Ethics and Communication in the Chocolate Industry

Thesis

by

Aneta Zadražilová

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Reader: Dr. Todd Nesbitt
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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the effects of chocolate promotion claims and brand promises in order to compare them with the reality and the ethical issues within the chocolate industry. The study examines the business strategy of major chocolate companies from a historical as well as a contemporary perspective in order to detect patterns in their communication of brand stories about health, mood, energy, relationship, and other chocolate benefits claimed by the industry. Examples of specific advertising slogans, campaigns, and legal issues are presented, giving the reader a wholesome picture of the system on which the industry is based. Towards the end, a major case study serves to scrutinize a specific chocolate product, Nutella, to reveal how elaborated the “conditioning process” can become in its effort to create life-long consumers. It is argued that chocolate marketing claims, in regards to both consumer experience and cocoa farmers’ work conditions, rarely reflect reality and thus are deceptive, which has detrimental impact on societies.
1. Introduction

As chocolate’s supply and demand have been simultaneously rising, chocolate production and promotion issues have been accelerating in importance too. Marketers of chocolate products are likely to maneuver with different publicity stunts and target groups, producing novel marketing trends and shaping brand identities. Chocolate can be sold as an ingredient, snack or a high-end delicacy. Lately, it has been regarded as one of the world’s favorite treats and, at the same time, a designated “food drug” that is claimed to bring about stress relief and other benefits (Vale, 2008). The chocolate industry’s effort to maintain this image manifests itself by strong advertising.

The marketing tools and techniques vary from the use of the classic commercials, posters, attractive packaging, and collectables, to the establishment of an emotional relationship via the Internet. With the unceasing demand for chocolate products from consumers and the increasing competition among producers, chocolate media and consumer trends are becoming more interesting. The range of media and touch points for consumers to connect with are constantly expanding online as well as in the physical environment; even to the extent of designing chocolate towns and amusement parks and unique chocolate “sceneries” in travel retail areas where chocolate companies often dominate. The “chocolate language” has evolved remarkably; health claims, personalized bars, social media games, and even the introduction of chocolate anniversary days all hint at a new fate of chocolate, especially in Western Europe and North America (Morris, 2012). Note that chocolate can be adjusted to the tastes of all age groups; adults, for instance, are targeted with alcohol and coffee fillings, while children with milk-cream content.
Behind this “chocolate theatre,” however, there is a more controversial backstage to which the general public has no access. This work will explore the chocolate industry’s hidden nooks so that consumers are inspired to think beyond the eye-catching packaging and advertising claims. The central question of this thesis asks about the impact that the communication of the chocolate industry has on people’s behavior and the impact their choices have on workers in the chocolate industry. Specifically, it will examine marketing communication strategies used in the chocolate industry and what possible effects they have. The claim is that emotional conditioning and the glamorization of chocolate leads to an incorrect perception of physical and emotional health, as well as shallow ideas about social status and moral sense while people are being unknowingly conditioned to excessively consume chocolate, or even think that life would be inferior without it.

To hint at the unperceived issues related to chocolate mass producers, Ferrero’s Nutella has been linked with deforestation, Kinder Surprise eggs with sexism and Hershey’s chocolate with child exploitation. Production areas, such as the Ivory Coast are known to have child labor on cocoa plantations where workers are likely to not have even tasted chocolate in their entire life. Consumers in First World countries, on the other hand, take the availability of the product as a matter of fact. Moreover, Jason Vale, an addiction specialist and the author of *Chocolate Busters: The Easy Way to Kick Your Addiction*, has a theory (2008) that claims the chocolate industry has slavery at both ends of the spectrum; While cocoa farmers are physically exploited on the cocoa plantations, Western consumers are psychologically enslaved to chocolate consumption by marketers and advertisers through life-long conditioning processes.
This work primarily applies communication theory to real-life trends in order to enlighten the reader about a number of social issues in a seemingly unproblematic, almost innocently-perceived industry, as well as addresses the way those issues evolve, and strips down broad studies on advertising effects. The focused approach on chocolate demonstrates the way a specific industry works on a much more practical level. The aim is to address the full complexity of issues surrounding the chocolate industry and to offer a fair view on all its merits and drawbacks. With the existence of fairly notorious industries, such as oil, tobacco, arms and others, which tend to be under constant scrutiny by many watchdogs and socially conscious individuals, it is not commonplace for the general public to think of something as “sweet” as chocolate too critically, even if there are somewhat bitter realities about it. This is why the analysis of the bittersweet chocolate industry can be especially relevant. All in all, this work is conducted with the hope that the reader will find it an enlightening and humbling experience to rethink a product whose effects generally go by unnoticed.

To begin with, background information on several issues in the chocolate industry will be laid out, including the exploitation of workers on cocoa plants and the environmental impact of harvest. Primarily, however, the paper will address marketing communication in relation to miscommunicated chocolate benefits and advertising hooks as well as major marketing tools and techniques that convey those claims. This shall be first explained in theory and then presented in context with real-life actions of specific chocolate companies. Towards the end, an in-depth case study on the Nutella brand will showcase a long-term scenario of marketing communication, shedding light on Nutella’s branding, which relates to many aspects of the theoretical part of this thesis.
2. The Chocolate Industry

This chapter will attempt to illustrate the chocolate industry’s history, social functions, major players and the controversies that surround them. A regular consumer only knows chocolate’s taste and promotion-based information about chocolate. Thus, chocolate may be viewed as one of the most known edibles that no one truly knows at all. After this chapter, nevertheless, the reader shall understand that chocolate represents a vast, old, complex, and constantly growing business.

2.1. History

To begin, we shall look at chocolate in its historical context. Chocolate has traditionally represented more than a choice morsel as it does today; it held major power in the Mayan culture, for instance, which would be unrecognized even by today’s greatest “chocoholics.” An understanding of such past roles of chocolate may help readers understand where today’s modern chocolate marketers get inspired from. Chocolate used to be a form of currency, status symbol, military ration, seasoning, beverage, aphrodisiac, cure and more (Ryan, 2012). To several vanished and a few still-existing societies, however, chocolate has had a meaning that surmounts all its other roles; it was deemed as “the food of the gods.” In fact, chocolate still verges on a religious veneration today, as marketers tend to revive ideas about miraculous powers of chocolate from the olden days, adjust them to people’s modern wants and desires and then embed them in their own brand stories.

Chocolate history begins in Latin America where cacao trees are known to be largely concentrated. The first people to be associated with chocolate are the Olmec who inhabited a place today known as southeast Mexico as early as 1000 BC (Off, 2014).
Back then, however, adjectives such as “sweet” and “solid” were un-applicable as chocolate was rather bitter and fluid. Olmec chocolate was a bitter beverage, which was believed to have stimulating, nourishing and even healing effects. Not everybody was allowed to enjoy these benefits though; the privileged consumed it and the peasants did the necessary work to produce it. Unfortunately, full information about all the functions that chocolate might have had in this ancient culture is no longer verifiable (Godiva, n.d.). There is more information in connection to other societies though.

Chocolate is known to have had an immense role in the Aztec and Mayan civilizations. The Mayan chocolate drink consisted of water mixed with crushed cocoa beans and chili peppers (Satre, 2005) No sugar was involved. In fact, the word “chocolate” is believed to come from the Mayan word “xocolatl” which translates to “bitter water” (Ryan, 2012, p. 1.). Chocolate itself was considered a mood restorative universal cure. It was also a part of religion, including sacrificial rituals (Godiva, n.d). Cocoa beans had another very peculiar function in the society; while people these days say that money does not grow on trees, it certainly was not the case for the Mayans. The cocoa bean, a product of the cocoa tree, was actually their established currency: it would buy anything from a pumpkin for four beans or a rabbit for ten beans to an overnight female companion for another ten beans (Godiva, n.d.). It was, literally, money growing on trees.

It was the Mayans who told Christopher Columbus about the existence of Aztecs when he arrived to Latin America in 1502 (Vale, 2008). It was unimagined, and for Europeans an even more fascinating culture, which was allegedly just as “obsessed” with chocolate. Their loathed monarch who energized his mighty army with chocolate was
later appositely nicknamed “The Chocolate King” (Off, 2014, p. 15). In regard to the rest of the population, drinking chocolate was an elite experience. Not everyone could partake.

Christopher Columbus is said to have brought the first cocoa to Europe from his fourth visit of the Americas somewhere between 1502 and 1504 (Godiva, n.d.). However, he sought land and proverbial treasures in the New World, and so the unknown humbly-looking cocoa beans on the board of his ship were left somewhat unnoticed. Since he alone did not realize their potential, he could not convey it to the European merchants either.

It was the Spanish conquistador named Don Hernán Cortés who first sensed their commercial worth, perhaps because the Spanish king Charles V wanted him to look for more than just wealth and territory among the native people in Mesoamerica (Off, 2014). As instructed, Cortés looked for habits and indigenous products there and found out about the secrets of processing cocoa beans as well as the way they were entrenched in the local monetary system. He found out that a slave costed 100 beans, turkey a whopping 200 beans and a prostitute’s service only 10 of them, a price similar to the standards of the Olmec. Straight in the land of the indigenous people of the Americas, Cortés already tasted chocolate, and since then, the Spaniards began to customize the drink by sweetening and heating it right there, basically creating the first version of hot chocolate (Off, 2014). In 1528, Cortes brought cocoa beans to Spain. It became an important component of the trans-Atlantic trade.
The habit of chocolate drinking gradually spread across Europe until it became custom for the Native Americans (Mayans and Aztecs) to harvest cocoa in order to supply European demands as slaves (Satre, 2005). There, chocolate was also partly associated with pharmaceutics and polemics for its aphrodisiac-like characteristics, as it was discovered that chocolate contained elements of theobromine, caffeine, and alkaloids that influence the nervous system, the mind-altering chemical serotonin as well as the sexual stimulant phenylethylamine (Vale, 2008). For the next few centuries, chocolate continued to be mostly a product for the privileged in Europe too (Off, 2014). At last, it was England that introduced sweetened chocolate to the middle class. During the Age of Enlightenment, it became a social drink that was served in salons, coffee houses and the newly introduced chocolate houses. The situation, however, had been darkening for the Native Americans and - by that time - even Africans who struggled to survive the horrific system of cocoa production, which was entangled with slavery.

Meanwhile in the 19th century, Europeans began to increasingly mind the fatty by-product of cocoa. In the era of the Industrial Revolution, the invented Van Houten press offered the first chance to remove the unwanted grease from the beans (Satre, 2005). This invention went down in chocolate’s history, as chocolate could finally be quickly dissolved in hot milk or water, allowing for easy home consumption. Nevertheless, the chocolate market had not yet evolved enough to provide many households with the opportunity to enjoy chocolate. Mass-production of chocolate was first mastered by a company named Fry (Cadbury, 2011). The reform in production allowed Joseph Fry to produce chocolate on a mass scale at affordable prices. Moreover, he introduced chocolate as a treat that would be finally eaten and not just drunk. His Chocolat
Delicieux a Manger in 1940 was known as the first ever mass-produced solid chocolate bar (Off, 2014). At that time, the company J.S. Fry & Sons had no equal rival.

The first real competition came with John Cadbury. He was first to realize the power of marketing. He promoted ornate chocolate boxes and portrayed chocolate as means to reach a sensual kind of experience (Bradley, 2008). It was Cadbury’s marketers who coupled chocolate with Valentine’s Day and thus popularized chocolate as a symbol of love. It was also them who associated chocolate with Easter by producing the first ever seen chocolate egg in 1875 (Off, 2014). Around that time, chocolate finally began to be commonly consumed as a result of mere pleasure seeking without any side expectations to health, mood or energy benefits. It simply tasted good.

Henri Nestlé from Switzerland introduced another first to the 19th century’s evolving chocolate world. He mastered the blending of dairy milk with cocoa solids – a method that led to the creation of the world’s first milk chocolate – and created a chocolate tastier than any of its precedents (Allen, 2009). Around then, Switzerland was already the home of other perspective chocolate businesses, including Lindt. Nevertheless, it was no one else but Henri Nestlé with his milk chocolate who inspired Milton Hershey back in the USA. Eventually, he perfected his own method of producing milk chocolate. Moreover, he wanted all Americans to be able to afford this treat, and so he made the purchase of his Hershey’s milk chocolate bars (plain and with almonds) and Hershey’s Kisses a matter of a few nickels (Brenner, 2000). As a result, he became the pioneering chocolate producer in America. The chocolate-themed, utopian-like Hershey’s town that he built around his factory in Pennsylvania is a memorial of that.
However, new chocolate barons in the 20th century appeared even in America. Forrest Mars in the 1920s was one of them (Cadbury, 2011). His prized produce was a chocolate-coated nougat bar called Milky Way, soon followed by Snickers, Three Musketeers, and later by the Mars bar (Brenner, 2000). All the above products were coated in milk chocolate. This is a reminder that the success story of the first major chocolate manufacturers, such as Fry, Cadbury, Lindt, Nestlé, Hershey’s and Mars, ultimately lied in the years of trial and error, inventing and perfecting milk chocolate, a treat that has been steadily favored to this day.

2.2. Basic Characteristics of the Contemporary Industry

The current main global manufacturers are; American Mars Inc, American Mondelēz International (Craft Foods), Italian Ferrero Group, Swiss Nestlé AS, Japanese Meiji Co Ltd, American Hershey Food Corps, Swiss Chocoladenfabriken Lind & Spurgli AG, Argentinian Acor, Japanese Ezaki Glico Co Ltd and German August Storck KG (Scully, 2013). The list indicates that the USA, Japan and Switzerland are leaders of the market. The company names above also show that most of the European and American chocolate tycoons persisted. A few of them underwent changes of name and ownership, such as Fry, which in 2010 was taken over by Cadbury’s Craft Foods (Chrystal, 2011). Ferrero came to the scene a bit later in the half of the 20th century, but quickly climbed up to match the others.

To outline the vast impact of the industry, several statistical figures shall be pinpointed. As Kay Frydenborg, the author of *Chocolate: Sweet Science & Dark Secrets of the World's Favorite Treat*, reports, the average European now eats about 11 kg of chocolate per year (2015). The Swiss have the highest chocolate consumption with
about 127 kg a year (Vale 2008). The fact that a single chocolate manufacturer, Ferrero, can afford to periodically buy up 25% of the world’s hazelnut supply for its hazelnut-chocolate products (Padovani, 2015) is further proof that the chocolate industry has powerful means of doing its business. In fact, Ferrero was enabled to purchase the greatest Turkish hazelnut processor Oltan in 2014 and thus was given the priority to continually buy the largest amount of hazelnuts even throughout the shortage in the same year when the prices of hazelnuts increased by 60% in Turkey, the land where 70% of world’s hazelnuts are produced (Padovani, 2015). Such numbers attest to the fact that the major players in the chocolate industry have become important and strong enough to be prioritized even over other types of businesses.

2.3. Related Issues

The sections above have already hinted at the fact that the chocolate industry has not been completely clean of ethical discrepancies, such as slavery and overconsumption of certain commodities. This chapter will engage in some of the controversies, which still apply to today’s chocolate production and marketing processes. It will help to further understand why chocolate companies tend to keep certain information undisclosed, and it will also help to draw contrast between what the industry communicates about chocolate and what chocolate truly entails. To give an introductory idea about the seriousness of miscommunication in the chocolate industry, this quote by Jan Pottker, the author of Crisis in Candyland: Melting the Chocolate Shell of the Mars Family Empire, shall do: “Mars, which enforces a vow of secrecy on every person who works for it, has often been compared to the CIA. This analogy is overstated, Mars, Inc. is far better at keeping its operations secret than the CIA” (1995). However overstated itself,
this quote is supposed to sketch the complexity and secrecy that has traditionally slithered through the chocolate industry.

