What are some contemporary questions or happenings that social theories can help to elucidate? For example, when you watch the evening news, do you find yourself asking why only particular kinds of crimes (violent crimes) are addressed while others (white-collar crimes) are rarely reported? Do you ask yourself why there are so few lesbian and gay characters in leading dramatic roles on television? Do you notice that the aftermath of natural disasters disproportionately affects people based on social factors such as race and/or social class? Do you ask why some cultures seem so different from your own? Do you judge other cultures as inferior? Do you wonder why certain classmates are targets of ridicule and harassment? What are your future aspirations?

As we navigate the social world, contemporary social theories can help us to explain everyday happenings like the ones noted above. Even questions that seem to be personal—such as those about your future aspirations—can be analyzed through a social lens. As you will see as you progress through this course, so many of the things that happen to us, as well as the things that we do, can be linked to social relations.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, students will be able to:
1. Describe Antonio Gramsci’s Marxist concept of hegemony.
2. Outline second- and third-wave feminist thinking using the examples of Dorothy Smith and bell hooks.
3. Explain the major post-structural concepts of Michel Foucault.
4. Explain the three principal areas of queer theory.
5. Describe the approach of post-colonial theory in general, and Edward Said’s Orientalism in particular.
6. Understand Canada’s colonial past.
7. Define the principal tenets of critical race theory and the approach to “whiteness” as a racial identity.
8. Explain Anthony Giddens’ theoretical approach to globalization.

What Are Modern Social Theories?

We should not think of modern social theories as being completely separate and different from the theories discussed in Chapter 2. Rather, the theorists we highlight in this chapter continue the conversation that began in the previous one. Indeed, social theorists draw on each other’s work in their formulations; queer theorists, for example, draw heavily on the work of Michel Foucault.

One theme that runs through the theories addressed in this chapter is that of power. While there are certainly differences in how power is theorized, it is nevertheless a major focus in contemporary studies.

Western Marxism

In Chapter 2, we discussed Karl Marx’s argument that the forces of production influence not only the organization of a society, but also people’s experiences of that society. Marx further believed that over time, the proletariat would develop a common class consciousness and revolt against the bourgeoisie. Western Marxism takes a slightly different approach to this classic formulation.

Western Marxism refers to more independent and critical forms of Marxism than those practised by the more dogmatic Soviet and Chinese regimes (Kellner, 2005). In fact, the term was first used derivatively by the Soviet communist regime to refer to the varied forms of Marxism that emerged after the 1920s in a rapidly changing Western Europe (Kellner, 2005). Several theorists are associated with Western Marxism, namely György Lukács, Antonio Gramsci, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and Louis Althusser.
Here, we focus on Antonio Gramsci and his influential concept of hegemony. We highlight hegemony because of its enduring significance in contemporary sociology (Garner, 2007).

**GRAMSCI’S CONCEPT OF HEGEMONY**

Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) helped found the Communist Party of Italy in 1921. He was imprisoned in 1926, sentenced to 20 years by Mussolini’s regime because of his opposition to fascism. Gramsci continued to think and write, and his sister-in-law smuggled his notebooks out of the prison. Parts of these notebooks were later published as the influential book *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*.

Gramsci accepted Marx’s analysis of the struggle between the ruling class and the subordinate working class, but he diverged from Marx in his analysis of how the ruling class ruled (Burke, 2005). Marx had explained that the ruling class dominated through both force and coercion, using the strong arm of the state—that is, the police and the military (Burke, 2005). However, absent from this analysis, according to Gramsci, was a consideration of the ruling class’s subtle yet insidious ideological control and manipulation (Burke, 2005).

According to Gramsci, then, there are two different forms of political control: domination and hegemony (Burke, 2005). *Domination*, in this context, refers to the direct physical and violent coercion exerted by the police and the military to maintain social boundaries and enforce social rules (Burke, 2005; Kellner, 2005). *Hegemony* refers to ideological control and consent. According to Marx and Engels (1846, p. 64), “the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas.” Ideological control, then, means that a society’s dominant ideas reflect the interests of the ruling class and help to mask social inequalities. Note that hegemony also involves consent. Gramsci argued that regardless of how authoritarian a regime may be, no regime would be able to maintain its rule by relying principally on organized state power and armed force (Burke, 2005). Rather, to enjoy longevity and stability of rule, a regime must have the allegiance of the masses (Sassoon, 1994). So, the hegemony of the dominant group’s ideas and cultural forms works by bringing about the consent of the subordinate class (Burke, 2005; Kellner, 2005).

Recall from Chapter 2 that Marx viewed the economic base of a society as a determining force for the shape of social relations (the superstructure). Gramsci separated the superstructure into the state (coercive institutions such as the police, military, government, and system of laws) and civil society (schools, media, religion, trade unions, and cultural associations). He focused on the role that civil society plays in establishing hegemony (Kellner, 2005). These institutions are critical for the permeation of the philosophy, culture, and morality of the ruling class; through them, the population internalizes the ruling class’s ideas and cultural forms, which then become accepted as common sense (Burke, 2005).

For example, if you have grown up in North America (and hence in a capitalist economic society), it is probably difficult for you to imagine that a political economic system such as socialism represents a viable alternative to capitalism. Capitalism, in its longevity, is considered to be common sense and thus enjoys hegemonic status. For example, think of some common-sense notions in capitalist societies about the need to work hard. Those who are unemployed are thought of as lazy, unproductive, and without motivation. A prevailing idea is that those who work hard and diligently will be rewarded with financial success. Such ingrained notions sustain the more or less smooth operation of capitalism as well as the hegemony of the bourgeoisie (Palamarek, 2008).

According to Gramsci, hegemony is a process that is constantly negotiated and renegotiated. In other words, hegemony is not static, and as such the ruling class cannot take it for granted. The consent secured by the ruling class is an active consent. In order to secure it, the ruling class constantly incorporates elements of the subordinate class’s culture so that the subordinate class never feels wholly oppressed by ruling class’s culture (Sassoon, 1994).
An example from popular culture demonstrates how Gramsci’s concept of hegemony is also useful in exploring ideological control that is not reducible to social-class interests. The television show *Will & Grace* featured two gay men (Will and Jack) and two heterosexual women (Grace and Karen). Jack was stereotypically constructed as a flamboyant gay man (whom audiences could laugh at and dismiss), while Will was constructed as serious (and mainstream audiences could see him as being like heterosexuals, and thus not a threat). The fact that Will and Grace lived together further reduced the subversive potential of the show. The audience could easily forget that Will was a gay man since he lived with a woman, and we never saw him kissing a man. So, while we may imagine that some gay men might appreciate having their lives portrayed on television, gay life on *Will & Grace* was presented as being so palatable that the show did little to challenge the heterosexual hegemony of the ruling class. Ultimately, then, the show was not truly subversive in that it did not challenge balances of power. The fact that people laughed along with it shored up heterosexual hegemony.

