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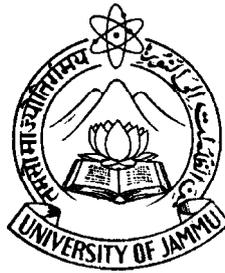
STUDY MATERIAL
For
MDP SOCIOLOGY
CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY
SEMESTER - IIIrd

COURSE NO. : SOC-C-301   LESSON No. 1–11

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CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

COURSE CONTRIBUTOR

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Syllabus of Sociology M.A. IIIrd Semester for the examination to be held in the year Dec. 2019, 2020, 2021 (Non-CBCS)

Course No. SOC-C-301 **Title : Contemporary Sociological Theory (NON-CBCS)**

Credits : 6 **Maxmimum Marks : 100**

Duration of examination 2½hrs **a) Semester Examination (External) : 80**

b) Internal Assessment (Internal) : 20

Objectives: The course is intended to introduce the students to the substantive, theoretical and methodological issues which have shaped the sociological thinking in the latter half of the 20th century. The main focus of this course is on Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, Neo-Functionalism & Neo-Marxism and some current trends like Post Structuralism & Post Modernism.

Unit I   Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology :

1. Alfred Shultz : Phenomenology of the Social World

2. Peter Berger & Thomas Luckmann : Social Construction of Reality

3. Harold Garfinkel : Studies in Ethnomethodology

Unit-II   Neo-Functionalism & Neo-Marxism :

4. Jeffrey Alexander : Neo Functionalism

5. Antonio Gramsci : Cultural Hegemony

6. Louis Althusser : Over determination & Ideology

Unit-III Post-Structuralism and Post-Modernism :

7. Jacques Derrida : Deconstruction

8. Michel Foucault : Discourse, Knowledge & Power

Unit-IV   Current trends in Sociological theory :

9. Jurgen Habermas : Public Sphere & Communicative Action

10. Anthony Giddens : Structuration

11. Pierre Bourdieu : Theory of Practice

NOTE FOR PAPER SETTING :

The question paper will consist of three section A,B and C.

Section A will consist of eight long answer type questions, two from each unit with internal choice. The candidate is required to answer any four questions selecting one from each unit. Each question carry 12 marks. (12x4 = 48 marks.)

Section B will consist of tight short answer type questions two from each unit with internal choice. The candidate is required to answer any four questions selecting one from each unit. Each question carry 6 marks. (6x4 = 24 marks.)

Section C will consists of eight objective type questions of one mark each. The candidate is required to answer all the eight questions. Total weightage will be of 1 x 8 = 8 marks.

Prescribed Readings :

1.   Adamn,Bert N and R.A. Sydie. 2001. *Sociological Theory,* New Delhi: Vistar Publication.

2.   Alexander, Jeffrey C. Ed. 1985. *Neofunctionalism,* London: Sage Publication.

3.   Althusser, L. 1971. *Lellin and Philosophy and Other Essays,* New York: Monthly Review Press.

4.   Apter, David, E and Charles F. Andrin. 1072. *Conemporary Analytical Theory* N.J. Prentice-Hall, Inc, Englewood, Cliffs.

5.   Beriens, Iians. 2002. *Postmodernism : The Key Figures*, Blackwell Publishers.

6.   Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge and New York:

7.   Bourdieu, Pierre. 1990. *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology,* Standford : Stanford University Press.

8.   Bryn Turner, Chris Rojek and Craig Calhoun (ed). 2005. *The Sage Handbook of Sociology,* London: Sage Publication.

9.   Derrida, J. 1978. *Writing and Difference,* Chicago: University of Chicago.

10. Elliot, Anthony. 2010. *Contemporary Sociological Theory: An Introduction,* Routledge Publishers.

11. Focault, M. 1971. The *Archaeology of Knowledge,* New York: Pantheon Books.

12. Garfinkel, H. 1984. *Studies in Ethnomethodology,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

13. Giddens, Anthony. 1984. *The Constitution of Society : Outline of the Theory of Structuration,* Cambridge: Polity Press.

14. Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selection from the Prison Notebooks,* London: Lawrence and Wishart.

15. Habermas, J. 1987. *The Theory of Communicative Action.* Vol. II, Boston: Beacon Press.

16. Leelite, John Filly. 1996. *Key Sociological Thinkers.* 1996, London: Routledge.

17. Lemert Charles(ed.). *Social Theory: The Multicultural and Classic Readings,* Rawat Publications, Jaipur, (2013).

18. Luckmann, T. (ed.). 1978. *Phenomenology and Sociology,* Middlesex: Penguin Books.

19. Martindale, Don. 1990. *The Nalure and Type of Sociological Theory,* Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

20. Rabinow, P. (ed.), 1984, *The Foucault Reader,* London: Penguin Books.

21. Ransom. 2010. *Social Theory,* rawat Publications, Jaipur.

22. Rasmussen, David, M. 1991. *Reading Habermas.* Wiley-Blackwell Publishers.

23. Rhoads, K. 1991. *Critical Issues in Social Theory,* Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University.

24. Ritzer George (ed.). 2005. *Enclyclopedia of Social Theory,* London: Sage Publication.

25. Ritzer, George and Barry Smart. (ed). 2001. *Handbook of Social Theory,* London: Sage Publication.

26. Ritzer. G. 2005 (5th edition). *Modern Sociological Theory,* New York: McGraw – Hill Publication.

27. Seidman, S. & Alexander, J.C. 2001. *The New Social Theory Reader,* London: Routledge.

28. Stones, Rob. (ed.) 1998. *Key Sociological Thinkers,* New York: University Press.

29. Swingewood, A. 2000. *A Short History of Sociological thought,* New York: Palgrave.

30. Tucker, Kenneth, H. Giddens. 1999. *Anthony and Modern Social Theory,* London.

CONTENTS

Alfred Schultz : Phenomenology of the Social World

Course No. : SOC-C-301	**Lesson - 1**
Semester - III	**Unit - I**

Prof. Gurpreet Bal*

Structure

1.0   Objectives

After going through this chapter, the learner will

* know the concept of Phenomenology

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* The Author is Professor, Deptt. of Sociology, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

* evaluation of Social Construction of Reality

1.1   Life Sketch

Alfred Schultz was born in Vienna, Austria in 1899. He studied from the University of Vienna and got his degree of Doctor of Laws in 1923. But he had to flee to the United States of America in 1939 due to the fear of Nazi atrocities. Schultz took a day time position in a New York City bank to support himself and taught social philosophy classes in the evening in the New School for Social Research. After four years he joined the faculty of New School for Social Research and rose to become Professor of Sociology and Philosophy in 1952 where he continued to teach till his death in 1959.

Edmund Husserl is known as father of phenomenology. Husserl's phenomenology may be seen as a critique of positivism or naturalistic empiricism. Husserl emphasized that the human mind is neither an empty container nor passive in experiencing the world around him; rather it consists of an active consciousness and everything known to man whether everyday or scientific knowledge is through his five senses. He can investigate the world and build a body of knowledge that accurately reflects the objective reality of the world. Husserl regarded the study of the structure of human consciousness as the central task of phenomenology. For Husserl, phenomenology referred to his attempt to describe the ultimate foundations of human experience by 'Seeing Beyond' the particulars of everyday experiences in order to describe the essences. Our experience of the world depends on our ability to grasp the essences of the phenomena we perceive. Grasping the essences is the foundation of all experience, because only in this way, we are able to recognize and classify in a manner which makes it intelligible to us. In order to grasp these essences, we must suspend the *natural attitudes* – means - we must detach or freeing ourselves from our usual ideas about the world. There is a real and objective world that exists, but it is known only through consciousness.

Schultz's phenomenology is also an extension and modification of Max Webers' major concepts which were applied to his phenomenology. Weber's concept of *verstehen,* emphasizing the significance of subjective meanings of actors fits in his phenomenological emphasis on individual consciousness. Schultz emphasizes this aspect of Weber's approach in analyzing the structure of meaning in individual and its relationship to the conceptions of others. Weber's concept of Ideal Types has also been used by Schultz in his typification.

Weber regarded the Ideal Type as a tool for the social analyst, whereas Schultz conceives of it as a device used in everyday life. Typifications while socially shared are experienced by the individual as part of his or her subjective consciousness. Schutz, therefore, regards this concept as providing a suitable basis for the analysis of 'intersubjective consciousnesses'.

ALFERED SCHULTZ'S

Alfred Schutz (1899-1959) was a social philosopher and phenomenologist. His phenomenological ideas in social science are well accepted and recognized by the other social scientists in general and scociologists in particular. Schutz's phenomenological work originates in the work of German scholars (Rickert, Windelband, Dilthey and Weber), Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and American intractionism. Schutz's work, therefore, is considered as eclectic in nature.

1.2   ORIGIN OF PHENOMENOLOGY

The term phenomenology first discussed by Hegel in his work **Phenomenology of Mind** in 1807. The word derived from the conjunction of the noun form of 'phainomai', to appear and 'logos' or reason. Phenomenological sociology, therefore, deals with the reason of appearance. The Encyclopedia of Sociology defines phenomenology **as 'a method in philosophy that begins with the individual and his own conscious experience and tries to avoid prior assumptions, prejudices and philosophical dogmas'**. Phenomenology, thus, examines phenomena as they are apprehended in their immediacy by the social actor. The primary focus of phenomenological sociology is in the act of understanding. In this context, in phenomenology, "the capacity of the human mind to understand meaning is more basic than either formal logic or the modes in which knowledge is articulated or structured." Phenomenological approach, therefore, gives emphasis on not to take the notions for granted that we have learned. It means one has to question about his social situations by suspending or 'bracketing' his learned cultural notions. The basic proposition states that everyday reality is a socially constructed system of ideas which has accumulated over time and is taken for granted by group members. This perspective takes a critical stance with regard to the social order and, in contrast to functionalism, it challenges our culturally learned ideas. Phenomenological perspectives in sociology, hence, offers a radical alternative to functional approach in theoretical and

positivists in methodological sense. This perspective starts with making the difference between the subject matter and methodology of the natural sciences and social sciences. In this sense, it is essential to discuss its historical roots of emergence. Some of the scholars, such as Dilthey, Windelband, and Rickert, had made major contributions, in the emergence of phenomenology. However, the main source of the phenomenological tradition in modern times found in the work and idea of Max Weber, Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz.

Dilthey makes a point that there is a basic difference found between studying nature (Naturwissenschaften) and studying society (Geistewissenschaften) because of different subject matters associated with the different disciplines.

Windelband and Rickert, on the other hand, discussed two methods of investigation.

This method of investigation, which Windelband terms 'nomothetic' and Ricket 'generalising', uncovers the general laws of natural science.

This method, which Windelband calls 'ideograpic' and Rickert 'individualising', focuses on describing unique events in their concreteness and individuality. Thus, a distinction is made between the natural sciences which seek to establish general laws, and the cultural sciences which isolate individual phenomena in order to trace their unique development.

Weber feels that every science can and does use both i.e. nomothetic or generalizing and ideographic or individualizing method depending on the discipline's research goals at that time. In this sense, Weber accepts a significant difference between subject matters of the natural and social sciences.

Weber's concept of Verstehen or "interpretative understanding" is central to the phenomenological sociology. He proposes this concept to explain how an event is unique rather than general without sacrificing the explanation of scientific validity. The goal of verstehen is to recreate the meaning of observed actors experience at the moment of action. At this point, phenomenological sociology seems to be very near to Weber's concept of Verstehen.

EDMUND HUSSERL

Husserl laid the foundation of modern phenomenology. Due to this fact he is often regarded as father of phenomenology. His phenomenological approach appears in his

most notable philosophical treatise, Ideas: Introduction to Pure Phenomenology (1913). The phenomenological approach of Husserl is based upon a particular philosophical foundation known as **transcendental phenomenology.**

Consciousness, therefore, is central to his phenomenological understanding. He concludes, "consciousness itself has a being of its own which in its absolute uniqueness of nature remains unaffected by the phenomenological disconnexion."

1.3   Intersubjectivity

Most broadly, Schultz's phenomenological sociology focuses on instersubjectivity. The study of intersubjectivity seeks to answer questions such as these : How do we know other minds ? Other selves ? How is reciprocity of perpectives possible ? How is mutual understanding and communication possible ?

An intersubjective world is not a private world; it is common to all. It exists "because we live in it as men among other men, bound to them through common influence and work, understanding others and being understood by them". Intersubjectivity exists in the "vivid present" in which we speak and listen to each other. We share the same time and space with others. "This simultaneity is the essence of intersubjectivity, for it means that I grasp the subjectivity of the alter ego at the same time as I live in my own stream of consciousness... And this grasp in simultaneity of the other as well as his reciprocal grasp of me makes possible our being in the world together".

Thus, while phenomenological philosophers focused primarily on conscioussness, Schultz turned phenomenological philosophers focused outward to a concern for the intersubjective, social world. (While this is an important difference, we should not lose sight of the fact that both focused on subjectivity, phenomenological philosophers within the realm of consciousness and Schutz in the social world).

It is a world to which Husserl calls the *world of natural attitudes* in which we find ourselves at every moment of our life, taken as it is presented to us in our everyday life. This world is indefinitely extended in space and time and it comprises both material and cultural objects. We encounter animals, creatures and have multiple relations with fellow human beings. We have our existence, carry on our activities and pursue goals and

have a certain familiarity with whatever we encounter in it. This is in no way scientific world, but a world of common sense, where we have all our social relationships and carry on actions. **The main characteristics of this world** are, **(i)** It is taken for granted – the idea which Schultz shares with Husserl. It means the existence of this world is never doubted or questioned. Even if doubt may arise, it is with regard to particular mundane existence and never the world as such as a whole. We carry all activities here in this life world, which is accepted and taken for granted. **(ii)** We do not experience the life world as a private world; rather we take it as a public world, which means that the social world of everyday life is always an intersubjective one. Each of us is an element in the life situation of others, just as they are in ours. I act upon them and they act upon me and we all experience our common world in a similar fashion. Our experience of this everyday world is a commonsense one, each of us takes for granted that our fellowmen exist, they have a conscious life, and we can communicate with them and they also live in the same natural, historical and socio-cultural world. The interpretation of this world is socially derived, which is to be communicated and passed on to others. It is socialized knowledge which we share with others, which means there is a possibility of combining in my understanding of events and things with that of my fellow beings. I share my stock of knowledge with others and my elders. Therefore, the world of daily experiences appears as social reality as a world common to all of us, hence, objective. The sense of its objectivity is being essentially determined by its anonymity, for instance, putting a letter into the letterbox written to a friend. We interact with other fellow beings and take it for granted that they are also confronted with the same world, same mundane existence. However, we perceive the world from our own perspective and have own viewpoint, but we do not give much importance to it and tend to accept that the life world is identical to all of us, to everybody. We believe that others also take it for granted as we do. Due to this reciprocity we can act and work with our fellow beings in a multiple ways.

Schultz believed that the 'experience and assumption of shared meanings built the foundation which made social life possible. For this, he discusses two levels of meaning. The first level of meaning, which Schultz defines as meaning in its 'primordial' sense, is constituted with the individual's consciousness. But on the other, it is the meaning at the second level in which social actors directly experience each other. Meaning on the second level is constituted in the process of interaction between individuals in the social world. In

this context, a phenomenological sociology must be based on 'the way meaning is constituted in the individual experience of the solitary Ego. In so doing we shall track meaning to its very point of origin in the inner time consciousness in the duration of the ego as it lives through its experience. "Schultz was focally concerned with the way in which people grasp the consciousness of others while they live within their own stream of consciousness. In other words, when two individuals share a single experience, the meaning which is constituted in that activity is called inter-subjective in literal sense. His examination of the phenomena of inter - subjective understanding is concerned primarily with explaining how interaction between individuals in the social world takes place on many levels of anonymity. Schutz uses the differences in the levels of anonymity in social experiences to classify various kinds of encounters in the social world. He asserts that the different levels of anonymity on which the individual experiences others in the social world create what he calls the structure or 'regions' of that world. He employs a full range of conceptual tools which facilitate analysis of these structures : the face to face relationship; we and they relationship; worlds of predecessors and contemporaries.

1.4   Typification and Uniqueness

All repetitive social situations constitute a process called typification – a process of categorization of situations and persons into types or kinds based on socially shared meanings and definitions. For instance, while encountering a dog in my neighborhood, I may perceive it simply as a stray dog or a pedigree. Further, I may categorise it into an Alsatian, Spaniel, or Doberman, etc. Still further, I may notice it as a dog or a bitch - as I am looking for a bitch for my dog. Each time I have put the dog into some type/ kind, however, it is my present interest or system of relevancy which has determined the form of typification prevailing at a given time. Any change in my interests, may bring a change in typification.

Specification of typification also differs over the time and across the space. For instance, the cultural items - utensils, tools, and instruments serve to specific human needs and activities. Recently, during the excavations at Khirsara village in Kutch area of Gujarat state of India, we have come across a variety of pottery, terracotta dish on stands, storage jars, perforated jar at the site of Harappan civilization. At the onset their typical purposes and typical uses were not known, but we can understand their purpose by putting them

into a type of vessel. Though, we may be mistaken that a particular vessel is used for cooking or for serving or for storage.

People develop and use typifications (first-order constructs) in the social world. In any given situation in the world of everyday life an action is determined "by means of a type constituted in earlier experiences" (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973:229). Typifications ignore individual, unique features and focus on only generic and homogenous characteristics.

While we routinely typify others, it is also possible for people to engage in self-typification. "Man typifies to a certain extent his own situation within social world and the various relation he has to his fellow-men and cultural objects" (Schultz, 1976a:233).

Typfication takes many forms. When we label something (for example, a man, a dog), we are engaging in typfication. More generally, any time we are using language, we are typifying; indeed Schutz calls language "the typifying medium par excellence" (1973:75). Language can be though of as a "treasure house" of typologies that we use to make sense of the social world.

The linking of typifications to language makes it clear that typfication exist in the larger society and that people acquire and store typifications throughout the socialization process, indeed throughout their lives. The typogies that we use are largely socially derived and socially approved. They have stood the test of time and have come to be institutionalized as traditional and habitual tools for dealing with social life. While the individual may create some typifications, most of them are preconstituted and derived from the larger society.

Schultz sometimes talks of recipes when he discusses typfications, and he often uses the terms synonymously. Recipes, like typifications, "serve as techniques for understanding or at least controlling aspects of... experience" (Natanson, 1973a:xxix). **Recipes, however, tend to deal with situations, while typifications refer more to people.** People use recipes to handle the myriad routine situations that they encounter each day. Thus, when someone greets us with the recipe "How are you" we respond with the recipe "Fine, and you?" Continuing the cooking analogy, Schultz argues that we function with "cook- book knowledge... recipes... to deal with

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the routine matters of daily life... Most of our daily activities from rising to going to bed are of this kind. They are performed by following recipes reduced to cultural habits of unquestioned platitudes" (1976a:73-74). Even when we encounter unusual or problematic situations, we first try to use our recipes. Only when it is abundantly clear that our recipes won't work do we abandon them and seek to create, to work out mentally, new ways of dealing with situations.

Schultz and Luckmann (1973:231) outline conditions under which situations become problematic and people must create new ways of dealing with them (new recipes or typifications). If there is no recipe available to handle a novel situation, or if a recipe does not allow one to handle the situation it is supposed to deal with, a new one must be created. In other words, when the stock of knowledge currently available is inadequate, the peson must add to it by creating new recipes (or typifications).

Because of the recurrent existence of problematic situations, people cannot rely totally on recipes and typfications. They must be adaptive enough to deal with unforseen circumstances. People need "practical intelligence" in order to deal with upredictable situation by assessing alternative course of action and devising new ways of handling situations.

1.5   Reciprocity of Perspectives

Schutz's general thesis of the reciprocity of perspectives has two idealizations:

1. Interchangeability of standpoints: I can take it for granted that I can put myself at the place of other person and can perceive the things from her perspective and vice- versa. Thus the objects beyond my reach, but within the reach of my friend, can be brought within my 'manipulatory zone' or within my 'actual reach'.

2. It further leads us to the congruency of different systems of relevancy. We take it for granted and we assume our fellowmen to do the same - the differences of perspectives originating in differences of biographically determined situations can be eliminated and therefore, different systems of relevancy can be made conformable.

It is due to the reciprocity of perspectives that we arrive at a common world comprising identical objects with identical qualities and properties, identically interpreted

by all of us. By identical, Gurwitsch means the extent to which cooperation and collaboration are required for practical purposes. Even the members of the most intimate dyad share only a limited sector of their unique biographies. Their respective systems of relevance can never be totally congruent. Ego can never make alters' system of relevance really his own, he can merely understand it. For these reasons I and you can transcend each other's worlds.

For Schultz, the meaning that the individual imparts to situation in everyday life is of prime importance; he puts the spotlight on the individual's own definition of the situation. And he believes that the meaning an individual imparts to the interaction situation may be shared by the person with whom he/she is interacting; Schutz calls this 'reciprocity of perspectives". **Wallace and Wolf** give an example of an orchestra to explain the idea of "reciprocity of perspectives", because the musicians in an orchestra share their meanings of the situation with the conductor, the musicians could exchange positions with the conductor and experience the situation in the way the conductor did. Shared meanings, Wallace and Wolf explain, "may be both assumed and experienced in the interaction situation. In these situations, people are acting on the basis of taken for granted assumptions about reality.

1.6   Multiple Realities–Meanings and Motives

Schutz argued that there are many realities, each with its own 'attitude' or 'style of existence". He advances the thesis of **William James's** theory of multiple reality that all human experience take place in one of a number of **'finite provinces of reality'**, each of which is defined by a particular cognitive style that gives experiences in that province their particular 'accent of reality'. Schultz specifies several criteria by which the cognitive style of one province of reality is distinguished from another : each has its own "tension of consciousness" experience of self, form of sociality, and perspective of time. Examples of these provinces of reality, which Schutz discusses, are the common sense world of social action, the world of dreams, the world of religious experience, and the world of scientific theorizing. Several discussions of multiple reality involve in the understanding of how Schultz conceptualizes the activity of social scientific theorizing and the relationship between that activity and the world of social action. First, he argues that one of these finite provinces of reality, the commonsense world of social action, can be labeled as "paramount reality'. Second, Schultz argues that each of these provinces is 'finite', by which he means that each

is experienced separately and that transition from one to another always involves a 'shock'. Although there are multiple realities, but they are not equally fundamental. The most fundamental reality, the one that gears into the real world, Schultz called the reality of every day life.

Schultz rather than referring to the concept of homogeneous social reality prefers the term multiple realities. There are several, probably an infinite number of various orders of realities, each with its own special and separate style of existence. We experience many different kinds of realities. The most important of which are the world of physical objects, the world of science, of ideal relations, of supernatural, world of religion etc. Each of these provinces is finite, which means each is experienced separately and transition from one to another involves jolt or a shock. What are the social implications of these differing orders of reality? Human beings are governed by pragmatic motives - they strive to control, dominate or change the world so as to realize their projects and purposes. Schultz calls the world of everyday life as the paramount reality. Fundamental reality is reality of everyday life. This is the reality we are all interested in, but all aspects of this reality are not equally relevant to our life projects. We select from the world within our actual reach or potential reach those objects that we believe will serve our interests and realization of our projects. In this paramount reality, our hopes, fears, and wants impel us to act, to plan, to resist obstacles and to realize our projects. In other realities, he leaves behind his will to master the world and his pragmatic motives. He becomes an imagining self who plays any role and projects himself into any world he chooses. He has freedom of discretion which he does not have in paramount reality. But the point is that everyday reality has its place as one among many possible accounts of reality, one of many coexisting orders.

1.6.1 Meaning and Motives

Schultz argued that we must distinguish meanings from motives. In the process, he differentiated between two subtypes of both meanings and motives. Although he did not always succeed in keeping them neatly separated, for Schultz meanings concern how factors determine what aspects of the social world are important to them, whereas motives involve the reason that actors do what they do. One type of meaning, is the subjective meaning context. That is, through our own independent mental construction of reality, we define certain components of reality as meaningful. However, although

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this process is important in the everyday life-world, Schultz did not see it as amenable to scientific study because it is to idiosyncratic.

Of concern to scientific sociology is the second type of meaning, the objective meaning context, the sets of meanings that exist in the culture as whole and that are the share possession of the collectivity of actors. In that these sets of meanings are shared rather than idiosyncratic, they are as accessible to sociologists as to anyone else. In that they have an objective existence, they can be studied scientifically by the sociologist, and they were one of the Schultz's main concerns. Schutz's was critical of Weber for failing to differentiate between subjective and objective meaning and for failing to make it clear that objective meaning contexts can be most easily scrutinzed in scientific sociology.

Schultz also differentiated **between two types of motives - "in-order-to" and 'because' motives**. Both involve reason for an individual's actions, but only because motives are accessible to both the person acting and the sociologist. **In-order-to motives are the reasons that an actor undertakes certain actions; actions are undertaken to bring about some future objective or occurrence.** They exist only when action is taking place. In-order-to motives are "subjective". They are part of deep consciousness, the ongoing stream of consciousness, and as such are insensible to both the actor and the scientific observer. In-order-to motives can be grasped only retrospectively by the actor, after the action is completed and the objective is (or is not) achieved. Sociology is little concerned with in-order-to motives because they are difficult to study scientifically. But sociology can study because motives, or retrospective glances the past factors (For example, personal background, individual psyche, environment) that caused individuals to behave as they did. Since because motives are 'objective,' they can be studied retrospectively using scientific methods. Since the actions have already occurred, the reasons for them are accessible to both the actor and the social scientist. However, neither actors nor social scientists must be satisified with being able to deal with typical motives.

In spite of their greater accessibility to the social scientist, Schutz was little more inclined to study because motives than in-order-to motives. They represented a return to a concern for consciousness, while Schultz, as we have seen many times,

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was interested in moving on to the intersubjective world. However, Schultz believed that all social interaction was founded on a reciprocity of motives : "The actor's in-order-to motives will become **because motives** of his partner and vice versa".

Because motives have their roots in my past lived experiences which determine my present biographical situation. As an actor, one hardly knows anything about because motives. They are ex-post facto and only by means of reflection awareness is sought. To become aware, one has to turn back to one's past and refer to it the goals one is pursuing. But then one becomes an observer of oneself and no longer remains an actor. In contrast to because motives, the in-order-to- motives are always given to one in one's very acting. One is always aware of them. It is an orientation of the action to a future event, project it in future perfect tense. For instance, if one asks me that why did you go out? My answer is in order to meet my friend. They refer to one's future state that an actor wishes to bring about by his actions. Actor is conscious of his in-order-to–motives. In social interaction, for instance, in questioning and answering, the in-order-to motives of one actor become because-motives of the other. The question will cause the other to answer or provide information the other wants. In some cases, the motives are simple and obvious. *May I go to toilet? May I have the salt?* The motive is clear. While other cases, on the other hand, may be complex. One asks a simple question, *'where is my black ball pen'*? The motive is to fill the form to apply for a scholarship which is known to the person only. The friend here simply understands that he needs a pen. In order to go to the ultimate motive, he has to gather additional information and observation. Therefore, Schultz illustrates that, **(1)** It is by no means certain that we truly understand each other in everyday life and that there is only a chance for such understanding (not in theoretical sense), rather the form of understanding prevailing in the actual practice of social life without which no cooperation and social interaction is possible. **(2)** We tend to increase this probability by grasping the meaning the action has for the actor. To grasp others' meaning in everyday life, everyone constructs 'course-of-action types'.

1.7   Life World or Lebenswelt

Husserl's vision of Lebenswelt is central to Schultz phenomenological sociology. This is an intersubjective world in which people both create social reality and are constrained by the Pre-existing social and cultural structures created by their predecessors. Schutz is

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more interested to deal with the specific elements of the life world that are part of the taken for-granted reality of every day life. These components are-knowledge of skills, useful knowledge, and knowledge of receipts. Each is part of the social stock of knowledge and leads to more or less habitual action. **First,** knowledge is the most basic form that it rarely becomes problematic and thus is accorded a high degree of certainty. Skill of walking is an example of knowledge of skills. **Second,** Useful knowledge is a definite solution to a problem that was once problematic. Although this type of knowledge is not absolutely trustworthy, it has achieved a high level of certainty. Example include courses of action, such as driving a car or playing a piano. Knowledge of receipts, **the third form** of habitual knowledge, is the most variable but skill is standardised. In certain situations, receipts are called **forth as** standard ways to cope. Whenever possible an actor employes a recipe. For instance in dealing with most customers, a salesperson can use time-tested customer behaviour in usual ways, the salesperson can employ an alternative recipe or even come up with an innovative response. Within the life-world, Schultz differentiated between intimate face-to-face relationships. ("we-relations") an distant and impersonal relatioships ("they relations"). While face-to-face relations are of great importance in the life-world, it is far easier for the sociologist to study more impersonal relations scientifically. Although Schultz turned away from consciousness and to the intersubjective life world, he did offer insights into consciousness, especially in his thoughts on meaning and people's motives.

In short, phenomenology is considered as a branch of social science which tries to explain phenomena that bears significant meaning to our life. In fact phenomenological tradition has been supersided by people like Hegel, Husserl and so on. Alfred Schultz a phenomenological tradition had also to eradicate the general feelings of act and get into the inner reality of life. Schultz, in fact, is concerned with dialectical relationship between the way people construct social reality and the obdurate social and cultural reality that they inherit from those who preceded them in the social world.

1.8 Schultz's Analysis of Social World

Schultz identified four distinct realms of social reality. Each is an abstraction of the social world and is distinguished by its degree of immediacy (the degree to which situations are within reach of the actor) and determinability (the degree to which they can be controlled by actor). The four realms are **umwelt,** the realm of directly

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experienced social reality, **mitwelt,** the realm of indirectly experienced social reality; **folgewelt,** the realm of successors; and **vorwelt,** the realm of predecessors. The realms of successors and predecessors (folgewelt and vorwelt) were of peripheral interest to Schultz. However, we shall deal with them briefly because the contrast between them illustrates some of the characteristics of Schultz's major focus the umwelt and the mitwelt.

Folgewelt and Vorwelt : The future (folgewelt) is a purely residual category in Schutz's work (in contrast to Marx's for example, where it plays a crucial role his dialectic). It is a totally free and completely indeterminant world. It can be anticipated by the social scientist only in a very general way and cannot be depicted in any great detail. One could not place great stock in the ideal types and models of the future constructed by the social scientist. Thus, there is little that Schultz's phenomenological sociology has to offer to the conventional scientist seeking to understand or predict the future.

The past (vorwelt), on the other hand, is somewhat more amenable to analysis by the social scientist. The action of those who lived in the past is totally the actions themselves, and their outcomes have already occurred. Despite its determinacy, the study of predecessors presents difficulties for a subjective sociology. It is difficult to interpret the action of people who live in an earlier time because we would probably have to use contemporary categories of thoght in the historical glance back rather than the categories that prevailed at the time. The interpretation of contemporaries is likely to be more accurate because sociologists share interpretive categories with those whose action they seek to understand. Thus, although a subjective sociology of the past is possible, the probability of misinterpretation is great.

The essential point here is that the objective for Schultz was to develop a sociology based on the interpretations of the social world made by the actors being studies. It is difficult to know the interpretations of predecessors and impossible to understand those of successors. However, it is possible to understand contemporaries (mitwelt) and the interpretations of those with whom we are in immediate face-to-face contact (umwelt).

Umwelt and We Relations :We relations are defined by a relatively high

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degree of intimacy, which is determined by the extent to which the actors are acquainted with one another's personal biographies. The pure we relation is a face-to-face relationship "in which the partners are aware of each other and sympathetically participate in each other's lives for however short a time" (Schutz, 1932/1967:164). The we relation encompasses the consciousness of the participants as well as the patterns of face-to-face interaction. The we relation is characterized by a "thou orientation," which "is the universal form in which the other is experienced 'in person' "(Schutz and Luckmann, 1973:62). In other words, we relations are highly personal and immediate.

The immediately of interaction has two implications for social relations. **First** in a we relation, there are abundant indicators of the other's subjective experience. Immediatly allows each actor to enter into the consciousness of the other. **Second,** when entering any social relation, an individual has only typical knowledge of the other. However, in the continuing process of a face-to-face interaction, typifications with others necessarily modifies typologies.

Schultz not only offered a number of insights into we relations per se but also linked these relationships to cultural phenomena in the real world. For example in we relations actors learn the typifications and recipes that allow them to survive socially. People not only learn typification and recipes in we relations by use them there as well - trying them out, altering them when they prove ineffective or inappropriate.

Schultz was aware that there is considerable give and take among actors in we relations. People try out different courses of action on other people. They may quickly abandon those that elicit hostile reactions and continue to use those that are accepted. People also may find themselves in situations where recipes do not work at all, and they must create appropriate and workable sets of actions. In other words, in the relations people constantly adjust their actions with regard to those with whom they interact.

People also adjust their conceptions of others. They enter a given relationship with certain assumptions about what the other actors are thinking. In general, people assume that the thinking of others is of the same order as their own. Sometimes this is confirmed by what they find, but in other circumstances the facial expressions, the

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movements, the words, and the actions of them must revise their view of others' though processes and then adjust their responses on the basis of this new image of what others are thinking. This is an indirect process, because people cannot actually know what others are thinking. Thus they may tentatively change their actions in the hope that this will elicit responses consistent with what they now think is going on in others minds. People may be forced to revise their conception of others' thought processes and their actions a number of times before they are able to understand why other are acting in a particular way. It is even conceivable that in some instances people cannot make an adequate number of adjustments, with the result that they are likely to flee the particular interaction, completely confused. In such a case, they may seek more comfortable situations where familiar recipes can be applied.

Even within we relations in everyday life most action is guided by recipes. People do not usually reflect on what they do or on what others do. However, when they encounter problems, inappropriate thoughts and actions, they must abandon their recipes and reflect on what is going on to create an appropriate response. This physchologically costly, because people prefer to act and interaction accord with recipes.

While it is difficult to analyze the umwelt scientifically, it is far easier to study the mitwelt in this manner. However, although it may be easier to study the mitwelt, such study is not likely to be as rewarding as a study of the umwelt because of the latter's key role in the creation of typifications and recipes and its central role in the social lives of people in the life-world.

