



Aalto University
School of Arts, Design
and Architecture

Sustainable design S4

How to communicate sustainability

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3.5.2024

Agenda

09.15 – 9.30 Presemo. Thoughts from session 3?

9.30 - 10.30 Design semiotics; meaning and visual language of sustainability

Break

10.45 – 11.00 Small groups: What product/service you chose. Place it at the Miro (see MyCourses Announcement

11.00 – 11.40 Sharing of thoughts of the small groups

11.40-11.45 Orientation for next session

How does design speak?

Iconic – likeliness, metaphors

Indexical – traces of manufacture, causality

Symbolic – arbitrary, has to be learned

S.Vihma: Design reaches beyond providing affordable tools for people to do their job.

Denotation – the obvious meanings of words/images

Connotation – the more free interpretation of meanings

Youtube, Film and Media Studies, Jordan Schonig, Introduction to Semiotics



Tiedot



Katso myöhemmin



Jaa

“How many colors
are there in a field
of grass to the
crawling baby
unaware of
“Green”?”

Stan Brakhage

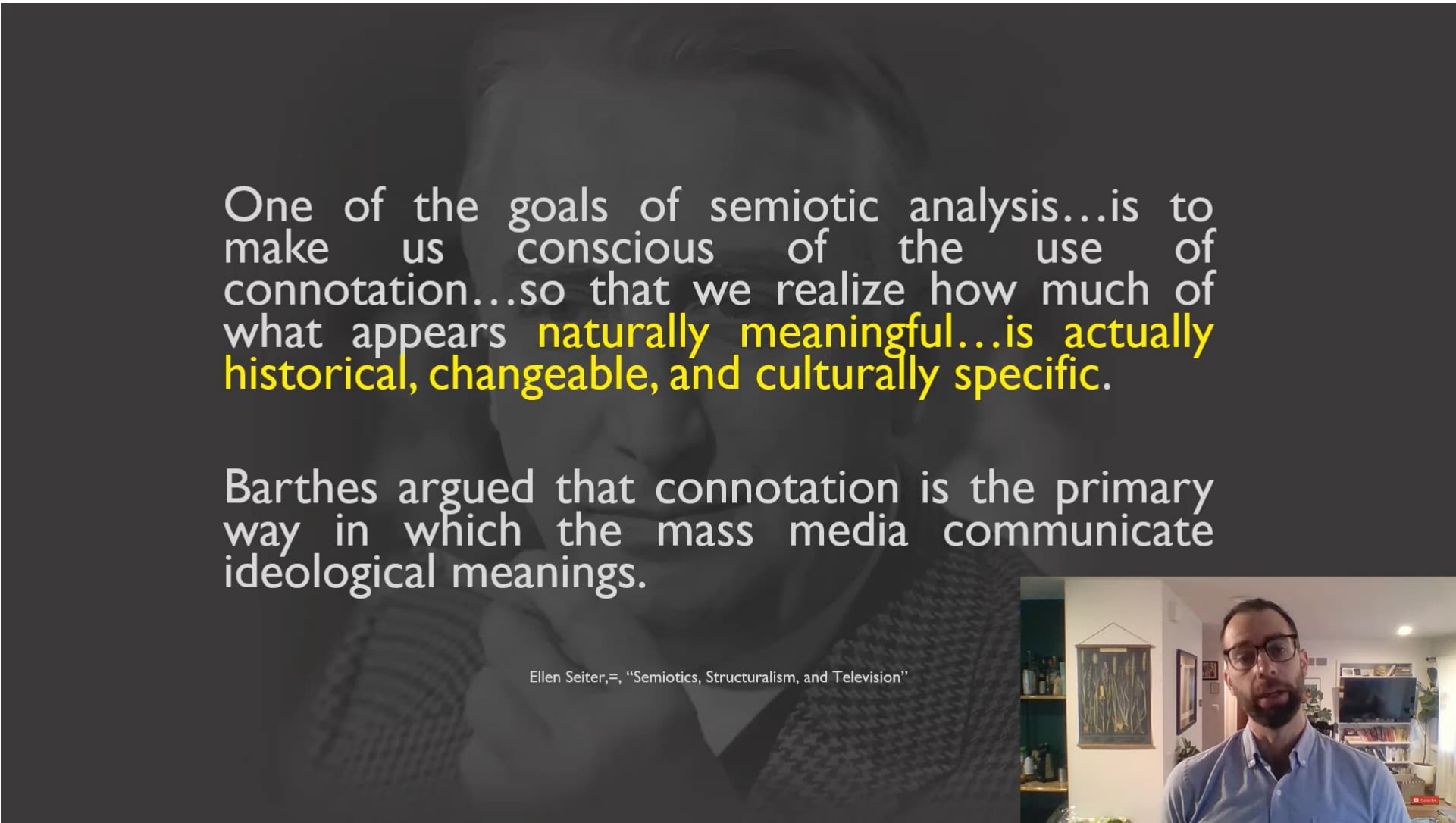


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YouTube





One of the goals of semiotic analysis...is to make us conscious of the use of connotation...so that we realize how much of what appears **naturally meaningful...is actually historical, changeable, and culturally specific.**

Barthes argued that connotation is the primary way in which the mass media communicate ideological meanings.

Ellen Seiter, "Semiotics, Structuralism, and Television"





Patagonia:
geographical
region in South
America

patagonia

Colors of child's
cap: red, white,
blue

The gesture of
hugging the
tree

Family unit:
mother, father,
child

Framing choice:
Cut on parents,
Privilege child's
perspective

Let them be.

Phrase: Let
them be

patagonia kids

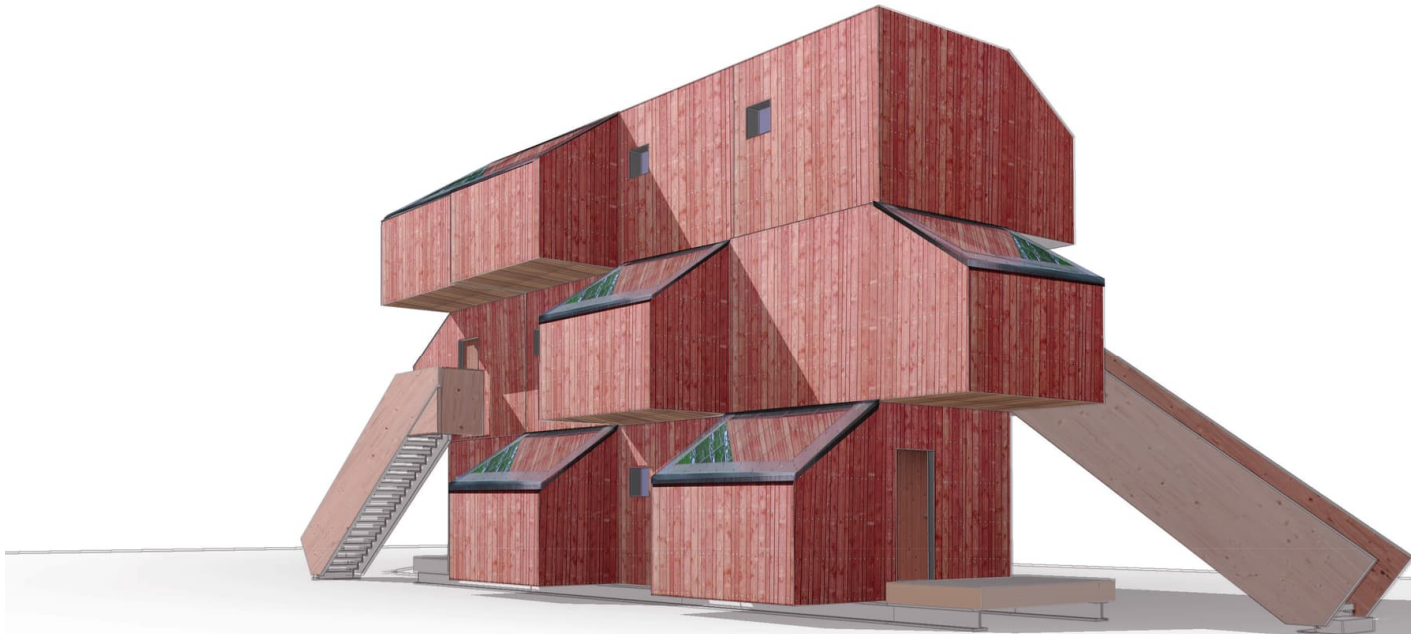
Type face for
"Patagonia
kids"

Giant tree
trunk





Futuro-house: WeeGee, Espoo



<https://www.aalto.fi/en/wood-program/kokoon-project-information>



Flickr: Jurriaan Persyn

Environmental sophistication vs design sophistication?

