

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

Lecture - 38
Ian Hacking – The Social Construction Of What - IV

So hello and welcome to this NPTEL course entitled Introduction to Cultural Studies. We were looking at Ian Hacking's book, *The Social Construction Of What*. We have already had some lectures in this book and we will hopefully wind up this particular text in another couple of lectures. So we were saying how Hacking has problems with the idea of social construction being an overdetermining principle of analysis.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:39)

IDEAS IN THEIR MATRICES



"Idea" is shorthand, and a very unsatisfactory shorthand it is too. The trouble is that we want some general way to make the distinction needed, not just for X = women refugees, but for a host of other items said to be socially constructed. "Idea" may have to serve, although more specific words like "concept" and "kind" are waiting in the wings. I do not mean anything curiously mental by "idea." Ideas (as we ordinarily use the word) are usually out there in public. They can be proposed, criticized, entertained, rejected.

Ideas do not exist in a vacuum. They inhabit a social setting. Let us call that the *matrix* within which an idea, a concept or kind, is formed. "Matrix" is no more perfect for my purpose than the word "idea." It derives from the word for "womb," but it has acquired a lot of other senses—in advanced algebra, for example. The matrix in which the idea

So you know he has problems in terms of looking at social constructionist theory as a sole hegemonic theory in terms of looking at cultural categories and sub categories such as race, feminism, gender, etc. And he is more in favor of the word matrix or matrices as you will find in this particular section that we will cover in this lecture. So matrices to Hacking, they are constituted a more material condition, something social, is material conditions as well.

So the materiality of this entire matrix, something Hacking finds more useful in terms of the situatedness of the subject in that particular matrix. So he is more favor of the matrix, the matrices system in terms of looking at the human subject, in terms of looking at gender, in terms

of looking at nation, race, all this different and myriad cultural categories that he investigates in this particular book, okay. So this should be on your screen, the section that we are about to cover and it is the sub section which is entitled ideas in the matrices.

So idea is shorthand and a very unsatisfactory shorthand it is too. The trouble is that we want some general way to make the distinction needed, not just for X equals women refugees, but for host of other items said to be socially constructed. Idea may have to serve, although more specific words like concept and kind are waiting in the wings. I do not mean anything curiously mental by idea. Ideas as we ordinarily use the word are usually out there in public.

They can be proposed, criticized, entertained, and rejected. So he is talking about the category of the idea and how ideas exist in a certain social matrix. Ideas you know travel and negotiate with certain material conditions and again this brings us back to one of our primary hypothesis in this course that is this constant loop between interiority and exteriority, between inside and the outside, between what you are thinking inside your brain and what is happening out there in the world.

The externality, the materiality of the external world is constantly feeding off and informing the interiority of the psychological self and we saw several examples that specially and most dramatically in Frantz Fanon's Black Skin White Mask as well as in George Orwell's Shooting An Elephant, okay. And then Hacking goes on to say ideas do not exist in a vacuum. They inhabit a social setting.

Let us call that the matrix within which an idea, a concept or kind is formed. Matrix is not is no more perfect for my purpose than the word idea. It derives from the word for womb. But it has acquired a lot of other senses in advanced algebra for example.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:27)

senses—in advanced algebra, for example. The matrix in which the idea of the woman refugee is formed is a complex of institutions, advocates, newspaper articles, lawyers, court decisions, immigration proceedings. Not to mention the material infrastructure, barriers, passports, uniforms, counters at airports, detention centers, courthouses, holiday camps for refugee children. You may want to call these social because their meanings are what matter to us, but they are material, and in their sheer materiality make substantial differences to people. Conversely, ideas about women refugees make a difference to the material environment (women refugees are not violent, so there is no need for guns, but there is a great need for paper, paper, paper). Materiel influences the

The matrix in which the idea of the women refugee is formed is a complex of institutions, advocates, newspaper articles, lawyers, court decisions, immigration proceedings. So in this section Hacking is looking at the concept or the category of women refugees and he is investigating how this concept can be examined using a variety of discourses, not the social construction as discourses.

But also looking at it from a position, a perspective of matrix, the matrix which combines different material institutions such as the law firms, emigration codes, paperwork, emigration papers etc. advocates etc. So all that, the material apparatus is invested into this idea of the matrix in which the concept of the women refugee is situated and through which it could be understood in more complex holistic manner, okay.

