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**Course
On
Visual Semiotics for Visual Communication**

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**Lecture 18: Visual Semantics for
Visual Communication (Contd.)**

Hello students welcome back to this course.

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And so far we have looked into various aspects of visibility we have talked about visibility from starting from communication aspects then we looked at what are the characteristics in a composition and then we looked at how visual perception affects and is dependent on certain phenomena which is very prevalent in visual practice and in doing all of that you have encounter one word very often which is the cultural aspect we have always talked about communication

being part of a particular culture, or a community or society so you have heard of these terms so today I thought of dedicating this particular lecture to talk something about culture.

What culture is who when it we when we talk about visual culture how is it rotate to culture and as a part of this course as we understand that your meanings and your semiotic understanding depends largely on culture into look at certain attributes of culture and then met it back to whatever we are doing so you will see something very performed today will deep dive into something which is very relevant and curial when it comes to visual semiotic or visual communication both are visual design for that matter.

And have an understanding of that so today we will cover three things one is visual culture then we will talk about visual preservation we talk about preservation in between we are taking about in professional areas of visual communication and then we will talk about visual literacy so these 3 things go hand in hand and they are retrieving force for any visual communication that is happening so we need to understand that in a little detail today.

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So if we look at the definition of culture as such so this is the complex whole this is by Taylor way back in 1974 so this a complex whole which includes knowledge belief art models, law, costume and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of the society so we will come to the later definition which is a much more modern definition as it later but if we look at the older definition with classical definition so it say it pin points that in a whole human society we are social creatures we are devices of a society we frame society and we are part of the society so while we are living in a society while we are forming a society as a part of the habit as a part of various capabilities where various functioning of the society as individuals and as a group what are evolving we are evolving certain shared knowledge.

We are evolving certain art we are evolving certain leaves we are evolving certain models laws customs which wells all these things together so these are various devices of a culture which merges going to people coming together so when there is a group of people coming together they have to rely on certain common practices certain common believes certain common thoughts and that is what shapes up a culture.

So as you can understand culture as it root in human society in human living and more than that in human capabilities activities and habits so it is dependent on something very what you say inherit in human attributes and that forms the culture so that a little bit of classical stand point of defining culture but if we look at a newer version very recent definition of culture by James if you look at that what does it says social domain that emphasize the practices discourses and material expression which over time express the continuities and discontinuities of social meaning of a life held in common.

So very interesting definition which talk about two things which talk about an expressionism okay which talks about some kind of expressionism which builds up in a society so there are different kinds of expressionism which builds up in a society bit art in architecture bit art literature so there are different forms of expressions it could be a practices it could be rich wells it could be festivities many other things so there a culture is defined as a whole of all this expressions that we have as a social beam as a social practices what we are doing and it is over time express.

So this is over time express the continuities and discontinuities of social meaning of life held in common so in actual means that there are certain practice which continues and there are discontinuities which happen in course of time but what is that meaning that is there with us even if the culture changes and evolves but it has certain deep lasting meaning and impression with us as a culture and that give some staying with us.

So in this two defections we see that they are hinting towards the same thing they are ultimately leading to a human social practice and that expressionism of human social practice which over time either continues or discontinues but it has some impact in us so this is in actual what culture is and we are all part of certain cultures are flat global certain cultures are very localized certain cultures are evolving certain cultures are statics.


Whatever it is we are part and so now coming to what visual culture predominately case so one is cultured as we see is a huge domain you know there are different aspects of cultured way to human society but if we narrow down now to visual culture what visual culture predominately means we will look at the definition.


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
Culture

"... complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." - Tylor, 1974

"... social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses and material expressions, which, over time, express the continuities and discontinuities of social meaning of a life held in common." – James, 2015



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And also we will look at another aspect of culture which is where we are going back to this semiotic model and you have the interpret you have the object and you have the signifier and as you see we have talked the understanding and you know with the knowledge you know the knowledge and belief so that traditional one was rooted more with the knowledge of the interpret and the object and if we see the next one the other one is emphasizing on the expressionism so the signifier and then there is an expressionism with the interpret.

So the classical definition was relating more the knowledge based and the outward products of this knowledge based which are the common practices common belief law art everything but this is based on the interpreter's knowledge about an object and then you are looking at a collective entity so that was the classical form of looking at it but when we are looking at a more modernist approach to culture we see that there the science and there is an expressionism and this expressionism is rooted with the interpret then hence there is a continuity and a discontinuity amongst that over course of time as so this expressionism changes but however all of that is a product of a society, okay.

