CONTEMPORARY LITERARY THEORY -I (MEN33)

Prepared by Dr.L.Sangeetha, Assistant Professor, Thiruvalluvar University College of Arts and Science, Kallakurichi

UNIT I

Introduction – Literary theorising from Aristotle to Leavis

Aristotle's Poetics was the first literary theory. In this work, Aristotle "offers famous definitions of tragedy, insists that literature is about character, and that character is revealed through action, and he tries to identify the required stages in the progress of a plot." Around 1580, Sir Philip Sidney wrote his ground breaking "Apology for Poetry." In this work, he made the radical claim that literature was different from other forms of writing in that it "has as its primary aim the giving of pleasure to the reader, and any moral or didactic element is necessarily either subordinate to that, or at least, unlikely to succeed without it." Samuel Johnson was another important figure in the history of critical theory. Johnson's in depth commentary on Shakespeare was the first time one had given "intensive scrutiny" to a non-sacred text. The Romantic poets Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley all engaged in a great detail of literary criticism. Notable Victorian literary critics include George Eliot, Matthew Arnold, and Henry James.

The three major literary critics in the first part of the twentieth century were I.A. Richards and F.R. Leavis (both of whom were from Cambridge) and T.S. Eliot. In his *Practical Criticism* (published in 1929), Richards claimed that readers should focus on a text's actual words and not its historical context. One of Leavis' major contributions was to claim that literature should be moral, that it should strive to instil its readers with values. T.S. Eliot made three major contributions. First, he claimed that a "dissociation of sensibility" (that is, a radical separation of thought from feeling) "occurred in the seventeenth century." Second, he advocated the idea of impersonality, which claims that one should view poetry, "not as a pouring out of personal emotion and personal experience, but as a transcending of the individual by a sense of tradition which spoke through, and is transmitted by, the individual poet." Third, he advocated the objective correlative, which claims that "the best way of expressing an emotion in art is to find some vehicle for it in gesture, action, or concrete symbolism, rather than approaching it directly or descriptively." In other words, the artist should try to *show* and not *tell* emotions.

There are two "tracks" in the "development of English criticism." The "practical criticism" track (which "leads through Samuel Johnson and Matthew Arnold to T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis") focuses on "the close analysis of the work of particular writers, and gives us our familiar tradition of 'close reading.'" "The other track is very much 'ideas-led' rather than 'text-led': it tends to tackle big general issues concerned with literature—How are literary works structured? How do they affect readers or audiences? What is the nature of literary language? How does literature relate to the contemporary and to matters of politics and gender? What can be said of literature form a philosophical point of view?" This second track is interested with many of the same issues that literary critics have been since the 1960s.

Liberal humanism is the type of criticism that "held sway" before "theory" emerged in the 1960s. Barry describes ten tenets of liberal humanism. First, good literature transcends the culture in which it was written; it speaks to people throughout all ages. Second, a text "contains its own meaning within itself. It doesn't require any elaborate process of placing it within a context, whether this be" socio-political, literary-historical, or autobiographical.

Third, one should strive to approach a text with an open mind, "without priori ideological assumptions, or political pre-conditions." Fourth, "Human nature is essentially unchanging." Therefore, "continuity in literature is more important and significant than innovation." Fifth, every person has a unique "essence," which transcends his "environmental influences." Though one can "change and develop" this essence ("as do characters in novels"), "it can't be transformed—hence our uneasiness with those scenes (quite common, for instance, in Dickens) which involve a 'change of heart' in a character, so that the whole personality is shifted into a new dimension by force of circumstance—the miser is transformed and changes his ways, or the good man or woman is corrupted by wealth."

Sixth, "The purpose of literature is essentially the enhancement of life and the propagation of human values," but not in a preachy, propaganda-like way. Seventh, "Form and content in literature must be fused in an organic way, so that the one grows inevitably from the other. Literary form should not be like a decoration which is applied externally to a completed structure." Eighth, writers should be sincere and honest. For example, he should avoid clichés, or "over-inflated forms of expression." In so doing, the writer "can transcend the sense of distance between language and material, and can make the language seem to 'enact' what it depicts, thus apparently abolishing the necessary distance between words and things." Ninth, "What is valued in literature is the 'silent' showing and demonstrating of something, rather than the explaining, or saying, of it." According to this view, "words should mime, or demonstrate, or act out, or sound out what they signify, rather than just representing it in an abstract way. This idea is state with special fervency in the work of F.R. Leavis." Tenth, the "job of criticism is to interpret the text, to mediate between it and the reader. A theoretical account of the nature of reading, or of literature in general, isn't useful in criticism."

