CULTURAL HISTORIES OF CINEMA

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Although early product-advertising film came in many forms, it is hard to overlook the extensive use of animation. While the earliest film advertisements tended to use live action, the institutionalisation of advertising film in Europe during the 1910s coincided with the adoption of conventions from trick film, and advertising went on to employ nearly every type of animation, from stop-trick and sand animation to silhouettes, experimental abstraction and – the most widespread form of advertising in the 1920s – drawn-character animation. This work includes many films by well-known experimental directors such as Lotte Reiniger, Walter Ruttmann and Dziga Vertov, but it also encompasses an entire army of professional illustrators and animators such as Robert Lortac (France), Peter Eng (Austria), Harry Jäger (Germany) and Victor Bergdahl (Sweden).1

If such work is garnering renewed interest today, that interest is certainly due, in part, to the influence of digital technologies, which – following Lev Manovich’s call to rethink cinema as a subset of animation – have helped to rekindle interest in the widespread ‘graphic’ traditions that have always existed within and alongside photographic cinema.2 The animated advertising film – or what its chief practitioner in Germany, Julius Pinschewer, described as the ‘advertising film on graphic basis’ (Werbefilm auf graphischer Grundlage) – represents an important domain of early animation, but one that has received little attention in animation studies.3 In what follows, I consider some of the reasons for animation’s prevalent role in product advertisements, as well as some of the specific functions that animation assumed.
when used in advertising. Tracing the trajectory of advertising film in Germany from the 1910s to its transformation into a full-fledged industry in the 1920s, I argue that animation served both to thematise issues of consumerist modernity and to forge instrumental images analogous to contemporary developments in graphic design, which were themselves spurred on by the new field of advertising psychology.

TRICKS, CONTROL AND THE ‘INVISIBLE HAND’

Writing in 1920, a reporter for the trade journal Seidels Reklame argued that a new form of ‘film caricature’ offered an ideal opportunity for advertisers in their effort to arouse audience interest:

The very process by which the image emerges over the white screen is extremely interesting and spurs viewers to reflection. It looks as if one of those lightning-sketch painters from the variety stage were drawing the image line by line before the audience’s eyes. But the difference is that we do not see the draftsman. The pencil appears to be moved by the invisible hand of a ghost. … The audience is astonished, for it cannot help but ask itself how this image was recorded.

The writer was most likely describing the work of pioneering animator Emil Cohl. Although Cohl’s famous fantasmagorie films did often show the artist’s hand setting up the image or intervening, their main attraction came precisely when the hand left the frame and characters and objects seemed to move and transform on their own as if propelled by a hidden agency. But the reference to the variety stage situates early advertising more widely within a tradition of attractions and magic tricks that also lay behind the trick films of magician-artists such as Georges Méliès, Segundo de Chomón, Walter Booth and James Stuart Blackton, all of whom had adapted the famous ‘lightning sketch’ genre to trick film. The work of German pioneer Julius Pinschewer is characteristic here.

After beginning with a few live-action films such as Die Korsett-Anprobe (1910), Pinschewer quickly adopted stop-motion and other tricks to create a world of magical commodity display, in which products perform dances (e.g. Tanz der Flaschen [1912]), sewing kits mend buttons on their own (Der Nähkasten [1912]), fairies appear – via superimposition – as tiny figures atop giant champagne glasses (Sektzauber [1912]) and paintings come alive by magic (Das Ahnenbild [1912]). In such films, Pinschewer sought to visualise commodities that appear – as he put it in an article from 1914 – to be ‘guided by invisible hands’ as they move about, transform and interact with one another on the screen.

In keeping with the trick film tradition, such films aimed to astonish audiences unfamiliar with the technology behind the display: ‘The audience wonders how it is technologically possible, for example, that a coffee pot moves on its own and buttons produced by a certain company line up to spell the company name.’