So not to mention the material infrastructure, barriers, passports, uniforms, counters at airports, detention centers, courthouses, holiday camps for refugee children. So he is giving a long list of things, list of institutions, places, real institutions, real places, real human beings, real documents which are invested into the entire idea of the women, the women refugee. You may want to call these social because their meanings are what matter to us, but they are material and in their sheer materiality make substantial differences to people.

So this is a very crucial section where Hackings seems to be making a difference between the social and the material and he is saying that if you use the word social, it oftentimes it becomes a very loose umbrella term which sort of means something very nebulous but I think Hacking says that we could do worse than looking at the materiality of this entire apparatus. We are talking about specific materiality in terms of the material existence of codes, the material existence of passport centers, emigration centers, paperwork, lawyers etc.

So the materiality is something that Hacking is drawing our attention to in this particular section. Conversely, ideas about women refugees make a difference to the material environment women refugees are not violent so there is no need for guns but there is a great need for paper.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:42)

people (many of whom have no comprehension of that paper, paper, paper, the different offices, the uniforms). Sheer matter, even the color of the paint on the walls, can gradually replace optimistic hope by a feeling of impersonal grinding oppression.

This discussion of ideas and classification takes for granted the obvious, namely that they work only in a matrix. But I do want to emphasize what in shorthand I call the *idea* of the woman refugee, that classification, that kind of person. When we read of the social construction of *X*, it is very commonly the idea of *X* (in its matrix) that is meant. And ideas, thus understood, do matter. It can really matter to someone to be classified as a woman refugee; if she is not thus classified, she may be deported, or go into hiding, or marry to gain citizenship. The matrix can affect an individual woman. She needs to become a woman refugee in order to stay in Canada; she learns what characteristics to establish, knows how to live her life. By living that life, she evolves, becomes a certain kind of person (a woman refugee). And so it may make sense to say that the very individuals and their experiences are constructed within the matrix surrounding the classification "women refugees."

Material influences the people many of whom have no comprehension of that paper, paper, paper, I mean the extraordinary paperwork that is invested into the refugee problem. The different offices, the uniforms, sheer matter, even the color of the paint on the walls, can gradually replace optimistic hope by a feeling of impersonal grinding oppression. This discussion of ideas and classification takes for granted the obvious namely that they work only in a matrix.

But I do not want to emphasize, I do want to emphasize what in shorthand I call the idea of the woman refugee that classification, that kind of person. When we read of the social construction of *X*, it is very commonly the idea of *X* in its matrix that is meant. So what Hackings says over

here is that instead of social construction which does not really, is a very nebulous term, we would be better off in looking at the entire matrix, the material matrix in which the particular subject, the particular category is situated.

And that category could be woman refugees, that category could be gender, that category could be foreign policy etc. right. So the matrix is a material apparatus, this combination of material discursive, ideological apparatus in which every subject is situated, every category, every cultural category is situated okay. And ideas, thus understood do matter. It can really matter to someone to be classified as a woman refugee if she is not thus classified, she may be deported or go into hiding or marry to gain citizenship.

The matrix can affect an individual woman. She needs to become a women refugee in order to stay in Canada. She learns what characteristics to establish, knows how to live her life. By living that life, she evolves, becomes a certain kind of person, a woman refugee. And so it makes sense to say that the very individuals and their experiences are constructed within the matrix surrounding the classification women refugees.

So he is talking about the individuality and the experientiality of certain human beings and how the individuality and experientiality can only operate within a particular matrix. So this matrix quality is something that Hacking constantly draws our attention to and one may make a comparison with this and what Lyotard had called language games in the sense that everyone of us you know according to Lyotard in postmodern condition, everyone of us is situated in certain language games.

And all we do is we negotiate and navigate across language games through different nodal points. So nodal points become very important. Nodal points are the points of interaction through which we interact with the other subject positions and other language games and how you interact across language games, across subject positions. So Hacking over here seems to offer similar structure in terms of the matrix.

So the matrix becomes the material entanglement in which the human subject is situated and from where the human subject navigates and negotiates with that entanglement in terms of acquiring in subjectivity and agency, okay and this is something again similar to what Butler had said you know in gender trouble where she very clearly said that there is no escape from discursivity.

