

## Glossary of Semiotic Terms

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### About this Document

This is a glossary of semiotic terms. Certain words may have different definitions but the ones chosen to be included in this document will be ones that resonate well with me and are more or less consistent with the established ideas within the field of semiotics.

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### The Terms

1. biosphere

The physical environment to which an organism adapts.

2. code

(1) A code is a specific set of paradigmatic and syntagmatic conventions according to which texts are produced and interpreted. (2) A code is a procedural system for generating and interpreting texts. ((From the “Chromesthetic Paintings” talk.))

3. Conative function

The effect of a message on the addressee

4. Conceptual metaphor

A generalized metaphorical formula that undergirds a specific abstraction

5. Conceptual metonym

A generalized metonymical formula that undergirds a specific abstraction

6. connotation

The extended or secondary meaning of a sign; the symbolic or mythic meaning of a certain signifier (word, image, etc.)

7. context

The environment (physical and social) in which signs are produced and messages interpreted

8. Conventional sign

A sign that is made by human ingenuity

9. denotation

The primary , intentional meaning of a sign

10. deconstruction

The view that texts can be deconstructed into a series of differences (oppositions) and, thus, that they do not refer to anything outside of themselves in any “true” fashion

11. diachronic

The study of change in signs and codes over time

12. Discursive symbols

Combination of bits of meanings that flow together such as a sentence

13. Emotive function (of communication)

The addresser’s emotional intent in communicating something

**14. firstness**

In pericean theory, the first level of meaning derived from bodily and sensory processes

15. haptics

The study of touching patterns during social interaction

16. gesture

Semiosis and representation by means of the hand, arms, and , to a lesser extent , the head

17. gesticulant

The gesture unit accompanying speech

18. grammar

The whole system and structure of a language or of languages in general, usually taken as consisting of syntax and morphology (including inflections) and sometimes also phonology and semantics.

19. hyperreality

The perception of simulated representations as more real than actual reality

20. icon

A sign in which the signifier has a direct (non-arbitrary), simulative connection to its signified or referent

21. Image schema

The term used by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson to refer to the recurring structures of, or in, our perceptual interactions, bodily experiences, and cognitive operations that portray locations, movements, shapes, and so on, in the mind

22. interpretant

The process of adapting a sign's meaning to personal and social experiences

23. index

A sign in which the signifier has an existential connection to its signified or referent (that is, the sign indicates that something "exists" somewhere in time or space)

24. Infinite semiosis

The signified is endlessly commutable- functioning in its turn as a signifier for a further signified.

25. kinesics

The study of bodily semiosis

26. langue

The nature of the rules and structures that make up any language, from sounds (known as phonemes) to grammatical and semantic systems.

27. Metalingual function (of communication)

A communicative function by which the code being used is identified

28. modernism

Refers to a global movement in society and culture that from the early decades of the twentieth century sought a new alignment with the experience and values of modern industrial life.

29. myth

A story that aims to explain the origin of life or of the universe in terms of some metaphysical or deistic entity or entities

30. narrative

Something told or written, such as an account, story, or tale

31. Natural sign

A sign that is produced by nature (such as a symptom)

32. oculosics

The study of the communicative role of the eyes in nonverbal communication (a culturally variable phenomenon).

33. object

What a sign refers to

34. paradigm

A set of linguistic terms that form mutually exclusive choices in particular syntactic roles

35. paradigmatic

A structural relation between signs that keeps them distinct and therefore recognizable

36. parole

'speech'. Saussure, on the other hand, intended for it to mean both the written and spoken language as experienced in everyday life; it is the precise utterances and use of language.

37. Phatic function (of communication)

A communicative function by which contact between addresser and addressee is established

38. Poetic function (of communication)

A communicative function based on poetic language

39. postmodernism

The world view that all knowledge is relative and human-made, and that there is no purpose to life beyond the immediate and the present

40. Post-structuralism

A movement in semiotics countering the structuralist notion that signs encode some aspect of reality

41. Presentational symbols

They participate in or are similar to, the thing they symbolize . often takes form of an image or icon, meaning sacred “image” or “likeness”. More than representative in a purely conventional space.

42. proxemics

A branch of semiotics and anthropology that studies the symbolic structure of the physical space maintained between people

43. Referential function

A communicative act in which there is a straightforward connection between the act and what it refers to

44. Representamen

In peircean theory, the physical part of a sign

45. representation

The process by which referents are captured and organized in some way by signs or texts

46. secondness

In peircean theory, the second level of meaning derived from relating signs to each other or to other elements (including sign-makers and sign-users)

47. semiotics

The science that studies signs and their uses in representation

48. semiosphere

The world of signs, codes, and texts to be differentiated from the biosphere (the physical life supporting environment)

49. semiosis

The comprehension and production of signs

50. Signifying order

vernacular design, cross-cultural design, and transnational design

51. sign

Something that stands for something or someone else in some capacity

52. Sign (peirce)

a sign is something that stands in a well-defined kind of relation to two other things, its object and its interpretant sign

53. Sign (saussure)

describes the sign and its arbitrary relation to reality. A linguistic sign is not a link between a thing and a name, but between a concept and a sound pattern.

54. signal

An emission or movement that naturally or conventionally triggers some reaction on the part of a receiver

55. signified

The part of a sign that is referred to

56. signifier

That part of a sign that does the referring; the physical part of a sign

57. structuralism

The study of the structures (signs, texts, codes) generated by semiosis

58. symbol

A sign that represents a referent through cultural convention

59. symptom

A bodily sign that stands for some ailment, physical condition, or disease

60. synchronic

The study of signs at a specific point in time (usually the present)

61. syntagm

An orderly combination of interacting signifiers which forms a meaningful whole

62. syntagmatic

A structural relation that guides the combination of signs or parts of signs in a coherent and consistent way

63. text

A “larger sign” put together in terms of a specific code

64. thirdness

In peircean theory, the third level of meaning derived from symbolic processes

65. Unlimited semiosis

is apparently a strict consequence of the semiotic theory, but it eventually takes on the form, in some of its representations, the anguished aspect of the interminability not only of the analysis of meanings,