As you will see in subsequent chapters, many theorists use Gramsci’s concept of hegemony as a way to explain how particular features of social organization come to be taken for granted and treated as common sense, such that it becomes difficult to imagine another way of being. For example, as discussed in Chapters 8 and 9, theorists talk about heterosexual hegemony and hegemonic masculinity—terms that refer to dominant cultural forms of sexuality and masculinity that are considered to represent a “natural” state of affairs.

### Feminist Theories

There is no single feminist theory; rather, feminist theorizing has many strands. These various approaches differ, for example, in their explanations of women’s oppression and the nature
of gender and in their ideas about women’s emancipation. Yet all of the approaches have at
their core a concern for gender oppression. Much of the focus of early feminist theorists was
directed at the issue of equality, both social and political, between men and women. In virtu-
ally every society, men (and those things associated with men) are held in higher regard than
women (Seidman, 2008). As a group with social power, men thus have an interest in maintain-
ing their social privilege over women (Seidman, 2008). Accordingly, feminist theories offer a
view of the world from the position of a socially disadvantaged group (Seidman, 2008).

We use the “wave” metaphor of feminism to distinguish between different approaches to
feminism on a large scale. That said, using the wave metaphor as capturing some theoretical
commonality within a wave does not mean that each wave itself is fully homogenous,
nor does it mean that the thinking in one wave supplants the thinking of the earlier wave(s)
(Karaian & Mitchell, 2010; Mills, 2008). Here, we introduce each of the three waves but
focus on second-wave and third-wave feminism and put forward two feminist theorists as
exemplars of each wave: Dorothy Smith and bell hooks. Both of these theorists have made
exceptional contributions to feminist social theorizing.

SECOND-WAVE FEMINISM

First-wave feminism took shape in the mid-1800s, concluding just after World War I with
the victory for (some) women of the right to vote (Calixte, Johnson, & Motapanyane, 2010;
Le Gates, 2001). In Canada, “The Persons Case” (1929) is also an example of first wave feminist
activism which saw women being defined as “persons” under the law, thus paving the way
for women to be able to occupy positions in public office (Calixte, Johnson & Motapanyane,
2010). Second-wave feminism finds its roots in the social movements of the 1960s in
North America (Thornham, 2000; Zimmerman, McDermott & Gould, 2009). At its core, second-wave femi-
nism is characterized by understanding “women” as a coherent social
group with a common experience as
women. Women, as a category, are understood as “peaceful, nurturing,
and cooperative . . . innocent victims
of sexist oppression and patriarchy”
(Adams, 2008). As a group, women also shared primary responsibil-
ity for domestic labour and social
reproduction (Seidman, 2008).

Gender oppression, then, was conceived of as being experienced
in the same way by all women. If
women were united in their experi-
ence, then such a unified experience
could form the basis for a political
project of emancipation (Armstrong,
2006). Women could have a single
voice that would adequately rep-
resent all women in their struggle
against patriarchy—a pervasive and
complex social and cultural system of
male domination (Abbott, Wallace,
& Tyler, 2005). This focus on homogeneity underlies much of the third-wave critique of second-wave feminism.

Second-wave feminism is also associated with consciousness-raising groups. The thinking is that if women share a common experience and if they got together to share those experiences, they would come to a realization about their mutual oppression—that is, they would understand that things that seem completely personal (such as primary responsibility for domestic labour and child rearing, violence against women) are actually widely shared and part of the patriarchal structure (Snyder, 2008; Zimmerman, McDermott & Gould, 2009). In this way, the personal is political (Snyder, 2008).

We move now to briefly consider the work of Dorothy Smith as an example of second-wave feminist theorizing.

Dorothy Smith Dorothy Smith’s approach reflects a second-wave approach to feminist theorizing. While she recognizes that there are variations of experiences for men and women, what women do share is domination by men (Seidman, 2008). Smith’s project, then, is organized around the desire to produce a sociology for women although in later writings she refers to this as a sociology for people (Smith, 1987, 1990a, 1990b, 1999, 2000a). Of central concern for Smith is the gendered character of the social production of knowledge. Smith is critical of classical sociological approaches that produce what she calls objectified forms of knowledge and knowledge that is androcentric (meaning “male-centred”). Smith argues that women have been left out of knowledge production—as both knowers and actors (Seidman, 2008). Sociology, traditionally, has been organized around men—around their experiences and their positions (Seidman, 2008). Men have been the subjects and the authors while women have been ignored. Thus, sociology itself has contributed to the “erasing and devaluing” of women’s experiences and perspectives (Seidman, 2008, p. 204). As it has been traditionally performed, sociology, according to Smith, has produced an androcentric intellectual world that presents itself as both universal and objective.

As an alternative, Smith is interested in a feminist sociology that can provide for women an account of the social relations that shape their lives—to explain that social relations that are both within our direct world and extend beyond it create the conditions of what is possible. As Smith (1999, p. 45) puts it, “we . . . seek from particular experience situated in the matrix of the everyday/everynight world to explore and display the relations, powers, and forces that organize and shape it.”

Smith wants a sociology that retains the presence of an active subject: “the subject/knower of inquiry is not a transcendent subject but situated in the actualities of her own living, in relations with others as they are” (Smith, 1999, p. 75). Her approach stands in contrast to macrosociological accounts that produce what Smith calls objectified forms of knowledge. In other words, she is critical of knowledge that treats the world as being “out there” as an object to be discovered. Rather, Smith directs researchers to always look for the ways in which social processes happen through people’s actions. As Smith (1999, p. 75) states,

Whatever exists socially is produced/accomplished by people “at work,” that is, active, thinking, intending, feeling, in the actual local settings of their living and in relationships that are fundamentally among particular others—even though the categories of ruling produce particular others as expressions of its order.

Smith is interested in a sociology that helps women come to understand the broader conditions within which their experiences arise. After all, our experiences are not entirely shaped by daily interactions; rather, our experiences are often the result of ruling relations in everyday circumstances. Smith uses the concept of ruling to indicate the “socially-organized exercise of power that shapes people’s actions and their lives” (Campbell & Gregor, 2002, p. 32). Ruling relations are the abstract, conceptual, and “extra-locally organized relations of
state, professions, corporations, academic discourses, mass media and so on” (Smith, 2004, p. 31). These ruling relations exist in a generalized form and work to coordinate, from outside the local sites of our bodies, what people do (their actions) (Smith, 2004). Smith’s approach involves studying how these concepts and theories are implicated in the constituting of social
relations (Smith, 2000a). As Campbell and Gregor (2002, p. 31) explain, “social relations are not done to people, nor do they just happen to people. Rather, people actively constitute social relations.”

