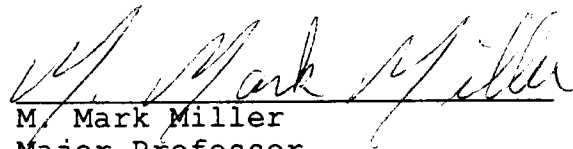
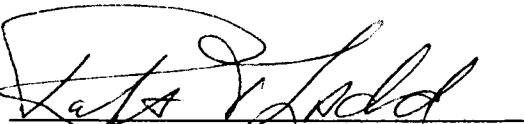


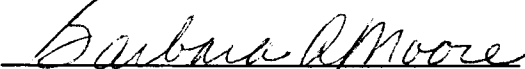
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Shu-Ling C. Everett entitled "An Investigation of Content and Production Differences Between Children's Program-Length Commercials and Standard Children's Programming." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Communications.


M. Mark Miller
Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:





Accepted for the Council:


Vice Provost and
Dean of The Graduate School

AN INVESTIGATION OF CONTENT AND PRODUCTION
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHILDREN'S PROGRAM-LENGTH
COMMERCIALS AND STANDARD CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Shu-Ling Chen Everett

December 1989

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To my father, Ting-Shang Chen,

To my husband, Steve,

and

To my mentor, Mark Miller

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ABSTRACT

The issue of program-length commercials on children's television has generated much controversy since the early 1980s. The National Coalition on TV Violence has charged that program-length commercials on children's television promote violence and the sale of war toys. Action for Children's Television (ACT) has criticized this type of program for comprising material designed specifically to promote products. Both ACT and the National Association of Better Broadcasting have stated program-length commercials are unfair to children.

The counterarguments from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are that no evidence of harmful effects from such types of programming has been discovered and that the FCC is not in a position to regulate "programming." The fundamental element of the debate then becomes the nature of such types of programs or commercials. Such a determination will put the issues in better perspective, facilitate understanding of the effects and serve to support further effects studies.

This study investigated differences between children's program-length commercials and standard children's programming from content and production viewpoints. Eight children's cartoons were selected for content analysis,

four program-length commercials and four standard programs. Eight hypotheses were tested to examine the differences between these two types of programs in terms of their production techniques and content design, especially with regard to character creation and their violent attributes.

The conclusions drawn from data collected for this study are that program-length commercials are indeed commercial-oriented in their production design and that some aspects of their content are designed around product promotion while others are not. However, no evidence was found to support the charge that program-length commercials' content promotes violence more than does regular children's programming.

Because of the nature of the study, the results must be interpreted with caution. Findings should not be generalized to all children's programming in general. Thus, while this study suggests some initial steps toward identifying the nuances of this issue, more work is needed to define more fully the nature of program-length commercials on children's television.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The issue of television's effects on children has generated much controversy through the years (Comstock, 1978; Maccoby, 1951). Some children's programs have been charged with promoting or reinforcing antisocial behaviors (Cullingford, 1984; Singer & Singer, 1981). Some commercials targeting children have been charged with promoting war toys, thus encouraging violent acts (Adler et. al., 1977). In addition, some children's commercials have been described as being unfair because they take advantage of children's limited cognitive development, not yet allowing them to distinguish commercials from programming (Ward & Wackman, 1973). However, no programming has invited criticism from both content and advertising perspectives as has the program-length commercial of today.

The term "program-length commercial" was first coined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the process of prohibiting product-related programming in all television content in the early 1970s (FCC, 1973). In 1974 the FCC defined a program-length commercial as a program with the dominant purpose of product promotion content:

The primary test is whether the purportedly non-commercial segment is so interwoven with, and in essence auxiliary to, the sponsor's advertising

... to the point that the entire program constitutes a single commercial promotion (FCC, 1974a).

A more recent definition can be found in a children's television bill introduced by the U.S. Senate in July, 1987. In the bill, a program-length commercial is defined as:

(1) programming which is intended as the primary element of a program or programming segment of twenty minutes or longer; and (2) programming which is designed in whole or in part to promote the purchase of one or more specific products by (a) the theme of the programming and (b) the identification of the product by name in the title of the programming, or the reference or display of the product in the content of program in a manner that readily permits the identification of the particular product brand (U.S. Congress, 1987, S10214).

Action for Children's Television (ACT) stated that program-length commercials on children's television are programs oriented around children's products. More specifically, it is a practice in which the entire TV program is built around a toy product. The National Educational Association (NEA) also offered a definition of a program-length commercial as one that "reveals that it has an overriding commercial purpose" ("Commenters defend and," 1988). Basically, "TV shows based on toys" is a general definition for the program-length commercial on children's television ("House telcomsubcom looks," 1988).

The development of program-length commercials can be traced back to the 1960s. Mattel toys and ABC pioneered the notion in the 1960s but the FCC stepped in and the program died (FCC, 1969). Thus the idea of program-length

commercials is not new. What is new is the extent of the trend.

The relaxed regulatory climate of the 1980s has allowed the rebirth and subsequent rapid growth of program-length commercials. Today, many cartoon characters are based on toy makers' latest creations. Concerned parents are wondering if the programs their children watch are simply commercials ("Are the programs," 1985). Because of this, a series of criticisms have been directed toward this current trend of children's television.

The National Coalition on TV Violence has charged that program-length commercials promote violence and the sale of war toys. The National Association of Better Broadcasting (NABB) has stated program-length commercials are unfair to children ("Strike two for," 1987). Action for Children's Television (ACT) has criticized this type of program for being of low quality and for comprising material designed specifically to promote products, with no educational purpose in mind ("Children's TV regulations," 1988). Moreover, the practice of program-length commercials is actually unfair to child audience.

ACT argued that program-length commercials fail to distinguish clearly between programming and advertising that in fact is a practice of unfairness. It is unfair because children's cognitive development does not yet allow them to understand the promotion intent of program-

length commercials. Therefore, while they think they are watching a program, they are in fact being exposed to a thirty-minute product promotion segment (Charren, 1988).

The counterarguments from the FCC are that no evidence of harmful effects from such types of programming has been discovered and that program-length commercials bring financial incentive to broadcasters that, in turn, may increase the willingness of broadcasters to produce and air more children's programming (FCC, 1985b; "Commenters defend and," 1988). In addition, with the financial cooperation provided by the toy manufacturers in connection with program production, it is very likely that program-length commercials can be higher-quality programs than are standard children's fare (FCC, 1985a; Steiner, 1988).

With such an attitude from the FCC, backed up by President Reagan, this controversy so far has not been resolved. The most recent development seems to favor the existence of program-length commercials in children's television.

On June 8, 1988, the children's television bill breezed through the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 328 to 78. The bill was a product of negotiations between the Telecommunication subcommittee and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and proposed

commercial limits, in children's programs, of 10-1/2 minutes per hour on weekends and 12 minutes on weekdays. The measure also suggested some requirements of broadcasters to curb program-length commercials ("Where things stand," October 3, 1988).

However, proponents of the bill suffered a defeat at the hands of President Reagan. Reagan viewed the bill as counterproductive and at odds with broadcasters' First Amendment rights and issued a pocket veto of the bill on November 5th, 1988 ("Where things stand," November 14, 1988). Nevertheless, the issue remains a high-priority item in the 101st Congress. In fact, hearings on new children's television legislation are underway. There are two children's TV bills, S. 707 and S. 1215, currently pending before the Senate Communications Subcommittee ("Where things stand," July 3, 1989; "Where things stand," July 24, 1989). Daniel Inouye, chairman of Senate Communications Subcommittee, had hoped to move the children's television bill out of the committee by August 1 before the summer recess. However, it did not occur. According to Michael Perko, Senior Policy Analyst for Senator Timothy Wirth, author of S. 1215, children's television bills will not return on the Hill's agenda until late this year (Personal communication, August, 1989). Therefore, up to this point, the fate of program-length commercials remains unknown.

A major reason that a decision on limiting program-length commercials has been difficult is the lack of evidence to support charges from concerned parties and the counterarguments from broadcasters, toy manufacturers and the FCC. To date, there have been articles and editorials written about the pros and cons of program-length commercials. However, very few empirical studies have been conducted to provide grounds for embracing either side of the argument. Therefore, it is imperative that studies pertaining to this issue be conducted.

Such studies will be important because they can provide valuable references for parents, legislators, members of the broadcasting industry and scholars engaged in research.

For example, if studies are able to provide evidence of the allegedly harmful attributes of program-length commercials, the issue will be one of substantially important social issues. It becomes an issue involving more than programs and toys. The socialization processes of the younger generation is at stake. That then can justify rule making from legal aspect. Regardless of the outcome, the findings will provide the broadcasting industry additional information with which to contemplate the future direction of children's television. Parents also will take interest in such research work as they attempt to

create in their children a much more selective and critical audience.

This point is especially important. Very often we see what sociologists term "social lag" in post-industrial countries, where social systems lag behind social change. In this case, the social system (legislation) may have fallen far behind the social change (unfettered development of program-length commercials). By the time we finally have rules to regulate program-length commercials, the young viewers already may be subjected to any harmful effects of the programming. Thus, there is a urgent need for study on this issue to provide the policy makers and, especially, the public with long-overdue information.

The ultimate goal of such studies is to determine if program-length commercials pose harmful effects on children. However, the fundamental element of the issue, the nature of such type of program/commercial, needs to be determined to help better understand the effects and to provide further support for effects studies. Therefore, questions such as what the differences are between program-length commercials and standard programming (standard programming is used in this context to refer to those programs that are not product-based), what the differences mean, and if program-length commercials are programming or commercials, need to be answered. Thus, the proposed research intends to seek answers to those questions, with

findings to be used to support and inspire effects studies on this subject in the near future.

Studies of this kind also have strong legal implications. If several studies demonstrate that program-length commercials are indeed similar to standard commercials in fundamental ways, it follows logically that they should be regulated like commercials. Therefore, if the guidelines on commercial time limits are resumed, they could be applied to regulate program-length commercials, too.

In addition, if program-length commercials are similar to commercials, it is safe to assume that such practices are taking "unfair" advantage of young children, who cannot distinguish commercials from programming. Therefore, FCC's prohibition of host-selling and its requirement of a clear device between programming and commercials logically can be used to eliminate the program-length commercial because, to many critics, it is a commercial disguised under the title programming and in effect is an ultimate form of host-selling.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the developmental history of program-length commercials on children's television. It reviews the early development of program-length commercials and the involvement of the Federal Communications Commission and some other organizations. It also reviews how the changing regulatory climate and other social conditions in the late 1970s and early 1980s led to the rebirth and subsequent rapid growth of program-length commercials on children's television. Finally, new developments in program-length commercials and the ongoing argument on this subject are discussed.

In addition, this chapter also discusses the nature of television commercials from their strategic and production viewpoints and the nature of child audiences based on cognitive developmental theory. The implications stemming from how children view commercials and how commercials use different strategies and production techniques to attract and persuade a child audience are discussed.

The Developmental History
of Program-Length Commercials
on Children's Television.

The Early Years

The prehistory of program-length commercials on television can be traced back to the early 1900s when the process of character licensing was first established.

In 1904, the Brown Shoe company purchased the rights to use the name of Buster Brown, a popular comic strip character at that time, in its children's shoes campaign. The idea of "character licensing" thus was born (Engelhardt, 1986a). Charlie Chaplin, a famous actor of the silent film era, soon took on the idea and franchised his character out as dolls, toys, books and a comic character (Engelhardt, 1987b). By the 1930s, character licensing was not an uncommon practice for those popular names and images that appeared on various mass media. For example, in the 1930s and 1940s Disney's "Mickey Mouse" was credited as a "merchandising kingpin" in both domestic and international child-oriented markets (Maltin, 1987). Also in the 1940s, the characters of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" enjoyed the same merchandising success Mickey had since the early 1930s.

When the television came to American families, television characters were also part of this merchandising

phenomenon. Along with the rapid growth of children's programming on television in the 1950s, character licensing for popular children's TV characters accelerated. For example, the face of "Hopalong Cassidy" helped industries that produced children-oriented products generate more than \$70 million annually. His face had appeared on pajamas, T-shirts, wallpaper, candy bars, watches and toothpaste tubes (Grossman, 1981). Though it was very successful, this TV merchandising strategy did not take advantage of another possible aspect of profit-making through television. Under this strategy, the process began with a popular children's TV show. Then a producer of child-oriented products would purchase the rights to make products featuring the show's main character(s).

However, if the order of such procedures was slightly shifted around, the potential profits could be unlimited. Under a reordered strategy, the process begins with a toy character and then the toy company can either single-handedly or jointly (with a production company) create a TV show based on its new toy. The show actually is only a part of its advertising campaign for the new toy line ("A TV license," 1985). However, the show and the toy help promote each other and bring profits to the toy company from both perspectives. It was this idea that led to the birth of program-length commercials on children's television.

Mattel Toys, Inc. and ABC pioneered this notion in 1969. "Hot Wheels," a Saturday morning cartoon on ABC, was based on a line of toy racing cars produced by Mattel (Boyer, 1986). Topper, one of Mattel's major competitors, filed a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Topper claimed that the show "Hot Wheels" was actually a thirty-minute-long commercial. Therefore, the public airwaves were abused because such a practice contradicted the broadcaster's responsibility for serving the "public interest, convenience, and necessity" (FCC, 1969).

After a careful examination, the FCC issued a ruling against ABC and Mattel. It stated that "there can be no doubt that in this program, Mattel receives commercial promotion for its product beyond the time [allowed] for commercial advertising ... We find this pattern disturbing ... for [it] subordinates programming in the interest of the public to programming in the interest of salability" (pp. 148-149). The series "Hot Wheels" subsequently was taken off the air.

Very obviously the FCC has played a crucial role in the developmental history of program-length commercials on children's television. The Communications Act of 1934 outlined that the broadcast channels are allocated to those applicants that are most likely to serve the "public interest, convenience or necessity" (47 U.S.C. Section 307a). However, the interpretation and execution of this

requirement were left to the FCC, which also was established by the 1934 Act.

The ambiguity of this public interest criterion has generated some dissatisfaction from both the Congress and the broadcasting industry. In 1946, in an attempt to define broadcasters' programming responsibilities, the FCC published the "Public Service Responsibility of Broadcast Licensees" (FCC, 1946). It was also known as the "Blue Book." However, broadcasters complained that the FCC was trying to control broadcast content. Thus, although the "Blue Book" standards endured, it was never systematically enforced (Brown, 1982).

The vagueness in defining broadcaster's responsibility along with the growing public concern on media effects led to the establishment of the National Association for Better Broadcasting (NABB) in 1949. The NABB was the first public interest media organization in the United States. Its primary goal is to raise the level of public awareness in broadcasters' responsibility to serve the public interest. It has been considered as the most active public organization that opposes the FCC's current deregulation trend (Libert & Sprafkin, 1988).

Meanwhile, the industry was not unaware of the growing public and government concern about media effects. The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), established in 1922, issued a television code in 1952, setting

programming and advertising guidelines for the industry in order to avoid potential government regulation (Maddox & Zanot, 1984).

In 1960, again, the FCC tried to define the public interest criterion for broadcasters. It issued a report and policy statement (FCC, 1960). The statement compiled 14 programming categories that would be considered at license renewal time to decide whether broadcasters had served the public interest. Programming for children was one of the categories. For the first time in the history of television regulation, children were identified as a special class of audience. In addition, broadcasters were instructed to provide programs to meet the particular needs of this special audience (Kunkel & Watkins, 1987). The FCC's decision on the Mattel and ABC case nine years later apparently reflected the Commission's concern for children.

In the meantime, a major force that has influenced the development of children's television was born. Action for Children's Television (ACT) was organized in 1968 with the hope to change the nature of television for children ("Peggy Charren," February 20, 1989).

ACT's objectives are:

(1) to persuade TV networks, stations, advertisers that children are special human beings, and not simply miniature consumers, (2) to eliminate commercialism from children's programs and to require a reasonable amount of programming each

week designed for children of different ages, and (3) to substitute a new system of financial support for children's programs by commercial underwriting and public service funding, in the belief that this system would look to the benefits to children rather than the profits to the advertisers (Sarson, 1971, p. 1).

Frustrated by being unable to get the networks' cooperation, ACT turned to the FCC in 1970 with a petition proposing rulemaking to eliminate commercials on children's television, abolish any host-selling (using characters from a given program to promote products in commercial time of the given program) on children's television and to require television stations to offer at least 14 hours a week of children's programming targeting different age groups (FCC, 1971).

In response to the ACT petition and the increasing public concern over television effects on children, the FCC initiated proceedings in 1971 to examine programming and advertising on children's television. In 1974, the FCC issued a Children's Television Report and Policy Statement in order to set detailed policies to help broadcasters better serve their special audience (FCC, 1974b).

The report stated that broadcasters should make "meaningful efforts" to provide a "reasonable amount" of educational programs that were specifically designed for different age groups of children (FCC, 1974b, p. 39398). The report also addressed advertising issues. It indicated that broadcasters should stop practicing host-

selling and use a clear divider between programming and commercials for children's television. These were designed to help children distinguish between programming and commercial messages (FCC, 1974b).

In addition, a guideline for advertising limits was issued in this 1974 Policy Statement. It limited commercial time during children's programs to 9-1/2 minutes per hour on weekends and 12 minutes per hour on weekdays. This, in fact, was identical to the Time Standards rule for advertising guidelines set by NAB in 1952. Finally, the FCC called on broadcasters to avoid "practices in the body of the program itself which promote products in such a way that they may constitute advertising" (FCC, 1974b, p. 39402).

This warning was obviously a result of the "Hot Wheels" case in 1969. The FCC's position in this case was clear. The Commission stated that it is inappropriate and inconsistent with the broadcasters' public interest responsibility to air children's programming created and designed to promote products (FCC, 1969). Subsequently, the prohibition of product-related programming was extended to all television content and the term "program-length commercial" was coined by the Commission in the process (FCC, 1973). The advertising limits guideline and the prohibition of product-related programming certainly

prevented any development of program-length commercials on children's television during that period.

However, rather than establishing hard and fast rules, the 1974 Policy Statement was designed as a set of guidelines to help broadcasters understand criteria that would be used to evaluate their performance at license renewal time. Furthermore, standards that were ambiguous and hard to quantify, such as "meaningful effort" and "reasonable amount" (FCC, 1974b, p. 39398), left many loopholes. Broadcasters claimed they were already putting forth meaningful efforts to provide a reasonable amount of children's programming. Therefore, there was very little to be done in order to comply with the FCC's new guidelines.

To nobody's surprise, little improvement (in terms of increasing the amount of educational and informational children's program) was observed even several years after the 1974 Policy Statement was issued. However, a new character entered the play.

Jimmy Carter, then the newly-elected President, appointed Charles Ferris as the new chairman of the FCC. Ferris soon organized a children's television task force and reactivated the issue of children's television (McGregor, 1986).

In 1978, the commission issued a Notice of Inquiry to help determine if broadcasters had complied with the 1974

guidelines. As expected, the task force found little evidence of broadcasters' efforts to increase educational/informational programming for children. However, the advertising limits rules were well followed (Kunkel & Watkins, 1987). This came as no surprise because advertising limits rules set a clear and quantifiable guideline for broadcasters while the educational/informational program guidelines did not.

In 1980, as a result of this finding, the FCC issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM). It would require all commercial stations to air educational programming five hours a week for preschoolers and two and a half hours for school-age children. Advertising limits were not a key issue in the 1980 NPRM (Kunkel & Watkins, 1987).

