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How Do Heritage Brands Transfer Their Brand Identity While Transitioning From A Complex To A Simple Visual Identity?: A Burberry Case Study

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Abstract

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Brands in the fashion industry are currently going through extensive changes in their visual expressions. Logos are being redesigned to appear more simplistic and are leaving behind their complex and well-established design. For heritage brands, that rely heavily on their past as part of their branding, it is a challenge to maintain their brand identity while moving from a complex to a simple visual identity. On these premises, the study aims to determine if a coherent transition from one visual expression to another is occurring during rebranding. Using the Burberry brand as a case study, and building on Barthes' semiotic system and Kristeva's intertextuality, an analysis of the brand's visual expressions will be conducted. The four different Burberry logos, alongside with variations, were put under the scope of the study. The findings demonstrated that references to the brand's core values, as well as references to previous visual expressions, are essential to keep a cohesion and coherence with the brand identity. Further research could go beyond the scope of the fashion industry, to corroborate or supplement the findings of this research.

Keyword: Rebranding, Heritage Brand, Brand Identity, Logo, Visual Communication

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1. Defining the Research Problem

1.1. Introduction

In 2018, Burberry launched a new visual identity for its brand (Petter, 2018). Following the trend of other high-end fashion brands, the new identity is much simpler, removing most distinctive visual markers from the brand. This recent trend towards simplifying the visual identity of a brand has been labelled ‘Blanding’ (Brunfaut, 2018; Matheson & Quinn, 2019), combining the term branding with the ambition of blending in, to the point of obtaining what could be considered a bland design. As the visual dimension of branding traditionally focused on expressing so-called ‘distinctive features’ (Keller, 2002) this recent trend has been received with some scepticism: How is it possible to maintain a distinct visual identity when at the same time trying to blend in?

Brands play an important role in today’s society. A strong brand will bring economic and strategic benefits to its company (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2003), which explains the high interest in keeping a brand relevant. It will ensure to remain desirable, which when you manage a brand on the long run involves rebranding (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2003). After a bankruptcy, the worth of a brand is sometimes all that is left as an asset and can be worth a lot (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2003). Creating a strong brand has been proven to bring a wide range of marketing advantages, brand name will indeed be associated positively with consumer product evaluations, perceptions of quality and purchase rates (Keller, 2002). For internal and external stakeholders, brands have a meaning, and all the more to customers (Daly & Moloney, 2005). Buying decisions are regularly made based on the brand and the corporate logo, sometimes even on the name rather than the product or service itself (Foroudi et al., 2017). For customers, brands are a reflection of a personality, values and even promises from the organisation (Daly & Moloney, 2005). Brand image plays a central role in brand associations (Joseph et al., 2020), and corporate or brand identity have been recognised as essential to build a brand image that fits a specific audience

(Mañas-Viniegra et al., 2020). Brand identity is defined as something tangible that appeals to the different senses (Wheeler, 2013). It is therefore a system of diverse elements, such as colour, design, or logos. Brand identity generates recognition, and allows brands to differentiate themselves (Wheeler, 2013). Indeed, it is what makes a brand recognisable to the customers, and it is of the essence as they will most likely associate the brand identity with the product or service offered. Some brands' identities have a heritage dimension to them, based on longevity, core values, or the use of specific symbols that will imply the importance of the organisation's history (Urde et al., 2007). Therefore, a heritage brand is "one with a positioning and a value proposition based on its heritage" (Urde et al., 2007, p. 5). They are constituting a specific branding category, with defined criteria and a specific approach for management and leadership (Urde et al., 2007). Yet, it is important not to confuse heritage and history: while history is about exploring and explaining the past, heritage is clarifying and making this past relevant to the contemporary context (Urde et al., 2007).

To a large extent, brand identity is visual, and with 75 percent of all information reaching the brain being visual, visual stimuli are extremely perceived (Goransson & Fagerholm, 2018). Therefore, visuals surrounding us are building our perception of reality, and visual communication should be looked at closely (Goransson & Fagerholm, 2018). Corporate Visual Identity (CVI) can be defined as "a name, logo, typography, colour, slogan, and, often, additional graphic design elements" (Bolhuis et al., 2015, p. 3), with name and logo being the most discernible elements. Logos are part of the visuals we come across every day and are essential elements for brands to appear unique and differentiate themselves from their competitors (Bresciani & Del Ponte, 2017; Foroudi et al., 2017). They also create an emotional bond between the consumer and the brand, this before any promotion has been made. For communication, a logo is one of the most important instruments to express organisational characteristics, it creates awareness and triggers recognition of the organisation (Foroudi et al., 2017). Indeed, customers judge an organisation and its image based on its logo design (Bresciani & Del Ponte, 2017). Having an attractive logo is of the essence, as it affects the purchase intention of consumers (Bresciani & Del Ponte, 2017) and can shed a positive attitude on the company. Which in the end can improve the reputation of an organisation (Bresciani & Del Ponte,

2017; Foroudi et al., 2017). A good logo has to represent the company's core values. Therefore, logo changes should be studied in order for communication professionals to stay efficient. As stated, a strong CVI will help a brand to differentiate itself from the competition, and make an organisation stand out internationally (Bolhuis et al., 2015). Those visual aspects of communication have been generating much interest from researchers lately (Barnhurst et al., 2004; Barnhurst & Quinn, 2012; Müller, 2007, 2008; Machin, 2014; Fahmy et al., 2014, as cited in Goransson & Fagerholm, 2018), reflecting a society becoming more and more visual (Goransson & Fagerholm, 2018).

However, logos are now entering a trend where they are no longer trying to differentiate themselves but looking as clear and simple as possible (Mañas-Viniegra et al., 2020). This trend has not avoided the fashion industry (Walker, 2018). If on the catwalk every couture house is trying to stand out from the crowd, in their visual expressions, many of them are adopting the same strategy. New media and information technology are influencing the way images are being used. With social media and the internet taking more space into our daily life (Goransson & Fagerholm, 2018), visual identity has never been more important. It is to tailor to those new platforms that logos are fitting into the mould, trying to become as clear-cut and readable as possible by using simple shapes, vivid colours, and extremely legible fonts (Mañas-Viniegra et al., 2020). Yves Saint Laurent, Valentino, Jimmy Choo, Balmain, these are a few of the fashion brands that have decided to leave behind their sans serif fonts and historical design, for a sleek modern text logo. In an industry where reference to the heritage is a constant, leaving behind some of those visual markers is a risk. The way those logo rebrandings are being conducted is therefore worth looking into.

Branding campaigns are used to bring this CVI to the public, and not just to assign a brand name to a product or service. Unfortunately, some brands do not achieve as expected in reaching their target market (Phang Ing, 2012). Those brands then have to go through an identity change process, rebranding, which is hazardous and challenging (Phang Ing, 2012). Organisations are seen to modify their visual identity on average every decade (Bolhuis et al., 2015). It is important to regularly update CVI so that it follows the brand's and the society's evolution, where the activity is being carried (Mañas-Viniegra et al., 2020). This is what will ensure an organisation will

stay relevant in markets that have varying business requirements. Through name transformation, positioning modification or visual identity change, rebranding will implement those changes (Marques et al., 2020). Rebranding strategies are considered the most powerful way to indicate changes within a company (Phang Ing, 2012). As Muzellec and Lambkin (2006) pointed out, the word “rebrand” is a neologism built on two terms “re” and “brand”, implying the concept branding again (Phang Ing, 2012). Rebranding is therefore a renewal for organisations, a way to start over and build something new. Goi and Goi (2011) highlighted that rebranding is a long-term strategy through which you will change your image to reach your goal. Different changes can take place during a rebranding phase: name, visual identity or positioning can be changed to fit a new strategy set by the company, and adapt to new business conditions (Marques et al., 2020).

1.2. Problem Statement

If rebranding is a way of staying relevant by looking more modern or adapting a brand to new core values, it is still a risky process and does not always bring the expected outcome. Too strong of a change within a brand can be unsettling for consumers (Collange & Bonache, 2015). It requires serious planning to make sure that the rebranding strategy will succeed (Daly & Moloney, 2005). Within the fashion industry, the different brands that have been through such changes received many reactions, positive and negative (Walker, 2018). However, heritage is often an important part of fashion brands’ branding, and therefore an important part of their brand identity. Leaving behind part of their heritage while keeping true to their brand identity is the challenge that many brands are trying to overcome.

1.3. Aim and Research Question

The aim of this thesis is to determine how the different visual identities of heritage brands, in the fashion industry, manage to be a reflection of their brand identity. It will as well identify if a coherent transition from one visual expression to another is occurring, especially while transitioning from a complex to a simple visual identity. This will be possible through the case study of Burberry, a heritage brand in the fashion industry, that has been through a recent drastic rebranding. The study

will contribute to strategic communication by giving an insight on how to handle logo rebranding for historic brands, even outside the fashion industry. This to make sure they maintain a coherent visual expression and get a positive response from stakeholders. By using theories such as Barthes' connotation and myth, or Kristeva's intertextuality, the author will answer the following research question:

- RQ: "How are heritage luxury brands transferring their brand identity, while moving from a complex to a simple visual expression?"

1.4. Relevance to Strategic Communication

This thesis research will be relevant to strategic communication as it focuses on an area that has not yet been fully studied. Strategic communication is defined as "the purposeful use of communication by an organisation to fulfil its mission" (Hallahan et al., 2007, p. 3, as cited in Goransson & Fagerholm, 2018), and represents as well the use of symbols by organisations and how they are used in communication practices (Goransson & Fagerholm, 2018). Logo rebranding therefore has a strategic communication aspect to it, as it communicates the brand identity to the consumer. Moreover, visual studies and strategic communication have similarities. Communication is very important during the campaigning and advertising, and scholars have highlighted the need to pay closer attention to the impact of visuals in the field of communication (Goransson & Fagerholm, 2018). Visual aspects of strategic communication are involved in every facet of communication/ management, marketing, public relations etc. (Goransson & Fagerholm, 2018). To understand what aspects of logos are important to transfer during a rebranding, or which are equated with brand heritage or innovation will help professional communicators to address their audience.

1.5. Boundaries of The Study

In the branding literature there are different approaches to conceptualizing the brand. In one extreme, the brand is defined as an economic-legal mechanism controlled by the company (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2003). In the other extreme, the brand is only fully constituted in the minds of the consumer (Keller, 2002) or in the cultural fabric of society (Holt, 2004). Thus, studying the visual aspects of branding

can be done from either a sender or a receiver perspective with emphasis on brand management or brand reception, respectively. This study will focus on the semiotics of branding. Hence, it will study the actual signs that make up the collective of a visual brand identity. It will not address possible receiver perceptions or interpretations, nor will it address managerial intentions.

2. Literature Review

The literature review on the topic of rebranding will now be presented in this section. Previous research and their implication for this thesis will be brought to light. At the end of this presentation, a research gap will be uncovered that this thesis will aim to fill. The phenomenon of rebranding can apply to different types of organisations and comes with different sets of challenges. The literature review will start by mentioning the different types of studies within the field of rebranding, to then focus on more specific papers that can be linked to the topic of this thesis.