Mitwelt and They Relations : The mitwelt is that aspect of the social world in which people deal only with types of people or with larger social structures rather than with actual actors. People do fill these types and these structures, but in this world of "contemporaries," these people are not experienced directly. Because actors are dealing with types rather than with actual people, their knowledge of people is not subject to constant revision on the basis of face-to-face interaction. This relatively constant knowledge of general types of subjective experience can be studied scientifically and can shed light on the general process by which people deal with the social world. A number of specific levels of the mitwelt will be discussed below.

While in the umwelt people coexist in the same time and space, in the mitwelt spatial distances make it impossible to interact on a face-to-face basis. If the spatial situation changes and the people draw closer to each other, then face-to-face interaction becomes possible, but if it occurs, we have returned to the umwelt. People who were once in our umwelt may draw away from us and ultimately, because of spatial distances, become part of the mitwelt. Thus, there is a gradual transition from umwelt to mitwelt as people grow apart from one another. Here is the way Schultz describes this gradual transition:

Now we are *face-to-face, saying good-bye, shaking hands; now he is walking away, Now he calls back to me; now I see him waving to me; now he has disappeared around the corner.* It is impossible to say at which precise moment the face-to-face situation ended and my partner became a mere contemporary of whom I have knowledge (he has, probably, arrived home) but no direct experience.

(Schultz, 1976a:37)

Similarly, there are no clear dividing lines among the various levels of the mitwelt discussed below.

The mitwelt is a stratified world with levels arranged by degree of anonymity. The more anonymous the level, the more people's relationships are amenable to scientific study. Some of the major levels within the mitwelt, beginning with the last anonymous are :

1. Those whom actors encountered face-to-face in the past and could meet again. Actors are likely to have fairly current knowledge of them because they have been met before and could be met again. If these people were to be met personally at a later date, this relationship would become part of the umwelt and no longer be part of the mitwelt.

2. Those once encountered not by us but by people with whom we deal. Because this level is based on second-hand knowledge of others, it involves more anonymity than the level of relationship with people we have encountered in the past. If we were ever to meet people at this level, the relationship would become part of the umwelt.

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3. Those whom we are on the way to meet. As long as we have not yet met them, we relate to them as types, but once we actually meet them, the situation again becomes part of the umwelt.

4. Those whom we know not as concrete individuals but simply as positions and roles. For example, we know that there are people who sort our mail or process our checks, but although we have attitudes about them as types, we never encounter them personally.

5. Collectivities whose function we may know without knowing any of the individuals who exist within them. For example, we know about the senate, but few people actually know any of the individuals in it, although we do have the possibility of meeting those people.

6. Collectivities that are so anonymous that we have little chance of ever encountering people in them. For most people, the Mafia would be an example of such a collectivitiy.

7. Objective structures of meaning that have been created by contemporaries with whom actors do not have not had face-to-face interaction. The rules of English grammar would be an example of such a structure of meaning.

8. Physical artifacts that have been produced by a person we have not met and whom we are not likely to meet. For example, people would have a highly anonymous relationship with a museum painting.

As we move further into the mitwelt relationships, they become more impersonal and anonymous. People do not have face-to-face interaction with others and thus cannot know what goes on in other's minds. Their knowledge is therefore restricted to "general types of subjective experience" (Schultz, 1932/1967:181)

They relations, which are found in the mitwelt, are characterized by interaction with impersonal contemporaries (for example, the unseen postal employee who sorts our mail) rather than consocites (for example, a personal friend). In they relations, the thoughts and actions of people are dominated by anonymous typifications and recipes.

In the "pure" they relation, the typical schemes of knowledge used to define

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other actors are not available for modification. Because we do not interact with actual people but with impersonal contemporaries, information that varies from our typification is not provided to us. In other words, new experiences are not constituted in they relations. Cultural typifications determine action, and they cannot be altered by the thoughts and actions of actors in they relationship. Thus, whereas we relations are subject to negotiation, they relations are not. Inspite of the distinction between we and they relations, the typifications used in they relations have their historical roots in we relations: "The first and originally objective solution of a problem was still largely dependent on the subjective relevance awareness of the individual" (Schultz and Luckmann, 1973:225). However, these solutions ultimately become more typified and anonymous - in short, more and more a part of the cultural realm.

1.9 Critical Comments

Alfred Schutz's phenomenology has not gone without criticism, some severe and unjust, some productive and insightful. Schutz's theory is radically different from the then prevalent theories of Parsons, Weber and Durkheim. His theory is both fundamental and modest in contrast to the recent attempts to theorize society as a whole. However, it is not a full grown social theory, but it is highly theoretical and has more to do with providing a philosophical background for the study of society. His strong critique came from Natanson- a phenomenological philosopher. He has called upon the social scientists to be more self-critical, more theoretical and certainly more philosophically literate in their conception of theory and theory construction. In view of Zeitlin, the real problem with Schultz's scheme is that it provides us with no independent means of assessing the validity of everyman's judgments about his existential conditions and his interpretations of his relations with his fellowmen. Schutz not only abstract the everyday world but idealizes it as well.

1.10 Ask Yourself

Q1.   Discuss Shultz's analysis of the structure of social world.

Q2.   What are the methods phenomenologists use to make sense of 'Social World'?

1.11 Essential Readings

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Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann
Social Construction of Reality

Course No. : SOC-C-301	**Lesson - 2**
Semester - I	**Unit - I**

Prof. Gurpreet Bal*

Structure

2.1   Objectives

After going through this chapter, you will be able to

* Know the foundations of knowledge in everyday life

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* Social Interaction in Everyday life.

2.2.   Introduction

After Alfred Schutz another significant contribution to Phenomenology has been made by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who applied sociology of Knowledge approach to have a sociological understanding of the relationship between individual and society. According to the sociology of knowledge approach, there are social bases of knowledge and sociology of knowledge must analyse the processes through which it occurs. The basic contention is that reality is socially constructed. Thus the focus is on the processes by which any body of knowledge comes to be socially accepted as reality. Here we need to understand what we mean by 'reality' and 'knowledge'. Reality has been defined as a quality pertaining to phenomenon that we recognize as being independent of our volition. By reality we mean that things exist independent of our experiencing them. Knowledge is a verified true belief. Sociology of knowledge is a relationship between knowledge and reality. Both knowledge and reality are socially relative terms, i.e. they pertain to specific social context, in the sense that what is real for Tibetan Monk may not be true for American Businessman, and the knowledge of a criminal differs from a criminologist. How do people construct reality? People through actions and interactions construct a socially interpreted/ shared reality which appears objectively factual and subjectively meaningful. The phrase social construction of reality refers to the process by which individuals creatively build reality through social interaction. Therefore, society is not only an objective reality but it also is a subjective reality. Berger and Luckmann take the world of everyday life as a subjective reality. They argue that this commonsensical world is a social reality and the construction of this reality has social basis.

2.3   Life Sketch

Peter Berger was born in Vienna in 1929 and teaches at Boston University. In addition to authoring numerous works in sociology, including *An Invitation to Sociology* (1963), Berger writes as a lay theologian. His most recent book is *A foe Glory : the Quest Fir Fatih in an Age of Credulity* (1992).

Thomas Luckman born in 1927. After teaching for a period in Frankfurt, shifted to Konstanz. He has written *Invisible Religion* (1967) and is the editor and co-author of

Alfred Schultz's *Structure of the Life-World,* a systematic social theory from a phenomenological point of view.

Berger and Luckmann wrote the Social Construction of Reality at a time when both were interested in the sociology of religion. Thus, they worked somewhat in the spirit of the classic social theorists, who derived much of their theoretical positions from assessments of, or reaction to, religion. Berger and Luckmann both felt that religion continued as an important force in modern life. This conviction underlay their argument that the social world was orderly, even though constucted in human process. Their book, from which the selection is taken, represents the most successful attempt since Schultz to construct an explicitly phenomological social theory.

2.4   Social Construction of Reality

Another important branch of phenomenological sociology is represented by the work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. Berger and Luckmann tried to extend the concerns of phenomnological sociology to social structures and institutions. In the social Construction of Reality (1967) Berger and Luckmann applied sociology of knowledge approach to integrate the individual and societal reality. The focus on the "processes by which any body 'knowledge' comes to be socially accepted as 'reality'. By "reality construction" authors mean the process whereby people reality that is expired as objectively factual and subjectively meaningful. In this sense with "the dual character of society in terms of objective facticity and subjective meaning. By subjective they mean that the reality is pesonanly meaningful to the individual and by objective they are referring to the social order. This fact is clarified in Berger's book. "The Sacred canopy", in more precise manner.

Worlds are socially constructed and socially maintained. Their continuing reality, both objective (as common, taken-for-granted facticicty) and subjective (as faciticity imposing itself on individual consciousness), depends upon specific social process, namely those processes that on goingly reconstruct and maintain the particular worlds in question. Conversely, the interruption of these social processes threatens the (objective and subjective) reality of the worl'd in question. Thus each world requried social 'base for its continuing existence as a world that is rea to actual human beings.

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmaan's book The Social Construction of Reality

1967) seeks to extend the concerns of phenomenological sociology to social structures and institutions. Furthermore, the authors sought to integrate the individual and societal levels. We will be concerned not only with what they have done but with how successful they have been in achieving their objectives.

Berger and Luckmann's work is one of the most widely read and influential books in contemporary sociology. One of its main attractions is that it translated Alfred Schutz's sometimes arcane phenomenology into the terms of mainstream sociological theory. Berger and Luckmann also attempted to go beyond S-hutz's work, to buttress it with Mead's social psychology and to complement both Schutz's and Mead's work with the work of Marx and Durkheim on society and culture. They attempted to integrate Weber's work on social action with Durkheim's thoughts on social facts as external realities. In relating these thinkers to one another, Berger and Luckmann made it quite char that they wanted to deal in an integrated fashion with "the dual character of society in terms of objective facticity and subjective meaning (1967:18). Even more explicit is this statement, which seems to give the essence of an approach to social reality that integrates a concern with a large and small scale phenomena: "Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product" (Berger and Luckman, 1967 :61). In other words, people are the products of the very society that they create.

The basic thrust and essence of this phenoenological approach to social reality, according to them is to integrate lartge and small scale phenomena: "Society is a huamn product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product. In other words, people are th product sof the very society that they create.

Berger and Luckmann wanted to study social reality that exists in everyday life away from the study of intellectual history from the perspective of sociology of knowledge. Here, we begin with the analysis of everyday life.

The books subtitle, A Treatise in Sociology of Knowledge, provides the key to their analysis. Their view of the sociology of knowledge is unusual. To them, it is concerned with the social construction of reality. In articulating this view, their goal was to move the sociology of knowledge away from the study of intellectual history and to the everyday construction of reality, the process of everyday knowledge production in which we all engage. However, despite their intent to deal with both large and small scale phenomena,

and their commitment to deal with the work of people such as Marx and Durkheim, they said little about objectivity, especially large-scale social structures, even though the longest chapter in their book is titled "Society as Objective Reality."

2.5   Everyday Life

Berger and Luckmann began their analysis at the individual level with the reality of everyday life, the common-sense world. Here Berger and Luckmann relied almost exclusively on the work of Alfred Schutz.

Berger and Luckmann were particularly interested in people's phenomenological tendency to view subjective processes as objective realities. In their view, people tend to apprehend everyday life as an ordered reality; that is, social reality seems to the actor to be independent of the actor's apprehension of it. It appears already objectified, and it seems to impose itself on the actor. Crucial to this tendency toward objectification is language, which "continuously provides [people] with the necessary objectifications and posits the order within which these make sense and within which everyday life has meaning for [people]" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:23). We take the reality of everyday life for granted; although we could question it, we suspend that ability in order to live comfortably within it. The thrust of Berger and Luckmann's discussion was a view of the social world as the cultural product of conscious processes.

Berger and Luckmann's discussion of face-to-face interaction is welcome, although it adds little to Schutz's work. In their description of face-to-face interactions, which, following Schutz, they called we relationships, Berger and Luckmann emphasized that such relationships involve an immediate interchange of meanings. In we relationships, there is less typification than in they relationships (which involve anonymous others) in other words, instead of relating to people on the basis of culturally defined recipes, in we relationships people relate to each other in more personalized ways. Because we relationships are less dominated by typifications, there is more latitude for negotiations among the actors. As we move away from immediate, face-to- face relationships to relationships with people with whom we are less intimate or even strangers, there is more likelihood of typification and less of interpersonal negotiation. In other words, our relationships with others in the they relationship grow progressively more impersonal and

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stereotypic. The importance of typifications (and recipes) to Berger and Luckmann is illustrated by their definition of social structures, a definition clearly not in line with an objective view of such structures. They define social structures as "the sum total of these typifications and of the recurrent patterns of interaction established by means of them" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:33).

As with many phenomenologists, language is very important to Berger and Luckmann, especially as it relates to the typification process. Berger and Luckmann viewed language as a specific form of the process of "signification," a subtype of objectification distinguished by its explicit purpose of standing for a wide range of subjective meaning. Language is a system of vocal symbols, the most important symbol system in society. The reason for its importance is that language can be detached from the here and now, from face-to-face interaction, and can communicate meanings that are not immediate expressions of subjectivity. Language also allows us to deal with things that we never have experienced and perhaps never will experience ourselves. It also can help us accumulate meanings and knowledge that can then be passed on to future generations. In these and other ways, language is, in Berger and Luckmann's system, the most important social structure: "I encounter language as a facticity external to myself and it is coercive on me" (1967:38). Here they self- consciously took a Durkheimian position on language as an external and coercive social fact. However, this is an exception to their general tendency to pay little attention to social structure, or the objective components of society.

The heart of this theory deals with the qestion of how everyday reality is socially constructed. as they put it, "how is it possible that subjective meaning become objective facticities?. They began their analysis at the individual level with the reality of everyday life, the common-sense world. here, Berger and Luckmann seem to be influenced by the world of Alfred Schutz.

Berger and Luckmann's phenomenological analysis is focused on the view that how subjective processes become as objective. realtiy. In their view, people tend to apprehend everyday life as an ordered reality. In this sense, social reality seems to be indpendent of the actor's apprehnesnion of it. it appears already objectivied, and it seems to impose itself on the actor. This tendency leads to the objectification involve in language, which "continuously proivdes (peop-le) with necessary objectification and posts the order

with in which these make sense and within which everyday life has meaning for (people). The reality of everyday life, therefore, should be taken as granted. To make their phenomological understanding more clear, Berger and Luckmann put forward three concepts :

1. Externalisation   2. Objectification   3. Internalisation

1.   **Externalisation :** In externalisation, individuals with their own human activity create their social world. Berger and Luckmann view the social order as on ongoing human production. The social order is both the "result of past human activity" and it" exists only in so far as human activity continues to produce it". Thus, externalisation has two dimensions. First, human beings can create a new social reality, like forming a new friendship or starting a new business. Second, human beings can re-create social instituions by their ongoing externalisation of them, like maintaining and renewing old friendship and old business, or like paying income tax. In the construction of social realtiy, people must externalise. In other words, people must do such things as produce what they need to survive and interact with others. In the process of externalisation, people are prone to develop habitualised patterns of acting and interacting in recurrent situations. It is in the externalisation phase of reality construction that Berger and Luckmann see individuals as creative beings, capable of acting on their own environment. In short externalisation means that individuals create society.

2.   **Objectification** : Objectification is the process whereby individuals apprehend everyday life as an ordered, prearranged reality that imposes itself upon but is seemingly independent of human beings. Berger and Luckmann put it, "The reality of everyday life appears already objectified, that is, constituted by an order of objects that have been designated as objects before my appearance on the scene". In the process of objectification, language is used as medium of construction of social reality. The common objectivations of everyday life are maintained primarily by linguistic signification. Everyday life is, above all, life with and by means of the language share with my fellowmen. An understanding of language is thus essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life" or examples, the friendship between two people which resulted from their interactions confronts the two friends

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as a social reality is an example of objectivation. Other people can understand their friendship by hearing their language that are using to designate the friendship. In short, objectivation means that society, is an objective reality.)

3)   **Internalisation** : Internalisation is a kind of socialisation by which the legitimation of the institutional order is assured . For Berger, successful socialisation means that there is a high degree of symmetry between both objective and subjective reality and objective and subjective identity. Internalisation for Berger is what socialisation is for Parsons. In short, internalisation means "everyone pretty much is what he is supposed to be". There is no problem of identity, for "everybody knows who everybody is and who he is himself".

In addition, Beger's definition of socialisation seems to be very similar to Parson's that is, the internalisation of social norms and values. Berger makes a distinction between primary and secondary socialization. Primary socialisation refers to what individuals undergo in childhood when they encounter the significant others with whom they identify emotionally. "The child takes on the significant others' roles and attitudes, that is,' internalises them and makes them his own"." Secondary socialisation is "any subsequent process that inducts an already socialised individual into new sectors of the objective world of his society".' Basically secondary socialisation is a later phase in the acquisition of knowledge which takes place under the auspices of specialised agencies, like modem educational institutions.

The social construction of reality tries to bridge the gap between objective and subjective reality on the one hand and macro- and micro-level social theorising on the other. It argues that whenever individuals engage in internalisation, they are conforming to the expectations of existing social institutions, and they are also re-creating that social institution. The creation of a new institution occurs in the moment of externalisation; once externalised, it is objectified entity. As Berger and Luckmann -sum it up: "Society is a human product". (externalization) "society is an objective reality (objectivation). "Man is a social product". (internalization)

2.6   Objective Components of Society

Despite their perspective on language, Berger and Luckmann are weakest on the objective components of society. For example, they defined social structure as nothing

more that recurrent patterns of action. In their chapter "Society as an Objective Reality," they were interested primarily in the process by which that world, such as it is, is produced and how a sense of its objectivity is created. They carefully reminded readers that this sense as well as whatever objective reality there "really" is out there, is produced by people.

(a)   Institutionalization Beneath this process by which a sense of social reality is constructed lies the fact that people must externalize; that is, they must produce what they need to survive. In the process of externalizing, people are prone to develop habitualized patterns of acting and interacting in recurrent situations. Life would be impossible without habits, it would be very difficult to decide the proper action in every new situation.

Habitualized actions set the stage for the development of institutionalization. This occurs when people develop typifications of what others are likely to do in a given situation. Berger and Luckmann defined an institution as a kind of reciprocal process of typification. This microscopic conception of an institution is quite different from most sociological conceptions of institutions. Although to Berger and Luckmana institutions are not large-scale phenomena, they are nonetheless external and coercive. Berger and Luckman argued that institutions "control human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct".

The stream of history allows these institutions to acquire objectivity. However, when Berger and Luckmann considered these institution, they were inclined to think of them subjectively also:

This means that the institutions that now have been crystallized .. are experienced as existing over and beyond the individuals who "happen to" embody them at the moment. In other words, the institutions are now experienced as possessing a reality of their own, a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact.

By emphasizing the experience of institutions, rather than their external reality, Berger and Luckmann made their subjective biases quite clear, even when they were supposedly dealing with external realities.

Children perceive the institutional world as an objective reality; that is, it was there before they were born and it will be there after they die. As individuals mature, they

apprehend their biographies as episodes within the objective history of society.

The various institutions within society tend to "hang together," but in Berger and Luckmann's view this is due not to their objective qualities but to the tendency of people to perceive them in that way. In other words, what is crucial is the knowledge that people have of society. Thus sociology should focus on how people reconstruct their knowledge of social reality, not only in the historical production of the world but also in the continuing creation of that world on a day-to-day basis.

(b) **Roles** Berger and Luckmann's definition of roles is typical of their sense of objective social reality. To them, roles are typifications of what can be expected of actors in given social situations. Roles are not to be confused with objective positions, as they tend to be in the work of many others. The role was particularly important to Berger and Luckmann because it constitutes a mediation or link between the large and small scale worlds. In Berger and Luckmann's hands, it served to mediate only between culture and consciousness: "The analysis of role is of particular importance to the sociology of knowledge because it reveals the mediations between the macroscopic universe of meaning objectivated in a society and the ways in which these universes are subjectively real to individuals".

(c) **Reification** Reification, is a particularly important tool for dealing in an integrated way with the social world, but Berger and Luckmann limited its utility by the way they used it. They defined reification solely as a subjective phenomenon: "The apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in nonhuman or possibly supra- human terms". Reification is the tendency to perceive human products as if they were something else, "such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will". In other words, people simply lose sight of the dialectical relationship between them and their products. People can objectify social phenomena without reifying them; that is, they can produce objects and view the world in objective terms without forgetting that people produce them. However, Berger and Luckmann gave absolutely no sense of the other aspect of reification - that is, the degree to which society, as a result of the subjective processes they describe, objectively comes to acquire a life of its own.

(d) **Legitimations** Also telling, in terms of their tendency to ignore objective structures in the sense that that term is ordinarily used in sociology, was Berger and Luckmann's extensive treatment of Iegitimations, or the explanations and justifications of the institutional

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system. Again, instead of dealing with the objective structures themselves, Berger and Luckmann focused on the knowledge that is used to support their existence: "Legitimation 'explains' the institutional order by ascribing cognitive validity to its objectivated meaning. Legitimation justifies the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to its practical imperatives". The focus is not on the structures being legitimated but on the means by which they are legitimated.

2.7   Subjective Components of Society

Society as Subjective Reality may be understood through four things : (i) Internalization of Reality, (ii) Internalization and Social Structure, (iii) Theories about Identity, and (iv) Organism and Identity. Berger and Luckmann discussed the socialization process, the process by which cultural phenomena are communicated to and internalized in consciousness. They added little beyond elementary knowledge about socialization.

(i) Internalization of Reality :

Internalization takes place in the process of socialization which is a subjective reality. There are two bases of internalization. First is used for an understanding of one's fellowmen and, second, for the apprehension of the world as a meaningful and social reality.

(ii) Internalization and Social Structure :

Socialization always takes place in the context of a specidic social structure. Not only in contents but also its measure of 'sucess' have social-structure conditions and social-structure consequences. In otherword, the micro-sociological or social-psychological analysis of phenomena of internalization must always have as its background a macro-sociological understanding of their structural aspects.

(iii) Theories about Identity :

Identity is, of course, a key element of subjective reality and. like all subjective reality, stands in a dialectrical relationship with society, Identity is formed by social processes. Once crystallized, it is maintained, modified, or even reshaped by social relations. The social processes involved in both the formation and the maintenance of identity are determined by the social structure. Conversely, the identities produced by the interplay of

organism, individual consciousness and social structure react upon the given social structure, maintaining it, modifying it, or even reshaping it. Societies have histories in the course of which specific identities emerge, these histories are, however, made by men with specific identities.

(iv) Organism and Identity :

We have discussed earlier the organismic persupposition and limitations of the social construction of relaity. It is important to stress now that the organism continues to effect each phase of man reality-constructing activity and that the organism, in turn, is itslef affected by this activity.

2.8   Critical Comment

Critics argue that in this perspective the personal experiences become the basis of construction of reality. Turner argues that Phenomenologists tend to differ in their willingness to acknowledge an external social world independent of people's subjective states of consciousness. Phenomenologists have failed to combine micro with macro reality. Berger and Luckmann also accept that reality is intersubjective. But whether inter subjectivity takes cognizance of reality or not is yet a question. The authors also seem to be more or less unconcerned with questions of ultimate validity of Knowledge per se, rather they are more concerned with the processes with which any body of knowledge comes to be socially established as reality and sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of social construction of reality.

Berger and Luckmann provided an almost purely subjective characterization of the social world. However, this may not be a fair criticism, because their stated intention was to present sociology of knowledge. Furthermore, near the end of their work they admitted the need for a structural sociology to coplement their subjective orientation. Still they are vulnerable to criticism because they promised more than simply a subjective sociology, including integrating Freud, Mead and Weber on social action with Marx and Durkheim on social structures-and they did not deliver. More important was what they promised on social structures-and they did not deliver. More important was that they promised in their pivotal statement : ***"Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product."*** They failed to produce any sense of society as an

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objective reality; as a result, their entire dialectic loses much of its significance. In Marx's hands a similar discussion is much more powerful, because of his strong sense of the obdurate structures of the social world and the difficulties involved in overcoming these structures. Berger and Luckmann were right to state that they needed Marx's sociology, but unfortunately they did not follow through on this.

2.9 Sum Up

Phenomenological sociology is that sociology which operates on the basis of philosophical phenomenology called transcendental phenomenology. It applies the principles of philosophical phenomenology to sociological questions. In this, the work of Dilthey, Rickert, Windelband, Weber, Franz Brentano and Husserl provide its ultimate source in the development of phenomenological sociology of Schutz, and Berger and Luckmann. Phenomenological sociologists provide a larger degree of conceptual analysis from both the perspectives of macro and micro on the one hand and objective and subjective reality on the other. Schutzian phenomenology represents a conceptual, theoretical, and methodological orientation that is based on the phenomena of consciousness, taken for granted meaning, typification and life- world.

Berger s theory of the social construction of reality is more like functionalism that involves in the process of socialisation as the internalisation of societal values and norms. Berger reminds us that the social order is a human product, he never addresses the question of whether some people are in a better position than others to create social reality. At the same time, phenomenological sociologists are not careful in the analysis of taken-for-granted meaning when they deal with objective and subjective reality. However, these concepts, for phenomenologists, become tools in the analysis of social reality. In fact, phenomenological sociology provides us a better platform to think on various social issues related to everyday life on the basis of common-sense understanding. This approach is known for radical alternative of positivistic approach that only gives emphasis on society as a whole. Phenomenology, therefore, prefers to take into account both individuals and social reality on the basis of particular situation. In short, phenomenological sociology is a science because of its rigorous, systematic, and critical attempt to uncover the basic realities of social life.

2.10 Berger's Major Works

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-Invitation to Sociology, (1963).

-The Social Construction of Reality, with Luckmann (1966).

-The Sacred Canopy, (1967)

-The Homeless Mind, (1973).

-Pyramids of Sacrifice, (1974).

-Facing up to Modernity, (1977).

-The War over the Family, (1983).

-The Capitalist Revolution, (1986).

-Sociology: A Biographical Approach, with B. Berger.

-Sociology Reinterpreted, with H. Kellner.

2.11 Key Concepts

Consciousness: According to Husserl, "Consciousness itself has a being of its own which in its absolute uniqueness of nature remains unaffected by the phenomenological disconnexion".

Epistemology: The study or theory of knowledge, its origin, nature and limits.

Epoche: The epoc or bracketing eliminates any personal position or attitude relating to factual existence.

Externalisation: it means that individuals create society. it has been discussed by Berger and Luckmann.

Folgewelt: It refers to denote the realm of successors. It is '- also one of the realms of social world as discussed by Schutz.

Ideographic: It is used to describe unique events in their concreteness and individuality.

Institutionalisation: Habitualised actions set the stage for the development of institutionalisation. This occurs when people develop typifications of what others are likely to do in a given situation. Berger and Luckmann defined an institution as a kind of reciprocal process of typification.

Intentionality: The idea of intentionality is created by Brentano to distinguish between

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mental or psychological activities and physical phenomena.

Internalisation: Internalisation is a kind of socialisation by which the legitimation of the institutional order is assured. This concept has been discussed by Berger and Luckmann in the analysis of The Social construction of Reality.

Lebenswelt: The Lebenswelt or life-world refers to the focus of reflective social action. The Lebenswelt is an intersubjective world. Life-world is concerned with pre-reflective experience in everyday life. It is also termed as "world of the natural attitude". This concept has been given by Husserl and later it discussed by Alfred Schutz.

Legitimations: Berger and Luckrnann made an extensive treatment of legitimations, or the explanations and justifications of the institutional system Berger and Lucknow focused on the knowledge that is used to support their existence: "Legitimation 'explains' the institutional order by ascribing cognitive validity to its objectivated meaning. Legitimation justifies the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to its practical imperatives". The focus is not on the structures being legitimated but on the means by which they are legitimated

Meanings: For Schutz meanings concern how actors determine what aspects of the social world are important to them. .

Mitwelt: It refers to the realm of indirectly experienced social reality. It is the one type of social world as discussed by Schutz.

Motives: For Schutz motives involve the reasons that actors do what they do.

Nomothetic: It is used to uncover the general law of natural science.

Objectivation: It is the process whereby individuals apprehend everyday life as an ordered, prearranged reality that imposes itself upon but is seemingly independent of human beings. Objectivation has been discussed and analysed by Berger and Luckmann. The Social Construction of Reality.

Phenomenology: A method in philosophy that begins with the individual and his own conscious experience and tries to avoid prior assumptions, prejudices and philosophical dogmas. Phenomenology thus examines phenomena as they are apprehended in their 'immediacy' by the social actor. -Psychologism : It is the basis of all human interpretations

of valid knowledge. Psychologism has been discussed by Brentano and then Husserl.

Reification: Reification is the tendency to perceive human products as if they were something else, "such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will". In other words, people simply lose sight of the dialectical relationship between them and their products. In addition to Marx, it has also been discussed by Berger and Luckmann.

Roles: Berger and Luckmann's definition of roles is typical of their sense of objective social reality. To them, roles are typification of what can be expected of actors in given social situations.

They Relations: Their relations are characterised by interaction with impersonal contemporaries rather than associates. Schutz concepts of mitwelt fall into this category.

Transcendental Ego: It pervades all acts and objects of consciousness, giving sense and validity to the world, and constituting the world's meaning. The transcendental ego connects the subjectivity of perception to the objectivity of a universally accepted epistemology.

Transcendental Phenomenology: It is dominated by Edmund Husserl's search for the essential foundation of knowledge in experience an endeavour to formulate a basis for knowledge "free from presuppositions".

Typification: In typification, actors use their stock of know1dge to categorise each other and to adjust their responses to these typification and hence actors can effectively deal with their world.

Umwelt : It refers to the realm of directly experienced social reality. It has been discussed by Schutz.

Vorwelt: It denotes to the realm of predecessors. The realms of successors and predecessors (Forgwelt and Vorwelt) are of peripheral interest of Schutz.

We Relations: We relations are defined by a relatively high degree of intimacy, which is determined by the extent to which the actors are acquainted with one another's personal biographies. The pure we relation is a face-to-face relationship.

2.12. Ask Yourself

> **Q.1.**   Write a note on the thesis of "Social Construction of Reality".

Q.2. Discuss the significance of analysis of everday life.

2.13   Reference

Berger Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann. 1966. *The Social construction of Reality: a Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Penguin Books.

Ritzer, George (1988), *Contemporary Sociological Theory,* New York : McGraw Hill.

Harold Garfinkel : Studies in Ethnomethodology

Course No. : SOC-C-301   **Lesson - 3**

Semester - I   **Unit - I**

Structure

3.0   **Objectives**

3.1   **Introduction**

3.2   **Life Sketch**

3.3   **Garfinkel's Ethno**

3.4   **Core Concepts**

3.5   **General Interactive Methods**

      a) Folk Methods

      b) Detailed Methods

3.6   **How People Communicate**

3.7   **Criticism**

3.8   **References**

3.0   **Objectives**

After going through this lesson, the learner will

*   know the conceptual clasification of Ethnomethodology.

*   its core concepts

3.1   **Introduction**

Ethnomethodology is the most recent theoretical and methodological

perspective in sociology **The literal meaning of the term ethomethodology is the study of methods used by the common people of society in every day activity.** The central concern of ethnomethodology "is to demonstrate how society is the ongoing practical accomplishment of fractional individuals" The term was practical accomplishment of rational individuals". The term was coined by the American sociologist Harold Garfinkel who is generally regarded as its founder in his book, Studies in Ethnomethodoloy, was published in 1967. Heritage defined ethnomethodoly as the study of **"the body of common sense knowledge and the range of procedures and considerations by means of which the ordinary members of society make sense of find their way about in, and act on the circumstances in which they find themselves".**

Ethnomethodology has its root in the phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. Here, one major question is related to the development of ethnomethodology is what should sociologists study ? For the ethnomethodolgist, "What is directly observable are people's effort to create a common sense of social reality. The substance of this reality is viewed as less interesting than the methods used by groups of persons, whether sociologist or lay persons, to there. In this sense, the methodology' used in the ethnomethodoligical investigation does not address question about the 'proper', 'unbiased', or 'truly scientific' search knowledge. Ethnomethodology is mainly concerned with the common methods used by the people - whether they are scientists, housewives, salespersons, or labourers - to create a sense or order about the situations in which they interact. The best way to understand it is in the world 'ethnomethodology' itself - ology, "Study of"; method. "the methods (used by)"; and ethno, "folk or people".

The ethnomethodologists, in fact, have extended the concerns of symbolic interactionism and phenomenology, and focus on microscopic aspects of human behaviour. The ethnomethodoligists have borrowed the idea of symbolic interactionism in the sense that how actors create common meanings in dealing with each other in the process of interaction. As Blumer, an interactionist, rightly is mediated by acting units interpretating the situation with which they are confronted." In other words, actors are capable of :

a)   introjecting new objects into situations;

b)   redefining situations, and

c)   realigning their joint-actions

These ideas advocate a concern with how meanings, or definitions, are created by actors interacting in situations. This line of inquiry is also emphasized by the ethnomethologists by focusing on interaction and on the creation of meanings in situations. Turner here points out an important shift in emphasis: In what ways do people create a sense that they share a common view of the world" And how do people arrive at the presumption that there is an objective, external world? Blumer's interactionism stresses in the process of creating meaning, but is acknowledges the existence of an external social order. Ethnomethodology suspends the issue of whether or not there is an external world of norms, roles, values, and beliefs. Instead, it concentrates on how interaction, from phenomenological school of thought. But the ethnomethodologists position are different from the phenomenologists in the sense that they (ethnomethodologists) give emphasis on the process by which commonsense reality is constructed in everyday face-to-face interaction. However, Schultz strongly influenced Harold Garfinkel, the founder of ethnomethodology, who sought to understand the methods employed by people to make sense out of their world.

The major purposes of ethnomethodology investigation are :

1)   To study particular situation of a society from the methods used by common people;

2)   To study a neglected phenomenon of the world of daily life.

Hence, ethnomethodology proposes to study on both the topics and to determine how it acquires its mundane, common place commonly known character.

3.2   Life Sketch

Harold Garfinkel   An American sociologist who pioneered the field of ethnomethodology in the 1960s, and thereby launched a major debate about the nature and validity of sociological methods. Born in Oct. 29, 1917 in Newark, New Jersey, Harold Garfinkel became a doctoral student at Harvard University in 1946 and

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completed his Ph.D. in 1952. Early in his career, Garfinkel spent two years teaching at Ohio State and conducting research at the University of Chicago where he developed the framework for ethnomethodology. Garfinkel spent the bulk of his career at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) where he was professor emeritus at the close of the twentieth century. As a result of his leadership, UCLA is considered a training center for ethnomethodologists. Died in April 21, 2011 at the age of 93.

