

Dublin City University  
The School of Communications

A Semiotic Reading of Advertisements

A Thesis submitted to Dublin City University in candidacy for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

By

Katrina Lawlor

1992

Supervisor  
Dr Martin Croghan

School of Communication  
September 1992

## **Table of Contents**

|                          |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Table of Contents</b> | <b>( i )</b>    |
| <b>Table of Figures</b>  | <b>( vii )</b>  |
| <b>Declaration</b>       | <b>( xi )</b>   |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>  | <b>( xii )</b>  |
| <b>Abstract</b>          | <b>( xiii )</b> |

### **Chapter 1 Issues Relevant to the Study of Meaning in Ads**

|               |  |           |
|---------------|--|-----------|
| <b>1</b>      | <b>Introduction</b>  | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>1.1</b>    | <b>Product Symbolism</b>   | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>1.2.</b>   | <b>Involvement</b>   | <b>10</b> |
| <b>1.3</b>    | <b>Attitude to the Ad and to the Brand</b>                             | <b>13</b> |
| <b>1.3.1.</b> | <b>Relations Between Affect and Cognitions</b>                         | <b>14</b> |
| <b>1 3.2</b>  | <b>Mediating Influence of Attitude to the Ad<br/>on Brand Attitude</b> | <b>19</b> |
| <b>1 4.</b>   | <b>Cognitive Structure and Cognitive Response</b>                      | <b>26</b> |
| <b>1.4.1</b>  | <b>Representation</b>  | <b>27</b> |

### **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

|               |   |           |
|---------------|---|-----------|
| <b>2</b>      | <b>Introduction</b>                     | <b>34</b> |
| <b>2.1.</b>   | <b>Theories of Meaning</b>              | <b>34</b> |
| <b>2.1.1</b>  | <b>Sign</b>                             | <b>36</b> |
| <b>2 2.</b>   | <b>Model of Meaning</b>                 | <b>41</b> |
| <b>2.3.</b>   | <b>Intention</b>                        | <b>43</b> |
| <b>2.3.1.</b> | <b>Processing Meaning</b>               | <b>44</b> |
| <b>2.3.2.</b> | <b>Creative Appeals</b>                 | <b>47</b> |
| <b>2.3.3.</b> | <b>Mythology, Black and White Magic</b> | <b>54</b> |
| <b>2 4</b>    | <b>Text</b>                             | <b>57</b> |

|        |                                     |    |
|--------|-------------------------------------|----|
| 2.4.1. | Semantic Memory                     | 58 |
| 2.4.2. | Visual Processing                   | 61 |
| 2.4.3. | Social Communication in Advertising | 65 |
| 2.5.   | Interpretation                      | 67 |
| 2.5.1. | Relative Theories                   | 74 |

### Chapter 3 Research Methodology

|          |  |     |
|----------|--|-----|
| 3.       | Introduction to Research Methodology           | 80  |
| 3.1.     | The Role of Attitude in Advertising            | 81  |
| 3.1.1.   | Attitude and its Relationship to Meaning       | 82  |
| 3.1.2.   | Attitude Conceptualization                     | 82  |
| 3.1.3.   | Measurement Instrument                         | 84  |
| 3.1.4.   | Cluster  | 88  |
| 3.1.5.   | Free Elicitation                               | 89  |
| 3.2      | Meaning  | 91  |
| 3.3.     | Semiotics                                      | 93  |
| 3.3.1.   | Semantics                                      | 95  |
| 3.3.2.   | Pragmatics                                     | 96  |
| 3.3.3.   | Syntax   | 98  |
| 3.3.4    | Structuralism                                  | 99  |
| 3.3.5.   | Visual Method                                  | 104 |
| 3.6.     | Focus Groups as a Qualitative Method           | 110 |
| 3.6.1.   | Planning the Groups                            | 110 |
| 3.6.1.2. | Determining the Number of Groups               | 111 |
| 3.6.1.3. | Determining the Size of Groups                 | 112 |
| 3.6.1.4. | Determining the Source of Participants         | 113 |
| 3.6.1.5. | Determining the Level of Moderator Involvement | 115 |
| 3.7      | Conducting the Focus Group                     | 116 |
| 3.7.1.   | Determining the Interview Content              | 117 |
| 3.7.2    | Site Selection and Data Collection             | 118 |
| 3.7.3.   | Choice of Ads                                  | 119 |
| 3.8.     | Pilot Groups                                   | 121 |

## **Chapter 4 Analysis and Discussion of Questionnaire Results**

|                 |  |            |
|-----------------|--|------------|
| <b>4</b>        | <b>Introduction</b>                                  | <b>127</b> |
| <b>4 1.</b>     | <b>Attitude to the Ad</b>                            | <b>127</b> |
| <b>4.1 1.</b>   | <b>Demographic Analysis of Attitudes</b>             | <b>129</b> |
| <b>4.1 2.</b>   | <b>Distance Analysis</b>                             | <b>133</b> |
| <b>4 1.2.1.</b> | <b>Semantic Meaning</b>                              | <b>133</b> |
| <b>4.2.</b>     | <b>Attitude to the Ad from Thought Verbalisation</b> | <b>142</b> |
| <b>4 3</b>      | <b>Comparison to the Ad Measures</b>                 | <b>149</b> |

## **Chapter 5 Analysis and Discussion on Reading Ads**

|                 |  |            |
|-----------------|--|------------|
| <b>5.</b>       | <b>Introduction</b>                        | <b>153</b> |
| <b>5.1.</b>     | <b>Structural Analysis</b>                 | <b>154</b> |
| <b>5.1.1</b>    | <b>Structural Analysis: Surf</b>           | <b>154</b> |
| <b>5 1.2.</b>   | <b>Binary Opposition. Surf</b>             | <b>155</b> |
| <b>5.1.3.</b>   | <b>Transformation Process: Surf</b>        | <b>157</b> |
| <b>5.2.</b>     | <b>Semiotic Analysis</b>                   | <b>159</b> |
| <b>5 2.1.</b>   | <b>Semantic Analysis: Surf</b>             | <b>160</b> |
| <b>5.2 2.</b>   | <b>Syntactic Analysis: Surf</b>            | <b>163</b> |
| <b>5.2.3.</b>   | <b>Pragmatic Comparison: Surf</b>          | <b>165</b> |
| <b>5 2.3.1.</b> | <b>Pragmatic Association: Surf</b>         | <b>168</b> |
| <b>5.2.3.2.</b> | <b>Pragmatic Image Analysis: Surf</b>      | <b>169</b> |
| <b>5.3.</b>     | <b>Visual Analysis</b>                     | <b>170</b> |
| <b>5.3 1.</b>   | <b>Visual Analysis: Surf</b>               | <b>172</b> |
| <b>5 3.2.</b>   | <b>Visual Comparison: Surf</b>             | <b>174</b> |
| <b>5 3 3.</b>   | <b>Visual Effect: Surf</b>                 | <b>176</b> |
| <b>5.4.</b>     | <b>Attitude to the Surf Ad</b>             | <b>177</b> |
| <b>5.5.</b>     | <b>Structural Analysis: Birds Eye</b>      | <b>183</b> |
| <b>5.5.1.</b>   | <b>Binary Opposition. Birds Eye</b>        | <b>186</b> |
| <b>5 5 2.</b>   | <b>Transformation Process Birds Eye</b>    | <b>187</b> |
| <b>5.6.</b>     | <b>Semantic Analysis: Birds Eye</b>        | <b>191</b> |
| <b>5 6.1.</b>   | <b>Syntactic Analysis: Birds Eye</b>       | <b>193</b> |
| <b>5 6 2.</b>   | <b>Pragmatic Comparison: Birds Eye</b>     | <b>195</b> |
| <b>5.6.2.1.</b> | <b>Pragmatic Association: Birds Eye</b>    | <b>196</b> |
| <b>5.6 2.2.</b> | <b>Pragmatic Image Analysis: Birds Eye</b> | <b>196</b> |

|           |   |     |
|-----------|---|-----|
| 5.7.      | Visual Analysis: Birds Eye                | 197 |
| 5.7.1     | Visual Comparison: Birds Eye              | 201 |
| 5.7.2.    | Visual Effect: Birds Eye                  | 202 |
| 5.8.      | Attitude to the Birds Eye Ad              | 203 |
| 5.9.      | Structural Analysis: Chanel               | 203 |
| 5.9.1     | Binary Opposition: Chanel                 | 208 |
| 5.9.2.    | Transformation Process: Chanel            | 210 |
| 5.10.     | Semantic Analysis: Chanel                 | 213 |
| 5.10.1.   | Syntactic Analysis: Chanel                | 215 |
| 5.10.2.   | Pragmatic Comparison: Chanel              | 217 |
| 5.10.2.1. | Pragmatic Association: Chanel             | 220 |
| 5.10.2.2  | Pragmatic Image Analysis: Chanel          | 220 |
| 5.11.     | Visual Analysis: Chanel                   | 222 |
| 5.11.1.   | Visual Comparison: Chanel                 | 224 |
| 5.11.2.   | Visual Effect: Chanel                     | 225 |
| 5.12.     | Attitude to the Chanel Ad                 | 226 |
| 5.13.     | Structural Analysis: Bank of Ireland      | 227 |
| 5.13.1.   | Binary Opposition: Bank of Ireland        | 230 |
| 5.13.2.   | Transformation Process: Bank of Ireland   | 232 |
| 5.14.     | Semantic Analysis: Bank of Ireland        | 235 |
| 5.14.1    | Syntactic Analysis: Bank of Ireland       | 236 |
| 5.14.2.   | Pragmatic Comparison: Bank of Ireland     | 238 |
| 5.14.2.1. | Pragmatic Association: Bank of Ireland    | 240 |
| 5.14.2.2. | Pragmatic Image Analysis: Bank of Ireland | 240 |
| 5.15.     | Visual Analysis: Bank of Ireland          | 241 |
| 5.15.1.   | Visual Comparison: Bank of Ireland        | 244 |
| 5.15.2.   | Visual Effect: Bank of Ireland            | 245 |
| 5.16.     | Attitude to the Bank of Ireland Ad        | 245 |
| 5.17.     | Structural Analysis: Peugeot              | 246 |
| 5.17.1.   | Binary Opposition: Peugeot                | 249 |
| 5.17.2.   | Transformation Process: Peugeot           | 250 |
| 5.18.     | Semantic Analysis: Peugeot                | 253 |
| 5.18.1.   | Syntactic Analysis: Peugeot               | 255 |
| 5.18.2.   | Pragmatic Comparison: Peugeot             | 256 |
| 5.18.2.1. | Pragmatic Association: Peugeot            | 258 |
| 5.18.2.2. | Pragmatic Image Analysis: Peugeot         | 259 |
| 5.19.     | Visual Analysis: Peugeot                  | 260 |
| 5.19.1.   | Visual Comparison: Peugeot                | 262 |
| 5.19.2.   | Visual Effect: Peugeot                    | 265 |

|           |   |     |
|-----------|---|-----|
| 5 20.     | Attitude to the Peugeot Ad              | 265 |
| 5.21.     | Structural Analysis: Maxwell House      | 269 |
| 5.21.1.   | Binary Opposition: Maxwell House        | 272 |
| 5.21.2.   | Transformation Process: Maxwell House   | 273 |
| 5 22.     | Semantic Analysis: Maxwell House        | 277 |
| 5.22.1    | Syntactic Analysis: Maxwell House       | 278 |
| 5.22.2.   | Pragmatic Comparison: Maxwell House     | 279 |
| 5.22.2.1. | Pragmatic Association: Maxwell House    | 281 |
| 5 22 2.2. | Pragmatic Image Analysis: Maxwell House | 281 |
| 5 2.3.    | Visual Analysis: Maxwell House          | 281 |
| 5.23.1.   | Visual Comparison: Maxwell House        | 284 |
| 5.23.2.   | Visual Effect: Maxwell House            | 284 |
| 5.24.     | Attitude to the Maxwell House Ad        | 285 |

## Chapter 6 Conclusions and Discussion

|          |                                      |     |
|----------|--------------------------------------|-----|
| 6        | Introduction                         | 287 |
| 6.1.     | Main Conclusions                     | 288 |
| 6.2      | Discussion of Method                 | 289 |
| 6.2.1.   | Structural Analysis                  | 289 |
| 6.2.1.1. | The Working of the Structural Method | 291 |
| 6.3.     | Discussion on Semantics              | 294 |
| 6.4.     | Discussion on Pragmatics             | 299 |
| 6.5.     | Visual Discussion                    | 302 |
| 6 6.     | Discussion on Attitude To The Ad     | 307 |
| 6.7.     | Conclusion                           |     |

|            |     |
|------------|-----|
| References | 312 |
|------------|-----|

|            |                                  |     |
|------------|----------------------------------|-----|
| Appendix 1 | Socio Demographic Questionnaire  | 329 |
| Appendix 2 | Attitude to the Ad Questionnaire | 330 |

|                    |   |            |
|--------------------|---|------------|
| <b>Appendix 3</b>  | <b>Pilot Discussion Topics</b>  | <b>332</b> |
| <b>Appendix 4</b>  | <b>Main Discussion Topics</b>   | <b>335</b> |
| <b>Appendix 5</b>  | <b>Coded Cognitive/Affective Response<br/>Categories On Thoughts And Feelings<br/>To The Ad</b> | <b>338</b> |
| <b>Appendix 6</b>  | <b>Textual Examples of Free Elicitation<br/>Coded Categories</b>                                | <b>340</b> |
| <b>Appendix 7</b>  | <b>Example of Structural Text</b>   | <b>342</b> |
| <b>Appendix 8</b>  | <b>Groups and Socio Demographic Breakdown</b>   | <b>345</b> |
| <b>Appendix 9</b>  | <b>Advertisements</b>   | <b>346</b> |
| <b>Appendix 10</b> | <b>Group Impressions</b>  | <b>348</b> |

## Table of Figures

|                    |   |            |
|--------------------|---|------------|
| <b>Figure 1.1</b>  | <b>Four Alternative Structural Specifications of the Mediating Role of Attitude to the Ad</b> | <b>22</b>  |
| <b>Figure 1.2</b>  | <b>Outcomes of Schema Congruity and Incongruity</b>   | <b>29</b>  |
| <b>Figure 2.1.</b> | <b>Triangle of Signification</b>  | <b>37</b>  |
| <b>Figure 2.2.</b> | <b>Sign Triangle</b>  | <b>38</b>  |
| <b>Figure 2.3.</b> | <b>Paradigm Showing How Signs Function</b>  | <b>39</b>  |
| <b>Figure 2.4.</b> | <b>Real Model of Meaning</b>  | <b>42</b>  |
| <b>Figure 2.5.</b> | <b>Analysis of Myth</b>   | <b>73</b>  |
| <b>Figure 4.1.</b> | <b>Attitude to the Ad</b>   | <b>127</b> |
| <b>Figure 4.2.</b> | <b>Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention</b>  | <b>128</b> |
| <b>Figure 4.3.</b> | <b>Demographic Analysis of Attitudes to Surf</b>  | <b>130</b> |
| <b>Figure 4.4.</b> | <b>Factor Scores of Ratings of 6 Ads by Two Groups</b>  | <b>134</b> |
| <b>Figure 4.5.</b> | <b>Distance Measures Relating to the 6 Ads for Group 1</b>                                    | <b>135</b> |
| <b>Figure 4.6.</b> | <b>Distance Measures Relating to the 6 Ads for Group 6</b>                                    | <b>137</b> |
| <b>Figure 4.7.</b> | <b>Semantic Spatial Representation of Group 6</b>   | <b>138</b> |
| <b>Figure 4.8.</b> | <b>Distance Analysis Group 6</b>  | <b>139</b> |
| <b>Figure 4.9.</b> | <b>Distance Analysis for all Ads</b>  | <b>141</b> |
| <b>Figure 4.10</b> | <b>Responses to Ads</b>   | <b>143</b> |



|                     |  |            |
|---------------------|--|------------|
| <b>Figure 4.11.</b> | <b>Ad Thoughts and Ad Feelings</b>                           | <b>148</b> |
| <b>Figure 4.12.</b> | <b>Mean Score Variation</b>                                  | <b>151</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.1.</b>  | <b>Binary Opposition Surf</b>                                | <b>156</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.2.</b>  | <b>Transformation Process Surf</b>                           | <b>158</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.3.</b>  | <b>Semantic Association Washing</b>                          | <b>161</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.4.</b>  | <b>Semantic Association Surf</b>                             | <b>162</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.5.</b>  | <b>Comparison of Ads for Noreen's<br/>and Marion's Group</b> | <b>166</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.6.</b>  | <b>Persuasive Variables</b>                                  | <b>171</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.7.</b>  | <b>Visual Sign Surf</b>                                      | <b>173</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.8</b>   | <b>Metaphoric Reading of Surf</b>                            | <b>176</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.9.</b>  | <b>Message in the Ad.</b>                                    | <b>181</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.10.</b> | <b>Binary Opposition Birds Eye</b>                           | <b>186</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.11.</b> | <b>Transformation Process Birds Eye</b>                      | <b>188</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.12.</b> | <b>Semantic Association of Burger</b>                        | <b>192</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.13.</b> | <b>Semantic Association of Birds Eye</b>                     | <b>193</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.14.</b> | <b>Ad Comparison Birds Eye</b>                               | <b>196</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.15.</b> | <b>Visual Signs Birds Eye</b>                                | <b>198</b> |

