Everyday Semiotics: The Paradox of a Universal Discipline

Elliot Gaines
Wright State University

Abstract: The marginal status of semiotics in society and the academic world is a paradox. Semiotics is not only relevant to every field of inquiry, but is a universal aspect of everyday experiences. Yet even among those that advocate the study of signs, the notion of calling semiotics an academic discipline is controversial. Like any academic area, the language and concepts of semiotics exclude the uninitiated. Ironically, just as the study of semiotics predicts, opinions and beliefs vary and disagreements commonly occur because of a tendency to interpret the world according to cultural habits rather than through critical logic supported by systematic and verifiable evidence. Especially in an age of global media, semiotics provides an effective way to examine messages representing ideas, and communicating values, beliefs, ideologies, and agendas.

Keywords: paradox, cultural habits, critical logic, semiosis, semiotics

Semiotics Paradoxes

One of many paradoxes of semiotics is its marginal status in society and the academic world. Even among those that advocate the study of signs, the notion of calling semiotics an academic discipline is controversial. Although semiotics is relevant to every academic field, the study of signs and sign functions is mostly taken for granted while scholars primarily focus on established practices in each discipline. Like any academic area, some aspects of semiotics exclude the uninitiated to the field. Just as the study of semiotics predicts, opinions and beliefs vary and disagreements commonly occur because of a tendency to interpret the world according to cultural habits rather than through critical logic supported by systematic and verifiable evidence. Paradoxically, semiotics is not only relevant to every field of inquiry, but

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