

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

UMI[®]

**Learning Gender Roles:
Advertising and Children**

Marietta Damiano

A Thesis

in

the Department

of

Sociology and Anthropology

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

April 2003

© Marietta Damiano , 2003



**National Library
of Canada**

**Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services**

**395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

**Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada**

**Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques**

**395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-77654-9

Canada

Abstract

This thesis investigates how children's gender identities can be constructed and developed by television programs and advertisements. Gender is being defined and taught through the marketing of toys and by the gender stereotypes presented through them. This thesis researches the impact of television on children. I used four methods to triangulate this impact: surveys of parents, interviews with children, observation of children and analysis of Saturday morning commercial television programs and advertising. The research was facilitated by support from the authorities at the pre-school where I work.

Some of my findings are consistent with the literature on television and children which I reviewed: that commercial television, in general, has a negative impact on children; that girls are more willing to play with boys' toys than boys are to play with girls' toys; and that both programs and commercials tend to target specifically either boys or girls, and both are presented as bi-polar stereotypes.

Others were unexpected, and serendipitous: that parents seriously underestimated the hours of television their children watched, seemed unaware of the anti-social content of many of the commercial programs; that children may lie; that there is almost no overlap between toys requested by boys and girls, and that rigid and mutually exclusive gender roles are clearly understood by children as young as three, four, and five.

In general I found that the commercial television world socializes children not into the broader gender identities option of postmodernity but into traditional binary sex roles: pink and blue, Barbie and Spiderman, beauty and strength, inside domestic or outside work, Venus and Mars; and children and parents seem content.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take the opportunity to thank those who have made the completion of this thesis possible. Firstly, I thank my wonderful husband, the love of my life, since he brings out the best in me each day. His love, encouragement, and patience guided me through the bitter sweet paths of this research, and his enlightening wisdom and charm lights up my life.

I also thank my parents who have guided me into always making the right choices, and for setting the stepping stones for my success as a person, student, daughter, and wife. Thanks mom for making me watch all the cartoons I wanted, and for all of the boys toys I had handed down to me.

I would also like to thank professor Anthony Synnott for his dedication as a professor and supervisor, and for all his hard work. He is the best professor I have ever had the privilege knowing and working with. Professor Belanger for designing the layout of the thesis, and of course Professor Angela Ford Rosenthal who has taught me so much throughout my time at Concordia.

Last, but not least I thank Professor Pearl Crichton, whose knowledge about life astounds me, and Susan and Jeff, for all the great times we had, and for all the great times to come. All of you have made this possible, and will not be forgotten. Thank-you.

To all the wonderful parents who have responded to my survey, and to all the entertaining and enchanting children who had such delightful responses to my questions, thank-you for all your contribution.

To Remo and my parents this book is dedicated to you.

Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
Chapter 1 Children TV Viewing	
Stuart Ewen	8
Advertisements	14
Resistance	17
Toys and Gender	20
Christmas	25
Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework	30
Development	31
Social Learning Theory	41
Feminist Theory	48
Chapter 3 Methodology	58
Surveys	57
Interview	58
Observation of Children	59
Observation of Cartoons	59
Chapter 4	
Survey on Television and Advertising (2001)	62
Survey on Television and Toys (2002)	67
Interview with Children: Gendered Toys, and Television	61
Chapter 5 Saturday Morning Cartoons	78
Television Programs on the FOX BOX	79
Television Programs on ABC	82
Television Programs on CBS	87
Children's TV and Sex Role Perception	89
Cartoons & Programs on PBS	90
Commercials for Girls	91
Commercials for Boys	94
Commercials for Both Boys and Girls	95
Cereal Commercials	96
Flyers	97
The Visit to Toys 'R' Us	98

Observation of Children	99
Chapter 6 Conclusion	102
Bibliography	114
Appendices	
A) Survey on Television and Advertising (2001)	120
B) Survey on Television and Toys (2002)	122
C) Results of the Questionnaire	124
D) Interview Questions on Children, Gendered Toys, and Television	126

Introduction

Toys, in today's society, are important things in a child's life. Toys bring pleasure, fun, and happiness to a child, and they also help children enhance and create characters in their fantasy play, where each toy comes to life and does what the child wants them to do. Toys fulfill many needs and pleasures for a child and they also participate in the construction of the self. Toys help children learn about themselves, by helping them develop as social beings, including who they are, what they learn, their interests, and their pleasures in playing and pretending. In partaking in the development of the self, toys and the advertisement of toys also contribute to the construction of gender identity. This includes how a little girl or boy identifies themselves within society as a girl or a boy. Advertising sets the paths and guidelines for children by presenting them with toys and products that help define what it means to be a girl or a boy. Through these three paths, of viewing cartoons, viewing advertising and purchasing their "gender appropriate" toys, we have created a form of mass media that is powerful enough to construct gender identities through the brands and toys that are advertised on television, and the cartoons which include the advertisements.

The purpose of this research is to study how children's gender identities can be constructed by a box in our homes. Children spend many hours a week watching television and television advertisements. Not only do ads persuade children to buy their products and toys, but they also inadvertently teach children the meanings of being a boy or a girl. Gender is being defined and taught through the marketing and promoting of toys. This paper will, therefore, show how television and advertisements may do this, and also how children react

towards toys, and how they understand the concept of there being toys for girls and toys for boys. The toys are virtually opposite. There are very few gender neutral toys being advertised on television, especially to children over the age of two. Although there are many other possible factors that may affect children in their development of gender and gender identities, I will be focusing on how children learn about gender, and gender roles through the media, specifically through cartoons and advertising; and especially what they learn: highly polarized sex roles rather than options within possible gender identities.

When children watch advertisements on television, they are often unable to distinguish between the real world and the television world. To them television programs tell the truth and represent real life, therefore they accept everything at face value. Many associations are made in the construction of their gender identities, which become crucial and important factors for the reasons why children want to purchase toys, and what purchasing these toys does for them. The popularity of certain products and toys comes to life by the merchandising of popular brands and products and with the repetition of these commercials and brands being played and viewed by children on television advertisements. Children begin learning the brands, and become able to recognize commercials by the music, and characters associated with a particular brand or product.

It was only with the release of the movie "Star Wars" that advertisers began to advertise products in full force. "The excellent kids ratings for animated adventure programs in turn helped to increase the toy advertisers' interest in television advertising, and their proportion of total advertising expenditure in children's TV grew from 15% in the early 70's to over 50% in the 80's (over 60% in the pre-Christmas quarter)" (Kline, 1993: 137). Television advertising forced

the toy makers to start listening to children and what was fun, enjoyable, and entertaining for them, and created what they wanted to play with, which not only turned children into active consumers, but it also gave them the power to be active consumers.

By the 1980's children were considered to be the primary consumers in a variety of products: candy (58%), and toys (30%). They were also influential in purchasing decisions of clothing (80%), sneakers (72%), toys (80%), cereal (65%), video movies (45%), and toothpaste (30%) (Pecora, 1998: 19). Part of the reason for the new purchasing power of children is that children are watching themselves at play in TV commercials. This is very appealing to them, and they identify themselves through the commercial with the same product, which leads to the purchasing of it. The world of the children's advertisements is usually not populated by parents, rather it is overwhelmingly a 'kids' world (Kline, 1993: 191).

Although children are considered to be active consumers of products, the question becomes, what other factors contribute to the popularity of toys? Christmas is that time of the year where the toy stores and manufactures maximize their sales. Advertising for the Christmas holidays may begin as early as October. Are the ads geared towards the adults to inform them what is new and cool and what all the other children are playing with? Or are children really processing and absorbing ads seen on television? Are children being influenced by peer pressure or by the creation and popularization of a product? Children's friends also encourage the purchasing of products, and they also help in the decision of whether a product or toy should be or is popular. Children's friends are also being gender constructed through the toys and products they buy from watching television or advertisements. It is necessary to study this topic for the

purpose of understanding the effects of advertisements on children and whether they influence the choices that children make when buying or choosing toys. What are the most popular toys for the Christmas season, and what are the factors that contribute to their popularity? Which products or producers make it to the North Pole?

Adults and children are being bombarded by advertising signals exhorting them to become defiant active consumers. They become defiant to themselves, since many succumb to the advertising tactics. As television and advertisements become a major source of information and ideas, children deserve special attention because they are most likely to accept and orient their view of life to the one that television and advertising promotes. Children are more aware today of products and brands in the marketplace and are reorienting their priorities to keep abreast with a changing economic environment. Advertisements on television have set the rules, regulations, and guidelines for what type or which toys girls are supposed to be playing with and what kind of toys boys should be playing with. Although there are many possible factors that contribute to the choices that children make in their choices for toys, television may be one of the most influential ones.

Today, although advertisements are distinct from television programs on adult television, on children's television, producers often integrate television programs within advertisements. In looking at the structure of television programming we are now finding commercials that are advertising toys from popular children's programs, for example "Scooby-Doo", "Spiderman", and "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles", among many others. The television industry, advertisers, and toy manufacturers have joined together to produce products

being sold, in cartoon form, to children. This is not only an extraordinary assault on the minds of contemporary children, given the number of hours of television they watch; but it is also a massive cultural homogenization of a generation.

Some authorities have also become concerned about the relation between television watching and the decline in children's capacity for imaginative play (Kline 1993). It is through imaginative play, fantasy play, and role playing that children really demonstrate their true selves, develop their independent identities, and learn to socialize with others. If adults really listened to children during their creative play time they will notice who that child really is, their true selves. Many children are able to take a little toy or situation and bring it to a world of people, places, and activities. With creative play also comes a bright imagination, cognitive development, and the adding of the personalities to their characters, identities and individualities.

The beauty in free playing and free imagination is that it is totally individualized. Children are all unique and distinctive from each other. No one child will visualize or create the exact same picture or imagine a scene or a picture in the exact same way. But on television and in the advertisements the scene or stage is set, the characters are visible, everything is prefixed into the act or play, there is no place for improvisation or innovation. Everything is accepted, and registered. In their learning years children need to know how to create. It is a period in their life where they dramatize, draw, color, paint, cut, sing, and express themselves verbally, and physically. Children need to be encouraged and guided into exploring their creative selves, and this cannot be done watching television programs or advertisements. Television and advertisers have taught

children and adults that toys are needed in order to play, not a creative and playful mind. Passivity is replacing activity.

The market economy has shifted their target market from adults to children in the last few decades. In this highly commercialized circle that has been created, research has showed that there is a strong association between television ads and the choices that children make when choosing toys, in that children may learn about new products through television advertisements. There is also an argument that toys have a strong influence on identity construction, in that the toys that children choose, or play with help their gender construction, of what it means, to society, to be a girl or a boy. By allocating, and appointing gender appropriate toys to children through commercials and advertisements, children learn what toys are considered to be fitting for their gender; and this guides and directs the child in constructing their own gender identity. Although there are many other sources that contribute to the construction of gender identities, this research will be concentrating on the effects of media.

The thesis will be divided in six chapters. First I map out the field of this research on toys, the media and gender construction among young children, and review the literature. Chapter 2 reviews the principal theoretical formulations in this area: media theory, socialization theory and feminist theory. My principal methodologies: survey research, interviewing, observation of children and analysis of television cartoons and ads are discussed in chapter 3. The data from the surveys is presented in chapter 4; and the data from the observation and analysis in chapter 5. In both chapters I integrate my data with the theoretical paradigms. Finally I present a summary of the principal findings of my research, and recommendations, in chapter 6.

On a personal note, I will just add that I work at a day care center with sixty children. This has given me both the opportunity, but also the motivation to study this topic. Opportunity in that of course I can and do talk to, and listen to, the children and parents, and engage in participant observation with the children; and motivation in that I have become increasingly concerned about the seeming inability of some of the children to be able to play without their toys, and especially of the girls to be playing physically outside, and of the boys who sometimes are far too physical. This gender polarity may be partly a function of the media. My personal interest in this topic, therefore, has evolved from my professional work with children.

Chapter 1

Children TV Viewing

Introduction

Many children watch a lot of television, but there is little agreement on how much they watch - nor on the impact of television. One authority suggests that American children watch, on average, 4.2 hours per day (Kline, 1993 : 208). Another thinks that over the next 10 years, a typical American eight year old will have watched, on average, 68 hours / month, or 30 days / year, "and one entire year out of 10" just watching television (Unnikrishnan, 1996 : 49). But that only adds up to 2.3 hours / day - far below the earlier estimate (and also "only" 10 months in the 10 years, not "one entire year".

Whether two or four hours per day, for many years, this is a lot of television. In this chapter I map out the field of the research, focusing on several themes in sequence: children, advertising (including resistance), toys and gender, and finally the Christmas season; but I start with Stuart Ewen as one of the first researchers on popular culture, especially ads.

Stuart Ewen

Stuart Ewen focused predominantly on consumer consumption, within the consumer culture. Ewen argues that "the image, the commercial, reaches out to sell more than a service or product; it sells a way of understanding the world" (Ewen, 1982, pg. 42). This seems congruent with Kline's later thesis since he argues that "children understand their position within the social structure largely through their perception of consumption styles expressed in play" (Kline, 1993:

347). They both seem to agree that commercials and television are showing us what there is in the world and how we should process this information and understand it. In a nutshell, Ewen describes the world as appearing on television to be, "as an individualized consumption of goods and services; a world in which social relations are often disciplined by the exchange of money; a world where it increasingly makes sense that if there are solutions to be had, they can be bought" (Ewen, 1982: 42). Stephen Kline, on the other hand, argues that, "television is a vast wasteland, because private media businesses have no goals beyond profit and make no public commitment to educational or quality goals" (Kline, 1993: 17-18). Even though this may have been true, television is meant to be entertaining and relaxing, in addition to this, broadcasting stations like PBS is a non profit and educational network that does not rely on profits and money making advertisements.

Ewen argues that children seem to adjust themselves by their likes, dislikes, and their wants, and needs by the products or toys, not only available to them, but also by what is presented to them. He argues, "the mechanism of mass production could not function unless markets became more dynamic, growing horizontally (nationally), vertically (into social classes not previously among the consumers) and ideologically" (Ewen, 1976: 24-25). Although, then, the products produced were primarily made for adults, nowadays, with the turn of events and focus on children as consumers, children have had to, and still have to habituate themselves to the products that are available and being produced for them. They have to learn how to control demands as well as learn how to act and respond to them. The supply is first and the demand is then created through advertisements. Ewen's assertion is similar since he argues that "modern advertising must be seen as a direct response to the needs of mass industrial

capitalism" (Ewen, 1976: 31). In agreement Kline asserts that "the changes that took place in audience programming, then had a direct relationship to the different economic base established for children's cultural production in commercial TV and to the subsequent quality of the TV fiction offered" (Kline, 1993: 120).

According to Ewen, "a given ad asked not only that an individual buy its product but that he experience a self-conscious perspective that he had previously been socially and psychically denied" (Ewen, 1976: 36). This argument can be applied to children, since many of them feel a need to purchase a certain toy or product to fit in with their society or peer group. "not only tastes are being shaped, but also perceptions of one's own self. The interaction of people and environment is being turned inside out" (Ewen, 1988 : 21) Even though few researchers have been able to narrow down the effects of television on children empirically, or for that matter to investigate whether there are changes to children's behavior when viewing television content, Kline contends that "children should have special status in the marketplace because they cannot be assumed to have the knowledge, experience, and emotional background to act as rational consumers in the market" (Kline, 1993: 216). There is no reasonable solution to this problem other than completely ridding children's television of all advertisements.

Children

Many researchers have studied the effects and consequences of children watching television and television advertisements in the last four to five decades (Kline, 1993., Pecora, 1998., Van Evra, 1998). Although there have been many changes in the media itself, some of their findings are still useful when looking at advertisements in the 21st century. For example, Young in his research on the

effects of children's advertisements demonstrates how empirical studies can be included in other, and more modern methods of analysis, and compared to the traditional and past researches conducted in this area. Young presents a series of empirical studies he conducted which look at the cognitive, and developmental approaches within psychology and supports these approaches with theories on linguistics and discourse analysis. The focus of his research dealt with mainly two questions, How do children understand television advertising? and, What are the effects of television commercials on children?

Children are able to learn and are competent enough to interpret and see through the advertisement intents in order for them not to be manipulated, controlled or cheated by them. Although Young argues that, children's understanding and interpretation of what is shown on television will depend on their level of understanding or development in the intents and functioning of advertising, and for interpreting the various types of television material (Young, 1990 : 99). Van Evra suggests that television's role and impact on children's social development depends on their cognitive level or development. She argues that with age a child is able to comprehend the persuasive intents of television advertising, not only because of the increased exposure to commercials, but also through their increased experience with commercials that comes with their greater cognitive maturity (Van Evra, 1998: 95). Unlike children of seven or eight years old, young children do not have the cognitive ability to distinguish between television programs and advertisements, therefore, they can't distinguish between fantasy and reality which is a very important component in the understanding of advertisements, and of course their responses and reactions to them.

Using the same approach as Van Evra and Young, Robert et al, conducted research in the area of children learning to view advertisements critically. They, concluded that children can be taught how to be critical viewers by learning how to through films that describe the hidden messages or intents of commercials, and how it is used to persuade them to buy and consume products (Van Evra, 1998: 177). Their research showed that those children who seemed to be more susceptible to the appeal and persuasion of commercials due to their immaturity or their understanding and cognitive development benefited from the films and were better and more critical to viewing advertisements than before. Roberts concluded that, "children younger than 7 or 8 years old show very little awareness of what a commercial is and its persuasive intent, and are unable to deal with commercials appropriately," (Blosser & Roberts in Van Evra, 1998: 95). Roberts, et al. took matters a step further and showed that films and the teaching of critical viewing to children helped them in being less persuaded by advertisements.

Some have been critical of ads (Kunkel, 1992), of programs (Kline, 1993), and distraction (Skornia, 1965). Kunkel conducted a survey in 1992 which showed that, "toys and breakfast foods made up over half of all ads observed, and adding sugared snacks and drinks brought it to 74%. Healthy foods, on the other hand, were represented in only 2.8% of all advertising directed to children" (in Van Evra, 1998: 94). Although Van Evra argues that these results need to be researched further in that we need to study the effects of these commercial messages, she also argues that unless we teach children about the tactics and influential powers of advertisements they will want to purchase and eat unhealthy foods since those are the ones that are mostly advertised and watched by children. According to Liebert, et al., (1982), "even though commercials may not direct a child explicitly to ask parents for advertised products, children's exposure

to advertising does lead to such requests, especially for toys and cereals" (Van Evra, 1998: 100). Consequently, not only should parents and adults teach children how to be critical viewers but they should also explain to them why they should, especially to those children who are not cognitively mature enough to understand ads by themselves, in order for them to learn how to get passed the persuasive intents of advertisements.

According to Kline, "television has been cited for a vast array of misdemeanors over its forty years of cultural ascendance, and the critical litany, has placed seemingly little pressure on the medium itself. It favors, banal, mindless, and trivial programming that strives not to enlighten but to entertain children with violence" (Kline, 1993: 208). Along with this Skornia (1965) states that television, "distracts children from healthier activities, such as reading, sports, and have thus produced a generation of mean-spirited, aggressive and illiterate slobs" (Kline, 1993: 208). What they have both said is that television is not and has not proven to be a beneficial, and resourceful learning mechanism. Entertainment sells, and often times we do not learn from entertainment, but it presents our minds and fills our eyes with desirable objects, and vacant information. Although theorists and researchers argue that television is useless, it undoubtedly, appears to be a powerful instrument of socialization, with a wide scope to influence children's attitudes, behaviors, views of the world, and cognitive abilities.

