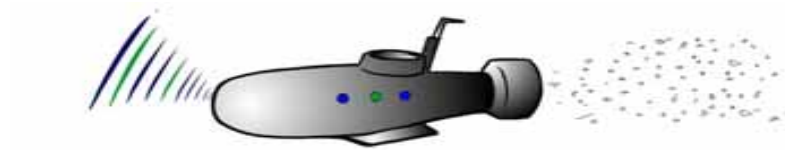


Semiotics: an introduction



Practical Semiotics

- What
- Why
- How

What

No big mystery...

- 'Semei-' is Greek for 'signal'

No big mystery...

- 'Semei-' is Greek for 'signal'
- 'Semi-otics' just means 'study of signals'

No big mystery...

- 'Semei-' is Greek for 'signal'
- 'Semi-otics' just means 'study of signals'
- We study the signals of popular culture.

Signals: things that create *meanings*



It's been around for a while...



-Ferdinand de Saussure



Charles Peirce



Vladimir Propp



Roland Barthes



Claude Levi-Strauss



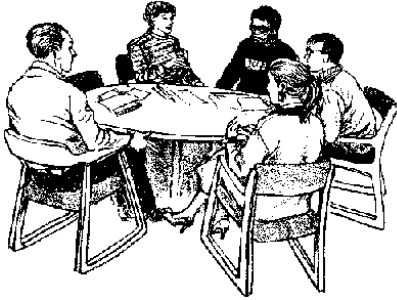
Gilbert Adair



Umberto Eco

How

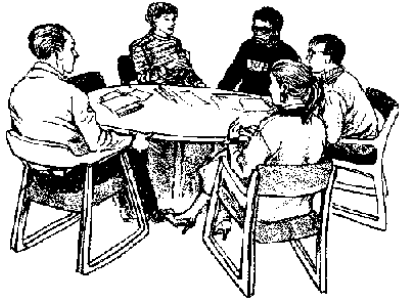
Traditional qual



Goes straight to the consumer.

“What do people really think about a, b and c?”

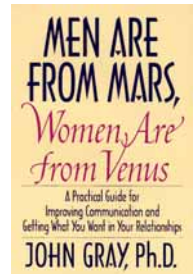
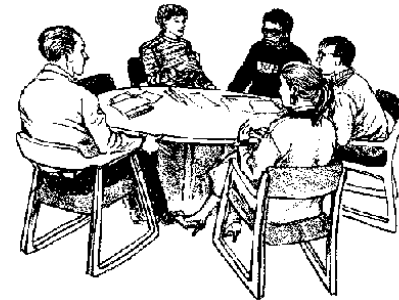
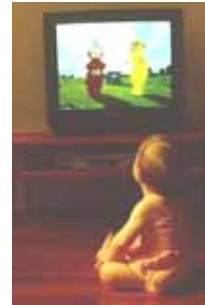
Traditional qual



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“What do people really think about a, b and c?”

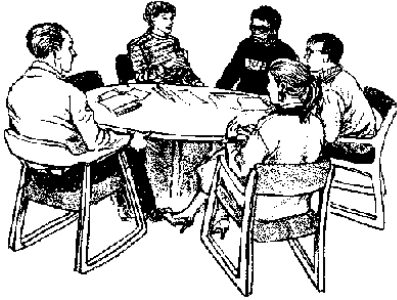
Semiotics



Goes out to the *culture*

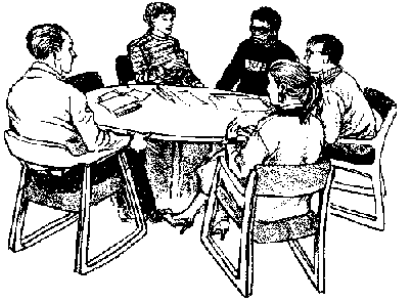
“What creates these ideas about a, b and c in the first place?”

