

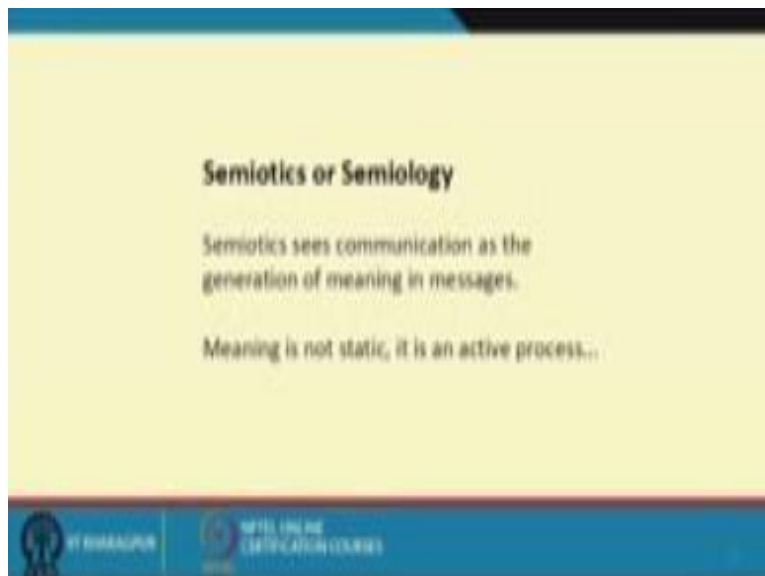
**NPTEL
NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE**

**Course
On visual Semiotics for Visual Communication**

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Lecture 10: Visual Semantics for
Visual Communication (Contd.)**

Hello students welcome back to our course on visual cement semiotics for visual communication into this lecture we will first time.

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Try to emphasize on the word semiotics you have been hearing this term semiotics of semantics used many times interchangeably but we have never really got into details of this particular term

or try to understand what it means but today is the in this class we will try to learn a little bit more about this term semiotics so semiotics or simulagee this whole domain or this is rather a discipline like you get physics chemistry mathematics similarly semiotics is a discipline it refers to a field of study related to a particular thing.

Say for example in case of physics it is a field of study which is related to various laws and hypotheses related to physics right so in case of semiotics the study of science is what is dealt with okay so if you look into semiotics what does semiotics look at it as the semiotics ceased communication as generation of meanings in messages or semiotics is related to study of science so we in our previous lectures have understood and learned about different modes of human communication we have understood that there is always a message which is being changed or communicated through different types of media.

And now the question comes that when all these things happen they happen through some kind of science so these communication involves a certain amount of science and interrelationship of these signs and the meaning associated with this signed the semiotics exactly looks into this in totality that's why we have named the course as visual semiotic for visual communication so we do visual communication by various modes and we design different modes of visual communication many a times but that's not enough there is certain amount of sign language or sign system associated with it.

And hence we are looking at semiotics as a subject to deal with it and remember one thing as we said that whenever it comes to meaning of science so semiotic does not stop with the system of science but it also looks into the meaning of these signs and it is important to note a very small simple tip which we should not forget which I have mentioned over here meaning is not static it is an active process so meaning is never static it is an active process what does that mean means that meaning is ever-changing it keeps on changing with time with people with culture with society with different other influences.

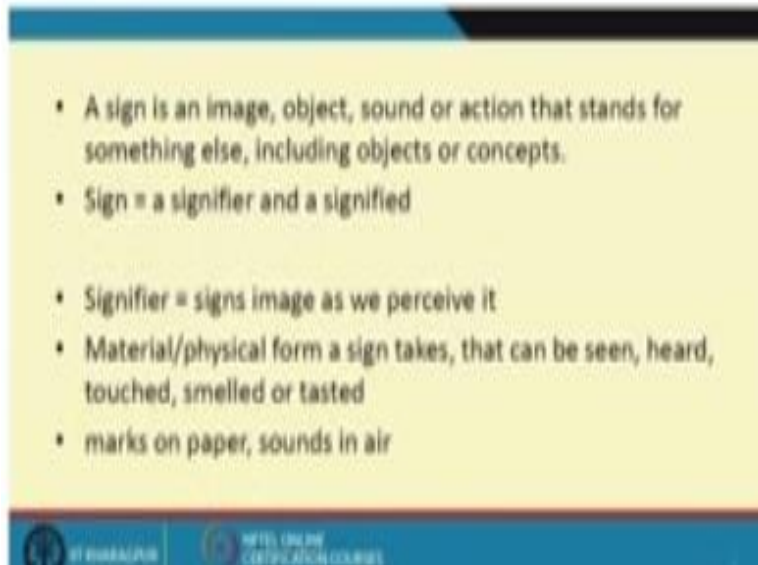
So we will talk about that a little later when we look into the structure of semiotics you will see that how on why we are calling it an active process rather than being a static process so now

