

Lecture 1: Semiotic reading

Preface:

Contemporary Arab critical discourse witnessed major and profound shocks and transformations in the last decades of the twentieth century, and that was brought about by the approaches - contextual and textual - that came to us from the West, so that scholars and critics resort to using them in their various issues and implications in questioning ancient and modern Arabic texts. "One of the most important curricula that formed a cultural and critical dimension between the West and the Arabs, and then the ancient poetic texts - in particular - were among the critical and analytical issues in which our modern critics fought and were influenced by them in one way or another, because the ancient poetic text has cultural and historical dimensions in memory. Creativity as the first ancient poetic station encountered by the recipient and the critic in particular, hence the interest in it was inevitable on the part of contemporary Arab criticism because it is the first beginnings of literature / poetic text through which access to the features of the text is possible.

For this, it was necessary to have sound critical foundations in dealing with the semiotic approach that facilitates the process of practice and application to the ancient literary and poetic texts in particular. To important results in how we deal with and receive the ancient text in the light of the semiotic approach from which our critics, both Eastern and Moroccan, drew.

Where those who employed it, all their poetic and prose applications from the pre-Islamic literary texts, until the present time, leading to the establishment of a semiotic critical vision for the semiotics of receiving the ancient Arab creative text unified among the critics as a whole, and this is in order to unify the process of conscious criticism based on the techniques and critical terms that are already known among The critic and the recipient in the light of the semiotic approach and the theory of reception.

1- The semiotics of the West and its approach to the Arabs:

Historical precursors to the semiotic method:

Before talking about the semiotic approach, it is worthwhile to briefly touch on semiotics in general, and then the semiotic approach, through our discussion of the mechanisms of analyzing literary texts.

Two do not disagree that the modern critical approaches, including the semiotic approach, are the fruit of Western culture (European or American) and the outcome of its material civilization, and that it was transmitted to the Arab world, like the rest of the features of civilization, through the wave of Western influence that shook the Arab world. Or imitation or re-manufacturing - if it is correct to say - according to what suits the Arab civilization, and this is what happened when the science of alchemy appeared, which the Arab world knew "since the mid-seventies".

Signs or “semiotics, or semiology or semiotics, or the science of signs, or the science of signs, or the science of evidence” are all translations of a single science concerned with the study of signs.

Thinking about semiotic signs is not a contemporary birth, as there is a theory of signs implicit in the traditional “linguistic” reflections in China, India, Greece, and Rome, as the sophists attached - before - great importance to this issue in the beginnings of thinking, where we find the term semiotics in the Platonic language. Along with the term Grammatiké, which means learning to read and write, combined with philosophy or the art of thinking.

Then Aristotle comes in his book (The Expression) to define the relationship between utterances and signs, and between the things of the external world, when he says: “The sounds that a person produces are symbols for psychological states, and the written words are symbols for the utterances that sound produces, just as writing is not the same for all human beings.” Likewise, the expressions are not the same as the other, but the states of the soul that are expressed by these direct signs are identical for all.

It seems that the Greek semiotics aimed only at classifying the signs of thought to guide them in a comprehensive philosophical logic, just as the Algerian saint, "Augustine 350 AD - 430 AD", provided definitions of the sign in his research in interpretation, relying on Greek philosophers such as "Aristotle" and the "Stoics", then he disappears. The term semiotics for a long time and does not appear except in the study of the English philosopher "John Locke (1632-1704)" on behalf of Sémiotiké» and the meaning is very similar to that presented by Platonic Greek philosophy.

The beginning of the sixties of the twentieth century is considered the actual beginning of the science of signs in all parts of the world, through two terms circulating in the French and American western culture, and they are the terms (semiology / semiotics) until they were united in the name of semiotics by a decision taken by the International Semiotic Society that was held in Paris in 1969 AD, and from Active members of this association are Yuri Lotman, Umberto Eco and critic Julia Kristeva.

2- The concept of semiotics:

The first international conference of semiotics was held in Milan, Italy in 1973 AD, and this conference raised the most important concepts of theoretical and procedural semiology”, so that the International Association, which was founded in France in 1974 AD, chose the name Semiotics for it, and did not choose the name Semiology, although the two terms are very similar either. In the semiology of de Saussure, or the semiology of Peirce, it must be noted that the role that it played in the field of the development of this science, and then Western scholars (semiology) have known various definitions, but they flow into one source: "the science that studies signs", This is indicated by Tzvetan Todorov, Julian Grimas, and Christian Metz, and others.

Since semiology consists of “the Greek origin: “Sémeîon” which means a sign, and “Logos” which means a speech, “it also means that” the science that searches in systems of signs, whether linguistic, iconographic, or kinetic.

It seems that the definition of "George Monan" is the most complete of these definitions, as he defines semiology as "the general science that studies all systems of signs or (symbols) thanks to which communication between people is achieved."

As for the scholars