

## Elements of Sexuality in Axe Bedroom Advertisement

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### Abstract

Humans are social creatures who are always trying to make ends meet, and cannot be separated from their role as consumers. Advertising is an important factor if it is associated with a product purchase decision. Advertising has the sole purpose to persuade and influence consumers in choosing a decision in buying a product that is offered through the visual rhetoric strategies as one way that is considered appropriate in persuasion. Axe advertisement Bedroom presents ideology of sexuality through visual rhetoric by exploiting the female body as a whole body full of sexuality. It is used as a selling tool to increase producer profits that are set in the media room. Manufacturer of Axe product with its powers and with the help of mass media display advertisement and put scented sex sexual become commodities sold. Data were collected by means of Axe advertisement sampling on youtube, and interviewing the makers of Axe advertisement. The advertisement was analyzed using visual analysis. The result shows that there is sexuality ideology wrapped in Axe advertisement through the system of capitalism.

**Keywords:** Axe, sexuality, visual rhetoric

### 1. Introduction

Human society nowadays live in news and information networks conveyed by media, which is mostly supported by advertising. Media is a kind of intermediary to convey the advertising messages through visual rhetoric abilities. The visual rhetoric available in the advertising shows various kinds of visual to create a particular image. It is expected to encourage the consumers to make a purchase action. The variety and the visual images created in the advertisements should imply good impression that will be memorized by the buyers. As the advertisement are getting numerous, then the creativity challenge is choosing the alternative media in communicating the messages, including in internet or YouTube.

Based on the phenomenon above, the research aims to analyze Axe advertisement in Indonesian version, shown in television and YouTube, entitled *Axe Bedroom*. Because of its controversial issue as cited in detik.com (2014), this advertisement was chosen as the research object.

*“Luna Maya, Uli Auliani, Marissa Nasution dan Chantal Della Concetta berada seksi dalam sebuah iklan body spray. Sayangnya, karena dinilai takut menimbulkan kontroversi iklan tersebut rencananya tak akan ditayangkan di Televisi.”*

It says that those female models above compete their sexual appeals in a body spray advertisement. Unfortunately, since it is considered too controversial, the advertisement is not shown in television channels.

**Through this** *Axe Bedroom* advertisement, the viewers were continually given knowledge and awareness that women are obliged to serve all the men's needs, and they work in domestic domain. **Their beauty and power should be offered to the men through the touch, feel, sight, and so on. Moreover, women was described as men's servants.** Indirectly, the viewers' perception are reconstructed that women should dedicate their physical attraction and their power to the men. Many people, particularly men aspire to gain such treatment that strongly triggers them to purchase the product.

The role of women in advertisements becomes significant because it brings implications for representation, stereotypes, distortion, and others, towards the women themselves. Hence, the process becomes visual rhetoric in order to create sexual images which are represented in *Axe* advertisement shown in television such as *Axe effect-call me sauce version* dan *Axe low price version*, however the *Axe bedroom* advertisement is only provided in YouTube and cinema. The three advertisement need to be analyzed to determine the repeating visual structure in visual rhetoric which is used for product images and understand how the representation symbols work on the viewer, particularly in *Axe Bedroom* established in Youtube and cinema.

## **2. Methodology**

The researcher conducted an observation to the advertisement that has sexuality images in YouTube. The next data step was collecting data and theories of sexuality from various resources such as on-line services, literature and interviews. Interviews were given to the advertisers to analyze the advertisement's sexuality level. To analyze the level, it needs sexuality images in the advertisement covering visualization (sign and significance). The images that represent sexuality level were adjusted with the collected data and theories as the indicators in order to analyze the visualization of sexuality advertisement. The table of analysis

was made to quantify the sexuality level used in the advertisement in persuading the viewers through its visual rhetoric.

### 3. Results

The three parts of *Axe Bedroom* advertisement in YouTube

*Interest:* The scene shows a bedroom atmosphere that symbolizes a private space. An adult male is visualized in pijama and spraying Axe product before sleeping, then it invites some angels with wings in extremely hot white gown to sexually appeal the man and serve him with some special treatment.



**Figure 1.** Axe Bed room advertisement based on communication role of *Interest*

*Benefit:* Most of adult men absolutely have expectation to be adored by women. Through this *Axe Bedroom* version, the manufacturer builds such image product to implement their desire. The market target is unconfident adult men because of their limited physical and financial conditions, particularly those in middle to low class income. It tries to build an individual perception that a real and confident gentleman will be adored by women if he uses *Axe Provoke*. This advertisement builds its product image based on its personal image and market target.



**Figure 2.** Axe Bed room advertisement based on communication role of *benefit*

*Benefit:* The scene that shows the verbal message repetition or the head line and the company identity with the Axe *Provoke* product and its *tag line*.



**Figure 3.** Company Identity with its *tag line*

The Axe advertisement of Indonesian version reveals the meaning series of femininity and women's sexuality that were created as interesting and realistic as possible through the advertisement visual rhetoric abilities. According to Reza Maulana, the art director of Axe Bedroom advertisement (2013):

*Target audience dari iklan Axe Provoke adalah pria menengah ke bawah, berwajah tidak ganteng yang tidak pernah merasakan kencan dengan wanita ideal yang digambarkan dalam iklan Axe Bedroom. Mereka bisa mengejar mimpinya hanya dengan menggunakan produk Axe Provoke dan setelah itu wangi Axe tersebut akan segera bekerja dan mewujudkan mimpi seperti yang diharapkan kalangan menengah kebawah tersebut.*

He says that the market target of Axe Provoke advertisement is adult men from middle to low class income, who are not attractive enough and never experience dating any ideal women described in the advertisement. They can realize their dreams only by using the Axe Provoke product.

Women are forced to understand themselves through the other dominant gender's (male's) perspective. The women images in the advertisement are constructed with sexy outfits that exposes the 'vital' body parts, such as breasts, thighs, buttocks, and they are naturally depicted as the creatures who serve men for foods, drinks and bathe. The woman's tasks in domestic domain just merely indicates that there is a man who is served in her whole-life.

The face expressions are shown on eyebrows, eyes, lips. These body parts are to emphasize the symbols of women who are sexually mature in seducing and influencing or appealing men.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study of Axe advertisement in Indonesian version, entitled ‘Axe Bedroom’ tries to find out the semiotic sign relation in the advertisement. After describing and analyzing the advertisement, the researcher finds the commercialization of women’s bodies and sexual images conducted by the manufacturer in dynamics of capitalism through internet as the electronic media.

Based on the interview carried out by the advertiser, and the analysis of semiotic signs on the advertisement objects, it reveals that the female bodies have significant role used to create the product image in the advertisement. There is an effort to describe the needs of female bodies in it. Hence, it creates the image of ideal female body that is described from its shape, size, colours, and others.

The whole sensual female bodies are used as the selling tool set in media room to increase the producer’s profit. With its power and the assistance of mass media, the advertisement producer puts sex becomes the commodity product sold.

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