A Historical Background to Genesis of Brand Doppelgänger

Prof. Gaurav Sood, Prof. (Dr.) J K Sharma
1Faculty of Management Studies, Manav Rachna International University, Faridabad, Haryana, INDIA.
2Amity Business School, Amity University Uttar Pradesh, Noida, INDIA.

Abstract: This paper maps the historical evolution of the concept of Brand Doppelgänger; tracking the emergence of earlier concepts of marketing, esp. brand. A better understanding of the brand and its imagery, equity of a brand, anti-branding and cultural jamming are necessary dimensions to understand the background to genesis of the doppelgänger brand. The paper explores the rise of anti-brand activities through user generated contents through the online medium. It further traverses the risk of emotional branding strategies and cultural jamming in creation of the monstrous doppelgänger brand imagery. This paper eventually puts together a strong case to either actively understand Doppelgänger power or work for brownie points at least. Therein, a defence of one’s own brands against a Doppelgänger attack from competition or elsewhere is forcefully mandated.

Keywords: Brand, Brand Marketing, Media, Brand Image, Brand Equity, Anti-Branding, Doppelgänger Brand Imagery, Marketing.

I. Discovering Brand Doppelgänger

The world of marketing and brand et al has always moved fast, conceptualising the next high, or the next relevant concept idiom. This paper delineates the historical background that led to the genesis of the Doppelgänger concept. We investigate the literature on Brand, followed by Brand Image & Brand Equity, subsequently tracing Anti-Branding, concluding on Doppelgänger Brand Imagery.

Philip Kotler once described brands as helping people to make decisions. In a world of frenzied competition and bewildering choice, they are of course the fastest, simplest and most effective way to link a name to a perception of value. What can easily be overlooked however is that B2B and B2C brands are not just about very different types of decisions but that they also involve very different types of decision making.

For the most part, consumer brands look to influence an individual and/or groups of individuals (tribes). They are at their most powerful ‘in the moment’. They are about excitement through identification, and they are often strongly influenced by culture, taste, fashion and what’s important to people as people. Two other insights are worth noting. The first: that the sense of value add is most important for publicly visible products and services, and that the importance of a strong and recognized brand increases significantly for those products and services that are clearly visible to the end user.

II. Brand – a complex phenomenon

Brand is a complex phenomenon. Though brands have been widely discussed and debated in academic world; a common understanding on brand could not be arrived at among the brand experts. “Each expert comes up with his or her own definition of brand or nuances of definition”, stated Kapferer (2012), which increases the complexity in brand interpretation as well as its management. On the pivotal issue of how the brand strategies can be developed, Chernatony and Williams (1989), talk of two key components characterizing brands and through the use of a two dimensional matrix, thus identifying the type of brand.

Now brands need to be strong, for that is where business has competitive advantage. Hoeflér and Keller (2003) show how brand strength, operationalised in various ways, can create differential responses by consumers to various marketing activities. De Chernatony, L., & Dall’Olmo Riley, F. (1998) tried to define a brand. They content analysed over one hundred articles from trade as well as from academic
journals, providing a broad and rich perspective of the range of definitions used. As a result of the content analysis of this literature, they identified twelve main themes which were an accurate categorization of the broad range of definitions of the "brand" in the literature, i.e. as: i) legal instrument; ii) logo; iii) company; iv) shorthand; v) risk reducer; vi) identity system; vii) image in consumers' minds; viii) value system; ix) personality; x) relationship; xi) adding value; and xii) evolving entity. The categorization into the twelve themes was fairly straightforward, since most authors used buzz words such as "personality" or "relationship" either in the definitions themselves, or in the discussion of their view of the brand.

This wrap-up of brand as a concept lay the earlier foundations, and helped marketing become more analytic via the construct of “brand”.

III. Brand Image & Brand Equity

Branding is a complex concept and houses various other concepts like Brand Image and Brand Equity. A detailed understanding into the dimensions of brand image, bringing up four categories of functions: guarantee, personal identification, social identification and status is a useful study (A. Beln del Río et al, 2001). Dobni, D., & Zinkhan, G. M. (1990) have given a study, In search of brand image: A foundation analysis. A few pointers arise:

- Brand image is the concept of a brand that is held by the consumer.
- Brand image is largely a subjective and perceptual phenomenon that is formed through consumer interpretation, whether rational or emotional.
- Brand equity is a vital facet of brand, and it originated in 1980s. Brand equity is closely related with brand loyalty and brand extensions. Therein arises the challenge of determining content and measurement of brand equity - whether financial or customer-based. The customer-based brand equity was studied by Chieng and Goi (2011).

Faced with absence of business-to-business (B2B) branding framework, Keller’s customer-based equity model was tested for B2B context (Kerri- Ann L. Kuhn et al, 2008) - indicating higher emphasis for selling organization’s corporate brand and its staff curability.

