

Cultural Studies
Prof. Dr. Liza Das
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati

Module No. # 01

Introduction

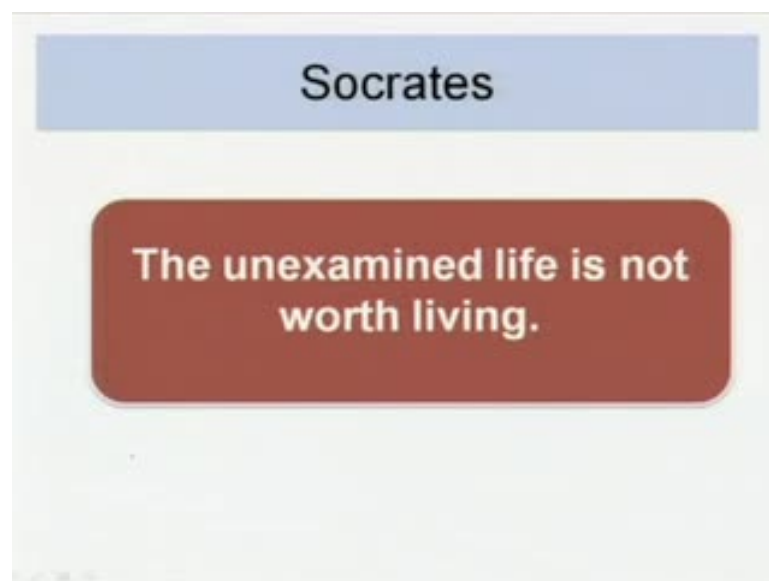
Lecture No. # 01

Understanding Cultural Studies Part-1

Welcome to NPTEL, the National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning, a joint venture by the Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institute of Science. We are at the beginning of a series of lectures on Cultural Studies and I welcome you to join me in this journey of knowing, understanding ourselves through Cultural Studies. In this first lecture, we shall be talking about several things.

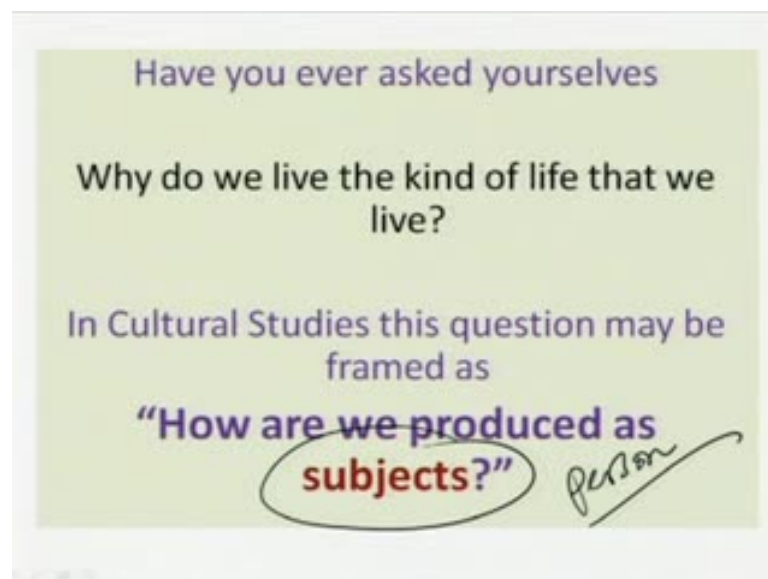
I shall be telling you what methodology I shall be following when I shall be delivering these 40 lectures. But before that, let us begin to talk about Cultural Studies, let us begin to unpack some of the things that we are going to do, some of the things that are going to be with us in these 40 lectures.

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Well, let me begin with one of my favorite quotations from the Greek philosopher Socrates. Socrates said that the unexamined life is not worth living. And whenever I teach this course at IIT Guwahati, I begin with this quotation from Socrates. We live lives, and when we do not examine the kind of lives that we are living, then it is as per Socrates' observation, it is a life that is certainly not worth living. It is a life that is lived in a way in which we are unaware of many of our decisions, many of our actions, at least why we take certain decisions and why we hold certain things valuable etcetera.

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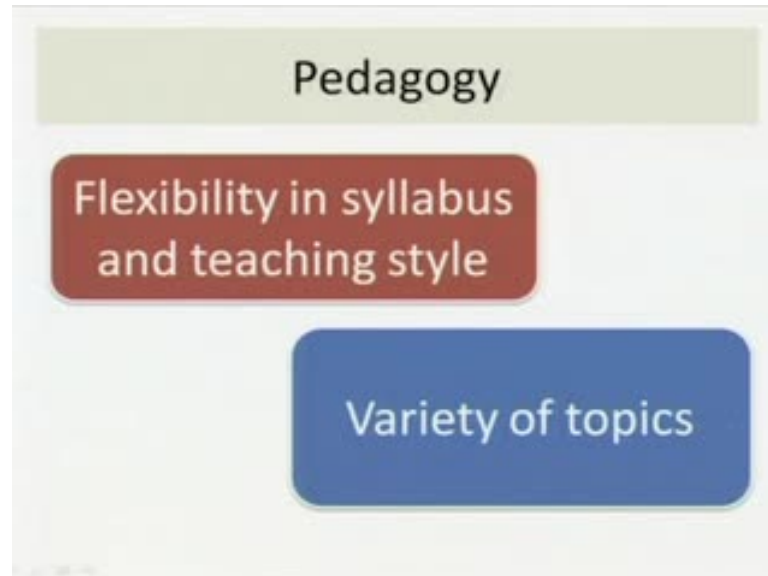


I would like to pose a question to you and it goes like this: have you ever asked yourselves why do we live the kind of life that we live? This is a question that has enormous implication, enormous importance for us. This in a way is why is answering the question, why we do live cultural studies at all. Why do we live the kind of lives that we live?

Now, there are ways of asking this question. So, the way that I have put it - why do we live the kind of life that we live, to which Cultural Studies gives us answers, that is not quite the way in which we are to pose questions when we do Cultural Studies. So, if we look at this slide, then we should say that, in Cultural Studies, this question may be framed as how are we produced as subjects. So, from this slide, we come to know that we are not to use a word like person when we talk about individuals, about human

beings. The word that we are to use here is subject. Subject, subjectivity, subject positions; these are important parts of words in the terminology of Cultural Studies.

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So well, with this, these preliminaries let me go on to introduce the course to you. And first we shall be talking about pedagogy. So, what is pedagogy? Pedagogy as we know, refers to the science and art of teaching. So, when we say we are going to declare our pedagogy here, what we are doing is, well I am expected to tell you how we are going to go about this course, how I am going to go about teaching this course.

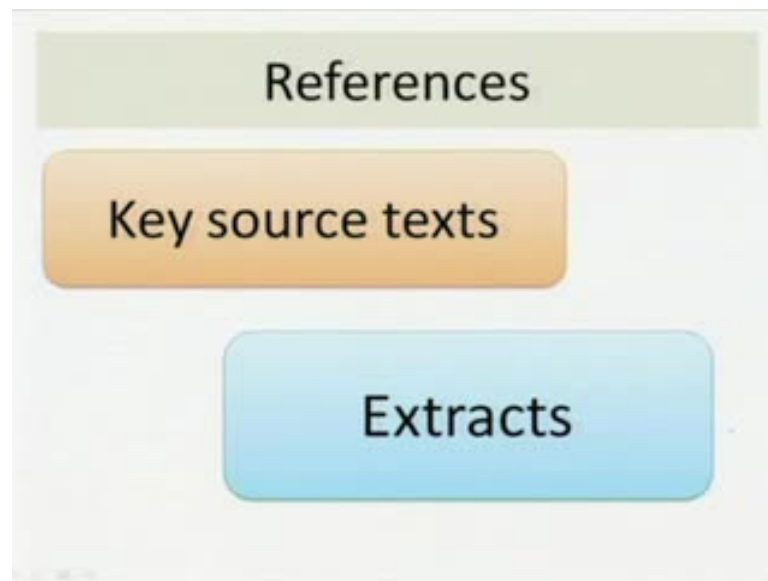
So, the first thing that is to be noted particularly in Cultural Studies is that, there may be a great (()) of flexibility is allowed in both syllabus and in teaching style of Cultural Studies and eventually, we will begin to understand why Cultural Studies is flexible. Suffice it for us now, to simply say that Cultural Studies, you may have, it is said that there may be as many ways of devising a syllabus in Cultural Studies as there may be teachers or instructors for Cultural Studies. Why there may be so much of flexibility is something that will come to realize when we talk about the sheer interdisciplinarity of Cultural Studies.

So, what have we found till now that Cultural Studies pedagogically allows and sometimes encourages a lot of flexibility in syllabus designing and the style of teaching? Second, a variety of topics come in to Cultural Studies, if we understand and we shall see in a while that culture is about everyday life. Culture is not in the way many people

understand cultural to be, say music or theater or high cultures or the great literary texts etcetera. Variety of topics may come in, while we build a syllabus on Cultural Studies ranging from rituals to ideas to intellectual products to mass media and so on.

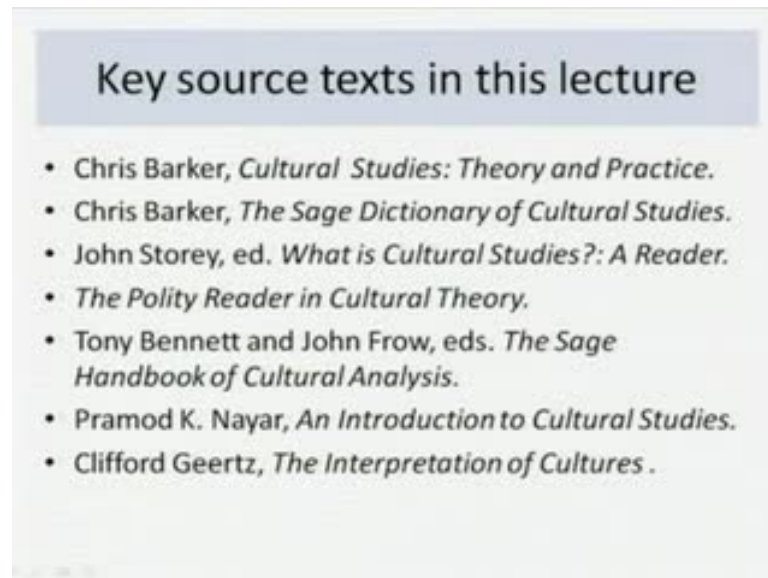
So, these are the two points that we found that is flexibility both in style and teaching and also flexibility in choosing and in choosing topics particularly when there are variety of topics to choose from.

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Next a bit about how I am going to use source material for this course. This is an important point and I need to declare right away that I shall be referring to several texts in these forty lectures. Some would be seminal, and would direct to the course, and would crop up from course to course, others may turn up only in, may be featured in only one lecture, and other and some others few others would be there in the background as reference material.

