

Describing Media Texts.....

How do we talk about the content of a media text?

Are there any special words to use?

Meet Mr. Saussure



Semiotics.....

(Ferdinand de Saussure 1857-1913)

How do we interpret media texts?



Signification
(the study of signs)



Visual images

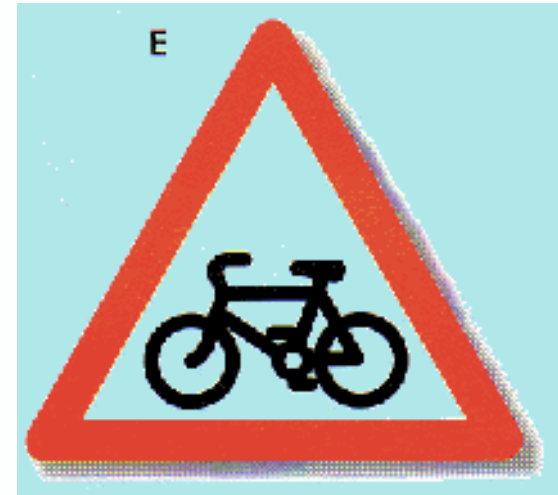


Acoustic images

All images (signs) have two parts :

1. individual elements : signifiers
2. their meanings : signified

What about these signs?



signifiers?
signified?

Important concepts

Making a list of the signifiers = denotation

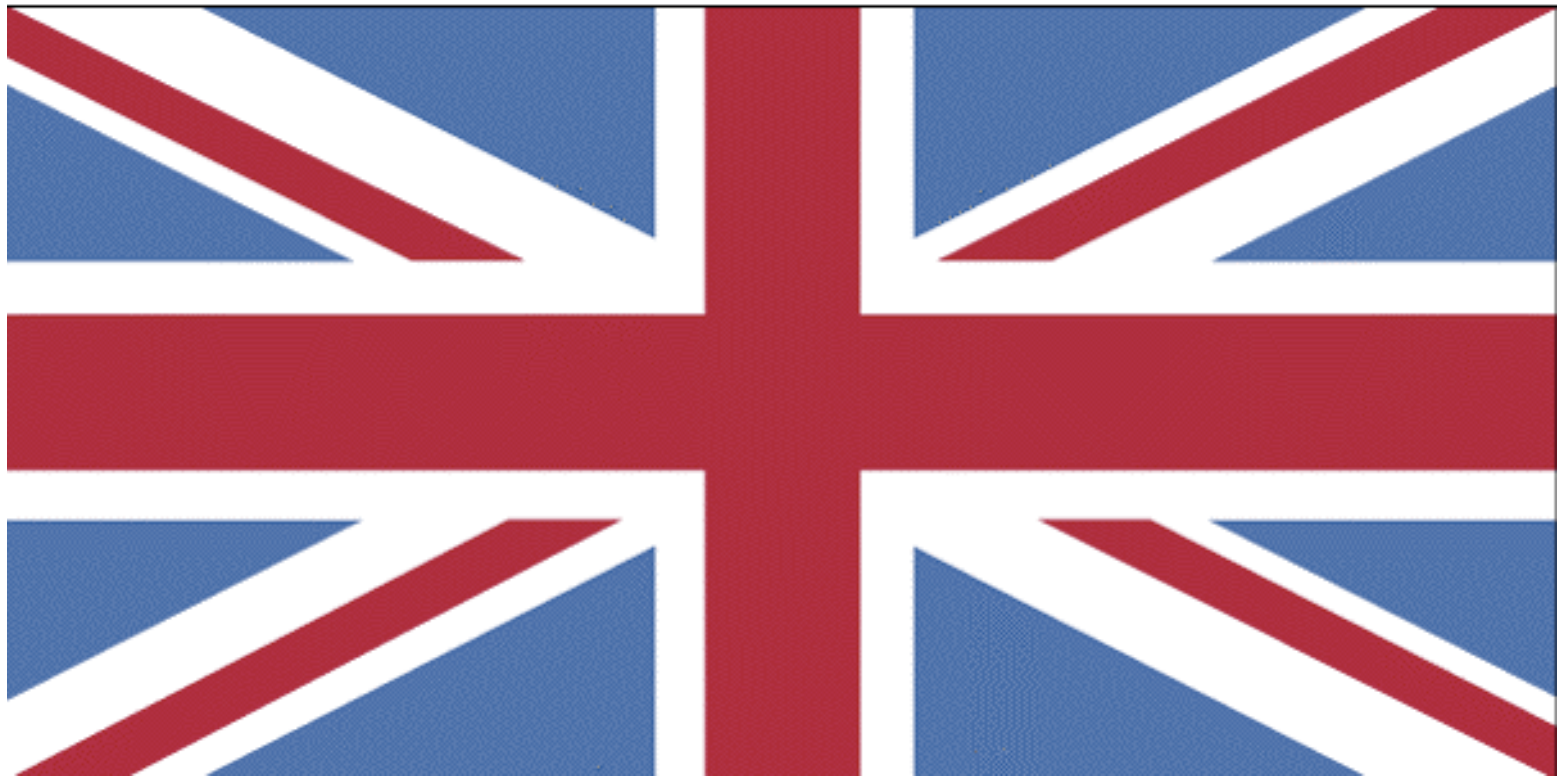
Saying what the signifiers might mean =
connotation

Denotation?