Warren, Gerke, and Kelly, argue that several cognitive processes, for example, separating fantasy from reality, identifying persuasive intent of advertising, and selectively choosing programs, are all very important tools in teaching children when dealing with the media in order to be critical viewers,

(March, 2002: 1). Much like Roberts, they argue that the most beneficial approach would be setting some viewing rule, co-viewing, and discussions with children about what they see on television (Warren, et. al., 2002: 1). Although some research shows that children will learn how to do this by themselves as they mature or develop cognitively, other research argues that younger children may also be able to be critical viewers, if they are taught how to, or if they are shown the influences that adults can pick up on when watching TV or TV advertisements.

Advertisements

“The primary goal of advertising is not necessarily direct persuasion, but to put awareness of a product in the viewer’s conscious mind and to have him or her associate it with something good or desirable” (Van Evra, 1998: 101). Van Evra also makes the argument that an attractive image or impression of a toy or product in an advertisement will influence buying behavior more than a product or toy that is not presented in an attractive way. Attraction of a product creates persuasion and desirability which will lead to a purchase of a product. Along with this notion Van Evra argues that many tactics are used by advertisers to make their product or commercial attracting to children, particularly to younger children. For example, music, repetition, slogans, visual effects and animation tend to attract viewers of all ages, but are especially attractive to young viewers. They rely heavily on such striking cues to derive meaning or gain information from television (Van Evra, 1998 : 96). Van Evra asserts that it is because of these special features that young children are sometimes not able to distinguish between programs and commercials. For children, the characters presented to them on commercials will probably seem to them to be new characters of the

program they were watching. The distinguishing between commercials and programs also improves with age. Responses to ads vary with age.

A cognitive effects study conducted by Robertson & Rossiter in 1974, demonstrated that children in Piaget's preoperational stage (2-7 years) did not respond to commercials the same way as older children in the concrete operational stage (7-12 years) did. Their research showed that older children are more able to distinguish commercials from television programs than younger children (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2002: 1). This data or argument was used by Buijzen & Valkenburg to help support their own arguments and results that older children are more critical of commercials than younger children, they make less requests for products than younger children, and they are less susceptible to the marketing strategies than younger children.

Important to this point was their next finding that with a sample of 250 children between the ages 7 and 12, "76% of the seven and eight year old boys asked for at least one advertised product, whereas 27.5% of the eleven and twelve year old boys requested at least one advertised product" (Buijzen and Valkenburg, 2000: 4). For the girls there seemed to be no significant age effect found in their study. The older girls asked for the same amount of advertised products as the younger girls. A study conducted by Frideres in 1973 was also conducted by Buijzen and Valkenburg and their results revealed that "more than half of the children 51.6%, asked for at least one brand that was being advertised at the time of their study, whereas in 1973, although 78% of the children reported that they saw their requested toys on television, 76% of the boys and 57% of the girls in the youngest age group asked for at least one advertised product". This shows that the studies and research conducted in these areas are still quite

comparable and there have been little changes in the results from the study that was conducted by Frideres in 1973, to that conducted by Buijzen and Valkenburg more recently. Although the age group is not specified in Frideres' study, the results still show that there is an association or relationship between requested toys and television, which affects children's choices when demanding a toy or product (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2000: 4).

There are many social and personal reasons why we buy and consume products. Kline argues, "consumerism as a way of life demands a social imagination - an ability to project how we will look and feel once we own and use those goods, or what our families and friends will think of us once we do" (Kline, 1993: 29). Kline focuses on the processes, changes, and consequences that children and society experience in watching television and advertisements. Many times the behind the scenes issues are not heard of or go unnoticed. He has studied and brings forth many explanations not only on the processes of marketing toys, but also the stages or the developments of television and advertisements, through the changes in the networks, broadcasts, and the popularity of different toys through these changes. Kline begins his research in the 1950's when the children had their own "culture", but not as children today. Children, through the process and changes of television programming are referred to as the consumer culture, in that, children have the power of purchase, much more now than they ever did before. Many researchers argue that young children do not have the cognitive skills necessary to deal with and understand both advertisements and most television content. According to Kline, "young children, because they lack cognitive skills and the life experiences necessary to evaluate messages as adequately as might an adult, are likely to learn from and be influenced by TV content, even though it is essentially intended only to

entertain them” (Kline, 1993: 216). Studies conducted in 1974 by Robertson and Rossiter argue that a child’s age and cognitive maturity will determine the comprehension level when watching television or understanding advertisements. Their studies showed that “children’s comprehension of television advertising and its persuasive intent increased with age, as a result of their increased exposure to and experience with commercials and of their cognitive maturity” (Van Evra, 1998: 95). Effects change with age.

However, “children’s requests for advertised products decrease as they mature” (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2000: 2). Along with this they make the argument that “not only do children become more critical about and thereby less susceptible to media offerings in middle childhood, they also become more sensitive to peer influences” (Durkin, 1997: 2). Stuart Ewen also states that, “advertising directed some of its messages directly at children, preferring their ‘blank slate’ characters to those of their parents whose prejudices might be more developed” (Ewen, 1976: 143-144). This, in turn, changed not only the industrial world, but it also changed the family dynamics, in that, children became “modern children” which also changed the family culture, by allowing children to change family habits, through the “modern” knowledge that was obtained when watching television and advertisements. Ewen argues, “children’s subconscious minds were depicted as infiltrated by the commodity market, and parents in the ads were supposed to accept and be sensitive to that invasion (Ewen, 1976: 147).

Resistance

Tobin argues that children are a part of community where they are able to make decisions on whether they agree with something or not. Children, according to Tobin, have the ability to resist accepting something that they don’t

agree with. Although advertisements are sometimes complex and may not be understood by all, Tobin asserts that children will make of it what they do understand and will analyze and process the information with the knowledge and understanding that they do have. On the other hand, according to Leiss, Kline, and Jhally, (1986), children as viewers have neither the ability to understand the intents of advertising nor do they have the conceptual maturity needed to evaluate commercial messages rationally. Consumers are receiving information without having to look for it. These are the messages and values being instilled in children by the media.

Ewen views the growth of marketing as being related to the problems of industrial management faced by mass manufacturers in the late 1920's. Ewen argues, "while much of the thinking in the American industrial 'war rooms' maintains an adherence to traditional 'democratic' rhetoric, the basic impulse in advertising was one of control, of activity channeling social impulses toward a support of corporation capitalism and its productive and distributive priorities" (Ewen, 1976: 81). By this Ewen argues that advertising was a societal production, support system, and organizational technique which not only encouraged consumerism but supported the whole system of capitalist production. Ewen claims that,

Consumerism was a world view, a philosophy of life. But it was not a world view which functioned purely in the economic realm - selling of goods. While it served to stimulate consumption among those who had the wherewithal and desire to consume, it also tried to provide a conception of the good life for those who did not (Ewen, 1976 : 108).

Marketing and advertising linked consumers to society and their economy. The “controlling” aspect embedded in advertising, was part of a marketing strategy that not only got to know people as consumers but also their social motivations, their thoughts on their contributions of their purchases of goods, and support of production within the marketplace.

The symbols and ideas presented to us by advertising creates the network of social interaction, and we communicate to each other by the products that are presented to us for purchasing. Kline also agrees with both Ewen and Leiss since he also argues that,

Marketing communication is a form of expression. It is designed to speak directly to our innermost experiences of the cycle of desire and consumption, to our sense of personal satisfaction, to our quest for meaningful social identities and relations, to our daydreams and fantasies about ourselves, to our aspirations, ideals and social values (Kline, 1993: 30).

Expressing or communicating through the market economy or advertising brings out true identities, and creates relations. Although we may think that advertising has been created only to make money, it also bonds us with society by presenting us with products that can help us understand each other and ourselves, all the while keeping and creating our own individuality through the purchasing of products and through our consumption within the consumer culture. As Kline states, “like a fish in water, an individual’s personal and social identity is so bound up with the consumer culture that it becomes difficult to reflect on the broader question of how we came to be in this aquarium” (Kline, 1993: 29).

Toys and Gender

Toys have a very special and specific significance among the symbols of a child's culture. Roland Barthes describes toys and how children identify with them in the first half of the twentieth century, and contends that, "the child can only identify himself as owner, as user, never as creator; he does not invent the world, he uses it: there are, prepared for him, actions without adventure, without wonder, without joy" (Barthes, 1986 : 54). The toy, for a child, became a symbol and the replacement of the social relations of work and the workforce. A child with his or her toys became a symbol of consumerism, and of leisure and fantasy. Barthes argued that, "toys always mean something, and this something is always entirely socialized, constituted by the myths or the techniques of modern adult life" (Barthes, 1986: 53). It was only in the late 1950's with the rise and appearance of Disney productions, and the Mickey Mouse Club that the market became wide open for communicating and selling to children. At this point in time, the marketers knew that there were changes being made, in spending potentials of children, and began not only airing advertisements but also began marketing Disney products. (Kline, 1993: 124).

It was only in the early 1980's, with the release of Star Wars did advertisers begin to advertise products to children. The popularity of the movie, almost guaranteed the success of the ads and products. By the late 1980's toy makers had to be very careful and aware of the social changes, and the effective influencing factors for parental consumers. At this time came a rise in the research industry that studied the demographic, attitudinal, and lifestyle information to the marketers, in order to foretell, or predict the success of a product. On the other hand, Scott Ward probably found this process to be useless since, in his research on peer influence found that peer pressure, and not

advertising, was one of the most important aspects in toy or product requests. Because play was a social activity, in that a few children played together, often the children requested toys that they didn't have but saw at their friends houses. His research also confirmed that the judgment of a toy or product of peers, played an important role, or became a deciding factor in the children's liking or disliking of a product or toy. Other research also showed that children preferred playing with children who had the best toys or the toys that were shown on TV. Their conclusion was that the product, more than the child himself or herself played a crucial role in the influencing of social choices (Kline, 1993: 191).

Children tend to quickly lose interest in certain toys, and quickly move on to look for new ones. They are extremely peer- oriented, and may turn to them for new toys. Because children change their views due to cognitive and psychological changes, they need new toys to develop and adjust to their cultural environment, which is always influxed with the changes in shape and focus. Through their peers, children try to recreate the images portrayed on advertisements, as a way of creating the moment, as the one shown on television. By creating this new environment, or surrounding, a child is also role playing with the limited social knowledge they possess, although advertisements teach them that in order to do this you must also have the right toys and use them the right way. Ads target boys and girls differently, although all ads have the same goal, to sell a product, they go through a different process and tactic for each gender. Rarely do we find ads with both genders, other than food, especially "kids" cereal.

Pecora examines children's culture in this realm of the entertainment business and how this in turn has shaped the children's culture. In her book she

sets out to accomplish two goals, to describe the children's entertainment industry in certain points in time, and to introduce a model that explains how industries made their decisions in the production of programming and advertising. Pecora argues that, "central to this understanding is the recognition that the children's toy and media industries, like all commercial industries, need to maintain and maximize profits, but they must work within the context of social, political, and economic constraints" (Pecora, 1998: 3). Ewen also argues that in order for these industries to succeed in what they wanted to achieve, profit and a distribution of mass produced products, many aspects or areas had to be carefully examined and structured. "The corporate structure was an arena of production, and if the distribution of mass-produced commodities was to succeed, indigenous popular attitudes had to be supplanted where they tended to look elsewhere for the satisfaction of material and social needs" (Ewen, 1976: 82).

Pecora argues that the toy industries had to begin their project by first making the shift of having children being recognized as potential consumers before they would be able to understand children as their primary audience. It is only once you have reached into this mode that toy industries, advertisers, and producers would be able to move along with their production, "for central to the growth of a child audience is the concept of the child-market" (Pecora, 1998: 8). This took quite a while to establish, especially in the 1950's.

There have been many factors that have contributed to this shift, of socializing and defining children as consumers. "Children are trained to fit cultural role systems which will presumably exist when they are adult; they are socialized for the role of consumer. As children gain access to spending money, they become valued as consumers" (Pecora, 1998: 8). Children from very young

ages are brought to toy stores and department stores and asked what do you want, or pick a toy. From early on parents, the media, and society, through television, advertisements, and peer influences, teach children how to be potential consumers. Although they may not have their own money, they learn how to spend money that they don't have, or their parent's money. This not only teaches them how to be consumers but it may also lead to numerous demands of products and toys. Pecora also agrees that toy stores was an important contributing factor for children becoming active consumers. "Perhaps one of the most important events in the move toward year round availability has been the development of large volume toy stores. These stores have provided a wider retail range year-round than was previously available (Pecora, 1998: 50).

There are many factors of marketing that have led to a year-round business and demand of toys and products. "Although the market still relies heavily on fourth quarter sales, there has been an important shift to year round marketing. As children acquired their own disposable income and influenced family spending, year-round marketing became feasible" (Pecora, 1998: 47). For one, there was the immense influence television had on advertising patterns which led to the changes of the previous seasonal marketing to a year round market. Secondly, is the increase in little collectibles, for example the Barbie, the Spiderman, and the Powerpuff girls. Every few months new products come out and are advertised in such a way that children feel like they are missing a piece of the puzzle. Also, they are also advertised in a gendered fashion. Girls tend to associate with the toys and products in which they see girls in the advertisements, whereas boys will associate with those products and advertisements that show boys playing with certain types of toys or products.

“The toy industry is among the oldest manufacturing industries in the United States, but it has always been a very capricious business. Changing demographics, the seasonal nature of the industry, and the high-risk investments involved in production contribute to its instability” (Pecora, 1998: 46). There are many factors that contribute to this phenomenon, the power of the toy industry. The demographic changes, parents are living longer, which means that grandparents are also living longer which creates a situation where a child has two sets of grandparents. If either or both the parents or grandparents are separated or divorce the sets quadruple, which adds up to many toy purchases and many gifts. The possibilities become endless. With the increase in the divorce rate there are also multiple households, therefore, instead of filling one house, children can joyfully fill both houses with different toys. Changes in the birthrate may also contribute in the toy industry blowout.

Gender and toys is another issue. Kline argues that children's advertising is sex-exclusive and children's play is sex-stereotypical. He suggests that, “targeting in the toy market, had two important consequences: it gendered the themes of children's television programming and it created a markedly sex-typed image of peer play in commercials” (Kline, 1993: 341). The gender and developmental levels of children play a very strong role or have a great influence on the types of gift requests that children make, boys tend to ask for activity-oriented items, like computer games, race cars, and action heroes, whereas girls prefer clothing, dolls, and jewelry. The older the child the more their requests will revolve around objects with a social function, whereas for younger children, toys still are very important because it creates for them security, comfort and consolation (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2000: 2).

Sometimes when dealing with children's issues, researchers tend to focus almost entirely on the child and child's view or perspective. Kline researched what priorities parents had for their child's development. 78% of the parents said that learning to read and write was their first priority. In second place at 52%, was learning moral behavior and interacting with peers. Thirdly was fitting in with society at 44%, and very close to third was becoming imaginative and self-expressive. Although we may seem to think that there is no link to children and toy requests, Kline's survey showed that "parents were buying their children toys to encourage their free and expressive play. Although the parents agree that this brought them great pleasure, 38% of this sample showed concerns about the way children play, especially with toys promoted on television" (Kline, 1993: 45).

Though there has been some research on gender and advertisements, there hasn't been much study on gender differences in advertisement requests. Buijzen and Valkenburg's researched this area and concluded from their study that "younger children asked for products advertised on television more often than older children did, although the child's gender did not predict the number of advertised product requests" (2000: 4). The results from my survey also showed that younger children (ages 2-3) asked for more products than older children (ages 4-5) by a difference of 34%. Gender did not account for any of the variance in my survey, both boys and girls responded equally.

Christmas

Consumerism gave a new meaning to the practices of socialization, especially to children with the advertising of toys. "With their emphasis on self-expression, exploration, and fun, toys represented a bond of love that fueled their popularity as Christmas gifts. In the 1950's toys achieved 80% of their

annual sales at Christmas time" (Kline, 1993: 162). On the other hand, Owen (1986) argues that, "until the 1970's, up to 80% of toy sales were in the six weeks before Christmas. Toy purchases were the responsibility of adults: Advertising, sales, and production were all geared to fourth-quarter holiday sales to parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and Santa Claus" (Pecora, 1998: 47). Kline like Pecora argues that Christmas has become "a seasonal consumption rite" where toys not only fill the emotional part of a child but also sets the interpretation of the spiritual experience for the child. Furthermore, adults seem to enjoy the notion of buying toys for children. Fleming states, "even within a mass culture that is so much more fragmentary than the traditional image of a family circle held together by sharing the simple meaning of toys at Christmas, there is still strong signs of the adult wanting to connect with the child through toys" (Fleming, 1996: 38).

Christmas is a very intense period in a child's life where a child learns how to be socialized as a consumer, since they are constantly being asked what do you want, and as they see ads on TV and are asked to write letters to Santa. Not only are their lists expressing their wants and desires for particular products, but they are also guiding and setting up their parents and relatives to the right places and in purchasing the right toys to make them happy. The fulfillment of these wishes and requests by their families, therefore, result in a more powerful consumer attitude of the child, than before. In consequence, Kline states, "toys, therefore, bear many messages for the child on top of the ones communicated on television" (Kline, 1993: 346).

Others question to what extent child-directed television advertising influences children's Christmas gift requests. Some advocates of child-directed advertising believe that advertising has no, or negligible effect, on children. Many

argue that children are capable of being critical consumers and are aware and are able to defend themselves against the harmful effects of advertising.

“According to other advocates, advertising provides children with valuable product information, so that they learn how to become consumers (Buijzen, & Valkenburg, 2000: 1). In their study, Buijzen, and Valkenburg, tend to agree with these points but they also add that it depends on the child’s age and cognitive development. On another note, they also agree that “child directed advertising aimed at young children can have a profound impact on their beliefs, values, and moral norms” (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2000: 1).

One type of field study has investigated to which extent children’s Christmas gift ideas are determined by television commercials. Television viewing is a major source of children’s gift ideas, and that children who watch more television are more likely to ask for advertised products. Gender and developmental level also have been shown to influence the types of gift requests (Buijzen, & Valkenburg, 2000: 2). On the other hand, Kline argues that in Quebec, Sweden, and Norway, where policies and public service television have limited children’s marketing and advertising, promotional toys do not become a part of a child’s life which does not become a part of a child’s expressed preference and wish list (Kline, 1993: 321). Promotional toys are the toys that are heavily promoted and advertised on television. These toys either make it or break it. It is the promotional toys that make the industry a fashion and entertainment business”

In the research that was conducted by Buijzen & Valkenburg, their first research question asked, to what extent children’s Christmas wishes were influenced by commercials broadcast around Christmas. The analysis of

children's Christmas wishes revealed that 51.6% of the children specifically asked for at least one brand that was advertised at the time of the survey. The brands that were most frequently advertised also turned out to be the most wanted toys.

Barbie turned out to be the most advertised toy. The Barbie commercial represented almost 10 percent of all the commercials that were broadcast during the period of analysis. Barbie occupied the ninth place in the top 10 gift requests for the whole sample. For the youngest girls, this toy was the second most wanted product (Buijzen & Valkenburg, pg. 4).

They also found that younger children asked for products advertised on television more often than older children did, although the child's gender did not predict the number of advertised product requests. Other findings from their research revealed that in their overall sample more than half of the children, 51.6%, asked for at least one brand that was being advertised at the time of their study. In a study conducted by Frideres in 1973, 78% of the children reported that they saw their requested toys on television, in Buijzen and Valkenburg's study, 76% of the boys and 57% of the girls in the youngest age group asked for at least one advertised product. This shows that there have been little, if any changes from the studies conducted by Frideres some thirty years ago (Buijzen & Valkenburg, pg. 4).

