

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

People in general have little knowledge about Semiotics; however semiotics is important in our daily life because semiotics deals with signs around us. According to Daniel Chandler, “In a semiotic sense, signs take the form of words, images, sounds, gestures and objects” (Daniel Chandler). I believe we have known that signs are so close to us and so common as to be found in our lives. Yet, we usually take signs for granted. Usually, people create these signs to signify or refer to something else. (Chandler) For example, a sign with a picture of two cars crashing into each other. This image is an example that represents a sign because this image refers to something else, which is a warning of cars crashing. Therefore, by only seeing this sign, we directly understand the meaning of this sign, which is a warning of car crashing. Moreover, this is more helpful than a

written warning for drivers because they do not need to read long phrases or sentences. Based on *The Routledge Companion To Semiotics*, not only do signs take the form of words and images but also gestures. (Cobley 26) For example, if somebody is standing with hands on hips, this gesture signifies aggression. (Frater) Those forms can be united in one medium such as advertisements. If we try to analyze those signs by using relevant theories, we can get a profound message from it.

In this thesis, I would like to analyze two Voodoo advertisements using semiotics. I believe these advertisements in the form of pictures and texts are used to deliver a message to the public. Two theories that I will use in analyzing each element in those advertisements are those from Saussure and Barthes. Saussurean semiotics defines that a sign consists of “signified and signifier” (“Sign”). Based on *Course in General Linguistics*, sign itself is an arrangement of “signifier and signified”. “The two elements are intimately united, and each recalls the other” (Saussure 66). To make signified and signifier clearer, Saussure retains “sign to designate the whole and to replace concept and sound-image respectively by signified [signifié] and signifier [signifiant]” (Saussure 67). Different from Saussure, Barthes sees semiotics a little bit deeper than what Saussure does. According to Barthes, there is a “second-order semiological system”. In the “second-order semiological system” the sign in the first system is used to be the “signifier in the second-order system.” Therefore, Barthes does not stop until finding the signified but he continues till myth. (113)

Those theories are related to my topic, which is Female Domination in Voodoo Hosiery Advertisements: A Study of Semiotics. I choose two

advertisements of Voodoo as my data resources. The first reason why I choose these advertisements is because all Voodoo advertisements on billboards are provocative. They become provocative because they always show naked men who are dominated by women. Hence, to show this message I need to analyze the two advertisements by using semiology since there are some signifiers that convey one message that many people need to know. The second reason is because they are the first two advertisements by Voodoo.

Voodoo is a legwear brand in Australia. Based on [voodoohosiery.com.au](http://voodoohosiery.com.au), “Voodoo is the number one legwear brand in department stores, with Australian women seeking its fashion forward and innovative styles for corporate dressing, and special occasions” (“Voodoo”). Based on [voodoohosiery.com.au](http://voodoohosiery.com.au), Voodoo becomes a number one legwear in department stores because of its quality, its up-to-date design and also its promotion. One of their promotional media is printed advertisements. Their advertisements always bring the concept of Voodoo. This concept can be seen in all their advertisements, especially their ad campaigns that are formed as billboards. As a winter hosiery brand, Voodoo sells stockings, leggings, opaque stockings made from thick materials that the customers will feel warm when they wear them in winter.

I am sure that using Saussure’s and Barthes’s semiotics can help me analyze the Voodoo advertisements. I purpose to show all signifiers and signified in these advertisements. The relationship between signifiers and signified leads us to get the sign system and finally reveal the message in the advertisement.

My study is significant because people often do not realize that an advertisement can convey a lot of messages. Thus, people will be more critical

and aware that some common things that we often take for granted actually carry a message.

By reading this thesis, people will not only treat advertisements as a cool picture or a media of promotion but also get a deeper message from it by using semiotics theory.

759 words

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In this thesis I would like to analyse the following:

1. What are the signifiers and the signified of Voodoo advertisements?
2. How do the signifiers and signified reveal the concept of female domination in the advertisements?

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

1. To know the signifiers and signified in the Voodoo advertisements.
2. To show how the signifiers and signified reveal the concept of female domination in the advertisements.

## **1.4 Methods of Research**

In doing the research, first I chose two of eight Voodoo ad campaigns. The next step, I found the theories related to this study. Then, I analyzed the signifiers

and signified in those advertisements through Semiotics. Finally, I wrote my thesis.

### **1.5 Organization of the Thesis**

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which is concerned with the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Methods of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the Theoretical Framework, consisting of the theories used for doing the analysis. Chapter Three discusses the analysis of the data. Finally, Chapter Four is Conclusion. The thesis ends with Bibliography and Appendix.