

THE LANGUAGE OF THE BRAND
JAMAICAN CHILDREN LEARNING
AND LIVING THE LOGO

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Abstract

Brands and the arresting fonts and flourishes of their symbols are ubiquitous in our visual and experiential environment. Although brand symbols are constructed to represent specific commodities, they are also important signifiers for the values, morés and assumptions associated with global consumerism. Contemporary tools of dissemination, predicated on the digital revolution, intensify the ubiquity of the branded symbolic environment exponentially, with global television advertising playing an instrumental role in this process.

The structural linguistic approach of semiotics, political economy, and neo-Gramscian hegemony theory are argued as ideal theoretical perspectives for this critique of the economic conditions of cultural consumption. That brand symbols can be designed to signify commodities as well as particularistic, subjective, ephemeral attributes is demonstrated in a cross-sectional sample of Jamaican children's recognition of various logos.

The thesis advances the view that learning about logos is a social practice that is inextricably connected to political-economic structures, and that Jamaican children are largely unaware of the ways in which brand symbols are informed by already-existing repertoires of dominant ideas, particularly the now hegemonic neoliberal ideology.

Keywords: Anthea Henderson; brand advertising; neo-Gramscian hegemony theory.