

**Introduction to Cultural Studies**  
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**Lecture - 06**  
**George Orwell's Shooting An Elephant (Part - I)**

Hello and welcome to this NPTEL course, Introduction to Cultural Studies. What we will do today in this lecture, we will start with an essay by George Orwell called Shooting an Elephant. It is an essay about something which really happened when he was a colonial officer in Burma. I am going to read the essay in details in this lecture and in the next lecture as well. We will take 2 lectures to finish this essay.

And the reason why we have selected this essay is because it is a really interesting work if you need to examine the idea of identities. We have spent a lot of time talking about the production of identities, hegemonic identities, complicit identities, subordinate identities and identities become really important in politically unequal situations where we have for instance colonialism when you have one race or one culture dominating another culture.

Then we have the idea of hegemonic identity, idea of dominant identities which are of course politically produced, discursively you know disputed and disseminated and consumed, right. So the whole idea of power becomes very important and we have read Said, Edward Said and then Homi Bhaba and we have seen how power becomes really important tool, a really important instrument, really important factor in terms of the production of identities in the colonial space.

And if you remember Bhaba's essay which we covered in the last lecture The Other Question which is the name of the essay they spend a good little time talking about the anti-metonymy and metaphor and how metaphor and narcissism are related and how metonymy and aggressivity are related so this four-term strategy that we talked about very interestingly I think Bhaba offers a strategy, offers a model of looking at identities.

Model which can be used very gainfully I think in terms of looking and examining identities especially in colonial conditions. Now what this particular essay is very useful for, Shooting an

Elephant, is it is an essay about what really happened in a particular situation in a colonial space. So this is an essay written by George Orwell when he was an officer, a colonial officer, a police officer in Burma about an experience that he went through.

And the whole essay really offers a very interesting glimpse into the idea of identity. So you know it really cracks up the constructed quality of identity. So we spent a good little time already talking about how you know ideology and entity, culture these are largely constructed categories. These are constructed to economic processes, political processes, discursive processes.

So what this particular essay does very poignantly I think is it completely cracks up, opens up the constructed quality of hegemony, hegemonic identity, power and the entire powerful presence in the colonial space. And you know it is a really interesting essay also because it is a very politically incorrect essay.

I mean there are certain elements, certain components, certain sections of the essay which would now be considered as racist if you use modern standards, modern measuring words then we find certain sections are profoundly racist and certain sections are profoundly problematic. I mean if someone would write this essay now there will be certain section which will be omitted, which would be you know done away with etc.

But this is why we find this essay so useful in culture studies because of its political incorrectness. You know because in a political correctness as a term, as a category is very contingent on the conditions of the time. So what is politically correct today might become politically incorrect tomorrow and vice versa, right. So the political correctness as a construct in this particular essay does not really work well. I mean it is a politically incorrect essay.

It is an essay about ambivalence. It is an essay about confusion. It is an essay about cynicism. It is a very cynical, dark, ambivalent, sort of helpless take on or futile take on imperialism. So we have someone that Orwell persona in his essay who hates imperialism, who hates the job he is doing as an imperial officer but equally interestingly he hates the Burmese people because you

know they hate him and so there are different kinds of hatred which are operated in this particular essay.

And those of you who are aware of George Orwell would know he was a Marxist philosopher, a writer, a literary writer who wrote some of the most monumental works of fiction in 20th century including you know but not limited to animal farm which is a magnificent allegory of Stalinism 1984 which is a profoundly dystopian fiction about the world where everyone is watching everyone else.

And also you know less famously a novel called Burmese Days which I think is a really magnificent work because you know the Burmese Days the novel about colonial experiences in Burma and Orwell evidently draws on his experiences as a colonial officer he was stationed there for some time and his life was very important. He was born in modern Bihar actually, a place called Motihari in Bihar where he was born.

And then he went off to England where he did his schooling, he went to a public school and then he came back to India, Imperial India as a colonial officer. So his relationship with imperialism is very complex and very interesting, right. So he he gives you an insidious view an insidious stake on imperialism; is a critic on imperialism this particular essay but equally it is an essay commentary on the confusion that imperialism creates, the cynicism the imperialism creates.

And also the kind of existential exhaustion that imperialism creates as well. I mean there is a degree of exhaustion in the essay which is really existential. I mean he finds this completely hollowed out as a person right. Because what happens in this essay as we will see when we read it is he becomes the Orwell persona in the essay, he becomes an imperial machine, a machine who is supposed and expected to carry or perform certain imperial duties or imperial responsibilities which often commit a cost of the human will, the human agency.

