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Authenticating by re-enchantment: The discursive making of craft production

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Abstract This paper presents an analysis of the way brand authentication operates through discursive enchantment as a series of ongoing negotiations among different market actors. We suggest that one specific type of enchantment, the concept of craft production, has been given too sparse attention in conceptualisations of authenticity. Through a qualitative multi-method inquiry based into the guitar subculture and a brand genealogy of the pseudo-Swedish guitar brand Hagstrom, we show how the rationalising trajectories of modernity can not only have disenchanting effects, but can also be dis-authenticating. We illustrate how various marketplace participants collectively engage in brand re-enchantment processes that provide the springboard for re-authenticating rationalised production through five enchanting craft discourses: vocation, dedication, tradition, mystification, and association.

Keywords consumer culture theory; authenticity; enchantment; retro brand; netnography; brand genealogy; craft production

Introduction

Authenticity and enchantment have evolved as key constructs of contemporary marketing and are recurrent analytical subtexts in culturally informed marketing research. Consumers and marketers alike seem to be united in their quest for the ‘real’ and ‘genuine’ – the authentic – and the emotionally charged ‘magical’ and ‘dream-like’ – the enchanted. However, conceptual blind spots continue to exist when it comes to our understanding of how authenticity is constituted vis-à-vis enchantment in the marketplace.

One of the reasons for these blind spots is that authenticity has been sometimes conflated with – and sometimes confused with – enchantment. We suggest that this is partly due to the univocal focus on the positive connotations of authentic experiences in previous marketing literature. For example, consumers are said to desire ‘authentic’ product offerings, want to listen to ‘authentic’ music, and want to travel to ‘authentic’ tourist destinations (Arnould & Price, 2000; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Brown, Sherry, & Kozinets, 2003; Goulding, 2000; Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Muñoz, Wood, & Solomon, 2006; Rose & Wood, 2005). Consequently, companies want to supply authentic market offerings, conceiving of authenticity as the new

business imperative (Beverland, 2005a & b, 2006, 2009; Beverland, Lindgreen, & Vink, 2008; Gilmore & Pine, 2007).

Conceptually, however, authenticity does not necessarily have to do with something positive; an authentic experience might just as well be dull, dreadful, dangerous, and disgusting – and as such may be particularly disenchanting. As an illustration, Bardhi, Ostberg, and Bengtsson (2010) found in their study of Western tourists visiting China that many experienced the authentic Chinese food as quite unpleasant and disenchanting. However, they continuously longed for the non-authentic but enchanted Chinese food they were used to from back home. Consequently, authenticity can exist without enchantment. Similarly, inauthenticity does not necessarily lead to disenchantment or vice versa.

Various techniques of making the ordinary special – of enchanting – have been part and parcel of marketing since the early days of consumer society. Just think of the purveyors of Snake Oil in the nineteenth century who provided enough smoke and mirrors to sell their concoctions as medicines, or marketing genius P. T. Barnum, who invented several now-classic marketing techniques to make the public believe that the things exhibited during his shows were indeed special (cf. Brown, 2003). These classic examples illustrate that marketing offerings are often experienced as enchanted without necessarily being authentic. But there are links between authenticity and enchantment: consumers often interpret disenchanting market experiences as being inauthentic, and enchanted market experiences might be more easily construed as authentic. However, we believe it to be important to disentangle these concepts and explore in what ways they relate to each other.

Ever since Weber's (1922/1978) sociological work around the turn of the last century, researchers have recognised that the rationalising trajectories of modernity are accompanied by a loss of myth and magic in the relation between individuals and the world. The principles of rationalisation are manifested in common management practices that pertain to production, such as outsourcing and the replacement of human labour with technology (Kakabadse & Kakabadse, 2005). The principles also manifest with brand management, for example brand licensing and brand acquisition, selling, discontinuation, and revival (e.g. Barwise & Robertson, 1992; Bellman, 2005). Following in Weber's footsteps, Ritzer (1996, 2005) has argued that the tenets of rationalisation – that is, seeking varying degrees of efficiency, control through technology, calculability, and predictability – inevitably have disenchanting effects that foster the loss of the mythical, magic, romantic, and spectacular aspects of brands and their consumption. This, in turn, leads to a desire for consumption that would recover these aspects in consumer culture (Arnould, Price & Otnes, 1999; Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Kozinets, 2001; Kozinets et al., 2004; Ritzer, 2005; Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007).

It seems, however, that when brands are treated according to these rationalised business models – for example, when they are bought and sold as commodities on global business markets and thus change owners, or when they are repeatedly taken off the market only to be subsequently revived when they are technologically updated – they often undergo significant alterations in their physical as well as their symbolic properties. As documented by Brown et al. (2003) in their study of retro brands (relaunched historical brands), these alterations in physical and symbolic brand properties pave the ground for market processes that seek to renegotiate brands as authentic. These negotiations take place between consumers and firms and are aimed at handling the dis-authenticating effects of rationalisation. Although

the phenomenon of retro brands can be seen as one way in which the market has responded to consumers' desires for enchantment, these kinds of brands face the challenge of re-authentication (Brown et al., 2003). Studies within other fields show that this quest for authenticity is not unique to marketing. Peterson (1997), for example, finds that, in the context of country music, 'all would-be country music performers have to authenticate their claim to speak for the country identity' (p. 218).

There is nothing inherent in a market offering that makes it either authentic or inauthentic, enchanted or disenchanting; rather these are socially agreed upon categories, or in other words cultural constructions (Peterson, 1997; Saler, 2006; Thompson & Coskuner-Balli, 2007). Consequently, authenticity cannot simply be built into brands: various audiences need to be convinced that the particular market offering is indeed authentic. When such claims of authenticity become too blunt, they often indulge inauthenticity (Peterson, 1997; Gilmore & Pine, 2007). Therefore the methods used within marketplace settings to (re-)negotiate authenticity need to be subtle, seeking offerings that can mediate authenticity rather than claiming it. Although Brown et al.'s (2003) study indicates that authentic brand meanings are channelled through enchantment as storied forms of nostalgic myths, it is surprising to find such a paucity of research that systematically analyses the linkages between authenticity and enchantment in the context of the rationalising trajectories of modernity. How can we conceptually understand the mechanisms of authentication in relation to rationalisation, disenchantment, and re-enchantment to derive practical and theoretical insights? Conversely, although enchantment (or the process of making the ordinary special and adding mythical, fantastical, and romantic elements to a brand) belongs to the classical tasks of marketing management, we still lack conceptual knowledge on how it can contribute to authenticity.

In this article, we explore and illustrate how authenticity is constituted vis-à-vis enchantment in the marketplace by looking at how various marketplace participants collectively engage in brand re-enchantment processes that provide the springboard for re-authenticating rationalised production. In doing so, we bring to the fore one specific enchantment element that we believe has been overlooked in previous research, namely craft production. Building on the work of Sennett (2008) on craftsmanship, we find that craft production is a particularly important element of enchantment, as it stands in opposition to the disenchanting rationalisation aspects put forth by Ritzer (1996). We will present an analysis of market reactions to a brand that has recently been revived through licensing its brand name to a company that outsources production to China. We find that the rationalised brand is initially situated in a struggle for authenticity, but that the marketplace has developed discursive mechanisms and re-enchanting strategies that counteract forces of rationalisation and disenchanting effects by symbolically re-authenticating the brand. Thus our findings suggest that authentication is embedded in and mediated through a system of enchantment discourses, specifically craft discourses.

Theoretical background

The fabrication of authenticity and enchantment

Research on authenticity can be classified into two major categories. The first includes research that aims to investigate what constitutes authenticity by examining core attributes of authentic brands and consumers' perceptions of them (Beverland, 2006,

2009; Beverland et al., 2008; Grayson & Martinec, 2004). This work seeks to reveal generalisable properties of authentic brands and has generated normative prescriptions for how firms can build authenticity into their brands (Beverland, 2005a & b, 2009; Gilmore & Pine, 2007). For example, it suggests that the brand properties of quality leadership, heritage, and sincerity are conducive to consumers' perceptions of authenticity (Beverland, 2005, 2009).