As students, how is your academic life shaped by your institution’s course offerings? How is the size of your institution’s classes dictated by your department? Who determines the hiring practices of your institution? Obviously, our experiences cannot be explained entirely on the basis of our typical or preferred activities. Smith’s point is that we need to know and understand what is not visible from our individual locations. We need to make visible the social relations that frame the conditions of our experiences. The kind of sociology that Smith envisions can provide such an account of social relations that may transform women into active social agents (Seidman, 2008).

As mentioned, Smith’s approach differs from that of *macrosociology* (discussed in Chapter 1), which tends to produce accounts of social processes as if they were external to the individual. Her approach also differs from *microsociology* accounts, which remain firmly rooted in the microcosms of daily life. Rather, Smith wants to produce an account that tells people how things happen that go beyond the local sites of their experiences—and that they can possibly use to effect social change. In sum, Smith is interested in a sociology that can show people how the relations of ruling shape their lives.

**THIRD-WAVE FEMINISM**

One of the major critiques levied against second-wave theorizing is that the singular voice that supposedly represents all women is really the voice of white, middle-class, heterosexual, educated women (Zimmerman, McDermott, & Gould, 2009). While some second-wave theorists, like Dorothy Smith, did attempt to take social class into account, most theorizing was framed around a homogenous notion of “women”—difference was not recognized, let alone theorized.

Rather than a singular voice, third-wave feminists believe that what is needed is attention to the multiplicity of women’s voices (Snyder, 2008). Third-wave feminists challenge second-wave thinking that women indeed shared a common experience; they challenged the coherence of the category of *woman*. Third-wave thinkers emphasize the “need for greater acceptance of complexities, ambiguities, and multiple locations” (Pinterics, 2001, p. 16). These feminists are interested in creating space for a feminism that takes up difference based on race, social class, sexuality, and so forth. Dichotomous positioning around gender and sexuality, for instance, is rejected and replaced with more fluid understandings (Mann & Huffman, 2005).

We now turn to a brief address of a pivotal theorist, bell hooks, who challenged second-wave thinking on the uniformity of women’s experiences.

**bell hooks** bell hooks is in fact a pen name, borrowed from her maternal great-grandmother, for Gloria Jean Watkins. hooks uses lower-case letters to emphasize her ideas rather than herself as an author (Marriott, 1997). She is a critical figure in black feminist thought, also called anti-racist feminism and multicultural feminism.

She argues against second-wave feminist theorizing when she draws our attention to the fact that race is inextricable from gender:

> From the onset of my involvement with the women’s movement I was disturbed by the white women’s liberationists’ insistence that race and sex were two separate issues. My life experience had shown me that the two issues were inseparable, that at the moment of my birth, two factors determined my destiny, my having been born black and my having been born female. (hooks, 1981, p. 12)
hooks argues that no one in the 1960s civil rights or women’s movements seemed to pay attention to the realities of black women’s lives: “We are rarely recognized as a group separate and distinct from black men, or as a present part of the larger group ‘women’ in this culture” (hooks, 1981, p. 7). hooks (1981) goes on to argue that when people talk about blacks, they focus on black men; and when people talk about women, they focus on white women. In such a framework, black women’s identities are erased (hooks, 1981). Although hooks focuses her writings on black women, her goal is the liberation of all people (hooks, 1981).

hooks has also criticized feminist theorizing that automatically positions households as places of patriarchal oppression for women. Such positioning is based on the assumption that gender segregation exists in the labour market in capitalist societies (Adkins, 2005). According to these theories, because women and men are divided in the labour force (into “men’s jobs” and “women’s jobs”) and women earn far less, their financial dependency leads in turn to their subjection and exploitation in households (Adkins, 2005). hooks argues against such universal assumptions about women’s experiences. She points to the historical reality that for many, households have been spaces of refuge, resistance, and solidarity from racism, including the institutionalized racism of the labour force (Adkins, 2005; hooks, 1990).

Post-Structuralist Theory

As discussed in Chapter 2, Enlightenment thinking views scientific knowledge as being the key to human freedom. Post-structuralists challenge this view, arguing that scientific knowledge, or ideas about absolute “truth,” cannot stand outside power relations. This means that to study the underlying structures of a cultural object, such as a text or a film—as structuralists do—is to analyze it from the perspective of social relations that already exist. Post-structuralists, then, are concerned with how knowledge is socially produced. Post-structuralist thinking has influenced feminist theory, queer theory, post-colonial theory, and anti-racist theorizing.
MICHEL FOUCAULT

French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984) was interested in the ways that power and knowledge work together. Foucault critiqued Marxism, for instance, for emphasizing class and the political economy as being the key principles in social organization. According to Foucault, this emphasis meant that struggles based on race, gender, and sexuality were marginalized (Seidman, 2008). After all, social movements are varied, and Foucault dismissed the idea that these uprisings could be explained on the basis of a totalizing theory such as Marxism (Seidman, 2008).

Here, we introduce some of Foucault’s main ideas and concepts, many of which we draw on in subsequent chapters.

Power, Knowledge, and Discourse One of Foucault’s greatest contributions to post-structural thought is his rethinking of power. His definition of power is different than a Marxist theory of power as oppression (Foucault, 1980), a position that Foucault refers to as the repressive hypothesis. This hypothesis holds that truth is opposed to power and can therefore play a liberating role. It views “truth” as something that can be produced outside of power relations and therefore as something that can be objective.

But, according to Foucault, power is not a thing possessed by one individual over another. Rather, he views power relations as being created within social relationships. As such, power relationships are multidirectional, can be found everywhere, and are always at work. Power relations, then, can produce particular forms of behaviour (Foucault, 1977). For example, we have the ability to resist power. That is, although Foucault understands that we are all subjected to particular forces, he also acknowledges that one group does not always dominate. In other words, Foucault understands individuals as, in a sense, having agency—meaning the capacity for self-directed action—since they have the ability to resist power relations and to alter power relations (Foucault, 1977).

Power is also linked with knowledge (Ritzer, 2008). According to Foucault, truths or facts are contextual, meaning that they can never be separated from the relations of power that they are produced within. To know something (particularly the “truth” about something or someone) is to exercise power. Think of medical doctors, who in our society are afforded a great degree of power because of the specialized knowledge they possess (McGrath, 2005). Doctors make pronouncements about our health, labelling us as “sick” or “healthy” (see Chapter 15). These kinds of pronouncements, then, have the power to alter how we choose to live our lives (by eating certain foods, engaging in certain activities, and so forth) (McGrath, 2005). Despite the link that Foucault makes between power and knowledge, he does not envision a society that is run by a conspiracy among elites (Ritzer, 2008).

