

Engaging the Shopping Experience

Experience design as a way to increase customers' emotional engagement on brick-and-mortar stores

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ENGAGING THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

EXPERIENCE DESIGN AS A WAY TO INCREASE CUSTOMERS'
EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT IN BRICK-AND-MORTAR STORES

**BY
SANNE DOLLERUP**

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED 2017



AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

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AUTHOR CV

Sanne Dollerup has a master's degree in Communication from Aalborg University. During the last year of her studies she co-founded an advertising agency with two fellow students as a way to gain insight into market communication. In this process she experienced a gap between the theoretical field of strategic market communication and the practical aspect. This motivated her to apply for a PhD fellowship with the idea of building a bridge between research on strategy and the practitioners trying to apply this knowledge in their businesses. This further developed into this dissertation about experience design as a way to increase customers' emotional engagement in brick-and-mortar stores.

During the PhD fellowship Sanne has been teaching within the fields of strategic market communication, consumer behaviour and concept development. In 2014 she established a consultant agency as a way of testing theoretical ideas in different businesses. The agency is specialized in consumer behaviour through emotional segmentation and strategic market communication.

ENGLISH SUMMARY

As new technologies such as the automobile, television, computer, credit card and scanner emerged, it shifted attention onto the convenient aspect of shopping. Retailers focused on parking, shopping trolleys, low prices, large quantities and quick purchase processes. This attention to convenience made it very easy for online stores to outmatch brick-and-mortar stores: With convenience as the competitive parameter, the online stores have all the advantages. A significant parameter is the ability to shop online anytime anywhere. Competition seems like a lost cause for the brick-and-mortar stores, because why would customers want anything other than convenient aspects such as the cheapest prize, more variety and quick service?

However overview of the last three hundred years demonstrates that people do not always shop for convenience. Historically, people went shopping for social interaction, leisure and identity confirmation. All features that are still relevant today. This indicates the two overall paradigms that are dominating the retail business: A focus on rational benefits through convenience and a focus on emotional benefits through social interaction, a leisure environment and identity confirmation. In this dissertation, I am interested in the last mentioned emotional paradigm. Therefore, the research is based on knowledge from atmospherics, service design and especially consumer experience, because they are all traditionally concerned with the emotional aspect of retailing. Atmospherics aims to set the customer in a certain mood through variables like smiling sales assistants and specific colours. Service design has a more holistic approach with an overall focus on all the touch points that the customer has with the organisation. Research on consumer experience has a more hedonic aim with an overall focus on making experiences pleasurable.

I have combined the theoretical field of consumer experience with possible world theory, which is mainly used in literary studies as a way to understand immersion in a literary world of fiction. Therefore the overall research question is:

How can brick-and-mortar stores be designed to differentiate them from each other and from online stores by addressing how customers can be immersed in a store through participation in a fictional world?

To answer this question I have chosen participatory observation in the store *Guns&Gents*, which resulted in an observation of 715 customers during a 2-week period. This is combined with several case studies: Two studies that are analyses of extraordinary cases and one that is a systematic data collection of 1153 stores in confined areas. The research in this dissertation is based on cases from Denmark (Copenhagen), Denmark (Aalborg), Sweden (Gothenburg), Germany

(Stuttgart), Germany (Berlin), Netherlands (Amsterdam), Scotland (Edinburgh), Italy (Rome), Belgium (Brussels), UK (London), USA (New York), USA (Los Angeles), USA (Atlanta), Canada (Victoria Island), Canada (Edmonton), Canada (Vancouver), Bali (Ubud), China (Dali City). In the following I will describe the papers in this dissertation individually.

PAPER 1: WHEN MEN GO SHOPPING

This paper is an analysis of participatory observation in the store *Guns & Gents*. The overall point is that the customers have a play-like behaviour as they enter the store, such as aiming for pretend birds in the sky, showing childish excitement, walking slowly and talking in lowered voices. In other words, they are adapting to the world presented in the store. We argue that this is a recreational mode where the customers are immersed into a dream world of hunting. In *Guns & Gents* the sociability of the customers seems to have a strategic intention to enhance their professional network through the field of hunting. The store thus becomes a club where the customers can engage sociably with peers.

PAPER 2: RECOVERING THE POETICS OF SHOPPING

This paper explores the poetic aspect of shopping by investigating the emotional reactions of excitement, boredom and repulsion observed in *Guns & Gents*. We present a theory of disruption to explain these emotional reactions related to the purchases that seem unplanned and a deliberate waste of time. The overall argumentation is that shopping is purposeful, because it is a purpose in itself. Therefore, it could be an aesthetic experience if the store is disruptive by having a different set of rules than ordinary stores.

PAPER 3: THE POSSIBLE WORLD OF STORES

In this paper we have carried out a categorization of different stores based on possible world theory. As a result we have recovered six worlds: The Standard World, The Replica World, The Perfect World of Everyday Life, The Tribal World, The Museum World and The Fairy Tale World. The main finding is an overall variation in the role-playing of employees and customers, the role of the product and the degree of transportation and transformation. The paper suggests that these factors all contribute to customer engagement in a store.

PAPER 4: CREATIVE IMMERSIVE WORLDS IN BRICK-AND-MORTAR STORES

This paper is an analysis of the store *Tarina Tarantino* through an exploration of different perspectives of play. It is based on *Yelp* reviews where customers disclose a very positive emotional reaction toward the store. The paper proposes some general principles for designing immersive stores based on "possible world" theory. I disclose that an essential condition for customer engagement is an overall cohesiveness in all elements in a store. The most significant contribution in this paper is that products become props for role-playing in a store, hence making them central for maintaining that role outside the store.

In this dissertation, I have sought to clarify customer experience in brick-and-mortar stores by introducing possible world theory. It is a clarification of how specific conditions in a store might influence customer behavior. I suggest possible worlds as a way to understand which conditions might engage customers in a store. It is a framework for designing fictional stores that engage customers emotionally in the actual store by transporting them into another world where they are role-playing. As such, shopping can become transformative as the role-playing becomes a way for customers to reinforce, maintain or try on a new identity. In this process the products may become essential for maintaining that identity outside the store. Until now, theory on consumer experience has been focused on employees playing a role and customers being audiences. Therefore, the findings concerning customers' active role-playing constitute a further development of the theoretical field of consumer experience in brick-and-mortar stores.

DANSK RESUMÉ

Detailhandlen begyndte i højere grad at fokusere på at gøre indkøb lettere for deres kunder da nye teknologier som bilen, TV, computere, kreditkort og scannere opstod. Det resulterede i tiltag såsom parkering, indkøbsvogne, lavere priser, store mængder varer og en hurtigere købsproces. Et nemmere indkøb begyndte derfor at blive det afgørende konkurrenceparameter i de fysiske butikker. Det betød at online butikkerne havde lettere ved at overtage markedsandele, fordi de på mange parametre (døgnåbent, levering til døren, billigere priser, et større udvalg og en hurtig service) kunne gøre indkøbene endnu lettere. Det er en interessant udvikling, da en gennemgang af de seneste tre hundrede år viser, at mennesker ikke altid vælger at handle et sted, fordi det er lettere.

Historisk set har shopping været et middel, der bruges til at opnå social interaktion og identitetsbekræftelse. Disse aspekter er stadigvæk relevante i dag. Der er derfor to overordnede paradigmer, der dominerer detailhandlen: Et fokus på rationelle fordele ved at gøre shopping lettere og et fokus på emotionelle fordele gennem social interaktion og identitetsbekræftelse. I denne afhandling interesserer jeg mig for det sidstnævnte emotionelle paradigme. Forskningen er derfor baseret på viden om atmosfære, servicedesign og især oplevelsesdesign, da disse i høj grad beskæftiger sig med det emotionelle aspekt af detailhandel. At skabe den rette atmosfære handler om at sætte kunden i en bestemt sindstilstand gennem variabler såsom smilende butiksassistenter og bestemte farver. Servicedesign har en mere holistisk tilgang, med et overordnet fokus på de berøringsflader (touch-points) kunden har med organisationen. Forskning inden for oplevelsesdesign har et mere hedonistisk mål med et overordnet fokus på at modificere emotioner i en positiv retning gennem oplevelser.

Jeg har kombineret oplevelsesdesign med litteraturteori om ”possible worlds”, som primært anvendes til at forstå læsernes indlevelse i fiktionens litterære verden. Det overordnede forskningsspørgsmål er således:

Hvordan kan fysiske butikker designes, så de differentierer sig fra hinanden og fra onlinebutikker, ved at motivere kunders indlevelse i butikkens fiktive verden?

For at besvare forskningsspørgsmålet har jeg valgt metoden deltagende observation i butikken *Guns&Gents*, hvilket resulterede i observation af 715 kunder over en 14-dages periode. Dette er blevet kombineret med flere casestudier: To studier som består af analyse af usædvanlige cases, og et som består af en systematisk dataindsamling fra 1153 butikker i afgrænsede områder. Forskningen i denne afhandling er baseret på cases fra Danmark (København), Danmark (Aalborg), Sverige (Göteborg), Tyskland (Stuttgart), Tyskland (Berlin), Holland (Amsterdam), Skotland (Edinburgh), Italien (Rom), Belgien (Bruxelles),

Storbritannien (London), USA (New York), USA (Los Angeles), USA (Atlanta), Canada (Victoria Island), Canada (Edmonton), Canada (Vancouver), Bali (Ubud), Kina (Dali). I nedenstående vil hver artikel blive introduceret.

ARTIKEL 1: WHEN MEN GO SHOPPING

Denne artikel er en analyse af deltagende observation i butikken *Guns&Gents*. Den overordnede pointe er, at kunderne udviser legende opførsel, når de træder ind i butikken, så som at sigte efter fiktive fugle på himlen, udvise barnlig opførsel, gå langsommere og tale lavmælt. Med andre ord tilpasser de sig den verden, der præsenteres i butikken. Vi argumenterer for, at dette sker, når kunderne indlever sig i en drømmeverden om jagt. I *Guns&Gents* har kunderne et strategisk formål: At udbygge deres professionelle netværk gennem jagt, hvilke betydelser, at butikken bliver en klub, hvor kunderne kan pleje sine sociale relationer.

ARTIKEL 2: RECOVERING THE POETICS OF SHOPPING

Denne artikel udforsker det poetiske aspekt af shopping ved at undersøge de følelsesmæssige reaktioner, der blev observeret i *Guns & Gents*. Der præsenteres en teori om "disruption" for at forklare de emotionelle reaktioner, som kan være forbundet med de køb, der kan virke tilfældige og som bevidst tidsfordriv. Den overordnede argumentation er, at shopping er formålsbestemt, da den i sig selv udgør et formål. Derfor kan det være en æstetisk oplevelse, hvis butikken er "disruptiv" i kraft af at have et andet regelsæt end almindelige butikker.

ARTIKEL 3: THE POSSIBLE WORLD OF STORES

I denne artikel ses en kategorisering af forskellige butikker baseret på "possible world" teori. Derved er der identificeret seks verdener: "The Standard World", "The Replica World", "The Perfect World of Everyday Life", "The Tribal World", "The Museum World" og "The Fairy Tale World". De vigtigste pointer er, at de ansattes rolle, kunders rolle, produktets rolle og graden af "transportation" og "transformation" bidrager til kunders engagement i en butik.

ARTIKEL 4: CREATIVE IMMERSIVE WORLDS IN BRICK-AND-MORTAR STORES

Artiklen er en analyse af butikken *Tarina Tarantino* som giver et indblik i forskellige perspektiver af leg. Den er baseret på *Yelp* anmeldelser, hvor kunder giver butikken positive tilbagemeldinger. Artiklen fremsætter nogle generelle principper for, hvordan man kan designe butikker, der får kunderne til at indleve sig i en "possible world". Alle elementer i butikken skal have en overordnet sammenhæng for at kunden kan indleve sig i den verden butikken repræsenterer. Den vigtigste pointe er, at når kunder spiller en rolle, bliver produkterne en vigtig rekvisit, således at rollen kan udspilles i butikken, og bibeholdes uden for butikken.

I denne afhandling har jeg søgt at eksplicitere forbrugeroplevelsen i fysiske butikker gennem inddragelse af ”possible world” teori. Det er således en tydeliggørelse af, hvordan specifikke forhold i en butik kan påvirke forbrugeradfærd. Jeg foreslår derfor ”possible worlds” som en måde at forstå, hvilke forhold der skal være til stede for at kunden kan engagere sig i en butik. Teorien udgør en ramme for, hvordan man kan designe butikker, som får kunder til at engagere sig emotionelt. På den måde bliver shopping transformerende, idet rollespillet bliver en måde, hvorpå kunder kan forstærke, vedligeholde eller afprøve en ny identitet. I denne proces kan produkterne blive afgørende for at bibeholde denne identitet uden for butikken. Indtil nu har teori om oplevelsesdesign fokuseret mere på, at de ansatte har spillet en rolle og kunderne fungerer som publikum. Derfor udgør konklusionerne omkring kundernes aktive rollespil en videreudvikling af det teoretiske felt.

I AM GRATEFUL TO:

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TO MY LOVED ONES, THANK YOU:

Jesper, for keeping me grounded, happy and loved. My son, for keeping me present in the most important aspect of life. My mom, for being you and for all your love. My brother, for reminding me to face my greatest fears with courage.

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PREAMBLE

Boyfriend: “Fix me some supper woman!”

Me: “Have you been playing Grand Theft Auto again?”

Boyfriend: “Yes...”

If you do not know about *Grand Theft Auto*, it is a *PlayStation* game where you play as a gangster in a large city with different missions throughout the game. The first time I watched my boyfriend playing the game I was appalled. In *Grand Theft Auto*, it is accepted to do the following:

- Steel cars from other characters
- Drive other characters over
- Hit other characters with a car
- Beat other characters
- Kill other characters

I can tell with absolute certainty when he has been playing *Grand Theft Auto*. His walk changes, the way he talks to me changes, his attitude toward suggestions changes and so on. Luckily, this is just for a brief moment after he turns off the game.

This everyday situation illustrates how a game can immerse a player through active participation, thereby becoming important vessels for identity constructions. This got me thinking: What if stores use some of the same principles as this game? Would it even be possible for stores to motivate the same behaviour – and with what outcome?

In this dissertation, I will investigate fictional worlds as a way to design experiences in brick-and-mortar stores.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

When I started working on this dissertation, my motivation was to build a bridge between theory on marketing strategy and practitioners doing marketing strategy. After taking my master's, I founded an advertising agency, and I discovered that I was missing some essential tools when designing marketing strategy. I could not (in a somewhat simple manner) explain why the colour needed to be red instead of green, why the underlying stories of the company are one of the most important factors or why the consistency in marketing material was important. It seemed as though understanding such issues would require a master's in communication. However, very few customers want to hear about semiotics, rhetoric or any type of theoretical explanation behind their strategy. This placed me in constant conflict with customers because when I suggested one strategy, an answer would typically be: "I do not want that font because we do not want to seem old-fashioned" or "the logo must be purple because it is my wife's favourite colour". This tremendous gap between theory and practice was the initial motivation.

One day, I was watching my boyfriend playing *PlayStation*, and I was intrigued by the world, the personalisation and the interaction in the games, and I remembered a period of my life in which I was always playing the game *Doom* with my childhood friend, Matilde. We used to share between us being the one navigating the shooter and being the one doing the shooting. We could spend hours playing it, and I knew every aspect of that game, all the secret pathways, where the ambushes occurred, where the god's weapons were being hidden. Later, I played *Nintendo* with my brother – particularly *Mario Cars*. When we were adults and briefly lived together (because he needed a place to store his furniture, as he was sent off as a soldier to Afghanistan), he attempted to teach me to play (in my opinion) a very complex game called *Oblivion*. My point is: These everyday life experiences have three themes in common: play, learning and sociability.

With my memories of the pleasures of gaming having been triggered, I convinced my boyfriend that we should find a game that we could play together. We tried different games, such as *Tennis Tour*, but he was so much better than me that we could not play together. We also started a band in the game *Guitar Hero* for a brief period. Then, we found an easy platform game called *Little Big Planet*. When we started the game, the story behind the game was introduced:

"Planet earth, or as the rest of the universe calls it, the orb of dreamers. The occupants of which spends so much time asleep and dreaming, their vast imaginations humming away, charged with creative energy. Where

does it all go? Up through a cerebral umbilical cord where it collects and melts with all the other dreamers' energy, and something wonderful happens. It forms a world and the theoretical dreamscape of adventures and possibilities – an abstract plane of beautiful wonderment waiting to be explored.” (*Little Big Planet*)

Consequently, I started thinking: When designing a world, there are some basic logics that exist. A simple example is a world where a unicorn is ruling. In such a world, there cannot at the same time be a unicorn that is not ruling. This logical consistency intrigued me. In such a fictional world, it seems obvious which elements could naturally occur and which elements seemed out of order. Simultaneously, I went on a research trip to Berlin, where we came across the store *Frau Tonis*, in which customers could create their own perfume. This store had many elements that seemed to duplicate features from games. First, there were different levels of difficulties depending on how many types of scents were mixed together. Second, the store was in elegant colours such as white, grey and black, and the perfume was carefully placed as a perfume laboratory.



Photo: Frau Tonis, Germany (Berlin)

This sparked my interest in the direction of stores because (1) some of them seemed to have something in common with games, (2) they are environments designed to motivate customers to buy, and (3) one could argue (as I will more thoroughly throughout the dissertation) that this type of store has elements of play, learning and sociability. My motivation is to build a bridge between all of the possible elements in marketing (colours, graphics, pictures, stories, text, etc.) by exploring these stores. To use the metaphor of orchestrating: The different elements in an experience are the notes and instruments, but we lack knowledge on the melody. In this vein, the dissertation is about finding the foundation for the melody (the concept) thus easier to orchestra the variables (notes and instruments).

Besides my own personal aim to understand meaningful store experiences, the brick-and-mortar faces some significant threats, mostly from online stores. American online stores have for example added \$27.8 billion to their apparel

revenue since 2005, while department stores have lost \$29.6 billion (Morgan Stanley, 2016). A survey conducted in 2016 by the analyst firm *Power Reviews* offers confirmation that *Amazon* beats *Google* when customers are starting a product search, with 38% starting with *Amazon* and 35% starting with *Google* (Power Reviews, 2016). A total of 3000 consumers from the United States and UK responded to a study about their shopping habits in general. The study shows that customers spend 61% of their time in brick-and-mortar stores and 31% of their time in online stores (Civic Economics, 2011).

First of all, this indicates the importance of brick-and-mortar stores, and second, it reveals a tendency towards online retailers gaining more market shares. The brick-and-mortar store seems to be slowly disappearing. This is especially evident when driving through small towns where empty stores with rental signs are a frequent sight. It could leave an impression of towns without people, activity or economy. In these ghost-like towns, the importance of brick-and-mortar store is immense. When looking at the brick-and-mortar store, there are two apparent problems in relation to the online store. The obvious one is a basic restriction in open hours, and the second one is the overall similarities in product selection, store design and service. This standardization in brick-and-mortar stores is a crucial factor when compared to online stores, which have (what seems to be) an endless amount of products from around the world.

The first problem is, the restriction in open hours compared to online stores, sets a physical barrier to shopping in the morning, evening and night. In Denmark, this is an immense problem. Due to the protection of small business owners, there is a legal restriction on open hours. For example, in Aalborg and Copenhagen, *H&M* opens at 10:00 am and closes between 6:00 and 7:00 pm. Most people work from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, and if they have to pick up children, drive to the store and park the car, the time could easily be 5:00 pm before they reach the store. Then, there is about 1-2 hours for shopping. These closing hours are the same in other smaller cities in Europe.

Place	Open	Closes
Saint-Quentin, France	9:30 am	7:00 pm
Växjö, Sweden	10:00 am	7:00 pm
Chemnitz, Germany	9:30 am	8:00 pm
Lelystad, Netherland	9:00 am	6:00 pm
Sheffield, Great Britain	9:00 am	7:00 pm

Table 1. Opening hours in smaller cities in Europe

According to Pampín & Peleteiro, most people shop online in the morning or in the afternoon:

“We find a minimum in the activity in the site around 2h, and two peaks of activity during the day; a local maximum in the morning circa 9h; and a global maximum in the evening at around 18h. These maximums in daily activity are most probably related to the beginning and end of the working day” (Pampín & Peleteiro, 2016).

This is interesting, because most brick-and-mortar stores open and close around these hours, thereby making competition with online retailers difficult. Shopping online away from or at work can be done on a tablet, smartphone or computer while doing other activities, such as eating breakfast, commuting, taking a break at work, walking to the printer, and standing in line for lunch. It only requires 3-4 clicks, and you have an order on your way. When you know what to buy, in most cases, it is much quicker to go online, buy it and have it sent home. Pampín & Peleteiro (2016) discloses that the weekdays where most people shop online are Sunday and Monday. Most people do not work on Sundays; thus, they have time to shop. The problem, however, is that in some countries in Europe, shops are closed on Sunday (Pampín & Peleteiro, 2016). This sets some unavoidable barriers for brick-and-mortar stores in competing against online stores.

Compared to online stores¹ the second problem is the standardization in a typically shopping street. Repetition has resulted from the development of chain stores. By definition, a chain store is a group of stores with some similarities, such as logo, interior design, products, brands and price. To some degree, chain stores have taken over shopping areas in the city, thus generating repetition. This becomes apparent when visiting a large city, such as New York, or even a small town, such as Aalborg, Denmark. When shopping in New York, there seems to be an *H&M*, *Zara*, *Starbucks*, *GAP*, and *Aldo* on every single shopping street. A quick search on *Google* reveals that there are 11 *Zara* stores, 26 *Victoria's Secret* stores, 25 *Sephora* stores, 27 *GAP* stores, 19 *American Apparel* stores, 17 *Forever 21* stores, 23 *Aldo* stores, 20 *Banana Republic* stores, and 163 *Starbucks* 23 *H&M* stores in an area of 789 km² that contains a population of 8,406 million (2013). This means that there is one *H&M* store pr. 365.478 persons. In New York, most of these stores are located in or within close proximity to Manhattan, which is a much smaller area of 59.1 km², with a population of 1,644,518.

¹ Such standardization is beginning to emerge online due to different search algorithms controlled by individuals' previous search history or online stores' ability to optimize their product on *Google* (or buy *GoogleAdwords*)

In Aalborg, Denmark, with an area of 139 km² and a population of 203,373 thousand (2013), there are 8 *H&M* stores and therefore one *H&M* store pr. 25.421 persons. In addition, there are 6 *Imerco/Inspiration* stores² (interior), 3 *Sportmaster* stores (sport apparel), 3 *Vero Moda* stores (clothes for women), 2 *Bahne* stores (interior), 3 *Baresso Bars* (coffee), 3 *Company's* stores (clothes for woman), 3 *Arnold Busck* stores (books), 2 *Bianco* stores (shoes), 2 *Change* stores (underwear), 2 *Jack and Jones* stores (clothes for men), 3 *Gina Tricot* stores (clothes for women), 2 *Pandora* stores (jewellery), 3 *Synoptik* stores (glasses), and 2 *Starbucks* bars. This will inevitable generate a repetitive environment where shoppers are presented with the same stores over and over and over again. As Kelly Graham formulates it:

“A twenty-first-century shopper dropped into any one of a dozen modern department stores will find the same woman’s clothing, shoes, and accessories, different, perhaps by price and quality. Sizes are standardized, and each year’s fashion colors are mutually agreed upon by an international board of color experts” (Graham, 2008, p. 16).

Compared to brick-and-mortar stores, large online retailers such as *Amazon*, *eBay*, *Best Buy*, *Taobao*, *Tesco*, *Zara*, *Net-a-porter*, and *Asos* have a large variety in stock. A survey conducted on *Amazon* demonstrates that 79% of customers shop on *Amazon* because of the variety of products (79%). Pricing factors such as free shipping (64%), good deals (60%) and reviews (55%) also play a big role in why they start the purchase journey on *Amazon* (Power Reviews, 2016).



Table 2. Why People Shop on *Amazon*

² Imerco and Inspiration are two different chain stores with hardware goods; they are displayed as one store, as it is impossible to tell them apart, if not for the different store sign outside.

The two mentioned concerns, being restriction in open hours and standardization, could be dealt with in several ways. Combining the brick-and-mortar store with an online store, which is already a widespread solution, could solve the first one. Most brick-and-mortar stores have an online store, thereby solving the problem with open hours. From the retailer's point of view, a sale is a sale. The revenue is the same whether it is from an online or a brick-and-mortar store. The problem with the standardization of brick-and-mortar stores is more complex. It requires more knowledge and research to find possible solutions, which is the overall starting point of this dissertation. Before beginning this investigation, it is relevant to account for the wider social importance of brick-and-mortar stores.

1.1. WHY ARE BRICK-AND-MORTAR STORES IMPORTANT?

When arguing for the importance of brick-and-mortar stores, it is important to note that I am not interested in promoting the expansion of goods in general as this has material limits on natural resources and the environment in general (Williams, 1982). Still, in a world where consumption is a significant part of human behaviour through the satisfaction of needs, identity creation and emotional gratification the brick-and-mortar stores has some important aspects (i.e. more than online stores), which will be described in the following. I will try to identify 4 arguments for the importance of brick-and-mortar stores for this urban environment. This will be based on literature from diverse areas: architecture, economics, tourism, sociology and marketing.

1.1.1. SOCIAL INTERACTION

When people are spending more time behind the screen, the social aspect of shopping will unavoidably decrease. The economists Blanchard & Matthews (2006) note that the decline of locally owned stores main shopping streets could provide “a potential explanation for why Americans are withdrawing from civic life, isolating themselves and their families through consumptive practices” (Blanchard & Matthews, 2006, p. 2255). They also show that the presence of independent business owners in town creates more social trust: “Within the context of our study, social trust is enhanced by the presence of independent middle class business owners competing for status within the community” (Blanchard & Matthews, 2006, p. 2254). As one of the most significant researchers in retailing, Paco Underhill, explains it in *New York Times*, 24 November 2002: “People want to shop; it's in our genes. We are social species. From our days as hunters and gatherers, we have needed to be around others”. The social aspect of shopping has been – and still is – an important aspect of shopping. The brick-and-mortar store provides a way for people to have social experiences outside the home (Tauber, 1972). Stores are a setting for social interaction, which could potentially improve the social relationships between citizens.

1.1.2. ECONOMIC GROWTH

The locally owned brick-and-mortar stores of towns and cities are essential to economic growth. According to a report made by The Urban Conservancy and Civic Economics: “Locally-owned businesses generate as much as two to three times the local economic activities as do chains” (The Urban Conservancy, 2009). They elaborate:

“This study shows that local retailers, when compared to leading retailers chain competitors, generate twice the annual sales, recirculate revenue within the local economy at twice the rate, and, on per square foot basis, have four times the economic impact” (The Urban Conservancy, 2009).

David Fleming and Stephan Goetz conclude without further explanation that “[s]mall-sized firms owned by residents are optimal if the policy objective is to maximize income growth rates” (Fleming & Goetz, 2011, p. 280), thereby making the connection between locally owned firms (such as stores) and income growth clear. By improving economic growth, such firms can contribute to town development by increasing taxes paid to the public sector. Then, the public sector can invest in education, health, research, culture and so on (Power Reviews, 2016; Civic Economics, 2014)

Locally owned stores are not only important to towns; towns are also important to stores, as the presence of a brick-and-mortar store in a town could promote consumption (Timothy, 2005). The German geographer Walter Christaller, who researches the development of central places in German towns, demonstrates that:

“[t]here is a definite connection between the consumption of central goods and the development of central places. The development of those central places by which inhabitants live becomes more pronounced if many central goods are consumed than it does if few central goods are consumed” (Christaller, 1966, p. 27).

There is a direct connection between the overall quality of a central place in a town and the amount of goods bought (Christaller, 1966). Thus, the argumentation is twofold: Consumption is important for urbanity and urbanity is important for consumption.

1.1.3. THE ABILITY TO ATTRACT TOURISTS

In 1999, a female tourist in Volcano National Park in Hawaii said: “Get me out of this irritating natural stuff and back to the mall” (Timothy, 2005). Shopping can be a reason – if not the only one – for undertaking a cross-border trip

(Timothy & Butler, 1995). Of course, it is the wide variety of things to do that make for a desirable tourist attraction, interesting shopping venues being one of them (Pearce, 2001). Rob Shields claims: “(...) one of the most important tourist activities is shopping” (Shields, 2003, p. 110). A quick Google Scholar search shows 145,000 results on “tourism shopping” and 165,000 on “tourism museum”. This indicates that shopping and tourism have an unavoidable relationship that is equally important to traditional sights (in this case museums). In Danish tourist guides, *The Trip Goes To* shopping is an occurring section. Each guide is divided into an area, and for every area, there is a general outline of recommended destinations, followed by an outline of “Places To Stay”, “Places To Eat”, “Places To Go Out” and “Places To Shop”. Depending on the destination, all four outlines are somewhat the same size, which signifies that they are of equal importance (Proksch, 2012; Simonsen, 2009; Gjerø & Thom, 2011; Ebbesen, 2012; Skau, 2009; Nørgaard, 2011; Kåri, 2012; Zacho, 2011, Tesio, 2010³). Thus, making shopping an essential factor when travelling.

1.1.4. CIVIC DIVERSITY

Following Simmel (2004), urbanity is part and parcel of modernity. It is the realization of freedom and equality, and it is also characterized by anonymity and individual’s confrontation with a mass of strangers. The urban environment thus consists of strangers pursuing their individual goals. The familiarity in a small town between people who are similar in aspects such as income, lifestyle, origin, and ethnicity is replaced with a new kind of interconnection between people that are fundamentally different.

“A few years ago you could have still distinguished between established and outsiders, between the indigenous original neighborhood residents and a group of foreign newcomers, whether of Moroccan or Turkish descent. This clear, albeit tense, situation no longer exists” (Reijndorp, 2014, p. 150).

Arnold Reijndorp uses the term “public domains”, which are places where there is an exchange of culture and a formation of social relationships. Public domains in cities and towns attract different people, thereby forming a place for social and cultural exchanges (Reijndorp, 2014). A public domain is established when groups of people encounter each other “in old villages, in supermarkets and superstores along old main arteries, in parks and in sport centers” (Reijndorp, 2014, p. 149). Stores and cluster of stores could be public domains that attract an accumulation of different people, therefore being places that promote diversity. By the seemingly simple act of walking to and from stores, different people in a town become visible to each other thereby, promoting the diversity of people. By this token, brick-and-mortar stores are an important reason for people to seek and stay in public spaces.

3 The books destinations are Vienna, Canada, Beijing, Vietnam, New York, Copenhagen, South Africa, Corsica and Rome.

The first two areas, “Social Interaction” and “Economic Growth”, support arguments for locally owned brick-and-mortar stores and against brick-and-mortar chain stores. The last two, “The ability to attract tourists” and “Civic Diversity”, support arguments for brick-and-mortar stores in general. The benefits of locally owned brick-and-mortar stores are local reciprocity and solidarity, which improve the local economy. Chain stores have national/international products that break down local traditions and foster narrow-mindedness and idiosyncratic choices. On the other hand, locally owned stores have the capacity to buy specialized and unique products, which could increase revenue and interest in brick-and-mortar stores in general (“going shopping”). In this dissertation, however, I do not distinguish between locally owned and chain stores. As long as the chain stores do not replace locally owned stores, there are some benefits of both. Brick-and-mortar stores are important because they promote civic diversity, social interaction, economic growth and the ability to attract tourists. This is especially relevant due to the socioeconomically aspect of city development. To be more precise, the brick-and-mortar stores in a town improve the economy, making the maintenance and development of the town possible. This could make the inhabitants more satisfied with their living conditions and thereby more likely to stay in the town. It could also attract new inhabitants, as the town is an example of an economically flourishing situation. If brick-and-mortar stores disappear, it will have dramatic consequences. The brick-and-mortar store has since the middle age been an important aspect of town development and social interaction. In the next section, I will roughly outline some significant changes in brick-and-mortar store, with the aim of identifying some of the problems with brick-and-mortar store today.

1.2. THE HISTORY OF STORES

From the beginning of civilization, humans have traded products (Stearns, 2006). Great empires rose from this, and historians state that ideas and technologies were exchanged from one tradesman to another and thereby made their way between cultures (Graham, 2008). For centuries, urban centres formed through commercial trading (Morrison, 2003), which is one of the oldest forms of human interaction. This historic overview starts in the renaissance when markets and fairs were a very important part of people’s daily life. It is based on the development in leading countries in relation to retailing: the focus is first on Italy and London (United Kingdom), followed by the USA. In this way, I have selected the countries that have contributed to the modern perception of what retailing is.

1.2.1. RENAISSANCE STORES (1400-1700)

In medieval times, most towns were built around a weekly market where people from the town sold their goods to people from the countryside and vice versa (Davis, 2013). The market was a place for social interaction, especially between

people of the countryside and town folks (Morrison, 2003). Even though the market was the main focus, the shops in the town had an additional commercial outcome. Regarding appearance, shops were mostly stall-like: dark and small with an open front and heavy timber construction. Other stores were workshops of craftsmen (guilds) or showrooms owned by wealthy merchants. The most expensive places for tenement were around the marketplace (Morrison, 2003). The annual fair had a more extravagant dimension than the weekly market and the permanent shops. In 1400, it is estimated that there were three dozen annual fairs in England. It was a yearly outing where everything was sold and bought:

“Nothing was too bulky, or too costly, or too commonplace to find its way there somehow, by wagon or packhorse or barge. Iron from Sussex, tin and copper from Cornwall, lead from Derbyshire were sold all over the country by means of fairs. So was the skilled work of London craftsmen, especially in costly fabrics and in gold and silver” (Davis, 2013, p. 25).

The international markets were the biggest of them all. Despite the autarkic society at the time, merchants from surrounding countries came to buy English wool, and they bought it with exotic luxuries from overseas (Davis, 2013). After the Middle Ages, Evelyn Welch portrays shopping as entertainment rather than a chore and notes that “purchasing indulgence was more of an activity than a product” (Welch, 2005, p. 301). This was the rise of recreational shopping. At this time, shopping in towns was almost completely done by woman and servants. It was not suitable for men to shop, and it was viewed as degrading (Welch, 2005). Shopping in the renaissance was not the seemingly simple act of shoppers buying products for the home and shopkeepers displaying and selecting products. It was an affirmation and reinforcement of social order. Shopping was an opportunity to interact with influential people in the town, to display one’s high income through expensive purchases or to show one’s refined taste by choosing the right products (Welch, 2005). In the seventeenth century, the possibility to get credit was introduced, which led to an increase in the number of stores (Leong, 2001, p. 42).

1.2.2. THE STORES OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (1701-1800)

At least since the beginning of the eighteenth century, shopping had become an everyday activity in Italy, which had a huge impact on markets and fairs, as they continued to decrease in size and importance (Morrison, 2003). This already began in the sixteenth century, as Venetian shopkeepers refused to sell in the marketplace even though they were forbidden from selling from their shop on market days. This seems to be a critical factor in the decline of markets and fairs. Due to the fact that shops had the newest, most fashionable items,

consumers began to prefer shops. Shopkeepers had a refined sense of customer's needs, wants and desires (Morrison, 2003).

In the same period, one of the most significant aspects in the history of shops happened: the affordability of glazing accelerated the importance of shop fronts (Morrison, 2003). The façade became an essential part of attracting customers (Stobart, Hann, & Morgan, 2007). The shopkeeper knew that the shop front needed to be eye catching and seductive in order to motivate the passer-by to enter the shop (Morrison, 2003). In 1755, André Rouquet noted “a kind of illumination which joined to the glasses, the sconces, and the rest of the furniture, is in regard to those who are passing by, frequently productive of theatrical effect, of a most agreeable vista” (Morrison, 2003, p. 36). This quote shows how factors such as furnishings and displays of goods inside the shop also became important in creating an opulent domestic atmosphere (Stobart et al., 2007; Morrison, 2003). Even though most shops were still hiding products, shops that were planned as a leisure environment that motivated browsing, looking at and trying out products began to emerge (Stobart et al., 2007). An example is provided by the bookseller James Lackington, who opened two literary lounges for men and woman equipped with books in glass cases (Morrison, 2003). The shopkeeper's motivation for this form of leisure shopping was to encourage customers to linger and thereby make additional purchases (Stobart et al., 2007).

By the second half of the century, shopping had become a popular pastime (Morrison, 2003), and even though women were responsible for purchasing for the household, they also exerted a considerable amount of time and trouble to shop for “personal and expressive goods, conveying identity, personality and fashion” (Stobart et al., 2007, p. 12). This was a way to portray and confirm their social class in public areas, such as assembly rooms and pleasure gardens, and in the streets. Unlike the seventeenth century, men were also described as enthusiastically engaged in shopping activity, for example, to seek out accessories, books and home décor. Shopping was a polite and suitable way of passing time. It was a pleasurable activity of seeing and being seen. Conversations with other shoppers and shopkeepers could include local news and gossip, but it could also be more focused on respectable issues, such as novelty and fashion. This sociability towards consumers was a way for shopkeepers to build strong social bonds with them and thereby tie them into long-term economic relationships (cf. former section about the benefits of locally owned stores). Giving customers credit was part of this bond. By that token, the social aspect of the store was nurtured through investments in materials and actions. This could mean everything from providing comforts such as chairs and refreshments or an exclusive session in a back room (Stobart et al., 2007). This was also the beginning of self-service, but at this time, self-service was reserved for customers who were not important enough to get decent service (Morrison, 2003).

This also meant that there was a significant increase in the distinction between inclusive and exclusive sociability. Some stores proclaimed openness to all, while others were exclusive to the few. If one wished to visit the store, it would be by invitation. Inclusive stores represented the beginning of the democratization of shopping, where non-essentials were not merely a luxury for the wealthy (Stobart et al., 2007). Due to the tentative beginning of such democratization, there was a growth in the size of shops, which were called “warehouses”, “magazines” or “repositories” at the end of the eighteenth century (Morrison, 2003). As a result, arcades began to arise as a way for pedestrians to avoid the busy, hostile and crowded streets. The first arcade, *Galeries de Bois, Palais Royal*, was built in Paris, France, in 1788. Due to its popularity, numerous arcades were built in Paris and London (Coleman, 2007).

1.2.3. THE STORES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1801-1900)

In the eighteenth century, most people were still bartering products on markets, fairs and in everyday activities and it was based on basic needs and unquestioned social traditions. The emerging industrialisation meant that goods became more ‘anonymous’ due to the separation of production and consumption. Goods were increasingly produced for mass markets where producers and consumers didn’t have direct physical contact with one another. Marx (1983) distinguishes between “Gebrauchswert” (use-value) and “Tauschwert” (exchange-value). Use-value is the utility of a material thing (i.e. iron, corn, diamonds) and exchange-value is when one commodity is valued in relation to money. (ibid) In the nineteenth century consumptions based on exchange-value increases as a consequence of the transition towards a money based economy. This further accelerated the more impersonalized aspects of consumption. As William formulates it:

“Active verbal interchange between customer and retailer was replaced by the passive, mute response of consumer to things - striking example of how “the civilizing process” tames aggressions and feelings toward people while encouraging desires and feelings directed towards things. Department stores were organized to inflame these material desires and feelings” (Williams, 1982, p. 67)

At the same time people began to have more leisure, education, and better health, which propelled a considerable increase in consumption opportunities (ibid)

After the Second World War, there were 300 arcades across the world. Two of the most prominent arcades in London at the time were the *Royal Opera Arcade* of 1818 and the *Burlington Arcade* of 1819, with 72 shops in a 150 m arcade. In Paris, the arcade had two or more floors, with apartments and restrooms above the stores. Arcades could be impressive constructions with a glass roof covering

the entire street (for example, *Galerie d'Orleans*, which replaced *Galleries de Bois*). As a guide in Paris express:

“These arcades, a recent invention of industrial luxury, are glass-roofed, marblepaneled corridors extending through whole blocks of buildings, whose owners have joined together for such enterprises. Lining both sides of the arcade, which gets its light from above, are the most elegant shops, so that the passage is a city, a world in miniature” (Benjamin, 1999, p. 15)

In general, England was the economically and politically dominating superpower and a frontrunner for retail development in the nineteenth century. The shops in England were called Victorian shops, in reference to the period in which Queen Victoria reigned from 1837 until 1901. Victorian shops varied from small, dark, closed off, ill ventilated, and awful places to open, neatly decorated, and carefully lighted places that were equipped with comfortable chairs. According to Kelly Graham (2008) Victorian shops were – in contrast to modern twenty-first century stores – unique. They were very different due to their willingness to take on untested products and small quantities of products for small groups of customers with specific needs, which further increased the bond between the store and the customer.

“There was a delicacy about Victorian shopping that is sadly absent from modern shopping, whether it is the tastefully appointed, marble-clad rooms for lady’s rest and recuperation, or the restaurants, serving real and not ready-made, microwaved meals. Ladies wear – dresses and shoes and lingerie – was always placed at the second floor or above, so no male shopper, however lost, would blunder into a scene that might embarrass him” (Graham, 2008, p. 16).

Still, there was a degree of repetition in the general appearance of shops, which was criticized by John Tallis’s in “Street Views of London”, published in 1838-40, and the lithographer Nathaniel Whittock, who wrote a book on shop front design in 1840. They both complained about the little architectural differentiation and tendency for shopkeepers to imitate one another (Morrison, 2003).

Between 1840 and 1870, a significant transformation in retailing occurred – in size, organization and practice. Department stores emerged throughout Europe and America: *Le Bon Marché* in 1869, the more varied *Macy’s* in 1870, *John Wanamaker’s* “New Kind of Store” in 1877 and *Stewart’s* in the 1840s (Miller, 1981). *Le Bon Marché* expanded in 1869, and within eighteen years, the result was a department store that “(...) excited the senses and offered the unexpected: the store had concerts, free gifts of almanacs and balloons for the children, as well as rooms where shoppers could rest, meet friends and socialize” (Graham, 2008, p. 123)

The late 19th century department store was deeply influenced by *Le Bon Marche*. The stores were bigger and more elaborate, with several floors and specialized service. Instead of solely focusing on keeping prices low, the new department stores focused on providing a leisure environment through an elaborated and sensuous atmosphere (Graham, 2008). Still, the department store had an impact on the emergence of ready-to-wear clothing, which was threatening craftsmen (tailors and shoemakers). Ready-to-wear clothing was more convenient and less expensive (Miller, 1981, p. 34). Department stores in the late 19th century had more capital to experiment with new products and modern technologies, such as elevators, cash registers, and pneumatic tubes, as well as the ability to experiment with different types of construction and plate-glass windows (Crossick & Jaumain, 2002). At the end of the century, department stores were the first places to get electric lighting and motorized delivery (Graham, 2008).

From the eighteenth century, the shop continued to transform into the nineteenth century. They were larger and brighter, had small windows and were more concerned with display. Afterward, the development mainly concerned windows, which gradually became bigger (Graham, 2008). Woman had an important role in public life in towns, and people tended to see shopping as an activity for middle class woman, who often “wasted time in the shops”. Shops changed from being a place for the wealthy to seek social affirmation to a place for everyone (Graham, 2008). In this period, men did not shop, and they were viewed as problematic shoppers. They would rather let wives, mothers or daughters shop for them. In a situation where men were forced to shop, “they presented a contradictory – and humorous – picture of disinterest, anxiety, and masculine air of mastery, which confirms the idea that woman were better suited to shopping” (Graham, 2008, p. 5).

In 1830, there were two dominant rules in shops. First, there were no fixed prices on products. There was always a form of negotiation between the customer and the shop assistant. Second, the customer could not touch or examine the products themselves. All the products were behind the counter in drawers or on shelves. Mainly because of the department store, the adherence to both rules began to decline in the nineteenth century. By the end of the nineteenth century, both rules had completely vanished in shops. (Benjamin, 1999) Products were placed within customers’ reach on the counter, in open shelves or on the floor in bins, which was the beginning of a more sensory experience. It was the customer who decided what to look at, not a sales assistant, which implies the further democratization of the store (Graham, 2008). In Paris, *Magasins De Nouveautés* introduced fixed prices, and this quickly became the norm in stores (Coleman, 2007). This also meant the cessation of credit, and as a natural consequence, there were fewer shop assistants. Nevertheless, shop assistants still serviced customers by advising them, wrapping gifts, stocking shelves and taking their money (Graham, 2008).



Photo: *James Smith & Sons*, United Kingdom (London)

James Smith & Sons is a famous Victorian shop that is still in existence. It is an umbrella shop established in 1870 that is located on New Oxford street in London. The appearance has not changed since the nineteenth century. Still today, there is an umbrella craftsman who makes umbrellas and walking sticks and takes care of repair work.



Photo: *Liberty*, United Kingdom (London)

Liberty is a department store in London that opened in 1875. Its luxurious architecture inside and outside offers a window into the nineteenth century shopping scene.

1.2.4. THE STORES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND (1900–2017)

In the nineteenth century, Great Britain was the most developed country – especially in relation to shopping. In twentieth century, this shifted to USA due to its political position and economic strength⁴. At the same time, the car was rapidly emerging in the states. When the car became an everyman object, supermarkets and shopping malls began to be located outside cities. One of the first cities to undergo major change because of the car was Los Angeles. When the car gained popularity in 1920, there was the natural development of service stations, and later in 1927, the car wash emerged. At the same time, the shopper's needs began to change. In 1923, the head of an insurance company *C.L. Peckham* was frustrated about parking options when he was running errands, and therefore, he initiated the idea of assembling a cluster of shops in one area with a large parking lot in the middle. As Peckman was not the only one with this frustration, the idea quickly became a realization under the name drive-in market, which was the beginning of shopping malls. In general, customers were more likely to shop at places that had parking lots or parking areas close by. Due to the larger quantities of groceries that woman purchased, they began to dislike the long distance to their cars, and they did not like to search for a place to park their car (Longstreth, 2000).

In late forties, the drive-in market was beginning to face competition from the upcoming supermarket, which had three significant advantages. First, supermarkets disposed of the discriminatory treatment of costumers as “good” or “bad” based on an evaluation of how much they spend (or could spend). Second, they established a low price as an important factor when choosing a place to shop. Third, they were placed – according to the drive-in concept – at a location that made them easy to access by car and that included large parking lots. The idea for supermarkets was to purchase large quantities of goods and thereby to be able to sell at a lower price than their competition. To reduce costs, staffing was kept at an absolute minimum, and self-service was implemented in every way possible. At first, supermarkets focused on pragmatic aspects of shopping, such as having a place to park the car and having lower prices, but in the 1930s, there was an interest in creating environments that the customer enjoyed. Elements of such environments could include impressive arched wooden ceilings, polychrome patterns of colours complementing the fresh produce and packaged goods, illuminating skylights, huge windows, long parallel aisles that motivated movement from one to another, and open displays of goods (Longstreth, 2000).

The first chain store emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, and in 1929, chain stores accounted for 22% of retail sales in the USA. Chain

⁴ After World War I, the USA was the major creditor in the world; almost every country involved in the war owed it money.

stores assured low prices and homogenous products. Such standardization of goods offered a sense of trust for customers. As supermarket chain stores bought large quantities of goods and as chain stores often had their own warehouse, the cost of renting an outside warehouse was removed. Most chain stores had self-service, not only to lower cost, but also to eliminate the risk of sales assistants being discriminatory of customers. In general, chain stores promoted themselves as democratic places where everyone would be treated equally (Deutsch, 2007). Popular chain stores today, such as *Ikea* (1943), *Zara* (1945), *H&M* (1947), *Walmart* (1962), *Target* (1962), *GAP* (1969), *Starbucks* (1971) and *Aldo* (1972), emerged after 1945, and they are still based on the same values.

In the 1930s, there was a transformation from self-service to supermarkets, which from that point kept on growing throughout Europe and reached Denmark in the 1960s (*Dansk Supermarked*). This was a period where retailers in the 1950 where mainly focused on efficiency, democratization (everyone is welcome) and convenience (parking lot, large variety of products, large quantities, no queues) (Shaw, Bailey, Alexander, Nell, & Hamlett, 2014). After 1945, there was an “Americanization” of Europe due to Europeans’ fascination with America. Things such as chewing gum, *Coca-Cola*, and nylon panties after the Second World War and rock ‘n’ roll and blue jeans at the end of the 1950s are testaments to this fascination. Moreover, supermarkets and self-service retailing also became symbols of the American way of life, which made the emergence of supermarkets unproblematic and rapid. This was also catalysed by unusually strong economic growth in Western European societies, with an increase in wages, growth in the welfare state and a decrease in class differences (Shaw et al., 2014; Crafts, 1995).

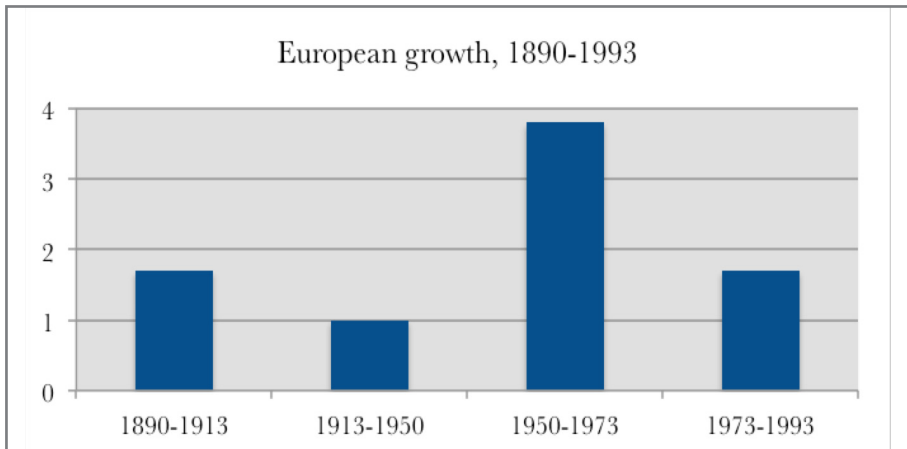


Table 3. The annual growth in Europe from 1890-1993. GDP and population are aggregates for 12 countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom) Sources: 1870-1989, Maddison, *Dynamic forces*; 1989-93, OECD, *Economic outlook* (Crafts, 1995, p. 429)

In UK, the television emerged in 1953 when people wanted to watch Queen Elizabeth’s coronation, and during the 1960s, television began to have a major impact on public amusement (Moran, 2013). Not only was it possible to find entertainment outside, but now entertainment could also be found in the comfort of your own home. One place that significantly was affected by this change was movie theaters. Even though they tried to get people back to the movies by initiatives such as “drive-ins”, wide-screen formats and Technicolor, attendance kept declining. By the 1970s and early 1980s, “cocooning” at home in front of the television became a known phenomenon. This was enhanced by technologies such as the VCR (Moss, 2007, p. 59).

In 1990, computers started to become affordable for more people, which was the beginning of the spread of home computers. At this time, the Internet was becoming open for commercialization, which lead to the online shopping industry. In 1994, it was possible to type in a URL address and visit a certain destination on Internet, and *Pizza Hut* was the first to take advantage of this by making ordering available online. Only a year afterward, a significant number of companies were using the online market to sell goods, including *Amazon* and *eBay*. In 2000, online shopping had become a multibillion-dollar industry that is continuing to increase. In 2014, the industry in the USA generated annual sales of more than \$232 billion (Valdes, 2014). In Denmark, the trend is the same. Since the first online store, sales on the Internet still continue to grow.

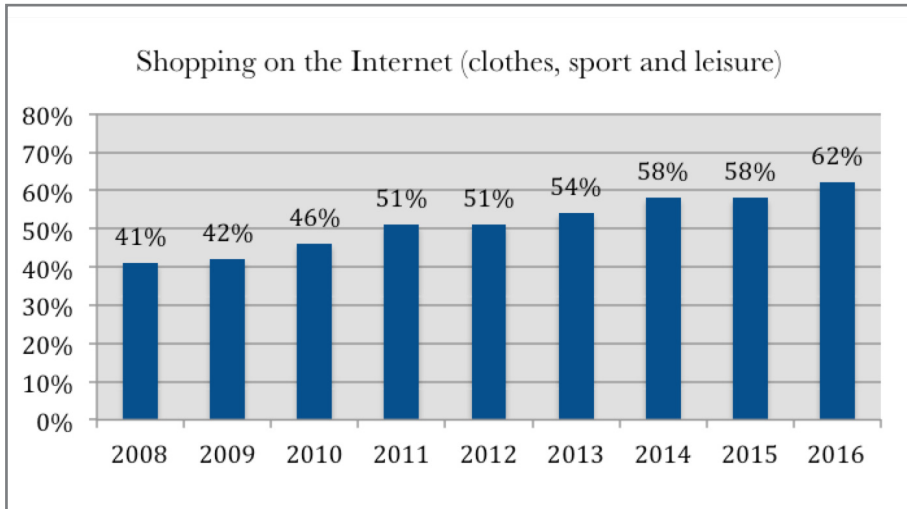


Table 4. Calculated by Denmark’s statistics BEBRIT08 (Appendix 1). The table illustrates the percentage (y) of people from 2008-2016 (x) shopping on the Internet in the category clothes, sport and leisu

At the same time, a recession became a reality in America and Europe. In Denmark, this entailed a dramatic decrease in retail sales from 2007 to 2013. Even though overall retail sales decreased, there was no effect on online sales, despite the fact that the crisis continued to worsen.

