

Introduction to Cultural Studies
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Lecture - 37
Ian Hacking – The Social Construction Of What - III

So hello and welcome to this NPTEL course entitled Introduction to Cultural Studies. We were looking at Ian Hacking's book The Social Construction Of What. We have already had two lectures in this text and we will continue with this lecture and other lectures to come, okay. So just to summarize very quickly what Hacking is essentially saying in this book, he is looking or he is examining the dangers of simplification and reductionism which can sometimes come with a purely constructionist perspective on culture.

So if you look at culture as purely a construction, a social construction, if you look at issues such as violence, emotion, body, you know affect etc. purely social as constructions then there is a danger of reductionism and he is examining that danger. So just to reiterate he is not calling, he is not asking us to go away or move away from a social constructionist theory. He is completely you know he acknowledges and he asserts the importance of such theories especially when it comes to gender, especially when it comes to violence, especially when it comes to exploitation, oppression etc.

Now what he is looking at is he, the excessive reliance on such theory, the excessive reliance on relativism, the excessive reliance on social relativism or cultural relativism which looks at everything as a legitimate construct, which legitimizes everything as a discourse and if according to Hacking if he allow that to happen, if he give a free will, a free leeway to such legitimization and obviously the problem becomes that we cannot really critique anything without you know looking at it as a construct.

And if you the moment we call that a construct we sort of lend some legitimacy to it which makes it impossible to critique oppression or critique violence, critique abuse etc. So this is a very important book especially for the purpose of this course because throughout this course we

will be talking about culture as a construct, culture as a text, textuality which is changeable, mutable etc.

But this book I have very deliberately chosen as I mentioned already as a warning against as a sort of guardedness if you will against an excessive textuality, an excessive reliance on this constructionist theory which then becomes quite simplistic in a very reductionist way of looking at culture because then it does away with all the other complex nuances that inform cultural categories. That is the long and short of this book, okay. So this the section we will start of with today, which should be on your screen is the section entitled gender.

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construction ideas. Undoubtedly the most influential social construction doctrines have had to do with gender.⁷ That was to be expected. The canonical text, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, had as its most famous line, *On ne naît pas femme: on le devient*; "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (de Beauvoir 1949, II, 1; 1953, 267). It also suggested to many readers that gender is constructed.⁸

And this is where Hacking is looking at different constructionist theories which inform the knowledgeable gender, which inform analysis of gender and he draws on Butler, he draws on Beauvoir and a whole host of other feminist critics in terms of understanding how the constructionist theory can be helpful as well as unhelpful in terms of looking at gender especially in the world we live in today, okay.

So and then he goes on, he starts this particular section by asserting that undoubtedly the most influential social construction doctrines have had to do with gender. That was to be expected. The canonical text, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* had as its most famous line, one is not

born but rather becomes a woman. So we all know this really famous seminal sentence in feminism that de Beauvoir says that you know one is not born, one becomes a woman.

So it is a process of becoming. So obviously that particular statement, that particular it become really a slogan for feminism in many respects. That becomes a very interesting corroboration of the social construction of womanhood, of femininity etc. It also suggested to many readers that gender is constructed.

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Previous toilers in the women's movements knew that power relations needed reform, but many differences between the sexes had a feeling of inevitability about them. Then feminists mobilized the word "gender." Let $X =$ gender in (1)-(3) above. Feminists convinced us (1) that gendered attributes and relations are highly contingent. They also urged (2) that they are terrible, and (3) that women in particular, and human beings in general, would be much better off if present gender attributes and relations were abolished or radically transformed. Very well, but this basic sequence (1)-(3) is too simplistic. There are many differences of theory among feminists who use or allude to the idea of construction.⁹

Previous toilers in the women's movements knew that power relations needed reform, but many differences between the sexes had a feeling of inevitability about them. Then feminists mobilized the word gender. Let X equal to gender in 1 and 3 above. So he is calling back, he is alluding to the theory with the structure that he had used before you know the structure that we had discussed in the previous section.

