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The metaphysical quality that gives
the BP *Helios* visual identity mark
its sway.



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**Certificate of
Authorship
Originality**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student

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Contents	List of Figures	i
	Abstract	iii
Chapter One :	Introduction	1
Chapter Two :	BP Time Line	7
2.1	The Early 20th Century	7
2.2	The Mid 20th Century	9
2.3	The Late 20th Century	10
2.4	The end of the 20th Century	12
Chapter Three :	The invention of the BP <i>Helios</i>	13
3.1	The Strategy and Equity of BP's visual identity	13
3.2	The Brief	15
3.3	Building the <i>Helios</i> colours	16
3.3.I	Yellow	17
3.3.II	Green	17
3.4	Being 'Green'	18
3.5	The New BP VIM, the <i>Helios</i>	20
3.6	The <i>Performance Formation</i>	21
3.7	The <i>Helios</i>	22
3.8	Statistics of the <i>Helios's success</i>	23
3.9	Conclusion	23
Chapter Four :	The Archetypal <i>Helios</i>	25
4.1	The Emergence of Symbols	25
4.2	Numinosity	28
4.3	The Solar Cross	29
4.4	The Energy within the Solar Cross	31
4.5	The <i>Helios</i> Aspect	32
4.6	The Sunflower	32
4.7	The Arrow/ Fulgur	33
4.8	Rites and Rituals	34
4.9	Conclusion	36
Chapter Five :	Engaging the viewer / user	38
5.1	Group Identity - an explanation	39
5.2	Development of the BP brand promise and brand image	39
5.3	The Formula of the <i>Helios</i> Brand Identity Program and "beyond petroleum"	41
5.4	The Communication Strategy of the <i>Helios</i>	44
5.5	The Viewer / User	46
5.6	Conclusion	49
Chapter Six :	Conclusion	51
Appendix 1 :	Glossary: Definition of terminology	54
Appendix 2:	Image Sources	61
Bibilography		65

List of Figures	Figure 1	BP <i>Helios</i> VIM 2000	1
	Figure 2	The Solar Cross	1
	Figure 3	The BP VIM 1920	8
	Figure 4	The BP VIM of the 1920s in a Union Jack	8
	Figure 5	The BP <i>Shield</i> VIM 1946	9
	Figure 6	The BP <i>Shield</i> VIM 1952	9
	Figure 7	The final name change for BP 1954	9
	Figure 8	Amoco VIM 1998	12
	Figure 9	BP/Amoco VIM 1999	12
	Figure 10	Arco VIM	12
	Figure 11	Solarex VIM	12
	Figure 12	Castrol Oils VIM	12
	Figure 13	BP/Amoco VIM 1999	13
	Figure 14	Arco VIM	13
	Figure 15	Solarex VIM	13
	Figure 16	BP <i>Shield</i> VIM and BP <i>Helios</i> VIM	14
	Figure 17	The evolution of Shell VIM 1900-1999	14
	Figure 18	Mercedes Benz VIM	14
	Figure 19	BP <i>Shield</i> VIM	15
	Figure 20	The colour equity of the BP brand	16
	Figure 21	Colour and Form by Karl Gerstner	16
	Figure 22	Official Earth Week VIM 1970	18
	Figure 23	Example of 'Greenwashing' advertising by Coca Cola	19
	Figure 24	The Performance Formation VIM	20
	Figure 25	The <i>Helios</i> VIM	20
	Figure 26	Nike VIM 1985	21
	Figure 27	McDonalds VIM	21
	Figure 28	Apple Mac VIM 1999	21
	Figure 29	The Performance Formation VIM	21
	Figure 30	The <i>Helios</i> VIM	22
	Figure 31	BP's Brand Equity Results	23
	Figure 32	The visual evolution of BP's VIMs	24
	Figure 33	The Solar Cross	25
	Figure 34	The Performance Formation VIM	25
	Figure 35	The <i>Helios</i> VIM	25
	Figure 36	The visual link between the Solar Cross and the <i>Helios</i> VIM	28
	Figure 37	The primordial dot in the Solar Cross	29
	Figure 38	The Wheel of the Year (Solar Cross)	30
	Figure 39	The Swastika (Solar Cross)	30
	Figure 40	Bayer VIM	30
	Figure 41	BMW VIM	30
	Figure 42	The Wheel of the Year (Solar Cross)	30
	Figure 43	Vitruvian Man by Leonardo de Vinci	30
	Figure 44	Examples of Solar Cross variations	31
	Figure 45	The San Francisco Opera VIM 2005	31
	Figure 46	Chrysler Corporation VIM 1962	31

