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Fantasy in children's animated commercials: a comparative study of Nestle's television advertising in South Africa

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Fantasy in Children's Animated Commercials: A comparative study of Nestlé's television advertising in South Africa.

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A Research Report submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts in the field of Digital Animation by Course Work and Research Report.

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Abstract

With the invention and development of media technologies such as radio, television and the Internet, advertisers have welcomed and embraced these advancements for the purpose of selling products to the masses. Advertisers have considered television to be an effective and popular technology for marketing and communication; and animation has been used extensively in advertising. My proposed research will attempt to explain the reason for the widespread use of animation in television advertising aimed at children. Thus, through an examination and understanding of historical and contextual factors that may have influenced two South African animated television commercials, my research will attempt to highlight why the medium of animation was utilised and thought to be appropriate and appealing to children.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work. It is submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in field of Digital Animation at the University of the Witwatersrand Johannesburg. It has not been previously submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

_____

Ajay Naran

19 day of May, 2011

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1 Introduction

1.1 Aim

This research aims to explore why the use of animation is so widespread in television commercials which target children. In an attempt to discover how and why they appeal to children, two such commercials for Nestlé products targeted to two different age groups of children will be explored.

It will be argued that their appeal is achieved because children relate to the fantastical or adventurous worlds portrayed in these commercials and animation is therefore an appropriate medium for these commercials.

1.2 Scope

This research report is primarily concerned with the relationship between animation and advertising, specifically where children are the intended audience. Two South African television commercials, created for Nestlé products have been chosen in order to describe such a correlation. This will be achieved by comparing the two commercials, which were created in a specific way for the purposes of marketing. These advertisements include Nestlé's: *Grown Ups* television commercial (2005) aimed at children between three and seven years of age; and *Rocky and Blizzard* television commercial (2006) aimed at children between the ages of ten and twelve years.

Youth Dynamix, a child research and Development Company, and the Johannesburg animation studios, Bug Box and Luma, were the key players involved in the production of the above-mentioned commercials. An investigation of the production techniques, their role, and their creative decision making processes in the production these commercials will be extensively documented and analysed for the purposes of this study. The similarities and

differences between their narrative and technical approaches will be analysed and will include the advertising and creative strategies utilised by the creators of the two commercials. This will also entail consideration of the creators' perceptions of the apparent appeal of these commercials to children.

1.3 Methodology

In accordance with the nature and aims of the research, this study falls within the parameters of the qualitative research model. Silverman describes four stages in a qualitative research process under the following four headings: 1) Observation; 2) Analysis of texts and documents; 3) Interviews; and 4) Recording and transcribing (8-9).

In order to eliminate subjectivity from the analysis of these commercials, I will follow, animation theorist, Maureen Furniss's 'contextual approach' to the study of animation by examining the context in which the commercials were produced (7). Furniss explains that when attempting to understand an animated production, it is important to be aware of the context in which the work was produced and the "historical, economic, social, technological, political and industrial" factors that might have had an influence on its production in order to evaluate the work as a product of specific time and place (7). The two Nestlé commercials, analysed in this study, were specifically created for marketing purposes. Consequently this research seeks to highlight the variety of factors which may have influenced the creation of the commercials.

According to Shapurjee, there is limited availability of pre-existing material on animation studies in South Africa (4). Therefore the interview method was used for data collection on the subject of the relationship between animation and advertising. Non probability sampling, more specifically, availability sampling, sometimes called accidental sampling was used to generate a sample of available and appropriate interview subjects (Grinnell 251). The total

sample comprised of three subjects. The table below provides further information on these subjects.

Table 1- Showing Research Participants:

SURNAME, FIRST NAME	COMPANY	POSITION
Andrea Kraushaar	Youth Dynamix, Johannesburg	Insights & Research Director
Tim Argall	Bugbox, Johannesburg	Owner/Director
Jason Cullen	Luma, Johannesburg	Creative Director

Data collection was undertaken by means of face-to-face interviews. The interview questions were presented in an informal and semi structured form, which comprised of several themes based on the interviewee's role and involvement in the production of the commercials.

The interview data was collected by means of an electronic recording device, to ensure that an accurate record of the discussion. Each interview was then transcribed into written text for the purpose of analysis. The analysis of this data will be discussed in full in chapter 6 and 7 of this study.

The subjects were questioned about the production process, the creative and strategic decisions made during the campaign as well as the contextual factors that influenced the production of the commercials.

1.4 Rationale

Research and documentation of animation has been a neglected field of study (Darley 64). Furniss suggests that the reason for the lack of scholarly interest in the study of animation is largely due to the belief that the field is "too commercialized" and often associated with youth audiences (1). The motivation for undertaking this study is linked to the lack of research in this field, and its characterisation as an economic vehicle not worthy of serious study.

South Africa was one of the first African countries to produce animation. Studios have been producing animated commercials since 1947 and continued to do so for many years (Wright 34). Despite a substantial amount of animation being previously and currently produced for advertising, it has not been systematically documented for historical or study purposes. It is the view of this researcher that despite the fact that this type of animation is created for commercial purposes, it forms a substantial part of the history of animation in South Africa, and it should be documented and studied.

Therefore, the proposed research is important and relevant as it aims to add to the knowledge base in the study of animation and to provide insight into the relationship between animation and advertising, specifically on advertisements aimed at children. Given that there is very little current empirical research on the topic the proposed research hopes to inspire further research. This may be beneficial to the advertising, animation and corporate sectors.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

As with other qualitative studies this research is subject to a number of limitations. This study presents a detailed, in-depth exploration of the relationship between animation and advertising through analysis of individual interviews. Given the small sample size, and the focus on two particular commercials it is not possible to make broad generalisations about

animation in advertising generally. In addition the method's reliance on the researcher's interpretation and knowledge in analysing the data can make it prone to bias. A further limitation is related to the uniqueness of the interview method to explore animation and advertising which means there are no other studies with which to compare, contrast or support the findings of the current research. Furthermore limited South African research and literature in this field of investigation forced the researcher to rely predominantly on American and European literature. This may have some impact on the study in terms of the social and cultural relevance of the theoretical base.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Cel animation - A cel is a sheet of transparent cellulose acetate, which can be overlaid by other cels. This is a hand drawn process of animation. An animator makes use of a number of layered cels to produce frames for an animated production.

2D animation – is a process of animation where characters or objects move in a two dimensional space. "Objects in a 2D animation can still have a 3D look to them - they just can't physically move in three dimensions" (Morrison 176).

3D animation - is a process of animation where characters or objects move in a three dimensional space. "It involves placing and manipulating objects in a three-dimensional virtual world" (Morrison 176).

Anthropomorphism - The display of human characteristics in an object is called anthropomorphism (Beauchamp 21). In animation, this may refer to inanimate or animal characters displaying human characteristics, such as speech and emotion.

1.7 Organisation of this Study

The researcher proposes to present the structure of this study through the use of an analogy. The theoretical discussion will focus on the study of animation, children and television advertising. Thus the structure will unfold in a creative form of packaging.



Figure 1 – Clip from *Grown Ups*

The above image consisting of a frame from one (*Grown Ups*) of the commercials studied, presents the four key subjects relating to this study, i.e. animation, children, television and advertising. The theoretical focus of this research aims to explore the correlation between these subjects.

In line with the above, this thesis has been divided into 8 parts, namely:

- Chapter 1 contains the introduction and orientation of the present study. The research problem and the motivation for the study are set out, the field demarcated and the aims and methods of this investigation are outlined.

- Chapter 2 examines related research and the theoretical background to animation. It also provides a brief historical overview of animated commercials and its appeal to youth audiences.

- Chapter 3 explores and highlights a discussion on child development, specifically highlighting cognition. Exposure to television viewing and comprehension of advertisements are presented.

- Chapter 4 explores what is meant by fantasy and how it relates to children and animation.

- Chapter 5 presents a synthesis of the literature review.

- Chapter 6 presents the research design and methodology of the empirical investigation.

- Chapter 7 presents a description and analysis of the study.

- Chapter 8 contains a discussion of major findings and presents the conclusion and recommendations drawn from this study.

2 Animation, Advertising and Youth Audiences

2.1 Introduction

Animation "… stretches the imagination to get a laugh, display an abstraction, explain a method or sell a product" (Beckerman ix). This statement implies that animation can be an excellent tool for expressing a variety of ideas. The discussion that follows in this chapter will include descriptions of animation, a brief history, and the appeal of animation to youth. Throughout this chapter animation and advertising will be discussed in relation to children and television.

2.2 What Is Animation?

In his book, *Cartoon Animation*, director and animator, Preston Blair, defines animation as the process of drawing and photographing a character – a person, an animal, or an inanimate object – in successive positions to create life like movement. Furthermore, he describes animation as "both art and craft; it is a process in which the cartoonist, illustrator, fine artist, screenwriter, musician, camera operator, and motion picture director combine their skills to create a new breed of artist - the animator" (6).

Norman McClaren, a renowned master of animation, defines animation as being "not the art of drawings that move, but rather the art of movements that are drawn" (Solomon 11). However, these two descriptions of animation are more suited to hand-drawn and cel animation. In his book, *Understanding Animation*, Paul Wells suggests that descriptions such as the ones provided by McClaren and Blair "has proven insufficient in the description of animation facilitated by new technologies, such as computer-generated animation" and defines animation "as a film made by hand, frame by frame, providing an illusion of movement which has not been directly recorded in the conventional photographic sense"

(10). McClaren adds, “What happens between each frame is more important than what happens on each frame” (Solomon 11). Although computer generated animation is not always drawn, the use of a computer may be seen as an extension of the artists hand. With reference to the above definitions, it can be suggested that the essence of animation is the creation of the illusion of movement.

Wells describes animation as an art, which “informs many aspects of visual culture”; these include feature-length films, prime-time sit-coms, television and web cartoons, as well as a range of communication technologies, including advertising. Because of its obvious presence in these media applications, Wells calls it “the omnipresent pictorial form of the modern era” (*Animation* 1).

2.3 The History of Animation

It is necessary to begin with a study of the historical background of animation because animation in South Africa has been highly influenced by American animation techniques and practices. In addition animation is often used in television advertising, as it is regarded as a suitable medium by advertisers. Therefore a discussion of the history of animation, in particular the animated commercial in the United States, provides a useful background to the history of animation in South African.

2.3.1 History of the Animated Commercial in the United States

According to Karl Cohen, animated commercials emerged in the 1940’s on American television and later in that decade, Television Magazine noted that four of the six best-liked commercials on television were animated (2). Some of the prominent animators at that time included David Hilberman and Zack Schwartz (former Disney animators), as well as animation legend, Otto Messmer (Cohen 2; Korkis 1). The demand for commercial animation

grew so rapidly that Disney opened up a commercial division in the 1950's. Other studios rapidly followed this trend in order to survive in the industry (Cohen 2).

