



# *Anthropomorphic animals in commercials*

## **Why fake animals tell good stories**

A Master's Thesis for the Degree "Master of Arts" (Two Years) in Visual Culture

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## ABSTRACT

Masters thesis in visual culture

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Animals are often used in advertising, especially in commercials. When given human characteristics, and used in several commercials over a longer period of time, anthropomorphic animal spokespersons are born. These animals are neither real animals nor humans. They are hybrids, or fake animals. Fake in the sense that they are fictive, they lack an existing model and they are an assembly of many things. Commercials that feature such animals are often very successful in that they are popular and increase sales. The fake animals seem to appeal to us and be able to convince us of almost anything. This thesis explains how this is possible.

Two contemporary Swedish advertising campaigns, featuring fake animals as spokespersons (*Bregottfabriken* and *Born to be cheap*) will be the main focus of the thesis. Compositional analyses of advertising campaigns, especially commercials, provide information about how these animals are constructed. The campaigns are analysed and compared to similar campaigns in order to define the circumstances required to create an illusion of personality and life in a fake animal body. Theories of among others, Paul Messaris, Jennifer Lerner, Linda Kalof, and David Pierson are relevant in the analysis.

Animals portrayed in a consequent manner are the ones that are most likely to gain a convincing personality. It is important that the animal is portrayed in a similar way in a series of commercials. But it doesn't necessarily have to be that the animal always inhabits the same setting, variation could function as an indicator of realistic life. Filmic features of the commercial can often compensate for a less realistic narrative. Storytelling is the most efficient way to create a personality and impression of life in an artificial animal.

The illusion of life in manipulated or totally artificial animal bodies is depending on many factors that all has to be tuned in to each other in order to be able to create a convincing image. In both the *Bregottfabriken* and *Born to be cheap* fake animals receive a personality and seem "real" due to a combination of technology, filmic features and narration. Narration and technology often compensate flaws in one another. The most important ingredient in the perfect illusion of a living entity, is that the audience identify with it. Identification with the animals in the chosen campaigns is especially easy, since the animals are portrayed in a wide range of everyday-life circumstances.

Keywords: Anthropomorphic animal, Animal representations, Fake, Artificial, Commercials, Advertising, Storytelling.

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. The fake animal</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Anthropomorphism	4
2.2 The anthropomorphic animal in human history	5
2.3 Anthropomorphic animals in advertising	7
2.4 How to create a fake animal out of the anthropomorphic animal	9
2.5 The fake animal as a convincing storyteller in commercials	11
<b>3. The successful advertising campaign</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 How to measure success	12
3.2 Advertising yesterday and today	12
3.3 The advertising campaign and the commercial	13
3.4 Surplus value, corporate identity and branding	14
3.5 Storytelling commercials	15
3.6 The ultimate advertising image	17
3.7 The successful advertising campaign	20
<b>4. Born to be cheap</b>	<b>21</b>
4.1 The campaign	21
4.2 The fake animal Frank	22
4.3 The commercials	22
4.4 The newspaper advert	31
4.5 The interactive advertising	33
4.6 Happy hour and the total retail solution	35
4.7 Frank compared to other fake animal spokespersons	36
4.8 Conclusions	38
<b>5. Bregottfabriken</b>	<b>41</b>
5.1 The campaign	41
5.2 Storytelling fake cows	43
5.3 The commercials	42
5.4 The Bregott homepage	44
5.5 Conclusions	45
<b>6. Conclusions</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>List of illustrations</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>51</b>

## Introduction

A black sheep called Frank that walks and talks like a human being. Cows sharing their thoughts with us meanwhile they produce butter. It might seem hard to believe, but these animal spokespersons are one of the most successful marketing tricks used in commercials. Animals are often used in advertising, especially in commercials. When given human characteristics, and used in several commercials over a longer period of time, anthropomorphic animal spokespersons are born. These animals are neither real animals nor humans. They are hybrids, or fake animals. Fake in the sense that they are fictive, they lack an existing model and they are an assembly of many things. Commercials that feature such animals are often very successful in that they are popular and increase sales. The fake animals seem to appeal to us and be able to convince us of almost anything. The question is; how is this possible? What is it in the representation of these fake animals that is so appealing and convincing that we love them and trust them?

In order to answer that question the research focus is set on two contemporary and successful Swedish advertising campaigns. The campaigns are Tele2's *Born to be cheap* and Arla's *Bregottfabriken*. These campaigns have been selected because of the fact that they represent two different kinds of anthropomorphic animals, but still seem to be equally successful.

Empirical material from the campaigns, such as commercials, paper advertisements and web ads, has been examined in order to extract characteristics in the anthropomorphic animal representation. The images have undergone compositional analyses, and the storyline in the commercials has been investigated. This has been done in order to characterise *how* the animals are presented, as well as *what* the animals are doing in the commercials. The result has been compared both to traditional ways of representing anthropomorphic animals and to modern theories about persuasive advertising images. The stories told have been analysed and compared to good corporate storytelling methodology. Finally the campaigns have been compared to other similar, but less successful, advertising campaigns in order to define what separates them from the rest and make them successful.

To limit the material only advertising campaigns which depict the same anthropomorphic animals in a series of commercials. Therefore there will be no comparisons to, or discussions about animals in commercials that either not is anthropomorphized, or anthropomorphised but only used occasionally. Further, only photographic images will be discussed.

The relevance of this question is of vital interest today. Because despite the general awareness of manipulated photographic images, the manipulated fake animal spokesperson of the commercial seems to go undetected into our hearts and minds. These animal spokespersons could be undercover agents for agendas that we might not want to accept otherwise, but as easily accept in the form of comforting entertainment. We shouldn't shoot the messenger, but we should create an awareness surrounding these representations. The benefits of the anthropomorphic animals storyteller could perhaps also be used in other settings than the commercial, where in that case also an investigation of the effective animal spokespersons of the commercials have to be done.

Lately there has been an increased academic interest in animal representation in TV-programs and commercials. Most of the work done in the field consists of content analyses, analyses of gender roles etc. Among others, Måns Andersson, David Pierson, Nancy Spears and Jennifer Lerner have done research in this field. Although many interesting finds have been discovered, very little has been stated about the impact that the fake animals in commercials have on us, and why.

The goal of this thesis is therefore to clarify what features that are necessary when a convincing anthropomorphic animal storyteller and spokesperson is to be created. The hypothesis is that the storytelling fake animal is effective because it is being represented basically as anthropomorphic animals always have been depicted, and that we therefore already are used to. That in combination with new technology, make these fake animals seem more real than the real animal. We trust our eyes, and if we at the same time are entertained by what we see, the result can't be none other than dazzling.

The thesis begins with a chapter that accounts for the traditional way of representing anthropomorphic animals. Then follows a chapter that describes what defines good advertising. The following chapters will describe both of the campaigns and discuss the material in relation to previous chapters. The conclusions have a separate section, followed by the list of illustrations and the bibliography.

## 2. The fake animal

In both of the advertising campaigns chosen for this thesis, animals with human characteristics are used to tell us stories. In this chapter, which begins with an odyssey in the historical representation of anthropomorphic animals, we will see that animals have been used for similar purposes since the dawn of man. This chapter will also describe how the anthropomorphic representation is the foundation of the fake animal.

### *2.1 Anthropomorphism*

From cradle to grave we are literary surrounded by images of animals. We grow up with the animal imagery of our children's books, and our school books. We enjoy watching animals on TV. Animal images represent companies, and are to be found on everything from car hoods to cereal packages. In art, the animal image provides us a sense of authenticity, and could be used to picturing the other, or to help us understand more about our selves and the roles we play.<sup>1</sup> The day we die, we might have the image of a faithful dog or a dove attached to our tomb stone.

Animals are virtually everywhere! Or at least, representations of them.

Despite the numerous animal representations that surround us, it is rare to find representations of animals where the animals have not been manipulated. In some cases certain characteristics in the animals have been endorsed, and in others the animal has been reduced to a symbol. The animal is then no longer a pure representation of itself, but a strange hybrid. A crossbreed between reality and fiction, that looks and acts the way we want it to. In most cases that results in animals that looks and acts like us. This is called anthropomorphism.

Anthropomorphism had originally nothing to do with animals that had been given human features. Anthropomorphism was the term used when Gods were given human-like features. However, to make it more complex, ancient Gods often were depicted as animals. Today the term is almost exclusively used to describe animals pictured with human features in art and visual culture.

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<sup>1</sup> Rothfels 2002: 72

## 2.2 *The anthropomorphic animal in human history*

The tradition of depicting anthropomorphic animals is as old as man. Hybrid creations have always fascinated us, from the feline-human hybrid Sphinx to the sheep-human hybrid Frank. In ancient societies, like in Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, Africa and the Latin America, representations of animals were used to explain the world and the human nature. Stories where the humans had been replaced by animals were used to inform and amuse. Everything from creational stories to stories about moral behaviour could be told through fables, metaphors, allegories and analogies. One example of that is the pre-Christian *example literature*, where animals were used to tell moralizing stories that later became known as fables. There the animals were pictured in a rather realistic way, although they were engaged in human activities. Later in the medieval society, example literature developed into *bestiaries* where more stylistic animals told Christian stories.<sup>2</sup> It proved to be very effective to let an animal tell the story.

The use of animals as symbols is perhaps even older than the use of animals as storytellers. For instance in Egypt the *faro*, that indeed was nothing less than a God, was symbolised by a falcon. Thereby even God was symbolised as an animal. Later in Christianity, Jesus Christ became symbolised by a lamb and the evangelists by other animals. Most of these animal symbols were however inherited from the Romans.

During the renaissance the tradition of animal symbolism was perpetuated.<sup>3</sup> Affected by the era of science, the animals were now depicted in a more realistic way. But still they symbolized something other than themselves and were often given human roles. In genre painting, in mythology or religious motif, animals were used to contradict or emphasise meanings. Later the impressionists used animals in order to be able to say things that otherwise couldn't be said. Dogs and cats were favoured in order to emphasise certain things.<sup>4</sup> A dog could easily stand in for a human, in situations where a human image wouldn't be sufficient enough to express emotions or situations. A dog could symbolize freedom or constraint, his master's carnal needs or loyalty, depending on the context. The painter could also depict himself as a dog.

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<sup>2</sup> Kemp 2007:87

<sup>3</sup> Cohen 2008:20

<sup>4</sup> Rubin 2003:101

The impressionists lived in a time where the human-animal relation changed. In the 1800 hundreds the industrial revolution forced people to live in cities, detached from nature. Humans were no longer naturally surrounded by animals, and that is when the nostalgic bourgeoisie became pet owners. This led to a cult around animals that took the form of the animal rights movement, controlled pedigree breeding, dog shows, rat shows, dog fashion, dog autobiographies and pet cemeteries.<sup>5</sup>

This development affected the way that animals were represented. The more human we made the animal, the more fascinating it seemed to be to make the human more animal. Already Titian had painted faces that were half man half lion.<sup>6</sup> Creatures that were half man half beast, were subjects of endless fascination and popular themes in literature, art and theatre. Stories and images concerned about werewolves, Frankenstein's monster and savages were as popular as the story about Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Frankenstein. In cabinets bones from real animals were mixed together in order to create new interesting fantasy creatures that lacked definitions, also known as taxonomy breaks. Sometimes human and animal remains created mermaids and other humanlike hybrids. Freak shows, circuses, spectacles and zoological gardens were all popular events at the time.<sup>7</sup> The fascination of the human-like animal, the hybrid, was not to be diminished despite centuries of scientific orientation.

