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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The principal purpose of p.o.v. is to provide a framework for collaborative publication for those of us who study and teach film at the Department of Information and Media Studies at the University of Aarhus. We will also invite contributions from colleagues in other departments and at other universities. Our emphasis is on collaborative projects, enabling us to combine our efforts, each bringing his or her own point of view to bear on a given film or genre or theoretical problem. Consequently, the reader will find in each issue a variety of approaches to the film or question at hand – approaches which complete rather than compete with one another.

p.o.v. is now expected to be peer-reviewed beginning with Number 24 (December 2007).

p.o.v.

Number 23, March 2007

Danish TV Commercials and Advertising Films

Other Contributions

Short Narrative Advertising and Cultural Heritage
New Options for Cultural Study Research via Digitalisation

Jørgen Bang

In the spring of 2007, approximately 4000 advertising films shown in Danish movie theatres during the 20th century and around 40,000 ads shown on the Danish channel TV2 since 1988 will be available in a database at the State and University Library in Aarhus. The material has been digitalised with support from the Research Council for Culture and Communication (the advertising films) and the Ministry of Culture (TV2 commercials, financed by revenue from selling the UTMS license) as part of a major initiative to preserve and promote the Danish cultural heritage.

The collection of TV2 commercials is complete and covers the entire period since the station began broadcasting as the second Danish public-owned television station with public service obligations, but partly financed via advertisements broadcast between programmes. Advertisements aired by commercial stations are not incorporated in the database at present. Unfortunately, the database is not nearly as complete with respect to the cinema advertising films. What has been preserved of advertising films from the first half of the 20th century is rather accidental. Unlike movies from the same period, as commercial products they were not considered of any particular cultural value and therefore not preserved systematically. The hope is that older advertising films may be found and incorporated into the database at a later stage. Furthermore, advertising films since 1995 need to be digitalised and added to the collection in order to cover the period up to the present time.

In this article, my primary purpose is to discuss the extent to which it makes sense to view advertising films and TV commercials as part of Danish cultural heritage. And more specifically, I shall discuss how advertisements should be analysed as cultural indicators and characterise advertising films and TV commercials respectively. Finally, I will illustrate my points of view through an analysis of a few advertising films from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, focusing on the role of housewives.

Advertisements as cultural indicators

In the late 1970s, a major research programme in Sweden investigated cultural indicators within the Swedish symbolic environment between 1945 and 1975. One of the publications focused on advertising and social change as reflected in the Swedish popular press from 1950 to 1975 (Nowak, K & Andrén, G: 1981). Through quantitative content analysis of 2,300 advertisements from the period (90 per year) they identified a series of indicators and compared the evolution of these ads with social developments during the same years. Basically advertisements were conceptualised as mirroring society:

> The reasoning, so far expressed, concerns the question as to what extent the total characteristics of advertisements justify conclusions about conceptions within society – that is to say, the general cultural climate. Content in advertising is understood as determined by the culture at large, and the content studied (the indicators) is consequently presumed to provide knowledge about ideas and concepts outside the world of advertisements (95).

But in the last pages of the report the authors admit that the relationship between advertisements and society might be more complex:

> … it (is) not only the correlation between content and the development of ideas and living conditions in the surrounding society that are of interest, but also its dependence of these conditions. If the content of advertising is unvarying in spite of changes in society in opposite directions (or vice versa) this might indicate that advertising influences (or even encourages) cultural changes (96).

Unfortunately, this more dialectical view of advertising was not incorporated in the cultural indicator project. In accordance with a general left-wing presumption of the time, advertising was, directly or indirectly, analysed and interpreted as the direct persuasion of innocent consumers to buy products beyond their needs.

Within the tradition of cultural studies a broader perspective on advertising was launched during the same years. As early as 1960 Raymond Williams suggested, "Advertisement is also, in a sense, the official art of modern capitalist society" (1960/1980: 184). Later, Erving Goffman (1976) elaborated this viewpoint using the term "commercial realism", (15) and he was followed by Michael Schudson (1984: 214), who used the label "capitalist realism":

> [Advertising] does not represent reality nor does it build a fully fictive world. It exists, instead, on its own plane of reality, a plane I will call capitalist realism.

And Schudson draws a parallel "…between what socialist realism is designed to do and what advertising in capitalist society intends to do" (215).

Contemporary to this argument, others (Williamson 1978, Marchand 1985, Jhally 1989, Featherstone 1991) compared advertisement to fetishism and called commercialism a new religion – the religion of capitalism.

Common to these three concepts is a recognition of advertising as part of culture, but at the same time the concepts express clearly different understandings of the relation between culture and society. At one end of the spectrum culture is viewed more or less as a reflection of society, while at the other end culture is given an almost transcendental function as religion. Personally I support the understanding of culture embraced by the cultural studies tradition – the

middle position – and view culture as "a whole way of life, a general social process" as formulated by Raymond Williams (1958/1961:273).

It is from this position that I will investigate the position of advertising in society and, more specifically, locate types of advertising that influence people's lives and help to shape the way they see themselves, others and society.

Advertising films and TV commercials

In a macro-economic perspective, advertising is viewed as part of promotion costs versus production costs in manufacturing the product. But to transform a product into merchandise involves more than advertising. Huge parts of promotion costs are spent on wrapping products in unique aesthetic ways that supply the products with a visible image and a name different from other products in the same category. Furthermore, in order to obtain the best selling position within supermarkets and department stores – places where the attention of buyers is caught – manufacturing companies pay large sums directly to shop owners. Whether these costs spent on attention-catching activities should be considered an aspect of advertising is open for discussion but will not be further considered in this article.

My focus is on advertising as media communication to inform consumers about products, and within that limitation I exclude product-specific information (product catalogues) used for business-to-business sales and today's bargain from individual shops. What is left is advertising for specific trademarks – product branding.

This article investigates the relationship between advertising and culture as expressed within advertising films and TV commercials. Consequently, the focus is on types of advertisement in these media, which leaves out pure information (normally not found in the media in question, unless public information campaigns are considered

advertising); but also still images such those as found in print media, although these show many similarities with advertising in films and television as far as product branding is concerned.

The dominant genres in advertising films and TV commercials are testimonials in which a person – often known previously from television – recommends a certain product, and short narratives telling/showing a story in which the product is integrated and plays a decisive role as a problem solver. Neither genre is propaganda with an authoritative sender persuading an audience through argumentation and rhetorical performance. Testimonials communicate with consumers by trying to persuade them to buy partly through enlightening information about the pleasures related to the consumption of the product and partly through consumer identification and sympathy with the main character. By purchasing the product, the consumer is promised a share of the glamour of the (known) presenter.

More complex is the communication between addresser and addressee (consumer) in short narrative advertising. On the one hand, the ad refers to the real world in which the consumer is able to buy the branded product, while, on the other, the content of the ad offers a world of fiction to which the consumer may relate. Within the text the branded trademark (the product) becomes the implicit sender, and the addressee (the reader) is staged as an implicit reader, which turns out to be the reader/viewer as a future consumer. John Berger talks about the consumer becoming "envious of himself" as a future buyer (1972/1979: 131-2).

> Within publicity, choices are offered between this cream and that cream, that car and this car, but publicity as a system only makes a single proposal.
>
> It proposes to each of us that we transform ourselves, or our lives, by buying something more. (…)
>
> Publicity persuades us of such a transformation by showing us people who have apparently been transformed and are, as a result, enviable. The state of being

envied is what constitutes glamour. And publicity is the process of manufacturing glamour. (…)

It offers him an image of himself made glamorous by the product or opportunity it is trying to sell. The image then makes him envious of himself as he might be.

Advertisements arouse our associations and longings. The reader installs him- or herself in the universe of an ad and consequently starts to communicate with him- or herself in the terms of the ad. As in fiction, the reader fills in more or less open symbols, images and structures with his or her own experiences and fantasies. The ad becomes a script to be realised on our individual "inner" stage. In an earlier article (Bang 1983: 83), I have described the process in the following way:

On the one hand a fictive text, as the term indicates, is invented and imagined, dealing with a non-real world. On the other hand fictive texts are able to arouse our "inner" visions, which are themselves complex mixtures of experiences, dreams, longings and hopes, with an offshoot in the real world of the reader.

Fiction has an ability to catch attention of the reader, to create imagination, and to establish understanding, insight and coherence, which relate not only to reason, but also to emotions and feelings. The acknowledgement of the reader is established more through images than through concepts and ideas. Basically the communication is aesthetic.

Short narrative advertising is aesthetic communication offering the reader an opportunity to invest his or her "experiences, dreams, longings and hopes" in the text when filling out its "open empty spaces", while, at the same time, the text in itself constitutes a frame-work – a fictive world – in which meaning and insight are presented to the reader.

This complex reception indicates how short narrative advertising relates to culture. Considering advertising films and TV commercials from earlier years, the reception becomes even more complex. The content of an ad with its images, words, music and narrative is not a mirror of the world at the time it is made, but an interpretation offered

to the reader to elaborate on and complete according to his or her interpretation of the world. To understand the reader's interpretative operation, we, as analysts, have to establish a socialising reading of the ad (comparing the reader's interpretation to the society of which it is an interpretation) (Bang 1983: 85). With older ads we are not able to conduct empirically based demographic research of their reception through qualitative and quantitative methods. We may build up general knowledge of a period from other sources and compare ads to other materials, but in order to grasp the interpretative impact of an ad we have to look for "open empty spaces" in the texts and focus on possible ways of reading for different readers.

Staying the perfect woman

The majority of the advertising films in the database have been produced and distributed by Gutenberghus Reklame Film, among these, two advertising products for dish washing liquid from the 1960s: LUX (1963) and AJAX (1966). Besides promoting similar products they both contain the same basic message: washing dishes with LUX or AJAX, respectively, is easy and keeps your hands nice and soft.

The LUX ad plays for 30 seconds, contains four independent scenes with few cuts and camera adjustments, and is kept together by a voice-over. Very little action takes place in each scene.

Scene 1


Scene 2

Scene 3

Scene 4

Scene 1 presents the LUX bottle with the remark, "All the best qualities in one and the same bottle," accompanied by music in the background.

In scene 2 the camera focuses on the LUX bottle standing next to a sink. The next cut is to a woman seen from behind doing the dishes. She lifts up a clean glass from the sink and examines it. The camera zooms in on the glass. During the scene the narrator continues his monolog by saying, "Liquid LUX. Clearly the best for dish washing. You get shining bright dishes, …"

Scene 3 starts with a dissolve from the hand holding the glass to the same hand holding a rose, and the woman is now in evening dress. The narrator finishes his sentence, "…and you keep your hands beautiful and well cared for." While the woman – the hostess – continues to arrange her flowers in the hall, a chorus sings: "Liquid LUX. Liquid LUX. Gentle towards your hands."

In scene 4 the camera focuses on the liquid LUX bottle, and the narrator announces, "Liquid LUX, clearly the best for washing-up."

The LUX ad is a clear illustration of the previously mentioned self-staging of the consumer as she reads it. If the ad catches her attention as a consumer, she is offered the option of transferring her dreams of becoming a "true woman" with gentle hands by identifying with the

image of the perfect hostess arranging flowers while waiting for her dinner guests to arrive. And liquid LUX becomes the addresser that promises to fulfil her wishes.

In *Ways of Seeing*, John Berger (1972/1979: 134) gives a similar description of the operation; but, at the same time, he twists the argument in a moralistic direction, typical of the left-wing approach of the 1970s:

> The spectator-buyer is meant to envy herself as she becomes if she buys the product. She is meant to imagine herself transformed by the product into an object of envy for others, an envy which will then justify her loving herself. One could put this another way: the publicity image steals her love of herself as she is, and offers it back to her for the price of the product.

Before going further into an examination of the relation between the ad and the cultural environment of the 1960s, let us take a look at the AJAX ad.

The AJAX ad lasts 44 seconds and is divided into three live action scenes plus a final shot of the AJAX liquid bottle. In the establishing shot of the first scene, a young women and two men are standing in a modernly furnished living room getting ready to leave the apartment when a second young women (the hostess) comes flying into the room with a bottle of liquid in her hand. Her remark is, "Now I am ready," to which the other woman comments: "But you flew out of the kitchen," and the hostess replies, "Yes, with AJAX, washing-up is no problem. You get out of the kitchen in a hurry."

Scene 1

Scene 2

Scene 3

Scene 4

Scene 2 takes place in the kitchen and consists of a dialogue between the two women as they examine the dishes and wash up a final serving dish. The key remark of the scene is made by the hostess: "But it is no problem with AJAX because it contains Mild Ammonium Chloride", which is simultaneously spelt out on the screen.

The scene ends with a dialogue about the hands of the woman doing the dishes: (the guest): "But what about your hands"; (the hostess): "They have never been softer".

In scene 3 the camera position is again in the living room and the two women come flying out of the kitchen. This time the guest has the AJAX bottle in her hand.

A voice-over accompanies their flight: "AJAX for washing up gets you out of the kitchen in a hurry" as the camera zooms in on the AJAX liquid bottle.

The LUX and AJAX ads have some similarities and even more differences. They were released for showing in Danish movie theatres within a time span of 4.5 years (1963 and 1967), but there are indications that the LUX ad might be older and partly produced outside Denmark – probably in the US. Unfortunately, no data to confirm this are preserved. The absence of dialogue and the use of

voice-over make it easy to produce many different language versions in which the same pictures are used. Therefore, I would not be surprised if the ad was originally filmed some years earlier, in the late 1950s. Also, the product branding both at the beginning and the end of the LUX ad seems a little out of date with the general style of the 1960. More in line with Danish practice of the period is the way the AJAX ad incorporates product information and branding into the content and action, and consequently complements the exposition of the product as advertiser and problem-solver at the end of the ad.

Furthermore, the AJAX ad is unfolded in a more realistic environment than the LUX ad and tries to capture the attention of the viewer/reader through the action and creating a possible feeling of familiarity with the situation. In the AJAX ad the furnishings of the apartment, the style of the kitchen and of the characters indicate Denmark in the 1960s, whereas the locality in the LUX ad offers a cosmopolitan touch of glamour, class and womanhood. This clearly indicates that the two ads do not address the same group of possible buyers. The AJAX ad addresses an audience able to identify with the characters belonging to the same age group or feeling solidarity with the situation and the environment, whereas the LUX ad appeals more to a mature woman wanting to realise her womanhood.

From a textual point of view, the LUX ad is more openly and metaphorically structured than the AJAX ad. The less specific portrayal of the environment and characters offer possibilities for freer interpretations and types of identification, but, of course, there is no guarantee that the viewer/reader will realise these textual possibilities and read the ad as a future consumer according to the lines offered by the advertiser.

Considering the focus on soft hands within a framework of cultural studies as part of mental history and sociology offers

interesting perspectives. In the LUX ad the gentleness of the product almost overshadows its usefulness for washing up, and in the AJAX ad the emphasis on soft hands is equally important to its effectiveness. Seen from the vantage point of 2007, the LUX ad in particular approaches a cosmetics advertisement. What indirectly becomes visible here is an ideal of womanhood freed from labour both inside and outside the home. When the LUX woman receives her evening guests as the perfect hostess, she is a replication of a bourgeois woman or even a noble lady behind whom a staff of servants and maids does the practical work. She is never supposed to touch a dish herself – much less wash it.

In the LUX ad this illusion of womanhood is made believable as the hostess stands with her roses in front of the mirror. In the AJAX ad the social environment, the behaviour of the characters and the concreteness of dishwashing make it more likely that both young women have jobs outside the home. AJAX becomes an aid for women offering them the possibility to work both inside and outside the home and still maintain their soft hands and sense of womanhood. Within the universe of the ad this interpretation is further supported by the role of the two young men. It never crosses their minds – nor the young women's – that they should be helping with the dishes, and it probably never crossed the mind of the audience in the 1960s either.

New options for cultural studies research

The analysis of possible readings of the LUX and AJAX ads doesn't really take advantage of the new research options made available through the digitalisation of the short advertising films and the TV ads. Easy access to the material and possibilities to browse through the large collection have offered me opportunities to select the best cases

for illustrating my point of view on the reception/reading of short film advertising and TV ads.

In a perspective beyond cultural studies, the database offers opportunities for studying changes in different areas like advertising language (including the use of images), narrative techniques and film language (cutting rhythm, zooming etc.). Furthermore, the database contains an enormous educational potential for broadening interpretations of cultural products like literature, painting, film, theatre and so on. Advertising is popular culture – never provocative or satirical, at most ironical and humoristic, and never out of reach of public opinion and commonly accepted values. As such, advertising constitutes a basis on which the challenges of art in the same period become visible.

Within cultural studies, a more advanced use of the database could be to compare images and conceptions integrated in advertisements from different periods – for example, how housewives were portrayed in different periods, how images of family life changed during the 20th century, and how everyday life has been reflected and interpreted in different social and historical situations.

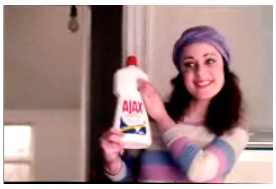
To exemplify the changes in the concept of the housewife, I will present a small mosaic of images from four short narrative ads (inspired by the non-verbal chapters in John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*). All the ads brand the same product from AJAX: "Liquid AJAX. Cleans like a white tornado" and its successor AXJA. Four images are chosen from each to illuminate the changes in the concept of the role-model housewife. I have called the mosaic "When the housewife turned into a male".

The four ads were released for showing at movie theatres in 1965 (playing 44 seconds), 1978 (playing 34 seconds), 1982 (playing 42 seconds) and 1987 (playing 30 seconds).

1965




1978


1982



1987




A closer analysis of the development indicated in the mosaic goes beyond the scope of this article, so let me conclude by repeating the idea that analysing short film advertising and TV ads in a cultural studies perspective is part of mental history and sociology. Advertisements don't have a one-to-one relation with the surrounding world; they are themselves interpretations of the world offering interpretive options for their users/viewers/ readers who, with their own experiences and dreams, enter into a dialectical relationship with the text.

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A Media-Industrial Complex
Dimensions of Danish Commercials

Edvin Vestergaard Kau

In this article, which takes the form of a preliminary study, I present analyses and considerations of Danish commercials along two lines. I discuss two early examples of Danish advertising films and identify some characteristic elements in selected commercials written and directed by a well-known man in the business, Erik Dibbern. In addition, by these means I hope to illuminate some of the persuasive mechanisms at work in the way commercials use the audiovisual elements of cinema as I detect them in the examples presented. In this way I also hope to indicate possible developments as well as groups or types of commercials with definable similarities.

A commercial is not only meant to inform viewers about the mere existence a product; it should also draw the potential buyer's attention to qualities and values that the producer and the director of the commercial want the buying audience to associate with the product: popular and/or successful people, exotic places, health, joy, family happiness, easy problem solving, sex, power, paradisiacal conditions and so on and so forth – all of which may bring the right persuasive aura to the presentation of the product.

If at first sight a commercial only presents pure information about the product, in all probability it still offers the consumer at least the dream of "extra-commodity" and extraordinary, maybe even dreamlike qualities. Furthermore, it probably also tells about the outstanding qualities of the product and the joy and happiness it is sure to bring the buyer, user, consumer…

A commercial made in the 1950s for the make-up product Créme Puff from Max Factor is staged like a scene in a Hollywood film.

Along these lines, one of the things I would like to explore in some detail is the use of stars of popular culture as promotional icons in some Danish film commercials. How are they used, and in what way can they be said to function as "aura-suppliers"? Obviously, their very

presence lends positive values to the commodity; something else is going on besides the fact that the star may act as a ballyhoo and mention the name or function of the product. The aura of stardom is transported into the commercial by an icon that may have been created in a number of different media or contexts such as in music, films, sports, revue performances or the theatre.

Sometimes more or less typecast characters from other media productions are repeated almost as prefabricated "packages" in commercials; small stories or sketches may even *become* the commercial. Once a character or a situation pattern has been developed and proved to be successful, the companies may also keep using them in a series of commercials. They become a kind of commercial series, in some cases with inner development in both the story and characters, almost like a television series – sometimes with a cult-like following. And this is not a new phenomenon. Early in the 20th century, companies and directors saw that this was an effective way to attract the attention of the buying audience – and keep their interest in these minimalist, episodic stories and their characters – as well as in the products, of course.

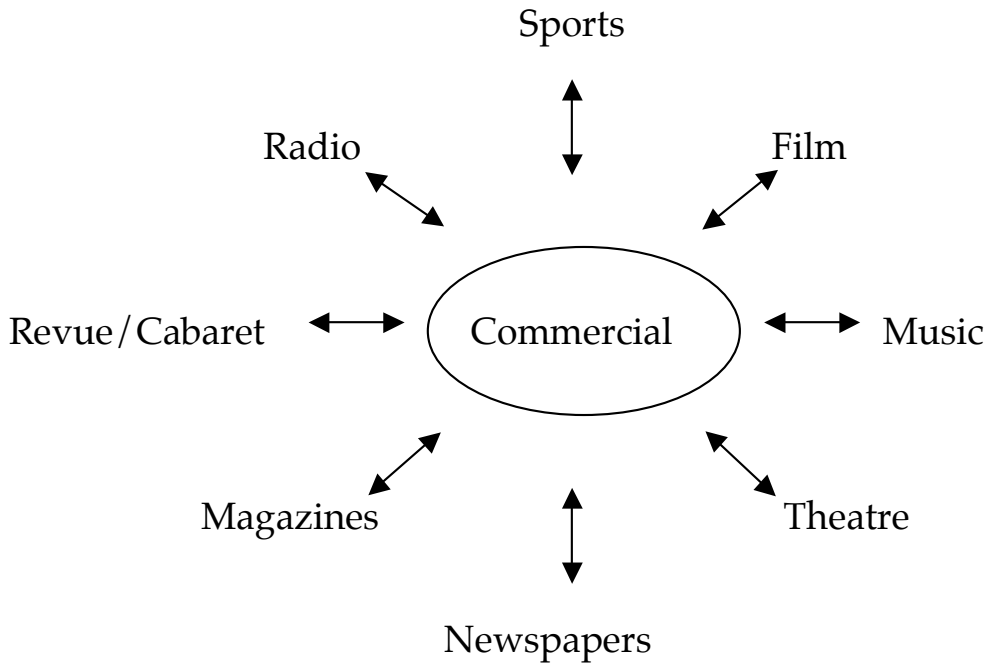
A few examples of these commercials are Foskanerne (for Foska oatmeal, with the film star Ib Schønberg); the Pre- og Karoline series (for detergent and milk/cheese, with 1.) the famous actors Preben Uglebjerg, Preben Mahrt, Preben Neergaard, and 2.) the teenage popstar Gitte Hænning, the composer and pianist Bent Fabricius-Bjerre, and the teenage football star Harald Nielsen); Vitalius Sørensens Meritter (for Solgryn, with the actor Helge Kjærulff-Schmidt), and more recently Polle fra Snave (for the phone company Sonofon), Harry og Bahnsen (for the Danish rail company DSB), and the Squash series (soda made by Tuborg). In addition, there was Ronaldinho and his incredible tricks with the football (for Nike), the

computer-generated animation of a four-wheel-drive car transforming into a science-fiction-like giant spider robot in order to cross a mountain range (for Hyundai), a Citroën car (the C 4) transforming into a robot-like figure and back again. The product and elements of the commercial must join together to produce good entertainment and hence serve as a valuable means of promoting the product. This observation suggests the rich possibilities involved in comparing early examples with contemporary commercials with regard to their use of stars, storytelling and style as well as other elements.

