

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A.1 Background of the Research

Beauty has long been a primary focus in literature and popular culture, reflecting the constantly evolving social and cultural norms. In the context of contemporary literature, the representation of beauty often becomes a complex and controversial subject, as it can reflect and shape our perceptions of identity, value, and cultural norms. Beauty, a theme that is often both fascinating and perplexing, has held a special place in literary and popular culture discourse for centuries. In contemporary literature, the depiction and interpretation of beauty not only reflect prevailing aesthetics but also explore how this concept informs and is influenced by broader social, political, and economic contexts. Research on the representation of beauty in contemporary literature is crucial because, through the narratives created, literature can question, reinforce, or even challenge the existing beauty norms within society (Lucas, 2023).

Beauty is often associated with positive values such as goodness, truth, and integrity; however, social realities show that representations of beauty can also carry negative implications, including discrimination, sexism, and unrealistic social pressures. By critiquing and unraveling these

representations, contemporary literature contributes to a deeper understanding of how beauty is interpreted and valued across different societal layers. Studying how beauty is represented in contemporary literary works allows us to further understand how aesthetic values shape and are influenced by broader cultural norms. Additionally, this opens up discussions on how perceptions of beauty interact with identity issues such as race, gender, and class. Through an analysis of beauty representations, we can delve deeper into the underlying dynamics of power and the potential for literature to serve as an effective tool for social change. Consequently, this research is not only relevant in an academic context but also has significant implications for the development of critical awareness in society at large (Sharma, 2023).

One medium that is often used to communicate representations of beauty is beauty product advertisements, which feature idealized beauty standards. Many big brands that have become iconic in the world of high-end beauty, such as Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Prada, Gucci, and Dior, have built their image as global beauty standard-setters. Louis Vuitton is known for its luxury handbags that are often associated with an elegant and sophisticated lifestyle. Their advertising campaigns often feature famous models who represent the image of a strong and glamorous modern woman.

Chanel, with its iconic products such as perfumes and haute couture clothing collections, has long been a symbol of beauty and luxury. Their advertisements usually emphasize perfection, elegance and timelessness, creating a standard of beauty that is hard to match.

Prada is known for its innovative and often futuristic approach to fashion. Prada advertisements often portray women with high self-confidence and bold fashion sense, setting a unique and aspirational standard of beauty.

Gucci, with its eclectic and colorful designs, has made a name for itself as a brand that celebrates individuality and self-expression. Gucci's advertising campaigns often feature models with diverse looks, communicating the message that beauty can be found in many forms and styles. And finally, the iconic brand known for its representation of beauty is Dior, especially in its special edition for the year-end holidays. The Dior Year-End Holiday Edition often garners attention for its elegance and beauty. However, behind the visual splendor, there are hidden messages about the beauty standards the brand wishes to convey. Dior itself is a luxury fashion brand founded by Christian Dior in 1946. Known for its high-end fashion, fragrances, and accessories, Dior has become a symbol of elegance and sophistication in the fashion industry. The brand is particularly famous for its haute couture designs, showcased in fashion shows around the world. During the holiday season, Dior often releases special products and packaging, such as the 2023 Year-End

Holiday Edition, featuring unique designs and motifs. This special edition is often accompanied by dazzling decorations and displays, creating a magical atmosphere for the holiday season. In recent years, Dior has also embraced digital technology to enhance its holiday campaigns. For instance, in collaboration with the Korean company D'stinct, Dior created a 3D digital advertising campaign that brought Christmas displays to life using advanced augmented reality (AR) technology. This allows visitors to experience a unique and immersive holiday experience, further emphasizing the brand's commitment to innovation and creativity. Dior is one of the brands that consistently shows the perfect standard of beauty in its advertisements. An analysis of Dior's 2023 year-end ads can be done using semiotic theory and Naomi Wolf's feminist theory to reveal how these beauty messages are constructed and what impact they have on public perception. (Setyaningsih, 2022).

This study of Dior advertisements is suitable for using semiotic theory, because with this theory we can analyze how signs and symbols in Dior advertisements are used to convey certain meanings. In the ad, every element from the selection of models, clothing, setting, to lighting is a sign that carries a message about beauty. Like, the use of certain colors, the model's facial expressions, and the visual composition can be analyzed to see how they create a perfect and ideal representation of beauty. Semiotic studies related to beauty (Zhang,2019), and (Ulrike Gretzel, 2019) provide a strong basis for

this kind of analysis. brand advertisements such as those conducted by (Setyaningsih, 2022),

In addition to semiotic theory, this research also uses Naomi Wolf's theory to analyze the beauty standards promoted by big beauty brands such as Dior. Naomi Wolf, in her book "The Beauty Myth", criticizes how the beauty industry creates and promotes unrealistic and often oppressive beauty standards. Using this perspective, we can explore how Dior advertisements contribute to the formation and maintenance of this beauty myth, as well as its impact on self-perception and society. Several other studies related to the analysis of beauty brand advertisements using Naomi Wolf's theory such as those conducted by (Karolus,M 2016),(Ziber,R 2020), and (Panambunan,I 2022) show how advertised beauty standards have a significant impact on individuals' body image and self-esteem.

By examining previous works that utilize Naomi Wolf's theory, this research will highlight the various strategies used by beauty brands to reinforce ideal beauty standards and how these strategies affect individuals and society at large. As such, this research will not only focus on analyzing the signs and symbols in Dior advertisements, but also pay attention to the broader social and psychological context in the formation of beauty myths, adding depth and relevance to the analysis conducted.

