


















The meaning of the brand

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1. the form and the brand




In the universe of mass consumption culture at the end of the millennium, the visual form  has become an important symbol, ubiquitous in the communications media, in the streets, in homes, in shops. But the ubiquitousness of the visual form  is also the ubiquitousness of the discourse it transmits. The aim of this study is to establish an interpretative hypothesis around the content of that discourse.











A form such as  is projected as a visual stimulus that conveys a meaning. To find that meaning, we can turn to the socially established code of commercial brands, and then  means "Nike". Therefore,  functions as the sign of a commercial brand; it is a graphic name. This case is circular, so  as a logotype,  as an imagotype, and /Nike/ as an acoustic verbal sign indicate and name one another, and become a circular structure of interpretants.









But  is not only a graphic name with an indicative function.  is also a graphic artefact that functions as a discourse about the brand.  transmits a series of meanings around the brand.  is also what is talked about, the reference, and what is said about what is talked about, the predication. What  is is shown in . The argument device of the brand is founded on the tautology  is .

If Pedro is essentially big, Pedro is not Pedro but **Pedro**, so that everything that is essentially **Pedro** is shown by **Pedro**. In the brand's play with arguments, to show is to


demonstrate.



The brand is both the maker of the statement, the subject of the statement and what is stated about this subject. What  says which is essentially  is shown in .




 transmits onto  a discourse through which a universe of meanings are attached to the brand. That universe is not fixed, since  only works as a code in the sphere of name-reference, but not in the sphere of predications. The code tells us that  is  is  is /Nike/, but there is no pre-established code that prescribes what the meaning that  transmits onto  is. And yet, that meaning exists and is important, because the fundamental function of  is to attribute a universe of values to .

The set of meanings that make up  are not only constructed through the form . All the components of the marketing strategy help to shape that set of meanings in the mind of the public: advertising, product design, pricing, the type of shop where they are sold, the entities that are sponsored by the brand, the news published about the brand and its users, etc. However,  is a strategic place where the identity that  projects onto the brand is densely and complexly concentrated. Because  is  and because  shows what  is.


2. the semantic universe of the form/brand















The visual form  is an instrument for transmitting meanings. Those meanings are not immediately evident and can only be revealed through analysis.




The semantic potential of , as of any visual form of the same type, is unlimited. Outside any specific use or points of reference,  can have all meanings or none for a subject. The interpretative drift can be unlimited and never go anywhere. We need to presuppose a kind of set of statements with a specific semantic memory, however generic it may be, and we also need to define basic reading instructions that enable us to restrict the interpretative universe.

For a set of statements defined as a projection of the objective public of , and whose semantic memory is constructed within our present day mass consumption culture, the visual form  designates and characterises a brand of sportswear. The brand is a transverse category that includes all the branded products. The brand .

includes all the products marked with , and while the brand transfers values to the products, the products transfer values to the brand.


For a subject living in our culture, the visual form  is a stimulus that can trigger semantic associations in many directions. But that degree of ambiguity does not mean that there is any absolute lack of differentiation between the universes of potential meaning that emerge from any visual form.


Taken in the abstract,  and  are two visual forms that do not refer to a previous code that assigns them a precise meaning. Likewise, either of them, by association, can be attributed a large number of semantic values. Nevertheless, and in spite of the degree of ambiguity,  and  are not equivalent; there is no absolute lack of semantic differentiation between them. Certainly, from our cultural standpoint, the concepts "dynamic" and "static" may be assigned quite clearly to either of the two forms. And so it is obvious, albeit intuitively, that it is coherent to convey "dynamic" through  and "static" through , and that the opposite would mean including a very high degree of conventionality. If it comes to it, we might even go so far as to admit the establishment of a socially instituted rule through which  would mean "dynamic", but in any case  would express a very different concept of dynamism from the kind that  can express. There is a " dynamism" which is a specific meaning. When  is instituted as a sign, no new signifier to which any pre-existing meaning is attributed is generated; the new plane of the expression in turn generates a new plane of the content. The " dynamism" is a new meaning. Therefore the sign  generates a new specific meaning, a " meaning". To find that meaning and make it intelligible, it will have to be translated into pre-existing and demonstrable semantic categories.