The dairy company Mejeriforeningen's Karoline commercial featuring the music star Gitte Hænning and the football star Harald Nielsen: "Det er mælk – det er dejligt!" ("It's milk – it's delicious!").

Also, we can try to locate the star icons, define the media-historical framework of their performances and thereby outline their contextual references within popular culture. This would at the same time define

commercials as "a sponge of cultural history" that absorbs "popularity knowledge". On the other hand, this is a field where the producers of the commercials can expect the audience to be the real experts. They possess a common and rich fund of knowledge about everyday life: entertainment, pop stars, movie stars, clothing, kitchen accessories, tabloid papers, trade unions, malls, small shops, supermarkets and so on. All these details, large as well as small, are parts we use as props in constructing the meaning of our personal life stories, and they constitute a field of communication where the commercial film can contact us as members of ordinary consumer society. Inter-textual references to and plays on popular, successful acts are used in a kind of mutual game with the experienced audience, an audience that knows the heroes of their entertainment industry. So, within these commercials we may look for and explore a broad range of links in a veritable landscape of media culture:



All kinds of celebrities, movie references or voices known from radio or other media may cross into the realm of commercials.

Early examples of commercials: film fiction as a model

To advertise a product that will solve problems for the buyer, the commercial has to present not only the nirvana of the solution as the happy ending, but also the problem. In this way the commercial is like a love story, drama, gangster film, crime movie or melodrama – you name it. The model is "problem, solution, happy ending". Or, "boy/girl misses girl/boy, one meets the other (plus difficulties), solution & kiss in the end as the sun sets".

An early example of this way of borrowing or re-using/re-shaping the love story or melodramatic pattern is offered by one of the very first Danish commercial films, which was produced in 1908. Entitled *Den heldige Frier* (*The Lucky Suitor*), it is a commercial for "English House", a fashion and clothing company that was also responsible for its production.

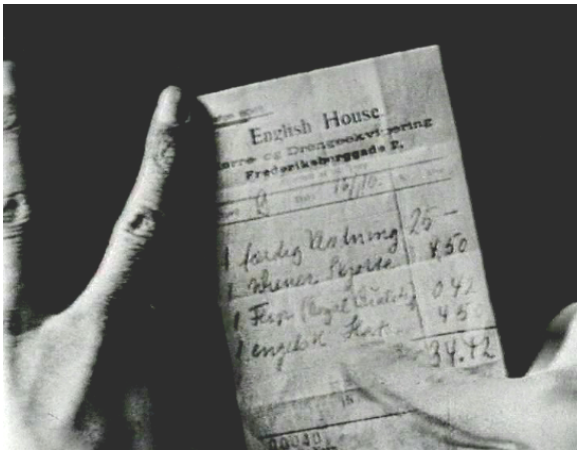
Fiction film as a model for *Den heldige frier* (*The Lucky Suitor*) is evident even in its use of a title and credits.

The crew was among the Danish film pioneers. The director, and probably the cameraman, was a young Englishman, A. James Gee (who had shown his own film shorts in Tivoli as early as the late 1890s; he stayed in Denmark and in the film industry and later became a cinema theatre owner in Ålborg). The actor Hilmer Clausen (the suitor) played in feature films during the following decade, though

mostly in minor parts. Later he became the managing director first of a theater, then of a cinema theater. The young woman was Valborg Dietrich. The father was A.W. Sandberg, a press photographer who was employed by Nordisk Films Kompagni as a cinematographer, writer and director in 1914. He became a superb cinematographer who directed and shot numerous films for the company for many years.

The story: A young man meets his beloved outside her house, but she rejects him and the flowers he wants to give her. Left alone on the sidewalk with his little bouquet of flowers, he is in despair; how shall he ever persuade her? But then he sees an ad for men's fashion in his newspaper. English House has special weekend prices for modern gentlemen's suits. He rushes off to the store, buys a suit, a new shirt, a collar and even a hat – an English one! Then he returns to his fiancée's house and meets her and her father. After a short discussion followed by his determined proposal of marriage, both father and daughter give in, and then he shows them as well as the audience the solution to everybody's problem: the receipt for what he has bought, complete with prices and yet another presentation of the name and address of the store. Finally, the slogan says "Moderne kalder paa Smile og/Priserne mindes man med et Suk" ("Fashion calls for a Smile and/Prices you recall with a sigh"):


The Week-End Price!
Extra Tilbud
1 radet Kr. 29
Moderne Herre-Klædninger.
2 radet Kr. 35
English House
Mf. at Gl. Torv · Frederiksberggade 2 · Tel. 8068


English House
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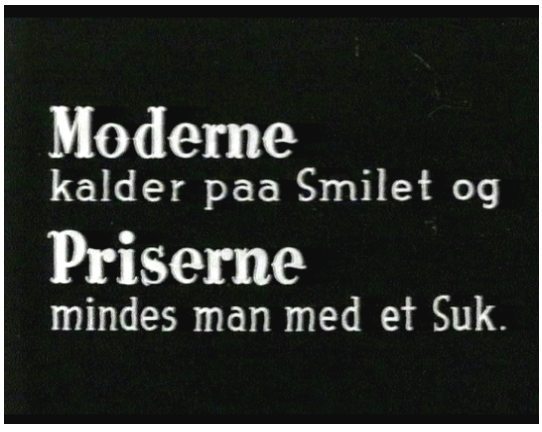
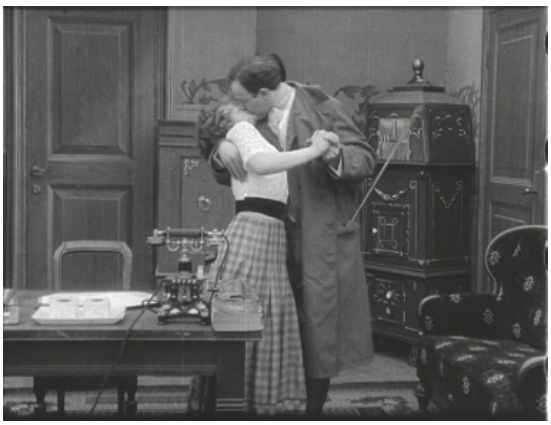
English House


Moderne
kalder paa Smilet og
Priserne
mindes man med et Suk.

The formula: 1. A real boy wants a girl he has already met. 2. He overcomes his difficulties with the help of the nice store that is advertising the appropriate suits. 3. Happiness and marriage. This is exactly the narrative three-step structure of the melodramatic productions which made the largest Danish film company, Nordisk Films Kompagni (founded in 1906), so successful during these early years. This commercial also resembles the fiction productions of the time in that some of their scenes were also shot on location in the streets. Lovers would meet and court each other outdoors, while other parts of the action took place indoors. Melodrama and sex were important ingredients when Nordisk and their Danish competitors produced for both the domestic and the international market.



Street location and indoor romance from the film "Ved fængslets port"/"Temptations of a Great City" (Benjamin Christensen, 1911; The Danish Film Institute).

Part of the appeal was the atmosphere of the great modern city, its busy streets and growing retail business, which at least presented the dream of the possibility to buy the chic life and happiness. The gold-digging new film industry took to the streets and showed how the two sexes meet. Ensuing melodramatic events might be played out indoors, difficulties would arise followed by tragic consequences, but in most cases the story would close with a happy ending. English House and its crew produced precisely this kind of story as a commercial on the very threshold of a great era of the film industry. The young man has his hope of happiness, he meets his difficulties, but luckily finds the remedy: to buy the product he sees advertised. Our couple can get married and …. ever after! The commercial combines its dreams with the dreams produced by films in the modern, expanding entertainment industry. And it presents its product as the solution to the problem that is introduced in the minimalist story, intertwining in the process both the product and the store with the events. In spite of the fact that we might find the film primitive today, it has a clear structure and aims very precisely to engage the audience and establish communication between commercial, product and buyer/consumer.

Singing in the kitchen

As mentioned above, another way of giving the commercial and the advertised products an air of glamour is to simply import stars from the entertainment industry into commercial films. Early examples can be found in commercials from the margarine production company Otto Mønsted. The product, which of course is the best one housewives can use to fry food on the stove, is called OMA Margarine. During the 1930s this factory produced a whole branding campaign with several films telling about its fine product, its good and pure

ingredients, its dedication to hygiene in the factory and so on. To show that they cared about the well-being of the costumers, the company even financed matinee programmes with not only commercials including performances by popular artists, but also, for instance, American cartoons.

One of these matinees has both a documentary-like company presentation called *Symfonien om den Gyldne Strøm og den Hvide Strøm* (The symphony of the golden stream and the white stream, about the ingredients and the production of OMA Margarine) and a commercial film section which features two established and very popular actors as well as the revue and cabaret artists: Oswald Helmuth and Ludvig Brandstrup (who also wrote for and directed cabarets). This built-in commercial film with the title *Kotelletter og Kærlighed* (Pork chops and love) was directed by one of the best-known Danish directors, Lau Lauritzen Jr. As the host, Brandstrup presents a professor (also a famous actor, Sigurd Langberg) who is going to explain the advantages of OMA Margarine. Brandstrup eventually asks for a practical example, but since the professor doesn't want to stand on the stage and fry pork chops, Ludvig Brandstrup tells a little story about a dinner he recently had with his friend O. Madsen (Osvald Helmuth).

The episode is shown directly as a flashback. They have some difficulty getting a decently fried piece of meat, and since Madsen could also use a wife who is good at frying things, they immediately advertise for one. Crowds of women arrive with frying gear, including margarine. But the pork chop dish is still a catastrophe – until a woman by the name of Olsen arrives. She understands the art of frying, especially how indispensable OMA is, the margarine with the right small bubbles and not the bad, almost dangerous big ones. This Olsen character is played by one of the most famous actresses, revue and cabaret singers and film stars of all time, Liva Weel. And

moreover, she repeats or does a variation on a role she had played in the feature film *Odds 777* shortly before this. In *Odds* she is appropriately the plain kitchen girl Hansy Hansen (In the film she sings one of her most moving songs, "Glemmer du" (If you forget), as well as the more hard-hitting "Gå med i Lunden" (Come along into the grove)). In the kitchen scene she sings the jaunty "Drømmer man om den, vågner man aldrig op igen" (If you dream about it, you'll never wake up again). And this is precisely the kind of performance she gives in *Koteletter og Kærlighed*.

Two frames with Liva Weel in the OMA commercial, and one from the feature film *Odds 777* (George Schnéevoigt, 1932). Both the kitchen setting and the singing performance from the popular fiction movie are repeated in the commercial.

The song, which is sung by all three characters at the end of the commercial, when Olsen and Madsen are spliced together by Ludvig, explains the perfect qualities of OMA while Liva entertains her fan audience. The popularity of her performer persona and perhaps especially, at least on film, her more tenacious/doughty roles were stressed at her 25th anniversary at the Dagmar theatre in 1942. A picture from the occasion shows her in a kitchen outfit very much like that from Odds 777. The star status, the energy and the self-irony were intact. OMA and Lau Lauritzen Jr. had seen and used a very strong card in their 1930-something commercial.[1]

Stars sing and act in modern crazy product promotion

Starting in 1948 Erik Dibbern wrote and directed commercials at Gutenberghus Reklamefim, and in 1956 he came to Nordisk Film Junior (a branch of Nordisk Film specializing in short films), where he made commercials and developed his distinctive cinematic style for approximately 25 years. At the beginning of 1961 he became the managing director of his own commercial film department, Nordisk Reklamefilm A/S. In the following analyses of his commercials, I shall try to characterize his technique and special touch.

Dibbern obviously understood how to capitalize on well-known stars from the entertainment business. According to himself, he gave the very popular actor and comedian Dirch Passer his commercial film debut in an ad for the electrical appliance PhiliShave (1952). Passer performed as his well-known over-energetic character, and he is seen getting up early in the morning and being forced to shave in a hurry to

[1] The media inter-textuality also applies to the use of famous *voices* in commercials - for example, those from the radio quiz program "20 questions for the professor," which was produced as a commercial film for OMA in the 1930s. Another voice that was used at an early stage was that of the sports reporter Gunnar "NU" Hansen, who was used as voice-over several times; he also acted in the commercials as himself.

get out of the house on time. Moreover, he is shown in fast motion, but when the electric shaver is demonstrated, solving the problem, we follow the process at normal speed. And before this we witness another one of Dibbern's favorite techniques: instead of using foregrounded cutting, he uses shifts or "hidden" jumps in time such as when, for instance, the same persons in alternating pieces of clothing are shown from a fixed camera position, running in and out of a number of doors. The speed and variation are maintained, and the stylistic solution leads the viewer's attention in the direction of the product.

Furthermore, the characteristic Passer routine merges with the intended emphasis on the time-saving shaver. Dibbern has said:

> Vitamins must have a chocolate coating to smooth their way. And then, sales talk must be merged with entertainment. Many people say, "Oh yes, all that about the popular actors – Dirch Passer, and then they remember Dirch Passer afterwards. But they don't remember the product."

One of Dibbern's gifts was the ability to use the actors and their special talents as one of the means to carry the message rather than as elements standing in the way of the communication strategy.

PRE ve' gi' dem fre'

This slogan for the washing powder PRE was used in a whole series of commercials for the production company Persil. One of them, which uses quite a lot of verbal explanation, is about a housewife who always has her luggage searched when she arrives at the airport on her way home from Mallorca. She is afraid that it is because of her looks. But one day a friend advises her to use PRE, and yet she still has her luggage searched the next time she is at the airport. She goes on to explain that she is nevertheless happy now because her laundry is perfect: "PRE ve' gi' Dem fre'!" (meaning "PRE will give you peace of mind!" in a regional Danish dialect).

But the most famous part of the PRE series is the film's *3 x Preben*, introduced by the voice-over: "PRE presents" followed by the three actors saying their names: Preben Uglebjerg, Preben Mahrt, Preben Neergaard. Again, the showbiz people are cast in the vein of the personae that the consumers of popular culture would meet in cabarets, revue theaters, films, or on gramophone records.

"Theatre stage" and cabaret performances in the PRE commercials with Preben – Uglebjerg, Mahrt and Neergaard.

In every film the three performers give examples of their skills as stage entertainers. They and Dibbern manage to deliver whole potpourris/medleys of, for example, popular hits or children's songs, invariably mentioning PRE an unreasonable number of times. Besides the pure effectiveness of it, Dibbern's playful texts along with the very well-known melodies are ingeniously funny.


These PRE commercials are fireworks of little fragments of popular songs bound together in nonsensical performances, which in Dibbern's words merge product and entertainment, because in the pure entertainment routine the only thing that makes some kind of sense is the practical purpose for which we can use the washing powder PRE. The playful virtuosity of the songs and the performance is matched by the elegant use of cinematic language with dissolves, different kinds of editing, camera movements, settings, contrasting scenes and so on. And the punch line always reappears in the final close-up of Uglebjerg looking out toward the audience: "PRE ve' gi' Dem fre'!"

Dibberns brings his ideas in play and further develops them in different variations during the 1950s and '60s. He has a legendary collaboration with the actors and comedians Dirch Passer and Kjeld Petersen,

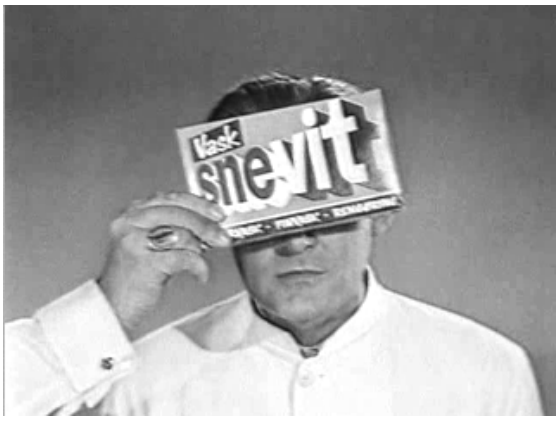
who develop a comic duo-routine at the ABC Theatre from around 1955 till 1962. Inspired by the Marx Brothers, among others, they invent the Kellerdirk Bros. and a unique kind of crazy sketch performance. We all know that the commercials don't really want to tell us anything but this: buy it! So, between beginning and end, between the proposed problem and so-called solution, the commercial producers may as well entertain us with *nothing* in the form of some kind of show, and hope that it rubs off on the product. Dibbern combines this talent for modern, absurd humor with his own ideas about commercials as entertainment and vice versa: Passer alone as a merchant promoting Perletand toothpaste to all his costumers (he played all the characters), and the two of them as a duo in celebrated productions like commercials for breweries and the clothing company Crome & Goldschmidt.[2]

Dirch Passer in Erik Dibbern's commercial for Perletand toothpaste.

In a good deal of his productions, Dibbern's cinematic practice developed into a sophisticated, self-conscious and highly reflective production style, cinematic composition of structure, and means of

[2] In a forthcoming article I plan to go into greater detail on these and a number of other Dibbern commercials as well as on his special talent as a gifted and creative commercial film magician.

communicating with his audience. In several cases this adds a meta-level to the commercials, a specialty which in turn is used to advance the play for the viewer's attention. An example is a commercial for the washing powder SNEVIT, where the immensely popular actor Ove Sprogøe delivers a promotional talk about Snevit and its wonderful qualities: Snevit (Snow white) "washes the clothes sparklingly black, black as coal (!)"



The director of the commercial they are shooting intervenes, saying that they already agreed to say, "sparklingly white as snow!" They have a discussion about the best slogan and how excellent Snevit is; Sprogøe says that the housewives know the name Snevit very well, and that his method is much better. People remember the name "Snevit – washes – black as coal. Ingenious, isn't it?" Of course the director doesn't buy the idea, but at the end Sprogøe tells the viewers to forget the other guy and that if they want really snow-white clothes,

they "must buy a box of Coalbl… Snow white, of course!" And of course, this meta-discussion about advertising and the play on words is accompanied by a performance and staging as well as visual effects that among other things includes names and boxes being appropriately turned upside down or rotated in the air.

Entertainment and promotion

In several instances we witness series of seemingly identical examples as a practice of cinematic aesthetics in Dibbern's editing, which may be described as a recurrent stylistic figure. It is a pattern we meet within both single commercials and in the "serialized" variations of "the same" commercial for a certain product. On the drawing board these may look like static elements that are just enumerated without any real meaning. But, when the elements are brought together as a sequential whole in the dynamics of the cinematic "time machine", the interlinking dynamic of the viewer's encounter with the chain (the pattern at work so to speak), immediately starts to produce meaning. This becomes a game in which the visual sequence with its playfulness of absurd connections functions through associative correspondences – in the same way as the verbal montage of words with their absurd joke-like qualities. When, in addition to this, plays on words and the visual sequence meet in mutually interlinking patterns of a Marx Brothers-like caliber, the modern and ironic pursuit of crazy comedy becomes striking commercial shows.

Dibbern knew how to establish intriguing situations or interesting, perhaps absurd little stories, and at all times integrate the small world of the commercial, the action and the character into the commercially important point: the product being sold. At the very least, the audience is reminded of it, so that it stays in their minds in some way – whether it be the toothpaste in the shopkeeper's mouth, the beer

jumping from century to century with the ever-changing characters, the specially made clothes appearing on the characters through the magic of a simple cut, or the pure "washing powder potpourri" of popular songs, whether in black or white. The ideas may be wild, but it doesn't matter as long as the entertainment value makes the commercial stand out among competing messages and the audience remembers the product.

As we have seen, the commercial is a complex media-industrial phenomenon, and at the same time it is the result or product of the overall media-industrial complex within which it works and from which it draws its energy and raw materials. Its building blocks may be fetched from any popular medium, and its elements of expression and persuasion are shaped in a play on meanings often developed in other media and their genres. The result is a media practice of its own – in this case, the commercial film. As such, commercials may be conventional, within already carved-out traditions, or they may be inventive and creative, developing their own kinds of entertaining format and playfully using spoken as well as cinematic language. Effective commercial films as media products demand good ideas/ payoffs and inventive film practice – and humor. Many commercials prove that a smile or a good laugh is the shortest distance between product and audience.

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Grinebidder 2, Dansk humor når det er bedst, 2004.

The sound of children's television

- or why it makes sense to watch television facing away from the screen

Stine Liv Johansen and Nicolai Jørgensgaard Graakjær

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to examine auditory phenomena in a series of programmes aimed at children.[1] First, we will analyze the series of programmes and then we will discuss the importance of sound in the ways small children use television, based on empirical studies of small children's actual use of television. Finally, we will point to the need for further studies on this topic, given that directly relevant research seems rather scanty and scattered, and the present examination deals with an as yet undeveloped research field with considerable potential. With these circumstances in mind, we intend to present and discuss the importance of sound for the ways small children use television, and thus to identify key areas for further investigation.

In general, it may be said that while an impressive number of studies of children's programmes and the ways children use television have been conducted (especially concerning certain types of content (violence) and genres (commercials); cf. Simpson 2004 and Jørgensen 1992), *auditory phenomena* have been examined somewhat superficially. Moreover, few studies of television reception have involved small children (Barr & Hayne 1999). This lack of research interest is probably

[1] The age range of the official target audience of the program *Martin & Ketil – the World for Beginners* (the central programme in the series of programmes) is three to eleven years. The empirical investigation of the ways small children use television referred to in the analysis is based on observations of children from one-and-a-half to three years of age (Johansen 2005). At present no Danish programs are officially aimed at children younger than three years of age, and there are no records of either the number of viewers or of audience ratings.

due to two related circumstances. Firstly, it probably has to do with the methodological difficulties of conducting research on the ways small children use media and on the role played by auditory phenomena. For instance, there is no clear convention for representing, verbalizing and reporting on sound, and this applies in particular to the *quality* of the sound (or the 'sound of the sound'; cf. e.g. timbre, density and intensity).[2] In addition to this comes the fact that auditory attention is less obvious for observation compared with visual attention. Secondly, it probably has to do with a theoretical neglect of the importance of the involved phenomena: a general reluctance to consider the ways small children use media to be important, and a widespread failure to appreciate, for example, the appealing and signifying potentials of sound. This kind of neglect is implied in the following statement by a researcher whose work is related to the focus of the present article: "Both 1- and 2-year-old children are captured by unusual and exciting pictures on the screen. But not until the age of 2½ - 3 years should we expect small children to view television more systematically" (Hake 1998:37). It is our hypothesis that small children's 'unsystematic' use of media is also important and that the attention of small children is also captured by phenomena other than "unusual and exciting pictures."

