The social construction of advertising: a discourse analytic approach to creative advertising development as a feature of marketing communications management

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Abstract

This thesis explores the creative development of advertising through a discourse analytic method. The 'creative development of advertising' refers here to the intra-agency process of developing advertising from client brief through planning, research, creative brief, design and execution. The thesis draws on a wide ranging literature review of research papers and popular texts to locate the study within marketing management as the superordinate field, and within marketing communications and advertising as the immediate domains. The main data gathering method is the dyadic depth interview, supplemented by observation in the field, informal primary data and agency archive material. The empirical focus is placed on a top five UK advertising agency, BMP DDB Needham, London. Transcribed interview data as text is subject to coding and categorised according to the 'interpretative repertoires' agency account team professionals draw upon to articulate and substantiate their positions and arguments, following well established discourse analytic procedure in discursive psychology. The empirical section argues that eight distinctive interpretative repertoires may be discerned from the data. These repertoires interact dynamically in agency discourse to circumscribe the social construction of advertising. The repertoires also act as resources from which account team members construct their professional identities and reproduce discursively proscribed power relations within the agency. The discussion explores the implications of the study for marketing management, marketing communications and related fields of research, theory and practice.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and outline of research problem and research design

Chapter outline: This chapter introduces and outlines the research problematic and offers initial methodological positions as a preamble to the more detailed positions developed in subsequent chapters. It sets the problematic, which concerns the process of advertising development, within an immediate field, advertising, as a sub-domain of the broader field of marketing communications. This in turn is seen as a sub-domain of marketing management. The empirical method outlined is primarily qualitative, entailing an analysis of transcribed depth interviews with agency professionals. The analytical approach is drawn from discursive psychology. The overall aim of the chapter is to set out a broad context of issues from which to develop a more detailed argument as the thesis progresses.

1.0 Introduction

1.0.1 Substantive domains of inquiry

This thesis entails an exploratory study into the intra-agency advertising development process. It locates this study of advertising process within the broad domain of marketing management, and specifically as a feature of marketing communications. Advertising is seen as a significant aspect of the 'marketing communications mix' (e.g. Shimp, 1997) while marketing communications in general is a feature of the broader domain of marketing management (e.g. Kotler et al, 1996, and references in next chapter). Advertising development as a managed creative process within an advertising agency is an important yet relatively neglected topic of research within these domains.

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Morgan (1992) suggests that there are but few empirical studies of advertising agencies within marketing research or, for that matter, from other disciplinary perspectives (p.153). In this case, the advertising development process within the agency is the marketing phenomenon of interest, and this phenomenon is located in terms of its superordinate functional marketing domains.

Figure one: schematic of the domains of inquiry and the integrating theory

Marketing management, the superordinate substantive field

Marketing communications, the subordinate field

Advertising, the focal field

A social constructionist approach drawing on discursive psychology methodology
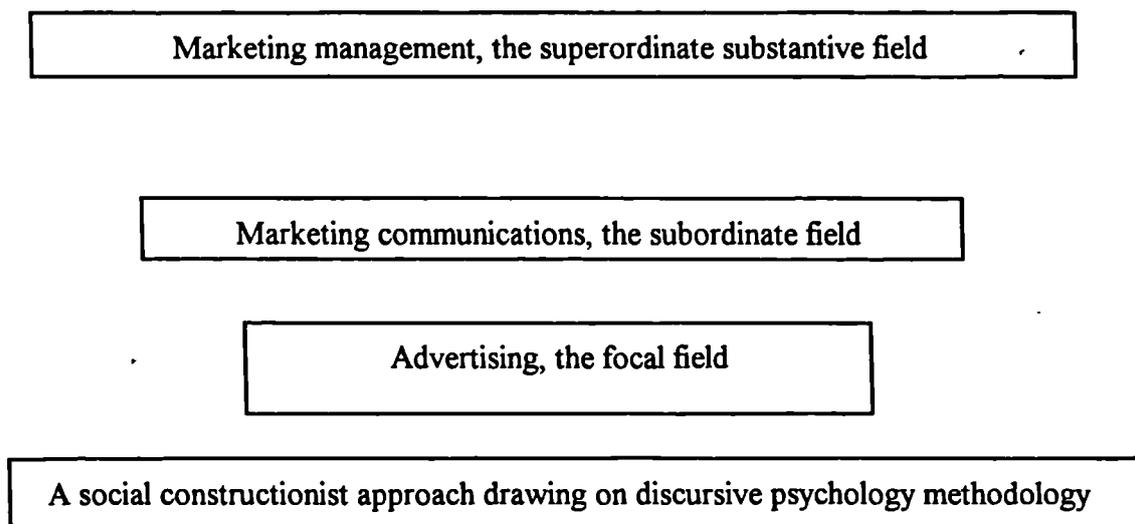
1.0.2 Discourse analysis and marketing

This study takes a discourse analytic methodological approach to exploring advertising development within a leading (top 5) UK advertising agency. Discourse analysis has been well developed and established in social constructionist social psychology (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). The potential usefulness, and hitherto relative neglect, of discourse analysis as a methodological approach in marketing and consumer research has been noted by, for example, Morgan (1992), and developed by Elliott (1996), Elliott et al (1995), and Ritson and Elliott (1995).

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1.0.3 Methodological issues: broader theoretical debates in marketing and management research and theory

The problematisation rationale of this study is based on two main grounds. These are a) in exploring advertising process the study addresses a relatively neglected substantive area of research in a sub-domain of marketing management, and b) in applying an inter-disciplinary methodological approach it attempts to engage with and address major theoretical issues raised within marketing research. Critical debates in marketing research have largely revolved around perceived methodological narrowness in the mainstream. For example, there have been calls for greater ethnographic understanding of what marketing professionals *do* and a need for more 'reflexive, interdisciplinary and pluralistic work in marketing' (Brownlie et al, 1994, p.9). The call to methodological pluralism in marketing research has often been made in the context of a perceived over reliance within the domain on the structuralist-functionalist paradigm (e.g. Arndt, 1985). Mainstream marketing has been criticised for being slow to adopt interpretative methodologies compared to other related domains, such as consumer research (Morgan, 1992). Such debates within marketing reflect broader debates in management research as whole (e.g. *British Journal of Management* 1995, Vol.6, Special Issue 'The Impact of Management Research', and 1997, Vol. 8, Iss., 1, and overview in Easterby-Smith et al 1991). As a generalisation, these debates often entail a call for greater multi- and/or interdisciplinary research. Hunt (1994) has suggested that mainstream marketing academic journals may in the past have penalised original work because of a reluctance to admit the legitimacy of inter- and multi-disciplinarity. Hunt (1994) goes on to advocate the potential usefulness (and relative shortage) of qualitative studies in marketing research, although with some heavy qualifications concerning the potential of such studies to be inter-subjectively confirmed. The main argument in Hunt (1994) seems to be that qualitative studies might offer a potentially fertile source of new

thinking in marketing provided they are underpinned by a rigorous philosophy of knowledge: in Hunt's terms this issue is couched within a relativist/realist dichotomy.

1.0.4 Methodological issues: a dual problematization rationale

To reiterate, in view of this rich background of critical theoretical debate in marketing (elaborated upon in the following chapter) the chosen methodological approach for this study is located within the broad field of marketing management on the dual grounds that a) in exploring the way that advertising is developed within an advertising agency the study addresses a significant marketing phenomenon which is largely neglected in marketing research and texts, and b) in applying a discourse analytic methodology it engages with persistent theoretical debates within marketing surrounding the dominance of the structuralist-functionalist research paradigm and the relative shortage of research studies and theory building perspectives which utilise interpretative, qualitative and social constructionist methodologies.

1.0.5 A study in advertising development: why discourse analytic methodology?

The research design (summarised in section 1.1. below) evolved through a consideration of several related research questions. Substantively, these concerned the managed process of advertising development within the advertising agency. Social constructionist discourse analysis is appropriate for a number of reasons. Morgan (1992) argues that marketing itself can be seen as a social construction and that the positivist marketing research agenda renders political critique out of bounds. Morgan (1992) suggests that the positivist ontology and the structuralist-functionalist research paradigm which dominate marketing are not merely tools for generating codified marketing knowledge but are *constitutive* of marketing itself. Hence social constructionist discourse analytic

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studies of marketing phenomena are called for to address the critical marketing agenda (Elliott, 1996, Morgan, 1992) by examining the ways in which marketing phenomena are socially constructed. Discourse analysis focuses on construction, function and variability in language. It seeks to reveal the ways in which positions are warranted, roles and identities constructed and interests upheld. Many facets of functional marketing management converge in the world of advertising. The medium through which marketing strategy, marketing management, marketing communications, consumer research and advertising creativity are brought together is language. Specifically, it is the language of agency account team professionals as they engage in the discourse of , advertising development. Discourse analysis is methodologically apt in this context.

1.0.6 Sampling: size and relevance

In keeping with ethnographic research principles sample size in discourse analysis is contingent. Sampling must be representative and data generated must offer insights into the research problem. In the present case, the depth interviews generated some 30,000 words of transcribed interview text supplemented by archive and informal sources. Full access was granted to BMP DDB (London), one of the top five UK agencies. In addition to this, supplementary data was gathered in order to qualify some of the main findings which emerged from the empirical stage of the research. This data included four depth interviews with planners conducted at Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO (London) on 27th May 1999, and further interviews at J. Walter Thompson (Manchester, June 11th) and Saatchi's as part of an ongoing research programme. The interview data was supplemented by archive material, creative briefs and other documents offered by interviewees at each agency, and observation. The interviewees all had extensive recent experience of working on major national and international advertising campaigns. For example, BMP staff interviewed had recently worked on campaigns for Volkswagen,

Sony, UK Labour Party, the UK Government, Walker's Crisps, Barclays Bank, Alliance and Leicester, Frizzel Insurance. AMV interviewees' clients included Dulux, Volvo, the COI and the coveted Guinness account. Thus the data generated offered a highly representative sample of successful advertising development at the highest level.

1.0.7 Access to data and data gathering

The agencies allowed private dyadic depth interviews to take place between researcher and account team professionals acting in the roles of account management, account planning and creative. Most of the interviews took place on agency premises. In addition, use was made of generously offered archive, video and library material.

1.1.0 Initial outline summary of thesis topic and research design:

Research topic: a discourse analytic study of advertising development as an intra-agency process

Substantive domain: the study is located within marketing management as the superordinate domain and marketing communications as the subordinate domain.

Research problematic: the empirical focus of the study addresses a relatively neglected substantive marketing phenomenon while the methodological approach addresses issues raised in theoretical debates within marketing

Research philosophy: The research is framed within a social constructionist ontology and applies a discourse analytic methodology. Discourse analysis is seen as a feature of the interpretative research tradition.

Research data: transcribed depth interviews with agency account team professionals, supplemented by observation, archive data and informal primary sources

Sampling issues: The focus was placed on the one leading UK agency which pioneered advertising development as an integrated, articulated planning process. This generated approximately 30,000 words of transcribed interview text in addition to other supplemental

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data sources. This volume of data is appropriate for a discourse analytic method.

Analysis: the aim of discourse analysis is to reveal the structure and functions underlying discourse. In this study the concept of the 'interpretative repertoire' will form the basic unit of analysis. Through it an attempt will be made to explore the social construction of advertising in the agency.

1.2.0 Research aims: the problematization rationale reduced to substantive statements

1.2.1 Ontological issues

Given the necessity (noted above in 1.0.3) of locating this (qualitative) study within a clear philosophical research framework, it is appropriate to deal with the broader social constructionist ontology within which this research design is framed. Ontology refers to the nature of what is. In marketing research ontological argument is concerned with the nature and essence of the social world (e.g. Kavanagh, 1994). Social constructionist research flows (following Berger and Luckmann, 1966) from the view that social life is self constituting rather than being the result of hidden causal forces.

1.2.2 Social constructionism and discourse analysis

The influence of social constructionist thought on interpretative research in management and related social fields is discussed at more length in chapter three. Of immediate concern are the major assumptions which such a position entails with regard to discourse analytic method. Discourse analysis need not be, but is usually regarded as, a qualitative method (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Qualitative research in general seeks insights into the quality of peoples' experience (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991, Banister et al, 1994). These research aims are premised on the social constructionist argument that subjective

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experience is manifested in and constituted through discourse in a broad sense. Discourse is defined as 'that which can be described', or alternatively as 'a series of statements which construct an object' (Elliott, 1996). Subjective experience, reasoning and the public articulation of plans and intentions is thus held to have an ineluctably social character. Furthermore, language is held to be a primary resource in the construction of discourses of social life. Thus analysis of the texts of social life can generate insights into the discursive constitution of social phenomena.

1.2.3 Research questions

Given the initial considerations outlined above, one of the research questions is pre-empted through the choice of research method and ontology. That is, the implicit question 'how is advertising developed within an agency' is met with the response 'advertising is socially constructed through the interacting discourse of agency account teams'. That is to say, given the assumption that social life in general is said to be manifested in and through discourse, then so are social processes within specific local domains. Hence the research task is the interpretative one of ascertaining the structure and function of the forms of discourse utilised in this process and of inferring tentative conclusions from these structures and functions about the process itself. Therefore, research questions/problems are both broad and exploratory in character. Noting that this study attempts to address methodological debates within marketing research through its choice of research method, a general research aim can be formulated as follows:

> *1.2.4 Can social constructionism provide a coherent theoretical framework for a qualitative method within a sub-domain of marketing management? Can this potential contribution be illustrated by a research study in advertising development?*

More specifically, research questions relating directly to the proposed study might take

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the following form:

1.2.5 Generally, how does advertising happen, or what are the constituents of creative advertising development within BMP DDB? How is advertising development socially constructed to socially construct creative and effective advertising?

Specifically, with regard to the methodological position taken:

1.2.6 What are the structural and functional features of discourse as manifested in advertising development account teams in BMP DDB?

1.2.7 What are the most significant 'interpretative repertoires' drawn upon by advertising agency account teams to substantiate their claims and positions within the advertising development process?

1.2.8 What are the dynamics of this process in terms of the ways power relations within the advertising development process are enacted through the interaction of these various interpretative repertoires?

1.2.9 How might such an analysis contribute insights for marketing management and the extant disciplinary areas of marketing communications and advertising?

1.2.10 Research problem: summary comments

Given the exploratory character of this study the specific research questions themselves are phrased in terms of broad questions as opposed to testable hypotheses. The primary problem which drove this research had a dual nature. It firstly concerned advertising and its role in marketing management. Advertising as a process within the agency is relatively neglected in mainstream marketing management and marketing

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communications texts. It is also a rare to find research studies focusing on ad agency practice. Yet advertising's significance to marketing management is widely acknowledged in those same texts. Secondly, the study was conceived in the light of ongoing theoretical debates within marketing. These debates concern, among other things, appropriate methodological approaches for the field. The study therefore is significantly a study of research theory and its potential role for marketing management and related areas. The central thesis of the thesis, as it were, is the case that a discursive analytic approach in the social constructionist tradition might offer a coherent inter-disciplinary rationale for qualitative empirical research in areas including and related to marketing management.

1.3.0 Research design: initial considerations

1.3.1 Exploring discursive construction and function in an ad agency

Research designs commonly employed in discourse analytic psychological studies (e.g. Harre and Stearns, 1995, Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Edwards and Potter, 1992) tend to emphasise the exploratory character of social constructionist research. The emphasis is placed on seeking rich understanding of and insights into the social phenomenon of interest. Following Potter and Wetherell (1987),

> "'Participants' discourse or social texts are approached in their own right (original italics) and not as a secondary route to things 'beyond' the text like attitudes, events or cognitive processes. Discourse is treated as a potent, action-oriented medium, not a transparent information channel." Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p. 160.

Hence the discourse analytic object of study is discourse itself rather than some mechanism subsisting beneath the level of discourse. Advertising seems especially ripe

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for discourse analytic exploration since it is constructed through the linguistic negotiation of several parties. These are the client, the account manager, the account planner, and the creative team, circumscribed by, on the one hand, the agency and its priorities and conventions, and, on the other, consumers (in the form of research findings). These parties undergo protracted discussion, argument and debate in order to establish the path of advertising development through its various stages. Even though advertisers have at their disposal specialist techniques and technologies, advertising is not a technical discipline: what is 'right', 'effective' or 'good' in advertising is always open to argument, one way or another. Advertising can therefore be seen to be a social construction in a very telling way. One can argue that all professional expertise, indeed all social identity, is constructed discursively. Advertising seems particularly vulnerable to this point of view, since it seems quite clear that language and ideas are the primary resource of advertising professionals.

1.3.2 Discourse analytic procedure

Discourse analytic procedures are relatively flexible and non-prescriptive. As Potter and Wetherell (1987) point out, a number of studies have concentrated on a single text (e.g. Eglin, 1979, Smith, 1978, Woolgar, 1980). Other research designs have conducted a wide range of interviews in order to establish a cross-sectional effect (e.g. Gilbert and Mulkay, 1984). Within marketing research, Elliott et al (1995) have studied the uses of overt sexuality in advertising based upon analysis of a selection of stimulus advertisements. There are no hard and fast rules of procedure in discourse analysis (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). It is a broad yet rigorously developed conceptual framework within which specific approaches taken must depend upon the research phenomenon of interest, the factors governing researcher involvement, the ease of access to data and the kinds of function being explored. Clearly, this kind of research design is

not setting out to confirm or verify a theory, except insofar as it is setting out to offer a plausible discourse analytic explanation of an aspect of social life. Therefore such research designs are not likely to conform to the conventions of confirmatory or hypothesis testing studies. In the current case, the method follows Potter and Wetherell (1987) in coding and categorising the transcribed interview texts to resolve the texts into predominant 'interpretative repertoires' which participants draw upon to warrant positions and substantiate claims.

1.3.3 Concluding rationale for research design

In the light of these issues the overall research design is initially outlined as follows. In subsequent chapters, especially chapters three, four and five, the various aspects of research design and choices made will be elaborated upon in detail. To reiterate the general point made earlier, this study follows Easterby-Smith et al (1991) and others in presupposing that marketing research and theory building has been under-represented by inter-disciplinary and, in particular, by qualitative studies. Hence this study seeks to begin to address this apparent imbalance by emphasising a research design which aims to offer an order of explanatory richness grounded in a rigorous theoretical approach to social research rather than seeking statistical significance through the application of a formal confirmatory research design. The general approach to research design taken here follows principles already noted and described in the discursive psychology work referenced above and takes account of qualitative research issues alluded to in Easterby-Smith et al (1991) and Banister et al (1994).

1.4.0 Research design

1.4.1 Research question/problem: elaborated upon in section above, the broad research

question explores the advertising development process within a leading UK advertising agency. The primary aim of the study is to offer a rich description of this process and to locate this description within the development of theory in extant domains of marketing communications and marketing management. The problematization rationale resides primarily in a) a relative lack of serious treatment of intra-agency advertising development as a legitimate topic in the management of marketing communications, and b) a relative lack of qualitative and social constructionist methodological approaches in marketing management research and theory building.

1.4.2 Research philosophy: The theoretical basis of the study derives from the well developed social constructionist tradition in discursive psychology. In brief, this holds to the broad ontological position that social life is self constituted through the mutual social engagement of actors. Central elements to this social constructionist view of social life are discourse (that which can be described textually) and language as a symbolic communicative medium. On the social constructionist view, social life is not said to be the result of hidden causal forces but is said to be constituted in and through discursive acts. Language is a primary medium in discursive practice. On this ontology of social life the legitimate object of discourse analytic social research is therefore to seek variability, structure and function in discourse itself, rather than to seek correlations between phenomena from which direct, yet hidden, causal relations may be inferred.

1.4.3 Methodological orientation: the particular tradition of discourse analysis which informs this study is one well established in social psychology. This tradition draws on features of ethnography, semiotics and speech-act philosophy in the analysis of discourse. The data in this genre of research can be any form of textual representation. In the present case, the texts which are available and which are the most appropriate in elucidating the research problem include published agency case histories and other archive material, informal industry sources written and spoken, other secondary data, researcher observation within the agency, and, primarily in this case, recorded and transcribed unstructured depth interviews conducted with advertising development professionals in major account teams within BMP DDB.

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1.4.4 Sample selection: The account team professionals (account planners, managers and creatives) of one leading UK advertising agency constitute the main empirical focus: the emphasis to be on senior team members of current high profile accounts. Discourse analysis is highly labour intensive and this agency has granted unlimited access. Therefore as much data as required may be gathered to generate a rich context for analysis. Furthermore, the particular agency chosen is very important in the UK advertising industry since it has pioneered a style of creative advertising development which has proved both uniquely successful and highly influential. As an agency, it is uniquely interesting. As Potter and Wetherell (1987) point out, there is no discourse analytic 'method' in the sense of a proscribed set of inviolable procedures. Discourse analysis, as a primarily qualitative method, entails a detailed and discretionary engagement with the data on the part of the researcher who must provide evidence from textual analysis to support the conclusions reached. The appropriate quantity of data will depend upon contextual research factors which must be reflexively articulated in the research findings.

1.4.5 Main focus of empirical data: Transcribed dyadic interview texts supplemented by naturalistic, informal data and extensive secondary and archive sources.

1.4.6 Interviews: A target of twelve to fourteen formal dyadic depth interviews to be conducted at the BMP DDB offices in London and at Oxford Brookes University in Oxford, amounting to some 30,000 words of text. Additional interviews conducted after the main empirical phase at AMV BBDO, Saatchi's and JWT. Following several pilot interviews, the procedure adopted will seek to relax the participants and encourage them to articulate what their working experience means to them. The involvement of the interviewer will be minimal, to encourage response, to loosely structure the subject matter, and to elicit elaboration on particular topics of interest or clarify responses. The interviews will each take place in a private office with an audio recording machine. Other peripheral textual data to be gathered as appropriate within the agency itself, supplemented by naturalistic researcher observation.

1.4.7 Analysis: Interviews to be audio recorded, transcribed according to specified transcription conventions and a discourse analytic procedure performed on them. This procedure seeks evidence of variability, structure and function, the main unit of analysis being the 'interpretative repertoire'. Following established discourse analytic procedures in psychology,

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the data is subject to sorting and coding in order to induce 'interpretative repertoires' as categories of linguistic practice drawn upon by advertising professionals to articulate their claims and substantiate their positions in the course of advertising development. These repertoires are used as the basis of an analysis of the ways in which advertising campaigns in this agency are socially constructed through the dynamic interacting discursive practices of the social actors concerned, framed within the superordinate discursive practices of the agency as an organisation with its own history and culture.

1.4.8 Intersubjective validation: Elliott (1996) suggests that attempts to validate discourse analysis have been 'valiant', but that discourse analysis, like other interpretative approaches, ultimately rests upon Thompson's (1990) three criteria for judgement. These criteria are a) conceptual insight which allows the reader to see a coherent pattern in data, b) phenomenological insight which resonates with the reader, and c) paradigmatic insight which allows the reader to see the world in an entirely new way. In addition to these reader responses this study attempts to elucidate its empirical claims by means of a simple content analytic framework. This framework retrospectively treats the induced categories of interpretative repertoire as content features of interview texts so that readers may, to some extent, judge for themselves the interpretation placed on the data. The content analysis over-simplifies the nature of the interpretative repertoire but does render the interpretation public in a way which is open to a degree of inter-subjective validation. The reader can see the criteria by which repertoires were categorised and can look at the texts to assess whether the repertoires seem significant in advertising development discourse.

1.5.0 Social constructionism as a research philosophy

1.5.1 A schema of the research philosophy for this study

This research study seeks to ground an empirical study of advertising within a social constructionist ontology and utilises a primarily qualitative, discourse analytic methodology. However, social constructionism and discursive psychology, from which

many of the methodological principles of this study have been drawn, are each diverse research traditions with many schools within them. Given this diversity and complexity it is useful at this initial point in the thesis to set out in simple and somewhat naive terms the research philosophy of this study. It should be noted that some prominent discourse analytic authors (e.g. Potter, 1998) deliberately do not engage with issues of research philosophy, preferring instead to point out that arguments in support of, for example, a realist ontology depend for their plausibility on the same discursive techniques and rhetorical constructions as any other arguments. However, given the character of the lively philosophical debates within marketing it seems useful to outline initial positions for this research study without pretending that this statement of research philosophy ends the debate.

Figure 2

Schema of research philosophy for this study		
Ontology	**Epistemology**	**Methodology**
Social constructionist	Knowledge is situated	Discourse analysis
social life is self constituting	meaning is indeterminate	Discourse is 'that which can be described'
language is a central feature of this construction	knowledge is contested and serves political interests	Discourse analysis seeks structural regularity and functional plausibility
there is no role for notions of hidden causes, of private mental events, or of a 'deep' structure of reality	notions of truth are based on versions of critical realism	Analysis is based on the concept of the 'interpretative repertoire'.

1.5.2 The naivete of this model: problematising epistemology

These initial positions are elaborated upon later in the thesis. Clearly, the positions

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stated here beg many questions and demand greater elaboration. For example the preconditions for epistemology, the question of what can be known, are rendered problematic by a social constructionist ontology. Knowledge is re-cast in a political light, serving interests in an active way and doing things as opposed to simply saying things. So the epistemological question turns from a consideration of what can be known and why should it be believed, to a question of what is knowledge *doing*? Furthermore, it is important to state that the outline positions indicated in figure 2 do not necessarily represent the positions of specific critical marketing theorists. Neither are they necessarily agreed upon by discourse analysts. However, they do offer clear signs for locating this study within a philosophical framework which is distinctive and which establishes a set of initial positions for development later. For the moment they are left as a sign of a general orientation which locates this study at a point within a discernable trajectory of thought in management, and marketing research. This trajectory has antecedents in broader social scientific debates. Some of these broader debates are alluded to briefly below in order to further locate the present study.

1.5.3 Some intellectual antecedents and themes of discourse analysis

As an interpretative method, discourse analysis can be viewed as 'an advance on hermeneutics' (Elliott, 1996). The interpretative research tradition (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) has, suggests Morgan (1992), been significant in placing the constitution of meaning on the marketing research agenda. The interpretative cudgels have been taken up significantly in consumer research and consumer behaviour research (examples Lutz, 1989, Belk et al 1988, Hirschmann 1985, all cited in Morgan 1992, and other examples in the following chapters), but thus far to a limited extent in mainstream managerial marketing research. Discourse analysis's main protagonists in social psychology (especially Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Potter 1996) situate discourse analysis as a development of poststructuralist thought in social science which bears the influence of semiotics, speech act theory and ethnomethodology. In psychology, as in management

research and marketing research, discourse analysis can be categorised as a 'critical' methodology (Fox and Prilleltensky, 1997, Elliott, 1996, Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). Elliott (1996) locates discourse analysis in marketing as a feature of the 'postmodern turn' in the field (e.g. Brown, 1995).

1.5.4 A more pragmatic rationale

Setting these issues aside, the present study seeks to locate a discourse analytic study of marketing phenomena within a broader social constructionist theme. This approach seeks new insights into advertising development which can address noted calls within the marketing literature for theoretically rigorous qualitative studies. More pragmatically, advertising development offers a useful case for developing Hunt's (1994) qualitative research agenda since advertising development itself relies so heavily on qualitative research for its normative managerial dynamic. Thus, notwithstanding the 'critical' orientation of discourse analysis, there seems no prima facie reason why a (benign?) managerialist marketing agenda may not be served by insights from critical methodologies.

1.6.0 Chapter summary: research problematic

This opening chapter has attempted to set out issues of research topic and research design in clear and simplified terms as a preamble to the more detailed argument in the forthcoming chapters. It has detailed a research problematic which operates on two levels. Substantively, the study seeks to generate insights into the relatively neglected research area of creative advertising development. Such insights have clear potential relevance for practice in marketing management and the related fields of marketing communications and advertising. Methodologically, the study seeks to contribute to the theoretical development of research in marketing by applying a discourse analytic methodological approach which is well established in other social scientific fields but which is still relatively novel in marketing management and marketing communications

texts and research. In this sense the study is positioned as a small contribution to theory development in the field.

1.6.1 Chapter summary: empirical scope

The chapter has outlined the empirical scope of the study. It explores the creation of advertising in an advertising agency. Advertising is developed from client brief to campaign execution by account teams of specialised professionals. The main roles are those of account management, account planning, and creative. The advertising strategy and creative themes are developed by a process of debates, arguments and evidence based reasoning within these teams. Influences on advertising development from outside the team include those of the client, the agency priorities and conventional practices, and the voice of the consumer. These various interests are articulated by the account team members throughout the advertising development process. Hence discourse analysis is particularly apt as a research method since it focuses on language and discourse and seeks insight into the ways in which positions and arguments are warranted and sustained. In this case unlimited access was very kindly granted to the London office of a top 5 UK advertising agency, BMP DDB Needham. The account team professionals of this agency had been involved in some of the most acclaimed high profile campaigns of recent years. Furthermore, this agency had pioneered a way of working which emphasised the full verbal articulation of every stage of reasoning in the advertising development process. Therefore this agency provided an ideal context for the study.

1.6.2 Chapter summary: methodology

In addition to outlining the broad philosophical and ontological framework of the study the opening chapter has introduced discourse analysis as a relatively novel methodological approach within marketing research. While noting the exceptions to this generalisation, particularly in the adoption of interpretative methodologies in consumer

research and, more recently, in some advertising research, the case has been made that discourse analysis can make a useful methodological contribution to research, and hence to theory development, in marketing management and its related sub-domains of marketing communications and advertising. The opening chapter has indicated a persistent trend of lively theoretical and methodological debates within marketing. The next chapter will elaborate on these debates which run throughout much of marketing's history as a sub-text to the mainstream research agenda. The methodological framework for this study is set against this background of debate within marketing and is located as a small contribution to the development of theory within marketing.

1.6.3 Chapter summary: the structure of the whole thesis: locating the study in a substantive and methodological context

Chapter two will develop the substantive context for the study by outlining some major trends within marketing management and related fields of research. The narrative attempts to indicate some relevant trends concerning thematic development of the field and also concerning philosophical trends in marketing discourse, in order to locate this study as both a substantive contribution and a theoretical contribution to research in the broad field of marketing management. Chapter two goes on to introduce discourse analysis as a methodological development within social constructionist social psychology which can be appropriate for empirical research within marketing. Chapter three broadens the methodological perspective to locate discourse analysis itself within various developments in social construction, including ethnomethodology, semiotics and speech-act theory. Chapter four narrows the focus to discuss the specific analytical approach which will be used to operationalise the research. This entails analysing transcribed interview texts to ascertain the principal 'interpretative repertoires' which account team professionals draw upon to warrant and substantiate their positions and arguments within the advertising development process.

1.6.4 Chapter summary: developing the empirical phase of the study

With chapter five the thesis moves into its empirical phase. The chapter sets out the empirical context with a discussion on the practices and processes within the advertising agency BMP DDB. This chapter draws on agency archive and other published material to elaborate on the institutional context within which account team members work at the agency. Chapter six discusses some practical issues concerning the gathering and analysis of the data while chapter seven begins the work of analysing the transcribed interview texts to isolate the significant 'interpretative repertoires'. Chapter seven draws extensively on the interview transcripts to argue that advertising development at the agency is constituted through eight main interpretative repertoires. Chapter eight develops the analysis, focusing on the discourse dynamics of advertising development at the agency and seeking to pick apart the ways that relations are discursively constituted within the account teams. This entails a discussion not only of the apparent practical goal orientated processes going on, but also of the ways in which discursive practices may hide or sustain other interests, constitute social relations and maintain the professional identities of advertising professionals. The advertising agency is notable for the way in which practices are normalised: on the face of it, there are few overt bureaucratic controls over professionals within the agency. Yet organisation always entails power relations which are discursively maintained, and advertising as a social construction cannot be seen as standing apart from the work that language does in the constitution and maintenance of these relations.

1.6.5 Chapter summary: the contribution of this study to the normative/managerial marketing tradition

Chapter nine explores the implications of the empirical findings with regard to the research problem. The chapter returns to many of the issues outlined in chapter one and developed in subsequent chapters in order to re-assess positions in the light of the

empirical analysis. The discussion attempts to reconcile two perspectives which might be seen as being mutually contradictory. On the one hand the study is positioning itself as a substantive contribution to research in marketing management. As such it must engage with the normative dimension of marketing and address the question 'what can this study say to practicing marketing professionals (both academics and marketing managers) which will enhance their professional expertise'? What is the contribution this study makes to the stock of codified marketing knowledge? Many marketing authors who publish in the mainstream marketing literature and who see marketing research as having a legitimate normative dimension in furthering the interests of organisational managers have drawn attention to prima facie shortcomings in the theoretical underpinnings of the field (e.g. articles such as Deshpande, 1983, and Brownlie and Saren, 1992, papers in Brownlie et al, 1994, especially Hunt, 1994, and also major works re-appraising marketing philosophy in Hunt, 1991, and O'Shaugnessy, 1992).

1.6.6 Chapter summary: acknowledging the tension between the 'critical' and the 'managerial' perspectives in marketing

On the other hand the methodological orientation of this study clearly places it in the 'critical' management studies camp (Elliott, 1996, and Morgan, 1992). As such it is concerned with detailing the way that a marketing phenomenon constitutes and reproduces relations of power and authority. Some critical management theorists argue that much of management theory and research is both intellectually shallow and politically naive (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). Marketing has been specifically accused of similar shortcomings from which it is said to be slowly awakening with a growing number of academic articles which problematise the assumptions of the managerial school (in Knights and Willmott, 1997). This study attempts to acknowledge and reconcile these perspectives by locating an ostensibly critical study of marketing within the managerialist tradition of the field. Clearly for many authors on each divide such an enterprise can only be partially successful. There are tensions, if not contradictions, in

representing marketing as a) a managed organisational function which entails expertise, which can have neutral or benign social effects, and which can be more, or less, successfully implemented, *and* b) as a discourse which upholds the interests of a professional class, which upholds the interests of organisations and of market capitalism, and which actively constitutes the experience of consumers and organisational members. The way that this thesis has formulated questions and designed research implies that marketing is, or can be seen as, both these things. This tension is present in any discussion on marketing whether it is acknowledged or not, since the notion of 'marketing' can make no sense apart from its empirical character as an organisational function or managerial job title, and the notion of technical expertise implicit in the managerialist tradition cannot be coherent without reference to the sociological dimension of knowledge in its constitutive character. This study attempts to acknowledge and incorporate this tension. The thesis as a whole attempts to maintain the problematic position that a discourse analytic study of advertising development within an advertising agency can be seen both as a logical development of the managerial marketing research agenda and as a logical development of methodological/theoretical debates conducted among marketing academics.

1.7.0 Chapter summary: summarising the trajectory of the thesis argument

The following section will complete chapter one by summarising the trajectory of the thesis argument in simple general headings corresponding to each chapter. The thesis is structured so that each chapter addresses a significant strand in the development of the argument as a whole. Chapters one to five of the thesis are essentially literature derived. They develop the problematic, the theoretical context and the research design. Chapters six through eight develop the empirical analysis, while chapters nine and ten attempt to explore the implications of the study with regard to the research problematic outlined in chapter one and substantiated in chapters two and three.

Figure 3: The unfolding thesis argument

1. Outline of the research problematic and research design: an exploratory discourse analytic study of advertising development within a leading UK advertising agency

2. Setting the substantive context with a literature review tracing significant developments in marketing management, marketing communications, discourse analysis and related fields of theory and research

3. Broadening the methodological perspective: a literature review of eclectic developments in social constructionist thought: the turn to language and discourse in social research

4. Narrowing the methodological focus: the discourse analytic concept of the 'interpretative repertoire'

5. Establishing the empirical context: tradition and practice at BMP DDB

6. Pre-operational empirical research issues: data gathering procedures and ethical considerations

7. Empirical analysis: a discourse analysis of transcribed depth interviews: eight major interpretative repertoires in the social construction of advertising at BMP

8. Empirical analysis: Discourse dynamics: power and the constitution of relations and objects in agency account team discourse

9. Discussion: exploring implications of the study with regard to the research problematic

10. Concluding comments: some possible implications for social constructionist research in marketing and related domains of research

Having set out initial positions in chapter one in the attempt to clarify the aims and structure of the thesis as a whole, chapter two will now begin to substantiate these initial positions by drawing on a wide ranging review of relevant literature sources.

CHAPTER TWO

A literature review: marketing management and related fields in perspective, and introducing discourse analytic methodology

Chapter outline: This chapter draws on a wide range of relevant literature to substantiate the research problematic outlined in chapter one. It sets out the broad context into which the study is located by reviewing significant developments in marketing management texts and academic research. The review then moves to a consideration of the immediate fields of marketing communications and advertising and indicates some significant theoretical debates in these fields. Finally the chapter introduces social constructionism as an ontological framework and discourse analysis as a methodological approach which together can engage with and address current debates within marketing management research.

2.0.0 Circumscribing and problematizing the issue: introduction

To reiterate, this thesis take a broadly social constructionist perspective in examining intra-agency creative advertising development in a UK context. The study is located within marketing management as the superordinate substantive academic domain with marketing communications standing as the subordinate domain. The specific sub-domain is advertising and the methodological positions are drawn from social constructionist social psychology. Discourse analysis is positioned as the specific method which addresses the research problematic.

2.0.1 Problematization issue (1)

The problematization of the research study issue rests on two main grounds. These are, firstly, that the advertising development process within the agency is a relatively

neglected yet potentially fruitful substantive area within marketing management and marketing communications. That is, the suggestion here is that, as a generalisation, mainstream marketing management and marketing communications literature tends to eschew considerations of the creative advertising development process within advertising agencies. Furthermore, the specifically designated advertising and marketing communications literature tends to display the same selectivity. This general tendency may be a corollary of the noted methodological preferences in the marketing research tradition.

2.0.2 Problematization issue (2)

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly for this thesis, the problematization of the issue rests on a broader argument concerning the application within marketing of an interpretative social constructionist research paradigm which has acquired a significant presence in other areas of social science over the last twenty years but which has not as yet been widely applied within the broad domain of marketing management. Thus the suggestion is that, in developing a discourse analytic approach to this issue, this study may offer a minor contribution to theoretical development in the field of marketing management. The questions of relevance and coherence of the research focus within the superordinate domain are partly bound up with issues concerning the use of the chosen interpretative research paradigm. As an inter-disciplinary study, the present study explores an issue which, it is suggested, would be unlikely to emerge as a research question from within the structuralist/functionalist approach which is prevalent in the superordinate domain.

2.0.3 Summary comments: problematization rationale

To summarise, the issue of interest concerns the social construction of advertising within a (leading) UK advertising agency. The thesis argues that intra-agency

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advertising development is a relatively neglected empirical area in mainstream marketing management research and theory. The suggestion is that a broadly social constructionist approach may yield insights into advertising development which are relevant to the broader superordinate domains of marketing communications and marketing management. As an associated but important issue of the problematization argument, it is suggested that an application of discourse analysis as a qualitative social constructionist methodology within a sub-domain of marketing management begins to address noted calls in the marketing literature (references below) for greater methodological pluralism, especially in the form of inter-disciplinarity and more qualitative studies of marketing phenomena.

2.1.0 Aims of the literature review

The review below traces some of the main trajectories of development within marketing research and theory broadly defined. It sets the thesis problem within a cascading set of priorities which reflects the priorities in the mainstream literature. The marketing management of organisations is the superordinate theme, the role of communications in supporting marketing management is the subordinate theme, and specific developments in marketing sub-fields of advertising and consumer research are related sub-themes. This organisation of themes reflects marketing's functional priorities. This is appropriate since the role of marketing as an organisational function conducted by managers has proved highly influential in directing the priorities of research and theorising. The review seeks to bring out this general theme of marketing critique into which the research design of this thesis is located as a potential response. In particular, the review seeks to highlight, a) some of the major theoretical themes which have been influential in the development of research and theory in marketing management and its sub-domains of marketing communications and advertising, b) the growing critical perspectives in marketing management and its sub-domains, c) the major themes of these critical perspectives

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especially regarding a perceived need for more, and more theoretically rigorous qualitative approaches in marketing. The review then turns to social psychology to outline social constructionism as a broad and influential development in research ontology within which discourse analysis is framed as a methodological response to critical calls in marketing.

2.2.0 Setting the substantive context: Marketing Management literature: development and major themes

The expression 'Marketing Management' is used here in order to convey something of the functional character of marketing's origins, the sense of marketing as an overarching domain of practice which conceptually subsumes many sub-domains in the strategic organisational interest, and to convey the normative strain in the development of the literature. Conventionally, 'Marketing Management' has been seen as the 'management' of the marketing 'mix' of Price, Promotion, Physical distribution and Product (e.g. Kotler, 1994 Baker, 1985, and see Bordern, 1964 and McCarthy, 1981 for expositions of the 'mix' analogy). The 'mix' metaphor (the analogy concerned the baking of a cake by mixing various ingredients) conveys the managerial, and managerialist flavour of much marketing literature: the metaphors are derived from and intended to convey something about, managerial practice. Marketing knowledge in this tradition is generally represented through a discursive repertoire of technical knowledge which can be harnessed in the interests of organisations (and, according to the 'consumer sovereignty' maxim), of consumers (Morgan, 1992, for a critical review). For Kotler (1994) (and by some distance the most influential author in the field) marketing management is a process which,

> "...consists of analyzing marketing opportunities, researching and selecting target markets,
> designing marketing strategies, planning marketing programmes, and organizing,
> implementing, and controlling the marketing effort." Kotler, 1994, p. 66

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2.2.1 Historical origins

The modern marketing discourse developed in North America some eighty years ago primarily deriving from the organisational function which sought to articulate organisational responses to expanding consumer markets. This approach built on classical microeconomics (e.g. Converse, 1930, Fulbrook, 1940, Ryan, 1935) and was later developed from within a structuralist-functionalist paradigm by Alderson (1957, 1964). The normative dimension of marketing theory was fully acknowledged in the nineteen sixties as several authors popularised axiomatic approaches to marketing which used simple metaphors (of marketing 'orientation', consumer 'sovereignty') as the basis of a practical vision of marketing management.

2.2.2 The normative dimension of the marketing 'concept'

The 'marketing concept' became popularised (especially by Levitt, 1960) as a maxim with a strong normative dimension: the marketing concept was mooted as a philosophy of business which placed the customer at the heart of the marketing function and the marketing function at the heart of the organisation. This discourse of marketing as a normative technical discipline in the service of organisations and society at large has remained pre-eminent in mainstream approaches in the most popular texts. Explicit within this functional view of marketing practice was the position that communications formed a significant dimension of the marketing function. Explicitly and implicitly in popular texts, marketing communications were positioned as a sub-function subordinate to, and in the service of, marketing objectives. Some leading marketing communications authors such as Shimp, (1997), argue for the functional priority of marketing communications over other features of the mix. Notwithstanding such views, the conventional treatments regard marketing management as the superordinate organisational function conducted by technical managers in the (benign) service of the organisation.

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2.2.3 'Strategic' and other representations of marketing management

The 'strategic' importance of the marketing organisational function came to be emphasised through the incorporation of topics such as 'strategic marketing planning' and 'strategic marketing management' into mainstream marketing management texts. In some respects this process of assimilation was mutual: Hunt (1994) argues that the business strategy movement owes a significant and largely unacknowledged debt to marketing theorists. Whatever the political issues in the battle for business school curricula, the 'strategic' discourse became powerful in marketing as in other functional areas. Kotler, (1994) quotes a 'planning manager at General Electric' to assert that..

> "...the marketing manager is the most significant functional contributor to the strategic planning process." Kotler, 1994, p. 35.

Kotler (1994) goes on to define a further domain of *marketing strategy*:

> "Marketing strategy defines the broad principles by which the business unit expects to achieve its marketing objectives in a target market. It consists of basic decisions on total marketing expenditure, marketing mix and marketing allocation". Kotler, 1994, p. 71

As in this quote, marketing management drew on business strategy for a new vocabulary to articulate the 'strategic' character of marketing management (e.g. Ansoff, 1965, Porter, 1980, Abell, 1978, Day and Wensley, 1983, Doyle, 1993, Foxall, 1981). The strategic planning process is presented as having three main levels into which the marketing management function has a major input. This 'strategic' vocabulary included portfolio approaches to product mix decisions, 'generic' competitive strategies and the 'product market expansion grid' (Ansoff, 1965) which conceptualised growth strategies. In particular, aspects of the 'planning' school of strategy informed a major development in marketing: the conceptualisation of

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marketing as a planned managerial process (MacDonald, 1984). Thus marketing had

turned from its origins as a branch of economic distribution theory heavily informed

by developments in (behavioural) social science and structuralist social theory (e.g. in

Alderson, 1964), to a metaphor for a new class of organisational managerial activity

which employed an overturning of the discourse of managerial action for a somewhat

paradoxical discourse of consumer sovereignty (e.g. Levitt, 1960, and critique in

Morgan, 1992). The paradox seems to lie in the sense that the consumer is

simultaneously represented as a subject and an object of marketing management.

Later, the vocabulary of the 'planning school' of business strategy was adopted to

formalise and technicise marketing management knowledge in the service of senior

business planners (e.g. MacDonald, 1984). Simultaneously with these grand

narratives of marketing management, the field developed knowledge representations

which refined smaller scale managerialist marketing models and techniques such as

'Product Life Cycle Theory' (Patten, 1959, Cox, 1967, Smallwood, 1973, Hooley,

1994) building on diffusion of innovation approaches (Rogers, 1962). The PLC is a

good example of the managerialist strain running through the development of much

marketing theory, and also of the way this managerialism manifested itself through a

quasi-scientific discourse drawing variously on the resources of realism, positivism

and operationalism. Other general (and generic) descriptive frameworks evolved

regarding marketing communication and persuasion, segmentation, positioning,

targeting, pricing, distribution, marketing research, buyer behaviour and product

policy. Marketing has since further developed techniques to embrace changes in

industrial structure resulting from post-industrialism (with 'services marketing') and

the services informed development of the marketing concept into a relational concept

(e.g. Sheth and Parvatiyar, 1995).

2.3.0 Managerial marketing- critical voices

Marketing management literature has persistently reflected a mainstream

managerialist orientation while also coming under (while evidenced by) critical calls for 'rethinking', re-theorising and reinvention (e.g. various theoretical debates aired in Anderson, 1983, Hunt, 1991, Hirschman, 1986, O'Shaugnessy, 1992, Brownlie et al, 1994, Firat et al, 1987, Deshpande, 1983, Alvesson, 1993, Brownlie and Saren, 1992, Myers et al, 1979, Morgan, 1992). The above references, while far from comprehensive, do illustrate aspects of a (perhaps paradoxical) trajectory of development in marketing management theory. The modernist managerial marketing narrative of analysis, planning, implementation and control persists alongside the reformulations and re-stated questions of critical approaches. Notwithstanding the critical movement, structuralist-functionalist marketing concepts and frameworks continue to be the objects of (positivist) research and of taught courses, for example, marketing 'orientation', (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990), and the 'product life cycle' (Hooley, 1994: overview in Saunders (ed, 1994). Among the main criticisms of marketing has been a perceived methodological poverty in comparison to developments in other fields of human and social science. Easterby-Smith et al (1991) state that,

"Hirschman (1986) argues that key factors in marketing are essentially socially constructed; human beliefs, behaviours, perceptions and values. Hence it is important to employ research methods drawn from this perspective, such as observation and qualitative interviews. But academics within the marketing field still show a strong preference for survey research methods...This may be because marketing as an academic discipline has emerged from economics and the behavioural sciences, and both of these have well established quantitative traditions. On the other hand commercial market research agencies rely heavily on qualitative methods." Easterby-Smith et al, 1991, p. 42.

2.3.1 A critical chorus for marketing research and theory building

Some of the main criticisms of marketing management as it has evolved in research and theory were summarised in Brownlie et al (1994, editorial). These include the

positions that marketing, as it has evolved in its managerialist mode, has been a) too concerned with developing quantitative analytical techniques on a positivist ontology b) narrowly conceived on a technicist model of value-neutral knowledge which plays down the social effects of marketing c) too little concerned with setting marketing in a broader context as a cultural product d) unable to develop an appropriate balance of qualitative work e) resistant to methodological pluralism f) over concerned with empirical work to the neglect of grounding theory. The managerial school of marketing (Sheth et al, 1988) continues to be the dominant mode of much marketing theorising and teaching.

2.3.2 The crowded agenda for 'new paradigm' marketing research

The grounds for critique in marketing research are addressed periodically (e.g. Wensley, 1995, and responses in *British Journal of Management*, 6, 1995). As a notable example, Brown (1994, 1995) has taken a radically critical approach in adopting a broadly postmodern position to deconstruct the managerialist position in marketing and to position marketing as, perhaps, a metaphor for a cultural epoch. Brown (1995) is cited by Elliott (1996) as a major influence in the 'post-modern turn' in marketing. Elliot (1996) puts forward the case for discourse analysis as a suitable methodological response to criticisms of the rigour and appropriateness of much marketing research. Among the usual general calls for more and better theory in marketing, Brownlie et al (1994) suggest that, among other recommendations, marketing should seek more ethnomethodological studies which offer insight into marketing as a human process in social context (Brownlie et al, 1994 and Weitz and Wensley, 1992). The suggestion is that marketing could benefit from a similar reformulation as occurred in strategic management when the common 'rational planning' assumptions were questioned by the generation of ethnomethodologically inspired insights into managers in practice (Mintzberg, 1973). Another call is for marketing to attain the methodological pluralism which has become increasingly

evident in, for example, the other functional organisational disciplines of accountancy, and organisational behaviour (Knights and Willmott, 1997). There is a general perception that marketing as a sub section of management research is slowly showing signs of beginning to open up to these concerns (Knights and Willmott, 1997). However, a sense of 'methodological monolithicism' (Brownlie et al, 1994) remains an enduring general criticism when marketing is seen in comparison to other related functional management disciplines. Whether this perceived monolithicism offers grounds for criticism concerning specific research traditions within marketing is disputed (see responses to Wensley in *British Journal of Management*, 6, 1995). Many marketing researchers are confident in their perception that marketing research and theory building has a dominant paradigm which entails many features of structuralist/functionalist and positivist research traditions (e.g Morgan, 1992). On the other hand, some authors dispute the dominant paradigm thesis while agreeing that empirical and theoretical work in marketing is skewed in favour of these approaches and is consequently lacking in methodological balance (e.g. Hunt, 1994).

2.3.3 So what is marketing management then?

The above section has attempted to construct a narrative of marketing management as a broad, diverse and dynamic academic field which straddles social scientific research, organisational practice and university business school teaching. It sought to offer a limited but representative selection of referenced works to populate this narrative with signposts to a trajectory (or several trajectories) of theoretical development and empirical scope. The field of marketing management is (re) presented here as the superordinate field within which the present study is to be located. In view of the foregoing, a tentative working definition can be offered: marketing management is seen as a set of discursive social practices which change over time, which are often conducted within or for organisations, and which are conventionally characterised by discursive representations of value and exchange,

managerial agency, control and autonomy, and consumers as both objects and subjects. That is, consumers are 'targeted' and 'segmented' as objects but are 'sovereign' as the subjects of marketing management discourses. This conflation of subject with object accomplishes a benign effect neutralising the 'controlling' rhetoric of managerialist marketing management (general argument in Morgan, 1992). 'Marketing management' offers the controlling rhetoric to which marketing communications are subservient.

2.4.0 The sub-domain of marketing communications

While marketing management constitutes the overarching, superordinate domain in which this study is located, the sub-domains of marketing communications and advertising also represent significant traditions of theory and research with more immediate substantive relevance to the present study.

2.4.1 Marketing communications in outline

Marketing communications is seen as a managerially and theoretically significant sub category of the domain of strategic marketing management which embraces, but is not limited to, promotion (Shimp, 1997, Kotler, 1994, Kitchen, 1999). Marketing communications itself entails a 'mix' of further sub divisions which conventionally include personal selling, sales promotion and publicity (PR and MPR), as well as advertising (Kotler 1994, Shimp, 1997).

2.4.2 Historical development

The field of marketing communications, it has been argued, has evolved under the theoretical influence of communications science and adopts a representation of human communication that was common in communications science and mass

communication research in the nineteen forties, fifties and sixties (Buttle, 1995, and see Kotler, 1994, chapters 20-23 for an exemplification of this style of exposition). Once again, generalisations are difficult in this vast field, but the leading figures of communication research who inform marketing communications research and theory may include Katz, 1957, Larzersfeld, 1941, Schramm, 1948, Klapper, 1960, Berlo, 1960, Lasswell, 1948 and Shannon and Weaver, 1949 (overviews in Buttle, 1995 and Livingstone, 1997). Many of these early structuralist conceptualisations of human mediated communication set out an essentially linear information processing model which entailed variations on the theme of source-encoding-sending-medium-decoding-receiver (for examples of the theme Schramm, 1954, and 1971). The unpredictable variable was 'noise' or interference in the communication. This machine-metaphor model of communication, characterised as a 'boxes and arrows' approach by Elliott, (1996a) informed the emphasis on communication effects research and is still influential in its most simple form in best selling marketing management and marketing communications texts (e.g. Shimp, 1997, Kotler, 1994, Smith, 1995, Hutchings, 1995). However, in later editions of these texts the information processing model of communication is supplemented by more interpretative frameworks, primarily drawing on concepts from semiotics.

2.4.3 Marketing communications research in relation to its informing fields

While marketing communications research has lagged behind in methodological terms (Buttle, 1995), much contemporary mass communications research has in general taken on board methodological developments in cultural and critical studies (e.g. Corner et al, 1997). This broadening of empirical scope and epistemology has been somewhat reflected in advertising research and particularly in consumer research (e.g. McCracken, 1987, Lannon, J., 1992, Lannon and Cooper, 1983, Mick and Buhl, 1992, Ritson and Elliott, 1995). Thus, as with marketing management as a general field, marketing communications and its related sub-domains such as advertising

demonstrate many research variations on the mainstream theme. However, the case still holds that the mainstream texts remain, perhaps understandably, somewhat behind the research journals in the extent to which methodological developments are incorporated into their subject matter. For example, Smith (1995) and Shimp (1997), two popular examples of undergraduate marketing communications texts, rely heavily on the sixties communication model so trenchantly criticised by Buttle (1995) for conceptualising marketing communication. It would not be right to overplay this argument: Smith (1995) mentions semiotics in the context of advertising, while Shimp (1997) devotes a chapter to the notion of meaning in marketing communication and utilises concepts from semiotics or semiology in so doing. However, in both cases, discussion of the communication process is premised on the information processing model with its attendant frameworks of cognitive processing, attention, memory, and perception. The point to make here is that much research in the field remains significantly premised on the popular cognitive information processing models of marketing communication and therefore the kinds of research question which may be addressed are circumscribed by this model.

2.4.4 Marketing communications and marketing research: a theoretical point reiterated

The foregoing review highlights one feature of marketing's methodological poverty: social constructionist themes are hardly evident either in popular mainstream texts of marketing management or in marketing communications. Research studies published in leading journals do employ social constructionist themes in some major empirical studies, for example concerning the joint construction of advertising meaning (Ritson and Elliott, 1995) or the discourse analysis of gender responses to the use of overt sexuality in advertising (Elliott et al, 1995). However, even the growing incidence of such studies in advertising and consumer research has not yet penetrated the discourse of the popular marketing text. Popular texts remain heavily dependent on

the discourse of cognitivism. This may reflect the perceived applied character of the field which in turn, as Hunt (1994) suggests, may explain the reluctance of mainstream marketing research gatekeepers to publish pluralist or inter-disciplinary studies. However, the intellectual case for social constructionist research in marketing seems compelling. Not only does it supply an alternative to the positivist ontology and thereby offer the scope of new ways of looking at marketing phenomena in terms of the 'co-creation of meaning' (Ritson and Elliott, 1995), it is also apt because it reflects observed characteristics of marketing itself. Hirschmann (1986) in Easterby-Smith et al (1991) has argued that key elements of marketing are essentially social constructions. For Morgan (1992)...

> "...the discourse of marketing itself constitutes social relations as it becomes applied...it actively participates in the self constitution of subject through commodities." (Morgan, 1992, in Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, p. 143).

A social constructionist ontology would therefore offer a potentially rich source of marketing insight given the possibility that social constructionism captures something essential about the constitution of marketing discourse itself.

2.5.0 Advertising as a distinct sub-domain within marketing communications

Advertising, as noted above, is often considered as a functional sub category of the marketing communications 'mix' (Baker, 1985, Smith, 1995, Shimp, 1997, Kitchen (ed), 1999, Kotler, et al, 1996, Belch and Belch, 1995, Kitchen, (Ed), 1999. The advertising agency may have been in existence in forms similar to the present day for 200 years (Crosier, 1994). Advertising agencies share (at least) one feature. From the point where a client gives the agency an advertising brief to fulfil, the advertising process has to be managed through its various stages and aspects of development (Shultz and Barnes, 1995). Many texts have dealt with aspects of this process, many of these from practitioner perspectives (e.g. Ogilvy, 1981, Broadbent, 1984, Ogilvy,

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1983, Butterfield, 1997, Channon, 1989). Additionally, there are many works on advertising which lean towards a more formal academic approach from a range of perspectives. These various perspectives have located advertising broadly within marketing theory (e.g. general marketing references above and also Aaker et al, 1992, van Raaj, 1989, Pelsmacker and Van Den Bergh, 1996, Hunt, 1976), while other perspectives have treated advertising as a feature of cultural, media, semiotic, anthropological or literary studies (e.g. Williamson, 1978, Berger, 1987, Bertrand, 1988, Sherry, 1987, Cook, 1992, Wernick, 1991).