So any idea of a meta discursive or you know transcendental idea of discursivity is erroneous according to Butler. That we are all inside discursivity and we just saw in the previous lecture how Hacking lauds Butler in terms of looking at her as moving away from a purely social constructionist position and offering a more complex position on gender.

So she seems to he seems to appreciate Butler he seems to support Butler, he seems to read Butler in that particular way in terms of moving away from a purely social constructionist position in terms of looking at gender and offering a more nuanced understanding of gender which does incorporate the material interpolated conditions in which the subject is situated, okay. So and then Hacking goes on to say that a logical point is simple.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:34)

This sounds very complicated. But the logical point is simple. Women in flight are the product of social conditions in their homelands. It would be stupid to talk about social construction in that context, because social circumstances so manifestly provoke the fear of staying home and the hope of succor in another land. But since, in Canada, *woman refugee* may seem a straightforward and rather inevitable way of classifying some people, there is indeed a point to claiming that the classification is far from inevitable. One can also argue that this contingent classification, and the matrix within which it is embedded, changes how some women refugees feel about themselves, their experiences, and their actions. Hence in that indirect way people themselves are affected by the classification—and, if you like, the individual herself is socially constructed as a certain kind of person.

It should be on your screen again. The logical point is simple, woman in flight are the product of social conditions in the homelands. It would be stupid to talk about social construction in that context because social circumstances so manifestly provoke the fear of staying home and the

hope of succor in another land. But since Canada, since in Canada, woman refugee may seem a straightforward and rather inevitable way of classifying some people, there is indeed a point to claiming that the classification is far from inevitable.

One can also argue that this contingent classification, and the matrix within which it is embedded changes how some women refugees feel about themselves their experiences and their actions. Hence in that indirect way people themselves are affected by the classification and if you like the individual herself is socially constructed as a certain kind of person.

So like I mentioned in the very beginning of this text that Hacking constantly draws on Canadian examples because he is a Canadian and he talks about specific examples from Canada, topical examples from Canada in terms of corroborating his points but what he is saying over here is quite interesting. He is saying that you know the human subject position, the human experientiality can change depending on the change in a particular matrix.

So it is better to talk about the matrix you know as an entanglement of material conditions, discursive conditions, economy conditions, financial conditions in which the subject is embedded right. And then he goes on to say one can also argue that this contingent classification and the matrix within which it is embedded, changes how some women refugees feel about themselves their experiences and their actions.

So when a matrix changes, the women refugees experiences of being inside the matrix of change as well. Hence in that indirect way people themselves are affected by the classification and if you like, the individual herself is socially constructed as a certain kind of person. So construction over here becomes a different kind of a category right and Hacking as we mentioned as we saw, we mentioned a little while ago that he is more sort of he is more in favor of looking at the idea of, looking at the idea of the product, the social product.

And the social product becomes more important rather than the social construction, okay. So and we saw in the previous lecture the idea of the self and how the self too becomes a very important category in Hacking's analysis and how this self can be you know again situated inside a

particular matrix etc. Now we come to the next you know category that Hacking takes up and that is emotions, right. So he talks about emotions.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:15)

EMOTIONS

Emotions provide yet another field for disagreement. Some students of the subject think that there are basic, pan-cultural emotions, expressed on human faces, recognized by human beings of every culture, and produced in brain centers, all of them determined by evolutionary history. Others argue that emotions and their expression are quite specific to a social and linguistic group. Paul Ekman (1998), one of the most dedicated universalists, has provided a personal account of the controversy before the social construction era. His opponents then were those mighty figures of a yet earlier generation, Margaret Mead and Geoffrey Bateson. Nowadays the issues have been translated into social construction talk. When people say that the emotions are socially constructed or that the emotion of grief, say, is a social construct, they do not mean

So to what extent are emotions socially constructed? To what extent are emotions purely existential, purely psychological, purely cognitive. So again he is looking at the entanglement between cognitive and the material you know dimensions of emotion and he is looking he is pointing out you know he is drawing our attention to the dangers of an excessive reliance on social constructionist theory when he comes to understanding and examining emotions, okay.