“Look at the architecture of the last 15 years,” architect James Wines complained in 2009. “It’s been more flamboyant and more wasteful than it’s ever been before. To build any of these buildings by Frank Gehry [the architect famous for sculptural structures of crumpled metal], it takes . . . 60 to 80 percent more metal and steel and construction than it would to enclose that space in a normal way . . . Mind-boggling waste.”(SoG, 2-3)

Hosey, Lance (2012). *The shape of green : aesthetics, ecology, and design*. Washington DC: Island press.

Iconic mode of reference: likeliness

Smart?



Sustainable?

Aggressive?







Forget Me Not. <http://www.pleasurabletroublemakers.com/>

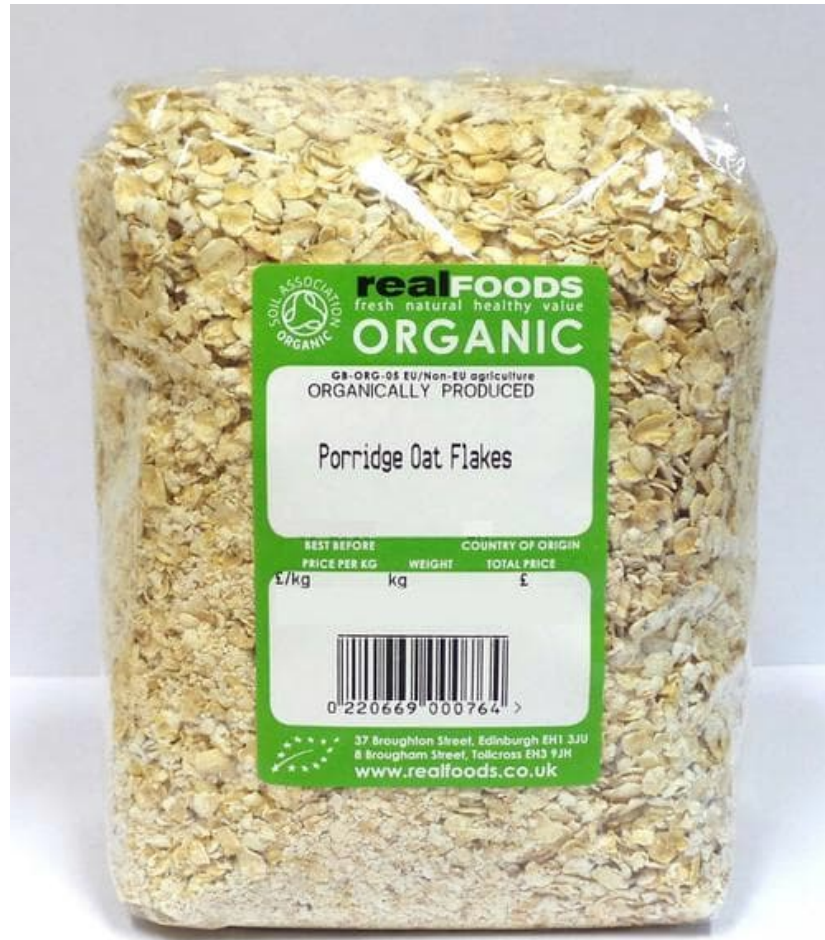
Indexical mode of reference



Smart Shape.

The original Smart Car, shown here in comparison to the MINI Cooper, the Prius, and the Hummer, gets better mileage than most hybrids, simply because of its size, shape, and weight.

