

Sociological Perspectives on Modernity
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Lecture – 14
Structuralist Interpretation III

Welcome to the 14th lecture of the MOOC course on Sociological Perspectives on Modernity. In the last lecture in the last couple of lectures, we have discussed the structuralist interpretation of critical modernist paradigm in sociology, through the lens of holism or totality when I say holism or totality in the case of structuralist interpretation of modernity. I mean ultra relationalist case within that we have discussed relationalism and the depth of the subject or depth of the author, we have also discussed difference functionality and modernity.

In today's lecture we are going to discuss the structuralist interpretation of critical modernist paradigm in sociology, through the lenses of 3 other 3 other important central philosophical and political foundations of critical modernist paradigm in sociology namely social movements, rationality and reflexivity ok.

Now, let us start with social movements through the works of Levi Strauss and Althusser, within social movements we are going to discuss ideology and function and what are the political backgrounds? I mean what kind of 2 Marxism's, which have emerged ok. And within nationality we are going to discuss the meaning of science how science can be construed or how science has been construed in structuralism and in reflexivity, we are going to discuss in Levi Strausses uncertainty principle.

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Social movements
Ideology and function

- As with social change, so with social movements structuralism has remarkably little to contribute. This derives partly from the "death of the subject": if human agency is simply an illusion, then social movements can be explained either in terms of a functional contribution to social change (particularly in the case of the workers' movement) or, more commonly, as an ideological reaction against social change (particularly in the case of the new social movements).



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Now, let us start with ideology and function within social movements through the works of Levi Strauss and Louis Althusser as with social change ok. So, with social movements structuralism has remarkably little to contribute let me put it this way, because if you say complementarity and reciprocity of roles in the social division of labour. And the kind of functional explanations or teleological explanations, which we have discussed in the last lecture that that no we are not going to I mean the way structurelists argued that, no there is no cause and effect relationship with the kind of social change that we witness over a period of time and across space ok.

Practically structuralism has little to contribute to the idea of social movements or to the idea of social change, because structuralists believe in the continuity of any kind of social, economic, political, cultural, institutional, ideological, legal or ethical order.

If I mean I mean this derives partly from the relationalism and the depth of the subject or depth of the author that we have already discussed. I mean if human agency is simply an illusion I mean if the individual if human agency ceases to exist we. What we have only relational ok, then social movements can be explained either in terms of a functional contribution to social change particularly in the in the case of the workers movements or more commonly as an ideological reaction against social change. And in this context particularly in the case of the new social movement, what is this workers movements? I said and then new social movements ok.

I mean when I say workers movements workers I mean conventionally speaking workers movements were based on only classes. In a strict Marxian (Refer Time: 05:07) Marx system, that classes are manifestations of economic differentiation classes are constituted not on the basis of the income that one earns, but on the basis of the position that one occupies in the process of production or the functions that one performs in the process of production.

For example, there are 2 blocks myths one an owner of the own fault and the other of paid worker then both belong to 2 different classes not 1 ok. In this strict Marxist sense, when I say workers movements ok. I mean Marx was not the first to discover social classes or their fights, but he came to the centre stage when he said the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways the point; however, is to change it.

The societies Marx's has analysed have traversed through different stages namely hunting and gathering economy and the slave society, the feudal society, and the capitalist society, which will unstopably move on to socialism and thereafter communism. And of these of these various stages of society as Marx's outlined the first I mean hunting and gathering economy and socialism and communism are classless societies whereas, whereas, slavery feudalism and capitalism are class society.

In this sense I am talking about workers movements and the then if there are if slavery feudalism and capitalism are class societies. In this sense then what are the classes in slavery we had slave lords as well as slaves, in feudalism we had feudal lords as well as serves, in capitalism we have capitalists and working class. If I put a and if what Marx the way Marx put us common Marx put common terms to both classes all these classes, I mean slave lords feudal lords or capitalists they are considered (Refer Time: 07:34) whereas, slaves serves and working classes, they the are termed as the proletariat (Refer Time: 07:43) has own owning classes and so, or exploiting classes and so on and when I say proletariat I mean have not owned classes exploited classes and so on ok.

I mean when I when I refer to workers movements I look at workers movements are based on Marx's notion of classes ok, but when I say new social movements, new social movements have been able to not simply take classes as a classes I mean industrial working class as an important variable for new social for the proponents of new social movements.

It is very important to look at not simply the new industrial working classes ok, but also gender, caste, race religious minorities ok, or immigrants ok. I mean there are there are many many categories, environment, women's movements and I mean environmental and ecological movements and so on ok.

This I mean when I or agrarian movements, presents movements and so on. The main distinction between workers movements and new social movements is that, workers movements only look at classes on the basis of which workers movements can take place and new social movements try to include many more categories; namely race, caste, gendered, environment and agriculture peasantry and so on in that in it is category.

In this sense in this sense structuralism has little to contribute, structuralism does not I mean has never or has not yet been able to make a framework of such social movements or theories of social change or any foundation to carry out social and political struggles ok.

Whether, it was on the basis of class or any other variable namely cast, race, gender, environment, agriculture and so on. That is that is why in the context of ideology and function the purpose of this exercise is to examine, structuralist interpretation of social movements ok. As a contributes to critical modernist paradigm in sociology ok.

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Political background: the two Marxisms

- **This weakness derives partly from the interaction of theory with social movements themselves:** a good example here is Althusser. Althusser was a member of the French Communist Party (PCF), which was perhaps the most immobile of the major Communist Parties of western Europe, and an organisation which could perhaps be described less as the political wing of the workers' movement than as the congealed wing of the workers' movement. French workers, throughout the 20th century, participated in a number of extremely radical actions – general strikes, mass occupations of factories, the French Resistance. At the same time, the Communists were by far the most important working-class party, and indeed controlled the main trade union federation and the greater part of the French Resistance.



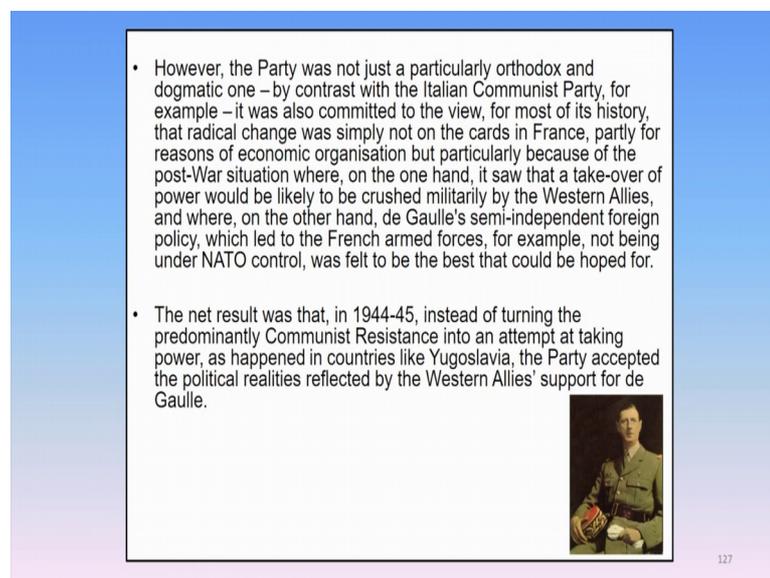
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Now, let us see the political background the 2 Marxism's ok. What are these 2 Marxism's what the kind of Marx's is I mean the what Marx said was not an easy mean itself ok, but what actually Marx said became an ism in a under the political climate of certain countries.

I mean such weakness derives partly from the interaction of theory with social movements themselves, a good example here is Althusser. Althusser was a member of the communist party of France, which was perhaps the most immobile of the major communist parties of Western Europe. And an organization, which could perhaps be described less as the political wing of the workers movement then as the congealed wing of the workers movements.

