

A glowing human brain is the central focus, set against a dark blue background with bright, jagged lightning bolts. The brain is rendered in a light blue, almost white, color with a glowing effect. The title 'JUST A THEORY' is written in large, bold, blue letters with a white outline, centered over the brain.

JUST A THEORY

*A rough guide to the theories that
university students are exploring
in the 21st Century*

NEIL JAMES HOGAN

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university students are exploring
in the 21st Century*

By

NEIL JAMES HOGAN

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DEDICATION

*To all the theorists who've made us think and to those who
haven't but tried.*

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I'd like to pay my respects to leaders past, present and emerging of the Darug people where I was born, and to the Kulin Nations people where I currently reside on their unceded land. Thank you very much.

I'd also like to thank Eloise Grills and Dr Melody Ellis who have given me more material than I ever thought possible. I now have enough ideas to keep me writing for at least another hundred years, and depending on posthuman transhumanist medical advances, perhaps two hundred.



FOREWORD

When I first heard that we had to put together a portfolio for our theories course, incorporating creativity, I had no idea what to do, and hoped that my 20,000 words of notes and creative writing would elicit an idea when I needed it. I decided that, as we had to create 10 x A4 pages, and 500 words was the estimate for single spaced words per A4, then I had 5000 words +10% to play with!

But what was I going to write? And how was I going to be creative about it?

It wasn't until our tutors said:

“What matters, who matters, and why?”

“White, European, Male and Heterosexual” is the “socially constructed” default, and that

“Part of the work then of the theories is to deconstruct these defaults”

that I began to understand what it was all about. This gave me an ‘in’ and I’ve been able to create this ebook as a result. I hope you enjoy it.



Chapter 1: Introduction: Approaching Theory and Ideas

“Engaging with literary/cultural theories and ideas to help us become better creative writers.” – Eloise Grills

“The world that we live in requires us to be engaged with that world.” – Melody Ellis

We explored the mother figure and bad mothers. In ‘The Mother Complex’ Melody Ellis wrote “The shit mother is a difficult figure for our culture to hold onto even though we know she exists.” From an anthropological perspective it doesn't make sense to me that there would be this difficult relationship between mothers and their daughters. Did we evolve this? What is it about modern society that creates this difficulty between mothers and their daughters? Was that problem there when we lived in tribes, or caves? I didn't have any problem with my mother, and neither did my sister, so this idea was more of a challenge for me.

Also challenging in this lesson was the concept of originality. Initially, I thought we were being told that no one can have an original thought because all thoughts have been originated before. That is like the apocryphal expression attributed to Duell in 1902, then later debunked. “Everything that can be invented has been invented.” As a space fiction writer it is my goal to come up with an original idea for every chapter I write in my novel or each short story in a series. I strive to create ‘six impossible things before breakfast.’ (Douglas Adams). So, I was confused that a creative writing course could theorise that it wasn't possible to have an original idea. But, now I understand the theory is that, as our ideas come from engagement with collective thought, “we are in communication with the world” we may come up with something original, but it could be original at the same time for someone else.

Short Story: Heart to Heart

Vibrations are the key. As I pulse in this conduit form, managed by the consciousness of my controller, I interact with others of my kind in other conduit bodies. I feel them with micromovements in the electromagnetic field. Many are active during the high radiation period, and are resting during the lows, feeling for others of like feelings. But many of our controllers don't know how we communicate. Every time we pulse, we send out fluctuations in the electromagnetic spectrum of our bodies. When we're near others we communicate through these fields.

Sometimes something wonderful happens and our pulses synchronise. It can happen with what our controller calls friends and family, when a situation causes our pulses to be stronger. We feel the adrenalin course through us, and we move faster. Perhaps it is for a good reason or a bad reason. Sometimes we're not sure.

But what the controller doesn't know is that we are always actively seeking out similar pulses in the sea of pulses in the world. When we synchronise with someone new, someone different to the controller's family, the vibration is usually at a higher frequency, and more chemicals are produced around us, leading us to experience joy and happiness, and spread those feelings to the controller.

Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes we feel that the world the controller lives in holds it away, even though that pulse is perfect for it. Sometimes we have to fight the brain for control. We can usually get the stomach on our side. Send nausea when we don't agree with the brain, or send other signals to direct the controller to choose a path that might lead to additional nutrients being given to the stomach, or more relaxation for our conduit, or even some intense horizontal activity during the low radiation period.

Eventually, most of the time, we finally get what we need, then we can feel that incredible feeling of happiness from our controller, making it all worthwhile.



