



Green Identity

*Visual Representations of Ecological Food Products through Their
Packages: A case study on the Products by ICA and Coop*

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ABSTRACT

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Packages: A case study on the Products by ICA and Coop

by Şeyda Özçetin

Green movement has started in the 1970s and gained popularity in the 1980s. Its expansion continued to grow even more in the 1990s. Today, in 2010, environmental issues are parts of political agenda, and everyday life. It has become a must to consider environmental aspects in design processes. Green design has gained enormous importance as well as green consumption and green marketing over the years. This thesis suggests that as a result of these developments a green identity has emerged as well. This study, by analysing ecological food products' visual representations through their packages, tests this claim. This work is a case study which focuses on both the ecological and the non-ecological products produced by ICA and Coop. Visual analysis, and qualitative research method have been applied to conduct this research. The theories such as visual social semiology, visual semiotics of Barthes, cultural approach theory, and script theory, guided the discussions and supported the interpretations.

Keywords: ecological food products, eco-labels, green consumerism, green marketing, package design, visual representation.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Diagnosis

Victor Papanek, one of the leading personalities in green design movement in the 1970s, lists a designer's seven skills. According to him, one of these talents is "the wisdom to anticipate the environmental, ecological, economic, and political consequences of design intervention"¹. He adds "Our survival depends on an urgent attention to environmental issues"². So, in 1970s he already took some attention to ecological design. Another key character, Sim Van Der Ryn, set the framework for ecological design in his book *Ecological Design*. He says, "we define *ecological design* as "any form of design that minimizes environmentally destructive impacts by integrating itself with living processes"³.

By the mid-1980s green movement gained more importance, especially in press. The Body Shop's projects, which were quite influential. It offered not just natural products but also recyclable packages and refilling opportunities. By doing so, it managed to get public's attention to environmental issues and green concepts. This interest in green design continued to grow in the late 1980s. This period witnessed many exhibitions and publications regarding the issue. One of the most influential among them, called 'Green Designer', took place in Design Centre in London in 1986. Significant publications such as *The Green Consumer Guide* (1988), *The Green Capitalists* (1989) by John Elkington, published in this period and also inspired other works in the 1990s such as *Green Design: Design for the Environment* (1991) by Dorothy Mackenzie, *Green Design* (1991) by Paul Burall and *Green Architecture Design for Sustainable Future* (1991) by Brenda and Robert Vale.⁴

Other than these publications major changes, in Western German, Dutch and Danish companies' attitudes towards environmental issues, were observed through a survey on *European Management attitudes to Environmental Issues*, which took

¹ Papanek, Victor, *The Green Imperative: Ecology and Ethics in Design and Architecture*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1995, p. 8.

² Papanek, 1995, p. 9.

³ Van der Ryn, Sim, *Ecological Design*, Island Press, Washington, D.C., 1996, p. 18.

⁴ Woodham, Jonathan M., *Twentieth-Century Design*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, p. 236-237.

place in 1990.⁵ They took environmental issues into account and did necessary alterations in their products. Some of these companies were Philips, IBM, and Zanussi. Another important development was the introduction of product-labelling. Labels, which define the products as ecological, were first introduced in the 1970s. But in the 1990s this movement spread around the world even more.⁶ These developments and concept of green design also introduced other concepts such as green capitalism and green consumerism. All these pointed out that a new market was emerging not just for businessmen but also for designers. Woodham says “the green consumer is likely to be an increasingly important influence in the world of product design. Designers, who ignore the fact, or who allow their clients to ignore it, risk losing out on some of the most exciting marketing opportunities of the eighties and nineties”.⁷

One of the influential authors Mackenzie states that in the 1970s environmentalism was an alternative movement, whereas, in the 1990s environmental problems became issues that cannot be ignored and captured enormous attention.⁸ Today it is not hard to notice the increasing importance of green design and expanding range of green products in our lives, day by day. One of these product categories is ecological food products. They occupy more space than before in retail stores. In parallel to this, green consumerism has gained even more popularity. It can be suggested that packages of green products have important role in the rise of green consumerism. Mackenzie says “the way in which a product is packaged is often one of the major influences on whether people notice it and buy it...”.⁹ As a customer, I like looking at the packages of the products. If I am not in a hurry I take my time and glance through them. Some of them make me buy, some of them make me think and some of them make me stay away from them. During my grocery shoppings, some differences between ecological and non-ecological products, produced by the same brand, caught my attention. This difference in visual representation, made me think about green identity and green consumerism. Moreover, it has inspired me for my thesis work.

⁵ Woodham, 1997, p. 237.

⁶ Woodham, 1997, p. 238.

⁷ Woodham, 1997, p. 239.

⁸ Mackenzie, Dorothy, *Green Design: Design for the Environment*, Laurence King Ltd, London, 1991, p. 8.

⁹ Mackenzie, 1991, p. 90.

It can be suggested that, with this expanding green marketing, a new identity has emerged; the identity of green products. I am curious about this identity. Based on my observation as a consumer, it seems, packages have quite significant role in constructing the green identity. Ecological products are represented by their packages as well as other products. But especially for ecological products, the package is crucial to express their green identity and content. Let me put in this way. How can one distinguish a glass of regular milk from a glass of ecological milk? They look the same in the glass. But when they are put in packages, they will differ, because the definitive information about the product will be on the package. For instance, it will say ecological milk. Moreover, this information will be supported by other elements, such as labels, information panels, images, slogans and so on. So it can be claimed that there is a difference in package design between ecological and non-ecological products.

I am very much into environmental lifestyle and also fond of ecological food products. I would like to combine my personal interest in ‘green’ with my educational background and academic skills. I want to look closer to this growing identity by analysing ecological food products by certain brands. As someone who is environmental, I find the role of the package very crucial in making the world greener. By analysing ecological food products’ packages I believe I will be more conscious and be able to contribute to green field in my future works or professions. For all these reasons, I am interested in this topic which is; “Green Identity: Visual representations of ecological food products through their packages: A case study on products by ICA and Coop”.

1.2 Relevance of the Work

This topic is inter-disciplinary and due to that, it is quite relevant to variety of fields since it is dealing (directly or indirectly) with objects, ecological products, design, visual representation, images, marketing, consumerism, human behaviours, and human-object relations and so on. It can be approached through cultural studies, material culture studies, design studies, visual culture studies, visual sociology studies, environmental studies, marketing studies, consumer culture studies, cultural anthropology, psychology, sociology, semiotics and so on. But since, this is a visual culture program master’s thesis, the topic will be handled through visual culture

studies perspective. But the related approaches from the other mentioned disciplines will contribute to the analyses.

1.3 Questions, Research Goals, Hypothesis

The following questions will be considered in this research: How do we understand that the product is ecological just by looking at its package?; Which elements of the design do convey that message?; How are ecological food products represented visually through their packages?; What are the common features among the package design of ecological food products?; What are the concepts behind the package designs?; How are the typography, colour, images, labels, slogans, material, shape, texture, and so on, on the packages of ecological food products?; Which elements of the packages do seem more important than the others if there is such a case?; How is the relationship between the visuals and other features of the product?; What are the similarities and differences between the packages by ICA and Coop?; How are the labels placed on the package?; Do they have any significance?; Do the packages allow any engagements?; How can the consumer engage himself / herself with the packages and the products?.

My goal is to answer these questions by analysing the selected products with the help of visual analysis and some related theories, such as visual social semiology, visual semiotics of Barthes, cultural approach theory, and script theory.

In this thesis, I suggest that in ecological food products' package design there are common elements which are not present on non-ecological food product's packages. I claim that having these similarities is no coincidence. Taking this claim as a point of departure, my hypothesis is that there is a green identity, constructed by the visual representations of the products. My aim is to test this hypothesis, to explore this identity, and to reveal its characteristics.

1.4 Case Studies, Method and Theory

First it must be stated that in this study the words "ecological" and "green" are used as synonyms. This study is a case study on the ecological and the non-ecological products produced by ICA and Coop with a focus on three different product categories; pasta, from the dry goods category; coffee, from the drinks category and

preserved tomato, from the preserved foods category. In selecting these products, my intention was to choose products from different food categories that are also quite common in our daily food consumption. I believe pasta, coffee and preserved tomato fulfils this criteria. The reason, for why the number of selected product types was limited with three, is the fact that this study has a page limitation which doesn't allow a larger focus group. Another issue, which needs further explanation, is the selection of the companies. Since I live in Sweden, it makes sense to focus on the products by companies in Sweden; either Swedish or non-Swedish. Also, the inspiration for this thesis topic came from my own shopping experiences in ICA and Coop. Moreover, they are two of the biggest retailers in Sweden. In addition to these, they both encouraged green movement. For instance, in the 1990s, ICA forced certain producers to apply for eco-labels for their products by decreasing the shelf space for products without eco-labels and increasing the shelf space for the products with eco-labels.¹⁰ Coop also offers its own ecological products for twenty five years and encourages environmental lifestyle.¹¹ Finally, both of them have their own brands devoted to both ecological and non-ecological products, which is very convenient for making comparisons between the ecological and non-ecological products.

This research was conducted through the application of visual analysis and qualitative research method. The selected products were compared systematically. Related theories contributed to the interpretation. I have selected visual social semiology, visual semiotics of Barthes, cultural approach theory, and script theory to support the study. "Content Analysis of Visual Images" by Bell; "Visual Meaning: a Social Semiotic Approach" by Jewitt and Oyama; "Semiotics and Iconography", by Leeuwen; "Legibility: The Need for a Functional Typography" by Rehe; "Seeing shades: Ecological and Socially Just Labeling" by Cliath are among the sources that guided my visual analysis. *Understanding Material Culture*, by Woodward and *Design History: Understanding Theory and Method* by Fallan, are the main sources, which discuss different theories on understanding material culture and design, that inspired my interpretations regarding human-object relations. *Green Goods?*

¹⁰ Morris, Julian, *Green Goods? Consumers, Product Labels and the Environment*, IEA Environment Unit, London, 1997, p.80.

¹¹ Coop, *Coop Anglamark*, retrieved 22 April 2010, < <http://www.coop.se/Ansvar--paverkan/Miljo--ekologi/Upptack-Anglamark/>>.

Consumers, Product Labels and the Environment; by Morris and *Green Marketing* by Paettie helped me to understand green marketing. I have used *Packaging Design: A Methodological Development and Simulation of the Design Process* by Klooster to analyze the material, the shape and the texture. Mackenzie's *Green Design: Design for the Environment*, which is one of the influential works in the 1990s regarding green movement, helped me in grasping the issue comprehensibly.

1.5 Structure of the Work

Chapter 1 focuses on typography, colour and image. The chapter has three main sections, each devoted to a product category. First one explores pasta packages beginning with the ecological pasta by ICA. Then it compares this product with the non-ecological pasta by ICA. The discussion continues with the ecological pasta by Coop. The section ends with the comparison of the ecological pasta to the non-ecological pasta by Coop. The second and the third sections, which follow the same structural principles, are dedicated to coffee and preserved tomato packages.

Chapter 2 discusses eco-labels, information panels, engaging texts, brand names and slogans. The chapter have four main sections. The first section focuses on eco-labels. It introduces the labels on the products and then analyses how they are used on the packages and how they contribute to the green identity. The second section is information panels. It focuses on the questions such as, what kind of information panels are present on the packages, how they are presented and their significance. The third section is devoted to engaging texts. It explores the texts which allow consumers to engage himself/ herself with the product. The section analyses the packages one by one under subtitles. The same order that has been followed in the first chapter has been adapted. The fourth section is about the brand names and the slogans. First, it analyses "i love eco" brand name and "we love eco" slogan by ICA. Then, it discusses "Änglamark" brand name and the slogan; "När du visar omtanke om dig själv, dina nära och din omvärld" ("when you care about yourself, your friends and your environment"), by Coop. How these brands and slogans are used as tools for identification and attraction, how they contribute to green consumerism and also green identity, are among the questions that were considered.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the material, the shape and the texture of the packages. It has three sections. The first one discusses the significance of the material choice by analysing the products one by one. The second section questions the role of the shape in the representation of ecological products. The final section focuses on the texture and mainly looks at the relation between the material and the texture.