The use of the ‘invisible hand’ to describe trick technology also linked animated film advertisements to numerous other forms of animated advertising beyond the cinema, such as the moving automata that were adapted to advertising in shop windows and the animated electric light advertisements. The latter, in particular, were often described as mysterious spectacles, in which words and images unfurl themselves over the night-time skyline as if drawn by an unseen hand. Thus, another writer for Seidels Reklame, commenting on the post-war ban on electric advertisements in Berlin, remembered the pre-war animated light spectacles as follows:

An invisible hand would draw spectacular characters over the building façades: long lines of striking text flared up suddenly, only to disappear after a few seconds as other texts took their place. Colourful animated images appeared on the roof to direct the attention of willing and even unwilling spectators.

Similarly, the author Erich Kästner, after visiting the Leipzig Trade Fair in 1925, described an entire array of animated street advertisements in magical terms, including electric light advertisements written by ‘invisible hands’ and ‘disguised automobiles driven by ghostly hands’.

But if such ‘ghostly’ hands underscore the link between animation and the conventions of stage magic, they also point towards another issue at stake in filmic animation: namely control over the image. In an oft-cited essay, William Schaffer has argued that in animated film every visible frame is ‘accompanied by the performance of an invisible hand’, since the animator intervenes in each individual frame at a level absent in live-action cinematography. The result, Schaffer argues, is a ‘paradox of control’ in which animators control the image to an unprecedented extent, while also seeing themselves exposed to a division of industrial labour beyond their control (increasingly so as industrial methods are adopted into animation). Schaffer’s emphasis on the hand as the ontological ground of animation has not been without its critics. But his identification of control as the key issue in ‘graphic’ film-making provides a useful entryway for a historical investigation of the use of animation in...
Of photographic representation, animation seemed to promise a control over spectatorial responses and a focusing of spectatorial attention on the brand. This control of attention forms part of a broader technology of economic control in the early twentieth century, in which branding and trademarks played a central role. Although trademarks might seem self-evident today, their very presence in advertising was still relatively new in the early twentieth century, having emerged around 1900 when powerful new corporations, such as the National Biscuit Company in the USA and Kupferberg Champagne in Germany, sought to gain control of widening markets by creating a loyal consumer base. In this sense, mass trademark advertising forms a key example of what James Beniger famously dubbed the ‘Control Revolution’ around 1900, where bureaucratic systems, telecommunications and emerging mass media were enlisted to manage the centrifugal forces unleashed by industrial production methods. Branding helped to manage increased production by stimulating consumption; but it also helped to forge a new *habitus* of consumption marked by affective investments in specific brands. For the companies involved, the mass distribution of identical trademarks promised to wrest market control from middlemen – retailers, wholesalers and department stores – by appealing directly to consumers. And it was precisely this development that led to the emergence of what the economist Viktor Mataja described in 1910 a new ‘professional group of advertising experts [*Reklamefachleute*]’ (i.e. advertising agencies), who promised to help companies forge effective brands and distribution strategies.

This desire for control over a broad consumer base also forms a key part of the background to the development of film advertising and its expert practitioners such as Pinschewer. The expense of film alone – the production cost of labour-intensive ‘trick films’, but also and above all the distribution costs – was still relatively new in the early twentieth century, having emerged around 1900 when powerful new corporations, such as the National Biscuit Company in the USA and Kupferberg Champagne in Germany, sought to gain control of widening markets by creating a loyal consumer base. In this sense, mass trademark advertising forms a key example of what James Beniger famously dubbed the ‘Control Revolution’ around 1900, where bureaucratic systems, telecommunications and emerging mass media were enlisted to manage the centrifugal forces unleashed by industrial production methods. Branding helped to manage increased production by stimulating consumption; but it also helped to forge a new *habitus* of consumption marked by affective investments in specific brands. For the companies involved, the mass distribution of identical trademarks promised to wrest market control from middlemen – retailers, wholesalers and department stores – by appealing directly to consumers. And it was precisely this development that led to the emergence of what the economist Viktor Mataja described in 1910 a new ‘professional group of advertising experts [*Reklamefachleute*]’ (i.e. advertising agencies), who promised to help companies forge effective brands and distribution strategies.

