

**The Invention of a
Legendary Notebook:
Producing Authenticity
through Storytelling**

Moleskine notebooks seem to be very basic, simple notebooks, yet they are fairly expensive and immensely popular. Why do we fall for them and what story does Moleskine try to sell to us?

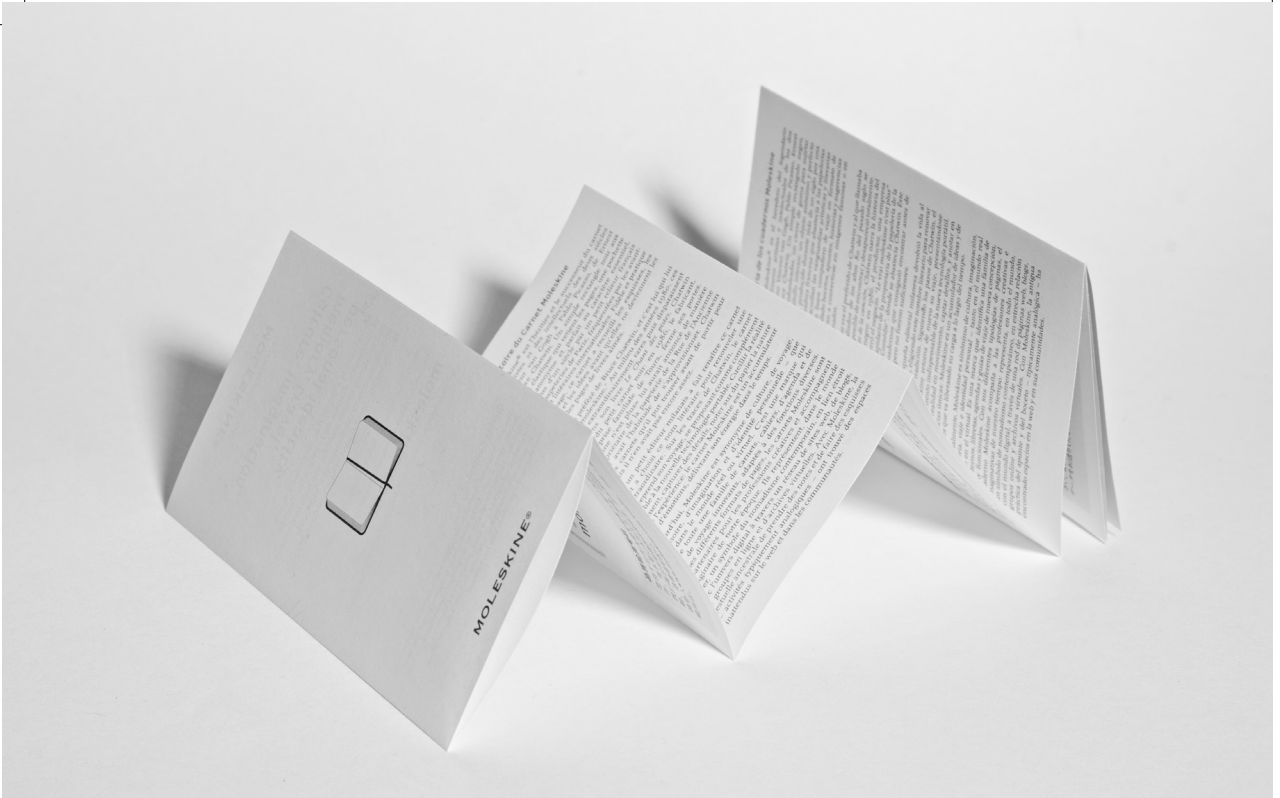


Fig. 1. Leaflet found in Moleskine notebooks. (photo: Anna de Jong)

