



الكلية: الآداب

القسم او الفرع: اللغة الانكليزية

المرحلة: الرابع

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اسم المادة باللغة الإنكليزية: **Literary Criticism**

اسم المحاضرة السادسة باللغة العربية: الحداثة وما بعدالحداثة

اسم المحاضرة السادسة باللغة الإنكليزية: **Modernism + Postmodernism**

## Modernism and Postmodernism

### Modern criticism

Modern criticism refers to the practice of evaluating and analyzing works of art, literature, film, music, and other cultural artifacts using contemporary theoretical and critical frameworks. It is a broad field that encompasses a range of disciplines, including literary theory, cultural studies, film studies, musicology, and art history.

Modern criticism emerged in the 20th century as a response to the changing cultural and political landscape of the time. It challenged traditional approaches to criticism, which were often focused on authorial intent or biographical interpretation, and instead sought to examine works of art in the context of their social, historical, and cultural significance.

Some of the key movements in modern criticism include structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, feminism, postcolonialism, queer theory, and critical race theory. These approaches have helped to broaden the scope of criticism, bringing attention to issues of power, identity, and representation in cultural production.

Modern criticism is an ongoing and evolving practice, with new theories and approaches constantly emerging in response to changing cultural trends and societal issues. Its goal is to provide a deeper understanding of cultural artifacts and their significance, and to contribute to ongoing discussions about the role of culture in shaping our worldviews and social realities.

### Assumptions of Modern Criticism

Modern criticism is based on a number of key assumptions that inform its approach to analyzing and interpreting cultural artifacts. These assumptions include:

1. Artifacts are products of culture: Modern criticism assumes that cultural artifacts, including literature, film, music, and art, are products of their cultural context. They are not created in a vacuum, but are shaped by the historical, social, and political forces that surround them.

2. Multiple interpretations are possible: Modern criticism assumes that cultural artifacts can be interpreted in a variety of ways, depending on the perspective of the critic and the context in which the artifact is analyzed.
3. Artifacts are not fixed or static: Modern criticism assumes that cultural artifacts are not fixed or static, but can be understood as dynamic and evolving. They can be interpreted and reinterpreted in new ways as cultural values and perspectives change over time.
4. Power and politics shape cultural production: Modern criticism assumes that cultural production is shaped by power relations and political structures. It seeks to uncover how these structures shape the meaning and significance of cultural artifacts, and to explore how cultural production can reinforce or challenge these power relations.
5. Context is essential for understanding meaning: Modern criticism assumes that understanding the context in which cultural artifacts were produced is essential for understanding their meaning and significance. This includes understanding the historical, social, and cultural context, as well as the author's intentions and the intended audience.

Overall, modern criticism seeks to move beyond traditional approaches to criticism, which often focused on authorial intent or biographical interpretation, and instead examines cultural artifacts in the context of their broader cultural significance. It is a dynamic and evolving field that continues to challenge and expand our understanding of cultural production and its role in shaping our worldviews and social realities.

## **Historical Development of Structuralism**

Structuralism is a theoretical approach to understanding human culture and behavior that emerged in the mid-20th century. It originated in linguistics, but quickly spread to other fields, including anthropology, literary studies, psychology, and philosophy.

The historical development of structuralism can be traced back to the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist who lived from 1857 to 1913. Saussure's ideas about language and its structure had a profound influence on the development of structuralism. He argued that language is not simply a collection of words and their meanings, but a system of relationships between signs and symbols. Saussure distinguished between the signifier (the sound or image of a word) and the signified (the concept or idea that the word represents), and he

suggested that meaning is created through the relationships between these two elements.

The structuralist approach was further developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss, a French anthropologist who lived from 1908 to 2009. Lévi-Strauss applied Saussure's ideas to the study of human culture, arguing that culture is a system of relationships between different elements, such as myths, kinship structures, and social practices. He argued that the structures of human culture can be analyzed using binary oppositions, such as male/female, nature/culture, and raw/cooked. Lévi-Strauss also developed the idea of structuralism as a method of analysis that seeks to uncover the underlying structures of human culture.