Moreover, Foucault outlines how truths and facts come together in systems that he refers to as discourses, which guide how we think, act, and speak about a particular thing or issue, as well as determine who is authorized to speak. To return to the medical example, we can identify the medical discourse as being a system of “facts” that works to organize and produce how we think about medicine—that is, how we understand the human body, how we view doctors as the skilled and rightful people to practise medicine, and how we understand medicine to be grounded in good science (McGrath, 2005).

Moreover, discourses not only tell us what the world is, but also what the world ought to be like (Abbott, Wallace, & Tyler, 2005). Using the medical example again, discourses tell us about the need to be “healthy”—what a healthy body looks like, what healthy eating practices are, the importance of being healthy. This normalizing aspect of discourses leads us to another of Foucault’s influential concepts: discipline.

Discipline Foucault (1977) uses the term discipline to mean how we come to be motivated to produce particular realities: “Disciplinary power works to produce bodies, practices and subjectivities that . . . bear the imprint of a given interest and logic . . . ” (Green, 2010, p. 320). Using the discourse of health as an example, we are encouraged to exercise on a regular basis,
to eat nutritious foods, and to stay away from “bad” choices. Think of how often you see commercials and news items about trans fats! By paying attention to this thing called health, you are disciplining your body.

To use another example (discussed more fully in Chapter 8), we also engage in discipline to produce our bodies as “feminine” or “masculine.” Think of all of the practices you engage in on a daily basis that contribute to your being understood by others as appropriately feminine or masculine. Examples of such practices include styling your hair; shaving; applying makeup; adorning your body with tattoos, piercings, and jewellery; and choosing your clothing. Such discipline also extends to your exercise regimen (or lack thereof) and your eating practices: do you conform to standards of thinness for women or of muscularity for men?

Think of the university, a setting in which both professors and students are embedded within the networks of power that operate there (Palamarek, 2008). Professors and students alike conform to specific and general expectations about their behaviour and performance. Students attend lectures, write essays and exams, behave appropriately in class, and so forth, while professors prepare their lectures, support their students, and so forth.

Foucault, then, thought about how power operates by producing some behaviours while discouraging others. According to Foucault, discipline, as a form of modern power, can work through what he termed surveillance—acts of observing, recording, and training (Ritzer, 2008; Seidman, 2008). These techniques function without relying on force or coercion (Hunt & Wickham, 1994). Think about your student record, and the accompanying threat of something being added to your “permanent record” in grade school or high school. If you were sent to the principal’s office, a file about you may have been created—in which your behaviour could be recorded. Your teachers observed your behaviour and admonished you for not sitting up straight, for failing to raise your hand before speaking, and so forth. All of these factors contribute to producing docile students.

Such disciplinary power is exemplified by the normalizing judgment—a type of internalized (self-policing) coercion that divides, classifies, and controls through regulation (McGrath, 2005). This is what Foucault calls normalization—a social process by which some practices and ways of living are marked as “normal” and others are marked as “abnormal.”

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Medical discourse is powerful. Doctors are positioned as the skilled and rightful people to practise medicine—the experts. Medical doctors are afforded a great deal of power because of the specialized knowledge they are seen to possess.
Normalization, then, is a method of standardizing, of creating standards. As discussed in Chapter 9, in North American society heterosexuality is constructed as normal while any other sexuality is constructed as abnormal.

Finally, unlike classical Marxist theorists, Foucault contends that resistance to modern disciplinary power is not manifested in revolution but, rather, within power relations. As Foucault (1978, p. 96) writes, “there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of Revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead, there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case.” These pluralities of resistances occur as ruptures or cracks that unsettle the smooth operation of disciplinary power. Consider those who try to construct “alternative femininities” by rejecting the dominant beauty ideal that is enshrined, for example, in slenderness. Resistance is both local and necessarily diverse (Seidman, 2008).

Queer Theory

Within the civil rights and women’s movements of the 1960s, gays and lesbians felt that they were marginalized. In fact, a rather large rupture occurred within the women’s movement between feminist heterosexual women and feminist lesbian women (Seidman, 2008). A key focus of all of these social movements was the belief that everyone should have equal treatment under the law, enjoying the rights and privileges afforded to citizens (McGrath, 2005). Queer theory problematizes the assumption that we are all the same and deserve the same treatment (McGrath, 2005). Instead, as discussed further in Chapter 9, queer theorists foreground difference as the basis for political and intellectual endeavours (McGrath, 2005). Queer theory is also concerned with deconstructing sexual identities by exploring how these identities are historically and culturally situated (Ritzer, 2008). These are the challenges of queer theory.

The three main areas of queer theory that we will explore in turn are desire, language, and identity. These concepts overlap and are implicated in each other.
DESIRE

Queer theory wants to open up the concept and reality of desire as wide as possible. It is not solely concerned with marginalized sexualities (McGrath, 2005). Queer theory aims to disrupt categories of normal sexuality and acceptable sexuality and allow instead for sexuality’s diverse and numerous expressions. Sexual expression, after all, should not just be understood as the missionary position, engaged in solely for the purpose of procreation (McGrath, 2005). Ideas from Foucault come into play here, as normalization is seen to create stratification (in this case, the division between “normal” and “abnormal”) and self-policing. Although it is hard for us to think outside the categories of “normal” and “abnormal,” these categories are, of course, not value-neutral (McGrath, 2005). Such binaries continue to shape sexualities (Ritzer, 2008).

LANGUAGE

Queer theory is also concerned with how language is related to power. Unless confronted with a problem of miscommunication, few of us stop and consider our use of language—that is, many of us take language itself and our use of it for granted (McGrath, 2005). But language and language use is not so straightforward, so let us consider it in more detail.

Just as Foucault understands that knowledge is inseparable from power, it is impossible to disentangle language from knowledge since language is the vehicle of knowledge (McGrath, 2005). Queer theorists ask us to consider the fact that language is not transparent. Rather, queer theorists argue that it is value-laden as opposed to being a neutral description of some reality (McGrath, 2005). Think about words such as black and white, up and down. They are not merely descriptions; like the normal/abnormal categories discussed above, they contain value judgments. Up conjures thoughts of heaven and “good,” while down brings to mind images of hell and “bad” (McGrath, 2005). These terms are not simply designations of spatial locations (up and down), then, but have come to signify much more.

