

Introduction to Cultural Studies
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Lecture - 12
The Post Modern Condition (Lyotard) – Part IV

So hello and welcome to this lecture on this NPTEL course entitled Introduction to Cultural Studies. We are currently doing Lyotard's Post Modern Condition, A Report on Knowledge and this will be the last lecture on that particular book. I will finish with Lyotard today in this particular session.

So in the last lecture, in the previous lecture we had seen how Lyotard looks at language games as offered by Wittgenstein as that site the potential site for which meaning can be derived, meaning can be produced, meaning can be configured in a postmodern condition and move away from the old idea of grand narratives. We are now looking at a local idea of meaning production through language games in a postmodern condition.

And so if you go to page 60 in the handout in the version that we are using and this should be on your screen in a moment you know the yellow section, the highlighted section over here is basic repetition of what he just said. But also very quickly he would now offer understanding of what we call paralogy. So he talks about paralogy as having more importance on the postmodern condition. So paralogy is parallel logic, alternative logical systems.

Again the whole idea is to move away from a unifying totalizing idea of logic in the postmodern condition and looking at parallel logic systems which are micro in quality, which are local in quality and which often offer more meaningful combinations in the postmodern situation.

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14. Legitimation by Paralogy

Let us say at this point that the facts we have presented concerning the problem of the legitimation of knowledge today are sufficient for our purposes. We no longer have recourse to the grand narratives—we can resort neither to the dialectic of Spirit nor even to the emancipation of humanity as a validation for postmodern scientific discourse. But as we have just seen, the little narrative [*petit récit*] remains the quintessential form of imaginative invention, most particularly in science.⁹³⁾ In addition, the principle of consensus as a criterion of validation seems to be inadequate. It has two formulations. In the first, consensus is an agreement between men, defined as

So this is page 60 on your screen, the highlighted section where he says we no longer have recourse to the grand narratives. We can resort neither to the dialectic of spirit nor even to the emancipation of humanity as a validation for postmodern scientific discourse. So he moves into the Hegelian understanding of dialectic, right. So the entire Hegelian idea of understanding of the dialectic which is thesis, synthesis, antithesis and the entire spirit which is very Hegelian in quality but it has been done away within postmodern condition.

So we cannot look at grand narratives from that kind of a site anymore. So he moves away from the dialectical spirit which is Hegelian in quality but as we have just seen the little narrative or *petit récit* remains the quintessential form of imaginative invention most particularly in science. In addition the principle of consensus as a criterion of validation seems to be inadequate. So the last bit is very interesting over here and he says consensus no longer becomes a criterion in postmodern condition. So no longer we need to have an agreement on certain things.

So agreements become secondary, tertiary, peripheral and important in a postmodern condition and this is a basis different that Lyotard has with someone called Jurgen Habermas and he already mentioned Habermas and he will finish again with Habermas and we will look at his disagreement with Habermas in a bit. But the whole idea of his disagreement with Habermas is precisely this.

It no longer should look at consensus as a criterion. So we should not look at agreement that collective agreement, that should not be the criterion for any kind of a grand narrative, any kind of a narrative at all rather. So we shall look at disagreement, we shall look at incompatibility, we shall look at incommensurability. So those become important conditions in a postmodern times, this Lyotard understands it. So again the idea of paralogy becomes important.

So no longer do we have one logical consensual or consensus of discursive frameworks. We rather have different discursive frameworks which may not agree with each other at all. So again the whole idea of incommensurability, incompatibility become very important over here. So consensus should not be a criterion for validation you know so that idea of validating certain things to a consensus so that criterion becomes inadequate, that criterion becomes secondary, that criterion becomes unimportant in a postmodern condition.

So his problem with consensus is very important, Lyotard's problem with consensus and therein lies this basic fundamental disagreement with Jurgen Habermas because with Habermas we have the idea of the public sphere and a public sphere is where consensus is produced through intellectual exchanges right and Lyotard says you know the whole idea of having a public sphere where we arrive at a consensus through exchanges, through ideas, through interactions that itself will very quickly become a grand narrative.

So if we are moving away from grand narratives we are looking at local narratives, micro narratives. So the whole idea of public sphere becomes unimportant in postmodernity, in the postmodern condition right. And equally the whole idea of consensus becomes unimportant in a postmodern condition, right okay.