before getting into the structure of semiotics and getting into the detail of that we will see how it evolved so semiotic the discipline is relatively very new so it is compared to other many other disciplines it is relatively very new it is after the so if you look at the time frame of when it was first coined so saussure was the key person he is known as the father of semiotics and so only during the you know late 19th century or in the beginning of 20th century saussure coined this term and started his research related to this.

And this whole semiotics the study of semiotics was revolving around in that time in literature in linguistic so basically what saussure was trying to investigate is the relationship between different words in a particular string of words in a sentence or whenever there is a literary notion there is a linguistic notion a linguistic piece a sentence for example or a group of sentences so there you have different words which are dead and then there is a relationship between these words which create a meaning okay.

So you say the rain is falling and then he said the rain is falling heavily and then he said the rain is falling heavily but it is very pleasant so all these words coming together but making different meaning all together so that interested saussure to a great extent and he started deep diving what exactly or how exactly these meanings are created by smaller pieces so that is how that's the origin of today's semiotics when we are talking about and which is the basis which took shape you know hundred years back, so that that is the time when we have been looking at the semiotic as a discipline so now if we move forward.

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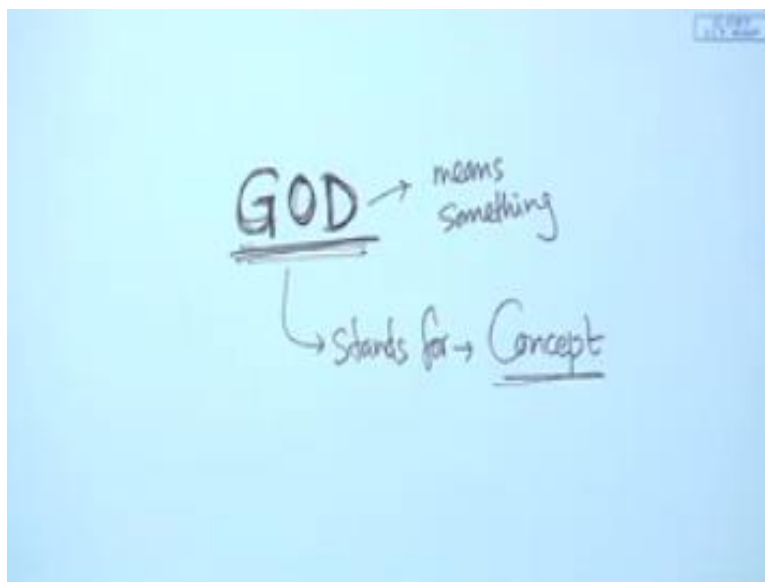
What is this time so we talked about sign and sign your texts predominantly related to sign so now we need to look into a little bit in detail that what exactly a sign is okay, if you look here a sign is an image object sound or action that stands for something else including objects or concepts at one go it might sound very confusing I can help you understand that but what again let us read it once more so a sign is, so what is the sign essentially a sign is an ad image it is an object a sound or an action.

So first of all let us see what a sign is so a time could be an image okay let us take it this way so assign could be an image it could be an object so assign could be an image like you are looking at the limit of my art it could be an object like this or it could be a sound or it could be an action ok which stands for something else now that is where the cat is in a fine ok so if I say that this is the sign so this is an object right this is an object and this will this is standing for something else so this is standing for this right then this becomes this time.

