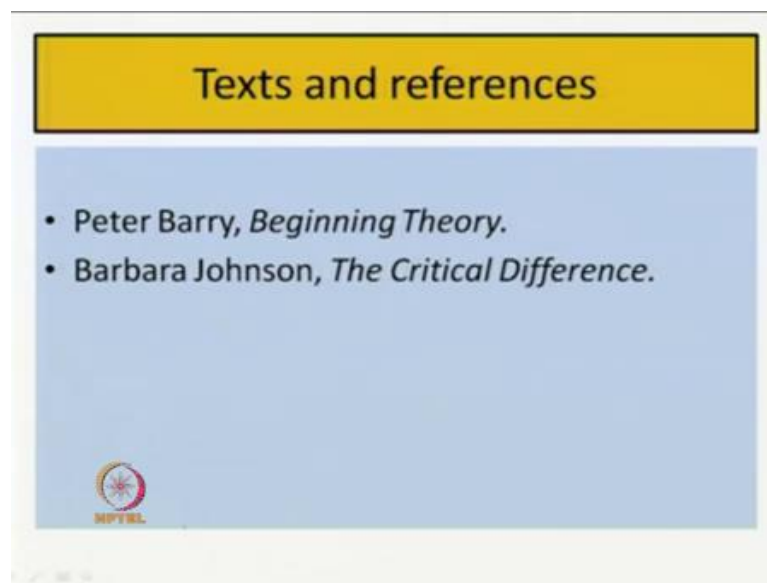


**English Language and Literature**  
**Prof. Liza Das**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati**

**Lecture - 33**  
**Poststructuralism**

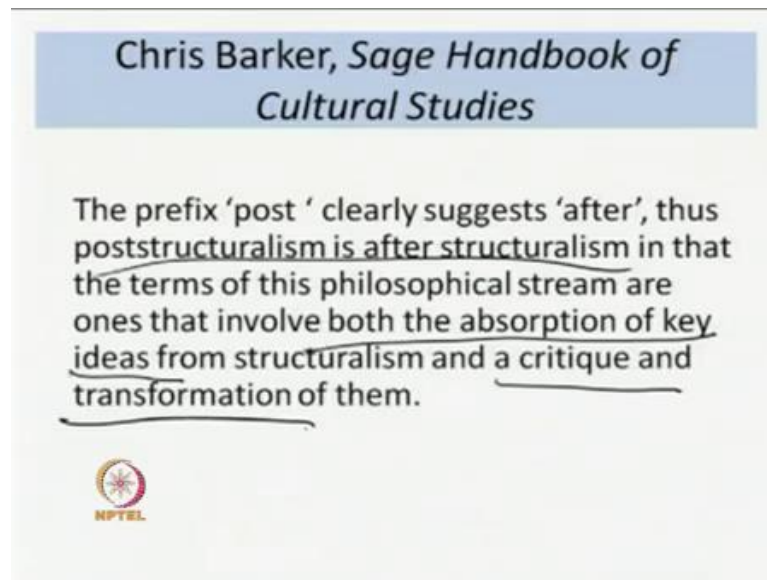
Welcome today's lecture on Poststructuralist literary criticism. This is NPTEL the National Program on Technology Enhance Learning. A joint venture by the Indian Institute of Technology and the Indian Institute of Science. We are in Module 4 of our series of lectures, collectively entire field English Language and Literature. Module 4 as you know is the voted to literary criticism. The last lecture was devoted to structuralism and structuralist literary criticism. And today's lecture is on poststructuralism.

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There are obviously, several text that you may want to consult as far as post structuralism in general. And poststructuralist literary criticism, in particular are concerned. However, for beginners I would recommend a useful book Beginning Theory by Peter Barry. You may also look up particularly for reconstruction Barbara Johnsons well known book The Critical Difference.

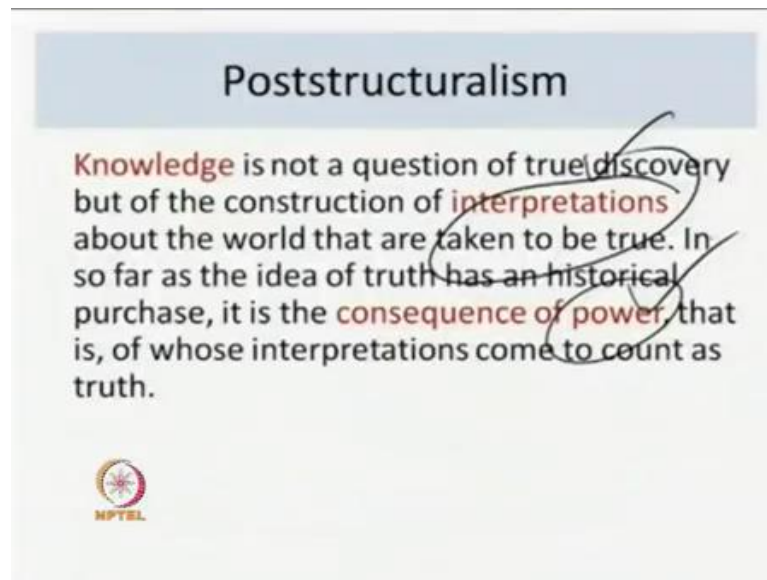
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As with other lectures I shall be taking extracts and referring to a couple of other text as well. In a bit to explain what poststructuralist criticism is all about? Well, let us begin before talking about the relation between post structuralism and structuralism. Let us, begin by looking at what Chris Barker in his sage handbook of cultural said cultural studies, says about post structuralism. And let me read from him. The prefix post clearly suggest after.


Thus post structuralism is after structuralism, in that the terms of this philosophical stream are once that involve both the absorption of key ideas from structuralism. And a critique and transformation of them. So, post is not simply, you know a temporal prefix. Post here means, that well we only take off or you know takeoff from structuralism. Retaining some of it is key ideas. And at the same time critiquing those ideas and attempting to transform them as you shall see in a while.

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**Poststructuralism**

Knowledge is not a question of true discovery but of the construction of interpretations about the world that are taken to be true. In so far as the idea of truth has an historical purchase, it is the consequence of power, that is, of whose interpretations come to count as truth.

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Now, from philosophical point to view as one critique has mentioned here. Post structuralism looks at knowledge and problematizes it. Knowledge is not a question of true discovery, but of the construction of interpretations about the world that are taken to be true. In so far as the idea of truth has an historical purchase, it is the consequence of power. That is of whose interpretations come to count as truth. So, the two you know, the two important words here are a interpretation and b power.

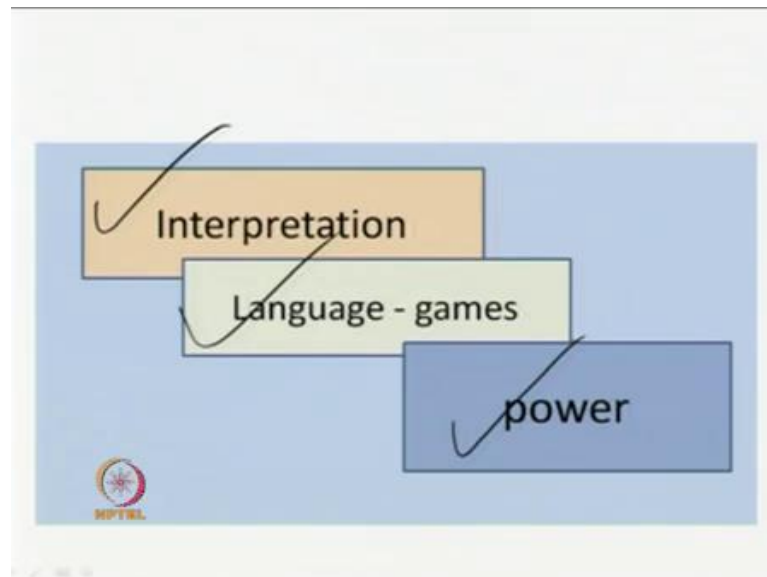
Post structuralism like post and lighting and thinking for instance post modernism. Does not believe in what we call truth with capital T. Post structuralism says that there are many perhaps innumerable interpretations, that one may give or one may bear upon a particular text. These interpretations are to use a word common word in, post structuralism are slippery. They are not about you know, the truth discovery of what a literary text is about.