2.5.1 Advertising and 'integrated' marketing communications

'Advertising' is placed as a feature, often a major feature, of integrated strategic marketing communications (e.g. Shimp, 1997, Shultz, 1991, Shultz et al, 1994, Shultz and Kitchen, 1997) but, as noted above, the conceptualisation of advertising within this framework is significantly informed by an information delivery model of marketing communication (critiqued by Buttle, 1995). As noted above, marketing communications (including advertising as a feature of the marketing communications mix) is treated as a feature of the marketing management armoury in major marketing texts. However, there is a clear hierarchy which usually places marketing communications as the superordinate category (that is, superordinate to advertising which is but one element of the marketing communications 'mix'). Advertising itself is treated as a further sub division with its own family of texts, specialist journals and, in some university business schools, its own modules and courses.

2.5.2 Advertising and marketing communications: distinguished yet also integrated

This subdivision is reflected, anecdotally, in the mutual confusion which often persists between marketing communications managers who commission advertising campaigns, and agency account teams who design and plan the campaigns. Each

often feels that the other party doesn't understand what is required. Nevertheless, the importance of advertising for marketing management is widely, if often implicitly, acknowledged in the cited texts. Also noted above, the strategic and managerial utility of marking a logical distinction between advertising and other components of the marketing communications mix has been questioned on the grounds that marketing communications may have an 'integrated' character which renders distinctions and sub-divisions problematic (Shultz et al, 1994, Shultz and Kitchen, 1997). 'Integration' of marketing communications is the theme of the moment.

2.6.0 The relative neglect of intra-agency advertising development process: paradigmatic issues

The intra agency advertising process itself is not generally treated in detail as an intra-agency social process either in popular texts or as a notable research topic. The better texts do address the formation of creative advertising strategy (e.g. Shimp, 1997, pp.248-276) but do not focus on the dynamics of this process within the ad agency. This tendency may follow from the noted and criticised (Buttle, 1995, Elliott, 1996a) cognitive information processing tradition in the field. Dominant theoretical approaches circumscribe possible research questions and intra agency advertising development process as a focus of research and textual treatment has generally fallen outside the pre-eminent research paradigms of the field. A social constructionist discourse analytic purview offers a radical alternative to mainstream ways of generating insights into this critical aspect of marketing communications. The coherence and relevance of the main research question in this study should, it is suggested, be seen in the light of the methodological evolution of the various related fields and the potential theoretical enrichment offered by interdisciplinary approaches.

2.6.1 Advertising agency practice and functional integration

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Additionally, the disciplinary tendency to subdivide functions and split research agendas into these subdivided areas has resulted not only in an apparent disconnection which some promoters of the Integrated Marketing Communications agenda seek to point to. It has also been a feature within advertising agencies themselves that the various advertising development functions are distinguished rather than seen as a whole. This has had several corollaries, for example in the USA the role and usefulness of the planning function within advertising has been debated but frequently rejected by the major agencies (Fortini-Campbell et al, 1992). Typically, the 'planner' is a market researcher who assists the account team with consumer and market information when required. The importance of the planning function to advertising development, and the high status accorded to the planning role within account teams, is a major feature of advertising development philosophy at BMP DDB, one of the UK agencies which pioneered the function in the nineteen sixties.

2.7.0 Creative work in advertising development

One recurring theme in practitioner discourses of advertising concerns creativity and its role in effective advertising. Since considerations of creativity generally fall outside the structuralist/functionalist world scheme there are few serious attempts at researching or theorising it in marketing (communications) management. Notions of creativity in advertising constitute a loose conceptual framework which is commonly employed in professional practitioner orientated work and reflects the overriding concern with creativity in the practitioner discourse of the advertising industry (e.g. Feldwick, 1997, IPA, 1997, Saatchi and Saatchi, 1988, Hart, 1990, Runyon, 1984, Fletcher, 1996, Shimp, 1997, and for anti-creativity in advertising arguments Phillips, 1996, Moira, 1996). Clearly, creativity as a construct can in principle be operationalised and measured as if it were a physical entity like any other construct. However, the problems of inter-subjective verification usually prove insuperable for

this kind of positivist research. Given the orientation of this study, creativity is seen not as a quasi-entity but as a discursive construction which constitutes an 'interpretative repertoire' or linguistic resource within advertising practice. This theme is returned to in the empirical sections of this thesis, where the 'power of creativity' is postulated as one such resource among several through which creative advertising development is socially constructed at BMP.

2.7.1 Managing creativity in advertising

The management of advertising creativity as an intra-advertising agency process and as a hypothetical construct cutting across issues of consumer behaviour within marketing communications is, as noted above, relatively under-theorised in formal treatments (see Shimp, 1997, for a mainstream treatment, Bogart, 1995, a discussion and Kover et al, 1995, for one suggested research approach). Once again, this emphasis may reflect 'boundary work' or perceived disciplinary parameters, this time within the advertising industry itself. It is common for the talk of advertising professionals to draw upon discursive repertoires which position creativity as a specialist skill or, in some cases, as a metaphor for the best in advertising practice and design. Many creative professionals (that is, professionals in agencies with the designated job title of 'creative' person) are conceptually informed by the worlds of art, film and cultural studies, while many of those in managerial roles in account handling (account planners and account managers) draw on a somewhat differing set of linguistic and conceptual resources reflecting their perceptions of their role and professional concerns. Thus within agencies there is a notable tension between the creative point of view and the account managerial, strategic and planning points of view. The reluctance of authors to treat advertising process as a unitary entity serving strategic marketing communication ends may be the result partly of these uncertainties concerning disciplinary boundaries and, in turn, the differing communicative practices of creative and planning/managerial staff within agencies

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may exacerbate this uncertainty. Interestingly, the divide in academic marketing research between the technical, instrumental, administrative/managerial tendency, and the interpretative, critical tendency is somewhat reflected within agencies by a cultural divide between the 'creatives' (creative staff such as visualisers, copywriters) and the 'suits' (managerial staff such as account executives). Within many agencies the creatives are a rebellious force who view with suspicion the agency's attempts to corral them into instrumental ways of thinking.

2.7.2 Literature review: methodological trends in marketing research

The foregoing literature review has highlighted several notable features of research and theory development in marketing management and related fields. Firstly, there have been significant methodological trends, reflecting similar trends in other social scientific fields. In particular, the structuralist/functionalist paradigm and an associated emphasis on quantification and administrative instrumentality has proved enduringly popular, in marketing research as in other management fields. Such critique as has taken place has often sought to refine and improve existing models to further their instrumental rationality. As Brownlie et al (1994) have suggested, this kind of research has manifested itself within marketing with a concern with the 'pathology' of technical marketing systems. This genre of research has been criticised as 'well intentioned' but often politically naive and intellectually shallow' by some management researchers working from within a critical tradition (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, paraphrased from pp. 6 & 7, and also Morgan in Alvesson and Willmott, 1992).

2.7.3 Literature review: counterbalancing methodological and epistemological trends in related fields

While in, for example, mass media research, critical literary theory and psychology,

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critical perspectives have developed through sustained and highly visible arguments and debates over the last twenty years (see Corner et al, 1997, Appleby et al, 1996, and Fox and Prilleltensky, 1997 respectively), marketing management and marketing communications has been slower in assimilating methodological and epistemological pluralism. Nevertheless, there are distinct signs of a critical body of work emerging within marketing and its functional sub-fields. Brownlie et al (1994) posed the question of how to re-think marketing and Hunt (1994) suggested that more rigorous qualitative studies might further the cause of this re-thinking. Elliott (1996) has pointed to a 'postmodern turn' in marketing and cited Brown (1995) as a significant figure in this turn. Marketing communications has developed an order of epistemological pluralism reflected in, for example, Elliott (1996a) and Buttle (1991), while advertising and consumer research have also reflected aspects of post-modernist and post-structuralist epistemology and methodology in, for example, McCracken (1987), Elliot (1997), Cook (1992), Elliott et al (1995) and other authors cited above. It is clear that organisational management is a powerful cultural force that has heavily influenced the priorities and methods of research and theory development in management fields. Methodological debates and controversies have been as evident in marketing as in other functional management areas. For some authors marketing has been slower than some other functional management areas in assimilating countervailing methodologies and epistemologies (e.g. Brownlie et al, 1994, Morgan, 1992, Arndt, 1985). Nonetheless, marketing management and in particular its related empirical areas of marketing communications, advertising and consumer research have begun to incorporate perspectives from alternative research traditions to reflect well established developments in other fields of social research and theory.

2.7.4 Meanings, semiotics and marketing communications

Semiotics has been an influential source of alternative conceptualisations of

marketing communications. There has been a great deal of interest in advertising and marketing from semioticians (e.g. Sherry, 1987, Umiker-Sebeok, 1987). For Sebeok (1991), marketing messages such as advertisements are 'strings of signs' (p.146). Wernick (1991) describes a view of semiotics on the boundary of cultural, historical and cultural analysis. Cook's (1992) work on advertising as a contemporary discourse form reflects this concern with advertising as a cultural product and echoes post-modern epistemological themes such as the indeterminacy of the text and the contested character of meaning. Mainstream marketing communications texts have begun to devote some space to questions of meaning in relation to marketing communications (e.g. Shimp, 1997, Smith, 1995). However, rather than clearly problematising the meanings of marketing communications messages, these brief acknowledgements of striking trends in communications methodology are conflated with the popular instrumentalist information processing models of communication.

2.8.0 Methodological issues: the case for qualitative research in marketing

It has been suggested above that the management of the (creative) advertising development process within advertising agencies may have been relatively neglected as a research topic in academic marketing management texts partly because of perceived disciplinary boundaries and logical distinctions between the fields of marketing management, marketing communications and the various components of the communications mix. Conflated with this issue are methodological issues concerning the methods of research and the governing philosophies or metatheories of research pre-eminent in the various research traditions and the roles these might have played in circumscribing the kinds of research question which may be considered relevant, coherent or important in each field.

Some of the references cited above have suggested that marketing in general might benefit from more and better qualitative studies. The following section discusses

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some of the issues arising from the uses of qualitative research for marketing and related fields.

2.8.1 Qualitative research in marketing and related empirical domains

It has been noted above that, notwithstanding calls for more and better qualitative research in marketing (e.g. Hunt, 1994) the domain still lacks a well defined tradition of qualitative empirical work. Qualitative research in general seeks insights into the quality of peoples' experience rather than seeking to delineate causal relationships (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991, Banister et al, 1994). Among other noted features, qualitative research principles include a need for reflexivity on the part of the researcher (Banister et al, 1994, Easterby Smith et al, 1991). That is, unlike research in the objectivist tradition, qualitative research demands that the researcher makes explicit a critical engagement with his/her own assumptions. The researcher is seen as part of the research process. In the ontology of qualitative research, meanings are usually the data unit rather than operationalised and measured hypothetical constructs (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991). It is often suggested that qualitative research is more suited to exploratory research in which the research question concerns a general problem area, rather than hypothesis testing. Qualitative research has many possible guiding epistemologies (of which social constructionism is one such). It (i.e. qualitative research) is often used for pragmatic reasons where, for example, the research problem is not well defined, where constructs are tentative and difficult to operationalise, and where the problem is not open to a discourse of explanation which draws on the positivist/determinist resource of direct causal effects. As a set of methods for gathering and interpreting empirical data, qualitative research (including, for example, depth interviews, focus groups, projective techniques) is well established within the market research and advertising industries themselves (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991, p. 42, Jobber and Horgan, 1987) and is also increasingly used in academic social research. It places less emphasis on quantification and more

on the reflexive interpretation of data by the researcher.

2.8.2 Sampling and data gathering in qualitative research

Hunt (1994) argues that one possible reason for the shortage of qualitative work in marketing may be the difficulty it presents in inter-subjective verification. In particular, researchers in the structuralist/functionalist tradition are used to looking at large data sets from which propositions are induced and probabilities assigned. The relatively small samples in qualitative research may sometimes present a barrier to its acceptance. However, the sampling issues in qualitative research are straightforward. Sampling is rarely random in qualitative research. The main criterion for sampling in qualitative research design is the richness and relevance of the data that will be generated in terms of its appropriateness for the problem being investigated (Morgan and Smircich, 1980, in Easterby-Smith et al, 1991, p.41). In qualitative field work the researcher makes choices based on what is observed to select the most relevant and useful data sets. In the present case, it was felt that the depth interview conducted within the advertising agency over an intense period of field work would be the most suitable main primary data focus. In qualitative research the peripheral or supplementary data assumes great importance as a possible source of ethnomethodological insight informing the interpretation of the data. The present research study, for example, utilised a large amount of supplementary primary and secondary data including archive material, case histories, pilot interviews held outside the agency, informal discussions, phone calls and visits, additional interviews held at other agencies, and documentary material from other agencies (e.g. AMV BBDO).

2.8.3 The qualitative/quantitative dichotomy: significant but overplayed

Given the nature of the research problem, the metatheoretical framework which informed the development of the problem and of method, and the nature of activity

within an advertising agency, a qualitative research approach was decided upon with recorded and transcribed depth interviews constituting the main source of primary data. Qualitative research methods are well established in social science and in market research and the use of a qualitative approach in this case seems not inappropriate given the exploratory character of the problem within an inter-disciplinary substantive empirical framework. Hunt (1994) points out that marketing could do with more qualitative studies provided they are rigorously theoretically grounded. In the present case the research design can be categorised as qualitative. However, more than this needs to be said since the qualitative/quantitative dichotomy presupposes that the extent or degree of quantification is a defining feature of social research. It can be argued that characterising research designs as one or the other misses the point. Indeed, the agenda of quantification in marketing is reinforced by such a characterisation. Most research entails an element of both and all social research should address significant problems in rigorous ways which yield insight. Hence, while this study is positioned partly in terms of the call within marketing for more qualitative studies, it also suggests that qualitative research per se does not address the perceived shortcomings of mainstream marketing research. The broader methodological framework is all important and in this case a discourse analytic methodology framed within a social constructionist ontology is offered up as a form of address to general theoretical and methodological debates within marketing. Therefore, given this aspect of the research problematic, it is appropriate to introduce some major elements and themes of social constructionist thought in order to set the broad context theoretical context for the study.

2.9.0 Social constructionism: informing themes and issues in a complex theoretical tradition

Social constructionism in general is a position in social theory which has been developed extensively over thirty years. The main informing text in sociology is

often stated to be that of Berger and Luckmann, (1966). However, it is also noted that there is a great deal of confusion in the field concerning terminology and origins (e.g. Burningham, 1998). As Velody (1994) notes,

"..While social constructionism has become a key term in sociological analysis, just what it signified remains an open question, and a clear formulation of its general usage, and indeed of its lineage, is yet to be written." (Velody, 1994, p.82, in Burningham, 1998).

This thesis attempts to discuss social constructionism in the broadest possible terms in order to set the terms of reference for the discourse analytic empirical analysis undertaken later. As Burningham (1998) and Velody (1994) note, it (social constructionism) is a broad and diverse movement in social theory which is used as a rationale for a wide range of research approaches besides the approach preferred in the present study. The brand of social constructionism outlined in this study leans most heavily on that developed in discursive psychology and utilised in approaches to discourse analysis within psychology (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Potter, 1998, application in marketing, Elliott, 1996). The rationale offered below and in the next chapter will attempt to explain why the term social constructionism is used here and what is usually meant by it.

2.9.1 The constructed character of social worlds: Berger and Luckmann's contribution

Berger and Luckmann's (1966) work is discussed at more length in the next chapter, but for the moment it is important to state that their book *The Social Construction of Reality* was highly influential in popularising the fundamental ontological social constructionist position, namely that social worlds are created by 'social arrangements and practices' (Potter, 1998, p.12) and not by, as it were, unseen forces of nature. There are various features of Berger and Luckmann's (1966) book which have been contested by later researchers in the social constructionist tradition.

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Potter (1998) mentions a number of these (on page 13), pointing out that in fairness, Berger and Luckmann's (1966) book was written to open up the ontological space for social constructionism, and was not intended to be a methodological handbook. In particular, Potter (1998) takes issue with the cognitivism he sees as being a feature of the book. Berger and Luckmann (1966) follow a phenomenological line of argument which runs close to subjectivism. Potter's (1988) point is that the phenomenological perspective does not capture the social character of meaning making. For latter day discursive psychologists our inner social worlds of mentality and cognition are constructed from material which is out there in the social world. Potter (1998) is arguing that, in a sense, Berger and Luckmann's (1966) position, influential as it was, did not go far enough.

2.9.2 Meaning: the mutualist position

A key assumption of discourse analysts in the social constructionist tradition concerns the ways in which meanings are constituted through linguistic practice. This assumption draws upon a mutualist theory of meaning (Still and Good, 1992). Mutualism is important because, on the cognitivist theory of meaning, words are referents for hidden private mental events. Meaning is constructed privately through cognitive processes and language can offer descriptions of these 'real' cognitive processes. The cognitive construction of meaning is socially mediated in the sense that social conditions inform cognitive processes, for example in the 'group influence' tradition of post war experimental psychology. However, this tendency for the social world to influence cognition is often described as social 'constructivism'. Crucially, the construction of meaning remains an essentially private, cognitive process which is mediated by the social environment. Social constructionism, on the other hand, usually holds that meaning is a social construction in a more profound sense than this. On this view our cognitive processes cannot be clearly distinguished from our interaction with the social world. In mutualism, meaning is constituted

through language in the sense that we draw meanings from the linguistic and other communicative practices of our social worlds. In passing, this does not necessarily imply a deterministic metaphysic, as in, for example, structuralist sociology. We can be said to possess autonomy and agency in the sense that we can select certain discourses and suppress others in order to accomplish our plans and intentions. So Mutualism holds that meaning is a joint social construction as opposed to a private cognitive construction. Within marketing, Elliott (1997) has been responsible for making this point, using examples from advertising (e.g. Elliott, et al, 1995), and communicated marketing brands (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1995). Elliott's (1997) mutualism has critical implications for marketing.

2.9.3 The research design located in a well developed interpretative research tradition

While the research design of this study is relatively novel in mainstream marketing management, it is grounded in very well developed general traditions of social research, some of which are interpreted and outlined with regard to management research by Easterby-Smith et al (1991). For example, these authors refer to Habermas (1970) in pointing to a trend in interpretative sociology which sought to counter what was seen as the 'value laden' enterprise of the positivist influenced research paradigms. Interpretative methods informed by a self-conscious researcher reflexivity were seen by some authors as adding a reflexive dimension to social research, a dimension which tended to be eschewed in the positivist tradition. Easterby-Smith et al (1991, p.25) also offer a schematic of ontological assumptions in social research which they derive from work by Morgan and Smircich (1980). On this schematic, the present study sits in the 'social constructionist' category on a continuum of ontological positions. The application more broadly of qualitative methodologies in management research is seen as having various antecedents in social research (e.g. Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, and overview in Banister et al, 1994).

Finally, Easterby-Smith et al (1991) refer to Burrell and Morgan (1979) who delineate three levels of paradigmatic assumption: the philosophical (or ontological) level, the social (or methodological) level, and the technical (operational/empirical) level. In terms of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) division, this study seeks to frame itself within a broadly social constructionist ontology of social research which is consistent with the application of qualitative methodological approaches drawn from discursive psychology (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Drawing on this theoretical background the research problematisation rationale can be operationalised in terms of an empirical study focussing on the language and discourse of senior advertising development professionals.

2.9.4 The turn to discourse in social constructionist social psychology

This thesis describes a discourse analytic study which is grounded in a social constructionist ontology. Some early mention of the development of discourse analytic approaches as part of the social constructionist tradition are appropriate to further establish the theoretical framework. Within psychology, the dominance of the cognitivist paradigm since the sixties has fragmented into a pluralist methodological situation in the domain (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Fox and Prilleltensky, 1997, Bayer and Shotter (eds) 1998). A significant strand of this move towards methodological pluralism has derived from the turn to discourse as a focus of attention in psychological research. This turn to discourse is seen as a significant feature of the social constructionist 'movement' in social psychology (Gergen, 1985). The movement embraces a variety of methodological positions regarding research approaches to discourse (Banister et al, 1994, Harre and Stearns, 1995, Harre and Gillett, 1994, Bruner, 1990, Edwards and Potter, 1992, Miller and Hoogstra, 1992). In particular, the theme that language *does* things as well as *say* things was taken up in speech-act philosophy by Austin (1962) and developed by social researchers interested in capturing the constitutive character of language in social research.

2.9.5 The 'illocutionary' force of language in social constructionist research

Language is a primary feature of discourse and is seen as a "tool for action, not an abstract calculus fleshed out in sound" (Harre and Stearns 1995). Language is not, on this view, merely a neutral medium through which we can communicate concepts. It has other communicative properties which are manifested in discourse. A major feature of this complexity is the notion that words have an "illocutionary force" (Goffman, 1959, Harre and Gillett, 1994) in the sense that they are instrumental in the accomplishment of social acts. That is, in Austin's (1962) phrase, words and language do things as well as say things. The language we use can, for example, be used to accomplish presentations of self (Wetherell and Maybin, 1996), and in so doing may sustain power relations and social roles (Wetherell, 1996). Our linguistic practices may be significant in the way we accomplish things to ourselves in using forms of words to sustain narratives or stories with which we constitute and maintain meanings relating to our sense of personal and social identity (Billig, 1987, Mauss, 1985, Gergen, 1991, Wetherell, 1996). In talking about our worlds we draw on meanings which are extant in social life with which to reconstitute our senses of selfhood. On this view, when professionals articulate aspects of their working life their words cannot be taken merely as referents to 'real' events, roles and processes, but must crucially be seen as constitutive of those events roles and processes. In terms of discourse analysis this implies a focus on the *variability* in descriptions, the *structures* of discourse and the *functions* that may be served by particular discursive repertoires or resources. Thus a primary role of discourse analytic research, as described by Potter and Wetherell (1987), can be to induce the structures that seem to characterise particular forms of discourse and to seek to interpret the functions that these may serve for the participants.

2.9.6 The turn to discourse in psychology: theoretical antecedents

Potter and Wetherell (1987), authors of perhaps the definitive text on discourse analytic psychological research in the social constructionist tradition, describe the turn to discourse in social psychology in terms of a trajectory of development which shifts in emphasis from a broadly positivist scientific orientation to one influenced variously by the continental tradition of phenomenological philosophy, the social scientific tradition of ethnomethodology, speech act theory in linguistic philosophy, and semiotics. They and other discursive or discourse analytic psychologists (e.g. Edwards and Potter, 1992), refer to Garfinkel (1967), Austin (1962) and de Saussure (1974) respectively as particular influences in this trajectory. The scientific psychological tradition Potter and Wetherell (1987) describe is one in which hypothetical constructs (group influence, attribution, attitude, cognitive processes, personality, intelligence) have been operationalised, statistically measured and verified on positivist verification criteria. This tradition, still pre-eminent in North America and highly influential in the UK, has been responded to by various social constructionist positions. In particular, the social constructionist movement in social psychology has challenged what it has seen as the central pillars of the positive research tradition in psychology, especially the assumptions that words necessarily signify mental entities, that there is a 'deep structure' of reality which can be inferred from empirical observation and measurement, that meaning is a private, cognitive construction and, more generally, that social life is composed of determined and direct causal relationships. These concerns raise the issue of the role of language in social life. As Harre and Stearns (1995) comment,

> "..the task of the new psychology cannot be to test hypotheses about the existence, nature or workings of hidden cognitive mechanisms. Rather it must be to try to reveal the structure of those discursive productions in which psychological phenomena are immanent and to discover how the various cognitive skills required to accomplish the tasks that psychology studies are acquired, developed, integrated and employed". (Harre and Stearns, 1995, p.2).

Thus social constructionist social psychology in its tradition in psychology often

manifests under a label of 'discursive psychology' (Burr, 1995, Harre and Stearns, 1995). The 'discursive psychology' label may imply very specific prescriptions on empirical data gathering method and analysis for some schools of discourse analysis, which include conversation analysts (references in Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Banister et al, 1995). However, one common thread among these approaches is a concern for language as a major feature in the constitution of social life.

2.10.0 Discourse and language: definitional issues

As mentioned above, the use of the term 'discourse' in social psychology can mean very specific things regarding methodological techniques and metatheoretical assumptions to particular authors (Banister et al, 1994) but in each the place of language in the constitution of social life is central. Discourse is a difficult term to define conceptually and has been used in very different ways by different authors. On commonly known usage is the Foucauldian sense of a discourse being a linguistic practice which represents a certain set of social relations. Thus people may employ discourses of, say, traditional microeconomics in order to position themselves rhetorically in a senior power relation over others in the context of industrial relations (e.g. "If I give you this pay rise you'll be doing others out of a job"). The usage more commonly employed in discourse analytic approaches is related but not quite the same. Discourse in a more general sense is 'a system of statements which construct an object' (Parker, 1992, p.5, in Burr, 1995, p.48, and Elliott, 1996). Discourse is also described as anything which can be described, i.e. can be represented as text, as in for example advertisements which can be seen as text in context (in Cook, 1992). Discourse forms are ways of representing the world and 'discourse' is a loose yet penetrating social constructionist concept.

2.10.1 'Discourse' and 'interpretative repertoires'

In psychological approaches to discourse analysis, discourse carries the general sense of a series of statements which construct an object. Interviews transcribed into textual representation are forms of discourse, while the ways that people go about discursive construction are picked apart and analysed by discourse analysis. The term 'interpretative repertoire' is used by discursive psychologists to designate the kinds of linguistic practices which people employ in order to substantiate their positions, realise their plans and intentions, position themselves in a power relation and so on. So for most discourse analysts working within the social constructionist tradition in social psychology, 'discourse' is the general object of their interest while 'interpretative repertoires' are the specific units of data with which people construct and recreate the meanings in their social world. The notion of discourse is discussed further in chapter two but it is also used to mean anything which can be described or reduced to some form of text. Language as a formal communicative system is a significant element of discourse.

2.11.0 Social constructionism as research paradigm: summary issues

Some of the main ontological and methodological positions of this study have been introduced above in terms of a trajectory of theoretical development manifested significantly in discursive psychology. Social constructionism is thus seen as a broad category of metatheoretical orientation in social research which places particular emphasis on the role of language in the constitution of meaning through discourse. The position adopted here takes broad methodological principles from Potter and Wetherell (1987) and a metatheoretical orientation from Harre (1998). This metatheoertical orientation notes that discursive psychology sustains the dual ontological position that a) social life is socially constituted through discourse and b) that this discursive construction of social life can have an agentive character in the sense that individuals are said to manifest their plans and intentions through discourse. The research approach described above which is consistent with this

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ontology of social life usually, though not exclusively, entails a primarily qualitative engagement with the language of social life in all its communicative complexity.

2.12.0 Chapter summary

Chapter two has sought to elaborate upon the research problematisation rationale by grounding its major premises from a wide ranging literature review. A review of texts and research papers in marketing management set the broader substantive context for the study. Marketing, as a managed organisational function, has evolved into a broad and diverse field of research, theory and practice. It has, as Morgan (1992) points out, assumed a powerful cultural meaning as a discourse which legitimises certain organisational norms, priorities and relations. Thus the underlying marketing management narrative of marketing management as technical discipline assisted and supported by science, may be only one possible version of the story. Hunt (1994) draws attention to marketing's applied character which circumscribes the research agenda of marketing's institutions. Authoritative voices within marketing academia point to a perceived imbalance between quantitative and qualitative, positivist and interpretative, 'methodological monolithicism' and methodological pluralism, intra-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary, and administrative/managerialist and critical, research. These debates are reflected in marketing's sub-domains, including that of marketing communications. The review outlined some of these live and continuing debates and particularly noted calls for rigorous and theoretically grounded qualitative studies to generate new insights for practice and theory development in the field.

The chapter then turned to an initial consideration of social constructionism as a social research ontology which has been particularly well developed in social psychology. This influential and wide ranging intellectual tradition has been adapted in social psychology by researchers in the discourse analytic tradition. Social

constructionism, in a broad sense, has been influential in many social scientific and organisational research fields but not, as yet, in marketing. Discourse analytic method, framed within a social constructionist ontology, is positioned in this thesis as a form of address to some of the critical calls for 're-thinking' in marketing.

Chapter two has attempted to substantiate the research problematic introduced in chapter one. It has drawn on an eclectic review of published developments in marketing management, marketing research, marketing communications, advertising, consumer research and social psychology to establish some broad themes. Firstly, it sought to substantiate the suggestion that studies of advertising are under-represented in marketing research, and that consideration of advertising development is under represented in marketing management and related domains in texts and theory. Secondly, it drew on debates within marketing theory to substantiate the position that marketing research and theory development is under-represented by research studies and theoretical developments informed by the social constructionist ontology and the discourse analytic methodology. Finally, the chapter drew selectively on sources in social constructionist theory and discursive psychology in order to initially set out the major assumptions and procedures entailed in this research design.

Chapter three will broaden the theoretical context to examine more closely the research traditions which inform discourse analysis. In particular it will trace some major developments in the turn to language and discourse in social constructionist social research.

CHAPTER THREE

Eclectic developments in social constructionist thought: the turn towards language and discourse in social research

Chapter outline: this chapter broadens the methodological perspective in order to draw out some of the primary intellectual themes and research traditions which inform the chosen approach to the empirical analysis. Social constructionist thought has a very diverse genealogy. Some features of this genealogy are referred to, most notably influences from speech-act theory, ethnomethodology, post-structuralism and semiotics. These eclectic influences are framed within broader sociological debates concerning the nature of science and of social scientific study. The aim of the chapter is to show that the diverse social constructionist tradition converges thematically in discourse analytic methodology and grounds that methodology in a varied yet coherent and well established ontological framework.

3.0.0 Introduction: the story so far.....

Chapters one and two have introduced the research problematic and outlined discourse analysis as the methodological approach which will operationalise this problematic in the present study. The method of discourse analysis has been framed within a social constructionist ontology. The review of literature in chapter two indicated a relative neglect of advertising development within the advertising agency as a substantive topic within marketing management and marketing communications texts and research. This relative neglect was, it was suggested, bound up with the way that research philosophy informs the choice and design of research questions. The review also pointed to theoretical and methodological debates within marketing research which include various calls for greater methodological ('paradigmatic') pluralism in marketing research and theory building (Arndt, 1985), more rigorous

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qualitative studies (Hunt 1994), and more studies which seek to uncover the micropolitics of marketing phenomena (Morgan, 1992). Discourse analysis has been put forward as a possible response to some of these calls as a useful and hitherto relatively novel methodological approach to research within marketing (Elliott, 1996, Morgan, 1992). Discourse analysis has been outlined in chapters one and two as a significant methodological development within social psychology (see for example Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Harre and Stearns, 1995). Discourse analysis is seen as an 'advance on hermeneutics' (Elliott, 1996) and a development of the interpretative paradigm of social research within marketing (Morgan, 1992, drawing on Burrell and Morgan, 1979). It is seen by discourse analysts (e.g. Potter, 1998) as a methodological development of the social constructionist ontological tradition deriving notably from Berger and Luckmann (1966).

3.0.1 Social constructionism: a loose but influential theme in social research

Social constructionism is a general term that is used to describes a thread of commonality between disparate developments in social science (Burr, 1995). Social constructionism has been seen as an influential 'movement' within social psychology (Gergen, 1985). It is a recurring touchstone theme in critical perspectives on management research (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). One manifestation of social constructionist thought, and the main one informing the methodological basis of this study, is discourse analysis as it has evolved within psychology (as in Potter and Wetherell, 1987, and Potter, 1998). This chapter attempts to trace some developments of social constructionism in psychology and extant fields of social research in order to demonstrate its great significance and wide influence.

3.1.0 Social constructionism and psychology: introduction

As noted in chapter two, Velody (1994) and Burningham (1998) suggest that a

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complete intellectual history of social constructionism and its influence in social research has not yet been attempted, perhaps because of its great diversity. According to one leading discourse analytic psychologist, Jonathan Potter (1998), Berger and Luckmann's (1966) classic book, *The Social Construction of Reality*, was highly significant in establishing processes of social construction as a 'central topic of study' (Potter, 1998, p. 12). Potter (1998) criticises Berger and Luckmann's (1966) approach on several grounds. One of these is that their brand of social constructionism does not go far enough in that it remains an essentially phenomenological perspective which regards meaning-making to be a private, cognitive activity. Latter day discursive psychologists regard our mental worlds of meaning as thoroughgoing social constructions: we draw on discourses available out there in the social world in order to construct our individual senses of meaning and identity. Notwithstanding the criticisms that Berger and Luckmann (1966) do not provide a complete philosophical account and methodological demonstration of social construction (which, as Potter (1988) admits, their book did not in any case set out to do) they did establish a theme in social research which has developed into many differing trajectories of research.

3.1.1 The seminal contribution of Berger and Luckmann (1966)

Berger and Luckmann (1966) described a process whereby social life is created and sustained by people through their social practices. The radical implications of this position are only apparent when it is contrasted with the 'natural scientific' methodological positions which characterised much sociology prior to this (see below). The social constructionist movement in social research cannot be well understood without setting it in this historical context. Berger and Luckmann's (1966) assertion that social life is constituted by the social practices of people seems unremarkable unless set against the methodological doctrine that social life is caused by a structure of reality which subsists independently of social life itself. The

meaning of social constructionism is constructed partly through its relation to other methodological narratives obtaining in extant fields of thought.

3.1.2 Berger and Luckman's central thesis

For Berger and Luckman (1966), people 'externalise' when they act upon the world, for example (to borrow aspects of an example from Burr, (1995)), when a person writes a story in a book. The idea for the book, in the form of a written text, then becomes an object of consciousness for other people. In this sense, as an object of consciousness, an idea (in this case in the form of a book) has assumed a character of 'out thereness', that is, it can be spoken about by using the same grammar as that used to describe physical objects. Of course, a book is a physical object, but in this sense all books are pretty much the same. To speak of *a* book is, on this analysis, to objectify a set of ideas expressed in words. The ideas in a book are clearly a mixture of, say, descriptions of a place, descriptions of emotions, perhaps first person accounts of emotions, reports of dialogue and so on, which together form a narrative text which tells some sort of story. This complexity can be labelled and spoken of as an objectified unity: a 'book'. The concept of the book can then become 'internalised' as part of someone's consciousness. So social practices, such as writing, constitute social realities which are objectified and internalised as concepts. In part, this thesis might be seen as a corrective to the reification that is impossible to avoid in social scientific discourse. Treating conceptual abstractions as if they were material objects may be a precondition of discourse, but it is a condition of reflexivity to be aware of the assumptions being made in discourses. Within the discourse of information processing psychology, the nature of inner mental entities is not held up for critical examination: the discourse of cognitivism suppresses debate concerning the ontological status of entities such as 'attitude', 'memory' and so on. Berger and Luckmann's (1966) contribution may be that they pointed out the dangers of reification in social psychological discourse.

3.1.3 Social research: ontology and epistemology

Berger and Luckmann's (1966) thesis crystallised a general theme which was controversial then and still remains a source of debate: what should social life be and how might it be described? Is there a method of natural science and, if so, can this codified and applied as an all-purpose epistemology for all social research? What is social knowledge knowledge of? These and related issues formed the backdrop to Berger and Luckmann's (1966) work and, arguably, mirror debates in marketing and management research which go on today (as they do in psychology). The cudgels of social constructionism were taken up in social psychology by, for example, Harre and Secord, (1972), and Brown, (1973), to be followed by many others.

3.1.4 SSK and marketing

As noted, social constructionist arguments have developed against a backdrop of debates in the sociology of scientific knowledge (SSK). In the seventies, historians and philosophers of scientific knowledge drew on SSK formulations to question the naive empiricist story of scientific progress (e.g. Merton, 1970, Kuhn, 1970, Lakatos, 1970, Feyerabend, 1975, discussion in Chalmers, 1978). These debates were mirrored by debates within marketing among a relatively small number of authors (in particular by Hunt, 1991, O'Shaugnessy, 1992, Anderson, 1983, commentary in Kavanagh, 1994). Some of the debates within marketing reflected critical responses to Kuhn (1970) and Feyerabend (1975) from within the scientific community. These responses took the relativistic stance towards scientific knowledge taken by these authors as impugning the integrity of science and scientists. Feyerabend's (1975) 'anything goes' characterisation of scientific 'method', and Kuhn's (1970) argument that science carries on in 'normal' vein within implicit and unquestioned methodological and epistemological parameters, seemed a challenge to scientists' claims of objectivity, detachment and rigour. The issues raised by SSK perspectives

were sometimes caricatured as relativist versus realist positions. The relativist/realist dichotomy was reflected somewhat in debates in marketing theory by Hunt (1991) and Anderson (1983).

3.1.5 SSK and this thesis

Clearly, these debates are too wide ranging to do justice to them in a chapter. However, several important themes are evident which have direct bearing on this thesis. Firstly, the social constructionist ontological position, insofar as it presented a strong challenge to conceptualisations of naive empiricism in science, changed the terms of the social scientific debate. SSK turned from an engagement with the conceptual coherence of scientific claims to a consideration of their sociological coherence. As Potter (1998) puts it, the claims of scientists were placed in context as parts in a 'web of belief' and the 'crucial role of scientific community and practice' (p.23) was recognised. Secondly, the preconditions were established for the later turn to language and discourse. A third significant matter is that these debates in science were picked up by a small but significant group of marketing researchers who showed that marketing can be subject to just the same kinds of debate as other domains of knowledge.

However, SSK and methodological debates and controversies continue. One way of possibly clarifying some of the major issues for this thesis might be to go back to some fundamental issues in the debate and to look at them in the context of developments and controversies in sociology. These fundamental issues include the mythical character of scientific 'method', the rhetorical nature of scientific reporting and the possibility of 'objectivity' in scientific observation.

3.2.0 The broader debate: scientific investigation of the social world

Berger and Luckmann (1966) positioned their thesis against a prevailing orthodoxy of social scientific method. This orthodoxy was perhaps exemplified by the communications researcher, Larzersfeld (1941). Sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959) quotes Larzarsfeld (1941) as one of the more sophisticated defenders of the position that sociology should be the source of methodological bases for all the social sciences, and that this methodological position should be modelled on a narrative of the 'natural scientific' method of physics.

3.2.1 Sociology and 'natural' science: Giddens on method

The characteristics of this model of 'natural science' are still debated in social science (see Medawar, 1963, for a discussion). Many researchers adopt conventions of natural scientific reporting and terminology while not necessarily holding an orthodox position on realism, objectivism, empiricism and the other positions usually associated with the positivist/structuralist/functionalist paradigm (s) in the humanities and social sciences which borrow resources and conceptual vocabularies from conventional models of natural science. For present purposes, then, it is suggested that a perceived over reliance on a model of natural science in social scientific research has been a source of disquiet to some social theorists. For Giddens (1982),

> "..those who have wanted to model sociology upon natural science, hoping to discover universal laws of social conduct, have tended to sever sociology from history..In breaking with such views, we have to grasp how history is made through the active involvements and struggles of human beings, and yet at the same time both forms those human beings and produces outcomes they neither intend not foresee". (Giddens, 1982, p. 156).

This statement reverberates with Gidden's (1993) persistent discussions on structure versus agency in social life, the need for social explanation to take account both of the structures, ideologies and institutions which frame consciousness and circumscribe social life, and also of the lived experience of autonomy and agency.

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Forms of social explanation which delineate the structures of social life may negate the phenomenology of the individual, while subjectivist accounts of the world in themselves are denials of the social character of individuation. In other words, Giddens (1993) argues for forms of sociological explanation which can embrace both the structural, and the agentive.

3.2.2 C. Wright Mills and the 'sociological imagination'

For prominent sociologist C. Wright Mills (1959), sociology should expand and excite the imagination of the researcher and should point to an expansion of the possibilities for human beings. He argues that a model of 'natural science' does not further the interests of sociology in these respects. Further, he argues that there is no 'scientific method' as such and quotes physicists in support of this (e.g. Beck, 1957).

> "Contemporary epistemologists have tended to take their signals from what they believe to be the methods of modern physics." (Mills, 1959, p.58).

He also asserts that,

> "This model of research is largely an epistemological construction; within the social sciences, its most decisive result has been a sort of methodological inhibition. By this I mean that the kinds of problems that will be taken up and the way in which they are formulated are quite severely limited by The Scientific Method. Methodology, in short, seems to determine the problems." (Mills, 1959, p. 57).

Mills (1959) argues that this focus on a supreme scientific method which in and of itself generates true empirical knowledge is a form of 'methodological inhibition', inhibiting the imagination of the sociologist and the possibilities for social research. This concern with a mythical model of natural science in social science, and the opposing arguments articulated by, for example, Larzarsfeld and Rosenberg (1955)

which defend this epistemology, form the background to the development of social constructionism in social science.

3.2.3 Objectivism and natural science methodology

One of the general arguments upon which social constructionism turns concerns the inevitable involvement of the researcher in his or her own subject matter. This principle clearly runs counter to the assumption of the natural science paradigm that the researcher stands outside the object of study. Giddens (1982) argues that,

> "Sociology, together with the social sciences in general, is inherently and inescapably part of the 'subject-matter' it seeks to comprehend". (Giddens, 1982, p. 156).

This position clearly implies that the researcher who is studying social life cannot stand outside social life itself. However, it remains is axiomatic in many discourses of 'natural' scientific social research that researcher 'bias' is to be eliminated, i.e. that research should and can be depopulated. The goal of positive scientific research is to airbrush the researcher out of the picture in the interests of 'depopulating' the research (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991, Billig, 1998). 'Objectivity' can be seen as a cipher for scientism and a major resource of natural, and social, scientific rhetoric (Billig, 1998). Habermas (1970) seems to pursue a broadly related theme in arguing that interpretative social scientific research permits forms of reflexivity which acknowledge the values implicit in social research, while structuralist/functionalist approaches tend to adopt a rhetorical denial of the role of value and subjectivity in research. But for some social theorists, objectivity in social research is a red herring. For Giddens, sociology must satisfy three imaginative criteria:

> "..these forms of the sociological imagination involve an historical, an anthropological, and a critical sensitivity". (Giddens, 1982, p. 13).

Giddens (1982) very clearly indicates a position in which the researcher does not stand apart from the objects of research as a neutral, scientific observer. The researcher is, Giddens (1982) seems to imply, intimately implicated in the research enterprise and must seek to generate forms of explanation which offer rich interpretations of social life. Equally clearly, a naive 'natural scientific' model which seeks statistical relationships between variables may not in itself generate such rich forms of sociological explanation. For Giddens (1982) and Mills (1959), the vocabulary of natural scientific investigation (including notions of 'objectivity', 'measurement', 'replicability', 'verification') does not sit easily with the primary tasks of sociological research which are to excite the sociological imagination and realise new forms of explanation and new possibilities for human action. Furthermore, as Habermas (1970) points out, such a scientistic vocabulary may prevent a balanced consideration of the value judgements and political relations implicit in social research.

3.3.0 Social constructionism as a turning away from the rhetoric of 'natural' science in social research: Kuhn and 'paradigm change'

Social constructionism, then, has intellectual antecedents in a reaction to epistemology and social scientific method as conceived by sociologists influenced by a model of natural scientific investigation. Philosophers of knowledge and of science have alluded to this turn away from notions of Baconian science. Scientific (and social-scientific) knowledge is, in this tradition, represented not in terms of a build up of facts confirmed by experiments and observation, but as a series of 'language games' (to adapt Wittegenstein's (1953) term) played out within and between paradigms of (differing) epistemological assumptions (Kuhn, 1970). For Kuhn (1970) science proceeded on the basis of (often tacit) assumptions which set the parameters for scientific work until a revolution or paradigm change was instigated (such as those of a Galileo or a Newton) which overturned one set of paradigmatic

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assumptions for another. Kuhn's (1970) portrayal of science as a sociological process rather than one that stands outside of sociology was controversial at the time (and still is in some scientific quarters) but it radically changed the popular terms of reference for philosophy of science (discussion in Chalmers 1978). Social constructionist themes might collectively be viewed as a paradigm change in social research which supplants, or at least rejects and offers an alternative paradigm to, the discourse of 'natural science' methodology for social research.

3.3.1 Scientific knowledge and hermeneutics

Other philosophers of knowledge have re-examined the notion of scientific knowledge. For example Warnke (1987) alludes to Habermas's (1970) assessment of the value of hermeneutics as an alternative to positivistic approaches as a logic of social science. For Warnke (1987) the value of a hermeneutic or interpretative framework for understanding scientific knowledge rests upon a notion of 'the situatedness of all understanding' (Warnke, p.108).

> "Forms of scientific knowledge themselves constitute traditions:...To this extent all understanding or observation of an object-domain involves a pre-judgement in terms of a particular interpretive "paradigm" or set of prejudices...it follows that there can be no observation of "facts" or confirmation of theoretical hypotheses that is neutral or objective in the sense for which positivism searches since there is no observation or confirmation that is not conditioned by tradition..of course, this hermeneutic insight into the situated aspect of scientific analysis has been echoed by Anglo-American philosophers coming out of the empiricist tradition...such theorists as Alasdair MacIntyre, Peter Winch and Charles Taylor emphasize instead the situated character of social scientific understanding inasmuch as it constitutes what Winch, following Wittgenstein, calls a "language game" and what Taylor refers to as a "semantic field". (Warnke, 1987, p. 109).

This lengthy quote is offered to further indicate that the move away from a naive empiricist model of knowledge generation and towards an emphasis on the socially

and culturally situated character of knowledge generation is a well established theme in the philosophy of social science.

3.3.2 Gidden's 'double hermeneutic'

For Giddens (1993) social science is especially characterised by a 'double hermeneutic'. The social scientific knowledge generation language-game or 'form of life' seeks to understand another language-game/form of life in its own terms. So social science, in its historically, socially and culturally situated character, has the task of understanding unfamiliar forms of life then translating them in the terms of another (social scientific) form of life. Clearly, implicit in this double-hermeneutic is an unequivocal rejection of the notion of knowledge generation as a culture and value-free enterprise administered by an all purpose superordinate scientific knowledge generating "method". Scientific understanding cannot be considered as standing in a superior form of life to the objects of study. It too is a form of life with its ideologies, values, paradigmatic assumptions and defining vocabularies.

3.3.3 Historical context in psychology

Giddens's (1982) concern with historical context in sociological explanation is reflected in another seminal text, this one in social constructionist social psychology, in which Gergen (1973) advocated that psychologists begin to acknowledge the contextual social and historical factors which frame individual social life. Gergen's (1973) general position was psychology on a supposed 'natural science' model had tended to treat individuals as if they were living in a social vacuum. Researchers were examining subjects as if the researchers themselves were not human subjects, and as if the subjects were not deeply influenced by their social context. Constructs such as 'personality', 'cognitive processes' and 'group influence' were, in positivistic cognitive psychology, treated for experimental purposes as if they were entities which

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subsisted apart from the social context (critical overview in Fox and Prilleltensky, 1997, Edwards and Potter, 1992). Gergen (1973), like Giddens (1982), argues that social life, and social research itself, cannot be said to subsist in a cultural and historical vacuum.

3.3.4 Interim chapter review

The first half of chapter three has attempted to discuss varied themes in philosophy and sociology of science in order to illustrate several key points for this thesis. The overall aim is to set the methodological approach of this study in a broader context of developing themes in social research. The narrative of this chapter so far has told a story of science in which the uncritical acceptance of the naive empiricist model of science becomes increasingly challenged from a variety of directions. It would not be right to imply that these debates are dead and buried. However, the work cited has opened up new areas for study and these new areas have been extensively developed by many researchers, some examples of which are alluded to below. The chapter has outlined major themes in social constructionism and has tried to show how some of these themes have been reflected in debates in sociology of scientific knowledge and sociology. Berger and Luckmann's (1966) social constructionism has played a major role in directing researchers' attention towards the role of social practices in knowledge generation and communication. This loose connecting theme is continued in the following section which outlines some social constructionist themes in management research before returning to a discussion of social constructionist discourse analytic psychology. The aim is to show how discourse analytic methodology embraces many important methodological themes which are relevant in many fields of social research.

3.4.0 Social constructionism and 'critical' epistemologies: 'critical' psychology

The 'critical' prefix has been used in management research to denote treatments of research in organisations which draw on traditions of Critical Theory (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). The prefix is sometimes used in psychology in a more colloquial sense to position work in opposition to well established mainstream approaches. 'Critical' psychology (Parker, 1997, in Fox and Prilleltensky, 1997, pp.284-298) regards as problematic many of the given assumptions of cognitive psychology. Discourse analytic psychologists such as Potter and Wetherell (1987), Edwards and Potter (1992) and Harre and Stearns (1995) specifically address the problematic nature and ontological status of 'mental entities' in many of their discussions and research. Well established 'mainstream' psychology topics such as memory research, attribution theory, perception, attitude research, social representations and social cognition have all been specifically addressed by these authors on the grounds that their ontological presuppositions are highly problematic[1]. Put very simply, the argument from critical psychology holds that such topics depend for their coherence on a realist ontology which assumes the material existence of mental entities. Discourse analysts seek to draw attention to and problematise this ontological assumption by sketching the anatomy of social action in different contexts. These discourse analytic sketches draw attention to the action orientation of language and especially to the constitutive character of discourse.

3.4.1 Parker, Foucault and Potter and Wetherell.

For Parker (1997), discourse analysis need not be inherently a critical methodology. He suggests that Potter and Wetherell's (1987) approach lacks a political dimension, even though he admits that their orientation to discourse analysis is clearly in opposition to cognitive psychology. Parker (1997) suggests that discourse analytic

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[1] In parenthesis, a cursory glance at any popular marketing text shows the debt managerial marketing owes to information processing cognitive psychology. Many marketing frameworks depend for their coherence on assumptions about the private, mental status of, for example, needs, wants and consumer satisfaction.

psychology can be divided into two broad traditions. The first has developed from Foucault's (1971, 1981, 1986) approaches to the 'rules of discourse' which mark the conventional meaning of topics such as punishment, confession and madness (in Parker 1997). Rather than posing the research question, what is the essence of (madness, punishment etc.) Parker (1997) suggests that psychologists can usefully ask 'how do we come to talk about these things in this way'? This approach takes an historical perspective in tracing the 'genealogy' of terms and categories. In particular, asking the question of why we talk and think about things in certain ways entails asking what interests are served by such discourses. This focus on power is, for Parker (1997), the essence of the critical perspective in psychology. Certain discourses take terms, objects and social relations and make them normal or unproblematic, thus hiding the interests that may be served by such discourses. For example, cognitive psychological concepts such as 'attitude', 'memory' and 'behaviour' can be seen to constitute a discourse of psychology which upholds psychology as a quasi-natural scientific technical discipline. This discourse or way of talking about psychology has many other possible implications. For example, psychologists have power over lay people who are called 'subjects' in experiments: the discourse upholds the power of cognitive and experimental psychologists to control massive resources in sustaining research programmes, university faculties, justifying appointments, courses and professional institutions. In turn, these sources of power for psychologists can be seen to uphold and support other power relations within society at large. For Parker (1997) discourse analysis should be 'critical' in the sense that it should reveal and acknowledge the power relations that are maintained in discourse.

3.4.2 Potter and Wetherell's DA tradition

Parker (1997) suggests that the standard work on discourse analytic psychology, that of Potter and Wetherell (1987), lacks this overtly political dimension of criticality.

Potter and Wetherell (1987) make the concept of the 'interpretative repertoire' their central analytical concept (as does this study). Parker (1997) suggests that much research in this tradition is

'..rather descriptive, and a range of techniques from micro-sociology make the description look more objective. This approach is less critical of the ideological and political discourses of psychology." Parker, 1997, p. 288, in Fox and Prilleletnsky (eds) 1997.

Nonetheless, Parker (1997) explores many of the same themes as Potter (1998) and other discourse analysts. Clearly, different constructions can be placed on the notion of the critical. Potter and Wetherell (1987) and Edwards and Potter (1992) focus their discourse analysis on established psychological categories (attitude research, memory research and so on) which, for Parker (1997), makes their work more acceptable to the mainstream. In establishing discourse analysis, based on 'interpretative repertoires', as an accepted methodological approach in social psychology Potter and Wetherell (1987) have moved forward the critical agenda, even though the critical dimension is often left somewhat implicit. Equally clearly, the 'critical' lexicon constitutes an interpretative repertoire which locates researchers in a relation to social research. Potter (1998) advances essentially the same argument as Parker (1997) but avoids positioning his approach as a 'critical' one. Perhaps Potter (1998) would argue that a sustained argument which demonstrates the socially constructed character of fact construction constitutes a truly critical approach in the long run in that it engages directly with prevailing research approaches in their own terms.

Formulations of and approaches to discourse analytic methodology will be taken up again below. Firstly the critical theme must be addressed as it has been extensively adopted in management research.

3.5.0 Critical management research

These general epistemological and methodological themes have been thoroughly and diversely reflected in approaches to management research. For example, the theme that quasi-scientific forms of explanation have a rhetorical character and cannot be viewed purely in terms of their correspondence to a supposed world of objective facts has been taken up by researchers in management related areas (e.g. Brown, 1995, Latour and Bastide, 1986, Knights, 1992, Stern, 1990, Astley, 1985). Management researchers have argued that post-modern epistemological positions can inform management research (Easton and Araujo, 1997, Cooper, 1989). In particular, post-modernist themes concerning the uses of language in social research and theory generation receive notable attention in management research (e.g. Hassard, 1994). Alvesson and Willmott (1992) review the critical tradition in the context of management research and theory and propose Critical Theory as a source of new directions in research and theory.

3.5.1 The Post-modern turn: language and the world

Post-modernist epistemological themes entail a fundamental rejection of the 'objectivity' of the 'natural science' model of social scientific investigation in management research. For Hassard (1994) 'Postmodernism' stands for a "full frontal attack on methodological unity" (Hassard, 1994, p. 303). Hassard (1994) points to an explicit rejection, in Postmodernism, of...

> "... the notion that reference is, or can be, a univocal relation between forms of representation (words, images etc.) and an objective, external world" (Hassard, 1994, p.304).

This linguistic theme is strongly reflected in critical approaches to management research (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). Language is regarded as constitutive of the

social world. Discourse analysis reflects this theme (Elliott, 1996) in that it seeks to reveal the discursive dynamic underlying the construction of meaning. The possibility of a theory-neutral observation language is clearly rendered highly problematic on this view. This view is also echoed from the perspective of Critical Theory in Deetz's (1992) comment that 'language is primarily constitutive rather than representational' (Deetz, 1992, in Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, p.28). The goal of social research thus cannot, on this view, simply be to find the right words and numbers with which to represent the social world. Rather it must be to earn insights into the dynamics of the social world in its political and constitutive character. Language is central to this endeavour.

3.5.2 The 'grand narrative' of positivism: a post-modern viewpoint

The attitude of circumspection towards social texts is reflected in Lyotard's (1984) position that Modernist scientific 'meta-discourses' such as the 'grand narrative' of positivism are rendered redundant in the Postmodern epoch, partly by changes in the structure of industrial and social life, but also by an associated change in consciousness from the unified certainties of modernist epistemology to a sensibility to 'differences' articulated through multiple language games. Grand narratives are meta-historical themes which structure discourse and guide the sense making of textual engagement. Grand narratives in this sense include positivism as a loose framework within which scientific legitimacy is endorsed.

Once again, the constitutive character of language is central to the issue. This social constructionist theme is fundamental to the position that discourse analysis is a development of the critical management approach, as is suggested by Elliott (1996). Social constructionist themes have also been taken up in relation to questions of identity. Social research entails the construction of a text which positions the author, in some sense, as well as the research. This theme seems important for discourse

analytic methodology because it is a major consideration in seeking the functional rationality of interpretative repertoires.

3.6.0 Social constructionism and selfhood

Another theme of much Post-modernist writing which is strongly reflected in social constructionism concerns the constructed nature of the self. This 'categorical' self is usually distinguished from the existential self. The categorical self of attributes, characteristics, predispositions, even the biographical sense of self can be seen as social constructions that can be de-constructed rather than givens which are absolute and fixed. Prominent discursive psychology theorist Rom Harre (1998) has developed a rigorous theoretical position on the social construction of selfhood. He argues that pronouns of self are mistakenly taken to be referential when they are, rather, indexical. In other words he locates selfhood at a point in space-time and deconstructs the sense of self as set of experiences, behaviours and social relations. This is a development of William James's notion of the existential self (the subjective 'I') and the categorical self (the 'me' of the social world). The self that we feel we know is seen as something of a chimera, a relational concept bound up in a never-ending matrix of social practices and relations. The empirical self is primarily a physiological body. The implication of this position is that the categorical self is a void of indeterminacy, a text to be constructed by reference to other objects of consciousness (such as marketing brands, messages and other cultural products). This notion of selfhood as actively constructed is clearly informed by social constructionist principles, and in turn reflects Postmodernist themes, notably the theme of the 'deconstruction' of objects.