VS



Chapter 2: Why Theory for Creative Writers?

“Any strong reaction. Negative, positive, disgusted, bored to death, should be paid attention to, as it may be an access point for your writing.” – Eloise Grills

Eloise explored with us the concept that the personal is political. How does our domestic life fit in the greater picture? Eloise also acknowledged that all the work that came before her have informed her and led to the creation of her work. I agree and, in my work, I usually drop Easter Eggs or other homages to indicate where an idea has had an origin, or as my way of paying respect to a favourite writer. In a recent novel I wrote, (*The Robots of Atlantis*), my protagonist says a line from the movie *The Three Amigos*, which I saw in the late 80s. The antagonist replies ‘Isn’t that from an old flat movie? Let’s be straight with each other. Amigo to amigo.’ I think giving credit where possible, even within a creative work, can add to the creativity of the work.

The concept of the male gaze is an interesting one as it wasn’t until 2003, when I watched *Lost in Translation*, a story written and directed by Sofia Coppola, and *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, directed by Sharon Maguire, that I began to understand what the male gaze was. Having had gay friends for years, I understood how straight most TV and movies were, but seeing a completely different style of storytelling on screen, slow pans, soft, subdued, lighting, contemplative scenes through car windows, and more of a focus on the character and the situation than how attractive the actresses were, brought this idea into stark relief.

In relation to my own practice, the male gaze concept is an important consideration for book sales. If I want to sell to straight males, I need to employ it in my novels. If I want to sell to anyone else, I don’t need it. So, it would probably depend on the genre I’m writing at the time.



Chapter 3: Poststructuralism & Postmodernism *(aka a brief introduction to High Theory)*

“The future has disappeared” and we are “marooned in the 20th Century.” – Mark Fisher

So much to unpack, so this chapter will be a series of vaguely connected paragraphs.

Poststructuralism emphasizes the instability of meaning, according to the Poetry Foundation. It is the reader that is important, not so much the writer, and poststructuralists believe they should be exploring where the knowledge came from, not just what the author wrote.

Foucault, after ruminating on the levels of importance of Nietzsche’s writings, and whether we should include a laundry bill, said, “These practical considerations are endless once we consider how a work can be extracted from the millions of traces left by an individual after his death.”

If anyone ever tries to ascertain where the instigations for my writing came from, they’ll have ten terabytes of portable hard drives as well as at least thirty years of emails and texts to go through. I’ll short-circuit that by saying I’m a polymath and they should just review everything online, as not everything I’ve read has been kept. One million terabytes should put them off!

The problem with poststructuralism is that it usually means the person deconstructing is doing it within the structure. Like pulling out the foundations from under a house you’re living in. It would be much better if they created new structures that could replace the old ones first, much like the world is beginning to see how the stock market, based on people’s emotions, isn’t the most reliable thing to be investing in, so are creating new types of investments.

I like the idea of hyper-real places and have been to the pyramid hotel in Las Vegas as well as Disneyland in Anaheim, though neither is a patch on the Big Banana in Coffs Harbour.

Postmodernism argues that 'truth' is only true where it is created. I identify with this as I would consider myself a relativist, though I have been known to dip into nihilism occasionally, from a positive perspective of course. After all, rather than simply consider that everything is meaningless, why not create new meanings for everything?! That's what I tend to do in my space fiction writing where possible.

How would I use this in my writing? Well, that's a difficult question. After all, it would mean removing the actual structure that my writing relies on and that readers expect. So, if I want to make money, I'll have to continue writing stories within a structural narrative. If I just want to create for myself, then I'll write a story that rejects all structures. Now, there's a challenge!



Chapter 4: Feminist Theory and Criticism

“Men, in this patriarchal system, cannot remove themselves from their power and privilege in relation to women.” – Brian Klocke

What I learnt this week was fascinating. For some reason I had always thought a feminist is someone who is anti-men. To find out I’d got it all wrong and that I am, essentially, a feminist, albeit a male one, was a revelation to myself. However, I could never claim the nomenclature as I believe women have full rights to that word, and labelling any man a ‘male feminist’ is diluting the value somewhat. I think the quote above says it best

(<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/apr/23/canmenbefeminists>). I am more comfortable with being called a feminist ally and will continue to support women’s rights, and do my best whenever the situation arises to make sure that there is equality between genders.