Keller (2003) enabled insights into various relationships that accrue, due to linking brands to other entities, for example, people, places, things, or other brands, as a means to improve their brand equity. Thus the constructs of brand image and brand equity stood differentiated from the generic roots of brand. The need to define, and protect, and grow the brand, the brand image, and the brand equity took stronghold in the castle of marketing.

IV. ANTI-BRANDING – From Activism to Hacktivism

Brand is no doubt a dynamic asset, it simply can’t stay static. Thereby, its negative dimensions may flare up. In this linkage delving into theories of consumer resistance, and so coming forth with an alternative model, it has been shown that brands are authentic cultural resources. (Holt, 2002)

Hogg (1998) explored the phenomenon of brand avoidance, and its determinants. So as to keep brand flexible enough to remain workable. Further study by analysing qualitative data from 23 in-depth interviews, and introduction of negative brand promises idea was completed (Lee and Motion, 2009). Anti-brand behaviours have been observed to be diverse: from complaining to third parties, to negative word of mouth, to illegal actions such as theft, threats, and vandalism. Mapping was done as to conditions under which such relationships may be transformed into exceptionally negative dispositions toward once-coveted brands. (Johnson et al, 2011)

Light was shed on the learning processes used to negotiate brand meaning within an anti-brand community (Zinkhan, 2010). It was revealed the negotiation of brand meaning is a social process where community members engage in brand-related discourses, interpretations, and sense-making.

Anti-brand can’t be completely said to have been studied unless the internet dimension has been covered. Web sites are online spaces that focus negative attention on a specific targeted brand. Anti-consumption movements on the internet have been gaining in numbers and in strength, research has not fully uncovered the nature of such sites and their impact on brand value and consumer anti-consumption. (Krishnamurthy, S., & Kucuk, S. U. , 2009).

The marketing’s anthropomorphic propensity, via brand animals, mascots and icons is an interesting study which portrays advertising icon life cycle and four beastly branding strategies (Brown, S., 2010).

Emotional branding is hugely in currency, even though this strategy is beset with many risks.
Rindfleisch, A., & Arsel (2006) reasoned that emotional-branding strategies are conducive to the emergence of a doppelgänger brand image, which is defined as a family of disparaging images and meanings about a brand that circulate throughout popular culture. The primal thesis they proposed was that a doppelgänger brand image can undermine the perceived authenticity of an emotional-branding story and, thus, the identity value that the brand provides to consumers. Negative Double Jeopardy (NDJ) was researched by Kucuk (2008): that the most valuable brands attract more anti-brand sites while less valuable brands do not have such hate attraction on the internet. The NDJ phenomenon and the NDJ components ['Brand Rank' and 'Brand Consistency'] were thus introduced. Negative publicity can lessen positive consumer perceptions of a brand – the holistic thinkers are less susceptible to negative publicity information than are analytic thinkers. Analytic thinkers are less likely to consider contextual factors, attributing negative information to the parent brand and updating their brand beliefs accordingly (Monga and John, 2008).

One of the stratagem in negative attack is parody. Measuring the consequences of parody on attitudes towards the brand that is the victim of the parody was studied (Jean, 2011). This study demonstrated that a brand parody communication by playing negative humour with an anti-commercial style represents a real threat for the brand parodied.

Going deeper in this arena, studies have mapped popular culture and modern communications media. It goes beyond mass media (Guillory, 2010). An across the spectrum exploration of cultural jamming was done from a point of view of developing a theoretical approach to explaining repertoire change and tactical choice (Iles, 2013). What came up was a rigorous conceptualization of culture jamming as an oppositional tactic.

Cultural jamming, a key part of negative branding, was linked to prankster (Harold, 2004). It was indicated the pranksters aren’t revenge prone, instead they are on a provocative mode. ‘Culture jamming’ is defined as ‘an organized, social activist effort that aims to counter the bombarding of consumption-oriented messages in the mass media’ (Handelman and Kozinets, 2004: n.p.). Carducci (2006) took this further to fathom culture jamming from a sociological perspective, situating it in the ‘expressivist’ tradition, which originates with the mid-18th century thinker Rousseau and whose legacy extends to postwar Western counterculture.

The issue of hacking, a new kind of internet threat, was studied to show how disrupting communications using internet enabled networks and organizations was done. (Mahncke & Williams, 2009). The hackers are in a sense really hacking to support the hegemonic practices of their respective countries, and that this kind of activity represents a new form of civic participation in international relations.

