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<u>Jony Ive – Design Culture & Theory</u>

Jonathan Ive is a legendary designer who is responsible for the look of some of the most iconic products such as the iPod, iPhone, iPad and iMac. Although most people are very familiar with the products that he has designed, most people are not too familiar with the man himself. In this paper, I will cover a look at *Ive's* career as a designer, as well as the modernist approach that he takes to his design culture.

Ive was born and raised in the town of Chingford, England. His father *Michael John Ive* was a silver smith, and his mother *Pamela Mary Ive* was a psycho therapist. *Ive* attended Chingford Foundation School. While in school, *Ive* was diagnosed with dyslexia. This however never seriously affected his education. *Ive* was curious about the inner workings of things throughout his childhood and was fascinated with how objects were put together. He would carefully dismantle radios and cassette recorders exploring how they were assembled and how the pieces fit. *"I remember always being interested in made objects. As a kid, I remember taking apart whatever I could get my hands on. Later, this developed into more of an interest in how they were made, how they worked, there form and material",* (Ive, 2003). Although he recognized his passion early on in life, it took him some time to figure out exactly what he wanted to design. His interest ranged from furniture and jewelry, to cars and boats. His father took him on tours around London design studios and design schools. Young Jonathan Ive took a special interest in a car design studio. He later looked into attending *Central Saint Martin's*

College of Arts and Design in London (famous for their automotive design program). However, Ive found the school to be a bad fit. Due to other students being *too weird*. They were making *vroom vroom* noises as they did their drawings. He looked elsewhere for a higher education, and eventually turned to *Newcastle Polytechnic* in the north of England. Ive decided product design would become his specialty.

It was during his college years when Ive first developed his signature Modernism Design Style based on German Bauhaus tradition. This design philosophy embraced a minimalist approach, where designers should only design what is needed. These were the same principles followed by former Braun designer *Dieter Rams*. You can clearly see similarities in the products that each of them has created.

After graduating, Ive took Silicon Valley to explore up and coming design studios in the Bay Area. He immediately fell in love with San Francisco and hoped that he would return there in the future. Ive returned to London, to work for the *Robert Weaver Group*, one of the top design firms in Britain at the time. After a fall out with RWG, Ive left the firm and joined a new design consultancy called *Tangerine Design*. While Ive had much more freedom, his designs were often rejected by clients due to expense or deviation from the company's existing product line. Another problem was clients accepting Ive's designs but reengineering them only to look half as good as it should have been.

In fall of 1991, *Bob Brunner* began scouting Europe for outside design firms to work with *Apple* on a secret project *Juggernaut*. Brunner was determined to get Jonathan Ive on board at Apple. At the time, Apple was expanding its product lines, and Chief Executive Officer *John Scully*, was investing heavily in R&D to speed up development of new products. Ive accepted a contract to consult on the Juggernaut project but was still working under Tangerine Design.

Apple wanted him to focus on developing mobile devices like tablets and laptop hybrids. Ive produced the *Folio Keyboard* that featured its own CPU, network jacks and a trackpad. Ive was later offered a full-time job working at Apple in Cupertino. Ive appreciated the supportive work environment where he could focus less on day to day business operations and more on design as a craft. He had also become frustrated with consultancy since working outside a company made it difficult to have a serious impact on product plans with true innovation. In September 1992, Ive accepted a full-time position at Apple.

His first assignment was to redesign the *Newton Message Pad*. The first version was a failure, and Apple was hoping to change that with its second iteration. Although the Newton as a whole was a complete failure, Ive's Newton was a design success. It earned him four of the top awards in the industry, and the honor of being featured in the permeant collection of the *San Francisco Museum of Modern Art*.

Since Ive was young and inexperienced as a manager, he was not exercising much discipline or leadership. His design group was creative chaos, with each designer working on their own projects with virtually no coordination. Then Chief Executive Officer *Steve Jobs* refocused the design team and got them working together on a new project the *Macintosh NC* which would later become the *iMac*. In order to meet the deadline, Ive implemented the *Radical Integrated Design Process* which transformed the way Apple developed its products. The iMac was released nine months later and ended up becoming the best-selling Mac in Apple's history up to that point.

Ive takes a very modern approach to all products that he designs. When looking at modernism some key principles that can be seen are clean geometric forms, a restricted use of colour, and the idea the *'form follows function'*. This

Work Cited

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