

ANTOLOGICAL

Branding™

PREVIEW

BGRV. B 01

Morfique Labs™

A STUDY OF HOW BRANDS
ORIGINATE, TAKE FORM,
AND PROPAGATE.

BRAND GRAVITY
BGRV. B 01



Asad Zia
©

Understand The Nature
Of Branding — BGRV. B 01

Short Preview

This is a small, non-sequential sample
from Ontological Branding™

It was selected to show how the book reads, thinks and
moves before you decide to read it in full—without giving
away the moments that are meant to be encountered in
sequence. It does not represent the whole experience.

ACT ONE

Brand & Fire

SCENE I - THE FORGE



icture this, the room is dark except for the forge. Someone kneels beside the fire and lifts a burning length of wood from the coals. The end glows orange. Ash loosens and falls.

He carries it carefully across the room, shielding it from wind with his body. *The fire is no longer only in the forge. It travels and it moves.*

A child watches the flame move from one place to another, and the room understands what the hand is carrying; heat, light...danger? and continuity.

That burning piece of wood is a brand.

Later, the same word moves through poetry. A sword flashes in the dark. The blade catches firelight and becomes almost indistinguishable from flame. The poet calls it a brand. Not because it is wood. Because it is brightness with consequence.

The 12th century word brand is cognate with Old Norse word **Brandr**, Old High German **Brant**, Old Frisian **Brond**, and German **Brandaz**. Meaning roughly “a burning.” With the root meaning of heat or warmth. A few centuries later, around c. 1400s or better known as **The 15th Century Medieval Period**. The verb ‘to brand’ starts to appear and comes to mean burning or impressing a mark onto something. Usually with a hot iron, to cauterise or stigmatise, originally criminal marks. Continuing for few centuries.

ACT THREE

Trust & Truce

SCENE I - THE MATH OF TRUST (±) GAME THEORY

The hand on the cave wall solves one loneliness and creates another problem. It tells the human mind that someone else has been here, but it does not tell the human body whether that someone should be trusted. Presence is only the first relief. After it comes the harder calculation; another person can warn you, feed you, shelter you, and remember what you would have died learning alone. Another person can also deceive you, take from you, poison the exchange, or turn your need into leverage.

Trust begins inside that uncertainty. It is not yet a virtue. It is the risk of letting another human action enter your survival. Trust, it is not the pretty moral word people use after the danger has already been civilised. At the root, trust is the risk of letting another human action enter your survival. That is why trust has always had math inside it.

A plus.

A minus.

Gain if the other hand opens.

Loss if it closes.

INTERLUDE

Real Brand

A REAL PRODUCT, A REAL BUSINESS

There is a kind of product that looks, at first, like it should be a bad business idea. Not morally bad. Just mathematically suspicious and maybe economically detrimental.

The kind of thing a clever person rejects too quickly, because the obvious evidence points in the wrong direction.

There is an old lesson about planes returning from war. The planes come back full of bullet holes, and the immediate instinct is to reinforce the places where the holes appear. That seems sensible, no? That is where the damage is visible. Let's plug the holes, mend the damage.

But let me introduce you to a more frightening idea:

What about the places where the returning planes have no holes?

If a plane came back with holes in the wings, the wings could survive those holes. If no returning plane has holes in a certain part, perhaps the planes hit there never returned. The missing damage is the real evidence. That is the kind of product we are dealing with here. Something perhaps more akin to the **Survivor's Bias** problem.

ACT FIVE

Play Well

SCENE I — THE WOODEN DUCK

The workshop still had wood in it. That was the cruel thing. A room full of material, and almost no work left for it to become. The dry sweetness of wood shavings gathered near the bench like pale little curls of butter. There are wooden boards leaning against the wall, tools returned imperfectly to their places, and the kind of silence that only working rooms understand; not empty silence, but a waiting silence. A thing is supposed to happen here.

Ole Kirk Kristiansen stood inside the remains of his carpentry business with the hollow resignation of a man whose hands still knew what to do, but whose world had stopped asking.

