

**DECODING LOEWE'S TOMATO PHENOMENON
ON INSTAGRAM: A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS**

By

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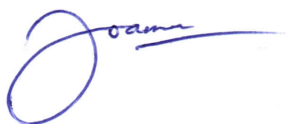


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STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person, nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis.



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ABSTRACT

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The study examines the mechanisms through which Loewe's tomato phenomenon on Instagram encodes cultural meaning via Roland Barthes' semiotic framework encompassing three levels: denotation, connotation and myth. Through the application of an analytical instrument developed for this study, 11 visuals drawn from three series of Loewe's Instagram posts were examined. The findings reveal that the tomato functions as the central sign through which Loewe communicates an evolving construction of luxury, from the natural, to the transformative, to the transcendent. At the denotative level, the tomato is presented in three material states: a luxury product, a creative process and a hot air balloon. At the connotative level, each series embeds the tomato within various symbolic registers and cultural contexts, gradually detaching it from its material reality. At the mythological level, the series naturalizes a class-specific construction of luxury, rooted in a singular capitalist consumerist ideology. The study concludes that Loewe encodes the cultural meaning of luxury through a cumulative semiotic operation, in which the tomato is progressively invested with cultural weight at each level of the sign system.

Keywords: Semiotics, Barthes framework, Luxury Marketing Communications, Loewe, Instagram, Tomato Phenomenon

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To my father, who is my greatest source of inspiration. Your wisdom and life story ceaselessly motivate me to achieve greater heights, for it is your legacy I dream of one day fulfilling. Thank you for instilling in me the same drive and passion I have seen you uphold throughout my entire life.

To my mother, who has inspired the topic of this dissertation. Growing up exposed to the allure of luxury has awakened within me, a deep fascination for the fashion industry I carry to this day. Here's to the woman who taught me that every item in her closet has a story.

And a reminder to myself,

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams”

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