

**Aspects of Western Philosophy**  
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**Lecture – 40**  
**Deconstruction**  
**Feminism**  
**Discourse theory**

Welcome to this lecture series in Aspects of Western Philosophy; this is the 40th lecture. The previous lecture was on postmodern approaches and we seen some of the major feature of postmodernism, and this lecture we focus on 3 important movements, and they are deconstruction, feminism and discourse theory. They are not philosophical schools; that is the reason why I prefer to call them approaches. They are part of the broader larger postmodern movement, because it was this postmodern it depends that made this approaches possible. And they are very different in nature. So, let us discuss by one by one, Deconstruction.

So, before that these are the sources and references on the base of which this lecture is prepared.

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### Sources and References

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## Deconstruction

- ▶ A postmodern approach.
- ▶ Deconstruction is not a method, but an activity of reading.  
[Derrida]
- ▶ Associated with certain techniques for reading texts developed by Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man and many others.
- ▶ Refers to certain new strategies for interpreting literary texts.
- ▶ A poststructuralist approach: advocates certain very radical positions regarding language and meaning.



Deconstruction as I already mention is a postmodern approach, and this is what one of the major founders, or one of the major propounds of postmodernism, Jacques Derrida says about postmodernism. It is not a method, but activity of reading, an activity of reading text, an activity of interpreting, an activity of understanding to extend the scope of the notion of reading.

So, Derrida himself says that it is not a method, but an activity of reading. And it is associated with certain techniques for reading texts developed by Jacques Derrida Paul de man and many others. And we still see it is a major trident philosophy in literature and in art criticism. And it refers to certain new strategies for interpreting literary texts particularly in dominie of literature, this very influential movement. Rather it is being adopted as a method, though Derrida himself says that it is not a method, rather it is an activity of reading text, but many literate critics have adopted it as a method interestingly. And it is a poststructuralist approach: advocates certain very radical positions regarding language and meaning.

So, in one sense to understand deconstruction, we have to understand what is structuralism. We already very briefly mentioned what structuralism is in some of our previous lectures. So, because structuralism as got a very definite philosophical position, and poststructuralist approaches rather oppose these fixed, these definite assumption of structuralism and deconstruction is one of them. And in this course, deconstruction

advocates or rather it approach to certain very radical position regarding language and meaning. We do not have to time to discuss all this thinks in detail, the purposes of this lecture is give a very brief outline of what deconstruction is, what feminism is, some of the very fundamental assumption and approaches of this methods or this orientation.

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### A Poststructuralist Approach

- ▶ Agrees with structuralism that human subjects are culturally constructed.
- ▶ Challenges certain assumptions of structuralism.
- ▶ Structuralism: structures of meaning are stable, universal, or ahistorical.
- ▶ Opposes similar views advocated by phenomenology and psychoanalysis.
- ▶ Opposes the idea of a stable reality and methods to reach



Now, when we talk about the poststructuralist approach, it agrees with structuralism to a very great extent that human subjects are culturally constructed, which is against some of the previous metaphysical assumptions that prevailed in western philosophy, where reality is largely conceived as something which is existence, something which is independent of human mind or human reality or human culture and society or human cognition and human language by an large.

So, in one sense structuralism opposes these assumptions, and in that way post structuralism also agrees with structuralists assumptions about reality. Structuralism believes that reality and human subjects are to a very great extent culturally constructed and it, but at same time post structuralism challenges as I already mention certain very important assumption of structuralism, and structuralism says that structure of meaning are stable, universal, or ahistorical. So, this again very important aspect of post structuralism, because structuralism advocates approached to view that, meaning is stable, the meaning is constant, and it universal, ahistorical. But poststructuralist

approaches try to oppose this challenge, these fundamental assumptions of structuralism. And it opposes similar views advocated by phenomenology and psychoanalysis.

We already seen phenomenology a bit in detail in one of the previous lectures, phenomenology of Husserl particularly Edmund Husserl of German philosopher, what he tries do is to arrive it some of the immediately given data to consciousness. And the most important slogan of phenomenology is back to things themselves, which is assumed that there are certain things which are in themselves, which exists as themselves, which are directly given to the human conciseness. When the human conciseness accesses them, so something is data which is directly given to the conciseness is the subject matter of phenomenology.

So, which as assume that there are certain fundamental data, which can be called as essences, which are directly given to conciseness. And this data this fundamental data, this immediate data which are given to conciseness are pure. They are they can be found in the conciseness, this is the basic assumption of phenomenology. And poststructuralist approaches oppose such a view, again in psychoanalysis, when you come to psycho analysis to the find in psycho analysis assumes that, there is one fundamental meaning that lies in the subconscious mind, which can be understood through analysis.



So, there is specific method which is adopted by the psycho analysts. By means of which a specific method of interpretation, they adopt by means of which they reach this data this fundamental data, which lie in the subconscious mind, and which they considered constitute the most important meanings to be understood. So, in phenomenology also there is a method, because Husserl propagates he advocate some method the phenomenology method of bracketing. By means of which reach the essences and finally, you reach that consciousness, the pure consciousness. Similarly psycho analysis also adopts a method the method of analysis, by means of which the fundamental data can be captured.

So, they all believe that there is a set of pure data, which is available for the phenomenologist consciousness, and for the psycho analyst's conscious mind. And poststructuralist approaches oppose idea of a stable reality, and the very concept of a method to reach this reality, which is advocated by phenomenology and psychoanalysis and many other philosophical assumptions.

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### Philosophical Basis

- ▶ Nietzsche's criticism of the idea of absolute knowledge.
- ▶ Language is arbitrary.
- ▶ Truth is a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphisms, in short a sum of human relations which have been subjected to poetic and rhetorical intensification, translation and decoration

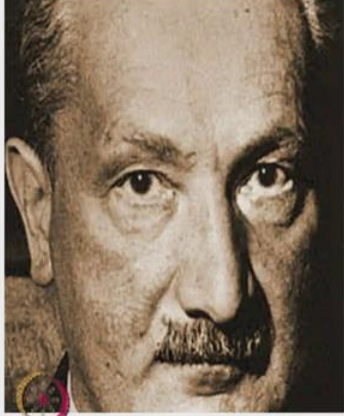


So, now when we talk about the philosophical basis of deconstruction, we eventually reach the phenomenal influence of this great German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Nietzsche's criticism of the idea of absolute knowledge, we have already discussed Nietzsche's philosophy and its contribution in one of the previous lectures. So, I am not elaborating on this, but we see Nietzsche as categorically opposing the idea of the very possibility of absolute knowledge. Because absolute knowledge pre-emptively opposes the concept of truth, the concept of universal truth, and nature as a very interesting view about truth, he says that truth does not exist; the absolute truth does not exist. Language, he says, is arbitrary and truth is a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphism in short a sum of human relations, which have been subjected to poetic and rhetorical intensification, translation and decoration.