Traditional qual vs. semiotics

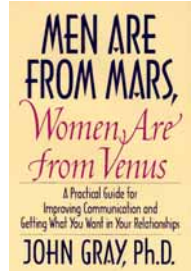
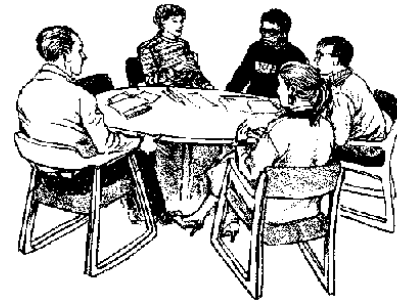
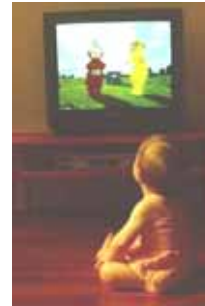


Tell us about... 'Luxury'

Traditional qual vs. semiotics

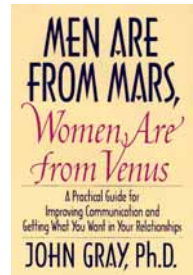
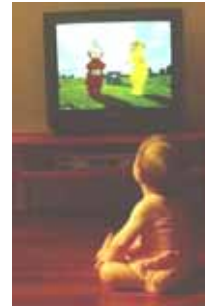
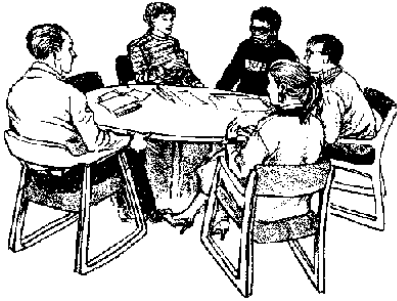


Tell us about... 'Luxury'

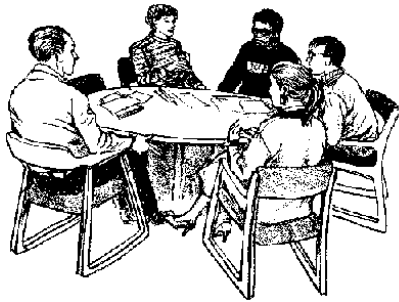


How is popular culture shaping our idea of Luxury?

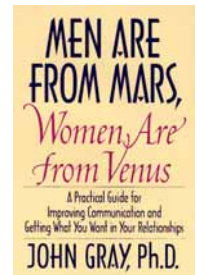
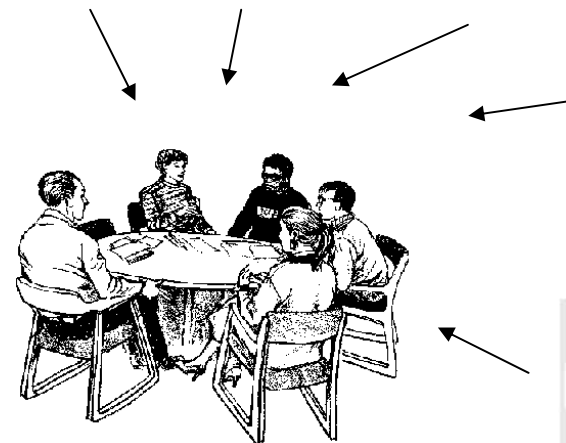
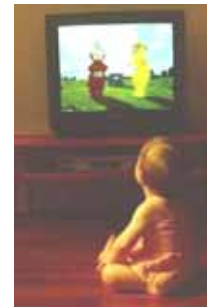
Semiotics can address gaps in traditional research



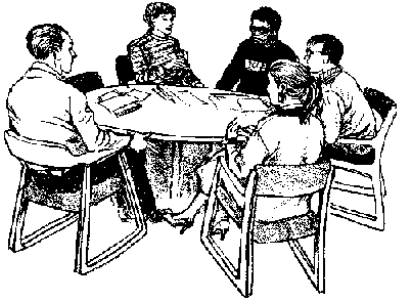
Semiotics can address gaps of traditional research



-Consumers can't / won't always articulate their truest or deepest feelings

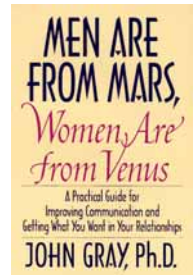
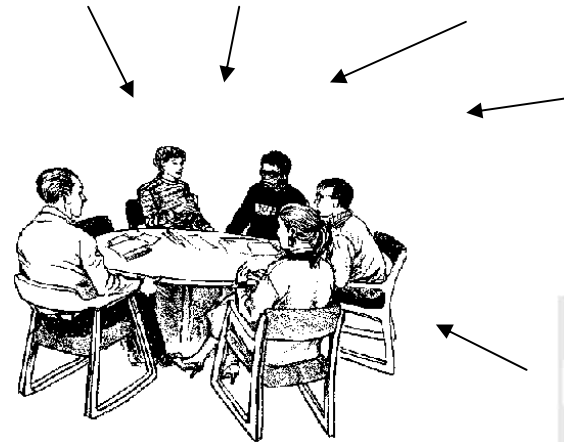
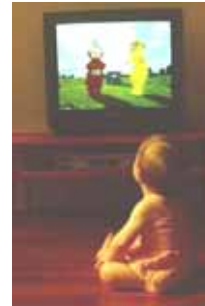


