

THE SEMIOLOGY ANALYSIS IN MEDIA STUDIES

- ROLAND BARTHES APPROACH -

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Abstract

Semiotics; also called semiology was first used by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in the early twentieth century. As semiology is concerned with the general properties of sign language and other signal forms, it would be obvious to say that semiotics is the science of signs that allowed the proliferation of a number of perspectives and paved the way to other cultural phenomena that raised the study of signs through its denotative and connotative meanings.

Linguists began to develop new theories of different kinds of signs and its connotative meanings. Roland Barthes was a key player in the French school structuralism semiotics .He developed his approach in denotation and connotation in relation to photographic images as a system of signs , Barthes also claimed that the semiology analysis can be applied to modes other than language . According to him the image has two layers: of what and how it is represented. He clearly describes that denotation is concrete while connotation is more complex and abstract concept.

Media studies need a new spirit like the semiological method from the Barthesian perspective in the qualitative analysis level to go beyond the text or the image which is open to an infinite number of interpretations. When applying the semiological method to analyze media within its messages whether verbal or non verbal in the case of the image, Roland Barthes suggests the sign as a combination of a signifier and a signified. Accordingly, connotation is not always a means to innovate meanings because it communicates and evokes ideas as in the case of the different semiotic modes for communication. Barthes works show new semiotics doctrine that allowed analyzing the signs system in media to prove how even nonverbal communications give connotative meanings.

According to Barthes, the image is related to the aesthetic and ideological factors that are opened to readings and interpretations at the connotative level in order to explain how meaning is created through complex semiotic interaction. Thus, semiotics in media studies uses a wide variety of texts including: images, adverts, and films to provide the recipients with knowledge they need to have the ability to analyze and produce meaningful texts and designs in the future. From this perspective, Barthes suggests the death of the author /the creator of the text to witness the birth of the recipient allowing him to interpret, read, and produce a wide range of meanings which are a form of semiotic production that is oriented to observation and analysis of media messages and discourses in order to open the senses of the semiological researcher to the complexity of semiotic interpretation and new methods of using signs within the social and cultural context in media .

In practice, Roland Barthes approach is highly applied in media studies that concentrate upon semiological analysis of such varied media domains as advertising, cinema, films, video clips, and caricature. In recent years the influence of Barthes works turned semiotists in communication and information sciences to study the different media images in order to investigate the symbolic interaction of verbal and nonverbal signs applying semiology as a qualitative method that viewed these signs as a text communicates significant meanings by rereading, giving interpretations and connotations to these media signs broader than its primary sense through frequent associations. Barthes made great contribution in this field i-e the textual image analysis in order to extract its connotations and the mediated significance which is accordingly based on functional order of culture and ideology.

Keywords: Semiology, image, connotation, Roland Barthes, media, analysis.