So, there is nothing called universal truth with a capital T, as that traditional metaphysical tradition of Western philosophy has been advocating. So, once such a concept of truth is destabilised or overthrown then what remains? What remains to be found out? There is nothing that remains to be found out by means of adopting a definite method, whether it is reality, social reality or anything for that matter. Even in a text the concept of truth is destabilized by Nietzsche's philosophy and that has been a phenomenal influence on deconstruction.

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### Philosophical Basis



- ▶ The idea of ontological difference; distinction between Being and beings of entities.
- ▶ Being and the structure of of being lie beyond every entity and every feature of an entity that there can possibly be.

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Another very important and very significant influence comes from this great German another great German philosopher martin Heidegger, he says that the idea of ontological difference. So, Heidegger philosophy, particularly his philosophy as it is advocated in being and time, which works on the basis of rather (Refer Time: 10:08) around the notion of being with capital B.

So, he says that, there is the basic distinction between being and beings of entities. So, this is called the under logical difference, the fundamental under logical difference between being, and the being of entities. This is concept which is so central to Heidegger's early philosophy. And being and the structure of being lie beyond every entity and every feature of an entity that there can possibly be. So, we can never known this being, this is and in connection with this concept Heidegger as gone back to the Greek tradition and developed in notion of althea or un concealment, being is unconcealed to the being of man, but each movement of un concealment is different, each movement of un concealment is unique.

So, there is nothing called an objective absolute truth, where a complete concealment of being happens to one individual entity. All this philosophical insides of created a very interesting and very important intellectual atmosphere in European philosophy. So, another very important influence is Heidegger and many others, and what you mean by deconstructing.

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### To Deconstruct...

- ▶ To deconstruct is to take a text apart along the structural “fault lines” created by the ambiguities inherent in one or more of its key concepts or themes in order to reveal the equivocations or contradictions that make the text possible. [Nancy Holland]



So, here Nancy Holland says in this context, I quote - To deconstruct is to take a text apart along the structural “fault lines” created by the ambiguities inherent in one or more of its key concepts or themes, in order to reveal the equivocations or contradictions that make the text possible. So, this is the very interesting aspect of deconstruction. So, our traditional understanding of our traditional way which we understand a text; A text is given, let us take a poem or any text for that matter.

Let us take the epic Ramayana, there is the story which talks about Rama, in which Valmiki says that Rama is the embodiment of dharma, he is the embodiment righteousness, and the whole story tells about how Rama has to go to the forest and finally, Seetha was abducted by Ravana, and then there was a war followed by which Rama kills by Ravana, takes brings back Seetha and lot of incidences happens in this epic in which Rama is being protect as a central character, the book itself is called the Kavya itself is called Ramayana it is the story of Rama.

So, there is a central meaning which is communicated through this text, and Ramayana is also a religious text it is not only a poetic work in India, it is also religious a text for many Hindus. But, the common meaning which is communicated which has been handed down for generation by this text has been questioned or can be questioned by different possible other readings.



So, Ramayana can be read in different ways, the same Ramayana can be read in different ways, which there can be a famines reading of Ramayana, you can read Ramayana by emphasising the character of Seetha, whether Rama as done justices to Seetha. All kind of question can be interesting questions can be raised, once you considered Ramayana as a text, not as the religious book academically.

So, this possibility of different readings, what makes a text? What makes that you know a text is can be read? Same text can be read in different ways? So, this is a very interesting phenomena, and this is phenomenon is being analyzed by this philosopher, and the deconstruction would say that the very possibility of different readings is already inherent in the text, that is because the text which is composed in a language, language itself contains that possibility of different readings, there are multiple layers of meaning. Language as the ability to hold in it multiple layers of meaning and often some of these layers are hidden. So, we have to actually bring this meaning out. So, the whole effort of the deconstruction is to bring out such meanings which are not apparel present. Now here it opposes structuralism, phenomenology and psycho analysis we already explain this.

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### Against Structuralism

- ▶ Structuralism gives priority to universal structures that subsume both the individual and the society and believed that we can thus transcend the conflict between them.
- ▶ Deconstruction criticizes the idealistic overtone of structuralism; common universal structures.
- ▶ Deconstruction is a radical variant of structuralism: a culturally and, to some extent, politically left-wing offshoot of structuralism. [Cantor]

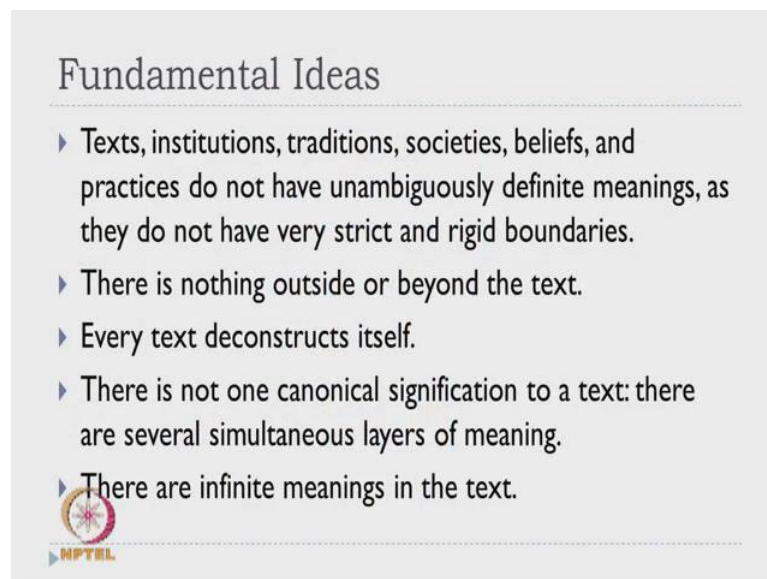


Now, at again structuralism gives priority to universal structures that subsume both the individual and the society and believed that we can thus transcend the conflict between the individual and society. So they In fact, emphasise on commonalities the universal features, deconstruction criticizes the idealistic overtone of structuralism, which believes




in the common universal structures. So, there are no such common universal structures, but there are various different structures, there are different structures. So, the idea of difference, which actually is being derived from the concept of ontological difference as discussed in Heidegger's work which we have already mentioned. So, again what Cantor says, deconstruction is a radical variant of structuralism a culturally and, to some extent, politically left-wing offshoot of structuralism will see the implication of this later.

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**Fundamental Ideas**

- ▶ Texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs, and practices do not have unambiguously definite meanings, as they do not have very strict and rigid boundaries.
- ▶ There is nothing outside or beyond the text.
- ▶ Every text deconstructs itself.
- ▶ There is not one canonical signification to a text: there are several simultaneous layers of meaning.
- ▶ There are infinite meanings in the text.

