

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the globalization era, environmental issues become a major phenomenon which requires the attention of each individual. Climate changes become the most significant threat nowadays. Effects which scientists had predicted in the past would result from global climate change are now occurring: loss of sea ice, accelerated sea level rise and longer, more intense heat waves. *"Taken as a whole, the range of published evidence indicates that the net damage costs of climate change are likely to be significant and to increase over time."* (Hamilton 17). The impact of global warming is almost certain to affect the environment as the place we live.

As phenomena which are described in previous paragraph, no wonder if this leads to the fear of the threat of global warming. The increasing environmental degradation ultimately raises environmental awareness and application of the eco-friendly lifestyle by some people from the regional, national and international level. There are many green lifestyles that implemented in some countries, such as using public transportation, using re-usable bag, using drinking bottle, in order to save the earth or nature. For example in Japan, *"the government plans to extend cycle paths, given the increasing number of pedestrian-bicycle accidents, as well as the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 300,000 tons through the establishment of bike route networks to achieve the goals of the Kyoto Protocol. In a project that*

began in 2008, the land ministry plans to lengthen cycle ways by designating 98 places around Japan, including Nagoya, as model sites for demarcating exclusive bike lanes on streets next to sidewalks” (Iida par. 13-14).

Some of phenomena such pollution, depletion of the ozone layer, and others become part of global warming. *“Long-term trends in surface temperatures are unusual and 2013 adds to the evidence for ongoing climate change, while one year or one season can be affected by random weather events, this analysis shows the necessity for continued, long-term monitoring” (Schmidt par. 5).* According to NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies, the most striking evidence of a global warming trend is closely scrutinized data show a relatively rapid and widespread increase in temperature during the past century (*Global Warming is Happening Now* par. 2). The phenomenon of environmental degradation increasingly diverse as described previously is needs any kind of program which aims to change people behavior or lifestyle from the way they live before.

There is an environmental program which concern about green living or lifestyle campaign. One programs from World Wildlife Fund known as WWF as the world's largest conservation organization which shown us how to do green lifestyle called Earth Hour. Earth Hour is a worldwide movement uniting people to protect the planet, and is organized by WWF. Engaging a massive mainstream community on a broad range of environmental issues, Earth Hour was famously started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia in 2007. Since then it has grown to engage more than 7000

cities and towns worldwide, and the one-hour event continues to remain the key driver of the now larger movement (*Celebrating Earth Hour* par. 1). In Indonesia, Earth Hour started from Jakarta, after that in 2013 Earth Hour successfully expanded to more than 30 cities in Indonesia including Surabaya.

“Six years ago, we started this campaign - Earth Hour has now developed into a campaign with the biggest participants in the history of the world. Initially spread from one city to more than 7,000 cities. From one continent to the 7 continents. From only 2 million people in Sydney to hundreds of millions of the world's population. Since the beginning of Earth Hour was created, it was not just turn off the lights, but to combine all of those who care about making this world livable, engaged and develop a campaign for more environmentally friendly lifestyle, creating a global community and continues to fuel the momentum that remind people to strive together for the future” (Earth Hour Global Media Launch par. 1).

The success of this campaign is also because of their advertisement. Each country which supports Earth Hour has their own advertisement. The use of advertisement on this campaign is very unique and really affects to engage people join Earth Hour. The way the ads engage is by challenge them doing green living, for example the challenge by the Earth Hour Ambassador who is Miranda Kerr. The Australian supermodel, who took to the runway in the \$2.5

million bra Fantasy Bra at last year's Victoria's Secret fashion show, posted her appeal on You Tube in a bid to raise awareness of the annual energy saving event which shown in figure 1. She encouraged her fans to participate in Earth Hour, *"I will conduct a free yoga class if 500 people upload their own 'I will if you will' challenge to youtube.com/earthhour."* (Miranda Kerr on track to broadcast free yoga class for Earth Hour event Par. 4).



Figure 1

Another example of the Earth Hour advertisement from other country is from Libya, they conducted live talks on facebook about Earth Hour. In Tripoli, Castle Museum and Martyrs Square saw its floodlights switched off while candles burned bright. Similarly in Benghazi, the Daawa Islamiya building, Tibesti Hotel and Al-Keish Square turned off lights in solidarity with the ecology movement. *"We have banners, candles and T-shirts. Hommer Electronics donated candles to the town of Zawiya. Al-Madar sent sms messages to subscribers reminding them to switch off,*

and the Environmental Public Authority, facilitated our dealings with other public sectors.” (Libya Celebrates Earth Hour 2013 par. 4).

