VISUAL REPRESENTATION OF RIVER POLLUTION AND GLOBAL WARMING IN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVERTISEMENTS : A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS BASED ON ROLAND BARTHES' THEORY

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Abstract
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This study explores the visual representation of river pollution and global warming in advertisements related to natural ecosystems, using Roland Barthes' semiotic framework. It focuses on how visual signs such as polluted water, industrial smoke, melting ice, and vulnerable human figures construct layered meanings that go beyond their literal appearances. Through denotation, connotation, and myth, these elements convey urgent environmental messages while embedding cultural narratives and emotional appeals. The environmental issues raised in these advertisements not only depict the impact of ecological destruction but also reflect the tension between destructive human activities and the need for ecological balance. Such visualizations demonstrate how visual media plays a significant role in shaping public awareness of environmental issues and encouraging changes in attitudes toward nature. Using a qualitative descriptive method, this research analyzes selected digital campaigns to understand how advertisements build ecological awareness and construct the myth of restoring harmony between humans and nature, ultimately aiming to strengthen collective responsibility for environmental sustainability.

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INTRODUCTION

River pollution and global warming are two interrelated global environmental issues that have become increasingly urgent to address in the modern era. River pollution refers to the contamination of water bodies caused by industrial, domestic, and agricultural waste, leading to the degradation of water quality and posing threats to aquatic life (Alkhadher dkk., 2020) Rivers, as one of the primary sources of water for human life and ecosystems, are currently facing severe threats due to industrial, domestic, and agricultural waste. Meanwhile, the increase in greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, and industrialization exacerbates the climate crisis, leading to global warming with far-reaching impacts such as extreme weather events, sea level rise, and ecosystem degradation. Global warming occurs as a result of the accumulation of greenhouse gases, which accelerates climate change and damages natural ecosystems life systems that consist of interactions between living organisms and their environment (Kurniawan dkk., 2024).

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2021, more than 80% of global wastewater is discharged into rivers without adequate treatment, leading to the degradation of aquatic ecosystems and posing widespread risks to public health. Meanwhile, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in 2023 that the Earth's average temperature continues to rise, with the energy and waste sectors being significant contributors to the acceleration of climate change

In the context of environmental communication, the understanding of ecological issues as represented through visual media particularly in the form of video advertisements plays a crucial role in evaluating the effectiveness of messages conveyed to the public. Visual representation has become one of the dominant forms of environmental communication. It is defined as the use of visual elements such as color, symbols, and image composition to convey messages and shape public perception of social and ecological issues. (Zeng & Yan, 2024). Through visual media platforms such as TikTok, various environmental campaigns harness the power of visual storytelling to evoke emotions and foster collective awareness of climate issues and pollution (Hautea dkk., 2021). One example is environmental campaigns that combine natural aesthetics with narratives of ecological crisis through representations of polluted rivers, melting ice, and a visibly 'heating' planet. Visual media, particularly environmentally themed advertisements, play a crucial role in shaping public awareness through powerful and emotionally charged representations. Images of murky rivers, affected wildlife, or floating plastic waste not only convey factual information but also construct ideological narratives that invite the public to care and take action

Visual representation remains a crucial element in cultural studies, as it serves as a medium of mediation between humans and the complexities of socio-cultural realities. Visual representations not only depict but also construct meaning through symbolization that is rich in cultural, political, economic, and ideological values. According to research by (Verlina & Maulini, 2024), Visual representation in modern brand logos such as the 'Haus!' logo concretely applies Gestalt principles and elements of popular culture to create a cohesive and appealing impression, thereby enhancing brand attractiveness among younger audiences. More broadly, such visual strategies reflect how contemporary branding leverages psychological perception and cultural references to construct identity and emotional resonance in competitive market spaces, n the study by (Arbi dkk., 2024) which examines visual diversity representation in the animation The Amazing World of Gumball, the authors demonstrate how the combination of art style and animation techniques enriches the narrative and broadens audience understanding through diverse visual constructions. The study highlights that visual representation is an active process of constructing inclusive and multilayered realities, rather than merely serving as passive 'images

