

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher analyzed selected scenes from the advertisement entitled *Frida Baby Presents Real Reviews: NoseFrida Edition*, focusing specifically on scenes that convey feminist messages. Each scene is examined individually using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis framework, which involves identifying the signifier and the signified, followed by interpreting the scene through the three levels of meaning: denotative, connotative, and myth. The findings are then summarized descriptively to highlight the denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings embedded in each scene. A total of eight scenes and sequences are selected for analysis, with a focus on those that visually and verbally support the presence of feminist messages. The following section presents the findings and the discussion of the semiotic analysis of the advertisement:

4.1 Findings

After viewing the advertisement multiple times in order to capture detailed elements of the scenes, matching screenshot with its corresponding voice-over and/or text, and transcribing on-screen texts and audio dialogues, eight representative scenes were selected based on their relevance to the study's objectives, especially those that showcase representations of motherhood, fatherhood, and shared caregiving. They are as followed:


4.1.1 Scene 1



In the first scene, there are several elements that can be identified and analyzed. These elements are presented as follows:

Time	0'0''
Visual	The screen displays the large text "Frida Baby Presents Real Reviews" over a soft blue-toned nursery background, featuring baby equipment and a blurred figure of a woman in the background.
Text elements on screen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- "Frida Baby presents"- "Real Reviews"- ★★★★★ (five stars)- Simulated "Post a Review" button
Spoken text	"Frida present real review really written by real parents"

Based on the image and the elements contained within it, we can identify the components of the semiotic analysis, namely the signifier, the signified, the denotative meaning, the connotative meaning, and the myth. These components are as follows:

Signifier	Signified	
	Real parenting stories are the most trustworthy and emotionally meaningful source of truth in baby care.	
Denotative	Connotative	Myth
The scene introduces the theme of real user testimonials	“Real Reviews” signals authenticity, with the five-star rating and review button encouraging trust and community, while the soft blue tones and realistic mother evoke sincerity and calm.	Real parents serve as the most valid source of judgment for baby products because their assessments are grounded in lived experience rather than brand promises, making their evaluations more trustworthy and relatable.

In the opening scene, the screen displays the large text “Frida Baby Presents Real Reviews” against a soft blue-toned nursery background. The setting includes various pieces of baby equipment and a blurred figure of a woman, likely a mother, subtly visible in the background. On-screen text elements such as “Frida Baby presents,” “Real Reviews,” a five-star rating (★★★★★), and a simulated “Post a Review” button immediately convey the premise of the advertisement. Literally, this frame serves to introduce the central theme of the video: real user testimonials about Frida Baby’s products, setting the tone for authenticity and relatability in the upcoming narrative.

The connotative elements in this scene work together to construct a deeper cultural and emotional message beyond the literal visuals. The phrase “Real Reviews” emphasizes honesty and authenticity, positioning the brand as

transparent and relatable, while simultaneously rejecting the notion of manipulative, overly polished advertising. The inclusion of a five-star rating symbolizes the highest standard of product quality and suggests widespread user satisfaction. The simulated “Post a Review” button serves as an invitation for audience engagement, reinforcing a sense of community and shared parenting experiences. The soft blue color palette according to color psychology research and experts such as Birren (1978) evokes feelings of calmness, safety, and trust—qualities that are particularly important in the design of baby-related products to promote a sense of comfort and reassurance. Additionally, the blurred silhouette of a mother and nursery scene provides contextual grounding, framing the advertisement as a reflection of real-life parenting moments. These elements together promote an image of Frida Baby as a trusted, community-centered brand rooted in emotional sincerity and parental support.

In Barthes’ (1972) framework, myth refers to cultural values or ideologies that become normalized and accepted as natural truths. Within this opening frame, several myths are conveyed that shape the ideological foundation of the advertisement. The scene presents the myth that real parents are the most valid judges of baby products, suggesting that authenticity and lived experience hold more weight than corporate promises. It reinforces the belief that product quality should be demonstrated through actual use rather than idealized portrayals. The inclusion of an open “Post a Review” button and the emphasis on five-star ratings suggest a myth of transparency—implying that a trustworthy brand is one that invites public scrutiny. Conversely, the ad rejects the traditional myth that advertisements must rely on polished actors or glamorous settings, and it

challenges the assumption that testimonials are inherently manipulative marketing tools.

As cultural theorist Gill (2007) notes, advertising has increasingly shifted toward strategies that prioritize authenticity and intimacy, reflecting broader cultural demands for “the real” in media representation. Similarly, Banet-Weiser (2012) argues that “authenticity” has become a powerful currency in brand culture, especially in industries targeting women and parents. This aligns with Frida Baby’s branding approach, which uses raw and relatable scenarios to foster emotional resonance and credibility. Ultimately, Frida Baby constructs a new myth: “honesty is the new marketing power.” Rather than dramatize or exaggerate, the brand communicates its message through the slogan of “real parents, real problems, real solutions.” As an introduction, this opening frame sets the tone for the entire ad, presenting it as intimate, credible, and intentionally anti-fake. It calls upon viewers to trust not in the perfection of advertising but in the authenticity of shared parenting experiences.

4.1.2 Scene 2



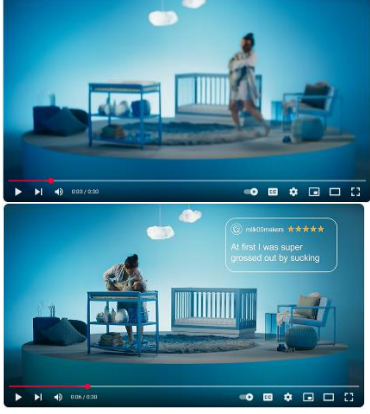


In the second scene, multiple key elements emerge that warrant close examination and interpretation. These components, which contribute to the overall meaning and impact of the scene, can be outlined as follows:

Time	0'3'' – 0'6''
Visual	In the scene, a mother gently holds her baby above a changing table. The dominant color scheme features pastel blue tones, which are further softened by gentle warm lighting. Surrounding them are several carefully placed objects: a baby crib, a chair, a small table, and whimsical decorative clouds hanging from the ceiling.
Text elements on screen	“At first I was super grossed out by sucking” – a user review from “milk00makers.”
Spoken text	“At first, I was super grossed out by sucking”

Drawing from the visual and contextual elements present in the image, we can identify the key components of semiotic analysis: the signifier, the signified,

the denotative meaning, the connotative meaning, and the underlying myth. These aspects are detailed as follows:

Signifier	Signified	
	Emotional and physical reality of motherhood particularly the solitary and sometimes unpleasant aspects that are rarely shown in idealized media portrayals.	
Denotative	Connotative	Myth
A mother is seen holding her baby, moving from a chair toward a crib.	The image conveys that motherhood is not a pristine or aesthetically beautiful duty, but one filled with harsh realities. Despite this, it remains an act of love and strength.	The mother as the primary, empowered domestic caregiver—capable of managing unpleasant aspects of childcare. Also, realism functions as resistance against traditional depictions of women in advertising, who are typically idealized as flawless, cheerful, and tireless.

In this scene, the images above literally depict a nursery room designed with a minimalist aesthetic. The mother appears to be in the process of changing or cleaning the baby, displaying a focused and responsible expression.

