

Applied Semiotics

- Parallax and sequence      Represent an action/event in a sequence of five images. Keeping the same time sequence for each of the five steps, represent the same action from five different perspectives.
- Semiotic Operations, syntactic level      Apply substitution, omission, and insertion\* at the micro and macro levels of the sequence. Keep the time scale unchanged. Based on these operations, represent the original sequence in an optimized manner.
- Re/presentation      Choose a word which best represents your final sequence. Represent the word iconically, indexically, and symbolically. Typography and concrete poetry can also be used here. Note the semantic and pragmatic aspects of the representations.
- Interpretant Matrix\*      Define functions of the word, placing yourself at the pragmatic level. Find relevant categories of interpretants and place the corresponding representations in a semiotic matrix\*, according to their sign typology: icon, index, symbol. Define a problem statement.
- Supersign      Develop the problem statement into a design project of your choosing. Consider all previous explorations as possible inclusive elements of your project. Aim at the highest possible design level (form-and-content), but allow the results to come out of your semiotic process.
- "Imageability", the criterion adopted by Kevin Lynch in the analysis of urban form, and presented in his book The Image of the City, will be adopted as the testing ground for the semiotic approach to design.

This outline is based mainly on semiotics courses presented by Mihai Nadin and Thomas Ockerse at the Rhode Island School of Design, Fall 1983, and Spring 1985.

\*Substitution, omission, insertion, Copyright 1981 by Mihai Nadin.

\*Interpretant matrix, Copyright 1981 by Mihai Nadin and Thomas Ockerse.

\*Semiotic matrix, Copyright 1981 by Mihai Nadin.

Definitions

(numbers refer to bibliography)

Semiotics ...discipline that provides a structure for studying and analyzing how signs function within a particular environment. A sign can be thought of as anything that conveys meaning. 5

knowledge science of signs 6

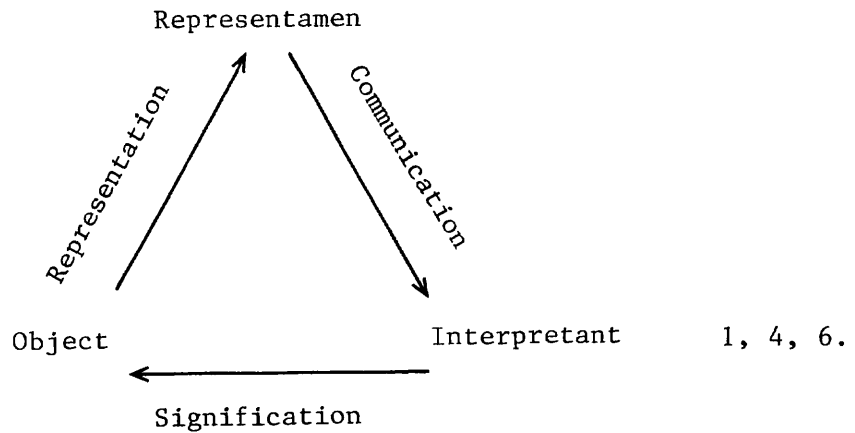
general theory of representation 2

general theory of signs in all their forms and manifestations among man and animals, normal and pathological, linguistic or non-linguistic, social or individual. 1

Sign something which stands to somebody for something in some respects or capacity 6

Semiosis an action, an influence, which is, or involves, a cooperation of three subjects, such as a sign, its object, and its interpretant, this tri-relative influence not being in anyway resolvable into actions between pairs. 6

Peirce's triangle (semiosis)



Iconic Modes of representation. Iconic (degree of resemblance, photo);  
Indexical Indexical (physical mark, fingerprint); Symbolic (based on  
Symbolic convention, flag, cross, signature).  
This typology of signs refers only to the primary function of the sign: representation. 4, 6.

Interpretant The interpretant is not the interpreter. 1  
interpretant as another representation which refers to the same object. 1  
signs are interpreted using signs. 4  
(the interpretant becomes yet another sign)  
the interpretant is a mediated, indirect process, which uses some previous knowledge. 4

## Bibliography

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Structuralism and Semiotics

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