The Role of Heritage and Authenticity in the Value Creation of Fashion Brand

Andrea Boccardi[1], Cristiano Ciappei[1], Lamberto Zollo[1], Maria Carmen Laudano[1]

[1]Department of Sciences for Economics and Business, University of Florence, Florence, Italy.

Correspondence: Lamberto Zollo, School of Management, University of Florence, Florence, Italy. Tel: 390-552-759-011. E-mail: lamberto.zollo@unifi.it

Abstract

This paper builds on traditional and recent marketing research concerning the constituents of brand authenticity, particularly investigating consumers' experience in the context of fashion industry. Specifically, we attempt to unpack the dimensions underlying the concept of brand authenticity by, first, correlating the role of heritage and 'mythopoesis' – the creation of a myth through repetitive narrative – and, second, by applying our proposed theoretical framework to four Italian luxury fashion brands, namely Gucci, Salvatore Ferragamo, Lous Vuitton, and Stefano Ricci. Thanks to the positioning of such fashion brands according to different levels of heritage and authenticity, it emerges how mythopoesis allows brand marketers to transfer brand heritage from past to both present and future. In this way, the risk of brand fixation in the celebration of the past may be overcome. Managerial implications are finally discussed, showing how marketers may foster or hinder brand authenticity, and how such an aspect affects consumer experience and attitude toward the brand.

Keywords: brand authenticity, heritage, strategic marketing, consumer experience

1. Introduction

Mythopoesis is the creation of a myth: an emblematic symbol characterized by a narrative rich of sense and allegorical values which is able to order and orient the generation of sense (Sherry, 2005; LaTour, 2010). In mythopoesis, the generation of sense in the present time finds a foundation in the past and looks to the future (Balmer, 2011). Mythopoesis is not limited to capture the past myths but, at the same time, it reinterprets the myth in the present context and nourishes the narrative in order to affect the future (Sherry, 2005). As well as the myth, heritage is a concept linked to both the past and the present, significantly affecting the future (Balmer, 2011; Hudson, 2011). The expression heritage describes the complex patrimony of everything the past has transmitted to nowadays, defining the identity of a population, a territory or a social group (Marani and Pavoni, 2006). Heritage is a symbolic patrimony that from the past generates the present (Lowenthal, 1998; Merchant and Rose, 2013). However, at the same time, heritage also threatens to block and prevent access to the future. On the contrary, mythopoesis allows a possible access to the future through innovative sense making, thus continuously generating and regenerating sense (Sherry, 2005; LaTour, 2010). Hence, there are both threats and opportunities for heritage marketing. Threats refer to blocking mythopoesis in the past thus preventing its renewal. Main opportunities refer to the exploitation of mythopoesis in order to renew symbolic value and meanings.

This paper aims to link the symbolic value of goods to the creation of economic value thanks to alive and innovative mythopoesis that continuously generates axiological value, which results in criteria of preference for consumers. In particular, this paper focuses on the authenticity of high symbolic fashion brands. For these goods, heritage and myhtopoesis contribute to authenticity and the creation of economic value. Furthermore, this work intends to highlight the risk, scarcely investigated in the literature, that the celebration of the past myth typical of the heritage marketing blocks the process of renewal of the sense. While in the short term the heritage marketing generates competitive advantages by exploiting the past, in the long term it should 'ride' mythopoesis in order to support the capacity for renewal of the myth. Mythopoesis creates sense and meanings through the narrative thus determining affective sentiment and emotion about brand identity. Hence, such feelings generate axiological values of preferability. This preferability of values orders and partly guides the empirical preferences of consumers. Finally, empirical preferences of consumers turn into economic value for fashion enterprises.