Within a specific culture, and for a model reader,  is a signifier whose degree of semantic indeterminacy is very high. However, it is not an absolute indeterminacy. The semantic universe determined by  has some kind of structural organisation. Although any value can be inserted into that universe, each one can have a different degree of attribution. There may be values with a very high degree of attribution, e.g. "speed", others with a lower degree of attribution, e.g. "well-being", and yet other values may have a minimum degree of attribution, e.g., "tranquility". The potential meaning of  is therefore configured as a structure in which a universe of values is hierarchised according to its proximity or distance from the visual gestalt which, in the last resort, projects a semantic gestalt. That proximity or distance, that degree of attribution, defines the degree of probability that the visual form will express each of the different semantic values.



The fact that there are different degrees of probability in the attribution of a value to a



form presupposes that there is a hard core of meanings expressed by the visual form. That core is composed of fundamental values linked to a human being's basic experiences within a culture. Starting from the basic, essential meanings, and through a chain of metaphorical and metonymic associations, we can reach any other semantic value; but some of those semantic values are connected quite directly to the meanings of the hard core, whilst in other cases the connections require long, complex interpretative drifts.

Moreover, the  brand refers to a type of product: sportswear. In turn, "sportswear" is a concept that defines a new semantic structure in which, through connections, it relates to different values. In that structure, the degree of attribution of each value to the original concept is also more or less intense, i.e., each connection assumes a higher or lower level of probability. Thus, for example, as regards "sportswear", the degree of attribution of "movement" will be stronger than that of "meditation".




When, through a proposition, the two semantic universes come into contact, " is a brand of sportswear", then among all the potential values of the two universes, the ones that occupy the foreground are the ones that, being the most probable within each, can connect more immediately. Therefore a semantic chain will be created:


 > speed > movement > physical exercise > sport > sportswear


In the process of interpretation, the connections that can establish a coherent relation between the two semantic universes that come into contact will be activated. And so the meanings structured by  are not the same if  refers to a brand of sportswear, as is the case, as if it refers to a brand of musical instrument or a building firm.

The set of statements of  tends to construct the coherence of the discourse which that visual form transmits onto , and thus controls the unlimited semantic potential of the imagotype.





3. the analytical route


The meaning of  is complex and dense, difficult to apprehend and formalise. It can only be revealed by being caught in the net of an analysis that covers all the levels that make up the sign , to capture the most important values at each one. That route will enable us to establish a hypothesis of the semantic universe that the imagotype  transmits, and an approach to the meaning of the brand. Each level of configuration conveys different meanings; some of them appear at different levels and are more recurrent and therefore more central within the particular semantic

universe, whereas others only appear in isolation at some level and are therefore peripheral within the semantic universe peculiar to  .

The fundamental levels of configuration of a sign such as  are the plastic and the iconic levels. Within each one the statement plane and the stating plane must be taken into consideration.


4. ON the plastic level


The sign  can be regarded as a pure visual form that is displayed in a two-dimensional graphic space. Taking  from that point of view, we are on its plastic level (1). Thus,  is an abstract two-dimensional form which does not refer to any external referent belonging to a real or possible world. On the plastic level,  has a semantic value independent of any reference to a recognisable object outside the form itself.

The significant elements of  concern its own configuration as a two-dimensional graphic form.

On the plastic level it is the morphological, compositional and chromatic values that make up the meaning.


The morphological and compositional values are values that are constituted around physical and spatial categories: consistency, weight, directionality, location, etc.. The physical and spatial categories are radically meaningful since for our culture they are basic elements of metaphorisation of meaning and instruments for understanding more complex and abstract realities (2).

Indeed, a plastic form such as  brings into play an operation through which its morphological and compositional values are metaphorically projected onto physical and spatial categories and end as more abstract semantic values. That projection is based on mindsets of a similar nature and a gestalt configuration that account for the meanings through the most fundamental bodily and perceptive experiences, sets that represent experiences such as: balance, containment, force, etc (3). Those experiences projected onto the visual form define the hard core of their meaning.

At a morphological level,  is first of all an elongated, not a compact, form, and at the same time it is an elongated form defined by oblique, not vertical or horizontal, orientations. Elongated oblique forms refer to instability and therefore to **dynamism**.

The convergence of the contours at the ends of the form make up two acute angles which define **directionality** and therefore refer to **movement, journey, trajectory**.


On the other hand, those acute angles cut off at the ends connect with a connotation of **aggressiveness**.

In any case, the categories defined around directionality are fundamental in the configuration of the semantic universe of the form . Directionality defines a route, a **space** and a **time**, and implicitly points towards a **goal**.


