

**Sociological Perspectives on Modernity**  
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**Lecture – 24**  
**Deconstruction of Modernity: Towards Cultural Studies II**

Welcome to the 24 th lecture of the course on sociological perspectives on modernity, we are in the 6th module of this course and in the 6th module we are discussing deconstruction of modernity through the lens of, through the lenses of three important perspectives namely, feminism, cultural studies and post modernism and we have already discussed feminist challenge to discuss the feminist challenge to critical modernist paradigm in sociology, what are those central pillars of modernity, that we have already discussed holism or totality, the reflexivity, rationality and social movements.


We have already discussed the feminist challenge to critical modernist paradigm in sociology and now we are trying to we are discussing bigger structure of modernity through the lens of cultural studies, in cultural studies, within cultural studies we are discussing we have.

In fact, we have already discussed the socialist humanist perspective on cultural studies response to critical modernist paradigm in sociology through the works of E P Thompson and Raymond Williams and the other strand the other theoretical strand the other philosophical standpoint that radical post structuralism.

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**Michel Foucault**

- Developed from structuralist tradition (contrast to EPT / RW), but unusual among poststructuralists in retention of analysis of power, institutions etc. as against purely literary or philosophical approach. Multiplicity of theories rather than single coherent Theory. Both Jay and Habermas treat dialogue between Foucault and critical modernism as a central one. Shares with RW / EPT dissolution of isolation of separate "levels" of society; for MF this is via an analysis of power.
- Traditional model of power (incl. liberal and Marxist theories), for MF:
  1. power is possessed by someone;
  2. power is derived from a central source;
  3. power is primarily repressive.



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That we are in this lecture we are going to cover this portion that radical post structuralism through the works of Michel Foucault. If you look at E P Thompson and Raymond Williams reflexes, you will find that their starting point to bring about critique to modernity quench Marxism in the case of Foucault or in the case of Foucault reflections it developed from the structuralist tradition contrary to E P Thompson and Raymond Williams starting point of as Marxism, but again Foucault is pretty unusual among post structuralists in retention of analysis of power institutions and so on.

As against purely literary or philosophical approach for Foucault I mean the way Foucault tried to operate I mean multiplicity of theories rather than single coherent theory both Jay and Habermas treat dialogue between Foucault and critical modernism as a central one, Foucault shares with E P Thompson as well as Raymond Williams. So, far as the dissolution of isolation of separate levels of society is concerned for Foucault these separate levels of levels of society can be analyzed through the analysis of power.

For I mean what are the models of power, what is power, the traditional models of power I mean which includes liberal theories as well as Marxist theories, but for Foucault power is possessed by someone power is derived from a central source and power is primarily repressive in nature. I mean how power is repressive, power is derived from a central source power is possessed by someone, there are many many things reflected on.

I mean he took the example of suppose prison, jail, school, that house in prison or school or mental hospital, how power is exercised? Power is exercised to further the ideology of the state in the furtherance of states ideology. Power is found everywhere if you look at the over right here the works of I mean Foucault why I said you developed from the structuralist tradition in contradistinction with E P Thompson and Raymond Williams stating points as Marxism Foucault. In fact, his fast work discipline and punish this is a structuralist move within social and political theory.

But later on, he moved away from these this structuralist's standpoint when he reflected on in fact, the order of things the history of sexuality. The order of things in fact, is one of the most important contributions of the twentieth century not simply by Foucault, but I mean if you look at social and political theory as such the order of things is very important how a particular concept is not static it they vary, according to the changes in modes of production changes in our intellectual and political consciousness and so, on. I was suppose for example, in the order of things Foucault tries to dwell upon a particular concept suppose madness.

If you look at in fact, madness and civilization is a structuralist more structuralist move, but if you look at the order of things where he tries to look at madness, suppose how was madness considered during the renaissance, during the reformation and during the enlightened, madness was considered a divine creation during the phase of renaissance, madness was considered a criminal trait during the period of deformation and during the enlightenment phase, madness was considered a medical condition.

That is where whatever which wherever you find mental hospitals in the world there are mental hospitals were created in the post enlightenment phase because earlier mentally challenged people, I mean they were not considered it was not considered a medical condition rather it was considered a divine creation in the phase of renaissance and criminal rate during the reformation I mean that is of power is exercised I mean how is exercised.