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The problem is therefore to determine whether it is possible to have a form of legitimation based solely on paralogy. Paralogy must be distinguished from innovation: the latter is under the command of the system, or at least used by it to improve its efficiency; the former is a move (the importance of which is often not recognized until later) played in the pragmatics of knowledge. The fact that it is in reality frequently, but not necessarily, the case that one is transformed into the other presents no difficulties for the hypothesis.

Returning to the description of scientific pragmatics (section 7), it is now dissension that must be emphasized. Consensus is a horizon that is never reached. Research that takes place under the aegis of a paradigm²¹³ tends to stabilize; it is like the exploitation of a technological, economic, or artistic "idea." It cannot be discounted. But

So so the dialectical spirit, the idea of consensus, the idea of agreement, the idea of a holistic understanding of totality, so these become secondary, these become unimportant in a postmodern condition. Rather what we have is a series of disagreements, incommensurability and incompatibility which become revolutionary in potential for the postmodern condition, okay. Now he comes to the idea of paralogy. This is page 61 on your screen.

So what is paralogy and how is paralogy an important criterion in postmodernity. So paralogy must be distinguished from innovation. The latter is under the command of the system or at least used by it to improve its efficiency. The former is a move played in the pragmatics of knowledge. So innovation and paralogy they are so fundamentally different and it is a very important difference that Lyotard talks about and it is very important that we have a conceptual gravity about this difference.

So innovation is an experimentation, is a form of detriment which makes the system better, which makes the system more efficient. So innovation is aimed to a sufficiency. Innovation is aimed towards preservation. Innovation is aimed towards extension of the already established system. Now the whole idea of Lyotard over here as you know a postmodernist is to break away from the system altogether, right.

So in that sense paralogy is a more important innovation. Paralogy he says is a move played in a pragmatics of knowledge. So paralogy in one hand gives you a different kind of language game. Paralogy will offer you a fresh perspective into a language game which will move away from the old established knowledge that you know the system uses. So innovation is an extension of the epistemic structure, is making the epistemic structure more efficient, is a betterment of the epistemic structure.

Whereas paralogy is essentially a move away from the epistemic structure, is move away into a better epistemic structure, a more micro epistemic structure which is you know full of disagreements, which is more postmodern in quality, okay. The fact that it is in reality frequently but not necessarily the case that one is transformed into the other presents no difficulties for the hypothesis, right. And now he moves on to the idea of you know dissension.

So dissension becomes a more important criterion rather than consent, right. And he says it is now dissension that must be emphasized. Consensus is a horizon that is never reached. Research that takes place under the aegis of a paradigm tends to stabilize. It is like the exploitation of a technological, economic, or artistic idea. So the entire idea of stabilizing you know becomes problem in postmodernity in the postmodern condition.

So he says dissent or dissension becomes more important in a postmodern condition because we need to destabilize, we need to delegitimize knowledge. So the whole idea of stabilizing knowledge becomes hegemonic in quality very quickly. So the whole idea of a stabilized knowledge means essentially that you capture and consume certain artistic idea and make that into a grand narrative so you know and that comes to an agreement, that comes to a innovation, that comes to efficiency etc.

So instead of innovation, efficiency, consensus, stabilization what we have is paralogy, what we have is local narratives, what we have is dissent or dissension and what we have is incommensurability or incompatibility which is designed to destabilize, which is designed to delegitimize any kind of a knowledge structure, right, any kind of a grand knowledge structure.

And therein lies the subversive potential for the postmodern nodes of knowledge, right that is essentially based on dissent.

It is essentially designed with dissent and dissension rather than consensus, right. So consent becomes secondary. Any kind of a public space where consent is produced or manufactured becomes problematic in a postmodern condition. Consensus is something which is you know done away with, which is subverted in a postmodern condition because consensus is a horizon which is never reached. It rather becomes a paradigm to protect, to control and to exploit certain artistic ideas, right.

So this idea of consuming and exploiting an artistic idea becomes a very systematic structure and postmodernism is designed to direct it against that kind of a systematic structure, right. So postmodernism becomes a subversive movement through which this systematic structures are done away with, with the use of dissent, with the use of local knowledge, with the use of language games etc. right.