2.3.1. Slave Labor and Child Trafficking
The hottest topic today is perhaps the exploitation of workers on cocoa plantations, which has been recently provoking an increasingly heated coverage in the media. The Ivory Coast, Ghana, Indonesia, Nigeria, Brazil, and Cameroon are the six largest cocoa producing countries in the world (Cadbury, 2011). Officially, slave labor on cocoa plantations ended in 1833 (Frydenborg, 2015). That formal statement, however, was untrue back then just as it is today. Worker exploitation and child slavery in the cocoa growing areas has been around ever since the first pioneering chocolate companies began to make business out of the cocoa bean (Satre, 2005). It was reported by the U.S. Department of State that Ivory Coast, the world’s prominent supplier of cocoa, currently employs about 109,000 children as young as eight years old who work under the worst forms of child labor, and that about 10,000 of them are subjected to human trafficking and enslavement (Frydenborg, 2015). As a result, they miss on any educational growth, which is a factor that is only likely to prolong the poverty in the respective nations.

The essence of the exploitation problem is believed to be dual. It lies in the impoverishment at the bottom of the production ladder and the greed for the highest possible profit margin of those companies on the top. Six of the largest transnational chocolate companies account for 80% of the global chocolate market, which in whole generates yearly about USD 100 billion (Frydenborg, 2015). The growers (plantation owners) in the poor producing countries, however, only get a few pennies from the dollars that chocolate sales generate. In some ways, the situation gets aggravated as time
progresses. In 2011, for instance, growers received only 3.5% of the value from a sold chocolate bar compared to the 16% in 1990 (Chrystal, 2011). Since the growers themselves are trying to survive out of the small wage, they are forced to underpay their farmers and the enslaved children who depend on the hand-to-mouth existence (Ryan, 2012). Although there are still for certain thousands of those who are kidnapped and taken across borders to do small-pay or even no-pay jobs, however, it is sometimes difficult to tell if some of the other workers in West Africa are true slaves or “just” desperate workers who are so hungry to survive that they work for the miserable pay voluntarily (Satre, 2005). Thus, the situation is more complex than it may appear.

It is believed that in order to change the status quo, a chain reaction of steps will have to take place. The chocolate companies will have to forfeit some more of their own profit for salaries of those ignored workers in West Africa and other relevant locations while, at the same time, consumers will have to be more educated about the reasons as to why they may have to pay more for their chocolate (Ryan, 2012). The producers should moreover monitor its production chains to ensure that unfair practices do not persist and that the money poor regions utilize their higher pays effectively. After all, cocoa beans stand for the most crucial resource to those nations’ economies and thus are the most hopeful means of raising them from poverty. All this can be strived for via a certification system that the companies would have to fully adopt.

What is this certification though? It is an idea developed so that cocoa, coffee and other relevant industries could produce their goods sustainably and efficiently and farmers could be supported through training by third-party organizations and monitored by independent auditors (Frydenborg, 2015). The most famous certification system is Fair
Trade. In plain, Fair Trade is a movement that aims to help growers get a fairer price for their work and detect small scattered farms where exploitation may take place. Jamal Fahim, the author of *Beyond cravings: Gender and Class Desires in Chocolate Marketing*, clarifies more officially that Fair Trade is an international monitoring and certification system that “guarantees a minimum price under direct contracts, prohibits abusive child labor, and promotes environmental sustainability” (Fahim, 2010, p. 37). There are also other non-profit organizations that try to secure better working conditions in the producing areas. One of them is the World Cocoa Foundation, which promotes a sustainable cocoa economy and helps cocoa farmers by developing effective programs, which raise money and allow the farmers to communicate their needs (Fahim, 2010). If chocolate companies actively allied with such organizations, their darker side could be abated.

Historically, however, the industry has had a habit of disguising its involvement in unethical practices and avoiding any certification duties. For instance, in late 2000s, the British TV Channel 4 aired information with evidence about the existence of child labor in the Ivory Coast whereupon Cadbury responded that they “were completely unaware of the allegations concerning cocoa growing in the Cote d’Ivoire” (as cited in Satre, 2005, p. 222). It has been easy to ignore the problems, as governmental laws on cocoa production are not firmly set, and hence no one can legally force the companies to eliminate unfair practices from their production (Faber, et al., 2010). In order to avoid a threatening legal intervention in 2001, the major chocolate companies, including Mars, Hershey’s and Nestlé even developed an official, but non-governmental agreement signed under “Harkin-Engel Protocol” to cease child labor in their respective production chains (Frydenborg, 2015). However, “avoidance” has been the industry’s “second
name” for a long time. The initial requirement, which was to embrace child labor-free certification by 2005, was not met, and so the deadline was multiple times prolonged (Frydenborg, 2015). Around 2010, companies finally, but slowly began to take action in order to address forced and child labor.

The very last company to comply was Hershey’s, the greatest American chocolate producer. Hershey’s has avoided its responsibility for so long that the public, advocacy groups and even some of its shareholders resorted to a rather more radical manner (Frydenborg, 2015). The threat of negative publicity was momentous, especially during Super Bowl in 2012 when the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) threatened to put an ad titled “Hershey’s Chocolate: Kissed by Child Labor” on a Jumbovision screen right at the event unless Hershey’s officially committed to a greater cooperate social responsibility (as cited in International Labor Rights Forum, 2012). On this account, Hershey’s promised to have all its chocolate certified by 2020 (International Labor Rights Forum, 2012). That was the first sign of success, which is still to be fully accomplished.

Full embracement of Fair Trade, however, was successfully achieved by a different, though smaller chocolate producer, which also dealt with a wave of public pressure. It was Harry Potter fans together with J. K. Rowling who appealed to Warner Brothers for a whole four years until the company promised to have their chocolate goods fully Fair Trade certified by the end of 2015 (“But Who Actually,” 2015). Consumers’ compassion and resolution led to the fact that Chocolate Frogs, Shock-O-Choc, and HoneyDukes Chocolate Bars are no longer stained by slavery. Note that the voice of
public has been so far the only force able to propel chocolate companies to face the ongoing dread on their plantation.

As the public has been recently more vociferous, more companies now seem to react. None of the major producers are officially in the full use of ethically sourced cocoa yet; nevertheless, most of them, including Hershey’s, are now committed to a full certification of their cocoa by 2020 (Cadbury, 2011). On the bright side, unlike Hershey’s, Ferrero was the first global chocolate producer to have explicitly promised to fulfill the 2001 pledge to cease child trafficking in the chocolate industry by 2020 (“Ferrero Sets Date,” 2012). It has established several programs to enhance the living conditions in areas with its major cocoa suppliers, which are Ghana, the Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Ecuador. Many companies report to engage in such small-scale actions. However, they seem limited. Without proper monitoring there is still much leeway in regard to producers’ possible capitalization on forced labor. Moreover, they are taking the process of certification only step by step. While Nestlé is still not fully certified, for instance, its famous four-finger Kit Kat bar has already entered shops with the Fair Trade label to benefit workers in the Ivory Coast (Chrystal, 2011). Despite those advances, the companies are criticized for the long gap between now and 2020. Thus, the end to the injustice on cocoa plantations and related complaints will come by fulfilling 100% of the commitments.

2.3.2. Effects on the Environment

The chocolate industry is also increasingly criticized in context with environmental issues, with palm oil being currently in the spotlight. This edible vegetable oil is nowadays one of the commodities most heavily linked to deforestation, especially in
In regard to Indonesia and Malaysia where enormous areas of forests are felled to enable production (Jones, 2015). In June 2015, French Ecology Minister Ségolène Royal brought negative publicity to the chocolate industry when she used Ferrero’s chocolate spread Nutella as basis for her discussion about problematic consumption of palm oil, which leads to deforestation and climate change (Jones, 2015). Soon after the accusation, the press confirmed that Ferrero is actively cooperating with the Palm Oil Innovation Group, which associates other non-governmental organizations and a few palm oil producers in order to ensure responsible sourcing. Furthermore, it was later clarified that the company, which sources 80% of its palm oil from Malaysia, already fulfilled its 100% use of sustainable palm oil (Padovani, 2015). Although these facts went public, Royal’s unverified criticism at least drew attention to the large number of products on the store shelves that truly do contain unethically sourced palm (vegetable) oil and to all the companies including those in chocolate business that do not adhere to sustainable sourcing.

However, it is important to recheck whether the commitments on palm oil sourcing, such as Ferrero’s, may have any loopholes. Ferrero has been fulfilling the commitments of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), which is a voluntary mechanism controlling the palm oil industry's practices (Mathiesen, 2015). There are two sides to it though. On one hand, RSPO is described as the key instrument for the measurement of progress done in the industry while, on the other, it has been criticized for being too weak due to its low common denominator on membership requirements (Mathiesen, 2015). Moreover, Ferrero often purchases its palm oil from middlemen and not directly from the traced plantations, which means that while its own supply chain might be reconciled with the expectations for sustainable sourcing, those middlemen can still be
tangled in controversial practices. If they are, Ferrero’s cooperation with them indirectly supports their impropriety. Another important point is that Ferrero keeps its suppliers unnamed (Mathiesen, 2015). This is one of many more instances demonstrating that the chocolate industry is just more tangled and secretive than the average consumer would expect and that most corporate and media claims are worth further scrutiny.

2.3.3. Marketing Concerns

On top of all, ethical discrepancies protrude right to the stage of consumption. If we say that cocoa farmers are exploited physically, we could also claim that consumers are exploited emotionally by marketers. At the first sight, the chocolate industry seems to cater to people’s palate and their sense of taste, but it also frequently appeals to the deep-seated desire for diverse feel-good emotions and an effortless life. When people buy chocolate to reward someone with a gift, to relieve their own mood or to add romance to their relationship, it is often the result of the fact that those people have been taught that chocolate is a solution to almost all of their everyday-life dilemmas, including gift-giving irresolution, a bad mood and sexual dissatisfaction. With the application of the right marketing techniques, chocolate can simply pose as anything: a good source of energy, mood stabilizer, sexual stimulator, and more.

Thus, chocolate is not only advertised as a delicious treat, but also as means that people can channel highly intense emotions from. Although the real-life experience of consuming chocolate rarely - if ever - meets the emotional expectations established by marketers, consumers keep on being conditioned to think that chocolate is a sort of panacea and that a chocolate-free lifestyle is somewhat void, incomplete or miserable. In concord with that, the general population has developed a habit for overstated
confessions, such as “I am addicted to chocolate” or “I cannot imagine my life without chocolate.” Are those claims legitimate or mere results of the placebo effect and a societal illusion shaped by marketers? This question shall be the subject matter of the upcoming chapters.
3. Marketing/Communication Theories and the Chocolate Industry

This chapter is going to introduce the primary marketing methods in the chocolate industry, most of which relate directly to communication. They will then be explicated via communication and media theories outlined by W. James Potter, the author of *Media Effects*. That is because the impact of many marketing tactics can be better understood through major communication theories. This chapter should ultimately lead to the understanding that consumers’ seemingly deliberate and spur-of-the-moment consumption and purchase behavior is oftentimes cautiously pre-planned by businesses and activated through methods, such as “pre-conditioning,” “emotional story-telling,” “product positioning,” “priming,” and other behavioral-based trigger marketing techniques.

3.1. Manufacturing Theory and Related Physical Addiction

This chapter will describe the secret behind the manufacturing of chocolate’s taste, which can artificially provoke a kind of physiological chocolate addiction. A health reporter Kelly Crowe from CBS reports from his investigation on how major companies carefully engineer the taste of processed food, using salt, chemicals, and sugar to make sure that people continue eating (2013). Although the manufacturing science of chocolate, which shall be discussed now, does not relate directly to communication (which can trigger emotional addiction), it constitutes information crucial to one’s compact understanding of how the chocolate industry operates from top to bottom. Moreover, taste itself in a way also acts as a communication medium. It “tells” people what to eat, when to eat, and most importantly how much to eat. This kind of beckoning is tantamount to the chocolate industry, as its alleged agenda is to make people consume increasingly more (Vale, 2008). The taste of chocolate itself is at times described as
irresistible, overpowering, and extremely seducing. In synchrony with such drug-like resonating adjectives, the industry tries to make their products habit-forming.

Such effort to develop overconsumption among the population has become a huge business in itself. Michael Moss, the author of *Salt, Sugar, Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us*, reportedly worked with top scientists as well as executives in order to find out how much mathematics, physics, and chemistry is put into the engineering of chocolate (Crowe, 2013) He discovered that an exact proportion of sugar, salt and fat leads to the highest possible (gluttonous) consumption of snack food and concluded that there is pure science, closely related to neuroscience, behind the understanding of how edibles increasingly attract people (Crowe, 2013). This substantiates what the nutritional researcher Michael Levin said: “Chemically speaking, chocolate really is the world’s most perfect food” (as cited in Frydenborg, 2015, p. 1). Bruce Bradley, a former executive at General Mills, Pillsbury and Nabisco, encapsulates the situation like this: "These products are designed to keep you coming back to eat more and more and more. They're trying to increase their share of your stomach" (as cited in Crowe, 2013, para. 13). The scientific art of making people overeat is highly refined then.

In fact, there are precise technical terms in the industry to describe the functioning of food science. They include “mouth feel,” “maximum bite force,” “melt-in-mouth quality,” and “sensory specific satiety,” the latest standing for the pace with which food forfeits its appeal when a person is eating (Crowe, 2013, para. 15). This loss of appetite clashes with the concept of “more-ishness,” which guarantees that snack food will keep being wolfed down uncontrollably, at best until the package is empty (Vale, 2008). "Vanishing caloric density," for a change, is supposed to trick the brain into the
perception that when slowly dissolving, food does not release calories into the body: they vanish (Crowe, 2013). It is obvious why this would be particularly useful in regard to chocolate, first sound of which usually alarms people with the word “obesity.” To brief this paragraph then, there is a science in the way food feels, crunches, chews and melts in one’s mouth, and basically in almost any other reaction to processed food.

The ultimate goal of the confectionery business is to elicit a “bliss point.” It deals with the perfect amount of sugar that can maximize the consumption of a certain product (Vale, 2008). Again, this is likely to be momentous for the chocolate manufacturers whose product is highly based on sugar. To emphasize, fat and sugar are the foundation of processed chocolate and despite of the industry’s tendency to avoid the term “addiction,” the concluding fact is that when the perfect amount of such ingredients accumulate, people are likely to eat more.

Indeed, many binge eaters are known to have a particular problem with chocolate products. That, according to Jason Vale, is understandable, as fat, sugar and other addictive chemicals aggressively whet people’s appetite and cause them to feel like they crave increasingly more with each bite, forcing them to consume too much of it in one sitting (2008). The reactions from chemical attributes of chocolate are likely to lead to the addict-like impression that premature discontinuance of chocolate in-take (halfway through the bar, for instance) is about to cause unpleasant withdrawal symptoms and feelings of dissatisfaction. In other words, interruption is painful. The mentioned point of “bliss” formed by food additives can rather lead to the point of highly uncomfortable feelings then.
Sugar and fat shall be further discussed in more detail. Both supposedly have three main functions in chocolate: camouflaging the bitter taste of cocoa bean, making it addictive, and giving it shelf life (Chrystal, 2011). Yet, we could add a fourth effect. It is commonly known that sugar plays a crucial role in obesity and diabetes while fat scares most of the world with the imminence of heart attacks, strokes and high cholesterol. Since 1958, the instance of diabetes tripled alongside the increasing popularization of chocolate, which makes sense knowing that a regular-size bar makes up 40% of sugar (Frydenborg, 2015). What may be more surprising, however, is that due to the slight momentary “sugar high” people feel after their sudden consumption of chocolate, they tend to believe that chocolate actually invigorates and satisfies them (Chrystal, 2012). Is that sugar high even real though?

