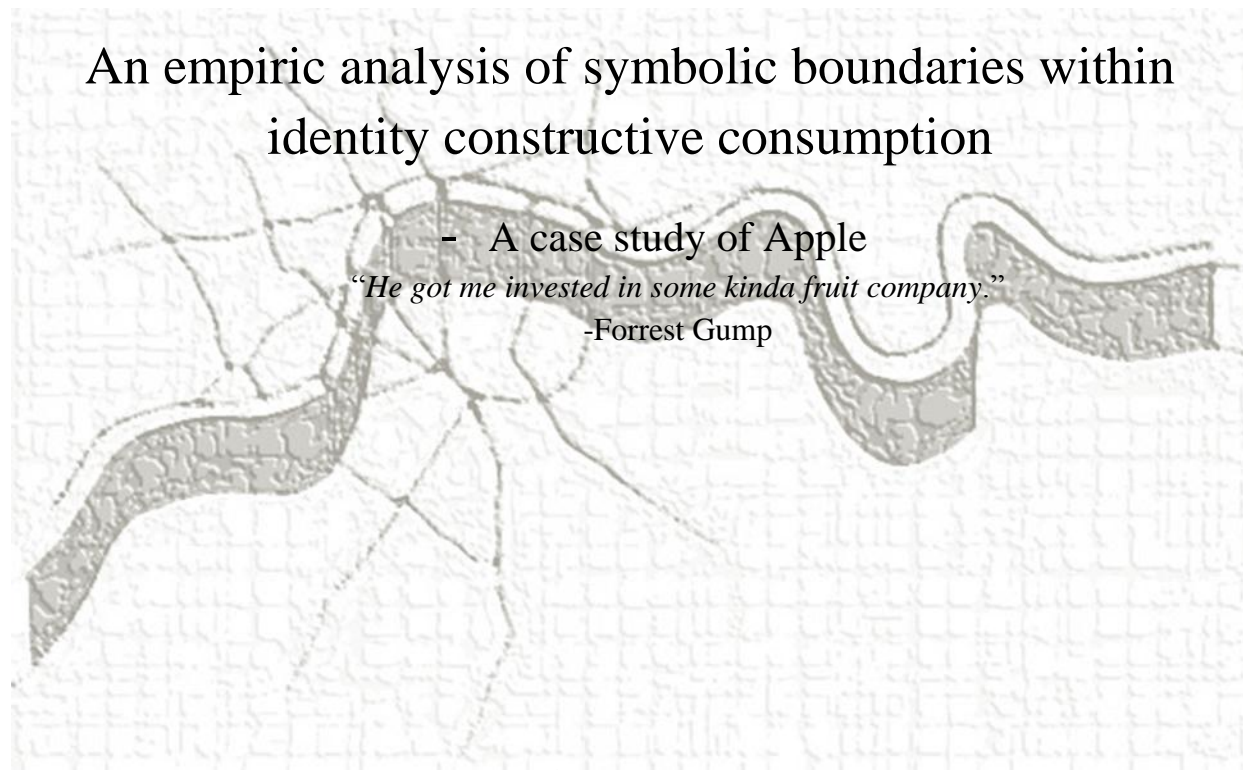


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An empiric analysis of symbolic boundaries within identity constructive consumption

- A case study of Apple

"He got me invested in some kinda fruit company."

-Forrest Gump

Cand. merc.MCM

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Executive summary

With an interpretive approach, this thesis explores the actions consumers make use of to classify themselves and others into distinct groupings that display their desired identities.

The interest was found in a paper on the symbolic meanings of the Apple brand, which indicated the existence of several groupings under the Apple brand. This sparked a desire to understand whether they were aware of each other and in that case how these groupings distinguished themselves from one another.

Through 8 semi-structured qualitative interviews empiric material was gathered and subsequently analyzed.

The analysis shows that several dynamic meanings are attached to the Apple brand. These meanings originate amongst others things from stereotypes and stereotypical ideas on what an Apple-user is. Showing that whether the consumers' choice of electronics is an Apple branded product or another, commonly referred to as PC branded products there are clear differences in the understanding of that individuals' identity.

There seems to be at least four groupings or reference groups maybe even identity forms giving meaning to the Apple brand. These consist of hipsters, creatives and trendsetters who are being chased by the followers. Which identity grouping an individual consumer belongs to is to a large extent determined by the holistic image that consumer is able to portray of himself. This is shown by different consumption-rituals of classification. The classification is shown by several different things, the clothes you wear, the bike you ride, the variety of Apple products you own, the café you zip your coffee at and the manner in which you use your Apple products amongst other things.

This thesis is completed by emphasizing that the groupings belonging to the Apple brand have different characteristics and needs. These characteristics and needs must be taken into account by Apple in order for them to establish themselves as a meaningful brand in these consumers' lives.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction: When everybody else just follows along

'It's not cool when everybody knows it's cool'

"For years Apple was for the people who were willing to pay money to be outsiders. This is turning. Today an iPhone in the pocket only signalizes that you don't want to be left behind. The apple is becoming something as banal as common."

Source: Information, 02.04.2011 for full article in original language see appendix 1

What you see in the epigraph is the beginning of an article by the Danish newspaper Information. The article debates how the popularization of Apple has changed the meaning of the brand to its original users of creative and highly educated people with a good sense of design.

There is little doubt that over the last years a lot has happened for the Apple brand, as the article also states the iPad 2 which was launched in the beginning of 2011, sold out the initial million iPads within 72 hours. In the same year Apple could claim the title of number largest smartphone manufacturer (macdailynews.com), number one largest technology company (Information, 2011), number one most valuable brand (Bloomberg.com) and having more money than the United States government (www.dr.dk › Nyheder › Penge).

While there is no arguing that the Apple brand has become increasingly popular over the last ten years, I am interested by the discussion that this is changing the brand. My interest is especially awoken by a short pre-analysis done for this thesis, which rapidly showed that people were actually annoyed by the increasing popularization, but with absolutely no desire to change brand. This makes me wonder what they do when the brand that used to be is no longer, as stated in this article. Therefore I developed a desire to research what consumers are doing and how they are reacting to this situation and exactly why it is not as cool when everybody knows it is cool, which in its essence seems like a paradox.

1.2 Contents and structure of thesis

This thesis can be categorized into three overall categories, an introductory part, an analysis and a conclusion. The introductory part of this thesis seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of what defines the problem at hand. Furthermore the second part of the introduction strives to provide an understanding of the method being used to gather the empiric material needed to answer the research question. Lastly the introductory part will seek to give a thorough understanding of the meta-theoretic views that lay the foundation for the understanding of the empirically gathered material and their meanings.

The analysis chapter will attempt to shed some theoretic light on the phenomena experienced during the gathering of empiric material. Thus the empiric findings and the theories that can serve to explain them will be treated simultaneously in the analysis chapter, and will end up in a discussion and summary of the most important findings.

The conclusion will offer a discussion of the findings and the implications these findings may have. Furthermore the conclusion will summarize the key results of this thesis, and finally offer proposals for the subjects this thesis opens up for, in relation to future research topics.

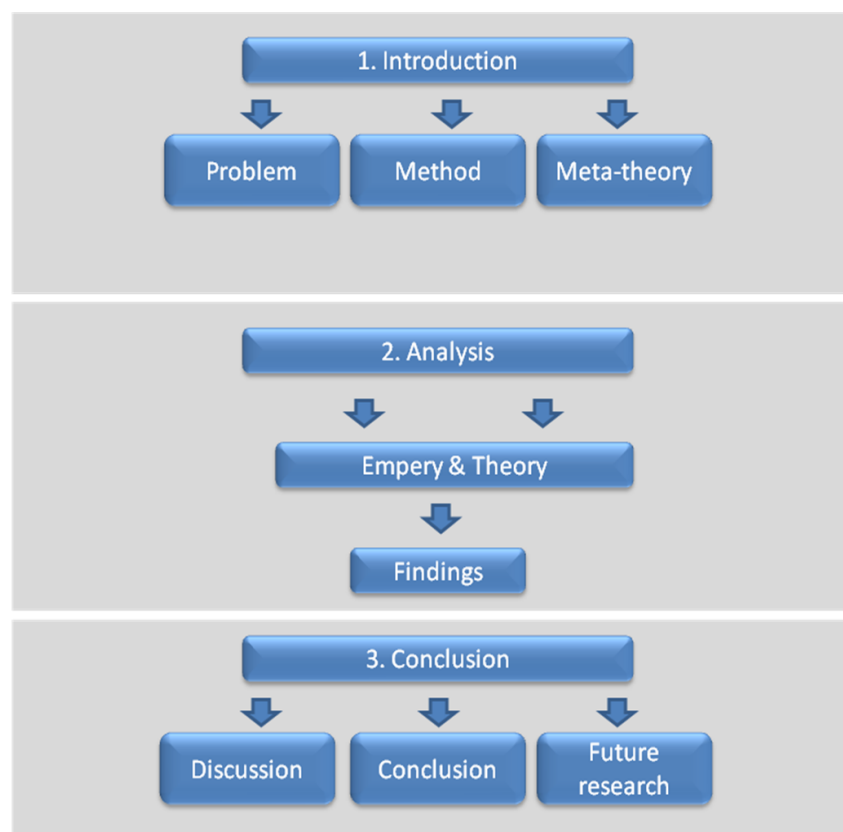


Figure 1, own creation

1.3 Motivation and background for the problem

This thesis will find its theoretical grounding in the widely recognized theories suggesting that consumers use brands to communicate social status as well as identity (Belk, 1988; Bourdieu, 1984; Goffman, 1959; Veblen, 1899). Taste and thereby brands reflect and influence the symbolic boundaries that categorize social groups (Lamont & Fournier, 1992; Bourdieu, 1984; Lieberman, 2000). When social groups of symbolic capital act or consume in a certain way, groups of lower symbolic capital can be assumed to imitate the higher social groups. This imitation act can be unwanted by the higher social group, because it can influence to the symbolic boundaries that distinguish the differing groups (Davis, 1992; Lamont and Fournier, 1992; Simmel, 1907). Therefore, the imitation from undesired reference-groups can lead to "contamination" of the original brand which can subsequently cause unadoption of the brand (Rogers, 1976).

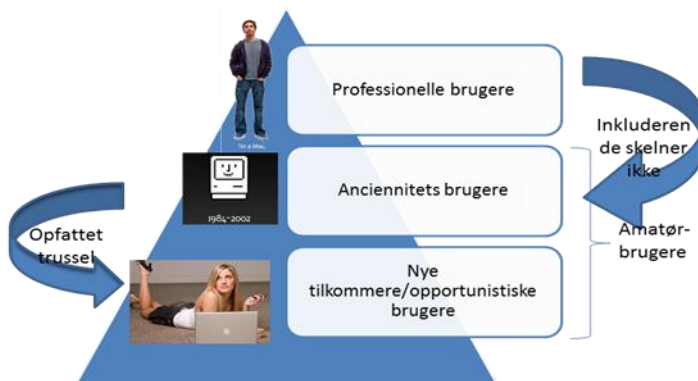
In this way, members of the brand, who are regarded as illegitimate by other members, can act as a threat towards any self-perceived legitimate members' self-perception and identity (Leigh, Peters and Shelton, 2006). To look at this situation in a very simplified manner, for a moment I will take an atomistic standpoint. The financial means needed to come in possession of a brand can seem as a rather easily surpassable boundary between brand and consumer. But returning to the social-constructivist approach on consumption, access to a brand also involves relational aspects and recognition of legitimacy by important brand stakeholders, which involves perceived boundaries that stretch beyond the mere act of simply buying the item. Therefore in the social-constructivist view access to a brand is about more than simply buying it.

The assignment "Think different? - a comparative analysis of the symbolic meaning of Mac amongst professionals and amateurs" (Cifuentes & Wehner, 2010) has left me wondering. This wondering pertains to whether brand-members, who regard themselves as having a specially privileged hierarchical status in relation to the brand, are prone to preserve their relationship to the brand by renegotiating or reestablishing symbolic boundaries to the brand and thereby creating new ways to exclude undesired brand-members. In this way consumers with a self-perceived advantageous social/cultural status or capital in relation to the brand can redefine the brands authenticity and protect it from "contamination" (Rogers 1976).

In the above mentioned assignment, a picture showing three broad social groupings under the Mac brand emerged; these are portrayed in figure 1 below. At the top of this hierarchy, we find the professional users, in the middle we find amateur-users with a certain seniority in relation to the brand, and at the bottom we find new users who primarily seem to use the brand because of its trendiness and fashionable appeal. The historical circumstances suggest that Mac was a brand that put itself against the mainstream brands. In the 80'ies the computer-market was dominated by IBM's PC and Microsoft software, which was all complicated and reserved to the experts. Apple in opposition to this launched the Macintosh computer in 1984. Quickly it emerged that Macintosh computers were very good to graphic designers and creative spirits. This fitted extraordinarily well with the corporate values of Apple portrayed by their pay-off "Think Different". This was a pay-off and a value that creative spirits and people alike could certainly relate to, after all a large part of the creative work was literally to think different. Nevertheless this was not a computer appealing only to professional users. Many amateur-users took a liking to the very user-friendly interface on Apple's Macintosh computer and bought into the brand. In the year 1998 something big happened for the brand, when they at the apparently perfect moment launched the iMac computer. The iMac has been a huge success from the day of the launch until now where the laptops have changed name from iBooks to MacBooks. In addition Apple have changed name from Apple Computers Inc. to Apple Inc. a name change that marks the company activity change from being only computers to consumer electronics. The MacBook has placed itself as a very popular computer, and still experiences a growing popularity.

It is precisely in this growing popularity that the essence of the previously explained problem arises. In the assignment a picture emerged showing signs that certain problems were beginning to show amongst the amateur consumers that over a long period of time had shown great loyalty towards the Apple brand. These brand-members found the relational importance of their consumer-brand-relation in the acknowledgement that they themselves were not professionally creative but that the creative subculture was a big locus of identification for them. One of the characteristics of this subculture (and according to Thornton (1995) any other subculture) was the oppositional standing towards mainstream. In this standing a problem emerged because the growing popularity of the brand and subsequent commercialization blurred this oppositional standing, and this appeared to be a problem for the amateur users or brand-members who in the use of the brand were reaching out for a belonging within a creative subculture.

In their eyes the new-comers amongst the amateur users were pure opportunistic users, who were not aware of the original meaning and value of the brand, but bought the brand because of its trendiness and fashionable appeal. These new-comers were in their opinion marginal in the symbolic community of the Apple brand, because they lacked the necessary seniority in relation to the brand in order to be an equal brand-member. Here lies an important boundary construction for the user with seniority, as he/she wants to create an identity in his/her consumption of the Apple brand, an identity in relation with the professional creative users of the brand, but not in relation to the new amateur users of the brand. Thereby the user with seniority finds a need to distance and a boundary between him/herself and the new-comers in order to avoid comparison by themselves or by others with the new-comers identity, which in the eyes of the seniority user will compromise the identity he/she is trying to construct partially through their consumption.



Figur 2: MacBook Hierarkier, own creation

Precisely this (de)construction of symbolic boundaries is an especially interesting point of attention in my opinion. The identity boundary that creates a distinct “we” (also called a we-ness (Jenkins, 1996)) for the individual to identify with and some more or less significant “others” who stand in opposition to the “we”.

The boundary or border, symbolic as it may be, is in itself an interesting phenomenon because of its constant dynamic and not least because of the duality that exists there. The border is a place of interesting duality because it is in this very place that we meet and at the same time are separated.

1.4 The problem and the research question

The overall purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the general understanding of how consumers create symbolic boundaries and thereby create several symbolic communities in relation to a brand. This will be done in a perspective of consumption as an identity construction process. The assignment “Think different? - a comparative analysis of the symbolic meaning of Mac amongst professionals and amateurs” (Cifuentes & Wehner, 2010) established indications of the existence of several socially created groupings related to the Apple brand, and therefore left an interest as to how the symbolic boundaries which define and constitute these groupings are created. For this broad field of interest I will empirically find my point of focus in Holts widely acknowledged typologies with a focus on the consuming as classification typology (1995). Thereby my interest will be related to the actions and intentions of consumers to create affiliation in relation to brands and identity and distinction to significant others. How consumers create affiliation to the others whom they wish identification with and how they create boundaries that distinguish them from the undesired identities that sometimes become part of the brand, will be a central focus of this thesis. The vast social mechanisms that follow with a brand and with consumption as such has furthermore created an interest as to whether brands can be seen as institutions especially considering Turners definition of an institution as “a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organizing relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment.” (Turner 1997: 6). This leads me to believe that viewing (de)construction of symbolic boundaries from an institutional perspective will help to create clarity and classification of the social mechanisms taking place within this phenomenon. This can be seen already in the first discussion of this thesis introducing the idea that access to a brand requires more than just buying the product. Here we see that breaching the regulatory institutional boundary is not sufficient to obtain access to a brand, and that more boundaries arise before obtaining a legitimate and recognized relationship to a brand.

In this manner I can formulate the following research question:

How do consumers make use of actions and objects in order to classify themselves and others, and thereby (de)construct the symbolic boundaries that help them form the desired distinction and affiliation needed for their consumer-brand-relationships?

The general question brings with it the following sub-questions:

- *Which meanings do Apple-users attach to the Apple brand and their Apple products?*
- *Where are these meanings created and how are they co-constituent to the consumers identity?*
- *Once the values are transferred how do consumers create affiliation to desired reference-groups and maintain distinction from dissociative reference-groups?*
- *How can this shed light on general subjects within (de)construction of symbolic boundaries in relation to consumption?*

1.5 Foundation for choice of theory

As the introduction indicates this thesis sees symbolic meanings as dynamic and changeable, therefore the choice of theory will be based on theorists with constructivist views. These theorists will stem from two very closely related fields i.e. constructivist sociology and interpretative consumer behavior research. This is to stand opposed to the theoretic understandings that regard symbolic meanings as fixed, established and eternal and consequently offer an essentialist view on meanings. My view is not necessarily that there is no essential grounding in symbolic meanings, but that this essential grounding is momentary and therefore dynamic and changeable.

*“If there were only one truth,
you couldn't paint a hundred canvases
on the same theme.”*
- Pablo Picasso

1.6 The meta-theoretical point of view

In the following, I will describe the fundamental assumptions, which this thesis is built upon.

Thus, I will elaborate on the theory of science that controls my way of seeing and describing the focus areas at hand.

As this thesis will be underpinned by the constructivist paradigm, I will first shed some light on the concept of a paradigm.

The word paradigm comes from Greek and in its noun form means pattern or model (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>). The Greek term παραδείγματι (paradeigma) was used in Greek texts such as Plato's Timaeus. It quite aptly had the meaning of the model or the pattern that the Gods used to create the cosmos. This applies as a suitable metaphor for the “god” as the researcher, the world around him or the research object as the cosmos, and the theory as the model or pattern used to create the world. A paradigm is the set of fundamental ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions, which define the researcher's view on science (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

For the purpose of this thesis, I will use the constructivist paradigm, as the interest of this thesis will be on dynamic symbolic boundaries and the symbolic world of the consumers. Focusing on the symbolic world of the consumers, opts for a more interpretative view in relation to the research of this thesis. Thus the focal point of the research of consumer behavior in this thesis will be on the interpretative consumer behavior studies.

1.6.1 The constructivist paradigm

In this following paragraph I will attempt to shed some light on the constructivist paradigms and its use in this thesis.

Within the conductive science, such as consumer behavior, the constructivists search for knowledge about the perceived reality and the situational determined meanings that are attached to the experience of the human in its lived world (Gergen, 1997). Thus, the experienced life-world of the individual, i.e. the life-world the individual knows of, is regarded as a construction (Schwandt, 1994). Consequently, in a constructivist perspective, the world must be understood as a "*complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it.... [Moreover, constructivists argue that] the world of lived reality and situation-specific meanings that constitute the general object of investigation is... constructed by social actors*" (Ibid, p. 118-119). It follows that in a constructivist approach "*social agents are considered autonomous, intentional, active, goal directed; they construe, construct, and interpret their own behavior and that of their fellow agents*" (Ibid, p. 120).

One very interesting point in relation to this study of consumer behavior is the notion of intentionality. The reason for this being interesting is that it entails that if we are intentional as social agents, we must have some (sub)consciousness about our actions, and therefore the meanings of our actions can be explored. The notion of intentionality is elaborated in "The Social Construction of Reality", by Berger and Luckmann (1966), who laid the foundations of social constructivism. The authors argue that consciousness is always intentional and that everyday reality is socially constructed. In order to 'hold together' reality, it is constituted by several levels of legitimization, i.e., processes of "*justifying the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to its practical imperatives*" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 86). One example of this could be the dos and don'ts of sports-fans within the sports-arenas, as explained by Douglas Holt (1995) in his research of the consumption typologies (more on this later in this thesis).

