

# Accepting Jeans

## A Search for the Understanding Of Jeans as Cultural Heritage



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## ABSTRACT

### Accepting Jeans; a Search for the Understanding Of Jeans as Cultural Heritage

This essay will determine through a qualitative study if jeans are understood as cultural heritage. The study will include a search of a selection of web sites managed by denim companies in USA and Sweden in addition there will also be two interviews with the owners of two smaller jeans retailers.

The search is going to generate information about how the companies use their history and heritage on their web sites by comparing their written statements to six keywords that I interpret as included in UNESCO's definition of heritage.

To highlight my findings from the web sites I will also conduct two interviews one with Tellason, a company situated in California and one with Indigofera whom have their headquarters in Stockholm. These will create a personal input on their take on heritage and generate material for discussion.

Through this essay I will only be studying jeans and no other denim apparel as the reason is to find if jeans are understood as heritage.

There will be a detailed account for the history of jeans up to the 1960's in the USA and Sweden as this will create an understanding on where the heritage first began, why and how. From the first pair of working denim riveted trousers to today's fashion where innovative techniques have been used to mimic the past in present times.

The questions that will be answered are if jeans be understood as cultural heritage and how jeans are linked to a historical and cultural perspective in respect to the companies. To answer these questions the empirical material and theories will be used in the final discussion and by doing so a conclusion has been made. Today there is an understanding in to the heritage of jeans used by the companies, more so in the USA than in Sweden. This is worth building on for a future essay with further research to include the jeans wearers and their understanding of cultural heritage in jeans.

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## Foreword

From then to now, from yesterday to today in hope for tomorrow I would like to thank everyone involved for the unlimited patience and guidance that I have received through these three fantastic years; the years that have enabled me to conclude this chapter in my life. I will mention no one and no one will be forgotten.

Who would have thought that the subject of jeans has brought me an infallible lust to absorb new information on a daily basis and not just about jeans but about life and myself.

*Thank you*



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# 1. Introduction

I own over 200 pair of jeans for the purpose of re-making, these were given to me by people that no longer wanted them or where unable to mend them. I asked myself; why do we use and own so many jeans? My curiosity led to an initial investigation in to the possibilities of finding relevant research and literature relating to my question. Through this search I found an interesting angle that could make jeans being understood as something else then just a pair of trousers.

## 1.1 Background

Since I started my education at the University of Gothenburg my interest has increased in what I call a phenomenon; jeans! The idea that the world would be without jeans is almost impossible. In the history of clothing the one garment that has made an extraordinary historical journey are the jeans; from working wear to a fashion icon in 172 years as elegantly put by English "... jeans were immortalized as a symbol..." (English 2007, p.67)

Through daily unplanned observations of the people in my home town it has become clear that a large proportion of the residents use this garment in everyday situations. Jeans were never intended to be part of the fashion industry but in the late sixties it all changed, jeans signalled freedom and revolution. To wear a pair of jeans was to show individuality and commitment (Sullivan, 2006). Today, jeans have taken a major role in the fashion industry and have evolved considerably since Levi's first marketed their work wear trousers in 1873.

Jeans are made of the denim fabric that is woven from the cotton fibre. The spun fibres are woven tightly with a twist which means that the fabric acquires strong structure and gives the jeans their durability (Woodward 2011). Surely this trait in the denim fabric was an important factor for Mr Strauss in the manufacturing of jeans as his signature in working clothing was strong and durable.

The denim apparel market offers the consumer vast amount of choice today which can indicate that there might be other reasons why we today use jeans other than the original reason of durability that Levi's initially stood for. This has had major impact on how we today manage sustainability from several perspectives such as ecological, economical and the social aspects of society. The choices in apparel that we make are to some extent manipulated by the company's marketing strategies the encourage us to follow fashion or the feel the freedom to do the opposite.

The likeliness is that a few of the reasons for the change in apparel intent are those of seeking identity and individuality but that can also give access to a culture or specific groups in society. These reasons in turn can be linked to history and heritage.

To find some assurance as to the reliability of these remarks the contents of this essay will in many respects highlight the way companies use history and heritage to promote their selling strategies in relation to jeans.

## **1.2 Research problem**

Jeans have had a big influence in how society classifies cultural expression; we can refer to the seventies when the hippie movement followers wore jeans as part of their uniform. The followers, working class citizens, embraced socialistic ideologies and became a matchless bearing on worldwide fashion (English, 2007 p.96). Jeans has become part of our everyday lives and connected with identity and particularly in subcultures. This can be appreciated as the everyday cultural heritage in obscurity with no questions as to why.

In a preliminary investigation into the jeans world that I completed in April this year for a literature course at the University of Gothenburg has shown that there is no pervious academic research made in reference to jeans from a cultural heritage perspective.

## **1.3 Aim**

Through this study my aim will be to recognise how Jeans can be understood and seen as cultural heritage through a study made of USA and Swedish denim companies on their web sites.

## **1.4 Objective**

The objective I will intend to reach is as follows:

My investigation will convey jeans history and how it relates to the cultural heritage of the USA and Sweden that can contribute to a better understanding how companies use heritage and history in their company story.

## **1.5 Research questions**

The essay will be centred on the following questions:

- Can jeans be understood as cultural heritage?
- How are jeans linked to a historical and cultural perspective in respect to the companies?

## **1.6 Limitations**

My investigation will only relate to the United States and Sweden. Due to the short time frame there is to complete this essay I have scaled my search down and will only be including a very small part of the jeans market in my study. The companies that are going to be looked into are just a few of some of the leading ones in the denim market in the USA and Sweden.

The enquiry that I intend to does not involve any research relating to branding or fashion. Only some dress history will be given as an explanation of some of the reasons as to why we wear clothes. With this in mind many companies will not be included in this essay such as BlåGul jeans in Sweden and True Religion jeans in the USA.

The information in this essay will not process from a gender perspective but will focus on the actual apparel; jeans.

To emphasise the meaning of the companies' statements I will provide some images that relate to the statements made and no theories will be used to process these images.

## 1.7 Previous research

There is as yet no documented research that places jeans in a cultural heritage context in today's fashion market. The research that I found is often linked to the individual or group behaviour where the link would be in finding particularities in the consumers' behavioural patterns or simply to answer the question; why do we use jeans?

Miller and Woodward's "Blue Jeans, the art of the ordinary" (2012) research describe how jeans are defined as the ordinary and ubiquitous garment that everyone wears. The study included several interviews of families living in two conventional residential streets in London in hope of finding the reasons behind why they chose to wear jeans. This research is not linked to the initial questioning line this essay is based on but it will in retrospect support the understanding of the main reasons as to why the participants want to wear jeans.

Jeans can give someone individuality whilst to another anonymity. The use of jeans can mean a way to fit in or not to be seen at all. Give an identity in particular subcultures such as rockers or bikers even university students. Jeans can say a lot about a person's life and highlight the significance jeans can have throughout it (Miller, 2012). One of the informants, Vicky, stresses that she did not want to be seen, just wanted to fit in. Jeans made this possible as it was for Vicky at the time a versatile garment that blended in (Miller 2012, p.100). Other informants gave the impression that jeans made them look good and able to follow fashion.

The 783 American and Korean male and female students between the ages of 18 - 24 that participated in a study in Korea answered a questionnaire. The intentions of the study were to find similarities and differences in the reasons why the participants wore jeans this providing the understanding that jeans were developed in one country and used and known in another (DeLong et.al. 1998). The majority in both groups answered that the reason where those of comfort and versatility.

Similarities could be made as Korean students wore jeans to be identified with the university culture that existed at the time and the students in the USA wore jeans more as a sign of cultural expression that created their American identity (DeLong et.al. 1998). Both groups were part of a cultural group with jeans as a symbol of belonging.

Furthermore the possibilities are discussed whether jeans function as a cultural symbol and holds the ability in communicating its meaning. To do this the symbol has been through certain stages to reach the level of understanding and meaning it might have for communities and people in different settings and countries. The stages are mentioned as symbols of "*rebellion, outlet for personal creativity, emblems of fashionable awareness and as evidence of generational longing and insecurity*" only then the symbol, in this case jeans can be categorised as a symbol of culture (DeLong et.al. 1998).

According to Hockey trainers become part of a person's identity only when used I believe that jeans can be put in the same frame, as there is a similar view on the use of trainers as the ones of jeans. The study was based on one question; "*How do trainers 'make' the individual?*" (Hockey et.al. 2015, p.23) I can then ask; how do jeans 'make' the individual? Something happens to an individual when a specific garment is worn, in a specific way and in a specific setting. The relationships we form with the trainer or any garment gives us the ability to make sense of our everyday lives and as individuals there

will never be an anonymous answer to how it makes the individual but rather a common ground that we share. The two, trainers and jeans, have a long history behind them and can in some respect be classified as partners in crime. The two garments can be compared to as “*a body prosthetic*” according to Hockey, worn they define who we are and where we belong (Hockey et.al, 2015 p.22).

The choice of companies I made to take part in my study led me to discover other studies that included some of the represented companies in my essay. Bohlin and Eriksson researched the possibilities that Levi’s was seen as a cult brand in Gothenburg, their method used, a questionnaire, generated answers from the participants that had links to history and heritage as follows:

““The leading manufacturers of jeans, with long history and tradition. Reminds me of the gold rush in USA” – Respondent’s answer (2010)”  
(Bohlin and Eriksson 2010)

““I will never forget when I was a kid and eagerly awaited to inherit my dad’s 501’s” – Respondent’s answer (2010)””  
(Bohlin and Eriksson 2010)

The theories used in this essay are a way to amplify the meaning of a cult brand and to explain that it has a special significance because the cult brand transmits representative contents for their most zealous and devoted followers. As a reference form Ragas & Bueno (2002) Bohlin and Eriksson have used a list that gives a simpler identification of what a cult brand embraces and covers:

- Consumers want to be a part of a group that is different.
- Cult brand inventors show daring and determination.
- Cult brands sell lifestyles
- Listen to the choir and create cult brand evangelists.
- Cult brands always create communities.
- Cult brands are inclusive
- Cult brands promote personal freedom and draw power from their enemies.

Bohlin and Eriksson (2010)

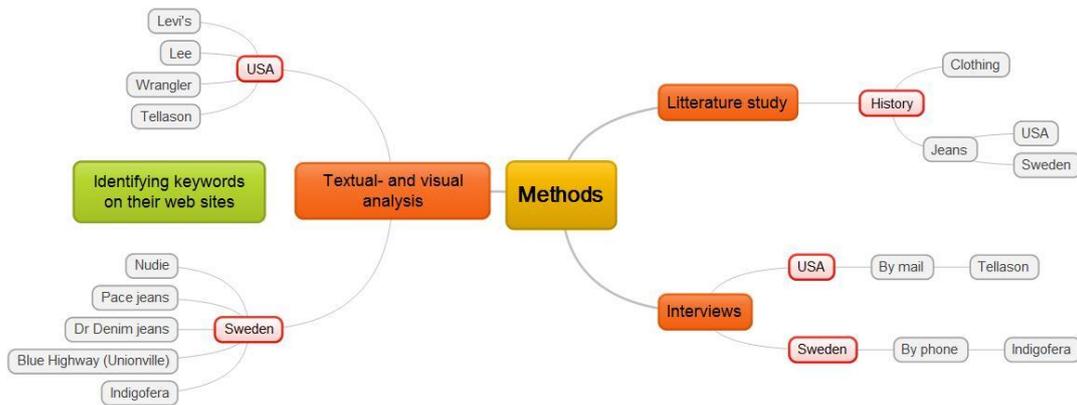
Like Augustsson and Johansson looked into the likelihood that Pace jeans and their customers could be looked upon as denim “nerds”. The “nerds” in this enquiry chose to dress in the manner that enhances their personality and gives them an identity this is not specifically in a given group or culture. According to the respondent from Pace jeans the associations their customers valued in choosing their model of jeans has a relation to the colour blue, quality, the history of American jeans and the classic American denim brands:

"The typical blue colour, deep blue to be more precise", "Quality is durable", "Right hand twill and left hand twill", "Cowboys and the classic, traditional cowboy brands Wrangler and Lee ", " Levi's 501-ball" (Free translation)

Augustsson and Johansson (2011)

## 1.8 Method

This illustration shows which methods of investigation have been chosen for this essay. The aim for quality and reliability in this essay is not only achieved through the interviews but permeates in all the methods applied (Patel 2015).