In the domain of technology and digital culture, the framework of Culturally Aware Image Captioning (CIC) proposed by Yun and Kim (2025) demonstrates how culturally sensitive captioning systems can extract and present cultural visual elements in a holistic manner, underscoring the continued relevance of traditional representation theory within the context of artificial intelligence. Furthermore, cultural evaluation within Vision-Language models (Yadav dkk., 2025) highlights

that representation theory particularly from semiotics and cultural studies is essential for assessing the cultural accuracy and sensitivity of visual AI systems. These findings underscore the relevance of visual representation not only in mass media but also in advanced technologies

Environmental awareness shapes an individual's understanding of the importance of preserving nature and recognizing the harmful impacts of human activities. This includes knowledge of pollution, habitat degradation, climate change, and the decline of biodiversity. Theoretically, environmental awareness is defined as an individual's recognition of the urgency of environmental preservation and their response to environmentally destructive behaviors (Fathoni dkk., 2024). In the context of visual media, particularly environmental-themed video advertisements, visual representation plays a strategic role in shaping environmental awareness. For instance, the motion graphic campaign video 'Plastic Pollution' designed by (Sitompul dkk., 2024) features realistic visuals, emotional narratives, and concrete data to evoke audience emotions regarding the dangers of plastic pollution in marine and cross-ecosystem environments. Similarly, the public service advertisement on the dangers of used cooking oil by (Amadea dkk., 2024) employs a short duration, high-quality audiovisuals, and concise messaging to ensure easy comprehension and effectively raise public awareness in Surabaya regarding environmental pollution Furthermore, the infographic-based campaign from ITS demonstrates that the synergy between visual elements such as color, icons, and statistical data can enhance public understanding of complex environmental issues through visually simple yet persuasive means (Sitompul dkk., 2024). Meanwhile, the semiotic-based digital campaign by (Syawaldi dkk., 2025) illustrates how the use of natural symbols such as trees, leaves, and water and green/blue color palettes creates strong associations with sustainability and environmentally friendly ethical lifestyles

Roland Barthes' semiotic approach provides a framework for understanding how visual meaning is constructed through signs that carry both denotative (literal) and connotative (cultural) meanings. Furthermore, Barthes introduces the concept of mythan ideological meaning that is perceived by society as natural or self-evident. In the context of environmental advertising, such myths often convey moral narratives, such as 'the Earth is sick' or 'nature needs us,' which subtly shape ecological awareness without appearing didactic (Fahida, 2021)

As the foundation of the meaning-making process, denotation precedes connotation. Denotation refers to the first level of meaning or the original meaning of a sign something explicit, tangible, and immediately recognizable without the need for additional contextual interpretation based on culture or social values. (Gunalan, 2020). In modern semiotics, denotation refers to the meaning that can be found in a dictionary and functions as the starting point in the process of sign interpretation (Syawaldi dkk., 2025). Recent studies reinforce the position of denotation as the initial stage before progressing into connotation. For instance, in the semiotic analysis of digital advertisements themed around the green economy, signs such as the color green, natural elements, and recycling icons denotatively present tangible objects plants, the recycle logo, and educational text as the foundation of literal meaning. These signs then operate at a connotative level, implying ideologies of sustainability, social responsibility, and a progressive corporate image

Denotation is also clearly observable in environmental advertisement video for example, images of trees, rivers, or animals. A visual of a tree, in its literal sense, represents the tree itself; this is the denotative meaning. It serves as the foundational layer of the message before evolving into more complex symbolic forms, such as moral symbolism, ecological values, or emotional rhetoric expressed through connotation and myth. A bibliometric study by (Prasetya, 2025) states that semiotic studies on advertising have experienced significant development over the past decade, with levels of meaning such as denotation and connotation consistently emphasized as the primary analytical framework.

Following the denotative layer, which conveys meaning in a direct and literal manner, semiotics recognizes a deeper level of meaning known as connotation. In semiotic studies, connotation refers to the secondary meaning of a sign, formed through interactions with social experience, cultural values, and the collective constructions of society. In the study by (Wijayanti dkk., 2025) it is explained that at the connotative

stage, signs no longer merely indicate reality directly but are interpreted symbolically in accordance with the surrounding social and cultural context. In the context of visual representation in environmental-themed advertisement videos, for instance, images of polluted rivers, thick factory smoke, or wildlife entangled in plastic waste do not only convey factual information about environmental conditions, but also deliver emotional messages that shape viewers' critical perceptions of the ecological crisis.