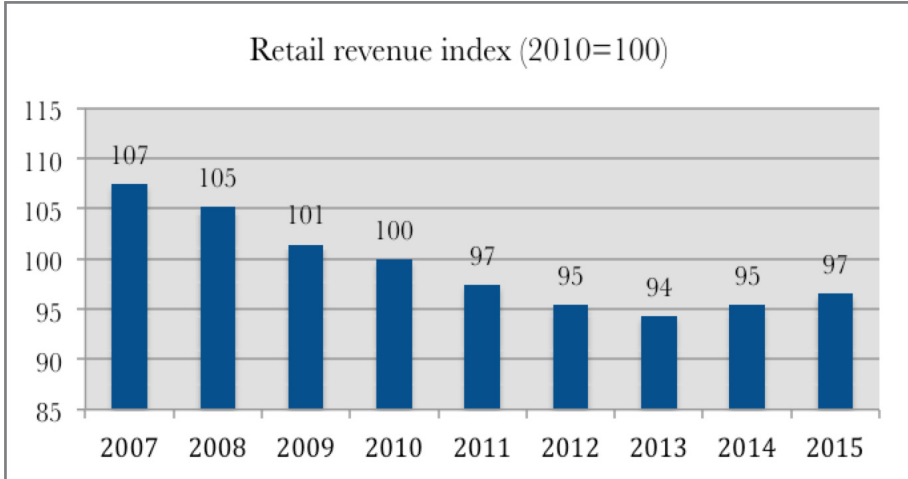


Table 5. Calculated by Denmark's statistics DETA21 (Appendix 2). The table illustrates the index (y) of retail revenue (2010=100) from 2007-2015 (x).

Thus, the recession brought significant pressure for the retail industry – especially brick-and-mortar stores. This made the brick-and-mortar stores economically vulnerable while online shopping was rapidly emerging in Denmark in 2008. At the same time, online stores offered many advantages. Online stores required fewer employees, and they had flexibility in inventory (direct shipping from suppliers), lower (if any) rent and 24-hour operation. The consequence was an overall decrease in their prices compared to brick-and-mortar stores. This has created the alleged habit of customers entering the brick-and-mortar store to get advice and then going online to buy a product at a cheaper price. Today, the prices in these two channels are more or less the same, indicating that online stores no longer have to compete on price.

The overall transformation of stores from the renaissance until today has been immense. There have been changes in appearance, products, customers and the reason to why people shop. This is illustrated in the following model:

	1400	1700
What kind of stores?	Weekly Market	○
	Craftsmen Shops	
	Annual Fairs	○
The apperance of the stores	Dark, Open-fronted, Timber & Small	○
		○ Affordable glazing
		○ Facade became
		○ Interior became
		○ Creating opulent
Products in the stores	Products was ordered in the store and delivered later	
		○ Credit
		○ Stores began to
Who is the shoppers?	Woman and servants	○
		○ Women and men (wealthy)
Why poeple shop?	Social interaction	
	Affirmation and reinforcement of social order	
	display a high income and refined taste	
		○ Pastime (browsing) ○ A pleasurable activity

1750

1800

○ Arcades

○ Victorian Stores

essential part of attracting customers (eye-catching & seductive)

important (lightning, furniture, and displaying the goods

domestic atmosphere

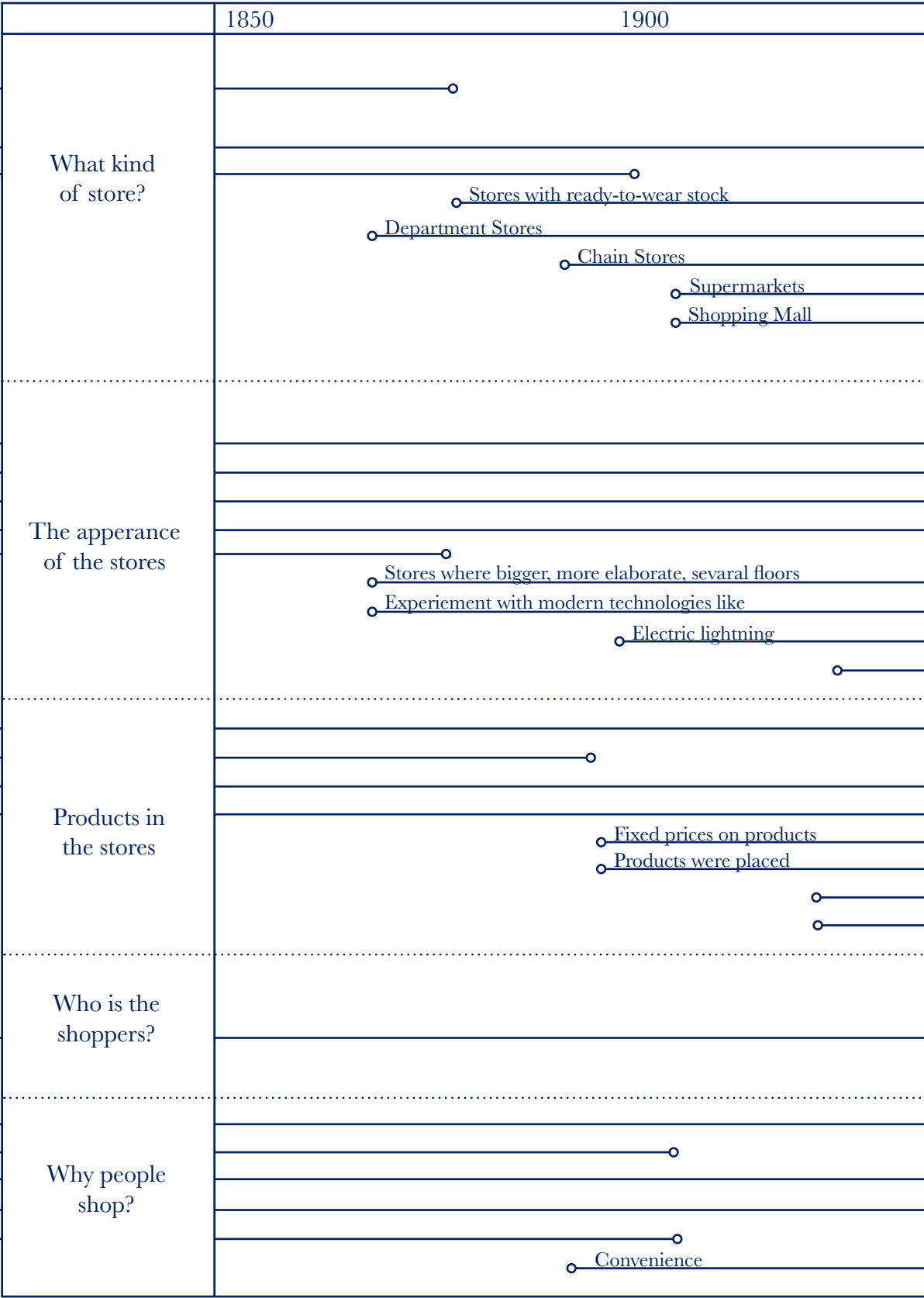
○ Comfortable chairs, refreshments, back rooms

have stock available

○ Displaying the goods inside the shop (behind counters or glazing)

○ Middle class woman

of seeing and being seen



1950

2000

○ Online Stores

elevators, cash register and pneumatic tubes
and motorized delivery
Focus on creating environments that customers enjoy

within customers reach on the counter, in open shelves or on the floor in bins
Self-service was implemented in every way possible
Focus on lowering the prices

○ Women and men

Figure 1: Transformation of stores from the renaissance until today including changes in appearance, products, customers and the reason to why people shop..

This historic overview indicates that consumer experience has been a consistent part of retailing from at least the 1400 until today although in different degrees. To be more precise, this retail genealogy signifies that consumption is both based on the fulfilment of basic needs (use-value) and what appear to be more pleasurable aspects (i.e. social, leisure). This second aspect seems to have increased over time. The point is, that even though the more pleasurable aspects have increased, stores nowadays still have an overall focus on convenience. As an example, the development of the modern brick-and-mortar stores based on convenience such as parking, shopping trolleys, low prices, large quantities and quick purchase processes. This attention to convenience made it very easy for online stores to take a substantial market share, because what is more convenient than shopping online? Rob Shield formulates it as such:

“Shopping and other consumption activities were considered under categories of convenience, proximity and rational economic choice especially from the 1950s through the 1970s. Such analyses lead to the construction of suburban “strip malls” oriented to automobile-born shoppers desiring choices amongst a range of shops but easy and convenient access with the rapid completion of their shopping task the goal” (Shields, 2003, p. 105).

Apart from tag scanners and credit cards, there have not been any overall changes in the appearance of the typical brick-and-mortar store since the 1960s. This is a problem because appearance is a consequence of convenience, which is problematic in competition against online stores, since they have the same agenda. Due to the spatial aspect of Brick-and-mortar stores they have tremendous potential in relation to the pleasurable aspect of shopping. This could be the reason why a new kind of store has emerged: a store with a more experience-based agenda, such as *Ikea*, *Build-a-bear*, *Benihana*, and *American Girl Place*.

As illustrated in figure 2, another interesting revelation throughout history concerns the social aspect of shopping. Until 1900, shops were social environments that motivated customers to engage in conversation with other customers and sales assistants to find products and negotiate the right price. This was one way to encourage the customer to purchase additional products. As an obvious result of self-service and supermarkets, the relationship between the sales personnel and the customer declined (Longstreth, 2000). In a survey conducted during 1960, when asked about her experience with self-service, a woman replied: “(...) I do not like the experience, and it felt so unfriendly and robotic.... I never went back after that one experience” (Shaw et al., 2014). Another woman revealed her experience with supermarkets: “(...) But my main emphasis was not on shopping in supermarkets at all. I don’t like them all that

much” (Shaw et al., 2014). Even though this is only the opinion of two women, the indescribable “dislike” of the supermarket and the description of self-service as “unfriendly and robotic” demonstrate the ongoing problem with self-service and supermarkets. Still, the advantages of self-service and the supermarket were too substantial to ignore. The five key benefits were increased sales, lower cost of wages, increased profits, no price reductions and a preference for self-service by some customers (Shaw et al., 2014).

Convenience is researched in a wide range of areas, such as eye tracking (Sorensen, 2009), robot-assisted navigation of grocery stores (Kulyukin, Gharpure & Nicholson, 2005), mathematical calculation of preference (Pampin & Peleteiro, 2016) and spacing of shelves (Frank & Massy, 1970). The common aim is to investigate how to make shopping effective –in relation to both making shopping easier for the customer and providing a way for stores to increase revenue. One of the most prominent researchers in this regard is Paco Underhill, who has published significant results related to human convenience. An example of one of his findings is the importance of shopping carts around the store due to the fact that human beings only have two hands. The findings also underline the importance of the unwillingness of people to reach for products on bottom rows (Underhill, 2009).

Indeed, logically speaking, why would the customer not want convenience, the cheapest price, more variety and quick service? Well, if stores have learned anything over the last three hundred years, people do not always have convenience as their most important criterion. In medieval times, shopping offered social interaction between the people of the countryside and the town folks, and the annual fair was an important social event where it was possible to buy or see exotic luxuries from overseas. Shopping was a way to confirm an identity by displaying high income or refined taste. In the eighteenth century, shops were beginning to be planned as a leisure environment to motivate lingering. In the nineteenth century, a democratization of shopping occurred – shops transformed from being a place for prosperous people to a place for everyone, and shopping became a popular pastime for middle-class woman.

Therefore, the three reasons, besides convenience, for people to go shopping, namely, social interaction, a leisure environment and identity confirmation, are still of interest today. First of all, even though self-service and fixed prices have eliminated some direct interaction between sale assistants and consumers, the social aspect of shopping is still a relevant aspect of shopping. In some cases, malls have become a place for teenagers to socialise, and sometimes, they are also where people get their first job (Crawford, 1992). The sociability of shopping today is more indirect, as it may allow one to meet an acquaintance or get a sense of something happening outside the closed world; “even if anonymously, one is present as part of a crowd, present for others and thus an object of their

surveillance scorn, commentary, cooperation, prejudice and so on” (Shields, 2003, p. 103). Second, leisure is also an area of interest in research on consumer behaviour. Leisure is captured by the lingering behaviour described earlier. When customers linger in the store, the possibility of them buying something increases. This behaviour could be described as browsing. In this regard, it is important to note that there is a distinction between purchasing and browsing (Bloch & Richins 1983; Bloch, Ridgway & Sherrell, 1989). Browsing could be defined as an indulging in dreams without the requirement to buy something (Williams, 1983). It is the activity before buying; it is a way of “mentally ‘trying on’ products” (Crawford, 1992, p. 13) to find out what consumers want and do not want (Crawford, 1992). This process is described as an interaction with material goods that includes questions such as “‘is that for me?’; ‘am I like that?’; ‘could that be (part of) me?’; ‘could I be like that?’; ‘would I like to be like that?’, and so on” (Falk & Campbell, 1997, p. 4). The activity of browsing is compared to the experience of being a tourist because the behaviour is similar since both involve exploration and sightseeing (Bloch, 1983; Bloch, 1989). This process of wondering and evaluating products is an act of self-formation (Bloch & Richins 1983; Bloch et al., 1989). Finally, this process could offer identity confirmation. To be more precise, “Identity consists of reflexive awareness of who one is, personal standards of evaluating situations and actions, a continually revised biography, goals for the future and plans to attain them” (Langman, 2003). The acquisition of commodities could in some instances constitute the very construction of identity (Belk, 1988). Personal identity in such cases is related to one’s ability to create a coherent self-image through the selection of goods. In this process, shoppers can confirm their identity and imagine what they might become (Crawford, 1992).

Thus, there are two overall paradigms: A focus on rational benefits through convenience and a focus on emotional benefits through social interaction, a leisure environment and identity confirmation. In the following, I will examine how these two paradigms are expressed in research on consumer behaviour.

1.3. RESEARCH ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

The four tendencies in shopping behaviour, social interaction, a leisure environment, identity confirmation and convenience, inform two overall paradigms: a focus on rational benefits through convenience and a focus on emotional benefits through social interaction, a leisure environment and identity confirmation. These two paradigms of emotional and rational benefits could be translated into hedonic and utilitarian values, which is a way to outline the field of consumer behaviour (Noble, Griffith & Weinberger, 2005). Hedonic values represent the pleasurable dimension of consumption (Havlena & Holbrook, 1986; Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989; Hirschman, 1984; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook, Chestnut, Oliva & Greenleaf, 1984; Holbrook &

Hirschman, 1982). Utilitarian values represent functional and instrumental motives that are related to possession needs (Noble et al., 2005: Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994), such as increased information about a product or service, the opportunity for comparable products/prices across channels, immediate possession by securing an item for use with minimal time delay and exposure to a variety of products (Noble et al., 2005).

In this dissertation, I am interested in the emotional paradigm with hedonic values. In one of the first attempts to challenge utilitarian thinking, in 1959, Sidney Levy wrote the article “Symbols for sale”, where he states: “People buy things not only for what they can do, but also for what they mean” (Levy, 1959, p. 118). Later, in 1972, Edward M. Tauber explained the reason why people shop, where he offers hedonic factors such as role-playing, diversion, self-gratification and sensory stimulation (Tauber, 1972). Still, hedonic values were not recognized until the early eighties, when Holbrook & Hirschman revolutionized the traditional utilitarian agenda in consumer behaviour by highlighting the importance of hedonic values (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). This idea was firmly established in 1989, when Thompson, Locander and Pollio criticised consumer research for being a field of cognition rather than emotion (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989). Examples of topics in recent research in the *Journal of Retailing* on utilitarian values include the combination of product, service and price (Meyer & Shankar, 2016) the use of customer upgrades on products instead of offering free products (Mao, 2016), return policies (Janakiraman, Syrdal & Freling, 2016), the out-of-stock effect (Huang & Zhang, 2016), negotiation (Alavi, Wieseke & Guba, 2016), price guarantees (Haruvy & Leszczyc, 2016), product mix (Fay, Xie & Feng, 2015), and personalized online advertising (Bleier & Eisenbeiss, 2015).

Today, the importance of both utilitarian and hedonic values is widely recognized in retailing (Babin et al., 1994; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). There are many utilitarian reasons to shop online (convenience, time), and research also suggest that utilitarian elements are more effective online (Bridges & Florsheim, 2008). Therefore, the theoretical focus in this dissertation is on hedonic values, or more precisely, it focuses on the effects of attitudes, emotions, preferences and feelings. The output for the consumer is fun, enjoyment and pleasure (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). In this regard, an important contribution of this paper is that it examines why themed brand stores are so powerful by focusing in the retail brand ideology at American Girl Place, which incorporates different fields of consumer research. The authors claim that: “Consumers go to themed flagship brand stores not only to purchase products; they go to experience the brand, company, and products in an environment largely controlled by the manufacturer” (Borghini, Diamond, Kozinets, McGrath, Muñiz & Sherry, 2009).

Some of the most prominent research fields in consumer behaviour aiming to understand the hedonic dimension of retailing can be found in the following areas: atmospherics, service design and experience economy. All areas are closely interlinked, and a clear distinction between the areas would be forced. Nevertheless, I will present the areas individually by introducing the most significant contributions. The aim is to present an overview of the research areas thereby placing my contribution.

1.3.1. ATMOSPHERICS

Atmospherics was firmly established in marketing by Philip Kotler in the article “Atmospherics as a Marketing Tool”, published in 1973. He made the following provocative statement:

“One of the most significant features of the total product is the place where it is bought or consumed. In some cases, the place, more specifically the atmosphere of the place, is more influential than the product itself in the purchase decision. In some cases, the atmosphere is the primary product” (Kotler, 1973, p. 48)

Since then, atmospherics has been used as a theoretical term in research on stores. In particular, research on atmospheric cues has focused on topics such as displays in stores (Patton, 1981; Chevalier, 1975), colours (Bellizzi & Hite, 1992), music (Areni & Kim, 1993; Hul, Dube, Chebat, 1997), lightning (Areni & Kim, 1994), and odours (Hirsch, 1995; Spangenberg, Crowley, & Henderson, 1996). In a 1982 article, Donovan and Rossiter combine atmospherics with environmental psychology, which is a field in psychology that investigates the relationships between behaviour and the physical environment (Bell, Greene, Fisher, & Baum, 1996). Donovan and Rossiter develop a method to measure emotional⁵ responses in stores. They use a stimulus-organism-response paradigm based on customers’ desire to physically stay in an environment, desire to look around and explore, desire to communicate with others and degree to which performance or satisfaction is enhanced. They used questionnaires to collect data, and customers were asked to indicate their response to different retail situations. They then evaluate their emotional states, for instance, by asking whether subjects feel good, happy, satisfied, excited and free. This evaluation is used to demonstrate the validity of the answers and therefore the SOR measurement method (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982).

⁵ From this point on “environment” and “atmosphere” have often used as synonyms. For example, in the article, “Atmospheric effects on shopping behavior: a review of the experimental evidence”, they use the terms “facility based environmental cues or atmospherics” (Turley & Milliman, 2000, p. 193).

In 1992, the prominent article “An experimental approach to making retail store environmental decisions” based on the SOR method was published. The research examines the effect of ambient cues (lighting and music) and social cues (number/friendliness of employees). The data were collected by placing test persons in a laboratory setting to view videos of a store and then letting them complete a questionnaire. The most important findings concerned the effect of atmospheric variables and the customer’s positive emotional state, with a correlation between the customer’s positive emotional state and their willingness to buy. This reveals the economic benefits of atmospheric cues, thereby establishing atmosphere and emotional states as an important research field. Another significant finding in the article is the positive effect of having a person greet customers as they enter the store (Baker, Levy & Grewal, 1992). In the field of atmospherics, there is a focus on both physical factors, such as décor, lighting, and shelves, and service factors, such as greetings and smiling.

Baker, Grewal & Parasuraman reused the same method in 1994, where respondents were shown videos that “walked” them through a store and were then asked to evaluate merchandise and service in prestige and discount environments. The prestige environment included cues such as classical background music, soft lighting, an open layout, neatly organized merchandise and three sales people with aprons who greeted the customer. The discount environment was characterized by Top 40 music, bright lighting, a grid layout, poorly organized merchandise and sales people with no apron. The authors establish a correlation between prestige environments and test persons who evaluate merchandise and service to be of higher quality (Baker, Grewal, & Parasuraman, 1994).

There are many different atmospheric variables that lead to a behavioural response. First, there are external variables, such as the entrance, colour of the building, and surroundings. Second, there are general interior variables, such as lightning, music, scent, wallpaper and temperature. Third, there are layout and design variables, such as waiting areas, furniture and placement of cash registers. Fourth, there are point-of-purchase and decoration variables, such as signs and cards, pictures, artwork, and product displays. Finally, there are human variables, such as crowding by employees and privacy (Turley & Milliman, 2000, p. 194). The combination of atmospheric variables can portray a certain store image. A 2000 article on self-congruity addresses the benefits of matching the retail image with shoppers’ self-image. The greater the match, the more likely the customer will have a favourable image of the store and therefore patronize the store. Thus, having the right atmosphere for the development of a long-lasting relationships with customers (Sirgy, Grewal & Mangleburg, 2000). Since then, research on atmospherics in retailing has mainly been focused on technology in brick-and-mortar stores (Vrechopoulos, 2010; Dennis, Newman, Michon, Brakus & Wright, 2010; Sirbu, Saseanu & Ghita, 2015; Poncin &

Mimoun, 2014), online retailing (Childers, Carr, Peck & Carson, 2002; Cho & Fiorito, 2009; Dailey, 1999; Dailey, 2004; Machleit, Eroglu & Mantel, 2000; Eroglu, Machleit & Davis, 2001; Eroglu, Machleit & Davis, 2003; Fiore & Kelly, 2007; Gorn, Chattopadhyay, Sengupta & Tripathi, 2004; Liang & Lai, 2002; McKinney, 2004; Manganari, Siomkos & Vrechopoulos, 2009; Richard, 2005; Vrechopoulos, O'Keefe & Doukidis, 2000) and mobile retailing (Manganari, Siomkos & Vrechopoulos, 2007; Shankar, Venkatesh, Hofacker & Naik, 2010). In this regard, there is a lack of research in atmospherics about the hedonic and experiential qualities of shopping in modern brick-and-mortar stores.

1.3.2. SERVICE DESIGN

Human variables in atmospherics combined with the field of service management (Gronroos, 1990) have been foundation of the field of service design. The main focus in research on atmospherics has been on ambient cues, such as lighting, music, interior and displays, where service management is based on controlling the service encounter (Gronroos, 1990; Kellogg, 1995). Regarding service design, research mainly investigates the atmospheric dimensions of the “service encounter” or the direct contact between customers and sales personnel (Bitner, 1990). Mary Jo Bitner is a pioneer in the field of service design. In her article “Evaluating service encounters: the effects of physical surroundings and employee responses”, she notes that the appearance of the environment has a huge impact on customers’ service evaluation (Bitner, 1990).

In a 1992 article, Mary Jo Bitner theoretically explains the importance of building service environments or “servicescapes”, which is “a framework that describes how to build the environment” (Bitner, 1990, p. 58). She argues that the management of servicescapes could provide a way to accomplish goals in external marketing (for example, the influence of atmospherics on customer satisfaction) and internal organizational goals (for example, employee motivations and productivity). Service design is a field that recognizes the importance of all elements in a service encounter: ambient cues (noise, music), the function of the space (layout, equipment), signs and symbols (style of décor, signage), employee responses, customer responses and the perceived service scape. In contrast to atmospherics, there is an overall focus on the holistic environment, thereby highlighting the significance of coherent elements in a service environment (Bitner, 1992). In 2002, a study on customer and frontline employees identified a mismatch between customers’ evaluation of the service encounter and employees’ perception of the encounter. Frontline employees failed to assess customers’ emotional state and therefore failed to tailor the service delivery to customers’ emotional state, indicating a managerial implication with respect to service design (Mattila & Enz, 2002).

To minimize such a problem, the service concept is suggested as a way to tie elements in a service encounter together by asking questions such as what is

to be done for the customer, and how can this be done? In this way, designers can focus on the whole experience (Goldstein, Johnston, Duffy & Rao, 2002). This concept was further developed in the field of “customer journeys” as a way to tie various elements together in order to create a more coherent experience for customers and service personnel. Customer journeys are a way to design services by registering the times during which a customer is in direct contact with a company. These are called “touchpoints”, and they extend to everything related to a service, such as advertising, social media updates, parking at the event, the possibility for beverages, toilet facilities, and service personnel. When touchpoints in a company are registered, they can investigate the customer’s point of view, including their feelings, motivations and attitude. A series of touchpoints constitutes a customer’s journey (Zomerdijs & Voss, 2010). Since then, contributions to the field have included the characterization and identification of service design in relation to experience value creation and service (Spohrer & Maglio, 2008; Helkkula, 2011; Teixeira, Patrício, Nunes, Nóbrega, Fisk & Constantine, 2012; Andreassen, Kristensson, Lervik-Olsen, Parasuraman, McColl-Kennedy, Edvardsson & Colurcio, 2016). Even though the field of service design dates back to Mary Jo Bitner in 1990 (and possibly even further), there is still a continuing need for definitions, indicating that service design is still in its nascent stage.

1.3.3. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Like atmospherics and service design, the concept of experience emerged as a consequence of the raising awareness of the positive effect of hedonic values in a retail environment. Atmosphere design involves the design of an environment that aims to set the customer in a certain mood. Therefore, research on atmospherics have focused on investigating variables that affect mood, such as rain, smiling sales assistants and specific colours. This is important because it contributes detailed insights into the customer’s reaction to certain variables. Service design requires a more holistic approach to the consumer experience, with an overall focus on all the touchpoints that the customer has with the organisation, including the interpersonal relationships in different situations. Research on the experience economy has a more emotional aim, with an overall focus on entertainment and surprise based on consumers’ biological and physiological reaction to a pleasurable experience (Jantzen, 2013)

Experimental marketing can be dated back to the fifties where Lawrence Abbott in 1955 (Abbot, 1955) and Wroe Alderson in 1957 (Alderson, 1957) wrote about consumption experiences. In 1959, Sidney Levy stated: “People buy things not only for what they can do, but also for what they mean” (Levy, 1959, p. 118). In later years, research on consumer experiences stopped. This could be because of the critique of marketing research, that followed when Piersons (1959) and Gordon and Howells (1959) evaluation reports concluded that there

was an alarming lack of academic criteria in American business schools. The reports emphasize the lack of mathematical and statistical knowledge. At the same time, it became possible to analyse large amounts of data due to the technological advancement in computers, which resulted in an overall focus on statistical quantification. It was Morris Holbrook, Elizabeth Hirschman and Craigh J. Thompson who restarted research on customer experiences. Craigh J. Thompson, William B. Locander and Howard R. Pollio wrote the article “Putting Consumer Experience Back into Consumer Research”. In this article, they question the lack of research on consumer experiences and notes that “[o]ther theorists have also noted that much of consumer research ignores experience” (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989, p. 143).

In 1998, Pine and Gilmore wrote the famous article “Welcome to the Experience Economy”, which offers a firm introduction to the positive economic consequence of customer experiences. They highlight the importance of five applicable areas when designing a memorable experience: create a theme for the experience (a unified story line), harmonize impressions with positive cues (each cue must accompany the theme), eliminate negative cues (remove the cues that contradict the theme), mix in memorabilia (sell goods that convey memories of the experience), and stimulate all five senses (sensory stimulants that support the theme) (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

The underlying rationale for the importance of these seemingly applicable elements is a complex explanation of different kinds of experiences “that derive from an iterative process of exploration, scripting, and staging” (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, p. 102). The requirement for a meaningful experience seems endless; it should be functional, purposeful, engaging, compelling and enjoyable (McLellan, 2000). The word “experience” is defined in philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology and ethnology (Carù & Cova, 2003). This makes a definition difficult, but for further understanding, a definition is needed. A suggestion could be that experience is a cognitive, physiological and emotional reaction to personal involvement in an activity. The outcome could be the development and/or construction of personality (Carù & Cova, 2003; Jantzen, 2013). In this regard, the term “optimal experience” is used to describe a state of “flow”, where a customer is absorbed in an experience through the right combination of skill and challenge (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

In the area of experience, research has focused on consumer behaviour in relation to specific experiences. Addis and Holbrook formulate it as such: “The value that the consumer gains from the consumption experience is created through the interaction, involving the relationship between the subject and the object” (Addis & Holbrook, 2001, p. 56-57). In a 2000 article, Bernd H. Schmitt combines experience with marketing as an aim to reach customers (Schmitt, 2000). At the same time, customer experience management (CEM) emerged as

a strategic field for managing the customer (Berry, Carbone & Haeckel, 2002; Smith & Wheeler, 2002; Schmitt, 2010). CEM involves orchestrating all the elements in the buying process into a total experience. Among these elements are the product, physical setting and employees (Berry et al., 2002). In a 2007 article, Anna Klingmann connects architecture with branding and experience as a strategic tool for designing architecture that expresses the identity of a city or organization (Klingman, 2007).

When it became evident that a pleasurable experience could motivate the customer to buy more and be more loyal toward a company, this line of research was established as a serious field (Pullman & Gross, 2004). In relation to retailing, the importance of the experience economy is immense (Petermans & Van Cleempoel, 2009). Further, the importance of orchestrating all elements to create a total experience has been agreed upon (Healy, Beverland, Oppewal & Sands, 2007; Pullman & Gross, 2004; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Pine and Gilmore point out that all elements should have a consistent theme and stimulate all the senses (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). At the same time, “research on consumer experiences in retail environments from a holistic perspective seems to be truly scarce” (Petermans, Janssens & Van Cleempoel, 2013, p. 1). This is also apparent when observing a typically brick-and-mortar store. The construction of the customer experience seems random and unintended. For example, brick-and-mortar stores have the opportunity to stimulate all five senses and to thus engage customers emotionally (Krishna, 2012). Touch and vision are often stimulated by the products in the store. Hearing could be stimulated by playing radio hits, with a range of different songs. Smell is typically based on the elements in the environment, such as the products and the perfume from costumers and sales personnel. Taste is rarely stimulated, unless there is some kind of tasting in a food store. Consumption research on sensory conflict – or in this case, sensory incoherency – is sparse (Krishna, 2012). On the other hand, research has shown a positive effect on impulse buying and enhanced satisfaction toward the environment when senses are congruent (Mattila & Wirtz, 2001; Russell, 2002; Spangenberg, Grohmann & Sprott, 2005; Yorkston & Menon, 2004; Krishna & Morrin, 2008; Hoegg & Alba, 2007). This indicates an overall lack of research on total consumer experiences.

Research on consumer experience thus adopts a holistic approach – but not to the same degree as that on service design. I am not interest in investigating every single element in an experience – I am interested in the foundation for all the elements: how can all elements be bound together to provide a cohesive experience. To be clear, the focus is not on single variables; it is on the customer’s immersion through the fictional aspects of a store.

From research on consumer behaviour, we know that a consumer experience can stimulate a positive emotional response, activate positive feelings and

facilitate identity constructing (Carù & Cova, 2003; Jantzen, 2013). An experience can engage customers through immersion (Carù & Cova, 2006). Pine and Gilmore define an immersive experience by explaining it in relation to the opposite term: absorption. Absorption involves “occupying a person’s attention by bringing the experience into the mind”. On the other hand, immersion entails “becoming physically (or virtually) a part of the experience itself” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 31). A field that has already mastered this is fiction, especially fictional games, which brings me back to *Grand Theft Auto*. This is a game that immerses players through active participation, thereby becoming important vessels for identity construction. I am interested in retail design where customers become active actors in an experience and thereby become immersed. As Pine and Gilmore formulates it:

“Rather than playing the passive role of couch potato, watching others act, the individual becomes an actor, able to affect the actual performance. Escapist experiences, such as computer-based sports games, let the average person feel what it’s like to be a superstar” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 31).

The last sentence here is essential for this dissertation. My proposition is as follows: Fictional worlds⁶ could be a way to create experiences that let customers feel what it is like to be a like someone else, such as a gangster, a princess, mother Teresa, or a wealthy business man. If an experience is built on the same principles as a fictional world in games, it has the potential to create a strong emotional response due to (1) a high level of activity, (2) immersion (3), and identity construction. These three areas are well researched. My interest is in how fictional worlds bind the three elements together in a cohesiveness experience. As mentioned, the holistic approach from research on consumer experiences is inadequate (Petermans, Janssens & Van Cleempoel, 2013, p. 1).

1.3.4. FICTIONAL WORLDS

To understand fictional worlds, I will start by introducing the theory of possible worlds, as it is more relevant to this dissertation. The concept of possible worlds originates from philosophy (Kripke, 1972), and it was developed as a theory in modal logic to validate the following prompt: “It is possible that...”. It provides a way to offer a semantic analysis of modal logic (Lewis, 1970). In this regard, possible worlds are conceivable worlds “if some otherwise possible worlds are inconceivable – say, seventeen-dimensional worlds – we should not count those” (Lewis, 1970, p. 176). Possible worlds are a philosophical way to understand the way things that might have been if something had been different from the actual world (Ryan, 1991). For example, the world would be very different if animals could talk or if dinosaurs were not extinct, and this is what the theory

6 However, the activity of buying can never be truly “fictional” due to the reality of paying.

of possible world addresses. The aim of modal logic is to navigate between valid and invalid arguments. To accomplish this, the logical system must be “sound” and “complete”, which is the logician's central concern (Garson, 2016). It was Thomas Pavel who first introduced possible world theory in literary semantics in 1975. He connects Saul A. Kripke logical model of possible worlds with fictional worlds as a way to point out problems with logics in literary discourses (Pavel, 1975). It was a way to theorize fictional literature in a way that made it possible to understand and construct true fictional worlds. In other words, the logics of possible worlds contributed a frame for fictional worlds to make them more true – or without errors. Possible world theory is, above all, a logical system that can be used to explain fiction (Fort, 2015).

Possible worlds are used in the literature as interpretative models to understand the logical structure of a fictional world. Fictional worlds are not formalised logical models. Fictional worlds are composed from the imagination of an author and activated by readers. Still, possible worlds are based on a logical universe with lies and errors (Fort, 2015). For example, in a fictional world, characters such as unicorns, robots, aliens and ghost could be inhabitants of the same world if this is the author's intent. In a possible world, there would have to be a logical explanation for the seemingly incompatible inhabitants. Possible world theory brings logic and frames to the fictional literature, making it possible to foresee if a story is believable or not on its own premises.

Possible worlds are semantic domains that “establish diverse relationships to the actual world, situate themselves at a closer or further distance from reality. They range from realistic worlds closely resembling the actual world to those violating its laws – fantastic worlds. But all of them are of the different stuff than the actual world: they are constituted by possible entities” (Doležel, 1998b, p. 788). Possible worlds are semiotic systems that are communicated in fictional texts by the construction of “language, colours, shapes, tones, acting, and so on” (Doležela, 1998, p. 15–16). According to logical semantics, three laws are particularly important in possible worlds in order for them to uphold their truth value: logical consistency, logical completeness and the validity of the logical implication. First, logical consistency includes noncontradictory elements: “a possible world cannot encompass both a statement A and its contradiction $\neg A$ at the same time” (Fort, 2015, p. 17). In relation to *Grand Theft Auto*, the gangster cannot be fearless and afraid at the same time. This would indicate an error or lie in his character and therefore an error or lie in the possible world. Second, logical completeness concerns the wholeness of the possible world, thus making obvious which logical universe the possible world represents. Therefore, some statements are true, and some are false. For example, in *Grand Theft Auto*, it is true that murder is accepted to completed a mission; it is false that a murder would be punished with prison. Third, the validity of the logical implication relates to the correlation between true statements: if there

exists a set of true statements (in any logical universe) from which another true statement can be implied, this statement is true in the same logical universe (Fort, 2015, p. 17). If it is accepted to murder a person in *Grand Theft Auto*, it would be logical that being violent in others ways, stealing cars, or deceiving others would also be accepted.

Marie-Laure Ryan theorises this by presenting three types of actual worlds. The first one is the actually “real” world (AW), or in other words, it is our native system. The second one is the textual actual world (TAW), and this is the world that is projected by the text. TAW is based on the logics, rules and system in the textual reference world (TRW). Because the textual actual world (TAW) has references to the TRW, there are an infinite number of TAWs based on the TRW. “TAW is offered as the accurate image of a world TRW, which is assumed (really of make-believe) to exist independently of TAW” (Ryan, 1991, p. 24). The three kinds of actual worlds open three types of representation or misrepresentation. If a person asked me for the way to the cafeteria, there would be correct directions or wrong directions ($TAW = AW$ or $TAW \neq AW$). If I were telling a story about a cafeteria (TAW), it would either be compatible or incompatible with the TRW. This would mean that there are some different problems. For example, if the TAW is a misrepresentation of the TRW, this could be interpreted, by the reader, as an error or lie. Ryan asks the following question: “In everyday language, we call an object or a situation fictional when it does not exist objectively, when it is a creation of the imagination, and we classify a text as fiction when it is primarily concerned with such entities. As antonyms to “fictional”, the above definition suggests “real” or “factual”. Then true of the real world, a statement yields facts; but what does it yield when false? (Ryan, 1991, p. 14). This is the case of $TAW = AW$ or $TAW \neq AW$. Ryan is interested in finding systems to analyse whether a fictional world is true or false. It is a way to differentiate fiction from errors and lies (Ryan, 1991). Possible world theory brings a logical frame for understanding what is “true” in a “false” (fictional) world.

Possible worlds are normally used in the literature or, more precisely, in the theory of narratives to “describe the imaginary worlds that are created in reader’s minds when they read a story (Doležel, 1998b, p. 788). Ryan describes the relationship between fiction and narratives in the following manner: “While fiction is a mode of travel into textual space, narratives is a travel within the confines of this space” (Ryan, 1991, p. 5). Narratives are actions of exploration where readers try to make sense of the information provided by a text (Ryan, 1991, p. 111). In this case, a possible world constitutes the presented information, and the narrative is the cognitive categorisation of the text. The implication in this regard is that if the reader finds the text impossible or difficult to translate into a meaningful narrative, the reader would reject the text as wrong or untruthful. Jerome Bruner further explains this by dividing a narrative into two areas. The

first area is the logical structures, where the main component is action (Bruner, 2009, p. 14). This can be compared to the linguistic term “syntax”, which is the logical-grammatical structure of language. The second area is the reader’s cognitive perception when reading a store (Bruner, 2009, p. 14). This could be compared to a semantic process where the reader interprets the different signs and symbols presented by the story, which is how the reader understands the fictional reference. This is where possible world theory is used to understand the imaginative process and whether a world is interpreted as true or false.

When readers process a story through the interpretation of a story, it is called “transportation”. Readers (or story receivers) are transported from the real world into a fictional one due to empathy and mental imagery. Owing to mental imagery, stories “come to live” through lively images “such that they feel as though they are experiencing the events themselves” (Van Laer, De Ruyter, Visconti & Wetzels, 2014, p. 799). According to Richard J. Gerrig, readers are transported by the narrative through the following 6 steps:

Step one is “Someone (“the traveler”) is transported”, which is an identification process where we analyse the local characters in order to act like them (“When in Rome, do as the Romans do”). Step two is “by some means of transportation”, which could be a novel, movie, store, event, theatre, or game. Step three is “as a result of performing certain actions”, such as “dodging a bullet” by moving to one side when someone in the text is shot at. Step four is “the traveler goes some distance from his or her world of origin”. In this regard, if the possible world resembles the actual world, the distance is shorter than if the possible world is very different from the actual world. In this case, the reader would have to make a greater cognitive effort to make sense of the world (by comparing it to the actual world). Step five is “which makes some aspects of the world of origin inaccessible”. In this respect, if a person is reading a story, watching a movie or playing a game, it would be very difficult to cook dinner at the same time. Step six is “The traveler returns to the world of origin, somewhat changed by the journey”, which represents a change in mental structure, such as memory, knowledge, or attitude (Gerrig, 1993, p. 10). Steps one, two, and three are motivated by an identification process. Steps four, and five are related to immersion or absorption (decided by the level of activity). The effect of step six could be identity construction. We can take this and apply it to the example from the beginning of the dissertation:

Jesper: “Fix me some supper woman!”
 Me: “Have you been playing Grand Theft Auto again?”
 Jesper: “Yes...”

In this case, the traveller is Jesper, and he is transported by the game Grand Theft Auto. As a result of performing certain actions (playing the game), Jesper

goes some distance from his world of origin, because other rules and guidelines apply, which makes some aspects of the world of origin inaccessible. These could be ordinary rules of conduct (e.g., politeness, courtesy), making him shout inappropriate words when failing a mission. Finally, Jesper returns to the world of origin, somewhat changed by the journey, and this is where he (unlike normal behaviour) states, “Fix me some supper”. This indicates that the task of the reader/gamer is similar to an actor’s role in a play. Hence, the reader is transported into the possible world by acting out a role (Gerrig, 1993).

The last element in the listed condition for transformation is “The traveler returns to the world of origin, somewhat changed by the journey” (Gerrig, 1993, p. 10). This signifies that when a reader is transported by his/her imagination, he/she assumes the characteristics called for by the story, which reconstruct the reader. Therefore, when transported into a possible world, this could change the person’s behaviour in the actual world (Gerrig, 1993). Doing so allows people to “make sense of who they are and provides a connected identity from past, to present, and into possible imagined futures” (Ahuvia, 2005, p. 172)

My proposition is that possible world theory can be used to understand immersion, transportation and transformation in stores. Applying this theory to the analysis of brick-and-mortar stores could disclose some problems and opportunities. Some interesting research questions could be as follows: Is it even possible to be immersed in a store? How could a customer get transported? Is transformation relevant in this context? What do logical consistency and completeness look like in a store? When is the design of possible worlds in a store relevant? What is the effect? Could this be a way to increase revenue? Will this give brick-and-mortar store an advantage in competition over online stores? This leads to the overall research question:

How can brick-and-mortar stores be designed to differentiate them from each other and from online stores by addressing how customers can be immersed in a store through participation in a fictional world?

It is important to underline that I am interested in fictional worlds as a framework to design a cohesive experience that bind all elements together, thereby immersing the customer in a store. To answer this question, some sub-questions are relevant:

1. What does immersion in a brick-and-mortar store look like?
2. Are there different ways to design immersive experiences?
3. What are the elements that create a cohesive experience in a store?

In relation to these questions, the method in this dissertation will be discussed in the following section.

CHAPTER 2. METHODOLOGY

In this dissertation, I am interested in understanding how cohesive experiences immerse customers in a store, and on this basis, my aim is to construct a framework for designing this type of experience. Experiences are subjective and concern both the body and the mind; thus, they are difficult to research. How is it possible to gain access to other people's experience, and how do I ensure reliability when describing my own experiences? They are difficult to describe, and doing so would require an individual to have an experience, remember that experience and be able to describe it. In this respect, the scientific direction of phenomenology provides an approach to the understanding of experience. Therefore, the different methods presented in this chapter are ways in which phenomenology is practised. I introduce design phenomenology as an approach to convert understanding into new constructions.

Phenomenological methods are not a traditional approach in the research area of retailing. Although retailing has been an academic subject in Europe for three decades, the USA has a long-established retail research tradition (Findlay and Sparks, 2002). The Journal of Retailing was founded over 75 years ago. The American Collegiate Retailing Association (ACRA) was established in 1949. By contrast, however, European equivalents date from the 1980s and the 1990s. The traditional method in research on atmospherics, service design and experiences in retailing is quantitative and consists of laboratory experiments. The Journal of Retailing is the most prominent publication channel in the research area of retailing (Findlay & Sparks, 2002).

Name of Journal	Impact factor
Journal of Retailing	3,69
International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management Journal	1,81
The International Review of Retail Distribution and Consumer Research Journal	0,79
Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services Journal	2,72

Table 6: The four top journals in retailing and their impact factor

In addition to having the most significant impact factor, the Journal of Retailing is the journal with the most citations among the four journals (including the Journal of Retailing). Additionally, the Journal of Retailing almost never has

citations to the other three journals. A quick word search from 1993 to 2016 in the Journal of Retailing resulted in the following:

Word search	Results
Ethnographic	10
Interview	4
Experiment	362
Survey	502
Questionnaire	268

Table 7: A word search in the Journal of Retailing from 1993 - 2016

The research is very much focused on the measurable areas that surround stores, such as price, sales personnel, music, channels, advertising, and service. There is little in-depth research on the overall store experience, except for general surveys asking about consumer experience. In the quantitative field, we can gain knowledge on specific variables:

- What effect do label colours have on the decision-making process in a supermarket?
- What effect do prices have on the decision-making process in a supermarket?
- What effect does the floor have on the decision-making process in a supermarket?
- What effect do smiling salespeople have on the decision-making process in a supermarket?

These issues could be investigated by using a questionnaire or experiment, which would give us precise, valuable and significant results. The primary retail research in JOR (Journal of Retailing) is focused on specific features that can be measured in surveys or tested in experiments. The results obtained are narrow and specific.

There are two different methods of research: nomothetic and ideographic. The dominant tradition in retailing consists of nomothetic methods that involve a deductive approach based on quantitative research, and the aim is to describe general laws and principles. An ideographic method involves an inductive approach that uses single hypotheses to describe unique elements of an individual phenomenon, typically through qualitative research (Windelband, 1893). I am an ideographic researcher because I want to determine how the combination of fictional worlds and customer experience contributes to a further understanding of cohesive experiences in brick-and-mortar stores. Thus, the following questions become relevant: What is going on here? Additionally, why is this store able to generate a pleasurable experience? How do the customers behave in a particular store? What do they do? How do they do it? It is a holistic approach

involving the emotional response to a total experience created by a cluster of atmospheric stimuli. Therefore, a more qualitative approach is appropriate. The results derived from qualitative research could be divided into three areas:

- The descriptive holistic perspective: research on understanding the combination of labels, prices, floor and smiling sales personnel has on customers.
- The descriptive sociology/anthropology perspective: research on understanding how customers behave in stores.
- The normative design-driven perspective: research on understanding the potentials of brick-and-mortar stores and how one can design for these potentials.

In this dissertation, I adopt these three approaches to investigate three overall perspectives. I have illustrated this in the figure below:

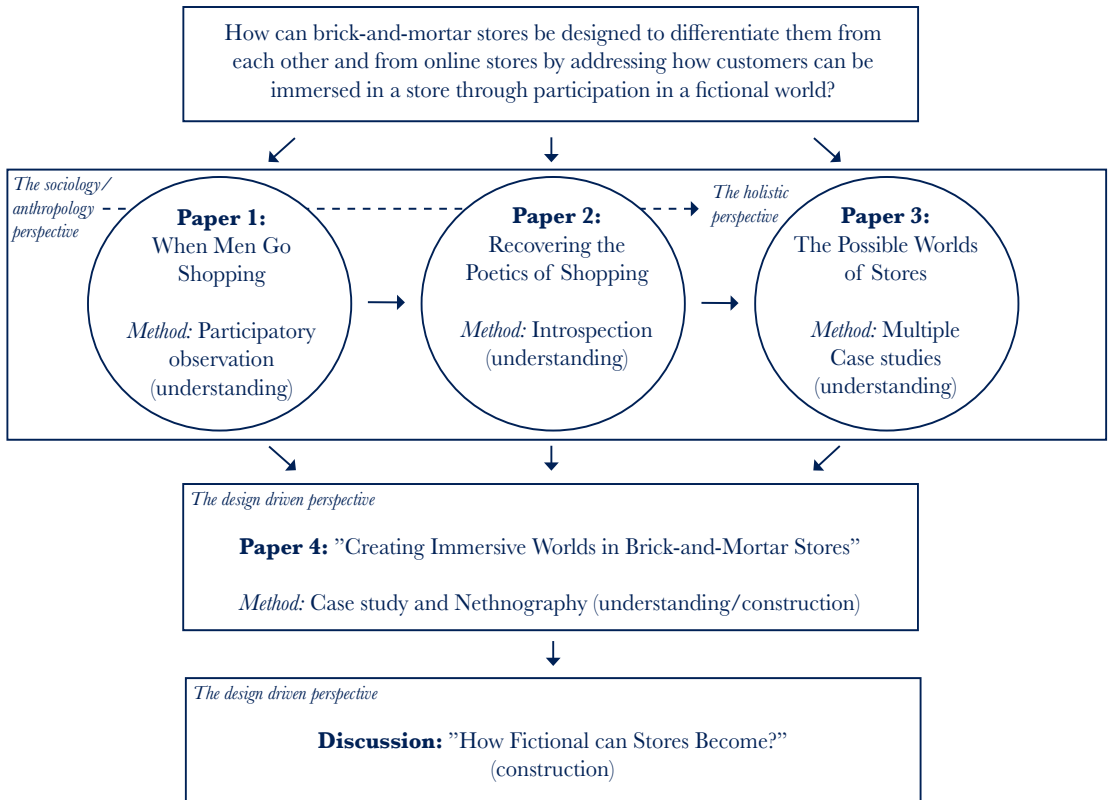


Figure 2: Methodical overview

The research question is placed in the first box because the different perspectives are derived from it. The next box contains the first three papers, which

all have the aim of understanding experience from different perspectives. In paper 1, “When Men Go Shopping”, the perspective is a sociology/anthropology approach. In paper 2, “Recovering the Poetics of Shopping”, the perspective is foremost a sociology/anthropology approach, but the theories analyse a more holistic perspective. In paper 3, “The Possible World of Stores”, the perspective is mainly holistic because we disclose the overall patterns in different stores. These three papers (illustrated through the arrows) are the foundation for paper 4, “Creating Immersive Worlds in Brick-and-Mortar Stores”, which has the aim of both understanding experience and constructing a framework; thus, there is a design-driven perspective. Finally, the discussion is foremost constructive because the findings from all of the papers are mapped in relation to each other. The aim of the combination of methods is to ensure more valid findings. Research on consumer experience is based on a relatively recent scientific tradition, and whether it is even possible to conduct research on experiences is currently still being debated. Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel (2007) formulate the problem as follows:

“It may seem odd, then, that we have so little scientific knowledge of what lies closest at hand, apparently ripe for easy discovery, and of greatest importance for our quality of life: our own conscious experience – our sensory experience and pains, for example, our inner speech and imagery, our felt emotion. Scientists know quite a bit about human visual capacities and the brain processes involved in vision, much less about the subjective experience of seeing; a fair bit about the physiology of emotion, almost nothing about its phenomenology.” (Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel, 2007, p. 1)

Their focus is mostly on urging researchers to sustain a highly critical view of the basis of their research merely on their (and others’) subjective experience. When observing experience, it is important to include other methodical perspectives to reach a more valid conclusion (Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel, 2007). As noted at the beginning, I seek to implement different methods to reach a more valid conclusion. In some instances, doing so could make the dissertation seem redundant, but this is necessary when researching the complex phenomenon of experience, particularly when there is an underlying design goal of making stores more engaging

2.1. PHENOMENOLOGY

To investigate customer experience, one must accept the fact that experience is always an individual’s interpretation of something or someone. Therefore, the aim of the research is to uncover the phenomena of experience. A general method of defining phenomena is “the appearances of things, as contrasted with the things themselves as they really are” (Spinelli, 2005, 6), which thus makes

clear that I subscribe to the scientific orientation of phenomenology. The phenomenological method focuses on the question of how individuals experience the world around them and how the philosopher could bracket preconceptions to reach a more adequate understanding of his or her world. However, this will still be an incomplete knowledge of the world (Bryman, 2015). Therefore, the philosophical discipline of phenomenology offers a framework for studying experience as the manner in which humans make sense of the world through their body. Because the objects that we perceive exist through the meaning that every individual gives them, phenomenologists contend that this interpretational process must be acknowledged. Reality is dependent on every individual's meaning construction of it, and therefore, it remains open to multiple interpretations. There cannot be any final or complete interpretation since this would require an ultimate reality. In other words, even if there is a consensus perspective, it is still influenced by something (for example, a group of individuals or an entire culture) and therefore remains an interpretation (Spinelli, 2005). Phenomenologists acknowledge that there is a separate physical reality separate from our consciousness, which could be defined as an objective reality, but we do not have access to that reality because we must have understanding through our consciousness (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2007). As explained by Spinelli (2005):

“Phenomenology, like all western philosophical systems, is concerned with the relationship between the reality which exists outside our minds (objective reality) and the variety of thoughts and ideas each of us may have about reality (subjectivity). How these two variables interact with each other is both the most fundamental and the oldest of philosophical issues. Phenomenology presents a unique perspective on this problem; it argues that we experience the phenomena of the worlds, rather than its reality. All phenomena experienced by human beings are constructs, formed as a result of the invariant process known as intentionality.” (ibid: 31)

Therefore, we can only make attempts to approach reality through theories that uncover and that may provide estimates, but we will always be forced to recognise reality as being unidentified to some degree.