The final chapter is devoted to the conclusion, which presents the outcomes of this research and suggestions for further researches.

2. Chapter 1: Typography, Colour and Image

In this chapter, the packages of ecological and non-ecological products from three product categories, which are pasta, coffee, and preserved tomato, by ICA and Coop, will be analysed in terms of typography, colour and image. They will be compared in order to see the similarities and differences. This comparison will help to reveal the features of visual identities of ecological products.

2.1 Product Category: Pasta

2.1.1 The Ecological Pasta by ICA

First “i ♥ eco” ecological pasta will be analysed (Appendix, 1.). It can be observed that there are different font types on the package. “i ♥ eco” inscription is used as logo. It is simple with round forms. Rehe suggests both the width of individual letters and also the space around the individual letters affect legibility.¹² “The white space within letters (such as in o, e, c, etc.) influences their recognition”.¹³ So since the letters, “o, e, c” are very similar to each other they are often misread. Misreading can be prevented by appropriate width selection, and also font type. Wider fonts than “normal width” improves readability.¹⁴ It can be observed that it is exactly the case on this package. Also fine strokes of individual letters reduce legibility because they have low visibility.¹⁵ So if the letters are already tented to be misread, as in the case the word “eco”, then it is important to choose a font type without fine strokes such as in Modern and Old Style Roman. It can be noted that, here on this package, the word “eco” is written with a type without fine strokes in order to be clearer to the reader. In addition to these, it is written in black on white background. “The brightness contrast between print and background seems to be the most important factor when colour in printing is under consideration”.¹⁶ Also previous studies reveal that black on white or black on yellow is more legible than other options.¹⁷ So it is clear why black is chosen for the inscription and white is

¹² Rehe, Rolf, F., “Legibility: The Need for a Functional Typography”, in Gunnar Swanson (ed.), *Graphic Design and Reading: Explorations of an Uneasy Relationship*, Allworth Press, New York, 2000, p. 101.

¹³ Rehe, p. 101.

¹⁴ Rehe, p. 101.

¹⁵ Rehe, p. 101.

¹⁶ Rehe, p. 106.

¹⁷ Rehe, p. 106.

for the background here on this package. Another important element is the font size in the discussion of typography. Type size is very crucial for legibility.¹⁸ On this package, the font size of this inscription is quite large. It is suggested that the most readable sizes are 9, 10, 11, 12 for reading and larger sizes slow down the reader since the words are recognized in sections.¹⁹ But this is valid for book reading or other longer texts. Here, there is just one logo, and almost one word to read, so the aim is not to make the buyer to read a long text but instead just to get the attention to this one word or logo. Therefore, obviously, the large font size and width, black print on white, and the placement of logo in the middle of the package surface, have been chosen to attract the customers.

Below ‘i ♥ eco’ logo, there is the title of the product; “Ekologisk Gnocchi”, in green and in uppercase. Studies reveal that lower case encourages more misreading than the upper case because uppercase letters are perceived individually which reduces misread, although it slows down the reader.²⁰ So it can be suggested that, here, uppercase has been chosen to prevent misreading because information is very important for ecological products’ packages. Clear information prevents confusion regarding making decisions when the buyer is trying to purchase green goods. Surveys show that although buyers say that they are willing to pay more for ecological products, in practise they don’t.²¹ It is claimed that one of the reasons for this would be confusion of the buyers. Sometimes they are not sure whether the product is really ecological or not.²² This observation puts more emphasis on the package design including the information and eco-labels on the package. Again, the font is simple without fine strokes to provide easy read and simple look. But the size is much smaller than “i ♥ eco” logo. It means that this has secondary importance. But one must focus on the font colour which is green. This colour choice is not random obviously. Green has been chosen also for the inscription “Ecological Dente” on the back side of the package and for the heart shape bullet, which signifies the message from ICA in regard to its ecological products. So obviously the green colour is associated with the concept of ecological on this package. The association of green colour with green products is not a new tradition. Woodham states, “In Britain in the

¹⁸ Rehe, p. 101.

¹⁹ Rehe, p. 102.

²⁰ Rehe, p. 105.

²¹ Morris, p. 10.

²² Morris, p. 10-13.

late 1980s even the colour green was often simply harnessed to the ecological cause...”²³

Below this title, details regarding the content are available in black, uppercase but in smaller size. They are in smaller size because of the fact that this is not a short title but more like a sentence or longer text. So it requires more space if the size wouldn't be smaller. Also the title must be distinguished by both its colour and its size, because this information has secondary importance in relation to the title. Again it is in upper case since it demands more careful reading from the buyer.

As it has been discussed before, to make the information very visible, clear and legible, black font on white background has been chosen for the rest of the inscriptions, such as the information panel, the recipe, the message from ICA and so on. The titles on the information panel are in white and highlighted with green to distinguish them. So it can be suggested that four colours used in the package for the font. Lowercase is used for the recipe, the information panels and the message from ICA. But the “Ecological Dente” section is in uppercase again, probably, because of the same reasons that are discussed before. It seems like, the recipe, the message from ICA and the other information have secondary importance and the inscriptions are designed for faster reading. The note from ICA is written in, italics. Rehe states that italic type is not good for emphasis and it also slows down the reading.²⁴ But since this information is not as important as the title, the brand or the phrase “ecological”, it seems the italic type has been preferred for its personal feeling and cosier effect, due to its resemblance to hand writing, to bind the customer with the producer. In addition to these, all the inscriptions on the back of the package are in more normal width and size because they are not designed for immediate attraction but more for normal reading.

Another important element to be discussed is the image. It can be observed that realistic images have been used on the package to represent pasta. Pasta images have been spread all around the package but mainly on the front side. The images are not illustrations but actual photo images of gnocchi pasta. It looks like they are uncooked pasta pieces. Jewitt and Oyama, mention the term modality which refers to reality value of images. They also discuss different modalities. One of them is naturalistic modality. If an image represents an object in the way that is close to its

²³ Woodham, Jonathan M., *Twentieth-Century Design*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1997, p. 239.

²⁴ Rehe, p. 104.

appearance in reality when it is observed with the naked eye, it means the image has naturalistic modality.²⁵ So it can be said that, here, the images have naturalistic modality which helps the product to be perceived more real.

2.1.2 Comparison of the Ecological Pasta by ICA with the Non-Ecological Pasta by ICA

It is important to make the comparison to see the differences because the difference makes the meaning. So if the ecological one would be compared with the non-ecological (Appendix, 2.) one it might be suggested that one of the most striking differences between them is the background colour. It can be claim that background colour changes the overall effect a lot. In the non-ecological product the background is orange and in comparison to the ecological one, more parts of the package are transparent. The colours used for the font are red and black. There is no use of green colour, which supports the fact that the green colour is associated with the ecological. Again, different font types have been used. The font type that has been chosen for the title of the product, which is “Route”, is simple and looks alike with the font on the ecological product’s package. On the other hand, some other inscriptions with regard to the product concept, which is “Italia”, are quite elaborate and decorated. It looks like handwriting, which doesn’t allow easy reading and seems like that wasn’t the aim. It might be suggested that it has been selected to give the crafty feeling of Italian cuisine and pasta tradition. So it can be said that another striking difference between the two products is the font type. There is nothing on the ecological product that is unreadable. It seems like legibility is crucial for the ecological product’s package. But other than that the information and story panels, recipes and all, are written, again, with a simple font. Although, in the ecological product the titles in the information panel have been highlighted with green, it is black in this one. It looks like the designers, intentionally, stay away from the green colour.

In terms of images, it is also quite different from the ecological one. There are two types of images on the package: a realistic pasta image and an image of people. The pasta image looks like a photographical image, which is not framed and placed

²⁵ Jewitt, Carey and Oyama, Rumiko, “Visual Meaning: a Social Semiotic Approach” in Jewitt, Carey and Leeuwen, Theo Van (ed.), *Handbook of Visual Analysis*, Sage Publications, London, 2004, pp. 134-156, p.151.

underneath the inscription “Route”, to illustrate the pasta type. But, although, previously, it has been said that the background colour was orange, it must be added that pasta images have been integrated to that background in the way that they are almost unnoticeable and have become the background colour. The other image is a framed photograph depicting possibly a mother and her child. It is black and white. It dominates the below half of the front side of the package. But it has also been used in a smaller scale on the back side of the package, on top of the panel that is titled “Italien, Pastan och Hela Familjen” (Italy, the pasta and the whole family). So it seems like the photograph illustrates that concept. Semiotics is helpful to analyse this image. “Semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign”.²⁶ Images are one of the signs in culture. “Images carry connotations and invite individual reminiscence”.²⁷ There are different semiological views. One of them is social semiotics. Leeuwen and Kress are among the key names for this view. They use three key words of terminology; representational, interactive and conceptual.²⁸ They say “Any image... not only represents the world, but also plays a part in some interaction and, with or without accompanying text, constitutes a recognizable kind of text”.²⁹ Also this view focuses on visual syntax; the structure of the composition.³⁰ Discussing this particular image, it can be noted that it is conceptual; meaning; it is timeless. But at the same time, other than being conceptual, it is also narrative, which means that it represents doings and happenings. Without the text it presents two people but with the inclusion of the text it can be related to a family and doing things with one’s family, maybe cooking pasta and eating together and so on. Also the image is frontal which is more efficient for identification.³¹ So, through the frontal composition as well as the inclusion of the text, which is about the Italian pasta tradition, being a family and gathering around the table and so on, the image invites the viewer for identification. It feels like the buyer isn’t just buying a package of pasta but also choosing a life style.

The difference between the two products in terms of images can easily be observed and it is quite dramatic. While the ecological one uses a very simple,

²⁶ Eco, cited by Chandler, Daniel, *Semiotics: The Basics*, 2nd edn, Routledge, New York, 2007, p. 2.

²⁷ Bell, Philip, “Content Analysis of Visual Images”, in Jewitt, Carey and Leeuwen, Theo Van (ed.), *Handbook of Visual Analysis*, Sage Publications, London, 2004, pp.10-34, p. 27.

²⁸ Jewitt, Carey and Oyama, Rumiko, p. 140.

²⁹ Leeuwen and Kress cited by Jewitt, Carey and Oyama, Rumiko, p. 140.

³⁰ Jewitt, Carey and Oyama, Rumiko, p. 141.

³¹ Jewitt, Carey and Oyama, Rumiko, p. 147.

realistic image, which presents just the product content itself; the non-ecological one uses both a realistic image of pasta and also a more conceptual image which doesn't present pasta itself but refers to a concept related to the Italian pasta tradition. In addition to this, on the non-ecological pasta package, the image of the people is much larger and more dominant than the actual pasta image. It is the salient element on the front side of the package. Due to this, it can be noted that the focus is not on the pasta itself, but instead, on the concept or what has been represented through pasta eating. "Symbolic attributes are recognized through one or more of the following characteristics: they are made salient in the representation, for example by their size, position, colour, use of lighting; they are pointed out by means of a gesture; they look out of place in the whole; they are conventionally associated with symbolic values".³² It seems, the ecological product prefers to focus on the content itself, since being ecological is already very precious and doesn't need other ways to promote itself. The content itself stands for the concept, which is an ecological lifestyle. Therefore, just the pasta image seems to be a better choice to present the product. The aim is to attract consumers by the ecological content not by something else.

To conclude, the two packages differ significantly, in terms of background colour, font type, font colour and images, although they have a few similarities such as the simplicity of the main font type.

