

Course: SKOM12
Term: Spring 2019
Supervisor: Henrik Merkelsen
Examiner: Mats Heide

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER
A narrative study of how late entrants position their brand
biography in the market
ELIN JÖRYD

Lund University
Department of strategic communication
Master's thesis



Abstract

Better late than never - A narrative study of how late entrants position their brand biography in the market

This study aims to provide a better understanding of how successful late entrants narratively construct their brand biographies in order to position themselves favorably in the market with already dominant players. A multiple case study with two different late entrants, Everlane and Too Faced, has been analyzed by using narratological theories based upon Algirdas Greimas's hierarchical order of surface- and deep level. The analysis shows that the late entrants construct and built their narratives so that they stand in opposition and want to challenge the status quo of the market in which the already established pioneers operate. The late entrants are positioning themselves as someone who is good and wants to do well for the future and the customer. Additionally, the competitors are positioned as being the enemy who stands in opposition to what the late entrants believe and support.

Keywords: late entrants, brand positioning, brand biography, brand communication, narratology, narratives

Acknowledgements

I want to send my absolute gratitude to my supervisor Henrik Merkelsen for his good advice and commitment during the implementation of this study. Without his guidance, this project would have turned out very different.

Also, I want to thank various classmates at the department of Strategic Communication for valuable discussions and feedback. Your comments were truly helpful as well as fruitful.

Finally, a big thank you to my family and friends who have helped and supported me during this process and have provided valuable insights.

Table of content

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem	2
1.3 Aim and research question	3
1.4 Relevance of the study	4
1.5 Disposition.	4
2. Literature review	5
2.1 Narrative brand biography.....	5
2.2 Branding and narratives of late entrants in the market.....	7
2.3 Positioning this study within previous research.....	9
3. Theory	11
3.1 Narratology.....	11
3.1.1 The structuralist approach to narratives.....	12
3.1.2 Greimas’s Actantial Model.....	13
3.1.3 Greimas’s Semiotic Square.....	14
3.2 Semprini’s Brand Identity System	16
3.3 Reflection of theoretical relevance.....	18
4. Methodology	19
4.1 The epistemological perspective of narrative structuralism.....	19
4.2 Research Design.....	20
4.3 Case selection.....	22
4.3.1 Case 1: Everlane	23
4.3.2 Case 2: Too Faced.....	24
4.4 Data selection and collection.....	24

4.5 Narratological analysis	25
5. Analysis	28
5.1 The narratives of Everlane	28
5.1.1 The Surface/Discourse Level	28
5.1.2 The Narrative Level	31
5.1.3 The Axiological Level	36
5.1.4 The Brand Identity System	40
5.2 The narratives of Too Faced.....	41
5.2.1 The Surface/Discourse Level	41
5.2.2 The Narrative Level	43
5.2.3 The Axiological Level	47
5.2.4 The Brand Identity System	52
6. Discussion	53
6.1 How do successful late entrants narratively construct their brand biography in order to position themselves in the market?	53
6.1.1 Disruption	53
6.1.2 Improved future	55
6.1.3 The “friend”	56
7. Conclusion	58
7.1 Conclusion.....	58
7.2 Limitations and future research.....	59
8. References.....	60

1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the subject that will be studied, followed by the problem formulation and aim as well as the research question. Moreover, the relevance of the study and disposition is also presented.

1.1 Background

Brand positioning as well as how to achieve competitive advantage in the market is probably one of the most frequent discussed topics in marketing- and brand communication. Kotler & Keller (2016) claim that brand positioning is an” act of designing the company’s offering and image” that contributes to “occupy[ing] a distinctive place in the mind of the target market” (p. 310). Strategically communicating one’s brand positioning has been shown to be highly effective in enhancing as well as strengthening the competitiveness towards other brands (Hassan & Craft, 2012) and often leads to positive consumer perceptions in the long term (Fahy et al, 2000). To achieve a brand position of competitive advantage, Matthyssens et al. (2009) suggest that, in addition to a brand’s offerings, it must also hold a distinct position in the minds of the consumers that is difficult for other brands to imitate. Previous scholars have identified several strategies for brand position in order to enhance the reputation of the brand and improve market performance. These are, amongst others, attractiveness, reliability, relatability, organizational identity and to state what distinguish your brand from others on the market (Blankson & Kalafatis, 2004; Pride & Ferrell, 2014).

Even though best practices and theories of branding and positioning have been discussed and studied multiple times, many start-ups and late entrants run into marketing- and branding problems and thus often fail not long after they have entered a market (Cantamessa et al., 2018; Wilkie & Johnson, 2016). This claim is supported by Tushabomwe-Kazooba (2006), who states that more than 50 percent of small business enterprises, that is the ones that are not dominated within their market, fail within the five initial years of existence. According to Cantamessa et al. (2018), this is often due to the fact that newer entries often deal with too many or too strong competitors that already have a steady and secure position within the market and have access to all relevant assets, i.e. distribution channels and resources, making

it difficult for late entrants to gain a good portion of the customer segment. Furthermore, a great deal of research of how and which brand positioning strategies to use in a beneficial way has mostly been focusing on early entrants (Besharat et al., 2016). This means that plenty of current branding and marketing strategies do not necessarily cover the need for branding positioning techniques that late entrants have, such as challenging and competing with pioneers (Besharat et al., 2016; Shamsie et al., 2004; Horan et al., 2011). As late entrants are newer to the business, they do not have the same resources, assets or challenges as early entrants do (Jun et al., 2015), making it difficult to apply the already existing branding strategies to them, meaning that they have little guidance in brand- and positioning strategies, which can lead them to fail (Hill, 2001; Horan et al., 2011; Wilkie & Johnson, 2016).

1.2 Problem

However, even though many late entrants fail, companies entering a market with already well-established brands can and have succeeded despite strong competition (Paharia, 2014). The tech company Apple Inc. is a perfect example. When the company entered the market, Microsoft was already a dominant player, and thus nobody thought that Apple would stand a chance. However, in 2010, Apple surpassed Microsoft as the biggest tech company in the world (Delventhal, 2015; Wheeler, 2018). Moreover, The Body Shop has also been through the same journey. Initially, the company was a subordinate to and competed against key players such as Revlon and Olay but have, however, revolutionized the beauty and cosmetics industry ever since (Delventhal, 2015; Wheeler, 2018).

Why have these late entrants had a major success? Well, if one was to believe Holt (2003), Fog et al. (2007) and Tsai (2006), this has little to do with only using traditional marketing- and positioning strategies such as offering distinct/enhanced products or competitive prices as they cannot alone achieve desired results anymore. Instead, the authors argue that this is a result of communicating identity and personality in the right way by using narratives and stories. This view is supported by Kao (2015) and Avery et al. (2010) who state that in order for late entrants to be successful and create a unique position in the market, brand biographies and narrative storytelling have to be added to already existing traditional branding strategies. This is because the use of brand biographies is a powerful tool to strengthen the brand's connection to the customers (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). Furthermore, since most of these traditional branding and positioning strategies have mainly been focusing on bigger corporations as stated above, using brand biographies and storytelling within one's market positioning thus becomes especially important for late entrants to be able to build

relationships with the customers so that they can identify with the brand, and thus gain a favorable position in the market in relation to their pioneers (Besharat et al., 2016; Shamsie et al., 2004; Aaker, 2012; Aaker & Aaker; 2016).

Even though research has been conducted on marketing- and brand positioning strategies that can be used to compete against pioneers (Basharat et al., 2016), few have been investigating effective branding in terms of narrative brand biography in relation to late entrants in the market. Nonetheless, the few that have been conducted on brand biographies in relation to late entrants have been focusing on its positive relationship to consumers. For example, Paharia et al. (2011) argue that late entrants positioning their brand biographies as someone who is determined to succeed even though the odds are against them can have a positive impact on brand identification and lead to favorable choices and purchase intention amongst the customers. However, there is a shortage of knowledge in *how* late entrants that have been successful in the market are narratively constructing, building and communicating their brand biography and personality, especially in regard to the actual narratives. Thus, when late entrants want to initiate a brand biography, they immediately face issues on how to narratively structure the brand identity and personality as little guidance exists on how brand biographies could be constructed in terms of narratives and what meaning it could have from a narratological perspective (Cohen, 2014). Not knowing how to construct one's brand biography could lead to that practitioners use narratives in a way that is not suitable for their organizational identity nor for how they want to position themselves, missing out on the possibility to create emotional association to consumers which is critical in today's marketplace (Posavac, 2015).

1.3 Aim and research question

Based upon the problem presented, this study aims to provide a better understanding of how successful late entrants are positioning themselves in the market with already dominant players by breaking down the structure of their brand biographies from a narrative perspective.

To be able to further investigate this, this study will aim to answer the following research question:

- How do successful late entrants narratively construct their brand biography in order to position themselves in the market?

1.4 Relevance of the study

Strategic communication is here defined as organizations' use of purposeful communication to fulfill its overall mission (Falkhemier & Heide, 2018). This study seeks to enhance the knowledge of how brands can construct and communicate narratives within their brand biography with the mission of positioning themselves favorably in a competitive market, thus contributing to the field of strategic communication. By investigating the narratives of late entrants that have managed to become successful within an already competitive market, this study hopes to understand how future brands that want to enter a competitive market can narratively construct and communicate their brand biographies in order for brands to position themselves favorably. This study will thus provide valuable insights for practitioners within strategic communication and enhance their knowledge of how late entrants can communicate narratives in positioning and promoting their brand biographies within a new market to gain competitive advantage. Furthermore, examining brand biographies from a narrative perspective will strengthen the understanding of how to strategically communicate one's brand identity and personality to acquire legitimacy within a market where pioneers are dominating. Hence, this study will also add scientific contributions to other dimensions of strategic communication as a multidisciplinary field, involving both marketing and branding communication.

1.5 Disposition

The following chapter will discuss previous research within the field of brand biography- and narratives, both generally and in relation to late entrants within a market where competition already exists. The third chapter will present the theories that will be used for the analysis as well as why the chosen theories are considered to be relevant for the study. Next, the used method is discussed and how the study has been conducted, followed by the analysis where the results are presented. Finally, a discussion will take place where the findings will be discussed, followed by a conclusion with limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. Literature review

This section will provide an overview of previous studies about brand biographies and narrative positioning in the market in general and in relation to late entrants in particular. The first part focuses on what has been said about brand biography narratives and why it is crucial in today's market. The second part presents a review of previous research about branding and narratives of late entrants. The section ends with a discussion of the relevance of the study in relation to the previous research.

2.1 Narrative brand biography

Brand biography, taking the form of a narrative, refers to a story where the brand's history, values and aspirations are shown and told to enhance the brand in the eyes of the customers to gain a competitive advantage in the market (Avery et al., 2010). Using narratives as part of one's brand biography has been studied multiple times before and has been proven to have a positive impact on the relationship between the customers and the brand (Pini, 2017; Avery et al., 2010; Shankar et al., 2001).

Green (2008) states that the use of narratives can be a very powerful tool for persuasion as this can create a narrative transportation where the customers enter "a state of cognitive, emotional and imagery engagement" (p. 47), which can lead to favorable customer beliefs of the brand. Additionally, Cooper et al. (2010) argue that brands can use narratives in their brand biography as a way of creating and constructing social realities where the customers are given symbolic depictions of identity, consumption and lifestyle ideals, leading them to want to take part in this constructed world and thus interact with the brand. According to Chen & Chang (2017), this is because being transported into a narrative reality increases the chance of evoking emotional feelings and connections to the story, leading the customers to more easily adopt and accept the messages of the brand. Furthermore, it also reduces the act of counter-arguments and customers would thus be less likely to form any kind of resistance towards the brand (Chen & Chang, 2017). This is supported by Huang et al. (2018), who studied the impact of brand narratives on consumers in relation to luxury brands. They found that being exposed to brand narratives and stories have a positive effect on consumers' attitudes and

intentions towards the brands and that the consumers are more likely to have a favorable brand image when encountering a brand that uses narratives as part of their promotions and identity. Similar results have been reported by older research as well. Padgett & Allen (1997) discuss the benefits of using narratives when creating a brand image within the service industry and state that this helps to create symbolic meaning to the brand which can facilitate positive consumer perception of the brand. Furthermore, they also argue that using brand narratives allows for the co-creation with consumers, making the brand more relatable and allows for customers to have a more positive experience (Padgett & Allen, 1997).

According to Shankar et al. (2001), the reason for why consumers react positively in relation to narratives can be explained by the fact that narratives are the fundamental way in which humans experience, interpret and make sense of the world. They argue that using narrative branding can work as a pervasive resource in which consumers match these stories to make sense of their identities and their aspects of life. Through narratives, it thus becomes possible to understand how consumer experience and structure their identities through consumption as this can be viewed to be an important part of creating one's identity (Shankar et al., 2001). Escalas (2004) comes to the same conclusion in her study about brand narratives in relation to self-brand connection and claims that when using stories and narratives in one's branding, this enhances the process by which consumers connect their self-identity to the identity of the brand, both to the psychological attributes of the brand as well as the symbolic ones. She argues that when consumers process information as stories, they will adopt this information to their own existing memories of stories, involving the self (Escalas, 2004). Hence, by using brand narratives, consumers can become connected to the brand by meeting psychological needs of the consumer or by helping the consumer achieve a goal in accordance to one's self (Escalas, 2004). Furthermore, the result of the study also showed that including narratives in advertisements can enhance the connection between the brand and the consumer's view of the self and it is through this meaning-making process of narratives that a brand becomes important to consumers (Escalas, 2004).

Pini (2017) states that, in today's marketplace, the process of consumer consumption is no longer the result of satisfying the consumers with simple functional resources, but is rather a combination with symbolic material of the brand in which the customers' identities are constructed and thus create meanings towards the brand and its services and products. Brands can therefore use narratives and stories in order to gain a competitive place in the minds of the customers, which would not be possible if only facts and features were communicated (Pini, 2017). Additionally, Denning (2006) goes further by saying that without using stories and

narratives when communicating the products and services, consumer action will decrease enormously. This is because customers buy products and services in order to experience the stories told and without stories, no value of the brand would be present (Denning, 2006). Hence, using narratives and stories in branding is very powerful and can determine whether consumers will buy a product or a service (Denning, 2006). Moreover, in her study of comparing the effectiveness of a storytelling message appeal and an informational message, Stubb (2018) concluded that brand messages about products and services based upon a narrative orientation has a far more positive affect on consumer behavior than informational messages, leading to increased purchase intentions. Lundqvist et al. (2013) come to the same conclusion where consumers who were exposed to a brand story or narrative had much more positive attitudes towards a brand and were willing to pay more for a product.

Finally, Aaker & Aaker (2016) suggest that stories and narratives as strategic brand messages are assets that enhance the brand's image, personality, relevance and visibility and offers guidance as well as enables growth both from an internal as well as external point of view. Besides the employees, the two aspects that are most positively affected by brand stories are the customers and the organizational values as stories can help understand what a brand stands for, enhancing the connections to employees as well as the customers (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). Narratives offer the creation of meaningful stories as well as emotional connections and are far better to use than simply informing about facts, which can lead to that consumers identify with the brand and thus enhances their purchase intentions (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). It also spawns social communication as well as word-of-mouth, contributing to increased consumer engagement and thus also brand visibility (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). It therefore becomes vital for contemporary brands to use narrative and stories in their branding in order to become successful in the market.

2.2 Branding and narratives of late entrants in the market

It is known that newer entrants in the market are different from their pioneer competitors in terms of branding as they need to differentiate themselves and create a unique position in relation to the dominant player to be able to be successful (Hill, 2001; Wong & Merrilees, 2005). According to Wilkie et al. (2015), late entrants have more barriers and different challenges than pioneers, including a higher number of competitors, less customer loyalty as well as market and advertising share. Horan et al. (2011) and Wilkie & Johnson (2016) thus state that late entrants cannot apply branding- and positioning techniques used by pioneers and larger companies since they cannot make mistakes to the same extent and therefore, they need to be very careful with the branding programs they choose to implement. Yet, to master

their positioning techniques is crucial for their survival (Horan et al., 2011). It is argued that late entrants' capacity for strategic positioning and branding communication is strongly related to their first four years of survival or to develop a good amount of share in the market (Shamsie et al., 2004). Furthermore, a study conducted by Berthon et al. (2008), states that it is essential for late entrants, lacking the capabilities and branding power of their larger competitors, to bring branding experience, more than their pioneers, in order to enhance the customers' positive associations towards the brand and thus to gain a better reputation as well as competitive advantage. Moreover, Witt & Rode (2005) state that a strong position in the market can lead to customer acceptance and thus competitive advantage towards the already existing dominant players. Brand positioning is thus fundamental for late entrants.

Plenty of previous research have addressed how late entrants can position themselves successfully in relation to their pioneers by discussing different marketing and positioning strategies. A study conducted by Basharat et al. (2016), argues that late entrants can surpass their pioneers within the same market by improving the attributes of the pioneer and providing superior characteristics, leading to beating the pioneer at its own game. Shamsie et al. (2004) also came to this conclusion in their study about late entrants within the household electrical equipment and the key strategic factors contributing to their success. Their research showed that late entrants need to improve the positioning already adopted by a pioneer in order to develop a superior position (Shamsie et al., 2004). Their success is closely related to enhancements of attributions such as higher quality, better features and innovation in order to successfully compete with an already dominant player on the market (Shamsie et al., 2004). Moreover, similar views have been presented by preceding research, arguing that late entrants can overtake pioneers by being innovative. Shankar et al. (1998) research showed that late entrants that are innovative, not necessarily in regard to products, but mainly considering their branding strategy, can build a very powerful position in the market, and thus gain competitive advantages in relation to the already dominant players. Moreover, they also concluded that by being innovative in their strategy, the late entrants slowed the growth of the pioneers as well as reduced the effectiveness of their marketing (Shankar et al., 1998).

However, according to Aaker & Aaker (2016) and Avery et al. (2010), the use of brand biographies and stories has to be complemented to already existing branding strategies in order to create a unique position in the market. This is especially important for late entrants as they occupy less customer loyalty (Aaker, 2012), which is best achieved by telling stories and narratives about ones' identity, personality and values (Aaker & Aaker, 2016). Moreover, it is essential for late entrants to brand in a way that it evokes customers' positive associations and

experiences with the brand in order to add value in relation to the pioneers (Horan et al., 2011). This is most effectively done by using stories and biographies as part of one's branding (Aaker & Aaker, 2016).

However, there is yet little research within the area of brand biographies in relation to successful late entrants within the market. Nonetheless, few exceptions exist that have focused on the general positive relationship between brand stories and consumers. Maguire et al. (2015) conducted a study about storytelling and brand biographies within the British craft beer market. They examined how microbreweries position themselves in relation to big breweries and found that the storytelling and brand biographies often include stories about themselves as well as their brand personality and stories about working closely with their peers as a way of showing a friendliness not existing between dominant players (Maguire et al., 2015). The researchers concluded their study by saying that including these stories in one's branding can enhance the relationship to consumers and add value in relation to pioneers already existing on the market (Maguire et al., 2015)

Moreover, Paharia et al. (2011) introduced the concept of underdog brand biography and its impact on consumer behavior when creating a story on late entrants. An underdog brand biography refers to when the brand characterizes one's humble background and the determination to become successful in a competitive market, despite lacking resources (Nagar, 2017). They concluded that the use of an underdog narrative as a strategy in brand communication and positioning can have a positive impact on customers' buying-behavior as well as purchase choices and can increase their loyalty towards the brand (Paharia et al., 2011). The explanation given for the positive relationship between consumer attitudes and underdog brand biography is that consumers favor brands with underdog brand biographies because they see the underdog aspects of their own lives being reflected in the company and thus can identify themselves with the brand (Paharia et al., 2011; Avery et al., 2010).

2.3 Positioning this study within previous research

Previous research shows that using brand biographies, stories and narratives is an important strategic tool in brand- and marketing communication. It has been shown to be an important aspect in positioning oneself favorably in a market, for companies and brands in general, and for late entrants competing with larger dominant players in particular. Most of the previous research of late entrants' position strategies has neglected the importance of brand biographies. The few exceptions have however mainly addressed the effect of brand

narratives on consumer perceptions. Nonetheless, little attention has been given to the narrative construction of brand biographies in relation to late entrants that have been successful in the market. There is thus a gap in knowledge in regard to how late entrants construct their brand biographies from a narratological perspective to position themselves in a competitive market.