However, it seemed that the 1980 NPRM was somewhat different from the traditional approach that directed regulation at individual broadcast licensees. The 1980 NPRM also proposed several options examining problems from the market viewpoint. It stated that children's programming may be improved by increasing the number of broadcast outlets in a given market. This approach suggested broadcasters in the same market share the responsibilities for serving the child audience. This novel approach indicated a shift in the FCC's regulatory philosophy. The Commission started searching for alternatives to move government away from regulating broadcast content.

This innovation was developed even further when the Reagan administration entered the play. However, even before Reagan's election, broadcasters seemed to foresee the rising of a new regulatory climate. The late 1970s saw the first of several breakthroughs that contributed to the rebirth of program-length commercials on children's television.

The Rebirth

In 1977, Lucasfilm licensed out its characters from the movie "Star Wars" to a toy company, Kenner Products. Kenner then produced small, plastic figures of "Star Wars" characters Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, Darth Vader, etc. This toy line took the toy world by storm. "Star Wars" toy characters became the most often acquired boys' toys of that time (Engelhardt, 1986a).

This success stimulated some even more creative ideas. American Greetings Corporation soon set up a separate licensing branch to create characters that could generate strong public identification. These characters then would be put on American Greetings' cards and would also be licensed out to various manufacturers (Cherubin, 1984).

The licensing branch's first task was to find out what types of characters would appeal to little girls. It conducted a national survey to search for the answer. Based on its survey findings, American Greetings created

the Strawberry Shortcake character or image, a pinkish little girl with an oversized head who lives with her other "berry nice friends" in Strawberryland. Ms. Shortcake was officially introduced into the market in 1980 through a joint effort of American Greetings and Kenner.

Kenner soon produced an animated TV special based on Strawberry Shortcake. However, in early 1980, the networks were not certain about the legality of such a practice, and all three "maintain[ed] their dignity" and refused to air the show because of its commercial nature (Kunkel, 1988). The Strawberry Shortcake distributors then turned to the independent stations through syndication. She quickly became America's number-one baby doll. Many of her TV specials were produced and aired on more than a hundred independent stations around the nation. She also appeared on hundreds of products selling for more than \$1 billion in 1980 (Engelhardt, 1986b).

Strawberry Shortcake's instant success paved the road for a drastic change in commercial children's television, reversing the time-honored order of character licensing. Under Ms. Strawberry's rule, a product could precede the show or, if possible, the product and the show could be introduced simultaneously into the market. More importantly, she had demonstrated a new strategic framework for marketing not simply a toy but also an image.

One of the factors contributing to this instant success was that Strawberry Shortcake was born at the right time. If she had been introduced in the 1960s, she would not have survived the FCC's regulation just as "Hot Wheels" never made it through.

When the Reagan administration took office, it also took away the traditional view of "trusteeship of broadcast regulation." In 1981, Reagan appointed Mark Fowler as the new chairman of the FCC, replacing Charles Ferris. Fowler advocated a deregulatory philosophy, emphasizing the merits of marketplace competition. He suggested that the general public would be able to control broadcasting service and ensure its adequacy because the public would support only those stations satisfying its needs (Fowler & Brenner, 1982).

Fowler offered three primary reasons why deregulation was needed. First, he argued that marketplace competition is more effective than governmental regulation in solving problems of broadcasting programming. Second, he argued that "spectrum scarcity," the conventional rationale for government regulation, no longer exists. The expansion of broadcast outlets and the growth of cable and other video technologies already ended the scarcity problem. Third, he argued that whenever government involves itself in any programming content regulation, it violates broadcasters'

constitutional right of freedom of speech (Fowler & Brenner, 1982).

Actually, a trend towards deregulation at the FCC, particularly in the area of radio broadcasting, started before the Fowler commission. However, the FCC had always emphasized that regulation of children's television programming was appropriate because there were few market-place incentives to encourage such programs (Kunkel & Watkins, 1987).

Indeed, one of the main differences between the Ferris and Fowler Commissions is that Ferris tried to keep children's program away from the deregulation trend, while Fowler did not see any need for exempting such programs from deregulation. Although the FCC's movement toward deregulation did not originate in the Fowler commission, it certainly accelerated as Fowler came to the FCC.

In addition, the broadcasting industry also was undergoing a self-deregulation trend. In 1922, the NAB was established as an representative organization that would appear before Congress, courts, regulatory agencies and the public for the broadcasting industry. As mentioned previously, in 1952, it issued a television code that set programming and advertising guidelines for the industry in order to avoid the potential government regulation.

The programming guidelines focused on broadcasters' responsibility for providing innovative, informative, enlightening, entertaining and socially significant programming to the public. In 1975, the NAB attempted to include a "family viewing" time guideline within programming guidelines. However, the "family viewing" time restriction was judged a violation of the First Amendment. In 1976, the NAB eliminated all programming guidelines as a response (Maddox & Zanot, 1984).

The advertising guidelines limited the amount of time for commercials each hour (the Time Standards rule), the number of commercial interruptions allowed in a program (the Program Interruption Standard) and the number of products advertised in less than 60 seconds (Multiple-Product Standard).

In 1979, the U.S. Justice Department filed a complaint against the NAB that its advertising guidelines violated the Sherman Antitrust Act. In 1982, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia upheld the Justice Department's contention. Judge Green ruled that NAB's Multiple-Product Standard, prohibiting the advertising of two or more products or services in a single commercial less than 60 seconds long violated the Sherman Act. Judge Green explained that this standard could particularly hurt small businesses that might be able to promote a new product by advertising it along with already

successful products in 30 second spots (U.S. v. NAB, 1982). As a result, the NAB eliminated all its advertising guidelines. Thus, by 1982, the entire NAB code was suspended (Maddox & Zanot, 1984).

The suspension of the NAB code and the deregulation of the FCC gave broadcasters the freedom to air almost anything they want. It was such a deregulated environment that helped spur the proliferation of program-length commercials on children's television.

The success story of "Strawberry Shortcake" was quickly copied by child-oriented or related industries such as the toy industry, cereal companies, card companies and others. "Smurfs," one of the earliest Shortcake followers, confirmed and extended the Shortcake strategy. A whole line of "smurfable" toy characters and products caught American children's eyes (and grabbed their parents wallets) in 1981. At the same time, a Saturday morning cartoon "Smurfs' Adventures," debuted on NBC. The program and the toy line reinforced each other. Within a year, toy "Smurfs" brought more than \$1 billion in sales. The program, "Smurfs' Adventures," became America's most watched children's TV program in the early 1980s. The program in effect has been credited as the first large-scale children's program-length commercial successfully broadcast through the network system (Engelhardt, 1986b).

Despite several examples of success, the fate of program-length commercials still was uncertain. By 1982, only five of them had made it onto the air. It took He-Man, "the strongest man in the universe," to make the final breakthrough (Kunkel, 1988).

The Final Breakthrough

He-Man, also known as Prince Adam, is a plastic toy figure developed by Mattel in 1981. During the development of this image, a TV script based on him also was being developed. Filimation Associates, a TV production company previously known for producing "Fat Albert and the Cosby Kids," produced the TV show while Mattel owned the licensing rights to the characters. Just like the development of "Strawberry Shortcake," the toy characters and the TV show "He-Man and the Masters of the Universe" were both end products of Mattel's research findings. Based on a study conducted by Mattel, "boys from three to seven spend a fourth of their time fantasizing about good versus evil" (Engelhardt, 1986b, p. 76).

With the 1969 "Hot Wheels" incident, Mattel had been very careful in avoiding conflicts with FCC regulations. The advertising limits on children's television and the prohibition of program-length commercials issued in the 1974 Policy and Statement especially should have deterred Mattel from pursuing program-length commercials. However,

Mattel and Filmation seemed to be ahead of time. Sensing the deregulatory climate of the 1980s, they did not wait for the FCC to change its policies. As soon as the direction of Fowler's Commission became clear, they acted.

He-Man made his debut in September, 1983. Mattel and Filmation syndicated their first sixty-five hours of daily shows to independent stations around the country for their after-school time slots.

Subsequently, in December 1983, the FCC finally dropped its children's policy guidelines of 1974, and it followed up in 1984 by allowing TV stations to have as many commercial minutes as they chose. Accordingly, the guideline that set limits on the amount of commercial aired during children's programming was dropped and the restriction on program-length commercials was removed (FCC, 1984). This broadcast deregulation order, in fact, sanctioned the program-length commercial ("Commenters defend and," 1988). Program-length commercials finally achieved legal status. He-Man was safe and stronger than ever before.

The TV show "He-Man and the Master of the Universe" set instant ratings records. Within a year of its debut, it was being shown on 120 stations covering 82 percent of the nation. Meanwhile, Mattel was licensing out He-Man to countless licensees, who then put He-Man on everything from lunch boxes to Halloween costumes. Some retail

figures help demonstrate the "power" of He-Man. In 1984 alone, Mattel sold 35 million of the He-Man action figure -- 95,628 a day (Engelhardt, 1986a).

It was He-Man, the master of the rating and money-making universe, that woke up the TV and child-oriented industries. The message was loud and clear: program-length commercials were the way to go.

The principle was simple: take a single line of toys backed by TV programs, big advertising budgets and a innumerable product tie-ins. The results were straightforward: big profits for both child-oriented industries and children's television. Thus, in "He-Man's" wake, both industries suddenly and firmly locked into place.

In addition to the deregulatory climate, the status quo of children's programming and the development of the barter system also helped facilitate the comeback of program-length commercials on children's television.

Children have always been categorized as nonpowerful buyers compared to adult consumers. Thus, child audiences are traditionally sold to advertisers at a much lower cost per thousand than adult audiences (Noll, Peck & McGowan, 1973). It is, therefore, economically inefficient for commercial broadcasters to provide programs for children (Owen, Beebe & Manning, 1974). However, the FCC's 1974 Policy and Statement that called for broadcasters to increase the quantity and improve the quality of

children's programming seemed to exert at least some power, though very limited, over commercial broadcasters. The average amount of educational/informational programming designed for children aired by commercial stations had increased only very slightly, a seven percent increase from 10.5 hours per week in 1974 to 11.3 in 1978 (FCC, 1980). Although the increase was limited, at least the quantity of children programming had not decreased. However, this soon was changed when Fowler took office.

Under Fowler's leadership, the FCC's deregulatory attitude were well recognized by the broadcasting industry. Even before the FCC officially adopted the broadcast deregulation order in 1984, which dropped its children's policy guidelines of 1974 (FCC, 1984), the amount of children's programming declined rapidly. The average amount of children's programming provided by commercial broadcasters dropped to 4.4 hours per week in 1983, compared to 11.3 hours in the late 1970s (U.S. Congress, House, 1983). This decrease in turn provided a new programming niche that needed to be filled.

Children's programming in commercial stations had been scheduled heavily on Saturday Mornings (Grossman, 1981). There was little competition outside the Saturday morning time slot while there was a large child audience ready to be served by broadcasters or, rather, to be sold to advertisers in weekday mornings and afternoons. This

seemed to be a golden opportunity for new children's programming to emerge and succeed.

Meanwhile, the early 1980s also witnessed a significant change in the structure of the television industry. New stations came into the market "at a rate faster than at any point in the previous 25 years" (Kunkel, 1988). Because most markets already had network affiliated stations, almost all newcomers were "independent," non-network broadcasters. From 1980 to 1985, the number of independent stations increased from 120 to 241 (Kunkel, 1988).

However, the amount of television viewing did not match the increase of broadcast outlets. Therefore, all these new stations were bound to attract a different group of viewers who were not being served by the old stations in the market (Whetmore, 1989). A new kind of children's programming seemed to be one of the logical, attractive options.

In addition to the increase of broadcast outlets, the barter system was another aspect of new development that the industry was undergoing. "Barter" describes programming acquisition arrangements by which producers offer free or discounted program(s) to broadcasters in exchange for a certain number of commercial slots during the program. The producers then can sell those time slots to advertisers to generate profits and cover production cost for programming (Guttenplan, 1986).

This approach benefits both broadcasters, especially new broadcasters, and the programming producers. The barter arrangements relieve new broadcasters' needs for large initial capital for program purchasing. If the program(s) can be distributed to most TV markets, the programming producers then can sell the bartered commercial slots to advertisers at a national rate and bring in high revenue (Schonfeld, 1986).

Therefore, the FCC's deregulatory approach, which is the primary force that changed the face of children's television, along with the reinforcing factors of increasing broadcast outlets, the available niche for children's television and the development of the barter system, boosted program-length commercials into orbit.

The rapid growth of program-length commercials speaks for the success of such practices. On Saturday morning, the number of program-length commercials jumped from five in 1981-82 to 13 in 1984-85. The after-school slots are also saturated with program-length commercials, up from nine in 1983 to more than 20 in 1985. In 1987, there were a total of 61 program-length commercials in both time slots ("Telcomsubcom holds hearings," 1987). Most broadcast outlets seem to enjoy this trend. Today, some stations carry more than 100 program-length commercials a month in their schedule (Wicks, 1989).

Retail sales also provide evidence of why the program-length commercial has become the means to successful product sales. Retail sales of the toy industry jumped from \$10.4 billion in 1983 to \$12.8 billion in 1984. About 60% of both years' sales were sales of "TV character products," and in 1985 about 66% of retail sales in the toy industry were TV character products (Engelhardt, 1986b).

New Approaches and the Current Development

The rapid growth of program-length commercials and the increasing retail sales of TV character products, in a sense, are bad news for some companies in the industry. Those toy companies that cannot afford to put on a TV show are simply out of luck. For example, retail sales for "He-Man" are far higher than those "unknown" action toy figures produced by some small toy companies.

In addition, even among those big toy companies that produce or co-produce many program-length commercials, the fast growth of program-length commercials also means high competition in the toy market. When the television screen and toy stores are filled with character toys, some creativity or novelty is needed in order to make a character or an image stand out from the rest. In other words, new approaches are needed in order to increase the popularity of a given program-length commercial or to create a

new program-length commercial to outrate the others and subsequently to increase the sale of toys related to that show.

Therefore, with so much competition, child-oriented industries have attempted to discover beforehand what children will like in toys, television shows, characters and in fantasies. Many corporate research projects have been conducted, and findings indicate that variations on what already works will work (Engelhardt, 1986b).

For example, if good versus evil is such a popular theme for the child audience, why not emphasize this feature by making the good even more powerful and the evil even more evil? One of the ways to achieve such a goal is to use the wildest imagination of genetic recombination. For instance, a character that is more than a human being is presumably more powerful than a human being. TV programs such as "Transformer" (featuring half-human half-robot characters that can transfer from one form, such as automobiles, to another, such as fighter planes), "Thundercats" (featuring half-human half-cat characters possessing superpowers) and Silverhawk (featuring half-hawk and half-human characters, again possessing superpowers) are products of this genetic recombination.

Another example that also is an end product of those corporate research findings is that when one character is already very popular, many of his/her relatives and

friends (with different features and characteristics but similar salabilities) will be added to the show, thus into the toy market. The sudden existence and subsequently popularity of She-Ra, He-Man's twin sister is a very good example.

Mattel's research had shown that although Mattel's He-Man was aimed at boys aged three to eight, about 30 percent of those watching the TV show were girls. What can be concluded from that? A new character (actually a new show in She-Ra's case) and toy line were born. He-Man's sister, Adora, also known as She-Ra, Princess of Power, dominates the TV screen and toy market just as her brother before her (Engelhardt, 1986a).

With the same rationale, many new ponies have come to the ponyland of "My Little Pony" and to the toy market, and "Care Bears" keep having new cousins appear on the screen and, of course, on toy stores.

Under decisions made with the aid of corporate research, program-length commercials on children's television now seem very similar to each other. The reason is simple. All toys and characters are aiming at the same consumers, children ages two to eight. As a result, it is common to find repetition of plots from one show to another and similarity of characters across almost all shows.

As mentioned previously, boys from ages three to seven spend a fourth of their time fantasizing about good versus evil, and girls the same age spend most of their time fantasizing about sweet fairies, beautiful tales and also good versus evil (Engelhardt, 1986b).

Therefore, children's television is filled with hundreds of similar characters: loving bears, fruit-scented caring little girls, unbeatable robots, smurfs of unknown species, musclebound blond princes and beautiful princesses, magic unicorns and flying ponies. Together, they are all trying to demonstrate their unique buyability despite their similar characteristics.

In addition, all stories are built around the salable theme: good versus evil. Thus, plots repeat across shows, regardless of producer or type of show. A similar plot can be found in both shows targeting little girls, featuring tender loving care, and shows targeting little boys, featuring "action" sequences in which the forces of good conquer the forces of evil. One kind or the other, almost all plots revolve around actions such as theft, capture or kidnapping and then escape, chase, and recapture. However, in the end, the good characters always take over the stage and the evil characters swear to come back.

As a result of aiming at the same target audience, it is fairly easy to categorize these programs and characters they try to sell. There have been different approaches

used to categorize children's programming. Some used the time slot approach such as Saturday Morning children's television and afterschool children's television (Grossman, 1981). Others used the format approach such as animation and puppet shows (Grossman, 1981). Still others combined time slot and format approaches with a story type approach such as action-figure shows and Saturday morning cartoons (Engelhardt, 1986a). The categorization in this study uses story line, characteristics of characters and themes of programs to try to best reflect the current approaches in the development of program-length commercials.

Therefore, program-length commercials aiming at young children can be roughly grouped into four categories. However, some overlap can be found among groups because their common nature of "selling" products to the same target audience. The four categories are as follow:

1. The Universe of Action-Figure "Superhuman"

This type of shows feature a superhero/heroine such as He-Man, G.I. Joe or She-Ra who is fighting against the forces of evil and trying to save the featured planet or the universe. All these superheroes/heroines are human beings with super weapons and powers. As expected, a series of chases and battles run through the show. At the end, the forces of evil withdraw but threaten to return. In effect, all characters and plots are so similar it is

fairly easy to construct a composite show from all shows in this category.

2. The Universe of Action-Figure "Superbeing"

No matter how powerful a superhuman is, as long as he/she is a human being, there is a limit to his/her abilities. The means by which to unlock this limitation is to create characters free of their specific structure.

Thundercats, for example, are half-human, half-cat action figures with glowing eyes. Silverhawks are half-human, half-hawk creatures. Transformers, with human voices and shape but with robot structure, can change from one form to another. They can turn from vehicles into robot guns and then to whatever form a toy company can come up with, then back to its semi-human shape.

Characters in this type of program are unique because of their semihuman nature. However, the plots for these programs are very similar to those in the superhuman shows. Through a lot of "action" and "battling," the forces of evil are always defeated but return again in the following episode.

3. The Universe of Creatures:

Another free form of characters are the fictional creatures that can possess any type of abilities writers and toy companies are able to create for them. No one really knows what Smurfs, Fraggles and ALFs are. But there are many innocent creatures (Smurfs, Fraggles, etc.)

living in pleasant, happy lands (Smurf village, Fraggle Rocks, etc.).

In general, they are "smurfully" happy and things are "fraggly" peaceful. However, they are constantly threatened by some evil wizards, such as "Gargamel" (Smurfs' Adventures). Again the same "good versus evil" theme used by "superhuman" and "superbeing" shows is used in all these supersweet creature shows.

4. The Universe of Animals:

Finally, cute animals, a universal appeal to TV audiences, also play a big part in children's television (Howard & Kievman, 1983). "My Little Pony," "Alvin and the Chipmunks," "Care Bears," "Pound Puppies" and "Duck Tales" are some examples of shows from the animal universe.

The theme of each story from all these shows is very similar to those of creature shows. The main difference is that animals instead of creatures are risking their lives to rescue their friends.

