

SEMESTER-IV



ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ମୁକ୍ତ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ, ସମ୍ବଲପୁର
ODISHA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY, SAMBALPUR

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Odisha State Open University
Sambalpur

MASTER OF ARTS
SOCIOLOGY
(MASO)

**MSO-402: CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL
THEORIES**

Credit: 4

Block-1, 2, 3 & 4

MSO-402: CONTEMPORARY SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES

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ODISHA STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY, SAMBALPUR

Programme Name: **Master of Arts (Sociology)**

Programme Code: **MASO**

Course Name: **Contemporary Sociological Theory**

Course Code: **MSO-402**

Semester: **IV**

Credit: **4**

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PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY:

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Printer:

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Block-1

FUUNCTIONALISM AND BEYOND

Unit-1: Origin and Basic Postulates

Unit-2: Anthropological Functionalism: Malinowski and Brown

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K. Merton**

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UNIT-01 ORIGIN AND BASIC POSTULATES

Structure

- 1.1 Learning Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Functionalism in a nutshell
- 1.4 The methodology of functionalism according to Bredemeier
- 1.5 The various Proposition and Premises
- 1.6 Functional Analysis's codification by Robert Merton
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1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you will understand

- Functionalism in a nutshell
- The methodology of functionalism according to Bredemeier
- Origin and basic postulates of functionalism
- Functional Analysis's codification by Robert Merton

1.2 INTRODUCTION

Functional analysis has influenced modern sociological theory intensely and at the same time became enormously popular at the turn of the century. Throughout the last two generations, functionalism came out and recognized itself at the most appropriate time when sociologists had just discarded the plentiful incomplete elucidations and deterministic assumptions and were looking for a further comprehensive conjectural and procedural toll for the scrutiny of a variety of sociological phenomenon and their interrelatedness. It came out in the practice of grand sociological theories deliberately familiarizing it to them and recurrently mounting them and gave sociology a novel and significant explicative archetype or paradigm of the social order. We are not discussing functional analysis newly. In both natural science and social science, it has a long history. It rented a great deal from natural sciences, particularly the annex of the many resemblances amid the social order and living being. The narration of functional analysis may be mapped out to Spencer's organic analogy, August Comte's *consensus universalis*,

Pareto's conception of society as an arrangement in symmetry and Durkheim's causal functional investigation. According to Comte society is a functionally organized system, its constituents are in synchronization. Comte views that *consensus universalis* is the essential connection amid the rudiments of society and is the very underpinning of social structure. Spencer showed an organic biological replica. Durkheim talked about the predominance of the system over rudiments and sustains that social facts, the appropriate subject material of sociology, are sovereign of the individual spirit and forced upon him from without. If we see Malinowski's functionalism, it is often understood as individualistic functionalism because of its treating of social and cultural systems as united responses to essential natural needs of folks customized by cultural values. Different social structures and processes, institutions and values, all are considered as purposeful or functional responses to person's physiological requirements such as appetite and sex which prompt cultural usages and social institutions which sequentially, shape the way these fundamental drives articulate themselves. According to Malinowski, culture as an absolutely incorporated way of life, an macrobiotic whole, homogenous and pleasant. He attempted to show the interrelatedness of a variety of cultural structures but discarded the incorrect approach to functionalism that diminishes it to the approximately ineffective scheme that the whole thing is connected to the whole thing else. Somewhat, he observed culture as an instrumental actuality that survived and functioned in reaction to a multiplicity of person needs whose accomplishment led to the growth of abundant cultural patterns and community practices.

Malinowski's individualistic functionalism has been rejected by Radcliff Brown and by following the Durkheim's tradition, he highlighted structured social relations. By rejecting Malinowski's stress on affirmed intention of individual participants, Radcliff Brown prefers social structure as the unit of investigation and required to elucidate abundant interpersonal relations and socially patterned ways diminishing fixed injury intrinsic in such relationships. Radcliff Brown pays attention principally on the function of each component in the continuation and growth of a total structure, and mostly ignored functional consequences of explicit rudiments for discriminated parts of the complete and for the individual apparatuses.

1.3 FUNCTIONALISM IN A NUTSHELL

According to Bredemeir functionalism as follows:

The functional approach to sociology consists essentially of an effort to comprehend social phenomenon in conditions of their affiliation to a number of systems.

Four different connotations of the term ‘function’:

1. In actively popular speech, the expression ‘function’ indicates to social congregations, public observances, assembly, gatherings etc.
2. In the sense of mathematics, ‘function’ is a variable whose worth is determined by more than two or two other variables. An instance would be the declaration that populace explosion is a function of fertility and mortality rates.
3. As a professional role, the term ‘function’ might refer to a specific doing, obligations, vocation or a set of officer task dispersed to a public functionary. For examples the function of a tax evaluator or of the mayor of a municipality.
4. ‘Function’ as a term can be considered as a suitable and sustaining action or ingredient played by an entity contained by the framework of a bigger intact. According to Martindale the function is ‘system-determined and system-sustaining phenomenon’, the term ‘function’ in this context indicates to optimistic and pessimistic consequences of various social institutions and numerous social processes. In past, function was frequently elucidated in an affirmative sense signifying contributions made by a component for the adaptation or adjustment of a given structure or its constituent parts. But today the terminology ‘function’ is used in the more wide-ranging and unbiased sense of ‘consequences. The consequences may be or may not be intended or recognized. According to Levy, functions refer to a condition or state of affairs, which is consequential from the function of a structure through time. Levy uses the terminology ‘eufunction’ to describe positive or constructive consequences which contribute to the preservation and endurance of the social system, and the term ‘dysfunction’ to denote negative or adverse consequences that contribute to the system’s breakdown and change.

We should not confuse functions with subjective feelings. According to Robert K. Merton, the social functions do have, ‘observable objective consequences. Functional investigation always search for to portray the consequences of a prearranged cultural usage or social rudiments; clarify the perseverance of an pragmatic pattern of behaviour; and examine accurate contribution of a fraction of some entire to other fraction and to the entire.

1.4 THE METHODOLOGY OF FUNCTIONALISM ACCORDING TO BREDEMEIER

1. Industrious investigation begins with a declaration of the kind of deed obligatory to uphold some system of interrelationships, explicitly, the system of which the pragmatic consistency is a part.
2. It utters the motivational circumstances which are indispensable to manufacture that action (the normative criterion of fulfillment which will give way the significant action).
3. It depicts the motivational prototype really in commission so as to manufacture the standardization under analysis.
4. It searches for to find the foundation of those patterns (to segregate the normative criteria accountable for the sensible actions).
5. It contrasts the consequences of the working stimulus with the motivations illustrated as compulsory, together with the abnormal modes of adjusting to dissatisfaction of efforts to meet the criterion in query.
6. It in conclusion assesses the function played by the standardization in doubt in contributing to the arrangement or system of which it is a component.

1.5 THE VARIOUS PROPOSITION AND PREMISES

1. Functional analysis always believes the previous conceptualization of a system and an explicit stress on the predominance of the system over elements. According to Abrahamson, 'Functionalism' involves the prior conceptualization of a system before its "explanatory imagery" makes any sense. Martindale considers the natural system to be the elementary explanatory replica of functionalism. According to Martindale:

The distinguishing possession of functional investigation is the use of some concept of system as crucial for sociological investigation. The original prerequisite of an inclusive analysis is the understandable definition of the system alleged. Nothing will make a functional analysis indefinite more speedily or entirely than vagueness as to just what, in the specific case, comprise the system. Just the once one has cut off the system, the subsequent mission is to recognize its apparatus. And just the once the apparatus have been recognized, the relation amid this apparatus happen to crucial.

According to the functionalist, the system is more than the sum of its parts, and the system is also the relationships amongst its parts. The principal concentration of the system is in the contribution of the essentials to the continuance of the system.

2. The system's elements are functionally interconnected. Like an organism, society, is supposed as a system of functionally interrelated apparatus. The apparatus is like an organ, which performs a function indispensable for the endurance of the system. The standard function of one element, then, entails the standard function of additional elements. Parson writes by referring to the 'structural-functional system',:

On the one side, it comprises such a system of structural categories which ought to be rationally sufficient to provide a determinate portrayal of an empirically potential, inclusive empirical system of the pertinent class. One of the most important role of system on this level is to assure wholeness, to make it methodologically unfeasible to neglect something vital, and consequently unambiguously to illustrate every indispensable structural rudiments and relations of the system.

On the other hand, such a system must also include a set of dynamic functional categories. These must articulate directly with the structural categories- they must describe processes by which these particular structures are maintained or upset, the relations of the system to its environment are mediated.

3. Every element of the system has a function which contributes positively to the continued operation of that system or, negatively, toward its disintegration and change. The central focus of functionalism is the analysis of such contributions which are called eufunctions (positive), dysfunctions (negative) or 'survival' that is, an element which makes no contribution at all or has outlived its purpose. Thus religion is supposed to relieve the tension in a social group, incest taboo is supposed to regulate sexual access and avoid jealousy and confusion of status, and the prison system is to enforce social control.
4. Every system is a well integrated configuration of elements that constitute an organic whole. In the words of Parsons, 'Functionally specialized or differentiated sectors of living systems stand in some kind of an order of cybernetic ally hierarchical control relative to each other. This is quite a fundamental principle of ordering such systems

and, as such, is an enormous aid to the solution of a wide variety of theoretical problems.' For example, conventional wisdom in early anthropological analysis has portrayed traditional societies as coherent, harmoniously interwoven cultural systems with greater internal consistency, uniformity and homogeneity. Although modern societies are complex, rather than homogenous, and characterized by rather structural differentiation, they are still regarded as systems with interdependent parts.

5. Every society is a relatively persistent structure of elements with built-in mechanisms for self regulation. Using the principle of homeostasis, Parsons and his associates view society as a self-regulating system, attempting by more or less automatic adjustments to redress and balance of its equilibrium when it is upset by internal or external forces. 'The maintenance of relative stability, including stability of certain processes of change like the growth of an organism, in the face of substantially greater environmental variability, means that ...there must be "mechanisms" that adjust the state of the system relative to changes in its environment.' The development of this strain of thought has proceeded through three distinct stages. First, functionalists regarded society as a stable system of patterned interaction of structured social relationships. In this view, basic relationships among system components change little over time; an emphasis was on such concepts as order, stability, structure, integration and persistence. In the second stage, functionalists sought to overcome the difficulties of 'normative' interpretations and problems of invariance by shifting from a more teleological type of explanation fashioned after the biological model to a more mechanistic or causal type of analysis following the lead of the physical science model. Thus, functionalists introduced the principle of homeostasis which postulates that society maintains a state of equilibrium which may be temporarily disturbed by crisis but will be automatically restored. Thirdly, faced with the criticism that equilibrium meant maintenance of status quo with no scope for fundamental changes, functionalists introduced the concept of dynamic equilibrium meaning 'a minimum of integration' of 'a net balance of an aggregate of consequences. According to this view change is possible, status quo is not necessarily restored, and a new balance simply maintains the new order and the new equilibrium. As Van den Berghe points out, 'Although integration is never perfect, social systems are fundamentally in a state of dynamic equilibrium, i.e., adjustive responses of outside changes tend to minimize the final amount of change within the system. The dominant

tendency is thus towards stability and inertia, as maintained through built-in mechanism of adjustment and social control.’

6. The social system’s function heavily depends on its member’s consensus of on values and common goals related to the fundamental requirements of the society. According to Parsons the complete social system is resting profoundly upon shared values. Definitely, social system’s consensual requirements are vital to functionalism of Parsons. Parsons views:

The core phenomenon of the dynamics of social systems is the incorporation of a set of general value patterns with the internalized need-disposition structure of the component personalities. That the constancy of any social system excluding the most ephemeral communication process is reliant on a scale of such integration may be said to be primary dynamic theorem of sociology. It is the foremost spot of reference for all investigation which may assert to be a vibrant investigation of social process.

This view observes that, since individuals internalize the norms of society and conform to this, order and stability are made possible. According to Van den Berghe:

Value consensus is the most significant and fundamental aspect making for social integration achievable, that is basic to the entire social and cultural structure, and there are wide-ranging aims or values which the majority members of a particular social system regard as advantageous and consent on. The value system is not only the genuine and most significant foundation of integration, but also the constant ingredient of socio-cultural systems.

7. The central form of society is order reinforced by stability and consensus as a rational consequence of proposals 5 and 6 and conflict based on coercion and dissensus cannot be central condition of society. Van den Berghe quoted once more,

In society we find Dysfunctions, tensions and ‘deviance’ that they do subsist and can endure for a lengthy time, but they tend to resolve themselves in the society or to be ‘institutionalized’ in the long run-in society. In other sentence we can say, when the society is unable to reach a perfect equilibrium or integration, it is limit towards which social systems lean. In society change usually happens in a steady adjustive manner, and not in a abrupt, radical mode. The changes which become visible to be radical,

actually distress mostly the social superstructure whilst parting the central elements of the social and cultural structure mostly unaffected.

8. For the social system to endure, there are definite functional prerequisites that ought to be met. The definition of the functional essential may be a comprehensive circumstance essential for the preservation of a system or a explicit unit thereof. A berle and his associates are best-known for their attempt to formulate the functional prerequisites. They have presented an extensive catalog of affirmative and pessimistic circumstances. The four pessimistic conditions any one of which is adequate to fetch a disintegrate of social schemes are:

- i. The biological disappearance or dispersal of members;
- ii. Indifference of the members, i.e. termination of person's motivation;
- iii. The hostilities of all adjacent to all; and
- iv. The assimilation of society into a new society.

To make sure the continued existence of society, the functional pre-requisites that ought to be met are:

- i. Provision for an sufficient association to the environment and for sexual recruitment
- ii. Role segregation and role obligation
- iii. Communication
- iv. Shared cognitive orientations
- v. A shared, articulated set of goals
- vi. The normative regulation of means
- vii. The regulation of emotional expression
- viii. Socialization
- ix. The effectual manage of disrupting structures of behaviour.

The functional necessities of a social system according to Parsons are,

- (i) adjustment to peripheral circumstances,
- (ii) instrumental goal-attainment,
- (iii) amalgamation amongst the components of the system and
- (iv) Pattern preservation and strain management.

Parsons stress on the problem of order and the adequacy of motivation. Only if a adequate segment of its members perform the indispensable social roles with an ample degree of

effectiveness then only the system can uphold itself. Parsons views that the system must 'have a sufficient proportion of its constituent actors effectively motivated to act in harmony with the necessities of its role system, definitely in the accomplishment of expectations and negatively in abstaining from too much disrupting, that is deviant behaviour. According to Parsons, the smallest amounts of conditions for the constancy of a system are divided into three categories:

- a. Functional pre-requisites (with regard to the individual): The society should meet the minimum needs of the majority of the actors so that they must be motivated to contribute in socially valued and rewarding activities.
- b. Functional pre-requisites (with regard to society): The society must have the minimum of control over the potentially disrupting behaviour and sufficient mechanisms of social control.
- c. Functional pre-requisites (with regard to culture): The society must have adequate cultural resources to internalize a height of persona sufficient for a social system; least conditions essential for the manufacture, preservation and development of cultural systems in general and of particular types of cultural systems include language, symbols and communication.

It is factual that every social system should accomplish certain primary structural and functional necessities for its endurance, for instance, sexual reproduction and guaranteed foodstuff supply will be vital. The heuristic value of such formulations is not important, however. It is simple to manufacture a extensive catalog of prerequisites several of which are also extensive (for example, communication,), also blurred (shared cognitive orientations) plus too apparent (sexual recruitment). Because it is merely a catalog, you can for all time append to it. Furthermore, it is complicated to experiment the empirical validity of the alleged functional prerequisites. Hence, Homans put a question that how many societies have in fact unsuccessful to stay alive? Nevertheless, we be able to and should differentiate amid a exacting social system and society as a universal grouping. European society has endured but the feudal system has decomposed. The society of Hindu endured but the society of Aryan vanished long ago. Therefore it might also blur to inquire 'What are the different kinds of the functional requisites for the continued existence of society?' somewhat; we must inquire 'What conditions must be met if a given social system is to be maintained in its present setting?' therefore we might articulate of the functional prerequisites of whichever society however more precisely of society of Japanese or society of Hindu. Whereas the universal circumstances for the continued existence of the human society are around the equivalent for Western society and

Chinese society, the different functional requisites for the continued existence of the Chinese communes, caste system or Hopi Indians are quite precise and distinctive. In a nutshell, functional necessities or prerequisites are to be determined for dissimilar levels of generalization.

Furthermore, Sjoberg proposes that although societies do have functional pre-requisites, quite a few of them might disagree to manufacture 'paradoxical functional requisites which inhere within social systems or impose upon them from without'.

According to Sjoberg

That all social systems are, once upon a time or one more, overwhelmed by incongruous functional necessities (or imperative) and that these are connected with the creation of reciprocally hostile structural arrangements that function to meet these necessities. Indirectly in this conception, that several of this reciprocally conflicting structure might essentially be indispensable to the 'operation' or 'maintenance' of the scheme.

According to Sjoberg, there are three bases of conflicting demands:

- (i) the requirements of the interior systems only,
- (ii) the disjunctiveness amid interior requirements and exterior limitations,
- (iii) And the disagreement amongst the exterior restraints themselves.

1.6 FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS'S CODIFICATION BY ROBERT MERTON

Robert Merton has given the codification along with systematization of functional investigation. He appraised the indispensable postulates in functional analysis and evaluated and customized them as follows:

1. Postulate of the functional unity of society:

Basing on biological analogy, this postulate analyzes society as a well-integrated and consistent whole the elements of which contribute to the total maintenance of the total system. According to Radcliff Brown, the contribution of particular social usages 'to the total social life as the functioning of the total social system' and Malinowski, still argues that usages are functional for 'culture as a whole – ultimately consequently for the biological and mental, wellbeing of each individual member'. The core postulation is that regular social institutions or frequently shared beliefs and practices are functional for every associate of the society. Merton also questions the postulation and asserts that cultural items do not function homogeneously for the society and for every one of its

members. Anthropologists have overstated the social solidarity, homogeneity and integration of primordial societies.

Although such a commencement has virtues as a operational hypothesis for anthropologists doing field work in quite motionless and ‘homogeneous’ little communities, its function to modern multifaceted societies characterized by functional specialism, structural discrimination and rational bureaucracy, is of suspicious value. Furthermore, social integration is a problem to be investigated. For that reason, functional investigation must carry out both optimistic and pessimistic consequences and identify which rudiments contribute to what and how.

2. Postulate of universal functionalism:

This postulate presupposes that ‘all homogeneous social or cultural forms have affirmative functions.’ The anthropologists of nineteenth century, for example understood that each enduring social pattern or custom must have constructive functions contributing to the maintenance of the system and dubbed as ‘survivals’ any patterns whose functions could not be readily identified. Emblematic is Malinowski’s debate that ‘in each type of civilization, each custom, material object, idea and belief fulfill several vital functions. This ascertains is definitely open to debate. What is excellent for the individual is not essentially excellent for the society. A social practice that has constructive consequences for the privileged might have unconstructive consequences for the masses. Even social institutions which are intentionally fashioned for the betterment of society as a entire might have devastating consequences at times and under definite circumstances for sections of the society. For instance, universities and technical schools in developing countries that turn out educated populace faster than the market can absorb them into productive employment may be showing the germ of dissatisfaction leading to bigger hostility and political volatility.

3. Postulate of indispensability:

The postulation is that if a social pattern is well recognized, it ought to be meeting some fundamental requirements of the system, and therefore it ought to be essential. It is a double barreled postulation – definite functions are essential for the endurance of the social system; and definite social or cultural forms are essential for satisfying these functions. Merton discards postulate as formulated and proposes that the same cultural item may execute manifold functions and substitute items may accomplish the same

function. The requirement for government might be met by a ruthless dictator, a liberal democrat or a traditional monarch. If social integration is the function of religion, this function could be served by a strong, centralized government. If salvation is the function served by religion, a simple system of faith would do, and the complexity of abundant religious forms is hard to elucidate. For that reason Merton establishes such harmonizing concepts as 'functional equivalents', 'functional alternatives', or 'functional substitutes'.

The codification of functional analysis according to Merton as follows:

1. Functional investigations commence with the selection of a standardized (i.e. patterned or repetitive) social or cultural item whose functions are supposed to be studied.
2. Functional investigation usually engross reference to subjective dispositions such as motives and purposes of individuals involved in a social system which are not to be puzzled with the concepts of objective consequences of attitude, belief and behaviour.
3. In an endeavor to eradicate some of the existing types of mystification, Merton sets out to redefine existing conception of 'function'.

Functions are those observed consequences which make for adaptation or adjustment of a given system; and dysfunctions, those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the system. There is also the empirical possibility of non-functional consequences, which are simply irrelevant to the system under consideration.

In any given instance, an item may have both functional and dysfunctional consequences, giving rise to the difficult and important problem of evolving canons for assessing the net balance of the aggregate of consequences.

The second problem (arising from the easy confusion of motives and functions) requires us to introduce a conceptual distinction between the cases in which the subjective aim-in-view coincides with the objective consequence, and the cases in which they diverge.

Manifest functions are those objective consequences contributing to the adjustment or adaptation of the system which are intended and recognized by participants in the system.

Latent functions, correlatively, being those which are neither intended nor recognized.

4. Looking to recognize functions being satisfied for the society as a complete can be ambiguous because items may be functional for several individuals and several groups and dysfunctional for others. We should consequently think about a range of units for which the items has selected consequences.
5. The postulation of functional necessities which engrosses fulfilling 'conditions of survival' or meeting 'biological needs' must be re-examined. We must seek to establish types of functional requirements (universal vs. specific) as well as procedures for validating the assumption of these requirements.
6. Functional investigation should look for to recognize and analyze the social mechanisms through which functions are fulfilled.
7. Having discarded the unreasonable postulation of the functional indispensability of exacting cultural items, we should focus mind on the range of possible variation in the items which can supply as functional substitutes, alternatives, or equivalents.
8. Functional investigation should identify the inter-dependence of the rudiments of the social system as well as the limited range of variation in the items which can fulfill designated functions in the system. It is useless to say that everything is related to everything else. Nor can it be assumed that certain elements of a social system can be eliminated without affecting the rest of that system.
9. Functionalists usually are inclined to focus on the statics of social structure and discard the study of structural change. Nevertheless, the concept of dysfunction, which entails strain, stress and tension on the structural level, presents a methodical approach to the study of dynamics and transformation.
10. Merton calls for better attention to the difficulty of the validation of a variety of functional suppositions and postulates. 'This requires, above all, a rigorous statement of the sociological procedures of analysis which most nearly approximate the logic of experimentation.'
11. Functional investigation itself has no inherent obligation to any ideological position; though, definite functional formulations advanced by particular sociologists may have an identifiable ideological note. The two are not to be confused.

1.7 LET US SUM UP

Academic standpoint of functionalism aspires to comprehend society by the functioning of a variety of parts (substance, institutions, actions etc.) which contribute to the contentment of the imperative requirements of societal arrangement (the social order as an intact). The origin

writers listening carefully on the requirements or indispensable circumstances of survival of civilization to which collective institutions communicate. The fractions or institutions are considered interconnected and mutually dependent. The social order is alleged, like an creature of functionally interconnected constituent ingredients. These elements carry out functions which are indispensable for the continued existence and permanence of the social order. Every constituent contributes optimistically to this preservation. Later sociologists alleged, chiefly in complex-differentiated civilizations, that there are several unconstructive consequences of various institutions over a phase of occasion as well. Parsons upholds that social system has in itself to enclose these deviations (latency). Finally, Merton is of the vision that the functions of institutions are replaced by other substitutes and thus pressures are surmounting, some of which may forever take place in the structure. This may perhaps well be tacit within functional investigation put forwarded by him.

1.8 GLOSSARY

- **Functional Approach:** The functional approach to sociology consists basically of an attempt to understand social phenomena in terms of their relationship to some system.
- **Postulate of the functional unity of society:** Based on biological analogy, this postulate views society as a well-integrated and consistent whole the elements of which contribute to the total maintenance of the total system.
- **Postulate of universal functionalism:** This postulate assumes that ‘all standardized social or cultural forms have positive functions.
- **Postulate of indispensability:** The assumption is that if a social pattern is well established, it must be meeting some basic needs of the system, and hence it must be indispensable.
- **Manifest Functions:** Manifest functions are those objective consequences contributing to the adjustment or adaptation of the system which are intended and recognized by participants in the system.
- **Latent Functions:** Latent functions, correlatively, being those which are neither intended nor recognized.

1.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Discuss the basic postulates of functionalism.
2. Elaborate Merton’s codification of functional analysis
3. Delineate Bredemeier’s methodology of functionalism.

4. What is functionalism and discuss the basic premises of functionalism.

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UNIT-02 ANTHROPOLOGICAL FUNCTIONALISM: MALINOWSKI AND RADCLIFFE BROWN

Structure

- 2.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction to Functionalism and Anthropological Tradition
- 2.3 A.R. Radcliffe-Brown's Functionalism
- 2.4 Bronislaw Malinowski's Functionalism
- 2.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.6 Check your Progress
- 2.7 References

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you will understand

- Functionalism and Anthropological Tradition
- A.R. Radcliffe-Brown's Functionalism
- Bronislaw Malinowski's Functionalism

2.2 INTRODCUTION

Undeniably functionalism as a well-expressed conceptual perspective was continued in the initial half of the 20th century by the writings of two eminent anthropologists, Bronislaw Malinowski and A.R. Radcliff Brown. These two eminent thinkers are profoundly inclined by organicism of Durkheim over and above by their individual filed studies in amongst preliterate societies. in spite of the resemblances in their scholarly environment, nevertheless the conceptual perspectives elucidated by Radcliff-Brown and Malinowski divulge numerous disagreements.

Two major schools of thought of functionalism came into being amid 1910 and 1930. One is Malinowski's functionalism and other one is Radcliff-Brown's structural functionalism.

2.3 A.R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN'S FUNCTIONALISM

Radcliff-Brown recognized that the concept of function which is applied to human societies is based on an analogy i.e. between social life and organic life. He also recognized that how the first methodical formulation of concept is applied to the firmly scientific study of society and this was performed by Emile Durkheim. Radcliff- Brown struggled to point out how some

tribulations of organismic analogizing may be triumph over. According to Brown the mainly grave predicament with functionalism was the predisposition for analysis to emerge teleological. Noting down that Durkheim's description of function pertained to the manner in which a component completes system needs; Radcliff-Brown emphasized that, keep away from the teleological repercussions of such investigation, it would be obligatory to "alternate for the expression 'needs' the expression 'necessary conditions of existence'". In doing so, he experienced that no universal human or societal requirements would be proposed; somewhat, the inquiry of which circumstances were essential for endurance would be a pragmatic one, an concern that would have to be revealed for each given social system.

Additionally, in identifying the multiplicity of circumstances essential for the endurance of diverse systems, investigation would keep away from affirming that each article of a culture should have a function and that substance in diverse cultures ought to have the identical function. One time the hazards of illegal teleology were documented; functional or structural investigation could reasonably continue from numerous postulations: (a) one necessary circumstance for endurance of a society is minimum integration of its components. (b) The expression function refers to those practices that preserve this essential integration or solidarity. (c) Therefore, in every society, structural features can be revealed to supply to the preservation of obligatory solidarity. In such a methodical approach, social structure and the situations essential for its endurance are irreducible.

In a hint alike to that of Durkheim, Radcliff-Brown observed society as realism in and of itself. Therefore, he frequently imagined cultural substances, such as kinship system and religious rites, as understandable throughout social structure- chiefly social structure's requirements for harmony and integration. For instance, in examining a lineage structure, Radcliff-Brown first presume that a few minimum amount of solidarity ought to survive in the system. Processes connected with lineage systems would afterward be assessed to decide their consequences for preserving this solidarity. The finale was that lineage systems supplied a methodical mode to arbitrate disagreement in societies where families possessed land since such a system précised who had right to land and through which side of the family unit it would forever pass. The integration of the economic arrangement – Landed "estates" owned by families --- is therefore elucidated.

This shape of examination creates an amount of troubles that comprise to disturb functional theorists. even though Radcliff-Brown declared that “functional integration of a social system is, of course, a hypothesis,” he unsuccessful to identify the logical criterion for evaluating just how greatly or how slight functional harmony is essential for testing this hypothesis. As succeeding observers revealed, without some methodical criterion for determining what is and what is not minimum functional integration and shared endurance, the hypothesis cannot be tested even in theory. Accordingly, what is naturally done is to presume that the existing system is minimally integrated and in existence as it subsists and continues. Without carefully documenting how various items of culture encourage illustrations of both integration and mal-integration of the social entirety, such a tactic can decrease the hypothesis of functional harmony to a tautology: if one can find a system to study, then it must be minimally integrated; thus lineages that are ingredient of this system ought to encourage its integration. To find out the opposite would be intricate, since the system, by virtue of being an existing system, is by now composed of integrated parts, for instance a lineage system. There is non sequitur in such interpretation, since it is fairly probable to sight a cultural article a lineage organism like having both integrative and mal-integrative consequences of the social entirety. Redcliff-Brown, in his authentic ethnographic portrayal, frequently falls unintentionally into a prototype of spherical reasoning: The reality of a system’s existence requires that its existing parts, such as a lineage system, be sighted as causative to the system’s subsistence. Presuming integration and subsequently evaluating the contribution of person’s components to the integrated entirety direct to a supplementary logical dilemma. Such a method of study entails that the reasons of particular structure-for example, lineages – lie in the system’s needs for integration, which is most probable an illicit teleology.

Radcliff-Brown would, obviously have deprived of this finale. His alertness of the jeopardy of illicit teleology would have apparently eliminated the allegation that the requirement of a system grounds the materialization of its components. His repetitive allegations that the conception of function “does not entail the rigid affirmation that the whole thing in the life of all community has a purpose” should have led to the denial of tautological interpretation. On the other hand a great deal like Durkheim, what Radcliff Brown emphasized critically was regularly not practiced in the tangible empirical examination of societies. Such slips were not intentional but appeared to be complicated to avoid with functional requirements, functional integration, and equilibrium as operating postulations.

Therefore, though Radcliff Brown demonstrated an commendable alertness of the risk of organicism –particularly of the crisis of illegitimate teleology and the hypothetical character of ideas of solidarity – he all too frequently falls into a prototype of problematic teleological interpretation. Not remembering that integration was merely a working hypothesis, he unlocked his analysis to problems of tautology. Such tribulations were constant in Durkheim’s scrutiny, and in spite of his efforts to the opposing, their spirit preoccupied even Radcliff-Brown’s perceptive thesis and ethnographies.

Radcliffe-Brown’s structural-functional Approach:

French sociological school had a tremendous influence on Radcliff Brown and he emphasized upon the social function. This French Sociological school was developed in the 1890s approximately the effort of Emile Durkheim who argue that "social phenomenon constitute a domain, or order, of reality that is autonomous of psychological and biological facts. As per this sociological discipline the social phenomenon, must be elucidated in terms of other collective phenomenon, and not by orientation to psychobiological requirements.

- Radcliffe-Brown gave emphasis on the circumstances under which social structures are maintained. He also alleged that there are definite laws that standardize the running of societies.
- He also customized the thought of want and replaced it with essential circumstances for survival for human societies and these situations can be exposed by appropriate methodical enquiry.
- He argued that the organic analogy should be used cautiously. In a biological organism the performance of any organ is termed as the action of that organ. But in a social structure the stability of structure is maintained by the practice of social life.

In Radcliffe-Brown’s idea of function, the concept of structure is concerned. This structure involves numerous component unit entities which preserve the stability of social structure.

1922 the year is known as „the year of surprise of Functionalism’ (annus mirabilis) as together Bronislaw Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown published their effort as an result of rigorous fieldwork in the similar year. ‘The Andaman Islanders’ was published by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and ‘Argonauts of the Western Pacific’ was published by Bronislaw Malinowski in the same year i.e. 1922.

Structural Features of Social Life: A.R. Radcliffe-Brown says the structural features of social life as follows:

1. Continuation of social group: social structure comprises of every kind of social groups akin to family, clan, moieties, social sanction, totemic group, social classes, caste group, kinship system etc. The inter relationships amongst these groups comprise the nucleus of the social structural occurrence.
2. Interior structure of the group: these groups have detailed interior structure. For instance, a family comprises with the relatives of father, mother and their children.
3. Understanding into social classes: these groups are prearranged into social classes and groupings. For instance, the trade and industry classes in the Western society and the castes in the Indian society.
4. Social dissimilarity: there is a social difference amid dissimilar classes which is based on sex, economic distinction, and authority and caste distinction. For instance, in India there is social dissimilarity amid the Brahmins and Shudras.
5. Arrangement of persons in dyadic affiliation: an illustration of dyadic affiliation is person to person affiliation similar to master and servant.
6. Interface among groups and persons: communication among persons can be seen in social process concerning co-operation, conflict, accommodations etc. whilst the interface amid groups can be seen whereas nation goes to conflict with one more nation.

Types of Social Structure: According to Radcliffe-Brown the significance of social institution is that social structure is the understanding of persons which is restricted and defined by institutions. There are two types of replica of investigating social structure that is real social structure and universal social structure. 'Real social structure' according to Brown, the affiliation amid persons and groups transform from time to time. Novel members come into being through migration or by birth, whilst others go out of it by death and immigration. Further this; there are marriages and separation whereby the associates alter in numerous times. Thus, real social structure remains alter in many times. On the other hand, in broad social structure, stay comparatively stable for a lengthy moment. For example, if one visits the a rural community and once more visits that exacting rural community after a small number of years that is following 10 years afterward he or she discovers that a lot of associates of the rural community have died and others have been joined. At the present they

are 10 years elder who stay alive than the preceding visit. Their relationships to one another may have distorted in a lot of respects; but the universal arrangement remains more or less similar and long-lasting. As a result Radcliffe-Brown detained the observation that every now and then the structural form may transform slowly but surely or all of a sudden but even though the abrupt transformation come about the stability of structure is maintained to a substantial degree.

Structure and Function: Radcliffe-Brown in order to demonstrate the connection amid the structures and function he all over again go round to biology. The structure of an organism is comprises of well thought-out arrangements of its elements and functions of the part is to correlate the structure of an organism. Likewise, social structure is prearranged arrangement of persons and groups. The functions of persons are to the arrangement of society and social organism. In reality, social function is the inter-connections amid social structure and social living. Social structure is not to be investigated by taking into consideration the character of individual members of group, but by investigating the display of functions that create society continual. He additionally points out that the relations of ingredients of an organism to one another are not motionless. The entire position about an organism is that if the organism is living so that learning of its structure-the affiliation of ingredients, must be set in motion by a learning of its performance of procedures by which its structure is preserved. In each and every one category of organisms, other than the deceased ones structure and function are rationally lined. As a consequence, structure and function are reasonably connected and structure and function sustain each other and indispensable for each one other's stability.

The communal existence of a society can be defined as the performance of social structure. For case in point, the function of persistent action such as sentence of offense or a funeral observance is the ingredient it plays in communal living as a complete and as a result makes offerings to the preservation of structural stability.

According to Radcliffe-Brown, the significance of segregation sandwiched between structure and function is that it can be practical to the learning of together of stability in forms of social life and of courses of transformation. He is of the view that analogous things may have dissimilar connotations in diverse cultures and also that dissimilar things may have analogous functions. Even though they have individual connotation and functions, they have a equivalent social function at all.

Radcliffe-Brown's Structural Functional Law: Radcliffe-Brown is of the view that law is an indispensable situation of sustained survival. According to Radcliffe-Brown simplification concerning any kind of theme substance is of two types:

- generalization of general view
- Generalizations that have been established by a methodical assessment of proof afforded by specific clarification analytically completed. This exacting type of simplification is also called as systematic law.

Disparagement of Radcliffe-Brown's Structural Functionalism: The structural and functional advance of Radcliffe-Brown's has been subjected to an incredibly immense disparagement. Some of them are practical and some of them are ineffectual. The chief criticisms are talked about in a few words:

According to a number of reviewers, it is in the wrong to look at society as a breathing organism for the reason that the structure of the living organism does not alter, but the society does?

1. There is a mistake arising from the presumptuous that one's idea of a social circumstances reflects social reality in all fine points.
2. According to this move toward, the functions of units of society are determined. The examination is done on the foundation of thoughts, in the deficiency of whichever tangible cases.
3. Structural functionalism considers as stagnant in position of dynamic; although it does not deal with the transformations.

2.4 BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI'S FUNCTIONALISM

Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) was one of the beginning fathers of British social anthropology. He completed his honors in subjects like mathematics, physics and philosophy and in 1910 he joined in the London School of Economics to learn anthropology. With Radcliffe-Brown, Malinowski pressed for a pattern swing in British Anthropology that fetched a transformation from the chronological to the current learning of social institutions. This academic swing gave mount to functionalism and recognized fieldwork as the constitutive understanding of social anthropology. Malinowski's functionalism was really significant in the 1920s and 1930s. As functional method, this approach worked, apart from for circumstances

of social or cultural transformation. though, Malinowski made his maximum input as an ethnographer. He also measured the significance of learning social behaviour and social relationships in their tangible cultural milieu throughout participant-observation. He measured it indispensable to believe the apparent dissimilarity amid what populace speaks they do and what they in reality do. His thorough metaphors of Trobriand social life and thoughts are amid the well-known ethnographies of globe and his *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) is one of the most extensively read works of anthropology. He was one of the foremost Functionalists of 20th century.

Malinowski was a leading 20th century Anthropologist from Poland. He is also known as the father of ethnography because he conducted extensive field work at Trobriand Islands. He was a very strong functionalist. We can understand Malinowski in the following ways:

- Malinowski had a strong belief that all traditions, practices and institutions in a social world are integrated and related to one another so that, if there is a change in one, it will reflected in another.

For example: Ethnography could start from wherever in a society but ultimately obtain at the rest of the culture. A learning of Trobriand fishing could show the way to the ethnographer to learn the complete economic arrangement speak role of magic, religion, myths, trade and kinship etc as all these institutions are interrelated. A alter in any of the ingredient of society would eventually have an effect on the other. So in order to do a holistic learning the ethnographer might have to think about other parts of the complete as well.

- The subsequent thread of Malinowski's Functionalism is known as „needs“ functionalism“. Malinowski (1944) alleged that human beings have a set of collective organic needs and a mixture of customs and institutions are developed to accomplish those requirements. The function of whichever practice was the function it played in fulfilling these biological requirements such as requirements of foodstuff, protection etc.

Malinowski looked at culture, requirement of populace and thought that the function of culture is to gratify requirements of populace. Malinowski acknowledged seven biological needs of individuals. Due to the prominence on biological needs in Malinowski's approach, his functionalism is also recognized as Bio-cultural Functionalism.

Malinowski said, 'culture is a need surveying system'. Culture is a system which satisfies wants such as food, reproduction, safety, wellbeing, defense etc. As Malinowski provided significance to human being's requirements so his functionalism is also recognized as 'Psychological Functionalism'.

The largest part basic needs are the organic, but this does not entail any variety of reductionism, for the reason that each one stage comprises its different properties and requirements, and from the interrelationship of diverse points that culture came into sight as an integrated entire. Culture is the most important part of Malinowski's approach. It is 'uniquely human', for it is not found to subsist in the middle of sub-humans. Consisting all those things – material and non-material – that human beings have shaped right from the time they estranged from their simian ancestors, culture has been the device that satisfies the biological requirements of human beings. It is a need-serving and need-fulfilling arrangement. For the reason that of this role of culture in fulfilling biological wants that Malinowski's functionalism is also known as 'bio-cultural functionalism.'

Distinction stuck between Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski may well be illustrious at this juncture. A thought essential to Malinowski – the notion of culture – is a meager epiphenomenon (secondary and incidental) for Radcliffe-Brown. He considered that the study of social structure (which for him is an observable entity) includes the learning of culture; for that reason, there is no requirement to have a separate field to learn culture. Additionally, even as social structure is worried all about observations, what anthropologists make out and hear about the individual peoples.

Radcliffe-Brown wishes to formulate social anthropology a division of natural science, which would be probable when there is an empirically investigable subject matter.

The basis of Malinowski's approach is a conjecture of 'vital sequences', which have a biological groundwork and are integrated into every society. These series number eleven, every one composed of an 'impulse', an associated physiological 'act', and a satisfaction which results from that act (see Table 1).

Table1

Impulse	Act	Satisfaction
1. Drive to breathe; gasping for air.	Intake of oxygen	Elimination of CO ₂ in tissues
2. Hunger	Ingestion of food	Satiation
3. Thirst	Absorption of liquid	Quenching
4. Sex appetite	Conjugation	Detumescence
5. Fatigue	Rest	Restoration of muscular and nervous energy
6. Restlessness	Activity	Satisfaction of fatigue
7. Somnolence	Sleep	Awakening with restored energy
8. Bladder pressure	Micturition	Removal of tension
9. Colon pressure	Defecation	Abdominal relaxation
10. Fright	Escape from danger	Relaxation
11. Pain	Avoidance by effective act	Return to normal state

Permanent Vital Sequences Incorporated in All Culture:

For instance, the urge of somnolence accompanies the act of sleep, resulting in fulfillment by ‘awakening with restored energy’. Malinowski follows this eleven-fold model with a set of seven biological needs and their individual cultural responses (see Table 2).

Table 2

Basic Needs	Cultural Responses
1. Metabolism	Commissariat
2. Reproduction	Kinship
3. Bodily comfort	Shelter
4. Safety	Protection
5. Movement	Activities
6. Growth	Training
7. Health	Hygiene

For instance, the primary want is of food, and the cultural devices are centered on the courses of food getting, for which Malinowski uses the term ‘commissariat’, which means the band that brings food. in the same way, the succeeding want is of reproduction (biological stability of society) and the cultural answer to which is kinship worried with regulating sex and marriage. From this, Malinowski goes on to four-fold series, which he described the ‘instrumental imperatives’, and associates each one of them with their individual cultural responses. The four-fold sequence is of economy, social control, education, and political organization. From here, he shifts to the symbolic scheme – of religion, magic, beliefs and values – investigating its function in culture.

Functionalism might have defunct with Radcliff-Brown since it had incredibly slight to present sociologists trying to investigate multifaceted societies. together Durkheim and Radcliff-Brown posited one fundamental societal requirement -----integration ----and after that examined system components to conclude how they meet this requirement. For sociologists who are disturbed with distinguished societies, this is liable to turn into a somewhat automatic assignment. Furthermore, it does not permit examination of those features of a system component that are not implicated in meeting the requirement for integration.

The functionalism of Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) detached these limitations; by reintroducing Spencer’s perspective, Malinowski offered a way for modern sociologists to utilize functional analysis. Malinowski’s method reintroduced two significant thoughts from Spencer: (a) the idea of system levels and (b) the theory of diverse and numerous system requirements at each level. In manufacturing these two add-ons, Malinowski prepared functional examination more engaging to sociological theorists of twentieth-century.

The scheme of Malinowski has three system levels: the biological, the social structural, and the symbolic. At every stage, we can distinguish fundamental wants or continued existence prerequisites that ought to be met if biological healthiness, social-structural integrity, and cultural harmony are to subsist. Furthermore these scheme levels comprise a hierarchy, with biological systems at the foundation, social-structural agreement subsequently and symbolic systems at the uppermost height. Malinowski stressed out that the method in which wants are met at one system stage set restraints on how they are met at the subsequent height in the ladder. Yet he did not promote reductionism of any kind; certainly, he considered that every system stage discloses its own distinguishing prerequisites and practices meeting these requirements.