|                     |   |            |
|---------------------|---|------------|
| <b>Figure 5.16.</b> | <b>Metaphoric Reading of Birds Eye</b>        | <b>202</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.17.</b> | <b>Structural Issues Chanel</b>               | <b>204</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.18.</b> | <b>Binary Opposition Chanel</b>               | <b>208</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.19.</b> | <b>Transformation Process Chanel</b>          | <b>210</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.20.</b> | <b>Semantic Association Perfume</b>           | <b>214</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.21.</b> | <b>Semantic Association Chanel</b>            | <b>215</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.22.</b> | <b>Ad Comparison Chanel</b>                   | <b>218</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.23.</b> | <b>Image of Chanel</b>                        | <b>221</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.24.</b> | <b>Visual Signs Chanel</b>                    | <b>223</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.25.</b> | <b>Structural Issues Bank of Ireland</b>      | <b>228</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.26.</b> | <b>Binary Opposition Bank of Ireland</b>      | <b>231</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.27.</b> | <b>Transformation Process Bank of Ireland</b> | <b>232</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.28.</b> | <b>Semantic Association Banks</b>             | <b>235</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.29.</b> | <b>Semantic Association Bank of Ireland</b>   | <b>236</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.30.</b> | <b>Ad Comparison Banks</b>                    | <b>239</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.31.</b> | <b>Image of Banks</b>                         | <b>241</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.32.</b> | <b>Visual Signs Bank of Ireland</b>           | <b>242</b> |
| <b>Figure 5.33.</b> | <b>Structural Issues Peugeot</b>              | <b>247</b> |

|              |   |     |
|--------------|---|-----|
| Figure 5.34. | Binary Opposition Peugeot               | 250 |
| Figure 5.35. | Transformation Process Peugeot          | 251 |
| Figure 5.36. | Semantic Association Car                | 253 |
| Figure 5.37. | Semantic Association Peugeot            | 254 |
| Figure 5.38. | Ad Comparison Peugeot                   | 257 |
| Figure 5.39. | Visual Signs Peugeot                    | 260 |
| Figure 5.40. | Structural Issues Maxwell House         | 269 |
| Figure 5.41  | Transformation Experience Maxwell House | 271 |
| Figure 5.42. | Binary Opposition Maxwell House         | 272 |
| Figure 5.43. | Transformation Process Maxwell House    | 274 |
| Figure 5.44. | Semantic Association Coffee             | 277 |
| Figure 5.45. | Semantic Association Maxwell House      | 278 |
| Figure 5.46. | Ad Comparison Maxwell House             | 280 |
| Figure 5.47. | Visual Signs Maxwell House              | 282 |

## Declaration

I, Katrina Lawlor, being a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy as awarded by Dublin City University declare that while registered as a candidate for the above degree I have not been a registered candidate for another award of the University Secondly that none of the material contained in this Thesis has been used in any other submission for any other award Further, that the contents of this thesis are the sole work of the author except where an acknowledgement has been made for any assistance received

Date

Signed

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge Dr Martin Croghan for his tremendous ability to guide, to constructively criticize and for his honest opinion of both work and effort throughout this thesis. Thank you Martin for your time, willingness to part knowledge and advice and above all for motivating me. Your optimism and belief in the student were invaluable lessons for academic practice and sustained me at all times.

A special thank you to all the women who took part in and organised discussion sessions. Your co-operation was encouraging and made my task easier. The various group impressions were lasting and gave me insight and understanding of the value of group research.

My thanks to the library staff of the College of Marketing and Design who never failed to fulfil any request made.

I owe a special thanks to the following,-

Noel Costello for his editorial advice

Jarlaith Jennings of Mc Connells Advertising for providing the video tape of the ads

Sean Trimble for his computer assistance

Finally I would like to thank my family for their moral support and encouragement

## **Abstract**

This study commenced from the curiosity in discovering the meaning people take from ads. Ads as a communication system are subject to the same weaknesses of any communication system, failure to understand what is said. Full understanding and acceptance of a communication is rare. A problem in communication is that the receiver fails to understand the message sent by the sender. The decoded message may only partially represent the encoded message. The fact that the encoded message in advertising is a dual process whereby the advertiser's intention is translated into a text by an advertising agency team can further exacerbate communication.

The initial stages of the study were concerned with analysis of existing concepts and methods used to evaluate meaning in advertising. The main area of applied research related to the attitude towards the ad concept. Critical evaluation of attitude to the ad shows the concern of the researcher with these methods. There was immediate recognition for developing an alternative approach to measure meaning in advertising. While there is interesting conceptual research on the meaning of brands, culture, symbolism, there were few applied studies showing how consumers take meaning from brands or ads.

The subject area of semiotics was considered to be the most applicable for developing a system which would show consumer reading of ads. Different advertising researchers have applied semiotics in different ways to the study of advertising. Few researchers have applied the methods of semiotics to consumer reading of ads. The majority of studies focus on the researchers

interpretation of the ads and showed little uniformity in developing a system which would elicit consumer reading

It was believed that the development of such a system would provide an explanation of what the ad meant to the reader. This involved adapting methods used in semiotics to the study of meaning of signs, text and language so that they could be applied to consumer reading of ads. The system developed revolves around structuralism, semantics, pragmatics, and visual/non verbal signification. Each of the areas used made a significant contribution to the study of meaning in ads. Structuralism shows how and if people transfer meanings from a symbolic system to the brand advertised. It highlights the significant meaning read in the ad. Semantics illustrates the associations between existing product schemas and its match or mismatch with the associations that the receiver connected to the ad. Pragmatics demonstrates how the ad is read in relation to other ads for the same product category and how the ad relates to prior images that the readers has of the advertiser. Visual and non verbal signification gives the connotative and ideological reading of signs.

Each of the semiotic areas applied to advertising may be used individually, but the use of all of the areas together in a single system shows the meaning taken from the ad. The system is greater than the sum of its parts. Meaning taken from an ad is not confined to one aspect of the system, the semiotic areas should not be considered in isolation. The real significance of meaning is in understanding what was read from symbolic transference, association, comparison and connotative reading. The system shows not only what was read but how the ad was read.

## **Chapter One Issues Relevant To The Study of Meaning In Ads.**

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter will examine the primary issues involved in advertising meaning, as a whole this thesis is relevant to advertisers, advertising agencies, consumer researchers and consumer education groups. Advertisers today are spending vast amount of money in researching consumers' needs, values and lifestyle by focus group interviews before an ad is designed in order to give the creative team a clear brief. However, there is very little analysis on the meaning of these ads to the consumer once the ad has been produced. Batra and Ray (1986) have called for more thought about the types of processing responses that matter in different advertising situations. The meaning of ads in current literature is explained in terms of people's attitude to the ad and also in terms of information processing. The question is "do attitude to the ad" theories explain what ads mean to the consumer? Attitude to the ad evaluates people's thoughts to an ad from a cognitive and affective perspective. It is argued because of different methodologies used to measure attitude to the ad the concept fails to inform on the meaning of ads. Also attitude to the ad tends to be a measure at a given moment in time and does not consider past experiences that a person brings to a given situation and how this effect interpretation of the ad. Emphasis is given primarily to subjective evaluation.

Advertising audiences today are no longer captive, remote control and fast forwarding mean that a viewer does not have to watch ads. This means that ads have to be designed to attract attention. This has lead creative people to develop short video films as ads e.g., Levi's 'Launderette' and 'Stiching' ad. The implications of this change in creative process is that people are no longer



processing ads in a passive, or a cognitive manner. Viewers of these film type ads may associate the ad with a film more than a product. At the moment we do not know how this change in creative style affects the processing of an ad. Advertising revenue is also being moved from television advertising to other media because it is believed that TV does not have the impact it once had, it could hardly be claimed that the assumptions and beliefs which underlie such a move are based on research.

Traditionally the study of advertising effectiveness includes the use of recall and recognition measures. But by simply measuring a person's recall of an advertisement the advertiser is no wiser as to how effective that campaign was, a more realistic measure would be to find out what the ad means to the respondent. Kintsch (1974) addresses this issue of what is meaningful knowledge in his critical review of two memory models, Baddeley's and Tulving's, arguing that "both these models are concerned with the rather literal memorising of bits of information, that aspect of memory called episodic, rather than with meaningful knowledge" (40). Kintsch's criticisms also refer to the way in which experimental psychologists conduct tests in an unnatural environment and in many cases with words that have no association with an individual's real life. The issue raised here is that recall and recognition measures, for example, do not even differentiate between people who recalled or recognized an ad because they were annoyed about the content or because they liked the content. By examining meaning of the advertisement to the individual the advertiser can find out how people interpret ads, how they associate different aspects of the ad with past experience and generally how the ad 'fits into' their lives.

Communication models in advertising have emphasised the need to consider consumer interpretation of ads and how they decode the advertisers encoded message. Models such as the Shannon and Weaver (1949) communication model suggest that at the start of the communication and in this case the advertising process the advertisers will decide what the intended message is going to be, i.e., the message they want to get across to a target audience. This message is then put into a transmitted format or encoded into various signs to suit the characteristics of the media where the ad is to appear. The message is also pitched at a level that the target audience will understand. The final stage is where the target audience decodes the advertisement and the advertiser hopes that at the end of this process the intended message is the same as the decoded message. But as Boulton points out "the limitations of language and human intelligence are such that we all have some difficulty in saying what we mean and all have some difficulty in being certain that we understand what the other person means (Boulton 1971: 83). The decoding process and the meaning people take from ads depends on many different factors such as the experiences a person brings to the interpretation of an advertisement and whether, for example, they form an attitude to the brand or an attitude to the product when they are watching an advertisement. To understand an audience the advertiser must know whether people interpret the advertisement as a whole or whether meaning is assigned on the basis of some particular aspect of the ad such as music and the implications for cognitive and affective information processing.

There is a growing body of literature that strongly criticizes the emphasis given to cognitive theory in both consumer behaviour and advertising (Zajonc 1980, Peterson Hoyer and Wilson 1986, Holman 1986). The main

argument of these theorists is that both product meaning and meaning derived from ads are measured according to the information processing models which focus on evaluations of tangible product attributes. These theorists suggest that product meaning and the meaning in ads is not simply cognitively based and that it is time to consider both the emotions that people attribute to products and ads, and the meaning that people interpret from ads. Lannon describes this shift in emphasis by saying that conventional theory asked the question -"What does advertising do to people?" whereas the new perspective should ask -"What do people do with advertising? What do people use advertising for?" (Lannon 1988 521)

Product and advertising meaning is based not only on an individual's evaluations of a product but also according to the cultural perspective of the individual (Mc Cracken 1987). Sanders also supports this view "Behaviour can best be achieved by tapping into cultural meanings as they are used in the immediate interaction situation" (1987 72). Cultural determinants of meaning include social interaction (Levy 1956), and codes used to create product symbolism such as aesthetic, social, and logical codes (Durgee 1986 332). The approach taken to the study of meaning is based on interpretive theories such as hermeneutics, phenomenology and ethnographics (O'Shaughnessy and Holbrook 1988 202).

This chapter will evaluate both applied and theoretical concepts and their contributions to measuring meaning in advertising. The main issues that will be examined are a), product symbolism, b), the role of affect and cognition, and, c), the relevance of attitude to the ad. The issues examined in this chapter are considered to be the most pertinent to the study of meaning in advertising.

### 1.1. Product Symbolism

Products have meanings in terms of consumers' past experience and influence of family members on purchase and consumption. Advertisers may become so involved in their own product that they think their beliefs and interpretation of their product is the meaning that an audience member decodes from an ad or a product usage situation. This is not always the case because the viewer can not share the advertisers' meaning of the product and, to further complicate the matter, other background aspects of the ad may have more meaning either positively or negatively for the viewer which may mean that the product is not perceived in the way expected. Research in the area of product symbolism is concerned with how individuals ascribe meaning to products rather than functional analysis of what the product does (Levy 1956)

Product meaning viewed from Levy's stance has been described as a symbolic interactionist perspective (Durgee 1986: 332). This perspective is based on (1) the meaning the product has for the individual, (2) the meaning derived from social interaction, and, (3), the conviction that meanings are not fixed but modified according to situations. Holbrook defines product imagery as "the manner in which a brand communicates with the consumer" (1982: 65).

Hirschman defines product meaning in terms of associated layers that vary in terms of tangibility. Four layers of meaning are outlined: the first is tangible attributes, the second, culturally common associations, the third, sub-culturally common associations, and the fourth, idiosyncratic associations. She also puts forward a theory where four groups are responsible in attributing symbolism to a product. The first is the specialist who gives a product meaning in terms of tangible and intangible attributes, the later will

give symbolic meaning to the product. The second is managerial decision makers who screen products, modify them and test consumer reactions to them. The third group is the communications specialist who provides additional meanings for the product in terms of the messages used for advertising and publicity. The fourth group, the consumers, create symbolic meaning, inferring intangible attributes that are not stated explicitly in advertisements, consumers may also discuss these inferences with friends thus altering the meaning they were supposed to decode from an ad (Hirschman 1980: 327-329).

Product meaning/symbolism has also been explained in terms of whether the product is perceived primarily as a utilitarian product or as an hedonic product. Consumer responses to this classification of products have been classified respectively as cognitive and affective (Zajonc and Markus 1982, Batra and Ray 1986), as epistemic or hedonic (Hudson and Murray 1986), and on the basis of information processing and rational responses or an experiential basis (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982). While recognizing the differences in response and processing to the utilitarian and hedonic product much of the work in consumer research on hedonic responses tends to be in the area of consumer esthetics which in turn has been confined to the arts. For example Belk and Andrusan (1980) examined the development of new markets for the theatre and symphony orchestra, Semenik and Young (1980) and Sexton and Braithney (1980) examined attitudinal and behavioural correlates of opera subscription and attendance, and Huber and Holbrook (1980) the determinants of esthetic value and growth for jazz recordings.

But esthetic/hedonic/experiential response and meaning also has relevance for both fast moving and durable consumer products. How does an individual decide on the meaning to give to a product? Certain products such as perfume may have more intangible attributes which will result in hedonic response. Or a product such as a car may, on a purely surface level, be primarily utilitarian, for example, but the advertising may also create hedonic values by associating the car with opera (Fiat Tipo) or film (Peugeot 405 Top gun). "The symbolic meaning of a product may, in some product classes, overcome or dominate its technical performance as a determinant of consumption" (Hirschman 1980: 3). It would be naive to assume that outside advertising brands and products have only utilitarian significance. "Brands have practical, rational values, and of course these must be acknowledged. But what makes them distinctive are their symbolic values" (Lannon 1988: 522). Solomon also takes this view. "Some products are deeply ingrained in our cultural psyche and have meaning far beyond those unearthed by concept tests, conjoint analysis and so on" (1983: 324).

In one of his studies Holbrook examines consumption symbolism and product meaning from a completely different perspective by investigating "the ability of marketing and consumption phenomena to serve artistic ends by contributing to the meaning of a work of art" (Holbrook 1988). Holbrook critically interprets a play called *Painted Churches* in terms of the symbolic values of products in the play. The play chosen is a little unusual in that it is concerned with discarding products. "marketing related consumption behaviour sits at the core of the symbolic system that carries and conveys the play's central meanings" (35). This leads Holbrook to the conclusion that marketing phenomena do influence meaning in works of art. Why the

marketer should be concerned with what he or she can do for art remains a mystery and a much more relevant issue emerges here that has been ignored, namely, the meanings that the art form has for the consumer. Classical and popular art forms, videos, and music, all convey specific meanings. Aspects of these art forms, including the form of their creative style are used in advertisements. The question now relevant for the advertiser is do these art forms maintain their original meaning if they have been seen by a target audience in their original context or does the meaning change when association is transferred to the product advertised and how will the meaning of the ad be interpreted by those who did not see the original art form?

One of the problems facing the advertiser and marketer is that products are interpreted in terms of different meanings such as utilitarian and hedonic (Ahotla 1985) which may result in formation of attitude to the ad or to the brand. The literature suggests that the hedonic and cognitive processes are two independent dimensions (Hirschman and Holbrook 1982) and that they should be measured independently (Hudson and Murray 1986). Methods for determining consumer responses to utilitarian products are already well established and centre around attitude and attribute evaluations. The hedonic response has only recently received attention and the research concentrates primarily on the concepts that may be methodologically appropriate. Hudson and Murray suggest that the subjectivist approach should be used to measure hedonic response and in particular the interpretive approach from phenomenology, ethnomethodology and hermeneutics (346).