However, there is a distinct difference between the creature/animal shows and superhuman/superbeing shows. Unlike superhuman/superbeing shows, characters in animal/creature shows do not use "technowonder" weapons nor are they involved in many physical fights. Instead, they rely on magic, intelligence and teamwork to complete their task.

Thus while creature/animal shows may avoid charges of excessive violence, many critics have concluded that these shows are driven by two imperatives of program-length commercials: the introduction of new characters (such as Care Bear Cousins, new pony friends) and the need for teamwork so that when new lines of dolls and other licensed products launch into market, they come in bonded groups but not singly (Cherubin, 1984).

Of course, charges against program-length commercials are not limited to number of characters promoted on each show. They basically can be discussed from two aspects: the nature of program-length commercials and effects that might result from that nature. The "nature" issue involves whether it is a program or a commercial. The "effect" issue refers to whether it has potential harmful effects on children and whether it is unfair to child audience. The rapid growth of program-length commercials in the 1980s has inevitably invited attention and arguments from many concern parties such as, public interest groups, broadcast organizations, toy industry, the FCC and the Congress.

Ongoing Argument on Program-Length Commercials

The focus of the ongoing argument is on the possible commercial nature of those programs and the possible effects on their young, innocent child audience. Program-

length commercials on children's television take the form of animation or puppet. This is because they are the two easiest formats for character creation and they are attractive to children (Maltin, 1987). However, animation as a format dominates most program-length commercials for children's television because it is also the easiest format, from a technical viewpoint, by which to demonstrate characters' special/super abilities. Moreover, animation shows are easy to syndicate because they do not date. The problem is that the target audience for most animation and puppet shows are children between ages of two and eight, whose cognitive development does not allow them to distinguish commercials from programs. Therefore, such a practice subordinates programming in the best interest of the child audience to programming in the interest of product promotion (Cherubin, 1984).

As a result, broadcasters, toy companies and program producers are charged with contributing to the overcommercialization of children's television by making program-length commercials possible ("Telcomsubcom holds hearings," 1987).

ACT argued that the program-length commercial targeting children builds an entire program around a toy product. Therefore, it is a commercial, not a program. Thus some regulations are needed to overturn this over-

commercialization phenomenon on children's television ("Telcomsubcom holds hearings," 1987).

House Telecommunications Subcommittee Chairman Edward Markey agreed, stating that "Congress can, should and will act on this exceedingly important issue. For if we do not act, commercial television will continue to be the video equivalent of a shopping mall for children, with sales clerks masquerading as children's favorite cartoon characters." ("House telcomsubcom looks," 1988).

Broadcasters, producers and toy companies defend their positions. The Association of Independent Television Stations along with the National Association of Broadcasters argued that it does not matter whether a show is a commercial or a program as long as it does not have any harmful effect and so far as "there is no evidence that children are harmed by program-length commercials." ("Commenters defend and," 1988). Responding to this argument, ACT stated "the marketplace does not work in the case of young children who cannot comprehend the difference between commercial and programming material." ("Commenters defend and," 1988).

John Weems, Vice President for Entertainment at Mattel, stated in a hearing on children's television in September, 1987, that "Captain Power," Mattel's newly released children's program, stands on its own. Weems assured that "each story is entirely independent of the

toy line; no mention of the toys is made during the program." The counterargument is that no one ever charges program-length commercials with making statements such as "the toy is made" during the program. It is the subtle selling through use of program characters to promote products without saying "buy me, buy me please" that makes the issue so controversial ("Telcomsubcom holds hearings," 1987).

Alvin Ferleger, senior vice president of Taft Entertainment Co., echoed Weems' viewpoint. Taft Entertainment owns Hanna-Barbera and Ruby-Spears, the two major animation houses for television, producing 73 percent of all Saturday morning children's shows. Ferleger said their shows are different from commercials because "the character has a life that is totally independent of what that toy is. The Monchichis don't sell themselves -- they're deeply involved in a plot" (Cherubin, 1984). ACT responded that "telling a story and giving some character to the toys is still advertising, only with greater effectiveness than a 30-second spot has" (Cherubin, 1984).

However, Carole MacGillvray, President of General Mills Marketing and Design Services, admitted the commercial nature of program-length commercials. General Mills cooperated with American Greetings, producing television shows "Strawberry Shortcake" and "Care Bears." MacGillvray acknowledged that they cannot deny the fact

that their TV shows are promotional tools, nor can Kenner, Hasbro, Mattel and all other toy companies now producing programming (Cherubin, 1984).

Further evidence came from Jack Chojnacki, vice president for American Greetings' licensing division. Chojnacki said they told the writers of "Strawberry Shortcake" to keep characters that can be incorporated in greeting cards, dolls and merchandise in mind if they need new characters for the plot (Cherubin, 1984).

Moreover, Robert Hubbell, vice president for investor relations, Hasbro. Inc., stated that when they provide financial support for program-length commercials about their products, they did not expect to make money from those programs. After all "the shows are part of the overall marketing effort," Hubbell stated (Charren, 1988, p. 1252). This further indicate that program-length commercials are more of a promotional tool than a program produced to "serve" child audience.

To date, there have been several efforts made to prohibit the growth of program-length commercials through legal channels. In 1983 and 1984, ACT filed several complaints with the FCC. ACT charged program-length commercials on children's television violated broadcasters' public interest responsibility to their child audience. In 1985, the Commission dismissed the complaints, noting the

public interest can be best examined by the public itself -- children ages two to seven or eight in this case. In fact, the FCC held that program-length commercials are among the most popular children's shows; they are obviously serving the public's interest (FCC, 1985a). In addition, the Commission noted that "the potential for deception and any corresponding harm is speculative" (p. 8). Furthermore, the Commission seemed to endorse such a practice because it is "an innovative technique to fund children's programming" (FCC, 1985b, p. 5).

Meanwhile, a bill that would require the FCC to examine children's program-length commercials was introduced in the House. Congressmen Timothy Wirth and Frank Lautenberg introduced the Children's Television Education Act of 1985. If passed, the act would require each broadcaster to provide a minimum of seven hours per week of age-specific educational and informational programming for children. In addition, the FCC would be required to conduct a formal inquiry on program-length commercials on children's television. The proposal never even reached a vote and died at the end of the 99th Congress in 1986 (Perko, personal communication, August, 1989).

However, the issue seemed to gain some prominence in the following year. In 1987, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia handed down two rulings favoring public interest groups. In Action for

Children's Television v. Federal Communications

Commission, the district court decided that the Commission did not offer an adequate justification for its 1984 decision to eliminate children's advertising guidelines and ordered the issue reconsidered by the Commission (ACT v. FCC, 1987).

In National Association for Better Broadcasting v. Federal Communications Commission, the district court held that program-length commercials on children's television are indeed commercials in their content. Therefore, such a practice is commercial matter within the ambit of Section 317 of the Communications Act, which requires appropriate sponsorship identification announcements for all broadcast commercial content (NABB v. FCC, 1987).

In November, 1987, response to these two court rulings the FCC issued a Notice of Inquiry to gather information to help it decide whether to keep the children's advertising guidelines it eliminated in 1984. However, the process has been moving very slowly. In addition, the FCC enjoyed new leadership. Mark Fowler resigned as chairman of the FCC in January, 1987, and Dennis Patrick succeeded him.

In general, Patrick had shared Fowler's deregulation philosophy. However, Patrick held the chair for less than three years. On August 4, 1989, Patrick left the FCC, and Alfred Sikes now is the new chairman. With the new

leader, "it is too early to tell what the future direction is going to be" (Porter, personal communication, August, 1989). But at least one thing has been quite clear, the decision on children's advertising guidelines is not high on the agenda.

Meanwhile, the FCC's low-profile response to the 1987 court rulings seemed to signal some congressmen that the Commission may not make decisions according the best interests of children. In July, 1987, Senators Wirth and Lautenberg reintroduced the Children's Television Education Act. If passed, it would require each commercial television network to air seven hours per week of educational programming designed for children. In addition, the FCC would be required to hold inquiries on program-length commercials and interactive toy programming (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1987). But the bill suffered the same defeat as it did when introduced in 1985.

Meanwhile, a House bill, the Children's Television Act, was introduced by House Telecommunications Subcommittee Chairman Ed Markey and Representative Terry Bruce. The bill would mandate a minimum of seven hours of educational and informational programs a week and limit advertising during children's programs to 10.5 minutes per hour on weekends and 12 minutes on weekdays (U.S. Congress, House, 1988).

In June, 1988, by a vote of 328 to 78, the bill was passed in the House of Representatives ("Where things stand," October 3, 1988). However, on November, 1988, President Reagan pocket-vetoed the bill on grounds that it violated broadcasters' First Amendment rights ("Where things stand," November 14, 1988). This rejection, in turn, makes the issue a top priority in the 101st Congress.

There are now (September, 1989) two bills on children's television pending before the Senate Communications Subcommittee, the Children's Television Education Act of 1989 (also referred to as "S. 1215," Senate bill 1215), authored by Senator Wirth, and the Children's Television Act of 1989 (also referred to as "S. 707," Senate bill 707), introduced by Senator Howard Metzenbaum.

S. 707 is identical to the House's children's bill, H.R. 1677, and to the measure Congress passed last year but vetoed subsequently by President Reagan. The bill would limit the amount of advertising in children's programming to 10.5 minutes per hour on weekends and 12 minutes per hour on weekdays. It also would codify the broadcasters' responsibility to serve the needs of its special audience -- children -- with educational and informational programming. However, during license renewal time the FCC would consider the station's "overall programming" to decide whether the licensee has served the

educational and informational needs of children (U.S. Congress, Senate. 1989a, U.S. Congress, House, 1989).

S. 1215 would require a commercial television broadcaster to offer educational and informational programming "specially" designed for "children" as one of the criteria of a station's license renewal. It would limit commercial time during children's programming to 9.5 minutes per hour on weekends and 12 minutes per hour on weekdays. In addition, for the purpose of the Act, it defined "commercial matter" as:

full matter broadcast by a broadcast television licensee for which any money, service, or other valuable consideration is directly or indirectly paid, or promised to or charged or accepted by the station so broadcasting, from any person, regardless of whether such matter is entirely commercial in content (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1989b, p. 4).

The bill then concluded that, when a licensee obtains the broadcast matter through a barter arrangement, the licensee is obligated to demonstrate that the arrangement gives fair compensation to the supplier of the broadcast matter (U.S. Congress, Senate, 1989b).

With the combination of defining commercial matter, setting commercial time limits and requiring fair compensation in any barter arrangement, Wirth hoped the bill then would prohibit program-length commercials (Perko, personal communication, August, 1989).

Eddie Fritts, president of the NAB, said NAB members would accept S. 707 but not S. 1215. Fritts stated free

over-the-air commercial television is no longer the only resource that can serve children. He pointed out that the marketplace has changed; cable and videocassettes have expanded children's programming choices. Fritts concluded that S. 1215 is an unworkable proposal and suggested Congress reject it ("Children's TV high," 1989).

Wirth emphasized the importance of seeing the difference between S. 707 and S. 1215. To him, S. 707 would do almost nothing to improve the status quo while S. 1215 would change the current development of children's television and really do something meaningful (Perko, personal communication, August, 1989).

Sen. Daniel Inouye, Chairman of the Senate Communications Subcommittee, endorsed S. 1215 but realized that the bill presents serious problems for broadcasters. Thus he stated that he would support a measure with a good chance for passage. He had hoped to have a consensus bill passed before the August recess ("Children's TV high," 1989). However, the Subcommittee failed to do so. Inouye predicted that a compromise package may emerge between S. 707 and S. 1215. To date, the passage of any bill still remains to be seen.

Another concern regarding program-length commercials that has not been addressed clearly through legal channels is that such types of commercials take unfair advantage of

children who are too young to understand their selling intent.

When the FCC issued its 1974 Policy and Statement, it required broadcasters to place a clear separation device between the program and commercials, prohibited host-selling and restricted children's programming promoting products within the body of the program content. This policy reflected the Commission's concern that children under age seven are in a cognitive development stage that does not equip them to fully recognize and defend against television's commercial persuasion. Therefore, any such marketing practices would take unfair advantage of children.

Since the FCC's broadcast deregulation order of 1984, the restriction on host-selling and requirement of a separation device still have been in effect. This shows that the FCC still believes children need special protection from commercialization. This also implies that program-length commercials could be regulated under the same philosophy.

For one thing, young children are not able to distinguish programming from commercials, so they could not defend themselves against the selling intent of the commercial; therefore, a clear separation device between programming and commercial on children's television is needed. The program-length commercial has been identified by most involved parties as a practice where commercials

are incorporated within the body of program content. In fact, as stated previously, the FCC coined the term (FCC, 1973; FCC, 1974a). With such intertwining of programs and commercials, how could young children who need a clear separation device between programming and commercials realize the product promotion intent of the program-length commercial? The FCC did not seem to think this through when it dropped its ban of program-length commercials but maintained the requirement of a separation device.

For another thing, again because of young children's cognitive developmental stage, they have difficulty telling commercials from programming; therefore, host-selling is not allowed in order to prevent such types of commercials from taking unfair advantage of young children. In many ways, program-length commercials can be described as the ultimate form of host-selling. Again, how could the FCC justify prohibiting host-selling in the name of protecting the child audience but allowing the practice of program-length commercials, thinking it is not unfair to children?

There is another approach that could be used to curb the practice of program-length commercials in children's television. If program-length commercials can be found to be similar to standard commercials in fundamental ways, it is then a practice that takes unfair advantage of young children. Therefore, program-length commercials could be

regulated without having to pass a bill to limit commercial time or to try to make the FCC to change its 1984 deregulation order, because the prohibition of unfairness to children is still in effect through the elimination of host-selling and the requirement of a separation device.

Nevertheless, after almost a decade of ongoing argument, no solid remedy has emerged. The focus of the issue remains the same: whether a program-length commercial is designed with product promotion in mind and if there are any possible effects on the child audience.

As expected, almost all companies deny the promotional nature of program-length commercials. However, the acknowledgments from few companies do point toward some possible solutions to the controversy over the "nature" issue. If significant differences between program-length commercials and standard programming can be found, the program-length commercial is different from "programming." Moreover, examination of how close program-length commercials are to commercials can provide further explanation of the "nature" of such practices.

If significant similarities are established, program-length commercials are in fact poorly disguised "commercials." Therefore, the commercial limit rule, if it is resumed, can be used to limit program-length commercials. Furthermore, without having to change the FCC's current regulation ideology, the program-length commercial

still can be regulated because it takes unfair advantage of young children as do host-selling and no separation between programming and commercials.

The following section will discuss characteristics of television commercials and their child audience, to build grounds for examining the nature of program-length commercials.

The Television Commercial and the Child Audience

Advertising in General

Although television commercials are unique in their form of communication (visual, audio and motion), they share some general strategies with all other forms of advertisement. As consumer behaviorists have concluded, consumers' purchasing decisions are based on their judgment that the product or service satisfies some need or want (Edwards & Johnson, 1986). Thus, any form of advertisement, including television commercials, is designed with this specific human nature in mind.

As defined by consumer behavior specialists, needs are things that are necessary for survival, while wants are things that consumers desire but are not necessary for survival (Schultz & Tannenbaum, 1988).

Today, in the United States, most of the basic consumer needs are satisfied in one way or another. Thus,

most advertising is for products that supply "want satisfaction" rather than "need satisfaction" (Schultz & Tannenbaum, 1988). This point is especially applicable to commercials targeting young children. In a normal family situation, parents already take care of the need satisfaction for their children, so commercials address children's "wants."

This "wants generation" can be described from two perspectives, as commercials can be used to generate either "active" or "latent" wants. Active wants refer to the situation in which consumers recognize their wants and actively seek to satisfy them. On the other hand, a latent want is something that is not a priority in a consumer's life. In fact, the want might not even be recognized until it is called to the consumer's attention by some form of advertising (Schultz & Tannenbaum, 1988).

In the case of program-length commercials, it is a stimulation of latent wants. For the most part, those characters\products promoted in program-length commercials did not exist until their associated commercials (in this case, the program-length commercials and associated advertising campaigns in other forms) were present in the market.

After wants are generated, how consumers make product or brand name selection is related to their decision strategy, either rational or emotional. By making

rational decisions, the consumer consciously considers various alternatives and attempts to determine the best price-value relationship. On the other hand, emotional decisions are made to enhance the consumer's self-image (Schultz & Tannenbaum, 1988). For the most part, children do not directly involve themselves in the "purchasing process." However, their opinions of products or brand names are references for their parents when selecting products to be purchased for their children. Not surprisingly, due to their cognitive developmental stages, children primarily use an emotional decision process rather than rational (Collins, 1975).

In summary, a general strategy used by television commercials aiming at young children is to generate children's latent wants based on their emotional decision process. Therefore, what children's wants are and how they process advertising information need to be understood before the details of television commercial production principles can be further discussed.

There are many developmental theories that can be used to explain children's communication behaviors. Among those, Jean Piaget's cognitive approach probably is the most appropriate to explain children's information processing of television commercials (Thomas, 1985).

Cognitive Development

Piaget's theory of cognitive development describes how the child knows or understands. According to Piaget, children's developmental processes are actually a series of adaptations. Adaptation occurs through the interaction of assimilation and accommodation processes.

Assimilation is a child's adjustment to environmental demands through familiar behavior or activity within their own ability, while accommodation is the changing of their behavior or activity to adjust to environmental demands (Piaget, 1952).

Therefore, in Piaget's theory, development is a function of "equilibration." In their developmental processes, children experience latent contradictions in mental structure. These contradictions in turn serve to stimulate inner reorganization of the child's mental structure. Piaget assigned these mental structure changes into four cognitive stages as children develop from infancy to adulthood: sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational (Baldwin, 1980).

During the first two years of life, a child is in sensorimotor stage, during which a child understands its world mainly through immediate action and sensation. A child does not realize objects' permanency (objects

continuing to exist when they are not in view) until toward the end of the second year (Piaget, 1952).

Following the sensorimotor stage, children ages two to seven are in their preoperational stage. During this period, children base their reasoning on perception rather than on logic. Intuition is used in the solution of problems. Therefore, children cannot conserve in this stage (Piaget, 1952).

The concrete operational stage lasts from ages 7 or 8 to 11 or 12. The major development in this stage is that children start to think operationally. In Piaget's terms, an operation is a thought. Thus, an operation on ideas is an exercise on logic (Lefrancois, 1986). However, a concrete operational child is only capable of understanding or using logic that is tied to real, concrete objects and events. A child at this stage cannot reason logically about hypothetical situations or events. In sum, children at this stage are able to conserve but their thinking is still bound to the concrete (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958).

Beginning around age 11 or 12, children's development in the formal operational stage is characterized by their ability to deal with abstract ideas. Finally, when children jump the hurdle that has been limiting them to the concrete world, they enter this last stage of cognitive development, during which the child develops complete generality of thought. They are able to do propositional

thinking and to deal with hypothetical situations. They also develop strong idealism at this stage (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958).

In Piaget's theory, a number of characteristics differentiate one stage from another. Two characteristics are particularly significant for distinguishing the preoperational stage from the concrete operational stage. Because program-length commercials on children's television are aiming at children at preoperational stage, it is important to understand the characteristics of and differences between these two stages.

The first characteristic that distinguishes preoperational and concrete operation stages is perceptual boundedness, the tendency for children to focus on and respond to aspects existing in their immediate perceived environment. Perceptual boundedness particularly characterizes preoperational children. Based on Piaget, children in this stage mentally duplicate images of the visual stimuli they receive. However, in addition to mentally duplicating what they see, children in the concrete operational stage can also mentally manipulate the elements in their perceptions. Therefore, concrete operational children can examine a number of possibilities in concrete situations, not simply accept what they perceive as the only reality as do preoperational children (Zigler & Child, 1969).