The term Ethnomethodology can be broken down into its three constituent parts: **ethno -method - (logy**, for the purpose of explanation. **Ethno** refers to a particular socio-cultural group (for example, a particular, localized community of surfers); **method** refers to the methods and practices this particular group employs in its everyday activities (related to surfing); and **(o) logy** refers to the methodic description of these methods and practices. The focus of the investigation used in our example is the social order of surfing, the ethnomethodological interest is in the "how" [the methods and practices] of the production and maintenance of this social order.

Examples of such methods and practices relative to the activity of surfing include, but are by no means exhausted by: methods for reading waves as to their rideability, practices employed for catching waves, methods for styling hair, practices employed for the wearing of swim trunks and wet suits, methods for using body language and gesturing, and practices employed for talking surfing among group members.

Anne Rawls states: "Ethnomethodology is the study of the methods people use for producing recognizable social orders".

The social order used in our example is the recognizably competent performance of the methods and practices of surfing ["being a surfer"] as demonstrated by members of this particular group of surfers.

The **fundamental assumption of ethnomethodological studies** is characterized by Anne Rawls:

"If one assumes, as Garfinkel does, that the meaningful, patterned, and orderly character of everyday life is something that people must work constantly to achieve, then one must also assume that they have some methods for doing so". That is, "... members of society must have some shared methods that they use to mutually construct the

meaningful orderliness of social situations".

In line with this assumption, the goal of ethnomethodological investigations becomes the description of the methods and practices employed in the production of the orderly character of everyday life. These methods and practices are embedded in the work that people do, and realized in local settings by the people who are party to those settings.

The approach was originally conceived by Harold Garfinkel, based on his study of: the principles and practices of financial accounting; traditional sociological theory and methods [primarily: Durkheim, Weber, and Parsons]; traditional sociological concerns [the Hobbesian & Parsonian, "problem of order"]; the phenomenologies of: Aron Gurwitsch, Alfred Schutz, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty; and Wittgenstein's investigations regarding language use.

Varieties of ethnomethodology

According to George Psathas, five types of ethnomethodological study can be identified (Psathas:1995:139-155). These may be characterised as:

1. *The organization of practical actions and practical reasoning*. Including the earliest studies, such as those in Garfinkel's seminal *Studies in Ethnomethodology*.

2. *The organization of talk-in-interaction*. More recently known as conversation analysis, Harvey Sacks established this approach in collaboration with his colleagues Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson.

3. *Talk-in-interaction within institutional or organizational settings*. While early studies focused on talk abstracted from the context in which it was produced (usually using tape recordings of telephone conversations) this approach seeks to identify interactional structures that are specific to particular settings.

4. *The study of work*. 'Work' is used here to refer to any social activity. The analytic interest is in how that work is accomplished within the setting in which it is performed.

5. *The haecceity of work.* Just what makes an activity what it is? e.g. what makes a test a test, a competition a competition, or a definition a definition?

An extreme example: driving the wrong way down a busy one-way street can reveal myriads of useful insights into the patterned social practices, and moral order, of the community of automobile drivers ... and police. The point of such an exercise is to demonstrate that gaining insight into the work involved in maintaining any given social order can often, best be revealed by breaching that social order and observing the results of that breach - especially those activities related to the reassembly of that social order, and the normalization of that social setting.

The phenomenon is acknowledged in various forms of analytical philosophy, and sociological theory and methods, but is considered to be both limited in scope and remedied through specification [operationalization]. In ethnomethodology, the phenomenon is universalized to all forms of language and behavior, and is deemed to be beyond remedy for the purposes of establishing a scientific description and explanation of social behavior. The consequence of the degree of contextual dependence for a "segment" of talk or behavior can range from the problem of establishing a "working consensus" regarding the description of a phrase, concept or behavior, to the end-game of social scientific description itself.

Reflexivity. "Garfinkle see these ethno-methods as reflexively accountable." The process in which we all engage to create social reality through our thoughts and actions. When we say Hello to someone and the person responds similarly, we are not conscious of the reflexive work being done by both parties, but when the other person scowls or walk away without returning any greetings, we become aware that we are creating certain reality with our actions and we failed. Order in society stems, at least in part, from people's reflexivity. The ethnomethodologists reject the idea that order comes from mere conformity to norms. It is the actors awareness towards their actions.

Documentary method of interpretation. This seeming paradox is quite familiar to hermeneuticians who understand this phenomenon as a version of the hemeneutic circle. This phenomenon is also subject to analysis from the perspective of Gestalt

theory [part/whole relationships], and the phenomenological theory of perception.

3.3 Garfinkel's Ethno

The term ethnomethodology itself was coined when Garfinkel was working at Yale with their cross-cultural files. During this time he came upon the files card entitled "ethnobotany, ethnophysicology, ethnophysics". He became interested in "how the jurors knew what they were doing in doing the work of jurors". In the jury deliberation project he came to know the methodology that was used by jurors and thereafter he decided to name this method as ethnomethodology. He created 'ethnomethodology', "explains Roy Tuner," because 'ethno' refers to the availability to a member of commonsense knowledge of his society as commonsense knowledge of the 'whatever'. Thus employed by people to make sense of everyday activities by constructing and maintaining social reality. The interest of ethnomethodology, therefore is in how people make sense of everyday activities. In short Garfinkel's ethnomethodology can be outlines in the following points :

i) It is the study of member's methods of making sense of their social world.

ii) It examines the methods by which people do this. By "making sense" of events in terms of a preconceived order for society, people create a world that is indeed.

iii) It sees the objective reality of social facts as an 'ongoing accomplishment of the concerted activities of everyday life". In other words, in everyday situations individuals invoke or recognised social facts, such as taken-for-granted norms or values, that interpret the meaning of the situation for them.

iv) Ethnomethodological studies 'analyse everyday activities as members' methods for making those same activities visibly-rational-and-reportable-for-all-practical-purposes, that is, 'accountable' as organisations of commonplace everyday activities."

v) It studies the process by which people invoke certain taken-for-granted rules about behaviour with which they interpret an interaction situation and make it meaningful. To ethnomethodology, in fact, the interpretive process itself is a phenomenon

for investigation.

vi) It answers how, but not why, about social interaction, while the other micro-sociological theories answer why, but not how. Ethnomethodologists cannot study social processes that transcend interaction while the other micro-sociological theories cannot address the format structure of practical knowledge within interaction."

3.4 Core Concepts

Ethnomethodological investigation consists of various concepts. The core concepts are :

1) Reflexivity,

2) Indexicality,

3) Sanctioned properties of common discourse and

4) Sense in senseless; situation.

1) Reflexivity : The concept of reflexivity focuses attention on how people interaction go about maintaining the presumption that they are guided by a particular reality.; A reflexive action, therefore, is an action the acting agent takes upon itself. For example, when I share myself, the action is reflexive. In broader sense, a reflexive action operates to maintain certain vision of reality. For example, ritual activity directed toward the gods in the belief that gods influence everyday affairs. Much human interaction is reflexive. Humans interpret cues, gestures, words, and other information from each other in a way that sustains particular vision of reality. Even contradictory evidence is reflexively interpreted to maintain a body of belief and knowledge". Ethnomethodological inquiry addresses the question of what concepts and principles are involved to explain the conditions under which different reflexive actions among interacting parties are like to occur.

2) Indexicality : Indexicality refers to understand a particular situation based on contextual reality. In this sense, the gestures, cues, words, and other information sent and received by interacting parties have meaning in a particular context. Without knowing the context, it would be possible to misinterpret the symbolic

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communication among interacting individuals. In other words, the practical sociological reasoning of ethnomethodological inquiry is based on the indexical properties of members' talk and conduct. Garfinkel uses the term 'ethnomethodology' to refer to the investigation of the rational properties of indexical expression and other practical actions.

3) Sanctioned properties of common discourses : This refers to people's expectation that there will be no interference with the conduct of everyday affairs in the form of questions about what is "reality said". In other words, it is expected and required that people understand everyday talk in the same way that it is so that common conversational affairs can be conducted with interference. To illustrate this properties, we can cite Garfinkel's experiment: "Students were instructed to engage an acquaintance or a friend in an ordinary conversation and, without indicating that what the experimenter was asking was in any way unusual, to insist that the person clarify the sense of his commonplace remarks."

4) Sense in Senseless Situation : Garfinkel attempted to demonstrate that sense could be made in a senseless environment and that when subject abandoned belief in the sense of environment they are able to perceive how the environment was given sense in the first place. To demonstrate that sense could be made in a senseless environment and that when subjects abandoned belief in the sense of the environment, they are able to perceive how the environment was given sense in the first place. To demonstrate that sense could be make in a senseless environment, Garfinkel produced a partly senseless environment in the laboratory. In his one of the demonstration, students were told to act as 'boarders' in their homes.

Having discussed four characteristics involved in the ethnomethodological inquiry, we find two key concepts, that is, reflixivity and indexicality are central to this approach. Here the emphasis is not on the context of the "life world", but on the methods or techniques that actors use to create, maintain or even alter a vision of reality. As Mehan and Wood have to say, "the ethnomethodologial theory of the reality constructor is about the procedures that accomplish reality. It is not about any specific reality." This emphasis has led to the isolation by ethnomethodologists of general types of methods employed by interacting actors.

3.5   General Interactive Methods or Folk Methods

Before going on details about the methods used ethnomethodological investigation, we make attention on the general methods that people use to constuct their reality. Aaron Cicourel has summarised a number of such techniques of methods isolated by ethnomethodologists :

1)   Searching for the normal form,

2)   Doing reciprocity of perspectives and

3)   Using the et cetera principle.

1)   Searching for the Normal Form : "If interacting parties sense that ambiguity exists over what is real and that their interaction is thus difficult, they will emit gestures to tell each other to return to what is normal in their contextual situations. In this sense, actors should try to maintain a normal form in interacting with situations.

2)   Doing a Reciprocity of Perspectives : Borrowing from Schultz's formulation ethnomethodologists have emphasized that "actors operate under the presumption, and actively seek to communicate the fact, that they would have the same experiences were they to switch places and that until so informed by specific gestures, they can each ignore differences in perspectives which might arise from their unique biographies. Thus, in the process of interaction with gestures would assure other that a reciprocity of perspectives does exist.

3)   Using the et-cetera Principle : In examining an actual interaction, much is left 'unsaid'. Actors must constantly "fill in" or "wait for" information necessary to "make sense" of another's words or deeds. Garfinkel refers to this practice of "filling in" the meanings to talk as the "eta cetera" principle. It is a "short hand" way of talking. For example, Garfinkel gives a assignment to his students is to "report common conversations by writing on the left side of a sheet what the parties actual said and on the right side what they and their partners (in the conversation) understand that they were talking about". The result is that much more is written on the left hand side is related (as Garfinkel puts it) to "the previous course of the conversation, or the particular relationship of actual or potential interaction that exists between user and auditor". Thus, et cetera principle is used to get needed information without disrupting the

interaction and the reality of the situation.

These three general types of "folk methods" refer to what ethnomethodologists seek to discover. In addition to these folk methods, there are also other detailed methods used by the ethnomethodologists. In fact, the ultimate goal of ethnomethodology is to determine the conditions under which these and other interpersonal techniques will be used to construct, maintain, or change a reality. These other methods are : Detailed Methods

      a)   Breaching experiment : and

      b)   Documentary method

a)   **Breaching Experiment** : Garfinkel and his associated conducted a number of interesting empirical studies to know and to understand of their assumptions about "what is real". For this, they used a method for empirical inquiry is known as the "breaching experiment" in which the normal course of interaction is deliberately interrupted by the researchers. Garfinkel, in fact, is not recognised a real experiment in the formal sense of the term and might better be called "breaching demonstration". In these demonstration, social reality is 'breached' in order to demonstrate the basic principles or ceaseless reality construction. "The objective of the breaching experiment is to disrupt normal procedures to that the process by which reality is constructed or reconstructed can be observed. Breaching experiment are undertaken to illustrate the way people make sense out of their everyday lives. However, the reactions to breaches are sometimes so extreme that Hugh Mehan and Houston Wood have cautioned about their use; "Interested persons are strongly advised not to undertake any new breaching studies".

b)   **Documentary Method** : Another important method used by sociologists who are "doing ethnomethodology" is called the documentary method of interpretation". Garfinkel credits Mannheim with the label and quotes his definition as the search for "an identical homologus pattern underlying a vast variety of totally different realisations of meaning". Garfinkel says :

The method consists of treating an actual appearance as "the document of", as "pointing to", as "standing on behalf of" a presupposed underlying pattern.

Not only is the underlying pattern derived from its individual documentary evidences, but the individual documentary evidences, in their turn are interpreted on the basis of "what is known" about the underlying pattern.

In other words, both lay people and sociologists use the documnetary method, which involves an effort to identify "an underlying pattern behind a series of appearances such that each appearances is seen as referring to, an expression of, or a documentary method, therefore, is constantly using by the people to interpret and reinterpret each others' behaviour and look for underlying patterns.

In short, Garfinkel's ethnomethodology emphasizes on member's methods rather than members of the society. The ethnomethodologist asks about how such meanings are 'locally' managed and the methods by which members in the setting accomplish the here-and-there practical relevance of their understandings. It can be said that ethnomethodological studies end at the point where symbolic interactionist studies begin. The ethnomethodologist speaks of the "local production" of understandings and the methods by which members "assemble the sense" of situational particulars. In this sense, Garfinkel's idea of ethnomethodology is better known for sociological practical reasoning that emphasizes on the inquiry of a particular situation.

3.6   How People Communicate

Ethnomethodology's field of investigation. For ethnomethodology the topic of study is the social practices of real people in real settings, and the methods by which these people produce and maintain a shared sense of social order.

How is communication possible? From the perspective of Harold Garfinkel

Harold Garfinkel invented the term ethnomethodoly and was considered the cofounder of this school of thought. Ethnomethodology looks at how individuals communicate while interacting. One of its key points is that ethnomethods are reflexive accounts. These accounts are the ways in which actors do such things as describe, criticize, and idealize specific situations to make sense of their social world (Ritzer, 1996). Reality is not stable. Garfinkel and other ethnomethodologists did not subscribe to Parsons' theory that the social world is reified. Ethnomethodology treats social facts as the result of the individual situation created by a specific situation involving

interpersonal communication. That is why many enthnomethodologists were concerned with the analysis of conversation.

Garfinkel believed experiences provided the meaning of language and facilitated communication. He did not believe language held a shared, consistent meaning for everyone. Garfinkel contended that the words of language are not the basis of communication. Previous and present interactions are at the heart of communicating.

Garfinkel interpreted the individual's use of words as a means to clarify or repair social problems created by human communication. Human communication, in his sense, is not what is said but what is not said. To him, what is left out of conversation is many times more important the actual words that are verbalized. How the speaker and the hearer communicate nonverbaly is of extreme importance. Both parties use anticipatory knowledge of previous interactions during verbal discourse. Insinuation and alluding to previous events provide an undertone of communication that is not always verbalized by those participating in the conversation. Until the undertones of a discourse are fully exposed through verbal language, honest communication can not exist (Garfinkel, 1967).

According to Garfinkel, communication is made possible by a communal agreement or the appearance of consensus of the spoken word. Previously agreed upon events, within conversation, can set patterns of understanding. These patterns of previous communication are brought to encounters by each participant and can only be understood if each person met with the same results during previous dialogues with others. Communication produces experiences that are recalled in future communication. The more experience one has through conversing the greater understanding in communicating can be achieved (Lemert, 1993). Understandings are developed through the interaction of communicating. The words of a language do not hold any inherit, common meaning. Conversations can be very vague. Social interaction provides the understanding.

Garfinkel and other ethnomethodologists see language as a tool that is used to interpret and clarify social interactions. The interaction is doing the communicating and language the clarifying. Progressive realization through communication, past and

present, further facilitates the understanding of language and its use. Communication is possible through social interaction and the development of the consensus of an assumed shared meaning based on experience.

3.7   Criticism

For Garfinkel, sociology is the study of the moral order, operating through the organized practices of eveyday life in the individual's drive for rationality and congruence with this order in his or her interaction with others. Accordingly, social organization is dynamic and ongiong, representing negotiated order between interacting individuals as they interpret and attempt to make sense out of every life.

Such a paradigm has proved highly controversial and raises a number of distinct issues.

- Ethnomethodology in its emphasis upon a normativeyl vlaued moral order, congruence, and rationality-may, in a sense, be viewed as simply a different from structure-functionalism in its systemic, macroscopic, and universalistic qualities.

- Like a symbolic interactionsim, ethnomethodology is more of a perspective than a theory and reveals many theoritical gaps in its rather simplistic and mechanical model of social reality.

- A further is the extent to which Garfinkel appears to neglect the structural context in which rationality emerges, i.e., the effect of varying group characteristics on this process.

- Finally, the problem of microscopic reductionism, as in the case of Blau, also applies to ethnomethodology, i.e., all aspects of the social system become a function of the congruence-rationality process.

Garfinkel's thus the best theorists for ethnomethodology and represent the individualism in a clear and honest manner. Though there are contradictions to his theory but his integration of the individual with the society provided a remarkable feature of the contemporary society.

By reducing ethnomethodology to it's practical application, he makes it quite similar to symbolic interactionism, which he sought to replace. Garfinkel claims that ethnomethodology plays a very important role in contemporary society. Garfinkel talks about *Adhocing-*through which the contingent objects would have to constitute afresh in each situation, old meaning do not have any relevance here. Everything that is constituted afresh is taken.

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Jeffrey Alexander : Neo Functionalism

Course No. : SOC-C-301	**Lesson - 4**
Semester - III	**Unit - II**

Structure

4.0   Objectives

4.1   Introduction

4.2   Writings of Jeffrey Alexander

4.3   Neo-Functionalism

4.4.   Theoritical Logic in Sociology

4.5   Criticism

4.0   Objectives

After going through this chapter the learner will equip with

* The background of Jeffery Alexander

* The writings of Alexander and Neo Functionalism

4.1   Introduction

Jeffery Alexander born in 1947 and studied at Harvard University. He teaches sociology at the University of California at Los Angeles, having chaired the department for a number of years . He is an American sociologist, is credited to have played an important role in the reinterpretation of Parsons's sociology. In his student life, that is, during 1960s and 1970s, he was oriented to new left Marxism. He participated in student movement while he was at the University of California. It was here that he was introduced to Parsons' sociology.

In the early 1970s, Alexander, became dissatisfied with the new left Marxism.

There were political and empirical reasons for his parting with Marxism. He was much interested in classical and contemporary theory. He realized that there was need to synthesize sociology with psychoanalysis and Marxism. While making a synthesis of sociological theories, he got an opportunity to study Parsons' *The Structure of Social Action*. He also came in contact with his doctoral supervisors, Robert Bellah and Neil J.Smelser. These eminent sociologists provided Alexander an opportunity to reinterpret Parsons' functional theory. The origin of neo-functionalism, thus owes much to the efforts of Alexander.

4.2 Writings of Jeffrey Alexander :

After studying at Harvard, Alexander did graduate work at Berkeley, where he began his four-volume study *Theoretical Logic in Sociology*(1982-83). His publications include works in the fields of social theory, cultural studies, mass media studies and studies of social change. He has written and edited many books and articles on theory, culture, and politics including *Neo-functionalism* (1985), *Twenty Lectures: Social Theory since World War II* (1987), and Action and Its Environments (1988), Fin-der-Siecle Social Theory (1995), Neo-functionalism and Beyond (1998)

4.3 Neo-functionalism :

Neo-functionalism is a recent addition to contemporary sociological theory. In fact, it is a discovery and reconstruction of Parsons' and Merton functionalism. The period between 1960s and 1970s in the US is characterized by debates and disputes regarding the usefulness of structural functional analysis in sociology. George C.Homans criticized the structural-functional perspective that had been dominant for a whole generation, but now it is coming in the way for understanding of social phenomena. Homans' main criticism was that structural-functional explanation were not in fact scientific, largely because they failed to provide explanations for empirical relations.

Under a barrage of criticisms, structural functionalism declined in significance from the mid-1960 through the early 1980s. However, by the mid-1980s, a major effort was under way to revive the theory under the heading of *neo-functionalism.* The term neo-functionalism is used to indicate continuity with structural functionalism, but also to demonstrate that an effort is being made to extend structural functionalism and overcome its major difficulties. Jeffery Alexander and Paul Colomy (1985:11)

define neo-functionalism as:

> "a self-critical strand of functional theory and seeks to broaden functionalism's intellectual scope while retaining its theoretical core" .

The prime object of the Alexander was to synthesize the classical theories available in sociology. The exercise was similar to one taken by Parsons in ***The Structure of Social Action***. Alexander developed a new theoretical exercise. This exercise was based on post-positivism. It means, he logically linked theory and empiricism. His major contribution to neo-functionalism is discussed below.

The rediscovery of neo-functionalism carries new features :

First, it comprises a critique of the fundamentals inherent in the original theory of functionalism. Second, the neo-functionalism seeks to integrate elements from mutually complicating theoretical traditions.

Thirdly, neo-functionalism tends to manifest itself in multifarious variants rather than in one single unveiling. Admittedly, neo-functionalism is a fresh interpretation, a new discovery of parsons' functionalism.

Alexander and Colomy build neo-functionalism on the strength of what Parsons has said. Other functionalism such as Davis and Merton have not been taken up for the reconstruction of neo-functionalism. Besides Alexander, Richard Minch has also picked up Parsons for the building of neo-functionalism.

Luhmann, student of Parsons, critically Parsons functionalism, He argued that modern society is not a single social system with related parts, but several systems, including some commonly recognized institutions- such as law, religion, communication media, education, politics and economics- and other systems consisting of organizations, personality and interactions. To Luhmann, "each of these is a system, with the other systems as its environment. Society is like the telephonic system and he interstates highway system is part of the other system's environment".

George Ritzer argues that functionalism witnessed its decline in the middle of 1960s. However, by the middle of 1980s, a major effort was underway to revive the theory under the heading 'neo-functionalism'. Defining neo-functionalism, in the context

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of 1980 development in sociology, Ritzer (1990) writes :

> The term 'neo-functionalism was used to indicate continuity with structural functionalism but also to demonstrate that an effort was being made to extend structural functionalism and overcome its difficulties.

On the basis of the definitions of neo-functionalism, Doshi (2003) outlines some of the tendencies of neo-functionalism as follows:

1. **Neo-functionalism is Multi-dimensional :** Sociological theories, broadly, are categorized into two groups: (1) micro-theories, and (2) macro-theories. Theories of Mead and Garfinkel fall in the category of micro-theories whereas theories of Durkehim and Marx came within the realm of macro-theories. The micro-theories propose that self is subordinate to society. The macro-theories embrace the society as a whole. These are universalistic. The neo-functionalism integrates both micro and macro theories.

2. **Left Orientation :** The Parsonian functionalism is charges for being conservative and status quoits. It tends to support the interests of the rich, elites and political leaders. Parsons' functionalism toes the ideology of modernity and the western societies have developed disenchantment with modernity. Thus, ideologically speaking, neo-functionalism has a shift towards left.

3. **Dominating Role of State :** In the US and developing countries, functionalism has established closeness to state and government. Sociologists who are functionalists, notwithstanding their nationality, are, in fact, official spokespersons of the government policy. But, other sociologists have always distanced themselves from government. Such a withdrawal can be explained by the fact that for most of the sociologists, sociology means the ideology of functionalism.

4. **Orientation to Tension :** Parsons has repeatedly talked about tensions which the system often encounters. The system has a tendency to 'manage' tension. But what is particular about this tension is that it does not bring any change in the system itself. The boundaries of the system remain uncrossed. The changes which the contemporary society faces in the wake of globalization and post-modernization are so compulsive that the tension management system fails. The system has to reorient itself for radical changes. The neo-functionalism is expected not only to bring changes in the system but also change the system

itself.

5. **Move Towards Creative Activities :** Functionalism by its attitude is conservative. Its kit of conceptual tools consists of anti-individualism, antagonism to change, conservatism, idealism and anti-empiricism. Neo-functionalism, as Alexander argues, makes efforts to overcome these problems programmatically and at more specific theoretical levels.

6. **Neo-functionalism is a tendency rather than a developed theory:** Alexander and Colomy showed all vigor to develop neo-functionalism as a theory. They were much enthused about it, but at the end of the prolonged exercise, they concludes that, Neo-functionalism is tendency rather than a developed theory.

4.4 Theoretical Logic in Sociology :

In his book, ***Theoretical Logic in Sociology,*** Alexander attempts to construct a new theoretical logic for sociology. He put for discussion two concepts: (1) action, and (2) order. Action is the activity of the actor, which takes place on the basis of norms or instrumental availability. The action tries to attain the objectives of the order or value-based. Thus, according to Alexander, action may be understood as guided by norms or utilitarian interests. The social order, on the other hand, is constructed on actor's consensus. Parsons argues that there are pattern variables- affectivity vs. affective neutrality; individual-oriented vs. collectivity-oriented, etc. which determine the course of action. Thus, Parsons' concept of action is multidimensional. It is here that Alexander shows his disagreement to parsons. He abandons Parsons' multi-dimensional approach. Instead he argues that there should be synthesis between action and order.

In his book, Neo-functionalism, Alexander discusses parsons' functionalism and comes to the conclusion that it was never really an appropriate term to describe Parsons' sociology. Alexander argument runs as below :

> Functionalism has always been a beyond for a wide range of variegated ideological, empirical and theoretical approaches. Parsons himself tried to break free of the appellation and its static connotations in the mid-sixties. His associates and students began to call the theory action theory. Furthermore, beginning in the late seventies, there seemed to be a

tendency among those who had been critically disposed toward parsons' functionalism to view this term as misleading. Indeed, parsons chose to discard the term structural functionalism, although he knew that the term would probably continue to cling to him.

For Alexander, parsons' functionalism is associated with anti individualism (hee system is dominating), opposition against social change, conservatism, idealism, and lack of empirical foundation. As against, this, neo-functionalism has emerged in the early seventies. This new brand of neo-functionalism is conflict-oriented and radical. The neo-functionalism, which Alexander has developed, contains a collective air of ideological criticism, materialistic orientation, an angle of controversy and interactionistic approaches.

Alexander is doubtful about the future of Parsons' sociology that is his functionalism. He thinks about several possibilities. Neo-functionalism might establish itself as a veritable school of thought. It might develop into one among several sociological approaches. It still remains an unanswered question whether neo-functionalism is old wine in new bottle or whether it is truly a new brew. Alexander is hopeful about he future of neo-functionalism as type of sociological analysis. He writes:

> In the years that have passed, the neo-functionalism have provided their contribution toward making neo-functionalism an inclusive term describing a certain type of sociological approach and analysis.

Alexander has outlined some of the ***basic orientations*** of neo-functionalism.

1. First, neo-functionalism operates with a descriptive model of society that sees it as composed of elements which, in interaction with one another, from a pattern. This pattern allows the system to be differentiated from its environment. Parts of the system are "symbiotically connected", and their interaction is not determined by some overarching force. Thus, neo-functionalism rejects any monocausal determinism and is open-ended and pluralistic.

2. Alexander argues that neo-functionalism devotes roughly equal attention to action and order. It thus avoids the tendency of structural functionalism to focus almost exclusively on the macro-level sources of order in social structures and culture and to give attention to more micro-level action patterns. Neo-

functionalism also purports to have a broad sense of action, including not only rational, but also expressive, action.

3. Neo-functionalism retains the structural-functional interest in integration, not as an accomplished fact, but rather as a social possibility! It recognizes that deviance and social control are realities within social system. There is a concern for equilibrium within neo-functionalism, but it is broader than the structural-functional concern encompassing both moving and partial equilibrium There is a distinction to see social systems as characterized by static equilibrium. Equilibrium, broadly defined, it seen as a reference point for functional analysis, but not as descriptive of the lives of individuals in actual social systems.

4. Neo-functionalism accepts the traditional Parsonsian emphasis on personality, culture, and social system. In addition to being vital to social structure, the interpretation of these systems also produces tension that is an ongoing source of both change and control.

5. Neo-functionalism focuses on social change in the processes of differentiation within the social, cultural, and personality systems. Thus, change is not productive of conformity and harmony, but rather "individuation and institutional strains" (Alexander:1985).

6. Alexander argues that neo-functionalism "implies the commitment to the dependence of conceptualization and theorizing from other levels of sociological analysis" (Alexander:1985).

Besides Alexander, Colomy, Luhamann and Munch have also contributed substantially to the development of neo-functionalism. The responses to it in sociology are mixed. In the US, Alexander's projected reconstruction of sociology was met with great expectations right from the outset. The responses to neo-functionalism in Europe are not favourable. There is perplexity as to what is neo-functionalism and what is not. The designation would seem to be so all inclusive that the connection to the 'original' functionalism becomes unclear, as do the demarcation lines separating neo-functionalism from other approaches. Europe has quite a few examples of theories involving syntheses, with scholars like Luhmann, Habermas, Bourdieu, Elias and Giddens. These scholars have made substantial

contributions towards the reconstruction of social theory.

4.5 Criticism :

Whereas Alexander has tried to delineate neo-functionalism in general, programmatic terms, Colomy (1986) has dealt more specifically with a revised structural-functional theory of change. He argues that the structural-functional theory of change ("differentiation theory") derived from Parsonsian theory has three basic weaknesses:

First, it is highly abstract and lacks empirical and historical specificity. Second it does not devote enough attention to concrete groups and social processes or to power and conflict. Third, it overemphasizes the integration produced by structural change.

As a result of these criticisms, the structural-functional theory of change has undergone several revisions:

First, the original master trend (progressive differentiation) has been supplemented with an analysis of patterned deviations from the trend. For example, in addition to differentiation, societies have experienced *de-differentiation*, or "a type of structural change that rejects societal complexity and moves towards less differentiated levels of social organization" (Colomy:1986:143). Such *de-differentiation* is likely to occur as a result of discontent with modernization. Also important is "unequal development" across various institutional spheres as well as "unequal differentiation" within a single institution. "incomplete differentiation" occurs "where initial steps toward differentiation are not consummated and, consequently, two or more structures share or compete for the authority to carry out a given function" (Colomy:1986:44).

Second, revisionists have pushed differentiation theory toward more concern for how concrete groups affect change as well as how change is affected by such factors as power, conflict and contingency. Various specific groups have been identified as instigators of change in the direction of greater differentiation as have groups that have stoop in opposition to such change. This leads to focus on conflict between groups over the process of differentiation and the forms that a resolution of that conflict might take. Great historical and empirical detail is presented in these studies on the contending groups involved in the process of differentiation.

Third, early differentiation theory focused on greater efficiency and reintegration

as the main effects of the process of differentiation, but more recent work has outlined a much wider array of possible outcomes.

It might be argued that although the theory of differentiation has been widened, it also lost its distinctive flavor with its new-found focus on conflict and competition. So much has been borrowed from other intellectual traditions that one wonders whether the kind of approach outlined above can, or should, be labeled structural functionalism or even neo-functionalism.

4.6.   Check Yourself

Q.1.   Explain J. Alexander's concept of Neo-functionalism ?

Q.2.   Describe Theoretical logic in sociology given by Alexander?

4.7.   References :

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Antonio Gramsci

STUCTURE

5.0   **Objectives :**

After going through this chapter the learner will equip with

* Understanding of Neo Marxism

* Gramscian Thoery and his Life Sketch

5.1   **Introduction**

Antonia Gramsci

The Italian Marxist Antonia Gramsci, although offering ales rich theoretical perspective than Lukacs, also played a key role in the transition from economic

determinism to more modern Marxian positions Gramsci was critical of Marxists who are "deterministic, fatalistic and mechanistic" In fact, he wrote an essay entitled. "The Revolution against Capital" in which he celebrated "the resurrection of political will against the economic determinism of those who reduced Marxism to the historical laws of Marx's best-known work (capital)" Although he recognized that there were historical regularities, he rejected the idea of automatic or inevitable historical developments. Thus, the masses had to act in order to bring about a social revolution. But to act, the masses had to become conscious of their situation and the nature of the system in which they lived. Thus, although Gramsci recognized the importance of structural factors, especially the economy, he did not believe that these structural factors led the masses to revolt. The masses needed to develop a revolutionary ideology, but they could not do so on their own. Gramsci operated with a rather etilist conception in which ideas were generated by intellectuals and then extended to the masses and put into practice by them. The masses could not generate such ideas, and they could experience them, once in existence, only on faith. The masses could not become self-conscious on their own; they needed the help of social elites. However, once the masses had been influenced by these ideas, they would take the actions that lead to social revolution. Gramsci, like Lukács, focused on collective ideas rather than on social structures like the economy, and both operated within traditional Marxian theory.

Gramsci's central concept and one that reflects his Heelianism is hegemony. According to Gramsci "the essential ingredient of the most modern philosophy of praxis of praxis [the linking of thought and action] is the historical-philosophical concept of 'hegemony' Hegemony is defined by Gramsci as cultural leadership exercised by the ruling class. He contrasts hegemony to coercion that is "exercised by legislative or executive powers, or expressed through police intervention" Economic Marxists tended to emphasize the economy and the coercive aspects of state domination. In contrast, Gramsci emphasized "hegemony' and cultural leadership. In an analysis of capitalism, Gramsci wanted to know how some intellectuals, working on behalf of the capitalists, achieved cultural leadership and the assent of the masses.

Not only does the concept of hegemony help us to understand domination

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within capitalism, but it also serves to orient Gramsci's thoughts on revolution. That is, through revolution, it is not enough to gain control of the economy and the state apparatus; it is also necessary to gain cultural leadership over the rest of society. It is here that Gramsci sees a keyrole for communist intellectuals and the communist party.

We turn now to critical theory, which grew out of the work of Hegelian Marxists like Lukács and Gramsci, and which has moved even further from the traditional Marxian roots of economic determinism.)

5.2   Life sketch

Gramsci was born in Ales, on the island of Sardinia. He was the fourth of seven sons of Francesco Gramsci (1860–1937), a low-level official from Gaeta, and his wife, Giuseppina Marcias (1861–1932). Gramsci's father was of Arbëreshë descent,[1] while his mother belonged to a local landowning family. The senior Gramsci's financial difficulties and troubles with the police forced the family to move about through several villages in Sardinia until they finally settled in Ghilarza.

