

Militancy and Male Representation in Advertising; a Semiotic Analysis

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ABSTRACT

In today's consumer society, the promotion and marketing of products is no longer just for necessity. With the development of information and communication technologies, images have surrounded people. In line with these images, invisible messages are imposed on people's subconscious in advertising messages. At this point, the semiotic analysis method makes these hidden messages visible. In this study, two different advertisement designs featuring militancy and male representation have been analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic method, determining which myths are reproduced by these advertisements. It examines how selected Tabasco hot sauce and Zwilling knife advertisements use visual media to convey complex messages that influence societal norms and consumer behavior through the purposive sampling method. It identifies cultural narratives and ideologies within these ads that not only market their products but also influence societal values. In conclusion, the analyzed advertisement designs have been found to reproduce myths of a patriarchal society, heroism, as well as nationalism and racism. The analysis highlights the need for ethical advertising practices that support inclusivity and societal well-being.

Keywords: *Semiotic Analysis, Myth, Militancy, Printed Ad.*

JEL Classification: *M37.*

Reklamlarda Militanlık ve Erkek Temsili; Göstergibilimsel bir Çözümleme

ÖZET

Günümüz tüketim toplumu içinde ürünlerin tanıtımı ve pazarlanması yalnızca ihtiyaç amaçlı olmaktan çıkmıştır. Bilgi ve iletişim teknolojilerinin de gelişmesiyle, imgeler insanın etrafını kuşatmıştır. Bu görseller doğrultusunda reklam iletilerinde kişilerin bilinçaltına görünmeyen mesajlar empoze edilmektedir. Tam da bu noktada göstergibilimsel analiz yöntemi bu gizli mesajları görünür kılmaktadır. Bu çalışmada militanlık ve erkek temsili içeren iki farklı reklam tasarımı Roland Barthes'ın göstergibilimsel yöntemi ile analiz edilmiş, bu reklamların hangi mitleri yeniden ürettikleri belirlenmiştir. Amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi ile seçilen Tabasco acı sos ve Zwilling bıçak reklamlarının görsel medyayı nasıl kullanarak toplumsal normları ve tüketici davranışlarını etkileyen karmaşık mesajlar ilettiği incelenmiştir. Bu reklamların, ürünleri pazarlamanın yanı sıra

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toplumsal deęerleri de etkileyen kltrel anlatılar ve ideolojileri barındırdığı tespit edilmiştir. İncelenen reklam tasarımlarında ataerkil toplum miti ve kahramanlık mitlerinin yanı sıra milliyetçilik ve ırkçılık mitlerinin yeniden üretildięi görlmştr. Yapılan analizde, reklam tasarımlarında etik standartlara uyulması ve toplumsal refahı destekleyecek şekilde kapsayıcılıęın teşvik edilmesi gerektięi vurgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göstergebilimsel Analiz, Mit, Militanlık, Basılı Reklam.
JEL Sınıflandırması: M37.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's capitalist system, companies attach great importance to advertising in their sales policies in order to gain large profits. It is common to mislead the target audience by showing the product with different features than it has and to analyze what the consumer wants to hear and see and to produce advertisements accordingly. In today's consumer society, where the variety of products and services is increasing, artificial needs are created and people are encouraged to buy. In this environment, the consumer prefers the product that is closer to herself or himself, which she/he knows through advertising, and provides feedback in the desired direction to the message given by the manufacturer. Advertising designs are one of the most preferred promotion methods that directly serve promotion and advertising policies. With the increase in product diversity and competition, advertising designs have become ahead of the brands and have started to aim to give visual or sensory pleasure to the consumer rather than promoting the functional purposes of the products.

Advertisements enable the transfer of emotion and information to the target audience by using linguistic or visual messages, colors, symbols or sounds as communication tools designed in accordance with a target purpose (Kçkerdoęan, 2013). Also visual communication is the practice of using visual elements to inspire or evoke an emotion to convey a message (Delil, 2023). The decision of which messages will be conveyed to the target audience in which ways is entirely up to the advertising brand and advertising designers. For this reason, the producer can create the desired awareness by presenting various images to the target audience.

Companies aim to sell their goods and services by persuading consumers through advertisements, appealing to the subconscious or guiding consumer behavior. Consequently, advertisements designed to motivate consumer action make use of various content elements. For instance, some ads employ humor, celebrity endorsements, slogans, or specific colors as part of their content strategies (Çeken & Özdemir, 2015: 131).