Indeed, sugar high is real; however, it does not substantiate energy claims. To explain, the amount of sugar (which is stripped of all vitamins, minerals and fibers) in mass market chocolate is enough to cause a rapid rise in blood-sugar levels; however, this in turn forces the body to over-secrete insulin, which then burns the excess sugar too quickly (Vale, 2008). Since the blood sugar falls much earlier than it would usually, a feeling of dissatisfaction occurs and the body then tries to re-supply this lost energy with more of the same thing that took it, in this case sugar (Vale, 2008). Since refined fat is also completely nutrition-free and does not satisfy the body’s needs, it similarly causes people to eat more (Frydenborg, 2015). This way chocolate actually uses energy and creates instant false hunger, which makes it difficult for people to control themselves while eating it.
Since the insecure feelings of dissatisfaction and hunger felt from the imbalance in the human body is likely to lead to anxiety, boredom and other unpleasant emotions (Fahim, 2010), people may feel even more urged to eat chocolate, thinking that more will finally help them achieve the effects advertised in the media. Such impressions are likely to be reinforced by shrewd marketing techniques, such as that of Snickers, which is promoted for its extreme ability to satisfy hunger: "You're not you when you're hungry. Snickers Satisfies." This merry-go-round craving works brilliantly for the chocolate industry, which gets the advantage over more nutritional food products that actually do satisfy hunger and hence can be consumed again only after hunger naturally develops late. Having people think that they are satisfying themselves with the same things that make them unsatisfied is a stroke of marketing genius. People’s dependence on chocolate does not end here though. While there is the physical side to chocolate addiction due to its appetite-altering chemicals and perfectly manufactured taste, dependence on chocolate is nevertheless believed to be mostly emotionally driven. This shall be discussed in the upcoming section.

3.2. Conditioning Theory and Related Mental Addiction

This chapter deals with conditioning theory, which is argued to be largely responsible for the second (emotional) part of chocolate addiction. Conditioning is a behavioral theory that is often associated with the findings of Ivan Pavlov (“Conditioning Introduction,” n.d.). He discovered that people’s as well as animals’ reactions to objects and events can be altered by learning or conditioning (“Conditioning Introduction,” n.d.). It roots in the concept of association; people are supposed to internalize links between things and act on their basis as desired by the one who taught them to. This can work in different situations.
In today’s consumerist society, corporations condition customers. Conditioning basically lies in the placing of promises into people’s subconscious mind through constant repetition until they begin to believe them and associate them with a given product (Vale, 2008). Underneath the taste of chocolate, for instance, lurks the promise to satisfy people’s appetites for social status, love, sexual fulfillment, less stress and more energy. Conditioning is not a one-time action; what the chocolate industry practices is called “life-long conditioning,” which logically helps to create loyal life-time customers (Vale, 2008). Conditioning is based on the mechanism of repetition and thus roots in consumers’ constant exposure (from as early as their childhood) to almost anything related to the marketed product - public relations articles, catchy brand slogans and logos, as well as the modified, animated visual image of chocolate in ads and commercials.

With all that said, it is hard not to associate conditioning with cultivation theory, specifically James Potter’s concern with the collective context in response to which individuals and groups interpret messages. Potter explains that certain knowledge, which is publicly held, leads to a collective thought and action (Potter, 2012). He stresses that this public knowledge does not only comprise of what is commonly known, but what is known to be commonly known by many. We can interpret this in context with our chocolate case. What the chocolate industry makes publicly known (that which is believed) through life-time conditioning consists of the information about chocolate being the tastiest treat, ideal gift, a mood enhancer, sexual stimulator, and an energizer. The resulting thought is that chocolate truly does possess such qualities and the collective action is the continuous mass-purchase of chocolate.
Cadbury’s 1900 commercial is a small-scale, yet prototypical example of conditioning. It features multiple images from a model’s photoshoot session as they all gradually transform into Cadbury’s chocolate (atariman, 1988). Thus, the viewer is continually exposed to chocolate and is urged to associate everything with it. The model’s gown, for instance, turns into a chocolate bar straight in front of the photographer and the background scenery takes on a chocolate form too (atariman, 1988). The thought, which suggests itself, is that this commercial is supposed to make viewers feel the compulsion to have some chocolate immediately or else not be able to think clearly. This effort gets reinforced by a background jingle, which accompanies the entire commercial: “Thinking about your chocolate […] thinking about your taste” (atariman, 1988). It is likely to taunt people so that they connect chocolate with feel-good emotion and cannot get it out of their heads. This sums up the key idea of conditioning, which is most effect via repetition.

We could argue that the intensity of such repetition somewhat pre-conditions people to think of life without chocolate as impossible. The actual belief that chocolate is addictive may be one of the factors that makes it addictive though. This connects to the fact that there is hardly anyone who never consumes it. The fear of letting go of something that is so embedded in the society may be too strong. After all, emotional addiction often resides in the fear of letting go. People tend to fear that without a certain habit or substance their life will be unfulfilled and abnormal. A negative sign may be the coinage of bizarre terms, such as “chocoholic.” It is used for self-description by those who want to capture the feeling of helplessness that they experience when craving chocolate (Fahim, 2010). People who even resort to acupuncture, hypnotherapy or
chocolate patches in order to gain freedom from those cravings obviously think of themselves as of being hooked on chocolate and believe that withdrawal symptoms are painful. Unfortunately, the regretful post-realization of having eaten fatty and unhealthy food is likely to even deepen the anxiety caused by chocolate’s chemical features discussed in the previous section (Vale, 2008). All this confirms that chocolate can at least to a milder extent act as a drug.

And yet, the remaining problem is that even though chocolate is generally known to be unhealthy and fattening, people are conditioned to embrace chocolate for its “overpowering” benefits. Several people genuinely believe that chocolate can actually enhance their mood and even teleport them into a state of delight (Cadbury, 2011). Consumer attempts to reach this delight is, nevertheless, likely to clash with their dieting efforts. The incompatibility of these two aspirations perhaps leaves them in a kind of love/hate relationship with chocolate.

An example of that even appeared in the news. Maureen Young from Southampton admitted to be a self-proclaimed chocoholic who used to consume up to 200 chocolate bars a week throughout the period of 6 years (“Why I Must,” n.d.). She confessed to have believed in the comforting abilities of chocolate and to have been turning to it in order to moderate her depression. Most likely because mass market chocolate is full of sugar, fat and other chemicals that purposely make it a less satiating kind of chocolate, however, she reported that the consumption only produced additional feelings of insecurity and emptiness that seemed identical to natural hunger and other normal feelings, such as unease, ennui, and dejection in her. As a result, she tried to use the already mentioned chocolate patches, which, nevertheless, she found ineffective (“Why
3.3. Brand-Consumer Storytelling Theory

This section shall discuss the story-telling theory, which is based off research in consumer psychology. Nowadays, it is an active marketing initiative. Brand stories seem to be a major part of people’s own lives.

Marketing guru Seth Odin claims that storytelling is all that marketing is. Effective marketers allegedly never promote features, benefits, or any other factual information (2012). They do not lie either though. Instead of that, they tell stories; stories that people - as irrational beings - want to believe, for they flatter their self-image. Believing a story supposedly makes it a true story. Odin points out that people are extremely suggestible to product storytelling. They are, for instance, even capable of believing that wine drank from a $20 glass is tastier than the same wine drank from a $1 glass (Odin, 2012). In this case, the luxurious taste becomes the brand story.

Odin also clarifies that almost all marketers tell stories although some may be simply more appealing than others. In accordance with the generally well-known appeals, Coca-Cola would represent happiness and Godiva chocolates would luxury. What the products themselves are really made out of is supposedly irrelevant (Odin, 2012). Consumers even choose not to believe that the specific products they use are, in terms of functionality or ingredients, almost identical to all the other products from the same category. What is more important to the consumers is the brand name and the story it carries, and primarily the possibility that it could enhance their own image. Thus, the
story-telling strategy has a peculiar advantage: since marketers insist that they tell “stories” and not “facts,” they cannot be accused of “lying” when their products do not live up to the advertised promises.

Odin’s modern, yet slightly controversial point partly reverts back to the famous cultivation theory of George Gerbner, which argues that exposure to consistent themes (stories) in the media lead people to believe that the themes in said stories relate to the real world (Potter, 2012). This is clearly an irrational belief, which connects to Odin’s argument about people’s tendency to think narratively (irrationally) rather than argumentatively.

The following contemplation will attempt to infiltrate the human psyche more deeply in order to better clarify why people prefer stories much more to the truth. Stories are pervasive in human lives, and a lot of information is stored within them. People gather to hear them, pen books with them and put them on screen. They simply like stories. According to Arch G. Woodside, the author of When Consumers and Brands Talk: Storytelling Theory and Research in Psychology and Marketing, today’s brands that deliver stories constitute a major part of people’s own stories about themselves. Consumers use products and services as props (identity signifiers) to establish stories that reflect archetypal myths (Woodside, 2008). For our purposes, a myth is a traditional tale about different heroes and supernatural creatures, which clarifies natural occurrences and even human behavior (Woodside, 2008). Reliving and repeating stories was considered by Aristotle to be people’s “proper pleasure” that enabled them to experience archetypal myths (as cited in Woodside, 2008, p. 100). It was a sort of catharsis then.
When narrating in the form of a conversation or their own simple thoughts, today’s consumers feel as if they experience similarly powerful myths, which mirror modern psychological archetypes, such as pleasure, rebellion, slacking or sinning (Woodside, 2008). All they have to do these days to embody them is to purchase a product with a brand story that already personifies them. Eating the KitKat bar would, for instance, reflect a “cool, easy-going individual” archetype. The consumption of the Lion chocolate bar, which theoretically stands for the archetype of “power and energy,” would appeal to people who want to be associated with these qualities.

Archetypes in the true sense of the word can be neither learned nor acquired though. They are naturally embedded in people’s DNA (Woodside, 2008). Thus, marketers must retain brand identities through repetition, so that it seems to people as if they have been a part of their lives ever since. After all, individuals search for clarity and stability, which would help them make sense of conversations. Thus, marketing messages or brand promises do not need to be complex and accompanied by long rational explanations (Vale, 2008). As long as they are simple and straightforward, they are marketable. Exemplary quotes of this show that M&Ms is the “candy that melts in your mouth, not in your hand,” “Nothing Satisfies like a Snickers,” and, “The Sweetest Things on Earth Come from Mars.” According to the conditioning theory, repetition sees to it that those seemingly trivial claims will have impact. As long as their catchy content is properly embedded in people’s minds, the validity, logic or truthfulness of that content loses importance. After all, marketers can still argue that they do not state facts and narrate stories instead.
3.4. Impulsive Purchase Behavior Theory

Given that emotions are known to lead to impulsive purchases, a new phenomenon arises. Most chocolate sales are impulsive and made from the point-of-sale, the time and place where a transaction is completed (Vale, 2008). Nestlé in the Czech Republic has analyzed that in the Czech market, for instance, only 30% of all confectionary’s purchase is pre-planned while the remaining 70% happens without initial intention (Bazanac et al., 2011). Out of the spontaneous 70% of purchases, 37% tend to plan on buying something in this category, but do not know exactly which product. The 33% left resort to a completely random impulsive purchase. These numbers show that impulsive purchase is quite irrational: a response to emotion.

Since an impulsive purchase is an irrational response to emotion, the first factor facilitating this emotion is believed to be an individual’s own personality, meaning that some people simply have a greater character for impulsive buying than others (Zimmerman, 2012). These people tend to be more social, self-conscious, image-concerned, and also are less able to control their own emotions, which results in the impulsive spending of money. The second motivator, “vicarious ownership”, is closely tied to the other two marketing theories discussed in this chapter - conditioning and storytelling - which aim to connect consumers with a product (Zimmerman, 2012). When consumers feel connected to a product, the forthcoming feeling is as if they already own it, thinking that their existence would be more difficult without it. The connection that verges on vicarious ownership is threefold. A “social connection” is established when one sees another using the product, which mounts the tendency to imitate (Zimmerman, 2012). A “physical connection” requires touch proximity to the product, which is closely associated with the “temporal connection” that creates the
possibility to purchase the product immediately (Zimmerman, 2012). How is the chance of immediate purchase maximized though?

Factors, such as the retail landscape with eye-catching window displays or the “buy me” aspect of chocolate packaging are both likely to encourage customers to “zoom on” the imminent product in a shop and consequently instigate impulsive purchase behavior (Vale, 2008). Branded chocolate products are strategically positioned in visible sections, whether at counters in supermarkets, newsagents, gas stations or in vending machines, which are just as conveniently placed at any major waiting points, including train and metro stations as well as various entrance halls and lobbies in hospitals, schools, and so on.

Furthermore each type of store has strict chocolate positioning rules so that the brands do not lose customers’ attention. According to Nestlé, 22% of people who planned on buying a product did not buy it for one or more of the most common three reasons: they forgot (27%), they did not find what they were looking for (19%), they bought something else (38%) (Bazanac et al., 2011). All of those grounds are likely to relate to an ineffective positioning of products and design of packaging. If people bought something else instead of the pre-planned product, the packaging and positioning of the substitute might have been somewhat better. Thus, huge brands, such as Nestlé have a “perfect store” product placement rules based on planograms and measures of sections that specific types of consumers are likely to buy specific products from, such as home shelves or cashier’s counters where only top products are placed and where 66% of all purchase is impulsive (Bazanac et al., 2011). Knowing this, we can see that it is almost impossible for people to avoid products that companies want them to encounter.
When an easy encounter with a product is arranged for, it is then all up to its packaging to persuade the customer into the final decision of buying it (Bazanac et al., 2011). The fact that people do not have a certain product in mind when they go shopping and that some of them buy items arbitrarily out of spite suggests that packaging is the ultimate communication tool in the chocolate industry. If the colors, logos, and images of packaging as well as the brand story that should reflect itself on it excite the consumer enough, people are likely to automatically and thoughtlessly grab a chocolate bar at the first sight of it even if it is not on their shopping list. They simply answer to their sudden emotion.

3.5. Priming Theory

This section examines how the media theory, priming, can influence advertising effects. Priming concentrates on the way a set of stimuli in a person’s mind can influence another (Potter, 2012). According to this theory, the human mind is associated in networks in which each node accounts for a bit of information. When a person thinks about a certain piece of information, the given node is activated and then progresses to another node: one that is closest to the one that is already activated. Although priming is most often discussed in terms of the media effect on violence and sexual behavior (Potter, 2012), it is argued here that the exposure to certain factors can prime, or activate, product attributes that consumers are already familiar with from advertising, and subsequently increase the likelihood of their purchase of this product.

As it was already mentioned multiple times, chocolate is portrayed as a gateway to delight and comfort. The possible trick is to link chocolate to any good real-life
experience or favorable thought. The second a person associates chocolate with something pleasing he/she is likely to seek the product again in order to recapture the feelings (Vale, 2008). In theory, slogans, such as Ghirardelli’s “Moments of Timeless Pleasure” should simply prime the thought of some kind of pleasure then. It can get more complex though. In effort to discover the power of media via the priming theory, Leonard Berkowitz found that when certain media symbols randomly occur in a person’s life, he/she recalls the media portrayal (Potter, 2012). In fact, he used to refer to the priming theory as to a “cue theory” based on the discovery that these media symbols give a person actual cues as to what to think about (Potter, 2012). Those symbols can be slogans, logos, as well as packaging features, which are among other things crucial to impulsive purchase behavior.

