

## DEFINE IDEOLOGY

The term ideology is used in a wide range of contexts. But there are two dominant yet apparently contradictory uses of ideology, (a) As the explicitly political (b) As the common-sensed, unconscious and unrecognized. Ideology is a system of values, beliefs or ideas that is common to a specific group of people.

What do you think ideologies would include?

– Dominant ideologies

– Individual ideologies.

Ideology is a difficult - but important -concept to grasp. Simply put, it is the ideas behind a media text, the secret (or sometimes not-so secret) agenda of its producers. In sociological terms, ideology is a body of ideas or set of beliefs that underpins a process or institution and leads to social relations.

- An ideology is a set of beliefs about the world.
- Virtually any belief system is described with a word ending in -ism or -ity
- e.g. Christianity, Marxism.
- The word is usually used to describe the beliefs of a powerful and dominant sector of society.
- Ideology is a ‘representation’ of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. - Louis Althusser (1970)

At every point of time the ideas of the ruling class has been the ruling ideas. And the subordinate group has been holding beliefs which simply guarantee their continued subordination. It is necessary for us to understand the precise mechanisms through which this process takes place. Media is an important carrier of dominant ideology. Sophisticated answers have been Supplied to the question of how the ruling ideas are being promoted. And it is been parlayed by more complex concepts formed by media themselves.

**CONNOTATION & DENOTATION**

**Semiotics**

In Barthesian visual semiotic, the key idea is the layering of meaning. The first layer is the layer of denotation, of ‘what, or who, is being depicted here?’. The second layer is the layer of connotation, of ‘what ideas and values are expressed through what is represented, and through the way in which it is represented’.

**Denotation**

For Barthes, denotation is a relatively unproblematic issue. There is no ‘encoding’ into some kind of language-like code which must be learnt before the message can be deciphered. Perceiving photographs is closely similar to perceiving reality because photographs provide a point-by-point correspondence to what was in front of the camera, despite the fact that they reduce this reality in size, flatten it and, in the case of black and white, drain it of color.

Clearly images can be perceived at different levels of generality, depending on the context, depending on who the image is for, and what its purpose is. Where the producers of the text have an interest in trying to get a particular message across to a particular audience, and in such cases there will be signs to point us towards the preferred level of generality.

<b>CONNOTATION</b>	<b>DENOTATION</b>
FIGURATIVE	LITERAL
SIGNIFIED	SIGNIFIER(S)
INFERRED	OBVIOUS
SUGGESTS MEANINGS	DESCRIBES
REALM OF MYTH	REALM OF EXISTENCE

**Categorization**

Captions can indicate the preferred level of generality. But even in the absence of a caption people can be visually represented as a specific individual (my sister, on my aunt) or a social type (‘an immigrant woman’). Typification comes about through the use of visual stereotypes, which may either be cultural attributes (objects, dress, hairstyle, etc.) or physiognomic attributes. The more these stereotypes overshadow a person’s individual features (or object, or landscape) is represented as a type.

## **Connotation**

The second layer of meaning is connotation, the layer of the broader concepts, ideas and values which the represented people, places and things 'stand for', 'are sign of'. It can come about either through the cultural associations which cling to the represented people, places and things, or through specific 'connotators', specific aspects of the way in which they are represented, for example specific photographic techniques.

Connotative meanings-in Mythologies (1973) Barthes called them 'myths' –

### **Myth:**

A story of unknown authorship that people told long ago in an attempt to answer serious questions about how important things began and occurred. Stories that explain natural occurrences and express beliefs of right and wrong. Myths usually have a religious sense.

Myths are early man's desire to explain the universe. Eg: God or goddess

Photographs are particularly good vehicles for such meanings, because they naturalize them. They can be thought of as just 'finding' these meanings on the street, as it were, rather than 'constructing' them. so that the message can be constructed as 'read into it' by the viewer, rather than as communicated by a powerful social institution.

Connotation can also come about through the style of artwork or the techniques of photography, such as 'framing, distance, lighting, focus, speed'. Barthes calls this 'photogenia'

### **Examples:**

**Denotation** means "In media-studies terminology, denotation is an example of the first level of analysis: what the audience can visually see. Denotation often refers to something literal. Being what the denotation represents." (1) Denotation explores the concepts on "what is it" (shape, colours, font).

**Connotation** means "A connotation is a commonly understood subjective cultural or emotional association that some word or phrase carries"(2) Connotation means what it represents (emotional, subliminal meaning). An example of connotation and denotation is, a red heart (denotation) may symbolize love and affection (connotation) due to the shape and the color. Examples using logos

1st logo: Vodafone



**what do the colours used represent?** The colour red is a unisex colour, which means that the company appeals to both male and females.

Red is also a strong colour, which symbolizes strength and reliability in the brand.

**what do the shapes represent?** The shape used is a speech/quotation mark.

This symbolizes communication, which is linked to the products and services they offer (mobiles and mobile network tariffs).

**what do the fonts represent?** The font is a simple bold curved font to help relate to the speech mark and for clarity of pronunciation for customers.

The company name has been shortened into informal/slang text to help it relate again back to the products they offer (mobiles) and to show the service is available for all ages which use technology.

**what do they tell us about the company or product?** The denotation factors and connotation meanings show us that Vodafone is a company based on telecommunications and offer products/services to a wide range of customers.

### **DENOTATION & CONNOTATION” IN LANGUAGE ANALYSIS WORDS**

**DENOTATION** • Refers to the ‘literal meaning’ of the word; i.e. the **DICTIONARY MEANING**. • It is the ‘explicit definition’ as listed in the dictionary.