Phenomenology developed in two central directions: existential and transcendental. The method of existential phenomenology (Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty) is concerned with describing an individual's experience with the aim of disclosing a pattern as it emerges. An experience always occurs in some context, “or, to use phenomenological terms, as it is ‘lived’” (Thompson, Locander & Pollio, 1989, 135). Ontology is an “in-the-world” view that recognises human experience and the world as coherently related. This requires a holistic research approach in which an experience is described thematically. This is the opposite of an objective description in which an event is separated from the

context to control variables. This is a dualistic ontology in which humans are separated from the physical world (Thompson et.al, 1989). Although I have a holistic perspective, this method is often based on 1. a person's perspective (for example, through interviewing), in which the focus is to bind all of the person's experiences together. Instead, I subscribe to transcendental phenomenology, which emerged from Edmund Husserl's focus on philosophical discussion about "that which makes things what they are" (Misiak & Sexton, 1973: 72). Husserl (2012) stated:

"(...) pure or transcendental phenomenology will be established not as a science of facts, but as a science of essential Being (as 'eidetic' Science); a science which aims exclusively at establishing 'knowledge of essences' (Wesenserkenntnisse) and absolutely no 'facts'. The corresponding Reduction which leads from the psychological phenomenon to the pure 'essence', or, in respect of the judging thought, from factual ('empirica') to 'essential' universality, is the eidetic Reduction". (ibid: 44)

In other words, it is concerned with the "difference, if any, between the appearance of things and what those things actually are (that is, 'the things themselves')" (Spinelli, 2005, p. 11). In the beginning, the proclaimed aim of transcendental phenomenology was to be a method to examine, expose and separate this difference. Husserl stated that our experience of the world contains a noematic focus and a noetic focus. The noematic focus guides an individual's experience towards "some thing" – it is the "what" of an experience. The noetic focus is the referential elements that an individual adds to the experience. An interpretative act always contains both noematic and noetic foci (ibid). Husserl (2012) developed a method of "phenomenological Reductions" with the purpose of separating these layers with the aim of arriving at a more adequate knowledge of things themselves. It is a method to "set aside the limitations to knowledge essentially involved in every nature-directed form of investigations" (ibid: 45). On this basis, three steps were outlined to constitute the phenomenological method (Spinelli, 2005). First, there is the rule of epoché, which, according to Husserl (1999), begins by placing all knowledge in question (ibid: 23-31). He describes it as follows:

"The phenomenon in this sense falls under the law to which we must subject ourselves in the critique of knowledge, the law of the epoché in relation to everything transcendent. The ego as a person, as a thing belonging to the world, and experience as the experience of this person – even if entirely indeterminant – exist in the order of objective time: they are all transcendent and, as such, epistemologically null. Only through reduction, which we shall call the phenomenological reduction, do I acquire an absolute givenness that no longer offers anything transcendent". (Husserl, 1999, pp. 33-34)

The rule of epoché urges scientists to set aside their initial biases and prejudices of the phenomenon that they wish to investigate. This process is called “bracketing”, which is a process of temporarily (and as far as possible) suspending expectations and assumptions, thus making it possible to focus on the primary and immediate data. Second, there is the rule of description, and as the name implies, the focus in this rule is on describing a phenomenon, in contrast to explaining it. The aspiration is to focus on immediate impressions by describing an experience as concretely as possible. Naturally, this is an ideal that cannot be achieved but rather approached (Spinelli, 2005). Finally, there is the equalisation rule, which urges us “to avoid placing any initial hierarchies of significance or importance upon the items of our descriptions, and instead to treat each initially as having equal value or significance” (ibid: 21). By applying a phenomenological method through these three steps, scientists attempt to arrive at increasingly adequate conclusions about our experience of the world.

2.2.1. A PHENOMENOLOGY OF EXPERIENCE

Phenomenology could be described as a science of experience. First, it is important to note that there is a difference between experience and an experience (Dewey, 1934). Turner and Bruner (1986) elaborate this point by explaining that “mere experience is simply the passive endurance and acceptance of events. An experience, like a rock in a Zen sand garden, stands out from the evenness of passing hours and years” (Turner & Bruner, p. 35). I am interested in “an experience”, which is an event that has a beginning and an end. From a phenomenological perspective, experience is a mental phenomenon that includes an individual’s perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and emotions (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2007). Therefore, it can be concluded that experience has an underlying structure. As Husserl explains it:

“The logician is not interested in mental acts as such, but only in objective meanings and their formal regulation, the phenomenologist on the other hand is concerned with the essential structures of cognition and their essential correlation to the things known.” (Moran, 1900, p. xxiii)

In this dissertation, I am particularly interested in the underlying structures of consumer behaviour. By this token, structural phenomenology can be used as method of defining this type of study. Structural phenomenology is interested in the relationship between experience and behaviour. In this regard, the concern is on both behaviour and an identification of “‘deep’ abstract structures which underlie and generate particular types of ‘surface’ phenomena” (Apter, 1989: 3). Therefore, the method of this dissertation will rest on the already defined structures of experience. So, what *do* we know about the underlying structures of experience? Dewey (1958) stated that experience is organised by the relationship between the self and the object in which the self understands

every experience with personal interest and ideologies. The geographer Tuan wrote that experience had two levels:

“The one is experienced by the body; the other is constructed by the mind. The one is a fact of nature or an unplanned property of the built environment; the other is more or less deliberative creation. The world is multisensorially stimulating not only because that is how it is, but also because that is how we humans have planned it. Accordingly, we shall look first at unreflective experience and biological facts (behavior – expressed behavior/performed behavior) and move to increasingly complex human creations – from multimodal experiences in synesthesia to the mixed models of experience in the creative use of metaphor and simile; from the construction of symbolic spaces, which rest on a sophisticated knowledge of the power of metaphoric language and images”. (Tuan, 1993, 165-166)

The problem with the Cartesian deconstruction of the mind and the body is the underlying presumption of the body as a source of experience that could be rationalised/controlled by the mind. Instead, we should consider the body to be a source of knowledge that in itself could motivate activity (Pink, 2015: 24-25). According to Rolls (2005), a bodily activity could be motivated by an emotional reaction involving both rewards and punishers. Although Rolls is a neo-behaviourist, his explanations of emotions can be understood as phenomenological, given that they are the body's interpretations of the environment. He explains by describing a reward as “something an animal (including a human) will work for” and a punisher as “something that an animal will work to escape or avoid (or that will decrease the probability of actions on which it is contingent)” (ibid: 2). He defines emotions as “states elicited by rewards or punishers” (ibid: 1) and further clarifies them by describing stimuli as reinforcers, in which some are rewarding and others are punishing.

In this regard, he distinguishes between primary reinforcers and secondary reinforcers. Primary reinforcers do not require any learning, for example, the response to a painful stimulus as aversive. Secondary reinforcers are stimuli connected with primary reinforcers, for example, the sight of cake (secondary reinforcer) does not innately associate it with the taste of cake (primary reinforcer). Rolls calls this “stimuli-reinforcer association learning, where reinforce is being used to mean a stimulus that might be a reward or a punisher”. Thus implying that a reinforcer could be either positive (a reward) or negative (a punishment) (ibid: 2). This type of learning is very important for understanding consumer behaviour because many previously neutral stimuli could become either positive or negative, depending on their connection to the primary reinforcers. For obvious reasons, the main focus in stores would therefore be to associate the different stimuli (for example, décor, music, sounds, smell) with

rewarding reinforcers (for example, the taste of cake). When a store is associated with rewarding reinforcers, it could motivate customers to “perform any, arbitrary, operant response in order to obtain the reward” (ibid: 4), for example, waiting patiently in line or driving by a store even though parking is almost impossible. The system in which the brain evaluates rewards and punishers seems to be a foundational method of producing appropriate behaviour in different contexts (ibid: 7).

An emotion could occur as both a conscious and an unconscious evaluation of an event as important to a concern (Oatley and Jenkins, 1996, p. 96). Roll elaborates this point further by explaining a concern as “primary positive reinforcers that act as rewards: touch, washing, flowers, soothing vocalisation, control over actions, group acceptance, play and storing/collecting”. When primary reinforcers are related to a neutral stimulus, they could generate secondary reinforcers (Rolls, 2005, p. 19). Therefore, if a store makes a person experience control over actions, group acceptance, playing and giving an opportunity to store/collect something, the store could then be a secondary reinforcer created by associating the store with primary reinforcers.

How is customer experience in a store observed? Well, expressed bodily behaviour could be observed by finding activity that is motivated by a positive stimulus-reinforcer association, such as staying for a long period of time in the store, waiting in line, being reluctant to leave, being explicit in excitement, wanting to stay longer or accepting negative things in a positive manner (such as a sales assistant who lacks knowledge of the products). Turner and Bruner (1986) state that experience should not be confused with behaviour because behaviour implies that an outside observer can describe someone’s experience by it. This is not the case, as “we describe the behavior of others but we characterize our own experience” (ibid: 5). An individual having an experience is personal because it “refers to an active self, to a human being who not only engages in but shapes an action” (ibid: 5). Researchers can never completely know another’s experience, regardless of the number of clues and patterns. Although someone could explain his or her experience in detail, there could be numerous relevant aspects that have been overlooked. Thus, the interesting question is how do we as scientists overcome this issue?

Regarding this question, Turner and Bruner (1986) note Dilthey’s (1979, p. 230) answer, to “transcend the narrow sphere of experience by interpreting expressions”. They continue by establishing a distinction between “life as lived (reality), life as experienced (experience), and life as told (expression)” (Turner & Bruner, 1986, p. 6). Therefore, if a scientist wants to research experience, then one method of doing so is to identify people’s expressions by observing their articulations, formulations, and representations of their own experience (Turner & Bruner, 1986, p. 9). In this regard, expressions refer to the conscious

description of an experience – and naturally, this becomes self-referential. Therefore, it is an extension of the term expressions; thus, I instead suggest a phrase: “expressed behaviour” or “performed behaviour” as a consequence of individuals performing in a designed environment (an experience). Observing customers’ “expressed behaviour” in a store could disclose “life as experienced (experience)” and perhaps indicate something about “life as lived (reality)” in that particular experience.

2.2. ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography originates in the Greek word *ethnos*, meaning “folk and people”; thus, ethnography literally means the “study of folk” (Thomas, 2011, p. 124). Ethnography has its beginning in the twentieth century as a branch of anthropology, and it is a method of scientific observation for studying culture (Malinowski, 1961; Whyte, 1943; Tedlock, 2005; Thomas, 2011). Malinowski states: “There is no doubt, from all points of sociological, or psychological analysis, and in any question of theory, the manner and type of behaviour observed in the performance of an act is the highest importance. Indeed, behaviour is a fact, a relevant fact, and one that can be recorded” (Malinowski, 1961, p. 20). It is a method of understanding a social phenomenon through the observation of its practitioners (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). Although Malinowski subscribed to structural anthropology and Geertz to cultural anthropology, there is an agreement that observation and fieldwork are an appropriate method when researching behaviour. The role of the ethnographer is to take part in the everyday life of the people in the social phenomenon that they are observing, observing all aspects of their lives (Tedlock, 2005, p. 497). Ethnographic observation, in general, is a recognised method of studying behaviour.

In the article “Using ethnography in strategic consumer research”, the argument is that observation is a particularly relevant method for “accessing thought and emotions ‘on the move’”. It can access what people do rather than what they say (or even think) they do” (Elliott and Jankel-Elliott, 2003). In relation to Tuner and Bruner’s distinctions of reality, experience and expression, this emphasises expression as observed behaviour. This is the opposite of an interview, in which individuals describe their experience. The most solid argument for ethnographic observations is the intersection between what people do and what they say (Elliott and Jankel-Elliott, 2003, p. 222). This is a significant critique against traditional customer behaviour methods, such as surveys and focus groups (Fellman, 1999, p. 21). Rust believes that observational methods in consumer behaviour research give more “rich” data:

“Field observations have a richness to them that makes them ideal for qualitative studies. How people behave spontaneously in the act of shopping or consuming products is often different from the descriptions they

give in interviews. They are much more responsive to social and environmental stimuli than they are consciously aware. And one way researchers can get a handle on all these influences (which are of paramount importance to marketers) is by observing the behaviors as they occur in the field.” (Rust, 1993, p. 12)

Rust reveals that when people are asked about their shopping patterns, they cannot remember what they did in the store or how they felt about it. Therefore, observation was chosen to disclose how customers behaved “on the move” in a store (Rust, 1993). The research shows that observational studies are appropriate for studying customer behaviour in stores. By this token, ethnographic observation is a relevant method of studying actual customer behaviour.

Fieldwork is necessarily an embodied activity because the observer is physically participating in an event. It is a spatial negotiating of the field through a concern about performance of our embodied self (Coffey, 1999). We are embodied, and “our perceptions and actions depend on the fact that we have bodies, and that cognition is shaped by our bodily existence” (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2007, p. 131). Participatory observation is a practice that entails scientists’ multisensorial embodied engagement with “their social, material, discursive and sensory environment” (Pink, 2015, p. 25). This perspective is the fundamental belief in the area of sensory ethnography. It is a process in which ethnographers register their multisensory experiences – both regarding the people who are being observed and regarding the scientists themselves. This method of performing ethnography is a perspective in which the relationship between the body, the mind and materiality is recognised (ibid: 25). It is based on a belief that perception is a product not only of the mind in a body “but of the organism as a whole in its environment, and is tantamount to the organism’s own exploratory movement through the world”. The perceiver’s immersion in the environment fosters a network of sensory impressions (Ingold, 2000, p. 3). All sensory inputs are therefore not isolated activities – but rather an output from the entire organism in an environment (Ingold, 2000, p. 261, p. 268).

2.3. CASE STUDIES

When researching the entire environment, case studies are appropriate because they are a method of investigating a phenomenon in a specific context. In this dissertation, I use an instrumental case study, which is research “with a purpose in mind” (Thomas, 2011, p. 98). Thomas (2001) elaborates:

“You are using the study as a tool; you are not doing it purely for the love of knowledge. Is your research aimed at evaluating something? (...) Do you have a purpose in trying to understand with a view to making this better? For example, if your case study is about Joshua’s persistent

difficulty with reading, your ultimate aim is probably going to be something to do with helping Joshua. The case study in this sense is instrumental: it is a means to an end.” (ibid: 98).

It is important to note that case studies are not something new, and they are a very common method of performing data inquiry (Stake, 2005, p. 443). Nevertheless, case studies have previously been neglected as a method in science, mostly because the method has been stereotyped as a discipline with inadequate academic standards. This form of stereotyping was very common in the 20th century, and it continues into the 21st century (Yin, 2003, p. 7). As described in the introduction, this makes sense when the method is observed through the eyes of a quantitative researcher. Case studies do not incite quantification. It is nearly impossible to produce tangible results, such as the previously noted effect of pulp in orange juice. The case study method has a very different character, aim and procedure. More specifically:

“Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions or other systems which are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of the inquiry will be an object – within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates” (Thomas, 2011, p. 23).

In an article from 2006, Bent Flyvbjerg explains the misunderstandings about case studies: First, he explains that practical knowledge is not recognised as being as important as theoretical knowledge. Second, it is not possible to generalise on the basis of a single case study. Third, a case study is only useful for creating hypotheses. Fourth, case studies contain different forms of bias. Finally, summarising a case study could be problematic (Flyvbjerg, 2006). He then explains the misunderstandings, and his work has changed the view of case studies as a method. In this chapter, I focus only on the second, third and fourth points, given that they are still debated to this day. The misunderstanding regarding generalisation on the basis of a single case study is discarded by the argument of “black swans”. For example, one could argue that it is most profitable to sell juice with pulp (white swans). In case studies, the researcher investigates the cases in which this is not the case (black swans). This is called falsification. This argument also dismisses the misunderstanding that case studies are only useful for creating hypotheses. Concerning the fourth misunderstanding regarding different forms of bias in case studies, Flyvbjerg argues:

“If one thus assumes that the goal of the researcher’s work is to understand and learn about the phenomena being studied, then research is simply a form of learning. If one assumes that research, like other learning processes, can be described by the phenomenology for human learning, it then becomes clear that the most advanced form of understanding is

achieved when researchers place themselves within the context being studied. Only in this way can researchers understand the viewpoints and the behavior, which characterizes social actors”. (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 236)

He argues that one of the most important matters in case study research is the researcher’s opportunity to understand the context. If we examine the quantitative field, the goal is to minimise all factors that can interfere with the variables. For example, in conjoint analysis, the results are gathered through a questionnaire. Therefore, the context is eliminated. The focus is on a cross-examination of a few variables. Variables such as smell, shelf placement, and customer mood cannot be measured in this type of data inquiry.

Case studies offer a method of understanding the complexity of social phenomena: “(...) In brief, the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristic of real-life events” (Yin, 2003, p. 2). Case studies also offer a method of staying “real” by investigating the context of the social phenomena “with your own experience and your own intelligence” (Thomas, 2011). This highlights the significant role of the researcher, which also calls into question the validity of case studies. The dominating role of the researcher incites a strict data inquiry with a substantial recognition of one’s own subjectivity (for example, as an explicit field note).

Although the case study method – compared to an online questionnaire method such as conjoint analysis – is a method with an unquantifiable number of variables and a focus on the social phenomenon in the context, it still offers a frame. Gary Thomas uses the metaphor of a searchlight beam as a method of explaining the frame that case studies offer (Thomas, 2011, p. 21). Case studies focus attention on an individual situation (Stake, 2005, p. 443). The case study method incites a method to “‘close in’ on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice” (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

The case study method is relevant in this dissertation because it can uncover why people do certain things, what motivates them and which activity leads them to do certain things. It is a method of finding factors that motivate certain behaviours. To that end, it is important to combine the method with ethnographic observation.

2.4. METHOD PAPER 1: "WHEN MEN GO SHOPPING"

In traditional ethnographic observation, it was thought that a long observation period was required to be accepted in a field (Whyte, 1943, p. 287). Participatory observers were expected to live in the observed society for 2 years or longer. Typically, they took part in every aspect of the societies that they studied (Tedlock, 2005). A long observation period in a store is not that important

for two reasons: First, stores have opening hours, which makes full-time observation impossible. Second, a store can be a small and controlled environment; thus, the number of behavioural patterns is limited.

This study was a two-week period of participatory observation and short, structured formal and informal interviews in the store *Guns&Gents*. I observed 715 customers inside and outside the store during this 2-week period. I was there from the opening of the store until closing time. Inside the store, I recorded details on 300 customers. I wrote my field notes on my phone because then, I could stay in the store (rather than walk out to write them) and, to customers, it looked like I was texting. It was a small store (approximately 100 square meters) in a physical environment that does not change that much. At the end of the observation period, there was a high degree of repetition in customer behaviour, which could indicate that the time period was appropriate. The selection of the case was based on my own emotional reaction. I was repelled and felt out of place:

“At first, the store did not appeal to me at all. On the contrary, it almost felt repulsive. It was so alien to me that the first time I walked in, I had to pull myself together, take a deep breath, and open the heavy door to look inside. At this point, I did not know what to do with myself. I felt like I was trespassing, and I had a big sign over my head that said: I do not belong here. After a couple of days of observation, I still did not feel comfortable in the store. I felt like a tourist in a foreign country where I did not understand the natives, speak their language or look like them”.

According to Lindlof & Taylor, there are two forms of observation: passive and active. The passive observer's function is to “blend in”, whereas the active observer attempts to interact with the people in the environment. The strategy behind the passive observer is to minimise disruptions of natural behaviour. The active performer would disagree and argue that the passive form is an unnatural, active performance because it is not possible to be passive (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 144). Whyte explains this point by saying: “the researcher, like his informants, is a social animal. He has a role to play, and he has his own personality needs that must be met in some degree if he is to function successfully” (Whyte, 1943, p. 279).

I was attempting to be passive and to “blend in” by being out of sight (as much as possible) and quiet, but I found that I had to be an active performer to become unnoticed by other customers. To the sales personnel, I was an active observer. They knew what I was doing, and they also “played along” when a customer walked in by stopping a conversation with me, walking away or ignoring me and helping the newly arrived customer. I did not talk or interact with the sales personnel when there were other customers in the store. The

observation was combined with several informal interviews with the customers, sales assistants, owners and daily manager. Andrea Fontana and Anastasia H. Prokos (2007) describe the informal interview in an observation period as a conversation between the researchers and the people who are being observed. Initially, I attempted to become part of the setting. Doing so was not possible, given that I did not look or behave like a regular customer. In particular, being female in a highly masculine environment, I caused a disturbance in the environment. Before the observation period started, I was very critical of this because my impression of the store was that it was a place restricted to male hunters. Therefore, I thought of different approaches to circumvent my presence in the store such as video and audio recording, using male students as observers and going undercover as a male-looking hunter. I decided to visit the store to determine the appropriate observation method. During the first days, I discovered that it was possible for me to blend in by staying in the female department. Being visible in the overview of the store, the female department was in the top left corner next to the weapon room, which made it possible for me to have an overview of the entire store.

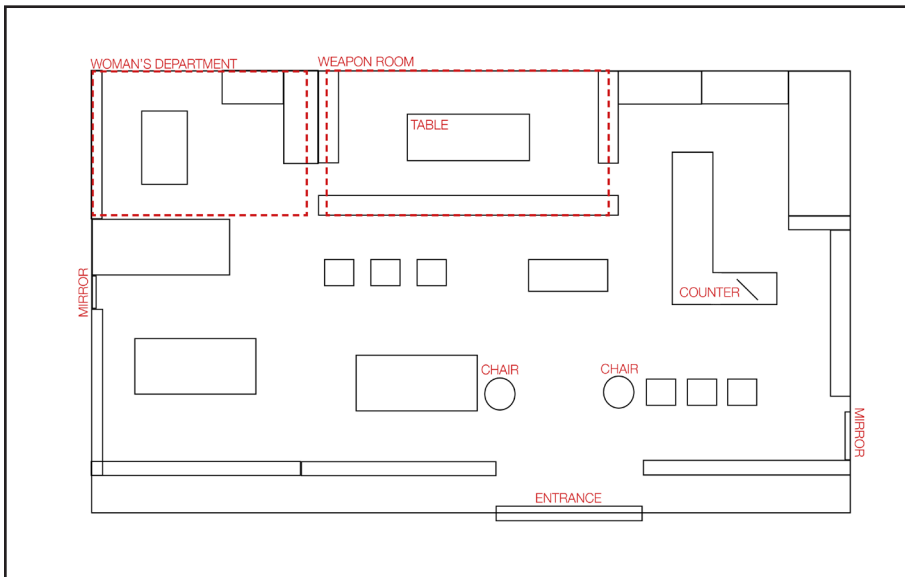


Figure 3: Sketch of *Guns & Gents'* floor plan

The most “natural” method of performing the observation was to act like another person – in this case, another customer. I studied the regular female customers, and then, I attempted to walk like them, touch the products like them, and wear the same colour of clothes as them (black, brown and dark green). I wrote notes on my phone so that it would look like I was texting, emailing, etc. Naturally, my presence still disturbed the environment to some degree.

For example, when a customer would stay in the store for hours, this exposed my identity to them as “an odd person hanging around the store”. I would also be exposed when a customer would visit the store several times during the two-week period, given that I was in the store every single time. This clearly raised suspicion. Most of the time, the customers did not seem to notice me. In contrast, I could sense when the environment was “interrupted”, for instance, when people (typically women) were talking loudly or when new goods were placed by the entrance. This would make the customers look irritated, walk in unusual patterns or simply leave the store.

Although my solution was to stay in the female department and act like a regular customer, it was not because the environment excluded female customers from participating. For example, at one point, there was a female customer in the store looking at a rifle, and she walked, looked and spoke like any other man in the store. She also seemed respected because she was able to take the rifle home to try it without buying it. This could indicate that the store did not exclude woman. Some men attempted to encourage their girlfriends or wives to be more enthusiastic about hunting and hunting equipment, and the daily manager frequently told me about the importance of the female department in the store because “women also hunt”. The store is more likely an encouragement of masculine values, independent of whether a customer is male or female. It is more about masculine qualities such as shooting animals, providing meat for dinner, protecting a neighbourhood by keeping the population of wild boars down and making the right connections to enforce career opportunities.

Nevertheless, this paper only has a focus on men since most of the customers were men. It could have been called “When People Shop in a Masculine Environment” instead, but because most of the customers were men, this was an opportunity to focus on men’s behaviour in a store. Because research on male customer behaviour is sparse, this was an opportunity to contribute to this research by giving it a more nuanced perspective. Nevertheless, one could argue that this contributes to an encouragement of stereotyping men (and women), but as I view it, it is more an analysis of how a store with a highly masculine environment encourages a certain type of behaviour – which happens to be a store where most customers are men.

2.5. METHOD PAPER 2: "RECOVERING THE POETICS OF SHOPPING"

This paper is a philosophical reflection upon my personal observations in *Guns & Gents*. It is therefore a case study based on participant observation. According to Holbrook (1995), it is a subjective personal introspection, which he explains as follows:

“In a sense, as a consumer, one can meaningfully conduct participant observation on one’s own life. In general, participant observation involves the attempt to gain a fuller understanding of some phenomenon by becoming part of it. Analogously, introspective studies in consumer research entail a form of participant observation in the world of everyday consumption experience. Hence, an emphasis on the importance of introspection as a window on consumption (...).” (Holbrook, 1995, p. 18)

Introspection could be a method of understanding the hedonic aspects of consumption. Introspective observation is when a researcher focuses on his/her personal encounter in a consumption experience by noting the relevant meaning or emotions that are evoked (Holbrook, 2006; Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel, 2007). According to Wallendorf and Brucks (1993), there are five categories of introspection. First, there is “researcher introspection”, in which the researcher studies him/herself with other subjects/information. Second, there is “guided introspection”, in which people are the individuals who are introspective by telling the researcher about their thoughts. Third, there is “interactive introspection”, in which the researcher and the informants share their introspections with each other. Fourth, “syncretic combinations” are when the researcher and the informants are included in the data and analysed on equal terms. Fifth, there is “reflexivity within research”, which is a combination of observations of and interviews with people and reflexive material that are obtained by the researcher (Wallendorf & Burkes, 1993). This article subscribes to “researcher introspection” because it is based on my initial observation of *Guns & Gents*. In this paper, introspective observation is used as an exemplification of my negative emotional reaction when I visited *Guns & Gents* for the first time. The argumentations in the paper are based on a theoretical and philosophical reflection upon this reaction.

A question that is particularly interesting in this paper is the validity in basing an entire paper on a research question derived from introspective accounts. As Russell Hurlburt (2007) explains it:

“Or consider emotional experience. What is your emotional experience right now? Do you even have any? Try to conjure some if you think you don’t. Is it completely obvious to you what it is? Even if you are fairly confident in giving it a general label, how much do you know about its particular experiential character? Does introspection reveal its detail, its somatic manifestations in experience (if any), its full phenomenological structure, as clearly and certainly as visual inspection reveals the contents of your desktop? Does this seem to you to be a topic on which you could not go wrong? I suspect that my wife reads my emotional phenomenology better in my face and posture than I do in my own introspection.” (Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel, 2007, p. 48)

He has a very critical view on introspection. Both of the authors urge scientists who subscribe to this research method to establish a critical distance because a person can never accurately report obvious features of his/her own experience (Hurlburt and Schwitzgebel, 2007, p. 49). As a phenomenologist, objectivity is never – and has never been – the aim of research. The introspective reflections in this paper are merely a description of my subjective reaction to a phenomenon, and it is not presented in any other manner. I am not interested in an objective description of a phenomenon – I am interested in why I felt an attraction or a repulsion because this indicated to me that there was something noteworthy to investigate.

2.6. METHOD PAPER 3: "THE POSSIBLE WORLDS OF STORES"

The third paper is based on the overall aim of categorising different stores around the world. This is interesting because it disclosed different overall patterns in stores, which expands the understanding of fictive stores. The analytic method used was grounded theory. We started by using open coding to identify some categories, their properties, and dimensional locations (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) based on cases that we already knew from our travels in places such as Copenhagen (Denmark), Edmonton (Canada), Gothenburg (Sweden), Dali City (China), Vancouver (Canada), Berlin (Germany), Rome (Italy), Brussels (Belgium), Amsterdam (the Netherlands), London (England), New York (USA), Los Angeles (USA), Atlanta (USA), Victoria Island (Canada), Ubud (Indonesia), and Aalborg (Denmark). When using open coding, many different categories were recognised, and some of them related to specific phenomena, for example, stores that have an exotic theme or stores that resemble a museum. The next step was axial coding, in which the different categories were developed by making connections between the categories. According to Strauss & Corbin (1990), axial coding is:

“A focus on specifying a category (phenomenon) in terms of the conditions that give rise to it; the context (its specific set of properties) in which it is embedded; the action/interactional strategies by which it is handled, managed, and carried out; and the consequences of chosen strategies”. (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97)

In practice, the categorisation process was a combination of the two modes in which we constantly compared, re-evaluated, changed, and questioned the different features. When building the final categories, we used the paradigm model (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 97):

(A) CAUSAL CONDITIONS → (B) PHENOMENON → (C) CONTEXT
 → (D) INTERVENING CONDITIONS → (E) ACTION/INTERACTION
 STRATEGIES → (F) CONSEQUENCES.

This method has been used in every category and subcategory. If we take the category of “The Replica World” as an example:

- (a) The causal condition was, for instance, different themed stores such as Hollywood (exotic location) or the 1920s (bygone past).
- (b) The phenomenon of these stores seemed to be a copy of a time and/or a place that is physically out of reach for customers.
- (c) The context was (1) products embedded in an overall ambiance; (2) the role of the customer was a bystander; and (3) the sales assistant did not have a role. This step was only evident later because it did not become clear until we began the process of making connections between the categories.
- (d) The intervening conditions were errors such as Hollywood with a wrong font or a TV screen in the 1920s stores.
- (e) The action/interactional strategies were transportation derived from analyses based on possible world theory.
- (f) The consequence of this is a transformation of the customer.

In practice, this process occurred over a long period of time in a complex web of reflection, discussions and coding procedure simulations with the collection of cases. It was an on-going discussion on the specific set of properties that pertain to the phenomenon. The final systematic data collection was inductive and based on 1153 stores in confined areas, namely, the main shopping streets in the following cities:

- Denmark, Aalborg: Nørregade, Bredgade, Algade, Boulevarden, Østerågade, and Bispensgade
- Germany, Stuttgart: Königstrasse
- Netherlands, Amsterdam: De 9 Straatjes and Haarlemmerstraat/Haarlemmerdijk
- Canada, Edmonton: Edmonton Mall
- Scotland, Edinburgh: Royal Mile, Victoria Street, and Rose Street

These places were, first, selected on the basis of convenience: They were where we travelled on vacation, attended conferences, and visited other universities and our hometown. Second, areas where shopping was the main activity were selected. Here, we attempted to capture the variety of shopping streets by selecting different environments, i.e., a shopping mall (Edmonton), a pedestrian area designated for shopping (Aalborg, Stuttgart), and motorised roads with

significant appeal for tourist shoppers (Amsterdam, Edinburgh). We focused on a wide sampling of different stores because doing so was a method of detecting cases that did not fit any of the existing categories. This led to the classification of a new category.

2.7. METHOD PAPER 4: "CREATING IMMERSIVE WORLDS IN BRICK-AND-MORTAR STORES"

This paper is a case study based on an assumption: “Playful elements orchestrated in a fictional world can generate an emotional brand attachment”. The chosen case is the jewellery store *Tarina Tarantino*. This is a critical case because it has “strategic importance in relation to the general problem” (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Therefore, it can be categorised as an “outlier” (Thomas, 2011, p. 77), revealing an unordinary case that created a strong emotional reaction when I first encountered the store. Thomas describes an outlier as follows: “An outlier case is a puzzle. It’s a case that is conspicuously different from the norm and the puzzle is, why? You may have an idea as to the reason (or reasons) and this will offer a ‘way in’. It may also offer a possible ‘analytical framework’” (Thomas, 2011, p. 80). Here is a description of my encounter with the store:

“Without hesitation, exchange of words or even a discreet hand movement, we are in agreement and almost hypnotized by the place we have found. We are like explorers – touching the sharp edges, watching the glittering colours and listening to the comfortable sounds. Completely lost in the feeling of a more glamorous life, we search for jewellery – a little piece of the world that we can bring home, an intense slice of the joyful memories of glitter, princesses and our childhood dreams”.

This clearly shows the attraction that I felt towards the store. It is random selection because I found it when I was walking down a shopping street in Los Angeles searching for a wedding dress for my friend. I was not specifically looking to find a case, but when I felt the impact that this store had on me, I became curious. How could this store trigger a reaction such as this?

The procedure was as follow: First, I felt an initial attraction towards the store and walked in. Second, I was a potential customer experiencing the store, trying out products, making selections and wondering whether anything was worth buying. Third, I became aware of the interesting aspect of the store in relation to my research, and finally, this changed my role from customer to participatory observer. Then, I began to describe all of the elements in the store, including the products, smell, music, interior, sales assistants, different touches, other customers, façade, and surrounding stores.

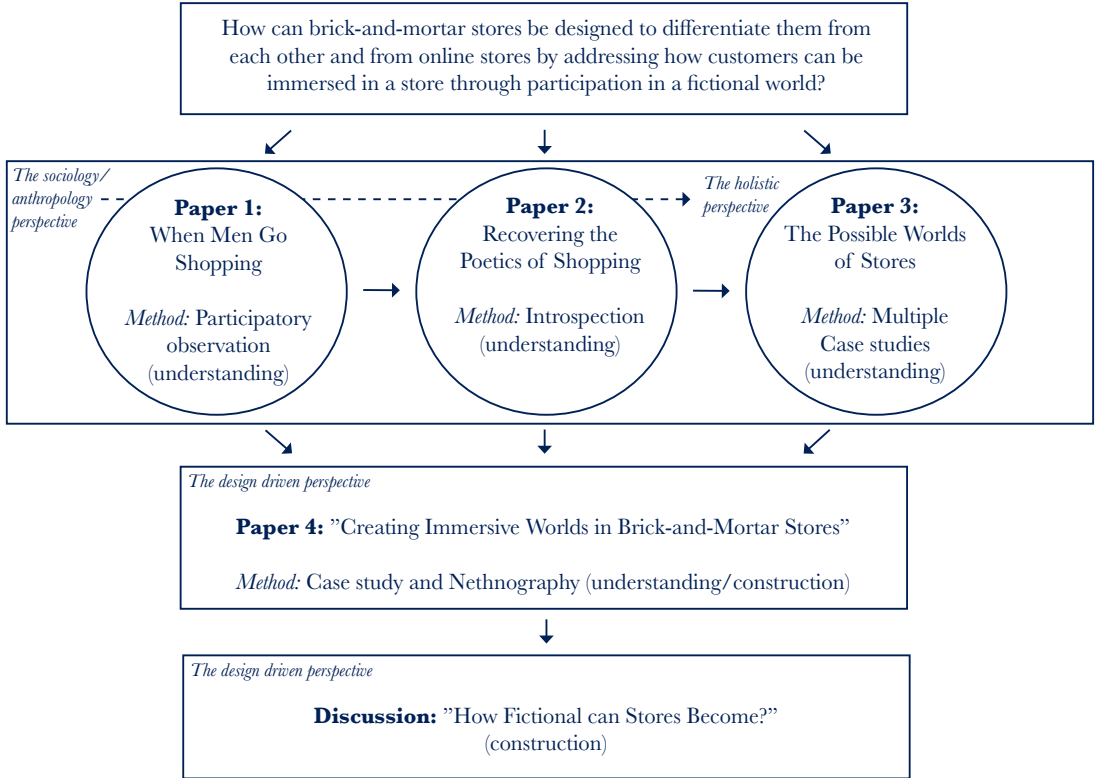
Another aspect of this paper was the use of *Yelp* reviews as a mean of supporting the findings of emotional attachment. The *Yelp* reviews were collected from www.yelp.com, which is a consumer review website. *Yelp* has altogether more than 70 million reviews of restaurants, clothing stores, supermarkets, barbers, mechanics, and other services. When reviewing a service, a person must choose to give 1-5 stars (where 5 is the highest rating). *Tarina Tarantino* has 45 reviews, of which 38 gave the store more than 4 stars, and a total of 33 gave it 5 stars. To submit a review, a person must submit his/her first name, last name, email and ZIP code. All additional information, such as a picture and birthday, is optional. This makes the review community secure to a certain point but still sensitive to review fraud because it only requires a fake name and an active email account (Luca & Zervas, 2016). Naturally, this could also occur in any other online survey in which the respondent types in fake names or gives untruthful answers (intentionally or unintentionally). Although there are some special circumstances in an online review, given that they could increase or decrease a company's revenue significantly, they provide a further incentive for a company to place false reviews or to negatively review its competition (Zhu & Zhang, 2010).

There are still some advantages of using online reviews, given that these reviews gave important insight into *Tarina Tarantino's* customers. For instance, they initially indicated that others (apart from myself) found the store interesting. Online customer reviews can generally be defined as “peer-generated product evaluations posted on company or third party web-sites” (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010, p. 186). I would characterise them as a simplified online survey asking only one implicit – but still very obvious – question: What is your opinion about *Tarina Tarantino*? This type of research is characterised as “a specialized form of ethnography adapted to the unique computer-mediated contingencies of today's social worlds” (Kozinets, 2010, p. 1). It is typical for netnography to use information that is publicly accessible and could therefore be viewed as a naturalistic technique. Netnography is therefore a method in which the researcher can obtain data from naturally occurring behaviours (ibid). To ensure the fraud profile, I examined two indicators of credibility: the number of friends and the number of reviews. For example, if a reviewer had no friends and two ratings, his/her credibility was low (Lim & Van Der Heide, 2015).

Another important aspect of performing netnography is anonymity, given that I did not obtain permission from any of the reviewers to use their review in the paper. My reflections in this regard were the fact that *Yelp* profiles are publicly available, given that I did not need to make a profile to gain access to the profiles. I do not disclose their last names, thus making them very difficult to identify unless the reviewers themselves have chosen to include more information about themselves in their profile. Finally, I presume that the reviewers approve of the use of their statements, given that they have written a review with the purpose of sharing their experience with others.

2.8. TOWARD A DESIGN PHENOMENOLOGY

As stated in the beginning, the methods mainly have an understanding perspective, but they also have a focus on change and the improvement of the brick-and-mortar store. This is introduced in paper 4, and it continues in the discussion. The previous findings are the foundation for the construction of a framework for experientially engaging stores. This is shown in the previous mentioned model:



This dissertation is a combination of understanding and construction, but how can this be compatible with the phenomenological orientation? I explain this issue by introducing a term, what I call "design phenomenology". Phenomenology is based on the fundamental belief that reality has an infinite complexity and could never be fully explored or understood. Phenomenological research is therefore an ongoing project that is only restricted by time or resources. Conversely, when conducting research with an aim to design, it is about creating something in the world that is particular (Stolterman, 2008, p. 59). The pragmatic aim in design complicates the phenomenological approach significantly, as the process of "bracketing" becomes more complex. When the

aim is to create a framework, this could cause the researcher to focus on this outcome instead of describing the actual phenomena. Hence, design research generates some essential scientific problems with exploring and understanding reality because it is already a designed reality and sometimes even a designed reality with a specific goal. Herbert (1978) argues that we do not have to abandon the idea of scientific methods as a ground for design, but he advocates that these methods have limitations and that with regard to design, we could only talk about “bounded rationality”. He describes the artifice as such:

“Moreover for most of us – white-collared ones – the significant part of the environment consists mostly of strings of artifacts called ‘symbols’ that we receive through eyes and ears in the form of written and spoken language and that we pour out into the environment – as I am now doing – by mouth or hand. The laws that govern the occasions on which we emit and receive them, the determinants of their content are all consequences of our collective artifice.” (Herbert, 1978, p. 5)

As evident in the quote, Herbert makes a clear distinction between the nature of the “real” world (the realm of science) and the artificial world (the realm of design). Husserl (1999) does not make this distinction; instead, he explains the world as a phenomenological world, therefore neither “real” nor “artificial”. Being a phenomenology researcher, the design practice is therefore not solely an approach to describing a phenomenon; it is also an exploration of how a phenomenon could be. This approach could contribute to a more valid framework for a specific design because it is based on the description of a phenomenon. Therefore, phenomenology and design are not incompatible, but they require the researcher to acknowledge two overall limitations. The first limitation is that an ultimate framework for design is never possible. In this regard, it is important to note that my ambition is limited. With a phenomenological orientation, I do not have any intent to once and for all present the ultimate framework for engaging stores, given that this would imply that I have found some objective truth. I want to understand the underlying structures of experience and how they are expressed in customer behaviour when engaging with the physical context of a store. The second limitation is the separation of method. As explained in the beginning, my research is twofold: understanding and constructing. Separating the research into two phases, the phenomenological orientation (understanding) becomes a foundation for the framework. More concretely, in the first phase, the researcher would need to “bracket” the design aim to withhold the phenomenological rules of description and equalisation. When these two limitations are applied, my argument would be that the methods are based on something that could be called design phenomenology. Alexander (1977), who developed the theory of language, argues that the identification of patterns is the foundation of a design (ibid). Alexander states that:

“This is the fundamental view of the world. It says that when you build a thing you cannot merely build that thing in isolation, but must also repair the world around it, and within it, so that the larger world at that one place becomes more coherent, and more whole; and the thing which you make takes its place in the web of nature, as you make it.” (Alexander, 1977: xiii)

Then, using (what I would call) design phenomenology, this is the basic assumption. Applying phenomenology as the fundamental scientific orientation, the suggested framework becomes more valid. In general, design research could be divided into three areas: research on design, research through design and research for design. Research on design is the study of the design activity in itself, for example, the different stages in a design process. Research through design is a method in which the design process in itself is the main lever to solve a problem. Research for design is a broad term describing theory that is being produced with the aim of having some type of impact in the overall practice of design; this could be, for example, a framework that functions with the intention of guiding designers in a reframing of their existing problems (Forlizzi, Zimmerman & Stolterman, 2009). This is what Stolterman (2008) calls the “ultimate particular”. The ultimate particular is a method of validating research in a design context through an assessment of the actual final outcome of a design process. As Cross (1999) explains it:

“(...) design knowledge resides in products themselves: in the forms and materials and finishes which embody design attributes. Much everyday design work entails the use of precedents or previous exemplars – not because of laziness by the designer but because the exemplars actually contain knowledge of what the product should be.” (ibid: 6)

An ultimate particular is a method of defining something that is non-existent. When a designer creates something, the aim is to develop something that solves a specific problem. The problem in this dissertation is the physical stores’ failure to emotionally engage customers. An ultimate particular would therefore be a store that solves this problem – which is the basis for the selected cases, in other words, existing ultimate particulars. I investigate cases that seem to emotionally engage customers to some degree. The aim of my research is therefore not solely to describe a phenomenon; there is also a design objective to suggest a framework for an ultimate particular. The interesting question is how do we know when something is an ultimate particular? The answer is simple: when it is solving a problem. In this dissertation, this would be a framework that suggests the element in a store that emotionally engages the customer, thus increasing the shopping experience.

CHAPTER 3. THE PAPERS

In the method, I argued the importance of the ethnographic approach combined with case studies when researching customer behaviour in stores. The field of retailing is traditionally quantitative, which reflects the enormous amount of knowledge about the effects of single variables in the store environment. In this regard, research on the effect of cohesive experiences is sparse. Research of this kind requires a qualitative approach because it is the combination of variables that is interesting. The next article is an observation of a store with overall coherent cues in order to identify the effect and thereby the potential for brick-and-mortar stores.

3.1. PAPER 1: WHEN MEN GO SHOPPING - A THEORY OF MALE RECREATIONAL SHOPPING

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This paper has not been published

Shopping is no longer a predominantly female activity. Demographic changes and cultural shifts have meant that men increasingly must shop. Research on male shopping attitudes and behaviour is still sparse, and most studies view male shopping as an instrumental rather than a recreational activity, i.e., something you must do rather than something that you like to do in your leisure time. This paper asserts that nonetheless, shopping in certain situations functions as a male leisure activity. The research is based on observational studies of shopping behaviour at a Danish hunting store. The customers were predominantly male, many of them were regulars, and sometimes, these customers would spend a considerable amount of time and money on shopping in this store.

The study analyses how these regular customers go about shopping, focusing on the play-like elements in performing this activity. Although there are many similarities between female and male leisure shopping (e.g., in how “browsing” is performed), we assert that there may also be important differences. Female leisure shopping is often conceived as an autonomous act; i.e., shopping is done without some external purpose. Male leisure shopping, on the other hand, seems to serve as an occasion for sociably engaging with peers. Hence, part of the attraction for regular shoppers could be that shopping allows for a specific male sociability, with the store as an entrance to this sphere, hunting as the activity in which this sociability enfolds and some sort of “old boys network” as the outcome and purpose of this sociability. Thus, the not yet finalised argument is that the store functions somewhat like a traditional gentlemen’s club (not to be confused with more popular venues bearing the same name).

3.1.1. SHOPPING: A MALE LEISURE ACTIVITY?

Shopping is an activity whereby products are treated “as potential objects of acquisition through purchase” (Campbell, 1997: 175). In market economies characterised by a division of labour, shopping has become a necessity. Every American, regardless of age, gender, income or ethnicity, spends on average more than 40 minutes each day on this activity, and during weekends and holidays, people actively engaged in acquiring things use on average almost 2 hours each day performing some type of shopping (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Although this figure most likely may be somewhat lower in other westernised countries, shopping nonetheless could be said to be one of the activities in which almost all citizens of developed countries partake. It is something that every household must do on a regular basis to sustain domestic order. It is “work”, understood as the performance of certain practices and routines at relatively fixed moments and with regular intervals to keep up the level of existence. It seems fair to say that this “work” is a time-consuming activity.

Although some people may dislike all or most forms of shopping, for many people, it is also a pleasurable pastime in which they voluntarily engage. Shopping is potentially not only “work” but also leisure, i.e., a spare-time activity spent away from domestic and occupational chores. You can shop for necessities, but you can also shop randomly around without some clearly defined purpose (Falk & Campbell, 1997). In the first case, as “work”, the activity has some external purpose, i.e., the acquisition of a specific product. This “work” is typically understood instrumentally in utilitarian terms of costs and benefits. Good shopping saves time or money and is hence characterised by convenience. In the latter case, as leisure, shopping in itself becomes the purpose of the activity. It is recreational in that it is enjoyable and is self-referential and autonomous because the shopper, at least in part, shops for the sake of shopping (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980). Convenience shopping and recreational shopping are not mutually exclusive practices. In everyday life, shopping may oscillate between shopping for and shopping around, e.g., when “work” becomes pleasurable, thereby shifting the mode of the activity from instrumental to experiential (Falk & Campbell, 1997).

Some products and settings, e.g., convenience goods and supermarkets, are perceived by many shoppers as inherently uninspiring and shopping, therefore, as something to be done as rapidly as possible. On the other hand, other products and settings, e.g., fashion or computer stores, are viewed as exciting, which may prolong the shopping activity. Whether the activity takes on an instrumental or an experiential orientation largely depends on interest. It seems obvious to relate systematic differences in shoppers’ interests to factors such as age, income, status, personality and, not least, gender. In fact, for a long period of time, shopping has been viewed as an almost exclusively female activity (Lunt & Livingstone, 1992). Presently, this may seem to be a bias, but historically,

modernity apparently constituted shopping as the “work” sphere for women (Tosh, 1999; Vickery, 1993). Housewives took care of the households’ domestic needs by shopping in the public domain (Nava, 1997; Witkowski, 1999). Tellingly, in his seminal theory of shopping, based on an ethnographic study of shoppers on a London street, Miller uncovered the deeper anthropological meanings of instrumental shopping. The labour of shopping is a devotional rite or sacrifice performed by Miller’s informants, mainly housewives, to express their love of and care for their family members (Miller, 1998). Since the first half of the 19th century, the invention of the department store, the planning of shopping arcades and streets and targeted marketing have enticed female shoppers to shop around while “at work”, i.e., to discover and explore previously unknown options, to sense the quality and quantity of goods and to daydream and fantasise about products (Friedberg, 1993; Jansen-Verbeke, 1987; Miller, 2014; Rappaport, 2001). Thus, shopping also became a female leisure activity not only to satisfy household needs but also to stimulate desire and consumer passions (Belk, Ger & Askegaard, 2003).

The transformation of Western societies since the 1960s has seriously challenged the conception of shopping as a gender-specific, predominantly female activity (Roy Dholakia, 1999). In many households, it has become the rule rather than the exception that men also do the shopping. This fact does not deny that there may be gender-specific differences in valuing and practising shopping. Women may have different attitudes towards shopping than men, and men may follow different shopping strategies than women. Research from the 1990s indicated that although there was a wide variety in the extent to which individuals expressed a positive attitude towards shopping, women were significantly more likely to have a positive attitude than men (Campbell, 1997). This research also showed that when men expressed a positive attitude, it was closely related to very product-specific forms of shopping (e.g., computers), whereas women were more likely to have this attitude towards a broad range of products. Women seemed more likely to value the activity in itself. Furthermore, compared to men, women significantly more often preferred shopping above other forms of leisure activities. This survey seems to confirm prior research that showed a substantial predominance of female recreational shoppers (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980).

These results could be interpreted as follows: Men have a more “work”-related than leisure-related approach to shopping. This interpretation is confirmed by popular perceptions of male shopping strategies. One of the few studies on male shopping behaviour identified three stereotypical beliefs – shared by both male and female shoppers – on male shopping attitudes and strategies (Otnes & McGrath, 2001). The first belief, “grab and go shopping”, expresses the view that men shop instrumentally by only visiting a few stores, buying the few products needed to satisfy a well-defined need and leaving immediately after

purchase. The second stereotype, “whine and/or wait”, is believed to capture male behaviour when accompanying female partners in retail settings. In such situations, younger men are believed to be unhappy and are hence “whining”, whereas older men are bored, hence “waiting” apathetically for their partner to finish her task, which, to the male companion, may seem never ending. The third belief was that male shoppers have a “fear of the feminine”; i.e., they are reluctant to buy clothing and products related to the household or to the female body. In their extensive study of actual male shopping behaviour, the authors found ample evidence to refute these stereotypes. The realities of male shopping are much more nuanced. Men examine products intensively, they negotiate with salespersons and discuss the properties of the products, they explore products spontaneously and in an unfocused manner, they buy goods impulsively, they actively participate in their female partner’s endeavours, they spend considerable time shopping, and they also shop for lingerie, crystal and china and, similarly, buy goods to enhance their relationships with others (Otnes & McGrath, 2001, p. 119). Common beliefs on male shopping held by both men and women are thus generally simply misconceived stereotypes.

Nonetheless, research still shows considerable differences between female and male decision-making styles. A study of adolescents showed that male shoppers have a more utilitarian approach to shopping compared to female shoppers (Shim, 1996). Male adolescents predominantly favoured quantity and price, whereas female adolescents had a more pronounced recreational approach by viewing shopping as enjoyable per se and indulging in the act of seeking out innovative and stimulating products. This result was confirmed by another study of male shopping traits in which only 10% of the respondents could be identified as recreational shoppers enjoying shopping just for fun (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004). On the other hand, almost half of the male respondents in this study showed aversion towards shopping. Interestingly, however, male shoppers appeared to be just as brand conscious and as effective in their shopping pursuits as their female counterparts (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006).

Studies of male shopping are sparse, and more recent studies are lacking. The transformation of gender roles and gender identity over recent decades may thus have made some of the results from earlier studies obsolete. However, it seems certain that, as with women, men also shop and that, contrary to stereotypical conceptions, they are actually very aware of how to shop, what to shop for and even how to endure shopping trips. They seem to know how to do this particular “work”. However, what about shopping around as a leisure activity? Previous studies do not identify this orientation as a prominent aspect of male shopping. A reason for this omission or lack could be that shopping is actually an insignificant leisure activity for most men. However, there could be other reasons as well. First, the most recent of the cited studies is almost ten years old. In the meantime, the leisure orientation may have gained greater pertinence

for male shoppers. In a way, Campbell forecasted such a change in his study of gender differences in shopping. By distinguishing between a male shopping ideology of needs (i.e., “work”) and a female shopping ideology of desire (i.e., leisure), he envisaged a future dominated by recreational shopping, with women being “the modern and sophisticated consumers” (Campbell, 1997, p. 175). This would make men either more “feminine” or leave them marginalised in society. Second, most of these studies were based on surveys asking respondents to recall what they do when shopping and to verbalise what they feel about this activity. This does not necessarily capture how these respondents actually perform these chores. Third, the activity may not be considered shopping at all by the respondents but rather an integral part of some other recreational activity, which they may perceive as truly important and meaningful.

