

Women's Representation in Cosmopolitan Magazine

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ABSTRACT

This research is aimed at looking at the portrayal of women in the media, especially in Cosmopolitan magazines. Cosmopolitan magazine advertisements use sex appeal in packaging their messages. Sex appeal is built through female sexuality and sensuality. This is reflected in the verbal and visual aspects of advertising. Verbal aspects can be seen from the text in the headline, body copy, and closing. Visual aspects can be observed vectorially, modality, and composition. The analysis was carried out using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach at the level of denotation and connotation. In collecting data, the research tries to see examples of advertisements in cosmopolitan magazines which are categorized into sensual, romantic, and erotic sections. In collecting data, this study used qualitative methods. This research type is a library (library study) using a semiotic approach. The research data were collected from relevant literature, journals, and previous studies.

Keywords: *Representations, women and the media*

INTRODUCTION

Women in a patriarchal culture are placed subordinate to men. Social relations between women and men are unequal. Men work in the public sphere, women are domestic. Men who earn money, women who receive and use it intelligently. Domestication of women places women in a weak, powerless position so they are often forgotten in decision-making. This domestication assumes that women must be able to cook, take care of children, serve their husbands and establish relationships with the outside world for the benefit of their husbands.

So far, the faces of women in our media have only strengthened the patriarchal position of this relationship. Soap operas that are shown on television often depict the role of women as weak, who must be helped, whose work is struggling in the kitchen, bed and wells. Even in some shows, such as sitcoms featuring parts of a woman's body as a commodity to be sold. The media, in its presentation, always positions women as objects of spectacle, and men, as subjects who actively consume these objects. The female body is

represented in terms of sexuality and sensuality. This relates to an ideology that places women as objects that are worth selling. Ideology according to Rosalind Coward & John Ellis in (Piliang, 2004) is a way in which "subjects" are produced, represented (capable of representing) themselves through language and confirmation of representation.

Patriarchal ideology greatly marginalizes women, especially in media discourse, women's bodies are exploited for commercial interests. Women are passive objects that become a spectacle. The female body is reproduced again through signs of sensuality. The continuous production of sensuality will create delusional satisfaction when people see the image of the body, not the reality of the body (Piliang, 2004: 110). These signs of sensuality are developed for male fantasies and obsessions. In the ideology of the female body, women are only carriers of meaning filled with signs. She is a passive object because it is men who make the signs and give them meaning.

Advertising is a form of marketing that mostly uses signs or symbols of sexuality and sensuality to sell its products. Apart from advertising, the sexuality of women's bodies has become a commodity for the mass media itself. This can be seen from the appearance of various tabloids and magazines which are known as "yellow newspapers". Call it Lipstick, Hot, X-Hot, Posmo, Liberty and the like. It is called a yellow newspaper because of the general assumption among the public that the contents conveyed by the media expose a lot of things that are taboo by the norms and values that exist in society which should not be displayed for fear that it will disturb or degrade people's morals.

Cosmopolitan Magazine is one of the global media industries that entered Indonesia in September 1997. As with the products of transnational companies that enter the local sphere, Cosmopolitan magazine agents also make adjustments so that their magazines are accepted by local consumers and sell well. This adjustment is not only through economic factors, for example by price adjustments, but also adaptation of cultural factors. Furthermore, the Cosmopolitan magazine circulating in Indonesia is under the auspices of the United States Cosmopolitan magazine license. This magazine carries cultural content such as sexuality, lifestyle, fashion, cosmetics, and others wrapped in the local language.

Beauty advertisements in cosmopolitan magazines were chosen because these advertisements display a woman's body which contains many signs that carry a certain meaning and image to be conveyed to the public. Women become objects of gaze (female gaze) whose bodies are exploited for consumption (men). The reason for the importance of this research is to see the representation of women's values in beauty advertisements and to reconstruct the feminist movement. Based on the problems above, the writer is interested in studying the representation of women in beauty advertisements, especially in cosmopolitan magazines.