3. Theory

In this chapter, the various theories that will be applied in the analysis are presented. The theoretical framework is based upon concepts of narratology and the structure of narratives as well as the brand identity system. The chapter ends with a discussion of the relevance of the theories applied.

3.1 Narratology

Narratology refers to the study of structures and practices of narrative presentation and systems (Bal, 1997). The term narrative is based upon the theory of linguistic as well as semiotics and is referred to as a text, either written or spoken, and includes the linguistic and semiotic reporting and telling of events (Prince, 2003). Narratives and stories play a significant role in human beings and it is through them that we construct an image of reality and make sense of the world (Fog et al., 2010). Many suggestions of what defines a narrative have been given throughout the years.

Abbott (2008) defines narratives as “the representation of an event or a series of events” (p. 13). Thomas (2016) expands this definition by arguing that narratives represent events within a chronological order. Furthermore, Polkinghorne (1988) refers to narratives as verbal presentations that have to be constructed in sentences rather than in single words. He discusses narratives as the process of making linguistic structural schemes to create a story and argues that narratives are both the process and the result of a story and could thus be seen as building blocks of a story or a plot. Simplified, one could say that a story is the sequence of events and the orderly occurring of the narratives, a plot refers to the narratological functional organization of the story and the narrative is the structure of the events and the building blocks (Polkinghorne, 1988).

According to Johansson (2005), there are basic approaches and requirements of narratives and the three most significant aspects are temporality, causality and coherence. Temporality refers to the presentation of unified sequences of events from which the final event is linked to the initial one (Johansson, 2005). Causality means that the events must be connected to one

another so that what happens in the past causes events to happen in the present (Johansson, 2005). Lastly, coherence recognizes that the different parts of the story (the narratives) have to be connected in order for the story to be apprehensible. However, opposed voices claim that these are not obvious requirements for narratives. It is for example completely possible to construct narratives and a story without having events in a chronological order or not to have clear causal connections (Johansson, 2005).

3.1.1 The structuralist approach to narratives

This study uses narratological tools that exist within the perspective of structuralist approach, based upon Saussure's dyadic tradition of what constitutes a sign (Chandler, 2007).

According to Saussure, a sign consists of a signifier and a signified. The signifier refers to the actual existence and pattern of a sign which could for example be a word, image or sound and the signified relates to the concept that the signifier stands for (Saussure, 1983). Chandler (2007) writes that "within the Saussurean model, the sign is the whole that results from the association of the signifier with the signified" (pp. 15). Thus, a sign constitutes of two parts, on the one hand the word, and on the other hand the concept and idea related to that word. The two parts do not exist separately for it is the relationship between them that creates meaning (Chandler, 2007).

The relationship between the two is arbitrary and has a conventional association which means that there is a general agreement of what different signs means, there is a static system upon which meaning is built where a signifier always consists of a signified (Saussure, 1983). However, the relationship is not natural and can thus somewhat differ depending on context. For example, taking the word "cool" as a signifier, the signified can take different forms within different contexts. Within one context, cool can refer to temperature but in another, it might refer to popular. Furthermore, Saussure (1983) also argues that the fundamental meaning of a sign is not a result of the relationship between signifier and signified but is however created in relation to other signs within the sign system. For example, a house is a house because it is not a hut or a castle.

Influenced by Saussure, Greimas, taking the semiotic perspective of structuralist narratology, sees narratives as a relational system that is organized in a hierarchical order consisting of the narrative structures of the surface level and the deep level (Greimas, 1987; 1971). The surface level refers to the form of the language and how words are combined, creating a semiotic grammatical system (Greimas, 1971). The deep level defines the most fundamental forms of relationship and the conditions of the existence of semiotic objects and represents the most

essential structures for the creation of meaningful elements (Greimas, 1987; 1971). Greimas states that the construction of meaning takes place within an interaction between these two levels, implying that meaning does not exist at the surface level but is however created within the passage from one level to the other (Greimas, 1987; 1971).

3.1.2 Greimas's Actantial Model

The actantial model was first introduced by A. J Greimas in 1966 and is a tool that can be theoretically used to break down and analyze functions, actions and events in a narrative or a story on the deep level (Greimas, 1987; Culler, 2002). The model is influenced by Vladimir Propp's theory that all narratives can be structurally broken down to different narratological actors (Greimas, 1987). The model argues that there are different kinds of narrative roles and functions within a story which Greimas calls *actants*, not to be confused with *actors* as actants do not necessarily represent the acts of a human person but could also appear as a concept or an object (Greimas, 1987; Chandler, 2007). The actants are found between the surface level and the deep level of the narratives (Greimas, 1987). According to Greimas and his actantial model, there are six different actants that are interconnected through three semantical axes, arranged in opposing pairs.

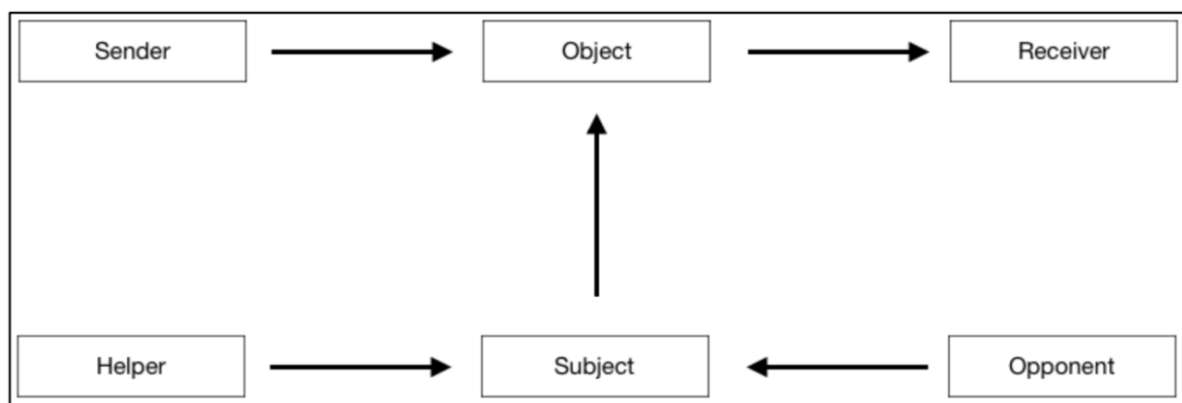


Figure 1. Greimas's Actantial Model (Translated from Johansson, 2005, pp. 159)

The first axis is called the *axis of desire* and is constituted of a *subject* that strives to achieve something – an *object* (Greimas, 1987; Chandler, 2007). This aspiration could for example be a wish for something. For this action to be successful, there must be a *sender* and a *receiver* wherein which the narrative is communicated, forming *the communication axis* (Greimas, 1987; Chandler, 2007). The sender requests the subject to obtain the object that is then transported to the receiver, upon which the latter benefits (Greimas, 1987; Chandler, 2007). Lastly, during the course of the action, the subject will encounter with a *helper* that will help the subject obtain the object and an *opponent* that will try to prevent the subject from attaining

the object (Greimas, 1987; Chandler, 2007). This axis is called the *power or conflict axis*. The progression of a narrative is created by the tension of the different axes and it is through these axes that the narrative, the plot and the story are driven forward (Greimas, 1987; Chandler, 2007).

The Disney movie Hercules can act as an example to illustrate the actantial model. Zeus tells Hercules to fight the titans in order to become a true hero and save Olympus. He is assisted by the satyr Phil who trains him, but is at the same time hindered by Hades who tries to kill him.

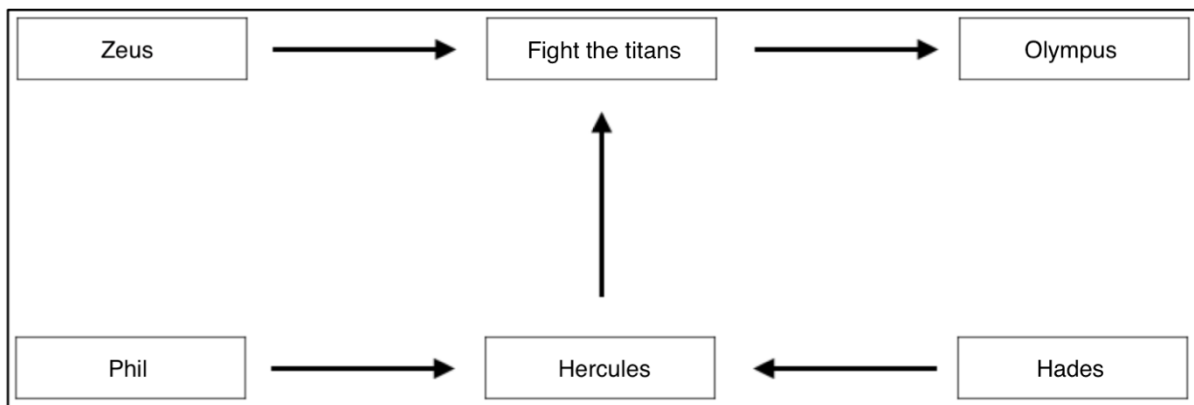


Figure 2. Example of Greimas's actantial model

The actantial model also argues that a narrative can be interpreted in different ways from various angles and therefore, it is possible to derive more than one actantial model from the same narrative (Greimas, 1987; Chandler, 2007). Furthermore, an actor can also possess different functions as well as positions and during a narrative or a story, several actors can occupy multiple functions, and are thus not limited to only one actor (Greimas, 1987). The functions should be seen as different episodes dragging the action forward and are crucial for how the story will develop (Greimas, 1987). The functions can also be structured in opposite pairs, showing possible contrast within a story, which brings me to Greimas's semiotic square.

3.1.3 Greimas's Semiotic Square

Influenced by Saussure, Greimas also sees differences as the most fundamental building blocks in all construction of narrative meaning on the deep level. All characters within a language are linked to other characters and thus a sign cannot be seen as complete in itself. This means that in the attempt of describing something, one has to use other signs and differences (Greimas, 1987). Based on this understanding, Greimas developed the concept of the semiotic square, an analytical technique that seeks to understand oppositions in the form

of paired concepts in order to understand meaning from textual assemblings (Greimas, 1987). This is done by putting contrary words relating semantic features against each other.

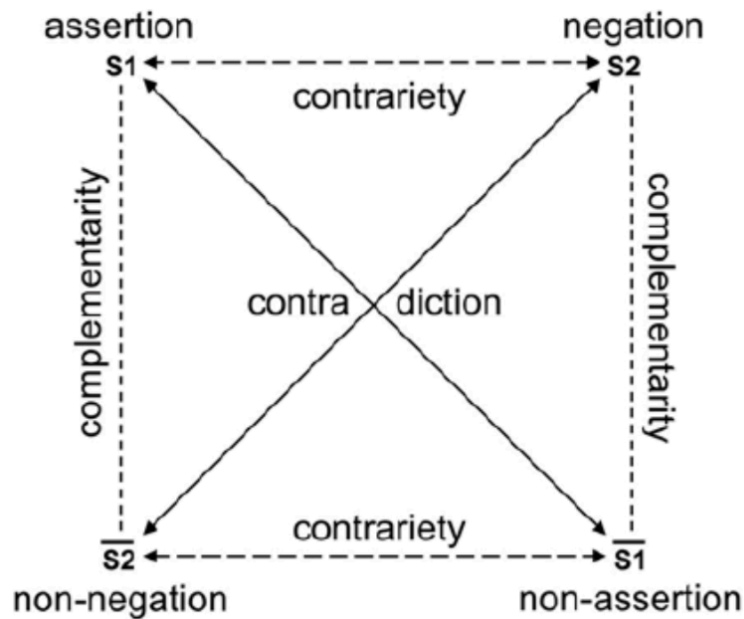


Figure 3. Greimas's Semiotic Square (Chandler, 2007, 107)

S1 = The first opposition of the square (i.e black)

-S1 = The binary contradiction of S1 (not-black)

S2 = The second opposition of the square (i.e white)

-S2 = The binary contradiction of S2 (not-white)

The square consists of four corners which are linked to each other by the relationship of contrariety, complementarity and contradiction (Chandler, 2007). S1 and S2 stand in oppositions towards each other in terms of meaning (i.e. black and white) and where -S1 and -S2 relate to the original contrarieties of S1 and S2 and act as their direct contradictions and negations (not-black and not-white) (Greimas, 1987; Chandler, 2007). In other words, S1 and S2 are not contradictory to each other, as one might think, but rather has their own adversaries where S1 relates to -S1 and not to S2 and where -S2 relates to S2 and not -S1. Furthermore, the dotted lines vertically placed show the implication-based relationship between S1 and -S2 as well as S2 and -S1 which means that S1 implies -S2 (black and not-white) and S2 accounts for -S1 (white and not-black). Additionally, the horizontal dotted lines represent the relationship between the oppositions where S1 and S2 stand for the presence of something and where -S2 and -S1 represent absence (Greimas, 1987; Chandler, 2007).

To illustrate the function of the semiotic square, an example is illustrated below.

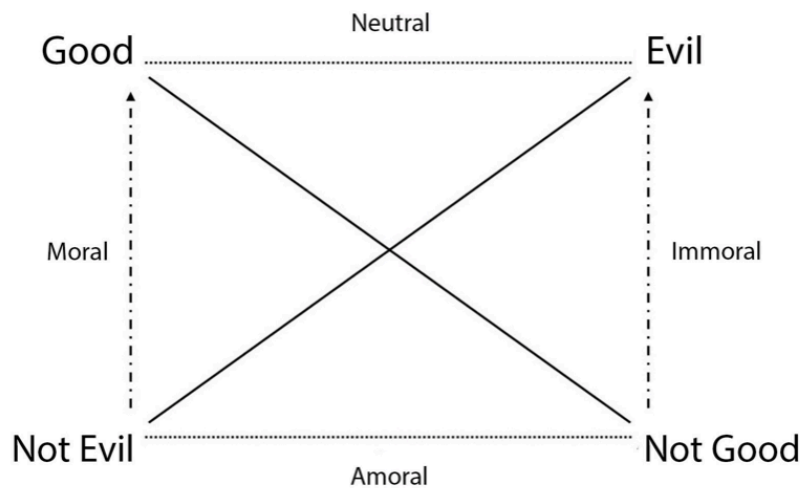


Figure 4. Example of the Semiotic Square

To be good and to be evil are opposing terms, where neutral is placed in the middle. Nonetheless, their contradictions form the state of being amoral. Furthermore, the relationship between the original contrarities and their terms of implications or complementary represent a state of being moral vs immoral. This specific example can be used to determine how characters within a story are positioned depending on what characteristics that are assigned to them.

Mapping out the different terms used within a brand biography in the same way as done in the example above, it becomes possible to reveal what directions and transformation the narratives take and thus expose deeper meanings and hidden themes within the textual corpus (Chandler, 2007) and hence, the construction and meanings of narratives and thus how a brand position itself in the market can be examined.

3.2 Semprini's Brand Identity System

Brands strive to position their identity and personality in the most favorable way and to do this, they combined their values as well as individual and social meanings, which, according to Mangano & Marrone (2015) can be seen as semiotic entities that stand for a meaning. The brand identity system was developed by Andrea Semprini (1992) and is based upon Greimas's concept of deep/surface level of narrative meaning and is a model that is constructed to analyze how brand identity is structured and positioned in the market, using the narrative perspective.

The model consists of three different levels. The first one is called the *axiological level* where the brand's core values can be found (Rossolatos, 2015) and according to Semprini (1992)

these values are based upon the relations of oppositions, and therefore this can be interpreted by using the semiotic square explained above. Next, we have the *narrative level* which narrativizes the core values through representations, attributions as well as characteristics and are organized by the meaning of the actions and figures presented and can thus be analyzed by the actantial model (Semprini, 1992; Rossolatos, 2015). Lastly, the third level is called the *surface/discourse level* where the values and narratives structures are concretized and portrayed by themes, figures and contextual elements (Semprini, 1992; Rossolatos, 2015). This level is analyzed by identifying the elements upon which the narratives and values are contextualized and includes what can be explicitly seen from the text. Additionally, the production encyclopaedia refers to the public that will act as receivers of the text and the reception encyclopaedia is the process of how the readers interpret the text based on knowledge, expectations etc. (Semprini, 1992; Rossolatos, 2015). However, since the present study is not focusing on brand positioning from the customers' point of view, the encyclopaedias will not be explained more into detail.

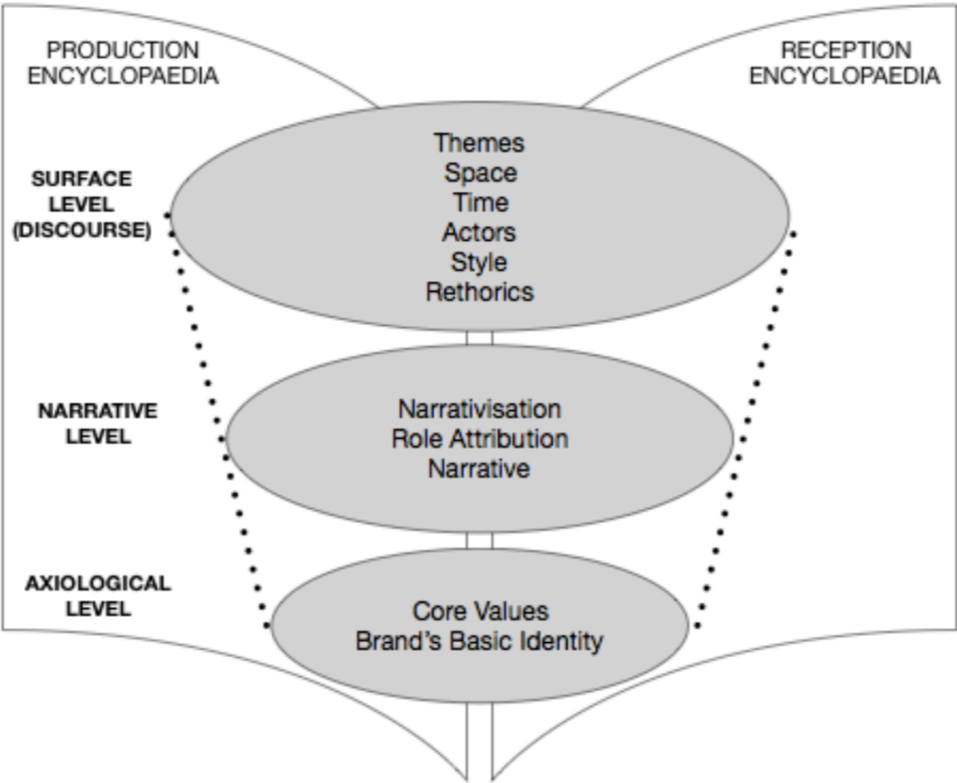


Figure 5. The Brand Identity System (Rossolatos, 2015, 103)

3.3 Reflection of theoretical relevance

The actantial model in this study will allow for breaking down the structures of the stories in which the late entrants are positioning themselves. This will help determine what characters, functions and possible conflicts that are present within the narratives, thus crystallizing how they position themselves in the market.

The semiotic square will help expose underlying themes and categories by investing adequate terms in the square and examining terms that are present and absent within the brand biography of the brand. It thus becomes possible to understand the meaning of the narratives that are presented by the brands. Furthermore, the semiotic square allows for mapping out what narratives that are meaningful and valued by the brand as well as what narratives that seem to stand in opposition to the brand.

The brand identity system provides the opportunity to break down the structure of the narratives and its different levels, representing different meanings. It offers the possibility to gain a good overview of a brand's identity and determine the themes and values that are the basis of the brand and upon which the brand position itself in the market. The application of the brand identity system on the words, narratives and stories used by the brands, will help in exposing the themes and values that can be analyze from the textual corpus and thus determine how late entrants within a market are choosing to position themselves.

By applying these models allows for a deeper understanding of the values and meanings that are formed and structured on the deep level, by looking at the narratives on the surface level. The different models address the subject from several different direction and have thus together been used to contribute to a deep and exhaustive understanding of how late entrants are narratively positioning themselves in the market.

4. Methodology

This section provides a detailed description of how this study has been designed and conducted. First, the epistemological perspective upon which this study is based is presented. Next, the research design, which is built upon a multiple case study, is discussed, followed by an explanation of the cases and the data collected. The chapter ends by discussing how the narratological analysis has been conducted.