Feminists convinced us that (1) that gendered attributes and relations are highly contingent. They also urged that (2) that they are terrible, and (3) that women in particular, and human beings in general, would be much better off if present gender attributes and relations were abolished or radically transformed. Very well, but this basic sequence is so simplistic. There are many differences of theory among feminists who use or allude to this idea of feminism, okay.

So this is the whole point in Hacking's argument that he is saying this is simplistic, that this is a very reductionist way of looking at feminism and if you just look at feminism as a construct and then argue that you know those constructs should be gender as a construct and if you argue that this construct should be done away with, this construct is evil.

It should be radically transformed etc. it becomes a very lineal, mathematical, simplistic argument which does disservice in a very complex nuances and systems that inform the understanding and formations of gender as studied by some of the leading feminists, okay. So the word simplistic holds the key over here. That is one of the contentions of Hacking throughout. So he keeps on saying that and it is a very simplistic and reductionist way of looking at culture or cultural categories if purely used in a constructionist model.

If you are purely using in a social constructionist model in terms of understanding this category. So that that makes it too simplistic in effect, okay. and then he goes on to say there are many differences or theory that more feminist use or allude to the idea of construction. So again this is one of the problems, one of the challenges of any ism for that matter. The moment a movement becomes an ism it becomes an umbrella term. It tends to become a grand narrative.

It tends to become a dominant, it tends to become a dominant discourse within that narrative and that dominant discourse sometimes effaces or does away with some of the other marginalized micro discourses that are equally important in alternative context. So Hacking over here is quite clearly saying that you know this idea of the social constructionist theory when it comes to gender it does not have takers among all the feminist.

I mean there are certain feminist who oppose this. There are certain feminist who are suspicious of this theory as being effective. So there are many differences of theory among feminists who use or allude to the idea of construction, okay.

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One core idea of early gender theorists was that biological differences between the sexes do not determine gender, gender attributes, or gender relations. Before feminists began their work, this was far from obvious. Gender was, in the first analyses, thought of as an add-on to physiology, the contingent product of the social world. Gender, in this conception, is "a constitutive social construction: . . . Gender should be understood

So one core idea of early gender theorists was that biological differences between the sexes do not determine gender, gender attributes, or gender relations. Before feminists began their work, this was far from obvious. Gender was in the first analysis thought of as an add-on to physiology, the contingent product of the social world. Gender, in this conception, is a constitutive social construction.

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as a social category whose definition makes reference to a broad network of social relations, and it is not simply a matter of anatomical differences" (Haslanger 1995, 130).¹⁰

Many constructionist uses of gender go beyond this add-on approach. Naomi Scheman (1993, ch. 18) inclines to functionalism about gender. That is, she thinks that the category of gender is in use among us to serve ends of which members of a social group may not be aware, ends which benefit some and only some members of the group. The task is to unmask these ends, to unmask the ideology. When Scheman says that gender is socially constructed, she means in part that it motivates visions in which women are held to be essentially, of their very nature, subject to male domination.

Gender should be understood as a social category whose definition makes references to a broad network of social relations, and it is not simply a matter of anatomical differences. So you know obviously Hacking over here is tracing the genealogy of feminism to a certain extent, the genealogy of gender studies to a certain extent and he is examining how gender becomes or

gender moves from a purely anatomical or biological category to a more discursive or more contingent cultural category.

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When Scheman says that gender is socially constructed, she means in part that it motivates visions in which women are held to be essentially of their very nature subject of male domination. So you know this is the next step that Butler, that Hacking is examining and you know he says quite clearly that many constructionist theories that go beyond as add-on meaning of gender you know add-on meaning being the gender is biological as well as an ideological phenomenon.

And then he goes on to say there are certain feminists who you know pushed us to another extreme and Naomi Scheman being a good example of that where she says you know Scheman looks at gender as a function. So she takes a very functionalist approach to gender, a very functionalist perspective on gender and which she says quite clearly that gender is a function which is sort of designed to privilege certain sections of society.

