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analysis is a capable descriptive tool but its normative powers are limited by paradigm. On the other hand, researchers require cultural competence to produce a reasonable analysis. Such type of analysis might prove difficult for large-scale studies.

These methodological weaknesses also offer strengths and advantages over other methods. Approaches that rely on semiotics alone are surrounded by suspicion (Leiss et al. 1990). Hence some of these problems could be avoided if the methodology is widened to include semiotic analysis with elements like non-written communication and rhetorical devices. To use discourse analysis in relation to visual texts provides the chance to open up, read and interpret texts in different ways. And the incompleteness of analysis could be attributed to method but it is difficult to judge where to end a study.

feature, a matter of use and context. Any picture that is used to reflect the nature of pictures in a metapicture.

The principal use of the metapicture is to explain what pictures are- to stage, as it were, the self-knowledge of pictures. We may want to say that self-knowledge is only a metaphor when applied to pictures that are, after all, nothing but lines and shapes and colors on flat surfaces. But we also know that pictures have always been more than that; they have always been idols, fetishes, magic mirrors-objects that seem not only to have a presence, but a life of their own, talking and looking back to us.

✱ However, Williamson (1978: 77-84) talks of 'types of absence' and Potter (1996) refers to making sense of content by means of what is not included leaving chance for readers to provide their own.

5. Conclusion:

The analysis of images might seem problematic (for, at least, first glance) due to the difficulty of representing such texts in print form. However, this task has been a continuous challenge for many researchers.

Among the weaknesses of such a task is that sometimes nothing of the analysis can provide an objective conclusion. Discourse

western art students do in a traditional life-class. But they are shown drawing exactly what they see, not some stereotype or conceptual schema.

The picture constitutes an array, by no means exhaustive, of some of the key moments of source in the representation of representation. It gives us a picture of the artist as a servile copyist of an equally servile model; the beholder, meanwhile, is placed in a position of superior visual mastery, beholding the whole scene of pictorial production as a historical moment, an archaic, alien convention from a position (apparently) beyond history, beyond style and convention. It shows archaic representation within the frame of classical representation Ernst Gombrich employs this picture as the opening illustration to *Art and Illusion*, arguing that it provides a key to the 'riddle of style' in the history of art, the puzzling fact that ways of picturing the world are different in different times and places (ibid, 1960: 2).

Moving on, Alain's Egyptian life-class seems to capture the geographical and historical other in the net of our gaze. The picture is generally self referential; it exemplifies the sort of picture that represents pictures as a class, the picture about pictures. Pictorial self-reference is, in other words, not exclusively a formal, internal feature that distinguishes some pictures, but a pragmatic, functional

face is looking forward, with her hands raised and parallel. She is almost sideways on to the students. The students sight along their thumbs to put the model in perspective and establish proportions, and the drawing they produce seem to duplicate quite faithfully the contours of the model.

On an overt level (the denotative), the image represents an Egyptian life class represented by a model and art students. But the image is not meaningful merely if taken on face value. A valuable resource in the explanation of connotation is Dyer's (1982: 97-104) analysis of non-written communication. The model is young. If she were older, it would be difficult to see her as a model. She is of extremely slight build, the main force of meaning generation. Her body is anorexic. Interestingly, Leiss et al. (1990: 290) talk about 'incongruity of elements' reversing our normal associational fields. Ewen (1988: 183) feels that because 'the ideal body is one that no longer materially exists', anorexia can be regarded as a 'logical extension of the norm'. It is a reaction to 'constructed thinness'. In taking her beyond 'thin but beautifully so' and thus making it difficult not to connote anorexia, the text may thus act as a 'social critique'. Dru (1996: 69) identifies 'defamiliarization' as a common tactic for attracting attention

In fact, the whole point of the cartoon is that the Egyptian art students are not shown as different at all, but behave just as modern,

the production of meaning. They investigate “they way in which depicted people, places and things combine in visual “statements” of greater or lesser complexity and extension” (ibid: p.1).

Pearce (1997: 179-85), however, developed a methodology of analysing visual texts, which basically involves:

1. Description.
2. Exploration of connotation.
3. Identification of discourse.
4. Definition of subjectification.
5. Search for similar discourses in other texts.
6. Appreciation of historical dimensions.
7. Summary and overall structures of meaning.