This article, however, aims to add to a second stream of research that contributes to our understanding of authenticity as a social construction. We align ourselves with the central tenet of consumer culture theory, which conceives of production and consumption of brands as being embedded in cultural contexts (Arnould & Thompson, 2005) and markets as social constructions (Penaloza & Venkatesh, 2006), which provide participants with a rich palette of discourses and culturally informed myths (Holt & Thompson, 2004; Thompson & Haytko, 1997). Consequently, we view authenticity as a cultural construct: a market-made, context- and goal-dependent social construction (Arnould & Price, 2000; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Handler, 1986; Peterson, 1997, 2005; Rose & Wood, 2005). Rather than locating authenticity as existing in an object or experience per se (*is* authentic), this literature demonstrates that objects and experiences are being authenticated (*are made* authentic). Here, research has first and foremost put the spotlight on consumers' authenticating processes. Arnould and Price (2000) demonstrate that consumers are capable of effectively appropriating meaning from objects and experiences through so-called authenticating acts. Because consumers' use of different authenticating strategies is influenced by their specific self-related goals, identity benefits, and cultural frames, consumers choose different authenticity cues to ascribe authenticity (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010), and they can authenticate even supposedly non-genuine objects (Grayson & Martinec, 2004; Rose & Wood, 2005). Grayson and Martinec (2004) found that two general types of authenticity can be evoked: *indexical* authenticity – the object has a factual spatio-temporal connection with the world; and *iconic* authenticity – the object resembles some other object.

Although it is valuable to include consumers' authenticating acts into the authenticity equation, only a few studies attempt to elucidate the authenticating processes within the larger frame of consumer culture. Brown et al. (2003) find that firms and consumers co-produce authenticity brand meanings. Studies by Cluley (2009) and Taylor and Littleton (2008) show how cultural producers attempt to authenticate their production outside the marketplace. In his extensive analysis of the fabrication of authenticity within the realm of country music, Peterson (1997) expands this lens and provides a valuable analysis that shows that authenticity is 'continuously negotiated in an ongoing interplay between performers, diverse commercial interests, fans, and the evolving [authenticity] image' (p. 4). That is, authenticity is a constant mutual creation between a variety of market players and their understanding of it, dialectically and mutually shaping each other. He finds that in the case of country music, authenticity can take the shape of different images that are negotiated alongside the dialectic of hard core/soft shell and the dialectic of new/old generations. Building on this idea, we aim to contribute a more refined understanding of the authenticating mechanisms involving various market actors.

Perhaps the biggest challenge of authenticity is that nothing is more inimical to it than claiming it. Thus authentication needs meaningful marketplace resources that are attained through symbolic work rather than simply being built into brands by managers. Research shows that not only do factual brands and their physiques

function as authentication resources, but also that advertisements (Beverland et al., 2008), brand stories, and narrative myths (Brown et al., 2003; Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006) function as appreciated symbolic resources that serve authentication processes in the market. Specifically, Brown et al. (2003) found that retro brand authentication operates via Allegory (brand story): symbolic stories, narratives, and metaphors; Arcadia (idealised community): a sense of an idealised past paired with technological magic; Aura (brand essence): 'the presence of a powerful sense of authenticity'; and Antimony (brand paradox): 'simultaneous presence of old and new, tradition and technology, primitivism and progress, same and different'. We propose that strong links exist between this *modus operandi* of retro brand authentication and the fundamental cyclical mechanism of rationalisation, disenchantment, and re-enchantment that Ritzer (2005) describes.

Ritzer (1996, 2005) compares the general development of many sectors of social life organised through markets to the developments of the rationalising principles of the fast-food industry, suggesting that 'McDonaldisation' characterises our entire rationalised society. His examination of the new means of consumption demonstrates that the marketplace attempts to satisfy consumers' desires for enchantment through cathedrals of consumption designed to attract and enchant consumers while simultaneously offering high degrees of efficiency, control through technology, calculability, and predictability. Such retail spectacles are indeed initially capable of thrilling consumers by evoking feelings of enchantment, for example the ESPN Zone (Kozinets et al., 2004) or the American Girl Place experience (Diamond et al., 2009). However, such enchantment is short-lived. Because these systems remain rationalised, they ultimately fail to enchant consumers because they deliver commercialised, standardised, and simulated forms of enchantment. As rationalisation goes hand-in-hand with the loss of mythical, magic, romantic, spontaneous, and unpredictable moments, it has disenchanting effects (Ritzer, 2005). To retrieve the happy customer, retailers then engage in increased efforts to re-enchant customers by developing ever more imposing, magnificent, and spectacular means of consumption that function as effective selling machines. But because the retailers continue to operate via the principles of McDonaldisation, they remain predictable dream worlds antithetical to genuine enchantment (Ritzer, 2005). This idea, then, leaves consumers in a rationalised world carrying the burden of finding enchantment in their lives (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995; Ritzer, 2005).

A number of studies suggest that consumers and the marketplace engage in projects of enchantment that capture moments of wonder, magic, myth, surprise, and romance outside the retail setting. Muñiz and Schau (2005) demonstrate that consumers of the abandoned Apple Newton community constructed the myth of this technological device by lifting its consumption to spheres of religion and magic. Similarly, Belk and Tumbat (2005) show how Macintosh devotees enact religious metaphors to enchant the brand experience. Langer (2004) shows how brands like the Walt Disney Company operate in the business of branded enchantment; Kozinets (2002) reveals the enchanting rituals of the Burning Man experience; Thompson (2004) elucidates the mythical enchantment of the natural health marketplace; Arnould, Price, and Otnes (1999) uncover how white-water river rafting enables consumers to experience magical transformations; Thompson and Coskuner-Balli (2007) demonstrate how consumers of community-supported agriculture co-produce experiences of enchantment. Although these studies provide empirical evidence that supports the idea of an increased desire for enchanted consumption in modernity

(Firat & Venkatesh, 1995), they leave us with only a limited understanding of how enchantment relates to mechanisms of authentication. However, Brown et al. (2003) found that retro brand meanings are maintained on a utopian communal element. Specifically, they revealed that Allegory (as symbolic stories, narratives, and metaphors) and Arcadia (as a sense of an idealised past paired with technological magic) share connotations with the idea of enchantment, and consumers subsume both Allegory and Arcadia under the umbrella of enchantment. Thus we discern from their study that these irresolvable mythical narratives that connect a rationalised brand with the days long gone are a form of enchantment that is conducive to the authentication of retro brands.

Craft production

Building on Ritzer's (2005) analysis of the new means of consumption, in this article we want to shift attention to the potentially dis-authenticating and disenchanting effects of rationalised production, a notion previously introduced by Marx (2000). We mean to add to that discussion by considering ways in which the production process, or rather its discursive representation, becomes re-enchanted. One realm that is particularly invaded by the modern trajectories and technological progress (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995) is that of craft production. Sennett (2008) defines craftsmanship as 'an enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job well for its own sake' (p. 9). Craftsmanship may be understood as a practice (e.g. Schatzki, 1996) that can not only be carried out by individual craftsmen, such as a luthier in a violin workshop or an orchestra conductor, but also by organisations, such as open-source communities or mobile-phone producers (Sennett, 2008). Sennett emphasises three dimensions that are central to the practice of craftsmanship: skill, commitment, and judgement.

Because 'all craftsmanship is quality-driven work' (Sennett, 2008, p. 24), much revolves around the *skills* necessary to reach high-end results. Because the desire to do good work is typically not satisfied by just getting by, craftsmanship often implies an almost obsessive occupation with skill, intensive training, and quality ideals. Craft appears to be embedded in skill and knowledge, which are accumulated and passed on from generation to generation. Skills and knowledge provide the glue that bonds craftsmen to their historical ancestors and their craft communities. In the course of intergenerational shifts and education, skills adhere to evolutionary developments, and with them processes of craft production change, as well as the standards that measure quality. Because craft is inherent in skill and is difficult to explicate, it may easily be lost if intergenerational transitions of craft production do not take the traditional form of social educational processes. Sennett exemplifies this in his study of the Stradivari and Guarneri violin workshops; their secrets did not survive their business transitions because the craft production skills could not be explicated and transferred. Sennett (2008) argues that craft traditions are threatened by the industrialisation of productive processes, that is, rationalisation: 'The greatest dilemma faced by the modern artisan-craftsman is the machine. Is it a friendly tool or an enemy replacing work of the human hand?' (p. 81). The tenets of rationalisation, particularly the quest to increase control through the replacement of human workers with machine technology, he argues, result in a deskilling of modern society. However, he sees a way out of this oppressive situation by using machines in an enlightened way:

The enlightened way to use a machine is to judge its powers, fashion its uses, in light of our own limits rather than the machine's potential. We should not compete against the machine. A machine, like any model, ought to propose rather than command, and humankind should certainly walk away from command to intimate perfection. (p. 105)

Marx theorised that, in the course of the industrial revolution, factory-organised mass production replaced traditional craft production. Mass production led to a dehumanising mode of production and a state of alienation. When production was thus separated from the people, a dichotomy between craft and machine was implied. Although many old forms of craft production do still exist (e.g. hand knitting, carpet weaving, and – as we found during our fieldwork – handcrafting of plectrums made of stone), we suggest that this sharp dichotomy between craft and machine obscures our view if we are to understand the functions of authenticity in contemporary consumer culture. Rather, as discussed by Sennett, we are witnessing a blurring of the spheres of craft and machine; technology and the machine are not antitheses to craftsmanship, and craftsmanship and mass production are not necessarily opposites.