So this is a very important definition that Lyotard has between you know consensus and dissent, between systematic structure and paralogy, between innovation and paralogy. So innovation and paralogy this difference is something that we must be very aware of when we are looking at Lyotard's understanding of language games especially how it relates to postmodernism, okay. so now we come to the final bit of the essay which is you know where he talks about what is essentially postmodernism.

So what do we mean by postmodernism and how is postmodernism different, how is postmodernism designed to be different from modernism, designed to be different as an artistic condition from its you know predecessors you know how is the revolution in quality how is it more micro in quality how is it more subversive in quality.

So postmodernism becomes a very important category of knowledge because it changes knowledge as an ontological you know structure. So it changes the very nature of knowledge

with the rise of technology, with the rise of science, with the rise of nihilism, with the rise of consumerism etc. right.

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of art for the author of *Ästhetische Theorie*. Jürgen Habermas (everyone had recognized him) thinks that if modernity has failed, it is in allowing the totality of life to be splintered into independent specialties which are left to the narrow competence of experts, while the concrete individual experiences “desublimated meaning” and “destructured form,” not as a liberation but in the mode of that immense *ennui* which Baudelaire described over a century ago.

So this is page 72 on your screen. Okay, so on page Lyotard talks about Habermas. So we come to page 72 which is on your screen at the moment you know he talks about Jurgen Habermas and he mentions Habermas and of course he disagrees with Habermas massively because he is very means so problematic. He finds the idea of, the Habermas idea of the public sphere as a sphere of agreement, as a sphere of consensus quite problematic as a postmodernist.

And he goes on to say Jurgen Habermas thinks that if modernity has failed it is in allowing the totality of life to be splintered into independent specialties which are left to the narrow competence of experts while the concrete individual experiences the desublimated meaning and destructured form not as a liberation but in the mode of that immense *ennui* which Baudelaire described over a century ago.

So obviously the idea of Habermas’ idea of modernity is completely different from Lyotard’s idea of postmodernity because according to Habermas he mourns the loss of totality. He laments the loss of totality. So he says the totality has been splintered has been fractured away. Now what we have is a very Baudelairean idea of the *ennui*.

So Baudelaire of course is a French symbolist poet and you know if we go back to his writings of *Fleurs du mal* or the flowers of evil that he wrote as a collection of poetry so that is essentially what the modern is ennui, the modern is tiredness, the modern is inertia which he laments and Habermas interestingly you know takes up that kind of a mood, that sentiment that Baudelaire you know poeticizes and says that sentiment emerges as an epiphenomenon, as a product of the splintered selves in modernity.

So the modernity has failed as a project because it has failed to remain a totalizing project. So he is completely against, he is completely opposite to what Lyotard has been talking about so far. So there is no wonder that Lyotard and Habermas disagree on this fundamental position. So Habermas, according to Habermas modernity must recover its unfinished project. It must recover its consensus. It must recover its public sphere.

It must recover its totalizing tendencies and only then can we do away with according to Habermas the idea of ennui, the sentiment of ennui, the sentiment of tiredness, the sentiment of decadence which he finds in Baudelaire's poetry, *Fleurs du mal* or the flowers of evil.

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My question is to determine what sort of unity Habermas has in mind. Is the aim of the project of modernity the constitution of sociocultural unity within which all the elements of daily life and of thought would take their places as in an organic whole? Or does the passage that has to be charted between heterogeneous language games—those of cognition, of ethics, of politics—belong to a different order from that? And if so, would it be capable of effecting a real synthesis between them?

Now, obviously Lyotard takes the issue, Lyotard has massive issues with this and he goes on to say my question is and this is on your screen. My question is to determine what sort of unity Habermas has in mind. So you know the whole idea of unity is problematic in quality according

to Lyotard. So he says what is this unity that Habermas is talking about. So is not that unity a very Eurocentric idea of unity. Is it not the idea of consent or consensus a very Eurocentric idea, right.

So it is the aim of the project of modernity the constitution of sociocultural unity within which all the elements of daily life and of thought would take their place as an organic whole. Or does the passage that has to be charted between heterogeneous language games those of cognition, of ethics, of politics belong to a different, this is page 73, a different order from that. And if so would it be capable of effecting a real synthesis between them.