2.1.3 The Ecological Pasta by Coop

The next ecological product to be discussed is the ecological pasta by Coop, "Änglamark" (Appendix, 3.). Again it can be said that the typography is very simple, without fine strokes. It allows the customer to read easily. It is very similar to the ecological pasta by ICA in terms of font type. It seems one type of typography has been used in the whole package. So, this is one of the differences between the ecological pasta by Coop and the ecological pasta by ICA, which uses several font types. Coop Änglamark logo itself is formed by inscriptions, which is also the case in the ecological pasta by ICA. All the inscriptions in the logotype are white on green. In addition to the logo, green colour has been used for the inscriptions "ekologi" (ecology) and "pasta" and the product information panel. So, the association of green

³² Jewitt, Carey and Oyama, Rumiko, p. 144.

colour with the concept of green is observed in both ecological products, although the association is clearer and more dominant in Coop's ecological product, since the logo "Änglamark" is green. The title of the product is in red and in terms of font size it is at least two times bigger than the other inscriptions on the same face of the package. The front side of the package doesn't have so many inscriptions. There are just the logo, the title of the product and the word 'ecology' in both Swedish and Danish. In comparison to ICA's ecological product this one is much simpler. The rest of the inscriptions, which are information panels and contact information, are placed on the back and the sides of the package. They are in dark grey on creamy white, with much smaller font size, since they have been designed for faster reading. So in this package as well, other than the titles, dark font on light background has been chosen, although it is not black on white. This is another main similarity between the two ecological products. As it has been discussed before, dark on light print improves legibility and it is very important for ecological products to communicate through the package with the buyers.

So, creamy white background is another element which contributes to this communication. It creates a simple look and also allows not just the inscriptions, but also the logos, labels and the images to be noticed easily. The labels must attract customers easily, because other than conscious green customers, who look for the necessary information or who knows what to look for, there are also less careful customers whom must be caught by the package. The information regarding the ecological content must be conveyed to the customer as efficiently as possible. Therefore it seems like it is crucial to design packages which focus on the information and the product itself.

One image, which is a photograph, showing a bowl of pasta, has been used to represent the product. So the image is very realistic. It is an actual photograph of pasta rather than an illustration of it. It is depicted as cooked and served in a red bowl. It is a simple composition. The focus is on the plain pasta, which is decorated with just a pair of green leaves of either basilica or mint (not certain). The background of the photograph is creamy green. The whole image dominates half of the surface of the package. So again it can be said that the image is the salient element of the front side of the package. As it has been discussed before, being salient carries symbolic meanings. The salient element wants attention. So the image

proves that, the focus is on the pasta content itself, as in the case of the other ecological product. The image wants the viewer to focus on the plain pasta.

If both green products would be discussed, in terms of images, some similarities can be noted. In Coop's product the image is a photograph of a bowl of pasta which has been framed and placed on the second half of the package. So both products use realistic images. However the placement and the use of photographed images on the package differ because in the package of the ecological pasta by ICA, the pasta images have been used as patterns instead of being presented in a framed, dominant photograph.

2.1.4 Comparison of the Ecological Pasta by Coop with the Non-ecological Pasta by Coop

In this case as well, the non-ecological products' package (Appendix, 4.) is more transparent than the ecological one and the non-transparent part, instead of being creamy white, which was the case in the ecological one, is much darker, which is sort of red. In this non-ecological product two font types have been used, as in the case of non-ecological ICA pasta. Also a handwriting kind of typography has been chosen in this non-ecological product as well as in the non-ecological ICA one. So it can be said that both non-ecological products share some elements. Also they differ from the both ecological products with regard to the same features, such as font type, colour, and package type. It must also be stated that there are few inscriptions on the front side of the package; Coop logo; white "Coop" inscription on green frame; the type of the pasta; farfalle, which is written in white with a handwriting kind of font and "pasta" inscription which is written with a very simple font in white and in quite small size. Other than this there is a "made- in- Italy" stamp again with simple font and in white. It can be suggested that the handwriting kind of font can be associated with Italian traditional, crafty, romantic cuisine. The non- green and green products by Coop would be compared in terms of this, it can be easily observed that the focus on the product type is done more by the font type in the non-green one, whereas, it was done more by the font size and colour in the green one. But what is common among them is the fact that they both emphasize the pasta type. Also in terms of typography there is more unity in the non-green one. Discussing the colour choice, it might be observed that although, the green colour has been used in the non-ecological one as well, it doesn't seem that it has any associations with the concept

of ecological, whereas in the ecological product it has deliberately been used to represent the ecological concept. Also the packages differ strongly in terms of background colour. The non-ecological one is dark and transparent, on the other hand, the ecological one is creamy white and has little transparency.

They also differ in terms of images. In the non-ecological one, there is one image, which is a photograph of an Italian country side. It is hidden and blurry in the reddish background of the front side of the package. On the other hand, the image in the ecological product is a framed photograph of a bowl of plain pasta which dominates the half of the package clearly. As it is discussed before in the ecological products' packages the images present the products directly, whereas in the packages of non-ecological products the images represent the products indirectly. This is one of the most striking differences between them. To make this point clearer, Barthesian visual semiotics, which is another semiotic approach to analyse images, could be applied here. Some of the key terms are *denotation*, which refers to the things that are depicted, and *connotation*, which refers to the ideas and values behind the depiction.³³ He thinks the photographs are analogies of reality. In the case of the ecological pasta the *denotation* is pasta and the *connotation*, is also quite close to pasta itself. It might be ecological pasta and lifestyle since the package tells you so. Moving on to the non-ecological product, the *denotation* is the country side or some sort of scenery. On the other hand, viewers might think that it is Italian scenery since the image is placed on a pasta package, on which it says pasta "farfalle" and "made in Italy". So the image, with the support of all the other elements, makes viewers think that the image depicts Italian countryside. Consumers associate pasta with that scenery, Italy and a lifestyle. So, all these are the *connotation* of the image. In the non-ecological one, the *denotation* is far away from the product content as well as the *connotation*, whereas in the ecological one, both of them more or less refer to the same; pasta.

³³ Leeuwen, Van Theo, 'Semiotics and Iconography, in Jewitt, Carey and Leeuwen, Theo Van (ed.), *Handbook of Visual Analysis*, Sage Publications, London, 2004, p92-118, p. 94.

2.2 Product category: Coffee

2.2.1 The Ecological coffee by ICA

The next ecological product is the ecological coffee by “i ♥ eco”, ICA (Appendix, 5.). The analysis can be started with the background colour, which is white, as in the other ecological products by ICA and Coop. It seems that white has been chosen to create a simple, clean look which allows the inscriptions and labels to be noticed easily. This is a common feature in both ecological products by ICA and Coop. Again, as in the case of the ecological ICA pasta, in this package as well, there are three types of fonts; one type for the “i ♥ eco” logo, another type for almost the rest of the inscriptions, and a third type for the message from ICA. The inscription colour is mainly black, other than the product title. The striking feature is that there is no use of green colour for the word “ekologi” (ecology) or for anything else. Brown colour has been used again in association with coffee in the title and the inscription of “fikaekologi” (ecological coffee break). So, this is a striking difference between the two brands. In the products of Coop, the concept of ecological is associated with green, but this is not always the case for the green products by ICA.

“i ♥ eco” font size is much larger than the other fonts and, again, it is placed in the same way as in the other ICA ecological product. It has been centrally placed and dominates the package. It takes your attention immediately to the logo rather than the product title. This is another difference between the two brands because in the ecological products’ packages by Coop, the logo is smaller and not as dominating as ICA’s. Also the title of the product is as dominating as the logo. The same design principles have been followed in terms of font size relation and also the choice of uppercase and lowercase, as in the ecological pasta by ICA. The title inscriptions and the content details on the front side are in uppercase to get the attention. They are designed for careful reading. But almost the rest of the inscriptions on the back and the sides, such as, the instructions regarding how to open the package or the details about the product and the note from ICA, which is also written in italics, are in lowercase and in smaller size, which is for faster reading.

Again, realistic coffee images have been used all around the package as a pattern, not like a framed photograph. Coffee hasn’t been represented in a glass or anything, but it has been represented as an ingredient. So the similarity between the two ecological ICA products, in terms of use of images, is very clear. The aim here is

just to present the content as naturally as possible. To conclude, it can be said that both ecological products' packages are very similar in terms of colour choice, font type, size and image. The only difference is the lack of green colour in this package.

2.2.2 Comparison of the Ecological Coffee with the Non-Ecological Coffee by ICA

Again, the discussion will begin with the background colour, which is green. This can be associated with the type of coffee that is skånerost (Appendix, 6). Skånerost is represented by green by other brands as well. In this case the inscriptions are in white on black or green. Using light font on dark is called "type in reverse".³⁴ It is claimed that type in reverse slows down the reading 14.7 percent. Also, it is not preferred by the readers. Because of all these reasons, type in reverse is not advised to be used too much but instead it must be used just to attract the readers. So, the use must be limited such as for short lines or titles and the suggested font size is at least 10 or 12.³⁵ It seems it functions exactly like this in this package, that is; to attract customers and also to make the inscription visible, since a dark green background is chosen to represent skånerost. It must be added that in both non-ecological products by ICA the background is dark, whereas in both ecological products by ICA, the background is light.

Larger font has been used for the title of the product, which is "Skånerost". Smaller font in uppercase has been chosen for more details below the title. The font type is again simple and similar to the other main font types both in the ecological and the non-ecological products' packages by ICA. One difference is that there is one font type on this package. Also more uppercase font has been used on this package. It might be due to the fact that there are more instructions on this package regarding how to make coffee. Therefore, it demands more careful reading, which is provided by fonts all set in caps.

A large, framed, photographical image of two mugs of coffee dominates more than a half of the front side of the package. The mugs are decorated in a traditional way probably representing traditional Skåne porcelains. So, it can be said that the image has a clear association with the type of coffee that is in the package. In terms of image, this package is very different from the ecological coffee by ICA, which

³⁴ Rehe, p. 107.

³⁵ Rehe, p. 107.

doesn't have any framed photographical image of cups of coffee. In the ecological one the coffee image represents just the coffee itself. It is totally naked, it is just coffee, whereas in the non-ecological one, it is dressed and it is not just an ingredient but also is a drink. Moreover it is not just a drink but a tradition, a culture.

2.2.3 The Ecological Coffee by Coop

The next ecological coffee is by Änglamark Coop (Appendix, 7.). The font type, which has been used for the ecological pasta, has also been used for Coop Änglamark ecological coffee. So as it has been mentioned before, it is a simple font which allows easy reading. The title of the product has been written in much larger size. In terms of these features, it is similar to the Coop ecological pasta. The same design principles have been followed in both products. Again, the background colour is creamy white. Also, the inscription "ekologi" (ecology) in green, proves that the green colour is associated with the concept of ecological. In addition to this, the rest of the inscriptions are in brown as well as the product title. It seems like natural coffee is represented by the selection of the brown colour for most of the inscription. So to sum up, the same kind of simple type of font has been used all around the package, which was also the case in the other ecological Coop product. Again, the product title is defined by another colour, which is brown, and a larger font size. The green colour has been used in the same way as in the other ecological Coop product. So it seems both Coop ecological products share a lot in common.

In terms of image, this package shares a common language with the other Coop green product. It is a photograph of a glass of coffee, accompanied by some bread. So it is a realistic image of a glass of coffee. As it has been discussed before, realistic image has been used to represent the ecological pasta as well. It must be stressed that the coffee in the photograph is not served in a porcelain or ceramic mug but in a glass. It can be claimed that the reason behind this preference is to focus more on the coffee itself. In the glass, coffee is visible and undecorated. Comparing this product to the other ecological product by ICA, the similarity in the attitude, which is a realistic and simple approach to the coffee itself, can be observed. But still there is a significant difference between them. On the package of ICA ecological coffee, the image of coffee grains has been spread around the package like a pattern, whereas on

the package of Coop ecological coffee, the image represents coffee as a drink, in a glass.

To conclude, the attitude towards coffee is similar in both ecological products by ICA and Coop and also in both non-ecological products by ICA and Coop (the non-ecological coffee by Coop will be discussed after this). Both ecological products put more emphasis on the coffee itself. On the other hand, the non-ecological products focus on the coffee drinking traditions and cultures, rather than just the coffee itself. They are making their points through their images.