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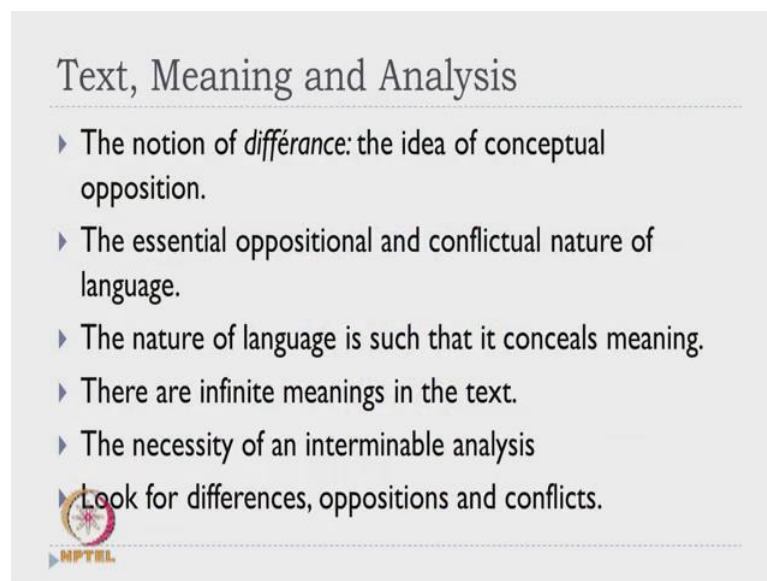
Now, let us see some of the fundamental ideas of structuralism. The texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs, and practices do not have unambiguously definite meanings, as they do not have very strict and rigid boundaries. This is what precisely I mentioned. I took the example of Ramayana, text, institution, traditions, society's, beliefs and practices. So, we can actually put into question, when we try to understand these phenomena, whether it is have certain social practices that excises in our society. We have already seen that in our political development of question, criticised and challenged certain practises like Sati, untouchability etcetera.

The again institution, and traditions, all this can be considered as phenomena that can be understood, that can be questioned, that can be challenged, and that can be read in different ways. So, because they do not have unambiguously definite meanings; again there is nothing outside or beyond the text. So, that there is the plat form outside the text where you can locate the meaning. For example, when you talk about the text, when you

talk about Ramayana since I have already mentioned that example, the author of Ramayana Valmiki, there is the immediate tendency to associate the meaning of the text with the author's intention, which is the problem in hermeneutics.

So, here again the deconstruction is would question that. They would say that there is nothing beyond the text; we do not have to search for the author's intentional life that lies outside the text in order to locate the meaning of text. So, the text the meaning of the text has to be found within the text itself. And text, every text since it is linguistic entity it will deconstructs itself, because it contains multiple layers of meaning, often some of this meaning contradict with each other. So, naturally there is tendency to deconstruct itself, there is no one canonical signification to text, there are several simultaneous layers of meaning which have already mentioned, there are infinite meanings in the text. So, there is no one single universal objective meaning.

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Text, Meaning and Analysis

- ▶ The notion of *différance*: the idea of conceptual opposition.
- ▶ The essential oppositional and conflictual nature of language.
- ▶ The nature of language is such that it conceals meaning.
- ▶ There are infinite meanings in the text.
- ▶ The necessity of an interminable analysis
- ▶ Look for differences, oppositions and conflicts.

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Now, when we talk about text meaning and analysis, again we come across the notion of meaning which is so central for deconstruction, the idea of conceptual opposition. What is it the essential oppositional and conflictual nature of language. So, since every text every institution, every phenomenon to be understood is found in language. Language is the fundamental structure to be understood, but then again language there is an essential opposition and confliction language. Every language has that feature the nature of language is said that it conceals meaning, because there are multiple layers meaning. For

a person who is trying to approach the text can read out only finites number of meaning, base on the contexts from which that text is read. There are infinite meanings in the text, and the necessity of an interminable analysis.

We will discuss this is very interesting concept, because deconstruction does not believe that the analysis of the text will ends somewhere by locating the real meaning of the text, like psycho analysis for example, the psycho analytic process ends somewhere, where the real meanings are located within the unconscious mind of the person, but here there is nothing called the real meaning, or universal objective meaning. So, analysis as to continue, it has needs to be in terminable, look for differences oppositions and conflicts, not for something which is universally accommodating in everything.

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### Analysis of Conceptual Oppositions

- ▶ Between writing and speech (Derrida)
- ▶ The deconstructor looks for the ways in which one term in the opposition has been "privileged" over the other in a particular text, argument, historical tradition or social practice.
- ▶ One term may be privileged because it is considered the general, normal, central case.
- ▶ Because it is considered more true, more valuable, more important, or more universal than its opposite.
- ▶ Since things can have more than one opposite, many different types of privilegings can occur simultaneously.

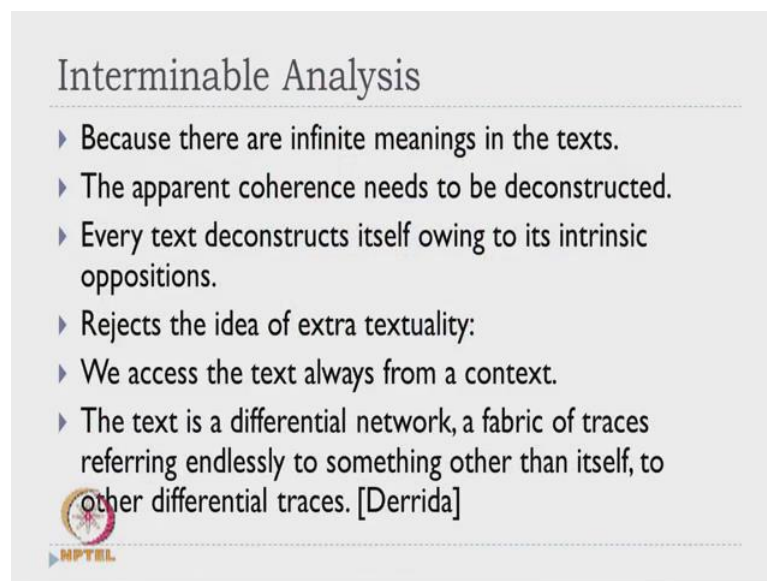


Now, between writing and speech, there are certain conceptual opposition. Derrida talks about certain conceptual opposition, the fundamental one is between writing and speech. The deconstructor looks for the ways in which one term in the opposition has been “privileged” over other in a particular text, argument, historical tradition or social practice. So, this is what I said. In the reading of the text, what happens is that, there is a privileged to meaning which always surfaces, which always try influence us when we approach the text. The example which I sited is Ramayana, you can take any text for that matter, there is a privileged set of meanings or argument, historical tradition or social practice.