METHOD

This type of research is qualitative research using semiotic analysis methods. This research uses a semiotic analysis method approach to analyze and provide meanings to symbols contained in a package of message or text symbols (Pawito, 2008: 155). This is used to understand the meaning contained in the representation of women depicted by the media, especially in cosmopolitan magazines. Qualitative approaches are usually used to be able to find out the hidden meaning of a social phenomenon, to understand social interactions, to develop theories and also to ensure the validity of data. According to Sugiono (2016: 9) qualitative descriptive method is a research method used to examine the condition of objects, researchers act as key instruments, data collection techniques are carried out in combination, data analysis is deductive in nature, and research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Representation of Women in Cosmopolitan Magazine

The Cosmopolitan magazine which circulates in Indonesia is under the auspices of the United States Cosmopolitan magazine license. This magazine carries cultural content such as sexuality, lifestyle, fashion, cosmetics, and others wrapped in the local language. This magazine is one of the global media industries that entered Indonesia in September 1997. As with the products of transnational companies that entered the local sphere, Cosmopolitan magazine agents also made adjustments so that their magazine would be accepted by local consumers and sell well. This adjustment is not only through economic factors, for example by price adjustments, but also adaptation of cultural factors. Cosmopolitan Magazine must negotiate with local culture because the interaction of cultural and economic factors in globalization occurs at the point where the global economy lives in the context of the culture and way of life of the local community it enters, where economic factors are the driving factor for global transformation (Robin, 1997: 23).

The breaking of the global-local space boundary which is part of the global-local nexus (Robin, 1997: 28), namely a new and complex relationship between global and local space, is not sufficient for the capitalist agents of Cosmopolitan magazine to attract local consumers. In this way, the marketing and sales efforts of the magazine will achieve the target, namely obtaining the maximum possible profit. Apart from harmonizing with the local culture, Cosmopolitan magazine tries to keep up with trends that are developing in the world of women, such as the emancipation movement. Cosmopolitan seems to support the ongoing trend because previously women were seen as weak, marginalized and subordinated (this view is an old construction built by the patriarchal system). Thus it can be seen that Cosmopolitan magazine really supports the emancipation movement that supports the new construction of women made by Cosmopolitan magazine which seems to tear down the old construction of women's identity.

Advertising is the process of conveying persuasive messages from communicators to communicants through the media. As a form of communication, advertising must be able to provide the necessary information. Advertisements displayed in print and online media should be able to provide sufficient space to provide the information that should be provided. Through one of the cosmopolitan magazine advertisements, an idol is popular with many people, especially the younger generation, both domestically and internationally, namely Agnez Mo. Agnez Mo is represented as the image of a modern woman who is accomplished, talented, has an ideal body, and is liberal. She has been in the music industry for 30 years, and is described as a representation of women who are able to break down patriarchal boundaries that restrict women only to the domestic sector. The picture can be seen in the image below:

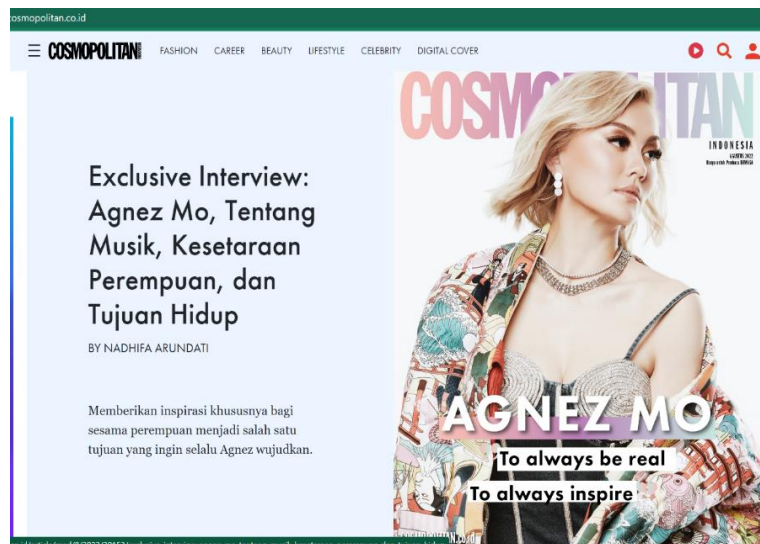


Figure 1: Cosmopolitan Magazine Exclusive Interview with Agnez Mo

Through the interview with Agnez Mo, regarding music, women's equality and life goals, it shows that there are women today where women are not inferior to men and are able to do various kinds of work or activities, both of which are usually identified with the work of women and men. According to Agnez Mo, music is a vessel that gives freedom to express thoughts and things that are very therapeutic. Music also teaches about how to be honest with one's own feelings, understand and learn from mistakes, and can even find one's identity through music.

Apart from talking about music, Agnez Mo also discussed women's equality. According to him, it is very unfortunate that nowadays there are still many who think that women are only placed in the realm of domestic work and reproduction. Social construction makes more and more people think that a woman's level of success is only measured by her marital status, so if she is not married she is not considered successful. Social construction

often assumes the role or division of labor for women, namely being a housewife by taking care of household chores, serving her husband and children, taking care of children, educating children and being obedient to her husband. This is what Agnez Mo will continue to campaign, that women have the right to choose their own path in life and respect the talents and achievements that have been achieved by women.

