

SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF EMBODIMENT IN THE DESIGN OF INDONESIAN WOMEN DESIGNERS

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Abstract. For designers, the body is the main instrument for creating design works that indirectly reflect social reality. In social interpretation, body issues affect the relationship between men and women. Furthermore, these issues influence the aesthetic discourse of modern design, which is formed in the form of a binary opposition with the logic of “form follows function”. Women are associated with form, while men are associated with function. However, the unique experience of women designers indirectly reflects social reality in their design work. This unique experience is referred to as embodiment. Previous research on the influence of embodiment, especially in the work of women designers in Indonesia, is still relatively scarce, except in the field of art. The embodiment of women designers is often limited to the representation of designs inspired by the woman body, which prolongs the objectification of women. Therefore, this study focuses on the influence of the embodiment of women designers in their work, which has not yet been explored. This study analyses three design works by Indonesian designers, namely Yolanda Santosa, Nita Darsono and Patricia Untario, which raise the issue of woman embodiment as a representation of social relations in society. This study uses semiotic analysis by tracing the levels of denotative and connotative meanings that later develop into myths or ideologies that appear in signs, both visual and written. This study aims to find the influence of embodiment reflected in the design of women designers in Indonesia. The findings of this study reveal the influence of women's embodiment as a reflection of social construction in the design of the three women designers. Women designers offer representations of women by challenging stereotypes of women in the form of binary oppositions that are often subordinated and objectified in media and design. The representation shows a claim and rearrangement of established semiotic elements in the binary opposition system as a form of counter-discourse in representing women based on their embodied experience.

Keywords: *Embodiment, design, Indonesian women designers, semiotic.*

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1. Introduction

The echo of the conflict between man and woman bodies in culture and social life, which has occurred for thousands of years, has become the concept of gender in a dualism that favours men over women, which persists in modern society to this day. Women are

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considered to have a ‘natural environment’ in the domestic space. This has had an impact on the field of design. An example of the influence of women's domestic roles on design is the organisation Women’s Section, which was set up by the Franco regime in Spain in 1934. The organisation promoted the role of women as perfect mothers and wives in line with Fascist ideology. Training was provided not only in everyday domestic activities such as cooking, childcare and housework, but also in the revival of popular crafts, decorations and furnishings. The women were trained in recycling and self-sufficiency by restoring old furniture and making their own curtains, bedspreads, tablecloths etc. This training was in response to the lack of national industry to meet domestic needs after the war. The resulting designs were inspired by traditional Spanish handicraft models. At that time, the Women's Section participated in the revival of these crafts as producers, designers and even entrepreneurs in charge of small, modest businesses (García, 2017).

In alternative perspectives that shed light on the limited involvement of women in the field of design, Bruce (1985) contends that the sexual division of labor, which classifies occupations based on gender, associating women with domestic and care work within the private sphere of the family, while men are engaged in the economically oriented public sector, is one of the root causes of the underrepresentation of women in industrial design. Throughout social and cultural history, industrial design has been perceived as a masculine activity due to its perceived “dirty” and mechanical nature, which was considered unsuitable for women. Furthermore, many technological objects were seen as not aligning with the needs and preferences of women. Although male designers and ergonomists have incorporated women’s considerations through anthropometric studies and market research, they have often failed to translate this knowledge into consumer products. Similarly, hand tools have often failed to meet women’s needs due to their smaller hands and muscles, further perpetuating the labeling of women in society as inactive, physically weak, not inclined toward logic, poor at manipulating machines and reliant on male colleagues or partners. Given that women are primary consumers and users of numerous products and artifacts in both public and private spheres, it is imperative that women are actively involved in the design process. This involvement can take various forms, including as designers, inventors, critical users and consumers, to ensure that products align with their specific needs and preferences.

