

## The Meaning Of Women'S Beauty In Garnier Pure Arabic Advertisements (Roland Barthes's Semiotic Analysis)

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### Abstract:

This study aims to discover the signifier of beauty and representation of beauty in Garnier Pure Arabic advertisements and to reveal the beauty myths of Arab women in ads based on the perspective of Roland Barthes' Semiotics. This study is descriptive qualitative research. The primary data are from Garnier Pure Arabic advertisements. Researchers used observation and documentation techniques to collect data, and then the data analysis consisted of 2 steps. The study found that the definition of beauty is; 1) beauty is having smooth skin, not oily and without acne; 2) beauty is having a bright and shining face; 3) oily and acne-prone facial skin is ugly and must be changed. This meaning refers to the myth that physical beauty is part of the perfection of Arabic women inclined towards physical beauty, not other factors.

**Keyword:** Advertisement, Garnier Pure, Semiotics, Roland Barthes

### Introduction

According to the Oxford Dictionary, advertising is a public notice or announcement.<sup>1</sup> Another definition is the news to encourage and persuade the public about the goods and services offered, notifications to the public about the goods or services being sold, posted in mass media such as newspapers and magazines or public places. Advertising is defined as promotion or campaigning activities through mass media.<sup>2</sup> One of the media used in advertising is television. Television is a mass communication medium combining audio and visual, where people can hear and see through audio. Advertising aims to trigger sales quickly. Products become more well-known in the eyes of the wider community, thereby increasing sales. The profits obtained by producers in this business will increase because the products being promoted are widely purchased and used by the public, thanks to convincing advertisements that attract the attention of the wider community. Many of us do not realize that we buy a product because of the advertisements on television because the majority of products promoted on TV have become our daily needs. This fact proves that we cannot avoid the influence of advertisements. Beside television, advertisements are spread in other social media, for example, Instagram, WhatsApp, SMS, banners, and posters.

Advertisements displayed by the Arabic version of Coca-Cola can provide

<sup>1</sup> Oxford Dictionary. "Advertisement". Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/search/dictionary/advertisement>. Accessed 27 June 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Wahyu Wibowo, *Semiotika Komunikasi: Aplikasi Praktis bagi Penelitian dan Skripsi Komunikasi* (Jakarta: Mitra Wacana Media, 2011), p. 5.

essential information for consumers in choosing a product. Through these advertising media, consumers can find out which products are best for them and whether these products are appropriate or not. Various kinds of advantages are offered by Coca-Cola drinks that provide offers for the community. Garnier Pure Arabic advertisements impact Arab society; only by washing your face with Garnier Pure will you overcome various facial problems, such as black spots and acne. The author uses a semiotic analysis of the 25-second Garnier Pure Arabic television commercial in this analysis. Using semiotic analysis, the writer can describe an advertisement related to the sign of the ad and understand a phenomenon, such as behavior, perception, and motivation in the form of actions or words in the language.

We hear about semiotics or semiology very often, especially when discussing literature. This study cannot be separated from the discussion of signs. Many people interpret signs in their own perspectives. They assume that semiotics is only visual signs, whereas semiotics includes all aspects and even has a broader scope, such as communication, symbols, texts, culture, and so on, which can be used as a tool to translate all of that into a more accessible language. The study of Semiotics or semiology as a science of signs is becoming increasingly popular. It has a broader field of study because it covers not only linguistics and literature but also includes aspects of specific approaches in art (aesthetics), cultural anthropology, philosophy, etc.

Roland Barthes with his theory of "two orders of signification", states that the study of meaning or symbols has two stages (levels) of significance, namely the levels of denotation and connotation and aspects of marking which are called myths. Roland Barthes came up with this theory because he considered that the previous theory was an initial stage that still needed further development. Barthes is known as a semiologist who actively utilizes Saussurean structural theory.<sup>3</sup> In 1956, Barthes read Saussure's work entitled *Cours de Linguistique Generale*, and then he saw and realized the possibility of applying semiotics to other fields (other than language). However, unlike Saussure, Barthes thinks semiology is linguistics, not vice versa. Thus, Barthes' semiology is a development of Saussure's semiology. In this case, Barthes' efforts follow Saussure's ideals that linguists must make the study of language structure the main focus, then relate it to other things outside of language as objects of application (language rules).<sup>4</sup>