During the 1950's, animation was not perceived to be solely for children; however they were the primary audience for cartoons and animation (Mittell 40). The impetus of the *The Ruff and Reddy Show* (1957-64), created by Hanna Barbera studios, who pioneered the limited animation technique, attracted Cereal sponsors like Kellogg (Shapurjee 48). These sponsors recognised that children were often the "gatekeepers" for their brands. This encouraged marketers to maintain a constant presence on television through advertising and sponsorship of popular shows. They went even further by creating and developing children's animated programmes, which proved to be a significant opportunity to entertain and influence masses of children (Samuel 205). Kellogg, through its agency Leo Burnett and The Hanna-Barbera animation studio developed animated programs such as *Huckleberry Hound* (1958 -1962) and *Quick Draw McGraw* (1959- 1962). Burnett's advertising style was so effective that cereal sales grew every single year for many years, and cereal remains the second most advertised product on TV (Cofer; Samuel 205; Shapurjee 48).

After the short lived penetration of animation into prime time television, in the early 1960's, animation was labelled a medium for children only, and by the mid-1960s, it was described as representing "the Saturday morning enclave" and animation was restricted to the Saturday morning timeslot (Mittell 46-51). As a result of this, advertisers produced numerous commercials specifically for Saturday morning TV, in order to penetrate the highly profitable children's market. A large number of these commercials were animated, these were created for products such as*: Beechnut Gum*, a stop motion puppet animation; *Tang*'s orange-flavoured drink, a 2-D animated commercial starring Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck, who

managed to boost sales dramatically; and *Trix* Cereal, a 2-D animated commercial, starring Trix the rabbit who was able to demonstrate similar results (Ingram).

John Halas, a British-based animation director, anticipated in 1956 that television would encourage and promote animation greatly in the future (Wells, *Understanding Animation* 18). This expectation has proven to be correct, as the development of animated content increased dramatically across the globe, to reach millions of people via television. There is a variety of animated content being produced for television as seen in commercials, programmes, and even some scientific documentaries. The use of animation has also expanded to the Internet, and mobile content such as cellular communication.

Animation techniques in the United States, such as those of established by Disney and Hanna Barbara studios have had a great influence on animation production around the world. In South Africa, classical Disney style of full-form animation was preferred over the limited animation technique of Hanna Barbara. Historically, Disney practices have been and continue to be highly influential to South African animation studios. Today, the principles of Disney animation are studied and applied to a variety of animation productions globally. The influential power of the medium of animation proved to be successful in persuading and captivating audiences in the United States. The success and popularity of the medium inspired various other countries, such as South Africa to embrace it for these reasons.

2.3.2 History of Animation in South Africa

Early 1900's

In a book entitled *Animation Writing and Development: From Script Development to Pitch*, Jean Ann Wright argues that South Africa was one of the first African countries to produce animation. *The Artist's Dream*, directed by Harold Shaw in 1916, was South Africa's first animated film (Wright 34). According to Shapurjee, the relationship between animation and

advertising emerged as far back as 1916, with the development of cinema (41). Similarly, such a connection has developed and maintained a strong presence on South African television to this day. Wright stated, "By 1920 I.W. Schlesinger's African Film Productions had produced five animated shorts" (34). However there appears to be documentation of only four such animated shorts: *The Adventures of Ranger Focus, Don't You Believe, Crooks and Christmas*, and *The Adventures of Ben Cockles*; by South African filmmaker, Norman V Lee, in 1917 (Armes 89). According to Kersh, the industry stood dormant from the mid-1920s until the 1940s, and the reason for this is still unknown (22).

1947 to 1960s

In 1947, Dennis Purchase arrived in South Africa to work on animated commercials for Alpha Studios (Wright 34), where he has been attributed with creating the bulk of the animation for the studio (Kersh 22). As with Alpha Studios most animation studios at the time thrived on income created from advertising, such as Dave McKey Animation, who produced thousands of animated commercials and continued to do so for many years (Wright 34). From the 1940s onwards, South Africa continued to produce animated commercials and animated short films for cinema (Kersh 23).

1976 to 1980: The Impact of TV on Animation

Similar to Cinema, the introduction of broadcast television, and the formation of the South African Broadcast Corporation (SABC) in 1976, led to a greater development of the animation and advertising industries. However as with the American market, animation was restricted to children's entertainment productions, due to the common belief that the medium was best suited for children (Haycock 57). Animators, Butch Stoltz and Gerard Smith, were commissioned by the SABC to make animated children's programs for broadcast television. They produced *Wolraad Woltemade*, *Bremenstadtmusikante* and others (Wright 34). Also, in

1978 during the production of *Bobby the Cat*, a children's television series for the SABC, Annie-Mation Studios was forced to create animated commercials, due to limited staff and much needed income (Shapurjee 50). This greatly slowed down the production of the series. Further, Shapurjee notes that during this period "South African animation slowly began to forge a niche for itself in the commercial market" by being very successful in the advertising industry (37). Despite on-going development it is Wright's view that the animation industry was suppressed because of disinvestment, sanctions, and cultural isolation (34), caused by the apartheid regime. Perhaps, for these reasons there were not many animated television series being produced between 1978 and 1980. However many animation studios continued to thrive on commercial work.

1980 to 2010

In the early 1980's, 2D cel animation was the dominant medium of animation production, due to the strong influence of American animation techniques (Haycock 57). Shapurjee explained that Glenn Coppens recognised the lucrative potential of selling advertisements to the SABC and started Glenn Coppins Cartoons in 1988. Through the use of the 2D cel animation technique, Coppins was able to boost the development of the animated commercials industry (51-53).

In summary, it is evident that South African animation studios and animators developed and maintained a close relationship with the commercial industry as far back as the cinematic era (1915 to 1975); and with the introduction of broadcast television (the televisual era -1975 to 2010) this bond has developed immensely to its current stature, today. Animation studios thrived by creating animated commercials for Television and Cinema. As a result, the relationship between animation and advertising continued to develop, not only in South Africa but also across the globe. Thus, the medium of animation grew in popularity amongst

children and adults alike, as masses of people were exposed to the medium via television. However, because children were the primary targets for most animated programs shown on television, they were exposed to the medium on a larger scale. This could possibly be one of contributing factors for its popularity amongst children, as compared to their adult counterparts.

2.4 The Appeal of Animation to Youth Audiences

A popular generalisation about animation is that it has always been associated with and thought to be for children. This is one of the reasons why animation was previously neglected or understudied in scholarship (Furniss, *Art in Motion* 1). Another generalisation about animation is that it is very popular amongst children (Winick and Winick 176 - 177). Perhaps, it is because of these generalisations that advertisers utilise the medium, to try to persuade children to buy their products.

According to Furniss, children are exposed to the medium as young as 6 months, when they begin to watch television (*Furniss TV for Babies*). Also historically generations of children around the world have been exposed to cartoons primarily aimed at children such as those of Disney and Hanna Barbera. Today this trend has developed there are TV channels entirely devoted to animation and where children are the primary intended audience for these creations (Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network). These channels are broadcast via satellite (DSTV) as well as other digital and analogue forms which are available for viewing around the world. They are also translated into different languages, e.g. *The Simpsons*, a popular TV series, which became a worldwide phenomenon, aimed at both adults and children has been translated into over 45 different languages (A Brief History of The Simpsons). Throughout its history, animation has developed both technologically and aesthetically and thus this is the quality expected in animated commercials.

Winick and Winick provide a psychological explanation for the appeal of animation to children, suggesting that, "[p]sychoanalytically, we can say that cartoons attract young viewers because of their application of the primary process, the expression of unconscious factors without the logical constraints that operate in adult thinking. The cartoons' speed, unexpected juxtapositions... and characters facilitate operation of the primary process, which may be more consonant with the interest of children than adults" (Winick and Winick 176).

Cartoons may be compared to fables in terms of their structure, function and appeal. Throughout childhood children are being taught life lessons and morals in the form of fables. Winick and Winick pointed out that the fable may be considered the most elementary literary form (86). In terms of television, the cartoon may also be seen as an elementary form because they are quick and simple in plot.

In 1955, before Television and the Internet, I&J introduced its Frikkie Fish Stick campaign in print media. Wearing a top hat, a cartoon character called Frikkie captured the imagination of that generation and helped persuade them to eat fish (Spokesperson). As the Frikkie Fish Stick campaign attests the use of cartoon characters has proven to be popular and effective in advertising.

Cartoons are popular throughout childhood and the reason for such popularity is that "they are semi-abstract and depend on movement, activity, and sounds rather than actual words" (Winick and Winick 177). Therefore they appeal to younger audiences by extending across all cultural and linguistic barriers.

2.5 Advertising and It's Purpose

Winston Fletcher points out that advertising is hard to define with precision, describing it as a form of communication which is paid for and its intended purpose is to inform or persuade (1-3). In contrast with this notion, Pratkanis states that advertising may be considered to be a

form of modern propaganda and its goal is "not to inform and enlighten but rather to move the masses toward a desired position or point of view" (11). While Gunther's position is that advertising influences perceptions about a product or brand in order to render it more desirable, to influence purchasing behaviour (56). With reference to the above statements, it can be suggested that advertising is persuasive, and advertisers utilise various methods and forms of communication to market their products. These may exist in a variety of print media such as magazines, newspapers and billboards; as well as electronic media such as television, radio and the Internet. The focus of this study concerns itself with television advertising only and therefore the other forms will not be discussed in detail.

However, it has become increasingly difficult for advertisers to market their products via television. Even if an audience regards an advertisement as appealing, its appeal may just be entertaining and does not necessarily lead to purchasing behaviour. Other problems which challenge television advertising include channel switching and disinterest from the audience.

2.6 Television Advertising, Animation and Children

In the early 1950's, advertisers in the United States did not consider the child to be an effective marketing device, because adults made most purchases. By the mid-1950s this belief began to change. *Disneyland*, a series of programs, broadcast on ABC-TV in 1954 and 1955, was aimed at children in terms of content and associated advertising and proved to be a huge success, attracting large audiences and dramatically increasing sales of advertised products (Young 22). The development of the 'youth market' in the 1960s marginalised animation, characterising it as being solely for children and relegating it to the Saturday morning timeslot (Mittell 77). Despite being relatively isolated in terms of its exposure to television audiences, the animation industry continued to evolve. The limited animation technique, developed by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, ideally suited the needs of

animation production for television (Shapurjee 48). The use of this technique speeded up animation production dramatically. Although this type of animation was marginalised as an art form by studios such as Disney, child audiences were attracted to these cheap television programmes and advertisers were able to exploit this market by advertising only within this time slot (Young 22). According to Mittell, advertisers focused on children as a specialised and desirable marketing demographic (78), where different age groups of children were attracted selectively at different times in the morning (Young 22). A similar theme is demonstrated in the South African market. In an article about television and children, the IOL website reported that children watch an average of 3-5 hours of television in the week and this extends to five to ten hours on the weekend (Viall).

Today, advertisers around the world have realised the commercial potential of a predominantly children's audience, thus they specifically focus on advertising products to this market. From 2008, SAARF (South African Advertising Research Foundation) have also changed their TAMS panel (The measure of television audiences in households) to include children from the age of four years and older (SAARF). This is due to fact that they have realised the influence of this age group on the buying potential of the household. This has evoked strong reactions from the adult population and regulatory bodies and remains a complex and contentious issue globally. Children who have a limited understanding of advertising may be misled into purchasing a product due to possibly misleading claims made by the commercials shown on television.

