Text, Textuality and Digital media
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**Lecture 14**
Benedict Anderson: "The Origins of National Consciousness"

Welcome today we are going to study nationalism. We are going to look through a specific text by Benedict Anderson called the Imagined Communities where he looks upon nations as imagined communities. With this lecture we will finish our discussion on the cultural political and social effects of print as we have observed through our discussions that the emergence of print and then the evolution of print, of course through the various centuries that we are discussing we are now about to reach the 18th century and print was discovered invented in the mid-15th century.

Since then printing technology has constantly improved this has been a journey of 300 to 400 years, so far and print technology has constantly improved, improvisation has been constantly on through increased demands for books, increased demand for knowledge and the hunger for profit and propagation of the printing industry. So though printing technology has continued to advance, it has continued to leave its footprints on human civilization, on human society, relationships between human beings and people and others.

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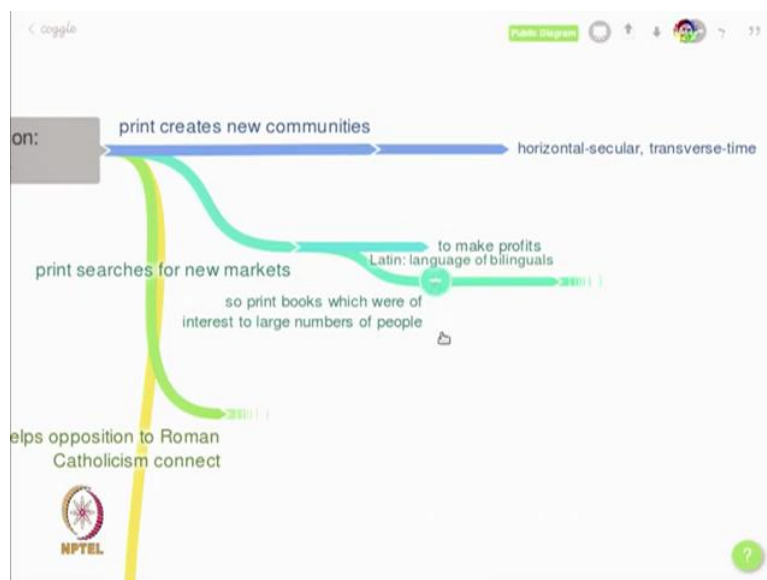
So let us look at what Benedict Anderson has to say. So as he says that print creates new communities which are horizontal and secular. Now just to explain this point a little bit further as I have been explaining before the coming of print the principal language within

Europe the principal language of learning and bookmaking were the classical languages primarily Latin and only after the fall of Constantinople that you have the coming of the Greek language.

Though most of the Greek literature would be translated into Latin for larger sections of the reading public to be able to access it and that would be primarily scholars. But the vernacularization of print language began as we understand through the translations and the propagation of the Bible, the translation of the Bible into vernacular languages brings about a kind of a solidification of language.

Now few important aspects that we need to understand here. One is that language itself the way it evolves, now we had talked about that before the coming of speedy communication mechanisms like railroads and others, human beings rarely travelled at most they would move on an average not more than about a 100 miles from their place of origin, their place of birth. And being in India we would attest to the fact that almost every 100 and 150 miles or so languages change.

The language that is spoken across the land changes every few miles I mean people in different parts of the same region also speak in languages which are slightly different from each other, they are allied but they are different. So geographically there is a certain kind of diversity of language and this diversity is there in every aspect of culture really in terms of food habits, in terms of attire, in terms of social and cultural and religious rituals even in fact architecture.

So these changes are ever so natural because the way human practice develops is that they propagate within the locality, within the region and therefore specific communities have specific linguistic practices, specific language identification. However, that is on the horizon. However, vertically we know we have discussed that there is a certain elite section of the society which actually uses a very different language, which is Latin.

And whether the person be within Italy or France or Germany or Switzerland or even Spain, Latin would be a kind of a common binding force, a communication force within the elite or the literate population of those times. So there is a certain kind of a vertical relationship between Latin and vernacular. If I were to explain it with the Indian context I have done this before but I will repeat that English has a very similar place in our society today as Latin would have had in 13th 14th century Europe.

English actually makes cross-cultural communication within India possible because English becomes the link language but the relationship between English and the other vernacular languages is a vertical one. So people within the Marathi speaking population they can talk to each other but most people within the Marathi speaking population would not be able to communicate directly with Tamilian population.

But the elite within Tamilian population and Marathi will be able to talk to each other in English, I am saying this because Hindi is still not a very strong, it is a strong link language but it is not as smooth as English is among the elite. If there are people from non-elite who have to communicate to each other they do rely on Hindi but the spread of Hindi is not uniform and not everybody is well versed in it.

So therefore with the position of English in India we can understand the position of Latin. The relationship between Latin and the vernaculars is a vertical one. However, with the coming of print and we will see how print actually creates these linguistic communities is that it creates a certain range of linguistic commonality which is larger than the vernacular one would say.

Because if we do understand whether we take Bangla or even Marathi or you know any other language we would find that there are several Banglas. People from southern West Bengal will probably not be able to understand some of the Bangla which is spoken in select for example. They would not be able to communicate with each other with too much ease unless either parties fall back on the standard Bengali. So this concept of the standard Bangla is something that we will have to explore to be able to understand today's lecture.

So what print does, it standardizes certain languages and why it does so is something that we will explore in a moment but for the moment we understand that among the particular standardized language communities let us say within Spain. Now within Spain there could be variations within the various kinds of Spanish that is spoken. Catalan is a language which is almost at loggerheads with standard Spanish and the Catalan province wants separation from Spain on linguistic grounds.

Even in the English there are multiple kinds of English that are spoken. Welch, Scots, Cockney these are various kinds of English that are spoken, we can call them dialects but what we are going to explore today is the politics between dialects and the standard language,

and what role print plays within it. So by standardizing the language, what print does, it creates a horizontal commodity.

And this horizontal community is a secular community, it is devoid of relationship with the ecclesiastical, with the church because the link that we have between Latin speaking scholars, Latin users within the European elite in the early modern or very early modern or mediaeval Europe was primarily a religious linkage between various monasteries, between monks between the Church network.

And print brings in a certain kind of a relationship within a certain linguistic community which is outside of the ecclesiastical relationship. Interesting because what we have already seen in an earlier lecture is that the initiation into this horizontal community of vernacular speaking region is brought about through the translations of the Bible.

So though the entry is religious it soon evolves into a secular sort of practice, secular linguistic practice simply because people once they learn to read they do not just want to read the Bible they want to read other things. And this community, each of these communities are also across time. The interesting part of print is that you can understand, let us say the newspaper.

The newspaper is a very important example for us to be able to understand Benedict Anderson's essay is that when a person is opening a newspaper he or she knows for certain, mostly he because of the particular time frame that you are talking about, literacy would primarily be male. The reader of that newspaper would imagine for the moment and that is why the name Imagined Communities, can imagine that there are other people across that particular geography.

Let us say the geography of France, the extent of France, would imagine that there are so many other people who are also reading the morning newspaper at that particular time. So the consumption of that particular piece of printed document is happening at the same time or within the same time bracket across that horizontal or secular region, that is an important concept for us to understand.

How is this different from other practices? So let us say the immediate prior practice is to print is that of the manuscript world. Now we have seen that manuscripts of any particular text are few and far between and they are located at specific locations. Let us say 2

manuscripts in 2 different locations, 2 copies of the manuscript in 2 different locations in Europe.

So obviously various people would be reading those texts, very small community of people would be reading those texts but they would not be reading it simultaneously, seated in different parts of geography, in different geographical locations. But perhaps for larger communities because the manuscript community is a very small one. But speaking of larger community we can talk about oral communities.

So when some oral commentary is taking place, a certain sort of gathering is taking place and everybody within that gathering are listening to whatever is being said together. But it is not that similar kind, the same speech, the same ideas are being shared at the same point of time at other places.

Now we can argue that it is possible that let us say sermons, the principal oral sort of exercise that every Christian is supposed to have undertaken, let us say in mediaeval Europe was church service. So when sermons are delivered every Sunday they would be delivered across Europe that is true. But the sermons would be different at different places, they would be delivered in different languages and most importantly this consciousness, this idea that I am listening to a sermon sitting here in Poland and someone else is listening to a sermon sitting in Portugal is scantly there.

That idea that consciousness in the mind of the listeners, of the audience is not there. Unlike let us say news broadcast on national television. So when we open the television at 9 o'clock in the evening and we listen to a certain news or if you are looking at the broadcast of an important sports event, a particular match, then we are aware that a large number of people within a particular geography are also watching that match are also listening to that news transmission.

So that awareness is different, is actually absent in the sermon practices of mediaeval Europe because people would not be aware of any kind of community beyond 50 to 60 miles away, maximum about a hundred miles, the most travelled people from among the entire population would probably have that kind of an extent in mind. So that consciousness of a larger community which speaks a certain language and is partaking of a similar kind of text is something that develops with print and why does this happen? Because print searches for new markets.

When we are printing something a certain print run, we understand the lattice which is being prepared when it is printing out, we looked at in our previous lecture, that the Voltaire's Questions there were print run of 2500 which is a very large print run, the most popular writer. Now every copy within that large print run of 2500 would look same by and large, and they would be distributed to wherever it is distributed, if it is a French language book then it is distributed across the French territory.