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"statistical study", based on the observation of 1,000 screenings in 600 theatres, which showed that 90 per cent of advertising films had elicited positive responses on the part of audiences to the brands shown. The number of visitors in these 600 theatres alone, he continued, amounted to some 58 million people per year stemming from all classes and professions. (By 1926, Pinschewer would boast of his monopolies with theatres totalling 300,000 seats or 3 million viewers per week.) Little wonder, then, that Pinschewer argued in the same article that advertising film was particularly well suited for ‘those products that enter into circulation under a specific trademark’. The cinema circuit offered a seemingly ideal distribution platform for advertisements designed to bind a broad public to a particular brand.

But if movie theatres offered an advantageous form of distribution, the cinema also appeared, in the eyes of advertising theorists, as a powerful dispositif for controlling spectatorial attention. Whereas newspaper inserts and street advertisements had to compete with dozens of neighbouring advertisements for the attention of distracted readers and passers-by, the darkened space of the theatre promised to focus attention on the product and its trademark: ‘Every patron in the movie theatre’, Pinschewer claimed in the 1913 article, ‘perceives the advertising film shown during radio advertisements or simply turn off the receiver; but it is not easy to close one’s eyes in the movie theatre. This is not to argue that we should take the claims of advertisers at face value, and the frequent discussions of dissatisfied or angry audiences in the trade literature of the time offer one indication of just how tenuous advertising’s control strategies might have been in reality. But it does suggest that the logic of control was a central motivation for the enlistment film as an advertising medium in the years around World War I and would continue to shape the way in which advertising theorists approached the medium throughout the 1920s. If the invisible hands of the animator promised control over the image, those of distribution specialists promised control over a new marketplace of late capitalism and its flows of consumer attention. It was precisely this double role that characterised the new class of advertising film entrepreneurs such as Pinschewer.

ANIMATED THINGS

This nexus of control helps to account for the predilection for graphic forms in advertising film. But it does not necessarily explain in particular the fixation these films evince with showing products in movement. Again and again, Pinschewer’s early films display anthropomorphised commodities dancing, marching, mending shirts, pouring champagne, etc. Indeed, it was precisely such films that the reporter for Seidel’s Reklame cited at the beginning of this article had in mind when he wrote that animation served as a perfect form for advertising the new world of consumer things: “Thousands of objects lend themselves to this kind of advertising, and this kind of advertising lends itself to thousands of objects.” This is a pattern that would last well into the 1920s and 30s – one still visible, for example, in Oskar Fischinger’s famous Muratti cigarette advertisements Muratti Greift Ein (1934) and Muratti Privat (1935), where animated cigarettes perform various group dances to the music. Here, too, filmic advertisements found a counterpart in other forms of ‘living advertisements’ such as the parades of human cigarettes and other products that could be seen marching in trade fairs or in the city streets of Berlin.

It would be hard to overlook the link between such spectacles of animated commodities and that other form of market magic so critical to modern life: commodity fetishism. Marx’s model – in which the labour of production and social relations assume ‘the phantasmagorical form of a relation between things’ – informed numerous more expansive diagnoses of modernity that sought to explain how the products of human culture seemed to emancipate themselves from human control. From Georg Simmel’s model of the ‘tragedy of culture’ to Georg Lukács’s theory of ‘reification’, modernist thought continually drew upon the Marxian concept of fetishism to explain the process by which the forms of modern culture – technology, bureaucracy, law, etc. – assume an autonomous status while human beings are reduced to ‘passive observers’. Even the early Jean Baudrillard could draw on this paradigm when he described consumer culture and its products as a kind of coercive (structural) social system – ‘the code by which the entire society communicates and converses’ – to
which twentieth-century individuals are trained to conform no less than nineteenth-century rural populations were trained for industrial and bureaucratic work.29