Antonio Gramsci (1891 - 1937) was a leading Italian Marxist. He was an intellectual, a journalist and a major theorist who spent his last eleven years in Mussolini's prisons. During this time, he completed 32 notebooks containing almost 3,000 pages. These notebooks were smuggled out from his prison and published in Italian after the war but did not find an English-language publisher until the 1970s. The central and guiding theme of the Notebooks was the development of a new Marxist theory applicable to the conditions of advanced capitalism.

He was born in a little town on the island of Sardinia in 1891, one of seven children. His was one of a very small minority of families on the island that could read and write and because of this he did well at school finally winning a scholarship to the University of Turin. Italy was then, as it is now, a country divided between North and South. The South being overwhelmingly rural with a large illiterate peasantry and the North essentially industrialised with a well organised and politically aware working class. The contrast was immense. Turin has been described as the red capital of Italy at the time Gramsci arrived there. It was home to the most advanced industry in the country and above all to FIAT, the motor manufacturer. By the end of the First World War, 30% of Turin's population were industrial

workers and this despite the fact that another 10% were in the army and not included in the total.

The organised workers of Turin had a very combative history. For the first twenty years of this century, Turin was to witness countless demonstrations and a number of general strikes until finally in 1919, there began a movement for the occupation of the factories and the setting up of factory councils to run them. It was this sort of atmosphere that welcomed Gramsci to university life and was to affect his thinking for the rest of his life.

Gramsci had already become a socialist through reading pamphlets sent home to Sardinia from the mainland by an older brother. His political thought was expanded by his experiences at university and in his new home city. What Gramsci was to develop, however, was not just an ability to propagandise or to organise political activity. He became the first Marxist theorist to work with the problems of revolutionary change in 20th century Western European society and the first to identify the importance of the struggle against bourgeois values ie an ideological-cultural struggle.

The initial theoretic application of cultural domination was as economic class analysis, which Gramsci developed to comprehend social class. Hence, cultural hegemony proposes that the prevailing cultural norms of society, imposed by the ruling class (bourgeois hegemony), must not be perceived as natural and inevitable, but must be recognised as artificial social constructs (institutions, practices, beliefs) that must be investigated to discover their roots as social class domination; from which knowledge follows societal liberation.

5.3   Approaches to Neo-Marxian theories

Marx was a dominant conflict theorist in sociology and social sciences. A variety of sociological theories bear the reflections of Marx's ideas. And, interestingly enough, Marx's influence has been far from uniform. Because Marx's theory is encyclopaedic, a variety of different theorists can claim to work within the guidelines set down in his original work. In fact, although each of these theorists claim to be the true inheritor of Marx's theory, there are many irreconcilable differences among them.

Neo-conflict theory has not established itself as a distinct sociological theory. It is loosely applied to any social theory or sociological analysis which draws on the

ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, but amends or extends these usually by incorporating elements from other intellectual traditions such as, for example psychoanalysis (as in the case of critical theory), Weberian sociology or anarchism (for instance, critical criminology).

Some of the key ideas associated with the neo-conflict theories are:

(1)   Marxism is amended or extended in the light of contemporary capitalism. The neo-conflict theories have provided, new insights from various intellectual sources.

(2)   For neo-conflict theories Marxism includes both Marx and Engles. They constitute the major sources of neo-conflict theories. For these theorists, the central perspective is of Marxism.

(3)   Any theme or element of intellectual tradition can be analyzed from Marxian point of view. And, such an analysis gets the status of a neo-conflict theory.

In fact, the neo-conflict theories are loose clusters of theories. The scope of such theories becomes unmanageable and anything which employs Marxian perspective, becomes a neo-conflict theory. Take the case of Baudrillard. His ideas about the society of simulation are formed in part out of a dialogue with Marxism. Baudrillard believed it necessary to bring Marx up-to-date. Marxism had now to account for contemporary developments in information technology, consumerism, the growth of the leisure industry, and multinational corporations. For further explanation of neo-conflict theories in terms of their meaning, the theme of class conflict may be mentioned. Marx has argued that the conflict between dominant and subordinate classes would ultimately lead to future revolution. In this view, faith is put in the proletariat as the universal class, which will lead the way to socialism. Marx further gives the thesis that economic structure is the determining factor in social and cultural life. But much postmodern thought has challenged the idea that any one class, structure or factor can single-handedly explain history or bring about change. There are postmodernists such as Lyotard, Foucault, Baudrillard and others who seek a less reductive view of history, society and Marxism. They formulate a more radical version of democracy than Marxism. All these examples bring home the fact that the neo-conflict theories are

very loose and do not exhibit any distinct or specified character.

Out of the confusion of defining neo-conflict theories, two specific approaches have been identified as two variants of neo-conflict theories as mentioned above. They are discussed below:

5.4   Marx, Gramsci and discourse analysis

It should be clear that Gramsci's theory has a substantial contribution to discourse analysis In constructing this theory, Gramsci has borrowed certain ideas from Marx. In this theory, Gramsci rejects Marxs thesis of class analysis and argues that non-class-based forces can also play an important role in historical development. It is interesting to make differentiations between Marx and Grarnsci:

(1)   Marx argues that there is social change in society but it is rooted in class relations In other words, for Marx, change stems from stable class relations This is not acceptable to discourse analysis Discourse analysis maintains that social change in society cannot be explained only by stable class relations There are other variables such as symbols, language and ideology which also help explain social change in society.

(2)   Marx developed class war and social change theory, particularly from economic determinism This is rejected by discourse analysis Gramsci's analysis of society was always historically specific and particularly developed in the context of an analysis of Italian history. The Italian historical particularity has always been different from Western Europe And, what is more interesting is the fact that Marx had always been specific to western history. The two different histories of Italy and Western Europe changed the structure of the analysis of society.

(3)   Marx has reduced his theory of social change to class relations onjy. He says that the mobilization of proletariat would commit to revolution and finally there would be socialism The root cause of conflict is class antagonism Gramsci has not taken this theory. He says that religious, cultural and ideological issues are also responsible for conflict and revolution However, it must be mentioned here that Gramsci, though introduces religious, linguistic, symbolic and cultural variables in the analysis of conflict and change, he equally accepts the

importance of economic factor in the occurrence of conflict.

Peter, Thomson and Anderson make Gramsci's theoretical position clear:

Gramsci underlines how religious, cultural and ideological issues as well as economic issues lead to important dimensions of conflict in the social order. He does not reject class struggle as the basic conflict, but the distinctive thing about Gramsci's analysis is that- he emphasizes other dimensions of conflict, which are not necessarily reducible to class conflict.

There are two basic things to understand discourse analysis There is Marxian theory of conflict It argues that conflict is due to class relations and class antagonism. This theory is reinterpreted and recast by Gramsci Gramsci argues that there is conflict in the society. This conflict is admittedly due to class relations But, he also adds that the variables of religion, ideology and symbols also play an important role in generating conflict There are the two basic things for the understanding of conflict Discourse analysis is the outcome of Marx's conflict theory and Gramsci's theory of multi-variable. This brings us to the discussion of discourse analysis

Discourse analysis

The term 'discourse' is often used by the postmoderitists. It is fashionable for them. Without it, they can hardly give any expression to their thought By discourse, Anthony Giddens means 'the framework Of thinking in a particular area of social life. For instance, the discourse of criminality means how people in a given society think and talk about crime". The technical meaning of discourse as given by Peter, Thompson and Anderson is given below

Discourse is a horizon of meaning and action, i.e., a certain segment of the social reality that is organized by interpretations and forms of action derived from these interpretations.

What is the meaning of conflict How does it occur What do people think about it These are questions which draw the attention of neo conflict theorists While Marx explained it with reference to class, Gramsci explained it in terms of a plurality of variables Discourse analysis goes a step further. The British discourse analysis is influenced by French and Anglo-Saxon language philosophy, especially by the French

philosopher, Jacques Derrida, and the Austrian language philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein. These philosophers have argued that social reality can only be constituted discursively.

In philosophy, a differentiation is made between language and reality. According to this differentiation, it is argued in social sciences non-material things are less significant than material things. For instance, religion is less important than material possessions. The materialistic view is most clearly expressed by Marx. His theory of dialectical mater;alism is well known.

Discourse analysis does not accept Marx's materialistic view of history because it differentiates between consciousness and materiality. It reduces language and consciousness to secondary thing compared to material relations. In a novel attempt to construe consciousness and materiality as different aspects of the same social reality, discourse analysis introduces the concept of discourse. This concept rejects any ontological distinction between language and reality and any apriori hierarchy of explanatory principles.

Discourse, in fact, is described as a social practice. It refers to social world as a linguistic reality. Despite this, the discourse is not equivalent to the notion of language. It includes forms of practice through which language, actors and types of behaviour connect to one another. And, this is the ontology.

The discourse analysis which improves upon Marx and Gramsci, and which draws heavily from linguistics, is criticized by Marxist scholars. One of the strongest objections comes from two neo-Marxists, Bob Jessop and the Norman Geras. In their view, the concept of discourse is unable to address the central axis of modern sociological and Marxist theory, that is, the fundamental relation between the social structures and social actors. Hence, it is argued that discourse analysis fails to offer a solution to the structure-agency problem in the social sciences. Indeed, it is often suggested that discourse analysis exaggerates the free will of actors at the expense of the structural constraints within which they operate.

5.5   Gramsci's theory of Hegemony

Hegemony is leadership or authority. Marx established that all through human

history hegemony has been determined by control of the means of production and exploitation of the wage labourers. Gramsci contested Marxian theory of hegemony or domination He argued that hegemony was not just structural domination through economics or politics According to him, it was a combination of political, intellectual and moral leaderships, meaning that it involved superstructure or ideology and private institutions as well as politics Dictatorship as that of Mussolini may or may not be one element in hegemony, Gramsci's formulations are important

Precisely because they stress the unity of consensus and dictatorship. This is the case with the definition of the integral state as follows: state = political society + civil society, in other words, hegemony protected by the armour of coercion. A social group exercises its hegemony over subordinate social groups, which accept its rule so long as it exercises its dictatorship over the hostile social groups which reject it (Jacquies Texier, quoting Gramsci

Hegemony, then, is exercised through the commitment of those who are persuaded through control of any opposition. Thus, according to Gramsci, domination or hegemonic apparatus of society includes schools, churches, the entire media and even architecture, and the names of streets Hegemony, thus then, involves persuasion or consensus, as well coercion. If this is the hegemony or domination exercised by the bourgeoisie class, what can the working classes do to offset it? In Gramsci's view, it is vital for the working class not to isolate itself within a ghetto proletarian purism. On the contrary, it must try to become a 'national class' representing the interests of the increasingly numerous social groups. In order to do this it must cause the disintegration of the historical classes of the bourgeoisie's hegemony by disarticulating the ideological block by means of which the bourgeoisie's intellectual direction is expressed.

The disintegration of the historical bases of bourgeoisie's hegemony is very difficult compared to the uprising of proletariat. What Gramsci has done in this case is that he has reincorporated ideological issues into the Marxist discussion of bourgeois control and proletariat revolution.

Gramsci has advanced the idea of the possibility of developing a liberal bourgeois democracy, which will play a positive role in the construction of a socialist society. And, therefore, Gramsci rejects the Leninist view that bourgeois institutions

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necessarily have to be completely destroyed because they have no relevance for working class ideology. Gramsci's model of analysis is more relevant when analyzing on modern societies than classical Marxism, primarily because Gramscian concepts allow for greater complexity and because they are not direct derivatives of rigid class analysis.

Neo-Gramscian or discourse analysis was introduced in the mid4980s and has been developed by the political scientist, Ernesto Laclan and English philosopher, Chantal Mouffe who together agreed to establish a new approach to social analysis by utilizing Gramscian insights. Of course, Gramscian texts only serve as a starting point for discourse analysis, which, as the name implies, forms part of the linguistic turn with social sciences. According to Laclan and Mouffe, discourse analysis involves an effort to apply linguistic tools to social and political phenomena. In this respect, their project represents one of the most original contributions to political science within the last ten years.

Discourse analysis combines strands of linguistic philosophy such as structuralism and poststructuralism. It rejects rationalism, objectivism and deterministic notions of causation. In this view, discourse analysis tends to ignore 'class behaviour', 'rational behaviour' and 'profit maximization'. Thus, discourse analysis asserts that ideology and language are just as important as material relations when explaining historical development. Second, it insists that material relations cannot be understood in isolation from linguistic and ideological conditions of existence The third claim is that language and symbols represent the tools with which reality is constructed Finally, discourse analysis claims that political conflict and dominance engender structural changes in social organization

The neo Gramscian theory, that is, discourse analysis, is thus a subjectivist approach, which regards language, symbols and ideological consciousness as the origins of human action.

5.5.1 Cultural hegemony

In a society, the praxis of cultural hegemony is neither monolithic nor a unified value system, rather it is a complex of layered social structures; each social and economic

class has a societal purpose and an internal class logic allowing its members to behave in a particular way that is different from the behaviour of members of other social classes, whilst co-existing with them as constituents of the society. Because of their different social purposes, the classes will be able to coalesce into a society with a greater social mission. In a person's perceiving the social structures of cultural hegemony, personal common sense has a dual structural role (personal and public). Personally, men and women apply common sense to cope with daily life, and to explain (to themselves) the small segment of the social order they experience as life. Publicly, the perceptual limitations of common sense emerge and inhibit individual perception of the greater nature of the systematic socio-economic exploitation made possible by cultural hegemony. Because of the discrepancy in perceiving the status quo(bourgeois hierarchy), most people attend to their immediate (personal) concerns, rather than than (publicly) think about and question the fundamental sources of their social and economic oppression.

At the personal level, cultural hegemony is perceptible; although each man and woman in a society lives a meaningful life in his or her social class, to him or her, the discrete classes might appear to have little in common with individual private life. Yet, when perceived as a whole society, the life of each person does contribute to the greater societal hegemony. Although social diversity, economic variety, and political freedom appear to exist — because most people "see" different life circumstances — they are incapable of perceiving the greater hegemonic pattern created when the lives they witness coalesce as "a society". The cultural hegemony is manifest in and maintained by an existence of minor, different circumstances, that are not always fully perceived by the people living it.

Gramsci shared the Marxist worldview but he differed in very important ways with the traditional views on how to implement Marxist ideology in advanced western capitalist cultures. Instead of using force, which was more effective in the peasant cultures of Russia and other non western countries, Gramsci developed, among other concepts, the idea of "cultural hegemony" as the way to displace capitalism and western culture.

Cultural hegemony is essentially this: The top down method of using force to take over an advanced capitalist society will fail because the powers that be are too strong in such a society and the effort to change the host culture to a Marxist society will be successfully resisted. Instead of this brute force method, the host capitalist culture can be

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taken over by slowly gaining a toehold and taking over through the incremental changing of the culture's conventional wisdom, or common sense.

This is accomplished on many fronts including, and especially in, education. Public education via the national school system is used to teach, at the most fundamental levels, the ways of cultural Marxism's ideas of social justice and general worldview. Eventually, the conventional wisdom of the culture is changed and the natural order of the culture's thinking reflects the new ideology, all without firing a shot! As the cultural memory of the targeted culture is replaced by Marxist thinking as the conventional wisdom, a new cultural hegemony is in place.

In order to implement his ideas of achieving cultural hegemony, Gramsci developed the ideas of using the culture's functional intellectuals. These are the people who run the culture's schools, media, churches, and social programs of various sorts. They are tasked with maintaining the drumbeat of cultural Marxism. They are the front line advance troops in the culture war.

Once a culture has been converted, there is little chance of it ever going back. At the deepest levels, it's people accept Marxist ideas as common sense. The tyranny of Marxist socialism is then in place and irresistible.

Think of our country today and apply these ideas. Think about the recent presidential campaign and the role of so called community organizers in our culture. Think of William Ayers and his role of "respected educator." Think about Saul Alinsky, the author of "Rules For Radicals." He was the anti-American inventor of community organizing in the 1960s and the archetypical Gramscian "organic" intellectual. Think about the anti religious forces you see becoming more visible by the day to the point that they are now advertising on the sides of buses that there is no God. Think about the crap you see and hear in so much of our media. Think about how ignorant we are becoming in general as evidenced by study after study on people's general knowledge and in television segments such as Jay Leno's Jaywalking.

By using this one lens, many things you see which cause you to shake your head in amazement or get angry in resentment make perfect sense. It tends to make you feel paranoid and to question your own mind. But, this is not paranoia. It is not imagined. The

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culture war is as real as rain. Look at what is right in front of your eyes. Everything we used to believe and stand for as Americans is being challenged and defeated at many levels. Our children are literally being brainwashed at increasingly young ages in schools essentially run by a central authority. The amazing thing is that none of this is hard to see once you look! Americans are being sucked dry of their cultural heritage and transformed into a helpless herd of sheep accepting huge central government taking over just about every aspect of our lives... all in plain view and right under our noses!

Cultural hegemony in the Gramscian sense is slowly being achieved, and if we don't stem the tide very soon, it will be too late. We need to start fighting back by educating ourselves as to what is going on and going from there. Do the research... there is a great amount of information available at a click on your computer. Look up Gramsci, Alinsky, Ayers, Cultural Hegemony, and read about them. You will be amazed at how your research will match what you observe going on in America today.

5.6   Ideological Hegemony

Gramsci accepted the analysis of capitalism put forward by Marx in the previous century and accepted that the struggle between the ruling class and the subordinate working class was the driving force that moved society forward. What he found unacceptable was the traditional Marxist view of how the ruling class ruled. It was here that Gramsci made a major contribution to modern thought in his concept of the role played by ideology.

Often the term "ideology" is seen as referring simply to a system of ideas and beliefs. However, it is closely tied to the concept of power and the definition given by Anthony Giddens is probably the easiest to understand. Giddens defines ideology as "shared ideas or beliefs which serve to justify the interests of dominant groups" [Giddens 1997 p583] Its relationship to power is that it legitimizes the differential power that groups hold and as such it distorts the real situation that people find themselves in.

The traditional Marxist theory of power was a very one-sided one based on the role of force and coercion as the basis of ruling class domination. This was reinforced by Lenin whose influence was at its height after the success of the Russian Revolution in 1917. Gramsci felt that what was missing was an understanding of the subtle but pervasive forms of ideological control and manipulation that served to perpetuate all repressive

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structures. He identified two quite distinct forms of political control: domination, which referred to direct physical coercion by police and armed forces and hegemony which referred to both ideological control and more crucially, consent. He assumed that no regime, regardless of how authoritarian it might be, could sustain itself primarily through organized state power and armed force. In the long run, it had to have popular support and legitimacy in order to maintain stability.

By hegemony, Gramsci meant the permeation throughout society of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs and morality that has the effect of supporting the status quo in power relations. Hegemony in this sense might be defined as an 'organizing principle' that is diffused by the process of socialization into every area of daily life. To the extent that this prevailing consciousness is internalized by the population it becomes part of what is generally called 'common sense' so that the philosophy, culture and morality of the ruling elite comes to appear as the natural order of things.

Marx's basic division of society into a base represented by the economic structure and a superstructure represented by the institutions and beliefs prevalent in society was accepted by most Marxists familiar with the concepts. Gramsci took this a step further when he divided the superstructure into those institutions that were overtly coercive and those that were not. The coercive ones, which were basically the public institutions such as the government, police, armed forces and the legal system he regarded as the state or political society and the non-coercive ones were the others such as the churches, the schools, trade unions, political parties, cultural associations, clubs, the family etc. which he regarded as civil society. To some extent, schools could fit into both categories. Parts of school life are quite clearly coercive (compulsory education, the national curriculum, national standards and qualifications) whilst others are not (the hidden curriculum).

So for Gramsci, society was made up of the relations of production (capital v labour); the state or political society (coercive institutions) and civil society (all other non-coercive institutions).

Gramsci's analysis went much further than any previous Marxist theory to provide an understanding of why the European working class had on the whole failed to develop revolutionary consciousness after the First World War and had instead moved towards reformism ie tinkering with the system rather than working towards overthrowing it. It was

a far more subtle theory of power than any of his contemporaries and went a long way to explain how the ruling class ruled.

Now, if Gramsci was correct that the ruling class maintained its domination by the consent of the mass of the people and only used its coercive apparatuses, the forces of law and order, as a last resort, what were the consequences for Marxists who wished to see the overthrow of that same ruling class? If the hegemony of the ruling capitalist class resulted from an ideological bond between the rulers and the ruled, what strategy needed to be employed? The answer to those questions was that those who wished to break that ideological bond had to build up a 'counter hegemony' to that of the ruling class. They had to see structural change and ideological change as part of the same struggle. The labour process was at the core of the class struggle but it was the ideological struggle that had to be addressed if the mass of the people were to come to a consciousness that allowed them to question their political and economic masters right to rule. It was popular consensus in civil society that had to be challenged and in this we can see a role for informal education.

Overcoming popular consensus, however, is not easy. Ideological hegemony meant that the majority of the population accepted what was happening in society as 'common sense' or as 'the only way of running society'. There may have been complaints about the way things were run and people looked for improvements or reforms but the basic beliefs and value system underpinning society were seen as either neutral or of general applicability in relation to the class structure of society. Marxists would have seen people constantly asking for a bigger slice of the cake when the real issue was ownership of the bakery.

5.6.1   Organic Intellectuals

This brings me to my second theme. Gramsci saw the role of the intellectual as a crucial one in the context of creating a counter hegemony. He was clear that the transformation from capitalism to socialism required mass participation. There was no question that socialism could be brought about by an elite group of dedicated revolutionaries acting for the working class. It had to be the work of the majority of the population conscious of what they were doing and not an organized party leadership. The revolution led by Lenin and the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1917 was not the model suitable for Western Europe or indeed any advanced industrialized country. The Leninist model took place in a backward country with a huge peasantry and a tiny working class. The result was that the mass of the

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population were not involved. For Gramsci, mass consciousness was essential and the role of the intellectual was crucial.

It is important at this juncture to note that when Gramsci wrote about intellectuals, he was not referring solely to the bowfins and academics that sat in ivory towers or wrote erudite pieces for academic journals only read by others of the same ilk. His definition went much further and he spread his net much wider.

Gramsci's notebooks are quite clear on the matter. He writes that "all men are intellectuals" [and presumably women] "but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals". What he meant by that was that everyone has an intellect and uses it but not all are intellectuals by social function. He explains this by stating that "everyone at some time fries a couple of eggs or sews up a tear in a jacket, we do not necessarily say that everyone is a cook or a tailor". Each social group that comes into existence creates within itself one or more strata of intellectuals that gives it meaning, that helps to bind it together and helps it function. They can take the form of managers, civil servants, the clergy, professors and teachers, technicians and scientists, lawyers, doctors etc. Essentially, they have developed organically alongside the ruling class and function for the benefit of the ruling class. Gramsci maintained that the notion of intellectuals as being a distinct social category independent of class was a myth.

He identified two types of intellectuals - traditional and organic. Traditional intellectuals are those who do regard themselves as autonomous and independent of the dominant social group and are regarded as such by the population at large. They seem autonomous and independent. They give themselves an aura of historical continuity despite all the social upheavals that they might go through. The clergy are an example of that as are the men of letters, the philosophers and professors. These are what we tend to think of when we think of intellectuals. Although they like to think of themselves as independent of ruling groups, this is usually a myth and an illusion. They are essentially conservative allied to and assisting the ruling group in society.

The second type is the organic intellectual. This is the group mentioned earlier that grows organically with the dominant social group, the ruling class, and is their thinking and organizing element. For Gramsci it was important to see them for what they were. They were produced by the educational system to perform a function for the dominant social

group in society. It is through this group that the ruling class maintains its hegemony over the rest of society.

Having said that what was required for those who wished to overthrow the present system was a counter hegemony, a method of upsetting the consensus, of countering the 'common sense' view of society, how could this is done?

5.7   Sum Up

Gramsci, in his Notebooks, maintained that what was required was that not only should a significant number of 'traditional' intellectuals come over to the revolutionary cause (Marx, Lenin and Gramsci were examples of this) but also the working class movement should produce its own organic intellectuals. Remember that Gramsci said that all men were intellectuals but not all men have the function of intellectuals in society. He went on to point out that "there is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded" and that everyone, outside their particular professional activity, "carries on some form of intellectual activity …, participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought". This sounds as if he was exaggerating the possibilities but what he was really trying to convey is that people have the capability and the capacity to think. The problem was how to harness those capabilities and capacities.

Gramsci saw one of his roles as assisting in the creation of organic intellectuals from the working class and the winning over of as many traditional intellectuals to the revolutionary cause as possible. He attempted this through the columns of a journal called L'Ordine Nuovo (New Order), subtitled "a weekly review of Socialist culture". This journal came out at the same time as the huge spontaneous outbreak of industrial and political militancy that swept Turin in 1919. This outbreak mirrored events throughout the industrial world that shook the very foundations of capitalist society.

Gramsci's insistence on the fundamental importance of the ideological struggle to social change meant that this struggle was not limited to consciousness raising but must aim at consciousness transformation - the creation of a socialist consciousness. It was not something

that could be imposed on people but must arise from their actual working lives. The intellectual realm, therefore, was not to be seen as something confined to an elite but to be seen as something grounded in everyday life. Gramsci wrote that "the mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence … but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organizer, "permanent persuader" and not just a simple orator…" [Gramsci 1971 p10]

The creation of working class intellectuals actively participating in practical life, helping to create a counter hegemony that would undermine existing social relations was Gramsci's contribution to the development of a philosophy that would link theory with practice. His philosophy was a direct counter to those elitist and authoritarian philosophies associated with fascism and Stalinism. His approach was open and non-sectarian. He believed in the innate capacity of human beings to understand their world and to change it. In his Notebooks, he asked the question: "is it better to "think", without having a critical awareness, or, on the other hand, is it better to work out consciously and critically one's own conception of the world?". He wanted revolutionaries to be critical and made it clear that "the starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is …". [Gramsci 1971 p323]

The role of informal educators in local communities links up with Gramsci's ideas on the role of the intellectual. The educator working successfully in the neighborhood and with the local community has a commitment to that neighborhood. They are not 'here today and gone tomorrow'. They may have always lived in the area and have much in common with the local people or they may not. What is important is that they develop relationships with the people they work with that ensures that wherever they go, they are regarded as part of the community ('one of us'). "They can strive to sustain people's critical commitment to the social groups with whom they share fundamental interests. Their purpose is not necessarily individual advancement, but human well-being as a whole" (Smith 1994 p127).

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Louis Althusser : Over Determination & Ideology

Course No. : SOC-C-301	Lesson - 6
Semester - I	Unit - I

Structure:

6.1   Introduction

Although he refused to be labeled as a structuralist, Louis Althusser is noted for influencing structuralism by using his writing to elaborate on ideas first proposed by Karl Marx. While Marx relates all aspects of human life to the base or superstructure of economic production, Althusser envisions the base as one of three processes (economic practice, politico-legal practice and ideological practice). Focusing on how ideology manifests itself within capitalist society, Althusser endeavoured to develop a systematic theory of how a supposedly abstract system

perpetuates itself through its living inhabitants.

6.2   Life Sketch

"Louis Althusser was the founder of Marxian structuralism. He was a genius. Essays written by him in the 1960s had the greatest and most long-lasting impact. He is considered to be a Marxist philosopher and conflict theorist. He was certainly the most influential social theorist working in any tradition. Right from 1960, he continued to publish through the 1970s, becoming increasingly explicit in his criticisms of the French Communist Party leadership. Finally, the personal turmoil and madness, which had been ever present in his life, led to tragedy and confinement in a psychiatric institution for much of his last decade.

Althusser was born in Algeria in 1930. Later on, he moved to France with his parents. According to his biography, Althusser's childhood was very unhappy, tormented by his powerful and authoritarian father, and his sexually repressed and obsessive mother, whose love he experienced overpowering. Brought up as a Catholic, he spent much of the war in a German prisoner-of-war camp. After the close of war he came to Ecole Normale Supericure in Paris as a student. Though as a student Aithusser joined the Communist Party, he always bound himself in conflict with his party leadership and the 'official' party theorists.

Althusser called himself a scientific Marxist rather than a structuralist Marxist. He rejected humanistic Marxism, simplified 'up-side-down' Hegelianism, the notion of the inevitable growing out of capitalism, historically specific. Marxism related to a single time and place. He also rejected Marx's economic determinism.

His works are given below :

(1)   For Marx, 1969

(2)   Elements of Self Criticism, 1974

(3)   Reading Capital (with Etenne Balibar, 1970

(4)   Lenin and Philosoper and Other Essays, 1971

(5)   Philosophy and the mountaneous Philosophy of the Scientists and Other Essays, 1990

Althusser's criticism of Marxism

Althusser's criticism of Marxism is on several counts. We shall elaborate these soon. It would be interesting here to mention that Francois Dosse (1977) says that French intellectuals' attention towards Althusser was for latter's two insights: the one historical and the other economist. The historical mistake was in a simplified viewing of social class as the subject of history. "Class is but one portion of societal complexity, one bearer of social structure." The other misreading of Marx reduced classes to relations of production only. The other criticisms made against Marx are given below:

Reaction of economic determinism

Althusser has raised the problem of Marx's economic determinism in his book, Reading Capital (with Balibar). Here, he has analyzed Marx's views on history and society. Marx explains the structure of society with the conceptual framework of mode of production. Mode of production is bound together by two sorts of relationship - relations necessary to the tasks of production and ownership relations, through which surplus wealth is acquired by the class of owners. The different types of society that have existed in history or are found in other parts of the world (ancient, feudal, hunter-gatherer, capitalist, and so on) can be classified in terms of the different ways in which the various elements are combined together. So far, the account is little more than an attempt to make more precise the existing 'orthodox' understanding of Marx's economic thought.

It is here that Althusser parts company with Marx. He rejected economic determinism and argued that a society consisting of a number of distinct structures or practices of which the economy was only one. These structures included ideological, political, and no theoretical practices. Each of these structures has its own reality, its own contradictions. Each makes its own contribution to the wider social processes. However, Althusser admits that all structures are not equal in their contributions to the whole. Some structures have greater influence compared to others. Despite this weakness, Althusser proposes that superstructure should get all attention to understand

the society adequately:

> It does not imply that nothing important goes on in the superstructure. The real problem was that Marx had not developed an adequate theory of the superstructures to compare with his economic theory. One of the most urgent jobs to be done by contemporary Marxists was to correct this weakness in Marxism by developing theories of ideology and politics.

6.3   Structural Marxism

Louis Althusser, Nicos Poulantzas and Maurice Godlier are the main contributors to structural Marxism. They try to establish that it was not Saussure who founded linguistics structuralism. In fact, it was Karl Marx who used structuralism as the method or approach to study social reality. Godlier made this point very clear when he wrote:

> When Marx assumes that structure is not to be confused with visible relations and explains their hidden logic, he inaugurates the modern structuralist tradition.

Agreed that all scholars of structuralism, whether linguistic, anthropological or Marxian, talk about hidden or underlying structure, their conceptualization of structure is different. However, there are some structural Marxists who share with general structuralists an interest in the study of structure as a prerequisite to the study of history. As Godlier said:

> The study of the internal functioning of a structure must precede and illuminate the study of its genesis and evolution .... The inner logic of these systems must be analysed before their origin is analyzed.

Yet another view shared by structuralists and structural Marxists is that "structuralism should be concerned with the structures or systems that are formed out of the interplay of social relations. Both schools see structures that they consider real. For Levi-Strauss the focus is on the structure of the mind, whereas for structural Marxists it is on the underlying structure of society". Ritzer's analysis is that whatever may be the variant of structuralism, empiricism remains a first-rate rejection. He (1997) says:

> What both structuralists and Marxists reject are the empiricist definitions of

what constitutes a social structure.

Godlier's rejection of empiricism runs as below:

For Marx as for Levi-Strauss a structure is not a reality that is directly visible, and so directly observable, but a level of reality that exists beyond the visible relations between men and the functioning of which constitutes the underlying logic of the system, the subjacent order by which the apparent order is to be explained.

There are, as we have seen above, some similarities in general structuralism and Marxian structuralism, the fact remains that the structuralist Marxists do not share with linguistic structuralism which Saussure proposed. The structural Marxism all through its analysis has stressed on social and economic structures. It has adhered to the Marxian theory of production relations and production forces. It is because of this orientation that structural Marxism has established its distinct identity.

6.4 Althusser's Neo Marxism

6.4.1 Anti-humanism

Althusser has also criticized Marxist humanism. And, therefore, he is described as anti-hurnnist. There are several approaches to humanism. One very common approach to humanism is the freedom of individual. It is the individual who as human being has all the privileges to make choices. This kind of humanism sometimes is also called 'voluntarism'. It took its extreme form in Sartre's existentialism. In economics, even today, individual's rational choice assumes importance. Giddens has also stressed the importance of individual identity. Althusser was not against such a kind of humanism. But he was against it or was anti-humanist with reference to Stalin's 'errors and crimes'. Whatever atrocities Stalin committed were on the humanist ground, that he exercised his rational choice. If this was the version of humanism, Althusser accepted, he was anti-humanist.

6.4.2 Anti-historicism

Althusser argues that Marx has been misread about history. Marx stood for historicism. By historicism is meant linear changes. Aithusser does not object to it.

Historicism further explains that historical change is for progress, for the betterment of society. In other words, history has always an upward mobility. Marx stood for such a conception of history. Althusser did not accept Marx's progressive ideas about history. On Aithusser's reading of it, Marx's great breakthrough was to overthrow this way of thinking about history. The faith often present in the communist movement that history is on our side' or the eventual victory of the working class movement was somehow written into the historical process was, in Aithusser's view, completely un-Marxist. In other words, Marx believed that historical change is always progressive change Now, there is the regime of the bourgeois, history would bring change and consequently, there would be regime of the proletariat. Such a progressive linear historicism was not acceptable to Althusser. He argues that historical processes were open-ended. In our own time, postmodernist writers such as Lyotard have proclaimed the end of widespread belief in historical metanarratives such as Marxism. Ironically, if Aithusser's reading is correct, Marx was the first modernist.

6.4.3 Althusser's superstructure or ideological theory

Marx was an economic determinist His thesis was that it is the economy which determines superstructure, i.e., ideology, religion and values. As discussed above, this theory was rejected by Althusser. Althusser developed his own theory of superstructure. We have discussed it elsewhere also. Here, we would only say that Althusser gave a systematic treatment to the question of the superstructure in an essay written soon after the revolutionary events of Paris 1968. The essay is entitled: 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus' (1971).