A detailed history of hacktivism’s evolution from early hacking culture to its present-day status as the radical face of online politics was laid out, along with describing the ways in which hacktivism has re-appropriated hacking techniques to create an innovative new form of political protest (Jordan & Taylor, 2004). The full social and historical context of hacktivism is positioned in terms of new social movements, direct action and its contribution to the globalization debate.

Cammaerts (2007) extended the cultural jamming techniques’ appropriation by political actors in their political communication practices. These ‘political’ jams are not directed at the corporate world as such, like the cultural jam, but towards society at large or governments, towards changing values or behaviours and even at times against minorities or common enemies.

On the basis of semiotic theory mainly by Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes, study was made on the related issues of Culture Jamming as a social phenomenon, history of advertising, ideology and propaganda (Önal, 2005). Rumbo (2002) ingeniously showed reversing of resistance into an advantage - the obstacles inherent in launching challenges to consumerism, and the difficulty of resisting consumerism given advertising's control over cultural spaces were studied. It was shown how marketers have converted resistance efforts from some of consumption's most ardent critics into market segments by targeting certain goods and services toward them.

Shimp T. (2013) gave a revolutionary thesis on pranking, illustrating how the yes man culture instilled culture jamming and carried tones of a disruptive rhetoric. Specifically, this thesis poses many research questions, key ones being: What rhetorical strategies do the Yes Men use to critique dominant corporate discourse and expose counter discourses? A Foucauldian rhetorical analysis reveals that the Yes Men rely on pranks that employ satire and sincerity to disrupt dominant corporate discourses, open spaces of freedom, and encourage critical self-reflection. The strategies of the Yes Men offer no doubt important insight into the relationship between rhetoric, discourse, and activism.
Darts, D. (2004) in his paper, Visual Culture Jam: Art, Pedagogy, and Creative Resistance, argues that visual culture is an essential direction for contemporary art educators who are committed to examining social justice issues and fostering democratic principles through their teaching. The study explores how visual culture education can empower students to perceive and meaningfully engage in the ideological and cultural struggles embedded within the everyday visual experience. The work of resistance theorists and socially engaged artists, including culture jammers, is researched in an effort to support and inform the teaching and learning of visual culture. This elaborate traverse of anti-branding provided the immediacy of the most analogous instincts in dangers besetting a brand; it was but natural for the concept of doppelganger to originate now.

V. Doppelgänger Brand Imagery

Abi-Ezzi, N. (2000) pores over the representation of the Double in the Work of Robert Louis Stevenson, Wilkie Collins and Daphne du Maurier. This is with particular reference to The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, The Woman in White, and Rebecca. A rejection of the prevailing social order is the basis of this rejection, different in each case, that determines the context in which each treats the double. This psychological symbolism manifests itself in several themes - namely the representation of landscape, animals, masquerade and writing - central to the main texts, and relating them clearly to one another. This study, then, while contributing on one level to the comparatively sparse literature on Collins and du Maurier, expands an understanding of the motif of the double by filling a gap in existing criticism, demonstrating that it is to no small degree through the relationship of the double to a given set of themes, defined through psychological symbolism, that the course and fulfilment of its function are explained.

Aggarwal, P., & McGill, A. L. (2007) rub it in a satirical way when they query, “Is That Car Smiling at Me?” Their research proposes schema congruity as a theoretical basis for examining the effectiveness and consequences of product anthropomorphism. Results of two studies suggest that the ability of consumers to anthropomorphize a product and their consequent evaluation of that product depend on the extent to which that product is endowed with characteristics congruent with the proposed human schema. And thus consumers’ perception of the product as human mediates the influence of feature type on product evaluation. Results of a third study, however, show that the affective tag attached to the specific human schema moderates the evaluation but not the successful anthropomorphizing of the product.

Giesler, M. (2012)’s paper: How Doppelgänger Brand Images Influence the Market Creation Process: Longitudinal Insights from the Rise of Botox Cosmetic, uses actor-network theory from sociology; and the author explores the creation of new markets as a brand-mediated legitimation process. Findings from an eight-year longitudinal investigation of the Botox Cosmetic brand suggest that the meanings of a new cosmetic self-enhancement technology evolve over the course of contestations between brand images promoted by the innovator and doppelgänger brand images promoted by other stakeholders. A four-step brand image revitalization process is offered that can be applied either by managers interested in fostering an innovation's congruence with prevailing social norms and ideals or by other stakeholders (e.g., activists, competitors) interested in undermining its marketing success. The findings integrate previously disparate research streams on branding and market creation and provide managers with the conceptual tools for sustaining a branded innovation's legitimacy over time.