Commitment is the second pillar of craftsmanship; without it high-quality work cannot be obtained. It is not about reaching the end through the use of effective means or efficient tools; it is about being engaged with, dedicated to, and committed to high-quality work. It is not about being instrumental, but rather valuing the quality of work for its own sake. Sennett quotes the example of the orchestra conductor who endlessly rehearses the same passage to achieve an extra pinch in quality.

Judgement is critical in craft production and is often expressed in the craftsman's consciousness of materials used in the production process to achieve high-quality outcomes. However, Sennett (2008) argues, while the craftsman will have to judge if the outcome is satisfactory vis-à-vis the desire to do a good job, objective measures often decide what is deemed high-quality work. He argues that because craftsmen are so 'absorbed in doing something well', they are 'unable to explain the value of what he or she is doing' which ultimately makes them 'poor salesmen' (p. 117). Hence, there is an internal logic of judgement, that is, judgement within the practice of craftsmanship, and an external logic, that is, consumers' judgements about the value and quality of craft production. The latter dimension, in particular, points squarely to the idea that the value of craft production is up for negotiation in cultural market processes.

Although Sennett's (2008) analysis focuses mainly on individual craftsmanship and its material cultural consequences, our analysis of re-authentication focuses on the discursive construction of craftsmanship by a variety of marketplace actors. It appears that craftsmanship is not only a purpose in itself but also a selling proposition in contemporary commercial market spaces; it is connected to marketing managerial instrumentalism. If our current understanding of craftsmanship is that it strives for high-quality work as a goal in itself, and has no strong connections to ulterior instrumental reasons such as making profit, how can craftsmanship be resolved with commercialism? How can craft production be authentic in contemporary consumer culture? We conceive of craftsmanship as a bundle of discourses that circles around the idea of doing a job well for its own sake. In the commercial sphere, the obsession with doing high-quality work pays off when customers are willing to pay

a price premium. Therefore, an analysis of how craft production is established in the discursive processes of brand re-authentication could prove useful for marketing managers.

Method

To develop our theories on the discursive processes of re-authentication via re-enchantment, we investigate it in an empirical context using a qualitative research approach. In contemporary consumer culture, brands are important symbols that exist in a co-constituting relationship with other parts of consumer culture. Therefore they cannot be studied, nor managed, in a vacuum. In order to understand how brands are made meaningful, the various groups that participate in the process need to be taken into consideration. Holt (2004) suggests that one way to conceptualise this is to look at the way different authors tell stories that fill a brand with meaning (cf. Bengtsson & Ostberg, 2006). He contends that 'brands are intertextual constructions, so we must pay attention to the relationships between brands and other mass culture as well as collective consumer influences' (p. 359). Transferring this analytical leverage to the study of authenticity guided the methodological requirements for our examination.

Pairing this conception of brands as intertextual constructions with the understanding of both authenticity and enchantment as meaningful marketplace resources that are attained through symbolic work – rather than simply being built into brands by managers – we view brand authenticity as a discursive construction (see Peterson, 1997). Authenticity is negotiated among various actors through a system of rule-bound and meaning-giving statements, or discourses (Fairclough, 1995). Discourse is seen here as a system of statements that constructs an object, supports institutions, reproduces power relations, and has ideological effects (Parker, 1990). Language is thus the site where the social world is constructed, replete with contradiction, paradox, and contest. In the field of marketing and consumer research, discourse analysis has been used in order to show how texts – such as guide books, advertising, and material from consumer groups – offer ideal interpretive positions, and how authoritarian voices in society – that is, the ones whose discourses get noticed and thus get reproduced – privilege and marginalise various modes of understanding (Caruana, Crane, & Fitchett, 2008; Ostberg, 2010).

The focus on discursive processes then necessitates the selection of an empirical context that helps facilitate theoretical insights (Arnould, Price, & Moisio, 2006). We chose to investigate within the context of musical instruments because 'musical instruments are empowered, not only by their sound but also by the written word, verbalizations, visual imagery, gestures and movements. . .' (Dawe & Dawe, 2001, p. 64). Thus musical instruments provide us with a rich discursive context. Specifically, we have focused our attention on the musical instrument subculture that revolves around guitars and bass guitars and on the new musical instrument brand Hagstrom (previously Hagström). The guitar is ideal for our explorations because 'the guitar is entangled in a web of culture that brings the instrument to life' (Dawe & Dawe, 2001, p. 64). We chose Hagström/Hagstrom because it is a retro brand, so we were able to explore explicit discursive struggles over its authenticity. Moreover, the rationalising principles that Ritzer (1996, 2005) writes about are highly pertinent in the historical trajectory of Hagström becoming Hagstrom. Thus choosing this brand

provides us with the opportunity to examine rationalisation and its disenchanting effects in relation to authenticity.

Our research design is guided by Holt's (2006) call to examine a breadth of different voices in consumer culture – the various market actors who take part in shaping a brand. We have also drawn inspiration from Peterson's (1997) approach to the study of the fabrication of authenticity in country music. To elicit these discursive processes, our study deployed multiple methods over a one-year research period where we investigated the negotiation of authenticity between the company, consumers, and popular culture. We combined observational netnographic inquiries (Kozinets, 2002, 2006) – that is, reading conversations consumers have in online communities and forums, interviews with managers, participant observation at retailers and guitar shows, and the study of documents.

The netnographic investigation resulted in the download of 1082 consumer statements; 41 written consumer reviews of new Hagstrom's instruments; 40 video clips; and a selection of 10 retailer descriptions of the new Hagstrom's brand and products. We found that consumers frequently engage in discussions about Hagström/Hagstrom in forums dedicated to other brands, guitar playing, or gear. In order to capture the visual material consumers often connect to their postings, we decided to download the statements in PDF format, resulting in 325 pages.

We interviewed 13 guitar and bass consumers as part of a general research project on the guitar subculture, and one Hagstrom manager in Sweden, which amounted to 26 hours of material. To learn about the guitar marketplace culture, we engaged in participant observations at several guitar shops in Sweden and Germany. We also observed Scandinavia's largest guitar show, where we familiarised ourselves with the context, observed, listened in, and chatted informally with customers, sales personnel, and company representatives. We kept field diaries and took 503 photographs.

The documents analysed consist of 50 archived Swedish newspaper articles on the Hagström/Hagstrom company; 40 historical and contemporary advertisements; 18 guitar and bass magazine reviews of new Hagstrom's instruments; and official Hagstrom material, including website contents, product catalogues, and press releases.

The analysis of the empirical material followed a two-step approach. Following calls for historicising (Brown, Hirschman, & Maclaran, 2001), we first conducted a so-called brand-genealogy (Holt, 2004, 2006) and studied historical and contemporary Hagström/Hagstrom brand representations. In the second step, we focused explicitly on how discourses are produced, circulated, and used in the marketplace. All gathered material was coded manually, and then, as suggested by Elliott (1996), the analysis involved two closely related phases: a search for patterns in the data and the hypothesising of functions and effects. The patterns we discovered function as interpretive repertoires, that is, recurrently used systems of meaning which individuals potentially can use to make sense of the world. The unit of analysis is discursive text and resulting meanings as they are produced in a network of entities that comprises the three pillars of company, consumers, and popular culture. Field notes, diaries, and inter-researcher discussion on the experiences of the guitar shows and participant observations at retailers were conducive to identifying dominant and challenging meaning positions and discourses on authenticity that are nested in marketplace culture, symbolism, disenchantment and enchantment, and craft production. Through a hermeneutic interpretation process, we let themes

emerge from the material. Inter-researcher comparisons of initial interpretations and conceptualisation led us to revise and develop our initial analysis, while comparing recurring themes with previous work on authenticity and enchantment.