2.1. Defining Rebranding

Researchers found difficult to define conceptually rebranding, and other terms are often used as synonyms, such as brand revision, brand repositioning, renewal, makeover, or reinvention just as Marques et al. (2020) mentioned. Some of the literature reassessed the reasons why rebranding is being chosen as an alternative. Goi and Goi (2011) summarised the different rebranding concepts present at the time, as well as models developed in the last studies. Kaikati and Kaikati (2003) summarised and outlined the criteria that make a good rebranding campaign. Joseph et al. (2020) highlighted that depending on the extent of changes, rebranding can be considered revolutionary or evolutionary. Evolutionary is referring to a reinvigoration of the brand through minor graphic changes, just like changing the logo. Revolutionary on the other hand refers to major changes that can include a new brand name, as well as some visual identity modification (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). The impact of rebranding has been studied as well. Zhao et al. (2018) investigated the relation between brand identity change and brand strategy change during rebranding, and their impact on stock return. Rebranding can as well occur through different levels within an organisation: corporate, strategic business unit and product level (Goi & Goi, 2011). However, most of the literature focuses on the corporate and product level.

Corporate rebranding is the focal point of most of the research on rebranding (Marques et al., 2020). It takes into account internal and external stakeholders and considers employees as a central instrument in “communicating the corporate brand promise to customers” (Joseph et al., 2020, p.2). One of the problems with corporate rebranding is that it can disturb the adjustment of the vision, culture, and image of the corporate brand, and those are important factors for the brand success, as proven by Joseph et al. (2020). It is important that the stakeholders support the rebranding strategy for it to be successful (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). Their embracing the new identity, vision and values of the corporate brand is essential and “considered a principle of success in corporate rebranding theory” (Joseph et al., 2020 p. 2). The impact of rebranding on employee perception has been previously studied as well (Bolhuis et al., 2015; Joseph et al., 2020), as part of corporate rebranding. Joseph et al. (2020) refers to internal rebranding, mentioning the example of France Telecom rebranding and the positive effect it had on employees’ perception. This because they had been informed of the changes to come (Joseph et al., 2020) and therefore were not caught off-guard as much. Bolhuis et al., (2015) mentions too the importance of employee involvement in the process of rebranding. Corporate rebranding can also be defined by the action of companies changing for new brand names (Daly & Moloney, 2005; Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). For other researchers, it is about changes of corporate brand’s attributes, that is to say name, logo or even colours (Joseph et al., 2020). The equity of the corporate brand is impacted by it, just as the stakeholders’ perception. Daly & Moloney (2005) proposed a corporate rebranding framework to advice companies on the right management during a re-branding process.

To a smaller degree, product rebranding is also being mentioned in previous research (Collange, 2014; Collange & Bonache, 2015). It represents the change of products brand names (Collange, 2014). A brand name is of the utmost importance as it reflects the identity of the brand (Collange, 2014). Finally, explanations to why a product brand name change may occur has been given: it is a will from companies to reduce their brand portfolio, or an aspiration to have more global brands, with marketing policies shifting from multidomestic to global (Collange & Bonache, 2015).

The impact of rebranding on consumer demand can be tremendous and has therefore been previously mentioned in the literature. For Marques et al. (2020), the consumer's perception is impacted by the previous perception (pre rebranding), same thing goes with the customer's loyalty to the brand. However, the modern aspect brought by the rebranding strategy to the brand seems to only be coming from the rebranding, and the impact it had. The example of Lidl was mentioned by Marques et al. (2020) to illustrate the influence of a good rebranding strategy. Joseph et al. (2020) for their part referred to the rebranding of Harvard Business School's online learning website. By going from an acronym to "Harvard Business School Online", their enrolment increased by seventy percent right after the first quarter (Joseph et al., 2020).

The importance of advertising in the rebranding process was not emphasised in the literature but is still considered relevant to mention. In the article by Marques et al. (2020), it was recommended for future research to look at the effects of marketing and advertising on the rebranding to obtain a more complete view of the impacts on the brand. In Bolhuis et al.'s (2015) article, the study from Van Riel, van der Ban, and Heijmans (2001) was mentioned, evaluating reactions before and after the launch of a new bank logo. They attributed the successful results to an extensive advertising campaign about the changed visual identity. People's perception of a new logo can change over time if an effective advertising campaign is launched (Bolhuis et al., 2015).

It is important to be aware of this possibility to change consumers' perception about a rebranding, as it is sometimes necessary. Even if rebranding has been proven useful for companies, it does not come without its share of risks. Many challenges have to be considered and overcome in order to reach a favourable outcome. Considerable financial efforts have to be put in a rebranding beforehand (Joseph et al., 2020), meaning that without guarantee of success a risk has to be taken (Collange, 2014; Joseph et al., 2020; Marques et al., 2020; Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). Previous studies have as well determined that a rebranding strategy has more impact in familiar brands than unfamiliar ones (Phang Ing, 2012). Changes might be disregarded and therefore having no impact on consumers with low brand familiarity (Phang Ing, 2012). The importance of brand familiarity was, to that end, put forward

by Phang Ing (2012). Another risk highlighted in previous studies is the ease for brands to lose the control over their rebranding intentions (Olteanu, 2020). No matter the efforts put beforehand, managers need to be aware that a brand name change can bring up consumer resistance (Collange & Bonache, 2015).

2.2. Rebranding and CVI

Another essential topic linked to rebranding that has to be reviewed is the previous research on Corporate Visual Identity (CVI). Gregersen and Johansen (2018) over-viewed the principles of CVI and the presence or lack of consistency within it. After reviewing the different subparts of CVI, such as CVI communication, CVI authenticity and CVI management, the debate remained open on an existing consistency. Different reasons can explain a need to change CVI. Most of those reasons were linked to changes in the corporate strategy: a merger or acquisition, the will to build a more positive image, or modernising the organisation appearance (Bolhuis et al., 2015). Bolhuis et al., (2015) in their article mentioned the effects of CVI changes, and how it is an ideal tool for highlighting organisational or environmental variations, as well as an important management tool. This explains why many organisations consider rebranding and are willing to invest in a new CVI (Bolhuis et al., 2015). As a consequence of this large investment, results are expected by companies (Bolhuis et al., 2015). CVI changes being strikingly noticeable, it is important to differentiate internal from external changes (Bolhuis et al., 2015). A link between identity, CVI and image was as well made in Bolhuis et al.'s (2015) article, emphasising how each influences the other. CVI however remains the one factor with the most visibility, and most representative of the organisation's external strategy (Bolhuis et al., 2015). It makes the brand familiar and recognisable to the external stakeholders. The results found by Müller, Kocher, and Crettaz (2013) as cited by Bolhuis et al. (2015), were proving that visual rejuvenation had a positive effect on the perception of brand modernity.

Logos are a big element of CVI. Their importance in the visual identity of a brand was highlighted (Bolhuis et al., 2015; Bresciani & Del Ponte, 2017; Foroudi et al., 2017; Foroudi et al., 2019; Kim & Lim, 2019; Mañas-Viniegra et al., 2020). Foroudi et al. (2019) in their studies provided a framework to develop corporate logos, in

order to get a favourable corporate image and corporate reputation. They considered logos as means of communication and tested their effectiveness. Logos are described as shaping people's impression of a brand, and therefore of the organisation behind it (Bolhuis et al., 2015). They play a key role as they are the most memorable elements of an organisation's visual identity. Logos are additionally able to communicate on the organisation's identity, and therefore affect its image (Bolhuis et al., 2015; Mañas-Viniegra et al., 2020). For a brand's identity to improve, logos have to be bettered and taken into serious consideration (Mañas-Viniegra et al., 2020). Kim and Lim (2019) reviewed the existing literature on logos and summarised it. The effects of logo dynamism have too been studied before. The impression of movement in them impacts the consumer, and it was also proven that it impacts the modernity aspect that brands are looking for (Bolhuis et al., 2015). Mañas-Viniegra et al. (2020) as well developed on this topic, stating that logos have now been simplified, from two- or three-dimensional logos simulating volume, to being flat and more easily inserted in different digital support. Those two views are clashing with each other but represent at the same time the speed at which the trends are evolving. A good logo redesign will bring modernity and enhance consumer's attitude and loyalty towards the brand (Mañas-Viniegra et al., 2020). Foroudi et al. (2017) in their study determined four main factors to determine the influence logos have had: the corporate name, the typeface, the design, and the colour. Indeed, a previous study established the way in which consumers differentiate unfamiliar logos, and this is based on two main characteristics: the logo colour and the composition of brand logo elements (Bresciani & Del Ponte, 2017). Brand logo elements representing the brand icon only, the brand name only or both according to Bresciani and Del Ponte (2017). Having a logo composed of a brand name is therefore of the essence (Bresciani & Del Ponte, 2017). They are seen as more attractive than logos lacking it, just as black logos are seen as more attractive than coloured ones (Bresciani & Del Ponte, 2017). The choice of having coloured logo has however been linked by Foroudi et al. (2017) to marketing objectives, cultural values, the level of relationship between the organisation and its customers, and the corporate communication. It can therefore in some cases be the right decision for brands to have a coloured logo anyway. Previous research therefore determined how to increase logo attractiveness, and how to make CVI as impactful as possible.

Just as it was the case with rebranding, CVI changes come with risks and challenges too. If organisations use CVI changes to present themselves in a new and improved way, it is possible that it backfires and damages the brand image (Bolhuis et al., 2015). Another highlighted challenge was that the success of a CVI change is tightly linked to the commitment to the brand by consumers (Bolhuis et al., 2015). If this commitment is not strong enough, the changes will not have the desired outcome. Just as stated previously about other elements of a rebranding, logos can bring a negative fallout (Mañas-Viniegra et al., 2020). If they fail to be memorable, or are too sudden of a change, it can create a contradictory reaction within the consumers familiar with the brand (Mañas-Viniegra et al., 2020). Going back to the study of dynamic logos, if they proved to bring modernity to a brand, the opposite reaction was noticed in brands considered more traditional and trying this approach (Bolhuis et al., 2015).

2.3. Research Gap

While rebranding has been studied extensively, the current trend of simplifying the visual expression of the brand in the fashion industry has not yet been subject to scientific research. Yet, from industry observers the trend has been met with scepticism (Brunfaut, 2018; Matheson & Quinn, 2019). While imitating successful brands in the tech industry, such as google and Facebook, observers have argued that this strategy risks jeopardizing the distinct identity and core values of high-end fashion brands (Brunfaut, 2018; Matheson & Quinn, 2019). The recent change in logo design within the fashion industry creates a challenge for organisations, as no previous research has been focusing on the connection between previous logo rebrands, within one same brand. No research has focused either on the transfer of brand identity for brands that hold a lot of heritage, or that are considered heritage brands. There is therefore a gap in the literature that makes it interesting for this research to focus on the way old heritage bands, such as Burberry, managed to keep their brand identity during drastic rebranding processes.

3. Theory

In this chapter, the theoretical framework will be introduced, as well as the specific theories that will be the base of the later presented methodology. Barthes' semiotics and his visual approach will be developed, just as Kristeva's notion of intertextuality. The background of the theory will be presented before that, with the main semiotic theories.