The representation of women in the cosmopolitan magazine through Agnez Mo above can be analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. Roland Barthes develops semiotics into two kinds of meaning systems, namely denotation and connotation. Denotation is a descriptive and literal level of meaning understood by almost all members of a culture. So at the denotation level it contains an explicit, direct and definite meaning. At the second level, namely connotation, meaning will be created by connecting markers with broader cultural aspects, such as certain beliefs, attitudes, frameworks, and ideologies. So at the connotation level, meanings operate that are not explicit, indirect and uncertain. (Barker, 2005: 93).

The denotation markers in one of the cosmopolitan magazine interviews above describe women as independent and free to choose their own way of life and achievements. The role of women is not only in the domestic and reproductive domains, but women are also able to do work and have careers in the public sphere according to their talents and competencies. So it can be concluded that the denotation markers in the magazine can be understood explicitly and definitely by everyone, namely the existence of a campaign on gender equality.

Meanwhile, at the connotation level, the images displayed in the cosmopolitan magazine contain certain ideologies that may not be in accordance with the noble values of Indonesian society. The interview featured women who were dressed sexy, showing certain body parts that indirectly made women a sexual attraction in packaging messages that were built through female sensuality. Although it is not uncommon for women to think that it is a woman's right and freedom to express one of them by using sexy clothes. Yet behind it all, this is used as a business field for the media to gain as much profit as possible by displaying women's bodies which indeed attract a lot of attention and interest from the magazine's readers. So it can be concluded that this connotation marker contains a meaning that is not explicit, indirect and uncertain.

Furthermore, we can see the representation of women in the cosmopolitan magazine on the cover of the cosmopolitan magazine. Along with using an attractive cover, it can increase the chances of others to glance at it. The cover is an important part for the media, especially for magazines, to introduce and promote the intent and content of the magazine being sold. The cover comes with a page consisting of writing and pictures (Koskow, 2009:31). Readers can communicate with the magazine they see through the cover, so it can be said that the cover itself becomes the gateway before entering the contents of the magazine. In addition, the cover also contains aesthetic and communication

elements which are symbolic spaces, spaces that try to say something through straightforward language as well as a number of figures of speech.

Most of the magazines on the front page generally include the price of the magazine, issue, volume, year of publication, and the name of the magazine itself. Furthermore, on average magazine covers there are many subtitles which are discussed in the magazine as well as the use of illustrations or photos as objects to catch the reader's attention. Making an illustration on a cover can be formed from many techniques, one of which is photography. Furthermore, the general anatomy of magazine covers (Rustan, 2008: 24) is:

- 1) Slogans, which are interesting and easy-to-remember words or short sentences to advertise something, or explain the purpose of an ideology, group or so on.
- 2) Nameplate, namely the name of newspapers, magazines, tabloids. Usually made in large size placed at the top of the front page.
- 3) Tagline, used as a sentence associated with the brand.
- 4) Description of time, which contains the time of publication or how many prints the magazine or newspaper was made.
- 5) Subhead, which is a fairly long article that is usually divided into several segments according to the topic, with the function as the title of the segment.
- 6) Deck, which is a brief overview of the topics discussed in the body text with a function as an introduction before people read the body text.
- 7) Headline, namely an article usually begins with one or several short words called the title. Titles are usually large in size to catch the reader's attention and differentiate them from other layout elements. And besides choosing the size, in the title the selection of the font can also reflect the nature you want to convey.
- 8) Runninghead, namely the title of the chapter or topic being read, the author's name and other information that repeats on every page and its position does not change.

The general anatomy of the cover or cover above can also be seen on the cosmopolitan magazine cover, where in general they use photos of women that can provoke sexual desire from their readers. Apart from that, on the cover of the magazine, sometimes there is the use of words or terms that contain erotic and sensual meanings. The pictures can be seen below:



Figure 2: Cosmopolitan Magazine Cover

On the cover of the cosmopolitan magazine above, we can see that there is a slogan that contains a short sentence in the form of "Good Mood Great Sex" which can attract the interest of the reader which is used to advertise something and for a particular purpose. In this slogan they talk about how a good mood will influence to have great sex. Based on the topics they put forward, it is understandable that this cosmopolitan magazine is specifically for mature readers. They also wrote this in the upper right corner of the magazine which read "only for adult readers".