Frame I mean French workers throughout the twentieth century participated in a number of extremely radical actions, general strikes, mass occupations of factories, the French resistance and so on. At the same time the communists were by far the most important working class party and indeed control the main trade union federation and the greater part of the French resistance.

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- However, the Party was not just a particularly orthodox and dogmatic one – by contrast with the Italian Communist Party, for example – it was also committed to the view, for most of its history, that radical change was simply not on the cards in France, partly for reasons of economic organisation but particularly because of the post-War situation where, on the one hand, it saw that a take-over of power would be likely to be crushed militarily by the Western Allies, and where, on the other hand, de Gaulle's semi-independent foreign policy, which led to the French armed forces, for example, not being under NATO control, was felt to be the best that could be hoped for.
- The net result was that, in 1944-45, instead of turning the predominantly Communist Resistance into an attempt at taking power, as happened in countries like Yugoslavia, the Party accepted the political realities reflected by the Western Allies' support for de Gaulle.



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Nevertheless the communist party of France was not just the particularly orthodox and dogmatic, by contrast the communist party of Italy for example, it was also committed to the view for most of its history, that radical change was simply not on the cards in France, partly for reasons of economic organization, but particularly because of the post

second world war situation there, I mean where, on the one hand it is all that a takeover of power would be likely to be crushed militarily by the Western Allies, and where, on the other hand, de Gaulle's semi-independent foreign policy, which led to the French armed forces for example, not being under the NATO control, was felt to be the best that could be hoped for the net result was that in 1900 and 44, 45.

Instead of turning the predominantly Communist Resistance into an attempt at taking power as had happened in countries like Yugoslavia, the Party accepted the political realities, reflected by the Western Allies' support for de.

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- Similarly, in 1968, the Communist-dominated General Labour Confederation was instrumental in keeping the general strike under control, physically excluding student radicals from the factories where they might have undermined the Party's position, and deradicalising the demands of the strike.
- In France, in particular, 1968 was almost as much a rebellion of the libertarian Left against the PCF as it was a challenge to the State. It is therefore not very surprising to find a Party philosopher keen to exclude any possibility that human agency could actually make a significant difference.



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Similarly, in 1900 and 68 the Communist-dominated General Labour Federation was instrumental in keeping the general strike under control, especially it started in France in fact, by students community physically excluding student radicals from the factories where they might have undermined the parties position and deradicalizing the demands of the strike.

In France in particular in 1968 was almost as such as much a rebellion of the libertarian left against the communist party of France as it was a challenge to the state. It is therefore, not very surprising to find a party philosopher keen to exclude any possibility that human agency could actually make a significant difference.

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- More generally, Althusser's Structuralist Marxism can be seen as the logical development of one strand, but **only** one strand, of Marx's thinking.
- The other approach, "Western Marxism" is more closely associated with social movements and activist parties; the kind of static Marxism practiced by Althusser is associated with parties who are either in power or who, for other reasons, are keen to minimise the possibility of large-scale social action which is not entirely under their control.

Then, when I said 2 Marxism's ok. the case of 2 Marxism's more generally Althusser structuralist Marxism can be seen as the logical development of one strand, but let me tell you, but when I say one strand, but that is the only strand of what strand of Marxist thinking ok.

The other approach Western Marxism is more closely associated with social movements and activist parties, the kind of static Marxism I mean unchanging Marxism practiced by Althusser is associated with parties who are either in power or who for other reasons are keen to minimize the possibility of large scale social action, which is not entirely under their control.

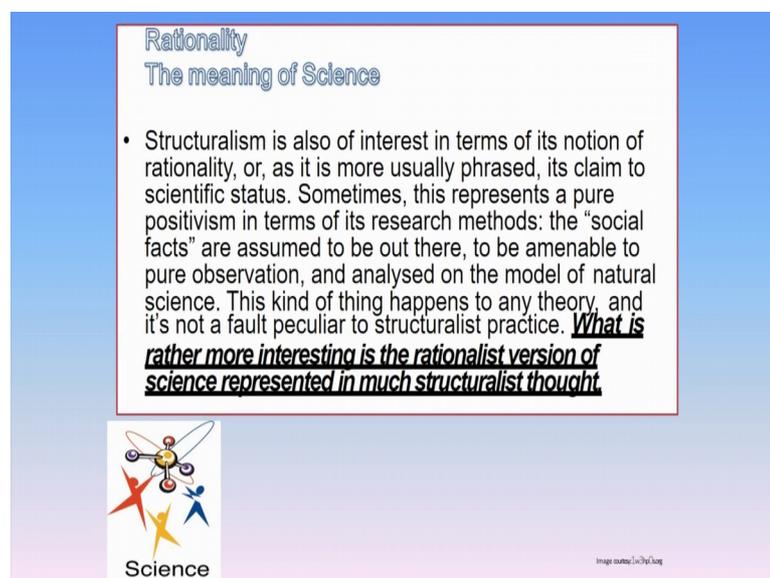
What kind of 2 Marxism's one kind of Marxism that is static Marxism, which was practiced by Althusser and the other Marxism was particularly by I mean if I have to say changing Marxism, I mean dynamic Marxism ok, was practiced by even today it is it is mostly practiced by the people's Republic of China ok. It does not it does not believed in static Marxism it believes in dynamic Marxism ok.

Let these are the 2 Marxism's that we find in the context of a social movements, and Althusser deviated from some kind of I mean I mean I mean that I mean deviated from the changing Marxist standpoint perspective and so on.

Anyway western Marxism I am not going to discuss right now, we are going to discuss in we will start with this with this philosophical train theoretical trajectory of Western Marxism, when we will be discussing the works of Lou Cox Graham see and today in the next lecture we are going to discuss this.

Then at least till now I hope you are aware of the philosophical engagement of structuralism with modernity, in the case of or through the lenses of holism or totality on the one hand and social movements on the other. Now let us see how structuralism through the works of Levi Strauss and Althusser has contributed to the debates on critical modernist paradigm in sociology, through the lenses of rationality, and reflexivity.

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Rationality
The meaning of Science

- Structuralism is also of interest in terms of its notion of rationality, or, as it is more usually phrased, its claim to scientific status. Sometimes, this represents a pure positivism in terms of its research methods: the “social facts” are assumed to be out there, to be amenable to pure observation, and analysed on the model of natural science. This kind of thing happens to any theory, and it's not a fault peculiar to structuralist practice. **What is rather more interesting is the rationalist version of science represented in much structuralist thought**



Science

Let us first start with rationality when I say rationality I mean I always refer to reasoning capacity, I mean Cartesian philosophy of science, where Rene Descartes said cogito ergo sum I think therefore, I am I doubt therefore, I am I interrogate therefore, I am I question therefore, I am.

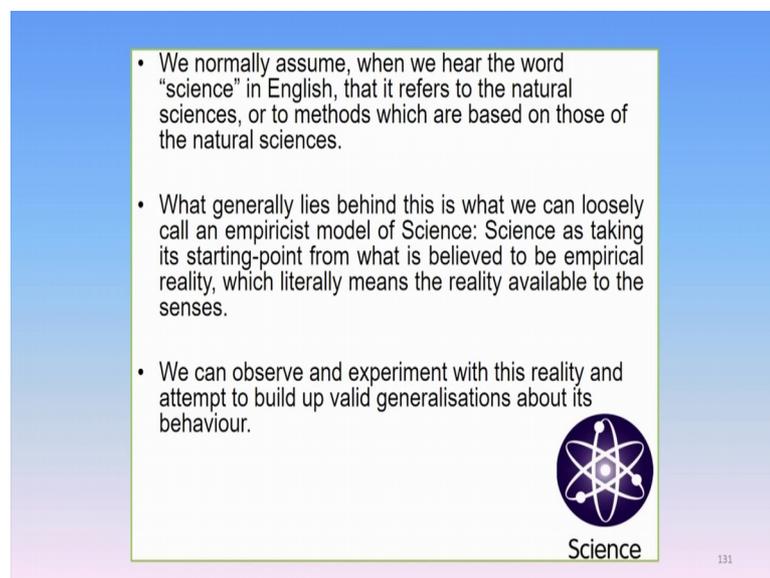
I mean my entire existence is contingent upon the way I think, the way I question, the way I interrogate, the way I doubt. There is a there is a transition from the world of certainty to a world of doubt ok. There is a transition from the culture of conformity to the culture of to a culture of deviance, and structuralism is also of interest of it is notion of rationality or as it is more usually phrased, it is claim to scientific status.

