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Depiction of Body in Advertisements of Cosmetic Products

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Neeta Adhikari has completed her thesis entitled “Depiction of Body in Advertisements of Cosmetic Products” under my supervision. She carried her research from August 2022 to May 2023. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Depiction of Body in Advertisements of Cosmetic Products” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur by Neeta Adhikari has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Depiction of Body in Advertisements of Cosmetic Products

Abstract

This paper examines the depiction of the body in advertisements of cosmetic products namely, Nivea's sunscreen and body lotion and Maybelline's lipstick, in the light of Roland Barthes's notion of myth and Jean Baudrillard's notion of simulacra.

Advertisements of cosmetic products and bodies come in a simultaneous manner. A body cannot be dislocated from advertisements because it is through the body advertisement disperses the messages it holds. Therefore, this research paper focuses on two specific questions: how does an advertisement depict the body when they disperse the motive of the company? And what role does a body play while disseminating the motive of the company? Focusing on these two questions, the paper claims that according to the Barthian notion of myth, the body supports hiding the actual motive of the company and portrays it in either way through which it creates a beauty myth. It persuades the consumers in such a way that the products are not produced to fulfill the profit motive of the company but rather are voluntarily produced for consumers. The myth functions to necessitate, naturalize, and essentialize the product, overshadowing the political motif of the company. Moreover, the body plays a role in persuasive mechanisms through which it instigates the consumer to impersonate the body in the advertisement and motivates them to be urgent buyers. Therefore, with the help of the body, the advertisements endorse the beauty culture among consumers through the media creating, in Baudrillardian terms, simulacra making it tough to distinguish between real and fake. Thus, the hyperreal simulation cannot be differentiated from the real itself, creating disillusionment among the consumer from which the producers merely profited.

Keywords: Body, Advertisement, Myth, Simulacra, Cosmetic

The marketization of cosmetic products has become a provoking strategy to appeal to customers' interests profoundly in contemporary capitalist society. These marketing tactics have undoubtedly accelerated the market's volume, constantly engaging customers with the product. In these remarks, the capitalist market has usually commodified bodies to enhance the charm of the advertisement. The beautified bodies, used as an apparatus to mechanize the cosmetic market, endorse beauty myths that merely disseminate pseudo-reality. To be more precise, bodies in the advertisement of cosmetic products are the jackets to overshadow the freckles reality of the product. They are tools that consistently vaporize the will of customers, benefiting the business tycoon.

Nepali customers have been enjoying cosmetic products enormously for around two decades. With the bombastic proliferation of media technology and rapid prosperity in medical science, business owners have been broadcasting beauty myths to intoxicate people with the beauty screen in the advertisement. In this regard, Savannah Greenfield puts, "People are faced with a constant barrage of advertisements every day and the subtle, and not-so-subtle, messages which come with that visual assault" (3). Moreover, the publicity of the products has an intended audience which Greenfield opines, "Women, especially, are targeted by advertisements to receive the brunt of this assault. The messages are fed by years of sexism and sexualization in the media, and work together to shape the actions of female consumers" (3). Indeed, the marketing motives of the company are fascinating in business policy; however, the impact that is penetrating customers' minds is largely undermined.

The messages rendered by the beauty product companies are instigating and appealing to the customers because, as Carolyn Tripp et al. put it: "Millions of dollars

are spent annually on celebrity endorsement contracts on the premise that source effects play an important role in persuasive communications” (535). This hardcore celebration of celebrity endorsement is also a subject of bodies that paves the way for the success of cosmetic entrepreneurship. In other words, they are the fruit bearers of the seed sowed by the capitalist. No doubt, “. . . cosmetic companies are in business to make money” (Dickinson 94); however, they are unexcused in forgetting, “The easiest way, in the long run, the only way, is to satisfy their customers, the consumer” (94). The companies, therefore, must pay attention to the reality they possess rather than creating a pseudo-reality. To be more precise, the sustenance of the company lies in the satisfaction of the customer.

However, these presumptions are violated by the beauty products in Nepal, therefore, making a higher profit, deluding the customers, and advertising their products with utmost grandiosity. In this relevance, *Trading Economics* reports: “Nepal Imports of Essential oils, perfumes, cosmetics, toileteries was US\$118.37 Million during 2021, according to the United Nations COMTRADE database on international trade.” And remarkably, this data is heightening in recent years. In distributing these products, *New Business Age* reports: “. . . there are cosmetic shops set up at every nook and corner of Kathmandu. From departmental stores to local beauty parlors, there is no dearth of cosmetic products for potential customers.” These tendencies have become widely popular and one of the significant necessities across the country to reckon a place as modern in the last few years.

The booming of the cosmetic market, despite the promiseless product of the company, is remarkably augmenting its necessity to its summit. This research paper, therefore, highlights the fundamental issue of the marketization of cosmetics which is seducing customers to extravagantly consume without compromise. The focus of the

paper will be followed by the questions: why bodies are the targeted factors in every cosmetic advertisement? How is the advertisement misconstrued to disillusion consumers? What is the underneath reality of the product? and how myths are filtering the negativity of the consumers in the product. In doing so, the advertisements of three popular cosmetic products, namely, Nivea's Sunscreen and lotion, and Maybelline's Lipsticks will be considered. Moreover, to analyze the questions from a specific location, the paper embodies Roland Barthes' notion of *Myth Today* and Jean Baudrillard's notion of *Precision of Simulacra*.