3.1. What Is Semiotics?

Visual communication study is an interdisciplinary field including two major branches: visual communication and visual rhetoric, the latter focusing on aspects of the visual such as its societal impact, and using semiotic theories (Allen, 2017). Visual communication studies are very different from other communication theories, not for their theoretical background or methodology, but because of the objects of analysis (Hill, 2009). Everything seen to the eye can be interpreted and dissected, therefore the number of visual phenomena to be researched is increasing (Hill, 2009). Semiotics is one of the theories that help studying visual communication and those visual phenomena, and therefore will be used in this thesis to conduct the analysis.

The term semiotics has for meaning “the science of signs”, and comes from Ferdinand de Saussure's semiology (Hawkes, 2003). The term semiology, mostly used in Europe (Hawkes, 2003) is an extension of psychology (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009), while semiotics, widely used in the English-speaking countries and emanating from the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (Hawkes, 2003), is a continuation of the study of logic (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). There are indeed two traditions to semiotics, a European one and one emanating from the United States (Hawkes, 2003). This section will later develop on both of them. Semiotics is a wide field of study, covering study fields such as the communicative behaviour of animals (zoosemiotics), the human bodily communication (kinesics and proxemics), the study of

olfactory signs (code of scents) or even aesthetic theory or rhetoric (Hawkes, 2003). Semiotics is indeed an area of study that attracts a lot, and this due to its interdisciplinary aspect (Gottdiener et al., 2003). Semiotics is not part of a single discipline, and communication cannot claim to be its sole field of study (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). Because of the level of interdisciplinary present in semiotics, it is difficult to introduce how the field developed in a convenient order (Gottdiener et al., 2003). Semiotics first appeared in linguistics and anthropology to then move on to the fields of philosophy, psychoanalysis, cultural history, literary studies, cinema, architecture and even what can be considered as pop culture; and all of those evolutions cannot be separated from each other (Gottdiener et al., 2003). The understanding of codes structuring meaning production and influencing the ways humans respond to messages in their environments is at the centre of semiotics, this is encompassing areas from ritual behaviour to social organization, or from shopping to advertising (Oswald, 2012). This interdisciplinarity that semiotics hold to his core has been passed on to all intellectual developments that have followed (Gottdiener et al., 2003). Semiotics can also be a useful tool to decode the culture of targeted consumers on specific markets, this will help develop products and determine how to position them (Oswald, 2012). Semiotics is therefore considered useful for marketers too. Rising trends can be identified, which in the end lead to developing advertising campaigns and other types of visually creative strategies (Oswald, 2012).

Semiotic analysis is commonly used to examine the particular aspects of a text and how it constructs meaning. Text standing for word, image, film, magazine ad, song, ritual, or other type of medium (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). Moreover, if all cultural phenomena are considered to be structured like language, consequently every cultural structure can be considered as texts, and are therefore comparable (Gottdiener et al., 2003). Texts can be constructed for one person or group of people by one producer, it is the case of printed advertisement; or texts can be constructed by many participants, as a conversation (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). The problem is that the meaning of those texts can change depending on the participants, that is why semiotics can be very useful, and allow for revealing misunderstandings that are ordinary to intercultural communication (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009).

Semiotics have an important foundation: theoretically, any image can be analysed as a sign (Hill, 2009). As semiotics is considered the study of signs and

sign systems, it is important to first define those terms in order to understand them (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). Signs are regarded as the “building blocks” of semiotics (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009) and their analysis is the groundwork of everything. According to Hawkes (2003, p.103), a sign can be defined as “something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity”. There is a plethora of human activities that can potentially serve as signs, or might become one (Hawkes, 2003). Signs can be constructed instrumentally or organically, with language considered the most organic semiotic system (Hawkes, 2003). The entirety of the five senses can work as sign-producers or sign receivers in the process of semiotics (Hawkes, 2003), that is Sight, Sound, Smell, Taste, and Touch. It is the basic assumption of semiotics theories, a sign or symbol can be perceived in virtually anything, this includes as well natural phenomenon that materialise without communicative intention (Hill, 2009). The assumption that signs have a deeper and sometimes abstract meaning is what makes semiotics so applicable to visual communication study (Hill, 2009).

Visuals are always a part of semiotics, which is what makes this theory relevant to the purpose of this thesis. A semiotic analysis can be used to reveal the intricate and subtle messages or signification, in order to determine how viewers are responding to visual elements, and how they get influenced by them (Hill, 2009). Those visual elements are based on different cultural codes, principles, and symbols (Hill, 2009). Semiotics is as well used during the process of designing logos. When it comes to considering what colour to use, semiotics is an important tool to make sure you target the right audience (Hedley, 2019). Some colours are automatically associated with feelings or connotations: blue being associated with trustworthiness or reliability, and therefore fitting for financial businesses; or green being associated with health, peace, or ecology, and therefore fitting for environmental or humanitarian organisations (Hedley, 2019). But, as it will be highlighted later in this section, those associations are only a first layer of meaning. Barthes mentions this concept of connotation against denotation in his theory. Connotation being the value and emotion an image brings up to the viewer, while denotation is the simple content of an image (Hill, 2009). This is what a semiotic analysis will bring, a deeper analysis of what signs convey. Colour choices is not the only visual aspect through which semiotics can be useful for an organisation’s logo design. Shapes can communicate

emotions and highlight where the focus has to be placed (Hedley, 2019). Just like for colours, shapes can imply feelings: rectangles and squares are perceived as stable and familiar and represent security, which again is fitting for financial organisations; circles on the other hand imply warmth and experience, and represent a whole (Hedley, 2019).

To conclude this presentation of semiotics we can go back to the interdisciplinary factor of semiotics that was mentioned earlier, which brought some controversy. If all cultural phenomena are considered conceivable texts that can be studied, then it becomes difficult to determine which texts are worth being studied more deeply than others (Gottdiener et al., 2003). As the interest in semiotics is considered close to communication and structuralism, it is important to have a deeper understanding of the latter theory (Hawkes, 2003).

3.2. A Structuralist Genesis

As previously mentioned, structuralism, and thus semiotics, stems from two traditions, whose origins can be found in the United States and in France (Hawkes, 2003). Saussure and Pierce are considered as the main founding fathers of those two schools of thoughts. The semiotics of Saussure developed inside a wider genre known as structuralism, an important movement of the natural and social sciences after the Second World War (Gottdiener et al., 2003). Structuralism is based on several important points. This theory, taking inspiration from linguistics, implies the existence of structures that are common to the creation of all texts (Hawkes, 2003). Just like semiotics, it emerged in France in the 1950's with Saussure as one of its pioneers. He established that language does not have a direct relation with the world around us but is arbitrary. Structuralism gives importance to the underlying structures of literary texts, they are free from context, history, reader's interpretation, and the author itself (Hawkes, 2003). Within structuralism, a word refers to something only because it does not refer to something else (Hawkes, 2003). The extreme consequences of this anti-essentialist thinking are expressed in Levi-Strauss' concept of the 'empty signifier', which also anticipates the future development of structuralism into post-structuralism: the sign is self-referential and cannot

refer to anything stable beyond the meaning imposed by the sign itself (Mehlman, J., 1972).

3.2.1. Saussure's Dialectic

The study of signs is a derivative from an old perception that signs have two aspects: a perceptible signans and apprehensible signatum, which is not far from Saussure's distinction between signifier and signified (Hawkes, 2003). For Saussure, signs are described as two oppositions: the signifier, which is the visible component, and the signified, the invisible component (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). Both components operate as inseparable aspects of the sign and are the basis of semiotic structures (Hawkes, 2003). Meaning comes from the relationships and differences between different phrases within the linguistic structure (Hawkes, 2003). Saussure considers that language is arbitrary, it shapes how we come to know the world. Saussure developed a system around language called langue, a social system composed of signs (Gottdiener et al., 2003). Therefore, langue can be considered as the linguistic system as a whole. Moreover, words have a relationship with other words in a sentence, but as well with words in the langue, context is therefore essential (Hawkes, 2003). Opposed to this is the parole, the linguistic act (Gottdiener et al., 2003). It can be individual verbal utterances or written words. To be able to analyse the meaning of parole and how it comes to mean anything, it is important to put in reference the langue according to Saussure (Hawkes, 2003). In order to properly define langue, it is necessary for Saussure to first define the concept of sign, that is to say signification. This is when parole takes its role, it is a circuit of communication. Sign is then defined as an entity made out of "sound-image" and "concept", termed signifier and signified (Gottdiener et al., 2003). Going back to the five senses (Sight, Sound, Smell, Taste, and Touch) and how they can be used in the process of semiotics, the way they react to each other in sign-systems makes it possible to hierarchically classify them. As Hawkes (2003) presented it, the example of a langue of cooking could be used, where every meal would be a parole, and as a sense it is the taste that would be predominant. Sight and smell would despite have their own role to play, but not to the same degree, hence the use of the term hierarchy.

3.2.2. Peirce's Sign Classification

The second tradition, the American one, was led by Peirce. Looking into his analysis is a way to get an insight into the type of signs that exist, how they work and what set of rules guide the use we make of them (Hawkes, 2003). Peirce is considered as one of the founding fathers of semiotics and the establisher of the American tradition, therefore the vastness of his work has to be acknowledged in the field (Hawkes, 2003). For Peirce, signs are divided into types, that he categorised in 66 different kinds among which three are considered the most important (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). In his view, the semiotic process is a triadic relationship between a sign (or representamen), an object and an interpretant. The representamen “stands for something (its object); it stands for something to somebody (its interpretant); and finally, it stands for something to somebody in some respect (this respect is called its ground)” (Hawkes, 2003, p. 103). Those different terms are the means by which a sign signifies, and therefore the nature behind the process of semiotics. They are evolving in three kinds of triadic structures: the kind of sign, the kind of ground and the kind of object. In the kind of ground, or “triadic relations of performance” (Hawkes 2003, p. 104), genuine entities of the real world are involved. Those are considered as icon, index, and symbol. With regard to the icon, the relationship amid sign and object, or signifier and signified illustrates itself as “a similarity or ‘fitness’ of resemblance proposed by the sign, to be acknowledged by its receiver” (Hawkes 2003, p. 105). A painting would therefore have a special relationship with its subject if it were to resemble it. Signs are thus defined by how signifier and signified are reacting to each other (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009), and correspond according to Peirce as the foundations of logic itself (Hawkes, 2003). Logic being the science of signs and its general necessary laws of signs (Hawkes, 2003). Once more in Peirce’s view, logic is independent from reasoning and can in fact exist on its own (Hawkes, 2003). Logic is therefore at the centre of Peirce’s ideology of semiotics, being the doctrine of signs (Hawkes, 2003).

3.3. A Shift to Post-Structuralism

Structuralism evolved, as every movement, and turned into what is called post-structuralism. Contrary to his predecessor, the social context is now taken into account with post-structuralism (Hawkes, 2003). When structuralism arrived in

America, it was considered that the positivist formulation that accompanied it was already over in Europe. However, it would be more accurate to acknowledge that what was perceived as post-structuralism, was in fact part of the semiotic phenomenon developing itself (Gottdiener et al., 2003). Post-structuralism is indeed difficult to clearly delimit. Many important thinkers such as Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan and Michel Foucault were central to structuralism, more specifically the Paris branch of it (Gottdiener et al., 2003). Although they never wanted to be considered structuralists, their work is tightly linked to structuralism, semiotics, and post-structuralism. As for Roland Barthes' and Kristeva's work, post-structuralism elements are as well central to it (Gottdiener et al., 2003).

