

Introduction to Cultural Studies
Dr. Avishek Parui
Department of Humanities & Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology-Madras

Lecture - 10
The Post Modern Condition (Lyotard) - Part II

Hello and welcome to this lecture on the NPTEL Course entitled, Introduction to Cultural Studies. We have already started looking at Lyotard's The Postmodern Condition. We started introduction yesterday in the last lecture and we will continue with that today. So and we will finish introduction and move on to the first chapter but before we do that we need to understand the main premise of Lyotard's essay and why we are reading this for this particular course, Introduction to Cultural Studies.

Now we saw in the last lecture that Lyotard offers a very interesting definition of postmodernism in general. It is more a definition the postmodern attitude, the postmodern spirit which defines or describes as an incredulity towards metanarratives. So any kind of metanarrative is a grand narrative of religion, politics, ideology, supremacy, race etc. And postmodernism instills a suspicion, a suspension and a suspicion directed against those metanarratives, right.

So in the place of metanarratives we have local narratives, micro narratives which are more surface in nature, which are more local in nature which are sort of more you know connected to the daily discourses of life rather than connected to a grand discourse of control, cohesion, politics or government. Now, the key question that arises is I mean the question of legitimation. How do you legitimize certain kind of knowledge and the process of legitimization is a process of narrative becoming a grand narrative.

A grand narrative can only happen through legitimization. So postmodernism also requires, also demands delegitimization and this is what Lyotard talks about a great deal in this particular book. So the question of legitimization and delegitimization become very important in a context of postmodernism.

So what is legitimized knowledge, what is delegitimized knowledge you know what are the what is politics behind legitimization; the racial politics, the linguistic politics, the cultural politics of course is the reason why we are doing this text in this particular course. And also equally how does the legitimized knowledge become delegitimized in certain historical paux.

And Lyotard spends a good deal of time talking about scientific knowledge which he contrasts with narrative knowledge, right and that is something we will talk about a great deal as we move on in the main chapter, in the introductory chapter. But right now let us focus on introduction before we move on to the first chapter that is focus on introduction and Lyotard writes in order to set out what he defines as postmodernism.

Now, he talks about postmodernism being an incredulity, it delegitimizes the grand narratives etc. And then he asks this key question which is on page 15, 14 and 15 the last sentence in the page 14 which will be on your screen now.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:56)

ment as it is to the blind positivity of delegitimation. Where, after

INTRODUCTION □ xxv

the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside? The operativity criterion is technological; it has no relevance for judging what is true or just. Is legitimacy to be found in consensus obtained through discussion, as Jürgen Habermas thinks? Such consensus does violence to the heterogeneity of language games. And invention is always born of dissension. Postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert's homology, but the inventor's paralogy.

Where after the metanarratives can legitimacy reside. So after the metanarratives dies we are supposed to say there are no metanarratives left. Postmodernism has sort of released an onslaught against metanarratives. There are no metanarratives of race, religion, faith, technology, science etc. everything becomes micronarratives which are disseminated across different kinds of

media which can be consumed and disseminated and created and co-created and recreated across different media. So after that condition where does legitimacy reside.

That is the key question that Lyotard raises, right. So and then he goes on to ask in page 15 in the very opening of page 15, is legitimacy to be found in consensus obtained through discussion as Jurgen Habermas thinks? Now Habermas as some of you would know is a very important philosopher of 20th century and he has his very important you know thesis called you know as *Modernity As An Unfinished Project*.

Now according to Habermas modernity which is obviously the best of the enlightenment, the best of European enlightenment, the best of rationality, the best of you know science, etc. It turns out to be an unfinished project. Now, it is not very hard to see how modernity as Habermas describes it is quite essentially Eurocentric, right. It is embedded in certain Eurocentric premises of you know faith, religion, race, supremacy, ideology, rationality etc.

So in order to call modernity an unfinished project you need to have a very nostalgic understanding of Eurocentricity. And Lyotard obviously is anti-nostalgia. He is someone who does not really believe in his European nostalgia of supremacy. So he has issues with Habermas which keeps coming up in this particular book.

