

Lights, Camera, Distraction!

The Joop Geesink Dollywood Studio and Viewers Inattention towards
Commercial Television in Britain, 1955-1962



Research Master's Thesis
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Abstract

This thesis investigates a phenomenon that I discovered in the British Film Institute archive: only a few years after commercial Television was launched in Britain in 1955, viewers stopped providing their full attention to commercials. In this thesis, I map out how the problem of inattention developed in the period of 1959 to 1962 based on extensive research in journals of the advertisement industry. I then conduct a comparative analysis of twelve commercials that were made in the mid-1950s to the early-1960s, as this was the period before and during which the problem of inattention was discussed. The commercials that I analyse were made for the brands Mackeson stout and Heineken beer. They were produced by the Dutch Production company *Joop Geesink Dollywood Studio*. This is a tiny sample of thousands of ads from this artistic collection, of hand-crafted puppet and animated commercials, that are preserved at the Eye Film Museum Netherlands, and of which I have viewed about two hundred. The reason why I analyse these commercials is to observe the impact of inattention, by assessing whether it affected advertisers' production strategy. In order to understand what exactly Geesink's production strategy was like before the problem of inattention, I apply Roger Odin's theory of Semio-Pragmatics. I do this because Odin created 'levels' and 'modes' that are useful for applying to media, in order to understand how the media communicates and is experienced. I apply this theory to help me understand how Geesink approached advertising, which I argue was by using characteristics of entertainment, like fictionalisation. I then conceive four sales techniques, to compare whether Geesink's use of them changed from before inattention was discussed and during. Overall, I shed light on the huge yet under-researched Geesink collection, whilst contributing to our understanding of the history of early television advertisement in Britain.

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Introduction

On the evening of 22 September 1955, the Independent Television channel (ITV) made its much-anticipated debut in Britain. It was the moment when the first ever TV commercial entered the homes of thousands of Londoners, and so it was an event that was met with much enthusiasm. For advertisers, the opening night of commercial TV was considered a monumental event in their career. Whereas for the British public, it was associated with the excitement of more entertainment choice, as prior to its arrival there was only one television channel, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

Despite this initial enthusiasm for the arrival of ITV, only a few years after the launch viewers were no longer providing their full attention to the television set. By 1962 it was reported that viewers were often conducting other activities alongside watching a programme, like knitting or reading a newspaper.¹ When it came to the commercial breaks, inattention went to another level, from multi-tasking to deliberately avoiding the ads. When the commercials appeared, an author claimed that viewers would often mute the tv-set, change channels, or get up to make a cup of tea.²

By 1962, inattention was regarded as a serious problem by many who worked within the advertising industry.³ Especially because prior to the launch commercials were only shown in the cinema environment, where audiences had to conform to the social contract of that public space (of the lights going dark being a signal that they should stay seated and quiet). But from 1955, for the first time viewers had far more agency over how they interacted with audio-visual advertising. In the home environment they did not need to conform to the same social rules as in the cinema space, but now they could leave the room or talk during the

¹ This information on commercial television and the phenomenon of inattention that I present here has been gathered by my own research, from scrutinising the trade press magazines at the British Film Institute archive, the most important articles are referenced in this thesis. "The Torquay Conference: A Symposium Round-Up - The Lessons and Rewards of Research for Television." *Television Mail*, vol. 6, no.7 (April 6, 1962): p. 25.

² John Mountjoy, "Should Commercials Entertain - Derick Williams Poses the Question?" *Television Mail*, vol. 2, no.13 (May 20, 1960): p. 23.

³ "The Torquay Conference", *Television Mail*, p. 25-26. Chapter One will entail the other examples that support this point.

commercials.⁴ Prior to 1955, audio-visual advertising only existed in the public sphere, and so conducting this form of inattention in public would have been considered as very inappropriate behaviour.

Between this period, of the launch of commercial TV in 1955 to when inattention was overtly discussed as a problem in 1962, one advertiser created a popular portfolio of commercials for British television. This was Dutch Producer and Animator Joop Geesink, who founded The Joop Geesink Teekenfilm Production in 1942.⁵ Between 1942-1972, the Geesink studio produced thousands of cinema and television commercials for many countries. These ads were made for major global companies which included Philips, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Cadburys, Campari, Winston and Camel Cigarettes.⁶ Despite the Netherlands not getting commercial TV until 1967, the studio was located near Amsterdam and employed around 150 talented men and women who worked on hundreds of commercials every year.⁷ Hence why the collection is now kept at the Eye Film Institute of the Netherlands.

According to his former business partner and fellow artist, Marten Toonder, one of the best ways to summarise Geesink is, “From an American point of view, he is therefore an ideal producer: an artist, who is actually a Businessman”.⁸ This description is accurate as Geesink had a very outgoing businessman personality, which made him great at networking with clients overseas.⁹ At the same time, he was also an artist who specialised in making handcrafted puppet characters, to the extent that his fellow advertisers even regarded him as a pioneer in the early developments of stop-motion animation.¹⁰ The studio would be filled with many props, puppets, and people working on the set just like a stop motion movie set.

⁴ It would be interesting to look at this point in relation to the work: John Ellis, *Visible Fictions: Cinema, Television, Video* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul) 1982. The book focuses on arguing the differences between cinema and broadcast TV, in regards to their: social roles, marketing, forms of institutional organisation, general aesthetic procedures, and how they ask their spectators to treat them.

⁵ Leenke Ripmeester, “Entertainment Uit de Lage Landen: de Geesink Collectie.” *TMG Journal for Media History*, vol 15, issue 1 (October 2012): p. 75, <https://doi.org/10.18146/tmg.416>

By 1947 the company was officially called Joop Geesink's Dollywood NV, and by 1955 he expanded the studio with Starfilm, which was where the live-action advertising assignments were produced.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 79. This is an English translation from a quote in Ripmeester's article. The original quote says in Dutch: “Vanuit een Amerikaans oogpunt bekeken is hij dus een ideaal producer: een artist, die eigenlijk Zakenman is”.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁰ Norman Hurst, “A New Process Gives Cardboard Puppets a 3-D Effect, an Off-Beat Appeal for the ‘TV Times’”, *Audio-Visual Selling*, vol 4, no.239 (October 2, 1959): p. 8.

His production strategy was recognised globally due to his intricate commercials, making him very successful and famous in the advertising world, winning more than eighty prizes during his career.¹¹ Instead of merely showcasing a product through different camera shots, or having a salesman list all of the product's virtues, Geesink's ads specialised in telling stories with puppet characters that were set in fictional worlds.

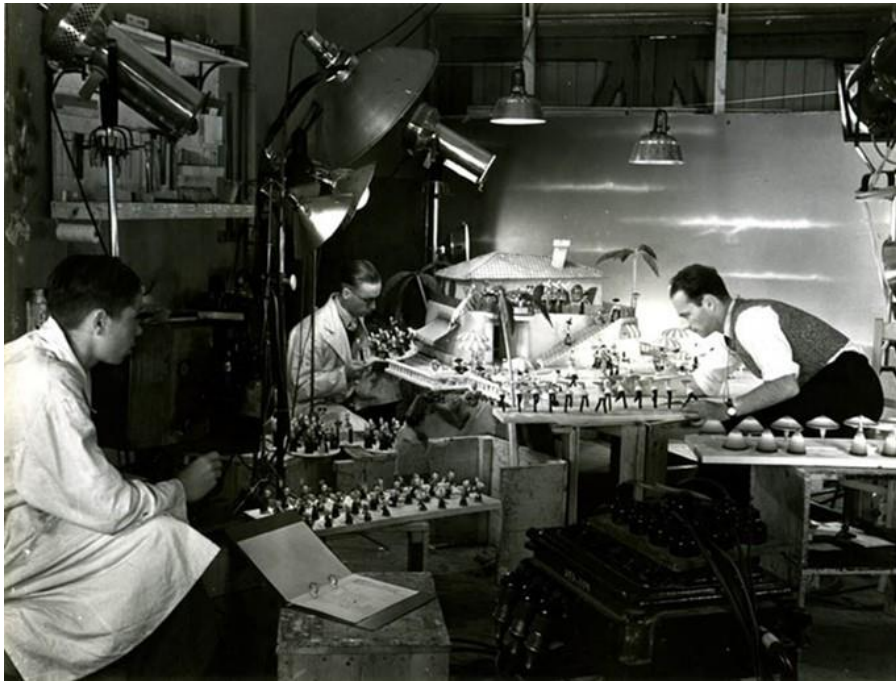


Figure 1 – The employees of the Geesink studio working on a commercial film

Yet despite Geesink having such an innovative and successful approach to advertising, specifically in the period when commercialisation really took off, his portfolio has been either overlooked or is unknown to scholars. The only reason why I am aware of his work is because I conducted an internship at the Eye Film Museum. Fortunately, in the last few years the collection has gained more interest as there have been presentations and screenings of the ads.¹² But despite it being a preserved collection of over two thousand television and cinema

¹¹ Ripmeester, "Entertainment uit de Lage Landen", p, 97. I also found in an article from 1955 that Geesink won "one of the five Sylvanus Awards, given in America each year for the best commercial tv spots." The commercial was a one-minute beer ad made for the Goebel Brewing Company, that was announced in an article headlined, "Major award for Joop Geesink". I also found that his Ballantine whiskey commercial won an award for the category of 'Puppets and Marionettes' in the June 1961 Cannes Lions International Advertising festival.

¹² One example of this was a talk I attended at the Kaboom Animation Festival, in the Netherlands 2023. On Sunday 2 April, at the Eye Film Museum, there was a talk on the Geesink collection titled 'Kaboom Classics: Dollywood'. The speakers were Geesink's daughter Louise Geesink, along with Ripmeester, Mette Peters and Arie den Draak. It was a great talk and turnout, and we got to see the original puppets, props and Loeki de Leeuw puppet!

commercials, it is still under-researched. Other than the work of curator Leenke Ripmeester, who is the Geesink collection specialist at Eye, there is not much written on the Geesink Studio. This is surprising because these commercials reached millions of people worldwide, specifically at a time when television had limited viewing hours, and so they were significant in contributing to what Historian Joe Moran describes as a, “community of viewers, formed wordlessly and unconsciously through collective habits and behaviours.”¹³ Yet despite this, audio-visual advertising, like Geesink’s commercials, have been marginalised in archival practices and academia. Instead, advertisement scholars have mainly focused their attention on paper ads, like newspapers, pamphlets, magazines and posters.¹⁴ In turn, animation scholars have neglected to notice that animation and advertising have been entwined since the earliest days of moving images.¹⁵



Figure 2 – An Italian commercial for Elah sweets and caramels, made by the Geesink Studio in 1954. The elaborate set design depicts a world where funfair rides are made from sweets.

¹³ Joe Moran, *Armchair Nation: An Intimate History of Britain in Front of the TV* (London: Profile Books, 2013): p. 11.

¹⁴ Ripmeester, “Entertainment uit de Lage Landen,” p. 78.

¹⁵ Malcolm Cook and Kirsten Moana Thompson, *Animation and Advertising*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019): p. 7.

Archives and Archivists

Due to the lack of information on the Geesink collection, I dedicated this thesis to finding out more about these artistic commercials. But in doing so, I first had to specify a topic of focus, as the studio made commercials for many different countries, including America, Germany and Italy. In order to examine this huge portfolio in more depth, I first narrowed down my research to specifically British ads. This is because my specialism is in British history, notably the 1950s and 1960s, and so I was most informed about this context that Geesink's work was exhibited in. The other reasons why I selected the UK, were practical, as it meant I was able to look at sources that were in English and visit the archives that are in my home country.

Thanks to my internship and job at Eye, I was able to easily connect with specialists who work at institutions that might have more information about the Geesink collection. One of the archivists that I met with was Jez Stewart, who is the curator of animation at the British Film Institute (BFI) and published *The Story of British Animation* in 2021. I reached out to Stewart to see if there were any British alcohol commercials made by Geesink that were at the BFI archive.¹⁶ But I soon found that there were not really any additional Geesink ads that were not already at Eye. Therefore, when I visited the BFI archive, we watched about a dozen prints of British alcohol commercials that were made by other advertisers around this same time. It was useful to see these prints, in order to also get an idea of how Geesink's competitors approached advertising. But what was most useful about my visit to the BFI, was Stewart's suggestion that I should look at some of the British Trade Press Magazines that are kept there.

These magazines became pivotal to my thesis, as they are what informed me about this phenomenon of inattention. There were at least three different magazines published by the advertising industry in Britain from around 1955, called, *Audio-Visual Selling*, *Television Mail*, and *Commercial Television News*. Stewart explained to me that they were likely created in 1955 to cater to the demand in discussions of the new medium of TV advertisement. He

¹⁶ Ripmeester informed me that this might be the case because in the past Stewart had informed her that the BFI had some Geesink commercials. I asked Stewart for specifically alcohol ads, because I narrowed down my research to only 'alcohol' commercials.

also mentioned that they would have been subscribed to by advertising agencies, equipment manufacturers, studios, production companies, and freelancers.¹⁷ They offered a community space to the people who worked in the advertising industry, who came from all fields like engineering, animating, production and research. They are such rich sources because they inform us about how people navigated this new industry, as described in articles that either reviewed the commercials, debated the best approach to advertising, or provided interviews with people who worked in the industry. They even contained interviews with Geesink, and reactions to his work from other advertisers at the time. This is also why I selected Geesink's television ads and not his cinema ads to examine here, as these magazines mainly focused on television advertising.

The BFI has thousands of these magazines that are bounded into many books, making it a huge collection to tackle. I was informed by the BFI library assistant that the *Television Mail* magazines are bounded into at least 28 books, let alone the other two magazines. Due to the scope of this thesis I was limited in time and resources to examine all of these books. Instead, I needed to select only a small sample of magazines. My methodology was to ask the library assistant for a random sample of magazine books that were published within a eight year time frame, as I felt that this period was not too broad or narrow.¹⁸ I chose 1955 as the starting point because this was when TV commercials were first broadcasted in Britain, and so this would allow me to examine how advertisers first navigated this new medium. Pragmatically, I selected 1962 as the end date simply because it is eight years from the starting date of 1955. But this ended up being a good point to end my study, because it was the year when inattention became generally recognised as a problem. For future research, I want to examine magazines that were published after 1962, to see how the discourse surrounding inattention developed from then onwards. Staying within this eight year timeframe really allowed me to examine each year in-depth, which is crucial for understanding the phenomenon of inattention, and for answering my research question.

¹⁷ Stewart also informed me that since 1913 there was already a popular advertising journal called *Advertising Weekly*, and that out of the three magazines that I refer to here, *Television Mail* seems to be the only one that lasted more than a decade. He said that it is quite natural for a few different publications to crop up to meet the needs of a specialist market but through competition only one or two succeed.

¹⁸ This means that my discoveries that I present here are the results of chance, as they are the outcome of the random selection that the library assistant made. Other researchers in this field have seemed to use a similar methodology. On page 202 of Su Holmes book titled, *Entertaining Television: The BBC and Popular Television Culture in the 1950s*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), she describes this comparable approach to the archive as, "To some extent, this book is the product of 'chancing it'".

Despite confining my research to an eight year period, I still looked at a huge quantity of magazines. The library assistant provided me with fourteen books that they had randomly selected. I was determined to look through them all, and so I spent five consecutive days visiting the BFI library in London, and in total I looked through almost a thousand magazines. I took over three hundred photos on my phone of the articles that mentioned Geesink, and any other interesting information that stood out to me. I did this because the magazines are not yet digitised by the BFI, and so it allowed me to look at the articles more carefully once I returned to the Netherlands. Then, whilst I was examining these photos in the Netherlands, I discovered the phenomenon of inattention.



Figure 3 - The fourteen books filled with hundreds of trade press magazines, that were published from 1955-1962.

The Research Question

My discovery of this problem of viewers' inattention, that occurred whilst Geesink was a prominent figure in the British advertising industry, led to the formulation of my main research question: To what extent did Joop Geesink's production strategy take into account viewers' inattention to television commercials? I ask this question to determine the impact of the problem by examining whether it affected advertisers' production strategy. I conduct a comparative analysis of twelve commercials that were made by the Geesink Studio before and during the problem of inattention. I examine these commercials to observe if there was a change in his production strategy, and whether these changes can be interpreted as a reaction to viewers' inattention. Overall, whilst I am answering this question we can learn more about the under-researched collection of the Geesink Studio, and about the phenomenon of viewers inattention.

The first step I take in answering this question is to map out what exactly the problem of inattention was. In order to look at this phenomenon of inattention closely, I ask the sub-question: To what extent was viewer inattention deemed as a problem by those who worked within the advertising industry? I then answer this question by creating an overview of how the problem of inattention developed from 1959 to 1962. This overview is made from the discourse of inattention that I have found in the advertising Trade Press Magazines. Here I unveil all of the articles that refer to inattention, so we can gain an overview of how it became an arising problem. However, these articles were mainly from advertising research agencies or academics, leaving advertisers' perspectives unclear. Hence why this gap prompts a closer examination of Geesink's ads, to assess advertisers' level of concern regarding inattention.

The twelve ads that I have selected for my analysis are all Geesink commercials that I found mentioned in the magazines. They were selected from the magazines because they provide a precise date of when the ad was aired, and thus a hint to when they were likely made.¹⁹ This

¹⁹ My research at the BFI helped me to identify the dates of when some of Geesink's ads were made. I also found interviews with him and discussions about his work from other advertisers. I have incorporated this valuable information into Eye's catalogue. This is important because it is difficult to find the exact dates of when the ads were made or any additional information on the collection.

is precious information because even in Eye's catalogue many of the ads do not have the specific dates recorded, as it is often unknown. But in order to conduct my comparative analysis of commercials that were made before and during the discussions of inattention, then I need to know the dates that the ads were made, hence why my findings are so useful.

Geesink made commercials for all types of products, such as chocolate, cigarettes, hairspray, dogfood, coffee, fridges, and bikes. But the alcohol products are the only commercials that are made by Geesink that I found mentioned in the magazines. This is fortunate as my original aim was to focus on alcohol products because they are the only lifestyle product that can affect the consumers behaviour. This links to another interesting point, i.e., that alcohol can only be bought and consumed by adults, yet in Geesink's alcohol ads he used animation, stories, and puppet characters, which are usually associated with children's entertainment. Today, there are even laws and regulations that prohibit this method of advertising alcohol because the animation can appeal to children.²⁰



Figure 4 –A few of the hundreds of puppets that the Dollywood studio created.

²⁰ Advertising Standards Authority. "Alcohol: The Use of Cartoons, Animals and Characters." Last Modified March 23, 2023. [Accessed April 12, 2024]. <https://www.asa.org.uk/advice-online/alcohol-the-use-of-cartoons-animals-and-characters.html>. Examining how Geesink approached advertising can also inform us of the changes of how alcohol can be advertised, which appears to be more complicated now compared to when Geesink made his work.

Literature Review

Fortunately, there has recently been more research published in the field of animated ads and audio-visual advertising. These works include *Films that Sell* (2016), edited by Bo Florin, Nico Van de Klerk and Patrick Vonderau, *Animation and Advertising* (2019), edited by Malcolm Cook and Kirsten Moana Thompson, and *The Animation Studies Reader* (2018) edited by Nichola Dobson, Annabelle Honess Roe, Amy Ratelle and Caroline Ruddell. These books provide much insight into the subject of audio-visual advertising, and they provide many different angles to approach this topic from. In addition to this, historian Wilbert Schreurs wrote a monograph that was published by the Netherlands Institute for Sound & Vision in 2014. It relates to my thesis topic as it is titled, *Don't Apologize for Your Commercial. The Discourse on the Content of Television Advertising During the Early Years in Britain and the Netherlands*.²¹ As we can see, fortunately there is some insightful scholarly work on this subject of animated audio-visual advertising. But having said this, their relevance to my research turned out to be very limited. This is because my corpus is the Geesink collection, and I am focussing on the phenomenon of inattention that I discovered. The Geesink collection was explored in some of these works, but not in relation to a British context of the topic of inattention.

In this thesis one of my sub-questions is: What was Geesink's production strategy? I ask this because I first need to understand what his approach to advertising was before I can conclude whether it had changed over time. In answering this question I agree with Ripmeester's argument, in her 2012 article, whose title can be translated into English as "Entertainment from the Low Countries: The Geesink Collection," that the Geesink studio approached advertising as a form of entertainment.²² Here she explains that there is a clear similarity or overlap between the meaning of entertainment and advertising.²³ She proves her point by connecting entertainment and advertising with the concept of 'utopianism', which she uses as a tool to explain how entertainment and advertising are similar.

²¹ Based on the archival sources that I observed, I disagree with some of the conclusions that Schreur draws here, but it does not link to this thesis so I will save that debate for another time.

²² Ripmeester, "Entertainment uit de Lage Landen", p. 79.

²³ Ibid. p. 81.

I agree with Ripmeester that Geesink's production strategy entailed approaching advertising as entertainment, but I apply a different theory to explain this. I use a communication theory from the field of film studies, to explain how entertainment features can help to transport a sales message, i.e. the work of Roger Odin, *Spaces of Communication - Elements of Semio-Pragmatics*, that was originally published in 2011. Odin's concept called 'Spaces of Communication', and his theoretical constructs of 'modes', helps me to determine the function of communication tools that are used in Geesink's advertisements. Examples of these tools are: animation, stories, characters and props. Production strategies are often broadly categorised under sales approaches such as 'soft-sell' or 'hard-sell'. But applying this theory helps to answer questions like: How exactly does a sales approach communicate? How are entertainment tools used to transport and enhance a sales message?

The Chapters

This thesis is divided into three chapters. In Chapter One, I begin by presenting the origins of commercial television in Britain in 1955. I do so by providing examples of how advertisers and the British public reacted to the launch of it, and how the Television developed into a mass medium alongside the arrival of commercial TV. I begin Chapter One with this information to emphasise that despite the enthusiasm surrounding commercial TV, just five years after its launch viewers were no longer giving their full attention to it. This point is emphasised because it is surprising how fast inattention developed, as the current discourse around inattention usually refers to it as a present-day problem that has recently been exacerbated because of the rapid advancements in communication technologies.²⁴ I then map out what this problem of viewers' inattention was exactly. I do so by presenting an overview of the discussions of inattention that I found in the trade press magazines and started around 1959. I then provide an example of how inattention had an impact on the terminology and programming of commercial television. This example serves to demonstrate that inattention was not merely a topic of debate, but that it also had tangible effects on the medium of television.

²⁴ Chapter One expands on this point with references to evidence of this current discourse.

In Chapter Two, I explain Odin's theory of Semio-Pragmatics, in particular his concept 'Spaces of Communication', the theoretical constructs of 'modes', and the 'levels' that create these modes. I dedicate this chapter to explaining this theory because Odin created useful tools that help to understand how media communicates, and thus how viewers experience them. Making it a particularly useful theory to apply to commercials, because the primary aim of them is to communicate a sales message. Having said this, I disagree with how Odin defines commercials' modes of communication, as I argue that Geesink's ads communicated via what Odin calls the 'Fictionalising Mode Second Approach' and the 'Documentarising Mode'. I explain this with an example of a commercial that was made by the studio in 1955, as this also helps to show what Geesink's production strategy was before the problem of inattention.