The next anatomical part that is found on the cover of Cosmopolitan magazine is the nameplate, namely the name of the magazine which usually uses a larger font size which is placed at the top of the cover of the magazine. In the cover image of this magazine you can see that it says COSMOPOLITAN with a fairly large font size, after which it also inserts INDONESIA writing, but with a smaller font size. This will be the difference later with the cosmopolitan magazine from the United States which is the main license for this magazine.

In the subhead section of the cosmopolitan magazine cover, there are articles which are usually divided into several segments according to the topic, we can see that the titles on this topic are "Not All Men on Tinder are Single" which provide information to readers on how to tips and ways to date men through dating apps. Furthermore, there are also two topics that discuss fashion related to how to dress and hairdos for women with the titles "Be Different (Deconstructive Tops Mix and Match) and "Sporty Look (Dynamic Women's Hairstyles).

Furthermore, the deck on the cover of the cosmopolitan magazine contains a brief overview of the topics to be discussed in the body text. As for a brief overview of the topics that will be discussed in this magazine, namely how to be happy and love yourself. They illustrate this through the opinion conveyed by Zendaya which reads "I'am Pretty Happy with Myself". Zendaya is a singer and young actress from the United States. He is not only popular in his home country, but his name is also known to the world, including Indonesia, thanks to his stunning appearance in the films he has played.

Next, the headline section on the cover of the cosmopolitan magazine is an article usually begins with one or several short words called the title. Titles are usually large in size to catch the reader's attention and differentiate them from other layout elements. The headline title on the cover of this magazine is "Love Your Body" which can be noticed that the writing on the cover uses a different font style and size than the titles on other topics. This headline itself basically wants to appeal to and campaign for people, especially women, to accept and love whatever their body shape is, which is also illustrated in the writing below the headline, namely "Look Stylish and Confident with Your Body Shape".

In general, the anatomy found on the cover of the cosmopolitan magazine can also be analyzed using Roland Barthes's semiotic approach to understand the meanings contained in the ideas, values, and visual images displayed. Roland Barthes develops semiotics into two kinds of meaning systems, namely denotation and connotation. Denotation is a descriptive and literal level of meaning understood by almost all members of a culture. The denotation level that can be understood by everyone who reads the magazine is the idea of loving oneself and remaining confident about the shape of the body they have. This idea is even supported by the opinion of a singer and actress who has gone global through her statement that she is still happy with all her strengths and weaknesses. So at the denotation level it contains an explicit, direct and definite meaning that can be understood by the reader, namely an appeal to love oneself.

Furthermore, at the connotation level, meaning will be created by connecting markers with broader cultural aspects, such as certain beliefs, attitudes, frameworks, and ideologies. The level of connotation shown through the visuals of women on the cover of the cosmopolitan magazine are young women who have an ideal body and dress quite sexy. Although in general the ideas contained in the anatomy section of the cover campaign to be able to love yourself and always be confident with your own appearance, the representation of women shown is women who already have certain standards of beauty. Therefore, of course this will also affect the readers, although not directly, they will think that it is appropriate for an actress who campaigns to love her own appearance to be able to do so because she already has a good and ideal body and appearance. Then what about women who are not included in these beauty standards, such as having a disproportionate body and an unattractive appearance. So at the connotation level, meanings operate that are not explicit, indirect and uncertain.

Feminism Perspective on Women's Representation in Cosmopolitan Magazine

Feminism is a women's movement that demands emancipation and equal rights and justice with men. Feminism combines the doctrine of equal rights for women (an organized movement to achieve women's human rights) and an ideology of social transformation that aims to create a world for women beyond simple social equality. Gerda Lerner stated that feminism must distinguish between women's rights and women's emancipation, (Humm, 2002: 158).

Feminism as a theory and social movement has a long history. Josephine Donovan (2000: 11) divides the theory of feminism based on the stages of its development era, namely the first wave theory of feminism which began in the late 18th century to the early 20th century, then the second wave of feminism theory which lasted more or less two decades, starting from the 1960s to the 1980s, and finally the third wave of feminism, which began in the 1990s to the present. Each of these waves has feminist theory that becomes mainstream, as in the first wave which was heavily influenced by liberal feminism theory.

In general, it can be concluded that the feminist schools above have the same premise in seeing women as an oppressed group that is different from men, because they are the subject of both personal and institutional discrimination. Feminists generally also believe that the mechanisms that work in society all result in greater benefits for men than women.