Whereas in the case of manuscript as we had seen that each manuscript can be custom-made, please refer back to the lectures on the manuscript, what did we see? Before a customer orders a particular copy of a manuscript discusses with the bookseller with the stationer, what exactly the layout is going to be, what kind of illustrations are going to be used, instructions for the illustrations are specifically marked on the parchment for the illustrator.

The text is then written out, the particular kind of illuminations are done, the illustrations are put together. So this process means it's a customized book. So each book is going to be different within the manuscript but in print every book is the same, it's the same lattice, and therefore there are no linguistic differences, the language remains exactly the same across wherever that book is going.

And that is true for the Bible this would not have happened in the manuscript world because in the manuscript world what was the principal language that was being used? It was Latin and Latin had a certain standard it was a classical language everybody knew, remember the issues of grammar and other things are also involved which had already evolved when writing came into place.

The vernaculars existed only in oral form. Remember many of the European vernacular languages started using the Roman alphabet to be able to write, they did not have their own alphabet, English does not have a very different alphabet than French though there are a few signs and symbols which are differently derived but primarily it is the Roman alphabet which has just taken over by these vernacular languages when the requirement comes when writing starts developing they did not organically develop an alphabet for themselves.

So Latin manuscripts would have a certain standard Latin which would be used and people across Western Europe would be able to read it. People as in the scholarly communities those who are literate, those who are having Latin literacy. But within the vernacular domain when

print enters into the vernacular domain, print is unable to match the linguistic variations that take place across geography.

In fact across the geography of France there would be several languages that would be spoken and this results in the standardization of language. Remember the schools that are attached to the churches, the schooling process which begins with the propagation of religious ideas through the churches through Protestantism and the battle between Protestantism and Catholicism that we had talked about.

The schools would be teaching this standard language to equip people, equip the children to be able to access the books which are being printed. In fact the textbooks would also help that standardization of the language which actually ultimately leads to obliteration oration of certain linguistic practices. Scarcely would you find within the 18th and 19th century books which are written in what is called the dialects or the variant linguistic versions of the standardized language.

So this print then leads to a larger because in order to make profits you really need to have large print runs at least several hundreds because that lattice which is being prepared has required, we looked at the print shop in the previous lecture. We saw how there would be almost a 6 monthly cycle of a certain book getting printed or a cycle which is spread across several months for a certain book to be printed.

In fact even in the modern day and age when a certain book manuscript is submitted to a publisher it takes at least 8 to 9 months if not more for that book to see the light of the day that is the case in today's day with very advanced technologies. Though today's publishers would be publishing several books simultaneously but that cycle is a long one. Now so much of investment which is going into material, into labor to be able to recoup the coast and make profits there has to be a large enough print run and that large enough print run cannot be exhausted within a small area around that printer that book then gets distributed.

We saw in our previous lecture how Rigaud actually imported books from Neuchatel and books were imported from Geneva and other places to Montpelier. So books would travel great distances across mountains, across rivers and seas to reach their destination, so there is a distribution mechanism. So it is important that for these books to find the readership, they needed the readers to be literate in that particular language and this entire push sort of

through the schooling mechanism through the reading through literacy leads to a certain standardized language. Before this Latin was a language of bilinguals.

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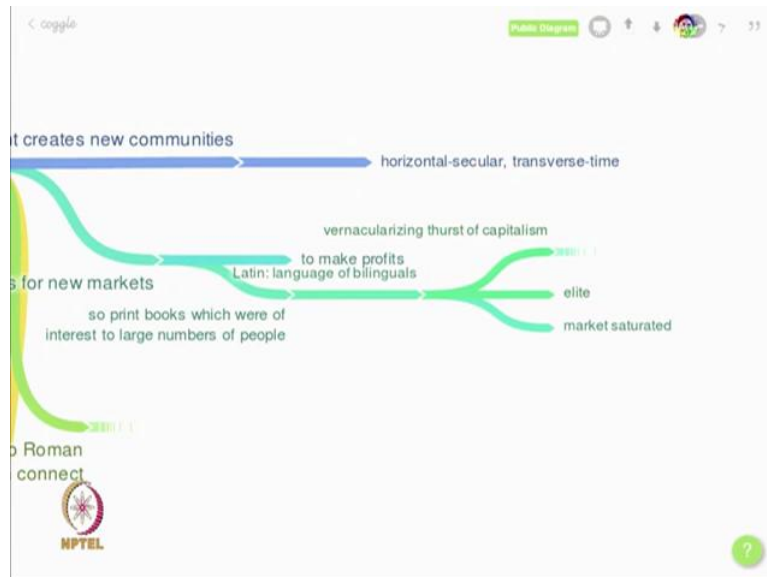
People who could speak 2 languages but with the coming of print in the vernacular you have people who can be monolingual speaking just one language either French or German. People who are in the pre-print era those who are speaking and using Latin also knew the vernacular though they would perhaps know the vernacular only in the spoken as many speakers of English actually do.

They are very comfortable with English but they are not so, they can speak their mother tongue whether it be Tamil or Telugu or Hindi but they are not very good in writing or in reading of these languages. So they are bilinguals but they are well versed primarily in Latin but now with the coming of print you have a vernacularising thirst of capitalism.
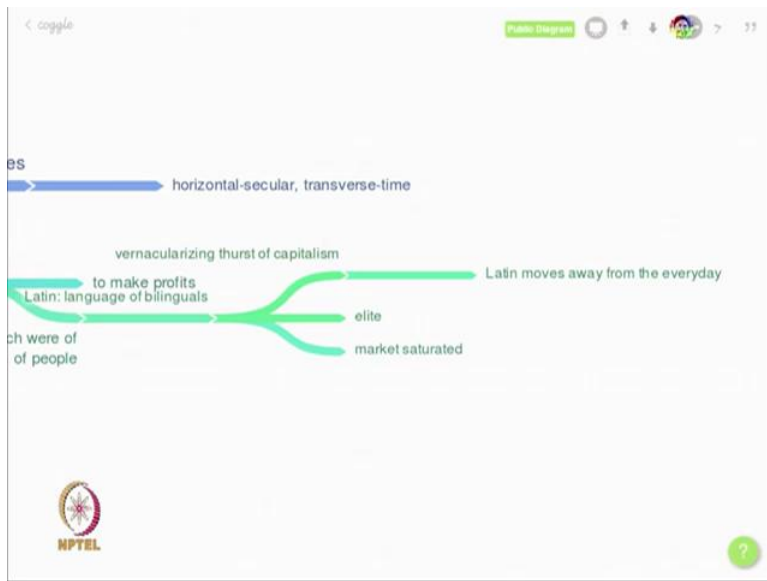
And Latin slowly moves away from the everyday. Latin was never really part of the everyday world other than within the scholarly universe, within the university population, within the ecclesiastical the church community, within the monks. And very important part is that we have always seen that Latin though has a larger geography spread it has a very small market and that market is saturated.

In fact, that market could have been satisfied, using certain advanced methods of preparing manuscripts but print in order to reach the kind of profits that it needed to generate, needed to reach a larger community and they found that community within the vernacular world. Even today if you ask various publishers if you do a little bit of research you could find that there is a distinction, so if there is a book fair you may want to walk up to some booksellers and ask them what you would find is that primarily books in English are priced higher than books in any of the vernacular languages, any of the regional languages or Indian languages if you want to call it.

And simultaneously you would find that books in English would have comparatively lower print run than those in the Indian languages because one, the purchasing power of the English-speaking population is much more, they are primarily the elites, number two this is a much smaller market, everything said and done the English-speaking population in India is a minority, is a very small one.

English-speaking, reading, talking, writing population you can you check all the boxes it is a very-very small population. It's a vernacular market which is far-far bigger in terms of the

number of books that are sold. So books are sold in greater numbers but they are sold cheaper because this is a non-elite, purchasing power is at a lower level. So this is true even today. So the link language the market remained saturated to a larger extent with the smaller print run but to have bigger print run the printers had to print books in the vernacular languages.

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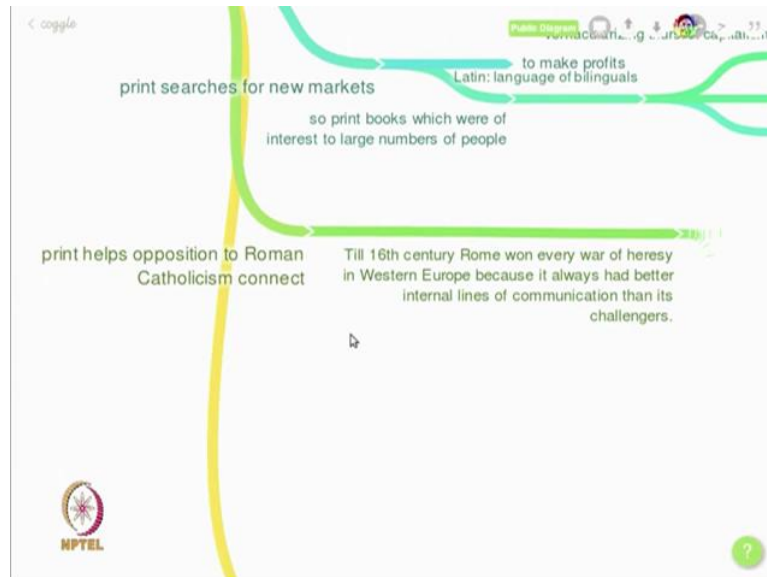
The other point which we had also checked out earlier is that print helps the opposition to Roman Catholicism connect. Till the sixteenth century Rome won every war of heresy in Western Europe because it always had better internal lines of communication than its challengers. So it is not that Martin Luther really was the first challenger to the authority of the Roman Catholic Church.

