

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF STUDY

In daily life, we can find signs in a variety of forms everywhere. In the morning, as we get up and go to the bathroom to brush our teeth, we can find signs in the form of text on the tube of our toothpaste. While we are driving in our car, we often see a sign in the form of a picture of a beautiful lady on the soap advertisement board by the street. Each time we wear a shirt with a cartoon character on it, we are actually wearing a sign.

As mentioned above, signs can come in a variety of forms. A most common form of signs that we can easily find in our daily life is advertisement. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, advertisement is “a notice, picture, or film telling people about a product, job, or service” (“Advertisement def. 1). Therefore, the main function of a picture in an advertisement is to introduce a product to the public. In fact, an advertisement may suggest more than just an introduction to a product. It can signify something more than that and can even tell us further about the person

or the company behind the advertisement because advertisement is a sign and a sign can stand for somebody or something else other than the sign itself (Gordon 14).

In this era, advertisement has become one of the main tools of the company to get maximum profit. In reaching their goal, they may not care about the negative effects their advertisement may cause. They still use the advertisement even if it means violating the moral principles or rules of behavior generally accepted by society or a social group. As a result, the advertisement may give some negative effects to some people who see it and it may even tend to suggest an offensive and disrespectful message to a certain group of people.

Dolce & Gabbana is considered as one of the companies that sometimes tend to suggest a rude or even offensive message in their advertisement. It is one of today's leading international luxury goods groups and also Hollywood's number one choice of designer (*dolcegabbana official website*). However, some of their advertisements are considered controversial in the world because the picture or the message of their advertisement is considered rude or even offensive to some people. With women as their target market, this group is considered to have more influence around the world. The company distributes their products and advertisement not only in Europe, but also in the United States and Asia.

In this thesis, I choose to analyze an advertisement of Dolce & Gabbana, which has some advertisements that tend to suggest a rude or even offensive message. I took the advertisement from *ifitshipitshere.blogspot.com*, a blog that inform us about "the latest and the greatest art, design, style, and fashion from all over the globe" (*ifitshipitshere.blogspot*). The title of my thesis is Female

Objectification in Dolce & Gabbana Advertisement: A Semiotic Analysis. The topic is significant because an advertisement is an important means of communication in our daily lives these days and people need to pay attention to advertisement more closely as it sometimes suggests negative things which can influence their lives, especially when the advertisement tends to suggest some rude or even offensive messages to some people. After reading this analysis, the reader is expected to be more careful and more critical in accepting a message from an advertisement.

In this thesis, the field of linguistics to which my topic belongs is Semiotics. The founder of semiotics is Ferdinand de Saussure, whose theory I will use. According to Saussure, semiotics is “a science that studies the life of signs within society...” (Silverman 5). He divides signs into two parts; they are “signifier” and “signified”. Signifier is “the meaningful form” while signified is “the concept which the form evokes” (6). The second theory I will use is proposed by another important figure in semiotics, Roland Barthes. According to Barthes, “The denotative sign is made up of a signifier and signified. But, the denotative sign is also a connotative signifier. And a connotative signifier must engender a connotative signified to produce a connotative sign” (Cobley and Janz 51).

To support my analysis, I will also use a theory of female sexual objectification from a feminist perspective. The objectification of women is an important idea in feminist theory. Feminists regard “sexual objectification as objectionable and as playing an important role in the inequality of the sexes” (“Sexual Objectification”). The objectification of women involves “disregarding personal and intellectual abilities and capabilities, and women's reduction to instruments of sexual pleasure for men” (“Sexual Objectification”).

(779 words)

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Based on the topic that I choose, I would like to discuss the following problems:

1. What is the denotative meaning of *Dolce & Gabbana spring/summer 2007 ready-to-wear collection* advertisement?
2. What is the connotative meaning of the advertisement?

1.3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In this thesis, I would like to show:

1. the denotative meaning of *Dolce & Gabbana spring/summer 2007 ready-to-wear collection* advertisement.
2. the connotative meaning of the advertisement.

1.4. METHOD OF RESEARCH

The method that I use in writing this thesis is divided into three steps. First I begin the research by finding and reading some books that are relevant to the topic discussed so that I can get the theory which I can use to support my analysis. Second, I analyze the denotative meaning and connotative meaning of the Dolce & Gabbana Spring/Summer 2007 Ready-to-Wear Collection Advertisement. Finally, I write the research report.

1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

I divide the thesis into four chapters. The first chapter is the introduction which consists of Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Method of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the theoretical framework. Chapter Three is the analysis of the

advertisement. The last chapter, Chapter Four, is the conclusion from all those analyses. At the end of the thesis, I put the Bibliography and Appendix.