Because of its great relative length within the form, the acute vertex on the right signals a dominant direction with great force. Therefore, the dominant directionality is the one defined by a diagonal moving forward and upward. Metaphorically, in our culture **going forward** and **upward** define movements of **positive progression**.



In western culture, because of the directionality of reading, in a two-dimensional space directionality to the right becomes, metaphorically, directionality forward. The evidence of positive progression directionality means that many brand imagotypes and logotypes take that directionality as the axis of their visual forms.

But the directionality structure of the form  is more complex and allows more possibilities. Thus, we can visually obtain a directionality in the opposite direction, downward and backward. That directionality is defined by the form of the lower curved corner. The value of that directionality is to establish an opposing force to the dominant one. So we have a structure in which the dominant movement is counteracted by a movement in the opposite direction. All that, therefore, refers to the experience of overcoming resistance and alludes to **tension** and **effort**.



A new structure of directionality is fundamental in the discourse of the form . That structure is defined by taking into consideration the continuity of the form. The

simple curved contours define a continuity in the movement, and that continuity determines the orientation through a gradual change in the directionality.





The continuous movement can be structurally broken down into two basic directions: it goes down only to come up again. That operation of going down only to come up again, like going backward to move forward again, could be categorised as acquiring **thrust**.




The structure indicated shows a change of direction. To go down to come up again can allude to bouncing, but bouncing presupposes a surface on which the body can rest to make the change of direction. That would mean an abrupt change of direction, a discontinuity, and would design another configuration of the form.




But that implicit surface does not appear in the form  : on the contrary, the continuous curved structure that defines the movement shows a change of direction which does not rest on a surface, but takes place in a void. There is no support: the movement is made in suspension. All of which alludes to overcoming the law of gravity and inertia and therefore to **force, energy and control**. In the end, it alludes to **mastery** over the laws of nature and becomes an action space as a space above the ground, an **aerial** space.


The lower zone of the form  is defined by curved contours. That is how the curved-straight opposition, which is related to the semantic opposition between flexibility and rigidity, appears. Here, then, is a reference to **flexibility**, to **elasticity** and, in the end, to **agility**.


The right end is configured as a long arrowhead defined by two straight lines, straight contours that come out of the curve and move quickly and directly towards their confluence, marking a direction. And so they refer to the **decision** with which the movement is developed.

On a plastic level, the two-dimensional form tends towards simplicity. It is composed of a single form, marked out by continuous contours, curved and straight, without breaks. On the other hand, the contours are well defined and the surfaces are flat, with no gradations of texture or modulations of tone. There is a clear contrast between the figure and the background. This is a form that shuns complexity, the superfluous, the ambiguous and the ornamental. In that sense the form  aims at **essentiality**.

Nevertheless, it is a simple form that refers to an even simpler one, the one that might come from the installation of a symmetry on the vertical axis.





The processes of perception tend to configure gestalts with maximum pregnancy, maximum simplicity and maximum redundancy. When a form recalls another, simpler, more redundant, one, the perceiver tends to restore the original simplicity and then a **tension** occurs. We then have  appearing as a **transgression**, a deformation of a simpler form produced through a **torsion**.


In chromatic terms, the form  has many manifestations. In each corporative appearance, it is embodied in quite different colours on backgrounds that are also chromatically very varied. All of which generates an effect of **imaginative** combination which is related to the pleasure of **games**.

The graphic form  is a constructed form which to some extent alludes to its own production. In that way the plastic dimension foregrounds its nature as statement.

There are graphic forms that refer to their production insofar as they are very personalised lines. Those lines clearly allude to the gesture of which they are a consequence.






Through its allusion to movement from backward to forward and through its simple configuration, the form  also refers to a gesture of production. Indeed,  is easy to memorise and reproduce;  undoubtedly encourages manual reproduction. Apparently it is a form whose execution seems to be within the reach of anyone. It is therefore a **near, accessible** form. But it is extremely difficult for a manual execution of  to give rise to forms which are absolutely identical according to the canon.

In that way, through its apparent graphic simplicity,  refers to execution with **precision, exactness, control**.

5. the iconic level

On the iconic level, the two-dimensional form is projected as a representation of an object that exists in a real or possible world, a more or less unknown or recognisable object.

A perception can be projected onto the form  that enables us to observe it in the coordinates of a three-dimensional space.



