

Elements of Visual Representation
Prof. Shatarupa Thakurta Roy
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Lecture – 47

In this lecture, we are going to discuss about, how we analyze a visual. When we talk about analysis, we basically indicate into the critical analysis, how we critically analyze a visual, while making and also while we view the image. So, this one process, where we put our planning and the different category, and we see that how you are planning out a visual arrangement.

So, in that way, there are quite a few steps that we follow. If you go by the general process, if you are developing certain designs, certain arrangement, keeping the viewer in mind, we of course, like always do that. But at sometimes, you know the artist may feel that the user groups or the viewers, those the artist is addressing at. We just feel that you know, they can be less in number we can also address a larger community, a larger user group.

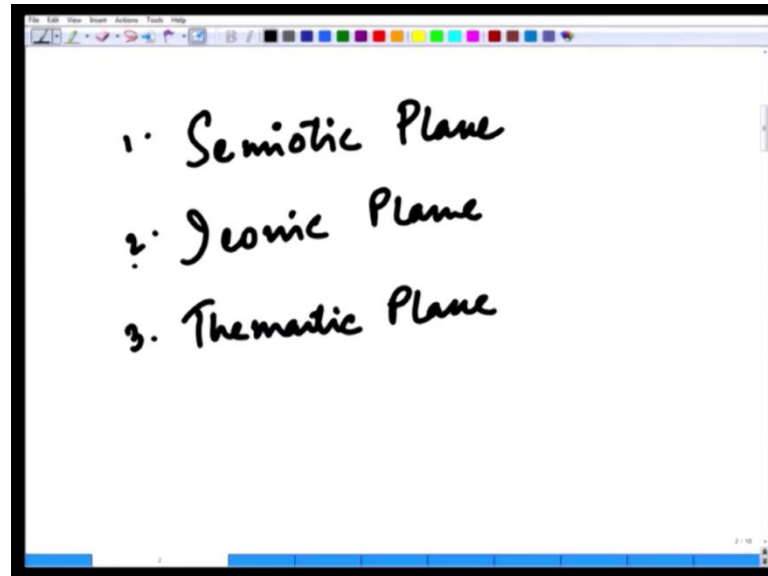
So, it totally depends on whom we are aiming at, we can work for children as artist, we can also address to an older age groups. They can be expression that is made for all regardless of their age, their ethnicity, their race and other factors. So, one artist has to be a little more clear about, which viewer group they are addressing at and with that, the planning becomes much more logical and also like reasonable.

So, in that level, we can understand like, you know how we go by the pressure, because we do not know, what the viewer is having in their mind. The viewers also do not know, what the artist is having in their mind. In the first few lectures, we try to see, how the artist is thinking or we try to just make a guess; that what is playing at the mind of the artist, but every time that is not work, we should only look at.

So, we will see, what are the things that we need to consider, when we critically analyze any visual image and that makes or what much scientific much more strategic and we go buy a proper rule. So, there are quite a few things that I would like to discuss and they are processes, which are also inclusive with each other. So, we can always follow two,

three processes together, we can merge them, it is not that all the rules are compulsory, but it totally depends on the context, we incorporate in our artworks.

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So, we often analyze the art work into three different layers, one is in it is semiotic plane, then in it is iconic plane and thematic plane and this semiotic iconic and thematic plane, they do not follow any orders. So, it totally depends on the image that we have viewing and as we know the context, we slowly get into the different planes of it. Now, the most interesting thing about the semiotic planes is that, we do not need any information that is related to it is thematic or the iconic plane.

So, if you look at an image and we have no clue about the artist who was made or the time period, when it is made in or any other things, the median the artist must have used or the size artist that is size must have used. Then also in that condition simply go by the basics semiotic approach. Now, when we say, what is systematic approach? This is also very basic that how we approach towards certain thing, with certain preconceived notion that we have in our mind, but most of the time we approach a fresh.

So, when we are approaching a fresh, what we incorporate, what we include in our vision is nothing but the basic knowledge that we have about the quality of line, the quality of texture, the quality of color, the color combination, the color use. They can be kind of considerations about the form, what the form equalities are. So, that way we can analyze

the whole visual and also get something out of it, we can enjoy thoroughly without any clue of whoever is made it.