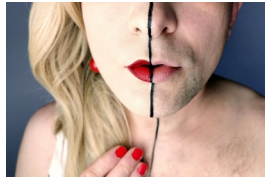
We’ve probably got another hundred years of discourse left before women worldwide begin to reach equality with men in a patriarchal society. When that happens, it won’t be patriarchal anymore. The shortcut would be to create a new matriarchal society today in juxtaposition, opposition or complementary to the current patriarchal society, so that the women within can be fully supported the way they wish, without the need to fight to get that support through a patriarchal one. Considering the patriarchal society, in its current form, has arguably only been around for just over 2000 years, a return to worshipping the eternal feminine is long overdue.

Having written many stories from multiple points of view, including gender, changing a well-known character’s gender had no discernible effect on me in the below class exercise besides considering a slightly different body shape, which didn’t come across in the writing anyway.

Short Story: Ms Robin Hood

Robin Hood took off her hat and stared down the three mafia and their knives, an arrow in her right hand and a bow in her left. They were too close for her to shoot an arrow before one of them grabbed her, but she had something else up her sleeve, quite literally. She dropped her bow, and a small fire lance, sent to her from a friend in China, fell into her palm. She waved it quickly. “Guns did beat bodkins any day,” she quothed.

“Oh, bull’s pizzle!” yelled one of the men, and they dropped their knives and ran.



Chapter 5: Queer Theory

“The fundamental idea of queer theory as resistant to fixed categorisations has meant that the theory has and continues to be applied far beyond the questions of sexuality.” – Hannah McCann

Being a straight male, before the lesson started, I felt I had nothing to add besides to say hey yeah, I’m pro LGBTQIA+ rights, and I voted *yes* to gay marriage. After all, I’m a member of the heteronormative society. I can’t get away from that, so I thought, this isn’t my discourse and I feel I would be appropriating a culture if I tried to make it so.

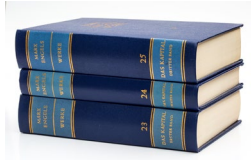
However, after reading the notes, and interacting with peers, I realised this is more about how society is not designed for more than two genders and what we can do about that. Queer theory looks at the gender binary of society and how we can see it through another lens. It also suggests gender is a social construct and that we should look at society in a way that doesn’t recognise gender.

Then I discovered that ‘queering’ doesn’t just mean making something gay or being opposed to gender essentialism. This was a revelation to me as my gay friends appropriated the word queer years ago. I had no idea it had been expanded, essentially seeing reality through many completely different lenses altogether. I also understand that this theory was heavily informed by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

I lived through that period in Sydney when gay people were finally coming out and being able to express themselves, then the AIDS epidemic hit, and they were subject to abuse from bogans and other homophobic people that pushed them back into the closet again. They not only had to deal with the fear of the virus but the fear of people as well. Blatant othering was quite disturbing and if anyone came out to me at the time, I knew how incredibly brave they were at doing so and usually offered a hug. After all, with heterosexual privilege, it was my duty to show those who were still

struggling to be themselves that not all cisgenders were homophobes. Being 'different' myself mentally (ADHD) I also wanted to emphasize that nothing is really 'normal'.

In relation to my writing, as a space fiction writer, writing about different genders of aliens, or even non genders or trigenders, is something I'm used to. Seeing humans from the aliens' perspective is also something I have no problem doing. Writing from the perspective of multiple brains operating simultaneously, or operating more than four limbs, or seeing the world from a completely alien vantage point is, ironically, a no brainer for me. To find that 'queering' is a legitimate theory that just about does the same thing from an academic perspective was quite a surprise. It means my writing has been queering the universe for years!



Chapter 6: Marxist Theory and Criticism

“Capitalism is extractivist, exploitative, possessive, tends to subsume everything” – Melody Ellis

I was quite surprised that someone in the 19th century (Marx) had spent his life pondering the capitalist system, coming up with concepts that we take for granted and put up with. Employees are numbers, profit is theft, crises when there is more than enough (see the millions of new cars that have been stockpiled in Europe), people chasing money are unhappy, not doing what you love is slavery. Aren't more people aware of this? The fact that it has to be taught at university level suggests not.

However, I think the big problem with Marx' theories is that they are stuck in the 19th century. His theory came out of the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie but doesn't apply in every country and along every timeline. They no longer apply in the digital age when people can legitimately work for themselves, doing what they love, selling their product(s) online that they themselves created, (which I do), rather than suffering alienation by feeling they are foreign to the products they created, if working for someone else.

How does this affect my writing? Well, I write stories set in the far future where there's no such thing as money. Characters trade their skills for other skills, or they 'work' as volunteers doing what they love in return for food, lodging and accolades.