Post structuralism says, that in this variety or in these, if you I may the use the word in these plethora of interpretations. Those interpretations have you know, a ring of truth about them or our considered to be true interpretations, which have to do with power. It says your, that it is as a consequence of power that interpretations come to be true. For example, it is not that it happens only in post structuralism.

For instance, if you go back and look at the criticism that was there before or prior to feminist literary criticism. Those criticisms, although those critical ways of critical

analysis of critical tools counted as true. When, we had feminism as a critical methodology, we found that feminism gave a different interpretations of the text. And challenged the you know the hegemonic and masculinist way reading text, where there is an eraser of the women. So, we move on.

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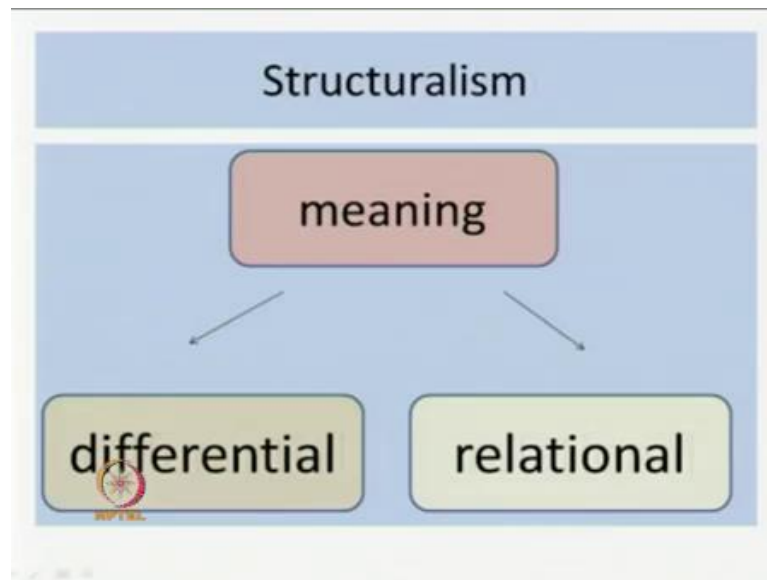


And we did not understand that post structuralism has to do of course, with interpretation, language games and power. It is well within the linguistic term that was inaugurative by structuralism. And understands ways of talking, understands interpretations, discussions and analysis as language games. And you know, that you know language games is a term, that comes from the philosopher victims sign. In case they are ways of talking for instance to put it very simply.

There are ways and which we talked, when we are in a certain scenario. For instance, when we are talking you know to our seniors, there is way in which we speak. When we talk, when we go to a restaurant and when we order you know a meal, there is certain is a different way in which we speak. So, instead of talking about truths, then within science talked about language games.

There are different ways of talking in language. So, post structuralism also falls within this kind of within this orientation of thinking. Laying more importance not an one way of reading a text, but on interpretation language games and power.

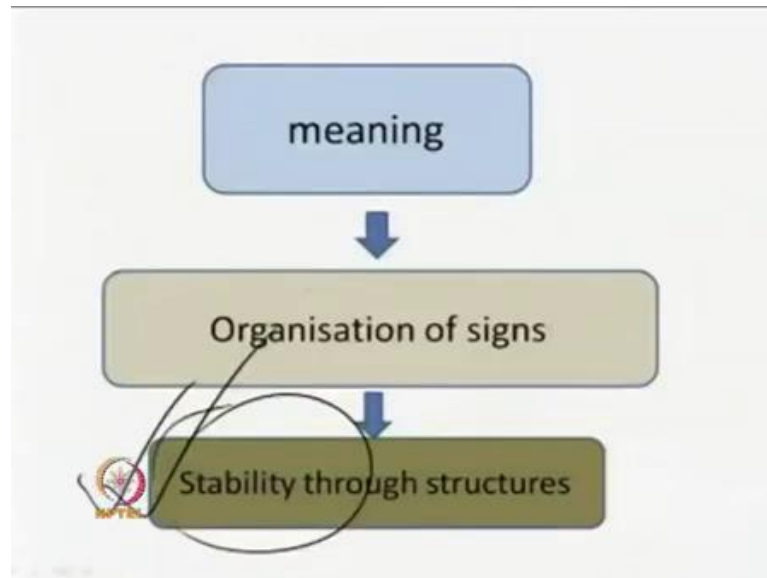
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So, if we pretty go back to our lecture or structuralism, we have found in the last lecture, that within structuralism. Meaning is always different shell and relational. Post structuralism also shares these aspects of meaning. Meaning being differential in a system. Meaning being meaning emanating in a, you know in relation to other units in the system.

However, there is difference remember we had said right in the beginning, that post structuralism critiques is not only after coming after structuralism. And retaining some of such structuralism score concepts, would also it is a critique and transformation of those concepts.

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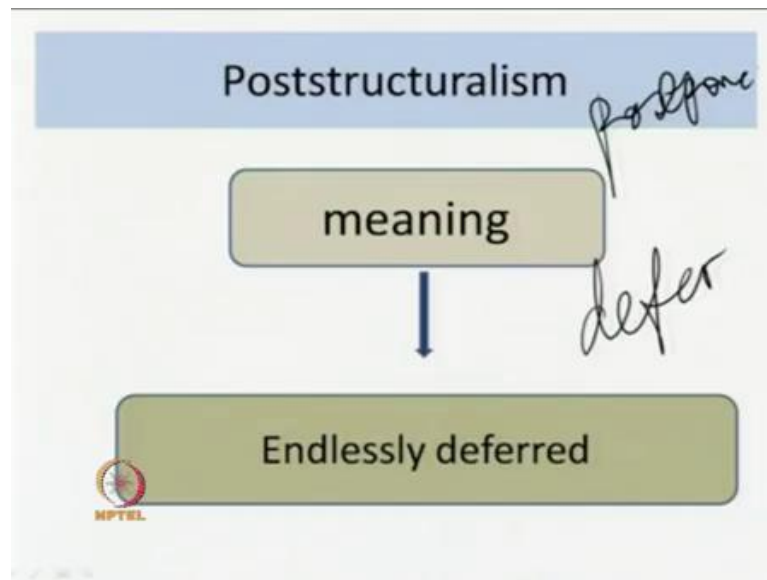


In structuralism we saw that meaning was basically an outcome of the organization of signs. And there was a certain stability, these structures in structuralism, gave us certain stability of meaning. Now, if you talk about the revision on the reorientation or the, you know the transformation. That is brought about by post structuralism. Then, this is where we must first look at. Stability through structures, post structuralism, critiques radically, the very stability of the structure that is celebrated, so to speak by structuralism.

In a way you may say, that post structuralism questions the structurality of the structure. You follow, what do we find in structuralism? That, we can have you know meaning in a text by looking at the differential relation, relationship between or among words or among different units of a text. There are certain codes for instance giving the five codes giving by Roland Barthes. There are certain codes by which meaning can be teased out from a text. And the text is a structure, which is more or less table.

In post structuralism particularly, through the work of the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, we will find that this stability is an illusion. Replace by another word, which is just slipperiness of the text. So, from this is the core the radical break as far as structuralism is concern, we talk about post structuralism.

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Therefore we may say, that in post structuralism various in structuralism that is meaning is arrived that. Meaning is possible by looking at the structure and studying the text true codes. In post structuralism we find that the meaning of a text is endlessly differed. This is the word to defer or we may say to postponed. The meaning of a text is always postponed.

Why this is what we need to understand. Now, if you understand why it is considered in post structuralism? That meaning is you know, forever postponed. Then, you would have understood one of the core claims of post structuralism.

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Here, we have very important word given to us by Jacques Derrida that is difference. This is the word that collapses two words, to differ and to defer. The differing part we have already found in structuralism. But, Derrida adds and another component to this differents, which is together, calls difference that is to defer. That is again as I said in the previous slide, through the previous slide, the postponing of meaning.