So, this is a very qualitative understanding that we develop by just looking at it and you know, we approach it that way. So, that tell us, whether the artist wanted to create some illusion into the space, if there is at all any illusion; that is getting created, how that is getting created, whether like the artist wanted to create a linear perspective or aerial perspective or many other kind of possibilities are there.

So, what we have learnt so far in our previous lectures that is by now made us quite equip; that we can make our understanding the semiotic level. But we cannot only go by semiotic level in most of the cases, because maybe the semiotic level is quite sufficient in that sense. But still we have certain other expectations, expectations through knowledge.

So, with this particular knowledge, where we are approaching to the basic principle and through the basic elements, we also need to know the history, the context. And that way, it just happens that in the iconic level; what we see is that we end up taking about the basic symbols and the meanings, symbols specific meaning of certain images. Now, we may or may not have the knowledge of the symbol that is present there.

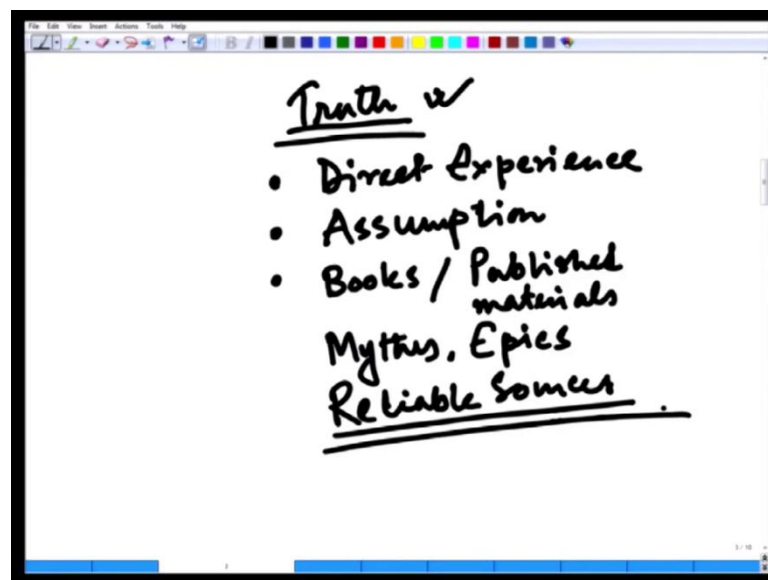
For example, if we see color combination which is saffron and green in a color palette, maybe we have a bit of a white and the pinch of blue also there; that may be associated with the Indian flag. And that will somehow inculcate patriotism to the mind of the Indian people. But that does not always mean that the same emotions will be generated to the people, who are not familiar with this kind of a color scheme and they do not connected with the nationalism.

So, that way things are every culture specific, some particular color, for example, maybe when we pickup color like black or white. Now, black is auspicious in some culture, black is in also auspicious in some culture, white is used for auspicious things in most of the cultures and white is also inauspicious in some of the cultures So, that way, the identity, the associations and the meaning that we get out of it, where we called up some visual analysis, they come into specific meaning and those meanings are iconic.

One needs certain knowledge in that particular cultural feel to understand that meaning, so that we not all expressions of universal. So, not always we can create a total analysis with the help of semiotic understandings. But we can always place it this way that the semiotic understanding is done and then we need to acquire more knowledge to conduct more understanding to the iconic level.

Similarly, in the thematic level, we need to have certain information from different sources. So, when we say that, there are sources of information, there are also three different sources that we usually talk about.

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So, if our illness to get the truth, the truth is, we see things the way it is. So, we know white as white, we know black as black and so on. So, this truth to achieve this truth, we need to have quite a few steps. So, the sources of truth is perhaps, one is from the direct experience, the other one is by assumption. What is that assumption that we see, the road is wet and then we guess that, it rained last night and then from the books published material, myths, epics from all sorts of reliable sources.