The three methods I have chosen will generate the empirical material for the purpose of understanding jeans as cultural heritage and will work as a base for discussion and results.

To relate the empirical material to the proposed theories in this essay I have chosen to work in an inductive way. To do so I have analysed the companies web sites and then applied the findings to set theories of cultural heritage which is not entirely without presumption as I have my own ideas of the outcome of the study and that can impact the conclusions made in the essay (Patel 2011).

### ***1.8.1 Literature study***

The literature that I have chosen for this search has been found through the universities library by using their web sites search engine. This part of the study will generate enough information to give an account of the jeans history and a general account about the history of clothing.

#### *History*

The history will be in two parts, history of jeans and the history of clothing, these will give an overall understanding into the world of jeans and how this can be related to the theories and research accounted for in this essay. The history of clothing will be a minor part in this literature study but it will complement the history of jeans.

### ***1.8.2 Textual- and visual analysis***

To enable a wider picture of today's denim market I have looked into several companies web sites to establish if their marketing strategies can give clues of their link to cultural heritage.

The one web site that did generate the majority of companies is dedicated to the global world of denim and has extensive information relating to quality, sustainability and other vital information that might be of importance in the denim market society.

(<http://denimsandjeans.com/top-denim-brands>)

To find the eight companies through this web site that could be included in the analysis I chose to set a few criteria that I feel have relevancy to the finding of the aim for this essay and it is as follows:

- Have an own brand of jeans
- Only sell denim related products
- Be an American brand
- Be a Swedish brand

- Have links to tradition, handicraft and history

Even though “denim & jeans” generated most companies for the analysis it was not as straight forward finding equals in the Swedish denim market. Through the American chosen companies and their links to the global denim market I found the remaining Swedish companies.

To find an understanding I will use six keywords and find these in the companies written statements and by interpreting the illustrations in addition to the statements. The following key words were chosen as an exploration of UNESCOs definition of Cultural Heritage. The keywords are:

- Heritage
- Identity
- Craftsmanship
- Authentic
- Culture
- History

UNESCOs definition is that of:

*“Cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations”*

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/cairo/culture/tangible-cultural-heritage/>

### **1.8.3 Interviews**

The interviews are of a qualitative nature so that I can identify and discover the informants’ view on the matter of understanding jeans as Cultural Heritage (Patel 2011).

The two chosen companies that have taken part in this study were given by mail and verbally a brief summary of the aim for this essay and the opportunity to be anonymous and the information confidential. The questions given were formulated with unpretentious words with initial courteous queries relating to professional background and company setup and not of personal or private manner, following questions enquired about cultural heritage and authenticity in relation to their business.

Tony Patella the co-founder of Tellason a company based in San Francisco, USA granted me an interview. Travelling to the informant’s location was not viable due to budget and time frame for the essay so therefore the informant was given the choice to answer by mail or phone. Through mail communication he answered 19 questions relating to the business and his personal view on heritage and authenticity. The interview was given and answered in English.

Likewise in Sweden the co-founder Mats Andersson at Indigofera participated but here a telephone interview was granted. With 19 questions that were as similar as possible to the previous interview’s questions were transcribed on a document. Choosing similar questions for the interview gives the opportunity to compare the answers and determine if there are a similar ways of thinking and understanding the aim for this essay. These interviews according to Patel (2011) are semi structured with low grade of standardising.

## 1.9 Empirical material

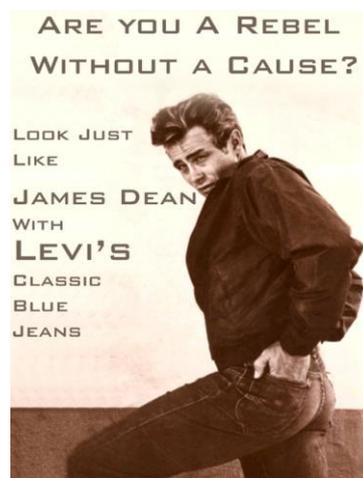
The empirical material that I will be processing through this essay is that of a thorough text- and visual web site examination and two qualitative interviews.

### 1.9.1 Web site examination

Here the chosen companies' online statements will be the objects of investigation. The statements will provide material that can link these companies to the main objective of this essay; to increase awareness of American jeans history and how this can be understood as cultural heritage in the USA and Sweden.

To make the objective possible I have chosen to use several books where there is a detailed account on the history of jeans in the USA and Sweden. There will also be a small part of this material which focuses on the history of clothing. The two subjects will complement each other to enhance the main intent.

In consideration to the method used there can be interpreted in preference to my investigation and not every angle is covered and the companies expressions and whole statement is not shared. Levi's as an example are targeting many groups in the fashion market and also those that perhaps have other intentions for wearing jeans other than fashion such as those that are part of a subculture; like portraying bad boy James Dean. The material collated will be used in accordance to questioning that has predisposed this essay.



<http://teenagerockandroll.weebly.com/>

<http://www.levistrauss.com/unzipped-blog/2015/03/back-in-time-a-closer-look-at-levis-vintage-clothing/>

### 1.9.2 Interviews

In addition to the material above there will be a more personal emphasis on the subject of jeans and Cultural Heritage. The motivations of the two informants through interviews can support the main issues that are discussed in this essay and be related to the other empirical material that has been collated from processing the chosen companies' web sites.

The interviews were not able to be made in person as the informants were at remote locations in view of where I, the author, live. This excludes the feeling and perception of setting and the personal meeting that can gather vital information to the interview material. There is also the account to take into consideration that the difference in how the informants have answered, one was by phone and one by mail, can make the interpretation of the answers different when compared and used in the final discussion.

In addition it could be valuable to perhaps include other companies' views so that a wider understanding can be made of the questions in hand. The product would generate more material for the concluding part of this essay.

Processing the recorded interviews required time; skill and practice which can mean that some of the information that is given can have been missed and wrongly assumed (Patel 2011). Even so the information gathered will be used to my advantage.

### **1.9.3 Ethics**

Information relating to the subject of this essay was given prior to the interviews to the participants in order to establish an initial contact and ascertain if they would be interested in taking part. In agreeing to participate in an interview further information was given to establish if the informants gave their consent to be named through the essay and if they had any objections that the conversation was being taped during the interviews. The material processed from interviews is only going to be that of relevance to the subject of this thesis.

The images chosen for this thesis have been selected in accordance to the rules applied and are not going to be reproduce for other purposes than to give a visual understanding of the contents so the reader can grasp the overall meaning of this essay.

Books and other written sources are going to be used by interpreting these and writing down from my own perspective and to reinforce this I will on occasion add quotations that will this highlight in my written material. Throughout the essay the same reference engine is going to be used so all sources are treated on the same grounds.

## **1.10 Theoretical framework**

### **1.10.1 UNESCO's definitions**

In UNESCOS definitions and cultural heritage theories chosen for this study I intend to find a valid connection in respect of understanding jeans as cultural heritage. These will be the tools needed to exploring the possibilities that the study's empirical material and theories have a common ground to stand on and create a final discussion.

The definition of UNESCO's cultural heritage is divided in three definitions and two of these are relevant for this study and reads as follows:

#### **Tangible Heritage**

*"Tangible heritage includes buildings and historic places, monuments, artefacts, etc., which are considered worthy of preservation for the future. These include objects significant to the archaeology, architecture, science or technology of a specific culture"*  
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/cairo/culture/tangible-cultural-heritage/>

#### **Intangible Heritage**

*"The intangible cultural heritage is transmitted from generation to generation, and is constantly recreated by communities and groups, in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their history. It provides people with a sense of identity and continuity, and promotes respect for cultural diversity and human creativity"*  
[http://www.unesco.org/services/documentation/archives/multimedia/?id\\_page=13&PHPS ESSID=cdf1c1b605ebc498950fa399d2ed8658](http://www.unesco.org/services/documentation/archives/multimedia/?id_page=13&PHPS ESSID=cdf1c1b605ebc498950fa399d2ed8658)

In Ahmad's article "The Scope and Definitions of Heritage: From Tangible to Intangible" (2006) he gives an account of UNESCO's definitions of heritage through many conventions where cultural heritage was the objective discussed and it gave it a wider meaning and sense of purpose. From the first convention in 1964, the Venice Charter, to today that has been important changes made to the charters content, from guidelines to rules, from the conventions. The guidelines had to establish the possibility of heritage and common definitions at international level. To mention one is the Burra Charter from the convention in 1979 where three new terms were introduced, place, cultural significance and fabric. The Burra Charter has since then been through several amendments that lead to other conventions. This has delivered new important definitions to cultural heritage in a broader meaning. Which gives the countries involved the opportunity to formulate their own definitions but within the frame of some common terms and terminology so there is a uniform in opinions.

Munjeri explains the importance that society's input has on determining static cultural heritage and more so, developed and accepted in recent charters, that of the intangible cultural heritage. According to Munjeri cultural heritage should be a sign of the values that people give the objects which in turn can only be recognized as heritage if and when society's expressions can be assumed and construed via the intangible. There is no Tangible Heritage without the Intangible, I quote "*Society and values are thus intrinsically linked*" (Munjeri 2004 p.13).

### 1.10.2 Authenticity

In defining and determining the objects true heritage to consider authenticity is of importance. To do so the definitions on authenticity are based on the four classifications of authenticity in the Venice Charter. It is as follows:



Munjeri (2004)

Munjeri stands somewhat critical to these interpretations of authenticity as many of society's values do not meet all the set criteria. One of the examples he uses is that of the Grand Shrine of Ise in Japan that dates back to 690 a.d. and is renewed every twenty years as ordered by the Empress of Japan. It is renewed in a custom called "shikinen zotai". The shrine, made of wood and thatch, is relieved of its material authenticity but retains that of workmanship, setting and design. The new shrine is made out of the same material, taken from the same forest and placed in the exact same setting using ancient techniques. But the fact remains that this statement does not relate entirely truthfully to the statement made in the Venice charter until definitions were amended in the Nara Chart documents to include traditions, techniques, spirit, feeling, historic and social dimensions of cultural heritage. These new found inclusions have given intangible heritage a larger arena to perform in and where the meaning can take shape of the tangible. (Munjeri 2006)

### ***1.10.3 Symbols of meaning***

An objects value can be shown as symbols, a way of communicating and as a sign that represents something else. There are the symbols that have a very specific meaning and that everyone understands, like a triangular yellow danger sign and there are symbols that work because of its elusive message, like a communicating device delivering an abstract meaning. For instance the Michelangelos's David is a symbol of the idea of himself but the statue also expresses an abstract symbolism such as the Genius, the art and the Renaissance just to mention a few. These meanings can change from individual to individual and offer each of us a more or less important personal attachment to the object in question and that is often inseparable from the perceptions of meaning from the rest of society (Muñoz Viñas, 2005).