The second characteristic is centration, the tendency to focus on a limited amount of the information available. Preoperational children tend to focus on one dimension of a situation, not making use of other dimensions that may be equally relevant. Consequently, it is difficult for a preoperational child to understand the relation between two dimensions and to handle situations that require dealing with two dimensions simultaneously.

Concrete operational children, on the other hand, are capable of decentration. They are able to focus on several dimensions of a situation or problem at the same time and to relate the dimensions (Ward & Wackman, 1973).

In summary, Piaget's cognitive development theory suggests that children develop through four stages from infancy to adulthood. Each stage is characterized by a number of cognitive structures. Two stages of primary concern in this study, preoperational and concrete operational stages, are differentiated primarily by changes in two important cognitive structures -- perceptual boundedness and centration.

These changes in cognitive structures have a number of implications for children's information processing behavior. For example, in processing a stimulus such as a television program or a television commercial, it is expected that the preoperational child would focus on only a few dimensions (centration). Furthermore, perceptual

boundedness would limit the child to focus on visual aspects rather than on content or message aspects of any stimuli from television. This principle can also be applied to understand why a preoperational child pays more attention to the sound than to the messages conveyed through the sound (Wackman & Wartella, 1977).

Implications of Children's Understanding Commercials

With centration and perceptual boundedness, most young children have difficulty discriminating television programming from commercials and recognizing the selling intent of commercials. In addition, they tend to perceive commercial messages with great truthfulness.

Ward, Wackman, and Wartella (1977) studied the effects of perceptual boundedness and centration on children's understanding of television commercials. Ninety children between four and twelve years old were recruited for the study, conducted in 1973. Subjects were divided into two groups: preoperational children and concrete operational children. Eighty percent of the preoperational children distinguished between commercial and programming in terms of "perceptual" cues. For example, they said it is a commercial because it is shorter or it has different people in it. On the other hand, 75% of concrete operational children differentiated the two using

"functional" cues. For example, they said it is a commercial because it is trying to sell something. They also said programs are to entertain, not to sell, and programs have a story or moral while commercials make you buy their product. This study concluded that young children can distinguish between commercials and programming "perceptually" but not "conceptually" at all.

Other studies also supported this conclusion. Ward and Wackman (1973) found that 56% of preschoolers in their study were not at all aware of the persuasion or selling intent in commercials, while only 12% of the third graders and 3% of the sixth graders were unaware. In a similar study, Rossiter and Robertson (1974) found that more than half of the first graders did not show any understanding of the persuasion motive in commercials, while only 12% of the third graders and 1% of the fifth graders did so.

In addition to this finding, Ward and Wackman (1973) indicated that children at different ages also evaluated the truthfulness of commercials differently. More than half of the preschoolers thought commercials tell the truth "all the time," while only 12% of the third graders and 3% of the sixth graders thought so.

The same strong inverse relationships between age and awareness of commercial intent and between age and perceived truthfulness of commercials have been reported in other studies (Sheikh & Moleski, 1977; Palmer & McDowell,

1979; Roberts, Christenson, Gibson, Mooser, & Golberg, 1980; Butter, Popovich & Stackhouse, 1981; Christenson, P. G., 1982; Levin, Petros & Petrella, 1982; Blosser, B. J. & Roberts, D. F., 1985).

With limited cognitive skills and life experience, most preoperational children are not aware of the selling intent of a commercial message, though they may be able to identify it by common labels (such as commercials, programs) through perceptual cues. Moreover, preoperational children place a great deal of trust in commercials. Therefore, young children lack the awareness, attitudes and defensive interpretation strategies commonly presumed by adults to act as defenses against commercial persuasion. Thus, it is nearly impossible to expect them to defend against the promotional intent and persuasion of program-length commercials where the few perceptual cues identifiable by young children, such as "commercial is shorter" or "commercial uses different people" do not even exist.

To date, a study by Bryant (1985) is credited as the only study that directly examined the effects of program-length commercials on children (Liebert & Sprafkin, 1988). Bryant's study concentrated on the effect on children's purchasing behavior and found that program-length commercials do make the associated products more appealing to children.

Bryant used the program-length commercial "The Transformers" as the treatment for his experiment. Eighty kindergartners were divided into four groups and shown hour-long programs of different kinds. All four groups viewed a animated show and one of the following: (1) an episode of "The Transformers," featuring the robot character, Insections; (2) two 30-second commercials for the Insections toy and another animated show; (3) the other animated show only (the control group); (4) the same "Transformer" episode on (1) and the same two commercials for the Insections toy on (2).

After viewing, all children were given tokens (coded by groups) to buy one of ten toys displayed on the shelf of their day care center. One of the 10 toys was an Insection Transformer. A significantly larger number of Insections were bought by children in group (4) who had viewed "The Transformer" program and Insections commercials than by children in any other groups. Children who watched either "The Transformer" or the Insections commercials bought an intermediate number of Insections. The difference between these two groups was not statistically significant. Finally, the fewest Insections were purchased by those in the control group. Bryant concluded that, under experimental conditions, even a single exposure to a program-length commercial can have strong impact on children's buying behavior.

Implications of Moral Judgment and Imaginative Play

As studies mentioned above, centration and perceptual boundedness interplay in a preoperational child's information process. This interplay can also be applied in a different setting, such as moral judgment of young children. Collins (1975) applied Piaget's theory to examine children's comprehension of televised social information. He found that children in the preoperational stage evaluate television characters based on limited dimensions (centration) and visible evidence (perceptual boundedness). In his study, preoperational children judged the goodness of TV characters based on tangible damage from any actions but not the moral reasons behind those actions. For example, children in his study thought that a character who was involved in an action for a bad reason but who caused little damage was better than the character who caused great damage for a good reason.

Another example of judging based on limited dimensions and bounded perceptual attributes was the study by Singer, Zuckerman and Singer (1980). They found that preoperational children liked the character "Hulk" because he is "big, strong, powerful and can do anything," although they did know that he is not a happy person.

The structural changes in cognitive development have implications not only for how children process information but also for how children get involved with the characters

on television. The study from Singer et al. also demonstrates how children only used limited dimensions and tangible attributes to form their liking for a television character.

Another aspect of Piaget's theory also provides insightful information on the relations between television characters and their child audience. Based on Piaget's developmental theory, children are capable of playing make-believe games from approximately the age of two and this play phenomenon becomes increasingly prevalent throughout the pre-school years.

Children's imaginative play comprises a multitude of make-believe games. Imaginative play includes three general types play: daydreaming, imaginary playmate(s) and transformation play (Lefrancois, 1986).

Daydreaming is imagining without physical activity. The imaginary playmate is private play that does not require participation of others in the game. Transformation play is mostly a group activity, though it can also be played alone. Transformation is the process of altering objects, time, situations and roles mentally through pretending (Kostelnik, 1986). Children often group together for such play, in which each child will pretend to be either a thing or a person other than him/herself.

In terms of imaginative play in general, television programming is useful in generating an imaginative

tendency and is viewed as "a powerful stimulant towards fantasy and imaginative resourcefulness in the child" (Singer & Singer, 1981). With regard to imaginative play specifically, television is closely related to transformation play.

First of all, one of the consequences of television viewing is the creation of a common consciousness. Television creates a widespread equivalence of experience in children. In addition, television characters give children a great variety of resources for role pretending in their play. This experience provides the common ground for communication and role construction in group imaginative play.

Some studies have argued that group imaginative play based on television is constructed mostly around the "television characters" but not the "programming content." Cullingford (1984) emphasized the emotional importance of fantasy characters to children. Children fulfill their need for identification through pretending to be certain characters in their imaginative play. Cummings and McCain (1982) found that in group imaginative play, when the "content" of television programming was played the characters of that program were played as well. However, very often television characters were played in the context of children's own story line. Therefore, in such instances,

program content does not really matter. Program characters are the essence of this imaginative play.

This phenomenon is especially obvious and has become more commonplace after the rebirth of program-length commercials. In a sense, this form of transformation play was expanded. Children now can pretend themselves to be characters from television and use character toys promoted by program-length commercials as their playmates. Furthermore, children sometimes physically remove themselves from the play. They play those character toys based on plots from TV programs or, for the most part, the plots they come up with. Children themselves are not part of the story or plot; they are simply the director of the story.

Suddenly television characters play more than a traditional role in children's imaginative play. Before the program-length commercial, television characters only existed in children's imagination during play. After the program-length commercial, television characters physically exist in children's imaginative play through a toy form. Therefore, attributes of a television character that make children want to have such a toy character in their play need to be discussed further.

Nature of Popular TV Characters for Children

Miller (1976) studied factors affecting children's choices of televised sex role models, concluding that children will generally nominate same-sex television characters as the persons they would mostly want to be like. He also found that girls nominated more opposite-sex characters as models than boys did.

Greenberg (1976) examined television characters' attributes and children's modeling tendencies and concluded that characters' goodness, youthfulness and gender were significant predictors of modeling tendencies. In addition, the perceived reality of the characters was the primary determinant of children's identification with them.

Reeves and Greenberg (1978) studied children's perception of television characters. They discovered that the significant dimensions of judgment in children's differentiation among television characters are the character's sex, physical strength, physical attractiveness, goodness, humor and social support from others.

Singer et al. (1980) concluded physical strength was a key attribute for children's liking for certain television characters. Children in their sample liked the character "Hulk" because he is "big, strong, powerful and can do anything," disregarding the fact that he is not a happy person.

Such superhuman/high-action/powerful characters seem to be named frequently as the type of person children would like to be. Cullingford (1984) found that children like to pretend they are superheroes/heroines from television because those characters fulfill certain expectations of pleasure and maintain a standard image in a variety of similar circumstances. This feature makes it easy for the transformation process in children's imaginative play.

Kostelnik (1986) found that children like to pretend they are superheroes/heroines because: those characters are unquestionably good and intelligent; they possess powers children wish they themselves had; they solve every problem and overcome all obstacles; they are always in control; they know and do what is right; and everyone wants to be their friend. Therefore, even girls like to pretend to be superheroes because superheroine roles are less available than superhero roles in children's television programming.

Other types of characteristics were observed in children's play from the study by Cummings and McCains (1982). The characteristics were funny and silly characters, characters wearing distinguishing costumes and/or using distinguishing props and characters with easy-to-imitate verbal and nonverbal behaviors.

At least eight factors of television characters that relate to children's identification, choice, modeling,

attribution or differentiation of characters emerge from these studies:

Demographic: sex, age.

Appearance: good looking, well dressed.

Personality: funny, silly, active, good, happy.

Intelligence: smart, always right.

Physical ability: strong, fast, busy, have superpower.

Activities: doing a variety of things, doing things that children or human beings are not capable of.

Popularity: social support of others, numbers of friends.

Reality: how much is the character like people in real life?

However, a preoperational child cannot use all eight aspects simultaneously to examine a given character when processing information from a program-length commercial or any television program in general.

Because of their tendency of centration, preoperational children are only able to process limited dimensions of information from a given stimulus. Within such a restricted framework, information that fits into their perceptually bounded universe is more likely to be processed. Therefore, out of these eight aspects of television characters, demographic, appearance, physical

ability, activities and popularity fit into children's perceptually bounded scheme quite well.

To discuss the demographic aspects of television characters is to bring up another controversial topic, stereotyping on children's television. Such a topic is interesting and important but beyond the scope of this study; therefore, it will be sidestepped in this study. Also, it will be difficult to discuss the appearance aspect in a meaningful way due to its subjective nature. Thus, physical ability, activities and popularity will be the three major focal points used to differentiate characteristics of various television characters in this study.

After discussing the characteristics of TV characters that capture children's hearts, the following section will explore how television can manipulate those criteria to gain maximum audience and consumers for toys and all other program tie-ins.

Advertising for Television

As mentioned previously, any advertising campaign that does not address at least one of the human's basic wants/needs is not a successful one (Jewler, 1989). Thus, all forms (different media) of advertising share the same philosophy in terms of designing effective messages.

Seven strategic approaches have been commonly used in the field of advertising production to make the audience

really want or feel a need for the advertised product or service after being exposed to the advertising. Different strategy is appropriate for different types of advertising situations. However, very often several approaches are used together in one situation (Courtland & Arens, 1989). They are the generic strategy, the preemptive claim, the unique selling proposition, the brand image strategy, product positioning, the resonance approach and the affective strategy (Jewler, 1989).

Among them, four especially appropriate strategies will be further explored:

1. The Brand Image Strategy. This strategy claims superiority that is based on factors that are extrinsic to the product or service. In the case of program-length commercials, superhuman and superbeing shows are an execution of this strategy.

2. Product Positioning. This approach gives the product a place in the mind of the consumer. It stresses how this brand is different from and superior to the competition. This strategy is particularly appropriate to new entries in a product category or to brands with relatively small market shares that wish to challenge market leaders.

Examples of such a strategy from program-length commercials would be those shows with characters created through genetic recombination. For instances, when it was

difficult to come up with another "He-Man" type of show to compete with the original, a new program, "Thundercats," was produced to gain its own niche. In fact, the Thundercats product was positioned as different from and superior to the competition--He-Man, a human being.

3. The Resonance Approach. This strategy does not focus on product claims or brand images. It is designed to present situations or emotions that evoke positive associations from the memories of respondents.

4. Affective Strategy. The intent of this strategy is to make contact on a purely emotional level. Such a reaction can break through indifference to change the consumer's perception of the product. Examples for both resonance and affective strategies will be those animal and creature program-length commercials.

It does not matter what type of strategy is used. The most important thing is to get the intended audience to participate in the given advertisement; as involvement grows, so does retention of the message and the learning process (Tan, 1985 & Jewler, 1989).

A successful advertisement should be able to convey to consumers ideas that may lead to the consumption of the advertised products or services. This teaching process must be as clear and as accessible to the potential consumer as possible. Therefore, after a strategy or strategies are selected, the VIPS formula is generally followed

in order to achieve such a goal. The VIPS formula comprises visibility, identity, promise and simplicity (Jewler, 1989).

Visibility. An advertisement with visibility should be able to stop casual audiences, who might be a target for the intended commercial message.

Identity. This element is designed to lead the audience to relate the main selling idea with the brand name. It is done by displaying the product's name and distinguishing features prominently.

Promise. This is a central element to any advertisement. The promise element is designed to evoke positive feelings from the consumers.

Simplicity. A good advertisement must be simple. It must stick with the strongest selling idea and present it in the most powerfully simple way possible.

This VIPS formula is especially applicable to commercials targeting children in their preoperational stage. When children can only process limited dimensions and amounts of information, and the information they do process is restricted to things that are perceptually obvious to them, visibility, identity, promise and simplicity are the key to get commercial messages across to them.

While there still are arguments about whether program-length commercials are commercials or programs, examining them from the production viewpoint, such as whether

a program-length commercial is set up to achieve the VIPS magic, may give us some clues to settle the argument. Before further discussing this issue, fundamental television production techniques and their application to commercials need to be stated.

Television Production and its Implications for Commercials

In television production, a good script is as important as good camera shots. However, preoperational children, the target audience of program-length commercials, for the most part notice and process only tangible and visible signals. Therefore, camera shots instead of all elements involved in television production, such as scripts, will be discussed here. Of all signals of a television commercial/program, how cameras are set up to present characters or products is the most obvious and strongest perceptual cue for children at the preoperational stage.

Basic Camera Shots

Unlike the theatrical stage where the audience can center its attention on any part of the stage, the television audience must rely on the director and the camera operators. It is they who organize and compose the sequence of shots to convey televised reality to the audience. As they decide what audiences need and want to see, they are building the videospace for television

viewers (Wurtzel, 1983). This building process is a combination of two different but related functions: framing the shot and composing the shot.

Framing is the inclusion and exclusion of various pictorial elements within the videospace and how these elements are shown to the viewer. Composition refers to the organization of these pictorial elements in a way that presents a unified, element-correlated and aesthetical picture to the audience. Framing and composition must be automatically combined to build the videospace. (Wurtzel, 1983).

One of the most important choices facing directors and the camera operators is field of view of the shot. It refers to exactly how large to show the primary subject and its surroundings. It can be explained as the balance between the primary subject and its surrounding background area. For example, in the early years of film production, a basic shot progression sequence was used very often. Each scene began with a wide, establishing shot to help viewers understand the spatial relationships among elements in the scene. Afterwards, the shots would become progressively tighter, isolating the primary subjects and eliminating more and more background. Although this convention is not followed very often today, the various shots within the progression make a convenient way to

break down and organize the component parts of the videospace.

The Extreme Long Shot (ELS) is a very wide field of view through which the camera shows the audience the entire playing area. The primary subject is small compared to the background. The subject in a sense tends to compete with the surroundings for the audience's attention.

The Long Shot (LS) is a slightly closer field of view than the extreme long shot. However, in such a shot, background area is still much larger than the primary subject. Background dominates the picture.

The Medium Shot (MS) is the shot where the primary subject becomes much larger than in the LS. The background is still important but, instead of dominating the videospace, now the background shares the videospace with the subject.

The Close-Up (CU) is the shot where the subject becomes the primary focus of interest within the shot. Only a small portion of the background is visible.

The Extreme Close-Up (ECU) is the shot where the subject virtually fills the screen. The subject is clearly the central focus of the shot. Background is literally eliminated from the videospace.

Multiple subjects shots are shots designed to frame more than one subject in the shot. These shots are named

by the number of subjects included. For example, there is a two-shot and a three-shot (Wurtzel, 1983). Directors very often frame two major subjects in one shot where subjects are the focal point and only a small portion of background is visible. This sometimes is called two-shot close-up (2CU).

With a variety of shots available, one of the director's primary concerns is to develop the camera shots which convey to the audience the essence of what is happening in the story. This concern is essential because the only frame of reference the audience (especially pre-operational children) has is what it sees in the videospace and hears through the television speaker. Therefore, what elements are shown and how they are shown are crucial factors in communicating messages to the audience. A good rule of thumb is to show the audience (1) what it wants to see, (2) what it needs to see, (3) when it wants and needs to see it.

Quite often, what the audience wants to see and needs to see are identical. However, it is up to the director to decide how to show it to the audience. For example, should a wide shot be used more often than a close-up in some instances? There are no rules here. Every situation presents possibilities in its own way (Wurtzel, 1983).

However, this "no rules" rule does not necessarily apply to television advertising production. For example,

it is common to find 90 percent of shots from a commercial are close-ups, extreme close-ups and some two-shot close-ups. This is so because those shots can be easily used to achieve the VIPS criteria of advertising the product (Bovee & Arens, 1989).

In television commercial production, there actually are five elements to guide or ensure product VIPS. (Jewler, 1989) The five essential elements are:

1. Attention-getting and relevant opening: The opening is crucial. It can either turn audiences off or catch their attention. Therefore, the opening needs to relate to the message that follows so that the commercial will not lose its audience after the opening. This element is also emphasized in program production (Howard & Kievman, 1983). An effective opening not only grabs the audience's attention but also sets the tone for the intended message.

2. Single-mindedness: This element referring to choosing a major theme and running it throughout the commercial. Normally, a television viewer is not able to absorb more than one theme in 30 seconds. In a sense, this element does not apply to a program-length commercial because of its much greater length. However, from another aspect, this element fits program-length commercials targeting preoperational children very well. Children in the preoperational stage are centrational and perceptually

bounded. Thus, any message with single-mindedness suits preoperational children perfectly.