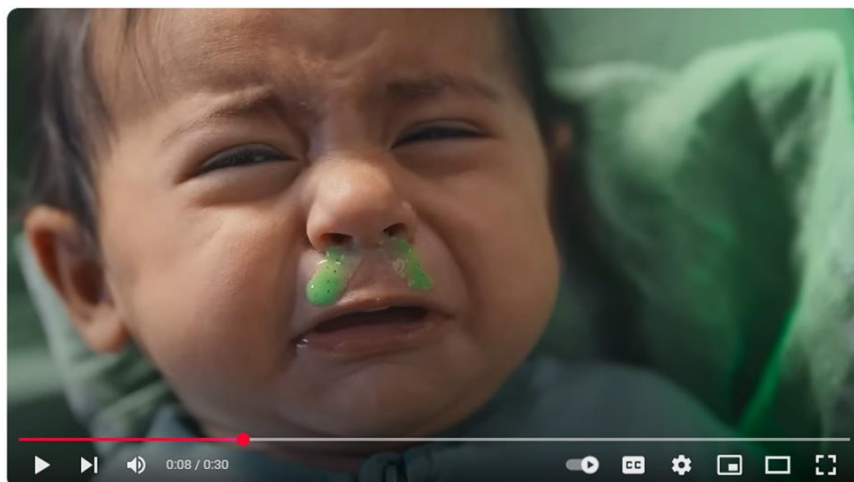
Connotatively, motherhood is redefined not as a pursuit of perfection, but as a role grounded in emotional and physical struggles. The image of the mother working alone at the beginning of the advertisement can be interpreted as a

representation of female independence or self-sufficiency. However, the absence of a male figure in this early moment also reinforces the idea that mothers are typically the first to notice signs of a child's discomfort and are expected to act immediately. This reflects what Chodorow (1978) describes as the "intensive mothering ideology," where women are socially conditioned to take primary responsibility for emotional and physical caregiving. The mother's facial expression underscores the realism of this role—showing visible exhaustion and vulnerability—thus rejecting the myth of the “perfect mother” often idealized in media. According to Douglas and Michaels (2004), the image of the flawless “new mom” is a cultural construct that places impossible standards on women, leading to guilt and emotional fatigue. In contrast, this advertisement challenges that ideal by portraying maternal labor as both messy and authentic. Moreover, the on-screen user review—“At first, I was super grossed out by sucking...”—reflects a raw honesty about the less glamorous aspects of caregiving. This moment aligns with Hooks' (2000) view that feminist approaches to motherhood must embrace truth-telling and reject sanitized, patriarchal narratives. By elevating the voice of an ordinary woman, the ad validates lived experience as a source of authority, echoing what Gill (2007) identifies as a shift in media toward “new femininities” that value emotional authenticity and resistance to traditional gender scripts.

Myths constructed in this scene include the portrayal of the mother as the primary, empowered domestic caregiver—someone capable of managing the most unpleasant aspects of childcare with competence and resolve. This depiction aligns with what Douglas and Michaels (2004) call the “new momism,” a cultural myth that both glorifies and burdens women with ideals of perfect, all-consuming

motherhood. However, this scene simultaneously resists that ideal through visual realism. Rather than presenting the mother as flawless, serene, and perpetually cheerful, she is shown as exhausted, unfiltered, and emotionally candid. This reflects a broader shift in advertising toward what Banet-Weiser (2012) terms “authentic brand culture,” where imperfection and emotional honesty are leveraged to build trust and relatability. Furthermore, by allowing the mother to express discomfort openly—both through facial expressions and through the text of the user review—the advertisement challenges gendered expectations that women should speak modestly or conceal unpleasant truths. As Gill (2007) observes, postfeminist media often reclaims emotional vulnerability as a source of strength rather than weakness. Thus, the scene functions as a counter-narrative to patriarchal media tropes and the myth of the idealized “supermom.” Instead of glamorized caregiving, it celebrates maternal authenticity as a form of everyday heroism, positioning real, imperfect labor as the foundation of feminist empowerment.


4.1.3 Scene 3



In the third scene, various elements can be observed and examined. These components are outlined as follows:"

Time	0'7'' – 0'8''
Visual	The image features a close-up of a baby's face with two streams of green mucus coming out of its nostrils. The baby's eyes are squinted, and its mouth is wide open in a cry. The background is softly lit and has a greenish hue.
Text elements on screen	-
Spoken text	"nose"

In the third scene, several important elements appear that deserve careful observation and analysis. These aspects, which shape the scene's overall message and effect, are detailed below:

Signifier	Signified	
	The raw, unfiltered reality of infant care specifically the physical discomfort of a sick baby and the urgency of parental response.	
Denotative	Connotative	Myth
A close-up of a crying baby's face, showing two streams of green mucus coming out of its nostrils.	This image subverts the polished aesthetic often found in parenting advertisements. Instead of an idealized, soft-focus baby, we see raw bodily fluids and intense emotion. These visual elements disrupt the idealized portrayal of caregiving by	Women are active agents, capable of confronting extreme and uncomfortable situations for their children. The image also challenges the sanitized aesthetic of motherhood, where babies and mothers are expected to appear

	exposing audiences to the raw and chaotic realities of maternal labor.	perpetually clean and pleasant.
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This image presents a close-up of a crying baby's face, with two streams of green mucus visibly coming out of the nostrils. The baby's expression reflects extreme discomfort—eyes tightly shut and mouth wide open in a loud cry. This image pops while the audio says “snot out of my kid’s nose” in order to strengthen the focus of the audiences into it. The background features soft lighting with a greenish hue. Denotatively, this image portrays the harsh reality of a baby suffering from a cold. The discomfort is depicted clearly and unapologetically, highlighting a situation rarely shown in mainstream advertising.

This image subverts the polished and idealized aesthetic commonly found in parenting advertisements. Instead of presenting a soft-focus, sanitized image of motherhood, the depiction of visible green mucus offers extreme visual honesty, rejecting the notion of perfect, sanitized portrayals of maternal care. The loudly crying baby further humanizes the infant, drawing attention to the emotional and physical demands mothers face on a daily basis. The dramatic close-up intensifies the viewer's discomfort while simultaneously evoking empathy and admiration for maternal resilience. These visual choices reflect a feminist critique by challenging mainstream representations of motherhood that often erase the messy, exhausting, and emotionally raw aspects of caregiving. As Tyler (2009) explains in her discussion of abjection, these elements confront audiences with the visceral and unsettling reality of maternal labor, rejecting the sanitized and romanticized imagery typically associated with care work. Additionally, the unapologetic

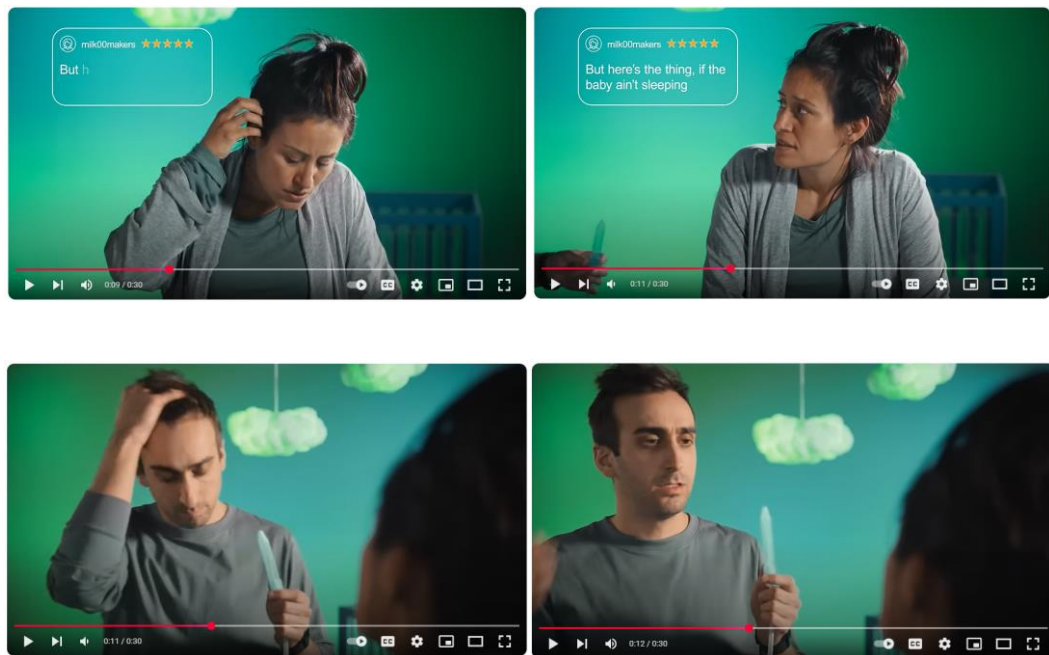
portrayal of mucus and crying contests the dominant cultural expectation that women must maintain cleanliness, composure, and control, even in moments of care. This supports Douglas' (1966) theory that cultural definitions of "uncleanliness" are often rooted in deep-seated anxieties surrounding the female body and caregiving roles. By foregrounding these "unpleasant" aspects, the advertisement disrupts normative ideals and invites a more honest, embodied understanding of maternal experience.