But for the purpose of our course, cultural studies, it is interesting to understand that how Lyotard's definition of postmodernism offers an alternative understanding of modernity and alternative understanding of knowledge of narratives etc. so he takes issues with Habermas over here and he says that you know this Habermasian idea of public space, this Habermasian idea of discussions on public space through which we arrive at a consensus, through which we arrive at an agreement about knowledge.

It is a felicitous argument according to Lyotard. It is a problematic argument because what he says over here is such consensus does violence to the heterogeneity of language games. Now this is a very key term in Lyotard's essay which we will spend some time dealing with in our lectures. Language games, this is obviously a term borrowed from Wittgenstein as you know language

games are the kind of the structural plays and the performative plays in language through which we make meanings through certain preexisting notes of rules.

We will talk about language games later. Now, Lyotard says that any kind of a agreement that is arrived at through discussion, through homogeneity, through a public interaction does violence to the heterogeneity of language games. So it does a disservice in other words to the heterogeneity, the mighty, the healthy heterogeneity of language games which according to Lyotard must be sort of unpacked, must be opened up, must be encouraged right rather than sort of given a closure through an agreement.

So the Habermasan idea of agreement through interactions and public space is a very European modernity base idea of agreement and consensus which according to Lyotard is a danger because it has a danger becoming a metanarrative in its own right. So in other words he is someone who promotes local narratives. He is someone who promotes micronarratives and he is someone who promotes heterogeneity or disagreement as against consensus and agreement and homogeneity in terms of neurotic knowledge.

So and then he goes on to say something really interesting. An invention is always born of dissension. So dissent, disagreement these become very important categories, ontological categories, epistemic categories and Lyotard categories of knowledge, right because he says invention will only come or can only emerge out of a disagreement, out of dissent. So we should not really aim at homogeneity.

We should not really aim at an agreement in a public space through discussions, interactions etc. Rather we should be aiming at heterogeneity, we should be aiming at dissent, we should be aiming at interstitiality or the inbetweenness you know of categories and that is something that postmodernism really promotes, right. So this particular book becomes a template in many ways of postmodernism.

And it also becomes a very important text for us interested in cultural studies because it shows us a very interesting reflection and a theory of what happened to the culture post Second World War.

What happened to European culture, what happened to American culture, what happened to Western cultures post Second World War. Where this entire idea of the European enlightenment began to break away and you know in this place we are going to have different other kinds of knowledge is coming and which is celebrated.

And then he gives a very interesting idea of postmodern knowledge. What is postmodern knowledge? Postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities. It refines our sensitivity to difference and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. This is a really remarkable definition. It says it is something which trains us to understand incommensurability.

What is incommensurability, it is incompatibility, right, something which does not balance. Something which does not really add up. Now this is not adding up, this imbalance propositions this imbalance is something that postmodernism refines us to. It trains us to tolerate. It trains us to you know accommodate this imbalances, these in incommensurabilities; something which is very important.

And then he says its principle is not the expert's homology but the inventor's paralogy and this is very crucial. Homology is a homologous understanding of logic. It is homogenous logic. It is one lateral narrative of logic which is based on rationality, which is based on reason, which is based on enlightenment etc. It is a very Cartesian kind of a logic. I think therefore I am, the entire logic is premised on the thinking mind, the rational mind, the conscious mind etc.

And it is very linear, it is very Eurocentric and it is very male as well. Now Lyotard contrasts that to paralogy which is parallelogic which is an alternative logic. Now it might be illogical, it might be antilogic but that is exactly what postmodernism is interested in. It is interested in you know a parallelogical understanding of the daily discursive life. It is a parallelogical understanding of the multiverse another universe, right.

So against the homological understanding of modernity we have a parallelogical understanding of postmodernity and that is a very important crucial category that Lyotard delineates or

calibrates in front of us. And it is very important for us to understand this especially if you are interested in cultural studies looking at that from a sort of Marxist postmodernist perspective. So how this paralogical parameters they open up postmodernity of looking at life where there is no grand narrative left where there is no metanarratives left.

And in this place of metanarratives, in the place of grand narratives we have local micronarratives which promotes dissent which promote disagreement which promote nonlinearity which promote incommensurability and this idea of incommensurability is something which is celebrated in postmodernism, right. Now what this does also immediately as some of you might be thinking of is that it does a very interesting thing to history, right.