Starting out as a small company in 1997, the Italian brand Moleskine has grown tremendously over the past decade.¹ One of its first products to appear on the market was a black hardcover notebook. Since then, many variations on the product have followed.² Something that all notebooks by Moleskine have in common is the enclosed leaflet that is to be found in the notebook's characteristic inner pocket. The leaflet tells the owner the notebook's background and emphasizes the significance of the product (fig. 1).³ The text starts with the following statement: 'Moleskine is a brand that identifies a family of notebooks, diaries and city guides: [...] ultimately becoming an integral part of one's personality.'⁴ With this statement the brand suggests that its products exceed their function as tools to form an essential part of their user's life. Moreover, the products can become part of a user's being: 'Moleskine is synonymous with [...] personal identity.'⁵ One might wonder how Moleskine, by trading a traditional object that has been around for centuries and in plentiful supply, would expect to successfully achieve this. The answer seems to involve a formula that is no

younger than the invention of the book or notebook itself: storytelling.

Emphasizing the uniqueness of the product, the text in the leaflet continues to tell a story about a notebook that used to be produced by a small French bookbinder for sale in Parisian stationary shops and was popular among 'the artistic and literary avant-garde of the world'.⁶ According to the text, Moleskine produces handmade notebooks which are 'the successor' to the French notebook and are 'partners for the creative and imaginative professions of our time'.⁷

The Moleskine brand is not unique in rendering authentic qualities, such as craft production and creative lifestyle, by means of storytelling. Consumers in affluent societies nowadays appear to be surrounded by brands that tell stories of a similar kind.⁸ An example that closely resembles the storytelling strategy of Moleskine is the Levi's brand (fig. 2). The Levi's Vintage Clothing fashion line 'offer[s] timeless products to discerning connoisseurs', by representing a series of garments that aim to 'faithfully capture the spirit and heritage of American work wear', through replication of

Fig. 2. Levi's logo with two farmers whipping up their horses, demonstrating the strength of a pair of denim jeans. Accessed through www.flickr.com, published under the Creative Commons Licence. (photo: kylewagaman)



the denim's original weight, texture, weave and dye.⁹ Besides the classic model 501, the 2013 spring collection pays tribute to the 1950s culture of clothing related to a typical American car called the 'hot rod', and to nineteenth-century miners. By connecting its products to the lifestyles of long gone days, Levi's generates a historical notion of the role that the company has played in American culture across centuries. Comparable to Moleskine's storytelling strategy, Levi's evokes contemporary practices that have been built on the authentic cultural heritage of distinct groups in society and the promotion of craftsmanship.

Both Moleskine and Levi's tell a story that provides their products with a hint of uniqueness and genuineness. At the same time, the stories marginalize the non-descript ordinariness of products like notebooks and garments and go against negative connotations such as homogeneity and artificiality which are often attributed to mass-produced commodities. Using Moleskine's black notebook as a starting point, this essay explores storytelling as an instrument to render the differentiating quality of authenticity to consumer products.

Storytelling

There appears to be a general consensus among authors with different scientific backgrounds that stories and their associated structures are deeply rooted in our lives.¹⁰ People unconsciously use stories to structure large amounts of information. In doing so, the contents are represented in a simplified form and by applying narrative principals such as cause and effect, coherency is increased.¹¹ This habit

of organizing information as structured stories is acquired at a young age.¹²

Although the structure of stories can be analyzed in different ways, it seems that stories revolve around recurring patterns that apply to both fiction and non-fiction. For example, the journalist Christopher Booker distinguishes seven story plots that repeatedly appear in stories which are in turn recognized by Professor of Economics Tyler Cowen as occurring in both fictional and non-fictional contexts.¹³ Along similar lines, it has been argued that fictional narratives have the ability to influence people's understanding of reality. A repeated set of experiments demonstrated that, after being exposed to weak and unsupported statements occurring in the conversations of narrative protagonists, readers are likely to shift their attitude towards the same topics that relate to real life situations.¹⁴

The human tendency towards storytelling appears to coincide with the human preference for cognitive ease which includes a preference for familiarity.¹⁵ Daniel Kahneman, Nobel Laureate and founder of behavioural economics, describes cognitive ease as being relatively 'casual' and 'superficial' in one's thinking.¹⁶ Since a state of cognitive ease requires little mental and physical effort, this thinking system is generally at work. A good mood, a repeated experience, a clear display or a primed idea can each lead to cognitive ease which makes the individual feel familiar, true, good and effortless.¹⁷ Citing Professor of Psychology Larry Jacoby, Kahneman argues that 'the experience of familiarity has a simple, but powerful quality of 'pastness' that seems to indicate that it is a

direct reflection of prior experiences'; therefore 'familiarity is not easily distinguished from truth'.¹⁸ Following this line of reasoning, the familiarity of recurring story patterns may be in support of making a message appear more truthful.