Furthermore, connotations that are continuously accepted and internalized by society may evolve into myths forms of collective meaning perceived as natural and no longer questioned. As stated by (Hidayati, 2021) when a connotative meaning becomes part of the general worldview of a society, a myth surrounding that sign has been established. In the context of environmental campaign advertisements, such myths can emerge through the visual representation of a child playing amidst piles of garbage; this image is no longer merely a depiction of pollution, but has become a symbol of a generation's future threatened by environmental degradation. Such myths not only reinforce ecological messages but also shape public awareness in a more affective and profound way, positioning visual communication as a vital tool in environmental advocacy

This study analyzes how environmental pollution campaigns circulated on TikTok represent river pollution and global warming through a cohesive sequence of visuals. Images of children playing in contaminated water, fish trapped in plastic waste, and a planet radiating heat symbolically depict the urgency of the environmental crisis while being framed through emotionally resonant narratives. The representation of women as agents of environmental preservation also highlights a gender dimension in the delivery of environmental messages. Barthes' semiotic analysis is employed to examine how visual symbols in these advertisements construct meanings and myths that influence public perception (Hidayatullah & Nisa, 2024)

Previous studies have emphasized that emotionally driven visual content can enhance empathy and raise awareness of environmental issue. For example, a study by (Hostiani dkk., 2023)

found that both verbal and nonverbal signs in environmental advertisements contain hidden ideological meanings that operate through aesthetics. This aligns with the findings of (Pera & Aiello, 2024) who note that climate-related content on TikTok is often framed using a narrative style that is personal, emotional, and easily understandable. Additionally, (Alessia & Aiello, 2025) reveal that visual framing which resonates with the audience's everyday experiences holds significant potential in shaping public opinion and encouraging collective action on climate change issues.. Several previous studies have reinforced the foundation of this research. For instance, a study by (Mohamad dkk., 2022) demonstrates how visual campaigns can reframe public perspectives on the climate crisis through the use of familiar symbols. Another study by (Arif Efendi dkk., 2025) emphasizes that emotional visual content is more effective in fostering environmental empathy, particularly on social media platforms such as TikTok. At the international level, Schroeder and Borgerson, as cited in (Erlyana & Steven, 2020) examined how commercial advertisements construct ecological narratives through visual aesthetics, Meanwhile, the study by O'Neill and Nicholson Cole, as cited in (Lukitawati & Wuriani, 2020) reveals that visually powerful environmental imagery can raise awareness, although its long-term effectiveness requires narratives that foster hope.

In line with this, the book Media, Communication, and Journalism in the Digital Era (Fadila dkk., 2024) Affirm that emotionally charged visual content tends to be more effective in fostering environmental empathy, particularly when disseminated through social media platforms such as TikTok. The study conducted by (Suseno & Athian, 2024) also serves as an important reference, as it highlights how digital illustrations can evoke collective memory a relevant approach to understanding how campaigns activate nostalgia, childhood memories, or cultural identity as part of their visual representation strategies.

Advertising is a form of visual communication that is rich in signs, symbols, and meanings not only informative but also persuasive and ideological. Within its media construction, advertising does not merely aim to convey information about a product or service; it also functions as a tool to shape public opinion and

influence how society perceives certain issues. The visual representations presented in advertisements are often strategically packaged through a symbolic combination of text, images, colors, and narratives, carefully designed to evoke emotions and raise the audience's awareness of the intended message. As stated by (Putriansah dkk., 2022) the representation of signs in advertising plays a significant role in human life, serving as a means of communication that not only conveys messages but also influences how people think and behave. This statement emphasizes that advertising is no longer merely a promotional medium within an economic context; it has evolved into a cultural instrument capable of shaping social constructions and values within society.

In the context of social issues such as environmental pollution and global warming, advertisements are capable of presenting visual representations that touch the emotional and ethical dimensions of the audience. For instance, the use of images depicting polluted rivers, children playing in damaged environments, or melting polar ice not only conveys ecological realities but also creates a profound symbolic effect regarding the environmental crisis faced by humanity. Therefore, semiotic analysis of signs in advertisements becomes essential to uncover how social and environmental messages are constructed, interpreted, and disseminated to the public in a massive and systematic manner.