3 Child Development and Advertising

3.1.1 Introduction

Hildegarde Hawthorne said, “Sometimes looking deep into the eyes of a child, you are conscious of meeting a glance full of wisdom. The child has known nothing yet but love and beauty. All this piled-up world knowledge you have acquired is unguessed at by her. And yet you meet this wonderful look that tells you in a moment more than all the years of experience have seemed to teach” (qtd. in Selig 181).

This chapter will explore the stages of child development and their maturation through exposure to television and advertising.

3.2 What is Cognitive Development?

Cognitive development is an important area of study in child psychology. It refers to the development of thought in human behaviour. The work of child psychologist, Jean Piaget “has been a central resource in the interpretation of cognitive development” (Winick and Winick 76) which “characterizes many of the stage developmental theories in child psychology” (Young 237).

3.3 Piaget’s Theory of Cognitive Development

Piaget’s theory of cognitive development can be used to explain how children relate to television advertisements and the level of understanding they may have in relation to the content. Piaget’s theory consists of 4 stages of logical thought. The three stages most relevant to this study are: the preoperational thought stage (2-7 years), concrete operations stage (7-11 years); and the formal operational stage (11 years and older). However a discussion of the sensorimotor stage (0-2 years) is also included as this presents an explanation of the beginning the development of thought. From birth until the age of 12, a child progresses

through each stage of development, gaining new levels of ability and understanding of the world and this can be related to their comprehension of television and advertising. It is necessary to understand Piaget's theory of cognitive development in order to discuss children's potential ability to understand commercials and the persuasive nature of advertising.

3.3.1 The Sensorimotor Stage (0 to 2 years)

This is the first stage of cognitive development, which occurs from birth up until the age of two. During this stage, children learn about the world through sensory perceptions and basic motor activities. Children are not able to communicate effectively at this stage because of their very limited language abilities (Cherry). Therefore it can be argued that they are unable to understand advertisements and their purpose. However, this does not mean that they do not respond to audio-visual stimuli shown on television. In a 1977 paper presented at the Society for Research in Child Development, R.G. Slaby and A.R Hollenbeck presented evidence that children in early infancy begin to interact with television by responding to its light and sound (Young 239).

In a 2008 article published in Animation Journal, titled *TV For Babies: Programming For The Very Young*, Maureen Furniss writes about Baby TV, the first television channel for babies. Furniss argues that television for babies is a growing field and animation is a common and popular medium used in programming (Furniss, Baby TV 8). Children are being exposed to television from a very young age, and because a large amount of the content is animated, arguably children may take preference to the medium, as they grow older.

There is also evidence that form the age of 3 months; children are capable of identifying graphic representations, such as photographs of people and objects, as they were able to recognize their mother's face in colour photographs (Barrera and Maurer 67). Children are

exposed to television from early infancy, and although they may not understand television or commercials or even recognise its persuasive nature for that matter, they can identify and respond to images, shapes, colours and sounds on television. By the time they "emerge into the world of language", they are interested in television and are able to react to it "as a segment of their environment" (Young 239).

3.3.2 The Preoperational Stage (2 to 7 years)

The second stage of cognitive development occurs between two and seven years of age. Kendra Cherry, a writer specialising in child psychology, describes children's reasoning during this stage in terms of performing logical operations to solve problems. Children's cognitive abilities develop rapidly during this period, but they are also limited in a number of ways. One of the limitations of the preoperational period is that they find it hard to perform logical reasoning in problems solving tasks. One of the characteristics of children in the preoperational stage is 'egocentrism', or failure to appreciate other perspectives, which occurs when a child is unable to differentiate between their own viewpoints and that of another person's (Cherry). According to Gunther, Oates and Blades, if children in the preoperational period cannot appreciate other perspectives besides their own, it is likely that they will have difficulty understanding the persuasive nature of advertising (59). But this does not mean that they cannot be influenced into taking a liking to products advertised on television.

According to Young, children between the ages of 2 and 4 years believe that they can interact with people they see on television (239). Most children are unable to distinguish between programs and commercials until the age of 4 or 5 (Kunkel and Wilcox 67). Piaget suggests that although children cannot yet internally manipulate and transform information in logical

ways, they are able to think in images and symbols (Cherry). Animation's graphic nature relates to the thought process of the child within this period of development.

Another limitation in this stage of development is 'animism', which is a belief that inanimate objects are capable of actions and have lifelike qualities (Cherry). Cartoons or animation, adds reason to this belief when objects such cars, books and pens are not only able to walk and talk they also present unique personalities, and are able to take action. These acts are made possible by animators through the means of various animation techniques, such as 2D, 3D, and stop-motion animation.

3.3.3 The Concrete Operational Stage (7 to 11 years)

This stage occurs after the preoperational period for children between the ages of seven and eleven years. They can reason logically in problem-solving tasks and consider two aspects of the task at the same time. Piaget argued that children's ability to consider more than one dimension of a task reflected their developing logical thought. When children have achieved such logical thought, they are in the stage of concrete operational thought (Gunter, Oates and Blades 65). For these reasons, it is suggested that children within this stage of development will be able to understand commercials. Also, Kunkel and Wilcox point out that a child is able to understand the persuasive objective of commercials from the age of 7 or 8 (45). Therefore it may be proposed that the concrete operational stage is where children have a good understanding of commercials and its purpose.

3.3.4 The Formal Operational Stage [11 years and older]

Although children can achieve a degree of logical thought in the concrete operational stage, they still have difficulty in tasks that require abstract reasoning. According to Piaget, children only begin abstract reasoning after about 11 years of age as they move into the formal operational stage of development. It is called the 'formal' operational stage because it

encompasses all aspects of abstract, hypothetical reasoning that can be applied to any task that can be solved by logical thought (Gunter, Oates and Blades 65). It could be suggested that having developed some degree of hypothetical reasoning children in this stage are able to understand advertising for its persuasive nature. During this period of development children are moving closer towards the logical thought of an adult.

3.3.5 Summary of Child Development

Other so called 'stage developmental theories' include the work of Bruner and Vygotsky, which looked at the way social interaction affected cognitive development (Brain and Mukherji 75-76). These theories seldom contradict each other. Instead they study different aspects and issues, or they build on one another to add new insight. Brain and Mukherji point out that there are many criticisms of Piaget's views and other researchers have found different results using alternative methodologies (80). This may be due to the fact that Piaget's research sample was very small often limited to observations of his own three children and the children of high income well educated parents making the results difficult to generalise to a broader population (Cherry). It is suggested too that Piaget may have underestimated the role of environmental factors, particularly social and cultural factors, in influencing the development of cognitive development (Cockcroft 190). Vygotsky's theory, which had a strongly socio-cultural focus, derived in part from this shortcoming in Piaget's work. However, all of the theories mentioned share similar understandings of child development: as a children advance with age, through various stages of development, they gain new abilities, skills and levels of understanding. This process of learning can be related to children's understanding of television and advertising. The child gradually moves from a simplistic and limited understanding of the form and function of television and advertising to a more mature and deeper understanding in subsequent cognitive stages.

An older child will possess a more developed understanding of advertising in terms of its purpose and message. This is perhaps the reason why generally advertisements aimed at children under the age of seven are appreciably simpler in plot and execution as compared to those that are aimed at older children. The qualitative difference in children and adult's cognitive reasoning may explain why children often have difficulty understanding the complex messages, puns, innuendos and techniques sometimes used in advertisements aimed at adults. This may also be the motive for the use of the simplistic characters commonly utilised in animated content aimed at the very young. However this simplicity is not restricted to a younger audience, as there is widespread use of this type of animation in content aimed at older children and adults as well.

There are various other reasons that influence children's understanding of television and understanding, such as their upbringing, social and economic conditions. However, it is fair to assume that older children understand more about commercials. Therefore the complexity of a commercial is often made to fit their supposed understanding according to age.

3.4 The Development of Television Literacy

In a book entitled *Television Advertising and Children*, child psychologist, Brian M. Young explains that adults have a variety of skills and abilities when faced with television advertising. However, children must familiarise themselves with the forms and functions of the television, so that it may be better understood. For example, Young suggests that techniques such as cuts and flashbacks are often used in television to signal change or the past. Zooms and close ups seem to alter the size of objects. Children may experience difficulty in determining the size of objects if they are shown in isolation, as they are unable to compare it to other objects. Adults who are familiar with television understand these conventions and can 'read television' but children have to acquire these skills of television

literacy as they grow up (236-237). The development of television literacy occurs in conjunction with cognitive development progressing with age and interaction with the medium. Constant exposure to television allows the child to develop greater understanding of the forms and functions of television and advertising.

3.5 Children's Exposure to Television

As indicated previously, television should be viewed as a significant developmental experience because it occupies a substantial amount of children's lives. Winick and Winick sum up the role of television when they say "[t]he experience pool that a child builds is affected by what the child is exposed to and influenced by, and television increasingly is contributing more to this pool and such traditional institutions such as the home and school are contributing less" (17). In South Africa, children watch an average of three to five hours of television per day and up to ten hours on the weekend. If they have a television in their rooms, this statistic may be much higher (Viall). Regardless of the content, television plays an important and dominant role in the lives of children, and it is inevitable that they are influenced by what is presented on television. Therefore it is fair to say that if children are exposed to commercials, animated or not, they will be influenced by them on various levels.

4 Fantasy

4.1 Introduction

The representation of adventure and magic commonly used in children's fantasy literature, such as fables and fairy-tales, has proven to be very popular amongst generations of children worldwide. In modern times, these fables and fairy-tales have been converted into wildly popular full-length animated films. In view of this it is unsurprising that advertisers have used the animated format in the production of their advertising campaigns aimed at children. This chapter will explore the development of written fables and fairy-tales, fantastical in nature, into the visual form of animation.

4.2 Definition of Fantasy

In order to understand the concept of fantasy and its role in various forms of media, such as literature, animation and film, it is important to first look at how it is understood in psychology. Austrian neurologist, Sigmund Freud who founded the discipline of psychoanalysis describes fantasy as the perception of evoking a distinction between imagination and reality. Based on Freud's theories about the conscious versus the unconscious mind, fantasy is both the conscious thoughts of imagination or of unconscious thought, such as dreams. Laplanche and Pontalis define fantasy as follows: 'Imaginary scene in which the subject is a protagonist, representing the fulfilment of a wish in a manner that is distorted to a greater or lesser extent by defensive process' (314). The Encarta Dictionary defines fantasy as an imaginative power, and the creative power of the imagination ("fantasy, " def . 1). In terms of literature it is the type of fiction featuring imaginary worlds and magical or supernatural events ("fantasy, " def . 4).

In the Oxford English Dictionary the word 'fantasy' signifies some of the following:

> 1. In scholastic philosophy: a. Mental apprehension of an object of perception; the faculty by which this is performed... b. The image impressed on the mind by an object of sense... 2. A spectral apparition, phantom; an illusory appearance… 4.a. Imagination; the process or the faculty of forming mental representations of things not actually present… d. An ingenious, tasteful or fantastic invention or design… (Oxford English Dictionary).

