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Semiotic Analysis

What is semiotics and why is it important? As stated by Sean Hill 'Semiotics is defined as a theory of signs' (2007, Pg. 1) which is derived by the Greek word Semeiotikos, meaning an interpreter of signs. Signs are found throughout every aspect of life in particular communication, they consist of the signifier and signified which is a concept developed by Rowland Barthes (1977) who found that the signified could be divided into connotations and denotations. Denotation means the literal meaning of a symbol, sign, or code, whilst connotations mean the symbolic and deeper meaning created by the sign or imagery. Alongside Rowland Barthes concept, Judith Williamson also explains in her book Decoding advertisements (1978), that the signifier is 'the material object' (pg.25) and the signified is 'its meaning' (pg.25). This is important as it helps society to fully understand, develop and create a meaning for signs that immerse us day to day and that underlies every method of communication, in particular advertisement and visual communication. Judith Williamson also states, 'Advertisements are one of the most important cultural factors moulding and reflecting our life today' (1978, pg.18). As a population we create cultural signs that rely on how we are as a society, this heavily influences what imagery is used within advertisements to create an emotional bond with the product and to help us identify with it.



Fig. 1, Daisy Love, Mark Jacobs advertisement

Marc Jacobs is a renowned designer brand known for its perfume and fashion. In April 2018, the luxury brand launched its famous perfume 'Daisy Love' which is constantly being redesigned, redeveloped, and advertised.

Marc Jacobs Daisy love advert consists of both natural and cultural signs. Using the beach for the adverts background is purposeful as it conveys a feeling of relaxation and happiness since the beach has connotations with holidays, warmth, and summer, therefore making the advert and perfume subconsciously more appealing. Although this is a natural sign it is culturally placed and used in the advert for the brands benefit, linking to Jean-Jacque's belief that 'even nature as an image of existence with or without culture is a conception that could only have been produced by culture' (2001, pg.64). The advert shows an abnormally large perfume bottle held by young models; suggesting their youth since everything appears larger when you are young. This also conveys societies high beauty standard of youth is more beautiful especially within women, therefore creating the underlying myth that when you wear 'daisy love' you will feel more attractive and desirable.

Within the advert the brand has used three models with different complexions to suggest that the perfume can be worn by everywoman no matter their ethnicity, although the connotation is clear it is not very successful as the models are predominantly white with one black model. Each model is clothed in garments containing shades of white and neutral tones which communicates a sense of purity, whilst the golden hues seen throughout the advert and the pink perfume bottle conveys romance which is idealised within female culture.

Bibliography:

Judith Williamson. (1978) Decoding Advertisements

Peter Pericles Trifonas. (2001) Barthes and the empire of signs

Sean Hill. (2007) This means this. That means that: A users guide to semiotics

List of figures:

Figure 1: Daisy love, Marc Jacobs advertisement, 2018, Accessed:

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