2. Mythopoesis of Fashion Brand: a Parallelism between Fashion Brand and Myth

Recent literature stresses symbolic aspects of brand such as identity, tradition, values, and meanings (Urde et al., 2007). The idea of brand as an intangible symbolic concept is present in recent studies individuating key components of a brand, namely identity, symbolism, differentiation, and experiential value (Bunchanan-Oliver et al., 2008; Tynan et al., 2010). In addition to this, intangible and symbolic brand's values have been recently acknowledged by Kim and Ko (2012) that describe brand equity as "*a customer's subjective and intangible assessment of the brand over and above its value*" (p.1481). This idea of brand as an intangible symbolic concept allows the association of brand with myth (Sherry, 2005; LaTour et al., 2010; Leudicke et al., 2010). This idea can be summarized with the expression: brand-myth (LaTour et al., 2010; Luedicke et al., 2010). Actually, symbolic value of brand is connected to a narrative of brand able to generate myths (Sherry, 2005). This is especially true for fashion brands with high symbolic value where myths can be encapsulated by brands. LaTour et al. (2010) argue that brand-myths are able to generate sense to everyday experience shared by a determined community. In order to create ethical and economic sustainable brand-myth strategies, brand names must acquire meaningful symbols that allow both economic value creation and social change adaptation (Kohli et al., 2005; Paasovaara et al., 2012). According to the structuralist perspective (Holt, 2003; Levi-Strauss, 2013), a brand-myth can resolve contradictions in society. Brand-myths interpret community desire or anxiety by offering a solution to transcendental needs (Holt, 2003). As well as for every mythological structure, brand-myths provide "*an archetypical cultural template that societies can use to represent and understand complex cultural occurrences and sociopolitical crises*" (Leudicke et al., 2010, p. 1018). High symbolic fashion brands are some of the myths of our times. The names of companies, products, and services are identities that contribute to shaping beliefs and individual or collective behavior (Balmer, 2001). Especially in fashion, one of the fundamental tasks of marketing is to propose values and impose tastes thus providing identity and reputation which make brands desirable and consequently preferable (Ciappei and Surchi, 2011). The myths of fashion are identities that come alive in our individual psychologies and so orient our purchasing behavior and fruition through ways which are more irrational than rational, more unconscious than conscious (Ciappei and Surchi, 2011). These identities are deeply rooted in personal and collective psychology aiming to reassure and exorcise the fear of uncertainty and to reduce anxiety of living (Holt, 2004).

One of the objectives of this paper is to highlight some similarities between myth and fashion brand. The myth provides a set of perspectives that guide the sense of human life (Levi-Strauss, 2013). The fashion brand too has the ambition to express and enclose a way of being and living through clothing. The myth is built to defend individuals from the world and in particular provides safety in response to the challenge for survival (Holt, 2003; 2004; Levi-Strauss, 2013). Similarly, fashion brand creates a sense of safety in respect of individual self and others (Merchant and Rose, 2013). The myth is creation of a divine meaning of the world with the goal of defending humans from threat, pain, and death (Levi-Strauss, 2013). Similarly, brands build a symbolic meaning through which individuals feel coated, protected from chaos and threats of relative symbolic context (Holt, 2003; 2004; LaTour et al., 2010). Furthermore, brand identity communicates symbolic meanings and creates a sense of safety and stability in an uncertain context (Merchant and Rose, 2013). The search for transcendence is the most common trait between the myth and the brand: both of them are interpreted as *pro tempore* remedy against anonymity, pain, and death (Holt, 2003; 2004; LaTour et al., 2010; Levi-Strauss, 2013). Their main intent is to ensure a cognitive diffusion of a common sense of identification (Durkheim, 1961). The best way for cognitive diffusion of both myth and brand is the narrative (Eliade, 1959; Sherry, 2005). Not necessarily this dissemination must be spread through words, but it can be achieved also through other forms, first of all the images.

Concerning the similarities between myth and brand, an important role is played by their propensity to become a source of aggregation and identification in line with Durkheim (1961). This author shows how myths have the ability to give cohesion to human communities through the creation of a common language. Fashion brand also promotes the collective creation of myths, tales, and histories closely linked to a community of producers and consumers (Bodkin et al., 2009). From a sociological point of view, myth can be considered as a collective representation of social origin resulting in social action (Luedicke, 2010). Myth can be interpreted as the result of a collective thought and assumes the characteristics of a collective belief. The brand, like the mythological hero, is a container of values, perspectives, and meanings which represent a certain lifestyle for common people (Luedicke, 2010). Consumers choose and use a specific brand because they perceive it as a source of elevation, pleasure, and self-realization (Holt, 2003; Luedicke, 2010). The creation of myth and the ability to renew them in fast changing contexts can be defined as mythopoesis that in marketing contexts is defined by brandthropologist John F. Sherry (2005) as marketing mythopoesis (Sherry, 2005). Precisely, this author refers to, "*the creation and perpetuation of deep meaning through narrative*" (p.42). Mythopoesis creates myths through a symbolic narrative that orders and orients the generation of sense (Sherry, 2005; LaTour et al., 2010). In mythopoesis, the generation of sense in the present time is anchored in the past and, at the same time, it is

oriented toward the future (Balmer, 2011). Mythopoesis is able to affect both the present and the future thanks to its ability to renewal and continuously generating and regenerating sense (Sherry, 2005; LaTour, 2010).