In view of the above views with regard to fantasy, it is very difficult to provide a clear definition of fantasy. From the variety of views provided, it is evident that in most cases the term signifies concepts that do not necessarily adhere to reality. It can be argued that fantasy is an exaggeration of reality and does not completely oppose reality. Fantasy may be a dream, imaginative thought or a desire.

4.3 Children and Fantasy

Fantasy is described as a genre that uses magic and other supernatural phenomena as a primary element of plot. Many works within the genre take place in fictional worlds where magic is common (Acuff and Reiher 122). Because of these magical and supernatural qualities, fantasy may be very appealing to children. Furthermore, drawing heavily on Freud, Bruno Bettelheim argues that fantasy stories are vitally important for young children's psychological health (142). Therefore, it is not surprising that fantasy has been associated with children's literature, television and animation. Winick and Winick suggest that the appeal of fantasy to children may be because of their application of the 'primary process' which is the expression of unconscious factors without the logical constraints that operate in adult thinking, (177) allowing them to accept imaginative or fictional worlds with ease. Hunt and Lenz describe fantasy as "the root of all literature, … essential to our mental health" (2). Therefore a child develops cognitively with fantasy literature such as fairy-tales. These above

statements about fantasy provide reasons why children have a tendency to connect with it. Also, there seems to be a natural association between children and fantasy.

"Fantasy allows us to speculate, to explore possibilities, … to consider imaginatively things that cannot be… it would seem to offer worlds of infinite possibility, of expansiveness, of liberation" (Hunt and Lenz 2). For these reasons, children have shown a great deal of interest the genre of fantasy, as it is commonly applied in literary texts, television shows and feature films. The value of fantasy is that children recognise very early that it is different from their everyday world. Although fantasy tends to be more imaginative, one can rarely say that fantasy has nothing to do with reality.

4.4 Fantasy & Reality

Winick and Winick argue that adults and children have a very different understanding in their awareness of fantasy and reality:

> "Since the young child does not have the ability to understand symbolic meanings, presentation rather than the representation of one thing by another is necessary. Especially for the child, a daydream could be something that happens that is just as real as his/her walking across the street. The adult, of course knows the difference between a daydream and reality, but for the young viewer the boundary between reality and fantasy is less distinct. What the programmer intends to be reality may be perceived by the young viewer as fantasy, and vice versa" (79).

Hunt and Lenz describe this "patronising" view that children have difficulty differentiating between fantasy and reality as "at the root of a great deal of careless and trivial writing [,]" as it is not clear at what developmental stage it occurs, "it might all be treated with a healthy scepticism" (6). The process of emergence of fantasy involves development which reflects

the child's own life experiences. For example, what a wealthy child regards as reality may be a poor child's fantasy.

With regards to literature, Hunt and Lenz state that

> [t]he assumption that fantasy is childish because you may not need to know much about this world in order to read about an invented one overlooks the obvious fact that knowledge of this world is necessary to invent one. Fantasy is, because of its relationship to reality, very knowing: alternative worlds must necessarily be related to, and comment on, the real world (7).

Many elements of the real world exist even in the most imaginative and fantastic stories. If all the elements described in a story or shown in a television production were completely foreign to our known reality, it would completely alienate the reader or viewer. Thus they would have difficulty in understanding and relating to it because of its complete isolation to the real world. In view of the above, one can say that fantasy tends to be an exaggeration and an addition to reality.

4.5 Hyper-realism

Hyper-realism is the idea of creating 'lifelike movement'. Most animations seek to artificially create their own "world" which is represented as real or believable. This idea applies to animation in general but it is particularly true of Disney animation (Wells, *Animation* 4). This type of animation is often used in television commercials that are aimed at children. Because Hyper-realism mimics reality, it makes it easier for children to understand and relate to. However this type of animation is not always used in animation production, as others may attempt to achieve the opposite effect of abstraction (Wells, *Animation* 4). In most cases, this type of animation is created for adult audiences. Younger viewers may not understand it because of its level of abstraction.

4.6 Mimesis and Abstraction in Animation

There is no clear distinction between reality and fantasy, and they often co-exist. As highlighted previously, even in fantasy material – animated or live action – a certain level of reality should exist in order to render it believable. On the other hand there are some types of animation or visual effects that tend to be more realistic. These may appear to depict reality or live action very convincingly. Therefore Funrniss has suggested that all animation may be considered in terms of mimesis and abstraction, placing it along a continuum in relation to its representation of reality (6). If the animation resembles more of that which can be seen in reality it would be closer to mimetic and the further away from reality, which would be abstraction. Children would have difficulty in understanding abstract animation, which does not have a link to the real world.

4.7 Fantasy and Mimesis in Literature

Kathryn Hume suggests that fantasy and mimesis are fundamental elements of the narrative imagination (xii). When describing fantasy Frye says that characters are able to do anything: fly, live forever, talk to trees, and sorcery (38). In contrast to this, mimesis limits the characters and they must "conform to our sensory experience of the real world" (Attebury 3).

4.8 The Link Between Literature and Animation

With reference to the above descriptions of animation in terms of mimesis and abstraction, and literature being described as mimetic or fantastic, it can be argued that mimesis is a movement toward reality. The following diagram illustrates the link between literature and animation placing along a continuum in relation to its representation of reality.

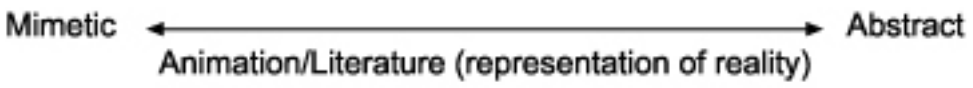


Figure 2 – Diagram illustrating the representation of reality in animation and literature

4.8.1 Fairy-tales and Animation

Since fantasy literature tends to stray away from mimesis and more towards fantasy, it is not surprising that animation is often used in production of the visual representation of a script. These ideas are evident not only in feature films which utilise various degrees of fantasy, such as those used in fairy-tales, but also in similar television productions and commercials. Many fairy-tales such as those by the brothers Grimm have been brought to life in a form of visual story telling by Disney. Although these fairy-tales can be classified as being fantasy, the characters and backgrounds are identifiable because they are an adaptation of real people or objects. This is an example of how mimesis and fantasy can co-exist. Despite the characters being animated and simplified, they still resemble real life people, animals, and trees and so on. The hyper-realistic movement of the characters also adds to the believability of the production. This is where hyper-realism and mimesis represent a similar representation of reality, in terms of movement and sound. However, its purpose is not to imitate live action in terms of aesthetics.

The use of fairy-tales in a child's life represents a paradigm of several dimensions of their view of the world and their development within it. Effective animation, like fairy-tales generally have a small number of characters, with the added effect of adults with childlike characteristics (Winick and Winick 70).

According to Wells, the fairy-tale genre is particularly effective in the animated form, mainly for the following reasons:

- Firstly, many fairy-tales are illustrated in children's books, for example those of the brothers Grimm. The use of illustration easily and naturally translates into animated stories.

- Secondly, the complexities of Fairy-tales are often imaginative and farfetched. Therefore the medium of animation allows this complex written word to be translated into a believable visual form. (Wells, *Animation* 63)

Due to the complexities of Fairy-tales, the medium of animation is ideally suited as a means to bring these works of art to life. Animation's 'frame by frame' process allows the intricacies and details of the literary text to be translated into much more than a cartoon, but an illusionary moving representation of a literary body (Wells, *Animation* 64). Similarly, advertisers who wish to present similar ideas of fantasy in commercials often choose the medium of animation to persuade younger audiences to purchase their products.

In the commercial and film industries, fantasy plots often utilise a combination of live action and visual effects (animated). In literature, fantasy is magic, the unknown, the impossible, the glorious, and glamorous and the imaginative abound, all of which translate effectively into animated form. In advertising the reason for the popularity of animation is because it is such an emotive means for conveying ideas. Although fantastical, most forms of animation require realistic elements in order to render them believable. This will ensure that the viewer is not completely detached from a known reality. This certain level of reality is particularly important to youth audiences as developing minds have difficulty in understanding abstract symbols. Mimesis in terms of animation and literature ensures a level of reality identifiable by the viewer or reader in question.

5 Synthesis of the Literature Review

This research paper deals with the study of animation in relation to South African television commercials. While researching this field of study, this researcher realised that there had not been much written text about the subject in question, particularly in South Africa. However, there is still the need for further research on the subject both locally and internationally.

5.1.1 Animation in the United States

Animation Journal, a well-known online and print publication which deals with the study of animation, provided a good beginning. Author, Carl Cohen did some research into the history of animated commercials in the United States before writing *The Development of Animated TV Commercials in the 1940s*. This article proved to be a great help as Cohen had interviewed various people who were working in the commercial and animation industries during the 1940's. These included Alex Anderson, Howard Beckerman, Lee Blair and Preston Blair. Cohen's research led to an article written by Jim Korkis for Animation World Network, entitled *The Secret of Walt Disney Commercials*. This was one of trade publications of the period which proved to be a valuable source of information. The information gathered from these articles by Cohen and Korkis provided a good historical background of the relationship between animation and advertising, which dated back the 1940's and World War II. According to these articles, despite the high cost of animation, it proved to be effective in marketing products on television. Animation primarily attracted viewers' attention for its aesthetic appeal.

Because many South African animation studios were and still are highly influenced by the work of Disney, this researcher felt that it was necessary to investigate the work done by the studio in the commercial industry. The article by Korkis entitled "The Secret of Walt Disney Commercials", proved to be most beneficial in gathering information about Disney's

involvement in the commercial (cinema and television) industry during the 1940's and 1950's.

In the first three chapters of *The Great Saturday Morning Exile. Prime Time Animation: Television Animation and American Culture* by famous author, Jason Mittell provided useful information on the exposure of animation to youth audiences during the 1960's. Also, Samuel R Lawrence's *Brought To You By: Postwar Television Advertising and The American Dream*, provided similar information.

An online article entitled *The Bizarre History of Cereal* by Jim Cofer, demonstrated how cereal companies at the time were able to market their products to children with the use of animation.

5.1.2 Animation in South Africa

Before investigating such a relationship, it was necessary to place animation within the context of South African history. Sarienne Kersh's *History of South African Animation* provided valuable information of such history.

Shanaz Shapurjee, a former student at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, published a book entitled *A Historical Enquiry into the Animation Unit, Situated within the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) 1976-1988*. This report also proved to be a productive tool in tracing the history of animation the United States and South Africa. Similarly, a report by animation student Andrew Haycock, *South African Stop-Motion Animation from 1980 - 2005* also provided an historical background. From these reports, I was able to gather additional information about the historical link between animation and the commercial industries in the respective countries.

However, many difficulties were experienced. Although Shapurjee and Haycock provided a brief look at animated advertising in a South African context, the majority of information this researcher could accumulate was from international sources. This demonstrates the 'gap' in South African research in animation. Having said this, both locally and internationally the use of animation in advertising is poorly researched. When comparing South Africa and The United States of America, it can be said that this is an unequal comparison. This is attributed to the fact that the USA is a first world country with a population of a vastly different socio-economic status to that of South Africans. As our general population is of a lower socio-economic status, marketing strategies need to be sensitive to this. Our cultural diversity can also hamper the marketer's artistic creativity, as his work must be accessible to the majority of the population. Language can also be an issue, if compared to the US, where English is the norm, in South Africa we have 11 official languages, and while English is the most widely used, this is a consideration that marketers must deal with.