2.2.4 Comparison of the Ecological Coffee by Coop with the Non-Ecological Coffee by Coop

This time brown colour has been chosen for the background, probably to represent coffee. The typography is quite simple. This is one of the common features between the two Coop coffees. Mainly white colour has been used for the font. Since the background is quite dark, this choice makes the inscription visible. Other than white, also black, to highlight, brown, for “Colombia Kaffe” inscription, and yellow, for decoration and for “Arabica Kaffe” stamp, have been used on the package. So it can be suggested that, in terms of colour and typography, the main differences are; the background colour and the use of green for some inscriptions, which doesn't exist in the non-ecological product (Appendix, 8.) which can be considered as a proof for the connection of the green colour to the concept of ecological. But in terms of font style, both packages are very similar, which makes sense, since they belong to the same company, they have a common language in terms of design. But a striking difference is the arrangement of the title on this package. The title has been written both horizontally and diagonally. The horizontal one is in white and more visible. The other one is in light brown and, since the background is also in brown, it is not that much visible. It seems the only aim here is to make the package more decorated or fancier. It looks like this package wants to distinguish itself from the other, ecological, very simple, package. But in terms of font type, size and arrangement of the rest of the package, it is similar to the ecological one.

Continuing with the image, it can be observed that the image on the package of the non-ecological Coop coffee is also realistic, framed, photographical image of a cup of coffee as in the case of the ecological Coop coffee. But still, there are some

differences. First of all, the coffee has been served in a glass in the case of the ecological one, which puts more emphasis on the content itself; the dark coffee, which can be clearly seen in the glass. This is supported by the clean picture. On the other hand, the non-ecological coffee has been served in a cup and the colours of the photograph are sort of brown and white. The colour choice helps the image to integrate with the overall package and it looks more like a pattern rather than a photograph placed on the package. Also both the colour choice and the composition, which includes the selection of cup instead of glass, the captured smoke coming out from the cup, puts more emphasis on the feeling of coffee and all the connotations, such as warm, cosy feeling, coffee culture and all, rather than just the coffee itself. In addition to these, the placement of the image is quite different. In the non-ecological product the image has been used repeatedly all around the package in different sizes and sometimes blur, as a pattern. But in the ecological one, one clear image, which dominates half of the package, has been used in the front side of the package. So, these are the significant differences between the ecological and the non-ecological Coop coffee.

2.3 Product Category: Preserved Tomato

2.3.1 The Ecological Preserved Tomato by ICA

The last product category is preserved tomato. It will begin with the ecological preserved tomato by ICA (Appendix, 9.). As in the other ecological ICA products, in this one too, three types of font have been used. The font types are the same as the font types in the other ICA ecological products. So it is simple, without any fine strokes and very clear. In terms of the sizes as well, all the selections and the arrangements are the same; such as the enormous dominating logo in the centre, use of upercases for important titles and details and much smaller lowercase letters for the other information. The main colours for the fonts are; black, for most of the inscriptions, white, for the titles in the information panel and green, for the title for the product. So, again, the association of the green colour with the concept of ecological can be observed in this ICA product as well. Regarding the colour scheme, it can be observed that, again, the background is white. As it has been mentioned several times, earlier, this selection aims to make the inscriptions, labels

and images easily noticeable and to give a clean, simple, serious look to the product. Other than white, again, green has been used to highlight the titles in the information panel. In addition to this, as it has mentioned before, black has been used for most of the inscriptions. So in terms of colour scheme, font types and sizes, this ecological ICA product is very similar to the other ICA ecological products.

Discussing the image, it can be observed that realistic photographic images of chopped tomatoes have been chosen. Again, the images have been used as a pattern and have been spread mainly on the front side of the package. In terms of use of images, this product shares much in common with the other ecological ICA products. All of them have been represented by realistic photographic images which have been used as patterns and have been spread around the package quite naturally.

2.3.2 Comparison of the Ecological Preserved Tomato by ICA with the Non-Ecological Preserved Tomato by ICA

Discussing the non-ecological preserved tomato by ICA (Appendix, 10.), in terms of font type, it can be said that, again, a simple, clean font has been used. The product title is in white, written with lowercase, whereas the other inscriptions, such as, the information panel, the recipe, and so on, have been written in black. Again, also white has been used for the titles in the information panel. So to sum up, it seems the colours for font is not so different than the ecological ICA product but there is one significant difference, which is the lack of green colour in the non-ecological product. This difference supports the association of the green colour with the concept of ecological once again. It can be said that in overall design there is no real emphasis done by the font type or size.

The non-ecological product is also different in terms of background colour, which is red. As it has been discussed before, the background colour is one of the significant differences between the ecological and the non-ecological products by both ICA and Coop. It is always darker, if the product is not green, in these cases. While the background is white in the ecological ICA product, it is red in the non-ecological product, probably to represent tomato.

In terms of images, in this product as well, a realistic photographic tomato image has been used but not as a pattern, instead, it is more like a staged photograph.

It is a photograph of tomato in a wooden spoon. So, again, in terms of images, although, both products have something in common, they still differ.

2.3.3 The Ecological Preserved Tomato by Coop

Starting the analysis with the font type, it can be noted that it is the same font type that has been chosen for the other ecological products by Coop (Appendix, 11.). The title, on the front, has been written with larger size fonts than the other inscriptions. It can be suggested that it is twice as large as the other inscriptions. The title of the product is in red, which can be associated with the content; tomato, and it differs from the other inscriptions which are in green. First of all, the words “ekologi” (ecology) and “økologi” (ecology) are in green, which shows the connection of green colour to the concept of ecological. Also the explanation of the product is in green on the front side. So it might be summed up that on the front side, for the font, three colours are used; red for the title, green for the product detail and the words ecology in Swedish and Danish, and white for the inscriptions in Coop Änglamark logo. For the rest of the inscriptions on the package, white has been chosen, apart from one title in the information panel.

In terms of use of colours on the overall package, white and red are the dominant colours. The front side of the package, where the product title and the eco-labels and the ecological inscription exist, and the background are white in order to define the face of the product and also, again, to allow a clean, plain space, where the information can easily be noticed. For the rest of the package, red colour has been chosen for the background, which might represent the colour of tomato. This is actually a striking difference both between this and the other ecological Coop products as well as the ecological product by ICA. In the other ecological examples, the background is always white or creamy white. In addition to these, green colour has been used as a background colour in one of the information charts.

Discussing the image, it might be observed that a realistic photograph of tomatoes has been placed on the below half of the front side of the package. It represents chopped and whole red tomatoes. The focus has been made to the tomatoes with close up and red colour dominates the photograph as well as the front side. In a way, it explains why the title has been written in red. So, it makes the association clear. In terms of images, this product follows the same style with the

other ecological Coop products and it differs from the ecological products by ICA, which uses realistic images as more like patterns rather than framed photographs.

2.3.4 Comparison of the Ecological Preserved Tomato by Coop with the Non-Ecological Preserved Tomato by Coop

As in the other Coop products both in ecological and non-ecological, a simple, plain font type has been chosen. So in terms of font type all products by Coop follow the same style.

All the inscriptions regarding the product title and the details are in black. This is one of the first significant differences between this product (Appendix, 12.) and the ecological Coop product, where the product title was in red and the other details were in green. Also, white has been used for the other information, such as, “made in Italy” or “natural”. The rest of the inscriptions are in black, which is another difference between the two products because most of the inscriptions in the ecological Coop product are in white.

In terms of use of colours, in general, in the non-ecological product it can be observed that the dominating colour is red, which was also the case for the ecological product by Coop, and the non-ecological product by ICA. It is obvious that red colour represents tomato. In terms of colour the main difference between the non-ecological Coop and the ecological Coop is the use of green colour. In this product green is not used for anything other than the Coop logo itself, which has nothing to do with the content.

Analysing the font size, it can be observed that the title is twice as large as the other inscriptions on the front. The rest of the inscriptions are much smaller than the inscriptions on the front. Again, in terms of font size, similar design principles have been followed with the other Coop products.

In terms of images these two products are similar. But again they are slightly different. The image, on the package of the non-ecological Coop product, dominates and covers the whole front side of the package and the inscriptions are written on it. So, the image is also the background. But on the package of the ecological Coop product, the image is on the below half of the package. In the non-ecological product as well, realistic photographical images of tomatoes have been used in a framed form. But in this one chopped tomatoes are in a white bowl, whereas in the

ecological Coop product, they are not presented in anything. Since the chopped tomatoes are in focus, what the viewers see is just close up tomatoes itself rather than more decorated and composed photograph of tomatoes. So it can be suggested that, so far, the ecological products both by ICA and Coop differ from the non-ecological products both by ICA and Coop in terms of images. The ecological products by both companies are represented by realistic images but in a more plain and undecorated way, whereas the non-ecological products by both ICA and Coop are represented, again, by realistic photographical images but in more staged, decorated way. So it can be suggested that both ecological products focus more on the content itself in their imagery. On the other hand, both non-ecological products focus more on the experience, the concept and the connotations of the content in their imagery. So these common features among the products support the hypothesis that ecological products have a common language in their visual representations through packages. But also it seems this is valid for the non-ecological products as well. To conclude, the difference between ecological and non-ecological reveals their identity.

3. Chapter 2: Eco-Labels, Information Panels, Engaging texts, Brand Name and Slogans

3.1 Eco-Labels

“Eco labelling belongs to the set of product policy instruments which have the aim of informing consumers and users about the environmental aspects of products. Characteristic for this instrument is the fact that the information is given only for a limited segment of the market, namely that part of a certain product group which is, according to certain criteria, the least environmentally harmful one. It is a voluntary instrument, i.e. its use is not compulsory. It is assumed that the suppliers of qualifying products will apply the label and use it as a marketing tool”.³⁶

Eco-labelling applied by Germany in 1978 for the first time. It was the eco-label “Blue Angel”, which was applied to around 3,000 products. In the late 1980s environmentalism gained more popularity. Germany was the leading figure in terms of environmental labelling for ten years and it inspired some other countries like Canada, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Japan to have their own eco-labels. In 1992, European Union started to use eco-label.³⁷

The products that want to be eco-labelled must fulfil the certain criteria. These criteria may also include safety and quality other than environmental issues. The whole lifecycle of the product must be appropriate to environmental standards to get the eco-label. Also the label must be updated based on the technological and market developments. Therefore, the products can only be labelled for a limited time and they must be updated to renew their labels.³⁸

A survey held in 1990, in Britain, revealed that 50 percent of the customers were willing to pay more for environmental products.³⁹ In 1993, another survey held in USA by Cambridge Reports- Research International revealed that 30 percent of the customers claim that they wouldn't mind paying 10 percent more for green products. But main manufacturers and a report by Yankelovich Partner's of Westport, Connecticut (1993) stated that in practice this is not the case, instead just

³⁶ Oosterhuis, Frans; Rubik, Frieder; Scholl, Gerd, *Product Policy in Europe: New Environmental Perspectives*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1996' p. 137.

³⁷ Oosterhuis, Frans; Rubik, Frieder; Scholl, Gerd, p.137; Paettie, Ken, *Green Marketing*, Pitman Publishing, London, 1992' p. 226.; Cairncross, Frances, *Green, Inc.*, Earthscan Publications Ltd., London, 1995, p. 184.

³⁸ Oosterhuis, Frans; Rubik, Frieder; Scholl, Gerd, p.138.

³⁹ Morris, p. 10.

10 percent of the USA customers can be defined that “evergreen customers”. Another survey, in 1996, by Environmental Research Associates also pointed out that 10 percent of the customers look for information regarding environmental issues on the products. So, all these researches reveal that customers behave differently than they say they would.⁴⁰

There are several explanations for this situation. One of them is the fact that customers are not sure whether the product is green or not. Therefore, it is suggested that eco-labels can improve the customer awareness and assure that the product is green.⁴¹ Peattie states, “such labelling aids consumers in making green purchasing in making green purchasing decisions, helps to discourage misleading green claims, encourages producers to develop greener products and facilitates trade in green products”.⁴² The issue of confused customers and lack of trust to the market is also pointed out by Kuhn. He says “If consumers are willing to pay a premium on environmental friendliness but are unable to observe it as a product attribute, there is an incentive for dirty producers to sell their products as green. Anticipating such cheating, consumers reduce their willingness to pay...”.⁴³ Another significant observation on consumer attitudes has been done by Cliath. She states that most of consumers scan the packages randomly and either they are caught by a catchy element on the package or by the overall impression. She adds “Labels are crucial in this process of locating familiar enough or good enough products quickly”.⁴⁴ Based on all these, it can be suggested that eco-labels are important elements of visual identities of ecological products as well as green marketing, because through this identity the products can distinguish and sell themselves better.