In literature, structuralism was popularized by the work of Roland Barthes, a French literary theorist who lived from 1915 to 1980. Barthes applied structuralist ideas to the study of literature, arguing that texts are systems of signs that can be analyzed in terms of their underlying structures. He also introduced the idea of "the death of the author," which suggests that the meaning of a text is not fixed by the intentions of the author, but is instead created through the relationships between the signs and symbols within the text itself.

Overall, the historical development of structuralism was shaped by a range of thinkers in different fields, who applied the ideas of Saussure to a variety of contexts. Structuralism had a profound impact on the development of literary and cultural studies, and its ideas continue to influence contemporary approaches to understanding human culture and behavior.

### **Assumptions of Structuralism**

Structuralism is a theoretical approach to understanding human culture and behavior that is based on a set of fundamental assumptions. These assumptions include:

1. **Human behavior is patterned and structured:** Structuralism assumes that human behavior is not random or chaotic, but rather patterned and structured. These patterns and structures can be analyzed and understood through the study of language, culture, and social institutions.
2. **Meaning is created through relationships between elements:** Structuralism assumes that meaning is not inherent in individual elements, but rather is created through the relationships between these elements. In other words, meaning is created by the way in which elements are structured and organized.

3. Systems are self-contained and self-regulating: Structuralism assumes that systems, whether they be linguistic, cultural, or social, are self-contained and self-regulating. This means that the elements within a system are interdependent and cannot be understood in isolation from one another.
4. Binary oppositions are fundamental to human thought: Structuralism assumes that binary oppositions, such as male/female, nature/culture, and raw/cooked, are fundamental to human thought and exist in all cultures. These oppositions provide a framework for understanding the world and are reflected in language, myth, and other cultural practices.
5. The role of the individual is limited: Structuralism assumes that the role of the individual is limited in shaping culture and society. Instead, individuals are seen as products of the larger cultural and social systems in which they exist.

Overall, the assumptions of structuralism suggest that human behavior and culture can be understood through the analysis of patterns and structures that underlie them. By examining the relationships between different elements and the binary oppositions that structure them, structuralists seek to uncover the underlying systems that shape human behavior and culture.

### **Methodology of Structuralism**

The methodology of structuralism involves a set of techniques and approaches that are used to analyze the patterns and structures that underlie human behavior and culture. Some of the key aspects of the methodology of structuralism include:

1. The identification of binary oppositions: Structuralists begin their analysis by identifying the binary oppositions that structure a particular system. These might include oppositions such as male/female, nature/culture, or raw/cooked. By identifying these oppositions, structuralists can begin to understand the underlying structures and patterns of the system.
2. The analysis of language and symbols: Structuralists often use linguistic analysis as a tool for understanding the structures of human culture. They analyze the way in which language is used to create meaning, and look for patterns and structures in the use of symbols and signs.
3. The use of diagrams and charts: Structuralists often use diagrams and charts to represent the relationships between different elements within a

system. These diagrams might include things like family trees, organizational charts, or linguistic maps.

4. The emphasis on the system as a whole: Structuralism emphasizes the importance of understanding the system as a whole, rather than analyzing individual elements in isolation. This means that structuralists look for relationships and connections between different elements, rather than focusing solely on individual elements themselves.
5. The use of comparative analysis: Structuralists often use comparative analysis to understand the structures of different cultural systems. By comparing the structures of different cultures or systems, structuralists can identify common patterns and structures, as well as differences and variations.

Overall, the methodology of structuralism involves a set of techniques and approaches that are designed to uncover the underlying structures and patterns of human behavior and culture. By analyzing the way in which binary oppositions, language, symbols, and other elements are structured and organized, structuralists seek to understand the larger systems that shape human experience.

### **Deconstruction theory: From Structuralism to Poststructuralism**

Deconstruction theory is a philosophical and literary movement that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, and it can be seen as a continuation and critique of structuralism. Structuralism was a dominant movement in linguistics and anthropology in the mid-twentieth century, which aimed to uncover the underlying structures that govern human behavior and communication.

Deconstruction theory, on the other hand, argues that language is inherently unstable and that there is no fixed meaning to any text. Instead, meaning is constantly shifting and dependent on the context in which it is produced and received.