So this is emotions and the category that Hacking takes up next and this should be on your screen. So emotions provide yet another field of disagreement. So as you can imagine emotions would be the fiercely contested category in this particular discourse where you know people make an argument about the motions being socially constructed. Our emotions being purely interior or internalized.

That disagreement, that debate is something that Hacking examines in this particular section. So emotions provide yet another field of disagreement. Some students of the subject think that there are basic, pan-cultural emotions, expressed on human faces, recognized by human beings of every culture and produced in brain centers all of them determined by evolutionary history. So

this particular thesis of emotion is purely an evolutionary thesis, purely a cognitive thesis, purely a neuroscientific thesis where people say you know there are pan cultural emotions.

They do not depend, they are not contingent on the culture, they are not contingent on the cultural context. All the cultural conditions they are purely internal and it just you know it is a question of evolution, neural evolution, evolution through you know different states, neural sophistication different states of neural development and in that kind of a neuroscientific analysis emotions exist.

So any idea of the cultural specificity of emotions the cultural conditioning of emotions is negated by this particular thesis. Thus thesis 1 according to Hacking, he is proposing different thesis that are used to study emotions. Others argue that emotions and their expression are quite specific to a social and linguistic group. So they are the, the converse argument of course is that emotions are fiercely dependent, fiercely context specific, context sensitive, culture sensitive, language sensitive etc.

Just how you emote depends on your location on language and how you emote depends on your location in culture, location in particular cultural setting etc. So that is the other thesis of emotion. Paul Elkman one of the most dedicated universalists has provided a personal account of the controversy before the social construction era. His opponents then were those mighty figures of a yet earlier generation, Margaret Mead and Geoffrey Bateson. Nowadays the issues have been translated into social construction talk.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:10)

that the *idea* of the emotions, or of grief is constructed, but that the emotions themselves, grief itself, are social constructs. But the word "construct" has lost all force here. In fact the "emotion" entry in my alphabetical list refers to Rom Harré's *The Social Construction of the Emotions* (1986). He told me that the original title was to be *The Social Production of the Emotions*, but the publisher insisted on *Construction*, believing that would sell more copies of the book. His later anthology, Harré and Parrott (1996), includes many essays by diverse hands about social construction. The authors argue that emotions vary from culture to culture, that the character of grief has changed in Western culture and is changing today, and that the physiological expressions of emotion vary from group to group. They argue, in various ways, that how we describe emotions affects how the emotions are experienced.

When people say that the emotions are socially constructed or the emotion of grief say is a social construct they do not mean that the idea of the emotions or of grief is constructed but that the emotions themselves, grief itself, are social constructs. But the word construct has lost all force here. In fact the emotion entry in my alphabetical list refers to Rom Harre's *The Social Construction of the Emotions* who is alluding to a particular book by Rom Harre's and that is *The Social Construction of the Emotions*.

He told me and this is a antidotal evidence that Hacking is offering us, he told me that the original title was to be *The Social Production of Emotions*, but the publishers insisted on *Construction*. So again, this is a very crucial point where we are seeing how Hacking would favor the word production over construction because he thinks that is a more holistic word, that is a more, this is a word which is more true to the materiality of the cultural conditions.

However, he insists he says that the publishers of that particular book written by Rom Harre they insisted to put their foot down in terms of you know going with the word construction because that apparently, that presumably that would sell more. That would attract more readership. So the publishers insisted on construction believing that would sell more copies of the book.

His later anthology, Harre and Parrott 1996 includes many essays by diverse hands about social construction. The authors argue that emotions vary from culture to culture and the character of

grief is changed in Western culture and is changing today and that the physiological expressions of emotion vary from group to group. They argue in various ways that how we describe emotions affects how the emotions are experienced. So again the question of representation becomes important. So how do you represent emotions, how do you describe emotions that in a way determines emotions and experience. So it is like a loop between representation and experience, okay.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:02)

believing that would sell more copies of the book. His later anthology, Harré and Parrott (1996), includes many essays by diverse hands about social construction. The authors argue that emotions vary from culture to culture, that the character of grief has changed in Western culture and is changing today, and that the physiological expressions of emotion vary from group to group. They argue, in various ways, that how we describe emotions affects how the emotions are experienced.

