

Reading images as ideological subjects



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Name: Lecturer: Course: Date: Reading Images as Ideological Subjects

Reading is the process by which people get information from written material and it involves deriving meaning from such towards understanding what a writer is trying to relay. Subject on the other hand refers to the doer of an action and refers to the individual to whom a written text communicates to; it is usually a noun and could also mean the person or object the action is directed. Repression is a means by which people try to push undesirable thoughts from the conscious mind to the subconscious in an effort to forget them or deal with the same in a latter period. These three terms offer various meanings or ideologies to people depending on personal interpretations that are determined by social ideas and beliefs. Beliefs and ideas are shaped through unconscious interaction with social factors around us. People from a different social background or place might hold a different view or interpretation to a particular reading or image, depending on their viewpoints.

Sturken and Cartwright suggest that ideologies are determined by social interactions around us such as economies and institutions. The writers suggest that an ideology is a representational means by which people experience and make sensible reality. They further suggest that a society is an ideology comprising of systems of representation that drive mini ideologies.

Ideology has further been defined as a representation of an imaginary relationship between individuals according to the real conditions under which they exist. However, this idea holds people as subjects and thus limiting the individuality aspect that does not recognize uniqueness and views all

individuals as the same. This meaning does not allow the economically disadvantaged people to challenge set ideologies such as those set by Karl Marx that suggest the rich should be in control. The poor are treated as subjects for the rich who believing in this idea suggest they should not seek to challenge it. In terms of reading, adding text to images changes the subjective ideas that people have by infusing a biased and limited perspective.

Note that, people hold different ideas when viewing a given image. When words are supplemented in the images, people view the message as the idea behind the image. For instance, in the example of an atomic bomb, many people would perceive the destructive nature of an atomic bomb whereas others would decipher the idea of scientific advancement.

By including statements on an image, a viewer is provoked to look at the picture from the given ideology. Sturken and Cartwright assert that if dominant ideologies were emphasized, people would only interpret an image from one ideology. Permitting people to have their own interpretations would allow different ideologies hence leading to various conclusions on a single picture.

Allowing individuals to have their interpretations on images or views on issues in life tolerates diversified ideologies and dominant ones tend to become obsolete elements within the society. Note that, when people are only fed with one ideology, they see all things from the given standpoint and this reduces the need to have other ideologies. In their article, Sturken and

Cartwright suggest that power is not exerted by one class of people on another, but agreed among all classes of people.

In dominant ideologies, power is held by one class of people, usually the powerful or ruling class. Hegemony emphasizes that power should be negotiated by all people transversing across all society levels through push and pull forces. Through this, dominant powers can be challenged and reaffirmed by changing social ideologies acquired from individual interpretations as opposed to one social class exerting ideological power on other society members.