In this essay, Althusser gives two types of superstructures: Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). The state (RSA) exercises its coercion through the police, the courts of law and the army. At the ideological level (ISA), the state controls the society through education, economy, trade unions, family, religion and communications media. The RSA functions to maintain the social order whereas ISA seeks to mobilize the consent of the masses of people. Aithusser, following Gramsci, argues that in most of the western societies, the legitimacy or recognition is given to class domination, i.e., domination by the bourgeois. It means most people, most of the time, are not in open revolt against the system. But, the question Althusser

raises is: why do people give their consent or legitimacy to the state? He says that it requires continuous ideological work, conducted under the ideas of the ruling ideology within the institutional framework of the ISA. As individuals pass from family to school to university, as they participate in rituals, watch TV and so on, they acquire a sense of their own personal identity and place in society which at the same time prepares them for a life of willing obedience to the requirements and tasks allotted to them.

This process of ISA is, what Aithusser calls interpellation, the acquisition by an individual of a sense of who they are which carries with it a set of ideas about their place in the social world, bound up with the necessary skills and attitudes. Here, Aithusser departs from Gramsci and previous Marxists. The RSA and ISA, according to Aithusser, constitute the superstructure and their superstructure is not determined by economy.

6.4.3.1 The Three-Spheres Model of Society

Louis Althussers Marxist or critical approach to cultural analysis examined the connections between social structure, power and culture (Smith 52), and how this influences subjectivity. Althusser endeavored to develop a scientific or systematic theory as to how society functions in order to maintain conditions favorable to capitalism. His primary focus was on the relationship between ideology and the roles and identities society creates for people that help to perpetuate these conditions. Althussers structural model of society consists of two different levels and of three spheres and is significant in part because it attaches specificity to Marxist ideas which often tend to posit somewhat free floating dominant ideologies (Smith 54). The first of these spheres, the economic base, refers to sites of production (including the cultural industries). Two spheres then make up what is known as the superstructure: the politico-legal which consists of the political and legal systems, and the ideological structure which refers to institutions such as churches and schools that perpetuate dominant beliefs and values. Although culture (the economic base) and politics (the superstructure) are independent of each other in Althussers model, they still share the ideological interconnections which serve to perpetuate the capitalist system (Fiske 287). One could say that Althussers theories suggest that rather than working to live, we are living to work.

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While Marx primarily examined the role of economics in perpetuating the status quo or ideology, observing that the ultimate condition of production is therefore the reproduction of the conditions of production, for Althusser, the reproduction of the conditions of production is not simply guaranteed by perpetuating existing material conditions such as wages (Norton 1483); rather, he believed that such conditions are achieved more and more outside production through the concept which Althusser deems as the state apparatus (1491).

Marx defined the state as a machine of repression, which enables the ruling classes ... to ensure their domination over the working-class, thus enabling the former to subject the latter to the process of surplus-value-extortion (i.e. to capitalist exploitation) (Norton 1487). Althusser refers to this classic tenet of Marxism instead as the state apparatus, referring to its function to repress the working-classes and thus perpetuate the capitalist system (1487). He divides the state apparatus into two different forces: the repressive state apparatus (RSA) and the ideological state apparatus (ISA). Repressive state apparatuses or RSAs such as the government, administration, army, police, courts and prisons curtail the working-classes predominately through direct violence or the threat of violence and are mainly controlled by the public sphere. Althusser further departs from Marxist theory by introducing the concept of ideological state apparatuses or ISAs. Unlike repressive state apparatuses, ideological state apparatuses cannot as easily be unified into one cumulative force as they originate primarily from various sources in the private sector. However, differentiating between RSAs and ISAs solely on the basis of the split between the public and private sectors is somewhat difficult, given that institution such as the media, which Althusser defines as part of the private sector, in fact spans both categories. Althusser seems to anticipate this point of contention by maintaining that the key difference between the two categories is that whereas RSAs function for the most part by violence, ISAs function primarily by ideology. The examples which Althusser provides of ISAs include forms of organized religion, the education system, family unit, legal system, political parties, trade unions, media and the arts (Norton 1489).

In pre-industrial society, Althusser argues that the importance of the family unit as an ideological state apparatus was only seconded by that of the primary ideological state apparatus at that time, the church which concentrated within it not only religious functions, but also educational ones, and a large proportion of the functions of communications and culture (Norton 1493).

The French Revolution (1789-1799), however, displaced the hegemonic power of the church onto other sources. In particular, the all-important task of indoctrinating the youth into perpetuating the status quo shifted from being the responsibility of the church to being that of the education system the central ISA from our contemporary post-industrial period according to Althusser. The importance of the school system cannot be underestimated for, in Althussers own words, no other ideological State apparatus has the obligatory (and not least, free) audience of the totality of the children in the capitalist social formation, eight hours a day for five or six days out of seven (Norton 1495). Moreover, the education system indoctrinates its audience according to ruling-class ideology during the years in which the child is most vulnerable, squeezed between the family state apparatus and the educational state apparatus (1494).

6.5 Over determination and ideology:

First used scientifically by Freud, over determination refers to a non-reductionist account of human experience and believes that the constitution of each thing is given by the totality of cause and effects that give it instantiation. In Freud, that includes things not remembered, elements of the sub-conscious that act without being recognized. To understand something we can not just look at the most visible and obvious causes, and over determination is a counter to these totalities of simple determination. Representation is problematical by the presence of non-visible or not articulated sentiments must be included in the cognition of various aspects of social life, especially subjectivity.

More generally over determination refers to multiple coexistent and complexly integrated structures, non- transparent modes in which certain types of activity express themselves. It is a counter to the idea of single determination of a whole and in its structuralist use is a counter to functionalist ideas of static harmonious

wholes. Thus over determination is used to refer to multiple causality - or for instance in Freud a hysterical symptom or in Althusser a revolutionary situation – or just the social itself.

In Althusser the need for a concept of over determination appears in Marxism at the point where the ideology of simple and general contradictions is undermined by historical process.

"If, as in this situation, a vast accumulation of 'contradictions' comes into play in the same court, some of which are radically heterogeneous – of different origins, different sense, different levels and points of application – but which nevertheless 'merge' into a ruptural unity, we can no longer talk of the sole, unique power of the general 'contradiction'… This means that if the 'differences' that constitute each of the instances in play (manifested in the 'accumulation' discussed by Lenin) 'merge' into a real unity, they are not 'dissipated' as pure phenomena in the internal unity of simple contradiction. The unity they constitute in this 'fusion' into a revolutionary rupture is constituted by their own essence and effectivity, by what they are, and according to the specific modalities of their action. In constituting this unity, they reconstitute and complete their basic animating unity, but at the same time they also bring out its nature: the 'contradiction' is inseparable from the total structure of the social body in which it is found, inseparable from its formal conditions of existence, and even from the instances it governs; it is radically affected by them, determining, but also determined in one and the same movement, and determined by the various levels and instances of the social formation it animates; it might be called over-determined in its principle."

"I am not particularly taken by this term over determination (borrowed from other disciplines) , but I shall use it in the absence of anything better, both as an index and as a problem, and also because it enables us to see clearly why we are dealing with something quite different from the Hegelian contradiction." - from For Marx p.100-101 (Verso) N.B – 'ruptural unity' – what is such a thing?

The concept of overdetermination has been used by Resnick and Wolff in the formation of a non essentialist marxian political economy.

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Glossary

Agency: the ability of an individual or group to effect or intervene in human affairs. Liberal humanists regard the individual as having almost unrestricted agency. Marxists see economic and social circumstances as playing a role in the ability of individuals or groups to shape their social destiny.

Cultural Studies: promotes resistance through the study of how ideologies manifest themselves within various texts including literature, advertisements and other media, fashion and many other possibilities.

Decoding: how readers interpret or make sense of the messages in texts.

Determinism: The view that economic, social and cultural life determines the consciousness of individuals.

Diachronic Analysis: analysis of the development of a phenomenon, such as language, and how it changes over time.

Empiricism: the conviction that all knowledge is derived from sense experience. Althusser distrusts empiricism as the sole basis of knowledge; since human beings are constituted within ideology, their sense experience is necessarily altered.

Ideology: term first coined by Karl Marx and used also as one of his three levels of society. Marx defined ideology as a set of beliefs, values, and ways of thinking through which human beings perceive and then explain what they assume to be reality (Abrams 148). Defined similarly by Althusser as the dominant political and cultural beliefs, values and norms at work in a given society or the representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals with the real conditions of their existence (Williams 148).

Infrastructure or Economic base: one of the two levels of society as defined by Karl

Marx consisting of the relations of production and the unity of productive forces (1486).

Interpellation or Hailing: term referring to the process by which individuals are transformed into subjects who work towards maintaining the ruling ideology. Althusser uses the example of conversion in which God interpellates an individual as a subject of the Christian religion.

ISAs (Ideological State Apparatuses): institutions which function to maintain and perpetuate the means of production primarily through ideology. ISAs derive from various sources as part of the private sector and, as such, their influence cannot easily be unified into one cumulative force, as with RSAs (Repressive State Apparatuses). Examples of ISAs include the education system and forms of organized religion.

Marxism: An approach based on the economic and cultural theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marxism is a theory of the evolution of history, society and social relations in terms of material production; i.e. changes to work ushered in by the Industrial Revolution or the advent of Fordist production (the assembly line). Marx applied his theories to the emergent Western system of capitalism, arguing that the bourgeoisie or middle-class disempowers members of the working-class or proletariat by separating them from control over the means of production and distribution (Abrams 147-8). Marxist critics are attuned to the ideology that serves to further the interests of the economic and social classes who are the primary beneficiaries of the profits of capitalism.

Media Theory: a specific area of study within the general field of cultural studies that focuses upon (often visual) mediums such as radio, television, advertisements, and increasingly web-based interactive texts such as online gaming. Because scholars recognize that all media operate within the construct of ideology, much attention is usually paid to the institutional circumstances that surround the production and reception of a given text.

Post-structuralism: a mode of criticism prompted in large part by the theories of Jacques Derrida. Derrida attacked what he saw as Saussures rigid structuring of language as logocentric or depending upon a centre. To Derrida, this centre needs constant negotiation, as continuously present and yet, conversely, always absent. Similar attempts to de-centre traditional foundations have been undertaken by Derridas contemporaries like Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Roland Barthes (Abrams 238). In particular, post-

structuralism tends to conceive of cultural forms as semiautonomous discourses susceptible to rhetorical and/or semiological analyses of cognitive constitutions and ideological effects(Leitch and Lewis, para. 9)

Reader: any person engaged in the process of understanding the meaning of texts; i.e. books, movies, art, television, radio, cultural artifacts, or the everyday rituals and practices of the social and cultural world.

Resistance: the ways in which any given individual may resist his or her position as a subject of ideology. Althusser has been criticized by some for dismissing the possibility of resistance in his theories.

RSAs (Repressive State Apparatuses): institutions which function to maintain and perpetuate the means of production primarily through violence or the threat of violence. Unlike ISAs, RSAs derive from the private sector and their influence forms one cumulative force. Examples include the government and the police.

Structuralism: a mode of criticism which generally applies the linguistic concepts defined by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) such as his concept of the sign to a wide range of social and cultural practices (Abrams 300). In particular, structuralism is focused on how meaning is constructed and how we as readers contribute to the creation of meaning by simultaneously participating in, and decoding culture and its products.

Subjectivity: refers to the roles, identities or subject positions we willingly take on in response to ideology. According to Althusser, an individual is always already a subject, even before he is born (1505).

Superstructure: one of the two levels of society as defined by Karl Marx and consisting of two sub-levels the politico-legal, including law and the state, and ideology.

Synchronic Analysis: analysis of a phenomenon, such as language, as it exists during one particular time period.

JACQUES DERRIDA (1930)

Course No. : SOC-C-301   **Lesson - 7**
Semester - III   **Unit - III**

Post-Modernism (Deconstruction)

Structure

7.0   Objective

7.1   Introduction

7.2   Writings of Derrida

7.3   Post-Structuralism and Post-modernity

7.4   Postmodernism

7.5   Postmodernism and Deconstruction

7.6   Derrida's Theory of Deconstruction

7.7   Check your progress

7.8.   References

7.0   Objectives

This chapter is itended to equip the learner with

* Concept of Post-structuration and post modernity

* Derrida's theory of Deconstruction

7.1   Introduction

Jacques Derrida was born in Algeria. He studied in Paris at the Ecole Normale Superieure and at Harvard (1956-57). From 1960 to 1964, he taught at the Sorbonne. The following year, he became Professor of the history of philosophy at the Ecole

Normale Superieure. Derrida has lectured and taught around the world and is particularly well regarded in the United States, where he has held irregular professorship at Yale, Johns Hopkins, New York University, and the University of California at Irvine.

7.2 Writings of Derrida :

Derrida's writings include :

1. *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays of Husserl's Theory of Signs*

2. *Writing and Difference, and*

3. *Grammatology*

All three appeared in France in 1967, the year following his famous 1966 presentation at John Hopkins, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences". He has written many books since, but there were texts in which the first and clearest outlines of deconstructionism appeared. The 1966 paper, from which the selection is taken, is sometimes considered, in retrospect, the event Derrida referred to in the work's first sentence__an event in the history of structuralism, the beginning of post-structuralism; an event in the history of world structures. Given his clear critique of the philosophy of the Center, it is unlikely that he meant that he himself caused this event. Even if he did, that is the point. Deconstructionism concerns itself with problems of this sort.

7.3 Post-structuralism and post-modernity :

Jacques Derrida is a French thinker. Who is influenced by the movement of structuralism, which swayed the whole of Europe. At best, Derrida is described as a linguistic philosopher. However, in 1966, as Charles Lamert informs us, Derrida talked about the dawn of post-structualist age in a lecture. Derrida thus became a post-structuralist as well as post-modernist. It is difficult for students of sociology to have an adequate knowledge about his much talked of deconstruction theory. His prose is largely concluded in linguistic structuralism and philosophy. Derrida, as a post-modern thinker, has created a science of writing which he calls 'grammatology'. While he thinks of grammatology as a science (in order to distinguish it from historical studies of writing), it is clearly not a positivistic science. In fact, grammatology is a type of knowledge rather than a science.

Over the last two decades the term 'post-modernism' has been in wide use. It has become a buzz word. Earlier it was used only as a cultural phenomenon. But now, it has entered into our academic curriculum and assumes an important status. What we mean by post-modernity? The 'modern' was regarded by Toynbee as a time of social stability and progress. In the US, the meaning got a new connotation. Bernard Rosenberg named as post-modern is the new circumstances of life in society during 1950s. He argued that during this decade important social and cultural changes took place in US. These changes included the rise of technological domination and the development of a mass culture of universal 'sameness'. The works of Rosenberg, Toynbee and others provide a good example of how early uses of the term 'post-modernism' do not always tally with how it is used today. In their works, changes in the values and conditions of society were effectively brought about by the expansion of industry. In fact, the history of the meaning of post-modern has undergone several changes during different periods of history. It is considered to be a social and cultural event. The meaning has changed so drastically that it is difficult to put it in precise terms.

Giddens defines post-modern society as: highly pluralistic and diverse, with no 'grand narrative' guiding its development. Post-modernism is the belief that society is no longer governed by the history or progress. Hall and others explain the causes which gave emergence to post-modernity. These are :

(1) collapse of communism and the loss of confidence in revolutionary Marxism,

(2) changes from mass production to flexible specialization,

(3) fragmentation of social classes,

(4) the decline of the politics of party, parliament and trader unions, and

(5) the growth of 'micropolitics' marked by struggles over power at the institutional and local levels or over issues.

Fredric Jameson is a neo-Marxist. He makes an influential attempt to relate post-modernist culture to political, economic and social developments. He argues that there is a culture of post-modernism. In this epoch of history, a plurality of groups have come up. These groups exhibit distinct cultures. Lyotard, who invented the term 'post-modern' in 1979 in his book, **_The Post-modern Condition_** (1979). Lyotard

believes that post-modernists rejects *metanarratives* or *ground theories.* Metanarratives are overarching theories or beliefs about the operation of society and the nature of social change. Most of the post-modernists share the common notion that post-modernity disintegrates the modernist symbolic orders. It denies the existence of all 'universal', including the philosophy of the transcendental self. Further, post-modernity rejects all the referential categories of modernity such as state, use value, social class and other such themes.

In contemporary social science vocabulary, it is much fashionable to talk about postmodernity; no discourse is complete without referring it. What is worse, only a few have comprehension of precise aning of postmodernity. But, the fashion must go on and so postmodernity and postmodern thinkers have become popular themes of today. The entry of postmodernity in common usage is very recent say 1990. During this short period, it has developed a kit of its own concepts, namely, discourse, mega or grand narratives, simulacra, decotruction, cyber people, poststructuralism, truth, reality, etc. Some of the postmodern thinkers have also become popular figures in our day-to-day discourse in academic circle. The concept of postmodernity is very fluid. It carries wide open-endedness. All sorts of cotroversies and contradictions are attached to the meaning of this At best, it allows full social plurality to ethnic groups and at it is nothing short of nihilism. Despite a wide range of disagreement on precise meaning of the term, it is certain that postmodernism is against ideas about depth and essence and the total .iversal. Again, despite controversies, postmodernism stands for ial and provisional and fragmentation and difference. Some of theses of postmodernity are revolutionary. It is said that there is real in the society, nor is there any truth.

The first half of the 20th century was dominated by modernism - a movement that rejected the legacy of the past, that was caught up in the early enthusiasm for technological progress, and that sought to create the world anew. It accompanied and may have even been seen as the cultural equivalent of Russian Revolution. Rejecting tradition it was culture of innovation and change. Fifty years later, however, by the second half of the century, this dramatic, daring and innovative trend had become the cultural norms accepted by western establishment. The revolutionary impulses that had once galvanized politics and culture had clearly become sclerotic. The Brave New World was in retreat. It is the beginning of

postmodern society. It has started a new movement that seeks to recover tradition. It prefers stability to change. Just as the whole socialist idea has gone into .retreat, so too the great modernist project has been largely abandoned. Into this vacuum steps postmodernism. It tries to undo what modernism has done for the European and American societies.

There are several myths about postmodernity. It is said to be a cultural paradigm and is not concerned with economics and politics. But most of those who write about the culture of postmodernism believe that, for good or evil, it is related in some way to the emergence of a new social epoch of postmodernity. Some of the related social developments and the loss of confidence, not only in revolutionary Marxism, but also in social planning as epitomized by post-war housing estates and tower block; the alleged economic changes from mass production to flexible specialization, and from mass consumption patterns to life style niches in the marketplace, with the consequent fragmentation of social classes, the perception that the modernist ideas of technological progress and economic growth by the cause of problems of pollution, waste and wars, rather than the solutions, the decline of the politics of party, parliament and trade unions and the growth of 'micro-politics' marked by struggles at the - institutional and local levels, or over single issues.

Some of these changes are epochal. Added to it is the one single cultural change, which rocked the whole economic, political and social sphere. It is the astonishing growth and pervasiveness of the mass media of communication, particularly the visual media of film, television and graphic design. If we are entering a postmodern age, then one of its most destructive characteristics is a loss of rational and social coherence in favour of cultural images and social forms and identities marked by fragmentation, multiplicity, plurality and. indetermination. It is a broken world.

Our objective in this chapter is to provide a comprehensive profile of modernity, its definition, characteristics and search for building theory of this broken world. As a matter of fact, the present world h become so much fragmented, incohesive and broken that we have construct a theory which can help us to identify ourselves out of massive plurality. Before we come to the grasp of postmodernity, establishment.

There are some key ideas about postmodernity. They are as below:

(1)   Postmodernity is against any depth and essence.

(2)   It is vehemently opposed to total and universal. It is because of this opposition that postmodernism rejects grand theories of Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Karl Marx, Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, etc. These theories are simply totalizing.

(3)   The major thrust of postmodernism is that everything in this society is superficial and provisional.

(4)   The world or the society is fully fragmented in varying cultures, ethnicities and pluralities. The postmodernists argue that there are many conflicting knowledge, identities, needs that it is neither possible nor desirable to see the human race as one big family. Difference, therefore, is the key variable which may help us to understand this world.

(5)   Postmodernists, for example, Jean-Francois Lyotard (1985), argue that the present scientific knowledge is never neutral. It does not give any knowledge, it only provides skills and technology. Jacques Derrida (1967) follows it and says that knowledge is always limited by the institutions in which it is created From this perspective, scientists can have no more direct access to the 'truth' than philosophers or historians. Lyotard has made in this respect an epoch-making statement 'Scientists are, all story tellers, and the narratives they produce (e.g., research papers, hypotheses, histories) are always governed by the protocols of the field in which they work. Each discipline is like a game: it has a special language which only makes sense within its boundaries. Rather than being faced with infinite possibilities, a theorist or researcher can only play within the limits of a system of permissible moves." For Lyotard, to be sure, science is only a grand metanarratives. Lyotard, as his job was to find out the state of scientific knowledge at the request of Qubec's Council des Universities, informs that the science metanarrative are constructed to be universal or absolute sets of truths which transcend social, institutional or human limitations For example, a small, local narrative or language game is usually granted significance only by its ability to reflect or support 'global' narratives like those of progress, truth and justice.

(6)   No social science can ever comprehend the reality or truth of society. It is always as Jean Baudrillard would say constructed by simulacra, that is, signs and images. Simulacra is the world of hyperreality which does not have original copies of reality. It is full of signs and images created by the manufactures.

The task of sociology, therefore, in this broken and fragmented world is very difficult. There is disenchantment everywhere. In India, most of the social segments and particularly the subalterns are experiencing disenchantment at the hands of modernity. There was already a kind of disenchantment with the weakening of tradition and the coming of modernity and it got enhanced by the postmodern views of signs, images and fragmentation. Yogendra Singh (2001) explains the nature of disenchantment of Indian masses as under:

> The intellectual nihilism, implicit in these postmodern views on social science theory, is merely a manifestation of double disenchantment: first, it is marked by alienation from tradition which the worldview of modernity is augurated, and secondly, it is symptomatic of the varied aberrations of ideology and culture in the contemporary post-capitalist society.

Fragmentation in India is so acute that any ethnic group worth the name is up in arms to press for the demand of its 'pound of flesh' in the realm of protective discrimination Some reservation, some benefit, some protection, constitute their charter of competing demands As elsewhere, so also in this part of Asia, sociology is faced with the problem of theorizing the broken world Irrelevance seems to haunt the glass house of Durkheim, Weber, Marx, Parsons and Merton which has been taught in Asia with great pride and prestige Even the native sociologists of India - G S Ghurye, M N Srinivas, N K Bose, Andre Beteille, and T N Madan, who exercise enviable status, are likely to fall victim to the onslaught of the notion of postmodernity. These sociologists have been—functionalists to their core and postmodernity rejects them all.

What is postmodernity?

Over the last two decades the term 'postmodernism' has been in wide, It has become a buzzword. Earlier, it was used only as a cultural enomenon. But now, it has entered into our academic curriculum and assumes an important status. It is so

comprehensive and complicated it there are several postmodernisms in existence. And, if not several stmodernisms, there are surely several variations of it. On one hand, beginning to circulate, however ironically, in popular culture, and the other hand, it remains a controversial subject in specialist kiemic books and journals Popular culture and academic usage have Ie the meaning of postmodernity quite flexible. But flexibility does mean that the term is meaningless.

How do we, thus, understand postmodernity? The prefix 'post' ns after, and 'modern' can be taken to mean current or up-to-date. WW) the question arises: how is it possible to be after and the modern. ie structure of the word 'postmodern', therefore, does not lead us to y meaningful definition. One thing we can do is to look at the history of the word itself. It was perhaps Arnold Toynbee who in his Volume book A Study of History (1947) used the word tmodern'. This was the period following from the dark to middle ii (1075-1475) and the modern age (1475-1875). The 'modern' was rded by Toynbee as a time of social stability and progress. In the U.S. the meaning got a new connotation Bernard Rosenberg named as postmodern the new circumstances of life in society during 1950s. He argued that during this decade important social and cultural changes took place in America. These changes included the rise of technological domination and the development of a mass culture of universal 'sameness'. The works of Rosenberg, Toynbee and others provide a good example of how early uses of the term 'postmodernism' do not always tally with how it is used today. In their works, changes in the values and conditions of society were effectively brought about by the expansion of industry. In fact, the history of the meaning of postmodern has undergone several changes during different periods of history. It is considered to be a social and cultural event. The meaning has changed so drastically that it is difficult to put it in precise terms. Despite this difficulty we will provide some definitions which would help us to understand its meaning and connotation.

Post modernity, postmodernism and postmodern social theory

Normally, 'postmodern' is the term used by most of the social scientists. However, there is also use of the terms 'postmodernism' and 'postmodern social theory.' Best and Kellner - the postmodern It   thinkers - have made a differentiation between these three terms.

Postmodernity

The term 'Postmodernity' means the era of modernity has ended and the postmodern era has comeMistorical meaning is also attached to postmodernity. Such a meaning was given by Arnold Toynbee He mentioned about it in his six-volume book A Study of History (1947). D.C. Somervell suggested that Toynbee's focus on history could be called 'postmodern age. thus took it up, and in his subsequent volumes of his work, he put forward the notion of a postmodern age.

Lamert is yet another postmodernist who traces the origin of modernity from history. But his history is only symbolic. He recalls the moment which took place at 3.32 p.m., July 15, 1972 at St Louis when the modernist architecture of Pruit Igoe housing project was destroyed The massive housing project which represented modernist architecture was constructed with the belief that by building the biggest and best public housing, the poverty and human misery would be eradicated. But, the bulldozing of the project was the destruction of modernity. Lamert says that symbolically at least postmodernity emerged with the destruction of this project in 1972 The destruction raises the issue whether postmodernity can solve the problems created by modernity. To conclude, it could be said that postmodernity emerged on the scene at different times at different places. It is all a historical phenomenon.

Postmodernism

The term 'postmodernism' is used to denote the cultural products which appeared newly in the already existing modern culture. Popular culture in the form of remix photography and new forms of art are some of the examples of new postmodern culture. In the realm of television some untraditional and unconventional serials have come to screen. Same has happened in the music of movies and entertainment programmes. Postmodernism, thus, can be defined as a movement that rejects or moderates the ideas of a previous movement considered modernist often encompassing a reinterpretation of classical ideas, forms and practices. However, the term has gained a specific definition with reference to western art and architecture after the decline of modernism in 1995. Particularly associated with post-industrial society and the 'cultural topic of late capitalism', it suggests multiple quotation, cultural crossover and multicultural borrowing It is a generalized term for the knowingf hi-

tech pluralist character of contemporary society.

Postmodern social theory

The term 'postmodern social theory' has special relevance for sociology. Before the beginning of postmodernity, sociology used to have sociological theory. It was classical contemporary and modern. Such a theory was foundational which developed in a cumulative way from Durkheiin, Weber, Marx and others to Parsons and Merton. Postmodernism calls these foundational theories merely as metanarratives. These are rejected. It is argued that the foundational theories tend to privilege some people and downgrade the significance of others, or in other words, give some groups power and render other groups powerless. Take the case of India: the functional theory which has been an obsession for Indian sociologists and which very rigidly draws from foundational theory, hardly takes into consideration the issues and problems with which the scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and women struggle They kept themselves engaged in maintaining the status quo of the privileged groups.

The postmodernists use the term 'social theory' instead of iological theory. It shows that they have thrown away the yoke of foundational theory. They have crossed the boundaries of sociology. And, they argue that the postmodern social theory is not essentially a sociological theory. It is interdisciplinary and is inclusive of osophy, linguistics, communication, knowledge and aesthetics. instance, Jean-Francois Lyotard begins by identifying modern entific) knowledge with the kind of single grand synthesis.

To close the discussion on the meaning of postmodernity, let us at end quote Lyotard:

> Simplify to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity to metanarratives Let us wage war on totality. Let us activate the difference. Postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate in commensurable.

In terms of Lyotard's definition sociology has moved beyond the dern period, into the postmodern period, in its search for a range of ir specific synthesis. The postmodern society provides us with 'smallish,' 'localized' narratives instead of grand or metanarratives. Interestingly enough, while Lyotard rejects the grand narratives in general, Baudrillard

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rejects the idea of the social. For another, rejecting the social leads to a rejection of the metanarratives of sociology that is associated with modernity. George Ritzer argues that a larger number of sociologists today operate within postmodernist perspective making social theory a part of classical sociological tradition. For instance, they analyze Georg Simmel and C. Wright Mills who are key figures in sociology, from postmodern perspective.

Characteristics of postmodernity

We have given a large number of definitions and meanings of postmodernity in the preceding section of this chapter. These meanings could be divided into two main categories. On the one hand, there is concern with postmodern as a social and economic event, brought about mainly by the spread of mass industry. On the other hand, postmodernism is a cultural matter, that is, a matter of changes in arts. In some ways, this distinction between social and cultural is quite artificial. The two can be said to inform each other to such a degree, in reality, that they cannot be separated. What we do here is to enumerate some of the major features of postmodernity in this section.

Cultural relations or the politics of culture

Postmodern thought is against modern art and architecture. The modern art is considered to be highly influenced by elitism. It indicates a decline in standards. The postmodern architecture dwells in populism, it is a manifestation of cheap populism. Characterizing postmodern architecture, it is argued that it is regressive rather than progressive, reactionary rather than radical, a sell-out of all that architecture should stand for. However, some of these criticisms of modern art, not only in architecture, music and entertainment programmes, but in media too, are defended by postmodernists. It must be accepted that the new art has reached to the grass roots and common people. It is closer to the ground reality.

Glen Ward (1997) makes the following observations in characterizing the cultural aspects of postmodernity:

When the postmodernists do the same they are said to be welcoming the plurality of contemporary cultural life with open arms.... On radio, television, video and home computer the whole of world culture seems to be at your finger tips. The media, it has been argued are placeless imagery spaces which refuse to make

clear distinctions between things. Adverts for ice cream and sun block interrupt an art history programme. Moving into different realities can be done at the push of a button. Everywhere you look, different, perhaps contradictory, messages, images and ideas jostle for attention. In this new media domain anything can go with anything like a game without rules. Or, at least you can make your own rules; culture can no longer be administered,, there is no legislation about what can and cannot be consumed. Modernists would bemoan this as a slackening of aesthetic criteria. Postmodernists would agree but would say 'good thing too'. They would ask, exactly whose criteria were they in the first place? And why should anybody have taken notice of them?

Postmodernity actually came to the field of art sometime in 1980s. was during this period that huge, splashy things became fashion 'of ie day. Postmodern art soon got associated with a pluralist, 'anything es' attitude and an obsession with the past Old styles and techniques ere reshaped At a later stage, it took to political postmodernism Lius, considering all the forms of postmodernism, it could be said that e of its prime dimensions has been the field of art in all its variations.

The end of reality. Baudrillard says it is a society of simulations

It is sometimes said that theories of postmodernism proclaim the "end he real This era of postmodernism has developed communications and the electronic reproduction of sound, image, and text Televisionis often been central in this area What is worse in this postmodern development of communications is that there have emerged doubts about the relationship between reality and representation Baudrillard as developed a theory which says that there is nothing real in this prid Instead, there are simulations, that is, carbon copies of reality and worse enough, there is no original copy. Sgns and images float frough the media, we do not purchase commodities, we purchase OS and images And, interestingly enough, we consume these signs and images

Baudrillard says that the thmgs available in the market are heavily charged by signs and images. The two combined constitute the resentation. These representations have no solid ground of facts, reality or history. Consider the example given by Baudrillard:

You are watching on a video tape of a contemporary film, an image of a woman

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smoking a cigarette She looks cool, seductive, and fairly dangerous. Her smoking gives her this sort of aura. This is something about the way she lights her cigarette .... You find this an alterative image Perhaps you would quite like to look like that yourself.

Simulations, therefore, are the fake, counterfeit and unauthentic reality of society. In such a situation we might assume simulations either duplicates or are emitted by a pre-given real. In a sense we might think that simulations and reality have a necessary attachment. But, for Baudrillard, this connection has long since swapped, so that simulation can no longer be taken either as imitation or distortion of reality or as a copy of the original

Postmodern society is multicultural and incoherent

One of the differentiating characteristics of postmodern society is its multiculturalism. Our national leaders, when make a public speech, often start with the phrase. "We the people of this community..." By the term 'we' they convey the notion that we are common people, have common lifestyle and common values. But such a phrasing would not be acceptable to postmodernists. They argue that the community is never 'one' It has varying ethnicities, feelings, religious followings and linguistic learnings. It is never possible to think of a community as a large family. There is enough fragmentation in a society.

Lyotard s The Postmodern Condition (1984), report commissioned by Qubec's Counseil des Universities, is a wonderful document on the state of scientific knowledge and information Lyotard finds out the grounds of knowledge and informs us how it controls the society. He says that science is never a superior form of knowledge It cannot find permanent answers to everything, it only comes up with temporarily valid opinions, and seeks to solve merely immediate, local problems.

There is splintering of knowledge because human beings in a society are never uniform They are multicultural, multi ethnic Thus, the science which is developed and created in postmodern society is not coherent. It can no longer be valued for the contribution it makes towards human progress. Postmodern science has given up the idea that one day the sum of all knowledge will add up to a state of perfect information. Lyotard strongly believes that postmodern science has become a mass of incompatible little things with no goal other than to generate further research.

Rejection of metanarratives

Postmodernists have no love left for the past In the Indian situation, postmodernity if it is there, it would at once, as Yogendra Singh would agree, abandon indologists who make all sorts of generalization on the basis of scriptures and epics. As the postmodernists in Europe and U.S. reject metanarratives, so will the coming postmodernists in India reject G.S. Ghurye, M.N. Srinivas and other sociologists of this category. As a matter of fact, when we are entering a postmodern age, one of its most distinctive characteristics is a loss of rational and social coherence in favour of cultural images and social reforms and identities marked by fragmentation, multiplicity, plurality and indeterminacy.

Viewed from this perspective postmodernism totally rejects metanarratives. When postmodernism represents fragmented culture, how difficult it is for such metanarratives to survive in contemporary society. Postmodernists have explained the concept of metanarratives. The foundational thinkers have developed their theories which are universal and can be applied to all the societies of the world. For instance, Durkheim's theory of suicide has general application for India and also Europe. Similarly, capitalism is the byproduct of religious ethics as propounded by Max Weber. Marxian economic determinism has universal application. And, with the same logic, .functional theory and methods have uniform applications notwithstanding the specificity of social. These theories are, therefore, labelled as totalizing. When the society is plural, multi-ethnic and ragmented, how metanarratives can explain its structure and function. These narratives miserably fail to identify any fundamental truth underpinning human society. They have anti foundational attitude in their approach.