As powerful as such theoretical paradigms are, however, they cannot account for the particular affective mode in which commodities come to life to address spectators in early animated advertisements: namely their humour. For this, we do better to take a cue from Arjun Appadurai, who famously called for ‘methodological fetishism’ in the study of things, one that follows the things themselves – their forms, their circulation and, above all, the work they do – rather than reflexively seeking to dissipate fetishistic illusions and reveal the human actors or social networks underneath. The particular humour of early product advertising was part and parcel of a broader culture of humour in early consumer society, which sought precisely to come to terms with the increased agency of material things. Perhaps the best-known articulation of the topos of the ‘thingness of objects’ whose ‘flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, however momentarily’.35

But if the humour of the cunning object resonates with cinema’s defamiliarising powers generally, it finds a more specific on-screen representation in slapstick. Méliès’s Diable noir, itself a proto-slapstick comedy, derived its humour precisely from a spectacle of malevolent objects – chairs, tables and beds – that thwart even the simplest intentions of the unsuspecting hotel guest. And this humour would come to a head in the films of Chaplin and Keaton, which offered filmic equivalents of the Heideggerian experience of worldliness, in which the objects of the world, ceasing to function as transparent tools, step forth ‘in their own right, as living beings’.10

For intellectuals such as Zweig, the experience of everyday objects in consumer society was precisely one of being pulled back down, cast into a stubborn material realm where autonomous theoretical pursuits become impossible. Earlier cinema is, of course, full of representations of things assuming their own agency. For theorists such as Béla Balázs and Jean Epstein, this capacity of objects to assume a living physiognomy on screen is precisely what made film an art form, whose defamiliarising close-ups could restore a mode of vision characteristic of children who ‘do not yet judge things as tools’, but ‘regard each thing as an autonomous living being with a soul and face of its own’.34 Such readings of film’s resistance to instrumental vision resonate with an entire strain of modern aesthetics, from Surrealism to Heidegger to contemporary ‘thing’ theory, dedicated to rediscovering what Bill Brown has called ‘the thingness of objects’ whose ‘flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, however momentarily’.35

Advertising and Animation

![Sherlock Jr (date)](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

Wahlisch shampoo advertisement – Leipzig Trade Fair, 1922
should ensure that they do not develop aggressive humour (satire); rather, their figures should be based in a jovial humorous characterisation. (To offer a crass comparison, Wilhelm Busch’s caricatures are funny and jovial, while George Grosz’s every pen-stroke is caustic and aggressive.)

Such ‘jovial’ (bequem) humour was omnipresent in the animated advertisements of the 1910s and 20s, and this is precisely what separated advertising animation from the provocations of Keatonesque slapstick. Even as these films evoked modernity’s ‘cunning’ objects, they visualised, in scenario after scenario, the transformation of the rebellious object into an obedient commodity.

EXPERTISE

The laments of Vischer and Zweig – that the overwhelming presence of material objects had destroyed ‘that concentration that used to last through weeks of undisturbed work’ – could also be understood in terms of advertising itself. The period after World War I, in particular, saw an exponential increase in the presence of advertising in Germany as public institutions such as the rail system, streetcars, the post office, subway stations, streets, highways, construction sites and pavements were opened up to advertising for the first time, resulting in a widely observed ‘flood of advertising’ in the public spaces of the new republic. This went hand in hand with a massive expansion of professional film advertising as new companies such as Deulig, Döring, Epoche, Nordmark, Ufa, Werbedienst, Werbelicht and dozens more got into the business. At the same time, the emergence of portable projectors and daylight screens meant that advertising film was no longer confined to cinemas, but also shown in display windows, trade fairs, on shop floors and advertising vehicles that made the rounds in urban streets. With the return of animated light advertisements after the post-war blackout in the early 1920s, the sight of animated advertising displays became a ubiquitous feature of public space – so much so that a utopian image of...
Benjamin’s description of advertising ‘hitting us between the eyes’ prefigures his better-known characterisation of Dada collage and film montage as phenomena that ‘hit the spectator like a bullet’. The passage also underscores the relation between the aggressive objects of advertising and the cinema of attractions – the image of the car careening towards the spectator recalling nothing so much as early automobile films such as Cecil Hepworth’s How It Feels To Be Run Over (1900) – and suggests that Benjamin attached the same utopian hopes to advertising that he did to film as a means of training vision.