In all, we analysed more than 1000 consumer postings supplemented by a considerable number of videos, advertisements, interview material, and other documents. This material provided us with rich data on the topic of authenticity, enchantment, and craft production.

Findings and analysis

Before we illustrate how authenticity is constructed via discursive enchantment within consumer culture, we begin with a brief overview of the results of the genealogical analysis of the Hagström/Hagstrom brand history because the trajectory of the Hagström/Hagstrom brand culture provides the backdrop for the company's contemporary discursive struggles.

Hagström/Hagstrom brand genealogy

We discern and develop three elements relevant to our brand genealogical investigation from the approach suggested by Holt (2006), which aims to synthesise brand representations and offers a structured approach to study brand trajectories: brand *ontology* (brand nature), brand *axiology* (brand value grid), and brand *epistemology* (brand promise). We use these elements to provide a brand genealogical overview of the new Hagstrom brand (see Table 1).

Albin Hagström founded Hagström in 1920 in Älvdalen, Sweden, as an accordion importer and vendor. Hagström had a passion for musical instruments and accordions in particular. Responding to the Great Depression, Hagström began craft-producing accordions in a shack in the Swedish woods in 1932 and later became a distributor for the guitar brand Gibson. In 1952, Albin's son, Karl Erik Hagström, took over the business and directed the brand towards electric guitars. This era was when rockabilly and jazz started to gain momentum and the popularity and sales of guitars were booming (Ryan & Peterson, 2001). Hagström found inspiration in the guitars they distributed and began making their own electric guitars. Pragmatically, production of accordions was re-oriented towards guitars. Using parts and pieces available in the accordion craft process on guitars gave the first Hagström guitars their quirky, nerdy looks – for example accordion push buttons and pearloid finishes, or adjusters for accordions straps as volume controls. Hagström directed efforts to improve the instruments' playability. To stabilise the guitars' necks, the company employed a patented 'H-profile aluminium truss rod, originally a part used to stabilize wings in Saab's military attack jet' (Jansson, 2008), a detail in the craft object that the new Hagstrom brand still references today. That detail allowed Hagström/Hagstrom necks to be thinner than those on most other guitars, so they could be played faster. The brand soon was nested within emerging rock culture, and many celebrity artists used Hagström equipment, including Elvis Presley, Jimi Hendrix, Noel Redding, David Bowie, ABBA, Joe Walsh, ZZ Top, and Frank Zappa. They all consumed Hagström as a meaningful pop-cultural resource: a quirky, alternative guitar produced by a mystical Swedish craft producer, portrayed in a romantic way as guitar whizzes operating out of a shed in the foggy Swedish woods – driven by passion rather than by coarse economic interest.

Table 1 The Hagstrom brand genealogy in five chapters.

Brand chapter	Accordionism (1920s–1930s)	Craft productionism (1940s–1950s)	Hagströmificationism (1950s–1980s)	The abandoned (1980s–2000s)	The resurrected (2000s–present)
Brand ontology	A musical instrument vendor	A musical instrument vendor and craft producer	A mythic and quirky Swedish electric guitar gear craft producer	Collectors' brand	Retro brand; Hagström becomes Hagstrom
Brand axiology	Entrepreneurial; every idea that makes business is welcomed	Hagström is selling third-party products and also craft-produces its own products; brand lives romantic ideals in form of the anti-elitist 'music to the masses'	Craftsmanship, transfer of tradition into novelty, often resulting in quirky innovation; connection with celebrity artists; the brand integrates mythical and cultural-emotional Swedish ideals with global fame	Connection to the past, nostalgia; myth of the dead hero (amplified by the fact that the brand indeed was played by many now-dead heroes)	Rationalisation through brand licensing and outsourced production; the brand attempts to re-enchant these rationalisations by drawing connections to its past and the concept of the craft producer
Brand epistemology	The world to Sweden	Music to the masses	Swedishness to the world	Romanticising the echoes of the past	Updated version of historical craft brand

During the 1970s and 1980s, new Asian brands like Yamaha, Ibanez, and Korg entered the market and challenged the established market actors. Hagström was not able to keep up with the new players and closed shop in 1983. After its commercial death, Hagström quickly became a collectors' brand. In line with a rising vintage trend in guitar culture and the increasing use of guitars as artefacts for identity construction (Ryan & Peterson, 2001), old products of the Hagström era gained a cult following. Kept alive as a pop-cultural icon by collectors, brand aficionados, and the media, Hagström was celebrated nostalgically as the archetypal Swedish craft producer, crafting magical instruments for now-iconic guitar heroes.

In 2005, the brand was revived, making it a so-called retro brand (Brown et al., 2003). However, even though its original owner still owns the brand name, it has been licensed to a third party, which runs the firm and sources the guitars to its specifications from a guitar plant in China. Because both licensing and mass production in China adhere to the principles of rationalisation as described by Ritzer (2005), they represent the brand's rationalisation acts.

Rationalisation, disenchantment, and the dispute of authenticity

Our data analysis and interpretation reveal that authenticity and re-authentication are part of a complex consumer-cultural process in which different market actors construct, contest, and alter the authenticity of the new Hagstrom brand through a series of discursive negotiations. Resonating with Ritzer's (2005) ideas on rationalisation, disenchantment, and enchantment as well as the idea of authenticating acts (Arnould & Price, 2000), our findings reveal a tripartite order of rationalisation–disenchantment–authenticating re-enchantment (see Figure 1). In the following analysis, we will focus on how the authenticating re-enchantment is discursively negotiated with an emphasis on how the notion of craft production is used as an enchantment element.

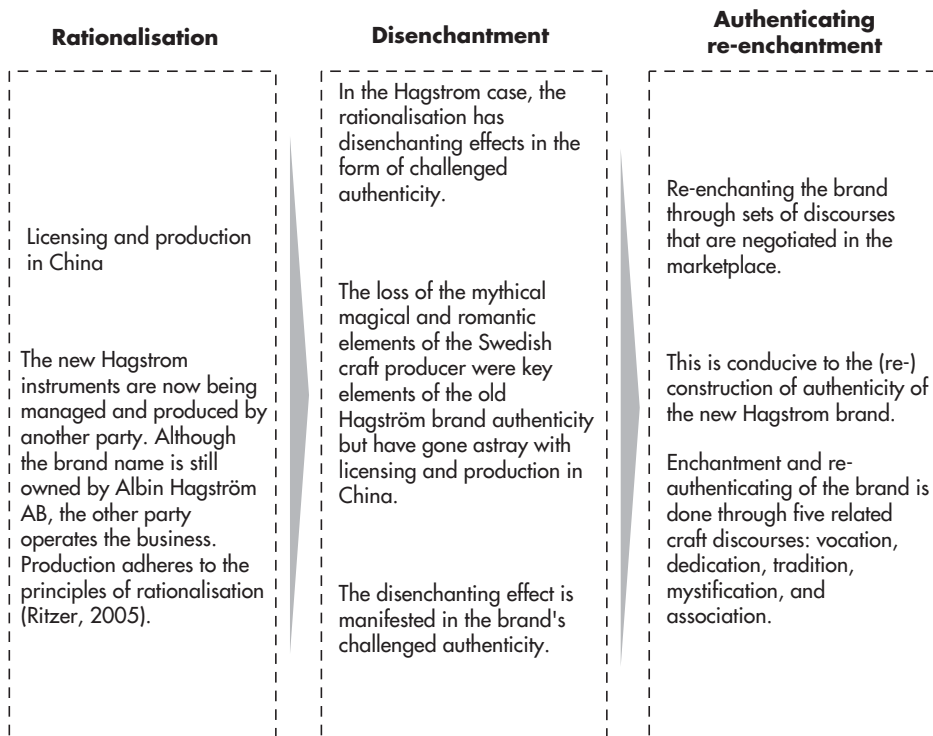
Hagstrom's relative position as authentic stands in relation to the company's own history. At the time of relaunch, consumers conferred authenticity to the traditional Hagström brand and display curiosity over the brand revival, as in the following quote where a consumer asks other members of a web-community about their opinions of the relaunched brand:

Jack: I've always liked Hagström. There's something about them that seems genuine. Anyway, what are your experiences/predictions/thoughts of the current Hagstrom guitars? Is there a revival happening?