Product symbolism can be viewed as part of an individual's lifestyle (Levy 1963) and how the product relates to a person's self concept (Belk, Bahn and

Mayer 1982 5) "It appears that individuals do prefer products with images more similar to their images of themselves" While there has been a considerable amount of research in comparison of product and brand images to self images in consumer behaviour there has been little if any comparison between images of ads and self image Some of the more interesting developments are found in research conducted by Sentis and Markus (1986) and Shavitt and Brock (1986) Sentis and Markus focus on the relationship between brand personality and the self, in particular they examined males self schemas of male fragrances Respondents were divided into two groups, schematics (those who thought of themselves as stereotypically masculine) and aschematics (individual who do not partition their self concept into masculine and feminine components) Brands were evaluated more positively by schematics Sentis and Markus suggest that people interpret ads very differently depending on their self concept (146) Shavitt and Brock studied self relevant responses in ads, a semantic hierarchy was developed to categorise responses in terms of self, product and execution thoughts This is not unsimilar to work conducted by other advertising research such as Lutz, MacKenzie and Belch (1983) except that they have included self thoughts, which are own thoughts in relation to purchase, usage and self characterizations Like Lutz, MacKenzie and Belch (1983) Shavitt and Brock found that product related thoughts were 'more predictive of persuasion than execution thoughts' (1986 159), but they also found that self thoughts were even more predictive of intention to purchase The above studies are exceptions in that most researchers have not considered self concept and how this effects interpretation of ads The tendency of advertising researchers is to concentrate on component areas such as psycholinguistics, verbal effect or visual effect with little overview of what actual meaning an entire ad may



have for an audience, in scientific terms it cannot be forgotten that it is the entire ad which is on offer to viewers

## **1.2 Involvement**

Involvement has become a very popular construct in the literature in explaining the importance of a product to an individual. There is a need to look at involvement in relation to product meaning because it is thought that the degree of arousal and motivation that a person experiences with a product (Mitchell 1980) determines the relevance of that product for the individual (Krugman 1965). Involvement as a concept has been explained from several different perspectives. One such perspective centres around the direction (high or low) of involvement (Greenwald and Leavitt 1984). It has been argued that involvement is not a dichotomous concept where one experiences either high or low involvement, the concept should be considered as a continuum where one can experience different degrees of involvement (Laurent and Kapferer 1985). However, strategy guidelines on the implications of involvement for consumer behaviour and advertising are suggested only for high or low involvement. Product meaning will differ depending on the direction of involvement. If a person experiences high involvement with a product it means that the product is important to their central values (Rokeach 1975) or to their ego (Newman and Dolich 1979), and that involvement tends to be enduring (Bloch 1981) and that there is also deliberate conscious evaluation of ads (Krugman 1965). If involvement is low, however, the product is unimportant to central values and there is little ego and enduring involvement and no conscious evaluation of information. A second perspective relevant to product meaning is whether involvement is predominantly cognitive or affective. This issue is examined later in relation

to attitude to the ad and the brand Rossiter and Percy (1987) claim that certain types of products will cause either positive or negative motivations towards the product, this has also been described as approach/avoidance (Wells 1986)

Where negative motivations exist the product should be promoted on a cognitive basis with emphasis on brand attributes, and when positive motivations exist the advertiser should consider the transformational approach in promotion where affect is described in terms of the ads ability to transform an experience onto a product so that it can be perceived by the individual A third perspective particularly relevant to the meaning of ads is the type of processing Processing under high/low involvement is described as, conscious/sub-conscious (Krugman 1965) where there is deliberate evaluation of the brand and its attributes, or a letting down of perceptual defense where information enters consciousness without deliberate evaluation, controlled/automatic (Olson 1978) deliberate awareness of encoding of information, or unawareness of encoding of information which occurs with arousal of the autonomic nervous system, deep/shallow (Crain and Lockhart 1972) where the individual is concerned with semantic evaluation of product in relation to existing values, or where there is only a sensory level of processing, and central/peripheral, where attention is given to the brand and the main attributes promoted or where attention is given to peripheral cues in the ad such as music, models or visuals

There are a number of problems that need to be addressed if involvement is to have practical relevance to consumer behaviour and advertising. One such problem is what to measure Early measurement problems related to the many different definitions that emerged, with each researcher measuring aspects of involvement such as ego and enduring involvement A mini conference was

held in June 1982 by the association of consumer research in New York to resolve some of the difficulties that were emerging in relation to establishing a definition which would highlight the area of study. A generic definition emerge "Involvement is a state of motivation, arousal or interest. This state exists in a process. It is driven by current external variables (the situation, the product, the communications) and past internal variables (enduring, ego, central values). Its consequents are types of searching, processing and decision making" (Rothschild 1984: 217).

The definition is an amalgamation of the key contributions to the study of involvement and problems of measurement are not resolved by the above definition in that no one researcher could produce empirical results for all areas. One way to resolve the present problem is to have a co-ordinated programme of research to investigate the above definition, instead of having different researchers taking different aspects with no integration of the different aspects of involvement. This problem of measurement was highlighted in a study conducted by Lawlor (1987). Findings of this study indicated that Kassarian's (1980) three personality types of high involveds, low involveds detached and low involveds know nothings existed in categorising product involvement. But in the same study these three personality types could not be differentiated by the manner in which they processed ads. This raises a major question: Is the processing of ads dependent on consumer involvement? If it is not, what are the implications for advertising strategy and consumer behaviour? What good is it to an advertiser to know that different people in his/her market segment experience different levels of involvement, but when they go to reach these people through advertising there may be no difference in the way they process ads. Given the

present state of research it cannot be said that high cognitive or affective involvement with a product means that an ad will be processed in a high cognitive or affective manner, involvement cannot explain the meaning of the ad for the individual in relation to their past experiences with a product

### **1.3. Attitude to the Ad and Brand**

The meaning a person gives to a product and the relevance of the product to the individual will effect the way they interpret ads. Many factors will affect the meaning or interpretation of the ad. Factors which affect responses to ads include ad content, programme content, product interest, situation distraction, clutter and repetition (Lutz, MacKenzie and Belch 1983). While these are important factors and will affect the individual's interpretation of an ad it is impossible to consider each one in respect to its effect on meaning. Meaning in this study is examined in relation to the ad as a whole and not a component of the ad such as verbal content, although in examining meaning it is expected that people will focus on a particular aspect of the ad depending on their level of involvement (Batra and Ray 1983: 309). The difference with this study is that focus of attention is given to what the individual finds meaningful. Meaning and responses to ads have traditionally been studied from an information perspective which stems from cognitive psychology. The major contribution to advertising in this area stems from Wright (1974) who measured cognitive meaning in terms of the level of counter arguing, support arguing, source derogation and curiosity. It was not until the 1980s that researchers began to investigate an alternative response which has come to be known as affective responses.

### **1.3.1. Relations Between Affect and Cognitions.**

The starting point of any study should be some level of agreement about the terminology especially operational definitions being used, otherwise different people will be measuring different aspects of a similar area with little empirical validity. While there is general agreement that cognition is concerned with both representation and process there is little agreement as to what constitutes affect. Simon (1982) distinguishes several aspects of affect and as a result differentiates between affect, emotion and mood. In his definition he describes "affect as a generic term, emotion to refer to affect that interrupts and redirects attention (usually accompanying arousal), mood to refer to affect that provides context for ongoing thought process without noticeably interrupting them and valuation to refer to association of cognitive labels attributing positive or negative valence to objects or events" (335/6). Other researchers refer to affect in terms of emotion (Zajonc 1980), (Bower 1981) and mood (Clark 1982) which leads to a certain amount of confusion as to whether affect is emotion plus mood or just emotion or mood. Advertising researchers generally consider affective response to be emotion and mood (Batra and Ray 1986, Holbrook and Batra 1987). However in measuring affective responses in advertising these same researchers ignore the psychological dimensions of arousal, interruption, association and valence. Affective response studies in advertising concentrate on emotion as a mediating device in advertising and attitude to the ad, conceptual studies on emotion and mood, and the construction of affective typologies that mediate on brand attitude and attitude to the ad.

Izard (1982) identifies three components of emotion: neurophysiological, motor expressive and subjective experiential, phenomenological, or conscious

process (231) This study is concerned with the third component Leventhal defines this third component as meaning, i.e., each emotion is a form of meaning Izard argues that to take this stance one is viewing emotion from a constructivist perspective, what he calls "the cognitive quality of consciousness" (231) The alternative perspective is to view emotion as a form of feeling (emotion-feeling) as a distinct state or process in consciousness The feeling component of emotion, e.g., joy remains the same over a person's lifetime What changes are the networks of images, memories and anticipations, what Izard calls affective cognitive structures, these structures are similar to the cognitive constructivist's views The difference between both viewpoints is that the feeling aspect of emotion is ignored by the cognitivists who do not consider emotion-feeling at any level of consciousness, the two viewpoints attempt to tease out the relationships between cognition and affect, and in particular whether affect is dependent or independent of cognition

Zajonc (1982) argues that affect is independent of cognition but also points out that affect can be dependent on cognition under some circumstances It is suggested that affect is dependent on cognition if one subscribes to the cognitive emotion theory, and independent if one agrees with the somatic theories of emotion (212) Zajonc believes that the cognitive emotion theories are concerned with experience and the somatic theories with expression Izard argues that between emotion-feeling the experiential or subjective component of emotion and cognition is the important factor He supports this view by stating that there are different ranges of conscious levels of emotion-feeling At the lowest level of awareness we are barely able to articulate the feeling and at the highest level of awareness the feeling dominates

consciousness and we are able to verbalize and express or suppress the feeling (237) If this view is accepted then it is apparent that as one moves from lower to higher levels of awareness more cognitive activity is involved This means that different methods would be required to measure emotion At the lower levels, e g , Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth's (1972) facial response methods may be appropriate while at the higher level one must be concerned with the cognitive emotion interaction and perhaps thought verbalization methods

Psychological theory of emotion emphasizes definition and establishment of relationship between cognitions and affect Advertising researches have only recently addressed the issue of affective processing in ads (Ray 1980) and have been concerned with developing typologies of emotion or affective responses (Batra and Ray 1986) and with the effect of affect on attitude to the ad (Mac Kenzie Lutz and Belch 1986, Moore and Hutchinson 1983) and with emotion and information processing Emotion on the other hand is not new to advertising, traditionally advertising appeals have been classified as either rational or emotional Emotion, however, is sometimes called persuasion and different appeals such as fear and humour are differentiated from emotional campaigns (Douglas 1984) Emotional campaigns would include fear, humour, persuasion, and generally Aah type ads, i e ads which elicit this surprise reaction Emotional studies must consider levels of arousal, intensity and valence Fear appeals in advertising are the only appeals that have been studied in relation to arousal (Janis and Feshbach 1953 ), (Strenthal and Craig 1973) Findings from these studies have been inconsistent with Janis and Feshbach suggesting that high levels of fear will effect persuasion and Strenthal and Craig suggesting that low levels of fear effect persuasion Studies of emotion and affect must consider the psychological theories and relations between

different components in order to correctly develop a measure of effectiveness of emotion in advertising

Different typologies and classifications have been developed in order to explain and measure affect in advertising. Typologies from psychology tend to involve fundamental listings of emotions while typologies in consumer and advertising research tend to be derived. Such fundamental typologies often overlap as may be seen from the following. Izard (1977) deals with interest, joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, contempt, fear, shame/shyness, guilt, Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth (1972) talks of happiness, surprise, sadness, fear, anger, disgust, while Plutchik gives acceptance, disgust, fear, anger, joy, sadness, surprise, expectancy. While these are used as the basis for building advertisements' affective responses, broader categories of derived affective response such as positive and negative affect have been sought to show the mediating role of affect on attitude to the ad (Batra and Ray 1985). The use of a fundamental list would involve hundreds of different emotions and so researchers categorize emotions into derived responses (Holbrook and Batra 1986).

It was Wright (1974) who first proposed the use of derived responses claiming that the acceptance of a advertising message was determined by the cognitive responses generated by the recipient. Respondents were asked to express the thoughts they experienced while watching the ad. The responses were coded according to the kind of thought expressed by the respondent. Wright coded thoughts to the ad into categories whereby the recipient experienced support arguments, counter arguments or source derogations to the ad. Affective responses were sought to counterbalance Wright's cognitive responses. Batra



and Ray (1986) proposed a typology of affective responses derived from emotions and mood evoked by the ad. They suggested three positive affect categories. One is a lively positive feeling, two is a pleasant or relaxed feeling and three is a warm social interaction feeling.

Holbrook and Batra (1987), and Stout and Leckenby (1986) stressed the need to establish a multidimensional typology of emotional responses to capture the individual's capacity to respond simultaneously on multiple levels. Both of these studies propose two completely different systems for feeling responses to ads. They support each other in that both claim that people experience multiple emotions with varying degrees of intensity.

An alternative approach to the classification of emotion is to focus on the stimulus, the ad, as opposed to the individual. Researchers using this approach were concerned with the inclusion of an emotion measure in determining reactions to ads. One such classification of emotions put forward by Rossiter and Percy (1987) and Puto and Wells (1984) involves the differentiation of ads according to information and transformation characteristics. A transformation ad is affect based and defined as an ad "which associates the experience of using (consuming) the advertised brand with a unique set of psychological characteristics which would not typically be associated with the brand experience to the same degree without exposure to the advertisement" (638). Other studies such as Zeitlin and Westwood (1986) have used a broader range of emotions such as Plutchik's (1980) emotional items to develop a battery of emotions. Olney, Holbrook and Batra (1991) use Mehrabian's and Russell's pleasure, arousal, dominance paradigm in developing a consumer reaction profile to ads. There is agreement in the literature that affect and

cognition should be considered as separate measure but there are diverse approaches to the measurement emotion

### **1.3.2. Mediating influence of Attitude to the Ad on Brand Attitude**

Studies of attitude to the ad are concerned with the mediating role of attitude to the ad on attitude to the brand. The concept of attitude to the ad emerged because it was felt that people may be more involved affectively rather than cognitively in the ad. Cognitive involvement means that people evaluate product attributes and form a brand attitude while affective involvement means that people like something in an ad and thus form an attitude to the ad which may later effect brand attitudes. MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch (1986: 141) highlight two important issues that effect the concept and relevance of attitude to the ad to brand attitude: the first, structural issues which identify antecedents of attitude to the ad, and the second, process issues that is, the effect of attitude to the ad on brand attitude purchase intention.

The question that arises in determining the mediating process of attitude to the ad is similar to the issue addressed earlier of relations between affect and cognition: does attitude to the ad automatically effect brand attitude or is there conscious association of the cognitive-emotional aspects of the ad with the brand? The issue of the mediating process of attitude to the ad was first described by Krugman as active and passive processing, the former is conscious awareness and evaluation of information and the latter occurs where perceptual defenses are let down and there is subconscious processing of information. This led Ray (1973) to investigate the main involvement issue, that is, whether attitudes precede or follow behaviour. From his experiments Ray devised the three orders hierarchy. The first hierarchy is the learning

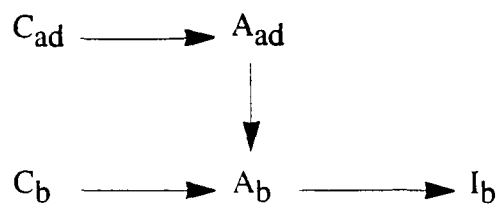
hierarchy where attitude precedes behaviour. This takes the traditional approach to the study of attitude and behaviour, with a focus on the sequence of learning, evaluating information and then behaving, this is also called the CAB (cognitions lead to affect which determines behaviour) paradigm. It is thought that people behave in this way when they experience high involvement with an issue or product. The second hierarchy is dissonance attribution where behaviour makes one doubt one's original stance on an issue or product, this leads one to learn more to reaffirm or reject original stance. The third is low involvement hierarchy where one may perceive information and behave and as a result evaluate behaviour. In this case behaviour precedes attitude. This is the CBA (cognitions lead to behaviour which determines affect) paradigm. In assessing the role of affect in advertising researchers focus on whether affect mediates attitude to the ad and attitude to the brand. The emphasis continues to be hierarchical oriented. For example in a study of emotions in advertising Holbrook and Batra (1987) review ten alternatives of the cognitive, affect, behaviour paradigms. Nine of these paradigms follow the CAB paradigm although there are slight modifications, for example, attitude is divided into utilitarian and hedonic components which separately effect behaviour. The tenth paradigm is Krugman and Ray's low involvement process of CBA. No changes have been made to the low involvement paradigm, but there are eight changes to the high involvement or CAB paradigm such as separate cognitive systems (Zajonc 1980) and inclusion of cognitive response (Toy 1982). The question that remains unanswered is the mediating influences of brand behaviour on attitude. What are the low involvement effects for advertising and consumer behaviour? After ten years of research, the low involvement paradigm remains the same. The main issue that needs to be addressed by low involvement theorists is how

behaviour affects attitude and not how attitude affects behaviour. Later Holbrook devises an emotional counter part to the cognitive affect behaviour paradigm that is consciousness, emotion and value (C-E-V) paradigm. This is supposed to consider affect in terms of emotion and mood, experiential, and hedonic feeling and not simply as a positive or negative evaluation.