And to marginalize certain other sections of society and the whole point of doing gender studies is to unmask the constructed quality, to unmask the ideology of gender, the ideology informing gender okay. So this is Scheman's argument. But then Hacking will say that this a problematic argument because it just relies almost entirely on a constructionist theory which does away with some of the other nuances, some of the lift realities of gender in our daily lives.

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Scheman wants to reform the category of gender. Judith Butler is more rebellious. She insists that individuals become gendered by what they do—a favored word is “performance.” She rejects the notion that gender is a constructed add-on to sexual identity. Male and female bodies are not givens. My body is, for me, part of my life, and how I live that life is part of the determination of what kind of body I have. “Perhaps this construct called ‘sex’ is as culturally constructed as gender . . . with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all” (Butler 1990, 7).

So Scheman wants to reform the category of gender. Judith Butler is more rebellious. She insists that individuals become gendered by what they do, a favored word is performance. So I often said we should remember Butler because we just finished Gender Trouble and we saw how the word performance is a really key category in Butler because that determines gender to a great extent. That determines gender embodiment.

That determines gender identity, performance and performativity in Butler. So these are the function through which gender is arrived at, performed and embodied in different discursive situations. So performance is a very crucial category, a very vital category in Butler. She rejects the notion that gender is a constructed add-on to sexual identity. Male and female bodies are not givens.

My body is, for me, part of my life and how I live that life is part of the determination of what kind of body I have. Perhaps this construct called sex is as culturally constructed as gender with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all. So when we look at Butler, Butler basically looks at the impossibility of any prediscursive gender category.

So we saw when we read Butler that how Butler rejects any idea of meta discursivity or prediscursivity. So she looks at every moment as discursive. She says that being born, the

moment a child is being born or is born, a child is born into a discursive system, into a discursive economy. And the child partakes the discursive economy, consumes the discursive economy and then obviously negotiates or navigates with the discursive economy through a combination of conformity and deviance, conformity and subversion; both go hand in hand.

Sometimes one exceed the other in terms of navigation with the discursive economy. So that is Butler and we have already that, okay. But you know over here what Hacking is saying is very interesting. Hacking says that Butler offers a more sophisticated, a more complex analysis of gender than just a purely constructionist approach.

So he says quite clearly that Butler seems Butler appears to move away from a purely constructionist approach and take a more nuance approach towards gender and gender performance and gender identity and that is the reason why Hacking seems to laud Butler over some of the other feminist who take a purely constructionist view when it comes to looking at gender.

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We may here be reminded, but only for a moment, of Thomas Laqueur's (1990) observations of how differently the sex organs have been represented in, among other things, Western medical texts of the past millennium. Butler is not discussing such systems of knowledge about the body. They have, of course, limned some possibilities for perception of self, and influenced possibilities for acting, living. But her concern goes far beyond Laqueur's. The systems of knowledge that he presents all assume that sex is physiological, a given prior to human thought. They differ about what is given. Butler questions how we get the idea of that given. Older notions of gender do not help answer such quest

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The systems of knowledge that he presents all assume that sex is physiological, a given prior to human thought. They differ about what is given. Butler questions how we get the idea of that given. So this is again a very good summary of Butler whose whole idea of Gender Trouble is to question the idea of the given you know the constructed quality of the given and how does the given come into being through various economic, political, religious, sexual, cultural practices.

So that is how the given is created and then it manages to become a given by effacing or concealing its constructed quality and that is what Butler argues throughout Gender Trouble as we have seen already. So older notions of gender do not help answer such questions.

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"How, then," she asks, "does gender need to be reformulated to encompass the power relations that produce the effect of a prediscursive sex and so conceal that very operation of discursive production?" Thus she wants at least to revise early feminist notions of gender, and as I read her, wants to mature away from talk of construction and proceed to a more complex analysis that would, perhaps, shed the word "construction" altogether.

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How then she asks does gender need to be reformulated to encompass the power relations that produce the effect of a prediscursive sex and so conceal the very operation of discursive production. Thus she wants at least to revise early feminist notions of gender and as I read her, wants to mature away from talk of construction and proceed to a more complex analysis that would perhaps shed the word construction altogether.