So he makes a very clear distinction between unity as a modernist quality and this unity of you know loss of unity as a very healthy condition because that makes allowance that gives allowance for different kinds of cognitive, ethical, political possibilities, right and that is what postmodernism is all about according to Lyotard. So postmodernism is about plural possibilities so that entire idea of plurality of postmodernism is directed against the idea of unity that Habermas wants to recover.

So again we have a very interesting disagreement between two major philosophers and that disagreement is something that I would like you to focus on little bit while reading this particular book. So why does Lyotard disagree with Habermas? So what is discursive differences between Lyotard and Habermas in terms of looking at totality, in terms of looking at unity, in terms of looking at modernity, right. So this is something that Lyotard talks about quite interestingly.

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Realism, whose only definition is that it intends to avoid the question of reality implicated in that of art, always stands somewhere between academicism and kitsch. When power assumes the name of a party, realism and its neoclassical complement triumph over the experimental avant-garde by slandering and banning it—that is, provided the “correct” images, the “correct” narratives, the “correct” forms which the party requests, selects, and propagates can find a public to desire them as the appropriate remedy for the anxiety and depression that public experiences. The demand for reality—that is, for unity, simplicity, communicability, etc.—did not have the same intensity nor the same continuity in German society between the two world wars and in Russian society after the Revolution: this provides a basis for a distinction between Nazi and Stalinist realism.



And then if you come to page 74 of this particular book where you know he talks about the whole idea of unity being a problem and if you move on to page 75 then he talks about realism. Now this is a very key thing and realism according to Lyotard is a very problematic form of representation. So this should be on your screen at the moment realism. This is the paragraph beginning with realism.

Realism, whose only definition is that it intends to avoid the question of reality implicated in that of art always stands somewhere between academicism and kitsch. So realism is a form of representation which aims towards totalizing you know orders of reality. So it is something which is removed from reality because it aims to totalize it, right and therein lies his problem. Therein lies Lyotard’s problem with realism.

So he talks about realism as essentially anti-postmodernist kind of a representation, right. So he located realism between academicism and kitsch. So kitsch of course is popular culture and academicism is a reified kind of a culture and he says realism is somewhat between the two and in the process realism becomes a problematic form of representation, okay. So and then he moves on this is very right towards the end where he talks about the difference between realism or realist kind of a writing and non-realist kind of a writing.

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cracy. Modernity, in whatever age it appears, cannot exist without a shattering of belief and without discovery of the "lack of reality" of reality, together with the invention of other realities.

What does this "lack of reality" signify if one tries to free it from a narrowly historicized interpretation? The phrase is of course akin to what Nietzsche calls nihilism. But I see a much earlier modulation of Nietzschean perspectivism in the Kantian theme of the sublime. I think in particular that it is in the aesthetic of the sublime that modern art (including literature) finds its impetus and the logic of avant-gardes finds its axioms.

And this is page 77 where he says modernity and this is sort of underlined on your screen. Modernity in whatever age it appears cannot exist without a shattering of belief and without discovery of lack of reality of reality together with invention of other realities, right. So you know this is of course modernity as a contemporary condition that Lyotard you know defines realism. This is not modernity as a discursive condition. This is modernity as a real condition.

So modernity can only appear, modernity can only emerge as an acknowledgment of loss of totality, as an acknowledgement of fractures and this is something that Lyotard celebrates in a true postmodernist spirit, okay.

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The Postmodern

What, then, is the postmodern? What place does it or does it not occupy in the vertiginous work of the questions hurled at the rules of image and narration? It is undoubtedly a part of the modern. All that has been received, if only yesterday (*modo, modo*, Petronius used to say), must be suspected. What space does Cézanne challenge? The Impressionists'. What object do Picasso and Braque attack? Cézanne's. What presupposition does Duchamp break with in 1912? That which says one must make a painting, be it cubist. And Buren questions that other presupposition which he believes had survived untouched by the work of Duchamp: the place of presentation of the work. In an amazing acceleration, the generations precipitate themselves. A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant.

So, right so now he comes to this is page 79 on your screen. It is the section called the postmodern and this is the definition of the postmodern. So this is the basic definition of postmodern that he offers at the end of the book after having talked about the loss of grand narratives, after having talked about the emergence of language games, after having talked about the different micro narratives which come up after the end of modernism.