5.1.3 Linking Children and Animation

Mariam Pezzella Winick, an expert in childhood education, and Charles Winick, Professor of sociology at City College and the Graduate Centre of New York, authors of *The Television Experience: What Children See* did extensive research on children and television. Chapter 5 of this book was most beneficial to my research as here the authors explored the ways in which children perceive the various dimensions of fantasy and their diverse understandings of fantasy within different development stages. Winick and Winick's also discussed aspects of children's viewing of television in chapter 6 of their book. This included children's perceptions of magic, animation and commercials. This led me to the work of famous child psychologist, Jean Paiget, who has been a central resource in the interpretation of cognitive development. This researcher used Paiget's theory of cognitive development to explain children's understanding of commercials. Dr Brian M. Young examines children's

understanding of advertising in his book *Television Advertising and Children*. Young suggests that children develop in their understanding of television and advertising as they mature and through repeated exposure to it. Young calls this television literacy. Other so called 'stage developmental theories' sited by Young, include the work of Bruner and Vygotsky. An online article by child psychologist, Cherry Kendra, entitled *Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development* assisted in the discussion of cognitive development and also proved to be beneficial in making the link between children's development and their understanding of advertising.

5.1.4 Fantasy and Children

Understanding Animation, by animation theorist, Paul Wells is a comprehensive introduction to animated content. In this book, Wells defines the terms animation and explains common animation practices such as 2-D cel animation and 3-D animation.

A book entitled *Animation: Genre and Authorship*, provides Wells' view about how children's literature such as fairy-tales, seem to be more suited to the medium of animation. The reasons for this have been discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis. The descriptions provided by animation theorists such as Paul Wells and Maureen Furniss have been included in the discussion of fantasy in relation to reality in animation.

Because fairy-tales are fantastical in nature, this encouraged research into fantasy literature. This literature made it possible to explain and link terminology, which is commonly used in literature and in animation theory. Associate Professor of English and Director of American Studies at Idaho State University, Brian Attebury's *Strategies of Fantasy* includes not only the writer's strategy for inventing believable impossibilities, but also the reader's strategies for enjoying it. Also, the views of Peter Hunt, a professor of English at Cardiff University, and Millicent Lenz, Associate Professor at the State University of New York at Albany, in

their book entitled *Alternative Worlds in Fantasy Fiction* provided an insight into literature that creates alternative worlds for young readers.

6 Research Design and Methodology

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the research method, population, sample, instruments and research procedure used in the present study are discussed.

6.2 Location of the study

The study was conducted in Johannesburg.

6.3 Research Design

A research design is a plan which includes every aspect of a proposed research study from conceptualisation of the problem right through to the dissemination of the findings. According to Grinnell the research design that the researcher eventually chooses depends on many factors: time, money, availability and appropriateness of data collecting methods.

There are three types of research designs: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. These designs fall on a continuum of available knowledge in the field of study.

The aim of this study was to describe and analyse the relationship between animation and advertising in South Africa , by comparing two advertising campaigns (Nestlé's *Grown Ups* and *Rocky and Blizzard*), directed specifically at children between the ages of 2 and 7 years and 8 to12 years respectively.

In accordance with the nature and aims of the research, this study falls within the parameters of exploratory research designs (Grinnell 225).

According to Grinnell, explanatory designs are best used where the area under study is well developed, theories abound and a testable hypothesis can be formulated on the bases of previous work. However if the area under study is not well developed, as in this case, and no

sound theories have as yet been put forward, it is far more sensible to use an exploratory or descriptive design (225). Furthermore Grinnell states that "[t]he idea of an exploratory study is to explore – nothing more – nothing less" (226). The researcher will not come up with statistically sound data or conclusive results; it is not the intent to. The researcher will only want to build a foundation of general ideas and tentative theories which can be explored later with more precise and complex research designs and corresponding methodologies (Grinnell 226).

As supported in the literature study of this research document, there is limited documented data on the relationship between animation and advertising in South Africa. Furthermore despite the vast quantity of research conducted in the field of advertising aimed at children, huge gaps still exist on the impact of the use of animation per se in advertising in general and those which are aimed at children. Therefore an exploratory design has been used since little is known about this field and the researcher is merely gathering data in an effort to find out "what's out there" (Grinnell 237). In addition intervening variables have not been controlled for and the results of this study cannot be generalised beyond this particular setting.

In accordance with the nature and aims of the research, this study falls within the parameters of qualitative research model. Silverman describes this method as comprising the following four stages: 1) Observation; 2) Analysis of texts and documents; 3) Interviews; and 4) Recording and transcribing (8-9).

6.4 Sampling Procedure

In this study the sample refers to the creators of the commercials studied (Nestlé's *Rocky and Blizzard* and *Grown Ups*). The study was restricted to this population group for the following reasons:

- Logistics and availability of subjects determined the choice of thereof.

- To elicit information about the production process of the relative television commercials.

- To elicit their opinions about the possible reasons of why the advertisements appealed to children.

- Their association and knowledge in their relative field of expertise, specifically to ascertain possible reasons for the use of animation and to elaborate creative decisions made in the production of these commercials.

6.5 Method of data collection

Given the exploratory nature and aims of the research, this study falls within the parameters of the qualitative research model. Grinnell states that the researcher may use this method to "seek the essential character of social and psychological phenomena" (185).

Qualitative research methodology enables one to assemble a detailed description of social reality. These studies tend to utilise social survey, structured interviews and self-administered questionnaires. These methods, while efficient and systematic have the disadvantage of being imposed on the systems under study. As such data collection methods may influence and distort the reality which the researcher may wish to describe. These studies usually rely heavily on participant observation methods and purposeful conversation. Although qualitative methods create their own problems of interference, they come closer to being "unobtrusive" (Grinnell 189).

Silverman describes this method as having the following four stages: 1) Observation; 2) Analysis of texts and documents; 3) Interviews; and 4) Recording and transcribing (8-9).

1. Observation in the form of viewing the two respective commercials was conducted.

2. A comprehensive study of available texts and documentation in the field of animation and advertising, in general, and in relation to children was undertaken.

3. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the selected persons involved in the relative productions.

4. The interviews were recorded with the use of a digital recording device and transcribed.

6.6 Development of interviews

The research instrument, i.e. the face-to-face interview method of data collection utilised in this study was not a standardised instrument, but one that was constructed for this research in order to individualise the study for the South African context and to explore and reflect the content of the two advertisements.

Questions were presented in an informal and semi structured form, which comprised of several themes based on the interviewee's role and involvement in the production of the commercials.

Face to face interviews were conducted with relative persons involved in the production of the commercial, based on their willingness to participate in the study. These interviews were recorded and transcribed.

The following were some of the areas explored in the interviews:

- factors which contributed to the production of the advertisements,
- the perceived appeal of the advertisements to children
- the appropriateness of animation used in the creation of the two advertisements

6.6.1 The reason for using interviews

According to Grinnell the goal of interviewing is to gather data about the subjects and their situation or data on their evaluation of the programs (195). The two major sources of self-reported data are written, in the form of questionnaires, and audio where information is elicited from respondents through interviews.

The advantages of interviewing as a data collection method are primarily related to naturalness and spontaneity, flexibility and control of the environment. Combined with a high response rate, these advantages provide a good argument for the use of interviews as opposed to mailed survey questionnaires.

There are problems and limitations to interviews as this method is dependent on the respondent's self-reports. According to Bailey, there are four major sources of respondents' errors and biases in self-reported data. Respondents may (1) deliberately lie because e they do not know an answer; (2) make mistakes without realising it; (3) give inaccurate answers by accident simply because they misunderstand or misinterpret the question; (4) be unable to remember despite their best efforts (156).

In addition to these problems there are other problems, which particularly effect research based on the interview method in comparison to survey research. These are principally

related to time and cost constraints, interview intensity, inaccessibility to respondents, loss of anonymity, interviewer distortion, and interviewer influence.

In relation to this study the reason for using the interview as a data collection method were as follows:

- Firstly, the limited number of respondents available for the study
- Secondly, because the interviewees were directly and intimately involved as creators of the commercials studied.
- Thirdly, interviewing was an effective and efficient method of data collection.

6.7 Conducting of the interviews

The initial attempt to elicit information from Nestlé was met with reservation i.e. no response was received. Thereafter subsequent attempts to secure an interview were made to advertising agency (J Walter Thompson in Johannesburg) – to no avail. Animation studios, Bugbox and Luma in Johannesburg, involved in the production of the commercials responded positively. Further, they suggested eliciting the expertise of Johannesburg's Youth Dynamix, a child research company, who were directly involved in the production of the two commercials. Once contact was made with these companies, the key players were identified. These individuals were then contacted telephonically and via email to confirm and further explore their participation in the study. The following three people were selected:

1. Andrea Kraushaar, Insights and Research Director of Youth Dynamix (child Research Company).
2. Tim Argall, Owner/Director at Bugbox animation studio in Johannesburg.
3. Jason Cullen, Creative Director at Luma animation studio in Johannesburg.

The researcher introduced his field of study and expressed appreciation for the respondent's willingness to participate in the study. The entire purpose of the interview was explained. The researcher emphasised the need for clear data in the area of the relationship between animation and advertising, in order to contribute towards the knowledge base of animation studies. They were asked to be honest about their responses and were informed that there were no right or wrong answers.

The interviews were conducted with each respondent separately on different days depending on their availability. The duration of the interviews was between 45 and 60 minutes. The researcher himself conducted the interviews.

6.8 Limitation of the study

The following limitations should be noted:

- The small sample size limited the representatively of the study in relation to the population.
- The research was confined to a specific geographic area, which limited the generalisability of the findings.
- The target audience i.e. children within the two age groups did not form part of the study.
- Access to market research in terms of the sales figures was not assessable and accessible at the time of the study.
- Limited South African research in this field of investigation restricted the researcher to rely predominantly on American and other international literature. This affected the study in terms of the social, cultural and commercial relevance of the theoretical base.

- The researcher collected the data via interviews. As a result the effect of wanting to create a favourable impression cannot be ruled out.

6.9 Data analysis

The audio recordings of the interviews were listened to and transcribed. The transcribed interviews were actively read to develop a sense of their overall content and identify relevant ideas in the production process of the two commercials in question. The analysis of the data is discussed in chapter 7.

7 Results and Analysis of the Empirical Study

7.1 Introduction

In order to discuss the results of the empirical study, this chapter will firstly present an overview of the Nestlé brand and descriptions of the two commercials of this study i.e. Nestlé's *Rocky and Blizzard* and *Grown Ups* television commercials. A digital version of both these commercials has been attached to this thesis. Secondly an analysis of the responses obtained from the interviews with the relevant creators of these commercials will be discussed. Thereafter the conclusions and recommendations will be presented in chapter 8.