So this is a very key section in this book, *The Social Construction Of What* where Hacking actually looks at Butler and you know he thinks, he reads Butler as someone who is trying to move away from a purely constructionist perspective on gender and offer a more complex analysis of gender that is more holistic, that is more nuance, is more incorporative, is more inclusive in quality.

And that takes on the lift reality that daily discourses our life and experientiality of the human body which is a corporeality you know and not just looking at the entire phenomenon as a social construct. So Butler according to Hacking over here is moving away from a purely constructionist theory and offering a more complex theory of gender formation and gender identity performance. So that is why Hacking seems to laud Butler or appreciate Butler especially in the analysis of gender, okay. So Butler cites as an ally an author whose work is revolutionary.

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Wittig (1992, 9) repudiates the feminist tradition that affirms the power of being woman. The entire set of sexual and gender categories should be overthrown. According to Wittig, the lesbian is an agent of revolution because she lives out a refusal to be either man or woman.

Scheman, to use a ranking I shall elaborate later, is a *reformist* constructionist who wants to *unmask* some ideology. Butler's published work is what I call *rebellious*, while Wittig's is *revolutionary*. But do not imagine that all feminists are hospitable to social construction talk.

Monique Wittig repudiates the feminist tradition that affirms the power of being woman. The entire set of sexual and gender categories should be overthrown. According to Wittig, the lesbian is an agent of revolution because she lives out a refusal to be either man or woman. Scheman to use a ranking I shall elaborate later, is a reformist constructionist who wants to unmask some ideology. Butler's published work is what I call rebellious, while Wittig's is revolutionary. But do not imagine that all feminists are hospitable to social construction talk.

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I suggested that Butler distances herself from it, preferring concepts of greater precision and subtlety. Jeffner Allen seems to have avoided it from the start. She thinks that too much of such talk gets caught up in banal and narcissistic postmodern fascinations with mere texts. It diverts attention away from the basics, like wage inequalities. Quite in opposition to Wittig, she suggests that it might be a good idea to refashion a specifically feminine sensitivity. She can be caustic about the idea that she, herself, is socially constructed. Which society did you have in mind? she asks (Allen 1989, 7).

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She can be caustic about the idea that she herself is socially constructed. Which society did you have in mind? she asks. Okay, so at the end Hacking is offering another example of Jeffner, Jeffner Allen who actually moves away or who rejects the social constructionist idea of looking at gender by suggestive, that obsessive attention to social construction can sometimes divert our attention to some lift realities, to some real crisis, some experiential crisis, some real economic problems such as wage inequalities, race problems, you know racial difference etc. which are very real and lift realities in everyday life.

So you know what Hacking says over here drawing on Allen and also you know reading Butler in a certain way is that an obsessive and over determination of textuality and over reliance on textuality can be a very banal you know shallow postmodern way of looking at gender, of looking at the lift reality of gender.

And this is again one of the problems in postmodernism and are something that any postmodernist and I do consider myself as a postmodernist as well in a very modest way should acknowledge that postmodernism is always in danger of being reified into a very shallow rhetoric of textuality where everything becomes a text, everything becomes textural and that is fine.

But then that sometimes diverts attention away from some life realities of everyday life such as wage inequality, such as economic crisis, such as racial problems, such as racial migration, such as abuse, violence etc. So this obsession with text, obsession with textuality in postmodernism is something that you know Hacking seems to be rejection, seems to be refuting and resisting throughout this particular book.

And this is a very interesting reading of Butler because it is very easy to look at Butler as someone who allies with a very you know linear poststructuralist, postmodernist way of looking at gender. But what Hacking does with Butler is very interesting because he says quite clearly that Butler seems to be moving away from a purely social constructionist theory of gender.

And instead looking at a more complex understanding of gender taking into account the life realities, the experientiality of gender as a phenomenon, as an embodied phenomenon and not just as a text, not just as a rhetoric, not just as a linguistic, discursive problem. So this is a very interesting way of looking at gender and what Hacking does in this section is he takes gender as a category, a very crucial category.