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Pramod K. Nayar, *An Introduction to Cultural Studies*

Thus reading or interpretation is the movement through the chain of signs, seeking a temporary meaning from/at each halt. X-R-E-E

This suggests that every signifier (word / sign) leads not to a stable end-signified but to more signifiers.  
This implies that meaning is never fully graspable, and the final meaning is always postponed (deferred).

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Now, we what we will do is pretty look at another inside given to us. And this is by Pramod K. Nayar in his useful book an introduction to cultural studies. Let us read and I



shall explain this. Nayar says, thus reading or interpretation is to movement through the chain of science, seeking a temporary meaning from or at each halt. Even if, there is a feeling of having arrived at a meaning in post structuralism, we have to admit a post structuralism needs us to admit.

That there is only a temporary closure of meaning of the text. The you know, because of the slipperiness of the sign, which I shall come to you know why. Because of the slipperiness of the sign, meaning is very temporary and in the next sense a meaning is gone or the meaning is deferred, to have another meaning come up. So, then he says this suggest, that every signifier that is a word or a sign leads not to a stable end signified, but to more signifiers.

Now, what did you see in structuralism. In structuralism is saw that for instance, these letters T R E and E or the syllable tree. Brings to a mind the concept, the concept of the tree not a real tree, but are the concept or the psychologically impression. As for the non rich so would call it, physiologically impression of tree. We also agreed that a tree may mean different things in different circumstances. For instance, if you are doing a tree diagram sitting underneath a tree, the tree diagram in your laptop.

And I come log and say that is a beautiful tree. So, there is an a bigger tree here. The tree may refer to the tree under which you are sitting or it may refer to the tree diagram. So, meaning is slippery even in structuralism. But, structuralism helped, that you know there is difference in context. But, one would eventually understand that the tree is refer to here is either out this. In post structuralism however, it is a little different.

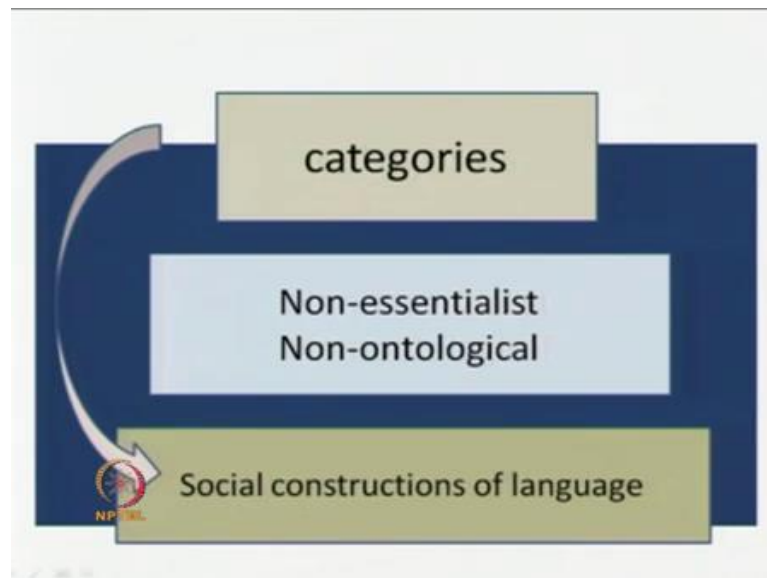
Since meaning comes about, owing to you know, a system of difference it not only differs, but the meaning is also deferred. Why, because every signifier carries this is the word, carries echoes from other signifiers? So, that meaning is never arrived that in complete totality or complete certainty. Do you follow? So, this suggest as Pramod K. Nayar says, this suggest that every signifier at his word of sign, leads not to a stable and signified, but to more signifiers. This implies, that meaning is never fully graspable.

And the final meaning is always postponed or as we saw a while ago deferred. Because, words carry the echoes of other words, leading to an a final ambiguity. So, this is also call what Derrida calls the Oopria. The impossibility of any meaning for that, matter.

That is called the slipperiness of language. Derrida also uses a very important phrase, which he says there he says there are in language, there are no pure, signifieds.

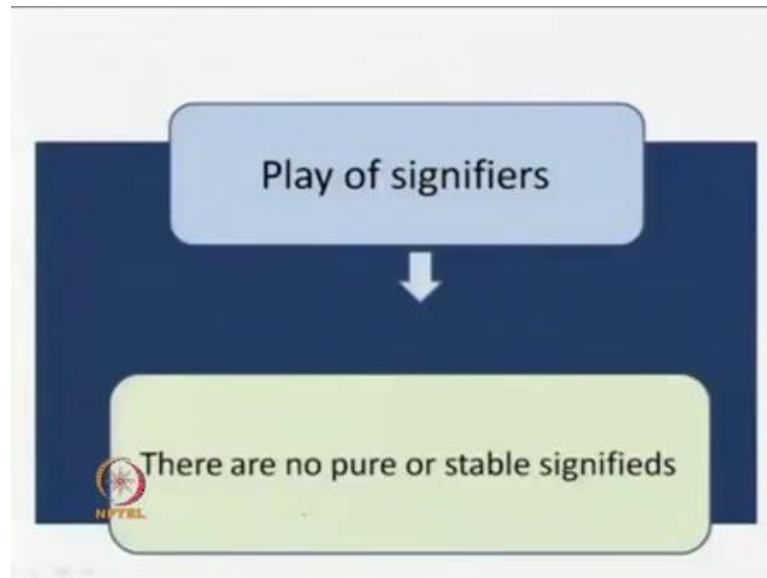
The signifiers signified, which we found was very neatly drawn out in structuralism by ((Refer Time: 15:48)). What happens here is the signified can never be known in its totality. Because, there are always you know, because sign is always under eraser. Under eraser by it is the fact that it is in a relation with other terms in the system.

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Therefore, these are non essentialist and non ontological categories. And finally, we understand that language is socially constructed and language is never to be fully grasped.

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Therefore, we can look at text as a play of signifiers not allowing any stable meaning. Now I hope you have understood this. Text is seen as play of signifier. And if you look at this slide here, there are no language pure or stable signifieds. So, if you have a term a signifier. And you feel that you have understood what it signifies. Derrida and other poststructuralist would say that no, there is no stability in this signified, because it is always and it is already intertwined with other terms in the system.

In that sense, a text also is open to innumerable interpretations of words. Now, let me put a cab at here. This is in I mean in no way is Derrida saying that they should be and irresponsible play of meaning in a text. That Noriega saying that you know, you can do anything with the text. And you can do any you know ridiculous interpretation of a text. What he is asking asked to understand is a very nature of language itself. He says, that language by its very nature is not stable.

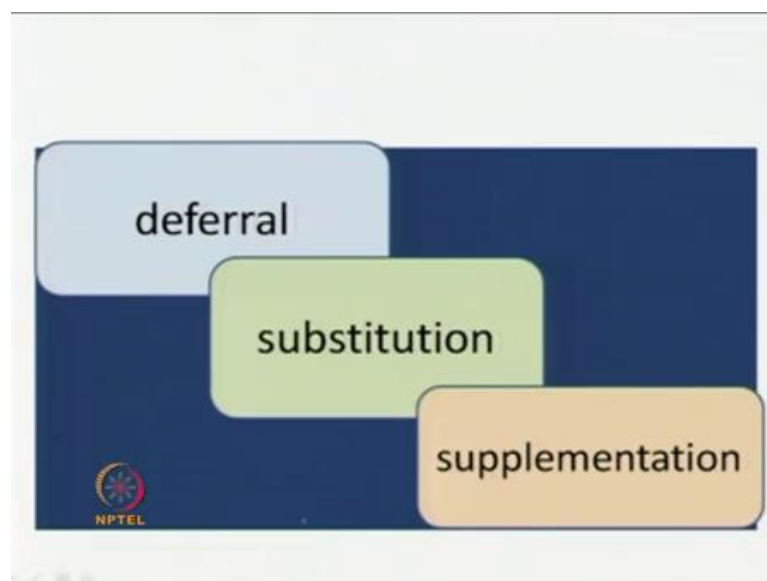
There is always or if I may use a working termination, so to speak with by other words in the system. Do you understand? So, in way if you look at, we do not have to deconstruct the text. Because, of the nature of the relation between the signifier and signified in post structuralism, which there we structuralism. We find the meaning is not at all possible in the first place. So, Lang the text really is already deconstructed. You do not have performed deconstruction on the text.