In the realm of social psychology, various images associated with femininity and masculinity are ingrained in the collective psyche. Through advertisements, these mental images are abstracted from their original meanings and content and are associated with products, thereby becoming naturalized. Consequently, the purchase and consumption of a

product also facilitate the assimilation of these associated images. Access to these images is thus reduced to the act of consumption (Çeken & Yıldız, 2015: 79).

Since the advent of technology, the visual communication design community has been able to process images more effectively, and visuals have surrounded the world more than ever (Çeken ve Arslan, 2016). People have used various methods to express themselves and convey their feelings and thoughts to others throughout history. Over time, these methods created literature and art, and forms called “signs” were born. A sign is the general name of any form that serves to show something else than itself (Ersan & Avşar, 2020).

In this study, the aim is to conduct an in-depth examination of the meanings embedded within advertising designs that feature representations of militancy and masculinity. To this end, purposive sampling was employed to select advertisements from the brands Tabasco, Zwilling, and Radio City as samples. In purposive sampling, the researcher selects samples that are deemed most appropriate for the objectives of the research. This sampling method is frequently utilized in qualitative research as an efficient technique to maximize limited resources; it involves identifying and choosing knowledgeable and experienced individuals or groups relevant to the research topic (Yağar & Dökme, 2018: 4).

2. THE METHOD

The research aims to scrutinize the meanings formed by the use of militancy and male representations in the global advertising content of brands. This objective necessitates the adoption of a methodological approach that integrates both hermeneutic (interpretive/semantic science) and semiotic methods in the analysis. In this context, the semiotic approach of Roland Barthes, which investigates meanings at the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth, has been adopted as a reference framework.

Semiotic analysis, a discipline where structuralism is most effectively applied, delves beyond the superficial aspects of sign systems to uncover their underlying structures (Çağlar, 2019). Accordingly, the selected advertisements were initially examined from a holistic perspective, subsequently analyzing their purpose and target audience through semiotic analysis of visual and linguistic elements.

Semiotics, the study of signs in verbal and visual communication, plays a pivotal role in linguistics, cultural studies, media studies, and communications. It aims to uncover the implicit meanings and myths represented by signs, employing semiotic analysis to decode and interpret images, advertisements, films, and other visual and linguistic texts, elucidating their cultural, social, or political contexts.

The foundations of semiotics were laid at the beginning of the XX. century by Charles Sanders Peirce and the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure defines semiotics as “the branch of science that studies the status of signs in social life” in *Course in General Linguistics* (Saussure, 1985). Saussure, who laid the foundation of semiotics stated that the signs consist of the signifier and the signified, and dealt with it in a coordinated manner.

He dealt with linguistic sign as sound image and concept. According to him, the signifier and the signified are independent of any external object and are based on social agreements. According to Saussure, the “table” sign consists of both the “t-a-b-l-e” auditory image signifier and the “table” concept signifier, and these two form the sign (Saussure, 1985). Barthes named “form” in response to Saussure’s “concept” and “content” in response to “auditory image”. The sign is the relationship between the signifier and the signified, and meaning emerges from the establishment of this relationship. Barthes considers signification in semiotics at two levels as denotation and connotation. Barthes states that denotation constantly produces connotation. Connotation is a string consisting of the signifier and the signified. Connotation allows people to deal with the world of history and culture in a system. He states that these meaning systems then turn into myths, which is the other dimension of second level signification (Table 1). Myths are signs that have broad cultural meanings and formed communication systems that serve the ideological goals of the dominant class. According to Barthes, “Semiology taught us that the task of myth is to ground a historical purpose in nature, a contingency in the form of eternity. If our society is the privileged realm of mythical significations, it is because myth is the most suitable vehicle for the intellectual reversal that defines this society: at all levels of human cognition, myth performs the translation of counter-nature into pseudo-nature (Barthes, 2014). While Saussure analyzes the sign in the context of signifier and signified, Barthes deals with denotation and connotation dimensions. While the denotational dimension consists of descriptive terms that everyone sees and can be understood at first glance, in the connotation dimension, cultural and perceptual differences emerge and myths are revealed by obtaining more subjective inferences.

