

Our great growing divide

I'm pretty certain that at heart, most people are like me and office raconteur John.

We have broadly similar upbringings and we sometimes disagree. John is of the view that formal institutions are repositories of knowledge and power that will be exercised in the interests of citizens.

My thinking is that individuals are best placed to look after themselves, with the support of a wise and efficient administration. I agree for example that institutions are fundamental to the proper functioning of our society and I'm sure John would not like agenda driven institutions to be making decisions for him.

And you know what? There is an 'average and acceptable' outcome we both aspire to.

So what do we make of this chasm across which those on the left seek to increasingly influence power through institutions, while those feeling disenfranchised by this movement rebel by voting for the likes of One Nation, Clive Palmer or Donald Trump?

Nowhere is this chasm greater than in the USA and unfortunately, it is becoming more evident in Australia. Also, unfortunately, the direction we are heading in is not a matter of chance or even aimless drift.

It is the confluence of three factors that began around 30 years ago, which now threaten to cleave Western societies and democracy

SPEAKING FRENCH

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apart. These three things are: the successful transition of critical theory from academia to society, the advent of the 24-hour news cycle, and the inexorable rise of social media.

Critical theory is a way of thinking that breaks everything down into component parts and finds fault with every part. Deliberately dismissing Western science and other learned disciplines, it lays blame for all of society's injustices on privilege and then seeks to dismantle said privilege, such that some other order will take over.

The form of this other order is not too clear, but the outcome can be seen in the morphing of totally appropriate, Helen Reddy-style feminism into something where, despite massive progress over 60 years or more, women are portrayed as being increasingly marginalised, disenfranchised and helpless. We see the same thing regarding people from developing countries, despite huge leaps forward in health

care, education and economic welfare.

On pointing out examples to the contrary, the deconstructionist method means we divert to intersectionality where it is no longer women we are looking out for, nor people from developing countries, but women from developing countries. These people are oppressed not according to critical theorists by despotic dictatorships, but by white men who led the original process of colonisation.

A primary aim of critical theorists then is to remove white men from positions of power, this they refer to as decolonisation. If you have read or heard about political correctness, identity politics or gender fluidity, then you know something about applied critical theory. With people being de-platformed, losing their livelihoods and being hunted down for claimed but unvalidated indiscretions, it is no joke.

In Australia, the 24-hour news cycle was originally represented by Sky News and then to Sky's chagrin, taxpayer funded ABC News 24. Just one night's viewing provides insight into the digital rubbish tip. However, consider living in the USA where there are 18 or more 24-hour news networks, requiring 3024 hours of content a week. In the 1970s and 1980s you actually had to do something newsworthy to get a mention on the half hour news bulletin or current affairs program. Today there is so much air-time available that anything goes and new channels have

become vacuous entertainment.

Finally, social media. Representing perhaps the greatest double-speak phrase ever, these platforms enable unbridled venting and grooming for all manner of anti-social ills. In the past such tripe would never have seen the light of day, but social media allows tribes to form easily. The tribes attack perceived enemies. Where understanding is required, hatred is spread instead.

Bring these three factors together and perhaps you can understand why democracy is under threat. It's not enough that, as Michaelia Cash recently commented, in Australia we have such a robust electoral system, overseen by an independent regulator. Such a system creates order and therefore is fair game for critical theorists, the 24-hour news cycle and social media. It is this order that is under threat in the USA and we are not immune.

Right now it is popular to talk of conspiracy theories, ridiculing those who suggest that something is afoot. But something is. It is deliberate, well-funded and institutionalised within government organisations and universities. Instead of pursuing genuinely progressive reforms, the left has appropriated critical theory as a reason for existing. It has led to grossly unhelpful responses from the right.

Australia almost always follows the USA. Decisive action from our leaders is overdue.

Photography business celebrates tenth birthday

Madelyn Holmes Photographics recently celebrated their 10-year anniversary - and business owner Madelyn Homes couldn't be happier.

Ms Holmes said her business started out "as a hobby" but now it is much more than that.

"I never intended to pursue photography in high school, but when I first picked up a camera ... that was it for me," she said.

"I love connecting with people through photography, to have people welcome you into their lives is a very special feeling."

Ms Holmes said her first 10 years in business "have flown" and she absolutely loves her work.

"Every day is different and I take pride in ensuring my photography tells the stories of people I capture.

"Photographs are the only way to preserve our memories and are one of the few things that become more valuable with time."

Ms Holmes offers a wide range of photographic styles from weddings and engagements, maternity and newborn, family portraits and glamour and boudoir.

Ms Holmes said she has recently taken a strong interest in travel photography and would like to do more of that in the future.

"I recently shot a wedding at Heron Island, the island was the perfect backdrop for a magical day."

Like many other local photography busi-



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nesses, however, Madelyn Holmes Photographics felt the brunt of Covid.

"I had a big lull when Covid was in place but now that restrictions have started to ease, photography is in demand again and business is starting to boom.

"Bookings for 2021 are starting to fill, which is fantastic to see after such a turbulent year," Ms Holmes said.

To find out more, please visit: <https://www.madelynhphotographics.com/glamour-boudoir>



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