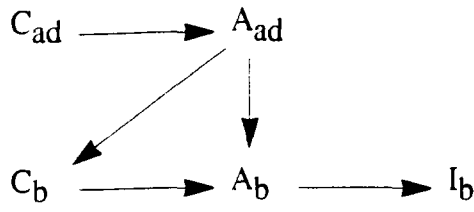
MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch (1986) summarize four mediating relationships of attitude to the ad on attitude to the brand, figure 1.1. The affect transfer hypotheses could also be called classical conditioning (Gresham and Shimp 1985: 11). The classical conditioning effect is the pairing of an unknown brand name, e.g., tissues (unconditioned stimulus) with an affectively valenced visual stimulus, e.g., kitten (conditioned stimulus) thus building an association, e.g., softness between the conditioned and the unconditioned stimulus (Mitchell and Olson 1981), their findings upheld this hypothesis. The dual mediating hypothesis is where in addition to the direct effect on brand attitude to the ad also affects brand cognitions which in turn effect brand attitude. MacKenzie, Lutz, and Belch (1986: 140) found this to be the superior hypothesis. The reciprocal mediation hypothesis stems from balance theory, the individual will seek balance by liking both the ad and the brand or disliking both. The independent influences hypothesis is where attitude to ad can independently affect purchase.

Moore and Hutchinson (1983) examine the relationship between attitude to the ad and attitude to the brand for immediate and delayed effects. Three relationships were examined: the linear, curvilinear and J relationship. The linear relationship suggests that liking of an ad will carry over to liking of

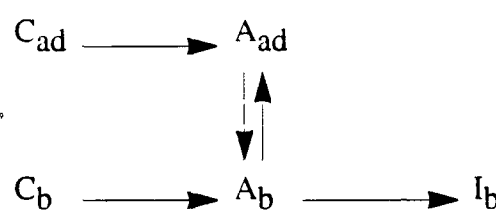
A Affect Transfer Hypotheses



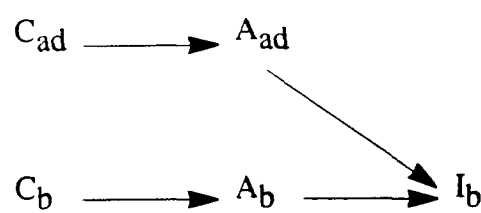
B Dual Mediation Hypotheses



C Reciprocal Mediation Hypothesis



D Independent influences



Key

- $C_{ad}$  represents ad cognitions.
- $C_b$  represents brand cognitions.
- $A_{ad}$  represents attitude toward the ad.
- $A_b$  represents attitude toward the brand.
- $I_b$  represents intention to purchase the brand.

Figure 1.1. Four Alternative Structural Specifications of the Mediating Role of Attitude Towards the Ad.

the brand. In the short term (up to two days) linear effects were found for positive ad evaluation, but after a period of seven days a J relationship emerged where the ad was originally negatively evaluated. The J relationships involves two different processes. In the first there is extreme affective reaction which may be positive or negative to the ad but effects do not transfer onto the brand. The second process is centred around brand familiarity. Affective reactions to the ad will improve brand familiarity and lead to processing of the ad but reaction to the ad will be disassociated from brand attitude, this means that initially attitude to the ad will have a strong effect on brand attitude but over time this weakens and becomes disassociated, but the increase in brand familiarity remains. Moore and Hutchinson also found evidence of a curvilinear or U relationship, where extreme affective reactions can facilitate or impair brand memory. There was no evidence of this in the short term but there was with a 7 day delay where respondents with either positive or negative attitudes to the ad showed greater recall of brand knowledge than neutral ads.

The problem at the moment appears to be one of identifying mediating factors. Lutz, MacKenzie and Belch (1983) concentrate on peripheral processing, Gardner Mitchell and Russo (1985) on brand sets and non brand sets, and Barta and Ray (1986), Holbrook and Ray (1987), and Moore and Hutchinson (1983), examine affective response which mediate on attitude to the ad. There is inconclusive evidence of the effect of affective response on brand attitude although they do appear to be antecedents of attitude to the ad in Batra and Ray (1986), and Holbrook and Ray (1987). Affective reactions have different immediate and delayed effects and there appears to be a linear relationship

immediately after exposure to an ad and a J or sleeper relationship with delayed response

Part of the reason that process findings vary is that different antecedent variables are used in determining attitude to the ad. For example Mac Kenzie, Lutz and Belch include ad execution, source bolstering/derogation, and repetition related cognitive responses as direct antecedents of an ad and measure attitude to the ad on two scales, favourable/unfavourable and interesting/boring (1986 141). Batra and Ray determine attitude to the ad as a result of verbal responses which are coded for dominance of surgency elation vigor and activation, deactivation and social affection (1986 244). Moore and Hutchinson measure attitude to the ad by asking respondents if they had a positive or negative emotional reaction to the ad, responses are measured on a 5 point scale (1983 527). The Hill and Mazis measurement of attitude to the ad included two procedures, one was coding of responses from thought verbalization into positive affect where the ad makes the person feel good, and negative affect where the ad makes the person feel angry. Positive and negative affect represent emotional responses to the ad. In the second procedure respondents were asked to rate four bipolar adjective scales good/bad, like/dislike, irritating/not irritating, interesting/uninteresting (1986 165). Gardner (1985) stresses the need to focus on the type of brand strategy used, believing that brand strategy should produce more elaboration and cognitive activity than a non brand strategy. While these factors mainly concentrate on affective emotional components other factors will also effect attitude to the ad such as whether one is measuring attitude to the ad for print or television advertising and whether one experiences high or low

involvement with the product advertised (Shimp 1981), or whether one is concerned with verbal and/or nonverbal effects

It is obviously important for advertisers and manufactures to establish the exact relationship between attitude to the ad and the brand if for no other reason than to establish that advertising does effect brand attitudes. The question that has been raised relates to the format of this relationship. One of the more puzzling issues is the recognition of low involvement theory in consumer behaviour and advertising and yet all research attempts to determine the relationship of attitude to the ad on brand attitude, that is from a high involvement perspective. While some consider the reciprocal effect none start with the premise that attitude follows behaviour or how brand attitude effects ad attitude. Krugman (1965) suggested that under low involvement, brand attitudes would not be formed during exposure to an ad (but only later when a purchase decision was made). Gresham and Shimp could not detect strong classical conditioning effects "because for mature brands with which consumers have considerable experience, the more likely flow of influence is from Ab to Aad and not the hypothesis reverse of this" (1985: 16). This is an important point, especially when one considers that the main objective of advertising is maintenance of existing customers, and not the encouragement of brand switching or attraction of new users these, of course, may be secondary objectives. Advertising budget expenditures are mainly for mature brands. It is not suggested that new brands should be ignored, but that mature brands and in particular brand attitude and its effect on ad attitude should be given more attention in research. Attitude to the ad measures must be considered alongside methods which show how people interpret ads to gain clearer insight into what happens when people view ads.



The difficulties with both processing and structural variables lead one to question the usefulness of attitude to the ad. Some of the studies mentioned simply tell us how an audience evaluates one aspect of an ad, for example, Park and Young manipulated groups with respect to cognition and affective and high and low involvement. Results matched this manipulation with cognitive groups recalling attributes and affective groups images. This is hardly surprising when the cognitive groups were prompted to concentrate on attributes and affective groups on images when they were processing the ad (1986: 15/17). It is suggested that these types of studies do not tell us about emotion or what in the ad is important to the individual, they simply tell us about components of the ad that the researcher manipulated. The experiences a person brings to an ad and how an individual relates to the experiences shown in an ad will determine the meaning of the ad to the person. This may show the real effectiveness of an ad. However advertising researchers and practitioners appear to like or believe that a number measurement such as attitude scores show real meaning and effectiveness but from the arguments presented above we still do not know what effects attitude to ad and how it in turn effects brand attitude.

#### **1.4. Cognitive Structure and Cognitive Response.**

Attitude to the ad is an evaluative measure of overall response to either cognitive or affective elements of an ad. To examine a person's attitude in depth consideration must be given to the way people process information and how this effects cognitive structures and cognitive responses. People interpret events in different ways according to their own experience, this interpretation or perception cannot be rigidly compartmentalized into

categories such as attitude or perception or cognition or emotions. Research must attempt to examine these variables alongside each other instead of conducting separate studies to determine the effects of one variable. What needs to be examined is the issue of perception of information, bearing in mind that information processing and its impinging effects on cognitive structures and cognitive response is concerned with both thoughts and feelings.

#### **1.4.1. Representation of Information**

Ads have meaning regardless of the product advertised and this meaning may reflect a positive or negative attitude onto the product. A person brings to a situation all their past experience. An individual's taste, likes and dislikes are not simply a matter of what is, because these factors also influence how this new information is integrated into an existing cognitive structure. Interpretation of a perceptual event such as an ad matches an event stored in memory with incoming information. Norman refers to these past memory units as schemas. "The problem faced by the perceptual processes is to determine which previously acquired schemas match the present occurrences" (1978: 124). Perception of ads from past representation or schemas may be more complicated than normal events because the objective is to create a new representation of the past event with a product. For example, if one uses a well-known song or film star in an ad, this music or star will have been perceived according to their role in films etc. If this music or individual is then used in an ad, will the new representation be a transference of this previous image on to the product that is a new representation, or a reminder of the old representation with no transference or association with the product?

Information is represented in memory by two processes, assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation occurs when incoming information is congruous with existing schemas and accommodation is where information is perceived as being incongruent with existing schemas, these schemas are then either altered or new schemas are created. "Positive valuation of the familiar is based on congruity and assimilability, while incongruity may be either positive or negative" (Mandler 1982: 3). In Mandler's description of preferences or likings as evaluative cognitions, he does not agree that affect and cognitions are two independent systems, emotional experience depends, instead, on the interaction of physiological arousal and cognitive evaluation. Mandler presents a structural analysis of schema congruity and incongruity in terms of both values and affective intensity. Processing of advertisements can also be considered in terms of whether information is congruous or incongruous with existing schemas.

According to Mandler there are five ways to assimilate and accommodate information. Examples of ads used in this study are hypothetically given to suggest how people assimilate and accommodate ads. In the first case, figure 1.2, going from left to right there is no affective arousal. Incoming information, more or less, matches existing information and is accepted or evaluated positively. Emotion or affect in the figure 1.2, depends on the arousal of the autonomic nervous system. This arousal occurs when information interrupts

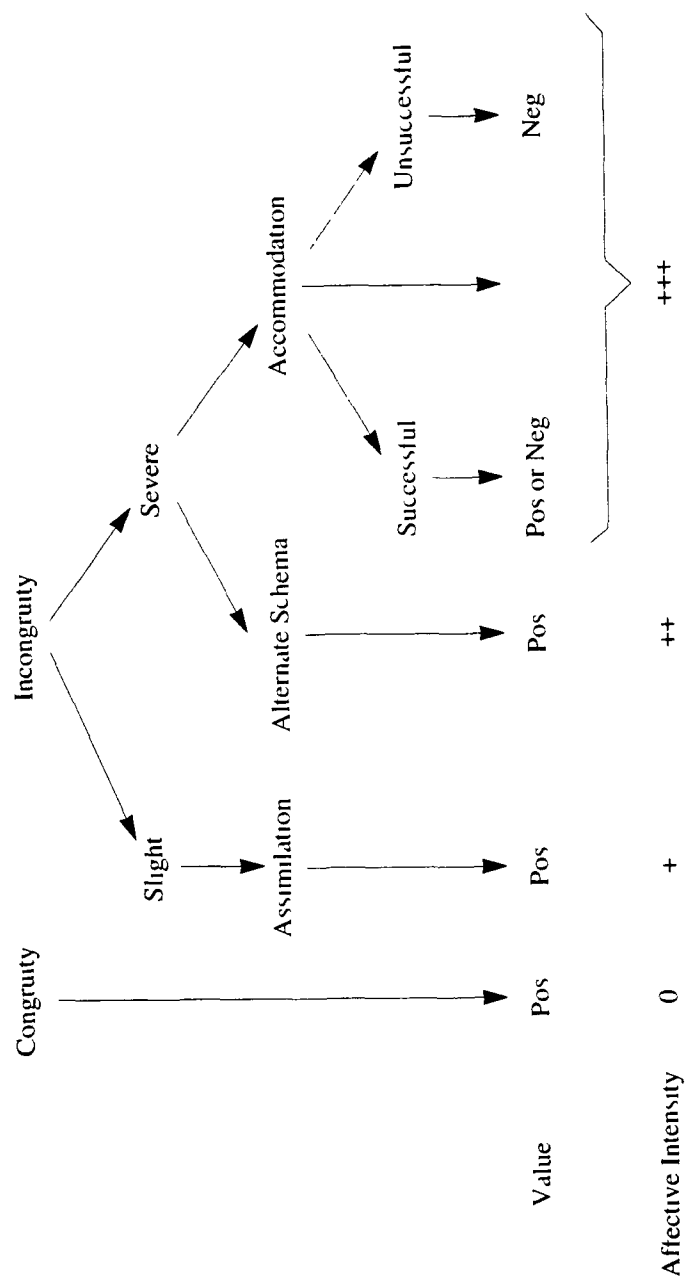


Figure 1 2 Schema Congruity and Incongruity

Several possible outcomes of schema congruity and incongruity in terms of both values and affective intensity. The resultant value is shown as either positive (Pos) or negative (Neg). Degree of affective intensity is shown to vary from zero to +++.

processing which in turn will be determined by the level of incongruity of information. For example, if the Birds Eye ad (Appendix 9) uses western music to convey image of cowboys and the audience likes the idea and realizes that western music symbolizes cows and beef then the ad fits existing knowledge and is accepted.

In the second case, figure 1.2, there is slight incongruity and assimilation results in a low level of arousal and a low degree of affective intensity. In the Peugeot 405 ad the music is used to symbolize the plane in the film Top Gun. The ad uses a car with the same music. The car may create slight incongruity in that previous associates were related to a plane but if the viewer is sufficiently aroused they may assimilate the symbolic substitution.

In the third case, figure 1.2, incongruity occurs but instead of a change in schema an alternative schema is found that fits the information being perceived. The song in the Peugeot ad 'Take My Breath Away' featured in the film Top Gun. The original schema associated with the song may relate to love, romance and excitement. If the ad associates a destructive fire with music, there may be incongruity between the music and the existing schema. The ad may never be associated with the original schema. Even though the music is liked an individual may not be able to fit evaluation of the ad and product into a schema instead the evaluation may evoke an alternative schema.

In the fourth case, figure 1.2, incoming information changes the structure of existing schemas. This change in schema may be positive or negative. If an existing product schema is perceived as old fashioned and out of date and an ad

portrays a modern and efficient brand, a viewer may be impressed with the ad and change their existing product schema

In the fifth case, figure 12, the schema cannot find an appropriate response. The system cannot adapt incoming information and this will cause anxiety. For example, if an individual perceives an ad for a bank which suggests that money can be borrowed easily, if the individual has never experienced ease of borrowing they may not be able to match the information perceived with any pre-existing schema related to banks. If they then perceive that some people are treated with helpfulness as portrayed in the ad and they are not, this may produce anxiety or annoyance.

The theory on schema congruity and incongruity is important in advertising where meaning for brands is established from signs and symbols which have already been assimilated and accommodated. Consideration must be given to the trigger of previous schema and the corresponding influence of acceptance or rejection of the proposition in the ad. Schema congruity may have a greater influence on the mediating relationship of attitude to the ad and its effect on attitude to the brand than an emotional or cognitive reaction. This point has received little attention in the literature with brief mention from Gresham and Shimp (1985).

Advertising researchers have concentrated on how individuals elaborate on the content of ads in examining how incoming information is processed in relation to existing knowledge and attitudes. Cognitive structure is concerned with identifying the difference in attitude resulting from exposure to a communication and determining the change that results in attitude after the

communication (Toy 1982 66) Cognitive response models focus on the thoughts people have while listening to an ad This approach maintains that individuals are active participants in the persuasion process, and as such continually relate communication to their own experiences thus accounting for individual differences in response to persuasion

Rehearsal and elaboration of thoughts are essential components of cognitive response Cacioppo and Petty propose the elaboration likelihood model of thought rehearsal (1983) Elaboration is seen as a continuous dimension, low elaboration is explained in terms of peripheral processing and high elaboration in terms of central processing Central processing is concerned with issue related thoughts and peripheral processing is where an individual makes inferences based on liking or disliking of cues peripheral to the main issue "The critical difference is the manner in which an individual relates this incoming information to his or her prior knowledge" (674) Central processing can cause enduring attitude change and focuses directly on previous brand information while peripheral processing is thought to be more relevant for attitude to the ad The type of processing, central or peripheral will effect storage of information in memory and retrieval of information

How information is represented in memory has implications for the affect of existing brand attitudes and the acceptance or rejection of what is taken from an ad It is not enough to know what people elaborated upon in the ad This information must be considered for affective intensity and degree of congruency An advertiser needs to know if the affects on brand attitude are greater where there is complete congruity between information in the ad and

an existing schema. Alternatively, information from the ad that is incongruent and has been successfully accommodated to match an existing schema may be more effective.