There were challenges even previously but as we had seen this linkage of the Latin speaking community which was primarily that of the ecclesiastical community, the Roman Catholic Church, allowed a certain internal line of communication which allowed the church to mobilize forces in order to put down a rebellion in one corner of Europe or even one corner of a particular region by mobilizing forces from another region and crushing that rebellion.

So if a King who attests to Catholicism's supremacy is challenged then the pope directs another set of rulers to send their forces to crush the rebellion there because that is the communication. Whereas the rebels themselves failed to communicate amongst each other because they did not have that link that is not only the institutional link but also the linguistic link. Because if they had to communicate with another group which was disgruntled with the church they would not have that language to be able to complicate.
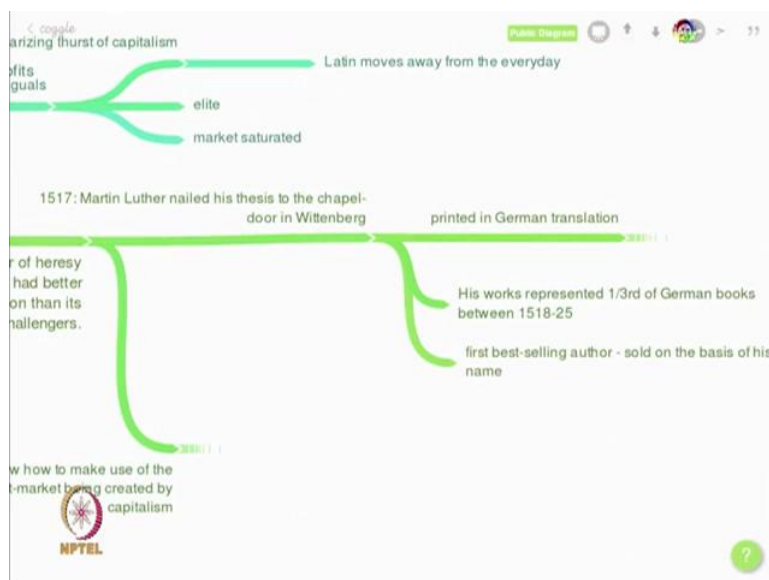
They would first of all not be aware of too many communities, the way the church would be aware of the diversity of the regions in which the church operated. So these channels of communication were very important for the survival of the church.
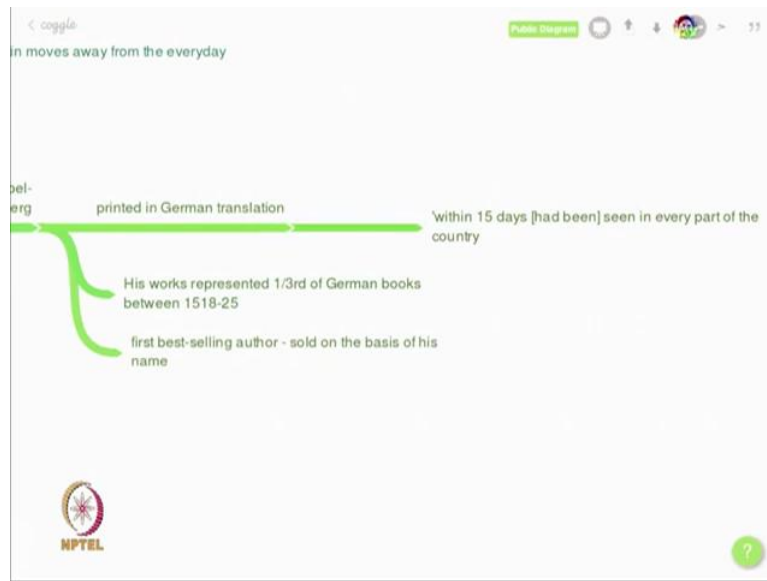
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But with the coming of print what happens? And this is what happens.

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In 1517 Martin Luther nails his thesis through the chapel door in Wittenberg that gets translated into German. It's the thesis itself was put up in Latin but it gets translated into German very shortly.

And within 15 days it had been seen in every part of Germany, what is present-day German, in 15 days, that is as viral as you can get, if we can use the modern term in sixteenth century Europe. Within 15 days as wide a geography as Germany it spreads but when we say it spreads within every part of Germany however it is not that all German-speaking population have got to hear it.

It is still within a certain elite population but it has managed to reach, the reach is much larger. First of all because it is in German translation and secondly because it has been printed and printed means at the same point of time it is printed as a pamphlet and it is distributed across. People don't have to go and read that one manuscript, it is distributed across a certain geography and that distribution ensures the connectivity.

As you have already seen that Martin Luther used print to propagate his ideas. In fact, within his lifetime his works represented one third of German books. He was really the first bestselling author. What do you understand by a bestselling author? Someone who sells on the basis of his name not on the basis of what is the content of the book but because this is the name of the author I will read the book. Okay Luther has published something we should all read it that is the kind of idea that is important.
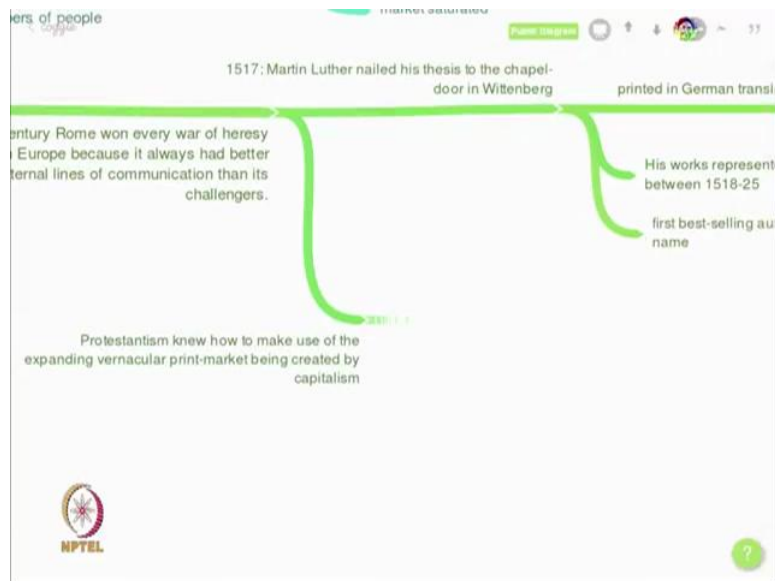
So we see the immediate, so for the first time now what happens is, with the use of print it is possible now that there is a sharing of ideas as we have already seen that with the coming of print the availability of texts have increased. Each person has access to a lot many more texts. Each reading community has access to many more texts than in the manuscript universe. There are more libraries that are growing, remember our previous lecture.

So access to texts are a lot more and what happens as a result of an increased access to texts? It leads to the possibility of comparing ideas, contrasting ideas and therefore coming up with better ideas. So if I have a certain dissatisfaction with the church, with the Roman Catholic Church I can think that, I am just one individual or we are a small community and the church is mighty, church have so many forces, it has so many followers and they will come and crush us.