There was too much wood for a man with no orders. That is where we begin. Not with invention or hope. With the stupid physical surplus of a failed future and a resignation from furniture.

Ole Kirk Kristiansen had been a respected carpenter, which is a beautiful thing to be until respect stops turning into work. The boards and the tools were still there. The skill was still there.

The ordinary world is full of these ancient achievements pretending to be common sense and, if humans have taught us anything, it is that the devil rarely hides in the details themselves. He hides in our confidence that we already understand them.

The strange common sense is that an object made in one place can arrive somewhere else and still be received as itself. A name can remain attached to a thing after the maker has vanished from the room. A mark can point back to a source the buyer has never met. A stranger can hold an object and behave as if the object has a history, a standard, and an answerable origin behind it.

We pass through that reality every day, so the mind stops treating it as strange.

But it is strange.

Almost offensively strange, once you slow down enough to look at it. A clay pot leaving the potter who shaped it is already a strange event. It may be loaded for another town. It may cross a road the potter will never walk. By the time it reaches the person who receives it, the object has left the place where its origin was obvious. The buyer can examine the pot, but examination is already a poorer thing than having seen the work happen.

Distance changes the problem of recognition quite dramatically.

Inside a local world, conduct remains close to the body. A maker can be known through the way he works and the way he answers when something goes wrong. If the object fails, the complaint still knows where to walk. If the claim is false, the source remains close enough to be named. The original luxury of oxytocin.

Trade weakens that luxury.

The object leaves the workshop and enters the custody of movement. A cart is enough at first. The important change has already happened. The maker is no longer beside the thing. It may arrive later in a place where no one knows the place it came from. The receiver can test the surface

INTERLUDE

Hero & Predator

YIN & YANG

The world does not present itself to a living being as an essay or a moral debate. Before the intellect can construct a single sentence defining what is right, corrupt, good, or evil, the nervous system is already operating in a state of unblinking triage. The first demand of reality is not classification, but orientation. The body must calculate exactly where it has arrived and what it is facing long before the mind can name it.

A sudden drop in the terrain—a trap, a nourishing fruit—a sweet berry, a poisonous fruit—a death berry, a shifting silhouette in the brush—a wolf or a shadow monster but often times a forest spirit, an open hand—is it a peace sign?—these arrive first as raw, high-density data points requiring instant structural computation. If the psyche lacks the precision to read these environmental coordinates accurately, it cannot survive. We exist within a primal baseline of alignment and propagation, or evasion and elimination. Morality is not the bedrock of human behaviour; it is merely the sophisticated language we choose to paint over our instinctual architecture of survival.

The organism must read before it can judge.

ACT SEVEN

The Order of Signs

SCENE I — THE FALLEN SHIP

The fallen ship tells a story. When it fell in Portland, January 1943. The SS Schenectady split opened in harbour and jackknifed into the riverbed. The break came under the wrong sky, at the wrong time, at the wrong stage of completion. Her name was already on the hull. The body was finished but the steel divided anyway, ships aren't supposed to divide like that. It was when the yard discovered, in one extravagant instant, that a thing may look complete while hiding a deeper incompleteness inside it.

The yard itself was like a repeated rhythmic thud.

Chains struck metallic plates somewhere above the river with a hollow metallic hum; steel sang with deep murmuring notes that lingered in the air longer than was pleasant to the ears. Winches wider and larger than multiple human beings dragged against their own weight. Hammer blows landed from inside walls of unfinished ships with deep echoing concussions that came through wet wooden floor and muddy ground; you could feel them before hearing them.

Welding arcs burst white behind scaffold and plating, vanished, then

ACT SEVEN

The Order of Signs

SCENE II — PAINTED EYEBROWS

Ryoto was still known then by its earlier name “**Heian-kyō**,” meaning the ‘Capital of Peace and Tranquillity’, and because it was still young enough to feel arranged rather than ancient, the city carried authority with a visible stiffness of nobility. The avenues were broad where power wanted them broad, narrow where servants, carts, and luck had to negotiate among themselves, and in winter the whole place seemed to tighten.

