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## **A DEEP STUDY ABOUT THE CULTURAL SEMIOTICS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Using the framework of cultural semiotics developed by the Tartu Moscow School of Semiotics (TMSS) and in particular the works of Lotman, the study analyzes contemporary Indian poetry in English (CIPE). The study places the CIPE in relation to the more than two centuries of Indian poetry written in English, starting with poets of English ancestry who wrote in and about India. The fundamental ideas of Cultural Semiotics, such as semiosphere, isomorphism, and the textuality of culture, are first used to the development of a theoretical framework. The cultural history of Indian poetry in English from the colonial era to 1990 is then briefly explored. The 'modern' era is the one that started in 1990.

**Keywords:** - Culture, English, Poetry, Language, Indian

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The majority of studies on English-language Indian poetry have either emphasized the basic theme elements or the evolving attitudes toward English as an Indian poetic language. Indian poetry written in English has had its linguistic structure and nativization examined, but further study is needed to understand how such poetry is produced. A relatively unexplored subject by critics and scholars of Indian poetry in English is the processes of signifying from a cultural semiotic perspective. Furthermore, there isn't much research in this area on modern Indian English poetry. The study's central premise is that the concepts of "Cultural Semiotics" might offer a framework for examining the signification processes in contemporary Indian poetry in English.

The use of semiotic frameworks to literary texts aids in illuminating the processes through which codes, conventions, and the structures of interdependent signals form meaning. Theorists including Saussure, Pierce, Barthes, Greimas, and Jakobson, among others, presented semiotic theories that have proven useful for comprehending literary signification processes and moving beyond the hermeneutic role of literary analysis. Using a framework primarily proposed by



Lotman and drawing on the works of Todorov, Kristeva, Barthes, Rifaterre, Williams, and others, the current study aims to analyze the cultural semiotics of contemporary Indian poetry in English and develop an understanding of the processes of meaning creation and evolution of such poetry as a cultural text.

## **II. CULTURAL SEMIOTICS**

There has been a significant change in how literature is examined in recent years. Although the term "culture" has always been problematic and evades a comprehensive definition, we have advanced beyond the hermeneutic analysis of individual texts and there has been a resurgence of interest in studying literature as culture. Two themes in modern literary studies are clear to detect. The first is cultural studies, which Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall helped to establish. As a neo-marxist perspective, cultural studies have prioritized the hegemonic ties between texts. The second, more modern movement, but one that hasn't gained much traction in English literature studies, is "cultural semiotics" or the "semiotics of culture," which promotes itself as taking a more rational approach. Beginning with Saussure and Pierce, semiotics evolved in two distinct parallel strains that were separated by geopolitical boundaries. With the English translations of the works of Lotman and other proponents being made available in the West, semiotics, structuralism, and formalism that had almost lost favor have returned though greatly modified as semiotics of culture.

The study of literature and culture could take on a new dimension as a result of this semiotics of culture. The term "Cultural Semiotics" refers to a methodology that is typically linked with the Tartu Moscow School of Semiotics. Juri Lotman, whose work has only lately been translated into English, is its main proponent. In his book "Cultural Semiotics," Lotman suggests a comprehensive examination of culture and the ways in which meaning is produced. The notions of "Semiosphere" and "Cultural Explosion" are perhaps Lotman's two most important contributions to the discipline. A discussion of the development of cultural semiotics, a definition of the major terms associated with it, and a discussion of why and how cultural semiotics could be used to examine modern Indian poetry in English are all attempted in this chapter.

## **III. EMERGENCE OF CULTURAL SEMIOTICS**

At a symposium on the structural study of sign systems conducted in Moscow in 1962, the groundwork for TMSS was built. For the first time, the idea of a modeling system was presented at this symposium. The methodology was heavily influenced by Hjelmslev and Ferdinand de Saussure. Despite Lotman's absence from the symposium, he made friends with the semioticians there, including Piatigorskii, Revzin, Ivanov, and others, and invited them to Tartu. At Tartu



University, where Lotman worked, the inaugural summer course was held, and the first volume of Trudy poZnakovynSistemam (TZS or Sign System Studies) was published. TMSS is hence said to have started in 1964.

According to Author cybernetics, which had been outlawed in 1950 as a pseudoscience, made a comeback in 1958 and received Communist Party official approval in 1961. This led to the emergence of semiotics in the Soviet Union. It was seen as a fresh philosophical and methodological paradigm. Scientific speech replaced Stalinist ideological and deceptive rhetoric in cyberspeak. This aided academia in creating new departments that put a particular emphasis on semiotics, cybernetics, and structural linguistics. In a sense, structuralism had also returned. The explicit scientific approach was something semiotics and cybernetics had in common. Semiotics was being investigated as a general approach to studying human culture, much like cybernetics. The goal of many semiotic studies was to clarify the universals or shared characteristics of every language and culture. Myths were studied by structuralists and semioticians like Claude Levi-Strauss, while generative or universal grammar was studied by Noam Chomsky. But soon, semioticians, particularly TMSS members, lost faith in semiotics due to its excessive scientism and universalism. The connection between semiotics and cybernetics may have also been an attempt to blend in with the harsh governmental system of the Soviet Union, which was opposed on ideological grounds. According to Waldstein (2008), nonconformist academics created their own imitation and adaption techniques. As a more secure term than "semiotics," cybernetics has been adopted as a catch-all for semiotic studies. Even the Tartu University publication, TZS (Sign System Studies), refrained from adopting the name semiotics, even though it was always referred to colloquially as Semiotika.