The portrayal in this scene resists the dominant media narrative that mothers and their children must always appear spotless, graceful, and emotionally controlled. It challenges several entrenched cultural myths: that mothers should be perpetually presentable and gentle, that babies in advertising must conform to an idealized standard of cuteness and cleanliness, and that caregiving is an inherently beautiful and effortless act. These myths align with what Douglas and Michaels (2004) term the "new momism"—an ideology that pressures women to embrace intensive, joyful motherhood while masking the real physical and emotional toll of caregiving. Instead, the advertisement disrupts this framework by dismantling the image of the "graceful mother with the adorable baby" and replacing it with a more radical figure: the warrior mother. This figure confronts the biological messiness, emotional exhaustion, and physical demands of motherhood with a sense of purpose and unapologetic strength.

As Barthes (1977) argues, myth operates by transforming culturally constructed meanings into naturalized truths. In this context, the sanitized, aestheticized image of mother-child perfection becomes a myth that obscures the labor and discomfort involved in caregiving. The advertisement resists this

process by making the invisible visible—by showing mucus, mess, and maternal exhaustion, it deconstructs the illusion of caregiving as effortless and instead frames it as a form of labor that is both real and worthy of recognition. This reframing echoes Ahmed’s (2014) notion that emotions and bodily expressions are political—they reveal the material realities of lived experience and push back against sanitized cultural expectations. Here, maternal authenticity is not a failure of grace but a marker of resilience and feminist agency.

4.1.4 Scene 4




The fourth scene contains a number of identifiable elements that can be analyzed in detail. These elements are listed below:

Time	0’6’’ – 0’13’’
Visual	A mother with loosely tied hair, dressed in casual homewear, touches her hair in one hand and a man stands in a nursery touching his hair while holding a NoseFrida device.

Text elements on screen	“But here’s the thing: if the baby ain’t sleeping...”
Spoken text	“But here’s the thing: if the baby ain’t sleeping, ain’t nobody sleeping.”

The forth scene presents a number of significant elements that invite thorough analysis and interpretation. The following outlines these components that contribute to the scene’s meaning and impact.

Signifier	Signified	
	<p>The shared emotional and mental burden of parenting, highlighting the stress, confusion, and teamwork required in caring for a baby especially when dealing with illness.</p>	
Denotative	Connotative	Myth
Top Left : A tired-looking mother, hair loosely tied, is touching her hair near the ear in one hand. A customer review appears: “But here’s the	<p>This image resists idealized portrayals of motherhood by highlighting emotional labor. It reflects a postfeminist</p>	<p>Mothers are allowed to feel exhaustion, doubt, and still be strong. Fatigue is not a weakness but a sign of bravery and</p>

<p>thing...”.</p> <p>Top Right : The mother looks to the right. A customer review continues to appear: “if the baby ain’t sleeping...”.</p> <p>Bottom Left: A man touches his head on the top with a confused or slightly uncomfortable expression while the background voice continues to appear : “ain’t nobody sleeping”.</p> <p>Bottom Right: The man looks the mother while holding the NoseFrida product.</p>	<p>media sensibility where female emotion is no longer hidden or sanitized but presented as a valid and powerful form of truth (Gill, 2007; Ahmed, 2014). Meanwhile, in this context, the man’s gesture may signal detachment or lack of deep understanding of the product or caregiving experience. Unlike the earlier scene with the woman who displayed clear emotional fatigue, the man’s gesture feels casual, almost performative. The aspirator is being held loosely—as if he is unsure of its significance or function.</p>	<p>endurance in caregiving. In addition, the man’s nonchalant expression and uncertain gesture reflect a broader social myth where fathers or male figures are often depicted as inexperienced or detached in the face of parenting duties—especially those requiring emotional or physical effort. However, within the ironic tone of the Frida Baby ad, this portrayal actually challenges the myth by highlighting the absurdity of how emotionally removed and under-informed male figures often are in caregiving conversations.</p>
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Denotatively, the first two images portray a mother in a moment of pause—likely after tending to her child—offering a glimpse into the everyday emotional reality of motherhood. Meanwhile, the other two pictures depict a man standing in a teal-colored nursery set. He is holding a nasal aspirator (specifically a NoseFrida) and is seen running his hand through his hair. His facial expression appears confused, blank, or mildly concerned, indicating a moment of uncertainty or hesitation in the context presented.

Connotatively, the visual elements in the Frida Baby advertisement collectively resist idealized portrayals of motherhood by emphasizing emotional

labor and raw, lived experience. The gesture of placing a hand on the head symbolizes mental exhaustion, stress, or reflection, directly challenging the myth of the “supermom” who is always in control (Ahmed, 2014). This is further emphasized through the depiction of messy hair and casual attire, which defies conventional beauty standards often imposed on mothers by media, presenting instead a more honest and unfiltered image of motherhood (Gill, 2007). The inclusion of on-screen review text validates the personal voice and experience of the mother, giving authority to everyday realities over institutional expertise. This shift is a feminist move that centers lived maternal experience as credible and meaningful (Gill, 2007). Additionally, the use of a teal-green background conveys a nuanced emotional state—balancing fatigue and calm—thus symbolizing the internal struggle mothers often face, while also hinting at resilience. Overall, this image reflects a postfeminist media sensibility, where female emotion is no longer hidden or sanitized but rather presented as a valid and powerful form of truth (Gill, 2007; Ahmed, 2014).

Meanwhile, the two other images convey symbolic meanings about masculinity, emotional distance, and discomfort in caregiving roles, particularly within the domestic and parental sphere. The man's gesture of running his hand through his hair (left image) commonly signifies confusion, hesitation, or stress, suggesting that he feels overwhelmed or out of place. This aligns with Ahmed's (2014) view that such gestures symbolize mental exhaustion or reflection, rejecting the idealized image of a parent—particularly a father figure—who is always in control. Meanwhile, his blank and mildly concerned facial expression (right image) implies emotional disconnection, suggesting a struggle to engage

meaningfully with the caregiving context. The teal-green background further emphasizes the caregiving setting, symbolizing both fatigue and serenity, a duality that Gill (2007) identifies as reflective of the emotional labor involved in parenthood. This scene places a male figure—traditionally not associated with such emotional expression—within a feminized space, thus subverting normative gender expectations in parenting.

The background voice line, "*If the baby ain't sleeping... ain't nobody sleeping,*" which appears just before and while the two images of the man spotlighted, carries strong connotative and symbolic meaning—particularly in the context of caregiving roles and household dynamics.

Literally, the phrase means that when the baby is not sleeping, no one in the household—whether it be the mother, father, or other family members—can sleep either. This line underscores the reality that a baby's needs dominate the rhythm of the parents' lives. However, within the visual context of the confused and awkward-looking man in the images, the phrase takes on an ironic tone: although responsibility is supposedly collective ("nobody sleeping"), in social reality, the greatest burden often falls on the mother. As Gill (2007) notes, media representations often elevate the lived emotional experience of mothers, reinforcing the idea that women remain the central figures in caregiving.

In the satirical tone of the *Frida Baby* advertisement, the phrase also mocks the myth that everyone in the household "struggles" equally when the baby cries. In truth, as the visuals suggest, the man appears unprepared, uncomfortable, and emotionally disengaged, as shown through his hair-touching gesture and

blank expression. This reflects Barthes' (1972) theory of *myth*—where cultural ideologies are disguised as natural behaviors. The visual contrast between a passive male figure and the verbal call for collective struggle exposes how gender roles are not equally distributed, despite appearing to be so.