Sometimes this represents a pure positivist approach in terms of its research methods. I mean the social facts are assumed to be out there to be amenable to pure observation and analyzed on the model of natural science.

This kind of thing happens to any theory and it is not a fault peculiar to a structuralist practice. What is rather more interesting is the structuralist version of science represented in much structuralist thought. You know positivism I mean supremacy of sciences over, natural sciences over, non-sciences and so on. Positivists always believed in a unilinear relationship between observation and theory and in observations lead to theory generation, theories are observation dependent whereas, observations are theory independent. You know these I mean the positivists I mean the scientific stage, which suggests that there must be a dichotomy between fact and value, I mean all methodological monism, inductivism, I mean the method of science is method of induction and so on.

All systematic verifiability and so on we have already discussed this in the initial lectures, what we normally assume when we hear the word science in English?

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- We normally assume, when we hear the word "science" in English, that it refers to the natural sciences, or to methods which are based on those of the natural sciences.
- What generally lies behind this is what we can loosely call an empiricist model of Science: Science as taking its starting-point from what is believed to be empirical reality, which literally means the reality available to the senses.
- We can observe and experiment with this reality and attempt to build up valid generalisations about its behaviour.

Science

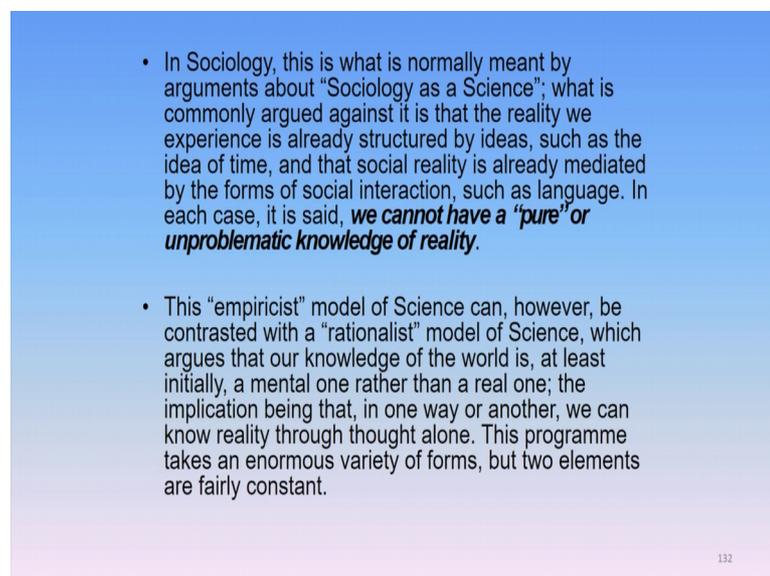
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That it refers to the natural sciences or 2 methods which are based on those of the natural sciences. What generally lies behind these is what we can loosely call an imprecist model of science? That is a method of the method of science is the method of index and when I say inductivism is based on empiricism empiricism is based on experience.

That is why I said, what generally lies behind this such argument that that science refers to the natural sciences or to methods, which are based on those of the natural sciences. What generally lies behind such conceptualization is that is what we can loosely call an empiricist model of science? Science is taking it is stating point from what is believed to be empirical reality or experience, which literally means the reality available to us available to the senses.

We can observe and experience with this reality and attempt to build up valid generalizations about it is behaviour.

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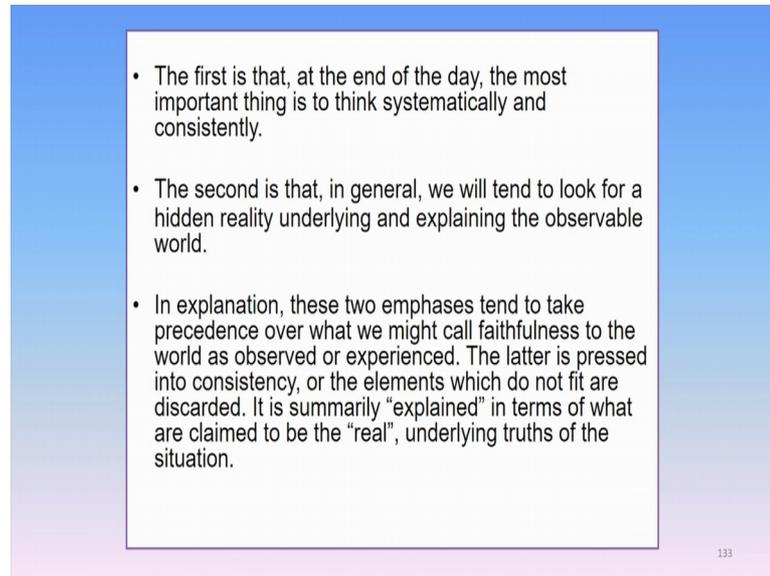
- In Sociology, this is what is normally meant by arguments about “Sociology as a Science”; what is commonly argued against it is that the reality we experience is already structured by ideas, such as the idea of time, and that social reality is already mediated by the forms of social interaction, such as language. In each case, it is said, ***we cannot have a “pure” or unproblematic knowledge of reality.***
- This “empiricist” model of Science can, however, be contrasted with a “rationalist” model of Science, which argues that our knowledge of the world is, at least initially, a mental one rather than a real one; the implication being that, in one way or another, we can know reality through thought alone. This programme takes an enormous variety of forms, but two elements are fairly constant.

In sociology, this is what is normally meant by arguments about “Sociology as a Science”; what is commonly argued against it is that the reality we experience is already structured by ideas, such as the idea of time, and that social reality is already mediated by the forms of social interaction.

Such as language ok. In each case it is said we cannot have a pure or unproblematic knowledge of reality. In this case we cannot have a pure observation we I repeat in each case it is said we cannot have a pure or unproblematic knowledge of reality. And this empiricist model of science can nevertheless be contrasted with a rationalist model of science, which argues that our knowledge of the world is at least initially a mental one rather than a real one.

The implication of being that in one way or another, we can know reality through thought alone this program takes an enormous variety of forms, but 2 elements are fairly constant.

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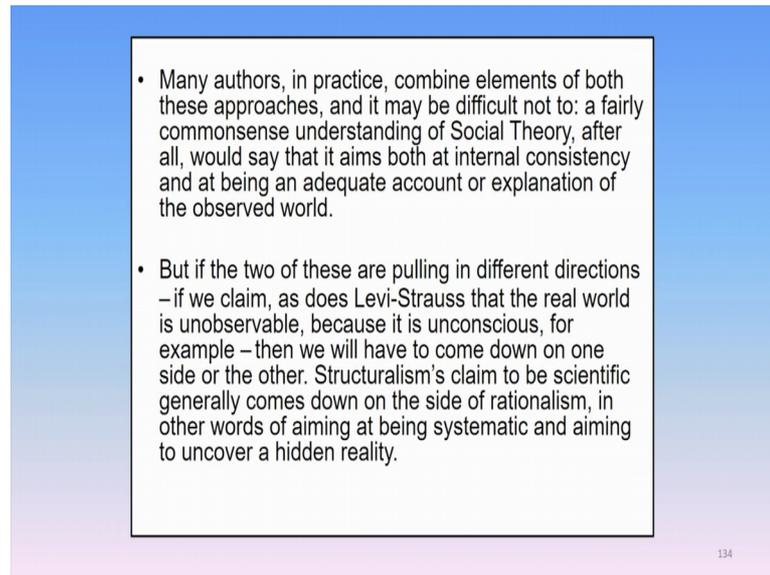
- The first is that, at the end of the day, the most important thing is to think systematically and consistently.
- The second is that, in general, we will tend to look for a hidden reality underlying and explaining the observable world.
- In explanation, these two emphases tend to take precedence over what we might call faithfulness to the world as observed or experienced. The latter is pressed into consistency, or the elements which do not fit are discarded. It is summarily "explained" in terms of what are claimed to be the "real", underlying truths of the situation.