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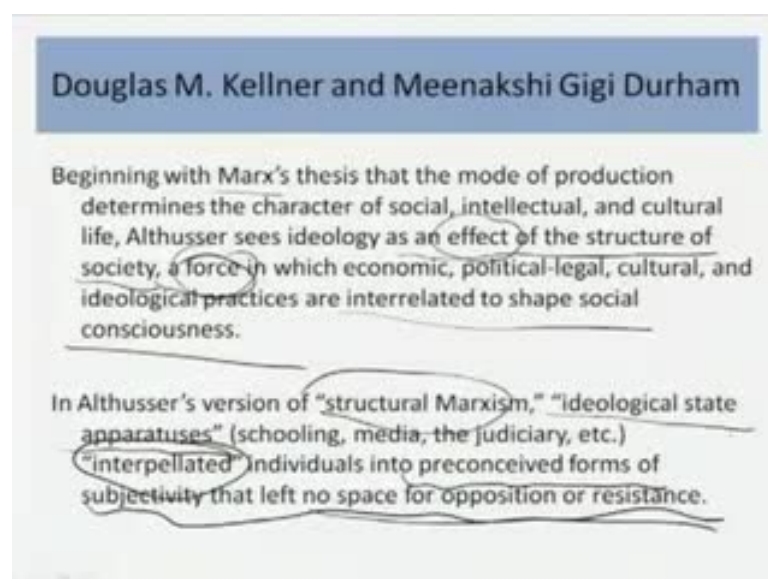


Key source texts in this lecture

- Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*.
- Chris Barker, *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*.
- John Storey, ed. *What is Cultural Studies?: A Reader*.
- *The Polity Reader in Cultural Theory*.
- Tony Bennett and John Frow, eds. *The Sage Handbook of Cultural Analysis*.
- Pramod K. Nayar, *An Introduction to Cultural Studies*.
- Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*.

So, for every lecture, there would be key source texts. These key source texts would be declared in a slide in the beginning of the lecture. And Cultural Studies are usually in the humanities. What happens is, the formulations, the articulations made by critics, by scholars are important and those of you who are in the humanities would understand how the way the words have been put. The language in which the terms that have been used by scholars are immensely important for us and that is why what I am going to do is, in every lecture, I am going to bring in extracts from the text that I shall declare to be the source texts in this lecture.

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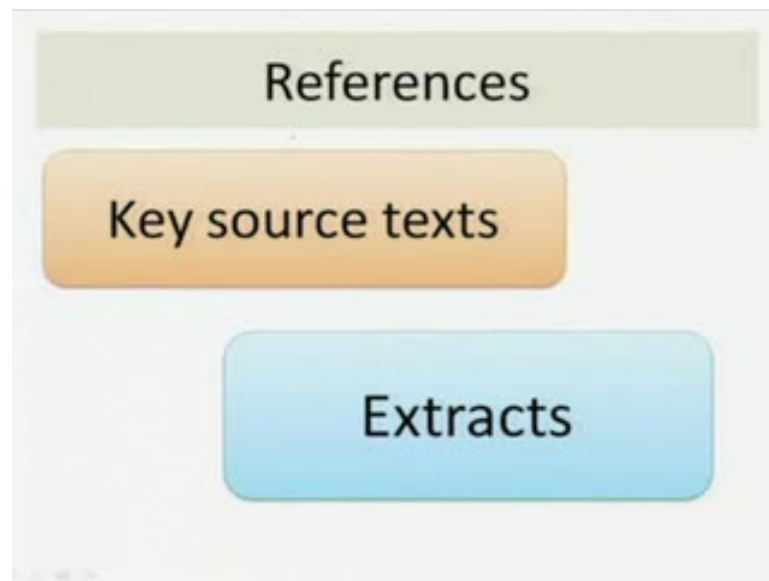
Douglas M. Kellner and Meenakshi Gigi Durham

Beginning with Marx's thesis that the mode of production determines the character of social, intellectual, and cultural life, Althusser sees ideology as an effect of the structure of society, a force in which economic, political-legal, cultural, and ideological practices are interrelated to shape social consciousness.

In Althusser's version of "structural Marxism," "ideological state apparatuses" (schooling, media, the judiciary, etc.) "interpellated" individuals into preconceived forms of subjectivity that left no space for opposition or resistance.

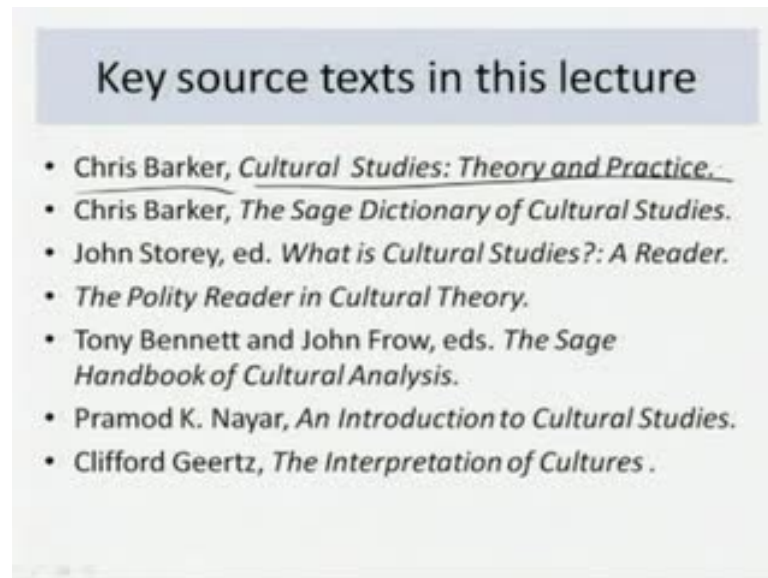
I shall be, for instance let me give you an example here. This slide is one such example, for instance, here I am bringing an extract from Douglas M. Kellner and Meenakshi Gigi Durham's edited volume on media and Cultural Studies and this is directly from their introductory essay and you see the marks on this slide. What I am going to do, is I am going to first read these extracts out and then as I do in the classroom, I shall unpack these lectures and I shall be explaining these extracts line by line to you.

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So, that is the first matter as far as references are concerned, that is, we are going to have key source texts declared at the beginning of every lecture. And then, we shall be using extracts and I shall be mentioning the names of the writers and I shall be also declaring whenever I am quoting from them. I shall be declaring that these are actually not my words these are extracts taken from certain scholars.

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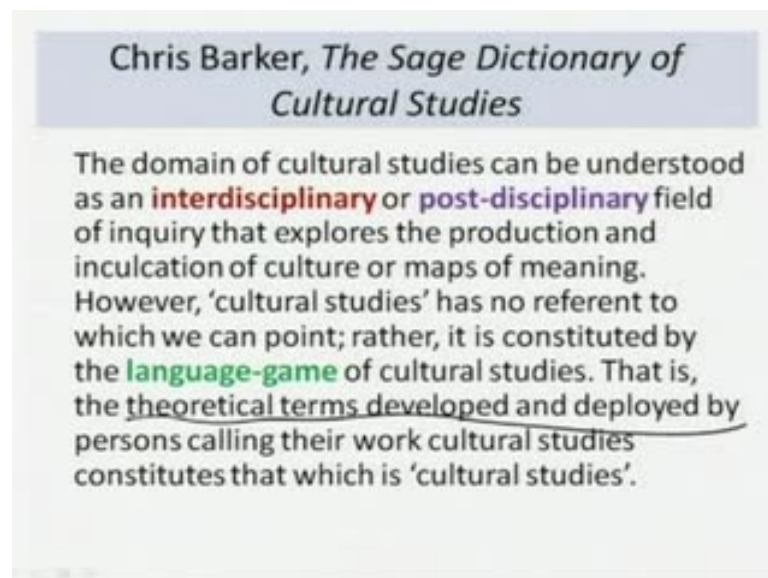
So, then what are the key source texts in this lecture. In the first lecture, these are: Chris Barker's *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, Barker's *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*, John Storey's edited volume: *What is Cultural Studies?: A Reader*, *The Polity Reader in Cultural Studies* published by Polity, John sorry, Tony Bennett and John Frow's edited volume: *The Sage Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, Pramod k Nayar's: *An Introduction to Cultural Studies* and Clifford Greetz's: *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Now obviously, all these books, all these titles do not feature equally in this lecture. In all lectures, you will find that sometimes only one quotation, short quotation is taken from a book. But if I were to point to one book that you may use as a text in a course on Cultural Studies, an introductory course on Cultural Studies, then it would be this first book, Chris Barker's *Cultural Studies theory and Practice*.

I should also tell you before going into the main part of this lecture that these lectures are introductory as far as a level is concerned. These lectures are as being recorded under the (()) of NPTEL, the National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning and the students at undergraduate levels in the IITs and in the various engineering colleges form the target audience of these lectures. But we also hope that students at higher levels for instance, students in the M A level or students who are just beginning their P H D to study to work for towards a P H D and those students who are also interested in Cultural Studies, it is hoped that they would also benefit from these lectures; however, it is wise

to remind ourselves that these lectures are being designed and these lectures are being delivered keeping in mind the undergraduates students at engineering colleges.

Second, it is not possible for us to deal with all aspects of topics within the limits of a single lecture. Those of you who are interested or begin to have an interest in Cultural Studies should look at some of the books that are being mentioned in the references.

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So, with all these caveats, let us begin our discussion on Cultural Studies. Well so, I shall begin with a quotation from Chris Barker's *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*. The domain of Cultural Studies can be understood as an interdisciplinary or post-disciplinary field of inquiry that explores the production and inculcation of culture or maps of meaning. However, 'Cultural Studies' has no referent to which he can point; rather it is constituted by the language-game of Cultural Studies. That is, the theoretical terms developed and deployed by persons calling their work Cultural Studies constitutes that which is 'Cultural Studies'.

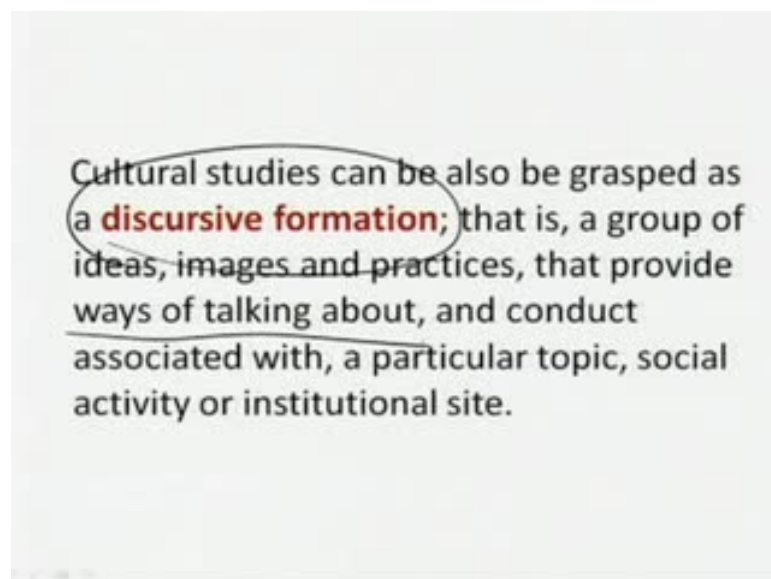
Now, let us unpack this extract from Chris Barker. What is the first thing that Barker says? Barker says that a cultural study is an interdisciplinary field. And rightly so, Cultural Studies is a field which is perhaps, the most, it would not be wrong to say that it is the most important field as far as interdisciplinarity is concerned. It has many kindred fields that I am going to talk about in a while, but the first characteristic of Cultural Studies as a domain, as a subject of study, as a discipline is that, it is by nature

interdisciplinary and some also call it post-disciplinary in the sense that, there is a willing blurring of boundaries, where one is not only interdisciplinary, that is one is not borrowing from different domains, but one has crossed the need to be a disciplined and also to be disciplined as it were, as a domain of study.