The embodiment experience of women also manifests in the dominance of women in interior design. Gordon (1996) equates the situation of interior design with fashion, which is culturally identified as a domain controlled by women. Symbolically, the body and interior are often treated alike and decorated by women. Since the industrial era, women have been closely associated with the home, making it an extension of their bodies. In contrast, men dominate the architecture profession, as they are considered more interested in the exterior aspects of houses rather than the interior. In contrast to Gordon, other research actually demonstrates the interior practices of women in Kampung Kauman Semarang as active agents in various flexible spatial arrangements based on the needs of women's activities. Space can switch functions according to the requirements for domestic space, socio-cultural space and economic space. The presence of the “*lengkong*” as a connecting space for women's activities in the kitchen to the outside world has become an important interior element. Domestic space can expand at different times to accommodate both socio-cultural and economic activities, which are then returned to domestic space when the activities are completed. Understanding women's daily interior practices in Kampung Kauman Semarang can provide a different

perspective on designing the relationship between domestic space and the urban environment in a more culturally sensitive context (Harani *et al.*, 2022).

This bodily experience is referred to as embodiment. According to its formulation, embodiment is the manifestation of the body that is experienced in a unique way, related to the meanings given to, for example, gender, certain behavioral norms, expected images and identities and so on Sugiharto (Syarifah, 2006). In line with this thinking, Arivia also (2018) states that there is a strong relationship between embodiment and human thinking:

"No one is exempt from their sex and gender concept. Our sexual embodiment experiences constantly make us aware of our gender and gender constructions. Sex is something of our body and our body is part of ourselves. The unity of sexuality and body cannot be separated from the definition of the self as an individual".

These stories and other stories of the marginalization of women's involvement, certainly disturb feminists to develop alternative design thinking that considers the usefulness for women. Although, as stated by Attfield (Walker, 1989), there is no final agreement on how the change should be and what strategies should be used to pursue that change because different women's groups have different interests and struggles. The pressure on women designers cannot be separated from modern philosophy, which always categorizes everything into two opposing or binary poles (black-white, male-women, dark-light). Through this binary opposition lens, modernists never see the 'space' between the two poles. This has serious implications in the social sphere and causes a lot of friction and marginalization towards expressions that exist 'between' or 'outside' of those two poles. Modernism inevitably puts pressure on the weaker side of the binary opposition system.

In the field of design, modern aesthetics are more focused on function rather than form, as reflected in the famous credos "form follows function" (Louis Sullivan), "ornament is crime" (Adolf Loos) and "less is more" (Ludwig Mies van der Rohe). One of the consequences of this is the relationship between men and women in the design field. Buckley (1986) shows that the position of women designers in the past and present is still placed in a patriarchal context that depends on capitalism, which indirectly shapes the framework of women's roles as designers. The industry is associated with the culture (of male designers), while nature (of designers) is the opposite. This is perpetuated into a system of "normality/nature" that women are skilled, decorative and meticulous in fulfilling household tasks. Women designers are naturally considered suitable for certain production areas, such as decorative arts, including jewelry, embroidery, graphic illustration, weaving, knitting, pottery and sewing. This mindset develops into the dichotomy of male designers who are considered logical and intellectual, while designers seem instinctive and emotional.

Barbara Kruger is one of the graphic designers who often criticizes the dominance of masculinity through her works. Her messages in mass media advertisements such as "Your body is a battleground", "I shop there for I am", "We don't need another hero" and "Surveillance is your busywork" use black-and-white photo montage techniques. In addition, Kruger also uses bold sans-serif Futura typography with white lettering on a red color block background that has provocative messages that encourage active reader engagement. As explained by Barret (2000), Kruger's works contain feminist ideas. Kruger's work is inspired by mass cultural images and her tactic of communication is to

approach the audience, spreading her ideas through mass cultural media. According to Bartelsheim (Breuer & Meer, 2012), the last decade has shown a fusion between contemporary art and design, especially due to the role of text/writing that can emphasize images. Art that focuses on women's issues is largely text-based, where women artists/designers become both writers (meaning creators) and designers, as in the case of Barbara Kruger. Barbara Kruger also openly explains her work: "On a formal visual, I'd say that about 85 percent of my work as an artist has been informed by my job as a graphic designer" (Breuer & Meer, 2012).