3. Heritage Marketing

Brand-myths are associated with typical elements of heritage, such as identity, tradition, symbolic values and meanings (Urde et al., 2007). Therefore, an opportunity for heritage marketing is to communicate the myths associated with corporate or brand identity. According to the Cambridge dictionary, heritage can be defined as "*features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, which come from the past and are still important*" (Merchant and Rose, 2013, p. 2620). This expression describes the whole patrimony that has been transmitted from the past to nowadays, thus defining the identity of a population, a territory or a social group (Marani and Pavoni, 2006). Heritage may relate to "*an object, monument, inherited skill or symbolic representation, and is a key identity component of a social group*" (Bessiere, 1998, p. 26). Heritage provides existential roots by contributing to form the identity (Balmer, 2011). Heritage is therefore able to offer a sense of identity, continuity, and certainty in a rapid evolving world (Rapport, 2002). Macdonald (2006) highlights that "*in sociological terms, heritage has been defined in terms of a material testimony of identity; as a discourse and a set of practices concerned with the continuity, persistence and substantiality of collective identity*" (p. 11). The concept of heritage may be understood as cultural patrimony or inheritance and it can be used in different contexts: cultural, anthropological, environmental, social, and business (Montemaggi and Severino, 2007). Particularly, there are numerous studies related to tourism that speak about heritage management and heritage marketing (Garrod and Fyall, 2000; DuCros, 2001; McKerchner, 2004; Aas et al., 2005). Recently, the term heritage has been introduced in the studies of management and marketing. In these contexts, in fact, it is possible to address the following expressions: heritage management, heritage marketing, brand heritage, and corporate heritage (Misiura, 2005; Balmer et al., 2006; Urde et al., 2007; Montemaggi and Severino, 2007; Balmer, 2011; Hudson, 2011; Wiedmann et al., 2011; Merchant and Rose, 2013). In addition, companies have started to pay more attention to their history and heritage in order to increase awareness and knowledge both toward internal and external stakeholders, aiming to obtain competitive advantages (Misiura, 2005). Both firms and scholars began talking about heritage marketing in order to define strategies aimed at enhancing value and communicating corporate heritage or brand heritage (Misiura, 2005; Urde et al., 2007; Balmer, 2011). Heritage marketing is based on the belief that products and services have value for not only the capacity for satisfying needs, but also for symbolic meanings that such products and services can generate and communicate (Urde et al., 2007). This is particularly true for fashion brand with high symbolic value. In such context, the symbolic meaning is a fundamental driver in order to obtain consumers' consensus. Heritage marketing helps to associate meanings and values to products and services, by using the heritage of enterprises as a strategic resource (Misiura, 2005; Urde et al., 2007). Aaker (2004) highlights how every enterprise may benefit from showing brand roots in order to stress its identity and strengths. Particularly, corporate heritage allows companies to communicate their identity and to spread stable values and meanings in a period of uncertainty as nowadays (Balmer, 2011). Heritage marketing strategies are numerous. For example, it is possible to highlight: creation of archives and museums; organization of past celebratory events; realization of products inspired by past models; development of brand closely linked to corporate heritage (Montemaggi and Severino, 2007). However, all actions of heritage marketing should always have the ability to affect both present and future. In fact, heritage marketing should celebrate "*a particular past through the lens of the present*" (Balmer, 2011, p. 1383) and should communicate certain enduring institutional features. In this perspective, it is essential to create synergies with stakeholders and with the community by highlighting the connection between company and community identity.

Heritage marketing is linked to brand heritage. Urde et al. (2007) describe brand heritage as a " *dimension of a brand's identity found in its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols and particularly in the organizational belief that its history is important*" (p. 4). Brand heritage recalls brand's origins and includes the evolution of values, symbols, and meanings associated to the brand thus providing authenticity and differentiation (Aaker, 2004; Urde et al., 2007; Merchant and Rose, 2013). Brand heritage enhances brand value (Keller and Richey, 2006) and allows the selling of products and services at high prices thus guaranteeing high profit margins (Stewart-Allen, 2002). Urde et al. (2007) differentiate between brand heritage and heritage brands and they maintain that "*a heritage brand is one with a positioning and value proposition based on its heritage*" (p. 4). Therefore, from the perspective of these authors, the aim of heritage marketing should be to create heritage brand. The development and communication of brand heritage may be a driver of success in fashion brand with high symbolic value, mainly because it fosters consumers' sense making and the transmission of symbolic meanings (Urde et al., 2007). Therefore, heritage could be "*harnessed and employed as a strategic resource in order to generate value as part of corporate marketing*" (Urde et al., 2007, p.6).

Literature focusing on brands management during time stresses that marketing strategy should pursue a balance between continuity and innovation (Hudson, 2011). Brand heritage tends to give consumers a stable and reassuring feeling of identity (Merchant and Rose, 2013). As a result, brand heritage represents a crucial source of competitive

advantages, especially during times of uncertainty and crises. In fact, the concept of heritage is not only closely linked to history but, at the same time, it refers both to present and future (Lowenthal, 1998; Balmer, 2011). However, a risk of heritage marketing is to be too anchored to the past thus generating a future which is only a reproduction of the past. In particular, during period of crises, firms implement heritage marketing strategies in order to stress brand identity and provide sense of continuity thus losing the opportunity of regenerating their brand identity through mythopoesis.

4. The Risks of Heritage Marketing and Innovative Mythopoesis such as Solution

This papers aims to highlight a threat-opportunity for heritage marketing. The threat of heritage marketing is the obsessive fixation in the celebration of the past, thus losing the ability to evolve and reposition fashion brand in line with the progression of time (Hudson, 2011). In this way, heritage marketing blocks mythopoesis in the past thus preventing its renewal. The opportunity is to dynamically ride the wave of mythopoesis which is able to continuously generate an innovative sense making.