Hosey, Lance (2012). *The shape of green: aesthetics, ecology, and design*. Island press



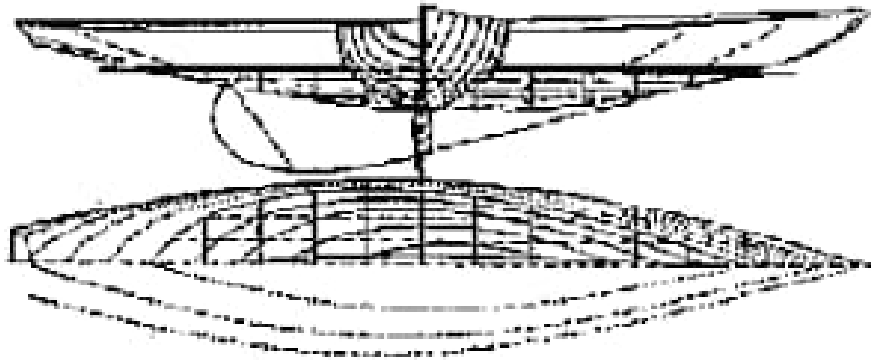
Icon of 1970's environmental movement



Iconic reference \neq Indexical reference



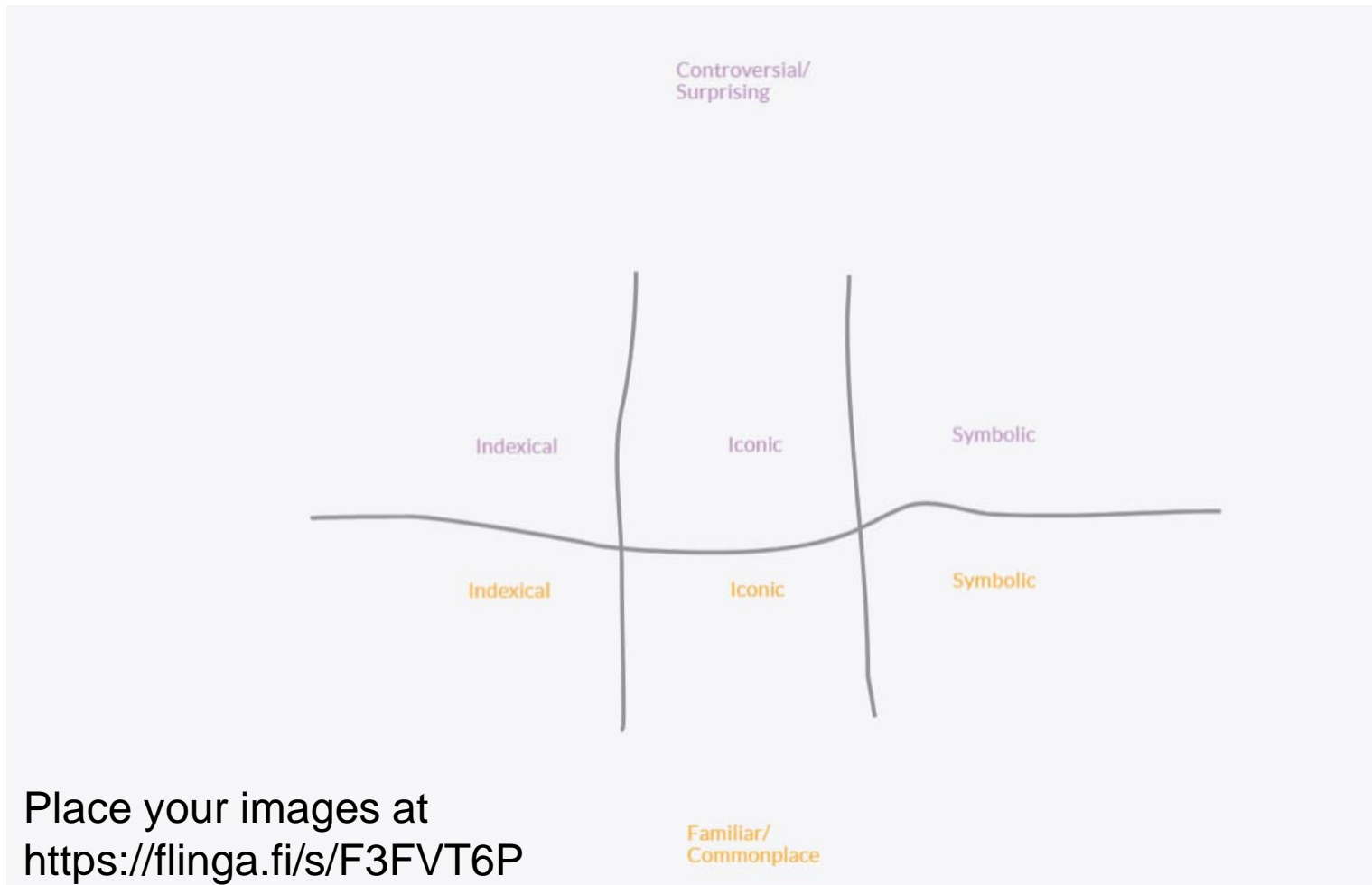
Symbolic: Democratic leisure



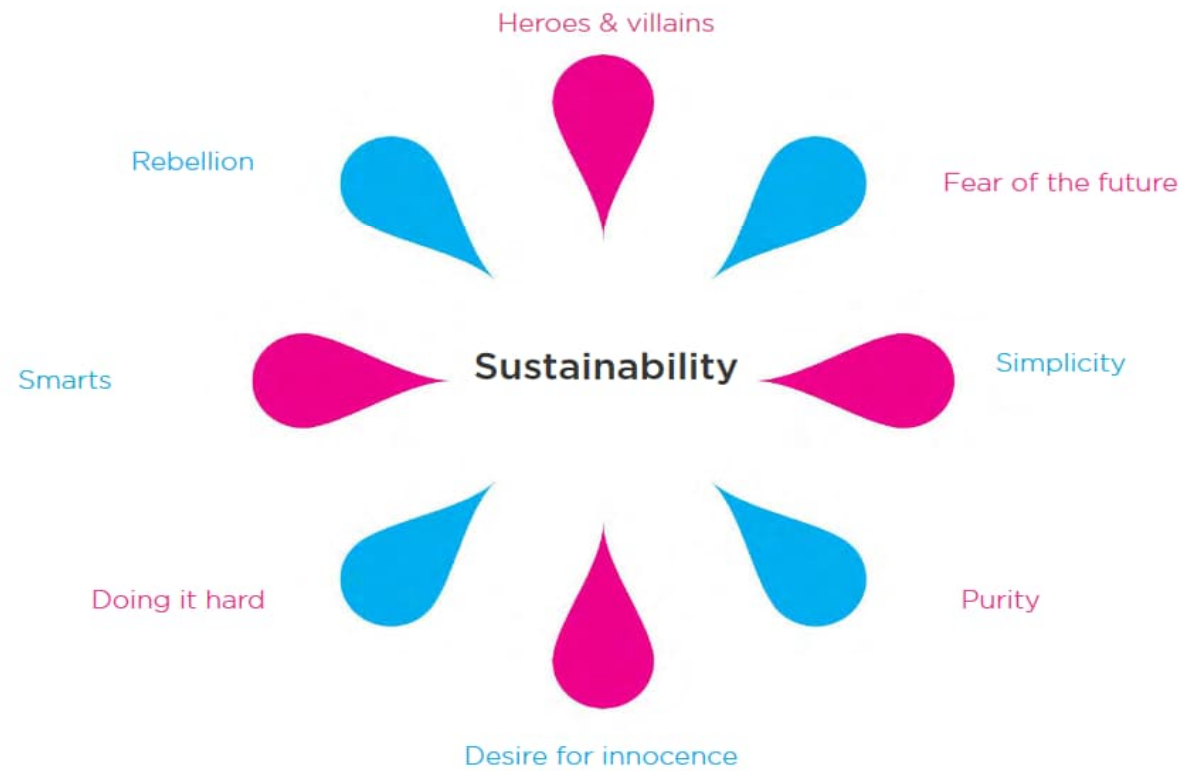


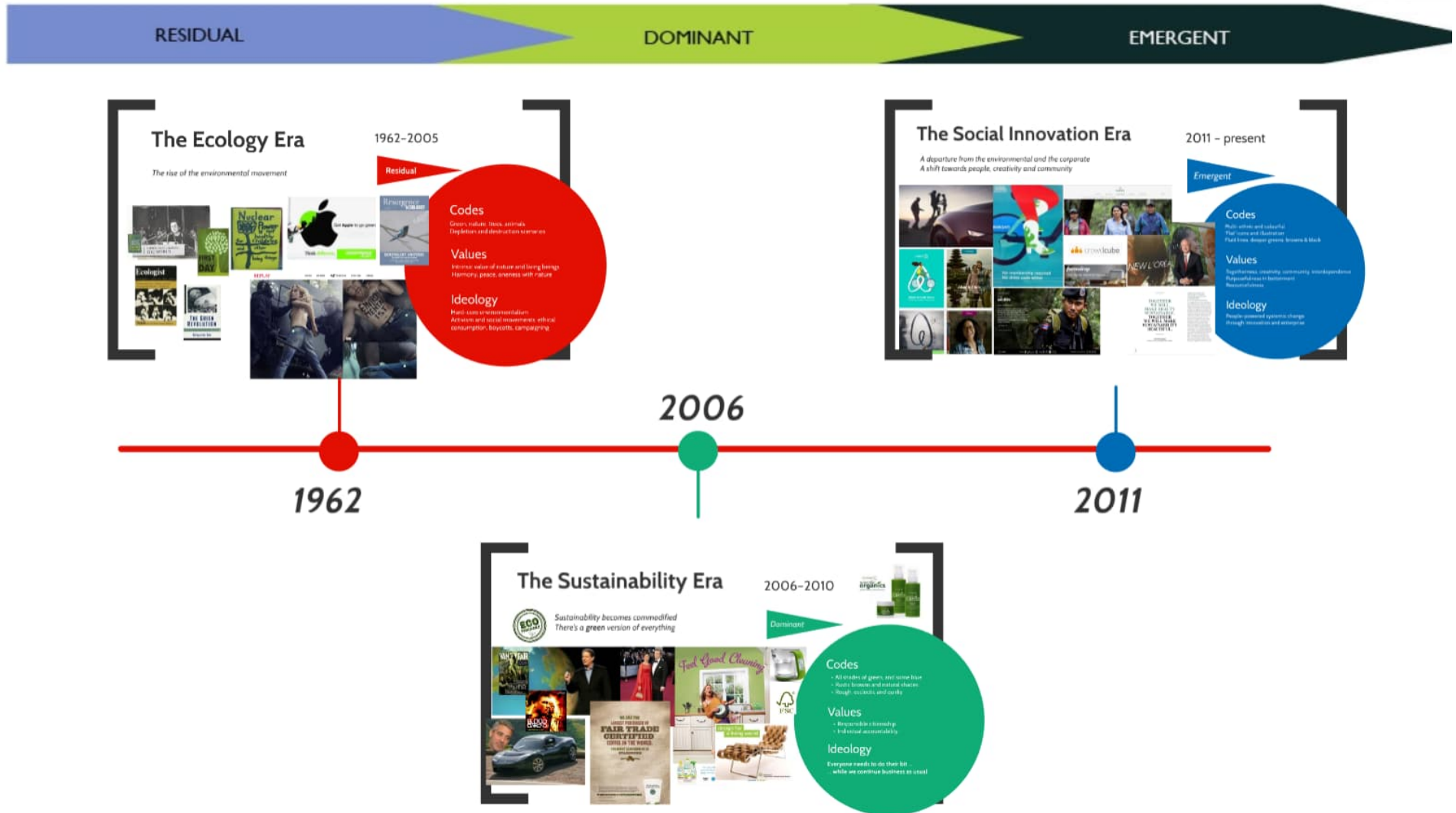






Some of the codes of sustainability





Laura Santamaria. Critical discourse analysis of sustainability representations.
<https://prezi.com/ezkvxajy3zvz/semiotic-analysis-of-sustainability-representations/>

Planet

Global • Environmental ideology



The eco friendly alternative to buying bottled water

Who needs bottled water when you can have fresh, purer water always at hand? The WH1 Water Dispenser can help you save one of earth's most precious resources.

People

Local • Well-being ideology



A source of wellness at the heart of your home

Who needs bottled water when you can have fresh, purer water always at hand? The WH1 Water Dispenser makes the healthier option easier to reach for.



<https://www.geospatialworld.net/prime/technology-and-innovation/a-symbiotic-relationship-supporting-sustainability/>

Key distinctions?

Invisible vs. visible 'green'

Technical vs. social solutions

Conservative vs. progressive solutions

green(bio) and blue (smart) and beige (reused)

For the next session

Reading: Ashby et al (2013). Materials and sustainable development - A white paper.

Write your learning diary: Reflection 3. Think about your own product choice and those of the fellows students. What/how and how they communicate about sustainability? What is greenwashing?