

Literary Theory

Liberal Humanism

Human nature, which literature represents, is essentially unchanging.

- **Professor F.D. Maurice (1840-)**
Study of English literature connects to the 'fixed and enduring' aspects of national identity.
- **Literary Critic I.A. Richards (1929-)**
Precise readings in isolation from context

Structuralism (France 1950s-)

Things cannot be understood in isolation.

- **Swiss Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-)**
Words are arbitrary, 'unmotivated signs'.
Language is relational: chain of dwellings
There is no truth only a choice of words.
Language doesn't just label the world, it creates it.
- **Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1908-)**
Interpretation of myth
The parole can be better understood in the context of the langue.
Analysis of similarities and differences between connected tales
- **Literary Critic Roland Barthes (1915-)**
Items are 'contextualised by structure'.

Post Structuralism (France 1960s-)

The de-centred universe without fixed linguistic landmarks.

- **Roland Barthes**
Death of the Author
- **Philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-)**
With each revelation we are caused to question what we knew.
Decentring of the intellectual cosmos after an 'event'
'There is nothing outside of the text'.
Language comes with built-in logic.
Language commands meaning as much as the writer.

Deconstruction

Poststructuralist reading against the grain. (Reading the text against itself)

Process of identifying discrepancies, contrast and contradiction in a text.

Feminism

- **Canonical writings**
1970s: the presentation of women in the currently recognised canonical writing.