Similarly, the term normal is not always simply deployed to mean the statistical average; it has come to be associated with what is “good”, or considered “right”, and so forth.
while abnormal means bad and wrong. The term normal has become the standard by which all else is measured. How we use language is connected to the concept of power, in that language produces reality. Sexualities that are produced under the category of abnormal are then governed, examined, and legislated by the “normals” (Ritzer, 2008). Being abnormal, in the context of sexuality, is not necessarily a matter of being statistically different but, rather, becomes a matter worthy of intervention and alteration—legal and medical and so forth (McGrath, 2005). Such is the power of language to produce reality.

**IDENTITY**

This brings us to how queer theorists deal with identity, which again draws from Foucault’s insights. Identity, in this perspective, is not some coherent entity that emerges from within our "souls," making us who we are (McGrath, 2005). Rather, identity is socially produced and is fluid and multiple (Ritzer, 2008). Our understanding of others and even of ourselves is always partial and contextual. This partiality connects to our discussion of language above—language is unable to convey the totality of objects or persons. Our identity is often tied to our connections with others (whether we are a mother, daughter, sister, student, friend), and as such our identity is situated within, and contextualized by, the multiple social relations within which we are embedded (McGrath, 2005). If we talk about ourselves as being skinny or overweight, blond or brunette, white or black, all of these categories carry an implicit social relation. You are skinny compared with whom? You are overweight compared with whom? This example illustrates how identity is implicated in the restrictions and limits of language as well as the relations of power and discourse.

Language operates with a logic of binaries—these are either/or dualities wherein one element in a pair is defined by what it is not (West versus East, women versus men, skinny versus overweight, good versus evil). These binaries are not neutral definitions but, rather, are value laden. One element of each is typically more highly valued, while the other is devalued; this valuation/devaluation is how power is implicated in language or discourse. These binaries, along with their implicit valuations, actually work to structure how we understand reality, ourselves, and how we move through the world (McGrath, 2005).

Identity is constructed through social relations and through discourses around gender (man versus woman) and sexuality (straight versus gay) and thus there are no core identities (Seidman, 2008). Queer theorists use this idea as a way to reveal and renegotiate the social inequalities in society. That is, if everyone's identity is constructed, then no one person's identity (including one’s sexuality) should be the standard by which another's identity is measured. One’s identity is no more normal than, say, the comparison of paintings wherein one is considered normal compared with another one—they are simply different (McGrath, 2005; Ritzer, 2008).

### Post-Colonial Theory

Post-colonial theory focuses on the political and cultural effects of colonialism. The colonial practices of imperial nations can include conquests of land, resources, and people’s labour, as well as political rule and the imposition of language. The term imperialism refers to the ideas, practices, and attitudes of colonizers (that is, “what happens at home”) (Cook, 2001). Former imperialist nations include Britain, Belgium, France, Germany, and Portugal. The term colonialism refers to the effects of imperialism within colonized spaces, including concrete and ideological effects (“what happens away from home”) (Cook, 2001). Examples of former colonies include India; virtually all countries in Africa; the Bahamas; Grenada; and many others.
The post in post-colonial theory suggests a focus on events that happened after formal colonialism ended in the early 1960s. However, post-colonial studies are not only concerned with happenings after colonialism. Post-colonial theory (also called colonial discourse studies) addresses several kinds of questions: Why were certain nations able to become imperial powers and gain so much control over the non-Western world? How were imperialism and colonialism practised by the West? What were the relationships between the colonizers and the colonized? How did colonizers defend their domination over others? How did people resist colonialism? Although formal colonialism has ended, what kinds of imperial and colonial relations persist? What are the enduring effects of colonialism? Are countries truly post-colonial? (See Cook, 2001; Seidman, 2008.)

SAID’S CONCEPT OF ORIENTALISM

Edward Said (1935–2003) is a pivotal figure in post-colonial theory. A Palestinian, Said was born in Jerusalem but lived in the United States for most of his adult life, earning his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1964. Until his death, he was a professor of English at Columbia University (Seidman, 2008). In Said’s most influential work, *Orientalism*, he critiques Western nations’ colonial dominion, which remained in place even as they championed ideals of personal freedom, social progress, and national sovereignty (Seidman, 1998, 2008).

While the study of empire most certainly concerns conquests of land and resources, it also concerns cultural meanings (Seidman, 1998). Said (1978) outlines *Orientalism* as a Western style of thought that creates a false opposition between the Orient (East) and the Occident (West). He views Orientalism as a discourse of power, one that works to naturalize the East as being inferior to the West (Cook, 2001). In this way, Said’s work draws on Michel Foucault’s notion of discourse as being implicated in relations of power and knowledge.

Said speaks of three kinds of Orientalism; all three are interdependent:

1. **Academic Orientalism** refers to knowledge that is produced by academics, government experts, historians, sociologists, and anyone else who is producing information or writing about the Orient. Said perceives that this knowledge is not neutral but is embedded in power relations. He argues that people make a distinction between the East and the West as the starting point for their theories, political accounts, and so on (Said, 1978).

2. **Imaginative Orientalism** refers to any representation making a basic distinction between the Orient and the Occident. These representations may include art, novels, poems, images, and social descriptions (Said, 1978).

3. **Institutional Orientalism** refers to the institutions created by Europeans such that they could gain authority over, alter, and rule the Orient (Said, 1978).

Said recognized that the discourse of Orientalism guided the representation of the East and provided the conditions for Orientalism to succeed as a mode of imperial domination (Cook, 2001). The characterization of the East as inferior, childlike, and incapable of progress and development is in stark contrast to the characterization of the West as superior, rational, and developed (Cook, 2001; Said, 1978). The East is to be feared (for example, the Yellow Peril—the fear of Asian immigration to Western countries in the late 1800s) and thus is in need of being controlled (by pacification, research, and complete occupation) (Said, 1978).

We can see lingering imperial notions in the United States as it continues to seek to control “over there.” Consider the invasion of both Iraq and Afghanistan, countries that were (and are) positioned in Western media as backward, barbaric, and in need of Western order and control.

Even the Disney Corporation was criticized by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (Wingfield & Karaman, 1995) for the Orientalist lyrics in the original version of the opening song “Arabian Nights” in the 1992 film *Aladdin*. The first version of the soundtrack contains the song’s original wording, while all releases since July 1993 contain new wording. The DVD release also contains the revised lyrics. The original lyrics draw on
Orientalist notions about the East as meting out arbitrary acts of violence. The first verse started with the lyrics “Oh I come from a land, from a faraway place, where the caravan camels roam, where they cut off your ear if they don’t like your face, it’s barbaric, but hey, it’s home” (IMDB, 2011). While this overt reference was removed and replaced with “where it’s flat and immense and the heat is intense, it’s barbaric, but hey, it’s home,” the revised lyrics nonetheless still position the East as barbaric.