Anthropomorphic representations of animals are often debated, but at the same time the majority of anthropomorphic imagery passes us by completely undetected and unnoticed. Anthropomorphism has long been considered un-scientific. It is said that anthropomorphism may bring attention to animals that otherwise wouldn't be interesting, but anthropomorphism will not aid the understanding of animals. That may be very true. Still, today a new field of cognitive ethology is emerging, and even Darwin frequently used anthropomorphism to describe why animals acted the way they did.<sup>8</sup>

Even today anthropomorphism dispersed in areas that traditionally are considered scientific. For instance, according to David Pierson, the anthropomorphic way of representing animals also dominate nature programming on TV.<sup>9</sup> By describing the animal activities in human terms, and by certain formal qualities of the images, the animals become anthropomorphic. Such presentations are characterised by close up shots of the animal faces, a storyline with a

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<sup>5</sup> Rothfels 2002:35

<sup>6</sup> Cohen 2008:166

<sup>7</sup> Kemp 2007:157

<sup>8</sup> Daston, D., Mitman, G. 2005:100

<sup>9</sup> Pierson 2005:698



moral, voice over narrations that tells us what the animals feel and the fact that the animals are given names. It is also interesting to notice that the kinds of animals most frequently shown on nature TV, are animals with large eyes and big craniums. Animals that looks like us. Connected to this debate is also the research of Måns Andersson and Miriam Eliasson. They describe how animals are given stereotypical human gender roles in scientific books and programs, and that we most often not even recognize it.<sup>10</sup>

The fascination of the border between animal and human is ancient and universal. It seems to be a form of communication that we are pre-programmed genetically to understand.

### *2.3 Anthropomorphic animals in advertising*

That representations of anthropomorphic animals are effective means for communication, is stated above. When it comes to animal representation in advertising, most of the representations are anthropomorphic.<sup>11</sup>

Per definition, at least one out of the following four criteria has to be fulfilled in order for anthropomorphism to take place in a commercial.<sup>12</sup> The criteria are as follows:

1. The ability communicates like a human being (the animal can speak or read).
2. The ability to express human emotions (the ability to smile or to be sad).
3. The appearance of clothes or other accessories.
4. The ability to do human things (drives a car, go to work, use tools).

There is also a lesser degree of anthropomorphism, called humanization. This takes place when an animal is essentially represented as an animal, but having human speech or thoughts added to the picture.<sup>13</sup>

In “The Animal Text: Message and Meaning in Television Advertisements”<sup>14</sup>, *Lerner & Kalof* point at the different functions that animals attain in commercials. Their six different categories are:

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<sup>10</sup> Andersson & Eliasson 2006:65

<sup>11</sup> Lerner & Kalof 1999:565

<sup>12</sup> Lerner & Kalof 1999:565

<sup>13</sup> Lerner & Kalof 1999:565

Loved ones (the role of family member and pet).

Symbols (for ideas or as logos).

Tools (sledge dogs, riding horses).

Allegories (fertile as a bunny, a bunny replaces a human).

Nuisances (a problem to get rid of with the right product or service).

Animals in nature (often used to connote naturalness, strength and reliability).

As Lerner & Kalof point out, many commercials use animals for multiple purposes, thereby the animals support multiple messages. The anthropomorphic animal was most often found in the allegoric commercials, and most anthropomorphic animals were males. In the allegoric commercials the animal role is often to make a product less intimidating. The choice of type of animal in a commercial was also studied. The study revealed that pets often were portrayed as “the good guys” with a strong persona, while farm animals are seldom individualized. This is also accounted for by *Nancy Spears* who argues for the culturally constructed animal in her article “Symbolic role of Animals in Print Advertising: Content analysis and Conceptual development”.<sup>15</sup> The choice of a particular kind of animal in a particular commercial is affected by what status the animal has in that particular society. In the western society a cow represents wholesome country living and everything fresh and natural. In India the cow gives perhaps other connotations. The “black sheep”-metaphor is only applicable in Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon countries, (that is one reason why *Born to be cheap* is not launched in Russia for instance). According to Spears, anthropomorphic animals are less common in commercials for durables, like technology products, than in commercials for non-durables like food and drinks. That, she interprets, is an effect of the fact that durables traditionally are keener to be presented as serious. Anthropomorphic animals don’t give that impression.

To conclude Lerner & Kalof and Spears theories, the choice of “the right kind” of animal is very important, and the situation where an anthropomorphic animal is used is equally important. Used properly, anthropomorphic animals endorse a product and it is probably safer to connect a brand with an animal than with a celebrity. The positive connotations of the animal will spill over to the product being sold. It could be a really good thing for a product to be linked to an animal. But, of course, it is not always beneficial for the animal being linked to a product. One example that comes to my mind is the *Taco Bell* commercials where an

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<sup>14</sup> Lerner & Kalof 1999:565

<sup>15</sup> Spears 1996:87

anthropomorphic Chihuahua functioning as the company spokesperson. As a result of the advertising campaign, the breed experienced an increased demand, and many Chihuahuas were bought by impulse and soon to be disposed.

#### *2.4 How to create a fake animal out of the anthropomorphic animal*

In order to create a real fake animal, the anthropomorphic representation has to come alive. That could be done in numerous ways. Historically, the automata might have been one of the first serious attempts to create artificial life. Since the renaissance and onwards, mechanically moving artificial animals and humans have been mesmerizing people.<sup>16</sup> There was nothing organic in the automata, only mechanics that imitated a real body.

Taxidermy is another field where man has tried to create artificial life. The tradition to resurrect dead animal bodies in the form of stuffed animals, is many centuries old. However, the process of resurrection left the animal something else than their original animal identity. This was particularly visible in the case of the taxidermy of the 1930-1940's. Real animal body parts were rearranged and added fake parts in order to create a new life form. In all honesty, this was not at all different from the taxonomy breaks exhibited in the cabinets of the past. A frog could be positioned in an armchair smoking a small cigar. The unbelievable was based on the real, and thereby convincing and interesting. The whole point was that it had to be a real frog body, in order for us to accept the unbelievable behaviour it displayed.<sup>17</sup> This kind of manipulation, and anthropomorphism, is still common in modern taxidermy.

Both the automata and taxidermy were based on the notion of the real. But none of the techniques were capable to create a perfect illusion of life.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century a new technology of creating artificial life was developed. The new technology can be said to be the successor of automata and taxidermy. The new technology was a robot technology called animatronics. This technology makes it possible to control the movements and actions of a robot in the shape of for instance an animal. The computer and machinery involved in such robots are capable of creating highly realistic movements. Animatronic figures are today seen in everything from films and commercials, to theme parks

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<sup>16</sup> Weimarck 1992:99

<sup>17</sup> Rothfels 2002:163

and shopping malls.<sup>18</sup> Already *King Kong* was to some extent made by animatronics. But it is perhaps not until *Jurassic Park* that animatronics made its universal break through. This is also the technology used in the *Born to be cheap* campaign.

It is true that animatronics, just as the automata and taxidermy, lacks the index of life.

However, this technique creates a three-dimensional creature that definitely appears more organic than the automata and more alive than the stuffed animals. This creature *is not* alive, but it easily *could have been!*

Automata, taxidermy and animatronics have something in common. They are all about creating life that never existed. They are capable of creating convincing fake animals.

Animals that either doesn't exist or animals that do unrealistic things. But the highly realistic package makes the unreal seems real, and we are convinced at the same time as we are amused.

The techniques described above are superb to use when artificial life is to be created from scratch. But sometimes an existing real animal have to be somewhat manipulated in order to make it look good in the representation. The image of the animal could then be manipulated in a number of ways inside a computer. Through a technique called *Computer Generated Imagery, CGI*, everything is possibly. This technique is commonly used in films and commercials where a real animal is required to unrealistic things. It is also the technology used for special effects in *Bregottfabriken*. With this technology it is possible to place a horse inside a car, or to make a cow perform the locomotion dance. *CGI* is separating itself from automata, taxidermy and animatronics in the way that it actually uses a real animal as a point of departure. Also the result is often good enough to fool almost everyone. Logically we all know that cows don't dance, but the cow's legs are bending in a realistic way, and the pace seems just about right. The grass is gently bending for the weight when the cow's feet plunge in to it. The cow has to be dancing!

In order to create artificial life in a fake animal in a commercial, the best result often comes with a combination of animatronics and *CGI* technology.

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<sup>18</sup> Rothfels 2002:170

### *2.5 The fake animal as a convincing storyteller in commercials*

Scientific or not, anthropomorphism is perhaps the oldest method of animal representation. Further, it is a form of communication that we are most familiar with, both historically and in our everyday lives. Through children's books and fables, we have learned the "anthropomorphic language" and feel comfortable about it. We have seen pictures of animals walking on two legs and talking like human beings since we were babies, and we have learned to listen to them. When the anthropomorphic animal comes alive in three-dimensions due to animatronics and CGI, we will listen even harder.

The "right" anthropomorphic animal in the "right" context will therefore be able to convince us anything, or sell us anything. When the anthropomorphic animal becomes a fake animal, realistically inhabiting its space, the messenger can't be any more convincing.

It is likely that it will have our fullest attention, and it strikes us where we are most vulnerable. In most cases, we won't be prepared and we will react instinctly.

As we should see in the next chapter, fake animals can play virtually every role demanded in a commercial.

### 3. The successful advertising campaign

Advertising can be defined as a non-personal communication from an identified sponsor using mass media to persuade or inform an audience.<sup>19</sup> Today, advertising can take almost any form, and be spread in the most unexpected ways. In this chapter the successful advertising campaign will be defined for later comparisons to the *Born to be cheap* and *Bregottfabriken* campaigns.

#### 3.1 How to measure success

The success of an advertising campaign can be measured in how well known the campaign and the product it market are in the public mind. The success can also be measured in the revenues that spin off products such as T-shirts, posters or mascots generate. The frequency of debates and down loads of commercials on the internet could also be measurements of success. As well as the occurrence of other advertising campaigns that reference or mimic it. Success can also be measured in the awards that an advertising campaign gets. The *Born to be cheap* campaign has for instance been awarded the prestigious price *Guldägget*. According to the criteria above, *Born to be cheap* and *Bregottfabriken* are both successful advertising campaigns, well known and well liked in the public mind.

#### 3.2 Advertising yesterday and today

In the early days of consumerism, advertising was mostly about product information. The advertisements were filled with texts, and the early TV-commercials were nothing more than camera testimonies of product demonstrations.<sup>20</sup> The most important thing was to sell a certain product. Today advertising is very different from what it once was. The most significant change is that commercials of today are less about product information and more about entertainment and experiences, and that the borders between commercials, films and TV-programs has been blurred. This change slowly began after the world war. The ads had to adapt to a society where no one read the ads any more, and the commercials had to be

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<sup>19</sup> Nilsson 2006:22

<sup>20</sup> Berger 2006:123

interesting enough to compete with TV-programs. The commercials started to use humour and ordinary people presenting the products.<sup>21</sup> They sometimes also made fun about the commercial as a phenomenon, and became self-referential in that matter.<sup>22</sup> The formal qualities of the commercial also changed. The commercial became more like a film. This was perhaps a result of the fact that many film directors also directed commercials in the 1980's. Suddenly the same techniques that were used in films were also used in commercials. Animatronics and CGI are introduced, and the way that the story is being told changes.