Connotation?

Try these









Signification is not an accident!

Editors, producers, designers, advertisers,
directors spend a lot of time
CONSTRUCTING the effect they want.

They **ENCODE** their messages.....

The audience has to **DECODE** them.....

Choose an image from a magazine ... try it! ➤



YOUR ASTRO PULLING GUIDE FOR 2002

19

PLUS
YOUR FREE
PERSONALISED
HOROSCOPE

BE YOUR
OWN STYLIST
Steal insider
know-how from
the women who
dress the stars

WOW
HIM!

- 1 Increase your powers of seduction
- 2 The new teasing sex tactics no man can resist
- 3 Ultra sultry dancefloor moves: pole dancers show you how

CELEBRITY
HAIR SPECIAL
CAT'S CUT
KYLIE'S CURLS
KATE'S CROP
Star styles made easy

SPECIAL REPORT
THE NEW
AMERICAN CULT
INFILTRATING
BRITAIN'S CLUBS

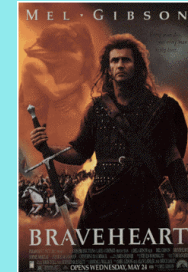
GO DISCO!

YOUR JEANS + OUR 32 MUST-BUY PARTY TOPS = 100% GLAMOUR

OBVIOUS

Print images do not move!

Try analysing this



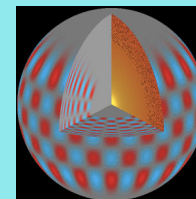
You have time to study them and to look at them again

DIFFICULT

Moving image texts can cause us more problems

.....

Try these TV clips



Where do you start?

It is important to have a structure for your thinking....

The **signifiers** can be grouped into families ...

visual
vocal
musical
sounds
print



Have a look at the opening sequences and see if you can choose two of the families and write a sentence for each....

Visual signifiers

... plenty to choose from

people

locations

objects

dress

camera shots & movements

editing

lighting

effects

graphics



Choose two of the categories on the left and write a sentence about each.....

Vocal signifiers

Voices have many important qualities :

volume
accent
tone
speed

pitch
words



Have a listen to these examples and see if you can comment on at least two different categories.

... and sometimes the microphone/processing can change the sound of the voice

Musical signifiers

Music is a vital signifier for creating mood in a text.

It can be a music bed ... or foreground

It can be different tempos

It can be diegetic or non-diegetic ..

It can be incidental

Is the music in this clip diegetic or non-diegetic.



Sounds

These are important signifiers in any audio-visual text.

ambience

actuality

sound effects

silence

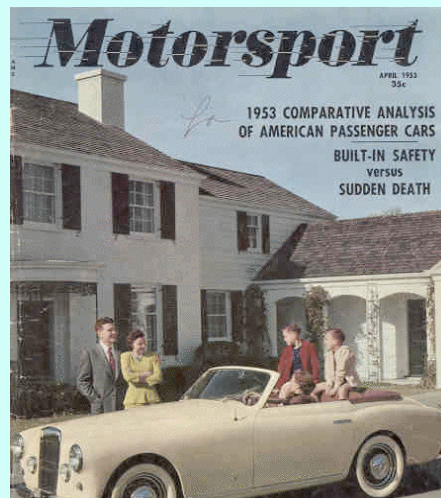


Can you pick out any of the above in this clip? How and why are they used?

Print signifiers ...

When you analyse anything in print ... consider ...

- size and angle of the image
- colour
- what is actually in the image (people, location etc...)
- the copy (writing) - font style and words.



ag
A

per
I

ug
D

urg
A

AV
sigs

PREF
MISE

PRINT
sigs

visvocmus
plodcamedleg
vatspmw
bedtedi
saf

juxtancon
modpoly
propptod
enigstran
repgen
crop

imaviscop
sac
plodcamedleg
fw

Motorsport

APRIL 1953
35c

Go
1953 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
OF AMERICAN PASSENGER CARS

BUILT-IN SAFETY
VERSUS
SUDDEN DEATH



ag per ug urg
A I D A

AV sigs → PREFAUD
MISE ← PRINT sigs