Semiotics can address gaps of traditional research

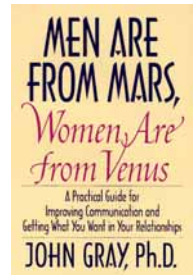
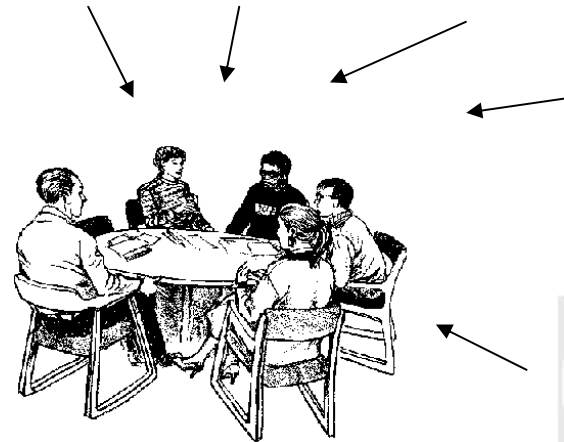
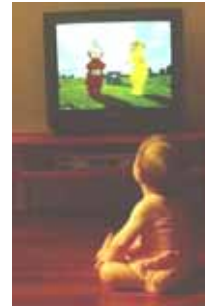


- Consumers can't / won't always articulate their truest or deepest feelings

- 'Uncritically' play back the category thinking

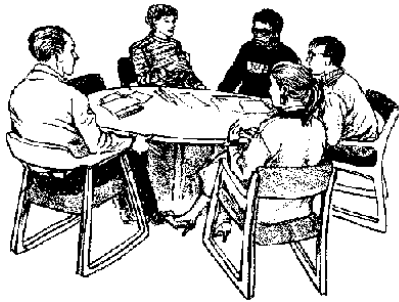


Semiotics can address gaps of traditional research

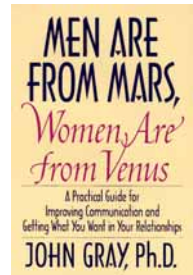
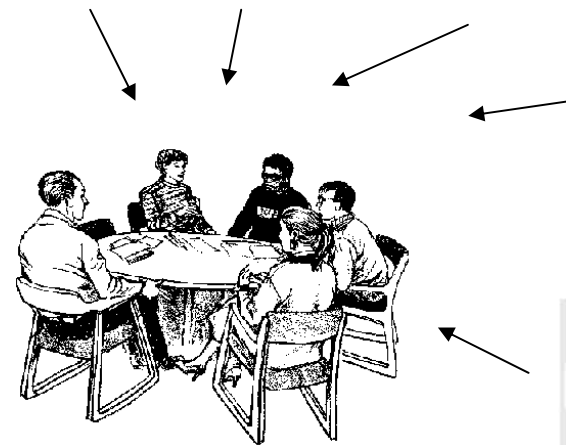
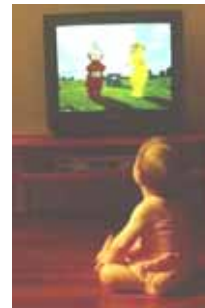


- Consumers can't / won't always articulate their truest or deepest feelings
- 'Uncritically' play back the category thinking
- Play it safe

Semiotics can address gaps of traditional research

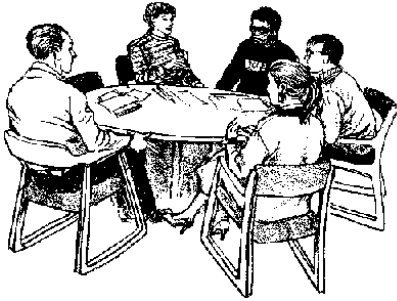


- Consumers can't / won't always articulate their truest or deepest feelings
- 'Uncritically' play back the category thinking
- Resistant to change

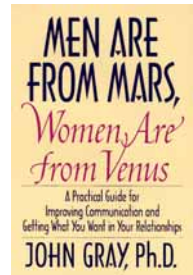
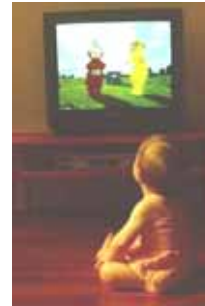


- Wide view: takes in lots of evidence
- Deep view: the power of details
- **Explanation, not just evaluation**

But...a powerful partnership



The close-up psychological view



The wider cultural view

Semiotics works on...