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So now we look onto visual culture and in visual culture we will see three distinct boundaries when it comes to definition so visual culture is a condition in which human experience is profoundly affected by images new technologies of looking and various practices of seeing showing and picturing so what does it mean, is the first definition if you look at the first perspective we are looking at.

Visual culture is that it is profoundly dependent on images that is one and it is also dependent on the practices related to images, so the practices of what is being shown to you, you know how you are seeing certain things we have talked about this in the past also but now we are adding an cultural attribute this is a collective attribute as part of the society how are you seeing a thing how are you approaching a thing.

Not only that what are the practices of showing and picturing things to you so that is something which governs your visual culture to a great extent and that is the first domain where we hit on to the way we are seeing things and the way we are you know shown things so that both of them together is forming connection with the images that you see and that forms the first definition, so it is the human experience which is affected by images.

And new technologies of looking various practices of seeing and all that, so now if we come to the attribute what is the major thing which is coming out of that is experience, so from the first definition if we take if we bring out the discomfort is the experiential aspect that revolves around in a culture so if now I say what is the predominant visual culture that you live in what is the predominant visual culture that is around you.

You look for your different experiences with images okay so you try to collate these experiences into together is this experience what are the things that you see what are things that has been shown to you and what are the experiences that you are having with this images over course of time will govern your visual culture will govern or will you know give a hint to what kind of visual culture that you live in.

Okay that is the first starting point of visual culture, now if we go to the second aspect of visual culture.

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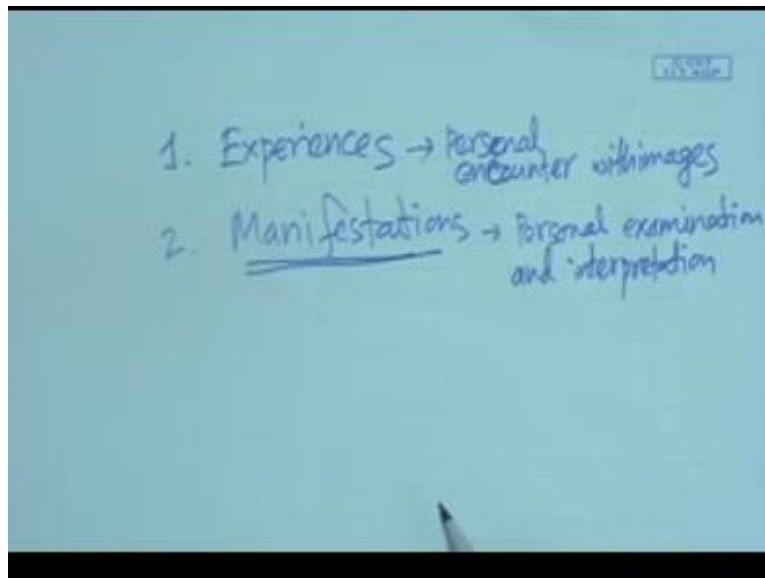


So visual culture is a critical field of study so it is a critical field of study that examines and interprets differing primary visual manifestation and experiences in the culture, so experience what we have already covered but here we will see that it is a field of study which examines and interprets differing primary visual manifestation so here we are talking about a field of study so visual culture is definitely a field of study many look at it from the experiential aspect.

Here we are looking at it as a field of study like design it is a field of study it is a process it is a product so we will look at it from different aspect but what is important here is what is this field of study doing, the field of study is trying to examine and interpret differing primary visual manifestation so you are trying to analyze you are trying to interpret the visual manifestation so whatever imagery that you have is a visual manifestation and here this stress is given more on the visual manifestation rather than what is what you are experiencing not that visual manifestation and there is a interpretation aspect which comes along with it.

So the second attribute if you see is talking about the manifestations so if we look at the first one the first definition was talking about.

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Experiences and the second definition is talking about manifestations so experiences it revolve around your personal encounter with images and manifestation is the personal examination and interpretation so whenever it comes to a manifestation of a particular image you are bringing in your own analytical function to analyze that manifestation whatever is presented to you immediately your brain start is acting on some kind of analytical features on that manifestation.