Figure 1. Barbara Kruger's designs are famous for combining black and white photography with bold white text in red boxes, often containing provocative and critical messages on issues of gender, power and consumption. Source: <https://www.thecollector.com/barbara-kruger/>

Unlike Kruger, Cipe Pineles, who worked as an illustrator and art director for influential women's magazines *Seventeen* and *Charm* in the 1950s in America, was known to often use household objects such as recipes and her personal furniture as props for her design, photography and illustration productions. As a result, the audience of those magazines would obtain "a slice of Pineles's life" in the magazine representation (Breuer & Meer, 2012). What Pineles did was also a form of critique in design work that blurs the boundaries between the private and public realm and brings her embodiment into her work and creations. It portrays the ways in which women designers negotiate the social conditions that encircle them.

From the description, it is apparent that designers have a different historical experience compared to male designers. It seems that their embodiment carries certain consequences in the field of design and the social field. In design discourse, bodily issues receive less attention. This is not surprising and can be understood because design work tends to involve many parties. It is different from art, which is relatively personal and the body becomes a constantly questioned theme. Looking at the field of art, there seem to be more efforts in that direction. For example, Dirgantoro (2019) reveals specific socio-historical visual representations of women and discusses the patriarchal structure that surrounds them. On the other hand, previous research on the representation of the woman body in furniture design created by male designers indicates that the woman body continues to be sexually objectified and disregards women's experiences and their own bodies (Li & Yang, 2019). In addition, in the documentary film, there is a study of multimodal texts that examines visual techniques, cinematography, framing, body language and audiovisual elements. This study provides a deeper understanding of implicit messages, power dynamics and social constructions related to the female body (Pujadiharja, 2013). Therefore, in this research, the study focusing on the influence of embodiment in women's design works is still relatively limited in exploration. Another

study reveals the significance of multiculturalism through semiotic methods employed by female visual communication designers in Indonesia. This research offers a counter-discourse against the standardization of body norms, such as white skin, idealized bodies and racial representations in the media, by promoting cultural diversity (Agustin, 2022).

This research is based on the background indicating the presence of embodiment in the works of designers in Indonesia, which serves as the foundation and motivation for further investigation into this phenomenon. The study will analyze three designs by Indonesian designers, namely Yolanda Santosa, Nita Darsono and Patricia Untario, which raise issues of embodiment in their designs. The discussion aims to gain a deeper understanding of how designers bring embodiment. The reflection on embodiment emerges through design elements, both textual and visual, that can be interpreted through semiotic analysis. As explained by Saidi (2020), since design exists in society, it carries inherent social functions. Design has surpassed functional value and has become a way of life, thinking, behavior and more. Design plays a significant role in constructing reality and shaping evolving values. It is presumed that designers, living within society, absorb social values and reflect them in their designs through semiotic signs. The experiences and thoughts of these three designers challenge stereotypes surrounding how women should behave and appear. They offer representations of embodiment that differ from previous media portrayals in terms of behavior, thinking and appearance. Additionally, this research examines how women designers utilize their awareness of embodiment to initiate discourse on different or alternative designs based on their own experiences.

2. Method

Simply like language, design is a text that conveys meaning. At a deeper level of meaning, whether consciously or unconsciously, design works contain the ideological expressions of the designer, the design client or even a specific group within society. This study utilizes semiotics analysis to decipher signs (visual elements, color, text elements and composition) that reflect the embodiment of women designers in work of three women designers. The initial design by Yolanda Santosa is for the packaging of Hustler sex toys, the second design is by Nita Darsono for a Women Empowerment campaign advertisement for BBC Indonesia and the last artwork is by Patricia Untario for the 'Women Speak Art' design showcased during Jakarta Art Week 2019. These three designs present the issue of embodiment in different ways, contrasting with the portrayal of women in previous media representations that often perpetuate the myth of flawless beauty.

The experience of women's embodiment in society is indirectly reflected in the works of women designers through the use of semiotic sources in conveying meaning. The design works that will be analyzed are those of women designers that address issues related to women's embodiment. The first stage involves identifying the detailed content of the text and images to understand the relationship between them. The semiotics analysis utilized in this study refers to Barthes's theory. Piliang (2003) explains the two levels of signification (staggered systems) by Roland Barthes in semiotics, namely denotation and connotation. Denotation is the relationship between the signifier and the signified, between the sign and its reference to reality and its meaning is direct, such as a photograph of a person. On the other hand, the connotation is an indirect and open-ended meaning. It creates second-layer meanings when the signifier is linked to aspects such as

feelings, beliefs or specific emotions. An example of this is a flower that connotes affection or a skull that is associated with danger.