Inventing the Legendary Notebook

A notebook can be perceived as a storytelling medium, a space to structure and materialize ideas into words or visuals. This connection is implied by Moleskine's accompanying narrative which states: 'The Moleskine notebook is the heir and successor to the legendary notebook used by artists and thinkers over the past two centuries: among them Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Ernest Hemingway and Bruce Chatwin.'¹⁹

The direct source of inspiration for this narrative was a passage in the novel *The Songlines* (1986) by Bruce Chatwin (1940-1989).²⁰ In this novel Chatwin describes his love for a French notebook:

[...] I made three neat stacks of my 'Paris' notebooks. In France, these notebooks are known as *carnets moleskines*: 'mole skine', in this case, being its black oilcloth binding. Each time I went to Paris, I would buy a fresh supply from a papeterie in the Rue de l'Ancienne Comédie. The pages were squared and the end-papers held in place with an elastic band. I had numbered them in series. I wrote my name and address on the front page, offering a reward to the finder. To lose a passport was the least of one's worries: to lose a notebook was a catastrophe.²¹

Further on in the novel, Chatwin expresses his regret for the fact that the notebook runs out of production. Having read Chatwin's novel in 1995, Maria Sebregondi, who holds the position of Director of Brand Equity and Communications at Moleskine Srl., recognised the potential of this story and decided to breathe new life into the *carnets moleskines*.²² This resulted in the launch of a notebook in 1997 of which the design was largely derived from the description of the notebook by Chatwin, but which was also inspired by a notebook Sebregondi remembered from her childhood.²³ Thus, the legend

that produced the present-day Moleskines is largely an invention of the 1990's.

Storytelling by Means of Design

Although all Moleskine notebooks radiate a similar simplicity and functionality, the black hardcover notebook comes closest to Chatwin's description of the French one. Chatwin mentions an oilcloth binding that looks like the leather made from mole skin, a cheaper alternative to genuine leather at the time. Moleskine adapted this characteristic feature, using a similar material for the cover of their notebooks.²⁴ Furthermore, identical to Chatwin's description, the Moleskine notebook is fitted with a flat elastic band that allows for better closure. The most direct reference to Chatwin's novel, however, is made by a printed text that one finds when opening the Moleskine notebook. It quotes Chatwin's habit of offering a reward to the finder of a lost notebook: 'In case of loss, please return to.... As a reward: \$....'

Incorporating several references to Chatwin's novel, the design of the Moleskine notebook may be perceived as a material translation of the notebook in Chatwin's story. Yet, besides echoing Chatwin's story, the design links to earlier times in a more general manner by making reference to characteristics of book design preceding the age of industrial mass-production: as opposed to being glued, the Moleskine notebook is sewn and it has a hardcover and a ribbon bookmark. Such elements create the impression that Moleskine stands in the tradition of bookmaking craft. By linking the notebook to pre-industrial craft production, the design takes on a vernacular quality.

Vernacularism as a descriptive term, has been constructed around the so-called 'English rural myth' which found expression in literature: in books by Jane Austen (1775-1817), but also in the writings of William Morris (1834-1896), who is known for his contribution to the Arts and Crafts Movement.²⁵ Ever since the modernisation of Europe, the desire to return to an honest world where 'peasants were believed to live in harmony with and have innate feeling for nature' has been used by many to 'furnish' their utopias.²⁶ This widespread concept coincides with the romantic notion of a 'natural' condition of man representing a life that is simple, uniform and solitary.²⁷ With regard

to design, vernacularism implies indigenous, often handcrafted designs where the designer and executor are most likely the same person. Vernacular design should be understood as 'pure' or 'innocent', not intended to be designed as such, and often practiced by fathers and sons for numerous generations. The image of the supposedly French, family-owned company which created the original *carnets moleskines* seems to be consistent with this perception of indigenous design. By relating to Chatwin's story, Moleskine's products simulate a vernacular quality of timelessness and authenticity, thereby marginalizing their connection to modern market economy which generally connotes the planned, fake, calculated and marketed.²⁹ Referring to the authentic and honest aspects of 'the vernacular' is thus a widespread marketing device.²⁹