4.1 The epistemological perspective of narrative structuralism

This study is based upon the perspective of structural narratology and is built upon the idea that language, words, narratives and signs are seen as structural rules that convey meaning within specific social systems upon which the reality is created (Prasad, 2018). This tradition suggest that our reality is socially created and interpreted through human experience, which is explained by understanding the structural language rules and the linguistic system in which we live, that is within a social system (Prasad, 2018). Narrative structuralism argues that the structures and principles upon which every language- and social system is built are relatively fixed and held together in the same way. Thus, even though the narrative texts, details and meaning as well as social context might differ, the basic structural systems are in fact identical (Prasad, 2018). This means that one has to understand the underlying narrative structures developed within these systems in order to comprehend the reality. However, language itself does not reflect the reality but rather provides conceptual frames for understanding it (Prasad, 2018). Thus, we cannot know whether there is an objective reality outside the language (Prasad, 2018).

As previously mentioned, narratives and signs are structured and understood between the surface and the deep level (Greimas, 1971), where the signifier (a word) and the signified (the concept that the signifier belongs to) both are needed to create meaning of words within a language – and social system (Saussure, 1983). This means that the sensemaking and interpretations of signs can differ depending on context and situation within different language- and social systems (Prasad, 2018). Hence, the narrative structuralism believes that

reality and meaning is constructed and interpreted through human experience within these systems and as these can somewhat differ, the world cannot be seen as objective in which humans live (Prasad, 2018). However, it should be noted that, as the relationship between the signifier and signified is stable within a language- and social system (humans within the same system often have somewhat the same signified to a signifier), the meaning is found in the codes and structures of a social system, rather than on an individual level, because otherwise human communication would not be possible (Prasad, 2018; Esaiasson et al., 2017).

The most common criticism of structuralist narratology is the fact that these narrative structures and systems are completely illusory and can thus not access a reality at all (Derrida, 1966). According to Derrida (1966), signs have no specific signified and are unstable and can therefore be individually interpreted in unlimited ways and therefore, a complexity, instability and ambiguity exist in each story, narrative and sign rather than them having structural and invariable homogeneity. Here, it is thus argued that the same linguistic structures and systems are not applicable to every text and thus meaning cannot be created and therefore reality cannot be accessed (Derrida, 1966). However, even though these instabilities of narratives are being somewhat accepted and taken into consideration, taking the structuralist approach still has advantages as it offers the ability to explain and understand underlying narrative structures and how meaning is created within narratives without discussing or determining anything about their ontological status (Greimas, 1987; Saussure, 1983; Jansson, 2002). It could thus be argued that structuralism can still be used to achieve legitimate and plausible results. Furthermore, following the poststructuralism approach supported by Derrida would mean that no unified or coherent conclusion could be drawn from the empirical material and no claims could be made as the researcher would have no narratological structures and systems to follow, resulting in almost an anarchy in the interpretation and analysis.

Taking the narrative structuralism approach will allow for exploring and mapping out the narrative structures and meanings in the brand biography of the late entrants and thus to gain a deeper understanding of how they position themselves in the market.

4.2 Research Design

To gain a deeper understanding of how successful late entrants are positioning themselves in a competitive market by examining the narrative construction of their brand biography, a qualitative multiple case study has been the basis for this study where two different cases of late entrants have been included. According to Yin (2009), a qualitative case study is suitable for when the aim is to gain better knowledge of how meaning is created regarding a specific

phenomenon. Additionally, it also increases one's understanding of organizational and brand behavior as well as processes and thus offers an extensive analysis and description of how narratives are structured in relation to late entrants (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, using a qualitative case study allows for understanding and gaining a holistic and detailed view of a phenomena where previous research is yet lacking (Yin, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2015). As the field of narrative constructionism is relatively unexplored using a case study will provide a good preparation for this as well as future research.

A common criticism of using a qualitative case study as a research method is the lack of objectivity and that it relies too much on interpretations, making it subjective and thus decreasing its reliability (Flyvbjerg, 2006). However, first of all, this study is based upon structuralist narratology which argues that meaning and the reality exists because humans can interpret it. Therefore, subjectivity is everywhere and is no less present in quantitative research than it is in qualitative research (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Furthermore, in qualitative research, it has been argued that the analysis (and also the interpretation) starts already when collecting the data (Berg & Lune, 2012) and it is therefore impossible to make an exact replication of the same study, and thus an absolute reliability is not possible. Secondly, as this study is based upon the tradition that the reality is socially created in the human mind and we cannot know whether there is an objective truth, the aim is to understand underlying themes and concepts of narratives through interpretation rather than searching for a truth (Prasad, 2018). This means that the result and conclusion of this study represents a socially constructed reality and is not a "mirror" of an objective reality (Prasad, 2018). However, the results of this study are still of relevance as they will provide a better understanding of how narratives are constructed and therefore contribute to the "reality" in which the empirical material as well as the researcher of this study and peers (as humans) are present (Prasad, 2018).

Furthermore, another criticism of a qualitative case study is that it cannot be generalized in the sense that scientific replications are not possible on populations (Yin, 2009). However, in case studies, the goal is not to reach statistical generalizations about universes, but rather to achieve analytic generalization by expanding, extending and strengthening theories (Yin, 2009). Thus, to increase the robustness, confidence and depth of the study in terms of analytical generalizations, multiple cases have been included (Yin, 2009). This is because including more than one case within a study enhances the attempt of replicating the findings as well as recognizing patterns, contributing to the strengthening of the study's credibility and

internal validity (Yin, 2009). Additionally, by searching for similar results between different cases, it is easier to clarify and argue for the value of the findings (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

This multiple case-study follows an exploratory approach, where the data is examined on a surface as well as deep level to explain underlying phenomena in the data, providing an in-depth analysis of the narrative constructionism of late entrants (Zainal, 2007). This approach is also especially suitable for when there is little research previously conducted within the studied area, serving as a prelude and basis for future scientific framework (Yin, 2009; Zainal, 2007).

4.3 Case selection

The two cases present in this study have been selected through purposive sampling where the brands have been purposefully selected by the researcher based on different criteria in order to answer the research question (Lavrakas, 2008). Developing clear criteria for the judgement of case selection contributes to an increase in validity and decrease in selection bias, thus avoiding an unrepresentative sample (Sharma, 2017; George & Bennett, 2005), which otherwise is a common critique of purposive sampling. Furthermore, according to George & Bennett (2005), cases should be selected based on their relevance and purposiveness to the research objectives of the study and thus might not necessarily be representing a general population. However, the aim is to highlight detailed insights and understandings of narrative constructionism of late entrants rather than achieving statistical generalization, and therefore it has been argued that purposive sampling best suits this study.

The relevance of the cases and “the expectations about their information content” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 230) was important in order to maximize the information that could be utilized and thus be able to answer the research question. This study is hence following the information-oriented selection (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

The criteria were the following:

1. The brands have entered and challenged a competitive market with an already dominant player/s
2. The brands have been successful in regard to that they have steadily increased their market share since its beginning.
3. The brands have a detailed brand biography- and story in terms of both their identities and values but also in regard to product description.

4. The brands need to operate within the fashion industry. The reason for this criterion is that since narratives in brand biographies are used to strengthen the customers' identification process with the brand as a way to position oneself favorably in the market (Escalas, 2004), the researcher wanted the brand to operate within such a market where this identification process is especially important, to examine whether they are considering this within their positioning of their narratives. The fashion industry was evaluated to be such a market as customers consume fashion as a way to express their identity (Fang et al., 2012).

When searching and deciding for cases, the number came down to two; Too Faced and Everlane. Despite other fashion brands that would meet the criteria above, these specific cases were chosen because of their brand biography being especially rich as well as detailed but are also one of the few that, in addition to telling stories about their identities and values, also had rich stories about their products. These were thus evaluated to provide the most fruitful information to answer the research question of this study in the best possible way, following the information-oriented selection previously mentioned.

4.3.1 Case 1: Everlane

Everlane is a clothing brand that was founded in 2010 by Michael Preysman, and even though the brand entered a market with dominant key players such as GAP, H&M and J. Crew, Everlane has managed to take the clothing industry by storm and was valued at \$250 million in 2018 (Nailor, 2018; Widdicombe, 2017). The company was born from the idea of transparency, the ethical thought of being sustainable and strengthening customer value by always letting the customers know exactly where their clothes are made as well as how much it costs to produce the products, from materials and labor to transportation (Everlane, n.d,a; Widdicombe, 2017). Everlane offers products such as apparel, shoes and accessories that are made out of high-quality material and has been produced in ethical factories where Everlane only partners with the factories that score high on fair wages, reasonable hours, and environment (Everlane, n.d,a). The brand also offers clothes that one can wear for many occasions and all year-round for decades, instead of following trends that will be passé before you know it (Everlane, n.d,a; Widdicombe, 2017). Everlane emphasizes that the company is trying to make the world more sustainable by being more ethical, transparent and taking more action for human rights (Everlane, n.d,a).

4.3.2 Case 2: Too Faced

Too Faced is an international cosmetic and beauty brand based in California. It was founded in 1998 by Jerrod Blandino and Jeremy Johnson (Too Faced, n.d, a; Shatzman, 2017) and although, initially going up against huge beauty pioneers such as L'oréal, Lancôme, and Maybelline, the brand has been proven to be successful as the company was valued to \$1.45 billion in 2016 (Sorvino, 2016; Hudson et al., 2018). Too Faced' story begins with a vision of makeup being used to celebrate individuality, rebelliousness and empowerment as well as to have fun. The brand offers innovative makeup products that are often named in cheerful, frisky and lighthearted ways (Too Faced, n.d, b,c,d). Too Faced was also the first makeup brand in the world to produce a glitter eyeshadow and has continued to be innovative with launching other products such as dazzling lip glosses, shimmering highlighters and luscious mascaras (Shatzman, 2017).

4.4 Data selection and collection

To be able to gain a rich understanding of how late entrants construct their brand biographies and what meaning that can be derived from them, written texts and documents presented by the brands have been analyzed. An analysis of text and documents, allows for an in-depth and careful reading of the texts, parts of it and the context in which it is included (Esaiasson et al., 2017; Chandler, 2007). Furthermore, it offers the possibility to investigate the content, how meaning is created as well as what things really mean within the text (Chandler, 2007). According to Bowen (2009), a scrutiny of a company's material can include both printed and/or digital texts as well as both words and images. However, for the purpose of this study, focusing on narratives in terms of words and written stories, only texts have been analyzed.

Everlane's and Too Faced's webpages have worked as the main sources for collecting the written material, including their stories about history, values, missions and product descriptions. Including texts rather than i.e. interviews in the data collection allows for a more flexible analysis as the material can be looked at from different perspectives on different occasions, thus contributing to the validity of the study (Bergström & Boréus, 2012). The information was gathered through an extensive navigation between different webpages, all belonging to the companies. Both of their webpages offered communicative practices and marketing material to understand the companies as a whole and provided great understanding of how they are choosing to position themselves with their narratives and brand biographies. Moreover, interviews where the companies' founders are telling stories about the brand, how it started, their visions, what makes their products special etc., were also a part of the

collected data. In the analysis, different sources other than the brands' websites are therefore sometimes referred to. However, this is still the narratives of the late entrants as only the founders' own words have been used when analyzing the interviews. Both printed and digital material was collected, even though the latter dominated. Furthermore, as this study aims to gain a deeper insight into how brands are positioning themselves through the narratives they use, it should also be noted that texts, stories and narratives created by customers have not been considered or analyzed.

In total, 256 texts and documents have been collected and analyzed, where 124 were from Everlane and 132 were from Too Faced. The amount of texts was chosen in order to ensure the accuracy of the narrative themes and topics that were found on the different levels within the brand identity system. According to Denscombe (2009), the more amount of texts that are used within an analysis, the greater the veracity of the narratological meanings is, thus contributing to answering the research question in an accurate way. However, due to time restrictions as well as the belief that adding too much information will not produce more knowledge, the so-called law of diminishing returns (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015), the analysis of 256 texts and documents were evaluated to be enough.

4.5 Narratological analysis

The narratological analysis of the case studies has taken the approach of explanation building, referring to that general patterns, themes and logics have been identified (Yin, 2009). This means that rather than reflecting upon each case in relation to the research question, a general explanation adaptable to both of the cases has been concluded.

Every text has been narratively broken down in order to question the seemingly self-evident within the text and to show that the text has a less transparent dimension (Chandler, 2007). This provides the opportunity to ask the following questions, all of which are essential for understanding how late entrants position themselves in the market by breaking down the structure of their brand biographies from a narrative perspective:

1. What is happening within the text?
2. Who/What is present/not present within the text?
3. What functions and characteristics are present within the text?
4. What values, attitudes, themes and environments are included in the text?
5. What meanings can be derived from the text?

These questions have been answered and analyzed by using the brand identity system, the actantial model and the semiotic square. The fundamental and deep narratological analysis occurred with the use of the actantial model as well as the semiotic square, both of which were applied on the written texts. The brand identity system acted more as a facilitator to determine the overall themes and values that are the basis of the brands and upon which the brands position themselves in the market.

The actantial model was used to identify the characters, the functions and possible conflicts within the brands' narratives. The model was applied to all of the texts and then categorized in order to conclude the most relevant themes, classifications, roles and actions that have been assigned positions within the different narratives. This allowed for exposing how the late entrants are narratively constructing their stories and brand biographies to position themselves favorably in the market. Furthermore, the semiotic square was applied to explore different terms that are present and absent within the brands' narratives and thus detect the meaning created as well as what seems to stand in opposition to the brands. The analysis with the semiotic square was conducted in the way that recurring words within the narratives presented by the brands were put in the square and analyzed with its opposition to determine the underlying values of the brands upon which they position themselves. Sometimes, the words and terms used by the brands would include both of the opposite words and other times only one of the words would appear in the material. In the case where only one of the opposed words was present, it was assumed that the brand would not want to be identified with the other word and therefore, even though all of the words used in the semiotic squares were not present in the brands' biographies, it is still argued that an accurate analysis of how the brands position themselves narratively has been conducted. Moreover, based on the recurring words, different semiotic squares were then sometimes categorized as fitting into the same brand value.

After categorizing and thematizing the actantial models and the semiotic squares, these were then put in relation to the brand identity system. Here, the narratological analyses with the actantial models were put at the narrative level and the semiotic squares were put at the axiological level. The themes and contextual elements directly seen within the narratives were then put at the surface/discourse level. This made it possible to gain an overview of the core themes and values of the brands upon which they determine to position themselves.

A potential problem when analyzing from the perspective of narratology is that, since the collected material demands much analytical capability of the researcher, there is a possibility for slowly drifting away from the original purpose (Larsson et al, 2008). However, the material has been read and analyzed multiple times at different occasions (in the attempt to obtain some distance to the material) to ensure that the interpretation of the texts is adequately carried out (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015) in order to achieve the purpose of the study.

Furthermore, when analyzing texts and documents from a narratological perspective, one also has to be aware of that the researcher takes on the role as being an interpreter of the narratives and stories that have been written or told by others, and there is thus a possibility for misinterpretations and misunderstandings contributing to that meaning cannot be created (Johansson, 2005). This criticism can also be argued to be strengthened due to the fact that the material has been interpreted by a single person (Johansson, 2005). However, as argued by narrative structuralism upon which this study is built, narrative meaning and reality is socially created within language- and social systems and not on an individual level (Prasad, 2018). This means that linguistics systems, structures, signs, codes and meanings are somewhat the same within each system because otherwise humans would not be able to communicate with each other at all, contributing to that everyone would understand the world in different ways (Chandler, 2007; Esaiasson et al., 2017; Prasad, 2018). Thus, humans exist in somewhat the same meaning system, and therefore it can be argued that another person (mastering the language system upon which this study is based) could derive the same interpretations as the researcher of this study has. It is thus very likely that meaningful results of how late entrants construct their narratives within their brand biographies will be able to be derived. Furthermore, since this study is following different narratological tools and systems that have been socially constructed and accepted by different scholars, the guidance of these tools can be argued to contribute to a decrease in misunderstandings of the meaning of the narratives.

5. Analysis

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the empirical material that has been collected in relation to the brand identity system, including the actantial model as well as the semiotic square. The cases of late entrants are analyzed separately by using the various narratological tools, where each of the signification level of the brand identity system is applied. The common traits from both the cases are then presented in the next chapter as a way of answering the research question.

5.1 The narratives of Everlane

5.1.1 The Surface/Discourse Level

When analyzing the texts where Everlane presents its corporate history, we learn that the brand was born from the thought of that there were too many inconsistencies within the clothing industry where the traditional fashion retailers did not give the customers maximum value in terms of clothes. In two different interviews when asked about why Everlane entered the market, the founder Michael Preysman, says that , in the retail industry “a basic high-end t-shirt costs about \$7.50 to make, but sells for about \$50” (Kansara, 2016)” and “we felt that the retail industry, and brands in particular, weren’t educating consumers (...) where their clothes are made (Zaratian, 2017). The stories and narratives of why Everlane was “needed” on the market, are thus based upon the founder’s perspective of that traditional clothing brands make the customer pay more for the clothes than what they ought to do and that they do not get the quality that they are paying for, and are thus being deceived by these other brands. Furthermore, Preysman also says in an interview that these other brands are not sharing “where the product is coming from and what impact is has” (Zaratian, 2017), which also indicates the same brands as not being ethical or environmental even if they might give the appearance of being so. It is thus clear that Everlane is, prior to entering the market, telling stories of an industry being dishonest where distributors are trying to fool their customers, something that Everlane is highly against.

Instead, Everlane's stories and narratives are built around the brand being the complete opposite. When reading about the brand's values, it says on the website that "customers have a right to know what their clothes cost to make" (Everlane, n.d,a) and that they offer the customers full access to the entire supply chain and where their clothes are made. The brand wants to offer their customers added value and ensure them that they are not being fooled, which is why Everlane further says on the website that "we reveal the costs behind every aspect of our production process (...) vs the traditional price" (Everlane, n.d,a). Moreover, Preysman says in an interview that Everlane takes "a t-shirt that normally sells for \$50 and (...) sell it for \$15" (Kansara, 2016). This gives the audience a sense of them being more honest in the way that they want the customer to understand what they are paying for which contributes to customers feeling that they can trust the brand. This sense of honesty is also apparent when reading about the brand's products. If you for example click on Everlane's Authentic Stretch High-Rise skinny Jeans, you see that it costs 34 dollars to make, including the exact prices of the materials, hardware, labor, duties and transports, and that Everlane takes 68 dollars for the jeans compared to a traditional retailer where it would most likely be 170 dollars (Everlane, n.d,h).

Furthermore, when reading about the brand's values, Everlane is also telling stories of the brand as being ethical and conscious in its operations. On Everlane's webpage, it says that "we spend months finding the best factories around the world (...) by evaluat[ing] factors like fair wages, reasonable hours, and environment" (Everlane, n.d,a) to "ensure ethical working conditions" (Everlane, n.d,f) and "an enjoyable working environment" (Everlane (n.d,c). This reveals for a strong position of being ethical, caring for human rights and doing well. The care for ethics is also something that is evident when reading about the products that Everlane offers and the materials that are used as the brand says that the products are made with "fair labor conditions" (Everlane, n.d,j) and with high "job quality standards" (Everlane, n.d,i). Furthermore, the brand is also revealing factories they cooperate with in the production of the products. This is evident when looking at the website and the products' descriptions as Everlane is providing information about the factory where every product has been produced as well as why Everlane has chosen to collaborate with these specific factories and how the relationship between the two parties look like (Everlane, n.d,d). Statements such as the following can be found when reading about the factories on the website; "we were impressed by the workmanship here and the environment created for the factory workers" (Everlane, n.d,e) and "we count ourselves lucky to have found a factory that (...) understands the value of treating employees well" (Everlane, n.d,c).