This chapter has examined the key issues currently researched in advertising that affect the meaning taken from ads. It is clear that the main emphases of existing research is to show the effect of ad exposure on attitude formation and change for a given brand. People bring to situations all their past experiences and it is on the basis of these experiences that they evaluate and interpret meaning.



## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

### **2. Introduction**

The literature on meaning in and of ads tends to confine itself to semiotic theory. There are some excellent semiological reviews of advertising (Williamson 1978), (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1987), but they do not tell us how the general public reads ads. Saussure's (1916) semiotic model of sign, signifier and signified is generally used as the base for analysis of meaning in ads. Semiotic theories of meaning in advertising are regarded as a study of meaning from the semiotician's point of view and not of how the general public reads ads. There is a need to combine the semiological approach with a more general review of how people read ads. Croghan's Real Theory of Meaning (1986) provides guidance for this type of approach, his theory outlines three levels of meaning: the intention of the communicator, the text and the interpretation. The reader can apply themselves to all three levels or some combination of the three levels, and can manipulate the model to suit their own political interests. This chapter is structured around Croghan's Real theory of Meaning and reviews meaning in terms of semiotics and reading of themes in ads.

#### **2.1. Theories of Meaning**

Theories of meaning are derived from philosophy and linguistics. Both disciplines attempt to say what meaning is. Pavio (1971) outlines three early approaches to the psychology of meaning. These are implicit reaction theories, functional behaviour theories, and meaning as a behaviour disposition. The implicit reaction theories equate meaning with the image a word evokes. The difficulty with this theory is that not all words are capable

of producing images, concrete words, for example, may produce images more than abstract words. Also people differ in their ability to produce images, and some people are unable to report mental images. A second version of implicit theories was put forward by Watson who "substituted implicit muscular and especially vocal or gestural responses, for images" (Pavio 43). Contrasted with this nonverbal approach is the associative theories that study implicit word associations. The functional behaviour and behavioural disposition theories are concerned with examining response. The former theories stem from Skinner who was concerned with the relations between the responses and the stimulus, the functional relationship is confined to a response in a specific context. Behavioural disposition theories are concerned with linguistic form and recall of referent systems. More sophisticated theories are derived from the discipline of semiotics.

Semiology is the study of any system of signs, the sign can be verbal or nonverbal. "Semiotic studies all cultural processes as processes of communication" (Eco 1979: 8). Cleaveland describes a semiotic analysis as "an unfolding of the meaning of a set of words" (1986: 228). The words derive their meaning from three separate sources: 1) the semantic analysis, this is the translation by the audience of words into ideas, 2) the syntactic analysis, which is interpretation of words by their structure sequence in a sentence, 3) the pragmatic analysis, this is the audience's interpretation of the context of the words. The interest in this study lies in interpretation and not with analysis of semantics and syntax. Semiology and its application to advertising lies in the theories put forward by the two pioneers in the field, Saussure (1916) and Peirce (1931).

### 2.1.1. Sign

Peirce's (1931) and Saussure's (1916) theories are built around the concept of sign. Each proposes how a sign represents and refers to the thing it stands for. Saussure's definition of sign is composed of two elements, the signifier which is the material object and the signified is a mental concept or reference. The relation between signifier and signified is signification. It is the process of signification between both sign and signified that enables the interpreter to assign meaning. "Signification is more or less codified, and ultimately we are left with open systems which scarcely merit the designation 'code' but are merely systems of hermeneutic interpretation" (Guiraud 1975: 25). In advertising the role of signification is transference of meaning usually from the denotative to the connotative. For example, in the ad for Milk Tray chocolates, the explicit and denotative meaning is that ladies love Milk Tray. But the implicit meaning is that the man is prepared to risk life and limb to show the woman how much he loves her. The signifier is the chocolates, the signified is love, and signification between the two is that women value gifts that express love.

So the sign is not simply the separate components of signifier and signified but the relation or signification of both. Signs only have meaning if what they signify is of value to a target audience. The full meaning of a word includes the value of the word in a given cultural system. The question raised by Aarsleff is the relationship between the physical and mental. "We have a single event with two faces: one mental, the other, physical, one accessible to the understanding, the other to the senses" (Aarsleff 1982: 358). The sign signifies its referent, but does not represent it. The sign stands for but possesses significant qualities other than those of the referent (Tyler 1978).

164) The advertiser needs to know how the sign is read by a target audience, and also needs to determine what referents are used in attributing meaning

Several models have been proposed which outline the relationship between sign, referent and interpretant (Peirce 1931) and Ogden and Richards (1983)

The Ogden and Richards model is referred to as the triangle of signification (Figure 2 1) and is based on the concept of symbolism as opposed to sign

"Symbolism is the study of the part played in human affairs by language and symbols of all kinds and especially their influence on thought" (9) Eco (1976) criticises the Ogden and Richards (1983) model because it's essential meaning differs from Peirce's

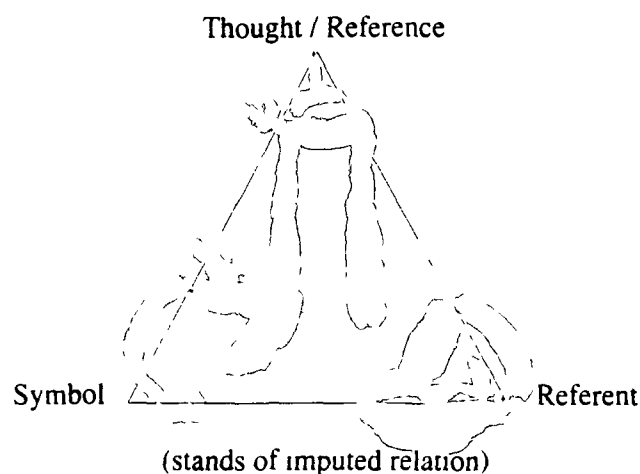


Figure 2 1 Triangle of Signification

The difference between the Ogden and Richards model and Peirce (1931) and Saussure (1916) theories is that Ogden and Richards (1983) do not consider the code concept involved in the object. For Saussure the object is a sign not a physical object and the meaning of the object is in reading the codes of signifier and signified, these two elements are the content of the message and not the referent as implied in the Ogden and Richards model

Thus, even when the referent could be the object named or designated by the expression when language is used in order to maintain something, one must nonetheless maintain that an expression does not, in principle, designate any object, but on the contrary conveys a cultural content (Eco 1976)

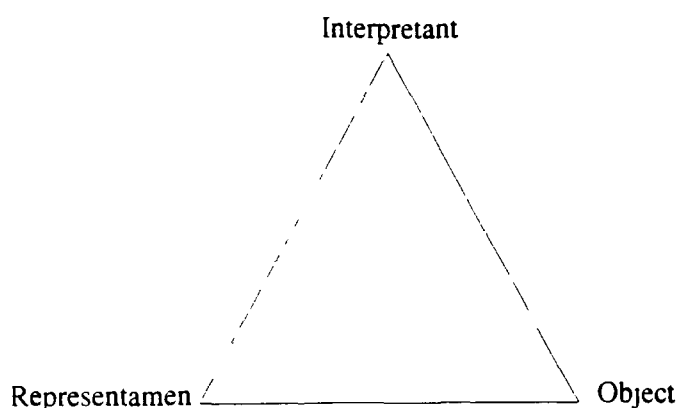


Figure 2 2 Sign Triangle

There has been limited application of these theories of meaning to advertising as in Williamson (1978), Leymore (1975), Dyer (1982), Mick (1986) and Zakia (1987) Zakia describes ads as signs and his paradigm is similar to Peirce's (1931)

The object in Figure 2 3 is the product advertised, representamen is the ad and interpretant is consumer interpretation Zakia describes the function of the ad as one of mediation between the product to be sold and the consumer and suggests three relationships that constitute the sign The first relationship is between object and representamen which should show how the ad represents

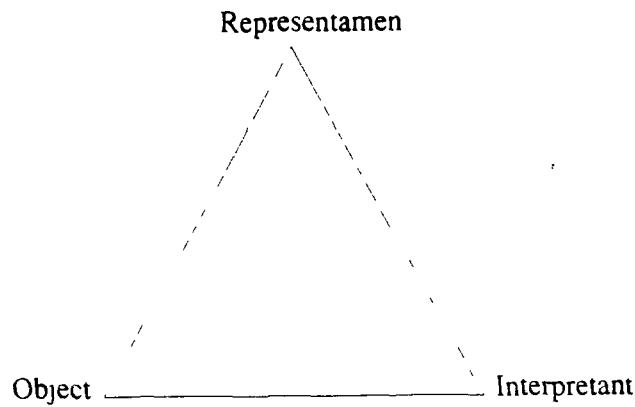


Figure 2 3 Paradigm showing how signs function

the product. The second is, representamen/ interpretant which shows how the ad communicates, and the third is object/interpretant which examines the significance of communication, that is whether or not the product is sold.

Zakia takes an easy approach to describing the paradigm by only analyzing one relationship and that is object/representament. This is also the approach taken by Williamson (1978). While the analysis of ads, particularly Williamson's on a semiotic basis is very sophisticated and detailed it really only tells us what the ad means to the person describing it, i.e., Williamson and Zakia. The consumer in the street would be incapable of conducting or deriving such meaning. Even the advertiser and creative team would be surprised at the depth of analysis given by Williamson. Semiotic analysis of ads to date has been confined to the meaning of the ad and the product and not with the consumers' interpretation or reading of an ad. This has caused a number of difficulties.

Firstly, for the product/ad relationship, meaning will vary depending on whether a semiotician, an advertiser or a creative team e.g., copywriter,

visualizer etc reads the ad. What the semioticians see may not be what the advertiser or creative team intended. What advertisers see may be so focused on the product that they fail to make associations between elements of the ad and their effects on the product and consumer, e.g., music and visuals may distract attention from product attributes and create a different product image. The situation of the creative team sees is similar to the advertiser in that each is bound to their own area of specialism, the creative team may, for example, read more into techniques and creative subtleties. The question remains whose interpretation of the product/representation is correct, that of the semioticians, creative team or advertiser? It really depends on who wants to know. From a sociological viewpoint it may be the semiotician's, from an artistic, the creative, and from a company point of view the advertiser.

A second problem is that this particular product/ad relationship while receiving most attention does not tell us what an ad means. From a commercial and social perspective there is a need to know how consumers/viewers interpret or read or take meaning from ads. The Ogden and Richards (1983) triangle of signification model (Figure 2.1) suggests that consumers take meaning in three ways.

Firstly, the product is read as intended. This corresponds to the left hand side of the triangle and means that the message is read as intended. People, however, could be reading the advertisers' or creative persons' intention, and the intention of the advertiser and creative team may not always coincide. Secondly, consumers read ads from past experience, or more specifically arousal of thoughts trigger referent systems. The problem here for the advertiser is that a non-product referent system may be triggered. Also a

problem that is never addressed is that more than one sign may be read and this means that more referent systems will be used. Thirdly, consumers read ads according to product imagery or symbols in the ad. While this depends on the first two relationships, i.e., factors used to represent product and how these trigger past experience, advertising continually strives to develop a direct relationship between symbol and referent by using behavioural principles of association. Ads attempt to build an association between a conditioned and an unconditioned stimulus to cause a conditioned response. For example Coca Cola is symbolized by fun, after continuous advertising and use of other marketing tools such as packaging and sponsorship, Coca Cola is no longer perceived as a drink but as fun. Levi's are not just jeans but the sexiest pair of jeans. Chanel is not just perfume, it is sophistication.

A third problem with the Zakia (1987) and Ogden and Richards (1983) models is that of generality. The model applies as much to the sender as to the receiver of the message, there is no indication who is reading or interpreting. The model, for example, could be read from the advertisers point of view, when they are trying to encode meaning that will be significant for the reader. Or it could be read from the consumers point of view, when they are decoding or reading an ad.

## **2.2. Model of Meaning**

Croghan's (1986) Real Theory of meaning overcomes some of the problems mentioned by focusing on the social process of meaning rather than the structural relationship between items of text (1986:1). The model also moves away from the assumption of semiotics that people are capable of explicitly expressing meaning.



We obviously process meaning in our verbal and non-verbal communicative life but this competence does not mean that we can give this meaning second level explicit, it is also a leap in the dark, and thus also a category mistake, to assume that the second level expression of meaning, no matter what the channel used, bears any necessary relationship to the first level meaning (5)

Croghan's Real Model of Meaning (1986 11) is explained in terms of three levels and is given as,

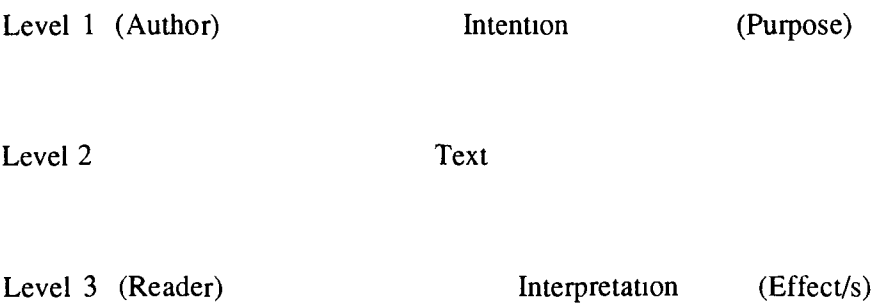


Figure 2 4 Real Model of Meaning

The first level identifies the initiator and intention of the communication The second level is the text which is not simply written material but also an expression of meaning which may be verbal or non verbal, text could be a human body, a conversation or written material The third level is interpretation or how the reader reads, either level 1 or 2, or both 1 and 2 In deriving meaning from a communication the reader may or may not refer to level 1 and 2 One of the examples given to explain the model refers to a rape judgement where the judge reduced the convicted man's sentence because he claimed the woman contributed to the crime because of the clothes she wore The judge in this case was concerned with levels 2 and 3 of the model Different associations protested about the judgement claiming that what the

woman wore was her own business, these groups were concerned with level 1 and 2 of the model

This model can be applied to advertising. The advertiser is inclined to assume that ads are created according to their intention as specified in an advertising brief, the agency or creative people then develop text and this is interpreted. It is hoped that the effects of the creative interpretation correlate positively with the intention of the advertiser, ads may be interpreted in the same way as the judge interpreted the rape crime. The reading of the ad is confined to levels 2 and 3 when people process or interpret some social aspect of the ad or text such as music. Other consumers may immediately recognize intention of advertiser from level one and produce an automatic defense which blocks further processing of the ad. The three levels in this model need to be described in more detail to show how meaning is ascribed and derived in advertising.

### **2.3. Intention**

The first level of meaning in the model is concerned with intention of the author. The author in advertising may be one or more of several people e.g. advertiser, art director, visualizer, photographer, copywriter. The issue relevant to assigning meaning on the basis of intention is whether or not intention makes meaning explicit in terms of the text use. The advertiser considers two sets of factors in deciding on expression of meaning in terms of intention. The first relates to how people derive meaning, the advertiser considers how people process meaning from ads. Secondly the advertiser must consider how to ascribe their own meaning into an ad, this includes analysis of

research and past experience to determine what is the most effective way to get a message across to an audience

### **2.3.1. Processing Meaning**

The advertiser needs to know how consumers react to ads and what they do with ads if they are to fulfil their intention. The advertisers' intention is usually stated in an advertising brief in the form of a statement of objectives. The theory of setting objectives in advertising is based on an analysis of theories which show how advertising works on consumers, these are usually referred to as hierarchy of effects models. Hierarchy of effects models integrate psychological concepts from learning, motivation and attitude theories. In a recent review of hierarchy of effects models, Barry (1987) delineates three phases of development of the models. The first period was from 1870-1929. The main model that emerged during this period was the AIDA (awareness, interest, desire and action) model developed and adapted by Strong (1925). The basic principle of this phase was that the ad should be exactly like a salesperson and should be a substitute of a sales presentation by creating awareness of a product, interest and desire for the product which hopefully leads to purchase. Although the objective and intention appears to be four separate areas, it is not, the intention of all models at this time were based on sales. Later theorists such as Colley (1962) and Kotler (1991) describe the AIDA model as a communication school model but this is an inadequate description. The communication school models are based on the idea that one campaign has the objective of creating awareness or interest or desire or action.