In the spring of 2013, we happened to visit a hunting shop in Copenhagen, *Guns & Gents*. Not being hunters ourselves, we were amazed by the behaviour of most of the other customers. Male shoppers could spend hours (and a considerable amount of money) in the store. They evidently enjoyed shopping around in the store. Furthermore, male passers-by almost invariably stopped as soon as they noticed the store. Several of them would subsequently enter the store, indicating that the store appeared attractive to them. Although most of these chance visitors would leave the shop soon after discovering the store’s hunting theme, their behaviour nonetheless indicated a considerable degree of willingness to shop around in an unplanned, leisurely mode and to be guided by the spirit of the moment. We thus decided to conduct an observation study on what goes on when men shop in a recreational mode to gain a clearer understanding of the rationale of shopping as a male leisure activity. This research was conducted at *Guns & Gents* in the autumn of 2013. Our research was guided by the idea that what “people do when they visit stores and malls is just as important in producing and reproducing their identity as the goods they might (or might not) buy” (Stobart, Hann & Morgan, 2007). Thus, our focus is on the how of male shopping activities and not on what men may find pleasurable to shop for.

3.1.2. METHOD

To capture what actually goes on when men shop around, our research was based on observation. We were not primarily interested in what shoppers said that the activity meant to them, how they recalled the shopping experience or how much and what they liked about the activity. Our focus was on how shoppers perform the act of shopping. The observations were performed by only one of us to avoid unnecessarily disturbing the shoppers’ routines. Of the various observer roles, we therefore chose that of the complete observer (Lindlof & Taylor, 2010) or the non-intrusive observer (Rust, 1993), participating as little as possible in the other customers’ interactions with one another, the products or the staff. The ideal was that the observer should act as a typical

customer in the store and be ‘a fly on the wall’, hanging around while regular customers conducted their business. Imitating other customers’ behaviour, she would walk around, touch products and look engaged. The observer also changed into clothes of darker colours to better match those of regular customers. At times, when the observer’s presence could have become conspicuous, she left the shop and observed the store from a café on the opposite side. To minimise intrusion, short notes were made on a cell phone and, at the earliest possible moment, written down in a fuller form on a laptop. The field notes were thus taken without having to rely solely on memory. None of the customers seemed to notice anything unusual about the observer, who appeared to be either texting or writing emails.

The observations were collected on six entire days during a two-week period at the beginning of the hunting season, when there were many new goods in the store and many prospective customers visiting it. During this period, we observed 715 customers inside or outside the store. The shopping behaviour of 300 customers was registered in detail. Inspired by grounded theory, we had no hypotheses on male shopping prior to our observations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For analysis, we used the constant comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). After having concluded the observations, each of us read the field notes several times, looking for patterns. Each of us categorised these patterns as emergent themes. These themes and the relations between them were discussed, leading to more mature themes. Some of these themes were foundational for the present study. Other themes were of more peripheral importance.

Apart from observation, we conducted background interviews with the sales manager, the CEO and one of the sales assistants. These interviews were conducted at the beginning and at the end of our stay. At an early stage of our research, we attempted to informally interview some of the customers, but most of the people we addressed declined, stating that they were too busy to be interviewed. Not wanting to compromise the integrity of the store, we therefore abstained from conducting further interviews.

3.1.3. THE CONTEXT OF OUR RESEARCH

The number of hunters in Denmark has increased in recent decades. In 2014, 177,497 people, i.e., approximately 3% of the total population, had a licence allowing them to go hunting. This is the highest amount since 1941, when the national registration of hunters started. This licence must be renewed annually and is acquired after passing a theoretical and practical exam. Most hunters are male, with the share of female hunters being 6% or 10.750 women. However, this share is also increasing (Politiken, 2015). Hunting used to be a socially divided activity with different practices related to distinct classes: Upper-class

hunting on privately owned larger estates differed from farmers' hunting on own or rented fields and coastal hunting along public beaches. Hunting was a rural activity, practised by people living in the countryside and handed down from one generation to the next. Since the 1980s, these classic divisions have started to blur, gradually transforming hunting into a pastime for urbanites as well. These "new hunters" are introduced to the activity somewhat later than the traditional young hunter from rural areas. With their new interest being promoted by colleagues and acquaintances rather than family, they often start out around or after the age of thirty. The rise of these "new hunters" explains the general increase in the number of hunters and the emergence of female hunters in what was once an exclusively male preserve. The practice of upper-class hunting is believed to model the expectations and notions of the "new hunters", thus indicating a connection between "new hunting" and upward mobility (Hansen, 2006).

The fact that *Guns & Gents* is located in the very centre of Copenhagen in itself indicates that it caters to an urban clientele. The store was founded in 1985 when "new hunting" started to become trendy. In Denmark, there are 194 hunting stores, of which 25 are located within a 100-km radius (or 1-hour driving distance) of Copenhagen. *Guns & Gents* is a joint stock company, and compared to other hunting stores and retail in general, it is a successful company. Despite the recession, it has turned a considerable profit each year. The staff consists of the daily manager, Tonni Rigby, who is a retired special service soldier. He manages everything from purchasing to cleaning. The CEO and co-owner, Carsten Bang, sporadically helps Tonni with sales, purchases and customer relations. He owns several other companies and has a large personal network from which many of the key customers are recruited. Furthermore, a few sales assistants work a couple of hours in the afternoon.

The store has a range of hunting-related products: guns, cartridges, knives, books, earmuffs, sock suspenders, jackets, bags, caps and cuff links with images of animals. The main brands are Aigle, Barbour, Filson, Härkila, LeCarmeau, and Purdey. The prices range from 20 GBP for a pair of gloves to 100,000 GBP for a specially crafted rifle. Right at the entrance are two chairs. Centred in the back of the store is the weapon room, and to the left of the weapon room is a small department for women's clothing. The colours and interior of the women's department are similar to the rest of the store. The store has black product displays, a dark carpet, white walls, brown wallpaper and four glass displays. All of the clothes and accessories are in dark natural colours except those items used for hunting safety, which are in neon colours. Moreover, the store is decorated with animal skulls and exotic animal trophy heads shot by some of the founders, board members, the CEO and the daily manager. A computer screen displays how the CEO has captured and killed various animals. All of these animals were from distant parts of the world.

3.1.4. ENTERING THE STORE

Our first impression of the store was its exclusivity. Sensing the soft black carpet on the floor, the comfortably warm temperature in the room, the neutral smell and the perfectly stacked products generated a feeling of being in a meticulously staged place. The mounted animals conveyed the purport of the store. There was a gazelle apparently jumping for its life, a scary-looking wild boar and some exotic animal that we could not immediately identify. When opening the store's heavy door, the contrast with the loud sounds of cars speeding, trucks delivering packages, people conversing, laughing or shouting and bike bells ringing became apparent. The closing of the door blocked the noise of the streets, restoring the serenity of the moment.

In general, the customers were quiet as well. When no one was talking in the weapon room, the store was silent. There was no music playing, no phones beeping, not even any coughing. Even when the place was filled with customers, nobody talked or made other noises. Customers rarely asked for help. They simply walked around quietly looking at the products. However, once in a while, this tranquillity would be disrupted, when two or more people (typically women) entered as a group conversing very loudly with one another. This seemed to be disturbing to the customers already present. Some would respond by looking irritated, by walking away from the "intruders" or even by leaving the store. Apart from such intrusions, the atmosphere of the shop could be characterised as one of solemnity and equanimity.

It was as though the store had a magnetic field attracting men of all ages. Male passers-by could not stop looking at the store once they had noticed it. Almost without exception, they would slow down their pace. Sometimes, they stopped and walked into the store. On the other hand, many of the women who accompanied their husbands appeared bored. When couples walked into the store, a specific scenario would typically unfold. The female companion would take out her phone and seat herself in one of the chairs by the entrance. The man, on the other hand, would walk further into the store, lift his eyebrows, open his mouth, and begin to touch the products.

Hence, the store was exclusive in another literal sense. Its appeal included some people but excluded others from wanting to engage actively with it. There was a gender issue, perhaps even a deep, biological issue, in this operation of inclusion and exclusion. However, the inclusion and exclusion of customers were more than just a feeling. They also seemed like a strategy that the sales assistants actively applied. Some customers were simply ignored, whereas others were directly invited to converse and interact with the staff. This was particularly conspicuous in regard to the room at the back of the store, where the weaponry was displayed.

There was no physical barrier between this room and the rest of the shop. In the middle of this room was a table where long conversations between customers and sales personnel would unfold. They talked about hunting trips, dangerous animals that are difficult to kill, exotic places to go hunting, the price of hunting in various countries, and which gear is best suited for hunting different types of animals. Not everybody was invited into these conversations. The manager, Tonni, carefully selected the customers he wanted at his table by addressing some customers directly while ignoring others. Although all customers were free to walk into the room, this rarely occurred. When a customer inquisitively looked into the room, the manager would keep on working without paying any notice to the person's interest. The customers complied with this. The somewhat rude service did not upset them. They did not exit the store in anger. They respected the invisible barrier and continued looking at the products in the store.

3.1.5. TYPES OF CUSTOMERS

Different types of customers visited the store, each with their distinct approach. The first two types consisted of hunters and would-be hunters. Most of these customers were male, although the shop also caters to female hunters by having a separate section with women's clothing and apparel.

There were notable differences between would-be hunters and 'real' hunters. The first group comprised customers who were invited to hunting parties without knowing how to dress for the occasion or what exactly was to be expected. They were outsiders to the world of hunting, having been invited in and therefore wanting to make an appropriate impression without exactly knowing how to do so. The decision-making process reflected the insecurity of their position in the world of hunting. Going on a hunt would typically be considered a once-in-a-lifetime event in which they were eager not to stand out from the rest of the company. Because the apparel is very costly, they would, on the other hand, be preoccupied with whether the gear would be acceptable outside the realm of hunting, i.e., when utilised in more familiar social settings. Ideally, the outfit should mitigate the feeling of being a total stranger in an unfamiliar community with unknown but highly codified expectations, without deviating too much from the norms of ordinary life.

This dramatised the theme of inclusion and exclusion. Their choice of garment should not exclude them from the hunting party, but these clothes should also in some way be included in their everyday outfit. Not infrequently, such a customer was torn between two differing advisers: between the sales assistant counselling him on the proper hunting attire and his spouse reminding him of the costs and the necessity of conforming to a more quotidian dress code. The fact that the staff, when available, was responsive to the needs of this group shows

that these would-be hunters were not excluded as ‘proper’ customers worthy of attention and care. Being invited to a hunt implies having some sort of social rank. However, this invitation alone was not enough to be included in the magic circle of the weapon room.

The group of ‘real’ hunters, far larger than that of the would-be hunters, were insiders with a varying degree of expertise, spanning from novices still in the process of applying for a hunting licence to very experienced hunters. This type constituted the regular customers who frequently visited the store and spent considerable amounts of money there. The extent of their inclusion in the weapon room expressed either their social and/or their hunting reputation. Novices who brought their wives along would typically postpone their purchase until the next day, when visiting the shop on their own. The opinion of the sales assistants clearly often counted for more than that of their spouse. Experienced hunters would typically come alone. They would typically look for novelties in the apparel section or ask for specialised advice on weapons and gear. Sometimes, though, they brought their spouse. She would sit despondently, checking her cell phone or staring apathetically at her husband while he had a field day.

The shop also had foreign visitors who took advantage of their stay in Copenhagen to visit the store. In general, they were experienced hunters and expressed their positive impressions of the store. They were mostly couples or entire families, which indicates that the visit was part of a tourist outing. Figuratively, other types of visitors could also be labelled “tourists”. The first type consisted of people who were foreign to the world of hunting but visited this type of store because of some specific garments that they could use for their own outfit. Having a wide selection of clothing from brands such as Barbour and Purdey, the store appeals to young urbanites (“hipsters”) with a taste for the countryside look. Their visit to the store seemed planned and their shopping behaviour goal directed. They had prior knowledge of the shop and went directly for the items of interest while neglecting all other objects. They actively excluded the real purport of the store as relevant for their own life projects. Another group of “tourists” were visitors who happened to stumble upon the store while passing by. Their prior knowledge of the business was at best limited. Hence, they did not know what to expect when entering the store. Some visitors reacted by being startled and left almost instantly after having entered. Others seemed pleasantly surprised and explored the shop, looked inquisitively at the clothing and accessories and glanced furtively into the weapon room. Upon leaving, such visitors typically thanked the sales assistant for having been allowed to have a peek at something from which they were basically excluded. None of these visitors bought anything during this first encounter. A fifth type was non-hunting customers who came to buy a present for a hunter. They were often women and almost always needed expert advice from the sales assistants.

They typically behaved as though they felt a bit out of place (i.e., not included) and found it difficult to make a personal decision on what to buy. Either they stuck rigidly to a wish list, or they relied on the sales assistant's knowledge of the recipient. If he was a renowned hunter, a form of 'inclusion by proxy' may have occurred, in which the staff would give her their undivided attention.

Once in a while, a pair or even small groups of women would enter, whereas male visitors typically came on their own. However, couples were not that rare. Except in cases in which both partners were ardent hunters, the relationship would be asymmetrical in terms of interest and knowledge. In many cases, one partner, always the female partner, would lack any interest in the business of her partner. She would sit in one of the chairs by the entrance, acting absentminded. Occasionally, she would encourage him to close the deal or even discourage him from looking any further by stating that the clothes were ugly or did not fit. Upon leaving, she would rise rapidly from her chair and walk out at a fast pace, whereas he would follow her much more slowly. He not infrequently seemed reluctant to leave, looking back over his shoulder and touching almost every item on his way out. Interestingly, the female behaviour perfectly matches one of the stereotypes of male shopping behaviour: "whine and/or wait" (Otnes & McGrath, 2001). Female non-hunting companions complain, are impatient and find a place to sit down as soon as they have entered the store. A visit to *Guns & Gents* seems to make them unhappy or bored.

When both partners took a genuine interest in the business, another form of asymmetry emerged: one of knowledge or expertise. A non-hunting spouse accompanying a would-be hunter or novice would take on the role of fashion expert, instructing him in what was hot (or, rather, acceptable) and what was not. These roles were reversed when a female novice came together with her more experienced husband. He would carefully advise her how to assemble a perfectly matching outfit and encourage her to try on further apparel. This taking on of the role of a sales assistant also extended to interactions between unacquainted experienced male hunters and female novices. He would praise the quality of specific products and attempt to convince her to buy them by stating that he himself had owned them for many years.

Guns & Gents is a haven for hunters. However, other customers and visitors may momentarily intrude on this sanctuary by occupying the sales assistants with non-hunting-related questions (e.g., "hipsters" asking for some fashionable garment), by talking loudly and making noises (e.g., cell phones), by other tokens of lack of respect for the special atmosphere, or by simply reminding the hunter of the existence of ordinary life (e.g., a spouse telling her husband that their new-born cannot stand waiting anymore). This raises the question of how experienced hunters behave when they have the shop for themselves.

3.1.6. SCENARIOS FOR REGULAR CUSTOMERS' IN-STORE BEHAVIOUR

While observing the shop from a café on the opposite side of the road, two typical patterns of approaching the store emerged. One was that, in particular, male pedestrians almost invariably would slow down when passing by and noticing the shop. Sometimes, they would stop and give the window displays their attention. Some of these chance passers-by would even enter the shop, with not a few coming out on the street again soon afterwards. In fact, inside the shop, we sometimes observed visitors making a sharp U-turn immediately after having entered. The visitors who stayed somewhat longer behaved like the accidental “tourists” described above.

The other typical pattern consisted of men who approached the store at a considerable pace and in an apparently very focused manner. It was as though they had targeted the shop. Many of these men spent a significant amount of time inside. Upon leaving, they generally sped up immediately after having closed the front door. This was the manner in which regular customers (i.e., the experienced hunters) typically behaved. This group of customers seemed to know the floor plan of the store by heart, moving effortlessly from one section to another. They appeared to know the staff and were often recognised by the sales assistants. Sometimes, lengthy conversations between customer and the manager or the CEO would follow.

Once inside, the regular customers' pace would shift dramatically. Some turned off their cell phones, others said curtly, when called, that they were not available or that they had other business right now, without hinting at what they were doing. Remarkably, the customers behaved very patiently. They seemed irritated when ‘intruders’ disturbed the serenity but not when the sales assistant was occupied serving another customer, the goods were out of stock or the junior assistant blundered. Overall, the customers appeared to be forbearing and in no hurry.

Five scenarios may capture how the regular customers' stay in the shop unfolded. The scenario with the shortest duration consisted of the customers who acted in a very goal-directed manner, knowing exactly what they were looking for, asking for it directly after entering, then paying for it and leaving immediately thereafter. This behaviour matches a stereotypical conception of male shopping behaviour, “grab and go shopping”; i.e., it is instrumental, ‘rational’ and to the point (Otnes & McGrath, 2001). Interestingly, however, it was often customers who had visited the store only a couple of days earlier (typically with their spouses) who performed these short acts. Rather, this behaviour could thus be interpreted as buying something the customer had longed for since the last visit and perhaps even as an act of ‘deceiving’ the absent partner by nonetheless buying the gear, which had not met with her approval.

The second scenario may also be interpreted as a strategy of deception. It followed the introduction of the first scenario, but as soon as the requested product had been set aside, the customer went on a browsing tour through the shop, looking at either the new arrivals (the shorter version) or the entire stock or significant parts of it (longer versions). In such cases, the customer may have been effectively fooling himself by feigning that the outing had a very specific aim but actually using this pretended goal as an excuse for having time off for unstructured and unplanned behaviour. One striking example of this was a seemingly busy businessman who phoned from his car to have some cartridges ready for him because he was in a hurry. When he arrived a moment later, he purchased the product and then forgot all time constraints by starting to examine the stock systematically. Regardless, this scenario shows the reversal from a goal-directed manner of shopping to spontaneous shopping behaviour at work (cf. Falk & Campbell, 1997). This scenario consists of two acts: an instrumental act and a recreational act. Between these two acts, the behaviour of the shopper changes significantly from pre-planned to unstructured or from behaving rationally to being inspired. The customer is led astray from the initial purpose of the visit. He is “seduced”, and his stay in the store will be prolonged (often far) beyond his original intentions.

The third scenario seems like an open admission of the pleasures of unstructured behaviour. The only planning involved seems to be the decision to visit the store. In some instances, the customer may have a faint notion of what he would like to buy, e.g., a new cap or new rubber boots, without having a clear picture of exactly what (brand, colour, fabrics, etc.) to want. In other cases, the customer is simply there to check whether there are new arrivals or some stuff he may need without knowing it in advance. This scenario is a one-act event of recreational shopping, pure and simple. It is “browsing” and may go on for a considerable length of time.

The fourth scenario is not only about looking at products and possibly buying some of them but also about having a conversation with the sales manager or the CEO about hunting experiences, exotic trips, rare game and weaponry. This scenario introduces a new act into the shopping experience, thus extending the stay beyond the second or the third scenario. This new act adds another dimension to the shopping experience, one of conversing with the staff about issues not directly related to acquisition. This occurs in cases in which the customer is invited into the weapon room, which is the place where these conversations are conducted. For a period of time, the customer will be part of the ‘magic circle’. However, this inclusion is only by direct invitation from the manager or the CEO acting as ‘guardians’ of this circle. This act is not about buying or looking at products. It is a social act of being accepted as a member of a group.

Some regular customers, though, simply enter the store and either ask whether the manager is available (the politer version) or go directly to the weapon room to check for themselves whether Tonni may be available for a chat. If this is not the case, then the customer will typically leave immediately. This fifth scenario is a variation of the fourth in which having a conversation is the sole goal of visiting the shop. In this scenario, the social dimension has become autonomous. Visiting the store is solely about chatting. This makes for the stays of longest duration, with some of the conversations lasting more than two hours without anything being sold or bought. Here, inclusion in the circle is taken for granted, which says a considerable amount about how this group of customers see themselves, i.e., as naturally belonging to some in-group. These five scenarios can be summarised in the table below.

Scenarios	Number of acts	Typical duration	Strategies for shopping	Planning of the last act
Grab-and-Go	1	Short	Instrumental	Pre-planned
Seduction	2	Prolonged	Instrumental to recreational	Spontaneous
Browsing	1	Long	Recreational	Act planned, outcome spontaneous
Invitation	2 or 3	Extended	(Instrumental to) Recreational to social dimension	Spontaneous
Chatting	1	Sometimes very long	Social Dimension	Pre-planned

Table 1. Five scenarios used by regular customers at *Guns & Gents*.

In two of the scenarios, “seduction” and “invitation”, the actual course of the shopping outing may very well have turned out differently from what was expected beforehand. The stay was longer than envisaged and required shifts of attitude and attention, i.e., from an instrumental to a recreational strategy or from a recreational strategy to one of social interaction.

3.1.7. STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY REGULAR CUSTOMERS

From these five scenarios, three strategies for in-store behaviour may be deduced. The first strategy, instrumental shopping, is directed towards fulfilling a very specific goal (i.e., the acquisition of a particular object) as efficiently as possible. This goal is pre-defined by the customer. If everything goes according to plan, the visit will be experienced as satisfying. The first scenario, “grab-and-go”, is an acting out of this strategy, with the customer as the main agent.

The second strategy, recreational shopping, has no pre-defined exact goal in terms of planned acquisitions. It is not about purchasing a particular object but rather about exploring what is in stock and what may inspire purchasing. This strategy is fulfilled if the customer discovers (and is able to buy) a new, previously unfamiliar thing that may become a real asset for his gear. The third scenario, “browsing”, is the manner in which this strategy develops: unplanned and spontaneous, driven not by goal-directedness but by inspiration and impulsivity. Henceforth, failure to succeed in this strategy will in many cases be attributed just as much to the customer’s lack of inspiration as to deficiencies in the store’s range of goods. The second scenario, “seduction”, is a combination of these first two strategies, and it can unfold in two different ways. On the one hand, the customer may become inspired to start browsing after having successfully finalised the planned purchase, or on the other hand, planning to visit the store to make a specific acquisition (first strategy) may be a mere pretence for feeling allowed to browse the store extensively (second strategy). This behaviour could be labelled as self-deceptive.

The third strategy, social interaction, is related to the fifth scenario, “chatting”. The scenario is pre-planned, with having a conversation being the goal of the visit. The customer is the agent who brings this conversation about. The prerequisite for success is not only that the manager or the CEO is actually available but also that he is willing to engage in a conversation with the customer. If this is denied, the operation of exclusion will be directly tangible. On the other hand, the customer’s inclusion in the ‘magic circle’ will be affirmed if the conversation relies on mutual interest. In this strategy, the customer thus places his esteem at stake. In the fourth scenario, “invitation”, esteem is granted. Being unexpectedly invited into the weapon room may be gratifying. It is not the outcome of a customer strategy, though, but could very well be part of the manager’s strategy to foster loyalty.

Strategy	Purpose	Motivation	Archetypical Scenario
Instrumental Shopping	Pursuit of planned goals	Utilitarian	Grab-and-Go
Recreational Shopping	Discovering something to want	Inspirational	Browsing
Social Interaction	Having a conversation	Inclusion in the "Magic Circle"	Chatting

Table 2. Strategies employed by regular customers at *Guns & Gents*.

The three strategies show that the goals, planning and control, agency, and forms of gratification vary depending on the purpose of the visit. The first strategy develops along the lines of 'rational' or utilitarian shopping behaviour, whereas the third strategy is conducted according to rules that typically govern forms of social interaction other than shopping. Relying on spontaneity and inspiration, the second strategy caters to experiential or hedonic and recreational qualities in shopping (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980; Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). In the following, we first analyse how men perform acts of recreational shopping, i.e., how browsing is practised as part of male shopping behaviour. Then, we examine the third strategy, in which shopping seems to be a pretext for a very different leisure activity, i.e., chatting. It is our contention that when men shop in a distinctly leisurely mode, this is also done for the sake of enhancing social bonds..

3.1.8. WHEN MEN GO BROWSING

"Browsing" is considered a main feature of shopping for leisure. Customers browse when they examine the merchandise for recreational or informational purposes without a direct intent to purchase (Bloch & Richins, 1983; Bloch, Ridgway & Sherrell, 1989). Our observations indicate that male regular customers took this activity somewhat seriously. Except for interactions at the counter or on those occasions in which lively conversations went on in the weapon room, the store was conspicuously quiet. Browsing was done almost silently. When couples discussed the products or if a customer asked the sales assistant

a question, this was done in an almost whispering voice. Even with up to six customers at one time, the shop was typically silent, with each shopper appearing absorbed in his own tranquil activity.

At *Guns & Gents*, the browsing activity was all about seeing, touching, and testing the products and trying them on. The examination was done either spontaneously or in a systematic manner. The systematic approach implied going through the entire product range or carefully selected parts of it meticulously, e.g., from one end of the store to the other. The spontaneous approach seemed far more driven by inspiration and sudden associations. Such customers would criss-cross the store. One customer started looking at a wide selection of caps and hats, then at equipment for the dog and at gloves, after which he opened a drawer to pull out some scarves, finally buying a rain cap and special gloves for shooting. Because help from the sales assistants was not always readily at hand, the customers were often on their own during their browsing. This seemed to be completely acceptable for regular customers, nor did it cause annoyance when it was left to the customers themselves to find the fitting room and to assess whether the clothing matched. This points to a relatively high degree of self-efficacy and self-confidence in regard to clothing among experienced hunters.

The regular customers seemed fairly knowledgeable in creating a matching outfit. The experienced male hunter counselling a female novice on how to compose an appropriate yet fashionable set of clothes is just one example. His advice to her showed considerable insight into the code of “permanent style”: a tasteful kit’s various parts should not be of completely identical make, colour or materials. Some variation should be allowed to create the maximum overall effect. One regular customer brought his favourite cap to find a matching jacket and another customer his jacket to buy matching tweed knickers and socks. A pair of couple customers entered the shop already adorned in hunting apparel, holding shirts and jackets up in front of the mirror and trying on new caps to evaluate the overall impression that such extensions would generate.

Match was thus an important factor in the consumer decision-making process. Interestingly, this corresponds to some findings on female behaviour related to lingerie. One study of women shopping for undergarments found a sub-category of behaviour called “fashion”, in which matching current fashion trends was a manner of expressing “personal taste and practicing sophistication, discerning abilities, and success” (Granot, Greene & Brashear, 2008, p. 805). Another study showed how some female consumers were so preoccupied with matching their apparel that they could not leave their home when bra and knickers did not match (Jantzen, Østergaard & Vieira, 2006). The quest for a match could hence be interpreted as an issue of displaying competence and keeping up an image of the integrity of the self. Our observations seem to indicate that male shoppers may be just as preoccupied with creating this match as their female counterparts.

Another factor in the consumer decision was originality. The originality of the brand (e.g., Purdey or Barbour) or of the colour and material was seminal for the product's value as an object to be considered. Having to choose between alternatives, the customers typically selected the original object. This shows that the decision-making was partly driven by a quest for authenticity as a manner of expressing the self by reconnecting it through original objects to time, place and culture (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Napoli, Dickinson, Beverland & Farrelly 2014). This is also a token of these male shoppers' brand consciousness and of a decision-making style focused on quality (cf. Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004).

For some customers, price also seemed to play a significant role. Costly products were equated with quality products and, therefore, with desirable products worthy of being acquired. One customer fell in love with a pair of wellingtons. Learning that this particular brand was too expensive to generate sales, he bought two pairs of them. He did not buy a jacket this particular day because the most expensive jackets would not be in before next week. The CEO of the store afterwards told us that one of this customer's colleagues bought apparel and equipment for approximately 100,000 GBP before going on his first hunt. The price of the objects seems to express the prestige of the acquisitions (Brucks, Zeithaml & Naylor, 2000). The high prestige of these things is apparently perceived as a token of the buyer's social prestige, thus emphasising the exclusiveness of their owner. Match and originality, moreover, help express his sense (and knowledge) of style, thereby contributing to his concept of self.

The specific browsing approach employed by regular customers at *Guns & Gents* differs from stereotypical assumptions about male shopping behaviour (cf. Otnes & McGrath, 2001). Our study also seems to disconfirm some of the findings in previous studies on male patterns of shopping (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004; Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006). First, these studies showed that many male customers preferred lower-priced products, which in no way seems to be the case in *Guns & Gents*. Second, these studies indicated that men were motivated to save time and energy while shopping, for example, by saying: "I really don't give my purchases much thought or care" (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2006, p. 1298). In *Guns & Gents*, though, male customers spend a considerable amount of time looking for and seeking out the right products. Third, according to Bakewell and Mitchell, men had a tendency to bargain with the store by haggling on the price. This behaviour was not present in *Guns & Gents*. In fact, the opposite occurred: The customers accepted the fixed price, and when a discount of 10% was given for larger acquisitions, they appeared satisfied or even expressed gratitude. The store was not a combat zone, and the sales personnel were not opponents to be overcome. Instead, there was much respect for the manager and CEO, and the customers had a considerable amount of patience with the sales assistants. This begs the question of what it is that triggers this shopping pattern at *Guns & Gents* that differs so significantly from standard male shopping behaviour as forecasted in other studies.

3.1.9. EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

One answer could be that many customers were emotionally involved in the store. Despite the tranquil atmosphere, favouring silence and almost solemn devotion, customers may occasionally forget themselves and lose self-control. This sometimes occurred when couples or a pair of friends visited the store. The ‘other’ was either a partner, in whom to mirror and reinforce one’s own excitement, or an adversary who had to be convinced by ‘performing’ an emotional outburst. An example of emotional complicity was two friends, both apparently unacquainted with the shop. Upon entering, one of them spontaneously exclaims: “Wow! One would like to take some pictures [of the store].” Seeing a pair of shoes, he continues, “Oh my god! These are NICE. Beautiful. SOO nice!”, and more calmly, “And they are good because they are made for hunting”.

The opposite of complicity is the following episode, which also may serve as a prototypical illustration of the relationship between the two genders and of how male customers went about browsing:

A couple enters the store. She immediately gets seated in one of the chairs at the entrance. Her husband walks around in the shop looking at things. He needs some plaques for hunting trophies and buys a lot of them. In the meanwhile, she sits staring at her nails and keeps on asking: “Do they have labels so you can swap them?” He counters by saying: “Don’t you want to look at something? There are so many nice things here.” He shows her some caps, none of which she fancies, whereupon he tries to convince her that he should have a particular cap. She keeps declining, whereas he keeps insisting. It would go with his waistcoat, he argues, “and it’s classical. So classical!” She replies by stating that his ears look silly under this cap. “But can’t you stand me just a little bit with this one on?”, he begs. He finds one in another colour, tries it on and then exclaims: “This one I simply MUST have!” She consents to buy it for him as a birthday present. While she pays, he looks at books on hunting. And when the gift is being wrapped in paper, he spots some shoes to examine.

Compared to notions of rationality, the male behaviour in these two cases must be said to be out of character. The customers behave almost “childishly”. The interaction with a partner, whether a spouse or a friend, showed an emotional engagement in shopping and in the goods that was not directly observable when customers came to the shop on their own. Research on customer brand engagement has identified three themes that may foster engagement: immersion, passion and activation (Hollebeek, 2011). Passion, i.e., the ability to relate to the product or the brand in an affectively highly charged manner, is at stake in the previous two examples. Activation is the active contribution of the

customer in bringing about the product (e.g., in co-creation), the situation or the right atmosphere. This theme was manifest in the skilled manner in which customers browsed either spontaneously or systematically and in the self-efficacy that they showed in making buying decisions, e.g., based on “match”. Immersion, the first theme, is characterised by being absorbed by the situation, thereby forgetting time, place and one’s own ordinary social role. Both the amount of time some customers spent in the shop and the falling out of character noted above are indicators of immersion. We elaborate on this theme in the following section.

3.1.10. A MALE DREAM WORLD OF CONSUMPTION

Immersion implies an alteration in conduct and/or awareness. Ordinary concerns and preoccupations are for a moment set aside. The focus of attention shifts, and so may the pace of walking, the tone of voice, its pitch and volume and many other physiological features of behaviour. These changes were readily observable in regular customers’ visits to the shop. They slowed down their pace, lowered their voice and appeared to relax. Upon leaving the store, the reverse seemed to occur. Immediately after stepping out on the sidewalk, they accelerated their pace. There was thus a marked difference between their behaviour inside the shop and that in the world at large. Particularly significant were the moments immediately prior to leaving. Many customers looked back over their shoulders before exiting, and several of them touched as many objects as possible on their way out as though to find something suitable for a last-minute acquisition. Tellingly, a buckskin jacket hanging right at the entrance was the most worn out object in the store as a consequence of having been touched by many fingers.

An obvious interpretation of this behaviour is that the door functioned as a threshold between the outer world and the universe of the shop, just like physical or mental boundaries that set rituals apart from ordinary life. In the ritual process, people enter the ritual or “liminal” phase after being segregated from the normality of existence and re-enter this normality in a somewhat altered condition upon leaving the ritual phase. What goes on beyond the threshold of normality, i.e., during the ritual, differs significantly from ordinary life in terms of both the roles of the participants and the rules to which they adhere (Turner, 1995).

Something similar could be said for the manner in which customers behaved at *Guns & Gents*. Inside, customers did other things than in the external world (e.g., browsing) and did things differently (e.g., at a slow pace). Additionally, by extension, inside the shop, external concerns tended to be excluded (e.g., by turning off the cell phone). However, in contrast to the ritual phase, this exclusion was not complete. The ordinary world of shopping had not been

superseded by the logic of a completely different, ritual world. In fact, two parallel worlds were simultaneously present: an actual world of physical and commercial reality in which goods were presented, probed and paid for and a possible world of imagination not concerned with the veracity of reality but rather with the vividness of potentiality (Ryan, 1991). This possible world is a “dream world”, which, since the 19th century, has been a driving force not only for consumers’ fantasies about possible pleasures and imagined identities but also for very actual purchases that may help bridge the gap between fantasies and reality (Friedberg, 1993; Williams, 1982).

Mentally, immersion occurs when conduct and cognitions are guided by the rules of a possible world rather than by those of the actual world, i.e., when the customer’s preoccupations turn towards exploring the multiplicity of possibilities and personas inherent in the dream world (Stevens & Maclaren, 2005). This requires a bracketing of the actual world. Its customs and constraints are momentarily deferred, just like the ordinary obligations of the customer. The actual world is still in existence, but its claims and demands are temporarily infringed upon. Cell phones are turned off; calls go unanswered. The customers behave neither as though they were at the office nor as they would in other shops. Instead, their actual behaviour imitates what would be perceived as appropriate in the possible world.

In our data, there are many instances of mimetic behaviour in which customers imitate what goes on during a hunt. Some of this behaviour has a perfectly practical rationale. One customer looking for suitable attire for safari hunting started waving his arms and bending his knees to examine whether the clothing made any noise. Outsiders may find this behaviour somewhat bizarre, but for an insider, it makes perfect sense. The possible opinions of outsiders were thus excluded from this customer’s consideration.

In other cases, play was superimposed on practical concerns. One customer on the lookout for a rifle to give to his daughter-in-law kept making the types of sounds that simulate shooting while he was handling the various specimens handed over to him. Another customer attempted to test the quality of a rifle by taking aim at an imaginary bird flying around in the weapon room. Such performances imitated the real acts of hunting. Other performances imitated the special type of social interactions connected to hunting. One customer emphasised his request for caps by taking an imaginary cap on and off. More conspicuously, practically every customer trying on clothes would disregard the mirror next to the fitting room. Instead, they would traverse the shop to see their own reflection in the large mirror centrally placed in the store. This mirror clearly represented a larger scene for seeing and being seen than the mirror by the fitting room. Customers would almost always smile back at their own reflection. It was as though the mirror fulfilled the role of the other hunters at

an imagined party. During this catwalk, some customers would take weighty steps as though to stress the weight of their appearance.

These acts of role-playing in the shop correspond to the category of “mimicry” in Caillois’ important classification of play (Caillois, 1961): They are enactments of behaviour in imagined situations (i.e., in future hunts) or for an imaginary audience of other hunters. Furthermore, they represent the play type “paidia”, which, in contrast to the rule-governed type of organised games (“ludus”), is characterised by being performed spontaneously and freely by the actor.

Dream worlds are immersive because they transport the customer to an imagined world that is set apart from reality. Such immersion is gratifying since this transportation to a considerable extent is of the customer’s own making. It depends on the customer’s own activity. Furthermore, it is pleasurable because it anticipates future events, not dissimilar from the acts performed in the shop. In this respect, the shop becomes a testing ground in which an adequate masculine public appearance may be tried out before being performed in actual hunting fields. It is experimenting with identity by inviting the customer to try on new and different outfits and to try out novel poses. It thus prepares him for looking simultaneously composed and carefree, i.e., as an eye-catching persona, as somebody who fits into the group and nonetheless in some respect stands out from its other members. This play is “free”, meaning that it stems from actions by the customer and has no immediate repercussions on his social standing. As explained by Campbell, it involves daydreaming by addressing a potentiality that very well may become a future reality: “a day-dream can be defined as the imaginative elaboration, in a pleasurable direction, of a forthcoming or anticipated, real event, and, as a consequence, requires that incidents should be kept within the bounds of the possible [...]” (Campbell, 1987, p.83). Hence, immersion in this dream world is both pleasurable and meaningful.

3.1.11. DOUBLE PLAY: HUNTERS AND GATHERERS

This doubling of the world in an actual world of commerce and a possible world of dreaming fits Bateson’s formal analysis of the meta-communicative structure of play. This structure contains two contradictory frames: one of veracity (“Everything that goes on here is true”) and one of voluntary delusion (“Everything that goes on here is a lie”). The pleasure inherent in playing stems from the participant’s oscillation in neither completely true nor completely delusory acts (Bateson, 1972). Playing is a “suspension of disbelief” (Coleridge, 1984): real acts oriented towards an imagined world that are without real consequences in the real world. Hence, entering the dream world of *Guns & Gents* implies moving back and forth between fantasies of owning and using the gear (i.e., inconsequential “play”) and acts of scrutinising, asking questions and possibly buying the gear (i.e., a potentially consequential “reality”).

A defining feature of play is that the activity is temporally delineated from other aspects of life and spatially demarcated from other functional spaces. Moreover, it is outside and beyond the ordinary. It is extraordinary, serving neither practical use nor any purpose external to the activity. It is non-teleological. Playing is ‘just for fun’ and crucially depends on the players’ voluntary and active participation. It is thereby intrinsically gratifying and pleasurable (Huizinga, 1949). The store is such a space set apart from other spaces. Here, regular shoppers tend to forget time as daily chores are actively blocked from consciousness. Their behaviour is guided by non-practical purposes, e.g., by mimicking that they are at a hunt.

This play category, “mimicry”, may be one of the recurrent features of leisure shopping, regardless of gender. Shopping in a “dream world” implies imagining that you are using, wearing or possessing the products at some other place and/or in some other time without completely losing your sense of the realities of the actual here-and-now (e.g., price targets, sales assistants or other customers). However, at *Guns & Gents*, playing is not confined to hunting for the perfect gear, i.e., to browsing. It also goes on during “chatting”, the third strategy employed by regular customers.

“Chatting” occurred in the weapon room at the back of the store. The conversations could last up to two hours, their main topics being hunting, weaponry and game. However, many other issues could be discussed. A typical conversation would start with talking about, e.g., rifles, new stock or good bargains. After a period of time, talk would then digress to stories about hunting experiences, shooting, dangerous animals, etc. The weapon room was separated from the rest of the store by one wall, leaving the sides open. Therefore, anybody could enter the room, but other than the regular customers in scenario 5, nobody ever intentionally did so. People going astray and thus happening to enter the room almost invariably backed out immediately. One of these chance visitors even expressed thanks in an apologetic manner for having had the opportunity to take a peek. Uninvited guests clearly found that they had crossed some invisible line. The weapon room was thus separated from the rest of the store, which itself was separated from the world outside.

The type of play unfolding here resembles what Simmel has called “sociability” (*Geselligkeit*) (Simmel, 1949). Sociability in its pure form is associating for its own sake, i.e., the art of association. With conversing being one of the seminal drivers of association, it becomes an end in itself. In this form, all practical or strategic purposes of conversing are excluded. The content of the talk has diminished or no importance. Furthermore, the individuality of the participants, their social rank, fame, learning or merits has “no role in sociability” (*ibid*: 256). Sociability is thus about associating for no purpose other than association. In line with Simmel’s micro-sociology in which society (*Gesellschaft*) is the

aggregation of a myriad of daily interactions (Simmel, 1910), sociability “creates an ideal sociological world, for in it [...] the pleasure of the individual is always contingent upon the joys of others” (Simmel, 1949, p. 257). Sociability is therefore a “social game” constituting “a democracy of equals” (ibid) in which “‘society’ is played” (Simmel, 1949, p. 259). To understand the attraction of “chatting” for customers, we must examine how this “social game” is being played at *Guns & Gents*, more specifically the roles played by customers and staff and the functions served by this sociability.

3.1.12. WHEN MEN DO “CHATTING”

Principally, all customers should be treated as equally important. However, in regard to “chatting”, at *Guns & Gents*, some were more equal than others. Some customers came to the shop with the sole purpose of having a conversation (scenario 5), whereas others were explicitly invited into the weapon room (scenario 4). Many customers were more or less ignored. Outside the weapon room, customers were generally left to themselves. In particular, the manager, Tonni, did not seem to notice them. He typically stayed in the weapon room and seemed reluctant to answer requests from incidental visitors. This was in stark contrast to the services provided to regular customers. He knew them all by their first name and had a vast memory of both their professional occupation, their acquaintances and family and, not least, their hunting interests and requirements. Many customers could not remember the calibre of the bullets or cartridges that they used. Tonni typically could, or otherwise, he would consult his notebook, in which such details about each customer had been meticulously registered. A striking example of this service was a female customer on the lookout for two presents for a male acquaintance. Not being a hunter herself, she was at a loss for what to buy. Tonni asked for the hunter’s name. After having been told, he replied: “Yes, I know him. Yes, he has already got everything. But may it be a funny present?” He showed her hipflasks and cuffs, saying: “He is a dog man because he hunts pheasants.” She ended up buying a hipflask with a dog on it and cuffs with pheasants engraved.

Other examples of this service to regular customers were Tonni’s eagerness to answer any question, even those that did not imply sales, as well as the store’s telephone policy. No calls were left unanswered, and all calls were taken seriously, which sometimes led to lengthy conversations. Almost all regular customers reciprocated this service by calling Tonni by his first name. In Denmark, calling and being called by your first name is a token of informal equality and not of status distinction. Customers, manager and the CEO talked with one another on an equal footing.

Nonetheless, there was an implicit and tacit status hierarchy. It was the manager and the CEO who decided with whom to converse and not vice versa.

They invited customers into a conversation, and they could ignore or refuse customers who wanted to converse. Three factors contributed to their pivotal role. First, although not always appearing service-minded towards all customers, they had a very substantial professional knowledge of all aspects related to hunting. They took pride in selling the right gear, not merely the most expensive gear, to every ‘serious’ customer, i.e., to both experienced hunters and novices. The store’s telephone policy shows that all inquiries on technical issues were taken seriously, regardless of whether it was new or regular customers who made them.

Second, with Tonni being a former special branch marksman and the CEO being an experienced big game hunter, their hunting skills were second to none. Many conversations therefore centred on their experiences from the field, mixing factual information, advice and tall tales. It was taken for granted that Tonni’s shooting skills were better than those of the customers, and typically, the stories told by the CEO were somehow grander and more spectacular than what others could narrate. Third, Tonni and the CEO seemed to know everybody of importance in the world of hunting. Many of their customers belonged to the higher echelons of society, i.e., the CEOs of larger corporations, old money, nobility and even members of the royal family. Tonni’s ability to remember all relevant details about these regulars’ hunting preferences and about their background, as well as his willingness to bring customers in contact with one another, certainly gave him a central position in chatting.

That customers respected Tonni and the CEO was thus a matter of course. This respect was not confined to the realm of the shop but was apparently something shared in external circles as well. On one occasion, a man in a three-piece suit entered, asking explicitly for Tonni, saying: “Mads told me to come here because I need a rifle.” This remark relies on a set of presuppositions. Mads is a common first name in Denmark. The speaker hence presupposes that the Mads being referred to is sufficiently known to Tonni to be identifiable among the numerous men named Mads. Furthermore, the fact that no surname was noted in the remark presupposes that Tonni is willing to acknowledge the singular importance of this Mads by knowing exactly whom is being referred to. Tonni is not expected to ask: “Which Mads?” Establishing Mads as important to Tonni also implies that the speaker positions himself as important. He is a person who knows Mads by his first name and who expects Tonni to know this particular Mads. Being able to call Tonni by his first name furthermore stresses that the speaker considers himself to be as equally important as Mads, who presumably is used to calling Tonni by his first name. A further implication of this is that Tonni has been positioned as important in prior conversations between the speaker and Mads. Mads has most likely talked about Tonni as the expert to consult. Tonni is positioned with his own importance comparable to that of Mads and the speaker.

In this manner, the existence of an informal insider group was asserted. No formal membership of this group was issued. It was a network of loose ties (Granovetter, 1973). The fact that Tonni and the CEO knew all members of this network endowed them with ‘respect’. It was their network, consisting of members who knew or had been introduced to at least some of the other members and who, moreover, acknowledged all other members as being important in some respect. This ‘importance’ could be the effect of social and economic rank. However, as in the case of Tonni himself, indisputable hunting skills could also grant ‘importance’.

Significantly, most of these conversations between such equals occurred at the large table in the middle of the weapon room. This table was waist-high and covered in black leather. During their interaction, interlocutors would typically lean over this table as at a bar as though to stress the informal character of the conversation. The tone was one of familiarity, complicity and banter. They were clearly relaxing while chatting with one another.

While relaxing, their conversations would sometimes slide into sultry talk. Lapses into denigrating remarks could occur, such as: “You must have a wife with nice tits to pinch at home”, said by one customer to another while talking with Tonni and the CEO for nearly two hours. All parties to this conversation took the utterance as humorous. It was part of the good-natured mutual teasing that characterised many of the conversations. Tonni and the CEO were not exempted from being subject to teasing. This type of reciprocity could be interpreted as a token of a shared concept of equality between the participants, i.e., of sociability in Simmel’s sense. Indicative of this was how regular customers handled Tonni. For them, he was certainly not a mere sales assistant, and he was more than a respected expert. Occasionally, customers would drop by just to say hello and leave immediately if he was occupied serving other customers. Some few would refer to Tonni’s non-professional side, thereby hinting at more intimate knowledge of his private life, e.g., a customer who started the conversation by saying: “Aren’t you tired? You were at quite a party yesterday evening”. For such customers, Tonni was a ‘friend’. He was somebody with whom they had not only a social bond but also some type of an emotional bond.

In this social play, customers, on the other hand, could make rude but undisputed comments on immigrants living in Denmark or on other, less well-off social groups. It was as though ordinary social restraints were absent from this ‘playing society’. Apparently, things could be said uninhibited by any self-control and without a damaging effect on one’s social status. This chatting among ‘friends’ actively excluded other groups from its “democracy of equals”.

Interestingly though, the interlocutors were never caught gossiping about absent hunters with whom they were acquainted. In fact, it appeared as though

such acquaintances were only noted when the speaker needed to impress the others with his connections. Pejorative remarks were reserved for those outside the network. Although gossip potentially undermines the fabric of society, it has been suggested that gossiping is also constitutive of society. From an evolutionary perspective, it addresses the problem of “free riders”, i.e., “those who take the benefits of sociality without paying the costs” (Dunbar, 2004, p. 100). This seems to imply that there were no freeloaders inside the network. The internal cohesion of the group was generated by accepting each member as ‘important’ enough to chat with and by excluding people deemed unfit for membership. This exclusion was practised by simply ignoring or actively ridiculing them. Within the network, everybody contributed with his valuable set of skills, stories or status. Additionally, everyone else within the network apparently benefited or hoped to benefit at some later stage from these contributions. Chatting in this store was thus the social kit supporting this exchange of benefits in a network whose members had ‘importance’ not only in the field of hunting but also in society at large.

3.1.13. CHATTING WITH A PURPOSE

The attraction of being invited or being allowed to chat in the weapon room was not solely the pleasures of sociability and of the playful and ‘free’ art of conversation. It was just as much the conversion of hunting ‘importance’ into societal ‘importance’, giving skilled hunters access to meeting members of the higher echelons of society, and of societal ‘importance’ into hunting ‘importance’, allowing representatives of high society to demonstrate their perseverance and prowess outside the board room or similar sites of power. Chatting hence facilitated the transformation of different types of capital (Bourdieu, 2011). This conversion made chatting without regard to social rank, merits or skills possible. It turned a store manager into a member of the clique who was just as respectable as persons belonging to the social elite. It gave his words and views importance not only in matters of hunting but also in all matters that may be discussed. However, as Bourdieu has stressed, such conversions serve to reproduce the social order. They are a tool for preserving hegemony.

In the field of hunting, this hegemony is masculine. Hunting is imbued with traditional masculine virtues such as competitiveness, strength, endurance, efficiency and even – if necessary – the willingness to kill. Although the number of female hunters is increasing, hunting as a pastime could thus be viewed as a sanctuary for hegemonic masculinity. This hegemony can be expressed in different hunting styles, depending on the social and regional background of the hunters, i.e., whether the hunter has a rural or an urban background and what his/her social status is. In the case of *Guns & Gents*, catering to urban hunters of an acknowledged social standing, the hunting-related virtues are merged with the virtues of business and nobility, underlining the masculine qualities of the

social elite. Being invited to a hunt is being invited into the network of this elite. For these hunters, hunting is a method of networking. For 'novices' in this universe, not only is hunting leisure, but it is also, and perhaps predominantly, work. It is working on your own future prospects.

Therefore, these "new hunters" were in need of advice, and therefore, an invitation to the weapon room actually meant something. It meant being treated as prospective, and it implied the opportunity to meet, to chat with and to get to know some of the established members of the network. The manner in which some of these arrivées took their access to the weapon room for granted by entering the store with no other purpose than chatting could be understood as an assertion and confirmation of their status in this elite network. During these chats, they set the tone for what to talk about and how to talk about it. In this manner, norms for the 'right' form of conduct – not only during a hunt but also in the network – were reproduced. Newcomers were introduced to these norms, and regulars had their persistent validity confirmed. The continuity and indisputability of this hegemony, being both gender and class specific, were stressed. The fact that chatters were invariably male makes it obvious to view chatting as a heterosexual homosocial act based on nonsexual attraction by men for members of their own sex (Bird, 1996; Lipman-Blumen, 1976) and, one may add, a male attraction to members of their own or their aspired rank. In this homosociality, chatting segregated insiders from outsiders, men from women, the elite from the average and the 'right' masculine manners and values from the 'wrong' and confirmed that hunting skills and social status were the admission tickets for this masculine elite of hunters, i.e., for a new 'old boys network', based not on background and education but on a shared interest in hunting and networking and supported by formidable hunting skills, considerable wealth or high social status. Proper conduct and 'pleasant manners' were the means of conversion that mediated these properties, and chatting was the manner in which these means were demonstrated, learned and rehearsed.

The talks in the weapon room would oscillate between being purpose driven (e.g., asking for information, negotiating the terms of sale, etc.) and being sociable, i.e., without any purpose other than chatting. However, this 'free' chatting was rarely practised for the pure sake of sociability. It was impure in the sense that sociability served the function of gaining or maintaining access to a network not only of hunters but also of members of high society. The store, particularly the weapon room, was more than a place for acquiring the proper gear. It was also more than a place for meeting with friends. It was the physical entrance to an intangible network of 'right' connections. In this respect, the store functioned as a modern version of a gentlemen's club, in which gentlemen could meet and relax, separated from the rest of the world and the turmoil of everyday life to converse with one another in a carefree manner. In such chats, connections beyond the realms of the club and with bearings on everyday life were established and nurtured.

