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Advertising: The differences in styles of advertising, depending on the type and proposed target market of the product.

The advertisements I have chosen for this analysis are for beers; a lager and a stout. The major factor that determines what core material goes into an advertisement is its intended audience.

There is the “Young fun lover” eighteen to twenty five year old out for fun and a laugh with mates. Advertising aimed at this audience includes ‘Alcopops’, such as “Hooch, W.K.D and Smirnoff Ice” and, even more so, recently lagers like “Budweiser” and bitters like “Boddingtons”.

Then there is the “middle aged” drinker, who, in contrast, could be seen as going for more of a heavy type of beer like stout, such as Beamish or Guinness.

However the boundaries between these stereotypical drinker types have been blurred in recent times as the advertisements that I have selected show, namely the Boddingtons advert entitled ‘Pint Survival During Shark Attack’ and the Guinness ‘horses and surfers’ classic.

Starting with Guinness: The advertisement opens with an aerial shot of a stretch of coastline. The camera then pans down to reveal four surfers lying on their surf boards ‘waiting’ for a wave [the ‘waiting’ idea is something involved in nearly all modern Guinness advertising] . When the wave appears it is accompanied by a deep dark bass line from the song “Phatt planet” by “Leftfield”. The wave and the music get gradually louder, parallel to each other and a contest between the surfers begins.

As the wave increases in speed, horses form within it and Surfers start to fall, one by one. They all disappear, leaving only one; the winner. Suddenly the music stops completely. A voice over says; “Tick followed tock.....he waits that’s what he does..... and that’s how he won”. This refers to the one surfer left. The advertisement then shows the winner embracing his fellow surfers and finally cuts to a pint of Guinness with the words “Good things come to those who wait”, across the screen. This effectively acts as a slogan by harnessing a common proverbial saying.

This whole advert, when looked at closely, could be considered a metaphor for pulling and consuming a pint of Guinness. The pouring is represented by the wave starting, the settling by the falling of each surfer and the drinking by the friend’s embrace at the end.

There are several features of this advertisement that are operating at a subliminal level, such as the fact that the entire advertisement is in black and white. These colours are associated with the struggle between good and evil, and this plants ideas in the mind of the recipient concerning the dark drink itself. Mystery and intrigue become apparent and the use of manipulative photographic techniques, like the horses within the wave, suggest to the audience, ‘there is something deeper to Guinness’. The horses themselves are white, conjuring up positive images of white knights on white chargers.

The musical accompaniment is in itself dark. It aids in the power of the central metaphor whereby the drink itself remains pure, however maintains its mysterious edge. It also contributes on a more simple level, increasing the emotional connections to the audience, as it is in a minor key which is well known to be good at raising the hairs on the back of your neck.

The advert makers have used computer graphics to create the horses in the wave. However, they have kept a subtlety about the horses thus continuing the mystical aura

The people in this advert are all male. They are all continental in appearance and are loosely clad, wearing only bathing shorts and showing off their manly upper bodies. They are similar in appearance and build which adds a united feel to their group, almost as if they conform to a uniformed way of life. They appear brotherly in their actions, suggesting an emotional bonding between the group. They are a team, surfing, enjoying life. Do these men know, and have, something the average person does not? This is again backed up by a look given by the winner; a stare deep into the camera lens.

The voice over is powerful, but this does not derive from the words used, but from the way in which these words are spoken, the intonation. They ask a question of the audience; challenging their comprehension, creating an intrigue, and making a simple point, so enticing the watcher to delve deeper. The words and their tone imply a higher knowledge asking the recipient to 'figure it out for themselves'. There is a quasi religious dimension here. A certain level of intelligence is requested, but it still leaves scope for imagination and in allowing for one's own interpretation, it appeals to a range of individuals.

The second advertisement, for "Boddingtons" is a lot less complex than the Guinness advertisement, but is (and this could be considered worthy compensation for depth) part of a series of 'theatrical' commercials with the lead character Graham Heffer; a cartoon cow. Immediately, the level at which this advertisement is aimed falls, simply because of the cartoon element. It begins with

Graham underwater. This is shown only by a black background and bubbles emanating from Graham's mouth, holding a pint of "Boddingtons". A shark approaches and begins encircling Graham. The shark then lunges for the pint and appears to swallow it whole, along with Graham's arm! It then swims off into the blackness and disappears. Graham then reveals he is still in ownership of his pint and that it was concealed behind his back. The advertisers are using absurdist humour here to exaggerate his commitment to his pint over and above his own well being.

In earlier advertisements the personality and attitudes of Graham Heffer have been outlined. He represents the 'laddish' pub frequenter who ironically has done well for himself; an intelligent 'other level of beer swiller'- 'a lord of the bar'. It sends messages to a gullible type of essentially male persons stating, 'If you drink this beer you will become more successful'.

This style of advertising lends itself to the development of a 'following' in the same way as soap operas use addiction. This in turn, opens up appeal to more intellectual people who warm to the character in a fun sense.

There is no sound track to this particular 'episode' as it has already been imprinted in earlier advertisements, but there is a voice over and this is the source of the sarcasm. It says "pint survival during shark attack. Hold Boddingtons away from snapping jaws" There is also an element of satire in that the text of the voice over resembles that of a safety pamphlet. E.g. "Hold Boddingtons away from snapping jaws!" The characters and their situations are also absurd; why would a cow be underwater? All this suggestive subtext lends itself to the 'joker' appeal, thus calling out to the intended audience.

There is, of course, a small element of traditional advertising included within the piece, designed to inform and publicise the product. The name and easily recognisable

logo appear on the screen at the advertisement's conclusion leaving an impression on the viewer's mind. This is, by definition, the essence of advertising, making something public and well recognised in order to promote its appeal. Nowadays, advertising is taken one step further in attempts to sell, by manipulating opinions, as opposed to letting a product sell itself.