Environmental-themed advertisement videos distributed through digital platforms such as TikTok have emerged as an effective form of visual representation in ecological communication. These platforms utilize rapid distribution and extensive reach to deliver messages to diverse audiences, particularly the younger generation, who are the dominant users of social media. (Athian & Onang , 2021) It is stated that the portable nature of websites provides open services that can be accessed anytime and anywhere. In other words, although the mediums differ, both websites and short-video platforms such as TikTok rely heavily on high accessibility to disseminate messages. TikTok, with its brief video duration and creative format, is capable of condensing complex messages about environmental crises into concise yet emotionally resonant visual narratives. In this context, advertisements function not only as channels of information and entertainment, but also as media for shaping collective awareness about environmental issues through strategic visualizations that engage emotional responses. These visualizations contain signs that are interpreted connotatively by audiences, thereby constructing certain ideologies. Using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, such advertisements can be analyzed on two levels: denotative and connotative, to uncover how ideological messages are constructed through visual symbols. At the mythological level, environmental ad videos may even create specific ecological myths that generate new meanings surrounding environmental protection actions. Therefore, this research not only dissects visual elements in environmental awareness education on TikTok, but also explores how these visual signs construct ideological meaning and build mythological constructs in the public consciousness. Thus, this study is expected to contribute insights into the importance of visual literacy and critical communication in addressing the increasingly urgent global ecological crisis.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using Roland Barthes' visual analysis method to examine representations of river pollution in environmental advertisements on social media. This approach is chosen for its capacity to uncover the layered meanings embedded within visual elements not only at the denotative level (literal meaning), but also at the connotative level (symbolic meaning), ultimately shaping mythological narratives that reflect specific ideologies.

The research objects consist of two environmental advertisement videos that portray themes of environmental degradation. These ads were selected purposively based on specific criteria: they feature polluted rivers, incorporate visual elements such as waste resulting from human activity, and show significant interaction on TikTok (in terms of likes, comments, and shares). The selection of two videos allows for an in-depth and contextual analysis, focusing on how visual construction is used to deliver strong and emotionally resonant environmental messages.

The analytical process follows the three levels of meaning in Barthes' semiotic framework: denotation, connotation, and myth, enabling a comprehensive interpretation of how

environmental concerns are visually and ideologically communicated (Jadou & Ghabra, 2021):

1. Denotative Level, which involves analyzing the visual elements in a literal sense such as visible objects (environmental pollution, waste, and changes in setting), dominant colors, and the overall composition.
2. Connotative Level, which refers to the interpretation of meaning based on social and cultural contexts for instance, murky water as a symbol of environmental degradation, or a child playing in the river as a symbol of innocence under threat.
3. Mythological Level, which refers to meanings constructed as common truths for example, the notion that living amid pollution is a normal condition for certain communities, or that environmental destruction is an inevitable consequence of progress

Data were collected through digital documentation and observation of visual content, and further supported by a literature review on visual culture and environmental communication. The researcher also took into account local cultural values such as the community's relationship with nature and collectivist practices in interpreting the connotative and mythological meanings that emerged. The results of the analysis are presented in descriptive form, outlining the visual meanings identified in the analyzed advertisement videos.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

 1. Video 1 : River Pollution

Figure 1. Scene 1

Source : Tiktok Account Bật Mode Eco

Table 1. Roland Barthes' Analysis

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
River	Hope	Harmony
Child	Purity	Innocence
Green Grass	Fertility	Life

This scene presents a peaceful atmosphere, with a young child playing by the clear river, surrounded by green grass. At the denotative level, the image shows natural elements that remain untouched and pure. At the connotative level, the presence of the child symbolizes the future and purity, while the river and grass represent hope and fertility. The myth constructed in this scene is a collective belief that humans once lived in harmony with nature marked by innocence and balance where the river serves as a sacred symbol of life itself.