Analysing the selected products in terms of eco-labels it can be noted that there are four eco-labels on the packages. These are; “Ekologiskt Jordbruk”, “KRAV- Se Ekol 1”, “Godkjent Økologisk av Debio” and “UTZ CERTIFIED: Good Inside”. In the following parts of this chapter, these labels will be introduced and how they are presented on the packages will be analysed.

⁴⁰ Morris, p. 11.

⁴¹ Morris, p. 12-13.

⁴² Peattie, p. 226.

⁴³ Kuhn, Michael, *The Greening of Markets: Product Competition, Pollution and Policy Making in a Duopoly*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, 2005, p. 11-12.

⁴⁴ Cliath, Alison Grace, ‘Seeing shades: Ecological and Socially Just Labeling’, *Organization and Environment*, vol. 20, no.4, 2007, pp. 413-439, p. 417, ELIN@Lund, retrieved 25 April 2010.

“Ekologiskt Jordbruk” is a label given by European Commission regarding organic farming. The translation of “Ekologiskt Jordbruk” would be organic farming. Based on the information on the European Commission Organic Farming website, it can be said that, through this label, European Commission wants to certify organically produced products and also to guarantee the customers that the product is organic. On the website, they define organic farming as follows; “organic farming is an agricultural system that seeks to provide you, the consumer, with fresh, tasty and authentic food while respecting natural life-cycle systems”.⁴⁵

It seems this labelling has been practicing since 2007 and will be updated in terms of rules and logotype from 1 July 2010. On the website, there is significant information, which is necessary to mention here, in order to explain the importance of eco-labels in regard to marketing of the product and communication to the customers, who are into ecological products. It says “Statistics show that many consumers in the EU are looking for products bearing these organic logos and labels... Studies estimate that the market for organic products is growing by 10-15% a year”.⁴⁶ So as it has been discussed before, eco-labels help the customers with their purchasing decisions and provide assurance. If one would look at the products that have been discussed so far, it can be noted that “Ekologiskt Jordbruk” logo is available on all the ecological products by Coop, and ecological pasta by ICA.

“KRAV” is the other label which is quite common on the packages of ecological products. On the official web page for KRAV, Sweden, it says “KRAV is a key player in the organic market in Sweden since 1985. We develop organic standards and promote the “KRAV-label”. The aided awareness is 98 percent!”.⁴⁷ This is another information which explains how eco-labels function on the package and how significant they are in terms of creating awareness and green marketing. It can be said that eco-labels are important elements of green identity. The “KRAV” label is present on ecological coffee by ICA ecological preserved tomato by ICA and all the ecological products by Coop.

“Godkjent Økologisk av Debio” is a Norwegian eco-label certifying organic products and producers in Norway. It can also be given to the imported products. Judgements regarding whether the products are valid for the certification or not is

⁴⁵European Commission, *Organic Farming*, retrieved 22 April 2010, <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/organic-farming/what-organic_en >

⁴⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/organic/organic-farming/what-organic_en

⁴⁷ Krav Sweden, *Welcome to Krav*, retrieved 22 April 2010, <<http://www.krav.se/System/Spraklankar/In-English/KRAV-/>>.

done based on EU regulations.⁴⁸ On the web page it says “We ensure that farms and fish farms, processing and marketing enterprises, importers and others follow the regulations for organic production, and meet the requirements for marketing organic products under Debio’s Ø-label”.⁴⁹ Among the products discussed in this thesis, the ecological preserved tomato by Coop is the only product, which carries this label.

UTZ certification program has been started in 1997 by Guatemalan coffee producers and Dutch Ahold coffee company.⁵⁰

“UTZ Certified is dedicated to creating an open and transparent marketplace for agricultural products. It offers coffee, tea and cocoa certification programs and manages traceability for RSPO certified palm oil. UTZ Certified’s vision is to achieve sustainable agricultural supply chains where farmers are professionals implementing good practices which lead to better businesses, where the food industry takes responsibility by demanding and rewarding sustainably grown products, and where consumers buy products which meet their standard for social and environmental responsibility”.⁵¹

This quotation supports the points that have been made in the introduction of eco-labels, earlier in this chapter. Among the selected products both the ecological and the non-ecological coffee products by ICA have this label.

3.1.1 Analysing the Products

“Ekologiskt Jordbruk” is the only eco-label on the package of the ecological pasta by ICA. It is placed on the front side of the package below the product details regarding the ecological content. “Ekologiskt Jordbruk”, “KRAV”, “Godkjent økologisk av Debio” are the labels on the ecological pasta by Coop. They are all placed on the front side of the package, to the right side of the image. In the first chapter it has already been discussed that images are very strong. In addition to that, Cliath also claims that realistic imagery is one the characteristics of true green products and also one of the elements that illustrates the companies’ sincerity.⁵² Keeping these in mind, it can be suggested that placing eco-labels next to the image

⁴⁸Debio, *Organic Certification*, retrieved 22 April 2010, <<http://www.debio.no/section.cfm?path=1,61?path=62>>.

⁴⁹ <<http://www.debio.no/section.cfm?path=1,61?path=62>>, retrieved 22 April 2010.

⁵⁰UTZ Certified Good Inside, retrieved 22 April 2010, <<http://www.utzcertified.org/index.php?pageID=108>>, retrieved 22 April 2010.

⁵¹ <<http://www.utzcertified.org/index.php?pageID=108>>, retrieved 22 April 2010.

⁵² Cliath, p. 422.

is not a coincidence. This arrangement brings two important elements; realistic imagery and eco-labels together to enhance their effect even more. Other than these labels, the product brand and the logo itself can also be considered as a label.

The labels, on the package of the ecological coffee by ICA, are: “KRAV” and “UTZ CERTIFIED”. “UTZ CERTIFIED” has been placed on the right top of the front side of the package, whereas “KRAV” is on the bottom of the package below the explanation which tells that the package contains ecological and certified coffee. Cliath also suggests that eco-labels are not enough to present ecological products. It is important to support eco-labels with great detail of product information, contact information, gateways and educational panels and so on.⁵³ So having this in mind, it is understandable why the eco-labels are placed underneath the information regarding the product content in the case of ICA products so far. The labels, on the package of the ecological coffee by Coop, are: “Ekologiskt Jordbruk” and “KRAV”. Other than the eco-labels it carry “FAIRTRADE” label as well. All the labels have been placed on the front of the package, on the right side of the image. On top, there is FAIRTRADE, underneath that there is “Ekologiskt Jordbruk” and below that there is “KRAV”. Änglamark Coop logo is on the top of the front side of the package and centrally placed on the first half of the package. It dominates the space. So on the package, there are two dominant elements: the logo of the product and the image. These two elements would catch the attention to the concept ecological easily. Therefore, placing the labels next to the image makes sense, if making the labels easily noticeable is the intention.

The only eco-label, on the package of the ecological preserved tomato by ICA, is “KRAV”. It is placed on the right bottom corner of the front side of the package, next to the details regarding the product content. So, it is quite similar to the other ecological ICA products in terms of arrangement. The label follows the information to support each other. The label functions as a proof. The information has been introduced first and it claims something, then the label proves that claim. The ecological preserved tomato by Coop carries the following labels; “Ekologiskt Jordbruk”, “KRAV”, “Godkjent Økologisk av Debio”. In this case as well, they have been placed on the right side of the image. Also the product logo and the label are on the first half of the front side of the package in the same way with all the other ecological Coop products’ packages.

⁵³ Cliath, p. 422-424.

In conclusion, as it has been shown, during the eco-label discussion, none of the eco-labels exist on a product that is non-ecological (except UTZ Certified). This is a significant difference between the packages of the ecological and the non-ecological products. On the other hand, all the ecological products carry at least one eco-label. The ecological products by ICA differ from the ecological products by Coop, in terms of placement of eco-labels on the package. On the packages by ICA, the eco-labels have been placed under or next to the content details, saying that the product is ecological (except UTZ certification, which has been placed on the top corner), whereas on the packages by Coop, they have been placed on the right side of the image. But no matter what the differences are, in the packages both by ICA and Coop, the labels have been placed on the front side of the package and also they are noticeable. Different sources and studies that have been mentioned previously, prove that eco-labels are crucial to communicate to customers and convey the message that the product is ecological. They function to ensure, convince and attract consumers. Therefore, they are both very important for environmental movement and also green marketing. Due to these reasons, they are also indispensable elements of the visual identity of green products. So, it can be concluded that one of the elements of green identity is eco-labels.

3.2 Information Panels

In this thesis, the term ‘information panels’ refers to all the information with regard to products’ ingredients, nutrition facts, packaging information, expiry dates, contact information, information regarding how to use the product. In this section, presence or absence or visual differences among the information panels on all the packages will be considered. Although, most of the time all this information is gathered in one block or at least presented together in some form, some differences can be observed on the packages of the selected products. For example, in some cases the information regarding ingredients has been placed separately.

If one would look at the information panels it can be observed that they are available on all the selected ecological and non-ecological products’ packages by ICA and Coop. It can be added that they have been placed on the back side of the packages in all the pasta packages. One difference in placement is that the information panel has been placed on the right column on the ecological pasta by

ICA, whereas it has been placed on the left column on the package of the non-ecological pasta by ICA. Another difference is the colour choice. Green colour has been used to highlight the title on the information panel on the package of the ecological ICA pasta. But instead of green, black has been chosen to highlight the titles on the package of the non-ecological ICA pasta. It can also be said that the pasta packages are quite similar in terms of arrangement of these information.

If one would look at the placement of information panels on the selected coffee packages, it can be observed that they differ. For example, on the package of the ecological coffee by ICA, there is no title saying “ingredients” instead, on the front of the package, below the title, the content details have been given with cap locks. It can be said that this information is very dominant and visible due to the facts that it has been placed on the front, below the title, it has been set all in caps with large size (especially comparatively to the other “ingredients” information) and printed black on white. The same principle has been followed on the package of the non-ecological coffee by ICA. But on the packages of the ecological and the non-ecological coffee by Coop, the ingredients information has been placed on the back with much smaller font. So it can be concluded that ICA products differ from Coop products in terms of the placement and the overall presentation of this information. But it must be emphasized that the difference is not related to being ecological or not. So it seems like on the both packages by ICA, there is an emphasis on the information, ‘ingredients’. In addition to these, on the coffee packages by both companies, there are additional information, which are not available in the other products, such how to open the package and dosage. On the ICA packages, they have been placed on the same spot, both on the ecological and the non-ecological one. On the ecological ICA package no titles have been used for any information. On the ecological Coop coffee package the information panel has been divided. Most of the information is on the back. But some of them are on the side, such as company contact information, expiry date, consumer info service, package details, etc. Also there are some repetitions on the side such as, the type and the amount. Whereas on the non-ecological Coop coffee package, almost all the information is on the back. For the information scripts on the Coop package, smaller font size has been chosen. Another common feature of the ecological and the non-ecological Coop product’s packages is the placement of the information regarding dosage and how to open the package. They are on the side.

One last general observation regarding the coffee packages is that there is no 'nutrition facts' panel.

