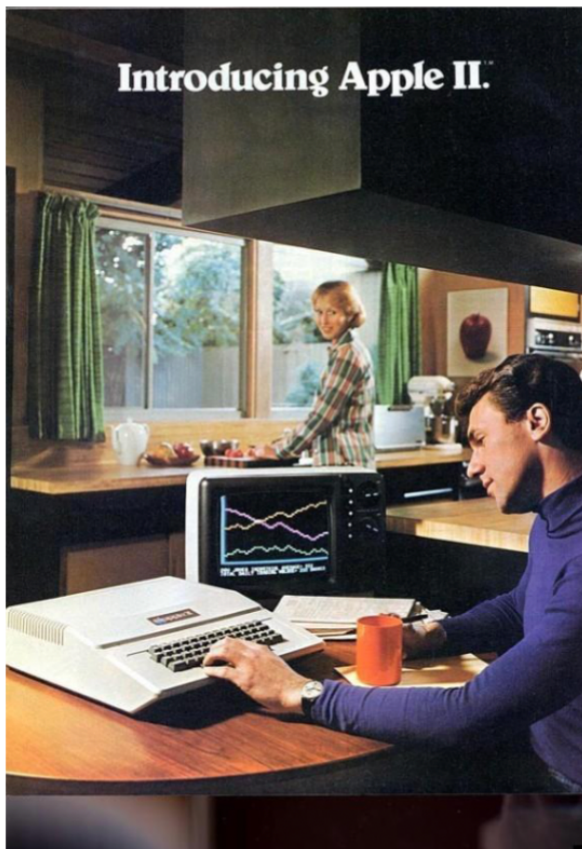




In this research paper, I will analyze the *Apple II* poster campaign through a *semiotic* approach.

Firstly, I will examine the keywords by identifying the **signifiers** behind the image: kitchen; fresh food; window; green curtains; apple poster; a woman with a plaid shirt, and a man with a purple long-sleeved polo shirt, and a wristwatch; a round table, and a notebook, a cup, a vintage computer/keyboard from the late 70s/early 80s and an old-school CRT monitor on that table.

Now, I will review the **signified** concepts behind each signifier:

- Kitchen (*denotation* – literal meaning) an area in the house/apartment in which people keep, make, and eat food (*connotation* – symbolic meaning)

representing a warm, intimate area for the gathering of the whole family members. This area supports the “family-time” and “friends-time” concept. Here, members can talk, eat, drink, gather, study, and work through both individual and collaborative activities, and they are also able to engage in multiple activities simultaneously together.

- Window – an open space in the wall that lets light and fresh air in (*denotation*). A warm, green forest view, especially with green curtains as decoration/barrier, highlights the peaceful, morning atmosphere (*connotation*).
- A woman with a plaid shirt working in the kitchen, cutting fresh food and looking at a man with wide-open eyes and a smile (*denotation*). Since the campaign is from the 70s/80s, the woman is probably very proud of her, assumingly, romantic partner, most likely her husband, while preparing him a meal (*connotation*).
- The man sitting at the table surrounded by technology, papers, holding a cup, and actively working on the keyboard, ignoring the look of the woman (*denotation*). He is probably drinking his morning coffee/tea and working on his job. Since the monitor is showing waves, and the notebook/papers are on the table, he is maybe testing his analyses. Also, since he is nicely dressed, he will either continue working from home or leave the house after the breakfast (*connotation*).

Semiotic Research Paper

Lila Fredrika Blom

December 2025

- Vintage keyboard and CRT monitor are in focus. They take up space from the centre down to the bottom of the image (denotation), for marketing purposes (connotation).
- Apple poster – a poster that perfectly fits the kitchen environment and the fresh food the woman is cutting/preparing (denotation), or a symbol of a marketing campaign (connotation) that carries multiple meanings.

Next, I will make a comparative review of these symbols by decoding cultural, gender, marketing and other codes.

In a beautiful, at that time very modern, high-class kitchen, there is a woman preparing the morning meal – assumingly for herself and her husband. The morning light is passing through the long-width window. Green forest, green curtains, and the green shirt on the women represent the peaceful, natural, and warm *green* environment.

The woman represents the traditional, positive, lovely woman, always supporting her husband. She is not sitting with him at the table, doing the *job*, or testing and playing with the technology, but instead, she is working *in the kitchen*, looking at her husband, smiling, and probably serving him food. Next, a man has a subtle smile, flattered by the woman's gestures. However, he keeps drinking coffee/tea and typing.

These are possible connotations from the picture that convey multiple symbols, which depict the 70s/80s era and society's

views on gender roles: *what* a woman and a man are, *how* they should behave, and *what* their roles are both in the home and society.

Although the *Apple II* campaign is *about* technology, the above symbols especially convey a traditional gender-role, to the point that the *emotion* which the woman and the man experience through mutual traditional ways is prioritized over the main point – technology.

Indeed, from the marketing point of view, this is a typical marketing strategy – to convey *emotions* so that customers get the *feeling* of experiencing the same. However, fifty years later, in modernized countries, these traditional symbols would backfire on most customers.

Lastly, but importantly, let's decode the symbols behind the apple – which is a **polysemic** sign.

From the religious code, in the Bible, the apple represents temptation, disobedience, and the knowledge of good and evil. However, in Taoism it represents peace, and in Hinduism it is a sign of creation.

From the health code – it represents health and prosperity; and from the marketing code – it is a symbolic representation of the red color and a sign of freshness and quality.

Moreover, the apple, in regard to the name and the symbol of the company *Apple*, has a meaning which is based on a very sad and traumatic story of Alan Turing – a pioneer of computer science and a brilliant mathematician.

Mr Turing, across his great inventions and contributions to society both during and

Semiotic Research Paper

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December 2025

after World War II, was prosecuted for his sexual orientation and forced into hormone therapy. He was found dead in his apartment, and near his body there was a half-eaten poisoned apple. To this day, it is still unknown if the cause of his death is suicide or an attempted murder.

Another similar story of a poisoned apple relates to Disney's cartoon "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs", in which the main character Snow White was poisoned by her stepmother. However, in the very first Brothers Grimm "Snow White" edition (1812), it is the mother who poisoned the Snow White.

Based on these codes behind the apple – we can understand that the apple was usually used as a *tool* to either lure or tempt the potential enemy. Unfortunately, it carries a symbol that mostly represents a negative connotation.

However, the true meaning of the apple as a logo that represents the *Apple* business company is kept in the minds of the creators – leaving free-thinkers to interpret it in polysemic ways, never coming to a single conclusion.