That may be why Mars linked its “Pleasure You Can't Measure” campaign to specific, everyday-life experiences through by-now famed images with complementary sub-headlines, such as “Retail therapy,” “New shoes” or “Saturday 3 pm.” It basically particularized situations during which one was likely to think of chocolate. In theory, the idea here is that when one realizes it is around 3 pm, for instance, the person suddenly recalls the memorable advertisement (one node) as well as the product it represents (another node). In the best case corporate scenario, this final node should lead to purchase. The priming effect, after all, centers around the impact of the media content on people’s subsequent behavior related to that content (Potter, 2012). For businesses, the triggering of chains of thoughts that revolve around their product is thus momentous.
3.6. Agenda Setting/Spiral of Silence Theory

The last relevant chocolate marketing tactic roots in the complete omission of, or – contrarily - extreme enforcement of facts. In fact, purchase behavior is likely to be influenced as much by the amount of information that is not disclosed as by the amount of information that is. This relates to agenda-setting and the spiral of silence theory. As Potter notes, agenda-setting refers to the media’s ability to influence the public agenda by covering certain issues more saliently than others (2012). This theory extended (second-level agenda setting) to the point of claiming that the media even tells people what to think about by emphasizing certain selected issues and even specific information about those issues (Potter, 2012). Developed by Noelle-Neumann in 1974, the spiral of silence theory additionally says that media do not only influence public beliefs, but also the public discourse (Potter, 2012). When media coverage avoids certain issues, people are likely not to express their opinion on them even if that issue would have been otherwise important to them. That is because they feel as if they were in the minority when focusing on issues that are not discussed by others. Thus, they rather stay silent and focus on the issues that are widely covered (Potter, 2012). This kind of silence on the part of each individual eventually puts that rarely covered issue into complete oblivion, almost as if it never existed.

The omission of certain information also connects to the production chain and manufacturing processes of the chocolate industry. Although there are serious issues with slave labor, the industry naturally never disseminates information about it to the public. The news media themselves too do not cover the topic with proper diligence in comparison to other similar themes, such as children’s exploitation in the textile industry, or completely different issues such as the Islamic State. If the truth about slave
labor and addiction-based manufacturing techniques in the chocolate production chain were universally known and understood though, the brand image of most chocolate firms would probably decline. And thus, the industry makes unbalanced claims instead, always talking only about chocolate’s benefits. In other words, only a fraction of information, which is carefully selected to bolster companies’ positive brand stories, is provided to the public.

3.7. Diffusion of Innovations

This sub-chapter engages with the diffusion of innovations theory. Everett Rogers came up with the theory in 1962 when he focused on the way information about new findings was diffused (Potter, 2012). According to the theory, information first tends to be spread among the early adopters, the people who are open-minded to novelties. Next are the opinion leaders who test the product, and the last are the later adopters. Rogers studied this phenomenon especially in connection to health and agriculture. Since the chocolate industry’s effort to dismiss any of its alleged “evils” is often based on “health” findings, the theory is relevant to this paper.

Innovative findings about the benefits of chocolate keep occurring constantly. The chocolate industry has been trying to soften people’s prejudices and emphasize that chocolate does not belong to the category of “junk food” through the sponsorship of articles that chocolate is not addictive or unhealthy (Frydenborg, 2015). This effort also led to claims that chocolate does not at all cause teeth cavities or acne, and that it can even slow down the aging process and benefit the heart. Due to concerns about the impact of such claims, the British Heart Foundation warned that it is reckless to consume chocolate for heart benefits, and people should ignore any messages that
advise to do so (Chrystal, 2011). By now, however, it may have become too difficult to expel some of the deep-rooted claims from collective thinking of consumers.

Although in general there are many counterarguments to the “scientifically proven” reports about chocolate’s positive impact on health, sexual life and pleasure senses in the brain, they are continually diffused. The “innovative” findings, which have been sparkling and continually backing this diffusion up in the name of science, relate to chocolate’s discovered containment of chemical compounds, such as serotonin, phenylethylamine, caffeine, anandamide, and theobromine (Frydenborg, 2015). Each was allied with one or more claimed physical or psychological effects of chocolate. Maybe, the many other chemicals that chocolate contains stand a good chance of being used in the same way one day.

Most PR articles about chocolate’s benefits tend to be diffused by the industry itself or by other sources that are somewhat entangled within it. One seemingly independent study asked whether money truly makes people happy (Vale, 2008). The finding was that the “simplest routes to happiness” are the little things, such as chocolate (p. 126). However, it was Cadbury who happened to sponsor the study. Another article in the Daily Express on June 5, 2001, reported that “researchers have found a way of altering chocolate so that it does not expand the waistline,” meaning that they possibly found a non-fattening kind of chocolate (as cited in Vale, 2008, p. 132). This time, it was the researchers from Switzerland’s Nestlé Research Center who conducted the study. Although they might not exactly lie, the problem with chocolate companies’ diffusion of new findings may be that they tend to be extremely economical with the truth.
4. Approaches to Advertising

In order to become successful, chocolate brands must simply say they are better at something than the others. They often do it through brand stories (claims/promises), many of which will be individually unrolled in this chapter. Once a chocolate brand promise is thought-out, companies begin to methodically condition people into believing it. The issue is that when different chocolate companies repeatedly use the same set of claims, they together shape a global generic image of chocolate itself. Since a brand story must kindle extremely good feelings, possible unfavorable facts are not disclosed. This tactic, which relates to cultivation as well as the spiral of silence theory, unfortunately nurtures erroneous public beliefs and subsequent ethical issues.

4.1. Health Claims

We should commence with one of the most controversial chocolate brand promises: the health claims. Although, as it was explained in chapter three, chocolate is not healthy due to the high amount of sugar and fat, there have historically been attempts to promote chocolate as a medical confectionary. Health claims boosted sales especially in the early 20th century (Cadbury, 2011). It was Henri Nestlé and Daniel Peter in 1875 who first realized milk chocolate would be the “aha” of their business and who first mastered milk chocolate (Allen, 2009). Since then, there has been the gradual tendency in the whole industry to promote chocolate’s rich content of pure sweet milk. How this has bordered on health claims is explained below.

The fact is that - prior to chocolate - milk was actually subjected to its own health-based conditioning process. It was managed by the Milk Marketing Board in the UK, which pushed milk straight into school cafeterias (Vale, 2008). At that time, milk was viewed
as an indispensable beverage, which provided children (above all else) with the calcium necessary for the growth of their teeth and bones. But the most intriguing product was yet to come: chocolate milk. It quickly penetrated children’s diet and even partially replaced regular milk in schools with the message that children would have drank it voluntarily due to its good taste, and yet they would have still gotten that “necessary” calcium that they would have from the less tasty regular milk (Vale, 2008). As Vale points out, however, almost every mass-market cocoa powder mix contains large quantities of sugar (like solid chocolate does), which in turn makes it unhealthy (2008). Due to the ability of marketers to influence the salience of matters on the public agenda by omitting undesired facts (spiral silence theory), this kind of information has not been properly distributed.

With the established "strong and healthy" character of plain milk and chocolate milk, it was pure marketing logic to promote milk chocolate as healthy too. The rationale behind this was that cocoa powder contained even more source of calcium than whole milk, which made milk chocolate a double source of calcium (Vale, 2008). However, milk powder found in milk chocolate is a remote surrogate of the gushing smooth fresh milk that is glamorized in chocolate ads. Therefore, rationalizing the consumption of milk chocolate with the constituent may not be correct. This kind of marketing has, nevertheless, been a part of many traditional chocolate brands. To this day, “a glass and half of full cream milk in every half pound” remains to be Cadbury's renowned slogan. “The sweet you can eat between meals” used to suggest that the Milky Way bar was a vital calcium-rich snack that would have made consumers tough and strong (Brenner, 2000). The logic was that the milkier chocolate was, the healthier it was (a claim deemed untrue these days). While Nestlé brought the UK under the rule of Milky Way,
Suchard (now Mondelēz International) conquered Switzerland with the symbol of a purple cow (Chrystal, 2011). Brand stories of many famous chocolate companies have been thus founded on the image of milk, especially cow milk.

Nevertheless, the content of cow milk is nowadays overall less ingratiating than before, perhaps partly because of the popularized practice of veganism. Since milk’s reputation in this increasingly health-oriented society may no longer be strong enough to obscure chocolate’s generally unhealthy profile, marketers are less go-getting when it comes to health claims based on milk. However, health claims in general are not over, as the chocolate industry began to cook novel terms such as “organic,” “fat-free,” “antioxidant dark chocolate” and “clean dark chocolate.” Those alternatives are tailored to the new age.

The promotion of clean dark chocolate as healthy, which contrasts with previous attempts to promote white and milk chocolate as healthy, is an interesting one. Forsooth, the cocoa bean itself is vital thanks to its vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids in the cocoa butter; however, even the darker mass market chocolate still contains just a slight amount of dried fermented cocoa paste mixed with flavorings, milk powder, chemicals, fat, and predominantly sugar (Vale, 2008). The fat-free chocolate may be an even more daring “bluff”: one that is also related to miscommunication about sugar. That is because the more fat-free or low-fat chocolate bars are, the higher their contents are in sugar, which ultimately leads to the same result, as sugar in the human body dissolves into fat (Vale, 2008). Since not everyone is aware of how such “guilt-free” products work, false impressions that chocolate will not get people obese may emerge.
4.2. Energy/Comfort Claims

We shall further discuss the claim that chocolate increases energy. In this case, marketers depend on the general belief that it is namely sugar, which energizes. The problem is, however, that chocolate contains unnatural refined sugars, which produce only momentary sugar “highs” and progress to the already discussed low-blood sugar effect (refer to sub-chapter 3.1).

Chocolate, nevertheless, can invoke energetic impressions, especially when the explicit claim is that it satisfies hunger. An instance of that is the world-famous quote “Snickers Satisfies.” Moreover, chocolate can also be linked with energy through the association with sports. Mars is particularly focused on the endorsement of sports events. Snickers, for instance, was a symbol of the Olympic Games in 1984, and M&Ms still sponsors the World Cup (Brenner, 2000). The association with sports used to be so strong that the products were known under various sport-related nicknames. Snickers, in fact, used to be commonly known as a “Marathon” (as cited in Brenner, 2000, p. 290). The point is that when chocolate becomes associated with sports, it somehow automatically, yet incorrectly gets associated with energy too.

It is contradictory, however, that chocolate is one time advertised as a product that energizes and the next time as one that helps people “have a siesta.” Examples of the latter are Nestlé’s "Have a break - have a KitKat" or “Get that Friday Feeling,” a slogan that refers to its Crunchie bar. The idea here is that Crunchie represents the last workday of the week, which is usually associated with free time (siesta). To finish on the most disputed claim, Mars combined the two polarities (energy and relax) in one mind
twisting appeal: “A Mars a Day Helps You Work, Rest and Play.” Here, the Mars bar is portrayed as an energizer and a tranquilizer in one. The fact that this slogan has been successfully employed for years suggests that the content of the claim itself may not be as impactful as its methodological enforcement is. If this catchy phrase is well deep-seated in one’s subconscious, it may eventually contribute to an impulsive purchase in the store as the conditioning and impulsive purchase behavior theories suggest.

4.3. Mood/Pleasure Claims

This topic consists of mood and pleasure claims told by the chocolate industry. Promises that chocolate can lift one from emotional doom or to even improve an already good mood have been dramatically growing since 1996, when a neuroscientist Daniele Piomelli discovered that chocolate contained the “bliss” molecule anandamide, which affects pleasure senses in the brain (Frydenborg, 2015). Holding onto this revelation, scientists at the Neurosciences Institute San Diego in 1999 even proclaimed that this ingredient affects the brain by producing "internal bliss," a similar feeling that one has from smoking marijuana (Vale, 2013). Vale clarifies this statement by saying that a person would need to eat 25kg of chocolate at once in order obtain the described feeling, which is an amount that would be biologically impossible to consume (2008).

This case reverts to the diffusion of innovations theory; the industry found the information that there is some anandamine in chocolate and tried to diffuse it among later adopters for wide-scale marketing appeal. However, they omitted to disclose important facts (pointed by Vale above) during the diffusion, and thus applied the spiral silence theory.

Since chocolate is also viewed as a mood pacifier and a stress reliever, the Pre-Menstrual Syndrome period (PMS) is also incorporated into chocolate marketing.
Chocolate is promoted as being capable of relieving an irritable mood during PMS, the monthly peak time of women’s heightened emotions (Frydenborg, 2015). That claim, however, may not be completely truthful either. Dr. Paula Franklin from a global health and care company BUPA reasonably concluded: “For those women who crave chocolate, there is no evidence to suggest that chocolate “cures” or “remedies” PMS... It’s not just pre-menstrual women who crave chocolate: many people fancy a bar if they are anxious, depressed, tense or angry. This could be “learned behavior,” carried over from childhood, when chocolate is commonly used as a reward or to pacify” (as cited in Vale, 2008, p.119). Franklin mentioned learned behavior, which was discussed in the social learning theory in chapter three. We could say that this also relates to the other theories, such as conditioning and agenda setting, which both refer to the shaping of collective public mind and belief about issues.

4.4. Nostalgia Claims

Next we should analyze an appeal to nostalgia, a specific mood based on the “rehabilitation” of old experiences. A It resides in the phenomenon of a “pink retrospective;” the ultimate idealization of past (Zvolská, 2015). The success of nostalgic marketing lies in the fact that nostalgia poses a trick on the human mind; even if the reminisced times were not truly that ideal, they will be later perceived as such, for humans tend to retrospectively romanticize the past and consider it more valuable and profound than the present (Zvolská, 2015). Although the unrealistically perfect past cannot be fully reiterated, nostalgic humans subconsciously still try to retrieve it. Note that a brand story based on a memory of one’s own experience (with a product), which the person already perceives as ultimately perfect may one of the most effective ones. It
is strongly emotional and extremely personalized. Those characteristics, after all, are the ones that would make a brand story ideal.

Comfort products such as chocolate are particularly ideal mediators between the past and present, which is why so many chocolate companies integrate nostalgia into their pitch. Chocolate products marketed in nostalgia’s spirit are those that have been in the given market for a long time; they were kept un-modernized intentionally so that they could appeal to older generations who “grew” with them (Cui, 2015). Nevertheless, new incoming products can also appeal to nostalgia if they bear old packaging or flavors that stopped being produced (Zvolská, 2015). New or old, the point is that all nostalgia-evoking products tend to be wrapped in retro packaging and/or are shrouded in a brand story about tradition.

The desired effect of nostalgic advertising is the emergence of consumers’ strong longing for past, a feeling comparable to “homesickness” (Cui, 2015, p. 126). Thus, feasts during which families traditionally stick together, such as Christmas, Valentine, Easter and in some cultures Halloween or St. Nicholas are good occasions for nostalgic marketing. It is also no coincidence that many reputed confectionary products are packed in rather childish wrappers (Zvolská, 2015). They appeal to today’s small children and at the same time remind adults of their own childhood, the age of innocence that they miss (Cui, 2015, p. 126). People are particularly likely to miss chocolate products, because it was in their childhood that they had the most genuine, joyful experience with them (Vale, 2008). No matter what today’s additional marketing appeals are (sex/socializing), chocolate - in the minds of many – still equals a treat that belongs more to children than to anyone else (Chrystal, 2008). Therefore, the child-like
promotion of chocolate has a double intention. It ensures that today’s children want the product for its looks and that their parents are willing to purchase it for them (or themselves) due to the resulting feeling. After all, if it was a part of their own childhood, they cannot take the same experience from their own children now.