As explained earlier the ontology, epistemology and methodology form the paradigm. Before attending the discussion of the ontology and epistemology of the social constructivist paradigm it is important to point out that, within the social constructivism there are roughly two philosophical directions. These are formed by the moderate social constructivism and the radical

social constructivism. The basic principal of the discussion between these two directions is whether both the physical and the social reality is a construction, as the radical social constructivists believe, or if only the social reality is constructed. An example could be illustrated through the following discussion: Is there for the human nothing there and no mountain until the human has acknowledged its existence or is there something there that only appears as a mountain once the human has acknowledged its existence. My conviction leans more towards the latter of these two opposing statements, meaning the moderate social constructivism, even though at times examples could be found of the first statement. As it may occur this thesis is mostly based on Berger & Luckmanns (1966) ideas on the social constructivism, Berger & Luckmann also mostly turn towards the moderate social constructivism and so will this thesis. This becomes clear as they speak of society as a construction of human activity, while society returns and creates the human as a product of society. Here it is noted, that the social reality, understood as the institutionalized and objectified habits, appears for the individual in the same way as the physical reality, this social part of reality constitutes and is constituted in a dialectic interplay. This is important as this thesis will deal with the symbolic world of the consumer, but will regard this symbolic world just as real as any reality.

For this thesis it is important that the ontology of the social constructivist paradigm sees the reality as socially negotiated, because it gives room for the discussion of the socially created phenomena and rules and norms of the consumers' world. Furthermore the epistemology of the social constructivist paradigm sees knowledge as socially constructed, because this opts for a sociological explanation of the phenomena found in the analysis of this thesis. These notions of epistemology and ontology of the social constructivist approach can be summarized as saying that humans are a product of society and society is a product of humans (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) which is important for this thesis.

As two paradigms cannot co-exist in the same scientific investigation because of the notion of incommensurability (Kuhn, 1962), it is important to discuss the methodology linked to the constructivist paradigm. This will be done in the following section.

1.6.2 Methodology

According to Schwandt (1994), the essential factor when collecting knowledge within the constructivist paradigm is that the method can capture details, complexity and situationally conditioned everyday meanings in the world of the lived. These methods are commonly viewed as “interpretive”, and they will lay the foundation for the methodology of this thesis. Therefore, social phenomena will be understood from the outlook of the individuals’ own perspectives: *”describing the world as experienced by the subjects, and with the assumption that the world is what people perceive it to be”* (Kvale 1996:52). The interpretive methods can also be viewed as hermeneutic methods, i.e. interpretive and dialectic ways of gathering knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). When we speak of hermeneutic methods, focus is on the different types of interaction between the researcher and the research object. In addition, the interpretation is sophisticated by the dialectic exchange between the researcher and the “meaningful others” (Jenkins, 1996). As pointed out by Andersen (1988:172), *“the goal of the interpretation process is for one individual to understand another individual’s world of lived”*. According to Guba (1994), the purpose of the interpretive methodology is to find a construction which is more adequate and sophisticated than the already existing. It is important here to stress that there is no absolute truth within constructivism, and that constructivism legitimizes different voices (Gergen, 1997), hence the epigraph. This means that this thesis steps away from the quantitative ideal of the positivist paradigm, and values the different voices of each individual that can shed light on the research questions.

1.6.2.1 Inductive and deductive method

In the process towards the result of this thesis I have chosen a method which is partially inductive and partially deductive. It is deductive as my observations are enriched by theory, theory that I on beforehand had some level of knowledge about. But it is also inductive as my motive is not to (de)confirm a pre-given theory, but to observe and research patterns of consumption and attempt to develop these observations with some theoretic fortifications. Thus the logic in the approach of this thesis is mostly inductive, but as I cannot cast away my theoretic and academic groundings and foundations for the research, it is partially also deductive.

1.6.3 Key meta-theoretical themes

1.6.3.1 Identity

As identity will be a central theme of this thesis it is natural to discuss further the constructivist understanding of identity, beginning with Berger and Luckmanns thoughts on the theme of identity. They argue that: *"Identity is a phenomenon that emerges from the dialectic between individual and society. Identity types, on the other hand, are social products tout court, relatively stable elements of objective social reality"* (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 160). This dialectic, as explained earlier in this chapter, said that society is a human product and also an objective reality, and the human is a social product (ibid.). The institutionalization of knowledge happens through processes of externalization where cultural processes such as routines and habitus (Bourdieu, 1994) are emblemized thereby creating an institution. This institution is essentially self-enhancing as it channels human behavior in one certain direction. Thus certain social processes such as for example consumption are underpinned by a type of social control. The symbolic social processes happening in these institutions essentially form an objective reality.

Therefore, the authors declare that, in order to study identity, it is essential to contextualize it within a theoretical framework. For example, *"a psychology interpreting certain empirical phenomena as possession by demonical beings has as its matrix a mythological theory of the cosmos, and it is inappropriate to interpret it in a non-mythological framework"* (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 160). Furthermore contextualization is important as the authors describe that every person has a certain relevance-structure which lets distinct parts of everyday-life-reality stand out and have a special meaning. Thus individuals never experience the wholeness but combine aspects of the common knowledge-stock into a particular understanding of the reality they experience. Individuals who share the same relevance-structures form a collective, which withholds particular sub-universes. Consequently the way in which we see society appears for us as an objectified reality, or a local ontology (Gergen, 1997: 81). Similarly what we believe to know about our self, with reference to our identity, can appear as an objective reality, this belief can even be shared by others thereby forming a local convention on our identity. This does not only pertain to a single identity but what we think to believe about ourselves can also entail multiple identities. These can be formed through a chronological process of change in the dialectic identification process. The multiple identities can also appear in the different contexts

of everyday-life, as the identification process can appear in the mirroring of meaningful others in relation to one's own self-perception (Weigert et. al, 1986; Mead, 1934; Jenkins, 1996). This identification process is elaborated by Mead, as he explains that self-perception requires reflexivity, entailing that one becomes object for one's own thoughts by taking the position of the generalized other (1934: 141-142). This notion is elaborated by Weigert et. al. (1986) as they explain that the reflexive realization of the self requires an answer to the question of "Who am I?". The answer to this question regardless of its form is a construction that is determined situationally, linguistically and culturally – an emblemization of one self. Thus realization of the self is first meaningful when it takes shape. The shape makes us recognizable to others and us self and is called identity, without form the self is unreachable and has no meaning (ibid: 42-43).

From the above mentioned it is noticeable that identity requires an objectification of the question "Who am/are I/we?". This objectification takes place in a social process, which ensures meaningfulness to the answer to this question. The answering-process is socially grounded whether it is anchored in an inner auto-communication with the generalized other or a communication with others. Thus the answer to the question of identity is a social construction which is limited to the semiotics pertaining to each individual's culture (Weigert et. al., 1986; Gergen and Davis, 1985).

1.6.3.2 Consumption and identity

The interpretative consumer research in which this thesis inscribes itself, takes its starting point in the 1980s according to Belk (1995). Here alternative perspectives in the consumer research began to emerge. This was a brake up away from the existing positivist paradigmatic consumer research which had a focus on the quantitative experimental research seeking to nourish economic and psychological themes for managerial purposes. The new consumer behavior as Belk calls it (ibid, p.55) introduced a non-positivist paradigm to consumer behavior with a focus on qualitative ethnographic research seeking to nourish sociological and anthropological themes for more culturally enlightening purposes. This brake up with the positivist paradigm produced a wide array of different directions for the consumer research in which the social constructivist paradigm, in which this thesis finds itself, is just one of many non-positivist paradigms. The common denominator for all of these different paradigmatic directions is however the interpretative perspectives, cultural studies and the holistic perspective on consumer research.

According to Belk the application of interpretative consumer behavior opens up for a vast array of possibilities for research objects and perspectives on consumption.

The notion of (de)construction of symbolic boundaries which this thesis finds interest for, takes its point of departure in the part of the interpretative consumer research that contributes to the understanding of consumption as a context for construction of identity.

As mentioned earlier identity in the social constructivist paradigm can be regarded as a result of an interaction between the individual and society. This interaction happens through communication via the things we say (e.g. Mead, 1934; Berger & Luckmann, 1966) the things we do as a social actor (Goffman, 1959) and the things we surround ourselves with (Belk, 1988). Thus when we find ourselves in a context of consumption, consumption must be understood as a symbolic interaction that takes place in the interaction between individual and society. The interaction of consuming can be regarded as a dialogue between the individual and society, consequently all forms of consumption are meaningful and thus symbolic. Subsequently my favorite soft-drink brand, my choice of transportation, my clothes and the way I wear them, my shoes, the way I decorate my home all says something about my identity, who I am. This means that all consumption in this thesis potentially can be regarded as meaningful, no act of consumption is meaningless, and thus all acts of consumption are on some level symbolic. Furthermore not only the consumption in itself is symbolic but also the functionality of the product is symbolic. This is due to the reason that functionality in the social constructivist paradigm is also a construction, and thus must also be regarded as symbolic (Askegaard & Firat, 1996).

1.6.3.3 Culture

A short notion of a definition of how culture is going to be seen in this thesis is important. Even though the anthropologist Edward Tylor came up with this definition in 1871, the definition is still very useful and works well within the social constructivist paradigm. Tylors definition of culture was as follows *"that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society"*. Thus Tylor viewed culture as something like a pre-understanding using habits to explain culture, hence culture can be seen as "the given", and something dynamic, as what we take as given changes constantly, and our reality is negotiated in the social constructivist paradigm. In accordance with

the thoughts of Geertz (1973), culture can furthermore be viewed as a system of symbols that acts as a “lens” for making sense of the world. Subsequently Geertz uses the “blueprint” as a metaphor for culture that arranges one to act in what is perceived to be a reasonable and natural manner in relation to this sensemaking. These cultural systems are primarily “local” constructions (Geertz 1983), as culture evolves within specific groups at both macro level (nations, regions, ethnic enclaves) and micro levels (occupations, organizations, families). As Geertz indicates the existence of very narrow and local cultural systems, it gives the opportunity as a researcher to loosen the assumption of a singular overall cultural system and to examine the multiple and diffuse cultural systems that operate across a given population. This will be an important focus for this thesis, as the introduction suggests precisely the existence of multiple cultural systems within a very narrow population.

1.6.3.4 Social boundaries

As the discussion of symbolic boundaries will be very important for this thesis it is important to define what exactly is understood by social boundaries. In Henri Tajfel's book *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (1982) a useful term is discussed as they in a similar way to Jenkins (1996) and Mead (1934) offer an interesting discussion on the identity question. The Social psychologists Tajfel and Turner (1982) propose that groups give us a sense of belonging, a social identity that makes us belong to a social world. In order to increase our self-image we enhance this social world, called the in-group, by discriminating the “others” or the out-group. For this thesis I will use the notions of “we’s” and “others” as proposed by Richard Jenkins, but the meaning of these notions will be very similar to the notion of in-groups (groups we belong to) and out-groups (groups we do not belong to). Thus social symbolic boundaries define where the in-group ends and the out-group begins and vice versa (Tajfel & Turner, 1982).

1.7 Method and the gathering of empiric material

In the following chapter I will explain the gathering of empiric material for this thesis. The empiric investigation of this thesis seeks to illustrate how consumers (de)construct symbolic boundaries. In the theoretic chapter of this thesis I have stated the preconception of consumer behavior for this thesis, which will be explored during the empiric investigation. As mentioned earlier this thesis will deal with the interpretive method and the constructivist paradigm, therefore I find it suitable to make use of the qualitative in-depth interview. The first part of this chapter will seek to show why the symmetrical dialogical ideal will be of great value to the gathering of data. Furthermore it will seek to explain why the phenomenological and the hermeneutical motives will help the gathering of empery. The second part of this chapter will seek to explain how the techniques of Grand Tours, Floating prompts, Autodriving and Storytelling (McCracken, 1988) will be of value to the interviews. The third part of the chapter will show the specific framework of questions that will be put to use and finally explain the selection criteria of the interviewees.

Within the interpretive science the qualitative in-depth interview seeks to uncover the individual's construction of the world and of the self, these notions are important to this thesis as it seeks precisely to uncover these factors. In the interpretive method it is in the dialogue that the interviewee's self-perception can be uncovered. Therefore one of the motives that I will try to substantiate in the interviews is to seek symmetry in the conversation. Symmetry is important to the professional conversation or dialogue because in order for a conversation to be effective it needs symmetry (Dam Hede, 2010). Many dialogue-philosophers touch upon the notion of symmetrical conversations but from Sokrates to Hegel the essence of their thoughts is that the only way of gaining self-consciousness is through the meeting with another human being (ibid.). Regarding the very meaning of the word symmetry we find that "sym" is greek for equal or mutual and "metron" is greek for proportion or measurement (worldlingo.com). Thus we find a notion that the symmetrical conversation for this thesis happens when researcher and interviewee appear to each other as equals. This is perhaps known better as the subject-subject relationship ideal.

This entails a problem because the very nature of the situation is asymmetrical, one person is the interviewee and the other is the researcher, one is asking while the other is answering. As such this for some theoretic means that the situation will never be symmetrical (Rogers, 1990), whilst for others, here amongst especially Martin Buber, means that the situation is in its starting point asymmetrical, but can find symmetry in moments and fractions of moments, and it is precisely in these moments that the conversation becomes effective (Ibid.). Another way of saying this is that the conversation becomes symmetrical in the moments where the researcher and the interviewee appear in a subject-subject relation to one another (Buber, 1922). I am of the conviction that symmetry can appear, even in situations that are asymmetrical, because one could ask oneself whether a completely symmetrical situation even exists, whilst I believe that most of us can agree to have experienced moments of symmetry in conversations. Precisely these moments is the exact reason why I implement this as an ideal motive in my interviews, because seeking it out will in my eyes enhance the chances of the moments of symmetry happening in the conversations. Furthermore the subject-subject relation will be able to secure the inter-subjective knowledge that the constructivist paradigm seeks to uncover in the conversation, as the inter-subjective knowledge can be seen as a constructed truth as opposed to an existing truth that is uncovered in the interview. This has certain similarities to the metaphor of the interviewer as a traveler by Steinar Kvale (1996).

In order to structure and lead the interview I as interviewer have prepared certain themes that will be treated along the interviews to secure a certain level of comparability amongst the interviews, and at the same time in to keep the conversation intense. Obviously this is also done in order to secure that certain subjects related to the (de)construction of symbolic boundaries are uncovered along the interviews. Consequently the interviews will have the form of semi-structured individual in-depth interviews (McCracken, 1988).

Two ideal motives of interview will be taken into account in this interview form, one being the phenomenological ideal, the other being the hermeneutic ideal.

The phenomenological ideal entails that the interviewer attempts to cast off his for-knowledge about the subject he investigates, meaning that he attempts to be open to new and un-assumed truths about the investigation subject (Kvale, 1996).

The hermeneutic ideal entails that the interviewer attempts to interpret what is being said and openly discusses his interpretations with the interviewee. This holds for a more active interviewer and a more active position in regards to the production of knowledge being produced along the interview (ibid). These two ideals both contribute to the dialogical ideal of symmetry as they both opt for a subject-subject relationship between the interviewer and the researcher.

These two techniques will help to strengthen the subject-subject relation ideal sought out in these interviews and thus help the interviewer obtain the metaphoric traveler role and subsequently moments of symmetry in the conversation.

1.7.1 The questioning frame

1.7.1.1 Techniques

The questions will form the structure of the interview, and as such each part of the interview starts off with questions of a certain width, also called “*Grand Tours*” (McCracken, 1988: 35). These are opening non-directional questions, that help to get the interviewee started. Another point of focus within these questions will be the “*floating prompts*” (ibid: 35) this is simply a technique for making the interviewee elaborate on his/her answer. The technique builds upon simple manners of just either raising ones eyebrow or merely repeating a key term from the interviewees’ sentence. Furthermore I will make use of “*autodriving*” (ibid:31) during the interviews, a highly obtrusive technique which in my opinion somewhat compromises the subject-subject relation and the symmetrical ideal, but a very useful technique. Autodriving is a term used when an interview is “driven” by the respondent by seeing and hearing their own behavior, it is a “photoelicitation” technique. Thus respondents will be shown stylized pictures of individuals and pictures of different computers Apple and other brands, and will be asked to pair them and discuss the reasoning behind their pairing. McCracken (1988) has mentioned autodriving as a tool that provides interviewees the necessary distance to see hear and discuss their own behavior, this is my intention with these questions, and therefore in my regard this reasoning makes up for the momentary deviation from the dialogical symmetrical ideal of these interviews.

As the focus of (de)construction of symbolic boundaries sets this thesis in a constructivist paradigm, storytelling questions are interesting for this gathering of the empiric as it may help to understand how the interviewees construct their reality. Thus storytelling questions will be a fourth type of prompt in this questionnaire.

1.7.1.2 The questions

The questioning frame will be divided into three parts as illustrated below, but will not necessarily be followed sternly during the interviews, as it is a semi-structured interview-form this leaves room for improvised questions depending on how the interviewee answers the questions. Part 1 seeks to explore the meanings of the Apple brand, including where these meanings are created. Part 2 and 3 seek to explore how affiliation and distinction is created among consumers and how they can be co-constituent to the identity of the interviewees. Here below the questioning frame is presented in the language in which the interviews will be conducted, Danish.

Part 1

Hvad er Apple? Hvad tænker du når du ser det her?

[Prompt, picture of a new and an old Apple logo]



Hvad er historien bag din Mac?

Fortæl om da du fik dit første Mac produkt?

Hvordan har du siden haft det med dine Apple produkter?

Fortæl historien om planeten Apple. Du er på planeten Apple hvordan ser der ud, hvordan føles det, hvordan dufter der?

Part 2

Fortæl om dig før og efter du købte din første Mac?

Færdiggør denne historie, du er i et rum fyldt med Mac's iblandt dem er din Mac, hvordan finder du frem til den der er din?

Færdiggør denne historie, du er i et lokale fyldt med garvede Mac-brugere, men en af dem er helt ny mac-bruger, hvordan spotter du ham?

Part 3

Beskriv en typisk Mac-bruger?

Beskriv en typisk PC bruger?

Du møder Mr./Mrs. Apple (kernebrugeren) hvordan ser han/hun ud?

Hvem er du mest lig/ulig?

Prøv at parre disse billeder sammen, hvad hører sammen? (See appendix 2 for the pictures used)

[Prompt, stylized pictures of different professions, the geek, the creative, the Business-man, the blue collar worker, men and women mixed in equal amounts, together with different electronic products some Apple products some not]

1.7.1.3 Selection of interviewees

The sampling strategy is important for the variations of findings that can be explored during the collection of empiric material. For this thesis the sampling strategy will be the a theory based “*purposive sampling*” (Miles and Huberman, 1994; 29) Thus I will be attempting to interview a very particular set of people based on my desire to find examples of the theoretic construct of (de)construction of symbolic boundaries.

This means that as Apple users serve as a case example for this thesis, there will be a necessity to interview both long term users of the Apple brand and short term users of the Apple brand. As this thesis is written from a standpoint of helping Apple understand their consumers better, the characteristics of the interviewees will attempt to aim at a representative group of Apple users. As such Apple products appeal to a quite large and broad group of people, but still there are certain characteristics that make for two very distinct target groups, amateur users and professional users. As the assignment “Think different? - a comparative analysis of the symbolic meaning of Mac amongst professionals and amateurs” showed that the (de)construction of symbolic boundaries was most important to the amateur users, the amateur users will be the point of focus for the collection of the empiric material.

This means that I will interview new Apple users, defined as users who have a maximum of one year of experience using Apple products with a minimum of a Mac computer product. As Apple’s products center on the Mac computer it is important that users are defined as people who, as a minimum, are in possession of such a computer. Furthermore I will interview experienced Apple users, defined as users who have been with the brand since at least 2001, as this is the time when the brand launched its first highly commercial success the iMac. Two very important factors will be taken into account when selecting these interviewees, one is that they must be involved in relation to the brand, the other being that they must be within a reasonable age likeness. This is in order to secure that the brand actually matters to them, and to secure that they relate to each other on some level. Therefore I will select respondent who are around their mid-twenties years and up to mid-thirties. The amount of interviews for each group will be around 4 interviews which will be a total of 8 interviews as this according to McCracken (1988) is where redundancy should begin to show. If redundancy has not yet appeared after these interviews, more interviews will be conducted until a satisfactory redundancy has taken place.