4. Text Example:

The text example is an image entitled ‘Egyptian Life-Class’, which appeared in the New Yorker Magazine 1955, 1983. The image shows a class of Egyptian art students drawing from life, rendering the figure of a nude model who stands in a stiff, flat pose remarkably similar to those flat stiff figures we find in the Egyptian painting. The model is white, avoiding immediate explicit association were she black. She is thin, let her hair down and her

analytic framework and emphasizes the need to “avoid some of the weaknesses associated with intuitive analysis”. She cites ‘non-verbal communication’, taking into account appearance (age, gender, race, hair, body size, looks), manner (expression, eye contact, pose, clothes) and activity (touch, body movement, position). Her main approach is to link ‘semiotics’ (analyses of systems of sign) to ‘content analysis’ (counting pre-specified elements of content) (ibid: 94-5). Cook (1992: 1-2) highlights a number of research parameters including physical content of the text, non-verbal communication, qualities of lettering, ‘properties and relations of objects and people’, other texts that use similar discourse (interviews / newspaper article) and ‘associated’ texts with different discourses.

‘Deconstruction’ is an important methodology that includes attempts to take apart text and see how they are constructed in such a way as to present particular images of people and their ‘actions’. Burr stresses ‘metaphors, grammatical constructions, figures of speech and so on’. This can be adapted to the analysis of imagery, for some rhetorical devices exist visually as well as in writing and speech (Burr, 1995: 104-7).

Other linguists like Kress and Van Leeuwen also favour a semiotic approach. In their book, *Reading Images: A Grammar of Visual Design* (1996), a ‘grammar of visual design’ is involved in

3. Approaches to Analysis of Visual Discourse:

Theoretical work is necessary for any text to be read and represented in a piece of analysis. Various texts call for various theories. However, there are distinctive approaches in different disciplines, which can offer something specific for the various types of texts, in question. Such analytic research needs to be interdisciplinary in order to provide readings of texts which do not have the form of reading or writing that are taken for granted to be properties of texts. Instead of trying to construct a discourse analytic technique that could be applied to all text varieties, attempts have been made to provide ways of reading and analysing texts. Such attempts may be modified and adapted for other circumstances. One of the researchers who devoted much of their work to visual discourse is Barthes (1972). He employs quasi-psychoanalytic techniques to analyze images, looking to implication, connotation, legend, correlatives, comparison, imagery and signification to derive meaning. The concept of 'myth' is associated with Barthes. It is a useful concept of second-order 'connotative' or ideological significance which implies an 'extra', second meaning that 'fixes' the first into place.

Dyer (1982: 86) advocates the practical application of semiotics to the critical analysis of images. She stresses the need for an

include all the things that we see, refer to and take for granted as actually existing 'out there'.

The term 'discourse' is also used broadly to make reference to the whole symbolic domain. Analysis is, then, made of things speakers can achieve with discourses (e.g. Billig, 1991) or of the distinct interpretative repertoires those speakers employ (e.g. Wetherell and Potter, 1992).

Students new to the field of discourse research and analysis are usually faced with the difficulty of the various approaches to the study of texts which go under the heading of 'discourse analysis' (e.g. Stubbs, 1983; Gilbert and Mulkay, 1984; Fairclough, 1995).

The study and analysis of discourse is usually limited to speech and writing and mostly concentration is on written discourse such as media articles (e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987; van Dijk, 1997). However, discourse analysis and textual research in the human sciences have developed to a large extent. A range of studies have been made to open up and read texts other than verbal using different innovative methods. This trend is based on the assumption that discourse may be studied whenever there is meaning

In 1988, the National Endowment for the Humanities issued a report entitled *Humanities in American* that sheds light on the problem of 'word and Image'. It argues that the tensions between visual and verbal representation cannot be separated from struggles in cultural politics and political culture. " 'Gender race and class,' the production of 'political horrors' and the production of 'truth, beauty and excellence' all converge on questions of representation" (Cheney, 1988: 20).