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The first is that at the end of the day the most important thing is to think systematically and consistently. The first is that at the end of the day the most important thing is to think systematically and consistently. That is why we all I mean I mean in research methods, we always say that no one must deploy both empiricist as well as rationalistic methods of science systematically and consistently.

Thus the second is that in general we will tend to look for a hidden reality underlying and explaining the observable world ok. We are not going to look at unobservable world. In explanation these two emphases tend to take precedence over what we might call faithfulness to the world as observed or experienced ok. The latter in the second one is pressed into consistency or the elements which do not fit are discarded, that is why we always say that no one must make consistent explanation.

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- Many authors, in practice, combine elements of both these approaches, and it may be difficult not to: a fairly commonsense understanding of Social Theory, after all, would say that it aims both at internal consistency and at being an adequate account or explanation of the observed world.
- But if the two of these are pulling in different directions – if we claim, as does Levi-Strauss that the real world is unobservable, because it is unconscious, for example – then we will have to come down on one side or the other. Structuralism's claim to be scientific generally comes down on the side of rationalism, in other words of aiming at being systematic and aiming to uncover a hidden reality.

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It is summarily explained in terms of what are claimed to be the real underlying truths of the situation. Many authors many thinkers in practice combine elements of both these approaches, both impressive as well as rationalism. I mean in other words both inductivism as well as hypothesisism, but and it may be difficult not to a fairly common sense understanding of social theory after all would say that it aims both at internal consistency and at being an adequate account or explanation of the observed world.

But if we if the two of these are pulling in different directions, if we claim as does Levi Strauss that the real world is unobservable only the idea ok. Because it is unconscious for example, then we will have to come down on one side or the other, structuralisms claim to be scientific generally comes down on the side of rationalism. In other words of aiming at being systematic and aiming to uncover a hidden reality this is very important.

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- This sense of the word "Science" is rather more widespread in Continental languages, which are capable of describing Literary Criticism, Theology and so on as "Sciences": what is meant is not that they represent an equivalent to Physics or Chemistry, but that they are systematic in approach.
- If we add that the hidden reality which is aimed at or discovered is likely to be a mental one (given that the rationalist is explicitly taking their own thought as the starting-point or indeed the totality of all that is known), we can see the fit between this model of Scientific Rationalism and Structuralism as a systematic ordering of mental categories.

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And this sense of the word science is rather more widespread in continental languages, which are capable of describing literary criticism theology and so on as sciences. What is meant is not that they represent an equivalent to physics or chemistry, but that they are systematic in approach.

If we add that the reality which is hidden that is aimed at or discovered is likely to be a mental one, given that the rationalist is explicitly taking their own thought as the starting point or indeed the totality of all that is known, we can see the fit between this model of scientific rationalism and structuralism as a systematic ordering of mental categories.

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- Althusser's scientific rationalism is in some ways even more thorough-going than Levi-Strauss': while he claims that there is a real world out there to which theory in some sense corresponds, scientific method has absolutely no need of empirical verification.
- Martin Jay summarises Althusser's conception of science very well: "Science, he claimed, operates on the level of conceptual production in which experimental verification plays no role; it is nonetheless materialist because it posits an ultimate congruence between thought objects and a real world. The raw material for scientific activity is provided by ideological conceptions of the world, the 'facts' that positivists innocently take as the givens of existence" (*Marxism and Totality*, p.401). In other words, scientific activity consists of the progressive refining, rethinking and systematising of everyday ("ideological") knowledge of the world; in Althusser's own practice this takes the form of a scholastic project in which an ever-decreasing selection of Marx's work is examined and rethought in order to produce what is presumably an ever-purer form of scientific knowledge.



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But actually that is not I mean Althusser scientific rationalism is in some way even more thoroughgoing than Levi Strauss. While he claims I mean Althusser claims that there is a real world out there to which theory in some sense corresponds scientific method has absolutely no need of empirical verification.

I mean for example, Martin Jay summarizes Althusser's concepts and of science very well; let me read it out read it out read it out I mean this is a court ok, that science Althusser claimed operates on the level of conceptual production in which experimental verification plays no role. It is nonetheless materialist because it posits an ultimate congruence between thought objects and a real world.

The raw material for scientific activity is provided by ideological conceptions of the world the facts that positivists innocently take as the givens of existence. In other words scientific activity consists of the progressive refining rethinking and systematizing of everyday knowledge of the world, I mean maybe ideological and political knowledge of the world in Althusser's own practice this takes the form of a scholastic process scholastic project, in which an ever decreasing selection of Marxist work is examined and rethought in order to produce what is presumably an ever pure or a form of scientific knowledge ok.

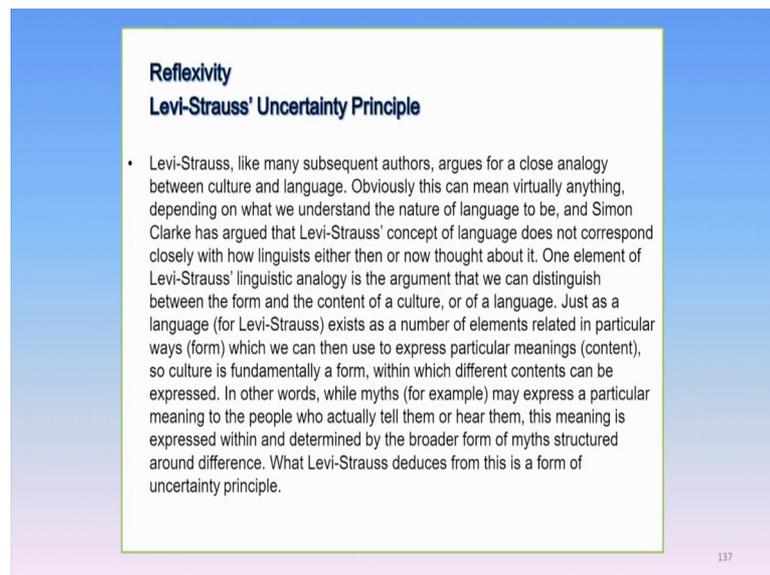
This is this is very important in the context of science ok. And the way both Levi Strauss and particularly Louis Althusser tried to bring about a different meaning of science,

different relation of science, I mean different notion of science, I mean where we find that that science is situated our science posits ok, an ultimate congruence between thought objects in a real world ok.

It mediates between thought objects and the world of reality and if thought object I mean if science can mediate between thought objects in a real world. This contributes immensely to our critical engagement with modernity ok. Because science is not simply about ideas or reality, but science is able to mediate between ideas and social, political, economic, realities ok; that is what martin j in Marxism and totality referred to.

Now let us see how Levi Strauss contributes to the domain of critical modernist paradigm in sociology through the lens of reflexivity this is very important ok.

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Reflexivity
Levi-Strauss' Uncertainty Principle

- Levi-Strauss, like many subsequent authors, argues for a close analogy between culture and language. Obviously this can mean virtually anything, depending on what we understand the nature of language to be, and Simon Clarke has argued that Levi-Strauss' concept of language does not correspond closely with how linguists either then or now thought about it. One element of Levi-Strauss' linguistic analogy is the argument that we can distinguish between the form and the content of a culture, or of a language. Just as a language (for Levi-Strauss) exists as a number of elements related in particular ways (form) which we can then use to express particular meanings (content), so culture is fundamentally a form, within which different contents can be expressed. In other words, while myths (for example) may express a particular meaning to the people who actually tell them or hear them, this meaning is expressed within and determined by the broader form of myths structured around difference. What Levi-Strauss deduces from this is a form of uncertainty principle.