The group of interviewees will be as follows:

Name:	Mac user for x years:	Sex:	Age:
New users			
Mai	Less than 1 year	F	26
Philip	1 year	M	24
Kristian	1 year	M	27
Klaus	1 year	M	26
Old users			
Anra	10 years	F	28
Mark	11 years	M	34
David	10 years	M	35
Clara	9 years	F	26

Table 1, own creation

For the sake of clarity these interviewees, will be referenced with their name, age and user seniority e.g. Anra (28 yr, old U). Meanwhile the interviewer will be written with my initials RC.

1.7.1.4 Post-interview procedures

Each conducted interview has been audio-recorded and some parts have been filmed, afterwards each interview has been transcribed. The transcription (see appendix 3 for example) has been written in a manner that shows the text as an interactive conversation, where it is also explicated what happens in the conversation, for example laughter or gestures. According to Kvale there are certain methodic issues to take into account here, with regards to the reliability of these transcripts. Ideally a professional transcriber should have been used to transcribe the interviews under careful guidelines from the interviewer in relation to the purpose of the transcript. Meanwhile a transcriber was not available with the budget at hand for this thesis, and thus I have transcribed the interviews myself, taking into regard the compromises being made with regards to the reliability of the interviews. In order to minimize these compromises I have transcribed the interviews as precisely and systematically as possible (e.g. the entire interviews have been transcribed including gestures, laughter, pauses etc.), and accepted the fact that the reconstruction of the interviews may have had an interpretation already before the interview was transcribed. Nevertheless this is also a risk even when a transcriber transcribes the interviews and therefore I believe that the compromise in reliability is held to a minimum. Furthermore the apprehension is minimized as this will be a content analysis and not a conversation analysis.

2. Analysis

2.1 Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to present the analysis of the empiric material, and simultaneously present the theories that can shed light on the phenomena and themes that were uncovered along the analysis.

On an overall level the first part of this chapter will show the positive meanings consumers attach to the brand and products of Apple, furthermore it will uncover the origins of these meanings and their co-constituency to the consumers' identities. These meanings are attempted to be transferred to the individual consumer through different possession-rituals in an attempt to create, achieve or construct a certain identity. The sources of these meanings can be found through the study of the stereotypes that are attached to the brands involved in this category of products, in this analysis PC computer-products in general and Apple. Finally the third part of this chapter will illustrate in which way consumers create affiliation and distinction to associative and dissociative reference-groups in relation to the brand. In prolongation of the study of stereotypes it becomes evident that, the positive meanings attached to these products come not only from the products themselves, but also from the people who use these products, and the group-belongings of these people. These groupings are identified as trendsetters, hipsters and creative, who are the ones that in certain regards lead the meanings and constitute them, while they are imitated by the followers. These groupings have different characteristics especially with regards to the creation of meaning and the brands role in relation to the grouping. They are in this analysis, overall noted as either subcultural groupings (Thornton, 1995) or brand community groupings (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). The discussion of the behavior and needs of these two types of groupings is very important, because the final part of the chapter discusses the typologies used by the individual consumer to show their (dis)affiliation. Thus the discussion of the characteristics of these groupings is important because it makes up for the shortcomings of Holt's study of consumption typologies, which limits the discussion to the individual's value creating activities. Accordingly both the individual's and the groupings' value creating ideals and activities are discussed throughout the final two chapters of the analysis.

As mentioned the final chapter will seek to uncover how consumers will attempt to show, which groupings they are (dis)affiliated to through rituals of classification. The Apple groupings have

been attempted to be illustrated in order to give an overview of the groupings and the hierarchy that will be presented in this analysis, in the figure below.

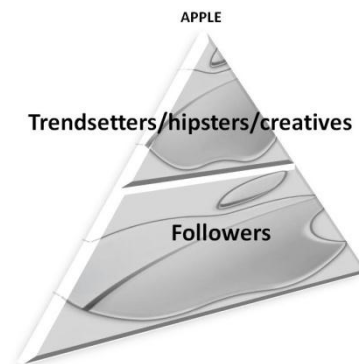


Figure 3, own creation

2.1.1 Apple: white, clean, beautiful, easy, user-friendly...

The empiric material of this thesis, on first sight gives an impression of a very strong relationship between the consumer and Apple. This strong relationship is determined because of the signs of intense involvement from the consumer. As the subtitle indicates very positive words were used to describe the thoughts connected to Apple, and they unveil the meanings or symbolic meanings that consumers interpret in their relation with the brand. A variety of meanings were associated with the Apple brand, they are depicted in the model below, and as it shows they are for the most part very positive associations.

Nice design	Creative	Quality	Freedom		
	Trustworthy				
Believable life	User friendly Technology	Beautiful	Innovation	Cool	City

Figure 4, Own Creation

More positive meanings associated with Apple were portrayed by the interviewees when put in the position to tell the story of the planet Apple, these values and ideas are portrayed in the model below.

Clean	Odorless	Shiny	Easy to get around
White	Silver	Weird	

Figure 5, Own Creation

While some of these meanings are clearly descriptions of how the Apple products look, some are merely positive meanings and this planet appears as a nice place to be.

A clear example of how these values are mentioned appears in the interview with Mai (26yr, old U):

RC: What are your thoughts when seeing this [prompt: picture of the Apple logo]?

Mai: I'm thinking computer, Apple and Mac. Innovation, new technology, modern, urban lifestyle.

RC: Urban lifestyle?

Mai: Yes, it's something I associate with city life.

RC: What is Apple to you?

Mai: It's coolness, innovation, quality, great design, and creativity.

Here Mai tells very surely and certainly about the associations she has with Apple, some important themes here are coolness and creativity.

The conviction is clearly that Apple is associated with coolness and creativity, and as we will see later in this chapter this is important for the meaning of the group belonging in relation to the construction of identity. Furthermore this is interesting because in the constructivist paradigm these themes or symbolic values are not actual objective realities, the objective reality is the product itself, which undeniably exists, but the values associated with the product are social constructions, as explained in the meta-theoretical chapter. Levy (1959) proposes one of the first and at the same time very interesting views on meanings of goods and products. He suggests that consumers are not only influenced by the functional characteristic of a product but also by its image or what it stands for. Subsequently if there is a match between the consumer's self-

concept and the product, it is more likely to be consumed. This quote is of course a bit older than the theory of the social construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and can in my view be refined with a more social constructivist formulation. Thus I believe that Levy's thoughts in the social constructivist paradigm would have put the functional characteristics and the image as one and same thing, because the functional characteristics cannot be regarded as objective realities these will have different meanings in the eye of the beholder.

2.1.2 Me, myself and Apple...

Solomon (1983) builds upon Levy's thoughts and includes aspects of symbolic interactionism. With a starting point in this Solomon argues that the consumer through consumption creates his self-concept. This stands opposed to the traditional view where consumption turns out in certain ways as a result of the consumer's self-concept. The consumer's interpretation of the product's meaning helps him reach out for different desired roles or identities and thus understand himself in an appropriate way in relation to those roles. Essentially Solomon argues that consumption is a social behavior, which rises from social and private/individual meanings attached to the products, and not an information process in the mind of the consumers. Consumption is a form of communication and auto-communication of meanings which lead to an enhanced understanding of the consumer's role which is a part of his identity and self-concept.

These notions are sophisticated by Belk (1988) who offers an elaborative view on why values are interesting to analyze. Belk (ibid) offers a view where he regards not only the buying decision but the whole consumption experience. This pertains especially to the role consumption goods and activities play in our self-concept. In his theory about possessions and the extended self he argues that the "me" is our self and the "mine" is our extended self, and emphasizes the fluidity of these boundaries. The more objects are considered to be "mine" the closer relation they have to the "me" or the self-concept. Belk argues that some things are in general closer to the self than others, for example body parts. An interesting point made out by Belk is that the closeness of the relation between self and object can be changed and made closer by certain processes, where ownership is just one of them. Other intentional processes are amongst others knowledge, control, contagion and construction of the object. Meaning amongst other things, that the more we use an object the closer our relation to it will become.

These theoretical constructs are important for the understanding of the symbolic consumption process and they become apparent in several of the interviews and especially in the interview with Klaus (26 yr, New U) after having described Mac as something beautiful with a nice design Klaus elaborates:

Klaus: ... I've always been a guy who liked design, I grew up in a home with an interior-architect and a designer, and we always liked beautiful things in our home.

This quote shows that the meaning of the object helps him accomplish a certain role as Solomon's theory describes. The nature of this role was in this case a role of being a guy who likes design, who has had an upbringing where design was a vital part. The way the meaning of the object can transcend into the consumers identity, is shown in the following quote a bit further into the interview:

RC: What do you think people saw when they saw Klaus with a Mac?

Klaus: Hmm, maybe that people with Macs are more design-oriented, people who want to spend extra money on something great and beautiful like a product. And there are probably some who don't get it and think what a hipster nerd, I've bought a much better product with my PC which does the same at half the price. But some might just think, Mac is a cool product he must be a pretty cool guy.

RC: What did those people think of you before you got a Mac?

Klaus: Mac-users probably looked down at me.

RC: Do you think they feel better?

Klaus: Well, they probably feel that they have a better product, especially because they like their product so much, and thereby that their choice of product reflects on themselves as a person.

Here Klaus discusses how the meaning of the product can give a person meaning in certain roles or parts of his identity. Some might come to the conclusion that he is a "hipster" while others will think, that Mac is a great product, so obviously he must be a great guy. This may also serve as an example of what Patrick et. al. (2002) call the approach of hoped-for selves and the avoidance of feared selves. According to their research the way we see ourselves physically and as a self concept is influential on our consumption. Thus, we use consumption objects to come closer to the person we wish to see us self as, hence achieving a hoped for self or avoiding a

feared for self (Patrick et al. 2002). Klaus in this quote acknowledges that the Mac may bring with it several different possible identities or roles, the hipster whom he does not strive to be, which could therefore possibly be an example of a feared self, and the cool guy which he probably strives to be which thus could be an example of a hoped-for self.

The way Belk regards consumption as overlooking the entire consumption process and emphasizing the meaning of closeness between object and owner, becomes clear in the following quote from the interview with Klaus:

RC: How have you felt about your apple products since?

Klaus: Really great, from the day I bought my Mac till now, I've developed a great relationship to it. But that's natural because I use it all the time, yesterday I turned it off, that was like the first time in weeks that it's been turned off completely. Otherwise I use it all the time, i listen to music with it, watch TV on it, watch a movie before i go to sleep, i use it all the time even when it's not directly in front of me.

Here we see how Klaus describes having built up a relationship to his Mac computer, and defending this relationship and the nature of this relationship as being rooted in his constant and intimate use of the computer. According to Belk (1988) this can be regarded as a contamination process where close physical contact with the object leads to the object becoming an intimate part of the extended self. At the same time this is an example part of the possession rituals that will be discussed later in this chapter.

Another example of this contamination process appears in the interview with Anra (28 yr, Old U):

RC: Can you tell me about yourself before and after you bought your first Apple product?

Anra: Haha, yes it's a little bit silly, but before I bought my first Mac computer, I was an idealist in the sense that I really didn't want neither computers nor internet, and I thought it was just a phase that needed to pass. But then I got my Mac, and it quickly became something that I actually needed, it quickly became part of me of my identity, or at least of my everyday life.

RC: Okay, interesting, which part of your identity is it then?

Anra: Well maybe that's wrong to say, but it's a big part of your everyday life, it fills a lot, you use it a lot, so maybe it's okay to say that it's a big part of your identity.

RC: What does it signalize about your identity?

Anra: A sort of superiority, it's your work and your free-time and your everyday, I don't have a TV so I watch everything on my Mac, I don't read the paper I read my Mac, I mean I look online to see what's going on in the world. It just overtakes a lot of parts of your life and gathers them in one place.

Here Anra describes how her Mac computer through the role it plays in her everyday life, where it forms a constant part of her doings and activities, becomes a part of her identity. She also describes that the computer, through her percept functionality of it, gathers several parts of her life in one place. These parts may be interpreted as roles or identity fragments. Furthermore the Mac computer appears to have a special meaning with her, because it changed her view on internet and computers, a view which had apparently become a part of her identity.

Anra also elaborates on how Mac helped her achieve a certain identity in the following quotes:

RC: Can you tell about getting your first Mac computer?

Anra: Shure, well, I had finished high-school, in high-school I hated computers, but then I wanted to be an artist and I was going to an art school, and I needed something that fitted with this, so i got a stationary Mac, and afterwards I got my little chubby laptop Mac, I was so happy about that computer.

Here Anra describes how her desire to become an artist needed something that matched, and here the Mac computer matched this desired identity, or possibly a hoped-for self (Patrick et. al., 2002). Continuing this exact part of the interview more interesting quotes appear, that may shed light on the symbolic nature of consumption:

RC: Yes, happy?

Anra: Yes, it did like all these thing I needed, and I think that maybe I thought it was a bit cool to sit with it in a café, afterall we weren't a lot of people who had one of those, so it was a bit cool in some way to sit with it in public. Then you could sit at Bang & Jensen at Vesterbro [trendy young neighborhood in Copenhagen], and sit with all the other cool hiptsers who where sitting with their laptop and showing it off at the café, they all had the white Macs and eventhough I don't like to admit it, you thought you were pretty cool. You were sitting there and you were a bit artist, bohemian style, design creative type, with your Mac, working on it. That was fun.

Here Belk's notion of consumption as having meaning in the whole consumption process and not only the purchase becomes apparent again. Anra describes how certain roles could be reached by

consuming the Mac computer in certain ways, using it in certain cafés helped her stand out and belong to a certain identity group, the bohemian design creatives.

Several others of the interviewees described how buying Apple products helped reach for a certain kind of identity, a clear example of this may be found in the interview with Clara (26 yr, Old U), we enter the interview after Clara has described a certain pride of having Apple products, a pride that is related to coolness and creativity:

RC: Could you describe into more details the feeling of pride that you just mentioned?

Clara: Well, I just felt mega cool. And it's something about... well at that time, it was a computer that was only used in very creative environments, and professional creative environments. So I sort of bought my way into being like them – I bought myself a more creative identity than the one I was able to portray myself or show to people around me.

Here Clara explains how her Mac computer helped her achieve a more creative identity than the one she was able to portray. So here we it becomes apparent again how certain products can help us strive for hoped-for selves (Patrick et.al., 2002) and create identities and extended selves (Belk, 1988). Here we also see, an important part of the meta-theoretical discussion of identity, a clear reflexive realization of the self, and the need of recognition by others (Weigert et. al., 1986; Gergen and Davis, 1985), which is also identified in the next passage.

Another similar passage that relates to a creative identity appears in the interview with David (34 yr, Old U):

RC: I here you describing a change, could you tell me more about the change Apple has been going through.

David: Sure, well, I godt my first Mac in 2001, it was a G4 powerbook, I bought it in a shop in London, it was used cause I was a student and couldn't really afford a new one, but I just really wanted a Mac. So I bought it, it was so cool, I really remember how happy I was about it, and how crazy it was to have it. Nobody had it, it was only us creatives that had it. It was completely unique to sit in a Café with the Mac on my lap and goof around with it. At that time PC laptops had a battery life time of about 20 minutes or so, but Macs had several hours, it was so cool. It was really something special to have it at that time.

In this passage of the interview David describes how “it was only us creatives who had it” telling that he was also a creative, who had the Mac computer. In this same passage also David

describes the café environment as having importance as a place for consuming the Mac, thus Belk's notion of the symbolic consumption process (1988) overlooking not only the buying event but the whole process of "having" and owning the product becomes evident. Furthermore David makes several statements referring to a past when Mac was special and cool.

2.1.3 Hey, this is mine...

An interesting finding in this empiric material in relation to the meanings associated with Apple, is that they are very similar among the interviewees. Taking an atomistic view this seems quite extraordinary, that people who do not know each other, have very similar thoughts on which meanings can be attached to Apple and Apple products. Grant McCracken (1986) offers interesting thoughts as to how this is possible, he offers an elaborative theory to the study of "person-object" relations. McCracken was convinced that in the present approaches to this study meaning was seen as a static object, but McCracken believed that meaning was always in transit. According to McCracken product meanings stem from the culturally constituted world. Cultural categories are the fundamental coordinates, which a culture segments the phenomenal world according to. Meanwhile cultural principals are the ideas and meanings used to determine how cultural phenomena are organized, appraised, and construed. Thus together the categories and the principles form the origin of the meaning that can be attached to a given object.

McCracken explains that the meanings that reside in the culturally constituted world are transferred to products through advertisers and fashion-systems, who serve as intermediates for meaning. The cultural meanings transferred to the products are transferred on to the consumer through several different rituals. McCracken mentions four different kinds of rituals:

1. Exchange rituals: consist of the exchange of products that are carriers of certain cultural meanings.
2. Possessions rituals: consist of thinking, comparing, discussing, cleansing, photographing, or in some way making yourself matter in relation to the product. These rituals help the consumer take ownership of the product and at the same time absorb or take in the meaning of the product.
3. Grooming rituals: consist of spending time with the product and at the same time refreshing the meaning-transfer that can take place in the "person-object" relation.

4. Divestment rituals: consist of a cleansing ritual where the consumer attempts to free the product of the meanings that have been attached to it by the consumer himself, these have importance in the situation where products must be disposed of.

McCracken is of the opinion that the choices consumers make in relation to product purchases put together an important part of the consumers' self-concept.

Some important critique points have to be made with regards to McCrackens thoughts. First off McCracken believes that it is possible for an individual to attribute entirely personal meanings to a product. In the social constructivist paradigm these cannot be completely separated from common meanings as the personal meanings will always be rooted in the social realm, it is not possible to subtract meanings out of their social grounding. This notion also makes for an elaboration of McCrackens meaning transfer model, because McCrackens theory has a fundamental linearity to it, the meaning starts in the cultural world and is then passed on down through product and finally to the consumer. In my opinion this model, in the social constructivist view, should have more circularity to it, where meaning is negotiated socially before it again appears in some institutionalized form in the cultural realm. With this notion in place I believe that McCrackens theory none the less offers some interesting thoughts on the transfer of meaning, that actually do seem to appear in several of the interviews.

McCracken also offers thoughts on how time spent with the product can serve as a ritual for possessing the product, and transferring the value of the product. Seen through McCrackens theory this can be regarded as a grooming ritual where the time spent with a product can lead to close ties between the product-meaning and the consumer. As we have seen in the interviews with both Klaus (26 yr, new U) and Anra (28yr, old U) this seems to be what is happening in the world of these consumers.

Klaus: ... I use it all the time, I have it in my bag today, yesterday I turned off but it was the first time in five days it was off. Otherwise, I lie with the constant, I listen to music on it, I watch TV on it, I actually listen to music from it the entire day and then I see a movie on it when I go to bed. I use it constantly, even when I'm not using it I have it in front of me.

Anra: ... it's your work and your leisure and your life, I don't have a television so I see everything on my Mac, I read no newspaper, I read only my computer [laughs], then look on the net to see what is happening in the world. It takes many parts of your life and gathers them in one place.

These quotes may serve as examples of how grooming rituals help the consumers transfer the meaning of the product.

Numerous examples of possession rituals also appear in the interviews, one example of the cleansing rituals that form part of the possession rituals appear in the interview with Klaus (26yr, new U):

RC: Tell me about the time you got your first Apple product.

Klaus: I remember it came with a courier, I bought on Apple's website, and this guy knocks on the door, and there he was with my package. I was so sick of my HP PC computer, I just wanted the exact opposite. But it was delivered and I opened the package, I was pretty happy, I did a quick inspection, I like that when I buy something new it looks completely new, I mean I just don't want there to be lots of scratches or things like that. I was really happy with my Macbook when I opened it, I get really excited when I buy new stuff like that. But I also feel that when I buy something new like my Mac, I don't want there to be too much stuff on it, I want it to be held as clean as possible for as long as possible. The way it came from the factory is the way I want my product to stay for a while.

RC: Why do you think that is?

Klaus: It is something to do with purity somehow, I have trouble explaining it actually. I don't want to many programs, to begin with, but as time goes by you install some stuff, that's inevitable. Maybe it looks messy if it doesn't look like it did in the beginning. That's actually how I feel about most my things, my kitchen, my table, lots of stuff.