Following Benjamin, Janet Ward has rightly emphasised the contribution of advertising to the elaboration of a visual culture of ‘shocks’ during the Weimar years. At the same time, the very insistence of advertising theorists themselves on distinguishing between advertising and Dada suggest that they understood the visual power of advertising images in ways that went beyond the mere shock of novel impressions. Parallel to the increase in advertising practice in the 1920s, there also emerged a new professional sphere of advertising psychology – one undergirded by new trade publications, university curricula and experimental institutes such as the Institut für WirtschaftspsychoLOGie in Berlin – which saw as one of its central tasks the overhauling of advertising design to achieve a maximum level of control over spectatorial attention. Blending doctrines of suggestion with experimental psychology, theorists such as Walther Moede – head of the Institut für WirtschaftspsychoLOGie and editor of the new journal Industrielle Psychotechnik – devised models of advertising images designed to capture the attention, guide the spectator’s gaze, stimulate associations and motivate consumer habits. In their writings these theorists conceived of advertising spectatorship as a terrain of ‘fleeting glances’, which images sought to attract by means of striking visual elements (the so-called ‘Blickfang’ or ‘eye-catcher’) and steer through carefully controlled layouts (so-called ‘Blickbewegungslinien’ or ‘lines of eye movement’) in order to forge lasting associations between needs, pleasures and particular brands. (Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the field of advertising psychology, while drawing on many longstanding tenets of experimental psychology and mass psychology, became intelligible as a doctrine of brand advertising.) The result was a new conception of visual culture, in which images struggle for control over attention and the wandering gaze is exposed to constant solicitations by instrumental representations. Here, the invisible hand was no longer that of a magician, but rather the hand of the advertising expert, aspiring to guide the spectator’s gaze – as Moede put it – ‘in the desired direction’.

Significantly, this new caste of advertising experts sought to define themselves against the world of magic and ‘tricks’ that had characterised much earlier advertising. ‘Tricks,’ wrote the editor of Seidels Reklame, Robert Hösel, in 1926, ‘...can no longer help us. Today’s audiences demand that the advertisement provide them with essential information, that it come to the point.’ Hösel’s call forms part of a trend towards Sachlichkeit (objectivity) – consistently championed by the contributors to Seidels Reklame such as Adolf Behne – that found its most famous embodiment in the reductive ‘object posters’ (Sachplakate) of Lucien Bernhard. But the passage is also indicative of a new era of expertise, in which advertising sought no longer to astonish, but rather – according to the dictates of the new advertising psychology – to control and direct visual attention.

Developments in film animation after World War I should clearly be seen in parallel with this professionalisation of print advertising. It was precisely during and after the war that industrialised modes of animation production – where studios were organised along Taylorist principles of industrial efficiency and animators employed labour-saving cel techniques – became the norm in the USA. This period that drawn animation separated from the tradition of the ‘trick film’ and the aesthetics of attractions to become an autonomous film genre focused above all on character drawing. This professionalisation of animation forms the context in which the new advertising film companies began to take up animation en masse, including the new cel techniques developed in the USA. Like other cultural phenomena coded as ‘Americanistic’, this new culture of professionalised animation provoked an ambivalent reaction. The advertising theorist Hermann Behrmann, for instance, complained that the outsourcing of animation to ‘individuals wanting in artistic talent’ and working for ‘insufficient pay’ was creating a market of bad advertising films. Behrmann saw the new vogue for ‘artistic’ advertising films – he specifically cited
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2) communicate a ‘need’ (Bedürfnis) through the scenario to retain attention and arouse interest and 3) introduce the trademark at the end in such a way as to forge a lasting association with a specific brand. This last point, Müller argued, was the key to controlling the actions of spectators after they leave the cinema:

The cigarette brand ... must be introduced in such a way that it is impressed inextinguishably upon the spectator’s attention, which has been carefully prepared by the preceding action in the film. ... In this way, according to the laws of mental association, whenever the spectator of this advertising film subsequently sees an elegant wine bar or hears a dance melody, the brand of cigarettes associated with them through the film will light up in his mind’s eye. At the same time, if the need to smoke becomes active in the consumer’s mind, this should also call forth memories of the film he saw and with it the relevant brand of cigarettes.63

Müller’s model – in which the trademark is introduced at the end to be associated with certain needs and their pleasurable fulfilment – offers something of a standard template for advertising films using narrative vignettes such as Umsturz am Nordpol and Küchen-Rebellen.

To be sure, this was not the only model around. A competing model, emerging in the wake of avant-garde advertising films by Walter Ruttmann, Guido Seeber and Oskar Fischinger, drew on recent psychological research to argue for the use of abstract rhythms in advertising. Elaborated most fully by the advertising theorist Fritz Pauli (who, once again, linked animated film to other forms of animated advertisements such as electric signage), the abstract model relied less on a singular Blickfang than on hypnotic repetition, by which – Pauli hoped – consumers could be brought into ‘resonance’ with the rhythms unfolding on the screen.64 In the trade literature of the 1920s one can find various ‘taxonomies’ of the advertising film that include both of these types and others. For example, a 1926 article by the advertising theorist Käthe Kurtzig, published in Walther Moede’s journal Industrielle Psychotechnik, distinguished three prevalent types of animated advertising: the humorous caricature, the ornamental silhouette (which she saw as the best form for advertising women’s products) and the rhythmical ‘absolute’ film.65

In every case, however, the animated filmstrip functions as an ‘expert’ tool for controlling spectatorship: captivating the attention and forging associations with particular brands.

At the same time, advertising film itself was increasingly conceptualised within the parameters of the new advertising psychology. On the one hand, the animated images of advertising film appeared to offer an efficacious type of Blickfang (eye-catching). Thus the industrial film-maker Arthur Lassally argued that, with the emergence of the new portable daylight projectors, filmic images would replace posters and cruder forms of animation ‘as an eye-catcher [Blickfang] in shop windows’ and other public spaces.66 This was, indeed, one of the main arenas for the projection of animated advertising films via portable projectors such as Pinschewer’s ‘Capitol’ projector. On the other hand, theorists argued that film’s status as a time-based medium, capable of narrative development, offered ideal conditions for putting the new advertising psychology into practice. Thus, in another article from 1921, C. F. Müller applied the new doctrines of advertising psychology directly onto film when he argued that a good advertising film should 1) include an ‘eye-catcher’ (Blickfang) early on to attract spectators’ attention,
None of this is to argue that the conventions of the ‘trick film’ completely disappeared in the 1920s. But those conventions are now combined with new forms of expertise and psychological management introduced by applied experimental psychology. Within this context, the invisible hand of the magician is once again subordinated to another invisible hand: that of the advertising expert, whose ‘applied animation’ would serve to control spectatorship at every level by capturing and directing attention, provoking psychological reactions and stimulating acts of consumption through film. In conclusion, I offer a brief reading of one film, among many, that combines these various moments. Made by Curt Schumann, a prominent member of the new cohort of professional animators in the 1920s, for Kaisers coffee products in 1927, *Gespensterstunde* (The Ghostly Hour) uses cel animation to create a phantasmatic world in which the phantom-like products of a Kaiser’s grocery store come to life during the wee hours of the night. In its use of the night-time setting and in its specific dramaturgy (such as the tracking over the city’s buildings in the opening shot), the film recalls such works of early cinema as *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* (1906), an Edison trick film based on a comic strip of Windsor McKay, in which the drunken protagonist is plagued in his sleep by a series of ‘cunning’ objects (culminating in an animated bed that takes him on a harrowing flight over the city). But while *Gespensterstunde* evokes a similar carnivalesque scenario, the film’s development works towards transforming such animated objects into obedient commodities. Awoken by their ‘leader’, a group of Kaiser coffee pots marches down the street from the counter and watches as the various products perform ethnographically marked dances one by one in orderly mass ornaments: a dance of Swiss maidens for ‘Kakao’, a Chinese dance for ‘Tee’, etc. With these typological ethnographic dances, the film clearly follows a well-known pattern from ethnographic exhibitions and educational films. But it also inscribes them with a distinctly consumerist gaze: the same imperialist gaze inscribed into the confection shop itself, where the world’s products appear lined up in orderly rows at the disposition of the consumer.