The analytical endeavor of the present article is based on a premise supported by observations of the ways small children use media (Johansen 2005): that small children are exploratory in their social activities (a premise inspired by the Finnish researcher Harriet Strandell's accounts of children's behavior in day-care centers (Strandell 1994)). For example, it shows that a small child will typically not sit in front of the television for long periods of time, but will

[2] The present examination is also somewhat complicated by this state of affairs; however, it is beyond the scope of the article to discuss this issue in greater detail.

instead engage in a wide range of activities while the television is on (play with toys, other persons, etc.). Another premise of this article is that auditory phenomena have an important role to play in this context. The small child is of course not able to shut its ears, and sound continues to anchor the child to the television even though it looks away or even enters another room. The article also shows that television programmes and films can function as a sort of soundtrack for the small child's other activities.[3]

Presentation of the material

The series of programmes we will analyze were shown on TV 2.[4] This sample represents a wide spectrum of types of programmes and it offers the possibility of examining the relationships between them. Not least the commercial aspect (the presence of television commercials) seems to raise interesting questions, which among other things has to do with children's ability to distinguish between different genres and types of programmes (discussed further below). The series of programmes represents a period of time between 5:55 and 7:00 a.m., 19 January 2006, and the programmes listed are *Martin & Ketil – the World for Beginners* and two cartoons.[5] This particular series of programmes was chosen because it represents the most popular children's shows offered by TV 2 on weekdays, and because it has been broadcast for a relatively long period of time (since 2004).[6]

[3] Such a soundtrack can be of great importance to the small child, whereas a grown-up observer might tend to hear it as trivial or unimportant.

[4] TV 2 is a nationwide Danish television corporation, financed by commercials but with public service obligations.

[5] We monitored the programs throughout the winter and spring of 2005/2006, and against a background of different dates representing rather similar programmes during this period, the particular date was chosen at random.

[6] About 70,000 viewers typically watch these programmes (as mentioned in footnote 1, this number refers only to viewers older than 3 years of age). By comparison, the number of viewers who typically watch the most popular children's programs aired by the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (DR), which is financed by license fees and has public service obligations, often exceeds 200,000. A program called *Sigurds Bjørnetime*, which is comparable to *Martin & Ketil* in

In the following presentation of the programmes, we are inspired by Williams's identification of different kinds of *flow* (1974/2003: 97ff), three types of which will be identified, ranging from the general to the specific. The first represents the flow of programmes listed by TV 2; the second, all the demarcated types of programmes that actually occur (listed or not); and the third, the detailed flow of visual and auditory expressions between and within each type of programme. These three perspectives identify different properties of the temporal flow of television, and by means of these perspectives the analysis is able to demonstrate connections and breaks between programmes as well as specific elements of the programmes.

In a somewhat different perspective, our primary analytical interest is, then, the kind of flow that is imposed on viewers (a so-called channel sub-flow; cf. Jensen 1994), and to a lesser extent, the kind of flow viewers themselves construct (the so-called viewer sub-flow).[7] An overview of the programmes shows that three are listed at the most general level of flow specificity, while thirty-five actually occur without being listed (identifiable at the second level of flow specificity) – including fourteen commercials and nine teasers.[8] The three programmes take up about 71% of the total time whereas the unlisted programmes take up about 29% of it.[9] In the following we will present the different types of programmes involved.

several ways, had an average of 185,000 daily viewers in week 30, 2006. It should be noted, though, that *Sigurds Bjørnetime* is broadcast in the evening while *Martin & Ketil* is broadcast in the morning. Generally speaking, there will always be more viewers in the afternoon and evening than in the morning, regardless of the type of program.

[7] Super-flow (and the affiliated conception of house-style (Ellis 1982)), aother relevant category of flow, will be briefly addressed in the discussion below.

[8] An overview of the exact sequence of the programs is available on application to the authors.

[9] The unlisted programmes last 18 minutes and 35 seconds, while the listed programmes last 46 minutes and 25 seconds. (*Martin & Ketil* lasts 24 minutes and 20 seconds and *Duck Dodgers* 22 minutes and 5 seconds).

The listed programmes

The programme *Martin & Ketil – the World for Beginners*, which forms the background for the whole series of programmes, is a hosted series of episodes based on the adventures of the key characters, Martin and Ketil. Martin and Ketil have set out on a journey in a spacecraft from which they observe the Earth. During their journey they fight extraterrestrials and face more mundane challenges like the issue of who should control the spacecraft and whether the little robot helper, Arto, is lying about the codes for the electrical equipment.

In each programme one of the hosts is ”beamed” down to earth, where he visits a location of interest and reports back to his co-host in the spacecraft. Some of the locations that have been visited are a farm, a cartoon studio, the seat of the Danish parliament, and, on this particular day, the Royal Danish Theatre. Some of the episodes have a humorous slant, but the main point of the visits is educational, often with a strong normative and moral inclination in relation to, for example, democracy, children’s rights or ecology. In addition to the trips to Earth, each programme consists of a number of short recurrent elements such as the telling of lies, the transformation of objects through a ”converter,” and conflicts between the key figures, which always result in them dramatically averting a devastating crash.

The programme is thus characterized by a whole series of recurrent themes and short, almost identical items that have no particular mutual connection from one episode to the next (apart from representing the doings of Martin and Ketil), and in this way the programme bears the stamp of a montage style. On this particular day the programme appears twice with a cartoon in between, and, typical of the montage style involved, the details of the two versions are differently structured without this interfering with the overall meaning.

The cartoon in between the two versions of *Martin & Ketil* is called *Duck Dodgers*, which also represents a series of episodes. The cartoon is about Daffy Duck as Duck Dodgers and Porky Pig as Cadet, and their missions in outer space; and as it happens there is a thematic coincidence between the cartoon and *Martin & Ketil*.[10] The cartoon involves supernatural elements such as magic and aliens. Two episodes are broadcast in the slot, each with complete storylines.

The unlisted programmes

As mentioned above, about 29% of the time is taken up by unlisted programmes. Due to the particularity of the programmes chosen (to be investigated further below) and the few studies available on unlisted programmes – or 'non-programmes' – it is difficult to further qualify this percentage. But if we turn to one of the few researchers who has actually examined non-programmes in greater detail, it could be argued that there is a tendency towards television flow being increasingly dominated by "…bits of information that makes promises for more to come" and that generally "…we are dealing with more and more self reference within the range of programs" (Stigel 2004: 29).[11] This tendency is related to the increased number of channels available, which serves as an incentive for each channel to take measures to attract and keep viewers' attention. And to this end 'promos' are of great importance – that is, commercials that refer internally to the channel and/or the programmes it provides viewers.

The following types of programme occur: *bumpers* (short, announcing lead-ins and lead-outs enclosing a programme), *teasers* (a

[10] Throughout the year a variety of cartoons are broadcast along with *Martin & Ketil*, so the thematic coincidence must be qualified as accidental.

[11] A temporal analysis of non-programs has been done (cf. Jantzen & Stigel 1995 and Hicketier & Bleichert 1997), but the series of programmes chosen is not suitable for comparison with these specifications. It seems, though, that a greater number of commercials could have been registered had we chosen a different sample, for example during the Christmas season.

longer presentation of a programme to come in the near future, but not immediately following the teaser) and a *listing* (in the material analyzed they are in the form of a still shot of a list of programmes to be shown that particular morning; in other words, it represents the most general level of flow, as mentioned above). In addition, a *filler* appears (a type of programme not intended to be shown, but used to avoid unforeseen 'gaps' in the flow). This last type is a promo in a somewhat different sense than the previous three in that it represents a profiling of the channel – as a brand – without directly corresponding to other programmes on the channel.

Promos have the specific point of directing the viewers' attention to the programmes listed, which, in turn (and among other things), direct viewers' attention to yet another type of unlisted programme, namely, *commercials*. From the perspective of the channel, these are an alien element that takes up 10-40 seconds and advertises certain products without any obvious relation to the channel and its programmes. Both commercials and promos are in the business of pointing to and characterizing a desirable future experience or product, and therefore one could expect certain similarities between styles of expression (which will be discussed in greater detail further below). But commercials and promos also differ by pointing to different future scenarios. Promos point to a future experience in the present world of the channel, while commercials point to a future appropriation of products in the absent world of the market.

Another important difference between commercials and promos is the fact that commercials are restricted by legislation which, taken together, has as its purpose to ensure obvious boundaries between the experiential world of the channel and the product world of the market. A central issue has recently been stated more precisely in the Danish

Marketing Law of 2005,[12] in which it is spelled out that commercials should be identifiable as such. It also emerges clearly from the latest departmental order on radio and television (2006)[13] that TV commercials should be placed with due respect for the natural pauses and length of the programme, and persons, dolls or characters appearing in programmes are not allowed to appear in commercials (cf. the supplementary departmental order on commercials, 2005)[14]. TV 2 interprets this regulation as referring to programmes they themselves broadcast, and this interpretation allows persons appearing on other channels to appear in commercials on TV 2.[15]

However, the boundaries between the experience world of the channel and the product world of the market are not always as salient as intended in the law. In a way this is implied in the parasitic character of commercials. Commercials profit from a long and varied tradition of media forms and genres. Furthermore, commercials themselves have a stylistic rub-off effect on other types of programme (cf. tempo, dynamics, teasers *en masse* 'inside' programmes, etc.) and presentations of products (cf. *product placement* and *commodity flow*). Intertextuality seems to be an important feature of this game of mutual influence, which will be addressed in greater detail below.[16]

In TV schedules the non-programmes are apparently unimportant padding; they are anonymous (not mentioned or characterized),[17] and they are seemingly just there to fill in pauses between programmes. From the perspective of the *channel,* the appreciation of the

[12] http://www.retsinfo.dk/_GETDOCI_/ACCN/A20050138930-REGL
[13] http://www.retsinfo.dk/_LINK_0/0&ACCN/A20060041029
[14] http://www.retsinfo.dk/_LINK_0/0&ACCN/B20050136805
[15] There is no example of this in the material analyzed, but a matter of interest is the appearance of Batman in both a commercial and a promo. We will discuss this in greater detail below.
[16] Intertextuality is used to account for the relationship established between two or more texts, based on explicit or implicit references (e.g. through quotes, paraphrases, pastiches, etc.).
[17] Internal records reflect the actual appearances of promos, but still commercials are listed *en bloc* without specification.

padding is of course quite different. Padding is the material that enables the channel to tickle, attract and keep viewers (so as to deliver the audience to the channel, its offers and its advertisers' offers) by making sure that no gaps or interruptions occur during the flow. From the perspective of the *viewer,* the appreciation of padding is more diffuse: some of the elements of the programme flow might be met with refusal or indifference, while some other material might be considered interesting. This diffusion has of course to do with the fact that the viewers do not represent a homogeneous mass, so to aid further discussion and understanding, we will characterize 'the viewer'.

The viewer is of course already identified as a small child, but it has also been implied that we do not only view the small child as a 'viewer,' but also, and not least, as a 'listener.' Exactly these premises shall provide the background for the following analytical orientation toward auditory phenomena.

The sound of flow

Focusing on the sounds that appear during these programmes, it seems enlightening to differentiate between three overall categories of sound: Music, speech and noise (inspired by van Leeuwen 1999, among others).[18] While all types of programmes (programmes as well as non-programmes) have sound, not all categories are represented in all types of programmes. For instance, music appears in all types of programmes[19] (a few commercials do not have music, but there is no commercial break without music), whereas speech and noises only appear in some types of programme. This can be heard in relation to

[18] In reality, the three categories are not as clear-cut as the reference might indicate, but for analytical purposes the categories can function as a reasonable approach.

[19] All the more remarkable, then, is the fact that television music is somewhat ignored by media research and musicology. The following statement is not wide off the mark: "*TV music has been virtually neglected as an area of serious inquiry*" (Tagg 2006: 163).

still shots and bumpers where there is only music and no speech or noises.

Looking more closely at the functions of the different categories of sounds, we find that *speech* generally and among other functions has a structuring and announcing function. Even though it is most often the symbolic nature of speech that has been addressed in analyses of media content,[20] when examining the way small children use media it also seems of great importance to include the auditory qualities of speech which lie beyond symbolic meaning. In this perspective the indexical references of speech can be highlighted when focusing on the speech-sound as a characterization of the person speaking (e.g. a low-pitched, slow and strong voice characterizing a big and heavy body), and also the uniqueness of voices allows recognition to be part of a possible primary attraction and aesthetic enjoyment.

Technically speaking, the speech sounds are both diegetic (directly motivated by the visuals and heard by the characters, as exemplified, for instance, by Martin in a conversation with Ketil) and extra-diegetic (added to the visuals without any obvious visual anchoring such as voice-overs in some commercials). In the analyzed material it is remarkable how many *different* and *distinct* speech-sounds are heard – for instance, in programmes where several permanent characters are present and the speech sounds are conducive to separating, identifying and characterizing the characters involved (e.g. Martin's airy and soft manner of speaking in contrast to Ketil's more accentuated and grating voice, and Daffy Duck's powerful and lisping voice contrasting with Porky Pig's reserved and nasal voice). Also in promos and commercials, speech sounds are highly significant; for instance, a level of distinctiveness is achieved in

[20] With van Leeuwen 1999 as an important and inspiring exception.

some commercials by using hurried, dramatic and pitch-altering voices (e.g. commercials for a Disney DVD and Elgiganten)[21] or by using famous characters with unmistakable and idiosyncratic tones of voice (e.g. the relaxed and lingering speech of Bischoff in a commercial for Realkredit Danmark).[22]

When it comes to *music,* it is obvious that the typical and general functions of television music are represented: attracting attention (function of presentation), characterizing upcoming programmes (function of representation), evoking memory and recognition (mnemonic function), and helping structure sequences and episodes (episodic marker function).[23] In *Martin & Ketil* a frequently recurring signature song is sung by Martin and Ketil accompanied by an acoustic guitar. In the analyzed material the song is never heard in its entirety,[24] but at a minimum the song's *hookline* is always heard – for example, for seven seconds at the beginning of the programme. The accentuation of the melody of *Martin & Ketil* corresponds to the metrical feet[25] of their names and hence evokes (the basis for effortless) recognition. The song has a relatively lively tempo, is articulated in the mode of pentatonic major,[26] and the melody is uncomplicated and easy to sing along with. The hookline appears to be extra-diegetic and is very often an episodic marker in relation to the introduction of different scenarios. From time to time the music is diegetic in *Martin & Ketil* – for example, when Martin and Ketil perform a musical number

[21] A Danish chain of electronic appliance stores.
[22] The former has worked as a news reporter and presenter for DR many years, and he is known for his serious and comprehensible way of communicating; the latter is a Danish mortgage institute.
[23] Inspired by a small number of research initiatives (thereby representing exceptions to the general evaluation offered previously) on music in episode series (Tagg & Clarida 2003), documentaries (Have 2006), news (Graakjær 2004) and commercials (Graakjær 2006).
[24] The song can be heard in its entirety on CD's and DVD's.
[25] The names are both trochees, and this is reflected by the metric accentuation (strong – weak) and the melodic progression (descending intervals) of the melody.
[26] This is a tone system based on five notes. Especially because of the absence of semitones it seems predisposed to articulate singable folk and children songs.

in a form related to the music video. Another interesting example from the analyzed material is related to the 'beamed' journey to the Royal Danish Theatre to visit one of the musicians. These examples are important as regards socialization to music and musical codes, in that the music is explicated 'visually' (cf. the music video-like inserts) and 'verbally' (cf. the musician who is asked to accompany Martin's dreams – for instance, 'a man walking in the forest').

In *Duck Dodgers* we are also exposed to a signature song, but it represents a different function from the one experienced in *Martin & Ketil*. The song is articulated as a long complete melody (lasting fifty-eight seconds), sung by Tom Jones and accompanied by a symphonic pop arrangement (including wind sections and strings). The difference between the two signature songs is interesting: the song in 'Martin and Ketil' is concise and therefore contributes to the general montage-like style of the programme (by structuring it and enabling recognition), whereas the song in *Duck Dodgers* is relatively long and imposing. This makes the representational function of the song more prominent in *Duck Dodgers*. Moreover, *Duck Dodgers* is almost continuously accompanied by music (as are many cartoons), highlighting the ways in which the music supports the characters and constructs the mood.

In commercials, the musical elements are relatively highly varied, spanning from short, complete melodies, so-called jingles (e.g. in a Toyota commercial) to longer supplements to voice overs (in a teaser for *Batman*) or presenters (in a commercial for Realkredit Danmark).[27] The ways music is used in commercials coincide somewhat with the ways it is used in teasers; in this material the teasers typically have a continuous music track and are sometimes significantly similar in structure and style to musical expressions in commercials. This

[27] See Graakjær 2006 for further discussion of musical appearances in television commercials.

applies, for example, to the relation between a teaser for the show *Batman of the Future* and a commercial for Guldkorn[28] in which Batman appears. The music score of both programme elements is intense and characterized by drums and electric guitars, and in both elements the music characterizes the products (Batman and the co-branded Guldkorn/Batman product, respectively) as well as establishing expectations towards actually possessing them. The similarity in structure and style is further reinforced by the fact that the two elements appear in the programme flow only a few seconds apart. In bumpers it is clearly the announcing, signaling function of the music that is most apparent – very much like the function of the jingle in commercials.

With respect to sounds of *noise,* these typically appear to derive from actions or objects shown or implicated in the pictures. Therefore, noise sounds *seem* diegetic since although they might have been manipulated (strengthened or distorted such as certain sound effects in cartoons or in *Martin & Ketil's World*, and thereby *technically* extra-diegetic), they directly correspond with and are motivated by visible actions.

Sounds of noise generally serve a dramatizing, sometimes surprising and entertaining, function, since they represent a meaningful characteristic of the object or the incident to which they are connected (for instance, the speed and weight of a fist stroke (*Martin & Ketil*), the firmness of a beard that is pulled (*Duck Dodgers*) or the characteristics of a fight in a cardboard box (the Guldkorn commercial). So they have a causal and indexical relation to the narrative progress. The sounds of noise can be put in perspective in several ways. In an approach inspired by gestalt psychology (using terminology borrowed from

[28] A breakfast cereal.

Shafer; cf. Shafer 1977/1994: 152f), with reference to *Martin & Ketil's World*, a number of sounds (silence, accompanied by an echo, beeping, whistling, ringing and vibrating sounds) contribute to the illusion of *field*; frequently occurring sound effects (for instance, the beamer, the converter and the movements of Arto, the robot) act as *ground*; and particular effect sounds (for instance, fist strokes) act as *figure*. In summary, the stated characteristics of the appearances and functions of sounds make it obvious that the programme flow is characterized by repetitions at several levels. Partly *within* the individual programme and partly *between* programme elements where, for example, bumpers and commercials are recurrent. The programme flow is furthermore characterized by significant similarities in style across different programme elements. For instance, picture and sound (in which especially sound effects play an important part) are generally synchronized, speech sounds have a variety of uses, and music widely serves to signal upcoming events (for example, in relation to bumpers and the hookline of *Martin & Ketil*) and to extra-diegetically emphasize the narrative progress (in certain commercials and in the *Duck Dodgers* cartoon).

Sound is characterized by three functions: it co-establishes a comforting and familiar visual and auditory *background* (caused by the music score and the many repetitions and recognizable voices and effect sounds), it attracts attention (understood as presence and the audience's focus on the screen), and it contributes to *continuous attention.*

The functions of sound are very closely related to children's exploratory approach to television. When a child is not looking at the screen (but is playing, walking around or perhaps in another room), the sounds serve as background and to signal future, possibly desired, events. This approach to sound may be called *absent-minded listening*

(Ruud 1983); in it the whole auditory experience becomes a *field* (as previously mentioned) for the child's actions, speech and so on, which might then be labeled a *figure*. Sometimes songs might be integrated in the child's play, and thereby act as a kind of *ground position*, since the child can synchronously sing along with the music on TV and/or non-synchronously sing the same songs to itself (perhaps in modified versions; see Barrett 2003) and in this way contribute to creating a soundtrack for its own play. In this approach some of the above-mentioned perspectives involving the relationship between sound and the narrative progress might be of less relevance to the child's way of experiencing and using sound. Rather it seems as if it is *recognition* (made possible by several repetitions) and *surprise,* for example by means of a significant contrast, which can attract the child's auditory attention (this can be seen in observation studies (Johansen 2005) and is noticed by Calvert and Gersch 1987).

When a child watches TV the relationship between sound and image then becomes relevant. In this instance it seems as if the *synchronized* relationship between sound and image can hold the attention of the youngest children (cf. also Dodd 1979 and Rice, Huston and Wright 1983). Furthermore, it would seem that a generally high level of perceptual salience (high level of intensity, quick shifts and fast movements, and significant contrasts) contributes to attracting and maintaining children's attention (also described in Rice, Huston and Wright 1983:27ff), although this perceptual salience may be considered a feature of the programme flow, which is so common that there is a risk of 'inflation of attention.' At the same time, the audiovisual expression generally may be regarded as socializing children to listen absent-mindedly as well as to establish schemes and codes of musical perception.

In summary, the formal features of TV (as formulated in auditory and visual gestalts) appear primarily to attract the attention of the relatively media-inexperienced young child, rather than its narrative or symbolic features. When these formal features described above are a common characteristic of the channel flow as such – across otherwise different programme formats – it is relevant to relate this to discussions of children's ability to distinguish between commercials and non-commercials. At this point we can conclude that the formal features *do not* encourage children to make a distinction. This discussion will be further elaborated below in our consideration of additional links between commercials and teasers as regards their genre and content. Furthermore, we wish to illustrate how a programme flow like this one is part of a larger context of media texts and cultural expressions.

Intertextuality and inclusive approaches

In the above analysis, we have shown that there are connections between different kinds of commercials (commercials and teasers) with respect to their context and formal features. As previously stated, this was proven to be the case for *Batman*, which appears in both a teaser (*Batman of the Future*) and a commercial (Guldkorn). The *Batman* commercials are furthermore an obvious example of how branding takes place in different media (*Batman* on TV 2 and *Batman* online (kids.tv2.dk)) as programme content, commercials and merchandise related to another brand – so-called co-branding. These symbolic relations attempt to influence the viewer on many levels, so that in the viewers' mind, the TV 2 brand, the Guldkorn brand and the *Batman* brand might be understood as related. McAllister and Giglio describe

this as *commodity flow*,[29] a notion which refers to the way in which commercials for commodities 'spread' across several media and expressions and commodity flow thus, according to the writers: "*is a defining characteristic of children's television programming*" (McAllister and Giglio 2005: 26).