In this quote we see how Klaus lets the interviewer understand how it was important to him that the computer he bought had to remain clean for as long as possible. The act of keeping the product clean by not doing anything to it, is of course just as much a conscious decision or a ritual as choosing to do a lot to it. Another interesting part of this quote is that Klaus explains that this ritual is actually something he likes to practice on many other of his possessions. This may be interpreted as though he feels that in the past he has successfully transferred meanings from other products with this ritual and therefore decides to put it in to use again. It may also mean that he is a person who takes his time to familiarize himself slowly with his products, as he mentions that after a while he began to install a few different things on his computer.

Other interviewees choose different possession rituals David (34 yr, old U) chooses something that makes him matter or makes him more relevant in relation the product:

RC: Finish this story, you enter a room, the room is filled with Apple Laptops, one of them is yours how do you find it?

David: Well my old one used to have stickers on it from Australia.

RC: From Australia?

David: Yes I had been on a backpacker trip around the world, I am a person who really likes to travel and I had some stickers from when I was in Australia, so I took them and put on my Mac. It gave me such a nice feeling when I saw them.

RC: Okay what about your present Mac?

David: The present one I have not actually done much about, but I'd probably find it as well. The desktop has a personal picture.

RC: Can I ask what's in the picture?

David: Yes it is me and my girlfriend Maria on a trip to New York. Well okay so actually one could say that I almost did the same to this one as the old one, it is after all, again related to travel, but it's also a big part of who I am.

In this quote we see how travelling is an important part of David's identity and self-concept, and that in the two products he has owned in some way he has transferred a certain part of his self-concept to the computer in order to possess it and transfer the meaning of the computer to himself. This becomes very obvious when he finishes his sentence by saying that travelling is a big part of who he is.

Another important theme in several of the interviews is that we experience that music and especially taste in music can be a big part of the self-concept, and as the Apple products can be used to store and listen to music, this becomes a widely used possession ritual:

RC: Okay, try to finish this story, you are in a room full of Mac's, but one of them is yours how do you find it?

Klaus (26 yr, new U): It's very funny, I think I would open iTunes, or perhaps look at the desktop, the purity that was there to start with has disappeared because it is used so much. But iTunes could

tell much about who you are, I'd go into the music library and therefore I think I would soon recognize my Mac by looking at iTunes.

Anra (28 yr, old U): I would look in the music library on iTunes, I would be able to know immediately.

Mark (34 yr, Old U): ... I would recognize it instantly at the Base where the programs are, they actually lie in a specific order in relation to how I use my computer, first safari and firefox on the left so FTP programs because I use alot and then skype which also has the web to do so, next is iTunes and iPhoto, because images and music are a big part of my life and sort of go well together, etc.

In these quotes we see how these consumers have used their music habits or taste to describe how they ritually possessed their product, thereby transferring the meaning of the product to themselves by making themselves relevant and important in relation to the product (McCracken, 1986). This is interesting as the rituals of cleansing and spending time are rituals where the consumer makes the product important in relation to himself. For example through personalization of the product through stickers, pictures or music, makes you important to the product first. Thus consumers can both transfer value directly from the product, or transfer own values to the product and then transferring the value of the product back to themselves as the product is now possessed by themselves. This has been attempted to be illustrated in the figure below, showing the two possibilities or categories found in this analysis of possession-rituals.

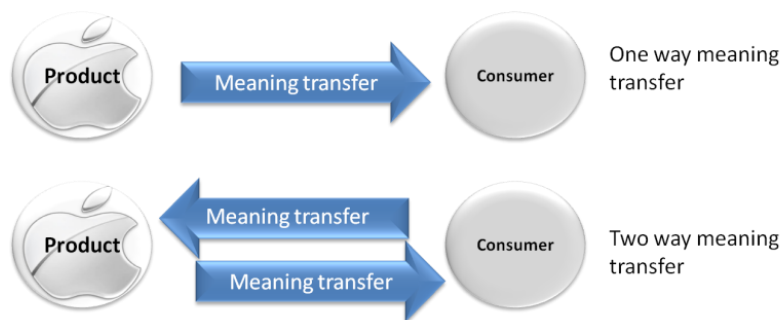


Figure 6, own creation

2.1.4 He is just so Apple...

In the beginning of this chapter figure 4 and 5 showed some very clear positive meanings of the Apple brand and products. Researching where these meanings originate can help us deepening the understanding of the identities that are sought after by the consumers in these interviews. Based on a composition of several theories (Levy, 1959; Hoolbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Solomon, 1983; McCracken, 1986; Belk, 1988) Richins (1994) establishes that the symbolic value of a product is the basis of the relation between consumer and product. This symbolic value or meaning of the product can reside in either a private or a common realm. As said by Richins the common meanings are social constructions and thus dynamic symbolic product values that appear within a society, culture or larger group, whom to a certain degree have a consensus regarding the meaning of an object. Out of several possible methods for researching the origins of these common meanings referring to Hyatt (1992) and Solomon and Greenberg (1993), Richins suggests the analysis of consumption stereotypes, but also symbolic interactionism referring to (Solomon, 1983) and Banduras' (1977) social learning theory and mass media analysis. All of these research options point to the notion that consumers learn common meaning through socialization processes. As mentioned earlier Richins also suggests that meaning can reside in a private realm, as for the same reasons that this is problematic with regards to McCrackens theory it also problematic in regards to Richins theory. In the social constructivist paradigm it is not possible to completely detach the private meanings from their social groundings. A private meaning will have a social grounding, so the sharp separation that Richins suggest between the common and the private meaning, is difficult to maintain in the social constructivist paradigm. A thought example could be a consumer who attaches the meaning of retirement to his Apple product because it was given to him by his grand-dad, the meaning is still grounded in a common cultural way of understanding grandparents. Thus his private meaning is actually grounded in a socially grounded common meaning. Meaning that even though a meaning may not be shared by many, and thus it may be private in that sense, it is still grounded in the social realm. Still Richins theory on how to examine the origins of common meanings is still very useful, and especially the research of stereotypes can in my view offer a very easy understandable starting point for understanding the common meanings found in this empiric material. A point of criticism towards this use of stereotypes, could be found in the argument that the use of stereotypes opens for categories that lead to a more cognitive research,

but as pointed out by Hall (1997) stereotypes can be used also in a interpretative perspective. Hall mentions that stereotypes develop in communication between different persons in different social contexts and are therefore connected to the way we understand ourselves as social beings, the interests we have and the affiliations we share. Thus in the interpretative branch stereotypes are not just cognitive models, they are meaning creating models closely connected to social contexts, communication and interpretations. Stereotypes are lived and it is also here that Berger & Luckmanns (1966) notion of reification becomes important, as the stereotypes must be lived, produced, recognized and experienced by the individuals, in order to have meaning.

One of the questions in the interview-guide was aimed at encouraging the interviewees to talk about stereotypes in relation to Apple products and PC products. In the following quotes it will become clear that these stereotypes are very concise and give a clear image of the common meanings of the Apple products:

RC: Could you describe a typical Apple-user?

Klaus (26 yr, new U): First Mover, designer type, he cares about quality and design, well at least one of the two, or she. Cool.

Mark (34 yr, old U): Someone who works with design or pictures or music, anything creative, they are more creative than most, more creative than technical. Black hair, glasses that are cool with big thick frame and nice clothes, not necessarily extremely rich, but with enough money. If it is in Copenhagen they bike, they are sort of a bit bohemian. He bikes on a self-composed racing bike, like a Fixie bike things that are trendy right now. And they have a leather laptop bag, or maybe bicycles on an old grandpa bike, but it is brand new with brown leather handles, they care about the fine details about themselves, they have a little beard, they are just really cool and between 25 and 40, they live in Vesterbro and Frederiksberg or Island Brygge, probably some nice places with beautiful penthouse apartment, which is really nice.

Mai (26 yr, new U): Yes he has skinny jeans and deckshoes, and he has big nerdy glasses and very trendy hair, short on the sides and neck and long on top. He studies graphic design at college or school, or at the School of architecture at least something creative. He goes out at culturebox and listens to electronic music, and he is between 20 and 30, he lives in some city, maybe Copenhagen. You will see a lot of those anyway, I think it is the cult-effect that rubs off a little on the people who live here.

Anra (28yr, old U): Yes it is a creative type, probably cool, fashionable clothes, young, little hipster. He is sitting at Bang & Jensen (café in Copenhagen Vesterbro area), who sits there all the bobo types you can't see anything but white from all the Mac computers at Vesterbro cafes, he always sits at the cafe with his computer and works, he is probably flexible, has got lots of time, he doesn't sit at an office, he just goes and sit in cafes and works with his graphic work, or music or movies maybe, maybe he's an architect.

RC: How old is he?

Anra: Between 25 and 30, you should also have a little money to buy this stuff, so maybe not too young, they're slightly more expensive than PC, and then you also need to have the iPhone and iPad. I have several friends who are sort a designer-types and they just have it all, they have their MacBook Pro and their iPod, and iPhone, iPad, and they must always have the latest. So I think perhaps it becomes an identity thing, it gets to the point where in order for them to feel whole, they need to have it all. It's perhaps a bit of an exaggeration, but I think they are about to become completely dependent on constantly needing the latest, so you can be part of the trend-wave, the front runner wave. It's like fashion, you have to constantly need to be ahead and move on so you can tell your friends that you have the latest.

There seems to be a very clear common idea that a Mac user is a creative person with creative job, who is very cool, cares about the way he looks, is very fashionable, lives in a nice and trendy apartment placed in a trendy part of a big city. Here we can also notice the importance of being recognized by others, in relation to building and creating the desired identity, this is particularly clear in the final quote with Anra.

The PC user stereotype is quite the contrary as these quotes suggest:

RC: Can you describe a typical PC user?

Klaus: Someone who does not want to spend much money on a product they feel like when buying a car, it just take them from A to B, they do not want to spend money on leather seats or have a nice car where the key is a credit card-like thing and the radio automatically adjusts itself to your favorite channel when you sit in the car. A to B humans, functional people.

Mark: [Laughing] It is difficult because it can be many different people, but if it is a student who reads well... to be a veterinarian, or I don't know, something where you don't pay much attention to posh things, something as a veterinarian or therapist or anything else like that. A second kind could be IT people, I think IT people use PC, the ones who work for large companies usually require it to be PC because it is cheaper for the company, it can mean a lot of money for a big company, only to

run Mac . People with ordinary and boring values, people without too many ambitions, they are just happy where they are, they do not develop as much they are happy enough, things are just good enough. Not all but if I generalize it's probably a wife with children in a house with flatscreen TV and they have just sort of crossed of their checklist. They are just everyday floating around, they are not seeking new things or innovation, they go home lie on the couch watch television, they aren't chasing anything.

Mai (26 yr, new U): He wears corduroy pants and read philosophy at the University. Hahaha. Or my mom. Just someone who has a practical approach. They just buy stuff because it needs to be functional and cheap.

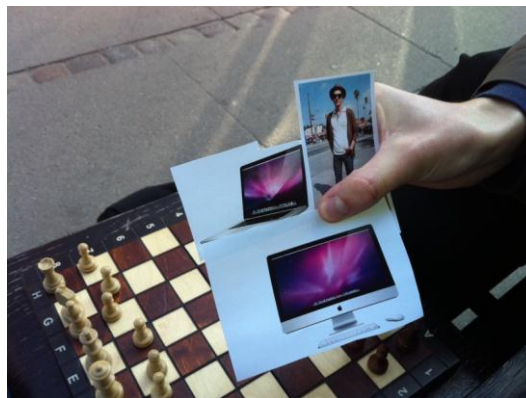
David (35 yr, old U): He is practical, he might not have a lot of money, he is not super cool to look at. He works with sales of some kind or another, probably lives in a boring home, a little IKEA-like.

As these quotes suggest the common meaning of a PC user is a sort of boring person, who does not really care too much about his looks, or his home, he is a geeky type who lacks inspiration and does not really strive for anything out of the ordinary. Several of the interviews also point to the conviction that the PC users buying motive in relation to computers and electronics are purely rational and practical. This is interesting because it somehow relates to the distinction between functional and emotional product features discussed by Levy (1959). As discussed in the case of Levy one could argue that in a constructivist view, the rational buy is also emotional, as there is no objective term for rationality, any so-called rational purchase is based on a feeling of rationality. For good reasons feelings are very difficult to objectify, arguments of why a purchase is rational are weighed by one-self and others through thoughts and emotions, thus rationality could be viewed as being also emotional.

These descriptions probably serve as caricatures that most of us on some level recognize. In this recognition dwells something interesting, the recognition points to the fact that this information is something that appears more or less natural to us and therefore is a part of the things we take as “given” objective realities and thus part of our culture (Tylor, 1924). Furthermore it is clear which one of these persons is most attractive with regards to our western values, the Apple user is a far more desirable and admirable stereotype. The Apple user stands in clear opposition to the PC user, as the Apple user is creative and dynamic as a person while the PC user is boring and static.

Further stereotypes and notions about the desirability of the Mac-user identity and the undesirability of the PC-user identity appeared in the prompt question where the interviewees were asked to match pictures of stylized people and different computers. An important example of the desirability of the mac-user identity appeared in the interview with Klaus (26 yr, new U):

Klaus: This is the classic Mac-user, a cool person, who cared about his looks, about design, he's probably from somewhere really cool, he works with design, or maybe he started the Copenhipster blog. He's got the the big iMac he needs a big screen because he works a lot. I think he lives in California. He probably has the whole package, iPhone, iPod, iPad, everything, he probably even has a laptop Mac like the Macbook to go with his big stationary iMac. He was probably one of the first to get the iPad as soon as it came out through a cool business relation or something like that.



Here it becomes apparent again how desirable the identity associated with the Mac-user is, again the identity is described as creative and cool. Furthermore this person is described as the classic Mac-user, the use of the word classic, could mean that Klaus believes that this type of person is founding for the identity associated with Apple. Another interesting finding in this quote is that Klaus talks about this person having “the whole package” referring to the belief that this person must have a lot if not all of the Apple products. This could mean that if the person fully lives up to the stereotype he must also be fully completed in his ownership of Apple products. We will come back to the notion of “owning a lot of Apple products”, and the meaning associated with this later in this analysis. An interesting stereotype about the undesirability of the PC-user identity appears in the interview with Mai (26 yr, new U):

Mai: This guy loves technical things, but in a sort of dorky way. He thinks it cool with like bling stuff, but he doesn't care about the brand, that's why he chose a PC with a big screen. He works at Q8 [gas station] he works full time at the register. He likes going out and checking out girls with his

friends who he works out with before going out so they look buffed, he would like to participate in Paradise Hotel and lives in Bolbro in Odense [working class suburb], he must be about 27.



Here Mai points out how "dorky" the PC user is and how undesirable his entire life is, in everything from his job to the place he lives and to the people he spends time with. Considering Belk's (1988) theory of the extended self, it is interesting here to consider that the starting point of this prompt was only to pair together people and computers. This is interesting because both the Mac-user in Klaus's quote and the PC-user in Mai's quote are described by thoroughly unfolding everything else in their life in a congruency with their identity. Full stories are told about the users of Mac and PC, for example as the PC opts for an uncool, or undesirable identity everything else in their life follows with and is also undesirable and uncool forming a complete and meaningful identity in the stereotype. This can be understood as a way to set a target for the desired self or identity they are trying to reach partly through consumption. As pointed out by Berger and Luckmann (1966) stereotypes are only meaningful if they are lived and experienced, referring to the notion of reification, so the mentioned stereotypes can be seen as constructions of the selves these interviewees are trying to live. This means that the descriptions above are social constructions experienced as objective realities, which the consumers mirror themselves in. As the descriptions also indicate, the meanings of the Apple brand or the PC are not static, you are not automatically a nerd if you have a PC, it works as a whole congruency of the things you as a consumer surround yourself with. Thus the context is very important for the interpretation of the computer user, as pointed out by Hall (1976) without context, there is no text. Therefore the meanings associated with Apple are neither static nor automatic they exist as possible interpretations of Apple users and are thus under constant consideration by the users.

2.1.5 Me and all the other Apples...

The dynamic of meaning appears is accordingly very important to consider, and exactly the dynamic of meaning in relation to Apple appears in several interviews. The most clear and noticeable example of the dynamic of meaning appears in the interview with Mai (26 yr, new U):

RC: Okay now I'm gonna give you a story to tell, it begins with you landing on planet Apple, now you take it from here, what is it like there?

Mai: Immediately, it seems very nice, and seems like everything is exciting, but then it takes just a few days and you think this is fucking annoying.

RC: Okay why?

Mai: Then it becomes too much a cult of Apple lovers who just think that Apple is the only right thing in the world and they have just been brainwashed.

RC: By who?

Mai: By Apple, and one another, like all other sects, and I think they're all a little too bumner and a little too cool, too hipsterish and dogged so I fly back home that's not a place I can be bothered to live.

RC: What does it look like?

Mai: Everything is white, and black fields and black trees, but the sun is silver, you get completely blinded by how shiny and clean it is.

RC: Does it smell?

Mai: No, you can't smell a thing

RC: Okay,

Mai: It's just very clean.

RC: But you say you get sick of it if you stay for too long?

Mai: I do because I'm so smart, and I can see it from the outside I am not a part of the sect, I think it's very cool, so I borrow a little, but I do not want to have it all.

RC: So what do you borrow?

Mai: The coolness for my personality, but not the rest, not the sect part.

RC: Who represents the sect?

Mai: It is especially hipster types. And people who are doing graphic stuff, and people who think I just need some cool thing. There are like trendsetters and followers [gesturing layers with her hands].

RC: Okay is there a hierarchy in this sect?

Mai: Yes trendsetters they have anything smart from Apple, both iPad and iPhone, and they are the ones who always say what to use that's cool, that you just can't live without, they are sort of a bit up in the hierarchy. Next come all the others who have no idea why the computer is better than the others except it's prettier and a little cooler.

RC: But you stand outside of all this?

Mai: Yes I am not a sheep, I'm just a little sheep, but I stand outside the flock because I am conscious of my sheep status. I'm not like the other sheep, I am a funny sheep.

This quote is important for several reasons, first off it shows the dynamic of meaning since Mai starts by describing a place that is nice at first glance, but as she says after a while it gets really annoying and she wants to leave it. It is also interesting because she talks about belonging and not belonging to certain groupings of people through your Apple products, and this brings up a very important point in relation to this thesis. Østergaard & Jantzen (2001) discuss the shifting perspective of consumer research and its change towards a consumption study that is more focused on consumption as tribal behavior. This means that in their view we consume for building or creating identity and also as a highly patterned social activity, *"In our view, it is about time for marketing theory to leave the dominant, individualistic paradigm that researchers have clung to so far and, we might add, all too long in their study of consumption. A turn towards social and cultural theory is much needed in order to establish contact with recent developments within anthropology and sociology."* (ibid. pp. 22). In my opinion regarding recent sociological identity theory, consuming for identity and consuming for group belonging, are actually very closely related. Taking into consideration some of the most acknowledged identity theories of sociology we see that these two are always linked. The term of identity is by Jenkins (1996) understood as the understanding of a "we" or a "we-ness", which is translated into a variety of "I-s" that is separated from many more or less meaningful "others". This is somehow easily understood because being part of something requires inclusion, and inclusion must bring

with exclusion even if only in a logical sense. Thus in this view of identity, identity can never stand by itself, it brings with it a belonging to something you are, a “we”, and of something you are not, “others” (Mead, 1934).

In the quote with Mai several “we-s” are observed, of which she is reluctant to take part of, as Mai discusses Apple users as a sect that have all been brainwashed and another we that she is definitely not a part of, being the top of the hierarchy the trendsetters. Thus here something interesting happens, because this shows that belonging to a brand-“we” or in this case an Apple-“we” can mean several things. As maybe one could be tempted to think that tribal consumer behavior was directly linked to being part of one brand group, this quote shows that belonging to a brand in the tribal view can be more complex than that. As we see in this quote one brand can bring with it several groupings. This observance can be seen in Mai’s observation of the sheep-Apple-“we” that she through her choice of computer to some extent has taken part of, but as she mentions she can see it from the outside, perhaps referring to her having some sort of agency, and therefore she is not completely a part of it. Furthermore she mentions that she does like some of it, and is willing to take part in some of it, but she does not want it all, in her opinion they are like sheep, and she is a “special” sheep. This can be interpreted as if she is taking a distanced membership in to one of the Apple group belongings and identities. The interesting thing here, is that even though the Apple brand exists as a “we”, standing in opposition to significant others, especially the “PC-we”, there still exists groupings that are all associated with the Apple brand, but nonetheless stand in opposition to each other. As a side note regarding identities as sources of meaning (Castells, 1997) we can here make an addition to McCrackens theory and add reference-groups as a location of meaning together with advertisers, fashion institutions and opinion-leaders, to give a more holistic understanding of the transfer of meaning.