Cold settled first into wood. It moved along corridors, through shutters, beneath screens, and climbed patiently into layered silk until every garment in a great house stopped being something merely worn and became part of the body’s ability to endure the season with dignity intact.

The higher one rose into the districts of the powerful, the less identity announced itself through speech and the more it gathered in surfaces: in the density of the weave, in the discipline of colour, in the exact pairing of outer layer and hidden lining, in whether a sleeve mouth disclosed too much impatience, too much novelty, too little restraint. A face could still be hidden by a blind. A household could not.

CHAPTER THREE

Brand Reality

PRINCIPLE

The World We Live In Is More Fantastical Than Any Fantasy We Could Conjure

In physics, visible light occupies only a narrow region of the electromagnetic spectrum. The adjective is more revealing than it first appears, because **‘visible’** does not describe something radiation possesses independently, in the way that wavelength or frequency might. Visibility occurs only when radiation enters into relation with an observer capable of receiving some portion of it as sight.

This raises a deceptively simple question.

Where, exactly, does visibility belong?

It cannot belong to light alone, because radiation continues beyond the point at which visibility ends. Infrared does not become unreal because the human eye cannot receive it, and ultraviolet does not remain incomplete until another organism or instrument happens to admit it into sight. Yet visibility cannot belong to the eye alone either, because an eye deprived of radiation does not manufacture a visible world from itself. Visibility belongs neither wholly to what is encountered nor wholly to the one encountering it.

It appears in the **‘relation’** between them. Pass sunlight through a prism

CHAPTER FIVE

Brand Form

PRINCIPLE

As Meaning Gathers Enough To Take Form, Say Be, And It Becomes

In physics, matter can remain apparently unchanged while the conditions for an entirely different order are quietly accumulating inside it. Take water.

Cool perfectly ordinary liquid water towards its freezing point and, under the right conditions, something strange can happen. It can pass below the temperature at which we expect ice to appear and remain liquid. Nothing about its appearance necessarily announces what has become possible. It still pours. It still moves around whatever contains it.

The molecules have not disappeared and been replaced by the ingredients of ice. The material from which the solid will emerge is already there, moving among possibilities that have not yet resolved into one enduring arrangement.

Then something happens.

A disturbance. An imperfection. A microscopic surface. Sometimes little more than the beginning of an arrangement stable enough for the next molecule to join it. And the water freezes.

Stop Becoming Better At Using Other People's Thinking And Their Answers.

Become Better At Producing Your Own.

The real work begins when the brand has a problem your favourite template was never built to solve.

This book is about how to work from the problem outward instead of from the borrowed answer inward.

[Start Reading](#)

ONTOLOGICAL Branding™

A STUDY OF
HOW BRANDS
ORIGINATE, TAKE
FORM, AND
PROPAGATE.

Most branding begins where a brand becomes visible.

The name. The language. The identity.
The things people can see, remember, and choose.

Ontological Branding begins before that. It asks what must be true for any of it to belong. Because identity is not decoration. It is what something underneath eventually takes the form of.

And humans are strangely good at recognising the difference. When what appears agrees with what is, we feel it. When it contradicts it, we feel that too, often before we know why.

This book is a study of that recognition.

Of how meaning gathers, identity takes form, and what begins inside something becomes real enough to move through other people.

This is not a book about making brands look better. It is an attempt to understand where brands come from at all.

Asad Zia studies branding as a phenomenon: how identity originates, how intangible structures become perceptible, and how meaning acquires enough coherence to move between people.



Asad Zia



He is the founder of Morfique Labs™, an independent branding and design lab where research, strategy, identity, interface design and product development are used to investigate and build systems around those questions.

His work approaches branding less as the manufacture of an image than as the cultivation of conditions from which a recognisable identity can emerge.

Ontological Branding is the result of that inquiry.