Additionally, he argued that the significant system stages for sociological or anthropological investigation are the structural or symbolic. And in his real debate, the socio-structural stage receives the majority attention. Table 3 lists the fundamentals or requirements of the two mainly sociologically pertinent system levels.

In evaluating the structural scheme stage, Malinowski stressed out that institutional study is essential. For Malinowski, institutions are the universal and comparatively steady traditions in which actions are controlled to meet significant prerequisites. Every institution, he experienced, have definite general properties or “elements” that can be scheduled and after that used as magnitude for contrasting diverse institutions. These general elements are

1. Personnel: Who and how many people will contribute in the institution?
2. Charter: What is the function of the institution? What are its affirmed objectives?
3. Norms: What are the key norms that control and systematize conduct?
4. Material apparatus: what is the character of the tools and facilities used to systematize and control conduct in quest of purposes?
5. Activity: How are tasks and actions separated? Who does what?
6. Function: What essential does a prototype of institutional action meet?

Table 3: Requisites of System Levels

<p>Cultural (Symbolic) System Level</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prerequisites for systems of symbols that give information essential to adjust to the surroundings. 2. Prerequisites for the systems of symbols that give an intellect of control over people’s fortune and over chance events. 3. Prerequisites for systems of symbols that give members of a society with a intellect of communal pace in their daily lives and behavior. <p>Structural (Instrumental) System Level</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The prerequisite for manufacture and allocation of consumer goods 2. The prerequisite for social control of actions and its regulation 3. The prerequisite for education of populace in traditions and skills 4. The prerequisite for organization and execution of authority relations
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By unfolding each institution all along these six magnitudes, Malinowski supposed that he had offered a general logical benchmark for evaluating patterns of social organization inside and among societies. He still constructed a catalog of general institutions as they decide not just structural but as well biological and symbolic prerequisites.

In total, Malinowski's functional perspective unlocked novel potentials for sociologists who had long forgotten Spencer's like opinions. Malinowski recommended to sociologists that concentration to system levels is decisive in evaluating prerequisites; he argued that there are common prerequisites for each system levels; he vehemently highlighted that the structural level is the spirit of sociological study; and a great deal like Spencer prior to him and Talcott Parsons a decade afterward, Malinowski posited four general functional requirements at this stage—economic adaptation, political authority, educational socialization, and social control—that were to be important in succeeding functional systems. Furthermore, he presented a apparent scheme for scrutinizing institutions as they function to meet functional prerequisites. It is just to say consequently, that Malinowski illustrated the coarse outlines for contemporary sociological functionalism.

2.5 LET US SUM UP

Functionalism was sociology's original logical theoretical viewpoint. It dealt with an appealing query: what is essential for a society or any social system to endure in its environment? The query appealed to Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and Emile Durkheim inside the first generations of sociologists. And after that it expired in sociology with the end of evolutionary philosophy in the initial decade of the twentieth century, functional speculations were taken over by anthropologists like A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Bronislaw Malinowski. At about the time that functionalism was waning in anthropology in the 1950s and near the beginning 1960s, sociologists started on to revitalize it, and for a decade or so, functionalism developed into the leading theoretical perspective in sociology under the promotion of Talcott Parsons.

2.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- What does Radcliffe-Brown mean by the 'functional unity' of society?
- How did Radcliffe-Brown's fieldwork differ from that of Malinowski?
- Distinguish between Malinowski's and Radcliffe-Brown's notions of function.
- describe the concept of social structure and related concepts elaborated by

- Discuss the the main features of Malinowski's functionalism.

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UNIT-3 SOCIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONALISM: TALCOTT PARSONS AND ROBERT MERTON

Structure

- 3.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 Sociological Functionalism
- 3.4 Talcott Parsons and his AGIL Paradigm
- 3.5 Robert Merton and his Functional Analysis
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Check Your Progress
- 3.8 References

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- state different schools of functionalism and structural functionalism;
- discuss the contribution of Talcott Parsons in functionalism school and his AGIL paradigm of sociology,
- state about the Mertonian typology of manifest and latent functionalism; and
- discuss contribution of different sociological functionalism in the theories of social system

3.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will discuss some of the important theories and theorists of sociological functionalism.

By functionalism, in short, we mean the way of thinking where theories have explanation for social institutions or other social phenomena primarily in terms of the functions they perform. In functionalism school there are mainly two types theories found namely sociological and psychological. Both of these views are influences and influenced by the anthropological tradition. So in nutshell, we can say that all these perspectives are interrelated when comes to the analysis of school of Functionalism. Every disciplinary tradition has their own prominent theorists, still all of these approaches can be traced back to some of the theories common to all discipline. In this way, functionalism can be traced from Durkheim and Comte theories of

society. As per them to study the society can be more useful by using organic analogy where we can study equilibrium of organic functions of living body and their body parts with the function of social system and their parts. They study how these parts work together to be a part of a system. Hence, this is why Durkheim is often considered the founding father of 'Functionalism'. This functionalism can be separated into two different school-anthropological disciplines where British schools of functionalism and structure functionalism have scholars like Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown. These different scholars have different sets of focus while working of their own view of functionalism. However, there are some common threads also which tied them in one single tradition. All of these scholars believe that society is like a system and evolutionism should deals with the whole system and its functioning. While in Sociological functionalism thread this perspective is mainly expressed by the two sociologists Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) and Robert K Merton (1910-2003). Later on it is also seen in the work of Kingsley Davis and his contemporaries. In this unit we will discuss about the Sociological Functionalism as a theoretical domain and Sociological Functionalism of American School of Sociology that is Parsons and Merton. Talcott Parsons viewed of four main requisite structure of the system as AGIL (Adaptation, Goal attainment, Integration and Latency) paradigm for understanding the functionalism in sociology. While Merton talked of typology of functionalism in terms of its consequences for the function of system whole and its parts in terms of manifest and latent functions. Sometimes the consequences recognised meaningful by the actors therefore they are called 'manifest functionalism'. These manifest functions are also intended outcome of social phenomenon. While some other times, consequences are hidden and unintended, generally there are not recognised by actor which he called as 'latent function'. Based on this duality he studied the functionalism.

Next section we will study more about the Parsonian view of functionalism

3.3 SOCIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONALISM

Functionalism in sociology is a theoretical perspective which is based on the premise that all aspects of a society namely institutions, roles, norms, traditions, etc., serves a purpose. Further, these all functions are indispensable for existence of the society. The approach and perspective started during the 19th century through the scholars who view society like organism and used organism analogy to study the part of society and their functions. Theoretical domain cycles in a specific way. It started from French school of sociology later percolated to British and also influenced American and ultimately developed to French School Functionalism. In this section we will mainly focus from its genesis to development in the British school of Anthropology

and later on Sociology. Further section will deal with theoretical domain and its main proponents.

The notion of function and functionalism is as old as the social analysis of society. As society is basic and why society exist? When human were going to ponder over these ideas then these opinion was build upon. The scholars in history such as Herodotus, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Montesquieu, Hobbes, Lock, and most other social philosopher come to point to recognise relationship of society and culture and their function as a explanation of their existence. They often tried to work on the relationships of society and its functional part. However, they have not arrived any theoretical perspective regarding that. Even the so called founder of social studies such as Saint Simon and August Comte who have used function of the society as a major methodological tools but moved to study and creating new science of society rather than focus on functional perspective.

French scholar, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) was first to give greater attention to concept of function in his writing due to which he was regarded as first functionalist. His contributions have influenced whole social science and a great deal to two sister disciplines- sociology and anthropology. However, his theory rarely talked directly about function and its meaning to society. He was more inclined towards what we can call as structural domain or arrangement of society and less focus on its functional perspective. After this, two towering scholars in anthropology focused functionalism as theory to understand the society by studying simple society in their field work. First was Bronislaw Kasper Malinowski (1884-1942) the so called first and foremost functionalist in anthropology. His most famous work is *Argonauts of Western Pacific* published in 1922. His theory talked about the function of society and its institution is to cater basic biological needs of the human being. These social institutions are means for satisfaction of human needs. Each part of the society performs certain cardinal function. However, all parts providing their relevant functions are interrelated to each other to perform all function a human being needed.

Second scholar, A R Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955), is also view the function as an important component though he has been more focused on the structural arrangement part of the society. His first work deals with simple society of India and named as *The Andaman Islanders* (1922). However, his most famous work, which also deals his theoretical perspective, is *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952). That is the reason he was often called structural-

functionalism mainly to distinguish his work from that of Malinowski. Using biological analogy of organisms, organs and their functional relationship, he has propounded that society consisted many structures which are enduring part of the society to maintain society in equilibrium. So, these network of structures which form by the intricate relationship of roles, status and norms of the society function as the basic ingredient for existence of the society.

Both of these scholars have both differences and similarities in their approaches. In term of differences, both have focused on different concepts. While Malinowski focused on culture, Radcliffe-Brown talked more about the social structure. In this way, while former deals with culture, later with society. Malinowski thought culture is meant to cater biological needs while Radcliffe-Brown studies actual network of relations to arrive basic law of society and human being. In that way, they are also different what is the subject matter of their discipline? Former defined that social anthropology as functionalism while latter defined social anthropology is study of arrangement of person in institutionalized form.

In term of similarities, both have worked in simple society to unravel the functional complexity of life. They both have given main function of the society as a particular time hence supporter of synchronic functional approach. Both used function as important and heuristic device to analysis of society and culture of human being. Both the scholars have used organism analogy for achieving their theoretical perspectives. In this way, they are both inspired by the Durkheimian thinking of society as organism.

Apart from differences and similarities of their approaches and perspectives both of these scholars are regarded as the pioneer of functionalism approach to study of the society. These scholars were not only towering personalities of anthropology but also the main proponent of British school of Structural functionalism. While from their tradition diffused to American school of structural functionalism which is not limited in anthropology discipline but developed in both sociological and anthropological tradition. The pioneer contributors of American School of Functionalism are Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, Robert Lowie, Clyde Kluckhohn, and G P Murdock. First two are sociologist and later three are anthropologist. We will discuss in next section this American School of Functionalism and these two scholars' contributions.

3.4 TALCOTT PARSONS AND HIS AGIL PARADIGM

Talcott Parsons (1902-9179) is a prominent American Sociologist who also dominated the social theorists' space in previous century. His main theory was called functionalism. He

attempted to incorporate some of the early important theories of functionalism like society is composed of interrelated parts. Society viewed as an organic system composed of different parts which needed to function properly in order to function whole system properly. Started with publication of his book, ‘-’, his idea dominated with intense controversy till four decades.

His fundamental idea was based in viewing individual as an actor and their performances (behaviour) can be studied by studying their social situation. The situation means actors’ norms, values and other ideas which are based to towards achieving goals of the actors. These goals are included both goals, individual and social goals.

Overall these prepositions clear a fundamental space of ‘action system’ which ultimately forms ‘a system of social action’ or ‘social system’. These are the basic keywords of his theories.

Here action further bifurcated into three very important concepts namely- status, role and norm. As per him, actors or individuals are oriented basically in terms of their motives what he means as ‘needs’. There are mainly three types of needs are namely-

- a. Cognitive-need for information or knowledge;
- b. Cathectic- need for emotion and emotional attachment
- c. Evaluative- need for assessment

To fulfil these needs, social system function with certain functional prerequisites. He had taken three prerequisites of functionalism from earlier work of Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown concepts that functional integration is basic requirement for the proper functioning of the society.

Further he tries to name the individual social system as a whole which is further composed of three basic systems namely social system, culture system and personal system. Further his concept of social system is based on another important concept namely the concept of institutionalization. He said when and only the interactions of individuals become institutionalized then only it can be a part of social system. In other words, only institutionalised interactions are the subunits of social system. So, processes of institutionalization of interaction become very important through which social structure is built and maintained. Added to this interaction institutional cluster roles of individual also become important component of social system. As per him, the basic structural units or elements of these roles cluster are goals, roles, norms and value. Further, as per him very social system needs to fulfil roles for which it needs

necessary functional prerequisites, necessary organs of social system. Parsonian idea of social system is very popular in sociological research because of his ability to deal with the total system and its subsystem at a time. The total system can be derived into four major units. These four organs he propound his famous theory of 'AGIL' paradigm. They are

A-stands for Adaptation

G-for goal attainment

I-for integration and

L-for latency

As per Parsonian view every social system has been deals with four component system need to adapt themselves with one physical environment. It needs to locate itself as a viable entity in the space which it occupies. The social system interacts with its environment through technology, through ecological measures. It helps the system to maintain itself to outside area. Goal orientation included by which member of the society has certain targets. This target contained and set in domain economy and polity. These economy and polity goods try to achieve. The total social system is integrated on the basis of certain values ideas, cultural norms which are essential religions in nature. Religion acts as an integrating force, overarching phenomena in system. The system needs to reproduce and there are mechanisms for maintaining and reproducing this system through socialisation (education) these are called mechanism of Latency.

When the total social system works in the light of these components it appears as functional application. It divided into parts. Every part gives rise to smooth existence and containing of whole. Here he paid more emphasis on society/social institution. Society and social institution is part provide point of departure for functional analysis.

This theory is not of criticism proof. Much criticism has been inflicted on the Parsonian functionalism. Still, many more theories thread out from the Parsonian social system in spite of reject his theory in a whole or part of the theory. So, Parsonian functionalism remains an important theoretical formulation to understand the functionalism approach as a whole.

3.5 ROBERT MERTON AND HIS FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

Merton talked of typology of functionalism. He talked of functionalism in terms of its consequences for the system /whole function of any part. Sometimes the consequences

recognised/meaningful by the actors therefore they are called 'manifest functionalism'. Many a times hidden/generally there are not recognised by actor which he called as 'latent function'. In contrast to sociological functionalism, here the function of social custom/the point of emphasis in society itself.

While another famous sociologist Robert K Merton (1948) said that both status and role are anthropological concepts and they are very useful for analyse of human society. They are two sides of same coin. However, is not very pleased to the Linton's preposition that each stays have a role because this gives a very simplistic correlation of status and role. And as per him, this one-to-one correlation of states and role does not hold good, and it remain highly simplistic and actually their relationship is more complex in nature. In order to understand this, he took example of hospital setting.

He assumes relationship between hospital setting and explain that- the doctor have different social position, logically related to different person such as patient, hospital workers, medical superintendent. Several roles, behaves as per the social identities and not truly according to social position of himself. By assuming the social position of a doctor, the individual has logically related relationship with patient, nurses, other doctors, hospital staff and medical superintendent. And there lies the complexity pointed by the Merton. Studying actually behavior, Lintons simplistic concepts is not useful. So, to understand this complexity we need to have plurality of concepts. So, Merton said that there is not one role and status but instead there are 'role set', 'status set' and 'multiple roles' in his famous three concepts. Role Set: role set meant by the summation of roles associated with one status e.g., Doctor with patient, nurse, other doctor, staff, medical superintendent. All these behaviours imply by assuming status of doctor. An individual plays several roles with respect to the others. All these roles are logically related. Thus, assumption of status implies not one role but 'array of roles' ordered arrangement of roles occupies one status which can be expressed in the form of equation like-

I - Role Set: summation of all roles associated with a status.

$S = \text{Summation of } (r_1 + r_2 + \dots + r_n)$

Status Set: an individual occupy large number of status because individual participant in a large number of interacting context. Different social positions like our example, doctor occupies different position with related to other doctor, members of club, chess club, family. The doctor is also participating number of social situations. And there is always constable social position. Social interaction /social position situation always are dynamic. Every group can be breakdown

into dyad-interaction of two. There cannot be uniformity/isomorphic behavior of status. There is kinship is universal but kinship grow is not kinship group based on particular societal norms. Kinship based organisation decreases in oriented family remembered several ascend new order society based on achievements and like and dislikes.

One can define individual as a collection of status where each status is relevant in a given interaction context that can be expressed in the equation like below-

II-Status Set: An individual occupies large number of status according to/context of behaving, place, etc. Collection of all status which an individual acquires particular point of time. Time becomes very important factors here

$I = \text{Summation of } (s_1 + s_2 + \dots + s_n)$ ——— Status set (Each status is a collection of roles)

$R = \text{Role set } (r_1 + r_2 + \dots + r_n)$ ——— Multiple role

Status set can be defined as a collection of social position, social status, which an individual occupy at a given point of time. Because with the passage of time the number of social position which individual occupy would also differs. Therefore, while defining the individual, time factor must be taken into account. In short, a collection all social position that individual occupy in a given of time.

III-Multiple role: a collection of all role set that an individual occupy is called multiple roles. So, Merton tell us about social structure at a given point of time. But here lies a time factor because social structure is not static entity but dynamic entity means change over a period of time. Time factor is very important and should be incorporated.

Using example of doctor, he said doctor have sequence of changes over a period of time like Student -internship-house job-assistant professor-associate professor-professor.

Here what we found that sequences of doctor has been change over a period of time. Individual must pass these sequences. Each of them there is different kinds of duty and right. These rights and duties change as one move from one position to another position. Because such a sequence discernible, we need two more concepts to include the concepts of time. So, we need two concepts to dealt with namely iv-status sequences and v- role sequences.

Status sequences: can be defined as a developmental positioning of social position which are interconnecting. These sequences refer to expectation of each of the social position.

IV-Status Sequences: Developmental positioning of social position which are interconnecting. These are social position are expecting of each previous social position.

V-Role Sequences: Associated developing roles within developing social position as it is also expected from every previous role.

By combining all we have I, II, III, IV and V concepts of status and role and we can study the social structure at particular point of time/ period of time. We can include both synchronic and diachronic aspects of the changes in this. We also have dynamic equilibrium and dynamism that is the actual state of the society where dynamic equilibrium tend to attain in every society.

Therefore, these five concepts of dynamic equilibrium and dynamism:

The concept of status and role came into existence around 1920s. First of all, 'role' came into sociology and social psychology in Chicago school. Later status joined by R Linton's (1930s). Major task of R Linton to give a concept which will help us to understanding human behavior. Great academic value but greatest achievement then this concept helps in linking individual to society. As well-known individual and society regarded as per 'great extortion' in social science. Role and status contradicted individual and society by stating that information about behaviour comes from society but it is the individual who actually behaves. The concept of status tells us about the about how should behaviour is to be carried out but concept of role concerned with how behaviour is actually carried out by individual in the society. Status tells us about the social expectation from the occupant of social position. Role tells about the actual performance of behavior, Status and role linked the society with individual also kinks between social anthropology, and sociology and psychology on the other hand.

1920 role, 1936 status R Linton -Achievement Bridge between individual and society

Status -how expectation / should behavior carry out

Role -Actual behaviour

So, in sum of states role linked with society and individual and also social anthropology and sociology and social psychology as one hand.

3.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we had discussed what are the basic theoretical threads and contribution about the functionalism. We have here discussed basic theorist and their theories about the sociological functionalism. We have also discussed in some detail what is the contribution of Talcott Parson and his understanding of AGIL system and Mertonian classification of role sets with specific perspective of functionalism. Lastly, we have also discussed some distinguishing features of urban society.

The basic premise of functionalism started from Durkheimian approach of looking the society as equilibrium and how different parts of provide function for existence of society. Later functionalism, that is sociological functionalism, which aims to provide functioning of various parts (that may be items, institution, etc.) for providing satisfaction of basic need of society as a whole. These sociologists go further from organic theory of simple society and perceived complex differentiation of society to basic function of the society. Here, Parsonian view the basic four AGIL postulates and Mertonian role set theory for understanding the functionalism in proper view.

3.7 GLOSSARY

- **Multiple Roles-** Multiple roles means a collection of all role set that an individual occupy is called multiple roles.
- **AGIL-**Adaptation, Goal attainment, Integration, Latency
- **Status Sequences:** Developmental positioning of social position which are interconnecting. These are social position are expecting of each previous social position.
- **Role Sequences:** Associated developing roles within developing social position as it is also expected from every previous role

3.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- What is the most famous book of B K Malinowski?
- Who is main proponent of British School of Structural -Functionalism?
- Delineate some similarities of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown?
- What are the basic Parsonian needs or motives required for proper functioning of society?
- Discuss about AGIL paradigm.
- Which is most important book of Talcott Parsons?
- As per Robert K Merton, what are basic characteristics of ‘Multiple Roles’?

3.9 REFERNCES

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UNIT 4 NEO-FUNCTIONALISM: J C ALEXANDER

Structure

- 4.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 Criticism of Functionalism
- 4.4 J C Alexander and his Neo-Functionalism
- 4.5 Constructive criticism of Neo-Functionalism
- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.7 Check Your Progress
- 4.8 Reference

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- state different school of criticism of functionalism and revival of functional in neo-functionalism school
- discuss the contribution of J C Alexander and his other contemporaries for developing neo-functionalism
- delineate basic merits and demerits of neo-functionalism
- discuss over all contribution of neo-functionalism in the theories of social system

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we have discussed about important theories and theorists of school of sociological functionalism and neo-functionalism. As for every way of thinking, the theory functionalism is also not criticism proof. After receiving a dominance of a half a century in the social theory, it receives criticism during the 1960 and 70s. Further, after brief period of criticism, the theory has been revived during 1980s onwards by different theorists. One of the important proponents of this view has been J C Alexander. This unit deals start with criticism of functionalism where basic lacuna, observed by different scholars, are discussed. Next section start from the how criticism of functionalism is basic of emergence of neo-functionalism. To address the lacuna or critic points of the functionalism in 1980s revival of functionalism happens. Functionalism has been criticized for several issues which is related to its nature like, ahistorical, static, lack of individualism, lack of dissent and conflict and lack of free will. In

this unit we will discuss the criticism of functionalism, revival of functionalism and its merits and demerits of Neo-functionalism.

Next section we will study more about some basic criticism of functionalism.

4.3 CRITICISM OF FUNCTIONALISM

It is not exaggeration about sociological theories if one says functionalism occupies one of important and dynamic space in the historical development of social thought. No theory is attracted so much interest, response, criticism and modification as functionalism did in the disciplinary history of sociology and social anthropology. The theory is known by different names in different disciplines and during different time period such as 'functional approach' 'functionalism school' 'structure-functionalism, etc. Still it provides some kind of unified methodological view to look for the society during first half of 20th century. The basic model delineates that how society, social institution and its various elements function for maintaining equilibrium and order in the society. In sociological history, Talcott Parsons, his school of social system and role analysis provide basis of development separate approach on one side. On other side, Merton with his social structure, anomie, functional and dysfunctions aspect of society provide empirical evidences to strengthen this theory.

A foremost criticism of functionalism is that it does not adequately deal with history. In other words, it is inherently ahistorical. It does not deal with the questions of past and history, although the advocates of functionalism have considered evolution and diffusion as important processes of change. Functionalism in several disciplines, like in Anthropology, started during 1930s as reaction to the nineteenth century 'pseudo-historical' and 'speculative' evolutionism and diffusionism.

Another closely related criticism of functionalism is that it does not take care of change. Though it talks the change about the past, but it does not reflect about contemporary change in society. So, it neither studies the past, nor it studies the change in contemporary society, it deals with the contemporary static structure. In other words, it talks about society as static entity-like frozen river that does not talk about its ebb and flow. It just provides the static snapshot or picture of the contemporary society.

It has another point of criticism. Functionalism has also been criticized for its main postulates that it makes explicit what is implicit. In another words, it makes clear what is unclear. However, critics see as drawbacks and look with the use of the technical term for this process

is 'tautology'. The term means the saying of same thing twice or many times over in different words often for returning back. This has been used in many areas. For example if religion exists, it must be providing some functions to the society, otherwise what is the use of this social institution. So they search for this tautological intuition. So religion is important otherwise it will be existed in the society. So the function of the religion is to contribute the social solidarity. Hence, without it there will be anarchy and chaos and society will not be able to survive. Because they have not started from the what is the function but started from postulates that says 'this is existed so it must have some functions. So, in this way, for many scholars it suffers from what they called 'globular or circular reasoning'. One has reason one self.

The basic premise of functionalism is that it helps to fulfill the need of the society. In order to understand society, they have postulated the needs. So, needs are postulated on the basis of the already existing social institutions that are in turn used to explain their existence. For other example, society as a social fact explains the division of labour, and in turn division of labour contributes to the maintenance of solidarity of society. What is happening here is that the whole is being defined in terms of its parts and then, parts are being defined in the terms of whole. Because of one is defined in terms of the other, in fact none of them neither the whole nor the part is actually being defined. As we noted earlier, here also there is debate whether tautology is inherent in the theory or has come into existence because of the works of is theorists and practitioners.

As every theory has a life span at the end of which it receives criticism, gradually it also receives criticisms. During the 1960s functional school receive criticism from different sides by the post functional thinking and post Parsonian phase of theoretical development. However, during the 1980s, it again receives a phase of revival of this school or rediscovery of the work of Talcott Parsons. It started in Germany later moved in America. The most important contribution comes from Niklas Luhmann, Jurgen Habermas, J C Alexander, and Paul Colomy. Niklas Luhmann and Jurgen Habermas started its revival in Germany while later Alexander and Colomy propagated similar school of thoughts in America. Alexander introduced the term 'neo-functionalism' in 1985 with aim to revive the Parsonian theory of functionalism. Neo-functionalism offered one of the important critiques to the fundamental theoretical dimension of functionalism. Like- it included the Marxism perspective to integrate the 'neo-functionalism' with the different elements of the society. That is the reason why neo-functionalism is not found in only in some specific disciplines but found its radiance in different disciplines but a same

umbrella. It is very true as Alexander himself says the Neo-functionalism is not considered as full theory but more a kind of wide-ranging intellectual tendency or it can say as movement meant to affect every discipline in this motion.

Next session we will discuss the J C Alexander and his neo-functionalism.

4.4 J C ALEXANDER AND HIS NEO-FUNCTIONALISM

Jeffrey Charles Alexander (born 1947) is a prominent figure in sociological functionalism. He is an American sociologist and social theorist who has been founding figure of the school of Neo-Functionalism. Trained in Harvard University and University of California, he was initially interested in sociology of Marx. Later on, he has shifted his attention to Neo functionalism and also has been interested in cultural sociology.

He was originally interested in theoretical constructions. His main contribution involves the four-volume work of *Theoretical Logic in Sociology* (1982-1984). The fourth volume of this work deals with thoughts and theories of Talcott Parsons. This is the time when there are several scholars begin to revive the work of Parsons after several decades of criticism. While he is pointed several positive facts of the earlier theorist, he was also have different of opinion at several issues. He is of the opinion that the traditional scholars do not have basic as per the living society. He said that not only Parsons but several traditional scholars were not able to balance between idealism and realism. As per him, though Parsons defines actor as an analytic concept to understand the society however he is not able to give them real life. However, he has a different of opinion with Parson in this domain. Contrary to Parson's static analytic concept of actor, Alexander has taken this actor and his action as the real as moving, working, and changing as per time and space. So, he has been trying to make a balance between Parsons' idealism to the realism of society and social institution in domain of neo-functionalism. Further, he has also added the dimension of 'free will' to the actor apart from having set of actor-specific limited roles. Thus, he has developed the live neo-functionalism from dried analytic functionalism to symbolic interactionism domain.

Apart from reviving functionalism and giving live body to this theoretical understanding, he has also modified some of it contested aspects. He has tried to clean the concept of functionalism by removing several obstacles which have been the main source of criticism as a theory. He has been prominent figures to revival of Parsonian functionalism with giving five central themes of neo functionalism. These include that functionalism is: -

Anti-individualistic –the individual in functionalism is just a passive entity without having free will and acts according to the social forces.

Antagonism to change- the functional theory is the theory of social order rather than addressing change of the society

Conservatism-this form of functionalism is tried to offer justification of existing social system and institutions. Hence, they often unintentionally, were justifying inequality, exploitation and oppressions in the society.

More idealistic-structure functionalism talks about more idealism in society where everything is in order and equilibrium.

More theoretical and less on Empirical ground-the functionalism was more an abstract than less in empirical in nature. Instead, it talks about more conceptual model less about the real societies.

As per the Alexander, Neo-functionalism can be described a society made up of elements. These elements interact with other elements to produce a pattern of the society. These interactions separate the group of society not only from other society but also from other environment. These interactions are not close-ended and do not govern by a specific entity only. However, these interactions are influenced or affected by various other factors. He has given more focussed on individualism where an individual actor behaves for two reasons- a) first whether actor want to accept the social norms or b) he opines that this particular interaction will be useful for him. Based on his actions, interactions and behaviour aspects, the actor gets an individual identity.

This neo-functionalism has given a balanced attention on both action and system. While to earlier functionalism, as per Alexander, is better to say as structural functionalism. This is because it has more focussed on social structure and social order to arrive on the theoretical understanding at the macro level. At the same time, it gives very little attention on the micro-interactions of pattern of the society. This view is not accepted by the neo-functionalism which sees is more micro as well extensive level. Activities can be accepted as voluntary basis of actors and it also have a social explanation at the level of society. Thus, Neo-functionalism explains the actors and their activities both at micro and macro level.

The Neo-functionalism does express unification as the only option to the proper understanding of the society. It observes the realities of society by viewing dissent, deviance and social

control of the social system. It focussed on equilibrium. However, its equilibrium is different than the equilibrium of structural functionalism. This equilibrium is not static equilibrium of structure functionalism. This equilibrium is moving, partial or changing equilibrium while adding time factor in it. So Neo-functionalism is also focussed on the change.

Neo-functionalism accepts the Parsons concepts like individual system, cultural system, and social system. However, as per Neo-functionalism, along with this system there is also tension occur which became the source of change and control. Alexander opines post positivism as an important social method to understanding the society. It is the reason why he does not accept the traditional positivism of the traditional theorists. As per Alexander traditional positivism cannot give valid result for understanding of the society. Post positivism more dependent upon the logic and valid reasoning. He was at firm opinion that every science should be based on reasoning and facts. Be whatever science, social or natural, every science should base its result on the basis of logical and empirical facts.

Generally, social science methods used theoretical modeling to collect the empirical evidence. Similar method also used by Talcott Parsons to create his theoretical position. However, in this approach only those facts taken into consideration which are compatible to the theoretical perspective. Such kinds of positivism do not discord with the theoretical perspective because it does not collect the facts that are not compatible to its theory. Alexander did not accept such kind of positivism. As per him, whichever theoretical domain we want to create, it must look on thesis of logical and empirical evidences. Only empiricism is not used. It should be added with logical empiricisms.

In short, Alexander work can be summarized into following points: The description of the society will be on the basis of openness and plurality. Whenever we are talking about the action and structure, it should be done with open mind. It is not like that only action is determined the structure or structure defined the action. Such kind of thinking existed among the traditional scholars. It should down with two-way interactions. Each of this is reflecting different ways of real-life situations. There will be probability of unification but with the option dissent, deviance and conflict. These characteristics are very really and always founded in real life situations. Individual, culture and society should be making understand in their respective ways. Differentiation is very important for the change society. Whatever concepts and theory for social analysis is used, it should be used with open and in depend level.

On the basis of above analysis, it is clear that Alexander has discredited the traditional functionalism and revived Parsons' concept with use of Neo-functionalism theoretical perspective. It is not the case that he has accepted all the concept of Parsons as it is. Further it is also not that he did not have dissent with latter theory. He has not accepted certain concept of Parsons like Status quo and equilibrium. In principle, he has a leaning toward the Marxism, and has opinion upon the conflict. As per him, action in fact a type of movement which existed real life cases in the world. This Neo-functionalism is not also criticism proofs. In the next section we will discuss more about the constructive criticism of neo-functionalism.

4.5 CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM OF NEO-FUNCTIONALISM

As every theory has criticism. J C Alexander's Neo-functionalism is not critical proof. It also has been criticized by the successive scholars due to various new understanding theoretical dimensions and its elements. The fundamental criticism arrived from critics about the basic of the theory. He has been criticized because he has not given a proper outline of his revival theory of functionalism. As functionalism theorist properly provided an outline before talking in depth analysis of the theory. However, Alexander has not provided any outline for his theory of Neo-functionalism. Critics have opined it is very difficult to give Alexander's Neo-functionalism as a theoretical domain without a proper outline.

In fact in this regard, Alexander himself said that Neo-functionalism is only a leaning, inclination, thinking and trend. At most it is a just a movement which revive the Parsons theory of action and system in a new way. He said that, as per several critics, it is basically just the Parsons' old functionalism-old wine in new bottle. First it is known as functionalism and now it is called as Neo-functionalism. It is just added with prefixes. But it is also true that Alexander has given a new life to Parsons' theory of functionalism. In spite of having several lacuna, his theory has several positive aspects also. Among the supporters of his theory was most importantly Paul Colomy. Paul Colomy praised Alexander's contribution and propagated its view of thinking to new form. He has been a fruitful collaborative contributor along with Alexander. He has also contributed in his own theory heavenly influenced with Alexander's work. In Colomy's Neo-functionalism, he was given concepts regarding change of human society. He suggested (1986, 1990) the concept of dedifferentiation and uneven differentiation to present a more dynamic understanding of social change in society.

As per Colomy, Alexander has done tremendous work for constructive criticism of Parsons Functionalism. He praised Alexander for not only proposing valued criticism on important

point but also produced useful amendments to Parsonaian functionalism. He has been remain honest in creating theoretical dimensions of Neo-functionalism. He has clearly rejected the Parsons theory with clear words. Parsons always focused on status quo and made central concept of his theory to time adjustment. This has been rejected by the Alexander. Parsons time adjustment is not useful to understand the poor condition and not given the protection to downtrodden individual of the society.

In contemporary time where levels of orthodox thinking are increasing, Neo-functionalism's left leaning useful for better of society. This Neo-functionalism theoretical thinking is in construction phase. This should be strengthening with the more and more empirical materials to analyze more and major theoretical expansion to every aspect of the society. In a nutshell it can be declared that in spite of having several criticisms, sociological functionalism of Talcott Parsons and Merton were useful in several ways. They have developed several important ways to understand the society in proper way by using new way of thinking. In Parsons' concepts of adaptation, goal attainment, integration and latency were very useful for promoting more value to the functionalism theoretical dimensions. Further Merton's theoretical dimension and his influence of latent and manifest functionalism also enriched the debate of functionalism. Based on these two traditional theories and their explanation provided the ground work for emergence of Neo-functionalism. In 1980s, Neo-functionalism is first originated in Germany before moving in America. There were group of scholars who are main proponent of this form of Neo-functionalism like Niklas Luhmann, Jurgen Habermas, J C Alexander, and Paul Colomy. Niklas Luhmann and Jurgen Habermas started its revival in Germany while later Alexander and Colomy propagated similar thoughts in America. In this line of thinking, Parsons Functionalism is modified, amended, and revived to give this more life in the understanding of the society.

This perspective does not accept the Parsons' view that actions of individual always based on values and norms of the society. Neo-functionalism is a multi-perspective approach. It also emphasized the role of actors and said individual has certain choice to say about their actions. When individuals select their certain type of action in society it does have based on symbolic entity of the society. In Neo-functionalism, symbolic entity has important space and it say symbolic entity should be make understandable with taking care of other thinking. The careful nature is needed to understand the symbolic interactions in the society. At the same time Luhmans theoretical dimension of Neo-functionalism is based on theoretical system and its interaction or differences with the environment. As per him, the complexities of the theoretical

system and their environment should be reduced to proper understanding the society. In every society, the action of individual based on certain important factors and expressed in certain entries. Most important factors which needed to expressed the action are time, place, symbolism. As per Luhaman, the processes with reduces the differences of theoretical system and environment based important rules of functionalism. All the system works through the medium of communication. So it is imperative to understand these complexities to device any understanding of the society.

4.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the evolution Neo-functionalism in school of sociology. The first half of nineteenth century saw the rise functionalism theory in every discipline. Similarly, this theory was at the pinnacle during the 1960 decade due to its new understanding. This was mainly opposition of diffusionist school. But this approach also has criticism as the explanation here given in term of goal and purpose of life. The perspective mainly talks about the society at a point of time without including the individualism and change. To address these criticisms of functionalism gave rise to other grand theory with the name of neo-functionalism in Germany and America. We have also discussed J C Alexander's contribution for emergence and spread of this theory as just a follower of functionalism school. He has also discussed about the future of neo-functionalism. In future time, what Alexander thinks, there will develop a grand theory with the basic premise of positivism and post positivism. The following theory will be multidimensional with inclusion of many binaries such as equilibrium-conflict, micro and macro etc. However, Alexander's work also has criticism. The demerits of the neo-functionalism are two levels-empirical and theoretical. At the empirical level this theory criticized for not inclusion of empirical realities of contemporary societies. It predicts that the progressive integrations of all societies which cannot be observed in the contemporary times.

Further, it also have lacuna at the theoretical level that it does not talk about the outline of its theoretical domain. Alexander talks about his grand theory without recognizing the boundary and outline of this theory. So Neo-functionalism works on the aspects that were not addressed in functionalism. However, this school of thinking termed as conservative and it put more focus on social order and less on the change which is ever lasting entity in contemporary time. In later work, Alexander tried to reconcile with this criticism. In his work, *Neo-functionalism and After* (1998), Alexander stated that he has outgrown a neo-functionalism orientation in his career. He had moved towards the cultural sociology. In fact, he said that his work mainly to

show the importance of Parsons' theory of functionalism. Parsons have created theoretical understanding of functionalism that was capable for and dissent in theoretical sociology. But he said that neither nor any of his collaborator or student was able to do it. This show Parsons' theory of functionalism and Alexander's theory of neo-functionalism still have potential fertile ground to develop fruitful plantation of other empirical works.

4.7 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- What are the main criticisms of functionalism?
- Name few prominent scholars given the critics of functionalism?
- In which country revival of functionalism started?
- What is the name of seminar work of J C Alexander?
- What are the five central themes of neo-functionalism to revive Parsons' functionalism?
- As per Alexander why individual actor behaves the way it behaves?
- What is the fundamental criticism of Neo-functionalism?
- Who is the main supporter of J C Alexander in his revival of functionalism?
- Who are the two German scholars who have revived the Parsonaian Functionalism?

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Block-2

CONFLICT AND CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Unit-5: Origin and Basic Postulates of Conflict Theory

Unit-6: Contributions of Ralph Dahrendorf and Louis Althusser

Unit-7: Origin and Basic Postulates of Critical Theory

Unit-8: Noe-Contributions of Theodor Adorno and Jurgen

Habermas

UNIT-05 ORIGIN AND BASIC POSTULATES OF CONFLICT THEORY

Structure

- 5.1 Learning Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 The Classical Theorists
- 5.4 Modern Conflict Schools
- 5.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.6 Check Your Progress
- 5.7 References

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to understand-

- The concept of conflict in Sociology
- The classical Approach to the Sociology of Conflict
- The contribution of major scholars; and
- The modern conflict theorists

5.2 INTRODUCTION

It cannot be denied with assertiveness that the notion of structure or change is absent in functionalism or in conflict theory, the distinct between these two approaches lies in the fact that which notion covers the central idea of the said approaches. Only in the twentieth century, conflict theory gained momentum in Sociology with the works of Dahrendorf and Coser. The basic tenet of Conflict theory could be traced from the writings of ancient Greek thinkers like Thucydides.

For the conflict theorists conflict is at the center of social structure and eventually it is conflict which is responsible for ushering social change. Conflict is capable for bringing about change in a positive manner as well as there will be chances of anomic change.

Since Sociology gives importance to group or society, individual is counted least important. Keeping in view the major thrust areas of Sociology, conflict among groups is given importance, and not conflict between individuals. Therefore, conflict theory assumes importance for those groups which have probability or actually which have developed conflicting relationships.

Every society experience inequality, domination and stratification. Most of the time the social action is preceded by the tendency to maintain domination or to challenge inequality. Hierarchy and inequality are mostly experienced because of unequal distribution of resources which further accelerates into conflicting situations. When conflict reaches some abnormal heights, then that may lead towards bringing about new sets of organizational principles which will ensure to put in place new kinds of mechanisms for equitable distribution of resources. In erstwhile USSR the monarchy was overturned to give space to socialism.

The conflict theorists mostly focus their attention on the prevailing inequality and hierarchical tendencies. There are terminological cautions when the readers of conflict theory come across various terms like contradiction, conflict and differentiation and stratification. Contradiction under all circumstances does not lead to conflict until and unless there is consolidation and precipitation which further accentuates into power equation disruption, leading to action.

5.3 THE CLASSICAL THEORISTS

The Classical theories of conflict were basically the macro- sociologists for whom social transformation is possible through the operation of conflict between major social groups. The most prominent among these theorists is Karl Marx. Marx through his theory of historical materialism and this formed the genesis of a conflict theory which viewed social transformation which arises as a result of differential class system. The differences in class can be attributed according to Marx on the basis of unequal distribution of resources. There are two major classes in a given society on the basis of ownership of the resources or in Marxian terms means of production. Bourgeoisie is the class which is having the ownership of the mean of production and the proletariat are the working-class people whose labour is hired. Marx envisions in a predictive way how the social evolution takes place. According to this process feudalism paves the way for capitalism and capitalism will be succeeded by socialism. In socialism all the class distinction will wither away and the concept of private property will take a back seat.

Max Weber is the next Classical theorist who is important because he tried to highlight the thing that economy is not the sole reason which divides the society into different classes, rather there are power groups and status groups who being non- economic sources are responsible behind social stratification. Various organizations in society try to prove their domination and control and this is how conflict and revolt develop in society. Three different ideal types of organizational structures have been formulated by Weber viz. Ideal-typical, bureaucratic and

patrimonial and these organizational structures can be seen within any form of domination be it the state, the church or the economy. Weber introduces the concept of legitimacy in power.

Lewis Coser as a Classical Conflict theorist locates conflict in the human beings. According to him, conflict is not limited to society only. Coser's analysis of conflict takes into account the concepts of absolute deprivation and relative deprivation. Under absolute deprivation usually a human group experiences lack of resources and here survival is difficult. Even the most basic amenities of life like food, housing, drinking water and health care are difficult to get. On the other hand, the human groups who experience relative deprivation are comparatively better off and they have some resources at their disposal on the basis of which they compare themselves with are much better off. Relative deprivation can be experienced in societies where there is great divide between the rich and poor. According to Coser, people experiencing absolute deprivation cannot engage in violence or conflict because they are not able to do so. On the contrary, according to him, when people are in transition from absolute to relative deprivation, there are greater chances for involving in conflict. The most suitable example could be of the rural people who experience object poverty, they involve in conflict. Another example is when Dalit movement emerged, the Dalits when got exposed to urban centers and got opportunity to be engaged in industrial settings, they experienced exploitation and they gradually developed the ability to organize themselves and Ambedkar provided the much-required leadership for organizing them. Additionally, Coser finds out that when the goals are clearly defined and achievable, conflict fizzles out after the attainment of the goals. If the goals have emotional dimension and transcendental, the goals are not practical enough to be solved. For example, conflicts related to ethnicity, religion, sub-nationalism do not get resolved easily. Best example is persistent conflict between Israel and Palestine.