In Chapter Three I conduct the comparative analysis of the Geesink studio commercials that were made between 1955 to 1962. The aim here is to assess whether there were any changes in the ads that were made at the start of commercial TV in Britain in 1955, compared with the ads that were made when discussions of viewers inattention were arising around 1960. To conduct this analysis, I have created four categories so I can examine and compare the commercials in more detail. These are: the type of audio used, repetition of the product name, depiction of the product in the package shot moments, and the use of slogans. These four categories were selected because they are advertising production strategies, than can be used to help promote a product. These sales techniques can also be used to attract and maintain attention, and so comparing how exactly they were used from 1955 to 1962. Therefore, this helps me to understand whether Geesink's production strategy may have changed in relation to the arising problem of inattention. I then end this chapter with a summary of the analysis results, and I provide some explanations to these results.

Before I delve into these chapters, it is important that I first emphasise that this thesis is composed of explorative research. Throughout this thesis I am asking an open question, and using a sample of primary sources to find an answer to it. This means that I run the risk of the material itself not providing sufficient answers. This can often be the case with historical research. But it is still very valuable, as in doing so I am not only able to shed light on this

huge yet under-researched Geesink collection, but I also contribute to our understanding of the history of early television advertisement in Britain.

Chapter One - From the Launch to Inattention

In this chapter, I explain how the phenomenon of viewer inattention unfolded. I do this by mapping out the problem of inattention in regard to when it was discussed, what was said about it exactly, and who regarded it to be a problem. This information provides us with an answer to my sub-question: to what extent was viewer inattention deemed as a problem by those who worked within the advertising industry? I ask this question as it helps me assess the extent to which inattention affected advertisers' production strategy. Hence why here I map out the problem of inattention as this helps me to first better understand the phenomenon before I explore how Geesink may have responded to it.

I begin this chapter by discussing the origins of commercial Television in Britain in 1955. First, I present some examples of the advertisers', and the British public's reactions towards the launch of commercial television. I also explain how television developed as a mass medium in concurrence with the launch of commercial TV. The reason why I discuss this here is because it informs us that there was much excitement towards commercials, but then only five years after the launch the novelty had already worn off, to the extent that viewers no longer gave their full attention to the commercials, and even the programmes. Therefore, I begin this chapter by presenting the response to the launch of commercial TV in Britain, to illustrate how the attitudes towards the medium changed so drastically.

In the next part of this chapter, I map out the discourse regarding viewers inattention, that appeared from around 1959-1962. Here we will see a gradual emergence of the discussions of viewers inattention, from those who were connected to the advertising world. I will then present an example that I found of inattention affecting commercial TV, specifically in regard to the terminology like 'Peak-Times'. I present this example to inform the reader that inattention was not only a debated problem, but that it had an actual impact on the medium of television. This is a significant source because it influenced my research question that aims to find out whether the problem also impacted the production strategy of advertisers like Geesink too.

The content of this chapter is mainly formed with the archival research that I have conducted, as opposed to secondary literature. This is because the phenomenon has not yet been discussed elsewhere, and so the only information that I could find on it was from the trade press magazines that I read. The lack of literature on this subject makes it even more important that I present the phenomenon in detail here. Mapping how it developed will also inform us about some of the challenges that are faced with new media, thus contributing to the field of media studies. Overall, this chapter is dedicated to presenting my findings here, in the aim to understand what the problem of inattention was exactly before I take stock of whether advertisers like Geesink also reacted to this problem.

The ‘Opening Night’

“A week has gone by since the opening night of commercial tv, but the memory of this historical occasion will remain vivid for many a year.”²⁵

It is difficult to imagine that a phenomenon that we regard as a nuisance, and hold much animosity towards, was once so welcomed. For most of us, we skip, mute, scroll and tap to avoid commercials as best as we can. Yet surprisingly, there once was a time when commercials were welcomed with open arms. In complete contrast with today, there was even a moment when commercials created an atmosphere of suspense and excitement. This all began on the evening of 22 September 1955, which was the ‘opening night’ of commercial television in Britain.²⁶ It was a night that had been preceded by an atmosphere of anticipation, and it was even considered a spectacle event by some who worked in the advertising industry. This was to the extent that moments before the first ever commercial was shown on British television, one individual, who worked in the advertising industry, described the anticipation

²⁵ “How We View It Column – ‘A Great Night and After.’” *Commercial Television News*, (September 30, 1955): p. 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

as: “Faces were eager, pencils poised, some people even checked the passing seconds on their watches as the great moment drew near.”²⁷ Advertisers, like in this account, were elated that audio-visual advertising had entered the public’s home environment in Britain for the first time ever.²⁸ One advertiser described this in 1958 as, “ITV put a salesman into millions of homes”.²⁹ Prior to this, commercials were only screened in the cinema, because the one BBC channel did not (and still does not) air commercials. This meant that before commercial TV, advertisers were only able to promote products in people’s private environment through *either* sound or vision, via radio, newspapers, or magazines. TV commercials meant that they had a whole new medium to work with, in which the imagery could seductively inform the viewer of what the product looked like, whilst the audio enhanced the visuals via a song, sound effects, a narrator or a catchy jingle. Advertisers assumed that audio-visual commercials entering the home would make them more effective at their job, which explains why they regarded the launch of commercial TV as an important milestone in history.

Not only were the people who worked in advertising excited about the launch of commercial TV, as the British public were too. For the first time, those who could afford a television set in 1955, finally had agency over what they watched. Prior to this, there was only one channel (the BBC), and so an additional channel now provided them with a choice of entertainment. Specifically for Londoners, who were the first in the country to receive this service. According to reports from this time, mentioned in social and cultural historian Joe Moran’s book *Armchair Nation*, there was a strong feeling of anticipation amongst the public for the run up to the event.³⁰ This was likely because, in the weeks prior to the launch, Londoners had been advised by posters on the London underground to adjust their aerials to receive the new Channel 9.³¹ Even the rival channel, the BBC, made a joke on the opening night of ITV about this atmosphere of anticipation. A character on the BBC show exclaimed “Come, come Tom: it doesn’t matter what you say. Nobody is watching us tonight.”³² Thus showing that

²⁷ Ibid. The article does not state who wrote it, but it was likely someone who worked within the advertising industry as it was a weekly column published in the *Commercial Television News* magazine.

²⁸ George Cooper, “ITV Put a Salesman Into Millions of Homes.” *Commercial Television News*, vol. 3, no.154 (February 14, 1958): p. 10.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Moran, *Armchair Nation*, p. 104. Another book that provides much insight into this topic is by Tony Currie, *A Concise History of British Television 1930–2000* (Tiverton: Kelly Publications, 2000).

³¹ Ibid. It is worth noting that the launch was limited to London as the signal towers started there, and so I am not referring to the broader British public but solely Londoners.

³² Ibid. The show that this joke was made was called, *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?* Mortimer Wheeler said the joke to Professor Thomas Bodkin on the show.

there really was this feeling of anticipation in the air that even the rival channel could not ignore.

Commercials were likely associated with the excitement of a new mass medium. In the 1950s a television set was a luxury item, only 190,000 homes owned one in 1955.³³ But only a year later, in 1956, there were over 1 million TV's in London homes.³⁴ In a 1959 study on the class status of TV viewers, it was reported that the medium was no longer a luxury item but "fairly evenly distributed through all social grades".³⁵ At this point nearly 15 million households had a TV set.³⁶ By 1960 television had indeed become a mass medium, as nearly three quarters of the British population owned one. From these figures, we can see that the launch of commercial TV in 1955 coincided with a surge of TV purchases. Making it highly likely that commercial TV influenced this increase in TV ownership. However, it is unlikely that this was caused by the launch of commercials, but instead the rise in entertainment choice that was provided by the additional channel.

Once ITV came along, there was not only more choice in entertainment but also an increase in the amount of hours of it. Unlike today, where we have access to unlimited media, in 1955 there was a strict schedule of when and how many hours of TV was allowed per day. Just before commercial TV was launched, the Postmaster General increased the maximum permitted weekly hours of broadcasting considerably, from thirty-five to fifty hours per channel per week. ITV used these hours to greatly expand daytime television, meaning that the arrival of commercial TV was also the beginning of daytime TV.³⁷ This meant that when commercials arrived, how and when people experienced television also changed, from only the evenings to the daytime too. The amount of people engaging with this medium drastically increased by millions, within only a short period of five years. A consequence of this, was that more TV hours meant there was more time for advertisements. This meant that Geesink was making his ads in a time when the amount of marketing that people were exposed to in

³³ Guy Paine, "Meeting the Challenge of a Changing Audience." *Television Mail*, vol. 3, no.4 (September 16, 1960): p. 21.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Darton, "How TV Advertising can Help the Drinks Industry", *Television Mail*, (1960), p. 3.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

their homes was increasing drastically. We might assume that his approach to advertising changed to adapt to this growing audience and competition from other advertisers.³⁸

The launch of commercial TV entailed much excitement for viewers, likely because it provided more entertainment choice. Having said this, I have found evidence that viewers were also enthusiastic about the commercials. However, before I present these accounts, it is important to note that I found them in the trade press magazines, which were created by the advertising industry. Meaning, that there is the possibility that these accounts were not actually from real members of the public, but instead formed by advertisers who were assuming the roles of ordinary individuals.³⁹ However, I find it unlikely that this was the case because the main aim of these magazines was to inform and debate the new medium, so that those working in the industry could develop it. Making false descriptions about it would have been unhelpful, but this possibility should still be considered.

One example, of a viewer's welcoming response towards commercial TV, is from a weekly column that started in 1955, called "My View – by Mrs. Joy Thomas (CTN's Average Housewife)". In an article from this column, published on 2 December 1955, a couple months after the launch of commercial TV, Mrs Thomas begins by stating, "Asked the other day what I most enjoyed on independent tv, I was forced to admit that second only to the plays, I liked the advertisements."⁴⁰ This comment is surprising, as it really contrasts with the current shared consensus towards ads, which is confirmed by a quick google search on commercials.⁴¹ But, having said this the term "forced to admit" is interesting wording, as it suggests that enjoying ads was seen as odd at the time, and so maybe they were unfavourable then too.⁴² Nevertheless, Mrs Joy still admits that they are her guilty pleasure, which becomes less surprising once you learn that during this time some viewers were so fond of ads that they would rate their favourite ones in a readers' poll, which was then published in papers such as the Sunday Dispatch.⁴³

³⁸ Darton, "How TV Advertising can Help the Drinks Industry", *Television Mail*, (1960), p. 3. This article found that people from all classes now owned television sets, not just the elite like in the early to mid-1950s.

³⁹ Or, that they only published positive viewer accounts in their magazines.

⁴⁰ Mrs Joy Thomas, "My View – Column." *Commercial Television News*, (December 2, 1955): p. 7.

⁴¹ As you can see in the image below, I typed into google "why are commercials" to see which results would automatically appear. It shows that the discourse surrounding ads on the internet is very negative.

⁴² Thomas, "My View", *Commercial Television News*, p. 7

⁴³ Moran, *Armchair Nation*, p. 105.

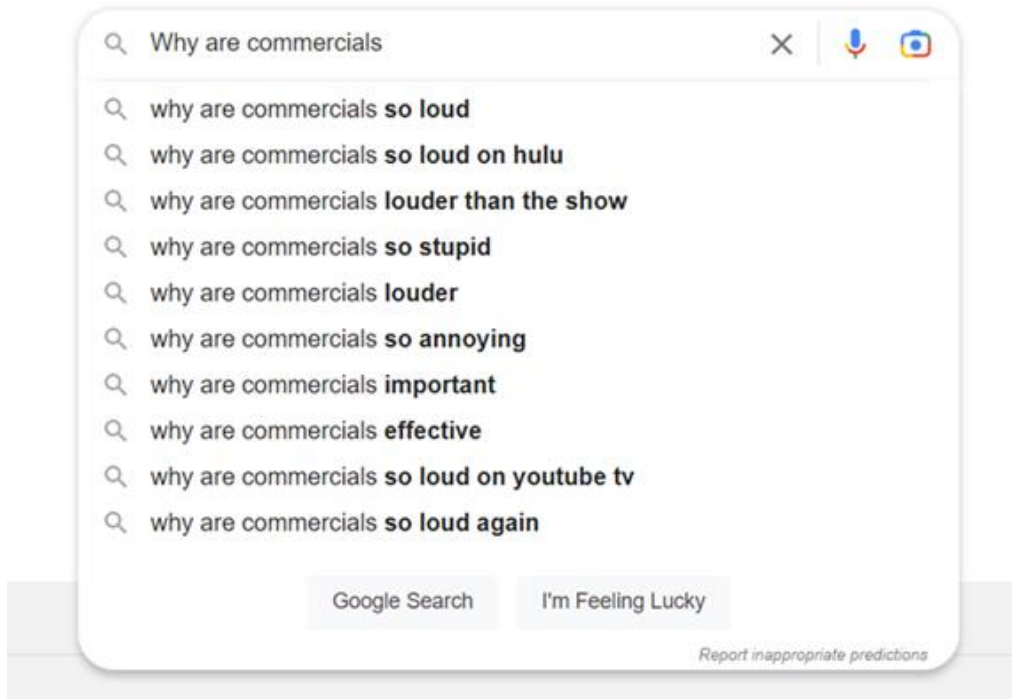


Figure 5 – As we can see here the current attitudes towards commercials is very negative.

Another example of viewers enthusiasm towards commercials, is mentioned in the *Commercial Television News* magazine, and is titled, “What Irritates the Housewife Most about Current Commercials”. This sounds like a negative response to ads, but the article actually entails a welcoming attitude towards them. It was written by a housewife named Irene Hazell, and she praises commercials for making the television her “shopping window”.⁴⁴ She expressed that “One thing commercials have done is to make housewives realise how short they have been all their married lives of a vast number of essentials.”⁴⁵ She explains that this is because commercials are more compelling than radio or paper ads as, “This is where the visual appeal wins over the written word, for one flips through a magazine, only reading the advertisements that personally appeal, but you can’t escape what appears on

⁴⁴ Irene Hazell, “What Irritates the Housewife Most about Current Commercials.” *Commercial Television News*, vol. 2, no.47 (November 23, 1956): p. 4.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

the screen if it breaks through your evening viewing.”⁴⁶ This article was published a year after the launch of commercial TV, in November 1956, yet Hazell is still enthusiastic about ads. This shows that housewives were supportive of commercials because they provided them with more information about products, which then helped them with their job of shopping.

It is understandable why Hazell held this view towards ads, as they depicted consumer products at a time when post-war Britain had finally ended rationing in 1954.⁴⁷ This meant that prior to commercial TV there was far less advertisement, because there were no resources to create commodities to advertise. But when the economy picked up, advertisement increased because more choice in commodities led to more competition between the companies that sold them. This meant that commercials represented all the luxuries and possibilities that the British had been deprived of through the long 14 years of rationing, that was caused by the Second World War.⁴⁸ This made ads associated with all the positive post-war possibilities, like consumer goods, which advertisers could use to their advantage.⁴⁹ This can explain why Hazell even goes as far to state that, “Housewives are tremendously grateful to advertisers, who have given us more attention and a sense of importance”.⁵⁰ This may seem like an odd statement, as thanking advertisers for creating annoying and interrupting ads is not something we would do now. But this was the period when many women had returned back to the home, as they had been working in public jobs whilst the men were in the army. The quote even suggests that upon returning to the position of a housewife, women lacked the feeling of gratification that they had received in the public working environment (like financial or verbal praise). Commercials helped to provide them with this ‘sense of importance’, as it assisted them in one of their important jobs of shopping.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ “1954: The END of RATIONING | BBC News | Classic News Report | BBC Archive.” YouTube. [Accessed April 25, 2024]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSQ4W3y88eo> .

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Harold Darton, “How TV Advertising can Help the Drinks Industry”, *Television Mail*, vol 2, no. 2 (March 4, 1960), p. 1. In this article we see that contemporaries were aware of this, and that advertisers were using it to their advantage as Darton states, “The wines and spirits industries are in a very strong position to capture the nouveau riche market created by the post-war boom we are now enjoying. This market is made up of all the people who now find themselves, thanks to a long period of high wages and full employment, in a position to enjoy luxuries of life with which may have been unfamiliar.”

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Mapping The Problem of Inattention

As I have mentioned in the section above, there was a lot of excitement from both the advertisers and the public towards the launch of commercial TV. For advertisers, it provided a brand new platform for them to work with, as for the first time audio-visual advertising had entered the homes of the masses. For the viewers, commercial TV was associated with more entertainment choices, commodities in a post-war rationed Britain, and it was even understood as a tool to help housewives in their work of shopping. But despite all of this initial excitement towards the medium, within five years of it being launched viewers had already lost interest in it.

There are a few reasons why I was so struck by this rapid shift of viewers' excitement to inattention. One reason is because I was unaware that inattention was such a historical problem. This may seem uninformed, but my assumption was likely shaped by the current discourse that inattention as a twenty-first century problem. As it is usually addressed as an issue that occurred over the last twenty years. Primarily caused by the recent rapid advancement of media and technology, specifically smart-phones, tablets and social media. There are many podcasts, YouTube videos, and news articles that refer to inattention as a very recent problem.⁵¹ An example of this, is an article titled "How to Focus Like It's 1990", that was published in the *New York Times* in 2023. It romanticises the past, as a time when focus was so much better than today. The sub-heading even blames current technology as causing inattention, and it advocates learning from the past, as it states that "Smartphones, pings and Insta-everything have shortened our attention spans. Get some old-school concentration back with these tips."⁵² In addition to this example, there is a popular podcast that often discusses inattention. It is called *On Purpose with Jay Shetty*, and one episode in particular is titled "6 Ways to Stop Getting Distracted and Start Getting Focused". It links this problem of inattention to modern technologies, and the podcast description even states, "How

⁵¹ Chris Bailey, "How to Get Your Brain to Focus | Chris Bailey | TEDxManchester." Posted 5 April, 2019. [Accessed 29 May, 2024]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hu4Yvq-g7_Y . This video has over forty million views on YouTube. Bailey asks "How does technology influence our attention and our ability to focus?" He discusses an experiment he conducted of only using his phone for thirty minutes a day, his results were that his attention span had increased. This shows that inattention is heavily connected to current modern technology (smartphones), as opposed to a historical issue.

⁵² Dana G. Smith, "How to Focus Like It's 1990," *New York Times*, January 9, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/09/well/mind/concentration-focus-distraction.html> .

many times have you looked at your phone today? How many times in a day do you scroll mindlessly on your favorite social media platform? How many times have you put down your phone to actually finish your work?”⁵³

In further support of this point, other researchers such as, Professor Su Holmes, admits how popular culture shapes our expectations before we enter the archive. As like myself, she was also surprised by what she found in the Television archives. Holmes refers to this in the conclusion of her book, *Entertaining Television: The BBC and Popular Television Culture in the 1950s*. As whilst in the archives Holmes noticed that “I repeatedly found that my own expectations of BBC television from this time (elitist, dismissive of popular film culture?) were reshaped and challenged.”⁵⁴

The discourse that inattention is primarily a twenty-first century problem, is also prominent in academia. Inattention is often discussed within new-media theory as a present-day issue, rather than historical.⁵⁵ Examples of this include, the bestseller book by Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*. It draws on research from neuroscience, psychology, and sociology, to argue how the internet is affecting our cognitive processes and behaviour. But by Carr focussing on the internet, means that inattention is discussed within a very late nineteenth century to twenty first century context. Another example is Dominic Pettman’s book *Infinite Distraction : Paying Attention to Social Media*. That explores the contemporary condition of distraction within the context of digital culture. However, as my research has unveiled to me, inattention is also a historical issue. One media theorist who really promotes this argument is Jonathan Crary. In his book from 1999, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture*.⁵⁶ Having said this, I do not delve into any of these academic discussions that focus on attention, because they do not help me to answer my research question that aims to understand the impact of it within a very specific

⁵³ Jay Shetty, “6 Ways to Stop Getting Distracted and Start Getting Focused.” *On Purpose With Jay Shetty*, Spotify, July 2021. [Accessed 29 May, 2024]. <https://open.spotify.com/episode/3GGXRB8AOAqtsC0SZ9xHdv?si=d5c56c32a2fb44a9> . This is a very popular podcast, and Shetty’s YouTube channel has almost three million subscribers.

⁵⁴ Su Holmes, *Entertaining Television: The BBC and Popular Television Culture in the 1950s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008): p. 202.

⁵⁵ See the ‘introduction’ of: Susanna Paasonen, *Dependent, Distracted, Bored Affective Formations in Networked Media* (The MIT Press: 2021). It presents a great overview of the current academic discourse on this topic of inattention.

⁵⁶ Jonathan Crary, *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture* (The MIT Press, 1999).

context. Instead of focussing on inattention as a concept, I apply Odin's concept of 'Spaces of Communication' to assess whether viewers inattention affected advertising production strategies.

Another reason why I was so struck by this phenomenon is because I did not expect to encounter it. Originally, I was searching for articles in the trade press magazines that mentioned the Joop Geesink Studio, not inattention. I inadvertently noticed many reports that viewers were deliberately avoiding commercials. This was mentioned in many articles, especially in the *Television Mail* magazine.⁵⁷ The problem of viewers inattention really stood out to me, because the tone of concern in the later articles starkly contrasted with the enthusiasm in the earlier articles that expressed viewers fondness towards commercials. Unexpectedly, inattention appeared to be a common theme discussed in the magazines, and a theme that I could not ignore.

In this section, I map out the discussions on inattention that I found in these magazines. I do so by presenting a timeline graph that I made to help visually demonstrate how the discussions on inattention developed over time. This timeline shows that the discussion on inattention heightened, from an implicit problem in 1959 to a predicted problem in 1960, and lastly to a serious problem in 1962. I then map out the phenomenon in more depth by presenting the articles that I used to make this overview. The information I present here is all based on my own research. Meaning, that it is mainly gathered from the trade press magazines that I read, as opposed to secondary literature, because as far as I am aware there is no literature on viewers inattention to TV commercials, that started in Britain from around 1959. Therefore, in this section I map out the problem of inattention to present my historical findings, and to help answer my research question of, to what extent this problem had an impact on audio-visual advertising, specifically the production strategy of advertisers.

To begin with, I will first briefly explain how I constructed this timeline graph. In the column section I have made four categories that summarise the discourse of inattention. They are inattention: not mentioned, indirectly mentioned, predicted problem, and a serious problem.

⁵⁷ I am unsure why the problem of inattention was mainly mentioned in this magazine and not the other magazines, it would be interesting to know why.

In the row section, the timeline begins in the year 1958 to emphasise that in this year I found no mention of viewers inattention. This suggests that a few years after the launch viewers were still engaging with commercials. The timeline then moves to 1959 as this is when inattention was first ‘indirectly mentioned’. I have then summarised 1960 as a ‘predicted problem’, because the articles from this year anticipated that inattention was going to become an issue due to the upcoming launch of new TV devices. Then, for 1961 it was difficult to categorise because I only found one article from this year that mentioned inattention. This article summarised a study that confirmed that viewers were no longer providing their full attention to commercials. Therefore, I have placed 1961 just below the ‘serious problem’ category because even with these results it was not described as a serious problem, instead the article mainly focussed on the methodology of the study itself. Lastly, I summarise the discourse in 1962 as a ‘serious problem’ because I found many articles that directly state that inattention was a problem. Overall, this graph illustrates how the discourse of inattention grew more intense over time, from not mentioned in 1958 to regarded as a serious problem by 1962.