Connotation and myth are effective ways of handling the signs in the second plane in the process of making sense of them. Myths are signs that have broad cultural meanings and formed communication systems that serve the ideological goals of the dominant class. Since connotation has myth and association dimensions, it includes subjective interpretations and sociocultural situations and is used in the analysis of ideologies and narratives. “It can be said that the society holding the connotation plane speaks of the signifiers of the studied system, while the semiotics speaks of the signifieds of the same system. This means that the semiotician performs an objective resolution function against the world that naturalizes or covers the signs of the first system with the signifiers of the second system.” The denotative plane refers to the primary meanings that are extremely clear in signification. This plane includes the dimensions of myth and connotation. According to Barthes, the most important factor in connotation is the first-level signifier. The first-level signifier is the sign of connotation. Barthes says that myths, which have a dynamic structure, change very quickly in order to adapt to the needs and values of the culture.

Table 1. The Semiological Scheme of Myth in Barthes’s Mythologies

1. signifier	2. signified	
3. sign I. SIGNIFIER		II. SIGNIFIED (langue)
III. SIGN		(myth)

Reference: Leak, A. N. (1994). *Barthes: mythologies*. (pp. 1-82). Grant and Cutler.

3. SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF “TABASCO” ADVERTISEMENT

Advertising designs are one of the mass media tools that help us to communicate with signs by creating textual and visual codes to reach the invisible by making use of visible images (Ersan & Topbasan, 2021). From this point of view, there are 6 basic signs in the Tabasco press release. The first of the main indicators is a young male figure with tears in his eyes, his mouth and nose wrapped in a kind of cloth. The second main sign is the restaurant in the background, engulfed in flames and smoke. The third basic sign is the male figure, who is integrated with this space in the background and flames coming out of his mouth while eating. Smoke, which is the fourth basic sign, essentially means a gray colored gas coming out of a burning substance, while it creates a mysterious atmosphere at the connotation level. Again, the dominant orange color in the background and the product image in the lower right corner are other basic signs. In Table 3, the signifier and the signified are summarized in the dimensions of denotation and connotation.

Image 1. Tabasco Printed Advertisement



Reference: Ads of the World (nd). Tabasco Creative Ads. <https://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/tabasco-creative-ads-996c93b2-f58c-4ea7-89f4-46d463d240a5>

Table 2. Information about Tabasco printed advertisement

Brand Name:	Tabasco
Area:	Food
Product:	Hot sauce
Place of publication:	Mexico

3.1. The Denoted Image

When looking at the Tabasco advertising, the first thing that stands out is a young male figure occupying a large area in the composition. The mouth and nose of this auburn figure are covered with a black and white checkered fabric. He has teary eyes because of the hot food. In the background, there is a male figure with his mouth on fire while eating and a place completely engulfed in flames. In the venue; there are 2 round stools, a table that takes up the space, and a long stand behind the table to display the products. The printed ad is divided into two parts, the upper side is orange and the lower side is designed in gray tones. The fact that half of the printed ad is covered with smoke brings with it the feeling of mystery, gloom and uncertainty. Again in this area, in the lower right part of the printed ad with grayscale color space, there is Tabasco's product image in the bottle and to the linguistic message "Not the Arab Revolution. This is Tabasco". In summary, the printed ad includes a main figure, a side figure, a place where the product is presented to the target audience, auxiliary elements and a slogan along with the product image. The printed ad has a vertically designed and narrative composition.

3.2. The Linguistic Messages

Of Mexican Indian origin, Tabasco is believed to mean "where the soil is moist" or "the place of coral or oyster shell". There is a slogan consisting of two words and two lines on the left of the product packaging located at the bottom right of the advertising image. This slogan contains the message "it's not an arabian revolution... it's Tabasco".

The Arab Revolution, in other words the Arab Spring, is a period of depression that started with an action by the entire Tunisian people after a teenager burned himself in Tunisia on December 17, 2010, and covered a series of anti-government protests, uprisings and armed rebellions that spread to a large part of the Arab world. The protests started in Tunisia as a reaction to corruption and economic stagnation, and soon spread to Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain. During this period, monarchs were deposed and serious communal violence occurred, including major uprisings and riots or civil wars. In this context, the main figure's sweating, red eyes and tears, the space being engulfed in flames and smoke, and the fact that the side figure supports this concept with smoke coming out of his mouth

explains that this fire is not caused by the arabian revolution, but by Tabasco's hot taste. According to Saussure (1998, p.205); “All parts of language are variable. Therefore, the meaning of each sign in a system is different from its stand-alone meaning.” (cited by Yemencioğlu, 2022). In this context, it is seen that the message has political and racist aspects.