The exact expression of such a thesis depends, of course, on what the author thinks emotions are. Griffiths (1997, ch. 6) notes that "There are two very different models of the social construction of emotion in the literature." There is a *social concept* model, according to which emotions are inherently cognitive and conceptual, and are the concepts peculiar to a social group, formed by the culture of that group. Then there is a *social role* model, in which "an emotion is a transitory social role

The exact expression of such a thesis depends of course on what the author thinks emotions are. Griffiths notes that there are two very different models of the social construction of emotion in the literature. There is a social concept model, according to which emotions are inherently cognitive and conceptual and are the concepts peculiar to a social group formed by the culture of that group. Then there are social role model in which emotion is a transitory social role, a socially constituted syndrome.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:31)

fiths). In these discussions, the label "social construction" is more code than description. There is no literal sense in which either the Victorian concept or the Victorian role of grief was *constructed* during Her Most Britannic Majesty's long reign. "Social construct" is code for not universal, not part of pan-cultural human nature, and don't tread on me with those heavy hegemonic (racist, patriarchal) boots of yours. Griffiths sensibly contends that the "insights of social constructionism [about the emotions] are perfectly compatible with what is known about the evolutionary [and therefore biological, pre-cultural] basis of emotion" (p. 138). Since we are not talking about anything that is literally constructed, it is not obvious that these insights are best couched in terms of construction talk at all. But there is the residual force of starting point (0). Constructionists about the emotions do start by feeling that "In the present state of affairs, the emotions are taken for granted; the emotions and our expressions of them appear to be inevitable."

In these discussions, the label social construction is more code than description. There is no literal sense in which either the Victorian concept or the Victorian role of grief was constructed during her most Britannic Majesty's long reign. Social construct is code not for universal, not part of pan-cultural human nature, and do not tread on me with those heavy hegemonic boots of yours. Griffiths sensibly contends that the insights of social constructionism are perfectly compatible with what is known about the evolutionary basis of emotion.

Since we are not talking about anything that is literally constructed, it is obvious that these insights are best couched in terms of construction talk at all, it is not obvious that these insights are best couched in terms of construction talk at all. But there is the residual force of starting point. Constructionists about the emotions do start by feeling that in the present state of affairs, the emotions are taken for granted.

The emotions and expressions of them appear to be inevitable. So in this entire section, what Hacking is saying again is that we do not require the word emotions and we do not require the word construction over here at all. What we are talking about is the code of quality of emotions and you know it will require and the word construction that is culture specific is something that comes in certain kind of cultural setting but again that is part of the material apparatus.

That is part of the matrix in which the subject is situated. So there is a say he is looking at a more nuance insignia of emotions in terms of combining the universal cognitive model where we think emotions are something cerebral, something neural. At the same time it is part of the conditioning, it is part of the materiality of the subject's experience. So to look at emotions on purely constructionist perspective according to Hacking over here is an error of judgment, is an error of analysis, an epistemic error.

So there is no literal sense in which you know emotions can be constructed according to Hacking. So the work construction over here becomes just a very dashy word, a very attractive word which is used to attract British, which is used to attract you know people who are interested in this kind of a study. However, in a literary sense it means very little. So hacking says we do not need, we do not require the word construction at all.

You know code is fine, you know conditioning is fine. So we are looking at a more balanced way of looking at emotions as being an entanglement between the internal neural psychological phenomenon and external cultural phenomenon. That is the balance that Hacking is trying to arrive at, okay. So as we can see that throughout this book, throughout this introduction that we are studying quite extensively, Hacking is more interested in looking at the materiality of the subject, the situatedness.

He is moving away from a very narrow constructionist perspective of looking at culture and cultural categories and rather he is summoning, he is calling for a more balanced understanding of culture and cultural categories and subcategories in which the human subjects are situated. So he is more interested in terms of looking at interaction, in terms of looking at nodal points, in terms of looking at navigation and negotiation with the materiality, with the matrix in which the human subject is situated, okay.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:40)

OBJECTS, IDEAS, AND ELEVATOR WORDS

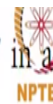
Three distinguishable types of things are said to be socially constructed. The resulting divisions are so general and so fuzzy at the edges that felicitous names do not come to hand. In addition to "objects" and "ideas" we need to take note of a group of words that arise by what Quine calls semantic ascent: truth, facts, reality. Since there is no common way of grouping these words, I call them elevator words, for in philosophical discussions they raise the level of discourse.