3.6.1 The socially constructed self and marketing research

The uncertainties of selfhood in the postmodern epoch (Giddens, 1991) are reflected

in a tendency for selfhood to manifest itself in public symbols of mediated marketing. The notion of selves constructing meanings and thereby constructing selves from mediated marketing experiences is distinctively Postmodern and embodies a central social constructionist feature concerning the social constitution not only of meanings but of our very sense of self. Thus another strain of social constructionist thought is evident in Postmodernist theory and has, in this case, begun to influence research in Advertising, namely, the social construction of the notion of self. If we draw upon meanings that are public to rhetorically substantiate the positions we take to others and to our selves, then the roles of branding and advertising take on very different hues to that implied in information processing, cognitivist explanatory schemes.

This social constructionist position on selfhood has some very immediate applications in marketing research. For example, the subjective sense of personal identity has been viewed as a social construction which is constituted partly through the consumer engagement with advertised brands (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998). For Elliott and Wattanasuwan (1998)..

> "The individual in postmodern society is threatened by a number of 'dilemmas of the self' (Giddens, 1991, p.201): fragmentation, powerlessness, uncertainty and a struggle against commodification: the individual endeavours to construct and maintain an identity that will remain stable through a rapidly changing environment" (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998, p. 131).

These authors go on to argue that.."..the search for self-identity is a key determinant of postmodern consumption.." and further, that brands act as "..symbolic resources for the construction of identity". Through the marketing and advertising of brands consumers are offered "..resources which may be used creatively to achieve an ego-ideal which commands the respect of others and inspires self-love" Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998, p. 131, referring to Gabriel and Lang, (1995, p.98). The role of marketing in producing identity, set against the managerial marketing rhetoric of

seeking out and satisfying consumer needs and wants, is a taken for granted aspect of management research in the critical tradition (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, p.11).

Clearly, if marketed brands are seen as constitutive of self identity or a feature of the categorical self then the conventional managerial marketing communications rhetoric of message 'delivery' and 'information/persuasion becomes problematic. Consumers are no longer represented simply as rational information-processing entities making buying decisions based on product attributes. Consumers are, on this social constructionist view, beings who actively construct their social life and their very sense of self through their engagement with marketing images, brands and marketing communications. The question for marketing managers becomes not 'how is a marketed and communicated brand processed as information by consumers', but 'what does a particular marketed brand *mean* for and to consumers'?

3.7.0 Summary comments on social constructionism, social research and language

The discussion above has attempted to point to an apparent convergence in both Post-modernist epistemology and social constructionist thought around the role of language as a mediating feature in social research. On this general view, language is not a transparent system of communication which refers unequivocally to objects in the world. It is rather seen in its symbolic, constructed character as a form of social engagement which constructs that engagement as well as depicting it. Meaning is held to be actively constructed in a very fundamental way; language represents versions of the world and is constitutive of the world. Therefore social researchers cannot simply talk about the world they see since the way they talk about it actively constructs a version of the world which is not necessarily incontestable.

3.7.1 Problematising the role of language in scientific research

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For critical theorists in management research, language is seen as 'inherently ambiguous and constitutive' (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, p. 14). Issues of . language clearly hold a central position in the theoretical developments outlined in this chapter. In many respects the development of social constructionist themes in social research may be termed a 'turn to language'. Diverse theorists such as philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn (1970), sociologist Anthony Giddens (1982, 1993), philosophers of knowledge Georgia Warnke (1987) and, much more prominently, Ludwig Wittgenstein (1953), social constructionists Berger and Luckmann (1966) and social psychologist Michael Billig (1987) among many others have all in their different ways questioned assumptions made about the role of language in the scientific enterprise. Issues raised include to what does language refer, if anything? Is a value neutral scientific observation language possible? Who's interests do particular *uses of scientific language serve? Are these interests hidden*, self serving or self preserving, and what does this imply for science? Can these interests be divorced from a consideration of the referential content of language? And what is the status of language itself as social scientific data?

3.7.2 Social constructionism and the 'turn to language' in discourse analytic psychological method

Such questions were raised by researchers in the social constructionist tradition in a variety of fields. These questions are met head on by discourse analytic or 'discursive' psychology which very clearly sets out ontological and methodological positions which address the role of language in social research. Discursive psychology texts typically ground their theoretical approach in the research traditions of ethnomethodology, semiotics or semiology, and speech act theory (e.g. in Potter and Wetherell, 1987, and in Edwards and Potter, 1992). Each of these traditions is typified by a particular orientation towards language in social research.

3.8.0 Social constructionism and psychology: informing traditions in discourse analytic or 'discursive' psychology: ethnomethodology

One strand of sociological research which is said to have made use of and developed social constructionist principles for discursive psychology is ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967). Potter and Wetherell, (1987) in describing ethnomethodology's relevance for discourse analytic methodology write that it is concerned with the study of ordinary peoples' methods for making sense of everyday life (p.18). One branch of ethnomethodological research of particular interest in social constructionist social psychology concerns the ways people use ordinary language in making sense of their social worlds. In particular, ethnomethodologists have sought to reveal the linguistic practices which embody the informal social rules of a form of life. People may say certain things in different situations which are grammatically and linguistically similar to those a person may say in other situations but the indexicality of the terms used differs with context (Barnes and Law, 1976). Thus it is often incumbent on the listener to fill in the details of what is meant by inferring the indexicality of what is said. Consequently understanding what is said in a given context almost always entails a joint construction in the sense that everything cannot be made explicit: the listener must have knowledge of the rules and codes underlying the speaker's form of life in order to interpret and understand what they trying to convey.

> "Ethnomethodologists suggest that people in conversations are constantly engaged in *interpretative work* to *accomplish* the meaning of utterances using their knowledge of context to help them". (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p. 23).

Once again, the ambiguous and contested character of meaning in language is highlighted.

3.8.1 The importance of context in ethnomethodological approaches

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For ethnomethodological researchers, then, the social constructionist theme is reflected in the joint accomplishments of speakers when they construct mutual meaning by drawing on extensive background knowledge. The role of language as a vehicle in the construction of text of indeterminate meaning is central in this joint accomplishment. The point for social researchers is that context is a basic requirement in understanding what is said in certain situations. Questions, or answers, devoid of ethnomethodological context may, on this view, seriously flaw the integrity of social research. This general ethnomethodological principle, that an understanding of social life as it is constructed in context is the goal of the researcher, is applied as a principle in discursive psychology. Therefore the researcher's understanding must be grounded in an intimate engagement with a form of life so that the nuances of meaning as it is accomplished discursively can be discerned.

3.8.2 Speech act theory and performativity

A major feature of the ethnomethodological position concerns the performativity of language (overview in Case, 1995). This acknowledgement is derived, in social research, from philosophical speech act theory (e.g. Austin, 1962). Words have a locutionary and an illocutionary force: they say things and they *do* things. Words therefore cannot be interpreted simply as referents for a 'real world' concept. Words accomplish things through the illocutionary force they may have in certain very specific contexts. The vocal intonation, accompanying gestures, environmental conditions and cultural norms obtaining in a particular verbal interchange can all inform the extent to which an utterance can accomplish things for the speaker. These accomplishments may include claims or assertions of social status, of power, knowledge or hostility: they may entail declarations of solidarity with the listener or the listener's group, or they may entail the maintenance of a certain representation of self (Goffman, 1959).

3.8.3 Performativity and selfhood: the illocutionary character of language

The general point here is that language does not simply refer to mental entities or events which are essentially private. Words and language can *do* things through their 'performative' or 'illocutionary' character. This character of language is bound up with issues concerning the ways we address dilemmas of personal identity by accomplishing certain effects through the illocutionary force of words. For example, we might accomplish certain effects concerning our social status and our allegiance to certain groups through the things we say. Central to these matters is the question of to what words may refer. Harre (1998) following (the later) Wittgenstein (1953, 1969) argues that words can seldom if ever be taken simply as signs for private, inner, mental events. Harre's (1998) argument implies that meaning-making with language has an ineluctably social character therefore the things we utter must almost invariably have an illocutionary or performative force.

3.8.4 Summary comments: ethnomethodology and speech-act theory in social constructionist discursive psychology

Ethnomethodology and speech act theory, then, are invoked by discursive psychologists to ground certain broad assumptions of discourse analytic approaches. In particular, these assumptions concern, firstly the need for social researchers to seek to understand the meanings of social life as lived by the subjects of social research. This is done by filling in the context of research with observation, experience and reflection so that the researcher can understand the *meaning* of what research participants say and do. In this way an ethnomethodological form of understanding may be established which is reflexive and which takes account of the research participants ways of constructing their social reality. Secondly, the things that people say are assumed to have a performative dimension. This is meant in the sense that what we say does not only entail a system of conceptual referents but also

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locates us in a social psychological landscape. The things we say, as researchers, as research participants, and in our direct experience of life, constitute communicative *acts*. These communicative acts are bound up with our sense of self identity, with our understanding of social roles and with our personal biography. These broad principles, over-simplified here, are two significant informing themes of social constructionist discursive psychology. A third typically referred to by discursive psychologists is semiotics or semiology.

3.9.0 Semiotics or semiology and discursive psychology

Semiotics or semiology develops a theme concerning language as a system of signification and is said (by Potter and Wetherell, 1987) to be the third main informing theme of the research tradition which informs discursive psychology, along with ethnomethodology and speech act approaches. Semiotics or semiology is the study of signs and their meaning (Danesi, 1994, Sebeok, 1985, Eco, 1984, 1976, Barthes, 1968). The term semiotics is one of general usage by semioticians in the tradition of philosopher Charles Sanders Pierce (1958) while the term semiology is more closely associated with de Saussure (1974) and the linguistic tradition of semiology.

3.9.1 Signs and semiosis

Signs may be visual, verbal, aural, electronic, chemical: in fact, anything which can be detected through sense experience can be a sign to a human (Danesi, 1994). For de Saussure (1974) the meaning of signs is arbitrary: a word-sign could, in principle, stand for anything. That it stands for a particular things in a particular cultural and historical context is a matter of social consensus and convention. However, the cultural code by and through which signs are interpreted is, for semiologists in this tradition, relatively fixed. There is a cultural code underlying the use of signs.

Understanding the code is the key to understanding semiosis. Semiosis is the process by which people construct meaning through their engagement with signs. The meaning of a particular sign is complicated by the possibility of *levels* of signification. 'Level one' signification may be relatively clear in terms of a conventional cultural association or relation between a word (say, Ford) and a concept (family car). 'Level two' signification may tap into cultural myths and utilise other meanings of the concept 'car' in twentieth century Western culture (say, freedom, glamour, attractiveness, social status). However, for many semioticians semiosis can be deconstructed by tapping into and interpreting the code through which signs assume cultural meaning. Hence in research in, for example, advertising, the *meaning* of certain advertisements has been asserted on the basis that the particular semiotic code at work can be successfully deconstructed and understood by (e.g. Williamson, 1978, for a well known work in semiotic codes in advertising).

3.9.2 Semiotic codes and cultural or individual variability

A controversy in semiotics and related fields concerns the extent to which semiotic codes are fixed, indeterminate and culturally variable. The usual social constructionist position is that meaning-making, while informed and framed by ideologies and other influences in the world at large, has a distinctively local character. So the meaning of an ad, for example, may be interpreted differently by different social groups in the same culture, and even by different individuals in the same group. Cook (1992) takes a version of this general position in arguing that the meaning of texts (specifically, advertising texts) carries an essential indeterminacy which leaves open the interpretative possibilities of construction. Texts construct meanings through their relation to, and use of, other discourses of which the reader is aware. There is, on this view, no single structural code which underlies meaning making or semiosis in a particular discourse. The meaning of a sign is always framed within the signs relations relation to other signs in context. In many discourse

analytic discussions of semiotics the limitation of semiotics is often placed in its tendency to emphasise one meaning over others while suppressing the extent to which meanings are contested, politically loaded, psychologically indeterminate and culturally variable. Some semioticians (e.g. Danesi, 1994) would reject this criticism on the grounds that many semioticians do not hold to the 'one right meaning: one true semiotic code' thesis and allow that meaning is contested and so on. However, the conceptual vocabulary of semiotics perhaps places a limitation on the extent to which this view can be incorporated into semiotic research and theory.

3.9.3 The vocabulary of semiosis

The conceptual vocabulary of semiotics includes terms such as 'sign', 'symbol', 'index', and 'icon', although the technical usage of these terms with particular semioticians (or semiologists). There are differing views within semiotics on the most appropriate conceptual framework for semiotic analysis (e.g. Leach, 1976, for brief overview). For present purposes it is perhaps sufficient to suggest that the general principles attaching to semiotics (or semiology) rest on assumptions about the interpretation of meaning in engagement with words or other signs. Some words might, for example, operate as indices, 'pointing to' a concept: others might operate as symbols, 'standing for' something. Still others might have an iconic function both standing for and being like, something. As noted above, some authors feel that semiotics imposes an analytical limitation upon itself when it commits to the revelation of a semiotic code underlying meaning-making in a particular context, arguing instead that the broader cultural context should always be taken into account (e.g. in advertising, Wernick, 1991). As anthropologist Leach (1976) put this view,

"..we must know a lot about the cultural context, the setting of the stage, before we can even begin to decode the message". (Leach, 1976, p. 96).

3.9.4 The possibilities for semiotics

Other authors feel that semiotics can evolve its analytical battery of concepts to become a superordinate science studying all forms of human communication (Sebeok, 1991, following Pierce, 1958). On this view semiotics can subsume all other fields of communication science. Indeed, all fields of science are about semiotics in that they are essentially concerned with the communicative properties of any signs whatever. The universe is 'suffused with signs' in Pierce's (1958, in Danesi, 1994) phrase down to the level of the cell. This general perspective, it has been argued, has great explanatory power in generating insights into human, social and even biological phenomena as essentially communicative practices.

3.9.5 The semiotic perspective and social constructionist discursive psychology

It has already been noted (in chapter 2) that semioticians have taken great interest in marketing (e.g. Umiker -Sebeok, 1987). This is reflective of a broader social constructionist influence, notwithstanding internal controversies within semiotics. While for some discourse orientated theorists, semiotics (or semiology) is inherently limited by what they see as a concern with the fixed character of semiotic meaning-making codes, some semioticians remain optimistic that semiotic analysis can form a superordinate communications science, particularly in view of the conceptual apparatus of first and second order meaning-making. Texts on discourse analysis/discursive psychology/social constructionist psychology (e.g. Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Edwards and Potter, 1992, Burr, 1995) cite semiotics (along with ethnomethodology and speech act theory) as informing disciplines for discourse analysis. The discourse analytic approach is positioned as a distinctive methodological movement in social research in its own right.

3.10.0 'Discourse': definitional issues

The terms 'discourse' and 'discourse analysis' are broad terms used to refer to a

variety of research traditions and methodological approaches in social research. Potter and Wetherell, (1987) offer a useful general discussion on the uses of the term. Discourse analysis can, these authors suggest, be concerned with any research which takes language in context as the main primary data (e.g. Brown and Yule, 1983, van Dijk, 1985): 'discourse' can refer to all forms of talk and writing (Gilbert and Mulkay, 1984). It is sometimes defined as being concerned with research which focuses on linguistic units above the level of the sentence (Stubbs, 1983). Some discourse analysts use the term to describe their work in conversation analysis dealing with, for example, turn taking and cohesiveness in passages of talk (Tannen, 1984, Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). Foucault's (1971, 1972) broad usage of the term has been influential. The general sense of 'discourse' meaning all forms of spoken interaction and written texts of all kinds (Gilbert and Mulkay, 1984) is in contrast to the definition implied in strictly defined conversation analytical approaches which take a more micro-orientated approach utilising differing methods and differing kinds of research question (Levinson, 1983).

3.10.1 Discourse: definitions in social constructionist psychology

Put simply, discourses can be defined as ways of talking about things. For Elliott (1997) following Parker (1992), as noted in chapter one, a discourse is 'a system of statements which construct an object' (Parker, 1992, p. 5). For Burr, (1995), a discourse 'refers to a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events' (Burr, 1995, p. 48). The social world can be described and the forms description takes can be seen as texts engagement with which constructs meanings. The meanings so constructed are contingent not primarily upon hidden cognitive processes but upon other discourses into which humans delve selectively in order to construct social life. As Potter and Wetherell (1987) note,

> "...social texts do not merely reflect or mirror objects, events and categories pre-existing in the social and natural world. They actively *construct* a version of those things". (Potter and Wetherell, p.6)

This construction is ineluctably of a public, social, rather than a private cognitive, character. For Edwards and Potter (1992),

> "The focus of discursive psychology is the action orientation of talk and writing. For both participants and analysts, the primary issue is the social actions, or interactional work, being done in the discourse". (Edwards and Potter, 1992, p. 2).

Thus for research purposes, discourse analysis can be performed on anything which can be rendered into a text.

3.10.2 Discourse and psychology

Edwards and Potter (1992) seek to explicate a social constructionist discursive account of cognitive psychology by focussing mainly on the way people use cognitive attributions in conversation to accomplish things. That is, humans construct versions of events (discourses) which ostensibly call upon notions of objectivity to justify claims but which, seen as action orientated talk, achieves effects through the rhetorical use of linguistic and other communicative devices. This orientation towards social texts as social scientific research data is not, these authors emphasize, only a methodological stance. For Edwards and Potter (1992) 'discursive psychology' is,

> "..a viable perspective on psychological life rather than just a mode of empirical analysis". (Edwards and Potter, 1992, p. 153).

Hence discourse analytic approaches to psychology have evolved into 'discursive psychology',

(Edwards and Potter, 1992, Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Harre and Stearns, 1995) a field in its own right which, adherents believe, has a coherent and rigorous outlook on social research into social life. For researchers in this tradition, 'discourse' does not represent merely a category of social phenomenon, or a unit of empirical data: discourse is seen as a fundamental aspect of psychological organisation. In other words we order our psychological and social worlds through engagement with discourses, and psychological methods which can generate insights into the terms of engagement with discourse are uniquely positioned to offer rich and novel insights into and explanations of almost any feature of social life.

3.11.0 Social constructionism: a defining influence in social scientific philosophy and methodology

This chapter has attempted to point to some significant themes in social constructionist thought. In particular it has tried to outline several trajectories of development which converge, in important respects, in discourse analytic methodology. While discourse analysis has its own internal debates and controversies (e.g. see Parker and Burman, 1993, Parker, 1990, Potter et al, 1990) is does nevertheless represent a convergence of significant social constructionist themes concerning the constitutive character of language in social life, the contested nature of meaning and the importance of interpretation in social research.

Shotter (1998) argues that there is an essential poetics in the constitution of social life of which language can be a mirror and can act as a point of substantive engagement.

> "Only in the stream of thought and life do words (and our other activities) have meaning".
> Wittgenstein, 1981: no 173, in Shotter, 1998, in Bayer and Shotter, p. 49).

Discourse analytic psychology can be seen to be seeking to preserve this important

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principle in research methodology and employs social constructionist themes to this end. Scientific and social scientific research is fundamentally seen as something done by people and expressed in language. The naive empiricist view of scientific method constructs a discourse in which science is depopulated and language is a neutral tool corresponding to objects in the world. Social constructionist discourse analytic approaches can re-populate the world of science and position language as constitutive of the world and of human experience.

3.12.0 Some final comments: discourse and empirical analysis

As Burr (1995) notes, a social constructionist perspective need not necessarily entail a discourse analytic method. Conversely, a discourse analyst need not be a social constructionist. Social constructionism is a broad category of intellectual development which may embrace many differing methodological approaches. 'Discourse analysis' too represents a category of methodological approach which is also diverse, ranging from the highly prescriptive to the impressionistic. Burr (1995) notes that

> ".. the nature of discourse analysis itself is subjective and interpretative...the term 'discourse analysis' is an umbrella which covers a wide variety of actual research practices with quite different aims and theoretical backgrounds" (Burr, 1995, p. 163).

Some of the controversies and debates within the field have been alluded to above (Parker and Burman, 1993, Parker, 1990, Potter et al, 1990). The discourse analytic tradition which informs the methodological choices of the present study is reflected most strongly in Potter and Wetherell's (1987) treatment of the subject.

3.13. 0 Chapter summary: overview

This chapter has attempted to set discourse analytic methodology within a broader

context of developments in social research over some forty years. It has attempted to use two loose related themes as links between the diverse traditions outlined in the chapter. These themes were social constructionism and the turn to language in social research. The discussion drew on the thoughts of a classic sociologist, C. Wright Mills, and a modern counterpart, Anthony Giddens, to illustrate that mainstream sociology has engaged in critique of the naive empiricist view of science and has posed questions problematising the supposed objectivity of scientific knowledge. This critique of objectivity in science has been developed by philosophers of knowledge in the hermeneutic tradition such as Habermas (1970). The chapter also drew on SSK (sociology of scientific knowledge) debates in the nineteen seventies to illustrate a similar turn away from the empiricist view and towards a more encompassing view which saw scientific knowledge as bound up in a seamless a web of practices and interests. The discussion noted developments in management research (including marketing) and in psychology which reflected these debates and focussed on issues of language and meaning in a *critical* re-appraisal of the social scientific endeavour in these fields. The chapter then turned to Potter and Wetherell's (1987) version of discourse analysis as a form of methodological response to these debates.

3.13.1 The 'critical' orientation of discourse analysis

It was noted that, for Elliott (1996) following Alvessson and Willmott (1992), discourse analysis is intrinsically a *critical* methodology. Within the field of discursive psychology (e.g. Edwards and Potter, 1992) critique takes different forms. For example, Parker (1997) implied that discourse analysis had been made palatable for mainstream psychology by approaches which focussed on 'interpretative repertoires' (i.e. those of Potter and Wetherell, 1987) and which were thereby de-politicised. This influence is reflected in general treatments on the topic such as Banister et al, (1994), which contains a chapter on discourse analysis apparently

partly written by Ian Parker. On the other hand, while discourse analytic psychologists such as Potter (1998) do not position their work explicitly as drawing on critical theory, they clearly position discourse analysis as a more politically and intellectually penetrating perspective on social life than mainstream cognitive psychology. For Parker (1997) this approach lacks an explicitly political dimension. No doubt Potter and Wetherell would refute this, the most obvious argument being that they have put discourse analysis on the research agenda which in itself is a political act with political implications.

3.13.2 The interpretative research traditions informing discourse analysis

The chapter then went on to outline the intellectual heritage that discourse analytic psychologists allude to in their work. It focussed on the tradition noted by Potter and Wetherell (1987) and Edwards and Potter (1992) informed by ethnomethodology, semiotics and speech-act theory. It also alluded briefly to hermeneutics and the Foucauldian tradition of discourse mentioned by, for example, Elliott (1996) and Banister et al (1994).

As relevant but peripheral issues the chapter also noted the role of language and discourse in the construction and maintenance of self identity, citing several studies in consumer research as examples. Intuitively it would seem that the positioning of DA as a politically critical methodology, or as an intellectual but politically benign advance on cognitivism, is to some extent a personal choice. Whether one is temperamentally comfortable with antagonism, or more comfortable with aligning oneself with group interests, it seems clear that discourse analytic methodology a) is intellectually well founded b) has the potential to be politically penetrating and c) can apply the concept of the interpretative repertoire in more, or less, revealing ways.

The following chapter will discuss the main issues surrounding Potter and

Wetherell's (1987) central analytical concept: the 'interpretative repertoire'. This discussion will act as the final prelude to the empirical phase of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Approaching a discourse analytic framework for empirical work: the analytical category of the 'interpretative repertoire'

Chapter outline: this chapter moves on from the broad outline of social constructionist themes in the previous chapter to narrow in on more specific methodological issues. In particular, the analytical unit of the 'interpretative repertoire' and its role in discourse analysis is examined. Some illustrative examples of discourse analytic studies in non-advertising fields are outlined to illustrate the application of the method. The development of discourse analysis by some theorists into a full blown 'discursive psychology' is discussed with special reference to the role discourse can play in maintaining personal and social identity.

4.0.0 Introduction

This chapter will detail specific methodological approaches for this study in the light of the foregoing discussions centred around social constructionist themes. In particular, the empirical analysis in this case focuses around an analytical concept known as the 'interpretative repertoire' (discussions on usage of this and related terms in Banister et al, 1994, Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Edwards and Potter, 1992, Burr, 1995).

4.0.1 Empirical 'method' and discourse analysis

As noted in chapter two, discourse analysis as a broad methodological principle (Banister et al, 1994, Burr, 1995, Edwards and Potter, 1992) displays some variety regarding the various proscriptions for empirical data gathering and analysis. As Potter and Wetherell (1987) point out, in discursive psychology..

"..there is no analytic method, at least as this term is understood elsewhere in social psychology. Rather, there is a broad theoretical framework, which focuses attention on the constructive and functional dimensions of discourse.." (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.169).

4.0.2 Discourse analytic precedents for this study

The approach taken in the present study follows that of many discursive psychology studies (e.g. references in Harre and Stearns, 1995, and in Potter and Wetherell, 1987, application to marketing research in Elliott, 1996). This entails utilising the central concepts of discourse analytic approaches in social psychology (i.e. construction, function and variability in discourse, and the notion of the interpretative repertoire) in taking an interpretative stance toward the transcribed interview data.

4.1.0 Recapitulation of the problematization rationale: substantive 'gaps'

To reiterate the unfolding general argument, the discussion in previous chapters highlighted the suggestion that, in a review of marketing management literature (both popular texts and academic journal papers), intra-agency advertising process is dealt with in a surprisingly cursory way, given the importance attached to advertising as an aspect of the marketing communications process. This study is positioned partly as a form of address to this substantive 'gap' in the literature.

4.1.1 Problematization rationale: methodological gaps

The literature review also suggested a possible reason for this substantive gap in the literature, given the perceived and commented upon methodological narrowness in mainstream marketing management research and theory building. Epistemology and methodology circumscribe possible research questions. The present study is positioned as a partial address to calls for theoretical development in marketing since it utilises a social constructionist ontology in a qualitative, inter-disciplinary study of

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advertising development. As such it also formulates a rather different kind of research question/issue than that usually associated with the positivist and structuralist/functionalist paradigms more commonly found in marketing management literature.

4.1.2 Social constructionism as an ontological position with epistemological implications

The ontology of social life which social constructionism entails carries clear epistemological implications. The question of 'what can we know?' about social life is circumscribed by the position taken on the character and essence of social life. For social constructionist social researchers, a social constructionist ontology carries the consequence that the epistemological question of 'what we can know' cannot be conveyed simply in terms of unproblematic facts, neutral observations and direct causal relationships. Social constructionism holds that social life is self constituting, that it cannot be seen purely as the result of unseen causal forces which subsist in another realm somehow more real than the realm of discourse itself. Hence social constructionism problematises many traditional conceptualisations of epistemology. It does not deny the possibility of knowledge, and neither does it assert that knowledge cannot be objective, universal or factual. What is does do is to draw attention to the situated character of knowledge and by implication to the ways in which epistemological interests assert themselves.

4.1.3 Social constructionist knowledge subsisting in discourse

The epistemology of social constructionism takes knowledge to be on the surface of social life bound up with discourse. We can know the forces which drive and shape discourse, and which contour social life, through an interpretative and reflexive engagement with discourse. This kind of knowledge casts light on the interests

served by particular knowledge formulations, i.e. by particular discourses of knowledge.

4.1.4 Social constructionism and discourse analytic approaches

This epistemological position in turn carries methodological implications. The methods of social constructionist research focus on gathering data which generates insight into what social life means for the participants. For many social constructionist psychologists, this implies that the appropriate research method should have an ethnomethodological character in that it seeks understanding of people in their own terms in the context of their local social life. There is also the concomitant implication that the language we use to accomplish discursive acts is constitutive of those acts. Discursive approaches to psychological research and theory building take these positions and operationalise them in research through discourse analytic approaches.

4.2.0 Antecedents of discourse analytic research approaches

As noted in the previous chapter discourse analytic methodological themes have developed through a diverse yet vigorous set of research traditions. Three strands of development in particular are referred to by discursive psychologists such as Edwards and Potter (1992). Firstly, there is the ethnomethodological tradition of social research from which discursive psychological methodology takes its concern with qualitative understanding of, and meaning in, data. In particular, ethnomethodological researchers place a priority on preserving the meaning data has for the participants. Social research on this model seeks to understand social phenomena from the participants point of view. The context of ethnomethodological data crucially sets the terms of reference for the interpretation of data. Secondly, there is the speech-act tradition of linguistic philosophy which emphasises the role of

language in accomplishing social acts for speakers. Thus language is viewed in its illocutionary character and not just as a transparent communication system with stable word- referent relations. Thirdly, there is a related linguistic concern with the semiotic aspect of communication. The emphasis on language as a sign system reinforces the interpretative theme. Language is seen as signifying things in various ways: words are not seen simply as indices pointing to real-world concepts. Finally, social constructionist discourse analytic approaches reflect broader concerns with the sociology of scientific knowledge.

4.2.1 The intellectually distinctive character of social constructionist discourse analysis

Discourse analytic researchers of different hues (e.g. Harre and Stearns, 1995, Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Parker, 1997) draw upon this eclectic intellectual genealogy as a basis for a variety of empirical analytic approaches, most of which are clearly developments of social constructionist thought applied in (usually qualitative) approaches to empirical research. As noted in chapter two, the nature of social constructionism is such that it cannot be satisfactorily defined with precision: it has developed in many forms with a correspondingly varied development in associated empirical methods. The foregoing has sought to show that within this variety there are clearly discernable themes which render social constructionist approaches to social research in marketing intellectually distinctive. To repeat, this distinctiveness implies, it is suggested, that social constructionism can offer a useful theoretical perspective for marketing management and allied fields. This chapter focuses in on the specific methodological choices made in this case.

4.3.0 'Interpretative repertoires' and discourse analytic method

The empirical method of this study leans heavily on approaches described in Potter

and Wetherell, (1987) and also in Edwards and Potter (1992). The method entails focussing on the 'interpretative repertoires' which advertising agency professionals draw upon in order to articulate and substantiate their positions. These repertoires will form the basis of initial coding of the data. Subsequently, the categories established through the coding will be subject to an analytical discussion based on the variation and function apparent in the discourse.

4.3.1 The 'interpretative repertoire' defined

The expression 'interpretative repertoire' refers to an apparent structure in the ways people account for views, positions or actions. A clear use of particular patterns of metaphors, grammatical structures and vocabularies to account for or warrant certain positions would normally be called an 'interpretative repertoire'. The 'interpretative repertoire' has formed a unit of analysis for many discourse analytic studies (Gilbert and Mulkay, 1984, Potter and Mulkay, 1982, 1985, Wetherell, 1986). Potter and Wetherell (1987) define the interpretative repertoire as...

> "The interpretative repertoire is basically a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterise and evaluate actions and events." (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.139).

Thus regularities in the ways in which people articulate and warrant their actions, positions and arguments may constitute an interpretative repertoire if there appears to be coherence in the way that the repertoire is used in discourse. The regularities may appear in terms of both patterns of language and in terms of the *purpose* such patterns seem to serve for the speaker. If arguing a particular point in a particular way effectively positions the speaker in terms of their sense of self identity, their social role or their relation to the listener, then there may be a case for arguing that this usage of language constitutes an interpretative repertoire.

4.3.2 The structure and function of 'discourse'

Thus discourse in various contexts is analysed in terms of its *structure*, i.e. the repertoires of metaphors and terms which together form patterns of drawn upon resources in discourse, and the *function* these repertoires seem to be serving in terms of the action they constitute for the sayer. As noted in Banister et al (1994),

"..the emphasis on variability, construction and function was already a distinguishing feature of a powerful intellectual movement- post-structuralism- outside psychology though the terminology was different: instead of speaking of 'interpretative repertoires', for example, post-structuralists used the term 'discourse'". (Banister et al, 1994, p. 94).

Banister et al (1994) emphasise a Foucauldian (e.g. 1975) approach to 'discourse' which seeks to pick apart the power relations and ideologies which give force to and betray the interests in the uses of particular forms of discourse. For example, Banister et al (1994) read a toothpaste package as a text made up of discourses which are 'rationalist' (i.e. seek to generate consumer response to instructions and procedures legitimised by government medical advice), familial (drawing on discourses of care and 'good' parenting), developmental-educational (concerning ideas about the appropriate development of children at particular ages) and medical (drawing on discourses of hygiene and chemical substances which prevent ill health). All these features togther constituted a mobilising of 'discourses' in the interests of the toothpaste manufacturer and drew upon the ideological interests of contemporary Western middle class parents.

4.3.3 'Discourse' and discursive psychology

This use of the term 'discourse', associated with Foucault (e.g. 1975) and referred to in Banister et al (1994), is related to but not the same as the use given to the term by discursive psychologists such as Potter and Wetherell (1987). In the methodology of

discursive psychology, 'discourse' is a broad term indicating textual representation of any sort, and 'discourse analysis' is the process of analysing discourse for structure and function. The structure of discourse is evident in patterns or regularities of linguistic resource drawn upon by actors to substantiate their positions. Such regularities can be called 'interpretative repertoires'.

4.3.4 Foucauldian notions of 'discourse'

Such repertoires may have a conventional character reflecting sectional interests and priorities. To this extent, an 'interpretative repertoire' might be not unlike the concept of a 'discourse' in the Foucauldian sense. However, the reverse would not necessarily be true. An 'interpretative repertoire' is a unit of discursive meaning which can be local and particular to a form of life. Foucauldian discourses as linguistic representations which reproduce power relations tend to have a broader sense, often rooted in historical class relations. An 'interpretative repertoire', on the other hand, draws its power from rhetorical resources which are primarily local rather then ideological. This distinction will be returned to in examples of discourse analysis offered below.

4.4.0 An illustrative example of discourse analysis from a non-marketing field

As an example in the ethnomethodological tradition of discourse analysis, Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) analysed the published texts in which scientists set out their biochemical work on the transmission of protons across the cell wall, then interviewed the scientists on the same topics. Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) found considerable variation between the accounts scientists gave in their formal publications and the accounts they gave in informal interviews. For example, a scientist might offer a rationale for a particular methodological approach which, in an article, is presented as following incontestably from the theory and/or data. In

informal interview, the same scientist might say that the choice of method was for pragmatic reasons, while other scientists might categorise that particular scientist's methodological choices as being a result of personal quirk or temperamental predisposition.

4.4.1 Gilbert and Mulkay's findings

Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) found two interpretative repertoires: the empiricist repertoire, in which the science as conducted by the scientist was represented as having an unarguable coherence with the facts, and the contingent repertoire, in which scientists offered quite different, pragmatic and idiosyncratic reasons for methodological choices. In this case the variation of accounts was the source of theory building in terms of the notion of 'interpretative repertoires'. Clearly, the scientists were engaging in conventional 'scientific method' discourses in their formal published papers, while in informal interviews they relied on these but also lapsed into less formal conversational discourse forms in which scientist's work was clearly informed by non-formal, personal, pragmatic, situational and other influences which were not derived from the data.

4.4.2 Structural and functional characteristics of repertoires in Gilbert and Mulkay (1984)

In Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) the interpretative repertoires were seen as,

> "..recurrently used systems of terms used for characterising and evaluating actions, events of other phenomena. A repertoire, like the empiricist and contingent repertoires, is constituted through a limited range of terms used in particular stylistic and grammatical constructions. Often a repertoire will be organised around specific metaphors and figures of speech (tropes)..". (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p. 149).

Identifying the structural characteristics of discourse in this way is only part of the process: the uses and functions of these repertoires and the problems their use 'throws up' are also important (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.149.) Discursive resources such as interpretative repertoires serve functions: they offer resources for people to use in the construction and maintenance of a position. In the case studied by Gilbert and Mulkay (1984), the repertoires of 'empiricism' and 'contingency' were drawn upon significantly to account for error. Scientists used interpretative repertoires as strategic devices to account for (others) error and to justify the integrity of their own scientific work. In this way they could also be said to offering constructions of their professional selves (as 'good' sciency scientists).

4.4.3 'Variation' in discourse

These repertoires and their uses were analytically derived from the study of variation in accounts. These variations, as Potter and Wetherell (1987) note above, are the focus of many discourse analytic studies since they reveal the fragile nature of discursive representations and show very clearly how linguistic and ideational resources are used strategically in discourse to serve functions of justification (e.g. in racist discourse, Wetherell and Potter, (forthcoming), in maintaining public 'face' or identity construction, Wetherell and Potter, 1989, in representing a version of reality through recourse to 'the facts', Potter 1998). In this analytic focus, the attention is not on the regularities of description and ordinary explanation, as it might be in, say, survey research, but on the variations which can illustrate how events and opinions are constructed in order to serve illocutionary and performative purposes in differing contexts. That is, people may produce differing accounts of events depending on the purposes such accounts are required to serve.

4.4.4 Approaches to depth interview analysis

In the present study, while the empirical data incorporated broader impressions from observation and other informal sources which inform the analysis, the primary data focus is on depth interviews which were relatively unstructured. Discourse analytic approaches to depth interviews have sometimes entailed a stance which seeks to disrupt the self-presentation going on in order to try to highlight variations in accounts and therefore earn insight into the functions being served by certain linguistic resources (Potter and Mulkay, 1985). In the present study, the technique used was to try to engage in a passive but supportive interview relationship so that participants could articulate their professional concerns, their role and associated issues according to their own agenda. This 'snapshot' approach, clearly not longitudinal, did not allow for variations in, say, the way the research participants might tell a researcher about advertising creativity and the way they might talk about it to a client, the company chairman or a friend in the pub. The main object of interest concerned the ways in which advertising professionals constructed and maintained their professional position given the conflicts which are inherent in the advertising process between the strategic marketing representative of the client organisation, the agency account manager, the planners and the creative team. The sources of variation in accountability were evident from comments within the same interviews and these were balanced with the other data sources available.

4.5.0 The interpretative repertoire as 'gross categorisation'

Potter and Wetherell (1987) make clear that they consider the notion of interpretative repertoire rather a gross categorisation for initial purposes of analytic approaches to discourse. The notion does not constitute a theory but simply an analytical unit. However, its flexibility is a strength in that it conveys in a significant way a major characteristic of social constructionism while at the same time offering a looseness of conceptual framework which permits many variations on the social constructionist theme to be realised in social research in a way which follows Derrida's (1973)

dictum about representing but not 'capturing' social phenomena.

4.6.0 Rhetoric and discourse: the rhetorical construction and maintenance of positions

Edwards and Potter (1992) point to the rhetorical dimension of an analytical focus on discourse. That is to say that the rhetorical force of repertoires and other features of discourse is highlighted by discourse analysis. In engaging with discourses we use language to maintain positions which are seen as important in some way to our social role, to our sense of social relations or to our emotional life.

> "..one of the central features of discourse analysis is its concern with the rhetorical
> (argumentative) organization of everyday talk and thought (Billig, 1987, McClosky, 1985,
> Simons, 1989). One of the major features of rhetorical analysis is the demonstration of
> how, in order to understand the nature and function of any version of events, we need to
> consider whatever real or potential alternative version it may be designed to counter (Billig
> 1988, 1989)." (Edwards and Potter, 1992, p. 28).

Edwards and Potter (1992) focus very clearly on the rhetorical function of interpretative resources/repertoires. That is, linguistic devices, metaphors, grammatical constructions and figures of speech have a performative character in that they can accomplish certain effects for the speaker. Thus a feature of the interpretative analysis of discourse can entail the researcher thinking creatively about alternative resources the participant might have drawn upon in response to the same point. The suppression (conscious or otherwise) of alternative forms of accounting can be a significant clue to the function certain repertoires might be serving.

4.6.1 Suppression in accounting: creativity Vs effectiveness in advertising

As an example of this, anticipating the empirical section of this thesis, professionals in

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BMP DDB never explicitly acknowledged a dichotomy between 'creativity' and 'effectiveness'. Talk of such a dichotomy is very common among other advertising professionals. The argument goes, advertising may be creative but not effective, i.e. it may be entertaining, novel, funny and engaging to the viewer but it may not necessarily sell product. It is matter of consistent debate in advertising practitioner publications (references in chapter two) that 'creativity' may be an indulgence of the industry, a chimera which may serve to distract clients (and agencies) from the ineffectiveness and waste of much advertising. On this argument, advertising would be better served by sticking to loud, straightforward appeals based on claims of product quality or price. 'Creativity' may be seen as a form of intellectual or class pretension. However, talk of creativity is often a sign of piety in the industry and anti-creativity talk is often considered philistine. It was striking that BMP DDB advertising talk failed to acknowledge the simplistic dichotomy of this debate by the simple and consistent device of suppression. BMP discourses of advertising development failed to acknowledge the legitimacy of the creativity-effectiveness dichotomy. This matter is discussed at greater length in the following chapters but for the moment the point is made that what interpretative repertoires are available *but not used* can be a fruitful source of reflection concerning the rhetorical effects that may be accomplished by this omission. In the case of discourses of BMP advertising development, the refusal to use a resource common throughout the industry was an interesting form of suppression which seemed to have the rhetorical affect of positioning advertising development at BMP in a distinctive space aloof from such oversimplifications. It was a feature of the 'BMP Way' of doing advertising that good ads are both creative *and* effective. This simple but strategically highly significant position was maintained in part by suppressing the very linguistic resource (the creativity Vs effectiveness dichotomy position) which could rhetorically undermine it.

4.7.0 The discursive maintenance of social roles: an example from discursive psychology

The point that the performative character of linguistic usage in discourse is psychologically significant has been made above. In warranting our actions, positions and roles we draw on linguistic and discursive resources to position our selves within a social landscape. While this may not in itself be a radical insight the discursive accomplishment of such effects is nevertheless enormously complex. As a further illustrative example from discursive psychology, Much and Mahapatra (1995) examined the discursive construction of divinity in Orissa in eastern India. Their transcultural approach to discursive psychology investigated indigenous theories of divinity and the 'interconnectedness of three co-creative semiotic systems: persons, social structures and cultural symbol systems' (Much and Mahapatra, 1995, p. 55). In Orissa, *darshan* is the viewing of special instances of persons or events as conduits for divinity. Certain persons (the *Kalasi*) are generally regarded as holy people who have a divine authority. The *Kalasi* are usually women which, in a highly gender conscious society, makes their power and authority especially interesting from the point of view of feminist discursive psychology. Much and Mahapatra (1995) examined the talk of, and the verbal interactions of people with, one particular *Kalasi*. Their aims included the earning of psychological insight into the social discursive construction of divinity in the *Kalasi*. People believed very forcefully that the *Kalasi* was a divine conduit, had divine powers and authority and could offer authoritative advice and counselling. They went to the *Kalasi* as supplicants even though many of the people may have had higher social status (in sex, age or caste) than the *Kalasi*, in a highly status conscious society.

4.7.1 The discursive accomplishment of *Kalasi*

Much and Mahapatra (1995) found that the Kalasi's discourse seemed characterised

by certain features of regularity which, given the broader social context, constructed her divine authority. In one of her manifestations the *Kalasi* becomes the Mother and the discourse of the Mother has a name, *hukum*. *Hukum* is characterised by discursive practices which construct the authority of the Mother. This discourse contains a high proportion of imperatives: she gives orders, addresses social superiors as 'boy' and 'girl', and scolds, rebukes and blames. She also dominates interaction by speaking most of the time and not allowing the supplicants much time to speak. The emotive and expressive freedom of the Mother is in marked contrast to the general conduct of women in this culture. The alternative ways of addressing people, expressing social relations or accounting for blame or cause are suppressed in the *hukum* as a means of constructing divinely sanctioned social authority. Dominating the talk was also a way of suppressing alternative constructions, e.g. that the Mother was not divine or authoritative. Responses which might have challenged the construction of Mother as divine authority were suppressed discursively. The Mother's discourse was also characterised by continuous indexical references supernatural rituals and symbols and reference to predictions of threats or rewards in the (unspecified) future. In addition to this, the bodily semiosis iconically indicates divinity in its bearing, manner and adornment.

4.7.2 The discourse analytic process

This example of a discursive psychological research project employs a focus on textual analysis of discourses which seek out linguistic structure, function, variation, and suppression, but which are significantly mediated by the researcher's knowledge of the cultural context. The speaker in this case draws on quite apparent interpretative repertoires in order to rhetorically construct a personal identity and accompanying social relations (of divine authority) but the structure and function of these interpretative repertoires only make sense when mediated by an ethnomethodological consideration of the socio-cultural context.

4.7.3 The discursive maintenance of social identity

Certainly, people have an expectation of this behaviour in this culture and they may want to see it and believe. Indeed, they may find it upsetting for a *Kalasari* 'Mother's' divinity to be accounted as a social construction, just as a devout Western Christian might find it upsetting to read a discursive account of sainthood or clerical authority. However, the social construction of social identity is a continuous process. People may have expectations but they also need to have evidence. The *Kalasari* Mother has authority and status that many might wish to emulate. The genuineness of the Mother for the Orissa people must be continually re-constructed discursively. The social role is a discursive accomplishment which is sustained rhetorically. Clearly, many people seek to successfully accomplish social roles (as 'saint', person of intellectual or moral authority, 'expert' professional in any field,'comedian', entertainer and so on) and the ways in which these seem to be complex discursive accomplishments are rarely evident until one sees people attempting and failing to accomplish a particular social effect. It is then that it seems apparent that accomplishing certain social effects is a highly complex matter which concerns the relation of many discursive factors *in engagement with* active 'readers'. The rhetorical effect of suppression is one such discursive device but it seems inadequate to focus on this and other subterfuges of the text while ignoring what one knows of the ethnomethodological terms of discursive engagement. Additionally, it would be wrong to assume that, because the term 'rhetoric' is often used in a pejorative sense in British culture, that the accomplishments so maintained are in some way bogus or false. The central social constructionist point to be made is that the very substance of social life rests upon such accomplishments. It is not that rhetorical features of discourse take the place of more sincere, more 'true' means of social accomplishment. It is that the discursive accomplishment of social acts, identities and relations is simply far more complex, and more remarkable, than we may normally consider. Thus a discursive account of social accomplishment, far

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from diminishing its subject matter in reducing it to 'rhetoric', renders a more ethnomethodologically rich and complex account of a social process which is far more profound than everyday meaning making allows.

4.7.4 The social roles of advertising professionals

This social maintenance of identity is clearly a feature of discourse analysis conducted in a work environments. In the present study the interviewee/participant is being interviewed in their capacity as an advertising account team professional. In contemporary culture, the advertising professional in a major London agency can be seen as a prestigious figure. The positions articulated and maintained, and the warrants offered are a feature of the participant's maintenance of their professional identity (to the interviewer, to possible readers of the interview transcripts, and to themselves). This is not pointed out as a feature of these interviews or of this class of professionals in particular. It is a feature of social constructionism that social actors must create and maintain social roles. For example, Elliott and Wattanasuwan (1998) have shown how consumers use brands as symbolic resources for the construction of social identity. It is axiomatic in ethnomethodological research that part of the researcher's goal is to 'make the everyday strange'. The foregoing focus on the discursive maintenance of social identity has sought to illustrate that such maintenance, in any social context, is a remarkable and complex matter the subtleties of which are not always immediately apparent. The present study is more concerned with the social process of advertising development than with the ways in which advertising professionals discursively maintain their senses of professional identity. However, the way they articulate advertising development is *bound up with* their social roles as advertising professionals, therefore some further consideration of the notion of personal and professional identity seems warranted.

4.7.5 The grammar of personhood

Discursive psychologist Harre (1998) has drawn extensively on Wittgenstein to argue that the grammar of personhood can lead to mistaken assumptions (Harre, 1998). That is to say that, when a personal pronoun such as I is used, the expression is, according to Harre (1998) indexical rather than referential. In other words, 'I' is a point in space-time, a location: 'I' cannot, on a social constructionist scheme, refer to an entity. While we are embodied, the senses of self we assume to be relatively enduring such as personality, attitudes, abilities and physical appearance are social constructions which are contingent on conditions which are, in important respects, social. Clearly, an implication of this line of reasoning is that the work we do and the job title we hold is intrinsic to our sense of self or sense of identity but this sense is not fixed or given: it is something we have to work at to construct discursively. This work is acknowledges in discourse analysis as one possible function of interpretative repertoires.

4.7.6 'Professional identity'

The argument used here is that 'professional identity' (Lilley, 1997, for a discussion) is ineluctably a social construction maintained to others and to ourselves by certain discursive practices with which we draw selectively on meanings (values, ideologies) extant in the social world. It would of course be a mistake to apply stereotypes of the advertising person as someone less substantial, less worthy, somehow, than an engineer or a teacher. The maintenance of identity through discourse is considered, by many social constructionist psychologists, a universal human characteristic. The interesting thing about this perspective in researching people in their work role is to look at the interpretative repertoires they draw upon and the rhetorical effects these seem to be meant to achieve and to poke around the blurred edges where the effect seems less convincing, where the source of the repertoire and the function of the rhetoric seems more transparent, and to infer hypotheses concerning the alternative ways things could have been said. The alternatives to what is said are very

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interesting for what they might reveal concerning the maintenance of professional roles in a given context: there might seem to be features which it is particularly important to maintain in an advertising agency for example. Examining the possible reasons why these repertoires or rhetorical devices seem important can yield insights into the agency process of conceiving and designing major advertising campaigns.

4.7.7 Advertising stereotypes

Given the nature of the analytical framework to be used in this study it seems useful to briefly mention the social constructionist position on identity. Advertising account team members are acting out their roles, in a sense, as planners, managers or creatives, when they are talking about what they do at work. The resources they draw upon may have implications for their professional sense of self identity. For example, in an advertising agency there are stereotypes which are, to some extent, discursively maintained, such as the stereotype of the anarchic creative person, the planner as intellectual boffin and the account manager (or 'suit') as management lackey and general weasel (at least to other groups: account management see themselves in a mature way as necessarily pragmatic in organising the agency's work). However, the purpose of this research is not to focus on these or other representations of personal and professional identity as such. The primary object of interest in this research is the discursive production of consumer desire through the discursive production of creative advertising.

4.8.0 Discourse analysis: a reflexive consideration of some critical issues

The focus of this chapter has been to offer a discussion on the terms of engagement of discourse analysis, especially with regard to the central analytic concept of the 'interpretative repertoire'. Clearly, the research design of this study has been chosen because, for reasons offered throughout the thesis, it is judged the best

methodological approach to this particular research problem. Some of the internal controversies of social constructionist research approaches have been mentioned in the foregoing. The following section develops some of these themes in a reflexive discussion.

4.8.1 Interpretavist research; who's interpretation?

Discourse analysis falls within the interpretative tradition in sociology. It has usually emphasised a qualitative approach (although neither social constructionism nor *discourse analysis preclude quantitative approaches per se, rather they preclude the assumptions which usually accompany their use). Qualitative approaches tend to be clearly interpretative and this tendency is thought by some to have a relativist character. That is to say, who's interpretation of the data should be authoritative? In the Banister et al (1994) example of the toothpaste package text above, why should the discourses employed in the text be worthy of note? Why do they signify a power relation? Is it not the case that the toothpaste package tries to explain to consumers that the product is a good product which cleans teeth and it cannot do so other than by drawing on these other discourse forms?

4.8.2 Transparency of coding processes in discourse analysis

Other criticisms of discourse analytic approaches include the apparently impressionistic approach of many researchers who do not present detailed evidence of the coding procedures which have given rise to their conclusions in discourse analysis. This general criticism (e.g in Burr, 1995) also notes that interpretative repertoires are often cited in research papers without the supporting evidence of the text.

4.8.3 These criticisms addressed

In the present study these apparent weaknesses of discourse analytic research are addressed in the following way. Clearly, the researcher's engagement with the data is in some important senses interpretive: the transcribed texts are read and coded and 'interpretative repertoires' induced from the data. These repertoires are resolved in the light of the researcher's reflexive engagement with the interview texts and mediated by knowledge of the surrounding context. This surrounding knowledge includes observation in the agency, informal exchanges with agency staff, memories of archive material and aspects of personal experience of advertising and of research all of which bring to bear on the interpretation of the interview data. However, a high order of transparency and rigour can still be brought to bear by the simple device of making clear the coding procedures for the repertoires and performing a content analysis of the transcripts. In this way, notwithstanding the varying personal experience readers bring to the interview texts, any reader can see clearly the grounds for categorisation of the various induced repertoires. Readers can also apply the descriptors for each repertoire in content analysing the texts to confirm that the repertoires postulated do indeed constitute significant linguistic resources through which the advertising development process at BMP is discursively constituted. As Elliott (1996) points out, attempts to render discourse analytic research verifiable have been 'valiant' but ultimately they must be resolved using Thompson's (1990) three categories of insight: conceptual, phenomenological, and paradigmatic.

4.8.4 A further criticism: the potential circularity of discourse analysis

Parker and Burman (1993) describe some more criticisms of discourse analysis. One such is that social constructionist approaches to social research are themselves social constructions and as such are characterised by performative aspects, structures, variability and the other rhetorical characteristics of discourse. In other words discourse analysis cannot call upon higher criteria subsisting outside of discourse as legitimating resources. It cannot stand outside itself as somehow more authoritative

or more true then the discourses it analyses. In the rhetoric of natural science, the researcher is positioned as an expert who stands apart from the subject matter of the research and utilises a neutral observation language to uncover the objective truth. In social constructionist research, the research partly constructs its object, the researcher is part of this process, and truth is a matter of rich ethnographic description.

4.8.5 A social constructionist response

Many social constructionist inspired texts argue that positivist research is concerned with drawing upon interpretative repertoires (of, for example, 'empirical evidence', 'realism', 'verifiability' etc.) for rhetorical effect. In other words, social constructionist approaches do not accept that their claims are in any way less forceful, less true or less legitimate than those of positivist research. The fact that they cannot draw upon the same kinds of rhetorical resource for legitimation does not render the claims less substantial. The paradigms of social constructionist research and positivist research rest upon differing ontologies which entail differing epistemologies. Therefore each requires judgement in its own terms. Social constructionist research approaches seek to generate insights which reflect the meanings of social life and which make sense in human terms. These goals may be sought rigorously and with transparency regardless of the methodological issues entailed.

4.9.0 Interpretative issues revisited: representation of the text

Reference has been made so far to various features of social constructionism which may be said to be incommensurable with the structuralist/functionalist research tradition. One primary feature concerns the contested character of social life. That is, social texts are subject to interpretation which can never be final. Interpretations

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may be plausible, coherent, transparent, rigorously supported and so on, but the meaning of the text can never be incontestable. Texts are not said to have one single meaning but their meaning is constructed through the active engagement of the reader. 'Reader response' theories..

> "...argue against the traditional notion that texts have a single meaning, for which authority lies with the author. Reader response theories suggest instead that many possible meanings of texts are constructed through interaction between textual characteristics and characteristics of readers themselves." (Howard and Allen, 1989, p. 280, in Edwards and Potter, 1995).

As Ritson and Elliott (1995) argue in the context of advertising, the meaning of an advertising text is a matter of joint construction between the readers of the text, individual consumers, and the text itself. Consumers might read many different meanings into advertising texts. This essential indeterminacy of textual meaning is a major feature of discourse analysis in marketing and advertising (Elliott, 1996, Cook, 1992, Elliott et al, 1995).

Given the above considerations and arguments, research in the social constructionist tradition grounds its claims in a careful and selective consideration of textual data which is rigorously analysed according to methodologically coherent principles. The research design of this study seeks to offer a methodological justification for this exploratory study which is rigorously supportable in terms of its ontological, methodological and epistemological coherence. One important aspect of this issue concerns the transcription of the interview text.

4.9.1 Transcription conventions

As Edwards and Potter (1992) point out, transcription is major and intrinsic part of discourse analysis since, they argue, the conventions of transcription adopted

presuppose the theoretical orientation of the researcher. While this may be so in a very direct sense with conversation analysis in which the pauses, vocal inflections and solecisms of the speaker are the main conceptual analytical material, it is less true of discourse analytic approaches which are seeking to interpret the function of the speaker's discourse from the analysis of larger linguistic units such as sentences or other sources of thematic coherence in the speaker's discursive ways of accounting for beliefs, actions or points of view. Furthermore, there is a labour intensity to very formal transcription methods which may be precluded by the scale of data being analysed. Conversation analysis (and some forms of discourse analysis) can be conducted on very small amounts of textual data. Transcription of audio recordings of interviews is highly labour intensive in itself. Formal transcription conventions (such as the 'Jefferson' model used in Atkinson and Heritage, 1984) are more labour intensive still.

4.9.2 Transcription issues

The transcription of a recorded interview is a means of translating what is said into some kind of orthographic system (Stubbs, 1983). In the present study, some twelve formal interviews were conducted of which seven were fully transcribed by hand amounting to some thirty thousand words of interview text. This process of transcription took some eight months. It was decided to eschew formal transcription methods such as the 'Jefferson model'. These can be highly technical and do not necessarily render the meaning of interviews clear to inexpert readers. Given the content analysis method of confirmation to be employed in this study, it was decided to transcribe the interviews in as natural a style as possible so that the meaning of what was said might be transparent to any reader. Some innovations were introduced to this end, such as phonetically including interviewee colloquialisms, repetitions, stutters, or solipsisms. This preserves the informal, ungrammatical character of face to face linguistic usage while also preserving the integrity of the

transcript in a transparent way. The method is extremely time consuming because it cannot be given over to expert typists: to fully interpret recorded interviews in this way, the transcriber must have been part of the interview. The difficulty of this method is worthwhile because the result is a full transcript which faithfully reproduces the interview in a way which can be accessed by any subsequent reader.