Because history as you know it the grand narrative of history is pre-homologous. It is a leader narrative. It deals with the big figures, it deals with big historical figures, the grand figures of history who make a difference in meta, macro level. But you know what postmodernism does is it brings our attention, it redirects our attention to local history to oral history to microhistory, to microhistorical narratives while little figures, more figures, “unimportant figures” they become important, right you know.

And their voice are sort of dug out, their voices are unpacked, their voices are so read and investigated and contrasted with the hegemonic voices of history, right. So what this kind of a attitude does, an attitude of ambivalence, an attitude of incredulity, an attitude of suspicion, an attitude of suspension of metanarratives. What this does essentially is it promotes the small voices. It promotes the subaltern voices, right. Voices which would not otherwise be heard.

Voices which are buried under the hegemonic voices, right. So postmodernism in a way would very quickly ally itself structurally as well as essentially as well as you know spiritually it would ally itself quite quickly with post colonialism with general studies with subaltern studies and you can see the structural similarities then, right. So all these are directed against the grand narratives which are essentially Eurocentric in their quality, okay. So and then he gives a very quick understanding of what this text is.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:04)

The text that follows is an occasional one. It is a report on knowledge in the most highly developed societies and was presented to the Conseil des Universités of the government of Quebec at the request of its president. I would like to thank him for his kindness in allowing its publication.

It remains to be said that the author of the report is a philosopher, not an expert. The latter knows what he knows and what he does not know: the former does not. One concludes, the other questions—two very different language games. I combine them here with the result that neither quite succeeds.

The philosopher at least can console himself with the thought that the formal and pragmatic analysis of certain philosophical



I mean as I said this in introduction but it is a very useful introduction because it sets out to define what he is about to do and he gives some very quick but very important definitions on postmodernism, dispute of postmodernism, the ontology of postmodernism etc. And then he moves on to say that the text that follows is an occasional one. It is a report on knowledge in the most highly developed societies and was presented to the Conseil des Universities of the government of Quebec at the request of the president.

So it was delivered as an address. But what this essentially is, is it is a report on knowledge. What happens in knowledge in a postmodern society. What happens to knowledge the ontology of knowledge changes you know there is an ontological change in a postindustrial postmodern society, the Western societies, the very highly developed societies where what happens to knowledge in those societies. It becomes more disseminated, becomes more commodified.

It becomes more coded in quality and that is something which you know he talks about in more details later, right. And lastly he makes a very interesting distinction which we will spend just a few minutes on. He says that it remains to be said that the author of this report, this particular book is a philosopher not an expert. The later the expert knows what he knows and what he does not know. The former does not.

One concludes the other questions, two very different language games, right. I combine them here with the result that neither quite succeeds. So it is a very interesting postmodernist play with ontological category. So he is saying over here that I am not an expert, I am a philosopher and then he delineates the difference between the two and he says an expert knows what he knows as well as what he does not know. There is a degree of closure in the expert.

There is a degree of knowledge which relies on closure when it comes to the expert and expert essentially is someone who extends pre-established knowledge. Someone who refines, perfects a pre-established knowledge whereas a philosopher is somebody who opens up preexisting fields of knowledge. Someone who questions the preexisting fields of knowledge and the philosopher as he goes on to say is someone who does not quite know what he or she knows or what he or she does not know.

So there is a degree of healthy ignorance, a healthy hesitation, healthy ambivalence in the philosopher which the expert lacks. The expert seems to be sort of preclosed and dogmatic in understanding of meaning, right. So that is something which we need to spend some time on as we move on with this particular book.

The idea of the philosopher, the postmodern philosopher who relies on ambivalence, who relies on hesitation, who relies on uncertainty rather than you know and which is contrasted with the certainty the dogmatic the dogged certainty that the expert has. So the postmodern philosopher is someone who promotes ambivalence, someone who promotes uncertainty because that is more allied to the idea of postmodernism in general, right.