Some limitations to their study is that they did not look at any other alternatives to Christmas wishes, for example, peers, or the influences of toys presented in toy stores. Also, toys like Barbie are and have been popular to little girls even without advertising, because they fit in little girls' imaginations and images of being a girl perfectly. "Over the years, manufacturers of children's

products have developed a diverse spectrum of highly sophisticated research techniques to investigate children's preferences during the product development cycle" (Buijzen & Valkenburg, 2000: 7), I'm just not so sure that it can totally be blamed on advertisements without any other contributing factors. An article found in The Gazette stated, "With the \$20.3-billion U.S. traditional toy industry struggling with sluggish sales, the movement is in reverse. The toys lead to movies or videos, which lead back to toys" (The Gazette, Feb, 2003). By making videos and movies toys get updated and advertised, and of course the toy industry makes additional money on all the accessories that become available after the movie.

Conclusion

There has been a shift from the 1950's to today in the advertising for children. Producers and advertisers have refocused their attention from adults to children, although the effects are not the same. Ewen argues that advertising sells more than a product, it sells the understanding of the world around us. "We are betraying our own self, we are selling our own inner being and replacing it for a more suitable one for "modern society" (Ewen, 1988 : 22). Children are able to interpret the "world", or ads with a certain level of development and experience, yet they will or can still be influenced because of the lack of cognitive skills, but they will still have some control over them. The goals of ads are to make adults and children aware of a product but ads are produced in such a way as to associate them with a need, especially during Christmas. Advertising during Christmas teaches children how to be socialized as a consumer, to want, demand, and consume toys, and especially to want sex-role stereotyped toys, rather than gender-neutral toys, through stereotypical; advertising and programs.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

In postmodernity, the theorizing of gender has become increasingly complex. Judith Butler argues that gender comes first since it constructs nature in its own image and it also subjugates every aspect of social life. Butler argues, “gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which ‘sexed nature’ or a ‘natural sex’ is produced and established as ‘prediscursive’, prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts” (Butler, 1990 : 7). Everything in the way we dress, eat, walk, or talk is governed by gender. To Butler, gender is a set of acts and gestures that link the subjects to an identification of themselves. We give the impression that we are following a system of gendered guidelines. The system of gendered guidelines are represented by the media, schools, families and other significant areas of our lives. Gender is a regulated and organized system of correct performances or behavior.

Gender, according to Butler is played out under the power of set roles divided into two oppositions: the masculine and the feminine. This new self-consciousness about gender that Butler’s argument provides is that we identify with the constructed system in which we must live. Simplifying she argues, “this production of sex as the prediscursive ought to be understood as the effect of the apparatus of cultural construction designated by gender” (Butler, 1990 : 7). In television, however, gender is still as simple as boy/girl, blue/pink, and Spiderman/Barbie.

In this chapter we consider three principal theorization's of gender: developmental theory as it has developed from Piaget to Kohlberg, socialization theory developed by Bandura, and feminist theory with particular attention, perhaps surprisingly, to Mary Wollstonecraft and especially her critique of Rousseau.

These theoretical paradigms inform the questions which we ask (Chapter. 3), the data we collect, and will in turn be reconsidered in light of our principal findings.

Development

Developmental theory in relation to children encompasses many theories, since they all interrelate in the development of the child. A child from one day old to six years old goes through many developmental theories, as their bodies, cognitive abilities, skills, and experiences change. Although there are quite a few theories, they all contribute and add on to the previous and next theory, therefore, it was imperative that none be left out. Among these are social structural and cultural theories, cultivation theory, cognitive development, gender schema, and other basic stages of development that children go through during their early childhood, especially those that develop children's gender roles and cultural expectations of gender appropriate behavior.

Given that sexual identity has been determined, and blue or pink blankets visually display what the diaper conceals, the task of gender role socialization, or of teaching the child to be a man or a woman begins. The child must be taught to identify with the appropriate gender and what the identification requires in terms of personality traits. The environment, and everything related to it, therefore, is

an important and crucial factor in this gender role socialization process. In teaching the child, the parents draw upon their culture's beliefs and societal definitions for the understandings of what is appropriate for males and what is appropriate for females, as sex stereotypes are based on the notion of opposites.

The patterns of everyday language reinforce the notion that different tasks and occupations are more suitable for one gender than the other and that males represent the norm while females are the exceptions. For example, in many cases parents, teachers, and children seem more reluctant to have boys play with female stereotypical toys, than they are having girls play with male stereotypical toys. In developing a sense of identity, the growing child must develop a sense of self in relation to others and a sense of separateness and individual purpose. Traditionally, the relationship aspect of development has been stressed for girls, while the individualistic achievement oriented aspect has been emphasized for boys. The media, especially television advertisements, among many others can be one of the causes of this discrepancy between boys and girls. Children are shown different products and toys on advertisements that set the rules for what each gender should be playing with. This will be further explained, in the last chapter, with the research that I conducted.

Gender is formed by means of complicated interaction of cognitive factors and social learning processes. These processes are developmental in nature, that is, take into account both the age of the child and the social environment to which he or she is exposed. "In this sense, the meaning of gender is a function of the cognitive level of the child. In other words, what the child thinks makes a person male or female changes as he or she grows" (Unger & Crawford, 1992: 230). Their interpretation of the information received from their social

environment in conjunction with their age will change how a child thinks, makes a female or male. Of course the shaping of sex differences involves the association between the individual's biology and social environment. While these sex differences are relatively minor at birth, they begin to shape how the infant responds to the environment, and how the environment responds to the infant. As a child grows and develops, there is a double effect between these two dimensions of the individual's life. As the physical differences increase, there is also an increase in the ways in which males and females react or respond to their surrounding social environment, and the ways in which the social environment responds to them because of their gender.

Social structural and cultural theories of gender is a developmental theory that accounts for children as young as two years old knowing that "boys don't play with dolls" and "girls don't play with airplanes and Spiderman". Research shows that the more television children and teenagers watch the more they support male and female stereotypes (Lips, 1988). Even though this seems to be very important, sociologists want to know why society supports the learning of these messages? Of course if the differences between males and females would diminish or if they would become equals than we would not have to worry about the differences that are attributed to gender.

Gender roles are cultural expectations about what is appropriate behavior for each sex. Socialization, on the other hand, is the process by which individuals acquire the norms and roles expected of people in a particular society. Gender role socialization is learned through reinforcement and punishment, observation, and sometimes self-socialization. One important way children learn gender roles is by the portrayals of them on television and television advertisements. Through

the media, family, friends, and schools, children learn what is appropriate for boys and girls, and this reinforces their ideas or ideals of what toys they “should” be playing with. As Ewen states, “the powerful role played by the mass media in modern life is both a function and a reflection of a society in which customary culture has been dismembered. Through the media, we see the most available and imposing panorama of the social world” (Ewen. 1982: 266-267). Our culture has been changing, although there are many elements that affect and alter culture, society, values, and norms, the media seems to set out guidelines for our society, especially for children.

Children play a role in the accepting, internalizing, and limiting of ideas and issues provided by external socializing agents. Children begin to form their identities at very young ages, not only by observing real people around them but by what they see on television. Sex roles are enacted, manifested, and altered by the mass media. Both explicit and implicit messages received from television, advertising, print media, and other sources all serve to model and reinforce behavior which is viewed as being appropriate or inappropriate for our gender. Anyone who has recently watched children's programs and advertisements can fairly easily distinguish those targeting girls from those targeting boys. Not only do they have different content, they also advertise different things, and they look and sound different.

In most advertisements, the types of interactions portrayed are stereotypical. Females are typically social while males are shown to display authority, are highly active, and play to win. By submissive I mean that girls are advertised playing with dolls, either changing their outfits, or doing something with their hair and often with other girls. Dolls are substitute people. Girls are

socializing with the dolls, but there is nothing educational about a doll. There are no fine motor or large motor skills being developed other than brushing or combing hair! The toys advertised for boys encourage boys to develop both large motor and fine motor skills, for example, zoids (transformers, good for fine motor coordination), as well as snowboarding, rollerblading, and scooters are all being geared towards boys which help improve their large motor skills. Boys are sold toys and programs that have themes like good versus bad, or extreme amounts of either violence or action. Boys programs or ads feature dark environments, loud music, and harsh, rough, loud voices, and are mostly outdoors. Girls, on the other hand, are sold toys and programs through themes of interpersonal sharing and caring, usually set in fantasy lands, in their homes, or bedrooms, with soft music, gentle backgrounds or settings, and high pitched, yet slower pacing female voices.

Boys and girls are rarely represented at the same time for one particular toy or product, therefore, it is tricky to analyze the submissiveness in girls from ads, although in comparing both gendered ads, boys seem to be offered products that enhance and develop social skills, and motor skills, more than girls. There are not many ads in which there is a mix of cultures or genders. It is only in the cereal advertisements that boys and girls are interactive. It is basically for these reasons that within the first few seconds of a television commercial that young viewers know whether they are in the target audience, and they, from that point, can make an informed decision whether to tune in or out. Commercials designed for children are effective in getting children to recognize and want the products advertised.

The cultivation theory advocated by Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1994) maintains that for those who watch a lot of television will tend to view the world around them as similar to that which is shown on television. Television's portrayals leads to homogeneity of understanding. The more television viewers watch the more likely they will perceive what they watch to be the truth. The theory argues that beliefs, values, and assumptions are different from those of light viewers, and light viewers have a different interaction due to social interaction, reading, or vocational experience. Heavy viewers believe that characters on television are their friends, and they want to meet them in real life, for example, Ronald McDonald.

This theory is very applicable to young children since they accept television as being realistic, and they have difficulty in distinguishing between realistic and unrealistic material. One of the reasons for this is because they have no sources for the clarification or categorization of incoming messages, so in situations where parents, relatives, siblings, or peers have minimal influence or input, television will be the only source of truth or reality that a child has.

The realm of consumption practices, or the marketplace itself through messages about products and their possible meanings for an individual gradually absorbed the functions of cultural traditions in providing guideposts for personal and social identity-telling on who one is or where one belongs or what one might become in life (Leiss, et. al, 1986: 11).

This theory has many problems since it does not account for many of the possible intervening factors and variables, for example, age, background, programs watched, viewing habits, socioeconomic level, cognitive maturity, attention,

experience with television in understanding and interpreting, and family attitudes, among many others.

The constant presence of a certain stereotype or portrayal on television is presumed to become part of a child's knowledge about the world, and surroundings. The television programs become representations of what the real world looks like, which is a false pretense to those who know more or beyond what is shown on television, but for a child who does not have the cognitive capabilities, or the knowledge that adults have, this is a harmful tool for the mind of a child. With the television programs presented to children that include bullying, violence, teasing, gender stereotypes, and uneducational themes, the mere idea of children internalizing what they see on television is not only disturbing, but it may become a part of their personality and of who they are. Characters on television can provide role models whom children may strive to emulate. Instead of learning from positive role models, and ways of behaving, children are understanding who they should be by a character that is shown on television. More will be said about this when I discuss what types of programs I saw on Saturday morning cartoons, in chapter 5.

Cognitive developmental theory proposes that gender, among other things, cannot be taught or learned until a child reaches a certain age or at a certain level of intellectual development. In Piaget's cognitive theory, a child before the age of seven is unable to distinguish the differences between an actual program and the advertisements, therefore, they are not able to understand the power and purpose of advertisements, that of persuading the buyer or potential consumer, in the self interest of the market economy or the advertiser. Television greatly increases children's access to adult information and to adult viewing. Due to the

increase in access, the potential for misinterpretation is greater for children if they do not critically and carefully decode messages and forms. As a result, what is occurring most often is that children are observing and trying to interpret the adult world through children's, but also with children's cognitive and intellectual capacities. Older children are usually more efficient in their processing of television information because they use symbolic codes which allows them to process information more directly on account of their greater comprehension and cognitive development.

By ages 3 to 5 a child attains gender constancy, which is defined as a fixed gender understanding and acceptance which cannot be altered by any changes made to that child. It begins with the knowledge that there are two genders, followed by knowing the differences between the two, and finally realizing that it doesn't change under any circumstances. In postmodernity, of course, it can and does. Butler argues, "when the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one" (Butler, 1990 : 6).

The cognitive developmental approach, argues that once a child learns how to categorize people and themselves into being either male or female, they focus their attention through a learning process of attaching value to behavior. This is the stage where the child tests both gender appropriate behavior and gender inappropriate behavior to understand which behaviors are reinforced and rewarded by those around them. The gender inappropriate behaviors usually result in negative feedback which would lead to avoidance (Lips, 1988). During

this learning period or stage, the child may look to television, relatives, books, peers, or the same sex parent for guidance and clarifications, which leads to sex role identifications and categorizations.

Cognitive developmental theory suggests that the child searches through his social environment for the correct way of behaving for his or her gender. Despite that the child may find it difficult at times to differentiate, especially with both parents working, cleaning, cooking, and parenting, they nonetheless, learn what is suitable behavior. They soon learn to balance out and differentiate the expectations coming from home, from school, from extra curricular activities, and from their peers. For example, mom and dad may allow their son to play with dolls at home, but he will soon find out that not only do the boys at school not play with dolls, but they will mock you if you do. Therefore, with maturity, and in every aspect of life, a child is defining and redefining what it means to be a boy or a girl.

While cognitive developmental theory indicates that sex-typing occurs as a result of gender-identity formation, much sex-typing occurs before the age of gender constancy, and preferences for gender-stereotypes toys and behaviors have been found among children who have not yet developed gender constancy" (Lips, 1988 : 47).

The differences between social learning theory and cognitive developmental theory are that social learning emphasizes reliance, on the imitating, reinforcements, and modeling, and it does not take age and maturity into consideration, it takes it for granted that a child's understanding will change with age. Cognitive developmental theory, however focuses on the stages of intellectual development. Until a child reaches a certain level of maturity, a child is not able to learn beyond their age or stage. While the gender role and identity

development of a child may go through these theories of social learning and cognitive developmental, it seems to me that neither theory is able to clearly support, identify or explain the development and subsistence of gender roles and gender identities. With all that a child is exposed to in a day, week, and month, consistency of developing through these theories seems to be quite impossible. Of course the combination of these two theories makes sense in a child's development in the learning of gender roles, it cannot be irreducible and exclusive to these. There are too many contributing and conflicting factors that intervene and add to the growth and understanding of gender differences.

Gender schema theory is another theory that can help explain or clarify the learning process. This theory, introduced by Bem (1981), describes cognitive development as a selection from many schemas to help arrange, classify, and organize information into different categories. In this case, for a child it would be male or female, but it could also include language, ethnicity, age, or occupations. New information is processed and organized within the existent categories which develops the learning process. In relation to television and advertisements, a child may watch a commercial and the information being processed is not only processed visually and mentally, but it also gets put into categories (Lips, 1988). For example, a boy may watch a commercial for easy bake ovens. Usually in these commercials little girls are shown playing with them, therefore, the boy would not only categorize easy bake ovens with little girls but inadvertently also dismiss this information since as a little boy he should not associate himself with this product. This is part of the reason why advertisers should not sell products to little children, because according to the cognitive developmental theory children are learning to categorize toys and products to certain genders and gender roles, which leads to children playing with gender stereotypical toys.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory also includes many learning processes that help develop both gender identity and gender role. This theory is quite important because it includes modeling, imitating, rewards, and reinforcements. These four factors surround children in their everyday lives whether they be parents, siblings, relatives, peers, teachers, television, or media. Wherever a child looks or turns to there is something to be learned. This section will include many possible aspects or factors that may contribute to a child's learning to be a social being.

One of the earliest social categories that children learn to apply both to themselves and to other people is maleness and femaleness. "Gender is a fundamental aspect of an individual's self-concept; it is also predominant in any assessment made of another person" (Schaffer, 1996 : 186). It tends to be the first thing that a parent wants to know about a newly born baby, from then on the child's treatment depends very much on which sex it belongs to. From this moment of birth, our environment plays an important part on our gender. Not only the environment but biological and environmental factors are so intertwined in this development process that it would be impossible to view them as separating factors. Because boys and girls are brought up in different environments, they learn somewhat different things, especially through observational learning. Due to the continuity of the parent-child bond, over the years, the power of the parent over the child, and the sex role identities of the parents themselves, parents are in a unique position to shape the course of their child's life.

Within the primary group, their family unit, the child begins to learn the most central, and basic feelings about the nature of gender differences, the importance of these differences, and of course what is expected of them or their

gender. There are different explanatory theories regarding how socialization works. Two of many are, Bandura's social learning theory and Kohlberg's cognitive development theory. These two theories have been particularly concerned with the processes by which gender identity is programmed. The social learning theory proposes that a child learns appropriate gender behavior through reward, punishments, and imitation of adult models, for children this would mostly be their parents. According to this perspective, the teaching of appropriate gender behavior and the proper imitation of it may begin quite early in a child's life, therefore, it may also become difficult to alter. Unlike the social learning theory, the cognitive development theory theorized by Kohlberg, argues that, "a child's gender identity and sexuality are not directly taught by others; rather, sexual ideas and sex role concepts result from the child's active structuring of his own experience" (Weiten and Lloyd, 1994 : 309).

Social learning theory suggests that children develop gender identity and gender role through a learning process that includes imitating, modeling and reinforcement. Through this theory it is assumed that boys and girls learn to be masculine or feminine by being reinforced or rewarded by behaving gender appropriately, while inappropriate behavior is punished or ignored. Children learn this through trial and error, through their own behavior, or by learning or imitating others, especially adults. As the child is rewarded for "appropriate behavior" they begin to associate themselves with their "appointed" gender, and they begin to associate others of the same sex as being gender appropriate, which produces and brings to life their gender identity. This may be one of the reasons why boys develop a dislike for feminine traits.

David Lynn (1966) presented a theory that bridged together psychoanalysis and social learning theory. He argued that boys are more often punished for acting like a girl, whereas girls are not as likely to get reprimanded for acting like a boy, hence being a tomboy, therefore, the argument suggests that because boys get reprimanded, they develop a contempt for anything relating to females or femininity. Girls, conversely, are not usually punished for "boyish" behavior, so they do not develop the same degree of hostility to masculinity as boys do of femininity (Lips, 1988). Social learning is inadequate to completely explain the development of gender roles and identity. The direct reinforcements may not be doing what we say it does. For one, parents usually do not treat their children different enough to account for gender differences. Secondly, from experience, children do not listen to being reprimanded, and ignore reinforcements, especially those given by parents.

From a very young age boys and girls are inclined to interact mainly with their own sex. Observation of any playground will confirm that girls play with girls and boys play with boys. The concept of friends and playing also becomes an important factor in socialization and gender labeling. Children begin to label themselves and others as male or female sometime between two and three years old. Simply being able to label gender, sets the stage for children's understanding of gender. This eventually leads children to engage in more gender typed activities. As the child learns more about gender, their knowledge about it becomes more organized. This is especially evident in toy preferences. Boys tend to play with and ask for toys like trucks, blocks, sports equipment, and action figures, whereas, girls tend to play with and ask for toys like dolls, soft toys, Barbies, and domestic articles, like easy bake ovens. Gender differences in play and toy preferences inevitably reflect gender differences in society in

general, although some of my research will demonstrate that there are some particular and uncommon differences in the way some boys and girls play. This will be further discussed in chapter 4. Because so much of children's play mimics adult behavior, it is unimaginable that the range of adult attitudes about sex roles would not be reflected in children's play and toy preferences.