### *3.3 The advertising campaign and the commercial*

An advertising campaign could be defined as series of advertising messages that share a single idea and theme that appear in different media across a specific time frame.<sup>23</sup> Today it is common for an advertising campaign is launched as a combination of TV-commercials, web ads, bill board ads and ads in newspapers. But there are several other ways of communicating the advertising message. Paul Springer mentions a whole range of inventive and exciting forums for advertising to be spread. He points at the fact that an explosion in new media and new technology has resulted in endless possibilities for a sponsor to communicate a message. And he also accounts for re-thinking of old advertising formats that is in use today.<sup>24</sup> One of the most common media used by advertising today is the internet. In his book *Attention to advertising* Carl Patrik Nilsson describes the interactive web ad.<sup>25</sup> The web ads differ from the TV-commercials in that they don't interrupt a program. They appear parallel to the content of the web site.<sup>26</sup> Web ads, often referred to as *banners*, are good complements to commercials and paper ads. They provide a choice for the viewer; interact with the image by clicking it, or simply ignore it. Actually, web ads are just as effective even if they are ignored, because they appear on the screen parallel to what ever constitutes the main interest of the viewer. Unconsciously we will perceive their message.

The message of the advertising campaign is often spread by buzz. That means that people who have seen parts of the advertising campaign starts to talk about it with others. This way

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<sup>21</sup> Berger 2006:125

<sup>22</sup> Berger 2006:124

<sup>23</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advertising\\_campaign](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Advertising_campaign) 2010-05-15 10:59

<sup>24</sup> Springer 2007:25

<sup>25</sup> Nilsson 2006:80

<sup>26</sup> Nilsson 2006:9

of spreading the advertising message is the prevailing in the two campaigns soon to be examined.

An advertising campaign could also be launched by guerrilla marketing. Guerrilla marketing takes place when an advertising campaign uses unconventional settings when placing its messages. Sometimes the sponsor of the message is not communicated when guerrilla marketing is used. That will make the campaign even more interesting and talked about. In a way, it could be argued that some of the advertising messages in *Born to be cheap* are of that character. Interactive advertising, which aims for potential customers to be active in some how, for instance by clicking an icon on the internet or by using services on a company homepage, becomes increasingly common.

The commercial is often the foundation of an advertising campaign. The commercials in a campaign follow the same pattern and work in the same way. A commercial is able to forward its message in a number of ways. These categories are chosen because they are relevant in the cases of *Bregottfabriken* and *Born to be cheap*:

1. Fun (it makes the viewer laugh).
2. Facts (it is informative).
3. Emotion (it sets the viewer in a certain emotion).
4. Storytelling
5. Celebrity based

Independent of the general characteristics of an advertising campaign and its commercials, it is essential that the corporate identity is incorporated in to the campaign.

### *3.4 Surplus value, corporate identity and branding*

Long before consumerism was born, a product was valued by its utility value. Products were produced to be traded, not sold. Today a product is produced to be sold, and its utility value is often less important than its surplus value.<sup>27</sup> The surplus value is something that has been added to the product in order to make it stand apart from the rest of the mass produced products on the market, and to provide the customer with a unique product experience. For

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<sup>27</sup> Haug 1975:30



instance, many companies produced butter. But if one company produces its butter in an ecological way, that could be the surplus value of that product and it is likely that customers will pay extra for that butter in order to support ecological butter.

In hard times advertiser also realised that a surplus value could be useful when to tend to the customer relation even after a purchase, in order to keep old customers faithful to the brand.<sup>28</sup>

The surplus value is often tied to the corporate identity. The corporate identity is the uniform way that a company represents itself in. By a consistent use of specific colours and typefaces on everything from packages to buildings, the corporate identity is manifested.<sup>29</sup>

The corporate identity is usually manifested through branding. Branding is an advertising strategy that aims to increase a company or a product's recognition and status.<sup>30</sup>

One way of branding is to use storytelling commercials.

### *3.5 Storytelling commercials*

As mentioned above, advertising today has more to do with entertainment than product information. One of the oldest universal methods of entertainment is storytelling. As we saw in chapter one, storytelling anthropomorphic animals have been used to inform and entertain us from the fables to the children's books of today. That is why it is hardly surprising that they also are employed as storytellers in commercials. But even though we know that this ancient way of communication is effective, it might be good to place storytelling in a modern advertising context.

Storytelling as a marketing tool has been used since the 1980's, but in recent year storytelling in advertising has become an academic discipline and the number of storytelling commercials have exploded. That storytelling as a marketing tool is effective has been shown in studies. People are said to remember three times as much if they are delivered the information in the form of story than otherwise. In the commercial context, it has been shown that storytelling generates more loyal customers.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Zetterlund 2002:39

<sup>29</sup> Zetterlund 2002:64

<sup>30</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand\\_management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand_management) 2010-05-08 21:20

<sup>31</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:10, 17.

That storytelling commercials could be a way of branding, and create surplus value in the products being sold has already been stated.<sup>32</sup> But Storytelling could also be used in order to create an internal value for the co-workers in the company.<sup>33</sup> This is something that will be accounted for later in the case of *Born to be cheap*.

Storytelling is often used in commercials when something needs to be said, but can't be said straight out. For instance, no company would like to brag, but if the message about their superiority is delivered in the form of a sweet story about the company's hard work, the message won't be that offensive.<sup>34</sup> This is by the way exactly what Frank is doing for Tele2. Sometimes storytelling is used to calm the potential customer, and that is probably why anthropomorphic animals are common as storytellers in commercials.

Since storytelling commercials should aim to add something to the customer's experience of the company or of the product, the truth factor is also important.<sup>35</sup> That is why storytelling commercials should be based on something that the customer already knows, or think that he knows, about the company or the product. The corporate identity, the uniqueness of the company, should be the point of departure.

The different kinds of stories that could be told in storytelling commercials, and how they should be told, are accounted for by Emma Dennisdotter. According to her, a good story has to be structured in a specific way. It has to have a moral message, a conflict or a problem, some actions and characters that act certain roles.<sup>36</sup> In the commercials soon to be examined, the three types of roles are detectable; the villain, the helper or the sender, and the hero.

The story that could be told in a commercial can be a story that explains the background or the future of the company or a product. The story can also be the story of a satisfied customer or a satisfied co-worker. A good story has a moral.

Independently of what kind of story that is told, the story has to be told in a good rhetoric manner.<sup>37</sup> The story needs; Ethos, pathos and logos.

Ethos is achieved if the storyteller and the story are credible. As shown in previous chapter, animals are often very convincing as storytellers. Animals also have the ability to communicate to our feelings, which generates pathos. Logos is achieved when the viewers are

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<sup>32</sup> Haug 1975:51

<sup>33</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:41

<sup>34</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:32

<sup>35</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:2

<sup>36</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:78

<sup>37</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:73

convinced by facts of some sort. An example of that is when animals are used as spokespersons in commercials and their statements are backed up by humans or by numbers.

It is effective to use storytelling commercials in an advertising campaign. To have a main story that follow a specific theme, but is delivered as several independent shorter stories, will make the TV-audience await the next commercial with anticipation. The chance of such commercials to be discussed around coffee tables and on workplaces is imminent.<sup>38</sup>

The many shorter stories also provide the possibility to place the action in many different settings which will give the result that many different kinds of people will recognize and identify with the places and the roles.<sup>39</sup>

### *3.6 The ultimate advertising image*

It is not just the verbal communication that has to be enriched with good arguments and ethos, logos, pathos, but also the visual communication. Bo Bergström has many tips on how to create a good visual communication in advertising. According to him, the foundation of a successful visual communication is to find the story worth to be told. Tell the story in a personal way. Make sure that the story is unique, but at the same time works as a long lasting concept.<sup>40</sup>

He divides advertising images in to two categories; images that fill us with lust and images that depict problem solving.<sup>41</sup> There are formal qualities in the images that aid that division. For instance, images that make us fill lust often have an open composition and less drama than the problem solving image.

Bergström discusses many formal and compositional qualities in advertising images. To mention a few that will have importance later on, his discussion about the forward movement in images is vital. He states that by letting the movement in an image be from left to right, a captivating forward movement is created.<sup>42</sup> Further he discusses how the format of the image can be altered in order to create more dramatic proportions. A standing format is more

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<sup>38</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:64

<sup>39</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:78

<sup>40</sup> Bergström 2006:92

<sup>41</sup> Bergström 2006:83

<sup>42</sup> Bergström 2006:192

dramatic, and a horizontal format appears to be more natural.<sup>43</sup> The best result is given is either the text *or* the image dominate the composition.<sup>44</sup> And advertising images that portray a figure that has been placed on a solid background will make the figure stand out at the same time as it provides multiple contexts for the figure.<sup>45</sup>

Bergström draws us the big picture in how to create a successful visual communication. Paul Messaris is more into the details of the individual images.

In his book *Visual Persuasion; The Role of Images in Advertising* Messaris describes how the ideal persuasive photographic advertising image is created. Even though he mainly discusses still images, his theories are just as applicable to moving images in commercials.

According to Messaris, an image can persuade can through iconicity, indexicality, and through linking.

An image that portrays the world in a realistic way will gain attention and persuade its viewer by its iconicity, its likeness, to the real. An image that displays a realistic face is bound to draw attention and elicit emotions. At the same time, a reduced style without ornaments imitates high and quality because it resembles fine art.<sup>46</sup>

However, also the violation of reality will gain attention and persuasion.<sup>47</sup> Advertising images violating reality fascinate us, just as much as the hybrid creatures discussed in chapter one.

Messaris also use the term *hybrid* or *morphing*, to describe such images. A smooth transition between two images creates, through CGI-technology, a hybrid. This is not all different from the taxidermy experiments accounted for in chapter one, where two realistic and existing components are combined in order create unrealistic but reality based creatures. In the case of advertising images, Messaris takes the example of a *Saab* ad from the 1980's. A man's face and the front of a *Saab*-car has been put together in a way so that the car's headlights and the man's eyes morph together and create a new kind of creature; half man half car.<sup>48</sup>

This kind of morphing is also at work in visual metaphors. Only in this case, the morphing takes place when images and words are put together in order to create something new.

The visual parody is another example where an advertising images violate reality. An image could be a parody of a painting, or the way that a commercial is shot could be a visual parody

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<sup>43</sup> Bergström 2006:189

<sup>44</sup> Bergström 2006:236

<sup>45</sup> Bergström 2006:238

<sup>46</sup> Messaris 1996:83

<sup>47</sup> Messaris 1996:7

<sup>48</sup> Messaris 1996:8

on TV- series or films are shot.<sup>49</sup> The commercial refers to the genre of film, and jokes about its own format.

In moving images, certain camera angles and camera positions can stand in for a realistic experience of a situation. For instance, a low camera angle tells us that the person showed is powerful because we see him as if we were smaller than him. A dialogue that is shot with multiple cameras, depicting only one person at the time, makes it easy for the viewer to positioning her self in the shoes of the person not in the pictures.