The Transition to 'theory'

In the 1960s, scholars began to rejection liberal humanism in favor of "critical theory." In the Sixties, Marxist criticism, psychoanalytic criticism, linguistic criticism, and feminist criticism all emerged. The Seventies saw the rise of structuralism and post-structuralism. In the Eighties, "history, politics, and context were reinstated at the centre of the literary-critical agenda." New historicism and cultural materialism. "Both of these take what might be called a 'holistic' approach to literature, aiming to integrate literary and historical study while at the same time maintaining some of the insights of the structuralists and post-structuralists of the previous decade." The major movements that arose in the Nineties were postcolonialism and postmodernism

Barry describes five "recurrent ideas in critical theory." First, theory is *anti-essentialist.* "Many of the notions which we would usually regard as the basic 'givens' of our existence (including our gender identity, our individual selfhood, and the notion of literature itself) are actually fluid and unstable things, rather than fixed and reliable essences." These notions are socially constructed, "that is, dependent on social and political forces and on shifting ways of seeing and thinking." "There is no such thing as a fixed and reliable truth (except for the statement that this is so, presumable)." Second, theory claims that all interpreters are biased: "all investigators have a thumb on one side or other of the scales. Every practical procedure…presupposes a theoretical perspective of some kind." Third, theory claims that language doesn't merely "*record* reality;" rather, "it shapes and creates it, so that the whole of our universe is textual. Further…meaning is jointly

constructed by reader and writer. It isn't just 'there' and waiting before we get to the text but requires the reader's contribution to bring it into being." Fourth, "The meanings within a literary work are never fixed and reliable, but always shifting, multi-faceted and ambiguous. In literature, as in all writing, there is never the possibility of establishing fixed and definitive meanings: rather, it is characteristic of language to generate infinite webs of meaning, so that all texts are necessarily self-contradictory, as the process of deconstruction will reveal."[xii] Fifth, the idea of "human nature" is rejected, "since it is usually in practice *Eurocentric* (that is, based on white European norms) and *androcentric* (that is, based on masculine norms and attitudes. Thus, the appeal to the idea of a generalised, supposedly inclusive, human nature is likely in practice to marginalise, or denigrate, or even deny the humanity of women, or disadvantaged groups."

Some recurrent ideas in critical theory

These different approaches each have their separate traditions and histories, but several ideas are recurrent in critical theory and seem to form what might be regarded as its common bedrock. Hence, it makes some sense to speak of 'theory' as if it were a single entity with a set of underlying beliefs, as long as we are aware that doing so is a simplification. Some of these recurrent underlying ideas of theory are listed below:

1. Many of the notions which we would usually regard as the basic 'givens' of our existence (including our gender identity, our individual selfhood, and the notion of literature itself) are actually fluid and unstable things, rather than fixed and reliable essences. Instead of being solidly 'there' in the real world of fact and experience, they are 'socially constructed', that is, dependent on social and political forces and on shifting ways of seeing and thinking. In philosophical terms, all these are *contingent* categories (denoting a status which is temporary, provisional, 'circumstance-dependent') rather than *absolute* ones (that is, fixed, immutable, etc.). Hence, no overarching fixed 'truths' can ever be established. The results of all forms of intellectual enquiry are provisional only. There is no such thing as a fixed and reliable truth (except for the statement that this is so, presumably). The position on these matters which theory attacks is often referred to, in a kind of shorthand, as *essentialism,* while many of the theories discussed in this book would describe themselves as *anti-essentialist.*

2. Theorists generally believe that all thinking and investigation is necessarily affected and largely determined by prior ideological commitment. The notion of disinterested enquiry is therefore untenable: none of us, they would argue, is capable of standing back from the scales and weighing things up dispassionately: rather, all investigators have a thumb on one side or other of the scales. Every practical procedure (for instance, in literary criticism) presupposes a theoretical perspective of some kind. To deny this is simply to try to place our own theoretical position beyond scrutiny as something which is 'common sense' or 'simply given'. This contention is problematical, of course, and is usually only made explicit as a counter to specific arguments put forward by opponents. The problem with this view is that it tends to discredit one's own project along with all the rest, introducing a *relativism* which disables argument and cuts the ground from under any kind of commitment.