To take the meaning of symbols a step further it can be clarified by classifying its meanings as follows:

- Social meanings – high-cult, group-identification and ideological
  - Sentimental meanings – produced out of individual feelings
- (Muñoz Viñas, 2005)

Any of these meanings above are valid symbols of meaning in the sense of conservation as it targets several groups in society. The high-cult meaning of a symbol is not necessarily understood by those who have more ideological views on the object of conservation but in most circumstances accepted. The group-identification have often strong links between the group members as outsiders perceive their symbols of meaning odd like for instance those who collect Hollywood stars memorabilia or religious objects (Muñoz Viñas 2005).

The sentimental values are flexible as these are fabricated out of personal experiences that give the individual memories that will in turn give associations to a particular object. Even so it does not mean that objects are worthy of preserving; but if you selling a Beatles original ticket that could be seen as an appropriate object because its history and nostalgia backing its true self (Muñoz Viñas 2005). The same could be said about a pair of jeans as these can bear a personal history; for instance if James Deans jeans where to be sold the meaning of purchase would not be because of the brand and its history but the fact that he owned and wore these particular jeans which means they carry a value of sentiment to perhaps a collector.

Changing meanings in objects of conservation can mean that the symbolic purpose is more important than the original purpose it was created for. Muñoz Viñas uses the example of a Bakelite telephone and as today it would no longer be used as a phone but as a symbol of the past with perhaps attached sentimental values.

## 2. The History of Jeans and clothing

The first jeans made an appearance in 1873, dedicated to yesterday's miners and today's fashion. Jeans apparel industry has made a memorable historical trip.

The following chapter will give a detail account of the story of jeans in the USA and how the jeans made it in Sweden up to the end of the 1960's. The story will give the reader a better grasp on how jeans can be understood as Cultural Heritage.

In addition there will be a short account of the history of clothing in general so that the meaning of why we wear clothes becomes reinforced.

### 2.1 Literature; The history of jeans

*What is Denim?*

This is the fabric that is used for the jeans manufacturing. This woven textile originated from Nimes, France, and has been documented as cotton fabric as far back as the sixteenth century even though no mention of denim has been made in relation to this cotton fabric but believed to be the beginning of the history of denim. (Wintzell, 1985)

#### 2.1.1 Jeans – USA

It was in the late 1850's and America was in turmoil. The Californian gold had almost dried up and the countries' economy was in trouble. This was a time of survival for the Americans and finding a new start. Thanks to intensive product marketing during the late 1800's and early 1900's enabled the garment to flourish in a hard economic climate (Eklund 2014).

The year was 1873 and Mr Levis Strauss and Mr Davis went into partnership in order to resolve the quality problem that the gold miners encountered with their working clothing. It was actually thanks Mr Davis, a tailor from Riga, that the jeans were invented or as Sullivan describes in his book "Jeans were not invented – they evolved democratically, like so much Americana" (Sullivan 2006, p.22).

Mr Davis was trying to make a living as so many immigrants did in those days and dedicated his time repairing the miners working clothing amongst other things. How could he make this garment strong and hard-wearing? Davis a skilful tailor also manufactured horse blankets these were reinforced with metal rivets to get an optimal product life. Why not use rivets on the workers trousers pockets where they always ripped? The rivets proved to be a success, a durable and strong solution, soon he had so many orders that he could not keep up the demand. With little money and no chance to make it on his own he contacted a well-known business man, Mr Levis Strauss, in the area. Mr Strauss had a significant experience in the apparel industry, so on the 20 of May 1873 a patent was granted, 139.121, for their invention that originally was called "XX". This new partnership that formed would take the world by storm, who would have thought that a riveted pocket

would mean so much to a nation in so many aspects. This was the birth of the blue jean (us.levi.com, 2015).

### **2.1.2 Globalisation**

World war two changed the world of jeans forever. No longer was Levis the sole owner of jeans but other entrepreneurs started to manufacture their own makes, such as Lee and Wrangler to mention a couple. The American soldiers set the trends, the fashion if you like, and the jeans now started a new voyage, globalising (Eklund 2014).

During war time the American government ordered the larger jeans companies to mass produce garments for soldiers. There was a shortage of denim textile and with that jeans gained even a higher owning prestige. The shortage made everyone yearning for a pair of jeans; not only in America but in many parts of the world. This was the beginning of mass globalisation for jeans. Jeans where no longer only marketed as strong and durable working clothing but accepted in new milieus and with that the jeans acquired an extended identity; jeans became part people's daily life and part of fashion.

When the war ended soldiers felt freedom needed to be explored; the freedom of America. Exploring on their bikes required comfortable clothing and jeans fitted the bill. Not only can we blame the soldiers for spreading the new uses of jeans but the Hollywood film stars had taken the roll of integrate young society in their quest, in search of a new identity in a new era which involved a new look; jeans and t-shirt , the "bad boy look" (Wintzell 1985). The movie star whom started this was Marlon Brando in "The Wild One"; Brando intuitively understood the uncontrolled message that jeans were capable of conveying. He managed to get an alluring audience that would follow his every move and rebellious attitude. Unknowingly Brando gave Levi's the best advertisement of its time (Sullivan, 2006).

### **2.1.3 Jeans - Sweden**

Through the decades jeans have been recognised as working wear in the USA and were introduced to Sweden in 1917 by John Magnusson. Mr Magnusson, an active textile entrepreneur, visited the USA in an early stage of his career. He got familiar with the USA working wear and decided after finding the quality of jeans to his satisfaction importing jeans to Sweden. Jeans adopted the name of "half blue" in Sweden and gained an ill reputation because of the discolouring of the indigo dye. Mr Magnusson then took it upon himself to make his own brand of jeans that would meet his customer's satisfaction; these were sold under the name of "Ranger". At this stage jeans where still seen as working wear until the company founder of a rival business decided to market jeans as apparel of leisure. His name was Algot Johansson and his company became the biggest wholesalers of Swedish jeans (Lloyd Kyi, 2005).

The year was 1946 and Eric Pråhl (NKs manager) decided to visit the men's fashion fair in Palm Springs and Sweden would enter a new jeans era. At the time it was a risk as the Swedish fashion industry not yet had succumbed to this working-wear garment as other then, but even so Mr Pråhl decided to import a batch of jeans called Gold Rivet. NK, Nordiska Kompaniet, is a well-established department store in Sweden with high reputation and a trend setter. NK received their goods in July 1947 and sold out. By the time a new order was due the Swedish government had issued an import stop for readymade apparel so NK manager contacted Algots as they had an extensive experience in the field of jeans. Algots delivered and NK could once more sell jeans (Lloyd Kyi, 2005).

Jeans were even at this point only used as a leisure garment and not accepted as an attire in many social gatherings such as dinner parties. It took several years for this fashion to be accepted as a garment for all occasions. The turning point according to Wintzell was the release of the Swedish movie “Farlig Kurva” (1952) where the jeans portrayed a new culture and used by teenagers in these groups. This gave them a chance to create an identity, give them a sense of belonging. It also presented the older generations with insight in their teenager’s world that would hopefully lead to better understanding and communication between the generations (Wintzell, 1985).

Levi’s as we know them today have not always been seen as the American symbol for jeans here in Sweden. Around the end of the 50’s a sailor happened to enter a small boutique by the name of “Engelbrektsboden” specialised in working clothing situated in the town of Malmö. The owner’s son, a young Kjell Wesén, happened to notice that the sailor that came in the shop was wearing jeans and not long after he ordered 3000 pairs of Leibas from Belgium, just like the ones the sailor wore. The timing was right and between April to November 59 he sold on 54 000 pair of Leiba jeans. This was the beginning of a fruitful affair and the experience gave Wesén the ability and opportunity to successfully secure the import of 10 000 pairs of Lee jeans that would probably not have been secured if Wesén’s selling figures weren’t so impressive. It was in the sixties to be precise the 1st of April 1960, that Lee jeans made the Swedish apparel market and were the ones to wear (Wintzell 1985).

## **2.2 Reasons behind wearing clothes**

From the beginning of human existence clothes have served humanity with its practical purposes. Humans evolved and with them the purpose of clothing; as the practical needs such as cold and protection where meet clothing would now serve as part of a daily way of identifying groups or individuals that in its turn created an identity (Torsson 1979).

This has been the case in many countries where diverse types of clothing are used in the representation of different rituals or in various religions. This can be compared to the kimono, a Japanese symbol of heritage. This symbol has been handed down through generations and got lost sometime after the war when Japanese society desired new and different consumer articles. It would be fair to say that the loss is now being reinstated by Japanese fashion designers in the hope to bring back a once lost heritage. Using new materials and innovative imagination designers are now in the process of finding new meaning to cultural heritage via the kimono to re-establish the heritage meaning in Japan (English 2007).

Likewise the use of jeans can mean a way to fit in or not to be seen at all as stated in Millers study. Give an identity in particular subcultures such as rockers or bikers even university students. Jeans can say a lot about a person’s life and highlight the significance jeans can have throughout it (Miller2012).

We form a relationship with particular items of clothing as it is emphasised in a study based on trainers and how these can form an identity. The relationships we create, with trainers or any garment, gives us the ability to make sense of our everyday lives. In this study the trainers have been compared to jeans to enable explanation for the individuals’ quest of identity. The two, trainers and jeans, have a long history behind them and can in some respect be classified as partners in crime. These two can be associated to as “a body prosthetic” according to Hockey, which identifies who we are and where we belong (Hockey et.al, 2015 p.22).

It becomes obvious that clothes have become a tool to pass on a message to society in respect to humanity and individualism. Clothes are a creative and spiritual way of making sense of life in general and the means to find our individuality and a group identity as quoted; "... unfolding of particular lives, offering a valuable, if under-utilised resource for making sense of everyday and life course processes of embodied identification" (Hockey et.al. 2015, p.21).

### 3 Textual- and visual analysis

In this chapter I will present my findings in order of appearance as written in the table below. The association between the companies and the research questions in this essay have been made through the use of six keywords.

The majority of images that are used in the companies' web are for the purpose of marketing their brand which is not of relevance in this examination but they will be interpreted for the message that can be perceived in the respect of history, identity and heritage. For instance some pictures represent how it used to be through the decades; the working miner or the insatiable James Dean look whilst others have strong connections to today's youth by marketing original styles with new and modern modifications.

*Table*

USA	Sweden
Levi's	Nudie
Wrangler	Dr Denim jeans
Lee	Pace jeans
Tellason	Indigofera

#### *Keywords*

- Heritage
- Identity
- Craftsmanship
- Authentic
- Culture
- History

### 3.1 Companies in the USA

#### 3.1.1 Levi's

The Levi's brand has a strong link to American heritage as many of their statements and pictures confirm.

*"Levi Strauss & Co. has been innovating since the birth of the first pair of jeans in 1873. Throughout our long history, we've inspired change in the marketplace, the workplace and the world. We invite you to take a look at our proud heritage in this timeline."*

<http://www.levistrauss.com/our-story/>

To preserve their heritage and history, they dedicate time to keep old jeans in storage under lock and key and supervised by their fulltime employed historian. These garments they keep have signs of authenticity according to the history of Levi's and are kept for future designs and inspiration.