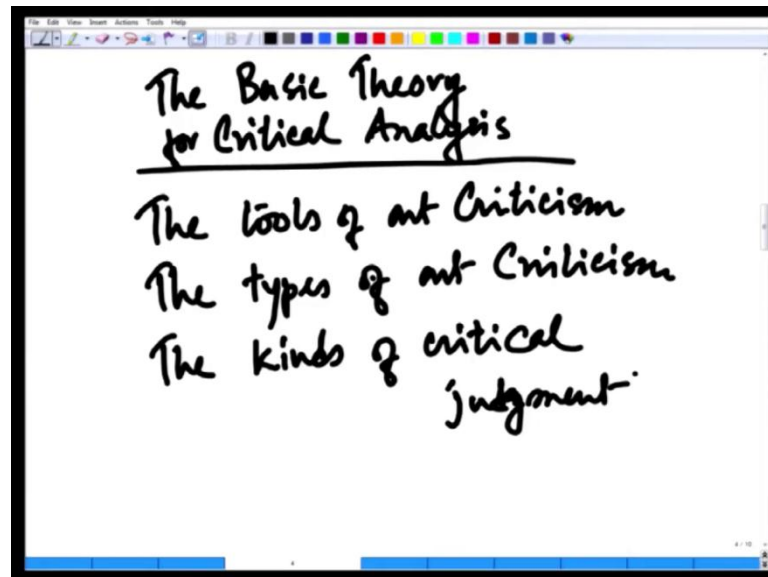
So, in the thematic level, the art work will come with some kind of cultural influence and also from the historical sources. So, in like, we talked about the thematic level, we incorporate a few other knowledge into that, the artist who has made it, which culture the artist is belong to, which country the artist is born, which art movement the artist was a part of or which medium he used at what point in his life, he has created that. So, these

are the thematic aspects that may also add some very good visual clue to analyze the images that are present to us.

And also in that level, we conduct another very important analysis, where we alter images. We try to mentally shift images from one side to another side, maybe we have some certain object here; we feel that had it been in some other place, what would have been. So, that is another way of looking at, that we displaced in a little bit and see, why the artist has done it. So, that way we try to justify the art work and also we try to understand the justification of each placement, each visual arrangement.

So, this is how we combine this layer, the semiotic, iconic and thematic plane with the kind of knowledge that we are available with and then we conduct some kind of analysis. But there are also other processes, where you know things are much more analytical, where maybe if we just pick up the formal analysis, which is conduct it in four states by Feldman; that is another very popular visual analysis; that is being made. So, let us talk about all those aspects also.

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So, we are going to discuss the theory, the tools, the types and the kinds. So, the tool of critical art analysis or the tools of analytical visual analysis, incorporate a wide range of things. So, maybe be somebody needs to be quite widely familiar with art works, the more we develop our connection with the existing art work and more we become quip to an understandable visual thing, because of it is observation based on. The more we see,

the observant we become and we cannot deny that a primary tool that we carry with our selves.

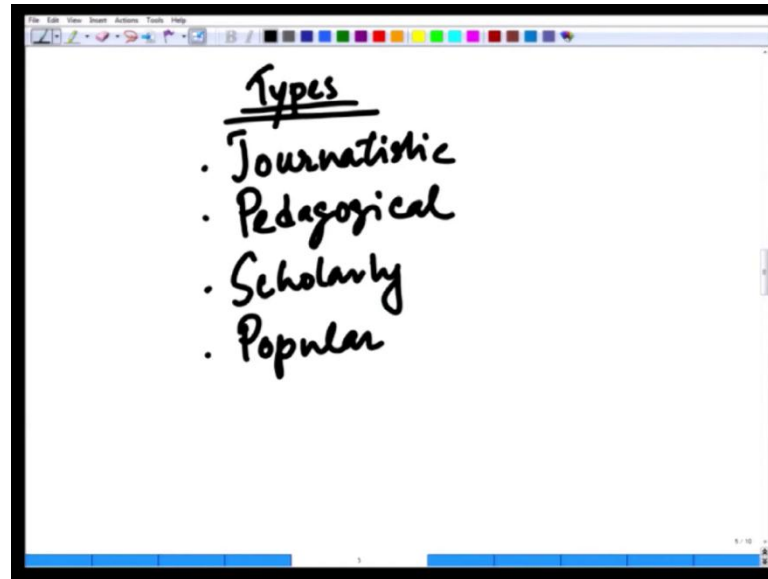
So, also like we can develop the very quickly with the knowledge of history of art, we can read and then reach our understanding. We read about the different movements, different time periods in history and that way we know, we become more confident. We are also become like we being a stage to coming with more visionary statements for the future.