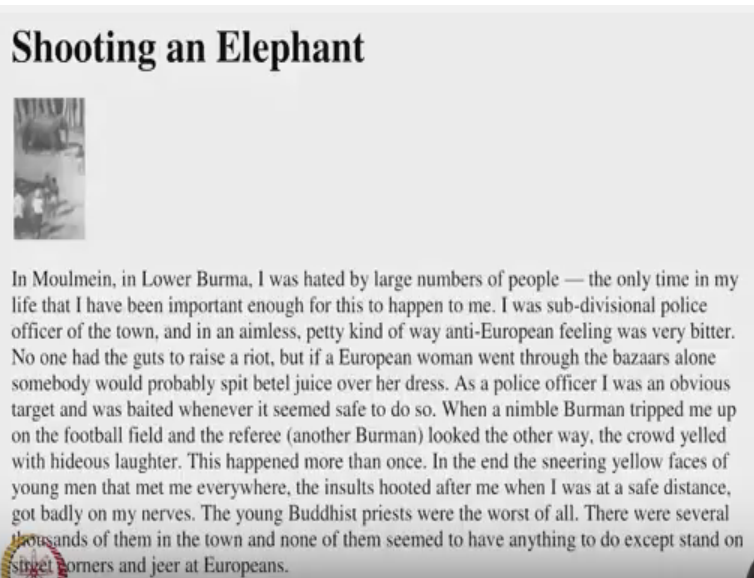
So the question of agency becomes very important in the essay because you know agency can be defined. I think we have already spoken about agency to a certain extent. It can be defined as you will of the person, the will of the individual and the ability to carry out that will with the

possibility of bringing about a change. Now whether the change will happen or not is a different question.


But agency is the possibility, the will and the possibility of bringing about change by exerting, by enacting that will. Now what we find in this particular essay Shooting an Elephant is an allegory of the death of agency, the annihilation of agency over here because the human will and the imperial will are at odds with each other over here, right. And so it becomes a really interesting text for cultural studies because it shows you that culture as a construct can become hegemonic.

Culture as a construct can become tyrannical really. It can consume human will. It can consume human agency and then it can become some kind of a sort of cannibalistic construct which consumes the pure human violation, pure human will, pure human desire and free choice, right. So you know over here culture becomes a really an overarching, tyrannical kind of a construct and how well the human being finds himself consumed increasingly by that construct.

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### Shooting an Elephant



In Moulmein, in Lower Burma, I was hated by large numbers of people — the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me. I was sub-divisional police officer of the town, and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot, but if a European woman went through the bazaars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee (another Burman) looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter. This happened more than once. In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance, got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priests were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans.

So you know this is the background of the essay, the discursive background which I sort of marked out for you. Now if you read the essay which we will in a minute we will find out how this particular essay reveals that all the idea of identity we were talking about, hegemony we were talking about you know political presence, political privilege that we were talking about.

So how these are really constructed to categories which can be deconstructed in certain situations right and how these categories, these constructed categories can actually become so powerful, so hegemonic that they can take over the human will, they can take over the human emotion, they can take over the human agency, right. So that becomes really so what I mean powerful that the powerful man over here becomes powerless precisely because he has to be powerful all the time.

So that is the profound paradox of the essay that you are powerless only because you have to be powerful all the time because that is your hegemonic identity as a white man in a colonial space that you do not have the choice of not being powerful. You do not have the choice of not carrying out the powerful man's job. It is your job, it is your responsibility, it is your expectation of you that you perform power all the time.

And if you stop to perform power then you know you crash the whole system. Then you basically compromise the whole colonial system okay. So this is the question, this is an essay on ambivalence, confusion, cynicism and agency and how all these things, all these categories, all these affects are tied to the cultural question, the cultural identity question okay. So it becomes a really important text for us who are interested in cultural studies.

So let us take a look at what happens in Shooting Elephant. It should be on your screen. I am going to read out the essay in some details because I think, it is a very short essay and I think it needs to be read in detail to grasp the full phenomenon of what really happens or what really transpires in this situation.

So this is George Orwell talking about his experiences in Burma and about a certain situation, a certain event which really opened up the constructive quality of power, the tyranny of power and how you know the powerful person is consumed by the power that he or she is expected to enact, right. So this is the essay. In Moulmein, in Lower Burma, I was hated by a large numbers of people, the only time in my life that I have been important enough for this to happen to me.