*“Anyone can make a pair of blue jeans, but Levi Strauss & Co. made the first blue jean — in 1873. And we draw upon our heritage to continually reinvent the blue jean for generation after generation”*

<http://www.levistrauss.com/our-story/#the-history-of-denim>

They pride themselves in revealing their history by giving a chronological account of how they have been innovative through the years right from the start in 1853 to 2011 when they introduced “Born to bike” with the following statement:

*“Urban cyclists across the country adopted jeans as a part of their commuting uniform. Inspired by the trend, Levi's® invents the Commuter line - a multi-functional performance product designed for cyclists all over the world.”*

<http://us.levi.com/family/index.jsp?categoryId=18816896>

The statement above was inspired by the earlier model of biker jeans called “bicycle pants” that were marketed in 1895 with the following slogan:



<http://us.levi.com/family/index.jsp?categoryId=18816896>

Levi's has evolved and in doing so secured a place in the current fashion market. Their marketing strategies are directly aimed at particular consumer groups. Let's take the 501's as an example; the original model that up until spring 2015 has been marketed as the original classic 501s. Now there is an updated version called the 501CT (Customised and Tapered) and marketed as the original but with slightly different features, narrow legs and extra details such as designed ripped holes. So the 501 model jeans can now be attractive to a larger audience. To further explain the new identity that these n 501's possess I will show the difference with images as follows:



The 501CT



The original 501s

<http://us.levi.com/search/index.jsp?kwCatId=&kw=classic%20501&origkw=classic+501&sr=1>

Levi's give their customers the chance to belong to their history by customising their apparel so that the individual can create an identity.

*“People are at the centre of our success. Whether it’s our employees around the world, the apparel workers who make our clothes, or the people who wear our products, we are committed to doing right by all of them”*

<http://www.levistrauss.com/sustainability/>

Looking closer into Levi’s statements it is revealed that there is a specific vintage range that is connected to craftsmanship. Levi’s believes that the best jeans are made from the best materials. They do not use, according to their website, recycled materials in their apparel for this particular vintage apparel that was introduced in 1996. This is so the garment can be truly related to the original one made in 1873.

*“Unrivalled construction. Tried and tested. American originals. No matter how you say it, every piece of Levi’s® clothing embodies a sense of craft and quality - from the classic fit of Levi’s® 501® jeans to the refined details of Levi’s® Made & Crafted collection .For us, craftsmanship translates to design with purpose. From fabric to stitching, here's just a slice of how Levi's® products are crafted with care”*

<http://us.levi.com/family/index.jsp?categoryId=18816946>

Over the decades Levi’s have found ways to make their brand authentic, to make it original. To wear a pair of authentic Levi’s means that the denim fabric is raw selvedge, the jeans have riveted pockets, are a five pocket model, have an original brand leather badge and their distinctive red label placed on the top left hand corner on the jeans’ right back pocket; if this is not the case they are not authentic vintage jeans. Levi’s refers to the blue jeans as an icon, an iconic symbol that places Levi’s on the global market with the concept of innovation in everything they do makes their brand authentic.

*“The history of Levi’s® is kept alive through the launch of Levi’s® Vintage Clothing, a line that faithfully reproduces the fits, fabrics and characteristics of historic Levi’s® garment”*

<http://us.levi.com/family/index.jsp?categoryId=18816896>

As a final reminder of how significant the meaning of heritage is portrayed on Levi’s web site and the aim they strive for in giving their consumer an identity that reminds them of the past today and the sense of belonging, here is a final quote:

*“Your grandparents wore them.*

*Your parents wore them.*

*You wear them.”*

<http://us.levi.com/family/index.jsp?categoryId=18816836>

### **3.1.2 Wrangler**

Wrangler started out as “Blue Bell Overall Company” in 1919 by C. C. Hudson, the wrangler jeans was not introduced to the denim apparel market until 1947. These were the first designed cowboy jeans.

This is where Wranglers heritage and pride lies; the cowboys jeans. On their web site there is extensive descriptive image to complement their written statements. The picture below shows how they market their cowboy jeans.



[http://www.wrangler.com/store/WRG\\_STORE\\_US/en\\_US/category/men/jeans/wrangler-cowboy-cut.html](http://www.wrangler.com/store/WRG_STORE_US/en_US/category/men/jeans/wrangler-cowboy-cut.html)

*“Nothing has changed much since 1947 -- in fact, our Wrangler® Cowboy Cut® jean features the same construction details as first designed by Rodeo Ben, tailor to professional cowboys more than 50 years ago. The Wrangler® Cowboy Cut® jean has been the Western Original ever since”*

[http://www.wrangler.com/TPC/coll/coll\\_wrangler-cowboy-cut.html](http://www.wrangler.com/TPC/coll/coll_wrangler-cowboy-cut.html)

In their company statement they refer themselves as keepers of tradition in the western heritage. Wrangler jeans were worn by the same people who made the USA.

*“It's the same as ever, even before the first pair of Wrangler® jeans were made in 1947. Our history runs parallel to the rise of the country, our jeans worn by the same people who built it.”*

[http://www.wrangler.com/store/WRG\\_STORE\\_US/en\\_US/content/about\\_us/overview.html](http://www.wrangler.com/store/WRG_STORE_US/en_US/content/about_us/overview.html)

According to the next statement made by Wrangler by wearing their jeans the customer can be included in the American history and becoming a real American with strong values and a heritage they can call their own.

*“Wrangler® is enduring American freedom; it's in the spirit of people who work hard, have fun and recognize courageous individuality. As a company, we believe in solid commitments and perseverance in the face of obstacles and challenges. Most of all, we respect ourselves, each other, our western heritage and the environment in which we live”*

[http://www.wrangler.com/store/WRG\\_STORE\\_US/en\\_US/content/about\\_us/overview.html](http://www.wrangler.com/store/WRG_STORE_US/en_US/content/about_us/overview.html)

Wrangler retail line aims to reach mainly categorised customer groups such as cowboys, farmers and rodeo stars and as the images below evidently would deliver, hard working men!



[http://www.wrangler.com/store/WRG\\_STORE\\_US/en\\_US/category/men/jeans/wrangler-flame-resistant-fr.html](http://www.wrangler.com/store/WRG_STORE_US/en_US/category/men/jeans/wrangler-flame-resistant-fr.html)

But on the other hand they identify with the famous country singer George Strait as a contrast to the “rough” American heritage. Their customers can identify with these stars and feel part of that particular culture.



*“His signature style is the inspiration behind the George Strait Cowboy Cut® Collection of jeans and shirts”*

[http://www.wrangler.com/TPC/coll/coll\\_george-strait.html](http://www.wrangler.com/TPC/coll/coll_george-strait.html)

Wranglers 1947 limited edition jeans offers the customer an authentic garment as the original cowboy jeans had features such as the brand logo, the iconic leather patch and the “W” stitching on the back pocket signifying “Western Wear”.

*“With authentic American style woven into every pair, these jeans preserve the Western legacy of the Wrangler brand. Combining craftsmanship in the details and artistry in the design, this collection is unmatched for premium, heritage denim”*

[http://www.wrangler.com/store/WRG\\_STORE\\_US/en\\_US/style/mwusa.html](http://www.wrangler.com/store/WRG_STORE_US/en_US/style/mwusa.html)

As explained through their chronological account of their history they take pride in telling their story by marking the extraordinary hardwearing product that has been inspired by the people and celebrities. This gives their consumers a chance to be part of the history and their future legacy.

*“We value our customers, and we strive for full customer satisfaction. Each item we manufacture carries a one-year warranty, which covers actual defects in materials or workmanship. Our warranty is a statement of Wrangler's continuing commitment to high standards of quality”*

[http://www.wrangler.com/store/WRG\\_STORE\\_US/en\\_US/content/about\\_us/overview.html](http://www.wrangler.com/store/WRG_STORE_US/en_US/content/about_us/overview.html)

### **3.1.3 Lee**

To find Lee’s story and concept has not been an easy task as they bake it in through their marketing illustrations with little textual reference. They play with words and pictures to relay the intended messages. I have had to use two web sites to get information relating to their history and what part it has in their advertising.

Their written account of Lee’s history is told with a slideshow that includes written statements and this presented in a chronological order. In 1889 Henry David Lee founded the Mercantile Company situated in Salina, Kansas, where they manufactured dungarees and jackets. Then later to become part of a bigger enterprise that incorporates other apparel clothing and Wrangler.

[http://www.lee.com/store/LEE\\_STORE\\_US/en\\_US/content/our\\_company/history.html](http://www.lee.com/store/LEE_STORE_US/en_US/content/our_company/history.html)

I believe that the quotes below show that Lee have a history behind them and use it in their marketing. They want to be able to give the consumer back a bit of history and to emphasise that heritage awareness still exists within the company. The focus lies upon the quality and craftsmanship in this particular line of jeans, the original Lee 101’s. Promoting authenticity from the original Lee cowboy pants from 1924. But the images do not match the statements from the perception of authenticity. Would this be a modern cowboy?

*“Lee® 101, the men’s premium collection, uses the finest materials, flawless manufacturing, and a smarter fit.”*

<http://se.lee.com/lee101/inspire-me>

*“Using antique machinery and the subtle qualities of real selvage denim, Lee® 101 works with the finest Japanese mills, experimenting with premium dry denims with real indigo intensity, seamless fits, and hand-worked used effects”*

<http://se.lee.com/lee101/inspire-me>

*“Lee® 101’s highest grade fabrics so far and three timeless fits at its base, this is an exceptional collection for the authentic denim brand”*

<http://se.lee.com/lee101/inspire-me>



<http://se.lee.com/lee101/inspire-me>

I feel that Lee has come away from their heritage and story as their focus lies in pleasing the consumers at any costs and keeping up with the latest fashion as this quote can reinforce this observation:

*“Today's Lee is all about bringing more fits, styles, finishes, features and choices than ever before to market”*

[http://www.lee.com/store/LEE\\_STORE\\_US/en\\_US/content/our\\_company/history.html](http://www.lee.com/store/LEE_STORE_US/en_US/content/our_company/history.html)

### **3.1.4 Tellason**

Tony Patella and Pete Searson started this company in 2009 because they felt that there was no quality denim to be found on the market. Today they take pride in selling authentic denim wear. Authenticity in their eyes is going back to the way things were made in the beginning. Strong durable salvaged raw denim made in Greensboro and the jeans sewn in San Francisco by a small factory where detail and quality is highest on the list. Tellason believe in today’s need of high quality and durability in denim garments, a young company with strong values and visions and that that cares about keeping the jeans culture alive; from where the raw materials come from to the perception of authenticity.

*"We are 100% committed to the city of San Francisco and will make our jeans here and only here, forever. This place is the home of blue jean culture as we know it and moving*

*production somewhere else to save a couple of bucks just won't happen. If you know us, you know this to be true..."*

<http://www.tellason.com/our-story/>

An easy web site to research and enough written statements to be able to make a connection with the key words I expected to find.