When looking at the website of Everlane, narratives involving high quality material also seem to be quite common. The brand says on the website when talking about the mission and the clothes that “we want you [the customers] to wear our pieces for years, even decades, to come” (Everlane, n.d,a), which is why the brand also promotes itself as “sourc[ing] only the finest materials” (Everlane, n.d, a) and that their way of operating is built around “exceptional quality” (Everlane, n.d, a). Additionally, the founder says in an interview that the brand focuses on basic design and year-round classics as a way to offer clothes that can be worn for a long time (Widdicombe, 2017). Furthermore, the idea of high quality also seems to be coming from operating in an environmentally conscious way in regard to the products as Everlane says on its website when talking about their premium products that they are made with “renewable energy resources like solar power” (Everlane, n.d,m). Everlane also seems to invest a good amount of time in searching for the right materials as a way to warrant high quality products. This is evident in statements such as the following that can often be found on Everlane’s website when reading about the materials; “we spent months developing a superior water-resistant cotton twill with minimal crocking (...) after multiple rounds of testing, we landed on a cotton twill that held its color amazingly well, even when damp” (Everlane, n.d,c). Moreover, when reading about the quality of their products, the brand is also telling stories of how they are cooperating with various countries, specializing in different apparel and materials, as a way to further promise high-quality clothes. In an interview when talking about the material, the founder explains that "we try to focus on country expertise “(Shoot, 2014) and that Everlane, for example, produces T-shirts in the U.S and cashmere from Asia.

Lastly, the narratives of Everlane alternate between “we” and “you”. Whenever the brand is referring to itself, the narratives always include a “we”. This is evident in statements such as the following which are common when looking at the brand’s website: “we believe we can all make a difference” (Everlane, n.d,a). Furthermore, whenever the brand talks to the customers, the word “you” is always present which is noticeable in statements such as “you could wear them all day” (Everlane, n.d, n) when referring to the products. Additionally, it is also clear that Everlane is directing its narratives and stories to minds that think alike, which in this case includes people who value honesty, truthfulness and ethics. This can be seen when reading about the brand and its customers where Everlane says that they “encourage customers to make an educated purchase” (Everlane, n.d,g) that is “socially conscious” (Everlane, n.d,g). Furthermore, on the website when reading about the products, one can find statements such as

“constructed of supima cotton that is (...) softer, and twice as strong as normal cotton (Everlane,n.d,k) and that their products are made with “ethical manufacturing methods” (Everlane, n.d,l) and “alternative energy sources (...) and byproducts” (Everlane, n.d,m). This also indicates a target group caring about the environment and sustainable quality.

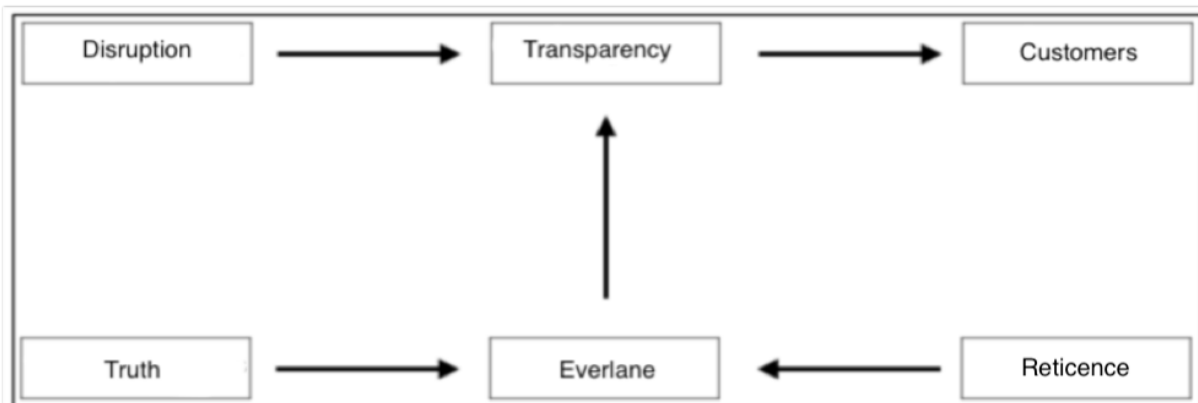
5.1.2 The Narrative Level

As seen on the surface/discourse level, Everlane constructs meaning through three main narratives:

- Their desire for enhanced customer value by disclosing the exact costs
- Their vision of partnering with the most ethical factories by evaluating their operations
- Their mission of providing high-quality clothes that can be worn for a long time

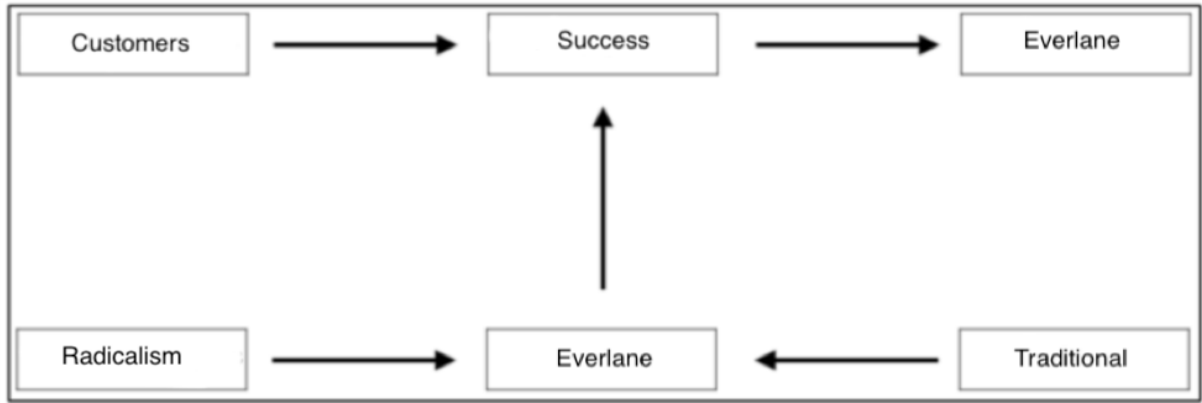
Transparency

As seen on the surface/discourse level, Everlane is putting a lot of emphasis on the fact that they want to ensure their customers that they are providing them with the maximum amount of value. With the help of the actantial model, it becomes evident that Everlane is trying to achieve this by always being completely transparent as well as honest within the entire supply chain in regard to the origins of the clothes in terms of costs as well as garment factories. On the website it says that the brand very much values that the “customers have a right to know how much their clothes cost to make” (Everlane, n.d,a) and to see the total cost breakdown before the product reaches the customer. Working from a completely transparent standpoint, this allows Everlane to, on the one hand assure the customers that their need and right for information is taken into consideration, and on the other hand compare itself to traditional retailers as an attempt to make the customers understand that Everlane provides better value than other brands.



In Everlane’s narrative, to fight for customers’ right to constantly know what goes on behind the production of the clothes that they purchase, this required challenging the status quo of the retail industry in terms of transparency. This is exactly what drove Everlane to the market. The brand is distancing itself from not sharing what goes on behind closed doors and is instead always striving for transparency by always telling the truth and promoting honesty, which will help the act of achieving transparency because if truth would not be present, it would not be possible to be transparent. However, the act of reticence as well as not sharing information will not contribute to transparency and will thus not provide the customers with the information that Everlane believes they deserve. It is evident that hiding information is often connected to traditional retailers as the founder says in an interview that they are not often sharing “where their product is coming from” (Zaratian, 2017).

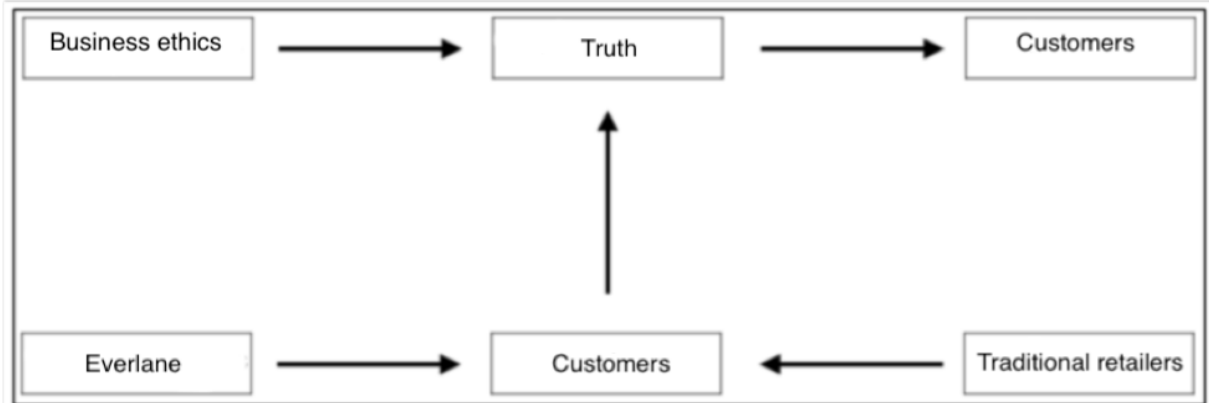
Furthermore, the fact that Everlane also says on the website that they “reveal the true costs behind all of [their] products” (Everlane, n.d,a) but also what the brand’s retail price is, means that the customers know exactly the amount of money that goes to Everlane. It is thus not a secret that the brand is trying to make a profit and succeed in the market. The thought of complete transparency could thus also be interpreted as a means of achieving success.



As seen on the surface/discourse level, Everlane saw a customer need of brands providing more customer value in terms of more commitment of being open (Zaratian, 2017). Instead of following traditional retailers way of operating, that of course created this need, Everlane tells the story of seeing an opportunity to satisfy that need and becoming successful by being completely dedicated to the thought of radicalism in terms of transparency or as they say themselves: “radical transparency” (Everlane, n,d,a). The act of transparency seems to be working in favor for the brand in two ways. On the one hand, Everlane is providing the customer with the information that they want in regard to production and costs, but on the

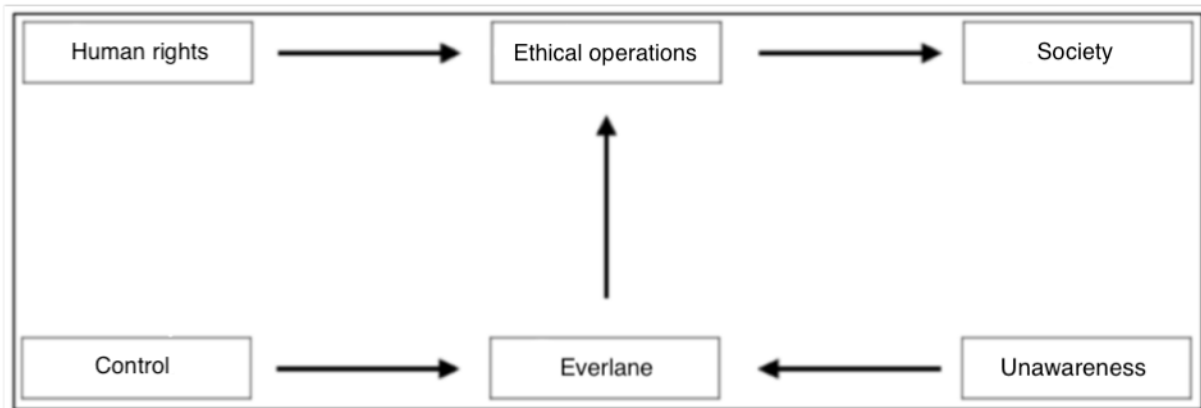
other hand the customers seem to appreciate the honesty that Everlane shares about its profit, both of them contributing to popularity and success.

Lastly, Everlane’s idea of transparency is not only addressed to the brand itself, but also to the customers. As seen on the surface/discourse level, the brand is often emphasizing their business ethics and importance of honesty to provide customer value and that they want their customers to be able to “make an educated purchase” (Everlane, n.d,g) and that they know what they are paying for. Everlane is thus directing its communication to customers also valuing truth and honesty. In this narrative, Everlane is depicting itself as the “friend” who the customers want to hang out with and should want to be as, and thus becomes the helper and “solution” for the customers who believe that it is important to purchase products reflecting their own moral compasses and values of truthfulness. By being completely transparent, Everlane can thus provide something that allows these customers to confirm their act and value of honesty in order to avoid cognitive dissonance, which would be more likely to occur if interacting with traditional retailers as these go more in line with less transparency than Everlane does.



Control

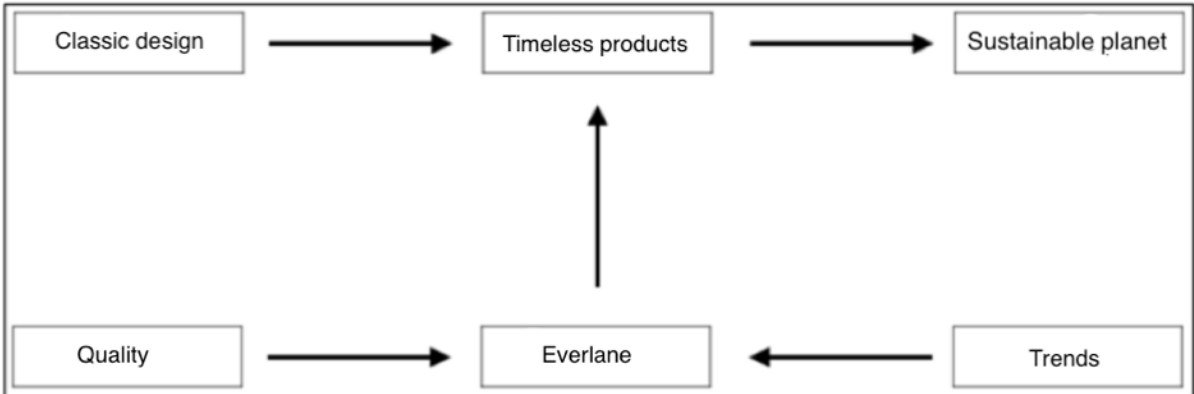
For Everlane, it is incredibly important to have an ethical approach in their operations and to “partner with the best, ethical factories around the world” (Everlane, n.d,a), as stated on the website. The brand is often emphasizing that they are spending a good amount of time in finding these factories by evaluating their performances in terms of working conditions.



In this example, Everlane’s desire of ethical operations comes from them valuing human rights as a way to do well and improve society. In order for Everlane to achieve this goal, they are always controlling and monitoring the factories that they work with to assure that they meet Everlane’s criteria of being ethical. All of the factories that the brand works with are evaluated through a compliance audit to verify their ethics in terms of workers’ well-being, working conditions and safety (Everlane, n.d,f). This is a way for Everlane to constantly control the partnership with different factories to reach their goal of being ethical. The brand is thus trying to distance itself from the thought of just partnering up with random factories without having any idea of how they are operating or what their values are, something that could be argued to be associated with other clothing brands as the founder have said in an interview that they are not often sharing what factories their clothes come from (Zaratian, 2017), which could be a result of them simply not controlling and thus not knowing that much.

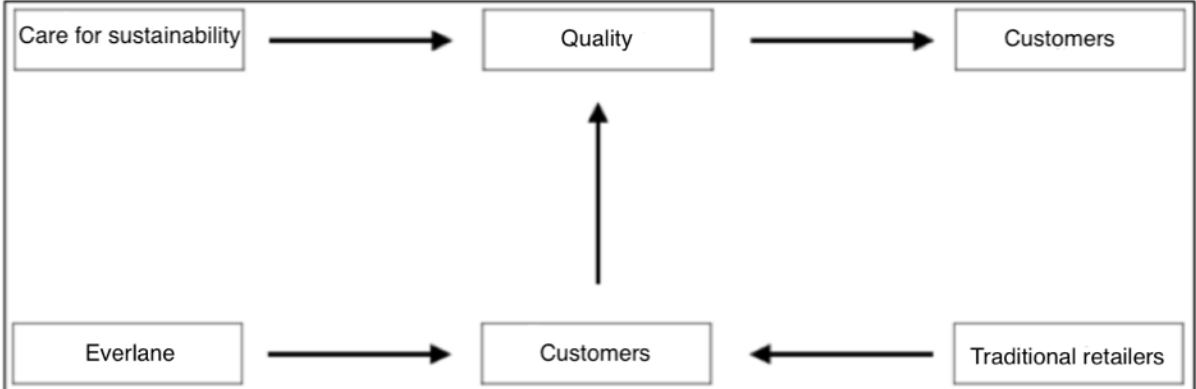
Timeless

As seen on the surface/discourse level, Everlane is constantly communicating their focus on quality and good craftsmanship in terms of the production of their clothes. Additionally, the brand puts a lot of emphasis on their “timeless products” (Everlane, n.d,a) and their fine materials. With the help of the actantial model, it thus becomes evident that the high focus on quality is an important way for the brand to be able to offer clothes that can be worn for a long time.



In this narrative, Everlane’s desire for producing clothes that has no expiration date comes from the idea of only making clothes with basic designs and year-round classics (Widdicombe, 2017). This is achieved by trying to distance itself from following trends as the website reveals that Everlane is “not big on trends” (Everlane, n.d,a) since they believe it is less environmentally friendly. “We don’t want fashion, we want lasting styles”, the founder says in an interview (Avins, 2016). The founder also says in another interview that it is here where Everlane is trying to differentiate itself from traditional retailers that often have seasonal collections (Widdicombe, 2017). Instead, the brand is emphasizing well-made, high quality clothes by always being incredibly careful with the material that they use for the production but also which factories as well as countries they choose to work with. In this way, Everlane’s clothes do not rag as easily, contributing to that they can be worn for a longer time, benefitting the planet.

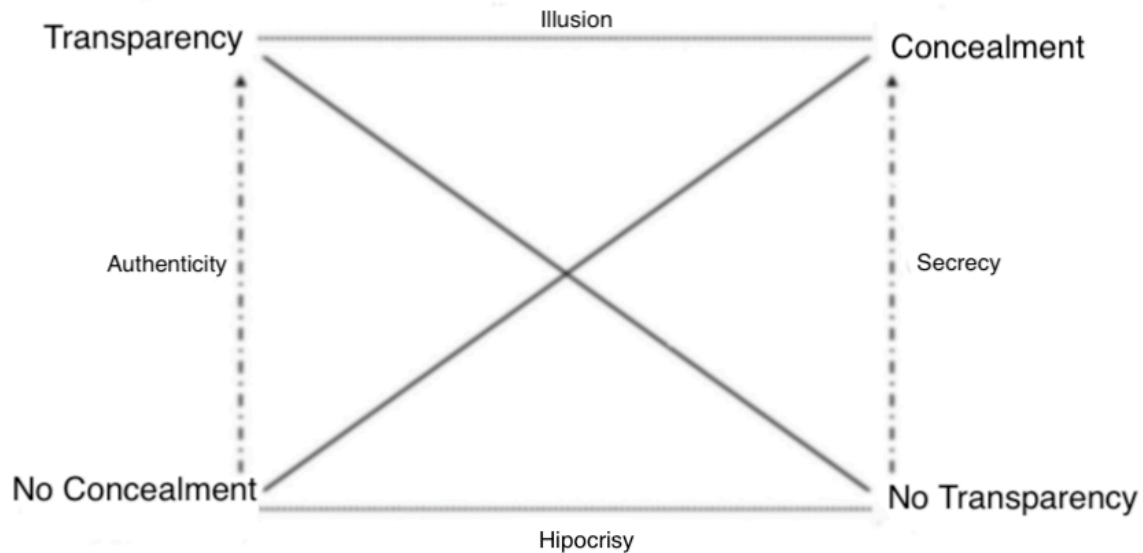
Everlane, is of course, also directing its communication about quality to their customers as they say that “we want you [customer] to wear our clothes for years” (Everlane, n.d,a). In this narrative, the customers who values purchasing clothes that are of high quality that can be worn for a long time as a way of being eco-friendly and sustainable will benefit from choosing Everlane as their go-to brand. The brand thus becomes the helper that can provide you, as a customer, with high-quality clothes with “garments that are durable, pill less, and get softer with wear” (Everlane, n.d,b), as stated on the website. In contrast, the founder says in an interview when talking about trends that “not doing collections, not being fashion focused (...) create[s] the best (...) [quality] products” (Kansara, 2016), which reveals for a certain attitude towards traditional retailers, following trends, that they do not focus on quality as much, contributing less to the environment as lower quality clothes cannot often be worn for a long time. Hence, customers wanting high quality favoring the environment should not buy clothes from other retailers.