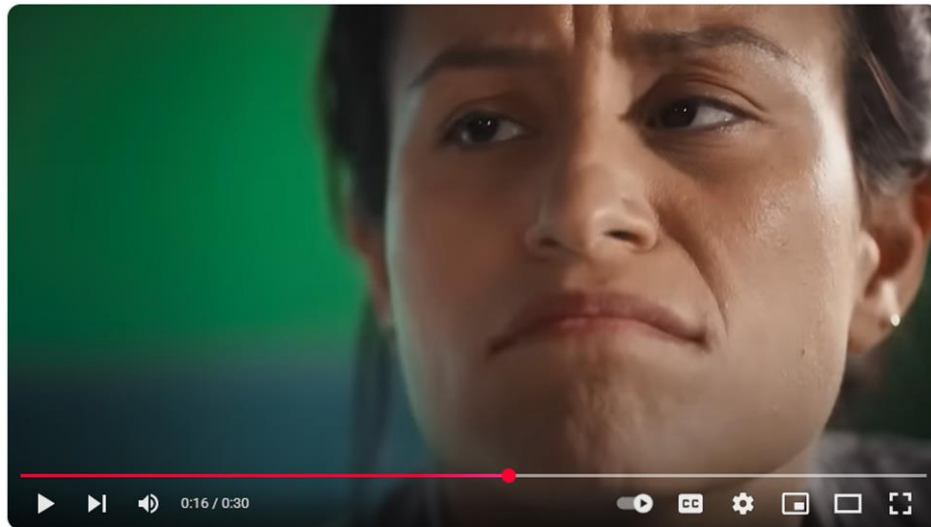
The phrase indirectly demands the active participation of all caregivers. However, the man's distant expression and uncertainty about what to do reflect how men are still often positioned—or position themselves—as passive observers in parenting. According to Warin (2017), while discourses of involved fatherhood have gained visibility, they often remain superficial and performative, lacking deep emotional or practical engagement. Barthes would describe this as a contradiction between the *signifier* (gesture, facial expression) and the *signified* (social meaning or cultural value), which reveals the hidden ideological structures behind what appears ordinary.

In conclusion, the phrase "*If the baby ain't sleeping, ain't nobody sleeping*" carries layers of irony and social critique. While it explicitly expresses a collective sense of exhaustion, it implicitly—through the image of a passive and confused male figure—questions how “collective” caregiving responsibilities truly are in modern parenting culture. As Ahmed (2014) points out, emotional labor and exhaustion are frequently feminized and made invisible when experienced by women, while men's discomfort is often centered and acknowledged, revealing a persistent gender asymmetry in emotional expectations.

In a broader feminist reading, this depiction critiques societal myths of male detachment or incompetence in caregiving. By ironically highlighting the

father's discomfort, the advertisement challenges traditional gender roles and supports what Gill (2007) describes as a postfeminist sensibility, where emotional expression, even when messy or awkward, becomes a valid form of truth.


4.1.5 Scene 5



Several distinct elements are present in the fifth scene, each of which can be examined for further analysis. The following outlines these elements:

Time	0'13'' – 0'16''
Visual	The image shows a close-up of an adult woman's face with a serious and determined expression. Her brows are furrowed and her lips are firmly closed. The background features a teal-blue tone with natural lighting.
Text elements on screen	-
Spoken text	"Don't think about it, just do it."

In the fifth scene, various notable elements arise that require detailed examination and interpretation. These components, which help convey the scene's overall significance, are summarized as follows:

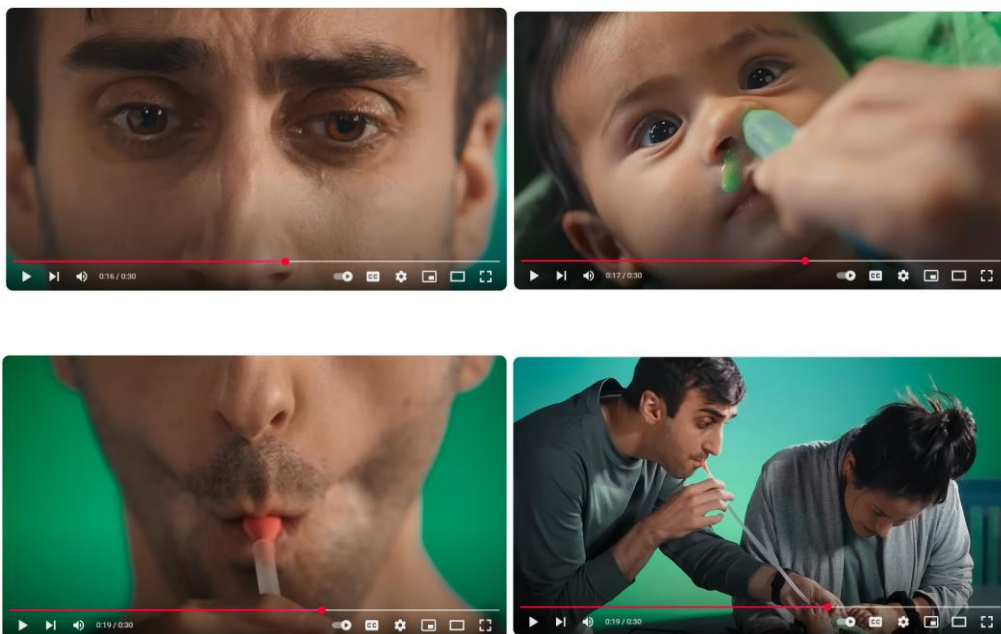
Signifier	Signified	
	The maternal authority and emotional strength that a mother can have in moments of parental urgency. Mothers often take on the role of the pragmatic leader (focuses on practical solutions and actions rather than ideals or theories).	
Denotative	Connotative	Myth
Close-up of an adult woman's (mother's) face with a serious and determined expression.	This depiction resists idealized portrayals of maternal patience and gentleness. Instead, it frames the mother as empowered, rational, and solution-focused. It echoes a feminist approach that centers on visible strength and resilience in the maternal role (Gill, 2007).	Women are capable leaders and decision-makers in the domestic realm. Moreover, addressing the messy aspects of parenting is not shameful but heroic. Finally, feminism can manifest through everyday actions and emotional labor, not just through vocal protest.

The visual shows a close-up of mother's face, marked by a serious and determined expression. Accompanied by the voice-over text, "Don't think about it, just do it," and set against a teal-blue background with natural lighting, the image emphasizes urgency and decisiveness. Her facial features—furrowed brows and firmly closed lips—suggest assertiveness and mental resolve. Denotatively, this moment captures a mother mentally preparing to take action, likely to use the nasal aspirator on her baby. Her expression signals that in moments of caregiving—particularly when removing mucus—there is no room for hesitation; instinct and decisiveness must take precedence over contemplation.

The close-up of the mother's face in this scene highlights her emotional strength and focus, creating space for female subjectivity and agency. Her serious and determined look conveys courage and a readiness to face discomfort for the

well-being of her child. The accompanying phrase, “just do it,” echoes Nike’s well-known slogan, as the response over the “blank husband” prior, symbolizing action, decisiveness, and empowerment (Goldman & Papson, 1998). Delivered in a firm and commanding tone, the message rejects common stereotypes of women as hesitant or overly emotional, instead portraying her as a confident decision-maker (Gill, 2007). Connotatively, the advertisement redefines the maternal figure not as passive or burdened, but as rational, empowered, and solution-oriented. It promotes a vision of “empowered motherhood”—a feminist interpretation that resists the traditional, sacrificial ideal of mothers and instead embraces women as bold, capable agents in the domestic realm. Gill (2007) notes that this shift reflects a broader “postfeminist sensibility,” where strength and femininity coexist in media portrayals of women. Likewise, Douglas and Michaels (2004) argue that such depictions challenge the enduring “Mommy Myth,” which idealizes mothers as soft, endlessly nurturing, and always cheerful.

4.1.6 Scene 6

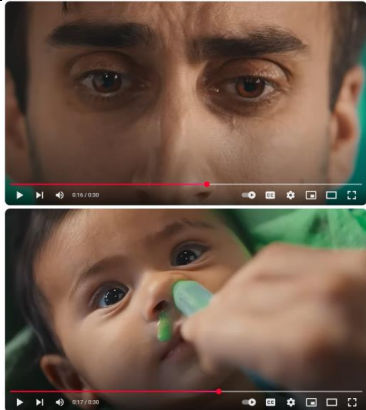



The sixth scene reveals a range of elements that are subject to analysis.