Cultural analysis



Positioning



Packaging



Body language



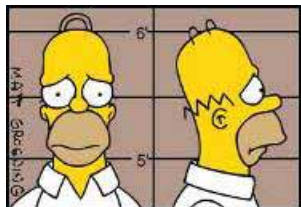
Ad concepts



NPD

How

Signals



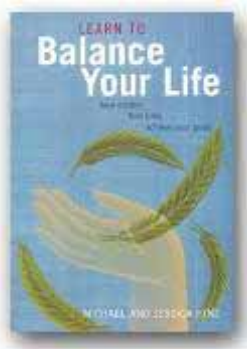
'Signals' in brands

Product behaviour, pack shape, colour, graphics, names, language, price, promotional ideas and advertising.

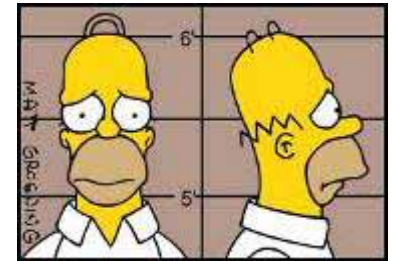
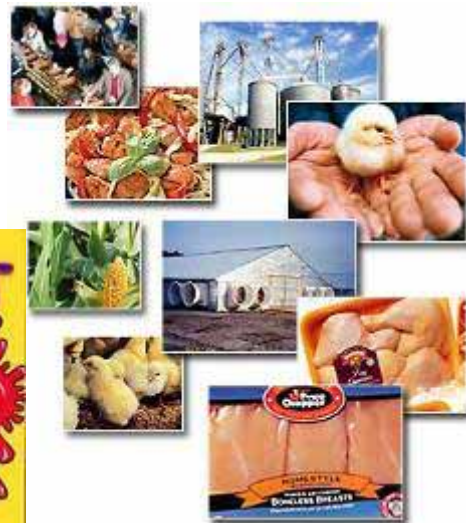


'Signals' in popular culture

TV, radio, magazines, websites, books, other ads, blogs, design, graffiti, buzzwords, fashion and general design.



*i am so random, so so so random, and i want the world to nooooo oohhhh i am so random, so so so random *has changed his/her name to* i am very very very random and i am a muppet!!! :P :P :P



CAN U TLK @ YR KID LIKE U R 1 OV 'em? R U IN 2DAY? TXTME L8R K?

The three contexts:

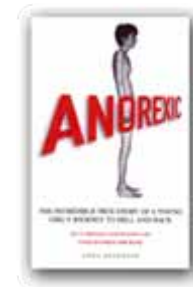
- The brand



- The overall category



- Popular culture



Leads to...

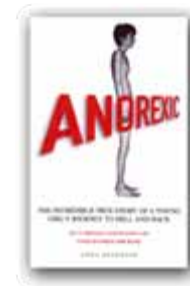
Coherence



Distinctiveness



Relevance



From brief to debrief...
a semiotic diary

The Brief:

To help a portfolio of lager brands better connect with contemporary male culture

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To help a portfolio of lager brands better connect with contemporary male culture



Day 1: kick-off workshop with client

2 Business objectives

To build a clear brand proposition for our brand and to deliver a strategy against the following objectives:

2.1 The functional/immediate objectives are to **clarify the brand picture for the business** to guide

- communications in-store and external advertising
- own brand development/category planning and thinking within retail outlets

2.2 To clearly **define what the brand stands for** and why it exists which should give the Company and its people the confidence to

- answer the oft-quoted media stories in a clear and succinct way
- identify the brand's purpose and values
- ensure the brand's total proposition is greater than the sum of its parts (i.e. a top-down brand vision that complements and works



Pushing the boundaries of the brief

Challenging brand and category preconceptions



Agreeing the cultural and brand stimulus

Days 2-5: mapping category signs and symbols



Looking at packaging colour, symbols and text



...and ad stories, visuals and language

Days 2-5: mapping category signs and symbols



Looking at packaging colour, symbols and text



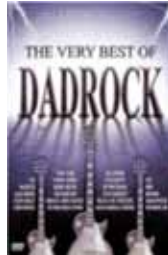
...and ad stories, visuals and language



Logging each tiny detail...