Since nostalgic advertising depends on the past, the creed is that “the older, the better.” “Old” thus becomes synonymous to “quality.” When it comes to edibles, nostalgic people think that everything in the past was better, tastier, and less adulterated (Zvolská, 2015). The winning adjective in this kind of marketing is “the first.” “The first chocolate bar,” for instance, should theoretically seem superior to the other products, which have not earned such a strong position in the market yet. Celebrations of product birthdays and brand anniversaries are also good means of emphasizing a long brand tradition and old unchanging products. The Czech confectionary market, for instance, seems to have a number of such “immutable” products, such as the quark-based ice-cream Misa, the cream dessert Pribináček, Lázeňské Oplatky (Spa Wafers) and chocolate products from the Slovakian brand Figaro and Czech Orion or Opavia. In order to form such a traditional, nostalgic image for their products, marketers first must tap into the memory of the masses, usually with some deep-seated cultural element (Cui, 2015). To show how the chocolate industry’s nostalgic communication works in a specific culture then, we will now stick to the Czech Republic as an example.

Orion, the Czech chocolate brand under the umbrella of Nestlé, is particularly founded on tradition, memories of the older generation, and perhaps even melancholy, which may emerge hand in hand with extreme nostalgia. Packaging and commercials do not tend to dramatically change over the years (Zvolská, 2015). Only the product flavors
and shapes are likely to change according to the latest trends. An Orion product that exemplifies retro packaging the most is “Studentská ečeť” (Student Seal), a chocolate bar with candied fruit. It has been in the market since 1975 and in 2015 celebrated its 40th year anniversary with this TV spot text: [It is the most natural thing to bring joy to others, because joy will always return to you. Student Seal has been serving that purpose for the past 40 years.] (my translation; Studentská Pečeť, 2015). In this commercial, Orion brand team may have been trying to suggest that the brand has been in the market for so long that it has become a common symbol of joy.

A particular nostalgic appeal takes place on Orion’s website in association with a product called Orion’s Rum Pralines. In the history section, it was commented on in this way: [Do you remember your grandma’s closet with sweets? Did it also smell so good after rum and chocolate?] (my translation; Orion, n.d.). This quote was followed by a promise that the product has never changed in terms of its taste; it was specifically written that the pralines changed only the “coat” (packaging), not the flavors. Key words, such as “grandma,” of course, are important in nostalgic marketing, as grandparents often play an important role in childhood memories.

Sometimes, the brands explicitly tell customers that despite of being old, they should not turn their back on what they used to favor as children. Orion’s commercial for the cocoa powder mix Granko, for instance, featured a story in which a mother brings his adult son a breakfast served with Granko to his bed. He reacts, embarrassed, by saying, “mom, please, I’m 40,” whereat the mother replies: “Well yes, but you still like Granko the same.” (my translation; publipobli, 2011). This example suggests that nostalgic
communication is often largely based on childhood, but not always necessarily targeting children.

In 2015, Marketa Zvolská inquired about the level of nostalgia in the Czech food market. She asked respondents whether there was any product that reminded them of their childhood. The most often mentioned products were Misa, Lentilky (Czech version of Smarties), Fidorka (round wafer in chocolate), Granko (cocoa mix), Pikao (chocolate paste), Tatranka and Horalka (peanut/chocolate wafers), Mila (chocolate-coated wafer with vanilla filling), and Kočičí jazýčky (Cat’s Tongues) as well as Kinder Surprise eggs and Kinder Chocolate (Zvolská, 2015). It should not go unnoticed that despite of the fact that Zvolská inquired about all edibles, the list mostly composes of Czech chocolate products. This means that the Czech chocolate industry must be doing something right in the arena of storytelling about tradition and past.

4.5. Parent-Child Relationship Claims

Since the section above already broached the importance of childhood, this one will discuss brand stories based on a harmonious parent-child relationship. Chocolate companies know that children’s brains are suggestible to advertising the most and that parents are frequently coaxed by their own children into buying things, and hence put special emphasis on advertising to the young. Sandra L. Calvert, the director of the Children’s Digital Media Center in Los Angeles, explains that as a result of being increasingly targeted by commercial media and being more excited about the advertised products, children have an increasingly significant impact on their parents purchase decisions (2008). She also confirms that children younger than eight are especially vulnerable, as they do not yet possess enough cognitive skills to comprehend the
persuasive intent of advertising (2008). Thus, children are a lucrative market for the chocolate industry.

Nowadays, it is normal for mothers to mix cocoa powder into their baby’s milk or add chocolate into school children’s lunchboxes (Vale, 2008). Thus, children are introduced early to the idea that chocolate is a natural part of their lives, just as parents are persuaded that sweets befit childhood. At the same time, chocolate is a negotiating tool between parents and their offspring. It is somehow commonly known that parents use chocolate as a “sedative” to settle their children’s tantrums down or as a medium of exchange to “bribe” their children to behave well, tidy their room, eat full dinners, and so on. Therefore, it is not startling that people grow up to have a special relationship with chocolate further in their adult life.

In addition to a negotiating tool, chocolate is also used as a parental proof of love. Marketers develop heart-warming commercials that feature chocolate as a signifier of a loving relationship between people that exchange it (Fahim, 2010). This is illustrated in one Kinder Surprise commercial in which parents rejoice over the little activities their children manage to do for the first time in their lives (e.g. washing the dog), which is all sealed off by this caption: "They never stop surprising you: give some surprise back" (kindersurpriseanz, 2013). As a result of such a play on emotions, parents who are able to say “no” to children when they ask for chocolate, are likely to be generally considered somewhat too strict, if not even unloving. As opposed to a harmonious parent-child relationship, chocolate promotion can moreover lead to a parent-child conflict as soon as the parent denies his/her child the advertised product (Calvert, 2008).
This manifests how life-long conditioning can shape public beliefs and the family concept.

Nevertheless, there is no better occasion for the expression of parental love than during the festive times of the year. Since feasts, such as Christmas are generally favored especially among children due to gift-getting, chocolate companies usurp these feasts despite of the fact that they have historically nothing to do with chocolate (see sub-chapter 2.1 History). As soon as Christmas time draws nearer, Orion, for instance, begins to re-associates its slogan “Orion: Our Chocolate Star” with this feast, specifically the star ornament that is supposed to decorate the top of a Christmas tree (my translation). In fact, Orion’s connection to Christmas in the Czech Republic is like a small-scale-prototype of the association with Christmas that Coca-Cola has globally. One example from this positioning is Orion’s 2010 Christmas commercial, which features a young girl whose father drops the star Christmas ornament on the floor whereat it breaks (Orion: Vánoce,). Afraid that the Christ Child would not find her because of that, the girl runs out of the room as if to seek a solution. The scene cuts to the next shot, and the girl appears is a chocolate maker’s kitchen in which he molds a new star out of chocolate, which then goes on her Christmas tree instead. Message? Orion saves Christmas. It is because chocolate is now so specific to children’s wants that Christmas stockings, Halloween treat buckets and Easter gift baskets around the Western part of the world tend to treasure a bounty of chocolate.

In order to get closer to children and condition them from an early age, companies additionally promote various “get active” initiatives. They sponsor both school affiliated as well as independent junior sports clubs or other activity clubs with free, yet
distinctively branded merchandise (Vale, 2008). However, the companies often claim to fight what their products actually contribute to. The “Cadbury Get Active” campaign from 2003 was supposed to help with the tackling of obesity; yet, it was schemed in a way that children were given sports equipment in exchange for their cumulative purchase of so many Cadbury chocolate bars that they would add up to 1.25 million calories and 2 million kg of fat (“Chocolate for Footballs,” 2003, para. 11). However, this particular campaign was over the line. The Food Commission, for instance, stated that the scheme was “absurd and contradictory” and that it was “ridiculous to combine a fitness campaign with eating chocolate” (as cited in “Chocolate for Footballs,” 2003, para. 3). The Guardian added that a 10-year-old would have to play the game for an hour and a half in order to burn the calories he/she would have to consume in order to receive a basketball (“Chocolate for Footballs,” 2003). Such instances call the system of marketing regulations into question.

4.6. Love/Sexuality/Femininity Claims

This part ties together all the historical perceptions of chocolate as an aphrodisiac, architect of romance, object of feminine longing, and a chance for men to woo women. A taste for something sweet is now socially related principally to females (and children); most chocolate is advertised as feminine (Fahim, 2010). According to Emma Robertson, the author of Chocolate, Women and Empire: A Social and Cultural History, advertising hooks and slogans have been enforced to the extent that they symbolize means for women to exhibit their natural attractiveness, femininity and tamed sexual desires (2009). Thus, chocolate advertising does not only arouse cravings for chocolate as such, but for sex as well. With the industry’s tendency to employ any claim that “sells,” sex appeal seems particularly to the point.
The combination of sexuality and femininity is often projected on commercial images in which beautiful women savor chocolate. Chocolate’s high content of calories and sugar, however, is likely to clash with the odds of embodying the thin female figures portrayed in chocolate ads. A sociologist Susan Bordo explained that chocolate advertisers are aware of the insecurity women get about their weight and about their tendencies towards food disorders, which is precisely why their advertisements feature the ideal female body and why they even contain the themes verging on food obsession (Fahim, 2010). This somewhat explains why “chocoholics” are predominantly female.

Typical commercial scenes provoking high consumption of chocolate could for example be those in which one of the characters greedily “steals” even the very last square of chocolate. Perhaps, such scenarios suggest that compulsive eating of chocolate is both common and lovable. As it was explained in chapter three under the chocolate manufacturing theory, however, it is the very unlovable twinge of regret and sickness that female binge eaters usually obtain after they try to eat their way to happiness. Weingarten and Elston, the authors of “Food Cravings in a College Population,” found that 82% of men, compared to only 57% of women, reported a positive effect after their chocolate indulgence (1991, p. 172). Thus, females tend to be more negatively impacted by their satisfaction of chocolate cravings than men.

Perhaps it is the fear of eating too much that could completely prevent females from purchasing chocolate. Whether that is the reason or not, some marketers advertise the opposite of what binge eating looks like. Instead of depicting how people eat every last bit of their chocolate, advertisers sometimes make sure to portray female actors as if
they obtain gratification from chocolate only in small doses, even from one square (Fahim, 2010). This seems rather unrealistic knowing chocolate manufacturers’ effort to provoke compulsive eating of snack food as described in the mentioned chocolate manufacturing theory.

Moreover, females are encouraged to think of chocolate not in terms of calories, but the sensual experience it may provide instead. Chocolate advertisements may strongly depend on sexual taboo; they need women to overcome their food inhibition, and so marketers urge them to reinterpret it into an even stronger inhibition: a sexual one (Robertson, 2009). Exemplifying the diffusion of innovations theory, the industry uses public relations and other means to emphasize that chocolate contains a kind of endorphin called phenylethylamine, which allegedly excites the same kind of euphoria that comes from sex (Frydenborg, 2015). As Vale points out, however, this chemical metabolizes too quickly to have any significant effect (2008). In fact, sausage has more of it than chocolate (Vale, 2008). Since sausage is not commonly perceived as a sex stimulator (people were not conditioned to think so), any impression that chocolate does have to influence sex is likely to be a mere result of the placebo effect.

Cadbury’s Flake as well as Nestlé’s BlackMagic and After Eight are products that are most frequently advertised through the attractive forces of sex and love. Thomas Krygier, one of the advertisers for Flake, himself said that in one of the campaigns they were purposely featuring coy and innocent-like females who would not be expected “to give a blow job,” and so he almost referred to the idea of an “oral sex with a chocolate bar” (as cited in Vale, 2008, p. 27). The thought behind this was that even innocent women can become rebellious and mischievous in a private setting with chocolate at
hand, which itself is a product considered to be naughty, yet nice. BlackMagic’s advertisers literally compared chocolate consumption to an orgasm: “We silly creatures are always so thrilled when a man thinks us worth the very best. Imagine it, a big box of these BlackMagic chocolates on my dressing table. My dear, each choc’s an orgy” (as cited in Chrystal, 2011, p. 75). These examples demonstrate how TV advertisements encourage women to convert their longings for chocolate into a sexual fantasy.

The TV advertisements likened chocolate’s consumption to a sexual, private experience that insinuates a taboo similar to that of masturbation. However, the advertised experiences of eating chocolate have almost nothing to do with reality. They rarely expound to the real life in which people tend to eat their mass market chocolate more like a quick snack rather than a long sensual experience. Those commercials merely exemplify the prevalent feminism theory, which contends that the media promote a sexist ideology (Potter, 2012).

Although chocolate is mostly associated with women, men also play their role in the business, which shows especially on Valentine’s Day. It could be said men have been somewhat taught that chocolate is the ideal gift, which can help them court their intended. “The Lady Loves Milk Tray” campaigns that ran from 1968 to 2003, for instance, featured a Bond-like hero who would have overcome all possible obstructions just to deliver chocolate to his ladies (Crystal, 2010). We could argue that the symbolic exchange of women’s affection for chocolate is also captioned in the famous slogan “Fortune Makes the Heart Grow Fonder,” which belongs to the chocolate company Caley’s Chocolates of Norwich. It suggests that women expect to be given chocolate
and in return will be willing to exhibit more attention and affection to those who give it to them.

This section demonstrated how well storytelling and conditioning methods work. Although chocolate’s appeal to sex, love and romance is basically one great brand story formed on the basis of truly strong human emotions (love, passion) and drives (sex), people have been conditioned to the extent that they now believe the associations too, even if just unconsciously. Chocolate is nowadays typical of Valentine’s Day after all.

4.7. Social Status/Socializing Claims

Chocolate marketers also tend to base their stories on community-based camaraderie, meaning socializing. To illustrate, the commercials for Milka Bubbly portray a rushed, unexcited town whereupon the Milka cow suddenly steps in, making the street grounds bubble and thus changing the street walkers into more sociable, beaming and sharing beings (Videoadcz, 2014). Milka’s “Tender Town” and “Catch Me Tender” commercials work on the principle of sharing as well. The idea that chocolate sharing is a token of kindness continues to be steadily consistent with another 2013 Milka campaign “Dare to be Tender,” which mushroomed from France to many other European countries (Shayon, 2013). In this campaign the chocolate bars are sold with one square missing, which the consumer can either claim back or send to another person as to demonstrate affection. Here, the travelling piece of chocolate itself becomes the communicative medium, ostensibly telling what kind of person (caring or not caring) the chocolate owner really is based on his/her decision. The campaign was even labeled as a “social experiment” (Shayon, 2013). That may have given people the idea that they
were watched and then defined through their choices, which could have subconsciously influenced their actions.

In contrast to the approach above, some of the pricier premium chocolates, such as Godiva, Teuscher, or Pierre Marcolini, appear to be divisive due to their alleged ability to confer superiority only to those who consume them. According to Fahim, the ideology behind premium chocolate is to encourage “false consciousness” about the possible obtainment of higher status, which could be deepened by the existence of chocolate connoisseurs who themselves tend to undervalue generic, mass-produced chocolate (2010, p. 33). In today’s culture, when products promise to bestow social status and to shape personal identity, premium chocolate brands seem to also promote first-rate luxury through powerful imagery in advertising and packaging.