These elements are described as follows:

Time	0'16'' – 0'19''
Visual	Close-up of the father's face, eyes wide open, expression frozen or bewildered, continued with a baby lies calmly, with a peaceful expression. A man's (father's) hand holds a mucus suction tool (NoseFrida) and gently approaches the baby's nose, which still shows visible green mucus. The scene then showed a close-up of the lower face of the father. His lips are attached to a red suction tube from the NoseFrida device. His cheeks appear drawn inward, indicating strong suction. Lastly, it showed the image of the father which is sucking mucus through a transparent tube connected to a baby's nose, while the mother gently holds the baby's hands.
Text elements on screen	-
Spoken text	-

The sixth scene features several prominent elements that merit careful analysis and interpretation. These components, which play a crucial role in shaping the scene's meaning, can be summarized as follows:

Signifier	Signified
	Parental cooperation and shared responsibility.

		
Denotative	Connotative	Myth
The Father's reaction to the command of the mother.	This visual reinforces the subversion of traditional gender roles. The father, traditionally viewed as the family decision-maker, is portrayed here as responding to the mother's directive. This symbolizes a reversed power dynamic and aligns with contemporary feminist narratives that advocate for shared domestic leadership .	Women possess valid authority in parenting—not merely as caregivers, but as decision-makers. Men can appear uncertain or depend on their partners without their masculinity being diminished. Domestic power can be negotiated, and women may lead within the family space.

The scene of close-up of the father's face, eyes wide open, expression frozen or bewildered portrays the father in a state of stillness, seemingly processing a command or directive given by the mother with no verbal response. The top-right image depicts a baby with a nasal aspirator inserted into their nostril, capturing a vulnerable moment that highlights the often overlooked, practical realities of childcare. This intimate scene transitions into the bottom-left image, which features a close-up of a man actively sucking through the NoseFrida device.

Connotatively, the silent and reflective expression seen in the father's demeanor symbolizes vulnerability or hesitation, portraying him as emotionally passive. The visual emphasis on his eyes suggests internal cognitive processing—

perhaps uncertainty, discomfort, or even a form of submission. Within the context of the mother issuing a clear command, this scene marks a notable reversal of traditional authority structures: the mother leads while the father follows. This depiction challenges conventional gender norms and reinforces a narrative where leadership within the household is no longer exclusively male. This imagery subverts traditional gender roles. The father, often cast as the dominant decision-maker in patriarchal structures, is shown here yielding to the mother's directive, illustrating a reversed power dynamic. This aligns with contemporary feminist discourse that advocates for shared leadership in domestic life. The scene conveys a reimagined narrative of parenting through the myths it presents and rejects. It upholds the belief that women possess legitimate authority in parenting, not solely as caregivers but as confident decision-makers. Simultaneously, it promotes the idea that men can express uncertainty or rely on their partners without their masculinity being diminished. This reframes domestic power as something negotiable, where women may take the lead within the family dynamic. In contrast, the scene rejects long-standing myths that fathers must always be in control, that masculinity is incompatible with submission or emotional vulnerability, and that leadership in the household is the exclusive domain of men.

From a mythological perspective, the advertisement constructs a transformative narrative in which masculinity is no longer defined by dominance, but by emotional presence, care, and cooperation. Through Roland Barthes' semiotic lens, this becomes a modern "myth" of domestic egalitarianism—where collaborative parenting and fluid gender roles are normalized. In the segment between seconds 16 and 18, the father's passive demeanor gradually shifts into an

act of intimate caregiving, culminating in his direct involvement in using the NoseFrida device. This moment is not portrayed as weakness, but as a powerful symbol of love, responsibility, and shared labor. The father's participation in a task often feminized in traditional discourse—sucking mucus from a baby's nose—becomes a Barthesian signifier of a redefined masculinity.

Rather than representing the father as a distant, disengaged figure, the ad positions him as nurturing and emotionally invested, aligning with feminist ideals of shared domestic roles. This imagery challenges patriarchal myths by illustrating that care work is not inherently feminine and that men are capable of emotional depth within family life. As Hooks (2000) argues, feminism does not only aim to empower women but also seeks to liberate men from the restrictive norms of traditional masculinity, allowing them to express vulnerability and affection without fear of emasculation. Similarly, Gill (2007) emphasizes that media plays a central role in shaping societal perceptions of gender, and the portrayal of engaged, caregiving fathers helps destabilize long-standing ideologies surrounding male detachment in parenting.

Ultimately, this scene marks the culmination of the father's symbolic transformation—from hesitance to emotionally engaged action. What might seem like a simple gesture becomes, under Barthes' (1972) framework, a mythic reconfiguration of fatherhood: one that embraces caregiving as a strength, not a deviation from masculinity. The advertisement therefore not only promotes a product but also subtly advocates for a more egalitarian and emotionally connected model of modern parenting.

4.1.7 Scene 7




In the seventh scene, a variety of components can be observed and explored through analysis. The details of these elements are as follows

Time	0'20'' – 0'21''
Visual	The father is holding the mouthpiece of the NoseFrida suction device, and the mother is looking at the tube filled with green mucus. Both have strong facial expressions, showing disgust, surprise, and disbelief. The background is bright blue with decorative clouds, resembling a baby's nursery.

Text elements on screen	-
Spoken text	“Oh my ...”

Within the seventh scene, a variety of essential elements come into focus, each inviting detailed analysis and interpretation. These elements are presented as follows:

Signifier	Signified	
	The emotional and physical reality of co-parenting , where both parents share not only responsibilities but also the uncomfortable, messy aspects of childcare.	
Denotative	Connotative	Myth
<p>The father is sucking mucus through a transparent tube connected to a baby's nose, while a woman (mother) gently holds the baby's hands. The scene continues with the strong facial expressions: disgust, surprise, and disbelief after they see the tube which is full of mucus.</p>	<p>This image communicates the ideal of a modern family, where caregiving is shared and gender roles are flexible. Affection is reciprocal, and responsibilities are jointly accepted. The parents act as a unified front in supporting their child. In addition, the expression of both mother and father after they see the tube implies that parenting is not always beautiful or idealized—it also involves confronting unpleasant realities out of love.</p>	<p>Parenting is teamwork: both father and mother share not only domestic space but emotional labor and physical caregiving. There must be equality in caregiving. Baby care is not the domain of women alone—it is a shared responsibility. The modern father is emotionally and physically involved in childcare. The other myth constructed is parenting can be an emotional journey which is not always</p>

		beautiful, but deeply meaningful. Genuine parents accept all aspects of their child, even the unpleasant ones since emotional closeness is forged through shared extreme experiences, even disgusting ones.
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The visual sequence shows a father actively using the NoseFrida suction device to remove mucus from his baby's nose, while the mother gently holds the baby's hands to comfort and steady the child. Set against a plain blue background, the focus remains solely on the intimate caregiving interaction, emphasizing the shared parental role in addressing the baby's discomfort. In a subsequent scene, the father is seen holding the mouthpiece of the device while the mother holds the tube containing visible green mucus. Both parents display vivid facial expressions—disgust, surprise, and disbelief—capturing the raw, unfiltered emotions of handling a messy but necessary task. The background shifts to a bright blue setting adorned with decorative clouds, evoking the warmth and innocence of a baby's nursery. Taken together, these visuals denotatively present a moment of cooperative caregiving, where both parents are physically and emotionally engaged in managing an unpleasant yet crucial aspect of parenting.