5.1.3 The Axiological Level

Authenticity

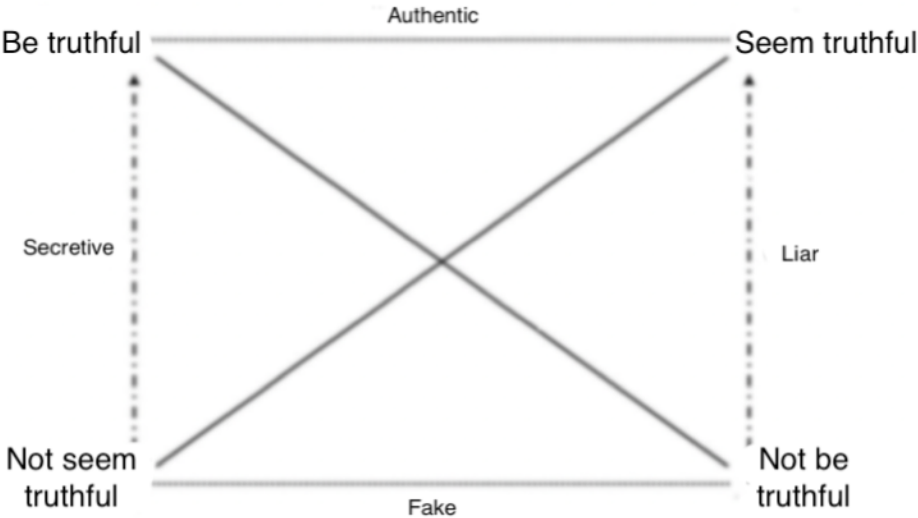
As seen on the narrative level, Everlane's stories are built around their desire for transparency (Everlane, n.d,a) and letting their customers know that they walk the talk. This implies for a strong fundamental brand pillar of authenticity.



By constantly revealing the truth about the brands' operations and being transparent in regard to costs as well as how the products are made, Everlane is strongly positioning itself far from the act of secrecy or hypocrisy and does not believe in running a business where honesty is not 100 percent present. To hide certain things in terms of operations that can give the illusion that the company is hiding something, which is here associated with other clothing brands, stand in direct opposition to what Everlane believes in. Instead, challenging the status quo with complete transparency and authenticity are the essential values upon which the brand's narratives are built.

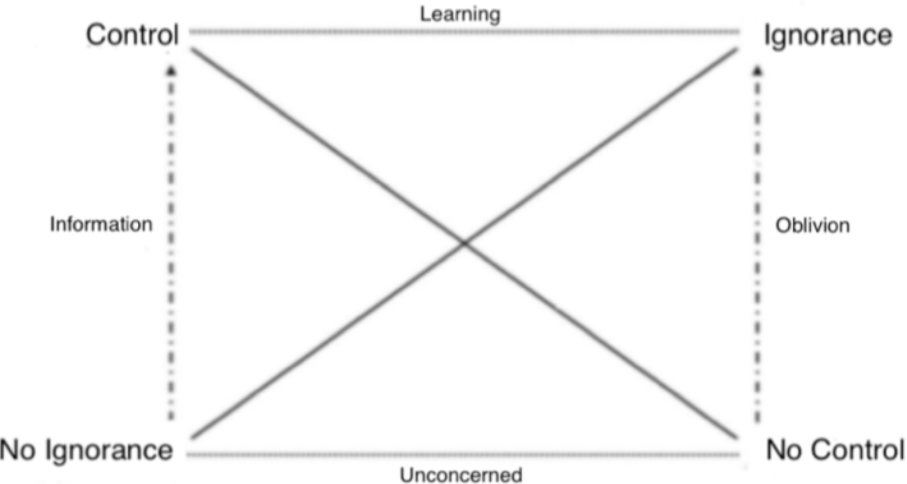
The brand value of authenticity is also present in how Everlane is presenting its customers. On the narrative level, it became clear that the brand is holding the opinion that the customers of the brand are people who are viewing themselves as honest people and want to be truthful. However, the founder also says that Everlane's customers "always ask why" (Everlane, 2010), which reveals for a certain requirement of also being truthful in terms of actions. It is thus not enough to only be seen as a truthful person for if this was the case, these customers might as well reach out to traditional clothing brands who could be viewed as possible liars or fake because of the fact that they do not share as much information. It could therefore be

argued that Everlane puts pressure on the customers in the way that they have to both be and seem truthful in order to be viewed as authentic and thus be a part of the “Everlane family”.



Knowledge

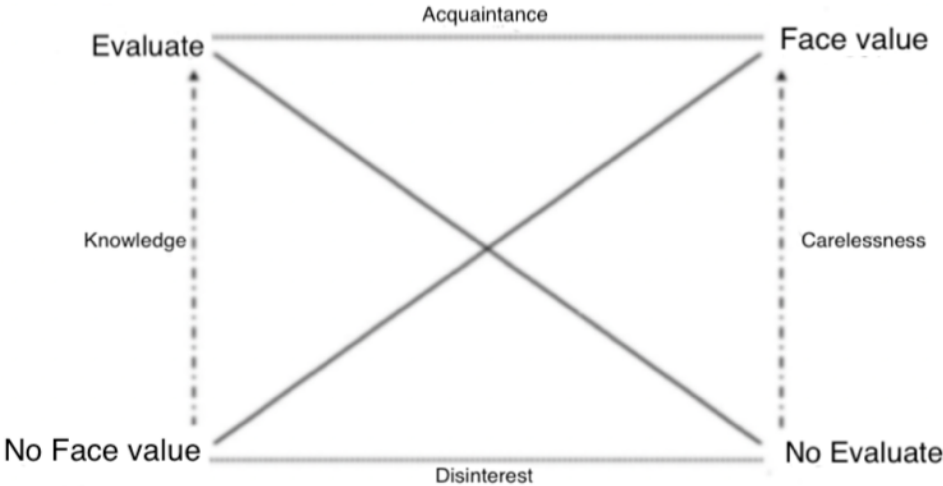
On the narrative level, it was also made evident that Everlane is very careful with the factories they are working with and tries to have as much information of their operations as possible to ensure control over their ethical approach (Everlane, 2019). The brand does not satisfy with having some insights about the factories but is instead striving for as much knowledge as possible through control.



Through the act of continuous control in regard to the partnering factories, Everlane is highly positioning itself against ignoring or being unconcerned about what is going on behind closed doors and be unaware of the factories’ way of operating, which could be argued that other

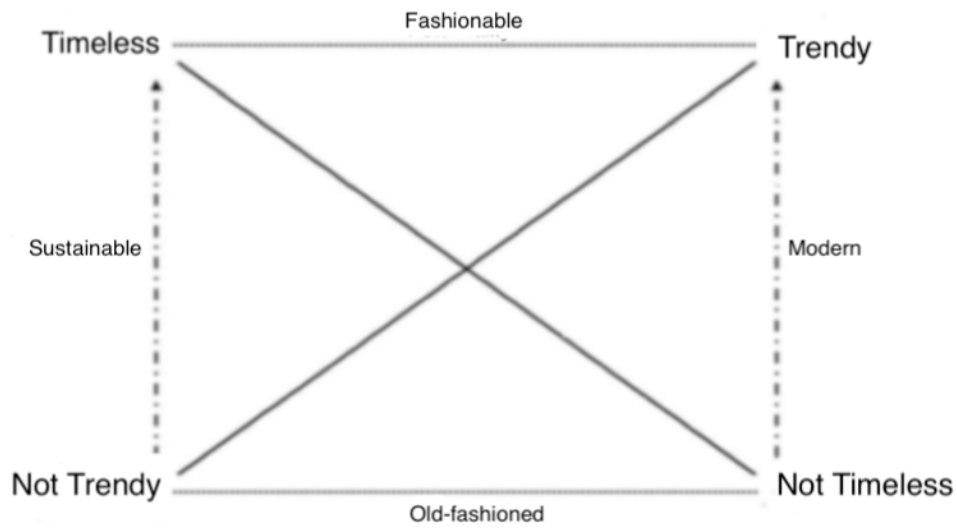
brands are connected to as stated in the related actantial model. Instead, full control and chasing all the information needed to make educated decisions contributing to ethical choices is something that Everlane cares about.

Furthermore, Everlane’s brand value of knowledge is also apparent in their narratives of “evaluate” (Everlane, n.d,a) as they so commonly use. The fact that Everlane is constantly evaluating their factories places them as someone who has a lot of knowledge, which the brand believes is the key to ethical operations but also for customers to make informed decisions. By being someone who is fully educated and sharing this information to the customers seems to be Everlane’s fundamental pillar not only in terms of being dedicated to ethics but also in regard to their values of being truthful and authentic as stated elsewhere. In contrast, being careless, disinterested or somewhat familiar by just accepting something at face value of how it appears without going much into depth stands in direct opposition to how Everlane chooses to position itself.



Sustainability

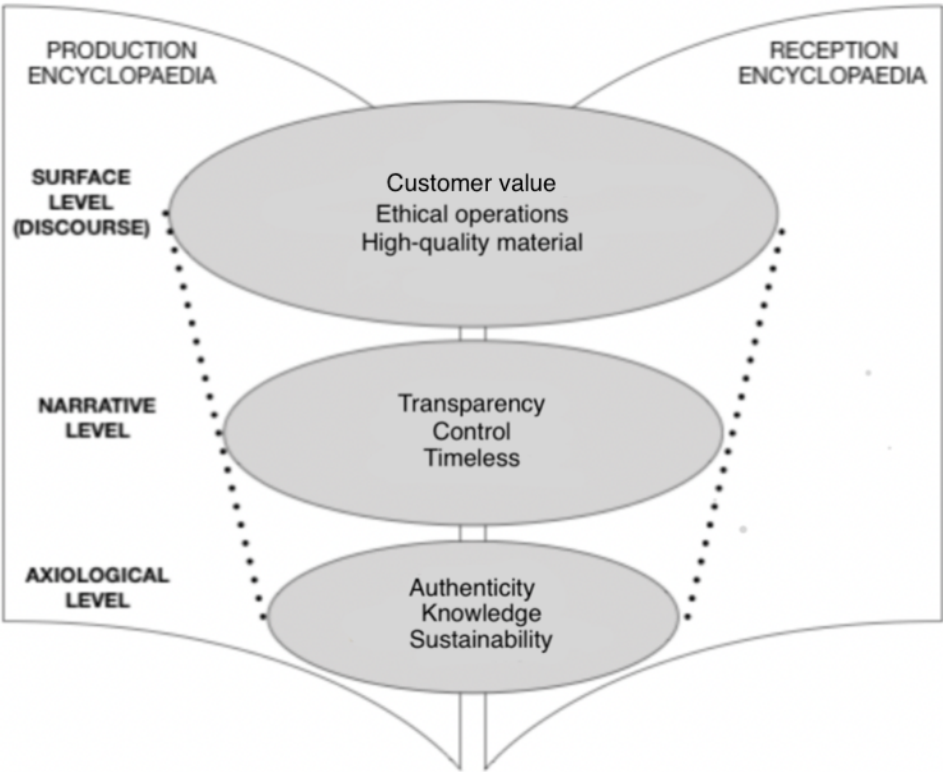
The fact that Everlane always strives for exceptional quality in the production of their clothes so that they can be worn for a long time and thus not have to be thrown away is a sign of valuing sustainability.



By constantly evaluating the materials that they use and the factories that they work with to be able to provide the customers with high-quality clothes and “timeless products” (Everlane, n.d,a), Everlane is standing in direct opposition to something that only can be worn temporarily as it later might go out of trend/fashion or will be thrown away as a consequence of lower quality, which is what other clothing brands are associated with. Instead, the brand is dedicated to only the highest quality and year-round classics (Widdicombe, 2017) that has a sustainable endurance.

5.1.4 The Brand Identity System

As seen in the analysis, Everlane is very much valuing and identifying itself with authenticity. This is based upon the fact that the brand is constantly assigning positive roles to transparency and truth on the narrative level. This is then shown on the surface/discourse level as the act of revealing the exact costs of their clothes as a way of showing that they are more valuable than other retailers. Moreover, another value found on the axiological level is the one of having as much knowledge as possible which has been evident by realizing that control is something that Everlane desires to be able to achieve their vision of having ethical operations, which is an important discourse which the brand’s narratives are rotating around. Control has been shown to be very important for Everlane as this allows them to have plenty of information and knowledge about the factories that they work with, which will contribute to their desire of operating in an ethical way. Finally, the last brand value that has been found to be significant for Everlane is sustainability. On the surface/discourse level, this is shown by the discourse of wanting to provide the customers with clothes made of high-quality material that can be worn for a long time. Furthermore, this brand value became evident when looking at the actantial models where timeless products as well as quality is something that is always put as either the object that Everlane desires or something that act as the helper to benefit the planet.



5.2 The narratives of Too Faced

5.2.1 *The Surface/Discourse Level*

Too Faced's narrative begins when they decided to change things up within the makeup industry. When looking at the corporate history and why Too Faced was born, the two founders, Jerrod Blandino and Jeremy Johnson takes the reader back to a time and an industry where "darkness was all the rage and pink had a bad rep" (Too Faced, n.d,a) and where "everything was so brown" (Shatzman, 2017). Furthermore, in an interview, Blandino says that "for women purchasing makeup, it could be a very intimidating, very regimented scary kind of experience for them (...) and that women really do want to try new things, they're just afraid of complications (...) and don't want to be judged" (Shatzman, 2017). This indicates the traditional makeup industry as being governed and led by conventional rules where women were feeling forced to use makeup in certain ways and with the same brown and dark colors. The text is thus structured and created in a way so that the reader gets the feeling of a very dull and depressing industry before Too Faced entered the market as an opponent. The reason for why opponent is an appropriate word to use here is because of the fact that Too Faced, Blandino says in an interview when talking about the makeup industry, wants to "taking it to that next level and giving it an extra push" (Decker, 2017). This is also evident in another interview where Blandino says that "we actually created the very first glitter eyeshadow ever and we did the first efficacious lip plumper ever" (Shatzman, 2017). Too Faced thus seem to be a brand that values and wants to try new things. Moreover, Too Faced also uses a language that implies the brand as being daring, risky and adventurous in relation to the world prior to Too Faced's birth. For example, on the website when talking about their products, one can find statements such as "give in to all your beauty desires" (Too Faced, n.d, i) and "hot melted mama, (Too Faced, n.d, j), which reveals the inclusion of sex and lust, something that the reader understands was not accepted behavior in the conventional past. Here, it is clear that Too Faced is constantly daring to try new things as a way of always moving forward.

Too Faced is thus positioning itself as being the complete opposite from the dark and dull industry describe above. This is evident when reading about the brand's values as it says that the founders were "unimpressed and distressed by the too-serious-state of the cosmetics industry" (Too Faced, n.d,a) and that they were tired of that the "industry had become rigidly led by rules" (Too Faced, n.d,a), which makes the reader understand that the brand does not believe in rules, norms or boringness. The brand's narratives are instead set in an environment

of “unapologetic glamour and femininity” (Too Faced, n.d,a) where Blandino says in an interview when talking about the mission that the brand wants to “[break] the rules” (Shatzman, 2017) and normalize the thought of being one’s own boss in looking how you want to as well as when you want to (Too Faced, n.d,a, b; Shatzman, 2017). This implies for a value of an industry where social rules are not welcome and where people can look how they want to and be accepted for who they are. Furthermore, the brand is identifying itself as having a “rebellious spirit” on the website (Too Faced, n.d, a) and the founders also say in an interview that Too Faced tries to “do it differently” (Shatzman, 2017). The fact that Too Faced wants to promote a world where no social rules apply in terms of makeup also seems to be present when looking at their products. For example, they have chosen to name their foundation to “Born this way” (Too Faced, n.d.e) and a collection to “Pretty Mess” (Too Faced, n.d.g) where it is promoted to embrace yourself and how you want to be as well as look without caring what others think.

Too Faced’s narrative also seem to be set within a fun and colorful setting as another way of opposing the dull and colorless world prior to the brand entering the market. The founders say in different interviews when talking about the brand’s values that they want to create an environment “where everyone is inspired to color outside the lines” (Johnson, n.d) with “new textures and colors” (Shatzman, 2017) to “create your own looks (...) and having fun” (Ng, 2018). Additionally, on the website, Too Faced is promoting itself as a fun makeup brand that wants to “inject joy back into [the] industry” (Too Faced, n.d,a). This brand value of being fun is especially evident when looking at Too Faced’s choice of words and their way of characterizing the narratives which seems to be very much connected to humor and the act of playing. For example, in an interview, Blandino explains his view of makeup as “a big box of creative, fun crayons that women get to doll themselves up in every day” (Shatzman, 2017). Also, when looking through the brand’s products where a collection is named “Tutti Frutti” (Too faced, n.d,h) and a mascara that has the name “better than sex” (Too faced, n.d,b), the brand seems to play with their choice of words as a way of being perceived as fun and interesting.

Lastly, the narratives of Too Faced also alternate between “we” and “you”. Whenever the brand talks about itself it always uses the word “we”, which can be seen in statements on the website such as “we are a (...) makeup-brand that knows how to have fun” (Too Faced, n.d,a). Furthermore, whenever the narratives are directed to the customers, the brand always uses the word “you” and when Too Faced says on the website that “ready to go from

housewife to club queen?” (Too Faced, n.d, g) followed by suggestions to use one of their products, it is almost like a form of social interaction and a friendly dialogue between the brand and its customers. For a conversation to be able to work smoothly, this often requires the members to like each other and to somewhat agree, which is why it becomes clear that Too Faced is directing its narratives to like-minded individuals, which in this case, are people who also value living on the edge, having fun and being accepted for who you are. The brand’s perception of the target group is nicely put by one of the brand’s founders in an interview; “it really is about giving them the confidence to try new things, (...) breaking the rules and having fun (...) and to take on that new look, and also giving them the products and the formulas that are going to service them and that they can rely on” (Shatzman, 2017).

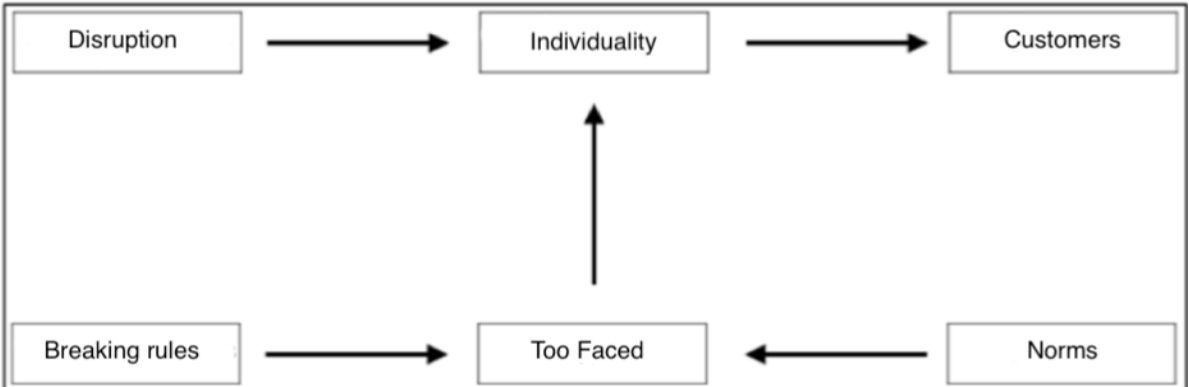
5.2.2 The Narrative Level

As seen on the surface/discourse level, Too Faced constructs meaning through three main narratives:

- Their mission of breaking rules with makeup as a means of being who you want to be
- Their vision of making the industry joyful by offering fun makeup products
- Their desire of always trying new things and move forward

Individuality

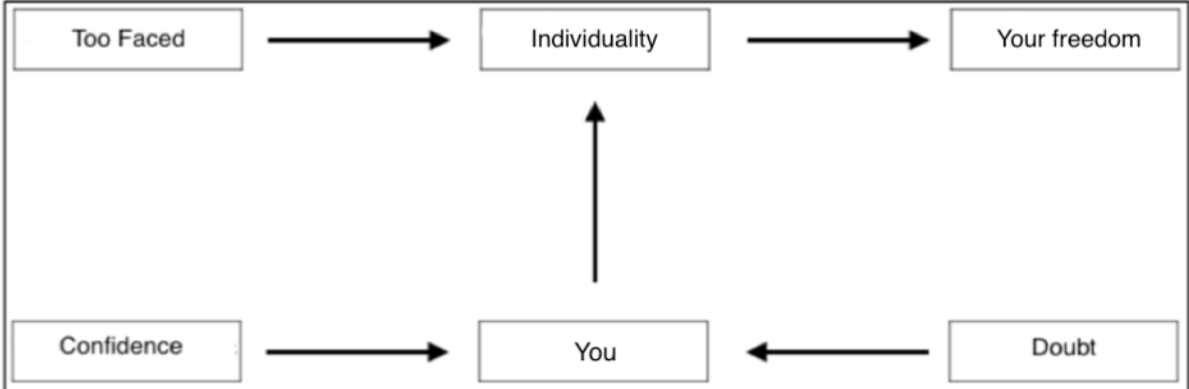
As seen on the surface/discourse level, Too Faced’s narratives revolve around the aim to break rules within the makeup industry without having to deal with judgements. It is important for the brand to be who you want to be without having to follow any rules on how one should look.