The text comes to you in complete the text comes to you, you know amenable to several and different interpretation. So, we are not to say that this interpretation is correct. If somebody says that this interpretation or a particular interpretation is correct. Then that is poststructuralist and act of power, an act of hegemony, an act of trying to pin down the text, when actually there are so many other interpretations available.

Remember this, that the tractors of post structuralism would always or mostly think that you know, what Derrida has done his played a sort of dirty trick on us. The kind of trick that a shallot on would do it. In fact, shallow on is a word that is used again has been use against Derrida. But, the point is what he saying here is you know what he cause the meta physics of presence. He says that entire rest in philosophy is sort of you know I mean use the word play it by the Meta physics of presence.

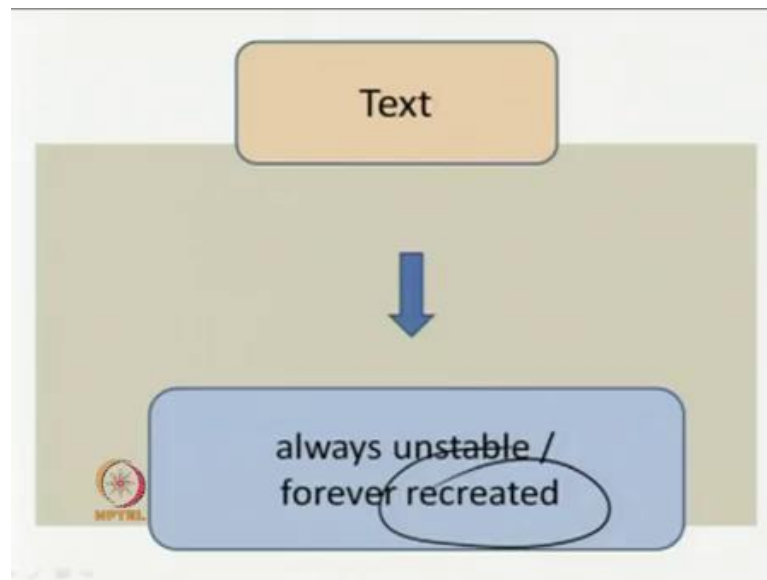
The how should I say it, the privileging we saw binary opposition in the last lecture. He says the privileging of one part of the binary opposition over and other. Let us say man woman, culture nature, strength weakness, light and darkness. There is only is a privileging of one side of the binary skin. And that is why he says that, this is you know this is a way of thinking in western philosophy that has to be deconstructed. And language by itself shows that it is already slippery and not to stable in it is totality.

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Therefore we will be use terms like deferral substitution and supplementation we will not go into this, because it is a lot more to be talked about.

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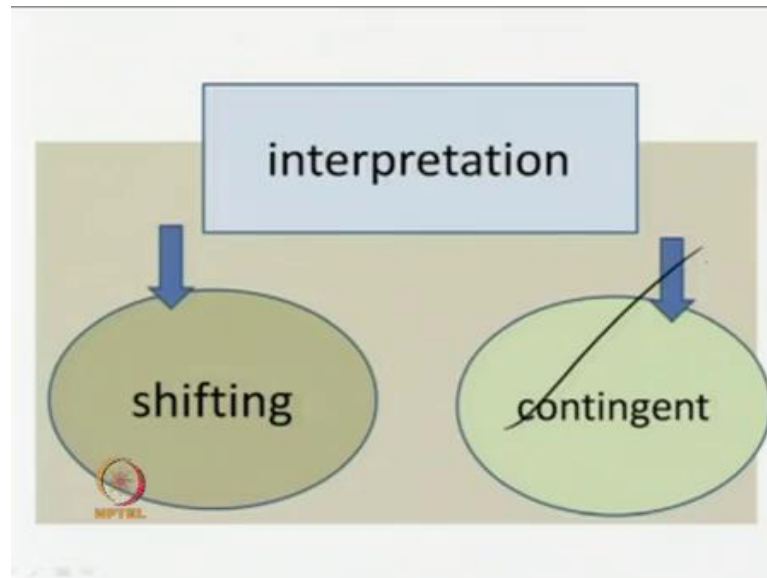


Therefore, a text now look at this slide here text is therefore, always any text for the matter not just literary text. A text is therefore, always unstable and forever re creative. You may create, recreate the meaning of a text there was a recreation or there is a recreation of hamlet when you for instance, when you talk from a feminist point that too is recreation.

From a feminist point of view when you talk about Gertrude will be foreground or Gertrude and Ophelia and not hamlet and Horatio or hamlet senior Robin Clouds dale. So, in that sense there is already you know foregrounding of the other part of the binary of male and female characters. That also is the therefore, you can have a hybrid way of you know hybrid methodology say deconstruction is or feminist deconstruction is me methodology. So, the text therefore, is forever recreated.

By again as I said, by refusing to acts of the fact that a signifier means or can come to a can refer to a totally, a fully graspable meaning in it is signified. Because, of this gap between the signifier and the signified, there is enormous political potential in deconstructionist methodology. To intervene in accepted and established powers saturated meanings of text.

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Therefore, interpretation which we saw was a core concept in post structuralism, interpretation is therefore, shifting and interpretation is contingent. Interpretation is contingent upon circumstances it is contingent upon political orientation, political views. So, you may create different interpretations and meaning of a particular text depending on the contingent situation that you are in. This is I would say, this is tremendously liberating of during literary criticism.

Perhaps those you know, those who are quite radical detractors of post structuralism. It could be as Nayar says in one of his books, Pramod K. Nayar says in one of his books that probably you are scared of losing authority, when we have different meanings or meanings that have different from your interpretation trammeling for attention and establishing a different reading of a text.

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The slide features a title 'Foucault' in a red box at the top. Below it are two bullet points: 'Meaning is not to be seen in terms of a chain of eternal deferrals' and 'Meaning is regulated by power'. The word 'power' is enclosed in a red oval. At the bottom left is the NPTEL logo.

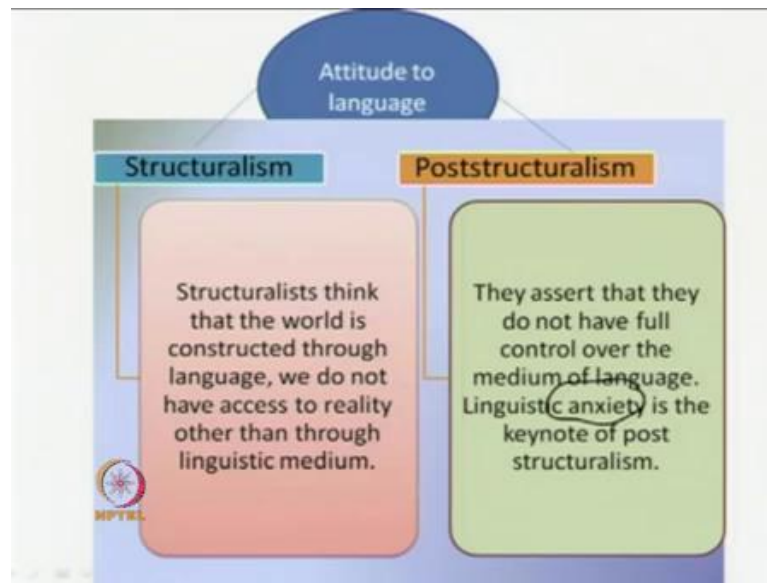
- Meaning is not to be seen in terms of a chain of eternal deferrals
- Meaning is regulated by **power**

This is similar to what you know, find in Michelle Foucault and other poststructuralist. When he says that meaning is always regulated by power. Meaning is not be seen in terms of a chain of eternal, deferrals only according to Foucault now if you look at this. According to Foucault, there is no point in you know finding enumerable meanings in a text. He says, when what is a point of you know then it becomes a actually play you know in that sense like a game for you know for Michelle Foucault.

He says there is no point in only substituting one meaning with another meaning. He says it is most important he says he do this. But it is most important again to show how these different meanings come from different sources of power or the absence of power. Do you understand? There in Foucault gives us a caution, you know a note of caution. That there is no point you know in playing a game of how many different meanings I can find out from a text.