Roland Barthes, a French post-structuralist literary theorist, is well known for his groundbreaking notion of 'The Death of the Author' and his radical provocation in redefining the myth from a new dimension that other theorists haven't reached so far. The present paper specifically endorses his notion of 'Myth' to highlight the beauty myth prevalent in Nepal. According to Barthes, ". . . myth is a system of communication, that it is a message. This allows one to perceive that myth cannot possibly be an object, a concept, or an idea; it is a mode of signification, a form' (107). Furthermore, he argues, ". . . myth is a peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it: it is a second-order semiological system" (113). In this relevance, cosmetic products are creating myths through advertisement, tantalizing the consumers with the bodies articulated within. These messages are disseminated through the virtual platform. In this connection, this research finds Baudrillard's notion of *Simulacra* an imperative tool to revitalize the myth created by the advertisement and naturalize them.

In his essay, 'The Precision of Simulacra', Jean Baudrillard, a French sociologist, and literary theorist, argues, "Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory,

a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it” (1). The media discourse has manipulated the distinction between real and fake. To be more precise, the copy of the original has become more real than the real itself or in Baudrillardian terms ‘hyperreal.’ Furthermore, as he claims, “It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory - precession of simulacra - that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map” (1). The simulacra created by the print and advertising culture have preceded the original version which is, “[i]n fact, it is no longer really the real, because no imaginary envelops it anymore. It is a hyperreal, produced from a radiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere” (Baudrillard 2). The atmosphere, over time, has changed reality, creating, in a critical sense, pseudo-real as more real. These happenings are implicitly articulated in the discourse of advertisement of cosmetic products. The research, therefore, critically analyzes three different beauty products with their advertising slogan embedded with the body’s significance. Firstly, the paper discusses Nivea’s sunscreen; secondly, Lakeme’s body lotion and lastly, Garnier’s Serum.

Nivea’s sunscreen is one of the most popular cosmetic products that is used for skin protection in Nepal. Cosmetic stores and online platforms are the media through which the product is disseminated to consumers. The appealing advertisement and the discourse it has created through virtual media are the sources that construe the necessity of sunscreen. Moreover, as Gaurav Ojha remarks, “The growing demand for cosmetic products is influenced by different types of advertisements through which consumers are attracted” (60). The influential apparatuses work as a mechanism to persuade the consumer and to evoke a sense of necessity, articulating the driving

factors in the advertisement in the process of marketization. Along with the tantalizing cosmetic marketization, the “Cosmetic industry is also connected with the film and fashion industry as consumers have profound knowledge about celebrity appearance and the trending fashion at a particular given time” (60). To establish sturdy reliability, cosmetic product uses renowned people, fashioning the product with strong emotions.

Moreover, prioritizing the necessity of cosmetic products, the advertisement, fascinates the consumer, and vehemently pleases the eyes of users. This strategy does not merely grabs the attention of the consumer, meanwhile, also succeeds in addressing the location where the consumer’s desire meets the needs. In doing so, to stimulate the desire of the consumers, according to EmmanuellaPlakoyiannaki et al., “Online advertising relies on the use of images to convey messages to the audience and offers opportunities for individuals and groups to provide alternatives to the existing set of dominant ideas about women and men” (101). The product, basically, is not merely the center of the advertisement but rather the associated body that sticks with the message and works as a significant apparatus to mobilize the discrete ideas regarding cosmetics. To be more precise, the body incorporated with the advertisement is equally relevant as the product to encourage consumers and make the users as friendly as the bodies associated. This idea is conspicuous in the advertisements for Nivea’s sunscreen. The following advertisement, for example, illustrates the marketing strategy in which the body is explicitly associated to justify the necessity of Nivea’s product.



Fig. 1. A lady with/out sunscreen.

Source: <https://www.nivea.in/products?main=Body&sort=rating>

The advertisement for Nivea's sunscreen in Fig. 1 is taken from Nivea's official website. The advertisement has been divided into sections. The left section delivers ideas with words and the right section presents the idea with the portrait of a girl. The sectional division can be effortlessly noticed as the picture of Nivea's sunscreen has been depicted at the center. The right section encapsulates a girl with/out sunscreen with different skin colors. The left profile of the girl has been presented as colorful whereas the right profile is colorless. Moreover, the picture consists of a label that says, 'TRY ME' and below it, there is a caption, 'ENJOY SUNNY MOMENTS WORRY FREE', written in multi colors: blue and yellow, in a capitalized form.