3.3.1. Barthes' Semiotic System

There is a lack of universally accepted theory within semiotics (Hawkes, 2003), however it is possible to focus on some voices coming from Europe, and specifically Saussure's model of linguistic communication, interpreted by Roland Barthes, among others. An important thinker of semiotics is indeed Roland Barthes, born in Cherbourg France in 1915 (Gane & Gane, 2004). The work of Barthes can be seen as a reflection of the most important intellectual and critical movements since World War II, covering Sartrean Marxism, Hjelmslevian linguistics, Brechtianism, Freudianism, semiotics, Lacanianism, and poststructuralism (Gane & Gane, 2004). In his career, Barthes espoused structuralism as a philosophy and technique, strongly supporting Marxism in theory and practice (Gane & Gane, 2004). Barthes intellectual career can be divided into different stages, he himself suggested in 1974 a division of his work in three different periods: first an analysis of discourse of "amazement" and "hope"; a second one focused on the movement of scientificity; and finally, a third period led by the theory of the text, inspired by other contemporary thinkers, including Kristeva (Gane & Gane, 2004). Subsequently, Barthes then declared that his work could be divided into two clear parts: an earlier era of semiological and ideological analysis of different aspects of consumer society, and a second part replacing previous conceptions of bourgeois society with a utopian strategy (Gane & Gane, 2004).

In his essay "Myth Today" published in 1957, he questioned the relationship between signifier and signified. According to Barthes, any semiotic analysis must

assume that this relationship is one of “equivalence” and not of “equality” (Hawkes, 2003). He criticised the idea of an objective semiotic science and the desire to obtain a fixed meaning. In keeping with Barthes, meaning coming from texts is not autonomous, but relies on the context. The cultural codes are what lead to pieces of knowledge we own (Hawkes, 2003). Meaning can as well derive from widely accepted value statements, that society has embraced, and that text can therefore use as shorthand to invoke certain meanings (Hawkes, 2003). The parallel with Levi-Strauss can once again be made, as Barthes is questioning the referentiality of the sign in terms of a stable and uniform denotation. For Levi-Strauss, the signifier can be a “symbol in the pure state” (Mehlman, 1972, p.23).

The relationship between signifier (the sound-image) and signified (the concept) is what Saussure considered the linguistic sign, and is a structural relationship of language (Hawkes, 2003). Focusing on non-linguistic systems, for Barthes, the associative total of signified and signifier constitutes the sign (Hawkes, 2003). He takes for example a bundle of roses, which is commonly used to represent passion, or signify passion. The roses then become signifier, and the passion the signified. The associative total, how Barthes refers to the relationship between signifier and signified, produces the bundle of roses as a sign, which is the third term (Hawkes, 2003). The bundle of roses as a sign is different from the bundle of roses as a signifier: one is a horticultural entity, as pointed out by Hawkes (2003), and is empty, while the other is considered full. It is filled with signification through societal conventional modes and channels, as well as personal intent (Hawkes, 2003). This is drawn on Levi-Strauss’ idea of the empty signifier (Mehlman, 1972, p.23).

Barthes came up as well with the concept of myth within semiotics. Myth are not representing classical mythology in this context, but “the complex system of images and beliefs which a society constructs in order to sustain and authenticate its sense of its own being: i.e., the very fabric of its system of ‘meaning’” (Hawkes, 2003, p. 107). Once again in the myth scenario, we get confronted to the tripartite signifying operation of the signifier, signified and sign, their product. Myth is unique in the sense that it suggests a semiotic chain and is constructed as a second-order semiotic system (Hawkes, 2003).

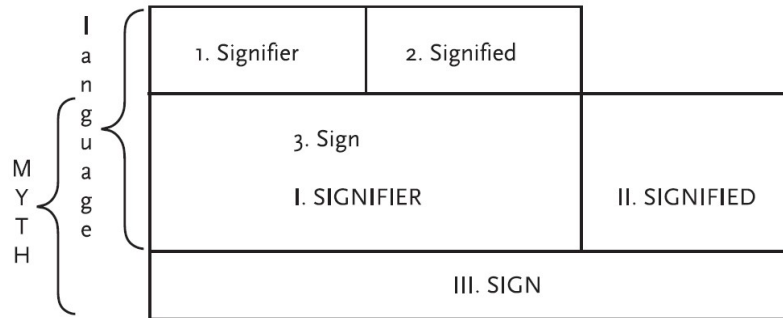


Figure 1 – Barthes' Myth System

The myth therefore operates by taking a formerly established sign, full of signification, and wearing it down until it turns into an empty signifier (Hawkes, 2003).

“I am at the barber’s, and a copy of Paris-Match is offered to me. On the cover, a young Negro in a French uniform is saluting, with his eyes uplifted, probably fixed on a fold of the tricolour. All this is the meaning of the picture. But, whether naively or not, I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors. I am therefore again faced with a greater semiological system: there is a signifier, itself already formed with a previous system (a black soldier is giving the French salute); there is a signified (it is here purposeful mixture of Frenchness and militariness); finally, there is a presence of the signified through the signifier.”

(Barthes, 1957, as cited in Hawkes, 2003, p. 108)

Myth is called sign in language, but according to Barthes should be referred to as the signification, the signifier should be referred to as the form, and the signified as the concept (Hawkes, 2003). Thus, in the first order of language signifier and signified are generating the sign, but in the second order of the myth, the relationship of form (being the first order’s sign) and concept produces the signification (Hawkes, 2003). Barthes’ analysis of semiosis, developing from Saussure’s, is taking us “behind the scenes” of our own construction of the world. Indeed, signification is a very strong producer of meaning, and allows us to perceive what is usually

unperceivable and bring to light the processes by which meaning is manufactured (Hawkes, 2003).

This notion is as well developed by Barthes through the concepts of denotation and connotation. For Barthes, an image has two different aspects: denotation and connotation (Hill, 2009). An image's denotation represents the simple content of the image (Hill, 2009), and usually refers to the use of language to mean what it says (Hawkes, 2003); connotation however is including all the values and emotions an image might generate within the viewer (Hill, 2009), and usually refers to the use of language to mean something other than what is said (Hawkes, 2003). Several factors influence the connotations of an image, including its framing, composition, or colours, in conjunction with the content itself (Hill, 2009). Connotation is often characterising the literary or aesthetic use of language (Hawkes, 2003). For Barthes connotation is to denotation, what myth is to ordinary signification (Hawkes, 2003), therefore, connotation is taking place when the sign of a previous signifier-signification rapport becomes the signifier of another one (Hawkes, 2003). It is however important to remember that social and cultural codes are what drives the connotations of an image as well. The viewer carries those perceptions with them when responding to images (Hill, 2009). A visual example to this concept of denotation and connotation could be given with photography. In photography, what is photographed would be considered as denotation, and the way it is photographed would be the connotation (Fiske, 1982, as cited in Chandler, 2020).

3.3.2. Kristeva And Intertextuality

Julia Kristeva, born 1941 in Bulgaria, moved to Paris in 1966 to work as a graduate with Lucien Goldmann and the previously mentioned Roland Barthes (Oliver, 2001). The work of Kristeva is a direct reflection of her diversified background, an intersection of philosophy, psychoanalysis, linguistics, and cultural and literary theory. She is at the genesis of the science of "semanalysis", a mixture of Freud's psychoanalysis and Saussure's and Peirce's semiology, that challenges traditional theories such as psychoanalytic, linguistic and philosophy (Oliver, 2001). Kristeva's influence in semiotics and symbolic elements of signification greatly contributed to the philosophy of language. The semiotics represents rhythms and tones, and how

they are a meaningful part of language, but do not have to represent or signify something (Oliver, 2001). The symbolic element of language on the other hand is relating to the grammar and structure of language, which makes it possible to signify something (Oliver, 2001). The relationship between semiotics and symbolic is what allows signification to be. The semiotics provide a will to engage in signifying process while the symbolic provides the necessary structure for communicating (Oliver, 2001).

Intertextuality is an extension of what is known as index or indexicality and was developed by Kristeva. It refers to the different connections between texts, and more specifically how past meanings, or past texts play an important role in providing relevant context to interpret present signs (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). Semioticians consider that most of the literature works are emanating messages referring to themselves, as well as referring to other literature works: that is what Kristeva referred to as intertextuality (Hawkes, 2003). Texts are never considered truly free from other texts. Kristeva considers the “literary word” as the intersection of textual surfaces, not a fixed meaning, as if several writings were conversing (Alfaro, 1996). Texts, or words as she puts it, are always meeting other texts at the crossroads, and one of them has to be readable (Alfaro, 1996). To put it quite simply “There are always other words in a word, other texts in a text” (Alfaro, 1996, p.268). That is the basic assumption of intertextuality, and it requests an understanding of texts not as self-contained systems but as differential and with an historical background, as they are shaped by the transformation of other texts (Alfaro, 1996).

A good example of intertextuality used in everyday life was pointed out by Leeds-Hurwitz (2009) and is the practice of sampling in hip-hop music. A small piece of a previous song will be integrated into a current song, forming intertextuality between the two musical works. The same way, gifts may make the gifted reminisce of the gift giver and make the object bring back memories. Intertextuality is therefore present in various contexts, and most often without being obvious to most people, its process seems natural and organic. If intertextuality as a concept is about three decades old, traces of the same concept were found in most human societies, wherever discourse about texts has been held. From Plato, Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus, to Bakhtin, Kristeva, and other theorists such as Genette, Barthes, Derrida and Riffaterre, all have tackled the topic (Alfaro, 1996).

Another concept is often brought up alongside intertextuality, bricolage, developed by Claude Lévi-Strauss. There, previous pre-existing signs are creating a new whole when brought together, just as a tourist collects postcards as souvenirs (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). If those postcards may exist somewhere else, the collection is however unique and expresses specific messages to the person collecting them. Bricolage and intertextuality are both showcasing how as humans we tend to use the past to create the present, and therefore create a new meaning (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009). This idea is central to understanding a variety of texts, and semiotics then becomes useful to understand how communication works, as well as deconstructing and analysing the said communication (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009).

3.4. Relevance to The Study

The approach of Barthes towards semiotics has been selected for this study as it highly refers to visual texts. In order to understand through semiotics how logo changes have an impact on brand identity, Barthes will be a great departure point. Looking at the different denotations of the visuals, and the connotations they bring up, it will be possible through this Barthesian approach to determine signifiers and signifieds in the two orders of semiotics. Therefore, determining meaning creation throughout the rebranding. In addition, because the analysis will focus on previous logo changes the Burberry company has been through, the concept of intertextuality, developed by Kristeva, will as well be of use. This will highlight the visual transfers and how each logo refers to the previous ones. Finally, both authors think of language and sign creation in a compatible way, where context is of the essence, which makes the choice of epistemology for the study plain.

4. Method Chapter

The method chapter will provide to the reader the epistemology used by the author to tackle the subject, and the research design with the coding and case presentation. Thus, overall key elements to determine the strategy of the analysis and answer the research question.