Critics of Said’s work point out that he fails to consider how non-Westerners view themselves and the West (Seidman, 2008). Many of those living in the East resist the imposition of Western culture, and try to maintain their own cultures and/or fashion new hybrid cultures (Seidman, 2008). Homi Bhabha (1994) argues that the West has a more ambivalent relationship with the East than Said describes, in that Western discourses also reveal a longing or attraction to the East (Seidman, 2008). Bhabha points out that the West and the East are enmeshed in a relationship that is not completely oppositional, “but involves identification, a mix of repulsion and attraction, and a standpoint of dominance that is always in danger of reversal” (Seidman, 2008, p. 257). He reminds us that power does not flow only from colonizer to colonized but is multidirectional, even if the colonizers do occupy a more powerful position. After all, the colonizers must always rely on the colonized to uphold their rule (Seidman, 2008).

Said’s work has been helpful for those sociologists who explore the social production of the “Other,” whereby one group differentiates itself from another by a superior/inferior opposition (Seidman, 2008). Further, because Said draws from Foucault’s work, we are reminded to always consider that the production of knowledge is never neutral and is always implicated in relations of power.

**CANADA AND COLONIALISM**

Canada has its own colonial history—it was a British colony. Canada won its independence (both economic and political) such that it was able to develop as a rich and powerful nation in its own right (Cook, 2001).

However, when we consider Canada’s Aboriginal population, perhaps the “post” in post-colonial has not yet been realized (Cook, 2001). Aboriginals are among the most marginalized people in Canada—economically, socially, and politically—with Aboriginal women being
the hardest hit (Native Women’s Association of Canada [NWAC], n.d.). There is a long history of internal colonial action in Canada with regard to the treatment of Aboriginals. Residential schools are often cited as horrific examples of colonial actions within Canada: Aboriginal children were taken from their families, made to live at these schools, and forced to learn English. Their histories were denied to them: they were not allowed to see their families or use their first language or practise their culture (de Leeuw, 2009). The goal of these schools was assimilation into dominant culture—no matter the human cost. In 2008, Stephen Harper, as prime minister of Canada, formally apologized for the country’s role in the residential schooling system. We explore the legacy of residential schooling in more detail in Chapter 12.

**CANADA AND GENDERED ORIENTALISM**

We can see that Orientalism is still an important theoretical concept today and is still at work in contemporary Canadian society. For example, Hijin Park’s (2010) research explores mainstream media depictions of attacks on six Asian women and girls who were living in Vancouver while studying English in 2002. Park’s critical discourse analysis of newspaper and magazine articles that covered the attacks is informed by feminism and postcolonialism. Park’s research provides an excellent example of how social theories can explain what is happening in our social world. You will recall from our discussion of Edward Said’s Orientalism that the West creates and perpetuates views of the east as backward, in need of help, and inferior. Park (2010) traces how the media depictions of the attacks on these women and girls positioned them as being in need of Western protection.

Of course, this contemporary incident cannot be separated from Canada’s past practices with respect to Asian immigration, which was largely blocked in Canada until the 1950s. Nor can these incidents be separated from the economics of the English-as-a-foreign-language
industry in Vancouver. As Park (2010, p. 344) notes, “whether Asian students were afraid appeared to be of less concern than whether their fear would correspond to a loss of revenue for the EFL and tourism industries.”

Park notes how the media included Orientalist interview quotes from police that situated “Asian” behaviour in contrast to “Canadian” behaviour. For example, “[Staff Sergeant] Worth believes that men target Asian women because of the perception they will not complain to authorities” (Park, 2010, p. 347). Such statements are positioned against statements about Canadian equality. These kinds of statements and positioning are not new but, rather, have long been a feature of colonial discourse. The West is positioned as “humane and democratic in relation to ‘the rest’” (Park, 2010, p. 347).

Overall, Park argues that the media coverage of the Vancouver attacks against Asian girls and women is a reassertion of gendered Orientalist scripts that position Asians as morally and culturally inferior to the West.

Anti-Racist Theories

CRITICAL RACE THEORY

Critical race theory (CRT) is said to have origins in a 1981 student protest and student-organized course on Race, Racism, and American Law at Harvard Law School (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993). The protest was sparked by the departure of Harvard’s first African-American professor, Derrick Bell, who had left to become dean of Law at the University of Oregon. With only two professors of colour remaining at Harvard Law School, students were attempting to convince the administration to hire additional faculty of colour. When the administration did not meet the students’ demands, the students organized the course mentioned above such that leading academics of colour were invited to lecture to the students each week and to discuss Professor Bell’s work. These events proved to be a vehicle for the creation of CRT as both a field and a movement (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993).

Critical race theory is defined by the following tenets:

1. “CRT recognizes that racism is endemic to American life” (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993, p. 6). CRT is interested in exploring how the status quo of American life (characterized by federalism, privacy, property interests, etc.—a set of interests and values) actually operates as a vehicle of racial oppression and subordination (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993).
2. “CRT expresses skepticism toward dominant legal claims of neutrality, objectivity, color blindness, and meritocracy” (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993, p. 6). CRT does not understand acts of racism as individual, isolated, random acts. Rather, CRT argues that racism is institutionalized (Aylward, 1999; Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993).
3. “CRT challenges ahistoricism and insists on a contextual/historical analysis of the law” (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993, p. 6). CRT argues that contemporary racial inequalities are linked to earlier historical periods. Contemporary situations of income disadvantage, disproportionate imprisonment of black men, and unequal levels of education and political representation are all linked with historical practices (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993).
4. “CRT insists on recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color and our communities of origin in analyzing law and society” (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, &
CRT sees value in drawing on the experiences of those who have experienced racism (Aylward, 1999).

5. “CRT is interdisciplinary and eclectic” (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993, p. 6). CRT draws from a number of traditions, including Marxism, feminism, post-structuralism, and liberalism. This interdisciplinary approach allows CRT to use a methodology or a theoretical insight strategically in order to advance the pursuit of racial justice (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993).

6. “CRT works toward the end of eliminating racial oppression as part of the broader goal of ending all forms of oppression” (Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993, p. 6). CRT takes an intersectional approach in understanding that racism exists simultaneously in people’s lives with sexism, classism, and heterosexism. To achieve racial justice, CRT understands that our entire social organization must be refashioned (Aylward, 1999; Lawrence, Matsuda, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993).