The caption presented in the advertisement dispenses the concern of the company towards the human skin much more than a human usually does. The caption: 'ENJOY SUNNY MOMENTS WORRY FREE', can be introduced as a prescription rather than a simple statement. Generally, doctors prescribe our medicine but here the caption shows the company's concern for human skin. Through the caption, it is delivering the message therefore, it is a speech to inform consumers about its

essentiality. As Roland Barthes argues, “Speech of this kind is a message. It is therefore by no means confined to oral speech. It can consist of modes of writing or of representations; not only written discourse, but also photography, cinema, reporting, sport, shows, publicity, all these can serve as a support to mythical speech” (108). These slogans are in Barthes’s terms a ‘Mythical Speech’. To put it more concisely, as Barthes claims, “Mythical speech is made of a material which has already been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication: it is because all the materials of myth (whether pictorial or written) presuppose a signifying consciousness, that one can reason about them while discounting their substance” (108). Barthes’s assertion clarifies that these speeches are in a sense existing assumptions and they are brought in to use to signify the need for a particular thing. In this sense, Nivea’s advertising speeches imprint the social understanding of beauty culture and in that realm, the product is the defender, as it portrays, of beauty lovers. In doing so, the body has been used as a touchstone for the validation of the product that instigates consumers to resonate with the picture and have fairer skin like the left section of the girl portrayed in the advertisement.

Nivea’s sunscreen is at the center, where lies the demarcation between the intriguing slogan of Nivea and the bodies associated with the product. The advertisement highlights the color difference between the use of sunscreen and the unused portion of the skin of the lady. The screenshot, though edited, exemplifies how the tonal quality of skin differs if sunscreen is not used. The advertisement itself provides evidence to consume the product to defend the consumer’s skin from possible skin deterioration. Since Nivea’s sunscreen is for the cosmetic body of human beings, the body is associated with the advertisement to naturalize the necessity. Indeed, cosmetic product is based on global variation, it has become a

material reality through which one identifies in this diversified world. In this relevance, as Nancy Ann Rudd argues, “The use of cosmetics is one appearance management behavior that is pervasive, and . . . ritualistic, in the self-presentation of many women in American and other cultures” (59). In Nancy’s regard, therefore, Nivea’s sunscreen is targeting the cosmetic behavior of the consumers and essentializing the product to assimilate consumers in the realm of appearance management. To be more precise, the associated body in the advertisement is a triggering factor that compels consumers to acknowledge the default of not using sunscreen, provoking them to purchase it and making them fairer and protected from harmful radiation.

However, the question of its reality remains unanswered. In other words, is sunscreen really a medical product that protects the skin from harmful radiation? Indeed, this is a serious question that ultimately destabilizes the credibility of the sunscreen product. Nivea’s sunscreen is a global product that is distributed throughout the world. People feel safe using it and they are intensely reliable towards the defending quality promised by their advertisements. However, according to Janet Winter Blaschke, “In the United States, sunscreen products are considered to be OTC drugs rather than cosmetics, and, thus, are covered by more stringent regulations than cosmetics, including a registration requirement” (418). Moreover, Blaschke, referring to the further premises, contends, “Similar requirements exist in the Canadian and Australian markets” (418). Some countries do not accept sunscreen as a cosmetic product but rather consider it as a drug that demands special attention.

However, the company, without defining it as other than a beauty product, tremendously advertises it as affirming a remedy for skin protection. In this sense, customers are disillusioned by the advertisement, and in contrast, they are tantalized

by the promises made. In this connection, Kim Bartel Sheehan and Joonghwa Lee argue: “Deceptive advertisements can lead consumers to make purchase decisions that are not optimal for them, resulting in both a material loss (where consumers lose money by purchasing a product) and an emotional loss (for example, consumers feel misled, leading to disappointment in a company or in their own poor choices)” (5). Sheehan and Lee are undoubtedly arguing about the impact of deceptive advertisements and they are concerned with the consequences of deluding advertisements. The point is how a constructive framework of marketization unquestionably plays with the emotions and trust of the consumers underneath the delusive advertisement cast by the product company. In this regard, a case in point, Nivea’s sunscreen is also deceiving the consumers and profiting the company from tactical advertisements they project to essentialize the product. The advertisement, associated with the politics of deception, is not merely describing and illustrating the positive side of the product merely, but also instigating audiences with the mesmerizing bodies associated with the advertisement. The company is assuring about the usability of the product on the basis of the advertisement they disseminate rather than the survey in which responses are delineated. To be more precise, the product is advertising what they entertain to dispose not on the basis of the concern which is necessary to be addressed.

The narration of the product constantly strikes, targeting the customers, to rule over their emotions. The motif of the company consistently moves on how their product triumphs in increasing the number of users of their product rather than concerning what number of customers account the product as health-friendly or how the product has become a game-changing instrument in their life. In fact, the product strategically focuses on the component of the advertising mechanism that works best

for their proliferation rather than benefitting the consumers, for instance, highlighting the body and stimulating users to resemble the body with the advertisement. Similar articulation and strategic depiction can be analyzed in figure 2 below.



Fig. 2. Woman in direct sunlight

Source: <https://www.nivea.in/products?main=Body&sort=rating>

The presented advertisement in Fig. 2. is taken from Nivea's official website. It advertises the range of sunscreen that it produces and can be used on the face and body. The blue color is dominant in the entire picture. The color of the sky, the water on the beach, and even the outer cover of Nivea's sunscreen cream are presented in blue color. The lady presented on the left side of the advertisement is in a jubilant mood. She seems to be on the beach. Besides her, there are variant sunscreen products that Nivea produces. Moreover, the sun in the advertisement indicates a sunny day.