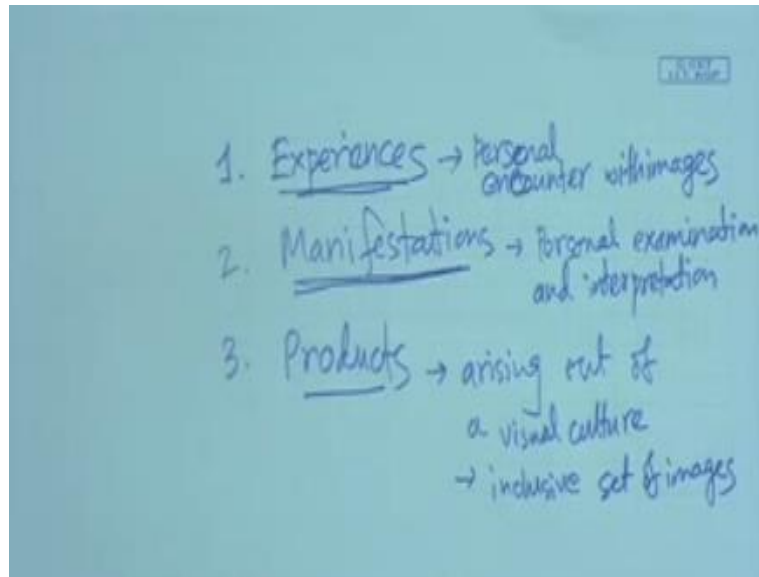
And he is trying to interpret that so that is another aspect of visual culture so if I ask you what kind of visual culture that you is predominant with you, you will look at various manifestations and then you will look at what kind of analytical approach you are taking to analyze that, so for that we have talked about the metaphors, connotations, denotations all these things will come into picture but what is predominantly happening. And that is what defines your visual culture.

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Now come to the third aspects so the numbering was wrong there with the first second and third one so visual culture is an inclusive set of images objects and apparatus projects, products and things of visual culture so this talks more of visual culture as a product. So we looked at three aspects the first aspect was.

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Experience the second aspect was manifestation and the third aspect is the product, the products arising out of our visual culture which are inclusive set of images, so now if we look at a closer look at the visual culture you will see all this products which are you know essentially images in our case they are connected with each other and they are forming as if bits and pieces of a puzzle inside a culture inside a visual culture.

So that what will freeing your visual culture your predominant visual culture that you segregate so these are three essential way of defining visual culture analyzing visual culture one is the experiences that you are having with images one if the manifestation which these images have and third is what are the products that we are encountering as a part of this world and images and that defines your visual culture okay.

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Visual Culture

1, 2 & 3 deal in large part with the processes of **seeing and being seen** while constructing individual and collective **identity** through everyday life.

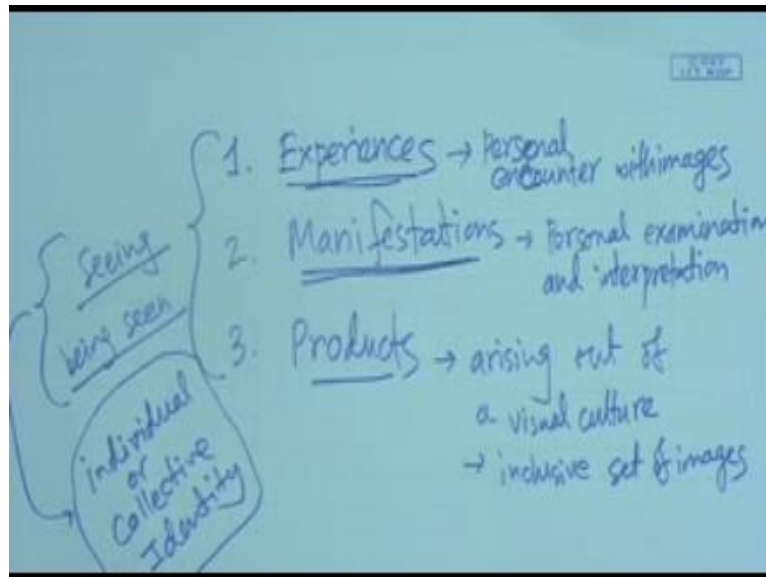
IDENTITY

- How we see ourselves
- How we imagine others to see us

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So let us move on to the next step here we are looking at visual culture so as a part of seeing and being seen so if you see the first second and third definition been in large part with the processes of seeing and being seen while constructing individual and collective identity through everyday life so what that does mean, whatever experiences that you.

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Whatever manifestation that you encounter whatever products that you deal with they are all a part of seeing and how are you being seen, so this is a very crucial way where the culture studies people or culture studies expert define visual culture as is one is the scene you are seeing something right.