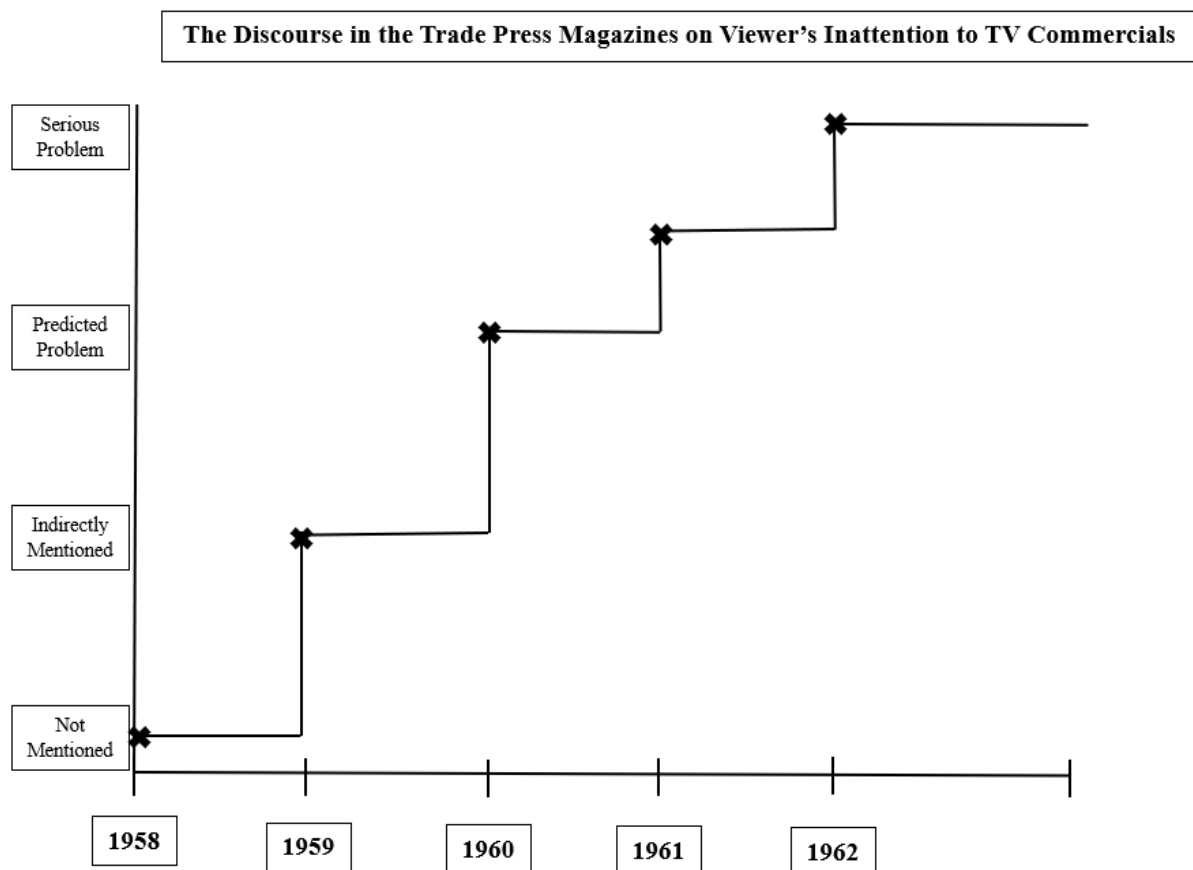


Figure 6 – An overview of how the discourse of inattention developed, from 'not mentioned' in 1958 to discussed as a 'serious problem' in 1962.

Inattention as an Implicit Problem

I will now explain this timeline in more depth, by presenting the articles that I used as evidence to make this overview. The very first article that indirectly referred to inattention as a problem was published on the 5 September 1959, and was titled “What Determines the Useful Life of a TV Commercial?” In this article three different people from the marketing industry, who each represent either the creative, media, or research fields, are having a conversation that is published here. Their names and roles were, Dr Elizabeth Nelson, who was the Managing Director of The Research Unit Ltd., John Turner, who was a Copy Director, and John Hughes, who was the Media Manager of Lambe & Robinson-Benton & Bowles Ltd. What is immediately noticeable here, is that the very first discussion point is regarding viewers disinterest in the ads. John Turner kicks off the discussion by stating “Our problem, in the creative department, is basically one of capturing people’s interest.”⁵⁸ He explains that this is difficult because “the fact remains, our enemy is disinterest, and from this point of view we are anxious to see changes in commercials as often as is thought necessary to maintain sharp interest.”⁵⁹ I link disinterest to inattention because inattention is a consequence of disinterest, as usually people do not provide their attention to things they are not interested in. But the reasons why I place this article in the category of ‘indirectly mentioned’, rather than ‘serious problem’, is because it still does not directly state ‘inattention’ as an issue. The topic of disinterest was not the main focus of the article as the three speakers addressed many other topics. Also, when they each conclude what they deem to be the most important topic, viewers’ disinterest did not make the final cut for any of them. Instead, they focus on: how long a commercial should run on TV for, on the commercial schedule, and on the sales approach in the ads, such as mood appeal or hard-sell appeal.⁶⁰ This shows that inattention was not the focus, it was mentioned indirectly by the term ‘disinterest’, but it was not the main focal point of these discussions.

Nevertheless, this source is still very useful as it illustrates how the discourse of inattention gradually arose. It can also help to explain why advertisers’ production strategies may have

⁵⁸ “What Determines the Useful Life of a TV Commercial?” *Television Mail*, vol. 1, no.8 (October 16, 1959): p. 5 and p. 19.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

not changed because Turner, who was also a creative like Geesink, says that in response to disinterest advertisers are anxious to keep changing their production strategy.⁶¹ This is likely because if there was this ‘fact’ that viewers will always have some disinterest towards ads, then constantly changing a production strategy will not fix this problem as it is a problem that can never be fully fixed. This can also help to explain why sixty years after the launch, commercials continue to be aired on TV despite the ongoing problem of viewers’ inattention towards them. Overall, this article informs us that some advertisers, like Turner, felt that changing a production strategy would not defeat the problem of disinterest. Making it even more worth comparing Geesink’s ads in Chapter Three, to see if he shared this same attitude towards the relationship of production strategy and inattention.

The second article that indirectly mentioned inattention as a problem, was published on 16 October 1959, in the *Television Mail* magazine. It was titled “Live Or Cartoon?”, and it was written by Ted Francis who worked for an advertising agency called *Rumble, Crowther and Nicholas*. I have categorised this article as indirectly mentioning inattention because the article did not directly state that inattention was a serious problem, but it did focus on discussing production strategies that could help to attract and maintain attention. It debates whether using animation or live action was more effective in TV commercials. Francis argues that, “whatever job it has to do it must attract and hold attention.”⁶² Here we see that Francis deemed the priority of any ad was to attract and maintain viewer attention, which suggests that in 1959 it was somewhat difficult to achieve this. I make this assumption because it is a given that a commercial should maintain a viewer’s attention, as an ad cannot achieve its fundamental aim of selling a product without the viewer engaging with it enough to see what the product is, or hear the name of the product/brand. Therefore, Francis mentioning that an ad must hold and attract attention, suggests that there was a problem with viewer’s attention.

Another reason why this article is labelled as indirectly mentioning the problem, is because Francis did not directly connect the production strategies of animation and live action to inattention. Francis says that an ad “must attract and hold attention” but he does not go into detail on how exactly an advertiser should do this. As after he says this, he then moves on to

⁶¹ Ibid. p. 5.

⁶² Ted Francis, “Live or Cartoon”, *Television Mail*, vol. 1, no.8 (October 16, 1959) p. 13 and p. 24.

discuss other things such as a cartoons believability, humour, and symbolism. These topics are not overtly mentioned in relation to attention.⁶³ This suggests that Francis did not deem inattention as a serious problem. Instead, this article informs us that around 1959 advertisers were emphasising the need to maintain viewer's attention, which suggests that they were struggling to achieve this, but they did not deem it to be a serious problem yet.

At the very start of 1960 the discourse of inattention remained the same as 1959, as it was indirectly mentioned as a problem. Evidence of this is from an article that was published on the 8 January 1960, and titled "Introducing Arnold Doodle". The article focused on discussing how a cartoon character, called Arnold, was created to "appear in cartoon spots throughout it, keeping the viewers' attention on the screen."⁶⁴ This shows that there must have been an issue of viewer's inattention as this was the motive for creating Arnold. Especially because it was a big project with four people working on it fulltime. They had even created a new animation system because of it, which was way more efficient as they went from producing five feet of film a day to thirty one feet.⁶⁵ As an additional point, my findings here contributes to the field of animation and advertising studies, as it supports Malcolm Cooks argument that there were a "number of practical ways animation has contributed to the development and effectiveness of advertising."⁶⁶

The reason why I categorise this article as indirectly mentioning inattention as a problem, rather than directly, is because it is referring to a TV advertising magazine (admag), not a commercial. An admag was a TV show that would promote a range of products, likely similar to what we now know as the 'shopping channel'. This admag was a fortnightly show that had a presenter/salesperson who promoted the products. It was around ten minutes long, which made it too long to be a TV commercial, as they were usually ten to thirty seconds. An admag was different to commercials as it was more so a hybrid between a commercial and a programme. Therefore, I cannot categorise this article as directly referring to inattention as a problem for specifically commercials. Also, despite mentioning the aims to attract and maintain attention, it still does not overtly discuss inattention as a problem or have a strong

⁶³ Ibid. p. 13 and p. 24.

⁶⁴ "Introducing Arnold Doodle." *Television Mail*, vol. 1, no.20 (January 8, 1960): p. 19.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Cook and Thompson, *Animation and Advertising*, p. 8.

tone of concern towards it. The reason why I assess the discourse based on this tone, is because the 1962 articles presented a very strong tone of concern, and inattention was the focal point of those articles. Therefore, in comparison to the 1962 articles, these earlier articles refer to inattention as an implicit problem.

In addition to this, Arnold was made to make the actual programme more entertaining, so that the viewers will tune into it. For example, the creator of Arnold, Nicholas Spargo from 'Nicholas Cartoon' explains that, "What we are aiming for with Arnold is to produce an admag that people will actually tune into because they hope to be amused."⁶⁷ For a total of one and a half minutes Arnold's "job is to amuse".⁶⁸ This differs to the discourse of inattention in commercials because advertisers could not tackle the problem with this same approach. They could not get a viewer to tune into commercials because of how commercials exist within this space of communication. Even with viewers initial excitement towards commercials in 1955-1956, it was still unlikely that they would deliberately tune into an ad. Especially because they would not know when the ad would be shown, or they would just wait until it was repeated again. Also, by 1960 there was an arising problem of viewers inattention towards commercials, and so it was even more unlikely that they would tune into them, as they were now mentally tuning out from them.

This article is about using animation to entice people to choose to watch this show. Whereas the mode of viewing commercials was very different to this, as usually the viewer is already watching the channel, and so for ads it is more about maintaining the viewers' attention to the ad break that appears on that channel. This difference in mode of viewing means that the approach to tackle the problem of inattention in admags compared to commercials was likely different. Therefore, for all of these reasons that I have explained here, I have categorised this article as indirectly referring to inattention as an issue for commercials.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Inattention as a Predicted Problem

As you can see in the graph, I have categorised 1960 as a ‘predicted problem’. This is based on the only other (and later) article that mentioned inattention in 1960, published on the 16 September. The article was titled, “WANTED – A New Approach to Commercials”, with the sub-heading, “looks ahead at a problem of growing importance to ITV advertisers.”⁶⁹ Already from these headings we see there was a stronger tone of concern, and one that was specifically aimed at advertisers. I have labelled this article as a ‘predicted problem’ because the article did not directly state that inattention was a current issue, but instead an anticipated problem. The author of the article, Gordon O’Connell, who was the Managing Director of Gate Film Productions, predicted that, “audiences are going to become resistant to any form of advertising which bores by incessant repetitions, and, perhaps more important, clashes with the mood set by a particular programme.”⁷⁰ This was caused by the advancements of new technologies such as a third TV channel and a remote control that could mute the TV. O’Connell explained that, “if a few hundred thousand homes do fit a ‘sound cut-out’ switch to their TV set – which I see is now available – then advertisers, agents, and the networks will really have something to worry about.”⁷¹ This makes “The basic problem, therefore, over the next five years will be to ensure that the advertiser **holds** his audience.”⁷² O’Connell even highlights the word ‘hold’ in bold to emphasise that viewer’s attention must be held. He was correct in his prediction that new technologies would lead viewer’s to “switch over or switch off”, as the 1962 articles report that viewers were changing the channels and muting the television during the ad breaks.⁷³ Overall, this article shows that towards the end of 1960 it was predicted that inattention would become a problem.

For 1961 I only found one article that mentioned inattention. This was surprising as out of the sixteen books that dated from 1955-1962, four of them that I read were from 1961 but yet inattention was only mentioned in one article. But having said this, we must consider that I looked at a very small sample of the thousands of magazines that were published in this

⁶⁹ “WANTED – A New Approach to Commercials.” *Television Mail*, vol. 3, no.2 (September 16, 1960) p. 28.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.* In the article the word ‘holds’ is highlighted in bold by O’Connell for emphasis.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

period. Meaning, that inattention may have been mentioned in the other 1961 magazines that I have not seen. Or, that it was not mentioned much that year because studies were being conducted to first confirm the issue, before regarding it as a serious problem in 1962.

The article was published towards the end of 1961, on the 8 September. It was titled “The True Audience for Commercials – Important Findings in Extensive New Surveys by LPE”.⁷⁴ It focused on discussing a study that was conducted by the London Press Exchange (LPE), who was a Government advertising agency that created the Market Research Society (RS). The aim of this research was to better understand viewership, as it focused on “behaviour studies”.⁷⁵ It was a massive project, as 11,000 interviews were conducted, and 1,450 intensive interviews with specifically housewives who did not work (likely because they were the daytime viewers).⁷⁶ The study found that “at least two-thirds of the programme audience are doing something else, besides watching TV, during the commercial breaks.”⁷⁷ They found that a staggering 80% of viewers were engaged in other activities, which meant that “There are large differences between the number of people viewing a programme and the number who actually see the relevant commercial breaks.”⁷⁸ This shows that by 1961 the predictions of viewers inattention were now scientifically confirmed.⁷⁹

Based on this article, I have placed the discourse of inattention in 1961 just below the ‘serious problem’ category. Instead, the discourse can be summarised as a ‘problem’. Especially because “A new technique has been developed based on recall of commercials, for evaluating the attention given to commercial breaks”.⁸⁰ The word ‘attention’ is literally mentioned here and accounted as influencing new research techniques. This was an interesting technique, that entailed asking audiences to recall the ads that they saw the night before, in order to test whether they had paid attention to them.⁸¹ This may lead one to wonder why I have not placed the discourse in 1961 within the ‘serious problem’ category.

⁷⁴ “The True Audience for Commercials - Important Findings in Extensive New Survey by LPE.” *Television Mail*, vol. 5, no.3 (September 8, 1961): p. 13.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid. The article says that the results confirm the suspicions of viewers inattention as “most people have assumed this for some time”.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

But the reason for this is because despite them proving that inattention was a big issue, the article focuses on discussing the methodology of the study itself, as opposed to emphasising (with a tone of concern) the results that prove that it was a very prominent problem.

“Programme viewers” engaged in other activities while watching TV: breakdown by activities

	Evening interviews	Next morning interviews
Knitting/sewing/darning ...	30	32
Domestic chores	19	15
Preparing food or drink...	13	13
Activity with children ...	8	7
Eating	7	6
Reading or writing	6	7
Talking, entertaining	7	9
Ironing	1	2
Other activities	6	6
Don't know	3	3
	100	100

Figure 7 – A breakdown of the activities that viewers engaged in during the ad breaks, from the LPE surveys that were conducted in 1961.

Inattention as a Serious Problem

By 1962, inattention was overtly discussed as a serious problem. The first article that mentioned this was published on 23 March 1962, and it was titled “The Efficiency of TV Ads”, with the sub-title, “Getting and Holding attention”.⁸² The article was from a lecture by Dr William Belson, who was the head of the Survey Research Unit at the University London

⁸² Dr William Belson, “The Efficiency of TV Ads.” *Television Mail*, vol. 6, no.5 (March 23, 1962) p. 13-15.

School of Economics and Political Science.⁸³ He was responsible for a programme of research that aimed at developing the methods of social and economic research.⁸⁴ He was also formerly the senior psychologist in the BBC's audience research department.⁸⁵ This made him an academic who also had experience working in television, specifically on audience research, which is likely why he was selected to feature in this magazine.⁸⁶ From the beginning of the article, Belson overtly addressed inattention as a problem as he stated that over the last seven years there had been, "a long-term change in viewer's attitude from one of tolerant support to one frequently characterised by irritation and annoyance."⁸⁷ This description further supports my point that I made at the start of this chapter, that when commercials first launched they were welcomed by the viewers. The end of the quote then sounds very relatable to today's attitudes towards commercials. It supports my main point that I make in this chapter, that viewers were initially supportive of commercial TV, but that by 1962 the problem of inattention gradually emerged.

Furthermore, Belson overtly referred to inattention as a serious problem by presenting his research on this issue. He explains that since commercial TV began, he had been involved in: survey work, intensive interviewing, and in group discussions, all of "which bears upon these matters of inattention".⁸⁸ He stated that the three most dominant reasons why viewers are irritated by commercials is because of the ads' interruption, repetition, and insincerity.⁸⁹ From the interviews with viewers that he conducted, he found that a lot of them said that they would leave the room during the commercial breaks, to either make a coffee, fetch cigarettes, check on the children, or prepare hot water bottles.⁹⁰ He discovered that usually once they left the room, they would not return because they would get distracted by the task.⁹¹

⁸³ At the time the lecture had been recently conducted at a meeting of the Commercial Television Circle.

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 13.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ From this article we see how TV, research, and academia were interlinked at the time. The sub-heading of the article states, "The title of this article indicates the breadth of the subject attempted by the author, one of the few men with the knowledge and detachment to do so deserving of a serious audience." This shows that detachment from the advertising industry was valued for preventing any bias.

⁸⁷ Dr William Belson, "The Efficiency of TV Ads." *Television Mail*, p. 13.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid. He also said that the insincerity makes the viewer feel patronised.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Belson presented a lot of examples of how exactly viewers avoided ads, which included: talking during the advertisement breaks, reading a newspaper, turning down the volume, temporarily changing the channel, and mentally tuning out.⁹² Reducing the volume and changing the channel was done “with modern change-over switches”, which is exactly what Gordon O’Connell predicted would happen, in his 1960 article “WANTED – A New Approach to Commercials”.⁹³ Belson’s article confirms that two years later O’Connell’s predictions had come true. This must have been a problem for advertisers, and so we would expect that their production strategy changed to prevent viewer’s from changing the channel.

The next article that overtly mentioned inattention as a serious problem, was published 6 April 1962, and titled “The Torquay Conference: A Symposium Round-Up - The Lessons and Rewards of Research for Television.” This article focused on summarising the Torquay conference, which was a two-day conference on research advertising, sponsored by the market research society. According to the article, the conference was an important event in the advertising world, as it was “one of the advertising industry’s highspots of the year”.⁹⁴ This explains why much of this week’s magazine was dedicated to discussing this conference. It also informs us that those who were not at the event still wanted to be informed about it via the magazine. Therefore it is important that we look closely at the topics that were discussed at this year’s high-spot event.

In this article there is a synopsis of lectures from the event. I read the descriptions of the eight difference lectures, and I found that four of them specifically focussed on attention. This shows that inattention was a big topic of focus at this conference, as half of the lectures focused on it. It was even considered a field of study, as one speaker at the conference advised to, “acknowledge the other researches in the field of ‘attention’ to commercials”.⁹⁵

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ “The Torquay Conference - The Lessons and Rewards of Research for Television”, *Television Mail*, p. 25. The other lecture topics were: the phycological aspects of communication research, testing TV commercials, measuring the effectiveness of advertising, and the measurements of communication in advertising.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

The first article that focused on inattention, specifically uses the word ‘attention’ as it was titled “Housewife Attention Value”. It was written by Dr J.A.P, who was a treasurer, director and vice-chairman of the British Market Research Bureau Ltd. The ‘Dr’ title has led me to assume that J.A.P was a professor who also worked in television marketing research, like Dr William Belson. I am also led to believe this because the article explains that J.A.P had carried out research on housewife attention in 1961.⁹⁶ This is probably referring to the research conducted by the LPE, that I discussed in the 1961 section above.

The lecture goes on to explain that there are two types of loss of attention which are ‘presence loss’ and ‘attention loss’.⁹⁷ These terms refer to whether a person is physically leaving the room (presence loss) or mentally zoning out (attention loss). Here we see that inattention was overtly discussed to the point that terminology was made for it, and researchers were even creating a spectrum of inattention, to measure and understand the problem. This terminology helped Dr. J.A.P measure presence loss and attention loss between the ad breaks and the TV shows, he concluded that there was no difference here. Meaning, that viewers had the same form of inattention to the commercials as to the programmes. These findings are important in relation to my main research question, of whether Geesink altered his production strategy based on the problem of inattention. It informs us that the ads were not specifically causing inattention, but that it was a general problem for the programmes too. Meaning, that if advertisers like Geesink were reading these articles, which was highly possible as he often featured in them, then they were informed by researchers that there was no point in them changing their production strategy, because inattention would prevail regardless (even in the programmes).⁹⁸

The second lecture at this conference that overtly referred to inattention as a serious problem, was titled “Television Viewing Behaviour (A Pilot Observation Study)”. It was written by Alex Mitchell, who was the head of research and information at Lintas Ltd. As you may notice here, a lot of these articles that overtly mentioned inattention in 1962 were written by

⁹⁶ Ibid. The synopsis of this lecture states that this research was influenced by a problem that inattention has caused, as it is affecting the concept of ‘peak-times’, which I will discuss in more detail in the section below that focuses on the impact of this problem of inattention.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Of course depending on how the advertiser would choose to interpret this information, and relate it to their production strategy.

researchers. One reason for this is that these articles are from the research advertising conference, and so they came from the researchers who were presenting at this event. However, this point, i.e., that only researchers were deeming inattention as a serious problem, still stands out to me, because the articles I found on inattention were only written by researchers.

In this lecture, Mitchell discussed a study of observing families in their homes to examine their behaviour towards ads. This shows how invasive audience observation was in 1962, as researchers were entering the general public's homes to watch their behaviour. But this did coincide with the period of mass observation, making it a common practice in many research fields. This study found that only one third of the time people were giving their undivided attention to the television programme.⁹⁹ It concluded that viewers were often conducting many other activities alongside watching TV, which then affected their attention levels. The article goes on to explore what these activities were, and measures how the activity can affect the level of attention. For example, it was considered that attention was high when the second activity was knitting, but low when the second activity was reading.¹⁰⁰ It argues that the ad break is "used" for a variety of small tasks, like leaving the room to make a cup of tea.¹⁰¹ In total, 16% of adults gave attention to a whole ad break, whilst the rest gave their attention to some of the ad break but not all of it.¹⁰² This shows that it was not just the viewer's attention that was wanted, but specifically their 'full' attention. In some experiments they organised their results via audience behavioural categories called 'not present' and 'full attention'.¹⁰³ Overall, the amount of time and money that went into audience research, especially in relation to the problem of inattention, shows that it was considered a big problem. It was felt that in order for commercials to be effective then full viewer attention was essential.

The latest article that mentioned inattention was published only a week after the article mentioned above, on 13 April 1962, and it was titled "Television Mail Awards Lectures". It published three of the lectures that were mentioned in the Television Mail Awards Festival.

⁹⁹ "The Torquay Conference - The Lessons and Rewards of Research for Television", *Television Mail*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ A.S.C Ehrenberg, "Television Mail Awards Lectures - The Qualitative Nature of the TV Audience," *Television Mail*, vol 6, no. 8 (April 13,1962), p. 19.