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**Foucault:**

1. "Power is exercised"; it is a relation. This derived from structuralist relationalism vs. subject-orientation of Western Marxism.
2. "Power is analysed as coming from the bottom up": post-structuralist refusal of single unified totality ex state, ideology, economy, etc. Instead multiplicity of power relations & no distinction between "levels".

NB (holism):

- (a) No escape from power relations (challenge to Habermas' "ideal speech situation"); human relations are always involved with coercive power. Hence this is not a liberal pluralism (with private retreats) but an all-encompassing multiplicity. (social movements)
- (b) Power includes possibility of resistance and struggle; it's never totally one-dimensional.

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We will see how power is primarily repressive for Foucault, for Foucault “power is exercised” as what now power is exercised for Foucault because it is a relation because somebody exercises her or his power over me because there is a relation that relation is not simply a relation of domination and subordination or subjugated, but the relation of exploitation this is derived from structuralist relationalism and versus subject orientation of western Marxism.

Secondly for Foucault “power is analyzed as coming from the bottom up”. I mean post-structuralist refusal of single unified totality namely state ideology economy and so on. I mean instead multiplicity of power relations and no distinction between “levels” he also emphasized I mean he also was one with E P Thompson as well as Raymond Williams on this that single unified totality there is nothing called single unified totality or holism maybe the state ideology, economy and so, on.

They must be examined in terms of that intersectionality, that is why such intersectionality limps Foucault to examine multiplicity of power relations and it also enables Foucault to suggest that there is no distinction between the levels in the society they are separated levels in the society, you just cannot say that you know this is economy, this is social, this is political, this is cultural no to. One must examine the whole array of economies, social, political, cultural, institutional, ideological, legal,

ethical and so, on in their totality I mean one must examine these categories together not in an isolated man.

Please note here that for Foucault there is no escape from power relations because whatever institutions that we have created these institutions are mostly created by the state a private property family. These institutions they also they try to create hierarchy, they try to create power and they try to exercise unfettered power over others, over the marginal intersections of the society, over even in family you will find there is power relation in private property that is there is power relation in state, in the state also there is powerless.

When he did that I mean that this was a challenge to have a messages ideal speech situation that when he said there is no escape from power relations I mean human relations are always involved with coercive power. When power is related to certain coercive majors, coercive this is not a legal, this is not a liberal pluralist perspective I mean, but an all encompassing multiplicity.

When power is exercised everywhere where when power is held by only one person or when power is possessed by someone or some institution, when power is derived from a central source, when power is primarily repressive in nature it becomes coercive power that is why human relations are always involved with coercive power. Hence this is not a liberal pluralism with private retreats, but an all encompassing multiplicity this is a part of holism or totality.

When he comes to social movements Foucault mentions that power includes the possibility of resistance and struggle against such power relations, but it is never totally one dimension. I mean if there is represent if there is exploitation there must be resistance and struggle against the powers that be, but it is never totally one dimension, you may find power is exercised somewhere I am a exercise power I mean power may be exercised on me, by somebody and I may not be able to exercise my power over that person, but I can exercise I am and I am trying to exercise my power over another person that is where power is exercised everywhere because it is a relation.

Then when Foucault said, that power is as constitutive of subjectivity because it is not absolutely objectively ordained, but subjectively coordinated through power knowledge, distinction knowledge is power.

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3. Power as constitutive of subjectivity etc. through power / knowledge. NB contrast to RW's use of Frankfurt School model of dominative / exploitative approach (instrumental rationality) which assumes original human nature a la Marx's philosophical anthropology.

(a) Shifting types of power. *Discipline and punish*: from dramatic spectacle (public mutilation / execution) to micro-level but all-present intervention (prison: surveillance / interventions to reform prisoner).

(b) Link power / knowledge: power in prison system relates to ability to view / hear prisoners and to "know" them as individuals constituted for example, via a psychological history - case sheet held by psychologist who makes recommendations as to treatment -> psychology, criminology, etc.

(c) Spread outwards via e.g. examination -> pedagogical knowledge; surveys -> social sciences. Hence human sciences bound up with spread of surveillance as discipline / disciplines.