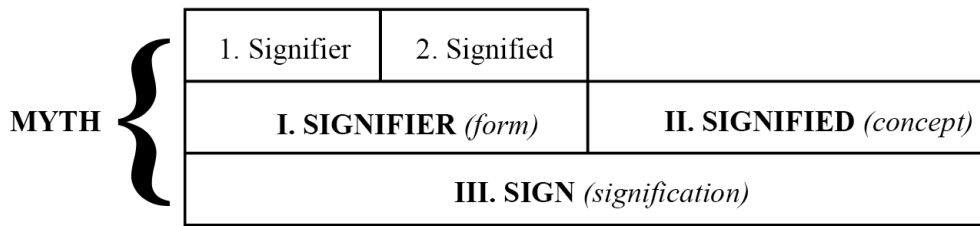


Chart 1. The signification process (Barthes, 1991)

According to Barthes, this connotation will later develop into a myth as the coding of meaning and social values (meaning connotation/arbitrator) is considered natural or taken for granted. Barthes (1991) argues that myth is a second-level semiological system. Furthermore, signs in the first system become signifiers in the second system. After analyzing the works of women designers semiotically, the next step is to analyze them through a deconstruction approach. A deconstruction reading can reveal the marginalization of a group in a binary opposition that tends to be fixed and can be reinterpreted creatively through blurring or reversing the hierarchical boundaries between them.

3. Discussion

3.1. *Semiotic Analysis of Works by Women designers*

3.1.1. *Semiotic Analysis of Yolanda Santosa's Design*

Yolanda Santosa designed the packaging for the sex toy brand Hustler. She designed a branding and packaging design for Hustler that is different from previous designs that often used erotic and vulgar images of half-naked women with vibrant colors. The poster design below represents Hustler's branding, including its products, names and packaging designs. The image shows four sex toy packages and products in various shapes and colors, including pink, purple, white and red. The text that appears on the packaging design includes "bad girl vibe", "nonconformist rabbit", "gossip ring" and "hustler heartbreaker". The denotation of the photography, packaging design and products shows the true meaning of the products, which are colorful sex toys. The text can also be understood literally. However, in understanding the signs, both visual and text, they reinforce each other, so hidden meanings or connotations can be traced. At the first level of denotation, the combination of the signifier and the signified produces a new sign, which is connotation.

Those signs, if connoted, can be described as follows. First, the colours of Hustler's sex toy products have a palette reminiscent of the colour palette of woman beauty products such as cosmetics. In addition, the combination of a black background colour contrasting with product colours such as red, purple, pink, red and white with sans serif fonts and transparent packaging material creates a sexy and luxurious image. This combination of signs means that the connotation of Hustler sex toys is equivalent to fashion accessories and luxury make-up for women. The design of Hustler sex toys is aimed at women as a target market that prefers products that are more intimate with

themselves, because they resemble accessories and make-up, as well as functioning as a means of personal pleasure, in this case sexual activity that touches the intimate organs of the woman body, either with a partner or even for herself. This is in line with Attwood's (2005) view of how sex products are targeted at a new market, women consumers as the mainstream, with a focus on sex business sites that construct new perspectives on active and independent female sexuality influenced by discourses of fashion, beauty, consumerism, bodily pleasure and women's own sensuality. Unlike the packaging designs that dominate the sex toy market, which usually feature images of half-naked women in various sensual poses and expressions, with the male gaze as the main target. Hustler's sex toy products are actually intended for women by removing images of erotic women. This phenomenon shows that women are the target market as well as men. Referring to Döring (2020), who explains that although much of the sex market is dominated by men, the sex toy market is also attractive to women, with companies run by women and/or targeting a large percentage of female consumers. There is also widespread feminist and queer support for the use of sex toys.