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Levi Strauss says uncertainty principle that is why we generally refer to this is very important. Levi Strauss I mean I mean when I say Levi Strausses uncertainty principle, I mean the last point that I want to mention in this lecture is perhaps a minor one, but it is unusual and perhaps worth bearing in mind. Levi Strauss what is that I mean Levi Strauss like many subsequent authors argues for a close analogy between culture and language.

As you have already noticed linguistic analogy I mean I quickly I will refer to how Lev's Strauss tried to bring about bring about an analogy between culture and culture and

language, if you if you slightly recall in earlier lectures in the context of holism or totality in the context of difference ok.

The way we discussed how essentially Levi Strauss performs two operations in his account of human culture, on the one hand Levi Strauss employed a linguistic analogy to treat culture ok. Not just as a system of relations, but as a system of symbolic relations such as myths.

And on secondly, using the same linguistic analogy Levi Strauss aims at a purely formal description of the various elements involved in particular myths. In other words Levi Strauss sets out to describe structure, but not content ok. They are in lies a close analogy between culture and language that is we have discussed how what this leads to is an argument there is an objective meaning in human culture, which is revealed by structure, which is other than the subjective meaning revealed by content?

Since nevertheless this objective meaning cannot be straightforwardly shown, to be present in a particular myth once we bracket any question of the way people say, they understand it or the contexts that they tell it in it has to be located within the unconscious.

In other words from a description of social relations we move to a description of the nature of the human psyche what Levi Strauss claims to be the central feature of the human unconscious claim, which he believes to be backed up by a linguistics. Is naturally enough identical with the concept he uses to analyze the objective meaning in of the form of the myths this concept is that of difference or distinction ok. For Levi Strauss then the end of the intellectual journey is a description of the social and in particular cultural world as a reflection of the supposed tendency of the human brain to divide things up we have we have discussed this.

Now, we are I mean I try to go back a little to foreground the problematic of the analogy between culture and language ok; obviously, this can imply virtually anything if I have to discuss Levi Strausses, argument for a close analogy between culture and language. It may mean virtually anything depending on what we understand the nature of language to be and Simon Clark has argued that Levi Strausses concept of language does not does not correspond closely with how linguists either then or now thought about it.

One element of Levi Strauss is linguistic analogy is the argument that we can distinguish between the form and the content of a culture or of a language; just as a language according to Levi Strauss exists as a number of elements related in particular ways or forms I mean the form the forum ok. Which we can use to express particular meanings, I mean the content. So, culture is fundamentally of fall within which different contents can be expressed.

In other words while myths for example, may express a particular meaning to the people who actually tell them or hear them this meaning is expressed within and determined by the broader form of myths structured around difference or distinction. What Levi Strauss deduces from this is a form of uncertainty principle.

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- Whereas in Physics, we may be in a position where we can measure light as a particle, or as a wave, but not as both simultaneously, in Anthropology or Sociology. For Levi-Strauss, we can know the content of a culture, or its form, but not both at the same time. In other words, we can think about the way a culture is structured, and indeed about the way culture as a whole is structured; this is like thinking about the syntactical structure of language. And like thinking about the syntax of a language, it cannot be done at the same time as thinking about the content or meaning. This means that we can study the structure of a culture with one method, or we can study the actual cultural meanings which are expressed with another method, but we cannot study both at the same time, because a study of actual meanings presupposes a knowledge of the structure with which those meanings are expressed. We can think about current meanings within our culture; we can stand back and think about our culture as a whole. We can even think about a foreign culture. But we cannot think about the meanings expressed within a foreign culture, because we lack the necessary knowledge of its structure.

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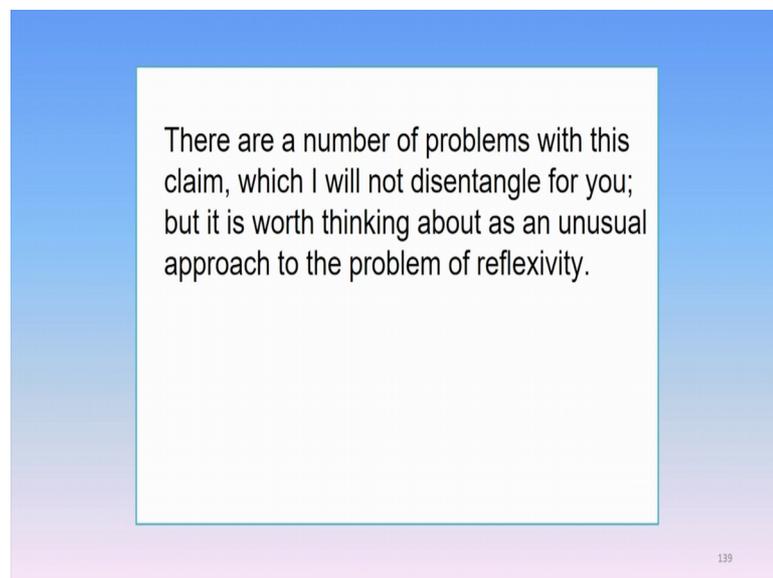
Where as in physics we may be in a position, where we can measure light as a particle or as a wave, but not as both simultaneously in anthropology I mean I mean if I have to say this I mean I have to put it this way whereas, in whereas, in physics we may be in a position where we can measure light as a particle or as a wave, but not as both simultaneously in anthropology or sociology for Levi Strauss we can know the content of a culture or it is form, but not both at the same time.

In other words we can think about the way a culture is structured and indeed about the way culture, as a holy structure, this is like thinking about the syntactical structure of a language ok. And like thinking about the syntax of a language, it cannot be done at the

same time as thinking about the content or meaning. This implies that we can study the structure of a culture with one method or we can study the actual cultural meanings which are expressed with another method, but we cannot study both at the same time, because the study of actual meanings presupposes our knowledge of the structure with which those meanings are expressed.

We can think about current meanings within our culture, we can stand back and think about our culture as a whole, we can even think about a foreign culture, but we cannot think about the meanings expressed within a foreign culture for Levi Strauss uncertainty principle.

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Because we lack the necessary knowledge of its structure of course; obviously, there are a number of problems with this claim which I will not disentangle for you, but it is worth thinking about as an unusual approach to the problem of reflexivity ok. This is important to understand then if I have to if we have to just recapitulate, the this entire module of ultra-modernism ultra relationalism, the structuralist case or the structuralist interpretation ok.

Through the works of Levi Strauss and will Louis Althusser we must what we have then discussed will see.

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Ultra-modernism: The Structuralist Interpretation

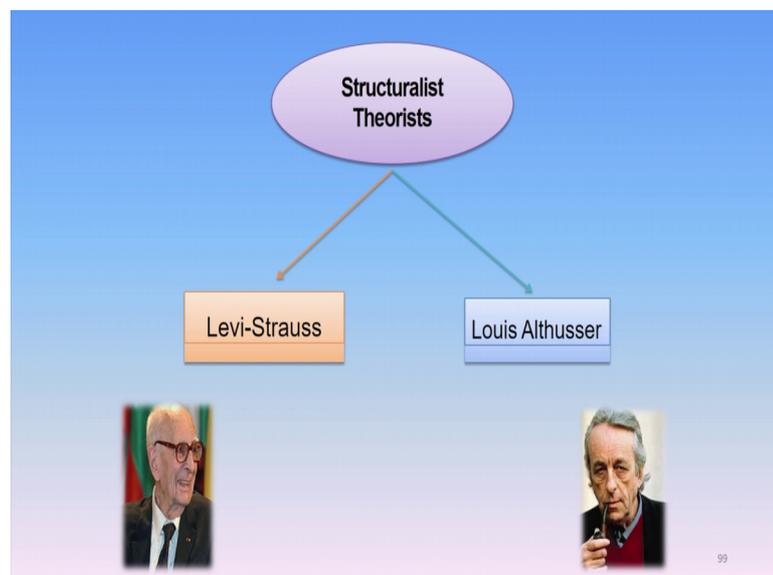
- Structuralism's claim to be considered a form to *critical* modernism – more *tenuous*.
- While much structuralism claims to be “Marxist”, very often it appears rather more as an incorporation of Marxism into a rather more affirmative form of modernism.
- This is particularly evident in the difficulties structuralist thought faces in coming to terms with reflexivity, as well as its consequent explicit or implicit flirtation with positivism.