In this narrative, for customers to be able to feel better about themselves when purchasing makeup and not experience it as something that will make them feel judged (Shatzman, 2017), Too Faced thought that the current state of the beauty industry had to be challenged in

terms of individuality and accepting people for who they are and how they want to look. This is exactly what Too Faced is trying to achieve by distancing itself from the feeling of being governed by social norms which is something that the other makeup brands are doing as the brand’s website says that they are “rigidly led by rules” (Too Faced, n.d,a). Instead, Too Faced is constantly aiming for individuality by trying to break rules and promote to always be yourself. Being unique, accepting everyone’s differences and breaking rules is something that is very important for Too Faced as this will help the act of achieving individuality while already existing social norms will increase the chance of individuality not happening.

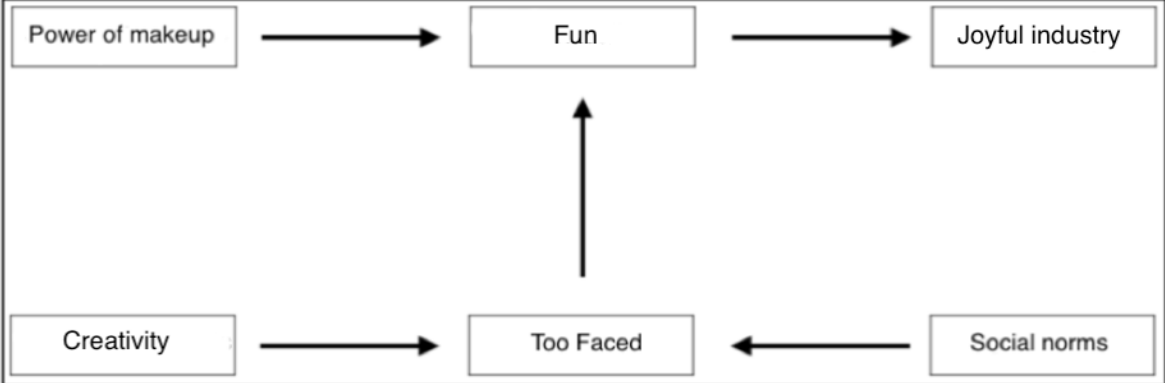
Too Faced’s narrative of individuality and breaking the rules is not only directed to the brand, but also to its customers as the founders say in an interview that they want their customers to feel confident enough to break rules and to be who you are (Shaztman, 2017). For customers courageous enough to be unique, confidence is the key, which of course, will be enhanced by using Too Faced’s products as the website says that their products will allow the customers to “create your own looks (...) and own your pretty” (Too Faced, n.d, f). Here, Too Faced is acting as helper (and sender) that can provide the customers with products that will benefit their desire for individuality and freedom of expression. The feeling of doubt stands in direct conflict with achieving uniqueness and individuality, which the customers will avoid by not buying products from other makeup brands as these promote to follow social norms and will thus foster the hesitation of standing out.



Playful

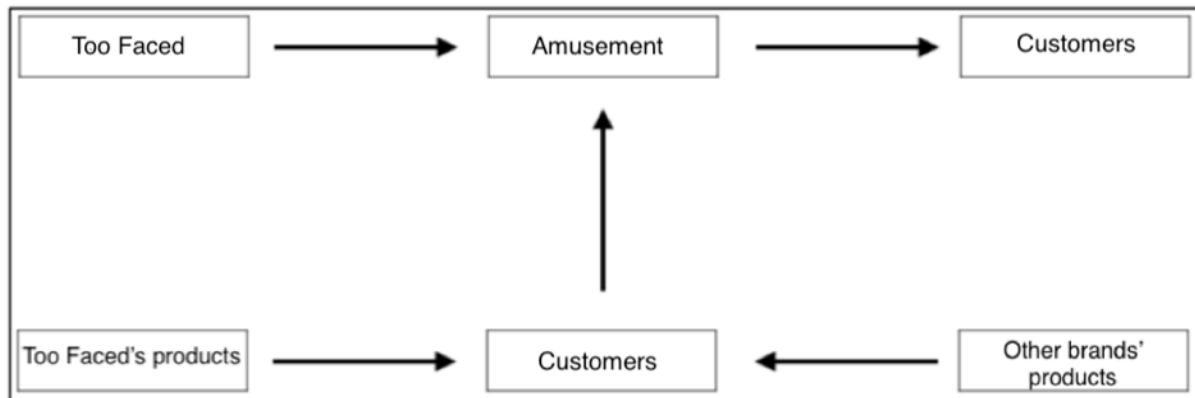
The surface/discourse level also showed that the attempt of trying to bring joy back into the makeup industry is something that is very important for Too Faced. When looking deeper into the narrative level with the help of the actantial model, it becomes evident that the brand is trying to achieve this by always “having fun” (Shatzman, 2017), as Blandino have said in an

interview, and to promote that makeup should be connected to fun and not seriousness (TooFaced, n.d,a).



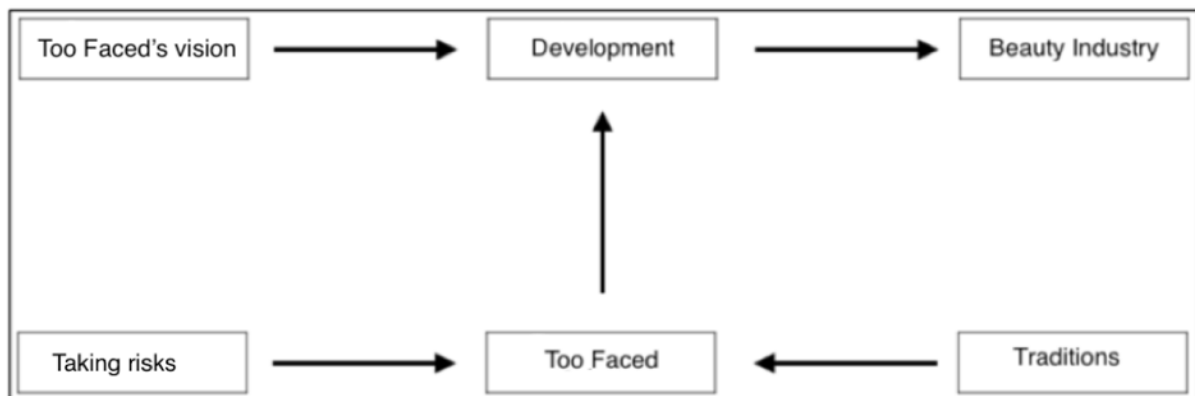
The founders have said in an interview that makeup is “a big box of creative, fun crayons” (Shatzman, 2017), and thus put a lot of emphasis on how powerful makeup is and its great potentiality of fun. This is exactly what Too Faced is trying to achieve by distancing itself from social norms as the presence of these have been described on the brand’s website to lead to makeup being brown and dull (Too Faced, n.d,a) as everyone would have to look the same, which is something that other brands are connected to. Instead, being creative and play with makeup is something that is very important for Too Faced as this will help the feeling of having fun and thus will contribute to reach the goal of a makeup industry defined as being joyful rather than gloomy.

Additionally, Too Faced’s promotion of having fun is not only addressed to the brand itself, but also to the customers. When talking about the customers, the founders have said in an interview that “they should have fun” (Shatzman, 2017) and address the fact that Too Faced’s makeup products with its colors and textures (Shatzman, 2017) is something that brings fun into your life and can be played with. Too Faced is thus acting as the sender but also places themselves in the position as a helper and a “fun friend” as this is something that they can provide the customers with and something that they need in order to play and have fun. Here, the customers who value purchasing makeup that one can play and be creative with as a way of having fun will benefit from choosing Too Faced. In contrast, traditional makeup brands are promoting rules and dullness which is why customers are indirectly told that these brands do not allow them to have fun and be creative and can thus not help them in reaching cheerfulness.



Innovation

Too Faced is constantly communicating their vision and desire for driving the beauty industry forward and to never stop developing both makeup products but also how to use makeup. This will be achieved by constantly discovering and learning about new ways and not be afraid of trying new things.

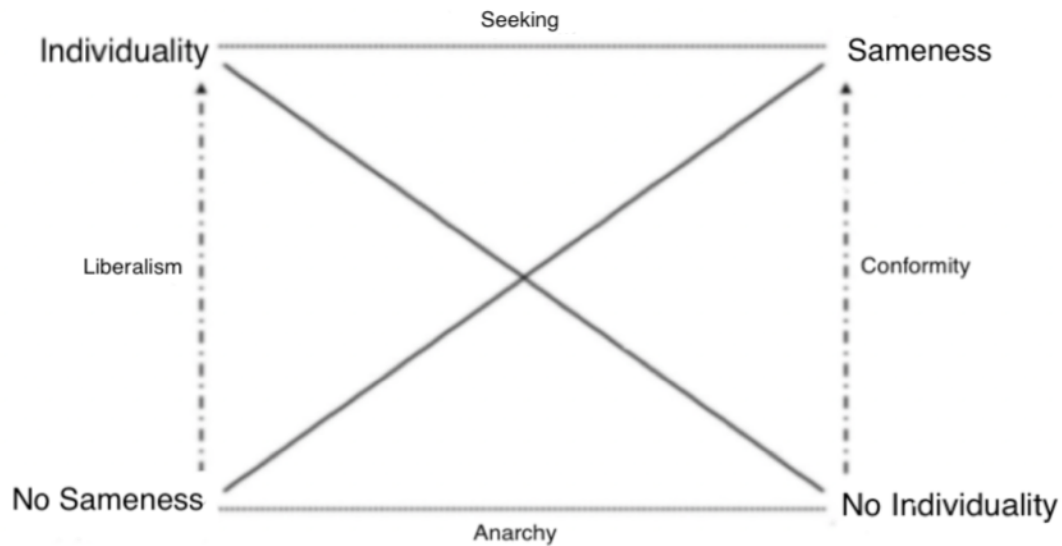


In order to be able to achieve development, it is important to have a certain drive for curiosity and taking risks as well as having an open mind. A close mind governed by traditions, such as the traditional makeup brands according to Too Faced, will only value things being done in the usual way and would thus not be able to appreciate new things. The former is something that is constantly present within the narratives of Too Faced as the founders have emphasized their mentality of “let’s try this” (Shatzman, 2017), in an interview. Thus, the brand wants to keep developing and constantly search for innovative new ways to break rules so that they can subsequently contribute to driving the beauty industry forward and make it better.

5.2.3 The Axiological Level

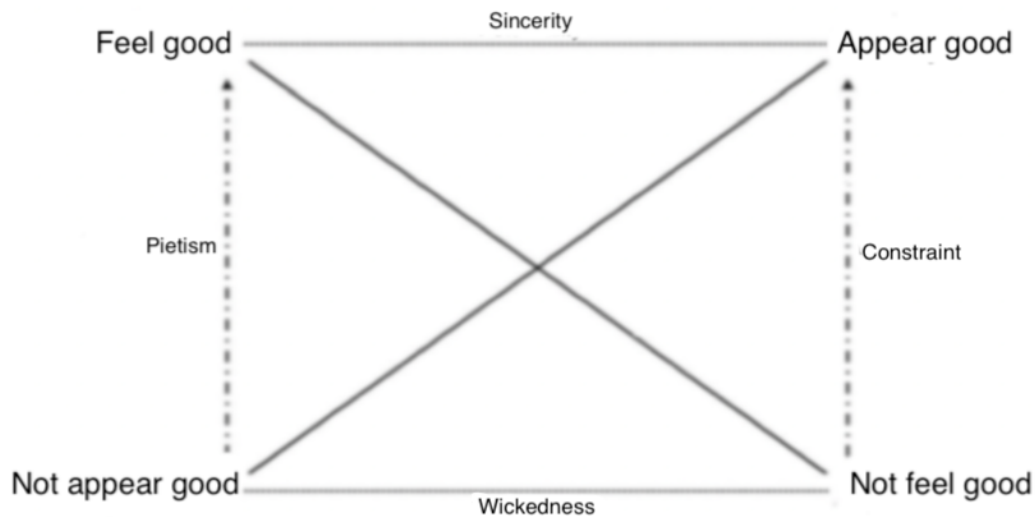
Liberalism

As seen on the narrative level, Too Faced's stories are built around the aim for individuality and promote to always be yourself no matter what. Having this kind of individualistic thought implies for a strong fundamental value of liberalism.



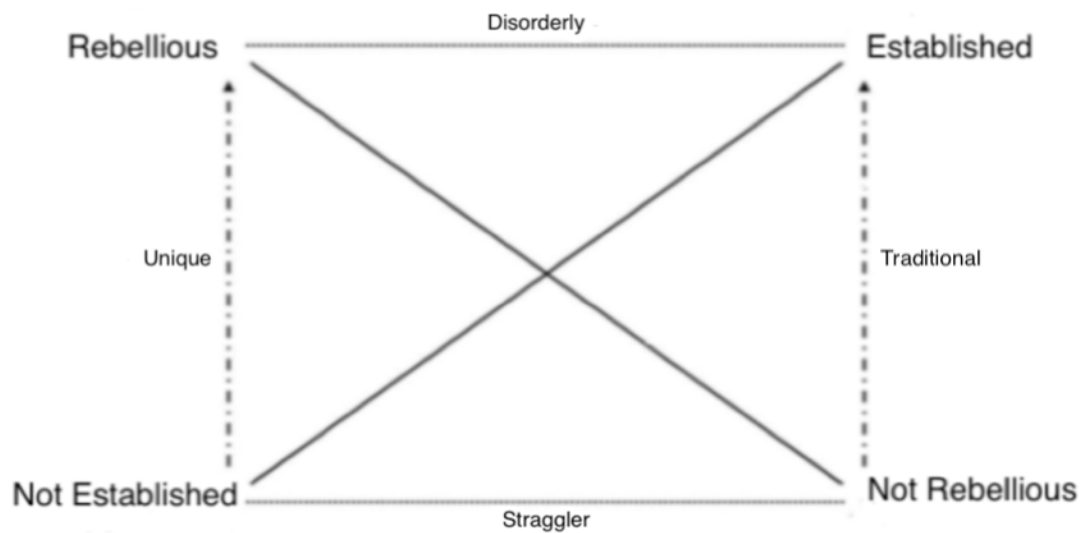
By being the devil's advocate and break rules, Too Faced is highly positioning itself against conformity and the feeling of being forced to look in a certain way because traditional social norms tell you to. The concept of being forced to comply to follow certain rules or to be manipulated into someone you are not, as the other brand stand for, stand in direct opposition to the values of Too Faced. Instead, liberation and freedom of expression are the essential values upon which the brand's narrative are built upon.

Furthermore, Too Faced tries to challenge what has been seen as the conventional way of doing makeup and the founders have said in an interview that what drives the brand forward is "whatever makes you feel good is the absolute right thing you should do" (Shatzman, 2017). This is a statement that very much reveals that there is no right or wrong in relation to makeup. Do you feel good? Go for it. If not, choose something else that makes you feel good. However, do not care about what other people think about your appearance. Additionally, this is also present within Too Faced's idea of who their customers are. In an interview, the founders have said that they see their customer as a person who "focus on what you're doing and be the best you can be" (Mcmeekin, 2018), thus focusing on oneself in terms of feeling good and not care about what other people are thinking.



Both Too Faced and its followers are thus trying to distance themselves from other makeup brands that gives the feeling of having to comply because social norms or someone else perceive something as right or the feeling of being deviated when wanting to do something that feels right for you but is however perceived as wrong by society. Instead, it is valued to wanting to be true and sincere to yourself and do what feels right for you no matter how it is perceived by other people. By not wanting to take part in the discussion of right versus wrong, but instead support challenging norms and appear however you feel like could also be a strong indicator of liberalism.

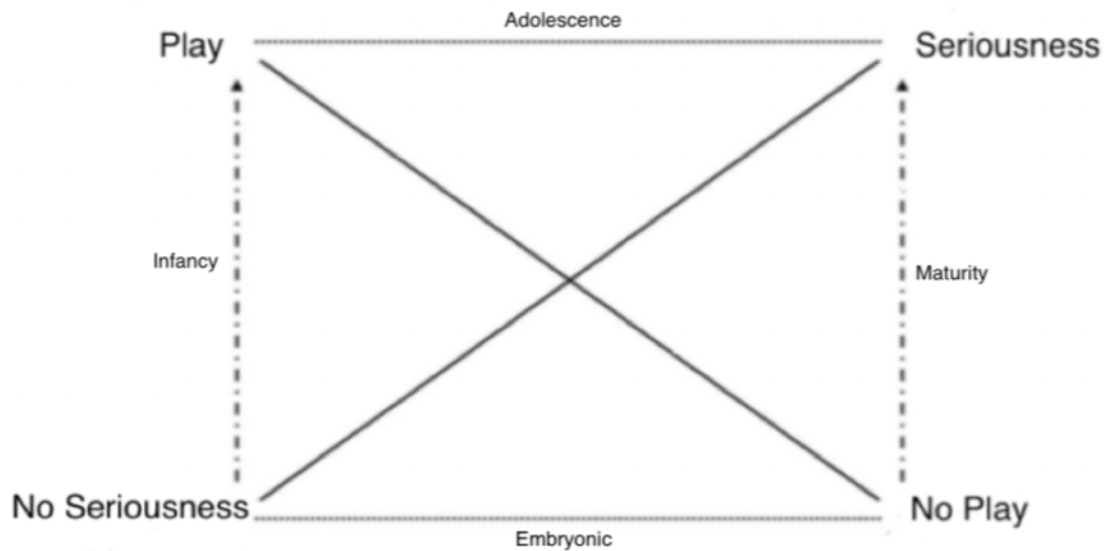
Lastly, Too Faced value of liberalism is also present within their narratives of supporting rebelliousness and breaking social rules. Being a late entrant on the market, Too Faced's "rebellious spirit (Too Faced, n.d,a), as stated on the website, could be seen as an act of revolting against the already established dominant makeup brands on the market that, according to Too Faced, operate on a more conventional market led by social rules.



Not being like everyone else is the fundamental key concept upon which Too Faced revolves around and is the very essence of what its narratives are built upon. The brand is very much standing in opposition to the idea of being traditional, conventional or even being a little bit disorderly. Instead, Too Faced is identifying itself as being completely rebellious and in combination with not agreeing with the established, the brand is positioning itself as being unique. Promoting uniqueness and being “one-of-a-kind” strongly indicates a thought of freedom and liberality in terms of expressing who you are, even though you might deviate.

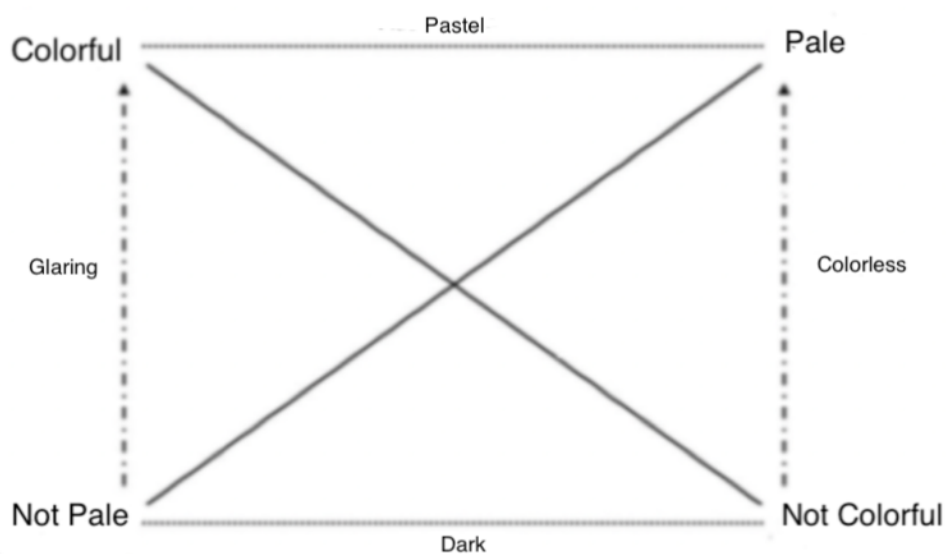
Childishness

Too Faced puts a lot of emphasis on the fact that makeup has to be something that is connected to fun and play and the brand promotes itself on the website as “a (...) brand that knows how to have fun” (Too Faced, n.d,a). Here, it is almost like the brand is trying to embrace a sense of “childhood” where everything used to be fun and play without having to take into account any rules. When you are a child, one does not often follow rules or understand the concept of having to adapt to what others consider as accepted. Instead a child is very much focused on doing what feels right and what the child considers as fun and playful.



