*Good morning! It’s Structuralism today! And I think, for a thorough understanding of this theory, a bit of introduction may help you. Well then, let’s start…and then day after tomorrow, we will try to come in terms with the intricacies.*

\*When we write a text, we think we control language. But the structuralists believe that in a text, it is the language which controls us.

\*In literary theory, structuralism is an approach to analyzing the narrative material by examining the underlying invariant structure, which is based on the linguistic sign system.

Well, something about the importance of sign:

\*Signs or symbols are the vehicles through which we conceptualize. It can be understood well by an example. You have the word ‘Lamb’ and when expressing the word orally the last ‘b’ sound is pronounced. But in modern American English in respect to this word the last ‘b’ sound is not sounded. You can say- speech sound of this object, is here , different from the symbolic representation of the same. Thus all the languages are governed by their own internal rules that do not imitate the structure of the word. An American may not thus be familiarized with ‘lamb’, as it is pronounced in the English way and this situation may be a pointer to the fact about the importance of sign, which we are talking about.

\*A sign(signs, meaning: conveyors of meaning) consists of 2 parts: 1. Signifier 2. Signified. Indeed, it was one Ferdinand de Saussure, who proposed that words are signs made up of these two parts.

*Well, we shall learn about him later …now let us know these parts better!*

\*Signifiewr: In langiage, a set of speech sounds, or of marks on apage

\*Sihgnified:the concept, or idea, which is the meaning of the sign.

\*Hiwever, it must be remembered that the consideration of signs is nt limited to the realm of language. The Morse Code, traffic signs and signals, and a gereat diversity of other human activities and productions- our body postires and gestures, the social rituals we perform, the kinds of clothes we wear, the meals we serve, the buildings we live in, the objects we deal with also convey common meanings to members who who participate ona aperticular culture. These can be analyzed as signs which function in diverse modes of signifying sysyems.

\*Well then, you know here that there is a (systematic) study of signs. This study has been termed as Semiotics and also as semiology.

\*Structuralism is about the erelattioship between language and thought. Can you have thought without language?- the Structuralists ask.

\*we can elucidate the above in this way:

The French word ‘mouton’ has the same meaning as the English word: ‘sheep’. But it does not have the same value for you, as you do not know French. Besides, to you, the meat of this animal, as prepared and served for a meal, is not sheep but it is mutton. So, there is a difference of value of the two words for you.

\*So, conceptualization of something depends upon the relationship between the object and the language(signs). The note of exclamation *i.e*.!, the traffic light, the national flags the stop sign in case of traffic sgnals are abut a few examples in this regard.

\*Well, Look at this obvious case: you can greet someone in many, many ways, from “Hello” and “Hi” and “What’s happening?” to no more than a nod of the head or a smile and raised eyebrows.  Each is distinct, yet at a certain level each is also the same—a primary move in a semi-ritualized behavior pattern—“greeting”—that goes on millions (or billions) of times a day all over the English speaking world.

\*Structuralists believe that if readers don’t understand the signs, they may misread a text.

\*The focus of the Structuralists, therefore, is on an objective interpretation(without clouding the text with a subjectibe or emotional interpretation).

\*Almost all literary theorists beginning with Aristotle have emphasized the importance of ‘structure’ in analyzing a work of literature. ‘Structuralist criticism’ however, now designates the practice of critics who analyze literature on the model of structuralist linguistics. The class also includes a number of Russian formalists(*you already have shad some idea about this school*), especially Roman Jakobson.

\*Ferdinand de Saussure’s “Course in general Linguistics”(1915) ushered in alarger movement in this field. Later Claude Levi-Strauss analyzed on the model of Saussure’s linguistics, such cultural phenomena as mythology, kinship relations, and mosdes of preparinf food.

\*Now you must guess that structuralism is not just about literature, it rather cuts across the traditional disciplinary areas within and between the hunanities nd social sciences. It undertakes to provide an objective account of all social and cultural practices. It is wide ranging - stretching out from mythicak narratives to lierrary texts, from advertisements to fashions in clothes and patterns of social decorum.

\*To be precise, structuralism views all practices by human as combinations of signs. These signs have significance for the members of a particular culture.

\*It undertakes to study the underlting rules and procedures by which practices are achieved… well, the underlying system of the relationships among signifying elements and the rules involved in their combinations.

\*So, there are ‘coddes’ that determine significant combinations in our life, right! And well, each individual masters a competenecy within his culture or a given culture, although he remains largely unaware of its nature and operation.

\* structuralism focuses on the conditions that make meaning possible, rather than the meaning itself.

\*Liteerray structuralism seeks out basic deep elements in stories and myths, which are combined in various ways to produce the many different texts..

\*Aldo, another thing- structuralism cjalleneged the belief that a work of literature reflected a given reality. It says instead that a text is constituted of linguistic conventions and is situated among other texts.

\*Another important thing to rremember is that- the principlaes of structuralist analysis used in other areas may be transferred to our dealing with literary texts.

\*How does "Structuralism" have an effect on what we do in the reading of literature? Basically, while reading a text structurally, we do our best to transfer the principles of structuralist analysis in other areas to our work with literary texts. That means that we will want to look for “structures” in literary discourse by looking beyond (or below) surface features to find instead deeper and more abstract elements that underlie surfaces, and to establish both what those basic elements are and what the rules for their combination are.

\*See the following sentences:

*“The dejected lover drank her tea slowly.”*

*“The frightened child held the puppy tightly.”*

These sentences are obviously quite different in meaning.  But looked at more abstractly, a structural analysis shows that in structural terms these two sentences are in fact pretty much the same.  Each consists of a subject and a predicate, the subject of each is a noun phrase, and the predicate is a verb phrase, and the substructure of each of the component phrases is almost exactly the same in each sentence.  Thus, when we look through the surface meanings of sentences like this in order to find deeper structural relations, we see regularities that from the surface alone we would never see.  In this case, two “texts” that look very different end up under analysis revealing that they are at the same time very much the same.

*To wind up for today, I would ask you to reflect yourself upon the possible effects of structuralism on the tradition of literary interpretation. A few hints, I would give for your convenience in this regard:*

\*Its attack on the “elitism” of the literary establishment resonated strongly, especially with younger scholars, and encouraged other forms of rebellion against conventional thinking.

\*Its “scientific” dimension helped to promote the introduction of a whole range of new texts (like romances) into the arena of the “study-able.”  Barthes, for example, wrote not just on literary topics but on the systems of style as well.

\*It helped to breathe the oxygen of interdisciplinarity into literary studies, which in time led to cultural studies and, more recently, to postcolonial studies.

\*In more abstract forms, the attractions of structuralist thought seem very much at the root of much post-structuralist theorizing in Derrida and Foucault. Neither would identify themselves as "structuralists," but they are very obviously concerned with structural problems in how and what we know, and how best to identify and respond to them.

*That’s all for today.*

*Good day –and- take care!*