The visual depiction of the father using a nasal suction device to remove mucus from the baby symbolizes active paternal care and the courage to face discomfort for the well-being of the child. Meanwhile, the mother calmly holding the baby represents emotional warmth, protection, and nurturing support. The balanced composition of the scene visually conveys gender equality and a

harmonious division of parenting roles. Their coordinated, neutral clothing suggests a unified and egalitarian family unit, where responsibilities are shared without reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes. This image communicates the ideal of a modern family—one in which caregiving is collaborative, gender roles are flexible, and affection is mutual. According to Pleck (2010), modern fatherhood has shifted toward “nurturant fathering,” where emotional and practical involvement are essential. Lamb (2010) also emphasizes that the quality of co-parenting significantly affects child well-being and reflects evolving norms surrounding gender and parenting.

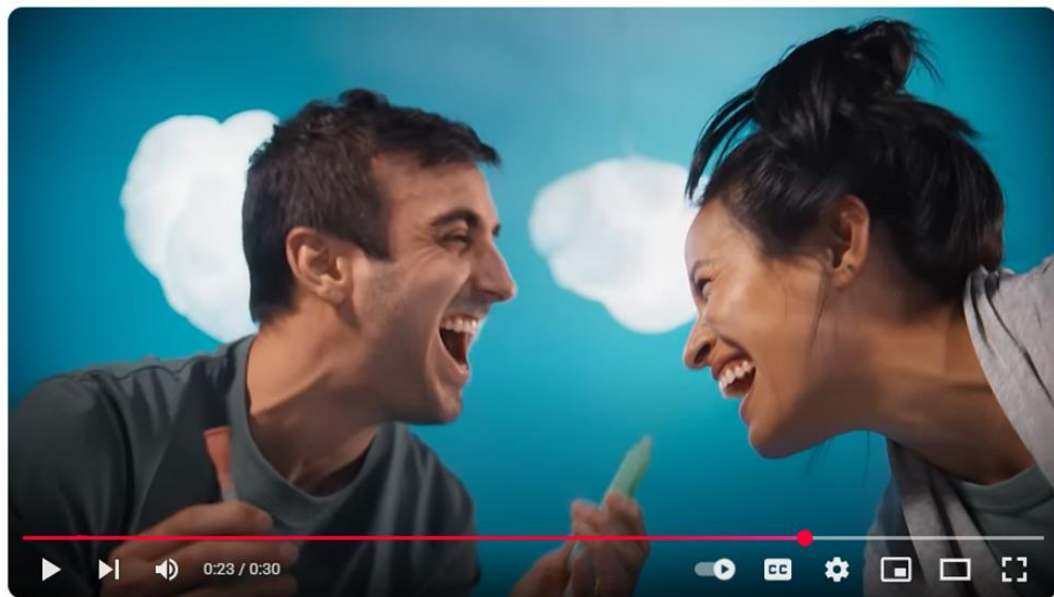
In the following scene, both parents’ expressions—a mix of disgust and amusement—symbolize emotional sacrifice in caregiving: an unpleasant task carried out in the name of love. The mucus-filled suction tube becomes a tangible symbol of “dirt” as a representation of labor and parental devotion. The emotional interaction between the couple reveals a kind of intimacy that is forged through shared, challenging parenting experiences. The bright blue background decorated with clouds evokes the tenderness and warmth of an infant’s world. This imagery implies that parenting is not always idealized or aesthetically pleasing—it often requires confronting messy realities out of love and responsibility. This aligns with Pleck’s (2010) perspective that both parents should be emotionally and actively involved in caregiving roles. As Gill (2007) notes, media representations play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of gender roles, particularly in how fatherhood is portrayed in family-oriented advertising.

This visual sequence presents a powerful reconstruction of modern parenting myths by conveying the idea that caregiving is a shared, egalitarian responsibility. It affirms that both father and mother participate equally not only in physical tasks but also in emotional labor. The image promotes the notion that parenting is a collaborative endeavor, with the modern father portrayed as emotionally and physically engaged—actively challenging traditional expectations that mothers are the default caregivers and that men play only symbolic or passive roles. Furthermore, it rejects outdated myths that men avoid unpleasant or “dirty” caregiving duties, instead presenting masculinity as compatible with empathy, nurturing, and cooperation. As Hooks (2000) asserts, feminism is not solely about liberating women but also about freeing men to embrace caregiving roles without fear of emasculation. Similarly, Gill (2007) emphasizes that media plays a critical role in constructing and negotiating gender ideologies, and this advertisement participates in that cultural shift by normalizing male involvement in childcare.

Additionally, the scene reinforces the myth that parenting is an emotional journey—often messy and far from idealized, but profoundly meaningful. It asserts that true parental love involves accepting every aspect of a child, including the difficult and unpleasant ones. The emotional closeness between parents is shown to be forged through shared extreme caregiving experiences, even those that involve disgust or physical mess. In doing so, the advertisement rejects the polished ideal of “clean” parenting, where caregivers must always appear composed, tidy, and aesthetically pleasing. It challenges the assumption that only mothers can handle the bodily messes of children, offering instead a more

authentic portrayal of caregiving rooted in shared love and sacrifice. This aligns again with Hooks (2000), who advocates for feminist parenting practices that encourage equitable participation between genders. Ultimately, the advertisement constructs a new myth—one where love, intimacy, and equality define modern parenthood.


4.1.8 Scene 8



A number of key elements can be identified in the eighth scene, each offering material for analysis. These elements are as follows:

Time	0'21''-0'25''
Visual	The father and mother are laughing while looking at each other. The father is holding the suction end of the NoseFrida. The background is light blue with cloud decorations, creating a nursery-like setting.
Text elements on screen	-
Spoken text	“Oh my God” (the continuation of the previous scene)

The eighth scene contains several important features that warrant close scrutiny and interpretation. These key components can be outlined as follows:

Signifier	Signified	
	Authentic parenting is not perfect but it is full of love and humor.	
Denotative	Connotative	Myth
The father and mother laugh heartily while looking at each other. The father is still holding the suction end of the NoseFrida and the tube filled with mucus.	This moment captures a transformation—from initial disgust to action, surprise, and finally, laughter. It represents how emotionally taxing experiences in parenting can turn into joyful, bonding moments.	Joy in parenting often comes from overcoming challenges together. Moreover, laughter is a valid and healthy part of modern parenting. Both parents, regardless of gender, are emotionally invested and supportive.

This image represents the emotional climax of the advertisement. It shows that parenting is about being willing to confront the unpleasant for the sake of love and well-being. By visualizing mucus explicitly and the honest reactions of the parents, the advertisement communicates that real love is visible in actions—not just idealized gestures.

In this visual scene, the father and mother are seen laughing heartily while looking at each other, capturing a moment of shared humor and emotional connection. The father continues to hold the suction end of the NoseFrida device and the tube now filled with mucus. Set against a light blue background decorated with clouds, the setting maintains a soft, nursery-like atmosphere that reinforces

the context of caregiving. Denotatively, the image depicts a successful moment following an unpleasant but necessary task—clearing the baby’s nasal congestion. The act is complete, and what remains between the parents is a sense of relief, satisfaction, and mutual amusement, highlighting the emotional intimacy and bonding that can emerge from even the messiest aspects of parenting.

This visual scene carries rich connotative meanings that reflect the emotional dynamics of parenting. The shared laughter between the parents symbolizes an emotional release and a deepened bond after managing a stressful task together. The tool, still visibly filled with mucus, highlights the raw and honest nature of parenting—there is no effort to sanitize or conceal the messiness of caregiving. Their eye contact reflects emotional solidarity and a sense of equality in their co-parenting roles, while the soft blue tones and cloud motifs in the background convey a sense of peace, warmth, and resolution following the small but meaningful “battle” of caring for their child. Connotatively, the moment illustrates a full emotional arc: from initial disgust to determined action, then surprise, and ultimately shared joy. As Sutherland (2010) notes, shared humor in parenting not only reduces stress but also strengthens family bonds, making this scene a powerful representation of resilience and love in everyday caregiving.

