

Abstract

The word 'intellectual' has been used in Thai society over the past 4 decades. Its signification consists of two dimensions. The first signifies a person who is labelled 'intellectual', the second is concerned with the term 'intellectual' itself. The second signification is the subject of this thesis. The persons who may be labelled 'intellectuals' occupy that label only for a certain moment. Similarly the meaning and signification of the word 'intellectual', like all other signs, are never stable and keep changing over time and space. This thesis attempts to study 'intellectual' as a sign.

A sign is not an object which it signifies, but a name for identifying something. It is used when we want to refer to something or replace it. The signification of each sign is constituted when it is distinguished from other signs in the system of signification operating at a time and place. The signification of the word 'intellectual' is therefore constituted within a signification system operating at a certain time and place. The purpose of this thesis is to show how each signification is constituted over the past four decades. However, not every signifier can be included in the thesis. Only major texts on intellectual are selected to see how each author defines his term according to his reading of previous texts. This thesis is therefore another text whose author read the previous texts on intellectuals.

The signification of 'intellectual' as read by this researcher , ranges from those blessed with knowledge and moral virtues , revolutionary intellectual , organic intellectual , to cultural politician , and others. Each meaning is distinguished from other signs in the system of signification. In this thesis, therefore , 'intellectual' is once again reread and rewritten.