But this ‘taming’ of the object at the level of spectacle is also echoed in the film’s narrative. At the end of *Gespensterstunde*, after the dances have been completed, a female ‘shopper’ emerges from a poster in the store to order products from the animated coffee pot, who tells her (and the film’s audience) that only the Kaiser’s trademark can guarantee the product’s quality. As this exchange plays out, an animated line – quite literally a filmic ‘Blickbewegungslinie’ – draws itself across the screen from the woman’s eyes to the coffee package, leading our gaze to the space where the trademark should be. In the next shot, the animated pot then jumps onto the package and becomes the Kaiser trademark, telling viewers: ‘I must always be present. For only the Kaiser’s trademark guarantees quality.’ At this point, the trademark is frozen into place, and the other figures also run back to their places as still objects and images. What began with the evocation of the uncanny powers of animation thus ends with the figurative and literal stilling of the rebellious object.

As the focal point for visual attention, the all-important trademark thus not only promises ‘quality’, but also the pleasures of taming the cunning objects of modern consumer society. At the same time, *Gespensterstunde* transforms the anarchical trick film into a forum for visual pedagogy for the consumer’s gaze. Not only does the film culminate with the trademark, thus forging associations between grocery shopping and Kaiser’s brand, it also trains the spectator, as it were, to look for trademarks, to identify with a brand in the interest of ‘quality’ consumption. Within this pedagogical scenario, the invisible hand has passed from the magician to the expert: from the phantasmagoria to the laboratories and studios of psychologists and professional animators.

