

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Background of The Study

Cartoons represented values, views, and ideologies, and were influenced by the socio-cultural framework of a given society, despite avoiding direct criticism. Cartoons, in this context, were assemblages of symbols employed to communicate ideas for amusement purposes, like the cartoon Avatar The Last Airbender itself through the symbol of the power of water, air, fire, and earth to show that showed the characteristics and the entertainment of the cartoon. This study, employing both visual and verbal signals, was the first of its kind to examine the animated cartoon Avatar: The Last Airbender, using theory Barthes's semiotic theory to elucidate the cultural messages conveyed through the signs employed by cartoonists in constructing each scene and Fairclough's 3D theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) explicated the ideologies and beliefs ingrained in the chosen data from the cartoon Avatar: The Last Airbender.

As noted by Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), inherent in the concept of the sign is the linkage between meaning and form. He referred to his system of signs as semiology. In terms of epistemology (the study of knowledge and justified belief) and ontology (the study of the nature of being, existence, or reality), Saussure's work can be seen as an exploration of the meaning (epistemology) and form (ontology) of language. He shifted the study of language from a purely instrumental basis, in which language was a means of studying something else, to

one in which it is an object of systematic inquiry in its own right. St. Clair (2014) mentioned that language is a socially constructed realm that allows humans to understand the real world. It is the only way that human beings have to understand their environment and the world of phenomena. This is where the field of semiotics belongs.

Furthermore, In this research cartoon Avatar, The Last Airbender, experienced the same outcome in ontology through philosophical traditions, the Avatar: The Last Airbender phenomenon exemplified a complex tapestry of philosophical and epistemological concepts. For example, the show incorporated wisdom from various traditions from East Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, North Asian, and Native American cultures, including contributions from specialists in Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian, and Indigenous schools of thought. It also relied on less well-known traditions, including black abolitionism, anarchism, and martial arts philosophy. Using techniques from various philosophical traditions, the show addressed today's pressing concerns, such as how to deal with ecological degradation, the repercussions of colonialism and genocide, and income disparity.

One of the finest animated series, "Avatar: The Last Airbender," would have been the basis for this research. The series received commendation for its age-neutral material, distinctive narrative style, cultural variety, integration of martial arts, and political motifs. Its intricate world-built and empathetic characters distinguish the series.

The researcher wanted to analyze the representation of ideological and cultural signed in the cartoon Avatar The Last Airbender. The characteristics of cultural signed in the Avatar The Last Airbender cartoon could have been seen in Figures 1 and 2.



Figure 1.1 Preliminary Data

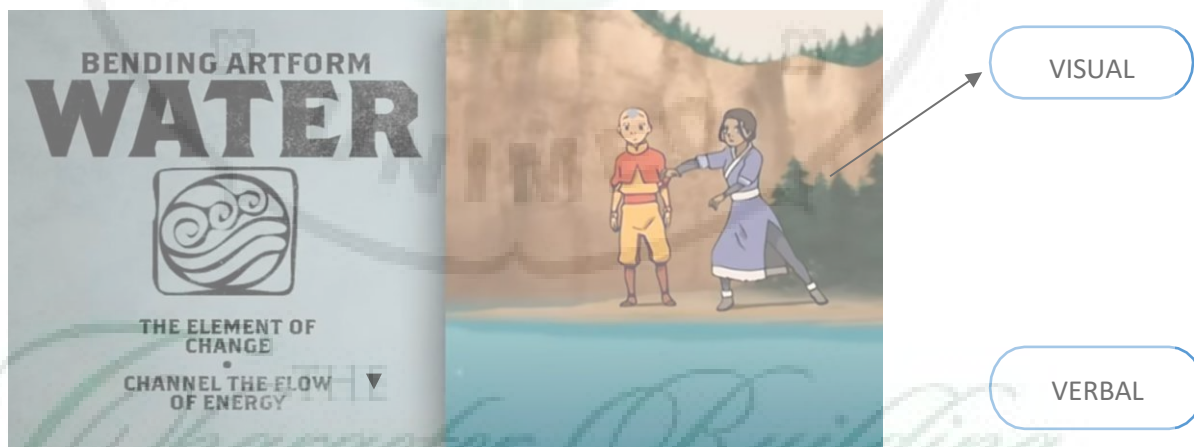


Figure 1.2 Preliminary Data

This screenshot image of the cartoon included the visual and verbal data of the cultural signed about the bending power included watered, air, earth, and fire and the ideological representations about the explanation of each element showed the magic system of the narrative allowed for the alluded parent cultures to infuse with the cultures of the showed as a logical repercussion of the ruled of the magic

system each major culture group in the world of *The Last Airbender* existed as a consequence of each group's ability to manipulate their respective element, and with each culture was an ideology. In "*Avatar: The Last Airbender*," water bending indeed portrayed a deep connection to the culture and spirituality of the Water Tribe, which is inspired by various indigenous cultures, including the Inuit. The show presented water bending as a formed of adaptability, healed, and introspection, reflected the valued and beliefs of the Water Tribe. The series had drawn from Inuit culture to shape the Water Tribe's societal structure, clothing, and bending techniques. For example, water benders learned to bend by observed the motioned of the waved and drew power from the Moon, which is reminiscent of the Inuit's relationship with their environment.

In "*Avatar: The Last Airbender*," air bending is deeply influenced by the principles of Tibetan Buddhism, emphasizing detachment from material concerned and a focus on spiritual growth. The AirNomads' culture, philosophy, and bending style reflected the Buddhist concept of non-attachment, as they strive for harmony and peace through their connection with the air around them. The shows had incorporated elements of Tibetan Buddhism into the Airbender way of life, such as their vegetarianism, meditation practiced, and nomadic lifestyle, which was reminiscent of Buddhist monks. The Airbender temples and their teachings also drew parallels to Buddhist monasteries and doctrines.

This researched would have been dissimilar from relevant studied because it focuses on semiotic analysis and cultural signed (Asian culture) that founded in the *Avatar: The Last Airbender* cartoon, used the theory of Barthes (1957), who

developed the ordered of signification theory, which classified messages into three categories: myth, denotation, and connotation. Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model of critical discourse analysis is employed to examined the underlying ideologies of the texted, based on three dimensions: description, interpretation, and explanation.

B. The Problem of The Study

1. What cultural signed and ideological representations were found in Avatar: The Last Airbender cartoon?
2. How are cultural signed and ideological representations realized in Avatar: The Last Airbender cartoon?

C. The objective of The Study

1. To investigated the cultural signed and ideological representation in Avatar: The Last Airbender cartoon
2. To elaborated on the cultural signed and ideological representations in Avatar: The Last Airbender cartoon.

D. The Scope of The Study

The scope of the studied would focus on the analysis of the Cultural Signed in Avatar: The Lasted Airbender cartoon on the YouTube channel (196) Avatar: The Last Airbender - YouTube. The 9 video moments from Avatar: The Last Airbender with the highest views, were uploaded in 2020. This researched would used qualitative methods and Barthes's (1957) and Fairclough's (1995) theories.

E. The Significance of The Study

The researcher aspires for this researched to served as a theoretical reference for comprehending the semiotic cultural sign's content. The researcher then anticipates thatthis researched would contribute to the future body of knowledge for English department academicians and other researchers. Students would found this research to been a valuable reference as they engaged in the studied or investigation of culturally signed semiotics. This research endeavour willed, in practiced, contribute to the scholarly comprehension of cultural symbols used in the semiotic analysis of the animated cartoon avatar: The Lasted Airbender. Furthermore, this studied encouraged further investigation into the intersection of cultural signed and semiotic theory by thereader.