Too Faced is promoting itself on the website as being “unimpressed (...) by the too-serious-state of the cosmetics industry (Too Faced, n.d,a) and is instead only focusing on the act of having fun and play around. This places the brand as having the mind of a child where no rules are applied or where cultural conventions in relation to makeup have not been considered yet. In contrast, having to be serious and follow rules as traditional brands are doing is something that could be connected to adulthood or adolescence (as they are learning about rules), which is something that Too Faced tries to distance itself from.

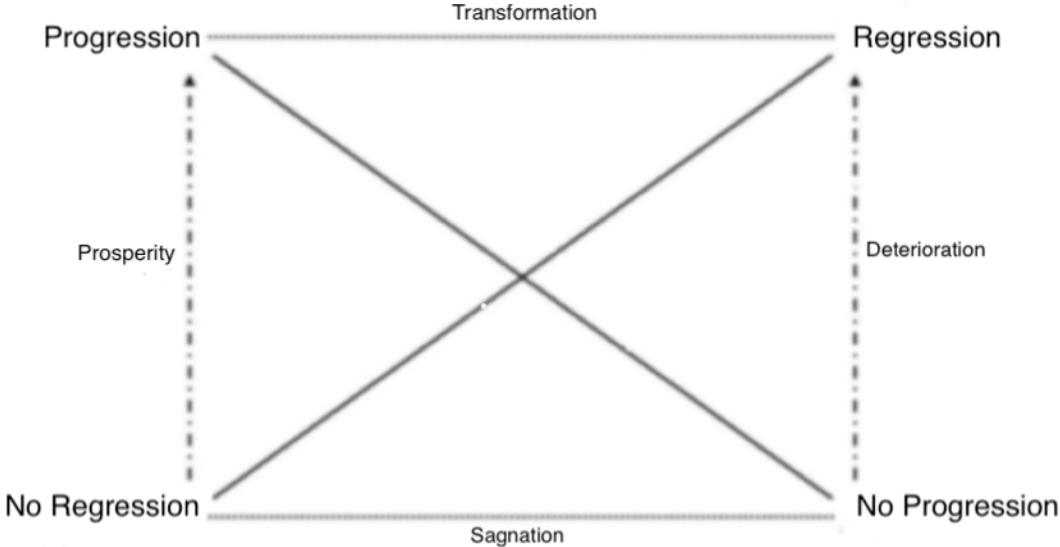
The fact that Too Faced promotes fun and has a mind of a child is also present within their narratives of being colorful and their emphasis on a colorful environment rather than being dull and brown (Too Faced, n.d,a; Shatzman, 2017).



Being colorful and not caring about what colors that are “allowed” to mix and match with is something that is very much promoted by Too faced. This could be seen as another interpretation of childishness since a child would not care to be looked at if wearing colors that stood out or that really “popped”. A child would often have no sense of what social rules tell you about colors, for example what colors would be “allowed” to mix and match, and would thus use whatever color they like, even though other people might regard this as queer. This is exactly what Too Faced supports and believes in, thus positioning itself as being a child who does not mind being glaring or conspicuous in terms of colors that are used. In contrast, being connected to darkness, paleness and colorlessness which Too Faced associate other brands with and rejects (Too Faced, n.d,a; Shatzman, 2017), are traits that could be argued to be possessed by adults as they have been “trained” to which colors that suits together or what colors to wear in order to not stand out.

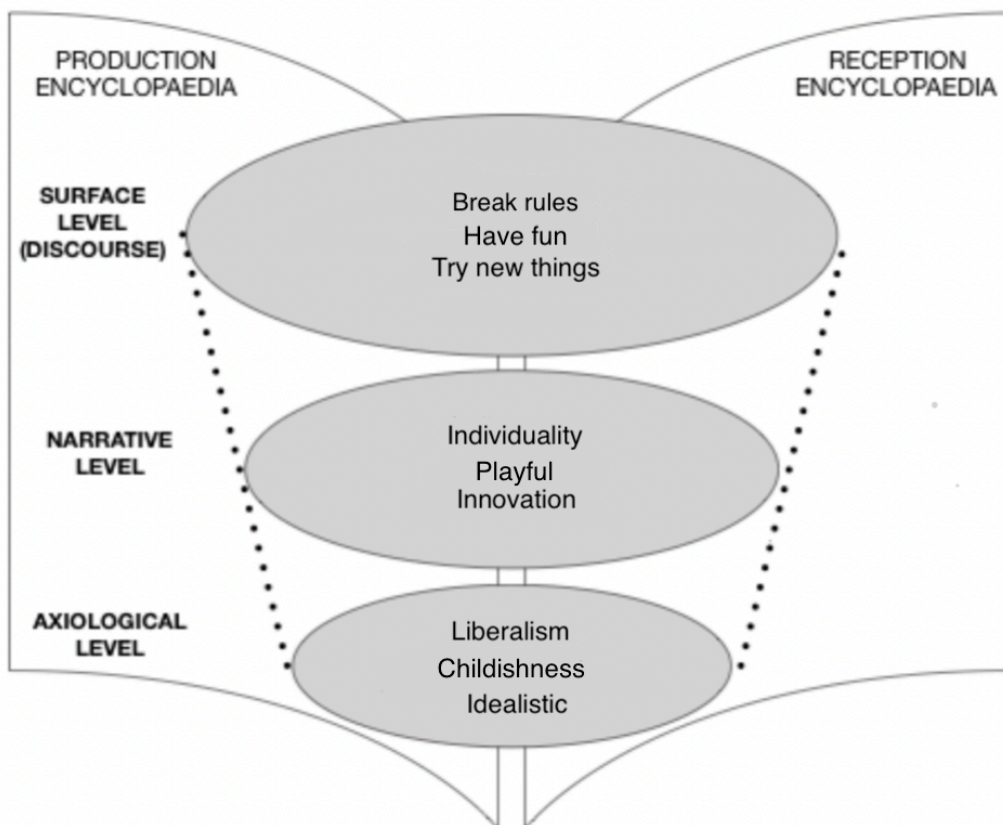
Idealistic

On the narrative level, it also became clear that Too Faced is never satisfied with being a part of the status quo but is however always striving for “taking it to that next level” (Decker, 2017), as stated in an interview, and always strive for progression and prosperity within the beauty industry. This could be seen as a sign of having an idealistic brand value. Too Faced’s drive, vision and transformation to put an end to a society full of social norms and conventions by constantly wanting to discover and try new things is an attempt to reach freedom and achieve an idealistic society where people live in truth to themselves and who they are. This stands in direct opposition to regression and deterioration, something that the brand highly positions itself against. Furthermore, the position of stagnation that other makeup brands seem to be satisfied with, does not appeal to Too Faced either. Instead to keep developing and moving forward are the main aspects that drive the business.



5.2.4 The Brand Identity System

The analysis has shown that Too Faced highly values liberalism and the act of fighting for freedom of expression. This has been made clear on the narrative level where individuality as well as having the confidence to be who you want to be always plays the role as an object or a helper as a way to reach freedom. This is then shown on the surface/discourse level as an emphasis on breaking rules and challenging norms. Furthermore, another value found on the axiological level is the one of having the mind of a child and never grow up, which is evident on the narrative level as the brand always wants to play and be creative with makeup as a way to make the beauty industry fun and not dull. This is a concept that is very apparent on the surface/discourse level. Lastly, the third brand value of Too Faced has been shown to be an idealistic one. This is based upon the fact that the brand is constantly assigning positive roles to the act of development, progression, innovation and taking risk, which is then evident on the surface/discourse level as the desire of always moving forward by continuously trying new things.



6. Discussion

This section serves to present the main findings that can be drawn from the analysis as a way to answer the research question of how successful late entrants position their brand biography in terms of narrative constructionism. Additionally, the result is discussed in relation to previous research presented in an earlier chapter.

6.1 How do successful late entrants narratively construct their brand biography in order to position themselves in the market?

The analysis has shown that the late entrants narratively create their position in the market by placing themselves in opposition to the already existing dominant players as a way to challenge the status quo. This can be seen in both the actantial models as well as in the semiotic squares as the pioneers are repeatedly placed on the opposite sides. Their narratives revolve around them challenging and opposing their competitors as a way to show that they are doing things differently, thus being disruptive.

Furthermore, the late entrants are assigning themselves the role as a subject that wants to achieve something to make the world a better place, something that the earlier entrants oppose. Additionally, the late entrants are also acting as the helper and the “friend” that the customers can rely on and that can provide them with something that the competitors cannot. Both of the late entrants are thus placing their competitors and earlier entrants as the enemy to show themselves better and thus gain competitive advantage.

6.1.1 Disruption

As previously stated by Hill (2001) and Wong & Merrilees (2005), for late entrants to be successful in the market with already existing competitors, this requires them to differentiate themselves and to create a unique position in the minds of the customers. This is something that both Everlane and Too Faced are doing by, amongst other things, defining themselves as being rebellious and radical as a way of opposing and changing the current state of the industry that they operate in. For example, Everlane is valuing complete radicalism in terms

of transparency as well as authenticity and is promoting to always tell the truth in regard to the origin of their clothes as well as how much they cost to make as a way for the customers to have full information and knowledge. This is, according to Everlane's narratives, something that their competitors are not doing. Furthermore, Too Faced is valuing complete liberalism in people's way of expressing themselves and is constantly using narratives including breaking rules and be rebellious as a way to reach this individuality. This cannot be seen in the operations of the other brands as, within Too Faced's narratives, these go in line with following social norms and appearing the same as everyone else. The two brands are thus being disruptive and want to challenge the status quo in the way that they are doing things in a different way than what their pioneers are, contributing to them gaining a unique position on the market.

This disruptiveness is also evident when looking at the narrative levels and the actantial models as both Everlane and Too Faced place their competitors as opponents whenever they themselves are assigned the role as a subject that wants to achieve an object. This means that the competitors (or concepts that are associated with the competitors) are placed as the adversaries who oppose the (positive) objects that the late entrants are trying to achieve. For example, when Everlane wants to achieve the object of products that can be worn for a long time, they place "trends" as an opponent which is something that the other brands are following. Moreover, when Too Faced is telling the story of wanting to have fun as a way of injecting joy back into the makeup industry, traditional brands with their normative dullness stand in direct opposition in achieving this object. The late entrants are thus constantly putting the already dominant players in the market as the opponent of what they are trying to achieve as a way to show that the other brands stand in opposition to what the late entrants are supporting (which is always positive) as a way to gain competitive advantage on the market, something that Maguire et al. (2015) also have previously concluded.

The idea of late entrants' success coming from improving and enhancing the positioning already adopted by a pioneer in order to develop a superior position as presented by Basharat et al. (2016) and Shamsie et al. (2004), thus seems to be dismissed by both Everlane and Too Faced. Within their narratives, the brands are not once adapting the position from another more dominant player and then try to make it better. Instead, these late entrants are forming a counter-narrative by positioning themselves as being the complete opposite of their competitors, thus being disruptive and not following lead with an improved twist. However, what is interesting is that even though they are not dependent on using a position adopted by a pioneer to be successful, they seem to be very much dependent on

them in other ways. For example, Everlane and Too Faced are both creating meanings around their narratives based upon differences in relation to their competitors and are creating their identity and brand values as well as position in the market based upon opposing the early entrants that already have been established. As follows, this suggests that in order for late entrants to create meaning within their brand biography and position themselves favorable in the market, they need the more dominant players and thus stand in some kind of dependency towards them.

6.1.2 Improved future

Whenever the late entrants are placing themselves as the subject who wants to achieve something, the receiver that will benefit from the object is referred to a better future either within their industry, in regard to the customers or for the world/planet. For example, in the case of Too Faced when the brand talks about the desire to always try new things and challenge the status quo as a way of driving the beauty industry forward or when Everlane argues that society will benefit from them being completely dedicated to ethical operations, this clearly shows that the late entrants are striving for a future that is better than the contemporary status. Additionally, in these narratives, the competitors and early entrants are working against the interest of improving the future as they are placed as the opponent who appreciates continuing to operate within the status quo, contributing less to making the world a better place.

The fact that late entrants seem to position themselves as caring for a better future is also something that is highly supported within the axiological level. It has for example been shown that Everlane has the brand value of sustainability and Too Faced is very much valuing idealism and progression, all of which can be connected to an improved future in some ways. Meanwhile, the early entrants are associated with the opposite words, such as being trendy and ephemeral in the case of Everlane as well as regression and stagnation in regard to Too Faced.

Based upon the previous argument by Cooper et al. (2010) that narratives and stories help and guide brands in constructing a “social reality” where consumers’ ideals are presented, in combination with Green’s (2008) claim that narratives have the ability of transporting one to a certain state of engagement, it could be argued that both Too Faced and Everlane are trying to create a “reality” where a better future is present as an attempt to alter the status quo (associated with the pioneers) of the entire industry in which they operate. By telling

stories of how they want to make the world a better place and by placing themselves as being the contributors of a better future, they are trying to construct an ideal reality that the customers would want to take part of. Additionally, by placing their competitors as opponents, the customers understand that this reality will not occur if engaging with the other brands within the industry, leading to that the competitors either have to cease their operations or being forced to change their behavior, both of which could be argued to contribute to a shift within the industry. The late entrants thus create the dichotomies of good versus bad when creating their social reality of an improved future, where the late entrants are the ones who are good, and the dominant players are the ones who are considered to be bad. However, it should also be noted that there seem to be an instability and somewhat unclarity in who the sender within the actantial model is regarding both of the late entrants. No general pattern has been shown here as the sender is sometimes the late entrants themselves, the customers or other aspects, such as sustainability. As the sender is important for a desire to be achieved, this instability and unclarity shows a weakness within their narratives and can imply that the late entrants have difficulties in establishing where, when or by who this change will take place. The late entrants' narratives thus seem to be under construction where their ambitions about a change are not in a decisive future.

What is also very interesting and somewhat paradoxical is that, although the late entrants are creating a social reality in regard to a better future, wherein which they do not want their competitors' opposing practices to be present, they still seem to be dependent on these exercises continuously existing in the market. Because, how else are the late entrants going to create their meaning of contributing to an improved future and thus position themselves favorably in the market if they have no early entrants with their "bad" practices to oppose? This, again, shows that the late entrants are dependent on their competitors to create their meaning and position in the market. Moreover, this also further supports that the occurrence of this change that the late entrants include in their narrative is not decided upon.

6.1.3 The "friend"

From the analysis, it has also been apparent that both of the late entrants are directing plenty of their narratives towards customers, mostly when talking about the products that they offer but also in regard to the values they stand for. Based upon Denning's (2006) previous suggestion of consumers buying products to experience the narratives and stories that are told, in combination with Shankar et al. (2001) argument of consumers reacting positively to narratives as this is the way humans interpret and make sense of the world, this could be

seen as an act of persuasion in buying the products. In these narratives, the late entrants place themselves as being the helper and becomes someone who can provide the customer with something that they need, thus acting as a friend and a helping hand that the customer can trust and rely on, making them want to interact with the brand as well as buy their products.

Whenever the narratives of the late entrants are centered around the customers, it is about the brand trying to convince the customer that they can provide them with something that the other brands cannot. The competitors are instead placed as being someone who works against the customers' interests, thus being the enemy that the customers do not want to interact with. For example, when Everlane talks to its customers about the importance of morality, openness and consciousness in regard to clothing, they are directing its narratives to customers valuing truth and honesty. Everlane thus becomes a "friend" having the same values as well as moral compass and can thus help the customers in continuously being honest and truthful by interacting with the brand and purchase their products. Additionally, this is not something that the competitors can provide the customers with as, according to Everlane, they are not sharing as much information as Everlane does, thus working against the customers' interest of being 100 percent honest. The same stories can be found within Too Faced's narratives.

According to Escalas (2004), Aaker & Aaker (2016) & Pini (2017), brand narratives and stories can enhance the process by which consumers connect their self-identity to the identity of the brand, strengthening the practice of customers matching their stories to the one's told by the brand, thus creating a self-connection which is of course positive for the brand. It could thus be argued that by putting the customers at the center of the narrative as a subject who wants to achieve something that the late entrants can help them with, the brands are trying to amplify the consumers' connection to the brands as a way of expressing the self, contributing to that the customer purchase the product. Hence, even though both of the late entrants' narrative suggest that their goal is to challenge their competitors and be disruptive, the brands still need to be profitable, thus adopting the popular branding strategies of relatability and attractiveness that has been previously suggested by Pride & Ferrell (2014) and Blankson & Kalafatis (2004), which the late entrants have proved to be working as they seem to have contributed to their success.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, concluding marks are presented, followed by a discussion of limitations of this study as well as suggestions for future research within the field.

7.1 Conclusion

In the introductory chapter of this thesis, it was made clear that little attention has been given to how successful late entrants narratively construct their brand biographies as a way of positioning themselves favorably in the market. The aim of this study has thus been to understand the structures of late entrants' brand biographies from a narrative perspective in order to understand how they are positioning themselves in relation to more dominant players.

The analysis and the discussion have shown that the narratives of late entrants are created in such a way so that they stand in opposition to the already existing dominant players in the market. The narrative positioning of the late entrants happens through them creating counter-narratives to their competitors involving them being disruptive and challenging the status quo (where in which the pioneers operate) in order to make the future better and reach an ideal social reality, thus placing themselves in complete opposition to the early entrants. Their narratives are built around them versus the competitors and can thus essentially be broken down to the dichotomies of good versus bad. Here, their stories involve the late entrants being associated with positive roles as well as values and are constantly depicting themselves as someone who is good by placing themselves as either being the helper/friend that can provide the customers with something or the subject that wants to achieve something that will contribute to a better future. Furthermore, the dominant players and the pioneers in the market are depicted as being the bad enemy that are satisfied with the status quo and are not trying to contribute to an improved future or are not working in favor of the customers' interests.

It could thus be argued that in order for the late entrants to successfully and favorably

position themselves in a competitive market, they need the pioneers as a means for constructing their (opposing) identities and creating meaning within their brand biographies.

By shedding light on how successful late entrants narratively construct their brand biographies to strategically communicate their position within a market with already dominant players, this study has provided an understanding for how future brands entering a competitive market can construct their brand biographies in order to create and gain a beneficial position.

7.2 Limitations and future research

This study has addressed how two late entrants within the fashion industry built and construct their narratives within their brand biographies to position themselves in the market where already dominate players exist. As there is yet little research within the field, it is suggested for future research to examine this further by conducting more studies within the same industry or within different industries to gain a more comprehensive understanding of narrative constructionism in relation to late entrants. Furthermore, the findings of this study have shown that late entrants are creating their identity and meaning within their brand biography with the use of oppositions to the pioneers already established on the market. However, what happens when the late entrants have reached their achievements of for example changing the industry for a better future. Does this mean that the pioneers opposing this better future no longer exist in the market and thus no longer stand in opposition to the late entrants? And will this contribute to late entrants losing their identity and meaning if they have no competitors to oppose? If this is the case, this suggests that the narratological techniques used by late entrants can only be adopted within a limited amount of time. It would thus be highly interesting to follow the journey of the narrative structures used by late entrants to see whether they change when the late entrants in fact become part of the established and have reached their achievements. A suggestion for future research could therefore be to conduct a longitudinal study of late entrants to examine if and how their narratives within their brand biographies change through time as they become more established.