The psychological theory that these first phase hierarchy models are based on is Pavlov's (1927) stimulus response theory. Stimulus response theory in

advertising suggests that the consumer does not think about the ad and that it is possible to condition an audience to a stimulus via repetition, to cause a conditioned response. The audience ability to read an ad is discounted because it is possible for the advertiser to sell, manipulate or create the desired response by repeating the ad and maintaining high frequency levels.

The communication school models belong to the second phase 1929-1968. Typical models are the Dagmar model (defining advertising goals for measured advertising results) produced by Colley (1962), and the Effects model created by Lavidge and Steiner (1962). The principal behind the second phase was that consumers pass through a series of mental stages in processing an ad, from awareness through to comprehension, conviction, liking and action. The advertiser determines at which of these stages the consumer is at with respect to their product and designs a campaign to move consumers nearer to purchase. The main contribution to this phase came from Lavidge and Steiner when they introduced attitude theory as a means of explaining how people move from unawareness of a product to purchase. If the advertisers' intention is to improve awareness and comprehension then the cognitive component of an attitude must be changed so an informational campaign is used. If the intention or objective is to improve liking or conviction then the affective component of attitude must be changed and a persuasive campaign is used. If the objective is to influence purchase or the conative component of attitude sales promotion devices may be used (Palda 1966). Barry (1987) refers to the third phase as challenges to traditional models. However the three periods could be renamed to coincide with consumer behaviour and advertising theory. The first period could be called the sales school. The second the high involvement phase because it is based on the notion that attitude precedes

behaviour and that people consciously evaluate ads. The third phase could be called the low involvement phase where it is thought that behaviour precedes attitude and that people process ads passively.

The second phase hierarchy models subscribe to attitudinal theory, which suggests that consumers consciously and deliberately evaluate attributes and information before making a decision. People learn from information, form their attitudes and behave accordingly. This is the traditional view of rational man. Unfortunately there is little evidence that advertising works in this way (Driver and Foxall 1986). Much of the theory on attitudes is based on Fishbein's work, yet even Fishbein questions the premise that attitude causes behaviour and suggests instead that after 70 to 75 years of attitude research it appears that people align their attitude to behaviour rather than behave as a direct result of attitude (1981).

The third phase is from 1969 - to the present. The main principle of this phase was first put forward by Krugman (1965) which describes the consumer as a passive processor of information. The main model of this phase is Ray's (1973) low involvement hierarchy where people learn, behave and then form an attitude. Ehrenberg's (1974) model is also a low involving model, it is a three stage process of awareness, trial and reinforcement or repeat buying. Advertising is said to work via Skinner's (1938) theory of operant conditioning. Operant conditioning is different from classical conditioning in that it considers the effect of the environment on the individual. If the consumer is not reinforced or does not like the product once they have tried it, they will not purchase again. These three phases show how the advertiser

would assign different meanings to ads depending on the theory they subscribe to

### **2.3.2. Creative appeals**

Once the advertising objectives have been set advertisers have to determine how to transfer their intention to the consumer. Everything in an ad may have meaning but not all meaning has an intention. Colour may have meaning but from the advertisers' point of view there may not be a specific intention behind choice of colour. Intention will be represented by choice of creative mix "which is composed of those advertising elements the company controls to achieve its advertising objectives" (Bovee and Arens 1989: 233).

The creative mix is a combination of target audience, product concept, communications media and the advertising message. While each of these four areas are considered in deciding on how to achieve objectives, the advertising message is the main concern of this study and in particular how people read this message.

Creative strategy is fundamentally concerned with message strategy which in turn focuses on content and layout. Many theorists such as Frazer (1983), Aaker and Norris (1982), Vaughn (1980), Rossiter and Percy (1987) have been concerned with developing message content typologies. These typologies consider how an individual processes message content as opposed to the effects of a particular layout on information processing. Layout of ads have not really been studied in terms of effects on consumers, but rather from a stylistic viewpoint to show changes in artistic areas that have taken place over time. Research studies of layout and design such as Leiss, Kline, JHally (1986), Feasely and Stuart (1987) are generally based on content analysis. More

empirical research is required that combines the effects of style of content with message content to show how both affect the way in which people process information

Typologies of creative strategies only provide very general guidelines in considering effects of creative strategies. Rossiter and Percy's brand attitude strategy model and Vaughn's (1986) FCB model have not been tested and no matter how plausible the models appear on a theoretical basis, they need to be empirically tested using different product categories and both cognitive and affective advertising appeals. These typologies are useful in that they outline how research should move from the general to the specific

The general in this case is the typologies and the specific the creative appeal and style. There appears to be general agreement among theorists that typologies are developed along two dimensions. The first is consumer involvement with a product category and the second is consumers' motivation in purchasing a product. It is the latter that determines creative typology of informational and transformational advertising as is shown in Rossiter and Percy (1987), Lasky, Day and Crask (1989) and Vaughn's (1986) thinking and feeling ads. If empirical research shows that these typologies are correct then the next issue that needs to be addressed is when and under what conditions is a specific appeal such as humour, fear, sex most effective for high and low involvement informational and transformational message strategies

The advertiser might think that creative people and researchers know which type of appeal is best for a given message. This is not the case. It is not known

whether hard sell appeals are more effective than soft sell, whether humour is more persuasive than fear or whether emotion outperforms information

Given potential differences in persuasive power of different messages for the same product, it is intriguing that there is little published research indicating the relative effectiveness of different types of appeals (Simon 1971: 29)

The intention behind choice of appeal is far from clear and frequently the decision is left to the whim or fashionable trends of the creative team. There may be a conflict of interest between the intentions of the creative team and those of the advertisers in developing advertising appeals. The creative team may be trying to build its own reputation and create original ads to win awards and the advertiser may be concerned with improving brand image or sales.

Creative people may also develop their own style to get the advertisers message across. This style will not vary from client to client, only content of message changes. There are many examples of this over the decades. In the fifties Reeves (1961) developed the idea of unique selling proposition. Two of the main style practitioners of the sixties were Ogilvy (1963) and Bernbach (Mayer 1958). Ogilvy was concerned with building brand personality, some would say that lifestyle or snob-style was developed by Ogilvy. Bernbach was concerned with the style of execution believing that how you said something was more important than what you said. Bernbach also believed that ads were an intrusion and the audience should be rewarded or entertained by such appeals as humour (Mayer 1958). The 1970s saw the development of positioning strategies by Ries and Trout (1981) the 1980s appear to be concerned with transformation and creative differentiation (Bernstein 1987). While the style of the individual creative team is important, particularly if it sets fashionable trends, type of appeal chosen is far more important. Creative styles come and



go but appeals or themes remain fundamentally the same and we must know if one appeal reflects the advertisers intention better than another

What is the intention behind choice of appeal? Humour is supposed to entertain and reward the viewer. Yet the advertiser does not know when the target market is most receptive to humour, or which brands benefit most from humour. There are no answers which are supported by empirical evidence on selection and use of appeals. A brief review of the literature on appeals gives an indication of the views of both practitioners and academics on the subject.

Two of the main studies on humour were conducted by Sternthal and Craig (1973) and Madden and Weinberger (1984). Sternthal and Craig review existing material on humour and propose a number of conclusions that may serve as guidelines for future research. Research on these did not take place until 1984 when Madden and Weinberger questioned researchers and creative teams on each of the conclusions that Sternthal and Craig put forward. What is known now is the opinions of research and creative people as to whether humour attracts attention or hinders comprehension, but these are opinions of experts and not of the general public who perceive the ad.

More research has been conducted on the use of fear appeals. Fear appeal can be classified into two categories, physical and social. Research on physical fear appeals (Ray and Wilkie 1970) and, (Stuterville 1970) has concentrated on the persuasive impact of the appeal. There is some evidence that fear ads are more effective if they show a coping response rather than emphasis on negative consequences. Physical fear is where the advertiser shows the danger involved if some behaviour were not adopted or discontinued e.g.

inoculation against rubella. Social fear appeals is where damage may result to the social image of the self rather than to the physical self (Spence and Moinpour 1972: 39). Social appeals have been concerned with the effect of fear on the self esteem of the individual. The issue here is whether people with high self esteem are persuaded by disapproval. Menasco (1982) investigated whether certain personality variables are included. Research finding did not support his hypothesis, but their results confirm findings of Mewborn and Roberts (1979) where "positive or negative outcomes of social or individual (physical) appeals operate primarily on mediational response and not directly upon preference or intention."

Creative appeals are generally given scant attention in advertising textbooks. There is little discussion on effectiveness of one appeal over the other or the affects of appeals on consumers. Textbooks concentrate on giving a basic classification and brief description of the appeal. Ads are classified as fear, humour, celebrity, emotional, and information. Runyon (1984), Wright, Winter and Zeilger (1983), Douglas (1984). None of the textbooks describe either sex or lifestyle as an appeal. Yet in *Creative Review*, a journal which represents the practitioners voice, there is much comment on both of these appeals. The viewpoints of these practitioners are only opinions, but these opinions show the intention of creatives in using and choosing an appeal. In an interview with Murray Partridge creative director of TBWA, Lewis Blackwell (1988) asks for his views on lifestyle. "the best ads are the ones that go right here, he says, banging his chest. The best ones are those that reflect the feeling you could get from buying a product, so that tends inevitably to mean lifestyle content" (1988: 15). An opposing view is given by Tim Mellors creative director of Mc Cormicks. "the way the thing works is to make you feel part of a club, but the

whole thing is becoming increasingly oblique. It will just wear out, there is so much of it" (17). There are similar divergent views on sex appeals. While there appears to be agreement on the idea that sex sells, there is a lot of disagreement on what is sexy. The resurgence of sex appeal in ads can largely be attributed to Bartle Bogle and Hegarty's series of Levi ads, particularly their first Launderette ad featuring Nick Kamen. Sales increased by 800% and all jeans competitors followed the Levi theme and produced sex ads (Romblough 1989).

Different aspects of sex appeals have been researched, such as role portrayal in ads and sexual content of ads. Sexual content of ads is usually measured physiologically in relation to levels of nudity and suggestiveness. Content analysis studies of role portrayal tend to concentrate on the listing of stereotype roles of women in ads. Whipple and Courtney (1980) review content analysis studies and stereotypes conducted in the seventies and highlight twelve dimensions that reflect role portrayal of women in ads. These include the following: a woman's place is in the home, women don't make important decisions, women are dependent on men, men regard women primarily as sex objects and women are not shown in dual roles i.e. working inside and outside the home. These dimensions have proved to be an important base for researchers concerned with evaluating respondents' attitudes to stereotypes. Lundstrom and Schiglimpaglia (1977), for example, found that women were critical of the way in which they are portrayed. Leigh, Rethans and Whithney (1987) examined consumers' cognitive responses to role portrayals and found that consistency between role portrayal in ads and the audience's role orientation improves attitude to the ad scores. This latter approach gives a more in depth analysis of how women perceive women in ads.

The importance of role portrayal is highlighted in an experiment carried out by Meyers-Levy (1988). The objective of the study was to investigate male and female judgements of the activation of sex roles. The experiments show that males focused on the self and females on the self and others and that ads which reflect this orientation will be more effective. The above studies suggest the importance of role portrayal in determining viewers' attitudes, how they read an ad and form a judgement. Langer (1984) concerned themselves with the further issue of how people perceive masculine and feminine product images of the brand and found that women accept masculine brand image more readily than males accept female brand image.

Lifestyle and sexual appeals are fundamental to the whole idea of transformation in advertising. It is through lifestyle and sex that images are attributed to products and people. Transformation ads are psychological rather than information oriented. Viewers are supposed to see themselves, whether this is a real or idealized picture, as users and owners of a particular brand personality. The advertiser attempts to give the viewers a feeling in an ad that they will later transfer to use of a product. In recalling a brand the consumer should experience the feeling in the ad.

The real issue in choosing an appeal that carries an advertisers' intention is how the ad triggers the referent system of the viewer. Advertising is based on the principle that people/viewers have ability and knowledge to connote from denotative meanings in ads. Take, for example a shampoo ad with a girl washing her hair in a stream surrounded by countryside. The denotative meaning would be that the shampoo washes hair clean and the connotative

that it is a natural product because of its association with nature. Other connotative meanings may be that the product is not artificial, but sophisticated, and that the individual has an opportunity to get back to nature by using this product. This point is also raised by Williamson: "it is the first function of an ad to create differentiation between one particular product and others in the same category" (1978: 24). Choice of symbols and people in ads show not only what the product is but also what it is not; the use of nature, for instance, implies a natural product and not an artificial product. The referent system allows for the transference of meaning from the signifieds to the signifiers. A product is given meaning because of the person or thing that it is associated with.

### **2.3.3. Mythology, Black and White Magic.**

Barthes explains meaning and the transference of meaning from signifieds to signifiers through the concept of mythology:

In myth, we find again the tri-dimensional pattern which I have just described: the signifier, the signified and the sign. But myth is a peculiar system, in that it is constructed from a semiological chain which existed before it: it is a second-order semiological system. (Barthes 1973: 114)

The sign in one system becomes the signified in another. The concept of mythology describes the process of transformation of meaning in advertising. Ads of the fifties could be evaluated on a first-order linguistic system where the product was shown, and demonstrated with explicit statements of attributes. Ads of the eighties rely on the second-order semiological system of mythology where the sign value or signification of a celebrity, film, music, sport is implicitly implied as the signifier of meaning for a product. The cowboy music of the Birds Eye ads and the punning of the visuals with children on bikes instead of cowboys on horses, all give credence to

mythology    Birds Eye burgers are now perceived by children as the real food of cowboys

The question for the advertiser is whether people can read mythology in ads. The answer to this question should assist the advertiser in assigning meaning to ads. Barthes deals with this issue and outlines three ways in which myths are read in ads. The first is where the producer of the myth considers the empty signifier in order to consider the signification that will be applied to the second order meaning. The second way of reading a myth is from the receiver of the message, where the receiver sees the full intention behind the choice of myth. This type of interpretation means that the message is demythologized. The third way of receiving the myth is where the receiver/reader reads the myth as intended by the author. Research is needed to determine effects of the second and third way of reading ads. Will demythification produce a negative intention to purchase a product? Wells (1986) introduced a concept called "schemers schema" which is similar to demythification, where the audience is aware of the advertisers/marketer intention and puts up a guard against persuasion.

Mythology can take many forms in advertising. One of the more popular forms is magic. Williamson (1978) and black and white magic. Leiss, Kline and Jhally (1986), Myers (1986). Magic is used as a process of transformation, through the process of magic spotty skin changes into beautiful clear skin, people become younger, and better. "Advertisements draw upon the entire magical repertoire, including contagious magic, charms to avoid dire consequences, taboos, command over the supernatural, incantation (jingles) and even the devil's blandishments" (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1986: 23).

Williamson (1978) describes several kinds of magic in ads alchemy, which means that a lot of magic comes from a little product, spells where the magic potent of the product produces the desired transformed effect, the Genie in the lamp and the World in the bottle where people time and feelings can all be contained in the product, and the crystal ball/magic circle, where the crystal ball is used to indicate the future (145-151)

Magic which is concerned with showing changing relations between people and objects is referred to as black and white magic White magic is the ability of the product to take on some aspect of nature, the product will therefore bring nature to the user Black magic gives the product the ability to improve interpersonal relations (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1986 225) Myers takes a broader view of black magic where she claims that critics of the advertising profession proclaim it as the new demonology, "the false god that despite ourselves we worship" (1986 84) Black magic is anything that perverts the truth, the presentation of a falsified reality that transforms peoples lives An extension of the black magic criticism of advertising is a comparison between advertising and the Marx theory of fetishism

According to Marx every object has a use value and an exchange value, use is the functional performance of the product and exchange the value of the good in comparison to product of other goods "Life and meaning are attached to objects that might seem worthless in themselves In all societies but our own we call this fetishism" (Williamson 150) Fetishism is the creation of magical, material values regarded as inherent in the product, it is a bringing of the product to life It is the value added concept that many marketers strive for

Value added is the adding of intangible attributes to a product through promotion, to differentiate the product and give it more value to the consumer

The advertising literature and in particular research, all with the exception of Williamson, have failed to highlight the importance of the referent system or even the implications of one referent system being used over another, which may oppose the desired intention of the advertiser. The referent is the knowledge and values that we attach to people and objects in our society or culture. It is what allow us to connote meaning from one event to the next. Ads depend on a person's ability to transfer meanings from symbols to products, by using someone like Madonna the advertiser tries to tap the values that a particular group associate with Madonna in the hope of successfully transferring these values or images to the product. Advertisers need to know what referent systems are triggered and whether there is a transference of meaning from these referent systems to the product. It is only by considering the referent system that the advertiser will know what happens to their intention.