Many parents argue against gender segregating their children to specific toys that are gender specific. Even if some parents do not intentionally want to deny their children of all toys, whether for boys or girls, a study conducted by Rheingold and Cook (1975) argued the opposite. In one study of about 10 parents of six month olds, 87.5% of them said that it was important for them to expose their children to all and any toy. The other 12.5 % said that there should be different toys between girls and boys. These results were then compared to the furnishings and toys found in 48 boys and 48 girls bedrooms under the age of six. In 1975, the researchers assumed that children under six years old would not have any input in their selection of toys. In my view, in the year 2003, the age may be changed from six years old to three. The children were selected from a highly selected, highly educated university setting, which the researchers expected to have gender differentiation at a minimum. The researchers found no differences in the areas of books, musical objects, or stuffed toys, but they found differences in many categories. Massed by age, the number of vehicles for the boys was 375 for boys versus 17 for the girls. There were no toy vehicles found in any girls rooms other than trucks, for example, cars, boats, wagons, motorcycles, etc. Another finding was 8 out of 48 boys' rooms had a "female doll", in comparison to 41 of the girls' rooms, although a majority of them contained "male dolls". The researchers describe the differences of male and female toys as "providing very different cues for play. Only girls were provided

with toys that encouraged nurturance and/or concern with fashion. On the other hand, masculine toys such as vehicles quite literally promote motor activity” (Unger and Crawford, 1992 : 238).

Parents play a key role in encouraging children to play with gender stereotypic toys. One study, conducted in 1989, videotaped 40 parent- child toddler pairs playing with six different sets of toys, for a playing time of 4 minutes each. The study showed that “children showed greater involvement when they played with stereotypically gender-appropriate toys even when parental behavior was statistically controlled, they were less interested in toys stereotyped for the other gender even when no alternative toys were available” (Unger & Crawford, 1992 : 239). Some parents from the study found it difficult to play with all toys, especially when they were not gender specific for their child. The study also reported that parents played differently with the different toys and genders. “Boy toys” evoked more activity and less physical nearness, whereas “girl toys” evoked physical closeness and more verbal interaction (Unger & Crawford, 1992).

The typical toys for the boys represent the world of work and adventure, with trucks, tools, building supplies, and sports equipment, whereas the typical toys for girls represent the mother as the nurturer role, interpersonal relations, and communication with dolls, dishes, and household appliances. Although parenting and upbringing are both important factors of the way children learn about social roles, and hence construct their identities, television and media also play an important role, since children tend to associate themselves through the characters portrayed on television, as well as the toys that they play with.

My recommendation is that instead of segregating boys' and girls' toys, television networks should explore children's interests by providing children with gender neutral toys, or include both genders in all commercials or advertisements. Another approach would be to teach children about individual differences. Sometimes a black and white approach is used but teachers are taught to allow a gray approach to be incorporated in their teaching, where a boy can play with a doll, if he wants to, without being shunned by his peers, although this proposal should be reinforced by the media in depicting gender neutrality rather than gender segregation. The combination of both recommendations will have the child constructing their own categories, personalities, likes, and dislikes, without society having to tell them what is appropriate and what isn't. Somehow, society has accepted girls playing with boys' toys, by labeling them tomboys, which is an acceptable label because it encompasses traits as being rough, and tough which builds character. On the other hand, when boys are labeled sissies for playing with dolls, this label is frowned upon and we are quick to change their habits or behaviors.

Sex and gender together have formed one of the most important distinctions that human beings have made about one another. Stereotypes of femininity and masculinity split up human qualities between males and females. The qualities that are assigned to females are devalued, a devaluation that is linked to females' subordinate position in the gender hierarchy. Interestingly, and unfortunately, a quality that is stereotyped as feminine may be equally prevalent in both women and men, or boys and girls, but because it is associated with femininity it may be valued and thus unacknowledged in men. Sex role socialization in our society prepares children for an adult world in which men are expected to be instrumental, conquering, controlling, and unemotional and in

which women are expected to be expressive, emotional, passive, and dependent. Thus, sex role socialization prepares us to be highly competent in some respects and limited in others. Of course, many people are perfectly comfortable with the traditional sex roles. It seems evident, however, that just about everyone will benefit when the more stereotyped and burdensome aspects of sex roles are set aside. Gloria Steinem argues, "socializing boys a lot more like girls, in learning to talk about feelings more openly, to solve conflict in nonviolent ways, to reject dominance as part of gender identity, and to be empathetic with the feelings of others, would probably diminish the violent cycles in boys" (Steinem, 1992: 81). This would be a great start in changing boys and girls upbringing, but positive changes should be made in the television cartoons, and advertisements that are targeted to boys and girls, for example by making them non-violent, educational, and less gender stereotypical in their roles and behavior.

Children are exposed to television programs, and advertising quite a few hours a week. Within this time period many sex role stereotypes are being instilled and taught to children. "The average North American child spends more time in the first fifteen years of life watching television than in any other waking activity. To children the media is the most potent and pervasive source of information about their social world" (Lips, 1988 : 227). Without having to watch the commercials, if children listened to commercials the auditory, and not only the visual cues will be enough for them to determine whether the commercial is directed to girls or boys. As a result, television is, and remains to be a very powerful socializing agent, since it sets the definitions and guidelines to children of what is gender appropriate, from clothes, shoes, food, and toys.

Feminist Theory

Since the nineteenth century, feminists have had a strong influence on the continuation of traditional gender roles. Although with the many changes in our society, in the 1970's and 80's, feminists have focused on the social aspect in the development of social roles for females. "Women's lack of power in society was attributed by many feminists to a process of socialization that begins in the family and is reinforced in schools" (Francis, 1998: 5). Social roles may not only be reinforced in schools, but the advertisements and programs shown on television for children also reinforce gender roles, through presenting toys in a sex segregated fashion, and by also depicting girls and boys into gender specific roles, from their body images, language, and toys that they play with. It is argued that girls are taught to be inferior to boys through the hidden curriculum of taught sex roles found in the education system (Francis, 1998), and possibly through the media, as well as other agents of socialization.

Feminist theories, with the motto "the personal is political", established in the early waves of feminism have made an immense impact on the discursive debates around children's media culture. It has helped in the fight to censor and boycott sexist products, as well as battle against the depiction of girls as powerless, useless, and frivolous. The producers not only had created programs where they exaggerated gender ideals or standards, but they were teaching young girls to be trivial, superficial, and fairy tale princesses. Gender identification is constructed by toys, advertising, and media, therefore, girls will learn and construct their identities with what they see on television, and purchase in the stores. Yet, there is still much disagreement as to whether gendered products reinforce inequities found between boys and girls, since the division amid is quite obvious and disturbing.

Over 200 years ago, Mary Wollstonecraft, in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* pointed out the connection of child's play and political change. She states,

Every young creature requires almost continual exercise, and the infancy of children, conformable to this intimation, should be passed in harmless gambols, that exercise feet and hands. The child is not left a moment to its own direction, particularly a girl, and thus rendered dependent-dependence is called natural" (Wollstonecraft, 1976: 41).

She took issue with Rousseau, the premier theorist of education in his time, who had proposed that boys and girls should be educated differently. "Rousseau declares that a woman should never feel independent.... she should be made a coquettish slave in order to render her a more alluring object of desire, a sweeter companion of man, whenever he chooses to relax himself" (Wollstonecraft, 1976: 24). To this Wollstonecraft responds, "What nonsense!". Rousseau argued that whereas a man would be schooled or trained according to his natural talents and encouraged to cultivate his mind and spirit without restraint, a woman should be passive, weak, and humbly submissive, especially in terms of accepting a man's judgment in all matters. In reference to girls Rousseau argues "that they have naturally, that is from birth, independent of education, a fondness of dolls, dressing, and talking" (Wollstonecraft, 1976: 42). The footnote elaborates this by including a quote from Rousseau's book *Emile*, "the doll is the girl's special play thing; this shows her instinctive bent towards her life's work. They are not content to be pretty, they must be admired.... their heads are full of this idea" (Wollstonecraft, 1976: 42).

Wollstonecraft argued that both boys and girls needed continual exercise of both the hands and feet. With the toys that are advertised for children, girls are not shown exercising using their feet, rather they are shown staying indoors, and only using their hands. What has been said by Wollstonecraft hundreds of years ago, seems to me to be continuing, and reinforced in the twenty first century through advertisements and toys produced and created for children. Toys that are advertised and produced for boys seem more creative, constructive, and extroverted, whereas toys that are sold to girls are more passive, submissive, and introverted, which may lead to instilling, and ingraining these traits. Wollstonecraft also argues for gender neutrality, or gender indifference, "girls and boys, in short, would play harmlessly together, if the distinction of sex was not inculcated long before nature makes any difference" (Wollstonecraft, 1976: 43). This can be easily related to advertisements or media, because until the age of two, children do not make a distinction between boys toys and girls toys, it is only once that they have learned to associate certain toys with specific genders, that the differentiation becomes relative.

Rousseau argued that blind submission to authority limits social and political freedom and inhibits development of mental reasoning. Although they proposed that boys should be given freedom while girls remain dependent, Wollstonecraft favored both genders being given as much freedom as possible in all situations, especially during play. Rousseau argues, "the aim of physical training for boys and girls is not the same; in the one case it is the development of strength, in the other of grace. Women should be strong enough to do anything gracefully; men should be skillful enough to do anything easily" (Rousseau, 1984 : 329). Who would have thought that what was said over 200 years ago would be the images and messages we see given to boys and girls on children's

advertisements through the selection of gender specific toys presented and available to them.

The connection Wollstonecraft makes between child's play and political change is that if we, or children become only involved in only at a theoretical level, we give in to a form of false purity, therefore, we lose the true meaning and beauty of being a child, either male or female, as equal. Wollstonecraft was confident that women's oppression from arbitrary sexual distinctions would end. She argued that, "society owes girls the same education as boys simply because all persons deserve an equal chance to develop their rational and moral capacities so that they can achieve personhood" (Tong, 1988: 15).

The major proposal made by Wollstonecraft was for co-education, and public day schools for all children up to age nine. By ensuring that males and females were provided with the same education with the same education, Wollstonecraft was confident that inequalities would diminish, and eventually end. Wollstonecraft did not limit herself entirely to an appeal for more education for women. Rousseau, on the other hand, argued,

"a woman's education must therefore be planned in relation to man. To be pleasing in his sight, to win his respect and love, to train him in childhood, to tend him in manhood, to counsel and console, to make his life pleasant and happy, these are the duties of woman for all time, and this is what she should be taught while she is young" (Rousseau, 1984 : 328).

She contends that once women had achieved intellectual equality with men, they should be given political and economic equality as well. The fact that we today

have equal education and opportunity between men and women has not resulted in political and economic equality. Liberal feminists, like Betty Friedan, wish to free women from oppressive gender roles, that is, from those roles that have been used as excuses or justifications for giving women a lesser place or no place at all, in the workforce, in society, in the media, in advertisements, or in their choice of toys and play time. Friedan argues, "if women were really people, no more no less, then all things that kept them from being full people in our society would have to be changed" (Jones, 1998 :30).

Betty Friedan, a liberal feminist concentrated on individual autonomy. She attacks the patriarchal status quo, but also seems to blame the women for their positions in life. Friedan took a different position in dealing with women. Instead of getting men more into the private domain, she sent out both women and men into the public domain. Friedan argues that in the past, "women tried to be like men, instead of accepting their own nature, which can find fulfillment only in sexual passivity, male domination, and nurturing maternal love" (Friedan 1965 : 38). Betty Friedan brings up a very interesting point about women in 50's and 60's. "She was healthy, beautiful, educated, concerned only about her husband, her children, her home. She had found true feminine fulfillment" (Friedan, 1974 : pg. 18). This seems like the message that we are giving girls 50 years later with the toys that are presented to them, for example, the easy bake ovens, the dolls, and the baby carriages.

Gloria Steinem, also a liberal feminist in the same time like Betty Friedan also looks at the different areas where men and women portray differences. She argues, "men themselves are working to break down the generalities and competitiveness that a male-dominant culture has imposed on them" (Steinem,

1983 : 185). This can be related to boys being exposed to violence on television. Our culture may be imposing a behavior that boys don't want, therefore, as they get older, or even at a young age, boys may work at moving away from violent behavior to a more socially acceptable behavior.

Simone de Beauvoir, one of the key feminists of the twentieth century, argues that women are oppressed because they are considered as "the other", or the "second sex" because she is not a man. "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (De Beauvoir, 1989 : 267). For De Beauvoir gender is constructed.

De Beauvoir argues, "women has always been man's dependent, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality. And even today woman is heavily handicapped, though her situation is beginning to change" (De Beauvoir, 1989 : xxvi). For a woman to become a self she must rise above the labels and stereotypes, and be whatever she wants to be. Women are outcast into a group which confines them into a situation where they are unable to transcend. De Beauvoir tended to define femininity in relation to masculinity and did not see many positive aspects in femininity itself.

Many propose that the family contributes to both the gender differences created through the purchases of toys as well as allowing, or teaching their children to be active consumers. Kline claims that parents are giving up their child's imaginations to corporations. They are allowing corporations to fill their child's mind and imaginations with tangible products and commodities, when imagination and creativity is defined by everything that is not tangible. On the other hand, socialist feminists make the claim that the family is at the heart of or

is organized as the site of consumption. Given that children are at the core of the family, they cannot avoid becoming consumers. Children asking for toys is the acting out of social and economic roles prescribed to them.

Boys are being socialized into being violent, and ruthless. With the male figure usually lacking in a boy's life due to work, a boy may turn to other means of learning what the definition of being a boy signifies. Some children may turn to television or cartoon characters for clarifications and guidelines of the stereotyped masculine role. With all the violence that is shown in association with boys and their gender stereotypical behavior, we cannot ignore the fact that boys do tend to be more violent and aggressive than girls. Changes need to be made for producers and networks to portray boys as being less violent and deviant.

Boys and men are supposedly more aggressive, dominant, and independent, while women are said to be more nurturant, empathetic, and altruistic. Most of these stereotypes are also reinforced by the media and by parents. From very young ages children may be set in gender stereotypical occupational goals, since the activities and toys determine or encourage children to develop interests, and goals. As my research will show boys are given more mechanical toys or hands on toys, which develops spatial ability, whereas girls tend to play with toys that revolve around household chores, or being a mother. Research has shown that fathers are more likely to use gender stereotypical toys with both their girls and boys, whereas mothers are more likely to use "girlie" toys for both (Lips: 1988).

Conclusion

In postmodernity gender identities are fluid and complex whereas the sex roles portrayals on television are not. The media constructs gender in unrealistic ways, for example, in the gender stereotypical toys for children, there is a dichotomy between Barbie and Spiderman. The portrayals do not fall under the postmodernity regime, it is actually doing the opposite, therefore there is a great gap from what is said in theory and what is done in practice. As the years go on these differences have become more pronounced. For example, in the early 80's children did not watch violent cartoons, they had symbolic violence found in cartoons like "Bugs Bunny" and "Flintstones". These shows were funny, and not gruesome. We understood it as being funny and not anything else, unlike the cartoons of today like "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles", and "Ultimate Muscle". In the past 10 to 15 years we have not only redefined gender, but we have also, through television programs, redefined cartoons, and violence seen in cartoons.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

I have studied different areas of television and television viewing in this research, and have, therefore, used various methodologies. I have conducted two surveys, one in 2001 that asked parents about their children watching television and advertisements, a second survey, conducted in 2002, that once again asked parents about their children's toys and products, and how their children may have learned about these products. I also interviewed ten children ages four to five about the toys that they had and played with, and about their preferences in television programs. They were not randomly selected, I chose them on the basis of whom I thought were the most verbal and would feel comfortable in responding to my questions. A third method that was used was participant observation of the children's interactions with their friends, in class, or outdoors, to see what toys were used, and cross gender interaction. A teacher hears and registers many things, especially with sixteen children in a classroom. Finally I also viewed and analyzed three viewings of Saturday Morning Cartoons both for their educational value and gender portraits, and also for their advertising. This entailed me to watch cartoons from 9:30 to 11:00 on American networks, such as, FOX, ABC, and CBS. I chose these channels because they seem to be the most watched and the most popular networks on cable television. I will go through the limitations and problems that I met with each of these methods separately.

Surveys

I conducted two surveys in order to gather the information needed to properly analyze the effects of television, advertising, and selection of toys in children's purchases. In using surveys it is most likely that I come across a few limitations. In furthering my research I would settle and expand on the following: for one I have only taken a small sample from the preschool where I work. I did not randomly select the sample but I chose three of the six classes to give it to, therefore, creating a sample bias. The questions answered may have also resulted in a double bias, as parents were answering on behalf of their children, making it a secondary source. Another element is that parents may not have been truthful in answering the questions, they may have been mistaken, or may have wanted to seem to be good parents, who encourage teaching their children rather than letting them watch television. The same applies to the 2002 survey where most parents responded that the toys that their children played with were educational or enhanced creativity. The results will be further analyzed in the next chapter.

The questions in the 2001 survey were intended to determine how much television children watch a week, when they are watching, what they watch, and whether they get influenced by the marketing strategies. I also wanted to know if all these questions were answered differently when controlling for gender and age. For example, do boys watch more television than girls, do older children watch more, etc. A sample of the survey is found in appendix 1. In the 2002 survey, I asked the parents to categorize the toys that their children owned, the most asked product for Christmas, and the most likely way that they found out about it. Once again for this survey I tried to determine if there were differences when controlling for gender or age. By asking these questions I am hoping to find

differences between boys and girls in the toys that they ask for, to see if and how the toys on their lists are gender specific. The ways that they find out about them will also establish and strengthen my proposition that children learn about toys mostly from watching television. The results are analyzed in the next chapters.

Interview

I interviewed 10 children, with their parents consent, about their preferences both for toys and programs, but learned also about sex roles and gender identities. The interviews flowed quite well, and the children were very open and honest to all the questions. Their responses showed that the toys that they have at home, and play with are very gender specific, and most of them are not willing to share with the other gender, whether it be their friends or siblings. They gave very straight forward definition of what boys and girls should be playing with. By choosing the children I may have some sample bias. I considered randomly selecting a few from each class, but some children may not have responded or understood the questions that I asked, therefore I chose them in order to maximize responses and results.

The results of the interviews may have problems of validity. For one, I don't know if what the children said is true, maybe they answered what they thought I wanted to hear. In one case, I interviewed twin brothers separately, and found that their answers were quite different for two boys living in the same house. The next day their mother informed me that one of the two lied about everything and she clarified the things that he had not watched, and the toys that he did not have. The question becomes is the mother denying some of the things that her son said, or did he lie throughout the whole thing? How can I be sure that what the children have told me is all true? Can we assume that all children tell the

truth and they are all trustworthy?, maybe not. As a result I may be understating what kids watch and what toys they play with at home. All interviews and surveys have the same problems of reliability and truth, hence the utility and necessity of observation to supplement and complement the results of the interviews, where possible and feasible.

Observation of Children

My observation of the children tended to confirm the rather polarized sex roles portrayed on the television programs and the toys advertised. For example, when children play with their friends, they sometimes have a tendency of exaggerating what they have at home, what they play with, and what they watch, especially boys. Children always seem to have more, and watch more than their friends. There is a status competition of who has the best toys. What is truth? A plurality of methods will help to clarify what is happening in the relation between television, toys, girls, and boys.