**NOTES**


8. Ibid., p. 276.
10. Erich Käsnter, ‘Der Karneval des Kaufmanns’ (1925), in Klaus Schuhmann (ed.), Der Karneval des Kaufmanns: Gesammelte Texte aus der Leipziger Zeit 1923–1927 (Leipzig: Lehnmstedt, 2004), pp. 172–3. Kastner’s contemporaries had no trouble making links between such forms of ‘animated’ advertisements and filmic animation, as when another writer for Seidels Reklame describes his vision of animated light advertisements in London as follows: ‘Animals and Machines appear in ten to twenty variations of movement in the manner of trick films’ (‘Tiere und Maschinen erscheinen zehn bis zwanzigmal variiert in Bewegung nach Art der Trickfilmaufnahmen’) (p. 13). In 1926, yet another writer described animated electric signs ‘as if drawn by a mysterious hand’ and argued that such spectacles could take a cue from trick film: ‘Were the sparkling wine of the Kupferberg light advertisement to flow from the glass back up into the bottle, this would be false in principle, but it would be very amusing and original for the observer of the advertisement. Projecting film in reverse is a rare phenomenon, but it is always met with great applause’ (‘Wenn bei der Kupferberg-Lichtplakat der Sekt aus der Glase wieder zurück in die Flasche fließen würde, so wäre das ja an sich ganz falsch, für die Beschauer des Lichtplakates aber sehr belustigend und originnell. Der rückwärts gekurbelte Film ist zwar selten zu sehen, findet aber immer großen Beifall’). L. von Bialy, ‘Das Lichtplakat’, Seidels Reklame no. 11 (1926), pp. 353–4.
12. Schaffer sees this paradox acted out in popular cartoons through what he calls ‘allegories of control’, where figures of ‘controllers’ in the cartoon point to the invisible instances of control affecting the image from without (ibid., pp. 471–4).
21. Advertisement for Pinschewer-Film, Die Reklame no. 19 (June 1926).
23. Ibid., p. 245.
25. Thus, the passage by Pauli continues: ‘Audiences do not wish to feel cheated, as it were, out of their time or their ticket price. … They wish to be amused, thrilled or educated in an interesting way. When this is the case, they feel entertained and regard the product being advertised with favor’ (ibid.). On this point, see also my article ‘Absolute Advertising: Walter Ruttmann and the Weimar Advertising Film’, Cinema Journal vol. 52 no. 4 (2013), p. 68.
28. Georg Lukács, History and Class Consciousness, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968), p. 100. For Simmel’s link to Marx, see Georg Simmel, The Concept and Tragedy of Culture, in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone (eds), Simmel on Culture (London: Sage, 1997), pp. 55–75: ‘The “fetishistic character” which Marx attributed to economic objects in the epoch of commodity production is only a particularly modified instance of the general fate of the contents of our culture. These contents are subject to a paradox – and increasingly so as “culture” develops – that they are indeed created by human subjects and meant for human subjects, but follow an immanent developmental logic in the intermediate form of objectivity which they take on at either side of these instances and thereby become alienated from both their origin and their purpose’ (p. 70).
31. See Friedrich Theodor Vischer, ‘Über das Erhabene und das Komische’ (1837), in Friedrich Theodor Vischer, Über das Erhabene und das Komische: in Auswahl (Stuttgart, 1954), p. 245. According to the writer, this is precisely what separated humorous product advertisements from the more serious forms of publicity such as public service and propaganda films.
35. Bill Brown, 'Thing Theory', *Critical Inquiry* no. 23 (2001), p. 4. For Brown, such moments form the model for a kind of theory that attempts to resist the sublations of hermeneutic reading.


40. See Kästner, ‘Der Karneval des Kaufmanns’. Kästner was hardly alone in describing the trade fairs as a carnivalesque event. Numerous were the complaints that these events, with their parades of animated objects, had retained an ‘obnoxious carnival character’ (aufdringliche Karnevalscharakter). Robert Hösel, ‘Die Messe und die neue Zeit’, *Seidels Reklame* no. 5 (1920), p. 210.


42. Like the majority of advertising films from the period, this one is now lost. However, a synopsis and illustrations survive in a print advertisement for Epoche. See ‘Aus Film-Manuskripten’ advertisement, *Die Reklame* no. 20 (1927), p. 421.


45. On this context, see my article ‘Taking it to the Street: Screening the Advertising Film in the Weimar Republic’, *Screen* vol. 54 no. 4 (forthcoming).


49. Ibid., pp. 244–5.

50. Ibid., p. 245.


52. Pinschewer himself would later recast his trick films in this light when he described them, in an article from 1927, as ‘Advertising films … which, like “living object posters”, brought the brand being advertised closer to observers’ [Werbefilme … in denen das propagierte Fabrikat, wie in einem „lebenden Sachplakat”, dem Beschauer näher gebracht wurde]. Pinschewer, ‘Von den Anfängen des Werbefilms’, p. 409.


54. See Philippe Gauthier, ‘A “Trick” Question: Are Early Animated Drawings a Film Genre or a Special Effect?’, *Animation* no. 6 (2011), pp. 163–75.

55. Not surprisingly, advertising theorists also began to distinguish between ‘trick film’ and ‘animation’ in the early 1920s. Thus, one book from 1923 described a new class of film as ‘die gezeichneten Filme, die eigentlich nicht ganz mit Recht Trickfilme genannt werden’ (‘drawn films that cannot really be called trick films’) (Behrmann, *Reklame*, p. 228).