When a community stiffens in self-celebration, myths become sclerotized and they negatively retroact into a vicious circle thus blocking the renewal of mythopoesis. Myths are stories that provide motivational latent energy to developing community. Therefore, when the latent part is less nourished than the apparent and celebrated one, the myth begins to lose its ability to generate sense and communicate identity, values, and meanings. Another significant element refers to the necessary coevolution of myth and community. Myths foster community cohesion, but if these myths are not inclined toward future the community risk to be bound in its past. In this way, myth is preserved and embalmed thus losing the ability to renewal. The antidote to contrast such threat of heritage marketing consists in feeding the myths as well as celebrating them, thus narrating histories while these are lived. Hence, a sort of 'peripatetic' mythopoesis in which the narrator continues walking and evolving. It is necessary to continue to narrate the myths with the willingness of changing them in order to make them alive in the present thus adapting them to the contingency. Mythopoesis of fashion brand is directly inserted into a community that struggles in order to survive. Fashion brands require a nomadic mythology that evolves along with the relative community.

5. Value Creation by Innovative Sense Making of Mythopoesis

Mythopoesis is not limited to capture past myths but, at the same time, it reinterprets myth in the present context and nourishes the narrative in order to affect the future. Such a mythopoesis generates sense drawing from past heritage and at the same time projecting it toward the future. Mythopoesis ensures the opening of heritage both to present and to future through innovative sense making thus continuously generating and regenerating sense (Sherry, 2005). In high symbolic fashion brand an important driver for the creation of economic value is the sense making. What is bought or sold is not so much the physical product, but the meaning that people can benefit from both purchase and consumption.

In high symbolic fashion brand, mythopoesis is strictly linked to the generation of economic value because sense making is one of the main drivers for the creation of economic value. Firstly, mythopoesis creates sense and meanings through the narrative. Secondly, such narrative generates affective sentiment and emotion about brand identity. Thirdly, such feelings generates axiological values, which are stable *a-priori* criteria of preferability. Then, this preferability of values orders and partly guides consumers' empirical preferences manifested through purchase and, finally, such empirical preferences turn into economic value for enterprises. Therefore, we interpret mythopoesis as the *a-priori* of economic value and this is especially true for goods and services with high symbolic value. In high symbolic fashion brand, entrepreneurs transform almost every process of consumption in a flow of sense thus converting themselves into storytellers and consumers into researchers of meanings. A critical success factor is the ability to grasp the potential involved in heritage in order to continuously generating innovative sense making. The entrepreneur should be able to make a sense to the potential of heritage, which is both a future direction and a meaning. The heritage marketing should be a part of a more general management of symbolic value by exploiting mythopoesis in order to communicate symbolic values and meanings. The key aspect is the transformation of mythopoesis in economic value and not the crystallization of the brand, thus avoiding the risk for heritage marketing of obsessive fixation in the celebration of the past.

6. Tension between Heritage and Mythopoesis in Marketing

The sense making that generates economic value can be interpreted as the present resulting from tension between past and future. The main criticality of brand identity is how to position it between a stock of past heritage and a flow of mythopoesis that opens toward the future. The way such tension can be accomplished determines both authenticity and inauthenticity of brand identity, and the different ways of reinterpreting the authenticity (Beverland, 2005). The authenticity of fashion brand is interpreted following Heidegger's definition (1996) as the existence reflecting the inner meaning of the collection linked to three elements, namely uniqueness, possibility, and choice. The inner meaning of collection linked to uniqueness represents the heritage nucleus; the spectrum of possibilities represents the space where mythopoesis achieves sense; finally, the choice of marketing mix represents the turning point that offers a solution to