Even gender can be portrayed in advertising images in a way that resembles reality. This is due to the fact that we tend to read soft curved forms as feminine and sharp hard angled forms as male. This is also applicable on editing styles. Slow and dissolving cuts could be regarded as feminine, while sharp and fast cuts could be regarded male.<sup>50</sup>

Bergström has a similar argumentation about male and female forms.<sup>51</sup>

The second way, according to Messaris, that images persuade has to do with the images indexical features. All photographic images are indexical, in that they depict what has been recorded in them. Today, of course it is possible to manipulate photographic images. But still we tend to believe in them, no matter what they depict.

Messaris third way of image persuasion is about how images are linked with something outside themselves. That could be done in a number of ways.

A causality link is when a celebrity is linked to a product. The message will then be either that the product is used by successful people, or that by using the product one will become successful.<sup>52</sup> Another way of linking According to Messaris is by producing an analogy. For instance to link an animal to the product sold is more effective than to link words to the product. This is especially effective if the product it self isn't that interesting.<sup>53</sup>

Music often accompanies advertising images. The music used in commercials should only enhance what is shown in the images. Erling Bjurström accounts for how music in commercials can be used to connote certain emotions, emphasise the action and to create an

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<sup>49</sup> Messaris 1996:19

<sup>50</sup> Messaris 1996:79

<sup>51</sup> Bergström 2006:252

<sup>52</sup> Messaris 1996:204

<sup>53</sup> Messaris 1996:191

atmosphere.<sup>54</sup> Sometimes the music alone is capable of say what words cannot.<sup>55</sup> The positive associations that certain music provide for the viewer could be used to enhance the value of the product that is sold. Bjurström brings up the example of how traditional folk music can be used when a sense of tradition and security is to be connected to the product.<sup>56</sup>

### *3.7 The successful advertising campaign*

In this chapter all the ingredients needed for an effective advertising campaign have been accounted for. The conclusion will be that the ultimate advertising campaign is based on the corporate identity, the qualities that make the company unique. It should entertain but also provide a surplus value for the potential costumers. Storytelling is a good advertising strategy to use in order to gain attention, entertain and to produce a surplus value. Filmic commercials work well with the storytelling format and enhance the storytelling character. A combination of media should be used and a persuasive imagery is necessary. To base the visual communication with imagery that refers to reality, or a break with reality, is effective in order to gain attention. In the next chapter two successful advertising campaigns will be analysed and the findings will be compared to these conclusions.

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<sup>54</sup> Bjurström 1993:56

<sup>55</sup> Bjurström 1993:64

<sup>56</sup> Bjurström 1993:62

#### 4. Chapter 3. *Born to be cheap*

In this chapter Tele2's advertising campaign *Born to be cheap* will be analysed in order to find characteristics defined in previous chapters.

##### 4.1 *The campaign*

Tele2 is a Swedish telecommunication company founded by Jan Stenbäck in 1993. The company was one of the first to establish on the free telecom market, after Televerket's monopoly ended. Since the start, Tele2's market idea has been to offer lower prices than Televerket/Telia. The advertising agency responsible for many of Tele2's advertising campaigns is *Forsman & Bodenfors*. Anthropomorphic animals have been used in many of the campaigns.<sup>57</sup> When in the fall of 2008, a new campaign was set to be launched, *Forsman & Bodenfors* was once again chosen for the job. Tele2 needed a strong spokesperson that would unite the big and diverse company that Tele2 had become. Forsman and Bodenfors went back to company's roots to find the perfect symbol of the company. They invented the black sheep Frank, and the slogan that also was to be the name of the campaign; *Born to be cheap*.<sup>58</sup> The name of the campaign is a visual metaphor. To be "the black sheep of the family" indicates that one is different and perhaps not quite accepted. Tele2 has a history of being the black sheep on the telecom market, since the company was a newcomer and had to compete with Telia in the early 1990's. The name of the campaign is also based on a pronunciation error. In Swedish, the English words *sheep* and *cheap* are often pronounced the same. The name Frank could indicate frankness and honesty.

In the fall of 2008 the campaign was launched. Through 15-20 TV-commercials, bill board ads, newspaper ads, web ads and interactive advertising on Tele2's homepage, the campaign has been spread. It has also been shown in other countries and has achieved an award.

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<sup>57</sup> <http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tele2> 2010-04-19 kl. 17.37

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.fb.se/#/en/work/251/0/> 2010-04-19 kl. 18.18

#### *4.2 The fake animal Frank*

The fake animal that is the star of the campaign is an animatronic robot in life size called Frank. The robot is very realistic in its appearance. The woolly body looks just like the body of a sheep. It is of the same size and even though he walks on two legs, his body composition is that of a sheep. At the same time, Frank has very realistic human features as well. His elaborate facial movements are the facial movements of a human being. When he talks, his mouth moves just like a human mouth does. Further he walks on two legs, uses his hoofs as hands and inhabits human environments.

This perfect hybrid creature, this fake animal that is half sheep half human, is possible due to animatronic technology.

The face, that indeed is the best part of this illusion, is controlled by 20 motors and a computer. The body is controlled by 4 men putting it in the right positions by the aid of sticks. Responsible for this animatronic robot is the same firm in Hollywood that created the Jurassic Park dinosaurs among other things, and The Los Angeles stand up comedian, Andrew Donnelly, does Frank's voice.<sup>59</sup> The voice, by the way, is a deep and calm man's voice that speaks American English.

It is probably through the series of storytelling commercials that we best get to know Frank's personality, where he is depicted as a Tele2 employee in a variety of situations and environments. The environment that he most often inhabits in the commercials is his Tele2 office in New York. Sometimes he is accompanied by other animatronic sheep, sometimes by real humans. Independent of the company, he is always consistent in character and size.

#### *4.3 The commercials*

The commercials shown in Swedish television are around 30-50 seconds long. In the beginning of the campaign, all of the commercials are about 50 seconds long. There have been about 20 films shown since the fall of 2008. Some of the commercials are shown extensively for a period of time, and then withdrawn, just to be broadcasted again a couple of months later. In all of them, Frank is portrayed as the main character.

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with F&B.



The general storyline in most of the commercials is that Frank is engaged in dialogs with co-workers, competitors and others. In some of the films he is having monologues, where he is directly speaking to the viewer. The environment he is depicted in is always a realistic setting, but the setting differs from his office to a restaurant, from dentist to garage. Only occasionally non-diegetic music exists in the films, but the diegetic sounds are always there. The company logo and offers are not integrated in to the films, but shown after the films. Often with a Swedish speaker voice. This separates the film from the products.

The films are generally characterized by sharp fast cuts, and multiple camera angles. The camera movements, angles and shots are similar to the editing style of office series on TV.

In order to extract characteristic features in the commercials, I will analyse the imagery in the films inspired by a method of compositional analyses described by Gillian Rose.<sup>60</sup> According to Rose, moving images can be divided into mise-en-scene (qualities of the individual images) and editing (how the images are put together). The mise-en-scene consists of framing, shot and camera movement. These features will all be accounted for in the films, as well as the storyline.

#### “Frank’s childhood”- commercial <sup>61</sup>

##### Description:

The first shot is from a distance. A black sheep is sitting behind his desk, typing on a computer, just like a man. The shot shows the whole office. Then we see Frank from a much closer distance, in a head and shoulder shot, and he lifts his head up to greets us. Just as if we walked in to his office. He says: “Ohh hi. I’m Frank and this is my story”. We have established an identity of the sheep, and he has instigated a contact with us. He continues: “As a child I always felt different”, and suddenly we see a herd of sheep on green pastures. The only black sheep in the herd suddenly rises on its two legs and walk away. “So I had to go and find myself”. In the following shots we get to see Frank in all sorts of situations and environment, in company with other anthropomorphic sheep and humans alike. We see him as a hippie, backpacker and practicing yoga. The different scenes are edited together in jump cuts, with Frank’s voice as a voice over narrator. So far in the film only diegetic sounds have

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<sup>60</sup> Rose 2006:51-56

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.tele2.se/aldre-reklamfilmer.html> 2010-05-06 15:53

been used. But then Frank says “I even went to the university” and simultaneously, by a jump cut, the camera zoom in and pans over a class photo from an examination ceremony. The photograph seems real, and it is real human beings in it. Frank is standing away from the crowd with a diploma in his hand. This is the first camera movement in the film, and it amplifies the fact that Frank, quite literary, is out of the picture. An outsider. Because the camera has to move around the picture in order to find Frank in it. He is standing alone in the bottom right corner, far away from the rest. Now is also the first time that non-diegetic music is used. A slow sad and soft piano music starts to accompany Frank’s voice. In the next scene we are back in Frank’s office, and we understand that Frank is holding the picture that has been shown to us in his hand. He puts it on the desk, and the next shot has closed in on his head and shoulders. “But then one day a got a job at a telecom company”, he says and rising his right hoof, in a pointing gesture towards us. His facial expression becomes more relaxed, even though more confident. In the following shot, we see another black sheep in close up. He is standing in a rostrum, shown from a very low angle so that we feel as if standing in crowd beneath him. We can read Tele2 on the rostrum. The black sheep is grey around the muzzle and is saying “We are different than the others. We are the low price keepers. We are sheep!” As he is saying that, the next shot is from long distance, we see it as if we were standing in the back of a large crowd. The crowd of black sheep is cheering. Then we see a close up shot on Frank, he is extracting a tear of joy from his eye. In the voice over he says “I felt for the first time that...” then, through a jump cut, we are back at his office again. Frank is no longer sitting behind the desk where we are used to see him, but standing up, looking at us. Behind him we see the rest of the office through a glass window. Black sheep are sitting by computers in an office landscape. He ends his story by saying “..I was home” He turns his back on us as he looks at his co-workers on the other side of the glass wall. This commercial was not followed by any special offers.

#### Analysis:

The first commercial in the campaign is a typical example of storytelling commercial where a story about the company history and uniqueness is told. But it could also classify as a satisfied co-worker story.<sup>62</sup> Even though it is Frank’s story that is being told, it is obvious that Frank is a visual metaphor for Tele2.<sup>63</sup> This storytelling commercial gives a visual confirmation of what we already know; that Tele2 is the black sheep on the market.

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<sup>62</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:58

<sup>63</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:58

Frank's life story is told chronologically, by aid of a voice over narrator and non-diegetic music that gets us in the right sentimental mood. It is structured in the way that any good story should be structured according to Dennisdotter.<sup>64</sup> First an establishing shot (the long distance shot of Frank behind his desk) that gives us a context. The sheep draws our attention, because we are prone to react on hybrids as discussed in the first chapter. As discussed in the second chapter, images that look real convince us. So the fake animal, sitting in a realistic office environment both fascinates and convince us. When the sheep starts to talk, we react as if it was a fable animal; we listening. The narrative is based on a problem; Frank is different and doesn't belong anywhere. The problem is solved by working at Tele2, where everyone is just like Frank; sheep. There is a moral saying that being different one day will pay off. Already in the first scene, Frank as a narrator has an ethos. He seems trustworthy. His voice is calm, male and confident. He sits in a nice looking office. We soon forget that sheep don't talk, and don't questioning his authority. As we later on, by the aid of non-diegetic music, will be moved by Frank's life story, we also realise that the story has a strong pathos. It convinces our feelings. The logos of the story is probable based in the visual metaphor. Tele2 is "sheep" because sheep are working there. The story follows a quite simple structure. The problem is outlined, there is a solution. Frank inhabits the role of the searcher, and he is being saved by the authority sheep on Tele2. That sheep is portrayed from a low angle, emphasising his power.