Barthes thinks that Saussure's semiological system (signifier-signified) is only the first stage of the semiological system. He felt the need to establish a second-level semiological system. In Barthes' semiology, denotation is the first level of the signification system, while connotation is the second level. In this case, denotation is more associated with closed meaning. As a reaction against the literalness of this oppressive denotation, Barthes tries to get rid of it and reject it. For him, there are only connotations. He further said that the meaning of "literally" is natural, which is known as the theory of significance. This theory is based on the idea of signs put forward by Ferdinand de Saussure. It is just that the expansion of meaning is carried out through sense, which takes place in two stages.

One of the critical areas for Barthes in his study of signs is the reader's role.

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<sup>3</sup>Nyoman Kutha Ratna, *Teori Metode dan Teknik Penelitian Sastra* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015), p. 259.

<sup>4</sup> Wildan Taufiq, *Semiotika untuk Kajian Sastra dan Al-Qur'an* (Bandung: Yrama Widya, 2016), p. 73.

Although it is the true nature of the sign, connotation requires the reader's activeness to function. Barthes extensively reviews what is often called a second-level meaning system built on other pre-existing systems, which later, from this Connotation, give rise to myths. Barthes created a map of how signs work:<sup>5</sup>

|                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Signifier             | 2. Signified             |  |
| 3. Denotative Sign       |                          |  |
| 4. Connotative Signifier | 5. Connotative Signified |  |
| 6. Connotative Sign      |                          |  |

From the Barthes map above, it can be seen that the denotative sign (3) consists of a signifier (1) and a signified (2). However, at the same time, denotative signs are also connotative signifiers (4). In other words, it is a material element: only when you recognize the sign of the "lion" can connotations such as pride, ferocity, and courage become possible.

So, Barthes' semiology is composed of levels of language systems in two language levels. The language at the first level is language as an object, and the second level language is called metalanguage. This language is a sign system that contains signifiers and signifieds. The dual sign system is developed by making the signifiers and signifieds of the first level of new signifieds, which then have their new signifiers in a further sign system at a higher level. The first sign system is called denotation or terminological system, while the second level sign system is called connotation or rhetorical or mythological system.

Myth can be said to be 'equivalent' to ideology because both refer to ways of understanding the world with a model of protecting existing power structures by considering these myths/ideologies as something natural and even non-historical (because something historical means something that was born due to human activities in the past, and may change in the future). All attempts to explain social inequality (class, race, gender inequality) as something natural and not historical (meaning that there are naturally inferior people). When this ideology is hidden behind cultural signs, that is what Barthes means by myth.

Study on advertisements language has been conducted many times. Muhammad Hasyim (2014)<sup>6</sup> explained that commercial television advertising media in Indonesia do not emphasize denotative meanings (product benefits) but emphasize on symbolic signs that represent simulacrum reality. Rudi Kurniawan (2017)<sup>7</sup> emphasizes that there are denotative meanings, connotations, myths and messages contained in the Djarum 76 advertisement for Friends of Life. Moch. Chalid Firdaus (2018)<sup>8</sup> finds the meaning of beauty, such as beauty with bright, shining skin, brown skin is ugly and must be changed. Beauty with rosy cheeks and Japanese skin color

<sup>5</sup> Alex Sobur, *Semiotika Komunikasi* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2013), p. 69.

<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Hasyim, *Konstruksi Mitos dan Ideologi dalam Teks Iklan Komersial Televisi: Suatu Analisis Semiologi* (Makassar: State University of Hasanuddin, 2014)

<sup>7</sup> Rudi Kurniawan, *Pemaknaan Iklan Djarum 76 Versi Teman Hidup* (Pekanbaru: State University of Riau, 2017)

<sup>8</sup> Moch Chalid Firdaus, *Makna Kecantikan dalam Iklan Citra Sakura Fair UV Versi Febby Restanty* (Surabaya: State Islamic University of Sunan Ampel, 2018)

is considered perfect. Ghazi Daffa Satria (2022)<sup>9</sup> reveals that the construction of women's beauty refers to the trend of natural white skin without makeup. Desiana (2018)<sup>10</sup> shows the deconstruction of beauty through dramatic advertising language and the representation of ideal women based on beauty. Several previous studies seek to describe the meaning of an advertisement implicitly or explicitly without any concerning product commercialization. This study aims to discover the signifier and signified of beauty and the meaning of women's beauty in Garnier Pure Arabic advertisements. This study also intends to represent the beauty myths contained in the commercialization context of a beauty product and the factors that show stigma about women and beauty. Exactly two things are related.