4.10.0 Concluding comments

This chapter has elaborated on social constructionist themes and approaches in discursive psychology in order to further ground the methodological choices of this study. It has offered examples of research in discursive psychology in order to demonstrate the kinds of approach and findings generated in other discourse analytic research studies. These examples emphasised the way that discourse analysis reveals the constructed and maintained character of social roles and self identity. Applications of discourse analytic research can cover any social phenomenon that may be represented as text in some form. The two examples of discourse analytic research offered above demonstrate the flexibility of discourse analysis as a broad analytical framework which can be adapted to widely differing research situations. The examples also demonstrate the centrality of the notion of the interpretative repertoire in widely differing studies, the need for an ethnographic understanding of the whole social context in question, and the power of the loose methodological framework of discourse analysis to generate telling insights in response to vastly differing research questions. Finally, they demonstrate the way discourse analysis engages the researcher in a creative way with data.

4.10.1 A focus on constructed meanings

Social constructionist discourse analytic approaches enable researchers to preserve the constructed meanings with which social actors make sense of their worlds

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through a reflexive interpretation of findings. The focus on constructed meanings allows political considerations to be highlighted in the sense that discourse analysis can delineate the way that differing interpretative repertoires interact in discourse to reproduce, or occasionally to subvert, power relations. This focus on meanings in context marks social constructionist research out as a radical turn away from the positivist research tradition. In this study, the empirical research focus on meanings deriving from discursive structures is grounded in an explicitly social constructionist ontology. Ontology, epistemology and methodology together offer a coherent framework within which this study is conducted (as illustrated in chapter one).

4.10.2 The 'interpretative repertoire' as analytical concept

The concept of the 'interpretative repertoire' offers a route into the social world of constructed meanings. People use language selectively in discourse. In everyday social relations it is often difficult to see how social roles are accomplished discursively. We tend to accept the social order relatively uncritically, and to take many warrants and accounting devices at face value. However, when discourse is turned into forms of textual representation which can be carefully analysed at length, structural regularities emerge which indicate the kinds of warranting devices people tend to use in the maintenance of everyday roles. These warranting devices may constitute patterns of resource, 'interpretative repertoires', which form frames of reference which are meaningful for individuals or groups and which constitute the basis of claims. The structures of discursive meaning making are then analysed, in the light of the researcher's ethnographic appreciation of the social form of life under scrutiny, in order to seek insights into their functional character. What does this person seek to accomplish by saying things in this way? What does this organisation accomplish if people regularly say things in this way? Questions such as these guide the researcher in seeking insight into the dynamics of discourse in a given social situation. This chapter represents a prelude to the empirical work beginning in

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chapter five which conducts a discourse analytic research process on the discourse of advertising development.

4.10.3 Moving into the empirical phase of the thesis

The next chapter will begin the empirical stage of the research. Chapter five will fill in the background to the study in terms of an initial discussion of the advertising agency on which the study is focussed. This is important because this agency works in a distinctive way with priorities which circumscribe the ways its staff can construct their own working experience. The agency is a highly successful and dynamic one and as such has a strong cultural presence for the staff: the ways they articulate what their work in advertising means to them reflects discourses which are owned and perpetuated by the agency itself. A largely descriptive account of the agency and its ways of working is important in order to give context to the subsequent interviews which form the analytical focus. The reader may understand what the interviewees are talking about through reference to the background in chapter four. Chapter six will then report the results of the initial coding process to categorise the interpretative repertoires which form the distinctive characteristics of the agency professionals' accounting devices. This analysis of the apparent structural features of agency discourse will be followed by an analysis of the possible functions such repertoires may serve in the context of the creative advertising process as conducted at this particular agency. The analysis will seek to better understand how creative and successful advertising is socially constructed through the discursive accomplishments of the account teams which create the advertising.

4.11.0 Chapter summary

Several themes of immediate relevance to the methodological phase of this thesis have been discussed in the preceding chapter. In particular, the nature of the central

analytical concept of the 'interpretative repertoire' has been discussed. In addition, some pragmatic issues of empirical method have been indicated, such as the conduct and transcription of interviews. Chapters one through four of this thesis have attempted to set out clear terms of reference for this study. A problematisation rationale has been established and grounded in relevant literature. An empirical and methodological response to the problematisation rationale has been put forward. This in turn has been grounded in a review of relevant literature. The thesis now moves into its empirical phase beginning with an initial contextual discussion of the advertising agency in question. This discussion will set out necessary background within which to locate the specific textual analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

Setting the empirical context: BMP DDB Needham

Chapter outline: This chapter will begin the empirical phase of the thesis by outlining the context of the study. The chapter examines published sources and archives which detail the evolution of the agency and its practices, and the distinctive philosophy of advertising development which BMP DDB brings to its work.

5.0.0 Introduction: setting the broader context

This chapter begins the empirical work of the thesis by filling out the background to the study. The primary empirical focus concerns the leading (top 5) UK advertising agency BMP DDB, part of the worldwide Needham communications group. Particular attention will be paid to the agency's distinctive way of doing advertising since BMP's philosophy of advertising development is a central feature of the agency's corporate self-identity.

5.1.0 BMP DDB Needham: writing its own story

BMP DDB perpetuates a strong agency ethos through its ways of working and of telling its story. The agency produces many 'reels' or videos of its work, the group of which the agency is a subsidiary produces videos of its ways of managing the creative advertising process, and the successes of the agency work are preserved in booklets and bound case histories[1]. There is also a web page and links with other professional organisations so that professionals working in each function have many means of engaging in discourses in which the agency story, and the advertising industry stories, are retold.

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[1] "BMP Works" Vols, 1 and 2, ISBN 1 870562 07 0 and ISBN 1 899314 10 5

5.1.1 Origins and evolution

BMP DDB (Boase Massimi Pollitt Doyle Dane Bernbach) is a London advertising agency which has evolved through several manifestations. Most of the following potted history is drawn from BMP's own in house publication. In 1949 Bill Bernbach founded Doyle Dane Bernbach with an ethos of advertising creativity:

> " Properly practised creativity must result in greater sales more economically achieved. Properly practised creativity can lift your claims out of the swamp of sameness and make them accepted, believed, persuasive, urgent". Bill Bernbach, BMP DDB publication[2].

BMP was founded in 1968. Martin Boase, one of the founders, is quoted on the sleeve of one of the bound volumes of BMP case histories (Feldwick, 1992) as saying:

> "I do not accept that there has to be a choice between advertising that is strategically relevant, or creatively original". BMP Works, Vol.1, sleeve note, Feldwick, 1992

DDB merged with the U.S. Needham Group in 1986, becoming DDB Needham Worldwide. In 1989 BMP was acquired by the group. In another agency publication Martin Boase is again quoted:

> "This agency (BMP) has been built around an idea. A point of view. A coherent set of beliefs about advertising. At the heart of these beliefs is a conviction that really effective advertising must be both relevant and outstandingly distinctive, not just one or the other." Martin Boase, BMP publication.

5.1.2 BMP as pioneers of the planning discipline

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[2] BMP DDB have produced a hardbound publication detailing the history, achievements and ethos of
ιe agency.

As the story goes, (confirmed anecdotally) BMP pioneered the discipline of account planning in the UK as a development of the company philosophy that advertising can and must be both 'relevant' and 'distinctive'.

> "Account Planning- probably the major innovation in advertising in the last twenty-five years, this has had a major influence on UK advertising and is beginning to infect Europe and the USA"-sleeve note, BMP Works vol. 1

5.1.3 BMP as a successful leading UK agency

The planning process was designed to generate 'greater consumer insights' as the platform for 'mould breaking creative work'. This holistic approach to advertising entails careful media planning integrated with the other functions of account management, planning and creativity. The BMP publication states that this simple principle is difficult to apply in practice then offers BMP's record in industry awards to support the case that BMP gets it right. Three tables show BMP DDB (or BMP for short) top of league tables compiled from awards won. One table shows IPA[3] Effectiveness Awards 1980-1996. BMP DDB leads the table by some distance, well ahead of J. Walter Thompson and Abbot Mead Vickers BBDO. The second table shows "Major Creative Awards 1989-1997" with BMP DDB on top ahead of Saatchi and Saatchi. The third table shows "Media Week Awards" (an industry publication) with BMP Optimum, the media arm of BMP, on top of the table again ahead of all other UK agencies. Recent major campaigns are listed, of which there are many. They include Barclaycard, British Gas, Budweiser, Marmite, Doritos, PG Tips, Sony, Volkswagen and Walker's Crisps, Alliance and Leicester, John Smiths, Strepsils, and many other high profile campaigns. The agency has a distinguished record in radio advertising as well as television. Its creative work is distinguished in the use of scripted celebrity ads (for, e.g. British Gas, Walker's Crisps and Barclaycard), in

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[3] IPA: Institute for Practitioners in Advertising

highly innovative cinematic work integrated with rock music for Sony and Budweiser ads, in the use of humour and novelty in VW campaigns, PG Tips and John Smith's; in fact the agency is distinguished in a broad range of creative and strategic marketing communications work.

5.1.4 Billings

BMP DDB is the UK's fourth largest advertising agency on billings of £324 million in 1996. Of these billings, (total advertising expenditure of clients) television constitutes 63%, press 26%, posters, radio and cinema 11%. Clearly, this is a very high profile agency with a major interest in television advertising. The agency's income is spread over 40+ major clients and ranges from £20 million from one client to £250,000 from the smallest.

5.1.5 Agency-client relationships

BMP DDB boasts the longevity of many of its client relationships (over 40% of clients have been with the agency for over 5 years, 20% for over ten years) and seeks to promote the development of trust and longevity in these relationships. The agency claims a distinctive recruitment and development approach:

> "Producing better work means attracting better people and keeping them. In an industry infamous for its instability, we have done this by creating a culture which attracts like-minded spirits with a real passion for advertising. We support them with one of the largest training budgets in the industry and we have added to this pool with graduate recruitment every year since 1970, providing us with seven of our senior executive directors". BMP publication.

5.1.6 Functional integration

Part of the BMP philosophy is to integrate media buying with the planning and other advertising development functions. The agency's media buying arm, BMP Optimum, is the UK's fourth largest media buyer, with £311 million gross billings placed in 1996. The discrepancy between advertising billings and media billings occurs because BMP advertising clients may not necessarily place their work through BMP's own media service, while BMP Optimum has its own clients who hire it just to buy media space.

BMP DDB has created a 'cross disciplinary team' to develop interactive media advertising solutions, called BMP InterAction. The agency also has a direct marketing arm. An internal agency resource, 'Billco', acts as an information conduit for planners, creatives and in support of strategic issues. Billco is a library, multi media and general information resource centre. This and the other internal agency resources compete for their own clients in addition to servicing internally. The other resources include qualitative research specialisms, an econometrics unit, recruitment service, in-house video production, public relations and multi-media consultancy. As BMP DDB is part of an international group, it has access to external resources as well in such areas as branding and brand development, publishing, sales promotion and PR.

5.1.7 BMP as part of a worldwide group

The DDB Needham international group is the fourth largest marketing communications network in the world with billings of around $10 billion. In Europe DDB is ranked fifth with offices in thirty-two countries. DDB International heads another league table in BMP DDB's company booklet, this one titled "Cannes Creative Awards 1988-97".

5.1.8 Personnel

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Finally, the internal agency publication gives pen portraits and photographs of the leading figures in the agency, all men aged about thirties to fifties, including notes on their university attainment. BMP seems to place some stock in recruiting graduates with good degrees from prestigious institutions. Oxford University degrees in the Humanities seem particularly popular, but more quantitative disciplines are also represented.

5.1.9 The self written agency story

The BMP DDB publication occupies a discreet place on the table in reception along with numerous other publications, daily newspapers, industry magazine and so on. There is also a copy in many of the staff offices. As a rhetorical device, it seems, to an advertising enthusiast but an outsider, powerful in framing a narrative of advertising practice, a story which has a coherent development, consistent themes and principal actors. It would be wrong to imply that daily work at BMP is overtly circumscribed by an intrusive procedural emphasis and a pious reverence for individuals and institutions. Nevertheless, just as advertising itself can have an unplanned, serendipitous yet cohesive character, the BMP ethos does frame but not delimit the company culture. The publication seems, to an admitted outsider and perhaps to new clients and new recruits, to be a powerful story told simply but very effectively. As the research progressed it became increasingly possible to see this story as a construction. This is not to imply that it isn't true, just that the way the narrative is retold through publications and other communications within the agency constitutes a significant discursive resource in itself. While it is certainly possible to make too much of the booklet, it is striking that the evolution of the agency is given its narrative hook by reference to an advertising philosophy, ethos or approach. The various mergers and developments were not described as the consequences of personal ambition, partnerships and collusions, networks, animosities, accidents, mistakes and cock ups although it would be unreasonable to suppose that none of

these factors ever played a part. Instead, an interpretative repertoire of 'excellence in advertising' in employed to tell a story of the development of an agency which is founded on the integrity of its working practice, which in turn derives from the insights and wisdoms about advertising of BMP's founding figures. This 'excellence in advertising' repertoire is reinforced within the agency by well designed posters of successful work, flattering press cuttings and letters from grateful clients (including one from the Prime Minister Tony Blair above the men's urinal). Of course BMP senior staff would agree that excellent advertising is what the agency does and that they are entitled to make public their best work. The excellence of the agency is , well supported with evidence of industry awards (including a recent major one reported in the *Independent*, July 14th 1998, for the Volkswagen 'affordability' campaign). But the reality of these achievements is not at issue. The point worth examining is the way the agency's achievements and evolutionary history come together to make a story which informs continued agency practice and circumscribes the practices and discourses of employees. This story then informs the successful advertising BMP makes and is bound up with the agency's insights into consumers.

5.1.10 The 'BMP Story' as a narrative construction

Rhetorically, the effect of the internal publication and the other internal posters of successful work is to establish a narrative which is probably more convincing to an outsider than to people inside the industry. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the scepticism which one is entitled to acquire after a period of employment somewhere, the 'excellence in advertising' resource did provide a reference point which interviewees drew upon as part of the construction of their own interpretative repertoires. The BMP culture and philosophy was communicated through the organisation and influenced staff who made their own variations on it to suit their own approach, predispositions and ways of working. Quite interestingly, the BMP story was used selectively as a resource by some staff who adopted scepticism as a

theme and took an overtly enquiring position on every aspect of advertising. The 'excellence in advertising' theme was used in some cases as a sort of anti-resource to rhetorically assert that it had been assimilated but not uncritically. Hence the story of BMP as excellent advertisers with a history and a coherent, distinctive philosophy of advertising constitutes an important interpretative repertoire even for staff who don't particularly believe in it. (In writing this paragraph I am thinking in particular of the interview with Account Planner X1 as an example: the more detailed analysis of the interviews in terms of their interpretative repertoires will be offered with closer quotes and referencing later).

This preliminary discussion has noted some features of BMP culture and the rhetorical status of certain resources of excellence, history and advertising philosophy. This general resource is elaborated upon by the agency's well worked out principles regarding advertising process.

5.2.0 The Advertising Development Process at BMP DDB: distinctive features

The sources for this section include external secondary resources, internal agency publications, documents and presentation materials, supplemented by observation and informal conversations. Occasional reference will be made to features of the interview data where a point seems to be relevant. In this initial discussion these will be supported only generally, with the more detailed discourse analysis coming later.

5.2.1 'Distinctiveness and relevance' through account planning

As noted above, the agency philosophy is committed to building both distinctiveness and relevance into its advertising programmes. The discipline of account planning was pioneered at BMP to facilitate this by providing greater depth of consumer insights. A concomitant belief, reinforced through the talk of agency professionals, is

that 'creativity' is a qualitative feature of the best advertising and the characteristic which can produce distinctiveness. The BMP approach to creativity is not romantic or idealistic: creativity is essentially seen as a resource which, given strategic direction, can mobilise qualities of distinctiveness in its advertising. The 'relevance' resource, often repeated in the agency, sends the strong rhetorical signal that its approach to creativity is pragmatic and strategic.

5.2.2 'Creativity' as a strategic resource

Creativity at BMP is seen as a major feature of the best advertising but 'creativity' as a discursive resource is located in a notably subordinate position to 'marketing strategy'. The creativity rhetorically serves the client's marketing strategy. Some creative professionals at BMP noted in their interviews that creative staff could be more powerful and better paid at some other agencies. However, it was also noted that career longevity in the industry was sometimes a price paid by powerful creatives. In other words, advertising creativity that was not circumscribed by a careful team approach which placed strategic marketing issues as the most prominent feature in the advertising design process stood a higher chance of falling flat (i.e. of not being successful). The team approach of BMP may also imply a collective responsibility for a campaign's success.

5.2.3 Trust in client relationships

There is an emphasis on trust and building a relationship with the client (which, anecdotally, is not necessarily achieved in every case). After initial meetings with the client, a decision is made as to whether advertising is the answer to the client's strategic problem. A recurring feature of the BMP staff discourse was their use of a 'BMP integrity' resource, perhaps to distance themselves from popular advertising stereotypes of avarice, mendaciousness and the 'quick buck' mentality. They argued

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that as advertising professionals they took a broad view of the client's needs and did not recommend advertising if it would not solve the problem. Clearly, pragmatically this is an important feature of the process where results are at a premium. A short term gain in billings would not be a reasonable to price to pay too often for a visibly failed campaign. The kinds of strategic marketing problem for which advertising could be a solution might include a new product launch, a corporate advertising campaign, a general election (BMP worked for Labour at the last election), a response to competitor activity, a need to enter a different segment of consumers, a need to increase market share, to re-launch a brand or in many cases simply to remind consumers that a brand or a product is still a major feature of their consumer landscape.

5.2.4 Client brief and the 'strategic role' for advertising

The advertising process at BMP entails various stages some of which may or may not be missed or subsumed under others according to the circumstances. They include an analysis of the client's strategic needs, the business analysis which is informed by the client brief. Client briefs tend to be businessy, framed in marketing discourse and often concerned with market share and other strategic marketing objectives. This must be assessed in order to decide whether the client's objectives are consistent with what might be achieved with advertising. This key stage is called 'defining the role of advertising' and is the platform for the client agency relationship and the basis for all subsequent action.

5.2.5 Planning: building on consumer insights to develop the creative brief

After the role of advertising has been established in broad terms, the planning process is embarked upon, often with 'positioning research' which seeks to begin the process of earning insights about the consumer in the client's marketing context. A

significant feature of the planning process is the writing of the creative brief. The planner builds up a picture of the consumer segment of interest from social research (often both quantitative and qualitative) and attempts to distil this insight into a creative brief which will be both stimulating for the creative teams and strategically relevant for the client. The creative brief is a very significant aspect of the advertising development process and is examined in more detail later.

5.2.6 Creative development

The advertising concepts are then developed. These conceptual advertisements may consist of initial creative approaches, perhaps in the forms of scripts or animatics, which will then be further researched in a process of 'creative development research'. The animatics, scripts or other stimulus materials can be the subjects of focus group consumer research as the concept is refined and developed. This stage of the process, as with the other stages, may vary markedly in length and complexity depending on the circumstances. Once the creative approach has been researched, established and agreed the advertising is produced.

5.2.7 Pre-production and production

Much of advertising production, especially TV production, is sub contracted to television or film production companies. As the campaign develops a continuous process of evaluation takes place and this feeds back into the advertising development process loop. If qualitative research of creative approaches generates negative feedback then the approach is re-evaluated.

5.3.0 BMP corporate style and culture in advertising development

BMP has a highly verbal, collegiate culture. Every stage of the advertising

development process is articulated carefully at numerous ("tortuous") meetings, each aspect of the rationale for the campaign is put into words and picked apart. This process at BMP allows every participant a voice although it is not democratic: there is a heirarchy of authority and final decisions are made by authoritative senior staff such as the DOCs ("Directors of Creativity"), the Director of Planning or the Board Account Managers. However, many of these decisions are themselves mediated through further research and discussion. Other agencies may be (according to the interviewees who had experience at other agencies) much less verbal, less inclined to discuss every point. Some agencies would see the creative stars taking control of a brief immediately the client offered it, bypassing the planning function and marginalising the account management function.

The next section will describe the BMP approach to advertising development in more detail.

5.4.0 The BMP DDB Advertising development philosophy

The advertising development process overview at BMP can be summarised as follows:

5.4.1 Account management-Planning-Creatives-Art Director-Production-Media

As noted above, BMP DDB Needham articulates its approach to the advertising process in a series of publications and internal presentation material. Additionally, the advertising process at BMP DDB is given form by the use of pro forma documents to record the essential positions taken for each stage. These documents are interesting texts in themselves but some of them are reproduced below to offer a overview of the advertising process in which the account staff engage at BMP, in order to set a more detailed context for the examination of the interviews in the

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following chapters. The writing down of the main stages of the advertising process allows BMP to track and record each stage in a way that focuses the attention of the staff involved on the issues which the agency sees as significant. Also, the existence of these documents means that the agency can agree each stage with the client without fear of misunderstandings emerging later. 'This isn't what we agreed' can be a common argument which is forestalled by the existence of written documentation. Clearly the character of the advertising process, particularly the creative aspects of it, is not entirely captured in these written documents. They serve, perhaps, as agenda around which discussions are organised. However, they do constitute important aspects of the advertising development process and as such it is worth reproducing a few of them here. They give flavour of the kinds of discussion that take place and of the priorities that BMP give to particular features of the advertising development process.

5.4.2 BMP internal material 1: "What has to happen in order to make an ad"

One item of internal BMP presentation material offers a simplified introductory picture of the advertising process. The item is reproduced below. It is a part of the introductory material BMP use for new appointees or interns.

"WHAT HAS TO HAPPEN IN ORDER TO MAKE AN AD?

* Deciding what the ads need to say and to who- THE CREATIVE BRIEF
* Coming up with the creative idea
* Testing whether the idea is right
* Making the film/press ad.
* Planning and booking the media
* Supplying the ad to the media
* Evaluating the effects of the campaign"

Source: BMP DDB presentation material

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5.4.3 Overlapping roles and responsibilities

The overview above doesn't elaborate on the overlapping and complex roles and responsibilities which are engaged in this process. For example, when the client initially brings their strategic marketing need to the agency discussions take place as to what form these needs might take in the client's best interests. A marketing need for market share or new product exposure may not translate directly into advertising. Of course, some clients are more willing to be directed than others. Some (e.g. Johnson and Johnson) have worked out a clear idea of what they want and they want the agency to put this into action. Other clients give the agency a free creative hand to do what seems useful. The latitude given to the agency, and the trust this entails, is a function of several factors such as the account manager's relationship with the client's representative, the length of the client's association with the agency, and the culture and strategic marketing philosophy of the client organisation. Often at the initial stage at BMP the planner is involved as well as the account manager. This is a feature of BMP's distinctive approach to the role of planning in the advertising development process. The client brief, the brief the client initially came to the agency with, is translated into a creative brief by the planner. The creative brief encapsulates what the ad should mean for and to the consumer, rather than what it must achieve for the client. The process of devising the creative brief may be preceded by weeks of, usually qualitative research. This research informs the advertising strategy document, which in turn informs the creative brief.

While the structure of advertising development at BMP is relatively fluid it does have a definable sequence of considerations. Another schematic of the process goes into more detail on advertising development as a 'creative' process.

5.4.4 BMP internal material 2: 'creative advertising development'

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT	CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT	PRODUCTION	IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION
Market evaluation	Brief creative team	Production phase	Supply to local territories
Brand interrogation	Present initial creative work		Adapt accordingly On air/in press
Initial product briefing	Amend recommendations Present work &	Present initial post-	On-going tracking evaluation
Develop creative brief	costs to business groups Local input	production	
Approve creative brief	Gauge reaction/ Amend accordingly	Approval of final work	*Adapted from BMP material

5.5.0 Strategic development

The initial strategic advertising development at BMP is undertaken primarily by the account planner who addresses issues such as 'what is the role for advertising?' In other words, what is the strategic marketing function the advertising must serve for the client? This may involve, for example, product re-positioning, launch or re-launch, tactical manoeuvres, to increase repeat purchase and so on. This strategic role must be translated from a marketing discourse to an advertising discourse by the planner. The advertising strategy also entails a consideration of the desired characteristics of the consumer who the client wishes to reach: i.e. the 'segment' or audience for the ad. The knowledge the planner earns about the consumer will inform creative decisions at each stage of the process. BMP holds that advertising should entertain and establish shared values which promote brand empathy with the consumer. In recent campaigns BMP has used strategic themes such as the notion of reliability and human values built into the Volkswagen Golf; the notion that Walkers crisps are irresistible, and the idea that Sony reinvigorates the senses. Clearly, the

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advertising strategy in words can have a bland and one dimensional character until the creative team give it life by employing other communicative forms to mobilise the strategy in a creatively successful way. BMP have recently won many awards for their work on the highly successful Volkswagen account. The 'marketing agency brief' which outlined Volkswagen's strategic requirements in August 1995 included such comments as these:

5.5.1 BMP internal material 3: Marketing Brief for Volkswagen, 1995.

"MARKETING AGENCY BRIEF

1. Name of product/service: The Volkswagen brand.

2. Business objectives: move from 4% to 6% market share in three years: this is the fastest rate of growth ever attempted in the motor industry.

3. Marketing strategy: reposition the brand as a mainstream player: further exploitation of the (current) niche will not yield the necessary volume. We must therefore broaden our appeal by raising the profile of Polo and Passat to Golf level.

4. Advertising objectives: (Measureable-e.g. awareness, attitudes, responses): Increase awareness of the brand dramatically through both increased media spend and more impactful creative executions. Broaden attitudes towards the brand from safe, middle class, middle age to include a younger, more dynamic audience.

5. Target market information: (e.g. who buys currently? TGI): Currently our real strength is one product, the Golf, which appeals to both old and young: Polo and Passat have has much weaker and generally older profiles, we need to redress the balance between Golf and the other models by appealing more to a younger (30s) and young family audience.

6. Competitive information: (Key competitors, strengths and weaknesses): To be mainstream we must compete with Ford and Vauxhall, particularly in the fleet market. However, the retail market has been driven recently by the French manufacturers who are now seen as dynamic and stylish.

Both domestic and foreign competitors have seen significant increase in quality, eroding one of VWs traditional advantages.

7. Key Brand benefit; we aim to establish emotional reliability beyond the product in every facet of our business. People will be able to trust the product, trust the company and (ultimately) trust the dealer network as well.

8. Other product benefits and helpful facts: The factory's declared intention is that every new car launched, starting with Polo, will be best in class an d competitively priced (both to buy and run). The key benefit of trust is supported by VWs heritage of reliability. We mus not lose this as it is our most valuable possession. There is real commitment to improving customer handling at both Milton Keynes and in the dealer network.

9. Mandatory inclusions: none

10. Budget; Enough!

11. Timetable/deadlines; Although the brief covers three years and should be shaping people's opinions into the next millennium it must start in January 1996."

Source: internal BMP document.

5.5.2 Advertising strategic development: the case of Volkswagen

This document illustrates an early stage in the advertising process when strategic marketing issue are addressed. VW had appraised their strategy in terms of an objective to achieve 6% market share by 1998. They had decided that they needed to broaden the appeal of the VW brand by 'reinforcing it core appeal of rational reassurance, establishing its status as affordable and reinvigorating its status as desirable' (source: internal BMP document). It sought to improve perceptions of the cost of buying and owning a VW (seen in the 'affordablility' campaign). These and other detailed strategic considerations of the client are discussed extensively with the

account planner and manager and this forms the background for the agency marketing brief. The issues which emerge from this stage are refined into an advertising strategy document in order to answer the question 'what is the role for advertising?' The internal BMP advertising strategy document is also a pro forma which the planner follows in negotiation with the account manager and client. One example of the advertising strategy document is as follows:

5.5.3 BMP internal material 4: VW 'master brief'

"VOLKSWAGEN- OVERALL CAMPAIGN MASTER BRIEF-

ADVERTISING STRATEGY

What and who

1. WHAT DOES THE CLIENT EXPECT THE CAMPAIGN TO ACHIEVE?

Volkswagen has to achieve growth in its share, across Europe, over the next 3 years. Advertising has a major part to play in this offensive. We need to use advertising to inject the brand with a strong dose of adrenalin so that more people believe that Volkswagen cars are better cars to own and, consequently, so that more people want to own one.

2. WHO ARE WE TRYING TO INFLUENCE?

This is about raising the profile of the Volkswagen brand across Europe, regardless of whether or not they are currently in the market for a new car. In particular we need to raise Volkswagen's profile to be more dynamic and therefore to broaden its appeal to be more than just a safe, middle class brand.

3. WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THEM THAT WILL HELP US?

Volkswagen is one of the few car brands that they have a focussed impression of. They associate it with reliability, robustness, durability, and quality and, as such, have come to think of Volkswagen cars as better cars to own. However, in recent years this impression has become a bit tired and faded and Volkswagen's 'betterness' and consequent desirability is not so top of mind.

They've always liked VW advertising and while they still buy in to what it says.

We need to stand out to them again by providing more consistent reminders of why Volkswagen cars really are better cars to own in a way that is less expected than our current advertising.

4. WHAT EXACTLY DO WE WANT PEOPLE TO DO AS A RESULT OF THE ADVERTISING?

Re-appraise what they think and know about Volkswagen and realise afresh that they really are the better of the cars they could own.

5.WHAT REWARD WILL PERSUADE THEM TO DO THIS?

Each individual brief will provide a demonstration of the fact that- "Volkswagen design cars that everyone can trust".

6. HOW COULD WE SUPPORT THIS REWARD?

Volkswagen is about design integrity

-'Proof'- product substantiation

-'Core values'- simple honest representation

-'Human touch'- Volkswagen put people before cars.

7. IS THERE A PARTICULAR TONE OF VOICE OR BRAND PERSONALITY WE NEED TO DEVELOP?

"Bernbach for the 21ˢᵗ century..."

Ask anyone what they think of Volkswagen and the sort of words that they come back with are "trust", honesty", "integrity" and "simplicity". These associations stem from both the cars and from the way that we have advertised them over the years.

Volkswagen advertising does not necessarily glorify the motor car. It is honest and realistic about what cars are all about talks about things that really do matter to people and is genuinely self deprecating- not smug or self-satisfied. In a sense the Volkswagen is the anti hero of car marketing and advertising. While other manufacturers say very little about their cars but smother them in veneer, Volkswagen is about substance and honesty and about delivering this in a way which reflects a sense of style and discernment on to the drivers of their cars.

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We need to develop and reinforce these impressions but to become more populist and more contemporary. While we should be in keeping with the best of what DDB has done for Volkswagen over the years we need to be fresh enough to really make people notice again.

8. WHAT IS THE ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITY?

To inject the Volkswagen brand with a strong dose of adrenalin so that more people believe that Volkswagen cars are better to own and, consequently, so that more people want to own one."

Source: internal BMP document

5.6.0 The planning role and creative research

These internal documents show that the language of advertising is prosaic, and the strategy stage of advertising process at BMP is characterised by the articulation and reiteration of simple axioms concerning the strategic needs of the client, the meaning the brand or product has for consumers, and the role advertising might play in helping fulfil the strategic aims. BMP is rather different than many agencies in the way it conducts this process and in particular in the way that it integrates empirical research into the process at every stage through the planning function. Part of the planner's role is to understand the meanings of the brand for the consumer very thoroughly, so that any unfounded assumptions can be exposed as such straight away. The planning function ties research into every stage of the advertising development process at BMP.

5.6.1 Qualitative research in planning

The predominance of qualitative research over and in addition to quantitative research in the planning process at BMP is explained by the Executive Director of Planning and editor of the agency case histories "BMP Works" volumes one and two.

"Too often creative research does more harm than good because of the heavy-handedness of its methods. It looks at aggregated data instead of understanding individuals, and it judges advertisements against artificial and often irrelevant criteria. For these reasons we prefer the flexibility of qualitative research, which properly should be conducted by the account planner. When this happens the findings can be fully integrated with all the other research and thinking on the brand, and interpreted and actioned in ways which creative people can use". Feldwick, 1992, p. xii.

The research seeks understanding of the consumer, the market and the product by utilising desk or secondary research, talking to the client and talking to the consumer (i.e. qualitative research). This creative research, undertaken by the planner and discussed and evaluated by the planner in consultation with the account manager, will define the role for the advertising and may take four weeks or more. The 'role for the advertising', as noted above, encapsulates the strategic character of the advertising as a marketing device.

5.6.2 Generating the 'single thought'

Planners sometimes talk about advertising strategy as a process which entails, in part, rendering all data down into a single thought or fundamental strategic rationale for advertising. For example, a general brief for an information campaign to reduce crime was refined into a more specific objective to reduce burglary by getting more householders to fit window locks: BMP re-cast a campaign brief for Hellman's mayonnaise to represent it as a food for everyday use rather than special occasions (Feldwick, 1992, p. x). The general strategic role for advertising is refined, where possible, into a very simple one sentence 'single minded thought' such as this which encapsulates something fundamental about what the ad must achieve. This thought comprises part of the creative brief. For example, the idea that "when I ask for Hofmeister in the pub I'll be one of the lads" was one such simple idea which encapsulated the findings of the planning research into a simple theme which the

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creative team then went to work on (Feldwick, 1992, p. xi).

5.6.3 The advertising development process: a reiteration

To reiterate, a typical process of advertising development begins with refining the
client brief into a creative brief through a process of research and reasoning. The
creative brief is informed by a 'strategic role' which the advertising must play in the
interests of the client, and this role is distilled down into a simple idea, sometimes
called a 'proposition', which encapsulates the meaning the ad must have for the '
consumer. The creative brief must be brief and 'inspiring' for the creative team,
helping the team to reach the idea. The brief may take around two weeks to write.
Once it is signed off by the responsible authorities (board account manager and head
of planning) it will be put into 'traffic', the section that tracks the progress of projects
around the agency, and it will be picked up by one or more creative teams allocated
by Art Director.

5.7.0 **The creative brief**

The creative brief at BMP is written on a pro forma also, an example of which
follows. In this example the Volkswagen brief has been used again to illustrate the
development process from one client perspective. It will be noted that in this case,
the creative brief is a paraphrase of the advertising strategy. This is partly because
the brief below is a general thematic brief which gives an overview of the advertising
strategy into which the individual campaigns for specific Volkswagen products and
offers must be integrated.

5.7.1 BMP internal material 5: A creative brief for VW

"BMP DDB NEEDHAM

CREATIVE BRIEF

CLIENT: VAG (UK) LTD   **BRAND:** Overall campaign brief-all brands

CREATIVE DEADLINE: N/A   **JOB. NO.**

SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS: A fresh and innovative long term campaign (individual briefs attached)

What is the opportunity for advertising?

Volkswagen has to achieve a 50% growth in its share over the next three years. This is the fastest rate of growth ever attempted in the motor industry. Advertising has a major part to play in this growth offensive. We need to use it to inject the brand with a strong dose of adrenalin so that more people Volkswagen cars are better to own and consequently, so that more people want to own one. Our advertising needs to be as fresh and relevant as the original Beetle ads were in the 50's and 'Casino' was in the 80's. Unusual or alternative media uses should be a consideration enable Volkswagen to stand out from the car advertising crowd. This master brief sets out the overall objectives and theme for all the individual briefs to follow over the next couple of years.

WHO are we talking to?

This is about raising the profile of Volkswagen to everyone in the UK, regardless of whether or not they are currently in the market for a new car. In particular we need to broaden VW's appeal to a younger, more dynamic audience. Volkswagen is one of the few car brands they have a focussed impression of. They associate it with reliability, robustness, durability and quality and, as such, have come to think of Volkswagen cars as better cars to own. However, in recent years, this impression has become a bit tired and faded and Volkswagen's 'betterness' and consequent desirability is not so top of mind...

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What is the proposition?

Each individual brief will provide a demonstration of the fact that- "Volkswagen design cars that everyone can trust".

Why is this true?

Volkswagen is all about design integrity. They believe in manufacturing simply styled cars that are better thought through, better put together and better finished than any other mass market player. They take an almost paternalistic approach to design. They never compromise on things they believe really matter about a motor car and are entirely focussed on building products and services that won't let you down. By the end of 1988 Volkswagen will have a completely new range of cars which are perfect testament to this philosophy.

What tone of voice do we want?

"Bernbach for the 21ˢᵗ Century...."

Volkswagen advertising doesn't unnecessarily glorify the motor car. It is honest and realistic about what cars are all about talks about things that really matter to people and is genuinely self deprecating not smug or self satisfied. In a sense, it is the anti-hero of car advertising. While other manufacturers say very little about their cars.....(etc as in advertising strategy brief).

Mandatory inclusions?

Nothing

Media budget: **Production budget:**

Issued by: **Date: 8ᵗʰ August, 1995**

Client approval   **B.A.D.**   **Creative director**   **Senior planner**

Source: BMP internal document

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5.7.2 The creative 'proposition'

The document ends with boxes for the approval tick of the various authorities involved. This example of the documents appertaining to the early stages of the advertising development process at BMP is particularly influenced by the relationship of the client with the agency (good and long standing with a high degree of trust) and the nature of the client need (a radical re-positioning). Among other campaign themes, creative work which was generated from these documents included the award winning 'obsession' series of VW ads and the even more award winning 'affordability' series. One feature of the creative brief not present in the advertising strategy brief is the 'proposition'. This is often the single most important feature of the brief for the creative to take note of since it encapsulates a bottom line or fundamental requirement of the ad. It is, in a sense, 'one step away from the ad'. It is thought that the best ads often communicate one message simply and the proposition, if it is a well written and conceived one founded on careful research and reasoning, will tell the creative what is true about the product.

5.7.3 Judgement of creative work

The creative work itself is judged against various criteria, obviously mediated by experiential judgements and internal politics. Is it original, is it distinctive and does it have impact?: is it relevant (to the strategic aims of the client) are major considerations. The creative work may take four weeks in development, again with the involvement of account management, account planning and senior staff (i.e. the creative director). Creative teams present their work to the teams with the help of visual aids, scripts and other stimulus material to make the idea more vivid and communicate it to the audience. Creative work is often subject to pre-testing depending on the clients wishes, with focus groups of consumers using stimulus material to make the ideas 'come alive'. Qualitative groups, depth interviews and

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quantitative tests may all be utilised by the planner in pre-testing the initial creative work (the famous Hofmeister campaign 'came right at the fourth attempt'). This pre-testing process may take four weeks. The client then sees the work, usually presented by the account manager. If the client and the relevant Director of Creativity (DOC) decides in consultation with the team that creative work is finished it will go into pre-production with a quote being established for costs, a director/photographer proposed and set and casting issue addressed.

5.7.4 Pre- and post-production

The pre-production, the shoot and post production (evaluation, editing) may take four to eight weeks and is co-ordinated by the account manager. The finished ad will be matched with appropriate media ('deciding who we want to talk to, when, where, how and how much') by the account manager and media planner over two to four weeks. The media department's TV/Press buyers will then negotiate a price for the media and traffic/TV administration will ensure that the right ad goes to the right media organisation at the right time.

5.8.0 Advertising evaluation

After exposure, the planner will be involved with ad evaluation. This may take the form of tracking sales with ad exposures, taking awareness surveys, talking to the client company sales force to hear their reaction to and experience of the ad, and assessing the PR generated for the client by the ad. The 'BMP Works' case histories deal in detail with the effectiveness of campaigns and tell a story of ad campaigns which are rational strategic marketing communications tools with liberal use of statistical data to support hypotheses.

5.9.0 Concluding comments

A number of features distinguish the approach to advertising process in BMP DDB Needham. These are largely related to the culture, history and values of agency and the ways these inform the character of daily working practice in the agency. Clearly, there is a human dimension which written sources tend to suppress: people fall out, there are arguments, some people leave organisations feeling that they haven't had a fair crack at things. Sometimes a client feels that an agency has not done what it was supposed to do: sometimes agencies find a client impossible to satisfy. When a campaign works well it can be because the agency-client relationship has a high order of personal trust which means that, for example, the agency is exposed to internal client issues which can be instrumental in informing the strategic role of the advertising. BMP DDB is well known for 'front loading' the advertising development process with carefully considered evaluation of this strategic role, because the BMP approach is that if the reason for advertising is thought through clearly, the better the chance that the advertising does something that is useful to the client.

5.9.1 A documented process

The documents above are public in the sense that they make the advertising process visible to the client and a matter of record. They are written in a very prosaic manner which reflects the BMP discourse of elegant simplicity in communicating about advertising. *The strategic marketing aims of the client are translated into advertising* discourse; of course an advertisement cannot generate 3% increase in market share or whatever. It may well do so, but it may do so by achieving something else that ads can achieve which result in increased sales as a consequence of something else. The something else is that they succeed in being distinctive, meaningful and so on for the consumer. There are other intermediate achievables such as awareness, recall and so on, but these can form part of ad evaluation rather than ad strategy. Awareness and recall can be stated as targets in themselves but this doesn't mean the ad will be

meaningful for consumers so that they see the product or brand as part of their cultural landscape and buy it. Nevertheless, such considerations form part of advertising discourse, especially in dialogue with the client. The public documents are particularly features of client-agency discourse and as such they make use of linguistic repertoires which draw partly on the vocabulary of strategic marketing.

5.9.2 BMP internal documents as texts representing a process

The public (between agency and client) character of these documents, and the formal process they codify, gives them a particular tone and emphasis. The documents as texts have an illocutionary force which signifies, to the client, a business like approach, structured, coherent formalised and informed by data and clear, simple reasoning. They also have a similar illocutionary message for agency staff, namely that the advertising development process has a formal structure, a way it is supposed to be, and a conventionality which some agency people may bypass in some campaigns. Perhaps the process as described in documentation is a myth which draws upon certain concrete features of the process (such as 'research' and 'advertising strategy') as resources to rhetorically construct a story which seems to conform to something like a managed organisational process. This is not to suggest that the advertising process in BMP is less than thorough and rigorous; it is just that every organisation has rituals and myths of procedure which represent the way things are supposed to be done, and people often gain some sense of accomplishment in bypassing the formalities of organisational culture. The rituals and procedures can, paradoxically, give structure and form to a process by being there to be deviated from or bypassed. Certainly, a sense of intellectual and practical contingency came through strongly from the research interviews, so that the formal processes and themes of BMP's approach to advertising development were used as reference points for people to describe how particular campaigns usually had some feature of uniqueness which meant that they did not quite conform to an advertising

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development process which could be illustrated with boxes and arrows. It seemed as thought the company ethos outlined above and discursively preserved in documents, pro formas, publications and other signs acted as an organising principle around which the discourse of agency professionals could be conveniently structured.

5.9.3 Public texts of advertising process and individual discursive practices at BMP

The ways of working in advertising which BMP DDB Needham re-create in agency documents and publications are clearly instrumental in informing the ways BMP staff talk about advertising work. This would seem to be especially the case in an organisation which has such a presence in the industry as BMP.

5.10.0 **Chapter summary**

Chapter five has set out the broader context for the empirical work by describing some of the significant history and working practices of BMP DDB Needham. A notable feature of this outline is the distinctive place that the planning function takes in the advertising development process at the agency. BMP has a powerful and pervasive sense of organisational culture which is made public through internal documents and publications which perpetuate the BMP way of doing advertising. The discursive constitution of advertising by individuals within BMP must be seen as heavily informed by the discourses utilised by the organisation itself. This and other considerations are dealt with in a short chapter six which further elaborates on *significant methodological* issues and data gathering concerns before the formal analysis of the interview data is embarked upon.

CHAPTER SIX

Further pre-operational research issues

Chapter outline: this chapter describes some operational aspects of the empirical study and discusses the rationale offered for organising the data collection in this way. Ethical and reflexive issues of data collection and analysis are also briefly considered insofar as they impact on the data analysis. The evolution of the final interview agenda through stages of pilot interviewing is described. Finally, the interpretative repertoires induced from the data in chapters seven and eight are listed in a content analytic form in the present chapter in order to aid the narrative development of the thesis and to assist in making the basis of interpretation more transparent.

6.0.0 Introduction: the research design and the data gathering process

6.0.1 The research question re-visited

The research question entails exploring the advertising development process. This process is relatively under-researched in the marketing management and marketing communications and advertising research-based literature. It is also not considered in detail in popular marketing communications and advertising texts. It has been suggested that this neglect may be partly due to the methodological priorities which have driven research designs in mainstream marketing management and related areas of research. Qualitative research designs have been traditionally less common in marketing, but a qualitative design seems suited to this topic since the nature of the investigation is exploratory. Furthermore, since advertising design is a relatively small field with a small number of expert practitioners, it is appropriate to take the experiences of professionals in the field as the basic data. The research design addresses calls within marketing literature for more qualitative studies in general

(Hunt, 1994, in Brownlie et al, 1994), and in particular for more marketing
management research which focuses on interpretative studies of
managerial/professional discourse (Morgan, 1992, in Alvesson and Willmott, 1992,
and Elliott, 1996).

6.0.2 The social constructionist framework and mainstream research in marketing and management.

Chapter 3 selectively reviewed eclectic developments in social constructionist
thought to illustrate how some fundamental social constructionist principles have
developed in differing research traditions and to show how these thematic trajectories
converge in discourse analytic methodology. This methodological approach needs
little elaboration or justification for those familiar with its principles yet it remains a
politically sensitive area within marketing and management research. Hence this
thesis may seem, to a discourse orientated researcher, to labour points which are
rather obvious. However, this labour is partly devoted to pushing forward the social
constructionist research agenda in an area which has hitherto assimilated pluralist
methodological approaches unwillingly. The notion of social construction can still
elicit a sceptical response from some quarters of the marketing/management research
establishment. In the light of this political background this thesis attempts to proceed
slowly with many reiterations in order to develop the argument in a way which, it is
hoped, might seem at least plausible, even to the sceptical.

6.0.3 Methodological approach

The chosen methodological approach entails a discourse analysis of textual data. In
this case, the primary textual data consisted of transcribed dyadic depth interviews.
Ethnomethodological context was derived from additional informal sources, field
notes, observation and archive data.

6.0.4 Data gathering process

The main empirical data consisted of some fourteen depth interviews conducted over a period of seven months, the latter nine of which were conducted in the agency itself. The interviews were complicated by some technical problems with computer discs and recording equipment, with the result that six interviews were finally fully transcribed for this study, with one other interview partially transcribed and three more recorded in note form. Two pilot interviews were conducted and discarded and two interviews within the agency were recorded on audio but no record was preserved of them because of technical problems.

6.0.5 The choice of agency

The focus was placed on a leading agency well known within the advertising industry for the emphasis it places on an integrated development progress for advertising. A broad range of interviews conducted among account team members at this agency would generate a useful and unique breadth and depth of data concerning the advertising development process as it has been conducted in many recent major high profile campaigns. No other UK agency has produced a similar number of award winning campaigns in recent years. Account team members at BMP could draw on a range of experience of advertising development as a well developed concept pioneered by this agency and also as successfully implemented practice. This range of experience could not be equalled by other account team members in the industry. The agency agreed to grant access for interviews and allowed unrestricted access to its own published case materials.

6.0.6 Interview participants

The interviewees who kindly gave their time and answered the questions fully and at

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length were of various orders of rank and experience. One had formerly held a senior postition at BMP DDB and had become Marketing Communications Senior Lecturer at Brookes. This participant had had a distinguished career in advertising with several leading UK and US agencies and worked at BMP as a board account director for some three years before becoming a university lecturer. Another senior advertising person was at the time a board account director for BMP and has since moved to another agency. The other interviewees were account member on accounts that were currently active and had been account team members on many of the major award winning campaigns to come out of BMP over the last five years.   ∤

One of the account planners was relatively senior in that, although she had only been at BMP for a few years, she held a board level communications role as a supplementary to her role of planner. One of the creatives interviewed was senior with a successful nine year track record at BMP and some seventeen years in advertising. He was leaving for a job at JWT at the time of the interview but subsequently took a new role as head of radio advertising at BMP. Two other creative teams were interviewed: because of audio recording problems one was lost and the other recorded in note form. Both these interviews were with experienced creative teams who had recently worked on major high profile accounts. The other interviewees were account planners and managers who had been at BMP for between four months to five years, many of whom had had advertising experience at other agencies.

6.0.7 Interview locations

The first two interviews took place at Oxford Brookes Wheatley campus, while the interviews in the agency took place at a specifically designated office[1] at the agency's

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London headquarters.

6.1.0 The Interview agenda: focus on discourses of creativity

The interview agenda evolved in the early stages (i.e. through the pilot interviews and again through the initial interviews). Initially the primary interest was focussed on advertising creativity. As interviews progressed it became clear that creativity was only one of a number of interpretative repertoires drawn upon by account team professionals to warrant particular claims and positions. Some people felt that planning was not a very creative role, and that the creative department did something very special and elusive which most planners could not do. Other people enjoyed the notion of creativity but saw it in terms of the mimesis with which much creative work is characterised: creative teams borrowed references from popular culture, references from classical culture, cinematic techniques, techniques of animation currently fashionable (e.g. Wallace and Grommett style ads); they borrowed the Kudos and popularity of currently hot celebrities, comedians and sports stars. Some interviewees felt that planing and management roles at BMP were very creative in that they contributed very notably to the creative process in various ways. Writing the creative brief was considered creative by some planners. One emphasised the impressionistic character of deriving findings and insight from qualitative and other data and creatively generating a proposition from this data. Others were perhaps more quantitatively predisposed and consequently did not see the planning role as so creative. One did not see account management as creative in the same way as creative roles but did think that the account manager set the terms of reference for creativity in important ways. He also felt that account management was creative in the sense that the manager had to think of different ways of doing things every day, but this creativity was not the same kind as was done in a creative role, more a pragmatic, intuitive creativity. In sum, creativity was not a construct which offered great breadth of analytical purchase on the subject matter of advertising process.

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Everybody had a view on creativity but it simply seemed to be used as a linguistic resource to substantiate more fundamental positions. At BMP creativity was seen as inseparable from problem solving

6.1.1 The final, open, interview agenda

Therefore, the interview agenda became less directive, participants were simply asked to describe their working experience in their own words. As they expanded on this theme supplementary questions would be asked to generate more detail. The interviews evolved into a pattern consisting of..

a) a preliminary stage in which rapport was established, an explanation of the reason for and purposes of the interview was offered, and the recording equipment was switched on, with the express consent of the participants.

b) an initial stage in which participants were asked simply what they did, what their role was within the agency, and how they had reached that point in their career. Each participant elaborated at length on this theme and needed no prompting other than an occasional interjection for greater detail on a particular point.

c) a main stage in which participants were asked to develop specific examples of what their role entailed on particular campaigns.

d) an elaboration stage in which participants were asked their views on their role within the development process. At this stage they were also asked supplementary questions depending on the particular points they had raised earlier.

Each interview proceeded without prompting until it was terminated with thanks from the researcher. Interviewees were giving up their time between other tasks they

were engaged upon within the agency on a normal (hectic) working day.

6.2.0 Interview texts: descriptive content

The interview texts, read on a descriptive level, constitute an interesting resource for anyone interesting in advertising. There are several very experienced advertising people, and several somewhat less experienced but highly able professionals talking freely about creating successful advertising as one of the UK's leading agencies in one of the world's pre-eminent marketing communications groups. Much of their talk rotates around a view of advertising practice that is distinctively that of BMP DDB Needham. In particular, this distinctiveness concerns three principles: 1) the dissolution of the old chestnut in advertising, the alleged dichotomy between creativity and effectiveness, 2) the imperative of having a clear strategic role for advertising which is articulated fully before the creative development process is instigated, and 3) the integral role of the planner throughout this process. The interviews elaborate in detail on the implementation of these principles with lots of illustrative examples drawn from current and recent high profile successful television advertising campaigns. These relatively simple principles are operationalised at BMP in a clearly effective manner and on a descriptive level the data could constitute the basis for a case study of excellence in advertising development. One could discuss the complexity of implementing the principles in a managed advertising development process at great length drawing on the interviews for examples of practical implementation issues.

This, essentially descriptive approach is clearly not without general interest within an applied perspective on marketing and advertising.

6.2.1 Interview texts: discourse analysis

The descriptive interest of the interview content gives way to a deeper socio-psychological level of explanation when the categories of interpretative repertoire are induced from the interview texts. These interpretative repertoires form regular features of advertising development discourse in this context, providing discursive resources for advertising account team professionals to warrant, justify and support the various positions they take. In this agency this warranting is especially significant since every stage in advertising development is articulated at team meetings: the direction campaign development takes depends upon the arguments articulated in these meetings and upon the force they hold within the discourse of this agency. The discourse analytic perspective preserves the subjective meanings of participants who can articulate their working experience in their own terms but it also permits analysis beyond the descriptive in that it seeks regularities of structure and evidence of function of discourse itself. Interpretative repertoires are the means by which power within the agency is exercised and mobilised.

6.3.0 Ethical issues

The ethical issues raised by the interview process seemed relatively benign. Confidentiality was assured although the matters under discussion were not considered especially sensitive. BMP encourage their planners top write up successful campaigns into papers for presentation at IPA awards. The agency makes no secret of the importance it places on the planning role in advertising development and actively promotes its methods within the industry. The interviews did not prompt participants for information considered sensitive, and neither were they asked to talk about failures or mistakes as such. The interviews did not direct very prescriptively and were consequently open and relaxed in tone.

6.4.0 Interviewer 'rhetoric' and sincerity.

One further pertinent ethical issue concerns the constructions or interpretations placed on what the interviewees said. It is worth reiterating that on a social constructionist viewpoint saying that someone says something for rhetorical effect or that they accomplish a social effect through drawing on forms of linguistic practice, emphatically does not imply that they are insincere. The social constructionist position implies that all of social life has a role playing character, that social acts and agency are accomplished rhetorically and that this is the very nature of social reality. Neither should comments regarding the presentation or self presentation of social roles be taken to be pejorative in any way: once again, on a social constructionist view, senses of selfhood and our social selves are accomplished discursively. Social roles are accomplished by this mastery of discursive forms and practices and this mastery may involve conscious, self aware strategies, unconscious ones or, more likely, a vague mixture of both. In accomplishing effects through the rhetorical use of discourse forms, meanings are socially constructed which are real, not 'merely' an effect or a chimera. The human accomplishment of maintaining a social role is not rendered trivial or superficial by social constructionism: on the contrary, the accomplishment of, superficially 'ordinary' or common place, taken-for-granted social acts is revealed in its extraordinary complexity by a discursive social constructionist perspective.

6.4.1 The discursive accomplishment of social roles: the interviewee agenda

There is an ethical dimension to discourse analysis insofar as the researcher may seem to imply that the interviewee has hidden motives which are evidenced by variation in accounting. As discussed in chapters three and four, many discourse analytic studies point out the variation in accounting that is evident when people warrant their actions of beliefs for differing audiences or purposes. If participants offer differing accounting devices to refer to the same phenomena in differing contexts then this variation can be a source of insight concerning the function of interpretative

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repertoires. For example, some discursive studies of racism have shown that people may regard another race as intrinsically lazy, devious or by some other pejorative stereotype when they talking in the abstract, yet particular acquaintances of the disliked race are often exempted from such categorisations. Clearly, there may be an order of post hoc rationalisation in such warranting. However, variation may be more easy to isolate in longitudinal studies in which interviewees forget what they've said previously. Additionally, it may be regarded as an unsophisticated discursive strategy, easier to spot in less accomplished speakers. The interview participants in the present research are articulate and in most cases highly educated. Language is their tool and they have succeeded in an industry the business of which is the manipulation of visual and linguistic symbols. In BMP in particular great emphasis is placed on the rational articulation of arguments in advertising development. Account team members are highly accomplished in using language to warrant positions and to justify actions. This accomplishment is taken seriously in the interviews: the objective is not to catch people off guard nor to make public the shallowness of their claims to professional expertise. On the contrary, professional expertise (in any field) is seen as a discursive accomplishment of enormous complexity and one of the objectives of this study is to provide some insights into how this accomplishment is achieved in advertising.

6.5.0 Operationalising the method: content analytic framework

Following established discourse analytic procedures, the transcribed interview texts are subject to a coding process by which the main ' interpretative repertoires' are induced from the data. This interpretative process generates repertoires which can then be defined in terms which permit a retrospective content analysis of the transcribed interview texts, thereby rendering the analytic process transparent to third parties. In the present case, the content analytic framework will be presented below *preceding* the report of the interpretative data analytic process in chapters seven and

eight. While this is clearly out of sequence with the research process it is offered in the current chapter in order to assist the narrative progress of the thesis. In the appendices to this thesis, three of the interview transcripts are reproduced in full. These transcripts permit cross checking of the induced interpretative repertoires against the content analytic framework. Hence while subjective interpretations must necessarily differ, the interpretative process for this research study is rendered as transparent as possible in a way which makes possible a degree of public cross checking of the findings with the data.

6.5.1 Initial formulation of the interpretative repertoires in content analytic form

Eight interpretative repertoires were induced from the interview data. To reiterate, these repertoires were accounting devices used by account team professionals to warrant, justify, support, offer reasons for, the positions or actions they took in particular aspects of the advertising development process. These particular repertoires were the most significant ones used by these interviewees in terms of the frequency they were used, the importance they appeared to have to the broader structure of arguments used, and the importance ascribed to them by the interviewees. These repertoires offer insight into an underlying dynamic, mobilised through language and discourse, through which advertising is socially constructed. The repertoires were used as resources in differing ways. For example, the 'BMP Way' resource refers to the general argument that particular actions were warranted on the grounds that they were consistent with accepted practice and precedent at this agency. This resource was brought to bear in many different ways (examples in the following chapters) and many different actions and warrants were justified on these grounds. Hence it is not an argument in a rhetorical sense but an 'interpretative repertoire'. The interpretative repertoires has the force of an argument but is a broader psychological concept. The various particular 'arguments' are subsumed within this superordinate category, and likewise with the other repertoires. The

various repertoires overlap and accounting devices within the texts may be attributable to more than one repertoire. Nevertheless the repertoires initially described below were considered the main superordinate categories by frequency and importance.