Chatting in the weapon room shared some characteristics with conversations in a club. Similar to a club, the weapon room was if not physically then symbolically delineated from the rest of the store, which itself was delineated from the outside world. Legitimate entrance to these chats was given to established members of a non-specified but nonetheless effective elitist network. Non-members could be invited in. Sometimes, regular customers brought non-members along, but most often, it was Tonni or the CEO who invited non-members for a chat. These two served as a type of balloting board. They also executed “the cut”, i.e., that verbal instrument used in London’s West End clubs during the Regency (1795-1837) to cut down such members of the haut ton who deviated only slightly from the unwritten rules of etiquette (Kelly, 2006, p. 151). One example of this was the treatment of a bragging customer who happened to be a duck hunter. The CEO told him that his dog once caught a duck by chance “but he spat it out immediately”. The differences between a real club and the weapon room ambiance are naturally evident. There is no formal membership and, therefore, no known number of members of this ‘club’, nor is there any membership fee, any calendar of activities, any activities other than chatting or any fixed dates on which members may meet. However, similar to ‘real’ clubs, members meet to converse, to relax while conversing (i.e., to chat) and to establish, develop and maintain connections with equals while chatting. Additionally, similar to ‘real’ clubs, this chatting occurs in a secluded sphere from which ‘non-members’ are actively excluded. Those included, on the other hand, can relate to one another in a “democracy of equals” in which social, economic and professional distinctions, as well as differences in hunting skills, are bracketed.

Having been given entrance to this ‘club’, one is instructed in how to behave (i.e., the right manners, knowledge, discourses, etc.) at attractive hunting parties through which one may gain access to an elite network that also functions outside the field of hunting. In this setting, chatting was done for the pleasure of conversing (i.e., sociability), for the sake of a leisure activity beyond shopping and/or conversing (e.g., managing hunting skills) and for strategic purposes beyond the world of leisure (i.e., networking). On most occasions, the sociability of chatting was impure.

3.1.14. A THEORY OF MALE RECREATIONAL SHOPPING

It may be a widespread but unsubstantiated conviction that men are not as apt at recreational shopping as women are (cf. Otnes & McGrath, 2001). Our case study has shown that men are very able to shop recreationally. In this particular store, the male customers generally showed themselves to be competent at performing the tasks of recreational shopping. They were good at browsing, behaved spontaneously, bought impulsively and were knowledgeable about brands and fashion trends. They had an elaborate system for evaluating the quality

and value of a product: match, originality and (high) price. Furthermore, they seemed to be self-confident shoppers: They knew how to match different garments, to find their right sizes, and to evaluate the overall impression created by an outfit. Many customers could do these things without the help of a sales assistant.

Previous research seems to confirm that in statistical terms, women are significantly more appreciative of recreational shopping than men (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2004; Bellenger & Korgaonkar 1980; Shim, 1996). Our study shows a remarkable reversal of roles when couples visited the store. Women would typically behave impatiently (“whine”) or despondently (“wait”) while their husbands shopped around (cf. Otnes & McGrath, 2001). The female partners most often did not appreciate this part of the outing, whereas the men apparently liked to shop recreationally. The customers’ emotional responses – surprise, joy, elation – when browsing are one clear indication of how recreational shopping appealed to this store’s male customers. The manner in which regular customers approached and entered the shop or their evident reluctance to leave the shop is another. The fact that many customers declined to be disturbed by business calls or simply turned off their cell phone also points in this direction. When inside the shop, they were not ‘at work’. It was ‘time off’. The concerns of everyday life were shut out. We have stressed the play-like character of the customers’ in-store behaviour as a token of this recreational mode: their difference in conduct inside and outside the store, their occasional regression to more child-like ways of behaving and their immersion in a dream world of hunting.

Nothing in our study, though, points to this recreational mode being a general male approach to shopping. Many of the customers behaved completely differently outside the store than after entering. Outside, they seemed busy, but once inside, they relaxed. Men’s ludic attitude towards shopping is not necessarily transferable from one shop to the next. Men may very well love to ‘play’ in certain stores but dislike shopping in general and even recreational shopping as such. Male recreational shopping may not be done for the pleasures of shopping around but rather for the pleasures associated with the activity for which these men are shopping and the manner in which new gear may increase these pleasures. In our case, the most pleasurable aspect seemed to be the imagining of what the products would do for the customer at a hunt, in the company of other hunters.

A theory of male leisure shopping emanating from our analysis is thus that men perform recreational shopping, sometimes at a somewhat sophisticated level, and that they enjoy it because it enhances another activity, which is deemed to be even more enjoyable. Men do not have just ‘shopping around’ and visiting one store after another as a preferred leisure activity. Their recreational shopping is focused on the stores or even on the one store that caters to this other activity. When men shop for leisure, this practice is embedded in a larger leisure activity that is important to them. Some men may therefore turn away from

their wives' shopping sprees and even scorn them but routinely visit do-it-yourself stores almost every weekend, behaving almost exactly as their spouses do, e.g., spending hours browsing there, buying things that they did not know that they needed and finding all of this immensely meaningful. A difference between male and female recreational shopping may thus be that women more often and to a larger extent enjoy shopping in itself. A female style of recreational shopping would therefore be that browsing is both the means and the goal of the activity. Shopping is an autonomous act, i.e., browsing is done for the sake of the activity. A male style, on the other hand, would be that browsing is the means for a goal that is not browsing but another leisure activity that is perceived as tremendously important for the shopper's emotional wellbeing and social standing. Shopping is not autonomous; i.e., it is done for the sake of some other purpose. Chances are that some male customers may not even recognise their browsing and buying as a shopping activity but rather view them as part of being, e.g., a hunter.

We have attempted to demonstrate that recreational shopping in our case involves a further dimension beyond buying and browsing. Male customers also shopped for the sake of enhancing social bonds. Shopping was also about social interaction with the staff and with other customers, about sociability, i.e., chatting in a leisurely mode. This function of shopping is certainly not gender specific. Women going on a shopping spree together are very likely almost always doing so for the sake of sociability as well. In our case, this sociability apparently often served a strategic purpose as entrance to an attractive position in the field of hunting, which itself was an entrance to an elite network. Chatting was about being included in this loose association, in which rank, occupation and skills mattered and from which many people were therefore automatically excluded. The sociability nurtured in these chats was hence impure. The same applies to the leisure activity that shopping in this store aimed at, hunting. Hunting was not only about leisurely spending time in a pleasant manner. It was also working on one's social position. It was 'serious leisure': work. This aspect gave the act of recreational shopping an extra importance. Many customers browsed for the purpose of hunting, which itself served the purpose of networking.

We have introduced the metaphor of the 'club' to capture the manner in which chatting was organised in the store. This metaphor must be further developed, but by shedding light on the bonding or interactional aspect implied in shopping, it could be of importance for theories on consumer culture. It locates sociability in the field of shopping. In our case, it further locates the place where different types of 'importance' or 'capitals' are converted into "symbolic capital" (Bourdieu, 2011). A 'club' implies (in)formal membership, invitation, balloting, exclusivity and a code of conduct giving those included a sense of belonging to a "democracy of equals" (Simmel, 1910) and fostering loyalty among members. This is most likely why retailers have established all types of

“membership clubs” that simulate a special bond between the store and individual customers but, more often than not, without generating any feeling of mutual interaction, of sociability, between its many “members”. Liquor stores that run wine, whisky or beer clubs for connoisseurs may function similarly to the store that we have studied by connecting knowledgeable hobbyists to an elitist network. However, in a number of niche retailers, the club-like character of their business is even more obvious, e.g., tattoo parlours furnished with imitation Chesterfield sofas for acquaintances and clients to chat or yarn stores and role-playing game stores in which customers meet after hours to knit and play. In these cases, a purer, less strategically oriented sociability may thrive. The most obvious example of how sociability can be successfully exploited and produced in a club-like fashion is, however, Tupperware, which has managed to sell its products at home parties for invited guests since the 1950s (Clarke, 2014).

Emanated from a single case study, this theory is clearly not the theory of male recreational shopping. Some men may shop recreationally in a female or some other style. Women may sometimes adopt the male style. Some women may almost always do so. It is a theory that explains why a group of customers for whom time is believed to be a scarce commodity spend a considerable amount of time shopping in a seemingly not very efficient manner and why such a behaviour, at first glance not very rational, could nonetheless be considered purposeful. It is a theory of recreational shopping because this shopping behaviour is meaningful because it not only serves an external purpose but also sometimes provides instants of emotional gratification, e.g., of relaxation and excitement. Such moments are often explicitly sought for while going browsing. It is a theory of a male style of recreational shopping because a systematic misunderstanding of the nature of shopping seems to be implied in executing this style. Many male customers browse and buy in the false consciousness that they are not shopping and that they are buying things with a purpose, i.e., acting instrumentally or even strategically, misjudging that they are actually enjoying the act of browsing. This false consciousness presupposes that shopping is an intrinsically gendered activity, not fit for men or beyond the abilities of men. Our study shows otherwise.

3.1.15. REFERENCES

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In "When Men Go Shopping", we argued that play-like behaviour is a recreational mode: A form of leisure shopping that immerses the customer in a dream world of hunting. In this case, the leisurely mode seems to serve as an occasion for engaging sociability with peers. In this case, the sociability has a strategic aim of engaging the customer in an elite network through the field of hunting. Therefore, we have demonstrated a theory on recreational shopping that serves an emotional gratification of relaxation and excitement. This emotional reaction is researched further in the next paper, "Recovering the Poetics of Shopping", where we try to explain the emotional reaction of excitement, boredom and repulsion observed in *Guns & Gents* through a theory of disruption. It is an investigation of purchases that appear unplanned and a deliberate waste of time. This seeming waste of time indicates that shopping resembles the aesthetic experience of art, thus making it purposeful – because it is a purpose in itself – and this is the dimension we will research.

3.2. PAPER 2: RECOVERING THE POETICS OF SHOPPING - HETEROTOPIA AS A THEORY OF DISRUPTION

Authors: Christian Jantzen & Sanne Dollerup

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"Habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war. [...] And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony." (Shklovsky, 2012/1917).

3.2.1. AFFECTS IN THE MARKETPLACE

This report is on how a female researcher personally experienced *Guns & Gents*, the most prestigious hunting shop in Denmark, while conducting an observational study:

"I did not feel drawn to the store at all. On the contrary, I almost felt repulsed. It was so alien to me that the first time I walked in, I had to pull myself together, take a deep breath, and open the heavy door to look

inside. I was really out of my element, and I definitely felt that I did not belong there and that the other customers would notice this right away. After a couple of days of observation, I still did not feel comfortable in the store. I felt like a tourist in a foreign country where I did not understand the natives, speak their language or look like them. Nevertheless, there was something strangely attracting about the store. It was as though it had a magnetic field attracting men of all ages. Male passers-by could not stop looking at the store once they had noticed it. Sometimes, they stopped and walked into the store, and when they entered, many of them seemed comfortable and at ease. They did not mind waiting for the sales personal and seemed not upset if some products had not arrived or a specific size was unavailable. In general, they seemed in a good mood.”

Three distinct patterns of customer reactions could be observed. The first pattern was that some of the customers would spend up to two hours in the store. They studied the new product arrivals, tried clothes on, assessed the goods and talked extensively with the manager. The second pattern was customers making a sharp U-turn and walking out just seconds after having entered. The third pattern was observed for people accompanying someone who wanted to spend some time in the store. They typically sat in one of the chairs by the entrance looking at their phone. Thus, people showed signs of being excited and attracted, looked bored or seemed to be repulsed.

The same store, the same goods or even the same persons can generate very opposite affective reactions, which, moreover, may reverse swiftly, e.g., when boredom reverses into excitement or vice versa (Apter, 1989). Traditionally, consumer research has addressed this phenomenon in terms of satisfaction and involvement. More recently, consumer psychology has advanced the understanding of attraction in the marketplace substantially by examining engagement as a driver in the value-creating process (Higgins, 2006; Higgins & Scholer, 2009). Three themes have been identified as seminal for the customer’s cognitive, emotional and behavioural investment in brands: immersion, passion and activation (Hollebeek, 2011).

Nonetheless, this line of research remains preoccupied with making such investments quantifiable. Engagement, just like satisfaction and involvement, is scaled with ‘high’ and ‘low’ (or ‘non-’) as opposite poles. Affects, though, are not easily scalable. It does not make much sense to scale ‘love’ from ‘high’ to ‘low’; the opposite of ‘love’ is not ‘non-love’ but ‘hate’ (both potentially strong affects), and ‘love’ and ‘hate’ may reverse within split seconds.

Affects and emotions are not directly motivational drivers but bodily reactions to sudden changes in our environment diverting our on-going activities (Frijda, 1988). Therefore, they are involuntary and automatic. Furthermore, they are

unpredictable and disruptive even though they are often actively longed for. Passers-by who happen to stumble upon *Guns & Gents* are diverted from other goals, and customers who unwittingly spend two hours in the store just to buy a new vest have their plans for the afternoon upset. Hence, to understand the intricacies of affects in the marketplace, a ‘theory of disruption’ is needed as a supplement to existing involvement and engagement theories.

The ‘theory of disruption’ concerns spontaneous acts of feeling attracted to objects that one had not imagined ever longing for or of becoming immersed in situations and settings in ways not anticipated. This paper intends to contribute to such a theory by sketching a theoretical framework for understanding the role of place in contributing to the customers’ affective engagement. Our research question is thus: How do the epistemological properties of ‘place’ provide insight into how unsolicited imaginations may be aroused? This framework is based on the concept of heterotopia. Heterotopias are real places interfering with the regularity and predictability of ordinary life. They divert, disrupt and defer. They thereby generate affects, not only pleasurable but also discomforting affects.

By examining consumer practices heterotopically, the role of space and place in creating not only meanings (or sense) but also affects becomes dominant. We understand place as historically structured space and this structure as a ‘text’, written and read. During this ‘writing’ and ‘reading’, feelings may emerge that run adverse to meanings, thereby unexpectedly generating strong impulses of attraction or repulsion or of love and hate. This is poetics, i.e., the foregrounding of meanings and feelings that ordinarily stay in the background – stones (re-)made stony.

3.2.2. HETEROTOPIAS

Heterotopia is a composite noun consisting of heteros (Greek: “another”) and topos (Greek: “place”). In the strict sense, it is a medical term indicating tissue that is out of place. Foucault introduced the concept into the humanities and social sciences in a posthumously published speech given to architects in 1967 (Foucault, 1984). Soon afterwards, the first translation of this short text into English followed (Foucault, 1986). The text is notorious for its verbal opacity, which has led to two further translations (Foucault, 1998; 2008). The human geographer Soja has famously and not unjustly characterised this text as “frustratingly incomplete, inconsistent, incoherent” and criticised its author for being “narrowly focused on peculiar microgeographies, nearsighted and near-sited, deviant and deviously apolitical” (Soja, 1996, p. 162). However, he also credits heterotopology as a necessary exercise to disorder, disrupt and deconstruct established ways of thinking about space. Heterotopias are “‘other than’ the established ways of thinking spatially” (ibid: 163).

Heterotopias are other places, i.e., spaces not governed by the rules and regulations of normal life that make behaviour in ordinary places predictable. A heterotopia is an “otherness” where the normal logic of ordering space is defied, thereby upsetting routines and expectations. Apparently, the standard interpretation in human geography of these other spaces has been to connect them with the carnivalesque (Bakhtin, 1984) or with Lefebvre’s related concept of “heterotopy” (Lefebvre, 2003), thus stressing the potentially liberating aspects of heterotopias as loci of resistance against and transgression of the dominant order of society (cf. Johnson, 2006; Kharlamov, 2014). In this vein, heterotopias are viewed as marginal places on the fringes of society where equally marginal groups may thrive unrestrained from social control. Festivals, fairs, American motel rooms (designated for acts of illicit sex), brothels and vacation villages are some of Foucault’s own examples.

Other examples, though, contradict unequivocally utopian interpretations of the functions of heterotopias: Prisons, military barracks, retirement homes, psychiatric wards, colonies and cemeteries are some of the other places listed as heterotopias in Foucault’s text. They are anything but transgressive. The common denominator in all of Foucault’s examples is that heterotopias are different from the homogeneous places of ordinary life by being ambivalent and ambiguous and, furthermore, that they are non-utopian. According to Foucault, utopias are “fundamentally unreal places” presenting “society itself in a perfect form, or else society turned upside down” (Foucault, 1986, p. 24). They are virtual counter-places to ordinary places. Heterotopias, on the other hand, are real counter-places representing, contesting and inverting ordinary real places. They are fundamentally ambiguous, i.e., “outside of all places” and “absolutely different” from all other real places, yet they are real, inside the realm of existing space (*ibid*).

The defining feature of heterotopias seems to be that they disrupt modernity’s de-sacralisation of life that has parcelled out society into separate spheres of regularity based on clear sets of distinctions, e.g., between public and private, work and leisure, male and female, cultural and useful. Heterotopias blur such distinctions: Brothels are public as well as private, they concern both work and leisure, and they mix (illusions of) love and money. A boat, a typical Foucauldian example, is a clearly delineated space, “closed in on itself” (*ibid*: 27), while being simultaneously nowhere and anywhere, going from port to port, “given over to the infinity of the sea” (*ibid*). Libraries and museums are described as places outside the ordinary progression of time, where time is indefinitely accumulated in an eternal presence, becoming a “place of all times that is itself outside of time” (*ibid*: 26). Thus, heterotopias not only dissolve customary distinctions but also subvert our regular notions of time and space. Shops become heterotopic when they rely on rules that are different from those that regulate ordinary commerce. Heterotopic shops will be staged as

something else or as more than just a shop. In such shops, customers are invited to switch between being a potential buyer and having to act out a specific role in this other universe. In the case of *Guns & Gents*, the shop is not only for buying clothing, rifles and equipment. It is also staged as a distinct masculine universe, albeit not based on typical male hunting values (e.g., being in a pact with nature or providing for the evening meal). Rather, the purport of this shop is to use hunting as a tool for networking among other nobility, captains of industry, ‘old money’ and newer members of the Danish upper class by staging one’s own masculinity. Regular customers frequent the shop and consult the manager (who allegedly knows most members of the Danish elite by name) to construct, rehearse and refine this role. Hence, they typically lose track of time when visiting the shop. Ironically, while playing out this masculine role, these customers show many behavioural features that stereotypically are considered to be specifically feminine (such as knowing everything about a garment or doing a catwalk while trying on clothes).

As emphatically noted by Johnson (2006, p. 84), the ambivalence and ambiguity of heterotopias make them into “fundamentally disturbing places” in that they alter everyday experience. This implies, first, that they are anti-utopian, “not tied to a space that promotes any promise, any hope or any primary form of resistance or liberation” (ibid). Second, they test our routines and self-conceptions: “[H]eterotopias draw us out of ourselves in peculiar ways; they display and inaugurate a difference and challenge the space in which we may feel at home” (ibid).

Moreover, Johnson stresses that there are no pure forms of heterotopia. Heterotopias are always intertwined with the customary order that they intend or pretend to disrupt or suspend. They make inherent tensions and contradictions in the dominant structures and our ordinary manner of behaving in space manifest. In this manner, they are “illuminating a passage for our imagination” (ibid: 87). This paper is on how this passage is produced by the epistemological properties of place.

As suggested by Hook (2007), heterotopias may not be conceived of as concrete places but rather as an analytics: “it is a particular way to look at space, place, or text” (ibid: 186, original emphasis). This perspective could and should be broadened. Heterotopias are not only about looking at space but also about looking at ourselves performing in space, i.e., about looking at ourselves performing the act of ‘reading’ the ‘text’, of losing ourselves while ‘reading’ it and nonetheless making (some) sense of it and of ourselves. This ‘losing’ dimension is what engagement (e.g., being absorbed at festivals) and alienation (e.g., feeling cut off in psychiatric wards) are all about. The disruption of customary notions and mundane routines are brought about in our imagination, in which the properties of the ‘text’ relate to covert, forgotten or unacknowledged properties

of the self. Heterotopias confront us with our own otherness, of being out of place. As a textual analytics, heterotopia is an ‘othering’, which highlights the issue of ‘text’, i.e., what texts, written and read, are.

3.2.3. ‘READING’ AND ‘WRITING’ SHOPS

Ever since its ‘literary turn’ during the 1980, the object and methods of cultural anthropology have become destabilised. Doing anthropological fieldwork and presenting it to a readership is not a mere matter of reporting some objective facts. More than a decade prior to postmodern anthropology, Geertz had famously stated that the art of anthropology was about the interpretation of cultures. Anthropology was reading, and culture was “an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong” (Geertz, 1973, p. 452). ‘The literary turn’ expanded on this notion by calling the authorship of these ‘culture-texts’ into question. A culture may be a collection of texts or writings, but who, then, does the writing? Doing anthropology is just as much writing culture as it is reading culture (Clifford & Marcus, 1986). Anthropology actively constructs a more or less coherent representation (i.e., ‘a text’) out of a myriad of artefacts, performances, interactions, expressions and beliefs that may at first glance seem chaotic and incoherent. In doing so, it makes inconspicuous patterns of everyday events explicit and extraordinary. This practice is poetical in the strict sense of de-familiarising the ordinary. Poetics, namely, is all about making familiar things strange (Shklovsky, 2012/1917).

Writing culture anthropologically furthermore raises the issue of ownership. To whom do these written texts really belong: to the natives, whose acts the anthropologist has ‘read’, to the anthropologist, who has given a written report of these observations, or to readers, who appropriate this text? This aspect is political in that it relates to property and to the societal uses that ‘authorship’ may be put to: Who writes the text, with which intentions and to what effect? These poetic and political aspects of writing and reading in anthropology apply to textual practices in the other social sciences as well. A Geertzian take on shopping, for example, would be to read this activity as a text properly belonging to customers, who write it by performing in certain ways in the shop or by verbalising their motives, strategies or longings. A postmodern approach would extend the equation by noting, first, that the study’s reading must be written up itself to have policy impact. Second, it would highlight how the customers’ writings are themselves based on their readings (i.e., sense making) of the physical properties and structures of the shop, which, in turn, is written (or scripted). Additionally, this writing in stone (and garments or other merchandise) is, in turn, based on an attempt to anticipate, to respond to or in some other manner to make sense of (i.e., ‘to read’) what customers dream of, long for and do, i.e., texts formulated outside the shop, prior to visiting it or after having

done so. All types of intermediaries – researchers, trend spotters, advertising agencies, architects, design agents, etc. – read and make these texts accessible to shop owners and management.

‘Reading’ and ‘writing’ cannot easily be separated as distinct practices. They are entangled in one another. Texts are written to be read. They have an “implied reader” (Iser, 1974). However, they are also read to be (re-)written. They are explained in other words, summarised, recounted, recreated in altered versions, etc. A heterotopia, then, is the unexpected and haphazard interruption of an ‘otherness’ in these cycles of sense making that in an instant subverts the identity (or sameness) of the text, its author and users. This interruption is disturbing by confronting the calculability of sense with the unpredictability of affect, i.e., with non-sense.

3.2.4. NON-SENSE AND ‘TEXT’

Text production appears to be a never-ending process, making it doubtful whether there is such a thing as a (proper) text: just one text authored by just one originating and univocally identifiable progenitor and just one writing that is a perfect representation of this reading (i.e., the interpretation). Deconstructionism has severely questioned the status of ‘text’ (Fish, 1980), and the concept of *différance* by the main philosopher of deconstruction, Jacques Derrida, may provide a philosophical underpinning of heterotopic “othering” as a textual analytics (Derrida, 1982). *Différance* is a deliberate misspelling of the French noun *différence*, derived from the verb *differer*, which means both ‘to differ’ and ‘to defer’. The pronunciation of *différance* is similar to that of the very familiar word *différence*, thereby de-familiarising it. This ambiguity is meant to make tangible how meaning is always postponed (i.e., deferred) and never complete or exhausted. Synchronically, the meaning of a term (or sign) is determined solely by its relation to other terms, i.e., by its distinction (difference) from other terms in a system of differences. There is no one-to-one mapping of meaning between the term and what it stands for. Diachronically, the here-and-now meaning of a term will be determined by what has been said previously and what will be said later. At best, meaning is always in a state of emerging, perpetually done and undone in the course of time. Additionally, the meaning of a term is, moreover, not an exact representation of what this term intends or is meant to stand for.

This emphasis on difference and deferral in the genesis of meaning opens up a deconstruction of the order of things. Underneath the surface of regularity and routines, there are cracks, tensions, contradictions, repressed options and nascent possibilities. Things may appear straightforward, but the path is full of detours. Deconstruction is the operation by which these deviations and discrepancies are brought to the fore. This corresponds to heterotopia as

analytics looking at the “other” side of ordinary life, present but denied, repressed and out of sight.

In a standard conception, a ‘text’ is a coherent structure that combines all of its elements into an integral whole (cf. Uspensky et al., 1973). Reading a text typically implies making sense of the various elements to reconstruct the meaning of this integral whole. A deconstructive or heterotopic reading, however, focuses on the aporia, inconsistencies and lapses that defy and deny such coherence. The purpose is to uncover the fissures of non-sense that dispute, disrupt and potentially destroy a unified understanding of the text. If the ordinary strategy for reading is to determine what the author ‘really’ means, then this reading against the grain denies any such essentialism. A deconstructive reading looks for traces of ‘otherness’ that challenge the regularity of meaning. It looks for ambiguity and ambivalence, for the differences that defer the easy appropriation of the text’s meaning.

This heterotopic method of ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ is not only a matter of literary criticism and philosophical reflections. It is an everyday activity occurring when we in ordinary life encounter something ‘out of the ordinary’ and when we subsequently relate to this occurrence by preserving its extraordinary qualities. This is what ‘love at first sight’ is about. Whether love of another being or love of an object (e.g., a dress or a watch), this love of the ‘other’ is an acknowledgement of its perfection, of the loving subject’s imperfection (which is disturbing) and of the wish that the object may mend this deficit. In contrast, a negative affect such as repulsion springs from the acknowledgement that the imperfection of the object may intrude on and dissolve one’s own integrity. In both cases, one’s state of (im)perfection is placed at stake. The heterotopic take on this defiance will be not to ignore the object or explain it away but rather to cultivate its excessive character, thereby challenging our own self-conceptions. Paradoxically, the perceiving subject may acquire revelatory insights precisely by ‘losing’ itself to the enchantments or horrors of the object.

If ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ are understood as the two intertwined operations of sense making in and of everyday practices, then heterotopia is the emanation of non-sense in meaning-generating processes. It is the ‘othering’ of what should have been self-evident: not only the authority of the ‘author’ but also the competencies and purposes of the ‘reader’. Ordinary reading is reconstructing the meaning of the text, whereas reading ‘otherness’ is detecting where the ‘text’ becomes disturbing while undergoing this very otherness. This second form is experiential. As “a disturbing place”, the text becomes appalling or enticing, moving or saddening, or in other ways emotionally engaging.

There are thus two textual strategies for ‘reading’ and ‘writing’. The first strives for ordinary sense making through the homogenisation of experiences, giving

the ‘text’ regularity and predictability by selecting the ‘important’ elements, piecing them together and explaining their internal relations. It produces coherence by interpreting and ordering such textual elements, which at first glance may seem incoherent. Reading and writing serve purposes beyond the act of reading and writing. Such text production satisfies needs and plays out familiar desires. The second, heterotopic strategy allows for irregularity and surprise foregrounding the experiential qualities of the text, at the expense of its practical purposes. It sheds light on unfamiliar desires that divert the ‘reader’ from useful purposes.

These two strategies interact such that the heterotopic strategy can interfere with ordinary sense making and unexpectedly generate strong feelings of engagement that disturb the ordinary course of things (e.g., by unexpectedly falling in love with a dress). It presents itself as an ‘other writing’ that disturbs the plain process of ‘reading’, or vice versa, the infusion of ‘normality’ (e.g., by meticulously performing everyday routines) in places at the fringes of society (in psychiatric wards, barracks, concentration camps, etc.) may restore or preserve a sense of ordinary human dignity. In the case of *Guns & Gents*, the accountant doing the books every Tuesday at the cash check was such an adverse infusion of ‘normality’, breaking the spell of being absorbed (i.e., of temporarily being lost to the world) in a non-practical activity. It effectively deflated the illusion of being in a place outside reality. On those days, sales were significantly lower than on other weekdays.

Understanding place as ‘text’ and heterotopia as a specific strategy for reading this ‘text’ by focusing on its incoherencies and irregularities, the entire issue of how place may contribute to spontaneous imagination and unsolicited affective attachment to objects and sites may be put in perspective by the concept of space. Human geography has introduced an important distinction between ‘space’ and ‘place’, stressing their interdependence (Tuan, 1977). In this tradition, ‘space’ is understood as the more abstract concept of yet undifferentiated spatiality, whereas ‘place’ is the historical filling in of this spatiality, thereby specifying it: Place is “past and present, stability and achievement” (Tuan, 1975, p. 165). Space is movement (i.e., future) between places, themselves “pauses” (i.e., past and present) (Tuan, 1977, p. 6). Space thus stands not only for openness, potentiality and freedom but also for threat by potentially disrupting the security of place. It “lacks content”, “inviting the imagination to fill it with substance and illusion” (Tuan, 1975, p. 164). In this respect, heterotopia is the emanation of space in place, thereby “illuminating a passage for our imagination” (Johnson, 2006, p. 87). In textual terms, heterotopia is excess, i.e., a surplus of meaning that expands and subverts stability by introducing an “other” regularity, which supplements, supersedes or contradicts the customary regularities (Brandt, 2006). This excess opens up as yet unrealised possibilities. This opening is affective. It may be experienced as threatening, exhilarating or exciting..

3.2.5. TOWARDS A POETICS OF SHOPPING

Browsing through shops is an important pastime for many people. Each American, regardless of age, gender, income or ethnicity, spends on average more than 40 minutes each day on purchasing goods and services, and during weekends and holidays, people actively engaged in buying things use on average almost 2 hours each day on this activity (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). Shopping is thus time consuming. Undoubtedly, most of the goods and services purchased will serve practical purposes, and many shopping trips are to some extent planned in advance. Some acquisitions have been planned, thought through and perhaps saved for for quite some time. However, some purchases occur unplanned, apparently more or less by chance but nonetheless with considerable affective intensity. It is these types of shopping experiences that our 'theory of disruption' attempts to capture.

Such experiences stem from detours from pre-planned shopping routes. They increase the time consumed by shopping and may significantly decrease the budget for purchasing other goods and services. They defer the satisfaction of needs or the fulfilment of desires by immersing the customer in the very acts of browsing, admiring, trying on, comparing or fantasising about goods that he/she prior to that did not know that he/she would ever want to own. These disruptions of ordinary shopping routines seem like a deliberate waste of time: shopping turned into a purpose – the purpose – in itself.

In fact, such shopping experiences resemble the aesthetic experiences of art. Art, as famously stated by Kant (2007/1790), is "without purpose". It does not serve purposes other than the experience of beauty or the sublime itself. This goal is brought about by a diversion of attention from the practicalities of everyday life, i.e., from concerns about what things mean or what their consequences may be, towards the very form and substance of these things. The aesthetic experience is "ohne alle Interesse", a disinterested interest in the palpability of experiencing. In this aesthetic mode, the customer may forget what the goods cost, what the social costs of wearing the clothes may be or what the costs in terms of time spent could be. He/she may 'lose' him/herself but find other sides of his/her existence in instants of epiphany.

The concept of heterotopia points to an 'otherness' residing in 'sameness', in the apparent identity of things that make us take them for granted. Heterotopia as a specific way of 'reading' and 'writing' disrupts mundane activities. It does so not from the outside or as an external force but as an inherent part of these very same activities. Poetics is the technique by which this 'theory of disruption' is practised. It is a technique "to make objects 'unfamiliar,' to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged" (Shklovsky, op. cit., p. 12).

Poetics diverts, disrupts and defers to impart the sensation of life. This applies not only to art but also to much more trivial pursuits such as shopping. The main argument of this paper is that the poetics of shopping is brought about when the ordinary goals of shopping are disrupted such that this deference affectively engages the customer. The concept of heterotopia is useful in understanding the epistemological properties implied in this diversion. It implicates a regularity that runs adverse to what was or ought to be expected, i.e., an “othering” of the shopping experience, in itself “othering” the customer. This theory on what sometimes makes shopping surprisingly and unexpectedly attractive requires further research into how places may contribute to this poetics: that is, studies on the ontological properties of place, on specific spatial properties that may invite people to feel, play or dream roles other than that of being a mere customer.

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In “Recovering the Poetics of Shopping”, the main point is that shopping can be an aesthetic experience when a store has rules that are different from those regulating ordinary commerce. We call these “heterotopic stores” – and due to the specific set of rules related to the store, they are defined by being disruptive. The disruptive aspect is particularly evident when the customer shows signs of switching between being a potential buyer and having to act out a specific role in the “other” universe. In *Guns & Gents*, the shop is not only a place for buying hunting equipment but also a place for networking with important people, albeit disguised as an interest in hunting. This ambiguity is relevant for further research into the experience of this “other” space in stores. In the next article, “The Possible World of Stores”, we will investigate this by identifying the different characteristics in stores by using the theory of possible worlds.

3.3. PAPER 3: THE POSSIBLE WORLDS OF STORES - FICTIONALISING STORES AS A METHOD OF ENGAGING CUSTOMERS

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Retailers in the physical world are challenged by intensified competition from the virtual world of online shopping. Strengthening the emotional bond between customers and the store may be one of the methods of tackling this challenge. This paper suggests experience design as an approach by which physical retail environments may become distinct and even unique for their customers, thus enhancing their affiliation with a specific store and increasing loyalty. In this article, we argue that another promising method of increasing customers’ engagement in retail spaces may be the creation of possible worlds (PWs). Although linked to storytelling, PW theory is still underdeveloped in marketing studies. PW theory holds that involvement in a story presupposes transportation from the actual world to a fictional world as well as performance by the “reader”. Furthermore, this involvement may lead to a transformation of the “reader” (understood as the customer making sense of the shop’s various aesthetic cues). Based on qualitative cases through an instrumental case study, this article identifies five generic types of possible worlds of stores and discusses the ability of each of these types to generate engagement

3.3.1. THE RELEVANCE OF EXPERIENCE DESIGN FOR RETAILING

A different approach to the planning, execution and managing of meaningful customer experiences in physical retail environments seems more vital than

ever. In Denmark, a small country with a population of approximately 5.6 million inhabitants, the total turnover in the retail sector has dropped 12% from 2007 to 2013 (Munkøe & Christensen, 2014). This decrease has slowed down considerably since 2012, leading to cautious optimism for the coming years. Another Danish trend, however, shows a rapid increase in online shopping. According to figures from the Danish trade organisation for e-commerce (FDIH), revenues in online trading almost doubled from 32 billion DKK to 62.4 billion DKK between 2009 and 2013, and the number of annual transactions grew from 48 million to 106 million (Theil, 2014). The annual report of the governmental bureau Statistics Denmark shows that in 2013, 77% of the adult population had bought goods and services on the net within the last year (in 2004, this figure was 42%). This is well above average compared to Europe as a whole, but here, the pattern is the same: the number of online shoppers in the European region has increased from 20% in 2004 to 47% in 2012 (Wijajensen, 2013). With revenues in the entire retail sector at best stagnating at a level significantly below that of 2007 and e-commerce showing a dramatic increase, the prospects for retail in “real”, physical environments, such as malls or shopping streets, may seem somewhat bleak. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in stores that have both a brick-and-mortar store and a web-shop. Nevertheless, our claim is that brick-and-mortar stores have significant potentials if they utilise their unique strengths. One of these strengths, we argue in this article, is the possibility of creating possible worlds where the customer may experience him/herself in roles other than that of being just a customer. Possible worlds come in many varieties, but a common denominator is that they point to other, partly fictional aspects than those that govern the actual world of shopping. Possible worlds are not so much concerned with the veracity of reality as with the vividness of potentiality, i.e., with consumer imagination and fantasies characterising the “dream worlds of consumption” (Williams, 1982).

Since Holbrook and Hirschman set a new agenda for consumer research by pinpointing that consumption also implies enjoyable, emotional and entertaining aspects (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), it has become widely recognised that retailing, whether in real or in virtual environments, must encompass both utilitarian and hedonic dimensions of customer motivation (Babin, Darden & Griffin, 1994). Utilitarian values express the activity’s practical or functional goals, whereas hedonic values are related to the pleasurable aspects of shopping. Interface design, information architecture, improved sound fidelity and image interactivity technology (IIT), e.g., zoom-in, close-up and 3D virtual models, have enhanced the hedonic qualities of online shopping (Kim, Fiore & Lee, 2007). Nonetheless, research seems to suggest that utilitarian values are still prime motivators for online purchasing, whereas hedonic values that emotionally involve the customer in the website, products or services remain secondary (Bridges & Florsheim, 2008; Jones, Reynolds & Arnold, 2006; Overby & Lee, 2006). Rather than competing on

utilitarian qualities such as price and availability, retailers in physical environments should therefore attempt to improve the cues that could increase their customers' emotional engagement in their business. They may therefore aim at creating emotionally intense and cognitively memorable customer experiences as a method of keeping the competition from online retailing at bay (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999).

The rise of customer experience management (CEM) reflects that the importance of building in hedonic qualities in product offering has been acknowledged. CEM is the strategy in which all of the customer's experiences with the product are orchestrated in a concept, which takes its point of departure in how the customer actually thinks and feels about the brand, the store or the service (Schmitt, 2010). Concept development proceeds from the analysis of every point at which the customer interacts with the product. These "touch points" of contact between the customer and the product should be optimised (Meyer & Schwager, 2007; Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010).

With the coming of "the experience economy" and CEM, the concept of "experience" has won widespread acceptance in various fields of research, as a managerial tool (or buzzword), and as a design practice (i.e., "experience design"). However, in spite of – or perhaps due to – its popularity, it has remained poorly defined (Walls, Okumus, Wang, & Kwun, 2011). We define experiences as the memorable and meaningful outcomes of experiencing. Experiencing is the physiological and emotional awareness of ordinary acts of sensing and feeling (Jantzen, 2013). This implies, first, that experiences are personal, although they may be recounted to others. Experiences are derived from and by the individual experiencer who is sensing and feeling (Schmitt, 1999). Second, experiencing is extraordinary: It is generated by an interruption of everyday life. It is an altered state of sensing and feeling that makes the experiencer conscious of the otherwise generally automatic processes of sensing and feeling. Third, this interruption averts attention towards something unexpected demanding attention and thereby increasing the emotional involvement of the experiencer in the situation (Ray, 2008). Fourth, this emotional involvement is translated into a new state of knowledge about oneself and/or the world (Carù & Cova, 2003). This is the transformative potential of experiencing (Boswijk, Peelen & Olthof, 2012; Boswijk, Thijssen & Peelen, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). A new experience upsets expectations and defies existing conceptions, which has the potential for expanding the experiencer's competences. This process is called "accommodation": an adaption of the inner world of the experiencer to fit the new information, which leads to new ideas about the world (Piaget, 1985). Fifth, the emotional intensity of this transformation affects memory (Berntsen & Rubin, 2012; LaBar & Cabeza, 2006; Talarico, LaBar & Rubin, 2004). Autobiographical memory is composed of more or less precise recollections of past events. Experiences form event-specific knowledge in the form of images,

whose details typically fade fast (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000). In some cases, though, these images may retain their intensity and vividness and become the basis of socially comprehensible life stories (McAdams, 2001). In addressing the transformative potentials in retailing, our article focuses on these last two cognitive aspects of experiences, i.e., their transformative and memorable qualities.

Thus, experience is the transposition of emotion into cognition (e.g., accommodation and autobiographical memory). The subjective character of individual experiences, however, has led to the critical assessment that CEM has limited usefulness as a managerial approach (Palmer, 2010). This assertion misses the point. The reason is that whereas the content of an experience is personal, the process of experiencing is not. Sensing and the basic emotions are universal (Frijda, 1988; Panksepp, 1998; Pfaff, 2006; Rolls, 2000), while the expectations, which are upset by new experiences, to a large extent, are socially shared and culturally communicated. This fact makes the orchestration and management of experiential offers to customers a feasible operation. Experience design is the tactical and practical execution of a CEM strategy. The aim of experience design (XD) is the production of enticing and appealing basic ingredients from which customers may create their highly personal experiences. As a multidisciplinary approach, experience design uses the “laws of emotions” and collectively shared cognitive constructs to create conditions from which individual experiences may emerge. The careful planning of tangible and intangible elements thus orchestrates experiences that are functional, purposeful, engaging, compelling and memorable (McLellan, 2000; Pullman & Gross, 2004). XD hence combines the demands for functionality, usability and pleasurability, i.e., both utilitarian and hedonic qualities (Blythe, Overbeeke, Monk, & Wright, 2004; Norman, 2002; 2004). We view the construction of stores as possible worlds as one of the XD approaches to retailing.

3.3.2. DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE DESIGN APPROACHES TO RETAILING

Most research in CEM and XD focuses on the emotional qualities of experiencing. This research field has an impressive psychological underpinning. Positive psychology has documented the impact of positive affects on learning, problem solving, decision-making, social interaction and longer lasting wellbeing (Isen, 2001; Isen, Daubman & Nowicki, 1987; Isen & Reeve, 2005). Of special interest to retailers is research that documents how experiencing positive emotions makes individuals broaden their scope of attention and thought-action repertoires. Positive emotions loosen the reins on inhibitory control, thereby opening the mind to attentional stimuli and enabling flexible thinking (Frederickson, 2001; Frederickson & Branigan, 2005; Rowe, Hirsch & Anderson, 2007). This theory matches the findings in business studies that indicate that pleasurable

store experiences predict an increase in the time and money spent in the store (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Donovan, Rossiter, Marcoolyn, & Nesdale, 1994; Sherman, Mathur & Smith, 1997).

The importance of constructing pleasurable service settings for customers and employees – or “servicescapes” (Bitner, 1992) – was early on coined as the field of “atmospherics” (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Kotler, 1973). This paradigm, based on an S-O-R model from environmental psychology (Mehrabian & Russel, 1974), has produced comprehensive research on the physical variables that improve or impair the experience of the store (Babin & Attaway, 2000; Hoffman & Turley, 2002). These variables are numerous but can be grouped into five categories: external variables (the height and size of building, entrances, etc.), general interior variables (colour, odour, lighting, etc.), layout and design variables (the placement of merchandise, waiting areas, furniture, etc.), the point of purchase and decoration variables (product and price displays, artwork, etc.), and human variables (employee and customer characteristics, crowding, privacy and employee uniforms) (Turley & Milliman, 2000, p. 194). In later years, this last category has been carved out as the field of service design (Helkkula, 2011; Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010). Whereas atmospherics studies the emotional effects of static variables, service design studies the inherently dynamic emotional qualities of interpersonal interactions in service encounters (Bitner, 1992, p. 59; Mattila & Enz, 2002).

Common to these two approaches, atmospherics and service design, is their emphasis on the emotional responses generated at the moment of in-store experiencing. From a qualitative research perspective, most of these studies could be criticised for singling out one element as a variable and thereby ignoring the complex structural relationship between all of the elements in the natural setting of shopping (Petermans, Janssens & Van Cleempoel, 2013). However, we find the contributions from atmospherics immensely valuable. This field may undoubtedly advance even further when the methods and findings from neuroscience (e.g., neuroaesthetics) are integrated in the experimental set-up (Chatterjee, 2011).

Nonetheless, in this article, we subscribe to a holistic and hence qualitative approach. The reason is that our focus is not on the emotional responses to specific atmospheric stimuli in experiencing a store but rather on the restructuring of knowledge and the formation of memory implied in meaningful experiences and triggered when exposed to possible worlds, i.e., on cognitive issues related to experiencing. Knowledge structures are organised in associative semantic networks (Collins & Quillian, 1969), in schematic representations (Bartlett, 1932) and in sequences (Schank & Abelson, 1977), and moreover, autobiographical memory is episodic (Tulving, 1983); i.e., knowledge structures and autobiographical memories are “wholes”, not reducible to the sum of their parts. Compared to the bulk of studies from atmospherics and from service design

on the emotionally involving in situ experiencing of servicescapes, research on the transformative qualities of retail experiences is still sparse.

Our research is guided by the assertion that under certain circumstances, the overall thematic layout of a store may function such that this store and its products are turned into an indispensable part of the customer's life story and self-understanding. A prerequisite for this is that the entire shopping experience becomes a "momentous event" memorised as a turning point in life, as an originating event (which sets the individual off on a path to long-term goals) or as an anchoring event (which affirms an individual's beliefs and goals) (Pillemer, 1998; 2001). Our article thus analyses the conditions under which stores may be remembered as sites where a transformative experience either occurred or is being confirmed. Hence, designing such private (and privatised) "lieux de mémoire" (Nora, 2001) could be the tool by which to create strong bonds of loyalty between the customer and stores, thus leading to repeat visits and repurchase.

3.3.3. CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AND LOYALTY

Not only hedonic pleasure but also engagement is crucial for customers' experiential value (Higgins, 2006). Customer engagement is "an interactive, experiential process, based on individuals' engagement with specific objects (e.g. brands, organizations), and/or other brand community members" (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2013, p. 112). Engagement theory claims that creating an interactive consumer experience increases consumer engagement. This theory is a further development of involvement theory, in which the goal of the behaviour is the key distinction between involvement and engagement. Involvement is related to arousal in different forms, whereas engagement is driven by a specific goal. Hence, engagement theory examines motivating features that facilitate customer loyalty (Bowden, 2009). To foster customer engagement, there must be a challenge, which is the forces that interfere with the goal pursuit in different ways; i.e., they "hinder, impede, or obstruct a preferred course of action" (Higgins & Scholer, 2009, p. 102) We argue that creating a possible world is one method of posing cognitive challenges because it diverts the customer from his/her pre-planned itinerary. To be engaging, this diversion requires a willingness and acceptance by the customer to be mentally transported into another world. Engagement is thus an important factor in value creation. Engagement theory has identified three core themes: immersion, passion and activation (Hollebeek, 2011). Immersion is the customer's cognitive focus or attention to a brand whereby other inputs are excluded. Passion is the customer's emotional brand-related investments. Activation is the time and energy that the customer spends on a brand. In our research, we investigate the three dimensions of engagement in different retail environments. Immersion occurs when the customer's attention is absorbed by the store's universe. The customer is immersed in this universe when he/she forgets time and place. We introduce the concept of possible

worlds to explain how some stores may be perceived as absorbing universes. Passion is the customer's physiological and emotional investment in the product or the brand. Consumer arousal, excitement or anger is a token of passion. In the case of retail universes, passion makes the customer feel like positively partaking in this possible world. Activation is the third theme, implying that engagement presupposes active cognitive, emotional or physical involvement. The customer's acts should meaningfully contribute to the universe. He/she should be an actor and fulfil a role in the scene. Hence, we examine how different types of possible worlds invite the customer and the store's staff to take specific roles.

Research has shown that increasing the emotional qualities of a store prolongs the time that customers spend in the store and increases the money spent in that store during a shopping session. Furthermore, research on the transformative (immersion) and role-playing (activation) qualities of stores may prove valuable because it can potentially enhance our understanding of how and why customers may become attached to specific stores and how loyalty bonds between the customer and the store may emerge (Fournier & Yao, 1997; Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011; Mascarenhas, Kesavan & Bernacchi, 2006; Pullman & Gross, 2004; Vlachos & Vrechopoulos 2012). We define loyalty as "a deeply held commitment to rebuy or repatronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing" (Oliver, 1999, p. 34). It is not only loyalty that is the consequence of consumer engagement. Researchers argue that the consequences also include effects such as customer satisfaction in general, a feeling of empowerment, a connection and emotional bonding to the brand, trust, and commitment. (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2013, p. 112) When customers have strong emotional ties with a brand or product, companies could gain financial rewards (Grisaffe & Nguyen, 2011) because they may result in repurchases (Oliver, 1999). This could be described as emotional brand attachment (Thomson, MacInnis & Park, 2005).

3.3.4. POSSIBLE WORLD THEORY

Our research is thus guided by two assertions. First, customer loyalty can be increased by engaging the customer in a possible world. Second, this engagement is caused by transporting the customer into that world.

Narratives are not a new topic in marketing or retailing (Arnould & Price, 1993; Borghini et al., 2009; Edson 2004). Whereas most prior research in this field has been on the dramatic plot of narratives (i.e., on syntactical aspects), our approach focuses on semantics. We are interested in how the construction of the narrative universe as a possible world engages the customer by inviting him/her to be transported into another world.

The concept of possible worlds was originally formulated by the 18th-century philosopher Leibniz (1969) to indicate that our actual world is just one, albeit

the best, of many possible worlds. Possible worlds thus describe options that could have existed if, for example, historical events had turned out differently. If dinosaurs had not been extinct, how would this have altered the world, and what would the role of mankind have been? In the 1960s, logicians revitalised the concept to discriminate between the truth values of propositions as either possibly true (or false) or necessarily true (or false) (Semino, 1997, p. 58). In the 1970s, the concept was introduced in literary theory to describe the differences and similarities between factual stories (e.g., newspaper reports) and fictional stories (e.g., novels). Both types of stories make reference to a world outside the story: Factual stories refer to an actual world, meaning that their truth can be validated, whereas fictional stories refer to a possible world, whose truth is not to be validated. The actual world (AW) is the centre of our reality. When we experience a possible world (PW), we always compare it to the actual world (AW). Possible worlds may thus resemble the actual world to a higher or lesser degree by sharing or lacking the properties, inventories, chronology, natural laws, taxonomy, logic or linguistic features of the actual world (Ryan, 1991:, p. 32f.). Thus, some PWs only differ from the AW in a few respects, whereas others are very different.

According to Gerrig (1993), the experience of narrative worlds implies both a transportation of the reader from his/her world of origin to another world and the performance of certain actions by this reader (*ibid*: 10). These two operations interact, thus generating the experience of being “carried away by” or “losing oneself in” the story, i.e., being immersed. This passive immersion in another universe is caused by the reader’s active interpretation and perception of the story. Consequently, some aspects of the world of origin become temporarily inaccessible. We must accept that not all of our knowledge (e.g., some truth propositions) of the actual world is seamlessly applicable in this other world.

This is a “suspension of disbelief” (Coleridge, 1906): What we know or believe in the real world becomes dissociated from what we know or believe in the narrative world (Gerrig, 1993, p. 15). We thereby gain access to new information that we may transport back to our actual world after the story is finished (*ibid*: 16). Because this new information is at least partly generated by engagement in the story (i.e., by activation), it may contain strong “feeling qualities”, i.e., the ‘passion’ dimension involved in engagement (cf. Hollebeck, 2011). Additionally, because the new information is gained by accessing a narrative, and thus often fictional worlds, it may moreover be erroneous or incorrect. Gerrig (1993, p. 17) quotes “Jawsmania” as an example. Informed by the movie *Jaws* (1975), many beach goers developed a strong aversion or even fear of being attacked by sharks when swimming at the beach. From a statistical perspective, this reaction was nonsensical, but it was nonetheless felt and believed. Having been transported into the world of this movie, many viewers had their knowledge of beaches, water and dangers transformed. “Getting lost” in a fictional world

may thus bring about a transformation of the reader when he/she returns to the actual world (Gerrig, 1993, p. 11). The journey into a possible world potentially transforms a reader's emotions, thoughts, words, characteristics and behaviour. Although possible worlds are constituted by the interaction between a story's grammar and readers' mental imagery, readers may learn more about themselves and the actual world by being immersed in this possible world, i.e., by identifying with fictional characters and by having to take on roles other than those in everyday life.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper is, first, to take stock of the ways in which possible worlds of shopping may be crafted. This is based on observations of how stores actually are designed and leads to a categorisation of different types of stores in which the PW character of each type defines the category. Second, we discuss the ability of each type to transport the customer from the AW to a PW and how much (and what type of) engagement they require.

3.3.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

In the following, all confined retail spaces, whether stores, supermarkets, warehouses, brand-lands, restaurants or other commercial outlets, are called stores. Because stores are defined by being places for commercial retailing (i.e., for actual world actions) and may also have actual world consequences (e.g., spending money and purchasing things), all stores have AW features. Our paper traces stores that also have PW features. Either these features can constitute a parallel universe – an autonomous PW – in addition to the AW character, or they can be embedded as a (minor) part of the overall AW experience of visiting a particular store. When the PW features of stores constitute a parallel universe, customers may temporarily forget or bracket the AW features. This implies that for a certain period of time, they will behave as though they are no longer in the AW.