these elements. According to Heidegger, the existence is the shift from the determination (uniqueness) of the past toward the indetermination (possibility) of the future. The present has to make a choice that will be authentic if it reinterprets the past in order to open and not close the future. In this paper, we interpret authenticity as the result of two divergent albeit not opposed forces, such as heritage marketing and mythopoetic marketing. On the one hand, heritage marketing is past-oriented and can be interpreted as the ability to evoke the past by instilling an idealistic and magical sense into consumer (Beverland, 2005). Thanks to the combination of meaning, idealism, and past tradition, brand managers may exploit the so-called 'arcadia' (Brown et al., 2003). On the other hand, marketing mythopoesis is future-oriented and can be interpreted as the narrative able to project in the future the original identity tradition, thus settling the paradoxes deriving from current the market's dynamism and competitiveness, the consumer's sensibility, and the enterprise's passion reflected by brand's uniqueness. Marketing research on retro-branding has labeled such narrative as 'aura' (Brown et al., 2003), which we interpret as the ability of reinterpreting brand's historical tradition through a myhtopoetic narrative able to transport the past authenticity also in the present. As a result, we interpret heritage as a sort of 'stock' that has to be used and narrated in order to be conserved, while mythopoesis is a 'flow' of sense that nourishes the new and different values of brand. The tension resulting from marketing heritage and marketing mythopoesis generates a sort of 'antinomy' (Brown et al., 2003) that allows the settlement of past and modern paradoxes coexisting for the success of brand heritage. We argue that brand's authenticity results from the presence of a high heritage sense combined with a high mythopoetic sense. Specifically, we refer to a graduation of authenticity in relation to determined levels of heritage and myhtopoesis. Applying such concept to brand it is possible to conceptualize a theoretical framework (see Figure 1) stressing four types of positioning.
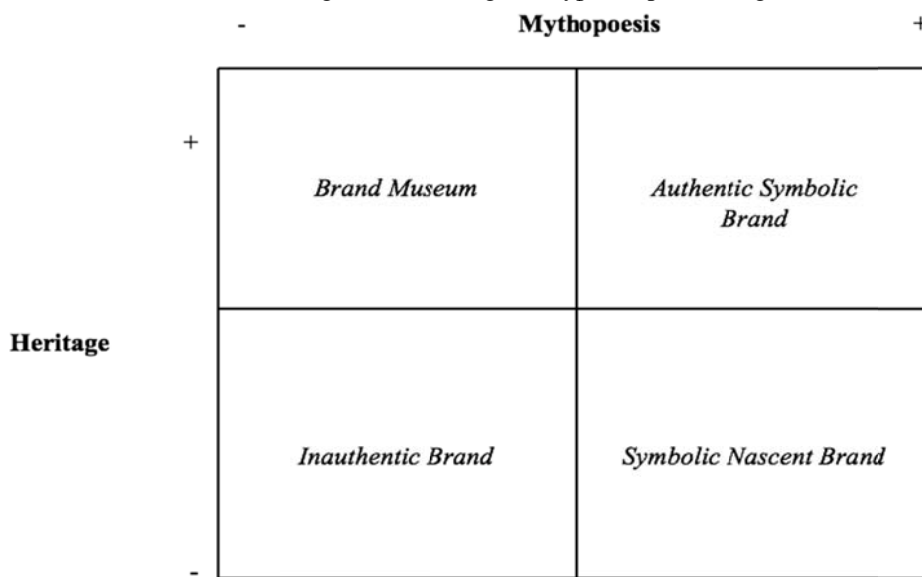

Figure1. The Determinants of Authenticity: Heritage and Myhtopoesis

Firstly, what we call 'authentic symbolic brands' show high levels of both heritage and myhtopoesis. Second, 'inauthentic brands' show low levels of heritage and mythopoesis. Then, brands showing high level of mythopoesis and minor levels of heritage are here interpreted as 'symbolic nascent brand'. Finally, brands characterized by high levels of heritage and minor levels of mythopoesis are conceptualized as 'museum brands'. Usually, a non mass-customized brand may firstly generate a 'symbolic nascent brand', which thanks to historic heritage gathering becomes an 'authentic symbolic brand'. At this point, the main risk refers to an inadequate creation of mythopoesis by exploiting only the heritage patrimony, thus becoming a 'brand museum'. Finally, once the 'brand museum' has exploited or forgotten its heritage, the main risk refers to a collapse toward the 'inauthentic brand'. However, inauthenticity may derive either from a historical absence or from a degraded and forgotten brand heritage. In this latter case, the brand may resuscitate as it happened for Pierre Cardin that in the 90s seemed to be so degraded as to be considered inauthentic. In this article we only focus on the area of 'authentic symbolic brand' in order to propose both the variables of heritage and myhtopoesis through a fractal model. As a result, we illustrate four areas depending on different levels of authenticity resulting from heritage and/or mythopoesis (see Figure 2).
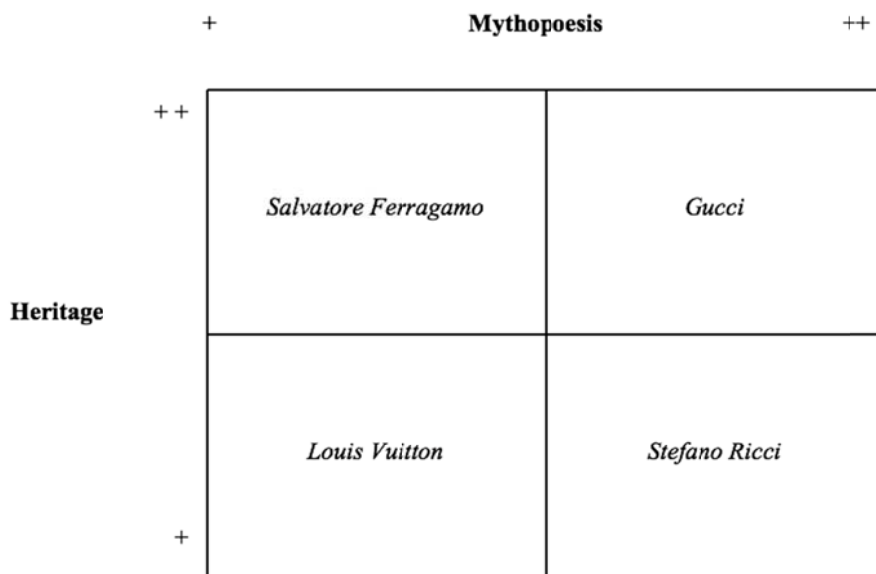
Figure 2. The Fractal Explosion of Authenticity