So, deconstruction as to be aware of this privilege meaning, one term may be privileged because it is considered the general, normal, central case and this assumption as to be questioned by the deconstructor. Because it is considered more true, more valuable, more important, or more universal than it is opposite. So, what bases? What is criteria on the base of which you consider one term or one way or set of meaning as more valuable and more important or universal or central. So, there are certain ways in which, they are certain reasons for which set of a particular word or particular set of meaning is treated as privilege.

Since things can have more than one opposite, many different types of privilegings can occur simultaneously. So, this actually brings of, this possibility actually shows up the contradictions involved in the text, the conflicts that the text may contain within itself. So, the deconstruction should be aware of and sensitive to such conflates, which the text itself shows up.

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### Interminable Analysis

- ▶ Because there are infinite meanings in the texts.
- ▶ The apparent coherence needs to be deconstructed.
- ▶ Every text deconstructs itself owing to its intrinsic oppositions.
- ▶ Rejects the idea of extra textuality:
- ▶ We access the text always from a context.
- ▶ The text is a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces. [Derrida]

And it is in this context the concept of interminable analysis is propose, because there are infinite meanings, the apparent coherence needs to be deconstructed, every text deconstructs itself owing to it is intrinsic oppositions, because there is no one single meaning or one set of meanings, which constitute the very central essence of the text, but there are several opposite contradictory conflicting meaning. And this makes the text an

entity, which has intrinsic oppositions. Rejects the idea of extra textuality, we access the text always from a context.

So, the context is very important. The specific definite context extremely important the text again the Derrida says the text is a deferential network, a fabric of traces, referring endlessly to something other than itself to other deferential traces. Now in this context it should be very interesting to see deconstruction and as an ideological critic. So, it is in this sense the beginning of this lecture, mention that it is a (Refer Time: 23:14) of soured of post structuralism.

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### Deconstruction as an Ideological Critique

- ▶ Ideologies often privilege certain features of social life and deemphasize others.
- ▶ Analyse what is deemphasized, overlooked, or suppressed in a particular way of thinking or in a particular set of legal doctrines.
- ▶ How suppressed or marginalized principles return in new guises.

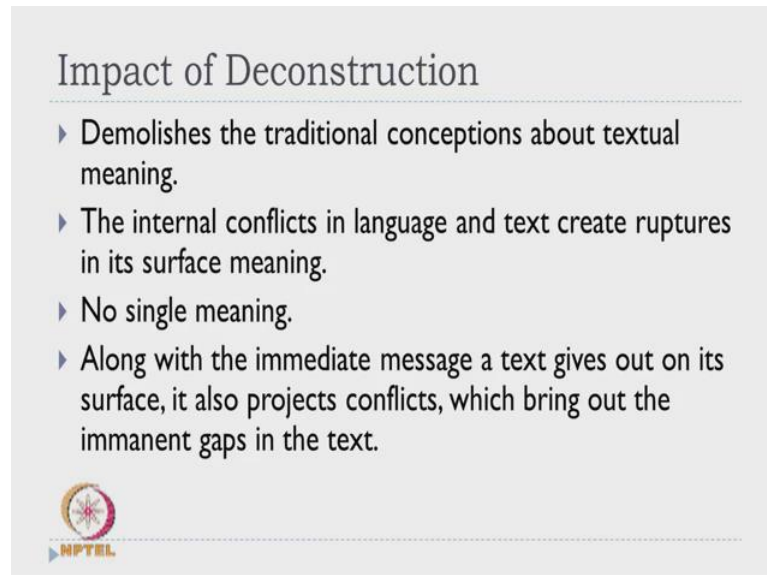


So, it can be treated as an ideological critic, where the privileged is opposed, but the privileged is rather being question and criticise. Ideologies often privilege certain feature of social life and deemphasize other features. So, this happens in every society, in every ideology, certain features of social life are emphasized. Particularly in most of our societies were once upon a time religious societies, or religion was dominant narrative.

So, in religious form of life, certain feature of life is highlighted considered most important than others. Analyse what is deemphasized. So, deconstruction says that we have to analyse, what is deemphasized? What is overlooked or what is suppressed in a particular way of thinking or in a particular set of legal doctrines? So something which is marginalised. So we are to other really looking into the margins. So, this possible reading different form of readings of the text, different kinds of reading of the text actually opens


up a lot of possibilities for the deconstructor. How suppressed or marginalized principles return in new guises.

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**Impact of Deconstruction**

- Demolishes the traditional conceptions about textual meaning.
- The internal conflicts in language and text create ruptures in its surface meaning.
- No single meaning.
- Along with the immediate message a text gives out on its surface, it also projects conflicts, which bring out the immanent gaps in the text.

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And let us see in this context, since we do not have time I will try to wind up my discussion on deconstruction here with highlighting certain important aspects. The impact of deconstruction of course, we all know that deconstruction has become one of the most dominant trends in literary criticism, the ways in which text are read by in different ways by different critics. It demolishes the traditional conceptions of textual meaning, where textual meaning is concerned as secrete universal platform in which utilise a historical platform in which it is situated.

So, deconstruction demolishes such ideas, and it brings out the internal conflicts in language and text that creates ruptures in it is surface meaning. So, deconstruction would remind you that the apparent surface meaning of the text, if you read it closely if you adopt deconstructions approaches, it will start exposing the ruptures created by the internal conflict of language and text. And it asserts that there is no single meaning of the text, along with the immediate message a text gives out on it is surface, it also projects conflicts, which bring out the immanent gaps in the text. So, this very interesting aspect there are certain gaps, there are certain immanent gaps in the text because of the conflictual nature of language. And deconstructor has to capture those gaps, he has to magnify those gaps or rather he has to be sensitive to those gaps. The internal conflicts

create immanent gaps the text hence we cannot fix the meaning. Analysis should focus these gaps which can be found in the margins of the text.

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## Deconstruction

- ▶ The internal conflicts create immanent gaps in the text.
- ▶ Hence we cannot fix meaning.
- ▶ Analysis should focus these gaps which can be found in the margins of the text.
- ▶ Withdraw gaze from what appear to be the most important, central or crucial.
- ▶ Instead focus the secondary, eccentric, lateral, marginal, parasitic, borderline cases.



So, this is what I said earlier, we have to actually look at the marginalized meanings. So, analysis should aim at this aspect, rather than trying to see the fundamental, essential, common and universal. Analysis should aim at understanding the gaps, the ruptures, the conflicts. Withdraw gaze from what appear to be the most important central or crucial, instead focus the secondary, eccentric, lateral, marginal, parasitic, border line cases. So, these are emphasised by the deconstructionist analysis. So, instead of the most important and central meaning which can be treated as the essence, or which traditional philosophical system treated as the essence, we have to look for marginalized, which is parasitic, which lies at border line.