So you know the very opening sentence of the essay it has a degree of dark humor quality, right. So he is saying that I was hated by lots of people and that was the only time in my life I was

important enough to be hated, right. So there is a degree of a paradox that you are hated because you are important. Importance is good but hatred is bad so how immediately you are in the heart of ambivalence in the essay the very first sentence drives you into the heart of ambivalence.

I was sub-divisional police officer of the town and in an aimless, petty kind of way anti-European feeling was very bitter. No one had the guts to raise a riot but if a European woman went through the bazars alone somebody would probably spit betel juice over her dress. As a police officer I was an obvious target and was baited whenever it seemed safe to do so. When a nimble Burman tripped me up on the football field and the referee another Burman looked the other way, the crowd yelled with hideous laughter.

This happened more than once. In the end the sneering yellow faces of young men that met me everywhere, the insults hooted after me when I was at a safe distance got badly on my nerves. The young Buddhist priest were the worst of all. There were several thousands of them in the town and none of them seemed to have anything to do except stand on street corners and jeer at Europeans. So what is interesting is the claustrophobia of the condition.

It is a very claustrophobic condition where you know everyone hates him and he can feel the hatred, he can feel the aversion, the collective aversion that he is subjected to just because he happens to be a white colonial officer in that particular town. So again look at the way in how power becomes paradoxically what consumes.

Because power produces privilege yes but it also produces hatred especially in unequal situations where one particular race, one particular system, one particular culture is dominating, exploiting another culture where you know Orwell the person over here becomes an instrument to the power machinery and by, due to that he becomes a subject of hatred, the object of hatred for all the Burmese people who feel that he is a representative for imperialism.

So interestingly if you read the opening section he says that the kind of hatred he is talking about is very petty, very aimless. It does not really transform into rebellion. It does not really transform into a collective subversion but it operates in very little petty ways which actually you know gets

on his nerves right. So getting on his nerves is making him really more and more sort of nervous, more and more hysteric in certain situations.

And he gives an example of how he would be insulted spectacularly in a football field where you know if he is playing a football game with certain officers, the Burman officers and the Burman's would often trip him, tackle him unfairly and the referee who would be another Burman would just ignore it and the crowd who will come to gather the match would sort of break out in hideous laughter, right.

Now obviously the interesting thing about this section is notice how the site of subversion over here is a football field where you know there is a game going on and the white man can be beaten up safely because you know the worse that can happen to you if you beat a white man in a football field is to get a red card where you do not get a political penalty, you will get a sports penalty, right and that is easier to handle but that becomes a site of subversion, that becomes a safe side of subversion, and not just safe, spectacular.

Because you know you can actually beat a white man in a football field in the presence of thousands of people and you get away with just a red card. So you know the space becomes very important over here and also I mean this is interesting because we in cultural studies are very interested in space because remember space is also very discursive. Space is also very ideological, right. Space is not apolitical at all especially in colonial conditions.

So the football field becomes a very discursive political space because that is the space where you can actually beat a white man and get away with just a red card. That is a place a space where you know all you can do, all that can happen to you for beating a white man is getting a sports penalty. You know you are penalized with the grammar of sports and not with the grammar of politics right. So it becomes a very important, a very interesting little episode.

And then you know he says that he is hated by everyone, wherever he goes people hate him you know and anti-European feeling works in a very petty way. People will spit betel juices on

European woman's dresses and run away. So everything around is very claustrophobic. Everything around is very unhealthy, very neurotic.

And that obviously is an epiphenomenon, a product of imperialism where obviously the Burmans feel persecuted by the Europeans, the Burman is exploited by the Europeans because European presence in Burma is an exploitative presence. It persecutes the Burmans, it takes away the wealth, it takes away the resources and subjects them to a marginalized presence in their own space.

So obviously the retaliation from the Burmese side is a very petty aimless kind of retaliation but despite the pettiness, despite the fact that it does not really transform into a narrative of rebellion. It works in very micro, aimless, petty ways. But this micro, aimless, petty acts of rebellion collectively really sort of influence although you know in a level of nerves. It really gets badly on his nerves he says.