Consumers express their feelings that Hagström is a genuine and authentic brand. However, the arrival of the new Hagstrom instruments constructs a separation from the traditional Hagström products, acting as a source of meaning for both. The McDonaldisation (Ritzer, 1996) process has been central to Hagstrom's mode of operation upon its commercial return to the marketplace, and consumers are sceptical of the brand's rationalisation:

David: The only thing this bass has in common with the original is the Hagstrom name on the headstock and eight strings. It's not a real Hagström! They were made in Sweden by the Hagström family and company, not in Korea or China by someone who bought the rights to use the Hagstrom name. I could go on, but I won't. You get the idea.

Figure 1 The operation of rationalisation, disenchantment, and authenticating re-enchantment in the Hagstrom case.



In this posting, David explicitly denies authenticity of the relaunched brand; his rejection is rooted in the brand's rationalisation of licensing and sourced production in China. Ownership and locus of production, in particular, serve as meaningful symbolic resources in the conferral of authenticity. As revealed in our brand genealogy, the enchanting qualities of the old Hagström brand as a mythical and romantic Swedish craft producer operating out of a shack in Sweden's Midlands have been key elements of the traditional Hagström brand aura. These elements are challenged with the brand's rationalisation processes of licensing and outsourced production. The firm's rationalisation acts have disenchanting effects: they alter the symbolic properties of the new Hagstrom brand not by adding a location but by subtracting the traditional brand place. Prior literature has documented that both positive and negative associations of country of origin, assembly, and design can impact the perception and evaluation of products (e.g. Bloch, 1995) and that the country with which a brand is associated influences consumer choice (the country-of-origin effect; Usunier, 2006). However, we found that the dis-authenticating issue of location vis-à-vis place operates via disenchantment in the present case. Disenchantment is manifested through the loss of the mythical, romantic, and fantastical elements of the brand: the absence of Sweden as a place associated with the making of traditional Hagström brand guitars matters more when it comes to conferring authenticity than the presence of China as a site of manufacturing for the new Hagstrom instruments.

These business realities of licensing and moving the site of production clash with expectations of consumers who demand more room for imagination, that is, enchantment (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995). Consider the following reaction of a consumer to a gear review video in which the presenter talks about the production of the new Hagstroms in China:

Frank: Does he think that the guitar being built in China is a good thing? I mean . . . everything is built in China. We know that. But we should be allowed to use our imaginations. . .

Frank's posting serves to illustrate consumers' demand for enchantment. Consumers frequently express their desire for romantic, mythical, and dream-like elements of brands and demand that they 'should be allowed' to use their imaginations and fantasies, masking the callous realities of corporate strategy. Sometimes a certain vagueness in advertising messages can be effective, as consumers can then use the brand as a canvas on which they can fill in their own stories (cf. Brown, 2003). Explicating and disclosing the information that the instruments are all made in-house in a production plant in China disenchant the brand and represents information this consumer would rather not know. Although consumers frequently draw on the everything-is-made-in-China-nowadays discourse and accept the fact per se, they express discontent when it is brought up and continuously emphasised.

Many consumers draw the conclusion that a new Hagstrom instrument cannot be a real Hagström because somebody else makes it in another country. This leads us to suggest that rationalisation not only has disenchanting effects, but, on a higher-order level, it can also have dis-authenticating effects; it challenges brand authenticity. This situation leaves new Hagstrom as a rationalised, disenchanted, and dis-authenticated brand.

Authenticating by re-enchantment: The discursive construction of the craft producer

We found that the revived Hagstrom brand is situated in a struggle for authenticity in which various market actors are re-enchanting Hagstrom's rationalisation acts to re-authenticate the brand. Our findings reveal that, in the present case, authenticity is embedded in and mediated through a system of enchantment discourses that circle around the concept of the craft producer. In line with Sennett (2008), we propose craft production as a concept that builds on the negotiation of skill, commitment, and judgement. But we also find that, in the present case, these elements are embedded in craft discourses that serve as symbolic resources in collective re-enchantment processes that might eventually lead to authenticity. Prior work investigating mythologies of 'homemade' (Moisio, Arnould, & Price, 2004) show that the product does not necessarily have to *be* homemade, but rather the concept of homemade is grounded in certain mythologies and culturally shaped understandings of what homemade is. Similarly, our discourse analysis reveals five discourses of vocation, dedication, tradition, mystification, and association that aim at re-enchanting the new Hagstrom brand as a craft producer with references to the mythologies and beliefs about what craft production is and its negotiation in the marketplace (see Table 2).

Table 2 Overview of enchanting craft discourses.

Craft discourse	Description
Vocation	Enchantment through connecting the making of the brand to professional craftsman practice and persons. In the Hagstrom case, the vocational discourse is manifested in the luthier theme.
Dedication	Enchantment through establishing a picture of the commitment and devotion of the brand as making a genuine effort of crafting the product. Hagstrom juxtaposes elements of 'craft' with elements of 'machine' under the umbrella of dedication.
Tradition	Enchantment through signifying history and tradition of the brand as craft producer, and through referencing old, genuine (and often secret) recipes used for crafting the product. In the Hagstrom case, enchantment through tradition is complicated by the retro brand paradox.
Mystification	Enchantment through romanticising and making mysterious the key elements of craft production. Because for Hagstrom, brand place is a key element lost through rationalisation, mystification of Sweden as brand place dominates.
Association	Enchantment through linking the brand with associative elements significant for craft production. In the Hagstrom case, enchantment through association is manifested in symbolic linkages with Sweden, other brands, and celebrity artists.

These enchanting discourses function as authenticating acts that promote Hagstrom as a craft producer and pinpoint an elaborate effort to reconnect to its brand history. The effort extends to relevant interest groups in popular culture and consumers who challenge, alter, and add to these discourses.

Vocation

Market actors engage in enchanting new Hagstrom's manufacturing process with a system of statements that relate to professional craftsman practice and persons. The vocational discourse here is manifested through a luthier – that is, an expert at making or repairing string instruments – discourse, which embraces elements of specific craftsmanship practice. This discursive pattern functions to enchant elements of the industrial production as being craft production, and through this, to confer authenticity to the idea that the Hagstrom brand is a craft producer. Because the type of wood that is used for the guitar's body and neck (and how they are attached) influences both sound and looks, these are the most foundational and critical elements of a guitar; much revolves around these:

Brilliant craftsmanship is evident in every detail of the mahogany body with carved maple top, flamed maple veneer, set mahogany neck, and bound Resinator fretboard with pearl block inlays.

This retailer's statement on a new Hagstrom guitar (Musician's Friend, 2011) relates to the material consequences of craftsmanship (Sennett, 2008); it tries to establish that craftsmanship is manifested in physical object characteristics, that is, the details

of the instruments. The features of the object are marketed as stemming from craft production, that their material gestalt is grounded in ‘brilliant craftsmanship’. Here, the strategic use of the display of material consciousness of the skilled craftsman (Sennett, 2008) is expressed in the use of terminology that relates to the use of certain ingredients – such as the particular type of wood. But the retailer also references specific production techniques that demand particular laborious production steps. For example, the set neck, in contrast to the bolted neck, is often considered a quality indicator, as many guitarists believe it enhances the sound of the instrument.¹ The material consciousness and justification of the woods used, however, operate on both types of logic of craft judgement as developed above. Consider the following statement found on the Hagstrom website:

Hagstrom uses only the finest select tone woods and figured wood stocks to enhance the sound and beauty of each instrument. North American Hard Rock Maple, arguably the finest neck wood and used by the best luthiers worldwide, further enhances the playability, durability and bright articulate tone. (Hagstrom, 2010a)

In this statement, Hagstrom’s desire to do a good job at making guitars operates via display of material consciousness and *judgement* on the type of woods they use. Here, judgement adheres to both: an internal logic of craftsmanship and an external logic of objective quality measures (Sennett, 2008). Unlike Sennett’s (2008) reasoning that good craftsmen cannot explicate the value of their work, Hagstrom motivates its material consciousness with the commitment to producing quality objects, that is, craftsmanship. The internal logic of judgement is manifested in an enhanced overall quality of the guitar (in terms of sound, playability, and look), displaying the commitment to good quality work. The external logic of judgement is manifested in Hagstrom drawing on a luthier discourse to make reference to craftsmanship practice and trying to establish symbolic congruence between the type of wood the ‘best luthiers worldwide’ use to make guitars and the type of wood Hagstrom uses. In this case, the ‘worldwide’ luthier practice serves as a meaningful resource for Hagstrom in the sense that it provides the objective measure or standard of craft production (Sennett, 2008). Hagstrom uses this accepted standard explicitly in relation to their own production. The luthier theme, then, not only serves as a justification of craft judgement but also has an enchanting dimension. By juxtaposing its own guitar making with professional luthier practice, the shared type of wood is the binding glue that connects Hagstrom with what is supposedly commonly accepted vocational craft practice of professional luthiers, it re-enchants mass production in a plant by associating it with notions of luthier craftsmanship. The use of the luthier theme is moreover evident in the *skill* element that relates to the design of the guitars. Hagstrom and other market participants emphasise that some of the original design elements were previously designed by celebrity luthier Jimmy D’Aquisto and can still be found on the new guitars. Consider the following statement made by a reviewer in a guitar magazine (Blackett, 2007):

Not many people know that famed archtop luthier Jimmy D’Aquisto designed guitars for Hagström for a time.