Now with this we will wind up our discussion on deconstruction. And we can see that at this is defiantly an off shoot of or rather constitute one of the very important movements, one of the very important approaches a within the postmodern strain. Now let us talk about another one feminism. Feminism again we can treat feminism, we can when you try to understand feminism interestingly, it is also kind of understanding the world. It also an approach by means of which you understand the world, by means of which you read a text, by means which you understand yourself. So, in that sense it is not just social



or a political movement. It suggests a way of being for all of us. So, in that sense feminism is a very significant 20th century and 21st century movement.

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### What is Feminism?

- ▶ A form of resistance against patriarchal domination.
- ▶ The struggle to end sexist oppression.
- ▶ A political movement, an idea or ideology, an approach to life and to raise questions of equality and justice.
- ▶ They criticize the patriarchal social order.
- ▶ Questioning the ways in which this social order has fixed identities.



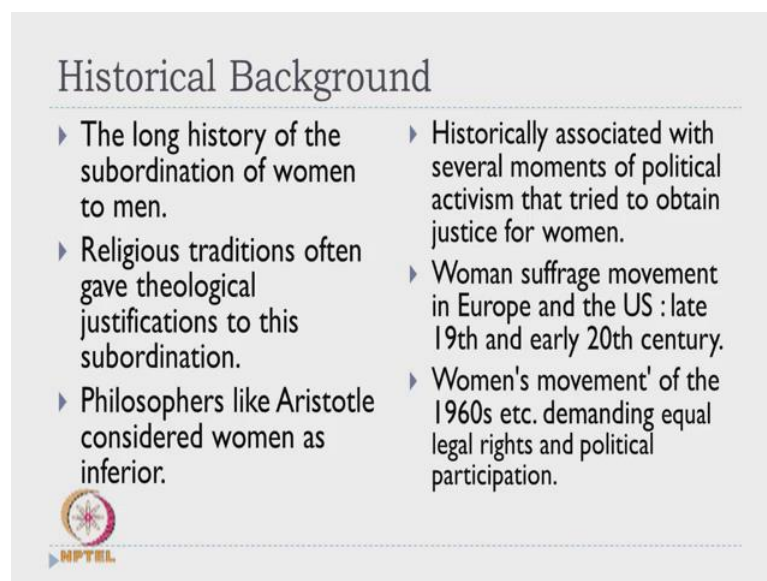
What is feminism? So, at the very outset it is very difficult to define this postmodern approaches, to give precise definition to them, but let us try to understand them by situating them in certain context. So, when we try to understand, what feminism is, we can see that it is a form of resistance against patriarchal domination, I do not think any feminist would oppose this characterisation of feminism. Because feminism all form of feminism for that matter is categorically against all forms patriarchal domination. The patriarchal social system, which has created a series of domination in our society; the struggle to end sexist oppressions there is a definite approach, which aims at ending all forms of sexist oppression in society, various walks of society, it is a political movement an idea or ideology, an approach to life and to raise questions of equality and justice all these are again you know try to see it has a political movement. They criticize the patriarchal social order we are already mentioned.

Questioning the ways in which this social order has fixed identities. This very interesting because every society has rather one way in which the patriarchal social order operates is through the establishment of certain institutions. Institutions like for example, one of the strongest institution is the institution of family. And most of the societies have their slightly different of course, but differ their conception of family. Marriage, family

relationship, etcetera what happens here is that, along with the creation of an institution called family, here also creating certain identities, certain very strong identities for example, husband and wife.


So, and this is so fundamental for the institution of family, they have certain rules, the identity of the husband and the identity of a wife we are quite fixed. If we come to the traditional Indian setting, even which is even today very relevant, which is prevailing even today in many places the husband and wife have certain definite duties, and in patriarchal order the husband the kind of freedom the husband enjoys, the man enjoys is not dare for the women. So, these are very interesting question which the feminist approaches would questioned, would try to raise and try to find solutions through various approaches.

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**Historical Background**

- ▶ The long history of the subordination of women to men.
- ▶ Religious traditions often gave theological justifications to this subordination.
- ▶ Philosophers like Aristotle considered women as inferior.
- ▶ Historically associated with several moments of political activism that tried to obtain justice for women.
- ▶ Woman suffrage movement in Europe and the US : late 19th and early 20th century.
- ▶ Women's movement' of the 1960s etc. demanding equal legal rights and political participation.

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Now, let us see the historical background. The long is history of the subordination of women to men we all know that in most of the human society this is happened. Women were subordinated. Religious traditions often gave theological justification to this subordination, we have seen the bible in which is sacred book for the all Abraham traditions, it is being stated that God has created man, God himself is a male character, and again God as created man. So, man is the first creation of God, and woman was created from man.

So, in a sense woman is a shadow of man, you can critically approach this whole narrative in that is fashion. A woman is not independent of man, but as always depends on man. And then the way in which various religion traditions have ascribe duties for men and women, even in India we could see that various tradition, but particularly in dharmic traditions, in like Hinduism and Buddhism, they all have their conception of women, where a certain form of subordination is instituted. There are certain very controversial practices like sati, which makes women a shadow of man in Indian context. Philosophers like Aristotle considered women as inferior, and historically this is associated with several movements of political activism that try to obtain justice for women.

So, the question the way in which women started rebelling against this such dominations have a long is free. There are certain exceptional voices here and there, but has a movement it was it took off as a movement, a power full movement only in the 21th century. Women suffrage movement in Europe and the US: late 19th and early 20th century, these movements have actually created a lot of sensibility, which favour the right which prompted to entire humanity to view certain genuine problems women facing all over the world; women's movement' of the 1960, demanding equal legal rights and political participation, in various parts of the world.

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## Major Concerns

- ▶ To end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.
- ▶ Opposes patriarchy as a system of domination.
- ▶ Equality: but not merely about women seeking to be equal to men and is not anti-male.
- ▶ Efforts to create gender justice: equal rights for women based on the idea of the equality of the sexes.
- ▶ Feminists are made, not born.
- ▶ Females were as socialized to believe sexist thinking and values as males: hence before women could change patriarchy they have to change themselves.




And major concerns of feminism as I already mention is to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression. And sexism exploitation based on sexism and oppression based on it happened through institution. And most of this institution as we already mentioned are patriarchal. Opposes patriarchy as a system of domination, and they all claim for they all argue for equality, but not merely about women seeking to be equal to men and it is very important to note that in a genuine feminist approaches are not anti male, though we could see that at some stage at some stage feminist approaches were predominantly adopting an anti male approach, but this is subsequently changed. Efforts to create gender justice, equal rights for women based on the idea of equality of the sexes.