3.3. The Connotations

Capitalism, fed by the market formed by producers and consumers, develops advertising strategies from the images that the consumer wants to see and hear, and brands are created by adding meanings that are pleasing to the eye and ear, specific to the product to be advertised. With these brands, a consumption culture is adopted by supporting the capitalist system (Taşkaya, 2009). The prominent male figure in the Tabasco advertisement that produced with this ideology contains many connotations. First of all, the fact that the figure is a young male shows that he is energetic, strong and dynamic. The fact that his mouth and nose are covered

with a cloth means that he has a rebellious, dangerous and militant character. The sweating and tears coming from the eyes of this strong, unyielding male figure emphasizes that even if he has strong features, he will be greatly affected by the effects of hot. Similarly, the fact that the side figure in the back continues to eat his food hungrily despite the fire coming out of his mouth makes the product encouraging, intriguing and attractive.

Table 3: Denotative and connotative analysis of the signs in Tabasco advertising design

Signifier	Signified (Denotation and connotation)
Militant Looking Male Figure	Denotation: A Young man with red eyes and tears, with his mouth and nose covered with cloth Connotation: The hot taste is so intense that it brings tears to the eyes of even the militants.
Customer in Flames on the Background	Denotation: A male figure with a burning mouth from the food he ate Connotation: The fact that the dishes that are hot enough to burn the mouth are also delicious enough to be eaten with great pleasure.
Restaurant (Place on fire)	Denotation: A restaurant on fire Connotation: A restaurant on fire from hot sauce and with customers who love that taste
Company Logo	Denotation: Red pepper, symbol of Tabasco hot pepper sauce Connotation: Hot taste
Orange Color and Flame	Denotation: the place turns orange as the restaurant catches fire Connotation: Warmth, energy, provocativeness, courage, appetite

Smoke

Denotation: Black, brown, gray or white gas containing solid particles and mist arising from a burning substance
Connotation: Uncertainty, danger, mystery

The fact that the place is on fire and half of the printed ad is covered with smoke creates an atmosphere of mystery and supports the image of the product as provocative and appetizing. In addition, an aggressive image has been tried to be drawn by establishing similarities with the fact that the place is depicted in flames with figures in it are similar to the act of arson. The figure is covered with smoke from the neck down is perceived that mysterious attitudes will make people strong and attractive. At the same time, it exhibits a policy of hiding after bad behavior, making it feel like he will disappear soon. The main figure in the advertisement continues to eat the hot food despite suffering; similarly the side figure eats the food in front of him with a great appetite despite the flames coming out of his mouth show that they do not feel discomfort from suffering physical pain. The main binary oppositions seen in advertising design are the concepts of strong and weak, rebellious and submissive, extraordinary and ordinary, provocative and soothing, mysterious and overt, active and passive, dynamic and stable, hot and cold, difficult and easy, willful and unwilling, hot and sweet (Table 4).

Table 4. Key binary oppositions found in Tabasco advertising image

Strong	Weak
Rebellious	Submissive
Unusual	Ordinary
Provocative	Soothing
Mysterious	Overt
Active	Passive
Dynamic	Stable
Hot (weather)	Cold
Hot (taste)	Sweet
Difficult	Easy
Willful	Unwilling

3.4. Myths That Tabasco Ads Reproduce

Like many other advertisements, the Tabasco advertisement reproduces various myths. Despite this, the figure draws attention with his sitting tall in the saddle. It is aimed to draw attention to the myth that men do not cry, by showing that strong men can also have weaknesses, with the sweating of the forehead and the reddening of the eyes of the figure who portrays a strong man. At the same time, the fact that his mouth and nose are covered with a cloth naturalizes militancy and reproduces this myth. Despite suffering in a difficult situation, his upright posture adds heroism to the figure. Similarly, in the linguistic message