7.1.1 An overview of Nestlé

In 1866 Henri Nestlé, a Swiss pharmacist, established the Nestlé company. The original business was based on milk and dietetic foods for children. The company was started in South Africa in 1916 and it began to manufacture and market chocolates in 1932 and continued to expand in following years. The formation of Dairymaid-Nestlé (Pty) Ltd in 1993 resulted in the development ice cream products. The company was renamed Nestlé Ice Cream in early 2003. The Nestlé Company produces a wide range of branded products, which include chocolate, instant beverages, refrigerated and frozen products, mineral water and pet food for the country. It currently employs about 4000 South Africans (Our Company History *Nestlé*).

7.1.2 Nestlé Products

The two Nestlé brands or products relative to this study are:

1) Smarties – is a branded sphere shaped candy coated chocolate snack which are about 2cm in diameter. They are available in eight colours in South Africa, namely red,

orange, yellow, green, purple, pink, brown and blue. An assortment of colourful Smarties is available in a variety of different sized boxes.

2) Nestlé Ice Cream – forms part of the Nestlé group, which manufactures a wide selection of ice cream products.

The two commercials related to the above products, which are the subject of this study, are:

1) *Grown Ups* is Nestlé Smarties television commercial, 2005, which was primarily aimed at children between the ages of three and seven. This commercial included a combination of live action and animation; animated and visual effects were completed by Bugbox animation studio in Johannesburg.

2) Rocky and Blizzard is a Nestlé Ice Cream television commercial, 2006, which was aimed at children between the ages of eight and twelve. This is a fully animated commercial, animated by Luma animation studio in Johannesburg.

7.2 Description of the Nestlé Commercials

7.2.1 Nestlé's Grown Ups Commercial

Grown Ups television commercial was aired across all major television networks, including SABC 1, SABC 2, SABC 3, ETV and DSTV, during the year 2005 in South Africa (Argall Interview). The commercial was created for the Nestlé brand in South Africa for the purpose of promoting a colourful, candy coated chocolate snack, called Smarties. This commercial was created using a variety of production techniques, which primarily included the use of a combination of live action and animated material. The commercial was strategized for the Nestlé brand, by Johannesburg advertising agency JWT (J. Walter Thomson) who worked closely with, child research and development company, Youth Dynamix (Kraushaar Interview). Bugbox animation studio in Johannesburg used live action footage of children,

combining it with animation and other visual effects, which resulted in the final production of the commercial.

The advertisement begins in a quiet neighbourhood, where leaves blow across a straight, tarred residential road while dark clouds build in the distance. The colour palette in this first scene is restricted to dull, washed out pastille pigments. The atmosphere is dark and gloomy, but a lively song describes the scene, explaining that all the adults have left the town and are on holiday. A group of children from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds are out on the street. They are overjoyed that they have the town all to themselves. They show their excitement by jumping high into the air as they wave their hands high above their heads and scream with joy, while two young and happy children appear at the front of the picture plane. A jolly black girl appears from the left of the screen, while a happy white girl appears next to her and a girl pops her head down from above, as she hangs down from a tree. All of the children can't seem to contain their excitement at the absence of all the adults from the neighbourhood.

A close up of a young boy's hand is shown shaking a box of Smarties. The sound of this shaking is apparent, as the Smarties inside collide with each other and along the edges of the box. The boy then begins to pour the bright and colourful candy-coated chocolates from the box into his hand and the other children are soon to follow. As the candy falls through their hands, they change into bright and beautiful butterflies, which fly away in different directions. After eating a piece of candy, the boy rotates swiftly in a clock-wise direction. This rotation is driven by the candy and causes the boy to magically transform into a construction worker. During the process of this transformation, his attire alters from a pair of dull shorts and faded yellow T-shirt to a bright yellow check shirt with a denim overall. As the boy spins rapidly through the air, the sky behind him alters from being dark and cloudy to

sunny, bright blue and clear. Thereafter, the candy flies off into different directions and the boy looks around in amazement as he begins to drive a fun animated tractor. The song tells the story that the children should help build their own town, using Smarties.

Thereafter, a profile of a girl is shown. The girl pours a few candy-coated chocolates from a Smarties box, directly into her mouth. The process of transformation is similar to the previous one except that the girl transforms into a game ranger. She is lifted up and out of the frame by what seems to be a skin textured balloon. A second girl, who has already transformed into a doctor, then enters the frame. As she begins to examine the balloon like object with her stethoscope, two eyes pop out from the object and they look around comically. A trunk, ears and mouth extrude from the balloon like object, and we now can see that it's an animated elephant. The game ranger girl rides the elephant as it sprays the entire town with Smarties, through its trunk. The elephant makes a loud trumpet like sound as it sprays the Smarties which transform the dull looking houses into brightly coloured ones. The song continues by saying, "Let's change the world to candy coated fun". Once again, white fluffy clouds and a bright blue sky replace the dark thunderclouds in the background. The once straight and boring road is now a curved and exciting road to travel on.

The children watch and enjoy the transformation of the world into a bright fun filled place where there are plenty of candy-coated Smarties for everyone to eat. The houses pop out of the ground as their colours brighten up. Bright flowers and trees grow before their eyes.

Another boy becomes a racing car driver, and races down the road. As the spins to a halt, candy is being released into the air. A fireman sprays thousands of bright and colourful Smarties across the town, as he is lifted into the air by a fire truck crane. In this aerial view of the city, houses in the distance are being transformed into bright and colourful places to live.

The boy, who was transformed into a construction worker, is building a road through the sky, with the use of large yellow and black animated tractor. The tractor lays the tar in mid air and paints on the road markings, which leads to a gigantic cake beautifully decorated with Smarties. Upon the top of this cake stands a goofy looking girl, who after eating a candy-coated chocolate Smartie, transforms into a beautiful ballerina wearing a tiara. Magical sounds accompany the transformation. The melodic song names the variety of colours of the candy explaining that with so many Smarties, the possibilities are endless.

On the second level of the cake, there are four children. A college graduate, doctor and game ranger watch in excitement as the soccer player kick a ball in the direction of the screen. The camera pulls away from the children and the cake, which is the size of a skyscraper. The child, who is dressed like a fireman continues to spray the town with thousands of Smarties, from high up above. All the children are having lots of fun with the magical transformation that has occurred as a result of the thousands of Smarties. The advertisements ends with a wide shot of the colourful town, where planes fly around and an animated anthropomorphic Smartie parachutes toward to the screen. A close up of this character is shown with emphasis on the box of Smarties in its hand. Once again we hear the distinctive sound it makes when the box is being shaken. The jingle ends with a prolonged emphasis on the word ‘Smarties’ and ‘watalotgot’.

The children from the neighbourhood come out to play and transform the town into a fun and colourful world where their aspirations become a ‘reality’.

7.2.2 Description of Rocky & Blizzard Television Commercial

The advertisement begins with a boy playing a video game in his room. This blue and white haired boy appears to be in his early teens, and is attired in a white T-shirt with orange sleeves. He is distracted by a beeping sound and looks to his left with a smile and picks up a

rectangular device. This device appears to be some sort of hi-tech communication device. It has flashing red button at the top with a screen below it, showing a picture of a man's face. Upon closer examination of this device, the head of a middle aged man protrudes from the screen and begins to give instructions to this boy: "Rocky, the free zone needs you". A three dimensional map is then projected from the device, and the voice continues "Find the new Nestlé Ice Creams and restore our power supply." To which the boy (Rocky) replies "Right on Doctor Free" while giving a thumbs up. After taking a bite of an orange ice cream, Rocky spins around and around very quickly while on his right there is an object spinning next to him. When he comes to a halt, he is dressed in a blue and lime green jacket with dark blue pants. He grabs hold of a dark coloured snow board, which has the words "*Rocky and Blizzard*" painted in red, located to his right.

Rocky begins his mission to restore the depleted power supply. He leaves his home, which is an igloo with cylindrical piping along the sides and a satellite dish on the roof. This igloo is located in a snowy mountainous area. There is a wooden sign board with the words "*Rocky and Blizzard*" carved into it. The boy proceeds on an adventurous and scenic journey through snow covered mountains. Blizzard, his faithful dog covered in white, blue and grey fur barks as he runs along into the mountains with Rocky.

They both navigate through the icy, snow covered mountains. The task which they were given proves to be exciting and challenging as they are faced with obstacles along the way. A bridge which previously joined the two sides of high mountain tops is damaged and as a result has fallen. There are traces of the wooden bridge attached to the opposing sides of the mountain tops. The absence of the middle part of the bridge does not prevent Rocky from proceeding with enthusiasm. He gains momentum while snowboarding down a hill and when he gets to the edge of the mountain, his faithful companion, Blizzard, eagerly joins him on his

snowboard. They both proceed on the snowboard and reach the far end of the mountain safely. We are shown four angles of the high, dangerous and exciting jump across the collapsed bridge.

Rocky rotates in mid-air and continues through the snow. Snow is being sprayed through the air as Rocky snowboards at a steep angle down a slope of a mountain. They finally reach their destination and Rocky presses a button on a device, which opens a door to a cave located deep in the mountains. Rocky has located the Nestlé ice cream flavours and has succeeded in restoring the power supply. A blue and white, Nestlé Ice Cream freezer is shown with different varieties of ice cream inside it. A woman's voice says "Go on, rock your world. Join the ice cream adventure in the blue freezer now".

7.3 Target Market

7.3.1 *Grown Ups*

According to Kraushaar, the commercial was primarily aimed at children between the ages of 3 and 7. Furthermore, she was of the opinion that animals are generally well suited for a younger target audience, explaining that animals utilised in animation are asexual, so they would appeal to both genders of children. Perhaps this is the motivation behind Nestlé's instruction to Bugbox animation Studios for the development of a 'cuter' elephant. The studio presented four executions of the elephant before the client, Nestlé, was satisfied (Argall Interview).

7.3.2 Rocky & Blizzard

According to Kraushaar, this commercial was aimed at children between the ages of 8 and 12 years old. She describes this age group as being 'tweens' because they are fall between the stages of childhood and early adolescence. Furthermore this age group exhibits some of the

characteristics of children; however they aspire to be teenagers. They often push away from what they perceive as being babyish, and would not identify with the scenes in the Smarties advertisement where pretending, role playing and dressing up is dominant. Research conducted in the 'tween' market found that 'warm, fuzzy and cute characters were seen as babyish' (Kraushaar Interview).

The choice to use a human-like animated character was motivated by the results of a survey conducted by Youth Dynamix to rank the appeal of four different characters. According to Kraushaar, three of these characters were more animal like and Rocky was regarded as being the most favourable because of the human characteristics that he portrayed.

7.4 Level of detail in characters

7.4.1 *Grown Ups*

This commercial utilised a combination of live action and animation. Argall suggested that the sets and background were detailed because the client, Nestlé, wanted a photo realistic environment that would be believable by the target audience. Because most of the characters were a live action portrayal of actual children, they depicted a real life representation of detail. However, this was used in combination with simple animation, as seen in the simplistic nature of the elephant presented in the commercial. Although this commercial was aimed at younger children, it has a considerable amount of detail in the majority of characters and background imagery.

7.4.2 *Rocky and Blizzard*

According to Cullen, the illustrations which were provided for the characters were quite detailed. Therefore they concentrated more on the characters and a lot less on the sets and background in terms of detail.