The second point that is made by Chris Barker is that Cultural Studies really if you say, what Cultural Studies is and there in sense there is no referent. There is nothing to refer to say that this is Cultural Studies. He says that Cultural Studies is constituted by several ways of speaking, this is very important for us and I want you to listen to this carefully. Cultural Studies are constituted by what he calls language-games. These are different ways of talking and we shall see in a while, what is meant by different ways of talking, different ways of articulating points regarding socio-cultural issues.

So, he says, it is constituted by the language-game of Cultural Studies and mainly it is constituted by the theoretical terms, theoretical terms developed and deployed by scholars who call their work 'Cultural Studies'. This is what Cultural Studies is about. Well, of course, this first sort of exploration into Cultural Studies, you may not be able to understand exactly what it is, but this entire lecture and the next lecture, these two lectures are devoted to understanding Cultural Studies.

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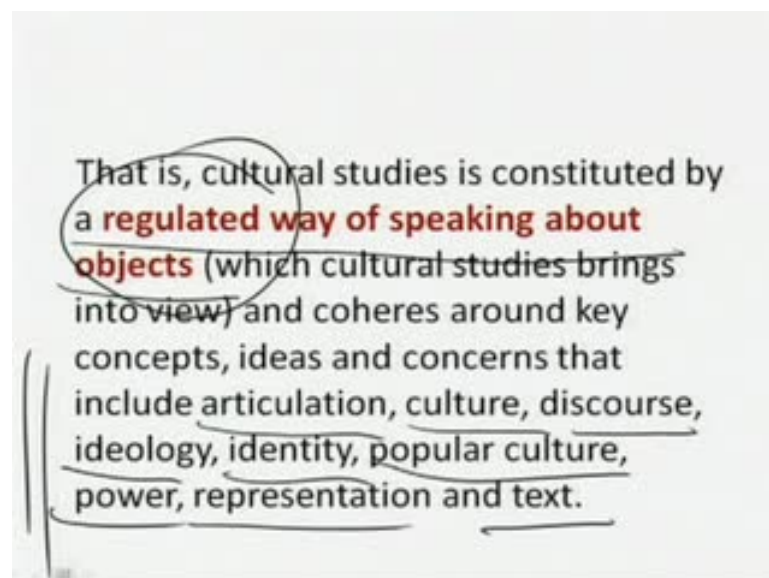
Next, Barker says, Cultural studies can also be grasped as a discursive formation. You will come across the term discursive formation a number of times in our lectures. And

we need to know at this juncture, what discursive formation is. So, discursive formation is a group of ideas, images and practices that provide ways of talking about and conduct associated with a particular topic, social activity or institutional site. So, discursive formation basically is something that forms around, forms around certain ideas and images and practices that come together to throw light on as he says, any topic, social activity or institutional site.

I can give you an example. For instance, the discourse of science when we call science discursive formation, then we understand that there are certain ideas, formative ideas. There are certain images and practices inherent in science as an activity and science as a language which throws light on, throws light on different aspects of the physical universe on different topics, on different activities and institutional sites.

Now, when you talk about a different discourse like religion for instance, religion too is then a discursive formation. It is, it also has its constituent ideas. It has its images and practices and it also talks about the universe. It also talks about man, but in very different ways. So you see, Cultural Studies is then it itself also a domain, in the sense that, it is a discursive formation which has its own foundational ideas, its own terminology, its own way of speaking or ways of speaking its own images and practices. Now, what comprises these images, these ideas, this terminology, these concepts is what would form mostly the subject matter of this video course on Cultural Studies.

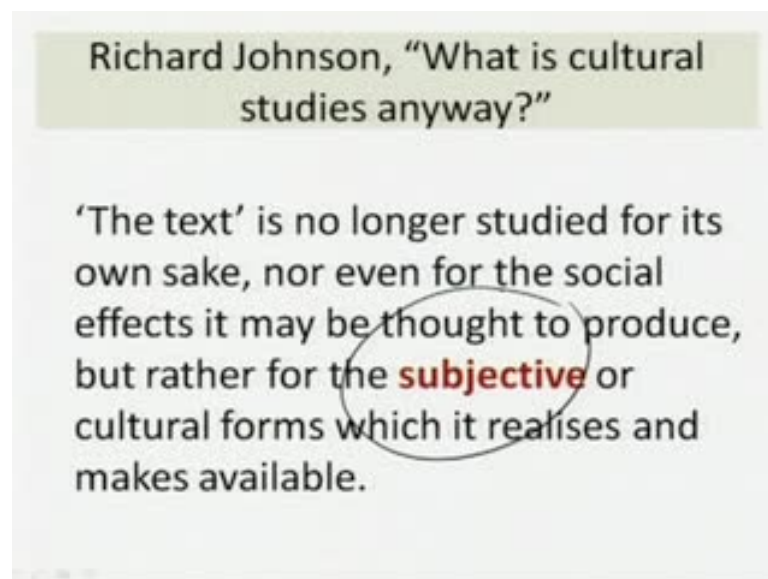
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Then, Baker says: That is, Cultural Studies is constituted by a regulated way of speaking about objects. Now, you may have a discursive formation, but one of the most important aspects of discursive formations is that, any discourse is a way of talking about something, but it is a regulated way of talking about something. That is, there are certain rules, regulations and norms within a discourse, within the limits of a discourse, within the framework of a discourse that you cannot cross or you cannot break.

So therefore, Cultural Studies is constituted, as Barker says, by a regulated way of speaking about objects. And then, look at the slide. And Cultural Studies coheres around key concepts, sorry ideas and concerns that include articulation, culture, discourse, ideology, identity, popular culture, power, representation and text; these are some of the fundamental concepts in Cultural Studies. And these are the ideas, the ideas that go on to build discursive formation called Cultural Studies.

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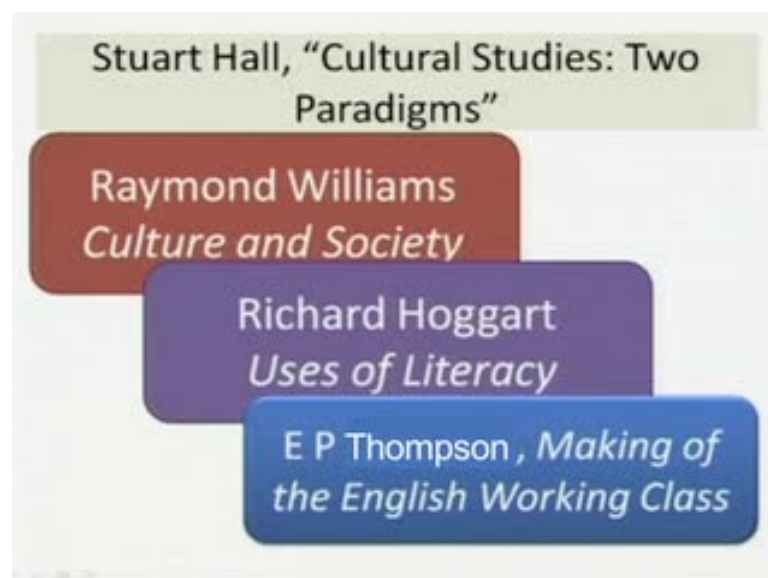


Then, I would like to draw your attention to an essay entitled "What is Cultural Studies anyway?" And this essay is by Richard Johnson. Here, Johnson says that "The text" is no longer, in Cultural Studies, studied for its own sake, nor even for the social effects it may be thought to produce, but rather for the subjective or cultural forms which it realizes and makes available. We believe in Cultural Studies that culture, everything about culture is constructed. Culture is the result of subjective forms. Now, by subjective forms, I do not mean only simply feelings, but by subjective, we mean that these cultural

forms practices artifacts are produced by certain conditions are produced by certain social conditions, by certain historical conditions and by actual people with their own historical and personal narratives. So, in that sense, it is to show what produces, how meaning is produced for instance.

So, objectivity is something that really does not find a place in Cultural Studies so much so that, when we look at our lecture on Science Technology and Cultural Studies in the fourth module, you will find that even science in the idea of pure objectivity, in science is contested by Cultural Studies.

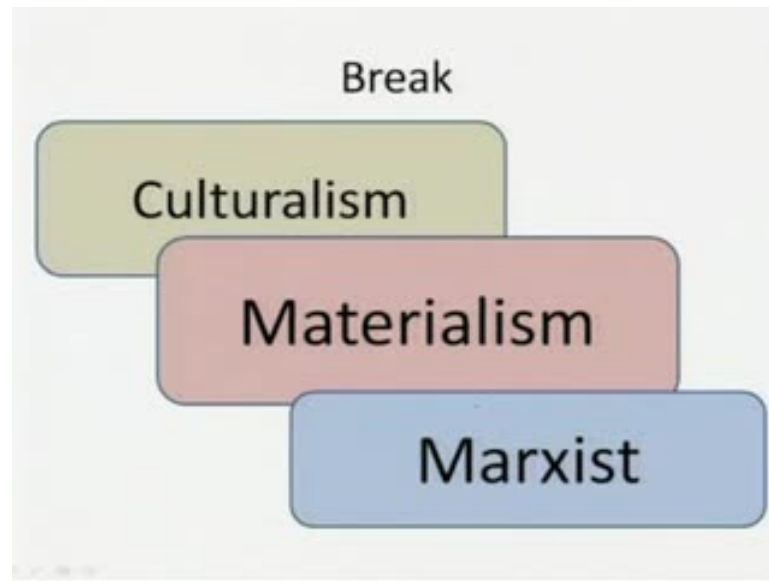
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So, what is, how did Cultural Studies come about and we should know that Cultural Studies is a relatively new area of study and it has its precursor domains, so to speak sociology being one, but before that we should look at what one of the most important practitioners and theorists of Cultural Studies, Stuart Hall has to say about the history of Cultural Studies.