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I mean we generally do not tend to look at knowledge for the sake of knowledge for its own sake, but knowledge the weight it has it creates power structures. Please note that that contrast to Raymond Williams use your Frankfurt school model of dominative or exploitative approach I mean that instrumental rationality I mean goal oriented social action I mean Weberian version which assumes original human nature in terms of Marxist philosophical anthropology.

There are shifting types of power for Foucault, if you look at his work on I mean or discipline and punish I mean from dramatic spectacle I mean public mutilation or execution to micro level, but all present intervention I mean prison I means when I say prison I mean surveillance interventions to reform prisoners. These sifting types of power then there must be a link between knowledge and power in prison system relates to ability to view or here prisoners and to know them as individuals constituted.

For example, Via a psychological history I mean case it held by psychologists who makes recommendations as to treatment I mean sick in the field of psychology criminology and so, on then there is spread towards spread outwards via as such as examination of pedagogical knowledge, I mean surveys in social sciences. Hence human sciences are bound up with the spread of surveillance as discipline or disciplines.

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- This suggests a characterisation of modernity as "disciplinary society" but MF refuses this kind of total analysis: the reasons for its spread are seen as contingent.
- Ditto sexuality: Victorian era e.g. not one of repression of sexuality so much as of its creation via spread of (psychological, social-scientific, pedagogical, criminological etc.) "knowledge" about sex.
- Issue of homosexuality (MF activist): people's self-identification with their sexuality as central element of personality relates to this form of knowledge.
- Hence MF offers radical critique of rationality as mode of domination. He offers not so much an alternative as a greater awareness of the ambiguous nature of rationality. It is not really possible to stand outside it, reflexivity consists in distancing ourselves from it and criticising it, being aware of its dangers. As against the model of 'global intellectuality" ex some meta-Theory MF offers situated / specific intellectual and political interventions.

This suggests of characterization of modernity as “disciplinary society” but Foucault refuses this kind of total analysis the reasons for it spread are seen as contingent. This is very important if you look at such analysis you if you start with madness and civilization which is your structuralist move within social and political theory of Foucault and then you get into the order of things discipline and punish the history of sexuality and so on.

You will find that that Foucault refutes some kind of kind of a total analysis I mean the characterization of modernity as disciplinary society refutes I mean that Ditto sexuality I mean Victorian era such as not one of repression of sexuality. So, much as of it is creation via spread of knowledge about sex when I say spread of knowledge about sex I mean Foucault referred to psychological, social, scientific, pedagogical, criminological and so, on.

Foucault as an activist he tried to bring upon the issue of homosexuality I mean peoples people self identification with their sexuality as a central element of personality that relates to this form of knowledge this is very important and perhaps for this reason and Foucault also has to be examined not simply as a theorist, but also as an activist.

The way he tried to hold aloft the banner of dissenting voices across borders and soul and Foucault is deep analysis of these elements makes him not simply a theorist, but also great champion of for social and political contents.

Hence, Foucault offers radical critique of rationality as mode of domination he offers not so much as an alternative as a greater awareness of the ambiguous nature of rationality, it is not really possible to stand outside it, for Foucault reflexivity consists in distancing ourselves from it and criticizing it, being aware of its dangers. As against the model of 'global intellectuality' for example, some meta - theory that Foucault offers situated and specific intellectual and political interventions.

Now, we have come to a point where we can see that radical post structuralist standpoint that Foucault represents, that radical post structuralism as well as socialist humanism they constitute or their constitutive of the intellectual trajectory of cultural studies.

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**Deconstructing Modernity: Towards Cultural Studies**

**History of social thought as a differentiation:**

- Philosophy / History split (Greeks)
- birth of modern Political Science (Machiavelli)
- Economics / Anthropology in modern senses (enlightenment)

*Each simultaneously addresses itself to specialised category of human experience and attempts to project this as account of the whole.*

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Now, how we are going to now wrap it up, we started this module I mean that module on deconstructing modernity; we have already discussed the feminist challenge to a critical modernist paradigm in sociology.



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"Cultural studies" joins feminism in the attempt to:

- (1) broaden the categories used,
- (2) include culture without reductionism;
- (3) thus generate a more adequate holism.



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Now, we are discussing cultural studies response to critical modernity we started with very brief background to cultural studies, how cultural studies joins feminism in the attempt to broaden the categories used, cultural studies also joins feminism in the attempt to include culture without reductionism and thus cultural studies attempts to generate of more adequate holism along with energy.