So what then is the postmodern? What place does it or does it not occupy in the vertiginous work of the questions hurled at the rules of image and narration? It is undoubtedly a part of the modern. All that has been received if only yesterday must be suspected. So suspicion becomes a very important sentiment in postmodernism. So again we are talking about the very interesting entanglement between sentiment, effect and material conditions.

So suspicion becomes a very important material condition as well as a effective condition in postmodernism. So and he goes on to say how the postmodern essentially emerges as diachronic kind of a movement, a historical movement which replaces the earlier movement and then becomes something else. So what space does Cezanne challenge the impressionists. So Cezanne, Paul Cezanne was a post-impressionist painter and you know Lyotard says that Cezanne challenges the impressionist.

So Cezanne is postmodern because he challenges the impressionists as predecessors and offers a new language game when he comes painting. What object do Picasso and Braque attack Cezanne's? What presupposition does Duchamp break with in 1912? That which says one must make a painting be it cubist. And Buren questions that other presupposition which he believes had survived untouched by the work of Duchamp.

The place of presentation of the work in an amazing acceleration the generations precipitate themselves. A world can only become modern if it is only at first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state and this state is constant. And this is a very important definition of postmodernism. He says postmodernism is actually premodern. So what does he mean by this?

And this takes a little bit of conceptual travesty where he says that a work which is modern, a work can only be modern or current or contemporary only if it is first postmodern. So postmodern is its formative phase. The phase in which the rules are being changed. The phase in which the rules are being made, being produced and reproduced and you know deproduced, right.

And only after that can we have the modern stage which is the current stage and then of course the modern stage will be replaced by another postmodern stage and then we have a new modern stage. Is that completely clear because this is very important. So he talks about postmodern as a temporal as well as a discursive phase you know the phase which comes before the modern. So in that sense the postmodern this change is constant you know it will never end.

So the postmodern is a permanent phase because the postmodern is always that which is formative. That phase, that temporal, that spatial temporal phase where rules are being formed you know before it freezes into a construct, before it freezes into a form, right. So that sense is formative and that sense is preformed, right. It is something which is nascent. It is a nascent state and this state is constant. So a work can become modern only if it is first postmodern, right.

So this idea of postmodernism as something which is actually premodern is an extremely interesting idea, is a really rich idea because what it says over here it really captures the stylistic conditions of postmodernism. So it is something which is always being formed. So in that sense it is never really a settled state. It is a presettled state and that sense is always permanent because any idea of art which is changing, any phase of literature, any phase of cinema, any phase of art which is changing, which is mutable, which is plastic that is postmodern by default, right.

And a work can only be modern if it is first postmodern. So we have a very interesting dialectic of the temporal idea of postmodernism and a stylistic idea of postmodernism. So it is something before modern because it predates the modern. It is something which forms the modern, something which informs the modern. A phase where rules are changed and rules are made and constructed and reconstructed.

The phase of deconstruction in other words and that is a postmodern condition okay and it is a very interesting definition that Lyotard offers us over here and he gives a series of examples of how one artist comes and replaces the art of the previous artist and becomes postmodern quality. And then someone else comes and replaces his work and becomes postmodern. So the idea of postmodern is always changing. So change is permanent in postmodern, right.

So he says that Picasso comes and replaces his predecessors work. Someone comes and replaces Picasso's works. So the idea of postmodern keeps changing all the time, right. So postmodernism will never really end and because postmodern is always a change of flux, a state of flux as a permanent flux as a permanent play between 2 different kinds of categories. So it is a liminal state, it is a playful state, it is a playful productive state.

It is a state of preproduction, deproduction, legitimation, relegitimation, and delegitimation, right. So it is a state which happens before the current state, before the modern state, okay right. So this change is constant as Lyotard tells us.

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The work of Proust and that of Joyce both allude to something which does not allow itself to be made present. Allusion, to which Paolo Fabbri recently called my attention, is perhaps a form of expression indispensable to the works which belong to an aesthetic of the sublime. In Proust, what is being eluded as the price to pay for this allusion is the identity of consciousness, a victim to the excess of time (*au trop de temps*). But in Joyce, it is the identity of writing which is the victim of an excess of the book (*au trop de livre*) or of literature.