in the advertisement, it is seen that a serious destruction such as the Arab Revolution has been naturalized. With the slogan “This is not the Arab Revolution... This is Tabasco”, a racist approach is adapted by comparing the pain of societies with different nationalities than those of the people appearing in Tabasco advertisement. In addition, the fact that both figures in the advertisement are men refers to male domination identified with the patriarchal social structure, supports the myth that women are abstracted from society and that difficult jobs can only be done by men. In theoretical discourse, practices (whether explicitly stated or implied) have predominantly sustained male dominance. Within a patriarchal society, the roles of women and animals can often be seen as serving others (Pehlivan Baskin, 2019: 191). In addition, it is conveyed that men who can eat Tabasco have qualities that considered superior in the eyes of the society, such as brave, mysterious, hero, leader, strong and invincible.

4. SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF “ZWILLING” ADVERTISEMENT

Zwilling knife advertisement presents a compelling narrative deeply embedded in military themes and the portrayal of masculinity. The central figure, an officer, meticulously handling an apple in a war-torn setting, serves as a powerful signifier of control and precision amidst chaos. This act is juxtaposed against the backdrop of a dilapidated room and soldiers in various states of alertness and rest, which further enriches the narrative of resilience and preparedness. The multi-sliced apple at the bottom of the advertisement, meticulously arranged, not only highlights the product's precision but also symbolically represents the ability to maintain order in the face of disorder. This imagery is charged with connotations of tactical skill and strategic planning, attributes valorized in both military and civilian contexts. The diverse representation of soldiers underscores themes of unity and collective strength, challenging traditional singular hero narratives and instead promoting a message of collaborative endurance and diversity.

Image 2. Zwilling Printed Advertisement



Reference: Ads of the World (nd). Soldier, Nun. <https://www.adsoftheworld.com/campaigns/soldier-8e9de784-941f-49e0-8997-28268c9ccee4>

Table 5. Information about Zwilling printed advertisement

Brand Name	Zwilling
Area	House, Garden industry
Product	Knife
Place of publication	Mexico

4.1. The Denoted Image

This advertisement showcases a military setting with soldiers in varying states of readiness. The setting is a dilapidated room, possibly in a conflict zone. The central figure, an officer, is handling an apple in what appears to be a calm manner amidst the backdrop of war. He seems like he is planning to slice the apple for the soldiers, however there isn't actual action of cutting or a knife is visible; the focus is on the soldier's contemplative gaze towards the apple. Other soldiers, displaying a range of ethnic backgrounds, are seen with different expressions and postures, suggesting a diverse group unified by their military involvement.

Also, there is a multi-sliced apple shape and a knife next to it at the bottom of the advertisement.

4.2. The Connotations

In the advertisement, the soldier's focused examination of the apple subtly conveys a sense of calmness and precision. Set against a backdrop that implies chaos and destruction, the deliberate and thoughtful handling of the apple by the soldier starkly contrasts with the surrounding environment. This contrast suggests a narrative of control and precision amidst chaos, highlighting the soldier's ability to maintain composure and focus under pressure. Additionally, the absence of active slicing and the soldier's reflective demeanor might imply readiness and strategic planning. The pause and consideration he shows could be symbolic of the careful strategies required in military contexts, suggesting that even small actions are part of a larger, thoughtful approach.

Table 6: Denotative and connotative analysis of the signs in Zwilling knife advertising design

Signifier	Signified (Denotation and connotation)
Military Setting	Denotation: A dilapidated room with soldiers in varying states of readiness, suggesting a conflict zone. Connotation: The setting conveys harshness and resilience, necessary traits in a conflict-ridden environment.
Soldier Examining an Apple	Denotation: A soldier is carefully looking at an apple, contemplating its condition. Connotation: This act symbolizes calmness and precision under pressure, showcasing the soldier's ability to maintain focus amid chaos.
Multi-Sliced Apple	Denotation: Artfully arranged apple slices at the bottom of the ad Connotation: Represents precision and skill, attributes of the knife being advertised, suggesting it can perform well under any conditions
Diverse Soldiers	Denotation: Soldiers of various ethnic backgrounds appear within the scene Connotation: Implies diversity and unity, highlighting teamwork and cooperation across different backgrounds in military operations
Apple as a Central Object	Denotation: The apple, typically a symbol of knowledge and temptation, is being examined rather than consumed Connotation: Suggests wisdom and cautious strategy, possibly referencing the calculated decisions made in military and survival situations