2. 'Discourse' and 'Discourse Analysis':

The term "discourse" is sometimes used to refer to patterns of meaning which organize the various symbolic systems human beings inhabit, and which are necessary for us to make sense to each other. It is important to emphasize here that the way we use the term 'discourse' is not restricted to language, as it appears in some accounts of discourse analysis (e.g. Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975; Brown and Yule, 1983). It is used to include other patterns of meaning that may be visual, spatial or physical. Hence, we follow Foucault's (1969:49) maxim that discourses are "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak". These 'practices' include spatial or temporal types of meaning. And the 'objects' such practices create (or 'form' in Foucault's words) will

On the other end of the spectrum, there is a different view according to which a picture is worth a thousand words. A verbal representation cannot represent—that is, make present—its object in the same way a visual representation can. “It may refer to an object, describe it, invoke it but it can never bring its visual presence before us in the way pictures do.” Words can “cite”, but never “sight” their objects (ibid.: 152).

Essential differences between verbal and visual media are found at the level of sign-types, forms, material of representation and institutional traditions. Art historians and literary critics talk about “linguistics of the image” and the “iconology of text” (Mitchell, 1980: 310; the Princeton Encyclopedia of poetry and poetics), which considers matters like the description of senses, the construction of figures, likenesses and allegorical images, and the shaping of texts into determinate formal patterns.

The treatment of vision and painting in the lingo of linguistics is commonly understood to be metaphoric. Also, the ‘icons’ we find in verbal representation, whether formal or semantic are supposed not to be understood literally as pictures of real graphic or visual images.

that go beyond merely formal or structural differences” (Mitchell, 1994:3).

However, there is confusion between differences of medium and differences in meaning. Semantically speaking (that is from the point of view of referring, expressing intention and producing effects in a viewer \ listener), there is a claim that no major difference exists between texts and images. Language can stand in for images and images can stand in for language since “communicative, expressive acts, narration, argument, description, exposition and other so called ‘speech acts’ are not medium- specific-proper to some medium not others” (Mitchell, 1994: 160).

Apropos, “writing”, as Plato suggested, in *Phadorus*, is “very like painting”. Painting, in turn, is very like the first form of writing the pictogram. The history of writing is regularly told as a story of progress from primitive picture-writing. The possibilities of verbal representation of visual representation are practically endless. Hence, there have been some attempts to stabilize and unify fields of representation and discourse under a single master-code (mimesis, semiosis, communication, etc.) (Mitchell, 1994: 84).

1. Introduction:

The focus of this work is on what Game (1991:5) describes as 'the how of meaning', how images mean as well as what they mean. A 'sign' is part of a specific text, which points to something else (the referential) existing outside the particular text. Signs have two functional dimensions, the signifier and the signified. The signifier is the image (or objectification) utilized in the text and the signified is what it potentially means. And the method for encoding and decoding signs that the viewer uses to interpret signs in texts is described as 'referent system' Williamson (1978:57).

This study is designed to illustrate the value of discourse analytic readings of texts and to present a way of reading which respect the particular form of the text presented. It presumes that there is no right way to interpret an image and that it is dangerous to ascertain proper reading. The structure of the analysis presented in this paper is loosely based on Pearce (1997) and Dyer (1982) methodologies.

“ 'Word and Image' is the name of a commonplace distinction between types of representation, a shorthand way of dividing, mapping and organizing the field of representation. It is also the name of a kind of basic cultural trope, replete with connotations,

Towards an Analysis of Visual Discourse

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Abstract

The paper is an attempt to shed light one type of non-verbal discourse, namely visual discourse. The aim is to provide a brief overview of existing approaches to this kind of text and so to arrive at a rationale for the approach that may be most useful for the particular text example. The paper attempts to illustrate the value of discourse analytic readings of texts. It argues that using discourse analysis in relation to visual texts provides the chance to open up, read and interpret texts in different ways.

الخلاصة:

ان هذا البحث محاولة تسليط الضوء على نوع من أنواع النصوص غير الكلامية الا وهو النص المرئي. والهدف هو عرض للنظريات الموجودة عن هذا النوع من النصوص واعتماد أكثرها ملائمة للنص المطروح للتحليل في هذا البحث. كذلك يحاول البحث توضيح أهمية القراءات النقدية للنصوص. ويعتمد البحث على فرضية ان تطبيق نظريات تحليل الخطاب على النصوص المرئية يعد مدخلا جيدا لقراءة وتفسير النصوص بطرق مختلفة.

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