The mise-en-scene of this commercial is characterized by a very well disposed frame plane, where Frank's position on the frame varies from shot to shot, and where the frame sometimes is closed and sometimes is open. There are few camera movements. Long distance shots are combined with head and shoulder shots. The angles are either straight ahead or low angled. In the beginning of the film, most of the shots are establishing shot, where we see Frank. But near the climax, we see the scene from Frank's point of view. Probably in order to identify with him and to enhance the emotions shown in the scene.

The editing consists of jump cuts, where voice over narration and non-diegetic music functioning as a read thread. The non-diegetic music starts in the middle of the film, simultaneously with the camera movement. The result is that we await a climax. This is an example of Bjurström's statement that music could be used to enhance the action.<sup>65</sup> It also definitely strengthen Frank's pathos as a storyteller.

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<sup>64</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:78

<sup>65</sup> Bjurström 1993:67

“Frank hires a HR-manager”- commercial<sup>66</sup>

Description:

The camera makes a left to right pan movement in a skyscraper landscape, accompanied by diegetic sounds consisting of traffic and sirens. In the next scene we see a black sheep from behind, sitting by a computer in an office. Frank’s voice makes the sheep turn around and face us. We are obviously seeing the scene from Frank’s point of view. The sheep has an ear ring in his right ear and a poster of naked human man next to his computer: “Sam, Sara is pregnant again so we need you to find a new human resource manager”. Sam replies that he knows the perfect guy for the job, and a meeting is arranged. Several sharp and short shots succeed each other in the dialogue between Frank and Sam. We see one sheep at the time, presented in half figure. Two times, long distance shots are inserted, where we get to see them both at the same time. The background with Frank and Sam is in deep focus where as the foreground is blurry. A long distance shot of Sam and Frank is wiped from the right to the left, and a new image replaces it to the non-diegetic sound of torn paper. The image that evolves is the close up view of a telephone. It is accompanied by a female voice saying; “Frank, he is here”. This is the first camera movement since the introduction scene makes the camera slightly move to diagonally up left in order to get Frank’s muzzle and hoof in to the picture. Frank responds; “Send him in”, as his hoof managing the intercom function on his phone.

In the next scene we see Frank sitting behind his desk from distance, but there is a person standing with his back against us between Frank and us. Frank starts a dialog with the man, and as the man replays, the camera angle is changed so that we now see Frank from behind and the man in full frontal. The man is a shepherd. A close up on his face when he is stating that he knows everything about sheep, makes us recognize the presentation from the earlier dialog between Frank and Sam. Only this time Frank is only shown from long distance, but surprisingly not from a high angle as if we were seeing him as a the herder does, but from a low angle. It seems as if we are a third party in the room. Perhaps a sheep since the world is shot at eye level for someone around five feet tall.

The image dissolves into an image of the Tele2 logo, which also includes the slogan Born to be cheap. But no other voice over is added.

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<sup>66</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VweBURluNo> 2010-05-16 09:35

Analysis:

This commercial was broadcasted when Frank already was an established spokes person for Tele2. He had become a celebrity. Frank's ethos, pathos and logos as a storyteller is confirmed.

Once again the narrative foundation is based on a problem: Frank needs a new human resource manager since his old one is taking parental leave. Sam has the role of the helper, since he knows a gay. The herder take the role of the hero since he solves the problem and enters the picture in a mysterious way, where we only get to see a part of him in a strange angle from behind at first.

Sam has been presented with typical homosexual symbols. He wears an ear ring, he has a picture of a naked man, and he talks in a soft way. Further he states that he has met "the perfect guy for the job" at a place called *Mikados* that could have gay connotations. All of these things create an enormous excitement in the viewer. We are expecting to see a gay sheep entering the door when Sam has arranged for the meeting. Therefore the story takes on a quit surprising turn when the guy that Sam recommended is a human being and also a shepherd. The moral of this story could probably be that things not always are quite as they seem.

Homosexuals are not commonly portrayed in commercials. That Tele2 has chosen to do so could probably be connected to the fact that the company likes to be regarded as different. But it can also have something to do with trends. When this commercial was broadcasted, gay TV-shows and programs were common. Perhaps this commercial just is trying to echo a trend.

The other interesting thing to notice in this commercial is the way that Frank is talking about Sara, the pregnant sheep. Frank seems clearly annoyed about the fact that "Sara is pregnant.. *Again..* " Because we already are familiar with, and in most cases like Frank, it is likely that we instinctively feel that Sara's pregnancy is a problem. Especially since we in this commercial, by the camera angles, are viewing what Frank is viewing and therefore easier identify with him. This commercial picturing pregnancy as a problem and the problematic female sheep is replaced by a man. This is a cocky statement from Tele2, and a good example of a case where a fake animal gets away with sexism that a human wouldn't.

The mise-en-scene in this film is characterized by a playful use of the frame, where open frames are used. The shots consist of a mix of long and short distance shot, with both full figure and half figure representations. The point of view either adopts the point of view of

Frank or Sam, or a third person. The initial scene works as an establishing shot, makes us aware that we are in a Manhattan office building.

Most interesting is perhaps the editing. A dissolve scene is used for the first time during the campaign, and the editing technique is also emphasised by non-diegetic sound, which functioning as a self reference to the format of TV series etc. The moving camera in the beginning moves from right to left, and the moving camera in used to focusing on Frank answering the phone is moving from right to left. This opposite movement in the camera functioning very well.

The editing in this commercial resembles the editing in TV series. It is somewhat messy, and contains only diegetic sounds.

“Any room for me?”- commercial <sup>67</sup>

Description:

The camera smoothly pans a bit from the left to the right of the lobby of Tele2. To the left we see a black sheep that easily is interpreted as a secretary behind a desk. In the background another black sheep is sitting on a chair near the entrance door reading a newspaper. The door opens and by the voice we realise that it is Frank entering the room. He says; “Morning Susie” to the sheep behind the desk. He walks closer to us. The camera stops moving. The newspaper reading sheep hastily approaches Frank; “Frank, Frank, is there any room for me in the mobile internet department?” Frank seems annoyed at the question. The long shot is now replaced by a shot from closer distance, showing Frank from behind and the other sheep in frontal view. In this shot Frank says; “Ohh let’s see”. A long distance shot now shows both sheep in order to show what Frank does. He puts his hoofs towards the other sheep that instinctly puts his hooves in the same positioning. Then a close up on the hoofs. A sound resembling that of clapping hands is heard and a sharp cut makes us see the two sheep in half figure. “To slow” says Frank and continues his walk in our direction while saying; “have a nice day”.

This commercial is ended by an image of the Tele2 logo, and Frank’s voice saying; “Mobile internet from Tele2, its fast and its sheep”.

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<sup>67</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/user/Tele2#p/c/13C172DA93CBF500/2/bJsmhvlv1II> 2010-05-06 17:39

Analysis:

This commercial picturing Frank interacting with another sheep that wants to work in his mobile internet department at Tele2. The commercial is interesting because it depicts stereotypical gender roles. The story follows the same traditional pattern as the others. An establishing scene is followed by an introduction of the problem of the annoying sheep. Frank solves the problem by confirming that the sheep is too slow to be working with him. The moral is that only the fastest sheep are welcome to work at Tele2.

This commercial depicts traditional gender roles in that a female sheep is a secretary, and soon to be literary out of the picture as the camera zoom in on the main characters of the scene. Further more, the female sheep that Frank calls Susie, doesn't even respond to Frank's "God morning". She has no part what so ever in the action that drives the story forward. She has no individual character, not even a voice, but the name that Frank calls her by. Her role is limited to the role of her profession.

The mise-en-scene characterizes of open and closed frames, and shots that are taken from a third person's point of view. The most striking thing is indeed the editing. The initial long cut with swiping camera movement.

"The duel"-commercial <sup>68</sup>

Description:

The water machine in the corridor at Frank's office is shot from long distance. From the right, a full figured Frank enters the scene and starts to tap some water in a glass. The next scene shows another black sheep ambushing Frank behind a door. He is armed with a rubber band that he aims at Frank. "Got you Frank" says the sheep, but he will never fire his weapon. The next shot shows Frank in half figure, apparently also armed and firing his sling shot towards the other sheep. The moment that Frank fires his weapon; a non-diegetic sound sets in and slow motion is used. The sound resembles the sound often used to emphasize the thrilling moments in thriller films. A short cut that has zoomed in on the other sheep and his face reveal the horror he experiences when he realises that Frank is going to fire at him. Frank is then shown in half figure shooting the rubber band, and in that moment both the non-diegetic sound and the slow motion effect is off. The other sheep starts screaming on impact, and then

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<sup>68</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/user/Tele2#p/c/13C172DA93CBF500/4/D5JeIJQijjE> 2010-05-06 22:07

Frank is once again shown from a distance, tapping water from the machine. It ends the same way as it started, with the difference that George's back is now in the foreground as if we were standing somewhere behind George watching Frank. Frank commenting on the action; "George, you are way to slow for the mobile internet department".

Analysis:

This commercial refers to the action genre of films. The violence, the non-diegetic sound and the slow motion effect could easily have been inspired by films such as Kill Bill for instance. The story is not told by words, but by images. This makes this commercial unique. Frank is put in an ambush situation, but since his special characteristic is to be fast, he has no problem beating the bad guy. Good concurs over evil. The traditional fable is told. The moral of the story is that every bad thing you do to others will be done to you.

The mise-en-scene is basically no different from the other films described, with the exception for the slow motion scene. The point of view the shots are taken from is the point of view of a third person.

Other commercials

In a number of less complex commercials, Frank is seen in different environments talking directly to us about an offer from Tele2. These commercials are often shorter and Frank is not made animatronicly but with CGI-technology. He is talking to us when working under a car in a garage or using a solarium. The formal aspects of these films are few stationary camera angles, and less exciting editing than in the longer films. The imagery from these commercials is often re-used in the web ads.

In other full-length commercials, Frank is seen outside his office in different environments. One of the earlier films starts with clinking glass and other restaurant sounds, a sweeping camera movement and Frank having a dinner with two humans. They offering him a job if he leaves Tele2, but Frank turns down the offer since they are not sheep.

Simultaneously to the childhood commercial, a commercial where Frank was holding a press conference for humans describing the company history was broadcasted.

Another film depicts Frank in the shower, singing *Born to be cheap* with the vocals of the rock song *Born to be wild*.



There are also one film showing Frank and his co-workers staying late at the office playing a game where slow participants get an electric chock. In this commercial low angles, long swiping vertical camera movements in the same way as in horror movies.

#### 4.4 *The newspaper adverts*

The campaign consists of several newspaper adverts. In general, the adverts are connected to contemporary big events that occupy the newspaper. Frank is always centred in the picture, and often shown detached from any kind of background. Three adverts run in the free daily newspaper *Metro* during the spring of 2010 have been chosen to be analysed.