The body articulated in the advertisement is bright and shiny. The gesticulation of the lady is a means through which the sunscreen product is evoking consumers to be happy as she is. Moreover, her confidence foreshadows the significance of Nivea's sunscreen because the reason behind her excitement, as the

advertisement depicts, is the result of Nivea's product. In a critical sense, more than the product itself, the body involved with the product is more appealing and plays a crucial role to encourage consumers to buy the product. The advertising paratext "with strong sun protection that's light on skin" adheres robust rhetorical strategy. For instance, in 'STRONG SUN PROTECTION', all the letters in uppercase indicate the focus of the advertisement and the strength of the product.

Similarly, the uppercase also suggests that this is the dominant product that works best to protect the skin of the consumers. Additionally, the narration "from face to the body we have got you covered" evokes a sense of intimacy. To be more precise, the advertisement is directed towards the purchaser, whom the products care about the most. In the paratext, the company is taking the responsibility of the consumer as if it is their job. Therefore, to accumulate the belief, the body is associated with the advertisement to assure what Nivea sunscreen can offer or how Nivea product work. It is because as Barthes claims, "This substance is not unimportant: pictures, to be sure, are more imperative than writing, they impose meaning at one stroke, without analyzing or diluting it. But this is no longer a constitutive difference. Pictures become a kind of writing as soon as they are meaningful: like writing, they call for lexis" (108). Barthes reminds us that a picture is not merely a banal articulation of images but a creative aspect of the creator to evoke a sense of necessity, hiding its politics and making more sense than the text itself. Different they may be in terms of articulation; however, they are similar in terms of rendering the message inculcated by the creator. In this connection, the body and the paratext associated with Nivea's advertisement are both serving the interest of the creator of the advertisement. In this sense, the body is also, as the text does, functioning as a mechanism that facilitates the requirement of the product rather than the consumer's desire. Strictly speaking, the

body, therefore, is a working apparatus, which is more political and less autonomous that is more delusive than informative to the consumers.

The company's target for publicizing such a slogan which says, 'With Strong Sun Protection that *lights* on Skin' indicates their strategic step to overshadow their political motive which actually is embedded in it. Even the use of the body in the advertisement has a connection with their politics as it conceals their ideology and substantiates their argument. It is because as IndhuRajagopal and Jennifer Gales argue, "It is evident that the media will be the catalyst for these women to have body image problems. But do you blame them? Anyone would be self-conscious of his/her image after looking through a magazine filled with attractive women who portray unattainable images" (3333). The projection of the body creates the beauty myth as it emphasizes the prominence of fairness. Through the body used in the advertisements, the company attempts to release the message that only a fair skin tone will lead to a colorful life. In the words of Naomi Wolf, "The beauty myth tells a story: The quality called "beauty" objectively and universally exists" (12). Wolf's proposition is undoubtedly tilted towards gender disparity and the cause of male domination; however, what is to be accepted, I think, is the advertising strategy relentlessly prioritizes the notion of beauty and consolidates the desire to be handsome and beautiful. In this connection, it is less reluctant, I argue, that this myth is deliberately created by the company to make extravagant consumers without any compromise that ultimately creates a surplus for the creator. Whether the product is actually a beauty product or disseminated merely for a particular purpose is a different matter of concern but what effect it has caused is a serious issue that obliges consumers to intercept consciously. The way advertisement is on the screen is not a piece of information merely but also a threat embedded within.

The company's inclination to address the body with such distinction reveals its intention to mark the body as a material fact. Through it, it is trying to dispense that to be other than fair is to accept to be not beautiful and to accept the contradictory societal thoughts which will not let one uplift their life. In the words of T. Lyddon Gardner, "In spite of their baleful attention, the cosmetic industry will continue to thrive, not only because it is supplying products which are today a public need, but because they are aware of their public responsibilities and have, of course, far too much at stake to risk their business by supplying inferior products" (901). Indeed, eye-catching advertisements are one of the purposes of the products; however, they do not fail to provide promising quality which is not merely a public need today but also a major concern through which they can uplift their business. Nevertheless, in these happenstances, it is also clear that the company is clear in its purpose but to what extent they have emphasized the necessity of the consumers. After all, because, they are still focusing their sustenance in the market. In other words, the purpose of the company is still based on how the company remains in the best form rather than how it can provide the best facility. To be precise, it is strengthening the prejudices that are prevalent in market discourses, or it is concerning how to grab the attention of the consumer and constantly substitute the fragile product with their solidarity.

In this relevance, Nivea's advertisement confirms the necessity of the product articulating certain presumptions prevalent in societal discourses. For instance, the assertion of the word 'protection' indicates unless consumers apply the product they will not be beautiful. Moreover, the assurance of the company to light the skin releases the argument that one must not move out of beauty politics. Neglecting to accept it, ushers to accept the horror or the darkness. In a similar instance, the use of

the body in the advertisement is to exemplify the narration that they try to release through the slogan.