The commercial was aimed at children in their pre-teens. Children within this age group aspire to be like teenagers, they therefore displayed a tendency to prefer more detailed animated characters.

Furthermore, Cullen pointed out that the younger the child, the simpler animation can be. For older children, more complex animation, such as highly detailed characters and complex movement may be utilised. For adults, animation and visual effects can be very detailed and complex. However, the suitability of the level of detail in relation to the audience in terms of age, is not always followed in animation production and is regarded as a principle and not a rule in the animation industry (Cullen Interview). For example, *The Simpsons,* a popular animated series, is predominantly aimed at adults and uses simple characters with very little detail. Conversely *How To Train Your Dragon,* an animated feature film utilises detailed characters but is primarily aimed at children.

7.5 Animals

7.5.1 *Grown Ups*

Animals are generally well suited for a younger target audience. Animals are asexual, so they would appeal to both genders of children (Kraushaar Interview). The animated elephant in this commercial may be seen as being anthropomorphic, as it displays human emotion by being able to smile. During animation production, the elephant looked more realistic initially and Nestlé marketers requested a simplified and 'cuter' looking elephant. The reason for this could be because they felt that this approach would be more appealing to its younger target market. The Bugbox animation team had a do a series of four executions of the elephant until the client was satisfied with the design (Argall Interview).

7.5.2 *Rocky and Blizzard*

In the research study for the *Rocky and Blizzard* commercial there were a few animals which children tended to routinely come up with such as beaver, polar bear and yeti type characters. However, the dog proved to be the most favourable animal and did well across all ages, genders and cultural groups in South Africa. It was very easily identifiable and fitted well within the cold and snowy environment portrayed in the commercial (Kraushaar Interview).

It was the decision of the client (Nestlé) to make the animation look and act in a similar manner to a real dog. Perhaps the reason for this was that if the dog were more caricatured and cute, similar to the elephant in the *Grown Ups* commercial, children may have thought that the commercial was directed at a younger audience. As Blizzard did not take on a more prominent role in the commercial, his very existence may be questioned. This dog fitted into the environment well, but should have taken on a greater role in terms of assisting Rocky in his task. Blizzard's role received negative feedback from the target audience.

7.6 Colour

7.6.1 *Grown Ups*

Colour played an important and dominant role in this advertisement. Young children like the assortments of colour and flavours. The objective of the agency was to associate the different colours of Smarties with the career aspirations of children. Thus, depending on the colour of Smarties the child ate it would enable them to become anything they would want to be (Argall Interview). This is an element of fantasy. According to Kraushaar, the use and choice of colour was a strategic decision made by the Smarties brand managers to associate bright colours with a variety of fun activities.

A criticism that can be made is that there isn't a vast difference in the change of colour as the world begins to alter. Perhaps the transformation would have been more evident if the world started off being extremely dull, with little or no colour at all. Andrea also mentioned that the transformation was more noticeable in previous Smarties commercials (Kraushaar Interview). Although these commercials were not animated, the world started off as black and white and transformed into a bright, colourful one. This transformation was more apparent because the differences between the 'realistic' and 'fantastic' worlds were more distinct.

As seen in the Smarties commercial of this study, initially the world is portrayed as dull and gloomy with dark clouds engulfing the sky, but as the world begins to transform with aid of Smarties, there is a metamorphosis of colour. What was once dull and de-saturated is now bright and filled with a kaleidoscope of colour.

The use of colour is appropriate in terms of the brand and in relation to children. These children are still learning about colours and are experimenting with them in school. Younger children enjoy bright colours. They also associate colours with mood. For example a character attired in dark colours may be seen as evil or sinister. Similarly, a clear blue sky would signify happiness and a good day for children to go out and play. In contrast, a dark and cloudy sky may signify a sombre day.

Tim Argall suggested that Smarties has been losing market share after changing the formulation so that it uses natural colorants, which are not as bright as the previous artificial colourants, and which posed health problems for those who ate them. Not to suggest though that eating, candy coated chocolate is healthy. Because of the dullness of the natural colorants currently used to manufacture Smarties, the product seems to have lost its identity (Argall Interview). However, the dullness of colour in the product is not portrayed in the commercial and this may not affect the success of the commercial.

7.6.2 Rocky & Blizzard

The choice of colour used in an advertisement is generally decided by client, agency and the animation studio. Thus Cullen shared that generally brighter colours are suitable for attracting children. However the Clients provided a handbook with the colour scheme of Nestlé as branding was an important and dominant factor in choosing a colour scheme for the advertisement. A good brand must be identifiable by the audience in terms of its colours. For example, the reason that the snow in this advertisement has a blue tinge is as this would have a subconscious association with Nestlé. However, Cullen implied that the use of the brands colours in objects also needs to be considered, adding that it should be applied appropriately depending the scene. For example, a combination of branding and the colour preferences of children would have to be considered. For example, if children like extremely bright and saturated colours they would use those colours if the commercial was aimed at children. However if there is a trend towards adults not showing a preference for those colours, they may not be used in commercials aimed at adults. However there is no rule that brighter colours are more suited to children and therefore they are not exclusively utilised for younger audiences (Cullen Interview).

When compared to the *Grown Ups* commercial, there wasn't a transformation in the use of colour as the advertisement progressed, because this was not necessary in terms of strategy. This advertisement did not advertise a particular type of Nestlé of ice cream, because ranges of ice cream change continually as compared to sweets, which are more constant (Kraushaar Interview). Some ice cream flavours are discontinued, and new ones are continually being developed. For these reasons, this generic advertisement of all Nestlé ice creams was created. Therefore, colours from a particular type of ice cream were not applied in the advertisement. It was however important to show the colours of the Nestlé brand, therefore blue was a prominent colour.

Blue is used in the snow, the sky, clothing, and even in both *Rocky and Blizzard*'s hair, which kids thought of as 'being cool'(KraushaarInterview). Hints of red are noticeable in the television set, the communication device and in the skateboard. The brand identity comes across quite strongly through the use of colour.

The use of colour was applied in terms of brand recognition and not necessarily what would appeal to the target market. This commercial shows a consistent use of blue and white, with hints of bright red, which are in accordance the brand identity of Nestlé Ice Cream.

7.7 Sound

7.7.1 *Grown Ups*

"Sound is 50% of the movie" states Argall, adding that if the right types and levels of sound are utilised in any audio-visual production, it would render the performance more effective and understandable.

With reference to the above view of the impact and importance of audio, it is interesting to note that the production of the *Grown Ups* television commercial began with a song and the visuals were developed to suit the audio. The 'jingle' which explains the magical story in this Smarties advertisement was written by Ed Jordan (Argall Interview). Tim Argall and his team supervised the sound production which was sung by a local artist known as T.K. According to Argall, T.K tended to mix the words upon her first attempts and was asked to re-record the song so that the song would be clearer and easily understood by the audience.

In contrast to the Rocky & Blizzard television commercial, there is no dialogue or voiceover in the *Grown Ups* commercial. However, the melodic theme song serves as the narration for the commercial.

The advertisement begins with the sound of thunder, fitting with the overcast and dull sky. This is in contrast to the jovial background song being sung, by a woman, to explain the story. The sound that the Smarties make as the children interact and play with them is evident but not overpowering.

After eating the Smarties, there is a cartoony sound of the comical spinning of the children and typical sound of a spring popping after the transformation of children into their appropriate attire.

Andrea Kraushaar, felt that at the time the sound was not particularly exciting. She described it as being 'flat' and 'unemotional' when compared to previous Smarties television commercials. In contrast to Kraushaar's view, Tim Argall from Bugbux animation felt that the sound had enough detail to create a fair amount of interest. "Sound adds another dimension to the story" adding that the "memorable jingle sticks in your head" (Argall Interview).

The sound of the elephant spraying the world full of Smarties, the sound of the magical transformation of the ballerina and the emotive use of colour add to the character and appeal of the advertisement. The theme song mentions the Smarties colours, "Red, orange, yellow, green, purple, pink, brown and blue, now there's nothing that we can't do" (Grown Up's campaign). This implies that children would be capable of doing anything with the aid of Smarties.

7.7.2 *Rocky and Blizzard*

In contrast to the Smarties commercial, dialogue is present in the "*Rocky and Blizzard*" commercial. Rocky communicates with Doctor Freeze, through a hi-tech communication device. This communication is very important, as it provides Rocky with his task to go out and find the flavours of ice cream in order to restore a depleted power supply.

The approach in terms of sound was quite different in the production of "*Rocky and Blizzard*" when compared to the "*Grown Ups*" television commercial. Andrea Kraushaar form Youth Dynamix, pointed out that production began with the plot and character development. Appropriate music and voices were incorporated into the commercial at a later stage. This ensured that all aspects would complement the story and the environment (Kraushaar Interview).

Blizzard does not play a dominant role in the commercial. We hear a faint bark of the dog, after Rocky instructs him to join him on his mission. He is the faithful and obedient companion of the teenage boy. The voice of the boy sounds like a typical 'cool' and 'hip' teenager. Luma animation studios and the Nestlé team went through a casting process to find a suitable voice for character of Rocky. An appropriate voice over artist was then selected (Cullen Interview).

7.8 Voice Over

7.8.1 *Grown Ups*

There was no voice over utilised in the commercial.

7.8.2 *Rocky and Blizzard*

A female voice over artist was selected for the narration of the commercial. "Join the ice cream adventure in the blue freezer now," says the female voice at the end of the commercial (*Rocky and Blizzard*). Blue was a dominant colour used in visuals for the commercial. The importance of this colour has also been carried through in the audio. The use of the word 'blue' in the narration of the commercial adds to the importance of the this colour in relation to the brand. Nestlé's brand colour is now being associated with the adventure portrayed throughout the commercial, visually and audibly.

Creative Director at Luma animation, Jason Cullen says that voice-over is one of the final elements which occur during animation production. The final recording of the voice–over is done during a process known as 'final mix' (Cullen Interview). This occurs after all the visuals and most of the audio has been finalised. Recording the final voice over then completes the audio. The sound levels are adjusted and finalised. The commercial is usually viewed by the client for approval before it is shown on television (Cullen Interview).

Cullen says that Luma animation studios worked together with the client, Nestlé, and the advertising agency (JWT in Johannesburg) in choosing suitable voices for the characters. These three entities often work together for this purpose. The client will have an idea of what they would want a particular voice to sound like. A description of the relative voices gets briefed out to the audio studios that respond with a selection of voices. Thereafter, they are able to choose the voices that they prefer for the characters (Cullen Interview).

7.9 Pace

7.9.1 *Grown Ups*

This advertisement had quite a slow pace, considering the time period in which it was created i.e. 2005 (Kraushaar Interview), when compared to the faster pace of the Rocky & Blizzard television commercial. The reason for this difference in pace could be due to the possibility that younger children would not grasp the commercial if it were too fast. However, a lot of audio-visual information has been put across in a short space of time, approximately 30 seconds. Therefore this researcher would disagree with Kraushaar's view that the commercial was slow paced.