3. High product visibility: This involves showing the product on screen as large as reasonably possible. That means use of many close-ups. This element also involves showing the product as many times as possible without making it appear forced. Therefore, close-ups, frequency and length of the product appearance are three keys to achieve product visibility.

4. Closing recap of product or message: This involves repeating the major message as the product appears. Therefore, the product name and its special features are expected to be repeated as many times as possible without damaging the commercial as a whole.

5. Visual emphasis: This involves coming up with the best way to frame shots so that what is being advertised is emphasized. This again can be achieved by using various close-ups of the advertising product.

After the discussion of the nature of television commercials and the child consumer, some theoretical assumptions from the production viewpoint now can be logically made to explore the commercial nature of the program-length commercials targeting children in the preoperational developmental stage.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Children are a special class of audience. Because of their lack of cognitive skill and life experience, the information processes of preoperational children are heavily dominated by centration, the tendency to focus on a limited amount of the information available, and perceptual boundedness, the tendency to focus on and respond to aspects existing in children's immediate perceived environment. These limit young children's ability to understand messages that are multidimensional and conceptual, such as television commercials.

It has been well established by social researchers that preoperational children cannot conceptually discriminate between television programming and commercials. They are not aware of the selling intention and persuasive nature of a commercial. Furthermore, they think commercials are trustworthy. Unfortunately, all commercials are designed to lead the audience to consume the advertised products or services, though some may be actually educational or entertaining. The bottom line is that commercials are intended to persuade.

They use whatever techniques they can, such as frequent close-ups for a closing recap of the product and

repeating the brand name frequently for product name identification, to paint a "simple, visible and identifiable" product picture with "promise" so as to induce audiences to use the products/services. Normally, adult audiences process commercial messages with a defensive technique and, for that reason, commercials need to be persuasive. However, preoperational children are not cognitively ready to defend themselves against commercial persuasion. Therefore, some commercial practices may take unfair advantage of children. That is why the FCC has required broadcasters to place a clear separation between commercials and programming and has prohibited host-selling on children's television.

The center of the issue, then, is whether program-length commercials are programs or commercials. If they are commercials, they could be unfair to children and may need to be prohibited, because they are packaged in a program format with children's favorite characters acting as the salespersons. In addition, toys promoted in program-length commercials are popular among children for their regular play as well as imaginative play.

These heavy associations with toy characters directly by playing and indirectly by viewing has raised another concern. Many of the characters from program-length commercials are fighting figures, and concerned parties have worried that the violence portrayed in those shows may

have negative influences on children. Therefore, this study attempts to determine whether the program-length commercial is different from programming but more similar to commercials, from a content and production viewpoint. In addition, it also examines the "violence promotion" concern raised by public interest groups.

Theoretical Assumptions

If we assume that program-length commercials embody the "commercial purpose of program design," they will share some characteristics with television commercials, in terms of their content and production design.

First, in order to promote the products, "brand image strategy" would be applied in program-length commercials. Therefore, visibility and identity formulas naturally are used to reinforce the toy characters the company intends to sell. Thus the essential elements of commercials, such as high product visibility, recapping the major message and visual emphases, presumably would be obvious in its production. Following this logic, a program-length commercial should have more close-ups (including ECU, CU and 2CU) of their leading characters than do standard programs. In addition, their characters' names supposedly would be spoken more frequently than those characters in standard programs.

Second, in order to sell the product, it is important to reinforce the importance and special features of their toy characters. Therefore, a program-length commercial supposedly would use product positioning strategy to show the "prominent" aspects of their product (promise of the VIPS formula). Again, it is no surprise that close-ups will be used to emphasize these features. In addition, any special features a toy character possesses are expected to be demonstrated more frequently with longer time than do the special features of characters in standard programs.

Moreover, the importance and special features of characters on program-length commercials are expected to relate to children's liking for TV characters. For example, in order to promote products to preoperational children, these toy characters might be designed to incorporate the features that most children at that developmental stage desire. Generally speaking, there are eight features of television characters that are highly attractive to children in the preoperational stage. However, due to the reasons stated previously, only three (physical ability, activities, and popularity) would be further discussed in this study.

Therefore, it is expected that superpowers or superhuman qualities (physical ability and activities) of

characters on program-length commercials would be demonstrated more frequently and with longer time for each demonstration than those characters in standard programs.

In addition, if all else is equal, there might be more regular characters in a program-length commercial than in a standard program. This argument can be established on grounds that "popularity" (social support of others, number of friends) is used as one of the selling points to the child audience. However, it can also be established on the assumption that the promotion of more characters in a program leads to manufacturing and sales of more products.

Third, if we assume the argument that program-length commercials promote violence is true, they should contain more violent acts than do standard programs. In addition, any fighting action is arguably a more obvious visual cue of a character's feature than is a subtler cue, such as a character's personality. Furthermore, fighting scenes involve use of physical powers that children may wish they possess. It is also an execution of children's good versus evil fantasy. Again, that attracts children to want to become or have those characters in their transformation play. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that program-length commercials would use such action cues from characters as a selling point. More frequent, longer fighting

acts are expected in program-length commercials than in standard programs.

Operationalization

Because toy companies try to sell the toy characters, not the television programs, the unit of analysis for the study would be the regular character on each selected program but not programs themselves. Nevertheless, programs are used as the framework for character selection.

The variables to be analyzed in this study include:

1. Program-length commercial and standard program on children's television:

As defined by the FCC (1973), a program-length commercial is a product-related program where non-commercial segment is so interwoven with advertising; thus the entire program is actually a single commercial promotion. As defined by Congress in its Children's Television Bill of 1987, a program-length commercial is a program designed to promote products. Such a promotion can be done through the manipulation of the theme of the program, the identification of product name and display of the product in the program (U.S. Congress, 1987, S10214).

Other concerned organizations defined program-length commercials as programs with overriding commercial purpose, entire programs built around a toy product and programs based on toys. On the other hand, a standard

program therefore is a regular program that does not have any product promotion intention and does not base its program on any toy product ("Commenters defend and," 1988, and "House telcomsubcom looks," 1988).

All these definitions help set the guideline to identify program type. However, it is difficult sometimes to apply such a guideline. For example, most toy companies and program production companies producing program-length commercials would not admit that their programs are toy-based or designed for product promotion. Therefore, this "intention" criterion is not very useful in the context of this study. To remedy this, a set of criteria based on the developmental history of program-length commercials is established here to help distinguish standard programs from program-length commercials.

A standard program is the one that was:

(a) Produced before the year 1980.

Any animation or puppet TV shows except "Hot Wheels" that originated and were produced before 1980, the year that witnessed the rebirth of program-length commercials, are presumably standard programs. These programs might have had product tie-ins when originally aired. However, because of the conservative regulatory climate of children's television before the 1980s and the fact that the program-length commercial did not make its first comeback until 1980 ("Strawberry Shortcake"), it is safe to assume

that those product tie-ins were merely end results of "old-time TV merchandising," under which toys sprang into existence after the program's characters proved popular among children. There was no joint venture relation between the toy company and the program production company.

However, there are some long running programs that need to be further clarified. For example, the TV show "Scooby Doo," produced by Hanna-Barbera, first went on the air in 1969 and has been on the air since. However, in the early 1980s, Hanna-Barbera modified the appearance of characters on "Scooby Doo." They are now more modern looking and they use new technologies such as computers to help them solve problems (Tadlec, M., personal communication, May 1989). In addition, there are new product tie-ins in the market in the 1980s. While this is a show with a lot of product tie-ins, it is only safe to assume that the old "Scooby Doo," produced between 1969 and 1979, is a standard program and the new "Scooby Doo," produced after 1980, is possibly a program-length commercial. Another Hanna-Barbera production, "Yogi Bear," is viewed the same way. It first went on the air in 1960 and a new look production started in 1987.

(b) Produced after 1980 but with absolutely no product tie-ins.

This type of program is hard to find. Most programs currently on the air have some sort of product tie-in. The product may come before, after or simultaneously with the program; the toy company and production company may or may not have business relations with the other. Unfortunately, most companies will not reveal such information (ABC, personal communication, May, 1989; CBS, personal communication, May, 1989; Fox Network, personal communication, May, 1989; Hanna-Barbera, personal communication, May, 1989; NBC, personal communication, May, 1989; Southern Star, personal communication, May, 1989; TPS, personal communication, May, 1989). Therefore, to insure the program really is not designed to promote its tie-ins, a program produced after 1980 must have no associated toys in order to qualify as a standard program.

Program such as "Teenwolf" and "Zoobilee Zoo" fall into this category. "Teenwolf" was first produced and went on the air in 1986, but it lasted only one year. Any episodes currently on the air are reruns. Kushner Locke owns the rights to "Teenwolf" characters, although the show actually was produced by Southern Star, a contract production company in this case. According to its Vice President of Post Production, Richard Anobile (personal communication, May, 1989), Kushner Locke has not licensed out any "Teenwolf" characters to any company. If any company can legally manufacture a product tie-in of the show,

Kushner Locke would be the only one, but it has not produced any tie-ins based on the show and does not intend to do so. Anobile also stated "Teenwolf" is absolutely not a program-length commercial. Commenting on why the program only stayed on the air for one-year, he said, "In the eighties, it is very hard for a program that has no financial support from a toy company to stay on the air" (personal communication, May, 1989).

"Zoobilee Zoo" is in the same situation. Hallmark owns the rights to characters in the show. Hallmark has not and does not intend to license them out for any toy production nor does it intend to put those characters on their greeting cards. Hallmark supports the program because "it wants to bring the best to children" (Taylor, personal communication, October, 1988). Again, a children program without any product tie-ins has a difficult time surviving in the 1980s. This program started production in 1987 and ceased at the end of 1988 (Taylor, personal communication, January, 1989). However, Hallmark may put the show on home video for children if the market is judged viable. Nevertheless, in this case, it is certain that the home video product will come out long after the program has gone off the air.

Therefore, any children's programs in animation or puppet form not meeting the criteria of standard programs

are subject to possible commercial intention and will be categorized in this study as program-length commercials.

2. Regular characters

Although it is reasonable to define regular characters on program-length commercials as those characters who appear on programs as well as in toy market, this criterion does not make provision for coding regular characters on standard programs. Therefore, a character appearing on a daily (for daily show) or weekly (for weekly show) basis and who has a name will be coded as a regular character for the selected program.

It is common for some characters to appear on a given program regularly but to serve only as background or crowd. Those characters are never the focus of the programs. Normally, program writers will not even bother to name such characters. For example, there are 99 smurfs living in the Smurf Village. Only a few (all with names) are at the center of each episode. The rest of the smurfs appear on the show regularly but very briefly and merely as "residents" of the village. In such cases, background characters will not be coded as regular characters.

3. Leading characters and secondary characters

In order to identify leading characters and secondary characters in a systematic way, two criteria are used in this study.

First, without question, both leading and secondary characters must be regular characters of the show.

Second, a leading character shall dominate the show while the secondary characters do not. This is defined by the length of appearance in a given episode. If each regular character is equally important in a given episode, each shall share approximately same length of time on screen as the focal point (i.e. not serving as a background). However, some regular characters will appear as the central interest on the screen for a short period of time, allowing more screen time for leading characters.

Therefore, for a given episode, those regular characters who do not have their fair share of appearance time are defined as secondary characters and those who have more than their share are defined as leading characters.

4. Number of times each leading character's name (or the characters' group name) is spoken during an episode.

This variable is defined to include more than names of individuals because both trade names, such as Thundercats, and product names (character's name in the case of this study), such as Lion-O, leader of the Thundercats, are important for product recognition. The total number of characters' group name mentions will be equally distributed to all regular characters in a given episode.

For example, there are 12 regular characters in a given episode of "Thundercats." The name "Lion-O" is spoken 20 times. The name "Thundercats" is spoken 24 times. Twenty-four divided by 12 equals two. Therefore, the final count for the name "Lion-O" would be $20+2=22$ times.

5. Number of close-up shots of each leading character during an episode.

Close-up shots here include extreme close-up, close-up and two-shot close-up. Shots are coded based on the definitions discussed previously. (Please see Appendix A, Shot Illustration, for further reference).

6. Length in seconds of close-up shots of each leading character during an episode.

7. Number of fighting or other violent acts involving each leading character during an episode.

Televised violence and its effects on children have been topics for debate and investigation for more than three decades (Liebert & Sprafkin, 1988). Therefore, criticism of frequent portrayal of violence is not unique to program-length commercials for children. However, concerned parties have charged that program-length commercials on children's television promote violence and the sale of war toys ("Strike two for," 1987). Thus, variables accounting for the number and lengths of violent acts were included in the study in order to explore if

program-length commercials indeed promote violence more than does standard programming.

Some of the earliest content analyses of violence on television were conducted by Smythe (1954) and by Head (1954). Independently, they conducted similar studies and generated similar results. Smythe found that violence was a prevalent theme on television shows. Head added that children's programs were the most violent among all programs analyzed.

However, the most detailed content analysis of television violence in the U. S. can be credited to Gerbner and his colleagues, known as the "Cultural Indicators" research team, at the University of Pennsylvania.

The team was formed in 1967 to conduct a study for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. The project continued under the support of the U.S. Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, the National Institute of Mental Health, the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy, the American Medical Association, the U.S. Administration on Aging and the National Science Foundation (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan & Signorielli, 1982). It published the "Violence Profile No. 1" in 1969 (Gerbner, 1969) and has continued to do so on a yearly basis. The latest profile, Number 15, was published in 1986 (Gerbner, et al. 1986). Basically, these profiles have reported

results similar to those Smythe and Head found in the 1950s.

For almost two decades, "The Violence Profile" has provided us with a general picture of television violence and references for legal decisions. In addition, this series of studies has contributed to the body of knowledge in mass communications. However, it also has invited much severe criticism. Basically, criticism has centered on its definition of violence and weighting used to construct the index (Blank, 1977a; Blank, 1977b; Newcomb, 1978; Hirsch, 1981; Gerbner et al., 1981; Gunter, 1985; Cumberbatch, Lee, Hardy & Jones, 1987; and Cumberbatch, Jones & Lee, 1988). Blank (1977a) summed it up: "an arbitrarily weighted set of arbitrarily chosen measures of aspects of violence on television, whose meaning is totally unclear" (p. 273).

In the violence profiles, violence was defined as "the overt expression of physical force against self or others, compelling action against one's will on pain of being hurt or killed, or actually hurting or killing" (Gerbner & Gross, 1978). However, under such a definition, the pillow fight between Smurfette and Brainy Smurf (in "Smurfs' Adventures") would be coded the same as Hordak (the evil force in "She-Ra: The Princess of Power") blowing up a whole planet, while most people would perceive these two acts rather differently.

The problem of defining violence in a sense reflects that a violent act is more than a unitary process. Thus, a multifaceted analysis may help us better understand the nature of violence (Fraczek, 1979).

In addition to needing a multi-faceted definition, Gunter (1985) felt that Gerbner's equivalent weightings on all forms of violence were inadequate. Gunter conducted a series of 12 experiments, attempting to get a better definition of and weighting system for televised violence.

Gunter stated that two broad definitional perspectives need to be identified. One relates to the violence perpetrator's behavior and the other relates to the consequences of violence from the victim's aspect. Therefore, five types of features were considered in his experiments: the type of program in which violence is portrayed; the types of characters (race, sex, occupation, etc.) involved in the violence; the physical form or weapons used in a violence portrayal; the degree of injury as the result of the violence; and the physical-environmental setting in which the violence takes place.

In each experiment, Gunter manipulated only one element, such as type of weapon, injury with/without perpetrator watching, degree of injury, etc., through program excerpts and asked his panel to rate the degree of violence after viewing excerpts in each experiment.

The results of all 12 experiments pointed the same direction. Violence is indeed multi-faceted and different incidents are perceived with different weightings in the viewer's mind. For example, in his weapon effect experiment, a rank order of portrayals of violence emerged on the basis of weapon used. The following is from the most violent to the least violent ranked by the panel of the experiment: slashing with a sword; knife-throwing; cannon fire at a fortress; shooting in street; clubbing with gun-butt; and fist fight (Gunter, 1985).

A more recent study by Cumberbatch, Lee, Hardy and Jones (1987) also tackled the multi-dimensional aspects of violence. In their large scale content analysis of violence on British television, violence incidents were coded from more than 15 dimensions. Some dimensions that were not included in Gunter's study were amount of blood shown, victim's emotional response, relation to previous violence, retaliation and witness response.

Both Gunter and Cumberbatch et al. have greatly contributed to the body of knowledge in demonstrating that violence is not an unitary process. In addition, Gunter's study indicated the need to view violence in an unequal weighting fashion. However, it did not establish how the weighting should be unequal. Further, it is difficult to try to apply Gunter's findings in coding a real television show.

In a television program, all elements in a violent act occur simultaneously, rather than singly as manipulated in an experimental situation, but coding problems occur in such a real situation. For example, in Gunter's weapon effect experiment, slashing with a sword was the most violent while a fist fight was the least and in one of the injury studies, death is rated more violent than no injury occurrence. However, it is unclear how cases such as slashing with a sword without injury or injury resulting from a fist fight would be coded and weighted.

In light of this, the weighting scheme is explored further as part of the process of formulating the violence variable in this study.

First, violence here is treated as a multi-dimensional variable. Some common dimensions derived from studies by Gunter (1985) and Cumberbatch et al. (1987) include: results of fighting, such as injury or death; number of perpetrators (group or individual fight); weapon used, such as knives or firearms; intention, such as attack, defending or rescuing; and demography, such as sex, race and age. Male attacking female may be viewed very differently from female attacking male (Gunter, 1985). So may attacks between old and young and between black and white. However, as mentioned previously, to discuss demography in the TV world is to touch upon

another controversial topic, role stereotyping. Therefore, the demographic dimension of violence has been deliberately avoided in this study.

A questionnaire containing 25 fighting situations varying in result, size, weapon and intention dimensions, was administered to 29 student subjects enrolled in a lower-division communications class at a major state university. Subjects were instructed to rate each situation on a scale of 1 to 10, with a 1 rating meaning "not very violent at all" and a 10 rating meaning "very, very violent."

The following summarizes each violent situation (V) based on its result, size, weapon and intention dimensions. Please refer to Appendix B for the complete description for each item. Note that A, B, E and F here denote different individuals, while C and D are different groups of people.

V1: A ties B to a tree; no injury occurs.

V2: A shoots B with a gun; B is injured.

V3: A threatens to hit B; no actual action occurs.

V4: A misses B when trying to hit B with a rock.

V5: A restrains B's motion with a beam gun; no injury occurs.

V6: E punches F while joking.

V7: C restrains D's motion with a beam gun; no injury occurs.

V8: C shoots D with firearms; injury occurs.

V9: A hits B with a rock; B is killed.

V10: C bombs D; some members of D are killed.

V11: C hits D with rocks; some members of D are killed.

V12: A hits B with a rock; B is injured.

V13: A misses B when trying to shoot B with a gun; no injury occurs.

V14: C threatens to shoot D with firearms; no actual action occurs.

V15: In a joking situation, F misses E on purpose when pretending to try to hit E with a rock.

V16: A threatens to shoot B with a gun; no actual action occurs.

V17: C ties D to trees; no injury occurs.

V18: C shoots D with firearms; some members of D are killed.

V19: A shoots B with a gun; B is killed.

V20: C threatens to hit D with rocks; no actual action occurs.

V21: C misses D when trying to shoot D with firearms.

V22: In a joking situation, F misses E on purpose when pretending to try to shoot E with a gun.