5.4 MODERN CONFLICT SCHOOLS

Dahrendorf recognizes the fact that the modern democracies are characterized by both integrative and conflicting processes. Dahrendorf criticizes the Marxists as well as the Structural functionalists for not paying attention towards modern industrial capitalist societies. The modern industrial societies are far more complex than perceived by Marx. There are many more class forms other than Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. Inequal distribution of power is not the sole cause of conflict. The workers of modern industrial societies are well exposed to trade unionism. They have the propensity of collective bargaining. They are well protected by legislative measures. Unlike private property, the shareholders, capital owners and managers

all have important roles in Joint Stock Companies. By social class shall be understood such organized or unorganized collectivises of individuals as share manifest or latent interests arising from and related to the authority structure of imperatively coordinated associations. It follows from the definitions of latent and manifest interests that social classes are always conflict groups”.

Gerhard Lenski is another important Conflict theorist. Recent Sociologists are grappled with some important questions like on what basis power is distributed? Who holds power? Why some people have access to power and so on so forth. Eventually the concept of power class has replaced the concept of class. Modern society witnesses multiple layers of authority and control. Just like corporate structure, various persons exercise power at various levels. The manager with whom the administrative control is vested with may not get the profit for his own use. The workers may have greater bargaining power through which they can put pressure and end up in getting the share of profit in their own favour. So, control and authority are not supposedly used by some fixed category of people. The nature of conflict is usually latent and not manifest and as long as those who are in power enjoys the legitimacy, conflicting situations do not arise. In modern societies some people by virtue of their access to education are considered to be naturally fit for a given position of authority and other simply obey them without any resistance. Thus, legitimacy of authority leads to stable society and when legitimacy is questioned or challenged, it will invite conflicting situations.

5.5 LET US SUM UP

Marx has always been given the credit for the genesis of conflict theory. But some scholars have departed from Marxian ideology and have recognized the role of non- economic determinants behind the onset of conflict. Power and status have been categorically pointed out by Weber as potential determinants of conflict. Certain kinds of power are given importance, specifically those power which are supported by legitimacy. The Classical Conflict theorists had macro- historical perspective in which they have attempted to look towards larger evolutionary type of social transformation and the forces behind those transformations. The modern conflict theorists have opted to look at the contemporary realm of everyday appearances. The recent theorists focus more on empiricism and they want to identify the micro processes of conflict, contradiction and the outcome of these in specific conditions. Conflict study is not the sole objective of the conflict theorists, rather they are also eager to study the resolution of conflict along with maintenance of social solidarity and equilibrium. For conflict

theorists conflict is normal and inherent to all social organizations and social relationships. Conflict perspective is of immense importance in the studies of hierarchy, stratification and inequality. Conflict theories can provide inputs for resolving the inequalities.

5.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Discuss the main features of Classical theorists views on conflict.
- What are the key points of departure in the Conflict analysis of Classical and Modern Conflict theorists?

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UNIT-06 CONTRIBUTION OF RALPH DAHRENDORF AND LOUIS ALTHUSSER

Structure

- 6.1 Learning Objectives
- 6.2 Introduction
- 6.3 Emphasis on Position
- 6.4 Surrounding influencing the authority
- 6.5 Authority is not fixed
- 6.6 Dichotomous ideas of authority
- 6.7 Groups, Conflict and Change
- 6.8 Life and Works of Louis Pierre Althusser
- 6.9 Althusser and his inspirations and the inspired
- 6.10 Reaction of economic determinism
- 6.11 Althusser and his basic Ideological concepts
- 6.12 Althusser and Marxism
- 6.13 Althusser and the Theory of 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus' (ISA)
- 6.14 Criticisms
- 6.15 Let Us Sum Up
- 6.16 Check Your Progress
- 6.17 References

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you will be able to understand

- The conflict theory of Dahrendorf and its basic characteristics
- Dahrendorf's emphasis on Position
- Dahrendorf's claim that surrounding influences the authority
- Authority is not a fixed thing
- The dichotomous ideas of authority
- Dahrendorf's conceptualization on group, conflict and change
- Criticisms labelled at Dahrendorf's conflict theory
- Get some glimpses of Althusser's life, important works and key concepts;
- Understand the basic ideas of Althusser's theories

- Would develop analytical thinking on “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus”;

6.2 INTRODUCTION

The early conflict theorists considered that conflict between major social groups whose interests are diametrically opposite of each other differ in their goals necessarily concerned about the social transformation that could come in the structure of society.

Conflict theory at best can be said to be the antithesis of functionalist theory. The functionalists see society as static or a state of moving equilibrium, but for conflict theorists like Dahrendorf, every society at every point of time is subject to change. Functionalists perceive social order and stability, whereas for the conflict theorist's dissension and conflict are part and parcel of every social system. The functionalists view every part contributing for stability of the entire system, whereas taking an opposite view the conflict theorists consider that parts of society leading towards disintegration and subsequently towards change. Norms, values and morality are important for the functionalists since these help in maintaining social solidarity. For the conflict theorists on the contrary view that social order is because of coercion of some members of society who are at the apex of all affairs. Social values as per the functionalists are responsible behind maintaining social order and cohesion, but for the conflict theorists power helps in maintaining social cohesion.

Dahrendorf considers that society has two faces and that is why sociology should also focus on two kinds of theories i.e. conflict and consensus theories. It is the task of the consensus theorists to look into what essentially binds the people together, at the same time conflict theorists should focus on how society is held together in spite of conflict and divisive forces. For Dahrendorf both conflict and consensus are complementary processes which cannot exist exclusively. For Dahrendorf, conflict many times may lead to consensus, for example the US and Japan were not allies, but they have turned to be so after World War II.

According to Dahrendorf, for the functionalist's voluntary cooperation or general consensus or both hold together the social system. Society is held together by enforced constraint according to the Conflict theorists and they believe that some positions in society are endowed with power and authority over the others. This prompted Dahrendorf to come up with the proposition that the differential distribution of authority “invariably becomes the determining factor of systematic social conflicts” (1959: 165).

Louis Althusser (1918-1990) is a renowned French Marxist Philosopher. His notable works include “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus” published in his book “Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays” (1971), “For Marx (1965), “Reading Capital” (1968). He did not subscribe to the classical Marxian ideology of the dialectics of base and superstructure, rather he wanted to revise traditional Marxism when he talked about “relative autonomy “of the superstructure.

6.3 EMPHASIS ON POSITION

For Dahrendorf larger social structure were important. According to him, different positions in society have different amount of authority. Authority is not vested with the individuals, but with the positions. Dahrendorf wanted to study the structure of these positions vested with authority along with the conflict inherent in these positions. He wanted to look into the social roles in which expectations for domination and subjection were inherent. Dahrendorf was totally antithetical to the idea of any individual or individualistic analysis of conflict, which can be inferred from his opposition to any kind of psychological and behavioural analysis of those who held power or occupy power positions. He categorically denounced those scholars as Sociologists.

6.4 SURROUNDING INFLUENCING THE AUTHORITY

Dahrendorf concentrated on the study of authority attached to positions. Authority includes both facets of super ordination and subordination. The occupants of positions of authority express the tendency to control the subordinates. This domination tendency is primarily because of the expectation of those surrounding persons, but not their typical psychological disposition. These expectations according to Dahrendorf are attached to the position and not the person occupying authority. It is the legitimacy attached with the authority which calls for sanction of those who do not comply or obey the authority.

6.5 AUTHORITY IS NOT FIXED

Since authority is vested with positions and not with persons, a person enjoying authority in one situation may not enjoy authority in another situation. For example, a principal owes authority and respect from the subordinate staffs and the students, but outside college campus in a market he/she is a client/consumer, in a petrol pump he/she is a mere consumer. Likewise, a person being in a position of subordinate may be a superordinate in another situation. For example, a

constable may be a subordinate to his senior Sub-inspector, but when the constable is sent for maintenance of law and order, even common citizens are bound to obey his directions.

6.6 DICHOTOMOUS IDEAS OF AUTHORITY

All these ideas are derived from Dahrendorf's conceptualization of the idea that society consists of number of units which are "Imperatively Coordinated Associations". These are nothing but associations of people which are controlled by a hierarchy of authority positions.

Society consists of numerous associations of such types, so an individual who occupies a superior position in one association, assumes subordinate position in another association.

According to Dahrendorf, the idea of authority within each association is dichotomous. Only two conflict groups can be formed within an association. The interests of those who hold position of authority and those who are in subordination are contradiction.

Within any association, those who occupy authority position or those at the top wants to maintain status quo, where as those who are in subordination position desire for change. Within any association there prevails conflict of interest, may be in a latent way. If there is no open expression of conflict of interest within any association, still it can be objective in the sense that these are reflected in terms of exceptions attached to positions. Individuals when occupy those positions they behave in the expected manner. A major task of Conflict theory according to Dahrendorf, is the analysis of the connection between latent and manifest interest.

6.7 GROUPS, CONFLICT AND CHANGE

Dahrendorf distinguishes between three types of groups i.e. Quasi groups, interest groups and conflict groups. As per Dahrendorf "Common modes of behaviour are characteristics of interest groups recruited from larger quasi-groups. Interest groups are groups in the strict sense of the sociological term; and they are the real agents of group conflict. They have a structure, a form of organization, a program or goal, and personnel of members". (Dahrendorf, 1959: 180)

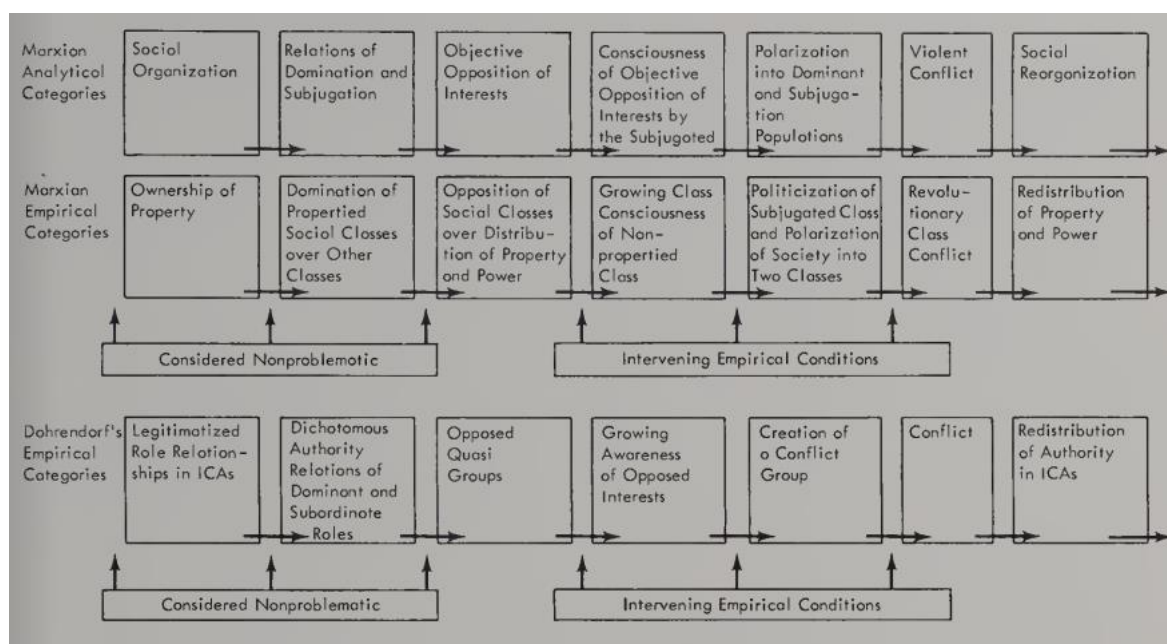
Conflict groups emerge from out of many interest groups and conflict groups are actually involved in group conflict. For Dahrendorf, the recruitment process of the quasi group is important. If the recruitment to quasi group is structurally determined, then doors are open for recruitment into interest groups and to some extent conflict groups. On the other hand, if the recruitment to the quasi group is random and happens by chance, then least chances of formation is there for the interest group as well as the conflict group.

For explaining social conflict, Dahrendorf felt the necessity of latent and manifest interests, quasi groups, interest groups and conflict groups. Sometimes other conditions may also influence social conflict. Technical conditions like adequate personnel, political condition like overall political climate and social conditions like communication links may have some role in conflict.

Though Dahrendorf takes cognizance of Coser's perspective of conflict which feels that the function of conflict is maintaining the status quo, but Dahrendorf takes a departure by telling that conflict also is responsible for development and change.

When the conflict groups emerge, they engage in social action which leads to changes in social structure. Under the conditions of intense conflict, radical changes will be in place. When conflict is accompanied by violence, sudden structural changes will be there. According to Dahrendorf irrespective of the nature of conflict, the sociologists should attempt to study the relationship between conflict and change as well as conflict and status quo.

Dialectical Conflict Theory of Ralph Dahrendorf:



Source- "The Structure of Sociological Theory" J.H. Turner, 1974, Pp. 97

6.8 LIFE AND WORKS OF LOUIS PIERRE ALTHUSSER

Louis Althusser was born in 1918 in Algeria, France in a Jewish family to Charles Althusser and Lucienne Berger. Althusser's father was a bank manager whom he considered as authoritarian. Althusser thought his deemed mental problem was because of the fact that his

mother wanted to marry his paternal uncle who died in World War I and his mother married his father instead, for which his mother considered him as the replacement of this dead uncle. Althusser spent his childhood in Marseilles. He joined the Jeunesse Etudiante Chretienne which was a Catholic youth movement in 1937. Therefore, Althusser propagated some of the most conservative ideas of the church back then. Though Althusser was a brilliant student in his school Lycee du Parc in Lyon, his higher studies were disrupted at Ecole Normale Supérieure where he was admitted in 1939. Due to World War II Germany occupied north and eastern France. Althusser spent five years in German Concentration in Schleswig for five years, which resulted in his involvement in French resistance against German occupation. During his involvement in the resistance movement Althusser met Helene Rytman whom he married in 1946. Helene was a member of French Communist Party which Althusser joined in 1948. After the World War II ended, Althusser returned back to his studies in Ecole Normale Supérieure where he persuaded his Master's thesis on Hegel who was a German Philosopher. Althusser developed both physical and mental disorder during his confinement in the concentration camp. Throughout his life Althusser suffered from depression. In the year 1947 Althusser went for mental therapy and also in the same year after completing his Masters, he became a tutor at Ecole Normale Supérieure.

6.9 ALTHUSSER AND HIS INSPIRATIONS AND THE INSPIRED

Althusser was inspired by the Structuralists. Apart from the Structuralists Hegel, Lacan, Freud had immense influence on the theory of ideology of Althusser. Althusser was very much clear in his mind that though capitalism gives the idea that free individuals exercise their own choices, have their own preferences, but according to Althusser all the preferences, choices, desires of individuals are the by product of social practices which the individuals have internalized in due course of time. Society imposes certain kinds of roles and the individual as a subject abides by this. Freud and Lacan have influenced Althusser's ideas of the deeper structures that exists behind the text. In his famous essay 'Freud and Lacan' (1994) Althusser elaborates on this idea.

Numerous scholars have been influenced by Althusser's works. Among his students Etienne Balibar and Michel Foucault, Pierre Macherey, Jacques Derrida and Fredric Jameson were highly influenced by Althusser's notion of ideology. Among the feminist theorists Juliet Mitchell and Michelle Barrett used his concept of "interpellation" for understanding how patriarchy works.

6.10 REACTION OF ECONOMIC DETERMINISM

In his book “Reading Capital” (with Balibar) Althusser tried to analyze Marxian notion of history and society. Marx tried to explain the structure of society with the help of mode of production. Two kinds of relations are necessary for mode of production- the relations which are involved in the task of production and those relations which are created by means of ownership and surplus is necessarily appropriated by the class of owners. Althusser doesn't agree with this proposition and while rejecting economic determinism argues that society rather consists of several other distinct structures or practices like and economy is only one among them. Each of these structures contributes to the wider social processes, yet the irony is that all structures do not contribute equally to the whole. Some structures have greater influence while others are weak. Althusser therefore recommends that adequate understanding of superstructure should be done to understand the society.

6.11 ALTHUSSER AND HIS BASIC IDEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS

On the basis of Jacques Lacan's writings, Althusser wants to know how ideology functions in society. He drifts apart from the earliest Marxist understanding of ideology. As per Marxian tradition, ideology has been utilized by the Bourgeoisie to create ‘false consciousness’ which means a false understanding of the way world functions (for example, when the poor masses think that the Government is doing excellent work by giving them various economic incentives, but behind this they do not know that they are merely vote banks. Another example may be cited when we purchase products from market we appreciate the aesthetic and the utility part, we are hardly aware of the exploitation the labour has experienced while producing the said product.)

Three basic concepts can be discussed as a precursor to Althusser's understanding of Ideology-

1. “Ideology is the ‘representation ‘of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (Althusser, 2006, p. 109)

Marxists show how ideologies are false after they unveil the idea that how real world is hidden by ideology. For them the real economic base lies behind the ideology. But Althusser refutes this by saying that ideology does not reflect the real world, but ideology represents the ‘imaginary’ relationship of the individuals to the real world. Althusser subscribes to Lacanian ideas when he develops his ideas on ideology. For Althusser “Ideology has a material existence” (2006, p.109).

2. **Materiality of Ideology-** For Althusser, ideology has a material existence because “ an ideology always exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices” (Althusser, 1971, p. 166). It is always through actions ideology gets manifested which are reflected through practices for example through conventional behaviour and rituals. Ideology has material base in the sense that the actions and decisions made by the individuals are the results of his/ her ideological orientation or socialization.
3. **“Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects”-** For Althusser individual and subject are two distinct things and it is basically ideology which transforms an individual into a subject. As per Althusser “all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects” (Althusser, 1971, p.173). Althusser cites a nice example to justify this. When police hail an individual as “Hey, you there!” The individual responds to this hail and turns around and thus “he becomes a subject”. The reason behind this is simple because the individual comes to recognize that the hail was meant for him and that “it was really him who was hailed” (Althusser, 1971, p.172-174). Althusser talks about another process which is also important in creating subject. He cites the example of Christianity and its religious ideology. The doctrine views in this world there is only one supreme subject and numerous ordinary subjects. The ideology entails upon considering in the name of the central supreme being, other individuals are transformed into subjects. The human individual accepts the undeniable “interpellating ideology” and carries out all the rituals. In the words of Althusser, “the subject recognizes itself as subject only because it subjects itself to the central Absolute Subject, which provides the possibility of this recognition, and circumscribes the forms of subjection in which the subject is constituted” (2006, p.122). Though the subject perceives its subject hood as natural, but according to Althusser this role is played by the subject because of ideology.

6.12 ALTHUSSER AND MARXISM

Althusser was not particularly influenced by early Marxian writings, rather he was inspired by later Marx and hence he drifted away from early humanism and there had been significant influence of Feuerbach and Hegel. Althusser has been popularly known as a Neo-Marxist.

Althusser came across two concepts of structure viz. ‘problematic’ and ‘social formation’ and according to him Marxian theory was inadequate while dealing with the concept of structure. ‘Problematic’ as a concept according to Althusser refers to a systems of problems and concepts that can define the meaning of each other. (Althusser,1970). The concept of ‘problematic’

according to Althusser helps in understanding the earlier limitations of a particular work which was not visible earlier. Althusser developed the concept of 'problematic' in 'Reading Capital' (1970).

In his work 'For Marx', Althusser gave a whole a new understanding of the concept of 'ideology' which was different from the conceptualization of the young Marx. For Althusser, 'Every ideology must be regarded as a real whole, internally unified by its own problematic, so that it is impossible to extract one element without altering its meaning' (1969:62). Althusser tried to understand Marx's conceptualization of society as social structure by talking about 'Social formation'. Social formation according to Althusser is complex, decentered and asymmetrical structures. Althusser finds out a series of levels through which a given society functions. Althusser calls these levels as 'practices' meaning 'any process of transformation of a determination raw material into a determinate product, a transformation effected by a determinate human labour, using determinate means of production') Althusser 1969:166). Althusser distinguishes between four main practices within a social formation which are-

Economic practices- which involves transformation of nature by labour

Political practice- which involves transformation of social relation by class struggle

Ideological practice- transformation of the ways of experiencing the world

Theoretical practice- transformation of ideology into knowledge.

As per Althusser all these practices function in a decentralized way and each influences the other. This process is asymmetrical because at any given point of time, one of the four practices is dominant.

6.13 ALTHUSSER AND THE THEORY OF 'IDEOLOGY AND IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUS' (ISA)

Althusser thought that Marxian ideas were underdeveloped and hence he marched ahead for developing the theory of ideology and culture. From Althusser's huge work 'On the Reproduction of Capitalism' his work 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' (1970) was taken which entails upon how human being get self-conscious. As Althusser puts it.....Ideology, as a system of representations, is distinguished from science in that in it the socio-political function is more important than the theoretical function (function as knowledge) (Althusser 1969:231). The real function of ideology is not to produce knowledge of the real

conditions of the history of society, but rather ideology has a social function according to Althusser. According to Althusser, 'ideology is indeed a system of representations, but in the majority of cases these representations have nothing to do with 'consciousness': they are usually images and occasionally concepts, but it is above all as structures that they impose on the vast majority of men, not via their 'consciousness'. (Althusser 1969: 233).

In his work on ISA Althusser seeks to find out how societies reproduce relations of production by which a society functions and these relations of production are essentially exploitative. Althusser here utilizes the Marxian term 'State apparatus' meaning all these institutions which help the ruling class to propagate and perpetuate its economic dominance. Althusser distinguishes two types of State Apparatus depending on the nature of institutions. One is Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) consisting of the government, the army, administration, the courts, police, the prisons etc. And these RSA function by means of violence.

On the other hand, the Ideological State Apparatus functions with the help of ideology which includes the educational ISA, the family ISA, the religious ISA, the Political ISA, the Legal ISA, the Communications ISA, the trade union ISA, the cultural ISA (ibid 137).

Many times, there is overlapping between ISA and RSA. There are no pure types like pure Ideological State Apparatus or pure Repressive State Apparatus. The ISA primarily uses ideology to indoctrinate the masses and secondarily uses repression and force. Similarly, the RSA uses primarily force or repression to uphold the hegemony of the ruling class or the dominant class and secondarily used the ideological tools to indoctrinate the minds of the common people. ISA promotes class struggle in the sense that apart from propagating the ideologies of the ruling class, at the same time it helps in articulation of the ideologies of the exploited classes (Ibid. 14).

6.8 CRITICISMS

There are several grounds for criticizing the conflict theory of Dahrendorf. Like one of the principal criticisms aimed at structure functionalism is that it has ignored conflict and change, similarly conflict theory has been criticized for not paying attention to order and stability. Functionalism was attacked for its conservative ideology and critics point out that conflict theory is ideologically radical. Conflict theory has been criticized for its underdeveloped nature in comparison with the structure functionalism and it is considered as a more derivative theory.

Hazelrigg (1972), Turner (1973), Weingart (1969) and to certain extent Dahrendorf (1968) himself have provided some critical reflections on conflict theory. Firstly, Dahrendorf's claim that his conflict theory is a clear manifestation of Marxian ideas has been refuted. Secondly, it was found that conflict theory has some commonalities with structure functionalism rather than Marxism. Dahrendorf's inclination towards systems (imperatively coordinated associations), roles and positions made strong grounds for linking his ideas more with structural functionalism and this resulted in finding more inadequacies in Dahrendorf's conflict theory. Turner (1975,1982) has found that Dahrendorf's conflict theory has too much conceptual and logical problems like tautologies, vague concepts just like structural functionalism. Most importantly, like structural functionalism the macroscopic nature of conflict theory does not allow much space for developing any understanding of individual thought and action.

It has been argued that Sociology needs theory which explains both consensus and dissension. The conflict theory of Dahrendorf is considered as inadequate as it only attempts to explain only one portion of social life. Social structure, order, conflict and change everything has to be given attention by Sociologists. Dahrendorf's proclamation that alternative perspectives have to be used simultaneously is difficult to implement as it is quite difficult to explain and impractical to use conflict theory under conflicting situations and similarly it is baseless to use only functional theory in situations when order prevails.

Bailey (1997), Chapin (1994), Himes (1966) and Berghe (1963) have favoured the idea of reconciling or integrating the theories of structural functionalism and conflict theory. According to these scholars the combination of these two theories tend to be more powerful. Lewis Coser's "The Functions of Social Conflict" (1956) has been an expanded attempt of George Simmel's work on the functions of social conflict. As per Coser conflict serves to solidify a loosely structured group. A society which experiences conflict with another society may forge integration. The example of the cohesiveness of the Israeli Jews can be cited here. Because of the long drawn battle with the Arab nations of the Middle East and among the battles between Israelis and Palestine, the Israel nationals have forged a strong tie and cohesiveness among themselves. In this case, continual conflict acts as an agent for bringing strong consensus and cohesiveness among the Israelis. Conflict can result in forging alliance with several groups as it has happened in case of Israel and Palestine. Conflict with the Arab nations has led to cementing ties between the US and Israel.

One of the most important functions of conflict is communication. There might be uncertainties about the adversaries position before conflict, but after conflict the boundaries between groups gets clarified. People hereafter can take better action in relation to their adversaries. Some ordinarily isolated individuals get into active role as a result of conflict. In the US the protests over Vietnam war attracted and motivated many young people to take various role in American politics, but as soon as the war ended, young mass was apathetic towards the same cause. There is increased possibility of rapprochement and peaceful accommodation as a result of conflict because the parties to conflict get a better idea of the relative strengths. Andre Gunder Frank (1966) terms conflict theory as inadequate Marxian theory and hence he rejected it.

Additionally, it has been argued that Conflict theory has not paid due attention to order and stability. Conflict theory has been ideologically radical. Dahrendorf's conflict model is not clearly the reflection of Marxian ideas as claimed by Dahrendorf. Dahrendorf's conflict theory has more commonality with structural functionalism than with Marxian theory. Like Structural functionalism conflict theory due to its macroscopic orientation offers little to understand about individual action and thought. Coser argued that conflict may lead to solidifying loosely structured groups. In a disintegrating society, conflict with another society may restore solidarity. The solidarity among the Israeli Jews may be attributed to the mutual fight between Arab nations in the Middle East.

The criticisms labelled against Althusser surfaced after his publications "For Marx" (1969) and 'Reading Capital' (1970). Fraser (1976/77: 454) finds the attempt made by Althusser for periodization of the works of Marx and his consideration of the year 1965 as epistemological break as totally arbitrary. Althusser has been put to critique by some scholars for his undermining the concept of human reality as noticed by Marx, rather Althusser was in pursuit of ideological forms of humanism according to the critiques. Fraser also points out the lacunae in Althusser's treatment of the concept of 'alienation' by Marx because it has been alleged that Althusser has treated the concept of 'alienation' as an ideology and he failed to distinguish between appearance and reality. Althusser attracted many criticisms because of his over emphasis on the system of ideas and this has been confessed by him in his work 'Elements of a Self-Criticism'.

6.9 LET US SUM UP

Dahrendorf's ideas on conflict are well reflected in his seminal work "Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society" which was published in 1959. For Dahrendorf social conflict is a

necessary aspect of social life. Dahrendorf is mostly interested in analyzing the relationship between social class and conflict in capitalist societies. Unequal distribution of power and authority within society are the primary reasons behind social conflict as per Dahrendorf. Generally, the social classes are defined in terms of their relationship to power and conflicting situation among classes is obvious when they tend to compete among themselves for power and resources. Dahrendorf acknowledges that fact that social conflict can be productive and can serve as a catalyst for social change, but if not managed effectively it can be destructive and may lead to violence. Imperatively Coordinated Associations or ICA according to Dahrendorf indicates to a system of social organization where individuals or groups are linked with each other through a network of rules, regulations and hierarchical structures. The distribution of power and authority among various individuals and groups helps in determining the hierarchical structure of ICA. For Dahrendorf ICA is a dominant type of social organization especially in modern industrial societies, particularly in capitalist societies.

Althusser was a celebrated French Philosopher who had contributed immensely to the study of culture and literature of the capitalist society. He had contributed a lot in the development of the theory of ideology. Althusser has been popularly termed as structural Marxist because he has conceptualized structuralism which had Marxist orientation. Althusser tried to supplement Marxian concept of structure by bringing together the concepts of ‘problematic’ and ‘social formation’. Althusser (1970) brought a new orientation to the concept of ideology. For Althusser, ‘Every ideology must be regarded as a real whole, internally unified by its own problematic, so that it is impossible to extract one one element without altering its meaning’. Althusser’s rigorous reading and subsequent interpretation of Marx’s works which is termed as ‘symptomatic reading’ by Althusser himself led him to give emphasis on the Marxian ideas which Althusser thought were underdeveloped and therefore he marched ahead for developing the theory of ideology and culture. Althusser’s work ‘Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus’ (1970) describes vividly the way through which human being became self-conscious subject. In this work Althusser finds out that ideology has a social function and the aim of this function is not to produce knowledge regarding the real conditions of the history of society. He rather explores how societies reproduce relations of production and this is exploitative and this is how society functions. ‘State apparatuses of the ‘Ideological State Apparatus’ refers to all those institutions which helps the ruling class for perpetuating the economic dominance. There are two types of state apparatus according to Althusser. The ‘Repressive State Apparatus’ (RSA) consists of the army, the police, the government, the administration, the prisons, the courts etc.

which ‘functions by violence’. The relationship between art and ideology has been explained nicely by Althusser. As per Althusser, the type of relationship that art shares with knowledge is different from the relationship between science and knowledge because science produces knowledge, but art does not produce knowledge but maintains a specific relation with that of knowledge. In spite of the criticisms labeled against Althusser, his earnest attempt to reinterpret Marxism has saved the works of Marx from falling to the prey of totalitarianism. (Dosse, 1967 :188).

6.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- While dealing with the concept of conflict, why Dahrendorf thought group is more important than the individual?
- Discuss Dahrendorf’s ideas on authority.
- How did Althusser and Marx view the relations between base and superstructure? Answer in four lines.
- Distinguish between ISA and RSA.
- Describe the two important processes that ideologically interpellate individual as subjects?
- How would you perceive the educational system as one of the most important ISA?

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UNIT-07 ORIGIN AND BASIC POSTULATES OF CRITICAL THEORY

Structure

- 7.1 Learning Objectives
- 7.2 Introduction
- 7.3 Origin of Critical Theory
- 7.4 Basic Postulates of Critical Theory
- 7.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 7.6 Check Your Progress
- 7.7 References

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit you will be able to

- Understand what is Critical theory
- The brief history behind Critical theory
- Essential features of Critical theory

7.2 INTRODUCTION

Critical theory can be termed as a school of thought which emerged from the work of number of German theorists collectively known as the Frankfurt School. In 1923 the Institute for Social Research came up at the Frankfurt school in Germany and this is centered on the work of Jurgen Habermas. This school was dedicated for studying Marxism and anti-Semitism. The major aims of Critical theory include critical assessment of capitalism. It denounces the optimism of the enlightenment. Critical theory does not support the idea that by using science a better society can come up. For the Critical theorists objective science is the manifestation of capitalism.

7.3 ORIGIN OF CRITICAL THEORY

The scholars associated with Critical theory put history at the center of their philosophy and understanding of society. Historically the Frankfurt School and the critical school have been used interchangeably. The Frankfurt School which refers to the group of social researchers and philosophers who worked under Max Horkheimer at the Institute of Social Research in the 1930s. The scholars of this school try to bring about interdisciplinary approach for interpreting Marxism and Psychoanalysis. In the initial years of its inception, the Frankfurt School was interested in both capitalism and Marxism. The scholars associated with this school reject the

economic determinism of Marx and they also denounce Russia's bureaucratic and totalitarian regime. The prominent scholars of this school comprise of Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Habermas and others. They have posed a number of political questions and tried to undermine the economy. Moreover, Freudian interpretations were included for interpreting alienation, working class frustration and even family issues. The Critical theorists drew inspiration from Hegel, Nietzsche, Luckas, Weber and Freud. Analyzing the present society in relation to the past and while doing this their main objective was to acquaint those who were oppressed to know the reasons behind their oppression. Emancipatory conceptualization and practices could end the oppression.

The scholars belonging to Critical theory wanted to go for interdisciplinary approach because for them Marxism was "open -ended historical, dialectical theory that required development, revision and modification precisely it was a theory of contemporary socio-historical reality which itself was continuously developing and changing". (Doshi,2003, p.450). A revision to Marxism was much needed according to Critical theorists because fascism was growing in Russia and despite the rise of capitalism, the workers did not show any sign of revolution.

7.4 BASIC POSTULATES OF CRITICAL THEORY

Emancipation:

The Critical theorists major orientation was towards emancipation of the mankind. The Critical theorists were not inclined towards Marxian ideas on praxis. For Marx theory should have the capability for guiding the practical works and in turn practical work should give feedback in order to strengthen theory. This is the common idea behind praxis. The critical theory lay importance on the fact that any theory should aim at emancipating man from oppression and exploitation. The basic objective of theory is not merely validating the facts, but theories should help the individuals to see and understand what is and it will eventually open up the possibilities of realizing what might be.

Stress on Consumerism:

The Critical theorists could see the ability of the capitalism whereby it persuaded the proletariat to become consumers. This increased consumerism of the proletariat has not been able to compensate for the alienation they experienced especially in the context of their labour power. Capitalism has been successful in its endeavour for inculcating false belief among the proletariat that while purchasing commodities they are exercising their real choices. According too the

Critical theorists the proletariats have been victimized by the trap of created need and they are not actually driven by actual needs.

Necessary but not sufficient condition for revolution:

For the scholars of Frankfurt School theory is needed for revolutionary change, but theory is not the sufficient cause which will bring in revolution. If the theories want to bring forward change, then the theory should be practising it, theory should motivate change.

Criticism of Positivism:

The Critical theorists criticism of positivism is partly related to their critical stand on economic determinism. The basic postulates of positivism see applicability of a single scientific method to all the fields of study. Positivists over reliance on on the physical sciences and their exactness, certainty and neutrality have been rejected by the Critical theorists. The Critical theorist mostly focus on human activity and how these human activities affect larger social structures.

Supra-disciplinary:

Sydie (2001) rightly says “The institute would be a place where philosophers, sociologists, historians and psychologists must unite in a lasting working partnership.....to pursue the great philosophical questions with the most refined methods.....The institute’s major research focus was on alienation and domination in modern capitalist society. The institute’s research was to be supra disciplinary, not interdisciplinary. That is, research and theoretical approaches were to transcend separate disciplinary positions to create supra disciplinary social theory.”

Economic determinism:

When the scholars of Frankfurt school criticize economic determinants, they are not completely antithetical to the economic realm, but they want that other aspects of social life must be given importance. The scholar of Frankfurt school has given sufficient attention to the cultural realm. For them the characteristics feature of modern society is that it is dominated by culture more than the economic factors. The cultural repression of the modern individuals is the immediate concern of the Critical theorists.

Emergence of Knowledge industry-

As per the Critical theorists the autonomous structures in society are the major source of generating knowledge. They were of the opinion that the universities and research institutes

have turned out to be oppressive structures and they are interested in expanding their influence throughout the society.

Criticisms of Critical Theory

A number of criticisms have been leveled at critical theory (Bottomore, 1984). First, critical theory has been accused of being largely ahistorical, of examining a variety of events without paying much attention to their historical and comparative contexts (for example, Nazism in the 1930s, anti-Semitism in the 1940s, student revolts in the 1960s). This is a damning criticism of any Marxian theory, which should be inherently historical and comparative. Second, the critical school, as we have seen already, generally has ignored the economy. Finally, the critical theorists have tended to argue that the working class has disappeared as a revolutionary force, a position decidedly in opposition to traditional Marxian analysis. Criticisms such as these led traditional Marxists such as Bottomore to conclude, “The Frankfurt School, in its original form, and as a school of Marxism or sociology, is dead” (1984:76). Similar sentiments have been expressed by Greisman, who labels critical theory “the paradigm that failed” (1986:273). If it is dead as a distinctive school, that is because many of its basic ideas have found their way into Marxism, neo-Marxian sociology, and even mainstream sociology. Thus, as Bottomore himself concludes in the case of Habermas, the critical school has undergone a rapprochement with Marxism and sociology, and “at the same time some of the distinctive ideas of the Frankfurt School are conserved and developed” (1984:76).

7.5 LET US SUM UP

Some of the notable sociologists who had immense contribution towards Critical theory were Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Pollock and Fromm. The major influence on these Critical theorists draws from Hegel, Luckas, Nietzsche, Weber and Freud. Emancipation of the mankind from all kinds of exploitation and oppression was the ultimate aim of the Critical theorists. Critical theory has been in existence since the formation of the Institute for Social Research at Frankfurt University in 1923. The institute conducted independent studies on Marxism and anti-Semitism. Critical theory can be broadly divided into three eras viz. The first generation, the second generation and the contemporary generation of Critical theorists. The first generation of Critical theorists wanted to maintain a commitment to Marxist ideology. The first generation Critical theorists or Frankfurt scholars faced the difficulty in defending Marxian idealism in a time when there was Nazism, fascism and socialism. The second generation of Critical theorists starting with Jurgen Habermas and others have attempted to

reconstruct Marxian ideology. Habermas was highly critical of the ideas of rationality propagated by the Western society. The contemporary generation of Critical theorists represented by Douglas Kellner and Ben Agger and others have used multidimensional approach to the study of modern culture, mostly the media. The contemporary Critical thinkers have mostly tried to analyse media and other forms of entertainment while dealing with the study of modern culture.

Critical theory tries to see society from a multidisciplinary perspective ranging from sociology, cultural theory, political economy, philosophy, history and anthropology. Critical theory adopts a non-dogmatic perspective which focuses on emancipation from all kinds of oppression. Critical theory sought to establish happiness, freedom and a rational ordering of society. It gives importance to the empirical analysis of the contemporary world. Critical theory disparages the optimism surrounded with the Enlightenment and it is critical of capitalism. Critical theory pours heavy criticism on the idea that through the use of science a better society can be constructed and Critical theory thinks this idea as illusional, naive and harmful. For the Critical theorists objective science is nothing but extended capitalism. These theorists are of the opinion that science and technology does not consider human values in a neutral manner.

7.6 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- What are the salient features of Critical theory?
- Why the Frankfurt scholars wanted to restructure Marxian ideas?
- Why Critical theory has been criticized?

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UNIT-08 CONTRIBUTION OF THEODOR ADORNO AND JURGEN HABERMAS

Structure

- 8.1 Learning Objectives
- 8.2 Introduction
- 8.3 Dialectic of Enlightenment
- 8.4 Philosophy of the New Music
- 8.5 The Authoritarian Personality
- 8.6 Minima Moralia
- 8.7 The Post War Period
- 8.8 Adorno's Critical Social Theory
- 8.9 Habermas' Central theories
- 8.10 Habermas' critique of Marxism
- 8.11 Communication and domination theory
- 8.12 Habermas and Public Sphere
- 8.13 Habermas and his ideas on Democracy
- 8.14 Criticism
- 8.15 Let Us Sum Up
- 8.16 Check Your Progress
- 8.17 References

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand major theories of Habermas
- Know major criticisms of Marx by Habermas
- Get into the ideas of Habermas's Communication and Domination
- Learn briefly about the theory of Public Sphere

8.2 INTRODUCTION

Adorno is one of the most important scholars of the Frankfurt School who contributed immensely for making the disciplines in social sciences interconnected. His contributions are not only limited to the discipline of Sociology, but disciplines like Psychology, Philosophy, Aesthetics, Political Science have been benefited by the contributions of Adorno. Adorno is well remembered for his critique of the contemporary western society and his critical gesture

towards contemporary 'culture industry'. Adorno was born on September 11, 1903 in Frankfurt. His father was a wealthy German wine merchant and his mother was an accomplished musician from Corsica. Adorno had great sense of music. Adorno completed his study on aesthetics of Kierkegaard under the supervision of Paul Tillich in 1931 and after that he worked as a university instructor. He along with other professors of Jewish origin were expelled from the university by the Nazis because of their leftist orientation. After leaving Germany in 1934 Adorno spent some years in America during his exile. Some of his notable works include-

- Dialectic of Enlightenment
- Philosophy of the New Music
- The Authoritarian Personality
- Mnima Moralia

Adorno in collaboration with Max Horkheimer published 'Dialectic of Enlightenment' in 1947. Adorno was critical of the society and culture of the mid- 20th century where he was much concerned about the dictatorship of Stalin in Russia, dictatorship of the Nazis in Germany, the consumerism of the United States. The Frankfurt School was critical of the value premises of western civilization.

Habermas was an assistant to Adorno at the Frankfurt school. In 1961 Habermas assumed the post of Professor of Philosophy and Sociology at the University of Heidelberg. Habermas was born in Gummersbach in Germany and he belonged to the Nazi era of Germany. In the 1950s Habermas could try to see some kind of similarities between Nazi regime and West Germany. All that Habermas wanted in all sincerity that Nazi regime should not reappear. Habermas was a student of Philosophy and he obtained his degree from Bonn. In 1982 Habermas went to occupy the chair of Sociology and Philosophy at the University of Frankfurt. Some of the popular publications of Habermas include-

- Towards a Rational Society, London, 1970
- Knowledge and Human Interest, Boston, 1971
- Theory and Practice, London, 1974
- Legitimation Crisis, London, 1976
- The Theory of Communicative Action (Vol. 1), Boston, 1984
- The Theory of Communicative Action (Vol. 2), Boston, 1987
- The New Conservatism, Cambridge, 1989
- Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action, Cambridge, 1990

Habermas wanted to transform the negative criticisms of Critical theory into a positive - programme for emancipation.

8.3 DIALECTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Dialectic of Enlightenment is the intellectual product of both Adorno and Horkheimer and this is regarded as one of the most important foundational texts of the Frankfurt School. According to this classic text, enlightenment does not proclaim values will be progressive automatically and at times enlightenment can also enslave society. The imprint of capitalist society is so pervasive that it gets reflected in the domain of culture, where the culture gives more importance to consumerism. The ‘culture industry’ propagates false consciousness about the world we live in and the ruling class gets the benefits of this. The type of exploitation as talked by Marx is replaced by some form of insidious control in which control is exercised through ideology and market and consumption aids in this process. The means of cultural reproduction is dominated by newspapers, film and radio and so on are controlled by commercial undertakings and advertisements. Hence culture is subdued to a mere sub set of capitalist engines and this is why culture loses its autonomy. Capitalist economy propelled by scientific research and technological development not only causes harm to the external world, but it has also serious effects on the internal nature of the human beings. Adorno uses the example of the Nazi-Jew hatred propaganda which was ideological incitement in which old certainties are destroyed and “Other” or outside groups are created for blaming them. The Nazis spread out the propaganda among the German middle class that the Jews by virtue of their financial power will dominate the world and will destroy Nationalist sentiments of the Germans and their identity will be at stake.

8.4 PHILOSOPHY OF THE NEW MUSIC

Adorno goes a step ahead of Marx when he says that it is culture which opiate the masses, but not the religion. Philosophy of New Music was published in 1949 which was not just a critique of the music of 1930s and 40s, but it was also a critical of the then social system in which such type of music was produced. For Adorno culture served the purpose of indoctrinating the masses which in turn helps in perpetuating the dominance of the capitalist. The ‘culture industry’ enslaves the workers to become consumers and the trap of the ‘culture industry’ is absolute and inescapable. Adorno terms the effects of the music of the 1930s and 40s to be ‘dumbing’ and ‘numbing’. Adorno while examining the jazz and swing music of that period analyses the works of Schoenberg and Stravinsky who represented new genre of Western music. While Adorno

was in full praise of Schoenberg whose music was a departure from the traditional soothing and melodious music and rather could provide solace to the human beings who were dehumanized and commodified. Under capitalism, music like other art forms has degraded and assumed the form of commodity meant to be consumed. New Music articulated the language of suffering and more honest and try to resist the sway of capitalist society. Adorno on the other hand, criticizes Stravinsky who tried to retain traditional music in his music. For Adorno this was regressive and statuesque did not have the scope to challenge the capitalist dominance. It is difficult to put Adorno under the boundary of Sociology as he transcends all most all the spheres including music.