And finally : An inconclusion

One of the greatest virtues of postmodernity is that it is imprecise. Although it has now been around for a long time, it still references to settle down or solidify into a single meaning. We have seen that each postmodernist has his own perspective of the term. Baudrillard interprets the postmodern society as of simulating society only; for Derrida, it is a fragmented society; for Foucault, it is the knowledge- power relationship, which defines this society. And what is worse, each scholar characterizes the contemporary society as postmodern and at the same time denies himself to be a postmodernist. We might say that

postmodernism practises what its preaches in that it continues to mean different things to different people and to have sometimes bewildering range of applications in different areas. It remains stubbornly elusive. In this way it allows ideas to stay mobile, constantly re-inventing themselves and adjusting to changing circumstances.

It is difficult indeed to provide some agreed upon characteristics of modernity. Despite fluidity, it is certain that postmodernism is against (1) ideas about depth and essence, and (2) the total and universal. Further, it is agreed upon by all postmodernists that, (1) it is superficial and provisional, and 2) fragmentation and difference. To write this in conclusion about postmodernism, we can do no better than to quote Glenn Ward (1997):

The term postmodernism, however slippery and contradictory it might be, it offers a way into debates about contemporary societies, cultures and lifestyles.

7.4 Post-modernism :

The term 'post-modernism' is used to denote the cultural products which appeared newly in the already existing modern culture. Popular culture is the form of remix photography and new forms of art are some of the examples of new post-modern culture. In the realm of television some untraditional and unconventional serials have come to screen. Same has happened in the music of movies and entertainment programmes. Post-modernism, thus, can be defined as a movement that rejects or moderates the ideas of previous movement considered modernist often encompassing, a reinterpretation of classical ideas, forms and practices. However, the term has gained a specific definition with reference to western art and architecture after the decline of modernism in 1995. Particularly associated with post-industrial society and the 'cultural topic of late capitalism', it suggests multiple quotation, cultural crossover and multicultural borrowing. It is a generalized term for the knowing of hi-tech pluralist character of contemporary society.

Jacques Derrida and Post-modernity :

Jacques Derrida through his writings is known as post-structuralist. He combines post-structuralism with post-modernity. In fact, Derrida has developed his own post-modernism with a blend of post-structuralism, philosophy, linguistic and literary analysis.

His brand of post-modernism, therefore, goes by the name of deconstruction.

Post-modernity is multidimensional. Each author has defined it from his own theoretical perspective. Derrida is a post-structuralist and is, therefore, post-modernist also. He characterized post-modernity by the concept of deconstruction and difference. Derrida actually initiated the movement of deconstruction after reading Martin Heidegger in 1960s. This has influenced post-modernist way of thinking. "Deconstructionsim is less a philosophical position than a way of thinking about the reading texts : writers who create texts or use words on the basis of all the other texts and words they have encountered, while readers deal with them in the same way. Cultural life is thus viewed as a series of texts intersecting with other texts producing more texts. This inter-textual weaving has a life of its own. Whatever we write, it conveys the meaning which we do not or could not possibly intend, and our words cannot say what we mean. It is vain to try and master a text because the perpetual interweaving of texts and meaning is beyond our control. Language works through us. Recognizing that, the deconstructionist impulse is to look inside one text for another, dissolve one text into another, or build one text into another".

Derrida is basically a post-stucturalist and his postulate of deconstruction is, therefore, structural construction. He argues that through deconstruction digs up the hidden suppressions and exclusions upon which texts are constructed, it is far from being an act of interpretation in the normal sense. Deconstruction does not mean trying to root out what a text is 'really saying'. On the contrary, it tries to show that the grounds from which texts and theories seem to proceed are always shifting and unstable. One way it achieves this is by recognizing the active role played by the invisible or marginalized in any text. Another is by exposing a text's system of imaginary oppositions.

In the present era we have reached post-modernity, the problem of the identity of individual is passing through a severe crisis. The identity of the individual has gone through a serious transformation. In ancient Indian society, the individual identity was fixed or ascribed. One is born as a Brahmin, he is vegetarian for being a Brahmin, he is also assumed to be a learned person, his position in his kin group was predetermined. His enemy ties were also largely of his past. The traditional identity elsewhere as in India also witnessed change during the modern period. The possibilities of expanding

identity witnessed within this period. Modernity involved the belief that rejecting the shackles of tradition was a step forward towards human emancipation.

Post-modernism gave a new dimension to the expansion of individual identity. During this period, social life is faster and complex than it was in modernity. More and more demands are placed on the individuals, more and more identities are paraded before individuals and they have to juggle hard with the rapidly expanding number of roles as society starts to fragment. Identity has now become an issue. In place of the serious modernist search for the deep, authentic self, the individuals have a recognition, and sometimes a celebration, of disintegration, fragmented desires, superficiality, and identity as something you shop for image is now all that matters. One of the major characteristics of post-modernity is, therefore, to win over the crisis of self-identity formation.

7.5 Post-modernism and Deconstruction :

What is deconstruction? Let us provide a simple example. When a shocking crime takes place in a city, we wonder whether its true causes are in the inherent evil of the criminal, something awful in his upbringing, or the fact that he was an avid viewer of violent films. In these and in a thousand other ways we are used to talking about things as though they have an essential meaning or root cause. Derrida and the post-modernists of his kind reject the idea of things having a simple basic meaning. Instead, it embraces fragmentation and conflict in matters of history, identity and culture. It is suspicious of any attempt to provide at embracing, total theories.

Derrida argues that there is no single cause behind an event. There are, instead, causes. The reason for the cause is that right from the individual to society, everything is fragmented. Explanation, therefore, rests on fragmentation. And it is post-modernity. Derrida gives his definition of post-modernity largely from linguistic structuralism. He borrows heavily from Ferdinand Saussure. Saussure argues that the meaning of 'word' has nothing to do with reality. In other words, words have significance with their relationship with other words, and not the reality. The meaning of the word 'night' is clear from the word 'day' and, therefore, whatever we get in the text or writing has to be explained not with the real things but with the relations of words of text with other words. There is, therefore, meaning of meaning. Explaining modernity with reference to

deconstruction, that is, fragmentation, Derrida observes :

Deconstruction sets itself the tasks of digging up the hidden suppressions and exclusions upon which texts are constructed, it is far from being an act of interpretation in the normal sense. Deconstruction does not mean to root out what a text is really saying. On the contrary, it tries to show that the grounds from which texts and theories seem to proceed are always shifting and unstable… All theories, arguments, texts, etc., rest on abstract systems of relationships. So they never touch down on the sure grounds of pre-existing and pure reality. Structuralism sought the 'facts' about texts. For post-structuralism and so far post-modernism, there are no facts. There are only interpretations.

7.6 Derrida's Theory of Deconstruction :

Derrida has developed the theory of deconstruction. According to him, deconstruction discovers hidden assumptions about a text. There is no knowledge outside of society, culture or language. The dictionary meaning of deconstruction is: critical techniques, especially in literary criticism, which claims that there is no single innate meaning and thus no single correct interpretation of a text. It is the task of the reader to find out implied unity of work and focus on the variety of interpretations that are possible. The crux of Derrida's argument is that the things do not have a single meaning. Instead, the meaning embraces fragmentation, conflict and discontinuity in matters of history, identity and culture. Derrida is against the originals, centers and foundations in social sciences. Theories of Durkheim, Weber and Parsons belong to the foundation theory. These theories constitute the text. It would be erroneous to accept the meaning given by these authors to their respective texts. These texts can be interpreted in a number of possible ways. Deconstruction implies meaning of meanings. And, in doing that, it deconstructs the explicit meaning of text and tries to find out the hidden meaning which is implicit.

Before defining Derrida's deconstruction, we should put it in proper post-modern-post-structural perspective :

- The first post-modern perspective is that it does not put emphasis on progress, totality and necessity but on the very opposite of these intellectual emphasis, namely, discontinuity, plurality and contingency. Post-modernity in this vein is

more 'deconstructive' style of reasoning and enquiry, offering itself as a stimulant to dialogue and to conversation among human beings without the universalizing pretension of enlightenment philosophies. People, it is hoped, will be able to talk to one another and, in the process, playing vocabularies and cultures off against each other, produce new and better ways of acting on problems of the world. The idiom of post-modernity therefore, is: (i) discontinuity, (ii) plurality, (iii) fragmentation, (iv) rejection of progress, and (v) totality.

- The second perspective concerns structuralism and, then, post-structuralism. The post-structuralists attack on the notion that there might be a meta-narrative, meta-language through which all things can be connected, represented or explained. Post-modernisms have a different view of language compared to modernists. The modernists presupposed a tight and identifiable relation between what was said (the signified or message) and how it was being said (the signifier or medium). The post modernists see these as continually breaking apart and reattaching in new combinations.

Kenneth Thompson has interpreted life to the meaning of Derrida's deconstruction as under :

Deconstruction views cultural life as intersecting texts, deconstructing cultural analysis is concerned with reading texts by deconstructing them or breaking down the narrative to show how it composed to different textual elements and fragments.

According to Thompson, Derrida argues that there is fragmentation and instability of language in post-structuralism. Words gain their meaning from being part of a sequential chain of linked signifiers in a sentence. If the links become unstable and the sequence disjoined, then there will be a fragmentation of meaning, manifested in an instability to think things through including an inability to think through one's own biography and to unify the past, present and future in one's psychic life.

Gayatri Spivak (1974) is credited to have translated Derrida's original work, of Grammatology in English. In her preface, she interprets deconstruction as under :

To locate the promising original text to disclose the undecidable moment, to pry

it loose with the positive lever of the signifier, to reverse the resident hierarchy, only to displace it, to dismantle it, in order to reconstitute what is always already inscribed.

George Ritzer (1997) interprets deconstruction as below :

In doing deconstruction, Derrida often focuses on the small, tell-tale moments in a text. The goal is to locate the key moment, the key contradiction. It involves working with the point in the text where things (and being) are concealed, covered up. However, such a demonstration is never oriented to ascertaining the truth. It is deconstructing in order to deconstruct endlessly again and again; there is no sense of ever hitting bottom, or even finding the truth. While reconstruction may take place along the way, it will only give way to further deconstruction.

It is indeed very difficult to define deconstruction in precise terms. Actually, post-modernists in general and Derrida in particular have always opposed any sorts of definition. In this context, Paulos Mar Gregorios clearly states : "If you ask any post-modernist to say what post-modernism is, he is lost. There is no way of defining it."

Characteristics of deconstruction are :

1. Deconstruction is method of enquiry.

2. It is play of presence and absence.

3. Difference : The structure of present is seen as being constituted by difference as well as deferent. Instead of simple concentrating on the presence, the focus in the study of text is on the play of presence and absence.

4. Deconstruction is post structural blend of philosophy, linguistics and literary analysis.

5. Meaning and text can be plural and unstable. Deconstruction rejects the surface meaning and tries to find out the hidden meaning. The texts never carry a basic, single meaning. There is fragmentation, plurality and discontinuity in the text.

6. Deconstruction means critical reading to texts. It implies that there is dismissal of all notions about truth in the interpretation of texts. The texts are open to

new critical discoveries. Any attempt to arrive at truth must be carried out within textuality, because thee is nothing outside of the text. We can only trace from one text to another and can never go beyond textaulity. Christopher Norris writes : "Texts are stratified in the sense that they bear along with them a whole network of articulated themes and assumptions whose meaning everywhere links with other texts, other genres or topics of discourses".

7. A text gives several meanings. Like any form of grammar, graphe or writing, it transcends its author and points to its origin. Hence, the meaning of a text is not exhausted by the author's intentions or the particularly of the historical context.

8. Derrida suggests that the reader and analyst much approach the text with the awareness of the arbitrariness of sign and meaning. This implies that the search for a unified coherent meaning within the text must be given up. In fact, one should not see the text as a united single whole. Instead, the focus should be on the inconsistencies and contradictions of meaning in the text.

9. A reading of absences and the insertion of new meanings are the twin strategies employed by post-modernism to emphasize that knowledge is not a system of 'tracking down' or discovering truth. It is instead the field of free play.

Derrida was more a philosopher than a sociologists. He suggested that we should critically look at the assumptions embedded in widespread beliefs and dogmas. There is no objective point of view which gives access to a pure global truth. Derrida conveys a lot as a post-structuralist to understand and present-day sociology and philosophy.

7.7 Check your progress

Q.1. Critically analyse the concept of Deconstruction ?

Q.2. Explain Derrida's concept of Post-modernism ?

7.8 References :

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MICHEL FOUCAULT

Course No. : SOC-C-301	**Lesson - 8**
Semester - III	**Unit - III**

Discourse : Knowledge and Power
(1926-1984)

Structure

8.0   Objectives

8.1   Introduction

8.2   Post Structuralism

8.3   Writings of Foucault

8.4   Discourse : Knowledge and Power

8.5   Defining Discourse

8.6   Discourse Analysis

8.0   Objectives

After going through this lesson the learner will be able to :-

* Understand the concept of Discourse.

8.1   Introduction

Michel Foucault was born in 1926 and died in 1984. Foucault's primary orientation, in terms of ideology, was towards Marxism. He had joined the Communist Party in 1950-53. He left it around the time of Stalin's death, when many others in France did the same. They all questioned what had been going on in the Soviet Union. In 1961, Foucault successfully defended his doctoral thesis. It was on the *History of Medicine*. He was a French philosopher whose work on the connections among

Language, Knowledge , Power, and Social Control has greatly affected the thinking of many sociologists. Foucault's basic argument was that language and knowledge form a basis for power in their role in the Social Construction of reality. Knowledge and language have been particularly powerful in their use to control the human body. From Foucault's perspective, for example, there is no such thing as an objective human sexuality apart from how we use language to think, write and talk about it. This in turn shapes how we experience the body, which in turn serves the interests of social control.

8.2   Post Structuralism

Structuralism has been largely a French phenomenon that includes Durkheim (in his later work), Saussure, Levi-Strauss, structural Marxists like Althusser and Godelier, and othdrs, especially Jean Piaget. Nevertheless, by the 1980s structuralism had peaked, and Kurzweil argued that "in Paris, the structuralist age is nearly over. However, structuralism did not disappear; it was superseded by what has been termed poststructuralism (or neostructuralism) Lemert (1990) traces the beginning of poststructuralism to a 1966 speech by Jacques Derrida, one of the leading thinkers associated with this approach, in which he proclaimed that structuralism was in transition and that a new poststructuralist age was dawning. The origin of structuralism can he traced, in part, to its effort to distance itself from subjectivistic perspectives like existentialism (see below) and articulate, in contrast, an objectivistic orientation. Poststructuralism involves an effort to extend structuralism by, among other things, including within it a range of theoretical perspectives.

Poststructuralism involves not only a theoretical change but also a transformation in the social world. While structuralism was locked into a focus on the modern world, poststructuralism takes and its subject postmodern society. 'Indeed, many of the leading poststructuralists are also associated with the intellectual movement known as postmodernism. In a sense, postmodernism represent an assault on structure, in this case on architectural structure.

One issue that unifies structuralism, poststructuralism, and postmodern is a concern for language. This is derived, in part, from their roots in linguistic, particularly the ideas of Saussure. Involved in a locus on language is an implied attack on positivism because, as Lyotard says, "scientific knowledge is a form of discourse". If science is merely one of

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many forms of talk, then it hot; no privileged status. Supporters of these approaches seek to replace positivism with a new approach to the social world that is based on language. They are one in their belief "that language is now necessarily the central consideration in all attempts to know, act and live". The social world is seen as a series of texts that need to be interpreted largely in relation to other texts But if the world is nothing more than a series of texts that can be interpreted only in relation to one another, then it is no longer possible, as positivities and modernists attempted "to view the world as internally and necessarily coherent"

What does it mean for sociology to see the world as a series of texts ? Lemert makes four points here, First, theory is a form of discourse that produces texts. Second, the empirical reality that theory deals with is other texts (interviews, census data, videotapes) Third, the meaning of empirical texts depends on their being read from the point of view of theoretical texts. Finally, a study of empirical texts leads to greater understanding than other kinds of empirical analyses.

This leads to another key aspect of poststructuralism (and postmodernism)-its view of social totality. While positivists seek a grand organizing principle that unifies the world, poststructuralists argue that it is not sonic unity that marks the world but rather that it-is difference that lies at the heart of the world. The goal becomes the study of the differences rather than the search for unity. Politically, this leads poststructuralists to take the side of those minority groups (for example, blacks, women) that are different from the majority group.

Another concern of poststructuralism (shared with structuralism) is the decentering of the subject. This involves rejection of a focus on the actor, the consciousness of the actor, subjectivity, and, more generally, humanism (all of which are foci of existential sociology; see below) In terms of the focus on texts, this means that the poststructuralist concentrates on the internal structure of the text. The author of the text is regarded as more or less than irrelevant. It is not the intentions of the author that matter, but rather the "internal play of signifiers". More generally, this means that we should focus on the structure of society and not the role of actors in constructing that society. Michel Foucault (1926-1984)

8.3 Writings of Foucault :

Foucault is best known for his work on imprisonment, madness, and sexuality. Major works include :

1. *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963)

2. *Madness and Civilization* (1965)

3. *The Order of Things* (1966)

4. *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1969)

5. *Discipline and Punishment* (1975)

6. *The History of Sexuality* (1976)

8.4 Discourse : Knowledge and Power :

Michel Foucault was a post-modernist though he refused to be so in his works. He defined post-modernity with reference to two guiding concepts: discourse and power. It is with the help of these concepts that he characterizes the post-modern phenomenon. Defining discourse he says that *it is the framework of thinking in a particular area of social life.* For instance, the discourse of criminality means how people in a given society think and talk about crime. And, what is important is that power works through discourse. The discourse becomes weak or strong in comparison to power. And, *power according to Foucault is knowledge.* Thus, in a post-modern condition, there are discourses which are shaped by knowledge.

Foucault defines *post-modernity in terms of discourse and discourse is interpreted through power.* He actually started with the truism: *Knowledge is power.* He was particularly interested in *knowledge of human beings, and power acts on human beings.* Suppose, we start with the statement*: knowledge is power*, but doubt absolute truth, what does knowledge mean? May be knowledge would be just what a group of people get together and decide is true. In one case, physical force, and in the other mutual force, is exerted by a powerful minority who are thus able to impose this idea of the right, or the true, on the majority. But, how does knowledge/power gets its work done? Often, knowledge/power and physical force are allied as when a child is spanked to teach a lesson. But primarily *knowledge/power works through language*, at a basic level when a child learns to speak, he picks up the basic knowledge and rules

of his culture at the same time.

Post-modernism reveals the relations between power and knowledge. It is the central theme which links all the aspects of post-modernity. Foucault defines *post-modernity in terms of power, knowledge and discourse* as below :

> Close scrutiny of the micro-politics of power relations in different localities, contexts and social situations leads us to conclude that there is an intimate relations between the systems of knowledge/ discourse which codify techniques and practices for the exercise of social control and domination within the particular localized contexts. The prison, the asylum, the hospital, the university, the school, the psychiatrist's office are all examples of sites where a dispensed and piecemeal organization of power is built up independently of any systematic strategy of class domination.

Foucault has rejected class analysis of power and abandoned the notion that power is ultimately located within the state. Foucault also floats the dictum that there are no relations of power without resistance. Thus, for Foucault, post-modernity is in all respects power-knowledge relationship. In his definition of post-modernity, Foucault has encouraged localized struggles which in the long run counter the challenging capitalism.

Knowledge and Power :

The central theme of Foucault's work is in the field of *epistemology*. He wanted to uncover knowledge and his search for knowledge led him to find out power. Ultimately, he connected power with truth. Before Foucault took up the search for truth, Nietzsche analyzed good and evil in his work, Genealogy of Morals. He argued that there was no essential or original, definitions of truth. Truth is, therefore produced by power, and the consequences of the exercise of power are formulated as truth.

Foucault establishes through his various case studies that power, knowledge and truth are interconnected. Power is differed throughout society. It is always in circulation. "It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth… And not only do individuals circulate between is

threads; they are also in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power".

Foucault's objective of ***The Birth of the Clinic*** was to find out the source of knowledge. Clinical observation helped the doctors to get knowledge about human body. George Ritzer's comments on as below :

The ability to see and touch sick people was a crucial change in medicine and an important source of knowledge and (ultimately power).

During the 18th century medicine was largely a classificatory science. The focus was on the classificatory system and the class, genus or species of a given disease. There came a shift from classificatory medicine to the clinical observation. And then, from clinical observation came the examination of autopsies, that is, dead bodies. What was hidden from observation came out clear in the autopsy. The idea of death changes as the autopsy involves the dead body. In ***The Birth of the Clinic***, Foucault takes a scientific attitude towards death and disease. He said: "Death is less the lack of life than the culmination of life. The nature of science is such that it deals with the general principles. It does not consider individual circumstances. Newton did not stop his thought at the particular apple that fell on his head. He developed a principle that accounts for all apples, all objects, falling.

Foucault established that knowledge can be derived from the gaze of sick person and the examination of corpses. He added to it the role of science. Thus, Foucault is interested in finding out the origin of knowledge.

In his another book ***The Order of Things***, Foucault tries to find out the structure of knowledge of a time and its way of establishing order. This book argues that before the 18th century man did not exist. Admittedly, he existed before this period, but he was never a centre of the universe. Men were subordinated by God. God was necessarily more central, and was the source of knowledge. Human knowledge was limited. God's was infinite. In the 18th and 19th centuries, God lost his place as the firm centre of all, who made all knowledge possible. Man was left with only himself at the centre, as the source knowledge, and thus turned to intense examination of what this knowing being was. The man, therefore, was invented in the 18th century when human being sciences sprang up to study man both as an object and analysis. What Foucault

wants to demonstrate is that before 18th century the thinking of man was quite limited. It was only with the emergence of human sciences that the real man came out. It has been Foucault's endeavour in this book to establish the order of things in knowledge perspective.

Another important writing of Foucault, **The Birth of the Prison** (1977), discusses knowledge-power relationship. Jeremy Bentham presented ideas of Foucault that prisons are an inspection houses. Prisons are built around an inner tower and having an outer ring of cells, all of which could be observed from the tower in the middle. Betham presented his creation as a universal model for all buildings involved in activities that required supervision: hospitals, asylums, workhouses, schools, factories etc. His model provided an answer to the question of how the few could watch the many an this surveillance could be made more effective, so that those who were watched could always be observed and thus must live their lives knowing there was a risk that they could also be seen. Foucault explains the reasons that made prison system to popular in a capitalist society. The basic cause for imprisonment has been to discipline the masses of people so that the rich could live secured. Prisons are an extreme manifestation of a more general process of conversion to the emergent capitalist society. It is in this book that Foucault links knowledge with power. The emergence of penal system or imprisonment owes to the notion of controlling the people by wielding power. It is the wielding of power which brings about discipline in the society. The society thus becomes a disciplined society. Foucault further asserts that it is the discipline which has created prison system. And discipline is not always negative. It is not destructive. It has positive consequences too. This book introduces the theory of power in correlation with the archaeology of knowledge, Prison and punishment are the manifestations of knowledge and power.

Foucault wrote the **History of Sexuality** in three volumes during the period from 1976 to 1984. The major concern of Foucault in these three volumes is to analyze the power-knowledge-pleasure relationship. His main objective is to define the regime of power-knowledge-pleasure that sustains the discourse on human sexuality in our part of the world. Foucault turns upside down the traditional notion that since the 17th century we have been in an epoch that has imposed an oppressive silence around sex. Foucault has traced the history of sexuality through different periods of history. He

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argues that the public discourse on sexuality has constantly undergone exchange. In the renaissance, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts. And, then, in the 19th century, homosexual became a patronage, a post, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homo sexual was now a species. If we infer from what Foucault has said, it could be said that during the 19th century homosexual and homosexuality were invented. Following Feud, Foucault established that sex is the truth of life.

Thus the work concludes that :

· Knowledge is power. It enables man to invent or identify some techniques through which human behaviour can be controlled rests with the individual and not the state.

· Each historical age is characterized by particular forms of knowledge. Foucault called these particular knowledge forms of "episteme". It means that set of presuppositions that organize what counts as knowledge, truth and reality, and indicate how the matters can be discussed.

· Truth is produced by power. It is an interpretation tied to the operation of power and domination.

· Power is exercised rather than possessed. It is not essentially repressive or coercive but it can be productive. Power does not flow from a centralized source but also flows from the bottom up, that is, from the multitude of interactions at the micro-level of society. Foucault calls it 'micro-politics.'

· Power is diffused throughout society. It circulates. It has a 'capillary from existence'. It reaches into the grain of individual touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and every day lives. Power produces things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse. Thus, for Foucault, power is a productive network, which round through the whole social body. And, then, to be sure, power is not social classes, the state, and other institutional sites of power that are the prime movers in social change.

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8.5   Defining Discourse :

Foucault defines the concept of ***discourse*** that *it is a frame work of thinking of a people about a problem.* Power, knowledge and truth are connected through discourses and texts. Foucault's central theme in all his discussions is the discourse. He defines it:

In its broadest sense discourse means anything written ort said or communicated using signs…Usually it is explained by a regulated order of talk. It includes the concept of chains of statements, institutionalized practices, and the historically…"

Discourse, in simple terms, means social institutions and disciplines. Crime is a discourse, so are corruptions, leadership, village development, industrialization, capitalism and environment. In fact, according to Foucault, discourses are everywhere. They are the very stuff of society and mediate all aspects of life. For instance, in Europe in western societies, marriage is a discourse, earlier marriage was a important institution among the lives of people, but today it has not been regarded as essential for relationships. Public views have been changing towards. Thus, discourse always keeps on changing. Discourse is not just an abstract public sphere of words and images; it exists in concrete social situations and has very real effects. To quote Foucault's study of Madness and Civilization, it could be said that professional distinction between the sane and insane, the normal and the abnormal. Discourse is characterized by tradition, modernity and post-modernity. For example, it is the discourse, which distinguishes between legal and illegal killings; or between historical particulars, variable from culture to culture. These are subject to change.

Language is a sign. And Foucault uses it as a tool in his discourse. In his book "Order of Things", he argues that in course of history there is a constant change in the discourse. For instance, Nietzsche rejected the notions of rational man and absolute truth. Foucault argued that history's search for origins in great moral truth is entirely misguided, everything is subject to history's disintegrating gaze. There is no absolute.

8.6   Discourse Analysis :

If we look at all the works of Foucault, we would immediately come to know that his major concern of enquiry was knowledge, truth and power. He was not

interested in proposing a global principle for analyzing society as other historians and sociologists had done. He was interested in the history of the way things become a problem and how the problem was constructed in discourse.

In his doctorate on *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault regards madness as a discourse. All through the periods of history, people have developed a specific framework of thinking about the insane and the mad. For instance during the renaissance period, madness and reason were not separated. There was a continuous dialogue between madness and reason. By the middle ages, the people, that is, the mad were locked up with those who suffered from Leprosy. Leprosy is not only contagious but also disturbing to look at. Everyone was happy about it, but what were they supposed to do with these big places to lock people up? They left them empty, but just for a while. In the 15th century, an idea cropped up, and became a central image in the popular imagination. People came to know anyhow that the madman may have dangerous insights. What Foucault in this work has tried to do is that it is the knowledge, which helps people to wield power.

Foucault has made his objective clear while studying madness. He is not interested in madness. What he is trying to know is about knowledge, especially knowledge about psychiatry. He begins his analysis of madness from the period of renaissance. During this period, madness and reason were not separated. They spoke the same language. Besides, there was lack of silence between madness and reason. As a result of it, the mad were treated at par with other categories of people such as poor, unemployed and prisoners. Thus, the renaissance period is characterized by the founding of madhouses, workhouse and prisons. Thus according to Foucault, hospitals, madhouses workhouses and prisons are not what they are supposed to be but rather part of a broad system to judge and to oppress people. After that period there emerged a shift in the analysis of the mad. For the first time in history, institutions of morality were found combining obligation and civil law. More generally, things like, virtue and goodness became concerns of the state.

The discourse, i.e., public framework of thinking about the insane, witnessed a revolutionary change by the 18th century. During these days, the evil was dealt with in public. The insane were considered to be unwanted persons and had to be kept in

isolation from the society. They were shameful inhuman. There was one important difference, however, between the insane and the others who were confined. The insane were shown, displayed, and made a spectacle of even after confinement. During this period the mad came to be thought of as animal. It should be recalled that this situation of mad persons stood in contrast to the renaissance in which madness was everywhere, it singled with everything.

In the 17ᵗʰ century the mad and the criminals were locked up by the state police. The discourse about the mad was that they were the sub-category of the unemployed. Madness was nor shameful and must be hidden. In the 17ᵗʰ and 18ᵗʰ centuries, not only content was pinning down the madman, people wanted to pin down the idea of madness as well. By the end of the 18ᵗʰ century, it was said that physical treatment alone would not cure madness. But this did not mark the beginning of psychological treatment. Any how it became the expert knowledge that the body, soul and mind are so interrelated like the trinity, that what affects one affects all. Thus, initially, madness was considered as the breakdown of the unity of the body an soul, the breakdown of the internal consistency of the symbol system.

The French Revolution proved to be a turning point in the discourse of insanity. The mad were taken out of prison and put in special hospitals. But the hospitals were few and far between. So, the mad were sent home to their families. But they created trouble with home and, therefore were sent away to lonely places. After that two reformers spread the ideology of liberation for mad people. Doctors also came in the scene, who had expert knowledge of psychology and psychiatry. That time for the patients, and to the world at large, the doctor's power seemed increasingly magical, even as the doctors told how scientific it was.

Thus, according to Foucault the discourse is constructed by the experts who have knowledge on the subject. Counter-knowledge can be constructed only by those who are equally experts or 'higher' experts. Foucault's focus all through this work is to establish that those who have knowledge wield power. In his book, ***The Order of Things***, Foucault focuses elaborately on the human science of biology. First, he rejects biology in preference of natural history. Second, he says that the body does not obey the laws of physiology. It cannot escape the influence of history. Biology, therefore,

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needs to be studied within the perspectives of discourse and natural history. His arguments are:

The body is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws, it constructs resistances.

Foucault develops the importance of technical knowledge. Today we have enough specialized or technical knowledge. In fact, the definition of knowledge changes with time. There is difference between the field, namely, natural history and the field named biology. As a matter of fact, the technical specialists always work together to establish their field and dominant ideas. These technical fields have had ever increasing power over people, and these discourses have profoundly shaped the structure of our society.

Foucault gives evidence from his study of madness. Madness in his terminology is a discourse. The experts, i.e. psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers explained madness in terms of specialized knowledge and thus the discourse about madness underwent a revolutionary change. It means that change in the discourse can change the whole social structure.

The French edition of **The Archaeology of Knowledge** was published in 1969. It is a document focusing on the methodology of social sciences. Technically, archaeology is the scientific study of material remains of artifacts and dwellings of past human life and activities. Foucault has defined archaeology in a very limited way. As archaeology digs the different layers of earth, so Foucault uncovers layers of civilization. In each period of civilization there are layers of discourses, i.e., thinking about social institutions, issues and events. The discourse- the thinking- could exist for relatively long periods, and then change could happen quite suddenly.

It is Archaeology that Foucault discusses at length the concept of discourses. In his view, "the great themes of the history of ideas are the genesis of ideas, their continuity over time, as well as totalizations such as the spirit of an age. He looks at the ideas of a period both in their continuity and discontinuity. And, he prefers detailed analyses of statements of ideas to global generalization about totalities. He rejects totalizing of ideas quite like his later post-modernists". In this context, Foucault articulates four principles that distinguish the archaeology of knowledge from the history of ideas:

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1. It does not focus on thoughts, representation, images and themes. Foucault makes his position clear: "archaeology is not an interpretative discipline; it does not seek another, better hidden discourse.

2. Foucault is not interested in the evolution of discourse. In other words, he does not analyze the linear and gradual sloped of a particular period of discourse. He focuses how discourse of a particular period is different from discourse of another period or periods. For instance, what thinking prevailed about madness or sexuality in renaissance and later periods of history is the concern of Foucault.

3. There are several discourses in a period. Foucault does not study all these. Nor he studies some dominant discourses. He is concerned only about the 'types of rules" which organize and control the discourses.

4. Clinic is a discourse. Foucault did not interested to give origin of clinic. Rather, he focuses on a systematic description of clinic- layer after layer in different periods.

Why does Foucault employ discourse as a tool of methodology in his study? His response is certain: discourse is a study in comparative methods. He looks at plural discourses at single times. Viewed from this perspective, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* is inherently interdiscursive. Thus, it looks like the 'spirit' of science, but rather the tangle of contradictions and analogies that make up one discourse in contrast to others.

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Course No. : SOC-C-301		Lesson - 9
Semester - III	JURGEN HABERMAS	Unit - III

Neo-Marxism

(Public Sphere and Communicative Action)

Structure

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9.4   Habermas's Analysis of the Public Sphere

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9.1 Background :

Jurgen Habermas (1929-) is a German social theorist with an extraordinarily wide range of interests. Although rooted in the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, his work spans many disciplines- from the social sciences to linguistics to philosophy. His primary concern has been with the role of knowledge in relation to society in general and capitalism in particular.

Habermas argues that objective scientific knowledge no longer promotes liberation and enlightenment, but instead serves as an ideology that supports the status quo. This occurs primarily because in order for knowledge to be valid, it must result from free and open dialogue, which is severely limited by political and other restraints under Capitalism. In other works, Habermas has analyzed the problem of legitimacy in modern capitalist societies which are, he argues, full of contradictions, crisis and distorted knowledge.

Habermas's major works include

1. Struckturwandel der offentlichkeit (1962),
2. *Toward a Rational Society;* (1970),
3. *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1971),
4. *Theory and Practice* (1973),
5. *Legitimation Crisis* (1975),
6. *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (1979), and
7. *Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 volumes (1984, 1988).