3. Language itself conditions, limits, and predetermines what we see. Thus, all reality is constructed through language, so that nothing is simply 'there' in an unproblematical way - everything is a linguistic/ textual construct. Language doesn't *record* reality, it shapes and

creates it, so that the whole of our universe is textual. Further, for the theorist, meaning is jointly constructed by reader and writer. It isn't just 'there' and waiting before we get to the text but requires the reader's contribution to bring it into being.

4. Hence, any claim to offer a definitive reading would be futile. The meanings within a literary work are never fixed and reliable, but always shifting, multi-faceted and ambiguous. In literature, as in all writing, there is never the possibility of establishing fixed and definite meanings: rather, it is characteristic of language to generate infinite webs of meaning, so that all texts are necessarily self-contradictory, as the process of deconstruction will reveal. There is no final court of appeal in these matters, since literary texts, once they exist, are viewed by the theorist as independent linguistic structures whose authors are always 'dead' or 'absent'.

5. Theorists distrust all 'totalising' notions. For instance, the notion of 'great' books as an absolute and self-sustaining category is to be distrusted, as books always arise out of a particular socio-political situation, and this situation should not
be suppressed, as tends to happen when they are promoted to 'greatness'. Likewise, the concept of a 'human nature', as a generalised norm which transcends the idea of a particular race, gender, or class, is to be distrusted too, since it is usually in practice *Eurocentric* (that is, based on white European norms) and *androcentric* (that is, based on masculine norms and attitudes). Thus, the appeal to the idea of a generalised, supposedly inclusive, human nature is likely in practice to marginalise, or denigrate, or even deny the humanity of women, or disadvantaged groups. To sum up these five points for theory: Politics is pervasive, Language is constitutive, Truth is provisional, Meaning is contingent and Human nature is a myth.

Structuralism

Structuralism began in France in the 1950s in the works of anthropologist Claude Levi-Struss (1908–) and literary critic Roland Barthes (1915–1980). Their significant works, as well as the works of other structuralists, began to be translated into English in the 1970s. Structuralism claims that “things cannot be understood in isolation—they have to be seen in the context of the larger structures they are part of.” To better understand how structuralism works, Barry gives an example of how a structuralist might analyze John Donne’s “Good Morrow.” (a) A structuralist would say that we can only understand the poem if we understand “the genre which it parodies and subverts.” The genre of Donne’s poem is the *alba*, “a poetic form dating from the twelfth century in which lovers lament the approach of daybreak because it means that they must part.” (b) But, a structuralist would continue, we can only understand the *alba* if we understand courtly love. Further, “the *alba*, being a poem, presupposes a knowledge of what is entailed in the conventionalised form as utterance known as poetry.” Barry notes that the structuralist approach “is actually taking you further and further away from the text, and into large and comparatively abstract questions of genre, history, and philosophy, rather than close and closer to it, as the Anglo-American tradition demands.” In the “structuralist approach to literature there is a constant movement away from the interpretation of the individual literary work and a parallel drive towards understanding the larger, abstract structures which contain them. Those structures…are usually abstract such as the notion of the literary or the poetic, or the nature of narrative itself, rather than ‘mere’ concrete specifics like the history of the *alba* or of courtly love, both of which, after all, we could quite easily find out about from conventional literary history.”

The structuralists were greatly influenced by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), whose teaching can be summarized in three points. *First*, language is arbitrary. That is, there is no reason why the words we apply to objects couldn’t be different

than they are. I may call X a “dog,” but there is no reason why I couldn’t have instead chosen to call X a “cat.” The structuralists were “interested in the implication that if language as a sign system is based on arbitrariness of this kind, then it follows that language isn’t a reflection of the world and of experience, but a system which stands quite separate from it.” *Second*, the meaning of words is relational—that is, “no word can be defined in isolation from other words.” For instance, I cannot understand what “good” means if I do not also understand what “bad” means. I cannot understand what a “mansion” is if I do not understand what a “house” is and what a “palace” is—a mansion is bigger than a house but smaller than a palace. *Third*, “language *constitutes* our world, it doesn’t just record it or label it.” Meaning is not just “expressed through” language; it is also “constructed” by it. For instance, Osama Bin Laden can be called either a “terrorist” or a “freedom fight”; there is no objective way to describe him; regardless how I describe him, I am imposing my values onto the world. For instance, according to our language, there are four seasons of the year. But, in reality, are we any more justified dividing the year into four seasons than, say, six or eight? “The seasons, then, are a *way of seeing* the year, not an objective fact of nature.” “So Saussure’s thinking stressed the way language is arbitrary, relational, and constitutive, and this way of thinking about language greatly influenced the structuralists, because it gave them a model of a system which is self-contained, in which individual items relate to other items and thus create larger structures.”