4.1. Epistemology

About the epistemology of the research, what is considered as acceptable knowledge to the researcher, the post-structuralism tradition is considered as the most fitting one. Indeed, the two different semiotic traditions each have their specific epistemological approach. Based on Peirce's triadic sign (Hawkes, 2003), the pragmatism epistemology shares fundamental beliefs with positivism about the relation between language and reality. It is ultimately based on empiricism, a set of philosophical theories which make the sensory experience the origin of all knowledge or belief, and of all aesthetic pleasure. When post-structuralism was developed out of structuralism, that had a positivist ambition to explain psychological and cultural levels of reality with the focus between signifier and signified relation put, a scepticism about the stable relation between the two and ultimately the referentiality of the sign was created (Hawkes, 2003).

Drawing on the theories previously presented, authors such as Barthes and Kristeva fit in this tradition and perception of research design. Post structuralism represents an intellectual movement in which human culture can be understood through structures, diverging from reality and abstract ideas (Belsey, 2002). For post-structuralists, consciousness is not at the origin of spoken languages or of the images we recognise, it comes from meaning we have learned and reproduced (Belsey, 2002). A post-structuralist epistemology is thus paying attention to the way language is never neutral or value free (Hawkes, 2003). However, they consider that communication is constantly changing, without human intervention sometimes. Indeed, all we can intervene in is to alter its meaning (Belsey, 2002). That is to say,

altering the norms and values taken for granted by our culture. Social constructionist tenets are something post-structuralist researchers will pay close attention to (Given, 2008). Small details inside texts, texts having a broad definition here, are what researchers will be interested in within post-structuralism. This is what Barthes relates to, images provide meaning at multiple levels (Hawkes, 2003), and Kristeva too with the idea of every text comprising other previous texts (Oliver, 2001).

4.2. Research Design

Once the epistemology defined, the type of research approach used can be considered. It will work as a guideline on how to proceed in the research. It is here question of a case study research design; it therefore comes with a specific process.

4.2.1. A Qualitative Study

This study is designed as a qualitative research, focused on understanding and sense-making. Qualitative studies are inherently looking further than pure data and white or black answers, semiotics as a theory is therefore perfectly fitting. Semiotics study signs, and those signs may be present in language, visual texts or even society. The analysis process used through the study is a content analysis, defined as the intellectual process of organising qualitative data into different groups or conceptual categories (Given, 2008). This method allows to make sense of the data and reduce them, which is what a qualitative study aims for. Qualitative research can interpret several different types of data, in this case visual images will be used. Visual images can either be created by the participants or the researcher, or be pre-existing and found (Allen, 2017). Finally, visual images can be categorised as still or moving images (Allen, 2017). The study will therefore identify signs within still visual images, the Burberry's logos before and after rebranding.

4.2.2. Case Selection and Sampling

As explained in the previous section, the research design of the thesis is a content analysis, but this within the frame of a case study. It is a suitable approach because it aims to uncover and study a specific phenomenon, peculiar to a certain

organisation in this case. As the research is based on a visual content analysis, the case selection is vital to gathering relevant information and getting admissible results. Choosing a single-case research design was considered by the researcher beforehand. First of all, focusing on one case only allows to highlight what can be considered a “typical case” (Allen, 2017).

The fashion company Burberry has been selected because of its strong heritage and its iconic visual expressions: equestrian emblem, check pattern and trench coat have all been part of the company’s branding for decades and are considered brand icons (Burberry Group plc., 2005). After its 2018 redesign, Burberry was the perfect representation of heritage brands leaving behind part of their complex visual expression to move on towards a more modern and simplified style. While being a study focused on the specific case of Burberry, it will open the field to studying this phenomenon within all heritage brands, and maybe uncovering a pattern. The single-case research design could therefore be revelatory, through the data collection (Allen, 2017).

The research focuses and investigates the different logos the Burberry company developed through the years, and more specifically the similarities between the different visual expressions. The sample of the study is composed of the four different logos Burberry has been using since its creation, as well as logo variations the brand released alongside. The collected material therefore belonging to the timeframe 1901 to 2021.

4.3. Coding and Results Presentation

The analysis will focus on how Burberry manages to maintain the balance between the two core values of heritage and innovation. These values have been present throughout the history of the company. It was considered analysing all the core values but after contacting Burberry’s communication department it was decided not to include them, partly because no records of previous values have been kept and partly because an initial analysis showed that all visual cues centred on heritage and innovation.

For the analysis, the raw data from the Burberry’s logos will be collected via Barthes’ semiotic system. This system is relevant to linguistic and non-linguistic

systems and can be used with visual elements such as logos. The four different logos that the Burberry company has had since its creation will be analysed and the different aspects of the logos (colour, font, typography, etc.) will be looked at, and be considered as what Barthes refers to as “Associative Totals”. They are at the same time “signifiers” and “signifieds” in the first order of semiotics and will be analysed to see if they are creating a new sign, and therefore meaning.

The second factor of the analysis, and comparison point, will be the “Connotations”. They are based on Burberry’s two company’s values that have always been present and confronting each other: heritage and innovation. Beyond those two factors, more connotations will be uncovered within the analysed data. The connotations will represent the “signified” in the second order of semiotics, referred to as the myth in Barthes’ theory. Put in relation with the “Associative Total”, which then becomes “signifier”, it will be possible to see if as explained before, they align and create a new sign.

The “Associative Totals” might change from one logo analysis to another, due to the dependence of elements present in the logo. The resulting “Connotations” will be relying on the associative totals, allowing to see the connection between each logo, and based on Kristeva’s intertextuality theory, to analyse if each logo is more or less inspired from the previous one, and if transfer is occurring. The analysis will as well allow us to determine if part of the core values the brand claims to carry are represented in its visual expressions, therefore if the brand identity is being accurately depicted. Because the two main core values have remained the same, it will imply as well if old visual expressions would be suitable in the current Burberry.

4.4. Limits of The Method

It is important to pay attention to the limitations of this method before starting with the analysis process. Some critiques have been associated with the post-structuralist tradition. It sometimes was perceived as a way of invalidating accepted knowledge and subjecting all areas to re-analysis (Given, 2008). Post-structuralism is not to be confused with relativism. The latter represents the concept that everything considered as true has no universal validity. It is only relative to personal history and cultural context (Zimmermann, 2015). Moreover, relativism is about the rejection of

an absolute truth, while post-structuralism is concerned with interpretation. With the post-structuralism signifier, society practices are seen as neither true or false, and are carrying meanings and values unconsciously chosen (Belsey, 2002).

Moreover, meaning cannot be considered as something objective. It very much depends on the individual and will vary depending on the context too. This semiotic analysis will for this reason be strongly representative of the researcher's perception.

4.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethics is essential to any type of research; it is important that the reader provide a text as unbiased as possible. Research ethics constitute a system of moral principles and that will determine right from wrong in research practices (Allen, 2017). There are a few ethical choices that researchers must take, and the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research developed a list of ethical principles established to help researchers during the decision-making process (Allen, 2017). This paper intends to follow three of those principles and apply while interacting with participants or with texts. Those principles are not just ethical principles. They are also vital components of the validity concerns in a scientific study. Thus, together with employing a well-established semiotic methodology, abiding to those principles ensures the validity of this study.

4.5.1. Truthfulness

It is important to stay honest and avoid fraud or data fabrication. People are expected to be truthful, however a question to consider is whether there are cases where it is acceptable to have dishonest behaviour, and if they can lead to ethical outcomes (Allen, 2017). It is to the researcher to determine if truthfulness will bias the research result, and if it is okay to exaggerate data or results without compromising the study.

4.5.2. Accuracy

Accuracy is as well related to the act of deception. Considering how accurately they will present information about their research is of the utmost importance. How

accurate do you have to be when analysing data or reporting results? The fidelity of the researcher's choices has to be considered while designing and implementing a research project (Allen, 2017).

4.5.3. Completeness

The idea of completeness relates to the level of comprehension the description of the research project has to be to be considered ethical (Allen, 2017). The completeness of the result report has to be considered too. Those choices are individual to the researcher but can in some cases be influenced by journal editors, reviewers, etc (Allen, 2017).

5. Analysis Chapter

The chapter will analyse the different Burberry logos through semiotics and determine how Burberry creates and maintains over time references to heritage and innovation in its visual brand communication. After a short presentation of the Burberry company, the two main core values that have always been a part of the brand identity will be presented. Finally, the different components of the logos as a sign, the components being signs on their own, and what they signify will be brought to light.

5.1. The Burberry Company

Burberry was originally a British tailor specializing in the manufacture of men's coats and raincoats, constructed to withstand the fickle English weather. Created in Basingstoke by Thomas Burberry in 1856 at the age of twenty-one, he invented the gabardine, a breathable and weather-resistant fabric, changing men's outerwear, until then heavy and uncomfortable (Burberry, n.d.). The famous Burberry trench coat was however invented during the First World War (Appendix 1). Its design included shoulder pads for hanging military gear, D-loops for carrying grenades, a gun flap to protect men at the front, and a storm flap to allow water to drain easily (Burberry, n.d.). The famous Burberry check motif (Appendix 2), now a registered trademark, appeared in the 1920's and was used for the first time as the lining of the rainwear (Burberry, n.d.). The pattern, still used on the brand's linings, has become one of the company brand icons (Burberry Group plc., 2005). The outfitter now manufactures luxury clothing for a wealthy and demanding clientele and established itself as a representative of the sober, refined, and high-quality masculine elegance of the British upper classes. Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Charles both incidentally granted the brand Royal Recognition in 1955 and in 1989 (Burberry, n.d.).

Now the Burberry company has been listed since 2002 (Burberry, n.d.), producing in China and developing a network of franchise stores around the world seeking to reach a large audience. Burberry has become one of the generalist luxury

commercial brands, its catalogue has extended to women, children, accessories, bags, and luggage, and even launched a line of perfumes. In 2018, a change of artistic direction was made, resulting in major visual identity changes. The 2018 Burberry rebranding brought a lot of attention (Walker, 2018), but it was not the first time the brand changed its visual identity. Over the 165 years of existence of the brand, its logo has been redesigned three times. In comparison to its current logo, Burberry's first visual identity can be considered as very complex. The equestrian emblem it showcases is another of the brand's visual icons (Burberry Group plc., 2005). It will therefore be interesting to uncover on a deeper level the changes that have taken place, and more importantly what aspects have remained the same.

5.2. A Constant Tension

As previously established, Burberry is a heritage brand. Therefore, it is using its history and longevity as a marketing tool to brand itself (Urde et al., 2007). This heritage has been created over 165 years of branding. With its first logo, the equestrian emblem (Image 1), the brand was then referencing the heritage of Great Britain and another era. Its next visual expressions then took over that equestrian emblem and referred to it. Becoming a building block and staple of the Burberry brand identity, the equestrian emblem became the visual representation of the brand.

However, if the heritage aspect of the brand is something that Burberry obviously pushes forward, it is in constant tension with another aspect. In its 2019/2020 Annual Report (Burberry Group plc., 2020), Burberry states: "We honour Burberry's DNA, combining a strong sense of heritage with a desire to learn from the world. We are inspired by our past as we shape the future". The company therefore brands itself as innovative and forward thinking, values that seem to be clashing with the idea of heritage and traditions. Be that as it may, Burberry has had this dichotomy in its identity since its creation. Going back to its first logo (Image 1), the Latin inscription is reflecting heritage with the use of Latin, a dead language that was a part of the creation of the English language, and its translation "forward" shows the brand's will to be innovative and forward thinking.

