

Representation/Signification

The sign is constituted by the relation between and among the following:

Signifier: the sound image, the graphic component of the sign
for example, CAT

Signified: the meaning(s) of the signifier
the meaning when we read or hear CAT
the signified can be very subjective—what associations or interpretations are
we giving this signifier?
the signifier mediates between the referent and the signifier

Referent: the thing in the world—what materializes, what appears
four-legged, furry animal that purrs

—There is no one-to-one correspondence between language and its signifying of reality; it is always a mediated relationship.

CAT does not always mean the same thing (referent) for each person in any given situation.

—Language, then, cannot render a reality for us; it cannot hold up a mirror to the world of things. The mirror is always a distortion of what is real. The mirror of language does not render a pure and unmediated correspondence to reality.

—Representation can never be innocent or realistic because representation, by its very nature, is a mediated form of attempting to render reality.

—We can only approach a reality outside the signifying system through representation of that reality in discourse (in language, with words, with signifiers).

Let's think about Professor Boscagli's discussion of nature: "Nature is what we think of when we think of nature." What does this mean in light of the above discussion of representation and signification?

Subject of/to Governance

—The modern subject is a subject of governance.

The body is dominated through reason (think of Descartes and Hobbes).

—The modern subject is a subject to governance.

The subject submits to the power of the state, its institutions.

Not necessarily through violence (think of Barker and Foucault), but by an act of reason.

The subject dominates and governs his or her body through reason, but also submits himself or herself to the power of the state by an act of reason—that is, it is not a coerced choice (not an act of bodily violence necessarily) but a rational one. In Hobbes' *Leviathan*, the subject chooses to be part of the state in order to protect himself or herself from his/her brutish or uncivil qualities, which would lead to the extinction of humankind as a whole. All of this implies an internalized law, which is the price of being "free" ("I can be free only because I have succeeded in dominating myself, ruling myself"). What does this mean in relation to Barker's "in situ control"?