

Decoding Advertising

Signifier + signified = denotative sign
(+ connotative signifier)

words + images are read on different levels

denotation → literal understanding
most immediate understanding

connotation → secondary meaning
triggered by a range of
associations (intertextually)

Anchorage

(Barthes) used to describe the relay between
words and visuals

- ↳ word specific
- ↳ image specific
- ↳ dual message
- ↳ interdependent
- ↳ parallel

"The Myths which suffuse our lives
are insidious precisely because
they appear so natural they
call out for the detailed analysis
which semiotics can deliver."

Roland Barthes - Mythologies

Myths are sites in mainstream culture
that reflect societal norms
or dominant cultural opinions

They are structured to propagate
messages that can be ideological or
serve the interests of certain groups

Adverts

"Ads ask us to participate in ideological
ways of seeing the world"
Judith Williamson - Decoding Advertisements

Ads have a currency
They're particular to time & place
↳ reflection of cultural trends
and social ideas

Moral Values
eg: nuclear family stereotype

Representation
eg: minorities

Consumerism and Status
eg: supreme uwo fans

Advertising and Myth CTD

- Aspirational Selling
↳ reflects a target consumer
↳ plant the seed of need
↳ upwardly mobile associations
↳ links status to consumerism
- Concealment
↳ hide the production or economic structure

The chad;
the madlad; Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Physiological

- ↳ Safety / Security
- ↳ Love / Belonging
- ↳ Self-Esteem / / / /
- ↳ Self-actualisation -
- / / / / / / /

Advertising is lucrative, well paid,
and those who do it have a good
handle on cultural trends and semiotics

↳ why do they struggle so much with mem
semiotics then??

Analyzing Ads

Linguistic message

- ↳ denotation
- ↳ connotation

Image message

- ↳ denotation
- ↳ connotation

Anchorage

Frame of reference

Does the ad present any cultural myths?