6.5.2 The content analytic framework: a reductionist approach

The content analytic framework set out below does not attempt to describe in full each repertoire but seeks to offer a simplistic but telling definition in order to facilitate transparency and confirmation of findings. The content analytic framework is a reduction and should be read in conjunction with the more detailed discussion of each repertoire and the discourse dynamics of all the repertoires, in chapters seven and eight. As an aside, it might be argued that the analytical concept of the interpretative repertoire is by its nature reductionist when it is parcelled up in order to be the subject, and object, of conceptual procedures. A list of categories implies a structuralist metaphysic but this need not distract from the discursive utility of lists as heuristics. Hence the content analytic definitions of the interpretative repertoires should be seen as pragmatic devices of exposition. As noted in Elliott (1997) with regard to binary oppositions of creativity versus constraint, rationality versus irrationality and so on, structuralist metaphors can be useful heuristic devices for 'coming to grips' with concepts which may be incommensurable (Elliott, 1997, p.15).

6.5.3 Interpretative repertoires: a simplified content analytic framework

1) "The BMP Way":

interviewees warranted their views or actions in advertising development by arguing that these were consistent with a corporate way of doing advertising that is particular to this agency.

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2) "The Strategic Imperative":

interviewees warranted their views or actions by arguing that these were consistent with the strategic integrity of the advertising.

3) "The Managerial Imperative":

interviewees warranted their views or actions by arguing that they were justified pragmatically on grounds of time or other practical constraint.

4) "Knowledge of the client":

interviewees warranted their views or actions by arguing that they had special knowledge of the clients needs, wishes, prejudices or priorities.

5) "Knowledge of the consumer":

interviewees warranted their views or actions by arguing that they had special insights into the relevant consumers.

6) "Intellectual contingency":

interviewees warranted their views or actions in verbally or grammatically innovative ways which displayed the power (within this agency) of novel or unconventional rhetorical forms of discourse.

7) "Power of rationality":

interviewees warranted their views or actions by arguing that they were internally logically coherent.

8) "Power of creativity":

interviewees warranted their views or actions by arguing that creativity in advertising was facilitated and promoted through their actions/positions taken.

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NB The final three repertoires, 6,7 and 8, were sometimes evident as sub-textual rather than explicitly stated as arguments.

6.5.4 Content analytic process: limitations

To reiterate, the content analytic framework offered above is not intended to represent the research process. Neither is it intended to fully represent the nature of the interpretative repertoires themselves. The complexity of these is explored in greater detail in the following chapters. The content analytic framework is offered for purposes of exposition, transparency and confirmation only: in other words, as a 'heuristic' device (Elliott, 1997). In principle, a third party can take the definitional framework in 6.5.3 and cross check interview transcripts, allocating parts of the text to one or more interpretative repertoires. Notwithstanding the unavoidable reductionism entailed in this process, third parties may read these or other interview texts and form their own views as to whether the interpretation offered in this thesis seems consistent with the discourse of advertising professionals as presented in the interview texts.

6.5.5 The content analytic framework: implications for cross sectional studies

Furthermore, this content analytic framework renders the research findings open and public in a way which may make possible potential cross sectional studies. That is, discourse analysis may generate sets of interpretative repertoires which offer a level of explanation of certain processes in advertising or in other areas of marketing. The content analytic framework constitutes a potential means of comparing the findings of different studies.

6.6.0 Chapter summary

This short chapter has detailed a number of important matters concerned with operationalising this research project. The empirical phase of the project entailed a number of methodological choices which should be made explicit. Some ethical issues of interview technique and interpretative analysis were also briefly raised. Finally, the chapter set out a simplified table of the research results, pre-empting the detailed discussion in chapters seven and eight. This device is intended to assist the narrative development of the thesis in the light of the interdisciplinary approach taken, for non-discourse analytic specialists. The table of results is set out as a content analytic framework which can be used for third party re-appraisal of the *I* research findings. This technique may also make possible cross sectional discourse analytic studies focussing on the social construction through discourse of other social processes in marketing.

The following chapter steps back from this content analytic approach to take a detailed discussion of the interview findings in terms of the interpretative repertoires induced from the data. The evidence for each repertoire is evaluated in the light of the structure of the interview texts and the functions particular repertoires seemed to serve for the speaker and the agency. Chapter eight develops this discussion further in terms of the dynamic interaction of the interpretative repertoires with each other. The meanings of repertoires have an inter-dependent character and this inter-dependence frames and gives direction to the discourses produced. A simple model of the discourse dynamics of the agency is produced in which suggestions are offered of the ways in which the various repertoires influence and frame each other.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The social construction of advertising at BMP DDB: a discourse analysis of transcribed depth interviews around the organising analytical concept of the 'interpretative repertoire'.

Chapter outline: this chapter begins the interpretative work in full with a formulation of 'interpretative repertoires' which emerge from an initial coding process. These repertoires are positioned as the discursive building blocks of advertising development at BMP. A case for each category of interpretative repertoire is offered which is supported by selective representative quotes from the transcribed interview texts. Issues of overlap and duality of purpose are broached. The discussion consciously oscillates between a 'realist' discourse which discusses advertising process by treating it as real, and a more abstract analysis of the structure and possible functions of the interpretative repertoires upon which account teams draw to substantiate their positions in talking about, their roles in advertising development at BMP.

7.0.0 Interpretative repertoires of advertising process: initial formulations and reflections

The initial coding process performed on the interview transcripts resolved eight main categories of interpretative repertoire upon which participants drew to substantiate their positions and arguments and to warrant their claims. The repertoires, listed previously in chapter 6, were as follows:

7.0.1 Categories of interpretative repertoire

'intellectual contingency'
'the BMP Way'

'the managerial imperative'

'the strategic imperative'

'power of rationality'

'the power of creativity'

'knowledge of the client'

'knowledge of the consumer'

7.0.2 Inter-subjective warranting or confirmation

As Elliott (1996) notes, attempts at inter-subjective verification of interpretative

research have been 'valiant' but cannot eclipse the need for interpretative research to

satisfy Thompson's (1990) three categories of insight: the conceptual, the

phenomenological, and the paradigmatic. The former refers to the clarity of patterns

obtaining in the empirical data, and this criterion may be satisfied by the content

analytic framework established in the previous chapter. The latter two categories

refer respectively to providing an interpretation which resonates with the reader, and

providing insights which allow the reader to see a social phenomenon in an entirely

new way. Chapters seven and eight discuss the interpretations placed on the

transcripts and seek to make clear the reasoning behind the categorisations of

interpretative repertoire and the attributions of function and action orientation to the

texts. In this way the study seeks to present a plausible and transparent argument,

notwithstanding the ineluctably interpretative character of the discourse analytic

process.

7.1.0 A discussion of each interpretative repertoire: "Intellectual Contingency"

This seemed to be a superordinate repertoire in the sense that it seemed a

precondition for working at BMP at all. People don't say anything in a positive,

declarative sense; their argumentation is not made up of the grammar of positive

statements. Everything is qualified, there is a reluctance to generalise, a discourse of contingency rules. This effect is partly grammatical: the talk of the interviewees is noticeably colloquial, halting, repetitive, sometimes incoherent as written text. I asked X1[1], an account planner at the agency for two and a half years, how he spent most of his time:

> "Erm, its really very diverse, probably writing creatives takes most of the time not the
> actual writing of them, but the sort of work leading up to them, discussions with clients,
> discussions internally, fine tuning them trying to get them absolutely right discussions with
> creatives also, before you write creative briefs, and I suppose creative briefs from a planners
> point of view are the most important thing in terms of the creativity within the role,
> and.....it sort of depends people have got different views on what makes a good or bad
> creative brief so obviously they can be more or less directional, creatively, they can be, can
> be very loose, er...."[X1 dries up].

7.1.1 Indeterminacy and contingency in agency language

The rhetorical position of this passage is that there is a complex process going on and that it can, by implication, be done less than well, but that its complexity makes it difficult to convey. The BMP staff do not adopt a mode of explanation which draws on technical language or other rhetorical means to represent what they are doing as if it is a clear and unambiguous process to experts but which excludes the uninitiated. The physical metaphors employed are simple, 'fine tuning', 'directional', 'loose', different 'views'. The text is an attempt to convey experience in a very simple way which does not over generalise or over elaborate. Of course, a reader might say that X1 is simply not very articulate, but the fact that X1 is an Oxford philosophy graduate talking about what he does at work every day might preclude such a judgement. A more plausible explanation is that agency staff at BMP (and perhaps elsewhere) have the intellectual and social confidence to talk about what they do in

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[1] The names of interviewees are replaced with symbols to preserve confidentiality

such a way that conveys its indeterminacy, as opposed to representing what they do as a technical discipline which is complex to outsiders but not to the initiated. Agency discourse noticeably did not draw on public discourses of marketing speak, neither did it draw on agency cliches very much, but mostly used ordinary, simple language to try to convey a complex and elusive aspect of the speaker's professional experience of advertising practice. Then again, it is a powerful rhetorical device to do this: to talk about one's professional status, in this case a prestigious professional status, in terms which leave it open to accusations that what they do is banal, has an illocutionary force which, in England, is resonant with class and educational status. It wouldn't do to say that they simply didn't care enough about what I thought of them to take my questions seriously: they didn't care much, but they did care. We all care when we are constructing a story about ourselves, however insignificant the audience. The point here was that BMP people thought about their role and the advertising process in general at BMP in terms of unfixed categories, shifting priorities, they had no technical vocabulary which would reify that process into something concrete. This, I suggest, is a feature of an intellectual contingency repertoire which is characteristic of intellectual and social confidence.

7.1.2 The colloquial and ungrammatical character of the contingency repertoire

This repertoire was characterised partly by a colloquial, ungrammatical form of talk which belied the educational attainment of the speaker but which nevertheless could convey something of the subtlety of distinction and interpretative sensitivity to information which characterised advertising work. I asked Y2 for an example of a recent creative brief:

> "Yeah..erm....recent work we've done, on Budweiser for example, we're just sort of developing stuff for the main TV work but as an example, in the last week, they wanted to talk about the purity of their beer: this was probably gonna be for international work so probably not going to run in the UK. Erm, basically, that was their brief to us they wanted

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to talk about the purity of the beer as part of an ongoing communications and quality whatever, and sort of we sort of thought that that in itself if we passed on that variation of that straight to the creative department it probably wouldn't be much help because a) that would probably be quite similar to what other people are doing, or come across as quite generic, and erm that probably wouldn't be particularly inspiring creatively, the purity of the ingredients or the wheat or something, so in a way the sort of creative role for the planning department then was to think of another way of expressing that and we stressed it through the lack of impurities which is quite, in a way quite a simple step, but, it was our judgement that that would be a) more differentiating in the marketplace and b) be a lot more interesting creatively for the creatives for them to talk about things, sort of left out rather than the things put in, just because there are more interesting things left out which can occur in some other beers than the boring ingredients which are put into it".

This isn't the slick and seamless kind of talk one might expect from a professional in advertising. The general style of simplicity, colloquialism, solecism, very simple physical metaphor and grammatical confusion was quite typical of the BMP interviews. However, it might be wrong to make too much of this. While evidence of a kind of 'planner talk' is apparent from both younger and more experienced account staff at BMP, this was not substantiated in interviews at other agencies. For example, planners interviewed at AMV and JWT were lucid and coherent in their discussions. These were, by and large, quite experienced staff though young, in agencies with a rather different culture to BMP. The passage does however illustrate the intellectual contingency I found in all the BMP interviews, characterised by grammatical irregularity, avoidance of technical or marketing jargon and a suppression of rhetorical devices which might render the process misleadingly concrete, formal, structured or direct. The lack of textual regularity is a notable linguistic feature of the BMP transcripts. Other examples of this general style will be evident in many of the subsequent quotes offered here. Of all the interpretations of this style of talking that are possible the one I favour is that it carries an illocutionary message of intellectual confidence derived from English social and educational codes. It has the added benefit of allowing the speaker to sound unpretentious and diffident

while he or she is explaining a role in a process which is glamorous or intriguing to many and rather socially prestigious to some. But, as noted, the 'rock 'n roll' talk may be a little of showboating to a naive audience: AMV interviewees pointed out that planners have to make themselves understood to many differing audiences when they conduct focus groups, and hence may drop into differing patois in differing circumstances. Planning at JWT was also articulated in a clear, non technical way.

7.2.0 The 'BMP Way' repertoire.

As chapter five indicated, BMP has a strong organisational culture as regards its ways of approaching, doing, and talking about advertising. The 'BMP Way' resource could manifest itself in several ways as a reference to aspects of the priorities and character of the BMP approach to advertising development. The main theme relating to this is the role of planning and the concomitant concern with advertising strategy which is a major feature at BMP, who 'invented planning' according to one creative team. A subsidiary repertoire was the notion that BMP had an elite intellectual approach to advertising which was uniquely rational and dialectical.

7.2.1 'BMP Way' as a flexible repertoire of collective warranting

The 'BMP Way' was a general resource/repertoire which all interviewees called upon, in differing degrees and with differing emphases, to substantiate particular claims or positions. Much use was made of a collective possessive 'we' do this and 'we' do that referring to the BMP way of doing advertising and the experience of working at BMP. When I asked L1 what the issues were in having a dialogue with clients about creative work she said that..

> "..I think BMP possibly more than other agencies have an anti -selling ethos; erm, not that
> we don't try and sell the work we do, but we try and involve the clients we make sure
> before we present anything that we're happy with the work we have creative reviews, I've

got one this afternoon: Alliance and Leicester where the whole internal agency team get together with what we call the DOCs: Directors of Creativity....".

And later,

Question: "..so you don't necessarily have to go and present work you think stinks..
Answer: No, no, I mean, again BMP doesn't approve of that system we want to make sure we're happy with it and we don't have creatives saying 'go away and sell my work or don't come back', its not like that at all."

Clearly, as a relatively junior account manager, L1 relied upon a BMP Way repertoire to substantiate her own working practices. I asked A, a planner, how he worked with the account manager and whether the roles overlapped.

" Erm, I think account managers at BMP do contribute quite a lot to the planning process you do work quite closely with them in an account team though you will consult with your account manager in writing creative briefs and they will have an input on that, probably not as much as the planner: the planner always writes the brief but you always consult it with the account manager throughout the process".

This quote illustrates a particular character of the BMP philosophy which is that roles, while strictly demarcated and upheld within a hierarchy, are also very fluid and overlap at every stage of the advertising process.

7.2.2 'BMP Way' and creative work: justifying the research criterion

The BMP Way repertoire was implicitly evident in the discourse of creatives who used it to warrant their position on accepting rejected work. Copywriter T, who had done a lot of advertising scripts using celebrities, said that his view of what a celebrity might mean for consumers in relation to a product or something was researched by the planning department:

"...Oh yeh it is to start with but after that, and once the client's on board with it and yeh,

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we'd like to use that then the planner will make sure its researched: I mean they're very good for that here its an awful long time before the ad actually appears but once it does appear more often than not, its very effective and do win IPA effectiveness awards as well, so..

Question:..so that's just part of the system of checks and balances..

Answer: Yeh, exactly, the client's gonna spend, you know, two million pounds, and they want to make sure they're hitting the target. I used to hate it I used to think it was like going around Sainsbury's and asking other shoppers to test your groceries:'do you like this?' 'Yeh well you're the fucking marketing director do you like it or don't you', you know, its your job if you like it fine if you don't, fine. But I suppose I've softened a bit or matured a little bit I realised that you can't just do it like that. But it can be a nuisance."

T mentioned elsewhere that he used to resent research but it is clear here that he has accepted the value of BMP's approach even it is sometimes painful (for a creative) to accept. The 'BMP Way' resource was a useful reference point for people to warrant what they were saying because it carried some authority for them and consequently it carried authority for the listener. The agenda which individuals (such as creatives) might bring to the advertising process was subordinated to the authority of the BMP agenda. For the listener, the same effect was maintained: alternative possibilities for advertising development were ruled out by invoking a flexible BMP Way resource, in this case regarding the power of consumer research to change, accept or reject creative work.

7.2.3 Textual representations of a company 'way'

The BMP Way repertoire perpetuated in the documents, publications, case histories and ways of working in BMP and itself was given warranty by the industry awards which seemed to accumulate with some regularity. People seemed to feel that they did work at one of, or perhaps the, leading advertising agency in the UK so when the BMP Way was utilised as a warranty for saying certain things it carried some effect. Of course it would be reassuring to believe this oneself if feeling as if one is a

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member of a professional elite is important in one's professional self esteem. It would not be out of place to speculate that this was important to people who, diffident and nice though they were, were from their educational and professional record clearly used to an order of social privilege in terms of education and, by implication, social-economic status. The BMP Way was a resource which warranted their professional practice and consequently their social identity. Yet even the brief extracts offered so far as illustrations begin to hint at the variability in accounts of advertising development. No two campaigns are exactly alike and the need for an intellectual contingency repertoire arises because of this variability in daily practice. Within BMP there is acknowledgement that most agencies have a concern with the strategic affects of advertising. The BMP Way resource is invoked to signify a positive difference between BMP (and its members) and other agencies. There seems to be a strong collective urge to feel a sense of corporate identity, or at least to articulate work issues in terms of a supposed corporate identity. This identity was perpetuated by textual representations of the company which were displayed around the premises.

7.2.4 Warranting novel instances of practice with the BMP repertoire

The collective BMP Way resource has the rhetorical effect of distancing individuals from the advertising development process yet at the same time presenting their acts as warranted by membership of an elite group. For example an account manager used the resource in this way:

> Question: Could you tell me about a typical example of what happens when a brief comes to you and how you deal with that?
> Answer: It doesn't necessarily just come to us in a way its because our clients are very long term and we just work with them on a daily basis, we know about briefs that are coming through the system before the initial briefing and we all kind of develop together what's going to happen to the.....to take an example Johnson and Johnson, as soon as they know they're launching new products or that brands need support they will just have ongoing discussions and we'll often develop a brief together and decide whether it needs advertising support or not.

Question: I see so the brief would kind of emerge through negotiation from the various reasoning of different people....is that fair to say?

Answer: Yeah, yeah pretty much I mean my client at the moment has a new anti wrinkle cream that they will definitely want to advertise...and we're just getting the briefs at the moment but we've known about it for a long time so we've already had thoughts so its not.....as cut and dried as receiving the brief then taking it on.

In this case the grammatical structure implies that there is a process, a regularity about how work is organised at BMP, yet she is invoking the 'this is how we do things at BMP' repertoire to cite an instance to which none of the other interviewees alluded, that is, where the client briefing process is almost redundant because the agency knows in advance about new product and other strategic marketing developments within the client organisation. This case may have arisen because of particular features of this client, or because of a particularly good client-account manager relationship in this case, but the grammar of the response represents this rather anomalous development in advertising process as a normal extension of BMP practice. In a sense, the BMP Way is a contingent repertoire somewhat like the Intellectual Contingency repertoire itself, since it permits speakers to describe a process which is highly variable and subject to personal idiosyncrasy in a way which rhetorically reinforces the collective character of a BMP Way of doing things.

7.2.5 A corporate myth?

One might suggest that there is no BMP Way in the sense of a definable set of processes, that it is merely a linguistic resource which allows very bright and flexible problem solvers to represent their working practice as having an organised, collective character. Yet it is organised and collective, and there is a 'BMP Way', a tradition of how to develop advertising. The BMP Way, as a sense of corporate climate, is produced discursively through the engagement of workers with it. It is not an entity and cannot subsist apart from the articulations of the workers who construct it. The BMP Way perhaps seems grandiose when it is articulated in written texts, letters from appreciative clients, awards and case history collections. The references to it

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are pretty vague, usually confined to the radical nature of dissolving the creativity/effectiveness dichotomy through the application of the planning role in advertising development. That's about it. It is a very simple principle or two, perhaps nebulous and/or insubstantial, which is actualised in the daily working discourse of the organisation. And this may be the point: that a working practice is bound up with the living discourse of people engaged in it. It is, on a social constructionist viewpoint, mistaken to look for an entity, the 'BMP Way', which stands outside the forms of language and discourse which represent it. The BMP Way is an interpretative repertoire and grasping the nuances of the repertoire seems an essential part of becoming successfully integrated into work at BMP.

7.2.6 Inverting the BMP myth as a source of power

An older hand at BMP, a Board Account Director, referred to a BMP Way repertoire in a more pragmatic way:

> Question: BMP tend to emphasise the advertising fitting into the whole marketing strategy
> don't they, which some agencies don't necessarily do.
> Answer: I think other agencies do but we just do it louder and have done it for longer
> really. I think the strategy is....but first the strategy is absolutely crucial. If you can't make
> the strategy clear and simple you will not get a good ad. You won't do it 99 times out of
> 100 you won't do it.

This interviewee tended to use a BMP way resource less noticeably than the younger staff, perhaps unsurprisingly. As a very experienced advertising man he was more confident in asserting things as arising from personal insight and experience, rather than distancing himself from processes by invoking a 'we do it this way' position. Additionally his positions were more characterised by pragmatism which was a tendency of more experienced staff, and particularly of account managerial staff. However, the effect was not to suggest that BMP staff become individualistic loose cannons when they get promoted: rather that their insight into the BMP Way is fully assimilated and therefore more telling, though presented with more subtlety. Their talk nevertheless reinforced certain features of the BMP way in a way that could be

the more forceful because it was presented as a personal view rather than a detached company ethos or process. Senior staff were the embodiment of the myth. He spoke very engagingly about the magic of advertising (when talking about the radical creative work in Sony and Levis accounts) but there was never any doubt that his view of advertising was not naive:

> "..its that lovely area where art and commerce rub up against against one another and it doesn't happen anywhere else, you've got to make them beautiful but you've got to make them beautiful, not because you want to but because, you know, somebody's paying for that."

In this sense he referred to a BMP Way implicitly but he didn't use it as a repertoire for warranting positions he took or things he wanted to assert. Rather, he used a repertoire of managerial pragmatism, a 'getting things done' philosophy to warrant his positions and the decisions he made were consistent with, and constitutive of with a BMP Way.

7.2.7 Challenging and reinforcing advertising myths

Interviewee R also used the BMP Way resource in a more qualified way, reasserting it but in a way that was mediated by a personal point of view. She was an account planner who had been given a more senior communications role. R was very forceful in asserting the strategic imperative resource as an offshoot of the BMP Way. She made a point of reasserting the importance of having a clear strategic rationale for advertising, which is a major feature of the BMP approach, but she did so in a way which pointed out that putting the principle into practice is difficult. So R did not use the BMP Way as a linguistic resource as such, rather she referred to it by default in representing herself as a serious exponent of one of the major BMP ways of looking at advertising practice. It could be almost as if the first stage of accomplishing expertise in BMP was to assimilate the discourse of the BMP Way by grammatical devices of collective reference and entity warranting (the entity being the 'BMP Way' of doing advertising) then a second stage of more advanced expertise

involved assimilating the BMP discourse so thoroughly that it could be rhetorically challenged in subtle ways which had the effect of representing the speaker as an expert in the BMP Way. Clearly, as a discursive accomplishment, this is difficult to do. It would be easy for a person to challenge the notion that there is a company way of doing things by talking too pragmatically about the serendipitous and idiosyncratic ways things were done. They could sound as if they are rebellious or not a team player. Yet the more senior people achieved the rhetorical effect of representing themselves as, as it were, soundly BMP people by discarding the BMP Way as a resource and replacing it with a pragmatic resource. R accomplished this effect by various means, for example she spoke without punctuation which I thought conveyed a sense of intense involvement with the work which partly gave her the rhetorical space to question or challenge convention at BMP: her discourse style precluded accusations of lack of involvement, not being a team player and so on because the grammar and rhetoric of her discourse conveyed those things while she drew on a selective interpretative repertoire to warrant her positions. This repertoire is discussed later as a 'strategic imperative'.

" I'm probably quite peculiar in my orientation within BMP for working in that way and the reason I work in that way is.....and I think there are also clear advantages to the creative process in working that way because very often, as a planner, if you kind of get straight on board and ignore the broader issues like is there a role for advertising for this client what actually is the broader message you should be getting across, if you dive right into the kind of touchy feely thing of what might be an interesting way of communicating that such that we get advertising which is different and unique and stands out in the market place, if you go straight in at that level then you're having a dialogue with your client which is purely in touchy feely langauge, if you then produce work you're unsure about its very very difficult to prove to them that they shouldn't be worried about it because the only criteria you've got to judge it against is the touchy feely criteria you put down and they were probably always a bit funny about it because they just thought it was you being slightly indulgent, but if right up front you really clarified this is who you need to talk to your target audience have got to understand this, then when it comes to assessing creative work you can take a piece of creative work which might be completely off the wall and really scare a client and really worry them but as long as you can show it will communicate this to the target audience you can circumvent a whole bunch of dialogue and debate and

you just need to show, to convince them that it will do the job. So I would see the way that I would go about my job is to probably define a framework for creativity..."

In this passage, R reiterates the strategic imperative as one distinctive aspect of the BMP Way, but distances herself from other aspects of The Way, i.e. the notions of distinctiveness and difference: she later criticises (by implication) the way planning is often conducted at BMP and also challenges other central BMP advertising development process concepts (such as the notion of the creative 'proposition'). However, the effect of this inversion of the BMP Way repertoire is to enhance the representation of R as an exponent of it. As another example, the 'proposition' is an expression that is often used in BMP to signify the one fundamental thing that the ad must do, the meaning it must have for the consumer. As account manager E said,

"..the proposition is kind of the one thing we need to communicate above all else, all others, in a piece of advertising".

The importance of the proposition is corroborated by others However, R contradicts this directly when she says..

"..I'd say that, the most important thing, the most important way someone like me makes a difference to that campaign is in having defined in really really basic easy easy commonsense terms what the need was what the communications need was so that at the end of the day this is what we have to get people to understand".
Question: The proposition?
Answer: No, I don't mean the proposition because...most...propositions, I mean, for a start its a silly word isn't it? Proposition. I mean who really knows what it means I mean you know what it means if you look it up in the dictionary but proposition is a word which kind of encourages people in agencies to be terribly precious and to think that its all about nuance and crafting and blah de blah and all this kind of stuff and that..actually, I think it often just takes people away from being really commonsensical and using plain English saying just this is what we need to achieve with this campaign."

7.2.8 Variation in representations of the BMP Way

Clearly there is some variation here. R is exploiting, or constructing, a conceptual distinction between the strategic purpose for advertising and the proposition which appears on the pro forma for creative brief. But she does so in order to represent her point of view as one more sophisticated that a naive reformulation of something written down in a BMP style book. Once again, it is worth stating that, while R's rhetorical use of discourse forms is interesting, I am not suggesting or implying that her accomplishment in a senior role at BMP is 'merely' the effect of rhetoric. I am suggesting that work (and other) social roles are in important ways rhetorically sustained and accomplished through a mastery of and sensitivity to certain discursive forms. R's rhetorical accomplishment was to achieve an effect of down to earth, no nonsense, eye on the ball managerial pragmatism in the service of the company, and she accomplished this through a highly complex discursive form. This discourse form enabled her to both challenge the conventional wisdom of the BMP Way of doing things, and also to raise it to a higher level in asserting that her insight into the BMP Way of advertising development was more telling and more forceful than that of other colleagues within BMP. It is worth noting that, in advertising as in industry generally, women in senior managerial positions are rare and the accomplishment described above is by no means insignificant.

7.2.9 Summary comments on the BMP Way interpretative repertoire

The last two examples have sought to show how a rhetorical category of The BMP Way seems to offer an interpretative repertoire the grounds for which are fairly well substantiated in that 1) it is clearly drawn upon by some staff as a resource to warrant ways of approaching the advertising work they do, and 2) it is evidence by the ways in which more experienced staff draw on the resource by omission in the sense that their orientation to a BMP way of working is rhetorically enhanced by a sense of the absence of a BMP repertoire in their discourse. They have, as it were, successfully assimilated the BMP Way interpretative repertoire so seamlessly that they can enhance their professional authority by adopting a critical or selectively circumspect position towards it. Clearly, this would not be possible were the BMP Way not

present in company discourses to be drawn upon.

Finally, the sense of prestige associated with working at BMP was very evident from numerous staff comments. "BMP people are twenty times more clever than other agencies" said L, a planner. P, another planner, noted a ' very different culture in BMP compared to the BBC, less hierarchical, more articulate, a thinking place where people think through issues in great detail'. Many other interviewees noted a rather cerebral approach to advertising at BMP compared with other agencies. Clearly, gather a couple of hundred philosophy and humanities graduates anywhere and one could be likely to get a cerebral approach to anything. Nevertheless, the articulated rationality apparent in the interview discourses seemed a major feature of the BMP Way, a pervasive and powerful company ethos which framed and informed the individual construction of meaning through the discursive articulation of subjective professional experience of advertising development. The establishment of a (possibly mythical) 'BMP Way' repertoire seems central to the preservation of the power and authority of the senior managerial staff at the agency.

7.3.0 The 'managerial imperative' repertoire and the 'strategic imperative' repertoire.

Both of these interpretative repertoires have been referred to above as aspects of the 'BMP Way' repertoire. Partly, this may be considered inevitable since the latter is an all embracing resource which acts as a warrant for the way things are done at BMP. However anomalous or atypical a procedure seems to be, it seems that it can be treated as a BMP way of doing advertising development. Or perhaps it would be truer to say that the BMP Way resource is a complex, fuzzy conceptual field which can subsume a large range of practical variations within the central conceptual scheme. In any case, two aspects which may be seen as offshoots of this resource are the repertoire which warrants positions on the grounds that they are managerially imperative, or on the grounds that they are strategically imperative. It seems useful

to treat these together since they both clearly support pragmatic company objectives about getting business done in a no nonsense way.

7.3.1 Managerial control as a primary purpose

To take the managerial interpretative repertoire first, it is most evident in the talk of account managers but is also utilised in various forms by people in others roles. For H1, it was important for him to see that everything BMP does under his remit 'bears fruit'. As he said,

> "..my specialism [as board account director] is making sure that things happen..catalysing and energising..make sure that everybody does what they're doing...and erm.. I think its quite important because nobody else has the time or the inclination".

H1 spoke about his role in the creative process as a manager:

> "...often we are there when they [creatives] are struggling and you can sort of lead them a way you think might be quite fruitful. The art for us is to come up with ideas and not let anybody think they're ours but think they're somebody else's..we are managerial but we manage a creative process and if you have no understanding of that process and you can't contribute to it.."

The 'managerial imperative' interpretative repertoire is characterised by agentive forms of discourse, the manager has a teleological relationship to the organisation of work. They are overseers who are part of the process they oversee and their role is warranted by the organisational imperative for direction, purpose, co-ordination: management.

7.3.2 The sub-culture of the 'suits'

Account manager E saw her job in managerial terms as 'managing, guiding the development of advertising'. For C the account manager 'is the person who runs the account does all the logistics'. Many people referred to 'the suits' (including the

suits themselves) to signify that managers were somehow involved at the interface of advertising and straight, conventional business. They would liaise with creative teams but in the world of advertising the managers are considered to have a different, less radical mentality than creatives, while they may be considered less clever than planners. Managers themselves seemed to consider themselves the cleverest of the lot since they had the benefit of an overview of the whole advertising process and in addition had a 'grown up' mentality. They were the realists who knew that everybody else could play at being a creative or a social researcher or whatever as long as they could keep the client happy that everything is happening to the benefit of the client. If the manager loses that trust then the wheels come off everything else. For creatives though, managers might be the toadies because they have to be politically sensitive and discrete. Of course, mature creatives would understand the importance of the account management role very well. Nevertheless the informal agency divide between conformist 'suits' and radical, individualistic 'creatives' persisted between those who are (allegedly) intrinsically fascinated by art, culture creativity and people, that is the creatives and, to a lesser extent, the planners, and those primarily motivated by a sense of order, control, co-ordination and a willingness to do boring things like be nice to a horrible client or arrange meetings: the account managers. Account managers are the functionaries of the agency who wield power but also have to manage people and manage process. They tended to see the advertising development as very much a team effort requiring talent and so on but they were also unwilling to be in awe of the talents in the agency: creative work might be good or bad but it had to be on time, planners might be engaged in a highly creative and demanding role but they had to generate a good creative brief which had a rigorously reasoned strategic rationale which could be expressed in a one line single-syllable way. The 'managerial imperative' repertoire was characterised, in these interviews, by a pragmatic approach to advertising development which was clearly underwritten by a fascination with the business but mediated by an instinctive sense of organisation.

7.3.3 Account managers imposing order on the world

Account managers seemed to feel that things were rather messy unless they were given order and direction through unobtrusive and socially sensitive management. C and H1, both very experienced senior account managers, struck me as having the demeanor of stern but kindly mummies.

Account managers seemed to feel responsible for things, as if they had to be the adult or nobody would, and they dished out encouragement, reassurance or bollockings according to whether the managerial imperative was being well served. As H1 said,

> "...it isn't that you treat creatives with kid gloves I mean they are not babies but we have to give them space to have that [T makes a clicking sound] 'I've had a great idea' but you know everyone has to work that bit harder.....We are in a business, we are not an art gallery so we have all got to pull together.."

A clear managerialist instrumentalism is present here as a sub-text which gives meaning to the comments. Why assert that an advertising agency is a business? Why state that it is not an art gallery? Clearly the function of such comments is to warrant the instrumentalism of the account managers and to claim power over creatives. This is not to allege that the managers' claims are illegitimate, or that agencies controlled solely by creatives would be more commercially successful than agencies with account managers. It simply illustrates some of the warranting devices that are constructed in the course of the negotiations over power in advertising agency management. The fragile, arbitrary and constructed character of these devices is often only evident when they are taken out of context and questioned.

7.3.4 The 'strategic imperative' repertoire

The 'strategic imperative' repertoire is clearly related both to the managerial imperative and to the BMP Way repertoires. However, it is distinguished from both in the role and form it takes and the purpose it seems to serve. The strategic imperative refers to the forms of discourse that warrant positions on the grounds that the advertising process must be circumscribed by a strategic rationale. All the

interviewees made reference to this central feature of BMP's approach. H1 noted above that the strategic (marketing) role of advertising was of concern to all agencies, but that BMP make a particular point of making this strategic consideration the fulcrum, perhaps, upon which the advertising development turns.

7.3.5 Warranting claims and obtaining power through the strategic imperative resource

This principle was a notable feature of the discourse of R who, in explaining and justifying her role as a planner and her senior communications role, made continuous reference to strategic imperatives as regards communications. Her whole discourse, fairly typically idiosyncratic and eclectic though it was, was given narrative hook and coherence by using the strategic imperative both to warrant positions and to warrant her own professional role. She made the point that part of her role is to say when advertising is not the solution to the client's problem, which she said sometimes made her unpopular. But this point is a corollary to the strategic imperative: if there is not a strategic marketing role which advertising can fulfil for the client, then the strategic imperative cannot be served. R said,

> "Question: OK, so you look at it from a broader marketing perspective?
> Answer: Yeh I think so.
> Question: OK so you would presumably be involved be involved in all the client meetings from the first enquiry?
> Answer: Yeh
> Question:..and then if you sort of felt that advertising was right for them would you just say nothing..do you intervene....?
> Answer: No, my response would always be that the first port of call always is to find out whether communicating with a target audience is going to make any difference to a client's business needs.....",

and later,

> "...And I would always say that, first step approach to the communications positioning if

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you like, so just getting to grips with is there a role for communications..I don't think you should ever think about advertising until you've clarified that properly...".

7.3.6 The strategic imperative as an organising principle in advertising development

Later in the interview R offers an example from the Volkswagen account she has been working on. Chapter five offered some examples of creative and advertising strategy briefs from Volkswagen which give a general impression of the overall brand strategy which Volkswagen wanted to be implemented. They also ran subsidiary campaigns for separate issues within the overall brand strategy, each having its own advertising strategy and creative brief. There was one for the brand, one for Polo, one for Passat, one for the Tdi diesel model and one very successful brief which addressed pricing issues ('affordability'). Each had its own account teams, budget and so on.

"So if you took Passat for example, we right up front spent ages clarifying because its...to get to the common sense you often have to do an awful lot of hard work and number crunching and all the rest. What we came to with Passat was the view that all that was important to communicate with a certain target audience and to get them to understand that the Passat was a car which shared everything that was best of German design which was just, obvious, common sense it was like something that would make absolute sense to your Mum which I think is the best way to judge strategy! You don't have to use any funny words, any long words its just one sentence...then, the proposition was actually about what might be an interesting way of doing it to do with, erm...motor cars falling off the conveyor belt in their thousands and they're not crafted and they're not well thought through and all this kind of stuff whereas the Passat was something which was the product of real human beings passions and all that kind of stuff and the brief was about how the car was a labour of love and whatever."

In descriptive terms this is a nice illustration of the way that advertising strategy informs the proposition which informs the creative brief which informs the creative work. As R said later on, the advertising development process can fragment into disparate views aired in endless meetings. The strategic imperative offered R an interpretative repertoire which interpreted other discourses against the normative

standards of the strategic imperative. She noted that the German clients went through a stage of 'being wobbly' about the creative work, that is they weren't confident in it and wondered whether they should change it from the 'obsession' theme, but...

> "..I was always able to bring back the debate with creative teams and with clients back to a really common sense view of what we had to communicate which was like all we're trying to do is to say this car shares the best of German design and all of a sudden you've sort of simplified the debate and all the stupid conversations we have just, like, oh of course it's really simple then."

Paradoxically, perhaps, R, who was as well educated as the other agency planning and account management staff, warranted claims on grounds like 'common sense', simplicity in sustaining the strategic coherence of the advertising development process. The effect seemed partly a construction of gender. A male account planner could perhaps not have employed the same themes with the same tone as successfully. R accomplished the effect of positioning herself as a committed and valuable contributor to the advertising development process by a judicious use of warranting devices and rhetorical effects, most significantly through the interpretative repertoire of the 'strategic imperative'.

7.3.7 The strategic imperative and other interest groups in the agency

The strategic imperative then gives R a warrant to substantiate positions she takes in order to satisfy the managerial imperative. People in BMP seem ready to accept the authority of this repertoire provided it is convincingly expressed. Copywriter U noted that the strategic work is mostly done before the creatives even get the brief.

> "..we get a creative brief, and they will have decided, media, first they will have decided with the money they have to spend where its best spent wither on press television, posters, radio whatever, and sometimes there's a campaign involving different media. And they'll say whether its going to be a thirty second TV, you know, forty second TV, double page spread, and also in conjunction with the planners and account managers will have worked

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out a strategy: 'we want to say this, because of that...".

As he notes above, and other creatives support, the strategic planning work at BMP means that creative work can be subject to more sanctions than at other agencies but it also means that the ads that do go out can become legendary in the field for effectiveness and also for creativity. The strategic imperative has perhaps more force within the planning and managing discourses than the creative teams discourses. P clearly implied that he didn't always believe in it when it was his work being rejected. He sometimes felt people didn't understand the work, but he accepted that as part of the job. For clients, the strategic imperative might be reassuring because the word strategy seems to have great reassurance for people with a bit of business education, even where its meaning seems indeterminate: another reason why a strategic interpretative repertoire has rhetorical force.

7.4.0 The 'power of rationality' repertoire and the 'power of creativity' repertoire

Reference has already been made to the comments (made by less experienced BMP account team members) about the cerebral character of advertising discourse at BMP. It should be clearly evident from the extracts above that BMP places great emphasis on the articulation in words of a clear rationale for everything. Each stage of the advertising development process is characterised by meetings in which every point of view is reasoned out and evaluated. This sense of rationality seems, according to account staff, more evident at BMP than at other agencies or indeed in other, related, industries.

7.4.1 A French perspective on the articulation of ideas in British industry

One planner, M, noted that, as a French person, she thought when working in a previous job for MORI that British company directors in general were less comfortable talking about ideas and abstractions generally than their French counterparts. She clearly felt this was not so true of British advertising in general,

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and BMP in particular. As M said concerning her own role,

"...the planner is the thinking beginning and end of the communication process..we are the ones who are very familiar, comfortable with research, qualitative and quantitative..I don't think planners at the agency are particularly intellectual, but they are considered intellectual by the rest of the agency..they come from a sort of more intellectual academic environment.."

Later she noted that most (though not all) planners would not in her view make good creatives:

"..I don't think that planners in there [BMP] would become very good creatives..they value too much the word...they can be failed academics".

Nevertheless, the planners and the managers do love to talk about advertising and their habit of articulating what they do and their reasons for doing it is evident in the care with which they try to articulate their working experience to me. R noted that planners and others on the team can get carried away with the notion of trying to think of interesting ways to deal with a brief to the neglect of the strategic imperative rationale. This also is evidence that people here talk a great deal about the advertising process, and it is supported further by the company policy of having planners write up their successes in case histories which seek to explain and articulate the BMP approach and why it is successful.

7.4.2 The 'power of creativity': an inverted repertoire

The 'power of creativity' repertoire was hypothesised and explored on the grounds that talk of creativity is so significant in advertising discourses of all kinds. However, at BMP, the talk of creativity tended to be invoked by account managers and planners more than by creatives and then in a context which was subordinate to the strategic imperative. Creativity was 'just problem solving really' (A and R, a creative team). Board account director H1 noted that account managers manage a 'creative process' and he was clearly enthused and intrigued by the more radically creative

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successes such as the recent Sony TV campaign, but nevertheless he did not invoke creativity as a magical property or ability but as something which was usually based on borrowing cultural references or cinematic techniques and putting them together in a novel combination to accomplish strategic advertising aims. He emphasised that advertising creativity had a lot to do with 'craft skills', knowing through experience what would work in a given context. None of the BMP interviewees invoked a creativity interpretative repertoire as such, notwithstanding the ubiquity of references to creativity in BMP literature and advertising literature more widely. Creativity was represented as a practical purposive activity which was not distinguished from the problem solving context which gave it form. This was a distinctive, though not unique, feature of BMP. Other agencies such as AMV BBDO, Saatchis and JWT all claimed to prioritise strategic marketing problem solving before creativity for its own sake, and the creatives in these agencies seemed to have their political power reduced compared to some other agencies. For example, one interviewee at AMV noted that White Collins, his previous agency, was very different in that creatives were politically more powerful than planners. At AMV he was, as a planner, 'respected'. At WCRS he had to argue the case for planning all the time, while creatives were politically more powerful. BMP interviewees represented creativity as being contingent on the strategic needs of the client. Other agencies besides BMP might be said to prioritise the clients' needs and hence the agency's own instrumental corporate needs by inverting the creativity repertoire with a strategic planning repertoire. However, at BMP this prioritisation of strategy over creativity seems a particularly notable discursive accomplishment.

7.4.3 The discursive subjugation of the 'power of creativity' as a repertoire

In this way BMP had taken what could potentially be a powerful source of disequilibrium in advertising development and harnessed it, partly by the device of including talk of creativity within all the agency talk of strategy and advertising development in general, thus defusing its potential to subvert the interests of the agency as a whole. Thus a 'power of creativity' repertoire could be seen in some

sense as an inverted repertoire. In talking about creativity in official, sanctioned agency discourses as a mainstream, managed commercial problem solving process, BMP had given creativity talk a legitimacy which took away its power as a potentially subversive interpretative repertoire. BMP were notably expert in expropriating discursive space with corporate texts. Other agencies' planners did not feel the same urgency to write up successful cases, and the other agencies visited did not have agency publications lying around in public view. For example at AMV there was no public display of agency material at all, no history, accomplishments, even posters of recent campaigns on display in the lobby. The entire approach of interviewees to advertising development was more laissez faire. The story of advertising development was essentially the same at AMV BBDO, Saatchis and JWT but BMP, known within the industry as the planning purists, told the story with much more force. Part of this ethos was to reproduce the story in various textual forms. These texts were apparently assimilated by BMP staff who's talk discursively reproduced power relations within the agency.

7.5.0 'Knowledge of the client' and 'knowledge of the consumer'

Part of pragmatic account management is knowing what a client might or might not accept. This knowledge is a feature of the managerial imperative, as H1 and B made clear. It is a feature of account management and, to a lesser extent planning (where the planner happens to have a good relationship with the client). Clearly, the manager has priority over this knowledge and, where invoked, it could be authoritative. But it tended to be an underlying feature of the advertising process at BMP. That is to say that an account manager rejecting work simply on the grounds that the client wouldn't accept it would lay him or her self open to the charge that they haven't sold it hard enough to the client. As several planners pointed out, BMP made a point of setting out the terms of the client-agency agreement in writing (as most agencies do). The client would set the terms of reference with the agency brief and would be party to the process of working out the advertising strategy, researching and writing the creative brief, and developing the creative work.

on occasions on the ground that the client would not accept it, but only a senior account manager on a major client would be likely to be in this position. So what the client wanted and would accept was a feature of the whole process and was re-negotiated throughout. Clients change their minds (and budgets) so the clients wishes might drive the process for each team member. What they might accept is both public and open to negotiation (as R said in relation to the Passat account).

7.5.1 The 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoire

More interesting analytically was the 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoire. Intuitively, knowledge, or understanding, of the consumer must be the main premise of successful advertising development. The significance of the planning role at BMP underwrites this premise, and the kind of knowledge emphasised tends to be of a qualitative character. If the account team have a thorough understanding of what the brand and the ad might *mean* for the consumer then they have a basis for reasoning about ad strategy, creative work and so on. This consumer knowledge is realised primarily through the planning function, which in turn is based, at BMP, significantly on qualitative approaches to consumer research.

7.5.2 A qualitative appreciation of the meaning of being a consumer

The BMP emphasis on qualitative research has already been alluded to above with regard to Feldwick (1995) writing in the 'BMP Works 2' case history publication:

> "The message of this book is that the indispensable contribution of research to advertising comes at the stage of planning the strategy, in understanding the consumer and in the dynamics of the market place. It is interesting, though it cannot be said to prove anything, that hardly any of the campaigns represented in this book were subjected to any form of quantitative pre-testing as part of their original development. (Ironically, in the case of the one most obvious exception to this rule, the research recommended against using the campaign, predicting that it was poorly branded and would lack memorability...the same ad, with minor changes, went on to get the highest recall score in its category on the tracking study).

Most of the campaigns were, however, researched qualitatively during their development. This is a process we have always valued extremely highly, and which has frequently stopped us and our clients from making some real mistakes." Feldwick, 1995, p.xii.

7.5.3 The legitimacy of qualitative research at BMP

The emphasis on qualitative research is so imbued into the advertising development process at BMP that some interviewees felt it almost too obvious to emphasise. A (a planner) mentioned the importance of research in his role several times before ˌ clarifying what kind of research was meant.

Question: "Would you normally do some creative work prior to writing the creative or not? Answer: It just depends on things like timing and things like budget. We will normally yeh do exploratory work it could be a creative brief comes out of qualitative work we've done previously on another bit of work: might be its come out of a press brief, we know what people have said there and it might be the basis for another brief but it can be quite organic like that rather than starting something completely fresh a completely new project then you'd do exploratory work with concept boards, stuff like that before writing a brief. Question: I see, could you describe sort of that to me the exploratory work with concept boards what would that entail?
Answer: Er...well that would normally entail, erm, the most common way of doing it is to write, pretty much propositions as would appear on the creative brief they'd be written down in a bit more detail on boards, or talked through, perhaps with photographs or some other visual stimulus....and it might be that what comes out at the end of that...qualitative research what often happens is not that you get a winner out of the six concepts you've taken on but more that they've just been tools to stimulate discussion you might well come out at the end and write a brief that's not based on any single one of them".

For this planner qualitative research was a precondition for advertising development but he conveyed no sense of being in thrall to a focus group mentality. Rather he used qualitative research (mainly focus groups) as a resource for reflection and insight. The focus groups were almost represented as an extension of the agency account team meetings where views about the brand and the development of the advertising were aired and debated.

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7.5.4 Interpretative work in consumer research at BMP:

This passage offers a good illustration of, firstly, how qualitative research is fundamental to advertising development at BMP, and secondly how the approach to it is highly impressionistic. No formal analytic frameworks are applied to qualitative data. The focus groups which are the main vehicle for qualitative research are often attended by the planner, the manager and the client, but not necessarily by any of these. Whoever attends and runs the group, a record might be made either in the form of a video or in the form of notes on what was said. I later tried to get A to elaborate on the way he analysed qualitative data.

> Question: " Could you describe to me some of the ways in which you'd conduct your qualitative research, the ways in which you kind of formalise the kind of data you get back?
> Answer: Right, I think its quite difficult to, you know, you sort of know from experience what qualitative research can and cannot tell you....qualitative research is probably at its best when its more sort of developmental rather than sort of a pre-test....if you're talking about set forms of stimulus you use..people are more than capable of filling in the gaps themselves, taking the leap of imagination themselves, so in terms of stimulus I think simple stimulus can be very effective.
> Question: and then would you normally record the conversation if its focus groups or something?
> Anser: yeh, yeh.
> Question: Then when it comes back here, what do you do with the tape?
> Answer: Well normally if there isn't, likely there's someone making notes at the time, either that or I'll listen back and make them myself, from them sort of write the debrief, erm, normally structured along the lines of the research proposal that you wrote.
> Question: So am I right in assuming that for you qualitative research is a very, impressionistic kind of thing, you listen to a conversation and form impressions without doing any sort of formal discourse analysis or anything like that?
> Answer: That's right."

Shortly later I ask A whether his philosophy education influenced the way he approached his work in the agency.

> "Erm, not directly really at all.....I think philosophy did help train the mind in terms of

being reasonably sort of analytical, sort of rigorous with the data you get, which I think is sort of consistent with taking a more impressionistic view sort of in terms of qualitative research where its very difficult to sort of try and sort of tot up, in any meaningful way, what people are saying...people aren't really exactly sure what they're saying a lot of the time and certainly just getting an impression at the end is often better than sort of picking out quotes and stuff".

This passage seems to suggest that the consumer is placed at the centre of the advertising development process but that the matter of earning insight into the consumer is taken to be an interpretative process conducted in ordinary language rather than something which can be objectified and subject to counting procedures. The expression 'talking to' re-occurred many times in this context. The ad development process earns insight into consumers on the basis of talking to people to try to understand what cultural references, ad ideas, brands, products, celebrities and so on mean for them in particular contexts. P the copywriter was frank in his difficulty, as a creative, with research. Research, or views of what consumers do or don't understand, could be invoked as a resource to stifle his creative work. Nevertheless, he did concede the value of research. For example, P described how the use of celebrities in ads was subject to careful qualitative research to try to establish what the celebrity *meant* to consumers in the context of this product or brand.

7.5.5 The knowledge of the consumer repertoire in Volkswagen's 'Affordability' campaign

Communications planner R explained at length how the multi-award winning Volkswagen 'affordability' campaign came about. She made continuous reference to what 'people' do and do not understand about pricing. R's notable use of a 'strategic imperative' resource to substantiate her positions was heavily dependent on a subsidiary 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoire:

"...So what we did on Affordability was just that after having spent ages, talking to people and doing research on different type, forms of price communication and trying to see which

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made some impact on people and which people believed and all that kind of stuff, erm, and also having spent a lot of time talking to people and thinking through what part understanding price plays played in people's decision process: when it was important to understand price and when it wasn't important..."

This knowledge of the consumer, earned through exhaustive, qualitative, research, gave R a set of premises from which to infer things about possible advertising strategies for Affordability.

"...and secondly, the way that price works is that, people don't actually understand pricing they have this fuzzy idea of what things cost anyway certain cars they buy them over five years or whatever they're not really interested they look at it on a monthly, you know a month by month cost basis not an overall cost basis..the only thing that matters is whether they think that you as a manufacturer are kind of in their ball park".

So 'knowledge of the consumer' is a resource which is often implicit in but fundamental to the BMP Way of developing advertising. The reasoning about advertising strategy is grounded in a knowledge of the consumer which is derived from qualitative research.

7.5.6 Quantitative research supporting qualitative at BMP

There is clearly a quantitative dimension: BMP conduct quantitative tracking studies and marketing strategy analysis which is often quantitative and which explains the number of mathematics and social science graduates in planning. However, notably, in many forms of life a call to an interpretative repertoire based on knowledge, particularly research based knowledge, is given rhetorical force by articulating it in terms of a quasi scientific discourse which is characterised by quantification, objectification, and measurement. This is certainly the case with much research in marketing management. In the exploratory, developmental context of advertising, the authority of the knowledge of the consumer repertoire is accepted without the need for quantitative legitimation. 'Talking to consumers' is itself an authoritative rhetorical call: the 'talking to' phraseology cues the listener that the research was

qualitative, impressionistic, an interpretation of consumer talk based on the sensitivity, experience and intelligence of the planner. As R explicitly says, ultimately the planning role is guided by the interpretation and judgement of individuals.

> "..I mean I think you know planning is, people always talk about what planning is like, part science, part art and the best planners are those people who can combine both parts of it and think, you know the really important part of any planners job is that, they go so far with the logic of a situation and they do all the homework they can do I have never in my life seen an example where, just doing your homework and applying logic will bring you to a solution in any business there's a leap of faith at the end of it which is just 'I think we should do this'. I've done all my homework and now I think we should do this. So I think that;s true of anything".

As this passage suggests, BMP staff convey no insecurity about the indeterminate character of researched knowledge. The legitimacy of an interpretative, qualitative model of social research is taken for granted in BMP discourses of advertising development. Perhaps the predominance of people from humanities educational backgrounds helps this effect. People do not talk in terms of absolutes, prescriptions or models of practice. They continually make fine distinctions in trying to convey the indeterminacy in what they do, which is to understand consumers and to use that understanding to create advertising that means something to them. 'Knowledge of the consumer' as an interpretative repertoire consists notably of a 'talking to' position, an idea that the consumer is metaphorically present at account team meetings, an absent friend who's views are well known by the consumer's best friend, the planner.

7.5.7 Creative work and knowledge of the consumer

Creatives also research consumers in their own way, although this source of consumer research tends not to be explicitly acknowledged in agency discourse. It is taken for granted that creatives will keep up with popular culture, that they will disappear to watch films, play computer game or whatever as part of their need to understand what cultural reference points have meaning for and stimulate consumers.

As Account Director H1 noted,

> "....creativity is about stimulus....I mean you talk to creatives and they'll always be going off to get magazines looking at reels you know just trying to get as much stimulus as possible. We [account managers] don't have time to so that it is an art and we don't have time to do it but you know where do you get an idea from? It is constantly seeking out and a lot of advertising borrows from cultural references all over.."

Account managers related anecdotes about agencies which insisted their staff rode to work on the bus in the mornings or read The Sun newspaper because they had to understand what the proverbial man on the Clapham Omnibus was talking about in order to advertise effectively to him. Copywriter P noted that,

> "..I'm not very good at talking about arty things but, the old saying there's no output without input: it sounds pretentious but you should try and read books and see films, try to keep abreast with what's going on, otherwise you're not going to have points of reference to share with the people you're trying to speak to".

Clearly, creatives keep in touch with what consumers are up to in a general sense, while planners do so in a specific sense with specific reference to particular products, brands or whatever.

7.5.8 Knowledge is power in advertising development

So, in general, 'knowledge of the consumer' was called upon constantly as an interpretative repertoire either implicitly or explicitly. The reasoning upon which advertising development proceeded was grounded in an understanding of the consumer which derived from research conducted by the planning function and which was primarily qualitative. The authority of qualitative research findings (or interpretations) was not usually challenged, except perhaps sometimes by creatives when their work was rejected because of unfavourable research. The qualitative research was not always listened to: planners were aware that groups and what they said need not be necessarily representative of the wider population. Nevertheless,

regardless of such qualifications, qualitative research was clearly considered a foundation stone of advertising development in its role as a source of insight into consumers. Such insights carried considerable power in negotiating the course of advertising development at BMP.

7.6.0 Chapter summary

The case for categorising certain patterns or structures of talk as 'interpretative repertoires' has been discussed in this chapter. Certain repertoires emerged as important and powerful in the social construction, through discourse, of advertising at BMP. Some of the ways in which these repertoires interact or overlap have been discussed, and some lengthy passages of interview text have been offered in support of the general points made. The chapter has discussed possible interpretations of sections of the texts in terms of variability, structure and function. In particular, it has indicated how differing interpretative repertoires are drawn upon by account team professionals to give their arguments force. While there are clear sources of power emanating from these repertoires they are also used innovatively by interviewees to warrant or justify novel positions. This flexibility seems particularly important in an industry in which no two accounts are quite the same. The 'BMP Way' repertoire seemed particularly important in framing the development of advertising and preserving the power relations within the agency itself. However, the repertoires are clearly inter-dependent. Their power resides in their relation to the other repertoires. For example, the BMP Way repertoire was invoked with a great deal of flexibility to warrant differing positions in terms of, for example, the strategic imperative or the managerial imperative. These overlaps and ambiguities are a feature of interpretative repertoires. The constructions of meaning within account teams are not without paradox and the categories of interpretative repertoire presented above cannot be seen simply as discrete and self-contained arguments in advertising development. There is an essential sense of the dynamic underlying the interpretative repertoires of discourse and the following chapter explores some significant aspects of this dynamic as it appears in the social construction of

advertising at BMP.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Discourse dynamics: structures of power in the social construction of creative advertising at BMP

Chapter outline: This chapter attempts to explore some of the paradoxes and ambiguities in the discursive production of creative advertising at BMP. The interpretative repertoires identified in chapter seven shape the construction of advertising at BMP and carry meaning in discursive relation to each other. The mutual inter-dependence of repertoires reinforces their discursive effect. Advertising creativity is located in a position of primary importance, since it is what the agency produces and sells, yet the subversive power of creativity is simultaneously suppressed in order to serve the instrumental rationality of the organisation. This ambiguity towards, and control of, advertising creativity is a significant accomplishment of agency discourse. The chapter discusses this and other dimensions of power and control as discursive accomplishments within the agency.