This was a three-day event for the trade press magazine called *Television Mail*. It was a different event to the one that took place the week before, and it appeared to be a big event for the industry, with a turnout of 400 guests at the last day's grand 'Awards Banquet'.¹⁰⁴ I read the three lectures that were mentioned in the article, to see if inattention was referred to in any of them. I found that in one of the three lectures inattention was mentioned, it was titled "The Qualitative Nature of the TV Audience", written by A.S.C Ehrenberg, who was the deputy managing director of Research Services Ltd. In this article, Ehrenberg mentions some large-scale research projects that were conducted to understand viewer attention. He explains that it did not take research to know that people leave the room during the ad breaks as "We all thought that we knew that."¹⁰⁵ Instead, the pilot-scale research helped them to understand viewers inattention. Some examples of the research on inattention includes, the Television Audience Measurement (TAM), that conducted a huge study in 1961 of 10-20,000 interviews with viewer's.¹⁰⁶ This study was used to see how many viewers were present during the commercial breaks. There were also two major research projects into the qualitative nature of the television audience, known as the JWT/BMRB Surveys, which formed a known 'Attention Report'.¹⁰⁷ By 1962 the LPE, who I mentioned in my 1961 section, examined viewers' behaviour and various other aspects of attention during 9,000 commercial breaks.¹⁰⁸ This is a massive amount of ad breaks, and it must have involved a lot of time and money to conduct this study. It highlights that inattention was regarded as a big issue by researchers who conducted these studies, and advertisers who likely paid the research companies to conduct them.¹⁰⁹

The Impact of Inattention

The overall aim of this thesis is to evaluate whether advertisers like Geesink took the problem of viewers inattention into account in their production strategy. This is why in Chapter Three

¹⁰⁴ Archibald Graham, "Ethics of Television Advertising," *Television Mail*, vol 6, no. 8 (April 13, 1962), p. 21.

¹⁰⁵ Ehrenberg, "The Qualitative Nature of the TV Audience," *Television Mail*, p. 13.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. The organisation formed in 1955, which suggests that the arrival of commercial TV caused the research industry to grow as new organisations formed at the same time.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 14.

¹⁰⁹ It is unclear who paid the researchers as maybe it was advertising companies or the government were funding them along with other mass observation studies at the time.

I conduct a comparative analysis of Geesink's ads that were made before and during the discussions of inattention. This helps me to assess whether there were any changes in his production strategy in relation to the problem of viewers' inattention. I use Geesink's ads to determine this for a few reasons. One reason is because only one article discussed the impact of the problem of inattention on advertising strategies. This was specifically referring to programming, not production strategies. Therefore, I analyse Geesink's ads to see if this can provide us with any additional answers to my research question of whether production strategies were impacted by inattention.

Having said this, by the magazines not mentioning an impact on production strategies can suggest that there was no impact. If Geesink's ads do lack a change in production strategy, then this can be evidence that supports this point. But it must be reminded that my study is only until 1962, and it is very possible that after 1962 inattention had an impact on production strategy. This limitation has allowed me to remain as concise as possible withing the dates of 1955 to 1962. I have aimed to lay the foundations of this study, by first discussing all of this rich information that I have found on the phenomenon of inattention.

I will now discuss the only evidence that I found on the impact of inattention on advertising, specifically the terminology and programming. I present this here as it contributes to our understanding of the scale of the problem in 1962, and whether inattention may have affected the production strategy of advertisers. I found that two articles from 1962 stated that inattention impacted prominent advertisement terminology and debates, such as the term 'peak-time'. In this period, the term 'peak-time' had the same meaning as it does today, as it meant the time of day that the most viewers were watching television. From the origins of commercial TV, peak-time was fundamental as it organised the programming of the commercials. Most advertisers wanted their ads to be shown during the peak-times so that more people would see their commercial. This meant that the cost of showing an ad was higher during the times that most people were watching television. From 1955, various articles debated the perks and costs of peak-times.¹¹⁰ Yet despite this term being fundamental since the origins of commercial TV, by 1962 the Independent Television Companies

¹¹⁰ Malcolm Brown, "A Changing Attitude to Airtime – Before and After." *Television Mail*, vol. 6, no.12 (May 11, 1962): p. 11.

Association (ITCA) decided to end the term due to the “wrong impression” it can create, because of viewers’ inattention.¹¹¹ This was explained by Malcolm Brown, who was the media group head of publishers at Alfred Pemberton Ltd, who stated that “Further coals have been added to the fire with the recent surveys on ‘attention’ value.”¹¹² Here he is referring to “The age old arguments on the value of off-peak time compared with peak time”, and so this new research on inattention, such as the surveys, were really adding to these debates. This shows that the research on inattention was listened to by people working in the advertising industry.¹¹³ So much so, that it was reported as influencing the official end of the term ‘peak-times’.¹¹⁴ The article refers to research that found viewers were only giving their attention to the screen for 1/3 of the time.¹¹⁵ This meant that despite the viewing number being high during the ‘peak times’, this did not mean that the actual amount of viewers watching TV was high.¹¹⁶ This created the problem that advertisers were paying the maximum cost for a commercial spot during the peak times, but they were not receiving maximum attention. Some articles even suggested that the off-peak attention levels were higher, making it cheaper and more efficient to show their ads during the off-peak times.¹¹⁷ This shows that the problem of viewers inattention, and the research conducted on it, did affect television terminology and rules such as peak-time.

Inattention to commercials did not only affect advertising terminology, but it also had a societal impact. Moran explains in his book *Armchair Nation*, that one Monday evening in May 1961, a calamitous power cut occurred in south-east England.¹¹⁸ For two and a half hours the lights went out across London, Surrey, Kent and Sussex, which made it the biggest failure the National Grid had yet known.¹¹⁹ This was caused by viewers’ determination to avoid commercials, as ad break activities strained the National Grid, since the electricity used in running TVs was small compared to the much greater amounts needed to operate lights,

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ It is unclear for how long this term ‘peak-times’ ended for, as advertisers today do pay more for the ‘peak-time’ slots.

¹¹⁵ “The Torquay Conference”, *Television Mail*, p. 26.

¹¹⁶ Bill McWilliam, “A Changing Attitude to Airtime – Peak v Off-Peak, a Re-Assessment.” *Television Mail*, vol. 6, no.12 (May 11, 1962): p. 14.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Moran, *Armchair Nation*, p. 145.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

electric kettles, and water pumps for flushing toilets.¹²⁰ It is no surprise that this happened in May 1961, as it matches my findings that the problem of inattention was arising then. It is also useful additional information worth adding here, as the magazines did not publish much on inattention in 1961. But here we see that inattention was an issue then, as it led to turning the whole of south-east England into darkness.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have answered my sub-question, to what extent viewer inattention was deemed as a problem by those who worked within the advertising industry. I have done so by explaining how the phenomenon of viewer inattention unfolded by mapping out the discourse surrounding inattention. I have explained that in 1959 it was indirectly discussed as a problem, and then in 1960 it was predicted as a problem. In 1961, studies confirmed that viewers were no longer providing their full attention to commercials. By 1962, it was overtly discussed as a problem, as it was reported in the magazines that during the ad breaks the viewers would avoid the commercials by either talking, reading the newspaper, turning down the volume, changing the channel, leaving the room, or mentally ‘tuning out’.¹²¹ This behaviour was associated with inattention as it was noted that there was a considerable amount of additional activity alongside viewing. These activities affected the amount of attention given to the television set.¹²²

These magazines are incredible sources that inform us about the industry at this time, but they should not be taken at face value. The mapping has informed us that it was not actually advertisers like Geesink who were expressing concern of inattention. Instead, it was mainly researchers who worked for research agencies, likely hired by the commercial television industry. To assess whether advertisers also deemed inattention as a big problem, in Chapter Three I will compare Geesink’s production strategy from before and during viewers inattention was discussed. There I will evaluate whether there were any changes in Geesink’s

¹²⁰ Ibid. p. 146.

¹²¹ Dr William Belson, “The Efficiency of TV Ads,” *Television Mail*, (March 23, 1962) p. 13-15.

¹²² “The Torquay Conference”, *Television Mail*, p. 25-26.

strategy, and if they were influenced by him taking into account the problem of viewers' inattention to commercials.

Chapter Two - The Communicative Levels Of Commercials

In this chapter, I position my case study in relation to Roger Odin's theory of Semio-Pragmatics, as this helps me to identify what Geesink's production strategy was. In doing so, I challenge Odin's summary that commercials communicate via the Aesthetic Mode or the Documentarising Mode, as I argue that Geesink's ads in fact communicate via what Odin presents as the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach. I argue that by Geesink communicating in this mode shows that his strategy entailed using entertainment to present and promote his sales message. This supports Ripmeester's argument that Geesink approached advertising as a form of entertainment.¹²³ But unlike Ripmeester, who uses the concept of 'utopianism' to explain this, I contribute to this argument with Odin's Semio-Pragmatics theory.

I begin this chapter my explaining Odin's theory. I do so by first defining his concept called 'Spaces of Communication' and his theoretical constructs of 'modes'. I then explain how he creates these modes with four different levels that distinguish each mode of communication. Once I define these levels, I then present two of the eight modes that Odin constructed from these levels. The two modes that I have selected are the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach and the Documentarising Mode. I have selected these modes because I argue that Geesink's ads communicate via them. To support this argument, in the last part of this Chapter I present a commercial that was made by the studio, and I explain how it communicates via this fictional mode, and thus how Geesink's production strategy entailed approaching advertising as a form of entertainment.¹²⁴

The reason why I position Geesink's commercials in relation to Semio-Pragmatics, is because this theory helps me to understand and explain what Geesink's production strategy was exactly. This is because Odin created tools called 'levels', which he encourages people to

¹²³ Ripmeester, "Entertainment uit de Lage Landen," p. 78.

¹²⁴ I present a commercial in this chapter, as opposed to waiting until the analysis in chapter four, to clearly identify what his production strategy was before I compare it in Chapter Three.

apply to all media in order to understand how it communicates to the viewer, and thus how the viewer experiences the media. It is a particularly useful theory to apply to commercials, because the main function of them is to create an experience for the viewer that convinces them to desire the product. The primary purpose of an ad is to communicate a sales message within a very short space of time, and within a space that has restrictions, and so these tools really allow us to scrutinise every element of an ad, to understand how each moment is constructed to persuade the viewer to become a consumer.

Having said this, despite Odins theory being useful for identifying Geesink's production strategy, it cannot be solely applied to the commercials in Chapter Three. I learned this when I first applied Odin's levels to each of the twelve commercials, because the results were pretty straightforward. They led to the conclusion that all of the ads communicated via the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach, except for certain moments in some of the ads which communicate via the Documentarising Mode (in the package shot moments). This created a quick answer to my research question, as it informed me that there was no change in Geesink's production strategy because all of the ads communicated via this fictional mode. But the problem with only applying this theory, is that I was then unable to ask more specific questions about the ads. This is because the levels only allowed me to ask broad questions, about whether the ads included a narrative, values, mise en phase, or fictionalisation. These results were therefore insufficient for my purpose, as I needed to look at the ads more closely in order to really ensure that there was no reaction to the problem of inattention.

In order to overcome the limitations of Odin's theory, in Chapter Three I have conceived four additional categories to apply to the ads. These categories are: the specific type of audio, the repetition of the product name, the depiction of the product in the live action imagery, and the content of the slogans. I created these categories because they are communication tools that are a part of an ads production strategy. Therefore, I compare them from before and during the problem of inattention was discussed, to examine whether the problem influenced any changes in these production strategies.

As you will see in this chapter, despite disagreeing with Odin's categorisation of commercials, and recognising the limitations of applying this theory to ads, Semio-

Pragmatics is still a useful theory to use here. It has helped me to identify Geesink's production strategy, that he approached advertising as entertainment, and it has influenced me to create my own categories for my comparative analysis. Hence why this Chapter is dedicated to explaining how I position my case study in relation to Odin's theory.

Semio-Pragmatics

Semio-Pragmatics is an approach to the study of film and audio-visual media that focuses on, the interaction of text and context, the usage of signs, and the institutional modes of framing and reading that shapes a viewer's engagement with a medium.¹²⁵ The approach was first proposed by Roger Odin in the early 1980s and it contributed significantly to the development of film studies.¹²⁶ This is because it shifted the former focus on textual analysis in film studies, by arguing that meaning is not just a matter of text but also context.¹²⁷

In order to understand this interaction of text and context, Odin created the concept called 'Spaces of Communication', which was formed to encourage the examination of frameworks, settings, and modes of reading of media.¹²⁸ Modes are theoretical constructs that aim to structure the processes of the production of meaning into functional sets.¹²⁹ In other words, modes allow us to understand the text and context, such as the relations inside the diegesis (narrative) of media, and the relation between the viewer and the medium.¹³⁰ They help us look at the medium in more depth as they can be used as tools that can be applied to certain contexts to ask questions such as: what type of communication space does the mode construct? Or, what type of communication experience does this mode lead to?¹³¹

¹²⁵ Vinzenz Hediger, "Introduction", in Roger Odin, *Spaces of Communication: Elements of Semio-Pragmatics*, translated by Ó Faoláin Ciarán. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), p. 11.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid. p. 13.

¹²⁸ Ibid. p. 16.

¹²⁹ Roger Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 74.

¹³⁰ Hediger, "Introduction", in Roger Odins, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 25.

¹³¹ Ibid.

As Vinzenz Hediger writes in the introduction of Odin's book *Spaces of Communication*, Odin distinguished eight different modes of how spectators can read films.¹³² These modes are: the documentarising, the spectacular, the fictionalising, the energetic, the private, the argumentative/persuasive (which in *Spaces of Communication* has been replaced by the discursive mode), the artistic and the aesthetic modes.¹³³ In describing the Fictionalising Mode, Odin considers it on four different levels, that are: the level of the world that the film creates, the level of the kind of discourse that the film presents, the level of the affective relationship that the film builds with the spectator, and the enunciative level such as a fictive enunciator.

There are several reasons why Odin selects fictionalisation as a starting point to construct the modes from. One reason is that fiction is a commonly shared experience, and so because Odin focuses on how we 'experience' media, he starts with this prominent form of communication.¹³⁴ But, the strong presence of fiction makes it difficult to construct the mode, because many things can be understood as fiction.¹³⁵ The risk of this is that everything and anything can be associated with fiction but many things are not fiction.¹³⁶ An example of this is commercials, as they are presented via fictionalisation but they contain a real sales message, that aims to persuade the viewers to actively buy the real product. Therefore, Odin argues that it is crucial to be more restrictive in how we characterise the experience of fiction, and so he offers a solution to this by creating 'levels' that describe fictional experiences.¹³⁷ In the next section I will briefly define these four levels. Then I will explain how they help to define, thus distinguish, the Fictionalising and Documentarising Modes. This will inform us how exactly each of these modes differ, and thus what communication experience each mode creates.

¹³² Ibid. p. 15.

¹³³ Ibid. I noticed that Hediger only lists seven modes, despite him stating that there are eight. He forgets to mention the Documentarising Mode, and so I have added it to the list here.

¹³⁴ Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 75.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

The Four Levels

The ‘level of space’ is formed by Odin to question “What type of space does this mode construct: a world, a set of signs, a symbolic or “discursive” space, an abstract space, a plastic space, and so on?”¹³⁸ A recent example of a ‘world’ in media, is the Barbie Land in the film *Barbie* (2023, Greta Gerwig). In this fictional feature film, the level of space is a utopian ‘world’, that is made up of the Barbie franchise toys. It is a world which is filled with beauty and vibrant colours that is fun to look at, and so the viewer can feel immersed and entertained by the imagery of this world. A different example could be an abstract space that exists in an animated film with no connection to reality. Instead, there are just shapes and movement, which is something that animation has the freedom to achieve.

The next level is the ‘discursive level’ and it is formed by Odin to question, what discursive form does this mode implement?¹³⁹ This could be narration, description, discourse, or poetic structure.¹⁴⁰ An example of narration is in the discursive level of an educational film, a documentary, or a TV news report, as they all consist of real factual information but also narration.

A reason why these levels are important to apply to media is because they help to create distinctions of how the medium communicates and how it is experienced by the viewer. For example, at the discursive level Odins states that “no branch of communication escapes narration.”¹⁴¹ Odin is referring to how some people may argue that most things are fiction because there is narrative, but he states that we use narration in almost all communication situations, which includes non-fiction.¹⁴² This is noticeable in current communication practices in fields such as politics, education and journalism, where the information is usually communicated through a narrative, as even terms like ‘news stories’ are used. Odin explains that this is because “it is through narrative structures that we perceive the world and organize what we do.”¹⁴³ Therefore, narratives are used in many forms of communication, from news-

¹³⁸ Ibid. p. 74.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p. 59.

¹⁴² Ibid. p. 74.

¹⁴³ Ibid. p. 60.

reports to conversations where we tell mini-tales as this helps us to inform and entertain.¹⁴⁴ These levels and modes are useful for informing us how these stories are communicated to the viewer and then experienced by them. As for example, the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach is distinct from the other modes that also communicate with stories, because there is “the construction, from the narrative, of a ‘discourse’ that conveys information and values”.¹⁴⁵ Meaning, that a fictional narrative can convey real information and values. I argue that in commercials there can be a fictional narrative that contains real information and value, and that this is the sales message.

At the ‘affective level’ Odin asks, what affective relationships does the media produce?¹⁴⁶ This means that when we apply this level to a media we are asking, what sort of mood, feelings, and attitudes are conveyed here, and how does the viewer connect to this? For example, at the affective level of the Fictionalising Mode First Approach, there is a process called ‘mise en phase’. This process means that the events that are narrated resonate fully with the viewer.¹⁴⁷ An example of this can be a tragedy film, the viewer can feel connected to the characters because they empathise with them, and so they feel emotional or upset about the events that are unfolding. Due to the fictional contract the viewer is aware that the events are not really happening, but they have accepted the contract in order to allow themselves to be immersed in the story, so they can experience being emotionally connected to it and entertained by it. A different example of this could be a mystery film, where the viewer may feel connected to it mentally, or even sensory due to the mise en phase that creates the feeling of suspense, as whilst the characters are trying to figure out who committed the crime, the viewer is also trying to guess throughout the film ‘who did it?’

But with commercials, the affective level is different to these examples of entertainment media, as instead viewers usually have a negative relationship with ads. We can relate to this feeling of frustration as we often try to skip, scroll, or mute commercials; and we have learnt from this phenomenon that this relationship began only five years after commercials were launched on TV in 1955. An explanation for this affective level, is that the ads themselves

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 86.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 76.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

and the space of advertising communication that the commercials belong to, creates a negative attitude towards them. In regards to the ads themselves, the primary purpose of an ad to help a company make profit, which can be frustrating for many people who feel reluctant to spend their money. The space that commercials exist within also produces hostility towards them. This is because, for the purpose of promoting capital ads interrupt viewers leisurely time of watching entertainment media, which are the moments when people want to unwind. Therefore, commercials have to overcome this resistance that spectators have.¹⁴⁸ This is a fundamental difference with the space of communication of fiction films and TV programmes, which the spectators explicitly want to see, as that is why they switch on their tv or go to the cinema.

This can explain why some makers of commercials, such as Geesink, try to overcome the resistance by inviting the spectators to develop a positive relationship with ads. Geesink specifically does this by using animation and puppets, as this artistic medium is associated with entertainment, which means that the ad can be perceived more positively. This means that at the affective level it is possible for ads to create some *mise en phase*. Commercials can resonate with the viewer, as they can have positive feelings towards them and even feel connected to them. A recent example of this is from a series of ads that were made for the British brand of high-end department stores called John Lewis. The company has become known for their Christmas TV ad campaign, that started in 2007 and are still made today (2023). They are very well-known in the UK, to the extent that they have become a part of British popular culture. Each winter viewers eagerly await to see, and then discuss, what the latest John Lewis Christmas ad entails.¹⁴⁹ There is even a Wikipedia page dedicated to them, and one of the songs that was used for the 2013 commercial, reached number one in the UK Singles Chart after the ad was broadcasted.¹⁵⁰ For this same ad, which is called *The Bear and the Hare*, there is an extended version on YouTube, that also shows the making of the animated 2D stop-motion commercial. The video has 55 million views and over 16,000

¹⁴⁸ Some advertisers are even self-reflective and play on it by using it as a part of their production strategy. For example, the British Go Compare series of commercials which consist of a very annoying character who is known for singing very loudly a jingle that repeats the product name.

¹⁴⁹ I form this point based on my own experience of hearing these discussions whilst living in the UK, but it can also be seen on YouTube comments of the ads.

¹⁵⁰ “John Lewis Christmas Advert,” Wikipedia, [accessed April 12, 2024], https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Lewis_Christmas_advert

comments.¹⁵¹ The YouTube comments are filled with countless people expressing how they feel connected to it.¹⁵² This is unsurprising to me, as it is commonly known in the UK that many people feel emotionally connected to this series of Christmas ads. This shows that media, like ads, can vary in the affective relationship that it produces based on the ads form (animation) and the space of communication (Christmas time making people feel more sentimental). Rather than frustrate viewers, some ads can connect with them, and in this case at least 55 million people.

This now leads us onto the final level, which is the ‘enunciative level’. This level is applied to modes to ask, “What enunciative relationship, and what enunciator(s), does it invite us to construct?”¹⁵³ It refers to the relation between the spectator and the kind of enunciation that the text implies. Here Odin positions himself from the point of view of how spectators experience the media. The enunciator can be a completely abstract entity and constructed by the viewer, which is what Odin means when he asks ‘what enunciator(s) does it invite?’ For example, in the Fictionalising Mode First Approach, the viewer constructs a fictitious enunciator who the viewer is “forbidden to ask questions of, in terms of identity, ways of acting, and truth”.¹⁵⁴ This process is what Odin calls the ‘fictivization of enunciation’, and it means that because of the fictional contract, the viewer is aware that the media is fictional and so it does not make any sense for them to interrogate it in terms of truth, as it is not based on reality (truth), but instead fiction.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ “Lily Allen | Somewhere Only We Know (John Lewis Christmas Advert),” YouTube. [Accessed April 12, 2024]. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mer6X7nOY_o. It should be noted that the high views are likely also because the singer uploaded it into their YouTube channel, and this version is of the making of the ad and so people may watch it out of intrigue (specularizing mode), but never the less the ad itself is still being watched out of choice by 55 million people.

¹⁵² This reaction to a commercial is rare, but it shows that it is possible for people to feel highly connected to an ad if there is a high level of *mise en phase*.

¹⁵³ Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 74.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p.76.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

Documentarising Mode

For Odin, the Documentarising Mode is the experience of the real. This is because media that communicates via this mode contains the production of information. It is usually prominent in media like a documentary film or a newspaper, as the main aim is to inform an audience with trustworthy information about actuality. In the example of a newspaper, Odins states that there can be three out of four levels that are associated with the Fictionalising Mode. The key difference that makes the media belong to the Documentarising Mode is the enunciative level.¹⁵⁶ As at the enunciative level of this mode there is the construction of a real enunciator, who can be asked questions in terms of identity, ways of acting, and truth.¹⁵⁷ The reader constructs a real enunciator, who is the person who wrote the article or featured in it.¹⁵⁸ Usually the enunciator is not actually approached and questioned, but the fact that they can be creates a contract where the reader can expect what they are saying to be legitimate, as if not then they can hold them accountable.¹⁵⁹

Context also plays a role in shaping the viewers experience of a medium, as in a space of communication there can be institutional frameworks which influence how a viewer experiences the media. These constraints can be the environment that the media is shown in. In the case of a documentary film, its genre means that even before the film starts there is a shared consensus between the viewers that the film will communicate factual information to the viewer. This shared consensus may have been created by the framing and labelling of the film, like the trailer and posters that indicate that the film genre is a documentary. Or, by the institutional framing, such as the environment of watching a film at a school creates the assumption that the film is educational. The space of a documentary film festival informs the viewer that they are watching a film belonging to the genre of documentary. This is why

¹⁵⁶ Another constraint that distinguishes the Documentarising Mode from other modes is the level of space, because a plastic (abstract) space is forbidden here. This is because the space can block the discursive process, as it can become too ambiguous and thus unclear what the information or message is. The main aim of media in the Documentarising Mode is to communicate real information to inform a receiver, and so the plastic space prevents this from being achieved. Having said this, the level of space here can be similar with other modes like the Fictionalising First and Second Approach, as it can also include a fictional space like a construction of a world, a chart, a series of symbols and diagrams. But despite these similar levels of spaces the modes are still dissimilar because the enunciative levels remains different.