In fashion field, heritage is more celebrating and, therefore, typically linked to communication of the past. Viceversa, although being characterized by a narrative structure, mythopoesis is more linked to innovativeness of collection. For example, Gucci is characterized by a high level of heritage (museums, tradition cult, quality values) but, at the same time, shows a high innovativeness thanks to its stylists and collection. This innovativeness can be interpreted as a future-oriented mythopoetic ability. Hence, thanks to these characteristics, Gucci is able to remain anchored to the authentic area. A possible strengthening of authenticity may be realized by re-insertion of Gucci's family stylist, thus linking myhtopoesis of fashion brand to Gucci's family saga.

Ferragamo is characterized by a high level of heritage but a minor level of mythopoesis. However, it is important to stress the fact that we are still describing the highest area of authenticity. The main risk of Ferragamo is to decline its marketing in a 'museum brand'. The choice of classic fashion is a legitimate market strategy, but its criticality refers to limited mythopoesis renewal. In order to successfully remain in the classical segment, Ferragamo could launch a classical collection directed toward young consumers with an appropriate marketing mix. This could benefit also the renewal of the enterprise client segment.

Stefano Ricci is characterized by high level of myhtopoesis and minor level of heritage. In order to strengthen its heritage patrimony, the enterprise has exploited traditional Tuscan craftsmanship, i.e. by acquiring the *Antico Setificio Fiorentino*. Since Stefano Ricci's brand is not proposed as heritage of its own brand, it represents the innovative mythopoetic of a past tradition. The main risk of such brand refers to the inability of transforming the mythopoetic flow into a heritage stock of the same brand.

Finally, Louis Vuitton is characterized by minor levels of both heritage and mythopoetic, although the brand is still an authentic one. The brand has been too much duplicated by illegal fakes and the attempts of brand's renewal through innovative styles and collections were not able to sufficiently propose an adequate innovativeness. However, it is still possible to strengthen Lous Vuitton's brand authenticity by supporting its heritage through a communication aimed at stressing how the best enterprises are imitated.

We argue that the tension between heritage and mythopoesis generates different levels and types of authenticity. As we illustrate above, such tension is characterized by antinomy elements. Heritage, mythopoesis, and antinomy compose what we call 'authentic allure'. In order to be alluring, authenticity needs the tension heightening its attractiveness. Such tension in the present arises from antinomy between the past and the future. In such narrative space of antinomy, both brand authenticity and consumer authenticity struggle and are combined by their experiences. Derrida (1985) stresses how the emptiness that is created by antinomy through its paradoxes and ambiguities in a narrative text is able to generate the space where readers insert their desires and succeed in identifying their selves with it. In the same way, such space of antinomy refers to the place where authenticity of both consumers and brand can be related. Brand authenticity has to be compared with consumer authenticity. We interpret consumer authenticity as the experience lived by the individual in purchasing and fruition of fashion product. The authenticity of consumer is also interpreted according to Heidegger definition (1996), as that existence that reflects the real inner nature of the individual, characterized by elements such as singularity, possibility, and choice. In such perspective, the consumer authenticity,

under a psychological and existential profile, may be high or low in its use of fashion brand. Hence, in fashion brand it is possible to segment antinomy present in the tension between heritage and mythopoesis through a scheme that compares brand authenticity with consumer experience authenticity (see Figure 3).
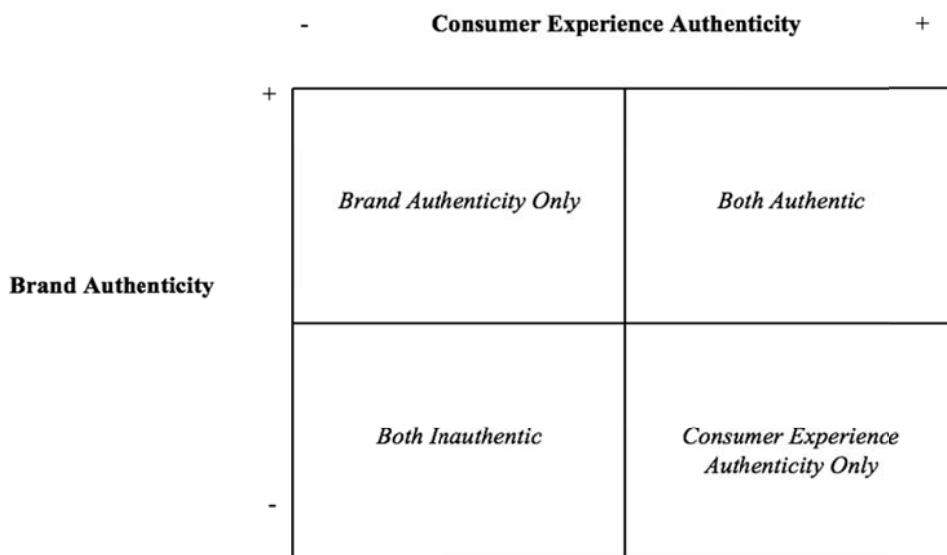

