

Week 14: Semiotics + Uses and Gratifications

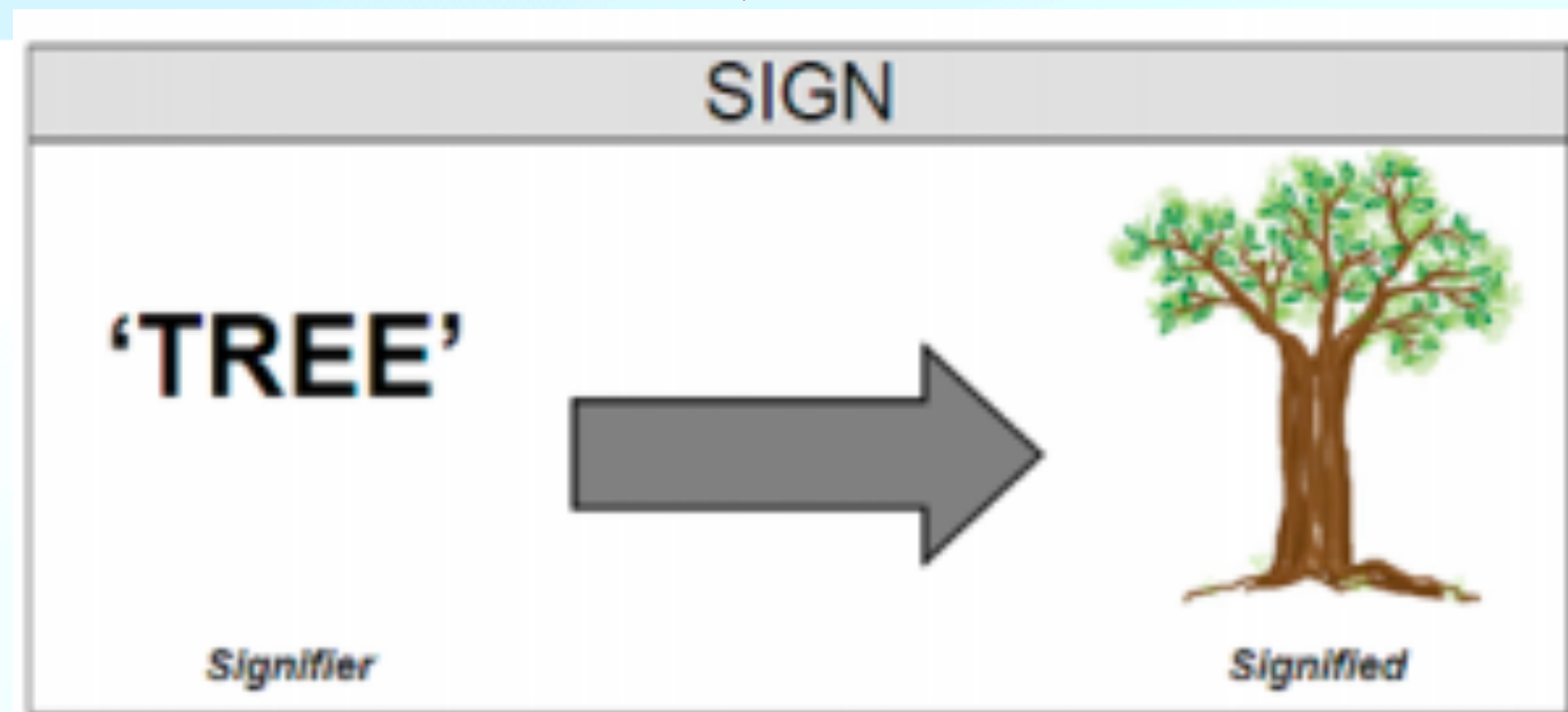
COMM 2100 Introduction to Comm Theory
SI Session

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Semiotics/semiology

The study of the social production of meaning from sign systems; the analysis of anything that can stand for something else.