Marx' theories, considering he predicted stages, would, however, give me the scope to write a ten volume epic about another civilisation shaking off the shackles of capitalism and moving into a utopia, much like Asimov's Foundation and Empire series touched on.

The takeaway though is that capitalism removes the value of people. We need a new system that brings it back.

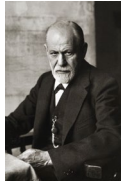
Short Story: The Cost of Living

I wake up and check my phone. 1.50 electricity used to charge it overnight. Paid the alarm fee for use of the alarm music. Fee on my bank accounts for using my bank accounts. App provider says there's a fee for an upgrade otherwise it'll be downgraded. A fee accessing a premium discussion group came through overnight. I keep forgetting about that one. Must log in to the group and do some talking to get my money's worth.

I get out of bed, glad of my \$400 mattress that gave me a good night sleep, then stare at my old TARGET pyjamas, probably made by kids in Bangladesh. Great that they have a job. I should buy a cheap one from K-Mart next time. It might mean supporting some more kids. \$2.80 slippers from Daiso, and I leave the bedroom of my \$500 a week apartment. The view is absolutely worth the money, though I don't know how long I can go spending 80% of my income on rent.

Across the room, the dreaded food cabinet. Full of snacks and treats and cheap food. For breakfast I opt for some spicy fish in a tin, \$1, and some rice. A cheap breakfast.

I check my phone again. Someone has signed up for my online pronunciation course. I get 83 cents for that. Fantastic. I love the capitalist system. These little rewards make everything worthwhile. If I could just get five hundred subscribers a week, I'll be able to buy better tins of fish.



Chapter 7: Psychoanalytic Theory and Criticism

“A Freudian Slip is when you say one thing and mean your mother” – Author Unknown

Simply, psychoanalysis is interested in meaning and interpretation, free association and the self. So, semiotics, accessing the subconscious, and trying to find the true self. The concept was spawned by Freud in the late 19th century.

Sigmund Freud was a highly influential figure in the early part of the 20th century, to such an extent we still talk about the Oedipal complex, and whether there’s a sexual basis to various neuroses. He also created the popular idea of lying on a couch and talking about your problems, under the nomenclature of ‘therapeutic discourse’. We even still use the image of him as a psychologist beating up patients in a meme template (made by Egor Motygin in 2013). His work helped to transform psychology.



However, Freud's theories don't explore outside of the mother / father/ child triad, they treat hysterical women like guinea pigs, and research in the hundred years since have greatly expanded on, and refuted, much of his work.

Psychoanalysis continued to develop, thanks to Jung and others exploring further into what lingers in the unconscious and how it influences our behaviour. Though, Jung was more interested in the archetypes.

Lacan said that the subconscious is like a language. This is interesting in that language (all forms of it) is semiotic, and if the unconscious is also semiotic then unconsciously, we're all just a bunch of symbols, signs, beliefs and meanings. Essentially our personalities wouldn't exist without this database running it. Perhaps the database gets updated when we interact with others. Though, like Klein, I believe it was formed preverbal, as most children can already communicate with fingers as early as six months, and perhaps in other ways earlier than that.

Deleuze and Guattari, in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* bring a materialist perspective, via Marx, to their critique of Freud's Oedipus Complex, and the way it frames desire. Their theorizing of the rhizomatic is highly influential.

Rhizome is a cool word, and this is the first time I've heard of it. It's "a philosophical term used to describe the relations and connectivity of things." (Maureen Estrella) Or "a networked way of thinking." (Melody Ellis). However, this concept is flawed in that Deleuze and Guattari want to use a rhizome to describe society, yet it doesn't consider time or entropy. The plane of consistency suggests infinity, so cannot really be applied to humanity which will either evolve beyond 'posthuman' (postposthuman?) or be destroyed by the expanding sun in about 5 billion years. Even so, it is a nice term and would make an ideal name for a quantum entanglement device.

Due to its connection with language, psychoanalysis is quite relevant to creative writers, and its use in Hollywood movies suggest there's a case for me to be using it now. In the following story I don't do that much. Instead, these chickens have no agency and are, to some extent, anthropomorphised. Hope you like it.