The job is a you know a more important a most significant one. That is of finding out how you know meaning is always regulated by power by systems of power in society.

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Now, quickly if we you know look at the attitude of post structuralism and structuralism towards language. And you will, I think this is from Peter Barry taken it from Peter Barry's book. The attitude to language in structuralism is this. Structuralist think that the world is constructed through language. And that we do not have access to reality other than through the linguistic medium. You remember from my last lecture the structuralism says that language construct reality.

Language is see only way through which we can apprehend reality. And there are obviously, chances that we can never apprehend the whole of reality. Why, because it comes to us through the linguistic medium. Post structuralism, the poststructuralist a sort that they do not have full control over the medium of language. Linguistic anxiety this is a very nice way of putting it. Linguistic anxiety is a key note of post structuralism. Now, look at this again.

We do not have access to reality says you know say the poststructuralist. We do not have access to reality, except through language. So, five we may not know, what reality is in it is totality, but at least we know that we have created a reality for us based on language, which is structured a system that is structured, where meaning emanates from differential relationship between the units or among the units. But, you see how this break is made as when we come to post structuralism.



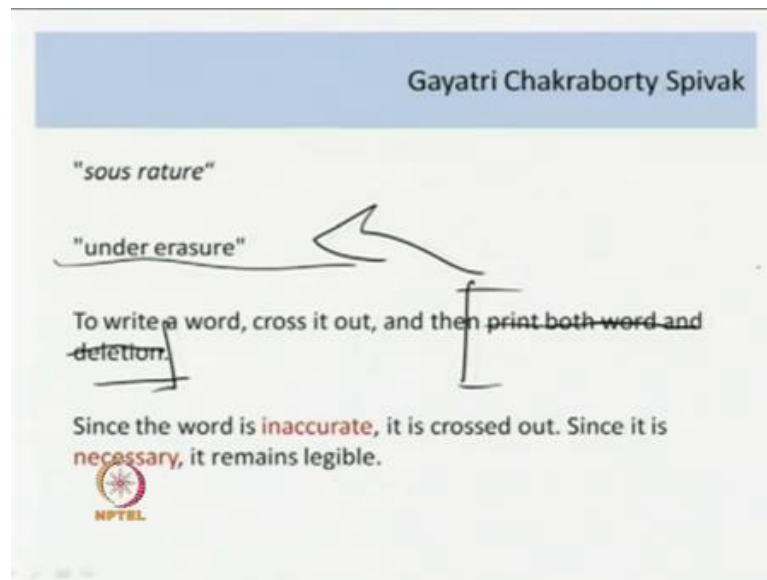
Post structuralism also says that yes. Our understanding of reality is largely the world cup language. But, they act this very important point here, which is that this very language that we talk about is something. That is something over which we do not have control. Even if we human beings have made language. If we have constructed language, we have no control over the language. Now, why recall know the as said just while ago that is because of the very nature of language.

The very fact as the reader argued, that there is they can never be any pure signifieds. Because, it is already you know it is because of meaning of any term comes about only in relationship to other terms. How can we have a pure signified, pure impure in the sense that it does not have an look at this. This is most important it, does not have an ontological meaning about it. Do you follow? The meaning of chair is other word chair gives us a meaning a psychologically impression of chair.

Not because there is something cherish about a chair, but because it is different from other objects of furniture. So, do you follow this? Therefore, poststructuralist would say, that yes we understand the, you know it went to structuralist tell us that realities apprehend able only through language. But, let us remind ours is that this very medium is a problematic one. So, the word the term linguistic anxiety, there is an anxiety even as you are using language, there is always a anxiety and high suspicious.

That you can never the meaning of a word or meaning of a sentence and even of a text is never to be the final one. It is forever in a state of deference. That is it is forever differing and it is forever defer, I hope you have understood this. Linguistic anxiety is the key note of post structuralism.

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So, we again now look at what the critic Gayatri Chakraborty's Spivak talks about when she says that, a word is always under eraser. From this French phrase, which means under eraser, to writer word cross it out and then print both word and deletion. For instance, you write print both word. So, you write print both word and deletion, you write this at the same time you have marked it.

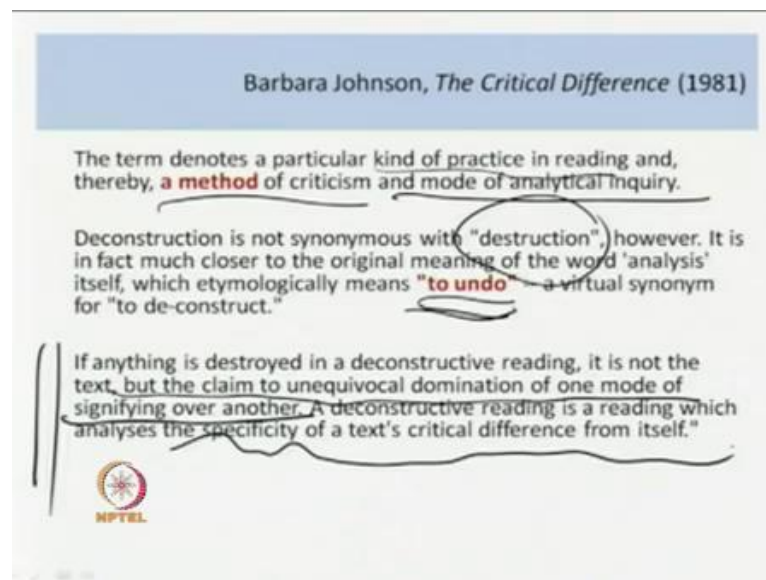
So, this means that you have written it, but you know that because you know you try to trying to show, you are trying to demonstrate that you understand that these words print both word and deletion. Do not have their corresponding pure signifies. And even as a string of word it may not have a or it does not have rather a pure signified or a consent meaning. So, to write a word cross it out and then print both word and deletion. This part that we have you know, we are struck out.

It simply you know means or it is as a said a attempt to show, that I am using words. But, I know that these words are under eraser or I know that there meanings are always deferred. So, this is you know, way of showing you know and the showing that was not have complete of full meanings. So, since a word is inaccurate, it is crossed out. And since it is necessary it remains legible.

So, have to words there at the same time you cross it out or you cross the words out. To show that they are necessary and at the same time they are inaccurate. Do you understand? It is not to say that, every time you write we are going also cross out the

words and keep them under eraser. Just to show that look, I am saying these, but I know that my words would not convey, you know always under eraser. This is one way of just to show you know, so perhaps you know pictorial way what exactly is meant by this deferral of meaning or the eraser or meaning big under eraser.

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So, refer to Barbara Johnson the critical difference and I will quickly read from her. In order to and reach what we are talking about, in the critical difference published in 1981 Barbara Johnson says, that the term deconstruction denotes a particular kind of practice, is the kind of practice in reading. And thereby a method of criticism and mode of analytical inquiry. Many would say that deconstructed criticism is no criticism, how can it be you know critical methodology. When it itself talks about the deferral of meaning.

So, a deconstructive critical piece by itself is a failure, because they deconstruction says very no meaning is final. Now, that is I would say it is taking it to you know quite as illogical, you know illogical extreme is the sense that deconstruction does not say that, because language is slippery, because as linguistic anxiety then we should stop talking at all. It knows that language you say only medium and structuralist too. But, it also cautions us that that medium is fraught with the lack of final meaning.

It is so, it is pointless really it is other you know, what we call arguing at infinitum or arguing even what was that term, I arguing in I know in complete absurdity. That deconstruction list should not say anything about to tell, because after all they say that

well words have no meaning. That is not our point here. A point is to understand that the deconstruction list will show you a different way a different say a different philosophical stance altogether.

So, therefore, Johnson Writely says as well deconstruction is a kind of critical practices. It is a method she even goes out to collect a method of criticism. And a mode of analytical enquiry. So, there is no reason to just throw the baby out with the bath water I have to say that well deconstruction is have no place. They are saying something and as critics like Johnson and Spivak say we all to listen. So, let us read on deconstruction is not synonymous with destruction very beautifully put.