Deconstruction theory was developed by the French philosopher Jacques Derrida, who critiqued the assumptions of structuralism by highlighting the contradictions and gaps within its theories. Derrida argued that language is not a transparent medium that can be used to communicate a fixed meaning, but rather a system of signs that is constantly being reinterpreted and recontextualized.

According to Derrida, there is always a gap between what a text says and what it means, and this gap cannot be fully bridged. The meaning of a text is not

determined by the author's intention, but by the reader's interpretation, which is influenced by their own biases and cultural context.

Poststructuralism is a broader movement that includes deconstruction theory and other critical approaches that emerged in the wake of structuralism. Poststructuralism is characterized by a rejection of fixed meanings and a focus on the power relations that shape discourse and knowledge.

Poststructuralist theorists, such as Michel Foucault, argued that knowledge is not objective or neutral, but is always shaped by the social and historical context in which it is produced. Foucault's work focused on the ways in which power operates through discourse, and how knowledge is used to legitimize certain forms of power and exclude others.

Overall, deconstruction theory and poststructuralism challenge the idea of fixed meanings and encourage readers to be skeptical of the assumptions and biases that shape our understanding of the world.

Structuralism and poststructuralism are two closely related intellectual movements in philosophy, linguistics, and literary theory. Structuralism emerged in the mid-twentieth century, while poststructuralism developed in the 1960s and 1970s as a response and critique of structuralism.

Structuralism is a theoretical framework that seeks to uncover the underlying structures that govern human behavior and communication, including language, culture, and social systems. Structuralists believe that these structures are more fundamental than individual experiences or subjective meanings, and that they can be studied scientifically by analyzing their formal properties.

The key idea of structuralism is that meaning is generated by systems of signification that operate according to rules and conventions. Structuralists seek to uncover these underlying structures by analyzing texts, discourses, and cultural practices, and by identifying the formal patterns that govern them.

Poststructuralism, on the other hand, challenges the assumptions of structuralism by arguing that meaning is not fixed or stable, but rather contingent and contextual. Poststructuralists reject the idea that there are underlying structures that can be objectively studied, and instead emphasize the ways in which meaning is constantly being constructed and deconstructed through language and discourse.

Poststructuralism is often associated with the work of French philosophers such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze. Derrida's concept of "deconstruction" is a key feature of poststructuralism, which involves analyzing

texts to uncover their inherent contradictions and the multiple meanings that they contain.

Overall, poststructuralism can be seen as a continuation and critique of structuralism. While structuralism seeks to uncover the underlying structures that generate meaning, poststructuralism emphasizes the ways in which meaning is constantly being constructed and deconstructed through language and discourse, and challenges the idea of fixed meanings and objective structures.

### **Assumptions of Deconstruction**

Deconstruction is a philosophical and literary movement that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, and it is characterized by its critique of the assumptions of structuralism and its emphasis on the contingency and instability of meaning. Here are some of the key assumptions of deconstruction:

1. Language is not a transparent medium for communication. Rather, language is a system of signs that is inherently unstable and constantly being reinterpreted and recontextualized.
2. Meaning is not fixed or stable, but rather contingent and contextual. There is always a gap between what a text says and what it means, and this gap cannot be fully bridged.
3. There is no fixed or objective reality that exists outside of language. Instead, reality is constantly being constructed and deconstructed through language and discourse.
4. The meaning of a text is not determined by the author's intention, but by the reader's interpretation. The reader's interpretation is influenced by their own biases and cultural context.
5. All texts contain inherent contradictions and paradoxes that cannot be resolved. These contradictions and paradoxes reveal the limitations and biases of language and discourse.
6. Language and discourse are always embedded in power relations, and are used to legitimize certain forms of power and exclude others. Deconstruction seeks to uncover the ways in which language and discourse operate to maintain and reproduce systems of power.

Overall, deconstruction challenges the assumptions of structuralism by emphasizing the contingency and instability of meaning, and by highlighting the ways in which language and discourse are embedded in power relations.