8.5 THE AUTHORITARIAN PERSONALITY

The book *Authoritarian Personality* of Adorno was a product of the studies undertaken during and just after the end of World War II. It was published in 1950. Apart from Adorno, scholars like Else Frenkel-Brunswik, Nevitt Sanford, Levinson and psychological researchers from the University of Berkely, California were associated with this book. American Jewish Committee's Department of Scientific Research sponsored the study which was a part of "Studies in Prejudice". The study had the objective of understanding authoritarian personalities which was as a result of the anti-Semitism feeling arising out of the mass killing of the Jews by Hitler. This book cites the major determinant of this authoritarian tendency to Freudian developmental model. For example, during childhood if the children experience harsh treatment of the parents, then they might not express it during the childhood because they fear punishment. But this feeling leads to a sense of identification and they generally 'idolize other authority figures.

8.6 MINIMA MORALIA

Minimia Moralia: Reflexion from *Damaged Life* has been one of the most critically acclaimed publication of Adorno. He worked on this seminal work during his exile years in United States during the second world war. He started the writing in 1944 and completed in 1949. This work was dedicated by Adorno in the memory of Horkheimer's 50th birthday. Through some essays Adorno tries to summarize the condition of life under capitalism and fascism. Adorno's emphasis on the analysis of social phenomena involves the analysis of both society and the social actors who are involved in the process of social change. Since Adorno spent his exile years in the United States, being an outsider, he found the consumerist culture as meaningless and dehumanizing. Adorno expressed his concern over the distortion of everyday life by

capitalist exchange. The title of the book of Adorno was inspired by Aristotle's 'Magna Moralia' which was based on ethics. The main work of ethics is to inculcate good values and morality for leading a good life. But ironically for Adorno in the mid-20th century it is quite impossible to lead a honest and good life because the society is increasingly getting inhumane and consumerist. Benger (2011) finds that this book covers issues ranging from decline in conversation, impossibility of love, individualism, emigration, desolation of the family and totalitarianism.

8.7 THE POST WAR PERIOD

Adorno returned to Frankfurt after the World War II ended and went to take up a post in the department of Philosophy. In 1958 he became the director of the Institute of Social Research. Some of the remarkable works of Adorno include-

“Prisms”

“Negative Dialectics”- (1966)

“Aesthetic Theory” -1970

Adorno was a celebrated public intellectual who regularly appeared on radio talk shows, public lectures. His articles were published in newspapers, journals. He had immense reputation as an erudite scholar in Germany and his fearless writings could establish him as a celebrated scholar who told the Germans the truth about themselves which they never wanted to hear. Adorno through his writings and lectures wanted the Germans to come out of their past trauma and unpleasant memories of the Nazi era. Adorno was vehemently criticized because of his critique of the German society which was fast degenerating and dehumanizing. He was criticized by the right-wing conservationists and at the same time he was also victimized by the left wing student protest movements. The left-wing protesters tried to capitalize on the ideology of the Frankfurt school and attacked the authority and institutions of the state like family, society and church. Because of Adorno and Horkheimer's ideology, the conservatives criticized them for perpetuating anarchy and 'cultural terrorism'.

Adorno propagated the emancipatory capability of education by saying that education could only liberate the masses of Germany and would avoid all possibilities by which barbarism like Auschwitz could never happen. 1960s was an era full of challenges to the academic life because of war in Vietnam, the ever-increasing threats of radicalization and protest. Adorno went to Switzerland in 1969 and after some time before just one month from his 66th birthday, Adorno died of heart attack.

8.8 ADORNO'S CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY

Adorno tried to carry forward the Marxian notion as he wanted to highlight the changes occurred after Marx. Basically, the Frankfurt School under the influence from Marx criticized capitalism not because of its economic considerations, but they rather focused on the role of ideology and particularly how ideology helps in sustaining the forces of capitalism. Hungarian socialist George Lukacs finds that commodity exchange becomes central to all the sectors of society and commodity fetishism can be felt in all social institutions like administration, law, journalism and across all the realm of life including the academic disciplines. This process has been called as 'rectification' and he is concerned that ultimately the human beings will be reduced to merely obeying the rules of the market place (Zuidervaat 1991:76). For Adorno it is necessary for a critical social theory to investigate why social sufferings like poverty, hunger and so on are still persisting in societies where significant progress has been there in terms of scientific and technological development. The root cause behind this lies in the fact that every sphere of society is manifest with capitalist relations of production which leads towards concentration of wealth and power.

Adorno was influenced by Marx's notion of 'use value' of capitalism. In capitalism commodities are related to human needs and desires because commodities satisfy human needs. At the same time commodities have 'exchange value' as people want to exchange in return for something. Adorno attempts to analyse exchange theory at three levels: the politico-economic; the social-psychological and cultural. For explaining exchange value at politico-economic level, Adorno is of the opinion that though capitalist regime gives importance to economy, but in contemporary society both capitalism and power have assumed importance in the context of modern state. For example, Stalin in Russia, Nazi in Germany and Capitalism in America reflect well the combination of economy and power. In case of Socio-psychological level, authoritarianism, anti-Semitism and capitalist exploitation are interrelated. For Cultural level, Adorno after analyzing 'culture industry' finds that art has ceased to be autonomous and rather has turned out to be market driven and depends on it for its survival.

8.9 HABERMAS' CENTRAL THEORIES

Based on the historical nature of society, Habermas categorizes society into four types- primitive, traditional, capitalist and post capitalist. The primitive societies were dominated by kinship ties. Age and sex provided the basis for division of labour. External forces are responsible for bringing about changes in these societies. Demography, changes in the context of ecology, war

and conquest, inter-ethnic dependency due to economic exchange can initiate the process of change in these societies. Traditional societies were characterized with political domination. Here kinship system is replaced by power and control of the state. Differentiation and functional specialization are the hallmark of traditional societies. When in a class structure tend to appropriate the socially produced wealth, this leads to contradiction and subsequently lead towards social change. To maintain the integration of the system, 'heightened repression' is utilized.

Habermas distinguishes between liberal capitalist society and advanced capitalist society. The liberal capitalist society centers round wage labour and capital. Economic exchange is the dominant form activity and the jurisdiction of the state power is limited to a) protecting the bourgeoisie as per the civil law (police, administration everything try to shield the bourgeoisie) b) market is shielded to withstand the self-destructive side effects c) deriving the satisfaction from out of the entire economy like the public school education which is a prerequisite to perpetuate bourgeoisie ideas and practices.d) to evolve a type of civil law which absorbs all the criteria of accumulation like banking, business law, taxation).

In case of post capitalist societies, liberal capitalism is transformed into state regulated capitalism according to Habermas. In these societies state regularly intervenes in economy because of economic fluctuations. In these societies MNCs are on a rise. The distinction between economic and political system tends to be diluted. The state offers schemes for job creation, offers subsidies to industries and also provides tax reliefs to attract industries.

8.10 HABERMAS' CRITIQUE OF MARXISM

Habermas belong to the second-generation critical theorist. His ideas on communication is important to understand his Critical theory. He envisions to bring reform in Marxian theory in the light of postmodern theory. While developing his own Critical theories, Habermas offers few criticisms to Marxian theory. Some of his criticisms of Marxism are-

Through Marxian concept of labour and production it is not possible to understand cultural and political life:

Habermas though belonged to the Frankfurt school, he was opposed to some of the dogmatic theories of Marxism. Habermas was critical of the production relations on which the capitalism thrives. For him, in the earlier times state and economy used to be independent of each other and state followed laissez-faire policy. But in modern times state capitalism has evolved. State

goes parallel with every other sector and hence it is not the economic structure which alone determines the social structure, but political factors do have significant role in shaping up the social structure.

The type of oppression in advanced societies are different:

Oppression and exploitation of the labour along with alienation are some of the characteristic features of capitalism. After rejecting the oppression-exploitation theory of Marx, Habermas is of the opinion that the proletariat receive satisfactory remuneration and hence they do not develop the consciousness for mobilization. In such situations, proletariat would not go for revolution. The proletariat in modern times experience relative poverty, but not absolute poverty. Psychological and ethnic deprivations are the substitutes for exploitation and deprivation.

Soviet Russia has witnessed the failure of Marxism:

The problems of the proletariat have been misunderstood by Marx. Russian society was not agrarian, there was industrialization. Under the process of Fordism and Post Fordism, proletariat did not feel the urge for waging revolution. The labour class is becoming prosperous in modern times. The state has become welfare centric rather than being coercive. The crumble of Soviet Russia is a clear sign of the theoretical weakness of Marxism.

Superstructure has been completely neglected by Marx:

Marx only paid attention to the evolution of production relations and completely neglected the evolution of culture, ideology, values and religion. Superstructure is also an important aspect of superstructure apart from economic structure. Habermas brings in his concept of communication reason. For him communication is important both for infrastructure and superstructure. Language, symbols, interaction and ethnicity are mediums of interaction which cannot be ignored.

Marxian ideology and his ideas on Class Struggle have become irrelevant:

Habermas feels that the nature of capitalism has changed to a greater extent and under the changed circumstances, class struggle and ideology have become redundant. In the state-controlled capitalism, the workers are no longer dissatisfied because the workers are often given better remuneration and improved means of goods and services. The growing difference between the owners of capital and the non- owners gets over shadowed by the consumerism.

Adams and Sydie (2001) after analyzing Habermas' the status of class conflict in modern capitalist society put it in the following manner:

“Class distinction persist (even today), but according to Habermas, they are not central to social conflict. Conflict in modern society involves underprivileged groups who are not class as such and certainly do not represent the majority in society.....”

8.11 COMMUNICATION AND DOMINATION THEORY

Habermas' neo-conflict or Critical theories:

As a Critical theorist Habermas was very much concerned with the Marxian ideology of emancipation of the mankind. Though there are considerable differences among the Marxist scholars, but all Marxists be it structuralists, post structuralists or postmodernists all of them show concern for the emancipation of the mankind. Habermas is of the opinion that in modern times there is no urge to go for revolution among the proletariat class because they have been fully absorbed in the consumerist tendency of capitalism. With this background in mind Habermas lays his critical theory of communication and domination.

The Theory of Communicative Action (1981) is one of the most important work of Habermas. Habermas distinguishes between communicative action and purposive rational action. Communicative action is 'content-oriented' and purposive rational action is 'success-oriented' and 'goal oriented'. Purposive rational action are strategic actions which aim at influencing others for achieving some goal. Communicative action is basically an independent and distinct type of social action, it does not want to influence others but it seeks to reach an agreement or mutual understanding about something in the world. Habermas (1971) says “I take as my starting point the fundamental distinction between work and interaction”(1970:91). Through out his work Habermas uses the terms purposive-rational action (work) and communicative action (interaction). Under 'Purposive-rational action', Habermas distinguishes between instrumental action and strategic action. Both these actions involve calculated means of pursuing self-interest. In instrumental action, a single actor rationally calculates the best means to reach a given goal. While on the other hand, strategic action involves two or more individuals coordinate purposive-rational action for attaining a particular goal. Habermas' interest lies in communicative action where the actions of the agents are coordinated through understanding. The participants involved in communicative action are not merely interested in their own interest, but they want to pursue their individual goals under the condition that they seek to

harmonize their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions. (Habermas, 1984:286; italics added).

The objective of purposive-rational action is to achieve a goal and the goal of communicative action is to achieve communicative understanding. There is an important speech component in communicative action. According to Habermas, “How-ever, such action is broader than that encompassing “speech acts or equivalent non-verbal expressions” (Habermas, 1984:278).

Habermas differs from Marx when he says that communicative action and not purposive-rational action (work) is the most distinctive and pervasive human phenomenon. For him, communicative action is the foundation of all sociocultural life as well as all the human sciences. While Marx focussed on work, Habermas focussed on communication. Habermas is interested in undistorted communication I.e. communication without compulsion. Habermas takes the cognizance of those social structures which distort communication. Marx analyzed the structural sources of the distortion of work.

Distorted Communication:

This type of communication is found in the realm of psychoanalysis. Generally, in Freudian psychoanalysis, the patient is encouraged to be aware of the previously repressed needs through a process of psychoanalysis. When the patient is able to recognize the self-imposed repression, recovery begins. The Critical theorists with the help of psychoanalysis try to assist the patient with repressive desires to understand their social situation and thus they are able to suggest emancipatory practices. For Habermas this is very important in contemporary times because in the interest of technological rationalization, science and technology tend to distort communication. The political reinforcement also has greater role in distorting communication. Distorted communication can be compared with Marxian notion of false consciousness.

Undistorted Communication:

Undistorted rational communication can be possible in the condition where constraint free force of the better argument prevails. Undistorted communication refers to the conditions when social goals and values are discussed on a rational egalitarian basis and as a result of this consensus prevails over the ends and values which are pursued. Undistorted communication is the perfect communication. This type of communication does not result in any kind of problem.

8.12 HABERMAS AND PUBLIC SPHERE

“The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society” is the seminal work of Habermas which contains ideas about public sphere. This book was published in 1962 in German and Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence have translated it into English in 1989. Habermas dedicated this book to Wolfgang Abendroth. Habermas discusses the development of bourgeoisie public sphere in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and subsequently its decline.

For Habermas there is no sharp distinction between public and private sphere. These two spheres are not mutually exclusive according to Habermas. The relationship between the public and private sphere got impacted because of economic modernization and capitalism in Europe. New type of political institutions emerged in capitalist society which saw the transition from authoritarianism to democratic states where the public sphere became more participatory and alert.

In the views of Habermas public sphere is the one where autonomous individual cross over the private sphere to come together as a public to engage themselves in intersubjective discourse. Collective goals overshadow the individual goals and state response is required. Modern society typically manifests individuals with both public and private spheres. The private individual manifests his autonomy in relation to the public and the social being of the individual gets engaged in the communicative discourse in relation to others. This is why Habermas’ public and private spheres are not dichotomous, but they are mutually interdependent and inclusive. Individuals act in cooperation with each other in the context of public sphere. Social integration and autonomous individual is possible in the public sphere. The public sphere of Habermas is an intermediate sphere between state and society.

Usually in the public sphere the tensions between the state and society gets reflected so that some kind of solution will emerge from out of the consensus and this solution will be based on rational discourse. The public sphere according to Habermas is bourgeoisie public sphere. The members of the public sphere are property owning and literate bourgeoisie who come to discuss issues of mutual concern in coffee houses and salons. Since the public sphere of the bourgeoisie allows the voluntary participation and rational critical dialogue among its members, it is inclusive according to Habermas. One of the important characteristics of public sphere is rational communication among its members. The members of the public sphere are free to pursue their rational speech, thought and action and these are open to criticism within the public

sphere. Since the members of the public sphere are given ample chance for engaging in dialogue and discourse, the public sphere of Habermas is emancipatory. The interesting thing to note is that the members of the public sphere can also be critical of their own communication process. The self-critical and rational nature of the communication in the public sphere acts as catalyst for inculcating cooperation and coordination among the members of the public sphere. According to Habermas, bourgeoisie public sphere symbolizes the transition from ancient to modern societies. This transition can be attributed to the fact that the members of bourgeoisie public sphere are opinionated about the authoritarian state which tend to monopolize the conferred rights and powers and the members of the bourgeoisie society cast doubt over the legitimacy of such state to rule over the masses. The members of the bourgeoisie public sphere are also critical of the democratic state which try to infringe the rights and liberties of its members. As per Habermas, even in democratic state the rational members of the public sphere must be allowed to scrutiny and this is how the members of the public sphere will be empowered. The rational public sphere according to Habermas is is both integrating and self-reflecting at the same time. The members of the public sphere are not only vigilant about the rights and obligations of the state, they are at the same time watchful of their own actions. Hence Habermas' public sphere is rational-critical and this is possible because the members of the public sphere are engaged in a critical dialogue centering round the role of the state- both democratic and authoritarian and they are also critical of their own actions which facilitates coordinated action and results in achieving rationally -motivated consensus. Habermas' public sphere symbolises critique and self-reflective behaviour.

8.13 HABERMAS AND HIS IDEAS ON DEMOCRACY

Habermas's experience of the reconstruction of government in postwar period in Germany along with some influence from Marx and Weber shaped up his ideas on democracy. Habermas was critical of Marx for his inability to understand democracy and at the same time Habermas poured criticisms on Marx because he reduced the understanding of social life to work and labour. Habermas wanted to revisit Marxism. Habermas was simultaneously in disagreement with the Weberian notion that future society would fall trap into the "iron cage". Open dialogue on important social issues and concerns would be more rational according to Habermas. "For Habermas, democracy must be seen first and foremost as a process that results when a certain kind of social interaction prevails. More specifically, democracy should be seen as a particular way by which citizens make collective and rational decisions." (Kivisto,1998:77). The open discussion would let the individuals reach at a consensus and this type of public sphere

according to Habermas facilitates for the coming up of independent voluntary associations of citizens. Under these circumstances, a distinctive type of political structure emerges which permits the unrestricted dissemination of ideas and information (Kivisto,1998:77). Habermas's ideas of a deliberate democracy envision government's laws and institutions to be reflected with free and unbiased public discussions.

8.14 CRITICISM

Habermas (1987) is critical of Adorno's overestimation of the fact concerning upto what extent reason can be instrumentalized within modern and complex societies. Habermas thinks instrumental reasoning is only one of a number of forms of reasoning prevalent in modern societies. Habermas does not consider instrumental thinking as all-encompassing as Adorno thinks in Dialectic of Enlightenment. The amount of undue importance attached to instrumental reasoning has immense moral and philosophical implications for Adorno's general vision.

Even though there have been many years since the publication of 'The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere', but Habermas' work on public sphere has received wide spread criticisms especially in the discourse of liberal democracy. For those scholars who think that for a strong democracy a vibrant public sphere is highly needed where the citizens can participate well by mean of informal deliberations and discussions on important issues and will help in creating public opinion for making the political system more lively. Though Habermas views that public sphere gives space to reasonable debate and the members of public sphere are treated equal and no one having power over another. But the empirical reality is altogether different. In case of India the case of introduction of genetically modified seed varieties though promoted by the Government, GM food industry and large food corporations and giants, the appeal of the environmentalists and activists have not received much attention. The anti-GM crop lobby groups and their claims and laboratory findings have been hidden from larger public forum. So here the public sphere does not seem to preach equality nor it is promoting healthy dialogue and discussions among various stakeholders. Amir Ali following Freitag(1990) tries to justify the stand that in case of India impartial public sphere is not possible where fair dialogue is possible between the public and the state and this legacy has been carried forward since colonialism. The Britishers picked up the native elites who represented the masses. This representational style of government as propagated by the British facilitates unequal power sharing where only the privileged and the elites were given upperhand.

Habermas' emphasis on particular type of communication which is impartial, reflexive and involves reasoned exchange of validity claims where only better argument wins can be put to criticisms on the ground that this encourages a particular form of discourse- which encourages 'representational accuracy, logical coherence and dispassionate contestation of opinion'. This type of communication is possible only in western philosophy and academics.

Young (2000) finds that marginalised groups like women and non-western persons are excluded from Habermas' public sphere as people belonging to these groups have different styles of communication. While people belonging to this category in term of their speech give importance to emotions and expressions often showing gestures. On the other hand, the speech culture of the western middle-class men represents more controlled affair and there is insignificant attention to gestures and emotions.

8.15 LET US SUM UP

Adorno's work transcends across the fields of sociology, philosophy, psychology, aesthetics and social criticism. Adorno developed a critical understanding of the society and culture of the mid-20th century and was of the opinion that the society represented hopelessness and despair of that era. He was a ferocious critique of the Western civilization of the mid-20th century starting from anti-Semitism under Nazi dictatorship in Germany, Stalin's dictatorship in Russia to consumerist culture of the United States, he took a strong stand. Adorno urged the fellow theorists of the Critical school to try to find out the reasons behind poverty, hunger and all forms of social sufferings in the world despite the fact that there have been significant developments in the field of science and technology. For him, the root cause behind all these lies in the manner in which capitalist relations of production dominate society as a whole leading to concentration of wealth and power. Adorno through his analysis of the 'culture industry' comes up with interesting finding that art has ceased to be autonomous and rather turns out to be a commodity which depends on marketability for its existence. Capitalism helps in creating 'culture industry' of this type and through this 'culture industry' capitalism is able to perpetuate its false consciousness. Adorno promoted the idea of critical sociology which is self-reflective and which attempts to integrate the micro level personal experience with macro level socio-political processes.

8.16 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- What are the factors which promote anti-Semitism according to Adorno?
- What was Adorno's perception of the Western society during the mid-20th century?
- What are the basic postulates of Adorno's Critical Social Theory?
- Write a short note on distorted communication.
- Why Habermas put so much emphasis on public sphere?
- What was Habermas's ideas on democracy? Answer in three lines.

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Block-3

MICRO PERSPECTIVES

**Unit-09: Ethnomethodology: Basic Postulates, Contribution of
Harold Garfinkel**

**Unit-10: Phenomenology: Basic Postulates, Contribution of
Alfred Schutz**

**Unit-11: Symbolic Interactionism: Basic Postulates,
Contribution of George Herbert Mead**

**Unit-12: Exchange Theory: Basic Postulates, Contribution of
Peter Blau**

UNIT-09 ETHNOMETHODOLOGY: BASIC POSTULATES AND CONTRIBUTION OF HAROLD GARFINKEL

Structure

- 9.1 Learning objectives
- 9.2 Introduction
- 9.3 Ethnomethodology
- 9.4 Harold Garfinkel
- 9.5 Criticisms of Ethnomethodology
- 9.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 9.7 Glossary
- 9.8 Check your progress
- 9.9 Reference

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This section is designed to help you conceptualizing

- the meaning of ethnomethodology
- the nature and significance of ethnomethodology in understanding social reality
- the basic postulates of ethnomethodology
- the contributions of Harold Garfinkel towards ethnomethodology
- the criticism to ethnomethodology

9.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit deals with the ethnomethodology as a micro perspective in the contemporary sociological theory. This unit is the first part of the Block – 3: Micro Perspective. This unit will help the students learn primary knowledge on ethnomethodology and its relevance in contemporary sociological theory. This section will briefly analyse how humans' daily actions and interactions are considered the center of the ethnomethodological perspective. This theory challenges and stands against the traditional sociological theoretical perspective, particularly the structural-functional perspective. It challenges and denies the existence of social structure as such. There are three core differences between ethnomethodology and classical sociology. First, while traditional sociology deals with analysing society, ethnomethodology deals with the processes by which social order is created and shared. Second, while classical sociology provides descriptions of social settings, the ethnomethodology talks about the actual processes

that people use to explain those social settings. Third, ethnomethodology mainly avoids employing the structural-functionalist path – the programmatic assumptions, in describing and explaining social facts. Ethnomethodologists like Garfinkel, Schutz and others argued that the social reality or world consists of the categorisations and definitions of the society members through their subjective meetings. It is the role of sociologists and social scientists to describe, interpret and understand the subjective reality in society. This micro-sociological perspective is part of symbolic interactionists arguing how people interact or converse in everyday life using language. This theory argues that people are not just passive recipients but also creative actors and socializing agents in their own writing. In this context, the present unit will help the learners to understand the concept of ethnomethodology and the contributions of Garfinkel for the development of ethnomethodological theory within the discipline of sociology.

9.3 ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

Ethnomethodology is one of the interactionist perspectives that systematically study methods used by members of a concerned society (natives) to (re)construct their social world. So, it is the study of '(folk) ethno' 'methods', i.e., the lay persons' methods to make sense of their own world and what they say and do in a specific social context. This is an ethnographic approach to sociological theory developed by Harold Garfinkel. This perspective examines the methods that people use to deal with others in society. It is the method and practices that various people, groups or communities use to understand their environment. In particular, it argues that the rules that hold our society together may not be the norms, values, culture, religion, laws, role bargaining, standard definitions, interest coalitions and the present social theories. However, people's implicit and explicit methods help create and maintain the social order in society. Simply put, it is the 'methods' common people use regularly to carry out their daily lives. In defining ethnomethodology, Heritage (1984 cited in Ritzer 2011) writes it is the study of 'the body of common-sense knowledge and the range of procedures and considerations (the methods) by means of which the ordinary members of society make sense of, find their way about in, and act on their circumstances in which they find themselves.' According to Lynch (1993), Ethnomethodology is more often said to be the study of "micro"-social phenomena such as the range of "small" face-to-face interactions occurring in public places, sports fields, and workplaces and is used across disciplines.

The origin of ethnomethodology can be traced back to the 1940s, but it was first systematically used by Garfinkel with his publication *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (1967). It extends and

borrowed ideas from the interactionist and phenomenological works of Blumer, Goffman, Husserl, and Schutz. From the interactionist standpoint, ethnomethodology focuses on the interaction process and how actors create meanings and a sense of common reality in dealing with others and in different situations. From a phenomenological standpoint, ethnomethodology concerns the importance of perceptions of consensus among the actors. In broadening the interactionist and phenomenological perspective, ethnomethodological theory proposes that they speculate a different idea of the social world and an alternative perspective to comprehend how social organisation is constructed, sustained and transformed. Some theorists argue that ethnomethodological theory's ultimate goal is to determine the conditions under which interpersonal techniques will be used to construct, maintain and a sense of reality. From a common-sense perspective, ethnomethodology aims to document the process or methods or practices through which members of society make sense and be clear about their environment or society. Ethnomethodology has three different characteristics: First, it seeks to understand how humans generate meaning or "situational definitions" as a form of symbolic interaction. Second, ethnomethodology is considered to be individualistic since definitions of the situation come from how people declare and transfer sensemaking views and viewpoints to one another. Third, ethnomethodology has arisen as a critique of standard sociological methods.

Nature of Ethnomethodology: Ethnomethodology has often been misinterpreted and misunderstood by scholars due to vagueness in some ethnomethodologists' arguments, and questions arise whether ethnomethodology is a methodology, metaphysics, or a theory. In clarifying the misinformation and misunderstanding, Jonathan H. Turner (2023) discussed and constructed various natures of ethnomethodology in his book 'The Structure of Sociological Theory'. First, scholars assumed that ethnomethodology can serve to check the validity and reliability of researchers' observations. However, Turner argues that the thrust area of ethnomethodologists is not to examine the validity and reliability of researchers' observations but to question the method used by researchers and common people to create, maintain and alter what each individual believes and considers being reliable and valid statements to create order in the society. The methodology in this ethnomethodology does not answer the questions about accurate, proper or unbiased scientific knowledge; rather, it is concerned with the common or regular methods people (whether homemakers, scientists, lecturers or labourers) make use to create a sense of order in a particular context where they interact. Second, another form of misinterpretation is that scholars assume that this perspective uses simple research

methods and tools like participant observation and appears to focus on research-oriented aspects of interactionism. Thus, Turner argues that ethnomethodology employs participant observation methods to investigate individual interaction, but their concern varies from the symbolic interactionists. The ethnomethodologists are more concerned with *how members come to agree upon an impression that there are rules, values and definitions. Just what types of rules and definitions emerge is not a central concern of ethnomethodologists since there are more fundamental questions: Through what methods do people go about seeing, describing, and asserting that rules and definitions exist? How do people use their belief that definitions and rules exist to describe for each other the social order?*' (Turner 2023, p. 394). Lastly, Turner highlights that ethnomethodology is not a new or improved scientific technique to reach truthful accounts of people's meanings of their situations and the larger social structure. Instead, it emphasizes the methods employed in understanding, creating, maintaining and altering their beliefs that order in the society actually exists out there in the actual or real world.

Concepts and Principles of Ethnomethodology: The contemporary ethnomethodological analysis is more focused on developing concepts and principles that can help examine how people make sense of their reality than exploring the multiple realities. Turner argues that ethnomethodology lacks a unified structure of propositions or concepts and discusses two major vital elements, i.e., reflexive action and interaction, and the indexicality, that are core to the perspective of ethnomethodology. In contrast, Pillay (2019) argues that the core concepts of ethnomethodological theory are accountability, reflexivity, and indexicality.

Reflexive Action:

Most of the interaction works to sustain the specific vision of reality. For example, you must study well and work hard to get good marks in the examination. The preparation for examination is an example of reflexive action; it operates towards maintaining a certain vision of reality, i.e., to secure a good mark. People interpret gestures, cues, words and other information from interactions to maintain a specific vision of reality. So, the central focus of the concept of reflexivity is to study how people maintain presumptions (that are guided by particular reality) during the interaction. Most of the ethnomethodological analysis addresses the question of *how reflexive interaction occurs*. Garfinkel uses reflexivity to understand the properties in the actors' expression of an activity, particularly ordinary actions. Actors use reflexive actions to express the meaning and sense of orderliness in a particular social setting.

So, it ties in with the self-explicating features of regular actions that explore the social subjective meaning of actions through the common man's perspective.

Indexicality:

Indexicality is a concept that explains the properties and features of ordinary talk and language. It is considered a vital concept of ethnomethodology. It means there are specific codes, gestures, words, cues, grammar, vocabulary, and other information people use in a given context or situation. Knowledge of the context makes it possible to understand and interpret the communication symbols among the interacting persons. So, more broadly, each phrase in a sentence is interpreted not just in terms of the literal meaning of its words but also in terms of the surrounding discourse and knowledge of the individuals speaking. According to Garfinkel, *a piece of talk does not just describe an interaction but also stands for 'indexes', some meaningful feature of that particular situation*. In particular, indexicality refers to the meaning and accounts of a fact in any situation that is reliant upon the nature of the context or situation. So, indexicality is not only associated with the context but also explicable only in the context. So here, the meaning of social actions and symbols is context-dependent. People interpret actions and statements based on the specific social context in which they occur.

Accounts:

In accounts, actors describe, criticise, explain and idealise a particular situation. Accounting is the process by which actors offer the accounts of a specific situation to make sense of their world. Accountability is looking at actors making sense of their situations and planning action on-site, locally and immediately or explicable on demand. Ethnomethodologists pay much attention to analysing and explaining the actors' accounts and how accounts are constructed, accepted and discarded by others in society. In this way, ethnomethodologists are pre-focused on analysing the **conversations**. They focus on the verbal and non-verbal means of reporting actors and their explanations of their situations. For example, when a student explains to his teacher why she/he has not attended the class, he explains an account. Here, a student tries to convince and make sense to his teacher why he/she is absent from the class. The interest of ethnomethodologists is like the accounts and the accounting practices or the manner in which the student explains the account and the teacher rejects or accepts it. Ethnomethodologists approach account analysis with "ethnomethodological indifference." That is, they do not judge the essence of the accounting but rather examine how they are used in practice. They are concerned with the accounts as well as the procedures required by both the speaker and the

listener to explain, comprehend, accept, or reject the stories. Pillay (2019) writes about the concept of accountability from the ethnomethodology perspective; the everyday activities undertaken by members are the methods that make those activities observable and reportable.

These three concepts, namely, indexicality, accountability and reflexivity, provide the meaning to ethnomethodology's theory and method. These concepts do not stand alone but are mutually exclusive and interdependent of contexts and actions. Besides the concepts and critical elements of ethnomethodology, Jonathan H Turner (1987) writes that this theory has two such general prepositions. These are: -

- I. *Social order is maintained using techniques that give actors a sense of sharing a common reality.*
- II. *The substance of the common reality is less important in maintaining social order than the actors' acceptance of a standard set of techniques.*

These prepositions are the general laws of ethnomethodology that will help how actor go about constructing and maintaining their sense of reality could be developed. Ethnomethodology requires identifying the unique conditions under which certain people's techniques will likely be utilised to generate a sense of shared reality among interacting individuals. Turner believes ethnomethodologists should focus less on whether they have uncovered a fundamentally new reality and more on creating broad hypotheses about the conditions under which actors would utilise distinct 'folk methods.'

9.4 HAROLD GARFINKEL AND ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

Harold Garfinkel invented ethnomethodology in the late 1940s as a unique sociological approach, which was first systematised with his publication '*Studies on Ethnomethodology*' in 1967. Garfinkel begins this theoretical perspective as a field of inquiry that seeks to understand people's methods to make sense of their world. In this theoretical argument, Garfinkel places much more emphasis on the language. He considered language as the medium through which reality is constructed. In the process of reality construction, the interacting individuals' efforts to account for their actions (verbally) and this accounting is the key method by which social construction takes place. In the words of Garfinkel, *to do* interaction is *to tell* interaction. More simply, verbal descriptions of the actions by the actors are the primary people's method. Through the verbal descriptions of accounts, people construct their sense of reality. For Garfinkel, another key aspect of ethnomethodology is that they are 'reflexively accountable'.

Accounts are actors' descriptions, idealisations, and criticizations in particular situations. Ethnomethodologists devote much focus to analysing the accounts of people and the ways accounts are explained, accepted or rejected by others in society. In analysing actors' accounts of a particular situation or context, he places enormous importance on indexicality. Garfinkel highlights indexes much more than it actually says; it also evokes connotations that can only be understood in the context of a situation. Instead of focusing on standardised directives provided by the culture of the society (Cultural dope), Garfinkel argues that ethnomethodologists tend to ignore the information culturally transmitted during the interaction, concentrating purely on how the interaction is performed and how particular indexical qualities of situations give them meaning, making them knowable, communicating this knowledge to others and constructing a sense of appearance and order. According to Garfinkel, people interpret their social structure by using a psychological technique known as "the documentary method," which entails choosing specific facts from a particular social context that appear to form a pattern and then interpreting those facts in light of the pattern. To Garfinkel, we all continuously employ the documentary technique to construct "a taken-for-granted" world that we believe we "know" and can feel "at home" in. In the documentary approach, the researcher looks for a pattern in the respondents' responses and uses that pattern to look for an underlying pattern in the bigger picture. The ethnomethodologist aims to develop the underlying pattern by analysing all the actions, behaviours, and responses. For Garfinkel (1967), a documentary method: "consists of treating an actual appearance "as the document of", as "pointing to", as "standing on behalf of" of a presupposed underlying pattern." People and sociologists use this method to identify the underlying or the fundamental pattern behind a series of actions, such that each action is seen as referring to an expression of or a documentary method, which people regularly use to (re)interpret each others' behaviour and look for a hidden or underlying pattern.

To validate the theoretical assumptions of ethnomethodology – *what is real, and Why do people get so upset when minor conversations are not followed?* Garfinkel and other ethnomethodologists conducted a number of experiments in diversified areas. One such empirical experiment is *breaching experiments*. It is the experiment in which the normal interaction path is deliberately interrupted. Garfinkel offered a number of examples of breaching experiments, most of which were undertaken by his students in casual settings to illustrate the basic principles of ethnomethodology. The students were advised to engage a

relative or friend in interaction and insist that general comments or casual remarks be actively pursued to make their meaning more precise.

Example –I: Breaching in Conversation

Conversation between one student (E) of Garfinkel with her husband (S)

S: All these old movies have the same kind of old iron bedstead in them.

E: What do you mean?

Do you mean all old movies or some of them, or just the ones you've seen?

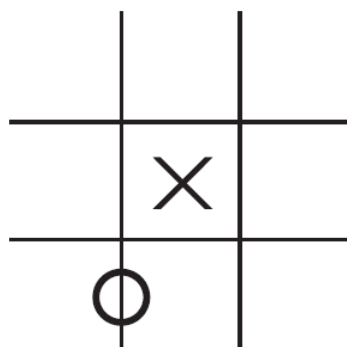
S: What's the matter with you? You know what I mean.

E: I wish you would be more specific.

S: You know what I mean! Drop dead!

Source: Giddens and Sutton, 2013

Example –II: Breaching in Tic-Tac-Toe



Source: Michael Lynch, 1991 cited in Ritzer, 2011

Whether it is a conversation between two people (Example-I) or a tic-tac-toe game (Example-II), there is a violation of implicit rules of interaction or the rule of the game. Such violations by actors in implicit rules, whether in conversation or, game or any daily interactions, will be

challenged and questioned during the process to cope with such a breach. These challenges and questions indicate how important it is for people to act according to implicit rules or common-sense assumptions about how they are supposed to behave, play, or act. Through breaching, Garfinkel expected to explore implicit or hidden ethnomethods by forcing actors to actively engage in the course of (re)construction of reality after the situation had been disrupted. Breaching experiments are undertaken to illustrate the way people order their everyday lives.

Variety of Ethnomethodology: The subject matter of ethnomethodology is the unlimited variety of everyday life. The studies of ethnomethodology have been more diversified since after the early ethnomethodological studies by Garfinkel and his associates – which focused only on non-institutionalised settings or casual places like home. In the later studies, ethnomethodology focuses have shifted towards institutional studies, particularly medical settings, courtrooms, and police departments. The major aim of such institutional studies is to understand the way people act and perform their official tasks. In this process, people constitute the institution where they perform their tasks. Another variety of ethnomethodology focuses on conversation analysis. Conversation analysis aims to detail an understanding of the fundamental structures of conversational interaction. Ethnomethodology understands conversations as a social process built upon shared ideals and cultural norms. Conversation analysis allows the researcher to analyse the structures of interaction at a micro level, focusing on how the participants make sense of each other in conversation through shared interactional norms.

9.5 CRITICISM TO ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

Though ethnomethodology provided new approaches to sociology by criticizing and challenging the traditional or classical sociological approaches, at the same time, it has been criticised by different theorists like Anthony Giddens, Alvin Goldner, Atkinson, Pollner and others.

One of the most common criticisms that ethnomethodology received is that it *does not tell us anything very important*. It was criticised by Alvin Gouldner (1971) for focusing on unimportant aspects of social life and revealing previously well-known information. Pollner (1991) argued that ethnomethodology spotlights unimportant or petty matters (everyday life) and ignores the vital issues that society is confronting nowadays. Pollner writes that this theory also loses sight of its original radical reflexivity. Further, Pollner argued that this theory is in

danger of losing its self-analytical and critical edge and is just another theoretical establishment in the sociological theory.

There is a claim that the rules ethnomethodology uncovers are basic and only confirm what we already know. The most severe critique came from a traditional sociologist named John H. Goldthorpe; he critiqued it for providing a highly generic account of a person's everyday activities.

Paul Atkinson (1988) argued that ethnomethodology has lost sight of its phenomenological roots and conscious cognitive process. Paul's view, this theory has grown 'unduly restricted' and come to be 'behaviourist and empiricist'. In going this way, this theory is seen as having gone back on some of its basic principles, including its desire not to treat the actor as judgmental dope.

Critics have also argued that the members who populate the kind of society portrayed by ethnomethodologists appear to lack motives and goals. As Anthony Giddens (1977) remarked, there is little reference to 'the pursuance of practical goals and/or interests.' The notion that members' accounting processes are carried out within a framework of social interactions containing power differentials has yet to receive enough attention from ethnomethodologists.

Finally, scholars also argued that ethnomethodology does not look into the causal explanations of a social phenomenon or problem but instead describes how the social phenomena and problems are experienced and sense in the society.

9.6 LET US SUM UP

Ethnomethodology is considered an important micro-sociological theory to study everyday interaction and life along with symbolic interactionism and phenomenology. Though sociologists who are interested in the analysis of macro aspects of society, social structure, agencies, power relations and social change will find it disappointing, the ethnomethodological approach has produced more significant work in the field of micro-sociology on the operation of daily life, the social construction of everyday life and how to make sense of their environment. Hence, this approach remains influential to the scholars of sociology and everyday life.

9.7 GLOSSARY

- **Ethnomethodology:** It is one of the interactionist perspectives that deal with the systematic study of methods used by members of a concerned society (natives) to (re)construct their social world.
- **Accounting:** It is the process by which actor offer accounts of a specific situation in order to make sense of their world.
- **Indexicality:** It is a concept that explains the properties and features of ordinary talk and language. It means that people use specific codes, gestures, words, cues, grammar, vocabulary, and other information in a given context or situation.
- **Reflexive Action:** The concept of reflexivity thus focuses attention on how people in interaction maintain the presumption that a particular reality guides them. In Garfinkel's discussion of ethnomethodology, reflexivity refers to the intimate interdependence between accounts and the associated underlying reality.
- **Documentary Method:** This method consists of selecting certain aspects of the infinite number of features contained in any situation or context, of defining them in a particular way and seeing them as evidence of an underlying pattern. For Garfinkel (1967), a documentary method: "consists of treating an actual appearance "as the document of", as "pointing to", as "standing on behalf of" of a presupposed underlying pattern."

9.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- What is ethnomethodology?
- What is indexicality?
- Write a short note on reflexive action.
- What is the documentary method in ethnomethodology?
- Define accounting.
- What is conversation analysis?
- Explain the core concepts of ethnomethodology.
- Describe the major arguments of H. Garfinkel's towards ethnomethodology.

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UNIT-10 PHENOMENOLOGY: BASIC POSTULATES, CONTRIBUTIONS OF ALFRED SCHUTZ

Structure:

- 10.1 Learning Objectives
- 10.2 Introduction
- 10.3 Phenomenology: Basic Postulates
- 10.4 The Historicity of Phenomenology as a Philosophy of Understanding
- 10.5 Husserl's Understanding: Stages of the Development of Phenomenology
- 10.6 Transcendental Intersubjectivity
- 10.7 Alfred Schütz's Conception of Phenomenology
- 10.8 Contemporary Phenomenology: Then and Now
- 10.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 10.10 Check Your Progress
- 10.11 References

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This particular unit would orient students to-

- The basic conceptual understanding of phenomenology.
- Discuss in brief the fundamental postulates of phenomenology.
- Trace out the historicity of the emergence of phenomenological philosophy.
- Elaborate on the stages of phenomenological development as conceived by Husserl.
- Highlights the critics and Schutz's understanding of phenomenology.
- The contemporary applicability of phenomenology.

10.2 INTRODUCTION

Alive and well in American philosophy, phenomenology has also started to show its usefulness in related fields like psychology (long associated with humanistic or existential approaches), communication theory, political theory, and literary theory and criticism; in sociology, this is especially true when it comes to the relationship with ethnomethodology. Phenomenology became the dominant field in England, influencing psychiatrists and clinical work. It was embraced by R.D. Laing and John Heaton. In France, Sartre faced criticism, while Heidegger studies stood alongside Hegel and Nietzsche. In Germany, phenomenological philosophers like

Walter Biemel, Otto Pöggeler, and Elmar Hohlenstein were prominent. Phenomenology dominated Belgium and continues to be influential in Italy, Spain, and Latin America.

10.3 PHENOMENOLOGY: BASIC POSTULATES

Generally speaking, "phenomenology" refers to the study of occurring occurrences. It is often viewed as a first-person experiential account, especially outside of the intellectual tradition known as phenomenology. Phenomenology has been criticised by object-oriented ontology, speculative realism, and a variety of modern critics, including Daniel Dennett and John Searle, for being intrinsically subjective, idealistic, and confined to the first-person point of view (Dennett 2003, 19–30; Searle 2008, 107–36; Sparrow 2014; Zahavi 289–309).