8. References

- Aaker, D & Aaker, J. L. (2016). What Are Your Signature Stories?. *California Management Review*, 58(3), 49-65. DOI: [10.1525/cm.2016.58.3.49](https://doi.org/10.1525/cm.2016.58.3.49)
- Aaker, D. A. (2012). Win the Brand Relevance Battle and Then Build Competitor Barriers. *California Management Review*, 54(2), 43-57. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/cm.2012.54.2.43>
- Abbott, H.P. (2008). *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*. (2nd edition). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Avery, J., Paharia, N., Keinan, A., & Schor J. B. (2010). The strategic use of brand biographies. *Research on Consumer Theory*, 12, 213-229. DOI :[10.1108/S0885-2111\(2010\)0000012011](https://doi.org/10.1108/S0885-2111(2010)0000012011)
- Avins, J. (2016) *Everlane: The San Francisco clothing company that launches t-shirts like they're iPhones*. Quartz. Retrieved 25th April from <https://qz.com/630567/everlane-the-san-francisco-clothing-company-that-creates-t-shirts-like-theyre-iphones/>
- Bal, M. (1997). *Narratology: introduction to the theory of narrative*. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press
- Baxter, P & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544–556.
- Besharat, A., Langan, R. J & Nguyen, C. A. (2016). Fashionably late: Strategies for competing against a pioneer advantage. *Journal of Business Research*, 69, 718-725. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2015.08.010>
- Berg, B. L & Lune, H. (2012). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. (8th edition). New Jersey: Pearson Education.

- Bergström, G & Boréus, K. (2012). *Textens mening och makt: metodbok i samhällsvetenskaplig text-och diskursanalys*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Berthon, P., Ewing, M.T & Napoli, J. (2008). Brand Management in Small to Medium-Sized Enterprises. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 46(1), 27-45. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2014.981567>
- Blankson, C & Kalafatis, S. P. (2004). The Development and Validation of a Scale Measuring Consumer/Customer-Derived Generic Typology of Positioning Strategies. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 20 (1–2), 5–43.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative research journal*, 9(2), 27-40. DOI: [10.3316/QRJ0902027](https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027)
- Brinkmann, S & Kvale, S. (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications
- Bryman, A & Bell, E. (2015). *Business Research Methods*. (4th edition). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cantamessa, M., Gatteschi, V., Perboli, G & Rosano, M. (2018). Startups' Roads to Failure. *Sustainability*, 10(7), 1-19. DOI:[10.3390/su10072346](https://doi.org/10.3390/su10072346)
- Chandler, D. (2007). *Semiotics: the basics*. (2nd edition). Routledge: London
- Chen, T & Chang, H-C. (2017) The effect of Narrative Transportation in mini-Film Advertising on Reducing Counterarguing. *International journal of Electronic Commerce Studied*, 8(1), 25-46. DOI: [10.7903/ijecs.1476](https://doi.org/10.7903/ijecs.1476)
- Cohen, R. J (2014). Brand Personification: Introduction and Overview. *Psychology & Marketing*, 3(1),1-30. DOI: [10.1002/mar.20671](https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20671)
- Cooper, H., Schembri, S., & Miller, D. (2010). Brand-self Identity Narratives in the James Bond Movies. *Psychology & Marketing*, 27(6), 557-567. DOI: [10.1002/mar.20344](https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20344)
- Culler, J. D. (2002). *Structuralist poetics: Structuralism, linguistics and the study of literature*. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

- Decker, M. (2017). *The Real Story Behind Too Faced's Cult Scented Makeup*. Refinery29. Retrieved 29th March from <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2017/12/184337/too-faced-jerrod-blandino-scented-makeup>
- Delventhal, S. (2015). *10 Surprising Companies That Began as Underdogs*. Investopedia. Retrieved at 25th January from <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/101315/10-surprising-companies-began-underdogs.asp>
- Denning, S. (2006). Effective storytelling: strategic business narrative techniques. *Strategy & Leadership*, 34(1), 42–48.
- Denscombe, M. (2009). *Forskningshandboken; för småskaliga forskningsprojekt inom samhällsvetenskaperna*. Lund: Studentlitteratur
- Derrida, J. (1966). Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Science. In *Writing and Difference* (trans. Alan Bass), 278-294. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Esaiasson, P., Gilljam, M., Oscarsson, H., Towns, A & Wängnerud, L. (2017). *Metodpraktikan: konsten att studera samhälle, individ och marknad*. (5th edition) Stockholm: Wolters Kluwe
- Escalas, J, E. (2004). Narrative Processing: Building Consumer Connections to Brands. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 14 (1/2), 168-180. DOI: [10.1207/s15327663jcp1401&2_19](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1401&2_19)
- Everlane. (2010). *Everlane* [Twitter account]. Retrieved 11th April from <https://twitter.com/Everlane>
- Everlane. (2019). *Everlane Privacy Policy*. Retrieved 1st May from <https://www.everlane.com/privacy>
- Everlane (n.d, a). *We believe we can all make a difference*. Retrieved 6th March from <https://www.everlane.com/about>
- Everlane (n.d,b). *The Cashmere V-Neck*. Retrieved 25th April from <https://www.everlane.com/products/mens-cashmere-v-plum>

- Everlane. (n.d,c). *Dongguan Eastrade Handbag Co., Ltd.* Retrieved 4th April from <https://www.everlane.com/factories/bags>
- Everlane. (n.d,d). *Our Factories.* Retrieved 5th April from <https://www.everlane.com/factories>
- Everlane. (n.d,e) *Molan Inc.* Retrieved 5th April from <https://www.everlane.com/factories/tees-sweatshirt>
- Everlane. (n.d,f). *CA SB657: Supply Chain Transparency Act.* Retrieved 5th April from <https://www.everlane.com/supply-chain>
- Everlane. (n.d,g). *Brand Analysis.* Retrieved at 10th April from <https://everlane404.wordpress.com/2017/10/08/brand-analysis/>
- Everlane. (n.d,h). *Authentic Stretch High-Rise Skinny.* Retrieved at 21st April from <https://www.everlane.com/products/womens-auth-strch-hr-skinny-black?collection=womens-jeans>
- Everlane. (n.d,i). *The Handbag Factory.* Retrieved 21st April from <https://www.everlane.com/factories/florence-bags>
- Everlane. (n.d,j). *The Flats Factory.* Retrieved 21st April from <https://www.everlane.com/factories/day-glove>
- Everlane. (n.d,k) *The Boxer Brief.* Retrieved 22nd April from <https://www.everlane.com/products/mens-boxer-brief-white?collection=mens-underwear>
- Everlane. (n.d,l). *Lives SAC.* Retrieved 22nd April from <https://www.everlane.com/factories/pima-tees>
- Everlane. (n.d,m). *The world's cleanest denim factory.* Retrieved 22nd April from <https://www.everlane.com/denim-factory>

- Everlane. (n.d,n). *Day Loafer*. Retrieved 22nd April from <https://www.everlane.com/day-loafer>
- Fang, M., Huijing, S., Lihua, C & Yiping, L. (2012.) A Theory of Fashion Consumption. *Journal of Management and Strategy*, 3(4), 84-92. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5430/jms.v3n4p84>
- Fahy, J., Hooley, G., Cox, T., Beracs, J., Fonfara, K. & Snoj, B. (2000). The Development and Impact of Marketing Capabilities in Central Europe. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 31(1), 63–81. DOI: [10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490907](https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490907)
- Falkheimer, J & Heide, M. (2018). *Strategic Communication: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 12(2), 219-245. DOI: [10.1177/1077800405284363](https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405284363)
- Fog K., Budtz C & Baris Y. (2007). *Storytelling: Branding in Practice*. Berlin: Springer
- Fog, K., Budtz, C., Munch, P., & Blanchette, S. (2010). *Storytelling: Branding in Practice*. Berlin: Springer
- George, A. L & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Green, M. C. (2008). Research Challenges: Research challenges in narrative persuasion. *Information Design Journal*, 16(1), 47-52. DOI: [10.1075/idj.16.1.07gre](https://doi.org/10.1075/idj.16.1.07gre)
- Greimas, A. J. (1971). Narrative grammar: Units and levels. *MLN*, 86(6), 793-806. DOI: [213.132.109.165](https://doi.org/213.132.109.165)
- Greimas, A. J. (1987). *On Meaning Selected Writings in Semiotic Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hassan, S. S & Craft, S. (2012). Examining world market segmentation and brand positioning strategies. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 29(5), 344-356. <https://doi.org/10.1108/07363761211247460>

- Hill, J. (2001). A multidimensional study of the key determinants of effective SME marketing activity: Part 1. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, 7(5), 171-204. DOI: [10.1108/EUM0000000006538](https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000006538)
- Holt, D. (2003). What becomes an icon most? *Harvard Business Review*, 81(3), 43-49.
- Horan, G., O'Dwyer, M & Tiernan, S. (2011). Exploring management perspectives of branding in service SMEs. *Journal of Service Marketing*, 25(2), 114-121. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/08876041111119831>
- Huang, R., Ha, S & Kim, S-H (2018). Narrative persuasion in social media: an empirical study of luxury brand advertising. *Journal of Research Interactive Marketing*, 12(3), 274-292. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-07-2017-0059>
- Hudson, S., Kim, A & Moulton, J. (2018). *What beauty players can teach the consumer sector about digital disruption*. McKinsey&Company. Retrieved 10th May from <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/what-beauty-players-can-teach-the-consumer-sector-about-digital-disruption>
- Jansson, B.G. (2002). *Världen i berättelsen: narratologi och berättarkonst i medieåldern*. Falun: Högskolan Dalarna.
- Johansson, A. (2005). *Narrativ teori och metod: med livsberättelsen i fokus*. Lund; Studentlitteratur.
- Johnson, J. (n.d). *Too Faced*. Retrieved 13th March from <https://www.elcompanies.com/en/our-brands/too-faced>
- Jun, S., Sung, J., Gentry, J. W., & McGinnis, L. P. (2015). Effects of underdog (vs. top dog) positioning advertising. *International Journal of Advertising*, 34(3), 495-514. DOI: [10.1080/02650487.2014.996199](https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2014.996199)
- Kao, D. T. (2015). Is Cinderella resurging? The impact of consumers' underdog disposition on brand preferences: Underdog brand biography and brand status as moderators. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 14(5), 307-316. DOI:[10.1002/cb.1521](https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1521)
- Kansara, V. A. (2016). *Michael Preysman on Iterating Everlane and “Fixing” Fashion Retail*. BOF. Retrieved 10th May from

<https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/founder-stories/michael-preysman-on-iterating-everlane-and-fixing-fashion-retail>

Kotler, P & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th edition). Harlow: Pearson.

Larsson, S., Sjöblom, Y & Lilja, J. (2008). *Narrativa metoder i socialt arbete*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Lavrakas, P. J. (2008). *Encyclopedia of survey research methods*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
DOI: [10.4135/9781412963947](https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963947)

Lundqvist, A., Lijander, V., Gummerus, J & Van Riel, A. (2013). The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: The case of a firm-originated story. *Journal of Brand Management*, 20(4), 238-297. DOI: [10.1057/bm.2012.15](https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.2012.15).

Maguire, J. S., Bain, J., Davies, A & Touri, M (2015). Storytelling and Market Formation: An Exploration of Microbrewers in the UK. *West Virginia University Press*.

Mangano, D & Marrone, G. (2015). Brand Language: Methods and models of semiotic analysis. In Rossolatos, G (2015). *Handbook of brand semiotics*, 46-88. Kassel: Kassel university press.

Matthyssens, P., Vandenbempt, K. & Weyns, S. (2009). Transitioning and Co-Evolving to Upgrade Value Offerings: A Competence-Based Marketing View. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 38 (5), 504–512. DOI: [10.1016/j.indmarman.2008.08.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2008.08.008)

Mcmeekin, S. (2018). *The co-founder of Too Faced talks billion-dollar success, working in a salad bar and raunchy new product launches*. Glamour Magazine. Retrieved 20th April from <https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/too-faced-jerrod-blandino-interview>

Nagar, K. (2017). Support for the underdog brand biography: Effects on consumer attitude and behavior. *Journal Of Marketing Communications*, 1-17.
Doi: [10.1080/13527266.2017.1356349](https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2017.1356349)

Nailor, C. (2018). How Everlane Disrupted the Fashion Industry. *Museum Hack*. Retrieved 6th March from <https://museumhack.com/everlane/>

- Ng, Melody (2018). *Too Faced makes travel retail debut as it strives to 'paint the world pink'*. The Moodie Davitt Report. Retrieved 21th April from <https://www.moodiedavittreport.com/interview-too-faced-makes-travel-retail-debut-as-it-strives-to-paint-the-world-pink/>
- Padgett, D & Allen, D. (1997). Communicating experiences: A narrative approach to creating service brand image. *Journal of advertising*, 26(4), 49-62. DOI: [10.1080/00913367.1997.10673535](https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1997.10673535)
- Paharia, N., Avery, J & Keinan, A. (2014). Positioning Brands Against Large Competitors to Increase Sales. *Journal Of Marketing Research (JMR)*, 51(6), pp. 647-656. Doi:[10.1509/jmr.13.0438](https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.13.0438)
- Paharia, N., Keinan, A., Avery, J & Schor, J. B. (2011). The Underdog Effect: The Marketing of Disadvantage and Determination through Brand Biography. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(5), 775-790. DOI: [10.1086/656219](https://doi.org/10.1086/656219)
- Pini, F. M. (2017). A Narrative Approach to Luxury Brands. In *New Luxury Management: Creating and Managing Sustainable Value Across the Organization*. Rigaud-Lacresse, E & Pini, F.M. (2017), 69-83. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1988). *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*. New York: State University of New York.
- Posavac, S. S. (2015). *Cracking the Code: Leveraging Consumer Psychology to Drive Profitability*. (2nd edition) New York: Routledge.
- Prasad, P. (2018). *Crafting qualitative research: Beyond post positivist traditions*. (2nd edition). New York: Routledge.
- Pride, W. M & Ferrell, O. C. (2014). *Marketing*. South-Western: Cengage Learning
- Prince, G. (2003). *Dictionary of Narratology*. University of Nebraska Press.
- Rossolatos, G. (2015). *Handbook of Brand Semiotics*. Kassel: Kassel University Press
- Saussure F.d. (1983). *Course in general linguistic*. Edited by Bally, C., Sechebaye, A & Riedlinger, A. Translated and annotated by Roy Harris. Bloomsbury: London

- Semprini, A. (1992). *Le marketing de la marque: approche sémiotique*. Ed. Liaisons.
- Shamsie, J., Phelps, C & Kuperman, J. (2004). Better late than never: A study of late entrants in household electrical equipment. *Strategic Management Journal*, 25(1), 69–84. DOI: [10.1002/smj.364](https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.364)
- Shankar, V., Carpenter G.S & Krishnamurthi, L. (1998). Late Mover Advantage: How Innovative Late Entrants Outsell Pioneers. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 35(1), 54-70. DOI: [10.2307/3151930](https://doi.org/10.2307/3151930)
- Shankar, A., Elliott, R., & Goulding, C (2001). Understanding Consumption: Contributions from a narrative perspective. *Journal of marketing Management*, 17(3-4), 429-453.
- Sharma, G. (2017). Pros and cons of different sampling techniques. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 3(7), 749-752.
- Shatzman, C. (2017). *Jerrod Blandino On Why He Launched Too Faced and Breaking Beauty Rules*. Forbes. Retrieved 6th March from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ceiliashatzman/2017/12/07/jerrod-blandino-on-why-he-launched-too-faced-and-breaking-beauty-rules/#75b1a3b62453>
- Shoot, E. (2014). *Providing Affordable Luxury-Quality Clothing to the Masses at age 29*. NBC News. Retrieved 25th April from http://www.nbcnews.com/id/55905988/ns/business-small_business/t/providing-affordable-luxury-quality-clothing-masses-age/#.XNL_1y2B1R0
- Sorvino, C. (2016). *Did Too Faced Founders Cash Out Too Early? Sale To Estee Lauder Suggests Yes*. Forbes. Retrieved 6th March from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/chloesorvino/2016/11/15/estee-lauder-family-acquisition-billion-too-faced/#3511c5ba7d54>
- Stubb, C. (2018). Story versus info: Tracking blog readers’ online viewing time of sponsored blog posts based on content-specific elements. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 82, pp. 54-62. DOI: [10.1016/j.chb.2018.01.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.01.001)
- Thomas, B. (2016). *Narrative: The Basics*. New York: Routledge

Too Faced. (n.d.a). *We are a serious makeup brand that knows how to have fun*. Retrieved 5th March from <https://www.toofaced.com/about-the-founders---story/about-founders-story.html/>

Too Faced. (n.d.b). *Better than sex mascara*. Retrieved 5th March from <https://www.toofaced.com/eye-makeup/mascara/better-than-sex-mascara/80021.html?cgid=mascara#start=1>

Too Faced. (n.d.c) *Diamond Highlighter*. Retrieved 5th March from <https://www.toofaced.com/face-makeup/highlighter-makeup/diamond-fire-highlighter/Diamond+Light.html?cgid=highlighters#start=1>

Too Faced. (n.d.d). *It's Bananas*. Retrieved 5th March from <https://www.toofaced.com/shop/face/powder/its-bananas-brightening-setting-powder-banana-cream/70311.html?cgid=powder#start=1>

Too Faced. (n.d.e). *Born this way foundation*. Retrieved 10th May from <https://www.toofaced.com/shop/face/foundation/born-this-way-foundation/Born+This+Way+Foundation.html?cgid=foundation#q=born%2Bthis%2Bway%2B&lang=default&start=1>

Too Faced. (n.d.f). *Own your pretty*. Retrieved March 15th from <https://www.toofaced.com/own-your-pretty-message/own-your-pretty-message.html>

Too Faced. (n.d.g). *Pretty Mess*. Retrieved March 16th from <https://www.toofaced.com/pretty-mess-1/>

Too Faced. (n.d.h). *Tutti Frutti*. Retrieved March 20th from <https://www.toofaced.com/shop/collections/tutti-frutti/>

Too Faced. (n.d,i). *Natural Lust*. Retrieved 25th April from <https://www.toofaced.com/natural-lust/natural-lust-makeup-collection/>

Too Faced. (n.d,j). *Hot Melted Mama*. Retrieved 15th April from <https://www.toofaced.com/shop/collections/kits-and-sets/melted-3-way-set/90716.html?cgid=kits-and-sets#start=1>

- Tsai, S. (2006). Investigating archetype-icon transformation in brand marketing. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 24(6), 648-663. DOI: [10.1108/02634500610701708](https://doi.org/10.1108/02634500610701708)
- Tushabomwe-Kazooba, C. (2006). Causes of Small Business Failure in Uganda: A Case Study from Bushenyi and Mbarara Towns. *African studies quarterly*, 4(8), pp. 27- 35.
- Wheeler, K. (2018). *11 Underdog Brands That Differentiated Themselves From the Competition*. HubSpot. Retrieved at 28th January from <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/brands-that-differentiated-themselves-from-the-competition>
- Widdicombe, L. (2017). *How Everlane Hacked Your Wardrobe - The direct-to-consumer clothing brand “disrupted” basics*. The New Yorker. Retrieved 6th March from <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/on-and-off-the-avenue/how-everlane-hacked-your-wardrobe>
- Wilkie, D.C.H., Lester, W. L & White, L. (2015). Overcoming late entry: the importance of entry position, inferences and market leadership. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31(3-4), 409-429. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2014.981567>
- Wilkie, D & Johnson, L. (2016). Is there a negative relationship between the order-of-brand entry and market share?. *Marketing Letters*, 27(2), 211-222. DOI: [10.1007/s11002-014-9344-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11002-014-9344-8)
- Witt, P & Rode, V. (2005). Corporate brand building in start-ups. *Journal of Enterprising Culture*, 13(3), 273-294. DOI: [10.1142/S0218495805000173](https://doi.org/10.1142/S0218495805000173)
- Wong, H. Y & Merrilees, B. (2005). A brand orientation typology for SMEs: a case research approach. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 14(3), 155-162. DOI: [10.1108/10610420510601021](https://doi.org/10.1108/10610420510601021)
- Yin R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (4th edition). London: SAGE.
- Zainal, Z. (2007). Case study as a research method. *Jurnal Kemanusiaan*, 9, 1-6.

Zaratian, E. (2017). *Everlane Founder & CEO Michael Preysman on the concept of Radical Transparency*. Nordstrom. Retrieved 10th May from <https://blogs.nordstrom.com/fashion/everlane-founder-ceo-michael-preysman-on-the-concept-of-radical-transparency/>