Signifier and Signified

The sign is, for Saussure, the basic element of language. Meaning has always been explained in terms of the relationship between signs and their referents. Back in the 19th Century an important figure for semiotics, the pragmatic philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (pronounced *purse*), isolated three different types of sign: The **symbolic** sign is like a word in so far as it refers by symbolising its referent. It neither has to look like it nor have any natural relation to it at all. Thus the word cat has no relation to that ginger monster that wails all night outside my apartment. But its owner knows what I’m talking about when I say "your cat kept me awake all night." A poetic symbol like the sun (which may stand for enlightenment and truth) has an obviously symbolic relation to what it means. But how do such relationships come about? Saussure has an explanation. The **indexical** sign is like a signpost or a finger pointing in a certain direction. An arrow may accompany the signpost to San Francisco or to "Departures." The index of a book will have a list of alphabetically ordered words with page numbers after each of them. These signs play an indexical function (in this instance, as soon as you’ve looked one up you’ll be back in the symbolic again). The **iconic** sign refers to its object by actually resembling it and is thus more likely to be like a picture (as with a road sign like that one with the courteous workman apologising for the disruption). Cinema rhetoric often uses the shorthand that iconic signs provide. Most signs can be used in any or all three of these ways often simultaneously. The key is to be able to isolate the different functions.

Saussure departs from all previous theories of meaning by discovering that language can be examined independently of its referents (that is, anything outside language that can be said to be what language refers to, like things, fictions and abstractions). This is because the sign contains both its signifying element (what you see or hear when you look at a written word or hear a spoken one) and its meaningful content. The sign cat must be understood as being made up of two aspects. The letters--which are anyway just marks--"C" "A" "T"--combine to form a single word--"cat." And simultaneously the meaning that is signified by this word

enters into my thoughts (I cannot help understanding this). At first sight this is an odd way of thinking. The meaning of the word cat is neither that actual ginger monster nor any of the actual feline beings that have existed nor any that one day surely will--a potential infinity of cats. The meaning of the word cat is its potential to be used (e.g., in the sentence "your cat kept me up all night.") And we need to able to use it potentially infinitely many times. So in some strict sense cat has no specific meaning at all, more like a kind of empty space into which certain images or concepts or events of usage can be spilled. For this reason Saussure was able to isolate language from any actual event of its being used to refer to things at all. This is because although the meaning of a word is determined to a certain extent in conventional use (if I'd said "your snake kept me up" I'd have been in trouble) there is always something undetermined, always something yet to be determined, about it.

Semiotics is concerned with signs and their relationship with objects and meaning. One way to view signs is to consider them composed of a signifier and a signified. Simply put, the signifier is the sound associated with or image of something (e.g., a tree), the signified is the idea or concept of the thing (e.g., the idea of a tree), and the sign is the object that combines the signifier and the signified into a meaningful unit. Stated differently, the sign is the relationship between the concept and the representation of that concept.

Langue and Parole

One other distinction made by Saussure gave structuralists a way of thinking about the larger structures which were relevant to literature. He used the terms langue and parole to signify, respectively, language as a system or structure on the one hand, and any given utterance in that language on the other. A particular remark in French (a sample of parole) only makes sense to you if you are already in possession of the whole body of rules and conventions governing verbal behaviour which we call 'French' (that is, the langue). The individual remark, then, is a discrete item which only makes sense when seen in relation to a wider containing structure, in the classic structuralist manner. Now, structuralists make use of the langue/parole distinction by seeing the individual literary work (the novel Middlemarch, let's say) as an example of a literary parole. It too only makes sense in the context of some wider containing structure. So the langue which relates to the parole Middlemarch is the notion of the novel as a genre, as a body of literary practice.

