

Semiotic Studies and Punjabi Criticism

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Introduction:

Semiotic studies, as a discipline, delves into the examination of signs, symbols, and their meanings across different modes of communication. When applied to the realm of Punjabi criticism, this analytical framework becomes a powerful tool for unraveling the layers of meaning within Punjabi literature, art, and culture. In the context of Punjabi literature, semiotic analysis explores how linguistic signs, such as words and phrases, are employed to convey cultural nuances, societal issues, and identity. It looks at the use of symbols, metaphors, and narrative structures in Punjabi poetry, prose, and drama to discern deeper cultural and social significances. The application of semiotic studies to Punjabi criticism enriches the interpretation of signs and symbols in Punjabi literature and culture. This interdisciplinary approach provides a comprehensive understanding of how meaning is constructed and conveyed, offering insights into the intricate tapestry of Punjabi artistic and cultural expressions within a broader historical and sociopolitical context.

Symbolism has become established as a major method of study in contemporary theoretical thought. The basic premise of this method is that every phenomenon takes existence through the communication system of signs. We can gain his understanding and knowledge through the process of symbolization. Consequently, the study of each phenomenon is also possible only in the context of the resulting meaning of its rules of signification. This method of study considers all human phenomena to be relational and tries to establish a common method of study for the comprehensive study of all human creations by treating them as diverse sign-systems. Thus, the aim of the semiotic method of study is to understand and theorize the process of symbolization of all the phenomena of creation as communication systems.

In recent times, semiotics has been able to present a very useful study model for the semiotic study of poetry. In fact, in dialogue with post-structuralist thought, semiotics has emerged from its primary structural form to become an analytical method of poetry at a practical level. Whereas Saussure, Peirce etc. thinkers established the basic basis of semiotics, Julia Kristiva, Foucault, Derrida etc. thinkers have tried to build a practical type of semiotics. Now, the major concern of semiotic studies is with poetic text, poetic language, discourse, production of meaning in text, intertextuality etc. Thus, symbolism is the method of reading the poetic text.

The famous linguist Ferdinand de Saussure introduced a new perspective on language, thus opening new doors of study in the field of knowledge. Saussure's theories of semiotics attempted to give new meanings to literary works. New ways of knowledge, experience and new thinking were opened from this meaning. Therefore, symbolism has been established as a major method of study in contemporary theoretical thought. The basic premise of this method is that every phenomenon exists through the communication system of symbols and we can gain its understanding and knowledge through the process of symbolization. Consequently, the study of each phenomenon is possible only in the context of its signification rules and the resulting meanings of the dynamic process of signification. This method of study takes all the phenomena of the human world in its scope, considering all the creations

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as diverse sign-arrangements and trying to establish a common study method for the comprehensive study of all. Thus, the purpose of the semiotic method of study is to understand and theorize the process of symbolization of all phenomena of creation as a communication system.

"Semiological study occupies an important place not only in the field of literature but in every field of human life."¹

The basic reason for this is that all the fields of human and objective reality relationships come under the scope of symbology, because basically each field has a special kind of symbological existence in itself. A more scientific, subtle and deep study and analysis of the entire life of a human group can be done only through the special study method of symbolism. Like other spheres of life, literature also has an essentially Semiotic existence. That is why the semiotic study of literature, like other areas of social life, can prove to be more helpful and meaningful for a deep, balanced, accurate and scientific study of literary works.

'Sygnology' is a science that studies signs. Through semiotics, we learn about the organization, nature and communication of symbols. But as a study method the nature and form of signs may be different. According to Wikipedia (encyclopedia) in the context of the semiotic study method, a symbol is defined as follows:

In semiotics, 'sign' refers to something that conveys a meaning about something that has a meaning different from itself through which information is communicated through interpretation or decoding of a sign.

That is, in the semiotic perspective, a sign is one that has a specific meaning and provides information in a coded language of meanings different from its original meaning. Dr. Sutinder Singh Noor in his research paper 'Symbolism - Basic Problems' refers to some of the following definitions which will help in understanding the method of study of symbology:

By semiotic, I mean an action, an influence, which is, involves a cooperation of three objects, such as (the) sign, is object and is interpretant, this tri-relative influence, not being in any way resolvable in actions between pairs .²

Semiotics is mainly concerned with signs as social forces. ³

The new classical theory of systems of called semiotic, semiotics, or semiology includes: pragmatics, the theory of the relationship between signs and their users; semantics, the theory of relation between signs and their meaning or the truth, an syntactic, the theory of relation of one sign to another.⁴

In the light of the above definitions, it is concluded that semiotics is a method of study that studies symbols in a social perspective, due to which it is also called 'Semiology'. The search for meaning takes place in the context of the sign, the object, and the use of the sign. Thus, it is a science that studies the relationship between signs and their users, the interrelationship of signs and their meanings in the context of semantics, and the relationship of one sign to other signs under an arrangement.

When we analyze literary works under this method, we mean that how these works communicate their meaning to the readers/viewers/listeners.⁵

Thus this method studies the composition as an arrangement and studies the underlying rules or conventions that help to give meaning to the composition. The systematic development of the Semiotic study method is only in the twentieth century, but According to the research of Dr. Gurpal Singh Sandhu it is round 300 BC, the Stoics, a philosophical thinker, used the term 'semeion' while discussing the importance of the communication process and called it 'cognitive presentation of observable fact'.⁶

Meaning to express or communicate something intelligently. After this, Aristotle, St. Augustine, J. Wilkins, Dalgarno etc. thinkers have been discussing this method, but the first theoretical discussion about this method was an English scholar John Locke in 1690 AD in one of his essays (Essays Concerning Human Understanding). He used the word 'Semiotike'. He envisioned a science that studies the symbols used by the human mind to understand things and communicate this knowledge to others.⁷

Two different terms for symbolism came into vogue. Some scholars called it 'Semiotics' and some were of the opinion that it should be called 'Semiology'. Therefore, in a conference held in Italy in June 1974, the International Organization for the Study of Symbols made a final decision to use the term (Semiotics) by ending this controversy.