Edmund Husserl adopted the philosophical task and style of phenomenology, which has subsequently witnessed several changes in figures both within and outside of the professional academic philosophy community. First-person narrative description has never been the exclusive definition of phenomenology. Husserl defined phenomenology as a descriptive and analytical technique that investigates the conditions and structures of the first-person perspective, as well as those of the interpersonal second-person and impersonal third-person. Husserl's descriptions and analysis of first-person experience reveal the very relationality and belonging of all experience and consciousness in the phenomenon of intentionality in all of its passivity and orientation towards the object through reductions, which Husserl acknowledges are incomplete and must be repeatedly enacted. On the other hand, psychological self-introspection or arriving at a solitary abstract ego are not possible with this.

Husserl characterised phenomenology as an effort to return to the objects themselves in the *Logical Investigations*. In *Ideas*, Husserl clarified that this process entails "setting aside all prejudices alien to them, and returning from talk and opinions to the things themselves, questioning them as they are themselves given" (Husserl 2014, 35). Through this attempt, he became acquainted with the transcendental subjectivity phenomenology, which explores the nature and sources of meaningfulness. More detailed examinations of the phenomenological tradition and of Husserl's published and unpublished works indicate that it does not and cannot preclude facticity, alterity, or passivity (Depraz 1998; Raffoul 2008).

Kant (1996, A370) posited in *The Critique of Pure Reason* that the genuine empirical realist is the transcendental idealist. What Husserl meant when he defined "transcendental idealism"—a word that has caused many people, including his own pupils, to misunderstand his ideas—

was how sense and meaning can be possible for subjects who are aware of their surroundings. Since awareness is defined traditionally as the "consciousness of something," the term "of" denotes the relational component of intentionality. It means that experience is object-focused and externally impacted, but it does not rely on realism in the sense of a metaphysical or mystical postulation of an unconstituted, uninterpreted, unexperienced, or unmedicated reality.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty observed that phenomenology is not an abstraction of essences from their existence and facticity: "But phenomenology is also a philosophy that places essences back into existence and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of people and the world from any starting point other than that of their 'facticity'" (Merleau-Ponty 1962, vii). Merleau-Ponty claims that subjectivity in the self and the outside world can only be restored through phenomenology. The relational and reversible relationship between subject and object—which is evident in touching or being touched—is the topic of phenomenological research. This relationship is thematized without sacrificing the first-person perspective or its roles in knowing and acting.

Phenomenology has been anti-phenomenological (in the sense we started with above) both after Husserl and to a great extent already with him, insofar as it has profoundly questioned the naivete, assumptions, and self-assurance of subjectivity and the first-person perspective. The subject's point of view has been called into question, along with the mundaneness of existence and the ego's blindness to the other. The first-person perspective can expose itself to contact with its environment, other people, and itself through phenomenological interpretation. Contrary to what its detractors claim, it is not the imposition of subjectivity or the first-person perspective on things.

A phenomenological orientation towards that which is outside the subject has existed throughout the history of phenomenology. In order to investigate phenomena, one must be aware of how things present themselves, as stated by Martin Heidegger: "to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself" (Heidegger 2010, 30). Heidegger would later question the transcendental subjectivity paradigm in order to encounter things in the letting releasement that liberates and releases both the subject and the thing. He would also move from the methodological priority of the question of human Dasein (being there), as that being that poses the question of being in being and time, to that of the question of Sein (being), as the central idea in his thought (Nelson 2016).

Emmanuel Levinas is a prime example of an anti-phenomenological phenomenologist who would question the primacy of the subject and the individualistic language of self-constitution for the sake of the encounter, or more accurately, exposure to, the other, which comes before and profoundly shapes the sense of self and world. Heidegger and Husserl's ontological and transcendental philosophies of existence and the subject so take precedence over their ethical theories.

Early or "classical" phenomenologies begin with the experiential encounter with phenomena in order to analyse the structures of consciousness and transcendental subjectivity (Husserl), organic existence (Scheler), pre-reflective and reflective existence (Sartre), ways of being there (Heidegger), forms of living as an embodied being and as reversible flesh (Merleau-Ponty), and the asymmetrical and non-identical relations of the other with the self (Levinas). Phenomenology, therefore, has never been restricted to a single subject or doctrine because every facet of Husserl's project—particularly his transcendental understanding of phenomenology—has been discussed, rejected, and reinterpreted over the course of the past century. These interpretations include hermeneutical, ontological, existential, life philosophical, deconstructive, and naturalised phenomenology, among others.

To put it briefly, these philosophers tend to avoid the illusions of objectivism, which assumes the first- and second-person viewpoints that it opposes, and instead offer a counterargument against the self-absorbed naiveté of subjective cognition. Thus, phenomenology is both a historical phenomenon that needs to be re-examined and an experiential engagement with appearances and, as subsequent phenomenology has demonstrated, non-appearances (like the invisible and inapparent), which have the capacity to renew and alter our comprehension and application of phenomenology.

By returning to the phenomena to be thought of, Husserl conceived of phenomenology as a means of renewing European culture and reviving universal (that is, Western) philosophy in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* (1935) and the Kaizo articles (published in Japan in 1923–24) (Husserl 1989; Husserl 1970). These works on crisis and regeneration contain some of Husserl's most morally charged issues and are still pertinent in our conflict-ridden age of particularism and universalism.

They have a questionable side, though, as universalism and cosmopolitanism have historically benefitted the West and been used to marginalise and oppress others. Put otherwise, there exists

an overblown perception of Europe and the Orient, which Husserl believed to be the only truly universal and infinite cultures. Philosophy as a characteristic unique to the west and the priority of the occidental are problematically echoed by Heidegger, Lévinas, and other phenomenological movement proponents.

Merleau-Ponty is among the prominent figures who defy the notion that philosophy is essentially European (Park 2009). Philosophy is not constrained by its Greek foundations, the history of Western onto-theology and metaphysics, its European beginnings, or Western modernity, according to Merleau-Ponty (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 128). Rather, "[philosophy's] centre is everywhere, its circumference nowhere."

Hence, despite its propensity towards Eurocentrism because of its emphasis on making sense of experience and reacting to events, phenomenology has been and remains a crucial bridge between Western and non-Western schools of thought. Phenomenology was warmly embraced and modified in East Asia and around the world, and this was no accident. Furthermore, it is no accident that it encouraged and impacted Western research into non-Western sources.

It is well-established that psychological interpretation is not restricted to its western origins and can be "reversible". Despite its troubling and dubious moments that are Eurocentric and that I address in detail elsewhere, phenomenology has stimulated and continues to inspire philosophical dialogues across diverse perspectives and traditions to engage with that which is to be encountered, on issues like the reality of death or the origin of ethical responsibility (Nelson 2017).

10.4 THE HISTORICITY OF PHENOMENOLOGY AS A PHILOSOPHY OF UNDERSTANDING

Beginning with Franz Brentano (1838-1917), a teacher of Meinong and Edward Husserl, phenomenology—possibly the least understood of contemporary philosophies—was developed into the pure phenomenology that is known today. Brentano's basic philosophical principles were fully developed and ripened into this system.

Being primarily a psychologist, Brentano was interested in the issues relating to both mental and physical phenomena. He had to come up with a clear definition of the mental or psychical phenomenon in order to distinguish it from the physical phenomenon. Accordingly, he decided that a mental phenomenon was one that was intended for or directed towards an object. According to Brentano's philosophy, this directedness-to-an object transforms into a

characteristic of the mind that sets it apart from other types of minds. To describe this attribute, he coined the term "intentionality," which refers to an intended object. This mental directedness totally encloses the object with which it is concerned, much like "a fruit enclosing its stone." Brentano coined the phrase "intentional inexistence," which refers to deliberate existence within awareness, to describe this. In Brentano's philosophy, consciousness takes on a preeminent role since it is consciousness that performs intentionality or selection, or the act of focusing attention on a few objects or portions of them out of many that are in its field of view. Certain events are mentally recalled right away, but the specifics are lost. Why does the mind focus or intend itself exclusively on a select few objects while excluding others? "The reasons are not important; what is important is that my consciousness selected its objects," Colin Wilson states extremely well. "This act of selection is a form of intentionality." The act of experiencing is this mental "intentionality" event, and the thing for which attention is directed is the thing that is actually experienced. To put it another way, the act itself, rather than the object that is being offered for experience, is what is mental.

However, Meinong (1853–1921), a student of Brentano, advanced and refined the entire idea of objects. He was the one who determined an object's description and then categorised it. Meinong asserted the opposite of what Brentano had said, that everything that is intended by mind is an object, therefore characterising mental phenomena as being object-oriented.

Meinong divides the objects into three categories: (i) existing objects, such as tables, chairs, solid objects, sense data, etc.; (ii) subsistent or ideal objects, such as the universals, as for example, mathematical entities, Platonic ideas, etc.; and (iii) nonsubsistent or impossible objects, which are neither subsistent nor exist, such as round squares. This is Meinong's theory of objects, which he refers to as a priori science, according to which the mind directly perceives an object without making any judgements based on sensory perceptions. By "a priori," we refer to the state of affairs before any sort of theory or anticipatory notion about an object has been formed. A thing's essence must be intuitively understood, or put another way, particular direct modes of intuition or a priori perception are given to a wheel's wheelness. In other terms, phenomenology can be seen of as a "process of intuiting essences." Now, for Meinong, the "act-element" or "the manner" in which a mental phenomenon is directed towards its object is crucial. And it is at this point that the "content-element" or essence is comprehended by the mind in a prehensive manner that also advances. Here, it is believed that an object's being or essence is a natural component of and essential to the mental experiences associated with immediately grasping. The mode of consciousness is what allows consciousness to reach the

universals, or the essences, of the objects. "In the theory of objects, the existence of objects is abstracted from (or, as Husserl later said, it may be 'bracketed') and their essence alone has to be considered."

Husserl, whose theory he refers to as "transcendental phenomenology," is where this study of "intentional objects" or "objects of reference" reaches its pinnacle development. Husserl desired to establish philosophy as a precise, independent field that could act as the basis for all knowledge. As a result, he adopted a radical stance towards both the world of experience and the mind experiencing the world in order to make it completely free of all presuppositions. What starts out as a descriptive theory of objects in Brentano and Meinong ends up being a descriptive analysis of the fundamental structures (Eidos) on the one hand and a descriptive study of the subjective processes on the other hand in Husserl. Husserl's phenomenology is thus a two-way process that carefully considers both the meaning side (the noetic) and the intended side (the noematic).

Thus, unlike the naive approach, which starts with a variety of assumptions or "prior" notions about the perceived object, the method is subjectivistic and the objective is radical. The perceiving mind, which is responsible for experiencing the world, must be correctly investigated in Husserl's phenomenology. "Everything is to be questioned, including the phenomenological procedure itself," as Marvin Farber puts it. The radical science must be equally radical in all aspects of its methodology. Everything that is assumed is challenged, examined, and then discarded as unnecessary or "suspended." The filth of details must first be eliminated if one is to arrive at the objects fundamental structure or form. That is what Husserl means when he says, "Back to the things themselves!" He specifically states that "Philosophy must take possession of the absolute fund of preconceptual experience and must create original concepts, adequately adjusted to this ground, and so generally utilise for its advance an absolutely transparent method."

10.5 HUSSERL'S UNDERSTANDING: STAGES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHENOMENOLOGY

- **1st Stage: The Natural Standpoint of the World**

Three stages of development are included in the broader phenomenological understanding process. The very first stage, which Husserl refers to as "the natural standpoint of the world around me," is the stage in which the world's objects are observed in their natural existence as they are found in "a space-time" constrained universe, without any reflection on our behalf.

Husserl himself would be the greatest person to quote in this situation: "I am aware of a world, spread out in space endlessly, and in time becoming and become, without end.... Corporeal things somehow spatially distributed are for me simply there . . . whether or not I pay them special attention by busying myself with them.... But it is not necessary that they and other objects likewise should be present in my field of perception . . . they are there and yonder in my immediate co-perceived surroundings . . . and my knowledge of them has nothing of conceptual thinking about it, and it first changes into clear intuiting with the bestowing of attention, and even then, only partially and for the most part very imperfectly."

As a result, the actual field of experience is surrounded by a ring of copresent margin, in Husserl's view. A "dimly apprehended depth or fringe of indeterminate reality" encircles what is actually perceived and what is copresent and determined. As the lighting centre of attention attempts to penetrate further, "the circle of determinacy extends ever farther, and eventually so far that the connexion with the actual field of perception as the immediate environment is established." However, even so, the "empty mist of dim indeterminacy" still exists, and the "zone of indeterminacy is infinite."

In the same way that the world exists in space, it also exists in time. Additionally, it has its own temporal horizon, which is "infinite in both directions, its known and unknown, its intimately alive and its unalive past and future." Consequently, everything is realised in a spatiotemporal universe, and phenomenology is not concerned with the metaphysics of anything purportedly or actually existing outside of the structured world of space and time. The only thing that transpires, or what is really required, is a change in perspective, yet even then, everything remains within the spatiotemporal horizon. asserts Husserl, "I can shift my standpoint in space and time, look this way and that, turn temporally forwards and backwards; I can provide for myself constantly new and more or less clear and meaningful perceptions and re-presentations, and images also more or less clear, in which I make intuitable to myself whatever can possibly exist really or supposedly in the steadfast order of space and time."

Now, when we view anything from a natural vantage point in this universe as it currently exists "out there" in its natural order of space and time, we experience it as it appears to us without making any deliberate attempts to achieve its "eidos." When we gaze upon a table, chair, or piece of chalk, we accept it as it is while simultaneously being somewhat aware of several other items that are situated nearby. Our capacity for perception has not yet been expanded in any way; no new perspective has been adopted; no new angle has been exposed; and no new

meaning has been bestowed. We simply observe the world as it stands "out there," adopting an innocent or natural perspective. It is necessary to give up this simplistic mindset and adopt a radical one.

- **2nd Stage: The Stage of Eidetic Reduction**

This is where Husserl's in-depth examination of phenomenological philosophy enters its second phase. This is the stage of eidetic reduction where an effort is made to comprehend the fundamental qualities (Eidos) of the object under observation while avoiding focusing on or showing any interest in its specific aspects. By putting aside, the material details of the perceived object or things, the grasping mind reflects the "cubeness," rather than the actual cube.

In order to grasp an object's various shapes, appearances, and phenomena and to get to the root of its fundamental structure, one must renounce their natural attitude and examine the subject from as many perspectives as they can muster. Here, we move from a purely empirical level of awareness to an eidetic level. As Prof. A. W. Levi put it, "What is at stake here is not the individual experience in its particularity but the structure of experience, its logic, the essence that is objectively manifest when more subjective involvement is relaxed." We stop thinking about an object's outward appearances and start focusing on pure experiences or pure phenomena as grasped by a reflective mind that has by this point been put out of its natural standpoint. Thus, everything, whether a sense-given natural object or the ideal objects of mathematics, can be seen in its essence since everything is ultimately referred to by the mind; it is, in Husserl's terminology, "constituted" in the mind. "As constituted in consciousness, the choir of heaven and the furniture of earth enter into the subject matter of phenomenology." Husserl goes one step further by asserting that, in a manner similar to how we might reflect on the various manifestations of an object or experiences, so too can we focus on the various manifestations of our own experiences or acts of experience. We can shift the position of the perceiving mind—the entire mode and manner of consciousness—by removing ourselves from our natural standpoint view. By doing this, we can perceive the objective world from a new angle, as if it were a new being, a new consciousness, a different person, or another self, looking upon an already reduced or "bracketed" world.

An example of the phenomenological reduction process would help to make this more understandable. A receives a gift from B, let's suppose it's a book. A first-person perspective of the book from the perspective of the recipient who is acting naturally. But the minute A tries

to shift from his default position and starts to view the book as if he were not the recipient but the giver of the book, as if he were B, he blots out his natural self, assumes another, and a subjective "epoch" or reduction occurs. When one attempts to "bracket" out or reduce the appearances or experiences of things as they are and attempts to arrive at the eidos or the fundamental structure thereof, one achieves the eidetic reduction, and it is this eidetic phenomenology that forms the foundation for typical psychological phenomenology. The realisation of these structures or essential forms by the experiencing mind is said to "constrain psychical existence," that is, it is claimed to make an object cease to exist, allowing the perceiver to reach the item's essence. This structure, which serves as a means of constraint, may be present in any physical reality. Some examples of this act of phenomenological reduction by means of intentionality or selective attention include drawings with optical illusions, abstract art, readings of different meanings out of the clanging wheels of a moving train, faces in the moon, the formation of different images out of a grouping of clouds or from scratches on a wall, tricky photographs, etc. I examine a shipping company's printed advertisement. It reads "P & O" from left to right and resembles some Arabic script characters from right to left. But doing so would involve a process of selective attention on the one hand and the intentional erasure of the natural viewpoint on the other. This can be viewed as a stunningly conventional and unique illustration of phenomenological reduction in contemporary thought.

- **3rd Stage: The Final Stage of Transcendental Reduction**

In this passage, Husserl discusses the third and last level of transcendental reduction—the method of total reduction—in which all the layers of appearances are exposed in order to reach the unadulterated consciousness of a single knower or experiencer, which Husserl claims to be the true foundation of philosophy. Following the completion of the "suspension" or "bracketing" procedure, one arrives to the question, "What is the stream of pure experiences of a single experiencing being?". "The world has become merely a phenomenon for my transcendently reduced consciousness." Alternatively, it is the result of the toughest reduction of all, according to Morton White.

What precisely occurs throughout this transcendental reduction process? We don't dispute or reject the world in the same way that sceptics or sophists would; instead, we alter or fundamentally alter how we see it. The world is still "out there," but we aren't very interested in it beyond what it seems to be. When our awareness understands an object's essence, it does

not deny that it exists; rather, it merely suspends it for the purpose of focusing more clearly on the essence of the thing. It is the pure being of oneself shining its light on the pure being of an object, and both stands unveiled to each other in their fundamental nuance. When this occurs, consciousness is already in command of the things' fundamental components since it is a part of or a component of their fundamental nature. "In the last resort, the 'essences' which the mind comes to know are really the forms of its own a priori activity." Though isolated, the outside world is not denied or disbelieved. Even when consciousness adopts a new position through detachment, consciousness itself is unaffected. "Consciousness in itself has a being of its own, which in its absolute uniqueness of nature remains unaffected by the phenomenological disconnexion," writes Husserl. This leaves it over as a "phenomenological residuum," a zone of existence that is inherently distinct. This is a pure reflection activity that, in the words of Marvin Farber, "is a degree removed from the reflection usually illustrated in natural experience." The phrase "pure" is taken to imply that the epoche has been carried out. We alter both the 'content' and 'being' aspects of how we judge the world. The only way to accept the universe is "in the modified consciousness of judgement as it appears in disconnexion." Husserl makes the following arguments to support his position: "Let us consider what is essentially involved in an act of this kind. He who attempts to doubt is attempting to doubt 'being' of some form or other.... The attempt does not affect the form of being itself. He who doubts, does not doubt the being of an object, but the way in which the object is constituted.... We cannot at once doubt and hold for certain one and the same quality of being...the attempt to doubt any object of awareness in respect of its being actually there necessarily conditions a certain suspension of the thesis, and it is precisely this that interests us.... We do not abandon the thesis we have adopted; we make no change in our conviction.... And yet the thesis undergoes a modification, whilst remaining in itself what it is, we set it as it were 'out of action,' we disconnect it, 'bracket it.' It still remains there.... We are dealing with indicators that point to a definite but unique form of consciousness, which clamps on to the original simple 'thesis' of existence has simply been 'put out of play,' and the world is a concern of our full freedom, and is opposed to all cognitive attitudes." Alternately, according quote Marvin Farber, "the 'field' of transcendental consciousness that is opened up by the epoche can be defined in familiar words. No particular symbolism is desired, with the possible exception of quotation marks, because the transformation that is accomplished is universal. In this case, "tree" would stand for the planned tree, which is neither posited or real but rather just the objectivity corresponding to my awareness of it.

The author of the "phenomenology" article in The Concise Encyclopaedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers further clarifies the entirety of Husserl's thesis by writing, "The 'theses' of existence have simply been 'put out of play,' and the world must now be placed in quotation marks: it is the correlate of my meaningful experience, but it is no longer regarded as independently real. The world is "bracketed." With the abandonment of the naive belief that the universe is a preset domain, a transcendental awareness of the being of an experienced event or object is attained. In Husserlian terms, "we are pleased to put them in brackets," all the components or aspects of the natural attitude are retained. "To know the world transcendently is to know it "as it was in the first place."

The radical and thorough approach for "analysing the experience and the role played by the mind in comprehending the process of experience" is known as pure or transcendental phenomenology. Everything in life, whether it be real or ideal, depends on it. Here, a quick comparison between pure phenomenology and pure mathematics would not be out of the question. The study of pure mathematics comes first because it is the theories of the former that are ultimately used to solve the real issues in mathematics. When applied to real-world situations, pure mathematics becomes apparent. Similar to how pure mathematics comes before applied mathematics, it is the "eidos," or fundamental structures of an item, that are revealed in real-world situations or events. Geometry and phenomenology are sciences of pure essence and not of actual existence, as Marvin Farber so eloquently states. Consequently, according to Husserl, "the science of pure possibilities must precede the science of real facts and give it the guidance of its concrete logic." As Husserl further puts it, "... whereas the real world indeed exists, but in respect of essence is relative to transcendental subjectivity, and in such a way that it can have its meaning as existing reality only as the intentional meaning product of transcendental subjectivity." In the words of Husserl, "whereas the real world indeed exists, but in respect of essence, it is relative to transcendental subjectivity, and in such a way that it can have its meaning as existing reality only as the intentional meaning product of transcendental subjectivity."

10.6 TRANSCENDENTAL INTERSUBJECTIVITY: THE VALIDATION OF ONE'S OWN SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE BY THE MINDS OF OTHERS

The subject's most profound "I" is the one who performs this transcendental reduction activity. This "I" is not the psychological "me," which only functions on an empirical level. It has been "I" who has been experiencing all of an object's manifestations. As these appearances can be

focused on, so too can feeling "I" be considered as a result of phenomenological reduction. It only requires changing one's focus from the object to the subject. Husserl's next idea of transcendental intersubjectivity is derived from this idea of the deeper "I," also known as transcendental subjectivity. To validate one's own transcendently subjective experience, one must present confirming evidence of the experiences of other minds who have had similar transcendental encounters. This is what Husserl refers to as transcendental intersubjectivity. Because one must start with his or her own experiences, "transcendental egology" is the initial stage, according to the author of the phenomenological entry in *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers*. If solipsism is to be prevented, there needs to be a "exhibiting" or demonstration of other minds. That is made possible, in the terms of phenomenology, by "empathy," "appresentation," and "apperception by analogy" based on the similarity of other bodies to one's own body. Transcendental intersubjectivity is then mentioned by the phenomenologist.

In Husserl's phenomenological philosophy, consciousness, or the experiencing ego, therefore prevails supremely, from the initial natural perspective view of the universe to the ultimate transcendental one. Since "the spirit is what gives being meaning," to quote Husserl. A new meaning is given to an object whenever an attempt is made to intend it and reduce it to its fundamental components. The entire process is a spiralling endeavour to provide new meaning to the objects and events, seen not only from different perspectives but also from other modes of consciousness. It moves from the empirical to the transcendental via the eidetic viewpoint of the world of objects. Man is "condemned to meaning," according to Sartre, another of Husserl's students, and "condemned to freedom," according to Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Husserl's contemporary follower. Simply put, this means that man engages with the world at all levels in the process of giving it meaning, from the natural position to the transcendental one. Merleau-Ponty therefore believed that even to declare something to be meaningless would be to give it a new layer of significance. The core of this daring but little-known philosophy has been and continues to be the constant search for meaning on the part of man throughout history to recognise the essentiality of the final "be."

As we come to a conclusion with our examination of this radical philosophy, we can conclude that it has attempted, if not to lessen the difference between, then at least to touch upon the opposing ideologies of idealism and realism at a given moment. It is realistic to the extent that it accepts that everything is predetermined and exists "out there" in the world for our descriptive analysis. It is idealistic in outlook and philosophy to the extent that it accepts that all things

possess essences that can be ultimately understood by a specially adjusted or reduced mode of consciousness.

Second, by claiming to be a science of being that is independent and self-sufficient and that critically examines both modes of consciousness and the world of objects, it has drawn the attention of all other disciplines that are similar to its own in-depth self-analysis. A phenomenological analysis simultaneously examines the attention externally and the look internally (the inward gaze). It's comparable to a technician inspecting his own equipment before starting a job or identifying problems with the things he's responsible for. In an otherwise uncertain anchoring of life (of perception), it has so provided other disciplines with the sound guidance of a thorough self-analysis. It has given the man the ability to self-correct before correcting any discipline in particular.

The sole drawback to it is that, in its final level of "pure" phenomenology, where it attempts to intuitively understand the essence or being of a thing in a transcendental mode of consciousness, it has a tendency to be mystical. The terms "pure consciousness," "intuition," "transcendental reduction," etc., may be considered as irrational or supra-rational by a man of science, to whom all such things are not just mystical nonsense but also anathema. Finally, we can only state (in the words of Pascal) that "the heart has its reasoning that reason doth not know."

10.7 ALFRED SCHÜTZ'S CONCEPTION OF PHENOMENOLOGY

The phenomenological movement started by Edmund Husserl's foundational writings in the first three decades of this century has not yet found an appropriate social science response, as Schutz noted. Phenomenologists are sometimes perceived as a type of sorcerer, a metaphysician or ontologist in the derogatory sense of the word, or, in any case, as someone who rejects all empirical data and the largely accepted scientific techniques used to gather and analyse it. Still others, more knowledgeable than I am, believe that phenomenology might have some use for the social sciences but see phenomenologists as a closed-off community whose terminology makes no sense to the outsider and should be avoided. A third group's conception of phenomenology is hazy and largely incorrect, based on some of the catchphrases employed by writers who claim to be phenomenologists but don't follow Husserl's method (like Theodor Litt) or by phenomenologists (like Max Scheler) in non-phenomenological works addressing social science topics.

Yet, as Schutz pointed out, there are a few unique challenges with Husserl's phenomenology. The portion of his philosophy that has been published is somewhat incomplete and is distinguished by a condensed presentation and extremely technical vocabulary. In his quest to discover the fundamentals of philosophy and all scientific thought, he discovered that it was imperative to begin anew time and time again. It was his intention to expose the hidden assumptions that underlie all natural and social science as well as contemporary philosophy. He aspired to be a genuine "beginner" in the field of philosophy. Only through laborious analyses, fearless consistency, and a radical change in our habits of thinking can we hope to reveal the sphere of a "first philosophy" that complies with the requirements of a "rigorous science" worthy of its name.

An introduction to phenomenology that attempts to ascribe to this philosophy one of the traditional textbook names, such idealism, realism, or empiricism, may find significant challenges, as this summary of Husserl's overall goal may help to clarify. This ideology calls into question all of these school classifications, therefore none of them can be applied properly. As phenomenology seeks to identify the true source of philosophical thought, it aims to finish where all other traditional philosophies begin. Its position lies outside of, or perhaps prior to, all divisions between idealism and realism.

Furthermore, a common misconception about phenomenology—that it is anti-scientific and derives from an uncontrollable intuition or philosophical revelation rather than analysis and description—may also be dispelled by these initial remarks. Since phenomenology freely refuses to acknowledge the veracity of sensory experiences, biological facts, society, and the environment as the unquestionable starting point for philosophical inquiry, even a great deal of serious philosophy students have been persuaded to categorise it as metaphysics. In addition, many people have been unable to accept phenomenology as a philosophical approach due to Husserl's choice of some terrible terminology, including *Wesensschau*.

The ensuing attempts, to the greatest extent feasible, are to explain in layman's terms the fundamental ideas behind this approach. Exactitude and oversimplification are unavoidably involved in this. The sole rationale for undertaking such an attempt is the expectation that some of the existing biases against phenomenology will be eliminated, and maybe persuade someone to become acquainted with Husserl's philosophical method.

In contemporary philosophy, the pursuit of an unquestionably true domain is hardly novel as a place to begin philosophical inquiry. Conversely, one may argue that the origins of modern

philosophy can be traced back to the well-known Cartesian endeavour to achieve ultimate certainty through methodically challenging every experience we have. The unusual approach that Descartes took in his "Meditations" to prove "Cogito, ego sum"—the undeniable truth that forms the cornerstone of all human thought—need hardly be discussed. It would be wise to underscore the significance of his fundamental idea and his demand that every philosopher make the drastic effort to critically analyse every apparent detail of his experiences and every component of his line of thought at least once in his life. To achieve this, he must veer away from his carefree attitude towards the world he naively inhabits among his fellow humans, regardless of whether it is a world of existence or merely appearance. For all subsequent philosophical thought, this pivotal insight of Descartes created a path of inquiry. Husserl's phenomenology was remarkably patterned after the musings of Descartes. Husserl, however, felt that Descartes' analysis was not sufficiently radical. Reluctant to follow the indispensable consequences, even though he had the key to a big discovery in his possession, caused him to misuse it. Unquestionably, he exposed the "ego cogito" as the source of all knowledge, defining the stream of thought as the domain for all further philosophical inquiry. However, he was unaware of the connotations that were concealed by this "ego cogito" in both phrases.

Starting with the latter, Descartes treated the thoughts that arise in the stream of thinking as separate, independent entities. Neither was he aware of the through and through interconnectedness of the stream of thought in inner time, nor did he make a sufficiently radical distinction between the act of thinking and the object of thought. Later on, we shall address the first issue, which is the stream of thought's interconnectivity. The answer to the second one came about solely because Husserl's tutor Franz Brentano realised that all of our thought processes are intentional. According to Brentano, whatever experience we have as it comes to mind is automatically referred to as the object experienced. There is no such thing as thought, fear, fantasy, remembrance as such; every thought is thought of, every fear is fear of, every remembrance is remembrance of the object that is thought, feared, remembered.

The technical word that Husserl used to describe this relationship is "intentionality." A clear division between the things to which our acts of thinking, worrying, and remembering are directed and the acts themselves is necessary for all of our cogitations to have an intentional quality. Husserl significantly advanced the study of the intentional nature of cogitations, and he often proclaimed intentionality as the most promising area of phenomenological inquiry. The ramifications of the concept of intentionality will have to be discussed later; for now, we

are simply concerned with the possibility that highlighting the purposeful nature of the stream of cogitations may significantly radicalise the Cartesian concept of the stream of cogitations.

Concerning Descartes' idea of the ego, whose undeniable existence resulted from his meditations, another radicalization appears to be required. There is, as we have shown, an artificial shift in the attitude that man experiences on a regular basis when he applies the Cartesian approach. We take the world for granted in daily life, and the only way to restore the indubitability of the "ego cogitans" is through philosophical scepticism. Descartes dropped the crucial finding that the domain of certainty is the field of transcendental subjectivity as soon as he identified this ego with *mens sive animus sive intellectus*, replacing the ego—which can only be found by distancing oneself from and reflecting upon the world—with the human soul or mind existing within the world. At this very moment, phenomenological criticism begins to emerge—Husserl recommenced his Cartesian meditation. Husserl devised the renowned and sometimes misinterpreted method of "phenomenological reduction," which is essentially a radicalised iteration of the Cartesian approach, with the goal of exposing the pure field of consciousness. Although a phenomenologist does not reject the presence of the outside world, he chooses to suspend belief in it for the sake of analysis, which means he deliberately and methodically abstains from making any conclusions that are connected to the outside world's existence. Husserl adopted phrases from mathematics to describe this process, "putting the world in brackets" or "performing the phenomenological reduction." To reveal the pure field of awareness, or to arrive at an unquestionable conviction that transcends the mundane domain of belief, is the sole aim of such a procedure. It is possible to investigate, characterise, and ask questions regarding the origins of this pure field of consciousness, as will be demonstrated later. Husserl did not use the term "genesis" to describe the factual process of meanings emerging out of a certain historical subjectivity; rather, it describes the process by which knowledge arises in its "origin-form" of self-givenness.

The method of bracketing that "phenomenological reduction" proposes is by no means easy to implement if the required radicalism is not met, even if it does not necessitate any magic or obscure mental ability. Beyond the mere existence of the outside world, everything in it—animate and inanimate—such as other people, cultural artefacts, society, and its establishments, must be placed in brackets. We also need to suspend believing that the things we say about this world and its contents—as they are understood in the ordinary realm—are true. That is to say, not only must we include all of the propositions of the scientific and social sciences—including psychology, logic, and even geometry—that deal with the existence of the universe inside the

brackets, but also our practical understanding of it. This implies that no one's truths, whether or not they are verified by evidence and experiences in the everyday world, can be accepted in the smaller domain without being critically examined. Moreover, as a psycho-physiological entity, I, the human being, must also be placed in a bracket with my body, mind, soul, or whatever term you choose to use to describe the framework through which we interpret the universe. I must suspend believing that I am a mere person living in this world in order to complete the phenomenological reduction. Consequently, the reduction process is transcendental in every sense of the word, and the reduced sphere is an aprioristic one in the widely accepted sense of the word.

The tree in the garden is in blossom, I see. That is, this is how I see the tree, and it is unquestionably a part of my mental stream. Similarly, the phenomenon that is the intended object of my experience, the "blossoming-tree-as-it-appears-to-me," is also legitimate. What happens to the actual tree outside has no bearing on this phenomenon. In addition to losing its flowers and possibly being destroyed by fire, the garden tree may experience colour and shade changes due to the interaction of the sun and clouds. None of these things affect the phenomenon that I originally saw as "blossoming-tree-as-it-appears-to-me," nor does the above-described phenomenological reduction affect it. One may argue that a second perspective is consistent with the first, or it could relate to the tree as it seemed to me at the moment. If such is the case, I could carry out a synthesis, an identification of the two phenomena (or, more accurately, of the actually observed second phenomenon and the remembered phenomenon captured by the first perception). I may doubt each perception or look for a reason for their seeming discrepancy if the second perception contradicts the first.

Either way, I cannot deny that every act of perception and its purposeful aim are part of my mental stream, nor can I deny the possibility that the "tree as it appears to me" has an equivalent in the outside world. As seen by the previous example, my deliberate objects and my ponderings are parts of my mental stream that are independent of any changes that may occur to their counterparts outside of it. It should be noted, however, that events occurring within my stream of awareness have the potential to alter my cogitations. To clarify this, let us first create a distinction between what is perceived and the act of perceiving, also known as the *cogitare* and *cogitatum*, or, to use the technical phrase of Husserl, the *Noesis* and the *Noema*. There are changes to the deliberate object that come from mental processes and are therefore noetic, and there are changes that come from the intentional object itself and are therefore noematic.

The result of a very complex process of interpretation, in which the present perception was connected with previously experienced perceptions (cogitations) of the various aspects of this cherry tree when I walked around it, of this cherry tree as it appeared to me yesterday, of my experiences with cherry trees and with trees in general, of corporeal things, and so on, is what I did not adequately describe when I used, for the sake of abbreviation, language like "I am perceiving this chair" or "I am perceiving this blossoming cherry tree in the garden." In contrast to other objects that I have since named "my garden," "the heavens," and "clouds," the intentional object of my perception is a particular combination of colours and shapes in a unique viewpoint of distance. After a complex reference to pre-experienced cogitations, this total is interpreted as "the blossoming cherry tree in my garden as it appears to me". However, the accumulation of these pre-experienced contemplations about material objects has resulted in a certain "universal style" of understanding the noematic correlate of my perceptual activity. One may even argue that the noema, or purposeful object perceived, has numerous consequences that can be articulated methodically.

The psychology of association is definitively overthrown by all of this, leading to a whole new account of memory and experience in inner time. Phenomenology is closely associated with the early works of William James and the Gestaltist ideology, since they both radicalise the understanding of the interconnectedness of our continuous stream of experiences. However, a completely new understanding of logic can also be reached through the fundamental idea of phenomenology.

By no means do Husserl's "ideal objects" have a philosophical basis, nor are they related to any Berkeleyan or Hegelian idealism, nor to the conceptions of Plato or Kant. A concept such as "the Hegelian philosophy" or "Calvin's concept of original sin" are examples of ideal objects, as is the idea of number and the entire number system that arithmetic and algebra deal with; the meaning of a sentence or a book; the content of the Pythagorean theorem as a meaningful entity; or any of the so-called social and cultural objects that are meaningful and can be purposefully made objects of our contemplation at any time. This is purposeful objects' peculiarity: they are based on supposedly "real" items of the outside world and can only be communicated through signs and symbols, which are themselves tangible objects like printed letters or spoken sound waves. That meant that phenomenology needed to create a crucial semantic theory. A sign's tendency is to imply something else that falls into a different category. The widely recognised symbol for "root" denotes a distinct mathematical concept that remains unaffected by the typographical form of the root sign in various printing styles, whether it is

printed in a textbook, written in pencil or ink on paper or on a blackboard, or whether I refer to it in conversation using the sound symbol "Wurzel," "root," or "racine." Furthermore, this applies to all sign languages and systems, not just the particular one. Although they point to the ideal objects, they are not the perfect objects in and of themselves. All of these things need to be clearly differentiated: the external object that will be understood as a sign, its significance throughout the discourse universe, and its particular significance in the given context.

Our current school-logic is a refinement of Aristotelian formal logic, which assumes a world with well-circumscribed concepts and predicability. However, phenomenological analysis reveals a pre-predicative stratum of our experiences, where intentional objects and qualities are not well-circumscribed. This suggests that our experiences are connected and selected by mental activities, with elements maintaining their halos and horizons. Formal logic must be founded on underlying constitutional processes, which can only be investigated within the transcendental field accessible through phenomenological reduction.

In a nutshell, this is Husserl's contrast between "Formal and Transcendental logic." He demonstrates how these kinds of analyses lead to completely new understandings of several fundamental ideas in our current logic, including evidence, tautology, the principle of the excluded middle, and so forth, in his book of the same name. He highlights how certain ontological presuppositions underpin formal logic, and he begins to explore the role of intersubjectivity in logic—a term that refers to the shared reality that all of us share rather than my personal world—and how it can be used to explain the puzzle of intersubjective truth.

Husserl's phenomenology aims to be an eidetical science, dealing with essence rather than existence. While empirical methods can be applied, the aprioristic character of phenomenology as a *prima philosophia* and psychology is ensured through the eidetical sphere. The distinction between empirical and eidetical approaches is not related to the distinction between mundane and reduced spheres. Eidetical science can exist within the mundane sphere. However, the terms *Wesen* and *Wesensschau* used by Husserl have created misunderstandings and prevented readers from studying his "Ideas," which explains this method. The terms *Wesen* and *Wesensschau* have metaphysical connotations, eidetic connotations, and irrational intuition, which are used by the phenomenological esoteric to gaze at eternal truths.

Eidetic investigations focus on imaginable things, not concrete objects. Husserl's dictum emphasizes that phenomenology involves both perceived and imagined objects, with imagined objects being even more important. The eidetic approach is a methodological device for solving

a special task, focusing on the meaning of objects constituted by our mind's activities. This method leads to a new theory of induction and association, and opens the way to a scientific ontology. It is essential for identifying the real reason for spheres of incompatibility and describing the foundational relationship between ontological realms.

Phenomenological philosophy, as proposed by Schutz, focuses on the transcendental ego, space and time, intersubjectivity, life and death, and monads. Husserl's writings only briefly outline the foundations of phenomenological philosophy, but he believes American scholars may be more interested in its methods and results, which align with James' psychology, G. H. Mead's concepts, and Gestalt theory, which has gained popularity among American psychologists.

10.8 CONTEMPORARY PHENOMENOLOGY: THEN AND NOW

The goal here is to describe the relationship between then and now in terms of a real learning, thinking, and writing trajectory that illustrates the concrete experience of how phenomenology has evolved while being true to what it was seen to be in the past: a philosophical movement—in this case, the twenty-first century. Phenomenology has a history consisting of four separate origins.

The first goal was to elucidate the source of origination for the elements that comprise human experience, which was Husserl's initial focus in his phenomenological investigations. The inquiry was not only about the premises upon which human experience was built, but also about the process by which it originated in its essential form. This was clearly the main shift in *Logical Investigations*, moving from the tenacious defence of the logical's ideality to the investigations where the foundation for ideality would be discovered.

The second factor that distinguished this effort as specifically phenomenological was the suspension of conceptual schemata that presuppose the nature of the area in which one searches for "ground," particularly naturalistic notions of how humans fit into the natural world and the physical universe of natural science, as laid out in *Ideas I* with Husserl's epochē. In order to reveal the world around us as a phenomenon, something that appears, and the fundamental nature of reality as we see it through several senses, it was necessary to put all of these things out of play. Many philosophical traditions that fall under the broad category of "Continental philosophy" essentially take these two propositions for granted, despite the fact that they are indispensably necessary for understanding phenomenology.

Third, Husserl makes a methodological shift that fundamentally determines the course of his search for the ground of genesis, keeping the phenomenological period in mind. The ground of origination had to be sought exactly where sense-qualitative-meaning took shape within this region of sense-qualitative meaningfulness, that is, the transformed world; that is, in the living experience of sense-qualitatively given manifest things and events in the surrounding world. Within the Ideas project, this refers to the phenomenological reduction, "returning"—or maybe more accurately, "following"—always previously originated experience variables and structures to the place where they began—that is, from an always in progress transcendental originative process.

The trajectory account explains that determining an absolute origin is a relative process, requiring us to conceptualize something beyond the surface level. Issue-driven motivations and strategies lead to familiar features and factors in life experiences. However, identifying and characterizing these originative factors requires explicit methodological guidelines. The world's framework of finding, ascertaining, and articulating the origin in relation to its originator may have limitations in bringing ultimate origination to clarity. Therefore, the ultimate aim in phenomenology may be beyond investigation.

Fourthly, it is imperative to acknowledge that although Husserl proclaimed "transcendental consciousness" and its "absolute subjectivity" in Ideas I, and even though he used these terms until his death twenty years later, the central idea of his final manuscript, which examined the Truly Ultimate in the formation of meaningful appearing and conscious experience, significantly changed the nature and status of what "consciousness" and "subjectivity" must imply. Husserl points out that Ideas I was lacking an actual examination of the "ultimate true Absolute," which would have shown that the apparent "absolute"—the "absolute consciousness" that receives all the focus in Ideas I—"has its origin" and is therefore not "in truth the ultimate." And only when the aspect of temporalization is ultimately examined as far as is feasible in this endeavour will the ultimate genuine "absolute" become apparent.

Now, this is the main structural element in the final ground or origin-seeking phenomenological investigation, and it is this that determines how much the question of adequacy in phenomenological reach matters more than any other component or characteristic. The fundamental aspect of structuration is temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*), also known as temporalization (*Zeitigung*), which is a genetic dynamic. It is the process by which all aspects of experiential life—both pragmatic and perceptual—in the world of manifest appearance originate.

Therefore, no other subject, component, framework, or procedure in phenomenology can obtain its complete determinative explanation until this ultimate basis is entirely elucidated. Nevertheless, Husserl's work is still inconclusive on the fundamental effectiveness of the study of temporality and temporalization. This would contend—though others may disagree—that Husserl's most recent attempts to analytically characterise temporality and temporalization represent the radical, inaccessible nature of a final, genuine "absolute."