Advertisement is one of the most important things present in or society today. Advertising helps to keep the audiences informed about whatever new products or services are available in the market at their disposal. It helps to spread awareness about products or services which are of some use to consumer and potential buyers. *“Advertising is at the core of contemporary culture and at the heart of debates about postmodernism, globalization and consumer culture”* (Barker 25). Advertisement nowadays become as mass media which appear in everywhere such as magazine, newspaper, online media, and mostly appeared on television.

“Thus the job of advertising is to create an ‘identity’ for a product amid the bombardment of competing images by associating the brand with desirable human values” (Barker 26). This means the idea of advertisement is to drive consumer behavior in a particular way in regard to a product, service or concept. Products with advertisements which attract public attention that have the potential to compete with competitors even then dominate the market. This makes the advertising agencies are trying hard to make different types of advertisements in order to get the attention of the audience. *“Advertisement is also one form of a marketing strategy which helps companies in promoting their product in order to support selling number because people use advertising to gather information before they make buying decision”* (Baran, and Davis 388). Advertisement is chosen as the object of the study because it

is a product of mass media; it comes out to persuade people in making a decision to buy something.

The textual and ideological analysis of advertising within cultural studies has stressed the selling not just of commodities but of ways of looking at the world. The advertisement uses a variety of signifiers which publicize both the identity of the brand (Clare par. 4). Acquiring a brand is not simply about purchasing a product, rather, it is also concerned with buying into lifestyles and values. According to Schultz and Schultz (2003), brand identity and brand image are the views or impressions held about a brand by the brand owners as well as customers and prospects. "Both identity and image are based on the values, attributes, traits, and personalities associated with the brand by the various stakeholder groups" (Schultz and Schultz 307). While an image of a particular product may denote such as a car, it is made to connote 'wealthy', specifically a person who has Ferrari is belong to high class society.

Advertisement is said to be an efficient way to promote product because it is easy to be found by consumers. This media has now become an important tool to persuade consumers, almost every company in the world uses the advertising services for their commercial product or service products. Every company must promote their products at least to introduce the product. The companies promote their product to attract their target market. Advertisement is also used by the company to build product image. It is usually promotes a certain product, programs or service and

activities. If the advertisement succeeds to fulfill the market demand, *“it could create a great selling number for the company and also produce a repeat purchasing”* (Sulaksana 25).

From explanation above, the writer will focus on how advertisement in Earth Hour Indonesia 2013 commodified some products using semiotic analysis by Roland Barthez. Technical analysis of the qualitative data analysis using the semiotic sign system by observing the Earth Hour Indonesia 2013 advertisement. The relation between advertisement and commodification itself, advertising promotes commodification while simultaneously denying it.

“Advertising blankets the cash nexus with narratives and signifiers that position the meaning of the commodity within non-commodified relations. For example, ads often place commodities at the center of familial relations. Just think of the many McDonald's commercials in which dad shares a moment of quality time with his son over a Happy Meal which include a plastic promo from the latest Disney movie. Imagery of exchange is replaced by a representation of a caring moment between father and child. The commodification of a product can be best described as the practice of treating goods and services as things to be bought and sold on the market” (Woodward 510).

To support this campaign, Earth Hour Indonesia helped by WWF Indonesia as national supporter use many channel, from poster, sticker, shirts, bags and also media such as advertising. Earth Hour's advertising has always been the first choice as a media campaign specifically for Earth Hour Indonesia since 2009 which is the beginning of this movement known by Indonesian. This advertisement contains several green lifestyles as one of their effort to educate and invite the public to change their lifestyle into a lifestyle which environmentally friendly. The use of advertising in media such as Youtube or television becomes the easiest way to inform to people nowadays about Earth Hour.

Currently, Earth Hour Indonesia in 2013 has new tagline "*Ini Aksiku, Mana Aksimu!*" which got more than six thousands viewers, bigger number than previous advertisement. This advertisement show us how people can save the earth by doing green lifestyle. There are several part or images which shown us on how the products being commodified by Earth Hour. For example, there is a man who using bicycle as their daily transportation. In this advertisement, Earth Hour being commodified with bicycle and this product become a symbol of Earth Hour green lifestyle. Moreover, there are many symbols and linguistic message which appeared in each of scenes which has purpose to explain Earth Hour program and how society or people can actively participate saving the environment by consuming green product which represent by bicycle as commodity.