¹⁵⁷ Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 81.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 83. Odin says here "It is this possibility that establishes the real enunciator." / example; writing or calling the paper to complain, or finding the write, of outing them via social media or media.

Odin states that documentaries work better when they are seen in these dedicated spaces.¹⁶⁰ Then the viewer is likely more prepared to be focused on the film, which is important for this genre as it requires concentration to obtain all of the factual information.¹⁶¹ This shows that the viewers' experience is not just shaped by the content of the film but also the framing of it. Therefore, whether a film is communicated via a specific mode of communication is complicated. But there is usually still a predominate mode of communication that is indicated via the framing, labelling, processing, and reading of that film.¹⁶² Applying the levels, and thus modes, to an analysis of media can help us to understand how an enunciator addresses the viewer, and then how a receiver experiences the media.

Commercials and the Documentarising Mode

In his book, *Spaces of Communication - Elements of Semio-Pragmatics*, only in one moment Odin refers to commercials. The main reason why they are even mentioned here is because they are a by-product of his case study of a televised version of *Tour De France*. Here Odin explains,

At times, the broadcast of the race cuts to ads, thus switching to the space of advertising communication: I leave the live broadcast, while continuing to use the Documentarising Mode, but it is the commercials that are the operators. However, the reference to the space of sports is not abandoned, because films often use it to construct their mini-scenarios: two spaces thus intersect. It amuses me quite a bit, and I rather admire the designers who have been so good at getting the most out of the situation (Aesthetic Mode).¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ This is why when people are tired they prefer to watch a more light hearted genre like a rom-com, comedy, action or romance, as unlike an artistic film which requires them to read it in an analytical mode or a doc = informative.

¹⁶² Hediger, "Introduction", in Roger Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 14.

¹⁶³ Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 145. The rest of the quote states, "Still, I am in the construction, not of the sports text any more, but of a series of advertising texts whose aim is to get me out of my position of spectator to make a consumer out of me and, by leveraging the prestige of the Tour de France and the competitors, to encourage me to make a purchase. I doubt that this will work, but you never know..." But this is all that Odin says about commercials in his book.

From this quote we see that Odin identifies ads as communicating via the Documentarising mode because of the context. As when the commercials appear, the viewers experience them by continuing to use the Documentarising mode that they observed the programme in. He also states that based on the programming of the show and the ad breaks, there is an Aesthetic Mode because the two separate medias are connected here through themes. For example, the ads that are shown during the *Tour* are likely for more male and sports related products to match the viewership of the *Tour*. This is often the case that the selection of which ads are shown are curated to match the viewership of the programme. It has been discussed in Michael A. Messner and Jeffrey Montez de Oca's article, "The Male Consumer As Loser : Beer and Liquor Ads in Mega Sports Media Events", which applies feminist theory to analyse alcohol commercials that were shown during the American Super Bowl games.¹⁶⁴ But because Odin is only briefly referring to ads, he does not expand on how exactly the ads themselves are communicating via the Aesthetic Mode. It seems that he is referring to the space of communication (programming) communicating via this mode, and not the ad itself.

The problem with Odins explanation here, is that by continuing to use the Documentarising mode from the programme to the ads means that all of the ads in the break are communicating via the same mode. In contrast, I argue that the mode that commercials communicate in varies, as it is not only created by the context but also the production strategy used. Each individual ad varies in its sales-approach as they are advertising different products which have different functions, benefits, and target audiences. For example, I regard most car commercials as communicating via the 'energetic mode' as they consist of fast imagery and dramatic loud sound effects. This is an effective mode of communication for selling this product, because the viewer experiences the ad in a way that represents the product. As they 'feel' the speed of the car via the loud audio and fast visuals. In these ads the story is less important as the visual and audio rhythm takes over.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Michael A. Messner, and Jeffrey Montez de Oca "The Male Consumer As Loser : Beer and Liquor Ads in Mega Sports Media Events." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol 30, no. 3 (The University of Chicago, 2005): p. 1879–1909.

¹⁶⁵ The energetic mode was not a form of communication used in Geesink's era because the mode is associated with the action film genre that formed in the late 1960s and became fully recognized and immensely popular in the 1980s. Therefore the energetic mode of communication, that is very prominent in current commercials like car ads, did not even exist when Geesink made his work.

Having said this, I do agree with Odin that commercials can communicate via the Documentarising Mode. Examples of this would be commercials that contain a sales-person conducting product demonstration, or a narrator presenting information about the product with visuals of it, like in the Admag that had Arnold Doodle, which I mentioned in my mapping of inattention in Chapter One. This hard-sell approach was used by Geesink's competitors, but it was often criticised for being too aggressive, as it lacks emotional or aesthetic entertainment that can be achieved via fictionalisation.¹⁶⁶

However, I still disagree with Odins point that ads continuously communicate via the Documentarising Mode, as some ads only communicate via this mode in certain moments. In Geesink ads, I argue that they only communicate via this mode during the 'package shot'. A package shot is usually the closing shot of an ad in which the advertised product comes into the picture most clearly. It is the live action moment when the product is overtly and seductively presented to the viewer, to inform them what it looks like. It is a part of a production strategy as it is a tool used to help persuade the viewer to desire the product. I identify these parts of Geesink's ads as the documentarising moment, because a real product is shown, and so at the enunciative level the imagery of the product can be questioned in terms of truth. Here the viewer may question, does the product really look like this? Does it taste as delicious as it looks? Is that really the size of the product? Do I want to buy it?

These aspects of reality help to sell the product. Hence why companies compete with each other to make their product the most aesthetically pleasing, to persuade the viewer to desire it because it looks so delicious or attractive. Communicating via the Documentarising Mode also has a practical purpose as it informs the viewer of its appearance, so that they can find it in the supermarket, which, as I mentioned in Chapter One, was deemed important by housewives in the mid-1950s. This explains why advertisers like Geesink did not want the viewers to only experience the ads as a fictional reading, as the consumer must be reminded to desire and buy the real product. To ensure this, the contents of the product and its packaging are usually presented boldly via the package shot moment. This, in other words, is why the package shot is an example of when ads communicate via the Documentarising

¹⁶⁶ Bruce Walker, "In America the Trend is – More Animation ... More Soft-Sell," *Commercial Television News*, vol. 2, no.45 (November 9, 1956): p.6.

Mode. But in Geesink’s commercials, this is only for a moment, as the rest of his ads communicate via the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach. In the next section, I will explain how, to support my argument that ads can communicate in the Documentarising Mode, but not always continuously as Odin states. Instead, these moments vary, based on the production strategy that the advertiser chooses.



Figure 8 –A package shot moment from Geesink’s Heineken commercial called *Sunday* (1961)

Fictionalising Mode Second Approach

Odin created The Fictionalising Mode Second Approach because in fiction ‘real’ values can be manifest, as we can still gain factual knowledge about the ‘real’ world, and so we cannot say that fiction has no relationship to reality.¹⁶⁷ He summarised this as, “the experience of

¹⁶⁷ Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 85.

fiction is also an experience of the real”.¹⁶⁸ This meant that an additional mode needed to be created because the other modes did not represent this, as the Documentarising Mode is heavily associated with a relationship to reality, whilst the Fictionalising Mode First Approach lacks a relationship to reality. A fusion of the two modes needed to be created which resulted in Odin creating the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach. He formed this mode by examining the First Approach of Fictionalising and then integrated processes regarding the relationship to reality into the construction of the Second Approach.¹⁶⁹

Below we see Odins definition of this mode, here we see that the ‘level of space’ and the ‘affective level’ is the same as the first mode of fictionalisation. But that the ‘discursive level’ and the ‘enunciative level’ differs as he created an additional ‘level two’ for the Second Approach. The discursive level of the Second Approach differs from the First Approach, because rather than present a story for the sake of entertainment, there is a discourse within the story that contains real information and values. Examples of this include: films based on a ‘true story’ or a historical event, biopics, or films that try to promote a moral message, like an anti-racist film. These are examples of media that are not only trying to entertain, but to make the viewer aware of certain information and values. This is why the ‘enunciative level’ is different in this mode, because then the viewer constructs “a real enunciator of information and values, who is hidden – masked beneath the fictivization contract”.¹⁷⁰ This means that the maker/sender can be questioned in terms of their identity, ways of acting and truth, because at the discursive level of this mode, the narrative conveys real information and values that can be interrogated. At the enunciative level of the First Approach, it requires no interrogation of truth, due to the acceptance of the fictional contract. Conversely in the second approach, even if the narrative is shown via fictionalisation, which is what Odin means when he says, “masked beneath the fictivization contract”, the enunciator can still be questioned.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 86.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

Definition of the fictionalizing mode (new proposition):

- At the level of space: construction of a world (diegetization)
- At discursive level 1: the construction of a narrative (storytelling)
- At discursive level 2: the construction, from the narrative, of a “discourse” that conveys information and values
- At the affective level: *mise en phase* with the story and thus with the values it conveys
- At enunciative level 1: construction of a fictitious enunciator of the story and of characters (what I have been calling *fictivizing*)
- At enunciative level 2: construction of a real enunciator of information and values, who is hidden – masked beneath the fictivization contract

Figure 9 –From Odins book, his definition of the Fictionalising Mode
Second Approach.

It was important for Odin to create this mode, as there are many examples where fiction and reality are intertwined, such as a documentary film or an educational film that includes animation. Here the boundaries are blurred because the framing and genre of the film means that it predominately communicates via the Documentarising Mode. At the discursive level, its function is to document reality, for the purpose of instruction, education, or maintaining a historical record. But if this film also includes animation (likely for the purpose of demonstration or entertainment) then, because animation is purely fictional (as it cannot be real), the animated character is referred to as a ‘fictitious enunciator’. Here it makes no sense for the viewer to interrogate the enunciator, because the characters and space are not real. The text cannot be questioned in terms of identity, ways of acting, and truth, because the viewer accepts the fictional contract, which is presented by the ‘level of space’ changing to a fictional world. But when a non-fiction film, like a documentary, is expected to present truth but it has a fictitious enunciator, it then becomes complicated because presenting truth is an expected requirement of this genre, yet the character presenting this truth is not real. This is why Odin created the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach, so that at the enunciative level “a real enunciator of information and values, who is hidden – masked beneath the fictivization contract”.¹⁷¹ This means that at the discursive level, there is still a narrative

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

conveying information and values that can be interrogated, because the viewer is aware that the enunciator is masked behind fictionalisation.

Geesink's Commercials and the Fictionalising Mode

I argue that Geesink's commercials predominantly communicate via the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach, which challenges Odins point that ads only communicate via the Documentarising Mode and the Aesthetic Mode. I came to this conclusion after I applied the definition of the levels for different modes to Geesink's ads. I began by applying the Fictionalising Mode First Approach of to his ads. But I soon realised that this could not work because whilst commercials can be constructed with fictionalisation, they are not purely fiction as there is always an element of reality in them. At some point in the ad the product or a brand logo needs to be presented in the imagery (likely via a package shot) so that the viewer knows what the ad is actually selling to them, and what the product looks like.¹⁷²

In addition to this, at the enunciative level of the First Approach, there is an acceptance of a fictional enunciator. The effect of this is that it leads to the receiver engaging in a fictionalising reading. What this means is, whilst watching a fictional film, which generally communicates via the Fictionalising Mode First Approach, we want to feel entertained by it and so we accept that there is a fictional enunciator that cannot be questioned in terms of truth. This means that rather than waste our energy to question or be critical of the film in terms of how logical the characters decisions are, or how plausible the narrative is, instead we accept that it is fiction, and so we agree not to question its validity. Odin summarises this as, "by agreeing not to ask questions about the enunciator, I somehow place myself outside the real world".¹⁷³ But with commercials, despite advertisers not wanting to be questioned in terms of truth, they do not want the receiver to be so immersed and entertained that the viewers place themselves outside of the real world. It is unlikely that this will happen, because the framing of ads interrupting a TV programme informs the viewer that they are watching a commercial. Leading to them observing the ads with a critical lens, as this helps

¹⁷² Really famous brands do not need to show the product, as just the logo can inform the viewers what is being sold as they are aware of what that logo represents.

¹⁷³ Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 77.

them to decide if the product appeals to them, and so they are not placing themselves outside the real world. But like with the John Lewis commercial, some ads can be immersive but do not only communicate via the Fictionalising First Approach, because reality needs to be presented within the ad itself, not only outside of it via the framing of it. This is because the viewer must be aware of the product, in order to decide if they want to take action and buy it.

Once I realised that ads cannot communicate via the First Approach, I then applied the Documentarising Mode to them. But I soon found that besides the package shot moments, Geesink's commercials do not predominately communicate via this mode either. This is because the affective level of the Documentarising Mode is "undetermined" by Odin, but I argue that Geesink's ads can have some *mise en phase*.¹⁷⁴ It is difficult for commercials to communicate via a high level of *mise en phase*, as they are constricted by factors of time length and framing. But as I explained with the John Lewis ad, it is not impossible. Geesink's ads are another examples of how ads can create some form of mental or emotional investment with the story, and thus with the information and values that the story conveys, which is the sales message. Making the affective level not undetermined but a part of Geesink's production strategy, of using entertainment to sell. I have evidence of the effect of this strategy in a review of Geesink's ad that I found, but before I present this review, I must first introduce the commercial.

After I discovered that Geesink could not communicate via the First Approach, and only in the package shot moments did he communicate via the Documentarising Mode, I applied the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach to his ads. I found that this mode represented his method of communication, and I will explain how via a commercial called *Penalty Kick*. This ad was made for the British alcohol brand Mackeson Stout, and it was directed by Jan Coolen and Ton van der Meyde, who together made the majority of the Mackeson ads for the Geesink studio.

As you will see in the image below, the ad was aired in black and white, and made with stop-motion puppet animation. It begins with a puppet beer bottle taking a penalty kick at a

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 84.

football game. Immediately, it is noticeable that this bottle does not have the Mackeson label on it, because it is surrounded by football fan bottles who all have brand label on their 'chest'. This curation of the characters costumes is important to note because it is a symbol that helps to tell the narrative, thus sales message.



Figure 10 –The goalkeeper who now fails to save the goal from the revived Mackeson bottle, also does not have the Mackeson label. This subtly presents the message that failure should not be associated with this brand.

The story then continues with the non-Mackeson bottle taking a penalty kick, but their shot is so bad that the ball comically defies gravity by returning back to the striker. The bottle is very upset that they failed to score the goal, especially in front of the huge crowd. These emotions are depicted by the bottle becoming deflated, and their bottle neck bends down to the ground in shame. But fortunately, the fans then cheer the product name “MACKESON!” which makes a Mackeson logo label appear on the sad bottle. Immediately the bottle goes from deflated to standing upright, which demonstrates that becoming a Mackeson bottle makes it feel strong and confident. The now ‘Mackeson’ bottle feels so good that it enthusiastically spins around in delight, and re-takes the penalty kick. It shoots and it scores, and the crowd goes wild as they cheer on the Mackeson bottles great achievement. This is then followed by

the last shot of the fans cheering, and holding a banner of the Mackeson Stout logo (which is shown on the cover page of this thesis).

Before I delve into how this ad communicates via this mode, I will first briefly explain why I have selected this specific commercial from a choice of thousands of Geesink ads. The first reason is because the Mackeson ads were a popular brand that were aired in Britain during my era of focus. This has been recognised by the specialist of the collection, curator Leenke Ripmeester, as she informed me that she selected these ads to digitise (which is a very timely and expensive process) because, “I treated Mackeson as a ‘special case’ because they were mentioned in the booklet on Geesink as a big and successful campaign so I thought these ads were a good representation of the studio’s output”.¹⁷⁵ I have discovered new evidence that supports Ripmeester’s point here. As I found an article from 1956 titled *Mackesons Win in Midlands*, that explains how the ads were the Midlands favourite commercials, and the second favourite in the combined London and Midland viewing areas.¹⁷⁶ In addition to this, I found a 1957 article that refers to Geesink’s Mackeson ads as “one of the most popular series on ITV”.¹⁷⁷ My research also found that even outside of the UK they were recognised as an impressive series by advertisers. As in 1958 three of Geesink’s Mackeson films called *Golf*, *Football* and *Tennis*, were each awarded by the Federation of Italian Publicity in the International Advertising Film Festival.¹⁷⁸ My findings support Ripmeester’s judgement that the Mackeson series were indeed very popular in the UK, and so a good representation of the Geesink studio’s output.

The reason why I specifically selected this Mackeson commercial from a choice of over fifty, is because I found that *Penalty Kick* was aired within the first two weeks of the launch of commercial TV in Britain. Specifically, the second weekend on Saturday, 8 October 1955. This means that this ad was amongst the first ever commercials shown in Britain, making it an important part of the history of commercial TV in Britain. It also suggests that it was shown when attention was likely at its peak, making it a good source to examine Geesink’s

¹⁷⁵ Leenke Ripmeester said this to me in an email, on the 27 July, 2023. I asked if I could quote her here, and she confirmed that I could on 30 April, 2024.

¹⁷⁶ “Mackeson Win in Midlands”, *Commercial Television News*, vol. 2, no.18. (May 4, 1956).

¹⁷⁷ “A Pictorial Review of Some Popular Spots in ‘CTN’s’ Christmas Album.” *Commercial Television News*, vol. 3, no.146 (December 20, 1957): p. 4.

¹⁷⁸ “Milan Award for Geesink.” *Audio-Visual Selling*, vol. 4, no.166 (May 9, 1958): p. 1.

production strategy before the problem of inattention may have influenced a change in his strategy. From the many trade press articles that I read, that were published between 1955-1962, the Mackeson ads were Geesink's most popular and broadcasted work in the UK. This is significant because people were exposed to far less commercials as we are now, and so the ones that they did see likely stood out to them more. I noticed in the commercial programmes that in 1955 the number of ads shown per day was usually around 28 to 36.¹⁷⁹ On Wednesday, 19 October 1955, out of the 29 ads that were shown that day, a Geesink Studio Mackeson ad was the only alcohol ad shown that whole day.¹⁸⁰ Then out of the 36 ads that were shown the day before, a Mackeson ad was also shown that day.¹⁸¹ Meaning that out of the limited number of ads on TV per day, Geesink's were shown two days in a row. This shows that when viewers were experiencing TV commercials for the first time in 1955, which was likely when their attention and enthusiasm towards them were at its peak, Geesink's Mackeson ads were amongst the most frequently shown commercials of that time. Overall, I have selected *Penalty Kick* because: it was shown within the first few weeks of commercial TV, I can determine the date that it was made roughly, and I have even found a contemporary's response to it, which I will discuss below.

Now that I have explained why I selected this specific commercial, I will delve into explaining how this ad communicates via the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach. One reason is because it matches the definition of the discursive level of this mode, that is defined as the construction from the narrative of a discourse that conveys information and values. I argue that ads can communicate via this mode because they can use fictional narratives to subtly present the sales message. *Penalty Kick* is evidence of this because the story that the bottle feels better once it is associated with the brand is the sales message. The ad is not literally stating that by drinking the beer you will be able to score a winning penalty kick in your football game. Instead, it is subtly presenting the message that this product is associated with positive feelings and emotions, that are similar to the good feeling of scoring a winning goal.

¹⁷⁹ "At-a-glance spot-check." *Commercial Television News*, (September 30, 1955): p. 2. This shows a schedule of all the commercials that were shown from Thursday 22 September to Sunday 25 September 1955. It even includes the exact times that the ads were aired and the length of them. It seems like the ads would interrupt the programmes, because there were sometimes short gaps of ten minutes between ads, but maybe this was because some of the programmes were very shorter.

¹⁸⁰ "At-a-glance spot-check." *Commercial Television News*, (October 28, 1955): p. 6.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

The majority of Geesink's Mackeson ads communicate via this discursive level, to help transport the sales message. As almost all the ads entail a story of a bottle underachieving, but when someone shouts "MACKESON!" they become the brand and so achieve great things. Using a fictional narrative to transport the sales message was a production strategy because as Odins explains, the strength of fiction is that this "information and these values are transmitted implicitly", and so the "receiver includes them unintentionally and without even knowing it, simply by taking an interest in the story".¹⁸² Rather than aggressively emphasising the sales message, like the hard-sell approach, Geesink's strategy was approaching advertising as entertainment, which can be labelled as the 'soft-sell' approach, as he created narratives that implicitly transported the sales message to the viewer.

At the level of space, Geesink communicated via the Second Approach. He was a set builder and an artist, and so, with his team, they made elaborate worlds of sports or leisure.¹⁸³ We see this in the setting of *Penalty Kick*, of a hand-made miniature football pitch that is filled with characters in costumes and a sky backdrop. The viewer experiences the ad via fictionalisation because they accept the fictional contract that this is a world where it is possible for beer bottles to be anthropomorphised. This is a part of the production strategy because it makes the ad more entertaining, as like the *Barbie* movie example, it is fun for the viewer to observe this fictional world and funny to see beer bottles play and spectate football. I have found evidence of Geesink being praised for this strategy of using fictionalisation by his contemporaries. I found this in a review from *Commercial Television News* of *Penalty Kick*, which states, "This was original – bottles playing football. The crowd scenes were also effective, with rows of bottles cheering their 'tops' off. When a goal was scored the supporters lifted a banner supporting the virtues of Mackeson's. Here we see Geesink's use of fictionalisation was deemed as an original and effective productive strategy. The reviewer embraces this approach by jokingly highlighting the use of anthropomorphism by exclaiming that the bottles were "cheering their 'tops' off", in reference to the saying that humans are "cheering their heads off". In this review, Geesink's use of fictionalisation is applauded

¹⁸² Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 85.

¹⁸³ It must be noted that the movements of the puppets were innovative, which may have made Geesink's ads more entertaining at the time because it was impressive to see how he achieved these special effects of making a ball fly through the air or the bottles form change. Geesink is praised for his innovation in this article, which is dedicated to discussing his technique, written by Norman Hurst, "A New Process Gives Cardboard Puppets a 3-D Effect, an Off-Beat Appeal for the 'TV Times'", *Audio-Visual Selling*, vol 4, no.239 (October 2, 1959): p. 8.

because it is deemed as “original” and “effective”. This is also evidence that at the affective level Geesink’s ads created some *mise en phase*, as the reviewer describes how the story resonates with them.

But with that being said, in this same review Geesink is criticised for not having a strong enough sales message. As despite the reviewer regarding the ad as original and effective, they gave the ad three out of four stars and explain that this is because, “The spot would have been even more effective had the sales message been a little stronger”.¹⁸⁴ Unfortunately the reviewer does not specify what would have made the sales message stronger. But since they praise the use of fictionalisation, I infer that it is linked to the absence of communicating via the Documentarising Mode. As the real product is never shown in the ad, instead it is only presented in puppet form. But at this time showing the product was considered important because prior to the launch of commercial TV, advertising in the home was only conducted via the radio where the product could be heard but not seen. Or, via newspapers and magazines, which limited how much of the product could be shown. TV ads meant that for the first time the products contents, packaging, and demonstration of it could be shown in more detail. This can explain why the reviewer felt that the sales message was not strong enough, as there was no package shot which is the moment when the sales message is presented more overtly.