Other connotations arise from the layout of the text that anchors the product content, such as "bad girl vibe", "nonconformist rabbit", "gossip ring" and "hustler heartbreaker", which can mean the personality and lifestyle of sensual and adventurous women. These phrases are in contrast to the texts that are usually displayed on sex toy packaging designs, which often use explicit and sexual language. Yolanda attempts to challenge the visualization that prioritizes the male gaze by reclaiming women's pleasure and sexual experiences. Redefining the image of women in the sex toy industry may be her awareness of interpreting and positioning herself as a women's market. The design of Hustler Sex Toys targeting women creates a meaning that women are able to legitimise an active role in expressing sexual practices freely, independently and confidently.



Figure 2. Yolanda Santosa's design for packaging design of Hustler Toys
 Source: <https://thedieline.com/blog/2012/3/22/inside-the-studio-ferroconcrete.html>

This kind of design effort can be interpreted as a challenge to the binary opposition that often appears in advertising media, television programs and movies that create the "beauty myth". Mass media beauty standards have contributed to the beauty industry and the worship of the body, such as diet programs, spas, fitness centers, cosmetic surgery,

skincare and so on. Referring to Wolf (2004), she states that female viewers allow mass media to capture their attention by focusing only on the body size, clothing, make-up and hairstyle of female performers on television without paying attention to the content of the show. This is how the myth of beauty works with optimum efficiency. Going back to the design of Hustler Toys, Yolanda Santosa as designer actually show her ability to understand the needs and body experiences of female viewers or consumers who should be diverse. At least Hustler’s packaging design can tap the awareness of consumers, especially female consumers and the patriarchal culture that is hegemonic by the myth of white, slim, sensual and domestic beauty.

3.1.2. *Semiotic Analysis of Nita Darsono’s Design*

Nita Darsono designed a “Women Empowerment” campaign on BBC Indonesia's social media account, featuring eight sequential comic-like slides that combine illustrations and text. To understand the meaning at both the denotative and connotative levels, it is necessary to break down the elements of the sign. The following table shows the breakdown of the sign levels that appear.











Figure 3. Nita Darsono’s design for BBC Indonesia with the theme of women empowerment
Source: Instagram @bbcindonesia

This eight-sequential slide designed by Nita Darsono for the “Women Empowerment” campaign on BBC Indonesia's social media account communicates a message to women to reinterpret the stereotypes that have been holding them back, through the portrayal of multiple identities of women side-by-side. The work communicates by breaking down binary opposition categorizations and presenting subordination in representation. For example, in slide three with the text “Liking children WITHOUT being a mother!” and slide six “Being a housewife AND working in the office”, reveal the connotations or myths of the perfect feminine mother, who is capable of giving birth, raising children and managing household chores, is not superior to women

who do not have children or who work in offices. Women can embrace both domestic work and work without any hindrance. This is in line with Heraty's view (2019) that in a materialistic environment, a woman's dependence on her husband to seek wealth can be equally productive if she can produce offspring. However, humans can not only be seen as biological facts and biological facts can be accepted as conditions that can be rejected or integrated into their entire existence.

Tabel 3. Two levels of signification in Nita Darsono's design

Picture No	Text Sign/ simultaneously denotation meaning	Illustration Sign/ simultaneously denotation meaning	Connotation Meaning → Myth/Ideology
1	<p><i>As women, do we always have to CHOOSE?</i></p> 	<p>A picture of a woman in a yellow-striped sweater with a red background. This generates the connotative meaning that the woman is the main character who is contemplating socially constructed role choices (from the text) in society.</p>	<p>The connotative meaning produced is that the woman is the main character who is contemplating the socially constructed role choices (from the text) in society.</p>
2	<p><i>No! we can be ANYTHING!</i></p> 	<p>The same woman sitting on a park bench.</p>	<p>The woman is looking ahead while thinking that she should be free to choose any role in her life.</p>
3	<p><i>Keen in children WITHOUT being a mother!</i></p> 	<p>The same woman greets a mother and her toddler passing by.</p>	<p>The main character proposes the idea that it's possible to like children without necessarily being a mother. The myth of motherly instinct always being present in women, whether they have children or not, is challenged.</p>
4	<p><i>We can be strong AND kind-hearted.</i></p>	<p>The same woman observing another woman wearing dark clothing, a necklace and bracelet, with tattoos and blue-dyed hair, petting a dog.</p>	<p>The woman is observing and suggesting that a woman who dresses in punk fashion and pets a dog is a kind-hearted person. Young women who dress in punk fashion are often seen by society as delinquents and rebels. The label attached by society is merely a common assumption that can be</p>

