

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Women's bodies are exploited in the media. Every single part of a woman's body belongs to market and advertising interests. Gul (2020) mentioned that advertisers overrepresent women's images with perfectly flawless bodies. Gul (2020) mentioned that the characteristics like dangling cleavage, slightly parted lips, and tight clothes are used to describe the typical sexual depiction of a woman featured in contemporary women's ads. The advertisers use the attractive parts of the body to catch the viewer's attention and arouse their desire. Therefore, the viewers may see these women as sexual objects because of their sexual appeal; when it creates pleasure and is rated as sexual objects, they become objectified (Setiawan, 2020).

Many ads in Indonesia still use women as a sexual attraction to make the audience or community use the product. For example, advertisements in magazines such as Victoria's Secret lingerie, Wonder-bra intimates, Calvin Klein underwear, jeans, fragrances, and Guess jeans feature women as models to market their products. The advertisement features models with sexy and naughty faces, slightly parted lips, and long, slightly wet hair. The models show the curves of their slender and plump bodies. They slightly lowered their bodies while showing the dangling cleavage. They also show the curves of the waist that look slim and sexy while lifting or opening the legs and beautifying them with high heels.

Interestingly, men's sexuality is beginning to thrive in recent years as a commodification. In recent years, the number of advertisements that feature men's bodies has been increasing dramatically. The male body images featured are an increased muscular and V-shaped body, broad shoulders, developed arms and chest muscles, and a slim waist. This muscular, mesomorphic body type has been overrepresented in TV and magazine advertisements. This trend is exemplified by male models in ads for underwear and perfumes, with muscular bodies with sexual nuances that invite the audience's desire. This portrayal of a male's muscular body in the media will encourage men to put effort into gaining a V-shaped, muscular body oneself (Schooler & Ward, 2006).

Selling sexuality in advertising a product is nothing new. Using sensual and sexual nuances attracts the public to the product, and this advertising strategy has lasted a long. Nooh's (2012) study on images of men and women in mobile phone advertisements in Germany shows that particular means of emphasizing stereotypes, such as feminine touch, are still widely used. Advertisers portray women as sexual objects and use men as models in advertisements to attract specific targeted audiences.

The writer is interested in studying the *New Era Boots* advertisement. This advertisement is one of the advertisements in Indonesia that exploits women's and men's sexuality. This advertisement is highly sexualized women and men through body images. The ad shows a scene of a woman in skimpy clothes and dance erotically. Also, there is a scene of a shirtless man moving his chest up and down. Therefore, this ad

became a controversy because there is no correlation between selling boots and displaying women's and men's sexuality.

The writer intends to analyze the New Era Boots Advertisement using Roland Barthes's Semiotics theory—denotation, connotation, and myth. The writer chooses Roland Barthes's theory because he intends to find hidden meanings, especially those related to men's and women's sexuality. As explained previously, the advertisement contains images and texts that are heavily sexualized for both sexes. Therefore, the writer chooses the title *Women's and Men's Sexuality in The New Era Boots Advertisement*.

1.2 Field of the Study

The field of study is pop culture, especially advertisements.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on women's and men's sexuality depicted in the New Era Boots advertisement.

1.4 Research Questions

The researcher has two significant problems in this research:

- 1) What are the descriptions of women's sexuality in the *New Era Boots* advertisement?
- 2) What are the descriptions of men's sexuality in the *New Era Boots* advertisement?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Based on the questions mentioned above, this research is conducted to achieve some objectives:

- 1) To find out the description of women's sexuality in the *New Era Boots* advertisement.
- 2) To find out the description of men's sexuality in the *New Era Boots* advertisement.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The researcher attempts to give readers about women's and men's sexuality portrayed through body images in this advertisement using Roland Barthes's Semiotics theory. Furthermore, the researcher hopes that the thesis can be a reference for those who want to research women's and men's sexuality in the advertisement.

1.7 Definition of Term

1. Sexuality

Sexuality can be defined as the construction of every individual that can be expressed through gender-appropriate sensing, feeling, knowing, and experiencing (Daniluk, 1993, p. 53).

2. Advertisement

Advertising is a means for producers to communicate product or service information to consumers and sponsors (Lukitaningsih, 2013). To face rivals, advertising is one approach to aid effective marketing by establishing communication between companies and consumers.

3. Denotation

Denotation is the first-order statement that deals with the literal (first-order) meaning of the words that make up the statement (Sui & Fan, 2015, p. 60).

4. Connotation

Connotation is the second-order meaning of understanding any statement. Other meanings are implied in a sentence, which is at the connotation level (Sui & Fan, 2015, p. 60).

5. Myth

Myth is a word involving symbols, historical and emotionally related (Barthes, 1972, p. 109)