Overall
Composition and
Lighting

Denotation: The image is dark with focused lighting on the apple and the soldier examining it
Connotation: Creates a dramatic focus on the action, enhancing the themes of vigilance and strategic planning in adverse conditions

Moreover, the setting of the room, marked by signs of wear and conflict, coupled with the composed demeanor of the soldiers, especially the central figure, connotes resilience and endurance. Despite the harsh environment, the focus on a simple, everyday activity such as examining an apple symbolizes stability and human endurance in the face of adversity. This scene underscores the resilience of the soldiers, portraying them as steadfast and durable, capable of finding focus and stability even when surrounded by turmoil.

The presence of a multi-sliced apple shape at the bottom of the advertisement adds another layer of meaning to the overall depiction of the scene. This design element could symbolize the precision and skill associated with the knife being advertised. The careful arrangement of the apple slices in a visually appealing pattern not only emphasizes the product's capability for precise cuts but also suggests a sense of order and meticulousness.

This artistic presentation of the apple slices could be interpreted as a metaphor for the control and exactitude that can be achieved in chaotic situations, mirroring the central theme of the advertisement where a soldier handles an apple amidst a war-torn environment. The design thus reinforces the narrative of mastery over one's tools and circumstances, highlighting the utility and effectiveness of the knife in both everyday and extreme situations.

Furthermore, the apple, often a symbol of knowledge and temptation in various cultural contexts, here might subtly nod to the 'forbidden fruit' aspect, suggesting that the knife can unlock or reveal things not ordinarily seen, playing into deeper themes of revelation and insight. This artistic choice enriches the advertisement by linking the visual imagery to broader symbolic meanings, enhancing the viewer's engagement with the ad's message.

Creating a table of binary oppositions for the advertisement involves identifying pairs of contrasting elements within the imagery that symbolize broader themes or concepts. Table 7 demonstrates structured way of examining these oppositions:

Table 7. Key binary oppositions found in Zwilling advertising image

Chaos	Order
War	Domesticity
Diversity	Uniformity
Leadership	Followership
Strength	Vulnerability
Technology	Nature

In the advertisement, a series of binary oppositions illustrate complex narratives and themes. The juxtaposition of chaos versus order is vividly portrayed through the war-torn, chaotic environment contrasted with the calm, orderly act of slicing an apple. This act, set against a backdrop of military setting, sharply contrasts with the domestic simplicity of food preparation, highlighting the opposition of war versus domesticity. The soldiers displayed come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, yet their uniformity is emphasized by their military attire and collective presence, showcasing the tension between diversity and uniformity. This theme extends to the dynamic of leadership versus followership, where the officer, who performs a precise task, is set against the other soldiers who appear in more passive roles, underscoring the contrast between leadership and the act of following. Furthermore, the advertisement presents an opposition between strength and vulnerability. The robust military environment and attire, which convey strength, stand in stark contrast to the vulnerability implied by the delicate task of apple slicing. Lastly, the contrast between technology and nature is represented through the military gear symbolizing human technological prowess and the apple signifying natural simplicity. These oppositions enrich the advertisement's narrative, reflecting deep societal themes around military life, leadership, and masculinity.

4.3. Myths That Zwilling Ad Reproduce

In the advertisement, the portrayal of heroism and masculinity draws on the enduring myth of the heroic, unyielding soldier, a figure central to many military narratives. This archetype reinforces traditional notions of masculinity, characterizing men as stoic, strong, and fully capable of overcoming any form of adversity. Such depictions are designed to resonate with cultural expectations of male toughness and resilience, underpinning a broader societal narrative. Furthermore, the advertisement emphasizes technological superiority and control through the meticulous depiction of a knife being used with precision to slice an apple. This act transforms a simple domestic task into a demonstration of superior craftsmanship and effectiveness, illustrating the ad's alignment with cultural narratives that value technical skill and control as desirable traits. This is particularly pertinent in contexts that involve defense or survival, where such skills are prized.

Additionally, the casual manner in which a domestic task is handled within a war-torn setting subtly normalizes the presence of conflict. By portraying such scenarios as regular and manageable, the advertisement conveys a powerful yet potentially controversial message that aligns with military advertising's tendency to integrate the harsh realities of conflict into everyday normalcy. This normalization strategy might aim to desensitize viewers to the severity of war, framing it as a backdrop to even the most mundane activities.

