

ABSTRACT

Amidst a saturated media landscape that triggers ad-avoidance, the 2023 Marjan "Baruna" syrup commercial emerged as an anomaly through its soft selling strategy and epic visual storytelling. The brand successfully transformed itself from a mere food commodity into a cultural icon and a time marker for the arrival of the holy month of Ramadan. This study aims to decipher the implications of epic fantasy visualization on product attributes, the ideological mechanisms in naturalizing cultural myths, and the impact of visual storytelling on the collapse of audience critical resistance in shaping brand image. This research employs a qualitative descriptive-interpretative approach using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, covering the orders of denotation, connotation, and myth. Data was validated through in-depth interviews with five informants to confirm audience reception. The analysis reveals that the heroic narrative against a sea monster (denotation) symbolizes the Muslim struggle against worldly desires (connotation). The myth analysis proves that Marjan successfully naturalized its position as the "Epicenter of Ramadan Joy," where the functional value of the product transformed into prestigious sign value. The use of digital storytelling proved to trigger narrative transportation, breaking down cognitive resistance while strengthening brand uniqueness. This soft selling strategy effectively solidifies Marjan's dominance as the Top of Mind in the Indonesian syrup market, where the brand is no longer consumed merely for functional reasons, but as an integral part of societal cultural rituals.

Keywords: Roland Barthes Semiotics, Soft Selling, Visual Storytelling, Brand Image, Marjan Advertisement.