Figure 3. The Relationship Between Brand Authenticity and Consumer Experience Authenticity

In the case of low level of authenticity both for consumer and brand, the experience is not particularly relevant at a symbolic level. In presence of consumer authenticity and brand inauthenticity, we describe a situation characterized by the consumer that does not make problem of the symbolic value of brand. Only at a theoretical level, it is possible to verify a situation where an authentic consumer mistakes about the authentic value of brand. These two situations are not so relevant in the present article because they relate to inauthentic brands. Instead, the following two situations highlight how brand authenticity may assume different connotations in relation to authenticity or inauthenticity of the consumer. In the case of high authenticity both for brand and consumer it emerges how consumer is attracted by brand particularly on similarity elements that allow him to express what he/she already is. In the case of authentic brand and inauthentic consumer, this latter is attracted by the pursuit of existential support for his/her inauthentic personality, because the consumer denies his/her own heritage or because he/she wants to be part of an innovative mythopoetic flow. Such situation refers for example to the consumption of Western luxury brand by consumers of developing countries. As a result, the consumer seeks to fill an identity lack, through the pursuit of elements of brand identity in order to appear what he/she is not or to anticipate what he/she is still not. Such elements allow the differentiation and the segmentation of consumers in respect to authenticity levels and lacking typologies that may arise. We want to stress that the mythopoesis of an enterprise will always require a nucleus of authentic consumers in order to strengthen its own authenticity. In the case that enterprise marketing is mainly oriented toward inauthentic consumers, its mythopoesis ability will also be strongly reduced. This is due to the sense generated in the enterprise that as an actor of narrative will not find adequate interpreters in the world scenario. Therefore, the 'brand's comedy fame' will decline.

7. Conclusion

This paper theoretically argues that authenticity of a fashion brand, and also its economic value, is linked to heritage, mythopoesis, and to authenticity of authentic consumer's niche. Evidently, our paper has limitations, as our theses are untested in an empirical setting. An opportunity for future research refers to the implementation of an explorative study in order to measure the intensity of heritage and mythopoesis in fashion enterprises, and assess their relation in the authenticity considered as a latent variable.

The aim of this explorative study could be to stress the threat for authenticity represented by conservative heritage marketing and the opportunities of innovative mythopoesis.

References

Aaker, D. A. (2004). Leveraging the corporate brand. *California Management Review*, *46*(3), 6–18. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/41166218

Aas, C., Ladkin, A., & Fletcher, J. (2005). Stakeholder collaboration and heritage management. *Annals of Tourism research*, *32*(1), 28-48. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2004.04.005

Balmer, J. M. (2001). Corporate identity, corporate branding and corporate marketing-Seeing through the fog. *European*

Journal of Marketing, 35(3/4), 248-291. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03090560110694763

Balmer, J. M. (2011). Corporate heritage identities, corporate heritage brands and the multiple heritage identities of the British Monarchy, *European Journal of Marketing*, 45(9/10), 1380-1398. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03090561111151817

Balmer, J. M., & Greyser, S. A. (2006). Corporate marketing: Integrating corporate identity, corporate branding, corporate communications, corporate image and corporate reputation. *European Journal of Marketing*, 40(7/8), 730-741. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03090560610669964

Bessière, J. (1998). Local development and heritage: traditional food and cuisine as tourist attractions in rural areas. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 38(1), 21-34. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-9523.00061

Beverland, M. B. (2005). Crafting brand authenticity: the case of luxury wines. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(5), 1003-1029. http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2005.00530.x

Bodkin, C. D., Amato, C., & Peters, C. (2009). The role of conflict, culture, and myth in creating attitudinal commitment. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(10), 1013-1019. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2008.05.005

Brown, S., Kozinets, R. V., & Sherry Jr, J. F. (2003). Teaching old brands new tricks: Retro branding and the revival of brand meaning. *Journal of Marketing*, 67(3), 19-33. http://dx.doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.67.3.19.18657

Buchanan-Oliver, M., Brodie, R. J., & Huang, D. (2008). *Refining the dimensions of the brand in the service economy*. In "Thought Leaders International Conference on Brand Management". Birmingham Business School.