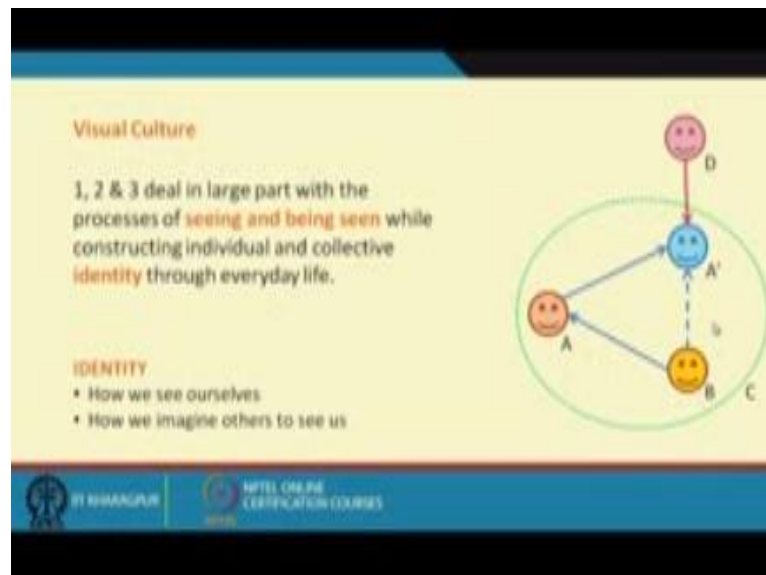
That ends there another thing about visual culture that is how the society is driven and the visual culture is formed is the way I want things to be seen is the way I want my myself to be seen by others will define what will happen as a next step in visual culture is not it, so one is what you are seeing, you are seeing certain kind of pens around you, you are seeing certain kind of colors, certain kind of fashion, certain kind of movies, certain kind imagery around you that is one part seeing would not affect culture as much as.

Now you want to being seen so how do you want to be seen as a part of that culture so if you are adopting that fashion if you are adopting that color, if you are adopting mechanisms which has been shown imagery simile, metaphors in your life in your way of representation also then it is part of a cohesive visual culture and why are you doing all this because by all this you are trying to create an individual or collective identity. So basically what you are trying to do over here is

by the scene and by this being seen the desire of being seen in a particular fashion, what you are trying to achieve?

You are trying to achieve an identity either individually or collectively your part of a collection of people anyway and hence you are trying to adopt to certain kind of identity or your individualistic and adopting to certain kind of identity minded this identity creation is thoroughly based on what you are see and what you what yourself to be seen as very, very important aspect in our visual culture study.

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So the identity is much dependent on how we see ourselves, so part is like how are we looking at ourselves that is what is creating our identity, right and how we imagine others to see us. so this is something which we need to understand which we already talked about so one part is how we see ourselves and the other part is how we are imagining others are seeing us and hence you start shaping up everything around you, you should start shaping up yourself and you start shaping up everything around you, you start shaping up everything that you create and this is all part of an imagery and that is what affects visual culture in large.

So graphically I have try to depict this say this is an individual and this is how we see ourselves so A' represent something which is a representation and this is how we see ourselves in context to our society so we will come to that the way you are seeing yourself is also dependent on what you have seen in that past or what you are being shown so this particular A to A' relationship is based on your interaction with the society, not only that now the visual culture the identity is also dependent on B so this where you are now also dependent on how B is looking at you or how A is imagining B is looking at with and B also has an exposure to A' so you think that A is having a reflection of A' this is how he or she sees himself or herself and you are imagining that B is also looking at A in a way B looks at A'.

So there is a connection with a hypothetical objectivity which is A' and that is nothing but something which is created by a designer so that is depicted by D, so this particular A' is a product, is a product with which you relate to is a product with which you are relating your identity to because that is something you want yourself to be seen and that is what you want others to see you as very, very profound concept and that is what is designed by your third externality who is a designer who absorbs the society and this all is part of a culture.

You are not doing something alien you are looking at a culture understanding the needs and demands of this particular individual you understand the needs and demands of this particular individual and hence you are designing a communication channel which fixed with it, so this is exactly what is happening in a culture and more precisely what is happening in a visual culture and which is related to the whole concept of creating identity and the whole concept of how you are seeing and how you are being seen and that is shaping of.

So this is happening at each level and each one is following something or the other and collectively as a culture, collectively as a society we are setting up some threshold we are setting up A' for our culture and that is exactly what visual culture does very, very crucial aspect which as designers as communicators as a layman we should understand because their one place a very, very important role where you can change the whole way of creating identity the whole way how the visual culture is working.