7.9.2 *Rocky and Blizzard*

Jason describes the pace of an advertisement as being determined by deciding on what information needs to be presented at particular points. Timing and pace is often determined by the point at which the voice-over begins as well as the time allocated for a logo to be presented (Cullen Interview). This television commercial was faster in pace when compared to the *Grown Ups* advertisement. The plot of the *Rocky and Blizzard* commercial depicted an adventurous and scenic journey, which was a race against time.

7.10 Live action or Animation

7.10.1 *Grown Ups*

When describing children's perceptions and cognition within the ages of two and seven, Baxen states that "[w]hile their ability to infer or abstract is limited, they can be quite analytical. Given the former, however, it means that for the most part they need to see, touch or experience things in order to learn. The use of concrete examples, real things, or pictures, therefore becomes vital" (54). For similar reasons, confirmed by Tim Argall, Nestlé decided to use live action characters so that children would relate to them. The role-play game portrayed in the commercial would allow and encourage children to connect with their own aspirations (Argall Interview). The use of animated characters and objects in conjunction with children, who were shot in live action, added to the believability of the magical idea that children are able to interact with the animated world.

In addition the cost of the advertisement would be much higher if all the children were animated. Children would relate to them just as they relate to various different animated cartoons. Live action characters were chosen in this instance for strategic reasons and because of budget constraints (Argall Interview).

7.10.2 *Rocky and Blizzard*

According to Cullen, the reason why the commercial was fully animated was mainly for creative and strategic reasons. When comparing live action and animated content, Jason Cullen says that one is not superior to the other. He added that live action 'has its place' and so does animation. In this case animation was more suitable in relation to the plot. Cullen was of the opinion that if the *Rocky and Blizzard* commercial were shot in live action, it would be unsuccessful and aesthetically unpleasant. He compared it to the live action feature film *Avatar - The Last Airbender*, which was a huge success as an animated series, but turned out to be a disaster in live action (Cullen Interview). However, there could be various other reasons for its failure, such as bad performance, directing and storyline. Also, in this instance, viewers had the opportunity to compare similar plots in different mediums. Perhaps, the same would outcome would have occurred if the series was animated initially. In this instance, it would not be possible to make such a comparison as there is only an animated version of the *Rocky and Blizzard* commercial. Therefore, the statement made by Jason Cullen may be mere speculation.

Animated films such as *Ice Age*, *The Incredibles* and *Toy Story* were a strong influence at the time, both from agency (JWT) and client (Nestlé). Cullen added that a live action production would entail filming in other parts of the world, or necessitate the development-specialised sets. This would increase the costs of shooting and the action shots of a boy would be difficult to enact and film. The interaction between *Rocky and Blizzard* was easier to control in animation. With live action there would a large number of takes to get the required shots needed for the commercial.

Live action would also be limited in terms of movement. In this instance animators were able to control and adapt the movement of the characters to create desired effects. In addition, in

terms of colour, the brand colours came across effectively with the use of animation. Although colour may be adapted in live action sequences, the alteration of colour in objects or characters may come across as being strange as this is not what is seen in reality. However, in animation this type of adaption may not seem obscure. Therefore the use of live action tends to be more fitting with realistic representations in terms of colour.

7.11 Appeal

7.11.1 *Grown Ups*

Argall suggested that the commercial was successful in terms of its execution and appeal to children. Children seem to have enjoyed the jovial song; the magical transformations and the role-play portrayed in the commercial. Children could relate to the commercial, because 'real' children interacted with the animated world. These ideas would encourage children's own ambitions and animation is medium that children seem to love (Argall Interview).

7.11.2 *Rocky and Blizzard*

Overall, Jason felt that the appeal of this advertisement to children was good because there was a positive reaction. However they felt that Blizzard 'looked a bit dumb' because he didn't do much except to follow Rocky on his adventure through the snow.

The fantasy world was designed for children and the ice world created in the advertisement is amazing to children. While snowboarding and the gadgets are perceived as 'cool' as is the idea of a dog snowboarding. Similar to the *Grown Ups* commercial, it presents elements of impossibility and outrageousness. Also, the creators of both commercials had attempted to make the advertisement aspirational to children. For this reason Rocky is slightly older than the target audience, the idea being that younger children aspire to be like older children (or teenagers). For example, if children between the ages of 10 and 12 are being targeted , the

commercial would often portray a 16 year old as younger children would aspire to be older and engaged in the activities typical of that age group.

When compared to the *Grown Ups* television commercial, this advertisement may be regarded as similar, because both advertisements make use of children's desire to aspire to be like older children or adults. Although Rocky is an animated character, children would regard Rocky as a hero and thus relate to him as an older brother or trusted friend (Kraushaar Interview).

It is Jason Cullen's view that there was no negative feedback about the commercial but there is always room for improvement. In terms of quality, the animation industry in South Africa is competing with television channels such as Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network who are well known for quality animated productions. Children of all ages in South Africa are exposed channels such as these, as well as top quality animated feature films such as those of Disney and DreamWorks. Therefore animated content created for advertising purposes has to keep up with these standards in order to be successful

Cullen implied that because the advertisement was for children's ice cream, they were able to "have more fun" in the production of the commercial and be more creative in their execution and style. At the same time there were a number of restrictions set out in the briefs from the clients, in terms of how the advert was made and what was shown. "With restrictions, comes creativity", says Cullen.

7.12 Plot

7.12.1 *Grown Ups*

As seen in this advertisement, there is a deliberate absence of adults as portrayed visually and audibly, by the song. According to Kraushaar, children within this age group would not feel

comfortable with the idea that their parents have gone away. Because of this insecurity, the song indicated that the adults have gone on holiday, which meant that they would be returning shortly. This would prevent them from experiencing 'separation anxiety' (Kraushaar Interview).

It was called the '*Grown Ups*' campaign because the idea was that kids would feel empowered through taking on the adult responsibilities or careers that adults commonly pursue (Argall). He explains that each child in the advertisement ate a particular colour Smartie. Each child would then change into a 'Grown Up' by taking on an adult responsibility or career, depending on the colour of the candy they ate. The idea of the advertisement was to portray to children what the world would be like with an absence of adults (Argall Interview). But more in terms of children's imaginations rather than reality, as for this younger age group it is necessary to have their parents around (Kraushaar Interview).

It is the view of both Argall and Kraushaar that younger children (between the ages of 2 and 7), enjoy games of role play. Also these children seem to be fascinated with fantasy and magic. In addition both Argall and Kraushaar concur that that children like animation. This commercial showed an alternate world of fantasy and magic. The commercial illustrated that this was all made possible with Nestlé's Smarties. Therefore the strategic decision made by the creators of the commercial, of combining 'real' children with animated characters, objects and backgrounds worked well with the plot, which was derived from the song (Argall Interview). The implication of this approach was that children would associate the colourful and magical world with Smarties, and this would encourage them to purchase the product.

7.12.2 *Rocky and Blizzard*

Kraushaar suggests that the plot was developed from children's writing. A group of South African children between the ages of 10 and 12 were asked to write stories. The adventure

element came across quite strongly in all of the writing. Mystery and adventure resonates with them (Kraushaar).

It is Jason Cullen's view that a good plot is essential to all productions, whether as short as five seconds or as long as two hours. The script helps in deciding whether you keep the animation style simple or complex. For example, the shorter the shot, the simpler the animation could be. Even a character striking a pose can tell a story without much of a performance. While simplistic animation may be used to tell a complex story (Cullen Interview). Furthermore Cullen suggests that animation was the chosen medium, by Nestlé and JWT, because it was best suited to the plot.

Although Nestlé's *Rocky and Blizzard* was aimed at older children, it shared similar ideas of fantasy, as seen in Rocky's adventurous journey through the snowy mountainous world portrayed in the commercial. Further the plot was more complex and the commercial was faster in pace. This could perhaps be more difficult for younger children (aged 2 to 7 years) to fully understand. However it is important to highlight the adventure and magic portrayed in the commercial was created through the use of animation. These characteristics are probably associated with Nestlé Ice Cream, by children and other viewers.

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Conclusion

This thesis explored possible explanations for the use of animation in television commercials targeting children. In an attempt to discover how and why these animated commercials appeal to children, two such commercials for Nestlé products were studied.

This study was a response to the relationship between animation and advertising in South Africa. The aim of this study was to explore why animation is utilised in television commercials which target children and to make a contribution to the body of knowledge with regard to these areas of interest to the animation and advertising industries.

Highlighted in this study is the apparent appeal of the creation of fantasy and adventure worlds for the purpose of marketing. This study shows how animation is an appropriate medium for portraying such worlds.

The study was supported by American and South African research into the history of the relationship between the advertising and animation industries, as evidenced in chapter 1. This has revealed that there is a direct correlation between the two industries. Further that there is a trend towards the use of animation in children's television.

Many resources and people working in the field of animation and advertising have viewed animation as an appropriate medium in advertisements aimed at children. As highlighted in chapter 1, there has been a significant amount of animation used for advertising purposes.

In response to the use of animation in advertising, this study has:

- Contributed to the knowledge base in the field animation studies.
- Explored using scientific methods, advertisers motivation for the specific manner in which the two campaigns were created.
- Documented the findings of the creators of these advertisements.
- Highlighted advertisers' endeavours to 'find the fit' between the nature of advertising aimed at children in terms of its narrative properties as well as the formal elements such as the use of colour, pace, types of motion, sound, shapes and characters, as indicated in chapter 7.

The theoretical discussion has focused on the study of animation, children and television advertising. The relationships between these key subjects have been outlined in chapters 2 through 4.

Chapter 2 has shown that there has been a link between the advertising and animation industries both locally and internationally. Animation has proven to be successful in advertising aimed at both adults and children. However, this research has concentrated on the study of animation and advertising aimed at children.

Chapter 3 of this research has outlined children's understanding of television advertising and its purpose, which in most cases is to influence purchasing behaviour.

Described in chapter 4 of this thesis is fantasy, which is often seen as a tool in the growth and development in the child's imaginative skills. Fantasy literature can be seen as escapist storytelling, which appeals to children on an identifiable level. To convert literature into a

visual form or visual storytelling, animation is often the chosen medium. This has been indicated in both case studies of this thesis where animation was best suited for the plot.

Therefore, as indicated by the views of creators of these commercials, presented in chapter 7, it can be suggested that the apparent appeal of these commercials is achieved because children relate to the fantastical or adventurous worlds portrayed and animation was the appropriate medium to utilise. As such advertisers can use animation as a means to market specific products to children, using fantasy. Similarly, fantasy has been brought to forefront in the form of visual communication with the assistance of the medium of animation, in the two commercials studied in this paper.

8.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made with a view to improving the findings of this study, and suggestions for future research are presented:

- A study composed of the analysis of two commercials aimed at the same age group of children but different in the execution of animation may display interesting results.

- It would be useful to compare commercials which have similar plots but have utilised animation or live action respectively.

- To analyse the correlation between animated commercials and purchasing behaviour versus live action commercials and purchasing behaviour.

- Increasing the number of professionals interviewed who were involved in the production of the commercials will provide a more comprehensive result.

- Interviews should include the views of the advertising agencies consulted in the production of the commercials.

- Children's responses to the commercials should be documented and analysed.

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