But with the coming of print I can read a book and figure out, that okay, I am seated here in Southern South of France but there are these people in Netherlands who are saying the similar things, who are sharing similar ideas maybe we can communicate with them and put up a joint front against the church and there would be similar kind of people who are elsewhere. It actually leads to a certain kind of solidarity among the rebels.
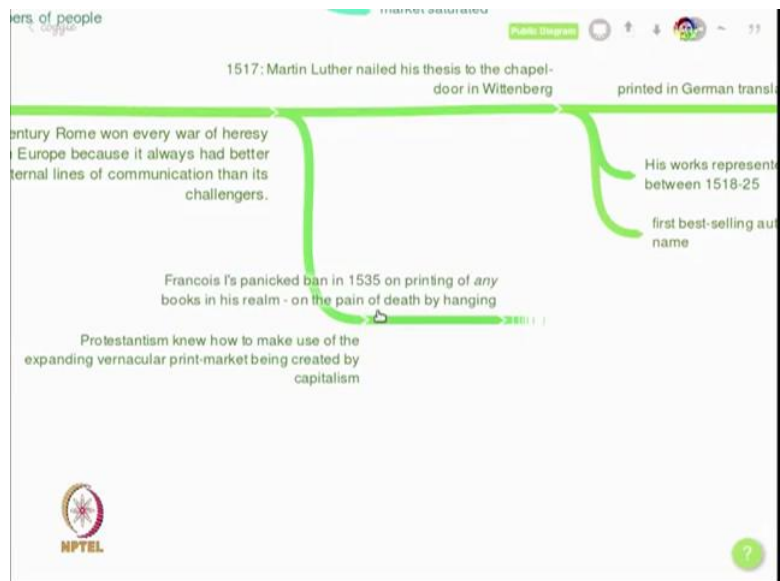
So Protestantism knew how to make use of the expanded vernacular print market that is being created by capitalism, slowly capitalism is coming into being and this leads to rulers panicking and they will start banning printing. In 1535 Francois saw the first put a ban on printing of any books in his realm, on the pain of death by hanging.
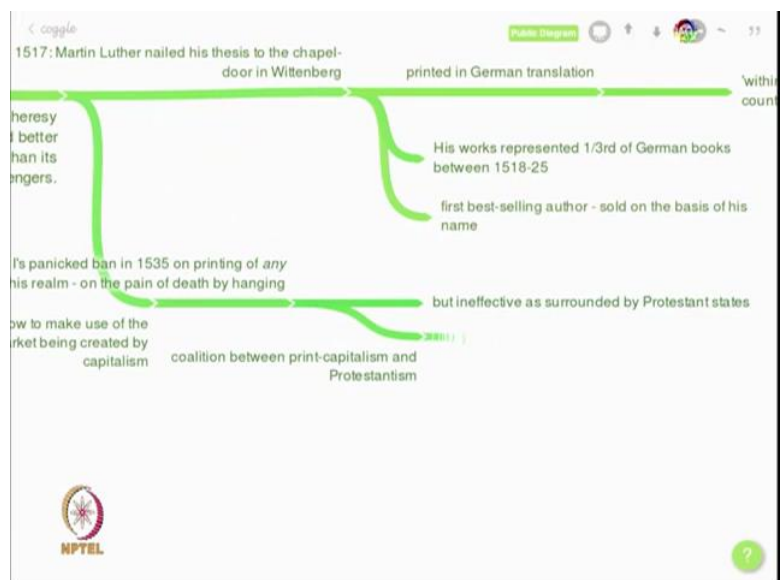
But that would not do a thing but it was ineffective because France was surrounded by Protestant states. So as we see that books would get transported across the boundaries of the realm, boundaries of the kingdom and borders would not be as strong in those times as they are today, so there would be leakages, so there would be bootlegging as one would say, piracy.
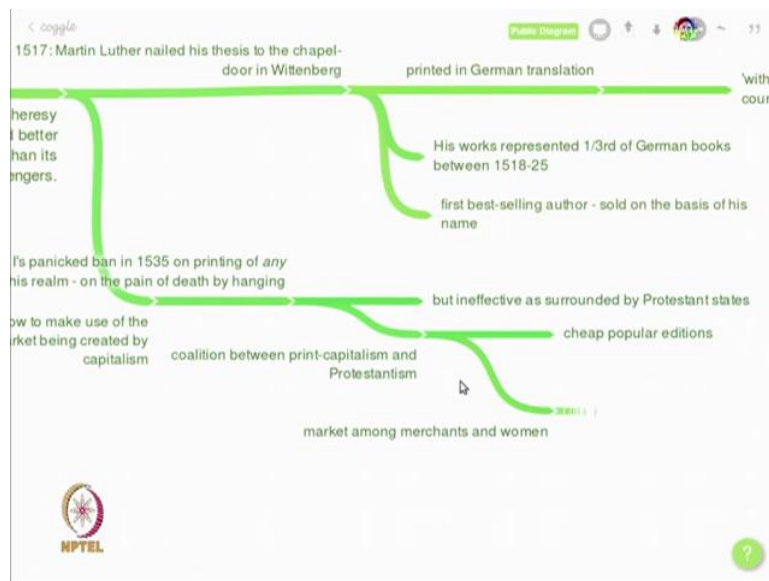
And Anderson goes on to say so much that there was a coalition between print capitalism and Protestantism. Cheaper popular editions increased the hunger for literacy more and more people started learning to read and write.
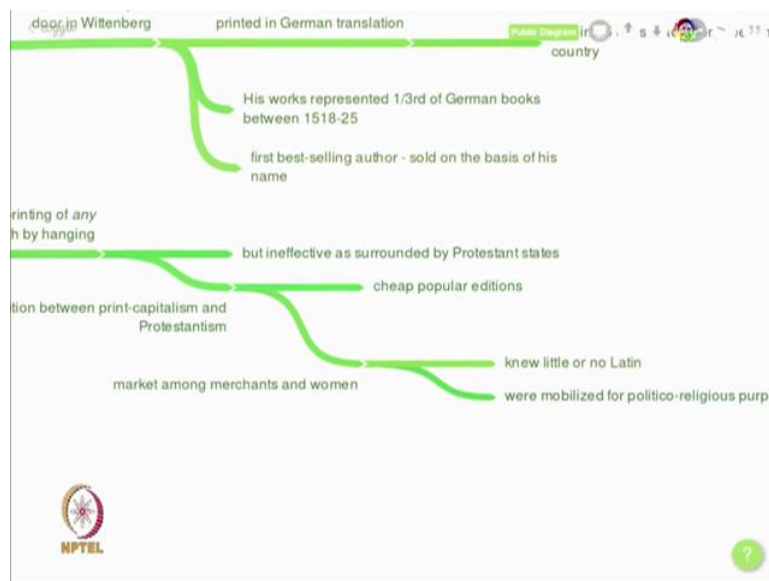
And populations which hitherto did not have much to do with learning, did not know much Latin now took to reading vernacular literature, merchants and women and this increased the population which was now open to political literature or religion-political literature and they were mobilized for this particular purpose. So print creates not only a linguistic community but it also creates a political community and what is this political community that is created?

This political community is that which is speaking a similar language. That language which is being printed by printers within a similar linguistic community. So there is a community of French-speaking people which surrounds a certain geography. There is a community of Italian speaking people who are within a certain community and this shapes a certain political identity for the group which is going to give rise to pro to-nationalist feelings.

This kind of gives a sense of pro to-nationalist ideas, early nationalism starts developing because do understand that even in the early days of printing what happens is that printers are dotted across this linguistic community. So a printer from Bologna prints something it travels to Turin. A printer from Turin prints something it travels to Venice. A printer from Venice prints something it travels to Florence.

So through this the entire Italian speaking population or Italian reading population gets to know a little bit about the entire country or whatever people across the country are thinking or saying and this gives rise to a certain kind of solidarity within that linguistic community. People start identifying themselves as French, as Spanish rather than as subjects of a particular ruler let us say Francois the first.

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So what is important is, let us also refer back to the other idea that we had come across in our discussion of the conversion between Feudalism and Capitalism where we had talked about that this shift also was marked by the rise of parliamentary politics. So what we now see is that slowly these rulers realize that they cannot control, they are now slowly losing the ability to be able to justify this realm on the basis of a religious authority.

That religious authority that strong central religious authority of the Catholic Church is being challenged. So they now start referring to themselves in a different light and what is that difference? Because we are moving to a more Republican Europe, alright. What is a republic? A republic is where the ruling head of a particular nation or a particular state is not hereditary, is on the basis of certain values, there's a certain rule of law.

And though the monarchs continue to rule, England still today has a queen the monarchs keep losing giving up more and more of their power to more representative authorities, more bureaucratic or legislative authorities, we have seen that the post-Civil War in England as well, and so we moved from definition of a kingdom to the definition of a state which is more Republican.

And the people dwelling in a particular kingdom look upon themselves as subjects to the monarch, so there is a certain hierarchy there. Whereas within a Republican state every person there or primarily those who are the first among equals, though democracy takes time to develop, the universal adult suffrage does take time to develop but certainly the power is shared beyond the aristocracy and the people become subjects, people become citizens from subjects.

Within a kingdom they are subjects but within a Republican state they are citizens who are governed by a common-law for everybody and a law which can be customary but the law which can also be written in the form of various edicts if not as a Constitutional sort of state. So the king now becomes a ruler of the citizens rather the ruler of his subjects. So the citizens make a greater demand of the same monarch.

Not the same monarch, within the same monarchical hereditary line. So the French king rules not because he is the authority of God on earth or authority annointed by the Church but he is the best of French. He represents the best of French culture, he is the protector of French culture or the Spanish King becomes the protector of Spanish culture or the best representative of French culture.
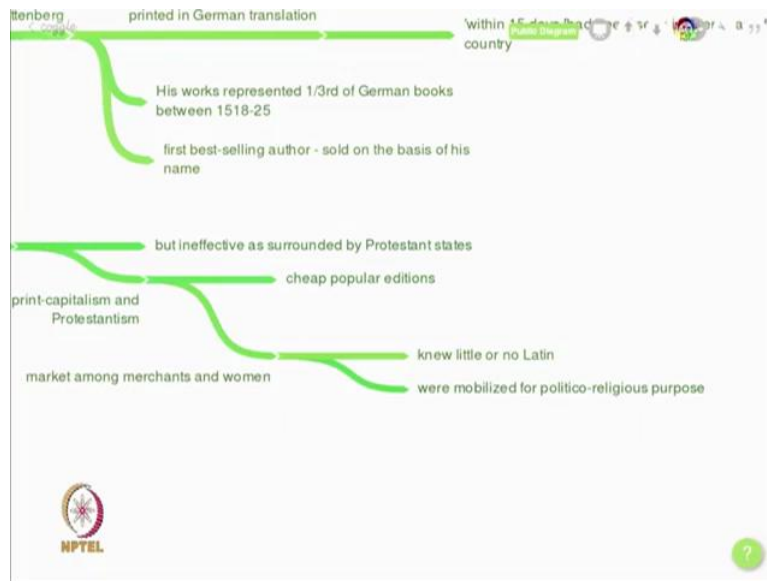
So this is the political religious identity that is mobilized, a kind of French solidarity or Spanish solidarity or an English solidarity which is developed and this gives rise to what we would see inter-European rivalry which we see in the form of the defeat of the Spanish Arvada by the English forces Sir Walter Raleigh and then we see the colonial wars which are a fall out of it.