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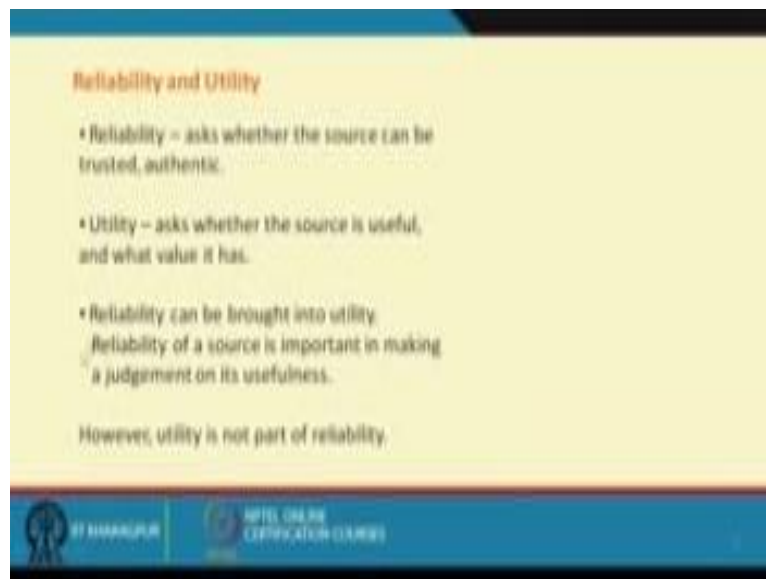
So now let us move forward where we are looking at image as a product okay, so what are the attributes image is definitely related to an identity we are living in a world of image and then identity is related to consumerism, so with an image what happens we are creating some kind of identity whenever I say we talked about this example of Hollywood okay, when we talk about Hollywood an image comes into your mind and this image creates an identity are you part of it you are not part of it are you aspiring, you are not aspiring something like that.

Now as a next level this image is part of a consumerist nature of an individual is this selling am I consuming this image so we are you know part of this whole image consumption attribute in our society we are consuming images more than anything else in you know past few decades where the proliferation of internet and communication media has vastly speculated in our lives so we are consuming images all the time, we are consuming it from a point of view of you know relating with that identity we have talked about that what are the avenues for an informational purpose, for the perspective purpose, for educational purpose, for administrative purpose we are flooded with this images and we are consuming there.

So there is this identity related how we are looking people are seeing at us and we want to be seen is related to consumerism and consumerism leads to image as a commodity okay, so we are going step by step and then this sense of commodity, sense of commoditization brings competition and competition brings comparison on reliability and utility, so these are step by step attribute we see as soon as an image becomes a product. So it holds such a strong notion with it, it holds a notion of identity, identity has a notion of consumerism attached with it because we are talking about how we are seeing and how we want to be seen.

So hence we require some kind of attribution relationship in terms of commoditization, commercialization, and commercialization definitely brings with it sense of competition and competition of course brings a sense of how do you compare, how do you compare two things, it is based on the utility and it is based on reliability. So now let us a closer look at how the reliability and utility works in our case.

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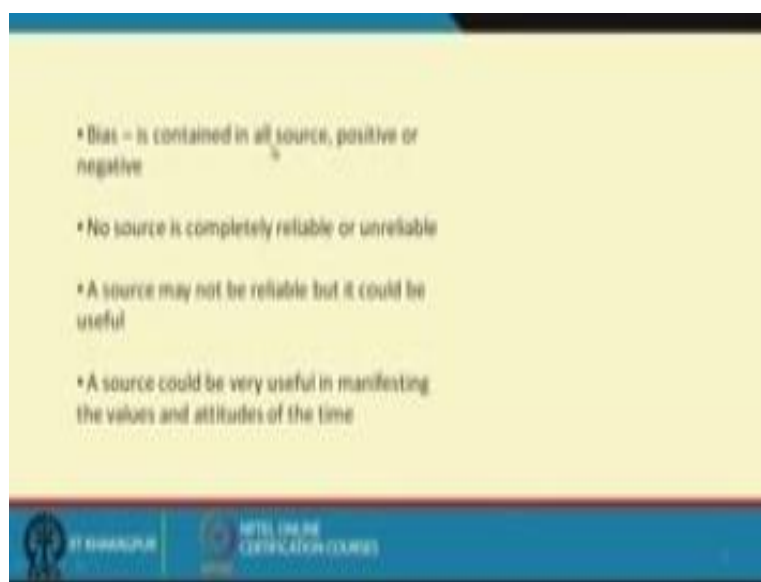
So if you look at reliability what does it ask for, it asks whether the source can be trusted or authentic the is the question that we ask when it comes to reliability and then utility ask whether the source is useful and what value it has got so whenever we are encountering with image in out

subconscious mind we are judging that image by this two attributes buy this two attributes owing to image being a commoditize.

Is in it so whenever you are looking at an image first thing that comes to your mind is the authenticity you know you ask for what is the dilatability aspect of this image am I at all going to spend time on it am I at all going to consume that image and go for a diver attribute that is what is happening all the time even before you start making some decision, you have a reliability check on it and the next thing that happens or parolee happens is you are having a utility check on that image that you look at what is the value that its hold to me.