### **Research Methods**

This is descriptive qualitative research.<sup>11</sup> The primary data<sup>12</sup> source in this study is a 25-second Garnier Pure Arabic advertisement broadcast on Arabic television obtained from [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). The author also took pictures of video advertisements to serve as the unit of analysis.

Data collection techniques used in this study are observation techniques and documentation techniques. Researchers carefully observed the object to be studied, namely advertising. The researcher observes every image (scene) and audio contained in the Garnier Pure Arabic advertisement so that later the researcher will find which objects related to the beauty contained in the ad need to be examined. Researchers also use documentation for data collection techniques. In this study, not all scenes were examined. What was studied were scenes that contained elements that signify beauty in Garnier Pure Arabic advertisements.

Data analysis in this study consists of 2 steps, (a) the relationship between signifier and signified in a sign to external reality, Barthes called it a denotation, namely the most accurate meaning of a sign; (b) connotation is Barthes' term for calling the second step of significance, which describes the interaction that occurs when the sign meets the feelings or emotions of the reader or viewer and the values of their culture. Connotation has a subjective or intersubjective value. Denotation is what the sign describes to the subject. At the same time, the connotation is how to describe it.

### **Results And Analysis**

#### **Garnier Pure Profile**

For many years witch hazel leaves have been used to help reduce inflammation in the skin. Witch hazel leaves are used in the Pure Active Sensitive series as one of the natural ingredients that make acne-prone skin feel comfortable and suitable for sensitive skin types. Zinc is a mineral that has a strong antioxidant content. In various studies, zinc helps treat inflammation-causing bacteria in acne-prone skin. You can

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<sup>9</sup> Ghazi Daffa Satria & Fajar Junaedi, Representasi Kecantikan Perempuan dalam Iklan Garnier Sakura White dan Wardah White Secret. Komuniti: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Teknologi Informasi, Vol. 14, No. 1, 2022.

<sup>10</sup> Desiana E Pramesti, Dekonstruksi Mitos Kecantikan Kajian Semiologi Struktural atas Iklan Sabun Dove "Real Beauty Campaign: Inner Critic". Jurnal SEMIOTIKA, Vol. 12, No. 1, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> M. Djunaidi Ghony & Fauzan al-Manshur, Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif (Yogyakarta: Ar-Ruzz Media, 2016), p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> Sugiyono, Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2015), p. 225.



feel the scope and benefits of zinc in the Pure Active Sensitive series, created specifically for those with acne-prone sensitive skin.

The nutritional content of vitamins A, C and antioxidants found in blueberries helps treat acne and its scars. In addition, the glycemic content of this fruit is also helpful for preventing acne. Matcha is a tea high in antioxidants; even the antioxidants in matcha can be up to 100 times that in regular green tea. This is also useful for reducing excess oil production on the face, which often triggers acne.

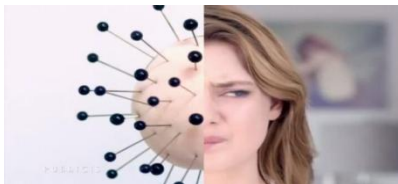




### Garnier Pure Arabic Ads Synopsis

Garnier Pure Arabic adverts tell about a woman looking in the mirror and is surprised by her facial problems, such as black spots, oily face, and pimples. Garnier comes with three functions: facial cleansing, brightening facial skin, and disguising black areas on the front. The blemishes or spots become faint and clean after the woman washes her face with Garnier Pure. Finally, the woman's face is protected from deficiencies or anything considered a defect on the front. Garnier Pure is the product for cleaning the face with the most sales in the world because the price offered by Garnier Pure is amicable.

Several scenes will be analyzed from the Garnier Pure Arabic advertisement Roland Barthes's concept.