Examining the preserved tomato packages it can be observed that on the package of the ecological preserved tomato by ICA, not just the ingredients but all the other information such as nutrition facts, packaging information, expiry dates, contact information, information regarding how to use the product, have been placed as a column on the back of the package. But on the non-ecological product by ICA, again, the whole information panel has been placed on the side of the package as a column. If the packages by Coop would be analysed, it can be noted that the ecological and the non-ecological packages differ from each other a lot because of the fact that their shape and material are so different. The ecological product is in a cylindrical, metal can whereas the non-ecological one is in a carton package. On the non-ecological product the information panel has been divided into two parts. One part, which includes nutrition facts, serving tips and the company contact information in three languages, has been placed on one side. The other part, which includes ingredients, expiry date, package information, and customer service contact and website information, has been placed on the other side in three languages as well. In the case of ecological Coop product, the front side or the face of the product covers approximately a quarter of the package and the information panel has been spread equally to the rest of the package. Three columns can be observed. Each of them has been dedicated to one language and again the information has been presented in three languages; Swedish, Danish and Norwegian. Other than these columns there is one section has been devoted to nutrition facts and the company contact information. One final comment for the Coop packages is that green has been chosen for the nutrition facts panel for all the products, except the preserved tomato. So since it has been used in all the products it can be suggested that this choice has nothing to do with being green. It just matches with the logo of Coop which uses green.

3.3 Engaging Texts

In her research Cliath also analyses green and blue products' packages to reveal the true green and blue products. Cliath says "at the broadest level, this analysis finds that labelling alone is not enough to permit concerned consumers to

see shades and make real choices”.⁵⁴ She uses five strategies to see the visual differences among the products. One of them is “Mimicry or Sincerity – An invitation to join in?”.⁵⁵ This strategy, in a way, measures sincerity of the product. The same strategy will be used here as well to reveal the elements of green identity. It is important to see if the label is accompanied with detailed contact information and information about the certification organization or some engaging texts and gateway information to inform the buyer more and also invite to learn more. Based on Cliath’s study and my own observations it seems engaging texts are one of the elements of ecological products’ packages. She states ‘the majority of organic and fair trade coffees do present ownership. Approximately 70% of organic and 90% of fair trade coffees provided information on company ownership, whereas only about half of non-organic and non-fair trade products did.’⁵⁶ So since informational panels have already discussed above, in this section engaging texts will be under focus. Engaging texts include recipes, voice of the company, voice of the farmer and gateways and so on. In other words it refers to every text which allows buyers to engage themselves with the product.

3.3.1 Product Category: Pasta

The first product that will be discussed is the ecological pasta by ICA. There are three texts that can be considered as engaging texts. On the back of the package there is the voice of ICA. It is defined with a heart shape green bullet. It mentions that the company wants to inspire the customers for ecological lifestyle. In the text they advise to use ecological products and inform customers that they are working on environmental issues. They also invite the buyers to learn more about environmental works from their web site. The font type of the text is different from the other texts on the package. It is an italic type with fine strokes and curves, whereas the other inscriptions were simpler, without curves and look more mechanical. It can be suggested that with more decorated and italic font type choices, a feeling of real letter has been tried to be imitated. It can also be claimed that through this letter and visual choices, the company aims to engage itself with the customer even more. Another text, below this one, is titled as “ecological dente”. Once again green colour

⁵⁴ Cliath, p. 435.

⁵⁵ Cliath, p. 421.

⁵⁶ Cliath, p. 427.

has been used for this title. As it has been discussed in the first chapter on this package green colour is associated with ecological content. In this text product content information has been repeated with more details. It mentions that the product is ecological gnocchi pasta which goes well with both meat and vegetables. Also it has been suggested to eat it with some tomato sauce with nuts and paprika and so on. But the important thing about this text is that it ends with the following sentence: “we love eco”. This sentence is very important in terms of engagement and identification. It also refers to the brand of ICA “i ♥ eco”. The logo and this sentence work together to create an identity both for the brand and for the customers. Durkheim says “... to express our own ideas even to ourselves, we need to attach those ideas to material things that symbolize them”.⁵⁷ People built identities for themselves through every kind of choices. What we eat, how we dress, what we read, what we buy, and so on, define us. So objects are also crucial in building identity. It can also be added that our shopping list can tell a lot about ourselves. Moreover, through our consumption habits we can be part of a social change as well. Woodward says “but why are objects held to matter? ...because they are involved in social representation or symbolization, and are recognized as containing important meanings for social action”.⁵⁸ So, all these texts are motivations for customers, who want to define themselves as environmental. In addition to these, on the side of the package, there is a recipe for gnocchi with spinach. This also supports the other engagement texts. They all work together to present an environmental lifestyle and invite the customers to be part of it. It can be concluded that engagement texts have significant functions.

The next package is non-ecological pasta by ICA. In this package as well there is a note from ICA. Again it differs in terms of font style from the other texts on the package. It is not as sharp as others. It has softer edges. It can be suggested a note is something personal if it is compared with a general information text. Its personal feeling has been conveyed through softer shapes. It can also be claimed that ICA has adopted a strategy to engage itself with the customer through these voice panels as a marketing strategy. This time instead of using environmental content it focuses on tasty and quality food for life and the choices they offer. The other panel next to this one focuses on Italian cuisine and concept of being a family. The family concept is

⁵⁷ Durkheim, cited by Woodward, Ian, *Understanding Material Culture*, Sage Publications, London, 200, p. 84.

⁵⁸ Woodward, p. 28.

supported by an image as well, which illustrates two people – assumingly a mother and a child but it is not clear for me. So it invites people to engage themselves with this lifestyle this time. “Photographs can symbolically make us relate”.⁵⁹ The importance of images in engagement has already been discussed in the first chapter, but here, once again it can be observed how images help to illustrate and support the concept. Also it must be said that the information or image on top represents the more idealized and the things on the bottom is more the informative.⁶⁰ In this case the image, which is on top, represents something idealized as it is suggested, on the other hand the text, which is at the bottom, represents detailed information.

So, to conclude, one of the differences between the two packages in terms of engaging texts is the content. While one of them focuses on environmental lifestyle, the other one focuses on Italian lifestyle. Also in the ecological one there is a recipe which is not available on the non-ecological one. Another difference is the visual presentation of the texts. Although, on the non-ecological products’ package, the text is accompanied with an image on top, there is no image accompanying the text on the ecological one. Kress and Leeuwen say “Secondly’ symbolic relations are not real relations... It can “lie”.⁶¹ Images create symbolic relations. Images can also lie like symbols. This can be the reason why there is no image accompanying the text in the ecological one because the product is trying to look more sincere and pure.

The next ecological product that will be discussed is the ecological pasta by Coop. On this package there is no text that can be considered as engaging text. This is an interesting result because, so far, ecological products have many features in common.

The last product in this category is the non-ecological pasta by Coop. On this package there is a section titled as “servering tips” (serving tips). Quite small, white font on dark background has been used. It is not so visible. Actually, it is hard to notice and due to that fact, it wouldn’t attract buyers when they glance the package. Then it can be claimed that this section is not designed strategically for engagement. Although, the text’s content is appropriate to be considered as an engagement text, its visual presentation fails to do so. Comparing this product with the ecological Coop product, it can be observed that there is no significant difference between them but it

⁵⁹ Bell, Philip, “Content Analysis of Visual Images”, in Jewitt, Carey and Leeuwen, Theo Van (ed.), *Handbook of Visual Analysis*, Sage Publications, London, 2004, pp. 10-34, .p.27.

⁶⁰ Jewitt and Oyama, p. 149.

⁶¹ Kress and Leeuwen, cited by Jewitt and Oyama, p. 135.

is also interesting to see that the so-called engaging text is on the non-ecological package.

To conclude the discussion regarding this product category, it can be suggested that there is no shared feature in terms of engagement texts between the two ecological products. But products by the same brands share similarities though.

3.3.2 Product category: Coffee

The first package that will be discussed belongs to the ecological coffee by ICA. Again there are several texts that can be called engaging texts on the package. One of them is again the voice of ICA. The note is quite similar to the one on the package of ecological pasta by ICA. It is inspiring to join to environmental lifestyle. It mentions about ICA's environmental projects and goal they set for 2020. It looks ambitious and serious. Also it invites the reader to learn more from their web page. The visual style is exactly the same as the other ecological product except the placement. This time it is placed on the side of the package. Since the shape of this package is like a box, it offers more surfaces. Below this text, there is another text which is titled as "Fikaekologi". The word "fika" refers to the coffee drinking culture in Sweden. Basically, having coffee, maybe with some sweets is called "fika". Both the title and the content are designed to inspire the reader for ecological choices. The text again emphasizes that the product is ecological with full of taste and spices. Also it gives some tips to make your coffee even better or experimental. Again the text ends with the slogan "we love eco". There is a clear invitation to associate yourselves with this product as customers through the brand, which is "i ♥ eco" and the slogan-like ending sentences; "we love eco". With the brand it addresses the customer; you! When one takes the product from the shelf and puts it to the shopping basket, he/she actually says "i ♥ eco" because it is his/her choice and the product itself is already talking for him/her. In addition to this, when the buyer reads the package he/she is conversing with ICA who replies; "we love eco". To sum up, through these elements, a perfect symbolic engagement is achieved. Berger says "When we ask ourselves "who am I?" the subtext of what we are asking is, many social scientists suggests, "to what group do I belong?"".⁶² The groups we belong are one of the things that define

⁶² Berger, Arthur Asa, *What Objects Mean: An Introduction to Material Culture*, Left Coast Press, CA, 2009, p. 159.

us. Moreover, the groups and our identities are also defined by objects. In this case, “i ♥ eco” product is inviting people to be part of a group; an environmental group. By purchasing that product buyer accepts the invitation and says something about his/her identity as well. Finally, the last engagement text is a gateway text. It informs buyers about ICA ecological coffee in detail and also UTZ Certification. It encourages consumers to learn more from the web site of UTZ Certification. It can be concluded that this package surrounds consumers with attractive engaging texts and great deal of information. It is designed for successful engagement.

The next product is the non-ecological coffee by ICA. Interestingly ICA non-ecological coffee is also certified by UTZ certification but still since it doesn't have the “ecological title” it cannot be considered as ecological product at least for this study. The only engaging text on the package is the information panel, which is located on the side of the package, for UTZ certification. So comparing with the ecological product, this one is not as inspiring as the ecological one.

The third coffee is the ecological coffee by Coop. It can be said that other than “Om Produkten” (about the product) section, which is considered more as a part of information panel, there is just one engaging text, which introduces “Fairtrade” Label. In terms of this, it is similar to the ecological pasta by Coop. So this green product doesn't share any common features in terms of engagement texts with the ecological product by ICA.

The last product of this category is the non-ecological coffee by Coop. It can be found interesting that on this package there is an engaging text which gives more detailed information about the coffee and some tips. It is located on the side of the package. It is quite visible and easy to read.

In conclusion, it can be suggested that ecological product by ICA offers the most engaging texts. On the other hand, the other packages offer just one text. Another interesting observation is that the engaging text on the non-ecological product is more visible than the one on the ecological one. Also considering the two product categories, so far, engaging texts don't seem as important elements of the ecological products' packages by Coop. This is a significant result which might point out that maybe engaging texts are not one of the main elements of the packages of green products.

3.3.3 Product Category: Preserved Tomato

Again, it will be started with the ecological preserved tomato by ICA. It is very similar to the other ecological products by ICA. There are three texts which allow engagement. First one is the note from ICA regarding their environmental projects. The second one is titled as “Solmogen Ekologi” (Sun-ripened ecology), which gives tips regarding use of the product. Again, the text ends with the slogan “we love eco”, which allows communication and identification through the personal pronoun “we”. “We” symbolizes being a group. In this case, the group is an environmental one. These two texts are located on the side and the same visual features have been chosen; softer look for the ICA letter and the sharper, simpler look for the tips. The last text is the “recept” (recipe), which is located on the back. It is the recipe of ratatouille for four. To conclude, the notes, implying that you are part of a group or you are welcome to the group; the tips and information, emphasizing the product is ecological and delicious; the recipe, inspiring for cooking nice food and maybe inviting couple of friends for dinner; all work together to present a lifestyle.