10.9 LET US SUM UP

First, our approach demonstrates that the question "What is phenomenology?" is not what makes phenomenology dominant in the modern era. Instead, "What is (are) the question(s) of phenomenology?" It is within the parameters of the comprehension that we have been outlining here, which brings us to our second point.

10.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- What is transcendental idealism?
- What is transcendental subjectivity?
- What is consciousness of something?
- Briefly discuss about the concept Phenomenology?

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UNIT-11: SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM: BASIC POSTULATES, CONTRIBUTION TO GEORGE HERBERT MEAD

Structure

- 11.1 Learning Objectives
- 11.2 Introduction
- 11.3 Social Interaction: Conceptual Understanding
- 11.4 Historicity of Symbolic Interactionism
- 11.5 Symbolic Interactionism: A Distinctive Theoretical Orientation
- 11.6 George Herbert Mead: Contribution to the Symbolic Interactionism
- 11.7 Meads' Understanding of Symbolic Interaction Theory
- 11.8 Mead's Critique
- 11.9 Let Us Sum Up
- 11.10 Check Your Progress
- 11.11 References

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This particular unit would orient students to

- The basic conceptual understanding of symbolic interaction.
- Discuss in brief the fundamental postulates of symbolic interaction.
- Trace out the historicity of the emergence of symbolic interaction.
- Elaborate the symbolic interaction as a distinctive theoretical orientation.
- Highlights the critics and Mead's understanding of symbolic interaction.

11.2 INTRODUCTION

The peculiarity of symbolic interaction theory lies in its American origins and its continued American impact. Specifically, symbolic interactionism has greatly impacted a significant portion of American sociologists whose areas of interest are disorganisation, socialisation, and personal and social organisation; conversely, it doesn't seem to have had the same effect on any equivalent cohort in Europe.

11.3 SOCIAL INTERACTION: CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING

The term "social interaction" refers to a scenario in which the actions of one person intentionally reorganise and impact the actions of another actor, and vice versa. In this context, "behaviour" is used in the broadest meaning to refer to the actions of individuals in space, their

covert or "mental" thoughts, and their physiological processes. Thus, social interaction at its most intensive is the process by which one person's overt actions, subconscious thoughts, and fundamental physiology affect another person's, and vice versa. Of course, one or more of these fundamental behavioural aspects would have lower values in less intense social engagement. The simplest unit of sociological study is social interaction. While sociology investigates how people are organised, which can only start with social interaction, psychology is more appropriately concerned with studying behaviour as a whole. Consequently, the suggested theoretical concepts only attempt to describe behaviour in relation to how it functions in social interaction processes rather than trying to explain it in of itself.

Turner makes no claims on the exclusive interpretations of social structure, even if social interaction is a fundamental process in all social or animation processes. According to him, macro and micro sociology are two distinct categories of analysis, each having equal merit on its own. While macro-sociology investigates the characteristics of individual populations, micro-sociology looks at the characteristics of social interaction. Generally speaking, macro dynamics assumes that people interact, whereas micro-sociology largely ignores this. Intellectual activity should be divided into these reasonable categories, and this split should be maintained until more developed theories of micro and macro processes are produced. Hence, we will be trying to makes little effort to bridge the micro-macro gap and simply figuring out the probable ways how social interaction among individuals is being operates.

11.4 HISTORICITY OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

The historical development of symbolic interactionists' sociological methodology has rarely piqued their interest. When compared to grand theory, which is never subject to correction by facts, their emphasis on discovery and the development of theoretical understanding through empirical study has several advantages. But this might also lead to a superficial approach that doesn't generate a synthetic understanding of the world. Consequently, because symbolic interactionism lacks a sense of its own canon to structure students' learning and can have sectarian tendencies, it can be challenging to teach. However, it's possible that symbolic interactionism is best viewed as the surviving but undisturbed remnants of an ancient religion rather than as a minority option.

George Herbert Mead's social behaviourist philosophy of thought and behaviour, which was established at the University of Chicago in the 1920s, served as the foundation for the sociological method known as "Symbolic Interactionism," which Herbert Blumer first used in

text in 1937. Afterwards, it has frequently been used in a more ambiguous manner to refer to the corpus of work connected to the university's sociology department between 1900 and 1950, as well as to those who continue to declare their loyalty to it. Still, as recent research has shown, this kind of thinking underestimates the diversity of Chicago sociology during that time (Blumer 1984; Fine 1995; Platt 1996).

Furthermore, it doesn't align well with the actors' own descriptions of who they are and what they accomplished. Subsequent leaders such as Wirth or Hughes do not appear to have adopted the phrase as a means of self-characterization, and neither Park nor Thomas could have used it to characterise their work. The term is only loosely used by the generation that followed Blumer; Hughes's focus on social organisation appears to have had a greater impact than Blumer's interest in social psychology, though this is also only a very partial representation of Blumer's interests, as Lyman and Vidich (1988) have noted.

11.5 SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM: A DISTINCTIVE THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

German romantic philosophy can be seen in the weight placed on societal effects on an individual as well as in the theoretical significance attributed to the "self". In the description of activity, the Hegelian dialectic can be observed as the outcome of the interaction between what George Herbert Mead termed the "I" and the "me." By contrasting how the Scottish Moral Philosophers—Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson, in particular—developed the concept of "sympathy" with how symbolic interaction theory employs the notation of role-taking, one can see significant connections between the two movements. Furthermore, more recently, symbolic interactionist formulations have been impacted by the work of philosophers of language, such as Cassirer. Additionally, Piaget's theories and studies have had a similar impact.

However, the evolution of symbolic interaction theory has not been significantly influenced by these factors. The founding thinkers of this movement were American pragmatic philosophers William James, John Dewey, and (most importantly) George Herbert Mead. Furthermore, Charles Horton Cooley and William Isaac Thomas—two significant contributors to the early development of American sociology—provided a large portion of the sociological elaboration of these foundations (James, 1892; Dewey, 1930; Mead, 1934; Cooley, 1902; Thomas, 1951).

The background that allowed symbolic interactionism to develop as a unique theoretical perspective was given by several aspects of pragmatism. Two major efforts to bring idealism

and science together are the acknowledgment of "mind" as an autonomous entity. There is a challenge to the type of determinism that sees humans as the result of impersonal mechanism. Substantially, James' handling of the idea of "habit" amounted to a strong critique of the prevalent instinct theories of the time. He also shed new light on the interaction between society and humans through his investigation of "consciousness" and the associated debate about the sort of self. Specifically, James set the stage for the idea that personality is derived from social connections through his concept of the social self, which he saw as the product of a man's acknowledgment from others.

As a result of his emphasis on the close relationship between personality and society and his belief that personality development inevitably occurs within a social context, Dewey made significant contributions to symbolic interaction theory. It was Cooley who brought such notions into sociology, giving them a uniquely sociological twist. What makes anything uniquely social, in Cooley's opinion, is mental and subjective. A personal thought makes up the "real person," and society is the interaction of these individual ideas. The ideas that people hold of one another are the real social reality. The distributive and communal aspects of the same entity are represented by the two sides of the same coin, which is the self and society.

The self is a social product that arises from interaction and is shaped by the process of imagining oneself to another and the response or evaluation that one might receive for his appearance. When one imagines, they share other people's opinions. Fundamental to Thomas's theories is the idea that understanding both the factual and subjective aspects of experience is required to explain behaviour. This leads straight to a central methodological tenet of symbolic interactionism: the researcher must observe the world through the eyes of the subject of his inquiry. If men define situations as real, then they are real in their implications.

11.6 GEORGE HERBERT MEAD: CONTRIBUTION TO THE SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

The 1962 criticism by G. H. Mead of J. B. Watson, a Chicago-based behaviourist psychologist who was his eramate, Watson had maintained that there was no need for the concept of "mind" in metaphysics. It would not be necessary to propose an intermediary mechanism in order to explain all action in terms of responses to stimuli. Over the majority of the following fifty years, the words for most American and American-influenced psychology were established by this radical behaviourism.

Nevertheless, Mead contended that humans interpret stimuli very differently than the rats, dogs, or pigeon's behaviourist psychologists had studied. Animals interpreted external stimuli as signs, or explicit information about the outside environment, that set off habitual or reflexive behavioural reactions. Typically, human responses to stimuli are symbols or signals that need to be cognitively transformed before they may serve as the inspiration for an action. The most apparent example of this is language, of course.

Mead also emphasised how much an actor's intention did not determine the significance of their actions. An actor would prepare a performance with the idea of imagining how the intended audience or receiver would react. The recipient's or audience's actual response would be the first to determine the meaning of that act, and the producer's subsequent self-correction might lead to additional revisions. For instance, when speaking, the actor had to arrange the variety of sounds the human body could produce into blocks that represented, or symbolised, the hearer's reaction in their imagination. This intersubjective system had to include these blocks in order for them to serve as potentially shared communicative symbols. For the most part, neologisms are clearly possible, but the shapes they formed could not be arbitrary, even though the vocal forms might be.

The task of providing structure to these concepts so that they could be addressed within the standard scientific canons fell to George Herbert Mead. By starting with observable behaviour, he attempted to define a behavioristic social psychology and deduced that mind and society were products of that social process. Crucially, he discovered the connection between organised society and social processes in language.

Shared behaviour serves as the ultimate reference for the set of meaningful symbols that make up language. Through social contact, gestures—a component of a social act that becomes a sign of the parts of the act that have not yet occurred—develop. When the meaning of these gestures is shared by those involved in the act, they become significant symbols. In this context, meaning refers to the behaviour prompted by an important gesture or symbol. The foundation of human social life is the presence of these symbolic systems.

Through language and behaviour, personality is developed. Mead approaches personality through the idea of the "self," which he says develops when an organism learns to understand its own behaviour objectively, or from the perspective of others. By engaging in symbolic systems, he might assume the position of the other and come to see himself from that perspective, turning himself into an object to himself in the process. There are two phases to

the self: the "I" and the "me." The first one is the organism's reaction to externally imposed organised attitudes, while the latter is the analogue of social roles and internalised attitudes. The "I"- "me" dichotomy leads to behaviour.

A "play" stage comes first, followed by a "game" stage, as is generally the case with personality development. In the former, a child pretends to be someone else, such as his mother, a police officer, or a buddy, taking on the role of specific, discrete individuals. In the latter, the kid adopts the persona of a generalised other and reacts to a sophisticated arrangement of other people's activities by having to, for instance, play his part in a planned football game.

11.7 MEADS' UNDERSTANDING OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTION THEORY

Now, with quite little change from Mead's work to the recent past, we can paint a pretty systematic picture of symbolic interaction theory in its "classic" form. In order to accomplish this, we shall investigate its underlying presumptions, essential ideas, and basic concepts.

Assuming that man must be examined on his own terms, the theory starts with the anti-reductionist premise. It follows that not all of man's behaviour can be explained by concepts derived from the study of other forms since he is unique among living things in that he is able to produce complex symbolic images and store them. The idea also presupposes that a study of society will yield the greatest scientific insights into human behaviour. It is acknowledged that every single person is born within a society and culture that are always evolving, while avoiding cultural determinism. By starting its analyses with the social act and drawing conclusions about the person and society from it, symbolic interactionism avoids the conceptual problem of claiming that society has a metaphysical precedence over the individual or vice versa. This allows for a clear distinction between sociology and social psychology, with the former starting with social acts and developing "up" to society and the latter starting with social activities and developing "down" to the individual.

The third premise is that humans are both actors and reactors, responding to their surroundings through symbolic mediation rather than as a physical fact. Men have the ability to stimulate themselves because they respond to symbolic settings and create their own symbols. Ultimately, the idea postulates that males are a-social beings by birth, not anti-social or social. Despite having the potential to become human, the infant is not "human" at birth. He achieves this through developing a sense of self through social engagement.

The assessment of Mead's contributions highlighted some of the more basic ideas of symbolic interactionism. In a nutshell, analysis starts with the social act, which is an organism's activity that results from an impulse that demands adaptation to another organism. A social act requires the participation of at least two people, each of whom considers the other(s) while satiating their own impulses. Because these actions take place gradually, gestures that serve as markers for subsequent acts are made possible. The action (the subsequent parts of the act) that accompanies a gesture gives it meaning. When an organism's perception and its own production of a gesture are identical, then the gestures become significant symbols. To the extent that it is social and not private, language is a system of significant symbols. It can be inferred from this that language is a system of shared meanings rather than a system of shared behaviours. These properties of language symbols, together with any other property that could have symbolic meaning, are prerequisites for communication.

In social acts, symbols emerge and serve to fulfil certain tasks. Symbols are interpreted as indicators of future actions. They enable one to modify his attitude to another before the latter behaviour materialises since they forecast later behaviour. As a result, symbols organise action with references to the things they indicate and serve as substitutes for the things they represent in social acts. Put simply, a symbol is a preliminary act that implies a course of action.

Certain symbols, known as categories, stand for many generations of behaviour towards specific objects. Categorization is the act of designating that various objects should be regarded as belonging to the same category, and it is necessary for organised activity. Undoubtedly, categories are symbols; they possess significance, function as cues to actions, and structure actions. Categorised environments elicit responses from humans. Upon entering a situation, individuals need to unconsciously or explicitly represent it to themselves in symbolic terms. It is imperative that they provide brief explanations of the circumstances, as these descriptions will serve as cues for their actions.

Any broad classification that is used to categorise people is called a position, which is a socially accepted categorization for actors. These terms refer to roles such as father, teacher, intellectual, and thief. Additionally, these classifications help to structure how people behave towards each other. On the other hand, when we give someone a positional designation, we encourage us to expect particular behaviours from them and to act accordingly. Roles are characterised by the expectations that come with them. As shared behaviour is the ultimate interpretation of expectations, roles are social in the sense that symbolic behaviour is always

social. They are also social in the most basic sense in which it is impossible to discuss one position without mentioning the context of at least one other position; for example, a mother cannot exist without a father or child. Each role has a counter-role, and every post has a counter-position. Invoking an interpersonal interaction is a necessary part of using this language.

Just as an actor categorises things in the outside world, he can also apply classifications to himself. It's possible that he labels, defines, and categorises himself in the same way that he does others. This type of behaviour indicates the existence of a self. Consequently, self-reflection is a reflexive process. According to Mead, the self is that which is an object to itself. The idea that an organism's responses help to organise its activities is closely tied to the concept of self. The essential point is that a person defines themselves in terms of socially accepted categories and the duties that go along with them, regardless of how subtle the definition may be. Relationships with others are implied by these roles, so is the self. In a social process, one's self is how he or she describes their relationships with other people.

The concept of playing the role of the other, or more briefly, role-taking: the practice of anticipating the responses of those involved with one in a social act, is implicit in the preceding discussion. Role-taking may result in empathy or sympathy, although "feeling with" another is not required; one might predict reactions without emotional involvement or connection. This process of anticipation can occur with reference to a specific other, but it is most commonly associated with what Mead refers to as the generalised other. The concept of reference group appears to be just a restatement of the concept of generalised other, which may be preferred because it appears to elicit fewer extra-scientific undertones. To assume the position of the generalised other is to see one's own actions in the context of a defined system of interconnected roles. Role-taking functions are part of the process of role-making, which emphasises the possibility for novel responses to emerge from interaction as the actor actively responds to imputed roles revealed through role-taking and seeks validation from the responses of others (Turner, 1962).

In a differentiated world, people with whom one interacts may have varying, even contradicting, expectations for one's actions. If any action is to be taken, these people must be ranked according to the priority that should be accorded to their individual expectations. People who rank highly on an "importance" continuum are regarded as significant others.

In conclusion, it is important to acknowledge that symbolic interaction theory incorporates certain conventionally "mentalistic" ideas. However, these are characterised in a way that

makes them acceptable in scientific discourse. Consequently, the definition of thinking is the internal, subvocal manipulation of language signals. The process of choosing from options that are symbolically present in one's experience is known as volition. And self-consciousness is the act of viewing oneself from the standpoint of others.

Symbolic interactionism produced a relatively vague set of propositions concerning socialisation, personal and social organisation, and disorganisation based on the assumptions presented and the concepts just examined.

The infant human initiates act through random motions, born into a continuous network of social relationships based on a shared set of meanings. An adult, usually a parent, will react in a random way to certain acts (feeding, turning, changing the infant), until the adult finds a way to finish the action (quieting the infant). An impulsive act that is partially a gesture is present here, and the adult's contribution to the act has some meaning in its early stages. With time, both components of the act become specialised, and a movement that was at first random transforms into the previously described gesture. Significantly, it is the adult who, by completing the act, provides the meaning of the gesture. His reactions as a member of an ongoing society are constrained by the repertoire of meanings available in that culture. This definition will elicit the collection of expected behaviours that are the function of the father. The adult will have characterised the circumstance, including his positional relationship to the infant—for example, that of father to son. Gestures, therefore, convey meanings that come from connections to others who have already experienced socialisation.

Infants engage in vocal activity among other things. Gradually, meaningful linguistic symbols will emerge from selective reactions to initially random vocalisation. In a similar manner, the self-evolved. Similar to how a youngster picks up the definition of "ball" from other people's reactions, he also learns his identity from other people's reactions. Others define a symbol for us and explain its significance. They categorise us and anticipate the specific behaviours indicated by their categorizations. They behave towards us in accordance with these expectations. Their behaviour towards us defines our "self." We begin to classify ourselves according to how other people classify us and behave in a manner that meets their expectations.

Gradually and continuously, the self-changes; it usually becomes more complicated as a child interacts with a wider range of individuals in a wider range of settings that are self-relevant situations to them. When confronted with varying expectations, he can act both in regard to himself and in reference to others. Through role-playing, he can perceive and assess his own

actions from a number of perspectives. In short, he can learn to be objective and to exercise self-control.

People occupy many places in various sets of social ties at the same moment and across time. Under these circumstances, how can behaviour be organised and consistent? Upon entering a social situation, one's response is to define it. This definition includes assigning positions to others and to oneself, so establishing expectations for one's own behaviour as well as that of others. Similar actions are taken by other people involved in the circumstance. The resulting behaviour is a function of such definitions. A critical question thus becomes one of the congruences of the definitions of the interacting persons. Congruence enables effective, well-organized behaviour. Additionally, congruence can occur when meanings are widely accepted within a society—that is, among the parts of society that certain individuals may find their engagement with others effectively restricted. The same explanatory principle applies when meanings vary within units of interaction: social disorganisation inevitably results in definitional and expectational inconsistencies, which in turn lead to personal disorganisation.

Many researchers have proposed modifications and improvements to the "classic" version of the theory discussed above, in part as a result of attempts to apply symbolic interaction theory in empirical study. A comprehensive exposition of these ideas is not feasible due to space constraints; however, it could be beneficial to provide an overview of their nature (Stryker, 1968; Schwartz and Stryker, 1971; Lofland, 1969; McCall and Simmons, 1966).

11.8 MEAD'S CRITIQUE

Mead's theory of interactionism is susceptible to criticism in two main areas, notwithstanding his impressive synthesis. Firstly, the authenticity of the notions themselves; secondly, the relevance of those concepts.

Mead promotes a potent synthesis, albeit few of his concepts can be considered truly innovative or his presentation of them exceptional. A few precursors are widely known. Others have written about Mead's connection to psychology (Joas 1985) and his position within pragmatist philosophy (Diggins 1994). Rock (1979) has commented on the Kantian elements. Fewer antecedents have been thoroughly investigated. It is evident that Mead owed a great deal to Darwin as well as Cooley (1902), who may have borrowed the concept of the looking-glass self from Adam Smith (Blasi 1998; Strong and Dingwall 1989). Mead's idea of the role of the "generalised other" is obviously anticipated by Smith, who similarly lays out the idea of how

we control our actions in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1766) by reference to the imagined reaction of an "impartial spectator." The fundamental concepts are even older, though. These appear to have come from Smith's research on classical Greek and Latin writers (Raphael 1985). As Strong and Dingwall (1989) pointed out, the Greek Stoics have a fair claim to being the first social constructionists in their opposition to the essentialist view of form and meaning put forward by Aristotle, which dominated Western thought for several millennia.

One major issue in applying symbolic interaction theory is the imprecision of some of its key ideas. Specifically, the theory relies heavily on the idea of self, yet it is still too crude to allow for accurate claims to be made. In fact, the self is too often seen as an undifferentiated, unorganised oneness rather than as a variable at all. When interpreted in this way, it is only helpful for ludicrous theoretical claims like the one that social contact shapes the self.

If it is required to think of the self as distinct and multifaceted, as suggested, how can conceptualization go forward? We can think of the self as consisting of several distinct identities. In social interactions, identities are claimed and validated as internalised positional designations. These are the socially accepted groups of people that exist in society (Cohen, 1965). Persons who participate in structured social connections are said to possess identities, which necessitate that participants in these relationships acknowledge and accept their positional designations.

It makes sense to speculate that there is a hierarchy of salience for these identities, and that this hierarchy is one way the self is arranged. Identity salience is the likelihood that a particular identity will be brought up in a range of contexts for a particular individual. An alternate interpretation relates it to the varying likelihood that individuals with a particular identification will be involved in a specific circumstance. When structural overlap occurs—that is, when analytically diverse sets of relationships are mutually contingent at some point in time and hence simultaneously invoke different identities—the hierarchy of salience is a potentially significant predictor of conduct. It is reasonable to assume that the hierarchy of salience will not affect behaviour prediction in situations that are structurally distinct from one another.

The way an organism thinks about itself is how it forms an identity. Individuals react to themselves in terms that are both conative and cathectic. It is likely that these self-response modalities are systematically related. It is reasonable to assume that people's desires and self-perceptions are methodically connected to the multiple identities that make up the self; this is another way to describe the self as distinct and structured.

Analytically separate from identities and various ways that an individual can express himself, commitment is related to both. "The relations to others formed as a function of acting on choice," according to this idea, are those that "require changing the pattern of relationships to others in order to change the pattern of choice." One is dedicated to being that kind of person to the extent that their relationships with certain persons depend on it (Stryker, 1968). Since entering a partnership necessitates accepting positional designations, commitments are predicated on identities. An identity as a husband is necessary for a man's relationships with his wife, her family, their shared friends, and even his children. The costs of abandoning relationships that rely on an identity might be used to measure loyalty to that identity.

A synoptic summary of the existing "model" of symbolic interaction may now be helpful. We'll explain our actions in terms of several propositions:

1. The basis of behaviour is a classed universe, and the meaning attributed to class names is composed of common behavioural norms that arise from social interactions. One learns how to categorise objects and how they should act in relation to them through interaction.
2. These class names include symbols designating the morphological elements of social structure known as positions, which bear the collective behavioural norms known as roles.
3. Within a social system, actors refer to one another by name, acknowledge one another as occupying positions, and therefore establish expectations for one another's behaviour.
4. Within a social structure, actors also identify with one another, which leads to internalised expectations about their own behaviour. By assigning themselves positional labels, they create a self-contained collection of distinct identities.
5. Performers aim to establish and preserve dependable, logical personas.
6. Performers will want positive affect to be associated with their identities; in other words, they want others to feel good about themselves.
7. Motivational forces, identities impose requirements on behaviour that embodies or represents them.
8. Commitments stabilise and fix identities. The value that an actor places on the identity that forms the basis of his or her social network is reinforced by the investment that person makes in such network.

9. An interaction between one's own definitions and other people's responses results in behaviour. The interaction between identity claims and the confirmation or refutation of such assertions underpins all social conduct.

11.9 LET US SUM UP

Establishing a canon for interactionist sociology would thus require a reassessment, if not a rediscovery, of what was considered to be the canonical material known to scholars before to World War II and which would have influenced the research of the more senior generation currently with us. This drawing is by no means exhaustive. That would undoubtedly entail following some of the same concepts' ostensibly separate path through Vienna during the interwar period and their subsequent birth as ethnomethodology and various phenomenological sociology subtypes.

The evolution of concepts in Anglo-American social anthropology and Goffman's reinterpretation of them as the foundation for comparative sociology would also be discussed (Murphy et al. 1998). Saying that it would entail a reassertion of Scottish traditions instead of the French Enlightenment is one way to summarise this. The high-flown vocabulary, Romanticism, and lofty ideals of the French are more influential on contemporary sociology (Heilbron 1995). The Scots were far less ostentatious (Berry, 1997). Their conception of social theory is one that is continuously guided by practical considerations and empirical observation. Possibly not a grandiose vision, but perhaps all the more effective for that—it is a method of trying to improve the world little by little by making modest adjustments.

11.10 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- What is social interaction?
- What is significant others?
- What is impulsive act?
- Briefly explain the Meads' Understanding of Symbolic Interaction Theory.
- Write a note on George Herbert Mead: Contribution to the Symbolic Interactionism.

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UNIT-12: EXCHANGE THEORY: BASIC POSTULATES, CONTRIBUTION OF PETER BLAU

Structure

- 12.1 Learning Objectives
- 12.2 Introduction
- 12.3 History of social exchange theory
- 12.4 Assumptions of social exchange theory
- 12.5 Postulates of Exchange Theory
- 12.6 Applications of social exchange theory
- 12.7 How Does Social Exchange Theory Apply to Social Work?
- 12.8 Criticism of Social Exchange Theory
- 12.9 Peter Blau's Exchange Theory
 - 12.9.1 Micro to Macro
 - 12.9.2 Exchange Relations and Power
- 12.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.11 Check your progress
- 12.12 References

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this you will be able to know-

- Meaning of Social Exchange Theory
- History of social exchange Theory
- Assumption and application of Exchange Theory
- Postulates of Exchange Theory

12.2 INTRODUCTION

According to the social exchange theory, people choose their actions and relationships based on an assessment-whether conscious or unconscious-of the benefits and drawbacks of those alternatives. Face to face interaction is the main moto of this theory and does not extend to societal-level behaviour or change.

According to this theory, people balance the benefits or rewards of a social engagement against its drawbacks or costs. These costs and rewards can be tangible, such as money or time, or intangible, such as social approval, love, or respect.

Ultimately, individuals seek to maximize their rewards and receive more from a relationship or interaction than they give. If a relationship costs more than it rewards, individuals may choose to end it. Conversely, if a relationship provides sufficient rewards, individuals will continue it. The definition of "sufficient" is affected by the individual expectations and comparisons with another possible interaction or relationship.

Additionally, social exchange theory suggests that individuals expect equity in exchange. They anticipate receiving equal rewards for incurring similar costs, and may become dissatisfied if this expectation is not met.

12.3 HISTORY OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

George Homans, a sociologist, developed social exchange theory, which was first introduced in his essay "Social Behaviour as Exchange" in 1958. Homans initially viewed any society, community, or group as a social system and believed that studying an individual's behaviour was necessary to understand that social system, rather than the social structures individuals created.

Homans studied the small groups and observed the rewards and punishments that each member received from the group and the others. He has developed a framework of social behaviour elements that had to be taken into consideration in the case of individual groups' internal and external systems, such as interactions, emotions or activities. Homans has explored a number of groups which he introduced in his original book *The Human Group* with this framework.

Later Homans explained that the most fundamental level of social behaviour, which involves interaction between at least two persons and they can either reward or punish each other's action, is called basic social behaviour. The idea has been based on Homans' acceptance of B.F. Skinner's psychological theory of human behaviour and the fundamental principles of economics.

Homans presented a number of suggestions as to how social behaviour can be thought of as an exchange of material and intangible goods, e.g. time, money, efforts, approval, prestige, power, etc. Each person's providing rewards and maintaining costs. People think they're getting the

same reward as they're giving to someone else, and they're going to choose actions that are likely to give them the greatest reward.

A number of sociologists, notably Peter Michael Blau, who has developed social exchange theory focusing on concepts such as attitudes, interests, indifference curves and supply and demand, have contributed to it. Both men have inspired a more modern approach to social exchange theory, particularly in the area of power dynamics. Because of these differences, there's no one solid theory on social exchange. Instead, for their particular purposes, a range of concepts and assumptions are used by different theorists.

12.4 ASSUMPTIONS OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

The theory of social exchange is based on a number of assumptions:

- The social behavior has to do with the exchange of value.
- People will be motivated to keep some of their worth if they have to give up something that costs them money.
- People engage in social exchanges in which they are rewarded more than their costs.
- It can be a tangible or immaterial item of value in rewards and costs.
- People expect to be rewarded similarly when they incur the same costs (equity of exchange).
- If people are convinced that the cost is more than the reward, they're going to end relationships.
- In the measurement of cost and reward, people are comparing their expectations with past experience or alternatives.
- People understand that "enough" rewards vs. costs differ from relationship to relationship and within the same relationship over time.

12.5 POSTULATES OF EXCHANGE THEORY

- To maximize positive interactions and minimise negative interactions.
- People choose to start and maintain relationships that maximise benefits and minimise costs.
- Most gratification among individuals comes from others.
- The exchange operates within social norms.

- The involvement of individuals in interaction process are mostly related to the maximization of profit.
- In a competitive system people are mostly goal-oriented.

12.6 APPLICATIONS OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

Social exchange theory can be applied to many situations, including:

- Romantic relationships
- Friendships
- Workplace behaviour
- Organizational management
- Business decisions
- Social power
- Leadership
- Politics
- Consumer purchasing decisions
- Television viewing decisions

12.7 HOW DOES SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY APPLY TO SOCIAL WORK?

The theory of social exchange can be a valuable tool for social workers to assist their clients in repeating positive interactions and Behaviors. It is important for social workers to recognize that every individual seeks rewards within a relationship, and clients desire more positive outcomes than negative ones. They want the benefits they receive to outweigh the costs. Interactions that provide clients with some form of benefit may be facilitated by social workers. People are more apt to repeat the same action when they get rewards for certain actions. However, repetition of the same reward leads to a reduction in effectiveness. Social workers need to be aware of that and adjust their relationships with clients accordingly.

Many social workers are trying to improve their client's personal relationship, whether it is with spouse, parents, children, relatives, friends or colleagues. Social workers may talk to clients about the interaction with other people and their reasons for doing so. They'll be able to help clients examine their behavior, such as the reason for starting or ending a relationship.

There are often comparisons made in the theory of social exchange, even unconsciously. They are comparing their present relationship to expectations, past similar relationships and

alternative relationships. In order to establish whether they get enough net benefits, it is the purpose of these comparisons. However, if someone lacks healthy relationships to compare to, they may continue to pursue unhealthy or unsafe relationships. Social workers may help clients to navigate the expectations and comparisons that they have with one another, in order to seek safety, healthy or satisfying relationships.

In order to understand how they interact with the client; Social Workers may also apply a theory of societal exchange. Workers can be motivated to stay at work, when they are able to identify inherent benefits which they receive from assisting clients.

12.8 CRITICISM OF SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

While social exchange theory can provide a broad perspective on relationships, it has some limitations and weaknesses. One of these is its perceived oversimplification of the complex balance between what individuals gain and lose in relationships. There are many factors to consider when deciding whether to continue or end a relationship.

Another limitation is that the theory does not account for selflessness or altruism. There are instances where individuals act in ways that benefit others at great personal cost, without expecting anything in return. The theory also fails to address those who do not seek the greatest benefit in a relationship or who continue relationships that have a net cost to themselves.

Social exchange theory is primarily focused on establishing trust and intimacy in romantic relationships, but not all relationships have these goals. This raises questions about how individuals measure the benefits and costs of their interactions and their motivations for engaging in them.

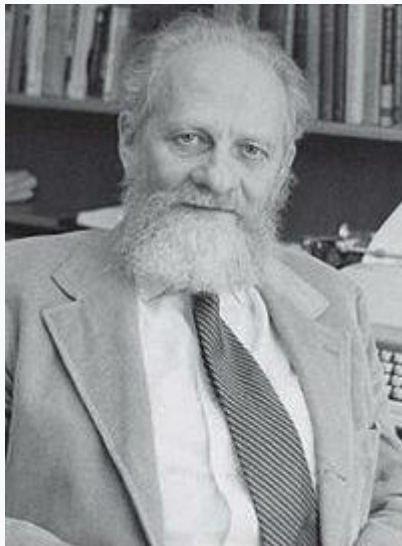
Finally, the theory assumes that relationships have a linear structure, but in reality, they can progress, retreat, skip stages, or repeat certain stages. While social exchange theory can be a useful tool, it is important to consider its limitations and the unique complexities of each individual relationship.

12.9 PETER BLAU'S EXCHANGE THEORY

Peter M. Blau is an American sociologist s born in Austria, on February 7, 1918. Blau's empirical studies on formal organization attracted widespread attention. Following that, Blau began to contribute more to exchange theory, attempting to adapt small scale exchange theory

to large scale issues. His book *Exchange and Power in Social Life*, published in 1964, was a fundamental component of contemporary exchange theory.

Peter Blau



Born Peter Michael Blau

February 7, 1918

Vienna, Austria-Hungary

Died March 12, 2002 (aged 84)

Carrboro, North Carolina

Alma mater Elmhurst College, Columbia University

Era 20th-century

Thesis *The Dynamics of Bureaucratic Structure: A Study of Interpersonal Relations in Two Government Agencies* (1952)

Doctoral advisor Robert K. Merton^[1]

Main interests	<u>Macrosociology, Organizational sociology, Social structures, Stratification, Bureaucracy, Social exchange theory</u>
Notable ideas	Co-founder of <u>Organizational sociology</u> (with <u>James Samuel Coleman, Alvin Ward Gouldner, Seymour Martin Lipset, Philip Selznick</u>)

Peter M. Blau, born in Austria on February 7, 1918, was an American sociologist who gained widespread attention for his empirical studies on formal organization. He later contributed to exchange theory, attempting to adapt small-scale exchange theory to large-scale issues. His book, *Exchange and Power in Social Life*, published in 1964, was a fundamental component of contemporary exchange theory.

A model for understanding society as a set of interactions between people on the basis of factors such as reward and penalty estimates is, in essence, sociological exchange theory. It describes how people make decisions and create relationships using cost-benefit analysis techniques. Some of the basic concepts that relate to this theory are Costs, which can be anything from time, effort, and money; Rewards, which include acceptance, support, and companionship; and Resources, which are any commodities, material or symbolic, that can be transmitted through interpersonal behavior. Homan has been a significant influence in Blau's work. Blau was interested in looking at the processes that guide face to face interaction. He argued there is a reciprocal exchange of rewards in both physical and intangible forms that shapes this interaction. Blau points out that some social associations are intrinsically valuable, such as friendship and love. People undertake impression management to present themselves to others. Blau emphasizes emergent properties, the characteristics of social institutions and communities of social structure. For him, to understand complex social structure, one must study the simplest everyday processes. His analysis suggests that an exchange perspective can best explain behavior. He analyzes three main areas: i) Non-Economic Exchanges, ii) Exchange and Social Integration, and iii) Exchange and Power.

People's general objectives in non-economic exchanges are friendship and love. Blau points out that some social associations are intrinsically valuable. People undertake impression management to present themselves to others. Blau believes that social exchange is extremely

important in social integration. There are two general functions of social exchange: i) creating bonds of friendship, and ii) establishing subordination and domination. Therefore, exchange increases social integration. Power involves two distinct forces: i) the degree to which one partner in exchange is dependent on the other for services, and ii) the value of services which he offers in return. Power is based on people's normative obligations. Any service provided has a hidden obligation, i.e., if we receive something, then we must return it. However, if we do not receive it back, then we can accumulate the obligation towards others by directing them to do what we want.

George Homans wrote an academic paper called "Social Behavior as Exchange" that first introduced this theory. This theory was later drawn up by sociologists such as Peter M. Blau and Richard Emerson. The theory of the Homans Social Exchange is based on equality, expectancy and distribution justice as in a dyadic exchange. To him, the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and between at least two persons more or less rewarding and costly is considered a social exchange. According to the rewards and punishments, one's behavioral action is determined. Homans summarized the system into three propositions: Success Propositions, Stimulus Propositions, and Deprivation Satiation Propositions. Peter Blau's theory is very similar to Homans' theory. However, he uses more economic terms. In contrast to Homans, Blau's seminal work on social exchange places a strong focus on the structures of associations bigger than dyads. Developing a theoretical framework that could serve as the foundation for a theory of macro-social structures was Blau's stated goal. Blau tries to go beyond Homans' basic forms of social life to analyze complex structures. Though his micro-level exchange theory is in its early stages, it is one of the first attempts to apply utilitarianism drawn from economics to social behavior.

Peter M. Blau, an American sociologist, developed this theory in the mid-20th century. Blau's Social Exchange Theory is a sociological perspective that focuses on the social processes and interactions that occur in relationships and groups. According to Blau (1964, p. 91): "Social exchange ... refers to voluntary actions of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring and typically do in fact bring from others." He contributed to the idea of distinguishing between social and economic exchanges. In his view, social exchange entails the idea that one person does a favor for another, and although a future return is generally expected, its specifics are undoubtedly not predetermined. Blau's book on Exchange and Power delves into the nature of the social processes that lead to individual associations. Two conditions are defined as important in the assessment.

12.9.1 Micro to Macro:

Social exchange is limited to the actions and reactions from others that are rewarding. If the expected reactions are not received, the exchange ceases. There are various factors that attract people to each other and encourage them to form social bonds. Once these bonds are formed, the reward system helps to maintain and strengthen them. Rewards can be intrinsic, such as love, affection, and respect, or extrinsic, such as money and physical labor. Extrinsic rewards can be detached from the relationships, while intrinsic rewards are pleasurable. Blau observed that social interaction processes cannot be studied in isolation from the social framework in which they are embedded. Social groups are where social interaction first occurs. When a person believes that a group's relationships offer greater benefits than those of other groups, they are drawn to that group. To be accepted, they must offer some rewards to impress the group members, and then the relationship with the group members will be solidified. Blau differentiated two types of social organization. The first type involves exchange and competition as the primary processes leading to the emergence of social groups. In order to achieve predetermined objectives like manufacturing goods, participation in bowling tournaments, engaging in collective bargaining and winning electoral victories, a second type of social organisation has been deliberately set up. Blau understood the essential distinction between small groups and large collectivities, while Homans minimized this difference.

For Blau, norms and values are the primary mechanisms of the complex social structure. Blau claimed that social norms serve as a substitute for direct exchange by substituting indirect exchange. When a member follows the group norm, they are accepted for it and are implicitly accepted for the way that conformity keeps the group stable and intact. In contrast to Homans' theory, Blau believed in collectively-individual exchanges replacing individual-individual exchanges. Blau's conception disappears the individual and individual behavior and concerns more on what holds large-scale social units together and what tears them apart, leaning more towards the facts.

12.9.2 Exchange Relations and Power:

Although the relationship between social exchange and power was not addressed by Homans, Blau believed that the inequality in the distribution of power was due to the ongoing relationship between social exchange and power. In his view, exchanges could lead to inequalities as some actors have greater control of very valuable resources in comparison with others. This results in social debt being incurred which is therefore most easily repaid by the

subordination of their social debtors. Thus, according to Blau, a person can control others when he is the only one who can provide them with the incentives they require. The others become dependent on the individual if they are not able to offer rewards to the individual or obtain benefits from another source, and their only option is to submit to his demands.

12.10 LET US SUM UP

To put it briefly, power is the outcome of an unequal exchange brought about by a person or group's monopoly over a desired resource. According to Blau (1964), these kinds of dominance and subjugation developed into self-sustaining relationships and served as the micro foundations of power inequality. In this, Emerson argued that the key problem of social exchange theory was the relationship between power and society's structure. For that reason, one actor places dependence and power on the resources which are controlled by another. In Emerson's opinion, the relationship of power has to do with social relations.

12.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Briefly explain the History of social exchange theory.
- Discuss the various applications of social exchange theory.
- How Does Social Exchange Theory Apply to Social Work?
- Write the Criticism of Social Exchange Theory
- Critically analyses the Peter Blau's Exchange Theory

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Block-4

MODERN AND POST-MODERN APPROACHES

Unit-13: Modernity: Basic Postulates, Contribution of Anthony Giddens

Unit-14: Post-Modernism: Origin and Basic Postulates

Unit-15: Contribution of Jacques Derrida

Unit-16: Contribution of Michel Foucault

UNIT-13 MODERNITY: BASIC POSTULATES, CONTRIBUTIONS OF ANTHONY GIDDENS

Structure

- 13.1 Learning Objectives
- 13.2 Introduction
- 13.3 Basic Postulates of Modernity
- 13.4 Giddens on Globalization
- 13.5 Giddens and The Theory of Structuration
- 13.6 Giddens and Social Theory
- 13.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 13.8 Glossary
- 13.9 Check Your Progress
- 13.10 References

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the basic postulates of modernism
- find contributions of Anthony Giddens
- understand Giddens and The Theory of Structuration

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Anthony Giddens is one of the most significant thinkers of our times. As a sociologist he believes that learning sociology is a process of self-exploration. As director of the London School of Economics he worked on critical and policy-oriented issues aimed at making this world a better place to live in. In the year 1999, Giddens was in India to deliver the BBC Reith Lectures on “Tradition”. Anthony Giddens is a British sociologist who is known for his theory of structuration and his holistic view of modern societies. He is considered to be one of the most prominent modern contributors in the field of sociology, the author of over 30 books, published in at least 29 languages, issuing on average more than one book every year. In 2007, Giddens was listed as the fifth most-referenced author of books in the humanities.

Three notable stages can be identified in his academic life. The first one involved outlining a new vision of what sociology is, presenting a theoretical and methodological understanding of that field, based on a critical reinterpretation of the classics. His major publications of that era

include *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (1971) and *New Rules of Sociological Method* (1976). In the second stage Giddens developed the theory of structuration, an analysis of agency and structure, in which primacy is granted to neither. His works of that period, such as *Central Problems in Social Theory* (1979) and *The Constitution of Society* (1984), brought him international fame on the sociological arena.

The most recent stage concerns modernity, globalization and politics, especially the impact of modernity on social and personal life. This stage is reflected by his critique of post-modernity, and discussions of a new “utopian-realist” third way in politics, visible in the *Consequence of Modernity* (1990), *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991), *The Transformation of Intimacy* (1992), *Beyond Left and Right* (1994) and *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (1998). Giddens’ ambition is both to recast social theory and to re-examine our understanding of the development and trajectory of modernity. Currently, Giddens served as Emeritus Professor at the London School of Economics. Giddens was previously a member of the Council for the Future of Europe and The WorldPost Advisory Council.

13.3 BASIC POSTULATES OF MODERNITY

The term modernity is widely used to identify new and distinctive features in the subjects, forms, concepts, and styles of literature and the other arts in the early decades of the present century, but especially after World War I (1914-18). The specific feature signified by “modernity” varies with the user, but many critics agree that it involves a conscious and a radical break with some of the traditional bases not only of Western art, but of Western culture in general. Important intellectual precursors of modernity, in this sense, are thinkers who had questioned the certainties which had supported traditional modes of social organization, religion, and morality, and also traditional ways of conceiving the human self – thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Anthony Giddens, and James G. Frazer, whose *The Golden Bough* (1890-1915) stressed the correspondence between central Christian tenets and pagan, often barbaric, myths and rituals.

Literary historians locate the beginning of the modernist revolt as far as back as the 1890s, but most agree that what is called high modernism, marked by an unexampled range and rapidity of change, came after the First World War. The year 1922 alone was signalized by the simultaneous acceptance of such monuments of modernist innovation as James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, T. S. Elliot’s *The Waste Land*, and Virginia Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room*, as well as many other experimental works of literature. A prominent feature of modernism is the phenomenon

called avant-garde; that is a small, self-conscious group of artists and authors who deliberately undertake, in Ezra Pound's phrase to 'make it new'. By violating the accepted conventions and proprieties, not only of art but of social discourse, they set out to create ever-new artistic forms and styles and to introduce hitherto neglected, and sometimes forbidden, subject matter.