So this object at that moment becomes the sign for this object so that is exactly what we meant when we looked at that definition so again let us look at this definition the assign is an object in this case we will refer to the pen that stands for something else which in this case was the bottle which includes of course the object or concept so in this case the other object was the bottle so we have represented the bottle by the pen and the pen becomes the sign of the bottle.

So that is how the sign language works it is somewhat there is a codification and there is a de-codification we have talked about that so it is now we can see how it all models together and emerges into in the world of semiotics so this is how the sign system works let me give you another example which it is a very fond example of mine and which I always talk about in the class is when we talked about concept we in here you have seen that we have talked about concept also so a sign is a concept okay so say for example when we talk about God.

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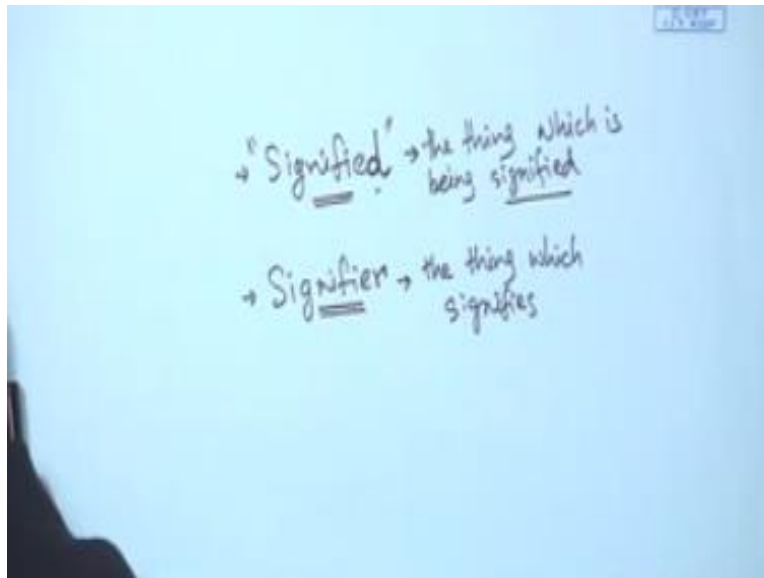


So when we talk about God say GO and D what is this is nothing but an image it's an image of an alphabet another alphabet another alphabet which means something so this means something what God stands for God stands for a concept because I wonder if any one of us has seen God but then there is a concept of God there is a concept we all refer to and this concept of God is given a shape by this particular image GO and D which is a text but at the end of the day it is in visual form and that stands for a concept this clarifies also another aspect where we are talking about sign as a concept.

You know sign also represents or stands for a concept so there's there is not much ambiguity in this particular aspect now so now we move on to another important thing which is sign has a

signifier and signified so very important thing in any of the senior tech books in any of the books where it refers to semiotics or if you read anything to do with semantics it will always encounter this word signifier and signified so let me write it down for you so we will encounter this word.

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Signifies and you will encounter this word signifier okay. So now though initially the words might look similar and might be confusing but it is easy as I will explain it to you so what is a signifier a signifier which you use to signify so the thing which signifies so if you take the pen example the pen was there was one the pen was the thing which was signifying so this particular object was signifying something else right so it was signifying or standing for something else.

So this is be signify our so this is signifier so it is trying to signify something else and standing for something else so this is signified clear about that now let us look at what is signified so now this particular penis signifying something right so the thing which is being signified the thing which is being signified so as it is very clear from me from the terminology itself the thing it is being signified is called signified so in this particular case the pen is the signifier and it is signifying what it is signifying this bottle.

So the pen is the signifier and the bottle is be signified so the bottle is signified by the signifier so this is how and both of them together form the sign system the sign is part of both the signifier and the signified this is according to the Athenian model but we will also look at other evolved model later on and which creates the genesis of the next generation of today's generation sign language. So now if you look here so fine image as we perceive it is a signifier is basically the image or the object that people see okay.

So it is the thing we perceive which stands for something else and then another very important aspect is the material and physical form a sign takes that can be seen hard touched smell or taste it so a sign so for example the marks on a paper or the sounds in air so all these are part of design so the sign has an essential quality and that quality is that it could be perceived it could be perceived by various other forms it is not just only by way of seeing it could be heard it could be spent it could be touched it could be smelled.