9.2 Critical Theory :

Critical theory is the product of a group of German neo-Marxists who were dissatisfied with the state of Marxian theory, particularly hits tendency toward economic determinism. The school was officially founded in Frankfurt, Germany on February 23, 1923, although a number of its members had been active prior to that time. With the coming to power of the Nazis in the 1930s, many of the major figures immigrated to the United States and continued their work at an Institute affiliated with Columbia University in New York City. Following the World War II, some of the critical theorists returned to Germany; others remained in the United States. Today critical theory has spread beyond the confines of the Frankfurt School, but the most important work is being done by a group of second-generation critical thinkers based in Germany. Critical theory was and is today largely European orientation, although its influence in American sociology is growing.

Critical theory is composed largely of criticisms of various aspects of social and intellectual life. It takes its inspiration from Marx's work, which was first shaped by a critical analysis of philosophical ideas and later by critiques of the nature of the capitalist system. The critical school constitutes a critique both of a society and of various systems of knowledge. Much of the work is in the form of critiques, but its ultimate goal is to reveal more accurately the nature of society.

Criticism of Marxian Theory :

Critical theory is a variant of Marxian theory that takes as its starting point a critique of Marxian theories. The critical theorists are most disturbed by the

economic determinists, the mechanistic, or mechanical, Marxists. Habermas criticizes the determinism implicit in parts of Marx's original work, but focus their criticisms on the neo-Marxists, primarily because they had interpreted Marx's work too mechanistically. The critical theorists do not say that economic determinists were wrong in focusing on the economic realm but that they should have been concerned with other aspects of social life as well. Critical school seeks to rectify this imbalance by focusing its attention on the cultural realm.

Criticisms of Positivism :

Critical theorists also focus on the philosophical underpinnings of scientific inquiry, especially positivism. The criticism of positivism is related, at least in part, to the criticism of economic determinism, because some of those who were determinists accepted part of all of the positivistic theory of knowledge. Positivism accepts the idea that a single scientific method is applicable to all fields of study. It takes the physical sciences as the standard of certainty and exactness for all disciplines. Positivists believe that knowledge is inherently neutral. They feel that they can keep human values out of their work. This, in turn, leads to the view that science is not in the position of advocating any specific form of social action. Positivism is opposed by the critical school on various grounds. For one thing, positivism tends to reify the social world and see it as a natural process. The critical theorists prefer to focus on human activity as well as on the ways in which such activity affects larger social structures. In short, positivism loses sight of the actors, reducing them to passive entities determined by "natural forces" (Habermas : 1971). Given their belief in the distinctiveness of the actor, the critical theorists would not accept the idea that the general laws of science can be applied without question to human action. Positivism is assailed for being content to judge the adequacy of means toward given ends and for not making a similar judgement about ends. This leads to the view that positivism is inherently conservative, incapable of challenging the existing system. Positivism leads the actor and the social scientist to passivity.

One of the best known dialectical concerns of the critical school is that of Jurgen Habermas (1970; 1971). His interest in the relationships between knowledge and human interests is an example of a broader dialectical concern with the relationship between subjective and objective factors. But he has been careful to point out that

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subjective and objective factors cannot be dealt with in isolation from one another. To Habermas, knowledge exists at the objective level whereas human interests are more subjective phenomena.

9.3 Knowledge and Interest :

Habermas differentiated among three knowledge systems and their corresponding interests. The interests that lie behind and guide each system of knowledge are generally unknown to lay people, and it is the task of the critical theorists to uncover them.

The first type of knowledge is *analytic science,* or *classical positivistic scientific systems.* In Habermas's view, the underlying interest of such knowledge systems is technical control, which can be applied to the environment, other societies, or people within society. In Habermas's view, analystic science lends itself quite easily to enhancing oppressive control.

The second type of knowledge system is *humanistic knowledge,* and its interest is in *understanding* the world. It operates from the general view that understanding our past generally helps to understand what is transpiring today. It has a practical interest in mutual and self-understanding. It is neither oppressive nor liberating.

The third type is *critical knowledge*, which Habermas, and the Frankfurt school in general, espoused. The interest attached to this type of knowledge is *human emancipation.* It was hoped that the critical knowledge generated by Habermas and other would raise the self-consciousness of the masses (through mechanisms articulated by the Freudian) that lead to a social movement that would result in the hoped for emancipation.

9.4 Habermas's Analysis of the Public Sphere :

In his first major publication, *Structural transformation of the Public Sphere,* Habermas traces the evolution and dissolution of what he termed *the public sphere* (Habermas : 1962). This sphere is a realm of social life where people can being up matters of general interest; where they can discuss and debate these issues without recourse to custom, dogma, and force; and where they can resolve differences of opinion by rational argument. To say the least, Jonathan Turner

(1987) finds the conception of a public sphere as rather romanticized, but the imagery of free and open discussion that is resolved by rational argumentation becomes a central theme in Habermas's subsequent approach. Increasingly throughout his career, Habermas sees emancipation from domination as possible through "communicative action", which is a free incarnation of the public sphere in more conceptual clothing.

In this early work, however, Habermas appears more interested in history and views the emergence of the public sphere as occurring in the 18th century, when various forums for public debate-clubs, cafes, journals, newspapers-proliferated. He concludes that these forums helped erode the basic structure of feudalism, which is legitimated by religion and customs rather than by agreements that have been reached through public debate and discourse. The public sphere was greatly expanded, Habermas argues, by the extension of market economies and the resulting liberation of the individual from the constraints of feudalism. Free citizens, property holders, traders, merchants, and members of other new sectors in society could now be actively concerned about the governance of society and could openly discuss and debate issues. But in a vein similar to Weber's analysis of rationalization, Habermas argues that the public sphere was eroded by some of the very forces that stimulated its expansion. As market economies experience instability, the powers of the state are extended in an effort to stabilize the economy; and with the expansion of bureaucracy to ever more contexts of social life, the public sphere is constricted. And increasingly, the state seeks to redefine problems as technical and soluble by technologies and administrative procedures rather than by public debate and argumentation.

The details of this argument are less important, as Turner (1987) thinks that this work established Habermas's credentials as a critical theorist. All the key elements of critical theory are there— the decline of freedom with the expansion of capitalism and the bureaucratized state; and the seeming power of the state to construct and control social life. The solution of these problems is to resurrect and control social life. The solution to these problems is to resurrect the public sphere, but how is this to be done in light of the growing power of the state? Thus, in his early work, Habermas as having painted himself into the same conceptual corner

as his teachers in the Frankfurt School.

9.5 Habermas : Theory of Communicative Action :

The two-volume *The Theory of Communicative Action* pulls together into a reasonable coherent framework various strands of Habermas's thought (Habermas : 1984). The first volume of the Theory of Communicative Action focuses on action and rationality in an effort to re-conceptualize both processes in a manner that shifts emphasis from the subjectivity and consciousness of the individual to the process of symbolic interaction. In a sense, volume one is Habermas's micro-sociology, whereas volume two is his macro-sociology. In this second volume, Habermas introduces the concept of system and tries to connect it micro-processes of action and interaction through a re-conceptualization of phenomenological concept of life-world.

Action :

Let us describe the type of actions before we move further for the analysis of the *theory of communicative action.* There are four types of action as argued by Habermas. These are as follows :

1.   *Teleological action* is behaviour oriented to calculating various means and selecting the most appropriate means to realize explicit goals. Habermas also calls this action "instrumental" because it is concerned with means to achieve ends. This action is too often considered to be 'rational action'.

2.   *Normatively regulated action* is behaviour that is oriented to common values of a group. Thus, normative action is directed toward complying with normative expectations of collectivity organized groupings of individuals.

3.   *Dramaturgical action* is action involves conscious manipulation of oneself before an audience or public. It is ego-centred in that it involves actors mutually manipulating their behaviours to present their own intentions, but it is also social in that such manipulation is done in the context of organized activity.

4.   *Communicative action* is interaction among agents who use speech and non verbal symbols as a way of understanding their mutual situation and

their respective plans of action in order that they can agree on how to coordinate their behaviours.

These four types of action presuppose different kinds of "worlds". That is, each action is oriented to a somewhat different aspect of the universe that can be divided into the—

1. "Objective or external world" of manipulate objects.

2. "Social world" of norms, values, and other socially recognized expectations, and

3. "Subjective world" of experiences.

Teleological action is concerned primarily with the objective world; normatively regulated action with the social; and dramaturgical with the subjective and external. But it is only with communicative action that actors "refer simultaneously to things in the objective, social, and subjective worlds in order to negotiate common definitions of the situation." (ibid:95).

Thus, as people communicatively act (interact, they use and at the same time produce common definitions of the situation. Such definitions are part of the life-world of a society; and if they have been produced and reproduced through the communicative action, then they are the basis for the rational and non-oppressive integration of a society. Let us now turn to Habermas's discussion of this life-world that serves as the "court of appeals" in communicative action.

The life world and system processes of society :

For Habermas, the life-world is a "culturally transmitted and linguistically organized stock of interpretative patterns." There are three different types of interpretative patterns in the life world: there are interpretative patterns with respect to culture or system of symbols, there are those pertaining to society, or social institutions; and there are those oriented to personality, or aspects of self and being. That is, (1) actors possess implicit and shared stocks of knowledge about cultural traditions, values, beliefs, linguistic structures and their use in interaction; (2) they also know how to organize social relation and what kinds and patterns of coordinated interaction are proper and appropriate; and (3) they understand what people are like, how

they should act, and what is normal and aberrant.

These three types of interpretative patterns correspond, Habermas assets, to the following functional needs for reproducing the life-world (and by implication, for integrating society): (1) Reaching understanding through communicative action serves the function of transmitting, preserving, and renewing cultural knowledge; (2) communicative action that coordinates interaction meets the need for social integration and group solidarity; and (3) communicative action that socializes agents meets the need for the formation of personal identities (Volume two ibid., pp. 205-40).

Thus, the three components of the life-world—culture, society, personality—meet corresponding needs of society—cultural reproduction, social integration, personality formation—through three dimensions along which communicative action is conducted—reaching understanding, coordinating interaction, and socialization.

Analysis of the theory of communicative action :

Habermas's goal over the year is to develop a theoretical program for reconstructing historical materialism (1979). Habermas (1971) argues that Marx failed to distinguish between the two analytically distinct components of species-being-work (or labour, purposive-rational action) and social (or symbolic) interaction (or communicative action). In Habermas's view, Marx tended to ignore the latter and to reduce it to work. As Habermas puts it, the problem in Marx's work is the "reduction of the self-generative act of the human species to labour" (1971). Thus, Habermas says :

I take as my starting point the fundamental distinction between work and interaction. Habermas looks at this distinction, although he is most prone to use the terms "purposive-rational action" (work) and "communicative action" (interaction).

Under the heading of purposive-rational action, Habermas distinguishes instrumental action and strategic action. Both involve in the calculated pursuit of self-interest. Instrumental action is concerned with a single actor rationally calculating the best means to a given goal. Strategic action involves two or more individuals coordinating purposive-rational action in the pursuit of a goal. The objective of both instrumental and strategic action is instrumental mastery.

Habermas is most interested in *communicative action,* or where

The actions of the agents involved are coordinated not thought egocentric

calculations of success but through acts of *reaching understanding.* In communicative action participants are not primarily oriented to their own success, they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they *harmonize* their plans of action on the basis of *common situation definitions* (Habermas : 1984).

Whereas the end of the purposive rational action is to achieve a goal, the objective of communicative action is to achieve communicating understanding.

9.6 Marx and Habermas :

Clearly, there is an important spec component in communicative action. However, such action is broader than that encompassing "speech acts or equivalent non-verbal expression (Habermas: 1984). Habermas's key point of departure from Marx is to argue that communicative action, not purposive–rational action (work), is the most distinctive and most pervasive human phenomenon. If (not work) is the foundation of all socio-cultural life as well as all of the human sciences. Whereas Marx was led to focus on work, Habermas is led to focus on communication.

Not only did Marx focus on work, but he took free and creative work (species-being) as his baseline for critically analyzing work in various historical epochs, especially capitalism. Habermas, too, adopts a baseline, but in the realm of communicative rather than purposive-rational action. Habermas's baseline is undistorted communication, communication without compulsion. With this baseline, Habermas is able to critically analyze distorted communication. Habermas is concerned with those social structures that distort communication, just as Marx examined the structural sources of distortion of work. Although they have different baselines, both Habermas and Marx have baselines, and these permit them to escape relativism and render judgments about various historical phenomena. Habermas is critical of those theorists, especially Weber and previous critical theorists, for their lack of such a baseline and their lapse into relativism.

There is still another parallel between Marx and Habermas and their baselines. For Marx the goal was a communist society in which undistorted work (species-being) would exist for the first time, for Habermas the political goal is a society of undistorted communication (communicative action). In terms of immediate goals, Marx seeks the

elimination of (capitalist) barriers to undistorted work, and Habermas is interested in the elimination of barriers to free communication.

Psychoanalysis :

Habermas sees psychoanalysis as a theory of distorted communication and as preoccupied with allowing individuals to communicate in an undistorted way. The psychoanalysts seek to find the sources of distortions in individual communication, that is, repressed blocks to communication. Through reflection, the psychoanalyst attempts to help the individual overcome these blocks. Similarly, through therapeutic critique, "a form of argumentation that serves to clarify systematic self-deception" (Habermas: 1984). the critical theorist (and the communist party) (Habermas: 1973) attempts to aid people in general to overcome social barriers to undistorted communication. There is, then, an analogy (many critics think an illegitimate analogy) between psychoanalysis and critical theory. The psychoanalysts aid the patient in much the same way that the social critic helps oppressed groups in society.

9.7 Rationalization :

For Habermas, elements of undistorted communication are to be found in every act of contemporary communication. This brings us to the central issue of rationalization in Habermas's work. Here Habermas is influenced not only by Marx's work, but by Weber's as well. In his work on rationalization, Habermas's distinction between purposive-rational and communicative action remains centrally important. Most prior work, in Habermas's view, has focused on the rationalization of purposive-rational action, which has led to a growth of production forces and an increase in technological control over life (habermas: 1970). This form of rationalization, as was to Weber and Marx, is a major, perhaps the major, problem in the modern world. However the problem is rationalization of purposive-rational action, not rationalization in general. In-fact, for Habermas, the solution is to the problem of the rationalization of purposive-rational life in the rationalization of communicative action. The rationalization of communicative action leads to communication free from domination, free and open communication. Rationalization here involves emancipation, "removing restrictions on communication" (Habermas 1979). This is where Habermas's previously mentioned work on legitimation and, is more generally, ideology fits in. That is, these are two of the main causes of distorted communication, causes that

must be eliminated if we are to have free and open communication.

At the level of social norm, such rationalization would involve decreases in normative repressiveness and rigidity, leading to increases in individual flexibility and reflectivity. The development of this new, less restrictive or nonrestrictive normative system lies at the Habermas's theory of social evolution. Instead of new productive system, rationalization for Habermas (1979) leads to a new, distorting normative system. Although he regards it as a misunderstanding of his position, many have accused Habermas of cutting his Marxian roots in this shift from the material to the normative level.

The end point of this evolution for Habermas is rational society. Rationality here means removal of the barriers that distort communication, but more generally it means a communication system in which ideas are openly presented and defended against criticism; unconstrained agreement develops during argumentation.

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Anthony Giddens : Structuration

Structure

10.0   Objectives

After going through this lesson, the learner is able to

* understand the concept of structuration

* understand the Giddens Theory of Structruation

* understand the concept of Agents, Agency and Action.

10.1 Introduction

Anthony Giddens has taught at King's College, Cambridge, since 1985 as Professor of Sociology in the faculty of Economics and Politics. Giddens is also a founder, philosopher and editor of Polity Press, one of the most ambitious and interesting publishers of books in social theory. His first widely read books was *New Rules of Sociological Methods* (1976). As the title's play on Durkheim suggests, the book is an attempt to reformulate sociological reasoning, in this instance by reexamining the idea of interpretation, or hermeneutic, sociology. This was Gidden's first statement of structuration theory, which is systematically worked out in *Constitution of Society* (1984). Giddens has written on many subjects, from war to sexual intimacy. The selection is from *Consequences of Modernity* (1989), which is his defense of what he calls radicalized modernity. The selection offers a particularly clear illustration of his understanding of the complexity of modern life, stated in his own discursive theoretical style. The tabular presentation of modernity (RM) and postmodernity (PM), though it reflects Giddens radicalized preferences for RM over PM, offers a useful comparison of theories of the two cultural types.

More importantly, the selection presents what is perhaps the crucial idea behind Gidden's structration theory: that the individual lives in an ongoing recursive relation with the complex structures of modern society. Structures create the individual, while they are being created and held by individuals. Giddens, like others (Gouldner, Bourdieu), views reflexivity as the fundamental feature of modern life arising in the relation of individuals to structures—a relation that creates the series of paradoxes he discusses. In effect, Giddens argues that modernity opens new and different opportunities for human fulfillment. Moderns may be displaced from local communities, but they are reembedded in world culture in ways that can be liberating. This is an example of a reflexive social theory recursively producing theory of the world as reflexive.

The British sociologist Anthony Giddens is today regarded as one of the leading social theorists. His work can be divided into two periods. In the first, from the early 1970 until mid-1980s, he developed his so-called theory of structuration. During his second period-from the mid-1980s until today, he had engaged in his sociological analysis of modern society. Giddens' work in the two periods is related, since he first worked for developing a theoretical perspective that could form the basis for the work

in the second period- a concrete analysis of contemporary society. Before we close the intellectual profile of Giddens, we must say that his theories of structuration and modernity have not come out by a kind of abstract empiricism but he took prolonged exercises in the understanding of classical works of foundational theories.

10.2 The Critique Levi-Strauss's Structuralism :

Giddens has been very critical of Claude Levi-Strauss's structuralism, because it simply ignores human agency or the capacity of people to reflect, monitor, define, and decide. In such structuralists approaches, actors are pushed, if not compelled, to act in accordance with immanent systems of codes. Other forms of structural theorizing, such as peter Blau's macrostructuralism, are chauvinistic and simply define away as relevant to sociology the reflexive capacities of human agents. In such macrostructuralism, social structure simply requires actors to do its bidding.

In all of these and other structural theories, then, there is a failure to recognize that structure is actively reproduced (or altered) by agents in interaction. For Giddens, structure is not some ex cathedra, external, and constraining force that makes humans into robots and dupes. Rather, structure is implicated in, and reproduced by, the day-to-day routines of people in interaction. It is, in the Giddens's words, "both constraining and enabling". One cannot, therefore, define away people in interaction as peripheral to the task of sociological explanation.

Giddens criticizes sociological theory of its unwarranted belief that the universal laws cannot be developed, for its unnecessary dualism. For its functionalism and evolutionism, for its tendency to view structure and symbols as somehow alien to the actors who produce, reproduce, and transform these structures and symbols. Unlike many critics, Giddens does not dismount his soap box at this point and go home. To his credit, he then tries to develop an alternative mode of theoretical analysis that, he believes, overcomes these deficiencies.

10.3 Meaning of Structuration :

All social scientists engage themselves to find out the reality of society. The foundational thinkers, namely Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Karl Marx tried to analyze the problems of society of which they were members. The society, which they

lived in, has changed today. The individual is the member of his society and in this respect he is expected to behave according to the norms, values and sanctions of his society. I respect my parents; I take all care for their well-being. This is my action and as an actor to my society. But, besides my relations with the society, I also reproduce my society or social structure. When I reproduce the society or social structure, it is called 'structuration" by Anthony Giddens. Structuration is a wider process which obliges the actor to follow the traditions of structure and at the same time reproduces or changes the structure. In this process, there arises an important question: does the actor or individual changes the society or does the society change the individual? The problem of structuration revolves around actor and structure. Giddens is credited to have launched the theory of structuration.

Giddens developed his own theory of structuration sometime in 1980s. To introduce his theory, he says that the actions of an actor are taken in the continuity with past. But in fresh action, he also reproduces his existing structure. The continuity of the past and the reproduction of the present structure is what he calls "structuration'. Giddens' definition of structure inherently involves structuration. The actor always does some activity, and while doing the activity he is actually doing structuration, i.e., reproducing structure. Thus, reproduction of structure is structuration. Giddens (1979) has defined structuration, as an action 'to structurate' or "to do or produce structure". Action has two things: actor and social structure. Classical theorists have argued all through their works that the social structure subordinates the activities of actor. For these classical thinkers actor or individual is always given a rear seat. This problem has been raised by Giddens. It is dualism.

A concern for the agency-structure linkage lies at the core of the work of a number of theorists who write in the European tradition such as Giddens (1979, 1982, 1984) structuration theory; Archer's (1982) interest in morphogenesis as well as her (Archer, 1988) later concern for the linkage between culture and agency Bourdieu s (1977, 1984) habitus and field Habermas (1984 1987) effort to integrate life-world and system; Burns's (1986; Burns and Ram, 1986) social rule-system theory; Lukes's (1977; see also Layder, 1985) power and structure Abrams 's (1982) historical structuring; Touraine s (1977) self-production of society; and Crozier and Friedberg's (1980) game-theory approach. Before we go much further, we need to define the ways in

which the terms agency and structure are used and compare them to the micro-macro terminology.

At a superficial level the micro-macro and agency-structure issues sound similar, and they are often treated as if they resemble one another greatly. It is tended to treat those orks that deal with agency-and structure as part of the concern micro-macro linkage (Ritzer, 1990a) Similarly, Archer (1988) argues that the agency-structure issue connotes a concern for the micro-macro relationship (as well as voluntarism-determinism and subjectivism-objectiv ism). Such positions seem justified since there appears, after all, to be a fairly close association between the micro level and the agent and the macro level and structure. There is, that is, if we are thinking of individual human agents (micro) and large-scale social structure (macro). However, there are other ways to think of both agency-structure and micro-macro issues that make the significant differences between these two conceptualizations quite clear.

While agency generally refers to micro-level, individual human actors, it can also refer to (macro) collectivities that act. For example, Burns sees human agents as including "individuals as well as organized groups, organizations and nations" (1986:9). Touraine focuses on social classes as actors. If we accept such collectivities as agents, then we cannot equate agency and micro-level phenomena. In addition, while structure usually refers to large-scale social structures, it can also refer to macrostructures such as those involved in human interaction. Giddens's definition of s,is (which is closer to the usual nlcining of structure than his own concept Of structure) implies both types of structures, since it involves "reproduced relations between actors or collectivities" (1979:66). Thus both agency and structure can refer to either micro-level or macro-level phenomena or to both.

Turning to the micro-macro distinction, micro often refers to the kind of conscious, creative actor of concern to many agency theorists, but it can also refer to a more mindless "behavior" of interest to behaviorists, exchange theorists, and rational choice theorists. Similarly, the term macro can refer not only to large-scale social structures but also to the cultures of collectivities. Thus micro may or may not refer to "agents" and macro may or may not refer to "structures."

When we look closely at the micro-macro and agency-structure schemas, we find

that there are substantial differences between them. Since American theorists tend to focus on the micro-macro linkage (Berger, Eyre, and Zelditch, 1989, are one exception) and Europeans on th relationhip between agency and structure, there are substantial differences between the consensuses in the United States and Europe.

Before going further with this general discussion of the agency-structure literature, as well as its relationship to the micro-macro literature, let us take a more detailed look at several major examples of work in this genre. Such a discussion will give us a better feel for the general nature of work on agency and structure.

10.4 Giddens and the Theory of Structuration :

Anthony Giddens: Structuration Theory

One of the best-known and most articulated efforts to integrate agency and structure is Anthony Giddens's structuration theory (I. Cohen, 1989; Held and Thompson, 1989). Giddens (1976:8) began "introducing" this theory in the 1970s, but it appeared in its most fully developed form in his book The Constitution of Society (1984), which is subtitled Outline of the Theory of Agency. In this work, Giddens goes so far as to say, "Every research :investigation in the social sciences or history is involved in relating action [often used synonymously with agency] to structure there is no sense in which structure 'determines' action or vice versa" (1984:219).

While he is not a Marxist there is a powerful Marxian influence in Gid dens's work, and he even sees The Constitution of Society as an extended reflection on Marx's inherently integrative dictum: "Men make history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen-by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past" (1869/1963:15).[2]

Marx's theory is but one of many theoretical inputs into structuration theory. At one time or another, Giddens has analyzed and critiqued most major theoretical orientations and derived a range of useful ideas from many of them. Structuration theory is extraordinarily eclectic.

I agree with according Marx such a central place in structuration theory and, more generally, in theories that integrate agency and structure. As I concluded in my own metatheoretical work, Marx's work is the best "exemplar for an integrated

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sociological paradigm (Ritzc'r, 1981 a: 22).

Giddens surveys a wide range of theories that begin with either the individual/ agent (for example interactionism) or the society/structure (for example, structural funcationalism) and rejects both of these polar alternatives. Rather, Giddens argues that we must begin with "recurrent social practices" (1989:252). Giving slightly more detail, he argues: "The basic domain of the study of the social sciences, according to the theory of structuration is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of social totality, but social practices ordered across time and space (Giddens 1984:2).

At its core Giddens's structuraion theory, with its focus on social practices, is a theory of the relationship agency and structure. According to Bernstein, "the very heart of the theory of structuration is intended to illuminate the duality and diaelectical interplay of agency and structure (1989:23). Thus, agency and structure cannot be conceived of apart from one another; they are two sides of the same term they are a auality (in the next section we will discuss Archer's critique of this orientation). All social action involves structure, and all structure involves social action. Agency and structure are inextricably interwoven in ongoing human activity or practice.

As pointed out above, Giddens s analytical starting point is human practices, but he insists that they be seen a recursive. That is activities are not brought into being by social actors but continually recreated by them via the very means whereby they express themselves as actors. In and through their activities agents produce the conditions that make these activities possible (Giddens, 1984:2). Thus, activities are not produced by consciousness, by the social construction of reality   the produced. Focussing on the recursive character of strcuture, Held and Thompson argue that "structure is reproduced in and through the succession of situated practices which are oganised by it" (1989:7). The same thing can be said about consciousness Giddens is concerned with consciousness or reflexively. However, in being reflexive, the human actor is not merely self-conscious but is also engaged in the monitoring of the ongoing flow of activities and structural conditions This leads Bernstein to argue that agency itself is reflexively and recursively implicated in social structures (1989:23). Most generally, it can be argued that Giddens is concerned with the dialectical process in which practice structure and consciousness are produced Thus, Giddenn deals, with the agency-structure issue in historical prccessual and dynamic

dynamic way.

Not only are social actors reflexive, but so are the social researchers who are studying them This leads Giddens to his well-known ideas on the double hermeneutic."Both social actors and sociologists use language Actors use language to account for what they do, and sociologists, in turn, use language to account for the actions of social actors. Thus, we need to be concerned with the relationship between lay and scientific language We particularly need to be aware of the tact that the social scientist's understanding of the social world may have an impact on the misunderstandings of the actors being studied. In that way, social researchers can alter the world they are studying and thus lead to distorted finding sand conclusions.

Let us discuss some of the major components of Giddens's structuration theory, starting with his thoughts on agents, who, as we havo seen, continuously monitor their own thoughts and activities as well as their physical and social contexts. Actors are capable of rationalization, which in Giddens's work means the development of routines that enable them to efficiently deal with their social lives. Actors also have motivations are more appropriately thought of as potential for action Motivations provide overall plans for action but most of our action in Gidden s view is not directly motivated. While such action is not motivated, and our motivations are generally unconscious, motivations play a significant role in human conduct.

Also within the realm of consciousness, Giddens makes a (permeable) distinction between discursive and practical consciousness. Discursive consciousness entails the ability to put things into words. Practical consciousness involves that which is simply done by actors without their being ito express what they are doing in words. It is the latter type of consciousness that is particularly important to structuration theory, reflecting a primary interest in what is done rather than what is said.

Given this focus on practical consciousness, we make a smooth transition from agents to agency, the things that agents actually do. "Agency concerns events of which an individual is a perpetrator. Whatever happened would not have happened if that individual had not intervened" (Giddens, 1984:9). Thus,   (his critics say too much) weight to the importance of agency. Giddens takes great pains to separate agency from intentions because he wants to make the point that actions often end up being different from what was intended;

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in other words, intentional acts often have unintended The idea of unintended Consequences plays a great role in Giddens structuration theory and is especially important in getting us from agency to the social system level.

Consistent with his emphasis on agency, Giddens accords the agent great power. In other words, Giddens'shave the ability to make a difference in the social world. Even more strongly, agents make no sense without -power; that i actor ceases to be an agent if he or she loses the capacity to make a difference. Giddens certainly recognizes that there are constraints on actors, but this does not mean that actors have no choices and make no difference. To Giddens, power is logically prior to subjectivity because action involves power or the ability to transform the situation. Thus Giddens s structuration theory accords power to the actor and action and is in opposition to theories that are disinclined to such an orientation and instead grant gr at importance either to the intent of the actor (phenomenology) or to the external structure (structural functionalism).

The conceptual core of structuration theory lies in the ideas of structure, system, and duality of structure. Structure is defined as "the structuring properties [rules and resources] ... the properties which make it possible for discernibly similar social practices to exist across varying spans of time and space and which lend them systemic form" (Giddens, 1984:17). Structure is made possible by the existence of rules and exist in time and space. Rather, social phenomena have the capacity to become structured. Giddens contends that "structure only exists in and through the activities of human. agents" (1989:256). Thus, Giddens offers a very unusual definition of structure that dues not follow the Durkheimian pattern of viewing structures as external to and coercive over actors. He takes pains to avoid the impression that structure is "outside" or "external" to human action. "In my usage, structure is what gives form and shape. to social life, but, it it is not itself that furm and shape" (Giddens, 1989:256). As Held and Thompson put it, structure to Giddens is not a framework "like the girders of a building or the skeleton of it body" (1989:4).

Giddens does not deny the fact that structure can be constraining on action, but he feels that sociologists have exaggerated the importance of this con- straint. Furthermore, they have failed to emphasize the fact that structure "'is' alwqsboth constraining and enabling" (Giddens, 1984:25, 163; italics added). Structures often allow agents to do things they

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would not otherwise be able to do. While Giddens deemphasizes structural constraint, he does recognize that actors can lose control over the "structured properties of social systems" as they stretch away in time and space. However, he is careful to avoid Webenan iron-cage imagery and notes that such a loss of control is not inevitable.

The conventional sociological sense of structure is closer to Giddens's concept of social system (Thompson, 1989:60). Giddens defines social systems as reproduced social practices: or "reproduced relations between actors or collectivities organized as regular social practices" (1984:17, 25). Thus, the idea of social system (Thompson, 1989:60). Giddens defines social systems is derived from Gidden's focal concern with practice. Social systems do not have structures, but they do exhibit structural properties. Structures do not themselves exist in time and space, but they do become manifested in social systems in the form of reproduced practices. While some social systems may be the product of intentional action, Giddens places greater emphasis on the fact that such systems are often the unanticipated consequences of human action. These unanticipated consequences may become unrecognized conditions of action and feed back into it. These conditions may elude efforts to bring them under control, but nevertheless actors continue in their efforts to exert such control.

Thus structures are "instantiated" in social systems. In addition, they are also manifest in human agents" (Giddens, 1984:17). As a result, rules and resources manifest themselves at both the macro level of social systems and the micro level of human consciousness.

We are now ready for the concept of structuration, which is premised on the idea that "[t]he constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize," or "the moment of the production of action is also one of reproduction in the contexts of the day-to-day enactment of social life" (Giddens, 1984:25, 26). It is clear that structuration involves the dialectical relationship between structure and agency. Structure and agency Are a duality-neither can exist withrut the other.

As has a already indicated above, time and space are crucial variables in Giddens's

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theory. Both depend on whether other poeple are present temporally or spatially. The primordial condition is face-to-face interaction, in which others are present at the same time and in the same space. However, social systems extend in time and space, so others may no longer be present. Such distancing in tems of time and space is made increasingly possible in the modern world by new forms of communication and transportation. Gregory (1989) argues that Gidden's devotes more attention to time than to space. Underscoring the importance of space, Saunders contends that "any sociological analysis of why and how things happen will need to take account of where (and when) they happen" (1989:218). The central sociological issue of social order depend on how well social systems are integrated over time and across space, One of Giddens s most widely recognized achievements in social theory is his effort to bring the issues of time and space to the fore.

We end this by bringing Giddens's very abstrt structuration theory closer to reality by discussing the research program that cm be derived from it. First, instead of focusing on human societies, structuration theory would concentrate on "the orderings of institutions across time and space" (Giddens, 1989:300). (Institutions are viewed by Gidens as clusters of practices and he identifies four of them symbolic orders political institutions economic institutions, and law.) Second, there would be a focal concern for changes in the institutions over time space. Third, researchers would need to be sensitive to the ways in which the leadervarious institutions intrude on and alter social patterns. Fourth, structurationists would need to monitor, and be sensitive to, the impact of their findings on the social world. Most generally, Giddens is deeply concerned with the "shattering imactof modernity" (1989:301), and the structurationist should be concerned with the study of this pressing social problem)

Giddens does not believe that abstract laws of social action, interaction, and organization exist, therefore, his theory of structuration is not a series of proposition. Structuration is intended to communicative the "duality of structure". That is social structure is used by active agents; and in so using the properties of structure, they transform or reproduce this structure. Thus, the process of structuration requires a conceptualization of the nature of structure, of the agents who use structure, and of the ways that these are mutually implicated in each other to produce varying patterns of human organization.

For Giddens, structure can be conceptualized as the "rules" "sources" that actors

use in "interaction contexts" that extend across "space" and over "time". In so using these rules and resources, actors sustain or reproduce structures in space and time.

Rules are "generalizable procedures" that actors understand and use in various circumstances. For Giddens, a rule is a methodology or technique that actors know about, often implicitly, and that provides a relevant formula for action (Giddens:1984). From a sociological perspective, the most important rules are those which agents use in the reproduction of social relations over significant lengths of time and across space. These rules reveal certain characteristics: (1) they are frequently used in (a) conversation, (b) interaction rituals, and (c) the daily routines of individuals; (2) they are tacitly grasped and understood and are part of the "stock knowledge" of competent actors; (3) they are informal; remaining unwritten and unarticulated; and (4) they are weakly sanctioned through interpersonal techniques (Giddens : 1984). The thrust of the Giddens's argument is that rules are part of actors' "knowledgeability". Some may be normative in that actors can articulate and explicitly make reference to them, but many other rules are more implicitly understood and used to guide the flow of interaction in ways that are not easily expressed or verbalized. Moreover, actors can transform rules into new combinations as they confront and deal with each other and the contextual particulars of their interaction.