This scene conveys several powerful myths about contemporary parenting. It suggests that joy often emerges not from perfection, but from overcoming challenges together. Laughter is presented as a valid and healthy part of the parenting experience, and both parents—regardless of gender—are shown as emotionally invested, supportive, and fully engaged. At the same time, the visual

rejects outdated myths that parenting must always be clean, graceful, or perfectly controlled. It challenges the stereotype that fathers are incapable of managing unpleasant caregiving tasks and dispels the notion that family harmony is only possible when everything appears flawless. Connotatively, this scene breaks down rigid ideals of orderly parenting and replaces them with a more human portrayal rooted in shared responsibility, imperfection, and emotional authenticity. It celebrates humor and vulnerability as strengths within family life. As Sutherland (2010) explains, humor can play a crucial role in family bonding and resilience, helping to “normalize the messy and chaotic elements of caregiving.” Furthermore, Hooks (2000) emphasizes that feminist parenting should embrace emotional openness and shared labor, allowing both parents to fully engage without fear of judgment or diminished masculinity. As the emotional resolution of the advertisement, this moment of shared laughter symbolizes the absurd, unpredictable beauty of parenting. More than just promoting a nasal aspirator, Frida Baby offers a redefined vision of parenthood—one grounded in honesty, collaboration, and joy.

4.2 Discussion

The advertisement Frida Baby Presents Real Reviews: NoseFrida Edition operates as a complex cultural text that both reflects and challenges dominant ideologies surrounding gender, caregiving, and parental identity. Using Barthes’ semiotic framework, this analysis reveals how the ad deconstructs traditional myths of motherhood and fatherhood while advancing feminist critiques of media representation. It foregrounds caregiving as a shared, emotionally demanding, and

embodied practice, resisting idealized portrayals of domestic life and celebrating imperfection, equality, and emotional honesty.

4.2.1 Realism and Emotional Authenticity as Feminist Resistance

The Frida Baby advertisement *Real Reviews: NoseFrida Edition* disrupts dominant media portrayals of motherhood by embracing unfiltered realism and emotional authenticity, thereby enacting a compelling form of feminist resistance. Rather than conforming to idealized images of maternal perfection—commonly symbolized by the “yummy mummy” archetype that dominates global advertising (Ying, 2023)—the advertisement centers the messy, emotional, and labor-intensive reality of parenting. In doing so, it rejects what Barthes (1972) conceptualizes as myth—the transformation of historical or cultural constructs into self-evident, natural truths. In this case, the myth of the effortlessly composed, ever-smiling mother is dismantled. Instead of celebrating idealized maternal calm, the ad features visible exhaustion, emotional vulnerability, and physically unpleasant tasks, such as using a nasal aspirator to remove mucus from a distressed infant. These scenes, captured with intimate camera angles and raw expressions, resist the sanitized imagery of caregiving and affirm a more truthful representation of maternal experience.

This visual and emotional candor aligns with Ahmed’s (2014) theory of affective labor, which positions emotions not as internal or individual but as cultural practices embedded in systems of gendered expectation. Caregiving, especially mothering, requires ongoing emotional management—soothing distress, projecting calm, absorbing chaos—which is rarely acknowledged as

“work” in media or public discourse. By visualizing the bodily and emotional toll of caregiving, the advertisement restores visibility to this often-erased labor. It invites viewers not to idealize parenting but to witness it in its full emotional range—fatigue, frustration, care, and resilience. In this way, the advertisement interrupts what Lynch (2005) refers to as “aestheticized motherhood”—the persistent commercial trope where maternal performance is defined by grace, composure, and sacrificial perfection.

This representational shift also resists the historical narrative that mothers should silently bear the weight of emotional labor without complaint or recognition. Robinson and Hunter (2008), in their study of family magazine advertisements, demonstrate how even contemporary portrayals often maintain the expectation that mothers manage the family, maintain emotional stability, and do so invisibly. In contrast, the Frida Baby ad subverts this by offering emotional exposure without shame. The depiction of tired, frustrated, or grossed-out parents does not ask viewers to laugh at or pity them but rather to empathize. It legitimizes these emotions not as signs of failure but as natural—and even commendable—features of caregiving.

Gill’s (2007) critique of postfeminist media culture is also relevant here. She describes how advertising co-opts “authenticity” and “empowerment” as marketable traits, often reinforcing normative femininity under the guise of individuality. In many such campaigns, messiness is aestheticized, vulnerability is choreographed, and “realness” is reduced to branding. The Frida Baby ad resists this co-optation by refusing to stylize its subjects. The lighting is not flattering,

the scenes are not glamorous, and the emotions are not restrained. This authenticity does not feel rehearsed; it feels lived.

Moreover, the use of multimodal elements—tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures, and bodily presence—functions as a critical strategy for feminist communication. As Pelclová (2023) notes in her analysis of maternal stance-taking in advertising, these semiotic cues contribute to the construction of a maternal identity that is complex and situated. In the Frida Baby ad, we see parents grimacing, sighing, laughing nervously, and reacting in real time to a chaotic situation. These expressions disrupt the norm of maternal calmness and fatherly detachment, replacing them with a shared humanity that blurs rigid gender expectations.

This strategy of visual and emotional realism is not merely a stylistic departure—it is ideological. Hooks (2000) emphasizes that feminist resistance begins with the truthful articulation of women's experiences, particularly those rendered invisible by dominant cultural narratives. The advertisement aligns with this principle by placing the messiness of motherhood front and center. It resists the commodification of maternal sacrifice and reframes caregiving not as martyrdom, but as a daily negotiation of love, exhaustion, and practical necessity. It recognizes that feminist resistance does not always manifest as overt rebellion—it can also take shape in the refusal to perform perfection, in the validation of emotional labor, and in the redefinition of strength.

In doing so, the ad also extends a subtle invitation to viewers—particularly mothers—to embrace their own imperfections without guilt or apology. By

rejecting the glossy spectacle of idealized motherhood, it opens space for alternative maternal identities grounded in authenticity, agency, and mutual support. It shows that caregiving, in all its messiness, is not a sign of personal inadequacy but a shared human reality deserving of empathy and respect. As such, the Frida Baby advertisement becomes more than a commercial message—it acts as a cultural text that challenges dominant myths and offers a feminist reimagination of parenting as both labor and love.

4.2.2 Maternal Leadership as Feminist Agency

The Frida Baby advertisement presents a compelling portrayal of maternal leadership that functions as an expression of feminist agency. This is especially evident in the moment when the mother says, “Don’t think about it, just do it,” using firm tone, body language, and facial expression to convey decisiveness and control. Her presence in this moment subverts the dominant media trope of the mother as soft, indecisive, or emotionally overwhelmed. Instead, she is depicted as clear-headed, assertive, and in command—traits that have historically been coded as masculine and thus rarely associated with caregiving roles.

This portrayal aligns closely with O’Reilly’s (2010) theory of “empowered mothering,” which reframes motherhood not as passive self-sacrifice but as a site of strength, autonomy, and resistance. Empowered mothers, as O’Reilly argues, are those who define their caregiving roles on their own terms, often challenging cultural expectations and gender norms. In this advertisement, the mother embodies these qualities through her practical action and emotional clarity. She

does not wait for advice or approval; she initiates the caregiving task herself, leading not just through love but through tactical decision-making under pressure.

Such representation also counters the foundational critiques made by feminist theorists like Firestone (1970) and Rich (1976), who saw traditional domestic roles as mechanisms of patriarchal control that restricted women's autonomy. While these critiques exposed how motherhood had been used to enforce submission, the mother in this ad reclaims the domestic space as one of power. She is not defined solely by nurturing or sentimentality, but by her ability to act with urgency, intelligence, and physical resolve—challenging the binary that separates caregiving from leadership.

However, it is important to acknowledge that media portrayals of motherhood, even when updated, often continue to circulate the same ideological core. As Lynch (2005) demonstrates in her long-term study of maternal imagery in advertising, the expectation that mothers should be self-sacrificing, emotionally composed, and appearance-conscious remains deeply entrenched, regardless of visual style or narrative tone. Against this backdrop, the Frida Baby advertisement offers an alternative model of motherhood that does not rely on grace, perfection, or cheerfulness. The mother looks tired, serious, and focused—yet she does not collapse under pressure. Her authority is grounded not in sentiment but in action.