¹This applies to a certain type of guitar – the Les Paul and resonator body guitars. Stratocasters, for example, have traditionally bolted necks that are said to contribute to the typical Strat sound.

This statement illustrates how the vocational discourse is typically used in connection with the traditional Hagström brand. The story of having a famous luthier designing guitars for the old Hagström brand sprinkles a pinch of craft DNA over the new brand. The use of the craft discourse is conducive to the enchantment of the instruments' design process – suggesting that the design of the guitars did not just happen on a drawing table in China, but rather happened through the skilful work of a celebrity luthier. However, the fact that the new Hagstroms are sourced from a plant in China triggers engaged consumer discussions in which consumers draw on, alter, and add to the luthier discourse. But this is not only specific to the Hagström/Hagstrom case. In the guitar subculture, Asian-made equipment is a hot topic, and consumers frequently engage in discussions on guitar making and luthiers. Consider the two selected statements in a consumer discussion on the topic of Asian production of guitars.

Eric: My thing is that would you want to have your guitar built by a 'luthier' or by someone dressed in a dental hygienist's outfit? I agree that most of the guitars being built in Korea, China, India are made by people who have no particular interest in guitars or music, but are working to receive a paycheck [. . .] The majority of people that work building guitars in an American plant aren't luthiers either, unless you are talking custom shop.

Caleb: Manufacturing is manufacturing, it doesn't matter what the product is. If the employee does his job well and the design of the product is good . . . then it stands to reason that the end result will be a good product.

These quotes challenge whether it is important to involve a luthier in the actual making of a guitar, while sustaining the importance of connecting the presence of an enchanting luthier to the design of the instrument. Specifically Eric's comment resonates with Sennett's (2008) notion of commitment when he suggests Asian guitars are 'made by people who have no particular interest in guitars or music'. Although Sennett writes about the commitment to doing a job well, Eric interprets the aura of having an interest in guitars or music as indicator of commitment and craftsmanship. The idea that factory workers could not care less about making the instruments comes with disenchanting connotations, but because the design and right tooling are important, in this valorisation of authentic craftsmanship, the machines used and the design process overrule the actual human being as a craft producer. That is, if the machine is being used in what Sennett calls the 'enlightened' way, enabling craftsmanship without sacrificing the skills necessary, then Caleb challenges the widespread belief among musical instrument consumers that production of a musical instrument differs significantly from the production of other products. Prior research informs us that sincerity is an important element in the conferring of authenticity (Beverland, 2005, 2009). Here, we found that it is through drawing on the vocational discourse that consumers negotiate the concept of sincerity. The authenticity of the new Hagstrom brand is negotiated via consumers' beliefs regarding the firm's sincerity, and sincerity in turn is conferred through the vocational discourse. That is, sincerity lies within the tooling and design process, not in the human being crafting the product. Overall, the luthier serves as a symbolic resource to display and construe skill, material consciousness, and judgement; this resource is used to negotiate the enchantment of production towards craft production.

Dedication

Discourses of dedication speak to the commitment (Sennett, 2008) and devotion of the brand in making a genuine effort to craft the product. Consider the following statement from a promotional video that illustrates how Hagstrom makes reference to the efforts they undertake in the production of the instruments (Meyer, 2007):

The pickups that we employ on these guitars are custom-made Hagstrom pickups. So, as opposed to buying the pickups and putting them in the guitar, we actually go through the effort of custom-making the pickups for these guitars.

The company attempts to make its production special by specifying it actually makes and crafts critical single parts, like the pickups, rather than merely buying components and assembling them. In other words, Hagstrom emphasises that they are not just getting by, but they are also extending their own efforts towards making high-quality guitars. Through building on jargon relating to human labour – ‘effort’ and ‘custom making’ – and constructing a meaningful dichotomy of assembly versus crafting, Hagstrom paints a picture of dedicated manufacturing. Consider the following statement in which the firm reveals the rationale behind the custom making of pickups (Hagstrom, 2010b):

All Hagstrom bass guitars are equipped with Hagstrom custom designed Dyna Rail Humbuckers. These pickups have been specially designed to deliver a clean and powerful tone without noise or hum, while still focusing on maintaining the instruments’ natural timbers.

The company explains that the use of ‘specially designed’ pickups is related to the goal of the instruments producing desirable sound characteristics. The dedication to the production process is embedded within the devotion to achieve high-quality outcomes, in this case adhering to the internal logic of judgement: good sound and thus the instruments’ performance and use value. It is through the discursive construction of dedication that the firm attempts to make the ordinary parts of a guitar special and creates a sense of craft production, which in turn is conducive to enchanting the production process through the display of commitment and an internal logic of judgement. However, this dedication to the craft process does not only revolve around human labour; it also includes enchantment through mechanistic terminology (Meyer, 2007):

One of most exciting aspects of a Hagstrom guitar is the neck. The Hagstrom neck includes a number of exclusive technologies and manufacturing techniques that makes this neck very playable and extremely fast.

This statement illustrates how new Hagstrom attempts to enchant the production through making reference to ‘exclusive technologies and manufacturing techniques’. Like the pickups being ‘specially made’ to ensure certain characteristics of the instruments’ sound, here the manufacturing techniques and technologies are serving the overarching goal of creating a slim neck. In Hagstrom’s enchantment of the manufacturing processes through using craft jargon and a mechanistic jargon, the company juxtaposes elements of craft with elements of machine under the umbrella of dedication. This juxtaposition is conducive to the blurring of the craft/machine dichotomy and pinpoints what Sennett calls the enlightened way of using machinery. And consumers extend this discursive enchantment of the production process.

Consider the following statement by a consumer who posted a review of a new Hagstrom guitar online:

Lucas: They are made in China in a dedicated factory for Hagstrom, overseen by Hagstrom. . .

Consumers often mention that the plant in China where the Hagstrom instruments are produced is a dedicated Hagstrom facility – that is, the factory produces Hagstrom guitars and no other brands. Here, the notion of dedication differs because it relates to the idea that Hagstrom is not merely ordering guitars from a plant but has exclusive control over a factory. For the Hagstrom licensee, production in a dedicated plant speaks to all five dimensions of rationalisation identified by Ritzer (2005). However, to consumers, the dedicated plant is an important symbol of Hagstrom's dedication and commitment to achieving high-quality work in the production of guitars, that is, craftsmanship. Through extending this dedication discourse that lifts the ordinary production line to a special and exclusive production line, consumers participate in the re-enchantment of the brand. However, some guitar reviewers challenge this specific understanding of dedication (Thomas, 2009):

Hagstrom make[s] much of the fact that their guitars are built in a dedicated factory, but you need dedicated workers to make good guitars. On this guitar, someone wasn't paying attention.

As this statement illustrates, the discourse of dedication ties in with the vocational discourse. The intention of dedication and a dedicated plant alone are not enough: the material instantiations of dedication and the desire to do a job well are critical. Here, the reviewer exemplifies critical parties that are tied to the external logic of judgement – to this guitar tester, the particular Hagstrom guitar does not live up to his standard, which serves to disenchant the potentially positive notion of a dedicated production line.

Overall, the display of dedication and commitment to producing high-quality guitars serves as a symbolic resource to establish a picture of Hagstrom as making a genuine effort to craft its products. Commitment and the desire to do a job well are important notions for different voices in the marketplace to convey in order to re-enchant the rationalised production of the new Hagstrom brand.