How do physical spaces shape consumer ideas?

Days 6-11: cultural auditing



• Discussion boards > Becoming a dad > still no sex...PLS HELP

Men's Health Discussion boards

Man admits having sex with 1,000 cars

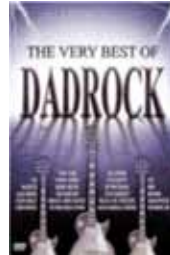
A man who claims to have had sex with 1,000 cars has defended his "romantic" feelings towards vehicles.



How do TV, radio and movies shape 'male' thinking?

Online: language, ideas, colours, graphics, icons and conversations

Days 6-11: cultural auditing



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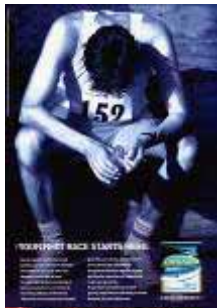
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Online: language, ideas, colours, graphics, icons and conversations



Exploring the explicit and implicit messages of print media

How do non-category ads shape the thinking?

Days 6-11: 'Masculinity' on the high street



We charted the signals of masculinity out in everyday life: words, gestures, icons, behaviour, rituals.

Days 6-11: 'Masculinity' on the high street



We charted the signals of masculinity out in everyday life: words, gestures, icons, behaviour, rituals.



And we analysed the signals in 'masculine' public spaces: layouts, colours, language, shapes and textures.

Day 12-14: bringing it all together



- **What are the redundant, dominant and emergent themes in masculinity?**



Day 12-14: bringing it all together



- **What are the redundant, dominant and emergent themes in masculinity?**
- **What words, images, narratives and concepts bring these to life?**



Day 12-14: bringing it all together



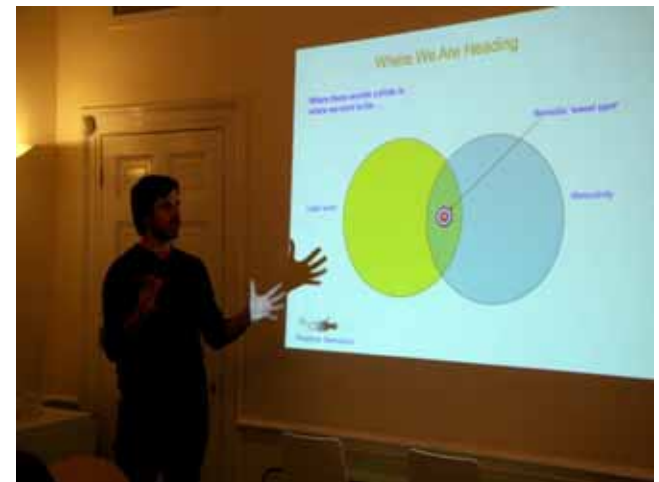
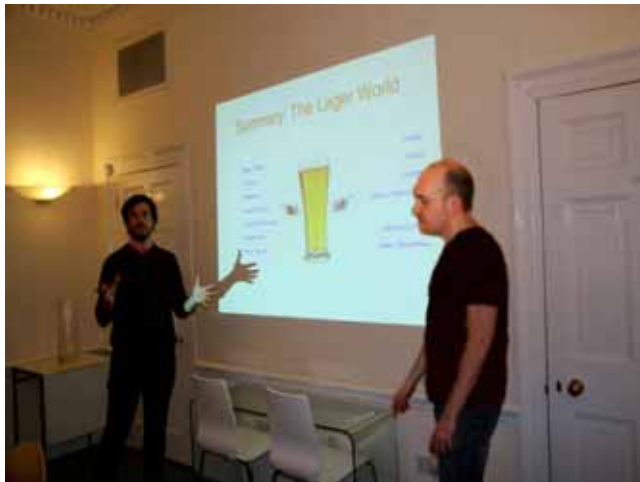
- **What are the redundant, dominant and emergent themes in masculinity?**
- **What words, images, narratives and concepts bring these to life?**
- **How do our brands and the wider category connect, or otherwise?**



The Big Day...