So, the concept of general justices is very dominate, a very central feature in the feminist concerns. Feminists are made not born, that the very important interesting thing. Because feminist are not just I mean when we talk about who is feminist? A feminist need not be necessarily women; both men and women can be feminist; because they are not born as feminist, but they are made. Females were as socialized to believe sexist thinking and values as males: hence before women could change patriarchy, they have to change themselves, because both men and women contribute to the creation and the sustenance of this patriarchal order, it not that men were responsible for this. It is a social order which is out there and both men and women have jointly created it and they have jointly changed it. But that is why before women change patriarchy, they have to change themselves. And when we talk about the philosophical foundations of feminism, we have women's like liberalism, where equality, personal autonomy, importance of democracy, rights of individual's etcetera are emphasized. And we could see that all this have become prominent in Europe after enlightenment.

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## Philosophical Foundations

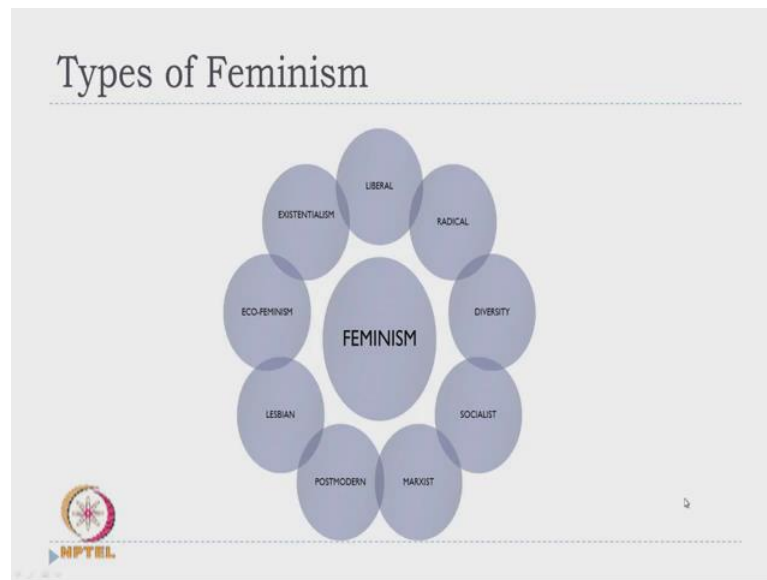
- ▶ Liberalism: equality, personal autonomy, importance of democracy, rights of individuals etc.
- ▶ Increasing democratization of the society.



For example consistory equality prior to enlightenment in the pre modern societies, this conceptive equality was not that predominant. Society had been divided into different classes of people like clergyman, peasants, farmer all kinds of different people, different class of people rather.

So, the conceptive equality was not predominantly there, but after enlightenment we are already seen this in some of the pervious lectures that enlightenment had brought in a kind of sensibility, that there is something in each individual which needs to be respected, something like a concept of moral sense, a kind of agent see. So, each human being is potentially an agent, hence there is a kind of equality that is functions and that level. So, there is equality and personal autonomy and then at the social level, social and political level there is there is an increasing democratisation, emphasis on the rights of the individual etcetera.

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So, when you talk about the different types of feminism. So, we could see that there are lot of I mean there are many types, say for example, let us start with the socialist we only discuss some of the prominent use of or prominent types of a feminism here, there are socialist Marxist, postmodern, lesbian, eco-feminism, existentialism, liberal, feminist, radical feminist, diversity feminist, all kinds of different types that extent and they offend overlap as well.

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### Socialist Feminism

- ▶ The problem is due to a combination of male domination and class exploitation
- ▶ Gender and sexuality are social constructs that are capable of transformation.
- ▶ Home is a place of production as work at home they contribute to society at large: social worth is important.
- ▶ Eradication of all political, economic and social foundations of contemporary society.



And among these different types, I will just take up 3 or 4 for discussion, socialist feminism where the problem is due to a combination of male domination and class exploitation. They identified the fundamental problem lies there, combination of male domination and class exploitation, gender and sexuality are social constructs that are capable of transformation.

So, they believe that this two aspect gender and sexuality, their social construct and that can be changed. Home is a place of production as work at home they contribute to society at large: social worth is very important. Because in traditionally the rules were divided for man and women; women were mostly confine to homes and men is to go and work; socialist feminist would argue that home is a place of production, as work at home they contribute to the society at large, then eradication of all political economic and social foundations of contemporary society is the aim.

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### Socialist Feminism

- ▶ All institutions like education, work, sexuality and parenting must undergo thorough transformations.
- ▶ Sexual division of labor, which locks men and women into stereotypical occupational categories, must cease.
- ▶ Relationships in society, workplace and family are naturally interdependent but have been artificially separated or placed in opposition leading to alienation.
- ▶ Emphasis on collaborating with other oppressed groups.



Then all institutions like education, work, sexuality and parenting must undergo thorough transformations. So, socialist feminist would argue for a form of transformations, a form of social transformation, where the entire apparatus of the society, all institution of society fundamentally undergo certain transformations. Sexual division of labour which locks men and women into stereotypical occupational categories, must cease like men should go out and work in the factories and women



should remain at home and work in the kitchen, such stereotypical views should be deconstructed, should be over thrown.

So, that is why sexual division of labour should be over thrown. Relationships in society, workplace and family are naturally interdependent, but have been artificially separated or placed in oppositional leading to alienation. Emphasis on collaborating with other oppressed groups. So, this is again another very important feature of socialist feminism is, that they emphasis on collaborating with other oppressed groups for creating a better society. Because they believe in social transformation, a total social transformation, which they also bring in improvements in the ways in which men and women are treated. Now when we in opposition to this or rather if not in opposition, in contrast to this, liberal feminist would argue that, liberal values like equality and autonomy are more important.

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### Marxist Feminism

- ▶ Capitalism as the major factor in women's oppression.
- ▶ Alienation in the workplace is a major issue.
- ▶ Tries to conceptualize gender oppression around class contradictions and class analysis.
- ▶ Bourgeoisie is equated with men and women with the proletariat.