So, if you know the past, we know that, what needs to happen now. So, we know our time, we know what is good for our future, what we are doing that we can justify in a much more ways. So, when we look at some artwork, we can always see that, this is something which is good perhaps, but that does not fit our times. So, knowing the time, knowing the history, makes it very rich.

So, we cannot deny the importance of these tools and apart from that, as we say that, you know we developed connection through the direct experience of viewing original art works. The more we see the more equipped we become and then we also need to see reproduction with proper information from different sources from books, from libraries, from internet, from many different sources. And also like the movies, visit the museums, studios, the galleries, see the performances and other things that are live and also connected with the social and cultural context in a daily basis, it becomes much more easier for ask to develop our tools. It is more like, you know we can sharp in our tools that way.

So, the opinion of the critics in the scholars during the basic period, the principle period that is another study, that we sometimes conduct that we read visual analysis done by other people, that provide us with some kind of a clue, that you know, how the criticism had been and also, we justify whether those criticism, where right, those analysis was justify for that time or not. So, there are tools that are available and we develop tools in that way. But the most important things in that way we should also know that, in what purpose we working. So, we come down to the next level that is the type of art criticisms that takes place in the culture.

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So, there are four main types of art criticism, one is the journalist criticism, then pedagogical criticism, scholarly and popular. In journalist criticism we have tried to produce a report, this is more like, when we are less judgmental, we just this is produce reporter this is what is taking place. And as we write the journal, we try to report, what is happening and how they taking place in which context is this put.

So, this is more like we put things in every in passive manner and we want more people to come and then generate there view there. So, there we follow a method and come down to the conclusion and no very generalistic manner; that we are producing something, we also like, this is more like, we try go by the information that is connected to that.

Whereas, in the pedagogical criticism, we are more academics, so when we think of the academic criticism or the pedagogical criticism, our interest there is that we go by quite a few steps which are academic and that will educate people in that trained, that kind of art work. So, when we talked about the semiotic level of art criticism or like we put it as the layer; that is part of the pedagogical art criticism, because there we go by the educational method and we are going to talk about that in a like more formal way.

When the contact the other analysis, so it is like an academic criticism, we may judgment, which are also derivatives of the statement status that is there, that is more scientific and logical, this is research oriented at the same time very clear and direct.

Whereas, in the scholarly criticism, we behave like the expert when we create the criticism, we are acting as a scholar, we can always make a kind of a property statement, but the scholarly criticism takes a lot of experience.

So, you cannot just start with us scholarly criticism from the beginning, unless you have a lot of exposure into the field and you also know, how things have been conducting before. So, that is the scholarly criticisms more visionary, we make end statements and that is how it is. Sometimes, we also in corporate quarter few scholarly critical points into the judgment part in the pedagogical expert system and then there are popular criticism that is also something which is very interesting that.

We just go by the public opinion, what the people say and we just put this way that, it might have a lot of history or this is justified in the cultural context or in social context, but what the people like, we are going by that. So, popular criticism is quite vast and we get to see that people writing the columns on art and there coming with an opinion not all of them are thoroughly educated in the feel of art, but they are quite prompt with their own understanding. So, popular art criticism is more reactive and intuitive in nature and apart from that, there are other things, we need to discuss, that is other part.

So, when we say that there are other part different types of judgment, there are also some kinds of judgment and those are certain thing, that we need to know where is specifically. So, there are three basic kinds of critical judgments that is used in a normal situation. One is the formalism or the formal method that I mentioned earlier also; that is basically prescribed by Feldman and there are other theorists, who also giving opinion on that. But that is not convenient for most of the people and what is the basic thing that we conduct usually.