So that concludes the introduction of the postmodern condition and then we move on to the main chapter that Lyotard begins with the idea of knowledge.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:01)

1. The Field: Knowledge in Computerized Societies

Our working hypothesis is that the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as the postindustrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age.¹ This transition has been under way since at least the end of the 1950s, which for Europe marks the completion of reconstruction. The pace is faster or slower depending on the country, and within countries it varies according to the sector of activity: the general situation is one of temporal disjunction which makes sketching an overview difficult.² A portion of the description would necessarily be conjectural. At any rate, we know that it is unwise to put too much faith in futurology.³

Rather than painting a picture that would inevitably remain complete, I will take as my point of departure a single feature, of



So if you come to the first chapter which is entitled The Field, Knowledge in Computerized Societies. So he is essentially saying what happens to knowledge in computerized societies, what happens to knowledge when there is a massive miniaturization of machines and machines become smaller, tiny in size. What happens to knowledge when knowledge becomes the greatest commodity that is competed you know across countries.

I mean all countries compete with each other to gain more and more knowledge and knowledge becomes more and more plastic in quality. How they can be transferred, translated, it can travel across media, across geographies, across landscapes and it can you know indefinitely, infinitely you know replayed and restored and recorded. So what happens to the idea of knowledge in such a society, in such a postindustrial society which is really highly developed in terms of technology, okay.

So at the very beginning he sets off the he historicizes his research. He historicizes his report and says our working hypothesis is that the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known was known as the postindustrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age, right. So this is the working hypothesis with which he begins his particular book. He says the nature of knowledge changes.

It is an ontological change, it is a functional change, it is also an epistemic change. So there is a meta quality about this change as well. The knowledge of knowledge changes so hence this is a meta change. Now he defines, he goes on to sort of describe or define or highlight the historical phase he is taking about. He says this transition has been under way since at least the end of 1950s, which for Europe marks the completion of reconstruction, I mean reconstruction from the Second World War.

So notice also how does the historical overlap between the rise of postmodernism and the fall of the European Empire so to say. I mean this was time where European imperialism also comes to an end after Second World War. I mean English Empire was coming to an end and the Belgian Empire come to an end even before that you know so you know this is obviously allied in spirit as I said to what we now call postcolonialism and this is something we should be interested in as well when we are doing cultural studies.

Now postmodernism the rise of postmodernism so it overlaps with the fall of Eurocentrism to a great extent and that is something that Lyotard talks about and highlights and in a way celebrates and postmodernism has a celebratory spirit when it comes to the fall of the European idea of meaning, the European idea of society, culture, high culture etc. So the pace is faster or slower depending on the country and within countries it varies according to the sector of activity.

The general situation is one of temporal disjunction which makes sketching an overview difficult. This idea of temporal disjunction is very important and that is something which we should be very interested in culture studies in general, the idea of temporal disjuncture. When there is a temporal change suddenly abrupt changes happen, there is a paradigm shift in culture.

So a certain kind of cultural narrative comes to an end and another kind of cultural narrative begins through very certain temporal changes; so certain temporal fragmentations which are which happen due to economic reasons, which happen due to sort of military reason sometimes, which happen due to political reasons, ideological reasons, linguistic reasons etc., right okay.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:32)

that immediately defines our object of study. Scientific knowledge is a kind of discourse. And it is fair to say that for the last forty years the "leading" sciences and technologies have had to do with language: phonology and theories of linguistics,⁴ problems of communication and cybernetics,⁵ modern theories of algebra and informatics,⁶ computers and their languages,⁷ problems of translation and the search for areas of compatibility among computer languages,⁸ problems of information storage and data banks,⁹ telematics and the

3

And then he goes on to say he spent some time talking about scientific knowledge which he contrasts with narrative knowledge. It is a very important contrast and he sort of builds his entire book on this contrast to a certain extent and he says, this is page 3 again, Scientific knowledge is a kind of discourse.

And it is fair to say for the last 40 years the leading sciences and technologies have had to do with language, phonology and theories of linguistics, problems of communication and cybernetics, modern theories of algebra and informatics, computers and their languages, problems of translation and the search for areas of compatibility among computer languages, problems of information storage and data banks.