Figure 47	Seed Media Group VIM 2005	31
Figure 48	The Labarum symbol (Chi Rho) 4th century CE	31
Figure 49	Coin from Constantine's Rome with the Labarum	32
Figure 50	The Golden Ratio	33
Figure 51	The Performance Formation VIM	33
Figure 52	Daricus 1 coin (Archeameadian coin)	33
Figure 53	Citroen Cars VIM 1985 - 2009	34
Figure 54	FedEx VIM 1994	34
Figure 55	Dunlop Sport VIM	34
Figure 56	Archetypal symbols adorn initiates of a passage of rites.	34
Figure 57	Bronze Age Oil Burner with Solar Cross decoration	35
Figure 58	Solar Cross decoration of Bronze Age pottery bowl	35
Figure 59	Bronze Age Assyrian solar deity Ashur VIM	36
Figure 60	Aligning brand actions and expressions of BP	38
Figure 61	Contrast in visual encoding of BP's <i>Shield</i> and <i>Helios</i> VIMs	40
Figure 62	Landor Brand Driver Platform for BP	42
Figure 63	Poster for USSR space race with the Hammer and Sickle VIM	43
Figure 64	Seed impregnated substrate used for BP printed collateral	45
Figure 65	<i>Helios</i> House (a concept petrol station) in LA, US	45
Figure 66	Environmental graphics for 'Connect' bp stations	46
Figure 67	BP tankers with the <i>Helios</i> applied	46
Figure 68	BP <i>Helios</i> uniform for customer service employees	46
Figure 69	BP brand matrixes 'In employee measure'	48
Figure 70	BP Brand Identity Program results	48
Figure 71	BP Market Share Price increases	49
Figure 72	BP <i>Helios</i> VIM	51

Abstract

The Metaphysical quality that gives the BP *Helios* visual identity marks its sway.

This thesis analyses the reasons why BP's visual identity mark (VIM), known as the *Helios*, was immediately accepted into the global marketplace following its launch in 2000. At the end of the millennium the merger between BP (UK) and Amoco (US) gave BP the opportunity to reposition itself in the petroleum category.

The work is constructed by explicating the objectives of BP's rebranding, through discussions with the *Helios*'s design team leader, Courtney Reeser (from brand strategists, Landor Associates), addressing both client's and designer's criteria through analysing the aesthetic and branding strategies aimed at the internal and external audiences (viewers/users). BP undertook a new direction towards environmental consciousness and the resulting *Helios* reinforced the new 'Green' ideology of BP with an authentic declaration for change.

In parallel with the above, another aspect of this thesis examines the connections between elemental nature-inspired archetypal symbols and contemporary VIMs, in particular the BP *Helios*, to establish a continuity of intent, application, and influence upon the viewer/user and further advances the understanding for the BP *Helios*'s success. Engaging areas of expertise not traditionally utilized within visual communication, such as sociology, archaeology, theology, and folklore assist in building an appreciation of the continuity and effectiveness of the use of elemental nature-inspired archetypal symbols within a contemporary context is gained. The *Helios* possesses similar visual qualities to the Solar Cross, an elemental nature-inspired archetypal symbol. Within these archetypal symbols lies a metaphysical quality Jung referred to as numinosity. This metaphysical quality within a symbol enables that symbol (VIM) to exercise influence over the individual's and the group's sense of identity and can act as a galvanizing and motivating force.

The BP *Helios* was rapidly and readily accepted into the global market indicating that the relationship between an elemental nature-inspired archetypal symbol and the VIM generated an immediate a sense of trust and reassurance within the viewer/user. This thesis contributes to the discourse on how VIMs exerts influence over the viewer/user no matter what level of sophistication their society has attained. It aims to offer visual communicators and graphic designers in particular, a more complete understanding of the BP *Helios*.