8.0.0 Introduction

The previous chapter hypothesised interpretative repertoires which were used by account team members at BMP in the construction and development of advertising. It offered selective extracts from transcribed interviews as representative examples of each repertoire. Clearly, the nature of the analytical concept of the interpretative repertoire does not permit a clear distinction of when a repertoire is or is not being drawn upon. At BMP, the account teams' substantiation of their positions in depth interviews, their ways of articulating and warranting their actions and views in their role in advertising development, displayed some structural regularities in the form of grammatical, linguistic, or metaphorical groupings or repetitions. This structure was resolved into a series of overlapping and interactive 'interpretative repertoires' and

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the evidence for resolving them as such was pointed to through extracts from the interviews.

In a very fundamental way, interpretative repertoires act as organising principles in the very constitution of social reality in this form of life. The repertoires, it is suggested, offer people templates or cues for making sense of certain social phenomena and for orienting themselves within this field of discursive reality. The ambiguity and indeterminacy of advertising as a field of social action highlights this function quite well. Successful advertising is an accomplishment of this advertising agency which, notwithstanding the tangible elements to it such as video and film production and celebrity actors, is ineluctably a social construction in the sense that it is constituted through the interacting discourses upon which account team members draw in asserting particular views, positions and arguments. The advertising, the aim of which is to elicit or construct consumer desire for the product or brand, emerges from these discourses. It is a social construction which bears the stamp of individual plans, intentions and actions but which also has a social character in the sense that it has emerged from within the public articulation of these plans, intentions and actions in a social context which is circumscribed by certain available and acceptable resources or bases for argument. The discursive dynamics of advertising development at this particular agency are further analysed in this chapter.

8.1.0 Constructing advertising creativity through interacting interpretative repertoires at BMP.

In BMP, the 'intellectual contingency' repertoire was seen as prior to but informing the 'BMP Way' repertoire. The sense of a BMP Way repertoire seemed presupposed by a repertoire of intellectual contingency. In turn, the 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoire underwrote all the others, since a major component of the 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoire was the custom and practice at BMP of

integrating the planning function into every stage, especially early stages, of advertising development. This repertoire seemed a notable category since it was called upon by each member of the account team to substantiate positions and actions. However, it could also be seen as both informing, and informed by, a superordinate BMP Way repertoire. Furthermore, the 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoire was itself underwritten not by a legitimizing meta-discourse of quasi scientific knowledge or by a rigid series of managed organisational procedures, but by a character of intellectual contingency and a repertoire of respect for argumentative discourse which debated and rationalised evidence in experiential terms.

Interpretative repertoires can on this line of reasoning be seen as both (or neither) superordinate and (nor) subordinate in some cases. Certain repertoires both presuppose and inform each other. The BMP Way repertoire in a sense acts as a superordinate category of repertoire, but as a rhetorical resource for substantiating positions and warranting actions and views it is composed of and informed by the other repertoires. The 'knowledge of the client', the 'managerial imperative' and the 'strategic imperative' repertoires all depend to some extent upon the 'BMP Way' repertoire for their coherence and rhetorical force. The 'managerial imperative' repertoire depends upon a sense of organisation while the 'strategic imperative' depends on that and upon a sense of organisational ethos. Yet both the 'strategic imperative' and the 'managerial imperative' repertoires also allowed account team members to position themselves as challenging the conventional wisdoms of the 'BMP Way'. In this regard, once again, a character of intellectual contingency ran through the discourse of advertising development. The various interpretative repertoires gave structure and meaning to the talk account team members employed with regard to advertising development at BMP, but the structures thus employed were fluid and could be used creatively, within certain parameters, by agency staff to account for their professional actions by positioning themselves as experienced and

pragmatic account professionals rather than merely as slavish followers of agency procedure. Thus the interactions of interpretative repertoires at BMP both circumscribed the actions, warrants and positions taken by account team members, and left room for pragmatic individual creativity. The ground rules for individual creativity were that people had to assimilate the overarching BMP Way repertoire very thoroughly. This accomplishment allowed them to position their own pragmatic intellectual contingency as a superior warrant for actions and views to the BMP Way. However, the repertoires they employed to do this (i.e. the managerial imperative, the strategic imperative, the power of creativity, and the intellectual contingency repertoire itself) were all aspects of a rhetorically superordinate BMP Way repertoire. In this sense the nebulous character of the 'interpretative repertoire' as an analytical concept can be seen to capture something of the indeterminacy of construct meaning.

8.2.0 A structuralist/functionalist systems metaphor of discourse dynamics setting preconditions for power relations and the construction of professional identity within account teams

The discursive system of mutually dependent interpretative repertoires at the agency might be represented by a visual metaphor of concentric circles with intellectual contingency and power of rationality forming the outer circle, BMP Way as the next, knowledge of the consumer, then managerial imperative and knowledge of the client, followed by the strategic imperative with the power of creativity in the centre. This image suggests a hierarchy which serves to suppress and control creativity in the agency. In one sense this is true since creativity is rendered clearly secondary to the instrumental interests of the agency. This is accomplished through the power of the strategic imperative which, in the hands of planners, has a role in silencing certain (creative) interests in order to re-assert the agency's commercial interest. Yet the strategic imperative can only be re-asserted if it is supported by the account members' expert specialist knowledge and privilege. The privilege derives from the

managerial imperative which asserts that, in any event, the interests of the agency must be served as a priority. The account manager's knowledge of the client can support this since they (and the planners) have special knowledge of what a client needs and will accept in terms of creative work. Knowledge of the consumer is also a powerful repertoire in constructing expertise in advertising and the planners have special access to this source of authority. Finally, the interaction of these repertoires is made possible by the organisation's ethos of democratic, *participative decision making* within account teams. Free speech within proscribed processes and roles, institutionalised in the BMP Way and power of rationality, provides the conditions for the interpretative repertoires to construct power relations and to construct objects (and professional identities) within account teams in the agency's interests, while suppressing alternative possibilities.

8.2.1 Mutual interdependence of, and linguistic distinctions between, repertoires

The concentric circles image is suggestive of cascading repertoires which are distinguishable as linguistic categories yet which are also mutually dependent. As Deetz (1992) notes, language is 'primarily a system of distinctions' (in Alvesson and Wilmott, 1992, p.29). When an interpretative repertoire is drawn upon to accomplish a discursive act, the language used constitutes its object through the active and purposive selection of one mode of expression among many alternatives. So, for example, when a planner in an account team meeting argues that a particular course of action is consistent with, or inconsistent with, the advertising strategy, this 'strategic imperative' interpretative repertoire assumes its rhetorical force because it is distinguished from other possible positions. The planner may also feel that the creative work is weak, that the research was misinterpreted, or even that he or she simply doesn't like the person who has proposed the idea. Nevertheless, the strategic imperative repertoire offers the planner a linguistic resource from which to fashion discursive sources of power. Yet again, this is not implying anything about the

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planner's sincerity or professional competence. Neither does it imply that the planner may not say so if he or she thinks creative work is weak, or whatever. The point is simply that the discursive production of power relations in an advertising agency is accomplished through subtle linguistic distinctions. Some interpretative repertories are sources of power in the sense that they can be used to position the speaker credibly in a social role (such as ad agency planner). The 'strategic imperative' repertoire is one such and it accomplishes its effect significantly because it is distinguished from other possible positions.

8.2.2 Silencing advertising creativity

Each of the interpretative repertoires alluded to supercedes others in significant ways but the authority of each repertoire can be subverted in certain circumstances. The superordinate repertoire which seems to make this possible is represented by the outer circle, the intellectual contingency repertoire and its corollary, the power of rationality repertoire. These and the other levels of repertoire are discussed in detail below but a point to mention now is the overall effect created by this representation of the discursive structure of advertising development at BMP. This is that the interpretative repertoires induced from the transcribed interview texts together create a discursive environment which seems in turn to create a vacuum at the centre: a kind of discursive silence around the notion of advertising creativity. To reiterate an earlier point, this refers to the shadowy presence of notions of advertising creativity in almost every aspect of agency discourse, yet it never arises as an interpretative repertoire, a source of power in the interview texts.

8.2.3 A paradox of managed creativity in the production of consumer desire

A 'power of creativity' repertoire has been alluded to in the previous chapter but it was noted that this repertoire is somewhat inverted in the sense that it seems so

exhaustively incorporated into the everyday working discourse of advertising development at BMP that it is not used explicitly to warrant claims at all. There was a sense of 'of course creativity is crucially important: we just don't bang on about it like some agencies'. A major assumption about creativity and its value in advertising has been assimilated into BMP discourses about advertising and this has subverted the power of creativity as an interpretative repertoire for warranting claims. This effect has meant, in a sense, creativity is at the same time the main watchword of advertising development and is subservient to advertising strategy. The idea of 'creativity' has been tamed, as it were, and has no power to subvert other repertoires (such as strategic or managerial imperatives) in this agency. However, it is evident that advertising creativity thrives at BMP, judging from the awards won, from the commercial success and industry recognition of many of its campaigns, and also from the comments of creative staff in the agency. One the whole, creative staff indicate a sense of security about their role: after all, since creativity is circumscribed by strategy and planning, creatives can rationalise failure as a failure of planning or strategy.

8.2.4 The discursive accomplishment of 'managing' and controlling a creative process

Perhaps the most notable achievement of the agency, and a major feature of its success in becoming the leading winner of industry awards in the UK, has been the discursive accomplishment of liberating yet taming advertising creativity. It is tamed in the sense that organisational discourses of management and control suppress the subversive potential of creativity in advertising. The strategic coherence of advertising in the service of the marketing strategy of the client is always placed in an authoritative relation to advertising creativity. Yet creativity is acknowledged as the core of the business- as one experienced account manager said, 'ideas are all we sell'. Production and media buying is often contracted out to specialists (in this agency

specialists under the BMP DDB Needham corporate umbrella). Creativity is acknowledged to be the product that the agency produces and manages, yet in a successful corporate enterprise such as BMP the creative process is organised and controlled in the instrumental interests of capital. In an advertising agency, there are few visible systems of labour control such as time clocks, production lines or piecework. The control and management is, to a noticeable extent, accomplished discursively through the management of language. This does not imply a Whorfian, or an Orwellianism hypothesis. Many voices partake in reasoning about and contributing to the development of advertising and these voices give advertising development an emergent character. This was a feature of all the agencies alluded to in the interviews. Language mediated the process of advertising in each agency. There was evidently a discursive influence on the social organisation of the agencies: people reproduced certain values an assumptions through their professional discourse. These values and assumptions entailed relations of power and control.

8.2.5 The discourse of creativity and the creativity-effectiveness dichotomy

Creativity is thus discursively located at the centre of the advertising development process at BMP yet while it is discursively present throughout the process its power as a warrant for positions is subordinated to, and contingent upon, managerial, strategic and other interpretative repertoires which place the collective interests of the agency above those of any particular interest group within the agency. Creative and successful advertising is a discursive social construction of the agency. One of the significant features of this discursive construction is the abolition, in agency discourse, of a creativity-effectiveness dichotomy. This is accomplished through elevating a 'strategic imperative' repertoire to a more powerful position (than a creativity repertoire). Thus a 'power of creativity' repertoire loses its ability to subvert power relations within the agency, yet is also maintained rhetorically at the very centre of the advertising development process in the agency. In agency

discourse, 'Creativity' is fundamentally what the agency must produce in order to be successful: in a real sense the agency's organisational rationale is the management of creativity. But organisational stability and strategic purpose are discursively maintained through the assimilation of creativity discourses into mainstream organisational discourse thus rendering creativity easier to manage. As the schematic metaphorically suggests, creativity might be said to subsist in a vacuum at the centre of the agency's operations, and the other advertising development functions serve it and direct it.

8.2.6 The 'management' of discursive accomplishment

It is worth reiterating that the foregoing is not to be interpreted as implying that BMP has a sinister character of subtle psychological control over its employees. On a social constructionist ontology social life emerges from social interaction and assumes an unpredictable, 'real' character. Discourse is not ontologically distinct from practice, therefore the possibility of management standing outside advertising development and controlling it is highly problematic. Managerial control in this context is itself a matter of social construction. BMP as an organisation has a tradition of working practice which is maintained and realised through discursive practices. The working practice of BMP is, in a profound sense, a discursive accomplishment immanent in the ways that BMP staff articulate their professional practice. Managers or professionals of managerial status, are themselves products of the organisation. Managerial control of purposive organisational activity is accomplished through discursive practices (Deetz and Mumby, 1990). So the professionals at BMP are produced by the organisation of which they members. The organisation itself constructs consumer desire as its product but it also constructs advertising professionals.

8.3.0 The discursive constitution of relations and objects within account teams:

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the roles of interpretative repertoires.

The concentric image above points to certain possible discursive inter-relationships at BMP which, together, serve to set the preconditions for the production of professional roles and the construction of creative advertising at the agency. These discursive forms do not merely describe the social reality of being an advertising account team member but are constitutive of it. However, notwithstanding the arbitrary character of discursive reality the social world we construct is circumscribed in important ways by dynamic, interactional features of discourse. While discourse is intentional the source of discourses are indistinct. We may, as professional advertising people, formulate goals and plans and use discourse in novel ways to put these into action. But in important ways the plans and goals we formulate are preconceived by the discourses within which we operate. What we feel to be autonomous action with our selves as source and independent agent may in important respects be re-creating certain relations and objects which are constituted in the social world of the advertising agency.

8.3.1 The ideological silence of discourse at BMP

One can envisage forms of social life in which warranting discourses draw heavily on ideological sources of power and authority. People might rhetorically use calls to, for example, what is 'normality', to an interpretative repertoire of notions of the 'scientific', or to an absolute standard of 'truth' to warrant their point of view and to claim power for it over alternative points of view. Studies in discursive psychology provide many examples of this, say in racist or religious discourse and in the use of calls to 'the facts' and empirical evidence to assert positions (e.g. in Potter, 1996). But the discourse forms which seemed characteristic of advertising process at BMP did not seem to offer evidence of simple warranting devices such as these. A naive view of advertising might have lead one to expect that positions and actions in

advertising might have been asserted through rhetorical calls to a notion of creativity, to sales effectiveness or to the authority of experience in more strident ways than those evident in these transcripts. Advertising development discourse at BMP seemed more subtle than this and the warranting devices more elusive.

That is why an interpretative repertoire of intellectual contingency has been invoked as the outer ring of the concentric circles in the schematic image. The interviewees at BMP were more or less experienced in advertising but all could be characterised as experts in using language to warrant positions. The account team planners and managers at BMP all had educational achievements signifying their linguistic and rhetorical skills. The policy at BMP of recruiting staff well qualified in humanities from leading educational institutions (Oxbridge, LSE and so on) may have been useful in impressing clients but clearly was also grounded in the need for staff to be used to arguing in the sense of engaging in a rationalist discourse which was characterised by fine distinctions and intellectual flexibility. The evidence for this did not lie in the use of an esoteric or technical vocabulary. In fact, the intellectual force of the arguments and points presented lay partly in the subversion of a discourse of intellectuality: the talk was so simple, almost teenage in its halting, colloquial and ungrammatical character, that the effect of intellectual authority could not have been accomplished unless the BMP discourse forms demonstrated were circumscribed by others. Many of the passages quoted in the previous chapter would have no intellectual force, or even meaning, if the reader had not been told that the speaker was an Oxbridge graduate with a significant role in the construction of some of the most successful and noted television advertising campaigns of the decade. Clearly, the freedom to speak and reason in a manner which seemed to lend itself to advertising problem solving, but which was not in itself intellectually impressive, was a feature of the discursive dynamics of the agency itself.

8.3.2 Technical vocabularies and the non-technical vocabulary of advertising

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development at BMP

One can envisage situations in which a simple and direct way of speaking does not in itself rhetorically reinforce the effect of the intellectual authority of the speaker. In many fields the use of esoteric vocabularies and jargon known only to insiders disempowers the lay listener from what is said and rhetorically asserts the power of the speaker over the listener. In BMP discourses this effect is not found except insofar as it is subverted by the use of a, perhaps misleading, single syllable approach which has the effect of rhetorically engaging the listener while simultaneously asserting the difficulty and elusiveness of the accomplishments being described. There is a marked distinction between the language of advertising discourse and the elite social status of advertising and advertising professionals. The reason for taking this line of discussion is to point to the way that BMP discourse seems to employ subversions of more common discourse forms to socially construct creative advertising creatively within a formal organisational framework. A precondition for this kind of subversion seemed to be a subtle interpretative repertoire of intellectual contingency. This was allied to a rationality repertoire: the way that BMP works seems to depend upon people enjoying rationalising, articulating and constructing arguments for their own sake. This sense of rational argument also enhances the discursive representation of advertising as a cerebral, difficult and important field of endeavour. The 'single syllable approach' was evident in interviews with planners at AMV BBDO, Saatchis and JWT also. Only BMP staff tended to use the distinctive halting and colloquial 'teenage' style, but staff of other agencies were equally simple in their linguistic usage. The discourse of advertising development was, on the evidence of this data, a non-technical discourse on the face of it. But while the language was simple, lay language, the conceptual organisation of advertising discourse was characterised by the distinctive repertoires already noted.

8.3.3 The role of qualitative research and BMP's liberal intellectual culture

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The general notion of respect for rationality and argumentation is a major feature of the traditional view of a liberal arts British higher education and this ethos is embodied in the Oxbridge humanities tradition from which a high proportion of BMP staff are recruited. In BMP, there is an implicit ethos that phenomena of social life can, through the insights of qualitative research, be reduced to words and intellectual control or power can be earned over social life by so doing. Advertising agencies must be in touch with popular culture and ways of conceiving knowledge, yet a significant interpretative repertoire at BMP draws upon an approach to knowledge and reasoning which is more characteristic of Greek culture in 400BC than it is of Western European culture in 2000AD. BMP discourses of advertising development appear to take a dialectical form with 'the consumer' represented collectively by qualitative research as a sort of classical chorus. Empirical evidence was employed to warrant positions: there was no flavour of classical rationalism in the sense of a priori reasoning as a philosophical approach to advertising. But this empirical evidence was seldom (never, in the transcripts) overtly quantitative of scientistic in character. BMP's liberal arts intellectual tradition (excepting a few social science graduates) would seem influential in this respect. At BMP there was a noted tendency to articulate working experience in words, and a noted tendency to eschew numerical ways of conceiving knowledge about the consumer in the context of advertising development. Furthermore, the BMP approach to qualitative research was highly and specifically impressionistic, almost as if a dialectical process was set in motion when consumer research was engaged upon. As several planners noted, the focus group and other qualitative data was used as a basis or stimulus for discussion: the data was not fed into a system to be modelled or analysed formally. Several relatively new staff were clearly proud of what they saw as the cerebral character of the agency. So the 'intellectual contingency' and 'power of rationality' repertoires could be seen as having cultural antecedents in the liberal arts study of classical antiquity. This seems evident in the priority placed in the agency on verbal modelling through dialectical reasoning based on evidence, rather than scientistic notions of

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proof. This Platonic ethos would seem far fetched were it not for the educational tradition in BMP and were it not for the striking contrast between this rationality ethos and the quasi-scientific discourses extant in twentieth century Western culture. The conclusion that may be drawn from this is that BMP's recruitment policy is a central feature of the maintenance of the balance of relations between interpretative repertoires within the agency. There are maths graduates in BMP, including the head of planning, and social science graduates who are familiar with the quantitative tradition. However, quantitative research is not used notably as an interpretative repertoire in advertising development at BMP. The arguments which develop and sustain advertising are based on epistemological suppositions which derive from a classical principle of dialectic or verbal reasoning. This general principle seems, in important respects, to presuppose the other interpretative repertoires which are drawn upon to rhetorically substantiate warranting positions in advertising development at BMP.

8.4.0 The mythical character of the 'BMP Way'

The 'BMP Way' is a hypothesised interpretative repertoire which was discussed at some length in the previous chapter. It was suggested that, as an interpretative repertoire, it was drawn upon more explicitly by relatively new recruits who made frequent reference to 'the way 'we' do things here'. It was also suggested that more experienced hands had assimilated the BMP Way repertoire in a thorough manner which allowed them to position themselves as having experience, discretion and autonomy in their views and actions by simultaneously challenging and reasserting the value of the 'Way'. However, the notion of a company ethos or way is nebulous and perhaps more open than other hypothesised interpretative repertoires to the charge that it is an insubstantial re-naming of a commonsense category. Certainly, part of the attraction of hypothesising a BMP Way repertoire is its insubstantiality: it is everywhere and nowhere in the advertising development process at the agency.

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Every brief is different in significant ways and the interviews carry a notably contingent, flexible character to reflect this variability in the daily organisation of working. Furthermore, the BMP Way repertoire is clearly manifested in and through other repertoires which are in themselves perhaps more distinguishable. In particular, these are the 'knowledge of the consumer', the 'power of rationality' and the 'strategic' and 'managerial imperatives'. Interviewees made reference to the way 'we' do things here, but this is perhaps a necessary feature of any organisational working. Perhaps also it is inevitable that newer employees will utilise such a linguistic resource more than better established and senior employees.

8.4.1 The force of the 'BMP Way' accomplished as a discursive mutuality

However a sense of corporateness comes strongly through the interviews. There is a sense of belonging and a strong sense of being in a team. A BMP Way resource is hypothesised because, as well as having some characteristic structural features of its own, it also notably seems to permeate other repertoires. For example, the 'strategic imperative' repertoire must be understood in terms of the BMP organisation's tradition of elevating the planning role to a position of importance in advertising development that it does not take in many other agencies. Additionally, the qualitative emphasis of the planning role at BMP is also a feature distinguishing it from other agencies. This practice informs the strategic emphasis in advertising development at BMP and is a distinctive feature of the agency's working practice. When BMP staff refer to the need for advertising creativity to have a strategic role this makes sense in terms of the priorities set by the organisation, i.e. a 'BMP Way' of doing advertising. Also, the BMP Way is characterised by intellectual contingency and a rational, dialectical approach to advertising development. These repertoires make sense in terms of each other.

The BMP Way repertoire, or discourse, is perhaps best understood as a way of

giving form and coherence to the other, interpretative repertoires which are drawn upon more explicitly as warranting devices. It is comprised of the other repertoires, and it gives form and meaning to them. Because of this overarching or superordinate character to the BMP Way, it has been placed second in the concentric schematic. It is informed by the intellectual contingency and power of rationality discourses or repertoires and in turn it gives form to the other repertoires. All the repertoires or discourses are interdependent and make sense in terms of each other. However, there is a sense of hierarchy and a 'BMP Way' as a discourse which gives the various agency practices coherence and collective identity seems an essential superordinate feature of the interaction of the various repertoires in the discourse and practice of advertising at the agency.

8.5.0 The 'Knowledge of the consumer' repertoire

A repertoire of 'knowledge of the consumer' could be said to be running through the advertising developing process at BMP. Indeed, it is a fundamental feature of the BMP Way, as the planning function as interpreter of the consumer is a key feature integrating advertising development at BMP. It is hard to conceive of a BMP Way at all without the planning role that is fundamental to it. At BMP planning is not hived off as a separate, and largely quantitative supporting role as it is at many agencies in the UK and USA. At BMP planning is afforded equal status with the other roles in advertising development. Planners are highly regarded for their creative skills in interpreting qualitative research and in giving a dynamic stimulus to the creative work by devising a stimulating and strategically coherent creative brief. Their ability to do this effectively depends upon their intuitive but also highly skilled appreciation of qualitative data, and their ability to articulate this intuition in simple and direct way. Thus 'knowledge of the consumer', rather than being a particular special plea for warranting a position at BMP, is a general principle underlying the whole advertising development process and a fundamental feature of the BMP philosophy.

Yet it was also a notable feature of the discourse of agency professionals. They invoked 'knowledge of the consumer' in certain circumstances to underwrite positions they wished to take. Extracts were presented in the previous chapter of R's rationale for the VW 'Affordability' campaign. This rationale derived wholly from exhaustive qualitative research investigating the meaning of car pricing for consumers. Other interviewees, especially planners of course but also creatives and account managers would invoke a knowledge of the consumer resource or repertoire to warrant actions or positions, therefore it seemed useful to suggest that this constituted an active repertoire for agency staff. No doubt such a resource is invoked at other agencies too, but the special character of it at BMP lies in the kind of research epistemology that is considered to be a just and appropriate warrant. At other agencies 'knowledge of the consumer' can sometimes be regarded as a mysterious property of good creative work, somehow bound up with the creative spark. There can be a division maintained between the analytical, rational approach to advertising, which is embodied in the quantitative, subordinate account planner and the pragmatic account manager, and the creative, intuitive approach to advertising which can be considered the exclusive domain of the creative teams. This structure of discourse potentially leaves creatives with more power. It could also be a reason why the creativity-effectiveness dichotomy has never quite died away. Where creative work is sanctioned by a 'power of creativity' resource, the failure of the advertising to work might be accounted for by criticism of the very notion of creativity in advertising. But this could be to misattribute cause and effect.

8.5.1 Knowledge of the consumer and the planning role at BMP

At BMP the 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoire is owned mainly by planners. Good creatives have always kept in touch with consumers by insinuating themselves into consumer situations. P (in chapter seven) noted that he 'went to the supermarket that night' when he received the PG Tips brief to make mental notes on

what shopping seems to mean to people. This kind of practice is taken for granted at BMP. However, it is the planner who seeks to integrate knowledge of the consumer as regards a specific product or brand, with knowledge of the client's marketing strategy. In this way there is another voice of the consumer within the advertising process, one which has a slightly different, broader and perhaps less quirky perspective than the creative, and one which has substantial research experience, theoretical knowledge and skills. In sum, the 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoire is owned by planners at BMP but is also used by other members of the teams, and in this sense the 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoire is integrated with other sources of warrant and power by the overarching repertoires of 'intellectual contingency' and 'power of rationality.'

8.5.2 The discursive power of planners at BMP

'Knowledge of the consumer' is a repertoire which is drawn upon extensively by staff at BMP but one of the key features of the management of the creative advertising development process at the agency is the way that this repertoire is integrated throughout the process under the warranty of a 'power of rationality' repertoire while being owned principally not by creatives, but by planners. At BMP this sense of knowledge through ethnographic understanding of consumers, rather than through measurement of them, seems to be sustained by the BMP Way resource. This maintains a framework of working which leaves power over advertising decision making in the collective hands of a team which is predominantly humanities educated and used to having to articulate arguments and positions. The power of a 'knowledge of the consumer' resource would be of a different kind in many agencies. It may rest with the intuition of a powerful creative, or with an account manager who decides that the planner's quantitative research data points to certain conclusions. In many agencies it is likely that a 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoire could not be sustained as a warrant for positions as it is at BMP, because there wouldn't be the

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same faith and understanding in qualitative research and the power of articulated rationality to solve creative problems creatively. At BMP the planning role is sustained as a significant and powerful role through the 'knowledge of the consumer' interpretative repertoire.

8.5.3 Discursive power: creatives and planners

An implication of this interpretation is that creatives have less power under such a system than under others. This has already been alluded to by the creatives at BMP, but nevertheless they seemed to understand the benefits of it. It does seem reasonable that such a system might generate greater organisational stability than is common in advertising. BMP have sustained a high level of achievement over a long time and their literature boasts of a relatively low staff turnover, by advertising standards. Whether or not this is evidence for the success of BMP's system of advertising development, it does seem clear that the ways in which interpretative repertoires are drawn upon in the discourse of agency account teams to warrant positions and actions has a distinctive character which is maintained through the complex interaction and mutual interdependence of BMP discourses or repertoires. This interdependence is bound up with the agency's history and the collective experience and background of its staff.

8.6.0 Interpretative repertoires and the expropriation of discursive space in the interests of organisational control

One of the notable features of the transcripts was that conflict, self evidently a feature of advertising development in which people argue their points of view, remained tacit. There were occasional amused allusions to situations where the glossy surface was torn by tantrums, fallings out, discontent or disasters with clients. Such things are the everyday gossip of every organisation. Yet, in general, the impression given

of working life at the agency was just as it has been described: collegiate, verbal, rational, emotionally contained and instrumentally directed. This effect was itself a discursive accomplishment of the organisation. This accomplishment of control, directedness and subjugation of sectional interests in the greater collective interest owed nothing to technicist discourses of managerial efficiency, and seemed all the more profound for that. As Alvesson and Willmott (1992) note,

"...management and management techniques....can be conceptualised as forces pushing to the 'delinguistification' of a domain, presented as beyond disputes of meaning and ambiguity". (P.15)

These authors were referring to the more common tendencies of managerial groups to make use of technical and specialist vocabularies (or obscure jargon) in order to represent what they do as impersonal, technical, uncontestable and driven by common interest. The use of such vocabularies silences oppositional voices through a premature discursive closure. Notably in BMP advertising development discourse there was little recourse to such vocabularies, rather the opposite with an adolescent inarticulateness and colloquialism predominant. Yet at BMP the effect of control and management was nevertheless accomplished, and very effectively judging by the agency's achievements. Agency staff had certain freedoms, perhaps signifying their elite status. They could roll up to work by 10AM: nobody seemed to mind. There was an endless free supply of food, snacks, fruit: travel and lunch expenses were generous. The working atmosphere was very congenial, comfortable, 'nice' people and a 'nice' working environment. Pleasure was as mechanism of control and compliance, as it is in many organisations. But underlying the collegiate, easy-going culture there was an understanding that deadlines had to be met, work had to be produced on time and the client had to be satisfied. To quote these critical management theorists again,

"...CT (Critical Theory) directs attention to the deeper and more pervasive aspects of

control....dimensions of power and ideology are of greatest significance in domains where they are not easily recognised as such. In particular....language and communicative action produce and re-produce the world-taken-for-granted, thereby giving priority to certain (unrecognised) interests and presenting social reality as natural and given". Alvesson and Willmott, p.16

Given that discourse analysis is 'intrinsically a *critical* methodology" (Elliott, 1996) it is appropriate to explore this dimension of control in the agency. The impression given from a politically naive reading of the transcripts is of a group of people, happy in their work, secure in their professional status, deferential towards their colleagues and content that the agency is engaged in a socially valuable enterprise, or at least indifferent if it is not. This caricature, perhaps unfair, is suggestive of certain discursive silences accomplished by the agency through which it sustains control (over both junior and senior staff) and directs purposive activity.

8.6.1 Accomplishing control and 'management' through discursive closure

The interview transcripts were characterised by certain features of absence. There was, for instance, an absence of allusions to conflict, with the slight exception of P, the copywriter, who's comments were perhaps influenced by the fact that, at that time, he thought he was leaving the next week (he subsequently stayed). Self evidently, clever and able people such as those at BMP hold views about things. Yet articulating arguments in a lucid, evidence based and emotionally controlled way was a feature of the organisational ethos which was acknowledged (if not always adhered to) by the interviewees. Similarly, the absence of creativity as an interpretative repertoire drawn upon by groups *within the agency* was notable. It was drawn upon extensively by the agency: corporate literature reiterated the central concern with advertising creativity in many ways, and account managers would, when prompted, echo this piety, although with some sardonic references to the tendency for creatives to borrow from each other. Yet within the account team the claim of creativity was

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effectively silenced. It was crowded out by the other interpretative repertoires. The 'strategic imperative' repertoire was more powerful than a call to creativity, as were the others. Creativity is, as has been noted many times in this thesis, a powerful theme in advertising, powerful enough to subvert organisational control in an agency. Suppressing creativity as an interpretative repertoire while elevating 'knowledge of the consumer' and the others in its place was the key to BMP' discursive accomplishment.

As Mingers (1989) has noted (in Deetz, 1992), lack of open conflict in work organisations can preclude the discussion of other interests. People may feel that they are all working ultimately for self interest, to get a better (material) life, and that their self interest is bound up with that of the organisation. Self evidently, organisations must exert some kind of control in order to sustain themselves and to avoid anarchy and destabilisation. The interesting thing is how this lack of conflict is discursively accomplished by silencing the language of potential destabilisation.

8.6.2 Forms of closure: the creativity/effectiveness dichotomy suppressed by the strategic imperative repertoire

Knights and Willmott (1985) have suggested that management, as a set of routines and practices, 'constitutes identities and experiences' (in Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, p. 26) which sustain the discursive preconditions for certain aspects of decision making. Within BMP the account team professionals talk of advertising creativity as distinctively subordinate to strategic marketing problem solving. This is reflective of the themes stated in the agency's own case history publications and re-stated in other corporate texts. They acknowledge that, once the advertising strategy has been carefully established and the creative brief crafted[1], the creative work assumes great

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[1] Creative briefs would, in another study, form a useful textual resource for discourse analysis in themselves.

importance since good creative work is a precondition of most good advertising. But the judgement of creative work is laid at the door of the DOCs (Directors of Creativity), experienced senior staff who will make judgements of work based on their advertising experience. The account team themselves will judge advertising development in terms of its strategic coherence given the research findings, the client marketing brief and the creative brief. As planner R emphasised, the 'strategic imperative' resource could suppress many forms of discussion in planning meetings. Such meetings could become 'tortuous' with many sided discussions introducing indecision and inefficiency into the process. The suppression of the creativity/effectiveness dichotomy, supplanted in agency discourse by the strategic imperative repertoire, focussed the attention of agency staff on one dimension of the advertising while deflecting attention from others. The strategic imperative repertoire cut through discussions and silenced other possibilities. In particular, it silenced talk of creativity such as 'but this is one great idea'. The great idea was fine, after strategic priorities had been set.

8.6.3 Discursive closure and planner power

As a form of discursive closure, the strategic imperative repertoire seemed particularly powerful in asserting the claims of planners. The historical role of BMP in raising the importance of the planning function in advertising development has been noted above. BMP were 'pioneers' in the UK of an approach to planning which has since been widely adopted in the UK, less so in the USA. In the USA, a view of planners as researchers, peripheral to advertising development, is still popular in major agencies, as it was in the UK twenty years ago. The rise in popularity, and credibility, of research (both quantitative and qualitative) has made possible the rise in status of the planner. At BMP the planning role is used in the interests of managerial efficiency: advertising development is controlled and directed through the 'strategic imperative' and it is primarily the planner who defines what the strategic

imperative is. The planner has access to the research (which no-one else in the agency understands anyway) while the planner also directs, or at least frames, the creative work by crafting the creative brief. The planner is responsible to the other members of the account team and to senior management and has to justify his or her position. However, the planner does have some powerful linguistic resources at his or her disposal which can be invoked to direct attention and to silence other forms of discourse. One of the most powerful resources is the interpretative repertoire of the strategic imperative, supported by the knowledge of the consumer repertoire. The elevation of the planning role into a position of discursive power in advertising ɩ development at BMP acts as a directing and controlling mechanism. The intellectual and managerial authority of the planner can define the experiences of other account team members, especially the experiences of creatives.

8.6.4 Planner power and the legitimacy of qualitative data

What counts as data is a significant issue in framing power relations in organisations. In many organisations (for example in many university management schools) quantitative forms of data 'count' to a far greater extent than qualitative data. When the basis for the legitimacy of particular forms of data is examined its foundations can seem obscure. Within BMP qualitative data was not formalised in any way: it was the result of a highly impressionistic interpretation of focus groups by planners and their associates (sometimes outside specialist research agencies). The interpretation of the planner was not necessarily considered final: account team seemed to hold a sophisticated position on the uses and weaknesses in focus groups and other qualitative data. Furthermore, planners often analysed quantitative data in seeking out consumer trends or other significant insights into the market. However, the significant point is that, in a quasi scientific age in which empirical evidence in quantitative forms is often a powerful rhetorical device for warranting claims, notably within mainstream management research, this agency had legitimised the use of

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qualitative data as a powerful warrant for claims in itself. If focus groups seemed to indicate a particular consumer reaction to an ad or to a brand, the planner was not generally called upon to substantiate or confirm this finding quantitatively. The legitimacy of qualitative forms of data within account team discourse was a powerful feature in supporting the role of planner in the agency. While the rationality of focus groups was sometimes questioned by creatives, the legitimacy of qualitative data itself was not.

8.6.5 The representation of the consumer within account team discourse: qualitative research as constitutive knowledge

The rhetorical force accorded to qualitative research as evidence to support arguments in advertising development is a measure of the status of the consumer within the agency. The consumer, represented by his/her proxy, the planner, and evidenced by the reports of impressionistic, interpretative forms of research, is always present and never present. The account teams have rather the demeanor of medical professionals in the way that they hold meetings about the way that meaning should be constituted for the patient, the consumer. The consumer has a problem, a lack of or distortion in, marketing information, and the agency has a job to set this right with a judicious communications strategy. Advertising is represented as serving the mutual interests of client and consumer. The consumer is represented as a respected partner in problem solving. The credibility accorded to qualitative research almost seems to serve a purpose of discursively representing the consumer as a partner in benign marketing problem solving, rather than as a partner in a very unequal power relation. The ubiquitous use of qualitative research in advertising development, and the respect accorded to its 'findings' within account teams, serves various purposes. It supports the planner in claiming power over the creative advertising development process, it acts as a form of bureaucratic control over account teams, enforcing discipline and giving a reason for meetings and actions, and it preserves the collegiate

social relations within account teams by representing the consumer as a silent partner in the process. The role of qualitative research may be more important than this: in moving the advertising profession away from the Vance Packard stereotype of manipulative, cynical, clever and avaricious mavericks, and towards a professionally detached, highly educated class of technical experts, it serves to legitimise the profession, or at least to legitimise advertising professionals' sense of their own professional and social status. Clearly, this does not imply that qualitative research does not generate useful insights or that its use in advertising is insincere. The suggestion derives from the social constructionist principle that knowledge has a ; constitutive character in that it constitutes both objects and relations. In important respects, qualitative research is part of the technical knowledge of this agency and as such it not only refers to objects and relations but constitutes them as well.

8.6.6 Planners as 'Suits' and 'creatives' as freedom fighters

One planner was very conscious of a social divide between creative staff and managerial staff. She felt that, as a planner, she fell squarely on the side of managerial staff as far as creatives were concerned. She herself did not feel managerial since her experience was framed as an ethically neutral problem solving service for the rest of the agency. Ads had to have a strategic rationale the coherence of which she could ascertain through research. As far as this planner was concerned, she liked the status and money which went with being a planner at a top agency (as she said), but she did not see herself as management but rather as a technocrat. She felt sensitive about what she saw as the negative personal perceptions about herself from creatives. But creatives seemed more politically aware than other groups in the agency, perhaps because of their perception of their own (relative lack of) power. They were happy with their general conditions: creatives were rather cosseted, exempt from most planning meetings, paid well, left to manage their own affairs. Some planners and account managers seemed slightly in awe of the creatives status

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since they could be in the agency, or out at the cinema/pub, without any sanctions being visited upon them. Any activity was warranted on the assumption that creatives have to keep up with popular tastes and trends. However, the creatives did have a professional sense of discipline. They were very aware that it was their reputation on the line when campaigns were launched. As one said, 'you can't say it was the brief or it was the media strategy: its either well was it your work or not?' So they had a strong sense of ownership over work which was produced, and a strong sense of vulnerability, notwithstanding their position and status in the agency which seemed secure as long as they produced work on time.

8.6.7 The suits-creatives divide as a source of power for creatives

The creatives and suits subcultural division seemed to maintain the creatives sense of professional identity. Perhaps it served to redress the perceived power imbalance between creatives, who produce creative work at the behest of others and have it judged by others, and the other account team members. One senior account manager said of creatives 'they're not babies' which clearly discursively positions account managers as superior to creatives, while also appearing to defer to the professional skills of creative staff. But the persistence of the subcultural divide suggests that part of the creatives sense of professional identity lies in distancing themselves from the commercial rationality of the agency, embodied in account planners and managers. Using one's creative talent to sell products for money is one thing: viewing advertising creativity as a specialist professional craft is another. The first might be seen as maverick: the second as a relatively low status craft. Preserving the sense of romanticism of creative work and creative people, even in as flagrantly an instrumental, commercial context as advertising, might be seen as raising the status of creative staff by mystifying their role. Several account managers seemed to acknowledge this with their rather patronising asides about creativity as 'mimesis' or borrowing allied to craft skills. However, they all admitted that good creative staff

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can do something that most account planners and managers cannot do: that is, they can come up with a good idea from nothing to a deadline. They might not be Michelangelo but they do have a skills which have a value. The informal, subcultural suits-creatives divide preserves their social status in a way which also recognises the claims of the other account team members.

8.7.0 The silences of participation

Much has been made of the emphasis at BMP on rational argumentation, on the ⸻ verbal articulation of positions and on a team approach to advertising development. Interviewees all appeared to feel that they were included in the advertising process: they indicated little sense of alienation by formal power structures in the agency. There was in general a strong sense of involvement and inclusion in the work. There were references to taken for granted power residing in senior staff such as the DOC's, but among account teams working on everyday accounts there was an impression given of a collegiate culture, restrained, civilised and rather urbane. The management and control of people was not of an overt kind at all: personal power relations within the agency were usually conducted on a very quiet level. This gave an overall impression of inclusiveness. Some account staff found themselves working with senior staff on a pitch on their first week in the job. Getting the job done was the culture and the means was, on the face of it, participative and democratic. But bringing certain discourses into the public domain also serves to silence others. The freedom to participate, to speak, supports the sense of individuals producing discursive practices as agents acting autonomously. Yet within such an environment there is an immediate need to continually reconstruct one's professional identity discursively.

Anecdotally, people who did not succeed at BMP would leave very disappointed with the way they felt they were not allowed to show what they could do. While this

is an inevitable feature of any organisation that employs people, it does point to the difficulties of constructing a professional identity of competence, expertise and commitment to the cause when there are no obvious rules for so doing. Insignificant ways, discursive practices produce individuals as well as being produced by them. Discursive accomplishment entails understanding and assimilating the discourses of an organisation. One such form of understanding would entail an understanding of which kinds of discourse were being silenced by the open and participatory culture within BMP account teams.

8.7.1 Repertoires of silencing in advertising development

Reference has already been made to the explicit public acknowledgement in BMP of the importance of creativity which served, in part, to silence and subdue the power of certain interests to raise certain matters. The most powerful interpretative repertoires in account team meetings were the 'strategic imperative' and 'knowledge of the consumer', both of which rested in the hands of planners. The next most powerful was the 'managerial imperative' and 'knowledge of the client', both of which resided with the account managers. The participative culture was a feature of the 'power of rationality' repertoire. What interests could be silenced by an acknowledgement of the power of rational argument?

8.7.2 The 'power of rationality' repertoire as a precondition of the discursive production of relations within account teams

Clearly, the freedom of every member of the account team to express their view, institutionalised in the 'power of rationality' interpretative repertoire, was a precondition of the discursive production of power relations within account teams. This freedom to express meant that managers and planners could intervene in any discussion to direct it and in so doing to discursively produce their own managerial

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role. The strategic and managerial imperatives, and the knowledge of the consumer and knowledge of the client repertoires, had the power when invoked to silence other considerations and to suppress the consideration of alternatives. These repertoires are not invoked irrationally: they are produced in the course of reasoning about an object, the advertising campaign. But they construct particular roles and reinforce certain interests in constructing their object, while subduing others. The ability of account planners and managers to invoke these repertoires at any time in the advertising development process was preserved by the 'power of rationality' repertoire: the culture of the agency was such that views could always be articulated and had to be since every account was conducted through a process of many meetings and reviews at every stage.

Pragmatically, it could be argued that the culture of free debate kept people feeling involved and listened to while also ensuring that those with more experience and/or a more hard-headed view held sway in decision making. Managerially, the construction of a 'cerebral' and 'clever' agency ("people here are twenty times cleverer than at other agencies" as one planner put it) is an accomplishment which has potential instrumental benefits in terms of quality of recruitment, lower staff turnover and corporate stability. This accomplishment was effected through the 'power of rationality' repertoire which supported the impression of a politically benign, collegiate culture. However, it could also be seen as discursively accomplishing a subtle form of control which precluded the raising of other interests. This control served the instrumental rationality of the organisation, which was to sustain itself by making advertising campaigns people liked.

8.7.3 The construction of professional identity through strategic repertoires

The various interpretative repertoires were drawn upon by individuals within account teams to constitute objects and construct professional identities. An essential part of

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this was the principle of verbal rationality within the organisation which, in allowing unlimited expression of certain proscribed interests, acted to suppress other interests. Within the account teams the interests suppressed included those of the creatives. Among planners and managers, the interpretative repertoires mentioned above (managerial, strategic, knowledge of consumer and knowledge of client) served to direct attention on to the instrumental aims of the organisation. The power of rationality repertoire supported this by fostering a culture of free expression constrained by the need to construct professional identities. Account manager and planners therefore could accomplish professional identity through drawing on the interpretative repertoires which supported the instrumental aims of the organisation. Advertising people, being people, no doubt talk about all sorts of things. However, within the agency and in the absence of overt control mechanisms there is a need to discursively construct professional competence. This need is the greater because there are no overt control mechanisms. Certain interpretative repertoires exist within the agency as a means of doing so. The existence of these repertoires as discursive resources, and the imperative of drawing on them in some way in order to construct professional identity, suppresses the possibility of alternative forms of discourse. Advertising development is thus socially constructed subject to a discursive system of control which establishes priorities against pre-set criteria, preestablishes the conditions for social relations among the account team and constructs and re-constructs the professional identity of account team members.

8.7.4 Some concluding comments: silent running at BMP

The discursive mechanisms which control and direct advertising development activity at BMP are silent yet pervasive. As Deetz (1992) points out, organisations produce their members. The foregoing analysis of discourse among advertising agency staff engaged in advertising development at a leading agency has indicated some of the discursive mechanisms by which this is accomplished. The various interpretative

repertoires pre-exist in account team discourse as linguistic resources upon which people can draw in relatively novel ways in order to position themselves as advertising professionals. These repertoires as mutually dependent sources of discursive power serve as preconditions to frame the working experience of account team members and to advance certain interests while suppressing others, such as creativity for its own sake, which might destabilise advertising development and distract attention from the instrumental interests of the agency. The control and suppression of destabilising interests is accomplished without overt means. On the face of it, working experience at the agency is very free with people feeling privileged by a lack of overt direction and control. But any work situation demands an order of control and entails competing power interests which must be resolved in order for the organisation to function. Within an elite professional environment such as a leading ad agency, this control of people and their social relations within the organisation can be seen as a subtle discursive accomplishment. The various interpretative repertoires drawn upon by account team members indicate ways in which advertising development discourse circumscribes the roles and positions people may take. Accomplishing a professional role entails understanding and assimilating, then manipulating, the discursive resources which are available.

Within this agency, power relations between account team members are significantly pre-established through certain superordinate interpretative repertoires. Within an agency culture of free expression and democratic participation the only controlling mechanism is discourse itself. Repertoires are, in this agency, institutionalised by structures, relations and discursive practices. Significantly, the political power of creative staff within the agency is subverted by elevating the professional expertise of planners and, secondarily, account managers. The organisational texts of working practice, history, personal roles and relations and even the physical layout and design of the premises reinforce power relations within the agency by supporting the power of rationality and BMP Way repertoires. Organisational control is established

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discursively and constituted in and through the interpretative repertoires people draw upon to constitute their experience of advertising development.

8.8.0 Chapter summary

This chapter has attempted to develop the discourse analytic perspective of chapter seven by discussing the interpretative repertoires of advertising development in terms of the power relations discursively constituted through them. The analysis of the interview texts for variability, structure and function has revealed interpretative repertoires which together constitute the practices and experience of account team professionals in the agency. This analysis has implications for the practice of advertising development or for the development of other consumer products in marketing, for example with regard to the use and legitimacy of qualitative research in understanding consumers in relation to brands and other aspects of marketing communications.

On a more political note, organisations and other institutions control people and direct attention to specific matters which uphold organisational interests by suppressing others. Within this discursive control individual experience is constituted and professional roles and relations maintained. This theme was particularly interesting in this case because within this advertising agency there was a very urbane culture of participation, verbal rationalisation and democracy. On the face of it there were no overt methods for control and direction of staff in the organisational interest. But while there were no time clocks to punch, few strict lines of hierarchical decision making to follow, and few overt systems of reward and punishment, there were other more subtle means of control constituted through agency discourse and practice. For example, creating and maintaining a professional role within the agency was substantially a discursive accomplishment achieved by drawing selectively and purposively on specific forms of interpretative repertoire. At the same time, the

people in the organisation were created in their professional persona by the discourses within which they acted. The chapter sought to point to some specific instances by which these effects were accomplished by, for example, the suppression of certain interests and advantaging of others, the circumscribing of social relations (e.g. between planner and consumer, between creative and planner) by the privileging of certain discourses, and the effect of a democratic decision making process in silencing the political, power of creatives within the team.

The next chapter discusses these findings in relation to the research problematic ' established in chapter one.

CHAPTER NINE

Discussion: implications and issues arising from this study

Chapter outline: This chapter re-states the research problematic and the research design in order to open up an evaluative discussion. The chapter returns to many of the issues opened up in chapters one and two and explores the ways in which the empirical phase of the study has addressed the research problematic. It also considers the broader implications of the study for research design and theory building in substantive marketing fields of research and practice.

9.0.0 The research problematic as summarised in chapter one

Can social constructionism provide a coherent theoretical framework for a qualitative method within a sub-domain of Marketing Management? Can this potential contribution be illustrated by a research study in advertising development?

..how does advertising happen, or what are the constituents of creative advertising development within BMP DDB? How is advertising development socially constructed to socially construct creative and effective advertising? Specifically,

1) What are the structural and functional features of discourse as manifested in advertising development account teams in BMP DDB?

2) Specifically, what are the discursive resources (or 'interpretative repertoires') drawn upon by advertising agency account teams to substantiate their claims within the advertising development process?

3) What are the dynamics of this process in terms of the ways power relations within the advertising development process are enacted?

4) How might such an analysis contribute insights for marketing management and the extant

5) What research implications might follow for extant related areas of marketing management and promotional management?   Reproduced from chapter one

9.0.1 The broader problematisation rationale

The set of simple questions in section 9.0.0 above was posed as part of a broader problematisation rationale which positioned the study as a development of a) , substantive research of a marketing phenomenon within marketing communications management as a sub-field of general marketing management and b) as a development of methodological debates within marketing as a whole. An argument was developed that the research design for this study was an appropriate response to these issues.

9.0.2 The research design in outline

A research design was offered in chapter one which, it was suggested, constituted a methodologically coherent response to the problematisation rationale. The initial research design was summarised as follows:

Research topic: a discourse analytic study of advertising development as an intra-agency process
Substantive domain: the study is located within marketing management as the superordinate domain and marketing communications as the subordinate domain.
Research problematic: the empirical focus of the study addresses a relatively neglected substantive marketing phenomenon while the methodological approach addresses issues raised in theoretical debates within marketing
Research philosophy: The research is framed within a social constructionist ontology and applies a discourse analytic methodology. Discourse analysis is seen as a feature of the interpretative research tradition.
Research data: transcribed depth interviews with agency account team professionals,

supplemented by observation, archive data and informal primary sources

Sampling issues: The focus was placed on the one leading UK agency which pioneered advertising development as an integrated, articulated planning process. This generated approximately 30,000 words of transcribed interview text in addition to other supplemental data sources. This volume of data is appropriate for a discourse analytic method.

Analysis: the aim of discourse analysis is to reveal the structure and functions underlying discourse. In this study the concept of the 'interpretative repertoire' will form the basic unit of analysis. Through it an attempt will be made to explore the social construction of advertising in the agency.

Reproduced from chapter one

What follows below is a general evaluative discussion loosely organised around two broad themes. Firstly, the main focus will be placed on theoretical issues of research design in relation to the research problematic. The discussion will attempt to point to broader implications for research and theory in marketing management, marketing communications, advertising and in management research more generally. Secondly, the main focus will be placed on the direct empirical findings of the study and the implications these may have for research and practice in marketing management and related fields. Finally, the discussion returns to broader issues of relevance and applicability before turning to a direct consideration of the specific issues of research problematic and research design as reiterated above.

9.1.0 Evaluative discussion: the social constructionist ontology and research methodology in marketing

It was suggested that the ontological basis for the research design of this study, social constructionism, was a suitable starting point for the research design given that social constructionist approaches are well established in other social scientific fields (references in chapter three) and also in some functional areas of marketing and management research (references in chapter two). As an ontology of social life social constructionism addresses the question of what exists in the social world. It concerns

the 'essence and nature of existence of the social world and man's existence' (for a reference in marketing research, Kavanagh, 1994). As Berger and Luckmann (1966) established, social reality can be seen to have a constructed character in that it is sustained in social practice and discourse. This thesis has argued that the social constructionist ontology, even considered as a research heuristic rather than as a seriously sustainable metaphysical position, has radical implications for research into marketing phenomena.

9.1.1 Elliott's social constructionism and normative marketing

The social constructionist ontological perspective constitutes a grounding philosophy for methodological responses to the call for greater 'paradigmatic' pluralism in marketing (e.g. Arndt, 1985, in Morgan, 1992). Research and theory building approaches from the social constructionist tradition are relatively few within marketing management and marketing communications texts and research. The most notable exception is probably the work of Elliott which has conducted empirical work concerning the jointly constructed meaning of advertising (e.g. Elliott et al, 1995, Ritson and Elliott, 1995), and the construction of social identity through the consumption of mediated brands (Elliott and Wattanasuwan, 1998). Elliott (1996, 1997) has also argued that social constructionist themes have broader relevance for understanding marketing as a cultural phenomenon which is constitutive of social life. In Elliott's (1997) case he does not argue that social constructionist approaches and perspectives can 'rehabilitate the practice of marketing' (Elliott, 1997). Rather, he argues that marketing is too socially important to be left to the narrow technical perspective of managerial marketers. In contrast to this view, this thesis has grown out of a naive managerialist perspective on marketing and has attempted to locate social constructionism and discourse analytic methodology within the mainstream tradition of marketing. This may entail an unavoidable incommensurability between the normative tradition of marketing management and the broader concerns of

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marketing's social and psychological role in contemporary life. Yet, while the incommensurability of these contrasting perspectives is clear, marketing's normative tradition may earn insights from social constructionist forms of analysis. After all, marketing practitioners, teachers and researchers are victims of marketing too. This thesis has attempted to emphasise the role of social constructionism in an area of marketing practice in order to draw out issues of concern which may have a broader implication for marketing's normative tradition of theory and research..

9.1.2 Discourse analysis: a development of social constructionism and a primarily qualitative approach

Discourse analysis was offered as the methodological framework which would be employed to operationalise this research study. Discourse analysis is a methodological development of the social constructionist ontological tradition in social research (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). It falls within the 'interpretative' research paradigm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) and can be seen as a development of hermeneutics (Elliott, 1996). Given that the qualitative/quantitative dichotomy has been extensively used as a basis for methodological discussion in marketing (e.g. by Hunt, 1994) DA can also be framed as a qualitative research approach (Banister et al, 1994). As such a discourse analytic methodology can be positioned as a form of address to theoretical debates in marketing research which call for greater methodological pluralism, greater paradigmatic pluralism, and for more contributions from a primarily 'qualitative' research standpoint.

9.1.3 Discourse analysis as a development of the interpretative research tradition

However, the qualitative categorisation need not be the defining feature of interpretative research: indeed it could be argued that most research studies have elements that are quantified *and* qualitative. Furthermore, interpretative researchers

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would argue that research results which are presented as quantified *and therefore incontestable* are a mutual construction of the author(s) and reader no less than studies which are primarily qualitative.

The interpretative research tradition develops hermeneutic principles to acknowledge the values and judgements that are present in all knowledge generation (Habermas, 1970). For Morgan (1992) the interpretative tradition has begun to make important contributions to marketing research at the margins. For Elliott (1996) DA is significantly different from other interpretative research approaches in marketing (e.g. Mick, 1986, Thompson et al, 1989) because of,

> ".. Its focus on social practice rather than individual perceptions, and its
> acceptance of the poststructuralist assumptions of language as the site of the
> construction of a social world replete with contradiction, paradox, and contest".
> (Elliott, 1996).

In this sense, the social constructionist ontology is fundamental to the DA focus on discursive practices and mutual meaning construction. So as a research approach DA can be located within the interpretative tradition but it has some distinct features not necessarily shared by other methodologies within that tradition. The most fundamental distinction resides in its social constructionism which argues from a constructionist ontological position that psychological life has an ineluctably social character (see reference to mutualism, Still and Good, 1992).