When there is free play with no toys, or gender neutral toys, for example, playing with blocks, dress-up, or outdoor play, the children may play against the stereotype. I have also observed children when they are playing alone because they are at their most individual when they are playing alone and not interacting with others. A child's behavior and attitude may change drastically when interacting with others. Watching the children at play, however, generates different data from listening to what they say.

Observation of Cartoons

I selected the FOX, ABC, and CBS networks, because they are found on all possible American and Canadian systems, and many children watch them.

These networks are also filled with advertisements and because children are watching these channels on Saturday mornings, then they will also be watching the ads. By analyzing these cartoons and ads shown on these networks, I can explain what the children are watching and how they can be teaching children about gender, and the educational benefits, if any. In watching and analyzing the selected channels that were chosen I also question whether the information or data is generalizeable to other channels. There are children watching these networks, but there may be other ones that are more popular, or more watched. In this day and age when there are different and numerous satellite systems including the Canadian Bell Express, and the American RCA, it is difficult to narrow down the networks that are most watched by children, which is my first limitation. Some children may also have both cable television and a satellite system which makes it more difficult. A second limitation to my study is that I selected English channels, and am targeting the English speaking population. I have not analyzed programs or cartoons, found in Quebec, and broadcasted on French speaking channels or networks. My study is also limited in the time and the day that the programs were analyzed. I have only selected a two and a half hour time frame on three particular Saturdays.

For further research I would have analyzed these networks during after school hours, and on many different days. It is possible that the cartoon episode that I watched was terrible that day, but may be fantastic on another, or vice versa.

Conclusion

All four methods employed generated different results, and different types of results. All four methods had problems, as I have suggested, but together they

have constituted an effective triangulation method, and contributed to a more accurate portrait of the children's world than any one method alone.

Indeed it is one of the more interesting (and unexpected) findings of any research that multiple methods are essential for effective research, as each method tends to even out the deficiencies or inadequacies of any one method.

Chapter 4

Television and Toys

Introduction

I surveyed parents to determine the television viewing habits of their young children, and the impact of television advertising on the toys requested for Christmas, and the degree to which these toys were gender specific. I also talked to the children about the types of toys they wanted, and the degree to which they were gender exclusive. In brief, the girls and boys are highly polarized in the toys they play with and identify with, and are being socialized by television and their parents in different directions. Yet the most interesting findings were unintended: That parents seem to be unaware of, the number of hours of television watched, the children's preferences and the types of toys desired, and bought. Also, that girls with older male siblings will be more open and willing to play with male stereotypical toys, than girls with no male siblings.

Survey on Television and Advertising (2001) (Survey found in Appendix A)

I surveyed the 35 parents of the three and four year old boys and girls who are enlisted in the preschool where I teach, and received 27 survey's back, a 77% response rate. The purpose of the survey was twofold: first, to determine the relation, if any, between television advertisements, and children's demands for products; second, to determine gender differences in the demand for, and receipt of, types of presents and toys.

The sample was made up of three year old children (78%), and the four year olds made up for (13%).

Table 1 **Distribution of Viewing by Age and Gender**

Age	2	3	4	5	Total
Male	1	10	1	0	12
Female	0	8	2	1	11
Total	1	18	3	1	23

As the table shows most of the children are three years old and there are 12 males and 11 females. Although a wider range for the age would have shown the variation between age, my purpose is to distinguish differences between boys and girls and not between 3 year olds and 4 year olds.

Table 2 **Hours of TV Watched per week by Age and Gender**

Hours	M	F	2-3	4-5	N	Total %
0 - 5	5	5	10	0	10	44
5 -10	4	5	7	2	9	39
10 - 15	3	1	2	2	4	17
15+	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	12	11	19	4	23	100%

The findings from this parental survey are totally discrepant from the findings discussed earlier. According to the parents, children are watching less television than the national averages. 44% of the children are watching television less than five hours a week, and 83% less than 10 hours per week, with none more than 15 hours per week. Yet the national data (U.S.) indicate that children watch about

2.5 hours per day, or 17.5 hours per week (Van Evra, 1998). So either the sample is skewed, or Canadian children watch far less television than American children, or parents underestimate the number of hours that their children watch television - or all three explanations may have some validity.

A second finding is that boys watch more television than girls; but the sample is so small and the differences so minor that this finding is more indicative than conclusive.

Table 3

Time When Child Watches TV by Age and Gender

Time	M	F	2 -3	4 - 5	N	Total %
In the morning	5	2	7	0	7	16
In the evening	9	7	13	3	16	36
At night	2	0	1	1	2	5
On the week-end	10	9	15	4	19	43
Total	26	18	36	8	44	100

(Totals do not add up to the number of respondents due to double and triple counting).

The findings show that most of the television viewing is being done in the evening and on the weekends, and males watch television in more time slots than girls.

The crucial point of the survey, was the question, "Does your child ask for products or toys that they see on television advertisements?", 78% of the parents

said yes, and 22% said no, boys asking for more products than girls, but there is not a significant difference. (see Table 4).

Table 4 Influence of TV ads on Toy Requests by Age and Gender

	M	F	2 - 3	4 - 5	N	Total %
Yes	10	8	16	2	18	78
No	2	3	3	2	5	22
Total	12	11	19	4	23	100

The findings from the survey are congruent with the findings discussed in the literature, and with my hypothesis that children do learn about and ask for products shown on television, therefore making them active consumers. Boys ask for products just as much as girls do. But younger children (2/3) seem to be far more influenced to ask for products than the older (4/5) year olds. 16 of the 19 younger children (84%) requested toys compared to 50% of the older ones - but the sample is too small to extrapolate with any certainty.

I also queried it, question on the survey, If a child has asked for a Christmas gift due to advertisements: 57% said yes and 43% said no, possibly because the survey was conducted in November and Christmas toys and products had not begun being advertised, or they already have what is being advertised. (see Table 5)

Table 5 **Demands for Christmas Gifts By Age and Gender**

	M	F	2 - 3	4 - 5	N	Total %
Yes	7	6	10	3	13	57
No	5	5	9	1	10	43
Total	12	11	19	4	23	100

The findings may not show a significant difference in comparison to the previous question because of either timing (too soon for Christmas), or because young children do not easily understand the concept and the process of asking for and the purchasing of Christmas gifts. There are not any significant differences between boys and girls or in age.

Attempting to rank television among children's preferred activities, I asked parents which activity their children would prefer : to read a book, go on an excursion, play with toys or watch television. The results are tabulated in Table 6. The plurality of parents, (42%) speaking for their children, said "go on an excursion", followed by "read a book" and "play with toys" (24%) with only 10% replying "watch television". Unfortunately, I failed to cross check this ranking with the children; also I failed to specify the type of excursion: going to the mall or a country cottage is not the same as going to museums, Cosmodome, Insectarium, and the Biodome.

Table 6**Children's Preferred Activities By Age and Gender**

	M	F	2 - 3	4 - 5	N	Total %
<u>watch television</u>	1	2	1	2	3	10
<u>go out on an excursion</u>	8	6	10	4	14	42
<u>read a book</u>	5	3	4	4	8	24
<u>play with toys</u>	4	4	3	5	8	24
Total	18	15	18	15	33	100

Survey on Television and Toys (2002) (Survey and Results in Appendix B and C)

A second survey was conducted in 2002 to examine the degree to which children learn about toys and products from advertisements on television. This survey is complementary to the first survey because it categorizes the toys that they have and it also includes their Christmas list, which toys that they asked for and how they possibly found out about them. Out of 33 questionnaires sent out to the parents of some of the children who are registered at the preschool where I teach, 23 responded. Of the 23, 74% were parents of boys and 26% were parents of girls. The children ranged between 4 and 5 years old. In this age range there are no significant differences in their cognitive development, only social factors would contribute to the differences. Another reason why there are only 4 and 5 year olds is because they will possibly have a Christmas list, and can distinguish between different advertising sources, whereas two and three year old would have a more difficult time doing both of these.

Table 7 Categorizing Child's Toys by Gender

<u>Category</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Total %</u>
<u>enhances creativity</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>53</u>
<u>educational</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>popular</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>100</u>

First I asked parents to categorize the toys that their child owns (see Table 7). Parents gave various and multiple responses ; but the majority emphasized that their children's toys enhanced creativity (53%), followed by educational (28%) and simply popular (19%). There are no significant differences in the toys that children played with but I expected to have boys with more popular toys than girls. The most interesting finding is that these responses totally contradict the results coming up of the toys that the children have asked for Christmas, and raises questions about parental self-delusion, both about the toys themselves, and the degree to which such toys enhance creativity.

If I had to do it again I would have been more specific in the categories, and would have defined or given examples within each of them, because there may be different interpretations. On another note, this question is not and should have not been mutually exclusive, yet many parents answered as if all their child's toys are from one category, which is quite improbable.

The most important questions relate to the toys requested for Christmas. The responses are summarized in Table 8, and 9. There are differences between boys and girls in the toys that they asked for. As I expected girls asked

for toys like bread makers, easy bake ovens, Barbies, anything that accessorizes Barbie, make-up, etc. The only male stereotypical toy was a fire truck. This is very surprising, but it can be related to having male siblings, or being exposed to non-gender stereotypical toys. On the same point of difference, most of the toys that the girls asked for are to be used indoors, and they are associated with the stereotypical roles of girls or mothers being the care givers, and the “household organizers”.

Table 8

Toys asked for Christmas (Girls)	Number
1) Barbie	8
2) Household appliances	4
3) Play dough	1
4) Lilo & Stitch movie	1
5) Make - Up	1
6) Fire Truck with sound	1
7) PC Games	1
8) Anything she sees on TV	1

As for the boys, they asked for, Spiderman, hot wheels, tonka trucks, skateboard, game boy, zoids, dinosaurs, police cars, Max Steel (action figure), power rangers, fire truck, super hero figurines, hockey games and equipment, etc.

Table 9

Toys asked for Christmas (boys)	Number
1) Outside toys/games	14
2) indoor toys	13
3) Inside action toys	10
4) drums	2
5) Christmas song book	1
6) clothes	1

There is a great difference in the responses from girls and those from boys. For one there was a greater variety of toys, which probably means that there are more toys to buy, or more options for boys than there are for girls. Secondly, some of these can be used outdoors, or manipulated more. Thirdly, from the boys list many of these toys portray violent behavior, like Spiderman, super heroes, power rangers, and Max Steel. This confirms the concerns of feminists like Wollstonecraft and of sociologists like Barthes that boys and girls are socialized into different and opposite directions : Barbie/Spiderman, inside/outside, kitchen/trucks, etc. While some might "blame" television producers and advertising executives for limiting the entertainment and implicitly the career options of girls and boys, it is after all the parents who buy the toys for their children, not the producers or executives.

The last question asked, was rank the most likely way your child has learned about these products. The parents of the girls ranked television as the first likely way of learning about a toy or product, the second rank, was friends, and third was flyers or catalogues.

Table 10

Most likely way you heard about product (Girls)	
	%
television ads	50
friends	34
flyers/catalogues	17
Total	100

The parents of the boys, on the other hand, ranked television first, stores and flyers and third, friends or family.

Table 11

Most likely way you heard about product (Boys)		Total %
television/ads		47
flyer/magazines/stores		29
family/friends		23
Total		100

As the results show, television plays an important and influential role in the choices that children make in asking for products. "Toy companies are spending huge amounts of money on making them irresistible and addictive. Children's play used to be directed and produced by children" (The Gazette, Feb., 2003). Not only does it inform them about products out on the market, but it also teaches them that there are gender specific toys for boys and girls. The toys in the lists do not overlap, other than the fire truck for one of the girls, and there are no boys asking for Barbies, easy bake ovens, bread makers, or make-up, and there are no girls asking for zoids, Spiderman, or Tonka Trucks. As early as the age of four, children have already learned that there are specific toys for each gender. There is no gender overlap in the demand for toys: boys and girls are being socialized as young as 3, 4, and 5 as polar opposite sexes.

Interviews with Children: Gendered Toys, and Television (Questions in Appendix D)

I also interviewed, i. e. chatted, with 5 boys and 5 girls from my pre-school about their toy preferences and television viewing. The criteria for the selection of the 10 were twofold: first, since I did not want to embarrass anyone, I selected those who were the most verbal and least shy. Second, I selected some who had

no siblings or cousins and the others by those who had brothers or sisters of the opposite sex, or same sex. I thought that siblings of the opposite sex would maximize their play options both in terms of the number of toys available, but also and especially in terms of the types of toys available (i.e., stereotypically male or female). Also, children with older siblings will tend to watch a greater variety of television programs than those who don't. I followed these interviews with observations, to determine whether actions matched words and whether they practiced what they preached.

The interviews showed that most boys do not play with Barbies and think that girls should not play with Spiderman. Boys who have older brothers will also have lots of boy toys and will not dare play with Barbies. Girls who are an only child, or have a sister will tend to have anything related to Barbie in every color. Girls who have older brothers believe that they can play with Barbies but they can also play with Spiderman. This indicates that having opposite sex older siblings may facilitate a greater range of play than is available to others - and thus a greater awareness of, and openness to, non-traditional gender roles. This may be important in later life for adult occupational choices and sports involvement.

My observation of the children showed that boys will tend to play with Barbies and dolls in school, or daycare, only if other boys are not commenting or watching, even if they told me that they don't play with dolls, because boys either just do not or should not. Although I believe that the popular media increases gender stereotypes, and segregates boys and girls in play, sometimes we will find that boys in school are the least gender stereotyped or segregated. Other teachers, who are also mothers, have pointed out that children will tend to play with toys that they are either not exposed to at home, or toys that they usually

don't play with, since it creates for them a sense of it being a new toy, or something new to play with. This does not lessen the significance of the media and consumer culture, rather, the manipulative effect of marketing strategies are such that children do not seem to have enough of just one toy from the set, but they feel that unless they have the whole set of toys, related to a popular product, they are unable to play with it, which is what advertisers present on television. Usually, in children commercials, the whole set or series is shown, it becomes a whole army or multitude of toys that are played with. Examples of these types of commercials are Barbie, and zoids. Usually, Barbie commercials show the whole series laid out on the table, including all the accessories and products that are available, and zoids, a toy like transformers, shows all the models that are available also.

Many of the girls whom I interviewed had loads of Barbies, and wanted more of them, they were also very stereotypical girls, who liked make-up, jewelry, sparkles and pink dresses. Emily said, "I got a Barbie luggage, and all kinds of Barbies". She also said, "next year I want a Barbie computer and a Barbie wand, but I have to buy a box so the magic doesn't fly everywhere". When asked what they would do with a Spiderman, Emily said, "I would give it to daddy, he likes Spiderman, but for his birthday I'm going to take money from my piggy-bank and buy him a race car". She added, "boys can't play with Barbies because Barbies are for girls". Emily is 4 years old.

In continuation with the Spiderman topic, a five year old Melissa said, "Steven told me girls can't play with Spiderman". Another said, "I would play with it, but I would prefer a Barbie". They also said that boys don't play with Barbies. Many of the girls seemed open to the idea of playing with a Spiderman, but

seemed totally horrified at the thought of boys playing with Barbies, or dolls. Only one of the girls responded that she would rather play with Spiderman, and that boys can play with Barbies, but she has an older brother, and is probably exposed to, or does not know the differences between gender specific toys.

The boys whom I interviewed had similar gender stereotypical responses. My favorite one was Stefano. I asked him: "What would you do if I gave you a Barbie"? His response, "thank-you?, but do you think I'm a girl?" He was also the only one who defined what a commercial was. The other nine respondents had not a clue. His answer was, "something in the middle of a TV show, it shows stuff you can buy". Excellent, for a four year old! Stefano, who has an older brother, received Power Rangers for Christmas, and a toy car. The programs that he usually watches are Fighting Foodons, and Ultimate Muscle. Stefano thinks that a girl can play with Spiderman, "but she shouldn't because she is a girl".

Natasha and Juliana both have older brothers, and they seem a little more open to playing with Spiderman. Natasha said, "I want a real horse for my birthday". She also said, that she would play with Spiderman, but she would rather play with a Barbie. Surprisingly, she said, "Alex and Nathan want Spiderman, they don't like Barbies". Juliana, another 4 year old, watches her brothers' shows on TV, like Pokemon, Spiderman, and Batman. Would she play with Spiderman?, "Yes, I like him because he climbs up walls". I also asked her if she would rather play with a Barbie or a Spiderman and she responded, "a Spiderman, I have the movie", she also said that boys can play with Barbies, and her favorite toy was Spiderman, although her least favorite toy was Power Rangers.

Jordan, another boy, said that if I gave him a Barbie, he would give it to his sister because he doesn't like Barbies, "Barbie is for girls, when my baby sister gets big I will give Barbies to her. Girls play with Barbies and boys play with cool stuff, like this robot". He loves Spiderman, and saw the movie at the movie theater, "where he got the power of the webs, and Spiderman's uncle, uncle Ben, he won't catch the guy, because the black cat kills him, but when Spiderman catches the Green Goblin, the movie finished". He also said, "Spiderman doesn't play with toys, he only fights bad guys, but I can share my Spiderman, but I don't like Barbies".

Girls, according to some of the boys, "can't play hockey, because they are girls, only boys can play hockey". One of the boys also said that if I were to be on his hockey team, we would lose because I'm "no good". This is how the conversation went: "My hockey stick broke, I only have two now". I asked, "do you have girls on the team?", Steven responded, "no girls, because they only put boys in my team?" I asked, "are there girls on the other teams, have you ever seen a girl play hockey?" Steven said, "No". I continued the interview by asking him if they would let me in his team and he said, "No, because you're no good, I've got new skates". I told him that I would ask his coach if I could join his team, and he looked appalled. He said, "We wouldn't win because you don't have a stick, I have a good one, only if you have a good stick you can play". Steven's interview is a clear example of the gender stereotypes that are developed at such a young age of four. Children are so determined, and so set on their thinking, that their rationale or reasoning is either black or white, boys or girls. There is no blending or mixing. Hockey is for boys, and there are no girls on my team. Steven also refused to have any girls invited to his birthday party at McDonald's.

I also interviewed twins, separately, and got very different responses in what they got for Christmas, their birthday, and what television programs they watched. The next day I was told by their mother that one of the two had lied about what he had received for Christmas and for his birthday, and he had lied about what he watches on television. He claimed to have watched very violent cartoons, and PG 13 movies, although his brother did not mention a word. This boy raises the issue of reliability and validity of responses with particular clarity. I might have believed him if his mother had not told me that his responses were all lies. She was horrified, and had not expected her sweet five year old to lie; and nor had I. And if there are problems with validity in one on one face to face interview, there must be even more problems with survey data. A lie detector test may have been needed.

Conclusion

My main findings are that, according to the parents, children are watching far less television than what has been shown or suggested from the previous research. Another important finding is that children definitely ask for products or toys that are shown on television advertisements. This was also proven in the second survey, since it was ranked as the most likely way that a child learns about toys or products.

My second set of findings indicate that there are definite differences in the toys that girls ask for and play with than the toys boys play with. In looking at the lists, one can quickly see whether the list is for girls or boys. There is hardly any overlap, other than the fire truck, and the toys that either gender asked for, are very gender specific. This finding was confirmed by my interview. Boys are very reluctant to play with Barbies, whereas girls, who have brothers, may be open to

playing with them, but would still rather play with Barbie. Only one girl said that she would rather play with Spiderman than Barbie. The division is very clear cut, and the boundaries are set high. In analyzing Saturday morning cartoons, and advertisements shown in-between, we can see if there are clear and set gender variations between boys and girls, in their portrayals of what it means to be a boy or a girl.