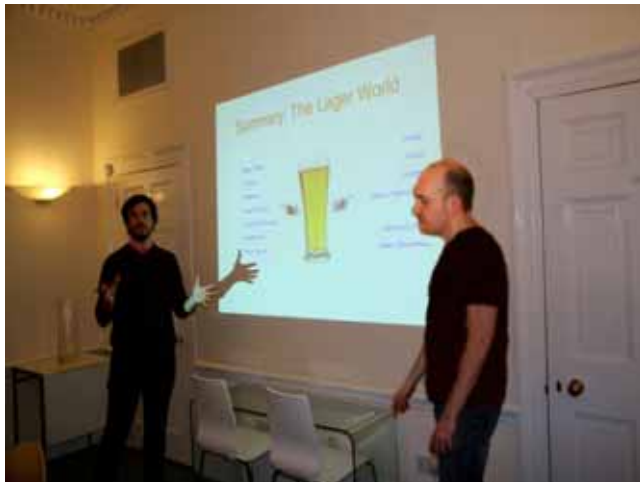
- Explaining the hidden signals of the brands and the category



The Big Day...



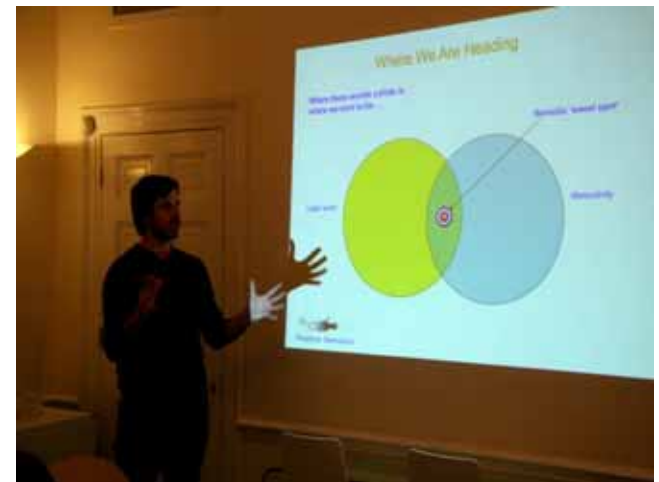
- Explaining the hidden signals of the brands and the category
- Showing the cultural developments shaping consumer thinking



The Big Day...



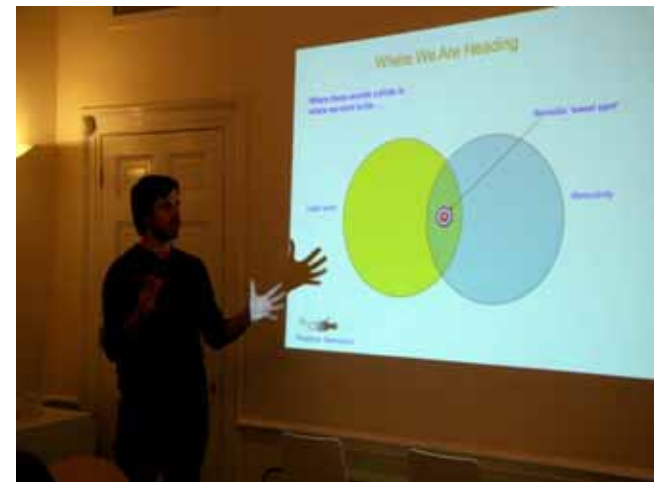
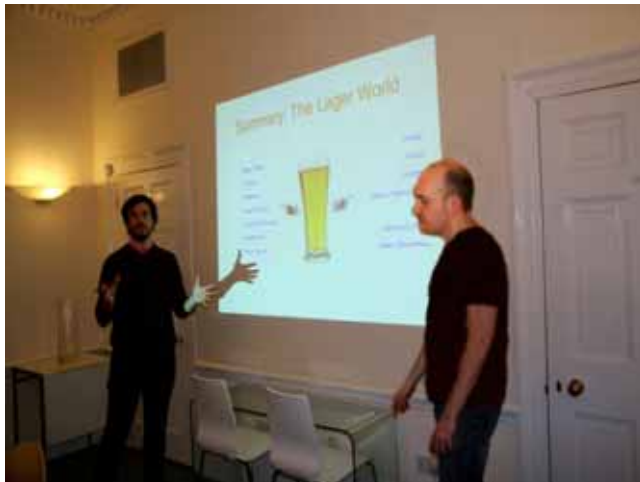
- **Explaining the hidden signals of the brands and the category**
- **Showing the cultural developments shaping consumer thinking**
- **The ‘So what?’ factor: turning insight into specific ways forward**



The Big Day...



- Explaining the hidden signals of the brands and the category
- Showing the cultural developments shaping consumer thinking
- The 'So what?' factor: turning insight into specific ways forward
- The 'semiotic toolkit': stand-alone guidance for brands





Practical Semiotics