Critical race theory allows us to view contemporary social situations through a lens of historical racism. In this way, we can connect historical inequities to contemporary practices and situations. For instance, consider Hurricane Katrina, which hit the Gulf Coast of the United States in August 2005. Many social scientists have focused on how the nexus of race and social class was implicated in the evacuation of citizens, rescue efforts, and governmental action and inaction (Allen, 2007; Campanella, 2007; Denzin, 2007; Hartman & Squires, 2006; Kaiser, Eccleston, & Hagiwara, 2008; Katz, 2008; Morris, 2008; Sharkey, 2007; Zottarelli, 2008). After the hurricane, there was a lack of an organized government rescue response for citizens trapped in New Orleans because of flooding. Those who had made their way to the Superdome stadium lived in appalling conditions in terms of food and sanitation.

Consider the social landscape of New Orleans prior to Hurricane Katrina:

- Almost one third (28%) of New Orleans residents were poor before Katrina hit the Gulf Coast.
- More than 105,000 city dwellers did not have a car during Katrina’s evacuation; nearly two thirds of those were African American.

This image of the National Guard patrolling the Lower 9th Ward in New Orleans one year after Hurricane Katrina depicts some of the social and economic effects on poor neighbourhoods in the aftermath of the storm. Abandoned homes are commonplace.
Almost half (44%) of those harmed by the broken levees were African American.

More than 11% of New Orleans residents were elderly.

Nearly 70% of the poor people affected by the storm were African American.

In the city of New Orleans, communities of color made up nearly 80% of the population in the flooded neighborhoods. (Allen, 2007, p. 466)

Many of the scholars listed above argue that the “natural” disaster of Hurricane Katrina was so devastating precisely because of decades of institutionalized racial inequality, as evidenced in the preceding list of conditions. Hurricane Katrina revealed for the world the enduring effects of racial segregation and racial inequalities in housing and occupation (Katz, 2008).

In Canada, the case of R.D.S. v. The Queen provides an example for critical race theorists to show that legal principles, such as “the reasonable person,” are not colour-blind. A black youth in Nova Scotia was arrested and charged with assaulting a white police officer as the officer tried to arrest another youth (Aylward, 1999). The original judge in the case, Judge Corrine Sparks, was the only black woman judge in Nova Scotia (Graycar, 2008; Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund [LEAF], 1997). Judge Sparks acquitted the youth and made reference to tensions between the police and non-white persons. Critical race theorists point out that white judges make decisions based on their experiences daily, but when a black woman judge made reference to racial tensions, the case was appealed to the Supreme Court. The Court upheld the original acquittal and accepted the argument that a reasonable person would use his or her knowledge of the social context of the community and race relations, as long as that knowledge was relevant, not based on stereotype, and did not prevent a fair decision (Graycar, 2008; LEAF, 1997). As critical race scholars argue, this case challenged notions of colour-blindness.

Critical race theorists and practitioners, then, are committed to ending racial oppression. Another important development in anti-racist theorizing is a focus on whiteness and the privileging of whiteness.

### THEORIZING WHITENESS

While a great deal has been written in the social sciences about race (especially race and racism in an American context), it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that social theorists began to consider whiteness as a racial identity (Seidman, 2008).

Richard Dyer’s (1997) book White addresses whiteness as something that is both visible and invisible: “At the level of racial representation . . . Whites are not of a certain race, they’re just of the human race” (Dyer, 1997, p. 3). In countries such as the United States, Germany, England, and Denmark (among others), whites are plainly visible, often occupying front-line positions (managers, doctors, servers, concierge), while non-whites are often out of sight (kitchen staff, janitors, housekeepers) (Seidman, 2008).

Race is often thought of as a colour—as being non-white (Seidman, 2008). The prevailing approach to whiteness is that it is colourless or, as Dyer (1997, p. 3) states above, “just [members] of the human race.” Within such an approach, disturbing dualisms emerge in which whites are thought of as simply people while non-whites are understood as distinct races (Seidman, 2008). For example, during the 2008 American presidential race, news cov-
Whiteness as a taken-for-granted category was highlighted during the 2008 American presidential campaign. News coverage consistently referred to Barack Obama as a “black” candidate, while there was never any mention of John McCain’s whiteness. Such representation is an example of the deracializing of whiteness, whereby whiteness is constructed as the default position, to which everything else is marked.

Globalization

Globalization, which is the subject of Chapter 19, is not solely an economic phenomenon, but also one that influences socio-cultural and political processes. Today, the world is increasingly interconnected, owing not only to technological advances in communication but also to the global flow of money, capital, and commodities. However, for the most part, it is Westerners who have the privilege of experiencing the world in this global way (Clarke, 2006). So how do we theorize these changing aspects of contemporary global life?

According to British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1998, pp. 30–31), globalization “is not only, or even primarily, about economic interdependence, but about the transformation of time and space in our lives.” In pre-modern societies, time was linked to the changing seasons and there was little concept of space beyond a collection of villages (Clarke, 2006).
In these traditional societies, most people would interact with those who were geographically close, and would rely on people they knew for assistance. Distant others were precisely that—distant and unknown.

This sense of time and space changed dramatically with the invention of the clock and the Industrial Revolution (Clarke, 2006). As Giddens (1990, p. 17) writes,

The invention of the mechanical clock and its diffusion to virtually all members of the population (a phenomenon which dates at its earliest from the late eighteenth century) were of key significance in the separation of time from space. The clock expressed a uniform dimension of “empty” time, quantified in such a way as to permit the precise designation of “zones” of the day e.g., the “working day.”

Moreover, with the 1884 adoption of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)—in which GMT is the starting point for all of the world’s time zones (GMT+1, GMT+2, GMT–1, GMT–2, etc.)—time was globally standardized.

Giddens refers to what he calls the **time-space distanciation**, which allows social relations to shift from a local to a global context. This separation of time and space marked a crucial distinction between traditional and modern institutions. Social relations could then exist across “infinite spans of time and space” (Clarke, 2006, p. 138). Giddens was interested in explaining just how this expanding out of time and space occurs (Allan, 2006). He focused on what he calls **disembedding mechanisms** that served to effect the shift in social relations from local to global contexts (Allan, 2006). According to Giddens, the two mechanisms that allow for this reconfiguration of social relations are **symbolic tokens** and **expert systems**.

**Symbolic tokens** are media of exchange that can be passed around without consideration of the specific person or group involved. Symbolic tokens—of which the primary example is money—make it possible for people to move from one local space to another, creating the illusion of a shrinking world (Clarke, 2006). As a common currency, “money permits the exchange of anything for anything, regardless of whether the goods involved share any substantive qualities in common with one another” (Giddens, 1990, p. 22). We can even use our credit cards to move around the world, with our banks doing the currency conversion for us (Clarke, 2006).