My third set of findings are that parents may be delusioned by the number of hours their child watches television a week, since they do not coincide with the national figures (U.S.). The results from my survey are far less than what I expected, and far less than what was found in previous research (Kline 1993). Also, girls who have opposite sex older siblings will lead to a greater awareness of and willingness to play with non-traditional gender toys, which may lead to greater options not only playing, but also in life and occupational choices.

CATHY



Chapter 5

Saturday Morning Cartoons

Introduction

After fifteen years I had the pleasure of watching Saturday morning cartoons and commercials once again. Now that I am analyzing them sociologically, I have realized that children may absorb the values, morals, and sex roles that are shown and depicted on television. Research on advertising aimed at children has found that “there was a steady decrease in educational programs for children among the commercial networks and an increase in both the frequency and amount of time devoted to commercials on Saturday mornings from 1970 to 1990” (Chan - Olmsted, 1996 : 32). Since 1990, the amount of time devoted to commercials has probably increased further.

For the purpose of this study of Saturday morning cartoons, the time that was watched was between 9:00 and 11:30, on the following networks, ABC, CBS, and, FOX. These are the major channels that air children’s cartoons. I did not include channels found on different satellite systems, and I also did not include French speaking channels from Quebec. These networks are the ones that are most likely watched by English speaking children, whether they had television satellites or cable television. Both the television programs and the advertisements shown between the programs will be discussed. In addition, I have only taken a sample of three Saturday mornings. For further research a more extensive study would be needed. My research aim here is twofold: to sketch the values implicit or explicit in the cartoons, and to review the types of products advertised in the commercials. My concern here is both the

socialization of children generally, but particularly the differential socialization of boys and girls.

Television Programs on the FOX BOX

The Saturday morning FOX BOX presents 5 programs in this order, although the order may vary from week to week; "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles", "Kirby: Right Back at Ya", "Ultimate Muscle", another episode of "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles", and "The Cramp Twins". Each of these programs and commercials seen in-between, will be described and analyzed, to portray and illustrate the kinds of programs and commercials that children are exposed to.

Among the cartoons shown on Fox is "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles". Although the purpose of this program is to teach children that the bad guy always gets caught and does not win, it is also teaching children to run away from the police, and to fight, by punching, kicking, and by using weapons. The program is about four male turtles, each named after a famous artist, Leonardo, Michaelangelo, Raphael, and Donatello. Their ninja master and guardian is a rat. One of the episodes that I watched showed the four of them fighting with swords, clubs, little pitchforks, sticks, spears, star blades, and chains. Although they get grounded by their guardian they don't listen and leave. They are also shown jumping off ramps, stairs, and tables, with their bikes, rollerblades, scooters, and skateboards. This does not set a very good example, especially since the boys in my survey asked for some of these toys, and will be using them in the spring. The commercial promotes fighting with their motto "time to come out of your shell".

One of the most violent children's cartoons I have ever watched is "Ultimate Muscle". This is a horrific children's cartoon, that is being watched by children as young as 4 years old. This program is all about fighting. The episode that I watched was about two very muscular men fighting it out in a fighting ring, and their muscular strength gives them the power to beat up their opponent. One of the characters was shown to be unconscious, and no one knew whether he was alive, or if he would live. The spectators, who are all criminals or convicts watching the fight were also shown cheering on the fighters from the stands. It is an appalling show about being tough, rough, violent, and destructive, being aired at 10:00 on a Saturday morning. The next weeks were not much different. It is like the WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment), put into cartoons. The fighting matches includes cage matches, and ladder matches, and the two fighters have to beat each other up to be the ultimate champion.

Sentences like these are heard during this show, "have you checked out your ear hairs lately"?, "we have to harden your heart to make you a tougher wrestler", "let the ultimate muscle power out of you", "I want you hungry, mean, and mad", "you're stupid and scrawny", and "you filthy cockroach". In one of the episodes, the son tells his father that he is scared of fighting his opponent. His father responds by slapping him and saying, "grow up and toughen up".

Abuse should not be shown on television in any manner. There is enough of it going on in many households, we do not want to teach children that this is appropriate behavior. Is there nothing else to teach our children? My interview with one of the children, from my class, revealed that he along with his two brothers watch this program and claims to love it. I assume these are the sex roles and gender identities that society would like to instill in boys, or they would

not be producing such programs. Boys are being socialized to fight. Girls are not socialized in this way. With all the violence that is demonstrated, publicized, and televised, the values being instilled here remain questionable.

Two other cartoons shown on FOX are "Kirby" and "The Cramp Twins". "Kirby" looks like a pink blob or bubble that lives in a castle and bothers the King. In one of the episodes the King dreams that Kirby is on fire and is attacking him. In this particular episode Kirby is shown putting fire in his mouth and blowing it out towards the King. Fire is another factor that should not be present in children's cartoons, especially when children are left alone and unsupervised at home. The King in "Kirby" is rude and arrogant. He tells his citizens to "buzz off", and "get out of my freaking way". This program is not recommended, yet it is not as violent as some of the others, but it still does not promote positive and appropriate behavior.

"The Cramp Twins" falls into a worse category. In one of the episodes watched about a family of four, the daughter wanted to be her brother, since she felt like her father ignored her. Her father, who was missing his front tooth, and only approved of and loved his son. The daughter wanted to be like her brother to be approved by her father. She began acting like a boy. This cartoon defined being a boy as being rude, gross, and repulsive. Some examples of these were burping, eating with no utensils, and speaking with your mouth full. This is the behavior that was deemed appropriate enough to broadcast on a Saturday morning cartoon. It also encouraged bad behavior and appalling language.

Television Programs on ABC

Another network that broadcasts cartoons is ABC. The ABC network motto for Saturday morning is "illuminating television" and a little light bulb turns on. The programs are not the same as CBS and FOX, but many of the commercials are the same, or have the same concept. The cartoons that were watched in this time frame were "Fillmore", "Recess", which is shown twice back to back, and "The Proud Family". They are very different from the FOX network, in that they are more educational, with minor cases of deviant behavior, but these three were very interesting and quite educational.

"Fillmore" is a very interesting cartoon, although I would not rate it as anti-educational, the lessons to be learned may be difficult for some children to grasp, depending on their age and level of maturity or cognitive development. The theme song for this cartoon reminded me of the James Bond theme song, and it displayed children looking like and acting like detectives. This episode began with some children stealing scooters, by pushing other children off them. Next the principal of the school, who is female, hires a boy and a girl to find these child thieves, and to get to the bottom of who was stealing the scooters and why. The nicknames that were heard throughout the cartoon were nicknames like "Fingers" and "Goatcheese". The children spies and the principal meet in the middle of the lake to discuss some information, findings, and possible solutions for the school ground theft. The river scene looked to me like it was taken from an episode of the Sopranos; it was just not necessary.

The mastermind behind the whole plot was a boy who tried to make money by reselling the scooters to Russia for a profit. The group of boys and girls who were working for this boy did it to make money for one of their teachers dog, who

needed a hip replacement operation. The children said they were sorry, were reprimanded, and the principal of the school paid for the dog's operation. All in all this was not a bad show, some children were thieves and others were safety patrollers. I would recommend this show to older children, because younger children may not understand the lesson, or message, but they may understand and remember the children pushing others off their scooters and stealing them.

"Recess" is produced by Walt Disney. This is gender neutral, in that boys and girls make up a gang in school, although they are not your "ideal" students. Indeed they were deviant. Interestingly, the girls were portrayed as tomboys, and were presented as having more boy stereotypical traits than girls. What is also interesting about this program is that a warning sign appeared right before the program, informing parents that "This is an educational program". They fail to realize that most parents do not sit down and watch television with their children, so there does not seem to be much purpose in rating programs, in written form, especially in cartoons. This particular program, although was rated as being educational, was not. The gang of friends shown on television, laughed at the principal, the teachers, at other children, and at each other. They hypnotized the principal and made him change the rules in favor of the children, and they also locked him out of his office, and took over the intercom. One of the girls in the cartoon was also shown yelling to her parents, since she refused to go to school. In a nutshell, they were rude, ill-mannered, impolite bullies. Educational? I think not. Thus both boys and girls are being socialized into attitudes and behaviors which are anti-educational and also violent, but it is gender-neutral.

The second episode of "Recess" was much better, it was all about the class election, and the candidates for the election. This episode taught about

democracy, and how people vote for who they want to represent them. They nominated a boy named Vincent, and a girl named Gretchen. Even though they were very good friends, the election remained fair. Of course they tried to get their friends, and each others friends to vote for them by bribing them but it was a civil election. Gretchen ended up winning because of Vincent's vote. He voted for her because he thought that she would make a better president, and representative, and would make many positive changes to the school environment and to the students available sources. This show was very gender neutral, and it portrayed girls in a very positive and non gender stereotypical way. This would encourage girls to go for presidential elections whether it be for their school or country.

The next episode of "Recess" was also quite good. Gretchen who is depicted as a nerd or geek, because of her big round glasses, crooked teeth, long braids, and her highly intelligent nature, wanted a new bike. When all of her classmates did not do their homework, she presented her teacher with a very lengthy paper on "the male members of the constitution developing a gender bias in society", Wow! This advocates female education and success. Gretchen, is envied for her intelligence, and is asked by one of her classmates to do his homework for money, which leads to Gretchen doing everyone's homework, and making enough money to buy her bike. She is then struck with guilt, and gives all the money back, and decides to tutor all of her classmates and friends for free. In appreciation, they put their money together to buy Gretchen the bike that she had wanted. This is an excellent lesson on helping your friends learn, and being thankful. Although it does seem a little materialistic, they wanted to pay her back for her kindness and goodness.

The third and last cartoon was "The Proud Family". It was educational, non-violent and gender neutral, and therefore I would rate it as one of the best children's programs on Saturday morning. The program is about a Black American family, who are neighbors with a Latin American family, and it teaches children about races, genders, ethnicity, respect, and being different. For example, this episode was about a girl who had extremely big feet, though she was first laughed at by her neighbors they helped her accept her body, by explaining to her that everyone is different and everyone has something that they don't like about themselves. It taught individuality, friendship, and most importantly, parents talking and supporting their child. It did not portray gender stereotypical roles, since the husbands were shown cleaning, and cooking, and the wives were telling their husbands what to do and how to do it. There is one son in the Proud Family but he only gurgles since he is a little baby, and there are no sons in the neighbors family either. The daughters were shown to be smart, outgoing, and athletic. Often the episodes are about father and daughter issues, where the father sets the tone and the rules for the daughter, but the father is told of them by the wife. So the father is the symbolic head of the family, but the mother is the real head: a sort of gender equality? This program is educational because it displays gender-neutral environments, and there are important life lessons and values to learn. Important to note are the lessons and values that are taught and learned on this show. They are understandable, and they make sense. More cartoons like "The Proud Family" are needed.

On another episode of "The Proud Family", I still have the same reviews, that it is a good educational cartoon. The theme song is very hip and interesting, which makes you want to watch. This episode begins with grandma, Sugar Mama, watching wrestling and beating her son numerous times at arm wrestling.

The father in this cartoon, is not your typical male, he is bossed around by his wife and mother, and he does not make many decisions in his house. His wife had blocked out all the "chic" and sports channels so they, along with their neighbors can go out on a date. Even though the husbands thought that this was a horrible idea, they went. The husbands were brought to a massage parlor where they were massaged by a big man who resembles and speaks like "Mr. T". The women conversely, were massaged by two great looking male characters. Not very typical for a massage parlor, the men are usually massaged by women. They were rather disappointed.

In the meantime their daughter goes out to the fair with three of her friends, and meets four other guys. All four girls wanted the "good looking fellow", but Penny Proud ends up with an overweight boy, named Carlos, who is too big to fit on the rides, and he is teased by his friends and hers. Penny's friends' dates end up being jerks, while Carlos is a swell and fun guy. Back at home, her father is upset at the thought of his daughter dating, especially dating an overweight boy. Penny explains to her father that his appearances are not important, rather he was a nice, sweet, smart, and brave person. Our society is dealing with a new issue of obesity in children. Whatever the facts or reasons may be, we have to teach children to accept people for who they are, and not by what they look like, or own. This is an excellent lesson to learn. It is very clearly, and simply portrayed. All children of any age would understand the lesson to be learned. This is not a violent cartoon. It enhances learning and education, and accepting of differences among people in your neighborhood or society. It covers issues of gender, race, ethnicity, obesity, and family interaction. This cartoon also has an advertisement that promotes reading. The motto is, "Read together,

learn together. Learn with people you love". This is a fabulous program for children.

Television Programs on CBS

The CBS network begins their cartoon broadcasts at 10:00 on Saturday mornings. The cartoons that fit into my time frame are "Chalk Zone", "Hey Arnold", and "Rugrats". "Chalk Zone" is not a very exciting or zestful cartoon, it is rather boring and dull. The characters on this cartoon are drawn with chalk, so the picture and colors are not as vivid as the other cartoons, so it probably does not do well with the children. The content of the program is not substantial, and there are not many lessons to learn. It may be anti-educational at times, but it is not as violent and as graphic as the programs on FOX, "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles", and "Ultimate Muscle".

"Hey Arnold" is a more animated cartoon, which appears to be more appealing to children due to the bright colors and content, but it is not educational. This cartoon portrays a little girl named Helga who pushes around and punches everyone in school. Teasing is seen quite a bit in this cartoon as well as names like "nutjob", which she is called by her father, and her mother says she "needs a smoothy". In one of the episodes she is forced by the principal to see a child psychologist. Once at the psychologists office she tells her that she has been in love with Arnold since preschool, she also tells the shrink, "if you tell anyone I will rip your tongue out of your mouth and wrap it around your neck". The shrink finds this very amusing, and tells her that it is okay for Helga to be rude and obnoxious to her friends and family if it helps her deal with her problems and her secret of loving Arnold. This type of behavior is being encouraged not only in this cartoon through Helga, but also through a professional psychologist in

the cartoon. Behavior like this should not only be prohibited from being shown, but it should not be encouraged and reinforced as proper behavior. It is not okay for children to push, punch, be rude, and call their parents stupid, but it is these types of programs that are reinforcing misconduct, and anti-social behavior.

“Rugrats” is not any better. “Rugrats” is about five little toddlers being bossed around by another child, Angelica, who is a few years older than them. Angelica who is a rude little girl tells her father, “I want a baby sister and I want it now”. Her father astonished from her tone of voice begs her to calm down and tells her that he will speak to mom about it. This is ridiculous. The roles of who is disciplining who has changed, and now we know why. Depiction’s like these should, once again, not be shown on television because they should not be taught to children as being proper behavior. In continuing with the content of the cartoon the other toddlers seem like they are not able to speak properly, so there are words like, “night scare”, instead of nightmare, “gooder” instead of better, “beautifulist” instead of most beautiful, and “polkaspotted” instead of polka-dotted. In a society where children are already having a difficult time reading and writing, I think it is important to present them with proper phrases and words so that they don’t develop speech problems and difficulties in word or sentence structuring, in addition to their reading and writing.

Whatever happened to the “Flintstones”, “Smurfs”, or “Bugs Bunny”, which although they displayed many scenes of violence with Yosemite Sam shooting at Bugs Bunny, and the coyote falling off cliffs, and being blasted, it still seemed better than what is being shown today. The “Flintstones” is a comedy that is very stereotypical and it portrayed two idiots, Fred and Barney, getting into trouble, but it was innocent and non-violent. Even though they hit each other with a bone or a

club, it was a comedy, intended to make us laugh and not act out in violent behavior. Violence in these cartoons was purely symbolic and visual, unlike the cartoons "Ultimate Muscle", and "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles". While the "Smurfs" seemed like a great show in terms of the teachings of morals and values, the show presented only one girl, Smurfette, in a clan of one hundred boys. Whereas the boys had no hair, Smurfette had long blond hair and high heels. Neither the "Flintstones" nor the "Smurfs" were gender egalitarian, but at least the roles were reversible (Flintstones), and it displayed only symbolic violence. It was purely comedy.

"Scooby Doo" is still presented and still remains to be a wholesome, gender neutral, and educational program, since it has two females, two males, and a dog, and they all contribute to unraveling a mystery. There are other great children's programs on television like "Clifford The Big Red Dog", "The Magic School Bus", "Franklin", "Where in the World is Carmen SanDiego"?, "Corduroy Bear", "Arthur", "Jay Jay the Jet Plane", and "Wish Bone", among many more, but none are being shown on Saturday morning when children are most likely to watch television. These shows also have associating books, rather than toys, so they promote reading and not violence.

Children's TV and Sex Role Perception

We tend to look at television as a means of entertainment, but it is also a resource for information, whether it be explicit or implicit. It may give us direct facts and information and it can also provide valuable lessons, and experiences that we can relate to in our lives. Society holds set expectations for men and women, which are usually not the same for each sex, rather a system of socially set stereotypes that are superimposed on males and females. Sex stereotypes

can be limiting for boys and girls in the toys that they can play with or in the way that they should play. Television and advertisements geared towards children, will demonstrate this, and show children the system of socially determined stereotypes, so that children can learn, absorb and model them. Gunter and McAleer have studied children and television and have found that, "to assume that television can impact upon a passively receptive child audience with messages about sex stereotyping, thus molding innocent young viewers' conceptions of gender is largely accepted as an oversimplistic picture of what really goes on" (Gunter & McAleer, 1997: 73). Viewers, they believe, are able to choose what to watch, when to watch, what to pay attention to, and what to remember from watching television.

In a small number of surveys, they found that heavy viewers held stronger beliefs than younger viewers, in what the researches found to be a stereotyped direction; but they failed to mention what younger children actually absorbed from their watching. Further research conducted on forty boys and forty girls showed that heavy viewers were more likely to choose toys in a sex stereotyped of way. Although this study has a lot of gaps, they concluded that children learn about traditional sex roles from television (Gunter & McAleer, 1997).

Cartoons & Programs on PBS

The cartoons and programs shown on PBS, on Saturday mornings or on any other day, are mostly rated as educational. Examples of these are "Sesame Street", "Dragon Tales", "Clifford The Big Red Dog", "Jay Jay The Jet Plane", and "Kids Bookworm Bunch". By educational this would mean that there is no violence, instead there is a focus on learning values, ABC's, shapes, colors, numbers, and songs. It creates an interest in learning and in preparing for

school. In interviewing the same ten children, the five girls and one boy watched more programs broadcasted on PBS, than the other networks. Four boys, on the other hand, watched violent cartoons like "Ultimate Muscle", and "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles". Only one of the boys said that he used to watch "Ultimate Muscle" but his mother says "that it is too violent, because all they show is fighting". By watching these cartoons, parents are able to see at first hand what the cartoons are about and how some may be harmful for their children. An article that looked at adult behavior 15 years after exposure to violence on television argues, "kids who watch violent TV shows, who identify with aggressive television characters and think TV violence is realistic are more likely to be physically aggressive as young adults" (The Gazette, Mar 2003). The study also mentions that men who watch a lot of violence on television are more likely to abuse their spouses. We have enough violence in the world, why depict it in children's cartoons, especially when these are the possible outcomes or consequences.

Commercials for Girls

The commercials on television almost all target either girls or boys specifically. For the girls, there is the new Barbie which is the regular looking Barbie, only that you can cut her hair as you wish, although there was no mention of whether it will grow back. The Barbies vary in color of skin, hair, and clothing, so that a little girl can demand the whole series. No boys were shown in these commercials, therefore making it a girl's product. Another new toy is Curly Q's, which is another product for girls. It presented three girls playing with three very similar dolls and they were styling and curling the dolls hair into different wavy patterns and styles. Once again there were no boys in the commercial playing with the dolls. What is the gender role or gender message we are giving to girls?