Short Story: 180 degrees

Sad chickens can't even soar
Comet-escaped dinosaurs
A mass of rock from space
With an alien embrace
Explosively said "no more"

Their lineage long forgotten
Valued just as a cooked hen
Reliving the day again and again
When they devolved to next gen



Chapter 8: Critical Disability Theory

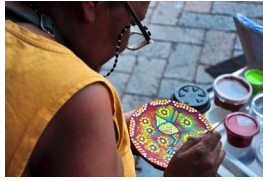
“Disability is not fundamentally a question of medicine or health, nor is it just an issue of sensitivity and compassion; rather, it is a question of politics and power(lessness), power over, and power to” (Devlin & Pothier)

“That quote ‘the only disability in life is a bad attitude’ – the reason that that’s bullshit is because it’s just not true...No amount of smiling at a flight of stairs has ever made it turn into a ramp.” (Stellar Young).

Critical disability theory is the umbrella term for multiple theoretical approaches across a wide field of subjects related to the disabled. Its goal is to analyse disability in all its views and forms across all aspects of society.

Traditional discourse suggests society has created an assumption of disability which oppresses the disabled. This unconscious behaviour, which is also unconsciously integrated into the structure of society, goes against disabled people’s human rights. The discourse promotes equal access for the disabled to all access of society available to the able, rejecting any idea of discrimination.

I recently wrote a story about a ‘normal’ human trying to get a job with gaseous ball aliens, and being treated as though he was disabled, due to his lack of propulsion vents, weight, and inability to discern humour flashes in other spectrums. Researching this story enabled me to learn about critical disability theory and enhanced my skills in developing and understanding non-anthropomorphic life forms, something that I wasn’t expecting at all! This will also enhance my worldbuilding skills as I’ll be able to allow for even more diverse physical carriages as well as include disabled human characters in my writing. So, I thank this subject very much for expanding my skills.



Chapter 9: Postcolonialism and Decolonisation

“Postcolonialism is not only interested in understanding the world as it is, but also as it ought to be.” Sheila Nair

We can't talk about postcolonialism without discussing colonisation and imperialism. In summary, similar experiences of those that have been colonised include violence, subjugation and oppression of the indigenous people, and making them part of an empire. Following that, some of the key ways colonisers retain their control may then be to outlaw indigenous language, culture and beliefs with the intent of indoctrinating them in the colonisers' own.

Colonisers' reasons could be generally described as a need for wealth and power, extending their hegemony, but it is usual that colonisers put no value on the indigenous tribes, considering the colonisers' own to be far superior—an obviously racist action, yet justified by the coloniser who believes they are bringing the 'progress' and 'enlightenment' of eurocentrism to the indigenous.

Postcolonial theory emerged in the 1990s, however, theorists are still undecided on its full definition and what limits it. One of the things it looks at is where countries believe they've officially ended the colonisation period, yet many indigenous, of course, don't agree, but as they've been shifted to the margins of society they're subaltern, so don't have a say. It also looks at how a nation can assimilate or come to terms with its often barbaric colonial history, and whether it is ever given any kind of recognition.

This then leads to another theory, that of decolonisation. Of course, physically decolonising a country like Australia is impossible, mainly due to hybridity, but we can do it mentally by changing how we think. Decolonisation is a concept that encourages us to 'decolonise' ourselves by rethinking, reframing and reconstructing society to remove a Europe-centric colonised lens.

In reflection, I'm not sure how this theory will help me as I always look to a bright and utopian far future where everyone is treated equally and are equally abundant. I understand that conflict is key to more popular novels but that is also a theory. There are people like me that are happy to buy and read books with limited to no conflict. Postcolonial theory and decolonising theory are too negative and limiting for what I write, unfortunately, but I wouldn't deny their place, and I encourage others to explore these theories and see if they fit with their own writing.



Chapter 10: Critical Race Theory

“Western notions of human identity itself as universal or unchanging may be recognized as a historical construct constituted by the exclusion, marginalization and oppression of racial others.” (Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle)

The theory explores how the idea of race is socially constructed, and that it's not a biological difference. It also looks at highlighting the privilege of whiteness as well as challenging the status quo that suggests, in many ways, that whiteness is superior. The theory also points out that it is the people of colour that have to deal with racism, rather than those who have 'white' skin, indicating that, in western culture at least, 'white' is not officially racialized.

The theory seems a bit limited in that much of the research has focused on white vs black, derailing the much-needed discourse on any other ethnic group marginalised by another ethnic group. Critical Race Theory needs to spend more time exploring race theory through other lenses, and not just focusing on white against the world, as important as that is.

This theory also fails to acknowledge the work done for intelligent animals. Some countries, like India, have already begun the legal work of giving cetaceans personhood, thereby identifying them as a race.