**CONNOTATION** • Refers to the ‘associations’ or the ‘emotional suggestions’ that are **CONNECTED** to a certain word. • The ‘association’ or ‘set of associations’ that a word usually brings to mind.

Example: HOME

DENOTATIVE MEANING A place where one lives; a residence. (with bricks & Structure)

CONNOTATIVE MEANING A place of security comfort and family.

**“DENOTATION & CONNOTATION” IN IMAGE/GRAPHIC ANALYSIS**

DENOTATION = Reality (of the image/graphic) • Refers to ‘What does one see in the image/graphic presented to him/her?’ • The ‘translation’ of light, line, shape, form – ‘denote’ REALITY.

CONNOTATION = Emotion/understanding (of the image/graphic) • Refers to ‘How one is affected by what the image/graphic suggests?’ • The ‘emotion/response’ evoked when one views the image/graphic is the CONNOTATIVE MEANING. Examples: Image of DOVE.

**CULTURAL IMPERIALISM**

Cultural imperialism theories focus on the globalization of culture as a highly unequal process dominated by powerful capitalist interests based in wealthy countries.

**Cultural Imperialism Theory states that Western nations dominate the media around the world which in return has a powerful effect on Third World Cultures by imposing n them Western views and therefore destroying their native cultures.** The drive to minimize costs and maximize profits is deemed to have prompted media and culture industries, with the help of global communications technologies, to operate in a toughly international manner. *Cultural imperialism can take various forms, such as an attitude, a formal policy, military action, so long as it reinforces cultural hegemony.*

From the point of view of cultural imperialism theorists, companies maximize demand for their products and services by attempting to sell their cultural goods to consumers all around to sell their cultural goods to consumers all around the world. Such is the importance of maximum exploitation of global markets to the success and growth of companies that most media products from television series to popular music – are now produced with global appeal in mind.

Cultural imperialism theories contend that the globalization of media and culture involves the systematic exploitation and cultural domination of small countries by powerful transnational companies based in wealthy parts of the world. The difference is that, instead of being imposed by military rule, cultural domination is attributable to overwhelming financial muscle and the use of communication technologies. In the 1970s, Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart (1971) carried out an analysis of Disney comics, which, at the time, had been sold in some 47 different countries and translated into 21 different languages. *Dorfman and Mattelart’s analysis suggested that the narratives in the comics, featuring characters such as Donald Duck, were*

*riddled with dominant meanings and served to normalized capitalists social relations and the American way of life. Characters, for example, are deemed to have exhibited a constant obsession with making money, becoming rich and indulging in compulsive consumerism.* Narratives also demonstrate regular engagement in ruthless competition in order to achieve such goals. There are even references, *it is argued, to imperialism itself, in the form of stories in which the characters compete to exploit resources such as oil and gold in exotic and faraway lands.* Dorfman and Mattelart conclude that the global circulation of products such as Disney comics is a vehicle for the spreading of ideologies that make capitalism and consumerism seem natural and inevitable.

**Colonialism: The policy and practice of a power in extending control over weaker peoples or areas. Cultural imperialism is the domination of one culture over another. Cultural imperialism can take the form of a general attitude or an active, formal and deliberate policy, including (or resulting from) military action.** Economic or technological factors may also play a role. We might say: the cultural products of the first world "invade" the third-world and "conquer" local culture. This has an important implication for the way Western television and film companies can have an impact on the cultures of developing countries. **Cultural Imperialism and the Media : The media also constitute a potential tool for control by dominant Western cultures over those of developing countries. The Western way of life and its economic and political systems can be imposed on other societies as its lifestyles are sold through media products such as films and television – cultural imperialism.**

## HEGEMONY

In common usage, hegemony means domination or rule by one state or nation over another. Marxists use the term in a different manner: Rule is based on overt power and, at times, on coercion, but hegemony is subtler and more pervasive. As Williams explains, rule is political and, in critical times, is based on coercion or force. Hegemony, on the other hand, is a complicated intermeshing of forces of a political, social, and cultural nature. Hegemony transcends (but also includes ) two other concepts: culture, which, from a Marxist perspective, expresses and is a projection of specific class interest.

This concept explains how a dominant class is leadership can come to be accepted by consent as well as by force, by subordinate groups. The institutions of civil society such as the media, the church, the educational systems, the family and other culture institutions were used by Western European bourgeois group to mobilize spontaneous consent. Hegemony can't be won or lost but it involves a constant fight back in order to be secured and maintained.

Therefore hegemony is not limited to matters of direct political control but seeks to describe a more general predominance which includes, as one of its key functions, a particular way of

seeing the world and human nature and relationship. This way of seeing the world is not simply the dominant class is idea imposed on subordinate class. But it needs to make space for views and interest of subordinate class without giving up on their own ideas. This creates equilibrium and it wins the heart of the subordinate groups. But if the working class would like to create its own hegemony for the society as a whole then it will involve a revolutionary struggle by force and persuasion.

Hegemony transcends culture as a concept because culture can be seen as being tied to “specific distributions of power and influence, “ or the mode of production and relations that stem from it. And hegemony transcends ideology as a concept because ideology is limited to systematized and formalized meanings that are more or less conscious. Ideology may be masked and camouflaged in films and television programs and other works carried by mass media, but the discerning Marxist can elicit these ideologists and point them out.

**Hegemony thus is what might be described as “that which goes without saying,” or the givens or commonsense realities of the world, which, it turns out, serve an ultimate purpose – that of maintaining the dominance of the ruling class.**

*The media, as unwitting instruments of hegemonic domination, have a much broader and deeper influence – they shape people’s very ideas of themselves and the world; they shape people’s worldviews. Williams says that hegemonic analysis is “cultural,” but in special sense, in that it connects culture to the patterns of subordination and domination that exist in a given society.*