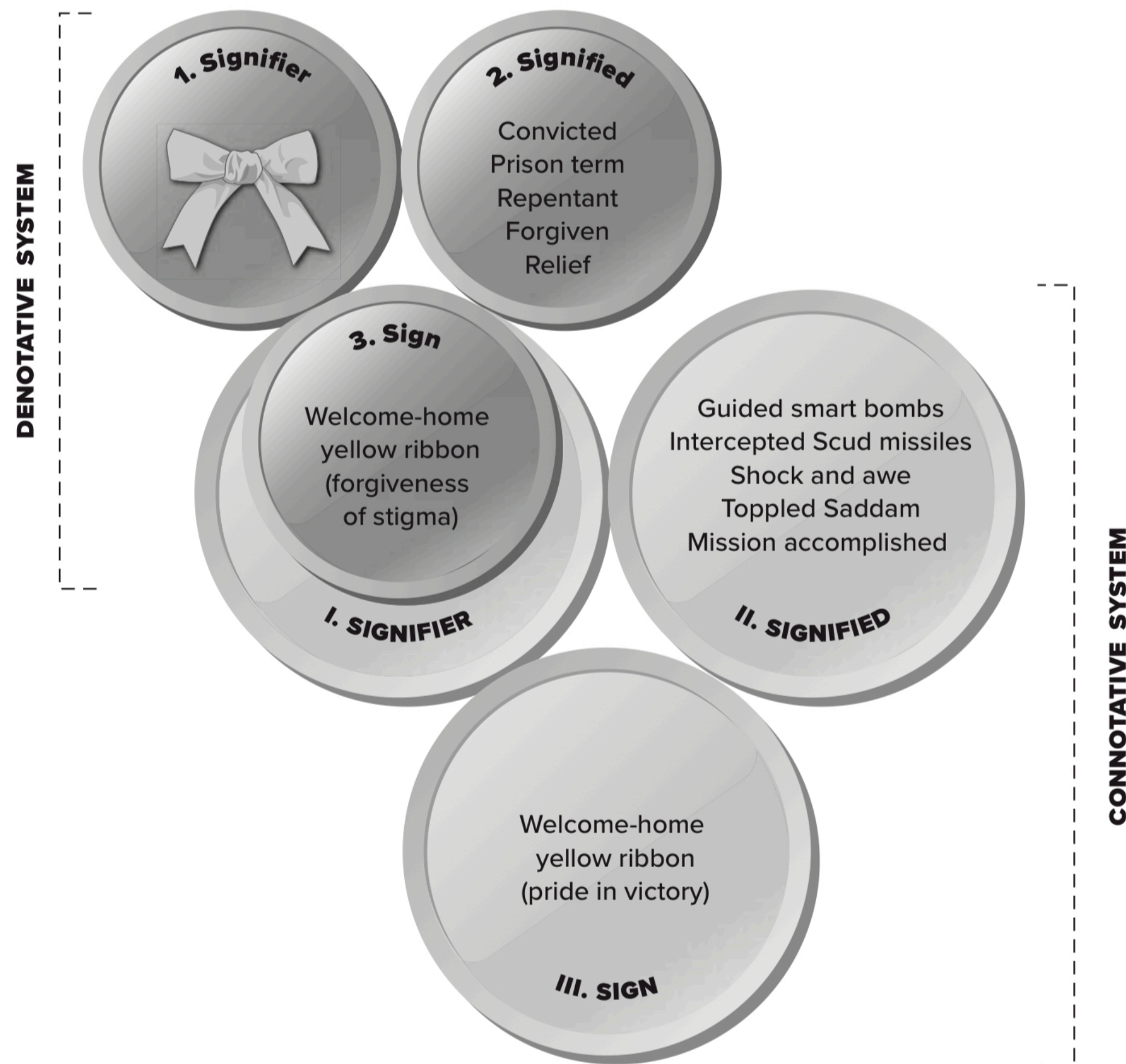
sign: a system of big culture background.



- A sign is the combination of its signifier and signified.
- Signifier: the physical form of the sign as we perceive it through our senses; an image.
- Signified: the meaning we associated with the sign.

Q: Can you think of some signs that carry ideological meanings?

Connotation & Denotation



- Denotative sign system: descriptive sign without ideological content.
- Connotative sign system: a sign that has lost its historical reference.
- The connotative sign can evolve over time.