The Scope of structuralism

But Structuralism is not just about language and literature. When Saussure's work was 'co-opted' in the 1950s by the people we now call structuralists, their feeling was that Saussure's model of how language works was 'transferable', and would also explain how all signifying systems work. The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss applied the structuralist outlook to the interpretation of myth. He suggested that the individual tale (the parole) from a cycle of myths did not have a separate and inherent meaning but could only be understood by considering its position in the whole cycle (the langue) and the similarities and difference between that tale and others in the sequence.

So in interpreting the Oedipus myth, he placed the individual story of Oedipus within the context of the whole cycle of tales connected with the city of Thebes. He then began to see repeated motifs and contrasts, and he used these as the basis of his interpretation. On this method the story and the cycle it is part of are reconstituted in terms of basic oppositions: animal/human, relation/stranger, husband/son and so on. Concrete details from the story are seen in the context of a larger structure, and the larger structure is then seen as an overall network of basic 'dyadic pairs' which have obvious symbolic, thematic, and archetypal resonance (like the contrast between art and life, male and female, town and country, telling and showing, etc., as in the 'worked example' later).

This is the typical structuralist process of moving from the particular to the general, placing the individual work within a wider structural context. The wider structure might also be found in, for instance, the whole corpus of an author's work; or in the genre conventions of writing about that particular topic (for instance, discussing Dickens's novel Hard Times in terms of its deviations from novelistic conventions and into those of other more popular genres, like melodrama or the ballad); or in the identification of sets of underlying fundamental 'dyads'. A signifying system in this sense is a very wide concept: it means any organised and structured set of signs which carries cultural meanings. Included in this category would be such diverse phenomena as: works of literature, tribal rituals (a degree ceremony, say, or a rain dance), fashions (in clothing, food, 'life-style', etc.), the styling of cars, or the contents of advertisements. For the structuralist, the culture we are part of can be 'read' like a language, using these principles, since culture is made up of many structural networks which carry significance and can be shown to operate in a systematic way. These networks operate through 'codes' as a system of signs; they can make statements, just as language does, and they can be read or decoded by the structuralist or semiotician.

Fashion, for instance, can be 'read' like a language. Separate items or features are added up into a complete 'outfit' or 'look' with complex grammatical rules of combination: we don't wear an evening dress and carpet slippers: we don't come to lectures in military uniform, etc. Likewise, each component sign derives its meaning from a structural context. Of course, many fashions in clothing depend on breaking such rules in a 'knowing' way, but the 'statement' made by such rule-breaks (for instance, making outer garments which look like undergarments, or cutting expensive fabrics in an apparently rough way) depends upon the prior existence of the 'rule' or convention which is being conspicuously flouted. In the fashion world recently, for instance, (late 1994) the combination of such features as exposed seams, crumpled-looking fabrics, and garments which are too big or too small for the wearer signified the fashion known (confusingly, in this context) as deconstruction. Take any one of these features out of the context of all the rest, however, and they will merely signify that you have your jacket on inside out or don't believe in ironing. Again, these individual items have their place in an overall structure, and the structure is of greater significance than the individual item.

The other major figure in the early phase of structuralism was Roland Barthes, who applied the structuralist method to the general field of modern culture. He examined modern France (of the 1950s) from the standpoint of a cultural anthropologist in a little book called Mythologies which he published in France in 1957. This looked at a host of items which had never before been subjected to intellectual analysis, such as: the difference between boxing

and wrestling; the significance of eating steak and chips; the styling of the Citroen car; the cinema image of Greta Garbo's face; a magazine photograph of an Algerian soldier saluting the French flag. Each of these items he placed within a wider structure of values, beliefs, and symbols as the key to understanding it. Thus, boxing is seen as a sport concerned with repression and endurance, as distinct from wrestling, where pain is flamboyantly displayed. Boxers do not cry out in pain when hit, the rules cannot be disregarded at any point during the bout, and the boxer fights as himself, not in the elaborate guise of a make-believe villain or hero. By contrast, wrestlers grunt and snarl with aggression, stage elaborate displays of agony or triumph, and fight as exaggerated, larger than life villains or super-heroes. Clearly, these two sports have quite different functions within society: boxing enacts the stoical endurance which is sometimes necessary in life, while wrestling dramatises ultimate struggles and conflicts between good and evil. Barthes's approach here, then, is that of the classic structuralist: the individual item is 'structuralised', or 'contextualised by structure', and in the process of doing this layers of significance are revealed.