Further examples of relationships between different types of content can be pointed out. For example, between different commercials and also at an intertextual level, where music, sound and modes of address refer to various media texts and must therefore be understood as offering opportunities for alternative and/or supplementary readings. For instance, there is a musical resemblance between two different commercials for two DVD movies: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *The Emperor's New Groove*, since they are both underscored by wind sections and funk rhythms. At the same time, both commercials are put together by bits of dialogue which are emphasized by direct, imperative modes of address such as 'Come forward!' or 'Open the door!', by means of which the viewer gets invited into the universe of the movie. These features are also present in a commercial for 'Realkredit Danmark,' where Hans Bischoff[30] *enters* a room followed by the camera and the viewers. In the same way, teasers often appear all-inclusive by using phrases like 'the whole kingdom,' 'the whole family,' 'see you in a little while,' 'see you later,' 'we are having visitors,' 'every Saturday and Sunday,' and 'cartoon for you.' Martin and Ketil also invite the viewer inside via the song 'Haba Haba Kulu, take a trip with Zulu' and by mentioning 'our earth' in the title song. From the perspective of flow, this means that the range of

[29] The word flow is used differently from in the previous section. McAllister and Giglio use flow as a metaphor for the diffusion of products in different media and genres. So as to avoid confusion with the concept of flow, a notion such as *commodity dissemination* might be a more appropriate term for the processes McAllister and Giglio are interested in.

[30] See note 22.

programming as such supports an (apparently) direct and personal relation.

Apart from the above-mentioned example, intertextual references also appear in a commercial for 'Becel,'[31] where the underscore is 'Put a Little Love in Your Heart,' a song used in the *Stuart Little* movies,[32] which many children are probably acquainted with. Stuart Little appears in two feature films and a series of cartoons (as well as in books); the cartoons are shown on TV 2. In general, intertextual references must be understood as an unavoidable characteristic of our commercialized media culture, and connections – intended or not – will always appear. References might appear between different programmes or channels or they might have a historical or nostalgic perspective, which among other places is seen in the *Duck Dodgers* cartoon, based on the classic Warner Brothers cartoon *Daffy Duck*. In the present version the characters are super-heroes in outer space. Apart from being broadcast on TV 2, the cartoon is also broadcast on Cartoon Network in Denmark.[33]

In the analyzed programme flow, a short music video is used as a kind of *filler*. In it, the Danish singers Elisabeth and Otto Brandenburg sing a verse from a Danish children's book, *Halfdan's ABC*. The images are drawings by the writer and illustrator of the book, Ib Spang Olsen. *Halfdan's ABC* is an absolute classic in Danish children's literature, and Ib Spang Olsen often appeared in children's television in the '70s and '80s. As such, this little element is loaded with cultural and nostalgic references to times past. References to various cultural values also appear in other kinds of programme elements; for instance, the teaser

[31] A margarine product.
[32] Jackie DeShannon, Jimmy Holiday and Randy Myers, 1969.

for *The Ugly Duckling and I* emphasizes that the cartoon is produced in Denmark, just as the commercial for *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* underlines the fact that 'everybody speaks Danish.' Similarly, *Duck Dodgers* accentuates the Warner Brothers logo and hence refers to a classic cartoon tradition, and the title song, sung by Tom Jones, sounds like a James Bond theme song. The teaser for the coverage of the christening of the Danish Prince Christian – an event which by nature is associated with a sense of national identity – is a cartoon (and must therefore have a certain appeal to children) and is narrated by Flemming Quist Møller[34] (another representative of 'the good old days' of children's television).

The hosts Martin and Ketil also refer to themselves in another programme: *Nature Patrol*,[35] where they, along with Sebastian Klein[36] as the confused Dr. Pjuskebusk, examined natural phenomena and among other things guessed which animal had produced a particular sample of feces. This illustrates the tendency of hosts as well as formats and genres to move between channels, both nationally and transnationally.

Finally, Martin and Ketil emphasize the handing down of the cultural heritage through certain normative and didactic elements. This didactic purpose is underlined in the subtitle, *The World for Beginners*, which indicates that the programme will introduce 'the World' to children. In the analyzed show, in which Martin visits the Royal Danish Theatre, the subject is how to play the bassoon as well as

[33] A similar connection can be seen between Disney Channel and DR, which holds the license to Disney in Denmark.
[34] Flemming Quist Møller is a Danish author of children's literature; many of his books have been transformed into cartoons.
[35] "Naturpatruljen" in Danish. DR, 1997-2003.
[36] A Danish actor who is a very popular host of children's programmes on DR. Son of the actor Jesper Klein, with whom he also makes children's programmes.

how to use music to illustrate one's dreams. The programme applies a specific perspective on the meaning of classical music in and for our culture – as something ethereal and high-brow – and takes it upon itself to pass on a classical cultural heritage.

Discussion

All the elements of the analyzed television flow are characteristically structured by easily recognizable visual and auditory patterns. For instance, the same sentences are repeated in every episode. This of course means that *recognition* is an important parameter for the viewer (the listener), who organizes his or her viewing on the basis of previous experiences with the media's forms of expression, combined with knowledge of the social aspect of a viewing situation. When attention is directed towards the TV screen, it will often be caught by a sound, which for some reason 'attracts' the child. It could be a voice or part of a melody which the child recognizes or it could be auditory markers of programme structure (stage shift, etc.) which make the child look at the screen and perhaps move towards it to resume its direct viewing. This is also described by Rodacy and Boyle (1979), but the point here is that we assume that some kind of meaningful reception takes place even when attention is not directed visually at the screen. In other words: You can watch TV facing away from the screen, and in this situation sound is the ultimate structuring parameter.

Typically, programmes aimed at small children consciously use this form, in which specific visual and auditory markers are suffused with iconographic meaning, and thereby enable a continuous connection with the small child as an exploratory, and not especially faithful, viewer. A show like *Teletubbies* uses this method to the extreme in that it is structured by infinite repetitions and marked breaks (bumpers)

between each of them. This abrupt structure is also found in the commercial breaks, which thereby take up an important part of the programme flow. Small children are remarkably interested in commercials – both teasers and commercials (Johansen 2005) – a fact which we first and foremost ascribe to the structure and presumably also to the welcoming and inclusive mode of address, as previously mentioned. The function of these elements in the programme flow is therefore supplemental and different from the functions which are usually mentioned in literature formulated from an adult perspective: that there are no breaks in the flow and that the channel and its advertisers can be 'branded' and 'sold.'

As such, non-programmes have functions similar to those traditionally associated with programmes, and they are not just fillers for the small child. Mouritsen (2003) describes how children use the language and form of commercials, including the musical aspects, as raw material in their play culture. The youngest children primarily direct their attention toward the simple narratives, which then function as a basis for their socialization with respect to media use. The child is being socialized on an overall level regarding rhythm, narrative structure and music. In addition, via their use of media, children develop a competence with codes and achieve an understanding of narratives as well as the visual and auditory markers which constitute and determine media texts. Commercials undoubtedly contribute to this socialization of the small child toward partaking in consumer society. In commercials, new toys are introduced, the child is exposed to 'what can be bought' and consequently 'what one can wish for.' And finally a bodily and normative socialization takes place in the family, around the activity of 'watching television.' The child learns when and how to watch television, and learns how to deal with watching television in an acceptable way (Johansen 2006).

In summary, it can be stated that in the programme flow – and in the relationship between programmes and non-programmes – intertextual references and overlaps in addressing modes frequently appear. Therefore, understanding the flow as just that – flow – makes good sense, and refers beyond the current programme flow, drawing on an infinite stock of traditions and references to media culture as such. These overlaps are often defined and determined by aspects which have to do with sound: music and sound effects as plot and attention markers, speech to underline a person's character, and music as part of a tradition of cultural heritage, pointing back to 'way back when.' In addition, many references to national and nostalgic aspects can be seen. Whether this matter is of significance to children is not possible to examine further in this article, but it would be of interest for future research.

While working on this article, our attention has been directed towards the structuring of children's television in general. There seems to be a general tendency towards structural fragmentation also in public service or non-commercial television, towards increasing similarities between non-commercial and commercial children's programmes such as *Martin & Ketil – the World for Beginners*. Due to its abrupt structure, *Martin & Ketil* is also somewhat similar to morning television aimed at adults, which consists of a series of independent elements brought together in an overall framework by two hosts. In this perspective one may assume that the structure of the programme 'fits' the exploratory way the small child acts, although it has not been possible to examine this in the present article. We assume, however, based on this analysis and on observation studies, that for young children, this has some significance in respect to fascination and understanding. Furthermore, we consider it likely that the blurred forms of expression in commercial TV make it more difficult for the

viewer to distinguish between different types of content, although we do not wish to judge whether or not this should be understood as a purpose of media socialization.

Final comments

In this analysis, we have tried to shed light on the fact that auditory phenomena play a central role in the way children use television. First of all, there are many and quite varied sounds in the current programme flow which *approach* children; and secondly, sound has a significant connection with TV as it is used *by* the small child. The large variety and amount of sounds in the analyzed programme flow are apparently a characteristic of commercial children's television (although additional comparative studies of non-commercial children's television, as well as television for adults, are necessary to substantiate this claim). This implies that sound is a significant category of style, with determining implications for the concept of genre (albeit if it is accepted that children often watch television facing away from the screen, without having the sound go behind their backs, as it were). Sound then structures the flow in both a syntagmatic and paradigmatic way: it sequences the flow in a 'horizontal' perspective and it segments the flow in a 'vertical' perspective by signaling, calling and making possible recognition and association. In addition, in its exploratory activities, the child often integrates the sound of the TV in its current, simultaneous actions and thereby creates a viewer subflow in which the child focuses its attention on the *field, ground* and *figure*, guided by the auditory connection.

Sound, then, is by no means a matter of secondary importance in the programme flow as far as the child is concerned, and this article introduces two implications of this fact: firstly, that the formal similarities between elements in the flow *do not* support the child in

making distinctions between the intentions behind programmes; and secondly, that the child is being socialized into a specific way of using television which seems to encourage certain modes of listening as well as certain codes for experiencing and understanding the programmes. It therefore seems reasonable to begin listening to children's television and observing how sound is concretely integrated and used by the exploratory child while watching television.

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Imagining paradise
Image schemata and affective participation in commercials as exemplified by Bacardi and the Danish National Lottery

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Imagine a sunset, a beach, palm trees, soft Caribbean music, and a beautiful woman with sensuous lips, tan skin and colorful flowers in her long blond hair and a glass in her hand. The glass is filled with delicious Bacardi rum and ice cubes that move as though dancing in the glass and following the rhythm of the music. It's sublime. It's paradise.

We remember these images from Bacardi cinema advertisements aired some thirty years ago. The concept of paradise is a well-known metaphor in tourism marketing and literature. An internet search for the two words "tourism" and "paradise" together through *Google* results in 1,840,000 hits, which illustrates how connected these two words are. The *touristic* image of exotic sites, landscapes and experiences is not limited to tourism marketing and tourism literature, but is also used in many commercials and marketing connections. It is even possible to speak of a certain *touristic* aesthetics including specific tourist signs, experiences and global visual images (Urry, 2002, Jansson, 2002, Larsen, 2001, Osborne, 2000, Waade, 2006). In this essay, I will analyse and discuss the use of visual and metaphorical presentations of "paradise" and "the good life" in two different commercial series: the Bacardi rum advertisements from the '70s and the '80s, and Danish National Lottery (*Lotto*) advertisements presented to a Danish cinema audience in the '80s and '90s. My main argument is that the *imagination* is key to understanding and analysing commercials and their aesthetic function, and that the viewers' imagination is not only

an effect of a specific commercial, but rather is incorporated and reflected in commercials' communicative intention and aesthetics. My aim is to outline a theoretical framework for understanding the imagination as involving cognitive, emotional and sensuous processes, respectively.

First, I will present theoretical perspectives on the relation between the aesthetic function of commercials and the consumer's imagination as well as the relation between moving pictures as a specific aesthetic and mediated communication and the receiver's imagination. Next, I will analyse the two commercial series and focus on how "paradise" and "the good life" are performed and presented in them. In the Bacardi series, the concept of paradise is related to the product's origin and a certain tourist rhetoric and image, as well as to alcoholic intoxication and a "trip" to a liminal, sublime, heavenly condition. In the Lotto series, images of a good life are related to consumption itself: Consuming exotic places as a tourist (using paradise as a visual and oral metaphor again, as in the Bacardi commercials), consuming goods, and luxury. In the last part of my essay, I will discuss how the concept of the consumer's imagination is reflected and communicated in the commercials.

The concept of imagination regarding commercials can be developed from several different theoretical points of view. Firstly, imagination is an issue in relation to consumer culture (e.g. Colin Campbell 1987, Michel Maffesoli 1997), and secondly the concept has been developed in the field of media and film studies (e.g. Edgar Morin 1956/2005). Imagination is also a theoretical issue in the field of art philosophy and art reception (e.g. Immanuel Kant, 1790), as well as psychology and cognition (e.g. Mark Thompson 1987). The theoretical perspectives include cultural, aesthetic and psychological aspects of

imagination in relation to commercials. In this essay I will focus on recent works presented in the field of media research dealing with imagination as it is related to consumer culture and media reception, and relate these ideas to the analysis of the specific commercials.

The consumer imagination

Imaginative consumption differs from physical, concrete consumption (e.g. buying a pair of shoes) and mediated consumption (e.g. seeing a person buying a pair of shoes in a television commercial). Imaginative consumption means all kinds of consumption that take place in a person's mind, all his/her fantasies, daydreams and plans about, for instance, buying a pair of shoes, including how s/he might look wearing the shoes, how they feel to put on, to walk in, to show off and so on (Jansson 2002, Waade 2006).

Imagination is one of several communication functions in commercials and marketing; others could be a didactic function (how to use the Swifter or the car cleaner), price (cheap cucumbers!) or an emotive function that identifies the addresser's ethos (e.g. financing and security firms). In Roman Jakobson's communication model (Fiske 2000, p. 35), the imagination is related to the *conative* function: the effect of the message on the addressee. Imagination is a specific communicative effect that the commercial pursues, and this effect has its particular relevance in relation to products and services that help the consumer to build his or her own lifestyle and identity. I am thinking of branded products, luxury goods, lifestyle products and experiences like fashion, jewellery, lipstick, cars, kitchens, houses, shoes, design, gastronomy, holidays and trips as well as products and services that make it possible to achieve these branded goods and experiences such as bank loans, credit and lotteries.

The consumer's imagination is a mental landscape of self-presentation, a kind of inverted psychological projection in which the consumer imagines how the product, the service or the experience could enter his/her own world or relate to his or her own body. Even though, for instance, imagination involves how it could be to lie in a hammock far away from home on a sunny beach drinking soft drinks served by young, strong, erotic men, the projection is inverted because the experience is transferred into the consumer's own bodily experience. More precisely, we can use Edgar Morin's term *projection identification process* (Morin 2005:85ff), in which the viewer relates him or herself to the (film) object in a complex process involving the viewer's understanding, emotions and imagination.

Imaginative hedonistic consumption

There is an ongoing fusion between media culture and consumer culture, and when trying to sort out different patterns of contemporary consumption, we become aware of several connections to media representation and media reception. In his book *Image Culture* (2002), André Jansson discusses the relation between media and consumer culture, and he points out different modes of consumption in which the media plays different roles. *Instrumental* consumption is anti-consumerist and gratifies certain physical and material needs in efficient ways; *hedonistic* consumption is about pleasure seeking and describes how the individuals try to maximize the bodily pleasure that may be achieved through consumption; *reproductive* consumption covers an expressive component in which consumption is used to mark social distinctions, and *pretentious* consumption is about shaping identity and social roles through consumption (Jansson 2002: 51f). Jansson is developing the different modes of consumption based on cultural

theories.[a] In this connection, the concept of hedonistic consumption is relevant, and especially the *imaginative hedonistic* mode of consumption. Inspired by the work of Colin Campbell, Jansson differentiates between *realistic* and *imaginative* hedonistic consumption, in which the first concerns pleasure seeking and sensory stimulation without the aim of trying something new but rather of minimizing the risk of failure, while the latter concerns the symbolic dimensions of commodity and pleasure sought via emotional and spiritual stimulation:

> The typical imaginative hedonist is a day-dreamer, hoping to experience the kind of higher spiritual joy promised by the image of certain goods – rather than by its material properties. Past experiences are of little concern, what becomes enticing to the imaginative hedonist is the fantasy of gaining really new sensations (Jansson, 2002: 52ff).

The emergence of imaginative hedonism is caused by the mediatization of consumption in contemporary culture as well as by the intensification of the symbolic aspects of commodities – "*advertising being the principal forum for romantic image creation*" (Jansson, 2002, p. 53). Consumption is clearly not only about consuming goods, but an important aspect of it is the individual's creation of images and production of fantasies related to consumption. And to help create these images, marketing objects become important through such media as commercials, posters and advertisements as well as lifestyle television series, travel magazines, literature, lotteries and computer games. There is an aesthetic relation between the reader/viewer and the object, similar to the way we used to think about the relation between an artwork and the museum visitor. A certain contemplative receptive mode is in play in which the consumer projects his or her own feelings and memories, creates images, produces fantasies and dreams and evokes reflections related to the sensuous experience of

[a] See also Christian Jantzen (2004) for a similar categorization.

the object (e.g. media text, picture, advertisement) (Kaare Nielsen, 2002: 57ff).

The contemplative mode characterizes the reader's reception of fashion and lifestyle magazines, as well as of *make over* and lifestyle series. The pictures and use of the camera – such as close ups, slow motion, stills, repetitions, and the absence of interfering speech and text – make it possible to dwell on and absorb the image. The basic premise in factual entertainment series is the *good mood* (Bruun 1999), and the reflexive concept these series deal with is the question, *What is the good life?* The way the series is produced and staged invites the viewer to reflect upon this question through cognitive, imaginative and emotional investments – for instance, the viewer is supposed to reflect on her answers to certain questions: Does it look better or worse? How does it feel to touch this object? Or how would it be to be in her place? (Carlsen & Frandsen, 2005:24ff). This basic premise and question is also relevant to other kinds of lifestyle journalism, magazines and media entertainment, as well as to lifestyle commercials and advertising.

Image schemata and affective participation

Mark Johnson's book *The Body in the Mind* (1987) offers some relevant and interesting perspectives on the concept of imagination. And inspired by Immanuel Kant's philosophy, he develops a theory of imagination and image schemata that reflects the relation between bodily experience and cognitive processes. Kant understood imagination as a capacity for organizing mental representations into meaningful units, and suggested four different functions of the imagination: *reproductive* (imagination as representations), *productive* (imagination as structuring experiences over time), *schematizing* (imagination as mediating between abstract concepts and sensuous, bodily experi-

ences) and *creative* (imagination as free and generating novel meaning and new structures in our experience) (Johnson 1987:165). Johnson criticises the traditional dualism in Western philosophy (body/spirit, reason/ imagination, science/art, cognition/ emotion) and argues that imagination is related to corporeal experiences and sensations. In relation to Kant's four functions, Johnson suggests the concept of *imaginative structures* as a way to develop his ideas. These structures include *image schemata* and *metaphorical projections*. The first is a "recurring, dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our experience" (p. xiv), and he uses the expression "*more is up*" to exemplify image schemata and to explain how this basic vertical structure works (e.g. in relation to prices, numbers, earnings) and to indicate that these schemata are related to the basic up/down bodily experience. Regarding the process of metaphorical projection, it is "not merely a linguistic mode of expressions, rather, it is one of the chief cognitive structures by which we are able to have coherent ordered experiences that we can reason about and make sense of" (p. xv). Imagination is closely connected to Johnson's understanding of metaphor, and it grows out of bodily experience as it contributes to our understanding and guides our reasoning.

Rather than discussing the theoretical and philosophical implications of Johnson's perspectives, I will suggest that the concept of *paradise* functions as a specific image schema in respect to the context of consumer culture rather than a religious codex. I will argue that in a secularized version, paradise, as the essence of the good life, does not illustrate a reunion with the good in a metaphysical state, but rather an imaginative reunion with oneself to achieve good moods, pleasure and inner satisfaction. In this connection, consumption becomes not only the goal for an individual's actions and longings, but also the way

to achieve this condition. We might say that consumerism is our society's religion and shopping malls are our cathedrals; shopping has become a mythic, ritual and self-reflexive behaviour; goods have been described as fetish objects and brands have symbolic and dogmatic qualities in Western culture.

How can we understand the functions of image schemata? Johnson works in the context of cognition and structuralism, and deals with cognitive processes of understanding, meaning and reasoning and how the schemata structure these processes. I will suggest that image schemata also have emotional and aesthetic-reflexive functions. Kirsten Drotner (2002) uses the term *matrix* to explain media-specific schemata (e.g. genres) and how they structure not only understanding and meaning, but also feelings and sensuous experiences. Image schemata structure, for instance, the way we gaze at a place or a nude, and image schemata structure the way we relate our feelings and emotional reactions (e.g. when to cry and to laugh). To supplement Johnson's dynamic concept of image schemata, I will mention the work of Edgar Morin (1956/2005) and his theory of imagination and affective participation. Morin works with the relation between fiction/dream and reality in cinematographic perception, and bases his ideas on a psychoanalytic perspective. Morin's main argument is the polymorphous projection-identification process and he says that cinema is a symbiosis, "a system that tends to integrate the spectator into the flow of the film" and at the same time "a system that tends to integrate the flow of the film into the psychic flow of the spectator" (Morin, 2005:102). He describes the spectator's projection-identification process (or, as I have already suggested, aesthetic relation) as *affective participation*, and he stresses the sensuous and emotional aspects of the process. The different cinematic techniques, such as camera movements, tempo, close-ups, slow motion, lighting, high angle or low

angle shots and so on, intensify the projection-identification process as well as the spectator's affective participation.[b]

Both Johnson and Morin underline the complex process of meaning and imagination, and with respect to my analysis of specific commercials, I will argue that images of *paradise* and concepts of *the good life* are much more than empty clichés and simple representations, but correspond to the spectator's needs and self-reflection as well as to an extensive cultural circulation of images and meanings.