But within Europe certainly there are these inter European rivalries which are no longer rivalries between kingdoms between Kings and Queens but it becomes a rivalry between nation states, between linguistic communities and the rulers mobilize people on the basis of a certain secular identity which is of linguistic nationalism.
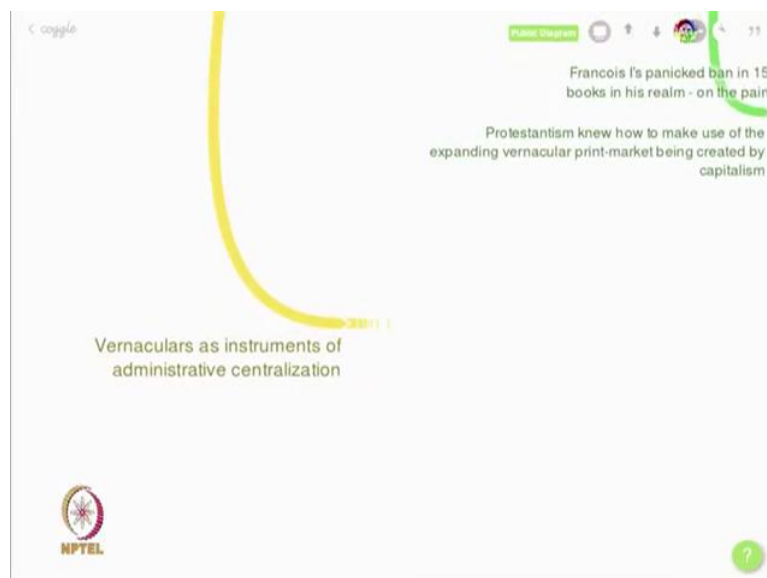
Alright, let us now move onto our next point. Vernaculars as instruments of administrative centralization.

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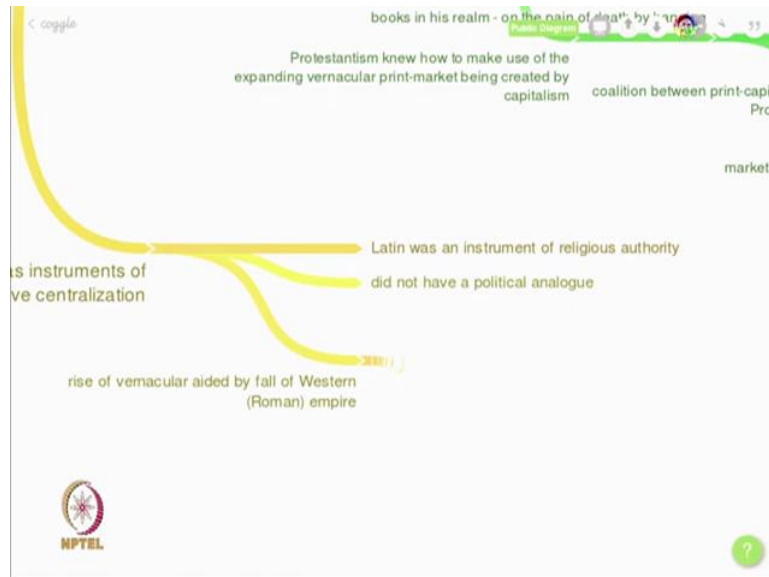
Now Latin was an instrument of religious authority as we have seen. The channels of communication were strong through Latin. There would be certain parts of messages which would be distributed from Rome outwards into the various monasteries or the various churches across Europe but it did not have a direct political analog. There would be kingdoms which would be given the control of the Church but there was no, it did not have a Latin nation-state, no. It did not. You had kingdoms which had broad allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church.

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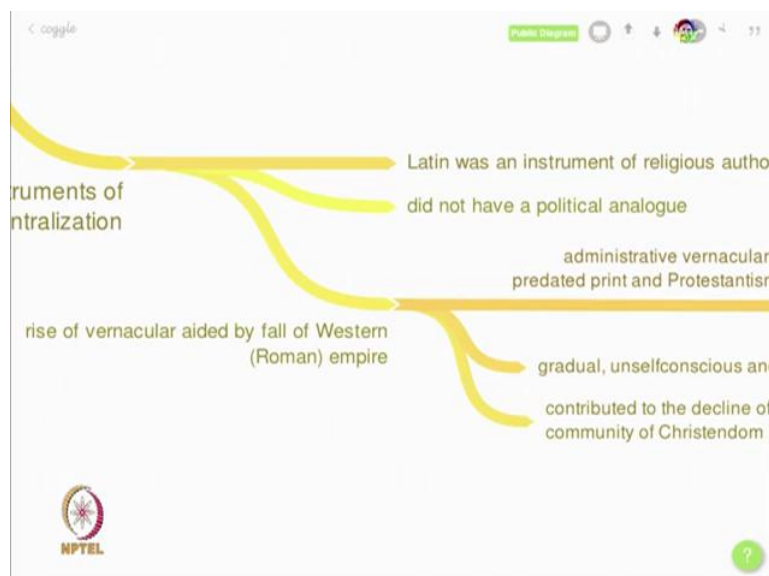
Now what we have already seen is that, the rise of the vernacular happened at the cost of Latin. It was aided by the fall of the Roman Empire, the Western Roman Empire, so the Roman Empire facing various challenges from rivals across Europe politically had become weak.

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So this administrative channel that was there was already weakening by the time of the coming of the print but print actually finishes it off. So you already had administrative vernaculars which predated print and Protestantism, it is not that Protestantism actually gave rise to the coming of allied with the coming of print and therefore challenges Latin. The administrative vernaculars are already in place and this we have seen that it is not only the administrative channels, it was also within the religious channels that the circulation of the Bible also created these kind of communities.

But these administrative vernaculars which predated the coming of print, if there is an administration which is outside the purview of the Church, which is opposed to the purview of the Church and what you would also understand is that this has got to do with certain secrecies because not only is it convenient for a certain local authority to communicate within themselves using the vernacular instead of Latin.

It also is prudent because in case of a leakage of a message that particular message would not be intelligible to that Latin channel or the Roman Catholic channel and therefore they're slightly more secure to actually communicate using vernacular very much like 2 teams who

are playing football and communicating among the team mates in a language which is not known to the other team and they can sort of pass that message along.

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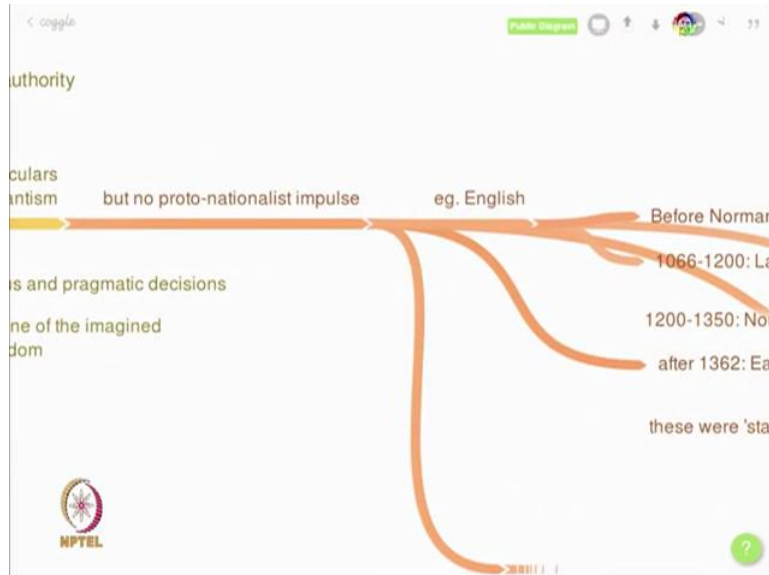
But this kind of administrative you know languages did not create any pro to-nationalist impact. They did not manage, without the coming of print they did not create any pro to-nationalist impact. For example those of us who are students of English literature would know that English did exist before the Norman conquest, the Anglo-Saxon language you know Beowulf and other texts did exist.

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But it did not create a kind of nationalism till we see I mean we see the various kinds of usages of languages in England. You had Norman French as the administrative language after the Norman conquest and you also have the early English from the 14th century, mid-14th century onwards. Use of English in the language of courts but these were state languages and not national languages.

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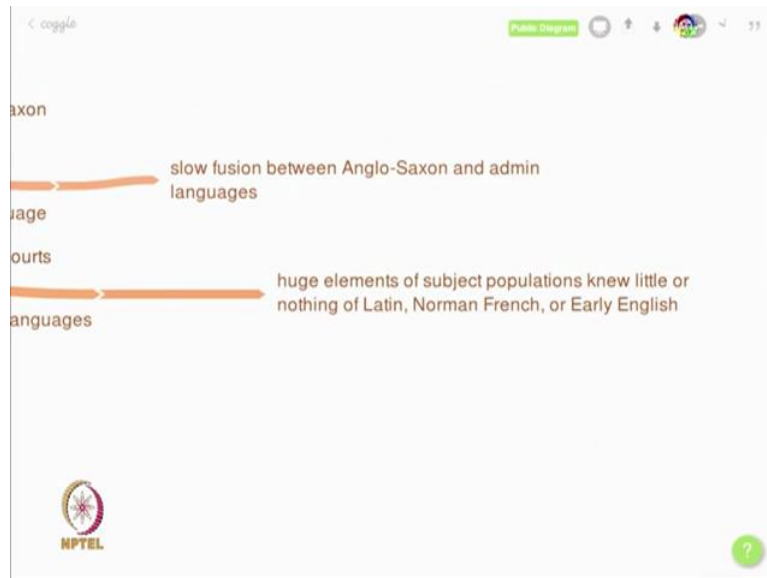
Because these languages were not standardized across that entire population, these would probably be languages which should be understood by the administrative, it is still very much, if there is a certain link language within the administration what actually happens is, that a certain dialect or a certain local regional language is used and the elite because the elite of that particular region actually rules over the larger region.