The consumption of fine chocolate may appear as worthy only of a few. According to the “middle class rule” that Morris emphasizes as one of the latest tactics in the premium chocolate market, however, this false perception is covertly meant to reach the middle class (2012, p. 11). As the higher classes are too small a market for sustainable business, the tactic is to appeal to people from the middle class who would somehow like to match that higher class. Michael Recchiuti, a chocolate confectionary artisan in San Francisco and the founder of Recchiuti Confections, stated that he gets customers who buy his chocolate even though they do not have the budget for it (Fahim, 2010). Since people buy premium chocolate even if it has no practical worth then, it could be the overruling emotion of feeling “worthy” through the archetype of “luxury” (refer to sub-chapter 3.3) that ultimately makes them willing to pay for it.
Since the fine chocolate market has increasingly prospered, chocolate mass-producers began to imitate its success. To explain, American chocolate companies, such as Hershey’s, Ghirardelli and M&M’s came up with their own lines of “premium chocolates” via which they try to sell consumers the supreme status at alternative prices (Morris, 2012). There are products that are quite consistently advertised through the appeal to a social status, such as Ferrero Rocher. Its commercials have traditionally featured people from high-end social circles who savor Ferrero Rocher as if it was an exclusive dessert. Ferrero’s 1990’s commercial called "The Ambassador's Reception" concludes with a voiceover saying: “Ferrero Rocher: sign of a good taste” (Palimpsest, 2013). This was an appeal to the desire of being top-class; nevertheless, in 1990s the product was presented as transcendent in a commercial called “Food of The Gods,” in which the Greek gods consumed it in delight (ToastTVTube, 2010). A brand story about Gods is perhaps a good end point to the demonstration of how far chocolate advertising claims can go.
5. Advertising Tools and Marketing Techniques

Understanding the major claims that the chocolate industry makes is one thing, but knowing the means through which they are communicated is another. Thus, this chapter will examine the tools that help to pass them forth: packaging, make-believe worlds, product placement, social media and fair trade labeling. Commercial and poster advertising is not included, as these media have already been referred to several times in the previous chapter.

5.1. Packaging

This section will analyze how packaging as a communication platform can pass on a brand story. It has two known functions: to attract and promote. Packaging is especially important, as it is a hands-on tool that can trigger impulsive purchase behavior.

The emergence of wrappers at the end of the 19th century changed chocolate marketing for good. This is because chocolate bars no longer had to be sold loosely from unidentified wooden boxes or expensive containers (Cadbury, 2011). While wrappers do not add any tangible value to the product, their relatively cheap but creative shiny design is eye-catching and hence easily purchasable. Wrappers are likely to plug indicating signs of the products’ brand stories. The packaging of the “Fry’s Five Boys” milk chocolate, for instance, encapsulated five main emotions that were allegedly connected to the taste: “Desperation,” “Pacification,” “Expectation,” “Acclamation,” and “Realization” (Chrystal, 2011, p. 76). These words, obviously referring to more than chocolate, demonstrate how packaging can convey love and sexuality claims.
Rather than a catchy disposable wrapper, however, some people may prefer their packaging to possess a tangible added value. In the early 1870s, Cadbury launched chocolates in their new “Fancy Box,” which was embellished with a silk lining and a tiny mirror (Cadbury, 2011). This was one of the earliest examples of packaging, which was after the consumption of the contained chocolate supposed to function as a keepsake box for other items, such as photographs and jewels. Since deluxe chocolate boxes are sold the most frequently by premium chocolate brands, it becomes clear that this kind of added value is meant to promote the social status claims.

However, there is probably not a more important market in the chocolate arena than children, and children prefer another kind of added value: a toy. Toys can easily attract children's attention and increase their loyalty to the product. In 1930s, free gifts, such as a quacking duck inside the chocolate, had already begun to be distributed (Chrystal, 2011). These days, the chocolate beans Smarties, which were first launched in 1938 (Chrystal, 2011), are often distributed in conjunction with toys too. Unfortunately, this kind of marketing is suspected to encourage obesity. As a result of this concern, there are ongoing debates about possible regulations on snacks associated with toys, especially in regions, such as South America and the United States, where children's obesity is a serious issue (Gregori, et al., 2013). Yet, almost USD 2 billion is still invested per annum by American companies to the marketing of food and beverages that are considered unhealthy (Otten, 2014). As for the involvement of the chocolate industry itself, the Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) that partners with Ferrero, Mars, Nestlé, Mondelēz, Hershey’s and others does not direct attention to children’s meals and marketing via premiums, such as toys (Otten, 2014). Thus, children are steadily targeted.
There is perhaps nothing as elaborated and focused on children within the chocolate industry as Ferrero's Kinder product line. “Made expressly for children” are the memorable words promoting Kinder Chocolate on Ferrero’s official website. The Kinder line also features Kinder Bueno, Kinder Milk Slice, Kinder Cerali, Kinder Brioss, Kinder Country and Kinder Choco Fresh, names that tend to becharm with a lighter, more summertime-like impression, which may cause consumers to defectively perceive products that hold those names as healthier than they really are. Ferrero has also enriched its collection of Kinder Pinquí, Happy Hippo, Choco Bons, Maxi King, and other treats with names that appeal to children first and foremost. All those products share a similar packaging feature that resides in the image of white (milk-like) spillway painted over the background (Ferrero Group, n.d.). That hints at an attempted health claim (refer to sub-chapter 4.1 Health Claims).

Back to toys, Kinder Surprise and its refined summer time sibling, Kinder Joy, go beyond any of the concepts above. The Kinder Surprise egg, which developed in 1974, features revolutionary and especially inviting packaging. The foil wrap covers an edible chocolate shell that has the form of a chicken’s egg, which itself houses a smaller plastic shell with a toy inside (Ferrero Group, n.d.). This “double treasure concept” consists of two things children allegedly like the most: toys and chocolate. It appeals to children's desire to experience fun and surprise, as well as to parents’ tendency to rejoice over their children’s joy at the moment they open the egg. With this providence, Kinder Surprise mastered the appeal to a loving parent-child relationship.
The trapped toy may be people’s main purchase enticement. Every year more than 100 new Kinder Surprise toys and gadgets are invented and divided in two groups (Ferrero Group, n.d.). The first set features the advertised limited edition of collectible toys that relate to popular feel-good movies (e.g. Disney) while the second is composed of unbranded random toys that often require assembly (Vale, 2008). Since toys from the second, less likable set are distributed more frequently, consumers could be prompt towards repetitive purchase in their pursuit of finding toys from the first set. Giving people a lesser chance of obtaining what they desire and a bigger chance of what they do not is certainly an unusual method of arranging repeated purchase Nevertheless, Ferrero’s main claim about the toys is that they stimulate imagination and assist in a children's cognitive and emotional development (Ferrero Group, n.d.). The assembly part itself, may in fact contribute to what is claimed, as children sometimes have to put pieces of the toys together in order to see their final form.

In contrast to this “developmental” claim, however, in 2013 Ferrero released two packaging versions of its eggs: blue and pink (Bignell, 2013). Blue eggs contained cars and super-heroes for boys while pink eggs guarded dolls and other toys that are typically considered “girlish.” As a result, the company was accused of being sexist and restrictive. Ferrero defended itself saying that the sorting was only supposed to help parents make an easier purchase decision (Bignell, 2013). Despite of that, Ferrero, which prides itself in helping children develop creativity, remained criticized for its enforcement of stereotypes on children and for putting them in clusters.

The last reference to packaging connects to the already discussed issue of coerced overconsumption. Re-sealable “snack-on” sharing bags with bite-size pieces of
chocolate bars, such as Nestlé’s Lion and Kit Kat Pop Choc bags, are new “tools” through which companies can give rise to overconsumption under the pretense of “facilitating sharing.” This “bag” concept was allegedly designed for those who want to share their chocolate or to eat sweets in lesser portions (Fleming, 2013). However, both reasons are riddled with polemics. While those bags appeal to consumers with the possibility of eating less (only bites), in whole they contain about three times more chocolate than the regular-size bars (Fleming, 2013). The fact that all the chocolate inside is unwrapped facilitates faster “hand-to-mouth-eating,” a term that was coined by Hershey Co (Fleming, 2013). Knowing on top of this about the addictive nature of chocolate (sub-chapters 3.1 and 3.2), people who buy those bags with the intention to eat only a few mouthfuls seem to be predisposed to close their bags after way more. Andrew Geier, a psychologist at Yale university, points out that the chocolate bags only illustrate another “portion inflation,” with the reasoning that if the bags were truly meant to be shared, the chocolate bites would be wrapped in order to make the consumption hygienic enough for sharing (as cited in Fleming, 2013, para. 6). Thus, the socializing (sharing) hook may be just a pretext to sell chocolate in larger volumes.

5.2. Make-Believe Worlds
Make-believe worlds, specifically the made-up fantasylands that are embedded in the physical realm, also constitute an effective tool to promote chocolate, especially to children who are fond of fantasizing. Many major chocolate companies have their own touristic destinations these days. Whether it is an amusement park, visitor-friendly factory, or the whole town, all these places should provide visitors with pleasurable memories that would lead to associations with the promoted product or brand they revolve around (Vale, 2008). Hershey’s town, for instance, is a home to Hershey Park
and Hershey’s World, ones of the most visited attractions in the USA (hersheypa.com). A town Bournville, commonly called Cadbury World, is similarly popular in the United Kingdom (cadburyworld.co.uk). Both Hershey’s and Cadbury World focus on the storytelling about branded products through tours and exhibitions. They even offer special tours for students. That would be fine, as history can be enlightening; however, there are concerns connected to this “chocology”.

It is most of the time a part of companies’ agenda to create lifetime consumers. Cadbury’s and Hershey’s supervised tours for schoolchildren are orchestrated in a way so that the children are exposed to many advertising techniques and supplied with complimentary chocolate bars or samples throughout (Ryan, 2012). As written on Cadbury World’s own website, its visitors are taken down the “advertising avenue,” a point where they are urged to see as many Cadbury’s advertisements and commercials as possible (Cadbury World, n.d.) The website itself, in fact, explicitly asks: “How many great Cadbury ads will you remember?” (as cited in Cadbury World, n.d). The tour ends in the “World’s Biggest Cadbury Shop” where a range of chocolate products as well nonedible Cadbury souvenirs are offered (Cadbury World, n.d.). This kind of excursion is more likely to “teach” children to “like” chocolate rather than to make them appreciate its history and manufacturing processes. The experience is also likely to lead to nostalgic memories, which may eventually influence participants’ purchase decisions.

5.3. Product Placement

Product placement, mentioning or displaying of items and trademarks on the screen, is another way of ensuring consumers’ encounter with a product. Although the encounter
takes place only through a virtual reality, it can be powerful, for it causes people to associate the featured product with the exact storylines they favor and characters they admire. Since admiration is likely to lead to imitation (modeling), fictional icons as well as real celebrities can have a strong influence over viewers’ emotions and purchase behavior. This is somewhat suggested by the social learning theory, which developed from Miller’s and Dollard’s research findings in 1941 about people’s tendency to observe others and consequently learn their behaviors (Potter, 2012). Potter clarifies that role models do not necessarily have to be real people; they can be fictional characters or media persons as well (2012). We could hereby advocate that celebrities and famous fictional characters are frequent cognitive models, because their characteristics tend to be highly idealized.

Let’s illustrate this with an example. A line such as “Ohhh, Lady Godiva, my only friend” by Blair Waldorf who represents the top-class in the TV drama Gossip Girl may, for instance, cause the target audience of young females to think that Godiva’s purchase can equip them with a social status similar to the one of Blair’s (as cited in Steinberg, 2008). As a result, they are likely to imitate her indulgence on Godiva. The obvious connection between the luxurious Godiva chocolate and the similarly luxurious character Blair Waldorf additionally shows that a brand story of the particular product that is placed in a show has a comparable theme to that of the hosting show.

Chocolate does not always act only as a “co-star” product though. There are stories that were written all about chocolate or were even named after it, the most obvious one being Chocolate from 1988. Movies based exclusively on chocolate can lead to a reverse product placement: a product being produced only after it was featured on the
screen or in a book. Roald Dahl’s classic *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is an example of a full reverse product placement. The Wonka brand has changed many owners since 1971 when the movie adaptation of the book aired (Sauer, 2011). Under the umbrella of Nestlé, the Wonka candy company today sells a wide range of products, from Nerds and Gobstoppers to the Wonka Bar, and the more “upmarket” line of bars called Wonka Exceptionals (Sauer, 2011). There are instances of reverse product placement in relation to the famous story of Harry Potter too. One of them concerns the Chocolate Frogs from Warner Brothers that are now sold in authentic film packaging (orated pentagonal box) and in conjunction with collectible cards that correspond to those featured in the story (Universal Orlando Resort, n.d.). Given the popularity of the Harry Potter franchise, it may be safe to say that people are therefore much more likely to buy these products.

However, what may be even more interesting than a paid product placement is writers’ or screen-writers’ completely arbitrary portrayal of generic chocolate. The role of chocolate in stories often complies with the chocolate industry’s own vision and its brand promises. The mood and health enhancing abilities of chocolate were, for instance, particularly suggested in Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (both book and movie) where chocolate is presented as a kind of cure against effects caused by the presence of Dementors, cold creatures who deprive people of hope and happiness (Rowling & GrandPré, 1999). In this story Harry faints after being under the effect of a Dementor, whereupon his professor Remus Lupin hands him some chocolate saying it would help him feel better (Rowling & GrandPré, 1999). Of course, J. K. Rowling was not some paid agent of the chocolate industry; however, her description of chocolate as an antidote to unhappiness and lack of energy infallibly affirms the chocolate industry’s
health and mood claims. It shows how people’s behavior and beliefs comply with the
thories of social learning and conditioning. After all, marketers might want consumers
to believe that all their real life “Dementors” can be soothed by chocolate.

5.4. Social Media
The arrival of corporate websites where brands promote their manufacturing processes,
recipe heritage and ethical credentials pioneered chocolate marketing once more. On top
of that, companies’ entry onto the social media allowed them to craft innovative
campaigns, games, and more advertisements that can condition the users also in their
“second reality:” the online world. NetBase, the social media analytics company, found
in 2015 that the confectionary brands talked the most about on social media are Oreo,
followed by Nutella, M&Ms, Starbucks, Cadbury, Hershey’s and Godiva (2015). Oreo
is the 20th and Nutella the 31st most “loved” brand across all industries (NetBase,
2015). Given there are many popular brands in other industries, such as electro and
textile, this ranking is quite momentous.

Much of the content on chocolate companies’ social media sites consists of mouth-
watering images of chocolate products and the desserts made out of them. However,
simple quotes are also frequently shared, an example being Ghirardelli’s: “Seven Days
without Chocolate Makes One Weak” (as cited in “5 delicious,” 2014). This forthright
word “weak” indeed is memorable. Since the increasing gamification of social media
offer the opportunity for interaction, consumers are no longer only passively viewing,
liking and sharing images though. As social media users are likely to have noticed, they
are encouraged to engage with trivial games through simple applications, such as the
famous “Milka Biscuit Saga,” that are linked to the social media. Most businesses also
tend to run engaging contests on their Facebook pages, rewarding the winners with some kind of brand-related prizes.

Customers are not only encouraged to play, but also bake. Almost all major chocolate brands, including Hershey’s, Cadbury, and Nestlé currently dedicate a subpage of their website to a list of recipes based on their products. Chris Pemberton who is in charge of Ghirardelli’s social media management disclosed that the company has a special baking team, which is responsible for the constant invention of new recipes (“5 delicious,” 2014). He confirmed that most of Ghirardelli’s content marketing focuses on the sharing of those recipes through social media, namely Pinterest. Since many other companies do the same, the industry seems to have found its own new “recipe for success.”

5.5. Fair Trade Labelling

This part focuses on the way chocolate companies address the issue of slavery and child labor in the chocolate production chains through certification labels. To begin with, there is some falsehood in the general marketing representation of the actual consumers of chocolate.