#### **2.4. Text**

Second level meaning focuses on text and not just hardcopy text, but the whole social communication within text. Meaning at this level may be derived more from non verbal material than verbal text. With the coming of 1992 and a more open European Community it is felt that ads will become more reliant on images and music (Blackwell 1988). This second level of meaning must focus on three different aspects of meaning. The first is evaluation of verbal and non verbal material in ads. The second is social communication in ads. The third how meaning is attributed to ads from memory.



It is necessary to study theories of memory at the textual level because they provide information on retrieval of semantic representation of words, how words combine together to give overall meaning to a sentence, verification of this meaning to a real world situation and how meanings are used to make further inferences (Smith 1978 2) Many different models of memory have been introduced which attempt to explain how meaning is represented Andersan (1976) developed the association model, Tulving episodic and semantic memory, and much attention has been give to semantic theories of memory which are concerned with meanings of words of representation of information in memory The issues that have been raised by the individual theories and how they effect interpretation and representation of meaning are important for marketing and advertising

#### **2.4.1. Semantic Memory**

Different researchers Smith (1978) identify memory models as falling into two broad categories One is the computational memory model and the other the network model Many memory models have appeared in both these categories e g , the computational Meyer (1970), Smith, Shoben and Rips (1974), and the network or prestorage models Collins and Quillian (1969), Glass and Holyoak (1975) The issue of concern to this study is how memory affects the reading of text Both categories of models are concerned with explaining several issues The first is representation of words in memory A word is thought to have either a dictionary or encyclopedia meaning in memory A dictionary meaning only contains essential aspects of the word and will not change over time Encyclopedia meaning would be more detailed, and personalized meaning would be derived from an individual's life experience with words, subjects and

the previous context in which they were used. The dictionary/encyclopedia distinction effects verification of information stored in memory. The second issue is how information is stored and retrieved. Both prestorage and computational models offer different views. Computational models suggest certain attributes are prestored and that all categorical relations are computed. For example brand attributes would be prestored and brands and product categories computed. Network models state that information is stored in relation to nodes, and that all category and attribute information is prestored in this node and that relations between categories are computed. This would mean that information is stored by brands and attributes and that relations between brands in a product category are computed. The Hierarchical network model introduced by Collins and Quillian (1969) is a prestorage model which means that attributes are stored in memory. The assumption of the model is that nouns are arranged in hierarchical structure. The model also introduces the concept of cognitive economy where subjects closest to each other on the hierarchy are verified faster than more distant subjects. Conrad (1972) questioned this assumption of positioning and instead suggested that association relations between two noun categories will determine the time it takes to verify the subject. This led Glass and Holyoak (1975) to propose a new model, the Marker-Search model, which explains the concept of association in terms of short cut paths. The model retains the hierarchical position through the notion of 'markers'. In verifying information there may be several paths to the marker, in the traditional model all of these paths were processed in getting to the node or marker. Glass and Holyoak suggest that all paths do not have to be processed and that there are short cuts within markers. The second classification of models may be represented by Smith, Shoben and Rips's Semantic Feature model (1974). This is a computational model. This model

suggests that each word is represented by a set of attributes or semantic features. The features can either define the word or the characteristics of the concept. Verification depends on association of the object with the semantic feature e.g. a dog is an animal, this is the first stage in the model where positive or negative verification occurs. But if there is doubt at the verification stage the second stage of the model is implemented where more defining features of the object are considered. The first stage involves heuristic computation and the second algorithmic computation. Encyclopedia meaning is heuristic and dictionary algorithmic. Estes (1978) has one major criticism of the semantic featural model which could equally apply to all semantic memory models and that is that meaning of features are explained in terms of representations of words and that there is a need to consider how nonlinguistic meaning accrues to semantic features.

There has been some attempt in advertising and marketing to test some of these issues and models of memory. There is, however, a predominance of emphasis on recall and recognition and little attention to interpretation of text. Biehal and Chakaravarti (1981) and Gardial and Biehal (1985) examine memory processes in relation to consumer choice, and emphasize learning process and task environments which relates to the organization of information. However, at no point do they specify what model of memory they are working on i.e. hierarchical network or semantic featural. By ignoring these models they also fail to highlight the difficulties associated with semantic models such as emphasis on words alone while other non verbal aspects of the subject may influence semantic features. This is likely to be the case if an encyclopedia context is given to the word.

Marketing and advertising studies do draw attention as to whether or not product information is stored by brand or attributes. Again there is no reference to memory models and whether a prestorage model is more relevant than a computational model. The former would suggest attribute storage, the latter both category and attribute. There is a lot of scope in this area, particularly for product research where there are contrived product and brand categories and brand attributes.

Advertisers are concerned not just with retrieval and storage of information from memory but also with elaboration of perceived information. Elaboration between verbal and visual material or visual and verbal determines mental image evoked. Mental imagery elaboration determines how people learn and remember information over time. Most of the advertising studies in this area are concerned with visual process and the effect of pictures on memory. There is a much smaller body of research on psycholinguistics, Percy (1981) give linguistic guidelines for copy writers and Rossiter (1976), Holbrook (1981) examines how pictures and other sensory cues evoke imagery.

#### **2.4.2. Visual Processing**

Visual research in advertising has been concerned with visual processing effects on memory (Houston and Childers 1984, Houston, Childers and Heckler 1987) and how visuals effect attitudes and intention to purchase (Edell and Staelin 1983). To determine how people read visuals in ads it is necessary to answer the question whether words evoke images and whether images can evoke verbal elaboration. Pavio's (1971) dual process theory of meaning provides the fundamental theoretical base for answering these questions, and

Percy and Rossiter (1983) research some of the issues raised in an advertising context

Pavio (1971) devises a theory of imaginal and verbal processing from two broad levels of meaning, (a), representational process, and, (b), associative structures. The representation process is the concrete image of an object or word stored in its familiar form in long term memory. This level of meaning is denotative. Associative structures refer to sequencing patterns for verbal or imaginal content and symbolic transformation which may include both (63). The associative structure suggests that words can trigger images and these images can be dynamic and hierarchial and not simply a fixed image of an object. Pavio suggests that concrete words are more likely to evoke concrete images and associative chains than abstract words. Rossiter and Percy (1987) extended Pavio's theory to advertising in an attempt to determine whether verbal material could be reinforced by visual imagery. Their findings support a dual reinforcement model for verbal stimuli. In one of their studies Percy and Rossiter (1983) test the impact of concrete and abstract visuals on brand attitude and intention to purchase. A concrete image was one that showed multiple products of a particular manufacturer and an abstract visual was an ad with multiple people who look happy. The concrete product images showed more positive responses than the abstract visual of happy people (87). There has been no follow up to this type of study which has vast implications for creative decisions. If it is the case that concrete images are preferred to lifestyle images one wonders why there is so much lifestyle advertising. One counter argument to Rossiter's and Percy's findings is that the testing of concrete and abstract visuals was carried out for referential meaning. If one were to extend this test and consider the associations and transformational

meaning that was derived from both concrete and abstract visuals results may have been more insightful and relevant to brand attitude

Edell and Staelin (1983) tested the effectiveness of visually framed and unframed ads on consumers' attitudes. A framed ad was one where the visual and verbal content were congruent. An unframed ad had an unrelated verbal and visual. The findings indicate that there was more evaluation of framed ads and as a result more favourable brand attitude. Lutz and Lutz (1977) also found that interactive ads (where product and brand name are given), as opposed to noninteractive (where brand name is given separately from product), rate higher on the level of recall. Mitchell and Olson (1981) found that favourable brand attitude was brought about by pictorial content especially when visuals were associated with the product. These research findings clearly indicate that visuals influence attitudes and that congruent interaction between visual and verbal content and product category also effects processing and elaboration of product information. While attitudes do not tell us about what what people read or the meaning they take from ads, other studies have been more concerned with the impact of the visual on memory. These visual attitude studies do show different contexts in terms of congruency and incongruency with a product category.

Research on visual effects in memory show superiority effects for visual over verbal content (Alesandrini Lutz 1982). Childers and Houston (1984) examine conditions where pictures have a superior effect on memory. Three imagery explanations, incidental-redundant cues, relational organization and stimulus differentiation, suggest two conditions where pictures account for superior memorability. Incidental cues are the images that support the word and aid

memory retrieval Images relate to the multitude of cues in a given context e.g the word washing powder can be stored in memory by multiple retrieval paths depending on images used, dirty clothes, odour, freshness etc Kisielius (1982) put forward the concept of availability valence hypothesis which suggest that greater cognitive elaboration of information will result from high imaginal communication and lead to greater availability of information in memory Redundant cues are elaboration of information above and beyond the original stimulus Relational organization is also concerned with elaborate encoding, it occurs when there is association between two items This particular imagery explanation improves recall and has lead to further studies on the differing effects of congruent and incongruent information Stimulus differentiation suggests the superiority of distinctive stimulus for more reliable encoding Childers and Houston tested pictures superiority effects at the sensory level and found "the absolute effectiveness of visual organization is substantially retained for sensory versus semantic processing" (652) More recently Houston, Childers and Heckler (1987) examine the elaborate processing of discrepant copy in enhancing retrieval and recall of information from memory In a review of the literature on storage and retrieval of congruent and incongruent information, Scrull (1981) suggests that retrieval of congruent and incongruent information depends on the memory task involved In a recall task incongruent information is superior because an individual is forced to use different associative paths in order to retrieve information In a recognition task, presentation of congruent information is superior because recognition process by-passes retrieval and different associative paths are not recalled Instead, processing involves matching prototypical information in memory Houston Childers and Heckler (1987) findings uphold Scrull's argument While present research on visual

processing does show the importance and also significant effect of the visual on verbal content, future research must examine further effects of associative theory, such as hierarchy visual structures and ability of the visual to produce a transformation message

#### **2.4.3. Social Communication in Advertising.**

Studies of social communication in advertising come from one of three sources, semiology (Williamson 1978), content analysis, or a combination of both, (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1986) The Williamson and Jhally studies have contributed greatly to the analysis of ads Their analysis, however, also needs to proceed one step further to include the consumer and their perception of the the ad It is not sufficient that an academic or a practioner conduct theoretical readings of ads no matter what their interpretation is What matters commercially in advertising is how viewers read ads Social communication in advertising is not spelt out but can be interpreted by looking at the relationship between people and the product, and people and people in ads Leiss et al identify formats for ads that may show different relationships The product information format is where rational information is given about the product, this may include a product demonstration which explicitly states what the product is and what it does, meaning in the ad is rational and refers to tangible product attributes The product image format is where the product takes on a symbolic context, the advertiser has to consider the likely interpretation of the symbols used People must know what the symbols stand for so that they can transfer meaning of symbol to product, the focal point can shift from the product to the intended user The personalized format identifies similarities and differences between persons and groups Here it may be difficult to separate the product from the person There are



different variations to this format and emotion plays a central role

Personalization may be in the form of a testimonial so we identify with the person, or it may be self transformation where people make themselves better by using a product or it could be where the person stands for the product, as in the case of the Marlboro man and also where the product is the centre of social interaction solving problems, making people more intimate improving social status Lifestyle format is where people are encouraged to join a social club to use the product so that they too will become like people in the ad Main emphasis in lifestyle ads is to encourage the consumer to emulate the activities of the people in the ad Products become totemic in that they constitute a code of social meaning The product is an emblem for a social group The marketing concept moves from provision of utility with the product format to providing satisfaction after consumption with lifestyle format

The social relationships and communication described above are usually portrayed by non-verbal means Very little research on the non-verbal communications relates to television Dyer (1982) highlights non-verbal elements of ads as appearance, manner and activity Appearance is subdivided into age, gender, nationality, hair, body, size, looks Manner is subdivided into expression, eye contact, pose and clothes Activity is subdivided into touch, body movement, positional communication Haley Richardson and Baldwin (1984) classify non-verbal areas of communication into seventeen different areas paralanguage, glance, proxemics, gestures, body language, facial cues, spokesperson, music, dress, semiotics, setting, tonality/mood, sound effects, deception cues, camera use, brand identification and commercial format These categories were tested to see if they accounted for difference in persuasion scores between brands The finding was that they did and also that

non-verbal effects were more likely to be negative than positive. Several factors need to be addressed in non-verbal study of advertising. It is evident from the above categories in Dyer (1982) and Haley Richardson and Baldwin (1984) that there are differences among researchers as to elements to include as part of non-verbal behaviour. Inclusion of a category for Haley et al involved a review of literature from a variety of disciplines. However the applicability of a non-verbal factor in one discipline does not mean to say it is applicable in another. For example the glance category is defined as the way in which eyes are used. "Amount of eye contact between cast, amount with audience, amount directed at the product, winking, blinking, opening eyes in surprise, crying, redirecting of gaze etc." One could question whether all these areas are relevant even aside from measuring all in an ad. But one interesting issue raised from cinema theory and the reading of a glance, is the intention to project the viewer into the screen, there is some question as to whether the same effect can be achieved for television, where the screen is smaller and also the techniques of camera work such as cut back are different. So rather than asking what is a glance or how do ads work, it may be more relevant to ask how do people read glances in forms such as cinema and can findings in cinema be transferred to television. It is important to know if the advertiser has certain intentions in using types of glances. Choice of category for study needs more rigorous analysis one could question why semiotics, for example, is included as a separate category when any of the other categories could represent a sign.

## **2.5. Interpretation**

Interpretation is Croghan's (1986) third level of meaning and is concerned with how people read an ad or text. Two different approaches are examined in

this section. The first is how the rationalists explain meaning. Rationalists claim that surface meaning may differ but that deep meaning is universal. Structuralists typify the rationalist approach. The second approach examines the major contributions on reading of television and the applicability of these theories to advertising. Some of these theories are rationalist in emphasis, others would follow a relativist approach, where it is believed that deep meaning differs, and is not universal.

Two of the main influences on structuralism have been Barthes (1973) and Levi-Strauss (1983). Both use the concept of myth to explain reading, and although both theories differ fundamentally the focus of each is the specific narrative at a given moment in time. Levi-Strauss's ultimate concern is with "the unconscious nature of collective phenomena" (22). He sought thought processes that were universally valid for all humans. To seek out these thought processes he studied myth because the thought processes in myth are primitive and uncontaminated by twentieth century culture which has forced modern man to adapt thought processes to technologies and away from the senses. Levi-Strauss's (1978) structural analysis of the myth suggests that what we know about the world we have perceived through our senses, the human brain orders and interprets, so that the perceived stimuli are ordered into categories and segments, which are evaluated in terms of binary oppositions and which, in turn, transform the abstract into concrete. Levi-Strauss's analysis of myth and primitive thoughts results in textual analysis by binary opposition.

Barthes' (1973) system was also two tiered but focused on how meaning from one system or culture transformed its meaning into a second system which he

calls 'myth', thereby creating a new meaning. He was really concerned with the ideologies that were used in both systems and how the significance of the sign in the first system was lost once it was used in the second. This notion of two levels is important for advertisers and the question is whether they succeed in emptying the first system of its meaning, which Barthes presumes happens, or whether the ad, that is, the signs of the second system end up reinforcing the first and thereby fail to transfer meaning. This 'reinforcing' case is not really considered. But if as Lord Leverhulme suggests that half the money spent on advertising is wasted this could in fact refer to meaning of one system failing to transfer to another and reinforcing the first and emptying the second of meaning. For example, if an ad uses romantic music and one fails to associate the romance with the product and simply concentrates on the music it means the first system has not been emptied, which in turn means that the ad is not perceived in the manner intended, and money is wasted.

Propp (1968) was one of the first individuals to use structural analysis when he analyzed 100 Russian folk tales and found a universal narrative structure. He divided the structure into six sections, preparation, complication, transference, struggle, return, recognition, with 32 functions. The emphasis in analysis is that what each of the 32 functions do in advance of the narrative is more important than what they are. One of the functions of transference is magical agent, the fact that the magic used is more important than the method in which it is used. Similarly with the notion of character, what characters do is more important than who they are. Propp's eight characters are hero, villain, donor (provider), helper, princess and her father, dispatcher, false hero. The narrative functions are always in the same sequence though not

every narrative will have every function. If this theory is applied to ads it means that attention is given to the function used, for example a skin cream, the advertiser may use the magic function which could be a comparison of before and after or visually showing disappearance of spots. Structural analysis of this sort would be similar to developing a taxonomy or classification of ads. Propp and his successors were looking for a unity between narrative structures. Levi-Strauss also sought universal structure for myths.