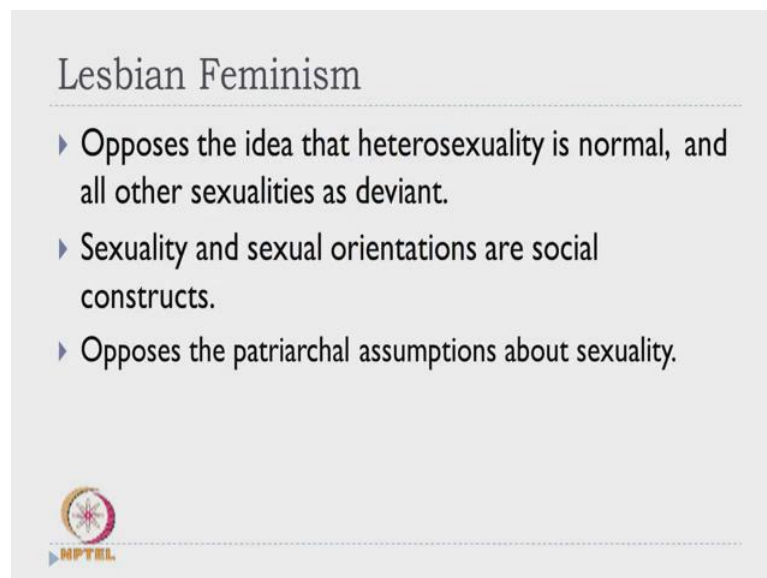
So, you have equality, you have autonomy, each individually autonomous. All humans have capable of self determination and liberty irrespective of their gender, irrespective of their sex and all are rational, recognition of human rights, individuals human beings have to be men and both men and women have to be respected equally, based on the concept of human rights.

Now, when we come to Marxist feminism, which is very close to socialist feminism, they considered capitalism as a major factoring in women's oppression like all Marxist

they also believe that capitalism is the major factor here, alienation in workplace is a major issue because for Marxist, alienation central problem, which we have already examine when we discussed Marxism in one of the previous lectures. They try to conceptualize gender oppression around class contradictions and class analysis.


So, the marshiest analysis would be divide society in to two class: the Murray and the proletariat. And all gender of all forms of operation including gender operation can be constructed, can be found are constructed around this fundamental opposition that exists in the society. Bourgeoisie is equated with men and women with the proletariat. So, you can see that contradiction, that class contradiction they bring here in order to analysis.

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Lesbian Feminism

- ▶ Opposes the idea that heterosexuality is normal, and all other sexualities as deviant.
- ▶ Sexuality and sexual orientations are social constructs.
- ▶ Opposes the patriarchal assumptions about sexuality.

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And now lesbian feminism, it opposes the idea that heterosexuality is normal, and all other sexuality as deviant. So, this is another very interesting aspect because the patriarchal social order will have a concept of sexuality, and it has a very central very rigid concept of sexuality and considers all other forms of sexuality as abnormal and deviant. See even the transgender are treated as abnormal, and they have no decent place in the society, unfortunately even today many society they do not have decent place, but lesbian feminism would say that the sexualities themselves are the creation of the society, which has to be over thrown. Sexuality and sexual orientations are social constructs according to them and opposes the patriarchal assumptions about sexuality, which considers all other forms of sexuality as deviant.

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Diversity Feminism	Existentialism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Problems women face are different in different cultures and times.</li><li>▶ There is no single feminist voice or perspective.</li><li>▶ There are multiple perspectives: non-Anglo, non-Western, Dalit etc.</li><li>▶ All other frameworks ignore this diversity.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Woman is constructed as man's Other: inauthentic existence</li><li>▶ No recognition of her own subjectivity and to responsibility for her own actions.</li><li>▶ Women is incidental and inessential, an object to man who is the subject and absolute.</li></ul>

And just very briefly mentioned about diversity feminism, where the problems women face are different in different cultures and times, they emphasis on differences and diverse problems, there is no single feminist voice or perspective, they would not say that there is feminism itself is not a single universal theory like what Marxist feminises would argue. There are multiple perspectives: non-Anglos, non-Western Dalit feminism etcetera.

So, all other frameworks ignore this diversity, which the diversity feminist would emphasise. And when you come to existentialism, woman is constructed as mans other inauthentic existence. So, mans other see in existentialist philosophy, the concept of orthotic existence so central, and the existentialist feminist would argue that, the existence of woman is concerned as a form of inauthentic assistance, the other of man which they oppose. No recognition of her own subjectivity and to responsibility for her own actions and women is incidental and inessential as object to man who is the subject and absolute.

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## Radical Feminism

- ▶ Women's oppression is the most widespread and deepest form of oppression.
- ▶ Women's oppression can be considered as the conceptual model for understanding all other forms of oppression.
- ▶ Men control the norms of acceptable sexual behaviour: so oppose them.



So, now again the other form of feminism is radical feminism, women's oppression is the most widespread and deepest form of oppression; women's oppression can be considered as the conceptual model for understanding all other forms of oppression. This is interesting because they consider that this can be treated as a conceptual model to understand all other forms of operation that exist in the society, and whatever actions we take in order to change such operations. Men control the norms of acceptable sexual behaviour. So, oppose them.

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## Eco-Feminism

- ▶ More spiritual than political.
- ▶ A patriarchal society will exploit its resources without regard to long term consequences as a direct result of the attitudes fostered in a patriarchal/hierarchical society.



And now another one is eco feminism, which is very interesting and very relevant today, because there are in literal criticism particularly the eco feminist reading is quite prevalent; this is more spiritual than political; a patriarchal society will exploit its resources without regard to long term consequences as a direct result of the attitudes fostered in a patriarchal hierarchical society.

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### Complexities of Feminism

- ▶ **Class differences and race discriminations:** black women realize that they are never going to have equality within the existing white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.
- ▶ **Polarization:** Reformists emphasize gender equality, while Revolutionary feminists wanted to transform that system.
- ▶ Feminist theory remains as a privileged discourse available to those among us who are highly literate, well- educated, and usually materially privileged.

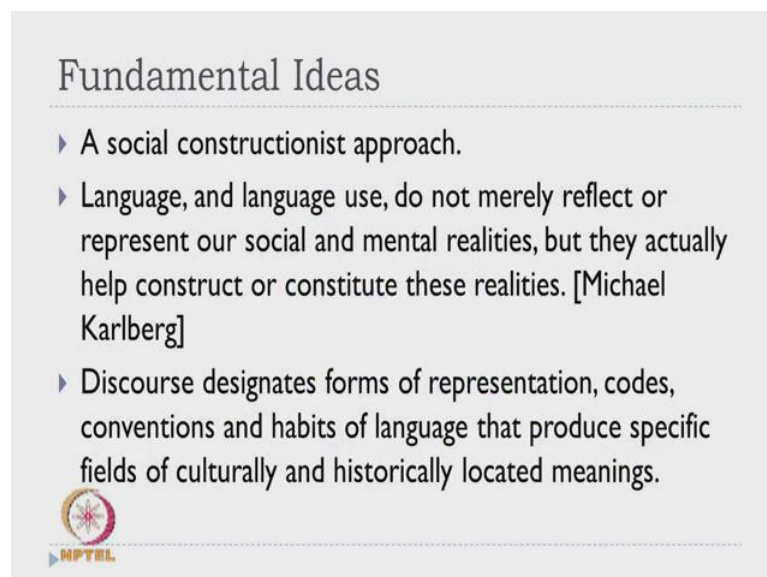


So, these are some of the different types of feminism which we can find out and now let us conclude our discussion of feminism. We can conclude our discussion of feminism by highlighting some of the complexities that are involved in this very approach. There are many of them; the first one is class differences and race discriminations are causing a lot of problems because black women realize that they are never going to have equality within the existing white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.