Tradition

Discourses of tradition revolve mainly around signifying history and tradition of the brand as craft producer through referencing old, genuine methods used for crafting the product. Consider the following statement by Hagstrom (2010a):

Since 1958, Hagstrom has been combining legendary design with premium materials, unique hardware, and innovative manufacturing techniques to create these magnificent guitars.

Hagstrom frequently quotes its long-standing tradition as a guitar maker and makes reference to the skilful combining of the right ingredients (see vocation) and 'innovative manufacturing techniques' as key elements that have not changed. This claimed brand continuity on these dimensions stands in direct opposition to its discontinuance when it comes to commercial death, revival, changed ownership,

and relocated production. As Sennett (2008) notes, tradition is a key element in craftsmanship, particularly when it comes to the transmission of skill in the craft practice. Hagstrom not only attempts to emphasise its brand tradition as such, but the company attempts to establish symbolic elements that would support such claims. The disastrous downfall of the Stradivari workshops, which serve as an exemplification of what happens if craft tradition and skills cannot be transferred (Sennett, 2008), represents an apparent threat, particularly for retro brands that have by their very nature been discontinued and updated. To prevent the construal of discontinuance in tradition, Hagstrom is prolonging its efforts to construct material instantiations of the ongoing tradition. Most apparently, the aesthetics of the relaunched guitars resemble the form and shape of classic Hagström guitars. Today Hagstrom make direct reference to some of the guitars' unique design characteristics that have survived and made it into the new instruments (Hagstrom, 2010a).

The new Hagstrom Select, Vintage and Ultralux series recapture many of the original Hagstrom features, are built to the same stringent quality standards and feature many of the same unique tones that made Hagstrom the legend that it is.

By relating the present design of the new instruments to the historical design language, the design of the new guitars is enchanted with the spell of the past. Essentially, Hagstrom is emphasising the idea that the instruments' design is grounded in tradition and 'legendary' historical success (see brand genealogy). Consider the following retailer's description: it illustrates how the distinctive tradition of the Hagström brand as accordion craft producer serves as a resource for enchanting the guitar's present design (Neue Musik Laden, 2011):

...the guitars have special characteristics that can be traced back to the company history. Hagström began in the 20s of the last century with the production of first and foremost accordions. . . .Hagstrom's guitar crafting was influenced by a lot of know-how from the hitherto production in the accordion area. For example, they used painting techniques and materials from the accordion crafting.

This quote illustrates how the design of the guitars is enchanted by relating it to the idea that it is rooted in the craft tradition of the brand's history. One important aspect of enchanting the Chinese models with tradition is illustrated by the following quote:

All engineering drawings and the know-how come directly from Karl Eric Hagström from Sweden. (Musikhaus Hermann, 2011)

Here, the newer models are being enchanted with the tradition of the old models and the original know-how of the owner. This authenticating act builds on the enchantment of the guitars with their traditional guitar ancestors through sharing the same designer and potentially the same drawings and requirements. The display of the survival and continued use of the secret brand recipe (cf. Moisio et al., 2004) for crafting is a discursive technique that aims to symbolically construct the transfer of then to now (Sennett, 2008), enchanting the present with the past. Many other brands, such as Coca-Cola and Heinz, use the idea of mythical and secret recipes as key marketing assets (Brown, 2003). However, tradition is not a straightforward concept in the present case. Hagstrom's nature as a retro brand complicates the enchantment through tradition. On the one hand, tradition ideally enters the new instruments untouched and unplugged – as with the use of a traditional recipe.

On the other hand, we witness the attempt to enchant the brand with an update and modification of tradition. That Hagstroms are updated historical guitars is one of the key selling propositions, and it speaks directly to the inherent retro brand paradox (Brown et al., 2003). The new Hagstrom guitars are frequently presented as straddling modernity and tradition. Hence, tradition emerges here as a key concept, either through enchanting the brand via direct reference to legendary tradition or through the departure and modification thereof; the latter represents one facet of the brand's rationalisation act. Consider the statement made by a Hagstrom employee in a promotional video (Martin, 2007):

We've taken the best of what the legacy and the designs and the unique characteristics of the guitars had to offer and we brought new modern manufacturing and design techniques so that the guitars represent the best of what the instruments represented in the past and what they can do in the future.

While Hagstrom as the updated historical brand that uses an updated historical craft production process is celebrated and appreciated by consumers and popular culture, we also witness tensions in the tradition discourse caused by the rationalisation acts of licensing and outsourcing. The following statement is representative of a segment of consumers who feel sceptical about changes in tradition:

Peter: ...Now, they are made in China and Korea and that is not the same!!
 ... I don't know why the Hagström family agreed to outsource the manufacturing to China but that is the way it works these days. The labour in China is for free, and they are skilled but the tradition and brand history fades away!!

Although many consumers seem to accept that outsourcing manufacturing to China belongs to the repertoire of common business practices, some consumers express that this rationalisation act directly challenges the brand tradition. The discourse of tradition is made up of the two facets that aim to either enhance or challenge brand authenticity. The expression used above – 'they are made in China and Korea and that is not the same' – indicates that these rationalisation acts challenge the brand's authenticity, as it is channelled through the concept of tradition. Tradition here resonates with the concept of heritage, a facet of authenticity. Tradition can be understood as a sub-dimension of heritage; it manifests in the tradition of craft production, the traditional recipe, and the complication of tradition through the retro brand paradox. Overall, tradition serves as an enchantment resource by referencing old and genuine recipes and the symbolic display of how they have survived in the new products.

Mystification

Discourses of mystification speak to the processes of romanticising and making key elements of the brand mysterious. For Hagstrom, brand place is a key element that was lost through rationalisation; consequently, mystification of Sweden as a brand place dominates. Frequently market actors draw on clichés, jargon, and mythologies of the North in relation to the new Hagstrom brand. Hagstrom is attempting to mystify its brand with Nordic discourses. Consider the presentation of the acoustic

guitar series, which is described on the Hagstrom website as follows (Hagstrom, 2011):

When one thinks of Dalarna in Sweden . . . thoughts often fall on ancient Swedish tradition, art & handicraft, Swedish midsummer, and of course Hagstrom. The new acoustic Hagstrom guitars are inspired by Dalarna's great tradition and handicraft culture, which is something that has always influenced the region where Albin Hagström started his company back in 1925.

Mystification works in concert with the discourses of vocation, dedication, and tradition, but the new Hagstrom also makes an effort to paint a picture of their guitars as having sprung out of ancient Nordic (Swedish) culture. As skill is the binding glue that connects craftsmen to their ancestors and to their craft community (Sennett, 2008), we notice a reverse momentum of this equation in the present case. By quoting the ancestors – founding father Albin Hagström – and by explicitly connecting to the handicraft cultures of the Swedish region in which the traditional Hagström firm was located, the new Hagstrom brand tries to construe skill through these mythical elements of the Hagström/Hagstrom brand story, rather than through factual representations. Further, through referencing Swedish cultural events like midsummer and naming the guitar models 'Viking', 'Swede', and 'Elfdalia', the company draws on symbolism particular to the North to enchant the brand place through mystification. Extended to popular culture, reviewers frequently emphasise the Swedishness and Nordicness by employing related terminology. Consider the following statement made by a guitar reviewer in a guitar magazine (Gill, 2008):

Some of the most original and enduring European guitar designs originated in Sweden. Coming from the land of the ice and snow, from the midnight sun where the hot springs blow, the mighty Hagstrom guitar company drove their wares to new lands to fight the horde, singing and crying, 'Valhalla, I am coming!' Well, not exactly, but they did make a decent stab at a crowded musical landscape with some rather funky but high-quality guitars that have achieved a devoted cult following over the years . . . This overlord of overdrive delivers tone that's a hot as a Swedish sauna, but its price is so cool that you won't have to pillage an entire village to afford one.

This text illustrates that the construction of Hagstrom as a brand from Sweden goes beyond the site of physical manufacturing and often is constructed with humorous reference to jargon and clichés rooted in ancient Nordic mythology, mainly expressing a Viking theme. The above review is seeded with references to pop culture beliefs about Nordicness and Swedishness, but it also makes reference to the classic rock anthem 'Immigrant Song' by Led Zeppelin. The discomfort of the loss of these symbolic properties of the traditional Hagström brand that are caused by licensed production in China is particularly evident in efforts to bring elements of the Nordicness to China; market actors attempt to enchant the Chinese manufacturing process through mystification. That is to say, these symbolic authenticating acts are complemented by attempts to reconstruct metaphorically the traditional brand place Sweden in the Chinese production location. The following consumer statement illustrates a common way in which market actors try to transport a little of the traditional Hagström brand place to the new site of manufacturing:

Jon: Originally produced in Sweden, and after a 20 year hiatus, Hagstrom picked up and moved all guitar machinery and production to China. . .