V23: C hits D with rocks; some members of D are injured.

V24: C bombs D; some members of D are injured but no death occurs.

V25: C misses D when trying to hit D with rocks.

The ratings of these 25 items were factor analyzed. Due to the very small sample size available for this analysis, results should be interpreted with caution. This analysis merely serves an exploratory function for any later studies of this kind. In fact, this perhaps is among the first attempts to explore empirically the definitional and weighting problems encountered in more than three decades of televised violence study.

Four factors emerged from the principal component analysis with varimax rotation. The first factor was identified as "Injury or Death," comprising acts by an individual or a group causing injury or death of the target subject(s). This factor accounts for 35% of the common variance.

The second factor, identified as "Unsuccessful Attempt or Threat," involves situations such as an act of violence by an individual or a group missing the target subject(s), with no injury occurring, or an individual or group threatening a physical act that will possibly injure or kill target subject(s) without actually performing the threatened action. It accounts for 30% of the common variance.

The third factor is identified as "Forcible Restraint." It involves an individual or a group using some power to restrain or prevent the movement of another individual or group. However, no injury or death occurs

in this act. This factor explains 26% of the common variance.

The fourth factor is identified as "Mock Violence." Some examples of this would be a pillow fight or characters teasing each other through friendly fisticuffs. This factor explains 10% of the common variance.

A mean score of ratings of items that loaded most heavily on Factor I (Injury/Death) was calculated to be 8.94. Ten violent situations loaded most heavily on Factor I: V2, V8, V9, V10, V11, V12, V18, V19, V23 and V24. Thus the mean score of ratings on items for Factor I is constructed as:

$$(V2+V8+V9+V10+V11+V12+V18+V19+V23+V24)/10.$$

The same procedure was used to compile mean scores of items loading heavily on Factors II, III or IV. Items for Factor II (Unsuccessful Attempt/Threat) had a mean of 5.14 with the calculation of $(V3+V4+V6+V13+V16+V20+V21+V25)/8$. The mean value for items loading most heavily on Factor III (Forcible Restraint) was 4.22 with the calculation of $(V1+V5+V7+V14+V17)/5$. Finally, items for Factor IV (Mock Violence) had a mean of 5.38 with the calculation of $(V15+V22)/2$. (Please see Appendix C for further reference).

Because items for Factor III had the lowest mean value, all means then were divided by the item mean of Factor III to obtain a relative weighting for each degree

of violent act. Therefore, in the final calculation, the violence variable is:

$((\text{Injury/Death}) * 2.12)) + ((\text{Unsuccessful Attempt/Threat}) * 1.22)) + ((\text{Forcible Restraint}) * 1)) + ((\text{Mock Violence}) * 1.28))$.

For example, if She-Ra killed a Hordak soldier in a 10-second violent act and tried to kill another one without success in that 10-second act, restrained Hordak from moving in another 10-second act and punched Bow, her very good friend, while they were joking around in a 3-second act, the number of violent acts in which She-Ra was involved would be coded as:

$(1 * 2.12) + (1 * 1.22) + (1 * 1) + (1 * 1.28)$ instead of an equal weighting of act of 4. The length then would be $(10 * 2.12) + (10 * 1.22) + (10 * 1) + (3 * 1.28)$ instead of 33 seconds.

Note that each act is defined based on videospace provided for the audience. During a fight, any cut-away from fighting ends that fighting act. When a shot cuts back to the fighting scene, it is coded as another new fighting act. For example, the TV screen shows that Hordak and She-Ra are engaging an intensive fight. The shot then cuts away to Swift-Wind, She-Ra's secret horse coming to help her. The shot then cuts back to the fight between Hordak and She-Ra. This example includes a fighting scene with two fighting acts. The reason to code fighting acts instead of scenes is that children in their

preoperational stage base their reasoning on perception rather than on logic. An act is a much more obvious perceptual cue than a scene. In addition, this procedure has been proven successful in the content analysis on television violence conducted by Cumberbatch et al. (1987). As for the leading characters' involvement in a fighting act, please refer to the next variable for the definition.

8. Length of each fighting act in which each leading character is involved during an episode.

Involvement here is defined as active participation. For example, Hordak shoots at She-Ra while She-Ra is running. She-Ra keeps running and never turns back to shoot at Hordak. In this case, Hordak is an active participant of this fighting act while She-Ra is the passive one. Therefore, this act is coded as one act of violence by Hordak but not by She-Ra. However, if She-Ra turns around and shoots Hordak back, it would be an act of violence by both Hordak and She-Ra. The moment She-Ra shoots back, the measurement of length of her violent act begins.

9. Whether or not each leading character in an episode possesses any superpower.

Superpower is defined as the ability to do things beyond that of normal animals or human beings. However, because all animals and creatures in cartoons are anthropomorphized, animals'/creatures' abilities such as

talking, cooking and walking upright will not be interpreted as superpowers in this study. Under this coding system, examples of animals' superpowers would be ponies that fly, that walk on top of rainbows, that have magic unicorns warming up the frozen universe, etc. For human beings such powers would be characters who breathe fire, summon the wind, are capable of unaided flight or run superhumanly fast.

10. Number of times each leading character demonstrates its superpower in an episode.

11. Length of such character's superpower demonstration during an episode.

Hypotheses

A set of measurements is made based on the proposed variables to test theoretical assumptions. The following is a flow chart, moving from assumptions to measurements and linked back to the charges of opponents of program-length commercials.

<u>Assumptions</u>	<u>Measurements</u>	<u>Charges</u>
Character Identification	Number of times the character's name is spoken in a given episode	Production is designed specifically to promote products
	Number of close-ups used on the character in a given episode	
Reinforcement of importance and special features of characters	No. of close-ups	
Physical power as selling point	No. of physical fights, length of each fight.	Content (character creation) is designed to promote product and violence.
Power and activities as selling points	Possession of superhuman attributes. No. and lengths of scenes demonstrating superhuman attributes.	Content (character creation) is designed specifically to promote products.
More regular characters, more toy characters to sell and "popularity" as selling point.	No. of regular characters in a coded program	

In light of the theoretical assumptions and operationalization, eight hypotheses emerge. The first three hypotheses test whether program-length commercials use

"brand image strategy" and visibility, identity and promise of the VIPS formula to promote their leading toy characters.

The first hypothesis tests whether names of leading characters in program-length commercials are spoken more often than the names of leading characters in standard programs.

The second hypothesis tests whether close-ups are used more frequently on leading characters in program-length commercials than on leading characters in standard programs.

The third hypothesis tests whether length of all close-ups on each leading character in program-length commercials is longer than on leading characters in standard programs.

If all three hypotheses mentioned above are confirmed, it suggests that production techniques of program-length commercials are indeed similar to the production techniques of standard commercials. This, in turn, provides evidence that the production of program-length commercials is designed specifically to promote products.

The next five hypotheses test whether program-length commercials use physical powers and ability, activities and popularity, children's liking for TV characters as well as obvious visual cues for preoperational children, as selling points to promote their leading toy characters.

They also include a test of whether program-length commercials are indeed promoting violence more than are standard programs.

The fourth hypothesis tests whether leading characters in program-length commercials are involved in violent acts more frequently than do leading characters in standard programs.

The fifth hypothesis tests whether lengths of all violent acts leading characters of program-length commercials are involved in are longer than that of leading characters in standard programs.

If hypotheses four and five are confirmed, it suggests that leading characters in program-length commercials are more violent than are leading characters in standard programs. This would provide grounds for the charge that program-length commercials promote violence more than do standard programs.

The sixth hypothesis tests whether more leading characters possess superpower in program-length commercials than in standard programs.

The seventh hypothesis tests whether leading characters with superpower in program-length commercials demonstrate their superpower more frequently than do leading characters with superpower in standard programs.

The eighth hypothesis tests whether leading characters with superpower in program-length commercials have

longer demonstration of their superpower than do leading characters with superpower in standard programs.

If hypotheses six, seven and eight are confirmed, it suggests that the character creation aspect of the content design in program-length commercials is manipulated specifically for product promotion. They emphasize the possession of superpower as the selling point to promote their leading toy characters.

This study also examines whether there are more regular characters in program-length commercials than in standard programs. This is derived from the rationale that "popularity," i.e. leading characters who have many friends, is one of the selling points used to promote toy characters to young children. In addition, more regular characters in each program means more toy characters to sell on stores. However, the number of regular characters found in the programs examined may not accurately represent the average number of regular characters in all children's programs, because the program sample was not selected randomly. Therefore, this proposition will be observed carefully but not entered as a formal hypothesis.

Program Selection

Although the programs could be selected randomly, a case study approach to program selection seems to be more

appropriate in this study. Almost all children's programming today has associated toys or products on the market. An attempt at random selection would be confounded because some programs are created as part of a toy promotion campaign while other toys sprang into existence after the program's characters proved popular among children. Therefore, selection of landmark examples of program-length commercials instead of selection through a random sampling method is reasonable and justified.

Four program-length commercials are selected for the study: "She-Ra: Princess of Power," "Smurfs' Adventures," "Thundercats," and "My Little Pony." The first three have been selected because they have been credited as the pioneers starting the trend toward program-length commercials in the 1980s. Recall that She-Ra (of the show of the same name) is the twin sister of He-Man, the primary character in the show that led to the final emergence of program-length commercials in the 1980s. "Smurfs' Adventures" has been credited as the first program-length commercial successfully broadcast through network systems. "Thundercats" are often quoted as the representation of the new development of program-length commercials in the 1980s--genetic recombination.

In addition, each show also is a prototype of a distinct category of children's television. "She-Ra" represents the universe of superhuman shows. "Smurfs"

represents shows centered on creatures, and "Thundercats" represents "superbeing" shows. Moreover, research has shown that there is very little variation among different children's programs within program type. They all tend toward the same story lines, types of characters and settings (Engelhardt, 1986). Thus, in the case of children's programming, choosing the pioneer program to represent each category should not create problems in representation.

However, there is another category in children's television--the universe of sweet animal. The pioneer list has not included much about animal shows. Nevertheless, "My Little Pony" is often quoted as a program-length animal show in Congressional hearings on children's television ("Telcomsubcom holds hearings," September 21, 1987). "My Little Pony" is popular in both television and toy markets. Though it does not share "pioneer" status with the other three programs, it is selected to be the animal type show in this study.

Four standard programs are selected as the parallel programs. "Popeye the Sailor" is selected as the comparable program for "She-Ra" because it has been a very popular standard program for children and because Popeye possesses vegetable-induced superhuman characteristics to rival She-Ra's powers.

"Teenwolf" is selected as the comparable program for "Thundercats," because its standard program nature and its characters share the "half-human and half-animal" characteristics of the "Thundercats."

"Casper, the Friendly Ghost" is selected as the comparable program for "Smurfs' Adventures," because its characters are "creatures" as are smurfs.

Finally, the old "Scooby Doo" episodes have been selected as the comparable program for "My Little Pony." "Scooby Doo" has been a very popular "animal" show. In addition, both "Scooby Doo" and "My Little Pony" center their stories around things happening among those animals and their friends.

After programs are selected, a random selection of the episodes of each show was executed. The literature indicates that children's programs in general are highly formula-based. Very little variance exists among episodes in a given program; therefore, a random selection of one episode shall represent the whole show (Clark & Blankenburg, 1972; Engelhardt, 1986; Gerbner & Gross, 1978). June 9, 1989, was randomly selected from Summer season of 1989 as the date for data collection. The June 9 episode of all but two selected programs will be used for content analysis. However, an additional five episodes before and after June 9, 1989, would be studied as well. Therefore, all 11 episodes of the selected programs airing during the

weeks of June 5 through 9 and June 12 through 16 will be used for data analysis. However, "Teenwolf" and "Smurfs' Adventures" are weekly shows, so only six additional episodes, three before and three after the week of June 9, will be used for data analysis.

The purpose for studying additional episodes is to further understand each program and to code the variable "regular characters."

The two programs that are not selected in this time frame are "Casper" and the old "Scooby Doo." Neither is currently on the air. Therefore, ten available episodes from each show have been collected through releases from the Home Video Department of Hanna-Barbera and from Worldvision Enterprises. "Casper" was produced by Harvey film but Worldvision now distributes the program through its Home Video Department.

All episodes were studied. However, one episode from old "Scooby Doo" and six episodes of "Casper" were randomly selected as the parallel episodes of the June 9 episodes of other programs for the study. Six episodes of "Casper" were selected because, first of all, "Casper" was not packaged in a 30-minute episode format and, secondly, "Smurfs' Adventures" is in a hour-long format. Removing the opening and commercial breaks, "Smurfs' Adventures" contains about 42 minutes of program. Removing the opening, "Casper" has about seven minutes of program per

episode. Therefore, six episodes of it were selected. However, in order not to confound the final calculation, values collected for all variables studied from these two programs will be divided by two. In other words, only 30 minutes worth of observations will be entered into the data analysis so that all programs analyzed in this study will be the same length.

Openings and commercial breaks for all programs were not included in the analysis. Please see Appendix D for characters and synopses of episodes coded for this study.

Coding Procedure

The investigator for this project was the only coder for the data analyzed. The preliminary coding practice started in Fall, 1988. The investigator (referred to as the first coder below) viewed all selected programs as well as many other children's cartoons on a regular basis. Some informal coding was done in order to test the practicality and workability of the coding scheme for variables suggested to be studied.

In spring, 1989, when the operationalization of variables studied was set, formal coding began. The first coder taped selected programs off the air so that the pace of coding could be controlled.

Actual data collection was done in Summer, 1989. All episodes mentioned in the program selection section were

taped off the air for studying and coding purposes. A remote control panel for the videocassette recorder, with a "pause" button, was used during the coding, allowing the tape to be paused at any moment. In addition, a digital stopwatch was used for measuring several variables, such as length of a close-up shot of a leading character. This stopwatch allowed calculation up to 1/100 of a second, allowing measurement of length as precisely as possible. Moreover, only one character and one variable or one type of variable if applicable (such as number of close-ups and length of each close-up) was measured at a time. Again, this procedure was used to reduce possible errors generated from coding more than one character and/or variable at a time.

Meanwhile, a second coder, a 55-year-old female, was brought in for a coder reliability check. The second coder was provided with an instruction sheet including a copy of the operationalization section of this chapter (please see Appendix E for the coder instruction sheet). After the second coder finishing reading the section, the first coder further explained every single measurement with the visual aid of a sample tape that was used in coding practice in the spring. The first and second coders then coded a segment of "Popeye" independently. A comparison and discussion of their coding followed the procedure. This was repeated three times by coding

segments of "Casper" and "She-Ra" and another segment of "Popeye."

Afterwards, the second coder was asked to code independently a total of 11 leading characters randomly selected from the eight programs for the coder reliability check. However, programs provided were half the actual program length. For example, the second coder only coded the first half of the "She-Ra," "Smurfs' Adventures," etc., episodes studied. The second coder kept a copy of the operationalization section of this manuscript for reference purposes.

The correlation between coding results of these two judges then was calculated and used as the measurement for coder reliability. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Coder Reliability between Two Coders
(N = 11)

Variable	Reliability
Number of times name spoken	.99
Number of close-ups	.99
Length of close-up	.99
Number of violence acts	.96
Length of violence act	.98
Possess superpower	1.00
Number of superpower demonstrations	.99
Length of superpower demonstration	.99

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Tests of Hypotheses

All hypotheses but one were tested through t-test. Hypothesis 6 was tested with the chi-square analysis. Results of each test are shown in tables along with interpretations.

The first hypothesis tests whether names of leading characters in program-length commercials are spoken more often than the names of leading characters in standard programs. As shown in Table 2, the t-test is significant at $p < .05$ level. Thus, the first hypothesis is supported. It indicates that the sample means reflect different population means and that names of leading characters in program-length commercials are spoken more frequently than names of leading characters in standard programs.

The second hypothesis tests whether close-ups are used more frequently on leading characters in program-length commercials than on leading characters in standard programs. As shown in Table 3, the t-test is significant at $p < .05$ level. Therefore, the second hypothesis is supported.

The third hypothesis tests whether length of all close-ups on each leading character in program-length

Table 2
Mean Frequency of Name Use
By Program Type

	Standard Program	Program-Length Commercial
Mean	8.61	17.22
Standard Deviation	8.21	14.39
Number of Leading Characters	18	18
t= 2.2 (27 df.), p < .05		

Table 3
Mean Frequency of Close-Up Use
By Program Type

	Standard Program	Program-Length Commercial
Mean	6.28	12.44
Standard Deviation	6.82	7.61
Number of Leading Characters	18	18
t= 2.56 (33 df.), p < .05		

commercials is longer than on leading characters in standard programs. As shown in Table 4, again the t-test is significant at $p < .05$ level. The third hypothesis, similar to hypothesis 2 except testing the length of close-up shots, is supported.

The fourth hypothesis tests whether leading characters in program-length commercials are involved in violent acts more frequently than do leading characters in standard programs. As shown in Table 5, there is no significant difference between these two groups. The sample means do not reflect different population means. Hypothesis 4 finds no support in the data. However, the group means do fall in the predicted direction. Not all the leading characters from both type of programs involve in violent acts. Therefore, a lot of "0" acts from both program types in the data weakened this test rather severely.

The fifth hypothesis tests whether lengths of all violent acts leading characters of program-length commercials are involved in are longer than that of leading characters in standard programs. As shown in Table 6, there is no significant difference between this two groups. Hypothesis 5, similar to hypothesis 4 except measuring length, is not supported, although the group means do fall in the pattern predicted. Again, many "0" lengths of violent acts of leading characters from both types of programs have severely weakened this test.

Table 4
Mean Length of Close-Up Use
By Program Type

	Standard Program	Program-Length Commercial
Mean	18.99	40.92
Standard Deviation	20.13	29.80
Number of Leading Characters	18	18
t= 2.59 (29 df.), p < .05		

Table 5
Mean Frequency of Violence Act Involved
By Program Type

	Standard Program	Program-Length Commercial
Mean	2.65	3.66
Standard Deviation	7.20	4.27
Number of Leading Characters	18	18

$t = .52$ (28 df.), not significant at .05 level

Table 6
Mean Length of Violence Act Involved
By Program Type

	Standard Program	Program-Length Commercial
Mean	18.41	26.75
Standard Deviation	50.84	32.75
Number of Leading Characters	18	18
t= .59 (28 df.), not significant at .05 level		

The sixth hypothesis tests whether more leading characters possess superpower in program-length commercials than in standard programs. As shown in Table 7, the probability of such a $X^2 = 4.000$ to occur under the term of null hypothesis is less than .05. Therefore, there is a significant difference between these two groups. Hypothesis 6 is supported. There are more leading characters with superpower in program-length commercials than in standard programs.

The seventh hypothesis tests whether leading characters with superpower in program-length commercials demonstrate their superpower more frequently than do leading characters with superpower in standard programs. As shown in Table 8, there is no significant difference between these two groups. Hypothesis 7 finds no support in these data. In addition, the means fall in the opposite direction of the predicted pattern. The average of number of superpower demonstrations is lower for leading characters in program-length commercials than in standard programs, although the difference is not statistically significant. In fact, because the effect size for this test is so small, the finding of no significant difference is expected.