As other critical property of structure and resources are facilities that actors use to get things done. Giddens visualizes resources as what generates power. Power is not a resource, as much social theory argues. Rather, the mobilization of other resources is what gives actors power to get things done. Thus power is integral to the very existence of structure, for as actors, interact, they use resources; and as they use resources, they mobilize power to shape the actions of others.

Giddens visualizes rules and resources as "transformational" and as "mediating". The rules and resources can be transformed into many different patterns and profiles. Resources can be mobilized in various ways to perform activities and achieve ends through the exercise of different forms and degrees of power; rules can generate many diverse combinations of methodologies and formulas to guide how people communicate, interact, and adjust to each other. Rules and resources are mediating in that they are what tie social relations together. They are what actors use to create, sustain, or transform relations across time and in space. And because rules and resources are

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inherently transformational- that is- generative of diverse combinations- they can lace together many different patterns of social relations in time and space.

Giddens emphasize that as agents interact in social system, they can reproduce rules and resources (via the modalities) or they can transform them. Thus, social interaction and social structure are reciprocally implicated. Structuration is therefore, the dual processes in which rules and resources are used to organize interaction across time and in space and, by virtue of this use, to reproduce or transform these rules and resources.

Giddens' theory of structuration is spread over to several sources. In a broader way, he has emphasized on (1) reconceptualizing institutions, (2) Structural Principles, Sets, and Properties, (3) Structural Contradiction, (4) Agents, Agency, and Action and (5) Routinization and Regionalization of Interaction. We discuss below these key features which make structuration an ongoing process of social life.

10.5 Reconceptualizing Institutions :

For Giddens, institutions are systems of interaction in societies that endure over time and that distribute people in space. Giddens offers a typology of institutions in terms of the weights and combinations of rules and resources that are implicated in interaction. If signification (interpretative rules) is primary, followed respectively by domination (allocative and authoritative resources) and then by legitimation (normative rules), a "symbolic order" exists. If authoritative, domination, signification, and legitimation are successively combined, political institutionalization occurs. If allocative dominance, signification, and legitimation are ordered, economic institutionalization prevails. And if legitimation, dominance, and signification are rank ordered, institutionalization of law occurs.

Giddens is unlike many interactionists because he wants to acknowledge the importance of analyzing stabilized social relations- that is, institutionalization. But as with all interactionists theory, he wishes to stress that institutionalized social relations are actively reproduced in terms of the creative transformations of rules and resources that are employed by agents in actual interaction. Thus, one of the most important structural features of social relations is their institutionalization in space and across time. Such institutionalization moves along four dimensions- law, economy, political and symbolic-which are distinguished

from each other in terms of the relative use of various rules and resources.

Structural Principles, Sets, and Properties :

The extent and form of institutionalization in societies is related to what Giddens terms *structural principles*. These are the most general principles that guide the organization of societal totalities. These are what "stretch systems across times and space", and they allow for "system integration" or the maintenance of reciprocal relations among units in a society. For Giddens, "structural principles can thus be understood as the principles of organization which allow recognizably consistent forms of time-space distanciation on the basis of definite mechanisms of societal integration" (Giddens:1984).

Structural principles are implicated in the production and reproduction of 'structure" or "structural sets". These structural sets are rule/resources bundles, or combinations and configurations of rules and resources, which are used to produce and reproduce certain types and forms of social relations across time and space. Giddens offers the example of how the structural principles of class societies (differentiation and clear separation of economy and polity) guide the use of the following structural set : *private property-money-capital-labour-contract-profit.* As these and other structural sets are used by agents and as they are thereby reproduced, societies, societies develop "structural properties", which are "institutionalized features of social systems, stretching across time and space (Giddens:1984). Hence, the institutionalization of relations in times and space reveals a particular form, or in Giddens's terms, structural property.

10.6 Structural Contradiction :

Giddens always wants to emphasize the inherent "transformative" potential of rules and resources. Structural principles, he argues, "operate in terms of one another but yet also contravene each other" (Giddens:1984). In other words, they reveal contradictions that can be either primary or secondary. A "primary contradictions" is one between structural principles that are formative and constitute a society, whereas a "secondary contradictions" is one that is "brought into being by primary contradictions" (Giddens:1984). Contradictions are not the same as conflicts. Contradiction is a "disjunction of structural principles of system organization," whereas conflict is the actual

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struggle between private profits and socialized labour is not, itself, a conflict. It can create situations of conflict, such as struggles between management and labour in a specific time and space, but such conflicts are not the same as contradictions.

10.7 Agents, Agency, and Action :

As is evident, Giddens visualizes structure as duality, as something that is part of the actions of agents. And so in Giddens approach, it is essential to understand the dynamics of human agency. He proposes a "stratification model". In this model, "agency" denotes the events that an actor perpetrates rather than "intentions", "purposes," "ends", or other states. Agency is what an actor actually does in a situation that has visible consequences (not necessarily intended consequences. There are also unconscious dimensions to human agency. There are many pressures to act in certain ways, which an actor does not perceive. Indeed, Giddens argues that much motivation is unconscious. Moreover, motivation is often much more diffuse than action theories portray. That is, there is no one-to-one relation between an act and a motive. Actors may be able to rationalize through their capacity for discursive consciousness in ways that make this one-to-one relationship seem to be what directs action. But in fact, much of what propels action lies below consciousness and, at best, provides very general and diffuse pressures to act. Moreover, much attention may not be motivated at all; an actor simply monitors and responds to the environment.

10.8 Routinization and Regionalization of Interaction :

Both the ontological security of agents and the institutionalization of structures in time and space depends upon routinized and regionalized interaction among actors. Routinization of interaction patterns is what gives them continuity across time, thereby reproducing structure (rules and resources) and structures (institutions). At the same time, routinization gives predictability to actions and, in so doing, provides for a sense of ontological security. Thus, routines become critical for the most basic aspects of structure and human agency. Similarly, regionalization orders action in space by positioning actors in places vis-à-vis one another and by circumscribing how they are to present themselves and act. As with routines, the regionalization of interaction is essential to the sustenance of broader structural patterns and ontological security of actors, because it orders people's interactions in space and time, which, in turn, reproduces and meets an

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agent's need for ontological security.

In discussing routines, Giddens sees them as the key link between the episodic character of interactions)they start, proceed, and end), on the one hand, and basic trust and security, on the other (Giddens:1984). Moreover, "the routinization of encounters is of major significance in binding the fleeting encounter to social reproduction and thus to the seeming "fixity" of institutions. In sum, social structure is extended across time by these techniques that produce and reproduce routines. In so stretching interaction across time in an orderly and predictable manner, people realize their need for a sense of trust in others. In this way, then Giddens connects the most basic properties of structure (rules and resources) to the most fundamental features of human agents (unconscious motives).

10.9 Regionalization :

Structuration theory is concerned with the reproduction of relations not only across time but also in space. With the concept of regionalization of interaction, Giddens addresses the intersection of space and time. For interaction is not just serial, moving in time; it is also located in space. Borrowing from Goffman, Giddens introduces the concept of "locale" to account for the physical space in which interaction occurs as well as the contextual knowledge about what is to occur in this space. In a locale, actors are not only establishing their presence with respect to each other but they are also using their stocks of practical knowledge to interpret the context of the locale. Such interpretations provide them with the relevant frames, the appropriate procedures for tact, and the salient forms for sequencing gestures and talk. Regionalization of interaction through the creation of locales facilitates the maintenance of routines. In turn, the maintenance of routines across time and space sustains institutional structures. Thus, it is through routinized and regionalized systems of interaction that the reflexive capacities of agents operate to reproduce institutional patterns.

10.10 Critical Analysis of Structuration Theory :

Turner sees Giddens writing as crisp, eloquent, and also vague. There is a great deal of jargon, metaphor, and just plain imprecision. It is often difficult to understand in more than a general way what is being said. Structuration is much more like

Parsonian functionalism in at least one sense: one has to "internalize" the perspective with all its imprecision in order to use it. One must become an intellectual convert to Giddens's cause and, in the best tradition of the ethnomethodologists' et cetera, principle, accept what he has to say, even though you cannot understand some of it.

Another problem is that Giddens's theory is, in reality, only a system of concepts. It is very much like Talcott Parsons's strategy of "analytical realism". Giddens's theory is a series of definitions that not precisely linked together. Moreover, the scheme tends to become concerned with its own architecture-that is, with the elaboration of additional concepts in a vain effort to 'complete" the edifice that, like all conceptual schemes, just keeps growing.

As Giddens admits, this conceptual scheme offers "sensitizing concepts" for the researcher. He does not believe that a natural science view of explanation is appropriate for the social sciences, and he consistently associates functionalism, naturalism, and objectivism- the unholy alliance or "orthodox consensus" that he and other are breaking down. Giddens rejects positivism and naturalism. But this rejection does not provide a sufficient reason to reject the search for abstract principles. If one does not believe that there are invariant properties of the social universe that can be articulated in abstract principles, then what is a theorist do? The answer is: construct conceptual schemes that sensitize us to empirical processes and that allow us to describe rather than explain these processes. In fact, descriptions of events are what Giddens and many other mean by explanation.

10.11 Check your progress

Q.1.   Explain the Theory of Structuration ?

Q.2.   Describe Giddens concept of structuration and give its critical analysis ?

10.12 References :

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Pierre Bourdieu

Course No. : SOC-C-301	**Lesson - 11**
Semester - III	**Unit - IV**

Structure

11.1   Objectives

11.2   Introduction

11.3   Life sketch

11.4   Works

11.5   Theory of practice

11.6   Habitus and Field

11.7   Sum up

11.8   Ask yourself

11.9   References

11.1   Objectives

The main focus of the lesson is to understand the :

* background of the author

* theory of practice given by Bourdieu

11.2   Introduction

Starting from the role of economic capital for social positioning, Bourdieu pioneered investigative frameworks and terminologies such as cultural, social, and symbolic capital, and the concepts of habitus, field or location, and symbolic violence to reveal the dynamics of

power relations in social life. His work emphasized the role of practice and embodiment or forms in social dynamics and worldview construction, often in dialogue and opposition to universalized Western philosophical traditions. He built upon the theories of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Edmund Husserl, Georges Canguilhem, Karl Marx, Gaston Bachelard, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, Erwin Panofsky, and Marcel Mauss. A notable influence on Bourdieu was Blaise Pascal, after whom Bourdieu titled his Pascalian Meditations.

Bourdieu rejected the idea of the intellectual "prophet," or the "total intellectual," as embodied by Sartre. His best known book is Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste, in which he argues that judgments of taste are related to social position, or more precisely, are themselves acts of social positioning. His argument is put forward by an original combination of social theory and data from quantitative surveys, photographs and interviews, in an attempt to reconcile difficulties such as how to understand the subject within objective structures. In the process, he tried to reconcile the influences of both external social structures and subjective experience on the individual

11.3   Life sketch

Pierre Bourdieu (1 August 1930 – 23 January 2002) was a French sociologist, anthropologist, and philosopher.

He was born Pierre Felix Bourdieu in Denguin (Pyrénées-Atlantiques), in southern France on 1 August 1930, to a postal worker and his wife; Gascon was the language spoken at home. He married Marie-Claire Brizard in 1962; the couple had three sons, Jérôme, Emmanuel and Laurent.

Bourdieu was educated at the lycée in Pau, before moving to the Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris, from which he gained entrance to the Ecole Normale Supérieure. Bourdieu studied philosophy with Louis Althusser in Paris at the École Normale Supérieure. After getting his agrégation Bourdieu worked as a lycée teacher at Moulins from 1955 to 1958 when he then took a post as lecturer in Algiers.[3] During the Algerian War in 1958-1962, Bourdieu undertook ethnographic research into the clash through a study of the Kabyle peoples, of the Berbers laying the groundwork for his anthropological reputation. The result was his first book, Sociologie de L'Algerie (The Algerians), which was an immediate success in France and published in America in 1962.

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In 1960 Bourdieu returned to the University of Paris before gaining a teaching position at the University of Lille where he remained until 1964. From 1964 onwards Bourdieu held the position of Director of Studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (the future École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales), in the VIe section, and from 1981, the Chair of Sociology at the Collège de France, in the VIe section (held before him by Raymond Aron and Maurice Halbwachs). In 1968, he took over the Centre de Sociologie Européenne, the research center that Aron had founded, which he directed until his death.

In 1975, with the research group he had formed at the Centre de Sociologie Européenne, he launched the interdisciplinary journal Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales, with which he sought to transform the accepted canons of sociological production while buttressing the scientific rigor of sociology. In 1993 he was honored with the "Médaille d'or du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique" (CNRS). In 1996, he received the Goffman Prize from the University of California, Berkeley and in 2001 the Huxley Medal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. Bourdieu died of cancer at the age of 71.

11.4 Works

Bourdieu routinely sought to connect his theoretical ideas with empirical research, grounded in everyday life, and his work can be seen as sociology of culture or, as he labelled it, a "Theory of Practice". His contributions to sociology were both evidential and theoretical (that is, calculated through both systems). His key terms were habitus, capital and field.

He extended the idea of capital to categories such as social capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital. For Bourdieu each individual occupies a position in a multidimensional social space; he or she is not defined only by social class membership, but by every single kind of capital he or she can articulate through social relations. That capital includes the value of social networks, which Bourdieu showed could be used to produce or reproduce inequality.

Ultimately, each relatively autonomous field of modern life, such as economy, politics, arts, journalism, bureaucracy, science or education engenders a specific complex of social relations where the agents will engage their everyday practice. Through this practice, they'll develop a certain disposition for social action that is conditioned by their position on the field (dominant/dominated and orthodox/heterodox are only two possible ways of

positioning the agents on the field; these basic binary distinctions are always further analyzed considering the specificities of each field). This disposition, combined with every other disposition the individual develops through his engagement on a multidimensional (in the sense of multi-field) social world, will eventually tend to become a sense of the game, a partial understanding of the field and of social order in general, a practical sense, a practical reason, a way of di-vision (or classification) of the world, an opinion, a taste, a tone of voice, a group of typical body movements and mannerisms and so on. Through this, the social field may become more complex and autonomous, while the individual develops a certain habitus that is typical of his position in the social space. By doing so, social agents will often acknowledge, legitimate and reproduce the social forms of domination (including prejudices) and the common opinions of each field as self-evident, clouding from conscience and practice even the acknowledgment of other possible means of production (including, of course, symbolic production) and power relations.

11.5   Bourdieu's theory of power and practice

At the center of Bourdieu's sociological work is logic of practice that emphasizes the importance of the body and practices within the social world. Against the intellectualist tradition, Bourdieu stressed that mechanisms of social domination and reproduction were primarily focused on bodily know-how and competent practices in the social world. Bourdieu fiercely opposed Rational Choice Theory as grounded in a misunderstanding of how social agents operate. Social agents do not, according to Bourdieu, continuously calculate according to explicit rational and economic criteria. Rather, social agents operate according to an implicit practical logic—a practical sense—and bodily dispositions. Social agents act according to their "feel for the game" (the "feel" being, roughly, habitus, and the "game" being the field).

Bourdieu's anthropological work was dominated by an analysis of the mechanisms of reproduction of social hierarchies. In opposition to Marxist analyses, Bourdieu criticized the primacy given to the economic factors, and stressed that the capacity of social actors to actively impose and engage their cultural productions and symbolic systems plays an essential role in the reproduction of social structures of domination. What Bourdieu called symbolic violence is the self-interested capacity to ensure that the arbitrariness of the social order is either ignored, or posited as natural, thereby justifying the legitimacy of

existing social structures. This concept plays an essential part in his sociological analysis.

For Bourdieu, the modern social world is divided into what he calls fields. For him, the differentiation of social activities led to the constitution of various, relatively autonomous, social spaces in which competition centers around particular species of capital. These fields are treated on a hierarchical basis wherein the dynamics of fields arises out of the struggle of social actors trying to occupy the dominant positions within the field. Although Bourdieu embraces prime elements of conflict theory like Marx, he diverges from analyses that situate social struggle only within the fundamental economic antagonisms between social classes. The conflicts which take place in each social field have specific characteristics arising from those fields and that involve many social relationships which are not economic.

Pierre Bourdieu developed a theory of the action, around the concept of habitus, which exerted a considerable influence in the social sciences. This theory seeks to show that social agents develop strategies which are adapted to the needs of the social worlds that they inhabit. These strategies are unconscious and act on the level of a bodily logic

The first generation of practice theorists sought a virtuous middle path between the excesses of methodological individualism ('the claim that social phenomena must be explained by showing how they result from individual actions') and those of its logical opposite, methodological holism (the explanation of phenomena by means of structures or social wholes, Ryan 1970). Put differently, they wished to liberate agency – the human ability to act upon and change the world –from the constrictions of structuralist and systemic models while avoiding the trap of methodological individualism. These theorists regarded the human body as the nexus of people's practical engagements with the world7. Thus the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977) developed the notion of 'habitus' to capture 'the permanent internalization of the social order in the human body' (Eriksen and Nielsen 2001: 130) whilst recognizing 'the agent's practice, his or her capacity for invention and improvisation' (Bourdieu 1990: 13). In Bourdieu's theory of practice, the world's structural constraints form 'permanent dispositions'. These are Bourdieu borrows the Greek word 'hexis' to refer to the way in which social agents 'carry themselves' in the world; their gait, gesture, postures, etc. (Jenkins 2002: 75). He exemplifies this idea with his early research in Kabylia (Algeria) where he observed that men and women carried themselves in markedly different ways. Where women's bodies were oriented down in keeping with '[t]he female ideal of modesty and restraint',

men's bodies were oriented towards other men (Jenkins 2002: 75). Bourdieu concluded that Kabyle bodies are 'mnenomic devices' that help to reproduce fundamental cultural oppositions and are integral to a cultural habitus learned more through observation than formal teaching (Jenkins 2002: 75-76). Another fundamental notion in Bourdieu's practical apparatus is 'doxa', those deeply internalised societal or field-specific presuppositions that 'go without saying' and are not up for negotiation (Bourdieu 1998: 66-67, 2005: 37, Parkin 1997: 376). For Bourdieu, in sum, practice is 'based on the dispositions inherent in habitus' and unfolds as 'strategic improvisations – goals and interests pursued as strategies – against a background of doxa that ultimately limits them' (Parkin 1997: 376).

A closely related notion to Bourdieu's habitus is Michel Foucault's (1979) concept of 'discipline'. Like habitus, discipline 'is structure and power that have been impressed on the body forming permanent dispositions' (Eriksen and Nielsen 2001: 130). In contrast to Bourdieu, though, Foucault laid particular emphasis on the violence through which modern regimes impress their power (or 'biopower') on bodies (2001: 130). In Europe, the introduction of mental asylums and prisons allowed the replacing of earlier hierarchical and centralised forms of control with more diffuse and insidious forms of 'governmentality' and 'disciplinary power'. Disciplinary power works through the body; subjects learn to self-regulate their bodily practices, making it less necessary for states to intervene directly in their lives (Gledhill 2000: 149).

Like Bourdieu, the British sociologist Anthony Giddens (1979, 1984) first developed an original version of practice theory in the 1970s, but he arrived there via a very different route. Where Bourdieu prided himself in grounding his theories in empirical research, Giddens is more concerned with the history of philosophy and social theory than with sociological data (Eriksen and Nielsen 2001: 129). In The Constitution of Society he sets out to unify structure and agency through the notion of the 'duality of structure', the idea that structure is both 'the medium and outcome it recursively organizes' (1984: 374). Social relations are structured across space and time thanks to the duality of structure – this is what Giddens calls 'structuration' (1984: 376). His 'structuration theory' demonstrated 'how principles of order could both produce and be reproduced at the level of practice itself' and not through some 'ordering' society impinging upon individual actors from above (Couldry, this volume). Critically building on Hägerstrand's (1967) geographical work, Giddens argues that we cannot separate 'individuals' from the day-to-day contexts they

help to constitute. Rejecting what he regards as Hägerstrand's weak notion of power as 'authority constraints' to human action, he stresses instead the transformational power of human action which operates both with the limitations and possibilities afforded by societal constraints (1984: 116-117). For Giddens, the routinisation of day-to-day life is fundamental to humans who derive a sense of 'ontological security' from the familiar contours of the social worlds they have helped to (re)create (1984: 23, 50).

Turning now to the second generation of practice theorists, these thinkers have continued to stress the centrality of the human body to practice while paying closer attention to questions of culture and history as well as developing new concepts (e.g. 'dispersed' vs. 'integrative' practices, see below) and applying practice theory to new areas (e.g. consumption studies, organizational theory, material culture of the home, neuroscience).

11.6   Habitus and Field

A perspective on agency and structure that is comparable to that of Giddens in many ways, and similarly ambitious, is Pierre Bourdieu's theory, which focuses on the dialectical relationship between Imbitus and held. Before defining these two terms and discussing their relationship, we need to offer the theoretical backdrop for Bourdieu's perspective.

Bourdieu's (1984:483) theory is animated by the desire to overcome what he considers to be the false opposition between objectivism and subjectivism. As Bourdieu puts it, "the most steadfast (and, in my eyes, the most important) intention guiding my work has been to overcome" the opposition between objectivism and subjectivism (1989:15). He places Durkheim and his study of social facts and the structuralism of Saussure, Levi-Strauss, and the structural Marxists the objectivist camp. These perspectives are critiqued for focusing on objective. 'structures and ignoring the process to social construction by which actors perceive, think about, and construct these structures and then proceed to act on that basis. Objectivists ignore agency and the agent, whereas Bourdieu favors a position that is structuralist without losing sight of the agent. Schutz's phenomenology, Blumer's symbolic interactionism, and Garfinkels ethnornethodology are thought of as examples of subjectivism, focusing on the way agents think about, account for, or represent the social world while ignoring the objective structures in which those processes exist. Bourdieu sees these theories as concentrating on agency and ignoring structure. Instead, Bourdieu

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focuses on' the dialectical relationship between objective structures and subjective phenomena:

> On the one hand, the objective structures ... form the basis for. . . representations and constitute the structural constraints that bear upon interactions: but, on the other hand, these representations must also be taken into consideration particularly if one wants to account for the daily, struggles, individual and collective, which purport to transform or to preserve these structures.

(Bourdieu, 1989:15)

To sidestep the objectivist-subjectivist dilemma, Bourdieu (1977:3) focuses on practice, which he sees as the outcome of the dialectical relationship between structure and agency. Practices are not objectively determined, nor are they the product of free will. (Another reason for Bourdieu's focus on practice is that such a concern avoids the often irrelevant intellectualism that he associates with objectivism and subjectivism.)

Reflecting his interest in the dialectic between structure and the way people construct social reality, Bourdieu labels his own orientation "constructivist structuralism" (or "structuralist constructivism"). 1-le subscribes, at least in part, to a structuralist perspective, but it is one that is different from the structuralism of Saussure and Levi-Strauss (as well as the structural Marxists). While they, in turn, focused on structures in language and culture, Bourdieu argues that structures also exist in the social world itself. Bourdieu sees "objective structures (as) independent of toe consciousness and will if agent, which are capable of guiding and constraining their practices or their representations (1989:114). He simultaneously adopts a constructivist position which allows him to deal with the genesis of schemes of perception, thought, and action as well as of social structures.

White Bourdieu seeks to bridge structuralism and constructivism, and he succeeds to some degree, there is a bias in his work in the direction of structuralism. It is for this reason that is thought of as a poststructualist. There is more continuity in his work with structuralism than there is with construtivism. Unlike the Approach of most others (for example, phenomenologists symbolic interactionists), Bourdieu constructivism ignores subjectivity and intentionality. He does think it important to include; within his sociology the way people on the basis of their position in social space, perceive and construct the

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social world. However the perception and construction that takes place in the social world is both animated and constrained by structures. We can describe what he is interested in as the relationship "between social structures and mental structures" (Bourdieu, 1981:471). Thus, the so-called creative sociologies would all be uncomfortable with Bourdieu's perspective and would see it as little more than a more fully adequate structuralism. Yet there is ii dynamic actor in Bourdieu' theory, an actor capable of "intentionless invention of regulated improvisation (1977:79). The heart of Bourdieu's work and of his effort to bridge subjectivism and objectivism, lies in his concepts of habitus and field, as well as their dialectical relationship to one another. Willie habitus exist in the minds of actors, fields exist outside their minds. We will examine these two concepts in some detail over the next few pages.

Habitus

We begin with the concept for which Bourdieu is most famoushabitiis. Hithitus are the "mental, or cognitive structures" through which people deal with the social world. People are endowed with a series of internalized schemes through which they perceive, understand, appreciate, and evaluate the social world. It is through such schemes that people both produce their practices and perceive and evaluate them. Dialectically, habitus are "the product of the internalization of the structures" of the social world (13(1v1icu, 1989:18). In fact, we can think of habitus as "internalized, 'embodied' social structures" (Bourdieu, 1984.46$). They reflect objective divisions ill the class structure, such as age groups, genders, and social classes. A habitus is acquired as a result of long-term occupation of a position within the social world. Thus, habitus varies depending on the nature of one's position in that world; not everyone has the Same habitus. However, those who occupy the same position within the social world tend to have similar hahitus. The habitus allows people to make sense out of the social world, but the existence of a multitude of habitus means that the social world and its structures do not impose themselves uniformly on all actors.

The habitus available at any given time have been created over the course of collective history: "The habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history". The habitus manifested in any given individual is acquired over the course of individual history

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and is a function of the particular point in social history in which it occurs.

The habitus both produces and is produced by the social world. On the one hand, habitus is a "structuring structure"; that is, it is a structure that structures the social world. On the other hand, it is a "structured structure"; that is, it is a structure which is structured by the social world. Another way in which this is described by Bourdieu is as the "dialectic of the internalization of eternality end the externalization of internality-

It is practice that mediates between habitus and the social world. On the one hand, it is through practice that the habitus is created; on the other, it is as a result of practice that the social world is created. Bourdieu expresses the mediating function of practice when he defines the habitus as 'the system of structured and structuring dispositions which is constituted by practice and constantly aimed at practical . . . functions" While practice tends to shape habitus, habitus, in turn, serves to both unify and generate practice.

While habitus is an internalized structure that constrains thought and choice of action, it does not determine them. It is this lack of determinism that is one of the main things that distinguishes Bourdieu's position from that of mainstream structuralists. The habitus merely "suggests" what people should think and what they should choose to do. People engage in a conscious deliberation of options, although this reflects the operation of the habitus. The habitus provides the principles by which people make choices and choose the strategies that they will employ in the social world.

The habitus functions "below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny and control by the will" (Bourdieu, 1984:466). While we are not conscious of habitus and its operation, it manifests itself in our most practical activities, such as the way we eat, walk, talk, and even blow our noses. While the habitus operates as a structure, people do not simply, respond mechanically to it or to external structures that are operating on them. Thus, in Bourdieu's approach we avoid the extremes of unpredictable novelty and total determinism.

Field

We turn now to the "field,' which Bourdieu thinks of relationally rather than structurally. The field is a network of relations among the objective positions within it.

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These relations exist apart from individual consciousness and will. They are not interactions or intersubjective ties among individuals. The occupants of positions may be either agents or institutions, and they are constrained by the structure of the field. There are a number of fields in the social world (for example, artistic, religious, economic), all with their own specific logics and all generating among actors a belief about the things that are at stage in a field.

Bourdieu sees the field as an arena of struggle. It is the structure of the field that both "undergrids and guides the strategies whereby the occupants of these positions seek, individually or collectively to safeguard or improve their positin, and to impose the principle of hierarchization most favourable to their own products" (Bourdieu, cited in Wacquant, 1989:40). The field is a type of competitive marketplace in which various kinds of capital (economic cultural, social, symbolic) are employed and deployed. The positions of various agents in the field are determined by the amount and relative weight of the capital they process. Bourdieu even uses military imagery to describe the field, calling it an arena of "strategic emplacement, fortresses to be defended and captured in the field of struggles".

In underscoring the importance of both habitus and field, Bourdieu is rejecting the split between methological individualist and methodlogical holists and adopting a position that has recently been termed "methodological relationism" (Ritzer and Gindoff, forthcoming). That is, Bourdieu is focally concerned with the relationship between habitus and field. He sees this as operating in two main ways. On the one hand, the field conditions the habitus; on the other, the habitus constitutes the field as something that is meaningful, that has sense and value, and that is worth the investment of energy.

Applying Habitus and Field

Bourdieu does not simply seek to develop an abstract theoretical system but he also relates it to a series of empirical concerns and thereby avoids the trap of pure intellectualism. We will illustrate the application of his theoretical approach in his empirical study, Distinction which examines the aesthetic preferences of different groups throughout society. In this work, Bourdieu is attempting, among other things, to demonstrate that culture can be a legitimate object of scientific study. He is attempting to reintegrate culture in the sense of "high culture" (for example, preferences for classical music) with the

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anthropological sense of culture, which looks at all its forms, both high and low. More specifically, in this work Bourdieu is linking taste for refined objects with taste for the most basic food flavors.

Because of structural invariants, especially field and habitus, the cultural preferences of the various groups within society (especially classes and fractions of classes) constitute coherent systems. Bourdieu is focally concerned with variations in aesthetic "taste," the acquired disposition to differentiate among the various cultural objects of aesthetic enjoyment and to appreciate them differentially. Taste is also practice that serves, among other things, to give an individual, as well as others, a sense of his or her place in the social order. Taste serves to unify those with similar preferences and to differentiate them from those with different tastes. That is, through the practical applications and implications of taste, people classify objects and thereby, in the process, classify themselves. We are able to categorize people by the tastes they manifest, for example, by their preferences for different types of music or movies. These practices, like all others, need to be seen in the context of all mutual relationships, that is, within the totality. Thus, seemingly isolated tastes for art or movies are related to preferences in food, sports, or hairstyles.

Two interrelated fields are involved in Bourdieu's study of taste-class relationships (especially within fractions of the dominant class) and cultural relationships. He sees these fields as a series of positions in which a variety of "games" are undertaken. The actions taken by the agents (individual or collective) who occupy specific positions are governed by the structure of the field, the nature of the positions, and the interests associated with them. However, it is also a game that involves self-positioning and use of a wide range of strategies to allow one to excel at the game. Taste is an opportunity to both experience and assert one's position within the field. But the field of social class has a profound effect on one's ability to play this game; those in the higher classes are far better able to have their tastes accepted and to oppose the tastes of those in the lower classes. Thus, the world of cultural works is related to the hierarchical world of social class and is itself both hierarchical and hierarchizing.

Needless to say, Bourdieu also links taste to his other major concept, habitus. Tastes are shaped far more by these deep-rooted and long-standing dispositions than they are by surface opinions and verbalizations. Peoples' preferences for even such mundane

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aspects of culture as clothing, furniture, cooking are shaped by the habitus. And it is these dispositions "that forge the unconscious unity of a class" Bourdieu puts this more colorfully later: "Taste is a matchmaker... through which a habitus confirms its affinity with other habitus" (1984:243). Dialectically, of course, it is the structure of the class that shapes the habitus.

While both field and habitus are important to Bourdieu, it is their dialectical relationship that is of utmost importance and significance; field and habitus mutually define one another:

> The dispositions constituting the cultivated habitus are only formed, only function and are only valid in a field, in the relationship with a field .....which is itself a 'field of possible forces,' a 'dynamic' situation in which forces are only manifested in their relationship with certain dispositions. This is why the same practices may receive opposite meanings and values in different fields, in different configurations, or in opposing sectors of the same field.

> (Bourdieu, 1984:94 italics added)

Or, as Bourdieu puts it, in more general terms: "There is a strong correlation between social positions and the dispositions of the agents who occupy them" (1984:110). It is out of the relationship between habitus and field that practices, cultural practices in particular; are established.

Bourdieu sees culture as a kind of economy, or marketplace. In this marketplace people utilize cultural rather than economic capital. This capital is largely a result of peoples' social class origin and their educational experience.

In the marketplace, people accrue mare or less capital and either expend it to improve their position or lose it, thereby causing their position within the economy to deteriorate.

People pursue distinction in a range of cultural fields-the beverages they drink (Ferrier or cola), the automobiles they drive (Mercedes Benz or Ford Escort), the newspapers they read (The New York Times or USA Today) or the resorts they visit (The

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French Riviera or Disney World). Relationships of distinction are objectively inscribed in these products and reactivated each time they are appropriated in Bourdieu view, "The total, field of these fields offers well-nighly inexhaustible possibilities for the pursuit of distinction" (1984; 227). The Appropriation of certain cultural goods (for example, a Mercedes Benz) yields "profit," while that of other (an Escort) yields no gain, or even a "loss."

There is dialectic between the nature of the cultural products and tastes Changes in cultural goods lead to alterations in taste but changes in taste also likely to result in transformation in cultural products. The structure of the field not only conditions the desires of the consumer of cultural goods but also structures what the producers create in order to satisfy those demands.

Changes in taste (and Bourdieu sees all fields temporally) result from the struggle between opposing forces in both the cultural (the supporters of old versus new fashions, for example) and the class (the dominant versus the dominated fractions within the dominant class) Arenas. However, the heart of the struggle lies within the class system, And the cultural struggle between, for example, artists and intellectuals is a reflection of the interminable smuggle between the different fractions of the dominant class to define culture, indeed the entire social world. It is oppositions within the class structure that condition oppositions in taste and in habitus While Bourdieu gives great importance to social class, he refuses to reduce it to merely economic matters or to the relations of production but sees class as defined by habitus as well.

Bourdieu offers a distinctive theory of the relationship between agency and structure within the context of a concern for the dialectical relationship between habitus and field, It is also distinguished by its focus on practice (in the above case, aesthetic practices) and its refusal to engage in and intellectualism. In that sense it represents a return to the Marxian concern for the relationship between theory and practice)

11.7   Sum up

To summarize, practice theory is a body of work about the work of the body. With one or two exceptions, this loose network of approaches to social theory takes the human body to be the nexus of 'arrays of activities' (i.e. practices) that agents perform with greater or lesser

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commitment, dexterity and grace. Whilst some of these practices are widely diffused across social space and time, others are found clustered in configurations that change over time through the socially (re)productive agency of practitioners. Practice theory itself has diffused across epistemic space since its emergence in the 1970s and today we find practice theoretical approaches in subfields as diverse as strategy theory, political anthropology, material culture studies, the sociology of consumption and neuroscience.

11.8   Ask yourself

11.9   Reference

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