This tension leads to a difficult balance to keep. The last rebranding of 2018 is the perfect example of it. Deciding to lean more towards the innovative, the brand made less evident its heritage affiliation, leading to a wave of confusion, and

sometimes consternation, from media and customers (Walker, 2018). The analysis will for that reason look into the different visual identities Burberry has been through and determine through semiotic analysis how the brand created, maintained, or lost reference to its heritage and innovation over time.

5.3. Heritage & Innovation: Value Creation and Retention

5.3.1. *A First Visual Expression*

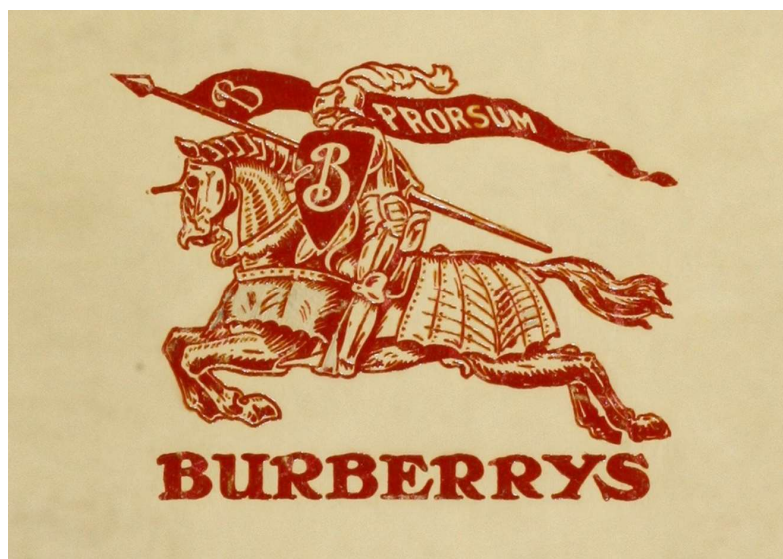


Image 1- Burberry's 1st Logo (1901)

If the Burberry brand was founded in 1856 under the name “Burberrys”, it is in 1901 that the famous equestrian emblem first appeared (Image 5.3.1) (Burberry, n.d.). The company organised a public competition to create the logo and the winning proposition got enhanced by inspirations of the 12th and 14th century armours displayed at the Wallace Collection in the Londonian Museum (Burberry, n.d.). The logo is a red emblem above a wordmark representing the company’s brand name in uppercase serif letters. As for the emblem, it represents an equestrian knight, with a shield and pike, taking almost the entire space of the logo. The pike is decorated with a flag inscribed with the Latin word “Prorsum” meaning “forwards” and the decorative letter “B”, just as the shield.

Logos include different associative totals to use Barthes' terminology, or signs. Indeed, as previously explained from a Barthesian perspective, a sign can operate on two levels. At the first level, the combination of the signifier and signified constitute the sign, or associative total. Here a combination of linguistic and visual associative totals constitutes this logo. The first associative total that can be analysed is the use of the colour red, one of the primary colours. It is generally associated with strong emotions such as passion, anger or even excitement, and is a popular colour within branding as it comes back often in very popular logos: Netflix, CNN, YouTube, and Lego are a few examples that can be cited. It generally would reflect a young brand, up-to-date, and suggest activity, strength, and stimulation (Labrecque & Milne, 2012). Yet, this is not the only association that can be made. Red in our western culture would be associated and have a connotation with aspects such as blood or roses, which would both signify two very different things. Blood would usually signify violence while roses would signify passion. Here in this logo, the combination of the equestrian emblem and the colour red signifies this idea of blood and the violence that comes with it. The beige background colour on the other hand is reminding of the colour used on the Burberry check pattern (Appendix 2). The pattern being used for the first time in 1920 (Burberry, n.d.), so nineteen years after the release of the logo, intertextuality here occurred. Both the logo and the check pattern were part of the brand identity at the same time. By using the same colour, Burberry developed continuity and consistency and strengthened its brand identity.

The equestrian knight is the second element and associative total that will be analysed on this first layer. The emblem is one of the most recognizable emblems in fashion and takes most of the space on the logo, therefore it is what attracts most of the attention. As described, the knight is holding a shield in one hand, and a spike in the other. This represents the traditional values of chivalry and protection, but as well of determination and honour. The spike looks like the ones used during jousts and connotes the attack. However, if we take this sign and turn it into a new signifier in the myth, or second order of semiotics, this idea of jousting and attacking can reflect how Burberry is ready to face the competition, and this with honour as was the case several centuries ago. The equestrian knight bending forward, launched to the full gallop is producing an effect of movement, as if he were ready to attack. This is generating this connotation of charge as well and signifies the brand always moving forward and being innovative. Both heritage and innovation are once again

put against each other. Yet, the shield signifies, in the second order of semiotics, the protection against the bad weather that the Burberry garments offer. This was part of Thomas Burberry mission statement when he created the brand (Burberry, n.d.). On the same note, if the armour worn by the knight and the horse are signifying protection, in the second order of semiotics the sign signifies the durability of Burberry's garments, specifically the famous trench coat. Another interesting aspect of this equestrian emblem is the "B" located on the shield connoting to the coats of arms of a noble family. Here, the family in question is Burberry, that is what the associative total signifies. Burberry is therefore seen, once again, as an institution full of principals, values, and honour. The emblem brings the connotation of craftsmanship as well, or of a commodity not being mass produced. This is due to the logo not being as sleek as what people are used to in today's society. Because of the roughness of the edges, it seems pre-Gutenberg and preceding the printing technique, and mimics drawings of the 12th to 14th century, a method that was consequently not used anymore in 1901 when the logo came out. The Burberry brand stated itself that the logo was altered to look more from the 12th to 14th century (Burberry, n.d.). Before the brand was ever established, references to the history of England, and thus of Burberry, was already made. Use of intertextuality is here being made, even if it is not based on the brand's previous visual expressions. The equestrian emblem overall reflects traditional values and a well-established institution that creates this heritage connotation, and sign in the second order of semiotics. More than just a heritage connotation, the equestrian knight conveys strong masculinity values. At the times of the knights, men had a central role in society, taking care of their family, protecting it and their land. A great physical strength was as well required to become a knight. Those are all values that are connotated with the equestrian emblem, and therefore that Burberry was connoting to its exclusive men clientele at the time.

In comparison to the emblem, the brand and founder name seem more recent. The Burberry company started under the name Burberrys, here located under the emblem, and taking much smaller space. By using the founder's name as its brand name, a relationship is organically created with the consumer. They are buying produce designed by Thomas Burberry and no one else. It builds up the ground for a reference to its heritage when the brand will have gained seniority.

For its part, the typography of the logo encapsulates different signifiers, creating associative totals: the font type, the choice of uppercases letters and the Latin word used. As Van Leeuwen (2005) pointed out, contemporary typography is creating meaning. It is no longer just a means to an end, but an integral component of semi-otic resources. Via letter forms, colour, three-dimensionality, and material texture semiotics change can be studied, and meaning created (Van Leeuwen, 2005). Letter shapes have a way of affecting the way messages are being perceived, and therefore the message that is written with them. In the 1901 Burberry logo (Image 1), a serif font is being used, serifs being the small lines or strokes that terminate the end of characters. Serif fonts are usually perceived as elegant and evoke a certain glamour attached to the 18th and 19th century. This sense of retro style and class is the perception that is a contemporary perception of the font. The perception attached to it in 1901 was surely completely different. Serif fonts were used in typewriters, expensive machines that required a specific technique to be used. By connoting to those modern devices at the time, the brand is signifying in the second order of semiotics that it is at the forefront. The text is perceived as more modern than the emblem, from a different era. The innovation connotation is once again present and put in contrast with the heritage represented in the equestrian emblem.

One last element of this logo exhibits this counterbalance between heritage and innovation, the word inscribed in the flag held by the equestrian knight “Prorsum”, meaning “forwards” in Latin. Latin being a dead language, it connotes values and emotions such as historical, intellectual, or high-class. Indeed, only a small part of the population would be able to get access to an education where they would be taught Latin. Burberry is therefore appearing as expensive and part of the upper class. The Latin connoting historical values is also signifying that Burberry is an old brand that has ancestry and therefore heritage. Because of its translation, meaning “forward”, the word connotes a sense of movement and onward thinking, or innovation, that is exactly what the Burberry brand wants to convey. It considers being forward thinking as one of the hallmarks of its organisation (Burberry, n.d.). Thus, the “Prorsum” inscription encapsulates the tension between the two core values: the heritage and the innovation.

This first logo will become essential to the brand's visual identity. Most of the next visual expressions will take inspiration from it, refer to it through intertextuality, as it will be demonstrated.

5.3.2. *A first Redesign*



Image 2 - Burberry's 2nd Logo (1968)

In 1968, Burberry decided to introduce a new design for its logo (Image 2), sixty-seven years after its first one. Moving from a red to black monochromatic design, it still represents the emblem of the equestrian on top of the brand name. However, this time, the emblem is taking a much smaller space in the logo, the brand name being put on the foreground. The emblem became much more abstract, similar to a black shadow, erasing the previous typography and letters inscribed on the flag. The indication "of London" got added below the brand name, written in an upper-case serif font. With this first change of visual identity, the Burberry logo started referencing its previous visual identity as it will be demonstrated.

Many of the associative totals of Burberry's second logo (Image 2) remained the same as its first logo (Image 1). As explained, although it is still a part of the logo visual identity, the equestrian emblem has been modified. It is now closer to a shadow and many details have been removed from it, the emblem now looks printed and no longer hand drawn. The brand could afford having only an outline because the equestrian emblem was already established. Indeed, it makes sense to the customers because they are familiar with the original equestrian knight and understand the reference. The outline therefore serves more as a reminder of the brand's old visual identity. Intertextuality is here used to signify the heritage of the brand. This simplification of the emblem also reveals that the brand name is now given the

forefront and shows a will to increase its awareness. Details such as the Latin wordmark, the armour, or the shield or no longer distinguishable. However, due to intertextuality, the emblem remains associated with pride and ancestry and signifies heritage.

The second associative total that remained the same is the presence of the founder's name "Burberrys", as the brand used to be named until 1999. It is now taking most of the space on the logo, attracting the viewer's attention to the name brand more than to the emblem itself. The emblem and the font are now matching together and do not seem like coming from a different era anymore. As the use of the emblem reflects a strong heritage, it was no longer necessary to use a pre-Gutenberg type of design for it.

The font stayed a serif one, in 1968 reflecting a certain elegance and simplicity. If typewriters were the norm at this time and using the same type of font, the text here appears slick with a perfectly straight outline. This connotated clearness signifying the refined design of the Burberry garments. However, the typography changed to some extent. It is now lowercase letters that are portrayed for the name "Burberrys". The brand name yet begins with a majuscule, as it is common with proper nouns, suggesting that the Burberry fashion house is an institution, and that it needs to receive a certain respect. There is a level of intertextuality less noticeable here, with the "B" inscribed on the shield of the first logo (Image 1). The "B" was connoting a noble family coats of arms, and the brand name is now spelled like a family name, with a majuscule at the beginning.