Figure 2. Scene 2

Source : Tiktok Account Bật Mode Eco

Table 2. Roland Barthes' Analysis

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Bridge	Development	Progress
House	Expansion	Modernity
Settlement	Connectivity	Sacrifice

The second scene marks a shift from natural landscapes to development. Visually, the appearance of houses and bridges signifies human settlement, reflecting the expansion of human presence over natural land. The connotation is one of growth and connectivity, but it also indicates the beginning of human intervention in nature. The emerging myth is the dominant narrative that development is always synonymous with progress. However, this myth carries the shadow of sacrifice, as nature is gradually replaced by concrete and infrastructure.
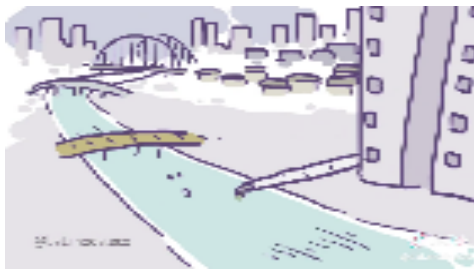
Figure 3. Scene 3

Source : Tiktok Account Bật Mode Eco

Table 3. Roland Barthes' Analysis

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Pipe	Pollution	Risk
Building	Inequality	Superiority
Sky	Fragility	Victim

This scene depicts an increasingly dense urban area, with tall buildings and waste pipes discharging into the river. The denotative level shows the physical manifestation of urban development. The connotative meaning suggests a disruption of balance, pollution, and a growing inequality between progress and environmental preservation. The myth constructed is the dominant belief that cities and modernity are inherently superior to nature, even though nature is, in fact, the victim of such development. This serves as a critique of the notion that all forms of progress are inherently positive
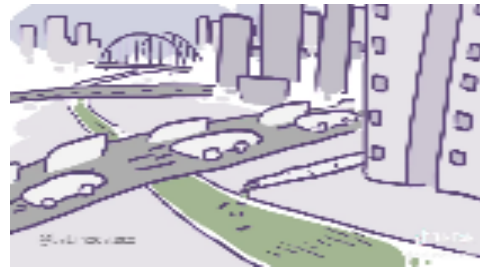
Figure 4. Scene 4

Source : Tiktok Account Bật Mode Eco

Table 4. Roland Barthes' Analysis

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Air	Exhaustion	Nature
Mobil	Regret	Progress
Face	Pressure	Crisis

In this scene, the river is portrayed as increasingly polluted, with a sorrowful facial expression. The constant flow of cars adds to the sense of congestion and pressure. The emotional connotation is strongly conveyed through the depiction of nature as if it is exhausted from being continuously harmed. The myth that emerges suggests that nature has feelings and can "suffer," and that uncontrolled development leads to a real ecological crisis. This becomes a symbolic warning: nature is not a passive object, but an active subject that is also wounded in the process of modernization..
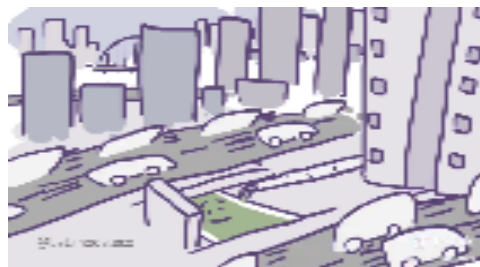
Figure 5. Scene 5

Source : Tiktok Account Bật Mode Eco

Table 5. Roland Barthes' Analysis

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Road	Loss	Nature
Car	Drought	Development
Drainage	Buried	Hope

The final scene presents the climax, where the river has been covered and replaced by a highway. Only a small amount of water remains in a narrow drainage channel, barely visible. The denotation shows a cityscape that has completely dominated the space. The connotation suggests loss, the drying up of ecological meaning, and the alienation of nature. The myth constructed is the belief that absolute development represents the peak of civilization even if it means burying the very sources of life. However, the faint smile on the small remaining face of the river serves as a symbol that hope still exists though very small, there remains a chance to repair and once again value nature.

