2-A: Shante You Stay/ Sashay Away: Approaching Language Within Brand Assemblages

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This research extends brand assemblage theory to contribute to understanding how language assembles and evolves in brand niche communities. We question how consumers of RuPaul’s DragRace create and circulate a cultural product, then we explore how this is scaled-up and mainstreamed, moving from a brand minor to a brand major.

[to cite]:

[url]:
http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/1024183/volumes/v45/NA-45

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Does social influence during the review provision process reduce the information content of reviews when individuals are exposed to promotional reviews? We show that social influence reduces the evaluation gap between products of different quality levels but that this reduction is insufficient to make average review scores uninformative.

We find that maximizers (vs. satisficers) give more favorable evaluations to feature-rich products indicating that they are less likely to anticipate feature fatigue. Underlying this relationship is a dual process whereby maximizers perceive feature-rich products as status signals as well as overestimate how much they will use the additional features.

This work identifies a boundary condition under which ethically motivated consumers elicit positive responses from observers rather than typically negative ones. We show that exemplars have the potential to harvest applause and can inspire others to emulate but only if there is sufficient psychological distance between themselves and potential observers.

Across three experiments we show that when consumers are presented with both the number of online reviews and the number of sales many of them use the ratio between these numbers – the reviewer percentage – to infer a product’s “word-of-mouth popularity” which is distinct from a product’s “purchase popularity”.

This research extends brand assemblage theory to contribute to understanding how language assembles and evolves in brand niche communities. We question how consumers of RuPaul’s DragRace create and circulate a cultural product then we explore how this is scaled-up and mainstreamed moving from a brand minor to a brand major.