

The Cultural Semiotics of Contemporary Indian Poetry in English- A Study

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Abstract

The study presents an analysis of the contemporary Indian poetry in English(CIPE) using the framework of cultural semiotics developed by the Tartu Moscow School of Semiotics(TMSS) and especially the works of Lotman. The study situates the CIPE in the context of the over two centuries of Indian Poetry in English beginning with the poets of English origin writing in and about India. First a theoretical framework is developed applying the key concepts of Cultural Semiotics, semiosphere, isomorphism and the textuality of culture. Then a brief cultural history of Indian poetry in English from colonial times till 1990 is presented. The period beginning 1990 is considered as the 'contemporary'. the fourth chapter presents a detailed analysis of CIPE defining its semiosphere and the organizing principles of this semiosphere including the core and periphery relationships. A spatial understanding of the semiotic space is arrived at detailing the poets who form the normative core and those at the periphery and how the core keeps shifting. Various aspects of CIPE such as intertextuality, intersemiosis, gradual and explosive processes, process of meaning generation, entropy etc have been analysed. It explains the heterogeneity of the space, asymmetry of internal structures, binariness of internal and external spaces, boundaries acting as bilingual filters that allow for the exchange of semiotic processes and the development of a metalanguage to describe the culture. The study concludes by affirming the relevance of using cultural semiotics as a methodological framework to develop a holistic understanding of poetry.