Our intention is to categorise the types of PWs of stores. In the first phase of the study, this categorisation has been based on a registration of notable deviations and variations from the standard method of designing stores, i.e., The Standard World of stores (see below). This registration has been performed by randomly visiting stores in different cities around the world: in Copenhagen (Denmark), Edmonton (Canada), Gothenburg (Sweden), Dali City (China), Vancouver (Canada), Berlin (Germany), Rome (Italy), Brussels (Belgium), Amsterdam (the Netherlands), London (England), New York (USA), Los Angeles (USA), Atlanta (USA), Victoria Island (Canada), Ubud (Bali) and our hometown, Aalborg (Denmark). This has led to a sample of critical cases that differ from the standard. When locating a critical case, the object is to identify those that confirm or falsify the continual categorisation (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

This was an intrinsic case study defined as “curiosity-driven” research (Thomas, 2011, p. 98). The second phase was a categorisation based on the intrinsic case study by examining the extreme cases to identify their distinctive features (Thomas, 2011, p. 98). This led to a categorisation of different types of PWs of shopping in which each type functions as a genre. The categorisation process was inductive, starting with a crude distinction between predominantly AW stores and stores with remarkable PW features. The discovery of a case that did not fit any of the pre-existing categories led to the definition of a new category. The third phase was an evaluation of the categories through an instrumental case study (Thomas, 2011, p. 98). The aim was to investigate the validity of the different genres. This is called a multiple case study (Stake, 2005, p. 445), and it is a form of instrumental case study: embedded units within one case (Yin, 2013). We categorised cases as units that have the same features, which we analysed as units of cases. This was performed by a systematic survey of all stores in confined areas, being the main shopping streets in:

- Denmark, Aalborg: Bredgade, Algade, Boulevarden, Østerågade, and Bispensgade
- Germany, Stuttgart: Königstrasse
- The Netherlands, Amsterdam: De 9 Straatjes and Haarlemmerstraat/Haarlemmerdijk
- Canada, Edmonton: Edmonton Mall
- Scotland, Edinburgh: Royal Mile, Victoria Street, and Rose Street

These areas have been chosen because they are all environments that were designed primarily for shopping. Furthermore, these areas cover a range of stores in both smaller and larger urban environments. The total number of observations was 1153 stores. The purpose was twofold: to test the validity of the categorisation and the frequency of each category. In the next part, we briefly summarise The Standard World of stores (AW stores) and then describe the different categories of possible worlds that we have discovered.

3.3.6. THE STANDARD WORLD

The standard store typically has many different products under one roof. If it is a clothing store, then there are shoes, trousers, jewellery and so on. Frequently, the garment will be shown in all available sizes. Everything in the store is centred on the products, displaying the products or enhancing the products. They are the main attraction, and they are displayed in a logical and functional manner to make it easy for the customer to see them, to compare them and to try them out. The guiding principle in product display is functionality.

The roles played by customers and sales assistants are conventional. The customer can walk in freely, look at the goods, touch them and ask relevant

questions. The staff assists the customer in these actions. Behaviour is described by social norms. The interaction should be polite and respectful. The customer should not steal or use the product before buying it, etc. From experience, most customers know how to behave in such settings and roughly what to expect. The function of The Standard World of stores is precisely to meet customer expectations. The roles of customer and sales assistant are fixed, holding few surprises. Ideally, surprises should be limited to the quality, price and novelty of the goods. Actual world features dominate. Because this applies to most stores, this world is called The Standard World.

3.3.7. THE REPLICA WORLD

Imagine strolling down Burlington Arcade (London) or Galeries Royales Saint-Hubert (Brussels), the oldest, still functioning covered shopping passages in Europe (opened in 1819 and 1847, respectively). Which types of stores do you expect to encounter there? The sumptuous architecture of these places celebrates the promises of early modernity, thus creating a perfect setting for stores that imitate upper-middle-class commerce from either the dandy era or *la belle époque*. All stores are small and sell relatively luxurious speciality goods (e.g., scarves, leather goods, tableware, lingerie, fine jewellery, watches, binoculars, chocolate, and charcuterie). Accordingly, we expect the service to copy that of old days as well, i.e., to be knowledgeable but nonetheless slightly servile. The scene is set for high-end shopping.

Such settings are eminently suited for The Replica Worlds, which are characterised by imitating either a bygone past or an exotic location. They copy a time and/or a place that is physically out of reach, implying that the quality of the goods matches that of the store's model. An excellent example of this is a shop specialising in tea and coffee in the main pedestrian zone of our hometown (Aalborg), Kronen. The shopping space is very small (35 sq.m.), all of the products are meticulously stored in similar metal receptacles, the ordered amounts are carefully weighed on an old-fashioned scale, the coffee is ground, the order is wrapped in quality paper, and the customer is offered a special sweet before leaving the store. It is just like the "good old days". Interestingly, this is a time period that anticipates most of the customers' active memory. The world of this shop is known (from movies, television shows, oral narratives, etc.) and hence easily recognisable, but it is not actually experienced.

Another example is the Danish restaurant chain Bone's, which presents itself as a replica of "the old America" where men were men and food a cornucopia of spareribs and New York strip steaks. To stress this, the walls are decorated with replicas of things from the former "New World" such as road signs, instruments, weapons and Coca Cola boards. The restaurant is supposed to look like old America – or, rather, how the customers imagine that old America could

somewhat have looked like. The Replica World is not a true copy of the actual world. Instead, it is, with a term borrowed from Eco (1987), “hyper-real”, i.e., a copy whose original model does not exist in the actual world but solely in the mind of the customer (see also Baudrillard, 1994).

The Replica World is a copy of a world that could have existed. It is a copy of a possible world that has relatively well-known features that the target customers in some manner can recognise as a bygone past or an exotic location. Bone’s Replica World is a simulation of a universe whose coherence is caused precisely by the manner in which customers combine the various “old America” signs into one consistent image. This image may very well function as a pastiche of America, namely, as a deliberate imitation of stylistic elements circulated by popular culture (Dyer, 2006; Hoesterey, 2001). It imitates representations, not “the real thing”. Because these representations are widely circulated, the mental process of reassembling them in a new, coherent whole is fairly effortless. In a similar vein, stores such as Kronen, with its broad variety of types of tea, hardly existed in old days. In this case, the store is an imitation of a representation, which in itself does not refer to some existence in an actual world. Playing according to the rules marked out by this shop may very well elicit nostalgia towards the simple(r) qualities (and pleasures) of life in the past (Boym, 2002; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003; Goss, 1993).

Compared to The Standard World, the coherence of the universe becomes more important in The Replica World, whereas the presentation of the individual products becomes less important. This coherence is brought about by the active participation of the customer in interpreting the various signs. Otherwise, the customer is more like a time traveller, observing but not interfering with the story line. The customer is a passive bystander. Precisely because customers must activate their mental models in making sense of the universe, they may still come home with new experiences, feeling that they know more about the specific time or/and place.

Basically, the role of the customer is very similar to that in The Standard World. By the same token, the sales assistants or, in Bone’s case, the waiters behave like waiters in any other restaurant. They are friendly, take the customers’ orders and help if someone has any questions.

The function of The Replica Worlds seems to be the following: to create a distinctive ambiance, which sets another tone or pace (more relaxing or more exciting) for commercial relations that in all other respects remain similar to the actual world of shopping. Therefore, transportation from the actual world to The Replica World is fairly easy but nevertheless slightly more difficult than in The Standard World because the customer must activate knowledge structures that are not directly related to actual world stores. In addition, the

possibility of a transformation is very low because the customer's behaviour is not that different from that in other stores. The learning potentials in these types of stores are relatively modest, but there is always the chance that a visit brings the customer into a mood of nostalgia or cultural superiority (e.g., by being able to decode the inauthentic and pastiche-like setting).

3.3.8. THE PERFECT WORLD OF EVERYDAY LIFE

Imagine a world where the customer can act like the ordinary human being that he/she is at home. This would be a world without the constraints of commercial life, e.g., other customers, pushy or ignorant sales assistants and also – ideally – without all of the tediousness of everyday life (cleaning, quarrels, boredom, etc.). This is the “capitalist realism” of advertising, representing how our life would be if we indulged in the product and if all of the troublesome features of ordinary life were absent (Schudson, 1984). It is also the world of IKEA and possibly one of the reasons for this company's global success.

In IKEA, furniture is displayed in realistic tableaux of living rooms, bedrooms, kitchens, etc. Most objects in these installations are for sale: not only the couch, the table and the chairs but also the lighting, the cushions and even the pictures on the wall. Each tableau not only mimics real settings but also actually emulates them by, for example, showing how a small room can be furnished and decorated in a both functional and emotionally gratifying manner. IKEA thus inspires the customer to find solutions that improve on the imperfections of their everyday surroundings. This may spur a continuous buying impetus: Whether the customer settles for a brand-new kitchen or just a new knife rack, the IKEA world seems to be always more perfect than the real world at home. These possible worlds hence serve as both “models of” and “models for reality” (Geertz, 1973). The IKEA living room looks just like a real living room and is therefore a model of reality. Moreover, however, the real living room, whose arrangements can always be enhanced, often looks slovenly compared to the IKEA world. This possible world thus becomes a model for how reality could be enhanced. If this model is replicated at home, then the real living room is turned into a copy of a hyper-imaginary world of ordinary perfection.

This possible world is “hyper-imaginary” because it serves as the original – and superior – model of how reality could or even should look like. Part of this imagination is the absence of actual world disruptions that may disturb the illusion. Most notably, sales assistants are in a retracted position, not interfering and only interacting with customers when help is explicitly wanted. The only fixed point of contact with the staff is at checkout. There are no sales assistants to welcome, guide and survey you, to recommend alternative products to you or to take your order. The customer is on his/her own.

This also plays into another aspect of the “hyper-imaginary”. The mechanisms of social control that regulate customer behaviour in standard retail interactions are out of order, thereby allowing the customer to behave as he/she would at home, i.e., carefree, not having to worry about what the sales assistant may think of you or your attire. Not only can you lie on the couch, but you can also have your feet up without having to take your shoes off, or you can jump on it. Being able to do whatever one wants – within legal limits – sets the customer free to use the furniture as though it had already been bought. This use is “play-like”, implying two roles being played simultaneously: that of the customer in the actual world considering whether to buy and that of the owner in a possible world imagining the good already having been acquired.

The function of The Perfect World of Everyday Life seems to be the following: to present a model of how life could be optimised without having to fundamentally change anything. The transformation implied in entering and leaving this world is fairly modest in that the understanding of what life has to offer is broadened without being fundamentally altered. Transportation from the actual world to The Perfect World of Everyday Life is more intricate compared to the case with The Replica World in that the possible world (as a model for reality) is mapped onto the actual world, inspiring the customer to imagine a “possible actual world” at home and subsequently making this dream come true through acquisition. It is the customer who must do the mapping by playing two roles: an AW role as an owner of a home and a visitor to the store and a PW role as a possible owner of the goods. The shifts between these two roles should be easy to manage for most modern consumers. The act of purchasing transports the possible owner to the role of actual owner – and to the tedious reality of having to assemble the furniture oneself.

3.3.9. THE TRIBAL WORLD

What do otherwise very distinct places such as an Apple Store (a store) and the Heineken Experience (a brandscape) share? One of their commonalities is that they construct a universe that immerses the customer’s life into the values and qualities of the product. For a period of time, nothing apart from this one product or brand exists in the mind of the customer.

In Apple Stores, the customer is confronted with products covering all or almost all of his/her virtual existence (Coget, 2011). The store serves the customer in the roles as potential buyer, as somebody in need of help to solve a practical problem (e.g., the Genius Bar) or as an eager learner of new features, new software or new hardware (in the store’s lecturing room). The Heineken Experience offers a tour lasting approximately 1 ½ hrs. guiding the visitors through all aspects of the world of Heineken: from the company’s founding to how beer is being brewed and how it should ideally be consumed. On this tour,

the visitor is offered the roles of a student, an observer, a consumer, a host, an advertisement endorser, etc. (Jantzen, Vetner, & Bouchet, 2011).

Both products pretend to cover fairly large sections of modern life and to be the solution to almost every problem. Additionally, they do so without ever hinting at other providers of the same types of coverage. In their respective settings, the two products thus assume a totem-like role of being objects that, on the one hand, watch over and help their users (worshippers) and, on the other hand, symbolise the unique qualities of the group of users. These places thus generate or cater to consumer tribes, i.e., for groups of consumers for whom one particular good holds an existential and socially integrative meaning that exceeds ordinary uses (Cova & Cova, 2002). For many computer users, Apple products are the “be all, end all” of digital technology. For some beer drinkers, Heineken may already serve a similar function, while visiting the site may convince more to join this tribe. Tribal Worlds support and produce brand communities (Fournier & Lee, 2009; McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002; Schau, Muñoz Jr, & Arnould, 2009). It is important to note that it is not only large chain stores that can be categorised as Tribal Worlds. Small stores that cater to specialised leisure activities, such as knitting, may also have tribal features. The customers are part of a knitting tribe, and the store becomes a gatekeeper into an exclusive club for the specially invited. To be accepted, they would have to have specific qualities such as looking like the other tribe members, knowing how to knit or having the desire to learn knitting, and accepting the social rules of the tribe. An example of this is Blackhill Yarns in Aalborg, Denmark.

What characterises The Tribal World is, first, that the product or the brand is the sole centre of attention, at the expense of all other goods, and, second, that every activity in the store revolves around providing and gaining more information that stresses or proves the unique qualities of precisely this product or brand. Third, Tribal Worlds address their customers as members of a tribe: as a group already convinced of the power of the object or as individuals who can be persuaded to join this group. The role of the customer in this PW is to worship the good, and the attraction of stores such as Apple Stores perhaps lies in the fact that it is socially acceptable to indulge both individually and collectively in the adoration of a commodity. Such activity may be perceived as a token of mental instability in the AW. The role of the staff is not primarily to sell the product but to initiate and guide customers into the mysteries of the product. In Apple Stores, customers are met by an extensive number of assistants who are willing to take on this task.

The function of The Tribal World seems to be the following: to create a “shrine” for the product or brand to be worshipped by a group of loyal followers who, in the process, can come to recognise themselves as part of a tribe. Transportation may prove difficult for customers who do not use the product

on a stable basis or who are sceptical about the qualities or the values of the brand. These stores are not made to convert non-believers. They are made to make loyal customers even more faithful. Apparently, the mantra is: “You would not seek Me if you had not already found Me” (Pascal, 1995). The aim is to empower those who were “converted” to the product prior to their visit. In The Tribal Worlds, goods are transformed from mere commodities into totems and customers from individual consumers into collective believers. A token of successful transformation after having visited this type of PW is becoming an active “brand evangelist” who is willing to preach the virtues of or defend the brand under all circumstances (Matzler, Pichler, & Hemetsberger, 2007).

3.3.10. THE MUSEUM WORLD

Imagine going to a modern art museum. How do you expect the objects to be exhibited there? The mounting and placement of each object will have been carefully considered to give it optimal exposure. The manner in which the objects relate to one another will be based on an overarching concept. The architecture of the building could be spectacular in its own right, but it will have been designed to give the qualities of each artwork maximum exposure. The Standard World of stores does not follow these principles. However, some stores, particularly high-end fashion boutiques, do.

Take, for example, the iconic Prada flagship store on Broadway (New York), designed by the famous architect Rem Koolhaas (OMA). The store has two levels: the ground floor and a basement. Contrary to all retail wisdom, most of the goods are displayed and sold in the basement. They are showed in cabinets and display cases. Each object is meticulously arranged to make the right impact. The number of objects is by no means overwhelming. Nonetheless, there are significantly more goods in the basement than on the ground floor. Entering the store, the visitor is confronted by an empty space devoid of objects. A spectacular staircase and perhaps the slowest elevator in the world, both connecting the two levels, dominate the view. Contrasting materials – the zebra-wooden floor and staircase and polycarbonate walls – create a unique space. In the back end of the floor, iron cases suspended from the roof exhibit some of Prada’s latest creations. They are to be admired, not to be touched by incidental visitors.

As in The Standard World, the objects take centre stage, but in The Museum World, they are not mere commodities: “Garments displayed in haute-couture fashion shows are not necessarily oriented towards the market but are rather displayed as evidence of the artist’s creative power: first to the “authorities” during the fashion shows, and then in the retail boutiques for clients who can admire them” (Dion & Arnould, 2011). The products are (like) art works. Prada’s display seems to suggest that the objects are exclusive and exquisite

and therefore justifiably expensive. They should be admired: looked at with awe, caressed by the eyes. Prospective customers may try them on, touch them, and caress them. Voices are lowered and the pace slowed down to not disrupt the atmosphere. The proper attitude is reverence and veneration. The commodities and the store should be treated with respect. The role of the customer is to show this respect, treating the product and the brand as something worthy of admiration. This implies that the customer should appear interested, knowledgeable and prospective (i.e., able to pay the price). Just like in (other) high-culture venues, the customer should ideally be dressed for the occasion. Visiting stores such as Prada, Dior, Chanel, Fendi or Salvatore Ferragamo in, for example, a sweatshirt, worn-out baggy trousers and sneakers means not fitting into this role.

One of the tasks of the staff is to spot prospective customers among the visitors and to treat them with respect. Incidental visitors are at best ignored (Jantzen et al., 2011). Visitors who disrupt the ambiance are to be persuaded to keep their stay short. A special feature of this type of store is the use of doormen who protect the store from unwanted guests and keep an eye on visitors. The sales assistants also serve as custodians who monitor and adjust the behaviour of the audience. It is very common that the assistants serve prospective customers drinks (coffee, water, champagne, etc.), adding a butler-like role to the job assignment. The sales assistants must be able to play a servant-like role as well. Prospective customers are treated like nobility: They are seated on sumptuous furniture and flattered, while the assistants see to all their wishes and suggest alternative or additional products. Hence, the roles played by the staff are multi-faceted. In this respect, The Museum World could also be named the Mansion World, the world of nobility.

The function of The Museum World seems to be the following: to create an ambiance in which mass-produced commodities can be handled as art-like objects by a group of “connoisseurs” who are able to admire, wear and purchase the objects. This is a world of extraordinary perfection, which sometimes makes transportation an uneasy endeavour. The customer must match the standard of the product both economically and culturally. Moreover, he/she must play the role of belonging to the happy few with considerable confidence. The transformative effect of acting and being treated as a prospective customer is status – either gained or maintained. By handling these goods as art-like objects, one distinguishes oneself from the mass of ordinary consumers. A side effect is the need to perpetually upgrade one’s attire after having acquired one exquisite object: For example, the rarity of the new bag creates an urge for an equally expensive and exclusive scarf. This is the so-called “Diderot effect” (McCracken, 1988). Unlike in The Tribal World, this upgrading does not imply brand loyalty: a Fendi bag can easily be combined with Gucci sandals. In that respect, the on-going combination of luxury commodities from different

brands may create the somewhat erroneous impression in the mind of the customer that he/she is transformed into a “unique personality”.

3.3.11. THE FAIRY TALE WORLD

Imagine being part of a fairy tale where you are transformed into another being. This is what The Fairy Tale World is all about. This world is built around a scripted story. The store is the scene, the customers and sales assistant are actors, and the products are props. This means that the behaviour of the customer changes if he/she chooses to play the role offered by the shop.

An example is *Tarina Tarantino* in Los Angeles. This store is an ultra-feminine possible world with the following slogan: “Live the sparkling life”. The feminine role required is that of “a glamorous princess”. The goods are the props in this world. Another example is the *Build-A-Bear* Workshop, in which the customer is supposed to actively participate in the production of his/her own teddy bear. In the process, the customer becomes the “father”, “mother” or “best friend” of the object, which is confirmed by a certificate stating that the object has been brought to “life”. The sales assistants, called “Bears”, function as a type of “midwife” (Jantzen, 2014).

Enchantment is thus the engine of The Fairy Tale World (Bettelheim, 1976). In *Tarina Tarantino*, the customer is enchanted; in the *Build-A-Bear* Workshop, both the customer and the product are transformed. In the narrative, the product is a helper to escape a drab existence or imposed immaturity and become girly glamorous (*Tarina Tarantino*) or responsible (*Build-A-Bear* Workshop). Being set in this type of narrative world, the product gives the customer certain virtues, emphasising or enhancing desirable personality features. The role of the customer is therefore to accept the magic potentials of The Fairy Tale World. The role of the sales assistants is to fulfil their part of the fairy tale. They must assist the customers in the story. This could be as the servant, confidante or friend of the glamorous princess.

The function of The Fairy Tale World seems to be the following: to create a setting in which products can transform customers in a “magical” manner so that some of these customers’ potentials, which are hidden, forgotten or ignored in everyday life, may emanate. Transportation is difficult if the customer is not an obvious part of the universe. In the case of the *Build-A-Bear* Workshop, it could be the sceptical adult, in *Tarina Tarantino*, an impatient husband, and in *Guns&Gents*, a bored wife. This would not work because these stores do not “support” those identities. They would not be a natural part of their universe. If a person can identify with the story, accepts the terms and actively wants to be, for example, more glamorous, responsible, cool or professional, transformation is possible. The interesting aspect about The Fairy Tale World is that the

narrative requires the customer to buy the product to actually be enchanted. In most of the other types of worlds, it is possible to be transformed (to learn more about America, high-end fashion, furniture, etc.) without actually purchasing the product. However, because the magic power to generate new virtues resides in the product, it must be acquired and brought home.

3.3.12. DISCUSSION

Our classification is inductive, based on the study of extreme cases deviating from the standard (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Further research may add new categories to the classification. Our study has identified six different types of worlds: a Standard World governed by actual world expectations and five categories of possible worlds. The examination of each of these categories has identified systematic differences in the roles played by products, customers and staff in the various possible worlds of stores. Such distinctions are translated into differences in the degrees of transportation and transformation. These differences are summarised in table 1:

The World	The role of the product	The role of the customer	The role of the sales assistants	Transportation	Transformation
The Standard World	The product is the main attraction	No additional role (customers)	No additional role (sales assistants)	No Transportation	No Transformation
The Replica World	The product is embedded in an overall ambiance	Bystander / “Narratee”	No role (sales assistants)	Low Transportation	Low Transformation (maybe better mood)
The Perfect World of Everyday Life	Being a vehicle for creating a perfect ordinary world	Behaving like at home – trying out the furniture	Retracted position, not interfering	Easy transportation. The PW idealises the AW	On the way to having a ordinary perfect home
The Tribal World	Being a totem	Being a member of a group worshipping the brand	Guiding the customers into the mysteries of the product	Difficult. The customer needs to be a loyal follower	Becoming an active “brand evangelist”
The Museum World	Extraordinary (resembling an artwork)	Admirer of the brand or product category	Spot prospective customers Arrogant by ignoring customers or Butler-like	Difficult. The customer needs to match the brand’s standard (economically and culturally)	Status (gained or maintained). Unique personality
The Fairy Tale World	A prop in the PW	An actor (active participant) in the PW (accepting the magic potentials)	An actor in the PW (fulfil their part)	Difficult. The customer needs to accept the “role” (identity)	Expand or maintain identity

Table 1. The distinctive features of different worlds of shopping.

A main difference between the six categorised stores is the degree of transportation required to fulfil the implied role of the appropriate customer. In some stores, this transportation is much easier than in others. This is due to the resemblance of those stores to the actual world. The Standard World of shopping is an actual world, while The Replica World is very similar to ‘ordinary’ stores. In simulating how ordinary life could look or feel like, The Perfect World of Everyday Life also enables fairly easy transportation. Transportation to the other categories of possible worlds is more demanding. To fit into The Tribal World, one must actually be willing to worship the product. Additionally, playing the role of the customer properly in The Museum World not only requires admiring the product but also being knowledgeable about it and seeming able to purchase it. The Fairy Tale World is the possible world that is the most different from the actual world. While playing his/her role in this world, the customer must forget or bracket knowledge about the actual world of shopping. The Standard World and The Fairy Tale World are the two extremes regarding the degree of transportation. In between these two are the other four worlds, which may be placed on the following scale:

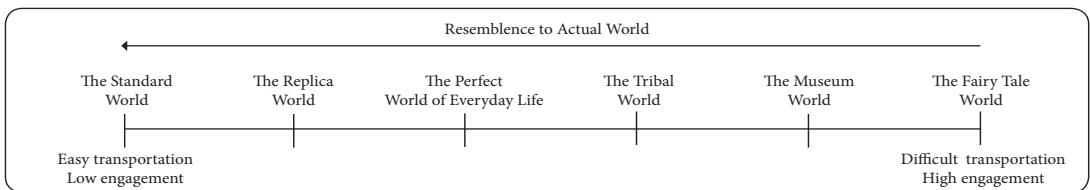


Figure 1. The Transportation Scale.

In retailing, three agents play decisive roles: the staff, the customers and the products. Comparing the different categories of possible worlds, the role of the product changes from being just the product (The Standard World, The Replica World) or being an authenticated version of just the product (The Replica World) to being the perfect version of just the product (The Perfect World of Everyday Life), to becoming ‘more than just the product’ (i.e., an extraordinary object in The Museum World or a totem in The Tribal World) and, finally, to being something ‘other than the product’ (i.e., a prop in The Fairy Tale World). In a similar vein, the role of the staff changes from being just sales assistants to becoming ‘more than just sales assistants’, i.e., acting also as guides (The Tribal World) or custodians (The Museum World). In The Fairy Tale World, the staff must take on roles that are ‘other than just sales assistants’. They must serve as actors in a play on equal footing with but with different roles from the customers.

The more these various roles differ from being ‘just a customer’, ‘just a product’ or ‘just a sales assistant’, that is, the more ‘other’ they become, the more difficult transportation will be. This is particularly the case in The Fairy Tale

World, where the customers, staff and products are both ‘just’ ordinary agents and something ‘other’ than ordinary agents. In the possible worlds of retailing, the customers must imagine themselves in a more unfamiliar setting compared to The Standard World of shopping, and they must accept this setting and their own roles. Only customers who are able and willing to take on such alternative roles as ‘more’ or other than ‘just customers’ will be transported. Taking on such roles implies being transformed from an ordinary customer into either something more (e.g., a shopper who is also acting like a museum guest) or something else (i.e., somebody participating in a fictional world). This transformation will often be temporary in nature. He/she may also gain a better insight into his/her own abilities and wishes and a better appreciation of the product, the store and the staff. Such gains are transformative in the longer run. If this is the case, then the shopping experience may become a “momentous event” that anchors the customer’s beliefs and values to the store (Pillemer, 1998, p. 2001). The ultimate effect of this type of transformation may thus very well be a more loyal customer who commits to buying the product and paying the store new visits.

The willingness of the customer to inhabit possible worlds demands a luscious attitude to accept the possible world’s special constraints on the actor’s activity as part of the play (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004; Suits, 2005). This attitude is supported or hindered by the roles of the other agents. The behaviour of the sales assistants must be meticulously scripted to avoid disturbing the illusion (e.g., as a servant or a confidante), and the product must be framed as something else – ‘more’ or ‘other’ – than just a commodity (e.g., as a totem, a prop or a work of art). This scripting and framing make creating a possible world a precarious endeavour. Not only do shopkeepers have to stage their staff’s acts in terms other than ‘sales assistants’ and supervise whether the commodities fulfil their role as props, but moreover, they may be up against customers who do not participate in this staged world and who perhaps also do not appreciate it. Mistakes made by the staff, misplaced props and other customers who disturb the illusion may easily break the spell created by the “suspension of disbelief” and make the otherwise positively inclined customer avert from the possible world and return to the mundane reality of shopping.

Bringing about transportation is both difficult and precarious. Creating a Standard World therefore seems to be the all-round and safe solution when stores are being designed. Examples of stores being designed as full-fledged possible worlds are much scarcer. This is apparent from our own systematic studies of five different shopping areas, where the frequency of shops that deviate from The Standard World by being a possible world is 4.95%. The results are summarised in Table 2:

Stores	Number of stores	Percent
The Standard World	1096	95.05%
The Replica World	28	2.43%
The Fairy Tale World	12	1.04%
The Tribal World	10	0.84%
The Museum World	3	0.26%
The Perfect World of Everyday Life	4	0.35%

Table 2. The frequency of various worlds of shopping.

Most stores are ‘just’ stores, in which products are presented as ‘just’ products and customers and staff act like ‘just’ customers and staff. Taking into account the decrease in revenues by brick-and-mortar stores, it is unlikely that this is because this method of conducting retailing – i.e., designing and having Standard Worlds of stores – is considered successful. It is also too easy to blame the situation on the lack of imagination by storeowners and shopkeepers. A very plausible reason is that being ‘more’ or ‘other’ than just a store is a demanding and precarious endeavour. It is demanding in terms of redesign and investment, and it is demanding for the staff that will have to learn, rehearse and play roles other than the usual roles in their service encounters with customers. However, it is also demanding for customers, who must act differently compared to ordinary shopping routines and who, moreover, must want and be able to act in this manner. This makes such alternative stores, possible world stores, precarious. Do customers actually want to be ‘more’ or ‘other’ than customers, and are they able to play this role? Can the staff manage to support the customers in these alternative roles, and is it possible to maintain the illusion while unwilling customers visit the store? Relying on the standard model of how retailing should be conducted – i.e., standard stores and standard routines – is playing it safe in the face of these uncertainties. The problem, though, is that this type of safeguarding in the current situation in which retailing finds itself may be a risky strategy – even in the not very long term.

3.3.13. CONCLUSION

In recent years, retailing has changed dramatically. The rise of online trading appears to have had a revolutionary impact on customers’ shopping behaviour, of a dimension even surpassing the emergence of supermarkets in the 1950s and 1960s and the decline of individually owned stores since the 1970s. These earlier developments could be said to have fostered a standardisation of the manner in which stores were designed and service delivered. Judged by turnover, such standard stores are now challenged by e-commerce on a scale at which brick-and-mortar stores in a not too distant future could become rare relicts from the past.

This paper argues that brick-and-mortar stores could have a future if they start

to better utilise their unique strengths. Brick-and-mortar stores are multi-sensual phenomena, and they are able to create strong personal bonds between customers and sales assistants by building on direct, face-to-face communication. These qualities are seminal parts of the shopping experience. Research on atmospherics and service design has advanced our knowledge of these aspects considerably. Our contribution proposes another approach to revitalising the interest in brick-and-mortar stores. This approach is not at odds with service design and atmospherics but rather should be considered a supplement to those fields.

Our point of departure is that as opposed to online stores, brick-and-mortar stores are real three-dimensional spaces. In these spaces, events occur in some sequential order. If stories are understood as the sequential occurrence of events in space, then the customer's journey while visiting a store is a story. Our approach has thus been to develop the understanding of different types of stories that stores may generate. Using possible world theory, these stories can be said to be (almost) always actual world stories. Brick-and-mortar stores are real, the commodities they sell are real, and the exchanges by which these goods are bought and sold are intended to be 'true'. Sometimes, however, the stories are not only true but also something 'more' or 'other'. In such cases, stores and their interactions construct a world of make-believe within the confines of the reality of retailing. These worlds are possible worlds. They are fictional because they rely on make-believe. Therefore, they are 'untrue': A customer in a fairy tale-like store is not a real princess; a customer in an Apple Store is not a real tribesman. These types of plays are illusory. However, this does not mean that the consequences of visiting the store are illusory. They are still 'true': Time is spent, money may have been spent, and goods may have been bought. The stories constructed in these types of possible worlds are both real and fictional. These stories are not 'just' real. They are also something else apart from real: something 'more' or something 'other'.

It is our assertion that this play between real and fictional, actuality and illusion, 'true' and 'untrue' is pleasurable. Based on Engagement Theory, this playing can be considered engaging. Engagement Theory has identified three core aspects: immersion, passion and activation (Hollebeek, 2011). Immersion occurs when the customer positively relates to the fictional, illusory or 'untrue' character of the possible world. Immersion is high in cases in which the customer momentarily forgets his/her embedment in 'real' time and 'space'. Successful Fairy Tale Worlds are examples of high immersion. Activation is the participation of the customer in the narration. Activation will be comparatively low when the customer is a narratee, i.e., an onlooker or a listener to whom the story is being shown or told. This is the case in, e.g., Replica Worlds and Museum Worlds. Activation will be higher in worlds where the active participation of the customer in the story is seminal for the unfolding of the story. In

The Tribal World, the customer must behave like a member. In The Perfect World of Everyday Life, the customer must behave as though he/she were at home and not in the store. In The Fairy Tale World, the customer becomes a protagonist playing an indispensable role for the unfolding of the plot. In this type of possible world, the customer is an actor, i.e., more than a narratee, a *dramatis personae* and perhaps even the narrator of the story. Passion is the emotional attachment of the customer to the store and the product. It is awe and admiration, the joy of exploring and interacting with others, the fun of playing, the feeling of comfort, etc. This attachment is mandatory for getting and keeping the customer engaged. It is the fuel of engagement generated by immersion and activation, i.e., by becoming engaged. Customer loyalty can be brought about in various ways. It can be fostered by building strong purchase routines. It can be enhanced by appealing to social comparison. It is our assertion that customer loyalty can also be produced and maintained by passion. In this case, the immersive and activating qualities of possible worlds may prove to be an obvious strategy.

Transportation into a possible world is a detour that requires mental efforts. Being a threshold that should be crossed, it therefore presents an interfering challenge (Higgins & Scholer, 2009, p. 102) Therefore, taking on alternative roles, becoming an inhabitant of the world and partaking in the narration increase the engagement of the customer. When transportation is difficult, a higher engagement is required, and when transportation is easier, the engagement is lower, which is illustrated by our Transportation Scale (figure 1). Transportation becomes more difficult the more different the possible world is from the actual world. Therefore, stores in the difficult/high end of the Transportation Scale would imply a greater emotional attachment, thereby potentially generating more loyal customers. However, this may also generate more customers who do not appreciate the effort necessary for overcoming the challenge. They may simply leave the store without buying anything. The fear of such negative customer responses is most likely a main reason why only a few stores are designed as possible worlds of retailing. Such customers would most likely reject the store by walking out, or they will “just” buy the required product without engaging in the possible world. Nonetheless, our overall conclusion is the following: If the objective is to generate emotional attachment, then a variable option is to engage customers through transportation into a possible world.

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See Appendix 3: The categorized stores that was possible world or had possible world features

In “The Possible World of Stores”, different types of possible worlds in stores were recovered: The Standard World, The Replica World, The Perfect World of Everyday Life, The Tribal World, The Museum World and The Fairy Tale World. The overall difference between these six worlds is the degree of transportation (cf. The Transportation Scale). The more similarities a store has with the actual world, the easier the transportation and the lower the engagement, and vice versa: the more different it is from the actual world, the higher the engagement. Of all the categories of our assessment, The Fairy Tale World could motivate high engagement because the transportation is the most difficult because the customer has to image themselves in relatively unfamiliar settings. When a customer is transported, they become an inhabitant of the possible world for a moment. This high engagement through transportation is researched in the next article, where the store *Tarina Tarantino* is analysed through different perspectives of play. My intention is to deduce some general principles into a framework.

3.4. PAPER 4: CREATING IMMERSIVE WORLDS IN BRICK-AND-MORTAR STORES - THE CASE OF TARINA TARANTINO

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One way for brick-and-mortar stores to survive the strong competition from online stores could be to motivate an emotional customer experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Pullman & Gross, 2004; Borghini et al., 2009; Zomerdijs & Voss, 2010). In this paper, I argue that one way of doing this is through play. The aim of this paper is to investigate how stores can increase sales through the construction of possible worlds in which customers are immersed in play through representations, fantasies and dreams. The paper results in a model illustrating the optimal conditions for the organization of a possible world in a store.

"Imagine if your most girly inner child went buck wild decorating this place with pink, sparkly frou frou-ness. All it is missing is a unicorn riding across a rainbow" (Valerie D., Los Angeles, CA)

The jewelry store that Valerie refers to in the quote is called *Tarina Tarantino* and it was located on Melrose Avenue in Los Angeles at this time. In 2014 the store was relocated to “The Sparkle Factory” downtown LA. Now the customers can visit the store by appointment or visit the monthly pop-up store. *Tarina Tarantino* clearly distinguishes itself from the crowd through an interesting combination of

1950's fashion, Disney princesses, punk attitude and the very colorful Japanese kitsch. The store decor is in pastel shades, and all the jewelry glitters and sparkles. The products incorporate different symbols such as hearts, bows, fairies, butterflies, sea horses and flowers. The jewelry is often the product of co-branding with for instance *Sephora*, *Hello Kitty*, *Barbie* and *Disney*. A wide range of collections revolving around different fictional characters has been created. The collaboration with *Barbie* and *Disney* has furthermore resulted in the design of a limited number of *Barbie* dolls fashioned in the likeness of *Tarina Tarantino*.



Photo: Tarina Tarantino, Los Angeles (USA)

The former store has received very good reviews at yelp.com¹, where 38 out of 45 reviews give the store more than 4 stars. A total of 33 gives it 5 stars, 5 reviewers give it 4 stars, 4 reviewers gives it 3 stars, 1 reviewers gives it 2 stars, 2 reviewers gives it 1 star. The reviews with a low number of stars primarily concern criticism of service, quality or price.

The ones with 4-5 stars show a pronounced fan mentality in which love for the brand is expressed in statements such as:

“This store is amazing”
(5 stars: Karla R., Los Angeles, CA)

“Favorite place on earth”
(4 stars: Emily W., West Hollywood, Los Angeles, CA)

“I fell in love with Tarina Tarantino jewelry”
(5 stars: Amanda G., Los Angeles, CA)

“I am such a fan!”
(5 stars: Marcy K., Los Angeles, CA)

“LOVE LOVE LOVE it”
(5 stars: Allison T., Allston, MA)

¹ The reviews was sampled on the 14/3/17

“Oh yes I am a fan”

(5 stars: Jacqueline N., Los Angeles, CA)

“I had fun looking at all the sparkly girly things”

(5 stars: Crystal P., Mineola, NY)

“I love her jewelry! Every collection makes my outfits sparkle Hello sparkle factory! A new favorite!

(Ellie N, Los Angeles, CA)

“Would I would love to see, is a tour of the Sparkle Factory in LA. This would be a girl's dream come true!”

(Elle N., Carlsbad, CA)

“I am a devoted fan!”

(Glam K, San Francisco, CA)²



Photo: *Tarina Tarantino*, Los Angeles (USA)

Tarina Tarantino is a brand that generates strong emotions. This is therefore an interesting case with regards to investigating which devices can be used for establishing a strong relation between a customer and a brand. This emotional attachment is clearly stated by one of the customers, Allison:

² In order to make a review at www.yelp.com, users need to set up a profile where a variety of personal information must be filled in, including full name, address and e-mail address. In order to create a profile, users need to accept a declaration that all information and future reviews are true. Each user has a profile where it is possible to see who they are (typically with photo). On the profile it is also possible to see their reviews of other things. It is of course still possible to cheat, in that companies may submit their reviews themselves, but it is difficult and it would take a lot of work to make the reviews look credible.

“Why did it feel so good to spend that much money on a rhinestone-encrusted ring???--love love love it!” (Allison T., Allston, MA)

This emotional brand attachment is explicit in the negative reviews. In a very critical review Elizabeth explains a number of problems such as a rude treatment at an event, wrong prices at the trunk shows (compared with the prices online), unsatisfying return/repair policies and products of a low quality. Even though, she has all these negative experiences with the store and the brand, her review ends with this:

With all that being said, I can't stay away from Tarina Tarantino jewelry. ****oooh shiny**** I love big, bold, badass jewelry that isn't afraid to occasionally keep it young and magical. I do think I'll keep my purchases confined to online retailers with a better return policy and service though. (Elizabeth H., Orange Country, CA)

The interesting question in this regard is: How is it possible to design a store that produces this degree of positive emotions? A hypothesis could be that the store manages to motivate the customers through playful elements that altogether form a possible world. When a customer plays in a store, a series of fantasies and dreams will form in which that person immerses him/herself into different scenarios revolving around the product.

3.4.1. PLAY AND SHOPPING

In order to investigate how stores can motivate customers to play, it is first and foremost necessary to investigate whether shopping can be play. In order for play to occur, the activity in question must fulfill certain criteria. Historian Johan Huizinga, who wrote the first seminal treatment on play “Homo Ludens” outlines the following characteristics of play (Huizinga, 1949, pp. 15-16):

1. It must be a free activity.
2. It must not serve any useful purpose.
3. It must be “not serious”.
4. It must be outside ordinary life.
5. It must absorb the player.
6. It is connected with no material interest.
7. It has boundaries of time and space.
8. It is secretive.
9. It is in disguise.

Shopping could be divided in two categories: Work and leisure. When shopping is playful it is purposeless and voluntary and therefore related to leisure. It

is spare-time spent away from domestic and occupational chores. A customer can shop for necessities or shop randomly around without some clearly defined purpose (Falk & Campbell, 1997). When shopping is without purpose it could become the purpose in itself. Shopping for the sake of shopping (Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980). Therefore, when play occurs in a shopping situation, an inner motivation is generated in the individual resulting in play being initiated for play's own sake. The activity serves no outer purpose. As such, the definition of leisure shopping could be: When a customer forgets that it is shopping it becomes play. When shopping is work there is an external motivation for example a grocery list. When a customer is “working” they will therefore be more focused on utilitarian values of cost and benefit. In this regard the aim for the customer will be to save time and money and therefore they will value a convenient store where products are easy to find, the prices label is correct, the shopping cart function well, a wide range of products.

In addition, an important characteristic of play is that it is outside ordinary life and creates a secret world through disguise, for example a store with an extraordinary facade, a back room for the special invited or a social bond between the customers. In play, a different world is created, with different rules and norms than those prevalent in our everyday lives. In that way, a sense of community may arise between those already participating in play and those who are not yet doing so. Furthermore, play includes temporal and spatial boundaries, which means that there needs to be a very clear indication of beginning and end through physical boundaries that motivate a ritual process. In this way play is ritualized, clearly showing the boundary between “the ordinary world” and the world represented by play. This is also why a fixed and secure order is necessary, which lets the people involved know when certain rules and norms are in force.

In his book *Man, Play and Game*, Roger Caillois categorizes four types of games: Agon, Alea, Mimicry and Illinx (Caillois, 1961). The four types can be found in different stores, where they are employed in order to motivate the customer to play:

The game type agon is concerned with competition in which the opponents all start out with the same point of departure, making it clear that the winner is better than the loser in the specific category in which they compete (for instance running, strength, endurance). Agon demands awareness, discipline, training and a strong desire to win. Games in this category include chess, billiards, tennis, boxing, hunting and crossword puzzles. A store which incorporates elements of agon is Topshop in London, a gigantic three-story clothing/shoe/vintage store, where it takes endurance and a fighting spirit to find the products that fit the bill. There are countless combinations because there are so many different products and brands. The challenge is major. In principle,

you can spend an entire day in this store, which is why it is also possible to go to the bathroom and buy food in the store.

The focal point of the game type alea is factors that the players have no control over. It is based on chance, and the winner is found through a draw that is based on “destiny” rather than the defeat of an opponent. This category includes games such as dice, roulette and the lottery. A store which fulfills alea criteria to a particular degree is Wasteland in Los Angeles, a famous second-hand store. It is a place based on chance, as you need to be lucky to find something of the right brand, the right shape and the right size. If, on the other hand, you succeed the prize is significant, as it is often expensive designer brands sold for as little as a fifth of the original price.



Photo, Line Boye Danielsen: Wasteland, Los Angeles (USA)

Illinx is the pursuit of dizziness. Here, the game is about disrupting your sense of stability and causing a physical panic in your body. Games in this category include bungee jumping, parachuting, roundabouts and rollercoasters. With regards to store design, this may result in small elements such as a lot of mirrors, slanting floors and walls or elements that revolve or move. The essence is to cheat the brain, causing visitors to lose their sense of direction for a few moments. The bistro Friends in Rome is designed on the basis of exactly this game type. It has elements such as slanting doors, an asymmetrical bar and a mirror ceiling with many different angles. The result is a place that continually challenges the sense of stability, potentially causing a mild sense of vertigo or sensory disorientation.

The focal point of Mimicry is a temporary submersion into an illusion or a fictional world. The pleasure derives from the player having to make him/herself and others believe that he/she is someone else and avoid mistakes that break the illusion. The role of the spectators is to give themselves over to their imagination and become part of the play, which means that both the actor and the spectator are part of mimicry. Examples of this include theater, movies, TV series and fairy tales. The store *Tarina Tarantino* is a typical example of how mimicry can be employed in a retail context. The world of the store motivates customers to assume the following role: Being a child again and experiencing the unconcerned pleasures, dreams and fantasies that go with that role. In this world, different rules apply than in adult life, and this makes it possible for the customer to try out the role of a young girl. Ideally, the customer steps into the role of a child who dreams of being a glamorous princess. In this role the feminine identity is crucial, and in this context being drawn to colorful jewelry with crystals is highly approved. Reviews from “Yelp.com” read as follows:

“Tarina Tarantino is for the child and also the princess inside you!”
(Emily W., West Hollywood, Los Angeles, CA)

“It’s like being a big kid in a shimmering candy store.”
(Karla R., Los Angeles, CA)

“My little girl comes out when I walk in!”
(Osvaldo, Las Vegas, NV)

“Absolutely worth it to feel like a pretty pretty princess.”
(Kaila Y., Los Angeles, CA)

“This store is every girly-girl’s dream come true! Like a kid in a candy store, you’ll want to try on everything here.”
(Melissa H., Dallas, TX)

“When I first walked in, the little girl in me got very giddy when I saw all the cool baubles on display.”
(Sparkie P., Los Angeles, CA)

“When I wear my accessories I am reminded of my days as a little girl endlessly playing with my Barbie dolls and trading hello kitty stickers.”
(Sarah M., Los Angeles, CA)

The store brings out the inner child. This is either stated explicitly or the attraction of the store is described in phrases such as “being a kid in a candy store” or “being a pretty princess”. This indicates that the store manages to motivate the customer to play along with the illusion that the world establishes. The

role that the customer adopts is not only described as the inner child, but more specifically as the women's inner, most girly girl. Through the design and products, the world resembles some very specific girls' games that revolve around the dream of being a princess; a dream which gathers its inspiration from either fairy tales (such as Cinderella) or weekly magazines (such as the Danish Crown Princess Mary), and around glamour such as in the Barbie material. When a customer plays a role they are immersed in the store. An aspect of immersion is the forgetting of time, place and one's own ordinary social role (Hollebeek, 2011). Immersion thereby implies and alteration in conduct and/or awareness, which is motivated by "mimicry". This is immersive because it requires the imaginative act of daydreaming, which can be pleasurable (Campbell, 1987). This pleasurable aspect of mimicry is evident in the *Yelp* reviews when the customers express their experience of role-playing ("My little girl comes out when I walk in!").

3.4.2. PLAY AND POSSIBLE WORLDS

Possible worlds are a way to immerse customers through mimicry. This is by imagining the way things could have been if something was different (Ryan, 1992). For example if you imagine that the wheel has not been invented then the mental construction of this scenario will be a possible world. A possible world is a semiotic system that is communicated in fictional texts (a store) by the construction of all the elements that can be interpreted by a customer (Doležel, 1998, pp. 15–16). According to logical semantics, there are especially three laws that are important in possible worlds in order for them to uphold their truth-values: Logical consistency, logical completeness and validity of logical implication. Logical consistency is noncontradictory elements therefore contradictory statements cannot both be a part of the possible world. (Fort, 2015, p. 17)

In *Tarina Tarantino* the sales assistant cannot be happy and depressed at the same time, as it would indicate an error or lie in their character and therefore an error or lie in the store. Logical completeness is the wholeness of the possible world. In *Tarina Tarantino* this logical completeness is centered around the slogan: "Live the Sparkling life" hence sparkling jewellery makes sense in this possible world whereas a necklace of discrete natural (brown, green) would misrepresent the word. Therefore some statements within the possible world will be true, others will be false. Validity of logical implication is the correlation between true statements: If there exists a set of true statements (in any logical universe) from which another true statement can be implied, this statement is true in the same logical universe. (Fort, 2015, p. 17) If logical completeness is related to "live the sparkling life" it would logically entail colourful clothes, a positive attitude, an outgoing personality, an interest in famous characters and of course sparkling accessories.

This could be related to cognitive interaction. Cognitive interaction is the psychological, emotional and intellectual interaction between a person and a system (Salen & Zimmermann, 2004, pp. 59-60). With regards to shopping, this may concern the fantasies, dreams and learning potential generated by a certain universe. This may be a store based on a fairy tale that the person is to imagine him/herself a part of. Within game design, the term “universe” denotes a solid world in which all the parts make up a coherent meaning. This is the world around which the game is built and which naturally sets up certain limitations for the content. Examples of this include a universe built around the Viking age or around a fantasy world.

A mixture of traits from different worlds would potentially destroy the illusion – in that case play would be interrupted. If for instance we imagine ourselves watching a Harry Potter movie, and suddenly a phone starts ringing in the movie. Harry Potter picks up the phone and starts talking to one of his friends about things unrelated to the story. This breaks the illusion and the spectator will no longer be immersed in the movie (unless it has previously been explained that this is a magical object enabling people to communicate across long distances). Fictional worlds are created from imagination, but they still contain an explanatory logic that makes the settings and potential compositions comprehensible. This is typically seen in science fiction, cartoons and computer games. It is also possible to maintain an illusion in a composition of various smaller universes enclosed in a large one. An example of this is Star Wars, where the overall universe is the galaxy and the small universes the separate worlds that the travelers visit. As such, the most important thing with regards to the construction of a possible world is the very understanding that it consists of a series of truths specifying which elements belong in world - and which do not.

The experience of a possible world requires transportation from the actual world (our “real” world) to the possible world through a performance by the reader (Gerrig, 1993). In this case the readers is the customer. When a customer is transported through a performance this could generate and experience of being “carried away by” or “loosing oneself in” the store. In other world: Getting immersed in the possible world in the store. Therefore, a possible world in a store could transport the customer through an interpretation of the different signs and symbols presented in the store. In this process of making mental imagery the possible world “comes to life” (Van Laer, De Ruyter, Visconti & Wetzels, 2011, p. 799). Thereby the customer can understand and act in accordance to the fictional reference. This is where the experience becomes playful (mimicry) because the customers have to act out a role (perform). Due to the spatial dimension in a store, the task of the customer would be to act like the inhabitant of the possible world presented. In this case, the role is someone who is living the sparkling life. Thereby, the customer is transported into the possible world by acting out this specific role. (Gerrig, 1993)

It is not a necessity for the experience that the customers actually believe that they are in a different world, but they need to be willing to play along with the illusion. The romantic poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (Coleridge, 1906) describes this as “Suspension of Disbelief”, indicating that it is possible to make a person “forget” the fictional nature of the world as long as the illusion is thorough and consistent (Coleridge, 1906). This supports Suits' emphasis on the importance of the player having “a lusory attitude” (Suits, 2005, p. 49). In order to maintain the truths and thereby the illusion, props are needed. These constitute social devices for maintaining the illusion of a possible world (Walton, 1990, pp. 61-69). In a brick-and-mortar store, the props are all the physical elements that as a whole create a possible world. In *Tarina Tarantino*, the props contribute to creating a possible world that tells the visitor that this is a world in which the playing concerns: “playing a child and dreaming of being a glamorous princess”. The props include the jewelry, the chandelier hanging from the ceiling and the pink colors.

The possible world provides a series of elements that are to motivate mental imagery. But it is not until the customer starts playing along with the illusion that it is complete. In a store, the customer will use his/her imagination to create various fantasies about the role that is required or expected. According to the philosopher Kendall Walton, all fantasies are basically concerned with ourselves, which is why possible worlds is relevant as we imagine what it would be like to own the products. Through imagination a learning element emerges, as the act of imagination allows for understanding and recognizing new or forgotten sides, which strengthens the sense of identity (Walton, 1990; Gerrig, 1993).



Photo, Nanna Dam: *Kronen Kaffe*, Aalborg (Denmark)

The tea-and-coffee store *Kronen Kaffe* in Aalborg, Denmark, presents a possible world in which the customer is taken on a journey back in time. Logical completeness is “The possible world of the shop in the good old days” through devices such as wooden décor with small shelves, old metal coffee grinders and sales uniforms, which together create a wholeness in the world. There is logical

consistent because there is no contradictions like a sale assistant wearing a headset. If the statement “playing shop in the olden days” is true than the law of validity of logical implication would entail that shop assistants being old-fashioned is also true. Values such as politeness, quality and presence are emphasized. In addition, every purchase ends with the customer being offered the coffee-flavored hard candy *Haagse Hopjes* for free, which in addition to the paper bags of different coffee/tea complete the experience and becomes important props.

3.4.3. PLAY AND RITUALS

All shopping activities encompass certain scripts that have come to function as rituals in consumer societies (Belk, Wallendorf, & Sherry, 1989, p. 10; Rook, 1985, p. 252). When shopping is playful it is governed with certain rituals. The behavioral structure that the possible world of the store triggers in the individual becomes just such a ritualized action because the different phases mark a clear transition from the actual world to the possible world. The term ritual refers to an activity with a fixed episodic sequence that is typically repeated (Rook, 1985, p. 252). Even though the ritual is serious, it does not conflict with the requirement for play's non-serious nature, as it is still serious for fun. The same goes for the game, as in spite of the seriousness this is still something outside of everyday life.