We now move onto the affective level, which in the Second Approach means, “*mise en phase* with the story and thus with the values it conveys”.¹⁸⁵ This is because at the discursive level of this mode, there is the construction from the narrative of a discourse that conveys information and values. Therefore, the emotional or mental investment that is with the story, is also with the values that the story conveys, thus the sales message. In *Penalty Kick* the imagery and narrative can resonate with us as we might feel a bit sorry for the bottle when he looks embarrassed, or find it funny that his ‘body’ changes so dramatically because someone from the crowd shouted “Mackeson!” These bottle characters can resonate with the viewer, which is likely why advertisers like Geesink’s use mascots, like the Mackeson bottles, as they help to create this familiarity and connection. Hence why in 1956 Mackesons were the

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 86.

Midlands favourite commercials, and the second favourite in the combined London and Midland viewing areas.¹⁸⁶

At the enunciative level, *Penalty Kick* also communicates via this mode, that is defined as the viewer constructs “a real enunciator of information and values, who is hidden – masked beneath the fictivization contract”.¹⁸⁷ This is because in *Penalty Kick* the sales message is embedded into the fiction, which means that whilst accepting the fictivization contract, the viewer is not very critical of the enunciator’s information and values. This is what Odin means by ‘hidden – masked beneath the fictivization contract’. As using fictionalisation can be a positive distraction from the reality of being sold something, which can make the viewer less critical towards the real enunciator, who is the product company. Fictionalisation makes the sales message more subtle, as it blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality which makes the sales message less aggressive. Having said this, this does not entirely prevent the viewer from being critical of the information that is presented in the ad. In *Penalty Kick*, the viewer will not question the fiction itself, like whether a bottle can really kick a football or cheer, as they accept the fictive contract. But the sales message that is communicated via the fictional story (the discursive level) can still be questioned. As a viewer might question the information and values that are presented in the discourse by asking themselves, will this drink make me feel good? Will I like the taste of this drink? Is this a drink for me? Do I like the way the packaging and bottle looks? Do I relate to this product that is associated with sports? Asking these questions helps the viewer decide whether they want to become a consumer of the product, and so the advertisers job is to persuade them to. They do this by presenting information about the product and associating positive feelings (*mise en phase*) with it. Context also plays a part here, as the Mackeson ads often have a theme of sports or a recreational activity such as, cricket, golf, rugby, tennis, fishing, boxing, fencing, singing, dancing. This theme links to the space of communication of British culture to make it more appealing to the viewers, which can help to explain why there are seven football theme Mackeson ads out of fifty, as football is a big part of British culture.

¹⁸⁶ “Mackeson Win in Midlands”, *Commercial Television News*, vol 2, no 18. (May 4, 1956).

¹⁸⁷ Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 86.

A Summary of the Fictionalising Mode and Penalty Kick

In Odins book he provides very concise summaries of the modes, as he briefly defines the levels of them. I found this very useful as it made his theory more clear, and so I have tried to replicate this. Below, I have created a similar list, where I have connected the levels that define the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach but with an example of that mode, *Penalty Kick*.

- **Level of Space:** Entering a fictional world, which is the set design of a football pitch that contains characters who are anthropomorphised beer bottles.
- **Discursive Level:** The fictional narrative contains a discourse of real information and values, which is also the sales message that the product will positively enhance how you feel, and possibly what you can achieve.
- **Affective Level:** Mise en phase with the story and thus with the values it conveys. The viewer may value the product and want to purchase it because the narrative that the product can enhance how they feel resonates with them.
- **Enunciative Level:** The real enunciator is hidden – masked beneath the fictivization contract so that the sales message is more subtle. The viewer can still identify the product company as the real enunciator, due to the framing and content of the ad.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained Odins theory of Semio-Pragmatics and applied it to one of Geesink's commercials to help me identify what his production strategy was like before the problem of inattention became a matter of concern. I conclude that *Penalty Kick* communicated via the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach, because the levels that define this mode are all identifiable here. This informs us that Geesink heavily used fictionalisation, which supports Ripmeester's argument that Geesink approached advertising as entertainment.

We see this in *Penalty Kick* as Geesink created a fictional world that entailed an elaborate set design of a football game, props, characters, and a story that transports the real sales message. This is to the extent that there is not even a package shot in the ad, and thus no moment that the ad communicates via the Documentarising Mode, which challenges Odin's point that commercials only communicate via the Documentarising Mode. As I have explained, I recognise that commercials can communicate via the Documentarising Mode, but I argue that in some ads this is only during the package shot moment, or like in *Penalty Kick*, not at all.

Chapter Three - Joop Geesink's Approach To Advertising

In this chapter I conduct my comparative analysis of the Geesink studio commercials. The aim here is to investigate whether there were any changes in the ads that he made at the start of commercial TV in Britain, in 1955, compared with the ads that he made when the discussion of viewer inattention was arising around 1959-1962. My analysis can inform us whether Geesink changed his style of advertising in the ads that he made for British television between 1955-1962. The answer to this question then helps me to assess if viewer inattention affected advertisers like Geesink's, production strategy. If we see a distinct change in Geesink's approach that appeared in parallel with the discussions of inattention, we can infer that there may have been a connection between the two. A correlation can suggest that Geesink changed his production strategy in the aim to attract and maintain viewer attention.

In order to answer my research question, a comparative analysis of the commercials needs to be conducted because the magazines did not provide much information about how advertisers responded to inattention. This is because the articles that discussed inattention were mainly written by people who worked in the field of research, such as advertising research agencies or academics. I did not encounter any articles from advertisers that overtly discussed this problem of inattention and so it is unknown whether advertisers like Geesink also shared this view. One clue that advertisers considered inattention to be a problem is that these articles on inattention were published in the magazines that were read, and possibly even published, by advertisers. But this still does not fully inform us of advertisers' attitudes towards inattention. Therefore, I conduct a comparative analysis of Geesink's ads to assess whether advertisers reacted to the problem in their production strategy. This helps to understand how serious the problem of inattention was deemed by advertisers because according to the articles alone, it was not specifically advertisers who were concerned by inattention, but researchers.

Methodology for the Analysis

The corpus of my comparative analysis consists of twelve commercials that were produced by the Geesink Studio and are preserved at the Eye Film Institute Netherlands. In 1972, a large part of the Geesink film print collection was transferred to Eye. It is a large collection of about 2300 copies of ads, which makes it the biggest animation collection at Eye, and 10% of the overall collection. The ads were not high on the list of priorities, because they are commercials, and so much of the collection remained untouched on the shelf for 35 years. But in 2007 the Dutch government released a large budget for film preservation, and as a result an important part of the Geesink material has been made accessible as it has been digitised. Fortunately, I was trusted with access to the digital and physical prints, because during my internship at Eye I learnt how to safely handle film prints. This meant that I was able to view hundreds of Geesink ads, and so I have managed to gain an overview of his approach to advertising.

These twelve ads are all of the Geesink commercials that I found mentioned in the British trade press magazines. Rather than pick a sample of commercials from Eye's catalogue, I selected these specific ads because I found them mentioned in the magazines, in weekly review sections, which was where advertisers would rate that week's ads out of four stars. In total I found ten Mackeson ads mentioned in these reviews.¹⁸⁸ I also noticed Geesink's commercials in articles that discussed awards won in advertising festivals, and in the case of Geesink's Heineken (1961) ad it was mentioned in an announcement of it being an upcoming ad campaign. These articles then confirmed to me which Geesink ads, from Eye's huge collection, were definitely aired in the UK and on TV as opposed to cinema, and the exact date that they were aired and so, at least roughly, when they were made. This information is not always present or certain in Eye's catalogue.¹⁸⁹ Hence why I only discuss the ads that I found mentioned. Especially because knowing the dates that the ads were made is vital

¹⁸⁸ They include, *Square Dance, Ice Skating, Funfair, Football, Cricket and Concert Party*.

¹⁸⁹ This is not a criticism to Eye, as the archivists lack the time and funding to do such extensive research. Their priority is to organise the prints so they can be climatized, thus protected and then made accessible via digitisation. I am aware of Eye's catalogue process because for my internship at Eye my task was to catalogue the Geesink collections negative 35mm print commercials. Even with extensive research, the problem is often that the information just cannot be found.

information for observing whether Geesink's production strategy was influenced by the arising problem of inattention.

Unfortunately, in the 1956 and 1962 magazines I could not find any mention of a Geesink studio commercial. For 1962 this is particularly a shame because it would have been really useful to find evidence of an ad that was definitely aired in 1962, as this was when inattention was discussed most. I wanted to overcome this obstacle by selecting an ad from Eye's catalogue to analyse, but I could not find one that was made for British Television from 1962 onwards. I asked Ripmeester if she could help me here, but she could not find one either. She sent me a link to some ads, but they were all for cinema (as they had colour) and as she stated to me, the dates were a little speculative. Therefore, I decided that it is best that I stick with only analysing the ads that I found, as these dates are conclusive. The reason why is because I am limited in resources, time, and money. But for future research I can look for the Geesink ads that were mentioned in the magazines that were published from 1962 onwards.¹⁹⁰ I am aware that this is a limitation in my thesis, but it does not stop me from providing an answer to this research question, because as I explained in Chapter One inattention was an arising problem from 1959.

The reason why I have chosen the quantity of twelve ads is because they are all of the Geesink ads that I found mentioned in the articles. Rather than select a sample of them I will compare them all. I am aware that there are limitations with this approach, as a broader analysis can lead to quantity over quality. But when observing whether production strategy changed over time, then a small sample would actually be more of a disadvantage for the aim of this analysis. Looking at more ads increases our chances to notice if there are any changes in Geesink's production strategy.

The other limitation is that I do not have the space to provide an explanation of the twelve ads narratives. That is why in Chapter Two I explained *Penalty Kick* (1955) in depth via Odin's levels. As this helped to show how Geesink heavily approached advertising as entertainment

¹⁹⁰ The magazines are not digitised and they are kept in the UK, and so this would require another trip there. Also, I had already spent five consecutive days travelling to the BFI library in central London, to read hundreds of magazines, and I spent countless days going through these photos and organising the information in them.

with his elaborate set designs, characters, and stories. Fortunately, all of the Mackeson ads consist of a very similar premise, as they only differ in the theme. As for the one Heineken ad, I will provide some explanation to it in this chapter.

After I found the Geesink ads that were mentioned in the magazines, I searched for them in Eye's collection database so I could watch them. I found the ads in the database by searching keywords that represented the ads that I saw in an image or from a description in the magazine. For example, in an article from 1958 an advertiser reviewed a Mackeson ad that entailed a narrative of kangaroos playing cricket, and so I searched the keywords, 'Mackeson', 'kangaroos', and 'cricket' to find it. In this example, there was one result in the database, of a Mackeson ad called 'Cricket' which I could safely assume was the same ad. But just to double check this, I read the written description of the ad in the database and saw that it matched with the review, which meant that I could assume that this was the same ad mentioned in the magazine. In some articles there were even photos of Geesink's ads, which really assured me that it was the same ad as in Eye's collection, see the photo below of Bowls (1959) mentioned in the magazine on the left, and then a screenshot I took of the digitised video of it in Eye's catalogue.

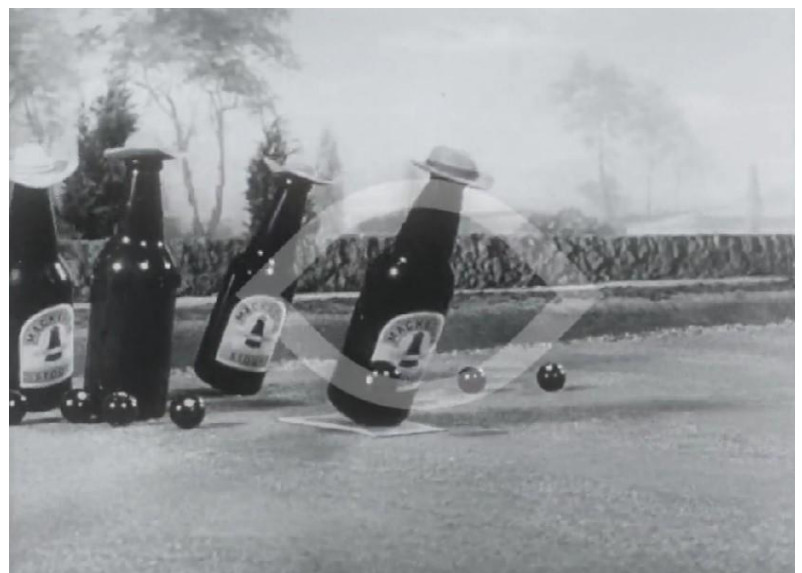
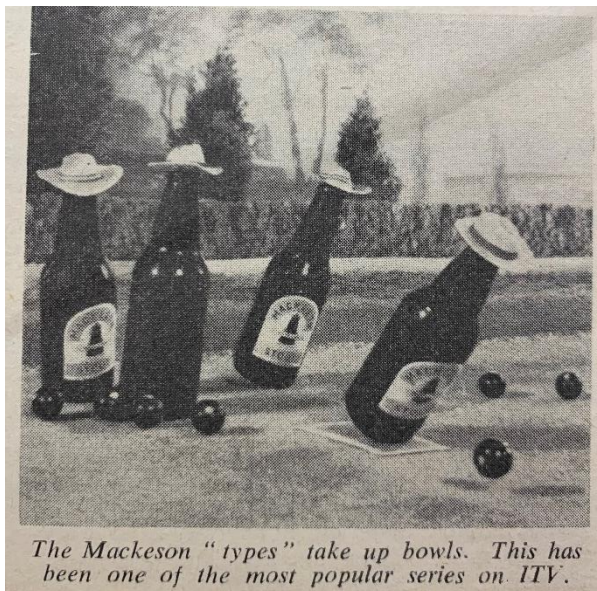


Figure 11 - On the left is a photo I took of an article that discussed Geesink's commercial *Bowls*, and on the right is a screenshot of the same ad that is digitised at Eye.

Fortunately for all of the eleven Mackeson ads that were mentioned in the magazines, the film prints had been digitised by Eye. This meant that I could watch them remotely via a link that Ripmeester sent me. Being able to watch the ads digitally meant that I could rewatch and pause them as many times as possible. This helped me to carefully analyse all of the characteristics of the ads. The Heineken ad has not yet been digitised, but to overcome this obstacle I visited Eye's archive to watch the print of it and recorded it on my phone.

In order to conduct this analysis, I have created four categories to compare the commercials by. These four categories are made up of characteristics of advertising and they are: the use of slogans, repetition of the product name, depiction of the product in the package shot moments, and the type of audio that is used in the commercials. I have created these four categories because they are all components that are used in advertising production strategies, as they can help to promote a product in order to persuade a viewer to buy it. They can also all be used to attract and maintain attention, and so comparing how exactly they are used from 1955 to 1962, helps me assess whether Geesink's production strategy changed in relation to the arising problem of viewers inattention.

In order to organise my analysis, I have made four tables for each of these categories. In the tables I have organised the commercials in chronological order from 1955 to 1961, and I have included a column of the dates that the ads were made for a clear lineal overview. It is important that the date column is included in all four tables, because the focus of this analysis is to compare whether there was a change in Geesink's production strategy through the time that the problem of inattention was arising. Below I have attached one of the tables to provide you with an idea of how I have organised my analysis, see the appendix for the other tables.¹⁹¹

The next step was to watch each of the twelve ads multiple times and note down the characteristics into all of the tables. After this, I examined the results that were recorded in my tables by printing them out on paper and then highlighting certain elements of the

¹⁹¹ The names of the commercials are very similar to in Eyes catalogue and so they can be found there.

characteristics.¹⁹² This meant that by simply looking at the table, I could immediately identify whether there were any changes based on the colour system. I then summarised the changes for each of the four categories. These observations are what I will now present in this Chapter, to discuss how changes in Geesink’s production strategy may have been influenced by the problem of inattention.

Commercial Name	Date	Sound: What type of audio is used?
Penalty Kick 1	1955	orchestra music + sound effects / character dialogue + narrator (Stern Tone).
Penalty Kick 2	1955	orchestra music + sound effects / character dialogue + narrator (Softer Tone).
Square-dance	1955	Music-singing + sound effects / character dialogue + narrator / voiceover.
Bowls	1957	(no music) + sound effects / character dialogue + narrator / voiceover.
Cricket Kangaroos	1958	sound effects / character dialogue + narrator / voiceover.
Ice Skating	1959	orchestra music + sound effects / character dialogue + narrator.
Singers	1959	Music-jingle (no dialogue or narrator etc).
Fair	1960	orchestra music + sound effects / narrator.
Promise in a Glass 1 (Dog Show)	1960	orchestra music / narrator / voiceover.
Promise in a Glass 2 (Park - People)	1960	orchestra music / character dialogue + narrator / voiceover.
Promise in a Glass 3 (Park – Bottles)	1960	orchestra music / narrator / voiceover.
Heineken – Sunday	1961	Music-jingle (no dialogue or narrator etc).

Figure 12 – An example of one of the four main tables that I made for my analysis.

¹⁹² For example, in the table on ‘Package Shots’, I highlighted in orange pen the ads that had one camera shot, in green pen two different camera angle shots, and in blue pen the six different camera angle shots so that I could have an immediate visual overview of the differences.

Orchestra Music and Sound Effects

The first category I will compare is the type of audio that was used in the twelve commercials. I conducted this analysis by noting down into my table, what type of audio is used in each commercial. For each ad I recorded if there was any orchestra music, sound effects, a jingle, character dialogue, a narrator, or a voiceover I made these distinctions of sounds with the help of Odin's theory.

The first type of sound I will discuss here is the use of music and sound effects. I argue that they are a part of Geesink's production strategy because their function is to audibly narrate the fictional story, which is why I discuss them together. A lot of effort had gone into the audio, as the music was made up of orchestra instruments and so it was very elaborate and likely involved many musicians and high costs to orchestrate. My results conclude that there was no change in Geesink's production strategy here. As nearly all the ads, ten out of twelve, contained some form of music. Eight of them had specifically orchestra music, seven had sound effects, and two ads contained a jingle. Even the two ads that did not contain any music, which were made in 1957 and 1958, still included sound effects.

The music and sound effects were likely used consistently because they helped to create fictionalisation, which was an important part of Geesink's production strategy of approaching advertising as entertainment. As I discussed in Chapter Two, I challenge Odin's point that ads only communicate via the Documentarising Mode and the Aesthetic Mode. I presented the example of *Penalty Kick* (1955) to show that Geesink communicated via the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach. This is because at the discursive level the ad matches this modes definition, as there is a narrative that conveys real information and values, which is the sales message. I regard Geesink's choice of audio as a part of the production strategy because it helps to communicate the sales message in a more entertaining way.

In animated audio-visual media, like the *Tom & Jerry* cartoons, the sound effects and orchestrated music really help to narrate the imagery of the fictional story, in order to achieve the primary aim of entertainment. The sounds depict the movements and emotions of the characters, as quick tempo music is used when Jerry is sprinting away from Tom, or

humorous sound effects are made when Tom gets hurt by Jerry. But these cartoons differ from Geesink's animated ads, as *Tom and Jerry* communicate via the first mode of fictionalisation. This is because at the affective level of these cartoons there is a relationship between *mise en phase* and the narrated events, which is constructed to achieve the main purpose of entertaining the viewer. Whereas, at the affective level of Geesink's ads, the music helps to create *mise en phase* with the story and thus with the values it conveys, which is the sales message. I explained in Chapter Two how this is the case in *Penalty Kick*, but I will present another example here to solidify my argument.

I have selected a series of three ads that were made in 1960, as this was when the problem of inattention was arising. All three *Promise in a Glass* Mackeson ads contain orchestrated music which connotes the story. I will briefly explain what the story (discursive level) entails here for one of the ads that I named *Promise In a Glass Three – Park Bottles*. At the level of space of this ad we enter a fictional world of a park setting that is filled with animated beer bottles. The ad begins with a bottle strolling through a park whilst jolly music is playing. The character passes other happy bottles, like a baby bottle in a pram and two bottles kissing by a tree. Throughout these scenes the orchestrated music is very upbeat to audibly connote the characters feelings of happiness. The imagery also depicts this feeling of joy, as there is a sunshine symbol attached to all of the characters 'bodies', and a sun bounces above the main characters 'head'. But the audio drastically changes to a sound of dread, that is formed with brass instruments and a timpani drum, to connote the story as the bottle sees a man (not a bottle) unconscious on a park bench. The Mackeson bottle rushes to help the man, and uses the sun above his head to awake him. Fortunately, the Mackeson bottle saves the day, as it rescues the man by giving him its sunshine symbol. The music emphasises the narrative's sales message, that Mackeson stout can revive people, as it returns back to the jolly sound to accompany the imagery's happy ending.

Here we see how Geesink used elaborate music to help audibly illustrate the story as a way to create more *mise en phase* with the narrative and thus the product. The jolly music is used to connote the feeling of the character, and this is done to emphasise the sales message (discursive level) that this product can make you feel good, too. The narrative of the bottle rescuing the unconscious man is not literal, especially because alcohol can actually make

people unconscious. Instead, it is presented to connote the sales message that this product can make you feel revived, thus good. Hence why the only human character in the story is depicted as vulnerable and needs to be rescued by the beer bottle. This is how the ad communicates via the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach, because at the affective level it creates emotional values (mise en phase) from the fictional story towards the real product. This was a very common production strategy at the time, and it is highlighted in the comprehensive book called, *Social Communication in Advertising: Consumption in the Mediated Marketplace*, co-authored by Kyle Asquith, Jackie Botterill, Sut Jhally, Stephen Kline, and William Leiss. The authors contend that during this period, "The new middle class undertook consumption patterns that sought to maximize emotional experience".¹⁹³ Meaning that advertising no longer only focused on providing information that described the products function (the Documentarising Mode), but instead focused on the varied possibilities of improving lives through consumption.¹⁹⁴

This point can also be applied to Geesink's use of sound effects. In the two of the twelve ads that did not have any music, it is likely because the music did not fit the fictional story, and so instead they were replaced by character dialogue, or a commentator. This audio matched the story of these ads much better than music would have. For example, in *Cricket Kangaroos* (1958) and *Bowls* (1957) at the level of space we enter a world that is fictional but still connotes the real values of a more calm sports environment. At the discursive level of these two ads, the story consists of an intense atmosphere as we await to see whether the bottle character will score a winning point. Orchestrated music would have ruined this mise en phase, as the viewer needs to somewhat resonate with the characters feeling of pressure or the spectators feeling of suspense. Instead of music, a commentator is used to create suspense and enthusiasm, along with sound effects that help to audibly illustrate the narrative. These two examples show that even when music was not used, the ad is still communicated via the second mode of fictionalisation. Geesink's production strategy remained consistent in approaching advertising as entertainment, as the music really helps to connote the fictional narrative that created emotional values towards the product

¹⁹³ William Leiss, Stephen Kline, Sut Jhally, Jacqueline Botterill, Kyle Asquith. *Social Communication in Advertising: Consumption in the Mediated Marketplace*. (4th Edition, New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 222.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 230.