A first view of the three-dimensional form represented by  defines a surface which arrives from behind and moves forward to turn and move away again. So the two vertices of the form  appear as vanishing points that are lost in the distance and where the surface has already become imperceptible. The route of the object represented comes from infinity and moves away again towards infinity. In a small graphic space an enormous spatial trajectory is represented. The visible trajectory from the observer's point of view is extremely short; the object represented appears and disappears in a flash. Here we have a strong effect of **speed**.



Thus, before the observer a surface appears in a brief instant and the concepts of **instantaneousness** and **fleetingness** are emphasised. But it is the instantaneousness and fleetingness of something unlimited which is lost in space in such a way that the observer cannot know either where it comes from or where it goes. It is an **apparition**, something that comes from beyond the visible and returns beyond the visible. The image constructed is of a subject who has a **vision**, who, through perception, grasps something ephemeral, flashing and extraordinary. The observer can see the




phenomenon for an instant, an instant frozen in the form/image, but that phenomenon goes beyond the space and time where the encounter takes place. Thus a reference is established to the **mysterious** and the **enigmatic**.


Moreover, the implicit observer is placed in an eccentric position with regard to the event. The surface represented comes to him and then goes away, but the forwardmost point is in a lateral position with regard to the central axis that defines the viewpoint from which he is looking. That denial of frontality eliminates the effect of *mise en scène*, of an event prepared in order to be looked at. It is defined this way, the image of an observer surprised by a phenomenon which occurs independent of his attention, his will and his expectations. There is a representation of a chance encounter and thus there appears an allusion to the **unexpected** and therefore to **surprise**.




Furthermore, if frontality refers to the formal and conventional, laterality/obliquity refers to the **informal/original** and the **natural/spontaneous**.


But in the end the form  alludes fundamentally to movement and does so in such a way that it points to certain forms of representation of movement in specific communications media. Thus, in the comic, and even in some kinds of animation, the so-called kinetic lines serve to construct and accentuate the effect of movement. The form  is an iconic allusion to a conventionalised way of representing movement.




But from that point of view  is a representation of movement in which a sight of the body moving is denied. It is a pure movement, a movement that appears in its **immaterialness** as the trace and effect of an event. And here the **enigma**, the **secret**, reappears. It points to the trace of the action or movement, but the body that performs the action or movement does not appear. In the end, the form  points to a **mystery** and generates an effect of **intrigue**.


On the other hand, kinetic lines may also be considered a representation of the movement of the air which occurs as a result of the rapid movement of a body. The movement of the air both refers to a weak materialness, a materialness on the borders of the immaterial, and evokes the sound of the air being cut and set in vibration by the passage of an object. In a synaesthetic operation,  alludes to the buzz/whistle of the air and functions as a graphic onomatopoeia. Thus,  implies not only the visual but also the acoustic and, in spite of its tendency towards immaterialness, paradoxically acquires a dimension that implies the **sensory** (4). In  a perception of what tends to be imperceptible is created: the sight and sound of the air, almost of nothing, and that evokes the **magical** and once again **mystery**.

On the iconic level, an abstract form can be used to allude to any object to which it bears some degree of resemblance. The form  is a simple form, but at the same time a special and clearly differentiated one. On extremely simple and conventional




forms, such as  o  , it is difficult to project recognition of any object in the world, since they are so unspecific that the number of possible objects is excessively high. On extremely complex forms such as  , it is also difficult to make an iconic projection, since they are so specific that it is hard to find direct similarities to any significant object.

The form  is a simple form and yet it has a high degree of specificity; so it is a form that makes it easy to project towards recognition of objects from the world. In


 we can identify a boomerang, a laughing mouth, the tick,  , meaning correct, a pipe, the bottom end of a hockey stick, an erect penis, the outstretched wing of a bird or an aeroplane, etc. In any case, the most important thing is the capacity for projection of the form  . It is a form that invites the spectator to act to construct his own personal iconic representation.


All that makes up the image of an active and **imaginative** spectator who uses the form in a game of discovery of similarities. In that way, the form  is a **recreational** instrument.



6. the feeling of exclusion

But if the form  is special, it is not because of what is present, but of what is absent. Imagotypes are used alongside logotypes to clearly identify the brand names (5). But in all probability the most important thing about  is that it has changed the rules of that game and tends to present the form  as a sign which can identify the brand by itself. First of all, there is a discourse about the predominance of the visual over the verbal, of the **emotional** over the rational.


Any form/brand, imagotype or logotype, is not only a transverse category that includes all the brand products; fundamentally it includes all the subjects branded by the form, with the possession and use of the products in which the form/brand is inscribed.