And then he talks about the Buddhist priests who stand and jeer at him, mock him on street corners. Again, it is not something that you can do really legally when someone jeers at you, when someone mocks, when someone sort of you know ridicules you facially or using gestures in a street. I mean there is nothing you can do except ignore it but then you know if you use the political power, if you use the political privilege to tackle that to handle that then you are becoming insecure, right.

So you tend to ignore it but then you cannot ignore it all the time because it is happening all the time. In every street corner there is a Buddhist priest according to Orwell's description jeering and mocking him, right; jeering at him, right. So that becomes, so the very opening paragraph of the essay describes the claustrophobia, the neurotic sort of degree, the neurotic quality of colonial where the Europeans are hated.

And the Europeans hate the Burmese, the Burmese hate the Europeans. It is a very unhealthy human existence that has been talked about. And this unhealthy bit you know is a interesting bit for us in cultural studies because you know there are 2 ways so stereotypically in which



imperialism is described by contemporary writers, by writers who are actually sort of dealing with imperialism, what person doing imperialism especially Indian imperialism.

One way was to glamorize it, to look at it as a civilizing machine, a benevolent machine, as a European enterprise, European glowing narrative, heroism narrative where the dominant narrative is we came and rescued the Indians, we came and rescued the natives who did not have any culture, did not have any religion, did not have any language. We gave them all that. That is one narrative. The other narrative is that you know this is a very terrible thing.

And you know it happened and we are very sorry for that etc. So but Orwell over here seems to be somewhat in between. So he does not take the stance of Kipling and for Kipling imperialism was a it was a white man's burden as you know as a civilizing machine so white man would come and it was the responsibility, the burden of the white man to so cure the native, to redeem the native in a way to give him give the native civilization, language, religion, culture and all that which presumably did not exist according to Kipling before the Europeans came.

That is thus one dominant narrative. So Orwell takes a sort of a very cynical stance. He is obviously very far from the Kiplingesque you know narrative of imperialism but at the same time you know despite the sympathies for the natives he hates the natives, right. So he is somewhere stuck between the two and this degree this quality of being stuck between the two is something that we find very attractive, very interesting in this particular essay.

And that is the position from which he produces the politically incorrect narrative of broad imperialism, right. So and this is very politically incorrect because in one hand he confesses, very soon we will see that, that imperialism is a very terrible thing, it is an evil thing, it is you know it is what is exploiting people. But on the other hand he also confesses that he hates the Burmese people.

So he is not as if he is being politically correct and saying that oh I am all for the Burmese and I love the Burmese and I hang out with them, I really like them. He does not say that. He says I am ideologically for the Burmese secretly of course because I am working for the empire at the same

time. But at the same time it is also true that I hate the Burmese. So he is somewhat who is living a very hollow, hypocritical existence okay and we will see that in a bit.

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All this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. Theoretically — and secretly, of course — I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British. As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of Empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos — all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was

So the next paragraph sort of really elaborates on this complex claustrophobia and he says and I quote, all this was perplexing and upsetting. For at that time I had already made up my mind that imperialism was an evil thing and the sooner I chucked up my job and got out of it the better. Theoretically and secretly of course I was all for the Burmese and all against their oppressors, the British.

So you know listen I mean sort of see the way in which he is just put these two words theoretically and secretly. I mean in theory, in ideology, he knows that imperialism is a terrible thing and he is all for the Burmese cause; however, all that lovely stance, all that political stance he is taking is a secret stance because at the end of the day he is an officer who is getting paid, who is in a payroll of the empire, right. So he cannot really go up and say publicly that he hates imperialism because he is getting paid for it.

He is getting paid for his job as an agent of the empire, right. So he is somewhere you know stuck in a very hollow hypocritical position and this hypocrisy, this hollowness informs the cynicism that you know that goes into the essay. The cynicism which makes it a profound

text really I think for cultural studies students like ourselves okay. So he was all for the Burmese and all against the oppressors the British.

As for the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear. In a job like that you see the dirty work of the empire at close quarters. The wretched prisoners huddling in the stinking cages of the lock-ups, the grey, cowed faces of the long-term convicts, the scarred buttocks of the men who had been flogged with bamboos all these oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective.

So you know he, this is a very interesting glimpse, a very interesting reflection of imperialism because I just mentioned that there are 2 ways of looking at imperialism from a British perspective; A, you take a heroic, glorified long shot like Kipling who sort of say that this is a grand mission you are looking at from a perspective, a very noble, broad, magnificent, panoramic perspective where imperialism becomes white man's burden, a civilizing machine, a really a macro narrative of rescuing and redeeming etc.