So, in that formalism or the formal art criticism, when we say that we are analyzing a visual in terms of it is from, the formal arrangements, we go by quite a few steps. The steps are basically like when we go by the four steps methods, we describe the things and that is like a passive descriptions without any commit any judgments. We just look at the visual image and we first describe what is there.

So, if we can associate certain parts which are otherwise like not shown on objective, then we try to recognize and we also try to read the visual arrangement without making any comment there, it just a descriptions. Sometimes, we just pick up that particular steps

and put it in our destruction part, like when we are developing a museum catalogue for examples of what we do that, we show the painting and just write the description. So, the people get to see it, they find out things much faster.

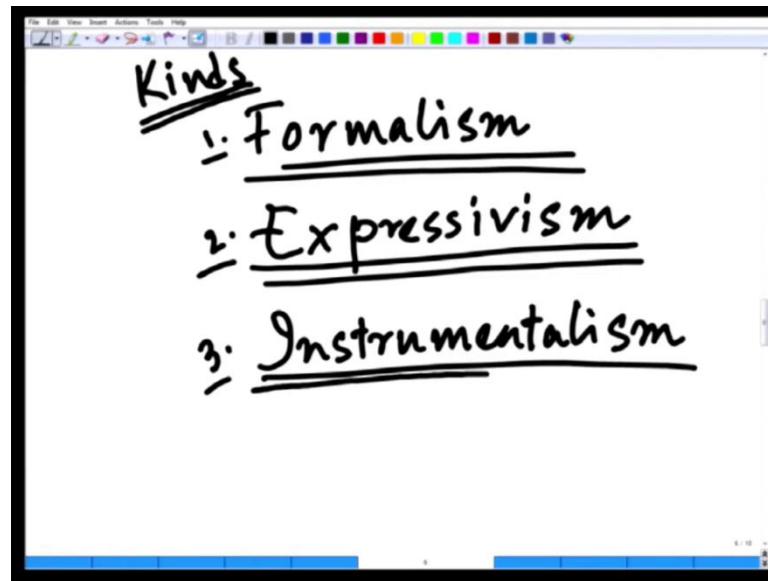
So, that is only the first step of this formula analysis method and the second step provides us some freedom of analysis. So, in that step, we analyze and we try to see what is there inside. So, there we are a prompt and dismantling certain part, putting them back and as we were saying that the altar, we try to justify and that is all about, how we analyze them. Analyzing is something you know, where this is very important to know that there are different approaches, people who believe in realism, they do not believe in reconstruction.

So, there things is what are there in nature, they will follow that, whereas, also some other opinions, where we look at the images as building blocks there units. If there unit is and we talk about visual harmony that will units are try to put together as building block and the images got constructed. So, if somebody believing in that construction of that image, they also think of reconstruction. So, that is how we analyze, that is how we generate our opinion.

And in the third step we interpret we try to get meaning out of things are in our own ways of our viewers. So, in visual analysis, we try to interpret, we try to make meaning we go high assumption, we feel that this is if something looks like that the artist must have meant it to be like something else. So, interpretation is one point that is also the next point from the general analysis. And finally, we just put the entire thing and come up with our own judgment, that it is more like a conclusive statement that we come up with.

And the judgment can become very scholar at time. So, that we put our vision our vision is statement we are free to somehow analyze our assumptions, we try to you know that is what is known as a hypothesis testing in that level. And finally, the judgments is ready there. So, that is one kind of art criticism that is very popular and we call it the formalism.

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And there are two different criticism, one is expressivism and instrumentalism. So, in expressivism, the formal arrangement takes a little more flexible terms. So, when we are describing or interpreting or judging and also applying, we keep in our mind that there are lots of things that are taking place there, which are for sake of expressions. So, there when expression is the predominant or we our basic aim is to express the ideas, we can take some freedom of distortion.