5. CONCLUSION

With today's technological advancements, visuals not only capture attention but also embed subtle messages that influence the subconscious. Semiotic analysis reveals these hidden messages, offering insights into how advertisements manipulate societal norms and

expectations. The analysis of both the Tabasco and Zwilling advertisements provides a comprehensive understanding of how visual media utilizes semiotic elements to communicate complex messages that influence societal norms and consumer behavior. These advertisements, while promoting their respective products, also embed cultural narratives and ideologies that reflect and shape societal values.

The Tabasco advertisement prominently features masculinity and endurance, deploying intense imagery to suggest that consuming Tabasco sauce is akin to a test of strength, aimed primarily at a male audience. This advertisement reinforces traditional gender roles by implying that resilience to discomfort is a masculine trait, as it exclusively features male figures, further suggesting that enduring such intense sensations is not typical of the feminine domain. Additionally, the portrayal of resilience to physical discomfort as commendable and desirable naturalizes masochistic behaviors and reinforces gender stereotypes that valorize toughness as a uniquely male attribute.

Moreover, the ad's use of militant imagery and the slogan "This is not the Arab Revolution... This is Tabasco" trivializes significant socio-political struggles, equating the revolutionary suffering and fight for fundamental rights to the experience of consuming a hot sauce. This not only minimizes the gravity of historical upheavals but also potentially normalizes a lack of empathy towards them. Furthermore, the design, which exclusively features male figures displaying endurance against the spicy product, suggests that such traits are exclusive to men, perpetuating outdated gender roles. This portrayal is out of step with broader social and cultural realities where taste preferences are influenced by a variety of factors, including geography, culture, and individual sensitivity, rather than strictly by gender.

In contrast, the Zwilling advertisement presents a different set of thematic elements focused on precision and control within a military context. Here, the imagery of a soldier contemplating the action of slicing an apple amid a war-torn setting highlights themes of calmness, strategy, and resilience. The multi-sliced apple at the bottom of the advertisement, artfully arranged, not only demonstrates the precision of the Zwilling knife but also suggests that even in chaos, order and precision can be maintained—attributes essential to both culinary and military success. The portrayal of diverse soldiers united in a stressful environment further promotes themes of teamwork and cooperation across varied backgrounds, subtly challenging traditional military narratives that often glorify conflict and individual heroism.

The juxtaposition of these advertisements reveals the diverse approaches brands take to weave complex narratives into their marketing strategies. While Tabasco focuses on reinforcing traditional masculine stereotypes and the endurance of physical pain as a measure of toughness, Zwilling opts for a more nuanced portrayal of mental resilience and strategic thinking, qualities that transcend specific gender roles. Both advertisements,

however, utilize emotional and psychological triggers to connect with their audiences, illustrating the power of visual advertising in shaping perceptions and behaviors.

Ultimately, these advertisements underscore the need for ethical considerations in marketing practices. They demonstrate how brands not only reflect but also have the power to influence societal values and norms. Moving forward, it is crucial for marketers to adopt strategies that promote inclusivity and sensitivity, ensuring that their messages contribute positively to societal discourse and reflect a conscientious understanding of diversity and equity. In conclusion, while the advertisement effectively captures attention and may enhance brand recall, it does so at the cost of promoting harmful stereotypes and insensitivities. It reflects and perpetuates myths of patriarchal society, such as the invulnerability of men and their dominance over women, and normalizes social unrest and racial stereotypes. These practices in advertising not only reflect but also shape societal values, often in ways that reinforce harmful norms rather than challenging or broadening them. As such, advertisers and marketers must critically evaluate the messages they are promoting to ensure they contribute positively to societal discourse and reflect a conscientious understanding of diversity and inclusivity.

Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Beyanı

Makalenin tüm süreçlerinde Manisa Celal Bayar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi'nin araştırma ve yayın etiği ilkelerine uygun olarak hareket edilmiştir.

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1. yazar %70 oranında, 2. yazar %30 oranında katkı sağlamıştır.

Çıkar Beyanı

Yazarın herhangi bir kişi ya da kuruluş ile çıkar çatışması yoktur.

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