Overall, orchestrated music and sound effects was used pretty consistently in all of the ads that were made between 1955-1961. This shows that in regard to this characteristic of the ads, Geesink did not change his approach to advertising. Meaning that the problem of inattention had no influence on changing Geesink's production strategy here.



Figure 13 – The studio created a tiny non-Mackeson bottle, to depict that it feels embarrassed that it fell over in front of the figure skater Mackeson bottle.

Narrator VS Voiceover

In order to ensure that there was no change in Geesink's style of audio over time, I made distinctions between the type of audio that was used. I did this, so I could look more closely at each ad, to make more specific comparisons. This is important because due to commercials being so short in time, then every second is carefully curated to communicate the sales message. Hence why I apply Odin's theory here, as it helps me to understand how exactly

Geesink addressed the viewer throughout the ad, which then helps me to identify his production strategy.

In this thesis I argue that Geesink's production strategy was that he approached advertising as entertainment, because he heavily used fictionalisation. This is why I identify the audio (in the non-package shot moments) as a narrator or as character dialogue. But at the same time, Geesink also communicated via the Documentarising Mode during the package shot moments, which has led me to ask, does the audio in the package shot moments differ to the audio that is used in the fictional narrative moments of the ad? Creating these distinctions allows me to zoom into specific parts of each ad so that I can make more comparisons.

My answer to this question is that the audio does differ in these moments, as during the package shots there is a voiceover, not a narrator or a character. Applying Odin's modes allows me to see that there are actually two separate types of audio here, which is character dialogue and a voiceover. This is because at the enunciative level of this mode, there is the construction of a real enunciator who can be asked questions in terms of identity, ways of acting, and truth.¹⁹⁵ When the real product is shown, we can question the truth of how it looks and what the voiceover says about it. For example, at the end of *Cricket Kangaroos* (1958) during the package shot we see a bottle of Mackeson poured into a glass whilst the voiceover says, "Of course, he's a Mackeson type, are you? If not, try it and taste the difference."¹⁹⁶ The voiceover is directly addressing the viewer by suggesting that they should taste the product, and asks a rhetorical question to encourage them to reflect on whether they want to identify themselves with this brand.

On the one hand, we could argue that this audio is not a voiceover but a narrator because they are referring to characters in the story. As "he's a Mackeson type" refers to the bottle that won the cricket match against the kangaroos. But because this is said over live action imagery of the real product, the enunciator is no longer "masked beneath the fictivization contract" of the fictional story and world.¹⁹⁷ In this moment we have left the animated fictional world, and

¹⁹⁵ Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 79.

¹⁹⁶ Eye Catalogue, FLM161201 - Mackeson Stout - Beer - Are you a Mackeson type? : *Cricket* (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1956).

¹⁹⁷ Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 86.

so we no longer accept the fictional contract here. Instead, we can question how truthful the imagery and audio description of the product is, and whether we desire it.

Prior to this package shot moment, the audio does belong to the fictional mode. As whilst the kangaroos and bottles are playing cricket, we hear a character commentate the match. In this scene we see a non-Mackeson bottle miss the ball and the commentator exclaims, “He’s entirely missed the ball! What will his captain say?”¹⁹⁸ The story continues with the product saving the day (the sales message) as when the captain shouts “Mackeson!” the bottle becomes the product and then hits the winning point, which the commentator enthusiastically describes as, “a Six! Mackeson has won the match and the series!” This emotive language is used to create *mise en phase* with the story and thus the values it conveys (the sales message). This shows that at the affective level the ad is communicated via the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach. Hence why I distinguish the commentator as a character in the story.

The other characteristic of sound that I noted was the use of character dialogue, and I categorise a ‘narrator’ as a character. The narrator may be breaking the fourth wall by speaking directly to the audience, but they still exist within the story because they are a fictitious enunciator of the story.¹⁹⁹ My results found that in all of the ads, except for the two which had jingles, character dialogue is present. This means that in regard to using character dialogue, Geesink was consistent and did not change his approach here. The ads all have fictional stories that are set in fictional worlds, and so it is no surprise that there is dialogue from the characters who live in these worlds. By making these distinctions via Odin’s modes has informed me that like with the music, the character dialogue is a part of the ad communicating via the Fictionalising mode.

However, despite making these specific distinctions with Odin’s levels, my results still conclude that the use of character dialogue was present in all of the ads, and so there was no change here. The use of a voiceover is also consistent as they appear in all of the six ads that had package shots. Overall, both the use of a narrator and a voiceover in Geesink’s commercials did not change from 1955 to 1961. I made these distinctions between character

¹⁹⁸ Mackeson Stout - Beer - Are you a Mackeson type? : *Cricket*.

¹⁹⁹ Odin, *Spaces of Communication*, p. 86.

dialogue and a voiceover to ensure that I would notice any changes in Geesink's production strategy, but instead they confirm that there were no changes in this regard.

Jingles

Having said this, there is an element of the sound that changed from 1955 to 1961. This is the use of jingles, as only in Geesink's later ads are jingles used. The ads with jingles are the Mackeson *Singers* (1959) and Heineken *Sunday* (1961). A change stands out here as prior to 1959, jingles are not used in any of the ads that were made from 1955 to 1959. An explanation for this could be that jingles did not exist until 1959. But I checked this by looking at the earlier magazine articles to see if jingles were mentioned, and I found that as early as 1956 they were used in British commercials. Not only were they used at that time, but they were already regarded as being overused, as the article headline was, *Harry Wayne McMahan says 'Jingles Are Overdone – Pay More Attention to the Background Music'*.²⁰⁰

This then leads to the question, why Geesink only used jingles in his later ads? I propose that one answer could be: the problem of inattention. This is because there is a correlation between when Geesink started using jingles, and when the problem of inattention was discussed. A correlation does not mean that there was definitely a cause and effect relationship, but it is certainly plausible. As jingles would have helped to tackle the issue of inattention, because whilst the viewers were leaving the room, or conducting other activities, then at least some of the sales message reached them, as they would hear the jingle mention the brand name or describe the product. Another explanation is that the function of a jingle is to be catchy, which can help to grab and hold viewer's attention. Lastly, jingles can help to make the pace of the ad feel faster which can help to maintain attention. Evidence that supports this, is that the two Geesink ads that included jingles, have a lot more camera shots than the ads that did not include jingles. In *Sunday* there are six different shots of just the products packaging, but only one to two shots in the other ads that included a package shot moment. In total, *Sunday* has nine different camera shots in the thirty second ad. In the other

²⁰⁰ "Harry Wayne McMahan says 'Jingles Are Overdone – Pay More Attention to the Background Music.'" *Commercial Television News*, vol. 2, no.27 (July 6, 1956): p. 4.

jingle ad called *Singers*, it is the shortest commercial of only fifteen seconds and yet there are six different shots in total. This shows that the ads with jingles had a faster pace because there were more camera shots. Suggesting, that jingles were a technique used to maintain viewer's attention, as it can prevent them from feeling bored, unlike with a slower paced ad.

Geesink's change in production strategy of using jingles was not necessarily a direct response to the problem of inattention. It may have been linked to a change in advertising trends in Britain, but this change may have been influenced by the problem of inattention. In the few articles I found that referred to jingles were all published from 1958 onwards. This can suggest that jingle ads were not heavily used or popular amongst British viewers from 1955 to 1958, as otherwise they would have been discussed more by advertisers in the magazines. This may explain why Geesink did not include them in his British ads until 1959. The reason why I link this to specifically British trends, is because Geesink's ads that were made before 1959 for other countries, such as America and Germany, did include jingles.²⁰¹ This informs us that Geesink's use of jingles in British ads from 1959, was not a change in his approach to advertising, as he was already using this strategy for the ads that he made for other countries. Therefore, Geesink may have used jingles only in his later British ads as a strategy to tackle the problem of viewer inattention, as it helped to create a faster pace in the ads. As you can see here, a lot of my analysis is dedicated to audio, but this is because audio is a big part of the ad, which was noted by the advertisers as well, as it was the first time that audio combined with visual advertising had entered the homes of the masses.

²⁰¹ The Goebel beer ads made by Geesink for America are an example of this. One example is from Eyes catalogue called, Goebel 22 : Baseball (NL, Henk Kabos, Koos Schadee, 1953). I am aware of this because I have watched around two hundred Geesink ads for my internship, and for my original thesis aim; that was to compare all of the alcohol ads made by Geesink, to see how the depiction of alcohol varied per country. The scope of this topic was too broad for this thesis, but it meant that I am now very informed on what Geesink's general approach to advertising was, which is useful to know when comparing if it changed.



Figure 14 – On the left is the article I found from 1961 that mentioned Geesink’s new Heineken series. At Eye and the Heineken archive it was thought that this ad (right image) was made in 1967 as this was when commercial TV was launched in the Netherlands, but I have found evidence that it was actually made in 1961, and then likely re-used in 1967.

Repetition of the Product Name

For the next category I recorded how many times the product name was repeated in each commercial. I asked this question to see whether there was a change in this element of Geesink’s production strategy. This characteristic is a part of a production strategy because it helps to remind the viewer of the product or company and remember these names. I conducted this analysis by repeatedly listening carefully to all of the ads, and then I noted down how many times I heard the product name mentioned in the audio of each ad.²⁰² My results lead me to conclude that this characteristic fluctuates throughout the period of 1955-1961. Meaning, that there was no change in Geesink’s production strategy here because the product name is mentioned between two of four times throughout the period. For example, in the earlier period *Square Dance* (1955) mentions the product name four times, but so does

²⁰² In my other graph, on slogans, I focus on when the product name is mentioned in the imagery, hence why I focus on the audio here.

Singers (1959) and *Promise in a Glass – Dog Show* (1960) which were made in the later period. Then *Bowls* (1957) mentions the product name two times, but so does *Promise In a Glass – Park bottles* (1960).²⁰³

That being said, there was one noticeable change over time, which is that in the latest ad *Sunday* (1961), the product name is repeated the most, i.e., six times. This means that by 1961 we do see a slight change in Geesink's production strategy. My initial thought of why this may be the case is that *Sunday* is longer than the other ads, which would provide more time to mention the product name. I checked this by looking at an additional graph that I made which measures the time length of all the ads.²⁰⁴ The results conclude that time length is not the reason because *Sunday* is among nine of the twelve ads that are thirty seconds long. Yet in *Sunday* the ad mentions the product name six times, rather than two to four times like in these other thirty second ads. Even the longest ad of sixty seconds, called *Square Dance* (1955) mentions the product name less, at four times. This means that despite the longest ad being double the time as *Sunday* it still mentions the product name two times more. Therefore, time length is not an explanation as to why *Sunday* repeats the product name the most times.

In order to find an explanation for this, I looked at the other graphs to see if there were any distinctions between *Sunday* and the other ads.²⁰⁵ The category that showed a clear distinction was the audio, as it is one of the only two ads that contains a jingle. The other ad is called *Singers* (1959), and it is half the time length as *Sunday*, and yet in fifteen seconds it manages to repeat the brand name four times. Meaning, that ads that are four times the length of

²⁰³ The ads with no package shot were: *Square Dance* (1955) and *Singers* (1959). The ads with a package shot were: all of the *Promise in a Glass* (1960), and *Bowls* (1957). This also shows that even when an ad communicated in moments via the Documentarising Mode, it did not affect how many times the product name was mentioned.

²⁰⁴ I made this extra graph because it helped me to determine whether the time length connected to the other categories, which it did.

²⁰⁵ One obvious distinction is that all the other ads are for the Mackeson brand, and so maybe it was the preference of the Heineken brand to have the name mentioned a lot. This is definitely a plausible explanation that should be considered. Even after visiting the Heineken archive it is still difficult to know the brand's influence over the creation of the commercial.

Singers, such as *Square Dance*, repeat the product name the same amount of times.²⁰⁶ The key difference between *Sunday* and *Singers* with all of the other ads is that they have a jingle.

In order to ensure that I was observing this characteristic as closely as possible, I applied Odin's modes to my analysis to distinguish 'when' the product name was mentioned. I observed how many times the name was mentioned during the package shot moments, and found that there was consistency, not change here, because in all of these ads the product name was only mentioned one time during the package shot moments. This suggests that Geesink remained consistent in his approach to advertising as entertainment, as rather than adopt the hard-sell approach and overtly emphasise the product name in the live action package shots, instead he used jingles which are fictional audio, to repeat the product name.

This can explain why Geesink's latest ad, *Sunday* (1961), repeated the product name the most amount of times, as the jingle created more opportunity to do this. It is highly possible that jingles were used as a response to the problem of inattention. As repeating the product via a jingle meant that even if a viewer was changing the channel, leaving the room, or 'mentally tuning out', then there was still a higher chance that they would at least 'hear' the product name.

Depiction of the Product in the Package Shots

This category focuses on the package shot moments and whether there was any change in Geesink's production strategy here. The analysis here is limited to only six of the twelve ads as they were the only ones that included a package shot. My results lead me to conclude that this characteristic of the ads represented the most changes over time. I will first begin with what I noticed did not change, and then delve into the changes.

²⁰⁶ The other ads that are thirty seconds long, and repeat the brand name four times, are two of the *Promise in a Gass* ads, called *Park – People* and *Dog Show*.

To begin with, Geesink's production strategy did not change in regard to whether he included a package shot. Throughout this period of 1955 to 1961 the ads that included package shots would vary. For example, the first ad that had a package shot was made in 1957 (*Bowls*), then there were others in 1958, 1960, and 1961. This was not continuous as there were ads in 1959 and 1960 that did not contain a package shot. Meaning that Geesink did not have a set rule of always having to include a package shot, and so we do not see a dramatic change in his production strategy here.²⁰⁷

Furthermore, there is no change in how the products are depicted in these package shots. Despite the ads promoting two different company products of Mackeson and Heineken beer, and over the course of seven years, in all the ads the products are depicted very similarly. As all of them entail one or two shots of a bottle next to a glass of beer, followed by the beer poured into the glass. This imagery likely remained consistent for several reasons, one being that it emphasised how delicious the product looked. By seductively pouring a cold beer into the glass a nice foam head was created, which made the beer look refreshing and tasty. Secondly, including the bottle allows for the product label that is on the bottle to always be shown, as it reminds the viewer what the logo and the bottle look like, so they can find it on the shelves. As I mentioned in Chapter One, some housewives considered commercials to be their 'shopping window', and so showing the bottle informed them how the product looked. These reasons can explain why even despite the problem of inattention Geesink's production strategy did not change in regard to how the product was depicted.²⁰⁸

Having said this, there was a change over time as by 1961 there was an increase in the number of shots that depicted the product. As I described in the jingles section above, the Heineken ad *Sunday* (1961) had a total of nine shots, and six of these shots were during the section of the Documentarising Mode. This increased over time as in the earlier ads from 1957 and 1958 there was only one shot of the product. Then, in the three later ads from 1960,

²⁰⁷ Initially I assumed that Geesink's decision to include a package shot was linked to time constraints, as two of the ads that do not contain a package shot are the shortest ads, fifteen seconds. This would suggest that when Geesink wanted to make a shorter ad he sacrificed the package shot to do this. But this is not necessarily the case, as the other ad without a package shot is thirty seconds long, and this is the same length as all of the package shot ads. Meaning, that time length did not always influence his decision of including a package shot.

²⁰⁸ I assumed that for the Mackeson ads Geesink used the exact same package shot clips, but I checked this and it was not the case as most of them are different. This shows that Geesink did not cut corners, and that he put effort into the Documentarising Mode moments.

they included two shots of the product. By 1961 there were six shots of the product and so there is a noticeable change over time of an increase in the number of shots of the product. Time length did not influence this because all of the ads are thirty seconds long. Instead, this change may have been influenced by the problem of inattention because more shots made the pace of the ad feel faster.

The most obvious distinction is that Heineken *Sunday* (1961) is the only ad that begins with a package shot, and then ends with one. All of the other ads only end with a package shot, which was the more common structure of ads at the time. This means that from 1961 Geesink changed his approach in regard to when he communicated via the Documentarising Mode. As he applied this mode more frequently, as rather than only at the end of the ad he now began his ads with live action shots of the packaging. In *Sunday* I counted that twenty seconds of the ad is shown in this mode, and only ten seconds is of the animated puppet world. A consequence of this is that it makes the package shot far more elaborate than the other ads, as here we see the beer bottle being opened and people clinking their beer glasses together as a toast. By 1961 we see a noticeable change in Geesink's production strategy as he communicates more via the Documentarising Mode. But even so, it is unlikely that this change was influenced by the problem of inattention because it does not really help to grab and maintain viewer's attention, as it is not very entertaining and at the affective level it does not create any *mise en phase*.

Slogans

Whilst creating my table of 'Slogans' I asked a few different questions. I first asked, what do the slogans say exactly? I ask this to observe whether the length of the slogans changed over time. If the slogans are shorter in the later ads, then this may have been to make them more catchy and the pace faster as a strategy to prevent losing viewer's attention. My results conclude that for both the audio and written slogans they vary over time. Some of the earlier slogans were short and the later ones were longer, and vice-versa. Evidence of this is *Penalty Kick* (1955) as the audio slogan was pretty short, "A Mackeson Type! That's better!" But in the same year, *Square-Dance* (1955) had a very long audio slogan of, "They're all Mackeson

Types, are you? If not try it and taste the difference.” This shows that in the same year the slogans length varied massively and so Geesink did not have a specific strategy in regard to the length of the slogan. This was not just the case in 1955 but throughout 1955-1961, as some of the later ads like *Ice Skating* (1959) consisted of a short audio slogan of, “Mackeson, Smooth yet Strong.” Then in 1960 they got longer again, as in the *Promise in a Glass* series the audio slogan was, "There's a Promise in a Glass of Mackeson, For You!" By 1961 the slogan was shorter again to, “Here’s to Sparkling Heineken”. But this was not any shorter than the 1955 slogan. This shows that Geesink did not have a set production strategy when it came to the length of the slogans, it varied regardless of the problem of inattention.²⁰⁹

The second question I asked when creating my slogans graph is, whether the slogans are in the audio or written on the screen? I ask this because a change here could have linked to inattention, as in Alex Mitchell’s 1962 lecture article titled, “Television Viewing Behaviour (A Pilot Observation Study)”, that I discussed in Chapter One. Mitchell said that viewers were not providing their full attention, as they were conducting other activities like knitting or reading the paper whilst sitting in front of the TV. This led me to hypothesise that when inattention was becoming an issue, Geesink would always include the slogan in the audio, so that whilst the viewers were conducting other visual activities, like knitting and reading, they could at least still hear the slogan that is associated with that brand and product. If we notice a decrease over time in the imagery slogans, and an increase in the audio slogans, then this could suggest that Geesink did react to the problem of inattention.

However, my results lead me to conclude that in regard to the audio slogans, there was no change here because since 1955 Geesink already used audio slogans and continued to, as all of the twelve ads included an audio slogan. For the visual slogans, they were used less in the later ads. As between 1955 to 1960, a commercial from each of these years included a written slogan, but not *Fair* (1960) and *Sunday* (1961). But two ads from 1955 did not include visual slogans either, which shows that including a written slogan was not a consistent production strategy that was used in all of Geesink ads. Instead, the decision to include one varied throughout the period of 1955-1961. This means that prior to the discussions of inattention,

²⁰⁹ Having said this, it is unclear who made the slogans. Maybe it was not Geesink, and instead the product company or an advertising agency.

Geesink would alternate between using slogans, and so I cannot link the absence of them in the later ads to my hypothesis that this represents a reaction to inattention.²¹⁰ For future research it would definitely be worth looking at this characteristic in Geesink's ads that were made for Britain in 1961 onwards, as then if we see a continuing trend of no visual slogans it can certainly suggest a reaction to inattention.

The third question I asked is, at what point in the ads do the slogans appear? I ask this to gain more insight into whether Geesink's strategy changed in regard to structure. If the later ads present the slogans at the start, rather than the end, then this could suggest that there was a response to the problem of inattention. This structure would have ensured that the viewer would immediately see or hear the product name before changing the channel, or getting up to make a cup of tea (relying on the ad being the first one shown in the ad break).²¹¹ My results lead me to conclude that for the audio slogan there was a slight change as only in the 1955 ads the audio slogan was mentioned around the middle-end of the ad. Whereas, in all of the ads made after that it was only mentioned at the end. But as inattention was not discussed until 1961 then we cannot connect this change in Geesink's production strategy as being influenced by the problem of inattention.

As for the written slogans, they were always shown at the start of the ad, except for in *Cricket Kangaroo* (1958) where the slogan only appeared at the end. Meaning, that there was no change in Geesink's production strategy here, as the written slogans were always at the start of the commercials, and so always incorporated into the fictional worlds as the ads (besides *Sunday*) began in this mode of communication.²¹² This was likely a consistent part of Geesink's production strategy because he approached advertising as entertainment. Presenting the written slogan onto the fictional imagery at the start of the ad was similar to the beginning of a fictional movie that presents the film title in the opening credits. Like in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *Gone with the Wind* (1939) and *Singing in the Rain* (1952). Here there is potentially a self-reflexivity of Geesink using entertainment features of movies in his

²¹⁰ Geesink's decision to not use a written slogan during the peak of the inattention discussion in his 1961 Heineken ad, cannot necessarily be explained as a reaction to the problem of inattention, because there was also an absence of the use of written slogans before the problem arose.

²¹¹ This is of course all speculations to understand how the viewer related to the media, or how the producer created it, but when there are not the sources that provide these answers then this approach needs to be conducted.

²¹² *Sunday* began in the Documentarising Mode as it starts with a package shot.

ads. Incorporating the sales message of the slogan, into the fiction was likely done to make the ad more subtle, steering away from the less popular ‘hard-sell’ approach.

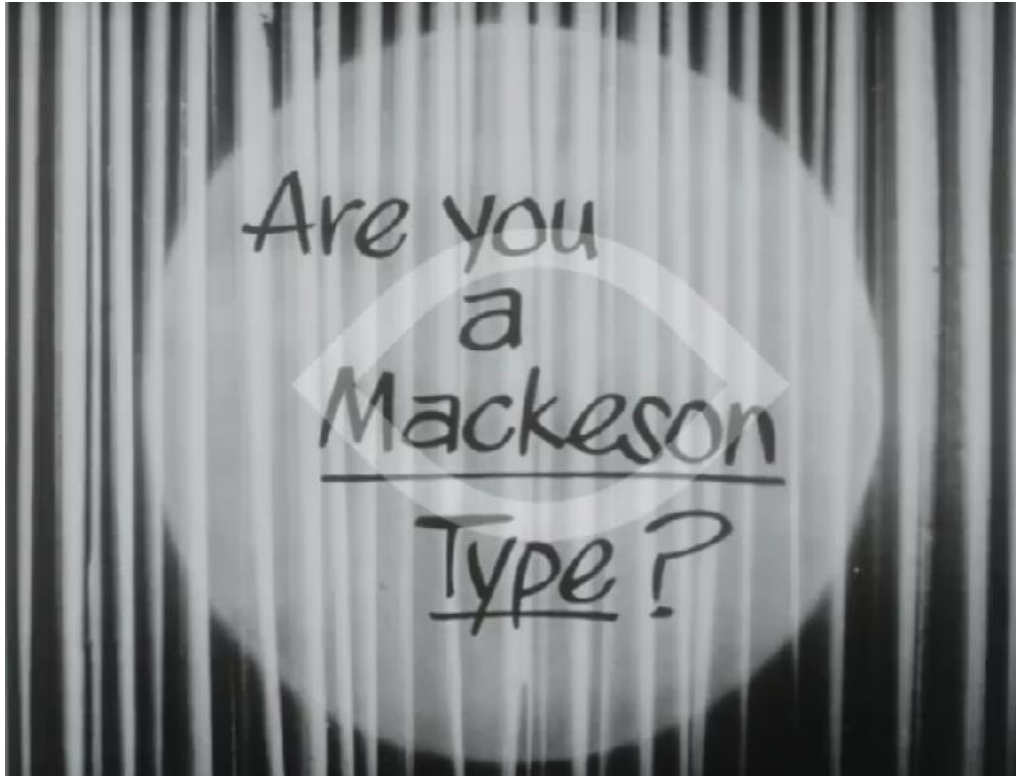


Figure 15 – The opening ‘credits’ of *Mackeson Singers* (1959). Like with movie title, the ad begins with the slogan projected onto the stage curtains before they open to reveal the singers.