As a part of the entire culture we have talked about the culture noise a part of the entire scenario does it hold anything to me and based on that you take the necessitation, so reliability can be brought in to utility reliability of source is important in making a judgment on its usefulness. So if a source is reliable if you are finding something reliable you may find it useful, so you may go to the next step and it is affecting that but however utility is not dependent on reliability as such utility is free function it works on its own entities it is not part of reliability. However over course of time reliability is start affecting your utility real aspect to a great aspect.

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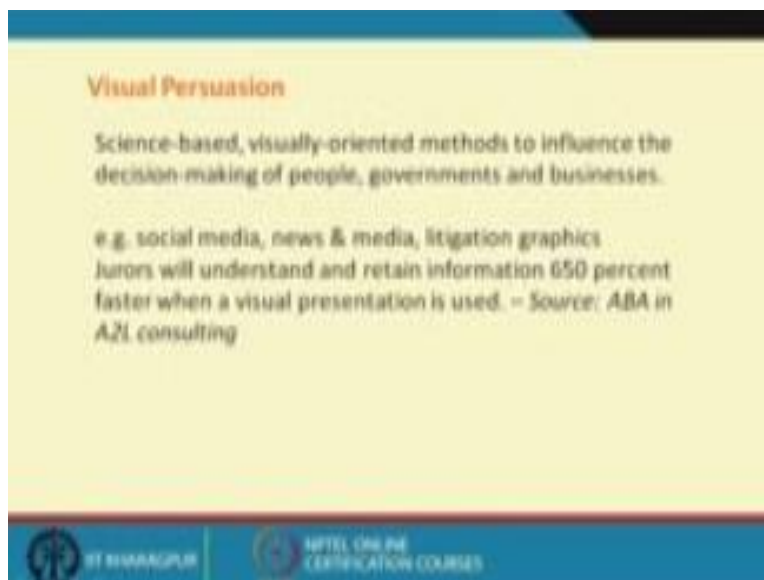


Now let us look at the other aspect so there is any source will contain some kind of buyers, okay that is very much understandable no source is completely reliable or unreliable as you can understand a source may not be reliable but it could be useful so many a time a source is not reliable but it could be useful in various fashion and the source could be very useful in manifesting the values and attitudes of time.

So these are certain attributes that we understand which is arising of this usefulness and reliability aspect of it, there are buyers and we are part of this buyers either positive or negative buyers so that is happening all the time in a culture and as a designer you have analyze this buyers that we have with culture no source is completely reliable or unreliable, so every source as to be judge it has to be analyzed and prudently consume by the user.

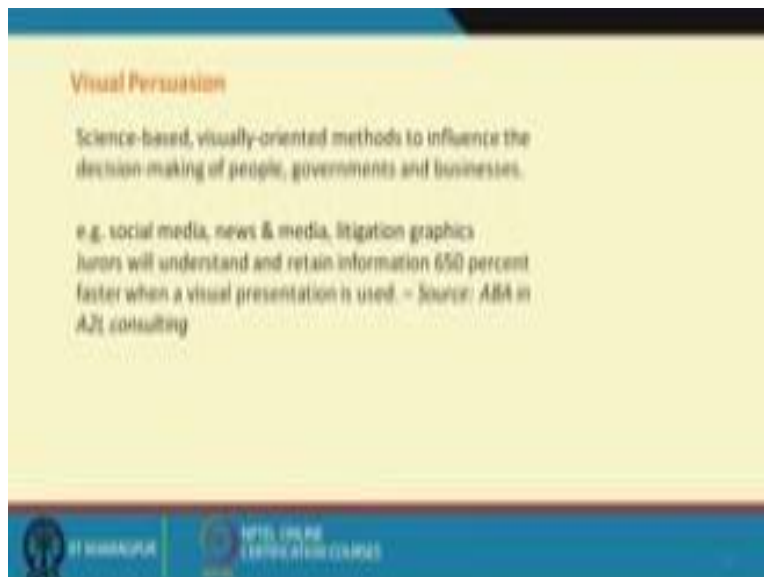
If we look at other attributes is that a source is not reliable that could be useful and more importantly it maneuvers some amount of value and attitude of time so that we needs to some connection with your culture.

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So now move into the next step where we are talking about visual persuasion such so visual persuasion is nothing but a science based visually orientated method to influence the decision making of people government and business so what is important the oriel is the science ways visually oriented method that influence decision making so we have talked about persuasion we are when we are talking about advertising and courser, so here we are trying to channelize the behavior channelize the attitude of people and affect the decision making of people to some extent. So this is what we are trying to do by visual persuasion so if we look at the sketch wise analysis.