So he goes on but the idea is he says how scientific knowledge becomes more and more bit of a service knowledge towards communication. It is so obsessed with communication, obsessed with language, obsessed with data about language, data about dissemination, data about you know communication, control over communication etc. And then he goes on to say that this is a bit of a political situation where countries fight with each other not for land anymore, not for military victories anymore but for information, for data, right.

So it is no wonder, it is no surprise that science or scientific knowledge is more and more increasingly directed towards database knowledge, towards information based knowledge, right.

So hence this is entire array of information based technology. So because scientific knowledge choose the path of discourse it cannot escape its discursivity. It is something which is embedded in its ideological discursivity, its ideological condition, its discursive condition.

So when the discursive condition becomes more and more oriented towards knowledge, towards communication, towards knowledge it is not surprised that science too or scientific knowledge too becomes more and more consumed by that kind of a obsession, right, okay. And then he goes on to say that this is page 4.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:27)

These technological transformations can be expected to have a considerable impact on knowledge. Its two principal functions—research and the transmission of acquired learning—are already feeling the effect, or will in the future. With respect to the first function, genetics provides an example that is accessible to the layman: it owes its theoretical paradigm to cybernetics. Many other examples could be cited. As for the second function, it is common knowledge that the miniaturization and commercialization of machines is already changing the way in which learning is acquired, classified, made available, and exploited.¹² [It is reasonable to suppose that the proliferation of information-processing machines is having, and will continue to have, as much of an effect on the circulation of learning as did advancements in human circulation (transportation systems) and later, in the circulation of sounds and visual images (the media).¹³]

These technological transformations can be expected to have a considerable impact on knowledge. So you know he makes a distinction as a very important distinction with technology and science but he does not conflict the two. He looks at technology as a manifestation of this kind of a scientific discursivity where science becomes discursive, scientific knowledge becomes discursive and hence it produces this technological advancements.

But that is not to say that this is scientific knowledge. So he makes a very important distinction between the two kinds of knowledge over here. The two orders of knowledge, scientific knowledge and technological knowledge, right. And then he goes on to show the idea, the impact of miniaturization. This is something I have been talking about a little earlier. It is common knowledge, this should be on your screen.

It is common knowledge that the miniaturization and commercialization of machines is already changing the way in which learning is acquired, classified, made available and exploited. Now, look at the verbs over here; acquired, classified, made available and exploited. So knowledge becomes a commodity that can be sort of possessed and exploited. Can be acquired, can be classified, can be made available, accessible and then exploited.

So a degree of ownership comes with knowledge. So whoever owns knowledge becomes a dominant person, becomes a dominant entity, becomes a dominant category. Whoever does not have knowledge becomes the peripheral marginalized category. So knowledge becomes a tool for exploitation to a certain extent, right. So and this kind of a transformation knowledge takes place through massive miniaturization and commercialization, right.

So machines become more and more miniaturized. Machines become more and more sort of small, tiny, accessible translatable you know traversable so you know you can travel with those machine for the time being and take the entire knowledge the entire library into a memory stick etc. Now mind you this is being written way before we have the idea of memory sticks, right. Way before the concept of memory sticks, the concept of you know CD-ROMs came into being.

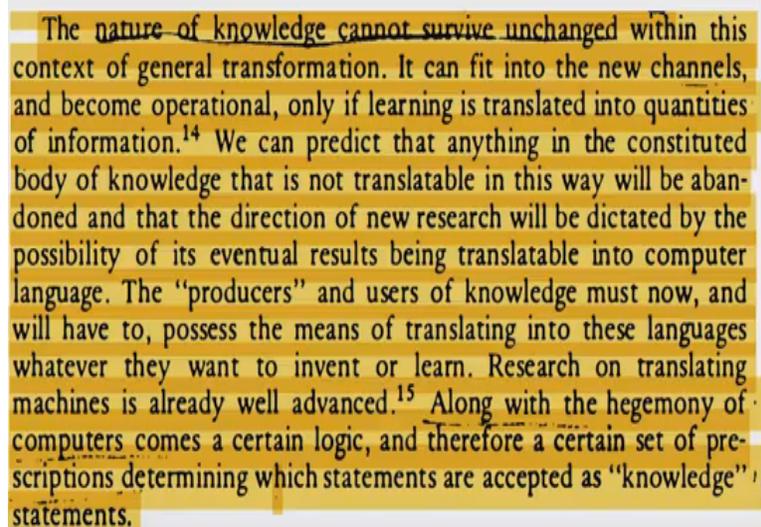
So in that sense this becomes a very prophetic essay, a very interesting essay which anticipates what will happen to knowledge, what will happen to knowledge later, right. So that is something that we should be aware of. So in a way this particular essay, this particular book speaks to us more closely today than what it perhaps did when it was originally written, right okay.