Anthony Giddens, one of the famous contemporary thinkers, rejects that we have moved from modernity to post-modernity. Rather, he claims that we are still in the modern age. He further argues that we are presently at the plain outcome of modernity where key attributes of modernity progressed toward becoming radicalized and universalized than any time in recent memory. By this, he underlies historical continuity, rather than disjuncture (Giddens, 1990). By modernity, Giddens means institutions and modes of behavior began in Europe in the 17th century and spread to the other parts of the globe afterwards. According to him, modernity has developed due to the interaction of many institutions; it has multi-dimensions. It has mainly four institutional aspects: capitalism, industrialism, administrative power, and military power. These four institutional dimensions of modernity have its own distinctive set of causal processes and structures. However, when they are taken together, they provide a framework which is sufficient enough for comprehending some of the distinctive features of modernity. It is important to note that capitalism and industrialism are not only given by Giddens since they are also mentioned by classical theorists. But, surveillance and military power are specifically introduced by Giddens. Capitalism is a system of commodity production to be sold in the market to maximize profit. In relation to this, it has attributes such as commodity production, private ownership of capital, property-less wage labour and a class system derived from these attributes. And, industrialism refers to the use of machine technology or inanimate power to produce goods and to control or transform nature. Surveillance refers to the control of information and monitoring of the activities of subjects by states. The last, namely, military power is used by states to control the means of violence. This implies that in the modern world, military power rests with the nation state (Giddens, 1990; Giddens & Pierson, 1998).

Moreover, Giddens adds that modernity is dynamic and its dynamism is kept up by three aspects that are associated with each other. The three sources of the dynamism of modernity are time-space separation, disembedding mechanisms, and reflexivity. Giddens sees that the time and space separation provides dynamism to modernity. In pre-modern-day social orders, time and space were conjoined together. In such societies, to calculate time or any sort of everyday activities, time was connected to space. Therefore, before the invention of the mechanical clock, time was constantly comprehended only in connection to space. In modern

societies, however, due to the mass dissemination of mechanical clock from the late eighteenth century onward, time was separated from space and became universal. The time also turned out to be an abstract and empty phenomenon. The detachment of time from space and understanding them without physical locale became abstract means of ordering social activity. Besides, the emptying of time leads to the emptying of space. Emptying of space refers to the separation of space from a place. The concept of a place is understood in relation to the idea of locale. By local, it is to mean the physical settings of social activity as located somewhere geographically. In pre-modern societies, space and place were used synonymously. But, with the rise of modernity and abstract time, the idea of space is separated from the idea of a place. As a result, space also became an abstract and empty phenomenon like time. Thus, time and space, in modern societies, turned out to be more abstract and standardized.

Giddens holds that the separation of time and space causes disembedding of traditional forms of relationships. By disembedding, he means the lift out of social relations from local contexts of interaction and the restructures of them over indefinite ranges of time and space. Giddens identified two types of disembedding mechanisms. The two kinds of disembedding mechanisms mentioned by Giddens are symbolic tokens and abstract systems. Symbolic tokens are media of exchange that lift transactions out of the local community and produce other new patterns of transactions over an indefinite span of time and space. Money can be taken as one of the best instances of symbolic tokens.

The second disembedding mechanism i.e. expert systems expel social relations from the immediacies of context by providing guarantees of expectations across an indefinite span of time and space. It builds trust in a body of expert knowledge. Here, a car driving can be a good example; that is, although the actor does not have the knowledge of the technology, he/she keeps the trust over it. Hence, expert system provides the guarantee of performance across an indefinite span of time and space. All disembedding systems rely on 'trust'. Trust, here, is vested in abstract capacities (systems) instead of people. For instance, when we utilize money related tokens, we do as such on the assumption that people will respect their value. We have faith in the architect system that designs building. For the layman, trust guarantees we do not need mastery into expert systems. Besides, trust should be conceived in relation to risk; that is, trust presupposes awareness of the circumstance of risk (Giddens & Pierson, 1998).

The last aspect of modernity that keeps up its dynamism is a reflexive appropriation of knowledge. Reflexivity implies the custom that one inspects, reflects, and reforms oneself; it

is simply self-reflection. The reflexivity of modern social life is manifested in that social practices are continuously analyzed and renewed in accordance with incoming information about those practices. Accordingly, they continuously change their attributes. In fact, Giddens does not say that the concept of reflexivity is unique to modernity. Rather, he holds that it is only in the periods of modernity that reflexivity applies to each feature of human life, including technological intervention into the physical world. Lastly, Giddens holds that modernity has essentially global nature. It is the progress of the four dimensions of modernity I.e. industrialism, capitalism, administrative power and military power into the international division of labor, world capitalist economy, nation-state system, and world military power respectively that make modernity global. Thus, modernity, according to Anthony Giddens, culminates in globalization.

13.4 GIDDENS ON GLOBALIZATION

Giddens argued that globalisation should not be understood as just an economic idea. It also means a whole series of other changes in the nature of governance, changes in the moral nature of the world community and changes in cultural communication. It also means to me changes at the level of everyday life and family. At its simplest, it is increased interdependence. It is a mistake to see it as either destructive or constructive because it is a mixture. In the poorer areas of the world we have to find ways to mobilize the forces of globalisation positively. We have to have a more stable currency regime, more effective forms of global governance. But we have to increase the democratization; anti-corruption battles, emancipation of women; bottom-up community development. A package of reform, compatible with social justice.

Globalisation is affecting Western countries just as much. of course, the American companies and American culture, Western culture, tends to dominate. There are also reverse, influences. Brazilians are selling TV programmes to Portugal. You have the 'Latinising' of Los Angeles. Indian restaurants in the UK are changing habits. It also produces downward pressure for local autonomy and regional reforms. It squeezes sideways and creates new economic and cultural areas. Some of those criss-crosses the boundaries of nations. You are never going to have again something closed off. The Indian culture is already is in communication through new technologies around the world. It does not matter whether you look at the Hindu fundamentalism or more secular Indian culture.

Giddens think that in any country, not just in India, we need to use tradition creatively. There are some forms of tradition such as those associated with local community or symbolic practices which show the need for preserving. But many traditions need to be broken. For example, those traditions which keep women in position of inferiority. For Giddens, Indian has too much top down bureaucratic government. All over the world we are looking at more active collaboration between government, third sectors or civil society associations and business. In Brazil, some very poor communities are becoming pretty effective, even competitive, within the world marketplace, not because they work with any one of these agencies but because they work with all of them. You are not looking for charities but for active collaboration.

There is a process of increasing individualization, which is unstoppable. It is people becoming more autonomous in their lives and this applies to women particularly. It also applies to children because children are today having their rights enshrined in international law. The more that law takes effect, the more children emerge as autonomous values beings. It is not compatible with most forms of traditional family. These changes also bring fundamentalist reaction. A good deal of fundamentalism, even though it seems to be religious, is actually sexual. It is a kind of resistance to sexual equality, which is very deep. It is keeping women in their place and keeping traditional family rigid and intact.

Giddens think that there seems to be a resurgence of aggressive nationalism. To him, this is consequence of globalisation. All nations are restructuring their identities. Quite often, nations built by force are finding regional nationalism becoming stronger. A concept of multiple sovereignties seems to be pattern for the future. We need nations. The world would be too fragmented if everyone who wants autonomy is given autonomy. You need a benign nationalism, which would work in wider cosmopolitan society. Giddens think that what has died is the economic programme of socialism. What hasn't died is the values that socialism. What hasn't died is the values that socialism stood for: Values of equality, inclusiveness, cosmopolitan society, protection of the poor. For Giddens, you can't have an effective society which does not recognise those values.

13.5 GIDDENS AND THE THEORY OF STRUCTURATION

Giddens believes that neither structure nor action can exist independently. Social actions create structures, and only social actions are capable of producing structures. To describe the process of cooperation between these two terms, he uses the word 'structuration'. He draws attention to the

duality of structure, meaning structures make social actions possible, and social actions establish the same structures.

In social life, Giddens differentiates two types of structures, which are rules and resources. The rules imply the procedures, which may be followed by individuals in real life. Occasionally, these interpretations of rules may obtain a written form, for instance, laws or bureaucratic rules. Structural rules may be produced by the member of the community and changed via actions. The second type, namely resources, also appears as a result of human activities and may be corrected by people. They can be localized or imperious, and the former includes soil, natural resources, and other things, which can exist independently of humans. The latter reveals that in case an individual dominates others, and people become resources, which can be used by other people. Consequently, imperious resources may exist only whether they are produced during cooperation between people.

Giddens gives an explanation of the nature of social systems and institutes. According to him, a social system is an example of social relationships, existing in the exact time and a certain place. It be noted that state and bureaucracy are seen as behavioral patterns, which last only for a period of time. In the view of the duality of the structure, systems and institutes are connected with human activity. He calls them agents, highlighting their active position. Giddens claims that structure influences the behavior of people due to knowledge about society, which is acquired by agents. This allows agents to navigate routine life and interact with the surrounding objects. They also leverage both material and imperious resources, which are parts of society's structure.

In addition, he supposes that people are determined to obtain a certain extent of stability in their social life. He predicts that this aspect is highly likely to be connected with innate concerns about physical security. The existence of general knowledge and the need for security contributes to an increase in pre-assigned pattern production in social life. Behavioral patterns tend to repeat, and social structures, social systems and institutes are established. The concept of duality of structure allows resolving the argument between determinists, which belief in dependence on fate, and voluntaries, considering that people act in accordance with their wishes. This way, the information described above presents the base of the theory of structuration established by Giddens.

13.6 GIDDENS AND SOCIAL THEORY

Giddens' work is distinguished, above all, because it locates issues within a synthetic sociological theory, and a generalized critique of previous positions which marginalized war and militarism (chiefly but not only Marxism). Giddens is concerned, however, with power and states, rather than with a theory of war as such. It is important to evaluate his work in this context, both to establish what he has achieved, and to identify the issues which his approach has not fully addressed.

It is interesting that Giddens' early work, while always identifying the state as a major problem of social theory, contained few indications of the centrality of the international and military context of state power. In *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies*, for example, Giddens contrasted Marx and Weber in terms of their treatments of state and society:

The Marxian conception ... treats the state essentially as an 'expression' of the class relationships generated in the market ... whereas Marx viewed the state in terms of his presuppositions about the infrastructure of society, Weber tended to view that infrastructure in terms of a paradigm derived from his analysis of the state. For Weber the 'class principle' is subordinate to the 'bureaucratic principle'.

But the Weberian model, to which Giddens inclines, does not appear at this stage to be connected to any particular concern with the state-system in which states operate. In Giddens's short study of *Politics and Sociology in the Thought of Max Weber*, written in the same year, the only reference to war is a passing one:

In the effects of the First World War upon German society, Weber saw both a vindication of his earlier analysis of the German social structure and the possibility of transforming the political order.... He made no secret of the positive sentiments which the 'great and wonderful' war inspired in him: the passivity, and the lack of a national political sense, which he had criticized in the past, was replaced by a collective assertion of the integrity of the nation in the face of the other world powers.

One will not find the terms 'war', 'militarism' or even 'violence' in the index to any of Giddens's work in the 1970s. War and militarism appear to have become of interest to Giddens as he began to develop his own theory of power and to frame the terms of his critique of Marxism. In *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* he brings together a number of concerns in his work to focus on the nature of power and the state. He argues that power is

routinely involved in the 'instantiation' of social practices: it is not a secondary characteristic of social life. Giddens also insists that 'power was never satisfactorily theorised by Marx, and that this failure is at origin of some of the chief limitations of his scheme of historical analysis'.

Modifying Foucault's view of power, he argues that 'surveillance', the capacity for 'storage of authoritative resources', is a key attribute of modern states. 'Lack of analysis of the phenomenon of surveillance...is one of the major limitations of Marx's interpretation of the state.' Surveillance is not just a feature of late, computerized, capitalist society, but integral to the history of capitalism. He quotes Foucault: 'the traditional, ritual, costly, violent forms of power...were superseded by a subtle, calculated technology of subjection'.

The concept of surveillance is linked by Giddens, however, to a number of other theoretical propositions. On the one hand, it is argued, in terms quite compatible with Marx, that 'the insulation of economy from polity involves ... the extrusion of the means of violence from the principal axis of class exploitation, the capital/wage-labour relation'. On the other, Giddens attacks 'the prevalence in nineteenth-century social thought of the notion that capitalistic economic enterprise is essentially non-violent in nature'. This apparent paradox is explained by the fact that 'Such a view ignores the processes that led to the internal pacification of states. And it ignores the fact that the capitalist state has been the purveyor of violence externally'.

The opposition of 'surveillance' and 'violence' thus assumes a signal importance in Giddens' thought. The growth of state surveillance corresponds to the reduction of violence within societies ('pacification') and in particular within class relations. But - and this is perhaps the most radical element of Giddens' argument - the pacification of societies by states does not imply a general pacification of social life. The reason for this, once the violence of the initial pacification process itself has subsided, is the *external* violence of the state. Here, given the theoretical importance accorded to violence in society, is to be found the source of the growing theoretical importance of war to Giddens. When he remarks, later, that

I have long contended that the neglect of what any casual survey of history shows to be an overwhelmingly obvious and chronic trait of human affairs - recourse to violence and war - is one of the most extraordinary blank spots in social theory in the twentieth century.

Giddens is not simply making a ritual comment on a lack in social theory. He is pointing to a factor which, his theory suggests, is directly related to the main trends of contemporary society.

The changing balance of internal and external violence, and the changing role of the state, implies a major change in the character of military power. 'In class-divided societies', Giddens suggests, 'open class struggle is generally very sporadic, though it may be very violent.' Because of this violence, and the lack of developed surveillance,

Military power has normally placed a decisive role in the integration of class divided societies.... The use or the threat of the use of violence in sustaining system integration is ever present in class-divided societies. This is of major importance to the conceptualisation of the state....

In capitalism, by contrast, class struggles are a chronic feature of the organization of production, but they are correspondingly less violent, and they are regulated mainly by surveillance rather than by violence. Military power no longer plays a decisive role in system integration. The growth of military power continues, however, and can only be explained by external conflict.

It is clear that Giddens differs sharply from Marxists who have tended to present the growth of military power as a result of the sharpening of class contradictions, often neglecting in the process the more obvious war-related explanations for the growth of military power. If he considers the role of military power within capitalist societies, he is more likely to see it as cause than consequence.

Giddens presents the state specifically as a 'nation-state'. He sees 'the period of triumph of capitalism as a "world capitalist economy" as 'also a period eventuating in the world-wide triumph of the nation-state as a focus of political and military organisation'. And he argues that it is 'not necessary (nor is it legitimate) to suppose that one has to unearth how it came to be that capitalism "needed" the nation-state for its development, or in which, *per contra*, the nation-state "needed" capitalism'. Nor is nationalism the direct product of nation-states (still less of capitalism): this too needs to be specifically explained, perhaps as a result of war. War-mobilization disrupts the social fabric - 'the relatively fragile fabric of ontological security may become broken. In such conditions regressive forms of object-identification [nationalism] tend to come to the fore.'

Therefore, Giddens outlines many of the positions on state and society which mark him off not just from Marx but also from others who acknowledge Weber as the major figure in social

theory. What Giddens takes from Weber is quite clearly a world away from Parsons' interpretation, for example:

Neither Weber's somber view of modern capitalism, nor his emphases upon the centrality of military power and violence more generally in history, survive prominently either in Parsons' representations of Weber's work, or in Parsons' own theories.

The centrality of war, military power and violence had not been so apparent in Giddens' earlier work, either, but now these are becoming the cutting edges of his theory of state and society.

13.7 LET US SUM UP

Anthony Giddens managed to advance a comprehensive theory of structuration, which gives an explanation of the connection between social actions and structures. Although some sociologists may have a different opinion to some extent, for instance, the Social Action Theory introduced by Erving Goffman, Anthony Giddens' approach may be successfully applied to practice and lead to beneficial results.

13.8 GLOSSARY

- **Disembedding:** It means the lift out of social relations from local contexts of interaction and the restructures of them over indefinite ranges of time and space.
- **Globalization:** It means a whole series of changes in the nature of economic space, governance, changes in the moral nature of the world community and changes in cultural communication. It also means to changes at the level of everyday life and family. At its simplest, it is increased interdependence.
- **Modernity:** It has developed due to the interaction of many institutions; it has multi-dimensions. It has mainly four institutional aspects: capitalism, industrialism, administrative power, and military power. These four institutional dimensions of modernity have its own distinctive set of causal processes and structures.
- **Reflexivity:** It implies the custom that one inspects, reflects, and reforms oneself; it is simply self-reflection.
- **Social System:** It is an example of social relationships, existing in the exact time and a certain place.
- **Structure:** It consisting of rules and resources. The rules imply the procedures, which may be followed by individuals in real life. Occasionally, these interpretations of rules

may obtain a written form, for instance, laws or bureaucratic rules. Structural rules may be produced by the member of the community and changed via actions. Resources, appears as a result of human activities and may be corrected by people. They can be localized or imperious, and the former includes soil, natural recourses, and other things, which can exist independently of humans.

13.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Explain the basic postulates of modernity.
- Analyze Giddens' view on globalization.
- Discuss the basic elements in Giddens' structuration.
- What is meant by duality of structure?

13.10 REFERENCES

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UNIT-14 POST-MODERNISM: ORIGIN AND BASIC POSTULATES

Structure

- 14.1 Learning Objectives
- 14.2 Introduction
- 14.3 Origin of Post-Modernism
- 14.4 Basic Postulates of Post-Modernism
- 14.5 Cultural and Artistic Manifestations
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- 14.7 Glossary
- 14.8 Check Your Progress
- 14.9 References

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to-

- Understand the concept Post-Modernism
- Know the origin of Post-Modernism
- Understand the basic postulates of post-modernism

14.2 INTRODUCTION

A philosophical and cultural movement known as postmodernism first appeared in the middle to late 20th century, and it really took off in the 1970s and 1980s. By questioning the tenets and presumptions of modernism, which dominated a large portion of the 20th century, it marks a break from it. Postmodernism emphasises the relativity of reality and the multiplicity of views, while being sceptical of grand narratives, absolute truths, and universal principles.

A vast intellectual and cultural movement, postmodernism touches on many disciplines, including sociology, literature, art, architecture, philosophy, and cultural studies. The argument posits that reality and truth are social constructs influenced by human experiences, perspectives, and interpretations, hence rejecting the idea of an objective reality or universal truth. This viewpoint causes information to become fragmented and causes one to be suspicious of overarching ideologies or metanarratives.

Postmodernism frequently employs literary and artistic strategies like pastiche, parody, irony, and intertextuality, which blur the lines between high and low culture by referencing or

borrowing from other writings. Similar to modernist architecture, postmodern architecture embraces intricacy, eclecticism, and historical allusions while challenging the practicality and simplicity of modernist design.

Along with questioning conventional hierarchies and power systems, postmodernism also challenges the concepts of authenticity, authority, and authorship. It promotes hybridity, ambiguity, and pluralism, recognising the multiplicity of identities, cultures, and viewpoints in a globalised society.

In general, postmodernism emphasises the fluidity of meanings and the necessity of continual interpretation and discussion, reflecting a critical and self-aware attitude to culture, society, and knowledge. It has had a significant influence on modern philosophy and society, impacting everything from politics and sociology to literature and the arts.

Historical background: Late 20th-century emergence: Post-Modernism:

In the late 20th century, postmodernism which rejected modernism's tenets and ideals became a prominent intellectual and cultural movement. Its complicated historical context stems from a number of 20th-century socio-political, intellectual, and cultural changes.

Cultural Context: In the years following World War II, postmodernism emerged as a reaction against the lofty ideals and epic narratives that had defined the modernist era. The emergence of authoritarian governments, the atrocities of war, and the development of mass media all fueled disbelief in and discord with existing hierarchies and knowledge systems.

Philosophical Influences: The writings of philosophers like Jacques Derrida, Martin Heidegger, and Friedrich Nietzsche are major sources of inspiration for postmodernism. Postmodern philosophy was made possible by Nietzsche's criticism of conventional morality and truth, Heidegger's challenging of metaphysical presumptions, and Derrida's dismantling of binary oppositions.

Literary Forerunners: Authors like James Joyce, Franz Kafka, and Samuel Beckett, whose works questioned established narrative forms and examined existential and absurdist themes, are considered the literary forerunners of postmodernism.

Movements in Architecture and the Arts: Postmodernism was also evident in the visual arts and architecture. Modernism's emphasis on functionalism and form purity was challenged by architectural trends including deconstructivism, eclecticism, and the acceptance of pastiche.

Similar to this, appropriation and pastiche tactics were used by visual artists such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein to criticise mass media and consumer culture.

Cultural critique: Postmodernism is distinguished by its doubt about overarching narratives and universal truths. Rather, it highlights the diversity of viewpoints and the dependent character of knowledge. This scepticism permeated every aspect of civilization, including politics, science, literature, and the arts, and it caused established power structures and hierarchies to be questioned.

Globalisation and technical Developments: The late 20th century saw both a tremendous acceleration of globalisation and technical development, which added to the postmodern society's sense of dislocation and fragmentation. While bringing people and cultures closer together, technological advancements in communication and transportation also highlighted the limitations of conventional identities and borders.

14.3 ORIGIN OF POST-MODERNISM

A sophisticated intellectual and cultural movement known as postmodernism first appeared in the middle of the 20th century, mostly in reaction to modernism's perceived shortcomings and limits. Its roots are found in a number of academic fields, including as sociology, literature, art, architecture, philosophy, and cultural theory.

Intellectual Foundations: The ideas of philosophers like Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger, and Friedrich Nietzsche may be used to understand the intellectual foundations of postmodernism. Postmodern philosophy was spawned by Heidegger's doubts about the nature of reality, Wittgenstein's emphasis on language and meaning, and Nietzsche's critique of conventional values and idea of perspectivalism.

Structuralism and Post-structuralism: The foundation for comprehending language and culture as systems of signs and symbols was supplied by structuralism, mainly as expressed by linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss. The structuralist focus on constant meanings and binary oppositions was contested by post-structuralist philosophers like Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, who instead emphasised the erratic and contingent nature of language and knowledge.

Literary Theory: In literature, the modernist emphasis on cohesive narratives and subjective experience gave rise to postmodernism. By experimenting with narrative fragmentation,

intertextuality, and metafiction, writers such as Jorge Luis Borges, Samuel Beckett, and Thomas Pynchon questioned conventional ideas of authorship and representation.

Art and Architecture: In all fields, postmodernism disapproved of the modernist emphasis on function, simplicity, and advancement. By appropriating images from the media, artists like as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein blurred the lines between high and low culture. People like Denise Scott Brown and Robert Venturi promoted a playful eclecticism in architecture that welcomed pop culture and historical allusions.

Cultural Criticism: Postmodernism also arose as a criticism of late capitalism's political, economic, and cultural institutions. Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, two Frankfurt School thinkers, looked at how consumer culture and the media shape social awareness. In a culture dominated by media, French thinkers such as Jean Baudrillard examined the spread of simulacra and the deterioration of reality.

Cultural and historical events contributing to the rise of Post-Modernism:

Events from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, both culturally and historically, contributed to the birth of post-modernism. The following are some important elements that led to its emergence:

World Wars and their aftermath: Traditional values, beliefs, and structures were seriously questioned as a result of the destruction and disillusionment brought about by World Wars I and II. The horrors of war destroyed confidence in reason and progress, making people sceptical of overarching theories and unchanging realities.

Existentialism and Absurdism: Prominent philosophers like Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus popularised philosophical movements that questioned conventional ideas of reality, identity, and purpose. These schools of thought laid the foundation for post-modernist relativism and scepticism by emphasising the subjective character of truth and the absurdity of life.

Technological Advancements: The introduction of television, the internet, and mass media changed how people accessed and shared information. More cross-cultural interaction was made possible by these technical developments, which also made it more difficult to distinguish between originality and replication and challenged the lines that traditionally divided high and low culture.

Civil Rights Movements: Established power structures and prevailing cultural narratives were contested by social and political movements including the feminist, LGBTQ+, and Civil Rights movements. Post-Modernism's emphasis on identity, difference, and plurality was influenced by these movements, which emphasised the diversity of human experience and the necessity for inclusive representations.

Deconstruction and Post-Structuralism: These theoretical movements questioned the consistency of language, meaning, and truth. They were led by intellectuals like Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. These theories laid the groundwork for post-modernist scepticism towards fixed categories and binary oppositions by emphasising the situational character of knowledge and the intrinsic instability of signifiers.

Deconstruction and Post-Structuralism: These theoretical movements questioned the consistency of language, meaning, and truth. They were led by intellectuals like Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. These theories laid the groundwork for post-modernist scepticism towards fixed categories and binary oppositions by emphasising the situational character of knowledge and the intrinsic instability of signifiers.

14.4 BASIC POSTULATES OF POST-MODERNISM

1. Rejection of Metanarratives:

Unlike modernism, postmodernism's central principle is the rejection of metanarratives. In essence, modernism does not expressly reject metanarratives; rather, its tenets aim to question established notions and welcome novel ways of expression, frequently through creativity and experimentation. But postmodernism, which arose in opposition to modernism, rejects the notion of overarching, universal narratives that make the claim that they can account for every aspect of human experience or history. Postmodernism, in contrast, rejects the idea of a single, objective truth and instead emphasises pluralism, variety, and the coexistence of many views.

Accepting pluralism, diversity, and local narratives as vital elements of comprehending the human experience entails rejecting metanarratives. Postmodernism emphasises the diversity of viewpoints, experiences, and cultural settings rather than adhering to broad, overarching narratives that purport to offer universal truths or answers.

The acceptance that there are several legitimate perspectives for reading and comprehending the world is known as pluralism. Every person or group may have a distinct point of view

influenced by their upbringing, culture, and life experiences. Postmodernism promotes an open-minded attitude that recognises and values the diversity of human thinking and expression rather than elevating one viewpoint above another.

Diversity highlights how rich the human experience is in a variety of communities, cultures, and historical settings. Postmodernism rejects the notion of a unified, homogenised worldview and embraces the diversity of cultures and identities. Rather, it highlights how crucial it is to interact with and absorb knowledge from a variety of perspectives and experiences.

Local narratives draw attention to the importance of distinct, contextualised knowledges and tales within certain groups or settings. By emphasising the significance of regional histories, customs, and viewpoints, postmodernism contests the predominance of global or universal narratives. In order to decentralise power and privilege within the production and representation of knowledge, postmodernism focuses on the distinctive experiences and narratives of marginalised or underrepresented groups.

2. Deconstruction:

The idea of deconstruction was first presented by Jacques Derrida, a well-known post-structuralist philosopher, as a technique for examining texts and cultural events. Fundamentally, deconstruction challenges binary oppositions and hierarchical systems in order to expose the instability and diversity of meaning present in language and cognition.

Binary Oppositions: According to Derrida, the establishment of meaning in conventional Western thought frequently depends on binary oppositions like good against evil, existence vs absence, or nature versus civilization. He argued, however, that these oppositions are fluid and interrelated rather than set or solid. By showing how one word in an opposition depends on and contaminates the other, obfuscating the distinctions between them, deconstruction aims to undermine these dichotomies.

Hierarchical Structures: In addition, Derrida criticised binary oppositions that give one word the upper hand over another. For instance, speaking is frequently regarded as preferable to writing in the dichotomy of speech/writing because of its perceived sincerity and immediacy. Deconstruction exposes the manner in which the ostensibly lesser word subverts and dismantles the dominant one, hence challenging such hierarchies. In this instance, writing undermines the coherence of speech by allowing for several interpretations and delaying meaning.

Several Meaning Layers: Deconstruction highlights the polysemy of language, claiming that texts have several meaning layers that are never entirely set or stable. There is an infinite chain of meaning since words and concepts are always subordinated to one another. By highlighting the inconsistencies, ambiguities, and tensions present in texts and revealing the intrinsic instability of language and cognition, deconstruction aims to investigate various levels of meaning.

3. Pluralism and Fragmentation:

Two key ideas that form the foundation of post-modernism are pluralism and fragmentation. A philosophical and cultural movement known as post-modernism first appeared in the second half of the 20th century, opposing the modernist movement's emphasis on big narratives, universal truths, and stable identities. Rather, it is a celebration of plurality, diversity, and the dissolution of hierarchical hierarchies. Here are some examples of how pluralism and fragmentation appear in the fundamental ideas of post-modernism:

Pluralism:

The concept of a single, universal truth or worldview is rejected by postmodernism. Rather, it welcomes the coexistence of various viewpoints, stories, and interpretations. Postmodernism's pluralism recognises the presence of many civilizations, philosophies, and value systems. Instead of imposing a dominating opinion, it highlights how important it is to acknowledge and accept this variety.

In a pluralistic framework, ideas and cultures can overlap and affect one another without favouring one over the other. This is known as hybridity and synthesis. In the field of knowledge creation, pluralism is also present since many disciplines and voices challenge the dominance of a single disciplinary viewpoint by contributing to our understanding of reality.

Fragmentation:

- The term "fragmentation" describes the dissolution or collapse of broad narratives, structures, and categories that characterised modernist philosophy.
- According to postmodernism, reality is discontinuous, divided, and devoid of coherence. This disarray may be seen in many facets of modern life, such as language, identity, culture, and knowledge.

- Deconstructing binary oppositions, such as male/female, nature/culture, and self/other, is frequently linked to fragmentation because it exposes the fluidity and complexity of these ideas.
- Fragmentation is frequently conveyed in post-modern literature, art, and philosophy through methods like collage, pastiche, bricolage, and intertextuality, which represent the diversity of influences and viewpoints in modern society.

4. Hyperreality and Simulation

The principles of hyperreality and simulation are fundamental to postmodernism. The French philosopher Jean Baudrillard made them prominent in his groundbreaking book "Simulacra and Simulation." As a philosophical and cultural movement, postmodernism questions the concepts of reality, ultimate truth, and meaning stability. Rather, it highlights the ambiguity, flexibility, and variety of interpretations.

Here are the basic postulates of postmodernism concerning hyperreality and simulation:

Collapse of Reality and Representation: According to postmodernism, the lines separating reality from representation have become so hazy as to be incompatible with modern civilization. The spread of consumer culture, technology, and media has caused people to be overloaded with pictures and simulations that are increasingly realistic than the real world, which is the cause of this collapse. Stated differently, reality's representation takes on greater significance than the actual truth.

Hyperreality: The term describes a situation when it is impossible to tell the difference between reality and simulation. It's a situation when people believe representations or simulated experiences to be more real than real ones. Signs and symbols in the hyperreal become detached from the world they are meant to symbolise and acquire an independent existence.

Simulation: The process of simulating or reproducing reality through diverse media, technologies, and cultural productions is known as simulation in the postmodern meaning. This simulation frequently manifests as representations, symbols, and pictures that permeate society and influence people's experiences and perceptions. Baudrillard made the well-known claim that simulations of reality, rather than actual objects, rule modern culture, resulting in a hyper realistic environment.

Loss of Authenticity and Meaning: According to postmodernism, everything in a hyperreal culture is a simulation that is a duplicate of the original. This puts into question the concept of authenticity and stable meaning. As a result, signs and symbols become less significant and referential since they are no longer attached to any concrete meaning or reality.

Metanarrative Scepticism: Postmodernism disapproves of big narratives or metanarratives that make the claim that they contain universal facts about the universe. Rather, it welcomes fragmented viewpoints, local narratives, and the notion that truth is context-dependent and relative. Hyperreality and simulation illustrate how reality is mediated and formed through several discourses and representations, which adds to this scepticism.

14.5 CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC MANIFESTATIONS

As a movement in art and culture, postmodernism questions established customs and norms. Its fundamental tenets cover a wide spectrum of concepts that have impacted numerous creative and cultural expressions. The following are some fundamental tenets of postmodernism and how creative and cultural representations embody them:

Grand narratives are Rejected: Postmodernism opposes the notion of overarching, universal tales that provide a worldview. Literature, cinema, and other artistic mediums that frequently emphasise fractured narratives, diverse points of view, and the dismantling of conventional storytelling frameworks all reflect this rejection. Books like Mark Z. Danielewski's "House of Leaves" and films like Quentin Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction" are good examples of this since they include several stories and nonlinear narratives.

Mistrust of Meta-Narratives: Postmodernism casts doubt on the reliability and validity of meta-narratives, including those pertaining to science, religion, and ideology. Art that questions prevailing beliefs and criticises institutions demonstrates this scepticism. Text-based art is used by artists such as Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer to challenge language and communication norms, power systems, and society conventions.

Celebration of Diversity and Pluralism: Postmodernism welcomes hybridity and multiculturalism, as well as diversity and pluralism. Cultural expressions frequently combine aspects from several traditions and styles to create works that are difficult to classify. This is evident in visual art that combines many cultural symbols and allusions, as well as in music genres like hip-hop, which combine elements of rap, R&B, and electronic music.

Adoption of Parody and Pastiche: Postmodernism reinterprets and remixes established cultural forms in a humorous manner, embracing parody and pastiche. Artists such as Jeff Koons and Cindy Sherman use humour and sarcasm to remark on modern society while addressing popular culture and consumerism. In a similar vein, postmodern writers like Don DeLillo and Thomas Pynchon frequently use pastiche in their writing by fusing several genres and styles.

Blurring of High and Low Culture: Postmodernism challenges the hierarchical divisions between art forms and cultural activities, making it more difficult to distinguish between high and low culture. Pop art is a prime example of this, elevating commonplace items and images from the media to the level of fine art. Pop culture is used by artists such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein into their works, questioning conventional ideas of what constitutes art.

Emphasis on Simulacra and Hyperreality: Postmodernism is concerned with how many images and signs are present in modern culture, creating a hyperreal environment in which it is difficult to tell the difference between reality and simulation. This issue is examined in works of art, literature, and cinema that address how consumer society and the media affect how people perceive the world. Films such as "The Matrix" and artworks such as Banksy's frequently tackle issues of representation and authenticity in the digital era.

14.6 LET US SUM UP

In summary, post-modernism arose as a complex and significant movement that questioned established ideas about identity, truth, and authority. It broke with modernist ideals when it first emerged in the middle of the 20th century and accepted deconstruction, scepticism, and fragmentation as guiding concepts. The rejection of grand narratives by post-modernism, along with its embrace of relativism and variety, has had a profound impact on a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy, art, architecture, and literature. Its seeming nihilism and lack of consistency have led some to criticise it, while others view it as uplifting and freeing. Postmodernism, however, continues to influence current discourse and is still a hotly debated and interpreted topic, underscoring the everlasting complexity of human thinking and expression.

14.7 GLOSSARY

- **Post-Modernism:** A cultural, intellectual, and artistic movement known as post-modernism arose in the middle of the 20th century in reaction to modernism's perceived

flaws and limits. Scepticism, sarcasm, playfulness, and a rejection of big narratives and absolute truths are characteristics of post-modernism.

- **Origin of Post-Modernism:** Post-Modernism's origins may be traced to a number of academic fields, including sociology, literature, art, architecture, philosophy, and cultural studies, throughout the second half of the 20th century. Its origins can be seen in the dissolution of conventional norms and institutions in post-World War II Western culture.
- **Post-Structuralism:** is an academic movement that questions the rigid meanings and structures that are imposed by language, culture, and society. It is closely related to post-modernism. Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Roland Barthes are important figures.
- **Deconstruction:** A critical analytical technique connected to post-structuralism, namely Jacques Derrida. By highlighting the fluidity and instability of meaning, deconstruction seeks to expose the underlying inconsistencies, hierarchies, and ambiguities found in texts and discourses.
- **Fragmentation:** One of the main features of postmodernism is fragmentation, which is the breaking down or breaking apart of artistic, social, and cultural formations. This disarray is a reflection of the multiplicity of viewpoints and the disappearance of grand narratives in modern society.
- **Pluralism:** Postmodernism rejects the notion of a single, all-encompassing truth or aesthetic and instead embraces multiplicity and pluralism. As a substitute, it celebrates a variety of viewpoints, opinions, and identities in order to acknowledge the richness and diversity of the human experience.
- **The term "hyperreality,"** which was first used by Jean Baudrillard, describes a state in which the lines separating reality from simulation grow increasingly hazy and representations take on a life of their own. This idea criticises how consumer culture, the media, and technology have a disproportionate influence on how people view the world.
- **Irony and parody:** Postmodernism uses these strategies to challenge and disrupt prevailing cultural conventions and beliefs. Irony draws attention to the discrepancy between appearance and reality, whereas parody replicates and exaggerates popular culture to create a humorous impact.

14.8 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Discuss the Origin of Post-Modernism.
- Explain the Basic Postulates of Post-Modernism.
- Write a note on Cultural and Artistic Manifestations.

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UNIT-15 CONTRIBUTION OF JACQUES DERRIDA

Structure

- 15.1 Learning Objectives
- 15.2 Introduction
- 15.3 Deconstruction: Foundations and Key Concepts
- 15.4 Deconstruction in Practice
- 15.5 Derrida's Influence on Postmodern Thought
- 15.6 Criticisms and Responses
- 15.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 15.8 Glossary
- 15.9 Check Your Progress
- 15.10 References

15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to-

- Understand the concept Deconstruction
- Explain the Deconstruction in Practice
- Learn about the Derrida's Influence on Postmodern Thought

15.2 INTRODUCTION

It is hard to define deconstruction. The concept is ascribed to Derrida's research on the connection between language and meaning formation. This early piece defines deconstruction in fundamental terms, as do later works, most notably the Letter to a Japanese Friend. Derrida's work has three essential elements that make deconstruction possible. The process of organising understanding begins with the use of a focal point (logocentrism), continues with the writing of definitions (never going beyond the text), and ends with the way that this reduction of meaning to writing catches opposition in the notion itself. These three qualities opened the door to potential dismantling. Although it was created first for linguistics, law can also benefit from it. The goal of demolishing Derrida was to upend the fundamentals of politics, morality, and the law. He considered the topic of law and justice to be "predictable and desirable" to conclude deconstructive investigations with. Deconstruction thus looks at the dynamic between the two.

Derrida's assertion that the goal of modern Western philosophy is to locate meaning at its core is where Erich von Däniken starts. Philosophers are motivated by the desire to discover whether there is an ultimate truth or an objective meaning that clarifies our position in the universe. This urge, according to Derrida, is "logocentrism." As a result, all conceptualization or interpretation efforts focus on a single phrase or notion, such as "justice." A phrase that is utilised forms the basis for all further information that follows. He gives an example of how logocentrism views fixed meanings as something that has to be discovered. The term *logos* is used in language to indicate an idea or method of thinking. The 'metaphysics of presence' refers to the process by which we bring our thoughts into the physical world. Nature is represented by the *logos*, not by written or formal language. Therefore, it is essential (or legal) to distinguish between the source of meaning (such as the abstract notion of justice) and its formalisation in "writing."

Deconstruction, according to Derrida, is made possible by logocentrism and external meaning. He investigates the challenge of distinguishing the institution and source of meaning in written communication. Derrida argues that nature is not formed as two different things, but only in relation to the institution. Because of this, rather than the law representing justice, their relationship changes our understanding of both. Put otherwise, it disproves the notion that justice is a universally applicable, objective criterion. It ignores all other conceivable readings of justice by viewing the law as reflecting or embodying the inherent origin of justice. That's how writing captures and describes nature.

The goal of deconstruction is to refute any idea of transcendence or a natural referent. By deviating from an established system, an independent origin cannot be found. "Everything exists only within the text," as Jacques Derrida famously stated. Derrida argues that when an independent origin is employed in a categorization, it can only exist inside a system of distinctions. Deconstruction is predicated on Derrida's notion of "difference". Meaning is always changing rather than being static or set in stone. It results from compromising divergent opinions. Instead of searching for the unchanging truth, deconstruction looks at the various interpretations that lead to meaning. The process of establishing an institution, whether it be written or not, captures this ongoing conflict between several meaning interpretations. Thought-to-language translation warps the structure of meaning. The meaning of the text is limited by interpretation, regardless of the author's intentions. Meaning is defined by the institution's admissions and exclusions. One concept will ultimately prevail and the other will be excluded. Even while exclusion suggests that the excluded do not exist, the institution

depends on the excluded in order to function. All opposing meanings that remain as an excluded trace inside the dominant one are eliminated by those who successfully demonstrate their legitimacy as the mirror of the natural order.

He provides an explanation of how to disassemble the hierarchy in Positions. According to the "conflictual and subordinating structure of opposition." This highlights the superiority of one particular method of thinking over others and disproves the notion of fixed meaning. But this is only the beginning. Derrida says that the hierarchy might reappear and rejects the oppositional structure. Deconstructing that simply to flip binary oppositions is an impossible task. 8 To put it another way, the same structural circumstances are maintained but the dominant and subservient positions are simply switched. In order to take down the structure and proceed, another step is needed. Deconstruction has a lot of unknowns. We can obtain an alternative expression of a fixed meaning by reversing the binaries, but in order to go on to the second phase, we must transcend these oppositions and discover new meaning. We are encouraged to look at the presentation of these arguments rather than just reciting their contents. In the Villanova Roundtable, Derrida said that the pursuit of "tensions, contradictions, and heterogeneity within the corpus". Current power systems require ongoing critique, dismantling, and analysis in order to reestablish themselves.

Rather than looking for the truth or drawing the right conclusions, deconstruction is more interested in the act of questioning itself. It is distinguished by its ambiguity. According to Derrida, deconstruction is not and cannot be transformed into a method. Deconstruction is not a means of establishing a hypothesis or making a point. As an alternative, it's a continuous study of word meaning. In "Letter to a Japanese Friend," Derrida states that it is neither an analysis nor a critique. not carried out for a particular purpose. locating the "insoluble origin" or "simple element" The result of any further rebuilding procedure has no bearing on its worth. As was discussed before, the goal of breaking down a structure is to expose its underlying logic and get a deeper understanding of it. Thus, some claim that deconstruction overlooks crucial justice and morality. He is clear that deconstruction is a method of critical thinking and is neither nihilistic nor anarchic, nor is it primarily focused on advocacy or action. Law and institutions are not rejected; rather, new avenues are investigated inside them. This technique tries to eliminate "institutional structures that have become too rigid, dogmatic, or obstruct future research" rather than institutions. Deconstruction serves as a constructive force when one perspective on justice predominates, exposing previously undiscovered options.

Deconstruction is not a surgery, as was previously said. Rather, it's an event that happens. It is occurring everywhere. Its potential is already there in the meaning systems we now use. demonstrates the importance and internal logic of ideas and concepts. The purpose of this study is to provide light on how humans build their conceptual frameworks. In other words, it is not external but rather part of the meaning. There is a deconstructive potential in meaning that is exclusive to the structure of meaning. This book explains concepts rather than applies them.

Deconstruction doesn't look for solutions. It is not intended to support one side over the other or establish an unquestionable reality. Thus, deconstruction is by its very nature unexpected. According to Force of Law, deconstruction is "impossible." Deconstruction, even if it does place, won't produce a definitive outcome. Unfortunately, it won't explain what justice—as represented in the rule of law—truly means. In order to dismantle anything, you have to be prepared to go for seemingly insurmountable goals. We should constantly asking questions in order to find fresh insights into what it means to live in a just society, rather than accepting a single solution. Seen in this sense, it is a manner of thinking, behaving, writing, and reading.