The second product is the non-ecological preserved tomato by ICA. Again there is a recipe on the back and it is quite dominant, covering the entire surface. It is written in black on red background and easy to read. The other text is the note from ICA. This time the note focuses on the importance of good food for good life and the products range of ICA. This time, the content, uses good food concept to attract customers, instead of focussing on environmental content. But still it is a text which allows engagement like the recipe text. The engaging texts are important elements in the packages of both ecological and non-ecological products by ICA. Based on the content of the product, ICA finds different ways to engage the buyers. So it seems for ICA, engagement is not crucial only for the green products as a marketing tool but also for the non-green ones.

The next product is the ecological preserved tomato by Coop. It can be noted there is no engaging texts on the package. The last product is the non-ecological preserved tomato by Coop. The only text engaging text is a tiny section for serving tips. So it can be concluded that, in general, Coop products do not use engaging texts but there are few mostly on the non-ecological products.

In conclusion, engaging texts allow customers to engage themselves with the product. Therefore it can be used as a good marketing tool. They also contribute to

the products' sincerity because they inform consumers with detailed information about the companies vision, how the product is produced and also about the labels. It seems ICA preferred to use engaging texts for both the ecological and the non-ecological products to attract customers. On the other hand, engaging texts are not important elements of the packages of the products by Coop, since they are not present.

3.4 Brand Names and Slogans

Another element of ecological and non-ecological products' package is slogans. Slogans also attract and motivate buyers. In addition to these, it can invite consumers to join a movement. Peattie illustrates this with the example "Keep Britain Tidy" slogan, which can motivate consumers to recycle the package properly.⁶³

In this section, the slogans on the packages will be analysed. The questions that would be answered are; "How they function?", "Are they available on all the packages?", "Are they part of 'green identity or do they contribute to green identity??".

First, the ecological ICA products will be analysed. ICA sells its ecological products under the brand "i ♥ eco". It can be said that the brand name itself is a slogan and can function as a slogan. In addition to this, as it has been mentioned before, the engaging texts end with the sentence "we love eco". This ending sentence can be considered as a slogan. If the content and the flow of the text would be discussed this sentence doesn't fit to the text naturally. The text talks about how to use the product and all of a sudden it ends with this sentence. There is no transition to this sentence. Therefore, it is there as a slogan. It has been integrated to the text, instead of being placed separately. It can be suggested that in this way, both the slogans' and the engaging texts' effect would be stronger. So they support each other. As it has already been discussed, the brand name, "i ♥ eco" works together with the slogan "we love eco". Together they allow perfect identification with the product. Both the brand and the slogan are strong and very straight forward statements. They are very clear in what they say, or who they are. When the customer buys the product and holds it in his/her hands, in a way, he/she says "i ♥

⁶³ Peattie, p. 226.

eco”. The object defines him/her. At least it says one thing about him/her and that is; he/she is into ecological lifestyle. There are many theories developed over the years to understand material culture. Some of them are semiology, cultural approach, actant-network theory, script theory. It can be suggested they all have one thing in common, that is; being interested in human-object relation to some extent. Woodward says “Not only do we constantly engage with objects in a direct, material way we also live in a world where objects are represented as images and have global mobility”.⁶⁴ Cultural approach is one of the theories for understanding material culture. It focuses on objects’ meaningfulness.⁶⁵ According to the Durkheimian Idea, which is the key idea for the cultural approach, people express their ideas through objects.⁶⁶ Objects symbolize our ideas. Objects are one of the elements that people use to construct identities. Another theory, which can be applied here, is product script theory. The terms “script” has been developed by Madeleine Akrich. According to this theory, “any artefact contains a message (the script) from the producer/designer to the user describing the products’ intended use and meaning”.⁶⁷ Fallan says “the script is thus a key to understanding how producers/designers, products and users negotiate and construct a sphere of action and meaning”.⁶⁸ The term script does not refer to an actual script but the hidden meaning of the product. But here, the script “i ♥ eco” and “we love eco” is used to make the hidden meaning obvious. So they are actual scripts representing the metaphorical script as well.

Also when the buyer reads the package and the note from ICA, he/she finds himself/herself in a conversation with the producer. What makes the text a conversation is the slogan “we love eco” at the end because it assigns a subject to the text. The text is not anonymous any more. ICA is talking to you. By using “we”, ICA adapts an informal and sincere attitude as if the buyer and the ICA crowd are talking to each other in person. This conversational mode is significantly important for various reasons. One of the reasons is its sincere attitude. Cliath discusses the importance of sincerity of the companies. She suggests true green companies are more sincere in the products’ presentation.⁶⁹ So it can be suggested that both the logo and the slogan with the help of other elements on the package, such as the labels,

⁶⁴ Woodward, p. 28.

⁶⁵ Woodward, p. 107.

⁶⁶ Woodward, p. 84.

⁶⁷ Fallan, Kjetil, *Design History: Understanding Theory and Method*, Berg, Oxford, 2010, p. 78-79.

⁶⁸ Fallan, p. 82.

⁶⁹ Cliath, p. 422-424.

emphasizes the products' 'true greenness'. Secondly, it invites buyers to a relationship and a group. This allows buyers to identify themselves. As it has been discussed earlier, among other things, such as gender, culture, religion, educational backgrounds, race, occupation and so on, people define themselves through groups they belong to and also objects they have.⁷⁰ So in this conversation with ICA, you are the one who say "i ♥ eco" by buying the product and ICA is the one who says "we love eco" by producing it. You as a buyer and ICA as a producer belong to the same group, which is formed by people, who love eco.

The other ecological brand is Coop Änglamark. Coop started to sell its ecological products under this brand twenty five years ago.⁷¹ It can be suggested that choosing Änglamark as the brand name is not random. There is a Swedish song called Änglamark, which was written for a film called Äppelkriget, by Swedish artist Evert Taube in 1971. It takes attention to environmental issues and seems like it managed to do so. So it can be claimed that the brand name has connotations to environmental issues and social change. It already means a lot to a middle age Swedish person. The brand name itself allows engagement and identification.⁷²

In addition to this, the slogan on the packages is "När du visar omtanke om dig själv, dina nära och din omvärld". The translation would be 'when you care about yourself, your friends and your environment'. Again the slogan helps customers to read the assigned meaning of the product. Also it symbolizes buyers' ideas and concerns. Moreover Miller says, "Consumption is not a passive act, but a creative project...".⁷³ The slogan not only reveals the message from the producer but also invites consumers to a movement or act. In this case as well, both the brand name and the slogan support each other and work together to enhance the effect on the consumer. They help buyers to express themselves. The product and also the user of the product have been assigned to be actants. Here the slogan invites you to act for yourself, for others and for your environment by choosing this product. As in the case of "i ♥ eco", this brand also represents a group, which is environmental, and customers who buy the products are welcomed to the group. So the slogan introduces the essence of the product and the group. Environmental customer identifies himself/herself with the product but also the other customers who are not necessarily

⁷⁰ Berger, p. 159.

⁷¹ < <http://www.coop.se/Ansvar--paverkan/Miljo--ekologi/Upptack-Anglamark/>>, retrieved 22 April 2010

⁷² Äppelkriget, retrieved on 17 May 2010, < <http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%84ppelkriget> >.

⁷³ Miller cited by Fallan, p. 40.

“green”, can be attracted and motivated to become “green consumers”, by the slogan and the brand. So, it can be concluded that both slogans by the both brands, motivate buyers to join a social movement. It can be concluded that, Coop’s ecological brand, in addition to the other elements such as, labels, information panels, realistic images and so on, both through the brand name and the slogan, proves its sincerity.

4. Chapter 3: Material, Shape and Texture

One of the basic functions of package is to protect the content. In this aspect, the material is in close relation to the content. But in the case of green package the aim of the package is not just to protect the content but also to be recycled and to damage the environment as little as possible during its own production.⁷⁴ So especially in this aspect, material and shape are very crucial in green package design. The choice of material defines how the package will be recycled, produced and reproduced. It can even encourage innovative technology. Material also affects the print quality on the package. In the previous discussions it has been concluded that labels accompanied by detailed information have significant role in green marketing. This means presenting the information through high quality print is important and material is one of the elements which define the print quality.

Texture seems to have secondary importance but it can be effective to attract customers. To sum up, analysing the selected products, this chapter will explore these elements of package design and try to find out how they contribute to the visual representation of green products.

4.1 Material

“Materials go together with possible production techniques, possible dimensions and a way of filling (closing, preserving, etc)”.⁷⁵ Some of the materials for packaging are; wood, paper and paperboard, cardboard, metals, glass, plastics, laminates and composites, bioplastics. They all have different characteristics, advantages and disadvantages. Material choice depends on several variables; possible production techniques, features of the content, budget, transportation, specific aims of the producer, appropriateness for presenting information, such as the print quality, attaching labels, glueing and sealing, speed of filling, and so on.⁷⁶

Moving on to the products, the packages of ICA ecological coffee and pasta are made of soft plastic. Ecological pasta’s package is also soft plastic. On the other hand, the material for the ecological preserved tomato’s package is paperboard. Continuing with the non-ecological products by ICA, it can be noted that the non-

⁷⁴ Mackenzie, p. 92.

⁷⁵ Klooster, Roland Ten, *Packaging Design: A Methodological Development and Simulation of the Design Process*, Druk. Tan Heck, Delft, 2002, p. 120.

⁷⁶ Klooster, p. 121-123.

ecological pasta's and the coffee's packages are soft plastic. But the non-ecological preserved tomato's package is made of packaging paper. It may be observed that soft plastic has been chosen for dry goods and hard paper has been chosen for liquids. But the material choice doesn't differ based on being ecological or non-ecological in the case of ICA products. Plastic is a good barrier for exterior effects such UV. Since it can also be transparent, it provides more options for the representation of the product. Among plastic's weaknesses, low resistance to high temperature and permeability to gasses, moisture and flavours can be counted. But on the other hand, it can be processed through variety of techniques. It can be said that plastic is an innovative material, especially due to its appropriateness for variety of applications, recycling and multitude of production techniques.⁷⁷ So, due to all these advantages, plastic is a popular choice for packing food and it is not surprising that ICA has chosen plastic for packing its coffee and pasta. The other material which has been used for packaging for ICA products is paperboard. This material is also a barrier for UV. It is also stackable and appropriate for high quality printing, which is quite important for packages of ecological products. So it is a good choice to present the information. This can be one of the reasons for why ICA has chosen paperboard for the ecological preserved tomato. But also the non-ecological tomato has been packaged with this material because paperboards are also appropriate for preserving liquids. Also it can be folded in numerous forms and structures. This material is also recyclable but not infinitely.⁷⁸ Apart from these characteristics, it can be suggested that paper has emotional effects on the consumer. It might be perceived more natural and warm, in comparison to plastic or metal. Plastic was introduced in the late 20th c..⁷⁹ It is hard for the consumer to know how plastic is produced or what it is made of actually. But paper is a material that humankind is accustomed to use it for centuries. Also its material is natural. It can be associated with natural, nostalgic, traditional, romantic, non-industrial, and human and so on. Dormer says "...plastic is not a much loved material in spite of its ubiquity it remains anonymous unlike stone or wood, paper or steel".⁸⁰ It can be concluded that although plastic have practical advantages, paper has emotional functions. Therefore, it can be chosen due to marketing

⁷⁷ Klooster, p. 121.

⁷⁸ Klooster, p. 121.

⁷⁹ Dormer, Peter, *The Meanings of Modern Design: Towards to Twenty-First Century*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1991, p. 62.

⁸⁰ Dormer, p. 63.

concerns. It can contribute to visual identity of the product and can be used to attract consumers.