Ciappei, C., & Surchi, M. (2011). *La mitopoiesi della marca moda. Strategie di brand building nelle imprese moda*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

Derrida, J. (1995). *The Ear of the Other*. New York: Doubleday.

Du Cros, H. (2001). A new model to assist in planning for sustainable cultural heritage tourism. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 3(2), 165-170. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jtr.297

Durkheim, E. (1961). *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* translated by J.W. Swain. New York: Collier.

Eliade, M. (1959). *The sacred and the profane (Vol. 11)*. London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Garrod, B., & Fyall, A. (2000). Managing heritage tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(3), 682-708. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(99)00094-8

Heidegger, M. (1996). *Being and time: A translation of Sein und Zeit*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Holt, D. B. (2003). What becomes an icon most. *Harvard Business Review*, 81(3), 43-49.

Holt, D. B. (2004). *How brands become icons: The principles of cultural branding*. MA: Harvard Business Press.

Hudson, B. T. (2011). Brand heritage and the renaissance of Cunard. European Journal of Marketing, 45(9/10), 1538-1556.

Kapferer, J. N. (1992). *Strategic Brand Management: New Approaches to Creating and Evaluating Brand Equity*. The Free Press, New York, NY.

Keller, K. L., & Richey, K. (2006). The importance of brand personality traits to a successful 21st century business. *Journal of Brand Management*, 14(1/2), 74–81. http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2550055

Kim, A. J., & Ko, E. (2012). Do social media marketing activities enhance customer equity? An empirical study of luxury fashion brand. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(10), 1480-1486. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.10.014

Kohli, C. S., Harich, K. R., & Leuthesser, L. (2005). Creating brand identity: a study of evaluation of new brand names. *Journal of Business Research*, 58(11), 1506-1515. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2004.07.007

LaTour, K., LaTour, M. S., & Zinkhan, G. M. (2010). Coke is it: How stories in childhood memories illuminate an icon. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(3), 328-336. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.05.011

Levi-Strauss, C. (2013). *Myth and meaning*. London: Routledge.

Lowenthal, D. (1998). *The heritage crusade and the spoils of history*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511523809

Luedicke, M. K., Thompson, C. J., & Giesler, M. (2010). Consumer identity work as moral protagonism: how myth and ideology animate a brand‐mediated moral conflict. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36(6), 1016-1032. http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/644761

Macdonald, S. (2006). Undesirable heritage: Fascist material culture and historical consciousness in Nuremberg. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *12*(1), 9-28. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13527250500384464

Marani, P. C., & Pavoni, R. (2006). Musei. *Trasformazioni di un'istituzione dall'età moderna al contemporaneo*. Venezia: Marsilio Editore. *Marketing*, *45*(9/10), 1538-1556. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/03090561111151880

McKercher, B., DuCros, H., & McKercher, R. B. (2002). *Cultural tourism: the partnership between tourism and cultural heritage management*. Haworth Hospitality Press.

Merchant, A., & Rose, G. M. (2013). Effects of advertising-evoked vicarious nostalgia on brand heritage. *Journal of Business Research*, *66*(12), 2619-2625. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2012.05.021

Misiura, S. (2006). *Heritage marketing*. London: Routledge.

Montemaggi, M., & Severino, F. (2007). *Heritage marketing. La storia dell'impresa italiana come vantaggio competitivo*. Milano: Franco Angeli.

Paasovaara, R., Luomala, H. T., Pohjanheimo, T., & Sandell, M. (2012). Understanding consumers' brand‐induced food taste perception: A comparison of 'brand familiarity' and 'consumer value - brand symbolism (in)congruity' - accounts. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *11*(1), 11-20. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/cb.356

Rapport, N. (2002), *British Subjects: An Anthology of Britain*. London: Routledge.

Sherry, J. F. Jr. (2005). Brand Meaning. In Calkins, T. (eds.), *Kellogg on Branding*, (pp. 40-69). John Wiley & Sons.

Stewart-Allen, A. (2002). Heritage branding helps in global markets. *Marketing News*, *36*(16), 7.

Tynan, C., McKechnie, S., & Chhuon, C. (2010). Co-creating value for luxury brands. *Journal of Business Research*, *63*(11), 1156-1163. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.10.012

Urde, M., Greyser, S. A., & Balmer, J. M. (2007). Corporate brands with a heritage. *Journal of Brand Management*, *15*(1), 4-19. http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.bm.2550106

Wiedmann, K. P., Hennigs, N., Schmidt, S., & Wuestefeld, T. (2011). The importance of brand heritage as a key performance driver in marketing management. *Journal of Brand Management*, *19*(3), 182-194. http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/bm.2011.36

Woodside, A. G., Sood, S., & Miller, K. E. (2008). When consumers and brands talk: Storytelling theory and research in psychology and marketing. *Psychology & Marketing*, *25*(2), 97-145. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/mar.20203