In Punjabi we call this method of study 'Chihan Vigyan'. Among those who gave the scientific and theoretical foundations of this study method were CS. The names of Peirce and Ferdinand-de-Saussure are prominent. Three traditions have prevailed to define symbolism and the thinkers of these traditions are detailed as follows:

1. American Tradition: C.S. Peirce, Charles Morris, Gregory Bateson, Rene Thomand Thomas.A. Cbiac.
2. French tradition: Ferdinand-de-Saussure, Louis Ylmslev, Levi Strauss, RollinsBarat, AJ Greimas, Yak Locken, Umberto Eco, Julia Kristeva, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Paul D. Mann, Ismail Benveniste, Jenarat Jayne and D. Deleuze.
3. Russian Tradition : V.S. Volsinov, Mikhail Bakhtin and PN Midvidev.

Important research in the field of symbolism is of the French tradition. All subsequent thinking about the semiotic method of study has been made possible through a reanalysis of the foundations of Saussure and Peirce.

Semiotic Studies in Punjabi Literature:

If we look at the history of Semiotic Punjabi criticism, we see that its history is not very old. However, there has been qualitative and quantitative critical research on this study method in France, America and Russia. If we review the Punjabi iconographic criticism, an important element emerges that till now no theoretical and original poetics of this study has emerged in Punjabi. On the other hand, the fact that whatever research has been done in Punjabi from this point of view is satisfactory, but there are still many more possibilities.

The second important fact in the perspective of Punjabi iconographic criticism is that whatever critical research work has been done in Punjabi, its insights have been taken from the above-mentioned thinkers. In this way, theoretically, while Punjabi sign criticism is in the direction of translating the works of Western thinkers into Punjabi, there is also a need to study and analyze Punjabi works from this point of view, the results of which have turned out to be quite meaningful and beneficial.

This critical perspective has suggested a new method to Punjabi criticism through which we have been able to understand in depth the active motifs, myths, stereotypes, Semiotic constitution, cultural system, social system in Punjabi works.

Dr. Harjit Singh Gill has started first theoretically about Punjabi symbol criticism. As a professor in Punjabi University, Patiala, under his supervision many researchers have completed their Ph.D. and M.Phil. have done research work at the level of After this Dr. Harbhajan Singh, Dr. Tarlok Singh Kanwar, Dr. Gurbhagat Singh, Dr. Sutinder Singh Noor, Dr. Gurpal Singh Sandhu Dr. Jagjit Singh, Dr. Jagbir Singh established its theoretical framework in Punjabi and studied and analyzed the literary

works from this point of view. The academic research done in Punjabi through this study method is as follows: Semiotic study of Punjabi myths: Bhupinder Singh, Semiotic study of Mohan Singh's poetry: Makhan Singh, Semiotic study of ancient birth records. Study : Maninderpal Singh, Semiotic Study of Balwant Gargi's Plays : Jaswinder Singh, Semiotic Study of Raja Rasalu's Legend : Harjit Singh, Semiotic Study of Puran-Luna Kavi : Gurbinder, Semiotic Study of Sukhbir's Novels : Rajinder Singh, Waryam Singh Sandhu's semiotic studies: Seema, Prem Prakash's semiotic studies of male-female relationships: Jatinderpal Singh, Nanak Singh's semiotic studies: Paramjit Singh Kalsi, Dalip Kaur Tiwana's novels Semiotic Studies: Meenakshi Rathore, Symbolism and Guru Nanak Bani: Om Prakash Vashisht, Punjabi Novels: Symbols (Signs) Scientific Studies: Gurpal Singh Sandhu, Heer Waris Shah's Semiotic Study: Jaswinder Kaur, Symbolist of Punjabi Folktales Study: Pritam Singh Batra, A Semiotic Study of Relationship Structure in Punjabi Poetry: Paramjit Kaur, Punjabi Folk Drama: A Semiotic Study (in Comparative Perspective of Major Folk-Drama Forms of Haryana, Rajasthan, and Gujarat) : Barinder Kaur, Semiotic Study of Punjabi Folk Tales : Amardeep Singh, Semiotic Study of Folk Tales of Bazigars : Harjit Kaur, Semiotic Study of Punjabi Folklore : Balwinder Singh, Semiotic Study of Ajmer Singh Aulakh's Play Begane Bohar Di Chan : Chhaibar Singh Baring, Semiotic study of Punjabi fairy tales: Satinder Kaur Virak, Semiotic study of plays based on folktales: Jatinder Kaur, Semiotic study of Jaswant Singh Viridi's stories: Baljinder Kaur In these dissertations, symbology is theorized. After defining the Torah, the semiotic studies of the works are done according to the respective subject area.

Much of the critical research work in Punjabi from a semiotic perspective has been done at the academic level and has subsequently been published in the form of books or various articles. However, there has not been any theoretical work about this method of study in Punjabi, which we can understand as an independent discipline and clarify its relevance in the Punjabi perspective. But the work that has been done has been done according to this vision and there is still a lot of need for more research work. There has been little work in this academic discipline regarding Punjabi poetry. Any literary work or creative text can be studied from several perspectives. Literary texts or works are also the creation of a person living in a society or cultural background and they directly or indirectly embody the caste or collective unconscious of a society or community. Although literature is an individual creation, it is an artistic and aesthetic expression of the desires, aspirations, experiences and vision of a human group. Literary works or literary texts are not monotonous or single-layered, so they can be studied from different disciplines of knowledge.

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