Seeking Authenticity

The story promoted by Moleskine connects seamlessly with a contemporary search for authenticity by consumers in affluent societies.³⁰ The definitions of the term authenticity vary widely, but it is generally agreed that the contemporary desire for authenticity is a reaction to the emergence of modern society. A contemporary loss of faith and meaning, the rise of individualism and free-market consumerism, and technological developments that enable the simulation of almost any material and technique, have culminated in a strong desire for the authentic. Seeking authenticity should 'provide meaning in a world that otherwise offers none' by celebrating 'spontaneity, emotional transparency, and [...] the creative powers of the individual.'³¹ James H. Gilmore and B. Joseph Pine II argue that the economies of affluent societies nowadays have made the shift from a service economy to an experience economy, bringing with it a new business imperative of rendering authenticity: 'in a world increasingly filled with deliberately and sensationally staged experiences, consumers choose to buy or not buy based on how *real* they perceive an offering to be.'³²

An incident that proves the fragility of the perception of the story told by Moleskine in relation to *realness*, is the discussion that arose on the internet after customers discovered that the Moleskine notebooks are not hand-

produced in France or Italy, as the reference to Chatwin's novel and the text in the leaflet indicate, but are manufactured in China. In order to restore the image of the product as authentic, Moleskine was forced to make some adjustments to the manner in which they tell the story. Nowadays, the label on the notebooks reads: 'Bound and printed in China. Designed and packaged in Italy', and the website states that the manufacturing process comprises 'a mixture of hand craftsmanship and industrial production' and that 'most of our production comes from the Far East.'³³

The authenticity of Moleskine's products was once again challenged when Moleskine's marketing director admitted to the New York Times that the statement that Moleskine is the successor of a legendary notebook once used by famous artists and thinkers is an exaggeration for the sake of marketing purposes.³⁴ The ruling sentiments of the online discussions that followed was that Moleskine asks too high a price for what is, in fact, no more than a mass-produced notebook.³⁵ Both incidents show that the perception of authenticity depends upon a fragile balance between fact and fiction that is easily disrupted.

Co-producing Hyper-authenticity

After the discovery of fictional story elements in Moleskine's marketing narrative, it might be expected that the story has been dismantled in a way that makes Moleskine's products less attractive for consumers since it affects the sense of authenticity. Yet, the popularity of the Moleskine notebook persists until this day and, enabled by the possibilities of new media, many consumers actively contribute to the brand's marketing narrative.³⁶

In this respect, the observation made by Professors of Marketing Randall L. Rose and Stacy L. Wood that the perception of authenticity does not necessarily depend on a judgment of genuineness is interesting. Their research into the consumption of reality television demonstrates that contrived authenticity — referred to by Rose and Wood as 'hyper-authenticity' — may in fact be valued by consumers.³⁷ Hyper-authenticity is defined by their observations that whereas viewers of reality television shows are aware of the fantastical aspects of such shows, it does not hinder them from experienc-

ing authenticity. Rather, the consumers of the shows actively co-produce the experience of hyper-authenticity based on 'an individualised blend of fantasy with the real'.³⁸

Viewers negotiate the paradox of the fictitious and the real, of the manipulated and the natural narrative, by connecting elements that they perceive to be real to their own lived experiences, and by blending personal aspirations with fantastical elements.³⁹ According to Rose and Wood, 'reality shows may serve as utopian places where viewers can engage in creative play space' and where 'we accept as authentic the fantasy that we co-produce'.⁴⁰ By scripting story elements that best reflect the viewer's aspirations and imagination (for instance, the setting of a tropical island that generally portrays a desire for paradise and escapism), the producer of the show stimulates the co-creation of a hyper-authentic experience that potentially aligns both the producer's and the viewers' aspirations.⁴¹