Because you know it is something which keeps coming up in cultural studies and you cannot really do without it. You cannot really avoid talking about gender. You cannot really avoid talking about the gender problems we face everyday in cultural studies. And he says if you look, if you are taking a purely constructionist perspective on gender you are missing away, you are in the risk of missing away many problems, missing out on many problems of life daily reality of gender.

And then you end up becoming purely textural, you end up being purely rhetorical, you end up becoming purely playful you know in terms of how you understand and configure gender relations. So this section is very important in this particular book, okay. So now we skip a little bit and then we move on to a section which is entitled the self which should be on your screen at the moment.

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THE SELF

Statement (0) helps clarify one very popular site for social construction analyses: "the self." I have a little trouble here. We seldom encounter anyone talking about "the self," except for rather highbrow conversation. This is quite unlike the situation with women refugees, a down-to-earth and practical topic. Our English word "self" works better as a suffix (herself) and a prefix (self-importance) than as a substantive. That is significant, but I do not want to practice linguistic philosophy here. We have to accept a situation in which many scholars contentedly discuss the self.

The history of modern philosophy contains many discussions that can induce talk about constructing the self. All of them (to foreshadow a theme developed in the next chapter) go back to Kant, and his visions of the way in which both the moral realm and the framework for the material realm are constructed.

So, so what Hacking is doing over here is very interesting. He is taking up different categories such as gender, self, emotion, refugee problem, abuse etc. and he says that you know if you take these problems which are very real problems, very real conditions, the self is a very real condition, gender is a very real condition and if we are using a purely constructionist way of looking at these conditions.

And that just limits us to a very textural understanding of these categories and stops us from engaging these categories at a lift daily level, at a real level and you know therein lies the difficulty, therein lies the problem with social constructionist theory that it sometimes ends up being reified and rarified and moves away from the lift reality of existence, okay. So the self is obviously one of those very crucial vital categories that inform our everyday existence.

And Hacking over here delineates how an over determination and over reliance on social constructionist theory can offer a very inadequate understanding of the self and you know how

the self needs to be a more elaborated, more complex phenomenon just being considered to be a social construction, okay. The history of modern philosophy contains many discussions that can induce talk about constructing the self.

All of them to foreshadow a theme developed in the next chapter go back to Kant, and his visions of the way in which both the moral and realm and the framework for the material realm are constructed. Take existentialism so you know existentialism is obviously one of the key philosophies of the self. It was phenomenally popular in early twentieth century and it is still very popular and is considered to be one of the great philosophies in terms of looking at the self as an activity, as an engagement with the real world.

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Take existentialism. Readers of Camus or the early Sartre can form a picture of a self with absolutely no center, a self that constructs itself by free acts of will. The constructed self must, however, accept agonizing responsibility for that which it has constructed. Later, Sartre with greater awareness of Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, thought of the self as being constructed in a social matrix. This suggests a genuine distinction in which some constructions of the self are social, and some are not. Thus May (1992, 3) writes of a view, which he calls "social existentialism," and which he finds "worth reviving"; one "which derives from Heidegger, Jaspers and the later Sartre [and which] sees the self as a social

So readers of Camus or the early Sartre can form a picture of the self with absolutely no center, a self that constructs itself by free acts of will. The constructed self must, however, accept agonizing responsibility for what, for what it achieves. So the construct itself must however accept agonizing responsibility for what that which it has constructed. Later, Sartre with greater awareness of Heidegger and Karl Jaspers thought of the self as being constructed in a social matrix.

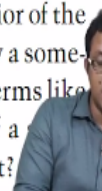
So the word matrix comes up in this section and Hacking uses the word matrix in a very interesting way in order to situate that particular (()) (21:22) against social construction, okay

and we will see how that works. It is very sort of complex at the same time quite interesting. This suggests a genuine distinction in which some constructions of the self are social, and some are not. Thus May writes of a view and which he calls social existentialism and which he finds worth reviving; one which derives from Heidegger, Jaspers and the later Sartre.