This research examines the details of the ads, including the selection of models, clothing, makeup, lighting, background, and other elements to identify the signs and symbols used. Using by semiotic theory, this research parses the meaning contained in each of these elements and how they interact with each other to convey a certain message. In addition, by using Naomi Wolf's perspective, this research assesses the impact of the ad on perceptions of beauty in society and how it might reinforce or challenge existing beauty standards.

Several researchers conducted research on world beauty brands, one of which is Utama (2022) who examined An Analysis of Guccci and discussed the denotative meaning, connotative meaning and myths in Gucci branding, which affect the meaning of the Gucci brand which can increase one's social status. While other research was conducted by Kozakowska (2018) who examined the meaning of Chanel advertisements. Her research discusses the meaning and in-depth emphasis on Chanel advertisements that build representations of the intended (preferred) reading of advertisements regarding this luxury perfume and conclusions regarding different ways of communicating luxury. Because there are still few who examine Dior advertisements, researcher is interested in analyzing Dior advertisements. Thus, the researcher will take a study with the title "Elegance Redefined: Beauty Standard in Dior's Year-End 2023 Collection."

## **A.2 Problems of the Research**

1. How do semiotic choices in Dior's designs convey new interpretations of elegance and beauty?
2. In what ways does Dior's approach to beauty standards challenge or support Naomi Wolf's critique of the beauty industry?

## **A.3 Objectives of the Research**

1. To analyze how semiotic choices in Dior's designs convey new interpretations of elegance and beauty.
2. To examine the ways in which Dior's approach to beauty standards either challenges or supports Naomi Wolf's critique of the beauty industry.

## **A.4 Significance of the Research**

This research is significant because it analyzes the "Dior Year-End Holiday Edition" advertisement through a semiotic approach, which offers unique insights into how signs and symbols convey messages, create meaning and build brand image. No previous research has specifically explored the semiotic aspects of this advertisement, making this analysis particularly valuable. By detailing the semiotic elements, this research enhances our understanding of the visual communication strategies used by luxury brands such as Dior, highlighting how beauty, style and brand values are reflected in the advertisement.

In addition, using Naomi Wolf's "beauty myth" theory, this research investigates how Dior's advertisements convey idealized beauty standards and their impact on viewers. Wolf criticizes the beauty industry's use of unrealistic standards to control women's self-perception. By combining semiotic analysis with Wolf's critique, this research provides a holistic understanding of how beauty product advertisements create narratives that are both aesthetic and socio-psychological.

It opens a discussion on the impact of media-promoted beauty norms on individual self-esteem, especially in the digital age. It offers valuable insights into luxury fashion advertising practices and expands our understanding of the social construction of beauty in contemporary society.

#### **A.5 Limitation of the Research**

This research will focus on the application of semiotic theory and Naomi Wolf's theory in the analysis of the Dior advertisement for the 2023 year-end collection. This research will not include the analysis of Dior ads from other editions or collections, nor will it explore other theories or analytical approaches beyond semiotics and Naomi Wolf's critique.

#### **A.6 Definition of the Key Terms**

##### **1. Semiotics**

Semiotics refers to the study of signs and symbols, and the way they are used to communicate meaning. In the context of this analysis,

semiotics will be used to explore how signs and symbols are used in Dior advertisements to convey messages related to the year-end holiday edition (Chandler, 2002).

## **2. Semiotic Analysis**

Is the process of deconstructing the signs and symbols that appear in the advertisement. Examines how visual elements, colors, symbols, and visual language (such as photography style, point of view, and framing) are used to convey messages (Chandler, 2002).

## **3. Dior**

Dior is a French luxury goods manufacturer controlled and led by French businessman Bernard Arnault, who also heads LVMH, the world's largest luxury goods manufacturer. Dior was founded by Christian Dior in 1946 and has since become synonymous with luxury, quality and innovation. The brand is known for its elegant and sophisticated designs that have transformed the realm of fashion throughout the 20th and 21st centuries (Dior C. , 2023).

## **4. Dior Year-End Holiday Edition 2023**

Details the specific elements of the Dior collection advertised, such as the clothing, accessories and other items included in the year-end holiday

edition. Investigated how these elements were integrated into the visual narrative to create a holiday atmosphere (Dior C. , 2023).

## **5. Naomi Wolf's Beauty Standards Theory**

Naomi Wolf's beauty standards theory illustrates that beauty standards applied to women are not only based on physical qualities, but also based on power relations that exist in a patriarchal society. Wolf explains that these beauty standards are not based on evolution, sex, gender, aesthetics, or God, but rather on the celebration of women based on patriarchal organizations (Wolf, 2002).

## **6. The Beauty Myth**

Beauty myth according to Naomi Wolf is a concept used to understand and examine aspects that are considered related to the concept of beauty standards. According to Naomi Wolf, beauty myths tell about the quality called "beautiful" which objectively and universally exists. The meaning of objective and universal relates to a combination of emotional distance, political, economic and sexual repression. Wolf explains that beauty is as much a system of exchange as the gold standard. Like everything in the economic circle, beauty is also determined by the political system. Thus, in this endeavor, women fall into a hierarchy according to physical standards. This idea of the ideal is referred to as the myth of beauty (Wolf, 2002).

## **A.7 Organization of the Research Report**

There are five chapters in this study. The background, problem, purpose, relevance, limitation, definition of important words, and structure of the research are explained in detail in the first chapter of this report. The theoretical foundation regarding Semiotic theory and Naomi wolf theory as well as some relevant research studies are discussed in the second chapter. The research method which includes the type of research, data, data sources, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques will be discussed in the third chapter. An explanation of the debate, the results of data analysis, and conclusions drawn from data analysis are then discussed in the fourth chapter. The fifth and final chapter contains recommendations and conclusions.