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We have we started this module like I mean how structuralisms claims to be considered a form to critical modernism is a more tenuous one ok. While much structuralism claims to be Marxist very often it appears rather more as an incorporation of Marxism into a rather more affirmative mode of modernism ok.

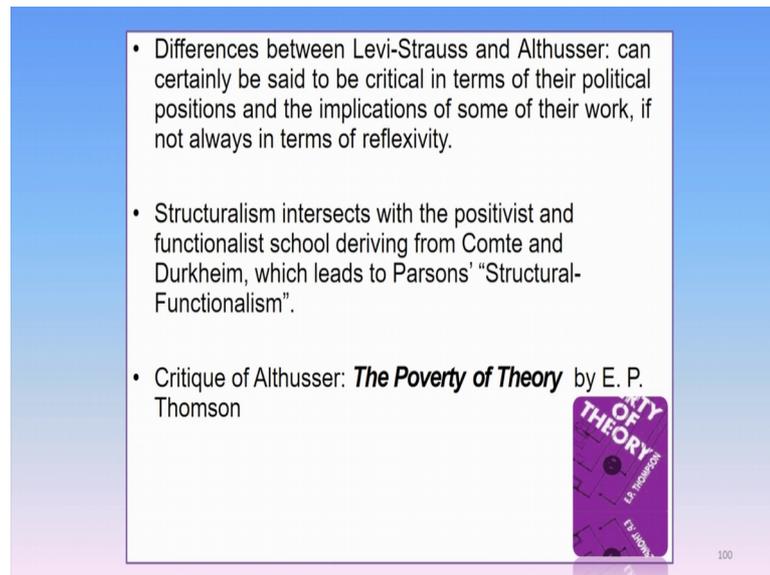
This is particularly evident in the difficulties structuralist thought faces in coming to terms with reflexivity as well as it is consequent explicit or implicit flirtation with positivism.

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And Levi Strauss and Louis Althusser they are the main proponents or they contributed immensely to the to or rather put it putting it differently that, we try to examine the contributions of a structuralism through the to the debates on critical modernist paradigm in sociology through the works of Levi Strauss and Louis Althusser ok.

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- Differences between Levi-Strauss and Althusser: can certainly be said to be critical in terms of their political positions and the implications of some of their work, if not always in terms of reflexivity.
- Structuralism intersects with the positivist and functionalist school deriving from Comte and Durkheim, which leads to Parsons' "Structural-Functionalism".
- Critique of Althusser: *The Poverty of Theory* by E. P. Thomson



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We have discussed the differences between Levi Strauss and Althusser, I mean they can certainly be said to be critical in terms of their political positions, and the implications of some of their work, if not always in terms of reflexivity and there is a close intersectionality between structuralism positivism and functionalism, deriving from Comte and Durkheim which leads to Parsonian structural functional.

When we and then we discussed the works of Levi Strauss and Louis Althusser and their contributions to critical modernist paradigm in sociology through the lenses of holism or totality, reflexivity rationality and social movements in holism or totality.

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- In structuralism, relationship takes off and becomes fully independent: it is no longer human beings who relate with each other, but the fact of relationship which first creates the social and cultural individual out of an amorphous biological mass.
- What does it imply?
- We can only know the social, in other words the relational, and that “the individual” or “human nature” are therefore metaphysical concepts in the strict sense that we cannot know them.

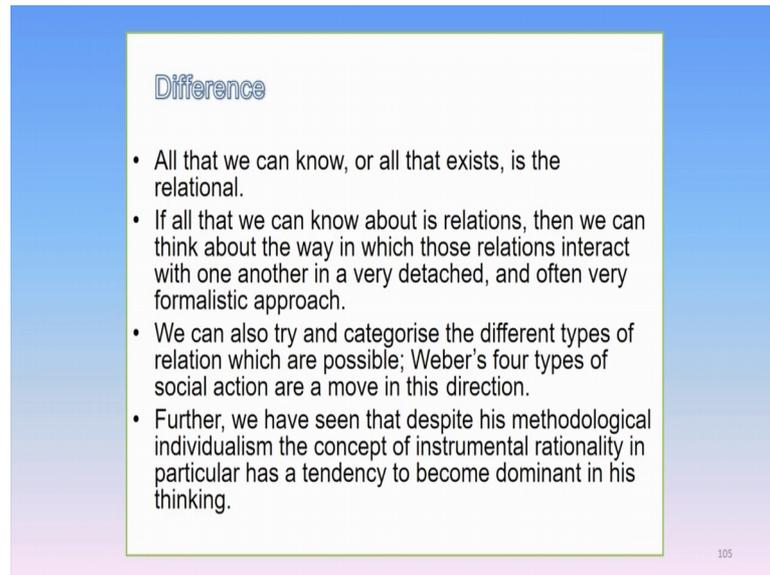
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We have discussed relationalism and the death of the subject or the death of the author and there we have discussed how in structuralism, relationship takes often becomes fully independent; it is no longer human beings who relate with each other, but the fact of relationship which first creates the social and cultural individual out of an amorphous biological mass.

We can only know the social in other words the relational and that the individual or human nature are therefore, metaphysical concepts in a structuralist case in the strict sense that we cannot know them. And then we have also discussed how Althusser argues that the category of the subject is the constitutive category of all ideology and our illusionary subjectivity generates ideology and ideology reproduces our illusions of subjectivity.

Then indifference what we have discussed I mean all that we can know or all that exists is the relational ok.

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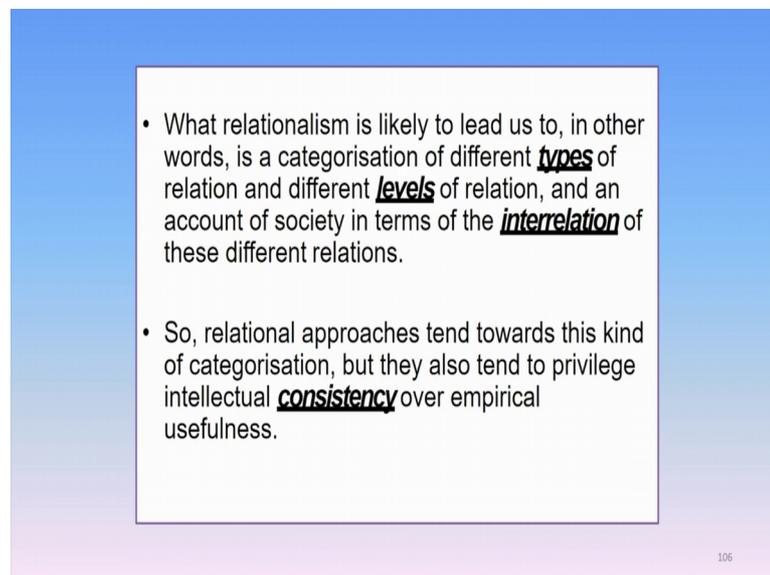
The slide is titled "Difference" and contains a bulleted list of four points. The text is as follows:

- All that we can know, or all that exists, is the relational.
- If all that we can know about is relations, then we can think about the way in which those relations interact with one another in a very detached, and often very formalistic approach.
- We can also try and categorise the different types of relation which are possible; Weber's four types of social action are a move in this direction.
- Further, we have seen that despite his methodological individualism the concept of instrumental rationality in particular has a tendency to become dominant in his thinking.