The new Burberry logo changed colour too, from a solid red to a monochromatic black. As previously stated, colours have different connotations and evoke different meanings within individuals (Hynes, 2009). Black for instance can evoke the elegance, durability, and sturdiness of the Burberry products. Black logos can depict strength and power. If in western culture black can have other connotations such as death, associated with fashion it connotes elegance and sobriety, just like a black tuxedo would. Looking at the other leaders of the fashion industry, black is the norm in terms of logo: Louis Vuitton, Yves Saint Laurent, Gucci, Chanel, all are adorned with black logos. The black colour of the logo also connotes power. Powerful brands reach this position because of their will to lead and being in front of competitors. This presupposes that they would have to be forward thinking, the black colour then signifying innovation.

Finally, the last change in associative totals on the new logo, is the now presence of the founder's location. The mention "Of London" has been added under the "Burberrys" wordmark, in a much smaller size and uppercase characters. It refers to where the brand has been created and therefore to the heritage of the brand. It also refers to the place as such, London, drawing on the heritage and history of the city itself.

5.3.3. *A Brand Name Change*



Image 3 - Burberry's 3rd Logo (1999)

It was in 1999, that for the second time, the Burberry company decided to change its logo (Image 3), and therefore part of its visual identity. The famous French artistic director Fabien Baron was appointed to do so (Burberry, n.d.). The proportions of the logo have been redistributed, the emblem became larger and the typography smaller. Moreover, the equestrian knight of the emblem recovered some details, including a white outline. The final main change is in the typography, with a comeback to uppercase letters for the wordmark, still in a serif font. The founder location indication has been reduced to only "London", and the brand name has been changed from "Burberrys" to "Burberry" (Burberry, n.d.). The changes in this redesign can be perceived as more subtly than the previous change of visual identity.

First of all, it is relevant to mention the aspects that have not been modified from the previous logo. They will be the proof of a consistency in the brand's visual identity, and therefore of intertextuality. The colour of the logo is part of this consistency. Just as previously, the brand decided to retain its monochromatic black in

its new logo, as a sign of keeping up with traditions and the brand heritage. The black still signifies the elegance and refinement of the fashion house. The second associative total that remained the same is the use of a serif font. In 1999, a serif font would reflect a certain British elegance and glamour of the 18th century. Therefore, connoting sophistication and signifying the seniority and heritage of Burberry. There is overall a strong intertextuality with the previous visual identity's font (Image 1, Image 2).

However, some elements have been modified, not all to the same degree. The equestrian illustration for example is back to a bigger scale. Not dominating most of the space inside the logo (as for its first logo in 1901 (Image 1)) but going back to a more balanced division of the space between the wordmark and the emblem. It shows the importance the emblem has taken into Burberry's visual identity. References to the first visual expression (Image 1), therefore intertextuality, is being made with details such as the shield, the spear, the armour, and the flag being back. However, the Latin wordmark and the "B" are still not discernible. The emblem is thus only a reference to its previous visual expression and can then signify traditional values. One of the main changes is the shift of brand name from "Burberrys" to "Burberry". For the first time, not only the visual identity of the brand is being modified, but its name too. Only one letter is being modified here, which maintains the brand recognition. "Burberrys" was indicating that you were shopping at Mr Burberry's, that the garments were its own. "Burberry" on the other hand is connoting to a more upper hand brand.

The logo is getting easier to read, more than the brand name being shortened, the founder location indication is simplified to "London". Based on the assumption that consumers will automatically understand that it is here a question of where the brand has been created. Since 1984 London is hosting the fashion week, the text then has a connotation with high fashion and trend setting design, signifying that the brand is coming up every season with new ideas and designs that will be followed, and therefore being innovative. Moreover, there is intertextuality with the previous logo (Image 2) that already mentioned London, and reference to the heritage of Burberry. The typography is back to using uppercase letters, just like on its first logo. This balances the overall design, as the size of the equestrian emblem has been increased while the size of the text decreased. It is thus possible for the brand name to have a more extended width. It is fair to say that none of the changes here

were a priori major but put together aimed to create a more modern visual identity for the brand. While strongly connoting to its heritage with the equestrian illustration, the founder's name, founder location and the use of serif font, the Burberry brand managed to reinvent itself with its new design and show its will towards innovation.

5.3.4. *Leaving Heritage Behind*

BURBERRY
LONDON ENGLAND

Image 4 - Burberry's 4th Logo (2018)

The current Burberry logo (Image 4) was released in an unpredicted way, 19 years after the last changes. It was designed in 2018, to reflect the new era the brand was engaging in. Indeed, the Burberry group previously appointed a new artistic director the same year, Riccardo Tisci (Burberry, n.d.), previously artistic director of the Givenchy fashion house between 2005 and 2017. Peter Saville was then chosen to redesign the famous logo; he expressed himself in an interview with The Guardian (Ferrier, 2019) about the challenges of developing this new visual identity. According to Saville, the logo did not need a redesign per se, but that the label had to change under the new artistic direction.

“Finding the right “Burberry” for a trenchcoat label is not difficult but putting the same “Burberry” in a chiffon blouse is.” (Ferrier, 2019)

More than adapting to a variety of garments, the new logo had to be easily transferable from one media to another. Indeed, since 1999 and the last time the brand changed its visual identity, communication channels multiplied themselves and social media became an important part of how to reach consumers (Mañas-Viniegra et al., 2020). Fitting with this new corporate identity, the logo reflects a youthful and modern design, accentuating the active and progressive spirit of the fashion

house. In addition, a new monogram (Image 5) was introduced comprising the letters TB for Thomas Burberry. Thereby, big changes have been made in this latest rebranding. The famous equestrian emblem has been removed, to leave only the brand watermark as well as the founder location's ornament with the word "England". The typography has been modified too, switching to a sans serif font for the first time.

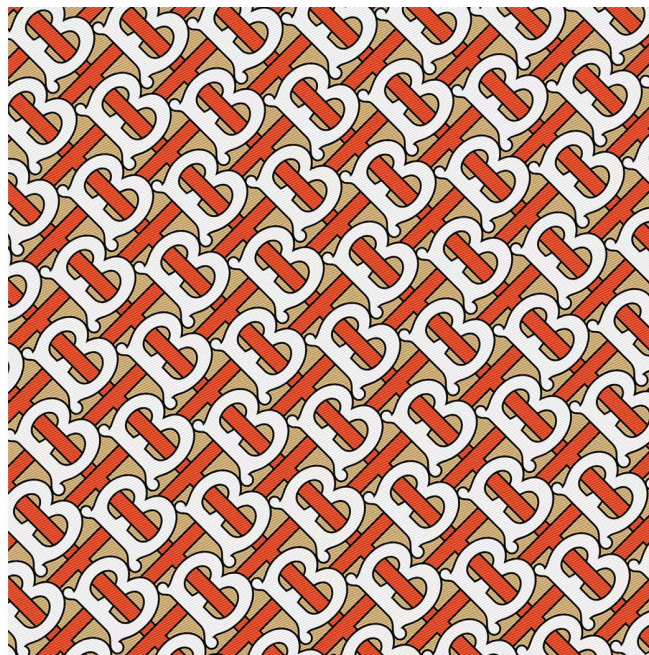


Image 5 - Burberry's New Monogram (2018)

The semiotic analysis of those last visual changes will be done in two main parts: the associative totals that differ since the rebranding, and the associative totals that remained the same and have been transferred. The first and main difference from all three previous logos is the disappearance of the century-old equestrian knight emblem. It represents a strong decision from the brand towards its visual identity. Over the years, the emblem had become one of the key elements in the brand awareness, along with its check pattern. In its 2004/2005 annual report (Burberry Group plc., 2005), the brand mentioned its brand icons, and three were being listed: the 1901 equestrian emblem, the trench-coat, and the check pattern. It is therefore surprising to not see the equestrian knight appearing on the new logo. This wilful removal is making the brand leave part of its legacy behind, and for this reason building fewer connotations to heritage.

A second associative total that has been modified in this recent rebranding is the font used. If every Burberry logo used to have the same type of font before, an elegant and sophisticated serif one, the new design displays a more modern sans

serif one. In his interview with the Guardian (Ferrier, 2019), Saville mentioned how he used the Burberry word to come up with a new letterform. He described it as something “somewhere between the institutional and something more cult – very British modern” (Ferrier, 2019). This reflects the idea that the brand, even though leaving behind many of its established visual markers, sought to keep a link to its heritage. However, this is not the end perception the font is giving. The sans serif font appears cold and bland (explaining the term Blanding presented in the introduction), it is not telling any story or background about the brand. The logo is no longer differentiating itself from others, a sense of anonymity is now present in the font. It gives no hint on the origin of the brand, the type of industry it evolves in, or even core values such as heritage it might hold. Or to some extent, the use of the sans serif font suggests rather innovation. Many tech companies such as Facebook, Windows or Samsung use sans serif font in their logos. The use of the sans serif font reflects a modern visual aspect, breaking apart from the heritage of the brand and the type of font they had been using for over a hundred years now.

Finally, one last associative total has been modified is the slogan, stating the founder location. If previously “London” or “From London” was written under the brand name wordmark, the indication “England” has been added. If part of the heritage of the brand has been deducted, they enhanced the origin and lineage of the brand. No longer just associating with London but with an entire country and culture.

Although many of the logo elements have been modified, parts of the visual identity have remained the same. The brand name is still present, clearly readable and written in majuscules. If a strong rebranding happened, leaving the brand name as it was important. A strong recognition is associated with the brand name. And above all, the logo remained monochromatic and black. On the one end, through intertextuality of previous visuals (Image 2, Image 3) the black still connotes elegance and sobriety of the fashion brand; on the other hand, the black colour accentuates this feeling of anonymity. To hide and go unnoticed one would wear black clothes, in order to blend in. Therefore, if combined with the sans serif font the black colour was connoting British glamour, with this modern sans serif font it loses those markers and therefore part of the brand identity. If many of the associative totals differ in the last logo (Image 4), some elements have been transferred from previous logos. However, those elements still feel minor when looking at the big

picture, and it feels like the last rebranding was a big gap from the previous visual heritage.

About the new monogram (Image 5), it was brought back from the archives as a way to pay homage to Thomas Burberry, the founder (Burberry Group plc., 2020). A branding strategy that the brand has been very open about. This is where the brand is bringing connotation of an older time, and therefore signifying its heritage. A strong intertextuality is present here as the monogram was directly taken from an old design, and other forms of older design references. Focusing on the design of the monogram, the pattern is reminiscent of eastern arabesque patterns, ornamental motifs based on rhythmic linear patterns that can form more or less complex interlacing. Yet, the Burberry pattern is a simplified or modernised version of this form of artistic decoration. Moreover, the dimensions of the T with a long vertical line are seen as unproportionate. It is similar to the design of a cross, connoting once again traditions and therefore signifying heritage. Even with its reference to a cross, the T seems more simplistic compared to the B. The latter being more artistic and decorated. It is as well more readable, contrasting with its white colour. This highlights the importance of the B in this monogram, and therefore of the word Burberry in the name Thomas Burberry, keeping the brand recognition to the maximum. Along with the serif font used in this visual expression, intertextuality from previous visual expressions (Image 1, Image 2, Image 3) is present. Another aspect of intertextuality present on the monogram pattern is the use of colour. The background colour is the same as the background colour of the first Burberry logo (Image 1), and the red of the T is a reference to the red equestrian used on this first logo as well. A second intertextuality present on this monogram pattern is with the check pattern (Appendix 2), that once again shares the same colours. Therefore, connotations of heritage are very present in the monogram, referencing not only previous visual expressions, but other brand icons that signify the heritage of the brand.

