

Social Semiotics

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Robert Hodge Gunther Kress

By Robert; Kress, Gunther Hodge

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Semiotics was defined by Ferdinand de Saussure as "the science of the life of signs in society." Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress here confront the conceptual difficulties that have limited its growth as a field of inquiry and demonstrate how it can be integrated with the social analysis of power, ideology, gender, and class. Social Semiotics explores the many possibilities for semiotic analysis that are created by the assumption that signs and messages must always be situated within the context of social relations and processes. Approaching semiotics as an evolving theory, Hodge and Kress first review the work of theoretical founders, including Saussure, C. S. Peirce, I. Voloshinov, and Freud. They build on the legacy of Voloshinov, who linked semiotics with the study of ideology, and develop the implications of his assertion that the form of signs is determined not only by the social organization of the participants but also by the immediate conditions of their interaction. Showing how such an approach can illuminate key issues in literary theory and communications, the authors analyze messages ranging from literary texts, television, and billboards to social interactions at home and school.

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Review

"Clearly presented and amply illustrated with specific examples including photographs, charts, and models. Among the topics discussed in detail are context as meaning, styles as ideology, and the social meaning of narrative."?Choice, April 1989

From the Back Cover

Semiotics was defined by Ferdinand de Saussure in the early years of the twentieth century as 'the science of the life of signs in society.' Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress here confront the conceptual difficulties that have limited its growth as a field of inquiry and demonstrate how it can be integrated with the social analysis of power and ideology, and of gender and class.

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