The renowned quote “All the World Loves M&Ms” by Mars is one of those that pose particular veracious issues. By contrary to similar advertising claims, which either explicitly or subliminally suggest chocolate’s worldwide presence, there is a disproportional gap in the real-life chocolate consumption between cocoa’s exporting and importing countries. Even if chocolate is advertised as if it is universally loved, it is not omnipresent, as most people from the cocoa producing part of the world actually have never even seen, let alone eaten, chocolate in its refined form, just like most
Western consumers have not seen the bean itself in its raw form (“But Who Actually,” 2015). Thus, the level of chocolate consumption across the world is not spread evenly. There is no Kinder Joy for every child in the world, and the whole world certainly does not love M&M’s.

Since we live in times of rising social activism, the more conscious consumers and activist groups may have already begun to see through the suggested discrepancies. That might be why a few smaller companies use the exploitation of cocoa farmers as an opportunity to develop an advantage over the bigger producers who are mostly to blame (Leissle, 2012). The new idea of the few small companies is to purposely integrate the controversial theme into their own pitch with the intended message that they positively differentiate from the other “ruthless” producers by treating their workers better. During the process, however, they might create unrealistic portrayal of farmer nations.

This refers particularly to Divine Chocolate. It brands itself based off the fact that a number of Ghanaian women are co-owners of the business, theming its packaging in the spirit of Ghanaian cultural symbols accordingly (Leissle, 2012); a perfectly acceptable way to promote and respect the country’s culture. However, a release of Divine Chocolate advertisements twisted the culture around a fantasy. The ads depict women from Ghana as dazzling social beneficiaries and successful business owners (Ryan, 2012). While there may be a fraction of Ghanaian women who truly do live well off Divine’s business, the idealistic images could potentially hinder consumers’ comprehension of cocoa farmers’ lives. Divine’s slogans on the advertisements, such as “Equality Treat,” may also contribute to the misrepresentation of the developmental lag in African societies and African women’s social roles in those societies (Leissle, 2012).
Although such advertising copies should logically refer to Divine Chocolate’s African female co-owners, the potential threat is that consumers might begin to generalize from such promotions. What is certain is that Divine Chocolate activated a unique marketing scheme; this is not a typical kind of brand story thus far. However, other companies may soon get inspired and turn a similar angle. Thus, it may be timely to wonder about the potential companies that will partner with the producing communities in order to exploit this brand story rather than genuinely help the cause.

The growth of the Fair Trade movement has attracted similar criticism. Although sub-chapter two 2.3 indicated that the major companies are finally awakening to their responsibilities by taking small steps to reduce unfair labor practices, they might be turning them into additional profit at the same time. Moreover, Fair Trade is somewhat starting to act as a brand in itself. To clarify, the purchase of Fair Trade chocolate presumably provides the consumer with some emotional and rational comfort; it flatters them into the belief that they positively differentiate from others by being supportive to a good cause (Ryan, 2012). In other words, the purchase of Fair Trade chocolate partly increases their cultural capital. The increase of cultural capital thus basically becomes Fair Trade chocolate’s added value. Added value no longer has to necessarily be material; it can be also imaginative, as consumers tend to pay for images or ideas of themselves. Fair Trade producers and chocolate companies can use this to gain more profit.

Since there is money in making customers feel as if they are instrumental to the world’s redemption, it makes sense that Fair Trade chocolate would eventually be capitalized on. The social theorist, Matthias Varul, re-examined Fair Trade consumerism and
argued that the romanticized projection of agricultural and artisanal production propagated by Fair Trade organizations helps them conceal their own failure to provide farmers with full equity and credit (Fahim, 2010). Fair Trade items are labeled as alternatives to unaccepted exploitative labor practices and detriment to the environment; however, Fair Trade items are pricey and have a revenue motive similar to other commercial items (Ryan, 2012). At the same time, Fair Trade chocolate consumers construct their self-image through their involvement in a cause that seems to benefit others. Rather paradoxically then, the “Fair Trade” label has become an exploited quality itself, which in the future may hinder the genuine purpose of certification systems.
6. Nutella Case Study

So far, this thesis has exemplified communication theories, typical chocolate brand stories, and marketing tools on a bounty of real-life, yet scattered instances; different chocolate companies have used one or more of the tactics in order to market their products through them. This chapter, accompaniment by relevant figures and images, finally focuses on a case study that should substantiate a large part of the theory in this paper on the example of one specific in-depth analysis of a chocolate product. In other words, this case study offers a full insight into a real long-term business case: Nutella.

6.1. Nutella’s Introduction

As Gigi Padovani, the author of *Nutella world: 50 years of innovation*, records, Ferrero’s Nutella turned from a solid block to a gooey chocolate-hazelnut spread in 1949 (2015). Back then, it was known as Supercrema, and only later in 1963 was renamed to Nutella. Nevertheless, it has become so famous that it gained the nickname “the symbol of a generation” (as cited in Padovani, 2015, p. 3). Throughout the years, Nutella has been subjected to many interchanging marketing tactics and claims, many of which have been outlined in this thesis. Nutella, however, has also exhibited quite an innovative positioning. However, it is implemented with a rather debatable vigor. In fact, Nutella could be as well considered one of the most ambiguous brands in the cocoa industry, torn between its business excellence and a slight lack of moral philosophy. The ethical downside concerns primarily the overuse of certain raw and refined ingredients, such as palm oil and sugar (Murane, n.d.). This imminently breeds yet another problem, which rests in the use of too-literal health claims. A few chocolate companies, after all, still advertise their products as unconditionally healthy. Nutella, however, does so methodologically, especially in context with children (Essays, UK,
While other chocolate products are commonly advertised “only” as treats, desserts, or snacks, Nutella penetrated what many consider the most important meal of the day: breakfast.

How did it breach people’s morning eating ritual though? The key was to befriend the bread industry right at the outset. Since the launch, the chocolate spread has been primarily advertised as topping for a slice of bread, posing as a part of a “balanced breakfast” (Essays, UK, 2007). Figure 1 below shows an exemplary vintage ad from the 1980s Italian campaign.

![Italian Nutella Ad from 1980’s](https://vintage-ads.livejournal.com/3328023.html)

The bread element may have in some measure helped to purge people’s perception of Nutella as an unhealthy chocolate treat. With bread, Nutella appears as a part of a “wholesome” meal. Later advertising, commercialization and online popularization
augmented the serving possibilities by featuring Nutella in combination with pancakes, crumpets, biscuits, waffles, croissants, muffins and more (Nutella Global, n.d.). Nutella is apparently fond of the pastry industries in general. Concurrently, it is advertised as a multifunctional ingredient. A 2013 British commercial playfully describes it as all of the following: “scrape sauce, spread sauce, dunk sauce, sprinkle sauce, and cover sauce,” which is illustrated on the examples of crumpets, porridge, strawberries and bananas (Nutella UK and Ireland, 2013). Ferrero also decided to maximize Nutella’s association in the US with pancakes through engagement with Pancake Day on February 17 (West, 2015). This first began in 2015 when Nutella launched an advertising campaign ahead of the date of the celebration. It was accompanied by a short jingle in which children excite themselves about Pancake Day and Nutella. Nick Hastings from the Krow Communications, which was in charge of the campaign explained, “Eventually we want Pancake Day without Nutella to feel as unlikely as Christmas without mince pies” (as cited in West, 2015, para. 4.) Thus, it is going to be a long-term effort. Figure 2 below shows one of the related advertisements from social media.

Figure 2: Nutella Pancake Day

Nevertheless, bread is still Nutella’s most important ally, which simply pays off, as an average European eats 50 kg (110 pounds) of bread per annum (Padovani, 2015). Thus, Nutella has a big market to realize its potential in. Figure 3 (below) confirms that Nutella’s bread-based positioning has even consolidated over the years. The advertised image does not associate Nutella only with the traditional European breads and popular American toasts; instead it shows that the spread also tastes well on the world’s other flatbreads and crêpes: paratha, chapatti and dosa.

![Figure 3: Spread on Bread](image)

For Nutella, the company has positioned it as a spread for any kind of bread, dosa or chapatti. (2015, June, 30). [Online advertisement]. Retrieved from http://www.fitnessvsweightloss.com/are-you-a-nutella-lover-you-may-not-love-nutella-anymore/

On the whole, Europeans make for 59% of Nutella consumption; however, the USA, Russia, India and China have inflated in numbers too (Padovani, 2015).

6.2. Nutella’s Gaps in Self-Representation

However, Ferrero seems to be reinterpreting Nutella’s international role squarely into a global image. The enforced perception that everybody already loves and eats it may mislead Westerners about Nutella’s popularity in the rest of the world. Such conditioning begins mildly in the spirit of “curiosities” highlighted on Nutella’s website
where Ferrero’s own calculations speak about Nutella’s vast consumption via references to historical sites and popular monuments from around the world. The website says that one could circle the world 1.8 times with the yearly produced amount of Nutella (Nutella Global, n.d.). This amount has the same weight of the Empire State Building and would fill so many jars that they could cover the Great Wall of China eight times or line the banks of the river Danube 26 times over. If all this Nutella was transformed into clay, one could even build 22 000 Big Bangs out of it. These fun facts, however, constitute for just a subtle preview of Ferrero’s ongoing strategy to globalize Nutella’s image.

Figure 4 below demonstrates Nutella’s re-appearing advertisement, which also arouses the image of universality, as it features an arrangement of several Nutella-covered bread slices that imitates the natural shape of the world map. The message here is quite straightforward: Nutella is everywhere.

Figure 4: World Nutella Day

World Nutella Day [@nutelladay]. (2015, January 29). On Feb. 5th, you’re invited to be part of World Nutella Day. We want to see how you celebrate! [tweet]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/nutelladay
Nutella also publicized a map with an embedded graph of its global value chain. As Figure 5 (below) shows, it labels all Nutella’s headquarters, main international suppliers, factories, and main sales offices across continents.

Figure 5: The Nutella® global value chain

At a closer look, we can see that Ferrero has its headquarters in Nutella’s “birth country” Italy, and that Europe is on the whole flagged with more factories and main sales offices than any other area. However, none of those two facilities seem to be located anywhere near the West African region, including Nigeria where most of Ferrero’s cocoa is according to the graph produced. The non-existence of factories in West Africa signifies that Nutella is not that easily accessible at affordable prices to the locals there (Richmond, 2011). What Nigeria does have and what Europe does not, however, is the indication of a main international supplier. This insinuates that the West African region merely provides the labor force necessary to supply Western or other affluent markets. Nutella’s self-representation as a global brand is thus not absolutely appropriate; at least in terms of consumption.

Nutella’s image as a “healthy breakfast” is not particularly applicable either. Since Nutella is mostly marketed as a healthy breakfast ingredient for the world’s youth, the two traditionally most important and respected figures in their upbringing – mother and teacher – were methodologically used in the Australian campaign “As a Mum and Teacher” (2003-2009) to pass Nutella’s “happy wisdom” about children’s needs on real mothers (As a Mum and Teacher, n.d.). Their trustworthiness based on experience with children was used to promote Nutella as a nutritionally better alternative to the other rival spreads, namely peanut butter (Padovani, 2015).

That being said, Nutella’s nutrition table is not as compelling. Nutella’s serving size consists of two tablespoons (which account to 37 grams) out of which 21 grams is sugar (Nutella USA, n.d.) That means 55% of Nutella consists of sugar. Moreover, there is a total of 200 calories in one portion of Nutella out of which 110 come from fat (Nutella USA, n.d.). This matches the exact amount of calories from fat in the regular-size chocolate bar Snickers (Mars, Incorporated, n.d.). With such a sugar and fat profile, it is unlikely that breakfast with Nutella, which is almost an equivalent to having a chocolate bar for breakfast, would qualify as healthy.

6.3. Nutella’s Energy/Practicality Pitch to Parents

Ferrero has been hiring its own professional staff to work on Nutella’s brand image and consumer needs. Amongst these experts is the Austrian-American psychologist Ernest Dichter, the “father of motivational research” (Padovani, 2015). What he and others fabricated in order to negate Nutella’s nutritional drawback was truly elaborated. They redressed Nutella’s negative attribute into a benefit through the simple rationale that its
substantial share of calories in one intake is actually just the right amount of energy for children to start their day (Padovani, 2015). An Australian commercial script (2009-2012) is tag-lined: "It takes a lot of energy to be a kid" (It Takes a Lot, n.d.). As for a variation of the same theme, a Canadian Nutella commercial (2009-2012) features a mother who, looking directly into the camera, explains: “[Nutella]’s a part of a nutritional breakfast. It takes good food to keep them going […] and it has a source of vitamin E. […] I make sure Nutella is always part of their breakfast. […] Spread some energy” (Spread some Energy, n.d.). These are two examples in which Ferrero makes literal energy claims about Nutella. The theme, nevertheless, is unremitting. To a smaller or bigger degree, energy claims, often on the verge of health claims, appear almost in all Nutella’s advertising.

Another pitch lures mothers with the idea of practicality and convenience. Like other Nutella appeals, it is frequently promoted through commercial “product endorsements” by alleged mother figures. The first message from the practical pitch has to do with portioning. “A Delight to Spread on Bread” was a slogan used already with Nutella’s initial sets of advertisements (as cited in Padovani, 2015, p. 34). However, the benefit of easy layout on pastry is communicated visually or literally in almost every Nutella commercial to this day. After all, it is a spread. It helps to emphasize that breakfast with Nutella is fast in preparation, and thus practical. It is an understandable and valid claim.

The next practicality-based appeal is rather more complex. A 2010 commercial, for instance, portrayed a mother who declared: “Breakfast? In this house? In the morning, I can use all the help I can get!” (as cited in Padovani, 2015, p. 81). What this ultimately referred to was that Nutella would help mothers get their children accustomed to the
habit of eating breakfast regularly, for children like its taste and would eat anything more substantial with it, even bread that may not be that willingly eaten otherwise (Padovani, 2015). This way, Ferrero simultaneously began to differentiate Nutella from classic self-contained sweet treats that children tend to gobble self-reliantly.

The idea is that breakfast with Nutella on bread does not only allow children to satisfy their sweet tooth, but also forces them to eat the bread, as Nutella is already “glued” to it and cannot be easily separated (Padovani, 2015). Hence the famous slogan: “Nutella, a Part of Balanced Breakfast,” or its analogue: “a Part of a Nutritious Breakfast.” The message is that the balance between the energy from Nutella and the solid foundation of the bread makes up a perfectly nutritious breakfast. The question is, however, whether bread with Nutella is any better than any other candy. After all, children like Nutella because its taste is as good as that of any other “chocolate goodness.” When it goes with bread or other baked goods, the consumer basically gets the same amount of sugar and fat as from a chocolate treat, plus the additional starch from the pastry, which itself is not particularly nourishing.

6.4. Nutella’s Re-Positioning from Chocolate to Hazelnuts

Since customers may still doubt Nutella’s health benefits due to its chocolate-like dark look, Ferrero sends the additional message that Nutella is actually a hazelnut spread, not a chocolate spread. This claim is cavalierly underlain with the fact that Nutella contains more hazelnuts (13%) than cocoa (7.5%) in whole (Padovani, 2015). However, it was explained in this thesis that the cocoa itself is not a problem; the unhealthy part is the contained sugar and fat as in any other mass-market chocolate. Nonetheless, the repositioning from a chocolate product to hazelnuts has been pressed especially since
2007 in the UK, where mothers perceived Nutella exclusively as a kind of “spreadable candy” and strictly defied it as breakfast food (Essays, UK, 2007). Ferrero’s strategy in response was to re-educate mothers through the “Wake Up to Nutella” campaign, by framing information about the positive benefits of hazelnuts through television, PR articles and samplings (Essays, UK, 2007). The effort, however, woke up critics too.