Paradise as image schemata

The concept of paradise in modern tourism relies on the romance of the South Pacific and the tropical beach. Orvar Löfgren describes the tropical dream and its history in his book *On Holiday* (1999): "The power of the Hawaiian imagery above all had to do with the fact that this was the first really mass-mediated paradise: a landscape not only to experience through colored postcards and illustrated magazines features but also a landscape set to music" (Löfgren 1999:216). Tropical paradise as a visual concept circulated in popular culture and music. Hawaii and the South Pacific was no longer only a fantasyland; the image of the tropical beach with palm trees and hula girls with flowers in their hair turned up everywhere. During the 1950s "active mass-media marketing furthered the fantasyland of the Pacific beach as an appetizingly exotic Eden of sensual woman with inviting smiles" (Löfgren 1999:217). At the same time as the tropical paradise became popularized as a music and media image as well as a tourist destination, the European beach underwent a "polynesification." Not only were the palm trees and the tropical plants necessary ingredients, surfing and tropical events also became popular activities, and in the

[b] See Waade 2006 for an analysis of the travel series *Pilot Guides* and the relation between visual images and the spectator's affective participation.

1950s "there was for example Club Polynésie turning European destinations into images of Pacific romance" (Löfgren 1999:219). The tropical dream has to be understood in the light of not only modern mass tourism and mass media, but also modernization, globalization and the Second World War.

Several image schemata dominate tourism culture: the explorer, the adventurer and the image of the family as "connected bodies" (Larsen 2004: 137; see also Sørensen 1999). Inspired by the work of John Urry (1990/2002), one might say that the tourist gaze in itself comprises image schemata that structure the commercial image production of specific tourist sites, landscapes and events in, for instance, postcards and travel books; it also shapes the tourist's perception, understanding and experience of specific places and cultures and his/her private photos and holiday videos, which reproduce the same images. Tourist images circulate in a global, visual and mediated culture, and image schemata and visual representations structure tourists' imaginations and experiences (Urry 2002, Croach Thompson & Jackson 2005, Falkheimer & Jansson 2006).

The tropical beach and paradise as a mythic image and the exotic and the erotic are already being fused as complex and ambiguous schemata. Paradise as Christian mythic and spatial phantasmagoria is also a paradoxical image: on the one hand, it stands for purity and a divine condition somewhere beyond our own world, something that once has been and will return, and on the other, paradise includes the snake and nudity as evil, erotic and tempting subjects. As an image schema, paradise is ambiguous, and this ambiguity requires that the viewer produce his or her own fantasies and interpretations.

The exotic image of specific landscapes, flowers and hula girls represents an anthropological point of view and works in itself as an image schema dealing with "the other" as well as spatial

representation. The concept of the authentic is central to tourism image schemata; not necessarily something original, un-touched or undiscovered, but a place or an object that gives an authentic effect (symbolic authenticity) to the viewer/visitor (Jansson, 2002:439).

Orvar Löfgren points out essential aspects of the concept of paradise in modern tourism: *the poetics of virginity* and the *familiarity of the exotic*. A Robinsonian rhetoric or specific narrative structure in travel literature and tourist marketing is evident: the discovery of virgin coasts, villages and regions, the first footprints in the sand and the heroic conquest. The rhetoric of virginity creates new definitions of spoiled and unspoiled (Löfgren 1999:183). The poetics of virginity also fit the dynamics of modern tourism as a commodity: we seek new places and new experiences. Paradise as something virginal that can be discovered and experienced is constituted both in time (nostalgic) and place (exotic):

> There is a constant nostalgia for an earlier "then", which tends to move around in time, as virginity is made and remade in different generational and social experiences of "the local" (…) In the cultural economy of authenticity, timelessness, and exclusivity, new hidden treasures have to be discovered and sampled before they are swamped by invading tourists. That is why so many tourist guides choose the strategy of telling secrets: Hidden Hawaii, Underground San Francisco, Undiscovered Europe (Löfgren 1999:184).

So far I have focused on the cultural and interpretative connotative aspects of paradise schemata as a whole, but what are the typical elements in the schemata, and should these elements be understood in tourist contexts? The paradise image schemata typically include the beach, palm trees, sunshine, blue sky, the nude or young woman (or a couple), flowers and fruits. The beach as an iconographic element symbolizes the end of the world, the border between land and sea, and suggests the infinity of life (similar to the horizon line). The beach has also become a global tourist icon familiar from postcards, travel books,

posters and films. Löfgren explains how the beach postcard "is a good example of the universalization of the beach experience, the making of a truly global iconography and choreography of beach life (…) without any hint of the "local", just sand, sea, and carefully arranged groups of beach visitors" (Löfgren 1999:213). The beach has also become an icon of modern tourism, in which sunbathing, swimming and surfing have become popular tourist activities that take place at the beach, and at the same time beaches have become popular tourist destinations in a global experience economy. As an element of paradise schemata, the beach represents the tropical dream and marks the threshold between land and sea, life and death, the corporeal and the spiritual world. The palms, fruits and flowers belong to the tropical dream, but also symbolize fertility, nature (authenticity) and beauty. The nude stands for sexuality and the voyeuristic spectacle: the pleasure of bodily performance as well as voyeuristic desire. Nudism and sunbathing were hedonist activities that became popular in the late nineteenth century, and they were "a utopia of modern life and natural living" (Löfgren 1999:222). The sunshine and the blue sky as elements of paradise image schemata illustrate sunbathing as a tourist activity, but also symbolize happiness and pleasure as well as divinity.

What is important are not the specific meanings of these different elements as a sort of iconographic dictionary, but rather the open and dynamic process of affective participation and reflection that the concept of image schemata offers. The ambiguity of paradise as modern tourist image schemata stimulates emotional and sensuous experience and reflection in physical, mediated and imaginative tourism (Waade 2006). The image schemata of paradise, like the global beach, include a bodily performance and choreographic experience

(Löfgren 1999:224ff), and this corporeal, sensuous element is significant with respect to the commercials I will look at below.

Bacardi commercials: the Caribbean dream

As mentioned above, Bacardi has always used their original place of production to brand their products: Santiago de Cuba. Even though the company no longer produces rum on Cuba, they have decided to use the place as a branding strategy:

> Bacardi, despite having no business tie (in terms of production) to Cuba today, have decided to re-emphasize their Cuban heritage in recent years. This is mainly due to commercial reasons: facing increased competition in the Rum market from the now international brand Havana Club, the company concluded that it was important for sales to associate their rum with Cuba. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bacardi)

In the '70s and '80s, several Bacardi screen advertisements were presented in Danish cinemas.[c] Even though the product is shown in and central to all the advertisements, I have found three subcategories in which the product (Bacardi Rum) is presented through different aesthetic strategies: some focus on the *facts about the product* (origin, Bacardi products, drink receptions), others use *paradise island*, and finally some advertisements show the product as a *sculptural, sensuous object* (both the bottle and the liquid). The latter two categories use intoxication as the aesthetic concept, the spiritual experience of spirits, so to speak. In the paradise advertisements, intoxication is related to the spatial experience of the Caribbean paradise, while in the sculptural ones, intoxication is illustrated as a particular sensitive state in which the drink's fluidity and sensuous qualities are intensified through cinematic visual techniques like slow motion, close ups, repetition, lighting and hyper-realistic textures. The imagination has

[c] My empirical study is based on the Danish digital archive of screen advertisements, *Danske reklamefilm*, at the Danish National Library. In this archive, I have found 15 Bacardi commercials presented in Danish cinemas in the period 1970-1993.

two different functions in these two categories: while the paradise advertisements illustrate a spatial phantasmagoria, the sculptural ones represent a tactile phantasmagoria. In both, the relation between imagination and intoxication is illustrated; the liquor is supposed to put us in a certain emotional and sensitive state that intensifies our experiences and makes us able to imagine and fancy places and objects.

These three aesthetic strategies are used in parallel and in different combinations during the period studied (1970-1993), and in themselves they illustrate different communicative ideals in advertisement and market communication: from facts about the product as serious and truthful information to branding strategies in which the product plays an indirect role and instead brand values and experiences are communicated through the screen advertisements.

Paradise as site specific and a bodily state

To look more specifically at Bacardi's paradise commercials, there are different variations on the beach-palm-trees-sun-woman scenery. According to Löfgren's description of the half-naked hula girls in tourist images of paradise, there are no such hula girls, but instead tan blond tourists. The only exotic elements in these commercials are the landscape, plants and fruits, while the persons (both male and female) are full-blooded wealthy and good-looking young people from the West.

Nearly all of the paradise screen advertisements use the beach as a location, and they show the tourist's relaxing life at the beach sunbathing, sleeping in a hammock, playing in the sand or having drinks with friends. In one of the advertisements, they use a raft on the sea as the location. The typical end shot is a postcard image: the camera zooms out and we see the bright beach, the coastline, the

turquoise sea, the horizon and the blue sky from above. It is a sophisticated commercial (Andersen & Jantzen 2004), in that the storyline and the text are subordinate to the images, which in turn play a dominant role. Besides the picturesque, slow visual images, the sound is very important in the commercial, not only the Caribbean music and the sound of the waves, but also the voice-over and song texts in the auditory text. The voice-over typically repeats the facts that we can read as written text, and in this way it is totally redundant. In some of the commercials, the voice-over is therefore quiet, and instead the image, the soft music and the poetic song texts are the main ingredients. It is these elements that serve an overall aesthetic function and also secure the receiver's imagination, fantasy and emotional investments.

Allow me to illustrate this. In the advertisement film in which the location is a raft floating around on the sea, the opening scene shows a couple on the raft. The camera zooms in from a high angle and we see the couple from different points of view as they look at each other. The woman is sunbathing and the man is caressing her legs while splashing refreshing water on her skin. The camera dwells on the body of the woman, following its lines and getting close to the surface. The images are repeated twice.

Fig. 1 & 2: Bacardi & Coke, 1976.

The visual image illustrates the male's as well as the spectator's attention, gaze and desire. We see glimpses of a (Bacardi) bottle behind the woman's leg. Visually speaking, almost nothing happens: we only see the two of them relaxing in the sun, and we have plenty of time to absorb the image and dream. Once, in a close up of the woman's leg glistening with drops of water, the image blends with a bottle of rum. The bottle and the body have the same colors, lines and shimmering drops, and the image of the bottle disappears immediately afterward. It is as though we enter the man's imagination, or perhaps a kind of alcoholic hallucination: the desire for the body blends with the desire for the liquid. This happens once more at the end of the film; this time it is a bottle of Coca Cola. The couple has just climbed into a ship that is as dark brown as the drink, and while the camera zooms out and we see the silhouettes of the young people in the sunset, their bodies have almost the same form as the cola bottle. The image follows the smooth rhythm of the music, and the song text as well as the easy melody, underline the simple message in the image:

> *Why don't you take it cool,*
> *Bacardi and Rum, Bacardi and Rum*
> *You've got all day, take that smooth, cool way*
> *Bacardi - and Coca Cola, Bacardi - and Coca Cola*

According to the paradise image schemata in this example, there are no palm trees, flowers or fruits, but rather sexuality and bodily desire. The bottle becomes the snake hiding behind the leg, like an antagonistic character in the mythic narrative that makes things happen through temptation and magic, awakening erotic feelings and showing the "smooth, cool way" to hedonistic pleasure.

In other words, the paradise image schemata include a transformation; a transition takes place both on an outer, site-specific and physical level and on an inner level of intoxication and eroticism. The paradisiacal condition becomes the combination of a certain spatial and sensuous appropriation and an inner bodily state.

"Let your imagination get wild"

In another example of Bacardi's paradisiacal screen advertisements (458/1975), the concept of imagination becomes an explicit communicative element. The opening shot shows the face of a woman in close up. She is standing still and her eyes are open but she isn't looking at anything specific. She is concentrating on her own dreams and thoughts. A male voice, half singing, half talking, proclaims:

Ahhhh, have a stretch,
Look around you, what do you see
Blue skies, beaches
Let your imagination get wild,
Take a meta trip to the Caribbean
'Cuz any place you go over there
You wanna see people all the time with a glass in their hand
Under the sun, drinking Bacardi Rum

The voice is commenting on the woman we see, but is also directed toward the spectator. The voice makes a direct, immediate connection between the image and the spectator, and it gives instructions to the spectator about what to do and how to react: "let your imagination get wild". Just as the woman looks around and sees blue skies and beaches, the spectator looks at the woman and imagines blue skies and beaches. There are no logos or company signs, no narrative presentations or introductory explanations that establish an interpretative framework and communicative distancing attitude between the viewer and the voice. Instead the relationship between them is

metonymic, in that the spectator is present in the image and gazes at the woman with his/her own eyes. The image, as well as the music and the words, starts *in media res* and the spectator just jumps into it; we are meant to look the woman right in the eye, relax and imagine the beach and the sky.

The music and the visual images extend this dream attitude: short glimpses of water, waves, beach, palm leaves, a bottle twinkling like sunshine while the image is blended with the water. In the end shot, once again we see silhouettes in the sunset in which the bodies, glasses and three branches intertwine in an abstract pattern. This is a poetic image that includes all the clichés we know from romantic films, love songs, tourist posters and advertisements.

As in the first example, alcoholic intoxication is connected with the power of imagination. The trip signifies an imaginative journey to the other place, but also an alcoholic trip. The commercial is produced in the mid-'70s, and at this time, the romantic attitude to both drugs and exotic places is increasing. The alcoholic trip becomes the incarnation of the good life and glorifies the way of life in exotic places. The commercial says, let's do what the people over there do: they have a glass in their hand all the time and drink alcohol under the sun. In this way, paradise image schemata include not only certain landscapes, narrative structures and figures, but also the freedom to explore and experience drugs and places. The imaginative hedonist is conceptualized in this commercial, and the spectators are supposed to imagine how rum makes them able to fancy and imagine the good life.

Lottery commercials: a daydreamer's paradise

As argued in the beginning, a touristification of popular culture and media is taking place. Along with the expansion of tourism as an industry and a cultural practice, tourist images, tourist destinations

and tourist experiences are used as aesthetic strategies in, for instance, literature and television series and as locations in films and computer games. The advertisements of the National Lottery use exotic places for two reasons: they are fascinating and tempting images in themselves that can cause the viewer to dream about holidays in the future or perhaps recall nice memories, and at the same time the lottery makes it possible – for the lucky winner – to realize these dreams.

Not only do the Lottery advertisements cause the viewer to dream about travelling; there is also a series with a "quit your job" theme, as well as glamour and fame. The Lottery screen advertisements that I have examined (produced in the period 1985 – 1993) are all typically short narratives with a surprising and humorous end point, and all of them illustrate the transformation of an ordinary (working class) man to a person living in endless luxury, freedom (off duty) or an exotic paradise. For example, the truck driver that crashes into another mans' expensive red Ferrari because he doesn't have to worry about the money or his job anymore; or the secretary, the fisherman and the house-painter that can quit their jobs by marching out the door away from their boss and shouting with joy. One spot shows a fashion show from Chanel with models that present their catwalk in the limelight. Suddenly a woman enters the stage from behind, the scene changes to slow-motion and we see that the woman is slowly running towards the audience and screaming. The sound also changes and almost disappears, as though time is standing still. The woman is happy, and she throws herself onto the floor as people embrace her, shouting with joy. In the end shot, we see the Lotto coupon in her hand. This short story is not only about a person that wins and can quit her ordinary job and life, but also a person that enters the celebrity world of fashion and breaks through on the screen.

The lottery makes it possible to become a star. That is the commercial's visual message.

Another example of how paradise is illustrated and used as image schemata in the Lotto advertisements is the commercial in which a couple is paddling in a small canoe in a rainstorm: the woman sees the Lotto coupon under their wet backpack, and she starts imagining a sunny beach where she is being taken care of by several strong, half-naked exotic men.

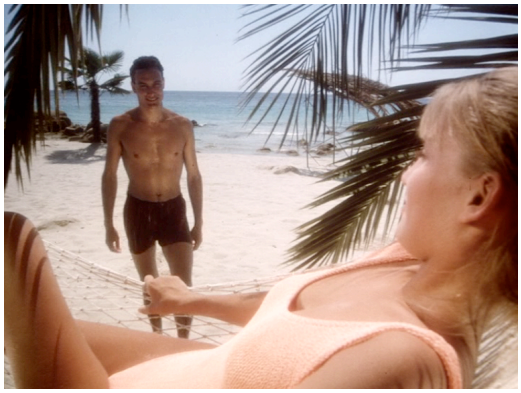


Fig. 3 & 4: Lotto, *Tænk hvis du vandt*, 1990-1994

Again, this is an image of a Caribbean paradise with palm trees, fruits, flowers and soft drinks, but in this example, the camera does not follow a male's gaze and his imagination and erotic desire; rather the spectator follows the woman's gaze. This is not at all a critique of the female body as an object of the male gaze; rather, the image illustrates that it is mainly the woman in a couple or a family who plans and dreams about holidays and travelling. And perhaps she is also the one who plays Lotto hoping to get a chance to realize her holiday dreams.

Another aspect of the image schemata is not paradise as an exotic place, but rather as an imaginative ability and state. Imagining paradise is not about the place, but imagination itself. In contrast to the Bacardi commercials where the product is branded through the

tropical dream of paradise, I will argue that the Lotto screen advertisements are about the daydreamer him or herself. First, it is rather important to be able to dream to realize the value of a Lotto coupon, while we can easily achieve and consume Bacardi Rum without worrying about the tropical dream. Second, the Lotto commercials establish an ironic and self-reflective attitude in which the dreamer him or herself is staged as a comic cliché (e.g. the secretary, the truck driver, the woman who almost drowns in the rain). In this context the paradise image schemata are about imagining the good life.

Imagining Pretty Woman

A Lotto commercial from 1993, paraphrasing the movie *Pretty Woman,* serves to illustrate this meta-communicative strategy. The screen advertisement is one out of four in the series "Imagining you were the winner" (*Tænk hvis du vandt*) produced in the period 1990-1994. There is no disturbing voice-over; instead the images and the music invite the spectator to dream along. The quality of the visual image itself in the series illustrates the concept of imagination – for instance, nostalgic High8 texture and colors that make us think back and remember, or a superficial image with exaggerated colors and contrasts that are reminiscent of science fiction and picture postcards.

Like the Bacardi film, the Lottery's Pretty Woman starts *in media res*, and the spectator sees a woman choosing clothes in a luxury fashion shop with the encouragement of her patron. We recognize several imitations of scenes from the film *Pretty Woman* in the screen advertisement, and this establishes a specific pleasant and comic tone. The spectator doesn't realize what the commercial is about until the very last second when the woman wakes up from her daydream, hearing the jingling sound of the opening door. The spectator realizes then that the woman is a laundress, she has been leaning her head on the

shoulder of a good-looking rich man next to her in the elevator while daydreaming. The man was the one we saw in her fantasies. They smile at each other as they leave the elevator.

Fig. 5 & 6: Lotto, *Tænk hvis du vandt* (Pretty Woman) 1993

Pretty Woman is a modern Cinderella fairy tale filled with enchantment and transformation. But in contrast to the film and the fairy tale with their happy, glamourous ending, the woman in the advertisement wakes up and realizes that it was only a dream. The song lines also underline the dream-like aspect. It is a man who is singing, and it is unclear whether he is supposed to be the man in the advertisement dreaming about the girl or the girl imagining the main character in the movie.

Sweet dream baby,
How long must I dream?
Dream baby, come and dream a sweet dream
The whole day through
Dream baby, come and dream a sweet dream
It's nighttime do
I love you and I am dreaming of you
That won't do

This short story is not about what could happen if you won the Lottery or had plenty of money; rather it is about the very act of imagining. Her dream is a movie, and her fantasies are about living in

this movie. Dreams and fantasies make your life good and worth living. And Lottery helps you to dream sweet dreams.

As image schemata, the Lottery commercials reflect imagination itself. This applies to both what is told and the way it is told. The stories that are told are about dreams and virtual realities. As regards the way they are told, I have already mentioned the nostalgic and superficial qualities of the images, as well as the narrative surprise and the spectators' guesswork concerning what the screen advertisement is advertising or the viewers' recognition of the advertising films' intertexual references to other media texts.

Commercials as cultural matrices

Image schemata are open frameworks for individuals' emotional, cognitive and imaginative processes and participation. Commercials rely on these schemata and popular matrices to secure immediate attention and responses. Intertexual references, genre parody, satire and caricatures are media-specific matrices that are well-known strategies in commercials. Paradise and tourist images, as I have argued, are manifested as ambiguous and mythical schemata in commercials and consumer culture. These schemata are dynamic matrices; they may be mixed, developed and changed.

On the other hand, commercials as such also function as image schemata. The general commodification and market rhetoric characterizing contemporary culture, society and (media) communication make commercials into matrices that structure our reflections, emotions and experiences. When we tell people about our last holiday, we use words we know from the advertisements ("It was a paradise for the kids," "we had a perfect view from where we lived"), just as the photos we take look like the ones we have seen in advertisements and magazines – for instance, sunsets, picturesque landscapes and

sites (Osborne, 2000). This also means that "paradise" may be seen mainly as an emotional and bodily state achieved when we visit an exotic place we have seen on a screen advertisement. The image schemata of paradise structure our experience as tourists as well as armchair travellers watching screen advertisements. That's the good life.

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Kitchen Counter: A Case Study of a Recent Danish TV Commercial

Richard Raskin

PRINCIPAL CREDITS

Client:	Kansas Kwintet [work clothes]
Ad agency:	M2 Film, Aarhus
Creative team	Rune Lünell and Lars Amby
Producer:	Lars Amby
Production leader	Bjarke Toft
Director:	Peder Pedersen
Photo:	Christian Gravesen
Editor:	Lasse Hoile
Running time:	45 seconds
Production period;	Shot and edited in Oct. 2004
Broadcast periods:	1-28 Nov. 2004, 7-13 Feb. 2005, 4-23 April 2005, 7-26 Nov. 2005
Carpenter:	Saul Amaya
Woman:	Tine Gravenborg Nielsen

Introduction

The Danish TV spot selected for close study here was written and executed in such a way that it affords the viewer the same degree of narrative pleasure provided by the best short fiction films, while effectively promoting its brand. The primary purpose of the present article is to consider some of the storytelling qualities of this spot, in part by looking at ways in which it stands out from the other ads in the same campaign.

This campaign was inspired by a set of highly successful commercials produced for Fristad, a Kansas sister-company based in Sweden, each ad depicting an outrageously inept or impertinent carpenter, bricklayer, plumber or house painter, and containing the tag-line: "It isn't only pros who use our work clothes" *("Det är inte bara proffs som*

använder våra arbejdskläder").[1] But the Danish campaign is no mere copy of its Swedish predecessor. New research was carried out in the Danish context, with ideas for the new TV spots discussed by focus groups consisting of Danish workmen. Furthermore, the Danish spots underwent a considerable evolution from initial idea to final production, and were also tested on Danish workmen and adjusted accordingly before their release for broadcast.[2]

The four TV commercials – *Kitchen Counter*, *Hacksaw*, *Bathroom*, and *Bricklayer* – were part of a comprehensive marketing package that included websites, billboards, newspaper ads, bus advertising and point-of-sale promotional materials, as well as advance visits of Kansas representatives to retailers who could then sign up for decorators to set up their stores for the campaign.