The advertisement, in this sense, is creating simulacra. In other words, by depicting the manipulated and beautified bodies through the advertisement, the media sources have sufficiently established new virtual stages where beauties lie in the use of the product rather than the natural facts. As Thomas Heyd argues, “The structure causative of the simulacrum is such that, viewed from certain perspectives, one would not have the appearance of similarity. We might say that simulacrum is a “dishonest” copy, one that hides some of the knowledge about the nature of the original that a faithful copy would transmit” (16). From Heyd’s perspective, the representation of simulacrum is a delusive media, which dissolves certain politics underneath. In other words, the reality created by the media discourses is not honest in terms of reality but rather fake and dishonest projection politically depicted by the media sources. In this sense, since Nivea’s advertisement is also a message diffused from the virtual platform, it is also untrustworthy articulation that overshadows reality and forecloses baseless facts. The way Nivea’s advertisement assures it to be a beauty product is merely underpinning the conventional notion of beauty and its capability to palpably beautify their bodies. Nonetheless, it is ironic that as Wolf contends, ““Beauty” is a currency system like the gold standard. Like any economy, it is determined by politics, “Beauty” is not universal or changeless” (12). The assurance of Nivea’s promises may be valid for a particular time; however, it is not transcendental but rather a fleeting and contingent reality based on discourse formation strengthened by the political economy. In this relevance, even though advertisements are unquestionably distributing a random fact, it is also adhering to the reality of the beauty myth. The bodies associated with the advertisement are, in this sense, an

intense reflection there lies the changing notion. In other words, bodies and beauties are correlated terms; they are temporary in terms of time and corollary based on space. The point is bodies in the advertisement are not static and unitary values that function as a single mechanism to dispense certain truths regarding beauty but rather a changing phenomenon, according to the situation, that mechanizes beauty myth regardless of gender, color, ethnicity, and geography. The bodies in the advertisement are actually an inclusive apparatus that instead of creating biases recants the prejudices of discrimination and projects pretentious which is more emancipatory. The following figure is a lively example that describes black as beauty rather than adjusting the conventional white beauty discourse.



Fig. 3. A woman exposing natural skin tone in Nivea's advertisement

Source: <https://www.nivea.in/products?main=Body&sort=rating>

The above advertisement in Fig. 3 is taken from the official website of Nivea. It disperses the body lotion that it produces for the human skin. The picture consists of three different colors: pink, blue, and white, with the major dominance of the color pink. The description box on the left side of the picture and the attire that the lady sitting on the right side has worn consists of the color pink. The letters in the description box are written in the colors blue and white. There is a cushion behind the

lady in blue color with the stripes on white. Moreover, the smile on the lady's face depicts that she is in a joyous mood.

The caption presented in the picture has a dual role. It disseminates information about the product as well as is trying to persuade the consumers to choose it. Using bold effects merely on the latter two words in the caption, "Reveal your skin's natural radiance", the company is trying to encourage the consumers to get the products as it provides natural radiance to the skin. Moreover, another caption reads, "Natural Fairness is now Perfect & Radiant" and again the bold effect used merely on the words: perfect and radiant. In a similar instance, in the caption "NEW NAME SAME RADIANCE" the word 'radiance' is made bold. The primary focus on the word 'radiance' reveals the company's strategic method to drag the attention of the consumers. The lady in the advertisement is used for an assurance that the one who uses the product will certainly receive the desired result.

The product might be convincing for those consumers who take advertisements for granted; however, if the information is scrutinized the naked politics of the product is conspicuous. In a critical sense, how can an artificial product reveal the natural radiance? Is it provoking consumers to believe that their skin is not natural? Or can natural skin be more natural with the help of artificial products? Indeed, these questions are, I think, problematic not because they are irrelevant but because they are politically charged. Problematic here I mean they create barriers to the advertising slogans. Products may enhance the quality of the skin but they are not capable, I believe, to reveal the natural skin. The body associated with the advertisement, for instance, is itself natural and so is the case with the consumer; they cannot be unmasked with the help of beauty products. The point is to reveal means to expose and to be exposed means to remove the concealing forces. In this

happenstance, if a natural thing is covered by a natural element it is again natural, therefore, the interference of artificial products cannot make it more natural or reveal its naturalness. However, concealing these facts the advertisement is using the body as an apparatus to subdue the voice of opposition and it is presenting the body with natural qualities.

The woman in the advertisement is qualified as a black body; however, the advertisement is not concerned with color prejudice. My emphasis is despite the fact that white color is considered a beautiful color in beauty discourse, the advertisement is undermining the stereotype and presents the black body as a gorgeous natural skin. The politics behind the body is to denaturalize the conventional thoughts and make the product inclusive. Moreover, the simulacra represented through the media is unconventional and beyond the structural limits of human history. As Baudrillard asserts:

Hyperreality and simulation are deterrents of every principle and every objective, they turn against power the deterrent that it used so well for such a long time. Because in the end, throughout its history it was capital that first fed on the deconstruction of every referential, of every human objective, that shattered every ideal distinction between true and false, good and evil, in order to establish a radical law of equivalence and exchange, the iron law of its power. (23)