Conclusion of the Analysis

The results of my analysis lead me to the conclusion that the characteristics of Geesink’s commercials fluctuate throughout 1955 to 1961, and so there was no significant change in his production strategy. This suggests that despite some people deeming inattention as a massive problem in 1962, it was not necessarily considered a big enough issue to affect advertisers’ production strategy, in any event not in the case of Geesink. I will now briefly summarise each of the four categories, to explain how my comparative analysis has led me to this conclusion.

I began my analysis by examining the twelve commercials' audio. I found that, from 1955 to 1961, Geesink consistently used elaborate orchestra music and sound effects to connote the narrative. This shows that Geesink did not react to the problem of inattention, as he stuck to his production strategy of approaching advertisement as entertainment. I then took this analysis a step further by applying Odins theory. By doing this, I was able to find more specific distinctions in the audio that I could compare. From applying Odin's modes, I found that the character dialogue, which includes a narrator, is communicated during the fictionalising moments. Compared with a voiceover which communicates during the documentarising mode moments, such as the package shots. I then compared these specific types of audio to see if there were any changes over time. My findings were, that character dialogue was present in all of the commercials, and a voiceover was in all of the six ads that included a package shot moment. This makes me conclude that even with applying Odin's modes, my results were the same, i.e., that Geesink did not change his style of audio over time.

Having said this, there was an element of the audio that did change, and it can be interpreted as a reaction to inattention. This was the use of jingles, which only appeared in the later ads from 1959 and 1961. I then compared the jingle commercial results with the third category, 'the depiction of the product'. This category showed a clear change over time, from one shot in 1958, two shots in 1960, to six shots in the latest commercial *Sunday* (1961). This may have been an approach to tackle the problem of inattention, as the changing shots made the pace of the ad feel faster, and this can help viewers feel more stimulated and less bored. This also showed that commercials with jingles had far more shots than the ads without jingles.²¹³ In other words, the jingles really helped to increase the pace of the ad. Making it plausible that this was a technique used to attract and maintain attention, as Geesink only started to include jingles, thus more shots, when the problem of inattention was arising.

The second category was the repetition of the product name, and I found that it fluctuated between two to four times throughout the period of 1955-1961. Meaning, there was no fundamental change in Geesink's production strategy here, as the number of times that the

²¹³ This was not because they were longer in duration, as they were the same length as most of the other ads.

product name was mentioned would vary. Having said this, as mentioned above there was some change over time, as the latest commercial *Sunday* (1961) repeats the product name the most, six times. Noticeably, this was one of the only two ads that contained a jingle, which suggests that jingles were a technique that helped to repeat the product name. This further supports my point that jingles were used as a response to the problem of inattention. Audibly repeating the product name may have been a strategy used to tackle the problem of inattention, because it meant that even if a viewer was changing the channel, leaving the room, or ‘mentally tuning out’, then there was a higher chance that they would at least ‘hear’ the product name.

For the last category, the slogans, I can conclude that there was no change over time and so no reaction to the problem of inattention. Evidence of this is that the placement of both the audio and visual slogans were always at the start of the ad, and so there was no change here.²¹⁴ The length of the slogan varied over time, which means that this strategy did not fundamentally change. If Geesink did react to inattention then he may have made shorter slogans, as this would make them more catchy and the pace feel faster, but this was not the case as longer slogans were also used in 1960. I also noticed that throughout the period, some ads would contain written slogans and some would only have audio slogans. This means that I cannot connect the absence of written slogan in his later ads as a reaction to inattention, because they were also absent in some of his earlier ads. Also, audio slogans were used in all of the twelve ads, which shows that it was not a technique adopted later to help ensure viewers still heard the ad whilst they were conducting other activities or left the room.

²¹⁴ Having said this, not changing a part of a production strategy could still be a response to the problem of inattention. Geesink may have felt that certain elements worked well in maintaining or attracting attention and so he chose to keep it.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have presented a phenomenon that I discovered, and then assessed the impact of it by asking the question:

To what extent did Joop Geesink's production strategy take into account viewers' inattention to television commercials?

In this conclusion, I first summarise the chapters to recap the steps that I have taken to provide an answer to this question. I then reiterate my concluding argument, which is informed by the results of my analysis. In the next section I provide some explanations of these results, reflect on my methodology, discuss some of the limitations and strengths of my thesis, and present some suggestions for future research.

In Chapter One, I presented contextual information that I found in the BFI archive, on commercial TV in Britain, from the launch in 1955 to when inattention was deemed as a serious problem by 1962. I first discussed how advertisers and the British public were enthusiastic about the launch of commercial television, to illustrate how the attitudes towards the medium changed so drastically from excitement to inattention. I then mapped out in detail my findings on the discourse of viewers inattention, from 1959-1962. I did this to record my findings on this undiscussed topic, and to first understand the problem of inattention before I observed whether Geesink responded to it. Here I presented evidence, from the British advertising trade press magazines, of how the problem gradually emerged. I mapped out that inattention was first mentioned indirectly in 1959, then considered a predicted problem in 1960. By 1961 studies were conducted to understand it better, and by 1962 there were many reports that regarded it as a serious problem.

In Chapter Two, I explained Odins theory of Semio-Pragmatics and then applied his theoretical constructs of 'modes' and 'levels' to one of Geesink's ads. This was done to help

me better understand what Geesink's production strategy was, before I compared whether it changed. Odins theory proved to be useful because it helped me to identify that Geesink's commercials communicated via the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach, as opposed to only the Documentarising Mode, which rather characterised the 'hard-sell' approach. This confirmed Ripmeester's argument that Geesink's production strategy entailed approaching advertising as entertainment. We see this in his elaborate fictional worlds, that were filled with puppet characters, props, set designs, music, and stories. These characteristics helped to associate the product with positive feelings and emotions, and transport the sales message more subtly and entertainingly.

Having said this, applying Odin's theory was insufficient for answering my research question, because it informed me that there was no change at all. This is because the theory could only provide me with a broad summary, i.e., that all of the twelve ads communicated via the Fictionalising Mode Second Approach, and throughout the period some ads had moments of communicating via the Documentarising Mode. On the one hand, this was an answer to my open question. But it felt inadequate because it suggested that there was absolutely no change over time in Geesink's production strategy. In order to ensure that there really was no change, in Chapter Three I created four categories of production strategies to compare. These were: the type of audio, repetition of the product name, depiction of the product in the package shot moments, and the use of slogans. I applied these four categories to twelve commercials that were made before and during the problem of inattention was discussed. I did this to assess whether there were any changes in Geesink's strategy, and if these changes can be interpreted as a reaction to the problem of inattention.

This now leads me to my concluding argument, which is informed by my analysis in Chapter Three. My conclusion is that there was no significant change in Geesink's production strategy. This then suggests that advertisers like Geesink, did not react to the problem of inattention. As I found that the characteristics of Geesink's commercials often fluctuated throughout 1955 to 1961, and so most changes were not specifically linked to the dates of when inattention was discussed.

Having said this, there were some changes over time in his production strategy, that can be interpreted as a reaction to inattention. This was the use of jingles that Geesink applied only in his later ads from 1959 onwards. It is very plausible that jingles were used to tackle viewers inattention, because the viewer would still hear the product name or slogan whilst they were conducting other activities during the ad breaks. I also found that more camera shots were used in the jingle ads, which suggests that these later ads had a faster pace. This can be seen as a technique to combat inattention, as quicker, more stimulating sound and imagery can avert boredom.

As we can see, I cannot provide a concrete answer to my main research question. Instead, I have made logical interpretations of the results of my analysis, to speculate whether Geesink's changes in his production strategy can be linked to inattention. Not providing a sufficient answer was the risk I took when working with mainly primary source material, which is often the case with historical research. It can be seen as a limitation, but it is a strength because with this methodology I have been able to conduct explorative research that not only sheds light on the Geesink collection but contributes to our understanding of the history of early advertisement in Britain.

I am aware that it would have been effective to look at the portfolio of other advertisers, to see if their production strategy changed once inattention arose. This may have led to a very different conclusion. During my visit to the BFI, I had looked at the work of Geesink's competitors, such as prominent British animation company *Halas and Batchelor*. Like Geesink, John Halas was frequently mentioned in the trade press magazines as he was a key figure in the advertising world. He formed the British Animation Group in 1960, promoted animation by conducting lectures in America and Europe, and he co-wrote the first comprehensive book on the production of animated films, *The Technique of Film Animation* (1959).²¹⁵ It would have been insightful to compare the *Halas and Batchelor* commercials that were made from 1955 to 1962, to help assess whether they changed their production strategy in response to inattention. But as you can see from this thesis, discussing Geesink alone required much in-depth research and analysis, specifically because I had to find the

²¹⁵ "The Most Complete Work Yet on Animation – John Halas Is Co-Author," *Audio Visual Selling*, vol 4, no. 218, (May 8, 1959), p. 6.

years that the ads were aired. Instead, for future research it would definitely be worth looking at the portfolio of *Halas and Batchelor*, to help further answer this question.

As I have already mentioned in this thesis, I would have loved to have found a Geesink British Television commercial that was definitely made in 1962 or after, and to have looked at how the issue of inattention was discussed after 1962. But due to the scope of this thesis, the extensive research that I had already done on the dates of 1955-1962, practical and financial limitations, I was restricted in doing this. For future research, it is definitely worth reading the magazines that were published after 1962, to see whether the discourse surrounding inattention developed, and to find more dates of the Geesink ads that were made after 1961. In general, I would encourage researchers to look at this huge collection at Eye, as the commercials were made for both cinema and television for many countries over a thirty year period. I was only able to look at a very specific aspect of this collection, and yet there is still so much to explore within that.

Moving on to some explanations as to why Geesink did not change his approach to advertising, one reason could be that his commercials were very popular in Britain and so there was no need for him to alter his approach as it was still deemed as effective. During this period, Geesink's British ads received awards and high reviews. The Mackeson ads were especially popular, as his puppet bottles had become recognisable mascots for the brand. Geesink was regarded as a key figure in the advertising industry, some of the trade press articles that I found were even dedicated to discussing his innovative techniques and interviewed him. This is likely because he approached advertising as entertainment, as his niche commercials entailed hand crafted puppets, elaborate worlds and stories, which may be the reason why he remained a successful advertiser, regardless of the problem of inattention.

Another explanation could be an acceptance that viewers will always have disinterest towards ads, and so constantly changing a production strategy will not really prevent this. After all, it was primarily advertising research agencies or academics who regarded inattention as a big problem, which was likely because their job was to understand viewership. Hence why their proposition to tackle it was not focused on production strategy, but to conduct more research.

It can explain why advertisers like Geesink did not change their production strategy, as they did not share this same level of concern. Conversely, they may not have known how to tackle it, as even the researchers were still trying to understand this new issue. This also reiterates why I conducted a comparative analysis of Geesink's ads that were made before the problem existed and during, as the magazines did not report concern from advertisers, but only researchers. The point that advertisers like Geesink may have just accepted this problem can help to explain how TV commercials have continued to exist, despite inattention to them beginning over sixty years ago, in 1960. Not only that, but commercials are becoming more prominent, as there has been an industry trend from 2024 among popular streaming services, like *Netflix*, *Amazon Prime* and *Disney+*, to now include commercials.

This now leads me onto my other suggestion for future research. Besides looking more at the Geesink collection and the discourse of inattention from 1962 onwards, it would be fascinating to explore whether commercials on streaming sites impact viewership and other entertainment media. I predict that something that is often ignored (commercials) can actually silently have much influence. In terms of viewership, people either need to pay the higher subscription fees to not have commercials, or pay lower fees at the cost of having to endure the ads. How will people respond to this choice? Especially because the main selling point of these streaming services, that really took off in the early 2010s, was the absence of ads. This meant that for the first time since 1955, we no longer had to change the channel, fast forward, pre-record, mute, or get up to make a cup of tea in order to avoid commercials. The absence of ads significantly contributed to the popularity of these platforms, as like I have discussed throughout this thesis, there is a shared consensus from people of the past and present that commercials are worth avoiding.

It would be interesting to look at statistics of whether this leads to an increase in higher subscriptions, thus making the companies more money, or, if people pay the lower fees, they are exposed to far more commercials than in the last ten years. The concept of inattention would be interesting to apply here, as this outcome can suggest that people are being forced to be more patient. Or, they continue to avoid ads like in 1960, but this time it would likely entail viewers going on their mobile phones during the ad breaks, instead of reading a newspaper or knitting.

It is commonly known, and somewhat accepted, that (since its origins) commercials are needed on Television to help fund the channels. Whereas, streaming platforms now adding ads, after years of people paying for an ad-free service, can seem influenced by greed. This is because, the platforms will now not only profit from the viewers subscription fee, but also the product companies. Even if the reason for launch of ads is not linked to greed, but survival in a competitive market as there are now way more platforms, this can still lead to people feeling that it is unfair to pay for a service that shows commercials. This can be a more detrimental effect than in the past, as rather than simply change the channel to avoid ads, viewers will altogether stop funding the platform by simply cancelling their subscription. This may have a knock-on-effect on other entertainment media. For example, if many people cancel their subscriptions because of the ads, and go back to TV (which they may have left originally to avoid ads), then it could impact the type of shows, the programming, and even the TV commercials that are made for this growing audience. For future research, understanding viewers relations to commercials in the present would be interesting, as I have presented here what it was like in the past.

Overall, my analysis shows that even with Odin's theory and my four categories, I am still unable to provide a concrete answer. This is because it is difficult to determine whether Geesink reacted to the problem of inattention, because a change in his strategy does not necessary mean that it was a reaction. Nevertheless, in this thesis I have conducted explorative research to present some possible answers to this open question. My methodology has allowed me to provide a better understanding of not just Geesink's portfolio and production strategy, but also the discourse and development of commercial Television in Britain from 1955 to 1962. A subject that has surprisingly not been studied in-depth, despite it being the turning point when audio-visual advertising entered our homes, and never left.

Appendix: Five Tables

Commercial Name	Date	Sound: What type of audio is used?
Penalty Kick 1	1955	Orchestra music + sound effects / character dialogue + narrator (Stern Tone).
Penalty Kick 2	1955	Orchestra music + sound effects / character dialogue + narrator (Softer Tone).
Square-dance	1955	Music-singing + sound effects / character dialogue + narrator / voiceover.
Bowls	1957	(No music) + sound effects / character dialogue + narrator / voiceover.
Cricket Kangaroos	1958	Sound effects / character dialogue + narrator / voiceover.
Ice Skating	1959	Orchestra music + sound effects / character dialogue + narrator.
Singers	1959	Music-jingle (no dialogue or narrator etc).
Fair	1960	orchestra music + sound effects / narrator.
Promise in a Glass 1 (Dog Show)	1960	orchestra music / narrator / voiceover.
Promise in a Glass 2 (Park - People)	1960	orchestra music / character dialogue + narrator / voiceover.
Promise in a Glass 3 (Park – Bottles)	1960	orchestra music / narrator / voiceover.
Heineken – Sunday	1961	Music-jingle (no dialogue or narrator etc).

Commercial Name	Date	Product Name: How many times do they say the product name in the whole ad?
Penalty Kick 1	1955	3 - (shout "MACKESON!" 2 times)
Penalty Kick 2	1955	3 - (shout "MACKESON!" 2 times)
Square-dance	1955	4 - (shout "MACKESON!" 2 times)
Bowls	1957	2 - (1 shout, 1 package shot)
Cricket Kangaroos	1958	5 - (4 times in the story, including 1 shout + 1 package shot)
Ice Skating	1959	2 - (1 shout from the snowman character + 1 voice over)
Singers	1959	4 - (Jingle)
Fair	1960	2 - (1 shout + 1 narrator)
Promise in a Glass 1 (Dog Show)	1960	4 - (3 story + 1 package shot < same voice)
Promise in a Glass 2 (Park - People)	1960	4 - (3 story + 1 package shot < same voice)
Promise in a Glass 3 (Park – Bottles)	1960	2 - (1 time from bottle character + 1 voice-over < same voice)
Heineken – Sunday	1961	6 - (Jingle)

Commercial Name	Date	Package Shot: How is the product depicted?
Penalty Kick 1	1955	n/a
Penalty Kick 2	1955	n/a
Square-dance	1955	n/a
Bowls	1957	1 shot: beer poured into a glass that is next to two bottles with the labels.
Cricket Kangaroos	1958	1 shot: one bottle and one glass, hand pouring beer from a bottle into a glass + writing on the screen and voice over
Ice Skating	1959	n/a
Singers	1959	n/a
Fair	1960	n/a
Promise in a Glass 1 (Dog Show)	1960	2 shots: First shot pouring the bottle into the glass. Second shot of the full glass and bottle, and the sun symbol shining and the word "Mackeson"
Promise in a Glass 2 (Park - People)	1960	2 shots: First shot pouring the bottle into the glass. Second shot of the full glass and bottle, and the sun symbol shining and the word "Mackeson"
Promise in a Glass 3 (Park – Bottles)	1960	2 shots: First shot pouring the bottle into the glass. Second shot of the full glass and bottle, and the sun symbol shining and the word "Mackeson". Image the same but audio different.
Heineken – Sunday	1961	6 shots: 1st package shot - beginning: male hand opening a bottle of Heineken, gas comes out the top to represent how 'sparkling' (jingle words) it is > shot 2: bottle poured into a glass that has the Heineken word/logo on it, nice foamy head > shot 3: a close up of the bear head. 2nd package shot - end: two filled glasses of Heineken (with name on it) + 2 bottles, on a silver tray together. > 2nd shot: two bottles pouring into two glasses, on the tray in sync (to suggest the outcome of the previous shot) > 3rd shot: 2 separate hands with the full glass of Heineken appear on the screen and they 'cheers', and then the logo appears.

Commercial Name	Date	Slogans: What are the product slogans? (When in the ads are they said? Are they said in the audio or written on the screen?)
Penalty Kick 1	1955	"Are you a Mackeson Type?" (beginning-writing) / "A Mackeson Type! That's Better!" (mid/end-audio)
Penalty Kick 2	1955	"A Mackeson Type! That's Better!" (mid/end-audio)
Square-dance	1955	"Ahh now he's a Mackeson Type, and all the better for it." (middle-audio) "They're all Mackeson Types, are you? If not try it and taste the difference." (end-audio)
Bowls	1957	"Are you a Mackeson Type?" (beginning-writing) / "Mackeson! Smooth Yet Strong" (end-audio)
Cricket Kangaroos	1958	"Of course, he's a Mackeson type, are you? If not <u>try it and taste the difference.</u> " (end-audio+writing)
Ice Skating	1959	"Are you a Mackeson Type?" (beginning-writing) "Mackeson, Smooth yet Strong." (end-audio)
Singers	1959	"Are you a Mackeson Type?" (beginning-writing) (+ Jingle audio)
Fair	1960	"You can't beat Mackeson types." (end-audio)
Promise in a Glass 1 (Dog Show)	1960	"There's a Promise in a Mackeson" (beginning-writing - poster) "There's a Promise in a Glass of Mackeson, For You!" (end-audio)
Promise in a Glass 2 (Park - People)	1960	"There's a Promise in a Mackeson" (beginning-writing - poster) "There's a Promise in a Glass of Mackeson, For You!" (end-audio)
Promise in a Glass 3 (Park – Bottles)	1960	"There's a Promise in a Glass of Mackeson." (end-audio)
Heineken – Sunday	1961	"Heerlijk Helder Heineken" / "Here's to Sparkling Heineken" (start + end-audio)

Commercial Name	Date	Length in Time (seconds) / Package Shot
Penalty Kick 1	1955	30 – no
Penalty Kick 2	1955	30 – no
Square-dance	1955	60 – no
Bowls	1957	30 – yes
Cricket Kangaroos	1958	30 – yes
Ice Skating	1959	30 - no
Singers	1959	15 – no
Fair	1960	15 – no
Promise in a Glass 1 (Dog Show)	1960	30 – yes
Promise in a Glass 2 (Park - People)	1960	30 – yes
Promise in a Glass 3 (Park – Bottles)	1960	30 – yes
Heineken – Sunday	1961	30 – yes

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"Introducing Arnold Doodle." *Television Mail*, vol. 1, no.20 (January 8, 1960): p. 19.

"Joop Geesink Says... 'So Many TV Possibilities We Have Hardly Started.'" *Television Mail*, vol. 5, no.6 (September 29, 1962): p. 34.

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The Joop Geesink Studio Commercials – Accessed at the Eye Film Museum

The twelve commercials that I analysed in this thesis can be viewed via this link until the end of the year (2024). They are located under the two file names called, “Geesink reclame positief conserveer 2”, and “Geesink reclame positief conserveer 5”.

<https://digitalarchive.eyefilm.nl/Public/Collection/AccessLink/8cdf670-0343-48b5-977f-4f74fbdcae7c>.

If this link no longer works then the commercials can be found in Eyes digital catalogue that can be accessed via this link, <https://www.eyefilm.nl/en/collection/eye-catalogue> . Here you can search for the commercials using the filmwork titles that I include below. After searching

for these titles a descriptions of the commercials content and materiality will appear. If you would like to watch the ads then you may contact Eye for a link to view the digitised versions of them, or check if they are on the 'Eye FilmMuseum' YouTube Channel, <https://www.youtube.com/@eyefilmNL>.

Below are the exact names of the commercials that are in Eyes digital catalogue. They are in Dutch because that is how they imported into the catalogue, searches in the catalogue can be made in English. The names are slightly different to how I have named them in my graphs as I needed a clear reference to save time, but they are still very similar.

FLM161201 - Mackeson Stout - bier - Are you a Mackeson type? : Cricket (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1956)

FLM161307 - Mackeson Stout - bier - Are you a Mackeson type? : Penalty Kick (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1954 - 1956)

FLM161309 - Mackeson Stout - bier : Singers (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1954 - 1956)

FLM161500 - Mackeson Stout - bier - Promise in a Glass : Hyde Park I (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1959 - 1962)

FLM161501 - Mackeson Stout - bier - Promise in a Glass : Hyde Park II (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1959 - 1962)

FLM161502 - Mackeson Stout - bier : Fair (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1954 - 1956)

FLM161505 - Mackeson Stout - bier - Promise in a Glass : Dog Show (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1959 - 1962)

FLM161506 - Mackeson Stout - bier - Promise in a Glass : Trafalgar Square (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1959 - 1962)

FLM161512 - Mackeson Stout - bier - Are you a Mackeson type? : Dancing (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1954 - 1956)

FLM27513 - Heineken - Bier - TV 68: Sunday (NL, Onbekend, 1968)

FLM3926 - Mackeson Stout - bier - Are you a Mackeson type? : Football I (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1954 - 1956)

FLM40110 - Mackeson Stout - bier - Are you a Mackeson type? : Bowls (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1954 - 1956)

FLM40114 - Mackeson Stout - bier - Are you a Mackeson type? : Skating (NL, Jan Coolen, Ton van der Meyde, 1954 - 1956)