### History

*"It is very important that historically American products are produced in the USA. And on a micro-level, that blue jeans are produced in their home of San Francisco"*

<http://www.tellason.com/our-story/>

### Culture

*"This place is the home of blue jean culture as we know it and moving production somewhere else to save a couple of bucks just won't happen"*

<http://www.tellason.com/our-story/>

### Identity

*"By leaving the fabric in its original state, it is the wearer that determines the aging characteristics of their jeans. This "story" is told over time and is based on the wearer's daily life and what they do in their jeans. After just a few days of wear, the jeans become completely personal and unlike any other pair in the world"*

<http://www.tellason.com/our-story/>

### Authenticity

*"By starting with raw denim, you not only get to provide your own real-life wear patterns, you also get the benefit of a custom fit as raw denim will mold to your body the way a great pair of leather shoes molds to your feet"*

<http://www.tellason.com/our-story/>

The images below show the simple way that Tellason jeans are promoted and how eye to detail is mastered.



<http://www.tellason.com/straight-leg-ankara/>

<http://www.tellason.com/vests/>

<http://www.gq.com/style/blogs/the-gq-eye/2012/12/stuff-we-like.html>

## 3.2 Companies in Sweden

### 3.2.1 Nudie jeans

I will like to start with a quote that perhaps puts nudie in a context, but the question is which?

*“THE NAKED TRUTH ABOUT DENIM*

*We love jeans, a passion we share with everyone who mourns a pair of worn out jeans as a close friend. Jeans share the same soul and attitude as music. The inspiration springs from the same dreams. Besides denim, only leather has the ability to age so beautifully, formed by its user into a second skin. Your jeans live your lifestyle. The longer you wear them, the more character and attitude they get”*

<http://www.nudiejeans.com/>

Today Nudie has become an established and reputable brand in Europe and working towards the same goals as when they started. With a larger customer base and more demands from the denim market. In the statement above there is a slight inclination towards and underlining declaration of the originality that a pair of jeans carries, this durable, hardwearing garment that will last almost a lifetime.

Maria Erixon, the founder, started Nudie with a vision; “I wanted to develop the brand’s expression with long term business in mind” and that is what she did, created a concept that was meant to last. Good quality apparel with the intentions of minimal impact to the environment.

*“Nudie Jeans was a dream about not having to compromise. It was a dream about bringing a consideration for the environment and human rights into every aspect of the production.”*

<http://www.nudiejeans.com/my-story-maria-erixon/>

In her earlier career she managed to secure a position as the European design manager at Lee in Brussels even so when starting Nudie the focus was not on heritage in the American sense it was more on a personal level. Her first design of jeans had a link to the original model jeans from the late 1900’s as these had the five pockets and coloured seems. She makes history and heritage in her own way.

*“I wanted to stay within the rigid framework of the five-pocket jean. But the fit and details, such as the orange thread, the shape and placement of the pocket and the hand drawn label gave Nudie Jeans a unique expression.”*

<http://www.nudiejeans.com/my-story-maria-erixon/>

*“For me, jeans were linked to culture. This was in 70's and there was a jeans mania going on in Stockholm. Even the King wore patched jeans”*

<http://www.nudiejeans.com/my-story-maria-erixon/>

2015 summer campaign highlights the words of Faith, Hope and Love where the connection is made to china, sea, indigo blue and the Gothenburg harbour. I believe that it is a bit of Swedish denim history linked to this as many sailors in the days brought back jeans from their travels home and some even sold them on.

The jeans you wear will create your personal history and heritage as many of the quotes that I found relates to the personal and intimate relationship you can create with a pair of jeans.

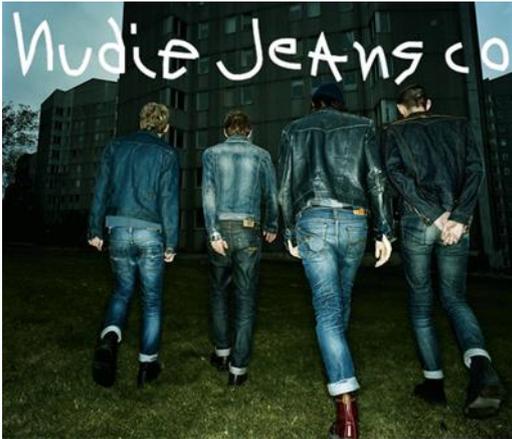
*“Everyone carries their past within them, and eventually some parts of your history become part of your legacy.”*

<http://www.nudiejeans.com/my-story-maria-erixon/>

One of their slogans clarifies the relationship of you and your jeans and the identity the harmony between jeans and wearer can give.

*“YOUR JEANS GO WHERE YOU GO.  
THEY LIVE YOUR LIFESTYLE.  
THEY GET ABRASIONS AND SCARS.  
AND THEY BLEED.  
JUST LIKE YOU”*

<http://www.nudiejeans.com/>



<http://www.nudiejeans.com/>

### 3.2.2 Dr Denim jeans

They have no clear statements to simply highlight their true identity; the fact is that this company's written statements are like deciphering a code. Dr Denim was established in 2004 by the Graah family. The company stands for innovative comfort and making the best denim jeans on the market. The images on the web site have mostly simple esthetical features and some tell a more complex story. The products are very much manufactured for the denim fashion market and what their targeted consumers desires.



<http://www.drdenimjeans.com/se/about-us>

<http://www.drdenimjeans.com/se/shop/clark-60037.html>

They tell their story in seven chapters each chapter is carefully explained that partly relates to their link to denim early in life as their grandfather was a sailor and used to come home with exciting stories and jeans and their vision in making jeans perfect like one of their statements reveals; *“Dr Denim’s jeans have taken his place with a fit that can only be described as having “divine proportions””*.

They pride themselves of this fact and make remarks on how the jeans are made because they are *“inspired by our past and optimistic about the future”*.

*“When we were young we would sit on his lap and listen to his many stories which were to make a big mark and inspire us deeply. He taught us important values and showed the importance of challenging established truths and going your own way”*

<http://www.drdenimjeans.com/se/about-us>

The quality of the material is a crucial part in their designs if it’s not right the feel will not be right. The way the jeans are manufactured, from idea to product, demands an upmost precision so their customers can experience the garment with all their senses.

*“Many factors combine to create the Dr. Denim feel. These are the most important:*

- *Fibre length.*
- *Composition (adding hemp and cotton to create rawness, polyester for softness and elastane for great stretch).*
- *Spinning techniques.*
- *Fabric construction.*
- *Density.*
- *Surface treatment.”*

<http://www.drdenimjeans.com/se/about-us>

They want their jeans to tell a story and by doing so give the wearer the opportunity to find individuality and make their own history.

*“Customers. It’s a great feeling to see people walking around feeling awesome in a pair of Dr. Denims. Nothing else lights the spark in quite the same way”*

*“A pair of old jeans is like a story. You can read the individual’s mental and physical health and the wearer’s attitude in it”*

*“But what the jeans will look like, where they are worn thin and how distressed they will be, that part is your responsibility. Your personality and your cares will be evident when your Dr. Denim jeans have become a part of you”*.

<http://www.drdenimjeans.com/se/about-us>

Craftsmanship is described as the creative and innovative process that their jeans go; from the raw denim to the abrasive process of the denim textile. Their philosophy is that they take part in the creative progression that must happen for the ultimate garment manufacturing, in search for perfection.

*“At Dr. Denim, all inspiration is abstract and internal. Collections are built around ideas and visions.”*

*“They are the result of hard, creative and highly enjoyable work.”*

<http://www.drdenimjeans.com/se/about-us>

As a final thought I would like to finish with a couple of quotes that I believe defines what seems to be the essence of Dr Denim company and what they want to give their customers; an individual identity.

*“Your personality and your cares will be evident when your Dr. Denim jeans have become a part of you.”*

*“Look after them well and you’ll have a long-term relationship to look forward to”*  
<http://www.drdenimjeans.com/se/about-us>

### **3.2.3 Pace jeans**

The family company started their business was born in 2003 out of their history and passion to jeans. Their great grandfather immigrated to USA, the land of opportunity to return to Sweden a few years later with a new found culture and enough stories to tell through generations. This gave Klas and Cecilia Erixon the push they needed to pursue their dreams.

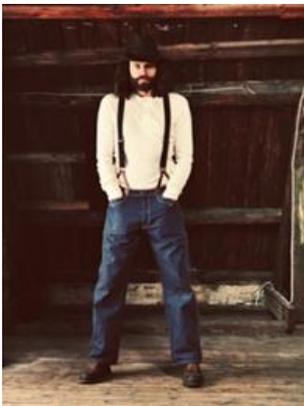
*“The original heritage of Pace jeans reaches all the way back to Klas Erixon’s grandpa Erik”*  
<http://pacejeans.com/en/articles/story/>

Their concept is presented in a simple visual way that gives the website visitor a pleasant experience, with very little text but making the obvious sip through; the link to heritage, a personal heritage. So today they stand for quality and durability being inspired by original designs and adding a personal touch. The wearer gets the chance to pursue their identity with the help of Pace jeans.

*“Adventurous times and stories from the years that Erik lived through in Telluride is a core part of the inspiration to our brand today”*  
<http://pacejeans.com/en/articles/story/>

Their personal experience has an influence on their designs and the way they deliver their message on the web site.

*“As a young boy Klas had grown up with jeans, had seen first-hand the cultural shift towards the way people identified with denim”*  
<http://pacejeans.com/en/articles/story/>



<http://pacejeans.com/en/articles/jeans-1/micheal-allen-harris-co-op-mah001.html>

Pace believes that jeans should last and become part of the individual's identity. The jeans make a personal imprint on the wearer where a relationship can be built between the individual and their jeans.

*“The corner-stone of Klas and Cecilia's philosophy is quality and a fit that would last. They believe that denim is something personal, a fabric that should change with the owner, only to get better with age”*

*“They believe that denim is something personal, a fabric that should change with the owner, only to get better with age.”*

<http://pacejeans.com/en/articles/story/>

### **3.2.4 Indigofera**

On their web site there is no story told relating to their company history and when it was established. It is a company that make their jeans with passion and that does things their own way. The importance is placed in the fabric, quality and authenticity. They have used the same factory since the beginning and are believers in tradition and history, even the cotton used in the denim textile is grown and harvested in America. To highlight this I will underline the important words and sentences:

*“At the core of Indigofera Prima Jeans is an unswerving dedication to quality detail and craftsmanship, an on-going love affair with denim. The name is a tribute to the colour indigo—the very essence of jeans, at the heart of denim manufacturing. Indigofera is the origin—the beginning of denim—and prima is the ambition, the vision of old-fashioned quality and enduring workmanship. We have a strong passion for garments made with the right materials, put together in the best way possible, and produced in Europe”*

<http://www.indigoferajeans.com/2013/brand/>

*“Supima is made exclusively of extra-long staple cotton grown in the US and has become the cotton of choice among the world's fine-count yarn spinners”*

<http://www.indigoferajeans.com/2013/woad-2/>

Indigofera has a range of designed wool blankets which have been born out of a history and heritage which are linked to the Volvo Amazon car and has a connection to their jeans.

*“The designs of the blankets are coherent with the Indigofera main line – which is qualitative jeans wear. Colors, labeling and design are familiar for the jeans aficionado and also easily adopted by individuals looking for a long-lasting visual expression that will age with grace. We insists that just like a good pair of jeans, a good blanket will age and grow personal with your shared moments”*

<http://www.indigoferajeans.com/2013/blankets-2/>

The following images relate to the culture that Indigofera is portraying has strong links to the past in a modern today with a notion of a subculture emerging.