It was the staple commercial of the campaign that posed a stumbling block. To illustrate, the commercial was accompanied by a motherly voiceover that validates Nutella’s salutary influence on health, "Each 15-gram portion contains two whole hazelnuts, some skimmed milk and cocoa. Wake up to Nutella" (Toaster Dance, n.d.). It was those signature words that became problematic. The tendency to refer only to healthy ingredients, such as hazelnuts and milk was considered highly deceptive, and in 2010 it earned 31 consumer complaints (Mae & Smith, 2011). Those were elicited predominantly by the misleading nature of the ad, which ignored to mention Nutella’s high containment of fat and sugar (Mae & Smith, 2011). Nevertheless, Ferrero escaped a threatening ban that would have prevented the commercial from further airing (Mae & Smith, 2011). Regardless of the scandal, this campaign resulted in one million new British customers and an estimated return of “£1.85 for every £1 spent” (Essays, UK, 2007, para 44). Thus, Nutella penetrated the British breakfast after all, and the tendency to stress those two famous hazelnuts, milk and some cocoa has protruded into many more new commercials after that.

6.5. Nutella’s Emotional Pitch to the Young

Despite of the frequent health claims, Nutella has not completely disowned the typical appeal to emotions, such as guilt, relief, joy and nostalgia. Its commercials
simultaneously often idealize family life (“Wake Up to Nutella,” 2007). The name “Nutella” itself was meant to sound amiably to citizens around the globe. The suffix is supposed to remind Americans of “Cindere-lla” and to Italians of their favorite treat “caramella” (Padovani, 2015). Nutella thus appeals also to happiness, harmony, childhood and nostalgia.

Depending on the target market, however, it can also pose as a “sinful” product. In fact, this positioning may be the only “unofficial” occasion for Nutella to act as a yummy chocolate spread rather than the “healthy” hazelnut spread. As a chocolate spread, it can pose as a mood pacifier that can quench strong cravings for something sweet (Padovani, 2008). It is also the creamy texture, which may tempt one to just dig in with a spoon or a knife and to gulp the portion down immediately (Padovani, 2015). Nevertheless, a product that can be eaten so effortlessly may lead to an uncontrollable in-take of calories, fat and sugar.

As Figure 6 on the page below shows, Nutella’s 2012 double-edged Olympics-themed ad featured the word “diving.” With the smudged knife on top of the jar, one could suspect that people are urged to comprehend the diving experience through their potentially unrestrained consumption of the product itself rather than through the sports activity the ad leans on. This ad is likely to create compulsive craving then.
Eating Nutella straight from the jar as opposed to combining it with bread according to the “official” commercial instructions could be a way to break the rules and express rebellion; Nutella suddenly appears as a kind of forbidden fruit or a guilty pleasure (Padovani, 2008). This brand story has attracted mainly the young. One of the apposite memes that nowadays travels on the Internet for instance says: “The jar says ten servings, but my heart says one.” The idea of indulging on Nutella for “dark” emotional reasons has already been promoted through product placement as well. The movie Bianca by Nanni Moretti features a naked, bearded male character eating Nutella from an enormous jar as a result of feeling guilty for having made love to his colleague Bianca (Padovani, 2015). Evidently, Nutella can be portrayed as a provocative as well as a consoling “meal,” especially to the young.
Thus, Nutella is no longer favored only among parents and their small children but also among teenagers and young adults. In fact, the popularity of this treat on college campuses has been so vast that it ended in the news. In 2013, it was reported that students of New York’s Columbia University became obsessed with Nutella. They allegedly consumed about 100 pounds of it each day, which scaled to the expense of $5,000 a week (Murane, n.d.). In addition, the students eventually made a habit of stealing Nutella from the dining halls for future consumption to ease themselves from stressful studies (Murane, n.d). This may be viewed as an emotional addiction.

6.6. Nutella’s Media Channels and Recipes

If not “addicted,” Nutella has at the very least extremely loyal online followers among the younger generations. Most of the online following is based on the sharing of recipes on Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest as well as Instagram (Murane, n.d.). The brand now instigates some of this promotion too, but most of it began to occur from the initiative and organic word-of-mouth of the consumers themselves; they even create independent online blogs dedicated only to Nutella (Murane, n.d). One of the first most avid fans was Sara Rosso who declared the World Nutella Day on February 5th in 2007 and who founded the same-named fan-site (“7th World Nutella,” 2013). Although this fan-site originated from an independent consumer as many others, it has become Nutella fans’ “pantheon.” Thus, Rosso herself became a kind of Nutella’s unintended freelance advertiser.

To no surprise, she eventually gained Ferrero’s attention too for that. Their first reaction was to commence a lawsuit against her over an illegal use of the Nutella trademark though (Padovani, 2015). The indignation about this on part of Nutella’s fans (who by
that time had already become also Rosso’s fans) forced Ferrero to replace its accusation with an apology and an actual expression of gratitude towards Rosso (Padovani, 2015). This shows that consumers sometimes do have power over company decisions. The gratitude may be due anyway. Prior to the annual World Nutella Day, during which Nutella lovers bake, cook and party with Nutella, and prior to the existence of Rosso’s website with over 700 Nutella recipes, using Nutella as a baking and cooking ingredient was virtually unheard of (“7th World Nutella,” 2013). As for turn of events, the World Nutella Day was later accepted in Ferrero’s own custody on Rosso’s own request (Padovani, 2015). As a legacy of Rosso’s effort, Ferrero now has a strong base of “inspirational consumers” who spread their fondness for the product to other people via the Internet.

Their veneration, universally called buzz marketing, is what a brand needs in order to become an icon. According to User-Generated Content, Nutella has, for instance, one of the most popular Twitter accounts, which is followed even by famous figures, such as Justin Bieber, Barack Obama and Katy Perry (Padovani, 2015). In 2011, Lady Gaga Tweeted about Nutella: “Yes I love Nutella (with Banana+Wonderbread) who doesn’t?” (The Countess, 2011). Referring back to theory, such Tweets are basically a result of second-level agenda setting; Ferrero has publicly popularized the belief that Nutella with bread is “lovable,” and this belief reflects on the public discourse on social media in which consumers, including celebrities can be nowadays together easily involved in. Talks about products or brands on part of celebrities, such as Lady Gaga can be particularly momentous, as they themselves have enormous fan-bases, which the Tweets get shared with.
Thanks to Nutella’s increasing popularity, its name grew to serve a general purpose. “Nutella” is now universally understood as a synonym to a chocolate spread - a distinct commodity in itself - rather than just one of many chocolate spread brands. Only a few of the most successful brands, such as Jeep, Hoover and Kleenex acquired this kind of advantageous perception (Padovani, 2015). Since Nutella ranks among them now, cafes, as well as individuals arbitrarily baptize the names of their culinary creations with the word “Nutella” as in a matter of fact. Instead of saying “pancakes with chocolate spread,” for instance, people are likely to hear Nutella pancakes (West, 2015). Thus, we come to realize that Nutella has a monopolistic-like share on chocolate spreads.

6.7. Nutella’s Packaging

Nutella also exemplifies the added value of packaging. Around its birth, it was decided that Nutella would have been sold in small reusable jars. Throughout the years, about 800 different Nutella glassware types have been produced, including water glasses, wine glasses, and beer mugs (Padovani, 2015). Those that remained now serve as collectibles. For marketing purposes, however, a consistent signature packaging had to emerge. The winner was a custom-tailored pelican jar in a plastic or glass version, which could be easily entered with a spoon or a knife (Padovani, 2015). The container still preserves its purpose of reusability today, ensuring that customers always have a tangible keepsake after they empty it.

With the growing concept of the “brand-lovers,” nonetheless, re-usability is not enough for companies to repay consumers for their increasing loyalty. Personalized products are now the key to customers’ hearts. Knowing this, Nutella - inspired by Coca-Cola - launched a campaign across different countries in which consumers could personalize
the label on their Nutella Jars with their own names or nicknames (Lobrutto, 2015). Figure 7 (below) presents a screenshot taken in January, 2016 from Nutella UK and Ireland’s website, which shows the concept quite clearly.

Figure 7: Nutella’s Free Personalized Label in the UK


Nutella France, however, stumbled during the process of such personalization. Their 2015 “Say it with Nutella” campaign, in which an online application gave users the chance to personalize Nutella jars with a message for others, became rather knotty (Lobrutto, 2015). Nutella France published a list with banned religious and identity keywords, such as "lesbian," "Jewish" and "Muslim while "Christian" and "gay" were allowed (Lobrutto, 2015). The ban was viewed as an attempt to discriminate minorities, which was a serious step back for a modern brand like Nutella.

6.8. Nutella’s Pitch to Children

Although Ferrero is a strongly children-directed company, Nutella’s brand team has always rather targeted mothers with the idea that it would be them who would serve Nutella to their children. Nevertheless, Nutella still upholds its rights to imprint
attention-getting Disney or Looney Tunes characters on special edition jars and to use them in commercials on given TV channels (Vale, 2008). Moreover, Ferrero can target children indirectly through the sponsorship of children’s events. The Canadian Nutella branch for example sponsors the Canadian Soccer Association and supports children’s active involvement in soccer events across the country (Nutella Canada, n.d.). This way, Ferrero gets the opportunity to directly interact with potential lifetime consumers at the age they are the most susceptible to marketing techniques (refer to sub-chapter 4.5).

The question is how much more can the consumption of sweets augment due to this kind of life-time conditioning. Luca Galletti, the Italian Environment Minister, hinted at this in 2015 on Twitter with a statement in response to the French minister’s baseless accusation of Nutella’s palm oil sourcing: "Leave Italian products alone. For dinner tonight […] it's bread with Nutella" (as cited in Jones, 2015, para. 9). This quote offers two ideas about the issue of Nutella’s overconsumption. First, it demonstrates that the company itself is aware of the controversy Nutella’s positioning as a vital ingredient instigates. Secondly, the cynicism suggests that the issue tends to be exaggerated. Perhaps this cynicism is not completely misplaced and people truly are not as tractable as some theories suggest; it is possible that conditioning can only go so far.

However, at least some part of the population can be truly negatively influenced by it. Ferrero was, for instance, sued for deceptive advertising by a Californian mother who used to frequently feed her four-year old daughter with Nutella, having thought it was healthy breakfast food as a result of Nutella’s advertising (Murane, n.d.). She was reportedly shocked and sued Ferrero after she discovered the spread’s true nutritional values. The result was a $3 million class-action settlement (Murane, n.d.) Despite of the
lawsuit, Nutella’s sales did not suffer, and the mother was even ridiculed by other
consumers on the Internet for having been too naive to think that Nutella was actually
truly healthy (Murane, n.d.). However, if a promotional statement is so obviously
untruthful that even consumers mock other consumers who believe in them, why they
are allowed to be communicated at all? Let us move to the conclusion to provide at least
a partial answer.
7. Conclusion and Discussion

To conclude, this thesis covered the kind of brand stories the chocolate industry regularly makes and how they affect consumer behavior. In addition, it showed how the chocolate companies tamper with scientific truths about various chemicals (which were found in chocolate only in small portions) in order to bolster a positive or healthy image of their product. In other words, the industry fathomed its own “propaganda research” to validate chocolate’s positive effect on sex, mood, and even health, all of which evidence the ill-conceived, deceptive advertising.

No matter how illusive, an effectively communicated brand story can still lead to the conviction that a product has the capacity to alter consumers’ deepest aspects of themselves and to hail a deeper experience in all possible areas of their life. To be specific, chocolate advertisers enhance chocolate’s enigmatic abilities to satisfy almost any human aspiration, whether they be in the medical, mental, sexual or social realm. Jamal Fahim sums up the global impact of this effort aptly: rather than the actual selection, purchase, or application of a product, consumption is “the imaginative pleasure-seeking to which the product image lends itself” (Fahim, 2010, p. 7). This means that chocolate consumption is now nearer than ever to what he describes as possible “mentalistic hedonism” (Fahim, 2010, p. 21). Lifelong conditioning helps to intensify collective societal dependence on chocolate and related brand stories.

The industry does not look at consumers as rational individuals but as impulsive and suggestible beings who are quite sensitive to constant repetition and prompt towards imitation. That is perhaps why they feel free to repeat a set of claims about chocolate, which regularly even contradict themselves: “calming as well as energizing,” “nice but
naughty,” “sexual, yet childish” and perfect for a “private moment as well as sharing.” All these inconsistent claims are simultaneously promoted even though chocolate as such stays more or less the same. Moreover, chocolate is marketed as to satisfy hunger even though science proves that it confuses the organism by making it feel as if it needs increasingly more. Chocolate is sometimes even described as healthy despite of the high amounts of sugar and fat in it. As a cherry on the top, there is a product now called “fat-free chocolate,” which is not accompanied by any disclaimer explaining that the more fat-free the chocolate, the more sugar it contains. Although they may be contradictory to science and common sense, these claims work, because they were framed as public knowledge according to the cultivation theory.

The case study on Nutella showed how marketing strategies work in practice. Its marketers, for instance, strongly focus on the parent-child relationship claim, pushing through the image of a “good responsible mother” and a “happy energetic child”: roles that can be supposedly embodied through Nutella’s use. Consumers feel nostalgic and excited about the product and sometimes are even medically affirmed to it. The boldness with which the “healthy breakfast” appeal is enforced almost overrules common sense. Nutella’s adhesive health risks tend to be beclouded by a well-thought brand story about its health and energy benefits. Moreover, there is the subliminal message that "everybody eats it,” which partly leads to the general conclusion that it truly cannot be “that bad.” This kind of psychology works too well to be forsaken across the whole industry.

Moreover, there is another issue at the other end of the chocolate industry. The companies still have a long way to go to eradicate exploitation from their own
production chains. They are tainted by slave labor and child trafficking. Such eradication is not a self-fulfilling prophecy; slave labor will not be eliminated until 100% of third-party verification of sustainable cocoa is implemented by all companies. Further consistent vigilance will be continually required, as loopholes can occur even in the Fair Trade system and rules can be still indirectly broken, which also applies to environmental issues. On top of all, the companies have a peculiar tendency to capitalize on almost “anything,” and so the Fair Trade label is becoming a commodity itself, being portrayed not simply as a necessity for the concerned farmers but a way to increase consumers’ cultural capita too.

How come all kinds of illusive brand stories are allowed to be such a great part of consumers’ lives these days then? This is perhaps a proper final question that the readers may have been asking on throughout. Although there are bodies, such as the UK’s Advertising Standard Authority, which are supposed to secure that only true claims are advertised (Vale, 2008), they do not seem to be potent enough. The reasons may vary. One of them could be the vast, almost uncontrollable extent to which this kind of advertising has reached. Perhaps it has become too difficult to amend by now. Another reason may be the existence of particularly nifty lobbyists. Another factor is also the thin line in the interpretation between a “brand story” and “fact claiming.” After all, marketers never claim to state the truth; they supposedly tell stories.

A chance of expelling illusive advertising from people’s lives may root from the voice of the people themselves. If they found a way to notice what advertisers do to them the way they have started to notice the exploited workers in sourcing areas (refer to subchapter 2.3), they could finally begin to rebuke the companies’ ways of marketing.
Thus, companies would be somewhat forced to undergo greater self-regulation in terms of deceptive advertising. The major problem is, however, that people seem to like brand stories too much to give them up. They may choose to overlook their falseness, for it flatters them to be a part of something that appears as perfect.
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Ok. Firstly, yes I love Nutella (with Banana+Wonderbread) who doesn't? Secondly, I can't believe Edge of Glory was trending, sneakymonsters! [Twitter post]. Retrieved from https://twitter.com/ladygaga/status/30037746005315584


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