FIGURE 26-1 Connotation as a Second-Order Semiotic System

Source: Based on Barthes, "Myth Today"

A little bit of thoughts

Mythic signs reinforce the dominant values of their culture.

- Ideology: Knowledge presented as common sense or natural, especially when its social construction is ignored or suppressed.

Uses and Gratification (U&G)

Five Assumptions

People deliberately use media for particular purposes.

Not passive audience; Media effect is not uniform.

People seek to gratify needs through media use.

Uses and gratifications are not separate.

Media compete for our time and attention.

To think about the choices people eventually make.

Media affect different people differently.

For the same media, the gratifications can be different.

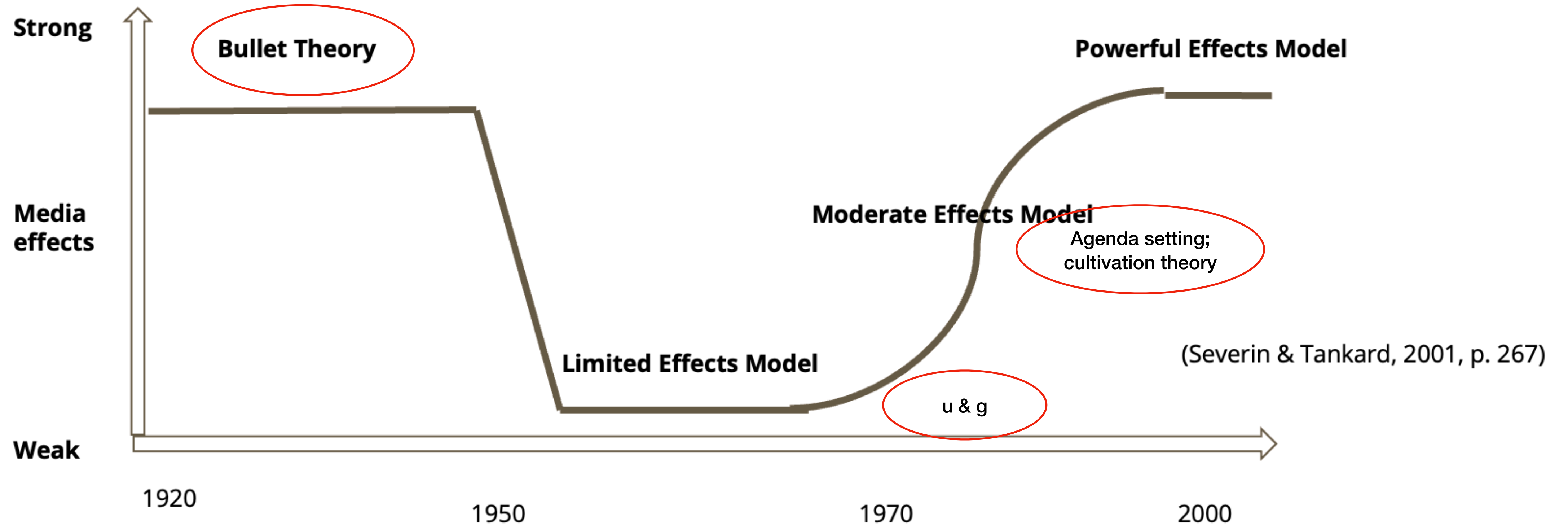
People can accurately report their media motivation.

About method: self-report survey.

Think: Some assumptions can be not applicable in today's world. For example, it's hard for people to report the reason why they like ply candy Crash every day?

Media effect background

Four phases of research



Eight motivations - typology

Typology: a classification scheme that attempts to sort a large number of specific instances into a more manageable set of categories.

Passing time	Social interaction
Companionship	Relaxation
Escape	Information
Enjoyment	Excitement

Q: What apps have you used most on your phone recently? How do you put these apps into the eight classifications?

Parasocial relationships

A sense of friendship or emotional attachment that develops between TV viewers and media personalities.



- *Friends - Joey Meets His Own Stalker*

Thank you!
See you next week!