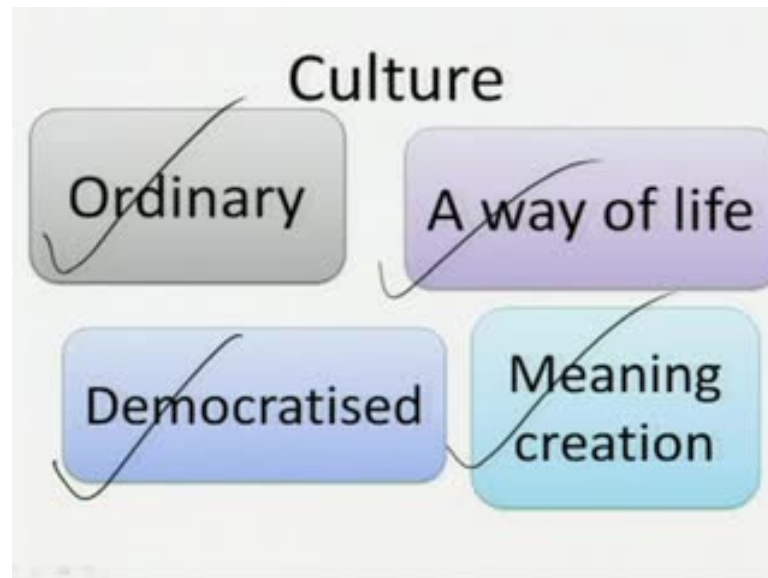
Stuart Hall, in his essay Cultural Studies: Two paradigms, talks about three persons. Three very important scholars whose works were sort of, whose works were instrumental in giving birth so to speak to the domain or discipline Cultural Studies and they are Raymond Williams and particularly his book Culture and Society, Richard Hoggart, his work Uses of Literacy and EP Thompson's Making of the English Working Class.

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Now, why these books are important is that they form a break from previous ways of theorizing. Essentially, this break is characterized by three things. These are: please look at the slide; these are Culturalism, Materialism and a Marxist approach to things. Now, you could use one term for all of these and that is, that term is materialism, in the sense that all our cultural practices, all our ideas, all our institutions are the result of a materialist, are the result of matter really. How matter in the sense that, it is from actual practices, it is from the material world. It is from these that culture emerges that even ideas emerge and in our lecture on Marxism, we are going to understand it better. Suffices us to say here that, the works of Hoggart, Williams and EP Thompson; they constitute or give a new push to the humanities and social sciences in that they bring in these these orientations which are called Culturalism, Materialism and Marxism.

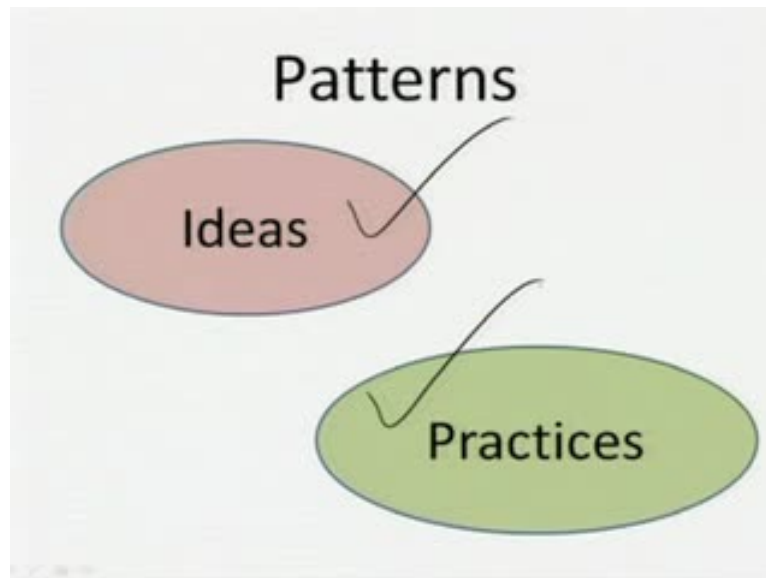
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So; obviously, when we begin to talk about Cultural Studies, the first question that should come to our mind is 'what is culture.' We all of us have an idea of what culture is, but those ideas of culture need not be the way in which culture is understood in the domain, Cultural Studies. In Cultural Studies, we consider culture to be ordinary. We do not make a distinction between high culture and low culture. Culture is everyday practices of people. Culture is, ordinary culture is also defined and this comes from Raymond Williams as a way of life. Culture is also understood further as democratized and finally culture is understood as something that gives us meaning or something where meaning is generated where significance is generated. So, what are the ways in which culture is seen in the discipline- cultural studies? The culture is ordinary. It is to do with ordinary everyday practices of human beings.

Culture is a way of life. Culture is democratized and culture is to do with meaning creation or meaning generation. All this would be clear as we look at these separately in our lectures.

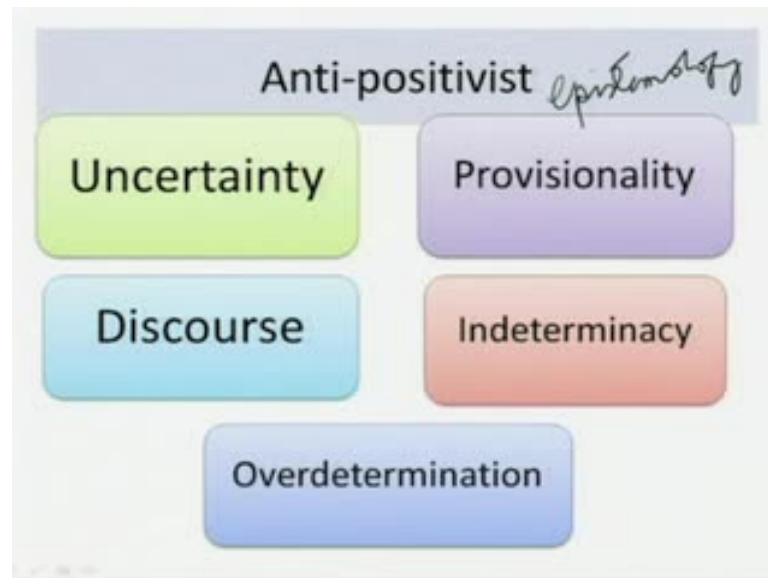
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Therefore, it is not that you simply look, you simply study culture or that you study cultural practices in isolation. One of the goals of Cultural Studies is to look at the ideas that human beings have produced which gave rise to cultural practices which are behind which are the foundation of cultural practices. And secondly we are going to also look at the patterns that these practices show. So, we find that both ideas and practices in different times in different spaces begin to show certain patterns and these patterns are what is targeted by Cultural Studies and we are supposed to find these patterns in our everyday practices and in our cultural forms.

Now, what is, how do we characterize Cultural Studies as a methodology. I had already said a while ago that Cultural Studies does not believe in pure objectivity. Cultural studies rather would look at the subjective elements in cultural formations; be these individual subjectivity or a collective subjectivity.

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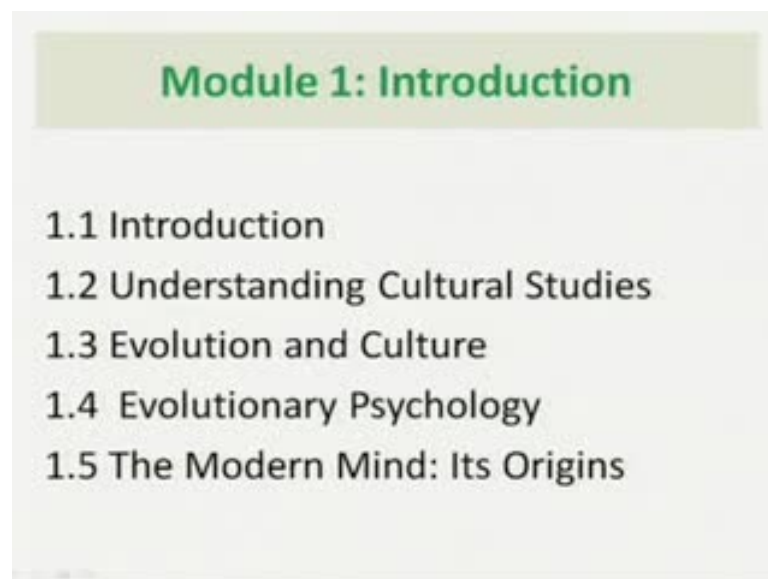


So, if you look at the slide we find that, Cultural Studies is basically anti-positivist in its orientation. Now, what do we mean by anti-positivist. Anti-positivism is philosophy you could say, that considers all knowledge as uncertain, as characterized by uncertainty by provisionality. It sees every way of speaking as a discourse with its own regulations, with its own norms and it is in and it is its own sorry and it is its own epistemology and it considers indeterminacy to be a crucial part of all knowledge and finally, it believes that phenomena whether they are cultural or scientific are always over determined. Over determined or over determination means that however much we may try and again succeed in finding out the causes of events, over determination would say that there is there would always be causes that we cannot identify given our cognitive and our technological limitations.

It means the theory of over determination therefore, means that phenomena are over determined that is, determined by causes over and above those that we can identify. So, uncertainty, provisionality, discourse, indeterminacy and over determination; these are aspects of a branch of philosophy that is called epistemology. Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that studies it; is also known as the theory of knowledge, it studies the origin, scope and the limits of knowledge. The limits of knowledge in the sense of how under what conditions is knowledge at all possible.

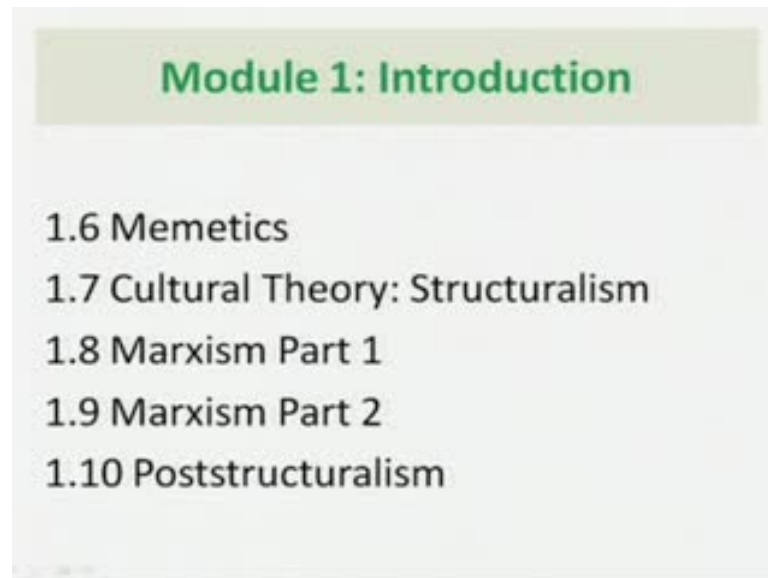
So, epistemologically speaking, then anti-positivism would accept the fact that knowledge is created alright. The knowledge has its origins, but knowledge also has its limiting conditions. So, under those limiting conditions, we eventually should arrive at a proposition like this that, all knowledge is always provisional because by its inception or by the conditions of its inception, it is already limited. So, this is what Cultural Studies believes in that all knowledge is provisional and all knowledge may work, but at the same time it is prone to change.