Returning to the elaboration of the group belonging(s) associated with the Apple brand in the quote of Mai we can observe a description of the people who actually form the so-called sect. Mai describes the sect as consisting of hipsters, people who work with graphics and people who just want cool things, and followers who want what the hipsters dictate. When asked of the existence or non-existence of a hierarchy in this sect, Mai defines a clear hierarchy with trendsetters at the top, who have all the Apple products and dictate to the rest which products they should have, for the rest to just follow along. It is here important and interesting to notice

that she mentions the rest who follow along as a “we”, referring to her status and belonging in this particular group of the Apple brand.

In other interviews similar understandings of groupings are observed, but with an associative standing opposed to the dissociative standing of Mai. A highly illustrative example appears in the interview with an old user Anra (28yr, old U):

Anra: Well, it could do all sorts of things that I needed, and I guess maybe I thought it was kind of cool to sit in a café, after all we weren't many people who owned a Mac, so it was cool somehow to be sitting with it. You could be sitting at Bang & Jensen at Vesterbro, and sit there with all the other hipsters, who were sitting with their Macs and were standing out from the crowd at the café, they also had the white MacBook all of those guys, and even if you didn't really wanted to admit it, you really felt super cool. You know you were sort of artsy boheme-like, design creative tyoe, you're your Mac, working on it. That was fun.

In this quote several “we-s” are observed, Anra mentions that you could sit with your Mac in a café with all the other hipsters, thus creating a hipster-“we” which is then later further defined as an artist/bohemian/design/creative type of “we”. Interestingly as Anra has a similar understanding of the definition of the trendsetters portrayed by Mai, as being people in possession of all the Apple products also appears in another interview, and is even elaborated with an example:

Anra: Yes it is a creative type, probably cool, fashionable clothes, young, little hipster. He is sitting at Bang & Jensen (café in Copenhagen Vesterbro area), who sits there all the bobo types you can't see anything but white from all the Mac computers at Vesterbro cafes, he always sits at the cafe with his computer and works, he is probably flexible, has got lots of time, he doesn't sit at an office, he just goes and sit in cafes and works with his graphic work, or music or movies maybe, maybe he's an architect.

RC: How old is he?

Anra: Between 25 and 30, you should also have a little money to buy this stuff, so maybe not too young, they're slightly more expensive than PC, and then you also need to have the iPhone and iPad. I have several friends who are sort a designer-types and they just have it all, they have their MacBook Pro and their iPod, and iPhone, iPad, and they must always have the latest. So I think perhaps it becomes an identity thing, it gets to the point where in order for them to feel whole, they need to have it all. It's perhaps a bit of an exaggeration, but I think they are about to become completely dependent on constantly needing the latest, so you can be part of the trend-wave, the

front runner wave. It's like fashion, you have to constantly need to be ahead and move on so you can tell your friends that you have the latest.

RC: Why must you be in ahead all the time?

Anra: Well because if your not in front, then the rest follows along, and then it's not special anymore.

RC: Who is the rest?

Anra: Well, all the people who try to imitate the hipsters, it's kind of funny, because it's sort of a cat and mouse chase. You can't stay for too long in the same place, because if you do the cats will know you're there. I think it's also about telling all the other frontrunners, hey guys I'm right here with you, I also have all the latest stuff.

In this part of the interview with Anra, several interesting observations can be made. First off it is interesting to notice how a certain dynamic of a hierarchy appears, between trendsetters and followers, which she describes as a “cat chasing the mouse” situation. The trendsetters find a meaning in their identity by being special and must therefore constantly move to new things in order to complete these conditions. Again here the trendsetters or the top of the described hierarchy are described as people who have everything, all the latest and newest Apple products, in her concrete example Anra mentions that they have to have everything to feel complete. It is important to notice, that it is not explicitly said that these people are at the top of the hierarchy, but the notion that they are the first-movers and that they are followed by everybody else, puts a certain value-difference between the two groupings and thus a certain hierarchy. This is interesting because it also shows yet another example of the dynamic of meaning, as the meaning of the trendsetter identity, constantly changes once the followers have seen what the trendsetters have seen. This stands out especially clearly when Anra says “*If you don't move fast enough the rest comes along, and then it's not special anymore.*”, and simultaneously Anra makes a comparison to fashion clothing. Two interesting examples of persons who are annoyed by the imitation of the so-called followers appears in the interview with David (35 yr, old U), Clara (26 yr, old U) and with Anra (28 yr, old U):

RC: How have you felt about you're Apple products since you got them and untill now?

David: Well I think a lot has happened, they have become cheaper and there are more people who have them, it is not quite so unique anymore. In the past it signaled okay he must be creative

because otherwise one is probably not willing to put as much money for such a computer. Today it is a little more ohh well yet another. I sat at a cafe yesterday, there was almost a silver mac on each table. You'd think they were standing and giving them away at the entrance, such a thing annoys me a bit. You get mistaken for a hipster when walking with your mac today.

RC: Okay – please allow me to take a few steps back. You said you liked that it wasn't difficult, why is this important to you?

Clara: Something I just want to say first that I think a lot about in relation to having a Mac - it can really annoy me that so many are beginning to have a Mac. Because it's a little like now it doesn't give me exactly the same dimension to my personality, which in fact was what I bought it for. Well especially to make me stand out a little - it doesn't give me that anymore. So it's very important to me that they also continue to develop their products so I can always keep myself updated, you know, now I am again one of the new. I think it has lost little of its .. you know, I am something special because I own a Mac. Because now everyone owns a Mac. And it is also the kind of person I do not like very much, that also owns a Mac. Well ..

RC: What does that mean for your vision of the type of persons that use Mac computers?

Clara: Well, I think; ohh wannabe. You know it has sort of become too easy. You know it is just an easy choice now, everybody else is doing it. I sort of think, when is that new product going to come, that can give the things, that I need. When is Apple going to be that über brand again, so that it can be for an elite group again. I mean if I'm really rude, you could say that the mob has entered the Apple brand. [Laughing] that sounds awful.

RC: You say was cool, as if it was in the past?

Anra: Yes, today I wouldn't buy a Mac computer for the same reasons, today I would buy it for practical reasons, at that time it was both practical and cool.

RC: Okay, isn't it cool anymore?

Anra: Yes, definitely it's just not as cool. It can be a bit of a bummer to be sitting with your Apple computer in a café you look a bit wannabe-ish.

Here we see how both David and Clara feel annoyed by the popularization of the Apple brand and the Mac computers, David's apprehension with this is that he is wrongly interpreted by others as a hipster, and not as a creative which is used to portray. Meanwhile Clara's concern with the popularization is that the brand no longer makes her feel special and she expresses that she is just waiting for that next thing from Apple that will make her distinguished from the

“mob” as she calls them. So here we see how both Anra and Mai’s thoughts about having to move forward and away from the followers are actually part of the concerns of other Apple and Mac-users. Anra also shows signs of irritation although not as strongly as David and Clara, but she still feels that the brand is not as cool as it used to be, so the meaning of the brand has slightly changed for her. Here it becomes apparent that some of the thoughts that Bourdieu had about taste and distinction are quite obviously displayed here. For Bourdieu “*taste classifies and classifies the classifier*” (1984:6). Consumption and lifestyle preferences involve discriminatory judgments which at the same time identify and render classifiable our own particular judgment of taste to others. In the above quotes we see how David, Anra and Clara in the first instance attempted to distinguish themselves from others with their “taste” in computers, and problematize the fact that their choice of computer or electronics no longer distinguishes them from others.

Interestingly not everybody has an excluding perspective on the new Apple users Mark (34 yr, old U) clearly expresses his including perspective in the following quote:

RC: [Prompt artikel about the popularization of Apple] Do you recognize the image portrayed in this article?

Mark: Well I can certainly see it , but I've never been so concerned about these things , I do not necessarily need to have what all others do not, I just want something that is good. Apple's become more pop, but I still think it's cool when I see others with Apple products I just think cool you also see it you have also understood it. I think respect, I'm glad you also see it.

Here Mark expresses the joy he receives and the added respect he has for people who can see the Apple product for what he also sees in them. Mark’s quote stands in clear opposition to David and Clara who are clearly annoyed by the popularization of the Apple brand and products. One possible explanation for this can be found in Schoutens article *Selves in Transition* (1991). Schouten investigates the motives and the self-concept dynamics underlying the symbolic consumer behavior of aesthetic plastic surgery. From this article signs appear that point to the fact that people who find themselves in a transitional or liminal phase feel unsecure of their role or identity, and find themselves in a limbo of non-status and unanchored identity. It is thus not unnatural to make the assumption that people who find themselves unsecure of their identity are more likely to defend the identity that they are trying to achieve. The two following quotes serve

as examples of the identity-insecurity that can be traced in the interview with Clara (26 yr, old U):

RC: Can you describe a little more about what sort of pride you felt? Why?

Clara: ... it was something that had to do with buying a little piece of them (Creative Ed.), I bought me a little more creative identity, than I could really be able to illustrate or show to people around me.

Clara: ... I have opted for a sleek design and something I think is cool and something I think is nice to have on my dining table, it's something ... of course makes me extra happy, and strengthens my identity in the person that I try to be.

In these quotes we see how Clara is very preoccupied by attaining a creative identity, which is more creative than the identity she is able to display herself. She speaks of a strengthening of the identity and the persona she wishes to display, by the use of Mac computers. The insecurity in relation to her identity is likely to be grounded in the transitional state of her identity, as she mentions that Apple helps her achieve a more creative identity than she could display herself, pointing to the interpretation that she has not herself yet reached this state of identity. Consequently it must be considered that the importance of the co-constituency for the construction of identity through consumption is amongst other things conditioned by the identity certainness or the identity state of the individual consumer.

Clearly the interviewees belong to groupings of different characteristics, with different meaning creations and with different symbolic worlds. This is to say that the social constructions of these different groupings are different.

Accordingly it becomes evident to consider that the Apple brand is a provider of access, access to networks or groupings (to keep discussing with this term). Consequently what you buy when you buy into the Apple brand is access to the groupings linked to the Apple brand. These groupings can be of different characteristics and nature, the nature of some of these groupings, may come close to brand-communities, while the nature of some other groupings of the Apple brand may come close to subcultures. These groupings are clear examples of how the paradigm of the social constructivism appears in our everyday life, as they appear for the consumer such as Mai, as completely real and objectively existing, even though they are in several ways imagined.

Here we see what it means when Berger & Luckmann (1966) say that society is a human product and the human is a product of society. The grouping is produced or imagined by humans who then live according to their own societal productions, Mai acknowledged the existence of these different groupings and explained her personal stands towards them. Sociologist Benedict Anderson (2001) offers interesting thoughts on how these groupings might be seen as imagined communities. Benedict Anderson calls nations imagined communities *“It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of a communion”* and thus this draws parallels to these groupings as they are also somewhat imagined in the same way, as the users will also not know most of their fellow members. For the sake of elaborating this discussion it would be insightful to have some short but clear definitions of what is understood by subculture and brand community.

Although it is difficult to find one very commonly used term for subculture, but some enlightening definitions in relation to this discussion in this thesis could be found with Richardson and Turley (2006). These authors discuss the subcultural ideology as driven by a desire for distinction and status. Additionally Thornton (1995) with links to Bourdieu (1984) regards subcultures as ‘taste cultures’, where the extent to which members are ‘in the know’ creates subcultural capital and works as the measurement of their status in hierarchies and their differentiation from ‘the mainstream’. With reference to the introduction of this thesis and the headline ‘It’s not cool when everybody knows it’s cool’ of the article by Information (2001), you see that the debate of the article is highly related to the subcultural discourse. Following the reasoning of subcultural capital, status hierarchies within subcultures are intrinsically competitive in nature and to a large extent dependent on consumption practices (Heath & Potter, 2006: 127). Here it is important to consider, that what gives you access to certain groupings, separates you from others and distinguishes you as it shows and legitimizes your belonging, for later approval of others. Thus these access parameters are actually also symbolic boundaries, as they are institutionalized habitus that appear to the individual in the same way as physical reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Bourdieu, 1984; Turner, 1982)

These definitions offer valuable insights to the consideration of Apple’s more or less impartial participation in some subcultures. Not necessarily meaning subcultures exist that are only

centered around Apple, but simply that Apple is part of one or several subcultures. The notion of standing in opposition and being in differentiation to the mainstream, is very clearly displayed in the annoyance exhibited by David and Clara in their interviews towards the popularization of the Apple brand. It becomes evident that what is at stake for David and Clara is the status, differentiation and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Thornton, 1995) that they have spent time building up, by using the Apple brand and living the lifestyle that goes along in order to reap legitimate recognition by significant others. The symbolic boundaries that they have set up, are in certain regards in danger of being breached, as they are no longer sufficient to show their affiliation to the subculture. According to Thornton (1995), the main apprehension of a subcultural member is “*a popularization by a gushing up to the mainstream*” (Thornton, 1995:191). Thus regarding Thornton’s notions on subcultures, these findings show that David and Clara employ the Apple brand as part of their communication. Communication that seeks the social validation that creates the symbolic boundaries that serve as evidence for their right to access and participation with a certain subculture or perhaps several different ones.

Meanwhile, as mentioned earlier signs of other types of groupings also seemed to arise during the analysis. This was especially clear as some of the interviewees had no problems whatsoever in relation to the popularization of the Apple brand, thereby showing no apprehension in relation to the “mainstream”. This could be seen in the above quote with Mark. As this shows that there are more types of groupings than subcultures related to the Apple brand, an important grouping type to consider is the existence of a brand community. With the following definition of brand communities by Muniz and O’Guinn (2001), these considerations gain substance: “*We introduce the idea of brand community. A brand community is a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand. It is specialized because at its center is a branded good or service. Like other communities, it is marked by a shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility.*” (Ibid, 2001: 1). First off there can be little doubt that Mark (34 yr, old U) is an admirer of the brand, this becomes very clear in his description of his associations in relation to Apple:

RC: What do you think when you see this picture (Prompt Apple logo)?

Mark: Generally I just think, cool, I do not even think much about what kind of product it is, it's just the fact that Apple is the sender, you know that it is cool, both in design and usability, it's just cool.

In these quotes it becomes evident that Mark has very positive feelings and associations towards the Apple brand, and also a large amount of trust. This can be seen as he explains that just by seeing Apple as the messenger he would know that regardless of what the actual product was, he would know that it would be cool. Furthermore Mark seems to spend time sharing news and solutions with other Apple users, displaying both a sense of shared consciousness, rituals and traditions. This can be seen in the following quote from the analysis:

Mark: ... I get there newsletter and whenever there a new convention or press meeting where they show all their latest stuff, I always look through it, and I sit there really excited about the things that are on the way for iPhone or OS [operating system red.]. It's just so cool, everything is optimized all the time with more functions.

RC: Right, do you share this with anyone?

Mark: A bit, I would if more of my friends cared as much about it as me. At the moment I share these things with my ex-girlfriends dad, we'll mail or chat about what's on the way and what we look most forward to.

Here we see how Mark with excitement awaits the Apple newsletter and the Apple fairs, and shares the news with at least one other Apple user. This shows that for the brand communities symbolic boundaries also exist, they exist in following and participating in amongst other things the rituals and knowledge sharing of the brand community. These are the elements that create cultural capital for the individual within the brand community.

Thus my findings show that Mark is involved in a community that has the Apple brand in the center. Hence these findings, in relation to the used definitions, confirm the existence of another grouping type, the brand community.

This means that Apple according to these findings is involved in at least two very different types of groupings, with very different symbolic worlds, one could say that the two grouping types in certain regards stand opposed to each other. Especially with regards to the popularization of the Apple brand, as the subculture as such is opposed to the popularization, while the brand community is more pro the popularization as the members themselves function as ambassadors for the brand. But also with regards to certain ways individuals build cultural capital, with regards to knowledge. In the brand community the cultural capital is gained by sharing knowledge, while the subculture is about acquiring knowledge for you, as the cultural capital is

gained by ‘being in the know’. Another essential difference between these two types of groupings is the brands position in relation to the grouping. For the subculture member the center of the grouping is the distinction and the status that comes along with a creation of identity in relation to the subculture, meaning that the self is at the center of this grouping type. While for the brand community the brand is in the center of the grouping. I have attempted to illustrate these thoughts in figure 3 below.

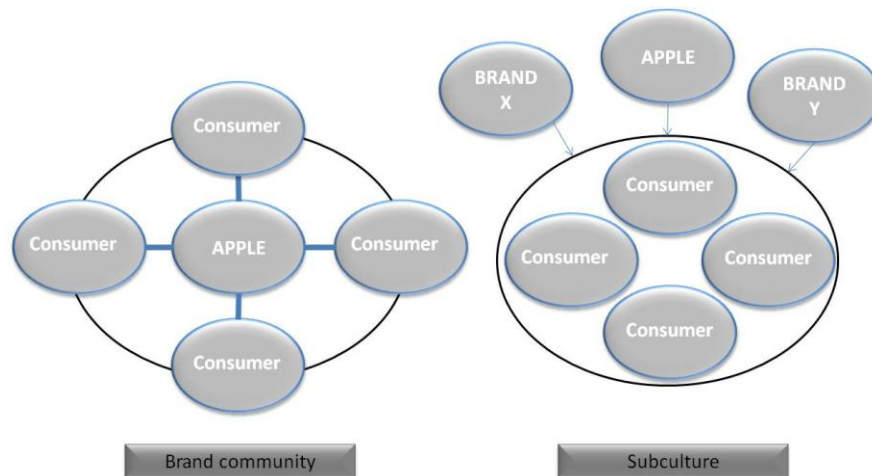


Figure 7, Own creation with inspiration from (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001; Thornton, 1995)

2.1.6 You belong to me, and I belong to you...

The above paragraph showed that multiple groupings exist amongst Apple-users, and thus it is interesting to consider, exactly how you show and see the affiliation to these groupings. Holt (1995) offers an interesting and in this regard important theory of the typology of consumption, meaning how consumers consume. Through an observatory study of baseball fans, Holt establishes a matrix of consumption rituals explaining certain categories of consumption. The matrix contains four consumption metaphors for the consumption action, which appear by crossing to dimensions, purpose of action and structure of action. As such the purpose of the action can be either instrumental or autotelic, meaning that it can serve as means to ends, or they can be the actual ends. The structure of the consumption action can consist of object actions, where the consumers interacts with an object, or they can consist of interpersonal actions, where

the consumer interacts with other people in which consumption objects serve as focal resources. Out of these two dimensions four metaphors appear, *consuming as experience*, *consuming as integration*, *consuming as classification* and *consuming as play*. Pertaining to the actions with an instrumental purpose two ends are described by Holt, as integration and classification. When a consumption-object makes for an important part of a consumers identity, consumption will be targeted towards integration. Thus the consumption act of the consumer will attempt to assimilate, personalize and produce the consumption-object. The metaphor of integration is important for this thesis as it pertains to the many possession rituals we have seen earlier in this chapter. For example when David had travel-stickers put on his Mac computer.

Most interesting for the above mentioned interest for how to show affiliation is the metaphor of consuming as classification. When consumption is understood as classification it is because consumption-objects are used to classify the consumer in relation to others. The classification shows both the affiliation and the disaffiliation of the consumer as Holt writes “...as social boundaries must always be at the same time exclusive and inclusive (Douglas and Isherwood, 1979), classifying practices always serve to distinguish as well as to affiliate.” (Holt, 1995: 10). According to Holt the classification can take place either through objects or through actions.

Classification through objects happens when consumers uses the common meanings associated with a certain consumption-object to classify themselves or others. This can be seen in this quote with David (35 yr, old U):

RC: How have you felt about you're Apple products since you got them and untill now?

David: Well I think a lot has happened, they have become cheaper and there are more people who have them, it is not quite so unique anymore. In the past it signaled okay he must be creative because otherwise one is probably not willing to put as much money for such a computer. Today it is a little more ohh well yet another. I sat at a cafe yesterday, there was almost a silver mac on each table. You'd think they were standing and giving them away at the entrance, such a thing annoys me a bit. You get mistaken for a hipster when walking with your mac today.