9.1.4 Mutuality in meaning, social constructionism and marketing research

Chapters one, and three, argued that mutuality of meaning (e.g. Still and Good, 1992) is a central, and crucial, feature of social constructionism. Mutualism holds that meaning, the sense people make of the social world, is drawn from the social world rather than being constructed by internal reference to cognitive structures.

This is a major assumption of social constructionist social psychology and draws on the developmental psychology of Vygotsky (1978). For Elliott (1997) the meaning of advertising is a joint construction of the consumer in engagement with the advertising text. Mutuality (i.e. the joint construction of meaning) casts a radical light on much cognitive psychology and has implications for the ways in which marketing research and theory conceptualises, for example, the effects of marketing communications or the managerial utility of marketing's normative models and frameworks. Put simply, in order to represent the world and construct our experience of it we draw on discourses extant in our social worlds. The construction of meaning is seen as significantly a social process mediated through language as opposed to a private mental process mediated by internal cognitive structures. Clearly, if we can be said to draw on socially available discourses in order to mutually construct meaning through language then many axiomatic marketing concepts must be seen in a different light. Notions of consumer 'need', advertising 'effect', buyer 'behaviour' and consumer 'attitudes' come to be seen as discursive, social rather than private, cognitive constructions and are hence available for study through discourse analysis. This point is developed further below and in chapter ten, since it is suggestive of a social constructionist research agenda for marketing with some parallel characteristics to that in psychology in the sense that it is concerned with generating insights into the *social* construction of marketing (and psychological) phenomena.

9.1.5 Advertising development, DA and methodological openness in marketing research

This thesis contends that discourse analysis is an appropriate and useful methodology within which to frame a study of advertising development. Chapter two suggested that one of the reasons why the intra-agency advertising development process had been neglected in marketing management and marketing communications

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management research and theory was because mainstream marketing research lacked the methodological tools to do the job. The kinds of research questions that are deemed relevant or feasible in a field is a function of the research paradigms extant in that field. Methodological pluralism in a research field has the potential to open up new kinds of research question and to focus on new formulations of 'problems' in the field. In particular, methodological pluralism makes possible cross-functional and inter-disciplinary research studies which are precluded under single paradigm fields. The research problematic for this study contends that advertising development process is a fertile area for exploration with a discourse analytic methodology because it is a) practically important for marking managers and b) it a social phenomenon strongly characterised by verbal articulation and hence is particularly accessible to a DA method.

9.1.6 Advertising development and marketing management: potential insights for marketing professionals

Advertising development is self evidently an example of a significant marketing phenomenon. Advertising is a powerful cultural force articulating the organisational marketing agenda and constituting consumer experience. This study was, however, located partly as a contribution to marketing *management*. Within the marketing literature the term 'marketing management' is conventionally used to denote the functional organisational task of manipulating the marketing mix variables to further the organisation's strategic marketing ends (e.g. Kotler, 1994, Baker, 1985). In this thesis, some licence has been taken to use the term in a somewhat broader sense. Certainly, the thesis contends that a discourse analytic study of advertising development is potentially highly relevant to organisational marketing managers. The insights of a top agency account team are self evidently significant to marketing people engaged in trying to operationalise the normative marketing concept. Advertising is in some senses a microcosm of the marketing world, reflecting

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fundamental managerial marketing concerns with understanding consumers, with making attractive consumer offers, and with communicating offer benefits in appealing ways. Therefore this thesis contends that an interpretative study of advertising development holds many possible applied insights for the professional marketing manager. These might include, for example, insights deriving from the way that BMP organise creative development in terms of roles and functions, which could hold insights for new product development in a more general application. It might include BMP's use of interpretative/qualitative research in operationalising the normative marketing concept of consumer orientation, and it might include some important practical insights concerning the strategic marketing utility of marketing communications, especially with regard to functional integration. These few examples will be elaborated upon later. For the moment the argument contends that, notwithstanding the interpretative social scientific methodological stance of this study, it is justified in locating itself as having a potential applied dimension.

9.1.7 Marketing theories of marketing management: a DA perspective

However, the term 'marketing management' was also chosen to convey the normative dimension of the field as a whole. A major contention of much marketing critique has been that this normative dimension has resulted in methodological distortion in the field. Put simply, the critical argument is that the 'how to' genre of theorising has been overplayed in marketing (and also in management research more broadly) with the prescriptive, formulaic theories and trite presentation of popular management consulting discourse holding undue influence over the scholarly treatment of such topics. This raises more general issues concerning management learning and education as a whole which are not at issue here. Marketing theorists have contested the epistemological status and practical utility of marketing theory given what is seen as the prima facie intellectual shallowness, empirical dubiousness and logical circularity of many of its popular formulations such as the 'marketing

concept' (Levitt, 1960, critique in O'Shaugnessy, 1992) and the 'marketing mix',

(Bordern, 1964, McCarthy, 1981, critique in Brownlie and Saren, 1992), the Product

Life Cycle (Cox, 1967), and the assumptions underlying the 'planning school' of

marketing (Kotler, 1994, MacDonald, 1984). Brown (1995, 1997) has tellingly

critiqued the intellectual and practical weaknesses in mainstream managerial

marketing discourse. Marketing theorists Hunt (1991) and O'Shaugnessy (1992,

1997) have engaged directly with the managerial marketing discourse on

epistemological terms. This debate has been conducted against the background of a

mainstream research and theory agenda which is intellectually unsatisfying to many

marketing and management academics and functionally implausible to many in the

practitioner community (see the *American Marketing Association* (AMA) Task

Force (1988) on the relevance of marketing to organisational practice). The point to

note here is that this thesis is located as an attempted minor contribution not only to

critical perspectives in marketing research but also to managerial marketing theory as

an applied field with a normative dimension. This places the argument among those

that contend that managers can act as managers and also as active, critical

researchers. This 'management learning' argument will not be developed in detail

here but the implied assumption is clearly that interpretative management research

can be both critical and relevant to management.

9.1.8 'Critical' marketing managers: a qualification

To many marketing academics the notion of managers as critical social scientists is

implausible. Yet it's plausibility depends on the presuppositions held about critical

social science. Discourse analytic approaches to critical social science demonstrate

that social accomplishment entails a sophisticated and sensitive engagement with

discourses. In the current study, account team professionals must be able to

assimilate the significant nuances of consumer discourses concerning products and

brands and other objects: they must be able to assimilate the organisational

discourses of the agency in order to effectively accomplish their professional role and identity within the agency. If, as DA presupposes, all social accomplishment has a discursive character, then one of the main tasks of social research is to generate insights into the social constitution of social accomplishment. Now accomplishment in marketing is a subset of the class 'social accomplishment'. Anecdotally, many entrepreneurial marketers do not act with reference to marketing models and frameworks. They have intuitive understanding of people, colleagues, consumers, social networks. The way that BMP do advertising reflects this. Advertising is developed not according to any formal or rigidly specified procedure. It is conducted discursively through a dialectic social engagement with relevant consumer groups, clients, creatives, planners and account managers. Hence BMP demonstrates a model of practice within marketing which has an essentially discursive character. Therefore, a suggestion that marketing managers can act as critical social scientists need not imply that they must be very learned, party-politically active or removed from day to day pragmatism. For discourse analytic studies such as this one demonstrate that everyday accomplishment in organisations entails a critical engagement with discourses and an ability to assimilate and exploit discursive practices.

9.1.9 The 'effective' marketing manager: a substantial or a trivial phenomenon?

The argument in the previous section does not imply that there is nothing to accomplishment in marketing management above the everyday, the 'commonsense' and the anecdotal. On the contrary DA technique reveals social accomplishment in all its extraordinary complexity. DA demonstrates that it is a delicate task to capture social accomplishment. DA research into marketing phenomena can generate insights into the social and individual preconditions for marketing to come about in all contexts. Marketing professionals, no less than consumers, draw on the world of marketing discourse to construct meanings which give their inner lives a dynamic and

a sense of purpose. The social construction of effective marketing practice is, seen in this light, a staggeringly complex matter which cannot adequately be described merely in terms of skills, knowledge or luck. To derive normative prescriptions from looking at the things successful marketers do is an essentially structuralist approach which misses the point. The point is that marketers are constructing a meaningful social psychological landscape by drawing on discourses extant in the social world. A pertinent question that can be asked, therefore, is what does marketing mean for them. By asking such questions marketing theory can generate insights into the social preconditions from which marketing phenomena emerged. Such a form of explanation will necessarily have a social, historical and biographical character and cannot be considered as technical knowledge as such.

9.1.10 General critical calls addressed by this study: a summary

In addition to the contention of this thesis that critical marketing research can have applied relevance, the study is also positioned as a contribution to the critical literature in marketing. The research problematic of this study positioned the discourse analytic approach as a form of address to general and specific methodological, epistemological and theoretical debates within marketing in the sense that it a) addressed calls for more 'qualitative studies', b) addressed general calls for new paradigm research, c) addressed calls for more research in marketing from the interpretative tradition, d) addressed calls for marketing research to introduce a greater element of reflexivity e) addressed calls for research to have a political/critical sensitivity, and f) addressed general calls for management research to engage more in inter-disciplinary work. Finally, the British Academy of Management has engaged in debate concerning the future character of management research. It has concluded, as a corporate response to this question, that management research should, among other things, address applied issues in a theoretically informed way, employing transdisciplinarity, addressing ontological issues, and pursuing a 'mode 2' approach in

'responding pragmatically to the worlds of policy and practice' (Tranfield and Starkey, 1998, citing Pettigrew, 1995). This thesis argues that the present study is an attempt to develop an approach to management research which moves towards these ideals. In this social constructionist DA exploration of a phenomenon broadly within marketing management the study has attempted to critically engage with theory in order to generate insights into a field of practice while not evading the pragmatic, everyday character of that practice.

9.2.0 Prelude to the empirical findings: general evaluative issues of interpretative/qualitative research

In interpretive research, knowledge does not come packaged in word-pictures of a reality the features of which are revealed incrementally by research study after study. Rather, the meaning of interpretive research is constructed by the reader, in marketing as in any other substantive domain (Elliott, 1996). Hence interpretative research findings are contextual and must stand for evaluation within the study as a whole. Banister et al (1994) draw attention to the complexity and dynamism of the social world and to the constructed character of understanding (p.142). These authors argue that, 'there is no certainty in enquiry' (p.143). For Banister et al (1994) the primary evaluative criteria of qualitative research include triangulation, reflexivity, validity and good practice. As Easterby-Smith et al (1991) point out, much of the discourse of research evaluation has evolved from quantitative research and is presupposed by its ontological and epistemological assumptions.

9.2.1 'Validity' in qualitative/interpretative research

Citing Marshall (1986, p. 197) and Silverman (1993) Banister et al (1994) argue that 'validity' in qualitative research is 'personal, relational and contextual' (p.143). For Easterby-Smith et al (1991) 'validity' in what they term as the 'phenomenological'

(i.e. interpretative) viewpoint concerns the question of whether the researcher has 'gained full access to the knowledge and meanings of participants' (p. 41). Clearly this must to some extent be a judgement constructed by the reader's engagement with the research. In the present study the research questions, problems, method and findings have been discussed at length in the attempt to make clear the assumptions and bases of the research. In this way a kind of 'validity' has been sought in the attempt to show by extensive and detailed discussion that the study has been coherent and rigorous in its own terms. Specifically, the thesis has argued that a) the research problem is significant and under-addressed in literature, b) that the research method is well established, thoroughly theoretically grounded and relevant to the substantive research problem, and c) that the empirical analysis and findings cohere with the methodological positions taken.

9.2.2 'Triangulation' in qualitative research

Banister et al (1994) refer to several kinds of 'triangulation'. 'Triangulation' is a nautical metaphor which refers to establishing a position by reference to an alternative viewpoint. In qualitative research it might refer to inter-subjective confirmation of findings by a third party, by reference to alternative data sources, or with reference to an alternative theoretical framework. In discourse analysis, the issue of triangulation is problematic. On the one hand, data triangulation is an inherent part of the discourse analytic research process to the extent that ethnomethodological context is invariably a feature of the analysis. The researcher seeks to understand the meanings of the participants' own social world and seeks to do so by taking account of all relevant field data. In the current study, the depth interviews were supplemented by archive data, observation in the agency and informal primary sources.

9.2.3 Content analysis and interpretative repertoires

A further move towards triangulation consisted in the content analytic framework for the induced interpretative repertoires (in chapter 6, section 6.5.3). While it was conceded that this content analytic approach somewhat over simplified the nature of the interpretative repertoire, it was argued that it does at least offer a way of assisting in making the analytical reasoning more transparent to third parties not necessarily familiar with discourse analytic principles.

9.2.4 Thompson's (1990) categories of insight and this thesis

Elliott (1996) refers to Thompson's (1990) three evaluative categories of insight for interpretative research evaluation. These are, firstly, conceptual insight. This concerns the extent to which the reader can see a conceptual pattern in the data. In the present study, the content analytic framework in chapter six and the discussion with transcript extracts in chapters seven has attempted to make these conceptual patters, in the form of interpretative repertoires, as clear as possible to the reader. The second of Thompson's (1990) criteria concerns the extent to which the interpretation resonates with the reader. Again, the exposition of reasoning and analysis in this thesis seeks to argue convincingly in favour of a particular interpretation of the data, and every attempt has been made to make clear the grounds for the findings. Finally paradigmatic insight allows the reader to see the world in a new way. The discussion in chapter eight sought to do this by showing how power and control in the agency was accomplished through discursive practices. This analysis of power and control issues offers a level of intellectual penetration into the social construction of advertising at the agency given that, on the face of it, agency account team staff are privileged members of a professional elite subject to few overt or obvious bureaucratic controls or sanctions.

9.3.0 Empirical findings of the study

The discourse analysis performed on transcribed interview texts sought evidence of variability, structure and function, following suggestions in Elliott (1996) regarding marketing, and following methodological frameworks described and demonstrated in, notably, Potter and Wetherell (1987) and others (e.g. Harre and Stearns (1995), Edwards and Potter (1992)). This analysis resolved eight primary 'interpretative repertoires'. Interpretative repertoires were defined in section 4.3.1 as,

".. basically a lexicon or register of terms and metaphors drawn upon to characterise and evaluate actions and events." (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.139).

The regularities in the transcribed interview texts were resolved into these repertoires which are seen as primary sources of power for account team members. That is, account team members articulated their plans and positions regarding advertising development by drawing on these repertoires. The existence of such repertoires in social life has the effect of distributing power and circumscribing social relations. In contemporary social life overt social control has been significantly replaced in many ways by technology and by the normalisation of everyday practices. Analysing social texts to reveal their structural characteristics resolves the interpretative repertoires through which meaning and experience is structured. Within an organisational environment such as an advertising agency, and in the close and ordered world of an account team, advertising can be seen as a social construction accomplished through the discursive practices of account team members. The analysis in chapters seven and eight sought to pick apart the elements of this social construction by examining the repertoires and the functions they served for individuals.

9.3.1 Interpretative repertoires of advertising development in the agency account team

The depth interviews with account team members were transcribed and an iterative process of analysis resolved eight significant interpretative repertories. These were

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entitled as follows:

'Intellectual contingency'

'The BMP Way'

'The managerial imperative'

'The strategic imperative'

'The power of rationality'.

'The power of creativity'

'Knowledge of the client'

'Knowledge of the consumer'

Reproduced from section 7.0.1

A detailed discussion of the grounds for inducing these repertoires was conducted in chapter seven. Discussion was organised around each repertoire. Chapter seven also considered issues of variability and function.

9.3.2 Repertoire function: the discursive accomplishment of professional roles

Chapter seven suggested that these repertoires serve various functions. The functions overlap and are difficult to consider outside the dynamic context. However, in simplified terms, some of the main arguments were as follows.

Firstly, chapter seven sought to show how the repertoires were used by account team members in the discursive accomplishment of a professional role. The review in chapter three noted many differing perspectives on this 'illocutionary' dimension of language use. Research in several traditions including the ethnomethodological and the post-modern noted the senses in which uses of language have a mutually constitutive character. In the agency, identity work was done in many specific ways. For example, younger and less experienced staff made frequent to a 'BMP Way' repertoire (discussion in chapter seven section two). They warranted positions,

actions and arguments by drawing on this repertoire as a flexible linguistic resource which positioned them as corporate people. By implication, it also positioned them as personally able. Yet the working practices of the agency seemed almost infinitely flexible. Advertising is an attractive industry to work in because every day, and every client, is different. Furthermore, the BMP Way repertoire was subverted by senior account team staff who challenged the corporate way yet positioned themselves as more able and also more committed to the corporation by so doing. Hence the variability in accounts of working practice in advertising development revealed an interpretative repertoire, the 'BMP Way', which was drawn upon in different ways by individuals in the accomplishment of their professional role within the agency. This accomplishment is significant and also nebulous. The performance of advertising development depends on the social cohesion of account teams, which in turn depends upon the various functional roles being accomplished. But the discussion attempted to show that the 'BMP Way' repertoire had a mythical character. While the corporate identity and established practices were a matter of public discourse in agency archives, publications and practices, it was difficult to pin down substantively because there was so much variability evident. The discussion suggested that this insubstantiality may often be characteristic of the most discursively significant repertoires. Successful performance of the account team role seemed to depend upon grasping the nuances and subtleties of this repertoire in order to be able to wield it in strategically useful ways.

9.3.3 Repertoire function: serving bureaucratic control through 'normalisation'

An important feature of the Foucauldian discourse analytic tradition is its focus on the way power relations are reproduced discursively in many differing contexts. Within BMP this feature of discourse was especially interesting because practices were thoroughly normalised. There were few overt bureaucratic sanctions or controls over staff. Roles, relations and the constitution of 'problems' and issues

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were circumscribed by features of discourse. The interpretative repertoires identified acted dynamically in mutual support.

9.3.4 Mutuality of repertoires silencing the 'power of creativity'

The dynamic interaction of repertoires was discussed in chapters seven and eight. It was noted that while each repertoires was distinctive, they were also mutually dependent. No individual repertoire could make complete sense seen in the absence of the others. So, for example, the 'BMP Way' was bound up with 'intellectual contingency' and the 'strategic imperative'. Seen together, the repertoires could be seen as exerting a form of subtle bureaucratic control over the process of advertising development. A more extreme view would hold that the repertoires held a subtle role in the constitution of the consciousness of agency staff. This role was essentially dynamic as agency roles and relations were reproduced with each successive socially constructed practice or discourse. The repertoires acting together constituted a social and a psychological environment which was essentially self-referential. For example, the 'power of creativity', anecdotally a very powerful repertoire in many other advertising agencies, was in BMP displaced or suppressed by the 'strategic imperative' repertoire. This effect could not be fully accomplished without the 'power of rationality' repertoire which allowed every account team member a presumed right of free expression of opinions at account team meetings. This meant that the planner and account manager held power over the creatives in two ways: firstly, repertoires of creativity were silenced by the other, 'strategic imperative' voices. Secondly, the power of the strategic imperative' repertoire warranted leaving creatives out of the advertising development meetings until the parameters for the advertising had been established. These effects clearly demonstrate that interpretative repertoires reproduce power relations in ways that mutually presuppose each other..

9.3.5 Expropriating discursive space: a source of agency power

While repertoires could be seen as mutually reinforcing and mutually self referential, the agency itself was in a position to set the discursive agenda in several ways. The empirical research seemed to indicate that the expropriation of discursive space was a source of power for the agency. That is, the agency as the organising corporation could use its influence to expropriate certain discourses to sustain its power over staff. A simple example of this in this case concerns the way the agency made efforts to publicise its activities. It encouraged staff (mainly the planners) to write case histories which were then rendered into hardback texts. Editions of the cases were available for sale to the public, and were also used to win industry awards. The agency printed (expensively produced)) hardback stories of the agency of which every employee had a copy. This helped to sustain the idea of a BMP corporate ethos, a corporate 'way'. These stories were factual and were told in a way which attributed the agency's successful evolution to talented individuals and happy events such as take-overs. In other words, new employees (or prospective clients: the books were left in public view in waiting areas) stepped into a socially constructed history. The agency thus expropriated discursive space. On the one hand, it made clear that it was an agency of stature and standing with many successes, including the successes of attracting some of the most talented individuals in the industry. It was not shy about its accomplishments but made them public in a tasteful way. On the other hand, there are always many possible narratives of any story. The agency used its influence to impose its own corporate version of the story on agency discourse and practice. Notwithstanding the ritual irreverence with which corporate stories are invariably dealt with by employees, the story is there in the public domain and expropriates space which other versions could take.

9.3.6 Assimilating and subverting repertoires: individual sources of power

It was noted in chapter seven that less experienced and more experienced staff drew on a BMP Way repertoire in different ways. For the junior staff, processes, activities and positions were warranted on the grounds that they conformed to a corporate tradition. For senior, better established staff, the BMP Way repertoire was subverted: central aspects of agency tradition were challenged, but in such a way that personal technical expertise and corporate commitment were enhanced. The ability to assimilate a repertoire and manipulate it in creative ways seemed a precondition for seniority in the account team. The more a person understood the nuances of the repertoire, the greater the extent to which they could draw on it in novel ways to sustain positions which enhanced their professional standing. On the one hand this is unremarkable: every organisation has its cynical, world weary people who are experienced and sceptical of the company line. But trying to position a repertoire of personal experience as more authoritative than a corporate repertoire clearly runs the risk of succeeding. That is, such people may position themselves as against the corporation and marginalise themselves within it. Ad agency account teams are very closed, intimate environments, working closely together day after day. Subverting the corporate BMP Way repertoire could be construed negatively if not handled very sensitively. Some of the transcript extracts in chapter seven demonstrate how this complex effect was accomplished.

9.3.7 Repertoires constituting account team roles and relations

The power within agency discourse of the 'strategic imperative' and 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoires was significant in reproducing power relations within account teams and preserving the social stability of the account team in the interests of the agency. It was noted in section 7.3 that the 'strategic imperative' was a powerful warranting device in account team discussions concerning advertising development. This repertoire concerned the need for advertising to have a coherent strategy which served client marketing needs, which could be expressed very simply

and which was credible and attractive to consumers. This repertoire allied with the 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoire was essentially the property of the account team planners. Planners conduct and/or organise consumer research in the agency. Planners also formulate the advertising strategy (with account managers) and write the creative brief. This gives planners a great source of power in the account team. This power of planners over advertising development results in the 'power of creativity' repertoire, conventionally a strong source of power in agency discourse, to be subverted. Creatives are utilised by the agency for what is seen as their technical and creative skill. However, a major accomplishment of this agency is that creativity is defused as a potentially destabilising influence within the advertising development process.

9.3.8 The character and function of the 'knowledge of the consumer' repertoire

A notable feature of this agency's working practice was the apparently unquestioned acceptance of the legitimacy of qualitative research as a source of insight into consumers. This can be seen as problematic on the face of it. Within academic marketing research quantitative approaches to research are enduringly popular. Within the marketing research industry quantitative approaches are common. Yet within this agency consumer insights were almost exclusively based on the interpretation the planners placed on qualitative data. Where quantitative data was used it was usually employed by the planner to seek more general insights into the market as a whole as a prelude to the focus group approach. This acceptance of qualitative data was central to the agency's accomplishment in elevating the status of the role of planner within account teams. The focus group findings were never subject to any formal analysis or confirmation. Findings were entirely impressionistic, subject only to argument and discussion within account teams. Yet such findings were often critical in directing the development of advertising at every stage in the process. The power of the 'knowledge of the consumer' entailed this

acceptance of the legitimacy of qualitative research findings and was critical in re-distributing power in account teams away from creatives staff in favour of planners. As a corollary, chapter eight discussed how the planners could be seen as quasi account managers in the sense that they served the instrumental interests of the agency. This was certainly the way they were seen by creative staff who maintained an informal 'suits' and 'creatives' divide which in turn served to preserve the professional identity of creatives in the face of this relative lack of power within the account team.

9.3.9 Empirical findings: 'normal' and 'problematic' discursive practice

Chapters seven and eight discussed the findings of the discourse analysis in some detail. The interview transcripts were seen in the light of the contextual data, some of which was discussed and reproduced in chapter five. The analysis could be seen on two levels. On the one hand the empirical phase of the research described the anatomy of a successful advertising agency's practice in developing advertising from client brief to campaign. The practices and working experiences described by the account team staff could be seen as unproblematic, 'normal', and purely descriptive. The agency is a top five UK agency with numerous international client brands and hundreds of industry awards for creativity and effectiveness earned over the last decade. The account team staff hold considerable insight into the practice from which emerged many acclaimed advertising campaigns. On a purely descriptive level, as a case study of advertising development, the empirical phase of the study is not without interest.

On the other hand when issues of power, function and variability were engaged with differing kinds of insights emerged. The discourse analytic process demonstrated another level of discursive reality, a reality in which the social order and the sense of 'normality' was seen as discursive accomplishment of deep complexity. Working

practices were seen as discursive accomplishments which reproduced power relations and exerted subtle bureaucratic control in the interests of the agency. Certain interpretative repertoires in agency discourse offered agency staff linguistic resources which they could assimilate and draw upon in order to accomplish and maintain their professional role within the agency. Yet in drawing on these repertoires to articulate their experience of account team practices the professionals were reproducing power relations which preserved social stability and a sense of everyday normality in the agency. Thus advertising development in the agency could be seen not only as a non-problematic example of working practice marketing, but also as a discursive accomplishment of subtlety and complexity which was riven with issues of power.

9.4.0 Further implications and issues arising from the study: contribution to theoretical and methodological debate in marketing

This thesis suggested that discourse analytic methodology constituted a relatively novel contribution to theoretical development in marketing research. A wide ranging review of marketing literature in chapter two substantiated the general claim that marketing research, especially as informs the 'managerial' genre of texts, was under-represented by interpretative methodologies in general and by discourse analysis in particular. This study has attempted to make clear the methodological and philosophical traditions which inform discourse analysis in order to establish the study as a contribution to developments in marketing research methodology.

9.4.1 Discourse analytic methodology changing the terms of methodological debate in marketing

Theoretical debates in marketing have drawn their terms of reference from traditional approaches in philosophy of science and have consequently often been concerned with issues of epistemology and methodology. In many cases these debates

presuppose a realist ontology (e.g. Hunt, 1994). The various philosophical approaches within marketing have been extensively debated and have reached an order of pluralistic truce (e.g. Kavanagh, 1994, Brown, 1997, O'Shaugnessy, 1997). Nevertheless the managerial school of marketing 'science' remains influential and resistant to the interpretative advance. However, interpretative research approaches have made slow but significant (Morgan, 1992) inroads into marketing and have changed the terms of engagement within the marketing theory debate.

Some critical social science researchers and theorists argue that a genuinely critical perspective cannot be maintained coherently within the presuppositions of a discipline's mainstream (as for example Parker 1992 does with respect to psychology). Within management research there is a small but well established tradition which seeks to incorporate critical analysis into managerial practice (see, for example, the 'critical management' tradition at Lancaster University, many articles in the journal Management Learning, and evaluative discussion in Nord and Jermier, 1992). Within marketing it seems clear that DA constitutes a departure from established methodological positions in that it seeks to sweep away significant presuppositions concerning, for example, the presumed legitimacy of marketing as a technical discipline and as a codified body of knowledge. DA takes no position on such matters but seeks to build in a consciousness of the political dimension into analyses of marketing phenomena. Some critical theorists would suggest that the discourse of marketing texts, and indeed the discourse of many functional management texts, serve to legitimise the power and claims of a social class at the expense of other social classes by suppressing major assumptions and effectively silencing alternative representations of the world. This view is held within the academic management research establishment (i.e. the BAM, in, for example, Tranfield and Starkey, 1998) as well as outside it. Regardless of one's position on this, DA and social constructionist perspectives on marketing can serve to critically re-examine theory and throw intellectually penetrating light on marketing

phenomena. The insights resulting can be turned back on marketing debates to re-examine marketing's basic assumptions.

9.4.2 Social constructionism and marketing

Of particular significance is the role of social constructionist ontology in discourse analytic methodology. As chapter two noted, social constructionism has made relatively few inroads into marketing research and theory development compared with theoretical and methodological developments in other areas of management and organisational research such as accounting, HRM and organisational behaviour. Discourse analysis has made inroads into other social scientific fields where social constructionism has been better recognised, such as in psychology, anthropology and ethnomethodology. The social constructionist ontology is a key element in changing the terms of theoretical and methodological debate within marketing. Traditional philosophy of science concerns with objective truth, verifiability, replicability, and predictive validity take on a different character. Traditional marketing phenomena can be seen in new and different ways, while many marketing phenomena previously seen as marginal or cross disciplinary might be seen more clearly as genuinely marketing phenomena, including advertising development. The inroads which work such as Elliott (1996, 1997) is making into the marketing research agenda will no doubt be followed by others seeking to develop a new kind of intellectual integrity for marketing education, theory and research.

9.4.3 Social constructionism and the marketing management research agenda: the jointly constructed meanings of marketing

For example, as a feature of managerial marketing, research areas previously seen as too broad, ill defined or inaccessible to research tools and researchers might, under a social constructionist ontology, be seen as open to managerial marketing research.

Of particular relevance could be the extent to which the marketing concept or maxim of consumer orientation might be more fully operationalised if marketing management can learn to use the interpretative research approach to earn qualitative insight into their markets and into the way that marketing management activity itself is socially constructed. As Elliot (1997) notes,

> "..the meanings of consumer goods are grounded in their social context and the demand for goods derives more from their role in cultural practices than from the satisfaction of simple human needs (Douglas and Isherwood, 1978, quoted in Elliott, 1997).

Marketing management discourse may espouse the naive cognitivist position of "satisfying" consumer "needs and wants" but it is not insignificant that this need satisfaction discourse positions managerial marketing as politically benign and socially useful. In practice, many marketing practitioners operate according to a heuristic based on understanding the *meanings* consumers bring to their consumption behaviour. BMP's approach to advertising development is a prime example of this. Need satisfaction forms no more than a post hoc rationalisation of marketing activity. The interpretation and exploitation of social meanings seems closer to the working model of marketing practice.

Anecdotally, many marketing professionals are sceptical about marketing research and about the prescriptive tone of marketing theory in popular texts. They feel that there is a level of detail in practical life which is not captured by simplified marketing prescriptions. Discourse analytic research on a social constructionist ontology is not beyond practical marketers. After all, this research study has shown that it is not far removed from what advertising agency account team planners at BMP do, in an admittedly informal way. Marketing research prescriptions run the risk of reifying entities (such as 'attitudes' or 'personality') which can be seen to have a crucially socially constructed character and are therefore contextual. Marketing management text normative prescriptions (such as 'become marketing orientated', 'apply the

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marketing concept' or 'satisfy customer needs') draw on discourses of managerial authority, power, and technical expertise and on discursive representations of the consumer which, on anecdotal accounts, do not square with the practical experience of many marketing professionals. A critical engagement with the social reality of customers, employees, colleagues and organisational hierarchies, and a critical appraisal of power relations in marketing, can potentially generate useful insights for marketing professionals. The social constructionist ontology and discourse analytic methodology can move forward the terms of this critical engagement for managerial marketing. A coherent alternative paradigm to the structuralist/functionalist is now available as a resource from which to construct marketing issues, concerns, problems and theories. This study has attempted to draw on this interpretative paradigm and to articulate its major assumptions in order to locate it as a viable approach within marketing research.

9.4.4 Marketing communications management: theoretical insights

The field of marketing communications management, as represented in texts and on marketing management courses, has so far been similarly slow in assimilating methodological pluralism in spite of many research papers in the periphery which take interpretative approaches to issues in consumer research and media research. This suggestion was again substantiated with a wide ranging review in chapter two. One trenchant critique by Buttle (1995) questioned marketing communications texts intellectual quality, educational effectiveness and theoretical adequacy. Once again, there may be a political dimension to this in that interpretative methodologies can be seen to problematise major managerialist assumptions such as the legitimacy and effectiveness of organisational and managerial authority, and the utility of marketing's normative prescriptions. Additionally there is a market imperative for universities running MBA and other business courses to be seen to be practical and vocational. Too often this manifests in formulations of management which are

simplistic, reductionist, or naive (a view strongly reflected in many debates in the *British Journal of Management*). DA methodology on a social constructionist ontology has the potential to re-examine the assumptions underlying managerialist discourses of marketing communications and to deepen the sophistication of representations of marketing communications.

9.4.5 DA methodology and marketing communications management: practical insights

As noted above, this study has shown that the quintessential marketing communications practitioner, the advertising agency, does not represent its activities in terms of a naive managerialist discourse. Advertising development is not conducted with reference to marketing theory. Indeed, it was strongly noted that clients who try to involve themselves in advertising development on the grounds that they have studied some marketing communications are viewed with dismay by account team professionals. Their experience is that they speak a different language to the professional class of marketers, hence the lengths the agency goes to translate the 'marketing brief' into an 'advertising brief', 'advertising strategy' and 'creative brief'. The agency planners also go to great lengths to re-examine the clients' basic assumptions about their consumers and their organisation's need for a communication initiative. For the agency, every marketing assumption needs to be re-examined rigorously from a consumer research perspective and also in terms of a rational, articulated dialectic which examines the role of communications in the client's marketing strategy. The 'intellectual contingency' repertoire was notably a feature of agency discourse: it was characterised by the variability of metaphor in agency discourse and by the flexibility to formulate issues in differing ways. In political terms the interpretative repertoires of agency discourse reproduced power relations in the agency: more pragmatically the repertoires freed account teams from limiting preconceptions in engaging in dialectic around the client's marketing problem

and the possible role of communications in addressing it. Crucially, on a marketing problem solving level, account team members were comfortable with indeterminacy of meaning and therefore did not need to set issues within the simplified parameters of marketing and marketing communications textbook formulations.

9.4.6 The consumers and the professional: differing representations

A central feature of this indeterminacy concerned the representation of the consumer in agency discourse. Marketing texts and marketing communications texts, even, today, rely heavily on a representation of the consumer as an entity conforming to a particular kind of rationality, and on a representation of the *communications* professional as an entity detached from the consumer's world. These assumptions are epitomised in the kind of linear models of the communications management process, usually derived from information processing consumer behaviour models, which Buttle (1995) and Elliott (1996a) critique. As Elliott (1997) and Elliott and Wattanasuwan (1995) strikingly point out consumption is far more important than a matter of satisfying instrumental needs. It is a cultural practice which is fundamental to the meaning of consumer life. The consumer is a 'practical existentialist' and an 'active agent in the construction of meaning', experiencing a kind of freedom in the exercise of consumer 'choice'. A constrained and limited kind of choice it may be but, as Elliott (1997) notes, it is a kind of freedom which is central to contemporary experience.

The agency responded to this sense of the consumer by reformuling its professionals as consumers, as part of the consumer world. Every agency professional was expected to be fully aware of developments in popular culture. Every daily paper was available in the agency every day. The casual talk was often of football and television. The 'Billco' library resource had satellite access to practically every TV channel, every radio channel and every news broadcast. The agency was saturated

with information. Advertising development was conducted against a backdrop of continuous qualitative consumer research. Consumers were represented as integral to advertising development, embodied in the account planner. All this is in striking contrast to mainstream marketing management which, like mainstream psychology, represents the in-group as scientists and the out-groups as subjects. The agency on the other hand, while clearly representing its own staff as a class of technical experts, did so in a very different way consistent with the discourse of qualitative/interpretative research. Consumers were treated as participants rather than as subjects in important ways. In account team discourse, staff constantly talked of 'talking to people' about ideas in advertising development, by which they were indicating conducting qualitative focus groups. The level of interpretation of qualitative data was informal, conversational, rather than stylised and quasi-scientific. The account team staff themselves were highly intellectually pragmatic rather than explicitly theory driven. This study of the practical, experiential world of advertising development, ineluctably a marketing communications phenomenon, could hardly offer a more striking contrast to the sanitised managerial world of the marketing communications text.

9.4.7 Marketing management, marketing communications, and psychology

The previous section has indicated some striking parallels between managerial discourses of marketing and discourses of cognitive psychology. This is a side issue which is not germane to the main argument of the thesis, but which nevertheless is worth marking out for its historical significance for marketing management. It would not do to push the argument too far, but the cognitive information processing paradigm in psychology represents the individual subject as unproblematic, communication processes as linear, cognition as a private mental activity, mentality as subsisting in mental structures, personality as reified, social life as apolitical, and assumes a realist ontology. The managerial genre of marketing shares most or all of

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these assumptions. Regardless of one's position on such matters, the parallels beg questions concerning marketing management texts' hitherto slow rate of assimilation of alternative representations. Psychology is now characterised by methodological pluralism, admittedly more notable in some sub-disciplines of psychology (e.g. social psychology) than others (e.g. child development). These issues are more a matter of discussion for marketing historians but are highly relevant to marketing critique. Why has marketing management been so influenced by information processing psychology? Has this influence been healthy for the field? What does this influence say about management as a field?

9.4.5 Advertising and discourse analysis: an inside-out viewpoint to counterbalance the outside-in viewpoint

A final point appropriate for this section concerns the field of advertising research. There have been several notable interpretative treatments of advertising, from Williamson's (1978) approach to advertising's semiotic or semiological codes, to Wernick's (1991) of promotional culture, and Cook's (1992) outstanding treatment of advertising as discourse. There have been many interpretative research papers on advertising in between but none, of which I am aware, which take a discourse perspective on advertising as it is developed *inside* leading advertising agencies. This is a significant direction from which to examine advertising, not least because the extraordinary complexity, subtlety and social significance of advertising discourse which the above studies powerfully reveal begs many questions concerning the motives, consciousness, skills, knowledge and experience of those who create the advertising. This study has shown that the social construction of advertising in an agency is as complex a discursive social phenomenon as the social construction of meaning of advertising in public. In particular, it has shown clearly that Vance Packard stereotypes of advertising people as a manipulative Machiavellian elite misses an essential truth about professional roles and about social construction. This

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is the self evident social constructionist proposition that social life in advertising agencies, like the social life of consumers, is power riven, discursively maintained and characterised by interpretative repertoires which normalise social relations and social practice. It therefore becomes highly problematic to categorise one generic group of people and to position them in a superior power relation to other groups on the grounds of their role in production. Advertising can be seen to significantly constitute the experience and consciousness of consumers, and the whole edifice of marketing activity in capitalistic culture can be characterised in the same way. But advertising people are themselves constituted (in their consciousness as consumers in their professional identity and in their social status) by advertising and marketing culture. This line of discussion could go on but is not of central concern to this thesis. The point to make is that a social constructionist DA study of intra agency advertising development is a useful counterpoint to the many studies of advertising as mediated public communication.

9.4.6 A discursive psychology perspective on a significant social phenomenon

This study explores advertising development as a discursive social process. As such it adds to a large and growing body of such studies which explore varied social phenomena from a DA perspective (many references in, for example, Potter, 1998, Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Edwards and Potter, 1992, Harre and Stearns, 1995). Advertising is a site of controversy and conflict. For Cook (1992) advertising generates extreme, and often confused responses because it is an unfamiliar form of discourse which is often mis-read by, for example, those critical of the ethical standpoint of advertisers. Advertising, branding and marketing communications generally represent and constitute the twentieth century consumer experience. As such it is a socially significant phenomenon which is rightly the subject of social scientific investigation from ethical and public policy points of view as well as serving the efficiency agenda of marketing organisations and managers. This study has

constituted a small contribution to a relatively neglected domain of social research.

9.5.0 The research problematic and research design revisited: a summary of the main arguments addressed in this thesis

The foregoing discussion has been speculative and wide ranging and has attempted to indicate some of the many ways in which discourse analytic contributions to marketing research can engage with current practical and theoretical issues in marketing and related fields. Significant parts of this argument relate to theoretical concerns of research ontology, methodology and epistemology. These theoretical concerns are of direct practical relevance to research in marketing fields because the theoretical assumptions of research circumscribe the scope and kinds of research question possible. In this general argument the research problematic was taken as a whole, with empirical and theoretical issues considered as bound up with each other. Previous chapters linked the theoretical arguments of this thesis to broader debates which cut across disciplinary boundaries. Active debates in broader fields of management research, social science and in sociology and philosophy of scientific knowledge run parallel to theoretical and methodological debates in marketing research. These eclectic traditions of thought were drawn upon to illustrate that the theoretical arguments of this thesis have a long and active tradition which has been reflected in critical approaches to marketing research.

In addition to this general argument, and to the points raised previously in chapter nine, it is worth briefly revisiting the specific research questions once again to reiterate the responses that this thesis has generated to each one.

9.5.1 This thesis addressing a dual problematisation rationale

The dual problematisation rationale suggested that a) advertising development was a

relatively neglected substantive empirical area in marketing management and marketing communications texts and research, and b) that this relative neglect was bound up with methodological issues raised by debates within the field. These suggestions were substantiated by a wide ranging literature review. This thesis has argued that a) this empirical study addresses a neglected substantive area of the empirical field of marketing phenomena, and b) that the methodological approach this study takes constitutes an appropriate form of address and contribution to issues raised in methodological and theoretical debates within marketing management, marketing communications and advertising research and theory, and extensively , reflected in debates within the broader domain of management research.

9.5.2 The problematisation rationale reduced to substantive research questions: the general question of social constructionism in marketing management research (research question 1.2.4 in chapter one)

Specifically, this thesis addressed the question (section 1.2.4) of whether social constructionism can provide a coherent framework for a qualitative method employed within an empirical sub-domain of marketing management. The thesis has sought to demonstrate this coherence by rigorously theoretically grounding the study in a tradition of social constructionism, attempting to carefully argue the grounds for each methodological step in the empirical study, and finally by seeking to draw out the some of the ways in which the study might be seen to generate insights into empirical, theoretical, methodological and practical issues in the field. The literature review noted that marketing authors from various traditions have engaged in a sustained theoretical and methodological debate often characterised by calls for greater methodological pluralism in the field. Other marketing authors were cited who specifically called for interpretative studies from the social constructionist discourse analytic tradition to broaden the empirical and epistemological terms of reference for the field. The review also noted that advertising development within

the agency has been a relatively neglected substantive empirical area for marketing research. This study has attempted a response to these and related issues. The foregoing study is located as a form of address to critical calls in marketing research. The thesis as a whole is offered as a sustained argument in favour of the social constructionist ontological position and the discourse analytic methodology. These theoretical standpoints are offered as useful points of reference in designing marketing research and generating insights into marketing phenomena at the levels of research theory and managerial practice.

9.5.3 Research question 1.2.5: how does advertising happen at BMP?

The ontological and methodological terms of reference for this question were presupposed by the theoretical parameters explained in chapters 1-4. The question was addressed through the empirical phase of the study which generated some 30,000 words of transcribed interview texts with agency account team professionals and induced from these eight significant interpretative repertoires which circumscribed the social construction of advertising at the agency. This general finding was substantiated through a detailed discussion in chapters seven and eight, supplemented by contextual and historical data about the agency and its practices outlined in chapter five. The empirical section argued for its particular interpretation concerning the structural and functional features of advertising development discourse. The anatomy of the social construction of advertising at BMP was examined focussing analytically on the transcribed interview texts and this analysis was contextualised by extensive, primarily descriptive, supporting data (detailed in chapter five) generated from observation, informal field data, and agency published and archive material.

9.5.4 Research questions 1.2.6-1.2.7: concerning the structural and functional characteristics of advertising development discourse at BMP

The empirical analysis resolved eight main interpretative repertoires of advertising development discourse at BMP. These repertoires were listed in chapter six in a content analytic form to assist intersubjective confirmation. Three representative interview transcripts are included in the appendices to this thesis for illustrative purposes. These interpretative repertoires represented the main broad categories of linguistic resource drawn upon by agency account team professionals to warrant claims and positions in the advertising development process i.e. they represented significant aspects of the *structure* of agency account team discourse. Chapter seven discussed the interpretative grounds for each repertoire and gave many examples from the texts to illustrate the reasoning behind the interpretations placed on structure and on function.

9.5.5 Research question 1.2.8: concerning the dynamic and mutually reinforcing character of interpretative repertoires of advertising development at BMP

Chapter eight developed arguments concerning the reproduction of social relations of power in the agency. These arguments were founded on the point that the various interpretative repertoires identified were mutually interdependent and acted as a web of linked resources for the construction of professional identity, the maintenance of social roles and relations and the accomplishment of advertising development tasks. The repertoires made sense to account professionals with reference to each other and the meanings extant in their use by account team professionals were seen as profoundly contextual. Chapter eight began to explore the political dimension of the study with regard to the discursive reproduction of social relations in the agency, the reproduction of wider social relations (for example in the ways in which consumers were represented by agency discourse) and with regard to the ways in which the experience of agency professionals themselves was discursively reproduced and circumscribed. Chapter eight further developed the functional aspects of the discourse analysis, especially in terms of the ways in which the repertoires could be

seen to mutually reproduce power relations and social roles within the agency and within the account team. The discussion argued that this reproduction of social relations served the instrumental ends of the agency as a bureaucratic corporation. Particular repertoires seemed especially significant in serving specific ends, for example the power of creative teams to influence policy decisions within the agency and to determine the course of advertising development was suppressed by the mutually supportive 'power of creativity', 'knowledge of the consumer', 'power of rationality' and strategic imperative' repertoires.

The point was made that not only do advertising agencies, as agents of marketing, create consumers and reproduce the social relations of market capitalism in wider consumer society. Advertising and marketing also constitutes the professionals who work within the field. The advertising professionals in this agency could be seen as successful precisely because they did not stand outside the consumer experience, but experienced advertising as consumers themselves.

9.5.6 Research question 1.2.9: concerning the generation of insights and implications for marketing management and related fields, especially marketing communications and advertising

Chapter nine has raised several issues concerning the insights which social constructionist discourse analytic research designs can offer for marketing fields of research. For example, the general point has been made that social constructionism represents a radically different ontological alternative to the naive realist ontology usually implicit in the structuralist/functionalist paradigm of marketing research. Marketing phenomena can be seen in entirely new ways that are precluded under realist ontological positions. Social constructionism does not supplant realism and bring to an end 2,500 years of metaphysical argument. It merely demonstrates that social research can move forward in ways which do not depend on naive analogies

being drawn between the social and the material worlds. The present study offers practical insights into, for example, the character of the consumer experience of marketing communications and offers examples of ways in which marketing organisations can use qualitative research to begin to understand their consumers. It offers insights into the ways in which marketing management can develop strategies and action plans on a dialectical model mediated by qualitative consumer insights. It offers insights into ways in which marketing communications professionals can understand the messages they design in terms of the socially mediated meanings generated by and within marketing culture. It offers insights into the management of innovative marketing activity in terms of organisational structure, control and culture. It also offers more general insights into the operationalisation of the marketing 'concept' of consumer orientation through an ethnographic form of understanding of consumers of marketing culture. Chapter ten will list more possible directions for future research and development of the implications of this study. The point made at this stage is that, in response to research question 1.2.9, this social constructionist discourse analytic study of advertising development within an advertising agency begins to address live issues of marketing research and of marketing management practice. These forms of address are mainly centred around ways of understanding the culturally and socially mediated meanings which consumers bring to marketed brands, messages and offerings.

9.6.0 Chapter summary

This chapter has opened up a discussion concerning the ways in which this thesis has addressed its research problematic by addressing ongoing intra- and interdisciplinary issues. The kinds of insights offered have been both practical in terms of marketing managerial priorities, and more abstract concerning the forms of bureaucratic control and power which can be seen to be reproduced through language and discourse. The advertising agency as corporation can be seen to expropriate certain forms of agency

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discourse and by so doing set the discursive agenda and preestablish the conditions which serve the agency's instrumental ends. However, this line of argument does not lead to a naive managerialism. Agency professionals are themselves constituted as advertising people by agency discourse, while the expropriation of discursive space by the corporation is itself a discursive accomplishment which cannot coherently be reduced to a cognitive one. That is to say that the forgoing analysis implies that, while discourse analysis can uncover power relations which are reproduced discursively, these relations can be dynamic, mutually supportive and shifting.

On a managerialist level, the thesis has tried to engage with two perspectives which are, in important respects, incommensurable. These are the normative managerialist tradition of marketing and the interpretative tradition of social research. The thesis has attempted to employ discourse analysis as an interpretative methodology to engage with issues within the mainstream research agenda in marketing. This position is perhaps more suggestive of Potter and Wetherell's (1987) in psychology than Parker's (1997). In psychology, Potter and Wetherell (1987) have used discourse analytic methodology to re-address many of the objects of traditional, mainstream psychology. Parker (1997) on the other hand holds, as some management researchers in the critical tradition do, that critique cannot be effectively conducted from within the mainstream of a discipline. This thesis has taken a moderate critical viewpoint in locating itself as a study in marketing management. As such it seeks to use DA to generate new kinds of insight which are not politically naive but which may serve the interests of marketing managers, as well as those of other groups in society. Notwithstanding views on this general position, the chapter went on to suggest several ways in which a social constructionist DA approach can usefully re-address mainstream managerial marketing concepts and principles such as consumer orientation, the management of innovation, the management of marketing communications, and of course the development of creative advertising. In sum, chapter nine has attempted to summarise some of the main kinds of insight offered by

the study and by so doing addresses the thesis argument firstly opened up in chapter one, research question 1.2.4.

Chapter ten will conclude the thesis argument by suggesting a number of possible future directions for research in marketing management and related fields implied by this study.

CHAPTER TEN

Concluding comments: future social constructionist research directions for advertising, marketing management, and marketing communications

Chapter outline: this chapter concludes the thesis as a whole by indicating some possible directions for future research that are implied the present study. The focus is placed on areas of research in marketing which can be re-addressed by social constructionist discourse analytic research and, more broadly, by other research approaches drawn from the interpretative tradition. The thrust of the chapter is the suggestion that the philosophy and design of the present study can be employed in various ways to open up a revisionary marketing research agenda which generates new and differing qualities of insight for marketing researchers, practitioners and consumers.

10.0.0 Introduction: a discourse analytic study of advertising development as a PhD thesis in marketing

This thesis has located an empirical study of advertising development within an advertising agency within the broad domain of marketing management research and theory. It has made connections between the research design and theoretical and methodological debates in marketing and its sub-fields and in management research more generally. These debates in turn have been linked to parallel debates in philosophy of science and social science. The particular orientation of this study entails distinctive methodological positions which are suggestive of a number of possible future research directions. This chapter will, as is traditional in social scientific research studies, conclude the thesis by indicating some of the main directions implied by this research study, beginning with research in the immediate field of advertising.

10.1.0 Future directions for advertising research: interpretative approaches

The literature review in chapter two noted that advertising research had taken on board the interpretative research trend to a greater extent than marketing communications and marketing management research, but perhaps to a lesser extent than consumer research. As Elliott (1997) points out, consumption entails an active engagement with communicated marketing products, advertisements, brands and other features of marketing discourse in a joint construction of meaning. Being a consumer is a social psychological state and the act of consumption is a cultural practice. The study suggested that BMP DDB seemed to understand this intuitively and grounded their practice in a search for consumer meaning. The thesis further suggested that this basic position could inform a move towards a social constructionist agenda for marketing as a discipline of research and practice. As Elliott (1996) maintained, discourse analysis is an inherently critical methodology which can reveal the relations of power and conflict within marketing phenomena. Some possible research areas may include the following:

> 10.1.1 Additional replicative or other interpretative field studies of UK advertising agencies which will develop the discursive theory of advertising development

> 10.1.2 Interpretative studies of other international advertising agencies for inter-cultural perspectives

> 10.1.3 DA and other interpretative field studies focussing on differing areas within the agency, such as account planning, creative teams, copy-writing, visual advertising discourse, account manager-client relationships, board level relationships, focus groups and relationships with consumer panels

10.1.4 Studies which take a DA perspective on different texts of advertising agency discourses, e.g. focussing on pro forma in the advertising development paper trail in different agencies. These and other documented texts of advertising could be discourse analysed to generate insights into ways in which advertising is constituted through orthographic representations within the agency and within the industry.

10.1.5 DA studies of advertising pre- and post-testing with consumers in different campaigns, different markets, different regions, *differing consumer* segments

10.1.6 DA studies of advertising with regard to different research questions concerning, for example, the meaning of brands, the meanings consumers construct in relation to different products, the ways consumers draw upon communicated brands as resources to construct their experience and to reproduce social relations

10.1.7 DA studies of advertising which reflect on wider social issues with regard to health, power, and happiness in society, which build on Ritson and Elliott (1995), and Elliott et al (1995). For example, the social marketing research agenda might be developed through DA studies focussing on teenage cigarette smoking, teenage pregnancy and sexual health issues, drink-driving, alcohol consumption, female body representations and anorexia, and drug taking. The qualities of insight generated through DA could in principle inform public policy making and the actions of industry regulatory bodies. Viewing these and similar issues through the cognitivist paradigm may unwittingly support the very interests which public initiatives are ostensibly designed to subvert (e.g. there has been evidence that the promotion of cigarettes through sports sponsorship and cryptic poster advertising is just as

attractive to children as traditional advertising).

10.1.8 Differing research designs in advertising using, for example,
longitudinal DA studies, or using different data sets e.g. recorded telephone
exchanges, e-mails, letters, informal discussions

10.1.9 Longer term ethnographic field studies of advertising agencies from a
DA perspective

10.1.10 DA studies based on the decision making and evaluative discussions
of advertising regulatory groups, quangos and pressure groups in order to
earn insights into the ways in which advertising is used in social regulation

10.1.11 Studies of advertising phenomena which adapt the DA approach in
different ways to emphasise different questions, e.g. using a more overt
Foucauldian perspective to focus on issues of power and control

While many of these substantive topics are not new, the suggestion here is that they
are under-represented by research studies conducted from interpretative, and
specifically social constructionist discourse analytic studies, and therefore novel
forms of insight into advertising could potentially be generated.

10.2.0 Future directions for discourse analytic studies in marketing management: an analogy from discursive psychology

As implied in the previous chapter, social constructionism suggests a research agenda
engaged in re-visiting central marketing themes, concepts and frameworks. Potter
and Wetherell (1987) have opened up a new field of discursive psychology by
revisiting central themes of mainstream psychology from a social constructionist

perspective. This thesis has noted, in passing, that mainstream marketing management has borrowed many assumptions from psychology, especially the notion of private mental activity. This notion is reproduced when marketing management texts refer to 'attitudes', 'behaviour', market 'segments', market 'orientation', 'needs, wants, customer satisfaction', and so on and so forth. This cognitivism, and the implicit realism it presupposes, runs throughout the edifice of codified marketing management knowledge. A social constructionist research agenda can open up questions and perspectives focussing on the socially mediated character of marketing concepts, and can thereby generate insights into the 'management' of marketing ′ which are qualitatively very different to the kinds of assertion which have been hitherto popular in popular managerial marketing discourse. Social construction clearly renders problematic the normative dimension of managerial marketing theories or frameworks, since prescriptions for managerial action presuppose a realist ontology. If marketing professionals are seen to inhabit the phenomena which they seek to exploit as a technology, then theoretical formulations of organisational marketing will acquire a very different intellectual character to those currently extant in popular texts.

10.2.1 Marketing's textual 'technologies' of marketing management and discursive closure

For example, the usually implicit narrative of popular marketing texts is a narrative of a 'real' marketing world exterior to organisations the deep structure of which is replicated, in some unspecified way, by marketing concepts and frameworks. These concepts and frameworks therefore constitute generalised forms of insight which act as technologies to reduce marketing issues to decontextualised problem solving. This general approach based on simple frameworks and conceptual schemes is derived substantially from pragmatic consulting (e.g. McKinsey and Co.) sources and is widely supported in the mainstream as pragmatically useful to marketing

management. However, it has also been criticised by marketing practitioners for being ineffectual, and by marketing academics and researchers for being intellectually superficial, logically tautologous and politically naive (notably Brown, e.g. 1997). A social constructionist research agenda can revisit the major assumptions of managerial marketing in many different guises to develop theory and research which opens up for debate discursive space within managerial marketing that has hitherto been closed down by certain interests. Specific examples of marketing's social constructionist research agenda might include:

10.2.2 Social constructionist DA and other interpretative studies of marketing accomplishment at many levels from the SME or cottage industry to the major international corporations. This could include the new area of the 'marketing/entrepreneurship interface'. For example, media interviews with CEOs of major corporations demonstrate extraordinary and significant discursive complexity in the ways in which certain repertoires are drawn upon to legitimise interests and to render the political apolitical. At the other end of the scale, local marketing activities can, on a DA perspective, be seen to be rich in cultural baggage in the way they reproduce social relations that are rooted in history. Marketing accomplishment at this level is clearly not explained by recourse to a managerial model of needs-wants-satisfaction but is richly symbolic of social identities, relations and cultural meanings.

10.2.3 DA studies which focus on marketing 'expertise' as the ability to assimilate unfamiliar discourses. As a discourse of technical expertise, codified marketing theory can be seen to fail to capture a crucial 'tacit' dimension to practical action. Studies of professional marketing 'expertise' can generate insights into the social accomplishment of marketing experts in terms of the meanings they bring to their work and the constructions they place on extant discourses.

10.2.4 Services marketing studies often focus on measurable elements of service. Successful service marketers such as Disney may lay claim to deeper levels of insight into consumers. Social constructionism can articulate this deeper insight as a matter of understanding the meanings people bring to marketing objects and experiences. In this way DA marketing studies can, on the one hand, publicise and disseminate a better quality of insight into consumers for organisational marketing professionals. On the other hand, it can move beyond the 'customer service' rhetoric of such organisations to give consumers insights and more power over their consumer experience.