			<p>challenged and does not reflect a person's character.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p><i>Religious AND open-minded.</i></p> 	<p>The same woman/main character sees two women walking side by side. One wearing a hijab and the other wearing a feminist t-shirt.</p>	<p>The connotative meaning that emerges is that women can be both religious and open-minded, as indicated by the two women (one wearing a hijab and the other wearing a feminist t-shirt). This ideology aims to dissolve the dichotomy between religious and secular.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p><i>Being a stay-at-home mom AND working in an office.</i></p> 	<p>The same woman/main character sees two women passing by. One is a formally dressed woman who is busy talking on the phone and the other is a mother carrying a baby, as in slide three.</p>	<p>The connotative meaning that emerges is that it's not a problem if a woman works in an office or becomes a stay-at-home mom. The ideology that emerges is that it's common to find women who work and are also stay-at-home moms. Being a stay-at-home mom does not make a woman subordinate to a working woman and vice versa.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p><i>Feeling love for oneself AND for a partner.</i></p> 	<p>The main character woman pets a cat with a background of a man and a woman leaning on each other on a park bench.</p>	<p>The connotative meaning that emerges is the idea of being able to love oneself as well as a partner. The status of being a single or a coupled woman is something that doesn't need to be compared.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p><i>We are free to be ourselves without COMPARISON and JUDGMENT!</i></p> 	<p>The same woman/main character is smiling while stretching her arms up.</p>	<p>The connotative meaning that emerges is the sense of relief and freedom to be oneself without fear of being judged and compared, concluding the sequential series of the previous seven slides. The ideology that emerges is that women should be free and independent in finding their own identity and not be bound by societal rules and judgments.</p>

The body of the designer, Nita Darsono, indirectly reflects the situation of the society in which she lives. Social construction also regulates the way members of society behave like eyes that watch over. For Foucault (Synott, 2003), the eyes are not viewed as

organs of sight but as instruments of power and are political in nature. Sight is not just vision, but also knowledge and power (*voir, savoir and pouvoir*). He explained that society is an institutionalized surveillance system. Society's gaze on Nita's image appears in both the text and accompanying images in the form of binary opposition of women's roles in society. Especially the emphasis at the end of the slide in the text “We are free to be ourselves without being “COMPARED and JUDGED!”, the words compared and judged are verbs that are performed by society as a form of social control that watches over its members”. Through her work, Nita Darsono offers diverse visual representations to be freely chosen by the subject who continues to process in realizing their identity, namely the women who receive the message.

3.1.3. *Semiotic Analysis of Patricia Untario's Design*

The work of Patricia Untario was exhibited at the Sudirman MRT Station with the theme ‘Women Speak Art’ in Jakarta Art Week 2019, along with eight other artists sponsored by Dove. Public spaces such as bus stops have replaced galleries for artists to exhibit their works, which is in line with Mirzoeff's (2004) view that visual culture leads our attention away from structural forms and focuses on visual experiences in everyday life.

Patricia Untari's artwork uses stained glass as a medium then combined with the play of light to depict five diverse women's heads. The denotative meaning is obtained directly through the image, with the first woman having curly shoulder-length hair and dark brown skin, smiling broadly. The second woman has gray and yellow hair and a tight smile, while the third woman wears a hijab and also smiles. The fourth woman has short black hair and the fifth woman, who looks at the previous four women while smiling, has curly brown hair. All of them gaze at the audience, except for the fifth woman. The connotative meaning that emerges is the diversity of women's beauty and embodiment, from skin color, age, religion and hair type. Meanwhile, another connotative meaning that is revealed is that Dove's identity as the main sponsor intends to campaign for and celebrate women's diversity, especially in Indonesia, through the theme “My Hair. My Say”.