Roland Barthes in these early years also made specific examinations of aspects of literature, and by the 1970s, structuralism was attracting widespread attention in Paris and world-wide. A number of English and American academics spent time in Paris in the 1970s taking courses under the leading structuralist figures (and these included Colin MacCabe) and came back to Britain and the USA fired up to teach similar ideas and approaches here. The key works on structuralism were in French, and these began to be translated in the 1970s and published in English. A number of Anglo-American figures undertook to read material not yet translated and to interpret structuralism for English-speaking readers; these important mediators included: the American,

Jonathan Culler, whose book Structuralist Poetics appeared in 1975: the English critic Terence Hawkes whose book Structuralism and Semiotics came out in 1977 as the first book in a new series published by Methuen called 'New Accents'. Hawkes was the general editor of the series, and its mission was 'to encourage rather than resist the process of change' in literary studies. Another influential figure was the British critic Frank Kermode, then professor at University College, London, who wrote with enthusiasm about Roland Barthes, and set up graduate seminars to discuss his work (though he later in the 1990s became identified, in retirement, with much more traditional approaches). Finally, there was David Lodge, Professor of English at Birmingham, who tried to combine the ideas of structuralism with more traditional approaches. This attempt is typified by his book Working with Structuralism (1980).

What structuralist critics do

1. They analyse (mainly) prose narratives, relating the text to some larger containing structure, such as: (a) the conventions of a particular literary genre, or (b) a network of intertextual connections, or (c) a projected model of an underlying universal narrative structure, or (d) a notion of narrative as a complex of recurrent patterns or motifs.

2. They interpret literature in terms of a range of underlying parallels with the structures of language, as described by modern linguistics. For instance, the notion of the 'mytheme', posited by Levi-Strauss, denoting the minimal units of narrative 'sense', is formed on the

analogy of the morpheme, which, in linguistics, is the smallest unit of grammatical sense. An example of a morpheme is the 'ed' added to a verb to denote the past tense.

3. They apply the concept of systematic patterning and structuring to the whole field of Western culture, and across cultures, treating as 'systems of signs' anything from Ancient Greek myths to brands of soap powder.

Structuralism – An Example

Peter Barry bases these examples on the methods of literary analysis described and demonstrated in Barthes's book S/Z, published in 1970. This book, of some two hundred pages, is about Balzac's thirty-page story 'Sarrasine'. Barthes's method of analysis is to divide the story into 561 lexies', or units of meaning, which he then classifies using five 'codes', seeing these as the basic underlying structures of all narratives. The five codes identified by Barthes in S/Z are:

1. The Proairetic code This code provides indications of actions. ('The ship sailed at midnight' 'They began again', etc.)

2. The Hermeneutic code This code poses questions or enigmas which provide narrative suspense. (For instance, the sentence 'He knocked on a certain door in the neighbourhood of Pell Street' makes the reader wonder who lived there, what kind of neighbourhood it was, and so on).

3. The Cultural code This code contains references out beyond the text to what is regarded as common knowledge. (For example, the sentence 'Agent Angelis was the kind of man who sometimes arrives at work in odd socks' evokes a pre-existing image in the reader's mind of the kind of man this is - a stereotype of bungling incompetence, perhaps, contrasting that with the image of brisk efficiency contained in the notion of an 'agent'.).

4. The Semic code This is also called the connotative code. It is linked to theme, and this code (says Scholes in the book mentioned above) when organised around a particular proper name constitutes a 'character'. Its operation is demonstrated in the second example, below.

5. The Symbolic code This code is also linked to theme, but on a larger scale, so to speak. It consists of contrasts and pairings related to the most basic binary polarities - male and female, night and day, good and evil, life and art, and so on. These are the structures of contrasted elements which structuralists see as fundamental to the human way of perceiving and organising reality.

What we are looking for, as we attempt a structuralist critique, and where we expect to find it, can be indicated as in the diagram below. We are looking for the factors listed on the left, and we expect to find them in the parts of the tale listed on the right:

Parallels	Plot
Echoes	Structure
Reflections/Repetitions	Character/Motive

Contrasts	Situation/Circumstance
Patterns	Language/Imagery

Sources and References

Beginning Theory by Peter Barry

A Course in general Linguistics by Ferdinand De Saussure

Elements of Semiology by Roland Barthes

https://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/elljwp/structuralism.htm

http://donemmerichnotes.blogspot.com/2003/10/beginning-theory-introduction-to.html

https://oregonstate.edu/instruct/theory/signs.html