So if there could be various modes in which the sign system operates but in our particular case we are only considering the visual semiotics so we only restrictor selves to the visual domain but just to make you aware that there are different other domains where the semiotics work as well and many a times they work in conjunction one with another, so now let us look at one of the structures.

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- Signified = the mental concept/object to which it refers
- This mental concept is broadly common to all members of the same culture who share the same language

The diagram illustrates Saussure's model of the sign. It is composed of two circles. The left circle is split horizontally; the upper portion shows a tree, and the lower portion shows a speech bubble containing the word 'tree'. The right circle is also split horizontally; the upper portion is labeled 'Signified' and the lower portion is labeled 'Signifier'. A vertical line separates the two circles, and a horizontal line divides each circle.

Of semiotics which has been proposed by Saussure so here we see that the signified is the mental model or the object to which it refers which I have already talked about so in our case the signified was the bottle so this mental concept is broadly common to all members of same cultures who share the same language so mind it that the when we are talking about the signifier and signified and time system it is cutting across the members of the same culture okay.

So it is cutting across members of the same culture so here if you look at this diagram if you see that this is a tree and tree is also a concept if you look at that tree or the understanding of tree is also a concept which is there in your mind so a tree is defined as a tree by its understanding which you have for this stream is so maybe the green leaves the trunk the branches that gives you an understanding of a tree okay so this is the overall concept a thing which has green leaves which has a trunk because branches is a tree.

So this is something which is being the concept which is being signified but what is important in our case is not the tree being cut as a concept that is anyway happening with us all the time in later but what is important for us here is we have assigned a signifier now so we have assigned a signifier which is the word tree that is why I have put it in a bubble which is tree as I say this I

am making a sound it is nothing but three the sound it is t our double e which is an abstract sound and abstract scaling with certain kind of alphabets with it but this is acting as a signifier which stands for the signified so this is something extremely significant in human civilization in human intelligence where we not only understand an object and understand it is concept.

But we try to assign something else we try to assign a different object or something else instead of this particular concept in this particular case this word so that sometimes helps us.

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Now we will go for another example which is the Ox example here I have shown you one there are two symbols or two figures on your screen so first one is this.

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And the second one is this so many of you might remember the game that uses quickly when you were child right so you will please you remember this game so is it out of that or is it a word is it O X ox so in this particular case let us take an example that this is O X ox right but mind it we have used one figure and then another figure and it together have created a sound which is ox right all that we mean all that the understand is this sound ox and as soon as I say this becomes the side right.

As soon as I say ox it becomes the sign and this ox as a sign stands for the real ox stands for the deal animal which we were talking about had it not been ox so this particular symbol at this particular sign may have stood for this particular game but we are talking about the animal over here so let us take an example of the ox as an animal over here now one thing is very important we have talked about that sometime back we talked about that it is related to people it is related to culture and it is related to society.

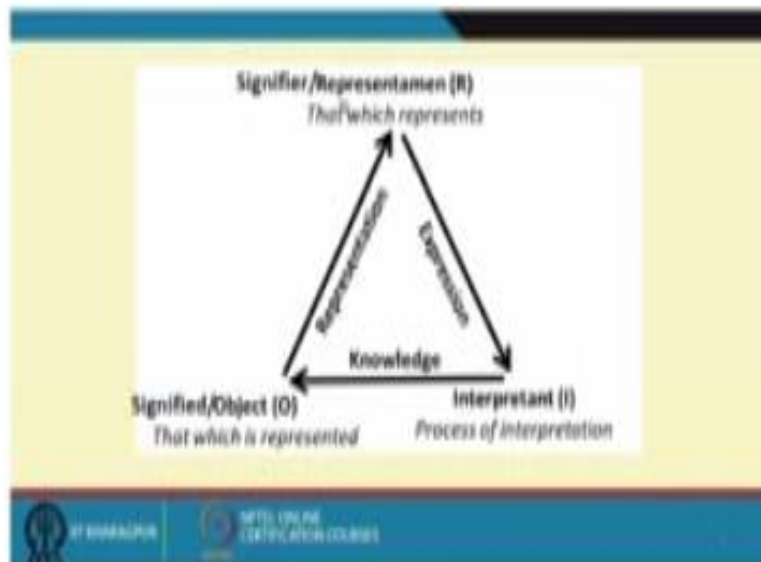
We said the meaning is active the meaning is not static but the meaning is active so here is the time now when we will slowly emphasize on that we have known that okay this world ox stands for an animal but now let us see how the aspect of activeness of meaning comes into picture so now let's take an example of an Indian scenario where we are visualizing ox as soon as I say ox what is the meaning that you get out of it or what is the visual image imagery that comes in into your mind.