### Selected Scene Analysis 1

| (Signifier)   | (Signified)  |
|---|--|
|  <p>Figure 1</p> | <p>A white woman who was looking in the mirror with a shocked and sad expression.</p> <p>In picture 1, it seems like the woman is feeling down because of the black spots on her face.</p> |
|  <p>Figure 2</p> | <p>Figure 2 shows a woman with a surprised expression because of excess oil on her face.</p>   |
|  <p>Figure 3</p> | <p>Figure 3 shows the woman with an annoyed expression because she saw a pimple that appeared on her face.</p> <p>Then picture 4 showed a frustrated woman.</p>                            |

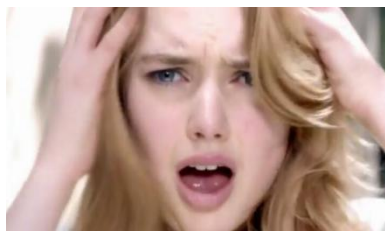


Figure 4

**(Denotative Sign)**

The disappointment of a woman looking in the mirror and seeing black spots appear on her face, oily and acne-prone.

| <b>(Connotation Signifier)</b>                                      | <b>(Connotative Signified)</b>  |
|---|---|
| Acne-prone skin, oily and black spots are ugly and must be changed. | The model who succeeded in changing facial problems became an example for the Arab community, especially to treat and care for their faces to avoid the stigma of being ugly and dirty, especially for women. |

**(Connotative Sign)**

Arab women are forced to feel insecure about having oily, acne-prone faces with black spots synonymous with the disgrace and ugliness of women who must be changed.

In scene 1, it is told that a woman who is the main character in a Garnier Pure advertisement is looking in the mirror with an expression of surprise and sadness when she sees her face full of black spots, pimples, and oily spots suddenly appear, then says "نقاط سوداء، بقعة، دهن".

The meaning of the denotation in this scene is the disappointment of a woman who is looking in the mirror, then sees her face appear with black spots, pimples, and excess oil. Meanwhile, the connotation meaning in this scene is that every woman with facial skin with many problems is considered a disgrace and horror. From this scene, it can be interpreted that women are always frustrated when faced with problematic facial skin.

Many women have treatment because they want to be beautiful and acne free. They feel insecure if there is even the slightest deficiency in themselves, including the appearance of pimples. Feelings of inferiority because facial skin looks unclean or dirty often occur in women.<sup>13</sup>





Problems with facial skin, such as acne, excess oil, and black spots, are synonymous with dirty, ugly, dirty, dark, and sad. Instead, white and smooth skin symbolizes cleanliness, beauty, purity, kindness, and a higher degree, especially in front of men. The appearance of acne on the face is natural, but women must still try to overcome it as soon as possible. This showed that each individual has a different perception of everything he experiences. Relevanced with Shaleh,<sup>14</sup> perception is a

<sup>13</sup> Eka Wahyuni, Hubungan Persepsi tentang Jerawat dengan Kepercayaan Diri Remaja Akhir (Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2007), p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Abdurrahman Shaleh, Pengantar Psikologi Umum (Jakarta: Kencana, 2004), p. 89

person's ability to discriminate, classify and focus on things around him.

## Selected Scene Analysis 2


| (Signifier)   | (Signified)   |
|---|---|
|  <p>Figure 1</p>  <p>Figure 2</p>  <p>Figure 3</p>  <p>Figure 4</p> | <p>Garnier Pure Active products are various cosmetics that come with three components.</p> <p>Picture 2 showed a woman washing her face with Garnier Pure Active, which cleans her face.</p> <p>Then in picture 3, you can see a woman massaging her face with Garnier Pure Active, brightening facial skin.</p> <p>Then in picture 4, you can see a woman using Garnier Pure Active products with a happy expression because it functions to disguise black spots on her face.</p> |
| (Denotative Sign)   |   |
| Garnier Pure Active product with 3 in 1 power can clean the face, brighten facial skin, and disguise black spots on the front.  |   |
| (Connotative Signifier)   | (Connotative Signified)   |
| Cleanliness and health of facial skin is the perfection of beauty for a woman.  | Problems with women's facial skin can be overcome simply by using Garnier Pure Active products.   |

## (Connotative Sign)

A healthy and clean lifestyle is the main factor in maintaining healthy facial skin. The colonized Arab population believes using Garnier Pure Active products is the most effective solution to facial problems.