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So what a persuasion does is you are trying to affect the decision making so at the end of the day you are trying to affect the decision making the examples of such are the social media news and media litigation graphics and all this kind of thing is where you see the jury will understand and retain information 650% faster when a visual representation is used so you can understand how your decision making could be made more globes efficient fast when you are using a visual representation.

And that what is happening at a social level at a business level at a administrators level today we are relying heavily on images.

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So I will give you one example where you can see that for a persuasive mode so this is the picture of Washington and you can see white house over here so this is the situation now but with the change of you know real-estate development and all this forcing out there is a lot of demand and there if you see that if the building height permissible building height is increased which is demand of the society.

Now you are having a perspective of white house with this so you can understand how it has changed so the visual perception persuasion is affect that it is trusting that whether you want that you do not want that it is affecting your decision making at sub line level, you can reach to your decision very quickly that I have white house which has a particular you know importance coming to politically philosophically architecturally and then there is demand for growing the city there is demand for housing needs and you need to grow vertically up which is logical.

But then what is the decision juncture that you take what helped us over here is a persuasive image that has helped us over here.

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So let us take a look at what is happening when we are talking about visual persuasion so this is a graph where you are indicating understanding level on this x axis and the context on the y axis so its percolate from here so there is just starting point where you have data you are little understanding of that and we have little context towards it and there is a producer of data so that is being churned and you are creating some kind of information.

So here the understanding is more clear and your contextualizing that data so we are moving up the ladder and someone is producing that but now comes the consumption of this information and that is going at the consumer in where you have certain kind of knowledge with this information that is being trust by the producer and you are starting to consume that you are starting to experience that.

And here the contextualization is more the understanding is more and then you go to the highest level of wisdom where you retain the highest contextualization and your, it is in the highest understanding of this and all of that is taking shape in a social cultural doming.

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Now if you look at the next graphic which is I would suggest the graphic description if you do not want to look at this graphic, do not but what is saying not everyone who gets hit by a drunk driver die is so this is showing something even worse so this was a lady who was big hit by a drunk driver this is promotion by the development of the transportation do not drink and drive that is the visual that we are creating but look at how the data being transfers in to information, someone is creating information but hat has been consumed by a consumer and hence you are making some knowledge and then it is going to an upper level of wisdom.

So this is sometimes you move forward in that ladder we are tasking help of persuasive image visual persuasion is a very strong persuasion as you seen in this image it has a such a strong impact utilizing all of this steps okay.

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So that is pretty much covers our visual perception but there are certain critical aspects towards visual perception so there is a drastic image when equation which happens which is a intension and this as you can understand that his visual manipulation could be led to a wrong intension could be led to a right intension so there is a intentionality aspect to it and there is a lack of truthfulness hence so we have to be very coheres about this aspect there are ethical challenges that we have got.

Then another aspect of visual persuasion coming to from a critical point of view is idealization there is a sense of idealization and that brings with it as self comparison and change of expectation so when you are idealizing something we are talking about realism and idealism so many of time you see that persuasion images trust then to idealism okay and then comes a self comparison many of the advertisements talking about realism and idealism.

So many a times we see that perusal images trust to idealism okay. And then comes the self comparison, many of the advertisements talking about beauty product or something, shows an idealized from, and based on that the viewer starts doing a self comparison. There is senses of you know self comparison, and there is expectations change.

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And for what which is very, very difficult from reality which is not correct to do so what we are trying to do, trying to bring our standardization. Which is not there in human society, we are trying to create desirable circumstances which fit for only few which is not from us and you use tools which makes things appear which are actually not. It is a sudo demand, it is a sudo expectation that you are creating by this idealization by your trusting you are pushing people towards something which is not correct.

Which is not deviant which does not happen in reality, that is another aspect we need to critically look at then there is a chance of stereo typing. You know many a times you will see advertisements or this visual imagery stereo type things because there is a meteroperic connotation. There is a gender vise stereo typing there is, cast wise stereo typing; there is community vise stereo typing. So there are you will see that the minorities are not shown in a reliable, respectable position in a imaginary.

Why is that because you have stereo types certain things you taking and that stereo type continuous. So you are taking chance of stereo typing when it comes to visual persuasion. And then many a times, we see the last but not the least is dependence on sexual proliferations, sexual

appeal as one of the strong feature of visual perception. So these are some of the critical aspect we need to keep in mind when we are looking at visual perceptions.