Figure 3. Patricia Untario's design at the MRT Stop in Jakarta Art Week 2019 with the theme ‘Women Talk Art’ with the main sponsor of the Dove brand

Source: <https://www.cosmopolitan.co.id/article/read/8/2019/16472/jakarta-punya-pekan-seni-rupa-jakarta-art-week-2019>

This new beauty myth shifts the dominance of straight and long-haired women in shampoo and beauty product ads. The counter-effort through representation of diverse ages, ethnicities and hair types against the long-standing myth of women's body beauty can be a different visual form of fighting against beauty standards. As Prabasmoro (2006) stated regarding the idealized body: "Because culture cultivates the body, the body also goes through a hierarchy of meaning: beautiful body, quite beautiful, not so beautiful, not beautiful at all. The desired and the unwanted body. Normal and abnormal bodies. Ideal and not so ideal bodies". Therefore, when connected with Patricia Untario's design, the concept of diverse beauty aligns with Wolf's proposition (2004) urging women to liberate themselves from the myth of beauty by envisioning a life within a body unburdened by societal values. Women can imagine a dramatic, spontaneous simulation that arises from a flourishing self-love.

3.2. Reimagining Binary Oppositions as a Reflection of Embodiment in the Works of Women Designers

The three works by women Indonesian designers indirectly reflect issues of embodiment. The meanings that emerge in their works are forms and strategies of positioning their conceptions and sexuality in the midst of social fields. Instead of accepting the established binary opposition system that has subordinated and objectified women, they play with the established semiotic elements of the dual opposition system to create different meanings. In Yolanda Santosa's work, she removes the image of erotic women and focuses on designing products that can be associated with beauty products with more poetic names. Sex toys are treated similarly to cosmetic products, with the hope of giving women a feeling of beauty and sexual adventure that prioritizes women as controllers. This is an attempt to reverse the objectification of women as sexual objects into women as sexual subjects who have full control over their own sexual bodies, rather than based on the male gaze. In Nita Darsono's work, through illustrations and texts that interlock, she shows the choices of women's roles that overlap and expand those choices, rather than comparing their worth. Meanwhile, Puteri's work offers diversity in the representation of women's bodies, including their ethnicity, skin color, hair type, age and religion that represent different groups of women. The representation of women that has been marginalized in popular culture such as advertisements and films is brought together to challenge the beauty myths that have been perpetuated.

The reimagining works by Indonesian women designers can be understood as a form of feminist thinking that is in line with deconstructionist thought because they play with opposing signs and reveal other meanings that have been marginalized. This is consistent with Haryatmoko's opinion (2016) about deconstruction and its goals based on his reading of Derrida: "...deconstruction helps to see what is hidden by history or what it forbids by rearranging history through suppressed elements". At least the goal of deconstruction is achieved in the works of designers in reflecting women's sexuality in contested social fields. Arivia also argues (2018) that deconstruction is important for feminism because it brings benefits.

"First, understanding the essence of women can be questioned. The essence that is considered natural can be dismantled because it is only considered as 'text' (discourse). Second, this dismantling produces different interpretations of existing women's texts. Women's experiences can emerge and show differences in the construction of male and values and even show how the construction of values

is completely different and not inferior to existing male values. Third, the dismantling of masculine texts gives birth to feminine texts that ultimately give birth to representations of women”.

Therefore, it can be concluded that through the awareness of women designers about dominant discourse in a society still dominated by masculine values, feminist texts are brought forth in the form of design. The representation that emerges in design is a different interpretation of values that are considered natural for women, achieved through deconstruction and reversing of meanings that tend to be permanent through semiotic elements, both visual and textual.

Through the difference in representation from designs that are dominated by patriarchal views, a counter-discourse is indirectly presented in design, particularly by showing the differences in issues and experiences of women in the world, which is a reflection of the thoughts of women designers that are embedded in their embodiment. Referring to Arivia (2018), a feminist way of thinking like this can also offer knowledge that is different from the dominant Western philosophy, which prioritizes universal reason that structures the world based on independent parts of thought and body. In contrast, feminist philosophy believes that there is no universal reason, but rather particular concepts that are formed from human experiences that are influenced by the body and mind. Furthermore, Arivia explains that Western philosophy conceives of humans having a different nature from animals due to their ability to use universal reason. In contrast, feminist philosophy believes that there is no essential nature except for social construction. Western philosophy upholds free will resulting from reason, which is considered to be of a higher degree than desire, passion and emotion, which are part of the body. Conversely, feminist philosophy believes that human reason is inseparable from the body. At least through their work, women designers have learned about the consequences of social construction in a binary opposition system that subordinates women as the “other”, which is a response to the injustice that women have naturally received throughout history without questioning its origins by women themselves.