So what we have today is, this is something that happens within England, is the East Midlands dialect what is known as Queens English today, it is the language which is the one which is standardized as the English that we know today. In fact, that is largely the English that this lecture is being conducted though, the accent is a very different one that I'm using.

So not in the spoken but certainly the written it is the Queen's English that rules. Why is it called the Queen's English? Because it was the language of the Royal family and it was the language of the Royal family which predominated the creation of the printing industry. The printers were controlled by the state and they printed in a language which was that of the Royal family.

The idea that the Royal family represented the best of English culture, And therefore that is the fit language for print, this idea of the high and the low, the culture of the elite is always regarded as the better culture it is hegemonic ally placed as a superior culture and a fit culture for learning and practice of literature and certainly the elite also controls the press.

This is true for other languages also. Khadi Boli becomes the standard Hindi in which Hindi gets printed and Hindi is spread across a huge breadth of the country right from western Rajasthan to Eastern Bihar and there are various Hindis which are spoken but in the printing of it there is a certain kind of standardization. Standardization also happens through the textbooks.

In Bangla it is the language of the Calcutta Bhadralok which gets standardized as the Bangla that is printed and the literate Bangla is that is the language that is used. But with the coming of print it is possible that this language is actually spoken outside even the administrative structure. It is not only that the IAS officers or the civil servants know a particular language, it's also the people know that language because print is making that possible through a larger, creating a larger community, through schooling and other mechanisms and other institutions which are allied to the coming of print.

And certainly the schooling mechanism is very well allied with the dominance of print because text books are printed. So that kind of standardization of language is possible. So you have a larger population, a certain community, the entire citizenry gathered around a certain standard language which is not the case with these early administrative languages.

This is a language which is understood by the governing elite of that particular region in this particular case England. So at a certain point of time after the Norman Conquest, Norman is in France and Alfred comes and conquers England, so it's actually French which is spoken, so it's important to understand this.
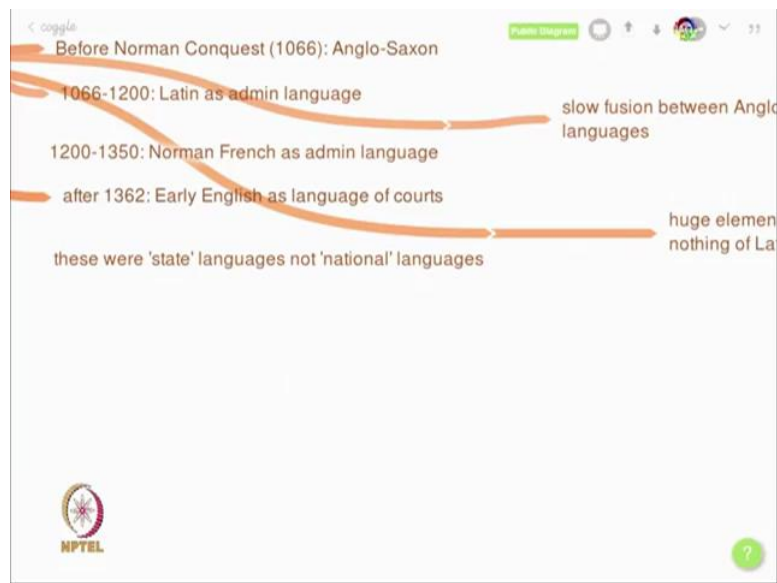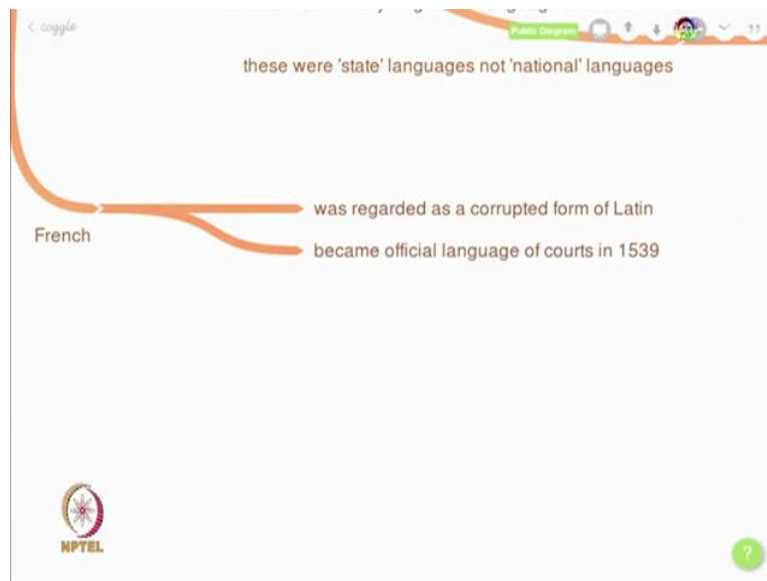
Now if we look at the development of the English language we have these various terms for various kinds of food. So you have let us say goat but the meat of the goat is called mutton is a French root, so the idea is that the servants were primarily those who were Anglo-Saxons and therefore the speakers of English, the old English. But the connoisseurs of food were the French.

So therefore the live animal is called goat and the cooked food is called mutton. Similarly, you have Pigs and Ham. So the idea is that the elite are communicating among themselves. The administrators are communicating among themselves but that language does not become a language of the larger population till the coming of print. So administrative languages do not create pro to nationalism because these were state languages and not national languages.
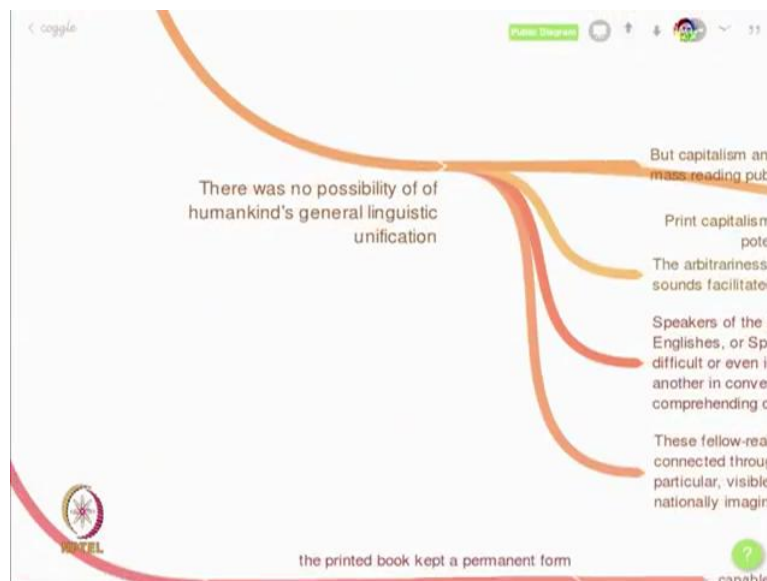
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these were 'state' languages not 'national' languages

French

was regarded as a corrupted form of Latin

became official language of courts in 1539

And within French, when it grew it was initially regarded as a corrupt form of Latin but later becomes the official language of the courts by about the 16th century and then with the coming of print you have a kind of French identity that develops.

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Let us now move on to a different discussion. Now it is very difficult actually to think of general linguistic unification of humankind though today's day and age you can say English has become the lingua franca of the world and in doing so what we realize that the English itself has devolved there are various English there is no single English and even within India we can say that English is spoken very differently in different parts of the country depending on what kind of heritage one speaks.

So you can probably regard the kind of language that I am speaking is a kind of Indian English but it is not exactly what you would understand Indian English. It actually represents the certain kind of schooling upbringing that I have had in which my particular language that I am speaking the particular accent that am speaking is brought about. So language always brings in that regionalization.

But capitalism tries to create this monoglot mass reading public. In the spoken our language always remains extremely diverse. There might be 10 people in the room speaking the same language but each of them speak it differently. But when there is a text up on the screen they would all be reading it similarly. Because they have learned to read it similarly and certainly in the writing they would be writing it similarly.

