

"semiotics for beginners" and "a rhetorical approach to understanding images in t...

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



“ Semiotics for Beginners” and “ A Rhetorical Approach to Understanding Images in the New ‘ Visual Age’” Essay Sample

Daniel Chandler tells us that a sign consists of two parts: the signifier and the signified. The signifier is the form that the sign takes, and the signified is a reaction of the signifier. For example: if the signifier is a symbol, then the signified could be a concept in the mind pertaining to that symbol.

Knowing that there are tens of thousands of different types of signs. Charles Pierce categorized them into 3 modes. The symbolic mode is one where the signifier is not directly related to the signified, and so the signified must be learned in order for the sign to work. The iconic mode is one where the signifier resembles the signified. The indexical mode is one where the signifier is directly connected to the signified.

One similarity of these two articles is the use of the sign in daily life.

Chandler gave us age-old definitions and examples of the sign, and Beverly Zimmerman shows us how the sign is integrated into our technological, and visual age. Chandler gives Saussure’s more bland definitions of a sign, where Zimmerman tells us Lester’s intricate perspectives to understanding images and WebPages.

Technology allows us to do some pretty cool stuff with words and images on the www. However, as the web is expanding, the quality of content is going down. Lester believes that these six analytical perspectives can help us create more meaningful and better quality images.

Personal Perspective refers to the initial opinion that you form when you first view the page. To form an opinion solely on this perspective would make it impossible to see the page in a meaningful way. Historical Perspective uses the history of the medium to form an opinion on the image. Technical Perspective looks at how the image was created, what it cost to make it, and how much effort was put into the quality of the image. There are six Ethical Perspectives that Zimmerman mentions. They are all different ways of looking at an image to decide whether or not it is ethically or morally acceptable for the content within the medium. It is suggested that a Cultural Perspective can understand an image better by figuring out which part of society it is directed towards and why. Critical Perspective is taking a critical perspective means to take more than just the visual interpretation of the image, but to further analyze the intent of the image.

Even though we have all of these new perspectives to get a more thorough definition of an image, they do have some limitations. We can overcome any limitations by adding another perspective: The Rhetorical Perspective is based on the images relationship with the audience, and how they respond to the image.

I feel that the literature by Daniel Chandler was not written for a person at my intellectual level at this point in time. However, I can see that the semiotics theory is a valuable one. The article by Beverly Zimmerman shows us Lester's views on how to effectively analyze an image. Between the two of these articles I can definitely see one huge message. This message is that when people see an image (or sign), the reaction to that sign differs from

person to person depending on a lot of different circumstances. This means that if we are going to be effective web designers we are going to have to apply these tactics to ensure that we are appealing to the proper crowd.