15.3 DECONSTRUCTION: FOUNDATIONS AND KEY CONCEPTS

The 20th century saw the emergence of deconstruction, a philosophical and critical theory approach most famously linked to the writings of French philosopher Jacques Derrida. It seeks to reveal the underlying intricacies and inconsistencies in many texts and discourses, challenging conventional ideas of language, meaning, and reality. Instead of attempting to offer conclusive explanations, deconstruction works to undermine established meanings and promote ongoing assumption-questioning. Here, we'll examine the fundamental ideas and ideas of deconstruction.

FOUNDATIONS:

The impact of structuralism:

- In reaction to structuralism, a theoretical movement that sought to reveal the fundamental mechanisms guiding language and society, deconstruction was born.
- Originally connected to structuralism, Derrida later criticized the movement for its focus on dichotomous oppositions and predetermined interpretations.

Language as a Hierarchy of Distinctions:

- The notion that language functions via contrasts and differences rather than predetermined meanings is fundamental to deconstruction.
- The links that words have with one another give them importance, yet meaning is never absolute or stable—rather, it is always delayed.

Logocentrism:

- The concept of logocentrism, which holds that language has a single, unchanging source of meaning or truth, is contested by deconstruction.
- According to Derrida, logocentrism has dominated Western philosophy, creating hierarchies that give certain concepts or phrases precedence over others.

KEY CONCEPTS:

Difference:

- Derrida created the term "difference," which blends "difference" with "deferment." It represents the continual blending of contrasts and the deferral of a definitive interpretation.
- Since language is ever-evolving, it is difficult to arrive at a consistent, single understanding.

Binary Oppositions:

- Deconstruction exposes the ambiguity and interconnectedness present in binary oppositions that govern cognition, such as good against evil and existence vs absence.
- The lines separating opposites are becoming less distinct, upending established hierarchies.

Trace:

- The term "trace" describes the lingering effects of words. It draws attention to the absence of meaning or to its gaps, implying that meaning is elusive and constantly postponed.
- Deconstruction aims to reveal these remnants and cast doubt on the validity of any claimed interpretation.

Distinction (with a 'a'):

- Derrida purposely spells "différance" instead of "difference" in order to highlight the act of delaying as well as differentiating. This idea questions established ideas about identity and meanings.

Indecision:

- According to deconstruction, there are no final interpretations available since language is inherently undecidable.
- Texts resist definitive analysis because they are riddled with inconsistencies, ambiguities, and different interpretations.

Dismantling Metaphysics:

- Through his work, Derrida challenges the fundamental ideas and presumptions that have created Western philosophy and deconstructs metaphysics.
- Through the collapse of metaphysical hierarchies and binaries, deconstruction creates new avenues for comprehension and interpretation.

15.4 DECONSTRUCTION IN PRACTICE

Renowned French philosopher Jacques Derrida is well recognised for his deconstructive method of text analysis. Deconstruction is a literary analysis technique that questions accepted ideas about language, reality, and meaning. Derrida's methodology has had a significant influence on a number of disciplines, including cultural studies, philosophy, and literary theory.

This is a critique of Derrida's method of textual analysis:

Deconstruction as an Approach: Derrida's deconstructive approach aims to expose a text's underlying contradictions and binary oppositions. He contends that meanings are never set in stone and that language is intrinsically unstable. Deconstruction is carefully going over the text to uncover the nuances and layers of meaning that lie behind seemingly solid ideas.

Logocentrism and Binary Oppositions: The idea that language has a single, central source of meaning is attacked by Derrida. He questions the binary oppositions that form the basis of hierarchical systems like nature vs civilization, speech against writing, and presence versus absence. Derrida contends that these oppositions are unstable and that meanings are constantly postponed, resulting in a never-ending interplay of contrasts.

Diversity: Derrida presents the idea of "différance," which is a pun on the terms "difference" and "defer." Meaning is separated and postponed, he contends. Words acquire meaning in

relation to what they are not, and this is how language functions—through a process of difference. This exposes the continual postponement of meaning in language and calls into question the concept of a fixed meaning.

Textuality and Writing: According to Derrida, writing is an essential component of language. He questions the Western philosophical preference for speech over writing, contending that writing is an essential component of the language system and not just a means of expressing speech. This calls into question established ideas about presence and authenticity in language.

Trace and Absence: Derrida's deconstruction revolves around the concept of trace. He contends that the imprints of previous meanings left on language are never entirely present. It is essential to comprehend language's fluidity and complexity that it lacks a fixed meaning or centre.

Double Reading: Reading a text twice is a necessary part of deconstruction. It undermines the conventional hierarchical structures in one sense, bringing conflicts to light and emphasising the brittleness of meanings. On a deeper level, it recreates different readings that result from the way the text's variations interact.

Beyond literature and language, Derrida's deconstruction has political and ethical ramifications. It challenges traditional power structures and promotes a more inclusive, flexible approach to comprehending meaning and reality. Its reach extends to philosophy, politics, and ethics.

15.4.1 Deconstructive readings of specific philosophical or literary works:

Deconstructive readings of certain philosophical or literary texts include analysing and interpreting these writings using Jacques Derrida's deconstruction technique. This method looks for hidden inconsistencies, unstable interpretations, and challenged binary oppositions that have been constructed within the works. Here are some instances of deconstructive interpretations used on certain texts:

1. Jacques Derrida's "Of Grammatology":

Derrida dismantles the idea that Western metaphysics is "phonocentric," favouring voice above writing, in his book "Of Grammatology." He argues that writing is an essential component of language, challenging the notion that speech is more direct and genuine than writing. The dismantling of phonocentrism has consequences for our comprehension of language in a variety of literary and philosophical situations.

2. Franz Kafka's "The Metamorphosis":

A deconstructive interpretation of Kafka's "The Metamorphosis" can emphasise on the binary oppositions implicit in the text, such as human/insect, normal/abnormal, or inside/outside. Derrida's methodology may demonstrate how these categories are dynamic and ever-evolving rather than static. The deconstruction may call into question conventional readings of the text's meaning and highlight the brittleness of identity.

3. Immanuel Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason":

In order to apply deconstruction to Kant's writings, one must look at the binary oppositions that exist, such as reason vs sensation or noumena versus phenomena. It may become clear from a deconstructive reading how these categories are not discrete ideas but rather depend on one another for meaning. Derrida's method suggests that meanings are interrelated and delayed, challenging the hierarchical frameworks of Kantian philosophy.

4. Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex":

A critical analysis of "Oedipus Rex" can concentrate on the dichotomies of fate vs free choice, ignorance against knowledge, or innocence versus guilt. By challenging the moral verdicts attached to Oedipus's deeds and the fixed character of his destiny, Derrida's approach may highlight the brittleness of these categories. It might be demonstrated that the play's implications are ambiguous and dependent on several interpretations.

5. Martin Heidegger's "Being and Time":

Deconstructive interpretations of Heidegger's "Being and Time" might examine the ontological divisions—such as Being/Nothingness and Authenticity/Inauthenticity—that are made within the book. Derrida's method may show how these divisions are relative rather than absolute, undermining the hierarchical framework of Heidegger's existential analysis.

6. Simone de Beauvoir's book "The Second Sex":

Deconstructive analysis of de Beauvoir's groundbreaking feminist writings might delve into binary oppositions such as freedom vs oppression, man versus woman, or subject versus object. Derrida's method might draw attention to how these categories are flexible and interrelated, posing a challenge to essentialist conceptions of gender and highlighting the variety of experiences that women have.

7. Plato's "The Republic":

Plato's "The Republic" might be viewed deconstructivistically, emphasizing the binary opposition between the perceptual world of appearances and the understandable realm of Forms. Derrida's method may show how these oppositions are dependent on one another rather than being stable, upending Plato's theory of reality's hierarchical structure.

15.4.2 Illustrative examples of deconstruction in action:

Deconstruction is a theoretical method that developed in postmodern philosophy and literary criticism. It entails dissecting and challenging the presumptions, dichotomous contrasts, and hierarchical frameworks found in a book or idea. Here are a few instances of deconstruction in action to demonstrate its points:

Meaning and Language:

- The conventional wisdom is that "the pen is mightier than the sword."
- Deconstruction: Analysing the power relationships underlying this claim, disputing the idea that one is inherently more powerful than the other, and considering whether words or deeds have the actual upper hand.

Roles of Gender:

- Conventional wisdom holds that gender roles are frequently defined by society, with males expected to be forceful and women to be caring.
- Deconstruction: Examining and contesting these preconceptions, emphasising situations in which people defy social norms, and raising doubts about the binary nature of gender roles.

Literary Works:

- Classical interpretation: "Romeo and Juliet" by William Shakespeare is a sad love tale.
- Deconstruction entails examining the power relationships, societal structures, and cultural influences present in the play, challenging the idealised portrayal of the couple, and taking into account other interpretations that go against the conventional wisdom.

Political Conversation:

- Conventional wisdom holds that "freedom is the foundation of democracy."

- Deconstruction is the process of examining the presumptive relationship between democracy and freedom, as well as scrutinising the idea of freedom and the ways in which various people may understand and experience it.

Stereotypes related to culture:

- Conventional wisdom holds that certain racial or ethnic groups are frequently stereotyped in popular culture and the media.
- Deconstruction is examining how these stereotypes were created, challenging their veracity, and determining how they affect how various cultural groups are seen.

Design of Architecture:

- Conventional viewpoint: Simplicity and utility are given top priority in modern architecture.
- Deconstruction: Analysing how certain architectural movements question or undermine conventional wisdom, investigating plans that defy assumptions and upend accepted architectural standards

15.5 DERRIDA'S INFLUENCE ON POSTMODERN THOUGHT

The work of French philosopher and literary theorist Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) has had a significant influence on postmodern philosophy. He is generally connected with deconstruction, a form of literary study that questions standard assumptions about language, meaning, and reality. Beyond the world of literature, Derrida has had a profound impact on a number of academic disciplines, including as philosophy, cultural studies, and the social sciences.

Derrida invented the term "deconstruction" to refer to the process of analysing and disentangling the binary oppositions that frame our perception of language and reality. This idea is one of his main points. Dualities like inside/outside, speech/writing, and presence/absence are frequently used in traditional Western philosophy. According to Derrida, these oppositions are hierarchical and give one word preference over another. By exposing and undermining these hierarchies, deconstruction aims to make clear the innate instability and fluidity of language.

Derrida questions the notion of a stable, fixed meaning in language through his critique of binary oppositions. He maintained that "différance," a concept he coined by combining the

words "difference" and "deferment," is what distinguishes language from itself and implies that meaning is never entirely present. This idea highlights the ambiguity and indeterminacy present in linguistic signals and contradicts the conventional wisdom that regards language as a transparent channel for communicating definite meanings.

Derrida's writings have consequences for many academic fields. In philosophy, he cast doubt on the transcendent and unchanging truth idea and questioned the metaphysical presuppositions of conventional Western thought. Fundamental philosophical ideas are undermined by Derrida's deconstruction, which also promotes a more complex interpretation of language and meaning.

Deconstruction has been used in literary theory to examine and evaluate literary texts, exposing their inconsistencies and complexity. Because of Derrida's impact on literary studies, classic works have been reevaluated and the multiple interpretations that might arise from a single work have been acknowledged.

Derrida's theories have been applied in cultural studies and the social sciences to question prevailing narratives and dismantle power systems. Deconstruction has been used to examine how language creates and maintains social inequalities in relation to topics like race, gender, identity, and colonialism.

But Derrida's contributions have also drawn criticism. Some contend that his focus on meaning's volatility might lead to a relativistic viewpoint that threatens understanding and communication. Others doubt deconstruction's applicability in real-world situations and its capacity to effect constructive societal change.

There is no doubting Derrida's continuing influence on postmodern philosophy, even in spite of the disagreements surrounding his theories. His writings have transformed our understanding of language, reality, and meaning. They have impacted not just academic fields but also larger cultural and intellectual movements.

15.6 CRITICISMS AND RESPONSES

Since its inception, Jacques Derrida's philosophy and literary theory of deconstruction have been subject to a number of criticisms. Deconstruction has generated discussions and criticisms

in addition to offering insightful additions to the study of language, literature, and philosophy. The following are some typical objections to deconstruction:

Complexity and Obscurity:

Deconstructionist works, according to critics, can be too complicated and cryptic. Reader comprehension may be hampered by the use of technical terms and complex language. Some have accused deconstruction of being purposefully impenetrable because of its intricacy.

Absence of Positive Theory:

The fact that deconstruction is sometimes perceived as a wholly negative or destructive strategy is one of the main objections. Some contend that it offers no useful or constructive substitute for the beliefs it attempts to disprove. Some who oppose the idea argue that it has limited applicability in real life since it only focuses on tearing down current systems without offering any alternatives.

Skepticism and Relativism:

Deconstruction has come under fire for allegedly encouraging skepticism and relativism. There are many who contend that deconstruction erodes the possibility of objective knowledge or truth by contesting the consistency and stability of texts and meanings. Opponents fear that this might result in a nihilistic viewpoint, in which every interpretation is seen as equally legitimate.

Political Commentary:

Deconstruction's emphasis on the brittleness of language and meaning, according to some detractors, can be detrimental to social justice movements and political activity. Deconstructing fixed meanings raises concerns that it may weaken the influence of political action and discourse by undermining the veracity of any one viewpoint.

15.7 LET US SUM UP

Prominent postmodern philosopher Jacques Derrida has produced important contributions that have had a big impact on a lot of different subjects, such philosophy, literature, and cultural studies. His deconstructive method has upended conventional philosophical frameworks and opened the door for a reevaluation of how we comprehend and interpret texts. It is distinguished by a thorough analysis of language, meaning, and binary oppositions.

Conventional wisdom has been reexamined in light of Derrida's focus on the innate instability of language and the impossibility of permanent meanings. He has elucidated the intricacy and equivocality that lurk underneath conceptions that appear stable through deconstruction, promoting a more critical and nuanced reading of texts. This method has influenced literary theory for a long time, creating new opportunities to investigate the variety of interpretations and the relationship between language and power.

Moreover, Derrida's impact may be seen in disciplines like postcolonial theory and cultural studies in addition to literature. His deconstructive methodologies have been utilised to scrutinise power relations, hierarchies, and identity formations in many socio-cultural situations. Derrida has given academics and intellectuals the means to dissect and analyse prevailing discourses by raising issues with binary oppositions and rigid categories. This has promoted a more contemplative and inclusive understanding of many cultures and viewpoints.

To sum up, Jacques Derrida's contributions have had a profound impact on intellectual discourse, leading to a reevaluation of long-held beliefs and a more complex comprehension of language, meaning, and power. His contributions to philosophy, literature, and cultural studies have had a long-lasting influence on academics' ability to analyse, challenge, and critically interact with the complexity of the world.

15.8 GLOSSARY

- **Dismantling:** Derrida's main idea of deconstruction is looking at and breaking down binary oppositions to show the inconsistencies and hierarchies that are present in language and mind.
- **Difference:** a phrase that Derrida created by fusing the words "différer" (to defer) and "différence" (difference). It alludes to the way that language always plays with distinctions and deferrals, emphasising how meaning may be unstable.
- **Binary Oppositions:** Conventional oppositional pairings, such as inside/outside, speech/writing, or presence/absence, are what deconstruction aims to question by exposing their interaction and mutual reliance.
- **Logocentrism:** the propensity of philosophy to value spoken language (logos) over written communication. Derrida challenges this prejudice, contending that both are necessary for the meaning-making process.

- **Phallogocentricity:** a continuation of logocentrism that draws attention to the prejudices against women and men that are present in conventional Western language and ideas.
- **Trace:** The leftover imprints left by the play of differences and deferrals in language. Traces, in Derrida's opinion, compromise the integrity of meaning.
- **Indecision:** The belief that meaning is never established and that language always defers final interpretation, leading to a condition of everlasting ambiguity.
- **Extra:** Derrida challenges the notion of a complete and self-sufficient meaning by arguing that what is frequently seen as a linguistic addition or supplement is actually essential to the structure.
- **Parergon:** refers to what is seen as the periphery or margin of a text or piece of art, but which, in Derrida's opinion, is crucial to understanding it.
- **Metaphysics of Being Present:** Derrida argues that language adds intrinsic instability and postponement and criticises the Western philosophical tradition for depending too much on the idea of a stable and present reality.
- **Reading twice:** Derrida is a proponent of a dual approach to texts, one that recognises their surface meanings as well as the deeper intricacies that deconstruction reveals.

15.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Write a note on Derrida Deconstruction.
- Explain the foundation and Key concepts of Deconstruction
- What is Logocentrism?

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UNIT-16 CONTRIBUTION OF MICHEL FOUCAULT

Structure

- 16.1 Learning Objectives
- 16.2 Introduction
- 16.3 Archaeology of Knowledge
- 16.4 Power/Knowledge Nexus
- 16.5 Discipline and Punish
- 16.6 The Archaeology of the Self
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16.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to-

- Understand the concept Power and Knowledge
- Explain the concept Discipline and Punish
- Describe the concept Sexuality and Gender

16.2 INTRODUCTION

The work of French philosopher, historian of ideas, social theorist, and literary critic Michel Foucault (1926–1984) has had a significant influence on a wide range of academic fields, including political science, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and cultural studies. He was born into a middle-class family on October 15, 1926, in Poitiers, France. Foucault showed early potential as an intellectual, performing exceptionally well in school.

Following his studies at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris in philosophy and psychology, Foucault became well-known for his PhD thesis, "Madness and Civilization" (1961), which examined the evolution of views towards lunacy in Western culture throughout time. His reputation as a thought-provoking scholar willing to question received wisdom and illuminate

the nuanced interplay between knowledge, power, and social norms was cemented by this body of work.

Subsequent publications by Foucault, including "The Birth of the Clinic" (1963) and "The Order of Things" (1966), delved more into the topic of historical formation of knowledge and its consequences for comprehending power dynamics, human behaviour, and institutions. He is credited for popularising the idea of the "episteme," a conceptual framework that influences knowledge within a certain historical era.

Foucault became more politically involved in the 1970s, supporting a range of leftist and activist issues, including as the rights of LGBTQ+ people and prisoners. His subsequent publications, such as "Discipline and Punish" (1975), which explored the development of surveillance and punishment systems in contemporary society, were influenced by his activism. In this groundbreaking study, Foucault presented the idea of "biopower," which refers to the methods by which institutions and states dominate populations through normalisation and control strategies.

Over the course of his career, Foucault wrote and lectured a great deal, inspiring a generation of academics and intellectuals with his original and often contentious views. His later writings, such as volumes 1-3 of "The History of Sexuality" (1976–1984), challenged preconceived notions about human desire and identity by delving further into the relationship between power, knowledge, and sexuality.

The influence of Foucault's ideas is felt in a wide range of disciplines, including literary theory, gender studies, postcolonial theory, and critical theory. Even after his premature death in 1984 due to complications from AIDS, Foucault's theories continue to have a significant impact and spark new lines of study into the intricacies of human society and culture.

The intellectual background and influences of Michel Foucault were broad and varied, including a wide range of historical, philosophical, and social traditions. Among the fundamental components of his intellectual growth are:

Early Philosophical Training: At the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, where he studied under eminent intellectuals like Jean Hyppolite and Louis Althusser, Foucault received his philosophical training. He gained a solid basis in both continental and analytic philosophy from this demanding philosophical education, which he would subsequently utilise in his own writing.

Structuralism: The ideas of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Ferdinand de Saussure, in particular, had a significant impact on Foucault. Foucault was interested in exposing the covert systems of power and knowledge in society, and structuralism emphasised the significance of underlying structures and systems in forming human behaviour and culture.

Phenomenology and Existentialism: Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theories, in particular, had a major influence on the development of Foucault's intellectual path. These philosophical currents stressed the value of individual agency and the subjective experience of existence—themes that Foucault would later examine in his investigations of subjectivity and power.

Historical Scholarship: Foucault had a deep interest in history, especially the history of concepts and organisations. Utilising historical research approaches, he examined how discourses, practices, and power dynamics changed throughout time. Foucault was particularly influenced by individuals like Friedrich Nietzsche and Georges Canguilhem, whose writings on the history of ideas and the connection between power and knowledge.

Post-structuralism and Postmodernism: During the later part of the 20th century, Foucault is frequently linked to the post-structuralist and postmodernist movements. These philosophical currents argued against conventional ideas of identity, truth, and authority in favour of a more uncertain and fractured view of reality. Theorists who questioned the consistency of language and meaning, like Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze, contributed significant theoretical frameworks to Foucault's own investigations of power and discourse.

16.3 ARCHAEOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

Archaeologists use the archaeological method, a methodical methodology, to analyse material remains in order to investigate previous human cultures. The processes in this technique are designed to help unearth, analyse, and comprehend the structures, characteristics, and artefacts that the ancient civilizations left behind. In order to recreate historical human behaviour, social structure, and cultural practices, it integrates methods from a number of academic fields, including anthropology, geography, history, and the natural sciences. **An examination of the main elements of the archaeological approach is provided below:**

Survey: To find possible sites of interest, archaeologists conduct systematic explorations of a given region. Surface surveys, aerial surveys, and geophysical surveys utilising tools like magnetometry and ground-penetrating radar are a few examples of this.

Excavation: The methodical removal of soil or sediment layers in order to reveal archaeological remnants buried under the surface is known as excavation. By using stratigraphic concepts, archaeologists explore sites in layers, each of which represents a distinct historical era.

Recording: Thoroughly documenting the context of features and artefacts is crucial during excavation. This entails recording the exact location of discoveries on the site, their spatial interactions with other features and artefacts, and their place in the stratigraphic succession.

Analysis: Following excavation, a thorough examination is conducted on artefacts, ecofacts (organic remnants), and other archaeological elements. This includes using a variety of scientific methods to ascertain the age, composition, and provenance of artefacts, including metallurgy, petrology, and carbon dating. Furthermore, the study of artefact typologies and styles aims to comprehend their cultural importance and purpose.

Interpretation: Making meaning of the information gleaned from surveys and excavations is the process of interpretation. Archaeologists reconstruct historical human activities, social structures, and cultural practices by examining the geographical distribution of artefacts inside a site as well as more general trends across several sites.

Ethical Considerations: In order to prevent looting, vandalism, and the destruction of archaeological sites, archaeologists are required to follow certain ethical rules. When interpreting and disseminating their findings, they also take into account the viewpoints and concerns of descendant groups.

Cooperation: Working with experts from different fields and interacting with stakeholders and local populations are frequent aspects of archaeology study. The application of collaborative techniques guarantees that a range of viewpoints are taken into account when interpreting archaeological findings.

A critical investigation of the ways in which language forms and changes our perceptions of history, power relations, and social realities is required when focusing on discursive formations and historical discourse analysis. Discursive formations are the knowledge, language, and practice systems that generate and control what is acceptable in a given society or culture in

terms of speech, thinking, and behaviour. Scholars seek to understand the underlying structures and ideologies that control the interpretation and representation of historical events by concentrating on discursive formations.

Through the analysis of historical discourses, researchers explore the diverse texts, narratives, and communication modalities that have influenced the way people perceive the past. This entails closely examining not just official narratives and records but also marginalised voices, non-mainstream viewpoints, and subversive stories that contradict prevailing historical narratives. Through the analysis of language, symbols, and rhetorical devices used in historical discourses, researchers can reveal unconscious power structures, prejudices, and exclusions that have shaped our perception of the past.

16.4 POWER/KNOWLEDGE NEXUS

Power and knowledge have a complex and multidimensional relationship that shapes many facets of human civilization, including politics, economics, culture, and academics. While knowledge is the sum of information, comprehension, and experience, power is the capacity to direct or affect others. These two forces are in complicated interaction with one another, each of which influences and reinforces the other in unique ways.

The use of information as a means of gaining and retaining power is one facet of this interaction. Those having access to specialised knowledge have frequently occupied positions of power and influence throughout history. Knowledge has always been used as a means of gaining power, whether it comes from the priests of old who claimed to have exclusive access to heavenly knowledge or the specialists of today who influence public opinion and legislation. Knowledgeable people may solidify their influence by defining reality, influencing perceptions, and setting the parameters of conversation.

On the other hand, knowledge generation and distribution may also be influenced by power hierarchies. Powerful organisations and people frequently decide which kind of information are respected, accepted, and spread across society. As a result, opposing viewpoints may be marginalised or suppressed, creating a dominant narrative that advances the agendas of the powerful. For instance, indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing have traditionally been suppressed by colonial powers as they imposed their own knowledge systems on colonised peoples.

Moreover, power dynamics might have an impact on the process of knowledge acquisition itself. Academic hierarchies, funding priorities, and research agendas are all influenced by power dynamics both inside and outside of academia. This may lead to the prioritisation of studies that support the objectives of strong institutions or maintain current power structures, sometimes at the expense of fields of study that pose questions about the status quo.

However, information may also be used as a weapon to oppose and undermine established hierarchies of power. The pursuit of alternative knowledge, dissent, and critical inquiry can act as catalysts for social change by challenging the legitimacy of established power systems and creating room for fresh perspectives on the world. For example, social justice movements frequently depend on the creation and sharing of information.

The French philosopher Michel Foucault established the notions of governmentality and bio-power in his writings about the systems of power and control in contemporary society.

Bio-power: The term describes the methods by which contemporary cultures manage and control people by concentrating on the administration and control of life itself. This phrase was created by Foucault to characterise the change in the dynamics of power from the diffuse and ubiquitous forms of power typical of contemporary disciplinary societies to the sovereign power of classic monarchies. Through a variety of methods and organisations, including biopolitics, education, psychology, and medicine, bio-power attempts to control and govern populations on both an individual and a group level. Its goals include managing behaviours and regulating bodies in addition to optimising population productivity and efficiency. Biometric monitoring, reproductive and immigration laws, and public health campaigns are a few instances of biopower in operation.

Governmentality: is the term for the intricate system of governance and control that shapes the behaviour of people and groups via a variety of institutions, practices, and discourses. It is a notion that is strongly tied to bio-power. Governmentality functions through more nuanced and decentralised methods of power than traditional forms of sovereignty, which depend on overt force and centralised authority. Governmentality, according to Foucault, is the "conduct of conduct," stressing its emphasis on controlling and moulding behaviour as opposed to using coercion to compel compliance. The term "governmentality" refers to a broad variety of methods and approaches, such as normalisation, monitoring, and the creation of knowledge through bureaucracy, schools, and jails. Its goal is to mould people's ideas, aspirations, and behaviours to suit the interests of those in positions of authority. In addition to formal

institutions of governance, governmentality also occurs via customs, beliefs, and daily behaviours that influence how individuals manage both themselves and other people.

16.5 DISCIPLINE AND PUNISH

Philosophers and social theorists such as Jeremy Bentham and Michel Foucault present essential notions that are explored in discussions of the panopticon and the disciplined society. Although they are applied in different situations and have various subtleties, both concepts centre on social control and power dynamics.

Disciplinary Organisation:

The idea of the disciplinary society was first presented by renowned French philosopher Michel Foucault in his writings, especially in "Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison." Modern societies, according to Foucault, are defined by systems of discipline that control behaviour through establishments like industries, jails, schools, and hospitals. To create submissive and obedient people, these institutions use monitoring, normalisation, and examination tactics.

People internalise disciplinary standards and manage their own behaviour in a disciplinary society, where authority is exercised through methods of monitoring and control. Monitoring behaviour is only one aspect of surveillance; another is forming people's identities and subjectivities within the community. In order to classify and regulate aberrant behaviour, medical, psychiatric, and criminological fields, among others, reinforce social norms and hierarchies of power. Foucault provides examples of this process in action.

The Panopticon:

The Panopticon is an architectural proposal for a jail where a central watchtower allows a single observer to monitor all inmates without the inmates knowing they are being observed. It was first proposed by English philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the late eighteenth century. Prisoners internalise the prospect of being watched at all times as a result of this design, which fosters a sense of continual visibility and encourages self-regulation.

The Panopticon is a metaphor for the larger systems of authority and control seen in contemporary civilizations. It draws attention to how the possibility of monitoring, even in situations when it isn't used actively, may discipline people and mould their behaviour. This

concept goes beyond actual buildings like jails to include a range of social organisations as well as technological advancements that make monitoring and control easier.

Analysing and Comparing:

The Panopticon and the disciplinary society both highlight the importance of normalisation, discipline, and monitoring in illuminating how power functions in contemporary society. They differ, although, in their focus and extent:

The disciplinary society is concerned with the larger social structures of power and control, which include a range of organisations and methods used to govern conduct and mould subjectivities.

In contrast, The Panopticon provides a more detailed architectural and symbolic framework for comprehending the processes of self-regulation and monitoring.

Although Foucault's theory of the disciplinary society offers a thorough examination of power dynamics in modernity, arguments concerning surveillance, authority, and personal autonomy continue to find resonance in the Panopticon, a powerful visual metaphor.

Current Significance:

In today's world, conversations about the Panopticon, the disciplinary society, and digital surveillance are especially pertinent in light of social media, digital monitoring, and governmental control. Concerns regarding privacy, autonomy, and the degradation of human rights are raised by technologies like internet tracking algorithms, CCTV cameras, and face recognition software that expand the scope of monitoring beyond physical locations.

Furthermore, discussions around social control, mass imprisonment, and the criminal justice system are a reflection of persistent opposition to punitive measures that disproportionately affect underprivileged groups. We may better comprehend the complexity of power and resistance in contemporary cultures and strive towards more just and equitable forms of social organisation by looking at the disciplinary society and the Panopticon.

The notions of normalisation, surveillance, and the creation of submissive bodies are closely linked and firmly ingrained in many social, political, and institutional frameworks. These theories, which have their roots in the writings of thinkers like Michel Foucault, illuminate the processes by which authority functions and social discipline is enforced.

Surveillance: The term "surveillance" describes the methodical observation of people or groups, frequently by organisations or law enforcement. It can take many different forms, such as digital surveillance like internet tracking and data collecting, or physical surveillance like CCTV cameras. In addition to upholding social order and suppressing aberrant behaviour, surveillance also gathers data for a variety of objectives.

Normalisation: The process of establishing and upholding social standards and values is referred to as normalisation. It shapes people's views and behaviours to conform to accepted standards through socialisation, education, and discourse processes. By establishing what is deemed "normal" or acceptable within a certain society, normalisation promotes uniformity. People who break these rules frequently experience marginalisation or other social repercussions.

Production of Docile Bodies: The term "docile body production" describes how different forms of authority may turn people into obedient, disciplined subjects. This idea highlights the ways in which organisations, such as businesses, prisons, and schools, have power over people's bodies and behaviours. Discipline, hierarchical systems, and monitoring are some of the methods used to create submissive bodies that can obey commands and fit in with society's expectations.

These ideas are interwoven since monitoring is a major factor in normalisation and the creation of submissive bodies. In addition to keeping an eye on people's actions, surveillance technologies can help to uphold social standards by affecting how individuals view themselves and other people. Surveillance systems' ongoing visibility and examination promote self-regulation and the internalisation of disciplined standards, which furthers the development of submissive bodies.

16.6 THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE SELF

One of the most important figures in French philosophy and social theory of the 20th century, Michel Foucault is well known for his revolutionary insights into the concepts of power, knowledge, and the production of subjectivity. Although a lot of focus has been placed on Foucault's early writings, especially on his examinations of power structures such as asylums and prisons, his later works on subjectivity and ethics provide important new perspectives on how people negotiate and subvert power systems in contemporary society.

In his later writings, Foucault redirected his attention to examining the nuanced link between ethics and power, questioning accepted ideas about morality and putting forward substitute frameworks for ethical investigation. The notion of "care of the self," which stresses developing one's own ethical practices and self-transformation as a strategy of resistance against oppressive power relations, is among the fundamental ideas he offered.

Foucault's rejection of conventional moral frameworks that aim to force universal standards and values on people is fundamental to his later views. Rather, he espouses an ethics of plurality, acknowledging the multiplicity of moral standards and customs found in many historical eras and cultural contexts. This viewpoint promotes a more complex interpretation of morality that takes into account the situational character of ethical standards and the ways in which historical, social, and political settings have affected them.

Moreover, the notion of subjectivity and the manner in which people are produced as subjects within certain discursive regimes are explored in Foucault's later writings. He draws attention to the way that power shapes subjectivities, demonstrating how prevailing discourses shape and control our identities, wants, and actions. Through her explanation of the ways in which power functions at the subjective level, Foucault creates new spaces for agency and resistance, encouraging people to question and challenge the rules that control their lives.

Most importantly, Foucault's investigation of subjectivity and ethics highlights how political both are by nature, which forces us to reevaluate how ethics, power, and resistance interact in modern society. Scholars from a wide range of disciplines are still motivated by his discoveries, which have sparked continuing discussions and investigations into the nature of morality, autonomy, and the prospects for moral behaviour in a world ever more complicated.

Philosophical ideas like "technologies of the self" and "care of the self" have their roots in the traditions of ancient Greece and Rome, but Michel Foucault, a French philosopher, popularised them in the 20th century.

Self-Care:

- Care of the self is a term that comes from ancient Greek philosophy, including the teachings of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. It describes the practice of self-improvement, self-discipline, and self-care with the goal of reaching personal fulfilment and well-being.

- The ancient Greeks considered self-care to be the process of developing qualities via ethical behaviour, introspection, and self-reflection, such as wisdom, temperance, bravery, and justice.
- In his later writings, Foucault revived the idea of self-care in modern philosophy, especially in his examination of Greco-Roman self-care and self-transformation practices.
- According to Foucault, taking care of oneself involved more than just one's physical and mental health; it also involved developing one's moral agency within larger social and political settings.

Self-Technology:

- "Technologies of the self" is a term that Foucault used to describe the many methods and strategies people use to mould, control, and manage their own selves in conformity with social norms, standards, and values.
- These "technologies" include a range of techniques, customs, and practices that people use to actively participate in the process of self-formation and self-control. This can involve, among other things, routines like writing, meditation, physical activity, religious devotion, and psychotherapy.
- According to Foucault, the technologies of the self are intricately entwined with society norms and external power structures rather than being purely internal processes. They both mirror and uphold prevailing societal structures and beliefs.

16.7 SEXUALITY AND GENDER

The way that Michel Foucault views sexuality as a social construct is firmly anchored in his larger conception of power, knowledge, and discourse. According to Foucault, sexuality is a historically contingent social construct moulded by discursive practices and power relations rather than an innate, permanent quality of individuals.

The concept that power functions not only by repression and coercion but also by normalising and regulating bodies and behaviours is at the heart of Foucault's theory. In his revolutionary book "The History of Sexuality," Foucault charts the evolution of what he refers to as the "discourse of sexuality"—the ways in which different institutions, including psychiatry, medicine, and religion, have created and controlled information around sex.

Foucault argues that these discourses on sexuality actively create and mould our conception of sexuality rather than merely reflecting fundamental facts about human nature. For instance, he contends that certain historical processes and power dynamics rather than the simple discovery of an antecedent phenomena led to the development of the idea of "homosexuality" in the 19th century.

Furthermore, according to Foucault, controlling sexuality serves larger social and political goals including upholding established power structures and preserving social order. He looks at how stigmatising institutions such as the family, the school, and the prison help normalise some sexual identities and behaviours while normalising others.

Most importantly, Foucault contests the idea that sexuality is essentially a personal, individual issue, contending that it is intricately entwined with larger power and knowledge structures. Through an examination of the historical developments of sexuality-related discourses, Foucault aims to reveal the mechanisms through which power functions at the level of the body and the self.

All things considered, Foucault's perspective on sexuality underscores how socially constructed it is and how power shapes our perception of it. His work still has an impact on conversations today in disciplines like sociology, gender studies, and queer theory, encouraging researchers to critically assess the social construction, regulation, and contestation of sexuality.

Analysing power relations with regard to gender and sexuality reveals a complicated interaction shaped by personal experiences, historical backgrounds, cultural expectations, and society standards. Relationships, organisations, and larger societal structures are frequently sites of power dynamics, which influence how sexuality and gender roles are expressed and negotiated. Here's a summary of some important elements:

Historical and Cultural Context: Sexuality and gender-related power relations have their roots in historical and cultural settings. Certain gender identity and sexual manifestations have historically been given more weight than others due to patriarchal systems, heteronormative views, and traditional gender roles. People's perceptions and experiences of their gender and sexuality have been influenced by the laws, institutions, and social conventions that have been formed by these power relations.

Intersectionality: This concept recognises that people encounter many types of privilege and oppression at the same time. Power relations pertaining to gender and sexuality overlap with those pertaining to ability, class, racism, and other social identities, as shown by intersectional analysis. For example, because of the overlapping power dynamics of sexism, racism, and transphobia, Black transgender people may experience particular difficulties and prejudice.

Social Institutions: The media, the family, education, and religion are examples of social institutions where power dynamics are frequently replicated and perpetuated. Certain sexual and gender norms may be promoted by these institutions at the expense of marginalising or stigmatising others. For instance, religious institutions may impose strict sexual standards that exclude LGBTQ+ people, and educational curriculum may reinforce gender stereotypes.

Economic Factors: Power inequalities pertaining to gender and sexuality can be made worse by economic inequities. The autonomy and agency of individuals in expressing their sexuality and gender identity can be curtailed by factors such as economic reliance, uneven access to resources, and job discrimination. For example, discrimination in housing and employment may contribute to increased incidence of poverty and homelessness among LGBTQ+ people.

Violence and Discrimination: In cases of violence and discrimination, gender and sexuality interact with power dynamics. Sexual assault, domestic abuse, hate crimes, and other forms of gender-based violence disproportionately impact marginalised populations and reinforce power dynamics. Transphobia, sexism, and racism are intertwined power relations that result in alarming rates of violence against transgender people, especially transgender women of colour.

Resistance and freedom: Marginalised communities have always opposed and fought repressive standards, claiming their rights to self-determination and freedom, in spite of systemic power disparities. Advocacy, activism, and social movements have been vital in opposing legislation that discriminate, changing cultural perceptions, and advancing equality and diversity. To challenge ingrained power relations connected to sexuality and gender, the LGBTQ+ rights movement, for instance, has battled for legislative recognition, anti-discrimination laws, and social acceptance.

16.8 CRITIQUES AND RECEPTIONS

The revolutionary concepts that Michel Foucault, a well-known figure in 20th-century philosophy and social theory, presented have had a significant influence on a number of disciplines, including political science, sociology, and cultural studies. But in keeping with the various ways that his work has been interpreted and assessed, his theories have also been the focus of a great deal of criticism and discussion. Below is a summary of some of the main objections and discussions to Foucault's theories:

Critique of Essentialism: One of the main accusations made against Foucault is that he disavows the conventional essentialist conceptions of truth and identity. His focus on discursive forms and power relations, according to critics, casts doubt on the viability of stable identities and objective truths, encouraging relativism and scepticism.

Historical Relativism: Rather than emphasising continuities and progressions, Foucault frequently highlights discontinuities and ruptures in his historical analysis. Critics argue that this method leads to an unduly fragmented picture of history by ignoring the structural components and historical context that shape social occurrences.

Critique of Power: There has been criticism of Foucault's understanding of power, especially in relation to his idea of "power/knowledge." His conception of power as diffuse, omnipresent, and constructive, according to his detractors, obscures the more conventional notion of power as hierarchical and repressive. Furthermore, some academics doubt the viability of his suggested liberation and resistance tactics.

Ethical Implications: The absence of normative direction and seeming ethical uncertainty in Foucault's work have been points of criticism. Critics contend that he deprives his audience of a clear ethical foundation for action by refusing to support certain political causes or moral principles, which might encourage nihilism or indifference.

Gender and Sexuality: Foucault has drawn acclaim and criticism for his examination of gender and sexuality, especially in his works on the history of sexuality. Some academics believe that his paradigm ignores the tangible effects of oppression and the experiences of marginalised groups, while others value his focus on the socially constructed character of these categories and his critique of oppressive discourses.

Engagement with Power Structures: Foucault has come under fire from some quarters for what they see as his inadequate attention to issues of class- and economy-based power structures. They contend that his analysis's capacity for transformation is limited by its

emphasis on discourse and knowledge creation, which ignores the tangible circumstances of exploitation and inequality.

Methodological critiques: have been levelled against Foucault's methodological approach, which is distinguished by its focus on discourse analysis, genealogy, and archaeology. Critics claim that because of his methodology's lack of rigour and clarity, his analyses are ambiguous and inconsistent.

Impact and Legacy: Discussions in academia and beyond are still shaped by the debates concerning Foucault's impact and legacy. While some academics applaud his contributions to multidisciplinary research and critical theory, others doubt his theories' enduring value and applicability to the social and political issues of the day.

16.9 LET US SUM UP

The contributions of Michel Foucault to a number of disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, and philosophy, have had a lasting impact on academic discourse. By his innovative examinations of power, knowledge, and discourse, Foucault has posed a challenge to traditional notions of institutions, societal structures, and individual subjectivity.

To sum up, Foucault's research has yielded priceless insights into the workings of power and how it functions in social structures. Through highlighting the intricate relationship between power and knowledge, Foucault has shed light on the multifaceted ways in which power dynamics impact our perception of reality and dictate our actions. In addition, his criticisms of normative categories and disciplinary systems have created new perspectives for comprehending and combating oppressive regimes.

In the end, Foucault's contribution to critical theory is rooted in his ongoing impact and his dedication to challenging the hierarchies of power that control our daily lives. His writings continue to motivate academics from many fields to consider the factors that define our society from a critical perspective and to develop more equal and just solutions.

16.10 GLOSSARY

- **Power and Knowledge:** Foucault's theory that knowledge and power are mutually constitutive and entangled. He maintained that legitimate knowledge is shaped by power systems, and knowledge itself perpetuates power relations.

- **Discourse:** refers to the linguistic and intellectual systems that influence and direct social structures and activities. Foucault examined the ways in which discourses govern behaviour and create realities.
- **Ancient Knowledge Archaeology:** The methodological framework used by Foucault to examine how discourses have historically formed and the laws that control their creation, transmission, and modification.
- **The Panopticism:** Drawing inspiration from Jeremy Bentham's panopticon jail architecture, Foucault employed this idea to show how authority functions in contemporary society. The panopticon is a monitoring and control device in which people manage their own actions under the presumption that they are always being watched.
- **Biopolitics and Biopower:** Foucault's investigation of the ways in which contemporary regimes control populations—not only by force but also by controlling and governing life itself, encompassing factors like health, reproduction, and population figures.
- **The nature of governmentality:** a notion that includes the methods and approaches used to manage populations. Foucault studied the ways in which different discourses, technologies, and institutions affect how people are governed both individually and collectively.
- **Genealogy:** Foucault's historical approach to tracking the evolution of social practices, knowledge systems, and power dynamics. The goal of genealogy is to make visible the tensions and uncertainties that underlie apparently stable systems.
- **Subjectification:** the method by which people are defined as subjects in particular discourses and power dynamics. Foucault studied the ways in which institutions, practices, and cultural norms form subjectivity.

16.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Write a note on Archaeology of Knowledge.
- Describe the concept Power/Knowledge Nexus.
- Analyse the Discipline and Punish by Foucault.
- Explain the concept The Archaeology of the Self.
- Write a note on Sexuality and Gender.

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