**Expert systems** of knowledge are also associated with modernity. Giddens understands these systems as disembedding because they shift the centre of our lives away from the local to the abstract, expert systems of knowledge that may be distant (Allan, 2006). Think about how traditional societies operated: if you had questions about child rearing or how to grow...
# Box 3.2 Exploring Theory

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<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Leading Theorists</th>
<th>Key Insights</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
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<td>Western Marxism</td>
<td>Antonio Gramsci</td>
<td>The rule of the dominant class involves ideological control and consent.</td>
<td>Hegemony</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second-wave feminism</td>
<td>Dorothy Smith</td>
<td>Women’s common experiences could be used as the basis for a political project of emancipation.</td>
<td>Relations of Ruling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third-wave feminism</td>
<td>bell hooks</td>
<td>Challenges the coherence of the category of “woman”; recognizes diversity of women.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-structuralist theory</td>
<td>Michel Foucault</td>
<td>Power is productive—it produces particular forms of behaviour. The production of knowledge cannot stand outside of power relations.</td>
<td>Power; Knowledge; Discourse; Discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queer theory</td>
<td></td>
<td>Seeks to destabilize and deconstruct sexual identities. Sexuality is socially constructed.</td>
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<td>Edward Said</td>
<td>Orientalism is a Western style of thought that creates a false difference between the Orient (East) and the Occident (West). Orientalism is a discourse of power that has the effect of naturalizing the East as being inferior to the West.</td>
<td>Orientalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical race theory</td>
<td>Charles Lawrence; Mari Matsuda; Richard Delgado; Kimberle Crenshaw</td>
<td>Racism is widespread in North America. Challenges the supposed neutrality of law and principles such as objectivity and colour-blindness.</td>
<td>Historical Racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globalization</td>
<td>Anthony Giddens</td>
<td>Explores transformations in our lives dealing with time and space. Globalization is an economic, social, cultural, and political process.</td>
<td>Time–Space Distanciation; Disembedding Mechanisms</td>
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healthy crops, you would rely on people in your local social network (Allan, 2006). Today, though, we rely on those trained in abstract knowledge. We do not even have to actually “go” to experts to be reliant on expert systems of knowledge (Allan, 2006). Western medicine, for example, is a system that dominates globally; polio vaccinations in North America are the same vaccinations used in the Sudan (Clarke, 2006). As a result, other forms of medicine are rendered “alternative” or even suspect (see Chapter 15).

Expert systems implicate us in relations of trust and risk. We trust that engineers and architects know something about construction, such that we do not fear that the roof will cave in as we enter a building. When boarding an airplane, we are both risking and trusting in an expert system that states that the aircraft is fit to fly (Clarke, 2006): “In high modernity, trust and risk are inseparable” (p. 139).

Expert systems of knowledge, then, are incorporated into both institutional and individual practices (Seidman, 2008). And institutional dimensions of modernity are clearly linked with globalization (Allan, 2006). Giddens identifies these institutional dimensions as capitalism, industrialism (international division of labour), monopoly of violence (world military order), and surveillance (nation-state) (Allan, 2006). These institutional dimensions are interlaced and support one another (Clarke, 2006).

Giddens (1990) argues that globalization is an inevitable feature of modernity, but one that is based on a Western world view (Clarke, 2006). As time and space are stretched and/or removed from the actual, institutions can further remove the social from the local. This removal can then allow further abstract relations at the global level (Allan, 2006). Globalization, according to Giddens (1990, p. 64), then, is “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.” In other words, there is a dialectic relationship between the local and the distant. Importantly, Giddens go beyond understanding globalization as a purely economic phenomenon, viewing it as something that transforms the social (Clarke, 2006).

Summary

1. Gramsci’s concept of hegemony holds that the ruling class dominates through the permeation of its ideology. Its prevailing philosophy, culture, and morality become internalized by the population and appear as common sense. In this way, the subordinate classes never feel wholly oppressed by ruling-class culture.

2. As an example of second-wave feminism, Dorothy Smith’s feminist theory begins with the actualities of people’s lives and addresses how they are influenced by social relations outside their particular worlds. Bell hooks, our third-wave feminism example, critiques the erasure of black women’s identities in the context of the women’s movement, and focuses on the inseparability of race and gender.

3. Michel Foucault understands power not as an entity, but as constituted within social relations. This approach thus perceives individuals as having the agency to resist and even change power relations. Foucault links power with knowledge through his concept of discourse, a system of “truths” that serve to structure how people think about certain subjects. Discipline, according to Foucault, is a form of modern power that works through normalizing judgment rather than force or coercion.

4. Queer theory’s three principal areas of critique are desire, language, and identity. With regards to desire, queer theorists aim to disrupt categories of “normal” and acceptable sexuality and allow for its multiple expressions. Language is understood as having the power to create reality in that far from being neutral, language is laced with implicit
values. Identity is perceived not as inherent within us but rather as constructed: it is fluid, multiple, and emerges through our relationships with others.

Post-colonial theory is concerned with relations of power, whether past or present, between colonizing powers and those colonized. Edward Said’s concept of Orientalism outlines the West’s false opposition between it and the Orient (or the East), whereby the West is considered superior to the East. This Orientalism takes three forms: academic, imaginative, and institutional.

Canada has its own colonial past. Internal colonialism for Aboriginals in Canada has resulted in severe forms of marginalization—economic, social, and political.

Critical race theory holds that racism is endemic in American life, is institutionalized, and is linked to historical practices. It also recognizes the experiential knowledge of those who have experienced racism, is interdisciplinary, and works toward the elimination of racism. The understanding of “whiteness” as a racial identity implies an important recognition that whites are generally viewed as the default position, with only those who do not fit into this category being marked.

Giddens understands globalization as occurring through the separation of time and space, whereby social relations shifted from local to global contexts. Two mechanisms associated with the process are symbolic tokens (money) and expert systems of knowledge. Giddens also links globalization to such institutions as capitalism, industrialism, and world military order.

Key Terms

colonialism

desire

discipline

discourse

disembedding mechanism

expert systems

hegemony

identity

imperialism

normalization

Orientalism

patriarchy

ruling

symbolic token

time–space distanciation

Reviewing the Concepts

1. How does Michel Foucault connect power with knowledge?

2. What is Dorothy Smith’s critique of traditional approaches to sociology?

3. How does Anthony Giddens link time and space to globalization?

Applying Your Sociological Imagination

1. What are some contemporary examples of hegemony (in addition to heterosexual hegemony and hegemonic masculinity)?

2. How might you use critical race theory to examine the aftermath of the tsunami that occurred in the Indian Ocean on December 26, 2004, or the earthquake in Haiti in January 2010?
3. What are some examples of a globalizing world (think culturally, economically, and politically)?

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