And then he goes on to say it is reasonable to suppose that the proliferation of information-processing machines is having and will continue to have as much of an effect on the circulation of learning as did advancements in human circulation, transportation systems, and later in the circulation of sounds and visual images. So he says this is perhaps the biggest impact of you know scientific knowledge today, the idea of you know information processing.

And information processing becomes to be (()) (23:16) of scientific knowledge at this point of time because that is tied that is related to the discursive conditions of this times which are relied which are obsessed with information, right. I mean in order to be discursively dominant, in order to be politically dominant, in order to be culturally dominant you need to possess information and that is the kind of culture we inhabit today Lyotard argues.

So it is no surprise at all that entire scientific knowledge is at the service of this discursive need and hence the entire scientific knowledge is directed towards this discursive need of information processing, okay. And then he delineates and gives you a very graphic idea of how the nature of knowledge changes under these conditions and he says and I quote, this should be on your screen.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:01)



The nature of knowledge cannot survive unchanged within this context of general transformation. It can fit into the new channels, and become operational, only if learning is translated into quantities of information.¹⁴ We can predict that anything in the constituted body of knowledge that is not translatable in this way will be abandoned and that the direction of new research will be dictated by the possibility of its eventual results being translatable into computer language. The "producers" and users of knowledge must now, and will have to, possess the means of translating into these languages whatever they want to invent or learn. Research on translating machines is already well advanced.¹⁵ Along with the hegemony of computers comes a certain logic, and therefore a certain set of prescriptions determining which statements are accepted as "knowledge" statements.

The nature of knowledge cannot survive unchanged within this context of general transformation. It can fit into the new channels and become operational only if learning is translated into quantities of information. So again look at the quantifiability, quantifiability of information, right. So and the information becomes completely quantifiable, calibrated.

It can be broken down into units and everything obviously is related to the massive commodification of information and becomes a commodity in its own right and obviously if

something become a commodity it should be quantifiable to a certain extent. It should have a price tag. It should have a value in the market of exchange, right.

So he says and the knowledge can fit into new channels and new channels are knowledge which are endlessly you know disseminated endlessly, accessible unless you consumed and becomes operational only if learning is translated into quantities of information. So learning becomes indistinguishable from information according to Lyotard. So you know learning and information become the same thing in this kind of a cultural condition where knowledge and technology, scientific knowledge and technology become imaged over here.

So and then he says we can predict that anything in the constituted body of knowledge that is not translatable in this way will be abandoned and that the direction of new research will be dictated by the possibility of this eventual results being translatable into computer language, right. So everything should be translatable in a computer language you know. Otherwise, it will be abandoned by the contemporary you know dominant scientific narratives.

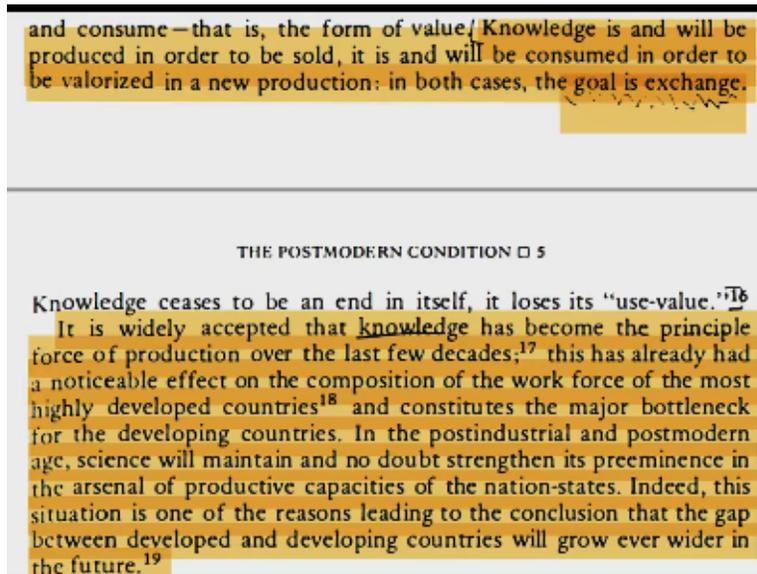
In other words, this is the demand in the market. This is the demand of the mercantile you know culture which requires translations, which requires knowledge to become something of a coded program in a computer which then can be endlessly disseminated, endlessly you know sent out and endless accessed and consumed by users and by the market together, right.