When the store is constructed like a possible world, the structure in the transition ritual becomes relevant because it explains the “magic” that may emerge within the particular frames of the world. This ritual consists of three phases. The first phase, separation, marks a separation that constitutes the transition from one state or social structure to another: from everyday life to the special sphere of the ritual. The next phase, the liminal phase, constitutes the threshold itself, which is a kind of limbo – a sphere outside ordinary time and space. As such, the player in the possible world in the store resembles the participant in the liminal phase of the ritual. The last phase, the incorporation phase, marks a return to the “real” world, which now, due to the individual having been subject to the ritual, has different rules and living conditions for the participant (Gennep, 1960; Turner, 2008). The individual's societal position or status has changed because of the transition ritual. With regards to stores and shopping, the different phases are scripted as follows:

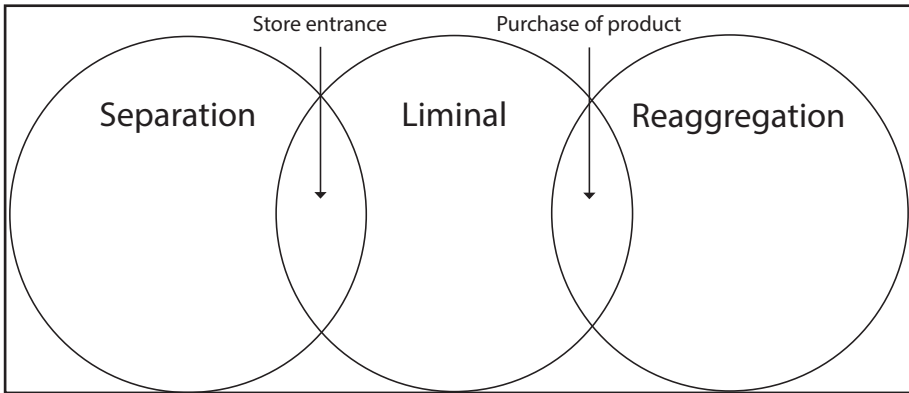


Figure 1. The three phases of the ritual (Turner, 2008) in a shopping context.

The first phase is separation, which still belongs to the “real world” that, contrary to play, has the quality of being serious, which means that in this phase there may be consequences to one's actions and worries about all aspects of life (Walton, 1990). The boundary between the separation phase and the liminal phase is marked by a threshold representing the transition from the actual world to the possible world. The store entrance could physically mark this threshold. In the next phase, play unfolds through the roles triggered by the world. Here, it is possible to try out the role by assessing, testing and combining different products. The transition from the liminal phase to incorporation phase happens when the chosen products need to be purchased. Here, reality reenters through payment, which has an obvious consequence in the “real world”. Subsequent to this, it is possible to try out the recently acquired role in “the real world”. The individual's position may be changed here, as the role may strengthen or emphasize certain traits in the individual that were not previously manifest. The premise of ritualized play is that the individual experiences this transformation when he/she returns to reality. This means that the consumer may experience the ritualized behavior as a positive and meaningful aspect of everyday life. The separation phase can be facilitated by a sensory differentiation from the surrounding stores. This may be in the shape of a different scent, music, different surfaces or through visual differentiation. One example of this is Joyrich in Los Angeles, which sells colorful clothes for teenagers. Here, the store facade is covered with plants, flowers and colorful sunshades that clearly distinguish the store and simultaneously activate the senses. As such, the facade illustrates that a very clear boundary exists between the store and “the real world”. When the customer crosses this boundary and enters the distinctive space of the store, the illusion – and the subsequent transition – can begin. As such, there are three phases to the customer's participation in a possible world:



Photo: Joyrich, Los Angeles (USA)

1. Separation phase: Differentiation of facade and entrance
2. Liminal phase: Construction of a possible world through props that requires the customers to play a role (such as a princess, business man, the evil queen, a famous person)
3. Incorporation phase: Payment and return to the real world with the product.

In *Kronen Kaffe* the separation phase is strengthened in the olden façade (the wooden door, gold letters and black wooden window frames). Before the customer enters the store they will know that it is a different place. The liminal phase is supported by the possible world (the good old days) in the stores and the props (the products, the coffee grinder, the wooden shelves). The role-playing is a reinforcement of the ordinary customer role as they are required to patiently wait in line, be polite and quite. The incorporation phase is the payment of the product, which is wrapped in brown paper and the customer is offered a caramel on their way out. Ideally, a fully ritualized world could produce a “ritualized magic” which lets the customer experience a positive transition through the testing of roles (Rook, 1985, p. 251). Shopping in a possible world in a store can facilitate a stronger sense of identity that is consolidated by the conceptual sensory story that is played out in the world. It may become a place where the individual uses fantasies and dreams to try out new roles and learn something about personal potentials (Walton, 1990). During the liminal phase, an area of tension arises between reality and non-reality, and this is where play takes place. The decisive criterion for the possible world is that it is believable and consistent (cf. the section on possible worlds). If it succeeds in this, its reality will not be challenged during the time of play. The individual can let him/herself be absorbed in the illusion (Coleridge, 1906).

The world strengthens these fantasies through play. In the *Tarina Tarantino* stores, this phase has very clearly been strengthened, as the customers refer to their inner girl to a very high degree. Children are much better than adults when it comes to playing and fantasizing, which indicates that the customers' fantasies about owning the products have been strengthened. If the product fits into that person's dream world, there is an increased likelihood that they will want to buy the product. The purchase is necessary for the long-term effects of ritual play to occur, and for the transition to be maintained. The transition is not possible without the products, as they are part of the change that is the aim of the ritual and the world. This may strengthen potential identity narratives in which *Tarina Tarantino* plays a major role. These narratives may include: "When I wear the jewelry, I live out my childhood dreams of being a princess", "When I wear the jewelry, I am feminine and glamorous" or "When I wear the jewelry, I am in touch with my inner child". If the product contributes to strengthening the customer's identity through narratives, it has a major impact. There are several indicators that possible worlds in stores can increase sales because the products become a crucial part of the experience. This happens because:

- Fantasies and dreams are strengthened when the products are tried on
- The products become props that contribute to maintaining the role in the actual world
- The products are a way of prolonging the positive emotions that have been triggered in the store
- The product completes the transition that the store offers through rituals

As is also clear from the yelp.com reviews, this may lead to the customers having strong emotions for the product, expressed in the words "love" and "being in love". This shows that combining shopping with play results in the customers attaching themselves emotionally to the products they try on to a very high degree. As such, facilitating the customer's "lusory attitude" is crucial as this makes the shopper more susceptible to play and game activities. This makes the construction of possible worlds in stores highly relevant, exactly because play unfolds in a world which, in spite of not being "real", must seem probable and believable within its own set of rules.

3.4.4. PLAY AND DESIGN

The most important point with regards to possible worlds in stores is that the world motivates the customer to take on a certain role for which the products of the store become the props. This can lead to the establishment of an emotional relation between the customer and the product, characterized by pleasure and curiosity on the part of the customer. This also means that the store potentially has a strong learning element, because the customer, through mimicry, has the opportunity to learn more about him/herself, which may contribute to the

formation of identity. The combination of play and experience with regards to the design of store concepts is therefore highly relevant, as it takes into account a pleasurable decision-making process in which play is a central focal point. The elements that possible worlds in stores need to incorporate are outlined in the figure below:

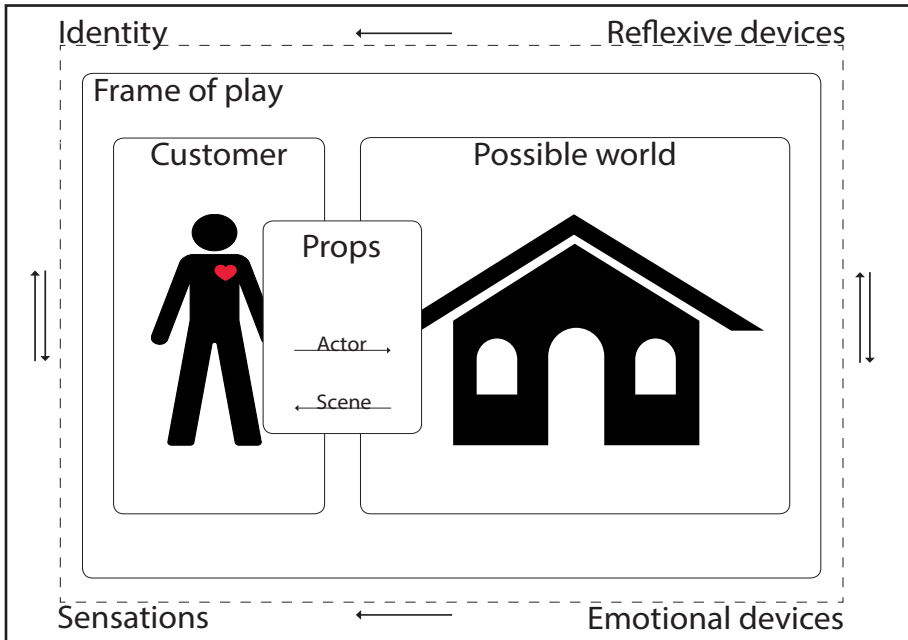


Figure 2. The Possible World Model: Processes in a possible world

The model is partially based on “the psychological structure of experiences” (Jantzen & Vetner, 2007), which constitutes the outermost frame of the model, consisting of a biological level and a reflexive level illustrating the effects of experience design. This means that an experience may affect the individual both physically and mentally; a process which is controlled by emotional (for instance sense stimulation) and rational devices (for instance a slogan). When an individual reflects on his/her experience, this may turn into self-narratives that can lead to the forming of identity (Vetner & Jantzen, 2007).

This structure is evident in the outermost rectangle of the model, indicated by a dotted line. On the right are “emotional devices” and “reflexive devices”, indicating that the store concept must include both types of devices, “inviting” the individual on both a conscious (reflexive) and a subconscious (biological) level. This, then, constitutes the communication of the store to the customer. On the left are “identity” and “sensations”, which are the effects that the devices may have on the recipient. A combination of rational and emotional devices may

result in an identity-forming process that will be strengthened by the customer having a pleasurable experience. If the store primarily employs emotional devices, this may lead to the atmosphere in the store being perceived as for instance nice, exciting or engaging, which all happens at a subconscious level. If this is the case, the customer does not consciously deduce anything from the pleasurable atmosphere.

The arrows indicate the relation between each element in the outer rectangle. When reflexive and emotional devices are combined, this enhances the effect because the thought processes are underlined by a pleasurable sensation and vice versa. With regards to playful store universes, the emotional devices can be a combination of play elements (for instance *illinx* or *agon*) and sense stimulation. The reflexive level is the concept around which the devices are centered in the universe. If this is considered in relation to *Tarina Tarantino*, the model can be filled out as follows:

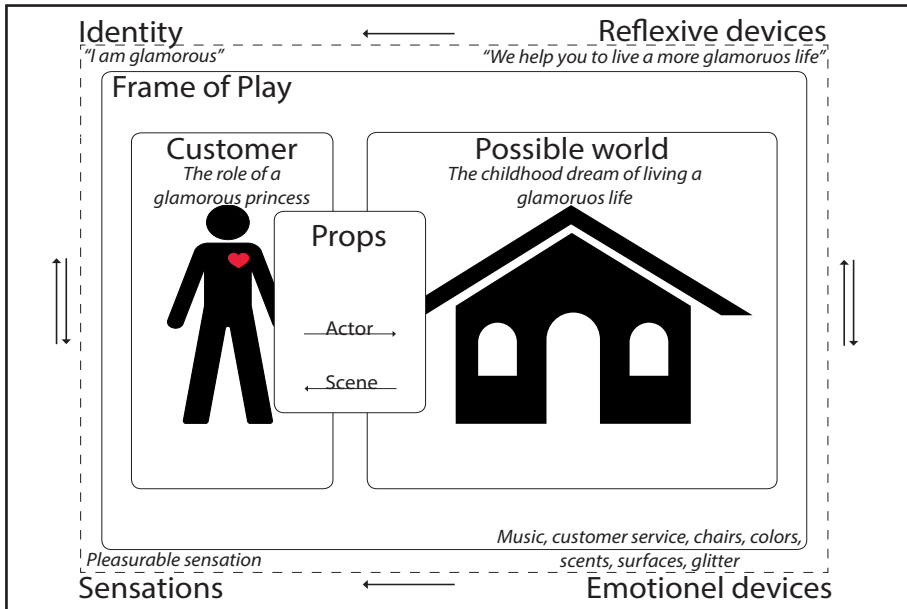


Figure 3. The Possible World Model: Applied to *Tarina Tarantino*.

Accordingly, the customers could undertake a “suspension of disbelief ” in which they are willing to let themselves be persuaded by the fictional narrative theme offered by the possible world (Coleridge, 1906). This leads to the visitors having the above-mentioned experience of their inner child emerging when they step into the store. This refers to the interaction that takes place through mimicry where the customer's is acting out the narrative theme of the possible world: It is during play with the possible world that the positive emotions for

the brand and therefore the products arise. As Denise writes in her yelp-review:

“There is a sense of dress up here that makes me feel stylish and sexy and fun all at the same time. I can’t get enough. It’s the ultimate girl store. It’s a candy shop so to speak complete with Hello Kitty, Barbie, Alice in Wonderland, tea party pride and even a bridal collection.” (Denise C., San Jose, CA)

Here, Denise refers to playing dress-up, which is concerned with dressing in specific items (for instance clothes, shoes, tools) and then taking on the role that the costume implies. Then she writes that she cannot get enough: The store has apparently triggered such powerful positive emotions that the visit seems intoxicating. The most interesting point comes at the end where she compares her experience to being a child in a candy store, where the candy in this case is the *Tarina Tarantino* jewelry. This indicates that the company has managed to utilize the store to establish a strong brand attachment, as the products are subject to the pleasure of the customer in question. If the customer wants to prolong the positive emotion when she leaves the store, she can achieve this by buying the products. The reason for this is that the positive emotions arise while playing with the products, which in this case are the dress-up items or the props of play (Walton, 1990). Like in playing dress-up, the props are a necessity for playing the given role, which means that the customer has to buy the products (the props) in order to stay in the role. This is the point where an identity-forming process may occur, because the customer tries out the role through the jewelry in the “real” world where the decision (for instance purchase) has consequences.

The possible world in *Tarina Tarantino* is “the Possible world of the childhood dream of living a glamorous life” and at *Kronen Kaffee* it is “the possible world of the good old days”. As such, a possible world in a store is an expression of this world through all the elements in the store. This is illustrated in the concept model below:

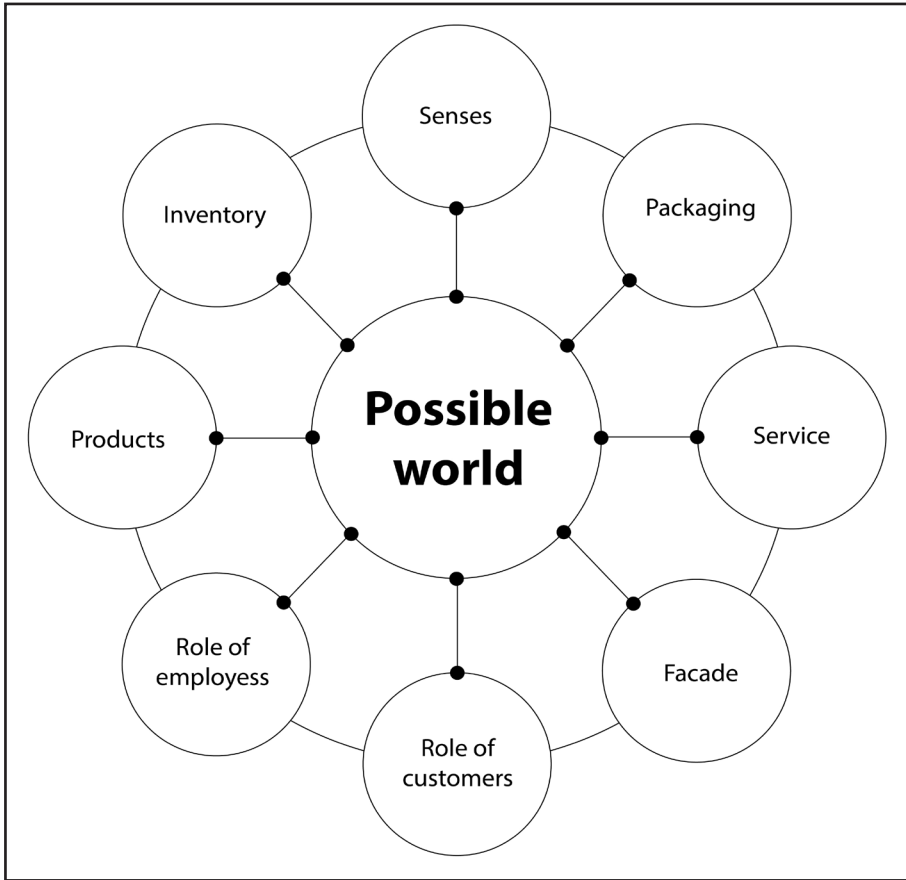


Figure 4. The concept model: The devices of the possible world.

The model is based on the different element that represent the possible world in a store. Senses are the choice of color, music, scent, surface (tactile) and taste. Packaging is both the packaging of a product and the wrapping of the products after a purchase. Service is the overall direct contact with customers through web, email, phone etc. The façade is 1) the differentiation of the facade from surrounding stores and 2) a representation of the possible world inside the store. The role of the customers and employees are the roles that are given by the possible world (the inhabitants of the possible world). The props are the items (the coffee grinder in *Kronen kaffe*) that support the possible world including the products (the small paper bags with coffee or tea). The inventory is the shelves, the light, the chairs, the counter and other decorative items. In the following model *Tarina Tarantino* is applied:

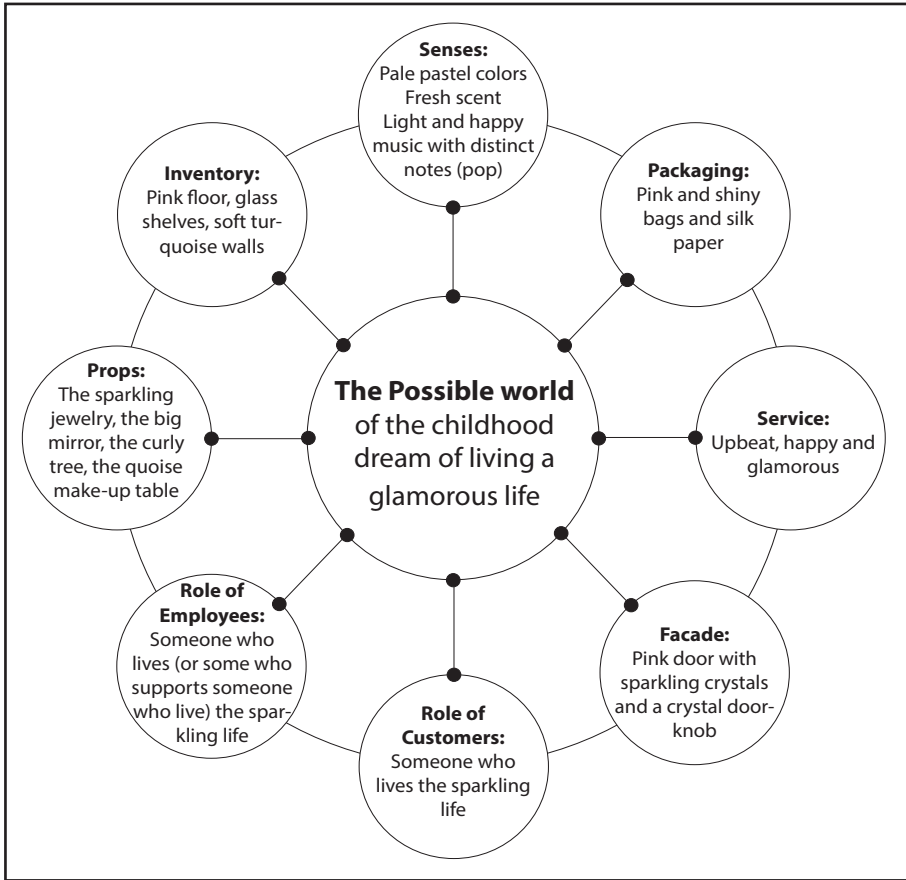


Figure 5. The concept model: Applied to *Tarina Tarantino*.

Tarina Tarantino offers a possible world in which the visual frame of reference is a girl's room from circa 1970-1990. The facade clearly distinguishes the store from the surrounding stores by the pink and purple door with sparkling crystals around the mirror-like window and a crystal doorknob. The role of the customers is someone who lives the sparkling life, which could be seen in a more carefree, happy and expressive behavior. The role of the employees is either someone who lives the sparkling life (the same role as the customer) or someone who supports this role such as a personal assistant. The props are the sparkling jewelry, the big mirror, the curly tree or the turquoise make-up table. The inventory is the pink floor, the glass shelves and the soft turquoise walls. The senses activated are sight (the pale pastel colors), hearing (the light and happy music) and touch (the sleek surface). The packaging is the pink and

shiny bags and the soft pink silk paper. The service in general through phone, email, website are upbeat, happy and glamorous (in the sense that the customers are treated as famous people)³.

As such, the world in the store is created around elements characteristic of a child's room from that time. The entire store design and all the jewelry refer to the Possible world of the childhood dream of living a glamorous life. Every single part communicates this message to the recipient through all the different signs and symbols. The store becomes a physical manifestation of the childhood dream of being a glamorous princess. Through this, the possible world triggers a series of positive emotions concerning the dreams, fantasies and play of childhood.

3.4.5. CONCLUSION

The psychological aspects and design elements that are in play when customers participate in playful store universes contain both subconscious and conscious moments. The subconscious moments are tied in with emotional decision-making processes that are solely based on a evaluation if something is a good or a bad. The conscious moments are tied in with rational decision-making processes that are based on considerations on whether the product contributes to the customer's identity. In this way, the paper has clarified how consumer behavior can be understood in relation to shopping as a playful activity that immerses them in a possible world, and why this is different from ordinary shopping.

The model presented (figure 5) may contribute to strengthening the attractiveness of stores for “the playful shopper”. The most important point is that when a store offers a possible world in which the customer enters into a certain role, the products become important props for playing out a role in the possible world. If the customer wants to maintain that role in the actual world they would have to buy the products. This could potentially increase sales. In *Tarina Tarantino* the role is “I am glamorous” the effect of a possible world will be that the customer needs the jewelry in order to live out that role in their everyday life. In this way, the experience is associated with the product through play, and the customer practically has to buy the product in order to complete the transformation into “a glamorous person”. The elements that the paper emphasizes as beneficial for strengthening and motivating play are the ones presented in the concept model: Facade, Role of Customers, Role of Employees, Props, Inventory, Senses, Packaging and service. The concept model illustrates, which elements are needed to design a possible world in a store.

3 Cf. with exception of Elizabeth who is very unhappy with the overall service (Elizabeth H., Orange Country, CA, 2013)

This is based on the assumption that it could be beneficial for brick-and-mortar stores to motivate an emotional customer experiences. In this paper the assertion investigated is that playful elements could motivate an emotional brand attachment. In the case of *Tarina Tarantino* the analysis point to the fact that the playful elements in the store seem to motivate an emotional reaction. The assertion generated for future research is that a store designed as a possible world could increase sale. A further understanding of this could be significant if brick-and-mortar stores are to turn around the downhill curve.

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CHAPTER 4. HOW FICTIONAL CAN STORES BECOME?

The discussion is based on engagement theory by analysing the terms immersion action and passion in relation to possible worlds in stores. It is an examination of how the different types of possible worlds are systemised, the fictional degree of the worlds and an elaboration of the connection between the actual and the possible world in a store. In the presented papers, I have introduced Possible World Theory as one way to understand emotional engagement in stores, which could generate a brand attachment. An example of the strong emotional bond is the store *Tarina Tarantino*, where the customers disclose their emotional attachment in the *Yelp* reviews, such as Melissa and Emily:

“This store is every girly-girl’s dream come true! Like a kid in a candy store, you will want to try on everything here.” (Melissa H., Dallas, TX) (Cf. paper 4)

“Tarina Tarantino is for the child and also the princess inside you!” (Emily W., West Hollywood, Los Angeles, CA) (Cf. paper 4)

This is also evident in *Guns&Gents*, where the customer shows playful behaviour by acting as if they were on a hunt (aiming for a bird in the sky); they forget themselves, and some of them even show a childish behaviour, such as this example:

“A man is walking into the store with his daughter, and when they see the weapon room, he says to her: “Wooooowwwww – look at this? Isn’t is just wild? Then they walk around in the weapon room, and the daughter says: “Can I have a gun?” Then the mother walks into the store and shouts the mans name. The man responds by sadly saying to his daughter: “we have to go now...” (Appendix 4, field notes, 62)

When a customer becomes engaged in a store, they stay longer and apparently seem to buy more (Cf. Paper 1). This is evident in this quote from the field notes:

“A customer comes into the store to obtain a gun (he has ordered). He parks the car illegally outside, so everything (according to him) needs to go as fast as possible, but when he walks into the store, he acts calmly. He ends the visit by buying the gun, cleaning equipment and patrons.” (Appendix 4, field notes, 165)

When a customer chooses to spend more time in a store, they are accustomed to buy more. Consequently, this could increase revenue. This dissertation is about

how such an engagement can be created in a store through the establishment of possible worlds. To design a possible world in a store, The Concept Model (Cf. paper 4, Figure 4.) has been suggested. In relation to *Tarina Tarantino*, this model particularly highlights the importance of coherence when creating a possible world in a store. All the different devices in *Tarina Tarantino* are a representation of the childhood dream of living a glamorous life.

In this regard, it is interesting to discuss the boundaries. For example, is the coherence of the devices important in all six worlds: The Standard World, The Replica World, The Perfect World of Everyday Life, The Tribal World, The Museum World and The Fairy Tale World? What occurs when there is incoherence? Is coherence related to the customer's ability to become transported into a possible world? Does the fictive dimension of possible worlds affect transportation? Are all the six categories of possible words fiction? By definition, "Fictions (fictional objects) are derived from reality, they are imitations/representations of actually existing entities" (Doležel, 1988c, p. 475). Therefore, could a store even be fictional? On the basis of these questions, I want to discuss the correlation between coherence, engagement and fiction in relation to the six categories. I will do this by applying The Concept Model on the six categorisations of possible world in stores by analysing them in relation to Marie-Laure Ryan's (1991) rules for true and standard fiction. True fiction is when a possible world is similar to the actual world in almost every aspect. Standard fiction is when a possible world is different from the actual world in several ways. (Ryan, 1991) The aim is to disclose the different elements of engagement – and how this could contribute to an understanding of engagement in stores.

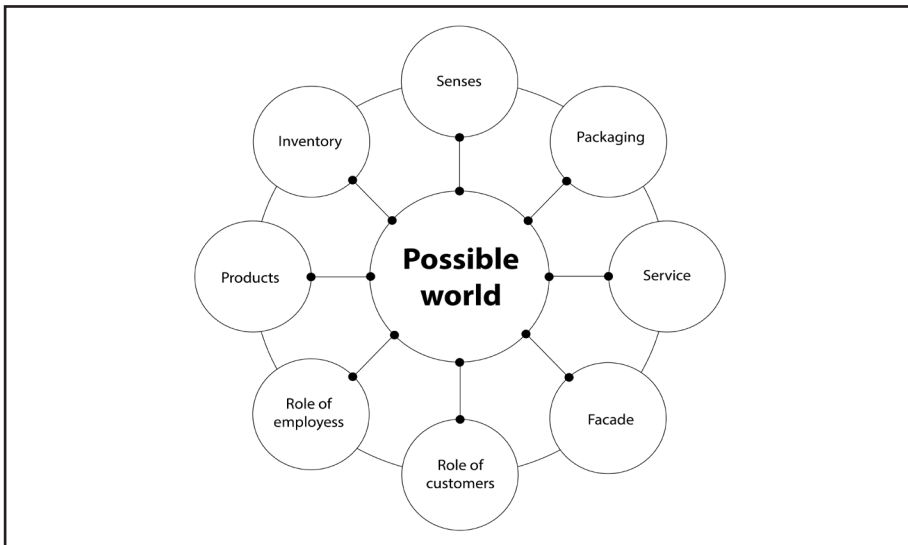


Figure 4. The concept model: The devices of the possible world (Cf. Paper 4)

To do this, it is initially important to understand the fictional character of possible worlds. According to Marie-Laure Ryan (1991), there is only one actual world, and this world is the one we live in and call “reality” (AW). A possible world is a textual actual world (TAW), which is a representation (for example, through text, pictures, figures) of the textual reference world (TRW). There could be infinite numbers of TAWs based on the truth, rules, and logic of the TRW. She also states that there is a difference between the actual speaker (AS) who lives in the actual world and the implied speaker (IS) who is an inhabitant of the possible world (TAW). To understand the different discourses of fiction, she has developed this typology:

	TAW=AW	AW=TRW	TAW=TRW	AS=IS
Nonfictional accurate discourse	+	+	+	+
Errors	-	+	-	+
Lies	-	+	-	-
Accidentally true lies	+	+	+	-
Standard fiction	-	-	+	-
True fiction	+	-	+	-
Unreliable narration in fiction	-	-	-	-

Tabel 8. A typology of mimetic discourse (Ryan, 1991, p. 28)

The Nonfictional accurate discourse is when TAW=AW, AW=TRW, TAW=TRW, AS=IS, and it is the case of sincere and truthful texts such as a map or a recipe. The text represents the actual world – and in the case of nonfictional accurate discourse, the world is always accurately represented. In relation to the categories of stores, this is The Standard World, as it is a correct representation of the actual world. When a possible world has an error or lie, it is due to a conflict between the facts of AW and their representation. An error could occur in different ways. For example, if a furniture store had a Hawaiian theme (flowers around the store, a palm, some sand, coconut

drinks), a Christmas tree would be an error because it is not representing the reference world ($TAW \neq TRW$). If the sales personnel told the customers that a Christmas tree all year is a tradition from Hawaii, it would be a lie because the actual speaker (AS) tries to keep the conflict hidden. If it actually turns out that Hawaiians have Christmas trees all year, it would be an accidentally true lie because it is an intentional lie, but by accident, it is an accurate representation.

Fiction is when a possible world (that are different from the actual world) is created. The world-image produced by the text is TAW, and it reflects correctly its own reference TRW, whereby they become indistinguishable from each other. In fiction, it is a requirement that the sender relocate from AW to TAW/TRW by stepping into the role of the narrator. The text becomes fictional when readers also relocate from AW to TAW/TRW by using their imagination. The difference between standard fiction and true fiction is similarities with the actual world. If the possible world is related to the actual world in almost all aspects, it is true fiction ($TAW \neq AW$, $AW \neq TRW$, $TAW = TRW$, $AS \neq IS$) such as a store is imitating Hawaii. The fictional imaginations would be based on the question: "What if this was Hawaii? If there are several differences with the actual world, it is standard fiction ($TAW = AW$, $AW \neq TRW$, $TAW = TRW$, $AS \neq IS$), such as a store that sells dragon weapons, which would be based on the questions: "What if dragons were real?" (Ryan, 1991, p. 26).

For a customer to become emotionally engaged in a true fiction or standard fiction, it requires a suspension of disbelief, which is a term stated by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1906):

"Yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith." (Coleridge, 1906, p. 161)

Suspension of disbelief is when a reader does not evaluate whether something is true – they do not make a truth verdict. When there are lies or error, the readers begin a process of evaluating the truth. They become suspicious – and therefore unwilling to suspend their disbelief. When a possible world has errors or lies, the suspension of disbelief therefore becomes compromised (Ryan, 1991). Therefore, if a possible world in a store has errors or lies, this could affect the customer's engagement. To understand this further, I will examine the dimensions of engagement in relation to the above-mentioned criteria for fiction.

4.1. ENGAGEMENT

This fiction dimension is interesting when compared with engagement. Engagement is based on three parameters: immersion, passion and activation (Hollebeek, 2011). Immersion is when the customer is absorbed by the situation, thus forgetting time, place and their ordinary social role. In retail environments, immersion could be created through possible worlds. Passion is about the customer's ability to relate to a product or brand in a highly affective way. In brick-and-mortar stores, passion is expressed through the customer's interest in the product and their willingness to partake in the possible world. Activation is about the customers actively contributing in creating the product, the situation or the atmosphere through an active cognitive, emotional or physical involvement. In possible worlds, activation is the customer's active contribution to the narrative by fulfilling the presented role.

In the next section, I will analyse engagement and fiction in relation to The Concept Model and the six categories: The Standard World, The Replica World, The Perfect World of Everyday Life, The Tribal World, The Museum World and The Fairy Tale World.

4.1.1 IMMERSION

Immersion is when a customer becomes absorbed in an experience and can therefore be “defined as a form of spatio-temporal belonging in the world that is characterized by a deep involvement in the present moment” (Hansen & Mossberg, 2013, p. 212). Immersion absorbs the customer in a situation; hence there being “elimination of the distance between consumers and the situation” (Carù & Cova, 2006, p. 5). By this reason, immersion is the process of becoming present in a moment through involvement (Hansen & Mossberg, 2013). As explained in paper 3, “The Possible World of Stores”, each of the six possible worlds immerses the customers in different degrees by transporting them into a possible world. In some cases, they even become an inhabitant of the possible world through role-playing. The interesting question in this regard is: Which conditions are necessary for immersion to occur? It seems like immersion occurs when there are coherent fictional elements, but is this true for all possible worlds in stores?

Most stores belong to The Standard World; for example, most of the commonly known grocery stores such as *Aldi* (German), *Fotex* (Danish), *Safeway* (Canadian) or *Walmart* (American). All of them have a delightful smell from the baked goods, wide bright aisles, and vegetables presented in a favourable light. They have an overall focus on generating an emotional experience through all these different devices.



Photo, Nanna Dam: *Føtex*, Aalborg (Denmark)

The Standard World	The Devices of <i>Føtex</i>
Senses	A focus on making a pleasurable shopping experience (for example on the smell of strawberry or baked goods, shelves, lighting, mirrors, displays)
Packaging	Focus on logo and maintaining the general design (a visual guideline) such as a blue plastic bags with the <i>Føtex</i> logo
Service	Focus on a “good” service trough smiling and friendly sales assistants
Facade	Open welcoming store (open for everyone)
Role of Customers	No role other than being a customer
Role of Employees	No role other than being a sale assistant (Smiling, friendly “keeping the customers happy”)
Props	There are no props
Inventory	Products (such as vegetables, milk, make-up), white floors, black ceiling, lightning (spot on some products)

Tabel 9: The concept model applied to *Føtex* (Denmark)

In The Standard World, the actual speaker and the implied speaker are the same because the sales assistants are being themselves (AS=IS). The actual world is the same as the possible world (TAW=AW), which makes the reference world identic with the actual world (AW=TRW). Thereby, it is inevitable that the possible world is the same as the reference world (TAW=TRW). As a consequence, The Standard World is a nonfictional accurate discourse (TAW=AW, AW=TRW, TAW=TRW, AS=IS). The customers could, for example, still get immersed in a sale or presentation in new products, but The Standard World does not immerse the customer because there is no fictional dimension to become immersed in. Everything in the store reminds the customers of the everyday life (the actual world), for example, toilet paper, broccoli and toothpaste.

The Replica World is characterized by being a replica of a time or place. Therefore, it is a combination of possible world traits and actual world traits. *Michal Negrin* is a replica of the Victorian age (the period of Queen Victoria's reign from 1837-1901), which for one thing is known as a period of prosperity for upper class and upper middle class. There are big chandeliers, striped wallpaper, white wooden product displays, curtains with detailed patterns, pictures with windows to the outside Victorian world, and colourful lighting and cut-out dolls in the window. Every single element in this store represents the possible world. In this store, the sales assistants do not play a role besides being ordinary; they smile and are welcoming. This is also the case for the other customers – they do not act out of the ordinary, but they seem fascinated by the presented world, hence behaving like observers.



Photo: *Michal Negrin*, Vancouver Island (Canada)

The Replica World	The Devices of Michel Negrin
Senses	Romantic patters (sight), Classic music (hearing), heavy perfume (smell), sleek surfaces (touch)
Packaging	Paper bag with romantic patterns
Service	Friendly, smiling and helping with size
Facade	Window display with delicate paper dolls in a theatre setting
Role of Customers	The customers are looking at the products and store with enthusiasm
Role of Employees	The sales assistant are behind the counter until someone needs help
Props	The extravagant and romantic curtain at the entrance to the dressing room, the painted window with a view to Victorian England, the big chandeliers, the romantic chest of drawers, the old table settings and the products (jewellery and clothes)
Inventory	The shelves and the light in the ceiling

Tabel 10: The concept model applied to *Michal Negrin*

Why does the customer not play a role in a store like *Michal Negrin* when all the conditions are there? In most of the replica worlds investigated in paper 4: “The Possible World of Stores”, the sales assistants do not play a role. According to Ryan, the customer could interpret this as an error, thereby compromising the suspension of disbelief. The consequence of this is customers who are observing instead of role-playing. Another interesting detail in *Michael Negrin* is the big screen TV behind the counter. This is an error, as the TV was not invented in the Victorian era, which could contribute to a lack of customers’ willingness to play along. Another example is the restaurant *Bones*, which is a replica of America. There are wooden floors and tables, and the walls are covered with things from America such as baseball souvenirs, pictures from “old America”, sports logos, deer skulls and fishing gears. The signature dish is ribs covered in barbeque sauce and fries. The sales assistants do not play a role of American waiters, and this could be the reason why the customers do not play a role either.

If the sales assistants were playing a role in accordance with the possible world ($AS \neq IS$), they would be inhabitants of the possible world. At the same time, it would be an accurate representation of the possible world ($TAW = TRW$), which is a representation of the actual world ($TAW = AW$), but it is not an accurate presentation of the actual world ($AW \neq TRW$). The possible world is like the actual world, but not similar in every respect. Therefore, it is true fiction ($TAW = AW$, $AW \neq TRW$, $TAW = TRW$, $AS \neq IS$). $AS \neq IS$ entails that the sales assistants cannot be themselves (actual speaker); they must be inhabitants of the possible world (implied speaker). This signifies the importance of the sales assistants being able to play a role.



Photo, Nanna Dam: *Kronen Kaffe*, Aalborg (Denmark)

This is the case in *Kronen Kaffe*: the employees play the role of “old fashioned” sales assistants. They wear special clothes (a blue shirt and dark green apron), and they are very professional, friendly and polite (almost submissive). The customers also play a role of “old fashioned” customers waiting patiently in line, thereby, accepting the inefficient way of products placed behind the counter and no self-service. Due the resemblance with the actual world, the transportation in replica is very easy. In comparison, The Fairy Tale World of *Tarina Tarantino* is based on the dreams of girls and therefore a more abstract possible world (that are more different from the actual world).

The Perfect World of Everyday Life is a possible world based on a visualisation of perfect everyday situations. An example of this is *Bombay* in Edmonton mall. The store has dark wooden ceilings, floors and rafts. Almost all the products in the store are arranged in a perfect everyday situation such as a reading corner, a table setting, a wine section, and a bedroom. The sales assistants do not interfere by offering help, and the customers act as if at home – trying out the chairs, lifting the glasses on the table, opening the drawers, feeling the bed and turning the reading light on and off.



Photo: *Bombay*, Edmonton (Canada)

The Perfect World of Everyday Life	The Devices of <i>Bombay</i>
Senses	Wood, dark colours (sight), soft pop (hearing), wood and candle (smell), soft surfaces (touch)
Packaging	Bags with brown stripes and the <i>Bombay</i> logo
Service	The service are ordinary
Facade	Open welcoming store showing perfect everyday situations
Role of Customers	Behaving like at home – trying out the furniture
Role of Employees	Retracted position, not interfering
Props	The props are the wooden ceiling, the trees and all the products (the chairs, the shelves, the flowers, the plates, the candles)
Inventory	The check-out station, the lights, the white ceiling and some of the shelves (the ones that are not for sale)

Tabel 11: The concept model applied to *Bombay*

In The Perfect World of Everyday life, the customers pretend that the everyday situations are as if in their homes. Therefore, the retracted position of the sales assistant is supporting this imagination. It would be interfering if the sales assistant, for example, asked: Can I help you, thus indicating that this is a store not their home. The sales assistants try not to be present in the actual world ($AS \neq IS$), and it is an accurate representation of the possible world ($TAW = TRW$), which is a representation of the actual world ($TAW = AW$). Still, it is not an accurate presentation of the actual world ($AW \neq TRW$) because there is no clutter, cords in the corners, scratches on the table, breadcrumbs on the floor and tiny stains on the forks. For that reason, this world is also true fiction. Everything in the store emulates the perfection of everyday life.

The characteristics of the Tribal World are the customers and sales assistants' dedication to the brand. An example is the chain store *Lush*, where the products are the sole focus of attention. When a customer walk into *Lush*, the sales assistant will provide detailed information about the products – and sometimes if the customer is interested, accompanied with a hand wash and massage. While the sales assistant washes and massages the customer's hands, they tell the story of the brand. The primary role of the sales assistant is not solely to sell the product but to initiate and guide the customers into the mysteries of *Lush*. Lush products are hand made by local manufacturers. This is told by the sales assistants illustrated on the products with a cartoon face and name of the person who made the product. In addition, the products are made with fresh natural ingredients. This is also told by the sales assistants, and some of the products (face masks) are so fresh that they need to be refrigerated.



Photo: *Lush*, Edmonton (Canada)

The Tribal World	The Devices of Lush
Senses	Bright colours (sight), “upbeat”/happy music (hearing), strong smell of different kinds of fresh fruit (smell), inviting the customers to touch (and smell) the products by displaying them with upon lids around the store (touch) a feeling of tasting the products through the other senses (taste)
Packaging	Black plastic pots from 90% recycle materials (to reduce waste they give a free face mask when a customer brings 5 pots to the store), half of the products is without packaging to reduce waste.
Service	Friendly and welcoming
Facade	An open, welcoming facade with product display in the windows)
Role of Customers	The customer is expected to be (or become) a loyal follower
Role of Employees	Guiding the customers into the mysteries of the product
Props	The props are the products
Inventory	The wooden tables and shelves, the black black-board frame by the ceiling, the light and weaved baskets.

Tabel 12: The concept model applied to *Lush*

The sales assistants in the Tribal World establish a possible world by addressing the customers as members of a tribe. They share their common conviction of the power of the object, or the sales assistants educates the individuals, who can be persuaded to join this group by telling stories and facts about the brand. They often do this by comprehensive product demonstrations. The notable quality of the tribal world is the disguise of the possible world. Like The Tribal World and The Perfect World of Everyday Life, The Tribal World is true fiction ($TAW=AW$, $AW \neq TRW$, $TAW=TRW$, $AS \neq IS$), due to the role of tribe members played by the employees and the customers, thereby separating the actual speaker from the implied speaker ($AS \neq IS$). It is an accurate representation of The Tribal World where the products are idolised ($TAW=TRW$), but it is still very similar to the actual world ($TAW=AW$), yet it is not a precise representation ($AW \neq TRW$).

The main characteristic of The Museum World is the admiration of the product. The store creates an ambiance where the products are dealt with as art-like objects. An example is the *Dior* store in Rome. Here the doors are opened and closed by a guard. In the middle of the store, there is a spiral staircase with an enormous digital display from the floors to the ceiling incorporated in the walls behind the stairs. The screen shows slowly moving abstract art. Upstairs is a private room with an open doorway. The room has a desk and a chair on each side – one for the sales assistant and one for the customer. The sales assistants are indifferent to the customers observing the store (without any intention of buying anything) while being the complete opposite to prospective customers: serving their every need.



Photo: Dior, Rome (Italy)

The Museum World	The Devices of Dior
Senses	Digital display (sight), soft electronic tones (hearing) sleek floors and soft extravagant chairs (touch) neutral (smell)
Packaging	Sleek elegant white paper bags with a strong texture
Service	Claiming that the service personal will give a “personalised welcome and will be delighted to accompany you as you discover the House of Dior and its products” (web1: dior.com) if you contact them trough the website.
Facade	Open welcoming store (open for everyone)
Role of Customers	No role other than being a customer
Role of Employees	No role other than being a sale assistant (Smiling, friendly “keeping the customers happy”)
Props	There are no props
Inventory	Products (such as vegetables, milk, make-up), white floors, black ceiling, lightning (spot on some products)

 Tabel 13: The concept model applied to *Dior*

This obvious transition in role is very characteristic for Museum Worlds. The customers are either admiring the product from a distance and or admiring the product from the inside while being treated as nobility. It is the sales assistants that govern this transition by spotting potential customers and ignoring the “observers”. Therefore, the sales assistants also have to be very aware of their transition between ignoring the customer and playing a servant/butler-like role to them. This duality in roles is very important in the Museum World because it guides the customers in their role-playing. The sales assistants are role-playing ($AS \neq IS$), and it is an accurate representation of the possible world ($TAW = TRW$), but it is not a representation of the actual world ($TAW \neq AW$) because the reference world is very different from the actual world ($AW \neq TRW$). According to Ryan, this makes the store standard fiction ($TAW \neq AW$, $AW \neq TRW$, $TAW = TRW$, $AS \neq IS$) (Ryan, 1991).

The Fairy Tale world is characterized by being based on an imaginative possible world that is not based on a specific time or place in the actual world but a figment of someone’s fantasies (such as Harry Potter, Cinderella or GTA). An example of the fairy tale world is the restaurant *Storm Crow* in Vancouver, Canada. At the beginning of the menu is the story of the *Storm Crow*:

“Every season a thousand sailors dare the Gulf of Ghosts, bearing their precious trade to the blighted port of Vancouver, from whence the caravans proceed inland to the fabled continent of Canada. And as in every port, there is a dockside tavern whose reputation is legendary to travellers near and far: a den of iniquity where everything may be bought or sold if the price is right. Where the blood of men is mopped from the floor each night, along with the stale beer of effluvia. Where those fleeing the law, and those far outside it, can break fast with a measure of peace, for it would be a brave and foolish guardsman who would set foot inside these walls alone. And where, if rumour is true, favours of an even darker sort are sometimes sought... and sometimes granted.”

The entire restaurant is based on this role-playing game, and every section has a specific purpose. For example, the hallway to the toilets is the “enchanted forest”, the kitchen is “the kitchen of horrors”, and a section of the bar is only for droids or ogres. On the walls, there are different props for this role-play such as “Zombie Tools”, “Crossbows” and “Raygun Storages”. The tables and chairs are black and brown wood, and the lamps are round metal circles. There are bars with sharp spikes from one section to another. There are two sections of the café. Section 1 is for beginners or visitors (to the right), and section 2 is for the regulars (to the left). In section 2, the customers play games, being louder, and most of them wear clothes with dark colours. There are also more customers in this section. In section 1, there are more available tables, and the customers look more like “ordinary” people who have randomly passed by.

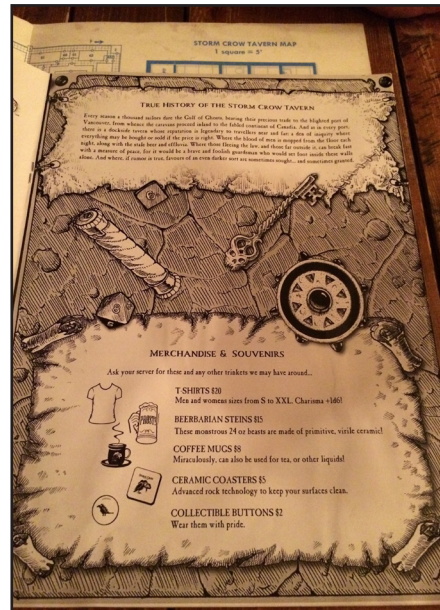


Photo: Storm Crow, Vancouver (Canada)

The Fairy Tale World	The Devices of Storm Crow
Senses	Dark colours, weapons on the walls, spikes in the ceiling (sight), smell of beer and food (smell)
Packaging	An orange cup for warm drinks with foam spikes
Service	Good food, clean dishes and quick delivery
Facade	Dark and closed of
Role of Customers	Section 1: Ordinary customers (audience) Section 2: Some customers seemed like they where playing the role of fictive character like hobbits, orcs and droids (being more loudly, cursing at each other, slamming the bear in the table)
Role of Employees	Section 1: Polite, smiling (normal waiter) Section 2: Seemed more “at ease” and more friendly with the customers
Props	The weapons, the metal lamps, the spikes, the pictures, the menu and the food/drinks (like “Frodo’s flatbread” or the drink “Wolverine”)
Inventory	The tables, the chairs, bar, plates

Tabel 14: The concept model applied to *Storm Crow*

The world is different from the actual world in several ways, which requires more mental effort to understand, hence making the transportation very difficult. Therefore, stores that are based on a Fairy Tale world can be more excluding (in comparison with the standard world or replica world). It could even repel customers. However, if a customer choses to participate, the emotional attachment to the store could be significant. This complication with the Fairy Tale world being excluding is solved in the Storm Crow by having the sections for beginners (observers) and regulars. This gives the customer an opportunity to understand the environment before choosing to be an active participant.

In the Fairy Tale world, the sales assistants are role-playing ($AS \neq IS$), and the possible world is an accurate representation of the reference world ($TAW = TRW$). The reference world is very different from the actual world ($AW \neq TRW$), thus making it impossible for the possible world to represent the actual world ($TAW \neq AW$), thereby being standard fiction ($TAW \neq AW$, $AW \neq TRW$, $TAW = TRW$, $IS \neq AS$)

In The Replica World, The Perfect World of Everyday Life, The Tribal World, The Museum World, and The Fairy Tale World, immersion seems to occur when there is a degree of fiction where the customer can act out a role by being something more or different than a customer. As demonstrated, the importance of coherence is very significant, which is also the overall difference between The Standard World and the possible worlds. In The Standard World, coherence is based on visual elements such as logo colours, which places the store in the actual worlds, which constantly reminds the customer of actual elements such as time, price, easy access, short lines, and large shopping trolleys. The convenience thereby becomes the overall focus, thus making immersion difficult and borderline impossible. In the possible world, the customers are immersed in the fictive dimension by activating their imagination. The main difference in the possible world is whether it is true fiction or standard fiction. Standard fiction requires more imagination.

As argued, the five classifications of stores describe pure types of possible worlds (The Replica World, The Perfect World of Everyday Life, The Museum World, The Tribal World and The Fairy Tale World) and the actual world (The Standard World). In practice, the actual world features of such stores have, since the rise of the department stores in the first half of the 19th century, been combined with some possible world traits (Miller, 1981; Sennett, 1978). Fictionalized displays were designed to give the customers an illusion of the rarity and preciousness of mass-produced commodities. Such techniques, creating small replica worlds, are in abundance in modern supermarkets, department stores and convenience stores too. Displays with Asian food, an organic farmers corner or a 1950 beauty area create small pockets of “dream worlds” (Williams, 1991). Standard stores may also include transports to other types of possible worlds. The largest department store in my hometown has an Apple section that reproduces some of the characteristics of *Apple Stores* (The Tribal World), and well-assorted tobacconists may have small cubicles restricted for special customers where Havana and other luxury cigars are exhibited and sold (the Museum World). In the wine and liquor store *Vinspecialisten*, there is a basement for wine tasting. It is a dark room with stone walls, wooden wine barrels and a big table with black leather chairs. This is a tribal feature because it is a place for worshipping the brand/product, and it is a museum feature because it is only for the specially invited.

Impure worlds are when different worlds are mixed together or have features from a world. An example is the Danish store *Spejdersport*, which sells equipment for outdoor activities such as biking, trekking, climbing or outdoor trips in general. In the middle of the store, they have a display of an “evening outside at the tent”. On the ground, there is a green carpet, and on top of that, a tent for two adults. In front of the tent are cooking equipment, plates, and two wine glasses. This is an example of a feature from the perfect world of everyday

life. By the entrance, there are two large poles covered in cut wood, which is a replica world feature of outdoor camping. Therefore, *Spejdersport* is a combination of a standard world, a world of ordinary perfection and a replica world. Another, more conspicuous example is *Humac*, an Apple premium reseller, where features from the tribal world (known from *Apple Stores*) are added to a standard world.

The blending of The Standard World with Replica features, Tribal features, Museum features, Everyday Life features, and Fairy Tale features could engage the customer to some degree, but the standard world will always be a constant reminder of the actual world. One way to manage this is through a room for the “specially invited”, for instance, a back room at the cigar store, the basement in *Vinspecialisten* or the weapon room in *Guns & Gents*. This would create physical boundaries, which will literally hide The Standard World in the store.