The TV commercials themselves cost Kansas roughly 1,000,000 Danish Crowns (corresponding to approximately $170,000).

The present study will begin with a shot-by-shot reconstruction of the *Kitchen Counter* spot, followed by a description of changes made in the initial ending of the spot, as a result of the above-mentioned audience tests. These two sections should give the reader a clear idea as to precisely what the TV viewer saw and heard at every moment of the commercial. The three other ads in the campaign will then be briefly summarized as a basis for subsequent comparison with *Kitchen*

[1] The four Swedish spots are currently accessible at:
http://www.m2film.dk/kansas/files/Fristads_Badrummet.mov
http://www.m2film.dk/kansas/files/Fristads_Dorren.mov
http://www.m2film.dk/kansas/files/Fristads_Golvet.mov
http://www.m2film.dk/kansas/files/Fristads_Malaren.mov

[2] The fours Danish spots (though before final adjustments were made in their packshots) can at present be accessed at:
http://www.m2film.dk/?id=12356821245
http://www.m2film.dk/?id=12356821495
http://www.m2film.dk/?id=12356821595
http://www.m2film.dk/?id=12356821695

Counter. Then the target groups and intended functions of the entire campaign will be discussed. With this foundation in place, we can finally look at the storytelling in *Kitchen Counter*, by outlining its narrative structure, describing the role of the woman in the spot, considering the status and national background of the workman, the pause and punch-line, and two ways of interpreting the spot. The main points concerning the storytelling qualities of *Kitchen Counter* will then me briefly summarized in a concluding note.

I would like to thank a number of people who played key roles in the making of the ad, both for taking the time to reply to my questions and for their kind permission to reproduce images and texts from the commercial: Lars Amby, the producer at M2 Film and half of the creative team (interviewed 11 May 2005); Rune Lünell, copywriter and other half of the creative team (also interviewed 11 May 2005); Peder Pedersen, the director of the spot (interviewed 23 May 2005); Saul Amaya, who played the workman's role (interviewed 18 May 2005); and Marie Arndal, marketing chief at Kwintet Kansas (interviewed 19 June 2006, and a source of additional information via numerous email exchanges in July and August 2006). The information and ideas generously shared with me by each of these five persons were of immense importance for the present case study.

Since virtually every piece of information included in this article stems from one or another of the above-mentioned interviews or emails, and it would be burdensome for the reader if nearly every sentence had a footnote attached, I will simply state now in a blanket fashion that all factual claims had a reliable source and that the completed article was checked for possible errors by Maria Arndal, Lars Amby and Rune Lünell, to whom I am most grateful for this extra help.

A shot-by-shot reconstruction of the ad

Shot 1 (6 seconds)

The workman is brushing sawdust off a crookedly mounted kitchen counter when the woman of the house walks in.

WOMAN: I'm not satisfied with that.
WORKMAN: But... but it's new.

KVINDEN: Det der er jeg altså ikke tilfreds med.
HÅNDVÆRKER: Men... men det er jo nyt.

Shot 2 (3 seconds)

WOMAN (incredulous): Look... I can't put anything on it.

KVINDEN: Altså... Jeg kan ikke stille noget på det.

Shot 3 (5 seconds)

WORKMAN: Sure you can.

HÅNDVÆRKER: Jo, jo.

Shot 4 (3 seconds)

She is speechless.

Shot 5 (3 seconds)

She slams a water bottle on its side on the counter, and the bottle rolls down into the sink .

Shot 6 (6 seconds)

WORKMAN: Oh that. That's because the house is crooked.
WOMAN: Is...

HÅNDVÆRKER: Nå det der. Det er fordi huset er skævt.
KVINDEN : Er...

Shot 7 (2 seconds)

WOMAN: ...the house crooked?
WORKMAN (nodding): Yes.

KVINDEN: ..huset skævt?
HÅNDVÆRKER: Ja, ja.

Shot 8 (1 second)

The WORKMAN continues nodding, after which there is a brief fade-to-black, indicating the passage of time.

Shot 9 (2 seconds)

WOMAN (resigned): It was also supposed to be mahogony.

KVINDEN: Det skulle jo også have været mahogni.

Shot 10 (7 seconds)

The WORKMAN thinks for a while before answering, then finally replies.

WORKMAN: It will become mahogany in time.

HÅNDVÆRKER: Det bliver mahogni med tiden..

PACKSHOT (7 seconds) – the image varying from time to time

A still image rolls down over the screen, making the sound of a slamming door as it hits the bottom.

VOICE-OVER and WRITTEN TEXT: Kansas has its workmanship in order. The rest is up to you.

Kansas har sit håndværk i orden. Resten er op til dig.

Images and text reproduced with kind permission of M2 Film and Kwintet Kansas.

Changing the ending

When "Kitchen Counter" was first produced by M2 Film, it's ending was gradual and consisted of several highly overlapping phases. The tag-line "We also sell work-clothes to pros" ("*Vi sælger arbejdstøj også til proffer*") was silently superimposed over the image of the workman who had just promised that the counter would become mahogony in time, and from then until the end of the ad, the sound of his hand brushing sawdust off the counter was heard. A moment later the "Kansas" logo appeared on the corner of the screen, along with the workman and tag-line. Then the packshot silently appeared, with the Kansas logo remaining where it was previously, and the workman's voice-over was finally heard, saying "It just needs... a little oil" ("*Det skal bare have... lidt olie*.") When this version of the spot was tried out on test audiences, the point of the spot simply didn't come across.

THE ORIGINAL ENDING

	SPOKEN TEXT	OTHER SOUNDS	WRITTEN TEXT
	WORKMAN: It will become mahogoni in time. *HÅNDVÆRKER: Det bliver mahoni med tiden.*		
		Faint sounds of the workman brushing sawdust off the counter.	We also sell work-clothes to pros *Vi sælger også arbejdstøj til proffer*
			[The Kansas logo appears on screen as the above text persists.]
	WORKMAN (voice-over): It just needs... a little oil. *HÅNDVÆRKER: Det skal bare have ... lidt olie.*		Workman's trousers 474 Kansas logo

Images and text reproduced with kind permission of M2 Film and Kwintet Kansas.

In the final version of the spot, a clear demarcation is made between live-action and pack-shot, both visually and audibly. Once the workman has delivered his punch-line, "It will become mahogany in time," a pack-shot rolls down over the screen and makes the sound of a slamming door when it reaches the bottom, thereby closing the live-action definitively. A new end-title is now legible at the top of the screen and is also spoken in anonymous voice-over: "Kansas has its workmanship in order. The rest is up to you" ("*Kansas har sit håndværk i orden. Resten er op til dig*.") And the Kansas logo is integrated into the pack-shot, which varied from time to time, featuring a specific product foregrounded by the campaign at the time of broadcast.

THE DEFINITIVE ENDING

	SPOKEN TEXT	OTHER SOUNDS	WRITTEN TEXT
	WORKMAN: It will become mahogoni in time. *HÅNDVÆRKER: Det bliver mahoni med tiden.*		
		The pack shot – a still image – rolls down from the top of the screen and as it hits the bottom, makes the sound of a door slamming.	
 or alternate image	VOICE-OVER: Kansas has its workmanship in order. The rest is up to you. *Kansas har sit håndværk i orden. Resten er op til dig.*		Kansas has its workmanship in order. The rest is up to you. *Kansas har sit håndværk i orden. Resten er op til dig.* + Kansas logo

Images and text reproduced with kind permission of M2 Film and Kwintet Kansas.

In this way, the live-action portion of the ad is entirely closed when the packshot appears, and the viewer has only one thing to attend to at any given moment. The new tagline is both spoken and written, so that the words heard on the sound track – which now begin with the brand name Kansas – are identical to those appearing on screen. And

the new packshot also lasts seven seconds instead of the original five. All of these changes helped to transfer attention at the conclusion of the ad from the fiction to the *brand, thereby bringing home the point of the ad with greater clarity than in the previous version.*

Comparable changes were made in the endings of the three other spots as well.

Hacksaw, Bathroom and *Bricklayer*

In order to set *Kitchen Counter* in the context of the entire TV campaign to which it belongs, the three other commercials will now be summarized briefly. These synopses will subsequently provide a basis for comparing the ads and will help to identify some of the ways in which *Kitchen Counter* stands apart from the other commercials in the same campaign.

Hacksaw (Stiksav)

A workman has placed a plasterboard on a dining-room table, and while cutting the board with an electric hacksaw, he accidentally saws off the corner of the table. Just then, the woman homeowner enters the room and is appalled at what she sees. The worker picks up the sawed off corner of the table and holds it back in place; then noticing the customer's presence says to her, "Oops, that was a slip-up." She comes closer and is visibly horrified. The worker continues, with a reassuring smile: "But don't you worry. We'll just foam it back in place." After a brief fade-to-black, the scene resumes with the workman spraying a thick white foam between the severed corner and the tabletop, and he says "There, you can see it will be just like new" as she despondently looks at him.

Bathroom (Badeværelse)

Two workmen are taking a bathroom apart, one of them cutting into a metal pipe with an electric saw, the other one breaking up the tiles on the floor with a hammer and chisel. A woman arrives at the doorway and the man breaking up the floor tiles looks up and says "Hi" to her. The woman takes in the sight and after a moment's pause asks: "What are you doing in here?". The man replies with a smile: "It's your new bathroom", to which she answers: "Yes, but it was the one upstairs". The workman's smile fades and he repeats her word, "Upstairs". He and his co-worker exchange glances, after which he begins picking up pieces of broken tiles from the floor.

Bricklayer (Murer)

In the middle of a living room, a bricklayer wearing ear-protectors is shoveling cement from a large container on the coffee table and into a rotating cement-mixer. The owner of the home enters, looks around and calls out "Hello." The workman turns off the machine, pulls off his ear-protectors and says: "Yes?" The home-owner asks: "What are you doing in here?" to which the workman replies, "We have to work even if it's raining," and we can see through the window just behind him that rain is in fact pouring down outside. The homeowner asks: "What about all this?" looking at the sand and buckets strewn over the living-room floor and furniture. The bricklayer replies: "You know what? I can certainly work [in this mess]." He then turns the cement-mixer back on, replaces his ear-protectors and resumes shoveling cement.

Target groups and intended functions

The *apparent* purpose of this entire campaign was to motivate workmen to choose the Kansas brand when purchasing their workwear from retailers. And as already mentioned, workmen were in fact used in focus groups when concepts for the spots were developed, and later on as test audiences upon which the initial versions of the spots were tried out. The age bracket for this male target group was 19-50 according to the broadcast schedules for the campaign.

The *underlying* purpose of the campaign involved, however, a very different target group: distributors who, until then, did not include the Kansas brand in their selection. And largely as a result of this campaign, Kansas gained access to distribution channels that had not been open to the company previously, including for example a chain of stores selling building materials and that also retail work-clothes.

In the words of Maria Arndal, marketing chief at Kansas, and who was closely involved in all phases of the campaign:

> Our main purpose was to gain access to some distribution channels we were having difficulties with. And we succeeded in that afterwards. Whether it was solely because of the TV commercials, I think maybe not. It was probably more the whole package... But we call the TV spots an "alibi-campaign." We knew it was an investment that would not increase earnings in direct sales. But it was an investment in getting through to some potential partners we had not yet managed to reach. Then we gave Kansas a higher profile and in that way gained entry to some [distribution] channels.[3]

In making the Kansas brand more visible in the media landscape, this TV campaign naturally involved the general viewing public, as well as distributors and workmen, and for viewers not potentially consumers of work-clothes, the entertainment value of the television spots was primary.

[3] Interview on June 20, 2006.

Storytelling in *Kitchen Counter*

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

The live-action portion of *Kitchen Counter* can be seen as a series of three initiative-response figures, with the woman in the ad making each of the opening moves and the workman replying to her initiatives.

The first exchange begins with the woman's complaint: "I'm not satisfied with that," to which the workman replies by telling her something that is as irrelevant as it is obvious: "But it's brand new."

The second exchange focuses explicitly on the crookedness of the counter, and plays out in three stages, opening with the woman's "I can't put anything on it," to which the workman counters with a "Sure you can." The next stage begins with the woman slamming her water bottle on the counter, and the bottle's rolling down the incline into the kitchen sink. The workman's response to this irrefutable demonstration is that it's the house that is crooked. The final stage of this exchange consists of the woman's stunned questioning of the workman's claim: "Is the house crooked?" met by a confident nod and reply in the affirmative.

The third and final exchange focuses on the wrong wood used for the counter and begins with the woman's complaint: "It was also supposed to be mahogany." The workman's response, which comes after several beats of introspection, serves as the punch-line for the live-action portion of the spot: "It will become mahogany in time."

These three figures might be schematically represented as follows:

		WOMAN'S INITIATIVE	WORKMAN'S RESPONSE
Figure 1		I'm not satisfied with that.	But it's brand new.
Figure 2	a	I can't put anything on it.	Sure you can.
	b	[She slams her water bottle down on the counter; the bottle rolls into the sink.]	Oh that. That's because the house is crooked.
	c	Is the house crooked?	Yes.
Figure 3		It was also supposed to be mahogany.	It will become mahogany in time.

The workman's responses become progressively more ludicrous, as we advance from one figure to the next, and that very progression helps ensure that the viewer's engagement in the narrative doesn't peak too soon and peter out.

THE ROLE OF THE WOMAN CUSTOMER

Of the four ads in the campaign, *Kitchen Counter* is the one in which the customer plays the most energetic role. As emphasized above, she is the one who initiates each of the exchanges between her and the workman, beginning with the defining line of dialogue: "I'm not satisfied with that." In "Hacksaw," the customer hasn't a single line of dialogue to deliver and her entire role consists of looking despondent while the workman does some damage or useless repairs and all of the talking. The customers in *Bathroom* and *Bricklayer* can be situated somewhere in between *Kitchen Counter* and *Hacksaw* with regard to their degree of activity.

Furthermore, only the customer in *Kitchen Counter* is given a piece of physical action to perform: slamming her water bottle down on the inclined surface to demonstrate that it slants downward toward the sink. This decisive bit of physical action was not in the early scripts for the commercial, in which initially it was the workman who placed a lamp or coffee cup on a slanting surface and the customer merely witnessed the sliding of the object. In other words, it was as the script developed and took its final shape that the customer became more active.

The extent of this increasingly dynamic role for the customer can be gauged by comparing the final production with the following initial script by writers Rune Lünell and Lars Amby:

> A carpenter stands before some shelves he has mounted on a wall. They are very crooked.
> A lot of things are lying on the floor. The carpenter puts some of them on the shelves, carefully so they don't fall down.
> As the carpenter puts a lamp on the highest shelf, a woman comes through the door.
> The carpenter turns around. The lamp starts slowly sliding along the shelf behind him. It will soon fall on the floor. This is seen by the woman but not by the carpenter.
> The carpenter, beaming: Yes, it will be good to get these things off the floor.
> The lamp falls down and shatters.
> The woman can't believe her eyes.
> The carpenter looks from the lamp to the woman: Yeah, it wasn't that nice anyway.
> The woman looks at the shelves, disappointed. They are extremely crooked.
> The carpenter, arrogant: Yes, it must be a real pain living in an old house with a lopsided foundation.[4]

In this early script, the customer's role is limited to looking shocked and incredulous as in the *Hacksaw* commercial, and is a far cry from the demanding attitude she would eventually embody in Rune Lünell's later scripts for the spot.

A general principle applicable to short narratives of every kind – including the best short fiction films – is that characters who take initiatives and make things happen are more interesting to viewers than characters things happen to and who remain relatively inactive as the story unfolds rather than driving it forward. And a closely related principle is that much of the vitality of a short narrative derives from the interaction of characters.[5] The interaction between customer and workman is considerably more dynamic and engaging in *Kitchen Counter* than in any of the other TV spots in the campaign.

THE WORKMAN'S STATUS AND NATIONAL BACKGROUND

Within the implicit value system of *Kitchen Counter*, the workman's attempts at damage control in his dialogue with a dissatisfied customer have both a negative and a positive valence. His endeavors to save face and maintain the upper hand in this situation are both:

[4] This is the first of eight scripts for the spot, kindly provided by Rune Lünell. My translation from the Danish. All eight scripts will be found in Danish in an appendix to this article.

[5] For a discussion of these storytelling qualities in short fiction films, see the author's *Kortfilmen som fortælling* (Aarhus: Systime, 2001) or *The Art of the Short Fiction Film: A Shot-by-Shot Study of Nine Modern Classics* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2002).

a) ludicrous in that they are unfairly frustrating to the woman customer and clearly in conflict with reality – the counter *is* crooked and will never *become* mahogany;

and

b) irresistibly appealing in their off-the-wall resourcefulness – a quality further enhanced by the sheer likeability of the actor playing the workman role and the positive energy he radiates.

The actor playing this role, Saul Amaya, is from El Salvador, and although the role was not written with him in mind, once he was cast in the part because of his eminent ability to bring it to life, the production team and sponsor were very much aware that cultural differences in play between workman and customer would further enrich the spot by giving it yet another dimension.

This had also been the case in one of the original Swedish spots, in which a plumber apparently of Turkish origin wades around in a bathroom he has flooded, with water spraying in a high arc into the center of the room. He sympathetically tells his despondent customer that he won't charge her anything for this job and he suggests that she get legal aid, to which she agrees. The plumber's likeability as a person, generously taking the side of a customer on the verge of tears, is just as striking as the hopelessness of his work.

And although the carpenter's tactics in *Kitchen Counter* involve a denial of any wrong-doing and become progressively more far-fetched as the narrative advances, his very resourcefulness in dreaming up one absurd excuse after another is disarmingly appealing.

In both the Swedish and the Danish spots featuring workmen from other cultures, the *person* of the respective workman is a positive, likeable figure and the cultural differences in play are invested with a special charm. This was an important consideration for Kansas, for the writer, the producer and the director of *Kitchen Counter*, and for the

actor playing the carpenter role. Failing to appreciate fully the positive qualities of the role, one private citizen did however report Kansas to the police for having sponsored an ad denigrating foreigners, though no charges ever materialized. And as Maria Arndal pointed out, *not* giving Saul Amaya the role because of his national origins would in fact have been a discriminatory act.

The cultural differences implicitly in play in *Kitchen Counter* – largely through Saul Amaya's appearance, ample gestures and the warm and positive energy he radiates, none of which is particularly characteristic of Nordic workmen – are yet another factor distinguishing this commercial from the three others in the campaign.

THE PAUSE AND PUNCH-LINE

When the woman in the ad makes her final complaint – that the kitchen counter was supposed to be made of mahogany – some seconds go by as the workman tries to think up a suitable answer. Peder Pedersen, the director of the ad, considers this pause in the action one of the best aspects of the commercial:

> What I think works really well is that we can see Saul thinking. And that's something there isn't usually time for in a commercial because things have to move so quickly. But we insisted from the start that this film should have the length it needed. Typically in a TV spot you have 30 seconds to tell a story and also to show a product. And most of the stories we actually see in 30 seconds should have had more time, at least with regard to getting to know the characters and bringing them to life. And it works really well that we can see Saul thinking "OK, how do I answer this?" We can see his eyes wander… And that makes it all somehow more genuine…[6]

Similarly, producer Lars Amby described the pause as an "empty space" giving the viewer a chance to fill in what must be going on inside the character, and copywriter Rune Lünel saw it as an

[6] Interview on May 23, 2005.

opportunity for letting the situation become progressively more uncomfortable for the workman, while bringing us inside his mind.

In addition to establishing the inner experience of the workman, this pause also helps to set us up for the punch-line by making us wait for it, so that when it is finally delivered it has a maximum effect.

The ingenious punch-line – "It will become mahogany in time" ("*Det bliver mahogni med tiden*") – did not appear in any of the scripts. In a test or rehearsal version of the spot, filmed before the actual production was made on the set by the director, the workman simply nodded saying "Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah" in reply to the customer's complaint about the wrong wood being used. It was during the actual shoot that copywriter Rune Lünell suddenly thought up the new reply, which was not only more outrageous than the line originally planned but would also serve as a kind of handle for the ad, a memorable, self-contained punch-line that could be quoted to evoke the entire ad. In Maria Arndal's words: "It was also our wish to find a line of that kind that could stand by itself and be remembered. I think that also contributed to the power of the film."

TWO NARRATIVE MODES

The storytelling in *Kitchen Counter* involves a balancing of two divergent narrative modes, so that alternate, complementary perspectives are simultaneously in play.

What I mean by this is that the viewer can experience this spot as being both:

a) a "straight" enactment of a workman-customer encounter, showing how frustrating workmen can be;

and

b) a tongue-in-cheek parody of "workman stories," comically overfulfilling a negative stereotype by pushing it to new, outrageous limits in an effort to outdo all earlier accounts.

This doubleness is reminiscent of ways in which many Jewish jokes simultaneously transmit and make fun of particular ethnic stereotypes, such as that of the Jewish mother, by parodistically overfulfilling those stereotypes while perpetuating them in new accounts.[7]

All four ads in the Kansas campaign share this quality, involving an interplay of straight and parodistic modes of storytelling, so that the viewer is at one and the same time – and most particularly in the final moments of each commercial – both engaged in and comically distanced from the fiction at hand.

Concluding note

I have tried to show that among the qualities of *Kitchen Counter* that make this ad stand out from the others in the same campaign, are:

- a more active role for the customer and consequently more dynamic interaction between customer and workman;
- a more likeable workman, largely as a result of the positive energy radiated by the actor playing the part;
- cultural differences in play, thanks to Saul Amaya's non-Nordic origins;
- a pause that establishes the inner experience of the workman and paves the way for the punchline;
- an outrageous and memorable punchline that can stand alone and evoke the entire ad.

I have also suggested that one of the interesting features of all four ads in the campaign is that each of them can be understood as both: a) a story about how impossible workmen can be; and b) a parody of "workman stories."

[7] For a discussion of this subject, the reader is referred to the author's *Life Is Like a Glass of Tea: Studies of Classic Jewish Jokes* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1992).

APPENDIX. Scripts by Rune Lünell and Lars Amby

reproduced with their kind permission

1. Snedkerfilm – Røvsyg sætningsskade

En snedker står foran nogle hylder, som han har sat op på en væg. De hænger meget skævt.
Der står en masse ting på gulvet. Snedkeren er ved at sætte nogle af dem op på hylderne. Han stiller tingene omhyggeligt, så de ikke falder ned.
I det snedkeren sætter en lampe på øverste hylde, kommer en kvinde ind ad døren.
Snedkeren vender sig om. Lampen begynder langsomt at glide hen ad hylden bag ham. Den falder snart på gulvet. Det ser kvinden, men ikke snedkeren.