They do no deconstruction list do not destroy post structuralism they not does not destroy the text. So, we have to understand to deconstruct is a not a negative activity. Please understand this. To deconstruct is not a destructive ability or a destructive tool. So, deconstruction is more like this mantling, you know when you dismantle something. You do not destroy it. You can put it back together. So, deconstruction is not synonymous with destruction however.

It is in fact, much closer to the original meaning of the word analysis, which etymologically means to undo. So, we have to understand deconstruction in term of undoing a text. Remember I said this mantling. So, dismantling undoing is not the same as deconstruction, which etymologically means to undo a virtual synonym for to deconstruct. If anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading says Johnson. It is not the text this is very important and I think she put it, so beautifully.

If anything is destroyed at all. Then it is certainly not the text, but the claim to unequivocal domination of one mode of signifying over another. So, she says deconstruction destroys the myth, destroys the illusion that there is only one dominant way of looking at the text or one dominant mode of signifying. A word signifies and to words together that is a text also signifies.

So, if you see the text a means meaning a, then you have to understand that behind that is or rather that itself that pronouncement is not act of power and act of hegemony. You are trying to sort of impose your meaning. Your signification of a text overall others. So, if anything is destroyed in a deconstructive reading it is not the text, but the claim of claim

to unequivocal domination of the mode of signifying over one mode of signifying over another.

A deconstructive reading is a reading, which analyses this specificity of a text critical difference from not other text from itself. So, beautifully put I you know we should say, that deconstructive reading analyses a text critical difference or you could say, a text critical distance from it is own self. That what it is perfecting according to you, according to the reader do the, if there is no reader there is no text in that sense, in deconstructive criticism.

What deconstructive reading does is to show that what meaning is perfected to come from a text. There is always a gap, why there is gap because the words do not have pure signifies or pure reference. Do you follow?

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The slide features a blue header with the name 'Jonathan Culler'. Below the header, there are three paragraphs of text. The first paragraph is underlined. The second paragraph is followed by a horizontal line. The third paragraph has a red circle around the words 'taking a position'. At the bottom left of the slide is the NPTEL logo.

**Jonathan Culler**

For deconstruction, if it is of any consequence, is not reducible to a specialized set of discursive procedures.

While certainly deconstruction is not 'anti-methodological', neither could it be called a 'discourse on method' as such.

Derrida: "It is also, at the very least, a way of taking a position, in its work of analysis, concerning the political and institutional structures that make possible and govern our practices, our competencies, our performances."

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Jonathan Culler another critic, has this to say deconstruction if it is of any consequence is not reducible to a specialize set of discursive procedures. It is a method alright, but you cannot say that this is there is one way your set of procedures set of tools that you can use. While certainly deconstruction is not anti-methodological neither could be called discourse on method as such. Derrida says it is also at the very least a way of taking a position in this work of analysis.

Concerning the political and institutional structures that make possible and govern our practices our competencies and our performances. Remember, if somebody tells you that this is just a linguistic term. And that you are in what is famously called the prison house of language. Remember the deconstruction and other schools, other methods in post structuralism.

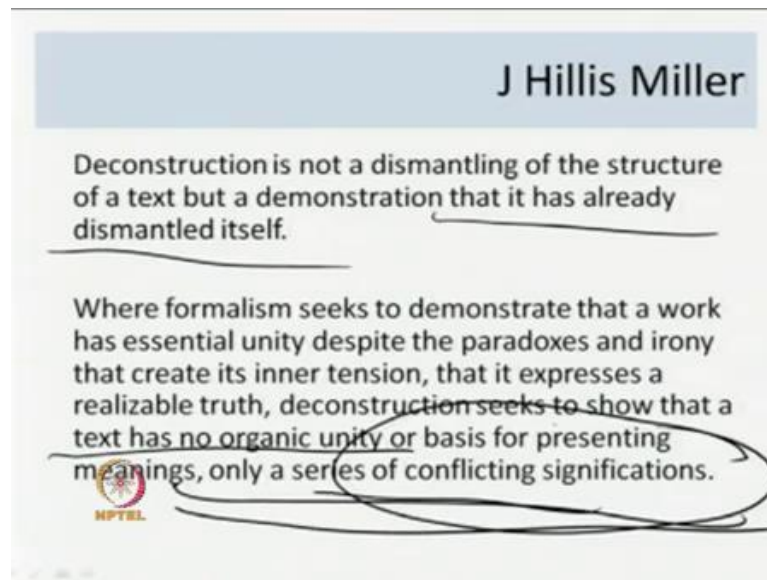
Also has a clearly political anger to it. As critics like Derrida would argue that deconstruction is not just clinical method of showing how meaning disappears or showing you know how there are no pure signify. So, that the text destroys itself or deconstruct itself or that the text is already deconstructed. That is one part of the philosophical explanation or philosophical you know, orientation of deconstruction the other is clearly political.

And deconstructions seeks to so us that any stable meaning or any you know, any demand or sorry claim over one meaning of set of meanings is always an act of power. So, it is also a way of taking a position on a text, which she called reading against the grain of the text, reading against the texture of a text, reading against the obvious conventional, so to speak spontaneous meaning of a text. We believe in reconstruction that we are trained to read in certain way.

And our culture I can culture I know assumptions and biases also kind of give a make us to spontaneous readings of a text by eliciting certain signifies for a signifier. What Derrida says, read against the text reconstructed it in a bit to show our how it has been constructed by language and how it cannot reach a one particular meaning. So, therefore, it is also as he says here concern with the political institutional structures that make possible and govern our practices.

These govern our practices our competencies and our performances. Even our performances on a text, even the analysis you do on a text are tied to our practices within certain institutional power based structures, political structures that make us you know seemingly or give us seemingly spontaneous, which we feel our correct responses toward text. So, these are some I would think some of the cautionary a points of caution that post structuralism very writely gave us.

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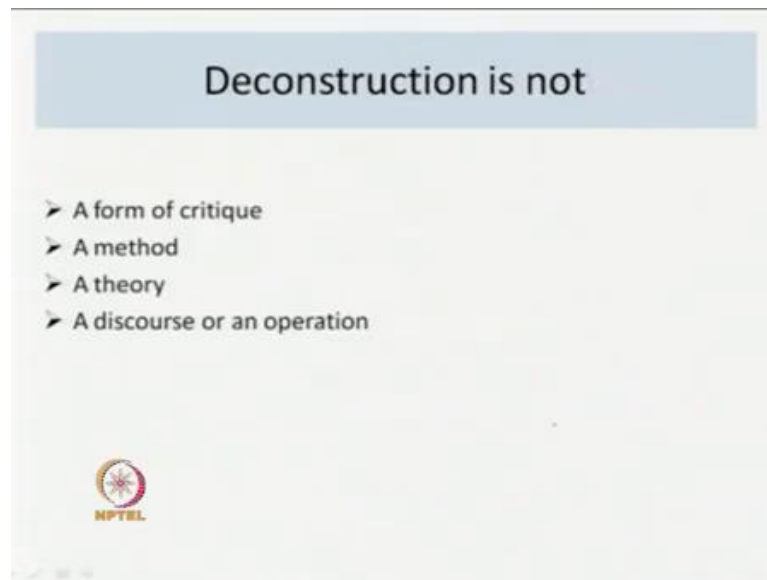


Then as I said, about how a text is always dismantled this calls from Hillis Miller. And way he says that deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text. But, the demonstration that it has already dismantled itself, where formalism seeks to demonstrate that a work has essential unity. Because, despite the paradoxes and irony that create its inner tension deconstruction seeks to show that a text has no organic unity or basis for presenting meaning, only has a says a series of conflicting signification, this is very important.

Formalism also belongs to a particular way of looking at a text. A new criticism also belongs to that way of looking at a text, looking at the words on the text. How is deconstruction different? Deconstruction is different according to J Hillis Miller, that it refuses totality it refuses an organic unity to the text. And it says that, there are only conflicting significations of a text.