This reframing suggests that maternal power and feminist ideals are not contradictory, but complementary. The ad implies that caregiving can be a site of feminist agency when it includes leadership, autonomy, and embodied strength. A mother can be emotionally responsive and intellectually strategic; she can nurture

without being reduced to softness. In foregrounding this complexity, the advertisement contributes to a reimagining of motherhood as an empowered, multidimensional identity that deserves not only affection, but cultural and ideological respect.

4.2.3 Fathers and the Reconfiguration of Masculinity

In the Frida Baby advertisement, the father's emotional journey reflects a redefinition of modern masculinity and shared caregiving, challenging traditional stereotypes. From the beginning, the father is shown as hesitant and visibly uncomfortable with the act of using the NoseFrida—a caregiving task that is both physically awkward and emotionally intimate. Yet, instead of remaining passive or withdrawing, he adapts and ultimately engages in the caregiving process. This transformation from reluctant observer to active participant demonstrates a crucial shift in how fatherhood is portrayed in media.

This narrative directly counters the longstanding stereotype of fathers as emotionally distant or inept in caregiving, a trope frequently used in advertising to generate humor or reinforce male detachment from domestic life (Robinson & Hunter, 2008). Instead of conforming to this outdated pattern, the advertisement allows space for the father to learn and grow. He is not mocked or marginalized, but supported by the mother's leadership and portrayed as capable of nurturing—a quality traditionally reserved for maternal figures. In this way, the ad reframes caregiving not as gender-specific, but as a human responsibility.

This representation aligns with broader cultural calls for relational masculinity—a form of manhood based on empathy, connection, and vulnerability

rather than dominance or stoicism. Hooks (2004) has argued that patriarchal masculinity limits men's emotional expression and reinforces harmful power dynamics; instead, she promotes a model that centers emotional openness and shared care. The father in this ad exemplifies such a model. He listens, learns, and participates without needing to assert control, and in doing so, he offers an alternative vision of fatherhood rooted in mutual support.

Moreover, this depiction reflects a shift in media representations of gender roles in parenting. As Sari and Ganiem (2021) discuss, recent advertising constructs new myths of equality, portraying domestic labor as a shared endeavor. In the ad, the mother leads confidently, and the father follows without resistance or fragility. Their dynamic feels cooperative, not hierarchical, emphasizing equality rather than traditional authority. This balance redefines parenting as a shared emotional and physical task, resisting rigid binaries of maternal softness and paternal detachment.

Collier de Mendonça's (2012) cross-cultural study further contextualizes this shift, showing that mothers in both Brazil and Canada often feel overburdened by unequal divisions of domestic labor. The Frida Baby ad responds to such frustrations not with utopian imagery, but through realistic storytelling. The father is not valorized as extraordinary; he is simply present, involved, and responsive. His caregiving is normalized, not dramatized—a quiet but impactful act of feminist progress.

Finally, this refusal to fetishize male involvement marks an important cultural critique. Many advertisements reward fathers with exaggerated praise for

performing basic parenting tasks. This reinforces unequal standards, where women's work is expected and invisible, while men's contributions are spotlighted and celebrated. The Frida Baby ad rejects this imbalance. The father is not shown as a "hero," but as a co-parent—equal, essential, and emotionally engaged. This subtle but meaningful revision of fatherhood adds depth to the advertisement's feminist messaging and contributes to a more equitable vision of caregiving.

4.2.4 Shared Emotional Labor and Humor in Parenting

In the Frida Baby advertisement, humor becomes a narrative device that supports emotional realism and challenges stereotypical portrayals of parenting. Unlike typical advertisements that use humor to make light of domestic chaos—often at the expense of fathers—this ad employs humor to portray shared vulnerability and connection. Rather than serving as comic relief or a distraction, the humor here emerges from genuine moments of discomfort and intimacy, making the caregiving experience feel authentic and emotionally resonant.

One notable example appears when the parents recoil in disgust after seeing the mucus extracted from their baby's nose, only to laugh together moments later. This blend of revulsion and amusement—familiar to many parents—illustrates what Hochschild (1983) defines as emotional labor: the management of feelings to meet social expectations. In this context, both parents are shown actively processing stress, discomfort, and emotional tension—not separately, but as a team. Their shared reaction is not merely comedic; it becomes

a form of coping, bonding, and mutual support. Rather than isolating emotional work to the mother, the ad reframes it as a relational, shared responsibility.

This portrayal stands in contrast to conventional representations where mothers are composed and competent, and fathers are distant or buffoonish. Instead, the Frida Baby advertisement challenges such tropes by portraying both parents as equally engaged, emotionally expressive, and invested in their caregiving roles. The ad avoids trivializing paternal involvement or valorizing maternal endurance; it shows caregiving as a collaborative, emotionally complex act, grounded in equality and mutual effort.

This egalitarian framing aligns with Ahmed's (2014) argument that emotions are not purely personal experiences but are culturally shaped and politically significant. In the advertisement, the visible, shared emotional response challenges the cultural assumption that caregiving—and the emotions that accompany it—is inherently feminine. It questions who is allowed to express disgust, frustration, and joy in caregiving contexts and asserts that emotional labor is not the exclusive burden of mothers, but a shared human experience.

Furthermore, as Pelclová (2023) suggests through her work on multimodal stance-taking, nonverbal cues—such as facial expressions, gestures, and vocal tone—are powerful tools for shaping meaning. In this advertisement, the parents' physical reactions and shared laughter become part of the narrative strategy. Their unscripted gestures, tired expressions, and synchronized responses construct a visual and emotional message: that caregiving is messy, challenging, and communal—but also rewarding and deeply human.

In sum, the ad redefines caregiving by rejecting perfection and embracing shared emotional reality. Humor is not used to minimize hardship or reinforce gender roles, but to connect, validate, and affirm the messy truth of parenting. Through this, the advertisement supports a feminist message that caregiving is not a gendered obligation but a collective act of emotional strength, resilience, and authenticity.

4.2.5 Verbal Elements and Feminist Messaging

The verbal language in the Frida Baby advertisement plays a crucial role in constructing ideological meaning, offering not only information but also layered feminist and cultural commentary. A phrase like “If the baby ain’t sleeping, ain’t nobody sleeping” does more than reflect parental exhaustion—it implicitly critiques the glorification of maternal sacrifice and highlights the absence of shared responsibility in traditional caregiving norms. This line functions simultaneously as a literal truth and a subversion of the idealized image of tireless, self-sacrificing mothers long embedded in advertising.

Unlike conventional parenting ads that adopt an expert or authoritative tone, Frida Baby uses colloquial and emotionally resonant language that reflects the messiness and humor of real parenting experiences. This shift aligns with what Pelclová (2023) terms the “voice of lived experience,” a narrative strategy that values authenticity over institutional authority. By allowing parents to speak in their own voice—with stress, laughter, and frustration—the ad resists dominant media conventions that often mask caregiving behind polished speech and curated wisdom.

From a semiotic perspective, Barthes (1972) reminds us that myth operates by making historically contingent ideas appear natural and inevitable. The advertisement disrupts this process by denaturalizing traditional parenting myths. Instead of reinforcing the myth of the flawless “supermom” or the emotionally distant father, it constructs new symbolic associations around caregiving as communal, emotionally complex, and inherently political. It shows that caregiving is not about individual heroism but about shared emotional labor and everyday resilience.

This subversion of dominant mythologies is further enriched by the advertisement’s broader representational strategy. Its casual, sincere tone and refusal to universalize maternal experience reflect a politics of care—one that is grounded in truthfulness rather than aspiration. As Barthes’ theory of myth suggests, when these ideological structures are made visible rather than masked, they become open to contestation. In this sense, the ad becomes a space where alternative narratives of caregiving can emerge—ones based on vulnerability, cooperation, and mutual emotional investment.

Supported by scholars such as Lynch (2005), Ahmed (2014), Hooks (2000), and Hays (1996), this reading positions the Frida Baby ad as more than a commercial; it is a site of cultural critique. It challenges neoliberal norms that individualize parenting burdens and invites viewers to see caregiving as a relational, emotional, and shared practice. In doing so, it speaks not only to what parenting is, but to what it could be.