2. Video 2 : Global Warming

Figure 6. Scene 1

Source : Tiktok Account Bật Mode Eco

Table 6. Roland Barthes' Analysis

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Factory	Pollution	Destruction
Smoke	Danger	Industry
Chimney	Damage	Modernity

This scene shows rows of factory chimneys releasing thick smoke into the air. At the denotative level, it depicts industrial activity. However, the connotation suggests a symbol of air pollution and ecological danger. The myth conveyed is that of large-scale environmental destruction.
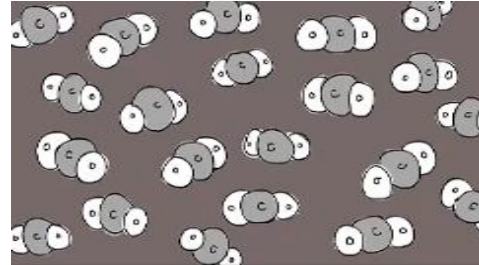
Figure 7. Scene 2

Source : Tiktok Account Bật Mode Eco.

Table 7. Roland Barthes' Analysis

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Moleculel	Emission	Pollution
Carbon	Invisible	CO_2
Oxygen	Threatening	Human activity

This scene depicts CO_2 molecules as the result of fossil fuel combustion. Visually, it appears simple, but connotatively, it emphasizes the significant threat posed by something invisible to the eye. The myth constructed is that modern life produces an "invisible enemy" in the form of carbon dioxide triggering global warming as a direct consequence of human activity.

Figure 8. Scene 3

Source : Tiktok Account Bật Mode Eco

Table 8Roland Barthes' Analysis

Denotation	Connotation	Myth
Earth	Trapped	Greenhouse effect
Layer	Crisis	
		Victim
Heat	Pressure	
		Nature

This scene depicts the Earth surrounded by a layer of gases that trap heat, representing the greenhouse effect. The connotation suggests that the planet is increasingly "confined and pressured." The myth constructed is that the Earth is becoming powerless as a result of human behavior that continues to heat the atmosphere.


Figure 9. Scene 4

Source : Tiktok Account Bật Mode Eco.

Table 9Roland Barthes' Analysis

Denotation	Connotation	Mitos
Sun	Heat	Temperature
Snow	Melting	Instability
Mountain	Change	Seasons

The image of snow-covered mountains beginning to melt under the heat of the sun illustrates the cascading effects of global warming. The connotation that emerges is the melting of ecosystems and the disruption of the Earth's natural balance. The myth constructed is that global warming is not merely about rising temperatures, but

about the drastic transformation of what was once a stable natural world.
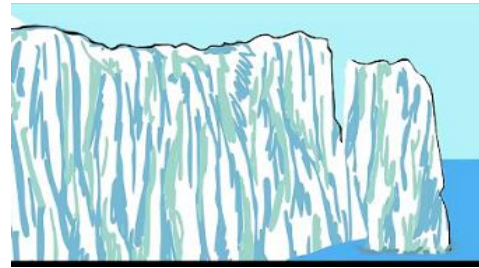
Figure 10. Scene 5

Source : Tiktok Account Bật Mode Eco
Table 10Roland Barthes' Analysis

Denotation	Connotation	Mitos
Ice	Loss	Disaster
Water	Threat	Sea-level rise
Glacier	Change	
		The End

The final scene shows a massive wall of ice beginning to melt, indicating the melting of the polar regions due to global warming. The connotation is one of vulnerability and a looming threat to the future. The myth conveyed is an apocalyptic narrative of environmental crisis, suggesting that the melting ice is a sign of collapse. Together, these two videos present a visual narrative of humanity's relationship with nature a relationship that gradually shifts from peace to destruction. Viewed through Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, each scene in the two videos communicates not only denotative (literal) meanings, but also deeper connotations, and constructs myths social ideologies disguised as natural truths..

In the first video titled River Pollution, the disappearing state of the river is portrayed as a consequence of rapid development and modernization. The opening scene shows a young child playing by a clean riverbank surrounded by green grass. Denotatively, this appears as nothing

more than a child, a river, and a meadow. However, connotatively, the child represents innocence and hope, while the clean river symbolizes pure life and fertile nature. The myth that emerges at this stage is the belief in harmony between humans and nature that the environment is humanity's natural home, peaceful and worthy of being passed down to future generations. However, this sense of peace is soon disrupted by visuals of bridges and houses gradually appearing along the river. Connotatively, this development signifies human expansion and the need for infrastructure, while simultaneously marking the shift from natural to constructed spaces. This is where the myth of modernity operates: the belief that development represents progress and civilizationan ideal that must be embraced, even if it means altering the natural landscape.