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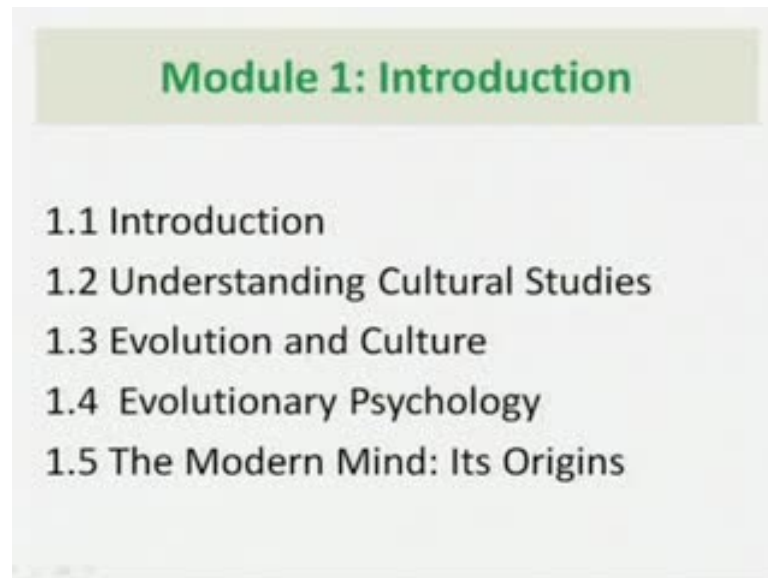
So, let me introduce the four modules in this video course. There are various lectures that comprise these modules. The first module is introductory by nature and lecture one is entitled 'Cultural Studies and introduction'. The second, in the second lecture, we continue our deliberations on Cultural Studies and we call it entitled 'understanding Cultural Studies'. The third lecture is the beginning of a cluster of lectures really where we begin to talk about what science has to tell us about our origins because culture is not contrary to what might be, culture is not a recent phenomenon. Even pre-historic man had culture. And we shall see in these three or four lectures on the scientific view of culture. We shall see how evolution has given us certain propensities and finally given rise to the mind that creates modern culture.

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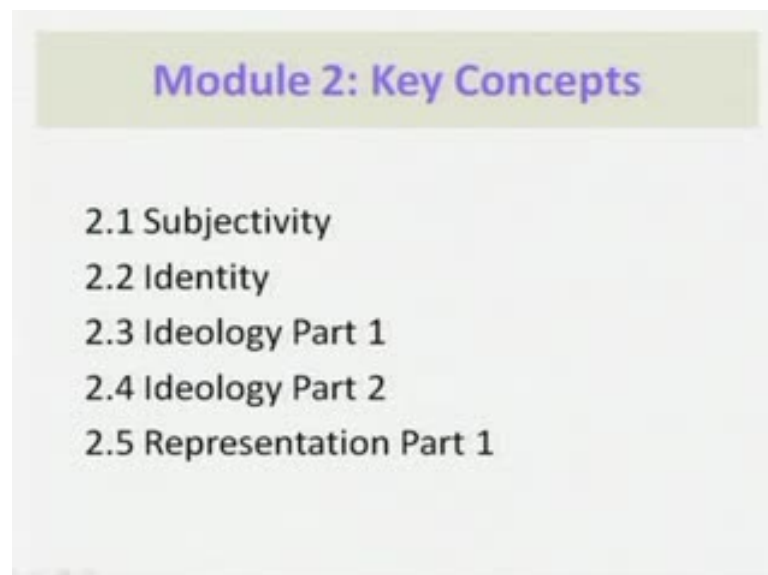
So, lecture three is on evolution and culture, lecture four in module one is entitled 'Evolutionary psychology' in which we will look at the principles of evolutionary psychology. Lecture five, the modern mind and its origins. The sixth lecture is entitled 'Memetics'. The seventh lecture, from the seventh lecture, we have another cluster of lectures really which are to do with theories in Cultural Studies. We would not have time to look at all theories and so, we shall be looking at three most important theories if I may say and these are Structuralism which is the seventh lecture. Lectures eight and nine are devoted to Marxism and the tenth lecture in module one is devoted to post structuralism.

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So, we will find that the first module introduces Cultural Studies; talks about its scope in the first two lectures and followed by lectures that are devoted to the science to what science has to say about culture. And then we have lectures that are, four lectures devoted to theories in Cultural Studies.

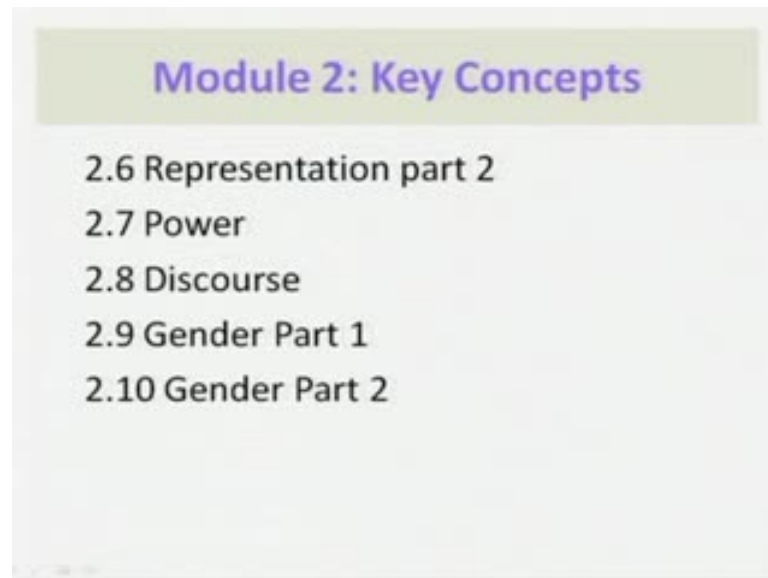
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In the second module, you will find that all the lectures are devoted to key concepts. You found a while ago that Cultural Studies is constituted by certain terms. Without these terms, without these key concepts, we would fail to make any sophisticated articulations

or formulations on culture. These are the constitutive and these are and this form the repertoire of the terminology of Cultural Studies. Therefore module two which is devoted onto Cultural Studies begins with one of the most important concepts which is subjectivity and we had just touched upon subjectivity a while ago. More about it in the lecture on subjectivity.

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Then, the next lecture is devoted to identity. Lectures three and four are devoted to another important term ideology. Lectures five and six are these lectures talk about representation. The seventh lecture in the second module is devoted to power, module sorry lecture eight is on discourse and lectures nine and ten are on gender. Now even; obviously, feminism is an important part of Cultural Studies, but when I am talking about gender, I hope to bring that in. So, I am not devoting a lecture separately to feminism.

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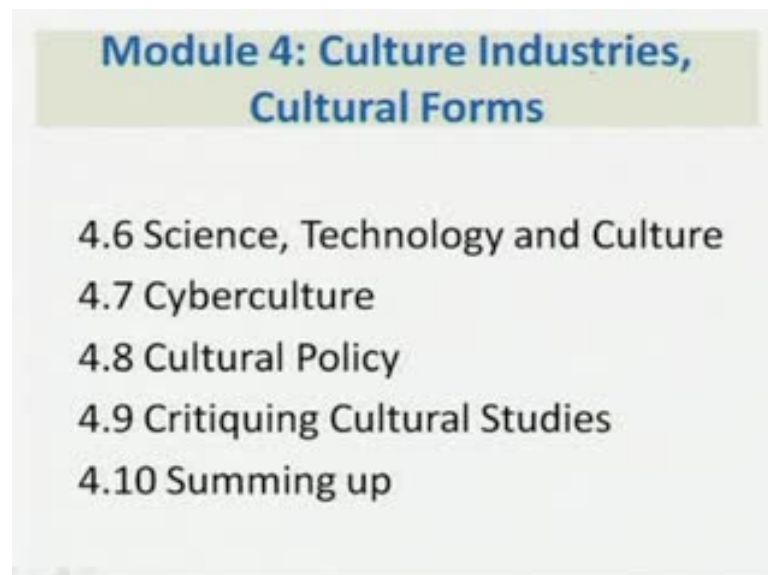
Now, in the third module, we include certain terms like body, space etcetera. These are also theoretical terms, but I am bringing them under another group break; that is, sites of Cultural Studies. In a bid to, in a bid to discuss these terms and topics, as with a view to understanding where culture happens, where cultural practices happen, we understood culture. By now, the definition we have is of culture is something ordinary, culture as having to do with our everyday practices. Culture as democratized and as meaning formation and meaning creation somewhere the meaning is created and formed. So, if meaning is created and formed, if culture is if culture is ordinary, if it is to do with

everyday practices then, where does it happened? So, keeping that in view, the lectures in this module are one- the body then space, time, development, language, ethnicity race and nation, globalization, consumption and biology.

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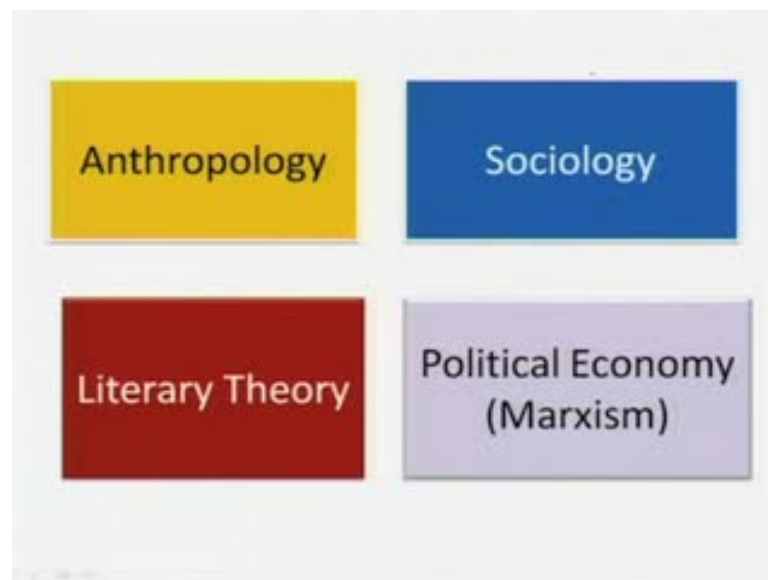
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Module four is the last module and it is devoted to cultural industries and cultural forms. We begin by talking about cultural industry and then we move on to talking to talk about the basic unit of cultural forms which is the commodity. This lecture is followed by the third lecture entitled 'media', the fourth lecture is devoted to television, lecture five is

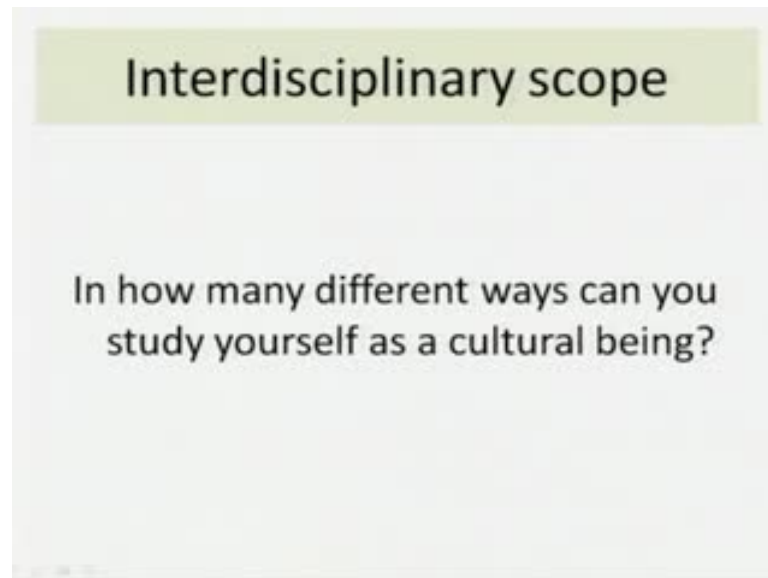
entitled 'new media' and the sixth lecture is on science, technology and culture. Lecture seven talks about cyber culture and virtual reality, lecture eight is on cultural policy and the ninth lecture is devoted to a critique of Cultural Studies. If Cultural Studies, you will understand as you move on with our lectures that Cultural Studies, one of the most important functions of Cultural Studies is to critique, is to scrutinize. So, to speak of cultural forms and practices. And by that token, Cultural Studies itself must be self-reflexive enough to critique itself. So, we shall be looking at the critique of Cultural Studies as given to us by many scholars and in the end we shall be also defending the domain of Cultural Studies. The last lecture in this course is a summing up of all that brief summing up of all that we have done in all that, we are going to look at in these series of lectures.