Here we see how David makes a certain classification of the others who were sitting in the same cafe as himself, by their use of the silvergrey Mac computer, as he implicitly says they are classified as hipsters, which for him is not a positive term. Interestingly the way David feels that

he himself would not be mistaken for a hipster as well as by the other objects he surrounds himself with, here amidst his clothing:

RC: Okay, do you do anything to avoid being mistaken for a hipster?

David: Well no, I don't know... I guess if you see me and the clothes I wear you wouldn't think hipster.

RC: Okay, what do you think people would think?

David: Hmm, good question... maybe creative, and conscious of quality.

Here we see that the image David wants to portray as creative and quality conscious is not only created by his Apple product but also by the overall impression of himself and the clothes he wears. This is interesting because of what Holt writes about temporal limitations in relation to baseball fans *"Attending a game is a powerful indicator of spectators' associations with professional baseball's valued objects, but it is both short-lived and not necessarily directed at those with whom one is interested in communicating. So spectators have adopted a number of practices to enhance their ability to communicate their affiliation and distinction beyond the temporal limitations of the game itself. A variety of objects are often used as symbols to mark associations with ephemeral events. Clothing that incorporates the team's insignia is, of course, a primary tool used to extend the temporal boundaries of one's affiliation."* (Holt 1995: 10).

What we saw in the quote with David was that the Mac computer also had *"temporal limitations"* because at a short glance it failed to show a holistic picture of David. Therefore clothing also served as supplementary communicatory objects, to show his identity's belonging. Furthermore Holt describes storytelling as another technique to specify the nature of the consumers' relationship to the consumption object. The following quote from the interview with Klaus (26 yr, new U), shows how Klaus feels that his lack of ability to tell stories about the Apple brand is an indicator of his short-lived experience with the brand:

RC: Okay, finish this story, now you're in a room with experienced mac users, but one of them is a brand new user, how do you find him?

Klaus: It's hard, because I would probably place myself as the new guy user, so it's hard to say what I would ask him about.

RC: Okay, but how are you different from experienced users?

Klaus: Hmm, I know nothing about the hardware, I think they know. I really do not know much about the brand's history or anything like that, I think the experienced users know.

Here we see how Klaus because of his lacking knowledge about the hardware and the brand's history, feels that he belongs to the group of new users, but that the well-experienced users in his view probably would be able to tell stories about the brand.

Returning to Holt's notion of classification, classification also happens through actions. In this view of classification the object meanings are not as important as when classification happens through objects, because here the important factor is how the consumer interacts with the object. In several interviews we see how there is a shared meaning as to how someone who is part of the experienced-group of Apple user interacts with his Mac computer. Interestingly there seems to be two details that are very important in relation to the interaction with Mac computers, the mouse pad and the hotkeys:

Klaus: I guess, if I was to spot the new user, I'd look at how he used the pad, you know depending on your movement and the amount of fingers you use, you can do all sorts of things, and then there the short cuts, I don't know many of them, but I will some day.

RC: Okay, finish this story, now you're in a room with experienced mac users, but one of them is a brand new user, how do you find him?

Mai (26 yr, new U): You can see it in his way to use shortcut things with their fingers on the MousePad, it is a thing with a different number of fingers doing different things, and can make it bigger and smaller and rotate, he wouldn't know how to work that.

David (35 yr, old U): Hmm, I think I would find the new user in the way he used his Mac, novices do not know all the shortcut keys and they cannot use the mouse pad as fast with different number of fingers for certain commands.

I here find it interesting that the act with the mousepad and the hotkeys, is not an act that is easily conveyed to others, as it is something that is difficult to see, and is probably to a large extent done alone in a private setting. Therefore I think that what is seen here is an act, that lets the consumer auto-classify, meaning the consumer is communicating his affiliations to himself. Thus I believe that the boundaries set in Holts model between the four metaphors, may not be as distinct as he describes them, as this would also be an object action and not merely an interpersonal action. This is somehow not surprising as consuming for integration is done to

achieve or create a certain identity, and identities serve as sources of meanings to classify oneself in certain group belongings as mentioned earlier (Tajfel, 1982). Thus the consuming as integration and consuming as classification metaphors will in some cases, as the one seen above have a difficult distinction from one another.

Another interesting classification action is the understanding of the language of the Apple products, here especially the Mac computer:

RC: Okay, finish this story , now you're in a room with experienced mac users, but one of them is a brand new user, how do you find him?

Mark (34 yr, old U): It's easy I would just look at him and look at his eyes, because he wouldn't know where he should look onto the screen on a Mac, if you know where to go you don't even have to look at it, he would look confused and he wouldn't understand the Apple language.

Anra (28 yr, old U): You know when you run the mouse over the icons they begin to jump out, it's like there a Mac language the computer will use to tell you what's going on, or what's about to happen, I don't think a new user would understand this language.

This is interesting because one of Holts discussions of baseball fans is that it is important to understand the conventions in order to show the correct affiliation. In my regard this is what we are seeing in these quotes, just as when baseball fans know when to do a “throw back” when a particular event happens, Apple users know what to do, when certain things happen on their Mac computers. The understated understanding is what shows the affiliation or the classification in these quotes. With the understanding of culture as “the given” (Tylor, 1871) as described in the meta-theoretical chapter, we see here that the Apple culture, just as the baseball culture, the understanding of the given, is what shows others the affiliation of the consumer.

One very clear interpersonal action is the contribution to sharing knowledge among Apple users, this is seen in the following quotes with David (35 yr, old U) and Mark (34 yr, old U):

David: ... I know a lot of experienced users who spend a lot of time on mac fora, we who have used Macs for a long time like that community feeling there is to the brand, we like helping each other out.

Mark: ... I get there newsletter and whenever there a new convention or press meeting where they show all their latest stuff, I always look through it, and I sit there really excited about the things that

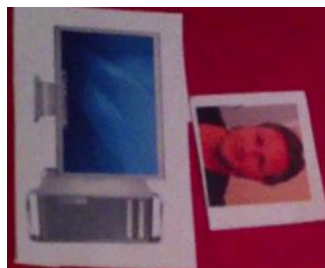
are on the way for iPhone or OS [operating system red.]. It's just so cool, everything is optimized all the time with more functions.

RC: Right, do you share this with anyone?

Mark: A bit, I would if more of my friends cared as much about it as me. At the moment I share these things with my ex-girlfriends dad, we'll mail or chat about what's on the way and what we look most forward to.

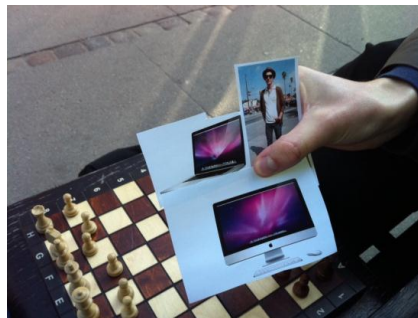
In the interview with David, again it is interesting to consider the group identities he is creating affiliation verbally in his formulation, saying “we who have used Mac for a long time”. Here he defines a definite “we” amongst the more experienced users that stands in opposition to the significant other being the “new users”. Both Mark and David share knowledge about solutions and new-comings with other users, David sharing with many on internet forums and Mark sharing with a fellow Apple enthusiast. This could be viewed as if they have a strong sense of ownership in relation to the brand and thus feel the urge to help others who may have issues with their products.

In the interview prompt, where the interviewees were asked to pair computers with different stylized consumers, it became apparent that classification also happens through very specific products. This became perceptible because even though the pictures of the consumers where interpreted differently, the interpretations and the pairing of the interpreted consumer with the computer product showed redundancies. Hence, not the same pictures where paired, but when the interviewees explained their interpretations of the pictures, clear redundancies appeared. Below is an example showing how certain computer products and personality types seemingly classify the individual consumer. Interestingly here some of the stereotypes that were explained earlier in this chapter in order to describe the true mac user are brought to life again.



RC: Thinking about what you've told me about new mainstream users and old users who have been following the Apple brand for a long time, who falls into which group here.

David (35 yr, old U): It's actually very simple as there is only one real Mac user, and it is him because he has used it because of the computer's content and appearance and not just because of the computer's appearance, he needs the content to do something. He works as a 3D Artist or post production of movies or something, he has a somewhat casual but stylish shirt is very well-groomed and well cared for, he wants a computer that also signals that, and he is a your creative type so I have put him at the most expensive of the Mac's here and at the same time also the most powerful and most professional one he can use for his creative work, along with one of the portable Macs and if there was an iPad, he would have it as well. All the others here, they belong to the modern wave where is more user friendly, cheaper than it was and looks nice so there's almost no reason not to choose it.



Klaus (26 yr, new U): This is the classic Apple user, a cool person who cares about what he wears, cares about design, he probably lives somewhere really cool, and works with design. Maybe this guy is the one who invented the Copenhipster blog, he's got the big powerful iMac with the big screen because he works on it a lot. He lives in California, he's got the whole package the iMac, iPhone, iPad etc. He was probably one of the first to get the iPad because he knows somebody cool who works for Apple or something like that.

Here it is clear that not the same pictures were chosen by the two interviewees, but interestingly the interpretations of the pictures were very similar, and also the interpretations of the pairing of the pictures. Remarkably here Klaus and David speak of the classic mac-user and mention him as a person having the whole package. This means that according to them this type of person would have all the newest mac products. Furthermore it is important to notice that Klaus mentions that he was surely one of the first to get them. Here Klaus is talking about the same phenomenon that Anra was talking about earlier in the analysis, how the true mac-users always move first and

always must have the entire product range and the newest products. Also it appears that looking cool, trendsetting and having a creative lifestyle is also a characteristic of the normative image of the true mac-user. Thus it may be interpreted that there exists a normative image on the true mac-user and having the whole product range comes only with a legitimate recognition if the lifestyle choices are also normatively correct. Consequently having a wide array of Apple products combined with looking cool or trendy and being creative as a person, shows affiliation to a certain grouping of Apple-users, the classic or the true Apple-user.

What we have seen earlier in this chapter that pertains to using the Mac computer in a café environment, could also be seen as classifying act through actions, the action being interacting with the object in a specific environment. This becomes very clear in the following quote with Clara (26 yr, old U):

RC: You mentioned that Apple makes you feel like a part of a community?

Clara: Yes definitely. I remember when I had the first ones, I was in Berlin with my ex-boyfriend, at that time Berlin was a bit first-mover like that was before everybody went there. We were sitting in a café and there were probably about 20 people sitting there, amongst those 20 there were three of us sitting with a Mac computer. We sort of looked at each other in an acknowledging manner, thinking we are the cool ones in this room. That was a special community feeling, it created a fellowship because we were unique in that forum. I mean there were other people with computers in the café and it was a nice place so we sort of created a community within a community. Even if the feeling was short-lived I take that feeling with me in my future use of my Mac and the feelings surrounding it at that time. That's exactly the kind of elite community I am seeking. I need to be different and need to be part of a über community. I remember my ex-boyfriend and I looked at each other and commented: this is pretty cool.

Here we see how using the Mac computer in a certain cafe-environment gave Clara a clear feeling of relation and community with the others who were using the Mac computer in the same way. In this quote we experience a classification act, which is clearly defining a “we” within a social context that stands in very clear opposition to the significant others, in this moment being the other guests in the café. An important aspect to notice here is that the group she feels belonging to in this situation discriminates against the “others”, in order to enhance the self-image (Tajfel, 1982).

Thus in this part of the analysis we have established that classification acts or rituals can amongst other things happen through interaction with the consumption object itself, through other possessions that give a holistic picture of the consumers identity, through knowledge and storytelling, and through the context in which the consumption-object is being consumed. All of these rituals help the consumer show his (dis)affiliation to (un)desired groupings, and create the symbolic boundaries that help classify himself and others.

2.2 Discussion of findings

What has been showed in this chapter is how Apple has established itself as a brand with very positive meanings in the consumers' interpretation of the brand. These positive meanings display themselves in the interviewees associations in relation to the brand and in the projective description of the Apple planet which seemingly is a nice place to be. The meanings associated with the Apple brand clearly showed that products are not only bought for their functional meanings but very much also for the emotional meanings that comes with them (Levy, 1959). Furthermore it was discussed if it was even possible to draw a line between the emotional and functional meanings of a product, as the functionality is interpreted by each individual consumer and is thus a result of the consumers emotions.

As some of the meanings of the brand seem appealing in relation to the self-concept of the consumer we saw how interviewees attempted to draw meaning from the product and the brand in order to create or construct a certain identity (Belk, 1988). For the most part this identity these consumers and interviewees were striving for was a creative and cool identity. An important notion was that not all the identities that could be related to the Apple brand were desirable and thus a risk of being interpreted wrongly existed, creating several possible selves in relation to the Apple brand (Patrick et.al., 2002).

The creation of identity and the transfer of meaning from the product or the brand to the consumer himself happens through different possession-rituals (McCracken, 1986). The most important finding in relation to the many types of possession-rituals found in the analysis was the two categories of meaning transfer as being either a "one way" transfer or a "two way" transfer. This means that consumers are prone to either transfer meaning directly from the product to themselves in the creation of the desired identity, or transfer personal meanings to the product

thus making it their own, possessing it, and then transferring value of the product to themselves once they are part of the product.

An important point of interest in this analysis was, the origins of the meanings associated with the brand. Inspired by Richins theory (1994) these origins were examined through the analysis of stereotypes. A very clear common idea of the stereotypical Mac user appeared as a creative, cool person who is very fashionable with a creative job, living in a trendy apartment placed in a trendy part of a big city. A very clear image of an important significant other in relation to this identity also appeared, as the image of the PC user who is interpreted as a dorky, non-adventurous person with a boring life. Considering stereotypes as meaning creating models closely connected to social contexts, we clearly see the value of these stereotypes. They help the consumers simplify the distinction of the groupings of people that can be related to the brand, but it is important to mention that stereotypes are reified. Thus the origins of the meanings of the brand are probably amongst other things dynamically created in a socio-cultural realm, where they in circularity are transferred from the culturally constituted world to the products, then to the social realm of the individual consumer and then back to the culturally constituted world.

In continuation of the study of stereotypes it becomes evident that a stereotype is in some ways a common denominator of the many types of consumers that influence the brand. Thus it is a way of grouping these consumers into categories. Consequently it becomes apparent that the meanings attached to the Apple brand and the creation of identity, takes place not only in relation to the product themselves but also from the groupings that use the product. Importantly it is noted that the elaborative definition of identity being used in this regard sees identity as an array of “I’s” that are affiliated to an array of “we’s” separated from more or less significant “others” (Jenkins, 1996; Mead 1934). In the analysis and throughout the interviews many “we’s” were observed as well as many “others”, the most important groupings were Creatives, Trendsetters, Hipsters and Followers and figure 1 in the beginning of this chapter offers an illustrative example of these groupings. Showing the hierarchy that appears in the interviews with the first three are the groups on top as they are the ones that move first and the followers simply imitate their behavior. Some of these groupings have very clear meanings in regards to being either positive or negative; the Creatives are for the most part discussed with a positive connotation. Meanwhile the Hipsters do not always have a positive connotation and are in several interviews

described with a slight disassociation from the interviewees' part. Thus the Hipster grouping is interpreted with an ambivalent meaning. The notion of the Trendsetter is as the Hipster mentioned with ambiguity. Accordingly many groups or possible "we's" exist under the Apple "we", creating many possible identities under the same condition of using Apple products and creating an "Apple" identity. This furthermore shows the existence of several cultural blueprints within a very narrow population.

Therefore as seen in several interviews, it becomes important for the individual consumer to show his affiliation and disaffiliation to the desired and undesired groupings of the brand. At this point it becomes obvious that taste, understood as consumer choices, in all its holism helps classify the individual consumer (Bourdieu, 1984). This means that the consumer's consumption and the entire context of these consumption choices help classify the (dis)affiliation of the individual consumer and help build the symbolic boundaries that distinguish the consumer from undesired groupings, and create affiliation to desired groupings. Looking into the Holt's typology of consumption, studying how we consume, helped discover several rituals of classification. Some important ones were the context meaning the social setting of the consumption, here we saw how consumption of the Apple computer in a café environment helped Clara affiliate to the desired grouping. Thus creating the desired identity (Patrick. Et. al., 2006) she wanted to portray in that moment, as a cool first-mover and creative person. We also saw how clothing helped David disaffiliate himself from the perhaps feared self of Hipsters (Patrick. et.al, 2006). This was because the overall impression he attempted to portray of himself to others would be different in his eyes, once they had noticed his clothings, thus creating the desired identity and affiliation to the identity of a creative architect. Seeing this through Holt's typology and his later article of the post-structuralistic lifestyle analysis (1997), it becomes evident that consumption helps us express, reproduce and transform not only social boundaries but also brands. An important finding in regards to refining the use of Holt's (1995) theoretic framework in this thesis, was that consuming as integration sometimes also means consuming as classification. This happens as the individual consumer will spend time classifying himself, in a sort of auto-classification. This became especially clear as some of the rituals of classification, were rituals that were not always carried out in front of other people, even though they were clear signs of affiliation to a certain type of Apple user. This was particularly the understanding of the Apple language the computer would make use of to tell the consumer about what was

happening. But also the shortcuts and hand-movements used by the consumer to work in a faster manner. Both these rituals are typically done in privacy and if done in public difficult for others to recognize, therefore rituals that create meaning mostly for the individual consumer. Thus the consumption as integration and consumption as classification metaphors in praxis are difficult to distinguish as absolute as done by Holt. This is also a consequence of the notion presented by Weigert et. al. (1986), where it is discussed that identity requires objectification of the question “Who am I?”. What we see in these rituals is this exact objectification, which for the consumer is ensuring meaningfulness to the answer to this question.

Hence it is important to consider the identity definition used in this chapter, as an “I” with several “we’s” and several more or less significant “others” (Mead, 1934; Jenkins, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1982). Therefore creation of identity and development of self-concept is very much about answering the “Who am I?”-question by defining the “I” in relation to the desired “we’s” consumers wish to assimilate in order to reach the desired identity and disassimilate the undesired significant “others”. The way we do this is by ritually creating symbolic boundaries and symbolic communication that help distinguish us from the significant “others” we do not want to assimilate and bring us closer to the “we’s” we strive to be part of. The symbolic communicative approach to the “we’s” is very important as part-taking in a “we” requires recognition and acknowledgement by the other members. This becomes very clear when Clara describes the scene in the café where she and other Apple users recognized each other, Clara tells how proud and cool this made her feel, showing the importance of the recognition and acknowledgement by significant people in relation to the “we” she was striving for.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Implications

The following paragraph will address in which ways the findings of the analysis of this thesis, can be of value to Apple. It will seek to discuss, the differences of the needs of the subcultural members and the brand community members, and how Apple can address these needs.

Furthermore I will discuss how both the grouping types are of value to Apple as the subculture serves as an aspirational reference group to newcomers and the brand community advocates the brand while they can serve as a co-creator in relation to product and brand development. Lastly it will discuss how analyzing the needs of consumer groupings and meeting these needs opts for a paradigm of seeing marketing as a dialogue between the consumers and Apple as a company, and how this dialogue can benefit from a symmetrical subject-subject dialogical ideal.

An important question to ask at this point is how this information can be valuable to a company like Apple and its likes. First off I find it important to consider, what it is that Apple provides the consumer? What do you actually buy, in the constructivist view of this thesis, when you buy an Apple product?

Clearly the analysis shows that an atomistic view is not sufficient to explain the considerations of the consumer when buying an Apple product. Consumers unquestionably buy Apple products for more than their electronic capabilities. Furthermore, the products seem to be bought for more than the brand values portrayed by Apple in their communication towards the consumers, this also became clear in the analysis as many values associated with the Apple brand came from socio-cultural realms. Thus a consideration must be placed towards the final part of the analysis, where meaning and identity is created in relation to the groups of people who consumers attempt to (dis)affiliate. Apple is an access-provider to groupings of people.

The two grouping types that were identified, as the subculture and the brand community reside in very different symbolic worlds and for Apple as a company, it is vital to understand what the two groupings need from the brand.