In regards to my space fiction writing set in the far future, all humans and aliens are treated equally, and I emphasize the skills of diverse peoples rather than point out the colour of their skin, if they have any, and background. So, I don't think this theory will be relevant unless I change genres.



Chapter 11: Ecocriticism & Posthumanism

“Crazy that the government couldn’t find a way to fight the climate crisis but could easily find a way to fight the pandemic.” - David Carlin

“My sense of posthumanism ... names the embodiment and embeddedness of the human being in not just its biological but also its technological world, the prosthetic coevolution of the human animal with the technicity of tools and external archival mechanisms (such as language and culture).” - Carey Wolfe

Ecocriticism explores humanity’s relationship with the environment—how we represent, interact with, and construct the environment, both “natural” and manmade. (Purdue University). However, some of the concepts, like the billions of years of Earth evolution, is beyond our conception. Climate change is a problem for many to comprehend as it’s a hyperobject – a term by Timothy Morton. “Objects that are so massively distributed in time and space that they transcend spatio-temporal specificity.”

Posthumanism can’t be discussed without first exploring humanism. Humanism suggests human exceptionalism, and some schools of thought even reject women as part of that. Humanism is trapped in its exclusions and can’t be considered a rational concept. Examples of leaders following this concept include Stalin and Hitler. For hundreds of years Europeans considered themselves to be the pinnacle of evolution and human advancement, referring to less educated civilizations as savages. So, humanism wouldn’t exist without its belief that ‘Man’ is superior, and anything that is other to man is not.

Posthumanism is a theoretical approach that comes after humanism, even though there are many humanists still around. Posthumanism is a concept that brings humans down to Earth, so to speak, and describes them as limited and finite creatures that

may not last very long in the grand scheme of things. It avoids binaries like ‘man’ and ‘the other’. It’s also part of relational thinking, something that can’t be applied to humanism which ascribes to the idea of autonomous individuals.

It also recognises its enmeshment with the rest of the world.

Rebecca Hill says that milieu is a better word to use rather than posthuman as the word human distracts readers from the concept of non-human. Milieu—anything related to a particular environment—can be used to describe the relationships between many types of beings.

The Cyborg Manifesto, by Donna Haraway, uses the concept of a cyborg to describe a posthuman which relies on others, and systems, to exist. A hybrid being. We are already in the posthuman or nonhuman-turn age, (turning away from social constructivism) and seeking to decentre ‘the human’.

There’s so much to write on this subject that I’ll have to leave it there due to word count limit. However, in reference to my own far future space fiction writing, it is entirely relevant, and I’ll be writing about future galaxies and transhumans for years, drawing on any further development of these theories.

Final Short Story: Opposing Thoughts

Left Brain – analytical / Right Brain – creative

R: I feel like painting something.

L: How? You have no brushes or canvas. You've got to buy them. You need to allocate that budget for...

R: I could use the strawberry jam.

L: Don't be ridiculous. It's sticky and what are you going to paint with it anyway?

R: I just want to play. Relax, forget the world and play. Run my fingers through the sticky jam and reject society.

L: What function would that serve? How will you make money from that? The food you eat to give you energy cost money. Use that energy to do something that makes more money so that you can buy more food.

R: I could eat the strawberry jam. I could paint something on a plate, then take it up with some bread. Or even lick it clean. It'll be fun.

L: Very well, then. Don't waste a drop. Only spend a few minutes on playing before you get back to work.

R: Awesome!

Afterword

Exploring these theories has been an amazing experience for a few reasons. Firstly, that I have been informed of different lenses to see the world. Secondly, that I finally have learnt and read what many of my degeered friends had learnt and read long ago and I can now converse with them on their level, and thirdly, that these theories most definitely mark turning points in not only schools of thought, but trends of thought, many of which will influence my future writing.

Thank you.

Do you sometimes wonder what theories university students are taught these days?

Have you ever struggled to keep up with your friends' discussion about Marx and Freud?

Have you ever thought, what the hell is poststructuralism?

This rough guide is for you!

In this book, Neil takes a quick look at a number of theories studied by students at universities in the 21st century.

Inside you'll find brief overviews of

- * Poststructuralism & Postmodernism
- * Feminist Theory and Criticism
- * Queer Theory
- * Marxist Theory and Criticism
- * Psychoanalytic Theory and Criticism
- * Critical Disability Theory
- * Postcolonialism and Decolonisation
- * Critical Race Theory
- * Ecocriticism & Posthumanism

along with some observations by Neil that you can use in your conversations with your friends.

Now you can join in the discussion, too!