The eighth hypothesis tests whether leading characters with superpower in program-length commercials have longer demonstration of their superpower than do leading

Table 7
Possessing Superpower or Not
By Program Type

	Standard Program	Program-Length Commercial
Yes	6	12
No	12	6
Number of Leading Characters	18	18

$\chi^2=4.00$ (1 df.), $p < .05$

Table 8
Mean Frequency of Superpower Use
By Program Type

	Standard Program	Program-Length Commercial
Mean	6.83	5.17
Standard Deviation	3.76	5.97
Number of Leading Characters	6	12
t= -.72 (14 df.), not significant at .05 level		

characters with superpower in standard programs. As shown in Table 9, hypothesis 8, similar to hypothesis 7 except measuring length of superpower demonstration, is not supported. Again, as the problem for hypothesis 7, the small sample size weakened the power for this test rather severely. However, the group means do fall in the predicted pattern. Leading characters with superpower have longer demonstrations of such power in program-length commercials than characters in standard programs, but the difference is not statistically significant.

Finally, the question whether there are more regular characters in program-length commercials than in standard programs was examined. As shown in Table 10, the t-test is significant at less than .05 level. There are significantly more regular characters in program-length commercials than in standard programs, based upon data collected for this study.

Table 9
Mean Length of Superpower Demonstration
By Program Type

	Standard Program	Program-Length Commercial
Mean	28.35	35.14
Standard Deviation	18.02	44.09
Number of Leading Characters	6	12
t= .46 (16 df.), not significant at .05 level		

Table 10
Mean Frequency of Regular Characters
By Program Type

	Standard Program	Program-Length Commercial
Mean	5.5	16.25
Standard Deviation	2.65	6.55
Number of Programs	4	4
t=3.04 (4 df.), p < .05		

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Discussion of Research Findings

Some researchers and critics have suggested that program-length commercials on children's television utilize commercial techniques in program production and character creation, to attract child audiences. The findings from the present study provide support for this conclusion.

Based on the findings that leading characters' names are mentioned more frequently and that they are shown through close-ups more often and for longer times than their counterparts in standard children's programming, program-length commercials do share some attributes with television commercials in their production techniques.

Program-length commercials use the "closing recap of message" technique, one of the essential elements of television commercial production, to promote names of products that are on sale in the toy market by mentioning characters' names repeatedly throughout the whole episode, while this phenomenon was not observed in standard children's programming in this study. In addition, the lengths and number of close-up shots of leading characters demonstrate an unusual production technique for programs but fairly common production technique for commercials.

It follows common practice of commercial production emphasizing high product visibility, closing recap of product and visual emphasis of product by using many, longer close-ups as often as possible without impairing the commercial.

Therefore, in terms of the charge that the production of program-length commercials is designed specifically to promote products (toy characters), this study provides strong support for such a conclusion.

The finding that program-length commercials have far more regular characters than standard programs, and that more leading characters possess superpower in program-length commercials than in standard programs, sustains some aspects of the criticism that content of program-length commercials (especially, in terms of character creation) is designed specifically to promote products.

In terms of the numbers of regular characters, the findings support intuition that more regular characters in a program provide more opportunities for producing toy characters for toy stores. There also is support for the theoretical assumption that program-length commercials build "popularity," one of the attributes of TV characters that attract children, in their character creation, so as to use "popularity" as one of the selling points for their toy characters. However, because it is possible that this

observation is partly a result of program selection, it needs to be interpreted with caution.

Findings also support the imaginative play assumption. When preoperational children are exposed to and later become familiar with a certain number of characters in a given program, they would like to have a similar number (as close to the number of characters in the program as possible) of toy characters in their imaginative play. Therefore, the more regular characters program-length commercials have, the more characters can be manufactured and sold. The finding that program-length commercials have more regular characters provides further support for the conclusion that some facets of program-length commercials' content are designed to further product promotion.

However, the findings on characters' superpower are perhaps the most puzzling of the lot. First, program-length commercials have significantly more leading characters possessing superpower than do standard programs. This supports the theoretical assumption that program-length commercials build "physical power and activities" into their characters as selling points to attract preoperational children who, in general, are drawn to TV characters with superhuman capabilities. Thus, we find support for the criticism that this aspect of content of program-length commercials is designed around product selling.

However, this study found no significant differences between program-length commercials and standard programs in numbers and lengths of leading characters' superpower demonstrations. Because of the small effect size, the finding of nonsignificance in this case was not a surprise.

In addition, the superhuman attribute is often used as a program appeal to attract a child audience in various types of programming. Therefore, it is logical to find that the superhuman attribute was used in an equal manner in programs analyzed in this study, regardless of program type. In summary, the theoretical assumption, that leading characters with superpowers demonstrate superhuman attributes more frequently and for longer periods of time than do characters in standard programs, finds no support in these data. In other words, the results indicate that at least some aspects of program-length commercials' content are not designed specifically to promote products.

Finally, the finding that there are no differences in numbers of violent acts and lengths of those acts between the two types of program refutes the criticism that program-length commercials promote violence more than do standard programs.

Mediated violence has been criticized for all program types across all media. Based on a recent study, a person's secondary experience of violence (through media

consumption) is a daily phenomenon. The average person's secondary experiences of crime and violence are more than 7,000 acts annually in the United States , while in reality the estimates indicate that most of us can enjoy at least a few decades of violence-free existence (Cumberbatch, Jones & Lee, 1988).

In addition, the Violence Profiles that have documented televised violence since 1967 have shown that children's cartoons continued to be the most violent of all television programming (Gerbner et al., 1978). Such findings came long before the rebirth of program-length commercials on children's television. Therefore, violence is not a unique attribute for program-length commercials. Thus, it is logical and theoretically reasonable to find that both standard programs and program-length commercials on children's television portray violence similarly in terms of number of acts, length and severity.

Finally, the findings of this study should be interpreted with caution. The purpose of this study was to take some initial steps toward the identification of differences between program-length commercials and standard programs and to use the findings as building blocks for further study. It was not intended that these findings be generalized to programs not analyzed in this study. As discussed previously in the methodology section, the nature of this study called for a nonrandom selection of

programming. Therefore, this study does not permit generalization, as would a study based upon a probability sample.

Implications for Policy Making

The conservative conclusions drawn from these data are that program-length commercials are indeed commercial-oriented in their production design and that some aspects of content are designed around product promotion while others are not. In addition, no evidence was found to support the charge that program-length commercials' content promotes violence more than does regular children's programming.

Therefore, if we take the position held by Action for Children's Television (ACT), that program-length commercials comprise material designed specifically for production promotion, this study provides support for such a charge. If we take the stands of both the National Association of Better Broadcasting (NABB) and ACT, criticizing program-length commercials for being unfair to children because their commercial nature, again this study lends support to such criticism. However, these findings do not support the charge by the National Coalition on TV Violence that program-length commercials promote violence more than do regular programs.

In light of this conclusion, Congress should be cautious in making rules banning or regulating program-length commercials on children's television. If rules are made on the basis of violence promotion, parties opposing the ruling could reasonably propose applying the same rules to regular children's programs because they seem to be equally violent. Therefore, "violence promotion" may not be used as justification for regulation of program-length commercials, though it may justify regulating children's programming in general.

Findings of this study provide somewhat weak grounds for regulating program-length commercials because of their content design. However, there is stronger evidence in these data to support rulings on the basis of their commercial production techniques. From the production viewpoint, the program-length commercial is a poorly disguised commercial, a product promotion television device carrying the flag of programming. Therefore, when it is so similar to a commercial in many fundamental ways, the program-length commercial should be identified as what it is, a commercial the length of an average program. Of course, more study is needed to confirm this proposition.

Nevertheless, this identification has two important legal implications. First of all, when a program-length commercial is viewed as a commercial, rulings limiting the numbers of and time devoted to commercials on children's

television logically could be applied to regulate program-length commercials. Thus, it may shed light on the ongoing debate regarding S.707 and S.1215 in the Senate.

Recall that S.707 proposed to limit the amount of advertising in children's programming and to enforce broadcasters' responsibility to serve children's educational and informational needs, while S.1205 goes farther. It would require broadcasters to provide programming designed "specifically" for children. In addition, if passed the measure would ban program-length commercials and put tighter limits on advertising during weekends than would S.707.

One of the major differences between these bills is that one deals with commercials in general, while the other focuses on program-length commercials. If enough studies provide evidence that the program-length commercial is indeed a commercial, it does not matter which bill is passed in the Senate because either one would be able to regulate the program-length commercial.

Thus, rather than continuing debate in the Senate to decide which measure should be passed and how it should be revised so the president will not veto it this time, the Senate may find it useful to look at the whole controversy from the viewpoint of the "nature" issue. It might bring a new light to the ongoing legal debate, if the Senate would first take a close look and decide exactly what a

program-length commercial is. This leads to the second legal implication of this study.

If the program-length commercial is indeed commercial in its nature, no new rulings would be needed. The FCC's clear separation principle, established in 1974, should be sufficient to eliminate program-length commercials on children's television.

As discussed previously, children in the preoperational cognitive development stage have difficulty in recognizing and defending themselves against the persuasive technique of commercials. In order to prevent advertising from taking unfair advantage of young children, the FCC established the clear separation principle for children's television in 1974. It required broadcasters to provide a clear separation device between programming and commercials, prohibited host-selling and banned program-length commercials. After the 1983 deregulation order, the ban on program-length commercials was lifted, while the requirement of separation device and restriction of host-selling still are in effect.

This clearly reflects that the Commission agrees with the well-established understanding that young children cannot discriminate between programming and commercials conceptually and that they need special protection, such as separation devices and no host-selling. It is fortunate that the FCC did not rescind these two guidelines in

1983 and that young children are getting special protection from commercial persuasion. However, it is extremely illogical to expect the same audiences that need clear separation and see no host-selling to defend themselves against the product promotion of program-length commercials.

From a production viewpoint, the program-length commercial blends commercial messages in a program format, an obvious violation of the spirit of the clear separation requirement. In addition, the program-length commercial uses program characters as the carriers for product promotion, an ultimate form of host-selling though it perhaps is a clever creation from a marketing perspective. Such a practice clearly does not consider children's best interest. In fact, if we accept the NABB's and the ACT's propositions, it is a practice that takes unfair advantage of young children and should be regulated, based on the clear separation principle to which the FCC still adheres.

If policy-makers can take a close look at the nature of the program-length commercial, they may conclude that the issue can be resolved without the need for new rules or regulations. Existing rules governing "clear separation" and "host selling," for example, could be applied to program-length commercials "as is."

Thus, while this study suggests some initial steps toward the discovery of the nuances of this issue, more

studies are needed to define more fully the nature of program-length commercials.

Directions for Future Research

Sample sizes must be increased to make studies of this type more valuable. Multiple programs within each category, thus more leading characters for study, should be studied in the future. While this will increase statistical power of the analyses, it also would allow cross-program category comparison and some other interesting findings might possibly emerge.

One dilemma in the research design of this study was whether to combine program categories for comparison. When doing a comparison between program-length commercials and standard programs, it makes sense to include all four program categories under each type so as to get the most representative picture possible. However, each program category possesses unique attributes, though the programs are similar in many ways. For instance, it is not unusual to assume and actually to find more violent acts and superpower demonstrations in "superhuman" shows than in "creature" shows. Therefore, for some variables measured, there is great within-group variation.

That, of course, weakened our ability to obtain significance in our t-testing. However, if we compare each variable between program-length commercials and standard

programs group by group, within-group variance would be reduced. To facilitate this, more observations, characters and programs must be studied at a given time.

In addition to increasing sample size, the dimension of production variables may be expanded in future studies. Other than names spoken and close-ups, variables such as length of appearance of characters and number of and length of formal cues used for leading characters could be included, with formal cues referring to production techniques, in addition to shots, used to emphasize the focal character on screen. The finding that significant production differences exist between program-length commercials and standard programs provides fundamental grounds for further study along this line.

Another implication is the need for empirical studies based on research findings on this study. As mentioned previously, studies of the nature of program-length commercial design and content should be followed by effects studies.

Results of this study indicate there is a difference between these two program types in their production technique. The next step is to find out how those differences affect audience members differently in aspects such as liking for a TV character, desire to own a toy character and the relation between playing behaviors and character application.

Conclusion

Although this study is not the complete and rigorous investigation needed to provide clearly supported conclusions and easy solutions, it gives some indication of how program-length commercials and standard programs are different in their nature. The topic deserves much more study, especially in light of the recent development of the 1989 children's television bills now moving through a legislative fast track. This study provides preliminary findings intended to help clear some of the confusion surrounding the nature issue, to help direct future studies to further clarify the nature issue and to serve as building blocks for further investigation on the effect issue.

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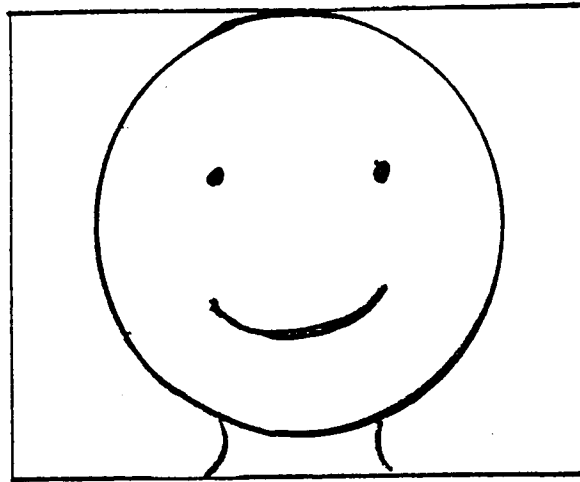
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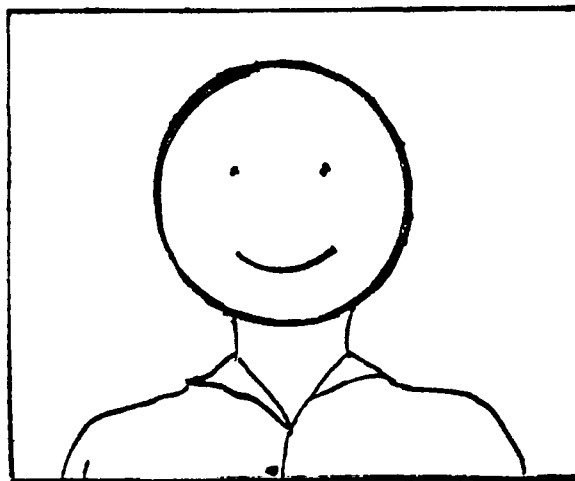
APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
SHOT ILLUSTRATION

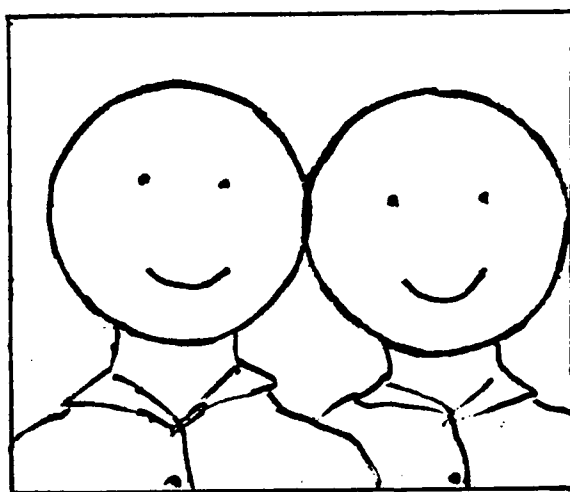
SHOT ILLUSTRATION



Extreme Close-Up



Close-Up



Two-Shot Close-Up

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE ON VIOLENCE

Please rate the following descriptions of violent acts on a scale of 1 to 10. For this scale, a 1 rating means "not very violent at all" and a 10 rating means "very, very violent." Please use any number from 1 to 10 as you think appropriate for the given situation.

_____ Person A ties person B to a tree, preventing B from running away. However, no injury occurs.

_____ Person A shoots person B with a gun. B is injured.

_____ Person A threatens to hit person B with a rock if B does not comply with A. B does what A says. In the end, A never throws the rock and no injury occurs.

_____ Person A tries to hit person B with a rock, but A misses B. B is not injured.

_____ Person A shoots a secretly developed beam gun that freezes a person's motion at person B, preventing B from running away. However, no injury occurs in the incident.

_____ Person E pokes fun at person F. In retaliation, F gives E a friendly punch in the shoulder and says, "Knock it off!"

_____ Group C shoots a secretly developed beam gun that freezes persons' motion at group D, preventing D from running away. However, no injury occurs in the incident.

_____ Group C shoots group D with firearms. Some members of D are injured.

_____ Person A hits person B with a rock. B is killed.

_____ Group C bombs group D. Some members of D are killed.

_____ Group C hits group D with rocks. Some members of D are killed.

_____ Person A hits person B with a rock. B is injured.

- _____ Person A tries to shoot person B with a gun, but A misses B. B is not injured.
- _____ Group C threatens to shoot group D with firearms if D does not comply with C. D does what C says. In the end, C never shoots and no injury occurs.
- _____ Person E pokes fun at person F. In retaliation, F throws a rock at E but misses it on purpose just to tease E back.
- _____ Person A threatens to shoot person B with a gun if B does not comply with A. B does what A says. In the end, A never shoots and no injury occurs.
- _____ Group C ties group D to trees, preventing D from running away. However, no injury occurs in the incident.
- _____ Group C shoots group D with firearms. Some members of D are killed.
- _____ Person A shoots person B with a gun. B is killed.
- _____ Group C threatens to hit group D with rocks if D does not comply with C. D does what C says. In the end, C never throws the rocks and no injury occurs.
- _____ Group C tries to shoot group D with firearms, but C misses D. Nobody is injured.
- _____ Person E pokes fun at person F. In retaliation, F fires a gun-shot toward E but misses it on purpose just to tease E back.
- _____ Group C hits group D with rocks. Some members of D are injured.
- _____ Group C bombs group D. Some members of D are injured but no death occurs.
- _____ Group C tries to hit group D with rocks, but C misses D. Nobody is injured.

APPENDIX C
FACTOR LOADINGS

Factor Loadings for 25-Item Violence Scale

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
1	.13	.05	.90	-.09
2	.85	.36	-.10	-.07
3	.03	.63	.50	-.00
4	.06	.75	-.00	-.24
5	.12	.15	.90	.06
6	.05	.68	-.01	.36
7	.10	.17	.90	.06
8	.48	.47	.18	.05
9	.80	.21	-.13	-.22
10	.82	-.02	.27	.14
11	.75	-.10	.12	.22
12	.74	.37	.22	-.14
13	.31	.82	.22	.17
14	.02	.48	.68	.32
15	.11	.06	.44	.77
16	.28	.81	.25	.01
17	.16	.08	.87	-.05
18	.85	.25	.13	.17
19	.81	.12	.22	.25
20	.19	.75	.25	-.30
21	.49	.63	-.14	.20
22	.21	-.02	-.19	.76
23	.58	.55	-.02	.01
24	.78	.38	.17	.19
25	.36	.64	.37	.06

APPENDIX D
CHARACTERS AND SYNOPSES

CHARACTERS AND SYNOPSES

For episodes studied, a total of 65 regular characters appeared on program-length commercials and 22 on standard programs.

"She-Ra: The Princess of Power" had eight regular characters with She-Ra, General Sunder and Hordak as leading characters.

She-Ra is He-Man's twin sister and the defender of the Crystal Castle. She has a flying horse, Spirit, also known as Swift Wind, who has flown She-Ra to countless battles with Hordak. Hordak is the leader of the evil forces whose goal is to take over the Crystal Castle. Mantenna, one of Hordak's followers, has gone to many battles with Hordak against She-Ra. Hordak also has a large group of robot soldiers who fight battles for him. On the other hand, She-Ra does not have troops; however, she has many friends. Madam is a good witch who gives She-Ra tips if the situation calls for it. Bow is a brave and skillful fighter. General Sunder used to work for Hordak but decided to leave the evil forces to become a farmer. However, he is a well-trained soldier. He comes to help She-Ra defend against Hordak whenever necessary. Glimmer has wings like a butterfly whenever she needs to fly. Her mother, Queen Anjellah, possesses the same power. They both help She-Ra in trying to defeat the evil forces.