Okay, now he comes to the end where he gives 2 examples of writers who can be classified as sort of postmodern and non-postmodern and he mentions the work of Proust and Joyce and this

is page 80 on your screen and the paragraph begins with the work of Proust and that of Joyce both allude to something which does not allow itself to be made present.

Allusion to which Paolo Fabbri recently called my attention is perhaps a form of expression indispensable to the works which belong to an aesthetic of the sublime. In Proust what is being eluded as the price to pay for this solution is the identity of consciousness, a victim to the excess of time. But in Joyce it is the identity of writing which is the victim of an excess of the book of literature.

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Proust calls forth the unrepresentable by means of a language unaltered in its syntax and vocabulary and of a writing which in many of its operators still belongs to the genre of novelistic narration. The literary institution, as Proust inherits it from Balzac and Flaubert, is admittedly subverted in that the hero is no longer a character but the inner consciousness of time, and in that the diegetic diachrony, already damaged by Flaubert, is here put in question because of the narrative voice. Nevertheless, the unity of the book, the odyssey of that consciousness, even if it is deferred from chapter to chapter, is not seriously challenged: the identity of the writing with itself throughout the labyrinth of the interminable narration is enough to connote such unity, which has been compared to that of *The Phenomenology of Mind*.



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Nevertheless, the unity of the book, the odyssey of the consciousness even if it is deferred from chapter to chapter is not seriously challenged. The identity of the writing with itself throughout the labyrinth of the interminable narration is enough to connote such unity which has been compared to that of *The Phenomenology of Mind*. So he talks about Proust. He praises Proust from breaking with Flaubert, from breaking with Balzac.

And he says he offers a new kind of hero. The hero is no longer out there, the hero is in there, the inner consciousness that becomes the hero. So temporarily it is very complex. Diachronically it is very complex. It is a movement away from the earlier traditional writing. However, it still establishes a tradition. It does not do away with tradition entirely. So writing is not decentered in Proust.

Writing is still centered although it now becomes more and more inward looking rather than outward looking. So in that sense it is quite subversive etc. But it does not do away with the syntax of writing. So this is what he says in the beginning you know it is the syntax and vocabulary of a writing which in many of its operators still belongs to the genre of novelistic narration. So it is still a part of novelistic narration, right.

So it is still a part of the novel writing tradition, right. So it revolutionizes it. It makes different things, it gives you different things but it still retains the basic structure of the novelistic narration. Now when he comes to Joyce he says you know that narration itself is done away with. That novelistic structure itself is being done away with because he gives you a decentered kind of writing.

So the very idea, the very activity of writing changes with Joyce and therein makes and that is what makes Joyce a truly postmodern writer compared to Proust and this is what he goes on to say you know about Joyce. So Joyce allows the unrepresentable to become perceptible in his writing itself in its signifier. And signifier, the very nature of signifier, the very quality of the signifier changes in Joyce's writing.

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Joyce allows the unrepresentable to become perceptible in his writing itself, in the signifier. The whole range of available narrative and even stylistic operators is put into play without concern for the unity of the whole, and new operators are tried. The grammar and vocabulary of literary language are no longer accepted as given;

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rather, they appear as academic forms, as rituals originating in piety (as Nietzsche said) which prevent the unrepresentable from being put forward.

The whole range of available narrative and even stylistic operators is put into play without concern for the unity of the whole. So in Proust he says there is still an underlying unity. There is still a nostalgia for unity recovering that unity to a play of time through a you know going back in time etc. And the novel itself you know, *The Search of Lost Time*, the novel itself does not do away with the unity of the novelistic tradition.

So the novelistic traditions unity is maintained, is retained in Proust's writing. But when he comes to Joyce that that unity itself is done away with. So it no longer is a novel. It becomes a anti-novel in some sense and obviously the reference in Joyce over here is reference to *Finnegans Wake* that you know Lyotard is talking about. The writing is basically anti-writing which is completely decentered kind of a writing, okay.