The denotation in this scene means that Garnier Pure Active products are here to clean and brighten facial skin and disguise black spots. While the meaning of the connotation in this scene, facial skin health is perfect beauty for women.

### Selected Scene Analysis 3

| <i>(Signifier)</i>  | <i>(Signified)</i>  |
|---|---|
|  <p>Figure 1</p> | A woman with fair skin, long and blonde hair smiling in bright light. |

### *(Denotative Sign)*

A female model looks so happy because she has bright and clean skin like before.

| <i>(Connotative Signifier)</i>  | <i>Connotative Signified)</i>   |
|---|---|
| The highlight of the happy expression and bright and clean facial skin. | Because the facial skin changed as it was ready to lose, the model's happy expression became a shining and clean facial skin. |

### *(Connotative Sign)*

The most pleasant happiness of a woman is when she has clean and shining facial skin.


In scene 3, it tells of the woman smiling with a happy expression, then saying, "Now the skin is pure and clean, and the end of the face is free of defects," which means, "Now the skin is bright, clean, and the face is free from damage." The meaning of the denotation in this scene is a woman's happiness because she has clean and bright facial skin like before; a smiling expression shows it. The connotative meaning of the scene is that all women will always be happy if they have clean, bright, and healthy facial skin.

In this modern era, most people see whether someone is beautiful from the visual side (outer beauty) only, such as on the face, face, shape, and skin color. Even a gorgeous person can be seen in what is not visible on the outside, or it is called inner beauty, such as smiling, trying to appear full of charm, having a great sense of humor, pleasing others, and not quickly making other people in a destructive mood/ bored.<sup>15</sup>

### Analysis 4

<sup>15</sup> Syata, Novitalista, Makna Cantik di Kalangan Mahasiswa dalam Perspektif Fenomenologi (Makassar: UNHAS, 2012), p. 60.



| Marker ( <i>Signifier</i> )   | Sign ( <i>Signified</i> )  |
|---|--|
|  <p>Figure 1</p> | A Garnier Pure Active 3 in 1 product with a bright blue background like the product theme. |

**(Denotative Sign)**

Garnier Pure Active products are cosmetic products with the most worldwide sales.

| ( <i>Connotative Signifier</i> )  | ( <i>Connotative Signified</i> )   |
|---|--|
| The highlight of Garnier Pure Active is the cosmetic product with the most sales worldwide. | A product that succeeded in inviting the Arab community to try Garnier Pure Active products in droves with the most significant sales worldwide because of its economical price. |

**(Connotative Sign)**

A woman's belief in using safe cosmetic products is based on whether or not enthusiasts for the product.

In this scene 4 tells that Garnier Pure Active products are here to clean facial skin, then they say “أكثر مبيعا في العالم” which means “the most sales in the world.” The meaning of the denotation in this scene is that Garnier Pure Active products are cosmetic products for cleaning facial skin with the most sales in the world. The connotative meaning of this scene is that women will use cosmetic products by looking at enthusiasts for these products.

### Conclusion

In scene choice 1, the denotation is the disappointment of a woman looking in the mirror, then seeing her face which is full with black spots, pimples, and excess oil. Meanwhile, the connotation meaning in this scene is that every woman with many problems on their faces is considered a disgrace. In the scene of choice 2, the meaning of the denotation is that Garnier Pure Active products are here to clean and brighten facial skin and disguise black spots. During the purpose of the connotation in this scene, facial skin health is perfect beauty for women. In the scene of choice 3, the meaning of the denotation is a woman's happiness because she has clean and bright facial skin like before; a smiling expression shows this. The connotative meaning of this scene is that all women will always be happy if they have clean, bright, and healthy facial skin. In selected scene 4, the meaning of the denotation of this scene is that Garnier Pure Active products are cosmetic products for cleaning facial skin with the most sales worldwide. The connotative meaning of this scene is that women will use cosmetic products by looking at whether or not there are many

enthusiasts for these products.

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