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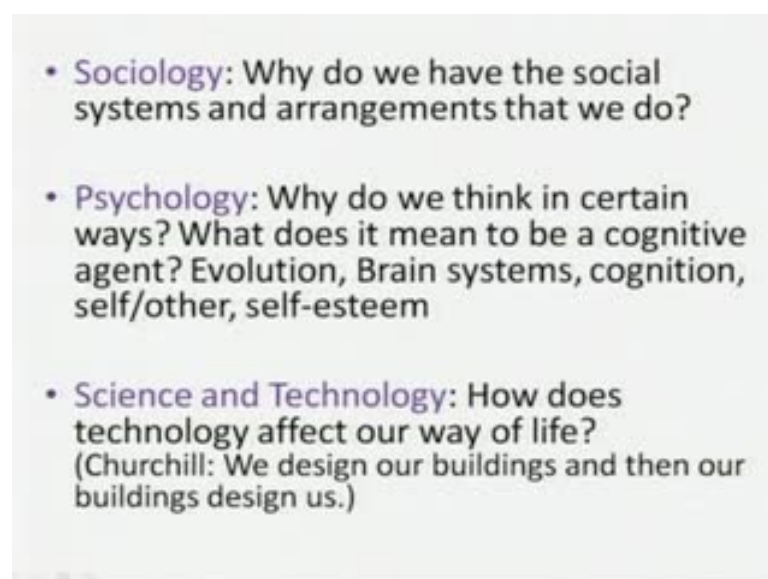
So well, now, let us go back to the point that, first point that Chris Barker had given us and that is the interdisciplinary mode orientation of Cultural Studies. So, in that case, what are the disciplines from which Cultural Studies borrows? So, the four main disciplines and this is not; obviously, an exhaustive list. There are several other disciplines that are increasingly playing a part in the interdisciplinary enterprise of Cultural Studies; however, we may point to four core areas really and these are Anthropology, Sociology, Literary theory and Political economy particularly Marxism.

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So, about the interdisciplinary scope of Cultural Studies and if we really extended it, we can begin by asking ourselves this question; in how many different ways can you study yourself as a cultural being? You are, we are beings in cultural, we are all particles of culture, we have our everyday practices, then in how many different ways you can study yourself as a cultural being. I am asking or I am posing this question to you in a bid to show you that there are many domains and many disciplines from which we can answer these questions and that is why Cultural Studies is and has to be interdisciplinary in nature.

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Now, let us look at sociology. Now from sociology, when you talk about culture, you can ask questions like these; why do we have the social systems and arrangements that we do? From psychology, we can ask questions like why do we think in certain ways, what does it mean to be a cognitive agent? We can talk about evolution, brain systems, cognition, the self-other dichotomy, self-esteem; these are all if you realize, part and parcel of what it means for us to be cultural beings with beings living in society, to be beings that engage in cultural practices.

Then science and technology for instance, we can ask a question like how does technology affect our way of life. Now, we saw that the way of life is nothing but culture. So, how does technology affect our culture and here, let me bring a quotation from Winston Churchill. He says it is so beautifully. We design our buildings and then our buildings design us. The science mostly is what is meant by technology affecting our way of life, we design our buildings and then our building designers.

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Next, literature and media. Literature particularly literary theory is very closely related to Cultural Studies. In that, many do not even want to make a difference, a differentiation or distinction between literary studies and Cultural Studies or literary theory and culture theory; however, from literature and media, we may ask questions like why are the media and literature so powerful as cultural products? Are we constructed by the media if so, how far?

Then history; how has culture involved, evolved and changed through different times, that is here by cultural; obviously, mean how have our ways of living evolved and changed through different times and how should we look at history how should we study history.

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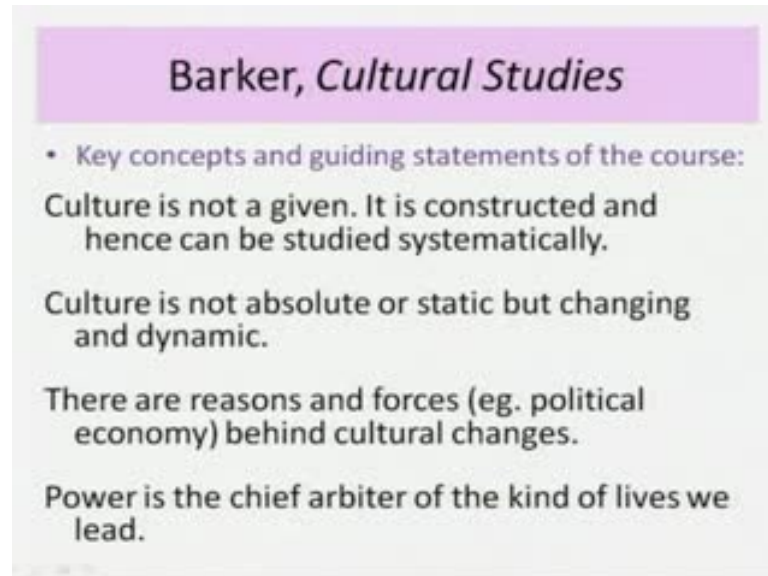
- **Philosophy:** How do we attribute meaning to our existence through our value and belief systems?
- **Language:** How does language construct culture? Can culture be 'read' as a language?
- **Economics:** How does wealth and its distribution determine our way of life?

Then, philosophy is also another domain that is very important from cultural for Cultural Studies particularly, I would say epistemology. In philosophy, we find questions like which are important for Cultural Studies questions, like how do we attribute meaning to our existence through our value and belief systems. Then, language. From language, we have questions like how does language construct culture and can cultural be read as a language. We have indeed whole lecture in this third module that is devoted to language and more about it in that lecture.

Economics; how does wealth and it is distribution determine our way of life. This is taken up by the two lectures or in the two lectures on Marxism. So, you see that there are several domains that from which we can borrow or we can borrow some formulations from which we can oppose certain questions and also look for answers. Now, if you recall, Cultural Studies has no referent really as Barker had said, Cultural Studies is all about talking in a certain way and so, when we sort of a language-games as it were, and when we begin to talk in certain ways, we need the help or we need to be interdisciplinary because the questions and their answers cannot come only from

language-games. We need certain areas from which these formulations would have to be made.

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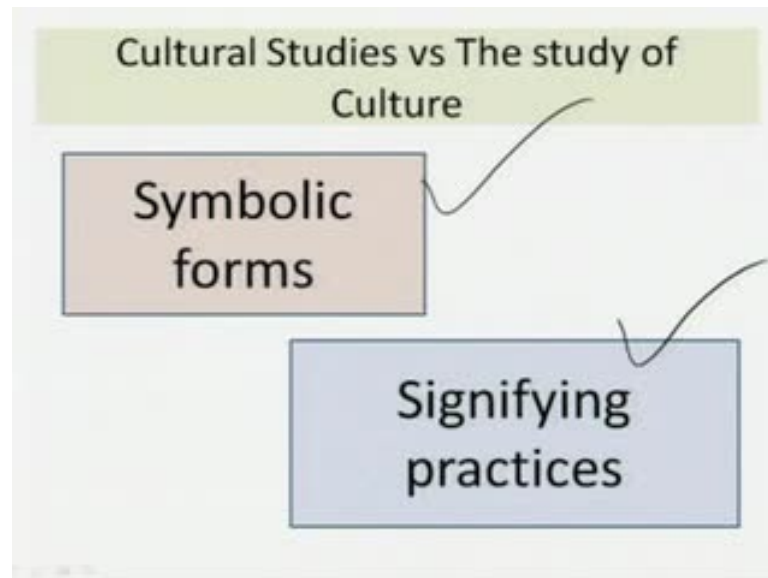
Barker, *Cultural Studies*

- Key concepts and guiding statements of the course:
Culture is not a given. It is constructed and hence can be studied systematically.
- Culture is not absolute or static but changing and dynamic.
- There are reasons and forces (eg. political economy) behind cultural changes.
- Power is the chief arbiter of the kind of lives we lead.

So, the key concepts that are, which are the guiding statements for our course are those that have been articulated again by Chris Barker in *Cultural Studies*. That is, culture is not given that, I said a while ago, culture is always constructed. Culture is never natural. It is constructed by human beings; meanings are generated and constructed by us. So, culture is not a given, it is constructed and hence can be studied systematically.

Then, the second point made by Barker is that, culture is not absolute or static, but changing and dynamic. Followed by this statement, there are reasons and forces; example, political economy behind cultural changes. And power is the chief arbiter of the kind of lives that we live. So, as I said, there are many ways in which you can talk about *Cultural Studies*, many ways in which the syllabus can be devised, but for our course, it is important for us to delimit the area within which we are talking and in this sense, Chris Barker's formulations on culture and *Cultural Studies* are important for us.

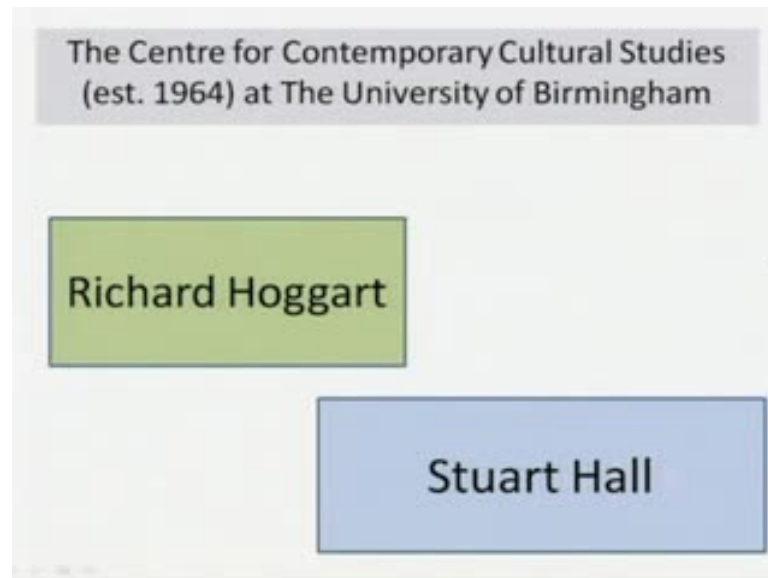
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We need to make a very important differentiation or distinction at this juncture, between Cultural Studies and the study of culture. Many would say, this is a distinction between Cultural Studies and anthropology. Now, in Cultural Studies, it is very important to remember that, even though we do not, even though we talk about cultural practices, even though our data are they are still practices that we do, that are not all about Cultural Studies these are the study of culture.