So in other words Lyotard is looking at a condition where learning and knowledge becomes synonymous with information, right. So there is no ontological difference in this kind of a cultural condition between learning and information; between knowledge and information. So information is knowledge, knowledge is information in this kind of a culture.

And this entire degradation or rather you know transition of knowledge and information it requires certain kind of a scientific apparatus and entire scientific pursuit of knowledge is not reliant on technology, is not reliant on information based machines etc. Because those are required in order for you know to contain that knowledge which will become data, discursive data which will then be disseminated and consumed and coded in a culture we inhabit today.

So this is a condition that Lyotard talks about and this is the condition which Lyotard says requires a relook at science because scientific knowledge changes. It cannot but change in this kind of a political condition. It must be at the service of the discursive needs of the market at that time which will require every kind of knowledge to become information. So entire scientific pursuit is geared towards information processing machines and is something that Lyotard is sort of highlighting in this particular section, right okay.

(Refer Slide Time: 27:15)



So if you come to the end of this page he talks about what happens in knowledge. Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold. It is and will be consumed in order to be valorized in a new production. In both cases the goal is exchanged. Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself. It loses its use-value. So I mean no one really pursues knowledge for his own end. It is just a medium. It is just something which is exchanged endlessly, right.

And so it must be consumed, it must be sold, it must be valorized in a new production. So the entire politics of production over here changes and knowledge becomes something which is a commodity, something which is packaged, something which is something which has had a body, something which is exteriorized to different apparatus. Now it could be computer apparatus, it could be other mercantile apparatus.

But the point is it is something which is endlessly packaged and sold and dished out and consumed right. It loses use-value. So it does not really have any use-value anymore apart from the medium of information. That is the key thing that Lyotard talks about. Knowledge must become in this condition a medium of information. Apart from that it does not have any value at all, okay.

So and this is the political of knowledge that I just mentioned and this is what Lyotard talks about how political how nation heads or political parties or political categories compete with each other for excessive knowledge and he says it is widely accepted that knowledge has become the principle force of production over the last few decades. This has already had a noticeable effect on the composition of the work force of the most highly developed countries and constitutes the major bottleneck for the developing countries.

In the postindustrial and postmodern age science will maintain and no doubt strengthen its preeminence in arsenal or productive capacities of the nation states. Indeed this situation is one of the reasons leading to the conclusion that the gap between developed and developing countries will grow ever wider in the future, right. So this is a very interesting link that Lyotard is making.

A link between the transition, the transformation in the body of knowledge in the ontology of knowledge and knowledge of knowledge and how that has reflections in the real political situations, right. So if we come to the postindustrial and postmodern societies we find that the gap between the developed and developing countries lies precisely at the level of knowledge. The developed countries have no knowledge. They can process knowledge better.