And those are the artistic distortion that we have discussed earlier also that, we also simplify or we exaggerated, we complicate for sake of a better expression. So, in that kind of analysis, what happens that the also play a role, where we know we have this thematic and iconic understanding in our mind, we know the symbols very well, certain particular symbol is there also there in mind.

And also thematic level we know that those belongs to a particular group, which is a perhaps American abstract expressionism or the German expressionism or a post impressionism and all this categories. So, that knowledge tells us that, these are the artwork we cannot just go by the basic semiotic, not understanding and if he says that a particular numbers over stretch it, we cannot put it as the manifest anything in that way, but that is done for the sake of it. So, it was done for the sake of expression.

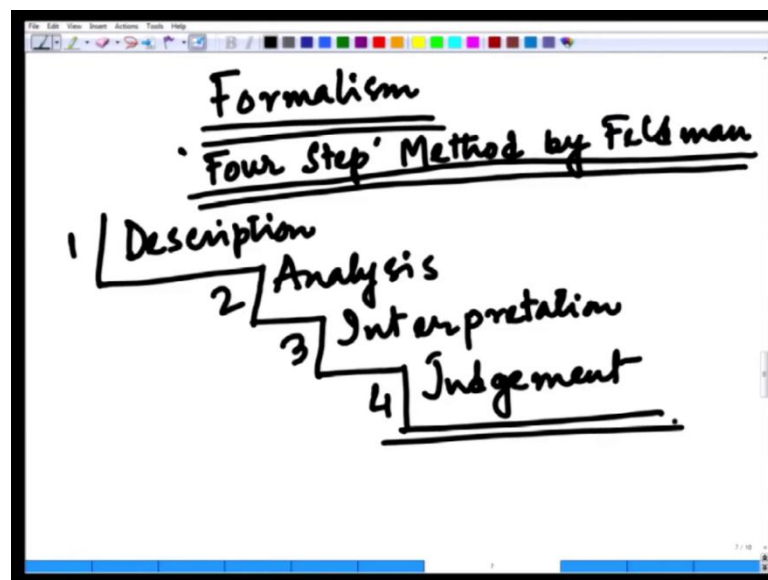
So, we will wanted the expression to be emphasized and heightened. So, that way expression is one tool and that kind of criticism title like a general that are artist who

would just see the art work from the expression point of view. At the same time there is another criticism which are not very different from that is an instrumentalism. Instrumentalism is the concept where we are instrumental with a particular ideologies.

So, you have fix ideology in your mind. So, every times as a critic when you are viewing the artwork you have particular ideology walking in your mind, for example, if we are instrumental in Marxism or we are instrumental in Feminism. So, every time we look an art work, we will have a point of view that will be indicative that particular ideology. So, anything we see we have a feminist point of view or the masses point of view.

So, that way instrumentalism is all about the ideology that we are holding as the project as the visual reader and we can come down to that kind of solution that you know everything is happening, I will see from my point of view. So, these are also different kind of art criticism. But the formula analysis, steps that are I write down and for your information and you can follow the steps and get amazing results, you can analyze all visual this knowledge, so I just write down the steps and you follow it.

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So, with this much of knowledge, we can enrich our regular reading and in the next lecture; that is our last lecture, we are going to see, how you go buy a problem solving process, when we know, how the visual analysis is going to take place by our viewer. When, we know our usable very well and we also know that, you know the problems that come to us have multiple layers, multiple passes, multiple complexity.

So, in that situation, we also need to connect to the audience in as the designer, as a graphic artist. So, everything is visual expression is not symbol specific there are lots of symbols, which are there are science symbols and many other things, but that is now the only thing. So, we need to go by our general understanding our social understanding and see or we can visual by the use of all these tools that we have gone so far.

And also, there is another thing that we need to keep in mind that if not just one kind of visual that we produce, because there are different demands and we may also feel that we should be versatile as designer. So, for like when we know the element of visual representation, so clearly and specifically, we should also develop our flexibility that we come up with the different solution for a single problem. So, it is not just a single problem, maybe the problem is one, but there can be multiple solutions, and we will see how successfully, we can solve all those problems.