## **Methodology of Deconstruction**

Deconstruction is a method of literary analysis and philosophical critique that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, and it is characterized by its emphasis on the contingency and instability of meaning. Here are some key features of the methodology of deconstruction:

1. Close reading: Deconstruction involves a close reading of texts, paying attention to the ways in which language is used and how meaning is constructed.
2. Identification of binary oppositions: Deconstruction seeks to identify the binary oppositions that are at work in a text, such as inside/outside, presence/absence, or male/female. These binary oppositions are seen as constructs that impose meaning onto the text and shape our understanding of it.
3. Deconstruction of binary oppositions: Once the binary oppositions have been identified, deconstruction seeks to destabilize them by revealing their inherent contradictions and the ways in which they exclude or marginalize certain meanings or interpretations.
4. Emphasis on the gaps and contradictions in texts: Deconstruction emphasizes the gaps and contradictions in texts, and seeks to expose the limitations and biases of language and discourse.
5. Attention to context: Deconstruction pays close attention to the context in which a text is produced and received, recognizing that meaning is always contingent on the historical and cultural context.
6. Emphasis on the reader's interpretation: Deconstruction emphasizes the reader's interpretation of a text, recognizing that meaning is not fixed or objective, but rather is shaped by the reader's own biases and cultural context.

Overall, deconstruction is a method of literary analysis and philosophical critique that seeks to destabilize the binary oppositions that shape our understanding of texts, and to reveal the gaps and contradictions in language and discourse. By doing so, deconstruction challenges the assumptions of structuralism and emphasizes the contingency and instability of meaning.

## **Deconstructive Reading of Robert Frost's *The Road Not Taken***

Deconstructive reading of Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken" would involve a close analysis of the text to uncover the inherent contradictions and gaps in the poem, and to challenge the binary oppositions that shape our understanding of it.

The poem is often interpreted as a celebration of individualism and the idea of making one's own choices in life. However, a deconstructive reading would question this interpretation and challenge the binary oppositions that it relies on.

For example, the poem sets up a binary opposition between the two roads, with one being "less traveled by" and thus more attractive to the speaker. However, a deconstructive reading would question the assumption that the two roads are actually different, and point out that the speaker only claims that one is "less traveled by" after he has already chosen it. This suggests that the two roads may in fact be identical, and that the speaker's choice is not a real choice at all.

Furthermore, the poem sets up a binary opposition between the speaker's choice and the choices of others, suggesting that the speaker's decision to take the road "less traveled by" is a unique and individualistic act. However, a deconstructive reading would question this assumption and point out that the speaker's choice is influenced by the fact that he is following in the footsteps of others who have already taken the road before him.

Overall, a deconstructive reading of "The Road Not Taken" would challenge the assumptions of individualism and the binary oppositions that shape our understanding of the poem. It would highlight the inherent contradictions and gaps in the text, and emphasize the ways in which meaning is always contingent on the historical and cultural context in which it is produced and received.

## **Structuralist Reading of Larkin's *The Trees***

A structuralist reading of "The Trees" by Philip Larkin would focus on the formal structure of the poem, particularly its use of repetition, rhythm, and rhyme, as well as the ways in which these formal elements contribute to the poem's meaning.

The poem is divided into three stanzas, each of which consists of six lines. The first and third lines of each stanza rhyme, as do the second and fourth lines, while the fifth and sixth lines rhyme with each other. This regular pattern of rhyme and rhythm creates a sense of harmony and balance in the poem.

The poem also makes use of repetition, particularly in the second and fifth lines of each stanza, which begin with the phrase "The trees...". This repetition creates a sense of unity and coherence, and emphasizes the centrality of the trees to the poem's meaning.

A structuralist reading would also focus on the binary oppositions that are present in the poem, particularly the contrast between the natural world and human civilization. The poem presents the trees as a symbol of the natural world, which is timeless and unchanging, while human civilization is portrayed as fleeting and transient. This binary opposition is reinforced by the repetition of the phrase "The trees..." which contrasts with the phrase "Our working days are long" in the final stanza.

Overall, a structuralist reading of "The Trees" would focus on the formal structure of the poem and the ways in which repetition, rhyme, and rhythm contribute to its meaning. It would also identify the binary oppositions that are present in the poem, particularly the contrast between the natural world and human civilization.