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Let us look at 2 influential sources for cultural studies:

1. EP Thompson / Raymond Williams - socialist humanism
2. Foucault – radical post-structuralism

Very different accounts, but surprising similarities...

- Marginal status:
  1. perspectives more than theories
  2. Haven't founded coherent schools
  3. but have taught people to think and work in new ways



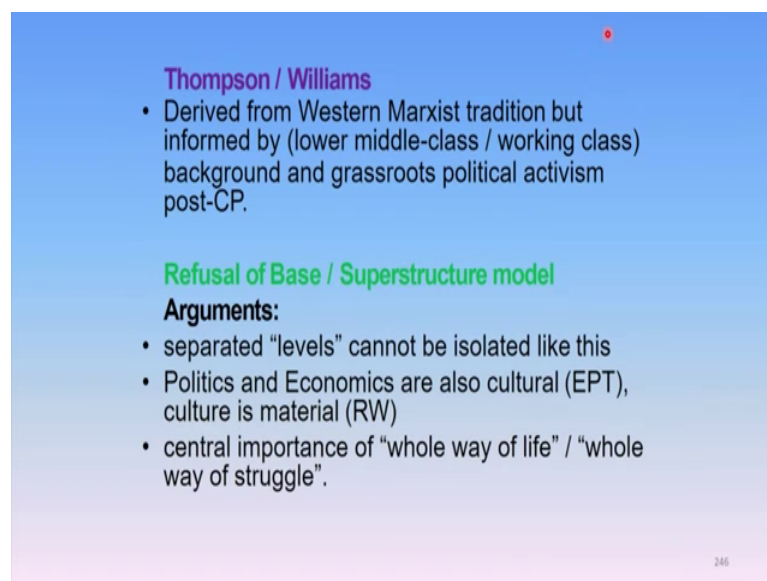
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We also I mean we discussed there are 2 influential sources for cultural studies one socialist humanism, the other radical post structuralism they are very different accounts,

but surprising similarities may be found because a marginal status has been accorded to both socialist humanism as well as pushed radical post structuralism in within the ambit of social and political theory.

Precisely because both socialist humanism as well as radical post structuralism emphasize more on perspectives than theories they have not founded coherent schools, but both socialist humanism as well as radical post structuralism have dot people to think and work in new ways.

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**Thompson / Williams**

- Derived from Western Marxist tradition but informed by (lower middle-class / working class) background and grassroots political activism post-CP.

**Refusal of Base / Superstructure model**

**Arguments:**

- separated "levels" cannot be isolated like this
- Politics and Economics are also cultural (EPT), culture is material (RW)
- central importance of "whole way of life" / "whole way of struggle".

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Within socialist humanism we have included the works of E P Thompson and Raymond Williams and within radical post structuralism we have included the works of Michel Foucault and we have discussed how Thompson and Williams they in their attempt to refute the base superstructure model, how E P Thomson is us suggested that no politics and economics and also cultural whereas, Raymond Williams suggested that no culture is material I mean that mode of production mode of domination has been replaced by whole way of life and whole way of struggle for Raymond Williams.

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**Culture [i.e. social movements]**

**EPT:**

- class culture (development of "class consciousness" idea)
- close attention to "anthropology" of popular culture (language and ritual, needs and expectations, formation of resistant popular agency)
- experience as junction concept between domination / exploitation and formation of political / cultural resistance (class as relation or as experience).

**RW:**

- culture in lived experience: place, community, kinship, etc.
- close analysis of formation of cultural production as material institutions and not simply disembodied "authors"
- recovery of class experience within language.

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We have discussed E P Thompson and Raymond Williams reflections on culture. I mean as a part of social movements holism or totality reflexivity and rationality.

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**Theorising [i.e. holism]**

**EPT:**

- distrust of overly sophisticated abstractions as "exercise in intellectual closure"
- attention to dialectic between experience and thought
- *Poverty of Theory*: capitalist relations as "kernel" of society.

**RW:**

- distrust of "specialisation", aim for looser but more encompassing concepts (loose but coherent)
- *Towards 2000*: from mode of production to way of life.

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I mean the way E P Thompson dwelt upon dialectic rationality and Raymond Williams to dwelt upon synthetic rationality.