Snedkeren, glædesstrålende: Ja, det bli'r rart at få tingende væk fra gulvet.
Lampen falder ned og går i stykker.
Kvinden tror ikke sine egne øje.
Snedkeren, ser fra lampen til kvinden: Jah, den var heller ikke for køn.
Kvinden ser skuffet på hylderne: Det er jo helt vildt skævt
Snedkeren, arrogant: Ja, det må sgu være dødssygt at bo i et gammelt hus med alle de sætningsskader.

Pack-shot
Skilt: KANSAS – ikke kun for professionelle
Produktskud
Lyd at ting der falder ned af reolen.

2. Snedkerfilm – Sætningsskade

En snedker har monteret et nyt køkkenbord. Han står med en kop kaffe i hånden. Køkkenbordpladen er meget skæv, og hælder ned mod håndvasken.
En mand kommer ind ad døren. Han ser den skæve bordplade.

Manden er rystet: Den er jo skæv
Snedkeren: Det kan du selv være.
Snedkeren sætter sin kaffekop på køkkenbordet, tager sit waterpass og lægger det i værktøjskassen.
Kaffekoppen begynder at kure hen mod håndvasken.
Manden: Der kan du se
Snedkeren: Det der? Det er sgu da fordi huset har en sætningsskade. Så må du have fat i mureren. Men pas på, de kan godt tage røven på folk.
Snedkeren fortsætter med at pakke sit værktøj sammen.

Grafik: Det er ikke kun rigtige håndværkere, der bruger vores arbejdstøj.
Pack-Shot
Afmelding: KANSAS – Også til professionelle
Lyden af snedkeren der pakker sit værktøj.

3. Snedkerfilm – Sætningsskade

En snedker har monteret et nyt køkkenbord. Han står med en kop kaffe i hånden. Køkkenbordpladen er meget skæv, og hælder ned mod håndvasken.
En mand kommer ind ad døren. Han ser den skæve bordplade.

Manden: Den er jo skæv
Snedkeren: Nå, nå
Snedkeren siger ingenting. Han sætter sin kaffekop på køkkenbordet, tager sit waterpass og lægger det i værktøjskassen. Kaffekoppen begynder at kure hen mod håndvasken.
Manden: Se der!
Snedkeren: Det der? Det er fordi huset har en sætningsskade
Snedkeren pakker sit værktøj sammen
Snedkeren: Det må du snakke med mureren om.

Grafik: Det er ikke kun proffer, der bruger vores arbejdstøj.
Pack-Shot
Afmelding: KANSAS – Også til professionelle
Lyden af snedkeren der pakker sit værktøj.

4. Snedkerfilm – Sætningsskade

En snedker har monteret et nyt køkkenbord. Han står med en kop kaffe i hånden.
Køkkenbordpladen er meget skæv, og hælder ned mod håndvasken.
En mand kommer ind ad døren. Han ser den skæve bordplade.

Snedker: (løfter hilsende sin kaffekop) Hej
Manden er rystet: Det er jo skæv
Snedker: Nej det er lige som det skal være
Snedkeren sætter sin kaffekop på køkkenbordet, tager sit waterpas og lægger det i værktøjskassen.
Kaffekoppen begynder at kure hen mod håndvasken.
Manden: Jamen... (peger efter koppen).
Snedkeren: Det der? Det er fordi huset er skævt. Det må du lige have en murer til at kigge på.
Snedkeren fortsætter med at pakke sit værktøj sammen.

Grafik: Det er ikke kun proffer, der bruger vores arbejdstøj.
Pack-Shot
Afmelding: KANSAS – Også til professionelle
Lyden af snedkeren der pakker sit værktøj.

5. Snedkerfilm – Sætningsskade

En snedker har monteret et nyt køkkenbord. Han står med en kop kaffe i hånden.
Køkkenbordpladen er meget skæv, og hælder ned mod håndvasken.
En mand kommer ind ad døren. Han ser den skæve bordplade.

Snedker: (løfter hilsende sin kaffekop) Hej
Manden er rystet: Det er jo skæv
Snedker: Nej det er lige som det skal være
Snedkeren sætter sin kaffekop på køkkenbordet, tager sit waterpas og lægger det i værktøjskassen.
Kaffekoppen begynder at kure hen mod håndvasken.
Manden: Jamen... (peger efter koppen).
Snedkeren: Det der? Det er fordi huset er skævt. Det må du lige have en murer til at kigge på.
Manden: Det skulle jo også være en mahogniplade.
Snedkeren: Det' altså en toplaminat den her
Manden: Det skulle være mahogni
Snedkeren: Nu synes jeg ikke vi skal gå så'n i detaljer.
Snedkeren fortsætter med at pakke sit værktøj sammen.

Grafik: Det er ikke kun proffer, der bruger vores arbejdstøj.
Pack-Shot
Afmelding: KANSAS – Også til professionelle
Lyden af snedkeren der pakker sit værktøj.
Det skulle være mahogni / Ja ja det er godt med dig / Ja ja det sku' du også / Og den er skæv / det kan du selv være / rømmer sig / Ja

6. Snedkerfilm – Huset er skævt

En snedker har netop monteret et nyt køkkenbord. Han er ved at pakke sin værktøjskasse.
Bordpladen er meget skæv, og hælder ned mod håndvasken. En kvinde kommer ind ad døren.

Snedker: Peger glad på bord
Kvinden: Det her er jeg altså ikke tilfreds med.
Snedker: Hvad mener du?

Kvinden sætter en kaffekop på køkkenbordet. Den kurer hen mod håndvasken.
Snedker: Nå det der, jamen det er fordi huset er skævt. Det får vi lige en murer til at klare.
Kvinden: En murer?

Snedker: Ja, ja. Det kan han sagtens rette op på. Sådan noget der.
Sort
Kvinden: Det skulle jo også være en mahogniplade.
Snedker: Ja, nu skal vi jo ikke sådan gå i detaljer.

Grafik: Det er ikke kun proffer, der bruger vores arbejdstøj.
Pack-Shot
Afmelding: KANSAS – Også til professionelle
Lyden af snedkeren der pakker sit værktøj.

7. Snedkerfilm – Huset er skævt Saul Amaya/Tine Gravenborg Nielsen

En snedker har netop monteret et nyt køkkenbord. Han er ved at pakke sin værktøjskasse. Bordpladen er meget skæv, og hælder ned mod håndvasken. En kvinde kommer ind ad døren.

Kvinden: Det her er jeg altså ikke tilfreds med.
Kvinden sætter en kaffekop på køkkenbordet. Den kurer hen mod håndvasken.
Snedker: Nå det der, jamen det er fordi hus et er skævt.
Kvinden: Jamen jeg kan jo ikke stille noget på det.
Snedker: Jo, jo det er helt nyt. Det er ligesom med et par nye sko – av av – de skal lige gås til.
Kvinden: Det skulle jo også være mahogni.
Snedker: Ja, ja, ja.
Kvinden: Det er det jo ikke.
Snedker: Ja, ja, ja.

Pack-Shot
Afmelding: KANSAS – Også til professionelle
Lyden af snedkeren der pakker sit værktøj.

8. Snedkerfilm – Huset er skævt Saul Amaya/Tine Gravenborg Nielsen

En snedker har netop monteret et nyt køkkenbord. Han er ved at pakke sin værktøjskasse. Bordpladen er meget skæv, og hælder ned mod håndvasken. En kvinde kommer ind ad døren.

Kvinden: Det her er jeg altså ikke tilfreds med.
Snedker: Nå det der, jamen det er fordi huset er skævt.
Kvinden: Er huset skævt?
Snedker: Ja, ja
Kvinden: Jamen jeg kan jo ikke stille noget på det.
Snedker: Jo, jo det er helt nyt.
Kvinden: Det skulle jo også være mahogni.
Snedker: Ja, ja, ja.
Kvinden: Det er det jo ikke.
Snedker: Ja, ja, ja.

Pack-Shot
Afmelding: KANSAS – Også til professionelle
Lyden af snedkeren der pakker sit værktøj.

Storytelling and promotional properties of the Audi ad, *Tracks*

Richard Raskin

PRINCIPAL CREDITS

Client: Audi of America
Agency: McKinney
Art Director: Bob Ranew
Copywriter: Liz Paradise
Creative Director: Pat Burnham
Producer: Joni Madison
Director: Zack Snyder
Production Company: Believe Media - Los Angeles, CA
Editing Company: Crew Cuts
Editor: Clayton Hemmert
Music Company: Elias Arts - NY
Composer: Matt Fletcher

Running time: 30 and 60 seconds
Production: 1997

Introduction

Since the time I first saw this spot on Belgian TV in 1998, it has stood out for me as one of the most interesting commercials ever made. In the present article, I would like to look primarily at the ways in which it positions the product within the narrative, and to examine some of the qualities that may help to account for the richness and effectiveness of its storytelling.

At least three variants of the ad are currently accessible on the web, and what I propose to do at the start of this study is to reconstruct shot-by-shot the simplest – and in my view the best – of these versions, after which the differences found in the other two variants will be described with regard to their endings.

I am grateful to Janet Northen at McKinney-Silver for providing stills and the original presentation copy, for granting permission to reproduce these materials and for replying to a number of questions; to Patrick Hespen at Audi of America for further permission to reproduce the images; and to Esben Horn at Motionblur for permission to reproduce a still from *German Coast Guard*.

A shot-by-shot reconstruction of TRACKS

Version 1 – 30 seconds, 19 live-action shots

In this version, the live-action is devoted entirely to the grandfather and grandson. There are no shots of an Audi Quattro speeding through the snow. This version can currently be accessed at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swxa00zDY9E and http://www.stiriauto.ro/files/fun/1_31_PUB_AUDI_quattro_eskimo.mov

Shot 1
Two tiny figures are barely discernible in a windswept, Artic landscape.

Shot 2
One of them is now seen to be an Inuit elder, looking out over the snow.

Shot 3
The two figures seen from above. They will soon be understood to be grandfather and grandson.

Shot 4
An animal's paw-print in the snow.

Shot 5
The grandson looks down at the animal track, then looks up expectantly.

Shot 6
GRANDFATHER: Amarug.
Subtitle: Wolf.

Shot 7
They move on through the snow.

Shot 8
The grandfather points at something.

Shot 9
Larger animal tracks in the snow.

Shot 10
GRANDFATHER: Nanuk.
Subtitle: Bear.

Shot 11
Again they move on.

Shot 12
.

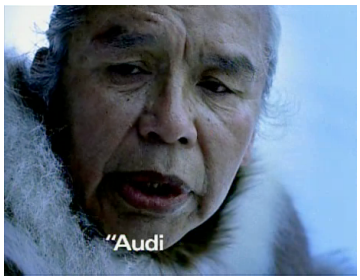
Shot 13
The grandfather kneels down to look at tire tracks in the snow.

Shot 14
He picks up some of the snow from the tire track.

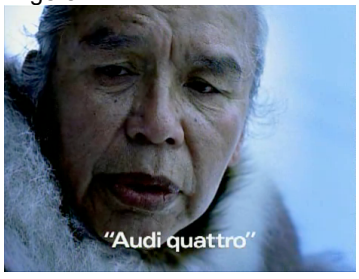
Shot 15
He narrows his eyes, studying the snow.

Shot 16
He crunches the snow between his fingers.

Shot 17
Grandfather faces grandson.



Shot 18
GRANDFATHER: Audi…



Shot 18 (continued)
GRANDFATHER [After a beat]:…quattro

Shot 19
The grandson listens and solemnly nods. Dissolve.

End-title and logo.

All stills used with kind permission of McKinney-Silver and Audi of America.

Version 2 - 30 seconds, 26 live-action shots

Identical to Version 1 up to and including shot 15. But in place of shots 16 and 17, there are nine rapidly cut shots (some from the p.o.v. of an unseen driver) evoking an Audi Quattro "kicking up a huge tail of spray" as it speeds through the snow and finally passing between two signs on which "quattro" is written and then braking to a halt, with a chrome strip bearing the name "quattro" clearly visible. *Then* the grandfather says "Audi… Quattro" and the grandson nods. This version can currently be accessed at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2qI6mFk_6OA&mode


Shot 15


Shot 16

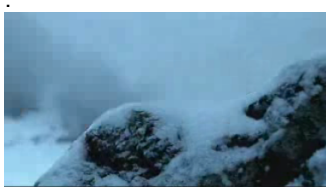

Shot 17

.


Shot 18

.


Shot 19


Shot 20

.


Shot 21

Shot 22


Shot 23

Shot 24

Shot 25

Shot 26

Stills used with kind permission of McKinney-Silver and Audi of America.

Version 3 (60 seconds) – 36 live-action shots

Here there are three sets of animal tracks instead of two: bear, caribou and wolf, as well as additional shots of the two characters throughout the spot. For example, the grandfather removes his gloves before reaching for some of the tire track snow. And *after* the grandfather says "Audi… Quattro," the grandson doesn't nod but rather turns his head toward our left, and we see seven rapidly cut shots of an Audi Quattro speeding through the snow. A voice-over accompanies the final shots. This version can currently be accessed at: http://www.believemedia.com/flash.html where the following options should be chosen: "directors," "Zack Snyder," and "Audi Tracks."

Shot 28
GRANDFATHER: Audi… Quattro.

Shot 29
The grandson listens, then turns his head toward our left, looking at something off-camera.

Shot 30

Shot 31

Shot 32

Shot 33

Shot 34

Shot 35

Shot 36

VOICE-OVER: The all-wheel drive… …Audi Quattro… track one down at an Audi dealer near you.

Stills used with kind permission of McKinney-Silver and Audi of America.

Overview of the endings in the three versions of the spot

Version 1 (30 sec.)	• grandfather studies snow from tire track • turns to grandson and says "Audi… quattro" • grandson solemnly nods
Version 2 (30 sec.)	• grandfather studies snow from tire track • an Audi Quattro speeds through the snow • grandfather says "Audi… quattro" • grandson solemnly nods
Version 3 (60 sec.)	• grandfather studies snow from tire track • turns to grandson and says "Audi… quattro" • grandson turns to look at something off-camera • an Audi Quattro speeds through the snow; voice-over

McKINNEY & SILVER

333 FAYETTEVILLE STREET MALL, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA 27601 (919) 828-0691

Presentation Copy

		As Produced	Date
Client:	Audi		
Job No:	C5R127ANB71000LP	Nice Shoes	6/27/97
Date:	October 13, 1997		
Description:	TRACKS: :60		

WVAD 6703/ Agency Version

VIDEO:	(GRANDFATHER AND GRANDSON ESKIMO ARE OUT ON WILDERNESS WALK IN THE SNOW. WHEN THEY SPEAK, IT'S IN ESKIMO, SO WE HAVE SUBTITLES. THEY COME ALONG ANIMAL TRACKS IN THE SNOW AND POINT AT THEM.)
SFX:	(WIND, CRUNCHING OF SNOW, DISTANT DRUMS AND PIPE.)
GFATHER:	Nanuk (Eskimo for bear)
SUBTITLE:	"Bear"
GFATHER:	Tuttu (Eskimo for Caribou)
SUBTITLE:	"Caribou"
GFATHER:	Amarug (Eskimo for wolf)
SUBTITLE:	"Wolf"
VIDEO:	(GRANDSON VERY PUZZLED. GRANDFATHER REACHES DOWN AND TOUCHES TRACKS.)
GFATHER:	Audi quattro
SUBTITLE:	Audi quattro
VIDEO:	(CUT TO A4 FLYING THROUGH SNOW KICKING UP A HUGE TAIL SPRAY.)
VO:	The all-wheel drive Audi quattro...track one down at an Audi dealer near you.
SUPER:	(Rings) Audi (official logotype)

Presentation copy, reproduced here with the kind permission of McKinney-Silver.

Positioning the product in relation to the narrative

TV commercials that make the most of storytelling possibilities and offer a memorable degree of narrative pleasure to the viewer, might be divided into two relatively distinct groups.

There are those in which the live-action reaches its climax without any explicit allusion to the product to be promoted. In such cases, the narrative is intended to engage the viewer's interest as a means for enhancing his or her *subsequent* receptivity to the specifically promotional component that will follow in the form of a pack-shot, end-titles, voice-over, and/or logo. And in order to fulfill this purpose, the narrative typically dramatizes a situation that sets in sharp relief a need for or the assets of the product or service.

An excellent example of a spot of this kind is the immensely popular *German Coast Guard* ad for Berlitz (2006),[1] more than 300 specimens of which have been uploaded at YouTube. In this 40-second ad, a new recruit is seated at a Coast Guard radio transmitter, when an emergency call comes in: "Mayday, mayday. Hello, can you hear us? Can you hear us? Over. We are sinking. We are sinking." The inexperienced young man, visibly taken aback by the call, slowly speaks into the microphone, saying in a thick German accent: "Hello. This is the German Coast Guard." The now more desperate voice on the radio repeats: "We are sinking! We're sinking!" The recruit then asks: "What are you sinking about?" A sudden burst of Beethoven's *Freude Schöner Götterfunken* accompanies an end-title now urging: "Improve your English," followed by a title bearing the Berlitz logo and the words

[1] Agency: BTS United Oslo. Copywriter: Pål Sparre Enger. AD: Thorbjørn Naug. Production Company: Motion Blur. Directors: Nic Osborn and Sune Maroni. Producer: Espen Horn. Post-production: Chimney/Bates Red Cell Oslo.

"Language for life."[2] Here the live-action portion of the spot, which could be enjoyed as a self-contained story in its own right, includes no mention of Berlitz and the explicitly promotional portion of the ad, confined to the end-titles and lying entirely outside the fiction, might be described as *extra-diegetic*. When this is the case, the narrative can be recounted by enthusiastic viewers of the ad without their ever mentioning the brand. This is not however a criticism of the spot but simply an observation regarding the positioning of the brand itself outside the fiction. And one argument in favor of this practice might be that withholding the transparently promotional component of the spot until after the live-action has reached completion, maximizes the likelihood that the viewer will not lose interest in the ad before it has delivered its payload.

Used with kind permission of Motionblur.

With ads of a second type, the brand is integrated into the live-action. If this is done unimaginatively, and especially if it is transparent from the start that a selling mode is in play, there is a significant risk that the viewer will withdraw his or her attention from the spot once it is recognized as merely a commercial.

But version 1 of the Audi ad is a special case in that the brand – which becomes an integral part of the narrative through the grandfather's final utterance – is evoked by name in a way that does

[2] A second and in my view far less amusing variant of the spot can currently be accessed at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_0JxZ2zIluU Here it is the supervisor, showing off to the new recruit, who misunderstands the mayday message.

not come across as a promotional pitch. In this respect, the brand is positioned within the story in an optimal manner, in that much of the narrative pleasure afforded to the viewer springs from the very utterance of the product's name, and it would be impossible to recount the narrative without mentioning the brand and model. The branding in play can therefore be described as *intra-diegetic*, but with an evocation of the product in a narratively pleasurable rather than promotional mode.

This important qualification is what distinguishes version 1 from the other two variants of the ad, both of which include product shots in their live action, as though the magic in the grandfather's utterance and of the grandson's solemn nod were not unbeatable in their ascription of a radiant status to the product in the viewer's eyes. The rapidly cut shots of the car speeding through the snow in versions 2 and 3 not only intrude upon and detract from the narrative focus of the fiction (the interaction of grandfather and grandson), but paradoxically may also weaken the promotional value of the spot by making the narrative itself too transparently promotional. Though I have no empirical data to support that claim, it is an important one to keep in mind because the point is not to allow narrative values to take precedence over the marketing effectiveness of an ad,[2] but rather to let the narrative do its job in the service of the product. Here, as in so many other contexts, less is more.

Another way in which the product is positioned within the narrative concerns its pretended assimilation into Inuit culture and into the world of nature.

[2] According to Sergio Zyman, this is what happens all too often, when advertising agencies become more interested in winning prizes for their ads than in helping to sell their clients' products. Though I believe he overstates his case and paints an unfair picture of advertising agencies, his provocative book is nevertheless well worth reading: *The End of Advertising as We Know It* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2004).

That Inuit culture is portrayed respectfully in this ad is obvious, particularly when *Tracks* is compared to a recent spot in which an Inuit who is distractedly driving his dogsled alongside a Land Rover falls off the sled when it hits a snowdrift and then goes chasing after the runaway sled.[3] According to *Brand Republic*, seventy-one TV viewers filed complaints with the Advertising Standards Authority in the U.K. claiming that the ad was "racist and denigrated Inuit culture" and sixty further complained that "the ad showed behavior that was harmful to the environment."[4] Although these complaints were all rejected by the Advertising Standards Authority, it is clear that this ad makes a representative of Inuit culture the butt of a joke and implicitly suggests that the Inuit dogsled is ridiculously inferior to the modern automotive technology embodied by the Land Rover.

Although one commentator found *Tracks* offensive,[5] the grandfather and grandson are depicted in this spot in an unmistakably positive light and with all the quiet dignity one could wish for in an enactment of this kind. And just as that culture is portrayed in a flattering perspective, the pretended assimilation of the product into that culture's lore becomes a glowing asset within the framework of the narrative – also in that the grandfather, who speaks an Inuit language when identifying the various animal tracks in the snow, flawlessly pronounces "Audi… Quattro" when examining the tire tracks.

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[3] This ad can currently be accessed at
http://www.ephinx.com/tvadverts/267/landrover-eskimo-advert.html

[4] Daniel Farey-Jones, "Land Rover steers into minefield of racism complaints," 8 March 2006. http://www.brandrepublic.com/bulletins/br/article/545241/land-rover-steers-minefield-racism-complaints/

[5] Jane George, "German car ad mangles Inuit culture." *Nunatsiac News*, 15 February 2002. http://www.nunatsiaq.com/archives/nunavut020215/news/nunavut/20215_6.html The author of that article objected to the pronunciation of the animal names in the spot, with the vowels incorrectly elongated ("nan-o-o-o-o-k," "amar-o-o-o-k"), and to the characters' wearing of snow shoes. A letter from John MacDonald replying to some of those objections appeared in a subsequent issue of *Nunatsiac News* and can be accessed at
http://www.nunatsiaq.com/archives/nunavut020301/news/editorial/letters.html

Furthermore, positioning the product as belonging in some way to a series including the wolf and bear suggests that the car is like a wild animal, which in turn is an asset both in that it is given the aura of something powerful and untamed (and therefore desirable to possess) and also in its playfully defining the car as a part of nature rather than an offending intruder into the natural environment. This of course is truer of Version 1 than of the other two variants in which the noisy and snow-spewing car does in fact come across as more of an intruder into the otherwise peaceful landscape.

2. Polarity and seriality as structuring principles

The shorter the narrative, the more useful it can be to give it structure by means of polar opposites that can be established almost instantaneously.