Important differences can be noticed between the monogram and the logo. If both of them are constituted of only typography, they reflect very different connotations. One is full of heritage and reference to previously used visuals, the other is anonymous, and could be used in various platforms. The monogram is not the only “variation” of the logo, used to transmit heritage through intertextuality.

5.3.5. *Importance of Variations*

Certain Burberry products require stronger connotations to the heritage dimension of the brand; therefore, logo variations have been developed. Those logo variations have different fonts or elements from previous visual expressions. They are referring to each other through intertextuality and explain how the brand could cope with big changes during its rebranding.

Before 2018 and the last redesign, intertextuality was already being used by the brand to signify its heritage. Products such as the trench coats have strong connotations to the heritage dimension of the brand. It is important to note that if the original equestrian knight had been removed from the logo in 1968, it was still present on brand's tag and packaging, or even on some branded clothes and accessories (appendix 4). It is therefore something that the brand still considered as part of its identity, and that customers would request. In Burberry's 2005 report (Burberry Group plc., 2005) many references were made to the brand's icons, comprising the equestrian knight as its emblem, along with the check pattern and the trench coat. By holding all three of those icons, the trench coat was therefore the perfect vessel of Burberry's brand identity.

If the brand was originally a men's brand, Burberry is now a high-end fashion brand with a strong female customer base. In light of the recent societal focus on me-too, the connotations of the equestrian knight and traditional medieval chivalry is now to an extent associated with "toxic masculinity". The heritage connotations are taking a back seat and are therefore overshadowed by those new societal connotations. This is not a good fit for a brand that sells feminine garments. Therefore, since the last rebranding of 2018, the equestrian emblem has been replaced by the royal seals.

Some models of Burberry's trench coats indeed display the royal seals of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Charles (Image 7, Image 6). They are royal warrants of appointments representing a recognition to those who supply services or goods to the English Court. Indeed, the brand had been granted a royal warrant as a weatherproofers by Queen Elizabeth II (Image 7). The seal represents a shield divided in four parts depicting Ireland, Scotland and in two of them England. The crest of the seal displays a lion wearing a crown, while the sides of the shield are supported by a lion and a unicorn. At the bottom of the seal the motto of English monarchs is

inscribed in French: Dieu et mon Droit (God and my Right); and surrounding the shield is the other French motto: Honi soit qui mal y pense (Shame on him who thinks evil). The second seal and royal warrant appointed to Burberry was by the Prince of Wales, as an outfitter (Image 6). It is of a simpler design, representing three ostrich feathers emerging from a gold crown. A ribbon below the coronet bears the German motto Ich dien ("I serve"). Those seals are therefore full of symbols, thus connotations to the English monarchy. By displaying the seals on the labels of its trench coats (appendix 3), Burberry is reminding its clientele of its past, and signalling its heritage.



Image 7 - Prince of Wales Royal Warrant



Image 6 - Queen Elizabeth II Royal Warrant

Thus, it draws on the connotations of the British monarchy, where currently the longest ruling regent is a queen. The British monarchy has a long tradition for powerful female regents, which makes it a more fitting use for the logo than the equestrian emblem. They are being placed right over the new Burberry logo (Image 4) as an addition.

Therefore, the new brand universe with all its visual brand variations tries to ensure a connection to the heritage dimension when relevant. But for many products, the brand name with its long history is enough to ensure a sufficient, although less visible, connection to its history. The complexity is actually maintained once the variations enter the equation and help to rebalance the tension between heritage and innovation.

5.4. A Necessary Tension

The brand identity of Burberry is based on this tension between heritage and innovation. Through all its rebranding, Burberry has managed to maintain this tension, by referring to previous visual expressions and hinting towards its innovative side. The use of variations is what helped transitions and made them possible. The 1901 first logo served as frame of reference to build the brand identity, and was constantly referred to through intertextuality. From this analysis, it is as well evident that this balance changed, in favour of a more modern expression where the heritage part does not fit. Thus, part of the brand identity disappeared with the last logo rebranding.

The question of whether or not this simplification of Burberry's logo is a sustainable branding strategy will need more time to be answered. If this type of font and design is what consumers are looking for at the moment, trends are known to disappear as fast as they appeared. By cutting with its heritage in its main logo and relying mostly on variations to connote it, Burberry might have found the way to avoid rethinking its visual expression too soon. Moreover, the brand's logo is only one aspect of its visual identity. The check pattern or the design of the trench coat are a part of it too. Going back to the concept of empty signifier, the Burberry logo (Image 4), and therefore name, became the perfect container of all the different brand's visual expressions and of the visual identity. By becoming an empty signifier, the Burberry logo becomes a sign, inside a sign universe of the brand's visual expressions. Even without associative totals connoting to heritage, it will still signify it because of all the meaning the name Burberry holds and of its strong brand identity. A high level of intertextuality is therefore necessary for heritage brands to transfer part of their brand identity and creates continuity and consistency in their visual expressions.

6. Discussion Chapter

This research focused on the analysis of the different visual expressions, or logos, that the Burberry brand has had since its creation, and how it managed to transfer brand identity throughout all of them. A detailed semiotic analysis of visual images has been conducted to determine the importance of intertextuality within the different logos and the importance of signified core values.

Rebranding studies focus on different aspects and can take a different scope, as shown in the previously presented literature review. Corporate rebranding or product rebranding as topics can therefore be focusing on internal or external stakeholders (Bolhuis et al., 2015; Joseph et al., 2020; Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). The studies would therefore be limited to the perception of the rebranding and how it influences the corporation. Most of those research would as well have name change as the centre of the rebranding process (Collange & Bonache, 2015). Another aspect of rebranding that previously received attention focused on the impact of advertisement to create a successful rebranding (Bolhuis et al., 2015). This study, by focusing exclusively on the content created by the brand, will be a perfect complement to previous findings. In combination, previous research on the importance of corporate visual identity and its influence on brand image would have a focus on how it impacts the consumers and employees, but not how to lower this impact. The literature highlighted as well the risks that come with rebranding (Collange, 2014; Joseph et al., 2020; Marques et al., 2020; Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006).

The problem of transferring the core dimensions of the brand identity, as it was pointed out, is of the essence for many heritage brands. This has not been studied in previous research and therefore tackled in this thesis. The recent switch in fashion houses to make their visual expression and logo designs more minimalistic is connecting to this general problem. The findings of this study therefore pointed out

how to maintain a distinctive identity, while in a minimalist way trying to blend in. This without leaving authenticity behind and losing differentiation aspects.

The analysis showed how core values are balanced and maintained over time; that even in the recent rebranding, core values of innovation and heritage are maintained, but in a different way. Indeed, previous research did not put the focus on the transfer of brand image for brands that hold a lot of heritage. From the findings, it was possible to determine that it is easier to accept a new design when it feels familiar. The analysis highlighted as well that a good transfer of brand core values within visual expressions will make sure the brand identity is being transferred alongside. For heritage brands that rely extremely heavily on their heritage core value, for branding purposes, having a clear design of how to transfer it is of the essence.

The analysis of the connection between previous logos, within one same brand, led to new findings. Such as the importance of intertextuality to create continuity and consistency in the visual expression. Moreover, instead of a traditional monolithic visual identity, Burberry is unfolding a nuanced visual brand universe where the brand identity is expressed in different ways towards different audiences and needs. Thus, the simplicity of the new Burberry logo, and the reduction of heritage connotations, did not become an issue so to speak. This can be linked to the previously established semiotic phenomenon of bricolage, where pre-existing signs create a new whole once put together (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2009), and with the concept of “empty signifier” (Mehlman, J., 1972). The new Burberry logo (Image 4) does not refer to anything else besides itself and is thus open for multiple interpretations. Yet, those interpretations are tempered by intertextuality, of the varied visual brand universe: the logo variations (Appendix 3, Appendix 4). Indeed, the brand name is now so established that it can almost self-referentially refer to itself as a source of heritage, so the need for explicit visual markers of heritage is not so strong. That is the reason why the logo variations are enough for the brand to signal its heritage.

It was also highlighted by the analysis that rebranding always is a response to societal changes, and changes in customer preferences (Mañas-Viniegra et al., 2020). In this case, not only Burberry but the entire fashion industry has faced challenges in terms of feminine and masculine values transmitted by a company. In the

aftermath of the me-too movement, and the awakening of existing problems. The rebranding of the brand was therefore a way to replace some of its visual expression (the equestrian knight) with others that fit better the society (the royal warrants seals).

This study will be beneficial to communication professionals, to reflect on brand identity and develop the best strategy to transmit the right message in visual expressions. The study will as well help brands understand what components of their visual expressions can be modified, and which are essential to the preservation of their brand identity. Knowledge has therefore been added on how to handle logo rebranding for historic brands, this even outside the fashion industry, and to make sure they maintain a coherent visual expression and get a positive response from stakeholders. Heritage brands will therefore be able to use this study to prepare themselves before a rebranding and knowing how to confront it.

7. Concluding Chapter

The study aimed to determine how different visual expressions of heritage brands, in the fashion industry, managed to be a reflection of their brand identity. Moreover, it aimed to identify if there was a coherent move from one visual expression to another. Therefore, the following research question was introduced:

- How are heritage luxury brands transferring their brand identity, while moving from a complex to a simple visual expression?

Through a semiotic analysis of visual images, it was determined that references to previous visual expressions are essential. As it was the case with the Burberry equestrian knight, that became one of the brand icons, thus essential to the brand recognition. It was as well determined that for heritage brands, a good transfer of the brand values inside their visual identity is of importance. Likewise, the importance of the use of variations has been determined. Building a visual brand universe is a way for brands to vary the visual expressions for different products and target audiences.

However, because of some limitations of the study, it will be possible for further research to develop on some new aspects. This was a new study and limited to the fashion industry. Other industries could be under the scope of a study, highlighting different connotations in the brands visual expressions. Many other industries are relying heavily on heritage as a branding strategy as (Urde, et al., 2007) pointed out. Likewise, if the subject of this study were heritage brands, companies branding themselves as innovative could be analysed. How would their brand essence be transferred during a rebranding process? The technology sector would benefit from such findings. Finally, some of the findings were solely limited to Burberry, such as the use of the monogram to signify heritage. Therefore, future research could focus on other heritage brands.

Overall, the study contributed to strategic communication, by giving an insight on how to handle logo rebranding for heritage brands, this while moving from a complex to a simple visual expression.

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Appendix

Appendix 1:



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Appendix 2:



Retrieved from: <https://us.burberry.com/our-history/>

Appendix 3:



Retrieved from: <https://www.burberryplc.com/en/company/history.html>

Appendix 4:



Retrieved from: <https://www.vervemagazine.in/fashion-and-beauty/can-you-spot-a-real-burberry-trench>