In the episode coded, Hordak, as usual, attacked the Crystal Castle and captured many civilians. Sunder used to be a commander under Hordak so he could accurately predict Hordak's approach in his second attack. With this tip, She-Ra, Sunder and the rest of their friends, through a series of fights and chases, successfully defended the Crystal Castle and rescue all civilians captured by Hordak. Hordak escaped and swore to return.

"Thundercats" had 21 regular characters with Lion-O, WillieCat, Cheetara, Mummra and Mummat as leading characters.

On the planet "Thundera," there are many Thundercats who lived in the Catslair. Lion-O is the Lord of the Thundercats. Panthro, Cheetara and Tygro are the patrol team for the Thundercats. WillieCat and WillieKid are the two Thunderkittens who also help out with the safety of all Thundercats. There are many other Thundercats such as Tygra, Lynx-O and Snarf who help Lion-O with his missions, too. Thundercats also have a group of friends such as Snowman, Snowmeow, Berbilbird, Berbilbell, Tuska Warrior and Hatchetman, who all help the Thundercats fight the evil forces. The leader of the evil forces here is Mummra, a mummy with superpower. Mummra can turn from a mummy to an extremely strong and powerful man whenever he calls for his superpower. Mummat is Mummra's pet, who carries out much of Mummra's evil business for him. Of

course, Mummra has a group of followers, too, such as Slythe, Cheela, Ravage and Luna.

In the episode coded, Mummra captured many Thundercats and put them in the Third Earth. Through Lion-O's sight beyond sight, he was able to track them down. With the help of the patrol team, Snarf, the Thunderkittens and all Thundercats' friends, Lion-O was able to defeat Mummra and free all Thundercats captured by Mummra. Mummra reverted to his mummy mode, shouting that his power will never die and swearing to destroy the Thundercats one day.

"Smurfs' Adventures" had 22 regular characters with Vanity, Gargamel, Grandpa Smurf and Nanny Smurf as leading characters.

Smurfs are very small, bluish creatures. They all live happily together in their mushroom houses in the Smurf Village. Among them, Grandpa Smurf and Papa Smurf are the two elders and have assumed the leadership of the village. Papa Smurf is especially intelligent and always help Smurfs solve their problems. Grandpa Smurf is sometimes forgetful. Both of them have some sort of magic books that help them carry out magic for fun or for defending the village against Gargamel, the mean human being whose life goal is to catch Smurfs and eat them.

Smurfs are supposed to be long-lived, provided they do not get eaten. For example, Nanny Smurf is more than 500 years old. Nanny is very brave and does not live by

values that most "people" associate with the elderly. In order to rescue her friends, Nanny could kill a monster without even blinking her eyes. On the contrary, Vanity is a more or less self-centered character. He only pays attention to his appearance and, for the most part, ignores the importance of team work. He always wears a flower on his hat and walks around with a mirror so that he can admire himself constantly.

There are many more Smurfs in the village. For the most part, each Smurf performs a function to serve the village. For example, Painter Smurf does the painting for everybody; Tailor Smurf is in charge of clothing; Handy Smurf and Hefty Smurf fix things; Clumsy Smurf is careless, keeping Handy and Hefty busy; Grouchy Smurf has a bad temper while Jokey Smurf is very good at jokes that sometimes make even Grouchy laugh. Brainy Smurf is the smart one who gives tips to people, but Brainy shows off too often, getting on Smurfette's nerves.

For a long time, Smurfette was the only female in the village. Thus, in a sense, she held a very special status. However, gradually, more and more new female Smurfs came to the village. For example, Susette, a relative newcomer, is a small version of Smurfette. After disappearing in a castle for 500 years, the return of Nanny Smurf also took away some of the special feelings Smurfette had enjoyed for some years.

In the coded episode, Gargamel tried to come to the village to catch Smurfs as usual. Handy happened to invent a "Smurfmatic picture machine" with a bright spotlight. With Painter's help, Handy used the light to confuse Gargamel. In the end, Gargamel did not catch any Smurfs. Meanwhile, ignoring Papa Smurf's advice, Vanity got into trouble by going into a room with magic mirrors, but Papa Smurf saved Vanity at the crucial moment with his magic. In addition, Grandpa Smurf accidentally wandered into the evil castle and found out Nanny Smurf was still alive. However, they were both trapped inside the castle. With all Smurfs' help, finally they all escaped. However, Nanny's friend, Smoogle, was still inside the castle. Nanny singlehandedly rescued Smoogle. In the end, everybody returned to the Smurf Village safely.

"My Little Pony" had 14 regular characters with Meagan, Moochick, Spike, Fizzy, Wind Whistler and Gusty as leading characters.

There are a group of ponies who live in the beautiful rainbow-colored Pony Land. They recognize the importance of teamwork and friendship. They always work with each other, their human friends, Meagan, Molly and Danny, and their fire-breathing friend, Spike, in case of emergency in Pony Land. Moochick is a knowledgeable elder who often gives advice for ponies to solve problems or crises in Pony Land.

Most ponies possess some sort of magic that helps them solve their problems. Fizzy is a blue unicorn who can release big bubbles from her horn to trap attackers. Wind Whistler is a light blue pony with wings that make her a fast flying horse. Gusty is a white unicorn with much knowledge. She often explains how physics works to other ponies. Other ponies always helping their friends out with their super ability include Galaxy, Gingerbread, Magic Star, Shaddy, Sundance and Baby Ribbs. Baby Ribbs is a baby pony still learning to be a superpony.

In the episode coded, one pony accidentally stepped on a wishing coin while she was complaining about the rainy weather of that day. Suddenly, Pony Land started to dry out and many ponies (especially sea ponies) were dying. With the help of Moochick, all ponies (who were not sick yet) divided into three teams, led by Meagan, Molly, Danny and Spike, to look for a solution. After going through a series of ordeals, such as fighting with a tree monster, passing through a fire pond and going into a collapsing tunnel, the ponies finally reversed the dry curse on Pony Land.

"Popeye" had four regular characters with Popeye, Olive and Bluto as leading characters.

Popeye is a skinny sailor who gets his superpower by eating spinach. Bluto is a mean character who is big and strong. Olive is supposed to be the most beautiful woman

in the whole world. Popeye and Bluto fight for her regularly. Wimpy is the fourth character appearing whenever a story line calls for it. He plays whatever role needed in a given story. Basically, he is a harmless character not involved in any fighting.

In the first segment of the episode coded, Bluto came across Olive and was instantly attracted by her while she was taking a walk with Popeye in a park. Bluto tried to do anything possible to get Olive. After a series of fights, chases and cans of spinach, Popeye defeated Bluto and was able to continue his walk with Olive.

In the second segment, Popeye and Bluto both invited Olive to go skiing with them. Olive decided to go with Popeye. This made Bluto mad and he started to hit Popeye. Popeye fought back. As usual, after chasing, hitting and swallowing spinach, Popeye finally got Bluto out of his way and was able to enjoy skiing with Olive.

In the third segment, Popeye and Olive worked for a knife shop. Prisoner Bluto escape while Wimpy, the policeman, was slobbering over a hamburger. Bluto then went into the knife shop to steal some knives. Popeye and Bluto got into a fight. As expected, in the end Popeye won and Bluto was back in jail.

Finally, Popeye and Olive were in a rodeo. Olive accidentally went into the field. After wrestling with some wild horses, Popeye rescued Olive.

"Teenwolf" had nine regular characters with Scott (Teenwolf), Style, Boof, Grandpa Wolf, Grandma Wolf, Harold (father wolf) and Loobie as leading characters.

In the town Wolverton, there lives a nice family of werewolves. They turn to wolves and possess incredible power when it is full moon and when they are under stress. However, Grandpa Wolf and Grandma Wolf have their wolf ears stick out even in normal situations. Grandma Wolf knows many wolf tricks that come in handy whenever things get out of hand. For example, she added wolf powder to water and turned it into a big bubble in which to trap the bad guys. They have a son, Harold, and two grandchildren, Scott and Loobie.

Scott sometimes turns into a wolf when he does not want to. He is attending Wolverton High School and has always been afraid that his friends may one day know his secret. So far none of his friends know except Style and Boof, his best friends. They do things together and share secrets with one another. But they do not like to do things with Nick and Pam, the two snobs in their high school who look down upon Scott, Style, Boof and almost everybody else in school. However, they all live in the same town and go to the same school. Chances are they always run into each other in whatever event is going on in town or at school.

In the coded episode, Scott, Style and Boof decided to go to the big city next to Wolverton for a fun Saturday night. Because the moon was full, Scott turned into a wolf on the way to the city. However, when they arrived they saw many "Punks" walking around with strange costumes and hair styles. Half man and half wolf, suddenly Scott blended right in without looking weird. They had a good time though it was the night of the full moon.

"Casper, the Friendly Ghost" had three regular characters with Casper and his friend as leading characters. "His friend" here is a composite character of all the different friends he meets in different segments. "His friend" is a regular part and primary thread for every single story in "Casper, the Friendly Ghost." However, in every segment, Casper has a different friend. Based on the criterion defined previously, none of the friends could qualify as a leading character in an hour-long episode. However, when compiling them into a single role, "his friend," the composite character qualifies as a leading character in the coded episode. This seemed to be logical because, after all, meeting "his friend" is the theme of every story for "Casper, the Friendly Ghost."

Casper is a friendly ghost. He does not want to scare people away; he likes to be friends with them. Because of his philosophy, he gets thrown out by the ghost leader very often. However, whenever he gets kicked out

he always ends up finding a good friend and has a wonderful time with him or her.

In the first segment of the coded episode, Casper was thrown out by the ghost leader. He was wandering in the street and met Pal, a stray dog. They became good friends and even rescued all the dogs caught by the dog catcher.

In the second segment, Casper again was kicked out by the leader. He walked around a port and met Billy. Later, Billy and his brother sailed out to sea and were swallowed by a whale. Fortunately, Casper came to the rescue and everybody was safe in the end.

In the third segment, Casper was kicked out again. This time he became good friend with Skunky, a skunk. Later, a wolf tried to catch Skunky and the rest of his friends, but all were saved by Casper.

In the fourth segment, as usual, Casper was sad that no ghost understood his philosophy. As he wandered into the zoo, he met Alfred, a baby elephant. Casper let Alfred out of his cage and they had fun together. However, the mother elephant woke up and could not find Alfred and was very upset. The zoo guards thought the mother elephant had gone crazy and were ready to shoot her. Casper came back in time to rescue her.

In the fifth segment, Casper met Junior, a young piggy. They went fishing and had a wonderful time together. Later, a wolf came to attack Junior's family.

Right before the wolf roasted Junior and his parents, Casper came to save them all.

In the last segment, Casper again was upset because all the other ghosts laughed at his Christmas wish: to have a friend. He wandered alone on Christmas eve and found out that Billy, whose family was poor, was waiting for gifts from Santa. Casper then dressed up like Santa and went to Billy. Casper also made many presents for Billy. They had a wonderful Christmas together.

"Scooby Doo" had six regular characters and all of them qualified as leading characters. They are Scooby Doo, Scrappy Doo, Shaggy, Freddy, Velma and Daphne.

Scooby Doo is a Great Dane who is not particularly bright nor brave. His nephew, Scrappy Doo, is not particularly bright either but is too young to be afraid of anything. Together, they help their friends solve many mysteries in their lives. Among their friends, Shaggy perhaps is the one closest to them.

Shaggy and Scooby Doo have many things in common. Whenever anything scary occurs, Shaggy and Scooby Doo are the first to run. Whenever there is a sign of food, they are the first two to go after it. Freddy is very different from Shaggy. He has the logic of a detective and is persistent in finding the solution to any mystery. He is much braver than Shaggy. Velma is very similar to Freddy in logic and persistency. Daphne is portrayed as a better

looking girl than is Velma. She does not seem to be as bright as Velma but she is at a higher level than Shaggy and Scooby Doo. Together, they form a good team that solves different mysteries they encounter regularly.

In the episode coded, suddenly the famous comic strip hero, Scarab, came to life. However, he did not come to bring peace to the world as he did in the comic strip. Instead, he robbed the bank and museum. With Freddy and Velma's detective brains, fearless Scrappy Doo and the cooperation of Scooby Doo, Shaggy and Daphne, they finally caught the false character after a series of chases, fights and struggles. Of course, in the end, Scooby Doo and Shaggy suggested they have a big meal to celebrate the occasion.

APPENDIX E
CODER INSTRUCTION SHEET

CODER INSTRUCTION SHEET

The following section provides definitions of variables and a list of leading characters that are to be coded in this study. Please read through the section carefully before you practice any coding. If you would like to have further information about each variable's definition, please refer to the "Operationalization" section in Chapter III of the dissertation.

When you start the coding, only code one variable and one character at a time. Be sure to use the stop watch provided to measure the length. Record coding on the coding sheet provided and write down length for appropriate variables up to 1/100 seconds as shown in the example coding sheet.

Characters and Definitions

A. Leading characters in various programs:

"She-Ra: The Princess of Power": She-Ra, General Sunder and Hordak.

"Thundercats": Lion-O, Williecat, Cheetara, Mummra and Mummat.

"Smurfs' Adventures": Vanity, Gargamel, Grandpa Smurf and Nanny Smurf.

"My Little Pony": Meagan, Moochick, Spike, Fizzy, Wind Whistler and Gusty.

"Popeye": Popeye, Olive and Bluto.

"Teenwolf": Scott, Style, Boof, Grandpa Wolf, Grandma Wolf, Harold (father wolf) and Loobie.

"Casper, the Friendly Ghost": Casper and his friend.

"Scooby Doo": Scooby Doo, Scrappy Doo, Shaggy, Freddy, Velma and Daphne.

B. Definitions

1. Number of times each leading character's name (or the characters' group name) is spoken during an episode.

This variable is defined to include more than names of individuals because both trade names, such as Thundercats, and product names (character's name in the case of this study), such as Lion-O, leader of the Thundercats, are important for product recognition. The total number of characters' group name mentions will be equally distributed to all regular characters in a given episode.

For example, there are 12 regular characters in a given episode of "Thundercats." The name "Lion-O" is spoken 20 times. The name "Thundercats" is spoken 24 times. Twenty-four divided by 12 equals two. Therefore, the final count for the name "Lion-O" would be $20+2=22$ times.

2. Number of close-up shots of each leading character during an episode.

Close-up shots here include extreme close-up, close-up and two-shot close-up. Please see Shot Illustration for reference.

3. Length in seconds of close-up shots of each leading character during an episode.

4. Number of fighting or other violent acts involving each leading character during an episode.

Four types of violent acts are to be coded. The first is "Injury or Death," comprising acts by an individual or a group causing injury or death of the target subject(s). Please code this as V1. The second one is "Unsuccessful Attempt or Threat," involves situations such as an act of violence by an individual or a group missing the target subject(s), with no injury occurring, or an individual or group threatening a physical act that will possibly injure or kill target subject(s) without actually performing the threatened action. Please code this as V2.

The third one is "Forcible Restraint." It involves an individual or a group using some power to restrain or prevent the movement of another individual or group. However, no injury or death occurs in this act. Please code this as V3.

The fourth one is "Mock Violence." Some examples of this would be a pillow fight or characters teasing each other through friendly fisticuffs. Please code this as V4.

Note that each act is defined based on videospace provided for the audience. During a fight, any cut-away from fighting ends that fighting act. When a shot cuts back to the fighting scene, it is coded as another new fighting act. For example, the TV screen shows that Hordak and She-Ra are engaging an intensive fight. The shot then cuts away to Swift-Wind, She-Ra's secret horse coming to help her. The shot then cuts back to the fight between Hordak and She-Ra. This example includes a fighting scene with two fighting acts. As for the leading characters' involvement in a fighting act, please refer to the next variable for the definition.

5. Length of each fighting act in which each leading character is involved during an episode.

Involvement here is defined as active participation. For example, Hordak shoots at She-Ra while She-Ra is running. She-Ra keeps running and never turns back to shoot at Hordak. In this case, Hordak is an active participant of this fighting act while She-Ra is the passive one. Therefore, this act is coded as one act of violence by Hordak but not by She-Ra. However, if She-Ra turns around and shoots Hordak back, it would be an act of violence by

both Hordak and She-Ra. The moment She-Ra shoots back, the measurement of length of her violent act begins.

6. Whether or not each leading character in an episode possesses any superpower.

Superpower is defined as the ability to do things beyond that of normal animals or human beings. However, because all animals and creatures in cartoons are anthropomorphized, animals'/creatures' abilities such as talking, cooking and walking upright will not be interpreted as superpowers in this study. Under this coding system, examples of animals' superpowers would be ponies that fly, that walk on top of rainbows, that have magic unicorns warming up the frozen universe, etc. For human beings such powers would be characters who breathe fire, summon the wind, are capable of unaided flight or run superhumanly fast.

7. Number of times each leading character demonstrates its superpower in an episode.

8. Length of such character's superpower demonstration during an episode.

APPENDIX F
SAMPLE CODING SHEETS

CODING SHEET

Variable: _____

Program: _____

Date: _____

Character: _____

Coder: _____

Frequency		Length (if applicable)
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
Total:		

CODING SHEET

Variable: Supergirl Demonstration & the Length

Program: "She-Ra: The Princess of Power" Date: 6-9-89
 Character: She-Ra Coder: S.C.F.

Frequency		Length (if applicable)
1	fly	00:01.66
2	fly	00:00.99
3	jump from ground to top of castle	00:02.87
4	turn sword to shield	00:03.59
5	turn sword to bow	00:02.74
6	turn to "supergirl She-Ra" ^{medium}	00:23.51
7	fly	00:03.21
8	fly	00:04.00
9	turn sword to rope	00:04.05
10	threw rope to sky and block airplane	00:05.51
11	fly	00:04.71
12	fly	00:06.27
13	fly	00:04.49
14	fly	00:09.69
Total:		

Continues on next page

CODING SHEET

Variable: Superpower Demonstration & the LengthProgram: "She-Ra: The Princess of Power" Date: 6-9-89Character: She-Ra Coder: S.C.E.

Frequency		Length (if applicable)
15	fly	00:04.44
16	fly	00:03.65
17	fly	00:01.67
18	fly	00:01.18
19	fly	00:05.96
20	use sword and cut airplanes ^{to pieces}	00:02.50
21	use sword, cut airplanes _{into pieces}	00:01.74
Total:		
21 demonstration		99.43 seconds

VITA

Shu-Ling Chen Everett was born in Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C. on July, 2, 1958. She attended elementary school and high school in Taipei, Taiwan, graduating from the First Girl High School in June, 1977. She then began undergraduate study at Fu-Jen University in Taipei, graduating in June, 1981, with a Sociology major.

Between 1981 and 1983, she worked for a communication company and a television station in Taipei in several capacities. In September, 1983, she entered the graduate program in Mass Communications at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. She received the Master of Science degree in Communications with a major emphasis in Broadcasting in September, 1985.

Upon her graduation from SIUE, she entered the doctoral program in Communications at the University of Tennessee. In December, 1989, she received the Ph.D. in Communication, with a major emphasis in Mass Media Effects, a minor in Applied Statistics and a secondary emphasis in Child and Family Studies.

The author is a member of Kappa Tau Alpha and the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. She currently is a research fellow with the Center for Mass Media Research at the University of Colorado, Boulder.