10.2.5 DA studies of the meaning of working in highly visible marketing organisations: what do managerial marketing discourses do to people, to social relations, to happiness and health in large organisations?

10.2.6 Social constructionist DA studies re-appraising specific marketing research fields such as attitude research and behavioural approaches to buyer behaviour, consumer 'needs' and 'satisfaction', the notion of marketing 'management' (what is 'managed'? What does this imply?), 'social marketing', power in 'marketing exchange relationships', the social constitution of marketing 'planning' in organisations, the notion of the marketing environment and environmental analysis, international and cross-cultural issues of marketing 'management', marketing and consumer research on social constructionist models of research, re-addressing and re-appraising the assumptions underlying 'targeting', 'segmentation' and 'positioning', re-examining the notion of competitive advantage in strategic marketing, re-appraising new product development and re-examining 'mix' approaches.

10.2.7 Marketing research: social constructionist directions

Once again, many of the areas above are not new but the suggestion here is that a social constructionist ontology of social research allied with an interpretative methodology such as discourse analysis can generate insights of a distinctive character which can offer conceptual purchase in the task of re-appraising, re-thinking and critically re-evaluating the mainstream topics of marketing management. In addition to this, new possible research questions can be explored from a marketing management perspective which, under a single paradigm research model, were represented as marginal to the main discipline and therefore out of bounds.

10.3.0 Marketing Communications: research and practice implications of this study

Many of the suggestions made above cut across areas of marketing communications research and theory. Marketing communications texts have much the same cognitivist, decontextualised problem-solving character as more generalised marketing management texts: they often conform to 'boxes and arrows' caricatures of mediated social communication (Elliott, 1996a). For example, marketing communications management is largely assumed to be politically benign, the process of management and the authority of managers is assumed to be unproblematic, and the cognitive information-processing paradigm of individual psychology underpins many of the models of practice. This paradigm has been reassessed in communications science but not in mainstream marketing communications research (Buttle, 1995). Possible areas for re-examination on a social constructionist marketing communications research agenda might include the following:

10.3.1 Social constructionist re-examination of promotional management. Just what is managed, and how? To what extent is the message-meaning dimension emergent, or subject to the conscious control of organisational managers? Whos' interests are represented in messages? What does the

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rhetoric of managerial control and message-sending accomplish, and for whom?

10.3.2 Re-examination of the notion of 'segmentation': more broadly, how do marketing communications discourses represent the consumer as object? What are the implications (for consumers and for marketing communications professionals) of these forms of representation? To what extent does the act of segmentation construct, as opposed to respond to, consumer experience?

10.3.3 A fundamental social constructionist re-appraisal of the 'models' of communication and buyer behaviour upon which much marketing communications discourse is premised, (and which are effectively critiqued by Elliott, 1996a, and Buttle, 1995), including a re-appraisal of notions of 'persuasion'. This implies DA studies of the consumer experience in many different forms and contexts, building on examples such as Elliott et al (1995).

10.3.4 A re-examination of media and communications 'strategy' as it emerges within marketing communications departments of organisations, from the intra-organisational, and also from the extra-organisational perspectives. In what ways do differing forms of media influence the meaning of campaigns? What are the constructed meanings consumers bring to new technologies? What is the character and role of media technology in shaping and constituting consumer experience?

10.3.5 Evaluative studies of marketing communications programmes using social constructionist, DA or other interpretative methodologies.

10.3.6 Social constructionist approaches to exploring the elements of the

marketing communications 'mix' (i.e. T.V. advertising, WWW, radio sales promotion, direct mail, personal selling, billboards, press, product placement, Public Relations and other categories as yet unthought of) as aspects of integrated communications programmes. For example, what are the dynamics of combining differing discourse types in marketing communications campaigns? What might the implications be for brand management, corporate identity, celebrity endorsement, product placement or other traditional categories of marketing communications research?

10.3.7 Using social constructionist DA and other interpretative research designs to explore broader facets of communications normally categorised under 'corporate' communications e.g. 'mission' statements, company reports, corporate visual communications and other organisational texts.

10.3.8 Marketing communications and social constructionist research: mutually exclusive?

It is perhaps worth reiterating that, as an empirical area of organisational practice, marketing communications has no natural paradigm. The tradition of codified textual knowledge about marketing communications has, as noted, been heavily influenced by certain discourses, such as the structural/functional paradigm of social research, the realist ontology of social research, and the numerous cognitivist assumptions implicit in formulations of marketing communications phenomena. Nonetheless, 'marketing communications' is a way of categorising a major social/organisational phenomenon which need not presuppose all these assumptions. Therefore there need be no contradiction in addressing it through social research which eschews them. The above suggested research areas, like the previous ones for marketing management, entail two main themes. One concerns the revision and re-appraisal of traditional categories of mainstream (i.e. popular) marketing communications topics

of research and theory. The other concerns the extent to which abandoning the single-paradigm model opens up new cross- inter- and multi-disciplinary research questions. In some cases such research may generate insights into marketing communications which can be utilised by professionals in the field. In others the insights generated may be of a more overtly critical character, challenging rights and assumptions and throwing a political light on activities often represented as benign, value-neutral and technical. In each case, research which builds on the small but influential social constructionist research extant in the field in top rated journals (notably Elliott, 1997, Elliott et al, 1995, Ritson and Elliott, 1995) can develop social constructionist insights into the phenomenon of marketing of marketing communications, notwithstanding the 'bullet theory' connotation with which marketing communications is inextricably linked.

10.4.0 Chapter summary

Chapter ten has briefly listed a number of sweeping and speculative suggestions regarding potentially fertile areas of future research in marketing which are suggested by the research design of this study. Many of these are not new in themselves but they have not been significantly developed within popular/mainstream formulations of marketing. The central point being made is that, given the neglect of social constructionist/DA approaches in marketing management and related functional fields there is much scope for re-examination of the field through interpretative empirical study. Some of this re-examination, admittedly, would entail admitting the legitimacy of research approaches which have hitherto been conducted on the margins of mainstream managerial marketing. This thesis has alluded to a few of many broadly interpretative studies of marketing (and) management phenomena conducted in anthropology, semiotics, linguistics, literary studies, media and communications research, psychology, advertising research and, notably, consumer studies. This growing interpretative tradition already offers many examples of ways in which the

mainstream managerial marketing research and theory agenda can be re-examined for new insights. This chapter has suggested that social constructionist discourse analytic studies can potentially contribute to this intellectual development in marketing by opening up a social constructionist research agenda within the field. This thesis as a whole has attempted to demonstrate one way in which this might be done.

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TRANSCRIPT 1

Interview with R. Account Planner and internal communications manager, BMPDDB. April, 1998, London.

Q: Thanks for talking to me, and first of all could you tell me who you are and what you do here?

A; I'm ---, I'm a planner here at BMP but I have particular responsibility for communications planning in a board sense as opposed to just advertising planning: this is a new job within BMP so we've only actually had someone doing my role since December.

Q. ok, what does that entail?

A: Um, the best way, I suppose the best way of describing it really is that a criticism clients make of advertising agencies is that advertising agencies say 'advertising is the solution- you tell us what the problem is', and the quickest way of defining my job is that my job makes the planning department be more than that and understand that or assume that their brief is not just to think about the part that advertising can play in the communications response to a client's situation but take it on board that they should always be thinking as a matter of course about the totality of communications and the things that could help..and what would be the best way of making a difference or getting a client's message over or whatever. And that doesn't necessarily mean that we'll be able to do all those things so for example we might to a client say that well really PR is going to help you more than advertising with this particular objective and that doesn't mean I mean we don't have PR people so we wouldn't be able to do that but it would mean that we should be able to understand what PR can do what it can do well what it can sometimes do better than advertising and we would understand who the good people are to turn to in that industry and we would understand enough about that industry to be able to deal with them properly for our client, so the idea if you like is not that we become experts in all fields of

communications but that we become experts if you like at dealing with experts so we can give clients a much fuller erm recommendation in response to any problem.

Q: OK Have you been a planner before you were involved in this role?

A: Yeh

Q: Does that mean that you've got a broader perspective than the other planners in a sense?

A: Weell....I'm not advertising..I don't have an advertising background..

Q: What have you done?

A: I've done all sorts of things really I started off working for the CBI when I first left college I worked as a policy analyst at the CBI for three years so I worked on policy and planning and on strategy, but it was to the end of government policy not to the end of, sort of, constructing a campaign for someone but obviously its a job which an awful lot of involves research analysis and like, future thinking and all that kind of stuff. Though they sound very different they're quite related skills. And then I worked for a market research company and worked with sort of all sorts of different businesses and went from that to work in an advertising agency but then went from that advertising agency to actually work for one of my clients then I came to BMP from working for a time at Vauxhall, motors. So in the sense of having a better claim to doing this job than anyone else its just because I do have different perspectives I mean I find it, I've always found it completely counter intuitive to confine yourself to thinking about advertising I mean if your talking to a client about their marketing problems and about their different situations generally I would be totally embarrassed in assuming that advertising was the only thing that was going to help them or in fact a lot of the time I'm totally embarrassed in pretending that advertising is going to help them.. A lot of the time..well I have done, its made me very unpopular I've turned round and say to people I think you're mad to spend any money on advertising before you've sorted your product out and before you've sorted your staff and services out and all that kind of stuff so I think its just a question of different background kind of different perspectives, different orientation.

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Q: OK, so you look at it more from a broader marketing perspective?

A: Yeh I think so.

Q: OK so you would presumably be involved in all the client meetings from the first enquiry..

A: Yeh

Q: ..and then if you sort of felt that advertising was right for them would you just say nothing..do you intervene..

A: No, my response would always be that the first port of call always is to find out whether communicating with a target audience is going to make any difference to a client's business needs. So it may be for example, they may have all sorts of problems of their problem is, you know, our staff are really horrible and every time people walk into our shops they just get really offended and walk out again then you'd straight away say well your problem is your staff are horrid, you need to sort them out there's nothing..you can't communicate and say that your staff are nice people because they're not, so its not really going to help, so my first port of call would always be to establish if there's something that can be said, be communicated and if there is if you target audience take that on board is it gonna make a difference to your business? And I would always call that, first step approach to the communications positioning if you like, so just getting to grips with is there a role for communications..I don't think you should ever think about advertising until you've clarified that properly: so when you've clarified that properly you can say that is there a target audience to communicate something which will make a difference to your business then I think you can start to think about and what tools are appropriate to use to get them to take on that understanding. is that fair comment?.

A; erm, I think that's quite unfair actually..

Q: really?

A: I'm probably quite peculiar in my orientation within BMP for working in that way and the reason I work in that way is..and I think there are also clear advantages to the creative process in working in that way because very often, as a planner if you kind

of get straight on board and ignore the broader issues like is there a role for advertising for this client what actually is the broader message you should be getting across, if you dive right into the kind of touchy feely thing of what might be a kind of interesting way of communicating that such that we get advertising which is different and unique and stands out in the market place, if you go straight in at that level then you're having a dialogue with your client which is purely in touchy feely language, if you then produce work they're unsure about its very very difficult to prove to them that they shouldn't be worried about it because the only criteria you've got to judge it against is the touchy feely criteria you put down and they were probably always a bit funny about it because they just thought it was you being slightly indulgent, but if right up front you really clarified this is who you need to talk to your target audience have got to understand this, then when it comes to assessing creative work you can take a piece if creative work which might be completely off the wall and really scare a client and really worry them but as long as you can show it will communicate this to the target audience you can circumvent a whole bunch of dialogue and debate and you just need to show, to convince them that it will do the job. So I would see the way that I would go about my job is to probably define a framework for creativity before we get into the business of helping the creative process along, but I think...a lot of people here, and probably a more traditional way of thinking about it is to dive straight into 'what would be an interesting way of playing with this task?' The part of the job which is 'how to do this interestingly?' is very important to people here and its just as important to me as to anyone else but I think there's a need to spend a bit more time up front before you get into it. But I think you'd find here I mean that's why BMP place so much emphasis on creative development research, things like that because most of the planners here are primarily motivated by generating work which is interesting which is different and which stands out and all that kind of stuff and as such they're probably primarily motivated by trying to be more sparky and natural than they are by trying to be logical in the process of getting into a brief..

Q: Which is why there's a role for you..

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A: Yes

Q: ..at the front end.

A: Yes

Q: Is there an equivalent role to yours in other agencies or is it unusual?

A: Quite unusual

Q: And you have an input into designing the creative brief do you?

A: Yeh.

Q: Do you have a hands on approach wherby you get involved with every client...?

A: You can't get involved with every..I mean I have my own clients anyway because they're clients I've worked with for the last few years..as a planner.. So I've worked primarily with Volkswagen I still act as planning director with Volkswagen..but very much as an overseer for all the other people who work as planners on Volkswagen..

Q: Right

A:..look to other people to do the day to dat work there. And then what I do is I work on pitches and with existing clients as and when they need to take a broader perspective on what they're doing or as and when their account team feel the need for a broader perspective to be taken.

Q: So you act in a kind of consulting capacity when you talk to the client about their overall marketing strategy and the role advertising might play in it?

A: Yyyyeeh....I mean I'd really steer clear of putting it in terms of being a marketing consultant because I think, you know, we're a communications business or whatever and we should rightfully confine our remit to communications or whatever and I don't think that my doing my job is about trying to compete with proper marketing consultancies..that's not part of what its about..

Q: But nevertheless that's an aspect of your remit when you talk to clients..

A: yeh, yeh..

Q: Can you tell me a bit about your role in trying to put over the broader picture to the creative teams and how you try to make sure they're..doing something that would fulfil a strategic marketing objective..

A: Yeeh, easily, I mean probably, if I talk via an example...

Q: Sure..

A:..its probably the best way to do that. Probably, the most immediate example I could talk about is the Passat, the car they relaunched last year and that we did, we did a lot of work with the advertising and also not just a lot of work with the advertising but in shaping all other aspects of their planned, launch campaign. And I think if you went back to that and think about how my role sort of makes a difference I'd say that, the most important thing, the most important way someone like me made a difference to that campaign is in having defined in really really basic easy easy commonsense terms what the need was what the communications need was so at the end of the day this is what we have to get people to understand.

Q; The proposition?

A: No..I don't mean proposition because..most..propositions, I mean for a start its a silly word isn't it? Proposition. I mean who really knows what it means I mean you know what it means if you look it up in the dictionary but proposition is a word which kind of encourages people in agencies to be terribly precious and to think that its all about nuance and crafting and blah de blah and all of this kind of stuff and that.......actually, I think often just takes people away from being really really commonsensical and using plain English saying just this is what we need to achieve with this campaign. And I think there's a good reason for that I think a good brief is about two things. A good brief is first about simplifying a client's situation and requirement so its about having a really simple and commonsense view of the client's requirement, and its secondly once you've clarified it thinking how can it be done in an interesting way..how can we do this in a way that's different and will stand out and all that kind of stuff. I think a lot of the time language like proposition and stuff just encourages people to think about the different parts of the equation and takes people away from remembering that they've got to have a really good understanding of what they need to achieve. Quite often a creative would disagree with the proposition because the proposition is your opportunity on a brief to give something

an interesting spin so that they might go off in a different direction or it gives them a bit of a springboard if you like to go about things more creatively. They might completely disagree with the way that you thought might be interesting to go about doing something and sometimes in fact a lot of the time [planners?] can get very precious about that because they think I thought this would be an interesting way of doing this and they don't want to do it that way and they get terribly upset and all that kind of stuff. I actually think does it matter, at all, whether the creative team goes off in a direction you thought it would be interesting to go off in as long as they go off in a direction and as long as they go off to set the objectives you set out to achieve and a lot of the time planners don't set simple objectives they might assume that. they might assume they're assumed so they don't bother to state them and I think that's often a real oversight often they're not assumed often a client hasn't had a real look to what they've got to do in a simple way, and often then that planner is in a really difficult position with the creative team because they can't argue why something is or isn't right because they've actually just been terribly obvious and commonsensical about what they need to achieve. So if you took Passat for example, we right up front spent ages clarifying because its..to get to the common sense you often have to do an awful lot of hard work and number crunching and all the rest. What we came to with Passat was the view that all that was important was to communicate with a certain target audience and to get them to understand that the Passat was a car which shared everything that was best of German design which was just, obvious, common sense it was like something that would make absolute sense to your Mum which I think is the best way to judge strategy! You don't have to use any funny words, any long words its just one sentence..Then, the proposition was actually about what might be an interesting way of doing it to do with erm.. This was a car which was designed not manufactured and the brief was all about erm, motor cars falling off the conveyor belt in their thousands and they're not crafted and they're not well thought through and all this kind of stuff whereas the Passat was something which was the product of real human beings' passions and all that kind of stuff and

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the brief was about how the car was a labour of love and whatever. Now, as it happens the creative team, that's the work we ended up running and producing and winning lots of awards for its about.. about a team of human beings and about what they've done for cars and just shows lots of different people and their particular obsessions and what its led to about the car. The process of getting to that campaign..we put the brief in about April of 1996, and we shot the work in sort of about December 1996 it took an awful long time getting from the creative brief to actually having that work even though an idea based around obsession came about within two weeks of putting the creative brief in to the creative department..but it bombed about three times in research the clients didn't like it the German clients hated it, erm all sorts of questions became involved and the more people had different ideas the more the account team became wobbly and thought God we don't know what the best thing to do is anymore and all that kind of stuff Q: Who was pushing this particular idea?

A: Erm..probably me and the most senior board account director on the business thought that I mean spotting ideas is like waiting for a bus you see three and you think maybe that's one coming maybe that's one coming and when one does actually come its just bloody obvious its a bus and its really obvious that the other things weren't buses and I think its absolutely the same with creative work you just know when something is good and the rest of the time when you're like mmmmm....then it probably isn't good and everything else we saw we just thought mmm not very sure not very sure but all the way through that process when everyone was being really wobbly and clients were being wobbly and all that stuff I was able always to bring back the debate with creative teams and with clients back to a really commonsense view of what we had to communicate which was like all we're trying to do is to say this car shares the best of German design and all of a sudden you've just sort of simplified the debate and all the stupid conversations we have just like, oh of course its really really simple then. I kind of feel that that's the real role I play in the creative process its just keeping it based in common sense and keeping people clear about

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what they need to achieve so that we don't end up having these ridiculous stupid debates.

Q: I see, So your role is to do with communication both internally and externally you have to go round and interpret the client's priorities for the people in the agency.

A: Well that's very much a planners role yeh.

Q: Ok so what way would your personal role sort of differ from that generic planners role?

A: Erm, well, in some ways it shouldn't have to. I mean the intention isn't that there will always be someone with my role the intention is that all BMP planners should work in the way that I work I think about things the sort of way I approach it. But that's not going to happen overnight the idea is that it happens by a process of sort of evolution with me working with different accounts over time and all that blah blah blah stuff. So at the end of the day the intention is that absolutely everyone should work like that there shouldn't be a need for two levels of planning involvement.

Q: OK Could you give me one more example of your intervention in a particular brief?

A: Erm, what would be a good example..erm..

Q: you actually do research designs and all the usual planning things as well?

A: Mmmmm. Yeh, but most of the time you se..its not like an additional process..

Q: All right..

A: its working with planners who are already doing this and just making sure they remember to do the common sense bit up front before they get involved in the other stuff. I mean this isn't like some sort of bolt on added extra or some kind of hurdle in the process or whatever, and also, to be honest, most of the time my job is not just about..you know, creative ideas and all that kind of stuff. I work with those clients where there is the opportunity to do more than just advertising. On a lot of clients I wouldn't bother..I wouldn't bother getting involved with them they're quite happy puttling along on their own and they're not looking for anything else and all that kind of stuff and I think that up front process is really about being really really

simplistic about your communications objectives. Its doubly important when you're dealing in more than one discipline. If you imagine..if you could imagine....I hope you can never imagine the conversations we have in advertising agencies both internally and with clients I mean its ridiculous and tortuous the process we go through in getting from a brief to a campaign. And if you can imagine we have that degree of torture when we're just dealing with advertising if you then combine with having to deal with PR agencies marketing agencies blah blah all that kind of stuff also not just the agencies also their different clients, their different clients within your client organisation, the potential for tortuous conversations is endless and it becomes all the more important to bring common sense and whatever..So my job is not just..its not the case that they want every piece of work BMP does with me getting involved trying to sort of steer it up front at all. Ermm, bbbbrrrr giving you another example...well they'd all be very predictable and similar really I mean I could talk to you about the affordability work we did for Volkswagen which is quite an interesting one because erm..we had a need about two years two and half years ago to get people to understand that Volkswagen had realigned their prices so that where they'd actually been quite uncompetitive in the 1990s they'd brought their prices down into line on a gradual model by model basis so that products were no longer quite so expensive as people had expected them to be and it's a whole area; price communication is a very very difficult area anyway because people do not believe what they see in advertising about price. Price advertising is so abused by agencies and by clients that nobody believes what they see: everyone assumes that the small print is going to say something different. So the task again we're thinking about how you could really get people to believe in advertising that was a price story is quite a big task, quite a difficult task. Typically, what agencies do is they say we shouldn't talk about it on television advertising because it's too difficult, too nasty, too [?] and it's much better to talk about it in lots of press advertising: you see lots of price advertising in the press, which rarely does any good because you don't look at it unless you're actually in the market for a new car, tomorrow, and also you're very

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unlikely to believe it. You see one asterisk in there and people assume you're hiding something and there's, like, a dodgy story underneath it. So what we did on Affordability or what we tried to do on Affordability was just after having spent ages, talking to people and doing research on different type, forms of price communication and trying to see which made some impact on people and which people believed and all that kind of stuff, erm, and also having spent a lot of time talking to people and thinking through what part understanding price played in peoples decision process: when it was important to understand price and when it wasn't important. We kind of came to conclusions and the first was, so, if you're just relying on what I would call shopping media, i.e. those things you turn to when you're in the market for a product which in the car market would be things like car magazines, newspapers local press all that kind of stuff: if you're just relying on using those to communicate price stories then you're not going to make any difference because people, erm, people, look, for information from those manufacturers that they've already decided that they're interested in it's very very rare for people to actually change their mind on what they want and what they're going to go and look at as a result of what they see in that communication and what they use that communication to do is almost to er, support their own hypotheses about what they'd actually like to buy anyway so unless you influence them before they start looking those kind of shopping media then the shopping media's really not going to make that much difference.

Q: Okey..

A: Oh, and, secondly the way that price works is that, people don't actually understand pricing they have this really fuzzy idea of what things cost anyway certainly cars they buy them over five years or whatever they're not really interested they look at it on a monthly, you know a month by month cost basis not an overall cost basis. The only thing that matters is whether they think that you as a manufacturer are kind of in their ball park or not in their ball park, and if they like you and if they think you're in their ball park then they're interested but if they think you're out of their ball park then they're not gonna bother pursuing an interest they

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have in you. But, to do with Volkswagen, it's just simplify the whole issue by saying, first of all what matters is we're in a media which influences people before they've actually started looking for a car such that, when they come to the point of looking for a car they've actually already realised that you are within their ball park which means then that you have to use high impact media like television or something which is really gonna get a broad, mass audience. And secondly, that actually it doesn't matter that you convince them of what your particular price or whether you're two pounds cheaper or more expensive than an Astra or an Escort or whatever: all that matters is that you make them think you're within their ball park, that you're not in a completely different arena in terms of price. And, ohm three things I should have said, and thirdly, we decided that in actual fact, it didn't even matter what people thought your price actually was. All that mattered in relation to Volkswagen was that they thought that what they did think was probably wrong, if that makes sense if you just get them to, assume that they might not be quite right when it came to Volkswagen pricing then you'd done a very very big job because hopefully then they would kind of follow up their interest if they were interested in a Volkswagen. So all of a sudden something which was terribly complicated which is how are we gonna get people to understand that we've put all our pricing back into line and we're now only £300 more expensive blah blah blah all that kind of stuff you can just simplify and just say well actually it doesn't matter, all that matters is that at this point you get people to question their assumptions about your pricing, that's all that matters you know: the brief then probably can be question your view about Volkswagen pricing or rather, make people think that they're probably wrong in terms of what they think about Volkswagen pricing and that's just a really simple brief and its a really simple brief for television and something that you can easily just do on a drip drip drip basis to make them think 'oh I'm probably wrong, I'm probably wrong, I'm probably wrong. And so all of a sudden all those debates you have upstairs and the creatives are all about..'God I don't want to do price advertising, its dirty and nasty and we don't want to talk about prices de de de..', and

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well you don't have to write campaigns about that. All you have to write campaigns about are about the fact that people are often wrong about Volkswagen pricing and it just becomes a different ball, you know, different ball game altogether and very simple and very easy, and you can do quite interesting work and be able to convince your client that this is ok all we have to do is make people think they're probably wrong about your pricing. So I think that's probably I think both those things were by, having been incredibly simplistic about what the real communications requirement was, meant that we could come up with a much more creative solution than we would have done if we'd had a much more, I think much more touchy-feely traditional planning type brief.

Q: Ok, so your role is about applying your judgement to the planning...

A: Noo..I don't think it's about judgement. I think in both those examples, both those decisions came out of quite a big process of research, talking to a lot of people, and trying out other methods of getting them to take on board a message as well, insofar as you can, in a researchy environment.

Q: Ok but its your judg..your interpretation of the brief and the client's needs and so forth...

A: Yeehh..well, any planning is that, any planning is that...I mean I think you know planning is, people always talk about what planning is like, part science, part art and the best planners are those people who can combine both parts of it and think, you know the really important part of any planners job is that, they go so far with the logic of a situation and they do all the homework they can do I have never in my life seen an example where, just doing your homework and applying logic will bring you to a solution always in advertising in any business situation there's a leap of faith at the end of it which is I just think we should do this: I've done all my homework and now I think we should do this. So I think that's true of anything.

Q: What was your degree in?

A: PPE, mainly politics and Economics..

Q: At Oxford.

A: Mm.

Q: Ok, lot of Oxford people here.

A: Yeh, there are, they're a bit Oxford biased.

Q: Well, thanks very much --- that's very useful.

TRANSCRIPT 2

Interview with —, Board Account Director, BMP DDB at 6.30PM on 10.11.97, in Oxford

Q: ----, first of all can you tell me how you got into advertising?

A: I decided to move into advertising when..I did a four year course, mots of the people were leaving after three but I did another year. People were sort of banging themselves around the head with damp copies of the FT saying `I'll have to go into the city`. `Well I didn't fancy any of those and I thought `well, I might fancy advertising that sounds quite good`. This is late eighties and it was quite a glamorous thing to be doing. I ended up meeting somebody, through the college funny enough , who had as advertising agency of his own in Newcastle which is where I'm from, and we got a bit pissed one night and he said `why don't you come and work for me this summer?` And I did and it was a bit..well local.. Regional free sheets and that and they also did PR and I found I really liked it. When I had to time find out a bit more I went a talked to a few people through contacts I'd agreed to go and see, and decided I was erm..you know, really pretty into it and went through the regular intake and got in that way, joined an agency called Publicis which is a French agency and worked there for seven years and then I've been at BMP for about three since then. I just found that I liked the fact that, you know, no two days were the same, it was good...I haven't regretted it yet.

Q : Your degree was in Classics at Oxford?

A: Ancient and Modern History. It was Classics originally but I changed because I wasn't very good at poetry!

Q: can you tell me about your role in the agency, what your title is, all that sort of stuff?

A; They call me a `Board Account Director` which is like an account director except once a year they allegedly put you all in a meeting room and talk about issues of

state..my job really is to be..erm..in an ideal world I wouldn't exist because I'm the one who's not a specialist. My specialism is making sure that things happen..catalysing and energising..make sure that everybody does what they're doing and the higher up you go you're basically doing it over bigger issues rather than smaller ones. And erm..I think its quite important because nobody else has the time or the inclination. And people often get it wrong and say 'we are the voice of the client at the agency': we're not, we're the voice of the agency at the client. It's quite easy, especially of you've been with an account for some time, to be able to predict your client so well and so quickly that you stop being actually of value to them because you almost become..well not a cypher for them but you'd really predict too accurately so you'd stop challenging them. You might say 'no they won't buy that' and you take it down and they reject it and you know that perhaps you didn't fight it as hard as you should have done because you knew in the back of your mind it wasn't what they wanted. That's why we tend to move around accounts, it's quite important. Sometimes its good to bring a fresh pair of eyes: sometimes its good to bring some experience to bear, its quite good with long running campaigns. The amount of challenge you can bring to bear there..its like Sony, you constantly want to be fresh, and if you stop being fresh...

Q: What did you begin as in the agency? Did you work your way up?

A: I began as a graduate trainee sort of account executive. And became account executive, account manager, account director, you become the board account director and the next move's probably into senior management, head of department, something like that. So I mean you're about as high as you go now where you have day-to-day with your accounts..the next move up would be...but nobody ever moves there 'cause..been there for ages..which is fine, its cool.

Q: So a lot of your role is managerial as opposed to being directly involved in conceiving campaigns?

A: It is managerial...we have to manage the creative process and I think...(interviewer

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discovers medium sized rock under contact lense at this point and interview dissolves into muttering and shuffling for a time). We manage the creative process so we can't not be creative and there are ads..I mean I've been in quite a fortunate position where I actually wrote an ad. And I was allowed to make it which is quite rare but it is quite nice to get the chance.

Q: You won an award for that didn't you?

A: Yes I did yeah, I was with a different agency then but it was quite nice because it gave you quite a useful insight into what people go through but it is not that different. The only thing, the only part that we are there is that spark where somebody says, 'I tell you what why don't we do that?'. But often we are there when they are struggling and you can sort of lead them a way you think might be quite fruitful. The art for us is to come up with ideas and not let anybody think they're ours but think they're somebody else's. Creatives are not happy necessarily about something which was not their idea but , you know, often things are..like I can think of the John Smith's ads., where you say 'look I think you'd better do the soundtrack that way: not change it not 'do it' but ' why don't you try it like that'?' And they think it is brilliant because you don't tell them...you just laugh along and 'what a brilliant idea' And it's fine and you know I'm not there to win awards I'm not there to suddenly become??? that wasn't what I chose to do but to say that we are managerial but we manage a creative process and if you have no understanding of that process and you can't contribute to it.. If you just wanted to manage it you would just manage it and it would all be about trafficking and we have a department that does that, so its actually about keeping all the right elements???make them feel excited. I mean often our creativity comes in?? And don't sign it 'cause it's all part of making the idea come alive and creatives funny enough are notoriously bad at presenting work..you can't say 'here's a script' you have to get them to use their imagination and make things feel real for them...

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Q: Creatives in agencies are very young aren't they do you think that you have 10 years or more experience do you think that changes your insight into the creative process and gives you an insight into what might work?

A: I think it is difficult I mean we have someone in our agency called John Webster and he is not just the most celebrated creative in the agency but in fact the world and he is now 62, he works part time because he runs a vineyard, he doesn't need to do it but he still loves ads. And the buzz it gives him and he has done some very...the Hofmeister bear that was one of his creations, the Cresta bear the Smash Martians and it goes on and on and on until Jack Dee and John Smith's now is his as well and a lot of creatives are quite young but the young creatives might have a good idea but they don't know how to shape the good idea into a realisable idea and there is a difference and you say wouldn't it be funny if you used this or they are often better for finding fresher techniques or new ways of looking at something and they can often give you a ???? but what they then don't have are the other craft skills and I think the thing that often you can forget is actually a lot of the work is really crafting you might have a brilliant idea that doesn't work in 30 seconds. you know you are often..a junior might have a five minute film.. You know a blockbuster synopsis.. But yeah it is great but it isn't going to work and, you're right there is probably an optimum age when people are doing their best work I tend to think it is probably around the time you know you're in your late twenties early thirties probably been working about 6 or 7 years because you know you do we all make duds, creatives still make duds and you know you can't believe they did that. And often its about the time of application its put in. You can't teach it I don't think you just realise with experience what will work in radio what will make a good poster and all that sort of thing. So, young creatives can have really fresh ideas but it can be really interesting when you things in a different way but often they were great but they are just unworkable. I think creatives are getting less and less.. Well we have a lot

of.. I wouldn`t say old.. Creative directors tend to be old `cause a lot of judgement comes into it then.. you need a good 6 or 7 years to be really...

Q: Now you are in a position of overseeing campaigns rather than trying to generate some momentum from the bottom as it were do you think the years have given you quite a different perspective on what might work?

A: Absolutely, I mean (tape machine blanks here for a few seconds) and a lot of styling of ads. comes down to personal taste, the way you like things done. And I am not such a trained eye but I would like to think that I have a pretty good opinion of what might or might not work, but I will always have half a mind to what the client would buy even if I don't intend to have it I will have it subconsciously so I think it is quite important. And I have seen a lot of changes and I think my awareness of a good idea is better: probably my willingness to go out there necessarily with something that is quite so challenging is less, but that is partly because I have to be responsible for the maintenance of the relationship with the client as well. So if ultimately something is not quite right you are better off putting someone who is younger and hungrier in there to have a battle with them and if it doesn't work then you know you are there to sort of keep everything on an even keel and not make them think you`ve gone completely mad. But yes, I mean every so often there is...but when I was younger when I first started you used to die on a sword for everything, you would fight everything and when you get higher up you actually can't because you have got to have an eye for the longer game and how much money is made `if we don`t relent on this we may not get this`...But every so often something comes along and you go , `well look, I really genuinely think this is right I don't know if you know the Sony piece of work..its on the reel anyway, its just running now. We had a situation where a client really wanted to buy something else and we had been in a difficult situation they had found something they liked and it was going to be very easy to just let them have what they wanted just so that everybody felt good. But when we were asked, I said look..I took them to one side I said `I don't do this to you

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very often if at all but I am going to tell you it is a mistake you have got to do this one instead` and they said no this is what we are going to do but I think because I am not in the habit now of going out and fighting, somebody said well perhaps we ought to hear this one out, and eventually they went with it so its about learning what you need to fight over. `Cause you `ve got to be the one who makes sure that the relationship`s still, still works (Tape blanks again for some seconds)

... and to be honest the best work is done in isolation and a lot of it is dependent on the trust relationship that hopefully we have engendered with the client. I think the work the agency`s done on Volskwagen is a good case in point, `cause there are things we made that were taken on trust. There is not a huge amount of trust I think between agencies and clients I think they tend to that that we are not very good value for money. I think that is very unfair we do an awful lot of work for them that they don't pay for, you know we help them with their own marketing plans we help them with their management consultancy and they don't get charged extra for it we just do it but you are right the politics is important, the politics of, you know, whose name is at the top of the script there are hot teams and there are journeyman teams: its like football you have got star strikers you have got midfield generals you have got journeyman defenders and that sort of thing. You know sometimes a really great idea can come from quite a surprising source. You do have to have a eye to what the agency requires, we as an agency have I think have quite high principles of creativity and if an account is actually not...

....There is a politics to creativity I mean there's also a politics of teams, themselves have to
work well together and the teams themselves work in very different ways: some people it's like Lennon and McCartney they go off and come back together and swop an idea others literally thrash them out together, others almost work as individuals. It is quite

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interesting the team dynamic our issue is that we have just got to work with what they want. I mean it isn't that you treat (---- makes a clicking sound) 'I've had a great idea' but you know everyone has to work that bit harder. You know there is a politics, you know, clients feel that people like me get in the way of them, we are organ grinder's monkeys not organ grinders. It is not fair, it is not right but the creatives do not really want to talk to clients either. I have met clients who don't want to meet creatives, they find it very difficult for them they find it makes them uneasy -and we have some sympathy with that situation and I can understand it does. They are not necessarily the most responsive people, they are sometimes very argumentative and that is why we exist to try and help that situation but they just have to be a bit more grown up now I think and deal with the situation. We are in a business, we are not an art gallery so we have all got to pull together but if a piece of work is not right then the client is not giving us a creative opportunity: at thee nd of the day if we're making huge sums of money on it we'll try not to bite the bullet we'll try to lead it the right way. You know, its more expense to try and shift something that won't shift, and we'll always keep trying and if there's no money it'll probably fall away. We've had some quite acrimonious bust-ups, largely based on our beliefs of the strategy, and the client's...

Q BMP tend to emphasise the advertising fitting into the whole marketing strategy don't they, which some other agencies don't necessarily do.

A I think other agencies do but we just do it louder and have done it for longer really. I think the strategy is.. but first the strategy is absolutely crucial. If you can't make the strategy clear and simple you will not get a good ad. You won't do it or 99 times out of 100 you won't do it.

Q Do you think, do you feel that your role in the agency is personally creative for you and if so is the nature of that different from the creatives?

A Yes, the role is creative, it is creative because you have got to find different ways of doing things: you have always got to keep people energised. You have to lead a team

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and leading a team is.. You can't do that.. advertising can't be done by a manual, there is not a book that says how to do good advertising ????? but there isn't one. There are things you can do and there are tricks you can buy but I think it is creative. It is different from the actual creative department. I mean, you know, they are faced with a blank piece of paper and they are supposed to cover that from the brief. My job is creative more about how before and after. How to make things come alive, how, you know, just how to make things happen in a fruitful way. Our job is to make sure that everything we do bears fruit. So yes I do feel it is kind of .. I have to be creative mine is the first opinion that a creative team will ask after outside their own department. Before it goes to the client they come and see me and they say what do you think and I get asked what I thought so I must be creative, creative judgement comes into play and if I am being asked I have to have at least half a mind to what they are talking about and thinking of.

Q How would you talk about the creative side what goes into that?

A Creativity is about stimulus, its about observing, from a stimulus, I mean your absolutely right we talk about ??? so what's the account man after and that means if you have got an ad. in your head what is the sort of plonky way of describing it and everybody does it, creatives often like it for example you can say what we really want is lots of customers saying how long they have been there and how great it has been and you go OK fine and some will just give it up and we will try and think of a way that we will give out some spark that says actually why don't you try it that way and this is what determines a good creative from a bad creative because they have that but it is really about stimulus I mean you talk to creatives and they'll always be going off to get magazines looking a reels you know just trying to get as much stimulus as possible. We don't have time to do that it is an art and we don't have time to do it but you know where do you get an idea from? It is constantly seeking out and a lot of advertising borrows from cultural references all over. A scene from here a shot from there you know why don't we do it that way, we want a character who is a bit like Robert DeNero or Dame

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Edna or what ever it is its cultural references and you need them because that is the language people understand. You talk about one of our clients did a big paper on post modernism in advertising and the British public not European wide or globally but the British public is so advertising literate and is very post modern culturally aware you know they get stuff like that, they understand self-referential text, spoofs of ads, spoofs of programmes, shot in the style of....they get it. It is all part of what they do advertising is an integral part of their world of entertainment and information so this stimulus is really important. Dave Trott is a famous creative director always said that he used to read the Sun every day because he needed to know what 12 million people many óf whom were consumers, talked about. Its true you need to know...soaps... you need that stimulus because you need to know... it is all very well going to an art house film but its is only so many people understand it and stimulus is the key thing to creativity. Now and again I think the armchair film is a genuine.. I mean nobody had ever seen before.

Q How did that idea come about..who thought of that? [i.e. the Sony ad. with a man falling through the sky in his armchair]

A: The creative team, Paul Mike and Jane..and I think they were just told don't come up with any boundaries about it was originally for a slightly different product actually, and just think about... the idea was, the strategy was Sony engages and excites your senses and what they wanted to do was all about how do you feel when you watch TV. TV is more exciting so they came up with the idea of well wouldn't it be great if you only sat on your chair and you actually felt like you were parachuting. At that stage I suspect that they had never worked out whether it could be done or how it could be done they just went and did it and they were actually quite an original team The minidisc again, again this idea of following examples I hadn't seen.

Q That's the ad. where there are copies, a man running and jumping from a train...I like that one... A Yeh, that's the one, and they have done it in quite a dramatic way. Again that was very fresh and it is quite interesting when they said well what's it going to look

like and we said to the client well actually there isn't anything that's like it. So it is quite rare, it is often not the most successful way to work with someone it is actually it is better to have something that is original for advertising but not necessarily for ????? I mean one of the best ads. of the nineties is the creek ad for Levis but that's taken entirely from Ansell Adams (?) photography and they obviously summed it up like 'we want to shoot it like these'..the idea is not to nick someone's trousers, I mean , Dick Emery, nothing new but the way he did it it wasn't new either but the fact that, advertising is putting together elements that you wouldn't normally associate and that was perfect. Levis is actually one of the best examples of taking elements that you would not , normally associate with one another. The drug store one that was shot like a thirties black and white film and depression America set to a techno track, you wouldn't normally think to do that and yet it works brilliantly. So, often that is what the skill of advertising is putting elements you wouldn't normally associate...

Q But that's creativity isn't it, putting together disparate ideas..

A It is creativity and often what advertising does it takes ideas that may have already been established but mixes them up a bit and of course the creativity is also discipline because you have a time limit. If you write a film you can actually be as long as you want, have probably got a budget restriction but not much else perhaps a time restriction in terms of how long you can shoot but in advertising terms you have got 30 seconds, 60 seconds, or a page, and you have got to work within those confines that's why it's creative and yet it's a stronger creative discipline because you got to work in that way and you need something memorable you have got to tell a story really quickly. Many creatives go on to be either commercials directors, or main stream directors or writers, Salman Rushdie was..a copywriter..

Q So it is a training ground for lots of popular culture professionals.

A Simply because it is that lovely area where art and commerce rub up against one another and it doesn't happen anywhere ales, you've got to make them beautiful but

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you've got to make them beautiful, not because you want to but because, you know, somebody's paying for that.

274 Q Have you had experience of international advertising? Do you think there is something distinctive about he way creativity is dealt with in the UK as opposed to other contraries?

A Yes..I think it is more developed here because the audience is more developed. I think because of growth of planning there is a devotion to an idea, they must have an idea they must be made to listen there must be a strategy: what is the proposition and what do you want to do.

Q Is it the audience that's better developed or the industry?

A Both. Both I think. I would say the audience is more developed in terms of advertising consumption. I think the French, France is great country for advertising. Theirs is done a slightly different way they tend to like style over substance and they enjoy advertising for that. If you go to the States it is a different thing there. They have more advertising: as a nation they are felt to have short attention spans. Which may be determined by the fact that that is the way they do their advertising, ours is a bit more monitored. The Germans prefer much more functional they want very straight, product focussed, ads. they want less emotional benefits which is fair enough. It just betrays national characteristics I suppose really. I think we have actually moved on I mean there's two things, going back to how we consume if you talk to sit com. writers, and this whole belief why were sit coms on the BBC better than on ITV, a sit com writer on BBC say I only have to write 28 minutes not 22 and only have to write to one end whereas an ITV writer has to write to a break so has a short of flick up for that and then a resolution in the second half, that is the way they have to write and they have less time to do it which is quite interesting that this had come in, the other thing that is completely....

End of interview

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Interview with — copywriter, BMP 18th/19th April 1998

[He was about to leave the next week for a new job at JWT but subsequently stayed when offered the headship of a new unit specialising in radio advertising]

Q: Could you begin by telling me who you are and what you do?

A: My name's —I'm a copywriter for BMPDDB: worked in advertising for seventeen years, nine of which have been here: shall I talk about how I got in or..

Q: Yes, just carry on..

A: All right, er, my route was quite unorthodox- I know people say that, its the orthodox route that's unorthodox now isn't it- I didn't know what I wanted to do after school- actually I did I wanted to be a journalist. But a chap from the local paper came around on a careers day and bored the piss out of me so I went home, got out the yellow pages, looked up advertising agencies phoned up Abbot Mead Vickers and got a job. As a van driver. Not really thinking about what it was, and after that I did four years, three and a half year in production, then I thought I'd like to be a copywriter so I changed to Young and Rubicam, that'd be about 1984, and took it from there really.

Q: OK, so would you spend your time in a team with a visual person..

A: Well, yeh we're supposed to but I'm not very good at that: no reason for it, I've got nothing against my art director or any other art director, I just find that it bizarre that they pay two salaries to two people to do one job, I really do, I know its an unfashionable view, I think it'll become a fashionable view sooner or later, that's why I did a lot of radio which has no visual content whatsoever: I mean I didn't go to art school so I'm not really trained in that way er, I haven't had that imbued into me: I just like to write I mean you don't get two people writing a book. I suppose you get

two people writing a screenplay, but part of the reason I'm leaving is so I can work on my own and because my art director, bless him, needs and deserves a more collaborative partner. But I always have worked in teams and officially I still do.

Q: Can you tell me what happens from when a client comes in wanting a campaign, what role do you play in that?

A: Well, its all fairly well sorted, exactly what they want before we even see it: at least it should be..

Q: So you get a creative brief,

A: we get a creative brief, and they will have decided, media, first they will have decided with the money they have to spend where it is best spent either on press television, posters, radio, whatever, and sometimes there's a campaign involving different media. And they'll say whether its going to be a thirty second TV, you know, forty second TV, double page spread, and also in conjunction with the planners the account managers will have worked out a strategy:'we want to say this, because of that: I'm not sure you've bee shown briefs..

Q: I haven't seen many..

A: I sort of throw all mine away, but it's sort of what do we want to say, who are we talking to, er, what is the proposition, why is this true, those sort of questions and that sort of standard form, and underneath it are the answers to that, and you work it out from there- and any mandatory inclusions for instance you must say this or you must have a phone number on the end- don't mention that..and you get a brief of the sort of thing you've got to do take it from there.

Q: Can you give me an example of a recent brief that came to you and what you did with it.

A: Er, the most recent brief I've actually completed was for PG pyramid bags, the old tea bags. What they had was..there were problems in Ceylon or Sri Lanka the price of tea had gone up and every other person sort of Sainsbury's Tescos, all the own labels, Tetley, they'd all put their tea up quite understandably but PG decided they wouldn't because the pyramid bags nice as they were were perceived to be more

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expensive (they actually weren't) so they saw this as a tactical reason not to put it up and they wanted a campaign that said theirs were cheaper, without it saying they weren't as expensive as you think. Um, initially we were supposed to use the chimps because the chimps had been used for forty years, and, but chimps commercials are done like every couple of years because its such an expensive and time consuming thing and it involved using old footage: I spent ages looking at the old footage sort of trying to construct a story round it and it didn't really work, and I just had an idea that perhaps, if they didn't use the chimps, er, I'd worked with Caroline Aherne, Mrs. Merton and I liked her I got on quite well I quite missed her, so I thought why doesn't she do that...she does a character in the Fast Show, the rude check out girl, I wonder if she'd do that- this is a secret I shouldn't put this down on tape we've been told not to blab about forthcoming projects, but its been in the paper as well there were so many people milling around the shoot, and so we did that: its not to replace the chimps long term its just a one-off thing, she's putting all the stuff through the scanner you know that's crap then Oh! PG , and you know I think it works quite well because, for one thing people who've seen the fast show will like it but probably ninety percent of people watching the break in Coronation Street don't watch comedy shows on BBC2 so they won't know it so erm, yeh I think it'll go down quite well she's funny, it turned out very well so it was the last thing I did.

Q: So did you think of the sort of script idea and give it to her or did it come out in conversation..

A: Um, thought of the script idea, sent it down to her, then I met up with her we had lunch and just put a few gags in it..er, yeh I mean the first thing I did was erm, she was insulting the customer and she said no that character wouldn't insult the customer, only insult the brands, so little stuff like that, so I said all right we'll insult the stuff we got, so I went to the supermarket that night when I was doing me shopping & look around at the funny things they sell and thought why that character might find them funny. With characterisation (I've done a lot of that) it doesn't matter what the character says as long as the viewer believes that character would

say it. You can make them say the most stupid things as long as it makes you think 'yes they would say that'. It's very important. So that was the last thing I did.

Q: Ok, er, so how long did it take from the creative brief coming along to the...

A: That was unusually quick: it was a new thing, they'd all put their prices up, PG wanted something *now*, so I mean we're talking about, about a week really, rm, but usually its longer than that, its put into research (we hate research because we just want the films to be made, but very often they're not) you know you show them to the group of consumers, they don't like 'em or understand them..and, sometimes that's a reason not to proceed: sometimes they ignore that and carry on anyway think that, you know, but its quite a lengthy process I'm very glad we're not paid royalties I'm glad we're just paid a straight salary 'cause if I was on royalties, I wouldn't get anything. I think, I'd say about every ten scripts you write, one of them will see the light of day which is why I do more radio because there's more chance of.. 'cause radio isn't subject to that sort of scrutiny, it's not as expensive, and you can get good work out quite reasonably.

Q: So presumably if you're going to be working more independently in the future you're not going to get this veto over your work.

A: Well I think I will, it comes from the client..

Q: You're gong to another agency..

A: Yeh I'm going to J.Walter Thomson so, no I think it'll be exactly the same there: yeh just a change of scenery after nine years and more money and that's another thing, its nothing to do with work but advertising in the creative departments, I'm not saying this, I hope it doesn't sound in a sort of bitter way 'cause its not true, its a fact of life they don't reward, not just this agency any agency, they don't reward loyalty, you have to sort of, go round and if you've been here nine years you really have to sort of move on, so, yeh that's what we all tend to do after a while.

Q: Do you feel sort of oppressed at the way the production line moves and the fact that some of your ideas, no doubt some of the ideas of which your fondest, get binned?

A: Oh yeh its just luck: you have to be quite resilient, and you have to be willing to erm.. you can't just have one idea: it can be a real shame when you've got a great idea, or what you think is a great idea, and erm, I mean there's all sorts of other reasons it doesn't get through, clients just cut budgets sometimes, they just decide 'no we won't make that', you know after you've worked really hard on it, well, you know, first thing to go, especially in a recession: which you think is insane 'cause in a recession they should be trying harder to sell their stuff so yeh you can work really hard, and just for a reason as simple as that, it doesn't...

Q: So how do you see the role of the planner and the manager, do they, well, just tell me how you see their role.

A: I've always taken the view that we're all on the same side. You get the odd shitty little one who isn't. I mean they..account managers, they (I couldn't do it) they represent the agency to the client and I suppose they represent the client to the agency. In an ideal world for them they'd just like to go along, show the work and say 'oh its lovely' and just buy it but of course that doesn't happen and they're also sort of more aware their clients sort of business objectives than we are, so they can have greater sympathy with clients than we do. People often think we just dig our heels in 'we want good work' but, that is true to a point and so it should be 'cause, if I were to get made redundant or sacked or just wanted to find another job tomorrow I mean they don't interview you initially you just send in your work you know your portfolio of ads, videos of commercials and that's all you've got that is your livelihood, and if you know, clients and account manager between them weaken your idea you can't go around to everyone saying 'no no it wasn't supposed to be like that' its just that's it who did it: you. So you do have to um fight hard to a point obviously its not worth, you know, arguing over every single point on principle: sometimes the client suggest things that don't make it any better or any worse, if they want to put it in fine.

Q: So do you try to be present at the important meetings?

A: Yeh you do try to, 'cause quite often clients find it harder, obviously its human

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nature, they find it harder to refuse if the person who wrote it is in the room. Also sometimes you can persuade them, er, more persuasively, why you did what you did, and your reasons for doing it so yes you do try to be...

Q: Are you one of these creative people who present their own work sometimes?

A: Sometimes: sometimes you know the clients anyway, like the last one, they were on the shoot and you got on quite well with them and they like to see you sometimes, yeh sometimes and sometimes not, to be honest: there are absolutely no rules to that at all.

Q: I thought in most cases the manager would do the presentation.

A: Yeh, and to be honest, they're very good at it: they're trained to do it, they go on presentation courses. And a lot of er, creatives, are inarticulate, and we're not sort of used to that sort of thing: we can be, but no, they tend to present it and sometimes I'm very impressed with the way they do it. Sometimes your'e not. But its all..a generalisation sometimes you go sometimes you don't it depends what else you're doing as well.

Q: Could you tell me about more of your work and sort of how the idea came and evolved?

A: er, Mrs. Merton, what we had there was erm British Gas were in real trouble, they were at the time: everyone hated them, fat cats you know blah blah blah they said we just need a personality, we need a person who embodies all of [??] who will appeal to old people and appeal to young people across the board and I'd liek to just say yeh! Mrs. Merton! But oh it took ages, thinking of people who weren't right and then that happened, then once we'd done that, she was very popular with old people and young people but she was just like a..waspish, chat show host so we had to invent a whole back story for her, a home life, a son (Malcom) and that whole intera...have you seen those?

Q: I'm sure I have I can't remember.

A: She just like fusses over her son he's thirty seven and he lives at home and with that, that's based on a friend of my mum's who's also got a son, about forty-five

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who's only just got married and she talks to him like he's about seven, always has done..you just draw from your own experience, and with that one, that's what that was. Again, I'm not very good talking about arty things but, the old saying there's no output without input: it sounds pretentious but you should try and read books and see films, try to keep abreast with what's going on, otherwise you're not going to have points of reference to share with the people you're trying to speak to.

Q: A creative person in a big agency has quite a cosseted existence..

A: Oh yeh, course they do, yeh, I like big agencies and this particular agency is excellent they don't care where you are, what you do, just..well I don't mean what you do you don't sort of go around shagging people and murdering them but they don't care whether you come in late or early as long as you're, well as long as you go to your meetings when you're supposed to be there and all your recordings but, yes, thinking of ideas you can't just sit down and think of one: its like being asked, to get a hard on: you only get one if you're in the mood and sometimes you just wander about. Advertising, I mean its no different to anything else you have to do things, I mean you have to write a letter, pay somebody something you might have to chuck your girlfriend you have to think of a way to put it you don't really sit down at a desk and do it you have a walk down the street and think now what can I say..blah blah blah its exactly the same and all we're trying to do ultimately is get people to do what we want them to you know either buy a product or quit smoking or something. It is quite nice that's why I like it if I was told I had to sit here from nine-thirty to five-.thirty I'd think no I'll go and do something else.

Q: Do you find that any particular things that stimulate your ideas or is just any...?

A: Just as long as I'm physically walking about. And if I'm writing a bit of press copy I tend to do it in me head: always start at the beginning then do the end then fill in the bit in the middle, and once I've done it pretty much how I like it I come back type it up and sometimes it doesn't look quite right, read quite right just change it a bit and then it's done.

Q: Is there a heirarchy...presumably, when you first started as a copywriter a smaller

proportion of your work got made than does now.

A: No, not at all, no, not at all: there's a hierarchy in as much as..I mean a lot of places have groups, when I go to my next job I'm going to be what they call a group head: we don't really have them here. Departments are very big and you can't possibly give all the approval to one man, so its sectioned off into little groups and you're in charge of two or three teams. Teams of two: and I'll have them working to me. I don't think I'll be their boss, but I'll be like an..like an editor I suppose. Sub editor I suppose is the best way of putting it.

Q: So presumably its a step up from being a creative director is it?

A: Yeh, I suppose it is I mean that's not why I'm doing it but I suppose it is, yeh, you're right.

Q: What from your experience how will you manage them..their creative processes?

A: Oh God knows, I'll find out when I get there. I mean I ought to be able to judge work and know whats good and whats bad by now otherwise I shouldn't be doing it. So I've got no worries about how I'll manage that, I'll just see when I get there. I like big agencies, I like to feel that I'm at sort of school, I like lots of people around the place I've worked in small agencies and I don't like them there's always some git at the top with some sort of corner shop mentality. Er, and small agencies are often formed by people who can't be employed in big ones, well not always but I couple I have, were I didn't like them at all.

Q: OK, the only other thing I'd like to ask you is just a couple more examples of what you've done and how it worked out.

A: Well, this agency..I've done loads of other things but the most famous things I've done, for no real reason, have just involved use of personalities, like Rowan Atkinson in Barclaycard, Jack Dee in John Smith's Mrs. Merton in British Gas, I just think you've got to use personalities well, you've got to consult them, you don't want to spoil the character that they've erm...you know, some people take a character, for some sort of reason, and they try to make the character say sort of marketing speak that the character would never normally say, so erm..I'm trying to think of some

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good examples...of that, that's what I've dome mainly here and this agency has quite a good tradition of that. There's some I haven't done that they've done here, there's Gary Lineker there's all sorts of other people: its a shortcut certain people represent certain things so erm, you sort of know what they're there, the sort of area we're in, so, if they're used properly its money well spent.

Q: So it's usually your decision if a celebrity's used..

A: Oh yeh , yeh, exactly. Sometimes not available, sometimes they don't do ads, yeh...but its not always the case I'm trying to think of the stuff I've done..........

Q: If you were going to do that would you go and ask the planner to.....

A: Oh yeh, yeh, long before it ever gets out, al that goes through first.

Q: So its not just your interpretation of what (the celeb means to consumers)

A: Oh yes it is to start with but after that, and once the client's on board with it and yeh we'd like to use that then the planner will make sure its researched: I mean they're very good for that here its an awful long time before the ad actually appears but once it does appear more often than not, its very effective they do win IPA effectiveness awards as well, so..

Q: So that's just part of the system of checks and balances..

A: Yeh exactly, the client's gonna spend, you know, two million pounds and they want to make sure they're hitting the target. I used to hate it I used to think it was like going around Sainsbury's and asking other shoppers to test your groceries: 'do you like this?' 'Yeh well you're the fucking marketing director do you like it or don't you you know..its your job if you like it fine if you don't fine. But I suppose I've softened a bit or matured a little bit I realised that you can't just do it like that. But it can be a nuisance.

Q: Well that's great, I can't think of any more questions to ask..

A: Oh are you sure?

Q: yeh thanks....