<http://www.indigoferajeans.com/2013/looks/>

### 3.3 Summary of textual- and visual analysis

The companies varied statements and images have one strong contestant in common and it is how they deliver their message about identity on the web sites. Their marketing enhances the possibility that the consumer has in reference to attainment of identity or identification within a culture or group in society.

If we take the owner of originality, Levi's, they refer to identity through their history, a historical sense of belonging by stating that their brand "... would become known for self-expression and classic American cool" with a similar outlook Wrangler reinforces the labels true origin and identifies with its culture and America, "... it's in the spirit of people who work hard, have fun and recognize courageous individuality". Dr Denim jeans on the other hand focuses on the feeling of and esthetical features that the jeans possesses and therefore gives the wearer and identity; "Your personality and your cares will be evident when your Dr. Denim jeans have become a part of you".

Focus also lies on the quality and the ability that the denim textile, particularly in the jeans, has of transformation when worn as many of the companies use words such as, change, personal, authentic, durability, strength, relationship, just to quote a few. History and heritage has formed an important tool to the companies that use it well, from personal to global history all the chosen ones use it to make a personal statement an enhance their label. The strongest link would be that of Levi's as they own the right to call the first ever made American jeans their own.

The following tables are the results of my findings as per the company's websites. The first table shows if the companies have any of the keywords in their written statements and table two and three are an upgrade of table one with actual quotations from the websites statements that include some of the keywords.

Table 1

	Levi's	Wrangler	Lee	Tellason	Nudie	Dr. Denim jeans	Pace	Indigofera
Heritage	x	x		x			x	x
Identity		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Craftsmanship	x	x	x	x		x	x	x
Authentic	x	x	x	x				x
Culture	x	x		x	x			
History	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	

Table 2

USA	Levi's	Wrangler	Lee	Tellason
Heritage	<p>"Anyone can make a pair of blue jeans, but Levi Strauss &amp; Co. made the first blue jean — in 1873. And we draw upon our heritage to continually reinvent the blue jean for generation after generation".</p> <p>"This is an exciting time for Levi Strauss &amp; Co. We're building on our heritage to move the company forward, to be as innovative and relevant to today's consumers — and tomorrow's — as we were when we invented the blue jean 140 years ago."</p> <p>"Your grandparents wore them. Your parents wore them. You wear them."</p>	<p>The 1947 limited edition jeans are inspired by the first ever manufactured cowboy jeans, the original and the real deal. As the promoting video discloses these jeans stay "true to their heritage".</p>	<p>I feel that Lee has come away from their heritage and story line as a marketing tool as there focus lies in pleasing the market at any costs. As I will show from the given explanation on their website:</p> <p>"Today's Lee is all about bringing more fits, styles, finishes, features and choices than ever before to market".</p>	<p>"It is very important that historically American products are produced in the USA. And on a micro-level, that blue jeans are produced in their home of San Francisco"</p> <p>"...their respect for where they came from and who made them..."</p>
Identity	<p>"When Levi Strauss co-invented the blue jean in 1873, he didn't know that he was creating a global brand that would become known for self-expression and classic American cool. And that's the beauty of the Levi's® story"</p>	<p>"Wrangler® is enduring American freedom; it's in the spirit of people who work hard, have fun and recognize courageous individuality."</p>		<p>"By leaving the fabric in its original state, it is the wearer that determines the aging characteristics of their jeans. This "story" is told over time and is based on the wearer's daily life and what they do in their jeans. After just a few days of wear, the jeans become completely personal and unlike any other pair in the world".</p>
Craftsmanship	<p>"For us, craftsmanship translates to design with purpose. From fabric to stitching, here's just a slice of how Levi's® products are crafted with care".</p>	<p>"Wrangler at its finest. A premium collection combining authentic American style with ultimate craftsmanship and design. Proudly made in the USA with denim from the Cone Denim® White Oak Plant™".</p>	<p>"Using antique machinery and the subtle qualities of real selvage denim, Lee® 101 works with the finest Japanese mills, experimenting with premium dry denims with real indigo intensity, seamless fits, and hand-worked used effects."</p>	<p>"Cone mill reserves the best cotton that comes in from the fields for their selvage fabrics. Our custom made pocketing is strong and will last throughout the life of the jeans"</p>
Authentic	<p>"We're producing the same iconic styles we're known for. In an incredibly more efficient way"</p>	<p>"Wrangler authentic western jeans" based on the 1947 jeans model.</p>	<p>"Using Lee® 101's highest grade fabrics so far and three timeless fits at its base, this is an exceptional collection for the authentic denim brand."</p>	<p>"By starting with raw denim, you not only get to provide your own real-life wear patterns, you also get the benefit of a custom fit as raw denim will mold to your body the way a great pair of leather shoes molds to your feet"</p>
Culture	<p>"...we're guided by our values: empathy, originality, integrity and courage. With them in mind, we constantly strive to build a culture just as inspiring as the people who wear our jeans"</p>	<p>Proudly working with and presenting celebrities in the cowboy world.</p> 		<p>"This place is the home of blue jean culture as we know it and moving production somewhere else to save a couple of bucks just won't happen"</p>
History	<p>"The history of Levi's® is kept alive through the launch of Levi's® Vintage Clothing, a line that faithfully reproduces the fits, fabrics and characteristics of historic Levi's® garment"</p>	<p>"It's the same as ever, even before the first pair of Wrangler® jeans were made in 1947. Our history runs parallel to the rise of the country, our jeans worn by the same people who built it."</p>	<p>"With its modern technical know-how, Lee® 101 returns to its work wear roots this Spring/Summer, reinterpreting iconic Lee® pieces with a contemporary edge and fresh, upbeat feel"</p>	<p>"We are very proud of the fact that our jeans are not only made in America, but that the pocketing, thread, buttons, rivets and leather patches are as well"</p>

Table 3

Sweden	Nudie	Dr Denim jeans	Pace jeans	Indigofera
Heritage	<i>"Everyone carries their past within them, and eventually some parts of your history become part of your legacy."</i>	<i>"It's an independent family business with experience, creativity and passion"</i>	<i>"The original heritage of Pace jeans reaches all the way back to Klas Erixon's grandpa Erik"</i>  <i>"Lennart became interested in clothing and it didn't take long for him to discover jeans, an influence from America which he identified with instantly. He had seen the jeans that his father had worn whilst working in the mines, battered, and torn they looked like working man's clothing"</i>	<i>"Indigofera is the origin—the beginning of denim—and prima is the ambition, the vision of old-fashioned quality and enduring workmanship"</i>
Identity	<i>"Your jeans live your lifestyle. The longer you wear them, the more character and attitude they get"</i>	<i>"A pair of old jeans is like a story. You can read the individual's mental and physical health and the wearer's attitude in it"</i>  <i>"But what the jeans will look like, where they are worn thin and how distressed they will be, that part is your responsibility. Your personality and your cares will be evident when your Dr. Denim jeans have become a part of you".</i>	<i>"The corner-stone of Klas and Cecilia's philosophy is quality and a fit that would last. They believe that denim is something personal, a fabric that should change with the owner, only to get better with age"</i>	
Craftsmanship	<i>"Nudie Jeans was a dream about not having to compromise. It was a dream about bringing a consideration for the environment and human rights into every aspect of the production."</i>	<i>"AT DR. DENIM WE PUT MATHS TO GOOD USE, CREATING OUR JEANS FROM MATHEMATICAL TOOLS AS WELL AS OUR STRUCTURES, PATTERNS AND EXPERIENCE"</i>  <i>"Finding an outlet for artistic and decorative urges is exhilarating"</i>  <i>"Many factors combine to create the Dr. Denim feel. These are the most important:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fibre length.</li> <li>• Composition (adding hemp and cotton to create rawness, polyester for softness and elastane for great stretch).</li> <li>• Spinning techniques.</li> <li>• Fabric construction.</li> <li>• Density.</li> <li>• Surface treatment."</li></ul>	<i>"He set about experimenting with what he could do with the denim. He used sand paper, a file and a number of other techniques to wear in the denim to change the style. He had found an interested that would last his whole life"</i>	<i>"At the core of Indigofera Prima Jeans is an unwavering dedication to quality detail and craftsmanship, an on-going love affair with denim"</i>
Authentic	<i>"I wanted to stay within the rigid framework of the five-pocket jean. But the fit and details, such as the orange thread, the shape and placement of the pocket and the hand drawn label gave Nudie Jeans a unique expression."</i>	<i>"The original concept behind the style should be strong and interesting"</i>  <i>"Dr Denim's jeans have taken his place with a fit that can only be described as having "divine proportions""</i>	<i>"They decided to concentrate on selvage raw denim, the original denim that had been used by Erik in Telluride. They searched for the best quality denim they could find, taking them as far a way as Japan. Here they bought selvage raw denim that had been produced in the original shuttle looms, that the Japanese bought from America after the Second World War."</i>	
Culture	<i>"For me, jeans were linked to culture. This was in 70's and there was a jeans mania going on in Stockholm. Even the King wore patched jeans"</i>	<i>"Dr. Denim is primarily about daring to have fun, trusting your feelings and intuition. Jeans are fun. For us, jeans-making is a love affair"</i>	<i>"During this period he meet like-minded people and feel in love with the culture and the possibilities that were open to anyone willing to take a chance and follow their dreams."</i>	
History	<i>"To me, there's a relationship between Nudie Jeans Repair</i>	<i>"When we were young we would sit on his lap and listen to his many stories</i>	<i>"As a young boy Klas had grown up with jeans, had seen first-hand the cultural</i>	

	<p><i>Shops and my father's re-treading workshop. He re-tread old tires instead of selling new ones. We encourage people to wear in their jeans and repair them instead of throwing them out and buy new ones"</i></p>	<p><i>which were to make a big mark and inspire us deeply. He taught us important values and showed the importance of challenging established truths and going your own way"</i></p>	<p><i>shift towards the way people identified with denim. "</i>  <i>"Klas and Cecilia creating Pace jeans in 2003, felt like the natural step to take, considering their history and passion for denim"</i></p>	
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## 4 The interviews

The two companies, one from San Francisco and one from Stockholm, which agreed to participate in the interviews, will provide me with some answers that can become part of the final discussion.

Each of the informants will have a total of 19 questions to answer with room for discussion. The questions will give me the ability to in some respect use the answers in the search for an understanding of jeans as a cultural heritage.

Both informants have a long retail background and have worked at other jeans companies where they gained experience in the field of denim. Starting their own business has meant that they can now apply their history and values to their jeans brand.

### 4.1 Tellason

One of the founders of Tellason, Tony Patella, agreed to answer some questions in relation to their business and how they perceived the statement I put forward relating to jeans and heritage. The answers were sent via mail on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2015 in English.

Initially the questions asked were more of a basic nature so a how and why could be established relating to the start of their business and to find out why they wanted to start a denim business.

Tony has been in the apparel industry for 25 years and for seven out of those years working with denim. This experience led Tony to make the decision to produce his own brand.

*“My experience with Sutter’s helped me realize I have a passion for products that get better with age, specifically denim”*  
*Interview 5/5 2015 with Tony Patella*

The business idea had been growing for some time and in the autumn of 2008 Tony contacted his friend and now business partner to be a part of his new venture. It was a natural choice for Tony as his friend shared the passion for denim and wanting to make a fresh start in their careers.

