MODERATING THE GREEN GUILT OF MARKETING: A VISUAL ANALYSIS AND SEMIOTIC REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL ADVERTISING

Philip Prouhet

Dr. Timothy Vos, Project Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Throughout the research component of my master’s professional project, I sought to effectively compare the intended message of environmental advertisements with the understood message of research subjects.

The understanding of environmental advertisements was gathered from a combination of visual rhetorical analysis of environmental advertisements and semi-structured, photo elicitation interviews of participants from the general population. Participants were chosen randomly through email correspondence with education in the field of advertising as the only negating factor. Participants participated in one-on-one interviews where they were asked to interpret the messages and societal value of nine environmental advertisements.

Results showed strong correlation between the visual resources, topic, tone, and emotional appeal of an advertisement with the type of reading on the part of the viewer. Through my research, I hope to expand on the current field of research currently available in the field of social marketing and advertising. With such a small fraction of mass communication promoting healthy behavior and lifestyles, it essential to explore what makes that communication effective.