

CRES 10
Day 4 Notes

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Agenda

- Word on last year
- Content Warnings
- Recap: Definitions, key terms, distinctions
- Liberal Theories of Racism
- A Weird Q&A

Words on Last Year

Complexity is not a virtue in itself.
What does simplicity make available
in a way complexity does not.
What does complexity cover that
simplicity does not.
Granularity is not always good.

Israel Palestine is often avoided through mentions of complexity. Humility is important, the urge to learn more is good. Simplicity can allow for clarity. Low granularity, chunking, can be useful. The Reading shows this, the framing of settler colonialism has high granularity, but the author dips out of that complexity to show how there are still broad simple trends. South Africa is a good example, it is a settler colonial state. The history of South Africa is long and complicated and there are numerous influences, however at its base it is a colonial state. Australia is another example, it is not the same as South Africa, but it still came about and falls under the Umbrella of Settler Colonialism. Israel is a settler colonial state.

To completely understand Israel is a task which is gargantuan, however to chunk Israel, and see broad Ideological influences, material origins, and economic incentives.

People are not oppressed absolutely, groups can move in and out of various systems of oppression and extraction.

The settler colonial framework is useful because of how it allows for a broad enough understanding of history to avoid amnesia. It allows for the ideological movements and the slow demographic shifts.

The War in Gaza is dependent on weapons. Weapons come from internal Israeli tech and military industries. A lot of it comes from US allyship, where they are provided Billions of dollars for purchasing weapons. War is a powerful tool for racialization and othering.

Technically international law obligates the US to stop sending weapons to Israel.
However the US does not care about International law beyond its ability to write the laws.

Question

Can a Jewish state dedicated to the wellbeing of Jews ever exist in a non-colonial context?

Responses

- The professor thinks it is possible, and that Israel is the result of a failure of the UN to make Europe a safe place to be Jewish.
- Jewish Anti-Zionism is as old as Zionism, and the idea of Israel as a safe place for Jews is not necessarily true.
- The idea of a dedicated state for a given racial/ethnic group is an idea based on the same foundation of anti-semitism.
- Israeli citizens are vocally protesting the ongoing genocide. The government is not the same as the governed.
- Distinction between states and peoples, the citizens do not directly control the state, even in "democracies"
- Protests in Israel, not necessarily against genocide. Primarily about making a deal to release hostages. They are not necessarily anti-war.
- Israel tries to conflate itself with Judaism. It is a flattening of identity akin to Whiteness.
- October 7th in relation to Jewishness. Zionism is a particular nationalist, ideology and movement that arose in response to the systematic oppression of Jews in Europe. It insists that the only way for Jews to be safe and free is to establish a strong, militarily powerful nation. The goal is to leave the "diaspora" and return to prominence.

Content Warnings

- Acknowledgement that materials are impactful and can cause harm or distress to those reading or experiencing them.
- They can alert us to important questions around access. If a person who has suffered harm knows in advance they can be more mentally prepared and engaged.
- Can present issues. The goal of the class is to carefully expose and pick apart these topics, not shield ourselves or each other from them.
- Discomfort in reasonable, controlled amounts is useful and important. The point of critical theory is to poke at the things which we might otherwise not think about.
- Not the same as continuing trauma.
- Complexity is useful for adding nuance, for navigating unclear or seemingly paradoxical issues. Complexity is a resource we try to fine tune to get the best, and most clear understanding of the issues in the world.

Passive Voice

Passive voice is used to make things seem normal, natural. For example, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* frame the Indigenous genocide in the Americas as the result of disease and natural processes.

Nuanced definitions of racism seek to remove the passivity and neutrality from racism. Racism is not a feature of the universe and is, in fact, something we do to each other.

Key terms

- Racialization
The construction and production of racial distinctions.
- Construction
The outputs of human creative processes. Both physical and conceptual.
- Production
The process of human creation. The gathering of raw materials the fabrication, the gathering of labor, organization, the planning, and desires behind the production process.

The ideas in our head inform the way we build our world. Our world then shapes how we are forced to interact with each other.

The things in our head are inscribed on reality through how we organize ourselves.

Racism both constructs new distinctions but also collapses large diverse groups into a single category. It is a forcible reframing of the position of people in society, White people are reframed as white and superior, Black people are reframed as cultureless slaves.