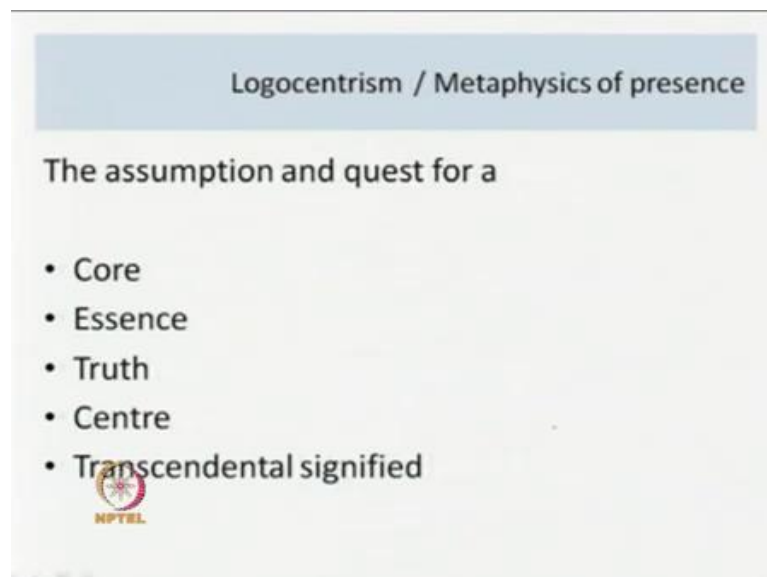
And that the fact that the text is already sort of you know already impure in that sense and sense of pure meanings not having pure meanings, view the very active reading has to show the conflicting interpretations or conflicting signification in a text that is a essentially the job of or you could say the method of a deconstructive critique. To show the conflicting signifies and or the conflicting processes of signification in a text and to deny the text a single meaning.

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Therefore, deconstruction as has been shown is not really a form a critique according to some according to others. It is not method, it is not a theory, it is not discourse or an operation. It is a reiteration of the fact that the text is already dismantle, that the text is already deconstructed.

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So, therefore, you know it goes again what Derrida calls in logo centrism or the metaphysics of presence in western philosophy. And it says that there is no logos or there is no core or essence or truth. There is no center the moment you have center or a core or



an essence or a truth. You know we end up privileging one reading over the other. Because, if you have a core then you always have something on the margins, something in the periphery.

So, any act of saying that this is a core of a text, this is the essence of a text is an act of power. And it betrays the logo centrism on out what he calls metaphysics of presence in the reader. And there are no transcendental or pure signifiers.

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Christopher Prendergast, "Derrida's Hamlet"

- For Derrida, the significance of the ghost resides in its radical indeterminacy.
- In *Spectres of Marx* it is indeterminate in the more strictly ontological register of occupying a place/non-place between presence and absence, appearance and disappearance.
- The spectre is a "Thing" and yet not a thing, not a substance. It hovers uncertainly between material embodiment and disembodiment. It inhabits a space of pure virtuality, and what in that space is swallowed up is the ontological ground of Being itself.

Handwritten annotations: "Derrida's" and "ontology" written in cursive over the first two bullet points. A bracket underlines the third bullet point.

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Now, I will quickly end by referring to the reading of by Christopher Prendergast of Derrida's Hamlet. Now, here he says that for someone like Derrida the significance of the ghost of hamlets father resides in it is radical indeterminacy. If you what are the opening words of Shakespeare Hamlet, where we had the guard saying, who is there. And many have taken this as a queue to forming a deconstructive reading, whose there is talks about in one sense indeterminacy of you know is not just a guard saying whose there.

So, it in symbolizes the indeterminacy of or the impossibility of knowing or not or that fact that you do not know whose there. So, this is also attached to the figure of the ghost of hamlets father. For Derrida the significance of the ghost writes in it is resides in its radical indeterminacy. You know what that hamlet is also not sure, whether it is you know a halogenations or whether it is an evil spirit, that has conjured the ghost of his

father you know, who then exhausts him to take revenge irrespective of mask by Derrida says Christopher Prendergast.

It is indeterminate in the most strictly ontological register of occupying a place, non place between presence and absence appearance and disappearance. So, the you know really the ghost of Hamlet's father by it is very nature of being an not being in the scene of you know being of inhabiting a place between, which is between mid way between presence and absence between appearance and disappearance on residing in a you know somewhere between the place and a non place.

So, he says that in a you know a symbolic of what the deconstruction is it is trying to say that words to also occupy this non space. And that is why it is signification can never be finally, grasp. The spectre let us read on the spectre is a thing and yet not a thing, not a substance. It hovers uncertainly between material embodiment and disembodiment. It inhabits of place of pure virtuality.

And what in that space is swallowed up is the ontological ground of being itself. So, the most important word here is that post structuralism in general. That is a way with ontology or essences. There are no essences in post structuralism. All that we can have are really traces is another word here, we can have traces, we can have supplements.

But, we cannot have the word literary cannot have the word in it is, you know you cannot have the word in it is totality, which because the word meaning therefore, it is already slippery and it escapes our grasp. That is the very nature of language.


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**Niall Lucy**

'Who's there?' is not a question we would ever ask of hydrogen. But it is the question that Barnardo asks at the very beginning of Shakespeare's Hamlet, and we might say that this question, which opens the play, remains open still at the end. In Hamlet the question of who or what is there

The ghost in *Hamlet* could be said to pose the questions Who am I? When am I? (What is my **being?** What is my **time?**). But for Derrida these cannot be confined to effects upon the characters and events in that text 'itself', as if Hamlet were a self-contained or self sufficient entity in a periodic table of fully constituted textual differences.

They extend rather to questions of being and time in general. And as such they are not simply literary or aesthetic questions that we might choose to puzzle over at our leisure or according to some privilege.

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Then Niall Lucy I mean carry this on Niall Lucy says here. I am using you know Shakespeare's play and you know talking about how few critiques have talked about you know, Shakespeare play in that. In to show more light on our, we can symbolically connected to deconstruction, whose there this is what we refer to while ago, whose there the opening words. Is not a question we would ask ever ask of something like hydrogen.

But, it is the question that Bernardo ask at the very beginning of Shakespeare Hamlet. And we might say, that this question which opens a play remains open still at the end. In Hamlet the question of who or what is there. The ghost in hamlet would could be said to post a question, who am I, when am I, what is my being what is my time. For Derrida these cannot be confined to a fakes upon the character in events in that text itself. They extend rather to question of being and time in general.

And this is the philosophical aspect of post structuralism. We do not have much time here, I would have like to you know talk to deconstruct show you know the these constructed nature of the text by using a poem like we did in structuralism. But, I hope I have been able to at least tell you or convey to you some of the important points in post structuralism. There is no point really in saying that deconstruction, there is no you know deconstruction can never be a method.

Because, it already says a languages impure, then that we can never mean anything. That is not the point that is really arguing as I said absorterm. The point here is that we have

we understand we do use language. But, at the same time we have to understand the language is by it is very nature. Because, you know a term is part of a system is not I think is no nothing ontological about it is always relational.

So, we have to understand that language is deficient in that sense of where the delineating of a full meaning is concern. That is what deconstruction is talking about, it is not talking about deconstruction or out of chaos or randomness or thinks ridiculous.

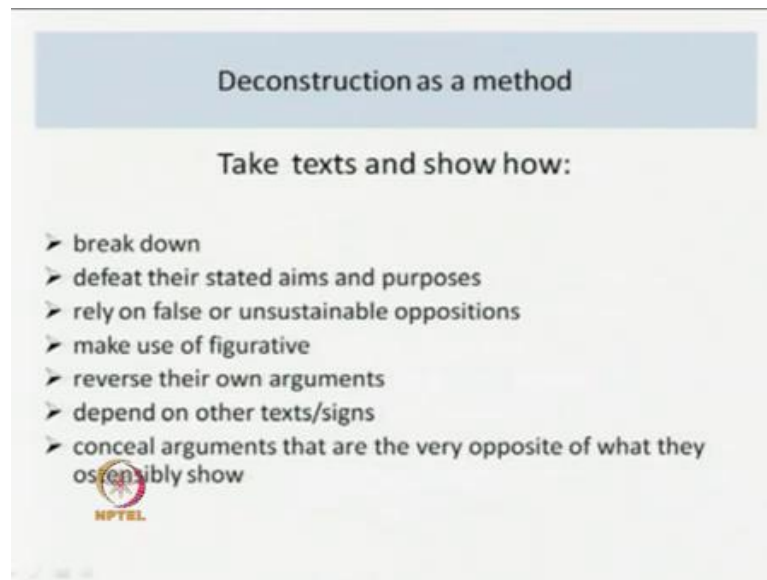
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The slide features a light blue header with the name 'Derrida' in black text. Below the header, there is a list of three terms: 'Gaps', 'Aberrations', and 'Inconsistencies', each preceded by a right-pointing arrowhead. To the right of this list, there are three hand-drawn, wavy lines in black ink. Below the list, the phrase 'Reading against the grain of the text' is written in black, with a long horizontal arrow pointing to the left underneath it. At the bottom of the slide, a quote is presented in black text: "The reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of the language that he uses." In the bottom left corner of the slide, there is a small circular logo with the text 'NPTEL' inside it.