Meanwhile, another form of deconstruction in the works of women designers is the merging of art and design fields in collaboration with advertisers (capital owners), which has become a common phenomenon in the visual cultural arena lately. The way Patricia’s work is in line with Sugiharto’s (2019) statement that the barrier between high culture and pop culture (low) in the postmodern situation at the end of the 20th century has faded. Pop culture has become an arena where cultural changes occur and is no longer seen as shallow and leisurely entertainment. The combination of high art and the pop world can be found in the works of Peter Blake, who designed the cover of “Sergeant Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band” - The Beatles; Richard Hamilton designed “White Album” - The Beatles and Andy Warhol designed “Sticky Fingers” - Rolling Stone. Through these new media, women designers can spread ideas about their feminist perspectives.

On the other hand, it is also worth examining the collaboration between Dove advertisers and art events. Perhaps this is a form of ‘pseudo-feminism’ by celebrating the differences in age, ethnicity and women's bodies as a capitalist facade. Therefore, it is necessary to examine whether the communication is created by agents (advertisers and their relationship with the media) or individual expressions. However, at least such communication actions are not always understood negatively. Concerning the influence of capitalism, Deleuze states that the positive aspect of capitalism is its ability to show

the deterritorialization of life: the ability to take something and translate it into a stream that provides new meanings (Haryatmoko, 2016).

Similarly, the application of market research to segment lifestyle is a necessity in the design process and when combined with the individual expression of women designers, it is a win-win solution tactic to embrace both art and marketing activities. This is a characteristic of visual culture, where the reading of texts (in this case advertisements or packaging design) achieves its 'meaning' through the elements of signs, where meaning is embedded through interpretation encoded in rules called codes that are distributed by agents (designers/artists), while the reader or viewer is the element that makes decisions in the process (Mirzoeff, 2004). Ultimately, through design, women designers can convey their inseparable bodily awareness from their thoughts, by exposing dominant discourse that is stabilizing in the form of binary oppositions that often sideline oppressed groups through deconstruction, reorganization, merging and reversal of semiotic elements between the two poles and playing in-between spaces. Through this unique bodily experience, women can produce their knowledge.

4. Conclusion

Through semiotic analysis of both visual signs and verbal texts, the three designs by women designers depict different signs of the woman body's experience compared to previous representations of women that often objectified and mythologized their beauty. The interpretation of the designs indicates that binary oppositional logic has been deconstructed and redefined by women designers. The deconstruction of signs is carried out through fusion, meltings, combination and playful use of signs. Women designers design on semiotic sources of woman representation that dominate women's perspectives and thinking in order to challenge and represent them through different visualizations. This strategic utilization of semiotic resources is paramount to the articulation of novel visualizations that challenge prevailing norms. These challenges include removing the erotic representation of women and presenting them as sexually equal rather than mere sexual objects in Yolanda Santos's Hustler design. Secondly, questioning the stereotypes of women's subordinate roles in society by providing diverse choices, as done by Nita Darsono. And finally, challenging the myth of beauty that has dictated women to conform to media's notion of flawless beauty, thus disregarding the diversity of women's bodies, as exemplified by Patricia Untario. These three women designers are able to redefine the identity of women, which often marginalizes their bodily experiences and thoughts. In this context, these design works also become a social negotiation arena. The clash of ideologies that occurs in this arena is expected to serve as a catalyst for understanding differences and nurturing tolerance. Moreover, it also has the potential to become a source of women's knowledge production and feminist design criticism that prioritizes women's embodiment. In light of this, the intrinsic potency of these design endeavors is underscored, emanating not only as transformative artworks but also as catalysts for the ongoing evolution of societal perspectives and scholarly discourse.

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