

Semiotic analysis of an advertisement essay sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



The advertisement on the left is promoting 'Xeryus Rouge' a fragrance for men by Givenchy. This example of advertisement emphasizes the various levels of meaning which are present in a sign, as argued by Barthes 1973. To start looking at the signifiers I will turn to lighting and colours, this advert's softly focused, silver and white photography acts as a signifier which gives a sense of sensuality to the image.

The advertisement uses an image of the product identify it and a human subject which is the key image to give the product a personality, it is important to note that the product is the only thing on the advert which has a burst of colour, based on the mise-on-scene I know that this is for a reason, and the reason is to highlight the product and make it look attractive to the audience.

The position of the couple; their nudity and physical contact are further signifiers of both the theme of the advert and the sexuality of the male subject which leads me to apply Goffman's theory; here the male subject is shown to be dominant as he is the one shown in control of the situation whilst the female model is portrayed in a sexual, reclining position with her head thrown back in a plateau of joy, she has a 'chocolate box' expression; this is a half-smile, lips slightly parted and three quarter face to camera, their smooth perfection lacks uniqueness and/or individuality.

The appearance of both subjects are further signifiers, both are young and in their peak of physical and sexual condition. The signified description of the male subject; who uses his physical strength after gaining confidence by wearing the product to please a woman depict him as the ideal role model

for a heterosexual man. The status of the man has been well established but why is this important?

To answer this question we must look at the target audience and where the advert will be placed, it is most likely it will be on a men's magazine, it is therefore likely that the readers of this advert will aspire to be as confident and powerful just like the male subject is shown to be in the picture. When a sign is present an ideology is too, the ideology behind this advert is one which shows machismo.

There isn't much writing on the picture; this tells us that more is given away by the pictures. However the writing that is there contains the name of the product and the famous brand: Givenchy. This has been done to add value perhaps as it is a well-known designer brand whose products are retailed at high prices. The name of the product itself: Xeryus Rouge, Rouge is red whilst Xeryus is the name of a Greek god, a lover who embodies masculine strength with his conquering and wild scent.

This already tells me what kind of image the creators want to portray about what the person who wears this perfume will 'become'. We can apply another theory to this advert: Mulvey's theory "The male gaze". The advert is very much in the male protagonist's point of view, we can see that the woman is portrayed from a male point of view and has been objectified, to gaze means more than just to look at, it implies a psychological relationship of power in which the gazer is superior to the object of the gaze- Schroeder.

In conclusion this semiotic analysis of a product has revealed that the signifiers have been placed in the advertisement to create an image in the potential buyer's mind, an image which shows them becoming 'better' by purchasing this product, it is a clever advert which may have been the reason behind why the fragrance was so popular and the reason why the customers bought into it.