So, next we come to a section which is entitled, it is a subsection in this introduction which is entitled objects, ideas, and elevator words. And where Hacking says, three distinguishable types of things are said to be socially constructed. The resulting divisions are so general and so fuzzy at the edges that felicitous names do not come to hand. In addition to objects and ideas we need to take note of a group of words that arise by what Quine calls semantic ascent; truth, facts, reality.

Since there is no common way of grouping these words, I call them elevator words, for in philosophical discussions they raise the level of discourse.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:19)

Objects. Items in the following disparate list are "in the world" in a commonsensical, not fancy, meaning of that phrase.



People (children)
States (childhood)
Conditions (health, childhood autism)
Practices (child abuse, hiking)
Actions (throwing a ball, rape)
Behavior (generous, fidgety)
Classes (middle)



He is giving a random list of words in which you know which are characterized by you know Quine's idea of semantic sament. So truth, fact, reality, so that is the ascent, that is the semantic, the meaningful ascent which characterize these words and so Hacking is looking at these words and again he is looking at the fallacy of addressing again these words in more purely, socially constructionist perspective, right.

So and he is looking again at the more nuance understanding of these categories. So objects, items in the following disparate list are in the world in a commonsensical not fancy meaning of that phrase. So again when Hacking says in the world and Hacking says situated, he is not being a constructionist, he is not being a loose constructionist philosopher. He is being, he is actually calling attention to the situatedness which is very material in condition, the very real in condition.

So it takes into account the lift reality of that situatedness, the experientiality of the situatedness, etc. So what are the disparate list? People (children), states(childhood), conditions(health, childhood autism), practices(child abuse, hiking), actions(throwing a ball, rape), behavior(generous, fidgety) and classes(middle). So and he is giving a list of words and how these words are commutations.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:38)

WHY ASK WHAT?

Experiences (of falling in love, of being disabled)

Relations (gender)

Material objects (rocks)

Substances (sulphur, dolomite)

Unobservables (genes, sulphate ions)

Fundamental particles (quarks)

And then there are other words like experiences(falling in love, of being disabled), relations(gender), material objects(rocks), substances, unobservables, fundamental particles(quarks). Okay and now he gives some very banal list of conditions, social conditions and he is saying how these conditions are determined by objectivity, a reality which is a lift reality, a reality which is rationalized, which is arrived at through certain constructive reason which is part of the lift life. It is not really a loose social construct in the sense that constructionist use it.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:52)

Fundamental particles (quarks)

And homes, landlords, housecleaning, rent, dry rot, evictions, bailiffs, squatting, greed, and the Caspian Sea. The id is an object, if there is an id, and who doubts that there are egos, big ones, in the world? These items of very different categories are all in the world, so I call them objects, for lack of a better label. Adapting a terminology of John Searle's (1995), we find that some of these items are ontologically subjective but epistemologically objective items. The rent you have to pay is all too objective (and in the world, as I put it) but requires human practices in order to exist. It is ontologically subjective, because without human subjects and their institutions there would be no such object as rent. But rent is epistemologically objective. You know full well (there is nothing subjective about it) that \$850 is due on the first of the month.

So homes, landlords, housecleaning, rent, dry rot, evictions, bailiffs, squatting, greed, and the Caspian Sea. So it sounds a bit absurd these words but then the absurdity is deliberately sort of evoked in this category, in this list of words that Hacking is offering us. The id is an object, if there is an id, and who doubts that there are egos, big ones, in the world? So you know this is a frightened id that Hacking is mentioning.


These items of very different categories are all in the world, so I call them objects, for lack of a better label. Adapting a terminology of John Searle's, we find that some of these items are ontologically subjective but epistemologically objective items. And this is a very crucial section in this book and which will help us understand what Hacking means by objectivity and subjectivity. So ontologically subjective, so you know the existence is subjective.

So you know it depends on the people, it depends on interactions across people, between people, across different nodal points the people inhabit. But they are epistemologically objective. So knowledge that comes out of that particular interaction, that knowledge becomes objective in quality. And then he gives a very banal example of house rent. So when you pay house rent how is house rent for instance ontologically subjective and epistemologically objective.