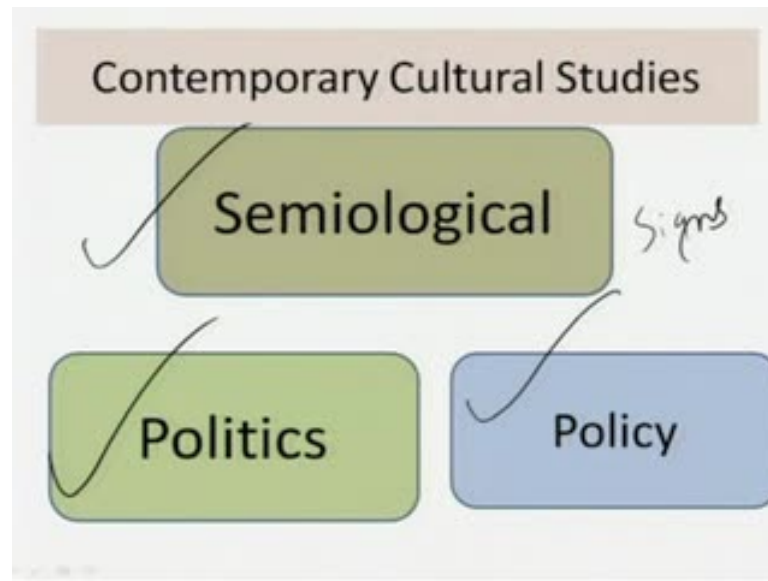
We talk about the culture practices and forms importantly in terms of they being symbolic forms and they being signifying practices. These are forms that are symbolic in nature. These are forms that signify something. Now, the symbolic aspect of Cultural Studies and the signifying practices aspect would be talked about in our lectures on structuralism and post structuralism. Suffice it at this juncture too, for us to simply understand that Cultural Studies is not exactly the study of culture, in the sense, cultural artifacts and forms are our target all right, but we talk about how meaning is formed through symbolic forms and signifying practices. And how they how they affect or how they impact our subjectivity or will create our subjectivity and our identities.

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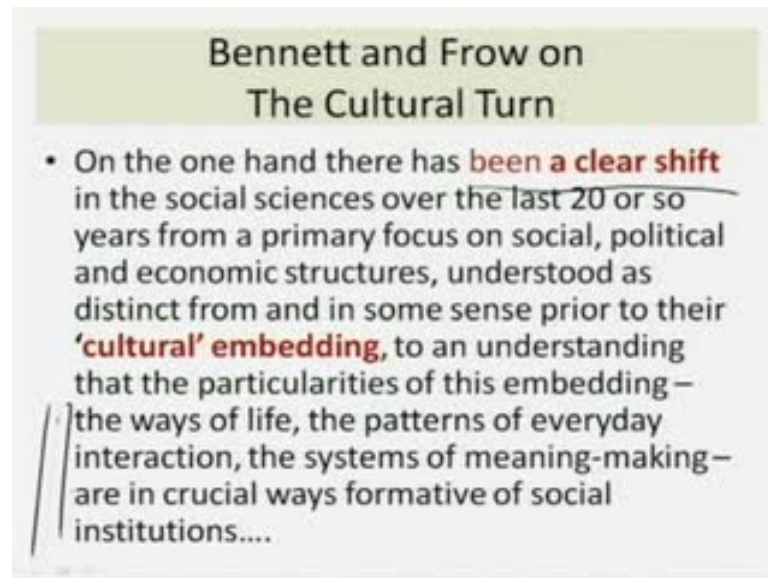
So, if we are asked, where, when Cultural Studies, as a discipline actually began. We said a while ago that Cultural Studies, as a discipline is relatively new discipline and those they were sort of precursor disciplines which gave rise to this interdisciplinary enterprise. For instance, we saw anthropology, sociology and literature and language, but we can in fact, point to specific date as far as Cultural Studies or rather the birth of Cultural Studies is concerned. And this is the establishment of the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1964 at the University of Birmingham. And its first director was Richard Hoggart and followed by Stuart Hall. So, Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall are the two most important persons. They both of them were directors of the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies and as we saw a while ago, Richard Hoggart along with Raymond Williams and EP Thompson, they constituted break in previous ways of thinking and orientations of thinking in the sense, that it was a materialist understanding of ourselves as cultural beings, as social beings that was the chief orientation and the chief methodology.

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Contemporary Cultural Studies; however, is slightly different. It has taken on different hues and colors. In that, there are three important orientations or three important, three important ways in which we talk about culture today and these are the semiological that is to do with signs. Second is the importance of power and politics in our cultural lives and third policy or policy making or decisions regarding the production, distribution and consumption of cultural products. So, contemporary Cultural Studies does not do away with the materialist approach, but there has been a change over the years, particularly with coming in of post structuralism and there is, we have a lecture, separate lecture on post structuralism where we talk about certain break again with previous ways of thinking. So, semiology, politics and policy; this is what characterizes contemporary Cultural Studies.

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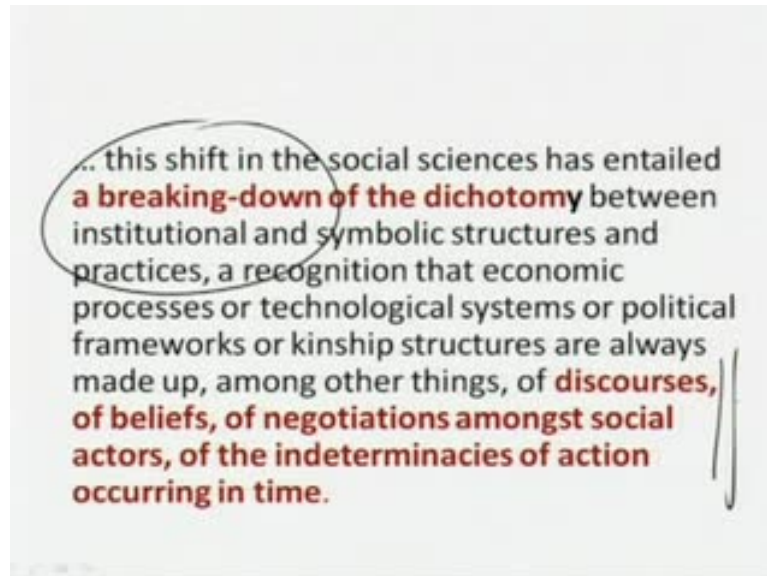


**Bennett and Frow on
The Cultural Turn**

- On the one hand there has **been a clear shift** in the social sciences over the last 20 or so years from a primary focus on social, political and economic structures, understood as distinct from and in some sense prior to their **'cultural' embedding**, to an understanding that the particularities of this embedding – the ways of life, the patterns of everyday interaction, the systems of meaning-making – are in crucial ways formative of social institutions....

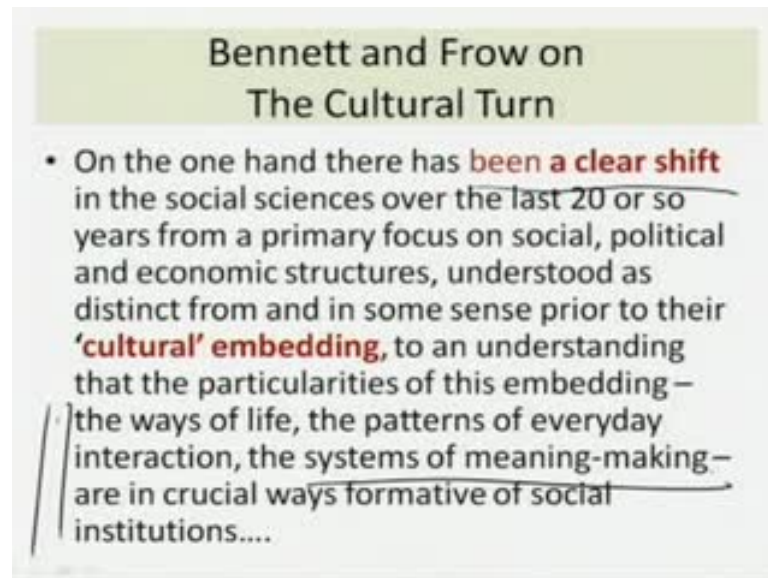
So, I would like to end by talking about this cultural term as given to us by Bennett and Frow and I am quoting from Bennett and Frow: “On the one hand there has been a clear shift in the social sciences over the last twenty or so years from a primary focus on social, political and economic structures, understood as distinct from and in some sense prior to their ‘cultural’ embedding, to an understanding that the particularities of this embedding- the ways of life, the patterns of everyday interaction, the systems of meaning- making- are in crucial ways formative of social institution.” So, what we talked just a while ago, in the previous slide about this change that has been brought in by the cultural turn is articulated by Bennett and Frow, in their introductory essay on The Sage Handbook of Cultural Analysis.

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Further, they go on to say “this shift in the social sciences has entailed a breaking-down of the dichotomy between institutional and symbolic structures and practices, a recognition that economic processes or technological systems or political frameworks or kinship structures are always made up, among things, among other things, of discourses, of the beliefs, of negotiations amongst social actors, of the indeterminacies of action occurring in time. So, here we see that scholars like Bennett and Frow and many others have so identified that, yes there is a break from talking only about institutions and economic structures to talking about discourses to talking about negotiations and to talking about as we see in the previous slide, the systems of meaning-making, that is of semiology.

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**Bennett and Frow on
The Cultural Turn**

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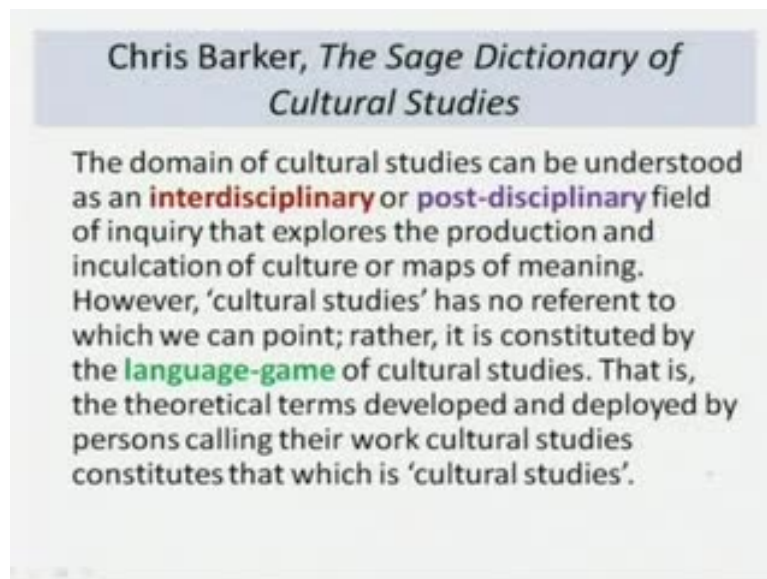
You will come to understand more of this, all this may seem to be rather alien to you as perhaps as students of engineering and sciences and technology, you are not used to this way of talking about culture. Many of the things may have been taken for us, by us for granted. So, I hope, as the lectures unfold, you will be able to understand because we will be able to spend time on so many of the key concepts that have just come up here today, it seems out of nowhere. So, slowly as you begin, as you stay with me and you we begin we begin to discuss these thing, then all of these would seem, by the end of these lectures, all of these would be very clear to you.