Moving on to the Coop products, the ecological Coop pasta's package is made of soft plastic. The Ecological coffee has two packages. The inner package which is in contact with the content is soft plastic and the exterior package is paper. The package material choice for the ecological preserved tomato is metal. Some of the characteristics of metal are; being compact, shiny, strong, being appropriate for shaping, heat reflecting and so on. It is also a barrier against gasses, UV and moisture. Among its weaknesses being vulnerable to oxidation, rusting and acidic environment can be counted. The most common shape for packages made of metal is cylindrical but it is possible to fold metal in other shapes as well. Another advantage of metal is the fact that it is easy to recycle and sterilize.⁸¹ Continuing with the non-ecological products by Coop, it can be noted that non-ecological pasta's package material is soft plastic. Again for coffee, two types of material have been used. The inner layer is made of soft plastic and the exterior layer is made of paper. The last product, non-ecological preserved tomato's package is paperboard. It can be observed that even though the product type is the same, different materials have been chosen in the case of preserved tomato. While the ecological one has a metal package, non-ecological one has a paper package. The choice of metal for the ecological preserved tomato could be due to the fact that metal is a better barrier against unwelcomed exterior effects, than paperboard. Since there is no protective chemicals added to the ecological preserved tomato, the package itself is the only protector. Therefore, metal might be a better choice.

In the case of ICA products, same material choices have been made for the same product category regardless of the content being ecological or not. Another difference between ICA and Coop is that Coop coffee packages have two layers and made of two different materials; soft plastic and paper. On the other hand, ICA packages have one layer primary packages and are made of plastic. Concerns regarding visual representation of the product could be the reason behind Coop's two layer package choice. It seems Coop wanted to present coffee to buyers with paper package. Although plastic is appropriate for vacuumed packaging, which is necessary to preserve coffee, paper has more emotional connotations than the plastic. The look and the feeling of paper are different than plastic. As it has been mentioned

⁸¹ Klooster, p. 121.

earlier, plastic is not as loved as paper by consumers. Since paper can be associated with being natural and crafty, it can be suggested that it represents the ecological content better. But in this case, since it has been chosen for both the ecological and the non-ecological products it seems paper hasn't been chosen to represent the ecological content. In this case, it can be suggested that the coffee package is more appropriate for a second layer of exterior packaging due to its big bag shape, and since paper is a more loved material, as a marketing strategy, it is a better choice to attract consumers. So it can be concluded that this material choice has nothing to do with the ecological content specifically.

In conclusion, it can be observed that being ecological or not doesn't affect the material choice much. In general, pasta and coffee products, whether they are ecological or not, have been put in plastic packages and preserved tomato products are put in paperboard packages. Putting ecological tomato into can is the only case which presents a difference. The reason behind it might be the ecological content and green identity but it is not certain yet. The following discussion regarding shape and texture might help to reveal a conclusion regarding that.

4.2 Shape

Another important element of packaging is shape because it has impact on the products' perception, experience, promotion and so on. For example, a product can attract a customer through its shape or the shape can make the experience of the product more fun or comfortable and so on. Moreover, it can help to reduce the quantity of material that is used for per package. In this way it can reduce waste. Also it can allow more efficient transportation. For instance certain shapes can allow more space in the transportation vehicle, which means more products can be transported in each travel. This causes reduction in energy wasting for transportation.⁸² Especially the impact of shape on energy and material wasting motivates this study to explore its contribution to green identity of ecological food products.

Having observed the selected coffee products, it can be noted that all the coffee packages are in the same shape whether they are ecological or not or whether they are by Coop or ICA. So this means, in this case, ecological content doesn't define the

⁸² Mackenzie, p. 94

shape. In other words the shape doesn't contribute to green visual identity. Pasta packages are also quite similar but ecological ones look smaller. For green packaging one of the aims is to use minimum amounts of material.⁸³ This allows more efficient transportation and also reduction in material waste. It can be suggested that the ecological pasta packages have been designed with these concerns and therefore they are smaller. The tomato packages are also different in terms of shape. The non-ecological preserved tomato packages are thinner and taller than the ecological ICA one, although they are all in blog shape. It can be suggested that the aim with this is to provide larger face for the product. Klooster states "...the facing surface on the shelf improves merchandising".⁸⁴ So in the case of the non-ecological products marketing concerns are more important than environmental concerns because producing thin and long blogs requires more material.⁸⁵ On the other hand, it seems environmental concerns define the shape in the case of the ecological preserved tomato by ICA. The package of the ecological preserved tomato by Coop is cylindrical, which is the best option if the aim is to use minimum amount of material.⁸⁶ This could be another reason for why Coop has chosen metal packaging for the ecological preserved tomato, since the material and shape depend on each other. The most common shape for metal is cylindrical⁸⁷. So it can be said that since the shape choice is due to the environmental concerns in both cases; ecological ICA and ecological Coop, it means the shape contributes to green identity.

4.3 Texture

Another element of the package is texture. Texture quite depends on material choice. Texture is not so related to the aim, which is to protect the content as efficient as possible, but instead it is more related to the visual representation. Each material has a certain texture. For example, metals are shiny and smooth. Plastic is also shiny and most of the time slippery. On the other hand, paper is not as shiny or slippery as plastic. It can also be smooth but not as much as plastic or metal. Texture can be felt through vision and touch. So it affects senses and triggers emotions. Therefore, it is an important element of visual representation.

⁸³ Mackenzie, p. 94, Klooster, p. 124.

⁸⁴ Klooster, p. 125.

⁸⁵ Klooster, p. 124.

⁸⁶ Klooster, p. 124.

⁸⁷ Klooster, p. 121.

Analysing the packages of the selected products, it can be observed that both pasta packages by ICA are made of plastic and in relation to that, they are shiny and slippery. So It can be suggested that being ecological or not doesn't affect the texture in the case of ICA packages. But in the case of the pasta packages by Coop, there is no such a direct correlation between the material and the texture. For example, although the ecological Coop pasta's package is plastic, it looks and feels like paper. It seems that Coop wants its consumers to perceive the plastic package as paper. It wants its ecological product to be represented through paper not plastic because paper symbolizes the ecological concept better. It can be suggested that materials and textures also have connotations. For example, plastic can be associated with industry, modernity, unnatural, and at the same time being cheap, whereas, paper can be associated with craft, man-made, natural, and so on. Paper packaging exists for ages. Putting things in paper bags or using paper for wrapping things are old habits. Plastic is a new invention in comparison to paper. So paper is nostalgic. It represents, old, tradition, natural. Eating natural food is the same. They both exist in non-industrial times and because of this they also have this romantic feeling. Although, plastic can be recycled through many ways, it doesn't look like it. It is hard to believe. On the other hand, if you leave a piece of paper on the street or in the garden, under different natural conditions it integrates with the soil. These everyday experiences of everyday people make consumers to recognize paper more environmental friendly and make them to associate paper with ecological products better. Keeping these associations in mind, it could be understood, why Coop chooses paper texture on a plastic package. On the other hand, the non-ecological pasta product's package is made of plastic and looks like plastic. The texture directly corresponds to the material. It is not faking. To conclude, although both of the packages are plastic, they have different textures. The texture of the ecological one feels like paper. This difference in texture proves that in the case of Coop pasta packages, the texture contributes to green visual identity.

Discussing the coffee packages, it can be observed that the ICA packages are made of plastic and the texture is smooth, slippery and shiny. So there is a direct relation between the material and the texture. Since the texture is the same on both the ecological and the non-ecological product's packages, it can't be suggested that the texture is part of green visual identity. Continuing with the Coop packages, it can be noted that both the ecological and the non-ecological exterior packages are made

of paper and the texture is smooth. It feels like paper when it is touched or looked at. So in this case as well the texture corresponds to the material. In addition to that it doesn't differ based on being ecological or not. This means the texture is not part of the green visual identity specifically.

The other category is preserved tomato. The packages by ICA are made of paperboard and the texture is smooth. It corresponds to the material. The texture does not differ based on being ecological or not. Therefore it might be suggested that texture does not represent green identity, in this case either. Continuing with the products by Coop, it can be noted that the products differ in terms of material choice. The ecological product has been put in a metal can and the non-ecological product is in paperboard package. But still their texture is almost the same since the metal can has also been covered by paper. It seems this is a common application in Coop products. It has already been discussed that paper is more loved material by consumers.⁸⁸ It has more positive connotations than some other materials. Also it is more convenient for high print quality. Moreover, it can easily be applied as tags, labels and so on. All these, explains why the can has been covered with paper. In addition to that it illustrates another occasion where the texture doesn't correspond to the actual material of the package. In this case, the paper texture on top of the can does not necessarily aim to represent the ecological content. It seems paper exterior has been chosen due to its practicality. So it can be concluded that the texture is not clearly related to the ecological content.

In conclusion, texture refers to the feelings, more than the logic or function. Therefore, it is crucial for the visual representation of the product. Representation is very important for marketing as well as for green marketing. The product must talk to buyers and present itself through variety of ways. It seems like just one way is not enough. The discussion so far shows that only labels, the information, the content or the images are not enough. All of them work together. Content can talk to you through the package; the vision. The primary function of the package is to protect the content and the choice of material and the shape mostly depends on this. But the texture is more about visual representation and emotions. Looking back to the analysis so far, other than the ecological pasta by Coop, in all the packages, the texture represents the material regardless the content's nature. But in the ecological

⁸⁸ Dormer, p. 63

pasta by Coop, the texture fakes. Even though the package is made of plastic it feels like paper. The choice of paper is a result of green marketing concerns. So it can be summed up that just in one instance the texture corresponds to green visual identity.

5. Conclusion

In Conclusion, the hypothesis of this thesis was that through visual representations of ecological products a green identity has emerged over the years. This research intended to test this hypothesis by analysing six ecological and six non-ecological products from three different product categories, which are pasta, coffee and preserved tomato, by two brands; ICA and Coop. The visual analysis aimed to reveal the similarities and the differences among the products. The actual goal was to find out the common features of the ecological products in their visual representation.

Chapter 1 explored typography, colour and images on the ecological and the non-ecological products by ICA and Coop. The discussion showed that legible font type, light coloured background, and realistic imagery are among the characteristic features of the visual representations of the ecological products.

Chapter 2 focused on eco-labels, information panels, engaging texts, brand names and slogans. The discussion revealed that eco-labels are fundamental elements of the packages of the ecological food products. Also it showed that eco-labels are supported with great deal of information and realistic imagery in the case of both ICA and Coop products. On the other hand, engaging texts are not among the common features. Although, ICA uses engaging texts extensively for its ecological products, Coop does not. This means that engaging texts are not part of green identity necessarily. On the other hand, this research proved that the brand names and the slogans by both companies are so strong and play crucial role in motivating consumers for green consumption. By working together they allow identification. They are invitations to join a movement and obviously significant elements of green identity.

Chapter 3 discussed material, shape and texture. It revealed that the material choice does not change based on being ecological or not in the case of ICA and Coop. But regarding shape, it can be said that the ecological products have more compact shapes since it prevents energy and material waste. But this is not valid for every product category since the coffee packages are exactly the same in terms of shape, regardless being ecological or not. The package of the ecological pasta by Coop illustrated that texture can contribute to green identity. But it is not as crucial as the other elements such as eco-labels, realistic imagery, detailed information and legible typography.

To conclude, this research revealed the fact that there is a green identity constructed by visual representations. Legible typography, light coloured background, realistic imagery, eco-labels, detailed information regarding product content and producer, attractive brand names and strong slogans are the characteristic elements of this identity.

I see this study as a prelude to my future researches. I would like to conduct broader researches, in which I can also apply qualitative method, on green identity and visual representations. This study can be seen as a step. The following studies can focus on the designer's perspective. Another work can be done on consumers' perceptions of the products and the visuals. Moreover a larger research can include all these aspects.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Ecological Pasta by ICA



Appendix 2. Non-Ecological Pasta by ICA



Appendix 3. Ecological Pasta by Coop



Appendix 4. Non-Ecological Pasta by Coop



Appendix 5. Ecological Coffee by ICA



Appendix 6. Non-Ecological Coffee by ICA



Appendix 7. Ecological Coffee by Coop



Appendix 8. Non-Ecological Coffee by Coop



Appendix 9. Ecological Tomato by ICA



Appendix 10. Non-Ecological Tomato by ICA



Appendix 11. Ecological Tomato by Coop



Appendix 12. Non-Ecological Tomato by Coop