The Ski-ad<sup>69</sup>:

This advert for the mobile internet was found on the very last page of the newspaper. The advert covers the whole page. The format is a standing vertical rectangular, which according to Bergström creates a dynamic movement from the top to the bottom.<sup>70</sup> A well chosen format since the ad presents a skiing Frank in whole figure, symmetrically placed in the middle of the page. He seems to be caught in the move, from the upper right corner to the bottom left corner. He is dominating the picture, and he is placed on a white clean background. There is nothing else in this picture, but Frank and his red skis and matching boots, sun glasses and rods. Frank is really standing out, and with a little bit of imagination, the viewer can put Frank's image in a personal context. This reduced style is definitely a good example of how an advertising image imitates a style connected to fine art, in order to attain the connotations of high quality and status.<sup>71</sup> The bottom of the page holds the slogan "It's cheap. It's fast." An offer for mobile internet stating that Tele2's mobile internet works just as good in the city as in the ski slope. In the lower right corner, a soft green colour dominates where the package, the mobile internet, and a smooth lined price tag is situated. The package shows a Frank in half figure, looking straight at the viewer with the mouth open in a smile. There are no commercials with Frank skiing, but the winter Olympics was at its heights when this ad was run.

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<sup>69</sup> Illustration 1

<sup>70</sup> Bergström 2006:182

<sup>71</sup> Messaris 1996:83

## The solarium-ad<sup>72</sup>

This ad was situated in the middle of the newspaper, and has the same format as the previous. The ad is dark blue in colour. The ad could be divided in to three horizontal fields. In the upper third part of the ad the text “Sommaren är räddad” is printed with big white letters contrasting the background colour. In the middle of the ad a solarium with Frank inside is shown. There is a blue green glow floating out of the solarium, emphasising the symmetrical horizontal centre line of the image, as well as drawing attention to Frank. He is lying relaxed on his back with eyes shut. A plant, a towel and a fan is situated around the solarium. These items help us realize that this probably is a professional solarium. On the floor just beneath the solarium, what seems to be a newspaper and a cell phone has been placed aside by Frank. In the lower third part of the ad there is a text explaining the summer offer from Tele2, and in the right lower corner once again the package, a phone and price tags are placed. But here the colour is orange, except for a tag indicating that mobile surfing is included. It is green, just as Tele2’s package for mobile internet. In this ad, the colour’s significance becomes clear. Different products are marked by different colours.

This ad was run simultaneously as the short solarium commercial was broadcasted on TV.



Illustration 2



Illustration 1

<sup>72</sup> Illustration 2

## The hiring-ad<sup>73</sup>

The last ad is a smaller rectangular placed on the bottom of a page. The ad is of the same green colour as the offers for mobile internet. Frank is shown in half figure, arms crossed and confidently looking straight at us. He occupies the left part of the ad. The rest of the ad consists of a text. The title of the ad indicates that it is an recruiting ad. Tele2 is looking for a project leader for the LAN-expansion. In the right corner, the Tele2 logo is found. This ad is also displaying Frank totally detached from any background, just as in the skiing ad. But here Frank is having eye contact with us, and he is silent, his mouth is shut. He looks demanding and serious. This ad could be an example of where storytelling is used for the internal market in a company.<sup>74</sup> The picture of Frank in this ad says all that a future employee needs to know about what kind of company Tele2 is.

The campaign also features several outdoor bill board ads. In most of the bill board ads, Frank is shown in full figure, detached from any kind of background. The vertical format and the low angle, manifest his hero status.<sup>75</sup> The text and the company name are sometimes missing completely on the outdoor adverts.



**Byggprojektledare LAN.**

För vår verksamhet för LAN-byggnation söker vi nu en byggprojektledare med placering i Malmö.

Avdelningen Projects & Site Construction arbetar som beställare av produktion och förvaltning av mobil-amer, lastbil-amer, kontorslokaler, LAN- och kabel-TV-nät, fibernät, samt med projektledning för nät- och produktimplementering i Sverige. Nu behöver gruppen CATV & LAN Construction som arbetar med projektledning av CATV- och LAN-byggnation förstärkning.

**Arbetsuppgifter:** Du planerar byggprojektet samt upphandlar entreprenörer och material. Du samarbetar både med externa kontakter som fastighetägare och myndigheter och internt med

En försäljnings- och marknadsutvecklare. Du ansvarar även för att projektet håller uppåttagna kostnader, kvalitets- samt tidsmål.

**Din bakgrund:** Du har erfarenhet av LAN-byggnation och projektledning och är van vid att arbeta självständigt. Samtidigt tror du i miljö som den pådrivande och sammanhållande kraften i projekt och har lätt att samarbeta med olika typer av människor. Det är viktigt att du arbetar systematiskt och strukturerat med respekt för deadlines. Du har hört och tillgång till egen bil, då arbetet kräver en hel del resor.

Upplysningar och tjänsten lämnas av: Tapio Savman, Gruppchef 08-5626 4612 eller Susanne Albeding, Rekrytering 08-5626 4562. Läs mer och sök på [tele2.se/jobb](http://tele2.se/jobb) senast 21 feb 2010.

**TELE2**

Illustration 3

## 4.5 The interactive advertising

Banners from the campaign have figured on several popular internet sites such as Blocket.se, MSN.se and Eniro.se. The banner chosen to be analysed, is a banner depicting the solarium-theme. Many of the web ads in the campaign are simple versions of commercials.

<sup>73</sup> Illustration 3

<sup>74</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:46

<sup>75</sup> Messaris 1996:34

The solarium web-ad<sup>76</sup>

This web ad was caught running on Eniro.se and consists of seven still images shown in a row. The first image in the series depicting Frank lying in a solarium. The image is bluish, like the paper ad version of it. The next image is veritable the same image, with the addition of the text “Sommaren är räddad.” The text appears from nowhere and is lightly swaying before it is fixed. In the third image and onwards, the solarium image will be in the background but darkened. As if the solarium has been turned off. From the right, a package consisting of the orange cardboard package with Frank’s picture on it, a cell phone and a price tag are streamed into the image. The speed in which they are moving into the picture is slowed down the closer to their final destination they come. Despite that the montage consist of a combination of real things, such as the cell phone, and graphic designed price tags, the overall impression is balance. The montage covers Frank’s body in the solarium. The fourth and fifth images show the same things, with addition of the text “Skaffa Kompis” and a split of a second later “Och surfa fritt tom 31 augusti”. The white text is lightly swaying before settling. In the sixth image an orange tag with information about the cell phone that is included in the offer, pops up seemingly springing from the cell phone in the right corner. In the seventh image the “skaffa Kompis...” text on the left is replaced with a text reading “Läs mer här” and an arrow. This is a click link to the Tele2 homepage.

Web ads are shown simultaneously as the rest of the web page content. In this case, the potential viewer is visiting Eniro.se which is a search engine that is specialized on maps and telephone numbers. A person is exposed to the discrete and uniform advertising at the same time as he is looking up an address or search for a telephone number. It is a perfect place for a telecom company to advertise. Bergström’s is stating that it is important to find the right target group for the visual communication.<sup>77</sup> Tele2 has probably done so in this case. The best thing about web ads, according to C. P. Nilsson, is that they don’t interrupt the viewer’s attention like the commercials do.<sup>78</sup> Since the solarium-theme also has been shown as a commercial, it is likely that the web ad will be more interesting and gain more attention than

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<sup>76</sup> [www.eniro.se](http://www.eniro.se) 2010-03-11, 16.30

<sup>77</sup> Bergström 2006:15

<sup>78</sup> Nilsson 2006:9

other web ads. Further, the ad is surprisingly interesting despite its consistency. This concurs Nilsson's statement that a web ad never becomes boring since new parts constantly develop.<sup>79</sup>

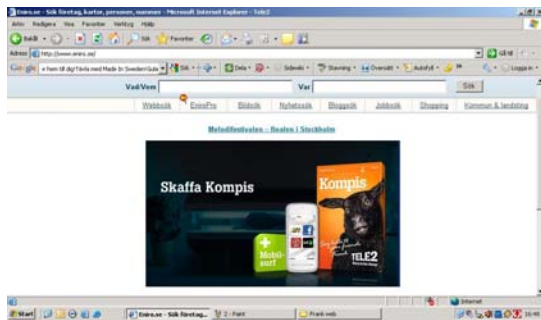


Illustration 4

#### 4.6 Happy hour and a total retail solution

The campaign can also be said to re-think the format of advertising, as accounted for by Paul Springer.<sup>80</sup> On Tele2's homepage Frank is used to introduce an especially cheap offer for a limited time. The clock starts when the viewer starts the Happy hour, by clicking the mouse. It starts with Frank sitting comfortable in a chair. He looks at us like a talk show host and welcomes us to Happy hour. Then music starts. Frank gets up and positioning him next to a giant package box obviously containing mobile internet. Price tags comes and goes, and Frank changes position every once and a while. Once every 30 seconds he asks "Hey! You haven't fall asleep have you?"<sup>81</sup>

This advertising makes it possible for the viewer to engage with Frank when ever he likes. It provides some sort of satisfaction to see that Frank actually starts his happy hour just for me.

Another revolutionary step taken by Tele2 during the campaign is to re-use the environment shown in the commercials in their retail stores. When a customer enters a Tele2 store, he enters Frank's world. Everything from typefaces to furniture will remind him of the world of the commercials.<sup>82</sup> Since most of us have seen the commercials, this setting is familiar. The only thing missing is Frank. But maybe he will be there the next time we visit the store.

Another important feature that separates tele2 from other telecom companies is that is that the customer always gets a physical product in his hand when buying subscriptions or services.

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<sup>79</sup> Bergström 2006:244

<sup>80</sup> Springer 2007:26

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.tele2.se/> 2010-05-16 12:24

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.market.se/Brancher/Hemelektronik/I-dag-fa-Faret-Frank-en-egen-butik/> 2010-04-26 kl. 13:42

Frank's half figure body is placed on all packages. There is a consistency in the colours on the packages and the colour used to indicate what kind of product that it contains. This indicates a uniform corporate identity, that has been established thanks to the advertising campaign.

#### *4.7 Frank compared to other fake animal spokespersons*

The analysis of the *Born to be cheap* campaign reveals that Frank is an excellent spokesperson for his company. Not only does he embody the spirit of the company, but his appearance is also highly realistic. The question now is; what separates him from other fake animal spokespersons? In order to answer that question, a few commercials from other advertising campaigns depicting anthropomorphic animals will be discussed.

Between the years 2005-2008 the Canadian telecom company Bell used two CGI-created beavers called Frank and Gordon in an advertising campaign. The beavers were used to highlight Bell's sponsorship of the Vancouver Olympics, and became popular mascots.<sup>83</sup> Commercials of the campaign depict the beaver friends in many different situations and environments. They are most often interacting with real humans. In most of the commercials, the beavers are discussing nice offers from Bell.<sup>84</sup>

The Bell beaver project is similar to the *Born to be cheap* campaign. Bell is just like Tele2 a telecom company, and the commercials show the same characteristics in editing style and the mise-en-scene. Both campaigns use sharp and fast editing, a mix of long distance and close up shots and a variety of different angles and point of views in their commercials. The ending of the commercials in the Bell-campaign is also similar to the endings in *Born to be cheap* commercials. The animals are replaced by a logo a slogan. However, the animals themselves are represented very differently. The Bell beavers are made by CGI-technology instead of animatronics which make them flat and lifeless compared to Frank. Further, they vary in size in the different commercials, and they stick out when integrated with humans. The fact that there is two of them, and that they usually directly discuss the offers from Bell makes it harder for the viewer to really establish a relation with them. We don't get to know so much about their lives or personalities, as we do in the case of Frank. Another problem of the beaver's position as spokespersons for Bell, is that beavers have nothing to do with the company.