So you must be visualizing an ox carrying a bullock cart or plowing a field or on menial streets or in a countryside or with a farmer these are kind of imagery which comes to you as soon as I say this word so this sign stands for an animal and that animal in a particular scenario the meaning surrounding that animal is very different for an Indian but say for example the same ox is spelled for a Spanish citizen or a Spanish person there perhaps ox stands for a bullfight or

stands for a bigger it stands for killing or hunting expeditions it stands for X you know expeditions gladiatorial actions things like that so the same sign which represents the same animal.

So the signifier representing the same signified yet there exists a difference in its interpretation of the meaning so here comes an example where we see that the meaning is also changing with time with society and with other aspects.

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So now putting it all together there was another expert in semiotics and his name was Peirce and Peirce came up with a more holistic model where he tried to put together all the things we have been trying to discuss so far so he has put together the concept of signifier it has put together to the concept of signified and he has put together another very important aspect which we just talked about and that is the interpretive interpreted or the person involved in interpretation who belongs to a particular culture or a community or a society.

So putting it all of them together how it works is this way so you have a signified or the object itself so that it is represented and then this particular object takes a representation and thus is

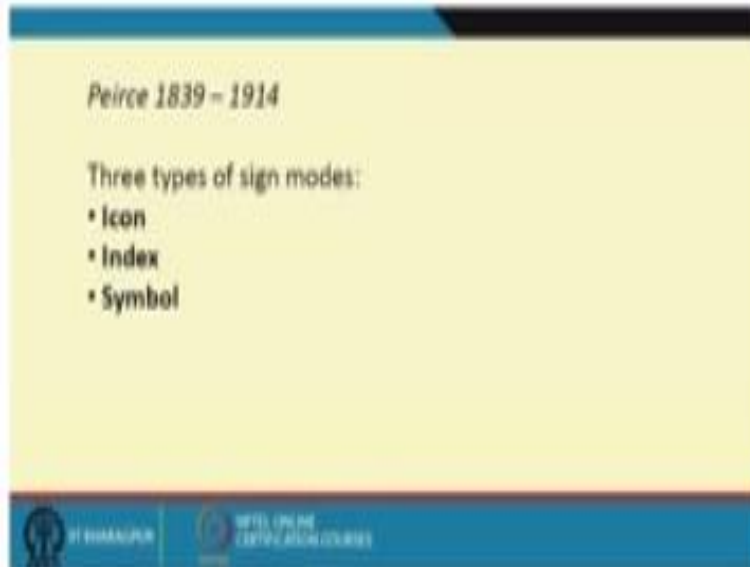
represented by a signifier, so that which represents a signifier or may many a times you know refer to as represent amend but we will restrain from using this sword but we will say that this is signifier and then the signifier has an expression.

So it must be having some sort of expression which is perceived by the interpreted or the person who is observing that and which definitely involves a process of interpretation and this process of interpretation will only be complete when the interpreting has the knowledge of the object so it is very essential diagram and very important diagram in terms of semiotics the whole senior tech understanding revolves around that and it is pretty much simple to understand so you have an object which means to be signified it is called the signified which is being represented by signifier which is the sign itself which has an expression which is perceived by the interpreted and the interpreting Percy's based on its knowledge of the object.

So this is how it all shapes up now if you look at the tree example again so there's a tree which is an object it is represented by this word tree which has an expression within the sound 3 which comes to be interpreted and the interpreting has an knowledge of what tree is he knows the tree nests and based on that he makes a judgment that okay as soon as I say that it is a tree and I say it is a beautiful tree the interpreting can make a judgment that it is referring to an object which is a tree and that is beautiful.