Thompson, C. J., Rindfleisch, A., & Arsel, Z. (2006) comment on Emotional Branding and the Strategic Value of the Doppelgänger Brand Image. Emotional branding is widely heralded as a key to marketing success. They argue that emotional-branding strategies are conducive to the emergence of a doppelgänger brand image, which is defined as a family of disparaging images and meanings about a brand that circulate throughout popular culture. This article's thesis is that a doppelgänger brand image can undermine the perceived authenticity of an emotional-branding story and, thus, the identity value that the brand provides to consumers. The authors discuss how the tenets of emotional branding paradoxically encourage the formation and propagation of doppelgänger brand imagery. They end up developing the counterintuitive proposition that rather than merely being a threat to be managed, a doppelgänger brand image can actually benefit a brand by providing early warning signs that an emotional-branding story is beginning to lose its cultural resonance.

Freund, J., & Jacobi, E. S. (2013) map revenge of the brand monsters: How Goldman Sachs’ Doppelgänger turned monstrous. They found the analysis on cultural branding theory, brand
psychoanalysis, and literary genealogy in a post-disciplinary manner to investigate the creation of an anthropomorphic, monstrous doppelgänger brand image by critics of Goldman Sachs. The case study explores how critics have succeeded in morphing the image of the bank into a 'brand monster' for a section of the general public. It is evident brand monsters focus negative emotions against organisations by exposing, anthropomorphising, and dramatising their alleged, monstrous, hidden motives, methods, and effects. This paper contributes to the literature on doppelgänger brand images by showing the importance of anthropomorphism when attacking a brand that does not employ emotional or cultural brand strategies.

Zivkovic, M. (2000) detours towards the Double As The "unseen" Of Culture, and evolves a definition Of Doppelganger. Despite a considerable interest in the fictional double, as a literary device for articulating the experience of self-division, the motif of the double seems to resist narrow categorization and definition. The starting position in the attempt to arrive at a comprehensive definition is founded on the assumption that the fictional double is not a literary motif but a construction of traditional culture – myth, legend and religion. Although surviving as a perennial motif present in all literary styles, periods and genres the double is never "free" – it is not "outside" time but produced within and determined by its social context. Through the introduction of some modern psychoanalytic theories, it has been possible to claim for the double motif a subversive function. Signifying a desire to be reunited with a lost centre of personality the double shows in graphic forms a tension between the "laws of human society" and the resistance of the unconscious mind to these laws. By attempting to transform the relations between the imaginary and the symbolic, the double hollows out the real, revealing its absence, its great other, its unspoken and its unseen.

Vardoulakis, D. (2006) elaborates Negation, going onto the Doppelgänger in Freud's "The 'Uncanny'". The Doppelgänger as a motif arose within German Romanticism and became a canonical theme in "Gothic" literature. The term was coined by Jean Paul in his novel *Siebenkäs*, published in 1796. Authors such as E.T.A. Hoffmann and Edgar Alan Poe exemplify the original narratives of the motif and theme of the Doppelgänger. Doppelgänger characters tend to be associated with evil and the demonic; thus one can infer that the Doppelgänger presents a notion of the subject/subjectivity that is defective, disjunct, split, threatening, spectral. With the rise of psycho-analysis, such epithets are taken to indicate a tendency toward a sense of failure or loss in the self. Thereafter, the Doppelgänger has been commonly viewed as an aberration, the stencil of a symptomatology of the self. Admittedly, psychological symptoms or forms of subjective failure can be inferred in the literary instances of the Doppelgänger. However, the Doppelgänger retains the potential to be articulated in positive terms. But this can only come to light by questioning the unproblematic equating of content – either as the plot of the story, or as the history of a self – with a stable and retrievable origin. When the notion of origin is no longer a simple "content," then the Doppelgänger can be allowed to make a contribution toward an ontology of the subject. The subjective ontology that the Doppelgänger introduces should not be seen as positing an original substance or essence. On the contrary, its formal openness allows for its own interruption. At the same time, that openness is impossible without the interruption. The Doppelgänger, then, is a form of relationality that is not only a condition of possibility, but also a reflection of and on that condition. In this way, the Doppelgänger is aligned to a notion of modernity as interruption.

VI. Conclusion
As intended, this paper has most systematically laid down leading concepts, from bedrock of which the doppelganger has emerged. The objective thus attained is one, better communicating that a doppelganger is a look-alike or double of a living person, sometimes portrayed as a paranormal phenomenon, or in branding terms one's 'double-goer' as an evil twin has been attained. And two, with such a foredrop, a superior appreciation of what this concept stands for. With such fodder in hand, it is expected the analysts and custodians of brands in the corporate and social matrix, are beware of havoc that can be wreaked by manipulating the Doppelgänger identity. This should inspire and provoke thoughts on counter-measures, which is a natural subject matter for further studies. It is hoped, further studies plug in any gaps thus shown in the evolution of body knowledge around the mentioned concepts. In fact, another paper that focuses on Brand Measurement aspects would have extensive supplemental value.
References


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