Blending could also occur by combining the different categories like *Guns & Gents*, which has features from The Replica World, The Museum World and The Tribal World. As mentioned, The Replica World is the imitation of a traditional gentlemen’s club (“old-boys-network”) that allows for male sociability. In particular, the weapon room marks this physical entrance to the club guarded by Tonni or the CEO who invites member or non-members for a chat. As referred to in paper 1: “When Men go Shopping”, the club culture is characterized by giving the members a sense of belonging (Simmel, 1910), thereby giving others a sense of not belonging – the sales assistants are very important in playing gatekeepers and deciding who could be part of the club (or more importantly, who is already part of the club). This aspect of *Guns & Gents* is a feature from The Museum World, where the sales assistants play a key role in determining whether someone is a prospective customer or a visitor. They do this by ignoring some customers or behaving like servants to other customers. This also happens in *Guns & Gents*, where Tonni and/or the CEO’s role changes according to whether the customer is a club member, prospective member or a visitor. The club metaphor has features from The Tribal World, where there is a sociability related to the product and hunting as a leisure activity. Although there is a blending of different worlds, it is still true fiction. The sales assistants in *Guns & Gents* play a role (AS≠IS), and it is an accurate representation of the possible world (TAW=TRW), which is a representation of the actual world (TAW=AW). Still, it is not an accurate presentation of the actual world (AW≠TRW) because there are specific rules in *Guns & Gents* (such as silence), which does not apply in the actual world of hunting.

In all the worlds, the customers become immersed in the fictive aspect of the store. There are different ways to immerse the customer – and it seems to presuppose that all the elements in the concept model should represent the possible world, thus creating a coherent concept. When the store is incoherent, the

suspension of disbelief is compromised because the customers begin to evaluate whether the world is true or false. This can occur in several ways, such as the TV screen in *Michel Negrin*, the pink ear defenders for children in *Guns & Gents* and the lack of role-playing by the employees. It is important to note that a text (store) is not grasped as a whole but as a series of devices. The process of reading (comprehending a store) is a way to "‘realize’ an overall situation" (Iser, 1979, p. 20), and therefore, it is important for all the single elements to be coherent. This is how the text (stores) becomes understandable to the reader (a customer). A way to relate the different elements in a store is the creation of a possible world

4.1.2 ACTIVATION

The active act of reading a text is related to engagement through activation. Wolfgang Iser (1979) explains it like this:

"Thus the reader's communication with the text is a dynamic process of self-correction, as he formulates signifieds, which he must then continually modify. It is cybernetic in nature as it involves a feedback of effects and information throughout a sequence of changing situational frames; smaller units progressively merge into bigger ones, so that meaning gathers meaning in a kind of snowballing process." (Iser, 1979, p. 19)

This dynamic process is also relevant when discussing the active process of understanding a store (reading a text). It requires a high degree of mental effort, which is the way the active process could be divided into two different ways of reading a text: ordinary, purely passive (receptive) reading and active reading. The passive reader is "being performed", and the active reader "performs" (Ingarden, 1980, p. 38).

This passive and active way of reading could be transferred to a customer being passive or active in a store. As seen in the analyses of the different worlds, there are typically two ways for a customer to act: like an observer (passive) or playing a role (active). Therefore, related to Pine and Gilmore (1999), which states:

"Too many workers fail to act, behaving no differently on stage from the way they do in their private lives. They execute their day-to-day responsibilities as mere happenings; their world is lifeless. To engage a customer in the Experience Economy, act as if your world depended on it! Only with work explicitly stated [audience = customers] will experiences flourish as the basis for new economic activity. You can begin this staging by examining the activities performed within your enterprise and then designing the workplace as a special place: the performance stage." (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, p. 112)

Their main focus is on the importance of employees acting out a role as a means to engage customers, which is similar to the arguments in this discussion. The difference in relation to my research is customer activation. According to Pine and Gilmore, customers are audiences to an experience performed to them. I argue that a possible world could motivate customers to actively perform with them.

Zomerdijk & Voss proposes five criteria for experience-centric services. First of all, Engaging Customers is the sales assistant engagement with customers by connecting “with them on a personal, emotional level”, which could entail a professional friendship. Second, Sensory Design is the device that affects the five senses. Third, the Dramatic Structure is a rather confused statement of “concept of dramatic structure, in which the plot often follows an arc-like structure of exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and dénouement or catastrophe to achieve a particular artistic or emotional effect”. Fourth, Fellow Customers is the establishment of brand communities where customers can share their experience. Finally, Backstage is a focus on improving the backstage and the front stage experience, for example, by assigning back-office employees to present their tasks in front of customers (such as restaurants where all the foods are prepared in front of the customers). According to Zomerdijk & Voss, these propositions are related to the physical environment (stage), service employees (actors), the service delivery process (script), fellow customers (audience) and back-office support (backstage) (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010). In this regard, there are many similarities with The Concept Model (Cf. paper 4, Figure 6), such as the physical environment (stage) being the “packaging”, “façade”, “props” and “inventory”. The service employees (actors) are “the role of the employees”. The service delivery process (script) is “service” in the model, and it refers to all the aspects that are not based on the personal encounter between the employees and the customers. This could be delivery, time waiting in line, and email correspondence. The back-office support (backstage) is missing in The Concept Model, and this aspect could be implemented as a requirement for the possible world to function. As stated above in relation to Pine and Gilmore, an essential different is the customer activity. Zomerdijk & Voss describe customers as the audience, while I have proposed customers as role players (active readers) in some worlds. As Zomerdijk & Voss (2010) explains, it is achievable to activate customers by motivating the sales personnel to engage with customers on “a personal level”, thus establishing a professional friendship. The problem with this is the customer becomes emotionally attached to that specific person instead of the store/brand, which makes it very vulnerable should the employee find another job. As mentioned, Pine and Gilmore (1999) state that customers could be activated by being the audience to an experience. Accordance to Ingarden (1980), this is the definition of passive readers who are being performed to. The research on customer engagement is mainly based on customers actively being audiences. In this dissertation, I investigate the aspect

of customers participating through role-playing, which according to Ingarden (1980) is defined as active readers who are performing. This is an aspect of customer engagement that, to my knowledge, has not been researched.

If this is analysed with Ryan's typologies, the dimension of customers being in the actual world of inhabitants of the possible world is neglected. Wolfgang Iser (1979) formulated the terms "implied reader" and "the actual readers". The implied reader has the task of building consistency by connecting the different elements in the text, thereby being able to understand the narrative. If there are errors of incoherence, this process become difficult, which could enable the readers' willingness to suspend their disbelief. The actual reader is "receiving mental images while reading", and this is connected to imagination (Iser, 1979). If these terms are compared with Possible World Theory, the actual readers are inhabitants in the actual world (making mental images), and the implied readers are inhabitants of the possible world (building consistency). Therefore, when a reader is reading a text (actual reader) he/she could get transported into the possible world, thereby becoming an inhabitant of the possible world (implied reader) (Gerrig, 1993, p. 10). These two terms, Actual Reader (AR) and Implied Reader (IR), are added to Ryan's typologies:

	TAW=AW	AW=TRW	TAW=TRW	AS=IS	AR=IR	The Worlds
Nonfictional accurate discourse	+	+	+	+	+	The Standard World
Standard fiction	-	-	+	-	-	The Fairy Tale World The Museum World
True fiction	+	-	+	-	-	The Replica World The Perfect World of Everyday Life, The Tribal World

Tabel 15: The six worlds' typology of mimetic discourse (Based on: Ryan, 1991, p. 28)

The customer could either be placed in the actual world as an "actual reader" or act out a role in the store as an "implied reader". As illustrated, the role

of the customers depends on the sales assistant playing a role. Therefore, the requirements (+/-) are the same as AS and IS. In all the possible worlds, the sales assistants need to play a role to create a believable fictional world. This role could be less than (retracted position like the sales assistant in *Ikea*) or more than (butler/servant in high-end stores) or different from (an orc in *Storm Crow*) the ordinary role of the sales assistant. By doing this, the customer's role also becomes obvious. In *Kronen Kaffee*, the role of the customer is "The Perfect Good Customer". It is a reinforcement of an existing identity. It is a confirmation of the individual's goals such as an identity of being trendy, a caring mom, a good host and a loyal friend. When the customers are becoming transported, the transformation will be a stronger sense of self: a feeling of being you. Therefore, in an *Apple Store*, the customers reinforce their identity of being fans and part of a tribe. The Fairy Tale World is a haven to try on an identity by performing a role – to play with the idea of being someone else. In this process, customers can confirm their identity and construct fantasies about who they might become (Crawford, 1992).

4.1.3 PASSION

Identity is closely related to the customer's attitude towards a brand, which could be explained as passion. Passion is the customer's willingness to engage in a possible world based on an emotional reaction. In paper 2, "Recovering the Poetics of Shopping", this emotional reaction is researched based on my observations in *Guns & Gents*. The excitement, boredom and repulsion observed in the customer's behaviour is related to passion. Passion is fostered from excitement, thus establishing an emotional absorption in something or a situation. Therefore, passion is required for a customer to become immersed and activated in a store. If a person were bored (like the ones sitting in the chairs in the store) or repulsed (like the ones making a U-turn out of the store), they would not become immersed. The obvious question is: What makes customers "play along"?

To understand this, it is relevant to consider the metacommunicative aspect of play. Bateson (1972) uses an example of two monkeys playing combat. He elaborates: "Not only does the playful nip not denote what would be denoted by the bite for which it stands, but, in addition, the bit itself is fictional" (Bateson, 1972, p.182). This playful behaviour can only occur because there is an exchange of signals saying, "this is play", which is the frame of play and "play is related to, or denotes, other actions of "not play"" (Bateson, 1972, p. 181). Thereby, there must be a frame that states, "This is not play". In relation to Possible Worlds Theory, the actual world would be in the frame "this is not play", and the possible world would be in the frame "this is play". A possible world is play because it is based on make-believe. Like the monkeys in Bateson's example, if a customer plays a glamorous princess in *Tarina Tarantino*

it is “untrue” – she is not a real princess. A customer in *Guns & Gents* is not a real club member. The play is fictional, but not illusory: time and money are spent, and products have been bought. Therefore, there is always a “true” dimension of the possible world in a store. They are not just true or untrue; they are something other – a disruption (Cf. paper 2: Recovering the Poetics of Shopping). In a possible world, there will always be two frames: A possible world frame (play) and an actual world frame (not play). In the possible world frame, a playful behaviour is motivated through mimicry (role-playing). As such, the actual reader will be in the actual world frame, therefore stating, “Everything within this frame is true”, and the implied reader is in the possible world frame where “everything within this frame is untrue”. When a store is created as a possible world, it will tell the customer: “This is play”, and therefore, “everything within this frame is untrue”, which could motivate the customers to be transported from being an actual reader to an implied reader.

As illustrated in figure 6 by the inner frame, possible worlds in stores can never completely become play; they merely create an illusion of play – it is “quasi-fictional”. Play within this world may, contrary to other games, have consequences in “the real world”. There may be a bill to pay – in the extreme case, in the shape of a psychological addiction to the sense of pleasure derived from play, known as “shopaholism”. This financial aspect often emerges when it is time to pay for the product and the reality of the actual world emerges. While the customer is in the possible world, he/she is isolated from “the seriousness of the actual world”. The transition from the actual world to a possible world and then back to the actual world is depicted in the model below.

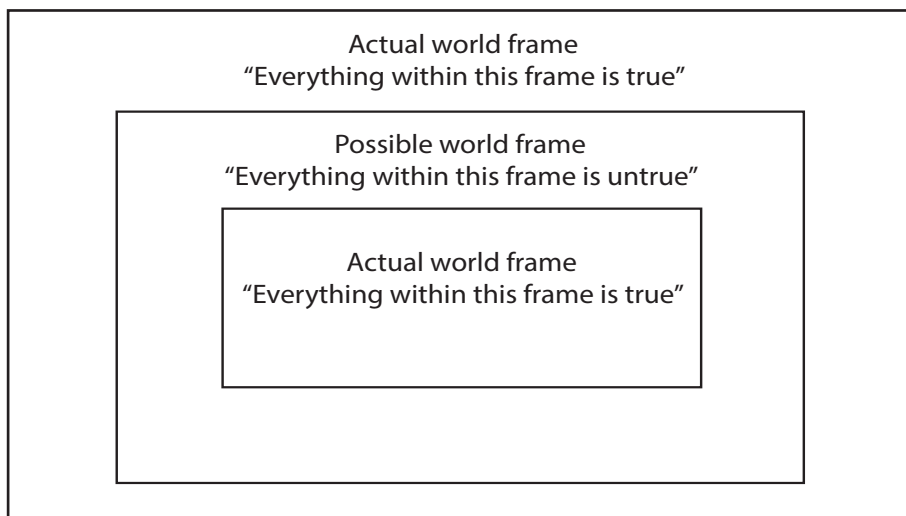


Figure 5. The metacommunicative frames of possible worlds in stores (Bateson, 1972, p. 184; Jantzen, Vetner and Bouchet: 2011, p. 219)

The outer frame is the actual world (everything within this frame is true), the middle frame is the possible world (everything within this frame is not true) in a store, and the inner frame is the actual world feature in the stores, for example, transactions and the goods (everything within this frame is true). This is also where the lies and errors could appear, such as sales assistants arguing, clutter around the store, or dust on the products. The purpose of play is “not serious”, and play is without consequence for our lives afterwards. This is the “untrue” aspect. In a store, an example of truth may be that the storeowner owns the products, and the not-truth may be that the customers play that the product belongs to them. The two frames are surrounded by a frame of consequence representing the actual world, which states, “Everything within this frame has consequences”. Above all, this means that in some cases, the possible world has consequences. These may include causing harm to others, theft or vandalism.

Once the customer buys the product, that person will be facing the reality of a financial transaction, and the possible world’s frame will transform into a frame of consequence: The actual world frame. In a possible world, the customers momentarily forget the consequences of the actual world because the shopping activity occurs within the frame of not-truth. The dynamic between the possible world frame and the actual world frame is very interesting with regards to the true possible world (true fiction or standard fiction) – or the believable possible world.

When the individual is within one of the three frames, it will be clear when and how this frame is different from the other two frames. “Within the dream, the dreamer is usually unaware that he is dreaming, and within ‘play’, he must often be reminded that ‘This is play’” (Bateson, 1972, p. 185). In a possible world, the devices (props, roles, inventory) will make it clear that this a frame of play. As argued in paper 4, “Creating Immersive Worlds in Brick-and-Mortar Stores”, the behavioural structure that the possible world triggers becomes a ritualised action because the different phases mark a clear transition from the actual world to the possible world. This could be explained using the terms telic and paratelic states. In the telic state an individual experiences pleasure when moving toward a goal through process and improvement. In the paratelic states, pleasure occurs in the primary activity – it is a sensual gratification in the moment. (Apter, 1989) Therefor the telic mode could be explained as being more serious and the paratelic mode is more playful. A store with a possible world frame can motivate a paratelic states through play and sociability, but it will always be a store with a goal of selling something to someone (the actual world frame). This motivates the telic states where the individual in the store becomes aware of the obligation to buy at some moment if they use the different services in the stores (getting advice, enjoying the store, touching the products). The underlying obligation is temporary forgotten through the possible world frame, where the customer enjoys the experience in the moment, but there will

always be a transactional expectation as this is necessary for the stores to survive. It is possible to switch between the telic (the possible world frame) and the paratelic (the actual world frame) when someone it reversed from one state to the other (ibid) for example when purchasing a product, where one could start in the telic mode, but at some point this shifts into the paratelic mode due to change in the environment (i.e. a playful store). This could again change into the telic mode if for example one runs out of time. When the customers for example slows down their pace significantly when they walk into *Guns & Gents* it could be due to a shift from the telic to the paratelic mode.

The shifting between the possible world frame (paratelic) and actual world frame (telic) could be defined as a form of serious leisure. The “seriousness” is related to the actual world frame and encouraging the telic state and the “leisure” are related to the possible world frame and encouraging the paratelic state. Then serious leisure is a combination of both and it occurs when an individual shift between the two frames. According to Stebbins (1982) serious leisure is “the development of skills and knowledge, the accumulation of experience, and the expending of effort.” (ibid: 267) He defines three characteristics of serious leisure: Amateurism, hobbyist and career pursuits. All three elements seem evident in stores with a possible world frame: First of all, amateurism is an activity where a person is motivated by seriousness and commitment. This could be seen when a customer tries to obtain more knowledge and skill about the store/brand/product. Secondly, there is hobbyist pursuit that is seen when someone is serious and committed without feeling obligated to engage. In this regard, this could indicate that the customer is shifting from the actual world frame (amateurism) and the possible world frame (hobbyist pursuits). As a result career volunteering can happen. This is when someone is volunteering to help society (i.e. when the customers help the store). Customers help by recommendation, praising products in reviews or as observed in *Guns & Gents* when customers inside the store help the sale assistants by praising the products to new customers. Therefore, creating a possible world in a store could motivate serious leisure by teaching people to be people to be amateurs, hobbyist, or volunteers.

To motivate this kind of passion, it is important that the possible frame is apparent to the customer. Like argued in paper *Tarina Tarantino*, this is related to the facade by creating a visual statement of “this is play”. This communicates to the customer: “here is a haven”, where you can pursue your passion for hunting, knitting, food, jewellery, purses, decoration, hi-tech (The Replica World, The Perfect World of Everyday life), or a specific brand or store (The Museum World, The Tribal World, The Fairy Tale World). The emotional reaction of boredom or repulsion could be due to the exclusion of the playful frame. Two things could happen: This frame is understood as something “I understand – but not for me” therefore boredom or (the customer has no passion),

or “I don’t understand – and I do not belong” (the customer is not immersed); therefore, repulsion could be based on fear (a reaction to the danger of being alien) that triggers the emotional system of “fight or flight”, therefore a drastic U-turn. This is solved in the *Storm Crow*, where the passionate customers are divided from the others, thereby establishing the possible world frame without disrupting it.

4.1.4. FINDINGS

The question asked at the beginning was: Could a store even be fictional? Due to the actual world frame within the possible world, frame stores could never become completely fictional. They are quasi-fictional because they create an illusion of play. Play in a possible world in a store has consequences in the actual world; for example, if the customers spend more money than they have. Second, Are all the six categories of possible worlds fiction? Besides The Standard World, all the categorised worlds are fictional to different degrees. The Replica World, The Perfect World of Everyday Life, and The Tribal World are true fiction because they resemble the actual world. The Museum World and The Fairy Tale World are standard fiction because they have several features that do not resemble the actual world. Third, Does the fictive dimension of possible worlds effect transportation? To be clear, customer involvement might occur in various ways: for example, when there is a sale, new products or friendly sales assistants, which is very common in The Standard World. Another way to involve customers is through engagement in a possible world. The fictive dimension of the possible world motivates engagement by hiding the actual world, thereby establishing a playful frame, which might make the customers act in accordance with the possible world. When a customer is role-playing, they are transported into a possible world. This seems to occur in two ways: in pure possible worlds or in impure possible worlds. In the pure possible world, there is a possible world frame stating, “Everything within this frame is untrue”. This fictive dimension could shift the customers from being the actual readers to the implied readers, which might motivate role-playing. In the impure world where The Standard World is combined with possible world features, the actual world frame is always present, stating, “Everything within this frame is true”. This could complicate the shift from being an actual reader to an implied reader. This is resolved in some stores by an extra room separating the possible world feature from the standard world. The transfer from the actual reader to the implied readers requires passion, which is motivated by the possible world frame, thus becoming a haven for being passionate about a product, a hobby, a brand or a store. If a customer does not have passion, the possible world could motivate an emotion of boredom and repulsion. Fourth, What happens when there is incoherence? When there is incoherence in a possible world, it would make the customers doubt the fictional dimension (reminding them of the actual world), hence making them unwilling to suspend

their disbelief, and instead of being in a state of “this is play”, they will ask the question: “Is this play”? Finally, I asked the question: Is coherence related to customers’ ability to become transported into a possible world? Coherence is important because it eliminates errors and lies. When a customer cannot understand how the devices in the stores are related, it will be understood as an error or lie. It would challenge the cognitive effort of “making sense” – and people do not shop to be cognitively challenged. They shop to be emotionally engaged (Cf. The Introduction). This emotional engagement is a contrast to convenience (quick-cheap-easy). When a store engages the customers, the usual criteria for convenient shopping is forgotten, e.g., a customer staying in *Guns & Gents* for a long time despite being in a hurry. When creating a coherent possible world, customers are more likely to be transported, which is also a way to get the customers to forget price, time and convenience.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Since the appearance of online stores, retailing has changed dramatically, and brick-and-mortar stores have been struggling to compete with the convenience aspect of online shopping. Online stores often offer a cheaper priced, larger range of products and quick delivery, and the customer can buy products 24 hours a day. This threatens the existence of brick-and-mortar stores, which seems to be slowly disappearing. Since the middle ages, the brick-and-mortar store has been a significant aspect of town development and social interaction. Brick-and-mortar stores are particularly important in contributing to social interaction, economic growth, the ability to attract tourists and civic diversity. First, they motivate social interaction between citizens by providing a reason for people to stay in places outside their home, which could strengthen the social relationships between citizens. Second, the locally owned brick-and-mortar stores could entail economic benefits for a town. Third, the stores have the ability to attract tourists. According to Timothy & Butler (1995), shopping can be a substantial reason for taking a cross-border trip. Finally, stores promote civic diversity because clusters of stores in public domains attract different people. Brick-and-mortar stores are important in towns because they improve the local economy, thus making the maintenance and development of the town possible. Ultimately, this could, for one, increase inhabitants' overall satisfaction with the town and also contribute to attracting new inhabitants.

Experience-based shopping emerged in the nineteenth century with the rise of department stores and arcades. This was due to the separation of commodity and production (for example ready-to-wear clothes) thus contributing the focus on products (i.e. more than the people who made the product). Nevertheless, when the supermarket emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, there has been an overall focus on the convenience aspect of shopping. This might be the overall reason for the dramatic increase in online stores. When online stores and brick-and-mortar stores compete on convenience, the online stores have the greatest advantage. For brick-and-mortar stores to survive, they have to compete on something other than convenience. As disclosed in the introduction, some answers could be found in the qualities of brick-and-mortar stores before the rise of the supermarket. Before the supermarket, there were three important features in brick-and-mortar stores: social interaction between customers and the sales assistants (both customer to customer and sale assistant to customer), leisure environments (places for people to browse) and identity confirmation (for example, confirming a social status). These three qualities are all related to the hedonic dimension of shopping. Hedonic values are related to the pleasurable aspects of shopping involving the customer emotionally in a store. One way to promote a pleasurable shopping experience is by engaging the customer in a brick-and-mortar store, which requires immersion, activity and passion

(Hollebecks, 2011). In this dissertation, I have investigated, in particular, immersion as a way to involve the customer emotionally in a store thus ultimately creating an emotional attachment.

An important finding in this dissertation is nevertheless that shopping can both be instrumental with a specific goal (telic) or recreational (paratelic). This is suggested through the possible world frame and actual world frame. In the possible world frame recreational shopping could be motivated through playful elements (paratelic). The actual world frame is the instrumental mode where the customer has specific goals (telic). Depending on the type of store, the customers shift between these two modes. The findings in this dissertation show that when adding a possible world frame, the recreational mode can be activated thus increasing the customer's emotional engagement. To be concrete, this indicates that a customer who is in an instrumental mode (actual world frame) could change into being in a recreational mode through the creation of a possible world frame. In the next section, I will answer the research questions presented in the introduction with the aim of disclosing the relevant results in the dissertation.

What does immersion in a brick-and-mortar store look like?

Immersion is an “othering” of the customers by motivating the role-playing behaviour in the stores. This pleasurable and meaningful experience the customers seem to have in *Guns & Gents* and *Tarina Tarantino* could be explained as aesthetic by using the concept of heterotopia. Heterotopia is used to explain a ‘theory of disruption’ as a way to increase the difficulties and length of the perception because a poetic experience is about the pleasurable process of perception. This is the property not only of art but also of shopping. Therefore, the argument is that the poetic dimension of shopping is the disruption of ordinary goals, such as obtaining cheaper prices, better quality, a large range of products, a short queue and products that are easy to find. When the ordinary activity of shopping is disrupted, it could motivate the customer to engage in the process of perceiving the store in such a way as that it becomes poetic. Heterotopia is a way of understanding this by explaining the “othering” of the shopping experience and thereby the “othering” of the customer. The customers are therefore immersed in something other than the actual world. In this dissertation, I argue that this “other” world could be explained as a possible world.

In *Guns & Gents*, customers particularly show immersion in the difference between their behaviour inside and outside the store. When they enter the store, they slow their pace, lower their voices and appear relaxed, and when leaving, they sometimes slow their pace even further, looking back over their shoulders

and touching objects on their way out, resulting in the existence of a worn out jacket by the entrance. When they finally leave the store, they immediately speed up their pace. In the paper, we argue that this could be because the door functions as a threshold establishing a ritual process from the actual world to the possible world in the store. Immersion occurs when customers' imagination is guided by the rules of a possible world, resulting in a change in their behaviour. Their behaviour seems to transform into actions that are appropriate in accordance with the possible world. In addition to the mentioned shift in behaviour, customers almost imitate what occurs during a hunt: for instance, one customer walking with unusually heavy steps to test the boots he was trying on and another customer bending arms and knees to inspect whether the clothes made any noise. In the weapon room, one customer tested the quality of a gun by imitating shooting sounds, and another aimed at an imaginary moving birds in the sky. This was an imitation of the real act of hunting. Other imitations included the social interaction associated with hunting. Customers trying out clothes looked at themselves in the large mirror in the middle of the store as if it was a representation of other hunters at a party.

This enactment in an imaginary situation is the role-playing behaviour, which is characterised as "Mimicry". The mimicry behaviour is governed by the rules and logics of the possible world because they transport the customer from the imaginary world in the store. In this regard, the store becomes a place for testing a masculine public appearance as performing at actual hunting parties. Therefore, the store becomes a place for experimenting with an identity and thereby preparing them (mostly men, but in a few cases, women) for the future of being a hunter: Fitting in, acting correct, saying the right thing and wearing the same clothes as others. Immersion in a possible world is both pleasurable and meaningful. This is also evident in *Tarina Tarantino* where the customers show emotional attachment through positive reviews where they express their love for the store and products. They also explain a transformation into "being a big kid in a shimmering candy store" (Karla R., Los Angeles, CA), "The little girl in me emerges when I walk in!" (Osvaldo, Las Vegas, NV) or "Absolutely worth it to feel like a pretty, pretty princess" (Kaila Y., Los Angeles, CA). This transformation in the stores is like *Guns & Gents* fostered by mimicry. Customers are immersed in role-play through representations, fantasies and dreams motivated by the possible world, thereby making Hollebeck's (2011) definition of engagement by explaining it as immersion, activation and passion. For customers to become immersed, it requires activation, and activation is the role-play in the store. Passion about the product/brand/store is required. Activation is also the dissertation contribution to the famous Pine And Gilmore drama metaphor. Instead of the customers being in the audience, they could – in a possible world – become active role players. This is a new dimension to the retail research, as it signifies the importance of role-play. In the discussion, I introduce the actual

reader and implied readers as a way to understand immersion, which is decided by the actual speaker and implied speaker. The main finding is therefore that the customers seem to follow the sales assistant.

Are there different ways to design immersive experiences?

The different ways to design immersive experience are found in the categories: The Standard World, The Replica World, The Perfect World of Everyday Life, The Tribal World, The Museum World and The Fairy Tale World. In addition to these pure worlds, there are also the impure worlds, which are a blending of the different worlds. In all the worlds, immersion is explained by how the customers are transported into a possible world. The transportation requires mental effort in which a threshold needs to be crossed by physically entering a store, playing a role and thereby becoming an inhabitant of the possible world. As illustrated in The Transportation Scale (Paper 3: “The Possible World of Stores”, figure 1), transportation could be difficult because it requires a high engagement or easier because it requires a low degree of engagement. In stores where the transportation is difficult, the emotional engagements would thus be greater. The various options to engage customers range from easy transportation (The Standard World) to difficult transportation (The Fairy Tale World). The Standard World is seen in typical stores such as *Aldi*, *Fotex*, *Safeway* or *Walmart*. They are characterized by having a wide range of products, and everything in the stores is about presenting the product logically in sections (e.g., vegetable section, can section, cookie section) and favourably with spotlights on some products and placing the sale products within eyesight. The principle is functionality to enhance the convenience of shopping. The roles played by the sales assistant and the customers are described by ordinary social norms. Actual world features are dominating in The Standard World

The Replica World is an imitation of a bygone past and/or an exotic location. It is a copy of a time and/or place that are out of reach, for example, “the good old days”. The Replica World is “hyper-real” (Eco, 1987) and thus a copy of an original that does not exist in the actual world but in the customer’s mind. Therefore, the copy needs to represent the well-known features in contrast to the actual world features. Therefore, the possible world is a copy of the thing commonly associated with the time and/or place. In this world, the customers are role-playing by an enhancement of the customer’s and sales assistant’s ordinary roles. For example, in *Krone Kaffee*, where the sales assistants are so polite, which almost resembles a servant-like role, the customers wait patiently in line. Because the role is an enhancement of an ordinary role and the possible world resembles the actual world, the transportation is easy. For this reason, the possibility of transformation is very low, but it could bring the customer a mood of nostalgia.

The Perfect World of Everyday Life is a perfection of the actual world – a type of “capitalist realism” that presents how the customer’s life would be if the product did not have the troublesome features of ordinary life (Schudson, 1984), such as clutter and dirt in the corners. *Ikea* is an example of The Perfect World of Everyday Life because the furniture is displayed in perfect settings like living rooms, bedrooms and kitchens, thereby inspiring the customer to improve the imperfections of everyday life. The possible world is a perfect model of the actual world. To enhance the imagination of the customer being at home in their perfect settings, the sales assistant does not interfere, as this would interrupt the imagination and remind the customer of the actual world. The customer typically plays someone who is already living in those settings by turning the light on and off, sitting on the sofa, raising the glasses, puffing the pillows and opening the closet. This possible world motivates the role for using the products as if they were already purchased. It is a rather easy transportation to a more perfect world, and the transformation is an understanding of how life would be if products perfected it. Due to the resemblance with the actual world and the role played by the customer, it is true fiction.

The Tribal World is a place for admiration of a product or brand. Well-known ensamples are the *Apple Store* (a store) and *Heineken Experience* (a brandscape). In both worlds, the products are presented as a solution to almost every problem, hence creating a carefree world. The products become totem-like objects, and the store is a place that provides for consumer tribes by being a place that establishes brand communities. An important aspect in the tribal world is providing the customers with information about the unique qualities of the product and/or brand, such as Lush, where the sales assistant gives the customers a hand massage while telling the customer about the fresh and natural ingredients of the hand lotion and the overall focus on the brand’s sustainability policies. Therefore, the role of the sales assistant is an enhancement of being a devoted fan and helping the customer into the world of the brand. The customer’s role is either (if they are not fans yet) to be introduced to or to worship the products. Transportation may therefore be more different in the above-mentioned world, as it requires knowledge and understanding of the brand. The transformation is, for consumers, a confirmation of being in a social bond of collective believers, hence becoming an active “brand evangelist” (Matzler et al., 2007).

The Museum World is, like the name suggests, a world where the products are displayed like art pieces. This could be seen in typically high-end store where products are meticulously arranged to make the right impact. The products are placed with empty space surrounding it to imitate the presentation of exclusive and exquisite art, which should be admired. In The Museum World, the role of the sales assistant is very important because, on the one hand, they need to be able to spot prospective customers by ignoring certain visitors, while, on the other hand, providing a butler-like and servant-like role for true customers. In

addition to admiring the products, the customer is required to look the part by wearing expensive and well-known brands and accept being treated as nobility. The transportation is more difficult because of the requirement of the customers being able to buy the products and able to play the role of belonging to the happy few with substantial confidence. The transformation is status, whether it is gained or maintained. Unless the customer is famous or royalty, this world is rather different from the actual world, thus making it standard fiction.

The Fairy Tale World is a store that creates a setting where products can be a way for the customers to transform themselves. In the narrative, the product is a helper to escape something like boredom, looking like others, drab and mature (adulthood). The *Storm Crow* is an example of escaping the “realness” of the actual world into a magical world with fictive beings. This could be described as a momentary enchantment where the customers accept the magic abilities of The Fairy Tale World. The role of the sales assistant and customer is to fulfil a role in the world. The transportation is difficult because it requires that the customer can identify with the story and accepts and understands the terms. Transformation could be an identity reinforcement of being more glamorous, responsible, cool or professional. A fairy tale world could also be a place for playing with a new role. If a customer does not identify with being girly but has a desire to, they could try this identity in *Tarina Tarantino*. Another feature specific to The Fairy Tale World is the products’ ability to help the customer maintain the identity in the actual world. This world is very different from the actual world, and therefore it is standard fiction.

The Impure World is either the blending of The Standard World with possible world features or a blending of the pure worlds. A standard world with possible world features is a very common way to display products in a fictional setting. It could range from a display of a Replica World of Japan, where cooking equipment for sushi is presented, or a Tribal World in the back room of the store. Customers looking at displays in a Standard World will constantly be reminded of the actual world. If the possible world were in a back room or behind a wall or counter, the emotional effect would be greater because the actual world is hidden, thus making the transportation possible. Blending is also seen as a combination of different worlds, such as *Guns & Gents*, which has features from The Replica World (traditional gentlemen’s club) and The Museum World (sales assistants determining if someone is a prospective customer or a visitor) as well as The Tribal World (giving the members a sense of belonging).

In all the worlds, immersion occurs when there is a degree of fiction. The difference is the resemblance with the actual world: some stores have many similarities with the actual world (replica), and others have fewer (fairy tale). This difference also reflects the roles played by the sales assistant and the customer, which range from an enhancement of an ordinary role (such as being a customer) to

a play with a new (but desirable) identity. For this to occur, an overall cohesiveness in all the devices is needed. The devices need to be accurate representations of the actual world. An example of this inconsistency is the TV Screen in the Victorian store *Michel Negrin*. This error could remind the customer of the actual world and compromise their willingness to suspend their disbelief.

What are the elements that create a cohesive experience in a store?

Coherence is first of all important because a text (store) is not grasped as a whole but as a series of devices, and therefore, it is important for all the single elements to be coherent. A way to relate the different elements in a store is the creation of a possible world. The possible world becomes a framework to design a cohesive experience that binds all elements together, thereby engaging the customer in a store. The first question in this regard is: How is a possible world created? To answer this, the component of a possible world needs to be noted. First of all, a possible world in a store is always fictive by being different from the actual world, and it is understood by the customer through the imagination of the world. For a possible world in a store to be true fiction or standard fiction, there are three laws for them to maintain a truth-value: logical consistency, logical completeness and validity of logical implication (Fort, 2015, p. 17). Logical consistency is the law of no contradictions, such as happy and depressed sales assistants in *Tarina Tarantino*. Logical completeness is the wholeness based on the slogan: “Live the Sparkling life”, where all the elements (such as sparkling jewellery, a big mirror and pink floor) together create wholeness. The correlation between the element that creates the wholeness is the law of validity of logical implication that states: If a statement is true, then other statements are true in this world. If “live the sparkling life” is true, then colourful clothes, sales assistants with an outgoing personality and sparkling accessories are also true.

In addition to these three laws, for a possible world in stores, it is also important that there are some physical objects that represent the possible world, such as the exotic stuffed animals in *Guns & Gents*, the big mirror in *Tarina Tarantino* or the weapons in the *Storm Crow*. To enforce the threshold from the actual world to the possible world, a spatial limit is also important. Therefore, these five laws apply for a possible world in a store: Logical consistency, Logical completeness, Validity of logical implication, Physical objects (props), and Spatial limits.

On the basis of these rules, The Concept Model (Paper 4: “Creating Immersive World in Brick-and-Mortar Stores”, figure 4) was developed as a way to illustrate the single devices that are important when creating a possible world in a store. In the centre of the model is the possible world, and all the devices in the store must be a logical part of this world. The devices are sense, packaging,

service, facade, role of the customers, role of employees, props and inventory. All these are considered in the world investigated in this dissertation. Other research also emphasises the importance of these elements (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010; Pine and Gilmore, 1999). An important addition based on the results in this dissertation is the role of the customer. In possible worlds, they are active participants through role-playing (performing). In engagement theory, this is “activation”, which motivates immersion.

How can brick-and-mortar stores be designed to differentiate them from each other and online stores by addressing how the customer can be immersed in a store through active participation in a fictional world?

To determine the answers to the overall research question, it is important to note the overall quality of brick-and-mortar stores: they are three-dimensional spaces. Therefore, shopping occurs in a sequential order and could therefore be understood as a story. This story is told in a ritual enhanced by the physical threshold to a possible world that could transform the customer. Possible worlds are untrue by being something “more” or “other” than the actual world. They are worlds of make-believe. A customer in the *Storm Crow* is not a real orc, and a customer in *Lush* is not saving the world. This type of play is pleasurable because the customers have to act out a role based on passion. It is awe and admiration, the joy of exploring and interacting with others, the fun of playing, the feeling of comfort, etc., which is a contrast to convenience (quick-cheap-easy). The overall point in this dissertation is as follows: When a store engages the customers in a possible world, the usual criteria for convenient shopping are forgotten. This is due to the absence of the actual world, as it is a constant reminder of actual world values such as time, price, easy access, short lines, and large shopping trolleys. When a store is designed as a possible world, it could motivate the customers to suspend their disbelief, hence a momentary forgetting of the actual world. When a customer plays along in a fictive world, they are immersed, which increases the emotional qualities of shopping and, as observed in *Guns & Gents*, it prolongs the time they spend in the store. It could also increase loyalty, customer satisfaction in general, a feeling of empowerment, a connection and emotional bonding to the brand, trust, and commitment.

CHAPTER 6. FURTHER RESEARCH

As stated several times in this dissertation, engagement is based on immersion, activation and passion. In relation to possible worlds, immersion is important because it discloses the emotional aspect of consumer behaviour. An interesting aspect is how transportation becomes either easier or more difficult in relation to the consumer's activation and passion. A proposition could be that the more passion the transportations become because it increases the customer's motivation to get engaged. And the higher the degree of activation (role-play) a possible world requires, the more difficult the transportation might become. For the simple reason that an extra effort is needed thus disturbing or upsetting the convenience of mundane shopping routines. I would like to investigate whether transportation becomes more difficult when more activation is required and easier when a customer has passion for the field/product/store/brand. This would also mean that some customers would not take the trouble to overcome the challenge to be transported into the possible world. These customers would most likely reject the store. This negative reaction could be the reason why most stores are Standard World. To retailers it probably seems dangerous to create a world that might get a negative emotional reaction even though there may be an equivalent positive emotional reaction.

My experience as a consultant at retailers is that they have an overall aim to please all customers based in the assertion that: The more customers there are in the store – the greater the sales. When creating a possible world this changes to: The more of the right customers there are in the store – the greater the sales. A seemingly simple thing that I observed in *Guns & Gents* was the importance of the door. When the door was open there were more people in there, because the store became physically open and thereby minimized the threshold. At the same time this seemed to decrease the sales. An open door attracted more visitors (tourist, non-hunters) that were just looking (as an audience) and ignoring the conduct of the store. This clearly interfered with the role-play of the regular customers. An example is the volume of voice – whereas the regulars spoke in lowered voices, the visitors did not. As a result the regular customers were looking at them in irritation or even walked out. This is an aspect I would like to research through making a direct comparison between a closed door and an open door and the sales correspondingly decreasing or increasing.

In this regard, another aspect is relevant: Why do some people find a specific world exciting while others find it repelling? As mentioned, this has something to do with passion. Another area I would like to explore further is the experience of self. According to Higgins there are three domains of self. Firstly, the actual self, which is the attributes that you yourself or someone else believes you have. Secondly, the ideal self, which is the attributes that you yourself or

someone else would like you to have. Thirdly, the ought self, which is the attributes that you yourself or someone else believes you ought to have. The theory on self-discrepancy states that an incompatibility between these selves could induce negative emotions. On the other hand, when the three selves become more compatible it could decrease negative emotions (Higgins, 1987). In this connection, when a customer is engaged in a possible world the ideal self could become more compatible with the actual self. For example in a museum world where the customer is role-playing as wealthy and cultivated (the ideal self), the transformation could be an experience of one's actual self becoming more compatible with one's ideal self. Another example is *Kronen kaffè*, where the customers role-play as "the perfect customer" by being polite, waiting in line. This is a role-playing of the ought self and as such the transformation might be a compatibility between one's actual self, one's ought self and (maybe) one's ideal self. The store could become a place where the transformation is a way for the customers to approach their ideal self or ought self. A hypothesis in this regard could be: The aspect that makes it desirable to play a role in a store is the ability to "try on" the ideal self or ought self. This would also mean that a store might represent an ideal the customers do not want to be. For example if the ideal self represented by the store is contrary to some customers' ideal selves. This could be someone whose ought self is to be more caring towards people in need, then there would be a contradiction in spending a large amount of money on a purse. This is an interesting aspect to research further, and it could be done by comparing people's ideal selves with their shopping habits. This might disclose some correlations between people's ideal selves and the stores they prefer. "

Another aspect is customers' general perceptions and attitudes, which has something to do with customers' willingness to get transported into the possible world and thereby accepting the role they have to play. Rosenblatt (1960) states that a reader (customer) perceives a story based on factors like past experiences, personality, present interests, hopes, dreams and anxieties. Therefore, a reader will not become engaged in a story without the right attitude (Rosenblatt, 1960). I would like to investigate this further by exploring lusory attitude as a customers "acceptance of constitutive rules just so the activity made possible by such acceptance can occur" (Suits 2005, p. 54) and aesthetic attitude (Dickie, 1964; Cohen, 1959). Stolnitz (1961) explains aesthetic attitude by connecting it to "disinterest". He writes:

"The self is and is known to be imperilled. Self-concern is therefore inescapable. Yet to be disinterested entails the inhabitation of any action on behalf of the self. One is a spectator rather than an agent. One's involvement is controlled and tempered by the detachment of selflessness" (Stolnitz, 1961, p. 136)

This is relevant because he describes disinterest with “actions on behalf of the self”, which could be an interesting point to relate to Higgins’ definition of self. Aesthetic attitude is the willingness to agree disinterested: To “lose yourself” (the actual self) in immersion. This could disclose a way to explain customers willingness to engage in some worlds and not in others.

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APPENDIX 1. STATISTICS BEBRIT08

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1	Internetkøb inden for sidste år efter produkt, type og tid															
2	Enhed: pct.															
3		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016						
4	Tøj, sport- og fritidsudstyr	i alt	41	42	46	51	51	54	58	58	62					
5																
6	Data for 2011 kan ikke direkte sammenlignes med tidligere år for 'Møbler og husholdningsartikler' pga. omformulering af spørgsmålet til 'Møbler, legetøj og andre ting til huset' i 2011 undersøgelsen.															
7																
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APPENDIX 2. STATISTICS DETA21

Detailomsætningsindeks (2010=100) efter indekstype, varegruppe og tid

Enhed: indeks

Sæsonkorrigeret mængdeindeks					Detailhandel i alt					2000M01	2000M02	2000M03
										85,5	85,7	85,3
2000M04	2000M05	2000M06	2000M07	2000M08	2000M09	2000M10	2000M11	2000M12				
85,6	86,1	85,3	86,2	86,2	86,2	85,7	86	86,5				
2001M01	2001M02	2001M03	2001M04	2001M05	2001M06	2001M07	2001M08	2001M09				
86,4	86,1	85,9	85,8	85,9	85,9	85,7	86	86,5				
2001M10	2001M11	2001M12	2002M01	2002M02	2002M03	2002M04	2002M05	2002M06				
86,2	87,3	87,6	88,3	88	88,8	88,2	89,1	89,1				
2002M07	2002M08	2002M09	2002M10	2002M11	2002M12	2003M01	2003M02	2003M03				
89,5	89,3	90,1	90,2	89,7	89,8	90,3	90,8	90,4				
2003M04	2003M05	2003M06	2003M07	2003M08	2003M09	2003M10	2003M11	2003M12				
91	91,7	91,3	91,7	92,3	92,3	92,8	91,9	92,4				
2004M01	2004M02	2004M03	2004M04	2004M05	2004M06	2004M07	2004M08	2004M09				
92,7	93,5	94,6	95	94,3	95,8	96,2	96,7	97,1				
2004M10	2004M11	2004M12	2005M01	2005M02	2005M03	2005M04	2005M05	2005M06				
99	99,9	100,1	99,8	100,3	100,4	101,7	100,8	102,2				
2005M07	2005M08	2005M09	2005M10	2005M11	2005M12	2006M01	2006M02	2006M03				
102	102,9	102,7	103,2	103,6	103,6	104,5	104,6	104,6				
2006M04	2006M05	2006M06	2006M07	2006M08	2006M09	2006M10	2006M11	2006M12				
104,8	106,6	106,1	105,9	106,4	105,9	106,3	107,3	107,1				

2007M01	2007M02	2007M03	2007M04	2007M05	2007M06	2007M07	2007M08	2007M09
107	106,5	107,8	106,8	106,3	107,8	108,3	108,6	108,9
2007M10	2007M11	2007M12	2008M01	2008M02	2008M03	2008M04	2008M05	2008M06
108	107,7	107,8	107,6	108,2	107,3	107,6	107,1	105,5
2008M07	2008M08	2008M09	2008M10	2008M11	2008M12	2009M01	2009M02	2009M03
104,8	104	104	102,8	102,4	101,4	101,9	101,7	101,6
2009M04	2009M05	2009M06	2009M07	2009M08	2009M09	2009M10	2009M11	2009M12
101,6	101,5	101,9	102,3	101,5	101	101,3	100,2	100,8
2010M01	2010M02	2010M03	2010M04	2010M05	2010M06	2010M07	2010M08	2010M09
100	100,1	100,3	100,1	100,8	100,7	100,4	99,8	99,6
2010M10	2010M11	2010M12	2011M01	2011M02	2011M03	2011M04	2011M05	2011M06
99,7	99,5	99,3	99,4	99	98,4	98,8	97,7	97,1
2011M07	2011M08	2011M09	2011M10	2011M11	2011M12	2012M01	2012M02	2012M03
96,8	97,3	96,9	97,1	96,5	96,7	96,4	95,7	96,3
2012M04	2012M05	2012M06	2012M07	2012M08	2012M09	2012M10	2012M11	2012M12
95,5	95,6	94,9	94,9	94,6	95,4	94,7	94,5	94,9
2013M01	2013M02	2013M03	2013M04	2013M05	2013M06	2013M07	2013M08	2013M09
94,6	94,7	94,1	93,7	94,3	95	94,5	94,1	94,4
2013M10	2013M11	2013M12	2014M01	2014M02	2014M03	2014M04	2014M05	2014M06
93,8	94,4	94,5	94,2	95,1	95,3	95,5	96,4	95,1
2014M07	2014M08	2014M09	2014M10	2014M11	2014M12	2015M01	2015M02	2015M03
94,9	95,5	94,9	95,5	96,4	96,2	96,4	96,5	97,1

2015M04	2015M05	2015M06	2015M07	2015M08	2015M09	2015M10	2015M11	2015M12
96	94,9	96	97	96,8	97	97,4	97,4	96,6
2016M01	2016M02	2016M03	2016M04	2016M05	2016M06	2016M07		
96,8	96,5	95,9	97,1	97,2	97,4	96,8		

APPENDIX 3: CATEGORIZATION OF STORES

The categorised stores that were possible worlds or had possible world features:

THE REPLICA WORLD:

Duus & Co. (Aalborg, Denmark)
 Sea bar (Aalborg, Denmark)
 Lady Luck (Aalborg, Denmark)
 Fredberg (Aalborg, Denmark)
 Schlossparfümerie (Stuttgart, Germany)
 Reijn / Italia (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Het grote avontuur (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Hollandaluz (Amsterdam, the Netherlands))
 Zenza (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Six and Sons (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Out Front menswear (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Lammles (Edmonton, Canada)
 The Old Spaghetti Factory (Edmonton, Canada)
 Jungles Jim (Edmonton, Canada)
 Orani Sushi Bar (Edmonton, Canada)
 The Red Piano (Edmonton, Canada)
 Saje (Edmonton, Canada)
 Urban Outfitters (Edmonton, Canada)
 Anthropologie (Edmonton, Canada)
 T&T Supermarket (Edmonton, Canada)
 Artemis (Edmonton, Canada)
 British Import Shop (Edmonton, Canada)
 Knights Vault (Edinburgh, Scotland)
 Walter Slater – Women (Edinburgh, Scotland)
 Walter Slater - Men (Edinburgh, Scotland)
 Museum Context (Edinburgh, Scotland)
 Iain Mellis (Edinburgh, Scotland)
 Demi John (Edinburgh, Scotland)
 Kronen (Aalborg, Denmark)

THE FAIRY TALE WORLD:

Nationaal Brilmuseum (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Sukha (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Tea Bar (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)

Disney (Edmonton, Canada)
Dragon Tale (Edmonton, Canada)
The Antique Photo Parlour (Edmonton, Canada)
Build-A-Bear (Edmonton, Canada)
Abercrombie & Fitch (Edmonton, Canada)
Supply Sergeant (Edmonton, Canada)
Build-A-Bear (Edinburgh, Scotland)
The Cadies & Witchery Tours (Edinburgh, Scotland)

THE TRIBAL WORLD:

Lomography (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
Victoria's Secret (Edmonton, Canada)
Lush (Edmonton, Canada)
Apple Store (Edmonton, Canada)
Tiffany (Edmonton, Canada)
Kate Spade (Edmonton, Canada)
DavidsTea (Edmonton, Canada)
Sephora (Edmonton, Canada)
Starbucks (Edinburgh, Scotland)
Lush (Edinburgh, Scotland)

THE MUSEUM WORLD:

Wempe (Stuttgart, Germany)
Mendo (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
Rolex (Edmonton, Canada)

THE PERFECT WORLD OF EVERYDAY LIFE:

Vinnies (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
Bombay (Edmonton, Canada)
Williams Sonoma (Edmonton, Canada)

PW M. REPLICA:

Salling (Aalborg, Denmark)
De 4 årstider (Aalborg, Denmark)
Kaffe Fair (Aalborg, Denmark)
Amerikansk Diner (Aalborg, Denmark)
Skjold Burne (Aalborg, Denmark)
Sunset – PD (Aalborg, Denmark)
MCZ (Aalborg, Denmark)
Penny Lane (Aalborg, Denmark)

Hugendubel (Stuttgart, Germany)
 Sportarena (Stuttgart, Germany)
 Fielmann (Stuttgart, Germany)
 Antonia by Yvette (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Exota (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 The Sherlock Holmes (Edmonton, Canada)
 Seafood Express (Edmonton, Canada)
 Alexis (Edmonton, Canada)
 Sportchek (Edmonton, Canada)
 Millennium (Edmonton, Canada)
 Garden Bakery (Edmonton, Canada)
 Ran Salon Spa (Edmonton, Canada)
 QuickSilver (Edmonton, Canada)
 Whittard (Edinburgh, Scotland)

PW M. TRIBAL:

Humac (Aalborg, Denmark)

PW M. MUSEUM:

Bogner (Stuttgart, Germany)
 Sir Max (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Hope (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Hester van Eeghen (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Hester van Eeghen (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Karl Lagerfeld (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)

PW M. EXTRAORDINARY PERFECTION:

Lydspecialisten (Aalborg, Denmark)
 DR Wonen (Amsterdam, the Netherlands)
 Sears (Edmonton, Canada)
 The Brick (Edmonton, Canada)
 Bose (Edmonton, Canada)

REPLICA + EXTRAORDINARY PERFECTION:

Spejdersport (Aalborg, Denmark)
 Pottery Barn (Edmonton, Canada)

APPENDIX 4. FIELD NOTES GUNS & GENTS

Appendix 4 is confidential material. Therefore it is distributed in a separate document available for the Ph.D committee only.

SUMMARY

The revenues in brick-and-mortar stores have declined in the last decade, not least due to competition from online shopping. This thesis investigates how traditional stores might use principles from experience design to reverse this tendency. Brick-and-mortar stores are very important in contributing to urban environments as they increase social interaction, economic growth, the ability to attract tourists and civic diversity. They are multi-sensual phenomena's with enormous potential that often is not utilized in an optimal way. The research in this thesis proposes an approach to revitalising the interest in brick-and-mortar stores by engaging the customers emotionally. This thesis suggests that using insights from Possible World Theory in designing stores is one way to do this. Theoretically the thesis is interdisciplinary by drawing on knowledge from a wide spectrum of fields such as consumer research, experience design, literary theory, the history and sociology of shopping. The method used is observation studies of cases that more or less successfully have been able to engage customers. This has resulted in an in-depth study of one such store and a typology of different types of engaging stores, based on a sample of some 1153 stores registered during fieldwork at different locations around the world. The main finding of the thesis is that casting the customers in the role of actors in a possible world may increase their emotional engagement.