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<sup>83</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank\\_and\\_Gordon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_and_Gordon) 2010-05-13 13:10

<sup>84</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBOGqlsUsTM&NR=1> 2010-05-13 13:53

Although less convincing, the Bell beavers could have inspired *Forsman&Bodenfors* when they created Frank. Frank was born the same year as the beavers were shut down, and the name Frank make one wonder about the connection. It is likely to believe that *Forsman&Bodenfors* wanted to build on the concept presented by Bell. If there would be only one animal spokesperson, perhaps that sole animal better would bond with the viewer. An animal that really personified the uniqueness of the company. And if that animal could be brought to life in the real three dimensional world, he would be more convincingly real.

It seems to be common in the USA to have two anthropomorphic CGI-created animals. Blockbuster run a popular advertising campaign in 2002-2003, where the guinea pig Ray and the rabbit Carl lives in a pet store across the street from a Blockbuster store.<sup>85</sup> The series of commercials depict Carl and Ray in their cage, discussing what is going on across the street. The commercials have similar formal qualities as *Born to be cheap* and the Bell beavers. The animals themselves looks like taken from an animated movie, and are less realistic. The fur looks like plush. The cage that they inhabit is also fake, made by CGI-technology.<sup>86</sup> The combination of fake animals and a fake environment makes the animals funny but hardly convincing. Compared to Frank, that looks real *and* inhabits a real environment, Carl and Ray are very different.

Another fake animal spokesperson that Frank could be compared to is the gecko Martin that is used in commercials for the Geico insurance company.<sup>87</sup> Martin is made CGI-technology, but inhabits his space realistically. Just like Frank, he interacts with humans in a natural way. He is also the result of the same kind of visual metaphor as Frank. The company name bears resemblance to the gecko lizard. The formal qualities in Martin's commercials are less exciting than the ones in the *Born to be cheap* commercials. Martin is often centred in the frame, and filmed with a still camera from conventional angles.

The American restaurant chain Taco Bell used in the years between 1997-2000 in a series of commercials a real dog that was made to talk by CGI-technology. A Chihuahua, which is a Mexican dog breed, was shown looking like a dog but talking and sometimes dressed in

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<sup>85</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blockbuster\\_Inc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blockbuster_Inc) 2010-05-13 13:33

<sup>86</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpiunE\\_x6Rc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpiunE_x6Rc) 2010-05-13 13:40

<sup>87</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geico\\_gecko#The\\_GEICO\\_gecko](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geico_gecko#The_GEICO_gecko) 2010-05-13 14:07



clothes.<sup>88</sup> The dog became a mascot and the campaign was popular. However, because many groups accused Taco Bell for enhancing the Mexican stereotype, the campaign had to be withdrawn after just a few years.<sup>89</sup> This might indicate that it could be risky to use a real animal as a spokesperson. The little Chihuahua had lost its animal magic when it was made to talk and wear clothes. It was no longer an animal, and therefore its messages could be offensive. To use animatronic technology that combines the best of the animal and human world seems to be a good choice for Tele2.

Compared to all examples above, Frank stands out from the crowd of fake storytelling animals. Frank is so much more realistic in his appearance due to the animatronic technology. The storyline in *Born to be cheap* is much more elaborate than the storyline of the Bell beaver's commercials. Also the way that the commercials are done, with exciting and surprising shots and editing and the consistency in which he is portrayed seems to be what separates him from other fake animals.

#### 4.8 Conclusions

No matter how one wishes to measure success, *Born to be cheap* has been a successful advertising campaign. In 2009 *Born to be cheap* received *Silverägget*, a prestigious award in the advertising business.<sup>90</sup> On the Internet, *Born to be cheap* has been discussed on many forums and chat rooms. The campaign has inspired other advertisers to imitate it. Several spin off products such as T-shirts and poster depicting Frank, have generated revenues for Tele2. All of these phenomena indicate that the campaign has been a success. Another indicator of success is that despite low conjuncture, Tele2 has been less affected by the crises than many other telecom companies.<sup>91</sup> That makes the fake animal Frank a successful storyteller.

The campaign has run in a wide range of media, including several revolutionary interactive forums. The slogan and the name of the campaign say it all, and Frank is the corporate identity impersonalized. The visual metaphor of the black sheep and the iconicity between

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<sup>88</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8sZ1DWsAHE> 2010-05-13 12:42

<sup>89</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taco\\_Bell\\_chihuahua\\_2010-05-13](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taco_Bell_chihuahua_2010-05-13) 12:01

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.guldagget.se/sok/info.aspx?b=337> 2010-04-23 kl. 10:31

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.resume.se/nyheter/2009/01/13/faret-frank-lyfter-tele2-m/> 2010-04-23 kl. 10:49



the words sheep and cheap, is the reason why Frank is a sheep. It could perhaps be a good thing that a sheep was the appropriate animal for the job, since we learned in chapter one, that farm animals seldom are used as storyteller. This feature alone makes the campaign original. The commercials are the foundation of the campaign. They influence the web ads and the newspaper ads, and they even decide the interior of Tele2's stores.

In the storytelling commercials we really get to know and love Frank. His personality and his physical appearance are consistent throughout the films. There are also a consistency in the portrayal of him in all images used in the campaign.

When shown in many different situations, solving many different problems, we get to learn who Frank is and what he stands for. We learn to know and love a masculine, confident leader that is far but tough. His manly characteristics are manifested through his voice, behaviour and the fast editing style (as discussed by Bergström and Messaris). He becomes a real person to us.

Frank is able to say things that would be offending if it came from a human being. Still, by having him say some of those things, he becomes more real. The gender stereotypes shown in the commercials confirm something that we all already know. The fact that Frank lives in the same stereotypical world as we do, makes him more convincing as a storyteller. The same thing can be said about the newspaper ad where he is seen skiing during the Olympics. That images position Frank in the same context as we are living in. The ability to pick up trends makes the commercials up to date. A good example is the gay-trend visibly in one of the commercials. The fact that Frank moves in many different environments makes it possible for many people to identify with the surroundings. For instance, the restaurant commercial will probably gain the interest of restaurant employees, the solarium commercial will apply to many women, and so on. But it is not just the setting for the story that people can identify with, but also the action. The stories told are varied, but simple. Most people could probably imagine themselves in Frank's position at least in some commercials. The boss that is irritated about the female employee that has to be replaced due to pregnancy, the lost boy that found his place in life, and so on.

The formal qualities of the commercials are entertaining and surprising. The variety of viewer positions, angles and references to film genres and TV-programs are captivating.

The visual representation of Frank is convincing, due to animatronic technology and the consistency of the representation throughout the campaign.

The representation of Frank is based on iconicity to reality. Frank really looks like a sheep, and he really behave like a human. The camera movements and viewer positions, in the commercials imitate a visual language that we are familiar with from real life situations.

All above stated are of course reasons for Frank's success as a storyteller. We can easily identify with both him and his surroundings. He has a solid persona. He is very well made, and the campaign is well spread and diverse.

But the basic reason why Frank is such a good storyteller has to do with the fact that he simply is a continuation of the ancient and universal communication based on anthropomorphic animals. He makes us listen because he is the fascinating hybrid creature that we have learned to love and honour from the fables to the children's books.

## 5. *Bregottfabriken*

In this chapter the advertising campaign *Bregottfabriken* will be analysed. Since this advertising campaign mainly consists of commercials, this chapter will be shorter than the previous.

### 5.1 *The campaign*

The Swedish dairy company Arla was founded in 1915. The company has a large share of the West European dairy market. The company owns many brand names, among them one of Sweden's most popular brand name in butter products, Bregott. Bregott has a leading position on the market of malleable butter products. Ever since the product was launched in 1969, Bregott's market idea has been to provide a natural quality product, easy to use directly from the fridge.<sup>92</sup> In Bregott advertising campaigns, the products origin, their "Swedish ness" and their naturalness, are always emphasised.

In 1995 Bregott launched the advertising campaign *Bregottfabriken*. The advertising campaign is mainly based on a series of TV-commercials of storytelling character featuring real cows in the Swedish nature. The cows explain how Bregott is made. The campaign has been rewarded prizes, and is very popular among the public.<sup>93</sup> Until this day, 36 films have been made. They are all approximately 30 seconds long. The advertising agency responsible for the campaign *Stenström Redcell*.<sup>94</sup>

The slogan changes a bit during the campaign. But in general the slogan consists of variations of the theme "Bara naturliga råvaror" (translation; Only natural ingredients).

### 5.2 *Storytelling fake cows*

The cows of the commercials are anthropomorphic, but not in an obvious way though. In many of the commercials the representation of them is not anthropomorphic until the end of the commercial, where their actions are described in human terms. Since the animals

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<sup>92</sup> <http://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bregott> 2010-04-20 kl. 09:02

<sup>93</sup> [http://www.superbrands.easysite.org/files/-Bregott\\_838.pdf](http://www.superbrands.easysite.org/files/-Bregott_838.pdf) 2010-04-20 kl. 09:30

<sup>94</sup> Letter correspondence with Bregott

themselves neither are talking, wearing clothes nor doing un-natural things, Lerner and Kalof's definition of anthropomorphism might not apply in this case.<sup>95</sup> However, in the commercials that is to be analysed in this chapter, the cows express feelings and talk. Even though their lips aren't moving. That results in the fact that we interpret the cows as a hybrid between animal and human. Worth mentioning is also the fact that it is not the same cows that are used throughout the campaign.

### 5.3 *The commercials*

The campaign can be divided into different phases in which the representation of the cows changes. Between 2004-2006 the commercials had the theme "Bregottfabriken presenterar" (translation; the Bregott factory presents). During this phase, a male speaker voice was introduced. The commercials were referencing to the genre of reality shows. They parody for instance the Swedish reality show *Småstjärnorna*. The cows were now given individual identities. They were named.

Between 2007-2009 the character of the commercial changed. A female speaker voice replaced the male, and the theme of the commercials was "Funderingar i Bregottfabriken" (translation; thoughts in the Bregott factory). Now the cows were thinking loud, or sometimes talking, about the process of making Bregott.

"Vårens nya avsnitt 2005"<sup>96</sup> (The Bregottfabriken presenterar-phase).

#### Description:

The film begins with dramatic, but classic Swedish music. The text "Bregottfabriken- vårens nya avsnitt" (translation; the Bregott factory- new episodes this spring) is flying in to the middle of the screen. Behind an old wooden fence, cows are seen in the background. The next shot shows the cows in a grove, one of the cows is standing a bit separated from the rest. The male speaker voice asks in Swedish the question; "Will Rosa and the others continue to gather for dinners with the girls?". Through a jump cut we are transported to a scene where two cows are seen wrestling one another, the speaker voice asks; "Will Blenda stop teasing Bella?".