Indeed, Baudrillard's hyperreality is against capital and he is trying to demolish the capitalistic notion; however, significantly, the simulation, blurring the distinction between the real and fake, is also creating a delusive truth which baffles the audience to distinguish between the original and duplicate. And in this relevance, the cosmetic product is using the advantage of this delusive state. In this relevance, the body in the

advertisement is used as a triggering factor or as a stimulus to evoke a sense of consumption in all sorts of consumers. In other words, the body is itself a definition that illustrates all human beings are naturally black but they can protect their skin from being darker. However, in this regard, as Gerald J. Gorn claims, “The consumer may not always be aware that the unconditioned stimuli in a commercial may affect his/ her product attitudes. Even more generally, the consumer may not be aware of the real forces impacting on both attitudes and behavior” (95). The outer fabric of the advertisement is more persuasive but the mechanism is helping the company to elasticize the horizon of consumers’ boundary. In this regard, politically the product uses information, limiting their presumption to center the focus on the product itself rather than the information. As Gorn further argues, “In testing for classical conditioning, product information in the commercial must be kept minimal, otherwise, the unconditioned stimuli in the commercial might merely be arousing interest in product information” (95). The strategic assertion of the product is more concerned about how the product widely impacts the intentions of the consumers rather than how consumers know about the product succinctly. Therefore, the body associated is a concealing factor to neutralize the debate and a provoking element to celebrate the product utmost. Moreover, the body used as a persuasive tool is not governed by power but rather by political motifs. Since consumers are never intoxicated by coercive forces they are channelized through technical empowerment. In the words of Baudrillard:

The simulation of an offense, if it is established as such, will either be punished less severely (because it has no "consequences") or punished as an offense against the judicial system . . . but never as simulation since it is precisely as such that no equivalence with the real is possible, and hence no

repression either. The challenge of simulation is never admitted by power.

(22)

The simulation, in either case, is punished if it is offensive. In other words, simulation is not expected to be harshly predominant in neglecting others but rather needs to be specifically tilted towards a positive instinct. In this relevance, the advertisement, therefore, uses bodies to justify the positive aspects of the product that is more a definitive factor to appeal to consumers.

Similarly, the advertisement of the products is more conscious of the mode and the saturation of the bodies that emotionally creates a bond between the products and the consumers. The combination of the paratext and the bodies associated works with a consistent bond, embodying relational institutes with the products. The bodies are deliberately introduced in the advertisement to highlight the appropriate distinction that the product could make. This strategy is technically adopted by the cosmetic product, Maybelline lipstick, in the following advertisement.



Fig. 4. A woman in red Maybelline lipstick

Source: <https://www.maybelline.com/>

The advertisement in Fig. 4, taken from the official page of Maybelline, presents lipsticks of the Maybelline brand. It advertises majorly of the shade red along with various other shades that it produces. The advertisement can be best comprehended by dividing it into two sections. The left section displays the shade red through the model with a fair skin tone in a cheerful mood. The right section with the background picture of New York City presents other additional shades that the company produces. Moreover, the red color is dominant in the advertisement even though the captions are written in color white with caps lock on/off.

The background of the city in the advertisement might have been placed to attract the attention of consumers from all areas to pass the impression that using the product will transform them and help them to look alike the model in the advertisement. Moreover, through the caption that reads, “CELEBRATE YOUR SHADE THIS LIPSTICK DAY!”, the company is trying to evoke a sense of celebration in the consumers. Other speeches that the Maybelline disperses, “SUPER STAY MATTE INK No-transfer matte color” and SUPER STAY VINYL INK No-budge vinyl color” are inserted there to aware the consumers about the benefits they will feel after use of it. The emphasis on the word, ‘SUPERSTAY’ reveals the scheme of the company to attract consumers. Generally, the lipsticks fade away after the consumption of food but the matte ink is supposed to make the lipstick stay on the lips for a longer period of time and with the use of the prefix, ‘super’ the company claims to be the best for the consumers. To make their claim robust, the company has written another caption that reads, “Saturated lip color with up to 16-hour wear”. The allocation of time here makes the claim more reliable and also has the power to make a positive impression on the consumers. In this connection, the product uses the body as a working factor to exemplify how the

product lasts. In other words, everybody is aware of the ephemeral quality of lipstick but despite its temporality to present the woman with sharp and attractive saturation of lipstick, is to show how they look even after the passage of time. In this fact, the product is deforming the reality of human comprehension. Actually, the advertisement is destabilizing the temporal notion of lipstick because as Barthes argues, “The relation which unites the concept of the myth to its meaning is essentially a relation of deformation” (121). The product presenting body is trying to fracture the transient nature of cosmetic beauty and striving to strengthen how sixteen hours, the duration of Maybelline lipstick, is not less to show the consumer attractiveness.

In this sense, the body, semiologically, apparent is the first-order semiological system but deep down in the second-order semiological system, it is working as a stimulus to evaporate the temporal blackness in the consumer. The combination of the paratext and the bodies works as a single unit to convey and exemplify the delusive message simultaneously. When this sort of message is disseminated through the media platform a huge mass of people are intoxicated and they are undoubtedly affected by the bodies and the hidden politics that they hold. The attractive bodies channel the inferior complex regarding their beauty and procreate a sense of urgency to buy it. In other words, the body does not merely show how the product is but also functions as a significant tool to create a cultural component where the practitioner is fascinated to be young and charming. In this regard, as Kathryn Bayer argues, “Changes in economic and employment patterns, the rise of image-based mediation (T.V., film, ads), and the growing significance of consumer identities—each contributes to a cultural desire for youth and to negative feelings toward old age. These cultural conditions magnify ageist sentiments rather than reduce them” (17). The bodies presented in the media or advertisement are actually a simulacrum but the

conditional stages of the product are strong enough to prove itself as the original. In other words, the media presentation becomes the reality and the consumers are so obsessed to acquire it. Describing the real effect of consumer behavior Philip Nelson assesses in the following ways:

Consumers are continually making choices among products, the consequences of which they are but dimly aware. Not only do consumers lack full information about the prices of goods, but their information is probably even poorer about the quality variation of products simply because the latter information is more difficult to obtain. (311)

Nelson's assessment clarifies that consumers are poor in terms of understanding the product and they are unaware of the quality. However, they are fond of using the product and they are eager to show what they are with cosmetic beautification rather than what the product does. In other words, Nelson's definition suggests that the consumers are so rooted in the product that they are more concerned with the looks, imagining the bodies associated, rather than the product itself. As he further argues, "Consumers can prefer information by way of experience rather than by way of search even when experience is expensive" (312). However, in contrast, for most products, as Demetrios Vakratsas and Tim Ambler contend, ". . . especially the frequently purchased packaged goods in which much research is interested, the consumer's mind is not a blank sheet awaiting advertising but rather already contains conscious and unconscious memories of product purchasing and usage" (27). In both cases, the advertisement plays a significant role in determining the consumer's decision. To be more specific, whether the product is expensive or it is of frequent use consumers rely on advertisements and the experience they go through to make any purchase. In these events, the bodies associated with the advertisement are the

primary tool that unquestionably functions as a triggering factor either to appeal to the consumer for their first experience or to prove the consumer to look like the bodies in the product advertisement. These advertisements disseminated through the media platform delude the consumers and relentlessly urge them to buy the product creating an illusion. As Baudrillard argues, “The impossibility of rediscovering an absolute level of the real is of the same order as the impossibility of staging illusion. Illusion is no longer possible, because the real is no longer possible. It is the whole political problem of parody, of hypersimulation or offensive simulation, that is posed here” (21), the real body is impossible to articulate nor is totally a copy; what comes in the forefront is the simulation, which functions as a compromising tool. In a similar instance, the following figure will make clear how the quality of the body delivers a certain emotional message to persuade the consumer to buy the product.

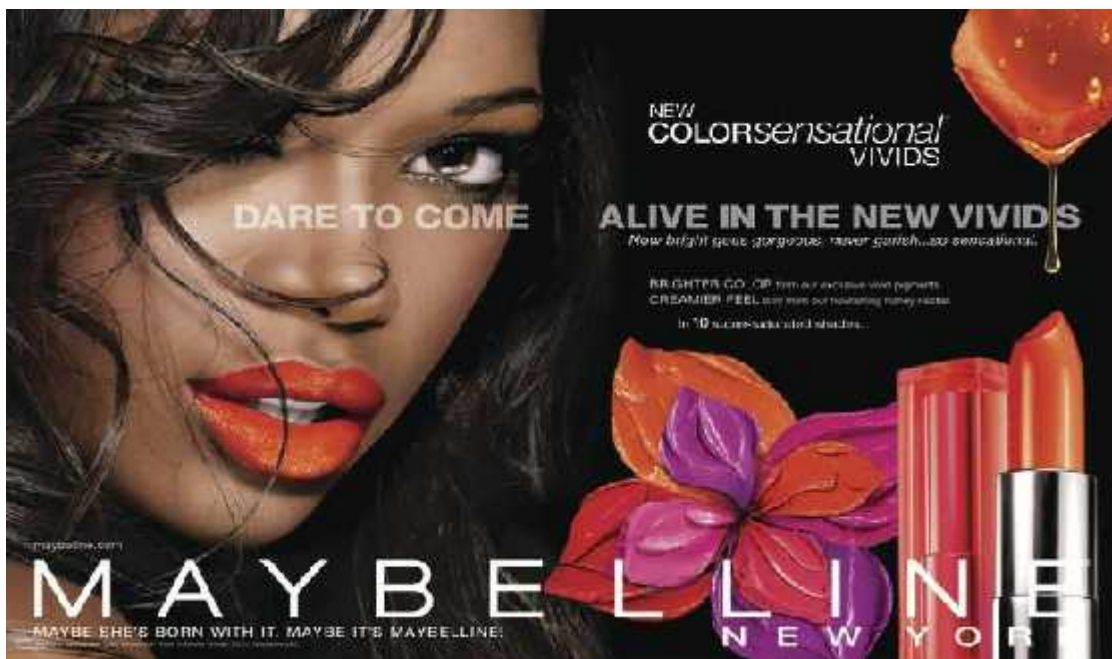


Fig. 5. A confident Woman in Maybelline Lipstick

Source: <https://www.maybelline.com/>

The presented advertisement in Fig. 5 is taken from the official page of Maybelline. It is an advertisement for lipstick/s that the brand produces. The picture consists of

multiple colors: orange, shades of pink, shades of red, lavender, and white. Through the portrait of the lady in the top left corner, one of the shades that the company has launched is displayed. The substance projected in the top right corner depicts the dropping down of the honey from the nectar into the lipstick that has been placed at the bottom of the right side of the picture. In addition, the captions are written with capslock on/off in white to provide information about the lipstick.