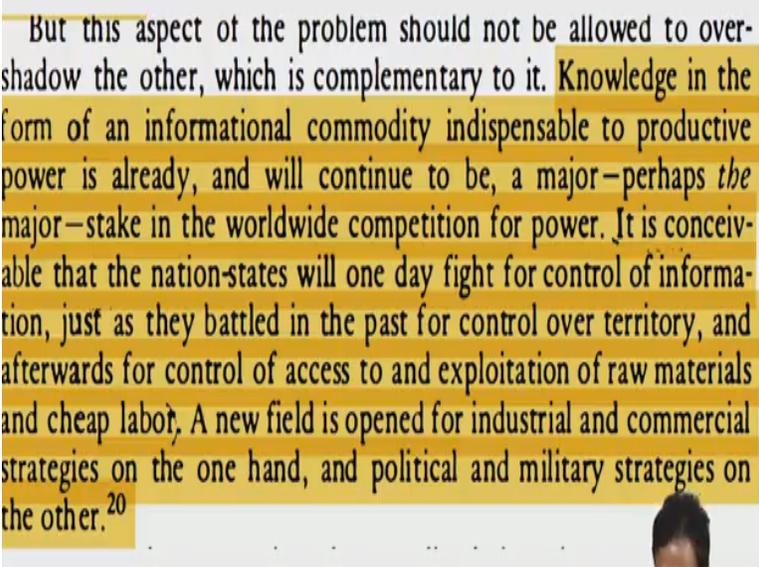
Everything becomes knowledge, the market becomes knowledge you know we have knowledge of share market, we have knowledge of the economy, knowledge of politics. Everything becomes a knowledge industry in a certain sense. Whereas developing countries they aspire to have that knowledge industry and therein lies the gap. The gap is an epistemic gap but is also an information gap, right.

So episteme and information become blended with each other in this kind of a situation. So this is basically you know what Lyotard talks about and then he goes on to say in this particular section that knowledge in the form of an informational commodity indispensable to productive power is already and will accompany to be a major perhaps the major state in a worldwide competition for power.

So this is a very Foucauldian idea of knowledge and power but just takes a more massive and more macro scale when nations compete with each other for knowledge and power but knowledge is power, information is power, right. So it becomes informational commodity. So this transition that knowledge has from being a category, an episteme in itself and end in itself over the use-value.

From that particular kind of an ontological status it becomes an information commodity while just has to be sold and accessed and resold and you know disseminated through media is something which has its replications in a political situation as well where he says that nation heads compete with each other for knowledge at this point of time.

(Refer Slide Time: 31:13)



But this aspect of the problem should not be allowed to overshadow the other, which is complementary to it. Knowledge in the form of an informational commodity indispensable to productive power is already, and will continue to be, a major—perhaps *the* major—stake in the worldwide competition for power. It is conceivable that the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory, and afterwards for control of access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labor. A new field is opened for industrial and commercial strategies on the one hand, and political and military strategies on the other.²⁰

And he actually says it quite clearly it is conceivable that the nation states will one day fight for control of information just as they battled in the past for control over territory and afterwards for control of access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labor. A new field is opened for

industrial and commercial strategies on the one hand and political and military strategies on the other, right.

So I conclude the lecture here today but just this is a very interesting description of knowledge and how knowledge becomes an industry and how does knowledge industry has its replications in a political field, in a real political situation while he says a day will come when nation heads will fight each other for knowledge and you know this in a way is quite prophetic because today we live in an era where countries blame each other for rigging the elections.

So if you just think of the American elections where this theory speculation that you know it was rigged, it was intervened by Russia to a certain kind of a knowledge crashing system, by certain kind of a information crashing system. So we are looking at a new kind of terrorism. We are looking at a new kind of military warfare where we do not really have machine guns, do not really have bombs. We just have computers and knowledge based, information based ammunition, right.

So ammunition becomes information, information becomes ammunition and countries fight with each other for control of information, right and entire idea of knowledge becomes information. So you know this obviously has replications in science and scientific knowledge which is directed completely towards producing and reproducing and classifying and coding knowledge into information.

Because that becomes the more the major commodity the most important commodity which is aspired for by the nation heads which is something which nations want to own which something which nations you know want to privilege themselves with etc. And you know the idea of a developed country depends on the extent to which the low country has knowledge, right. To what extent does it have the information about itself, about its economy, about other countries, about its neighboring countries etc. right.

So you know this is a very interesting essay and it obviously has replications in cultural studies, massive replications in cultural studies because you know it is something which reflects the kind

of culture we inhabit today. It is anticipating the kind of culture we inhabit today and also it gives us very interesting theories with which we can look at the culture as we consume today, right. So I conclude the lecture today and we will continue with this in the next lecture. Thank you for your attention.