Therefore, according to Derrida text have gaps text have aberrations and text have inconsistencies, which is the job of the deconstructionist to show. Reading against what he says, reading against the grain of the text. And he says here the reading must always aim at a certain relationship unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of herm beautifully put of the patterns of the language that he uses.

So, these gaps aberrations and inconsistencies are what I need to before grounded. Actually, how the methodology goes and as a method then you take a text.

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**Deconstruction as a method**

Take texts and show how:

- break down
- defeat their stated aims and purposes
- rely on false or unsustainable oppositions
- make use of figurative
- reverse their own arguments
- depend on other texts/signs
- conceal arguments that are the very opposite of what they ostensibly show

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And you show how, you know you break it down. You show how rather the text breaks down. How the text will defeat text defeat their stated aims and purposes rely on false or unsustainable oppositions make use of figurative terms. Reverse their own arguments depend on other texts and signs as an intellectuality, conceal arguments that are the very opposite of what they ostensibly show.

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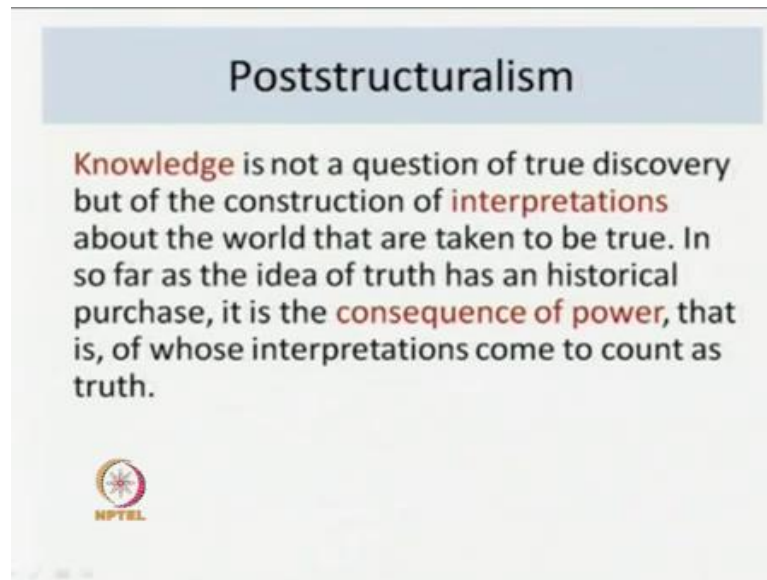


- What is Poststructuralism's take on knowledge?

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So, quickly now, let us look at the just one or two questions. For instance if you get a question like what is post structuralism take on knowledge. That is how, does post structuralism consider knowledge.

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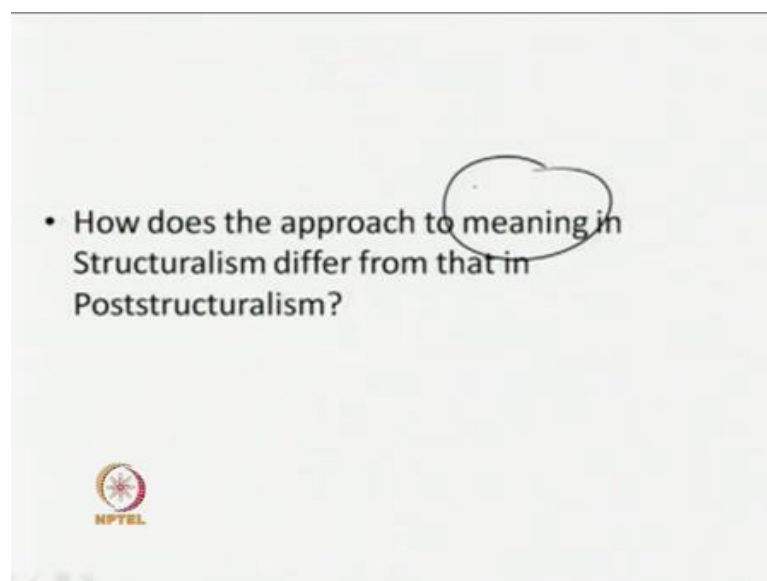
**Poststructuralism**

**Knowledge** is not a question of true discovery but of the construction of **interpretations** about the world that are taken to be true. In so far as the idea of truth has an historical purchase, it is the **consequence of power**, that is, of whose interpretations come to count as truth.


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The answer is this in post structuralism, knowledge is not a question of true discovery but it is seen as interpretations. And the privileging of any one interpretations of a text is seen as a act of power.

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- How does the approach to **meaning** in Structuralism differ from that in Poststructuralism?

 NPTEL

Next, how does the approach to meaning in post structuralism differ from that in structuralism. The previous question was to do with knowledge. How does post structuralism consider knowledge, how does it look at knowledge, how does it define knowledge here, it is with meaning. How does the approach to meaning differ you know in structuralism and how does it differ from that in post structuralism ((Refer Time: 52:07)).

And the answer is that in structuralism there was a certainty of knowledge. In the sense that we admitted the fact, that meaning is always differential in a system meaning is relational that words or terms signs are related to other signs and the meaning of a sign imitates from it is difference. That is why meaning is differential in structuralism. Yet we saw ((Refer Time: 52:32)) that meaning is graspable. We can grasp meaning, because there is stability in the structure.

There is a frame work, there is a stability and it is an organization after all sign. It is not a disorganization of signs, then signs you can arrive at some sort of meaning. But, ((Refer Time: 52:50)) we saw in post structuralism that in post structuralist approach to meaning is this that there can never be a complete meaning. Whether it is a sign or whether is this you know, collection of sign as you find in the text. So, meaning is endlessly deferred. And remember we looked at two words ((Refer Time: 53:13)).

And how their collapse to form another word call difference. To differ and to defer, that is meaning no doubt I am the structuralism is differential differs signs differ from other signs and that is how they get their meanings. But, we have an additional you know additional proposition here. Is that meaning is always also differed, that meaning is always postponed.

You can never have a full meaning from a signify, the way it is put is this is in this way by Derrida that is meaning there are no pure signifies or there is no transient dental signify. That is transience all culture or structures they can never be a transient dental signify. A signifier will always have you know different times and places, different signifier, the signifies and the fact is that all these signifies are also signifiers.

You will be rise to signifies and the fact is that these signifier, you know the text becomes then a play of signifier. So, we then end our lecture here. And I would want you to go back, if you have to understand post structuralism. There is also you need to go

back to the structuralist methodology. You cannot understand post structuralism without structuralism may be you can say, you understand, you cannot understand structuralism, if you know without looking at post structuralism.

But is not the other way around. First you have to understand that we said in the beginning of this lecture. That structuralism, post structuralism you know takes off from structuralism. That, the post here is not just a temporal post of say post world war one etcetera. It is a post in the sense that it retains and admits to some of the you know coprihenises of structuralism.

But, it gives a eventually a radical twist with transform it. And critiques and the most important you know important point linking in to structuralism, I would say in my reading is the sign and the idea of differentiability. You know, they it definitely in as in structuralism, there is meaning through a differential relationship. But, in post structuralism though it is retain the other part is more important, that there is always a deferral of meaning. Because, by nature you know language is such that take a never be any pure signifiers. Because of the traces substitution and echoes from other signifiers.

Thank you so much.