So rent you pay is the rent you have to pay is all too objective and in the world as I put it but requires human practices in order to exist. So there has to be an interaction between human beings, an agreement between human beings which is a subjective agreement in order for the rent to exist, right. So in that sense it is ontologically subjective. So it will only come to existence you know the ontological bit through a subjective interaction, through a subjective agreement and therein lies the ontological subjectivity.

However, so you know there will be no rent if there is no ontological subjectivity. But rent is epistemologically objective. So you know the knowledge about the rent is objective. You know exactly how much you have to pay. You know exactly when you have to pay exactly. So therein lies the epistemological objectivity of the rent. You know full well there is nothing subjective about that certain amount of money is due on the first of the month.

(Refer Slide Time: 25:26)

Ideas. I mean ideas, conceptions, concepts, beliefs, attitudes to, theories  They need not be private, the ideas of this or that person. Ideas are discussed, accepted, shared, stated, worked out, clarified, contested. They may be woolly, suggestive, profound, stupid, useful, clear, or distinct. For present purposes, groupings, classifications (ways of classifying), and kinds (the woman refugee) will be filed as ideas. Their extensions—classes, sets, and groups (the group of women refugees now meeting with the Minister of Immigration)—are collections in the world, and so count as “objects.” I am well aware that there is much slippage in this coarse system of sorting.¹²

So and then he goes on to say ideas. I mean ideas, conceptions, concepts, beliefs, attitudes to, theories. They need not be private, the ideas of this or that person. Ideas are discussed, accepted, shared, stated, worked out, clarified, contested. They may be woolly, suggestive, profound, stupid, useful, clear, or distinct. For present purposes, groupings, classifications, ways of classifying and kinds the woman refugee will be filed as ideas.

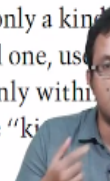
Their extensions, classes, sets, and groups, the groups of women refugees now meeting with the Minister of Immigration are collections in the world and so count as objects. I am well aware that there is much slippage in this coarse system of sorting, right. So what Hacking is looking at is the objectification of objects. So he is looking at certain object value of certain objects and he is saying if you take away the idea of objectivity from these objects, from this matter and if you are looking at it purely as a social constructionist discourse then obviously you are moving your attention away from the objectivity, the reality, the lift reality of these categories, okay.

So then he moves on, the next section that we will study is again one of these sessions where he talks about the inside and the outside as being situated inside a particular matrix and the matrix, the word matrix becomes very important for Hacking.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:54)

INTERACTIONS

We have seen how some objects and ideas may interact. The idea of the child viewer of television interacts with the child viewer. Ways of classifying human beings interact with the human beings who are classified. There are all sorts of reasons for this. People think of themselves as of a kind, perhaps, or reject the classification. All our acts are under descriptions, and the acts that are open to us depend, in a purely formal way, on the descriptions available to us. Moreover, classifications do not exist only in the empty space of language but in institutions, practices, material interactions with things and other people. The woman refugee—that kind or “species” of person, not the person—is not only a kind of person. It is a legal entity, and more importantly a paralegal one, used by boards, schools, social workers, activists—and refugees. Only within such a matrix could there be serious interaction between the “kind” person and people who may be of that kind.



So interactions is the next section that we will study and interactions become a very important activity in hacking’s analysis because it is only through interactions that we arrive at decisions,

that we make decisions, that we move on etc. but interactions again may not be seen, it should not be seen from purely social constructionist perspective. So interactions become the next topic for your study. So we will just begin with this at this point.

We have seen how some objects and ideas may interact. The idea of the child viewer of television interacts with the child viewer. Ways of classifying human beings interact with the human beings who are classified. There are all sorts of reasons for this. people think of themselves as of a kind, perhaps, or reject the classification. All our acts are under descriptions and the acts that are open to us depend in a purely formal way on the descriptions available to us.

Moreover, classifications do not exist only in the empty space of language but in institutions, practices, material interactions with things and other people. So again he is talking about interactions as a very material activity, as a very real activity and not a purely social constructionist activity. So you know this is a lift experience, lift reality etc.

And how interactions produce agreements, produce classifications and this becomes a very key category in hackings analysis. So we just started with this and we stop at this point in this lecture and move with this in the next lecture and hopefully conclude the text in another lecture. Thank you for your attention.