Although the conclusions by Rose and Wood relate to a different medium than the textual narrative of the Moleskine leaflet and the expression of this narrative through the design, what they have in common is the blending of fantastic elements, indexical elements, and personal experiences to construct a story. In light of the concept of hyper-authenticity as set out by Rose and Wood, the fact that Moleskine's marketing narrative has a fictional basis may not be that problematic for consumers after all. The consumer simply completes this fictional basis by adding elements from his or her own life in accordance with personal aspirations, thereby co-producing authenticity. The hyper-authenticity of the initial Moleskine story is thus completed and finally transformed into an actual authenticity by its users, even though it is based on a false story.

Comparable to the fantastical story element of a tropical island used as a setting for reality television shows, Moleskine introduces story elements that have repeatedly appeared in previous stories. The 'creative elite living in Paris' storyline for instance, undoubtedly rings a bell for anyone with a basic knowledge of art or literary history, and might also meet personal aspirations such as creative distinctiveness and a bohemian lifestyle. And the story element of a small family-run bookbinder's workshop

corresponds with the primed idea of honest craftsmanship, thereby meeting the possible personal aspiration of surrounding oneself with meaningful products that oppose mass-production. As Kahneman argues, repeated experience and primed ideas lead to cognitive ease, which results in a feeling of familiarity. Familiarity, in turn, has a quality of 'pastness' that leaves the observer with the impression of a direct reflection of prior experiences. It would seem that by telling a story containing story elements that are almost iconic, Moleskine has found a way to easily connect with consumers' aspirations, thus stimulating the co-production of authenticity.

Belief and Imagination

Another study that underlines the ability of consumers to co-produce an authentic experience based on fiction is that by marketing scholar Kent Grayson and linguist Radan Martinec, who researched the perception of authenticity among visitors of the Sherlock Holmes Museum and William Shakespeare's Birthplace.⁴² Both tourist attractions consist of a re-creation of the character's residence. A conclusion of the study is that, even though visitors are aware of the fact that Sherlock Holmes is a purely fictional character, they treated the recreation of Holmes' household environment as if they could distinguish more and less authentic aspects. What is more, visitors of the Sherlock Holmes Museum did not have a very different experience of authenticity than visitors of Shakespeare's birthplace. Grayson and Martinec note that 'a consumer's belief that a quill pen is evidence of Shakespeare's existence appears to depend on their ability to imagine that Shakespeare used the pen'.⁴³ An important note that the researchers make is that the blurring of imagination and belief is 'not in support of making a presumed fiction seem more real, but in support of making a presumed fact seem more real'.⁴⁴

What stands out in the story told by Moleskine is that it is primarily presented as factual while the story obviously is not. Nonetheless, this presentation may allow for consumers to blur imagination and belief in a way that is perhaps comparable to the experience of viewers of reality television shows or visitors to historical sites. Thus, by presenting its story as a history, Moleskine elevates the simple notebook,

which in turn encourages the public to associate the product with the much-appreciated value of authenticity.

Discussion

Storytelling proves to be a strong device in directing the consumer's perceptions of a brand's products and their authentic value. Although Moleskine notebooks can be purchased widely, a fact which betrays their mass-produced nature, consumers are tempted to believe that the brand's products are fabricated in a smaller setting in Europe, echoing the practice of pre-industrial bookbinding rather than their manufacture in China. Moreover, the case of Moleskine proves that the presence of 'errors' or 'untrue' aspects in marketing narratives do not necessarily devalue the promoted product, as long as the company is up front about it after the fact. Seeking authenticity does not exclusively mean finding forms of authenticity that represent 'genuineness' as opposed to a copy or imitation, but can also imply settling for a type of authenticity that is specified as hyper-authenticity. Therefore, the presence of fantastical elements does not hinder the perception of 'realness', but on the contrary, may even inspire the imagination of the consumer.