Your hair style is very important and if you don't like it it can be changed. What do girls learn from the product? Girls are being guided into an adult career of hairdressing, and beauticians. They are being socialized or steered into what some have called the "pink collar ghetto" careers of hairdressers, beauticians, estheticians, waitresses, nurses, etc.

Given the commercials, and the cartoons and the toys, it would seem that the so called postmodern society is in many ways very similar to the societies against which Wollstonecraft, de Beauvoir and Steinem have protested for so long.

Along the same lines as Barbie is a new doll named Polly. Polly is a cute looking doll that rides in a limousine (which is sold separately), and has fabulous clothes, costumes, and wigs, that can be changed, depending on the night's destination or event. The purpose of this toy? When girls get older, they need to look good, and ride in a limousine to be a star. Great accomplishment in teaching children to be smart, ambitious and successful. Girls are being socialized into the beauty mystique, the "all looks and no brain syndrome", and the boys "do" and girls "are" syndrome also.

An interesting toy that has been produced for girls, since they are the only gender shown, is Fur Real Friends, which are cute little furry cats that girls can cuddle and sleep with. The commercial shows three little girls playing with three different colored kittens and they are hugging and kissing them. Part of the selling tactic heard during the ad is "the more you love it, the more it moves. Batteries not included", and "more than friends they are a part of the family". If a parent cannot or does not want to get a pet for their child, this might be a good

product to buy, but the fact that it needs batteries to show love, becomes totally absurd to the concept of what it means to give love and receive it. A motto that is associated with girls' B-Styling toys is "be strong, cute, and independent". This toy consists of buttons that you can decorate yourself which can be stuck on clothes, hats, and shoes.

Another gender stereotypical toy for girls is the Mini Miracle Babies. These are dolls that a girl can put to sleep, but first she has to feed her in her highchair, later place her in her swing, and rocker, and then into her crib. All the baby accessories are shown on the ad and are sold separately. This educates little girls how to play the mother role. Being a mother is very important, but it is also imperative that girls learn to accomplish and succeed educationally, or in the workforce, and not only succeeding as a mother. The options for a girl are very limiting and they need to be broadened, expanded, and developed.

Some other products that were advertised for girls and also found at Toys 'R' Us were What's That Face Doll, and Get Glam Styling Head Barbie. They are both dolls that girls can fix their hair into different styles, and with various accessories, and in which you can also do their make-up. The Barbie head is exactly that, a big Barbie head that stops at the shoulders, which looks a little odd in a bedroom or play room, but it sits nicely on a desk or a dresser. Once again these are not very educational toys. It teaches girls how to look beautiful by doing your hair a certain way and by applying make-up to your face. Girls are being taught to be flimsy, and superficial.

Commercials for Boys

Some of the commercials that are produced for boys shown on Saturday mornings, are Kool-Aid commercials, Nintendo, and Zoids. Both boys and girls drink Kool-Aid, yet the commercial showed the Kool-Aid character snowboarding with three other boys, no girls were shown in this advertisement. Most advertisements that are shown outdoors, either engaging in play, sports, or some other activity are usually targeting boys. On the other hand, girls are shown playing indoors, in their bedrooms, in a quiet setting, and usually with other girls. If girls understand and accept ads as being the truth, and as a guide of what it means to be a female, then they will become very limited in their skills, both physically and socially. It seems that girls are being taught to be relating, and boys are taught to conquer, be active, physical, have fun, and explore their environment. Another commercial presented to boys was Zoids. Before I saw this commercial I had no idea what this product was. It is an extended, and advanced version of the old transformers. Children can manipulate these toys into human-like, or animal forms, even if it is not educational, it still develops fine motor skills, and memory. Once again girls were not shown in this commercial. The other commercial Splastic, is a new product on the market that resembles bouncing putty. In this ad, the boys are playing and the girls are watching. This reinforces the aged notion that girls are prim and proper and boys can roll in the mud and get dirty!

Other commercials that are geared towards boys, because they only are shown are for Gogurt, which is a new product on the market for yogurt on the go, hence, Gogurt. Boys in this commercial are seen skateboarding around town, and when their gogurt gets splattered on a window of a restaurant they lick it up with their mouth and tongue, who can't resist!

The ads for children's toys on television replicate how gender itself is advertised. Erving Goffman states, "function ranking is also pictured among children, albeit apparently with the understanding that although the little actors are themselves perfectly serious, their activity is not" (Goffman, 1976 : 34). In the advertisements shown on television, children are being displayed and depicted in gender stereotypical ways. Adding to the gender stereotypes is the reinforcements of them through the ads for the gender appropriate toys which are being defined by the advertisers and producers for children's toys and products.

Commercials for Both Boys and Girls

There are a few gender neutral commercials which presented both boys and girls. Most of them advertised foods, like cheese, cereal, and McDonald's. McDonald's has a new advertisement which shows Ronald McDonald sitting at a table with about six little friends, and he asks them: How would you help a friend? Some children respond, "I would listen to him", "I would tell them jokes", "I would give them a hug", etc., Ronald responds, "I would give them a Happy Meal from McDonald's!" This is teaching children to be very materialistic. In addition, it is also equating happiness with eating, and specifically with eating high fat foods, which plays a major part in the increasing problem of child obesity. Although the children all gave great responses, they are being told to give their friends a hamburger and fries, instead of being caring and loving. The McDonald's commercial also advertises the toys that are being given with Happy Meals which are the toys from the new Walt Disney movie, The Jungle Book. A double whammy. The selling of hamburgers, and the advertising of a Walt Disney movie, all wrapped up in one little bag to go, called a Happy Meal. Among the competition is Wendy's which gives out little Monster trucks for both boys and

girls whom of which both are shown on ads, and Burger King who also portrays both boys and girls, while advertising Sponge Bob toys with every kids meal.

Along the same lines are the Walt Disney commercials for their new movies coming out like Inspector Gadget, and Winnie the Pooh. Although they both look like great movies, we can't assume that they are just because they have the Walt Disney label on it, since many of the movies need some parental guidance, for example, Peter Pan, and the pirates get a little rough with each other, and Lilo & Stitch is about a little girl adopting a pet who is really a little Martian. Monsters Inc. is another movie that is all about monsters, but they are good monsters, yet, for a child, there is nothing good about a monster when they are lying in their beds at night trying to fall asleep. Children are scared, and some should not be exposed to such movies.

Commercials for Play Doh's, play dough, and Splastic also present both boys and girls. The play dough commercial showed a boy and a girl playing together, with a new line of play dough with a tropical theme and tropical scents. The boy and girl were shown both equally in time and space, not one seemed superior than the other.

Cereal Commercials

Numerous commercials for children's cereal is marketed for both boys and girls, though they are usually not portrayed in the same ways. For example the ad for Cocoa Puffs, shows boys being physical and skateboarding, while the girls are shown eating. Along with this is Reese's Puffs. This cereal ad presents boys playing instruments in a rock band, and then eating cereal, but no girls are seen anywhere throughout the commercial. Contrarily to this is Honey Combs cereal,

which portrays a young teenage girl playing with a PC game, and within her game she explodes into the kitchen, to have her mother give her a bowl of cereal.

Both boys and girls eat cereal. Even if they may like different brands, they both should be shown in every commercial, in order to maximize the ads to its potential, both in what is learned from the ads, and also to maximize the potential consumers possibilities in buying the product. Pebbles cereal also advertises on Saturday morning but they include the cartoon characters of "The Flintstones", Fred and Barney to sell their product. For these cereals, Barney always dresses up like someone or something else to steal Fred's cereal. Because no human boys and girls are shown, it is geared towards both boys and girls, and not one or the other are displayed as gender stereotypical.

Flyers

Advertised in the flyers for the spring and summer are bikes, in particular BMX, which are bikes that are usually designed and geared towards boys. In the Zellers flyer, there are three different models, and they are marked to be boys bikes. There is not one bike that is either designed for a girl, or written to be a girls bike, the Barbie bikes probably did not go well for this weeks advertising strategy. The fact that bikes for girls are not advertised sends out the message that girls should not be on bikes, because bikes are made for boys. Instead, for girls, they have included a half page advertisement on the various Barbie summer accessories available. These include, swimming goggles, floats, beach ball, fins, floaters, and pool, all pink and all labeled with Barbie image and logo. The message here is girls should be swimming and sun bathing in style. Furthermore, there are available for girls, the complete Barbie set of tennis, badminton, boom bat, and catch set, once again all pink and all with the Barbie logo. Although this

may encourage girls to exercise, be outdoors, and move around, it is still limiting because hitting a ball is not challenging, it is also very repetitious, and boring.

The Visit to Toys R Us

In the commercials that I have watched there are no commercials on Spiderman, or Tonka Trucks, yet in walking into Toys 'R' Us, this is all you see. There is a definite distinction and division in Toys 'R' Us from the boys toys and the girls toys. In the girls department all that is found are Barbie type dolls, child size Barbie clothes or costumes, and household appliances. In the household appliances a little girl can get an oven, stove, microwave, countertop, and sink all in one, they also have these sold individually, for example, the sink with a counter, a stove, oven, and microwave, or a washer and dryer. None of the household appliances were found in the boys' section. The Fur Real Friends (cats) were found in the "baby section" or toys for ages one to three, but they were not as soft or as friendly as they seemed on television. The toys were found to be very gender stereotypical, even though many women, these days, do not even know how to use some household appliances, other than a microwave. Although women have gone through many changes through the women's movement, and have gotten away from being homemakers, and housewives, the toys have stayed in a Betty Crocker stage, and have not evolved with the times.

The boys had the fun toys. The boys department had displays of toys that depicted and encouraged violence. Some examples are wrestling characters, characters from "Ultimate Muscle", G. I. Joe looking combats including army tanks, and guns, toys from "The Incredible Hulk", and numerous and endless toys on Spiderman, which also included a Spiderman figure dressed in camouflage. In this section there was not anything pink, no fantasy dress up section, and no

household appliances. Most of the toys were anti-educational, and would lead to a play time of fighting or of violent behavior. While the girls are cooking up a storm, the boys are creating one. The toys that are available to both boys and girls are at the extreme of being gender stereotypical. The toys cannot be presented more stereotypically than they are now. The polarities between them is incomprehensible, and will create more harm than good in our society.

The Saturday morning cartoons are not totally divorced from reality: They both reflect and recreate gendered behavior. Without wishing to develop another theses on children's playground behavior, even minimal observation indicates the close relation between boys and girls in the box and in the playground.

Observation of Children

Given the differential presentation of women and men, girls and boys, in both the visual and the print media, it would be surprising if the play of boys and girls did not sometimes reflect (as well as reinforce) these differences. Indeed in the preschool where I teach, the differences in physical and large motor play, is very evident. In the winter, when our playground was covered with snow, we let the children play with sleds, and shovels. In the instant when the shovels are taken out the boys attack them, of course it is because none of the boys want to be stuck with the pink one. Ironically, the boys would rather be included and play with the boys using a pink shovel, than not having one at all. Out of the snow, the boys built igloos, volcanoes, and mountains. The girls, contrarily either walked around together, or lay in the sleds to be pulled by someone. They would sometimes pull their friends around in the sleds, but rarely were they found shoveling or building something.

During spring and summer outdoor play time, girls often roam around not knowing what to do, while the boys are busy hanging, or jumping on anything in sight. Our playground has slides, seesaws, sand box, a play house, and an asphalt area for games like basketball, or soccer. The boys usually play in the sports area, while the girls play in the house or on the slide, rarely will a girl last the whole play time doing sports.

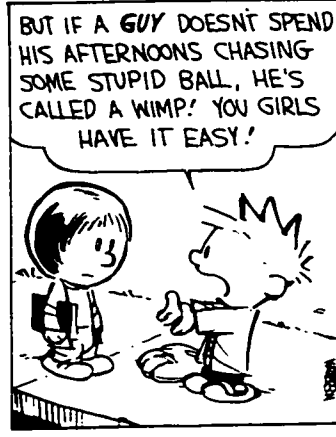
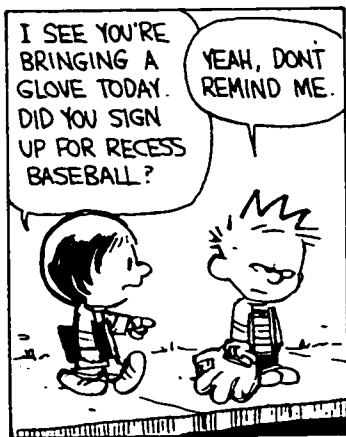
The “outside” play toys requested by boys mirror the outside play of the boys in school. Conversely, the girls seem happier inside, or talking with their friends, rather than engaging physically with each other, and with boys. Even in pre-school, boys and girls live on Mars and Venus (Gray, 1992).

In my observation of the four year olds I teach, unless they have toys they are not able to play. On one occasion, toys were taken out of the classroom to wash while the children were napping; so that afternoon the children did not have their toys. Not only did the children feel like they couldn’t play, but they also felt like they were being punished, since some of their toys were taken away.

Conclusion

Parents seem to take for granted that all cartoons are educational, wholesome, and good programs to watch. What they fail to see is that the values and sex roles that are taught through these commercials and programs may not teach their child about manners, about setting aspirations or ambitions, or about how to treat others around them. Parents do not watch cartoons, and their children will often glue themselves to a television set until it is turned off. Yet this flickering baby-sitter is, at least on the commercial channels, teaching their children stereotypical sex roles rather than expanding possible gender identities,

violence, anti-educational attitudes and behavior and anti-familial attitudes and behavior. Cartoons marketed as entertainment are, as Ewen, Kline and others have noted, marketing for profit; and as feminists have noted, marketing traditional sex roles. This is probably not what parents want. Children are watching violent and destructive, sexist and anti-educational television programs, therefore, parents should also be available to explain appropriate behavior, and clarify how their children should understand and identify with what is shown.



Chapter 6

Conclusion

The material culture is presented to us through the media, as well as the mall. The images that we see influence the way we think, and in the way we buy and consume the products advertised. They teach a way of life, and build an emotion of consumer helplessness, since the media, and advertisements strike us at any time of day, in many forms. Children learn to recognize McDonald's before they are even able to speak, and are able to recognize cereal boxes by the commercials seen on television. As children, many of us looked for Ronald McDonald in each restaurant, and learned to equate happiness, and togetherness by going to McDonald's, and eating fast food, all because of television, and advertisements.

In this research I have drawn several conclusions from the different methodologies employed, in surveying parents, in observing children every day, and in interviewing them. Also, after watching children's television cartoons and advertising myself, I have listed a few recommendations to help parents deal with television programs and advertisements, and suggested how they can guide and teach their children to be active and critical viewers.

Indeed the values of advertising and cartoons are not necessarily those of the family, the school or the society. They may be antagonistic to those of our core institutions. One authority asserts : "Advertising can be described as dry rot. If society is pictured as an old building, advertising can creep in undetected and affect its very fabric, influencing the basic moral and spiritual values the culture holds dear" (Young, 1990 : 2). The same, I suggest, applies to most cartoons.

The child is socialized, through the media, to want things, to consume products and goods. Yet the consumption of so many toys has resulted in the rapid deterioration of child's play and imagination. Children have been intoxicated by the mass media, and they are not able to think and create without the products that have been produced to enhance their creativity, not destroy it.

Stereotypes of femininity and masculinity split up human qualities between females and males. Interestingly, a quality that is stereotyped as feminine may be equally prevalent in both boys and girls, but because it is associated with girls or femininity, it may be devalued and thus unacknowledged in men. Usually female traits, like caring, are expressed differently in men. They may not express it in cuddling, feeding, and washing, but it may be expressed in working long hours to make money. Because it is assumed that gender stereotypes reflect culturally prescribed beliefs about gender, one might also assume that as society's views of females and males change, the content stereotypes will, hopefully change as well.

1 = Both programs and commercials tend to target specifically either boys or girls, and both are presented as bi-polar stereotypes.

At present there is a disjunction between the values of television programs and advertisements and the values of family and school. Programs and ads are teaching children that it is okay to yell at your parents, be rude, to fight, and be violent. It is also teaching them that certain products are "suitable" for each gender, for example, the toys that encourage domesticity, caring, and sharing are being sold to girls and violent, and action toys are being sold to boys. This does not reflect reality, since it is not stereotyped and divided as it is portrayed and taught on television. Stereotypes have changed and continue to change. Girls

have the same if not more opportunities than boys in any career path, or as children, to play with any toy they want to play with. It seems as if television programs and advertisements have been left behind in the progress or changes that have been made. Yet, although girls are being presented with dolls, household appliances, and beauty products, in reality they get beyond it. Boys seem to keep the super hero and violent behavior longer than girls keep their dolls. The cartoon violence probably transfers into aggression and competition rather than boys physical violence in maturity.

Sex role socialization in the children's media prepares children for an adult world in which men are expected to be instrumental, conquering, controlling, and unemotional and in which women are expected to be expressive, and emotional. Thus, sex role socialization prepares us to be highly competent in some respects and limited in others. Of course, many people are perfectly comfortable with the traditional sex roles. It seems evident, however, that just about everyone will benefit when the more stereotyped and burdensome aspects of sex roles are set aside.

"The average North American child spends more time in the first fifteen years of life watching television than in any other waking activity. To children the media is the most potent and pervasive source of information about their social world" (Lips, 1988 : 227). My research has shown that there are differences in boys' and girls' commercials and programs. Ads for boys are action packed, frequent cuts, loud, outdoors, have sound effects, and many scene changes. On the contrary, girls commercials have soft background music, are indoors, and have female narration. Without having to watch the commercials, if children listened to commercials the auditory, and not only the visual cues will be enough

for them to determine whether the commercial is directed to girls or boys. As a result, television is, and remains to be a very powerful socializing agent, since it sets the definitions and guidelines to children of what is gender appropriate, from clothes, shoes, food, and toys.

Ads tend to stream boys and girls in opposite and traditional directions. Many advertisements depict boys and girls in different ways. Children associate with what they see on television as a way of life. If boys are being shown playing with one thing, and girls another, then it should be kept that way, without any interference's. There are many differences which also seem to stream boys and girls into different directions. For example, boys are usually shown doing sports, playing outdoors, and playing with cars and trucks, which leads them to being more extroverted, more coordinated, and more competitive. Girls, on the other hand, are shown playing indoors with dolls, either playing alone or with a few friends, which leads them to being introverted, less coordinated, not able to run or jump and not aggressive or competitive. We are teaching girls to be beauty queens, and boys to be Bill Gates.

When watching children's television advertisements it is very clear the gender that it is directed to. Boys are usually playing outdoors, while girls are playing indoors, for example, Gogurt, a new yogurt for children showed boys skateboarding outdoors while the Barbie commercials showed girls playing indoors. A few target both boys and girls like most ads for cereal, play dough, and fast food restaurants. An ad for Cocoa Puffs cereal showed boys skateboarding wildly outdoors, while the girls were eating the cereals indoors. Even if both boys and girls are shown they are not shown in the same way.

One of my recommendations is that all toys be advertised to both girls and boys. We are all born equal. The only way that we can assure absolute equality in our society and optimum gender flexibility, is to make sure that toys, the making, advertising, selling, and buying of them become available to both boys and girls. In slowly changing advertisements and producer tactics we can reduce the gender segregating toys which contribute to the differences in interests and traits found in very young children. In creating gender neutral environments we are informing and teaching parents that it is good for children to be exposed to all toys, and not only gender specific toys.