#### **IV. THE SYSTEMIC NATURE OF CULTURE**

Culture is a semiotic system, where 'system', according to Lotman's definition from 1967, is a structure of elements and rules for combining them that is in a state of stable analogue to the entirety of an object of knowledge, insight, and control. As a result, a system is a structure made up of recognizable components that have defined roles and are arranged in a particular hierarchy. This system is different from other systems or non-systems. According to Lotman, culture is a complicated semiotic entity made up of a variety of other semiotic systems.

The primary characteristic of culture as a system is that it facilitates inter-human communication. Here, it's crucial to highlight how Lotman's communication model differs from earlier semioticians. According to Saussure, the reason we can communicate with one another is because we employ the same signs and their mixtures. He makes a distinction between *langue* and *parole*, the latter being the concrete communications created on the basis of the former's uniform sign system. As a result, communication is made feasible by the fact that all



communications utilize the same linguistic structure. A distinct model of communication was put forth by Jakobson (1960), in which he discusses the referential, emotional, conative, phatic, metalingual, and poetic aspects of communication, which are the six functions of language. In place of langue and parole, Jakobson substitutes the words code and message. In both instances, there is only one message that is being transmitted and only one piece of code that is being exchanged. Contact is defined by Saussure and Jakobson as a physical conduit and psychological link between the addresser and addressee. Lotman disagrees with this approach and believes that it is useful but has cultural limitations. He views the text as the primary medium of exchange and the hub of semiotic activity. The preceding models of communication, according to him, can only function in artificial semiotic systems created to transmit messages with the least amount of distortion. Such artificial systems are unable to generate fresh messages.

Any information transfer in a culture is referred to as a "translation." Lotman includes translation in his definition of fresh message. "We do not consider text T 2 to be new in relation to text T1," he writes in 1990, "if the translation of text T1 from language L1 to language L2 leads to the appearance of text T2 in such a way that the operation of a reverse translation results in the input text T1 (1990, 13–14)."

## **V. CULTURE AS TEXT AND TEXT AS CULTURE**

Because they can be considered as wholes at various levels of the same system, the semiosphere concept allows us to integrate the treatment of culture as text and the treatment of text as culture. The ability of culture as a whole and of its individual pieces to produce nontrivial new texts in the 'output' is what we will refer to as meaning creation, according to Lotman, who views this issue as the primary challenge facing the semiotics of culture. According to Ilya Prigogine, new texts are those that appear as a result of irreversible events, or texts that are somewhat unpredictable. (2000; 640)

According to Lotman (1970: 64–77=1981: 34–48), every artifact with a purpose and a coded message can be considered a text. He observes, however, that every culture chooses from the set of these texts a small subset that its members consider significant for their cultural identity. According to his assertions (1970=1981: 38), "The selection of a certain number of texts from the mass of [...] messages can be considered as indicating the emergence of a culture as a special form of self-organization of society," and that "A situation in which all texts have equal value amounts to a liquidation of the culture."

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The research described in this thesis sought to investigate how Contemporary Indian Poetry in English has changed over time as a cultural text and how it may be analyzed using the Cultural



Semiotics framework created by the Tartu Moscow School of Semiotics, specifically relying on the work of Juri Lotman. Over the past two centuries, Indian poetry in English has continuously changed and established itself as a vital component of Indian literature, overcoming the obstacles to establishing its identity and belonging.

'Contemporary' has been defined as the time starting in 1990. Globalization, the internet, and international terrorism all increased in the 1990s. These were universal phenomena that affected societies all throughout the globe. On a more local level, India experienced economic liberalization, the rise of social justice politics (such as the Mandal Commission report's implementation), Hindu nationalism, separatist terrorism and the ensuing exodus of Kashmiri pundits, as well as numerous terrorist attacks, including the Mumbai bombings, the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, the Akshardham attack, and the attack on the parliament. Additionally, local nationalism grows and regional identities are emphasized as a result of globalization (Giddens 2005). We may see an increasing expression of regional identities even in CIPE.

It is possible to study contemporary Indian poetry in English as discrete pieces or as a component of a whole, as a whole text with a border and parts that are both discrete and continuous dispersed throughout a continuum known as the semiosphere. Since CIPE is a cultural text, it both generates and portrays the culture.

Any study that attempts to analyze it will likely change the cultural text since it is involved in the "auto communication" or "self-description process," which is contradictory in nature. Because every attempt at analysis or definition will only change the semiosis under study, it is possible that it is only studying a contingent semiosis.

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