Or you take a completely opposite stance whilst you take you say that this is a terrible thing etc. and we should not be doing it and so let us get out if it etc. But then Orwell he hates imperialism. He is saying this is a dirty job but then he cannot get out of it either because he is getting paid for it. So you know despite all the political correctness, not correctness, all the political consciousness that he has he is he ends up doing the job just as much as anyone else does.

But and also look at the way in which the images come. So the dirty work of the empire. So he sees the prisoners beaten up. He sees the prisoners tortured in prisons in terrible human conditions and he knows very soon very quickly he realizes that there is nothing glorious about imperialism. There is nothing heroic about imperialism. It is a dirty job of exploitation. It is a dirty job of torture really and you know the sooner he gets out of it the better it is, right.

So you know it is a very unromantic, unheroic look at imperialism and this is exactly why we look at it this particular essay as a really interesting text for cultural studies. Because it is a really

interesting and rich commentary on the culture of imperialism at that time, a very unheroic, cynical, dark look at you know the culture of imperialism. So all these images of prisoners sitting huddled up in stinking cages, beaten up, flogged by bamboo sticks, it gives a really unpleasant terrible inhuman idea of imperialism which it really was in the first place.

So you know Orwell is giving a insidious perspective of imperialism. So he is giving you the perspective of a conscientious white imperialist who despite being conscientious is hypocritical and hollow because he does not really take up a stance. He hates imperialism secretly but that is all that is. It is a secret hatred. He does not have the courage to publicly own it up, confess it or do something about it. He is just writing a essay.

It is more of a diary writing if we notice it. It is not something that seems to be for the consumption of everyone either I mean he comes across the diary writing or is meant for someone who is you know who is a British person living in England, someone who has sort of relayed the tales of horror from an insider, an insider's perspective into imperialism. So you know, and this is exactly what makes this a politically complex, the incorrectness of the essay makes it complex and this is something that we should be aware of.

So you know all these images of imperialism and the people being tortured and exploited and imprisoned and beaten up, all these oppressed me Orwell says with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective.

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oppressed me with an intolerable sense of guilt. But I could get nothing into perspective. I was young and ill-educated and I had had to think out my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible. With one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, as something clamped down, in saecula saeculorum, upon the will of prostrate peoples; with another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are the normal by-products of imperialism; ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty.

I was young and ill-educated and I had had to think of my problems in the utter silence that is imposed on every Englishman in the East. I did not even know that the British Empire is dying, still less did I know that it is a great deal better than the younger empires that are going to supplant it. All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred of the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible.

I mean notice the really interesting vacillation between ideological correctness, ideological sort of conscientiousness and a very racist rhetoric, right. So he is saying that you know I was young and ill-educated. I was confused. There was callous and I did not know what I was doing. I was just doing my job but I was getting increasingly guilty and increasingly uneasy with what I was doing, with what I was a part of, a party to etc.

And he is saying equally that I had to think of my problems of my own and there was no one that I could speak to you know. So he gives you a very interesting picture of alienation. So the agent of the empire is increasingly essentially alienated in the empire. He is so cut off from the empire, cut off from everything. He cannot confess what is exactly going on in the mind because he had to perform the social codes.

He had to perform the colonial codes the cultural codes of colonialism in order to enact the machinery of colonialism. So this is the image that is very interesting; the utter silence that is

imposed on every Englishman in the East. And then he comes to say that I did not even know that British Empire is dying because he was right in the heart of it and if you are in the heart of something you do not quite know whether that is decaying or not because you know you are still a part of it and it takes a sort of a longish perspective, a longer perspective of sort of more far off perspective to understand what is really happening to imperialism.

As soon as in 1936 the beginning of the end of the empire as you could say because you know the empire especially in India ended in 1947. So decade before it all ended. So he did not quite know at that point of time that it was ending because he was right in the middle of it and he did not have any idea of this imminent end and then he says that I did not even know that this British Empire was a great deal better than the other younger empires that were going to supplant it, right.

So he is talking about the American Empire, the rise of America as a superpower. The rise of the USSR as the superpower and he sort of says at the moment that those were much worse than the British Empire at that point of time. So the quality of the essay, the tone of the essay is interesting. It is a retroactive narration, a retrospective narration, right. It is a much older Orwell retrospectively about something that happened to him when he was much younger.