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Rationality / Reflexivity:

**EPT:**

- artisan model of "determination" by material (data) of theory etc; interaction, "working with" the material;
- sharp refusal of inductive analytic reasoning in abstraction from lived experience of subjects;
- (implicit) identification with subjects and relevance to present-day struggles;
- (loosely) dialectic rationality - not aiming at or claiming neutrality but interacting with "material" and using it in present-day context.

Strategy of "circularity" between material and concepts in *Poverty of Theory*.

Question of whether this is a search for "truth" or (more likely) a search for (present-day) "meaning" in history.

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And then we have also seen how Michel Foucault offers a radical critique of rationality as mode of domination, we must have we must create different forms of rationality different types of rationality we cannot have only one way to look at rationality and then we have discussed Michel Foucault's reflections on power relations I mean how power is possessed by someone, power is derived from a central source, how power is primarily repressive.

And then we have discussed how Foucault suggested that you know power is exercised, it is a relation this is derived from structuralist relationalism versus subject orientation of western Marxism and how power is analyzed as coming from bottom up I mean there is no escape from power relations for Foucault and power also includes the possibility of resistance and struggle, but it is never totally one dimensional power as constitutive of subjectivity and so, on.

Then we have also discussed Foucault refusal of for kind of total analysis I mean the characterization of modernity as disciplinary society and so on and how Foucault offers a critique of radical critique of rationality as mode of domination he offers not. So, much as an alternative as a as a greater awareness of the ambiguous nature of rationality it is not possible to stand outside it for Foucault, reflexivity for Foucault is very important that consists in distancing ourselves from it and criticizing it being aware of it is dangers

as against the model of global intellectuality for example, some meta theory Foucault offers situated or specific intellectual and political interventions.

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**Common points (EPT / RW / MF)**

- Refusal of "separate levels" (political, economic, cultural) of analysis, culture not residual or reduced to economics / pol. ideology but key and omnipresent mediating term.  
NB need to distinguish analysis of political, economic, cultural institutions from pol., econ., cult. relations; most social relations and institutions involve a mix of power, value and meaning (pol. econ., cult.)
- Rejection of inductive Concepts ex (structuralist-type) Theory for ground-up thinking; looser categories.
- Skepsis re rationality as mode of domination, but no alternative.

*Radicalisation of this position -> postmodernism*

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There are certain common point's communalities that we that we tend to find so, far as E P Thompson Raymond Williams and Michel Foucault are concerned. In the sectional cultural studies response to critical modernist paradigm in sociology what are those common points they are all these 3 I mean all the 3 whether E P Thompson or Raymond Williams or Michel Foucault, all 3 they refute they made they made a refusal of separate levels in the society maybe political, economic, cultural, I mean separate levels of analysis.

Culture is not residual or reduced to economic or political ideology, but key and only present mediating term that they all three of them they made a refusal of best super structure model they made a refusal of separate levels of analysis, that economy, polity, culture, language, religion, region put ideology cannot be examined in isolation, culture the way I tend to examine culture cannot be reduced to only political ideology cannot be only reduced to economics.

But culture is a key and omnipresent meditative term culture always attempts to mediate between economical quality ideology religion region and so on, please note that there is a need to distinguish the analysis of political, economic, cultural, institutions from political economic, cultural, relations most social relations and institutions involve a mix of

power value and meaning be it polity be it economy or culture all three they made a rejection of inductive concepts like for example, like structuralist type theory foreground of thinking loser categories and so on and their refusal of only one type of rationality as mode of domination, but for them there is no alternative and when they say that they are skeptic about rationality as mode of domination or mode of subordination mode of subjugation mode of exploitation through power relations or there is no alternative to this.

I mean there is no way out and the radicalization of this position leads to the post modernist challenge to critical modernist paradigm in sociology and what we will do in the next lecture that, we are going to make a case in point that feminist cultural studies and post modernism. They make an attempt to respond to or they try to make an attempt to bring about the critique to the central pillars of critical modernist paradigm a sociology and in such radicalization of this position which leads to the postmodernist challenge to the critical modernist paradigm in sociology.

There we are going to discuss in fact, Michel Foucault more than we have discussed till now and with the post modernist challenge to critical modernist paradigm in sociology we will end this module on deconstruction of modernity and then we will move on to our last module of this course that is a new totality.

Thank you.