The transformation continues in the next scene, as the city rapidly expands and the once-pristine river becomes a dumping ground for waste. Pollution begins to emerge, and the previously blue sky turns gray. The connotation of this visual sequence reflects the disruption of ecological balance, evoking feelings of suffocation and regret. The myth conveyed is that urban civilization is perceived as superior and prestigious compared to the natural landscapedespite its devastating consequences. The river, once a center of life, is now reduced to a victim of unsustainable development. At this stage, the video depicts nature beginning to respond the river's sorrowful expression serves as a metaphor, suggesting that the environment also 'feels' the effects of continuous exploitation. The climax is marked by the complete disappearance of the river, replaced by a paved road. The city and its vehicles dominate the entire landscape, leaving only a narrow stream of water flowing through a concealed drainage system. On a mythological level, this scene conveys the message that development has become an absolute ideology one that prioritizes progress even at the cost of entirely burying nature. However, the river's faint smile at the end subtly signals that hope is not entirely lost.

The next video, titled Global Warming, illustrates the occurrence of global warming caused by human activities and its resulting effects. In the opening scene, factory chimneys emit thick black smokedenotatively representing industrial activity. However, on a connotative level, the smoke is not merely a byproduct of production; it symbolizes pollution, greed, and economic excess. The long-standing myth of industrialization as a symbol of progress is preserved, even as it becomes evident that nature is the primary victim. The visual of carbon dioxide molecules floating in the air highlights that environmental threats are not always visible. This reinforces the connotation that contemporary ecological dangers often manifest in unseen yet deadly forms. The embedded myth suggests that clean air is no longer a universal right, but a luxury that is increasingly rare due to modern lifestyles.

As the Earth becomes increasingly enveloped by the greenhouse effect, a layer of heat surrounds and traps its temperature, signaling a planet that is no longer comfortable and is under internal pressure. Melting snow-capped mountains and shrinking polar ice caps are not merely geographical phenomena; they are concrete signs of an ecological crisis. The connotation drawn from these visuals is one of loss, instability, and looming threat toward the future. The myth that is deconstructed here is the belief that the Earth will always remain stable and that seasons will arrive in a predictable cycle. In this narrative, nature is portrayed as a living entityexhausted and struggling to survive amidst the relentless assault of modernity..

Using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, this video unveils the hidden layers of meaning embedded in its visual narrative. Barthes divides the meaning of signs into three primary levels: denotation as the literal meaning, connotation as emotional and cultural associations, and myth as ideologies that have been naturalized by society. In the context of this public service announcement, myths surrounding progress, modernity, and human dominance over nature are gradually deconstructed. What appears to be development, in fact, brings destruction; and what seems like urban growth marks the loss of natural living spaces. Barthes argues that myths do not falsify reality, but rather erase its historymaking us forget that environmental degradation is the result of human choices, not destiny. By critically reading these visual signs, as this video

encourages, we are not only invited to grasp environmental messages more deeply, but also to rethink the ideologies that shape our relationship with the Earth.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that environmental-themed public service announcements, such as TikTok campaigns circulating on social media, effectively construct strong visual narratives about the crises of river pollution and global warming. Using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, this analysis reveals how simple visual elementssuch as rivers, smoke, factories, children, melting ice, and atmospheric layersnot only convey literal (denotative) messages but also generate symbolic (connotative) meanings and construct ideological myths that are collectively accepted by society.

Through emotionally resonant and aesthetic visual representations, these advertisements construct myths about the relationship between humans and natureranging from harmony and development to destruction. These visual narratives not only inform viewers about the state of the environment, but also prompt them to reflect on the consequences of unsustainable modern lifestyles. Myths such as the equation of progress with physical development, or the acceptance of pollution as a reasonable price for industrialization, are deconstructed through meaningful visual symbols.

Thus, environmental visual campaigns disseminated through social media advertisements function not merely as promotional media, but also as ideological discourses that shape public ecological awareness. Barthes' semiotic approach enables a critical reading of visual signs, inviting audiences to recognize that what appears natural is often a cultural and social construct. This awareness becomes a crucial first step in fostering collective concern for environmental sustainability.

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