But moreover, and most of all, when the form  appears in isolation, without being accompanied by the logotype, it is presented as something whose reference the spectator must recognise. It establishes the illusion that there is a **secret** code of which the translation is withheld and thus constructs the image of a spectator who is already **initiated**, who knows the keys of the code and therefore belongs to the elite. There is a strong value of **exclusiveness**, and a relation of **complicity** is established between the brand and the subject.




The community universe of  is no longer established only through the ownership and use of objects, an ownership and use that characterise having, something outside




the subject and related to its appearance; the community universe of  is also established through knowledge of a secret, a knowledge that characterises knowing, something internal to the subject and related to his essence. Thus a strong effect of **identification** between the subject and  is thus constructed.



7. the form/brand as narration

Throughout this analytical journey through the different levels that configure the form , a series of semantic values have appeared. They can be arranged in a simple list, but the construction of the coherence of the discourse requires two fundamental operations. The first consists of grouping the semantic values in sets which point in the direction of more generic semantic categories. The second consists of organising those categories around some kind of canonic discourse structure.

The discourse transmitted by  has a **narrative structure**. Indeed,  is the representation of an action which, like all actions, is inserted in **space/time** axes.

 is action (6) and the action determines the minimum essential nucleus of narrative. Therefore, the semantic categories which are projected through  have to be organised around a narrative outline. In the discourse of  the fundamental elements that define the actant level of narrative appear: subject/hero, object/goal and transformation/action. A subject proposes to obtain an object and to achieve his goal he performs an action.

The form  is, in itself, the schematic representation of a basic narrative structure. And so the brand embodied in the form  is an instrument that serves to attain the goal signposted by the form  itself.


The object/goal is not specified in a body, is not made figurative, nor is it visible or clearly described or specified. However, it is defined by certain values. The meanings that refer to oriented movements such as **going up**, **going forward** and **going beyond/farther** allude to an implicit goal that is defined as **overcoming**. On the other hand, the object to be attained is characterised by values such as: **immaterial**, **distant**, **aerial**, **mysterious**, and is presented to the observer as a **vision**. All of which evokes the **transcendent** and constructs the image of the goal as a **utopia**. On the practical/utopian semantic axis,  situates its universe of meanings on the pole of the utopian. The goal defined by  is defined as a **utopia of overcoming**.


The subject/hero who pursues the goal is not made figurative either, but there are certain semantic values that allude to him and endow him with meaning.


First of all, he is a competent subject. He has virtualising competences that impel him


to perform the action. Thus, values such as **effort**, **decision**, **thrust** and **tension** refer to the sphere of **will**. It is an intense, firm desire which imprints its character on the performance of the action. In that way, the subject is awarded the virtualising competence of wanting.

The subject also possesses the actualising competences of being able and knowing, which equip him to perform the action and make him the hero of the narration.

He is a subject with **power**. The form  transmits a series of values that are related to **physical power**: **speed**, **force**, **energy**, **flexibility**, **elasticity** and **agility**, and also to **mental power**: **control**, **precision**, **exactness**.

The second actualising competence is **knowing**. The subject is an initiate, able to recognise the secret: the referential meaning of .

Initiation also supposes belonging to an elite community. **Initiation**, **exclusivity** and **complicity** allude to a **communion**. The individual blends into the collective and the value of the **emotional** projects a group image in which there is a strong sense of **belonging** to that symbolic element characterised by .

The **communion** of the group is founded both on shared knowledge and shared **mystery**. At some of its levels, the form  refers to the **invisible**, the **enigmatic**, and the **mystery** alludes to the transcendent, to what goes beyond the obvious and the immediate, but also, like the secret shared knowledge, the common mystery to be discovered strengthens the sense of belonging to the group.



Radicalness is also a category which characterises the subject. The values **simplicity**, **essentiality**, **definition**, **decision**, **contrast**, **clarity** and **aggressiveness** refer to that category. The radical subject searches for the essential in an essential way, eliminating nuances, accessories, and taking up an extreme position.




The category of the **recreational** also takes on considerable importance. The **informal**, **original**, **natural**, **spontaneous** and **imaginative** bring us closer to the **recreational** as a category that refers to games.


The conjunction of the **radical** and the **recreational** generates a space of values that have to do with **youth**.



Meanwhile, the intersection of the **utopian** and the **recreational** provides the space of **adventure**. The utopia whose conquest is conceived as a game defines an adventure experience (7).