*“We began working on our first model in early 2009 and delivered our first order in May of 2009”*  
*Interview 5/5 2015 with Tony Patella*

Now the questions start to be more directed at how history is used in their marketing. Tony does not believe in taking drastic marketing strategies as today any business with money can buy advertisement. Instead they let their products do the advertising for them.

*“... but that only the best products can find a shelf space in the world’s best stores”*  
*Interview 5/5 2015 with Tony Patella*

They take their business seriously and like to have genuine satisfied customers. They offer their customers hemming and repair services whilst not forgetting showing interest in customer contact. The quality and durability is highest on their list of garment requirements. As the question of branding aroused it was clear that they identify themselves with people that craft their products and care about those products origin. That is why it comes natural to them; manufacturing a handcrafted valuable product.

*“With our jeans, you could buy one today and buy the exact same model, fit and fabric three years from now. We are not fashion.”*

*Interview 5/5 2015 with Tony Patella*

This lead to the description of their customer:

*“Our “guy” is someone that cares about provenance, consistency and service”*

*Interview 5/5 2015 with Tony Patella*

In the respect of heritage a very direct question lead to the following answer:

*“Absolutely. Specifically a San Francisco heritage symbol. Jeans are what they are because of what was happening in California during the Gold rush Cultural icons in America turned jeans from workwear to everyday wear in the 1950s.”*

*Interview 5/5 2015 with Tony Patella*

Even though jeans stand for heritage in America according to Tony he does not believe that their business governs this heritage but in another respect he thinks that by manufacturing jeans in San Francisco will keep the history of jeans alive. This is where the original, the authentic jeans where made back in the day. The constitution of authenticity in a pair of jeans is answered by Tony as follows:

*“Jeans that are made in the “old” way – with narrow loom selvage denim and void of extraneous details and washes”*

*Interview 5/5 2015 with Tony Patella*

Tellason likes to be identified with originality and quality. They make personal connections with fellow believers and only use the best of American products in their clothing lines.

## **4.2 Indigofera**

This interview was done over the telephone with Mats Andersson the co-owner of Indigofera on the 11th of May at 11 am. The conversation was recorded to later be transcribed on a document. The chosen language for the interview was Swedish as this is a Stockholm based company.

Mats started out in the retail business as a sales representative for a company called JC in Sweden. This experience lead to a position in a European branch of Levi’s working with their vintage collection for 8 years. It was not quite clear why he chose to work with denim but from the answers one can deduct that denim has always been part of his life.

Mats decided to start his own brand in 2009 and make quality jeans with a durable lifespan; this was due to his disappointment in the denim apparel industry which he felt had come away from producing products of quality and authenticity.

*“The jeans that Indigofera produces are “jeans” and the fashion industry produces blue trousers” (Free translation)*

*Interview 11/5 2015 with Mats Andersson*

Mats describe their jeans as the best on the market and makes remarks about being the “Best tomato on the market” (free translation). The idea for the Indigofera Prima jeans has a history attached to it; indigo stands for the original dye and prima for the outstanding quality, their jeans are not mass produced.

Their boutique in Stockholm has not been named after their brand and is called “Pancho Lefty”, Mats believes that there should be a place for brands with a likeminded history to Indigofera and that this place would promote and highlight their products.

Their targeted customer as Mats explains must be the one that is tired of fashion and appreciates the real thing. He believes that his customer is not “fashion worried” and that he is self-assured in his consumer role.

As the conversation de railed we once again took up the red thread and proceeded talking about authenticity and what that means in their jeans brand. Mats view on this matter is that a replica is not authentic just because it looks the same but authenticity is acquired with time and patience. Be true to yourself and make quality products with a forever lasting model with original tools and material.

*“The philosophy behind how you should do things” (free translation)*

*Interview 11/5 with Mats Andersson*

Indigoferas history is influenced by the American history that Mats believes lies closely to ours as we in Sweden chose to immigrate to the land of opportunities. From this reality many subcultures have been born in Sweden such as the Rockabilly culture where the American 50’s era is of strong influence. Indigofera sell more jeans outside Scandinavia and mostly in shop. Mats is positive that the internet sales will increase.

Now that authenticity and history had been established we started discussing cultural heritage and it was clear that to Mats heritage is linked to both America and a personal level. He then explained how their blankets designs have a link to their jeans and the Swedish Volvo Amazon. The blankets are made in Norway in a small village where weaving has a strong connection to custom and craftsmanship; just like their jeans.

*“Parallels between love and the blue fabric” (free translation)*

*Interview 11/5 2015 with Mats Andersson*

## 5. Conclusion and final discussion

In this final stage of the essay I will divide the arguments and conclusions into parts with a heading that highlight the keywords of *identity, craftsmanship, authentic, culture, history and heritage* that I have been used throughout this study. The key words have been used as a tool of examination and comparison to be able to answer the following questions:

- Can jeans be understood as cultural heritage?
- How are jeans linked to a historical and cultural perspective in respect to the companies?

Initially I thought that finding clear evidence of understanding jeans as Cultural Heritage was not a straight forward task but what I found was that today the chosen companies included in this study believe in history and heritage but not perhaps in the sense of UNESCO's definitions of Tangible and Intangible Cultural heritage that according to Munjeri cannot exist without each other but in many ways from a personal view and with their own opinion.

*“The distinction between physical heritage is now seen as artificial. Physical heritage can only attain its true significance when it sheds light on its underlying values. Conversely, intangible heritage must be made incarnate in tangible manifestations.”*  
(Munjeri 2004 p.18)

What strengthen these findings where the interviews completed with two smaller denim companies that decided that fashion has taken over and that jeans are no longer the trousers they were designed to be. Jeans according to both informants are the product of history and heritage that is worth preserving; perhaps not the actual physical pair but the way that they are made and the material used in the manufacturing. Original craftsmanship used in the process of making jeans delivers authenticity and that plays an important part in calling this phenomenon, jeans, Cultural Heritage.

Heritage and history takes precedence in many denim apparel companies today and more so in the USA with a partner that has seriously perceived the original garment intent and managed to produce good denim brands that pride themselves on making the authentic jeans based on the original model and material. Indigofera is one of them situated in Stockholm states that “...*dedication to quality detail and craftsmanship...*” is at the core of their concept.

The empirical material in this essay has been used parallel to UNESCO's definitions on heritage to determine if there is a possible connection to the aim of this study. The connection is to be found largely in the history and heritage statements that the collected and collated material from the companies hold and there is a certainty that an underlying understanding of the meaning heritage is clear to the companies and in some respect their customers as shown through the interview material I have processed and the research I have read made in the admiration of jeans as a part of our society.

## 5.1 Heritage, history and culture

The companies chosen for this essay have a long or short history that is revealed in the company story which can be associated with the history and heritage of jeans. Like Pace jeans but on a more personal basis tell their story about the influences of their jeans are directly linked to their grandfather as stated on their web site “*Adventurous times and stories from the years that Erik lived through in Telluride is a core part of the inspiration to our brand today*” and Levi’s take pride in telling the story of the birth of the original jeans whilst Wrangler’s story is strongly related to the Western Cowboy culture and both with an American icon. According to Tony at Tellason believes that jeans are part of the American heritage and history; especially in San Francisco where it all began that it all happened because “Jeans are what they are because of what was happening in California during the Gold rush Cultural icons in America turned jeans from work wear to everyday wear in the 1950s.” (Interview, Tony Patella). In Sweden it is another story as we adopted part of this heritage through relatives and sailors that brought the story and jeans back home. Mats at Indigofera believe that there is a certainty that sub cultures as the Rockabilly groups here in Sweden have been born out of the influence of American culture.

Likewise we can refer one of the informants in Eklunds book, a retired sailor by the name of Lars-Olof that bought a pair of jeans in 1956 that he never wore are worth more now than when he bought them. These jeans carry a history and a legacy that Lars-Olof feel is important to preserve. He values the cultural aspect that these jeans embrace and made sure they found a forever caring home (Eklund 2014). The history of these jeans can also as explained in Muñoz Viñas have a sentimental meaning that is made up by personal experiences and memories that in turn creates specific associations to an object.

Jeans can be understood as heritage even cultural heritage but most of us do not reflect on that fact. The companies on the other hand do reflect on how they chose to communicate that information to the consumers. We can take one of USA’s top brands; Levi’s; they have strong associations to jeans’ history and heritage. This brand reached national status during Second World War and the American government declared jeans as “... *an essential commodity*” (English 2007) and today the company proudly link their products to history and heritage as quoted:

*“Inventing blue jeans was just the start of how Levi Strauss pioneered a brand for true originals. Around every bend of the Levi’s® story, innovation and quality is at the heart of everything we do. Here’s how we’ve made history with you...”*  
<http://us.levi.com/family/index.jsp?categoryId=18816896>

Some have chosen to name their apparel line after something connected to jeans and its history like Indigofera and their prima jeans; they have chosen the name after the indigo dye that has been the original colour since the beginning and prima for the quality. Likewise we have Tellason which are the composite of the founder’s surnames and that stands for quality and durability. Levi’s are the story and have been the proprietors of jeans since the beginning as the research showed “The Jesus of Jeans? A study of Levi’s customer loyalty in Gothenburg” (Bohlin 2010) when informants were asked about the Levi’s brand and what it meant to them. There is a hidden meaning that is often connected to the story of the founders that in many ways have associations with America and its heritage.

It is evident that the companies’ globalisation takes them into a different journey than the smaller more niched companies. Lee for instance have in some respect moved away from their heritage and are now part of a more globalised venture where other apparel companies are part of; like Wrangler. Mats at Indigofera is worried about who will in the

end govern the history of jeans as he believes that the larger companies are no longer producing jeans but blue trousers and have come a long way away from the original idea of jeans in respect to the denim textile and techniques used in the manufacturing.

## 5.2 Identity and authenticity

The majority of companies give the consumer a visual experience that can be identified with the original and authentic jeans but in a modern form. These are represented mostly by male models in their late twenties. Their image reminds the consumer of the bad boy image that James Dean represented in the late 1960's or some images even take you back to the mining days and some images that are shown on the web sites today are also stereotypical so a specific consumer group is targeted. The example can be given of Wrangler as they target the hardworking male; being a professional or cowboy as the picture below proves and whilst Dr Denim jeans are associated with urban fashion within a younger subculture.



Wrangler



Dr Denim jeans

Being a hippie in the seventies meant that you represented a group and within this group grew an identity that reflected the person's faith in individuality; "... and reinforced a cultural link between the art clothing and wearer" (English 2007, p.96) but for most of us using jeans is just an everyday occurrence and no thought is behind the choice made and why. Instead jeans can give us that sought after identity or the sense of belonging as Miller & Woodward answered through their research; a study in London where the participants' personal views and perceptions were going to be interpreted from a material culture perspective. The findings were many but one that can be connected to the notion of identity is that of "fitting in" and many felt that by wearing jeans they did just that. These participants could also be identified as part of a subculture such as rockers that perhaps can be compared with the hippie movement in the 70's. The description of symbolism that Muñoz Viñas offers describes that the "*Group-identification meaning*" can be applied to any group in society as long as the common view or object is the same and gives a sense of belonging.