So that is how the semiotic structure works now we go to the next step where we look at how many types of signs are available but before that.

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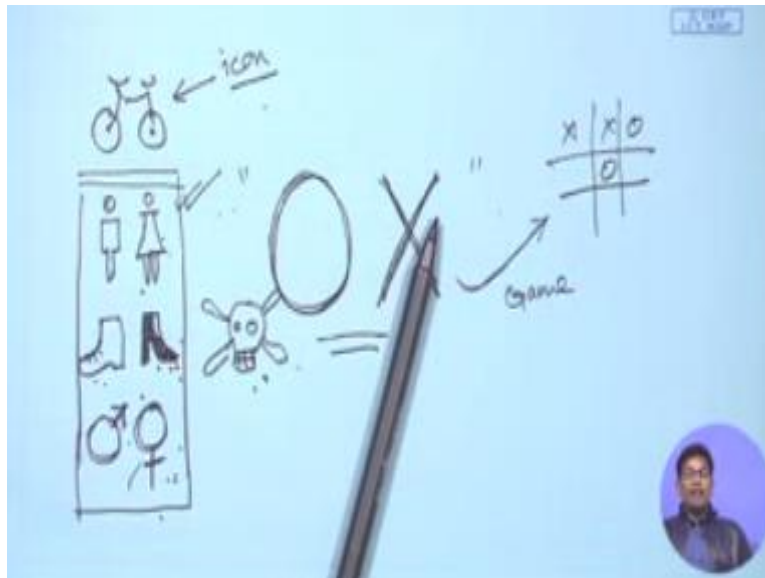
We will look at Peirce over here so his timeframe more or less around the same time of Saussure so according to him there are three types of signs or sign modes which are the icon, index, and symbol. There are three types of science which are prevalent which are icon, index, and symbol so if you look at each of them what exactly each of them are.

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Sign mode	Iconic	Indexical	Symbolic
Signifies by	Resemblance	Physical or causal connection	Convention
Examples	Mug shot	Footprint (animal) Smoke (fire)	Corporate logo Church symbol
Process	Recognize it	Figure it out	Must learn it

So iconic sign mode depends on resemblance okay so if I am trying to represent a bicycle by a you know scribbling of a bicycle something like this we say for example.

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I am trying to represent a bicycle by this so this becomes an icon so it resembles a bicycle so in that case this becomes an icon or let me give you another example in the in terms of whenever we do sinus for ladies and gents toilet we use icons like this so these are basically representation or resemblance with the real life object that creates the iconic sign and generally were cognize it when we look at it were cognize it whereas in case of indexical in case of indexical sign it is based on some kind of physical or causal connection.

And it has to be figured out you have to be able to understand or make out there is a cause-and-effect relationship we have to figure it out so I will give you an example to for example the same toilet example the signage of the toilet say for example I represent the same toilet example this way now, so I show the footwear of the different genders so this is a guy's shoe for example and this is a ladies shoe so now you see this is icon of the shoe this is icon of the shoe but this is index of male and female you understand the difference this is the icon of male and female this is icon of shoe no doubt but it is index of male and female.

Because there is a causal relationship there is a causal effect that you are doing let me give you another example the way we show danger so the way we show danger is we draw a skeleton and we put the bones over here I am sorry about my drawing today but this is the way we show the danger sign so there is a causal impact, so why this happen this is from death and death means

danger and hence danger is represented by so this is an indexical sign and let us now come to the last one which is the symbolic sign the symbolic sign is purely based on convention there is no resemblance there is no causal connection there is only convention and one must learn it.

So any kind of logo that you see is a symbolic sign it is by convention and must learning so say for example let us take this same example if we go by the same example here this is a symbol this is neither resembling anything there is no causal effect to this but this is a mere mirrors agglomeration of shapes but by convention we know that one is male and one is female and hence this is a symbol which stands for the toilet sign so these are three main types of signage and this covers the entire landscape of semiotics based on which our subsequent discussions will take place thank you for your patient listening.