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If all that we can know about is relations, then we can think about the way in which those relations interact with one another in a very detached and often very formalistic approach.

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The slide contains a bulleted list of two points. The text is as follows:

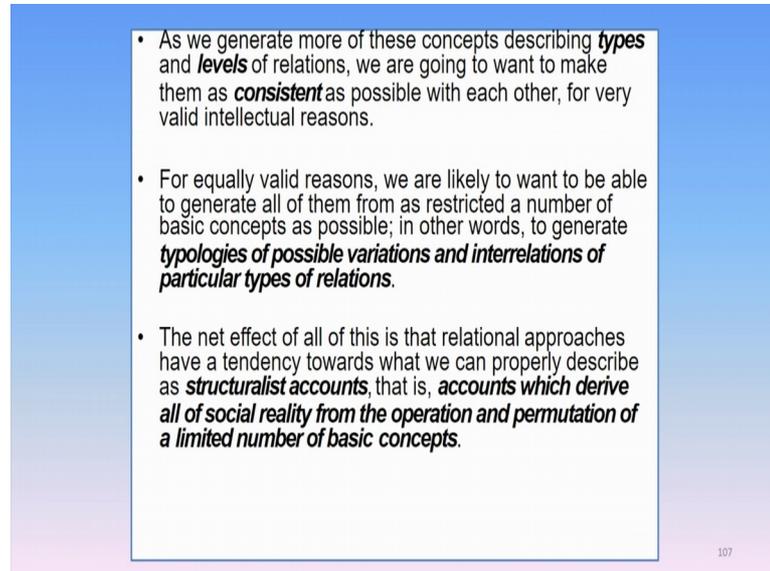
- What relationalism is likely to lead us to, in other words, is a categorisation of different **types** of relation and different **levels** of relation, and an account of society in terms of the **interrelation** of these different relations.
- So, relational approaches tend towards this kind of categorisation, but they also tend to privilege intellectual **consistency** over empirical usefulness.

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We can also try and categorize the different types of relation, which are possible and also levels of relation, we will see I mean what relationalism is likely to lead us to in other words is a categorization of different types of relation and different levels of relation and an account of society in terms of the inter relation of these different relations.

So, relational approaches tend towards this kind of categorization, but they also tend to privilege intellectual consistency over empirical usefulness we have discussed this.

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- As we generate more of these concepts describing **types** and **levels** of relations, we are going to want to make them as **consistent** as possible with each other, for very valid intellectual reasons.
- For equally valid reasons, we are likely to want to be able to generate all of them from as restricted a number of basic concepts as possible; in other words, to generate **typologies of possible variations and interrelations of particular types of relations**.
- The net effect of all of this is that relational approaches have a tendency towards what we can properly describe as **structuralist accounts**, that is, **accounts which derive all of social reality from the operation and permutation of a limited number of basic concepts**.

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Then we have also mentioned discussed how as we generate more of these concepts describing types and levels of relations, we are going to want to make them as consistent as possible with each other for very valid intellectual reasons when I say, consistency I mean we must generate typologies of possible variations and interrelations of particular types of relations ok. These accounts which derive all of social reality from the from the operation and permutation of a limited number of basic concepts ok.

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- Because this core concept, from which our description of society is generated, is a highly intellectual one, this is very likely to produce **a form of philosophical idealism: a theory which treats the (social) world as generated from ideas, and in this case from a single idea.**
- While there are dramatic differences in the content, the **structure** of our account of society is likely to be very similar whatever idea we start from; in some ways **Althusser's** account, not of actual modes of production but of the **idea** of modes of production, and **Levi-Strauss'** account of culture oriented around **difference**, produce quite similar ways of thinking.



108

Then we have discussed philosophical ideologies, I mean a theory, which treats the social world as generated from ideas and in this case from a single idea. I mean the structure of our account of society is likely to be very similar whatever idea we start from in some ways Althusser's account not of actual modes of production, but of the idea of modes of production and Levi Strauss's account of culture oriented around difference or distinction produced quite similar ways of thinking.

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Levi-Strauss performs **two** operations in his account of human culture:



- Levi-Strauss employs a linguistic analogy to treat culture, not just as a system of relations, but as a system of symbolic relations, such as myths.
- Using the same linguistic analogy, Levi-Strauss aims at a purely formal description of the various elements involved in particular myths; in other words, Levi-Strauss sets out to describe structure but not the content.



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That is how we have discussed how Levi Strauss performs two operations in his account of human culture, I mean by deploying linguistic analogy to treat culture not as a system of relations, but as a system of symbolic relations such as myths.

And using the same linguistic analogy Levi Strauss aims at a purely formal description of the various elements involved in particular myths. In other words Levi Strauss sets out to describe structure, but not the content ok.

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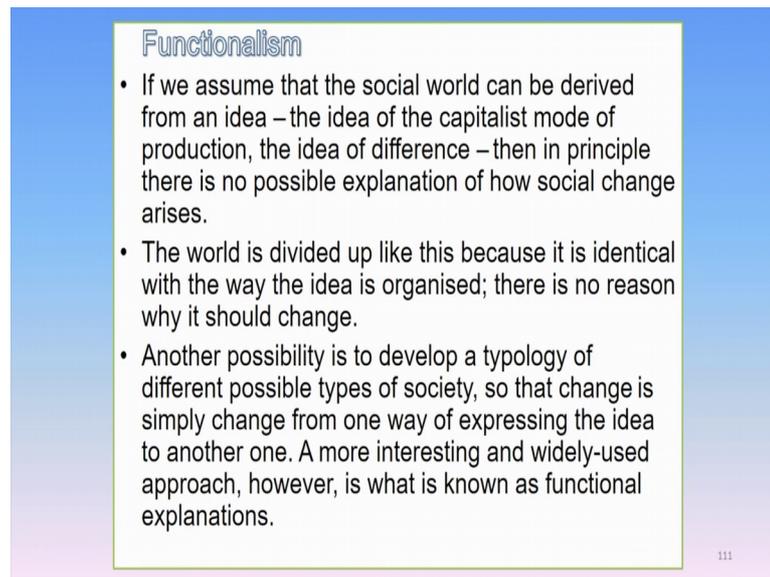
- What this leads to is an argument that there is an **objective meaning** in human culture (revealed by **structure**) which is other than the **subjective meaning** (revealed by **content**).
- Since, however, this objective meaning cannot be straightforwardly shown to be present in a particular myth once we bracket any question of the way people say they understand it or the contexts they tell it in, it has to be located within the unconscious. In other words, **from a description of social relations we move to a description of the nature of the human psyche**.
- To complete this account, what Levi-Strauss claims to be the central feature of the human unconscious – a claim which he believes to be backed up by linguistics – is naturally enough identical with the concept he uses to analyse the objective meaning of the form of myths; this concept is that of **difference** or **distinction**. For Levi-Strauss, then, the end of the intellectual journey is a description of the social and in particular cultural world as a reflection of the supposed tendency of the human brain to divide things up.

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I mean what this leads to is an argument that there is an objective meaning in human culture revealed by structure, which is other than the subjective meaning revealed by content. Now we make a transition from a description of social relations to a description of the of the of the human psyche.

What Levi Strauss claims to be the central feature of the human unconscious a claim, which he believes to be backed up by linguists linguistics is naturally enough identical with the concept he uses to analyse, the objective meaning of the form of myths this concept is that of difference or [description/distinction].