So the whole range of available narrative and even stylistic operators is put into play. So it becomes a playful, becomes a profoundly poststructuralist kind of writing where the relationship between signifier and signified is no longer linear, is no longer neat, is no longer (()) (25:36) in quality. But rather it becomes playful in quality. So signifier can mean several signifieds and vice versa, right. So without concern for the unity of the whole and new operators are tried.

The grammar and vocabulary of literary language are no longer accepted as given. So it does reveal any kind of givenness. So it does not really remain in the literary tradition at all, right. So

that that becomes a very revolution. That becomes a very postmodern kind of performance in Joyce's writing according to Lyotard. Rather they appear as academic forms, as rituals originating in piety which prevent the unrepresentable from being put forward, right.

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[Here, then, lies the difference: modern aesthetics is an aesthetic of the sublime, though a nostalgic one. It allows the unrepresentable to be put forward only as the missing contents; but the form, because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer to the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure. Yet these sentiments do not constitute the real sublime sentiment, which is in an intrinsic combination of pleasure and pain: the pleasure that reason should exceed all presentation, the pain that imagination or sensibility should not be equal to the concept.]

So this is the fundamental definition of postmodernism and this is what Lyotard goes on to say, here then lies the different, modern aesthetics is an aesthetic of the sublime though a nostalgic one. It allows the unrepresentable to be put forward only as a missing contents. But the form because of its recognizable consistency continues to offer to the reader or viewer matter for solace and pleasure.

Yet these sentiments do not constitute the real sublime sentiment, which is in an intrinsic combination of pleasure and pain. The pleasure that reason should exceed all presentation, the pain that imagination or sensibility should not be equal to the concept.

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The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable. A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. Those rules and categories are what the work of art itself is looking for. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what *will have been done*. Hence the fact that work and text have the characters of an event;

The postmodern would be that which in the modern puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself. That which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable. That which searches for new presentations not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable. A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher.

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So this is basically the concluding argument in Lyotard's book and this is a very clear mapping out of differences between the modern and the postmodern. So he says the modern aspires for the sublime but it aspires for supplying by retaining the form. So the content changes, the content may become revolutionary. The content may become missing. It might include missing content but it still has a nostalgia for the sublime.

It still has the memory of the sublime and that memory plays itself out of the modernist narrative; whether it is an art form, whether it is a painting, whether it is a cinema, whether it is

literature etc. However, when he comes to postmodernism it actually presents the unrepresentable. It actually gives you a new kind of form. It does not really look for a solace of meaning. It does not really look for agreement. It does not really look for consensus.

Rather it celebrates and dramatizes disagreement. It celebrates that which is completely new, right. So a postmodern work is something which is looking for rules and again this goes back to things which are before that postmodern could actually come before the modern because in some sense the postmodern is actually in that phase when you are actually looking for rules, when you are actually making the rules when the rules are being formatted, when the rules are being formed and reformed and deformed etc. right.

So it is a presettled kind of a phase therein lies the revolutionary quality, the revolutionary potential for the postmodern, right. So it is something which basically you know sets out to do new things altogether. It breaks away the relationship between signifier and signified and it gives you a new fresh set of signifiers which are actually subversive in quality.

Now this idea of the postmodern writer or artist being the philosopher is again a very interesting idea and this is what Lyotard offers at the end where he says the text he writes the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rule. So he is a philosopher because he is a seer of truth.

He is you know he is someone who looks for new kinds of through which are not totalizing in quality, which are not grand in quality, which are local in quality, which are micro in quality and which you know do away with you know pre-established ideas of grand truth, right and that cannot be judged according to pre-established norms because that this is exactly what the postmodern work is aspiring to become and is aspiring to become a new kind of norm right.

So it is always breaking away from old norms and is always moving towards new kinds of norms and therein lies the revolutionary potential of postmodernism or the postmodern writer or artist and therein lies the connection between the postmodern writer or the postmodern producer who are a literature and a philosopher, right. so both are looking for new kinds of roles which do

away with the older promising rules which are you know done away with and more importantly there is no nostalgia, there is no memory, there is no mourning for the loss of meaning, for the loss of the older rules in postmodernism and therein lies the fundamental difference between the modernist and the postmodernist, okay. So this is basically the conclusion you know of the essay and you know he goes on to say what the postmodern philosopher should aspire to do.