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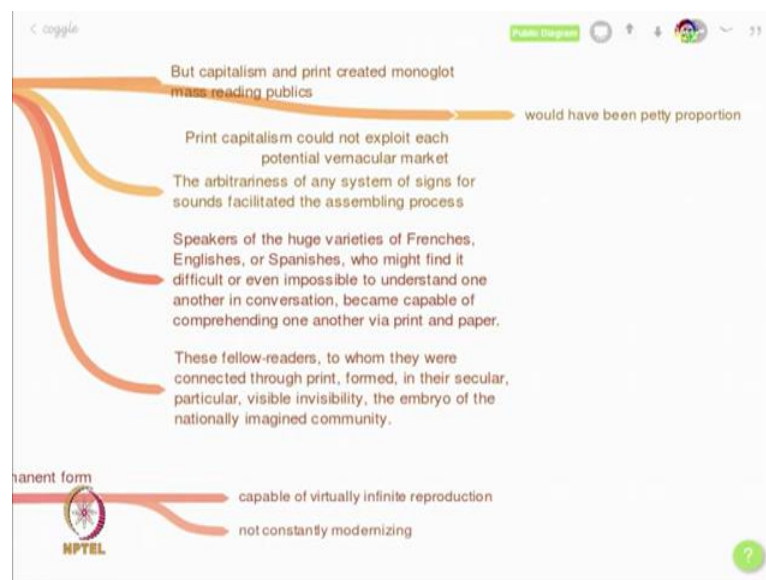
Now print as we have understood, the print could not have exploited. The capitalist understanding of print could not have exploited each potential vernacular market. It will be a very small community. Welch, speakers of Welch or speakers of the Cockney, speakers of Scottish Highland dialects. It will be a very small minuscule market and this we are talking about the early days.

Today possibly yes if we were to develop a different kind of linguistic identity, books published in Scottish dialect would perhaps sale but today English has established itself. So print could not have exploited or could not have generated profit from each of the potential smaller vernacular market, the common spoken languages. So they sort of kind of assembled these various languages and created a standard language.

And primarily what would happen is, that it would be the language of the elite, the administrative elite which gets thirst upon as the standard language for that entire speaking population of the realm, of the particular kingdom. Speakers of the huge varieties of French and Englishes who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation then became capable of comprehending one another via print and paper.

And they became fellow readers who read each other and they were connected with each other through print they formed secular, particular I mean a kind of visible invisibility that I know that others are reading the newspaper I cannot see them, so they are invisible to me but I know that they are reading the newspaper, so they are visible to me. This is the embryo as he says, Anderson says of the nationally imagined community. So this is a community that exists in the imagination.

The way I am reacting to a certain news story is likely to be the way others are reacting to that news story because I know that others are reacting to it, others are reading this. Martin Luther's thesis when it is translated in German and posted across Germany, various people understand that there are others who are also feeling the same way. They feel that solidarity and that gives potential rise to a certain political mobilization.

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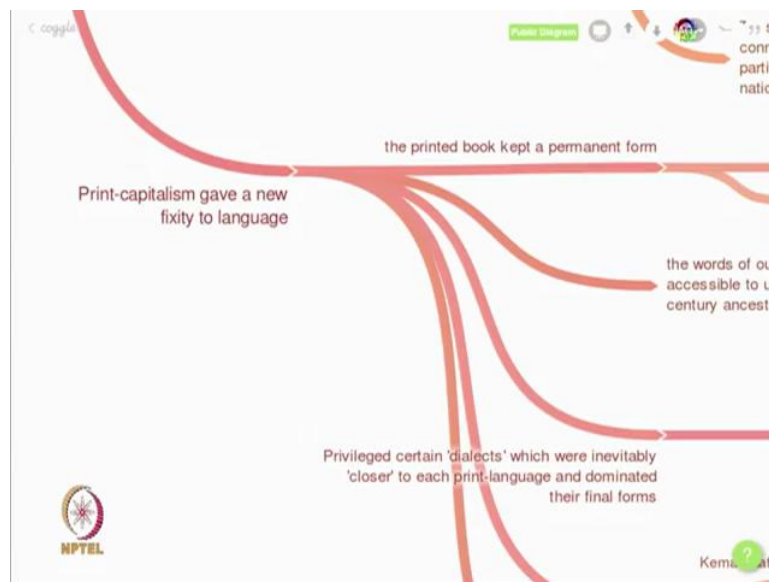
Now print capitalism therefore gives rise to a new fixity of language.
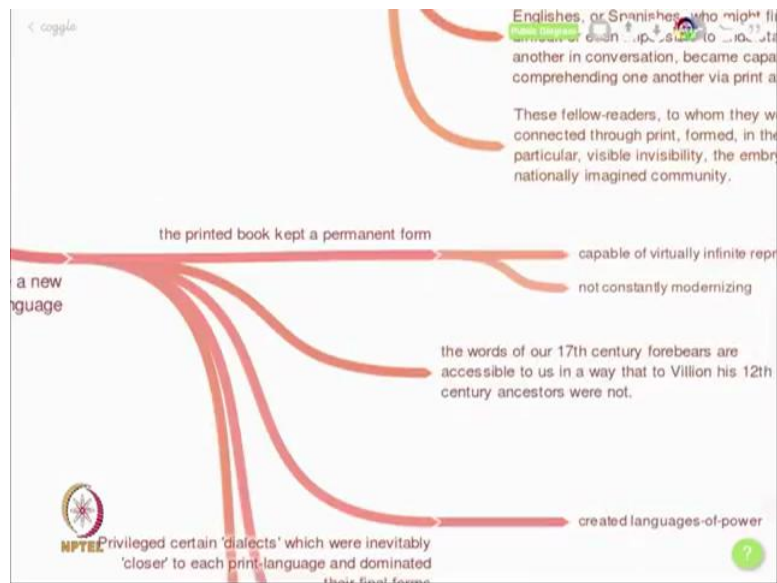
And importantly the printed book kept a permanent form. It had a permanent form. You could not and therefore the process we have seen in our previous lecture the process of editing of a book manuscript, of a book before it actually gets into print because once it is printed and distributed there is no way to recall them and make that correction it is far labor-intensive and very very expensive.

Today it is different, today you can post something on social media, you can then go ahead edit it and change it or a web page which has been put forward one can go and make a certain change even after publication but that is not something that is possible with print. In the oral universe it is possible, I say something and I have done that several times as you can see in the form of this lecture as well.

While it is oral, while it is getting recorded, if I make a mistake, I correct it in the subsequent sentence, subsequent line that is spoken but because there is a certain permanence to it, once this lecture is recorded, once it is uploaded, it becomes very difficult to recall, of course it can be edited again because it comes from one singular server but it's a very much more difficult process to actually correct it.

In the manuscript world, one manuscript there could be a mistake in copying an error, a different one will have a different set of errors but the first set of errors may have been corrected in that other copy. But because the manuscripts are far distributed this correction of errors also become much more difficult.

So because printed book keeps a permanent form therefore and virtually capable of infinite reproduction. You can actually print as many copies of a particular book as you want. There is an assessment that printers make, okay I can print about 500 copies or 600 copies of this book beyond that I would be making losses, so I restrict my losses. I would not print this particular book because this would not sell more than 300 copies and 300 copies will not actually allow me to make any profit whatsoever, so I will not print it. So this kind of calculations are there.

So that is the only restriction on the number of copies which are printed but actually virtually any number of copies could be printed as long as there are papers and ink. So the book does not constantly keep on changing there are different versions.

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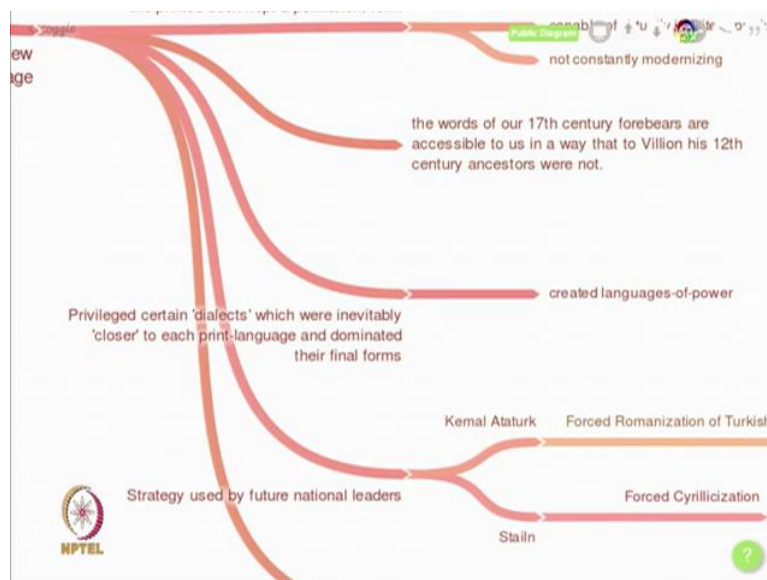
Another important aspect of print is that though words what has been written this is something that does to another sense of time that print actually begins engagement with time that print brings in is that the words of our 17th century for-bearers. People who have written in the 17th century are accessible to us in the way that the people in the 14th century did not have access to the works of the people in the 12th century. So we know the works of 18th and 19th century people in a different sort of way than those who knew about the works of previous pre print generations.

One can argue at this point that okay, now we all know that Valmiki was the creator of the Ramayan and that everybody knows and that is much older, first of all this would be subject of a different lecture but I would argue that the way we understand today as someone as a

creator of a particular text, the question of authorship we will discuss this in a future lecture is very different from the way the oral universe actually understood it.

In oral universe the position of the author was not as important as print makes it to be that is also another important effect of print we are going to look at it in conjunction with our discussion on copyright later on but for the moment let us understand that print actually leads to the longevity of a particular work and therefore you can understand the text in a specific form for much longer.