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construct, as a function of the interplay of history, social conditioning, and the chosen behavior of the individual person." This is the very view, quoted earlier, expressed by the overworked director of the welfare agency: "And I myself am, of course, a social construct; each of us is."

The point of saying *social* construct is to contrast it with individualist, and in the case of Camus and early Sartre almost solipsist, construction of the self. Note that the quasi-solipsist construction of the self is rather naturally called construction. We have the picture of a self step by step coalescing through a sequence of free acts, each of which must build on the self built up by preceding free acts. Conversely, the "interplay of history, social conditioning, and the chosen behavior of the individual person" can hardly be called *construction* at all. Only a somewhat unreflective usage—the result of rote and repetition—of terms like "social construct" would prompt one to call the resultant self a construct. Social product, product of society, yes, but construct?



And which sees the self as a social construct, as a function of the interplay of history, social conditioning and the chosen behavior of the individual person. This is the very view quoted earlier, expressed by the overworked director of the welfare agency. And I myself am of course a social construct, each of us is. The point of saying social construct is to contrast it with individualist and in the case of Camus and early Sartre almost solipsist, construction of the self.

Note that the quasi-solipsist construction of the self is rather naturally called construction. We have the picture of a self step by step coalescing through a sequence of free acts, each of which must build on the self built up by preceding free acts. Conversely, the interplay of history, social conditioning and the chosen behavior of the individual person can hardly be called construction at all. Only a somewhat unreflective usage, the result of rote and repetition of terms like social construct would prompt one to call the resultant self a social construct.

Social product, product of society, yes, but construct? So this particular section is very interesting because what Hacking seems to be saying is he is making a difference between social

product and social construct and he is saying that everyone, every self, every act of self, every activity of self is a product of society, is a product of being in society and it goes without saying that we all engage, we all navigate, we all negotiate with a social materials, with a social apparatus, with a discursive economy called linguistic whatever and the self emerges as a product of engaging or negotiating with this apparatus.

So you know the social product is a more appropriate term rather than calling itself as a social construct, okay. So the construct is inadequate, slightly erroneous when you are describing yourself according to Hacking over here. So product is a more important word. Product is a more holistic word than construct in Hacking's analysis in this section.

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Some people find the social construction of the self repugnant for quite the opposite reason. Far from thinking of the self as beginning in a centerless Sartrean vacuum, they identify "the self" with a religious, mystical, metaphysical, or transcendental vision of the soul. Selves have essences, and, except in superficial and accidental ways, they are not constructs. Sartre, early and late, thought this was simply a mistake, so here we have a profound philosophical disagreement masquerading under the label of construction, pro or con.

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So here we have a profound philosophical disagreement masquerading under the label of construction pro and con, okay. So you know the different ways of looking at social construction so you know Hacking will say that even Sartre moves away from looking at self from a social

construct and then you know he looks at self as something more complex later on in life. So the different ways you can disagree with the idea of the social constructed self.

So you can talk with the self as a product of society. You can talk with the self with an essence that is not necessarily a construct. So there are two different ways you can disagree with the social constructionist theory when it comes to looking at the self. A, looking at the self as a product of society and not a construct and B. looking at the self you know as having an essence which had a superficial constructed quality but the real meaning derives from the essence.

So these two perspective, one social perspective and the other more metaphysical perspective, both disagree on the social constructionist theory of looking at the self, okay.

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There is yet another ground of objection, more empiricist than the last. Today's English-language traditions of political theory emphasize individual liberty and individual rights. Human beings are thought of as self-subsistent atoms who enter into relationships with other human beings. Enlightenment philosophies of the social contract theories had such a background, as do present-day game-theoretic approaches to ethics. Such pictures invite us to think that first there are individual "selves," and then there are societies. That has been a fruitful model in terms of which to think about justice, duty, government, and law. People who subscribe to this vision or strategy find talk of social construction suspect.