The location is being enchanted with the original tooling and thus ultimately aims to authenticate the production symbolically. Through mystification, market actors attempt to enchant the brand place and add Nordic spices to the Chinese production.

Association

Association refers to discursive processes of enchantment through linking the brand with associative elements significant for craft production. As Sennett (2008) notes, craftsmanship practice does not happen in isolation but in social communal contexts. As seen above, Swedishness is a key element of the new Hagstrom brand aura, so that much of Hagstrom's associative enchantment operates via brand place. Consider the following review:

I have to admit that when I found out that Hagstrom was sending me a Wild Cherry Super Swede, I was hoping for something more along the lines of Christina Lindberg (Google her) than a guitar. However, the guitar and the girl have so much in common that I wasn't disappointed in the least – both are Swedish beauties that debuted in the Seventies, and both have extremely enticing, sexy curves that beg to be caressed. (Gill, 2010)

Associating the Hagstrom with a Swedish actress and glamour model of the 1970s adds more Swedish flavour to the Chinese Hagstrom. Hagstrom tries very hard to construct a certain Swedishness in its crafting and the company attempts to associate the brand with other well-know Swedish and European brands, associating itself with other firms that share a passion for and dedication to the production process. As a Hagstrom manager puts it:

Manager: . . .the aim is to build a quality guitar and represent the Swedish standard of quality that we demand. Because Germany and Sweden are worldwide well known to be the pickiest people in the world, when it comes to quality. That is how it is!

Interviewer: Aha!

Manager: Yeah! Scandinavians and Germans they are like that! If you ever get something approved in Germany or in Sweden, then, you know it's gonna work for the rest of the world! But that's how it is! That's why you have, you know, Volvo cars, you have Mercedes, BMW, you know all these German brands and Swedish brands – they all stand for extremely high quality. Whatever brand name, German brand name or Swedish brand name you take – it is all about quality! . . . There are no shortcuts anyway. So that's, I think, the emotion we want to send. You [are] gonna have the best quality guitar you ever can get . . . at that price!

This manager associates Hagstrom with German and Swedish brands that stand for good craftsmanship and high-quality products. Consumers also draw on the association pattern, and connect Hagstrom with other Swedish brands. This specific

association discourse serves to construct an overarching point of reference of the new Hagstrom guitars as being Swedish.

Marcus: . . . It's built to last, quality is way over the top, you can't go wrong with this. Think of Saab and Volvo, other brands from Sweden. Epiphone² is for those who can't open their eyes. . .

Here, Hagstrom, popular culture, and consumers use other Swedish brands as cultural resources to construct Hagstrom as a Swedish brand by embedding it in associative contexts. However, re-enchanting the brand through associative strategies goes beyond the mere reference to other brands. Association also operates through the use of celebrity artists. We found that the association pattern aims to construct a discursive base for evaluating the product. This is evident in Hagstrom's advertising. The company has created advertisements that associate Hagstrom with celebrity guitar player Frank Zappa and simultaneously associate Hagstrom with the next-generation Zappa (his son, Dweezil). This twofold associative pattern of Frank Zappa–Hagstrom–Dweezil Zappa is very much tied to the tradition pattern, as the tradition is achieved through association.

Discussion and conclusion

Our investigation of how authenticity is constituted vis-à-vis enchantment in the marketplace has revealed that although authenticity and enchantment are conceptually different, we find that enchantment can function as a meaningful resource collectively used by a variety of market actors in negotiating brand re-authentication processes. In our particular case, such brand re-authentication is primarily triggered by the rationalisation acts of licensing to a third party and outsourcing production. As these business practices are becoming more common, it is important to acknowledge that the rationalising trajectories of modernity can not only have disenchanting effects but can also be dis-authenticating. We find that the market has developed discursive mechanisms and re-enchanting strategies that counteract forces of rationalisation and disenchantment. This happens through symbolically re-authenticating the new Hagstrom brand through collective re-enchantment. In the present case, authenticity is mediated in and through the five enchanting discourses of vocation, devotion, tradition, mystification, and association, which become, in turn, conducive to upholding the notion of the craft producer. For marketing managers, these discourses offer a typology of how to transform production into craft production. For craft products, the process of production takes on symbolic importance. Although building promotional strategies on superior product ingredients belongs to the repertoire of classical marketing tactics – for example emphasising the quality of the materials used or engaging in ingredient branding – the procedure through which these ingredients are put together (i.e. production and representations of it) have been underemphasised. We find that the notion of craftsmanship through the three pillars of skill, commitment, and judgement (Sennett, 2008) functions as a symbolic asset for the marketplace to re-enchant and re-authenticate the new Hagstrom brand and its production.

² Epiphone is a rival guitar brand and consumers often discuss Hagstrom guitars vis-a-vis Epiphone guitars.

Although much consumer culture theory thought has been given to the constitution of the consumer (Campbell, 2005; Cova & Dalli, 2009; Davies & Elliott, 2006; Humphreys & Grayson, 2008; Kotler, 1986; Slater, 1997; Toffler, 1981; Zwick, Bonsu, & Darmody, 2008), we find that work on the constitution of the producer is relatively scarce. Our findings demonstrate that the notion of craftsmanship in connection with production plays a vital role in brand re-enchantment and re-authentication. The notion of what constitutes craft production is open to negotiation and grounded in firm tradition, vocational practices, and culturally shaped understandings and beliefs about craft production in popular culture and among consumer groups. We suspect that in the present case, the dis-authenticating effects of rationalisation are grounded in the fact that for the traditional Hagström brand, the mythical, romantic, and fantastical elements of Swedish craft production were key parts of the brand aura. Thus the re-authenticating of the new Hagstrom brand operates mainly on the collective quest to re-establish these dimensions.

Taken together, our findings suggest that for certain products there are properties – for example place and mode of production – that are anchored in facts that have such high symbolic value that they cause significant negative effects if altered. However, we have also shown that firms, consumers, and popular culture can work in concert to mask, at least to a certain degree, disenchanting facts. Although prior research has shown that brand communities are capable of keeping an abandoned brand alive (Muñiz & Schau, 2005), the present case reveals what might happen when a once-abandoned brand returns. Here, market actors engage in collective efforts to keep alive key symbolic brand properties of the traditional brand that have gone astray in the course of rationalisation and construct them in the revived brand. We suggest that the concerned market actors are highly aware that the revived Hagstrom brand cannot replace the original, but rather that the new brand operates as a canvas on which to construct the simulation of key properties of the traditional brand. For Hagstrom, the label ‘authentic’ is perhaps lost for good, but it is through the collective authenticating acts that the market finds a not-fake position for Hagstrom. Baudrillard’s (1994) idea of simulacra states that ‘It is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real’ (p. 2). Thus the Hagström/Hagstrom case may be seen as an empirical illustration of how a simulacrum brand operates in contemporary consumer culture.

In this article, we have added to prior literature on authenticity and specifically how authenticity is negotiated through enchantment discourses relating to craft production. We affirm the importance of enchantment as a meaningful marketplace resource in authenticating processes. Consumers, marketers, and the media systematically employ enchanting discourses for their purposes – here first and foremost to re-authenticate the Hagstrom brand. Thus our analysis asserts that constructing and finding enchantment is not only a goal in itself (e.g. Firat & Venkatesh, 1995) but is also conducive to the construction of authenticity.

Thus we insist on the theoretical usefulness of distinguishing conceptually between authenticity and enchantment while acknowledging their mutual relationship and linkages in the negotiation processes we have investigated. Although our analysis builds on a multi-lens perspective on a single case, it is our contention that it demonstrates the fruitful theoretical avenues provided by a perspective that includes both authenticity and enchantment in explorations of contemporary market negotiation processes. Future research that investigates multiple brands from various

product categories may contribute to our understanding of the factors that either are conducive to or hinder co-creative market efforts to re-authenticate. Further research is also needed on other types of discursive re-enchantment strategies as well as on the notion of the craft producer in several product categories.

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