The use of already familiar, even iconic, story elements which may be expressed through text or design, appear to play a key role in stimulating the co-production of hyper-authenticity. Story elements such as a tropical island, creative Paris or nineteenth century miners, open up preconceived notions that positively contribute to an active negotiation of real life experiences, imagination and identity. Their familiarity evokes associations, thus moving the consumer products away from the realm of the market economy towards a personal context that provides more profound meanings. In addition, by presenting a story as factual rather than fictional, consumers are offered the space to trick themselves into an essentially false perception of the product. Instead of being recognized as planned and marketed, the products are likely to be perceived as 'uncontrived' and therefore authentic.

The experience of fiction and non-fiction may be interlinked in ways that are more complex than initially expected. Storytelling proves to be a powerful mechanism in making the connection between both worlds, thereby increasing the potential to co-produce a form of authenticity to the benefit of the produced script.

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- 1 In 1997 Moleskine sold 5,000 items, in 1998 30,000 items, in 2003 3,000,000 items and in 2005 4,500,000 items. Source: James Harkin, *Niche. Why The Market No Longer Favours the Mainstream*, London: Little, Brown, 2011, p. 175. In 2009 10,000,000 items were sold across five continents. In 2006 Moleskine had a turnover of 80 million euro, whereas the turnover in 2010 was more than 200 million euros. Syntegra Capital, 'Press Release'. Accessed through www.syntegracapital.com/_documents/News/Moleskine20190111.pdf, on 1 April 2013.
- 2 Nowadays the Moleskine collection consists of a variety of products such as address books, diaries, accessories, bags and pencils, and the brand will gradually expand its collection into other product categories. Syntegra Capital, 'Press Release'. Accessed through www.syntegracapital.com/_documents/News/Moleskine20190111.pdf on 1 April 2013; Moleskine's company website. Accessed through www.moleskine.com/ on 1 April 2013.
- 3 Over the years Moleskine has changed the content of the text in the accompanying leaflet slightly; therefore the text in a leaflet may differ from the text being referred to in this paper.
- 4 Source: leaflet enclosed in the package of Moleskine notebooks, introduction.
- 5 Source: leaflet enclosed in the package of Moleskine notebooks, 'The History of the Moleskine notebook', §4.
- 6 Leaflet enclosed in the package of Moleskine notebooks, 'The History of the Moleskine notebook', §1.
- 7 Leaflet enclosed in the package of Moleskine notebooks, 'The History of the Moleskine notebook', §1 and §4.
- 8 Among others examples are Louis Vuitton and Puma. Accessed through www.louisvuitton-histoires.com/uploads/assets/home/pdf/Int_HIST2_GB.pdf; about.puma.com/category/company/history/ and www.creativeartnetwork.com, on 18 June 2013.
- 9 Accessed through www.levisvintageclothing.com, on 28 June 2013; Andrew Potter, *The Authenticity Hoax. Why the "Real" Things We Seek Don't Make Us Happy*, New York/London: Harper Perennial, 2010, pp.104-106.