An important reflection in order to give answers to their needs, is where and how meaning is created, and who is creating it. It becomes clear in the analysis that meaning is to a large extent created amongst the members of the subculture, especially the Trendsetters, Creatives and/or Hipsters, they serve as the reference group giving meaning to the brand and their admirers. It is

here important to consider the cat after the mouse metaphor used by Anra in the analysis. The Trendsetters/Hipsters/Creatives move first and buy the newest products as soon as they come out and then rapidly move on to the next before their behavior is imitated by the followers. It is also important to consider that Apple is not the only brand giving meaning to the subcultural member, Apple is one of many brands being used to communicate (dis)affiliation to certain subcultures. This became especially clear in the analysis, as the interviewees would describe stereotypes in a holistic way and certain things having nothing to do with Apple were a continuous part of these descriptions. It became evident as well when David spoke about his clothing's ability to communicate to others which type of Apple user he was. It would seem that clothing has little to do with choice of computer, but in the view of tribal consumption showing affiliation to subcultures, clothing was an important mean of communication for David. An important difference between the subcultural grouping and the brand community grouping is the sharing of knowledge. The brand community offers a grouping where the advocating of the brand and the sharing of knowledge in relation to the brand is an ideal (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). Meanwhile in the subculture knowledge creates cultural capital (Thornton, 1995) and thus knowledge is not shared, nor is the brand. The subcultural members apprehension of the mainstream and their constant need to be different brings with it a need for protection. Thus the need of the subcultural member is to be protected from the imitators and followers.

This need could be satisfied by creating allowing the subcultural member access to pre-knowledge, knowledge that is not known by others than themselves for a while. This would give them the protection from imitators that they need and the knowledge that provides them with cultural capital. This could be done through loyalty-programs that allow them to be in the know and giving them knowledge before it is publicly available. As recognition and legitimization of others is important for the subcultural members strict rules would have to be created in order to allow membership to this loyalty program. These could be such things as seniority in relation to the brand.

The brand-community members can be characterized as “*“active loyalists,” users of a brand who are “committed, conscientious—almost passionate”*” (Gruen and Ferguson, 1994, p. 3 in Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Hence members of the brand community put the brand in the center, as could be seen in Mai's ambassadorship of the Apple brand. Their most important characteristics

“shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibility” (Muniz and O’Guinn, 2001: p. 1), are important to consider in order to understand their needs. They advocate the brand and their needs lie in the tools of spreading the brand, and in the nurturing of their rituals, traditions and the up keeping of the ties between the members. Thus the brand community members need the opportunity to construct the brand community in order to communicate together and to contribute to the brand with knowledge and with ideas of optimization. This could be done using online tools such as official web-forums and allowing the members a large amount of freedom to use these forums as they wish.

Obviously attempting to complete the needs in these ways, opts for a marketing ideal where the company gives away a lot of control of the brand. But one could ask, is absolute and full control of the brand actually necessary, desirable or even possible in today’s market?

A lot has happened since Kotler wrote the following quote on positioning *“[It is] the act of designing the company’s offer and image so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customers’ minds”* (Kotler, 1994:307), the quote shows a clear belonging to a more positivist paradigm where brands are under the companies control, and represents a strong subject-object relationship between company and consumer. The advances in technology and media, have turned this kind of thinking somewhat around, and the following quote from Vargo and Lusch shows a completely different kind of thinking in relation to the consumer *‘The customer is a co-producer of service. Marketing is a process of doing things in interaction with the customer. The customer is primarily an operant resource, only functioning occasionally as an operand resource’* (2004, p. 7). These notions from Vargo and Lusch opt for a view going towards a more subject-subject relation between marketer/company and consumer, a good argumentation for this more interpretative paradigm is offered by Peñaloza and Venkatesh *“we do not limit marketers to production or consumers to consumption, as marketers consume and consumers produce”* (2006:6).

Regarding the two grouping types found in the analysis of this thesis, we see how both types of groupings produce and both groupings are of great value to Apple. This is seen as the subcultural grouping to a large extent gives meaning to the brand as they serve as a reference group that transports value from the socio-cultural realm to the brand and the products. They serve as an aspirational group for many newcomers of the brand. The brand community serves as a co-

creator and the competencies within these communities can be grown. This can amongst others things be seen in the practices of Apple and its likes in which they have found ways of making the best of the values created out of their own control. This can be spotted in their launches of so-called beta versions of their new software products. What happens in these situations is that the companies launch a test version of their software to be used freely amongst customers, who then reply back to the company with suggestions for improvement etc. This may be seen as a clear sign of the shifting paradigm towards a more subject-subject relationship between the company and the consumer, where the consumer co-creates not only meaning as we have seen in this thesis but also value. As this thesis that consumers are highly contributive to the production of brand meaning, one could argue that Apple whether they like it or not already find themselves in the co-brand-producing paradigm. In essence branding can be seen as a conversation or a dialogue between company and consumer, and interpreting Apples situation in a dialogue-philosophical way, shows two different directions of dialogue or branding ideals. One being the control-branding paradigm which opts for a subject-object relationship in the dialogue or maybe more accurately said monologue ideal between brand or company and consumer, meanwhile the co-producing paradigm (Vargo & Lush, 2004; Peñaloza & Venkatesh, 2006) opts for a subject—subject dialogue ideal between company and consumer. Consequently considering the same ideal that was presented for an optimal conversation between researcher and interviewees in this thesis, shows itself again as a useful ideal for the conversation between company and consumer. Therefore it could be argued that the future for Apple and brands alike may lie in the establishment of a good subject-subject relation and a more symmetrical dialogue ideal for the branding efforts and accordingly the conversation between the consumers and themselves.

Hence for Apple it seems that it is a matter of entering a dialogue and determining what this dialogue should withhold, what is important for the consumer in relation to the brand, as Claus Buhl says “*A modern brand has to be able to be a part of their lives – more than getting the consumers to ascribe to themselves some predetermined brand-value*” (Buhl, 2005: p. 20). Consequently Apple need to consider what was discussed at the earlier in this chapter, for their dialogue with the consumers, which part of their lives are they a part of. Much could point to the fact that their role as a brand is giving access to networks, bringing certain groupings of consumers together, as said by Mark in one of the interviews:

“It’s almost antisocial if you don’t have an iPhone or a mac computer, because so much interaction happens through it, I check-in on my iPhone when I enter a place, like a café or a bar, so that any one of my friends can see where I am and get in touch with me if their nearby. They are like social tools Apple products, they bring my group of friends closer to me.”

Thus in my regard Apples dialogue with the consumers and their users should be about their role as the network brand, giving access and opening doors for the consumers to belong and be acknowledged by others for their belonging in groups and networks. The Apple brand contributes to their ability to (de)construct symbolic boundaries in “I’s” belonging to “We’s” that are separated from significant “Others”.

3.2 Conclusion

This thesis has had the purpose of investigate the actions and objects consumers make use of in order to (de)construct the symbolic boundaries, which help classify themselves and others and form the desired affiliation and distinction for their identity-constructive consumption. This conclusion will show exactly how I have answered the problematization of this thesis.

Initially I determined the paradigmatic frame of this thesis, and following the argumentation for the choice of the constructivist approach and even more accurately the social constructivist approach, with a set off point in Berger & Luckmann, I discussed the key themes of this thesis and the interpretations of these themes under the social constructivist paradigm. Furthermore I discussed the consequences these definitions of key themes under the social constructivist approach, would have for the interpretations of certain phenomena within the analysis of this thesis. One of the most important remarks in this instance is the understanding of identity, identity as a question of who you are. The notion of identity for this thesis is understood as a result of a continuous symbolic negotiation and interaction between the individual and society. Furthermore the notion of identity as an “I” belonging to a plethora of “we”s (Mead, 1934; Tajfel & Turner, 1982) is important, as it is in this identity as group belonging perspective that we find the problematization of the (de)construction of symbolic boundaries.

The symbolic nature of consumption is also a very important notion for this thesis, in this regard the interpretative consumption perspective useful and served to show consumption as one very important source of identity. For this consumption a universe of meanings exists, and subsequently the choices of consumer electronics have meanings in this universe. These meanings are negotiated when a consumer asks himself the question of who he is in relation to his choice of consumer electronics.

Both individual and society take part in the responding of this question, the individual by attributing the electronic products and thus himself meanings. Society does this as well amongst other things by attributing stereotypical meanings to electronic products but also through advertising, trendsetting famous people and very importantly for this thesis reference groups.

The analysis shows the following:

- There are clear differences in answering the question of who am I or who is (s)he, in relation to whether their choice of consumer electronics is an Apple branded product or another, commonly referred to as PC branded products (even though there are several thousand different PC product brands). However there are also differences in answering these questions between the Apple users themselves, there seems to be at least four groupings or reference groups maybe even identity forms giving meaning to the Apple brand. These consist of hipsters, creatives and trendsetters who are being chased by the followers. An interesting finding in this regard is that though the creatives and trendsetters are usually discussed with positive connotations the hipsters are more ambiguous in their appearances in the discussion of the interviewees and sometimes have undesirable connotations.
- The societal negotiation and response to the identity question is amongst other things seen in the stereotypical ideas of which type of Apple user you are. This is dependent on several different things here amongst, the clothes you wear, the bike you ride, the variety of Apple products you own, the café you zip your coffee at etc. Thus societal image of the hipster is a person who has a creative job perhaps as a music producer, likes fashion clothing, drinks his coffee at the most trendy cafes and travels to Los Angeles with his large portfolio of Apple products. While the follower is more aspirational towards the trendsetters/hipsters/creative, wears ordinary clothes, could be a student of a non-creative subject and has only one Apple product which is the cheapest option.
- Thus it is important to notice that it is to a large extent the holistic image of the consumer that answers the question of who am I/who is he. Consequently it is in the holistic context that consumers separate themselves from others and create the symbolic communication and boundaries which serve to show (dis)affiliation from (un)desired reference groups or imagined communities.
- Depending on how the individual consumer interprets the nature of the group or network he feels affiliation to, the need of the consumer towards the brand can be of different characteristics. The groupings found in the analysis can be either of subcultural or community characteristics. The member of a subcultural grouping feels a need for protection from the consumers who in their view possess lower symbolic capita and

imitate their behavior. Meanwhile the member of the community grouping feels a need to advocate, develop and share the brand.

From a theoretical point of view, the meanings attached to the Apple products, the stereotypes attached to the users, the groupings or networks consumers feel affiliation to, are all part of the socially constructed culture that fosters our identity and behavior. They appear as objective truths and realities for the interviewees in this thesis and therefore must be understood as part of the culture they are part of. Culture understood as the blueprint of our society, a system of symbols that makes sense of the world, understood, produced and recognized by significant others.

4. Literature

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4.2 Newspaper articles:

Information, 02.04.2011: Det er jo ikke så fedt, når alle ved at det er fedt

4.3 Web:

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-05-09/apple-brand-value-at-153-billion-overtakes-google-for-top-spot.html>

<http://macdailynews.com/2011/04/21/apple-overtakes-nokia-as-worlds-largest-vendor-of-mobile-handsets-by-revenue/>

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Penge/2011/07/30/155746.htm>

<http://www.tlg.uci.edu/ljsj/#eid=1&context=ljsj>

Appendix 1 (Article)

Information, 02.04.2011

' Det er jo ikke så fedt , når alle ved, at det er fedt '

I årevis var Apple for dem, der gerne ville betale penge for at være udenfor. Det er ved at vende. I dag signalerer en iPhone i lommen blot, at man ikke er hægtet af. Æblet er ved at blive noget så banalt som folkeligt

Af HENNING DUE

To drenge står og kigger ind gennem butiksrudden for at få et glimt af den. Anne-Marie Rawlins står i køen ved siden af sammen med sin kæreste. De er studerende og har været nødt til at sælge deres gamle for at få råd til at tage en ny med hjem.

Ikke fordi de kan få øje på forskellen.

Heller ikke fordi de er utilfredse. Den gamle kan stadig tænke hurtigt, og hukommelsen fejler heller ikke noget.

Desuden er det jo mest bare for at have en at lege med, siger en langhåret mand, der ikke vil have sit navn i avisen, på vej væk fra butikken med en ny model under armen.

Steve Jobs kan godt få øje på forskellen: Den nye er »magisk og revolutionerende«, forklarede han os under en såkaldt keynote-tale i San Francisco for fire uger siden.

Godt nok var det præcis sådan, han beskrev den gamle for et år siden. Sagen er bare den, at når den 56-årige californier lunter ud på scenen i sine hængerøvsbukser og slidte gummisko og tager den slags ord i munden, lytter folk som Anne-Marie Rawlins og hendes kæreste efter. Også selv om de har hørt historien før. Det gør de også foran butikkerne i London, Tokyo, Madrid, Beijing, Paris, Sydney, Berlin, Milano, Quebec og Zürich. Som Anne-Marie Rawlins siger: »Der ikke er noget, der er så fedt som Apple.« Den følelse har spredt sig som en global steppebrand de senere år. En nærmest religiøs følelse, der allerede blev forvarslet i starten af 80'erne.

»Soon there will be two kinds of people.

Those who use computers, and those who use Apples,« rungede det dengang fra Apples hovedkvarter i Silicon Valley. I mange år var følelsen forbeholdt en lille skare af kreative og højtuddannede med sans for design. Men som årene gik, og lønningsposerne blev større, oplevede flere og flere følelsen, når de rørte ved maskinerne med det lille æblelogo på. Det hele kulminerede i en global vækkelse for et par uger siden.

Englene sang, og kasseapparaterne ringede med klokkerne, da en million iPad 2-modeller blev udsolgt på 72 timer.

Året før gik der fire uger, før så mange havde købt et eksemplar af iPad'en. Tvivlerne var holdt op med at tvivle, og Apple kunne indtage pladsen som verdens største teknologivirksomhed - og i forbifarten snuppe titlen som verdens næststørste virksomhed, lige efter olie-giganten Exxon Mobil.

Det engang så eksklusive æblelogo er i dag designet til at passe lige ned i bukselommen på hr. og fru hvem som helst. Men den nyvundne brede forbrugertække kan koste eksklusive købere, for mange af Apples oprindelige kernekundr står nu tilbage og føler, at æblet har mistet glansen.

Ikke det samme længere

Heinrich Veilgaard er en af dem. Engang fik han også julelys i øjnene, når Steve Jobs introducerede det nyeste fra Apple. Sådan har han det ikke længere. Han er træt af at betale 30 procent mere for en computer, hvor styresystemet ikke læn ge re er fejlsikret, inden det ryger på gaden. Det minder ham om de sure Microsoft-dage, hvor computeren hele tiden gik ned, når han brugte grafiske programmer på den. Han er træt af, at Apple bruger kræfterne på at udvikle alle mulige gimmicks og gadgets i stedet for at fokusere på kerneproduktet. Også er han træt af, at resten af verden render rundt med en iPhone i lommen.

»Det nager da lidt, at alle i S-toget nu sidder med en, selv om man dybest set godt kan forstå, hvorfor de har købt den.« I gamle dage var det godt nok mere upraktisk at arbejde på en Apple end på en Windows-maskine. Ofte gik det galt, når en Apple forsøgte at gå på nettet, og i mange år kunne Apple ikke udveksle filer med Windows-pc'er. »Men dengang stod vi sammen om følelsen af at være anderledes og følelsen af, at de andre ikke forstod, hvad der var fedt.

Nu forstår de det, og så er det ikke så fedt mere,« siger Heinrich Veilgaard og griner.

Suzanne C. Beckmann er professor og branding-ekspert ved Copenhagen Business School, CBS. Hun tilhører også gruppen af inkarnerede Apple-brugere og satte sin første Apple-computer i stikkontakten i 1985. Hun har ikke skiftet mærke siden, og gennem årene har hun kun én gang oplevet, at hendes computer brød sammen.

Hendes begejstring for Apple-produkter er derfor udelukkende »erfaringsbaseret«, som hun siger. Hun vil ikke gå så langt som til at kalde sig selv for fan. Men i gamle dage vidste hun godt, hvilken side hun stod på i det,

hun kalder 'David mod Goliath' - Apples imagekamp mod store, markedsdominerende pc-producenter som IBM og Microsoft i løbet af 80'erne og 90'erne.

Modstand mod forandring

»Det var ikke nødvendigvis en bevidst strategi, men nærmere en naturlig måde at tænke på. Den der fornemmelse af, at vi er de fremadrettede, dem, der arbejder med det smarteste. Det, der fungerer godt, er brugervenligt og ikke går i stykker.« Os mod dem-følelsen blev forstærket af, at Suzanne C. Beckmann gang på gang følte sig diskrimineret som Apple-bruger.

»Da jeg arbejdede på Odense Universitet (i dag SDU, red.), fik vi for eksempel lov til at købe Apple-maskiner, men vi fik ingen servicering. Og her på CBS må vi ikke engang købe en Apple-arbejdscomputer, selvom vi er en del, der er Apple-brugere.« Indtil Apples 'post pc'-æra tog fart med den første udgave af iPod'en i 2001, var æblelogoet forbeholdt en lille gruppe folk som Heinrich Veilgaard og Suzanne C.

Beckmann: æstetisk bevidste professionelle fra reklame-, medie-, og universitetsverdenen.

Men den smalle niche var også grund til, at Apple-skuden var tæt på at synke i starten og midten af 1990'erne.

Virksomheden oplevede sit største fald i omsætningen og gik fra omkring 10 til to procent i markedsandele.

»Problemet med en kult er, at den ikke ønsker forandring. Når Apples ledelse for eksempel luftede ideer om en ny type mus, lød der ramaskrig,« siger Richard Jones, professor ved Institut for Afsætningsøkonomi, ved Copenhagen Business School, CBS.

Alt det ændrede sig, da Steve Jobs vendte tilbage fra Pixar i 1997. Med sig i rygsækken havde han en vision om, at Apple ikke længere bare skulle lave computere.

Apple skulle løse menneskers problemer.

»Evnene til at gøre sig relevant for individet førte Apple ind i masseforbrugernes univers. Det første resultat var iPod'en - en mp3-afspiller, der basalt set blot var en harddisk, man kunne putte i lommen. Den var hverken innovativ eller spændende rent teknologisk, men på grund af en hidtil uset brugervenlighed opfattede man den som stor innovation, der kunne løse et problem for millioner af mennesker: Hvordan man kan få lov til at være sammen med sin musik hele tiden,« siger Richard Jones.

Pludselig følte millioner af svedende motionister, at nogen havde forenet lige præcis deres personlige interesser.

iPod'en blev en del af selvidentiteten og kom bogstaveligt talt ind på huden af brugeren.

Det fik Apple lov til, fordi folk syntes, maskinen var cool.

David Trier-Mørch er web-udvikler med eget webbureau og studerer e-concept-udvikling på Københavns Erhvervsakademi.

Han husker tydeligt første gang, han prøvede en iPhone.

Det var, som om nogen havde været oppe i hans hoved og undersøge præcis, hvilke behov han havde. Hver gang han trykkede på en knap, førte den ham intuitivt derhen, han gerne ville være. Oplevelsen gentog sig, da David Trier-Mørch begyndte på multimedieskolen i Kolding.

»De havde lige købt den nye bærbare iMac i aluminiumsudgaven. Alene den måde, metallet var skåret på... Og detaljerne i designet var meget lækre end nogen anden computer, jeg før havde set og ført.«

Lånte fjer

Indtil videre vækker ordene 'Designed by Apple in California' stadig en følelse af eksklusivitet hos kræsnere forbrugere. Men belejlighat nok leder de også opmærksomheden væk fra det faktum, at Apples produkter er »Made in China« under forhold, der angiveligt drev 15 ansatte hos underleverandøren Foxconn til at begå selvmord sidste år.

Og kigger man designet efter i sømmene, er det tydeligt, at flere af Apples største design- og salgssucceser er plunket fra den tyske teknologiproducent Brauns produktlinje fra mellem- og efterkrigsårene.

Stiller man for eksempel Brauns T1000 radio og T3 lommeradio op ved siden af Apples Powermac-kabinet og den første iPod-model, ligner de til forveksling hinanden. Ikke overraskende er Apples ublu kærlighedserklæring til Brauns indflydelsesrige chefdesigner Dieter Rams, gensidig: »Der findes kun én virksomhed i dag, der laver kvalitet, og det er Apple,« slog designikonet Rams fast for et par år siden i dokumentarfilmen Objectified.

Den lige linje fra Brauns tyske hovedkvarter i Kronberg til Apples i Cupertino, Californien skyldes dels Steve Jobs' personlige begejstring for europæisk industridesign, dels at Apples britiske chefdesigner, Jonathan Ive, har gået på Royal College of Arts i London. Der fik han smag for den funktionalisme og minimalisme, der siden slut-90'ernes banebrydende iMac-computere med farvestrålende og pyntede plastikskærme har banet vejen for Apples nuværende farvepalet af sølvfarvet aluminium, sort og hvid.

»Det undrer mig faktisk lidt, at produkterne i dag betragtes som så cool, for designet er ikke specielt unikt. Deter bare no nonsense. Den nye Powerbook ligner jo bare et Minox-kamera fra 1930'erne. Men når Apple-produkter i dag opfattes som specielt lækre, hænger det formentlig sammen med, at alle andre produkter ikke er særlig lækre. Set med mine øjne er det interessante ved Apples succes først og fremmest, at kvalitet pludselig er begyndt at sælge i så stor skala,« siger Henrik Lund-Larsen, lektor ved Danmarks Designskole.