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<sup>95</sup> Lerner & Kalof 1999:565

<sup>96</sup> [http://www.bregott.nu/?csref=ip\\_google\\_adwords\\_bregott](http://www.bregott.nu/?csref=ip_google_adwords_bregott) 2010-05-13 10:05

Yet another jump cut transport us to an empty space in the green pasture. “Will we ever get to see Ferdinand?” the speaker voice asks to that image. He continues; “You might find that out in the new episodes of Bregottfabriken this spring”. The voice bridge the next scene, a shot that depicts all the cows again, moving towards us. The text “Bregottfabriken” is showed, and then it is replaced by the Bregott package and the slogan “Naturligare kan ingen vara” (translation; Nobody could be more natural).

#### Analysis:

This film has been preceded by a couple of films of the reality show genre. In one of those the cows have been presented with names. So we are already familiar with the identities of the cows when watching “Vårens nya avsnitt”.

The story builds up suspense. We want answers to all the questions. And that is given to us in the end. The vignette in the beginning and in the end of the commercial clearly refers to film or TV-series.

The cows are shot from the same distance consistently throughout the commercial, and they are placed in the middle of the frame. The editing consists of jump cuts. This technique resembles also TV-series. So does the voice over narrator.

”Min mamma 2007” (the Thoughts in the Bregott factory-phase).

#### Description:

The film begins with soft intro music and a calf inhabits the centre of the image. The music is traditional Swedish folk music. The voice of a young girl tells us in Swedish; “Grass becomes milk, milk becomes cream. Mixed with rapeseed oil, it becomes Bregott.” The calf slowly walks from left to right, but is always centred in the picture. While the voice is telling us how Bregott is made, the scene consists of one long take, with a soft and slow panning camera movement. The music is equally slow. The image of the lonely calf in full figure is replaced by a shot where the calf is zoomed and the former closed image becomes an open one. The voice is heard again; “Isn’t it so, mother?” The calves head is suddenly lifted as if it really did wonder if that was the case. The next shot shows the calf and a cow, that we of course interpret as the mother. They are seen from some distance. The cow lifts its head from the grass and looks at the calf. As if it was responding. Then the image of the package of Bregott

and the slogan “Only natural ingredients” are inserted on top of the cows. The cows are still moving in the background.

Analysis:

This commercial is one in the series “Funderingar i Bregottfabriken” where the cows are thinking or talking out loud. The speaker voice is no longer just a third person who describes the cow’s actions and thoughts. The speaker voice now *is* the cow’s voice. However, the cows never open their mouths when they “speak”, not even when they are talking to each other. The story told is a product story.<sup>97</sup> The process of making Bregott is told in an entertaining way, by a fake animal storyteller. The girly voice over narrator starts to talk when the calf already has been showed. This makes it easy for us to understand that it is the voice of the calf that we hear. We don’t know where the calf is going, but in the third scene when the calf is showed in close up and talks to its mother, we understand. The last scene is important for us, since we then understand that the calf was moving towards its mother, and the last scene leaves us with a feel good moment.

One extremely long shot, where the calf alone owns the frame, dominates the mise-en-scene. The camera slowly follows the calf’s movement. The long shot and slow camera movement creates a soft forward movement from left to right.<sup>98</sup>

The non-diegetic music used in this commercial enhances the action, the forward movement, as well as provides an atmosphere. Non-diegetic national folk music is always used in Bregottfabriken commercials. It connotes tradition, naturalness and Swedishness to the product. In this particular commercial, speech is added, but in the majority of the films the music is all that is needed. That music often says more than words are also accounted for by Bjurström.<sup>99</sup>

#### *5.4 The Bregott homepage*

The campaign is also present as interactive advertising on the Bregott homepage.<sup>100</sup> The first page that meets the viewer looks like this:

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<sup>97</sup> Dennisdotter 2008:63

<sup>98</sup> Bergström 2006:245

<sup>99</sup> Bjurström 1993:64

<sup>100</sup> [http://www.bregott.nu/?csref=ip\\_google\\_adwords\\_bregott](http://www.bregott.nu/?csref=ip_google_adwords_bregott) 2010-05-13 11:25



Illustration 5

On a background of green grass, a folder has been put. The pre-selected page is called *Filmrummet* (translation; film room). Five cows are standing next to each other. They are slightly moving, they move their heads and tails. When we move the mouse over the image, mooing is heard. When the mouse hits a specific cow, name tags pop up. The names are the same as the names used in the commercials between 2004-2006 (The Bregottfabriken presenterar-films).

In the bottom part of the page all the commercials are present with icons that could be clicked.

### 5.5 Conclusions

*Bregottfabriken* is one of the most popular advertising campaigns in Sweden. Thanks to the campaign, Bregott is known to almost every Swede.<sup>101</sup> The campaign might not have been launched in as many media as *Born to be cheap*, but its long lasting format of the commercials seems to be every so successful. By changing the character of the commercials every two years, they never become boring. The connection between the commercials and the Bregott-homepage also proves to be effective when establishing the cows as the spokespersons of the company. *Filmrummet* on the homepage is also a fine example of a refreshingly new interactive advertisement, where the viewer can visit the cows any time.

The choice of animal is of course natural in the case of this advertising campaign. Cows provide milk that could be made to butter. But cows also embody something else. Bregott's corporate identity lays on the foundation of tradition and naturalness. As Spears pointed out,

<sup>101</sup> <http://www.stenstrom.se/ClientCaseView.php?ID=3> 2010-05-16 17:49

cows are often used as symbols for these things.<sup>102</sup> That the spokespersons for Bregott are cows has many benefits.

The representation of the cows throughout the campaign varies, in that the storytelling changes its character. The two commercials analysed are based on very different stories, as well as different formal qualities. However, the cows look the same and do the same kind of things. That makes the visual presentation of them consistent all throughout the campaign. The cows are real cows, not made by animatronics or CGI-technology. Although CGI sometimes is used in order to arrange the cows in certain formations. The impression of real cows is present in the moving images of the commercials. To connect to Messaris, the indexical image persuades.<sup>103</sup> The fact that the cows are real animals, that just slightly have been anthropomorphic, makes them convincing storytellers.

The fact that most anthropomorphic animals in commercials are male, make this girls even more interesting and original to listen to.

Just as in the case of *Born to be cheap*, *Bregottfabriken* represents the fake animal in gender stereotyped roles. Here the cows are pictured doing chores that traditionally are feminine, such as product food and take care of children. The editing style is also feminine, in that it consists of long shots and soft cuts.<sup>104</sup> The editing style of *Bregottfabriken* is the complete opposite of the editing style used in *Born to be cheap*, and for that matter the style used in most TV-programming.

Just as in *Born to be cheap*, this reproducing of stereotypes make the fake animals seem more real. More like us. It makes them more convincing as storytellers.

The same effect is achieved when references to contemporary phenomena, such as contemporary reality shows, are made in *Bregottfabriken*.

There are several differences between *Born to be cheap* and *Bregottfabriken*.

The imagery and storytelling of *Bregottfabriken* is about creating an emotion in the viewer, while in *Born to be cheap* the target is problem solving.

Non-diegetic music is used in *Bregottfabriken*, but almost entirely missing in *Born to be cheap*. The editing style is entirely different. Also the end of the commercials is different. In

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<sup>102</sup> Spears 1996:87

<sup>103</sup> Messaris 1996:135

<sup>104</sup> Messaris 1996:79



*Bregottfabriken* the package of Bregott and the logo is inserted smoothly into the picture, while in *Born to be cheap* the film ends before a text is added.

Despite all the differences between the animal portrayals in the campaigns, they seem to be equally popular and effective storytellers.

This proves that it is possible for different representations of fake animals to reach the same result.

Finally, the cows are effective storytellers not just because they embody realness, the corporate identity and all other things stated above. Just in the case of Frank, the cows are effective storytellers because we are mesmerized by them, and the stories they tell.

The Bregott-cows may not be walking on two legs, but they are human in another kind of way. There are real animals that just are anthropomorphic in words, not in image. Maybe this is the most convincing anthropomorphic animal of them all. It still owns its animal magic; it has not been lost as in the case with the Taco Bell Chihuahua. But it is still so much more than an animal. It is the ever so fascinating hybrid.

The storytelling animal from the fables.

## 6. Conclusions

There are several elements needed in the representation of fake animals in order to turn them into successful storytellers in commercials.

A massive, long lasting and consistent advertising campaign where the animal spokes person is established is required. Interactive advertising is essential. Further, the choice of animal is of the uttermost importance. The animal has to embody the corporate identity. There has to be clear connection between the animal and the company.

The formal characteristic of the advertising imagery has to be unique, inventive and varied within limitations. References to other media are welcomed. The editing style should be used to emphasize the character of the animal. Exactly which formal qualities that are used seem less important, as long as the visual representation is coherent. Initial establishing shots are useful when creating a context. Animatronic technology is important, however not always necessary. The environment that a fake animal inhabit have to be realistic.

The storyline in the series of commercials should be simplistic, but visually interesting. The fake animal should be placed in many different environments, and situations in order for the viewer to get to know the animal better. A moral is needed in the stories.

The fake animal often benefits when being presented in a gender stereotypical way. It makes the animal more realistic and trustworthy as a storyteller. It doesn't have to be the perfect individual, it can even benefit if it is not. To engage the animal in a contemporary context is also prosperous. It proves that the animal is sharing the world with the viewer.

Identification with the fake animal is important to some extent. Surprisingly though, this thesis has found that it is unusual for the viewer to adopt the point of view of a successful fake animal storyteller. This is has to be related to the history of storytelling animals. Since ancient times to modern day children's book, anthropomorphic animals have told us stories. These hybrid creatures are predestined to gain our attention by nature. We are used to listen to such animals, to be fascinated by them. We want to see them, but not be them. That is the probable explanation to way identification with fake animal only is effective to some extent.

This thesis has now achieved the goal set out in the introduction. The hypothesis has been proved. Basically, fake animals in commercials are appealing because they are the continuation of an ancient mood of animal representation. The most interesting conclusion however, will be that successful anthropomorphic animal storytellers can vary so much in

appearance but still reach the same result. The composition and character of the individual storyteller are just as individualized as in a human being.

Maybe that is not that surprising after all. Considering what a perfect and fascinating hybrid between human and animal the fake animal storyteller is.

The relevance of this thesis will probably increase in time. The use of real animals in advertising is now vividly discussed. The fake animal has a brilliant future in the advertising business. But perhaps the fake animal could be employed in other areas as well.

That will be the subject for another thesis though.

## **List of illustrations**

Illustration 1, “Frank in ski-slope”. Newspaper advertisement, Metro 2010-02-15. Format: 38 x 27,5 cm.

Illustration 2, “Frank in solarium”. Newspaper advertisement, Metro 2010-03-16. Format: 38 x 27,5 cm.

Illustration 3, “Hiring ad”. Newspaper advertisement, Metro 2010-02-10. Format: 27,5 x 10 cm..

Illustration 4, web ad. Eniro.se. 2010-03-11, 16:30.

Illustration 5, homepage. Bregott.se. 2010-05-16, 19:30.

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