As explain previously that the job of advertising is to create an “identity”, thus objects in advertisements are signifiers of meaning which decode in the context of known cultural systems associating products in advertisement with other cultural ‘goods’(Barker 26). Use-value refers to the actual function that a product contains, or its material makeup, while exchange-value refers to the rate of exchange one commodity bears when compared to other commodities (Baudrillard 303). A commodity in advertisement has sign-value which established through advertising that confers prestige and signifiers social value, status, and power. Then, the writer assumes there is use-value and exchange-value as sign-value occurred on the Earth Hour Indonesia advertisement. The study of signs and the way they work is the domain of semiotics wherein the components of a sign are called the signifier and the signified. A signifier is taken to be the form or medium of signs, for example a sound, an image, the marks which form a word on the page, while the signified is to be understood in terms of concepts and meanings.

The power of sign-value is enhanced by the advertisement, hence the writer assumes that consumption for use-value and exchange-value has been replaced by consumption of sign-value. Entailing the shift from use-value and exchange-value oriented to sign-value oriented, Baudrillard adds the concept of commodification. If commodity can be briefly defined as “something that is sold in order to make a profit” then commodification can be defined as a process that objects, either it is physical or non-physical such as experience, can be traded as long as it is profitable

(Allan 305). This is possible because commodification is rooted from sign-value oriented and because people pursue the 'symbol', anything can be traded – be it a glass of water or the experience of drinking water like in the waterfall.

Linking back to the sign-value, the writer found that Earth Hour Indonesia 2013 advertisement is interesting because it covers all of the concepts which the writer mentioned earlier. In Earth Hour Indonesia advertisement issued in 2013 and still available on the Youtube and many viewers watched. It is shown on the video that by using a significant product, a person can be someone who “doing a good deeds” because with the entire product, we can be such individual that more environmental friendly.

Particularly influential has been the work of Baudrillard with his notion of a simulacra and simulational culture. He was arguing that *“the whole scope of advertising and propaganda comes from the October Revolution and the market crash of 1929. Both languages of the masses, issuing from the mass production of ideas, or commodities, their registers, separate at first, progressively converge. Propaganda becomes the marketing and merchandising of idea-forces, of political men and parties with their ‘trademark image’. Propaganda approaches advertising as it would the vehicular model of the only great and veritable idea-force of this competing society, the commodity and the mark”*.(Baudrillard 87-89).

From above explanation, we know that advertising having significant relation between the commodity and the mark that works together. This significant relation also works in Earth Hour Indonesia advertising which make audiences are positioned that by buying green products and at once they have done two kindnesses, i.e. not merely buy high quality products but also doing a good thing by minimizing the adverse effect to the environment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, the writer would state problem as follows:

- How does Earth Hour is commodified as portrayed in its advertisement?

1.3 Objective Of The Study

The study aims to explain how Earth Hour Indonesia advertisement commodifies Earth Hour by using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis and all findings which gained from the semiotic analysis are interpreted using Jean Baudrillard's theory on commodification.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be useful for media's reader especially about advertising or advertisement, because in this research will discuss about the commodification which occurred by using semiotic analysis. Each of the advertisement has their own style, product and the way to promote their product.

Often, advertisement conveys a certain message which is accepted by the viewers. The result of this study will give some point of view for semiotic analysis which works on audiovisual media especially in virtual advertising. This study also provides information about the description how does commodification from object or person or even experience works on the video. Furthermore, this study is expected to offer an insight to readers who are interested in commodification and semiotic analysis which works on the advertisement.

1.5 Definition of Key terms

Advertisement : is mass media content intended to persuade audiences of readers, viewers, or listeners to take action on products, services, and ideas (*What is Advertising?* par.1).

Commodification : a process that objects, whether it is physical either non-physical such as experience, can be traded as long as it is profitable (Allan 305)

Semiotic : a study of sign and symbol which is studying the meaning and the function of each sign and symbol. (Semiotic Terminology par. 1)

Earth Hour : a worldwide movement uniting people to protect the planet, and is organized by World Wildlife Fund (*Celebrating Earth Hour* par. 1)