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Finally, it must be clear that it is our business not to supply reality but to invent allusions to the conceivable which cannot be presented. And it is not to be expected that this task will effect the last reconciliation between language games (which, under the name of faculties, Kant knew to be separated by a chasm), and that only the transcendental illusion (that of Hegel) can hope to totalize them into a real unity. But Kant also knew that the price to pay for such an illusion is terror. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have given us as much terror as we can take. We have paid a high enough price for the nostalgia of the whole and the one, for the reconciliation of the

And he says, finally it must be clear that it is our business not to supply reality but to invent allusions to the conceivable which cannot be presented, right. basically it is to try and present the unrepresentable, right. Unrepresentable in the sense that which has not been presented yet. So if you present that which has not been presented yet it makes it postmodern. So it is something completely, something which is completely paralogical.

So it is not really part of the mainstream logic. It is not part of the mainstream logical system. You offer a paralogical system, a alternate reality and through the alternate reality you produce a work of art, you produce a work of painting, you produce a work of literature and that will make it postmodern, right. So it is not really designed to supply reality. So that again, it breaks away from the very productive model of our productive model of literature.

But rather looks at the nonproductive model of literature and art which is essentially innovative in quality in a paralogical sense. So again that goes back to the idea of the difference between

innovation and paralogy. Innovation is something which is designed to extend the efficiency of the already established system. Whereas the paralogy is something which breaks away from the system and offers an alternative system, offers an alternative reality through which we can find out, through which we can find new instruments of main production and representation, okay. So that is something that Lyotard talks about in the end.

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concept and the sensible, of the transparent and the communicable experience. Under the general demand for slackening and for appeasement, we can hear the mutterings of the desire for a return of terror, for the realization of the fantasy to seize reality. The answer is: Let us wage a war on totality; let us be witnesses to the unrepresentable; let us activate the differences and save the honor of the name.

And the final bit, the final sentence of the book is quite interesting and it sort of is almost a clarion call for postmodernist. He says the answer is let us wage war on totality. Let us be witnesses to the unrepresentable you know let us activate the differences and save the honor of the name. So he can replace the word name away with signifier and says let us activate the differences and save the honor of the signifier. In other words make the signifier more plural in quality.

Let us not make the signifier constructive in quality, open it up to plural possibilities of meaning etc., right. So the war in totality is the fundamental condition of postmodernism and now you can go back and again look at Lyotard's war with Habermas because according to Habermas the idea of modernity can only emerge out of totality. Totality can come from consensus in a public sphere etc. And Lyotard is obviously ideologically and ontologically you know against that kind of a consensus production in a public sphere.

Rather he wants fractures, rather he wants micronarratives, rather he wants anti-totality etc. And obviously related to that anti-totality related to that idea of local narratives is the idea to present the unrepresentable. To aspire to present the unrepresentable, to find a new instruments of meaning production and in the process restore the honor of the signifier making more plural, making more plastic, making more performative in quality in a sense opening it up for newer possibilities of meaning which is basically the business of postmodernism.

So this concludes the book what is postmodernism you know A Report on Knowledge The Postmodern Condition you know it is a report on knowledge because it spends a great deal of time talking about the nature of knowledge, how knowledge changes ontologically, epistemologically, qualitatively, functionally, ideologically, discursively with the rise of postmodernism. And again just to summarize very quickly, Lyotard does not look at this breaking down of knowledge as necessarily a barbaric condition.

He does not look at this as a condition which should be mourned but rather he accepts it theorizes it and then he goes on celebrate it in his anti-totality, anti-totalitarian quality and this anti-totalitarian quality it is what is the main criterion of postmodernity according to Lyotard and something which should be celebrated according to his discourse. So this is the conclusion of this particular text. I hope you enjoyed reading it.

So do go through the sections we read closely because that section you will be tested on in your examinations and hopefully you will have a bigger knowledge about, a very interesting knowledge about the idea of culture as it emerges in the postmodern condition. Because it is very important as a profoundly significant book in terms of looking at how we look at culture today.

So as I mentioned this is quite prophetic in quality because this is written way back many decades ago but it seems to be more true to us today the world we live in today than perhaps what it did appear to the people who lived during Lyotard's times. So thank you for this particular section. Thank you for attending this session and I will see you in the next lecture. We will begin with a new text. Thank you.