So, we shall now move on to what we call the discussion. The discussion really comprises a couple of questions that may be put to you in exams or questions that you may pose to yourselves also, to find out how much you have understood.

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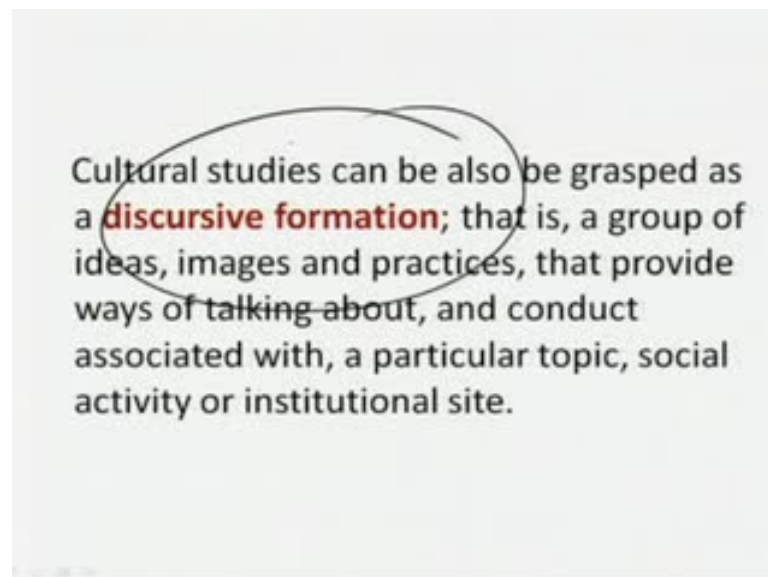


So, if we ask a question like this, delineate the domain of Cultural Studies, then you would say that we may talk about Cultural Studies and delineate its domain through the words of Chris Barker and we will take help from Barker's definitions to delineate the domain of Cultural Studies and we shall say, then that Cultural Studies first is an interdisciplinary field, in that it borrows from several kindred domains like anthropology, sociology, literature, language etcetera or political economy and that because of the sheer interdisciplinarity Cultural Studies itself does not have disciplinary boundaries so much

so that, many do not want to call it a discipline and hence it is also a post-disciplinary one.

That cultural studies have no referent really what is Cultural Studies is. We are not really referring to anything other than the very language-games. The way or different ways of talking about culture, about cultural practices, about knowledge and that it is, as Barker says, it is constituted by language-games and the theoretical terms, it is constituted by theoretical terms that have been constructed in a bid to talk in different ways about culture. Now, the fact the important fact here is that, we will be talking about this later in one of the lectures is that the theoretical terms help us to talk about things in different ways; in ways that have not been really used before and even as we talk about things in different ways, we re-describe and re-signify things. What happens is, all the habits and patterns of thinking, these subside and we begin to see things in a new way. This itself is a beginning of political practice where we show the working of politics and power in our culture lives.

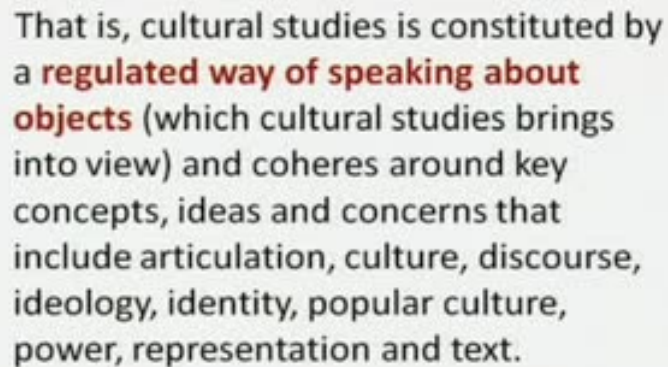
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Then, we can also say that Cultural Studies is a discursive formation. And by discursive formation, we understand that it is a formation from made by a group of ideas, images and practices. It is a way of talking and if you remember, we talked about science being a discursive formation, religion being a discursive formation that and both have different

ideas and different images and practices. So, also all other domains are different ways and discursive formations.

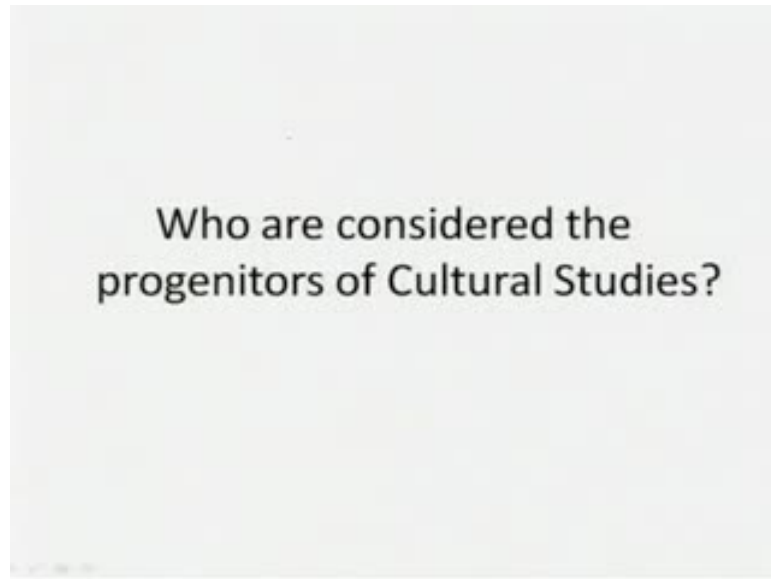
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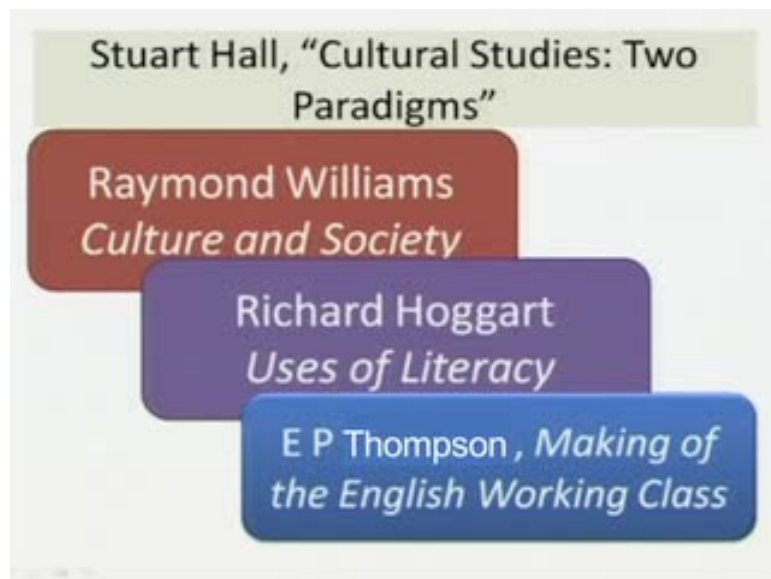
That is, cultural studies is constituted by a **regulated way of speaking about objects** (which cultural studies brings into view) and coheres around key concepts, ideas and concerns that include articulation, culture, discourse, ideology, identity, popular culture, power, representation and text.

So, Cultural Studies is also regulated way of talking. It is not that you can say anything and everything within Cultural Studies because it is interdisciplinary. There are also rules, regulations and norms within which you can talk or you can build this course in Cultural Studies. And these ways of speaking, they also cohere as Barker says, around concepts, ideas that concerns, which include words like power, identity, representation, discourse; all these are part of our lectures on Cultural Studies.

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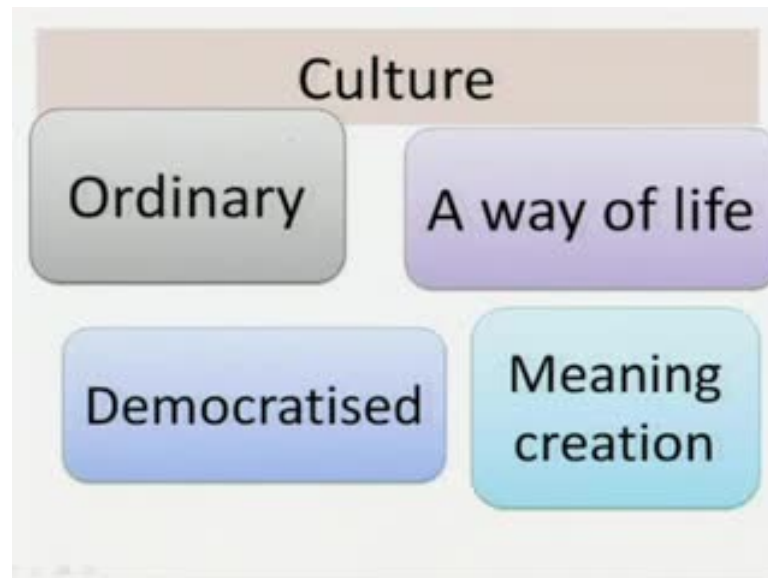


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Then, who are considered the progenitors of Cultural Studies? Then the answer here is the one given by Stuart Hall that scholars like Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart who are known as cultural materialists, who argued from the point of view of materialism and not of idealism or not from metaphysical point of view here, matter is paramount. So, Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart and E P Thompson are the scholars who are identified by critics like Stuart Hall and others to be the most important precursors. So, to speak of Cultural Studies as a discipline

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Then, how is culture defined in Cultural Studies? Culture is not defined in the sort of common sensical way of culture as referring to cultural products like the theater, like dance, music, high forms like classical music etcetera. Culture is ordinary culture is a way of life. In Cultural Studies, it is understood as democratized and importantly culture is where meaning happens; where meaning and signification are generated. So it is in this sense that, we have to understand culture in Cultural Studies and this is what is going to guide us in our understanding of culture.

Well so, we come to the end of the first lecture and yes I understand so many terms being thrown around. So, many new things being talked about by, but I will assure you that, as we begin to take each of these up one by one in the lectures, these would definitely be easy for you and you would also, after these lectures, find that we have all we have grown. Cultural Studies is an area that allows you to grow, why because it talks about it is, about you, it is about us, it talks about us as cultural beings and remember what is the question that we had posed in the beginning; why do we live the kind of lives that we live? And we had said, after Socrates the Greek philosopher that the unexamined life is not worth living.

So, I invite you to examine life, to examine the kind of lives that we are living and to find out the reasons behind why we live the kind of lives that we live.

Thank you so much.