So however, the kind of feminist sentiments we talk about, black women and white women are not going to be equal and the black women are realising that they are never going to have equality with this extremely, with it is with it is white supremacist capitalist patriarchy. And then there is the kind of polarization, reformists emphasize gender equality, while revolutionary feminists wanted to transform that system. Many feminist groups would like to transform the entire system, while certain other groups would do satisfied only with you know attending a kind of gender equality.


Feminist theory remains as a privileged discourse available to those among us who are highly literate, well educated and usually materially privileged. This is another very interesting aspect, because the kind of the theory the kind of theory kind of discourse which the feminist are try to advocate, are not going to touch the realities of many under privileged, non educated, illiterate people particularly women in third world countries. So, some of the complexity is involved in feminists, there are basic there are many other we can highlight, but at the same time none of us can denied importance of feminism as a movement, as an approach to understand reality, as a critic, as a criticism against existing social order.

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**Fundamental Ideas**

- ▶ A social constructionist approach.
- ▶ Language, and language use, do not merely reflect or represent our social and mental realities, but they actually help construct or constitute these realities. [Michael Karlberg]
- ▶ Discourse designates forms of representation, codes, conventions and habits of language that produce specific fields of culturally and historically located meanings.

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Now, will continued this lecture by a very brief discussion on discourse theory, which is also very significant postmodern approach and discourse theory again, of suite of what is known as linguistic term, where ling language becomes philosophical significant by around 20th century, this is a very significant phenomena that is happened in European thought. Language as become philosophical significant, see it is a social constructionist approach and language and language use do not merely reflect or represent our social and mental realities, but they actually help construct or constitute these realities. A language is not just the medium or vehicle through which you communicate, but it is something which constitutes our reality. Discourse designates forms of representation, codes, conventions and habit is of language that produces specific fields of culturally historically located meanings.

So, basically discourse theory would argue that, meaning is not fixed here they agree with others other postmodern approaches. So, in that way you know this is also very strong postmodern approach, they basically argue that it is a discourse designates forms of representation, course and conventions and habits and produce meaning it is the discourse which produce meaning.

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**Fundamental Ideas**

- ▶ Language is structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life.
- ▶ Historical and cultural sipecificity are emphasized.
- ▶ discourse is a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world and our ways of understanding the world are created and maintained by social processes.

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And some of the fundamental ideas language is structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life.

See for example, in a medical discourse or in a religious discourse, in a political these are all various discourses available, the same terms or the same phenomenon will have different meanings in this different context. So, in one sense meaning is contextual here. Historical and cultural sipecificity are emphasized by all discourse theorists, and discourse is a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world and our ways of understanding the world are created and maintained by social processes.



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## Meanings in Discourse

- ▶ Discourses are produced by social actors through their practices and the meaning of objects and actions is determined by historically specific systems of rules.
- ▶ The condition of the meaning of any object depends on the socially constructed system of rules.
- ▶ Things in the world gain meaning only in the context of a discourse.



Now, when we talk about beginning we have already mentioned that meaning is not fixed, meaning is not universally available, but it is discourses which fixed meaning. Discourses are produced by social actors through their practices and the meaning of objects and actions is determined by historically specific systems of rules. So, the condition of the meaning of any objects depends on the socially constructed system of rules. So, that depends on the discourse in what discourse people are participating in. Things in the world gain meaning only in the context of a discourse.

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## Foucault's Contributions

- ▶ Discourse is made up of a limited number of statements and is essentially a fragment of history. [Foucault]
- ▶ A discourse is a group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation.
- ▶ Truth is a discursive construction: different regimes of knowledge determine what is true and false.
- ▶ Power is linked with knowledge: power is spread across different social practices




There is no discourse independent meaning. Here the French philosopher Michel Foucault's contribution are very important, Foucault's as talked about the important connection between meaning and discourse and also between knowledge and power.

Discourse is made up of a limited number of statements and is essentially a fragment of history according to Foucault. So, there are statements which are contextual, and discourse group of statements in so far as they belong to the same discursive formation. So, he talks about the very idea of discursive formation. Truth is the discursive construction: different regimes of knowledge determine what is true and false. So, again the concept of truth of universal absolute reality does not exist. Truth is determined by the specific discourse in each context. Power is linked with knowledge; power is spread across different social practises.

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**Power , Knowledge and Discourse**

Power constitutes discourse, knowledge, bodies and subjectivities. It is responsible both for creating our social world and for the particular ways in which the world is formed and can be talked about. Therefore, power is both a productive and a constraining force. [Foucault]



The slide features a title 'Power , Knowledge and Discourse' in a bold, dark font. Below the title is a paragraph of text in a standard font, enclosed in a light gray box. At the bottom left of the slide, there is a circular logo with a star-like pattern inside, and the text 'NPTEL' below it.

So, here there is what one of the major contributions of Foucault is to highlight the link between power and knowledge and discourse. So, this is what Foucault says in his archaeology of knowledge. Power constitutes discourse, knowledge, bodies and subjectivities. It is responsible for creating our social world and for the particular ways in which the world is formed and can be talked about. Therefore, power is both a productive and a constraining force.

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## Discourse Theory and Reality

- ▶ No reality is given.
- ▶ Every reality is discursively formed through discourses.
- ▶ Neither the world nor the subject are given.
- ▶ Even the subject is created through discourses.
- ▶ Everything evolves through discursively formed social practices.



And when you talk about discourse theory and reality, discourse theory would say that there is no reality as something which is given to us independent of our language. Every reality is created by discourse. Every reality is discursively formed through discourse. Neither the world nor the subjects are given two of the most important metaphysical entities in western philosophy where the mind and the body or rather the world and the subject.

The world represents everything that is other than the subject which is vaguely mind and the subject. And metaphysically these two are fixed concepts the world exists independent of the mind and the mind exists independent of the world, but these two concepts are questioned these two assumptions are questioned by the discourse theorist. Neither the world nor the subject are given, even the subject created through discourse, everything evolves through discursively formed social practices. This is the fundamental assumption of discourse theory; we will wind up this discussion here. The idea of this lecture is just give a basic outline of these different postmodern approaches called deconstruction, feminism and discourse theory.

So, we are also winding up our discussion on this course here, the aspects of the western philosophy this is the last lecture, the 40th lecture.

Thank you.