The captions articulate the portrait of the lady presented in the advertisement. The caption, “Dare to Come Alive in the New Vivids, ” written with caps lock on calls, encourages people to live their lives with utmost confidence, and the portrait presented depicts a similar expression. The eyes of the lady are in subtle way and as per the company, a person obtains certain confidence only when they put on the lipstick of the particular brand. Whether the product is capable of developing confidence or it is merely a promise that advertisements usually adhere to persuade the consumers is a matter of question. Indeed, the product itself is incapable of connecting consumers directly, therefore, it uses several strategies to render its message and deliver its product to the consumer. In this connection, as Gary S. Becker and Kevin M. Murphy claim:

Clearly, very few advertisements are sold separately and directly to consumers. Ads may be given away, as those in direct mail and billboard advertisements, or they may be sold jointly with programs, newspaper articles, comics, sports pages, etc. The special properties of advertising markets are responsible for important differences between the positive and normative analysis of advertisements and that of many other complements. (942)

Becker and Murphy clarify the policy of the advertisements. The advertisements are information banks that provoke consumers to purchase the product without

compromise. However, “Advertisements are not written to help people make a reasoned choice of commodities, they are written with the object of inducing them to buy particular things, and they naturally exaggerate the uses and merits not only of the commodity but of a particular make of the commodity” (20). In this sense, advertisements are deluded to the consumers and the promises made in the advertisements are merely a strategy to connect the product with the consumers, ultimately benefiting the company. Therefore, the body itself becomes an aesthetic apparatus that helps a company to achieve its targeted goal.

The body articulated in figure 5 is facilitating the company to visualize the message encoded in linguistic parameters. Moreover, in the other caption, “New Colors *sensational* Vivids” the word ‘sensational’ is italicized, and the specific italicization reveals the company’s intention to assure consumers to look magnificent after its use. The brighter color has usually interpreted as loud and quite violent therefore people tend to avoid brighter tones however, to substantiate the proposition, the company has presented another caption that reads, “*Now brighter goes gorgeous, never garish...so sensational.*” Through this, it is trying to guarantee the consumers that brighter colors will not let them look tasteless but rather gorgeous. Besides this, by displaying the use of honey nectar, the company is playing a strategic card game to make consumers believe that the lipsticks are made out of natural products and will not harm their beauty but rather adds charm. To elaborate on this, they write the caption that reads, “Creamier feel only from our nourishing honey nectar”. In these backdrops, the body is not merely defining what the linguistic codes are referring to; meanwhile, exemplifying how it really feels like if the product is used. In this relevance, the body is making an emotional body with the consumer psychologically

which is not apparent but becomes ostensible when the consumer empties their purse.

In the words of Dorothea Braithwaite:

. . . the vast majority of advertisements do not confine themselves to pointing out the uses of commodities; they make their appeal not to the reason, but to the emotions, of the consumer. Suggestion, reiteration, and attractive illustration- these are all devices to induce him to buy the article without making comparisons and calculations. They certainly do not assist his judgment as to the relative satisfactions to be obtained from different commodities or as to the relative satisfactions to be obtained from commodities and leisure. (20)

Braithwaite elucidates the politics of the advertisements and lists the persuasive tools through which they normalize the retention of consumers. In other words, with the use of persuasive apparatus, advertisements succeed in answering the question of consumers and consequently triumph in regaining their motives. As he further contends, “To dissimulate is to pretend not to have what one has. To simulate is to feign to have what one doesn't have. One implies a presence, the other an absence. But it is more complicated than that because simulating is not pretending” (3), the company trying to address the quality of the product is to show what they do not have. To be more precise, advertising the product through the media platform is to create simulacra and the process of simulation is to depict what they are not or what their product cannot do. Moreover, “This is certainly why order always opts for the real. When in doubt, it always prefers this hypothesis” (22). However, “. . . this becomes more and more difficult, because if it is practically impossible to isolate the process of simulation, through the force of inertia of the real that surrounds us, the opposite is also true . . . namely, it is now impossible to isolate the process of the real,

or to prove the real” (22). Since the product cannot guarantee their promises, they are incapable to discern the real determining factors nor in the virtual platform, it is possible to prove. Therefore, the simulation and the statement acclaimed ultimately become pseudo-real, which obviously less harms the company but baffles the consumer ultimately.

To sum up, bodies in an advertisement function as an apparatus to disseminate the motive and the meaning of the paratext mentioned in it. Imposing an inclusive remark, the body conveys the visual message to consumers. To be precise, it excludes the prejudices in terms of color, gender, and race, that are prevalent in society rather there is a connection between the ideas and the body it shares. The attractive body corresponds with the contextual framework that an advertisement tries to disperse. In a similar instance, expressions, emotions, and energy of the body are mentioned depending on the situation that an advertisement disperses.

Moreover, the body is a medium through which consumers create an outlook of the product after its application onto them. Doing so, simultaneously creates a beauty myth among consumers that pushes them to take the product as a necessity. In an advertisement, the body is a factor that triggers the consumer culture. It also develops psychology in them that disrupts their age factor. Body impersonates the message that an advertisement hold. As the advertisement cannot disseminate the message solely, it takes the support of the media and through it dispenses their motives. Media plays the role of simulacra as it establishes disillusionment among consumers because of which the product is always profitable and the myth related to the products keeps consumers in hyperreality. Therefore, in the research paper, how a body in an advertisement instigates delusion which remains a truth in the mindset of consumers is presented through the advertisements of Nivea and Maybelline.

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