So it is a much older, much more experienced voice reflecting on something that happened to the person when he was much younger, right; so a more matured voice talking about a less matured self. It is a very common strategy in literature, the kind of something like Charles Dickens' Great Expectations which does a similar strategy at the narrative level that talks about the story that here is a much older Pip talking about what happened to a much younger Pip.

So the tone of the voice is very mature. The tone of the voice is more mature than the protagonist, the content of the story, and the protagonist in this story is less mature person. So you know a similar narrative strategy is being employed over here by Orwell saying that you know I am a wise man, a older man now that at that point of time, I did not know that the empire was dying.

I did not know that the young empires which will replace it will be much worse than the British Empire. All I knew was that I was stuck between two kinds of hatred. The hatred of the empire and the hatred of the Burmese people and I hated them as well okay. So and again look at the rhetoric over here. He is describing the Burmese people as evil-spirited little beasts and again this is explicitly racist right and he is talking about human beings as beasts or animals he is just being racist by default.

However, what is interesting is that the racism is embedded in the essay. The racism is part of the rhetoric in the essay and racism is part of the honest confession of the essay. So this is what I mean when I said that the political incorrectness of the essay makes it politically complex. Makes it politically important and significant for us today. But he is not even trying to be politically correct. He is not even trying to give himself a good picture, a good image.

So he is very much implicative in imperialism. So he is very much a part of imperialism and despite the fact that he hates it ideologically he retains a rhetoric of imperialism. So he is talking about the Burmese as evil-spirited little beasts who really makes his job make his job impossible, who hate him and he hates them back in equal measure. So with one part of my mind I thought of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, a something clamped down in saecula saeculorum upon the will of prostrate peoples.

With another part I thought that the greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts. Feelings like these are normal by-products of imperialism. Ask any Anglo-Indian official, if you can catch him off duty. So again look at the extremity of his emotions. He is thinking of the British Raj as an unbreakable tyranny, something which will go on forever, in saecula saeculorum for eternity.

So it is a tyranny, it is a system of exploitation, a system of torture that the British were employing through their raj through the empire. So he understands it exactly as a torture mechanism as an exploitative mechanism; a mechanism, a machinery for human exploitation that is one, but equally and interestingly he also thinks that the Buddhist people are terrible, the

Burmese people are terrible and he wants to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts, into his belly, right.

Again, very violent very visceral kind of hatred, very visceral rage and he retains a rhetoric of rage here as well. And then he comes to confess feeling like these are the by-products of imperialism. So ambivalence like this, cynicism like this, violence like this are the by-products of imperialism. If you stay in this for too long you end up being a cynical, violent person full of extremity, full of hostility. And then he says ask any Anglo-Indian official if you can catch him off duty.

So you know if you catch someone off duty, if you take a person away from the normative narrative of imperialism and ask the person what did really is all about, what do you really think about it and Orwell says in most occasions you get this answer that I hate imperialism as a terrible thing. I understand this exploitation at all at every levels but at the same time I hate the Burmese people as well. I want to beat them, I want to kill them, I want to drive bayonets into the guts, right.

So this, so caught between this, feeling of being caught between, the state of being caught between two levels of hatred is what gives this essay a very claustrophobic quality. You know there is no escape from it. He is stuck in hatred, stuck in cynicism, stuck in hypocrisy and stuck in hollowness, right okay. And then we move on, so this is the background, the discursive background of the essay that Orwell talks about.

He says that you know this is what I was, this is what I was like, this is what my life was like when I was in Burma and this is the cultural condition in Burma and you know my job as an officer you know made me you know do dirty things, made me an object of hatred. Everyone hated me and I hated the empire but then at the same time I hated the people back, right. So what we see over here is how the hegemonic identity, the hegemonic male identity, the white male officer is the most powerful dominant identity over here.



How that becomes not just a sight of privilege but also a sight of cynicism and hatred, right. So that becomes not just a subject of privilege but also the object of hatred an aversion, collective aversion. So this is the background Orwell sets up. So we will stop here today. We conclude this lecture and then in the next lecture we will see how the event in the essay, the elephant going mad and then shooting the elephant and the event really opens up the constructive quality of power, privilege and hatred.

And how it really gives a very ambivalent and disturbing and unsettling glimpse of the ideology of imperialism, of the grammar of imperialism, of the codes and narrative imperialism and how that really makes the essay a really rich text to study if you are interested in serious cultural studies today. So thank you for your attention and I will see you in the next lecture. Thank you.