- 10 See for instance: Russell W. Belk and Maria Kniazeva, 'Supermarkets as Libraries of Postmodern Mythology' in: *Journal of Business Research* (2010) 63, pp. 748-753; Christopher Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots. Why We Tell Stories*, London: Continuum, 2005; Raymond A. Mar, 'The Neuropsychology of Narrative. Story Comprehension, Story Production and their Interrelation' in: *Neuropsychologia* nr. 42 (2004), pp. 1414-1415; Raymond A. Mar and Keith Oatley, 'The Function of Fiction Is the Abstraction and Simulation of Social Experience' in: *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 3 (2008) 3, pp. 173-192; Roger Sametiz and Andrew Maydoney, 'Storytelling through Design' in: *Design Management Journal* no. 3 (2003), pp. 18-34.
- 11 Mar (2004), op. cit. (note 10), p. 1415.
- 12 Kristin J. Alexander, Peggy J. Miller and Julie A. Hengst, 'Young Children's Emotional Attachments to Stories' in: *Social Development* 10 (2002) 3, pp. 374-398.
- 13 Booker, op. cit. (note 10); Cowen Tyler, 'TED Talk. Be Suspicious of Stories'. Accessed through: www.ted.com/talks/tyler_cowen_be_suspicious_of_stories.html on 28 June 2013. Christopher Booker distinguishes seven story plots: 'monster' (e.g. Jaws, Beowulf), 'rags to riches' (e.g. Cinderella, The Ugly Duckling), 'voyage and returns' (e.g. Alice in Wonderland, Gone with The Wind), 'comedy', 'tragedy' and 'rebirth'.
- 14 Deborah A. Prentice, Richard J. Gerrig and Daniel S. Bails, 'What Readers Bring to the Processing of Fictional Texts' in: *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 4 (1997), pp. 416-420; Christian S. Wheeler, Melanie C. Green and Timothy C. Brock, 'Fictional Narratives Change Beliefs. Replications of Prentice, Gerrig and Bails (1997) with Mixed Corroboration' in: *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review* 6 (1999), pp. 136-141.
- 15 Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow*, London/New York: Penguin Books, 2012; Yvette Reisinger and Carol .J. Steiner, 'Reconceptualizing Object Authenticity' in: *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 33, no. 1 (2006) p. 80.
- 16 Kahneman, op. cit (note 15), p. 60.
- 17 Ibid. Greater cognitive ease is, for instance, experienced when one reads a foreign word that one has encountered before. What is more, the sensed cognitive ease leads to a positive perception of the word's possible meaning, as opposed to foreign words that one has not been exposed to before.
- 18 Ibid., pp. 61-62.
- 19 Leaflet enclosed in the package of Moleskine notebooks, §1. No sources are presented by Moleskine with regard to the use of such a notebook by Van Gogh, Picasso and Hemingway.
- 20 Mathias Irie, 'Das Ungeschriebene Buch' (2008), §7 and §8. Accessed through: www.brandeins.de/archiv/magazin/das-marketing-ist-tot-es-lebe-das-marketing/artikel/das-ungeschriebene-buch.html, on 1 May 2013.
- 21 Bruce Chatwin, *The Songlines*, New York: Penguin Books, 1988, p. 160.
- 22 James Harkin, 'Le Vrai Moleskine. How An Iconic Notebook Was Rescued from Obscurity and Became a Global Phenomenon' (12 June 2011), §1. Accessed through: www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2011/06/12/resurrecting-moleskine-notebooks.html, on 28 June 2013; Tim Walker, 'Moleskine. A Page out of (Altered) History' (21 June 2012) §5. Accessed through: independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/moleskine-a-page-out-of-altered-history-7870099.html on 28 June 2013.
- 23 Harkin, op. cit. (note 1), p. 177.
- 24 Oilcloth bindings used to be made of canvas or linen coated with a linseed oil resin. Nowadays it often refers to a cotton fabric that is coated with vinyl. Accessed through: www.theartfulcrafter.com/oilcloth.html on 1 April 2013.