2 = Parents probably underestimate the number of hours that their children watch.

My survey on parents found that almost 50% of the children watched 5 hours of television a week. Yet children are very aware of products and programs shown on television. It seems difficult to believe that this type of knowledge and interest in television is developed in less than 5 hours. Furthermore, this finding is contradicted by the vast mass of other research which suggests that they seriously underestimate the hours of television that their child watches. The children in my class constantly tell me about new movies that they watched, or about characters on cartoons. Even if a child watched one movie a week, they've already watched an hour and half. Parents should keep a log of the programs, and the number of hours a week their child or children watch television.

3 = Interview respondents as young as 4 or 5 years old may not always tell you the truth.

We tend to think that children are innocent, sweet, and honest. I won't generalize this as being true of all children, but out of ten respondents, one of them lied throughout the whole ten minute interview, with a perfectly straight face. The next day I was told by his mother that it was all a lie, but he said he was sorry. Even though his twin brother had very different answers to my questions, I cannot assume that one and not the other was lying, because they both can be lying. Had he not told his mother of his responses, I would have never known. Some children and adults may lie through interviews, or surveys. This is one drawback of these methods; hence the importance of double checking these sources, where possible, or using other methods of triangulation.

4 = Girl's are more willing to play with boys' toys than boys are to play with girls' toys.

The interviews that I conducted showed that girls were more willing to play with boy stereotypical toys than boys were in playing with girl stereotypical toys. In the interview I used Barbie and Spiderman. None of the boys were willing to admit that they would play with a Barbie, because "boys are not supposed to" and "Barbies are for girls". On the other hand, none of the girls said that they wouldn't be willing to play with Spiderman, even those girls who did not have male siblings. Society, and parents, are more open to have girls play with boys toys, and have them be tomboys, then having boys play with girl toys. For the boys there is a fear of feminizing them, or of them becoming sissies, therefore, it is taught and permeated in their heads that boys don't play with dolls and Barbies. Gender identity for boys seems to be more rigid than it is for girls, who are more flexible. This may have implications for career opportunities as they grow older.

5 = What boys and girls say about toys is not what they do given the opportunity.

One of the boys that I interviewed, who has a little baby sister, seemed appalled at the question of whether he would play with a Barbie if I gave him one. Although he said no because he was a boy, and boys don't play with dolls, but he would give it to his little sister, I caught him playing with dolls about fifteen minutes later. Of course I did not draw any attention to it, but I watched him choose a doll, carry it to a carriage, strap the doll in the carriage, and pushed it around the room. He was not playing with any of the boys, but he was looking for someone to play with. Children, in daycare's or schools, will tend to play with toys that they usually don't have at home, because they consider it to be something new. Although he told me that he never plays with dolls, and would not, role playing can be very powerful. Maybe he plays with dolls at home all the time, and lied to me too!

6 = Television programs on Saturday morning teach children to be disrespectful to parents, teachers and others, and violent to their peers and hostile to education.

The Saturday Morning cartoons shown on FOX, CBS, and ABC, that I analyzed, displayed violent behavior and anti-educational attitudes. Children, both boys and girls were shown being deviant and disrespectful in some programs like "Recess" and "Kirby". Other programs were shown to either be violent or encourage violence, for example, "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles", and "Ultimate Muscle". Out of ten programs, only one seemed to be educational, and taught children about races, genders, ethnicity, respect, and being different. Unfortunately, it is the only one show on Saturday mornings, and it is only shown for half an hour on one network, therefore, if children are not watching the

network, they miss out. If parents want to play it safe, then have children watch PBS, whether it be during the weekday or on the week-end. This network, hardly has any advertisements, and ALL the programs are educational and non-violent.

7 = Even at the age of four there is no gender overlap in the demand for toys.

The survey that I conducted demonstrated that boys and girls demand and ask for very different products. Other than a fire truck, that was asked by one of the girls, there were no products that overlapped. Boys did not ask for any dolls, or household appliances, and girls did not ask for Spiderman or Tonka trucks. It is quite amazing that at such a young age children are able to differentiate toys by gender. This goes back to my point that children learn and associate with products shown on television by the gender that is portrayed with each product. Parents also contribute to the learning of gender differences and toys, by not buying them toys of the other gender

Children should explore all toys and not only gender specific toys. Children have to be encouraged to explore gender neutral, or the other gender's toys, along with their own, to stay away from segregating and secluding gender, to what the media defines is appropriate for either boys or girls. In observing children playing there are obvious differences in the toys that girls and boys play with and also in the way that they play with them. Girls tend to play house, mommy, or dress up, while boys play in a physical often constructive manner. Children should learn to be open enough to play with both genders. Boys and girls rarely play with each other, and if a boy is told to play with a girl or a girls toy, they will be reluctant or understand this as being a punishment. Girls, on the other hand, adapt well either way.

8 = Commercial television, in general, has a negative impact on children.

Television, in general, does not have a positive influence on children. If children can avoid watching television, or if parents can have them doing something else, by all means, do it. Other than that one program, called the Proud Family, on ABC, and all the programs on PBS there is nothing valuable to watch on television. Parents also get fooled with the movies that Walt Disney comes out with. Parents seem to associate Walt Disney, with being educational, when Walt Disney is one of the biggest money making enterprises. Those movies are not always educational, and will have language like stupid, and idiot, along with violent scenes of pushing, kicking, and fighting. Saturday morning cartoons promote anti-social behavior, violence, gender polarization, and the eating of fatty and unhealthy foods. Not only does children's television on these three channels teach dysfunctional attitudes and behavior, but it also robs children of their time, imagination, and ability to play.

An important way parents may contribute to their child's understanding and interpretations of media messages, and which will also be beneficial to society as a whole, is to help develop the ability to make good (educational and non-violent) choices of what to watch and what not to. Television and advertising clearly influences both adults and children, it is important that we be aware of its purposes and effects. Advertisers spend billions of dollars each year on television for viewers to buy their products. Though we may sometimes be critical of commercials, we are often persuaded by them rather than our own judgment of what is best. An awareness of possible deception and illusions in commercials can make us better consumers.

In order to be responsible parents and educators we must become very aware, and sometimes critical, of our media environments, and selective about what our children watch. One of my greatest concerns is that parents substitute consumer goods for parental companionship. Although the popular argument is that children should be kept away from television because they don't understand it, it is quite the opposite. Children understand the media too well, and they become such media experts that it becomes frightening for adults. Parents need to be reminded that the television set is not a baby sitting service, more accurately, it is a double edged sword that does harm no matter which way you approach it. Television is a double edged sword since it impedes children from being outdoors, exercising, running, and jumping, developing their large motor skills, and secondly they are being socialized into attitudes and behaviors which are anti-educational and violent.

Parents should ensure that channels are age appropriate for their children. Although some may believe that new technologies will worsen the matter, by increasing exposure possibilities, they may be beneficial. Satellites, and advanced cable systems can change how television viewing cultivates beliefs about social reality, since there is diversity of programming and increased viewer control and selectivity. Yet children can also watch television at a friend's house or relative's house where there is no control and they are able to watch whatever they like. The reverse is also possible. Children who are exposed to many channels will watch programs that are not appropriate for their age group, especially when "latch key" children are home alone after school, until their parents come home from work. The bottom line is, no matter how many channels are available to a child, television programs and viewing should be controlled, and verified for being age appropriate, and educational.

In researching this topic I hope that I will be able to help parents help their children to be critical of what they watch and to help them critically analyze the intents and strategies of advertisers. Children have to learn how to gain control over the constant and huge amounts of information that beg for children's attention every day, and not be controlled by it. Parents should teach children how to watch television, by teaching them the meaning and consequences of behavior seen on certain cartoons, and of buying particular toys, products, or foods. They should also teach them how to create demand, by explaining to their children that many ads are sometimes bad for you. Children are naturally drawn to noises, colors, and laughter, although with experience, children may learn to pay attention if information seems important or relevant, if it is understandable, and if it seems interesting. One important way parents may contribute to their child's understanding and interpretations of media messages, and which will also benefit society as a whole, is to help develop the ability to make good choices of what to watch and what not to.

For further research, I would like to expand my research to include children of different daycare's, in different cities, countries, and also include children of different socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and ages. For example, I have only taken a sample of 40 children who live in the same area, with the same ethnic background.

Television and advertising clearly influences both adults and children, it is important that we be aware of its purpose and effects. Advertisers spend billions of dollars each year on television for viewers to purchase and consume products. Though we may sometimes be critical of commercials, we are often persuaded by

them rather than our own judgment of what is best. An awareness of possible deception and illusions in commercials can make us better consumers.

Nonetheless, even this small study has clarified the socialization portraits of cartoons and advertisements, the values depicted and effectively taught, the time invested in passive watching, the gender polarity of toys advertised, the seemingly greater flexibility of gender identity for girls than boys, and the apparent delusions of many parents about children's viewing habits and toy preferences. My conclusions and recommendations apply primarily to commercial television, but also to public television, and to parents.

Bibliography

- Anthony, Lorrayne. 2003. "TV violence kicks in - years later." The Gazette. 10.3.03.
- Barthes, Roland. 1986, (1957). Mythologies. London: Paladin Grafton Books.
- Brittan, Arthur. 1989. Masculinity and Power. New York: Basil Blackwell, Ltd.
- Buijzen, Moniek, and Valkenburg, P.M. 2000. "The impact of television advertising on childrens' Christmas wishes". Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media. Washington; Summer .
- Butler, Judith. 1990. Gender Trouble. New York: Routledge.
- Chan - Olmsted, Sylvia, M. 1996. "From Sesame Street to Wall Street : An Analysis of Market Competition in Commercial Children's Television". Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media. v. 40.
- de Beauvoir, Simone. 1989, [1952]. The Second Sex. New York: Vintage Books, Random House Inc.
- D'Innocenzio, Anne. 2003. "Convergence R Us." The Gazette. 20.02.03: B1.
- Durkin, K. 1997. Developmental Social Psychology : From infancy to old age. Maiden, MA: Blackwell.

- Ewen, Stuart. 1976. Captains of Consciousness. New York: McGraw - Hill Book Company.
- Ewen, Stuart. 1988. All Consuming Images : The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Ewen, Stuart, and Ewen Elizabeth. 1982. Channels of Desire. New York: McGraw - Hill Book Company.
- Fleming, Dan. 1996. Powerplay : Toys as Popular Culture. New York: Manchester University Press.
- Francis, Becky. 1998. Power Plays : Primary School Children's Constructions of Gender, Power and Adult Work. Oakhill: Trentham Books, Westview House.
- Friedan, Betty. 1974. The Feminine Mystique. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Goffman, Erving. 1976. Gender Advertisements. New York: Harper Colophon Books, Harper & Row Publishers.
- Gray, John. 1992. Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus. New York: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc.
- Gunter, Barrie., & McAleer, Jill. 1997. Children & Television. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.

- Jones, Constance. 1998. 1001 Things Everyone Should Know About Women's History. New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.
- Kline, Stephen. 1993. Out of the Garden : Toys, TV, and Children's Culture in the Age of Marketing. New York: Verso.
- Leiss, William, Kline S., and Jhally, S. 1986 Social Communication in Advertising : Persons, Products, & Images of Well - Being. New York: Methuen Publications.
- Lengerman, Patricia, M., and Wallace R. 1985. Gender in America : Social Control and Social Change. New Jersey: Prentice - Hall, Inc.
- Lips, Hilary, M. 1988. Sex & Gender : An Introduction. California: Mayfield Publishing Company.
- Pecora, Norma, Odom. 1998. The Business of Children's Entertainment. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1984, [1762]. Emile. Trans. Barbara Foxley. London: Everyman's Library,
- Steinem, Gloria. 1983. Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions. New York: New American Library.

- Steinem, Gloria. 1992. Revolution From Within : A Book of Self-Esteem.
Canada: Little, Brown and Company.
- Stockard, Jean., & Johnson Miriam, M. 1980. Sex Roles : Sex Inequality and Sex Role Development. New Jersey: Prentice - Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs.
- Tong, Rosemarie. 1988. Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction.
San Francisco: Westview Press.
- Unger, Rhoda, and Crawford, Mary. 1992. Women and Gender : A Feminist Psychology. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Unnikrishnan, Namita, and Bajpai, S. 1996. The Impact of Television Advertising on Children. California: Sage Publications.
- Van Evra, Judith. 1998. Television and Child Development. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Warren, Ron. Gerke P., and Kelly, M.A. 2002. "Is there enough time on the clock? Parental involvement and mediation of children's television viewing". Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media. Washington; March.
- Weiten, Wayne, and Lloyd, M. 1994. Psychology Applied to Modern Life : Adjustment in the 90's. California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. 1976 [1792]. A Vindication of the Rights of Women : An Authoritative Text. New York: Carol Poston (ed.). W.W. Norton & Company Inc.

Young, Brian, M. 1990. Television Advertising and Children. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Appendices

- A Survey Questions on Television and Advertising (2001)**
- B Survey on Television and Toys (2002)**
- C Survey Results on Television and Advertising**
- D Interview Questions on Children, Gendered Toys, and TV**

Appendix A

Survey on Television and Advertising (2001)

Marietta Damiano

I am doing a research paper on the topic of children and advertising and how it effects children at very young ages. My interest in this topic is due to the fact that children are more aware today of products and brands in the marketplace and are reorienting their priorities to keep abreast with changing economic environment. Children are being taught to accept the ideals presented to them by television and advertising and they are not readied to protect or guard themselves from these influences, they are accepting everything they see as the truth and the ideal.

This topic is so fascinating to me that it may become the topic for my thesis paper. In order for me to do this paper properly and effectively I would like to know if you may take a few moments of your time to respond to this questionnaire. The questionnaire remains nameless which means that it remains anonymous. I am not looking for a way to categorize people, I would like to research or analyze whether there is a positive correlation between television viewing, advertisements, and children's demands on products.

Please return before Tuesday, November 27, 2001.

Questions are not mutually exclusive, therefore you may select more than one response.

Please mark your choices with an X

For analyzing purposes only the boys have been coded as 1 and the girls as 2 to see whether there are differences in responses by sex.

1) Is your child:

- a) Female **48%**
- b) Male **52%**

2) How old is your child?

- a) 2 years old **4%**
- b) 3 years old **78%**
- c) 4 years old **13%**
- d) 5 years old **4%**

3) How many hours a week does your child watch television?

- a) less than 5 hours **46%**
- b) 5 to 10 hours **38%**
- c) 10 to 15 hours **16%**
- d) more than 15 hours

4) When does your child watch television?

- a) In the morning **16%**
- b) In the evening **36%**
- c) At night **5%**
- d) On the week-end **43%**

5) Do they watch more television programs or movies?

- a) television programs ____ **48%**
- b) movies ____ **52%**

6) What type of programs does your child watch?

- a) adult programs e.g. Frasier, or Friends, Law & Order ____
- b) game shows e.g. Weakest Link, Survivor, Jeopardy ____ **3%**
- c) cartoons e.g. Barney, Arthur, Franklin, Sesame Street ____ **54%**
- d) children's movies e.g. The Jungle Book, The Lion King ____ **43%**

7) Does your child ask for products or toys seen on television advertisements?

- a) Yes ____ **78%**
- b) No ____ **22%**

8) Has your child already asked you for their Christmas gift due to an advertisement?

- a) Yes ____ **57%**
- b) No ____ **43%**

9) Would your child rather

- a) watch television ____ **1%**
- b) go out on an excursion ____ **42%**
- c) read a book ____ **24%**
- d) play with toys ____ **24%**

10) Does your child ask for products, advertised on television, that are out of reach (can't afford)?

- a) Yes ____ **32%**
- b) No ____ **68%**

11) Does your child accept everything they see as reality when watching television?

- a) Yes ____ **32%**
- b) No ____ **45%**

12) Can your child make a distinction between what is real and what is make believe when watching television?

- a) Yes ____ **52%**
- b) No ____ **48%**

Thank-you for your time, and if you would like to have the results to this study or a copy of my research paper, it will be available for you upon request.

Please return before Tuesday November, 27, 2001.

Appendix B

Survey on Television and Toys (2002)

December 16, 2002.

Dear Parents,

My name is Marietta Damiano, and I am completing my Masters degree in Sociology at Concordia University. Under the supervision of Dr. Synnott, I am conducting a research on children toys and products, and advertisements on television. The purpose or objective of this survey is to examine whether children learn about toys and products from advertisements on television. For the matter of this research you have been selected as a candidate to complete this survey. Your participation in this procedure is greatly appreciated by myself and the Department of Sociology at Concordia University.

Please complete and return the enclosed questionnaire - it will only take a few minutes- by December 20, 2002. Confidentiality in this research is assured, as your children's names are not required in this survey. You can also withdraw at any time. Let me assure you that the results of this survey are strictly for academic purposes. Again, your participation is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Marietta Damiano

Please circle your response or fill on the given lines

1) Is your child a boy or a girl?

2) How old is your child? _____

3) How would you categorize the toys your child owns?

1) educational 2) enhances creativity 3) popular

4) Name 3 toys or products your child has asked for Christmas. The first being the most wanted, and the third being their least wanted toy or product

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

5) Rank the most likely way your child learned or heard about these products or toys. The first being the most likely way and the fourth being the less likely.

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____
4) _____

Thank-you.

Appendix C

Results of the questionnaire

Sex of Child

Boys = 74% Girls = 26%

Age of Child

4 years = 78% where 72% (b) 28% (g)

5 years = 22% where 80% (b) 20% (g)

Rating of Child's Toys

educational = 28% where 67% (b) 33% (g)

enhances c. = 53% where 70% (b) 30% (g)

popular = 19% where 67% (b) 33% (g)

Most Wanted Toys for Christmas

Girls

- 1) Bread Maker, Easy Bake Oven, Barbie Computer, Play Dough, Barbie
- 2) Lilo & Stitch, Barbie Truck, Barbie telephone, Easy Bake Oven, Make-up, Fire Truck
- 3) Barbie, Picnic Table, Barbie-Barbie-Barbie, Anything she sees on commercials, PC games, Barbies

Most Wanted Toys for Christmas

Boys

- 1) spider man, hot wheels, police station, talking tonka truck, skateboard, etch-a-sketch, hockey game table type, leap pad, puzzles, game boy

2) spider man movie, zoids, dinosaurs, police car, farm, big blue car, Max Steel, Disney movies, transformers, drums, skateboard, leap frog, Power Ranger, Lilo & Stitch

3) sled, educational software ????, Mickey Mouse computer diskette, fire truck, hot wheels, Spiderman DVD, scooter, hockey helmet, laser doodle, robots, clothes, super hero figurines, drums, Christmas song book ??????

Most likely way child learned about these toys.

Girls

1) 100% Television 2) 66% Friends 3) 33% Flyers

Boys

1) 68% television 2) 45% friends or family 3) 64% stores / flyers

Appendix D

Interview Questions on Children, Gendered Toys, and Television

The following questions were asked to the children and their responses were tape recorded.

- 1) What did you get for Christmas?
- 2) What do you want for your birthday?
- 3) Do you watch TV?, What do you watch?
- 4) What would you say if you got a Spiderman (girl) or a Barbie (boy)? Would you play with it?
- 5) How did you find out about Spiderman/ Barbie?
- 6) Can a girl play with or buy a Spiderman? / Can a boy play with or buy a Barbie?
- 7) Do you know what a commercial is?
- 8) What is your favorite toy? / What is your least favorite toy?