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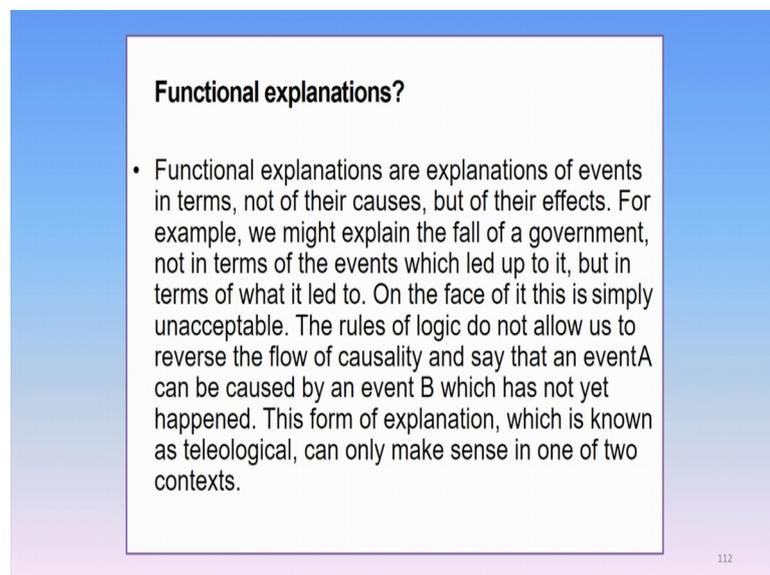
Functionalism

- If we assume that the social world can be derived from an idea – the idea of the capitalist mode of production, the idea of difference – then in principle there is no possible explanation of how social change arises.
- The world is divided up like this because it is identical with the way the idea is organised; there is no reason why it should change.
- Another possibility is to develop a typology of different possible types of society, so that change is simply change from one way of expressing the idea to another one. A more interesting and widely-used approach, however, is what is known as functional explanations.

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This is very important then in functionalism we have discussed how the complementarity and reciprocity of roles in the social division of labour and so on ok.

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Functional explanations?

- Functional explanations are explanations of events in terms, not of their causes, but of their effects. For example, we might explain the fall of a government, not in terms of the events which led up to it, but in terms of what it led to. On the face of it this is simply unacceptable. The rules of logic do not allow us to reverse the flow of causality and say that an event A can be caused by an event B which has not yet happened. This form of explanation, which is known as teleological, can only make sense in one of two contexts.

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And then we have we have discussed what are functional explanations?

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• One is, if event A is caused by a prior event alpha, which is somebody's intention with regard to the future. We can certainly argue that a government fell because someone wanted to form a different government and thus forced the collapse of the current government.

• However, intention and effect are two different things: the intention to bring about event B may not in fact be realised, and our action in causing event A may have completely different results. This is generally characterised as "unintended consequences", and it is clear from Weber's account of instrumental rationality as a method we adopt as a means to a particular goal, but which then becomes an end in itself. So an intentional explanation can only work where the person with the intention is in fact not just all-powerful but has total knowledge of the context of their action; in other words, where they are God. Much mediaeval thought is teleological in this sense: events are explained in terms of God's plans for the future of the world.

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I mean teleological explanations ok.

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• Apart from intentional explanations, there is one other form of potentially valid explanation in terms of effects, which is the argument known as **Functionalism**; it is represented, for example, by the claim that such-and-such a thing happens "because the economy needs it" or "because of the interests of capital"

• Note that this is quite different from an explanation in terms of the perceived needs of the economy (as seen by the government, by the electors or by individual managers). It is also different from a simple explanation in terms of compatibility: by definition, if a form of state is incompatible with a form of economic organisation, they will not coexist – **but this says nothing about the reasons for their incompatibility or the mechanism which prevents their coexistence.**

114

And how structuralist interpretation of modernity does not treat the specific elements of modernity though, it is a modern one in that is what we have also discussed in the while dwelling up in modernity ok.

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Modernity?

- How does radical relationalism lead to structuralism as a holistic account of society, and also indicate the well-known difficulty that structuralism has with explaining change?
- The last feature of holism that is worth mentioning here is the concept of modernity expressed in structuralism.
- While structuralism is strongly modernist in its approach, it does not treat modernity as a key term: it is itself modern, but it is not very interested in the specificity of the modern. There are obvious reasons for this: if society consists of a structure of relations deriving from a single key concept, it is hard to see how we can have dramatically different types of society.



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I mean how does radical relationalism lead to structuralism as a holistic account of society and also indicate the well-known difficulty that structuralism has with explaining change ok.

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- This is a problem for **Levi-Strauss**, who derives the organisation of culture from the biological structure of the unconscious brain, in other words from something which, if it changes at all, does so over enormously long periods of time. Unsurprisingly, Levi-Strauss' work, as was at the time the general practice among anthropologists, was largely devoted to the study of what were seen as "traditional" societies, and his concept of the modern is largely defined against these.
- **To an extent, it seems that he treats the modern as an aberration, an unnatural separation of culture and nature, and doomed to destruction for that reason.** This may be appealing as a political position, but it does not really deal with the problem, and later structuralists have tried to show that modern culture can also be analysed in the terms that Levi-Strauss uses for "traditional" culture.

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Then, we have discussed how to an extent it seems that a Levi Strauss treats the modern as an aberration an unnatural separation of culture and nature doomed to destruction for that reason.

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Althusser, by contrast, fits modernity into a static typology in which it is effectively simply one variant on a pattern. This derives from his version of Marxism, which replaces the crude version of economic determinism found in vulgar Marxism – the argument that everything else can simply be reduced to the economic – with a more sophisticated analysis of different levels of social life, including the economic, the political and the ideological. Each of these, for Althusser, can be described as "relatively autonomous": in other words, it has a logic of its own, and cannot simply be reduced to the economic.



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Althusser by contrast fits modernity into a static technology in which it is effectively since one variant on a pattern ok.

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Thus, Althusser's model of the social totality is that of a "decentred whole". However, the economic is "determinant in the last instance", in other words, it has the final say. Since "the last instance never comes", though, it is the interaction which is most important. Incidentally, this tension between "determination in the last instance" and the insistence that "the last instance never comes" is one of the major theoretical problems of Althusser's holism.



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That is why, I used the term vulgar Marxism in this sense and we have also discussed how Althusser's model of the social reality is that of a decentred whole, I mean all economic, political, and ideological things are more important ok, but, but the economic is the determinant in the last instance in other words it has the final say since the last instance never comes though it is the interaction, which is most important, incidentally

this tension between [determinants/ determination] in the last instance and the insistence that the last instance, never comes is one of the major theoretical problems of Althusser's holism or totality.

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Social movements
Ideology and function

- As with social change, so with social movements structuralism has remarkably little to contribute. This derives partly from the "death of the subject": if human agency is simply an illusion, then social movements can be explained either in terms of a functional contribution to social change (particularly in the case of the workers' movement) or, more commonly, as an ideological reaction against social change (particularly in the case of the new social movements).



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Then we have discussed social movements and within social movements we have discussed ideology and function and within ideology and function, we have discussed the differences between workers movements and new social movements and then we have discussed the emergence of 2 Marxism's.

And in the case of rationality we have discussed the meaning of science ok. And is particularly Althusser's account of account of a modernist construal of science, I mean science always mediates between the objects of the I mean the way Althusser suggested that no science always mediates between the taught objects.

And the world of reality and then in reflexivity, we have discussed Levi Strauss's uncertainty principle ok. I mean how Levi Strauss argues for a close analogy between culture and language, it is very important I mean one element of a Levi Strauss is linguistic analogy is the argument that we can distinguish between the form and the content of a culture or of a language ok.

I have that uncertainty principle we have discussed and in I mean, we end with the and we end this module of the structuralist interpretation of critical modernist paradigm in sociology with this lecture.

In the next lecture we are going to discuss the Western Marxist perspectives on critical modernist paradigm in sociology, what I say society as a human creation within that we are going to discuss. We are going to examine the contributions of Western Marxist especially the works of Lou Cox Graham C and a train through the lenses of those four critical I mean central, philosophical, and political foundations of modernity namely a holism or totality, reflectivity, rationality and social movements ok.

Thank you.