- 25 Darron Dean, 'A Slipware Dish by Samuel Malkin. An analysis of Vernacular Design' (1994), in: Grace Lees-Maffei and Rebecca Houze (eds.), *The Design History Reader*, Oxford/New York: Berg 2010, p. 22.
- 26 Ibid.; Paul Greenhalgh, 'The History of Craft'(1987), in: Grace Lees-Maffei and Rebecca Houze (eds.), *The Design History Reader*, Oxford/New York: Berg 2010, p. 331. Greenhalgh points out that vernacularism gave ground for artists like Kandinsky to lobby for the preservation of tradition, but also for fascists to legitimize the purification of blood-ties and many others.
- 27 Potter, op. cit (note 9), p. 49; pp. 56-57 and p. 75. The French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) described the 'the state of nature' in response to what he experienced as the alienating effects of the modern world. According to the author Andrew Potter, Rousseau laid the groundwork for our contemporary perception of the authentic self in relation to the modern world. Potter argues that Rousseau's writings mark a beginning of 'centuries-long disputes between passion and reason, art and commerce, the individual and society, the bohemian and the bourgeois.'
- 28 Ibid., p. 114.
- 29 For example, the brand Dorset Cereals — producer of 'unadulterated breakfast cereals that are tasty, honest and real' — promotes an idyllic image by describing the production process as a careful blending of the best possible ingredients taking place in a locally designed factory surrounded by the rural environment of the British county Dorset. Through its website and social media, the brand makes an effort to relate its breakfast cereals to life's 'simple pleasures'. Accessed through www.dorsetcereals.co.uk/about-us/; www.dorsetcereals.co.uk/about-us/where-we-work/ and www.dorsetcereals.co.uk/photo-competition-finale on 20 June 2013. Among other examples are: Vlaamsch Broodhuys, Le Pain Quotidien.
- 30 Michael Beverland, *Building Brand Authenticity. 7 Habits of Iconic Brands*, Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p. 21; Kent Grayson and Radan Martinec, 'Consumer Perception of Iconicity and Indexicality and Their Influence on Assessments of Authentic Market Offerings', in: *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 31 (September 2004), p. 296; Charles Lindholm, *Culture and authenticity*, Malden/Oxford: Blackwell 2008; Richard A. Peterson, 'In Search of Authenticity', in: *Journal of Management Studies* 42:5 (July 2005), p. 1094; Potter, op. cit. (note 9), p. 264; Philip Vannini and J. Patrick Williams, *Authenticity in Culture, Self and Society*, Farnham/Burlington: Ashgate, p. 6.
- 31 Potter, op. cit. (note 9), p. 78.
- 32 James H. Gilmore, and Joseph B. Pine II, 'Beyond Experience: Culture, Consumer & Brand. Using Art to render Authenticity in Business', in: *Art & Business*, 16 May 2012. Accessed through: www.artsandbusinessni.org.uk/documents/2012-05-16-11-59-29-48-aandb_beyond_experience.pdf, on 28 June 2013.
- 33 Moleskine's company website. Accessed through: www.moleskine.com/en/moleskine-quality, on 1 April 2013.
- 34 'It's an exaggeration, [...] it's marketing, not science. It's not the absolute truth.' Francesco Francheschi, cited in: Jason Horowitz, 'Does a Moleskine Notebook Tell the Truth?', in: *New York Times*, 16 October 2004. Accessed through: www.nytimes.com/2004/10/16/business/worldbusiness/16iht-mmole_ed3_.html, on 1 April 2013.
- 35 See for instance: www.colewardell.wordpress.com/2009/02/02/why-i-dont-use-moleskine/, accessed on 1 May 2013; www.apenchantforpaper.blogspot.nl/2010/11/battle-of-pocket-notebooks-moleskine.html, accessed on 1 May 2013; www.bleistift.memm.de/?tag=moleskine, accessed on 1 May 2013.
- 36 Anticipating developments in online, networked computing, Moleskine engages in a direct dialogue with its public by means of the Internet in order to stimulate creative interaction among users of Moleskine notebooks. Among other initiatives, Moleskine introduced the webpage Artist Marketplace that stimulates people to use their Moleskine notebook as a 'canvas' for their 'cover art', and allows them to trade their personalized version of the notebook. Accessed through www.artistmarketplace.moleskine.com/en, on 10 January 2013.
- 37 Randall L. Rose and Stacy L. Wood, 'Paradox and the Consumption of Authenticity through Reality Television' in: *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 32 Issue 2 (2005), pp. 284-296.
- 38 Ibid., p. 294.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid., p. 295.
- 41 Ibid., pp. 288-289. From audience rating of the show *Survivor* it appears that the setting of a tropical island attracts more viewers than the setting of the Australian outback or an African landscape. Apparently the iconic image of a tropical island — based on preconceived, socially constructed notions — resonates more strongly with most viewer's personal aspirations.
- 42 Grayson and Martinec, op. cit. (note 30).
- 43 Ibid., p. 307.
- 44 Ibid.