There is yet another ground of objection. So there is a third ground of objection that Hacking is highlighting. More empiricist than the last. Today's English-language traditions of political theory emphasize individual liberty and individual rights. Human beings are thought of as self-subsistent atoms who enter into relationships with other human beings.

So this is something which may remind us of you know Lyotard's idea of nodal points if you remember the postmodern condition where Lyotard says that every person inhabits a nodal point in which he or she intersects or interacts with other nodal points, other human beings, other

systems of thought, other systems of signification etc. right. So in that sense every human being becomes a subsistent atom interacting with other subsistent atoms in terms of nodal points you know enter into relationships.

And this quality of being self-subsistent is something which goes against entirely the idea of the social constructionist idea of the self, okay. Human beings are thought of as self-subsistent atoms who enter into relationships with other human beings. Enlightenment philosophies of the social contract theories had such a background, as do present-day game-theoretic approaches to ethics. So again, you know he is drawing on game theory when he comes to ethics.

Such picture invite us, such pictures invite us to think of that first there are individual selves and then there are societies. That has been a fruitful model in terms of which to think about justice, duty, government, and law. People who subscribe to this vision or strategy find talk of social construction suspect. So again, there are three different disagreements that Hacking is offering over here in terms of looking at the self as a purely social construct, right.

So the first agreement is to looking at the self as a product of society, as a product of interactions with society. The second disagreement comes on a more metaphysical understanding of the self, the self having an essence etc. And the third more empiricist rejection of the social constructionist theory of the self can come from the idea of the self as being a self-subsistent atom which interacts with other similar atoms in you know different kinds of interactional environments where you know social construction become secondary and interaction becomes more important, okay.

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Others, who began by thinking in that way, come to realize that, despite their upbringing and the assumptions of much of the political discourse that governs the societies they inhabit, the atomistic presocial self is a harmful myth. They then find it rather liberating to proclaim that the self is a construct. That is one reason we have heard so much about the social construction of the self. It comes from people who once found the notion of a presocial self natural, even inevitable. They feel that condition (0) has been satisfied: in the present state of affairs, the atomistic self is taken for granted; it appears to be inevitable. (And it isn't inevitable at all.)

So others who began to thinking, by thinking in that way, come to realize that, despite their upbringing and the assumptions of much of the political discourse that governs the societies they inhabit, the atomistic presocial self is a harmful myth. They then find it rather liberating to proclaim that the self is a construct. That is one reason we have heard so much about the social construction of the self.

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Some thinkers find atomistic visions of human nature to be obviously false. Rather, we are born into a society, educated by it, and our "selves" are sculpted out of biological raw material by constant interaction with our fellow humans—not to mention the material environments that our extended families and larger communities have made. Charles Taylor (1995) is one distinguished philosopher who takes this stance. He uses anti-Enlightenment German authors as his authorities in this connection—what he calls the Hamann-Herder-Humboldt axis. For such a thinker, there seems very little point in talking about the social construction of the self, because condition (0) is not satisfied. The self (whatever that is imagined to be) does not seem in the least inevitable.

Some thinkers find atomistic visions of human nature to be obviously false. Rather, we are born into a society, educated by it, and our selves are sculpted out of biological raw material by constant interaction with other fellow humans. Not to mention the material environments that our extended families and larger communities have made. Charles Taylor is one distinguished philosopher who takes this stance. He uses anti-enlightenment German authors as his authorities in this connection what he calls the Hamann-Herder-Humboldt axis.

For such a thinker, there seems very little point in talking about the social construction of the self, because condition 0 is not satisfied. The self somewhat that is imagined to be does not seem to be in the least inevitable. So you know the different theories that Hacking is offering in terms of refuting the purely social constructionist way of looking at self and he mentions you know Charles Taylor at the end who looks at a very complex understanding of the self as being not inevitable.

Self is constantly in interaction with other fellow human being, other communities etc. So in that sense this interactional model, this interactional understanding of the self moves away from a purely socially constructionist view of the self which becomes quite narrow in comparison according to Hacking. So I stop with this point today. I will move on and continue with this text in the lectures to come. Thank you for your attention.