The explanation above is relevant to the keyword identity used in this essay as jeans do certainly give an individual or group an identity as stated in the research made in relation to trainers by Hockey that "*addresses its agency within processes of identification*" or as many of the companies use as an important way of portraying their concept. Many refer to the denim fabric as the one giving the wearer the opportunity to make their jeans individual and unique as stated by Tellason "*After just a few days of wear, the jeans become completely personal and unlike any other pair in the world*" or indeed Nudie with their description of the relationship that we form with our jeans "*Your jeans live your lifestyle. The longer you wear them, the more character and attitude they get*". UNESCO's definition of intangible heritage has also a reference to that of identity "...provides people with a sense of identity...".

Lars-Olof from Eklunds book the jeans that he bought and never wore can be classified as authentic according to the criteria set in Munjeri's definition of authenticity which is based on the Venice Charter; these jeans can be classified as an object of conservation. If the jeans would have been worn they would not be less authentic as according to the new updated guidelines is that to include traditions, techniques, spirit, feeling, historic and social dimensions to the object or indeed the immaterial attributes. The meaning of authenticity can differ from individual to individual as shown when the interviewees answered the question of their interpretation of what authenticity means.

Tony at Tellason explains that a pair of authentic jeans should be made in the original factories, with original looms and material from original mills, the original fabric as he puts it "*Jeans that are made in the "old" way – with narrow loom selvage denim and void of extraneous details and washes*" but Mats at Indigofera believes that authenticity is acquired through time. The products that you manufacture stay good quality and durable that you are true to yourself and your product like he describes it as "*The philosophy behind how you should do things*". According to Mats just because something looks authentic does not mean that it is. Levi's uses the term authentic when it comes to their Vintage line collection, such as the original 501's that this spring collection have now been marketed as the original but new 501CT (Customised and tapered). Can we call these authentic?

### 5.3 Craftsmanship

The one keyword that has not been easily found among the companies' web sites is that of craftsmanship. Levi's, Wrangler, Lee, Nudie and Dr Denim cater for all genders and are largely globalised which can interfere with the original reason of setting up shop. The smaller businesses have a tighter clientele and only that of males that want product of quality and craftsmanship. Tony at Tellason describes their customer as the "*guy*" that cares about provenance, consistency and service likewise Mats at Indigofera refers to their customer as not "*fashion worried*". Their customer no longer desires other than quality and durability with consistency in model. These customers can be compared to the ones in Augustsson's study that looks into the possibility that Pace jeans customers are denim nerds. They are described as the ones that associate denim with the classic American denim brands, quality, American denim history and the indigo dye. Equally I believe that Levi's has a take on this as the study made by Bohlin and Eriksson in recognising Levi's as a cult brand in Gothenburg shows that the wearers are devoted to the brand as one to their respondents stated "*The leading manufacturers of jeans, with long history and tradition. Reminds me of the gold rush in USA*" and identified with the American history.

Levi's associates craftsmanship within their vintage collection and states that For us, craftsmanship translates to design with purpose "... Levi's® products are crafted with care" whilst Indigofera and Tellason companies' have skill as a crucial part of their concept. As stated on Indigofera's web site "*At the core of Indigofera Prima Jeans is an unswerving dedication to quality detail and craftsmanship, an on-going love affair with denim*" this gives the picture that perhaps craftsmanship in the jeans apparel is no longer so important in the larger companies as it is with the smaller and more niched ones.

UNESCO's definition of the intangible cultural heritage describes that to be classified as that of the intangible, traditions should be passed through generations and human creativity and diversity is to be respected this can be compared to with some of the statements that are made by for instance Levi's believe that jeans are made for generations to come; "*Your grandparents wore them. Your parents wore them. You wear them.*" and Wrangler states that their original 1947 jeans have the "*Combining craftsmanship in the details and artistry in the design, this collection is unmatched for premium, heritage denim*" this

proves only that understanding the connection between the companies written statements and the definition of UNESCO's intangible heritage can in fact increase the understanding of jeans as Cultural Heritage.

## 5.4 Final thoughts

There is no denying that all the companies are using the history and heritage of jeans in different ways to tempt the consumer to purchase. Mats at Indigofera believe that the fashion apparel today has no claim on jeans as they do not use its true self in the desired way. The care should lie with quality, history and durability in mind; equally at Tellason as Tony nicely put it *"With our jeans, you could buy one today and buy the exact same model, fit and fabric three years from now. We are not fashion."* Mats claim might not be far off as there is proof that Lee jeans have decided to change focus and use their heritage and history in their clothing lines by making them attractive to the consumers and making these into fashion. It is no longer about the originality but more about pleasing the customer. Their statement reveals no other than customer focus *"Today's Lee is all about bringing more fits, styles, finishes, features and choices than ever before to market"*. This creates the question if the history and heritage of jeans can in time be governed by the rightful hands and not be lost in fashion?

Under the convention and safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage it is stated that the inventorying of such cannot take place unless the communities, groups or individuals values of heritage are defined. This can raise questionable reasons to the values applied according to the guidelines in place for identifying intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO). Jeans might be such occurrence as the reasons to put these into an intangible cultural context might differ from communities, groups or individuals. Going back to the sailor in Eklunds book; perhaps all sailors do not apply the same cultural values to jeans as Lars-Olof does. Others might find the economical values more interesting or even the material culture that can be applied to objects such as jeans (Miller 2012).

By identifying people's beliefs and perceptions of Cultural Heritage it is safe to assume that there is an understanding to be found and an opportunity for further research. The understanding might not be that of cultural heritage as a common global term but perhaps entwined in another cultural context. The opposite to this study would be that one of what the general public believes that perhaps would increase their awareness and understanding of the meaning of jeans in a cultural aspect and even in a more sustainable way. For instance material culture defines that even though we do not reflect on why we use jeans it does not make the intentions of use less important to taken into account when determining why we do it (Miller 2012, p.120).

I would like to finish with this quote:

*"Making a pair of jeans, especially in this age of hand-washed, individually abraded premium brands, is an art form. It's a kin to architecture, they say, or woodworking, sculpting. And to wear them is to express a kind of philosophy, in that the classic pair of blue jeans might carry more implications about the American consumer than anything else we consume" (Sullivan 2006, p.7)*

## 6. Summary

The idea for this essay started when I grew an interest and healthy obsession for jeans. I own over 200 pairs; these have been given to me as means of re-making. Jeans have become an apparel phenomenon that has been globalised and incorporated in people's everyday lives; from working wear to fashion icon in less than two decades.

So why do so many of us wear jeans? That question was too big to answer in the time frame for this essay so I began to look into the possibilities of finding a link to another way of understanding the meaning of jeans other than mass consuming. Through my University courses I have also found that the discourse of Cultural Heritage is interesting and thought that the two could perhaps be the starting point for the thesis in this essay.

The problem was that it proved difficult to find specific research that could give the answers to the questions that I proposed to ask in this essay. There was nothing linking jeans to Cultural Heritage. Finding relevant information and collating this was the proposed way in finding answer to the questions:

- Can jeans be understood as cultural heritage?
- How are jeans linked to a historical and cultural perspective in respect to the companies?

The methods used to find information that would lead to some answers included a thorough web site search, a literature study and two qualitative interviews. This combo of methods would provide the material needed to form a discussion into the understanding and use of history and heritage of the chosen companies. The literature study stays only as a small part of this essay as this is aimed to create an initial understanding of the birth of jeans in the USA and how jeans made it in Sweden. Giving a clearer picture on how the companies use the jeans history in their company story.

To choose the companies a set criterion was made so the right companies could be chosen to fit the aim and objectives in this essay. The aim would be that to understand how the companies use heritage and history on their web sites and the objective will be to convey the history of jeans and how this relates to Cultural Heritage that in turn can contribute to a better understanding on how these companies use it in their written statements. The set criterion is as follows:

- Have an own brand of jeans
- Only sell denim related products
- Be an American brand
- Be a Swedish brand
- Have links to tradition, handicraft and history

Only eight companies were chosen to be included in the web site analysis and chosen mainly from a web site called "Denims and jeans" and from there chosen from their top ten list; the companies chosen were Levi's, Wrangler, Lee and Tellason in the USA and in Sweden Nudie, Dr Denim jeans, Pace jeans and Indigofera. To fully comprehend the companies written statements and their use of pictures I used six keywords that would lead

the analysis in the right direction; the keywords are heritage, identity, craftsmanship, authentic, culture and history.

The material collated in this analysis was put in a context of Cultural Heritage permitting the use of UNESCO's definitions of heritage and also with literature that relates to conservation where authenticity is explained was used. The chosen literature was mainly that of Muñoz Viñas and his detailed explanation of authenticity and symbolism. To add to the depth of understanding two interviews have been carried out with two of the chosen companies. These generated insight on a more personal level that gave the analysis affirmation in relation to the essence of the web site analysis and the possibility to use set material in accordance to the theories. Tellason in San Francisco and Indigofera in Stockholm provided me with an understanding on how the views of authenticity and heritage can differ but at the same time based on the same history and passion.

There have been some limitations made in this essay as it is an extensive subject to deal with. The denim market caters for most consumers and many leading companies have not been part of this analysis which only gives the study a very small part of information in the greater scale of things and as the Cultural Heritage discourse has been going on since the early 1900<sup>th</sup> century also giving this essay the opportunity to only tell a small part of the whole truth. Even so there has been enough material collated to make an educated discussion and conclusion.

The American companies like Levi's the inventor of the five pocketed riveted jeans, take pride in sharing their history and promoting the fact that they are considered an iconic brand; likewise Tellason manufactures the authentic jeans apparel as all material is American and sewn in San Francisco and writes this fact on their web site statement. On the other hand the Swedish companies have adopted the history of jeans and made it their own, still proud and conscious of the jeans origin.

Putting their views and statement towards the definition of Cultural Heritage that UNESCO presents there are similarities to be found and scope to widen the notion of jeans as Cultural Heritage. Jeans can be part of the identification of a group that gives the followers a sense of belonging and UNESCO's definition emphasise the fact that it is the individual in a group that determines cultural heritage. Tellason reminds their customer of authenticity and as Muñoz Viñas explains that if the product of the intangible is manufactured with original tools and with the same artistry it still today would be classed as authentic.

The questions have been answered and the main objective reached as we can note that the companies included in this study use history and heritage to promote individuality and craftsmanship within a culture. Wrangler in particular is associated with cowboys in the rodeo scene and Lee uses their history to emphasise how history and heritage is transform into fashion to create individuality. We know now where jeans come from and how this phenomenon was globalises, we have also learnt how Sweden took this history on board to form it to the prevailing needs of its people.

Until the wearer's point of view can be determined and the companies act upon the fact that peoples real input is needed; it is safe to assume that the whole truth has not been revealed. Further research can be made in respect of seeking this truth and increase awareness as today focus lies largely on consumption and sustainability. By including the consumers and comparing notes with the outcome of this study I believe that we will be a step nearer to the truth.

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<http://en.unesco.org/>

Top ten denim brands

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## USA

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<http://us.levi.com/home/index.jsp>

<http://www.levistrauss.com/>

Wrangler

<http://www.wrangler.com/home>

Lee

<http://se.lee.com/>

[http://www.lee.com/store/LEE\\_STORE\\_US/en\\_US/content/our\\_company/history.html](http://www.lee.com/store/LEE_STORE_US/en_US/content/our_company/history.html)

Tellason

<http://www.tellason.com/>

## Sweden

Nudie

<http://www.nudiejeans.com/>

Dr Denim jeans

<http://www.drdenimjeans.com/>

Pace jeans

<http://pacejeans.com/en/start.html>

Indigofera jeans

<http://www.indigoferajeans.com/2013/>

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