Whereas in the oral or manuscript universe that is not possible. The oral is ephemeral it finishes the moment the narrative is over. Next time you hear it from somebody else, you may hear the same narrative but you hear it from somebody else with certain changes and we have seen in the manuscript world that manuscripts rarely and certainly within the Indian subcontinent palm leaf manuscripts do not last beyond let us say 2 centuries, so they have to be rewritten.

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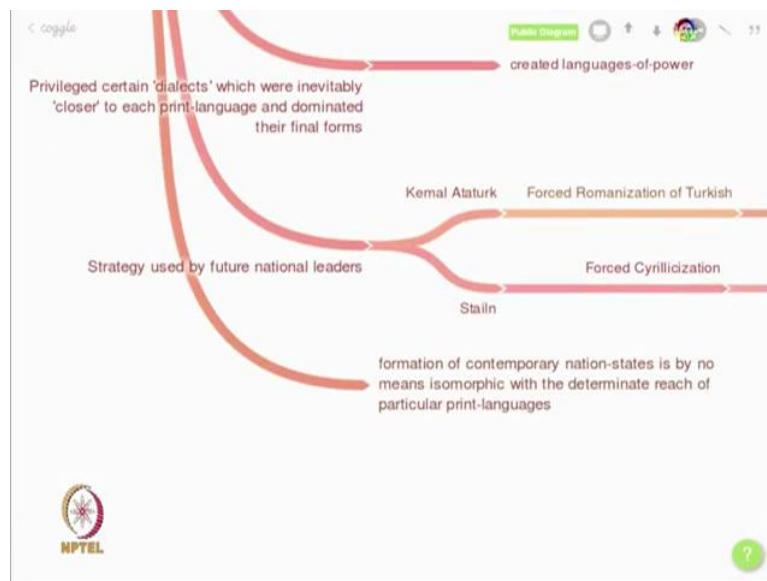
And in the process of rewriting certain changes to come about they are not exact copies. Whereas in print the work lasts much longer and therefore can be accessed in an unchanged form and as we have seen print actually privileges certain dialects and therefore they create languages of power. It is power that helps these dialects establish themselves as national languages and these languages become the language of power.

English today in India is a language of power. It represents power to people. The person who speaks in English has a certain power, what is that power? Not only administrative or

political power but the cultural power. Ability to intervene in various social matters is far more.

Now what we see is that this power of print is actually exploited by various rulers across history this was well after the establishment of print. Various rulers actually used to solidify their rule their terrain and language actually becomes a very-very important tool, political tool, so came Ataturk someone who shaped modern Turkey. He forced the Romanization of Turkey, the use of Roman script for Turkish in order to counter Islamic identification.

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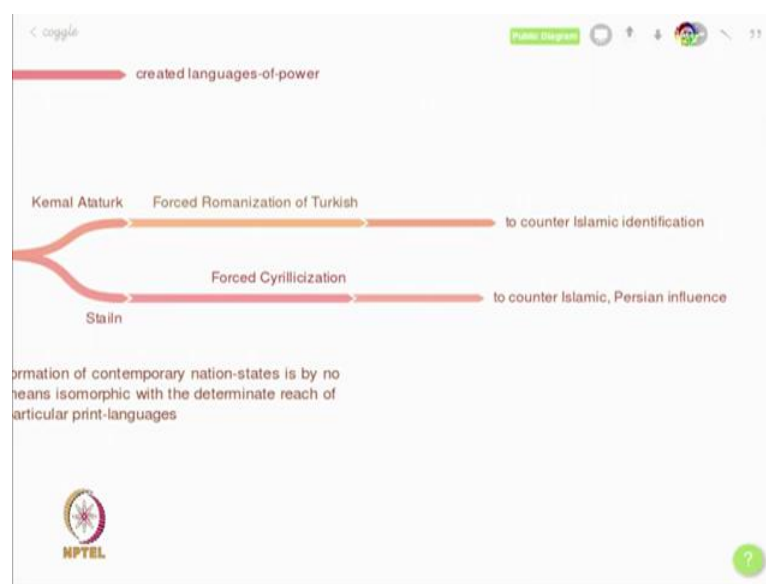
Do understand that we talked about the fall of Constantinople Istanbul. And the rise of Islam and the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Empire. So Islam had a very-very important role in shaping a large part of Turkish identity but Ataturk wanted to undo that. He wanted to create a secular Turkey. So he wanted to remove that Islamic identification and therefore he wanted to remove Arabic and Persian influences.

So instead of using Arabic and Persian for the writing of Turkish language, he forced the usage of Roman alphabet for the writing of Turkish and what is going to happen because of that? Because of that, the schooling mechanism will also be teaching people how to write Turkish using the Roman alphabet and the students and children a certain generation will therefore not be able to access the Islamic texts anymore which would primarily be available in Persian and Arabic. So those texts will therefore become inaccessible from the population.

The similar kind of strategy was undertaken by Stalin who forced a civilization of the spoken languages in some of the Russian provinces to counter the Islamic and Persian influence you know, what are present-day Azerbaijan and other nations were at one point of time part of the Soviet Union and being part of the Soviet Union they would be subject to influences from places like Iraq and Iran and their southern neighbors.

A similar kind of challenge is being faced by China in some of its Central Asian provinces and China is tackling it both culturally and as well as militarily, we may or may not agree with what China is doing in some of its Islamic provinces but what we must understand is that the way the Soviet Union dealt with this, one of the strategies was the use of language. So once established, linguistic nationalism then is used to actually create nationalist identities.

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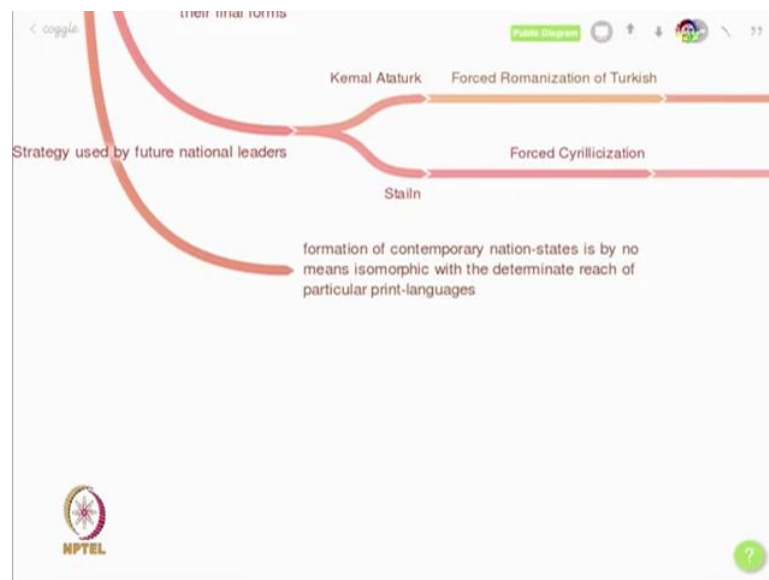
So formation of many contemporary nation states print does play a very important role in it. Now important for us to understand the development of nationalism this has not been a comprehensive lecture on nationalism, we have looked at the understanding or the development of nationalism or the nation state from 17th century onwards till the present day till about the 19th century is what Anderson is really concerned about but we can see it affects even to the 20th century and this has not been as I say a comprehensive discussion of nationalism.

We have primarily been interested in discussing the effects of print on the development of nationalism but nationalism has other features, other characteristics. What we have seen, that nationalism actually takes shape in Europe through the coming of print, and the nationalism

that print actually shapes is a linguistic nationalism, but once this nationalist edifice, this idea of a national sort of identity gets developed, it replicates itself in various situations across the world in different forms.

So you could have nations which are created on the basis of ethnic identities and not necessarily linguistic identities. People could be within similar language speaking populations but they could be of a very different ethnic identity. So the Kurds in Central Asia there is a desire to form a separate kind of a nationality right there and we have seen several instances of wars, civil wars and revolutions which take place on the basis of ethnicity.

In India within the Indian subcontinent we have seen the creation of nation states on the basis of religion. However, that was swiftly followed up within a space of a couple of decades' by bifurcation of Pakistan in the form of Bangladesh which was again an assertion of a linguistic nationalism. So language becomes important there but various kinds of nation states-- India as a nation state has a very different trajectory and it shares its trajectory with many other nation states across the world and that is a nation state that is born through politics.

So you had East and West Germany though they were German-speaking populations, they were divided by politics. India however is united by politics. India when it became a nation state in 1947, before 1947 Indians were not citizens they were subjects. It is only when India becomes independent that we become citizens of this country and the common linking factor for the Indian people is the politics of fighting an anti-imperialist movement led by various nationalist leaders and organizations that becomes the solidifying factor, the unity of the unity in diversity of this country.

So primarily a nation state created through politics we can talk about the similarity of culture but we can also talk about the diversity of culture which are brought together by the history of a certain political movement and political struggle but once again nation states once they come into being they try to create other forms of creating uniformity among its forces, Soviet Union was also another state which was put together as a fallout of the Russian Empire.

So politics is what united these provinces but what Stalin tried to create was to create a kind of a linguistic uniformity through the forced (()) (1:20:10). So we will see a little bit more of these effects of language and print languages on the development of the Indian national identity. Later on when we look at the development of Hindi and Urdu languages I would invite you to study the issue of nationalism outside the purview of this course and it would be

a fascinating piece of learning for you but for the moment that is where we will end our lecture on the relationship between print and nationalism and Anderson's concept of nation states as Imagined Communities, thank you.