In *Tracks*, the grandfather and grandson form a cluster of binary oppositions such as age vs. youth, big vs. little, knowing vs. not knowing, initiating vs. responding.

There are also polarities in play with respect to distance and proximity, in that the two figures are at times little more than dots in the landscape but fill the entire screen at other moments. This alternation can also be seen as a moving back and forth between vastness and intimacy, or wilderness and family bonds.

Yet another kind of polarity was pointed out by Liz Paradise, the copywriter of the ad, when she wrote:

> There's also a great juxtaposition between the weightiness /gravitas of the landscape with wise elder, and the apparent humor in the end.[6]

The solemnity with which the grandfather makes his final utterance and the grandson takes it in, are integral parts of an elaborate joke they are enacting for our benefit – the actors having to keep a straight

[6] Transmitted in an email from Janet Northen at McKinney on February 7, 2007.

face while undoubtedly aware that this final plot-point will amuse and delight the viewer.

Seriality is also a familiar feature of fairly tales, fables and jokes, in which – for example – there may be porridge that is either too hot, too cold, or just right; or houses made of straw, sticks and bricks; or three deeds to be accomplished in order to win the hand of a princess; or visits of the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come; or a priest, minister and rabbi, who in turn deliver their lines about a situation at hand.

Seriality as a structuring principle is very much in play in the Audi ad in which the first two (or three) sets of tracks establish a pattern: in each case and for the benefit of the grandson, the grandfather effortlessly names the animal that left its paw-prints in the snow. The framework for these on-going interactions has been aptly described by Janet Northen as a mentoring relationship.[5] And as is the case with seriality in any storytelling situation, the initial items in the series establish a narratively pleasurable pattern that the final item completes, often with some unexpected deviation that both heightens enjoyment and caps the series, implicitly marking closure. As part of the set-up in the Audi ad, a traffic sign (in shot 12) opens the way for the final set of tracks though without revealing too much, and the grandfather's need to feel and intently study those tracks before announcing their origin, further sets this final bit of mentoring apart from the earlier ones. With the scene now fully set, the live-action in Version 1 of the ad reaches completion in three successive beats: 1) the grandfather's utterance of the brand name "Audi"; 2) his further specifying "Quattro" (like a wine taster who having identified the

grape then nails down the château and vintage); 3) the grandson's responsive nod.

And as already pointed out above, in likening the brand and model to a wild animal and in playfully integrating it into the world of Inuit lore by means of its positioning in this series, the ad invests the product with qualities enhancing its desirability in the eyes of the viewer.

In Versions 2 and 3, the product shots play against the seriality unnecessarily and detract from the coherence and closure of an otherwise beautifully orchestrated narrative.

Summary

The Audi *Tracks* ad:

- not only positions the product *within* the narrative but also brilliantly makes the very utterance of the brand name and model the dramatic climax of the story;
- assimilates the product into a positively portrayed Inuit culture and into the world of nature;
- uses polarities (such as age vs. youth, distance vs. proximity, gravitas vs. humor) and seriality (wolf, bear, Audi Quattro) as structuring principles, shaping and deepening the viewer's involvement in the narrative, and helping to ascribe positive characteristics to the product.

I have further argued that Variant 1 (containing no shots of the car speeding through the snow) is the best of the three versions of the ad in that the grandfather's final utterance is an ultimate and unbeatable moment investing the product with a glowing status in the viewer's eyes, while the shots of the car

- detract from the coherence of the narrative;
- weaken the case for seeing the car as a part of rather than an intruder into the natural environment;
- dilute the promotional impact of the spot by too transparently *selling* the product instead of letting the story work its magic in a more subtle and effective manner.

Web-based commentaries on the Audi Quattro spot

George, Jane. German car ad mangles Inuit culture. *Nunatsiac News*, 15 Feb. 2002.
http://www.nunatsiaq.com/archives/nunavut020215/news/nunavut/20215_6.html

MacDonald, John. "Inuit in wooded regions wore snowshoes." *Nunatsiac News.*
Letter dated 1 March 2002.
http://www.nunatsiaq.com/archives/nunavut020301/news/editorial/letters.html

Weigand, Andrea-Verena. "Vergleich der Erfolgsfaktoren von emotionalen Werbebotschaften in Deutschland und Italien." HOCHSCHULE MITTWEIDA (FH) , UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES Fachbereich Medien, 2006.
http://www.buena-la-vista.de/pdf/diplomarbeit_weigand.pdf

"Audi quattro - Spuren im Schnee. Erfahrungsberichte. Die Sorge um den kleinen Eskimo." http://www.ciao.de/Audi_quattro_Spuren_im_Schnee__Test_1491538

"The quattro's emotive appeal." 1 May 2005. *AudiWorld.*
http://www.audiworld.com/news/05/25quattro/content4.shtml

"Networked creativity. AudiAgencyNetwork." 12 November 2002. *AudiWorld*.
http://www.audiworld.com/news/02/111102/content2.shtml

UNDRESSING MY MOTHER
Ireland, 2004, 6 minutes, documentary

Director: Ken Wardrop.
Editor: Andrew Freedman.
Director of Photography: Michael Lavelle
Camera Operator: Kate McCullough
Post Sound: Ruth Treacy
Producer: Kristin Brook Larsen
Production company: Venom Film

Awards include: Selection for the International Critics Week at Cannes, 2005; Best Documentary, Tampere Film Festival, 2005, Prix UIP Award, 2005, Best Short Film, Lisbon Int'l Film Festival, 2005; Best Short Film, Irish Film & Television Awards, 2004; Jameson Best Irish Short, Cork Film Festival, 2004; Best Short Documentary, Galway Film Festival, 2004

The film can currently be accessed, though with its original rather than its definitive ending, at: http://www.atomfilms.com/film/undressing.jsp?channelKeyword=channel_documentaries

Ken Wardrop's other films include: *Bongo Bong* (2006), *Ouch!* (2004), *Useless Dog* (2004) and *Love Is Like a Butterfly* (2004).

An interview with Ken Wardrop on *Undressing My Mother*

Isabelle Meerstein

Do you have someone you trust to discuss your ideas with?

With a short, you show it to your friends or your family and then you show it in film festivals, but at that stage, obviously, the editing is finished, it's beyond your grasp. You never get a chance to show it to an audience (as is the case for a feature with a so-called sample audience) and perhaps change your film as a response to what people have told you and how they reacted. My friends won't want to hurt my feelings, and they'll say that it's good when they don't think it is.

Don't real friends tell you what they think?

Real friends do…Well, yes!... In that case, I'm lacking real friends! Andrew Freedman, he is *the* one person I can rely on. But then, Andrew asks other people [their opinions about my films] and then he feeds me with that kind of information, so that's good, too.

During my four years at the Irish National Film School in Dun Laoghaire, I directed six films and co-directed one with Andrew. I have to say that every film is as much his as he has produced and edited seven films, so it has been a massive part of the whole thing.

Here is a telling story about how we took out part of the last shot of *Undressing My Mother*.

We were at the Hamburg Film Festival. After the screening, there was a questions and answers session. People started to debate the issue about the last shot: some said it was fantastic. Others said it was not needed!

The ending was then like this:

My mother puts back on her clothes and walks out of the room. She has this moment and she looks back and the camera reveals the whole crew. It was done very poetically, very sensitively, it was not done "in your face" as if saying something like: "Now, I break the mould, here!" But for some people, that was too much, they would explain: "I didn't want to know that, I wanted it to be left there and have my thoughts as the credits roll and think about what I've just seen!"

I thought: "Oh, let's just get rid of it so that the controversy, the argument has no chance to exist!" I didn't care to keep that ending because for me the question was: "How am I going to have the biggest impact with this film?" By impact, I mean the emotional impact on the audience.

Well, after that cut was made, nobody has ever objected to the ending, no one has ever said: "Well, I would have liked to see more." That was my decision as a film-maker. I love to get to that part of filmmaking, that stage of *not* being precious. When you are editing, you are so bloody precious, and you can't see things! So you leave them to rest for a month and you come back and you think: "Oh, my God! What the hell was I doing?!"

And this same thing has just happened to me on a project I was doing for Channel Four's 'Three Minute Wonders' [broadcast in late January 2007]. I had done the interview and then I went straight into editing for the next two days (that is a constraint when working for Channel Four). I didn't have the space [to think], I was still very emotional. That film is about a guy who was paralysed at the age of 25 and all he has now to connect himself with his girlfriend is his kissing. I cried

after the editing because I had an emotional connection with this guy and I wish I could do something for him; I felt for him. But it doesn't come across in the film. I'm sure I could have a stronger piece! I think he wouldn't have had a problem if I had taken the film further. I was too emotionally connected.

What is your relationship to or with reality?

Oh, with reality? As a film-maker, I enjoy twisting reality. As a documentary film-maker, I think we all twist reality. I think we propose a reality that suits our films. I mean we hope to put across an unbiased opinion thing. To be honest, I have never made a documentary that had a bias to it. My films are very simple…

The essential thing that struck me about the three minute-long documentary I have just finished was that it was a false reality. That young man – and this is something true because he will read this – told me about the beauty of the kiss and what it meant to him. But the reality behind the story is that he would really say this: "This is fucking horrendously bad! I am 25 years of age, I broke my neck and all I have is kissing. I want to feel a woman's breasts, I want, you know… I want sex!"

So that *was* the reality behind the story.
But I created a false reality for the sake of him and of his brother. And that really upsets me! It's not the type of thing I want to be doing! And I suppose that with *Undressing My Mother*, it's sort of the same, in a sense. Only that my family believes that the story with my Mum *is* honest.

Two years after *Undressing My Mother* was finished, my sister said to me: "This is not reality, Ken!" And I am like: "What window are you looking through? Because I believe (and my mother was present during this argument) that this is how Mother feels about her body." My sister, in her 40's, could not believe that Mother has this sense of happiness. Well, she is a woman, she is her mother's daughter, whereas I am her son so I can see it differently. I see that if my Mum was *that* bothered about the size or shape of her body, she would be able to do something to change it. But she is happy. She is happy because her husband was sexually happy with a larger body and this is what made her happy. I am not stringing anybody along with that story, I am not pretending because it is exactly what my mother gave me and that's what I *believe* to be the fact. Because I asked every

question. I had a six hour-talk with my Mum to get this five-minute film! [Ken's mother, Ethel's voice is heard as a voice-over in the film].
How did you approach your mother to get this long conversation?

Initially it was a joke. I said: "Look, I'm doing this graduate film, I'd love to have this bohemian mother who is into the arts and watches movies." She is a country woman, you know, she was laughing and said:"You know, Ken, I could be!" And then, I asked her: "I'm thinking of doing this project – we were laughing over a glass of wine – Would you go naked for me? Because I love your modesty."

She's always been very open with her body around her sons, she never locked the toilet-door. I was always aware of my Mum's physicality. Of her breasts. It was never a shock if I walked in and she was naked. There might have been this little giggle. She is a very cuddly, affectionate, bosomy person. I just said to her: "I just think it would be lovely if I could explore this. The fact that you feel that way." And obviously my Dad passing away the year before, I said to her: "We could explore this together, maybe discover things." And so it was a very combined effort. We talked.

And in the end, I got a slightly different film than I had anticipated because I had thought we would go more towards specific parts of her body. And here we were, talking about how she felt since my Dad had gone! And about her whole sexuality! We explored loads of areas. My Mum is such a rich person who gives so much, and there is a real honesty in her being! She's been through a lot of tough times, simple tough times, but tough to her because she is an emotional character and sees great things in silly things. She had a very bad trauma when she was a child. She has a great outlook on life because her childhood was so bad, and then, as a woman, she got lucky because she met a man she loved. Then everything improved in her life, it went all rosy.

So she didn't enjoy love in her childhood, perhaps, but when she found your father, she found a nurturing love?

It was a nourishment. Something that clicked. They were childhood sweet-hearts: they met when they were 14, so it was one of those huge bonds! She was married at 17. She's never known any other man but she's been very happy.

The reason I'm saying all this is that I could have taken this documentary in so many other ways!

When I was making the film, I also saw this as a great opportunity to have six precious hours recorded with my Mum's voice and story. That was a major part of me doing this film because I was grieving the loss of my Dad. I had nothing left from him. All I had were photographs…And I thought to myself: "Now I am a film-maker, what a great thing to have, this ability to record the people you love! And I am not going to waste this, I'm going to do it!" In these six hours there is a lot of rambling, all right, and I knew it'd have to be. But I also knew that out of all that would come great moments! So we went from her childhood all the way up and we had a great chat. These six hours, I will treasure them for the rest of my life! Behind these six hours, there was my thought-process of getting my Mum onto tape, to have for the rest of my life! We don't collect memories enough, you know! Well, I don't. The reality of it is that as a filmmaker, you need to be more aware of those around you. You forget.

How do you define reality, then? This has yet to be clarified, perhaps…

Reality is the truth. The great thing about the truth is like an honesty. It comes across in film-making and it's pretty straight-forward. You can watch a film and you know this is absolute genuine stuff and it's not through my editing process or whatever. It's genuine sitting and seeing. We can all create stories and mow them to suit ourselves. But honesty is a different thing. It's very hard to cut around that. So reality for me is…If we take the story about the kissing gentleman, I can cut that film into something that is evocative and adds meaning. But the truth is that this was never there! So, it is not a strong film because *I never asked the honest question* behind it! Why? Because I was too scared. The representation of reality, it's the toughest question to ask a documentary film-maker, isn't it?You can say that it's all a pack of lies as soon as you start to edit something. But I strongly believe that truth comes through.

Now, as a film-maker, I have evidence of both: with my Mum's film, I have the truth. And with the kiss film, I know it is not a representation of the truth, because the truth is a place I couldn't go to, because of that question I didn't ask**.**

How did you prepare* Undressing My Mother*? Did you write a script?

I had these six hours of my Mum's voice. I had a vague idea on how to stucture all that. I knew what the opening shot would be. I knew the film would open with a song for my Mum because that first shot

would have a little bit of her body in it. And I knew what the ending would be, I knew it would have the pan across her body with the moving light. Those pictures came from the voice-over. But for most of the shots, I didn't know exactly, so it was quite a tough editing. I stepped back and I had to make sure it would not be made in bad taste. Nobody would have seen the film if it had had bad visuals. I got very lucky on all the levels because when you are in college you are working with very little money, you know you can't do much with sound. The cinematographer did a great job because he got it right. There are no special effects done in post-production, We knew we wanted it to fall to black. We knew the space we would be filming in: the attic of the farmhouse where I grew up! It felt perfectly right to shoot the film in my Mum's attic, because, you know, we speak of "the attic of the soul."

In shot No 14, we see your Mother's body partly reflected in a vertical mirror. There is a chair by a window. What we see of the room shows signs of dereliction.

I didn't mean it to be a metaphor. I thought the attic would fit the drama, it would be a dramatic space. I guess, in a sense I knew it would suit the ageing body of my mother. But I did merge it with contemporary stuff.

We shot, and two days later, I was in the edit. I had to go away. I was thinking: "Oh, my God, I can't see my mother like this!" It was a big moment in a son's life to tell your mother: "Ok, Mum, now drop your pants!"

Can you tell me about the shooting crew and experience?

It was a four day shoot. The crew was amazing, they all bonded. There were four of us. The chap who was the cinematographer, we actually went to secondary school together!

Michael Lavelle?

Yes, Michael. He lived with me in London and went home to study at the Irish Film School. At that time, I was not interested at all in film. It's bizarre, then, that he ended up shooting my film.
There was also Kristin [Brook-Larsen], producer and sound person (she was the reason why I was making films). And Kate [McCullough], the other cinematographer, who is lovely and would have met Mum while I was in college.

Kristin's boyfriend was on holidays, he was training to be a doctor. But he also had been a chef. So he cooked amazing food for all of us. My Mum could not wait for lunch, it was great!

[On arrival.] we were all a bit like: "Ooh, ah, er". She was like: "Oh, here we go!"; matter-of-fact. After two minutes, everybody felt relaxed because my Mum made fun of it, she lightened it. And then, she fell asleep. She started snoring. We all started laughing. And we did the whole "front" of my Mum's body. But it wasn't right [for her dignity] so we didn't use it in the edit.

You must have been told hundreds of times that the film is never voyeuristic, always respectful…

It all comes from the fact that my Mum throws light on the situation, and that's the power of the edit.

In the film, we go from behind the screen [shot 1] to immediately the feet shot [shot 2]. And then it goes straight into the body shots where she expresses everything. It gets everything out of the way. And my Mum makes fun of, she has a joke. People are laughing with her as opposed to laughing at her. We can relax with her (…) All the shots are connected [through] the voice-over, but you can see how she walks. We can see how she walks. It's kind of [her saying]: "Oh, God, I'd better get over there!" It's her natural way of living. When she says:"I've got a big bottom", she laughs with it. It's my Mum's ability to out-laugh things. We were very fortunate she gave it to us. If she was not like that, we wouldn't have been able to make the film.(…) That film is only as good as my mother was going to be as a character. My Mum and I are very close.

What does bring up your interest in a character?

As a film-maker, I'm always interested in hearing people talking, telling their stories. A lot of Irish play a game. They have a sense of story-telling anyway, but not all of them have an honest approach to their stories. What interests me is to hear an honest voice. There are film-makers [here in Ireland] who can't get the truth because people don't want to share the truth, they are afraid of what people [relatives and acquaintances, neighbours] will think. In Ireland, people are too connected with one another. It seems to me that the film culture in Denmark is honest: that Dogma-touch.

I'm more interested in human stories of realities that are alive. And for that to happen, I got to be connected with the character. By connected, I mean just at a simple level, there is a bond between us, I have something to share with them, you know, I am interested in their story and they are interested in me and we can share in this experience.

If your mother had not been so generous, you wouldn't have had any film, would you?

Absolutely! when we were talking about the possibility to make a film, she asked me: "Would it help you?" I said: "Yes, greatly!" And she said: "Well, let's do it, then, if it will help you. I'll do it." I don't think she realised then what it meant. And afterwards, it helped her. I got a lot of awards, but that's not the point. It's helped her because she's done this. She did it for herself, too! There are not many people in her position in life, as a farmer's wife I mean, who have done something like that! She has a problem showing the film to her friends. She'd say they would not understand. And I'd say: "But that's not the point! *You* did it, and now you are really proud." I know she is proud of it, I know it! It helped her! The conversations brought things up. People were willing to ask her things about my Dad. It opened things up, I think, in our family. For my younger brother, it was a lesson. Initially it was good for me, yes. It did help me.

[Once the film was edited] I showed it to her. I was confident it was good enough for everybody to see. She agreed. [The only public screening she went to] was the Cork Film Festival 2004.

I went to consult the Cork Film Festival website on which the names of the selected films are listed. You know, it's a big day for the NFS' students to check if their films have been chosen to be in the Cork Film Festival because it is [in Ireland] our première short film festival and we all aspire to get our films shown in there. And I got very excited: not only had I one, but all seven films had been selected! That was so exciting for me and my colleague [Andrew Freedman] since we had made them all together! A few days later, I think, Mick Hannigan [the Cork Film Festival's Director] rang me and said: "Look, we were thinking of showing all of your films together in a special programme because we never had seven films sent in by the same director on the same year." I said that it would be a great opportunity. And then, he said to me:"If there is one film that is your favourite to enter into the the national and international competitions, which one it would be?" I

said that, obviously, it would be *Undressing My Mother*, my graduate piece.

My mother saw the genuine reaction of the audience. They loved it! That was a defining moment. She relaxed, then. That was enough for her to know it was genuine. She's never accepted to travel to festivals with the film. She'd say:"Oh, for God's sake, I don't fit in, I wouldn't be bothered!" And when I would be telling her I had won that big award with the film, she just would not care!

As for my brothers, after a first cringing: "Oh, we can't watch this!" they loved the film. But, you know, they are real farmers. [In rural culture] you never really discuss things. They'd watched the film and they would answer my "did you like it?" question with a short "Yeah." The conversation would not go further. You'd move onto some other topic.

The last shot, shot No 21, is a long tracking shot, camera gliding from left to right alongside Ethel's reclining nudity on her bed. And the light moves in an opposite direction…

It lasts a minute or so… I wish I could take the credit for that shot. That was a suggestion made by a lecturer at Dun Laoghaire's National Film School: to use a light and to pan across it! I thought: "Let's introduce a track at the same time" so that we got a tracking shot and a light going in the opposite direction.

For the opening shot, we had to come up, the cinematographer and I, with an idea. The night before the shoot, we thought: "Let's have Ethel behind a screen."

How do you work with your music? Were some pieces accompanying you during the preparatory stages or was the music done at a later stage?

I don't listen to a lot of music so I draw on a composer. His name is Denis Cloughessy, he is Irish. Denis is happy – unlike most composers – to hear my working music. So I give him a piece of music, and I tell him that this is how I'd like it to be. For *Undressing My Mother,* I gave him some Satie, some Lizst, and some Shostakovich [as a guide to compose] something similar in pace or in mood. Not necessarily the same instruments. He works to my cut. I'm quite precise with the pace: 5 seconds here, 10 seconds there. Unless he has a very valid argument as to why not to, or a better suggestion. I'm open-minded.

I'd meet him very briefly. He goes and comes back with ideas, Then I just say what I like. Then he goes off and comes back, and that's it!

Denis and I don't talk much. I don't really know if he likes my films. He never says. He is a man of little words but of a lot of music! I really enjoy working with him. Hopefully, he'll do my feature-film.

Your feature film?

I'm still scared shitless – if I can use that word – of the whole business and I guess there are some people who come out and have all the confidence to just go and get it, and do it, but I want to be confident in my story or in my filmmaking before I go and get it. And I haven't had that yet. This has nothing to do with Andrew Freedman because he is ready as a producer; he wants to go after the big thing. While I am still a little less confident in my own ability as a film-maker to really take the bull by the horns. I don't want to get it wrong for the first time out. I want to just take my time and just make sure it's right. Having said that, I'll probably rush it and it'll be a disaster! This *is* the year, I have to give it a go!

Now Andrew is concentrating much more on the producing. As a consequence, there is almost no involvement of his in the editing [of any of my new work]. So I am trying to find a new editor. You want to make sure you are on the same wavelength with your editor. The next big thing for me is therefore to find an editor to make the feature film with!

But what you've made has been appreciated and recognised!

Well, that's the danger, isn't it? Complacency can set in. As a film-maker, I think, your strengths lie in the acknowledgement of your weaknesses. I am coming to terms with my own weaknesses, realising: "All right, you are never going to be great at this, so don't do this, it doesn't suit you." So a lot of stories I have been developing in my head might be off the mark because going towards that direction of films I like may not be what I am actually good at making.

Is there anything you would like to add?

No, I think you've got enough there for a novel!

Irish Film Institute, Dublin
11 January 2007

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