Above the narrative discourse proposed hovers a generic value that seems to

impregnate the whole semantic universe of . That value is **tension**. The utopia of overcoming, the decided will, the mystery, the secret, the radicalness, are contents that mark the narration as a story in which there is no definitive ending that involves the restoration of a stable order. In the end, the discourse of  defines a space of **permanent adventure**.

When all is said and done, it is vital to emphasise that significantly some of the semantic values that make up the discourse of  are directly related to basic values of the tribal paradigm that is blooming in present day developed societies: the emotional community, the life potential, the law of the secret (8). For all those reasons, the form  is an ideal instrument for implanting in the social imagination the fantasy of forming a new tribe: **the  tribe**.

 defines a diffuse collectivity characterised by a tribal sociality, at whose heart the everyday connects directly with the illusion of utopia.

This analytical journey enables us to establish an interpretative hypothesis around the semantic universe projected by the form/brand . To sum up,  contains a **narration** in which:

The subject/hero is defined by the following characteristics:

youth

radicalness

will and decision

physical and mental power

tribal communion

The object/goal is:

a utopia of overcoming




The action/transformation is lived as:

a permanent adventure

But the structure of the semantic universe of a form/brand such as  is also

defined by its relation to the other forms/brands competing on the market.






All those forms/brands certainly project semantic universes which are clearly differentiated from . That is why the relevance of each of the semantic values projected by the imagotype  can be precisely measured according to their degree of specificity as regards the semantic values projected by the other imagotypes/logotypes of the other important brands in the sportswear and equipment sector; brands in relation to which  defines its own semantic position in the symbolic space of the social imagination.


Notes:




1. From the tradition of structuralist semiotics, the plastic level of visual texts is defined as a differentiated level of the iconic level. (J.M. Floch 1985, 1993. A.J. Greimas and J. Courtes 1991. Groupe M 1992). J.M. Floch (1985,1993) defines the signifying system of the plastic level as a semi-symbolic system and has been concerned with an analysis of the plastic level of images in his studies of advertising, marketing and design. In a semiotic analysis of the plastic level, F. Thülermann's study (1982) of the work of Paul Klee is also fundamental.
2. From the standpoint of cognitive psychology, the work of G. Lakoff and M. Johnson (1986) is the foundation of the basic importance of spatial and orientational metaphors in the construction of meaning.
3. M. Johnson's concept (1986) of "image schemata" clearly demonstrates the importance of the basic physical and spatial bodily categories in the processes of understanding and constructing meaning. The cognitive perspective on spatial

metaphors and image schemata explains and legitimates, from a psychological point of view, the importance of a semiotic analysis of plastic values in text structures.


4. B. Schmitt and A. Simonson (1997) mention the reference to the form  as "the whistling wing" (p. 146). That way of referring to the form  alludes directly to its acoustic representation aspect. Moreover, the authors establish two opposing axes for the stylistic placement of brands: minimalist-ornamentalist and realism-abstraction.

Within those coordinates,  would be located in the abstract minimalism quadrant.

5. When defining the imagotype, N. Chaves (1988) says that the logotype "is usually added to a non-verbal sign whose function is to improve the conditions of identification through an extra medium." According to that definition, the imagotype is a simple complement of the logotype. But  inverts the terms in such a way that it tends to enable the imagotype to acquire autonomy and become the exclusive identifier of the brand.

6. The slogan "just do it" which sometimes accompanies the imagotype  ratifies the reference to the action carried out by the form . The slogan introduces interesting contributions to the narrative and enunciative structure defined by , contributions that should be analysed in a broader study of all the elements that go to make up the identity of the brand.

7. From a semiotic square defined by J.M. Floch (1993), A. Semprini (1995) constructs a map of semantic position defined by two axes. The first is established on the semantic opposition "utopian" v. "practical" and the second on "critical" v. "recreational".

According to his analysis, the semantic position of  on the map would be in the quadrant between "utopian" and "recreational". Semprini calls that the "project" space, but here, for the sake of greater conceptual clarity, we prefer to call it the "adventure" space.

8. M. Maffesoli (1990) defines the basic characteristics of tribal sociality in mass culture societies. And along those lines, with regard to the law of the secret, he says: "... there is a relation between mystery, the mystic and the silent; and that relation is the initiation that enables us to share a secret. That the secret may be uninteresting, or even objectively non-existent, does not change things essentially. It is enough for the initiates to be able to share something, even though only phantasmagorically. That is what gives them strength and makes their action dynamic." (p. 166)

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