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Visual Literacy

Holistic construct which includes - (Trumbo, 1999)

- **Visual Thinking**
Incorporation of images in conscious and preconscious thought
- **Visual Learning**
*Process of gaining awareness of meaning of visuals
Process an person uses to interpret meaning from visuals*
- **Visual Communication**
The use of images of express ideas and convey meanings to others

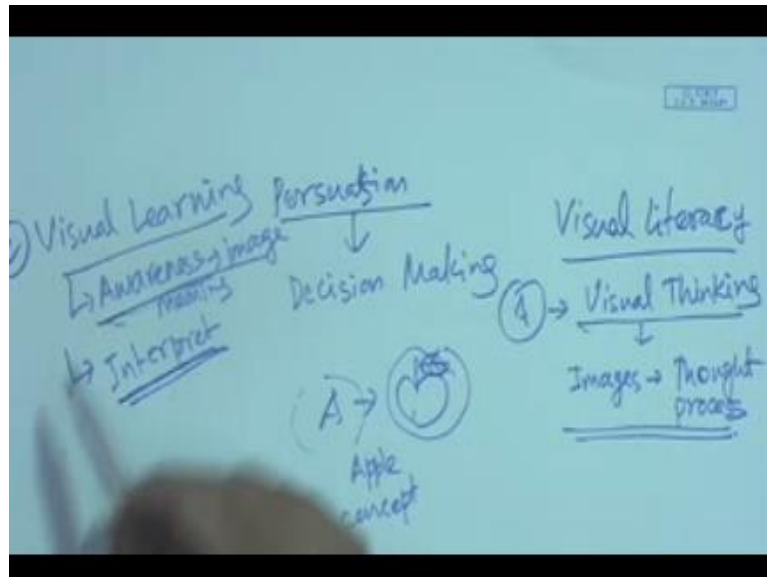
Awareness
Self-defence
Protection
Balance

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And why this understanding is important is because now we are moving to the next step of visual literacy. So you understand all of this persuasion all of this culture based on if you have a visual literacy like you have academic literacy there is a thing which is visual literacy. Bangs on three particular things one is the visual thinking, is you see this Trumbo this is based on Trumbo constant holistic construct of visual literacy which depend upon on a visual thinking.

Where you are incorporating images in your conscious and preconscious thought process, there is a visual learning which is associated with it and there is a visual communication, which is associated with it. So visual learning has two processes the process of gaining awareness of meaning of visuals and the process and the person, uses to interpret meaning from visuals. And then your visual communications were the use of images for expressing ideas and convey meaning to others.

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So these three aspects are very, very important if you see what visual literacy is talking about. It is talking about visual thinking; in first place where you are taking help of images as a thought process so you taking help of images as a part of your thought process. So this is governed by when you are you know practicing, using image as a part of your thought process this comes as a part of visual literacy. The first part you are thinking based on images, okay when we say A for apple or visual literacy starts from there.

So when you say A for apple so that means you are connecting an alphabet, a word, a concept which something which is visual. So we the starting point of visual thinking starts for all of us with this notation of thinking or subconsciously thinking in terms of visual literacy. Then we have something which is related to visual learning the next step, this is step one, this is step two. Which is related to visual learning, and visual learning has two processes. One is the awareness about this image so whatever we are encountering you are aware the image holds.

What meaning that images holds so you are aware of that meaning. So that is how you learn you start learning about the image more. You get aware, you start more about understanding the meaning of it and. The second part of visual learning is you are trying to interpret that, you are

trying to interpret; you are trying to learn something from this visuals. So one part is just awareness about the image, and the second part is the interpretation of the meaning of that image. So these two form the visual learning and the third part is visual communication.

Where you are actually utilizing image to express so apart from visual thinking where you have started your thought process relating to images. The second part is you have build up your awareness about the images you have build up your awareness about interpreting images and only then you will be able to communicate now with images. So you, you have an idea and you want to communicate to someone and you will use some kind of image for communicating that.

So this is what is the entire domain of visual literacy and that is what leads us to the whole concept of understanding visual literacy and. If you see why visual literacy is important because this acts, this gives us a sense of awareness; this gives us a self defense. And some kind of protection and balance, why do we need that because we live in a world of visual persuasion and you see the critical aspects of visual persuasion. So these gives us a strong armature this gives us the, you know fight back to balance the things.

One is to persuade things, you know forcing you but if you are there with visual literacy you will be able to counter that, you will be able to take an unbiased decision which is true to the context. So that brings us to the end of understanding visual culture in a very brief I have discussed but visual culture, visual persuasion and the visual literacy. In our next concluding classes we will look at the some of the aspects of how image and text comes together and build up a context and some of the applications and implications of visual semiotics in visual communication thank you very much.