Apple er med andre ord blevet godt og gammeldags folkeligt. Det er grunden til, at David Trier-Mørch forrige fredag måtte stå i kø i timevis og endte med at gå tomhændet hjem, fordi hans foretrukne iPad 2 var udsolgt.

Det er også grunden til, at Heinrich Veilgaard er begyndt at støde ind i flere og flere af dem, han kalder »rookies« - folk, der putter deres nye iPhone ind i et cover, så den ikke får ridser.

»Hvem fanden går ud og køber et dyrt og smukt produkt med stor signalværdi, der alligevel kun holder i to år, og så går hjem og pakker det ind i en plastikstrømpe?«.

hedu@information.dk

»Når Apple-produkter i dag opfattes som specielt lækre, hænger det formentlig sammen med, at alle andre produkter ikke er særlig lækre« — HENRIK LUND-LARSEN DANMARKS DESIGNSKOLE.

Fakta: Fakta

Sidste efterår indtog Apple andenpladsen på listen over verdens største virksomheder, målt på markedsværdi, med en værdi på 1.500 milliarder kroner. I 2010 overhalede Apple også konkurrenten Microsoft og indtog førstepladsen som verdens største teknologivirksomhed. Kun det amerikanske olieselskab Exxon-Mobil har en større børsværdi. Størstedelen af Apples indtjening kommer i dag fra ikke -pc-produkter.

Det første af slagsen, iPod'en, blev sendt på gaden i 2001. Det andet 'post-pc'-produkt, iPhone, blev lanceret i 2007, og sidste år blev Apples tredje og foreløbigt sidste post-pc-produkt lanceret, iPad'en.

For otte dage siden blev seneste skud på stammen, iPad 2, lanceret på verdensplan.

Indtil videre har Apple solgt 100 millioner iPhones og 300 millioner iPods.

I 2010 blev iPad'en solgt i 15 millioner eksemplarer og sikrede Apple indtægter på 55 milliarder kroner.

200 millioner individuelle brugere har i dag oprettet en betalingskonto hos Apple til online-butikkerne iTunes, iBooks og App Store.

Til sammenligning solgte Apple solgt 58 millioner computere i perioden 1977 til 2005.

Billedtekst: Udsolgt. Køen begyndte at samle sig allerede først på eftermiddagen, da Eplehuset i København forrige fredag satte den nye iPad 2-til salg. Få timer senere var der ikke flere eksemplarer tilbage. Foto: Sofie Amalie Klougar

Information

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'Det er jo ikke så fedt', når alle ved, at det er fedt'

I årevis var Apple for dem, der gerne ville betale penge for at være udenfor. Det er ved at vende. I dag signalerer en iPhone i lommen blot, at man ikke er hængt af. Æblet er ved at blive noget så banalt som folkeligt

AF HENNING DUE

To drenge står og kigger ind gennem butiksruddet for at få et glimt af den Anne-Marie Rawlins står i køen ved siden af sammen med sin kæreste. De er studerende og har været nødt til at sælge deres gamle for at få råd til at tage en ny med hjem.

Ikke fordi de kan få øje på forskellen.

Heller ikke fordi de er utilfredse. Den gamle kan stadig tænke hurtigt, og hukommelsen fejler heller ikke noget. Desuden er det jo mest bare for at have en at lege med, siger en langhåret mand, der ikke vil have sit navn i avisen, på vej væk fra butikken med en ny model under armen.

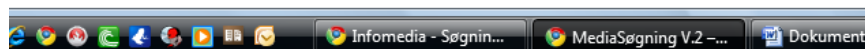
Steve Jobs kan godt få øje på forskellen: Den nye er »magisk og revolutionerende«, forklarede han os under en såkaldt keynote-tale i San Francisco for fire uger siden.

Godt nok var det præcis sådan, han beskrev den gamle for et år siden. Sagen er bare den, at når den 56-årige californier lunter ud på scenen i sine hængerøvsbukser og slidte gummisko og tager den slags ord i munden, lytter folk som Anne-Marie Rawlins og hendes kæreste efter. Også selv om de har hørt historien før. Det gør de også foran butikkerne i London, Tokyo, Madrid, Beijing, Paris, Sydney, Berlin, Milano, Quebec og Zürich. Som Anne-Marie Rawlins siger: »Der ikke er noget, der er så fedt som Apple.« Den følelse har spredt sig som en global steppebrand de senere år. En nærmest religiøs følelse, der allerede blev forvarslet i starten af 80'erne.

»Soon there will be two kinds of people.

Those who use computers, and those who use Apples,« rungede det dengang fra Apples hovedkvarter i Silicon Valley. I mange år var følelsen forbeholdt en lille skare af kreative og højtuddannede med sans for design. Men som årene gik, og lønningsposerne blev større, oplevede flere og flere følelsen, når de røre ved maskinerne med det lille æblelogo på. Det hele kulminerede i en global vækkelse for et par uger siden.

Englene sang, og kasseapparaterne ringede med klokkerne, da en million iPad 2-modeller blev udsolgt på 72 timer. Året før gik der fire uger, før så mange havde købt et eksemplar af iPad'en. Tvivlerne var holdt op med at tvivle, og Apple kunne indtage pladsen som verdens største teknologivirksomhed - og i forbifarten snuppe titlen



Appendix 2

(Example of the pairing of prompts)



Appendix 3

(Interview transcript example)

RC: Hvad tænker du når du ser det her billede?

MB: Jeg tænker generelt, sejt, jeg tænker ikke engang så meget over hvad det er for et produkt, det er bare at det er den afsender, så ved man at det er sejt, både på design og brugervenlighed, så er det bare sejt. Selv deres knap så fantastiske produkter, som AppleTV som jeg synes er lidt mærkeligt, synes jeg alligevel at de rammer hovedet på sømmet hver gang, de er altså bare seje. Og når de rammer hver gang, bygger det jo også troværdighed, og de gør bare tingene med stil, så det er ikke kun de tekniske aspekter som er fede. De skaber bare nye fede ting som skiller sig ud og som man ikke vidste at man havde brug for, lige som iPad men de skaber det bare og rammer plet. Det er sejt.

RC: Andet end sejt?

MB: Ja praktisk og æstetisk, jeg synes det skal være flot og praktisk. Og jeg tænker også kæmpe firma, som bare tjener kassen, men de leverer varen så det er jo bare fedt.

RC: Hvad tænker du når du ser det her? [Prompt gammelt logo]

MB: Retro og oldschool, jeg havde sådan en gammel Apple, da jeg var meget ung, der havde jeg et helt andet forhold til dem, det var slet ikke frontløbere eller innovation man tænkte om dem. Det var en del af resten i mine øjne. En computer var på det tidspunkt bare en computer, men jeg var også meget ung på det tidspunkt, men jeg tænkte ikke noget specielt om dem.

RC: Hvis du ser på dem sammen hvad tænker du så?

MB: Udvikling, gået fra tekniske aspekter og så til et brand, et kæmpe brand der ved hvad de vil og hvor de vil hen og hvordan de vil opfattes af såvel kunder som ikke-kunder.

RC: Ja, hvad er historien bag din Mac?

MB: Jeg var PC bruger og havde fulgt det i noget tid, jeg tænkte slet ikke over hvor besværligt det egentlig var, for det var slet ikke i tankerne, det var bare det man brugte når man interesserede sig for computere, jeg vidste godt at Mac eksisterede, men jeg opfattede det slet ikke som en konkurrent, jeg tænkte bare, tjaa whatever, det er bare for folk der ikke dyrker computere. Men da jeg så først kom til Danmark, havde min ekskærestes far Mac over alt, og jeg havde det lidt som PC brugere at Mac var noget lort, og hvorfor han dog brugte det. Og det tog mig cirka halvanden uge at lære at bruge de computere, og det virkede meget organisk sådan som styresystemet var, alt var så intuitivt, det var som om der havde siddet en og tænkt hvad er mest logisk, og så gjorde det det på den måde. Så efter halvanden uge var jeg totalt overbevist, alt var meget flottere og super nemt. Jeg kendte jo windows super godt og havde fulgt det længe, men da jeg kom ind på Mac, så selv om jeg som udgangspunkt var

lidt imod det, blev jeg så hurtigt og let overbevist om at det var meget nemmere og praktisk og flot, og sejt. Jeg tænkte først, det her er smart, og så tænkte jeg og det er flot. Jeg vil faktisk helst aldrig bruge PC igen, jeg blev i en kort periode tvunget til at gøre det gennem mit arbejde og jeg hadet det, og fik hurtigt overbevist min chef om at vi skulle skifte til Mac. PC virker bare så klodset og dumt. Det sjove er at hvis man snakker med folk findes der næsten aldrig folk der bruger PC som startede på en Mac, det er altid den anden vej rundt, man siger altid jeg vil aldrig gå tilbage til PC, ingen siger sætningen omvendt.

RC: Kan du huske hvordan du fik din første Mac?

MB: Ja min ekskæreste og jeg gik og brugte hendes fars Mac og så gav han den til os til jul, jeg var bare så glad, ligesom da jeg overbeviste min chef om at skifte til Mac, da jeg så fik min Mac blev jeg så lettet og glad, det var så rart at jeg ikke længere skulle bruge windows. Selvom man jo godt ved at det koster mere, men jeg vil hellere betale noget mere for noget som jeg bliver virkelig glad for, og efter to måneder har man glemt de penge, så er man bare glad for sit produkt.

RC: Har dit forhold til dine Mac produkter ændret sig eller udviklet sig siden du fik dit første mac produkt?

MB: Ja, altså produkterne har jo ændret sig, men jeg har aldrig tænkt at noget var et skridt baglæns, jeg har altid været positivt overrasket over hvad de nu fandt på, jeg får også deres nyhedsbrev og når de har deres store messer og viser deres nye ting, til OS eller til iPhone, så kigger jeg altid det igennem og så sidder jeg og glæder mig helt vildt til de næste ting der kommer, alt bliver ligesom bare hele tiden optimeret med flere funktioner.

RC: Ja, deler du det med nogen?

MB: Lidt nu er det ikke alle mine venner der nørder det ligeså meget som jeg, men jeg plejede at dele det med min ekskærestes far, så sad vi og mailede og chattede om hvad der nu kom, og fortalte om hvad vi hver især glædede os mest til osv.

RC: Okay, nu kommer der en historie du skal fortælle du lander på planeten Apple, og du fortsætter bare historien, hvordan er der der?

MB: Hmm, [lang pause] alt er gråt og hvidt [lang pause] alt er smooth og strømlinet, der er ingen hårde kanter, folks går i helt hvidt og helt rent tøj, tøjet tager slet ikke imod smuds og snavs, det er bare totalt hvidt. Jeg forestiller mig at alle bygninger og alle mennesker er rene og shiny og smooth, og det bliver måske lidt for meget, alle er rigtig flinke mod hinanden.

RC: Du kommer nu ind i et lokale fyldt med Macs, en af dem er din, hvordan finder du din?

MB: Hmm, jeg ville være sådan lidt detektiv agtig og udelukke alle dem der ikke er min, ved at kigge på hvor snavset den var og sådan noget, så kunne jeg skære det lidt ned. Så ville jeg tænde dem og kigge på brugernavnet.

RC: Okay, hvis nu de var tændt og man ikke kunne kigge på brugernavnet.

MB: Så ville jeg kigge på programmerne, jeg ville kunne genkende det med det samme på Docken der hvor programmerne er, de ligger nemlig i en bestemt rækkefølge i forhold til hvordan jeg bruger min computer, først safari og firefox til venstre så FTP programmer, fordi det bruger jeg også meget og så skype som også har med web at gøre, så kommer itunes og iphoto, fordi billeder og musik fylder meget for mig og hænger godt sammen osv. jeg har en lidt logisk tilgang til det og jeg sætter det op så det giver mest mening for mig.

RC: Okay nu kommer du ind i et lokale fyldt med meget erfarne og garvede macbrugere, en af dem er dog helt ny hvordan finder du ham?

MB : Det er nemt jeg ville bare kigge på ham og se, jeg ville kigge på hans øjne, for han ville ikke vide hvor han skulle kigge hen på skærmen, på en Mac er det sådan at hvis man ved hvor man vil hen så behøver man ikke engang at kigge på det, han ville se forvirret ud og han ville ikke forstå computerens sprog.

RC: Er der andet der ville afsløre det?

MB: En der har haft en mac længe, han ville nok have styr på antallet af apps på computeren og måske ville de sider der er åbne organiseret, en ny bruger ville bare have det hele åbent udover det hele, hvis man er god til Mac, kan man have ti programmer åbne, og organiseret på en helt bestemt og nem måde, via noget der hedder expose og det ville være lidt mere organiseret, en ny bruger ville have en hel masse vinduer åbne. Desuden tror jeg en ny har en dock som ligner fabriksindstillingerne sådan helt som da det startede, det har en erfaren bruger i hvert fald ikke. Deres skrivebord vil være lidt rodet, for man kan nemlig hvis man er lidt øvet, organisere skrivebordet efter forskellige parametre. En anden ting der er et program der hedder iWeb hvis det er i docken så er det en ny bruger, for det er det første en rutineret bruger han sletter, det er sådan et rigtig nybegynder program, til at lave hjemmesider, det er sådan noget man ikke gider at bruge når man er garvet. Hvis man har haft en mac før kan man bare kopiere sine indstillinger fra den gamle og køre med samme set-up.

RC: Kan du beskrive en typisk Mac-bruger?

MB: Nogen der arbejder med design eller billeder eller musik, noget kreativt, de er mere kreative end de fleste, mere kreative end tekniske. Sort hår, briller som er smarte med stor tyk ramme, og lækkert tøj, ikke nødvendigvis vildt rige, men sådan med penge, hvis det er i københavn så cykler de, de er sådan lidt boheme. Han cykler på sådan en selvsammensat racing bike, sådan en fixie bike agtig ting, de er sådan meget på mode lige nu. Så har de en læder laptop taske, eller også cykler de på en gammeldags morfar cykel, men den er helt ny med brune læderhåndtag, de går op i de fine detaljer med sig selv, de har sådne lidt skæg er bare helt generelt tjekket, de er sådan mellem 25 og 40, de bor nok på vesterbro, eller frederiksberg eller islandsbrygge, sådan nogle lækre flotte steder med penthouse lejlighed, som er vildt fed.

RC: Ja hvad med en typisk PC bruger?

MB: [Griner] Det er svært for det kan være mange forskellige, men hvis nu det er en studerende, der læser tja, dyrlæge eller jeg ved ikke, ikke noget hvor man går for meget op i de fine ting, noget som dyrlæge eller pædagog eller alt muligt andet, det kunne være en slags. En anden slags kunne være IT folk, jeg forestiller mig at IT folk bruger PC, dem der arbejder for store firmaer, bruger som regel PC fordi det er billigere for virksomheden, det kan jo betyde mange penge for et stort firma, kun at køre Mac. Folk med helt almindelige og lidt kedelige værdier, folk uden alt for mange ambitioner, de er bare tilfredse der hvor de er, de udvikler sig ikke så meget, de er tilfredse nok, ting er ligesom godt nok. Ikke alle men hvis jeg nu generaliserer så er det sådan nogen med kone børn hus fladskærm og så har de ligesom ticket af i deres tjekliste. De ligger bare til hverdag og flyder, de stræber ikke efter nye ting eller innovation, de tager hjem ligger på sofaen ser fjernsyn, de laver ikke så meget spændende, de jager ingenting.

RC: Hvem er du mest ulig/lig=

MB: Jeg er Macbruger,

RC: Lad os starte her, han har fået den store Mac Pro, hvem er han?

MB: Han er arkitekt eller laver film, han gør noget hvor han skal have masser af kraft, men han er samtidig også pænt klædt, flot hår pænt ur, han har pengene til at bruge på det der skal til. Han er faktisk den eneste i denne flok som har brug for en Mac. Han har nok haft mac i mange år, sådan 10-12 år agtigt. Han bor nok på nordsjælland.

RC: Nummer to her har fået Acer hvorfor?

MB: Hun arbejder med noget som ikke er utroligt spændende, men arbejdet har betalt computeren.

RC: Ikke utroligt spændende?

MB: Ja altså ikke kreativt og mere sådan det er bare et job, 9 til 5 job.

RC: Hvor tror du hun bor?

MB: Kbh. Ø, det er lidt tjekket, det er relativt billigt, men det er kedeligt, der sker jo ikke ret meget der. Så hvis man vil lave nogen aktiviteter så skal man væk derfra, så hun sidder nok meget hjemme.

RC: Hende her?

MB: Hun er studerende, håret er flot og farvet, det er flot lavet, god make-up, hun ved hvad der ser godt ud, hun vil gerne have noget som er tjekket, men hun har så taget den billigste Mac-løsning. Macbooken. Hun bor nok ved søerne, hendes forældre har købt hende sådan en flot lejlighed. Hun læser nok kommunikation, hun har ikke brug for en Mac, hun synes bare det ser fedt ud.

RC: Nummer fire her med IBM?

MB: Han bruger ikke sin computer så ofte, andet end til lidt hjemmearbejde, han rejser meget, så han bruger den her selvom den er lille og grim, den er stadig kraftig. Han sidder og arbejder med sådan et

udviklingsprogram, som er windowsbaseret, han arbejder måske for staten på en eller anden måde, måske sådan noget lidt hemmeligt, lidt forsvarsagtigt.

RC: Nummer fem har fået iMac?

MB: Ja han er fra TV, eller måske er han fotograf, sådan noget i den stil. Han er omkring fyrre og han har nok en større på arbejde og den her hjemme, hvis der lige er behov for det når han arbejder hjemmefra. Han har brugt den her i 10 års tid og han har et arbejde hvor han er nødt til at have en kraftig mac som samtidig kan synkroniseres med den anden han har. For ham skal alt bare være på Mac, han er kreativ og det er hans fremtid.

RC: Hende her har også fået en Mac?

MB: Ja hun har en mand som arbejder og tjener kassen, de bor i Whiskeybæltet hun laver lidt forskelligt hun er sådan lidt en housewife, hun er nok med i velgørenhedsting og er god til social networking, hun bruger den aldrig, men hun skal have en computer og valgte Mac'en hun havde pengene og kan godt lide flotte ting.

RC: Nummer syv her har fået en Macbook pro?

MB: Ja han går op i sin stil, jeg var lidt i tvivl om det skulle være en Macbook eller en Macbook pro, men han er fyr og vil gerne have den store, som ser lidt mere maskulin ud. Macbook er lidt en studerendes og en piges computer, mænd vil gerne have noget stort og kraftigt.

RC: Hvad signalerer det om en mand hvis han har den hvide?

MB: Så har man ikke lavet sit hjemmearbejde, man har bare købt et eller andet.

RC: Okay lad os vende tilbage til fyren, hvem er han?

MB: Ja han arbejder nok for sig selv med design eller grafisk design han sidder ikke på kontor han er en fri mand.

RC: Disse to har fået nummer 8 hvem er de?

MB: Han er ejendomsmægler, hun er også ejendomsmægler, i hvert fald noget med salg og de sidder en del på kontoret, derfor har de også en pæn skærm til osv. Jeg tænker også ejendomsmægler fordi folk kommer ind i deres butik og det skal se pænt ud, men de har sikkert et salgsprogram som kun køres på PC.

RC: Ville de gerne have haft en Mac?

MB: Nej de er ligeglade det skal bare være praktisk og funktionelt.

RC: [Prompt artikel]?

MB: Altså jeg kan godt se det, men jeg har aldrig gået så meget op i sådan noget, jeg skal ikke nødvendigvis have det som alle andre ikke har, jeg vil bare gerne have noget som er godt. Apple er jo blevet mere pop, men jeg synes stadig det er fedt, når jeg ser andre med Apple produkter tænker jeg bare fedt, du kan også se det, du har også forstået det. Jeg tænker sådan lidt respekt, det er godt at du kan se det.

RC: Tror du andre folk tænker som artiklen indikerer?

MB: Ja jeg tror nogen faktisk holder sig væk fra Apple, fordi de tænker, nej jeg skal ikke hoppe med på den rutsjebane. Tænker jeg vil have noget andet, bare fordi det er noget andet, men når de oplever og prøver Apple, så er jeg sikker på at de gerne vil have det også, det er noget helt specielt.