Referring to the representation of women featured in cosmopolitan magazines, in general, there are indeed many displays of sensual female bodies. Feminism considers this to be symbolic violence that occurs against women, where their bodies are objectified as a commodity. Sensuality is an action that is deliberately shown to increase the sexual imagination of anyone who consumes or sees it. According to Surya and Ida (2003:18) this sensuality is usually raised by attaching certain attributes to the woman such as minimal and dreamy clothing, her visual nature is capable of causing erotic arousal for anyone who sees it. Sensuality is used to describe a pleasure or satisfaction that is obtained through the experience of the five senses.

Feminism also echoes that the owner of a woman's body is herself, by recognizing her body, a woman knows how she treats it. Awareness of her body is the basic capital for women to exercise self-control. As owners and determinants, women should fortify themselves from all forms of violence aimed at them, because they must realize that every body they have is beautiful and valuable.

The followers of black feminism also strive for the same thing. They want to break the standards of beauty that have existed decades ago, such as the representation of women who are considered attractive in various media are those who are white. So that so many beauty products have sprung up that offer to be able to have white skin on women.

It is also not uncommon for many women to be desperate to use products that are harmful to health in order to have white skin. Likewise in Cosmopolitan magazine, one of the beauty advertisements that they published in the magazine featured a white woman using a skincare and beauty brand. The pictures can be seen below:

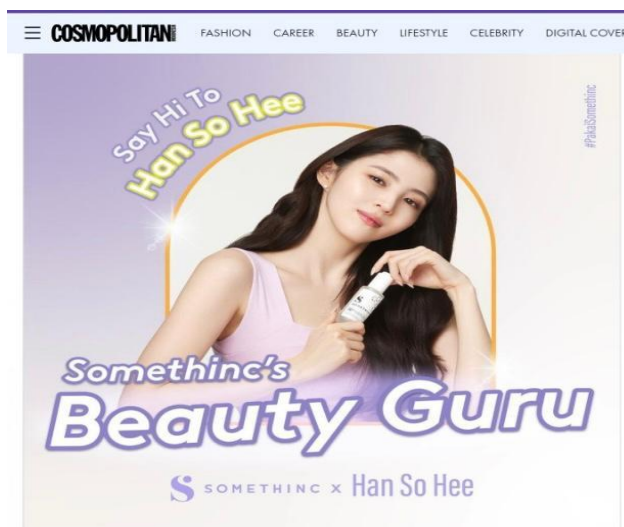


Figure 3: Beauty Ads in Cosmopolitan Magazine

Based on the picture, we can understand that there are ideas and values that cosmopolitan magazine wants to transmit to its readers, especially for women to follow certain beauty standards. Seeing today's developments, Korean beauty has indeed become a reference for women in fashion and the style of makeup they use. Beauty brands quickly seized this opportunity by presenting a South Korean actress as a beauty icon who has a smooth and white face which seems to be described as having a white and smooth face like that because she uses the products they offer.

The representation of women in the cosmopolitan magazine has been criticized by followers of the feminist movement. In general, there are so many beauty advertisements that want to include the idea and values that a beautiful woman must have white skin. It is this understanding that causes racism against black women. The flow of black feminism struggles to eliminate racism and the negative image of black women. Women are expected to be confident and develop their potential regardless of their skin color. Every woman is beautiful in a variety of skin tones.

CONCLUSION

The representation of women in cosmopolitan magazines through interviews with Agnez Mo can be analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, namely the system of denotative and connotative meanings. The denotation markers on the magazine depict

women as independent and free to choose their own way of life and achievements. The role of women is not only in the domestic and reproductive domains, but women are also able to do work in the public sphere according to their talents and competencies. So it can be concluded that the denotation markers in the magazine can be understood explicitly and definitely by everyone, namely the existence of a campaign on gender equality.

Meanwhile, at the connotation level, the images displayed in the cosmopolitan magazine contain certain ideologies that may not be in accordance with the noble values of Indonesian society. The magazine features women dressed in sexy clothes, displaying certain body parts that indirectly make women a sexual attraction in packaging messages that are built through female sensuality. Behind it all, this is used as a business field for the media to gain as much profit as possible by displaying women's bodies which indeed attract a lot of attention and interest from readers.

Feminism considers this to be symbolic violence that occurs to women, where their bodies are objectified as a commodity. Physical beauty and the label given to women by the magazine raises the tendency of women not to love themselves, women are led to follow certain beauty standards. Feminism invites women to realize that they have full rights and authority over their bodies. The followers of black feminism also strive for the same thing. They want to break the standards of beauty that have existed decades ago, such as the representation of women who are considered attractive in various media are those who are white. So many beauty products have sprung up that offer women to have white skin.

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