Levi Strauss was concerned with the explanation of meaning and by studying myth and suggesting a system of structural analysis he offers a method for understanding meaning. "There is something very curious in semantics, the word 'meaning' is probably, in the whole language, the word the meaning of which is the most difficult to find. What does 'to mean' mean?" (1978: 12). Levi-Strauss's answer is data which can be translated into another language. But not a different language such as from English to French, but to an alternative language, using words or symbols that express the same idea. Structural analysis enables us to do this. Levi-Strauss explains structural analysis in *Mythologies*. He develops a set of rules which seek out order from the apparent disorder of the myth. This ordering process involves segmenting the text or myth so that sub segments can be classified and named, once all segmented parts are identified, they are represented in a table showing the varying relationships (which are binary opposites), and this table then becomes the object of analysis. The ordering process is presented in his culinary triangle which is based on the belief that by 'noticing *how* we apprehend Nature, by observing the qualities of the classifications which we

use and the way we manipulate the resulting categories, we shall be able to infer crucial facts about the mechanism of thinking" (Leech 1970 26)

Leymore (1975) follows Levi-Strauss's structured system in looking at meaning in ads and Levy (1981) in consumption Francis (1986) feels that Leymore's study is contrived in that images are chosen for positive binary classification These positive images naturally have a negative counterpart which supposedly implies the competitors absence along the images chosen The product category chosen was butter, so if butter is portrayed as expensive or dear it implies that margarine is cheap Levy (1981) studies food consumption by asking respondents about their own family consumption of food These 'mythemes' are analyzed for symbolic distinction among specific food items between different age, social class and sex variables The impressions of these studies (Leymore 1975) and (Levy 1981) is that the researcher started out with a goal of finding a universal meaning

Barthes (1973) notion of myth evolved from the traditional sense of something false which could be applied to the way in which contemporary media reflected various topics He deeply resented the way in which media were projecting various topics and the significance that was being given to these areas Barthes gives us examples of twentieth century myths For example in his essay on soap detergents and washing powders he shows how washing powders try to involve the consumer by using psychology or psychoanalysis The psychology based ad Persil, 'Persil washes whiter' emphasizes the end result and social acceptance, while Omo concentrates on psychoanalysis and involves the consumer in the ad, the consumer becomes an "accomplice of a liberation rather than the mere beneficiary of a result" (37) Individuals

come to bestow values onto the substance of the ad. In the Omo ad described in the essay one of the values is depth, the text states that, the powder cleans deep, yet clothes or materials have no depth. Other values portrayed are luxury, the use of foam in the visuals and gratification through the use of airy images which imply freedom. What really matters is that the abrasive function of the detergent is completely ignored or disguised by use of imagery such as depth, luxury and gratification. Barthes deeply resents this portrayal "I resented seeing Nature and History confused at every turn, and I wanted to track down, in the decorative display of what-goes-without-saying, the ideological abuse which in my view is hidden there" (1973: 11). However what he finishes with in *Mythologies* is a completely different concept of contemporary myth which he describes as a language.

Laski (1959) expresses a similar opinion to Barthes on cultural exploitation of nature, claiming that the reasons for much criticism against advertising is advertisers mis-use of life enhancing feelings. Certain contexts such as religion, art, national glory, natural beauty etc, activate or trigger life enhancing feelings in us, the contexts create 'a passion of awe' (122). There are other contexts that inhibit beneficial feelings such as commercial and competitive social values, these are anti triggers. The argument is that anti triggers are not offensive in their own right but they are when 'they impinge on triggers'. Advertisers want to belong to the trigger side of life and some advertising people want to raise the status of advertising. Others want to exploit the life enhancing feelings in order to manipulate consumers. Two of seven examples of mis-use of trigger contexts are what Laski calls trigger elimination and trigger assimilation. Trigger elimination is where the original text is shown as being totally insignificant in comparison to the product.

advertised Trigger assimilation is most frequently used and is close to Barthes notion of emptying original sign of meaning This is where the trigger such as nature is put beside the product so that the product can steal the qualities and feeling that people associate with nature

Barthes (1973) suggests two semiological systems The first is the plane of language and the second the plane of the myth These are represented as

|          |             |             |              |
|----------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
|          | 1 Signifier | 2 Signified |              |
| Language | 3 Sign      |             |              |
|          | 1 SIGNIFIER |             | 11 SIGNIFIED |
| MYTH     | 111 SIGN    |             |              |

Figure 2.5 Analysis of Myth

The sign of the first system becomes the signifier of the second The mythical level is both dependent and independent of the language level The intention of the myth is separate from the original sign However myth is dependent on the meaning of the original sign to convey a new meaning The reader must know what the sign in the first system means so that meaning can be transfered to the signified or intention of the second system For example an advertiser such as AIB seeks a new image centred around security and survival The design concept produced is Noah's ark In the plane of language Noah's ark symbolizes survival, in the plane of myth the reader disassociates Noah from the Ark and the reader reads AIB instead of Noah In myth the meaning is distorted by the concept, the concept distorts the full meaning of the original sign by taking its history of meaning and re-



applying it to another sign. The original sign must always be present so that the meaning can be seen alternatively in its history and then deformed in the myth. The alternation is constant, at one moment the significance of the myth is evident, at another the history of the sign.

Intertextuality, which is a structuralist concept, highlights the notion of re-reading of signs and states that, any one text is read in relationship to others. "Intertextuality exists in the space between texts" (Fiske 19). There is no need to have explicit knowledge of the previous text, because people build up cultural images which allows for the reading of one image in a particular space into another text at a different time. Marilyn Monroe and Madonna convey a similar image, sexy blonde females, James Bond type men. Another, the reader does not need to have explicit knowledge of each individual text that conveyed these images, our previous knowledge of these types of people is read across texts. McArthur gives two examples of intertextuality in recent ads, one is where ads use moving statues and the other where ads insert scenes from old black and white films. "Television commercials are not 'about' products, but are images of desire and pleasure that overwhelm the product they are attached to" (64). If signs as in Barthes' myth and this moving image of intertextuality falsify original sign and image, the question that could be asked is: do we ever have a final meaning? The only way to find a final meaning is by looking at how a person reads a text at a given moment in time.

### **3.4.1. Relative Theories**

Structuralists study meaning from a universal perspective, Levi-Strauss constructs a system of universal thinking and Barthes a system to show the significance or language of meaning. The rationalists or structuralists

believed that all languages are the same in deep structure and only surface structure differs. The relativists take an opposing view stating that meaning differs across and between cultures. In the 1970s and 1980s there has been a reaction in favour of relativists, mainly through contributions of ethnic studies from feminists and blacks, these minority groups state that all linguistic worlds are different. The problem for the advertiser is creating ads that appeal to different conceptual worlds. Advertisers appear to trivialize and ignore minorities who have different beliefs to the traditional American view (McCracken 1987). Sapir (1949) and Whorf (1963) highlight the importance of relativity in culture, the real world centres around the language habits of the group.

"Human beings do not live in the objective world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society" (Whorf 1963: 162)

In the traditional reader strategy a text is presented and analyzed for deep/true meaning. It is assumed that the meaning is in the text waiting to be uncovered. An alternative approach to reading is suggested by Iser (1978) who suggests that texts are made to mean through the process of reading. This means that reading is not a property of the text but the result of interaction between reader and text. Allan (1987) calls this a reader oriented approach to text. Reader oriented approaches to meaning derived from text stems from phenomenology, which is concerned with the perceiving individual and the world of people, and texts, that are perceived. Ingarden (1984) was one of the first researchers to take a reader oriented approach to literary criticism and

takes a similar approach to reading as Croghan's (1986) three level model. The text starts as an intention of the author or addressor. Once the work is written it becomes separate from the writer and awaits different possibilities of meanings from the reader. Iser expanded on Ingarden's work and takes a semiotic approach to reading literature. The essential stance taken by these researchers is that the text is only one half of the perceptual equation; it is the object. The second half of the equation, the perceiving individual has not received the same attention as the text. Reader oriented theorists differ over the focus of study. Ingarden and Iser focus on text and Fish (1980) and Holland (1975) on the individual.

If reading is dependent on the interaction of the reader and the text then it is time that researchers focused on the individual. Some minority groups such as, feminists, have considered reading from their own perspectives. Feminist theory on reading is briefly reviewed to give an example of the importance of relative theory. Definitions or perspectives of feminism are discussed first because these determine the focus of study for different researchers.

Philosophically feminism is defined as essential or anti-essential. Essential feminism Figs (1970) states that the basic truth about women in a patriarchal society has been kept hidden. The assumption is that women have a separate culture and value system from men. These values such as humanness and morals are repressed in patriarchy society because "they offer an alternate way not only of *seeing* but of *being*" (Kaplan 1987: 217). Three political definitions of feminism follow essential philosophy; bourgeois feminism (Radcliff Richards 1980); Freidan (1982), which is concerned with gaining equal rights; marxist feminism, which examines female oppression from the larger system; radical feminism (Daly 1984) which emphasizes the difference

between males and females. Radicals seek separate system such as a separate feminists' language system. Anti-essentialists do not regard the feminine to be separate from the patriarchal system. They seek to understand the sex identity of the feminine in a patriarchal society. The political system that matches anti-essential views is post structuralist feminism, which evaluates the language system to establish the cultural concept of women.

Kaplan (1987) examines media studies that have been conducted from a feminist perspective. Most of these studies take the liberal feminist perspective where women demand equal rights to men. The methodologies of the studies tend to be quantitative content analysis which looks at the frequency of role portrayals and status of women. Meehan (1983) conducted a major study on the description and behaviour of male and female characters. One of her major conclusions is that "the composite impressions of good bad images was a forceful endorsement of a secondary position for women, a place in the world as selfless, devoted adjuncts to men" (113).

The anti-essential view is represented in Mulvey's (1975) study of Visual pleasure and Narrative Cinema. Mulvey shows that Hollywood cinema is built on three filmic looks all based on the male perspective. The first is the look of the camera which tends to be male and traditionally cameramen were men. The second is the look of the male figure in the film. This tends to be the glance/object strategy where we are shown a close up of a character, the next shot is taken from the character's point of view and shows us what he is looking at, which tends to be a woman. The third look involves the spectator and is a combination of the first two, it is where the spectator identifies with the camera and sees as it sees. This approach supposedly involves the viewer

in that the gaze fulfils the male unconscious need via voyeurism This follows a psychoanalytic approach to reading of film based on Freudian and more recently Lachanran theory

Reader oriented theorists such as Allan (1987) and Kaplan (1987) start out from the premise that reading of text involves viewer activation, how the reader produces their own meaning Yet focus of attention of much of the research mentioned above still focuses on the text and not the production of meaning from the individual There is a need in advertising to examine the values and significance of what is in the ad from the viewers perspective Is the viewer reading values as shown or projecting their own values which may alter the meaning considerably

This chapter has examined several theories which suggest different approaches to the study of meaning Saussure's (1916) theory explains the notion of meaning, a sign represents the expression of an idea However Saussure's model ignores the reader and their interpretation of the sign Croghan's (1986) Real Model of Meaning is concerned with the readers reading of meaning This model was examined in relation to advertising theory, where intention and author represents the objective of the advertiser and the appeal chosen to fulfil this objective Text was examined by looking at theory on visual and verbal effects on memory and social relations Interpretation examined structural and reader oriented strategies The interest of this research lies in interpretation but this may or may not be a separate phase of a meaning model Croghan's significant contribution is the way the model can be read Level 1 may be read or level 1 and 2, or level 3 or some other combination Therefore it is first necessary to explain each of the levels for

the subject area examined, in this case advertising. The danger as in the past is ignoring what cannot be explained and that appears to be the reader. Interpretation has focused on seeking a universal understanding. The more recent re-emergence of relative theory would appear closer to explaining interpretation. However even with these newer contributions focus of attention by the researcher has still remained on the text and the way one is supposed to read it and not on the reader and how their experiences and knowledge effects the reading.

## **Chapter 3 Research Methodology**

### **3. Introduction to Research Methodology**

The objective of this study is to ascertain the meaning people take from ads. The achievement of this objective depends on the establishment of a system to show how people read ads. There are various methods used in advertising to ascertain how aspects of ads are read, but none of these have been applied to consumer interpretation and analysis of ads. Most of the techniques used by the researchers involve their own idiosyncratic interpretation of what an ad means.

Approaches range from studies measuring attitude to the ad, structural analysis, symbolic interpretation, imagery elaboration, literary analysis and semiotic reading. The system created in this study and applied to women's reading of ads evolved after consideration of a number of issues concerning the application of these various methods.

This chapter examines current literature and research which have been applied to the uncovering of meaning in ads. Discussion of the literature concentrates on issues that effect the proposed system of consumer reading of ads. Variables considered in the planning and conducting of focus groups are discussed. Issues that arose in the pilot groups which affected the working of the proposed semiotic system are critically analyzed.

The system created revolves around semiotics. The study extends knowledge and use of semiotics in advertising and produces a method that can be applied in practice to show how an audience reads ads. At the outset of this research it

was believed that attitudes and attitude to the ad in particular could reveal meaning. Key methodological issues are examined to investigate the usefulness of applying attitude to consumer reading. Serious reservations emerged in relation to the usefulness of attitude methods in revealing the significance of meaning. This led to an examination of methods and issues in structural, semiotic and visual areas that could be applied to consumer reading. Critical analysis of these areas results in a proposed system for reading ads.

### **3.1. The Role of Attitude in Advertising**

Advertising research has always been concerned with answering the question how does advertising work? Up to 1970 most of the academic research conceptualized hierarchy of effects models in answering this question. The focus of attention in these models is the relationship between attitude and behaviour. One of the most significant contributions came from Ray (1973) when he outlined his Three Order Hierarchy. Essentially his model questioned whether there was a direct relationship between attitude and behaviour. He proposed a high and low involvement model in explaining advertising effects. Ray's research findings showed that behaviour could change as a result of exposure to ads prior to a change in attitude. This finding led to a major shift in emphasis in advertising research. Researchers became interested in investigating the relationship between attitude to the ad and attitude to the brand. Lutz's seminal article (1975) on changing cognitive structures via advertising led to the development and testing of mediating relationships between attitude to the ad and attitude to the brand. Different aspects of attitude have received attention by researchers. Toy (1982) examined how advertising could influence cognitive structures. Cacioppo and Petty (1983) showed how elaboration at the time of viewing could effect the proposed



mediating relationships between attitude to the ad and the brand MacKenzie, Lutz and Belch (1986) highlight different aspects of meaning and present methodological issues that need to be examined

### **3.1.1. Attitude and its Relationship to Meaning**

The relationship between attitude and meaning raises the debate (Gadamer 1975) about whether the social sciences should be concerned with seeking scientific formula based explanations as in the natural sciences or whether they should seek to understand behaviour. It is argued that there has been an overemphasis on understanding the evaluative criteria that determine attitude. The measurement of attitude is formula based, the purpose is to provide the advertiser with a quantified figure which could predict variables that would improve or maintain persuasion. But attitude scores do not show us what the communication means to the viewer. Attitude scores do not show the significance of meaning, they provide a judgemental evaluation of an attitude to an ad or a brand. Knowledge of the significance of meaning would help advertisers to understand behaviour and the effect of the ad on the individual. This study uses both quantifiable attitude measures and understanding approaches or semiotics to studying meaning in ads.

### **3.1.2. Attitude Conceptualization**

Two methodological issues need to be addressed in relation to attitude to the ad. The first concerns the conceptualization of attitude, the second methods of measurement. Attitude is conceptualized as a "predisposition to act in a favourable or an unfavourable manner" (Fishbein and Azjen 1975). In advertising and marketing the method appropriate for study of meaning focuses on the determinants of attitude and how these affect existing belief.

systems. Attitude to an object is a function of beliefs about the object and evaluations of affective reactions towards the individual attributes. The contentious issue with this definition centres on the explanation of affect. According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) affect is a favourable or unfavourable evaluation of cognitions. There is direct linkage between cognitions and affect. Batra and Ray (1986), Burke and Edell (1989), and Shimp (1981), define affect as emotion or mood and not simply an evaluation of cognitions. Shimp proposed that affect and cognition were independent of one another and as such had differing effects on brand attitude. Burke and Edell (1989) proposed that different feelings had different mediating effects on the brand. The issue for researchers remains one of distinguishing whether they regard cognition and affect as two separate processes or as a single process where the belief is accompanied by and inextricably linked to an emotional feeling. This has implications for what is measured, cognitions and evaluations of these cognitions, or, affect measured as a separate emotional/feeling construct. Lutz, MacKenzie, and Belch (1983), Mitchell and Olson (1981) describe affect as evaluation. Madden Allen and Twible (1988), Edell and Burke (1989), Holbrook and Batra (1987) define it as emotion.

Attitude to the ad is regarded as an essential concept in understanding consumer behaviour. It is assumed that if a person has a favourable attitude to the ad it will directly impinge on brand cognitions and thereby determine brand attitude, or a favourable attitude to the ad will indirectly affect brand attitude and purchase intention. An evaluation of the ad be it favourable or unfavourable, does not tell us about the meaningfulness of the ad to the individual and as a result it is possible that people who have negative attitudes to the ad may have a positive intention to purchase. More emphasis must be

given to what people think of the ad and how they relate these thoughts to the brand. It is the relationship between the meaning of the brand and the ad to the individual that is important.

### **3.1.3 Measurement Instrument**

Different measurement techniques have been proposed to determine cognition and affect. In advertising research the two most popular methods are the semantic differential and free elicitation. Issues that are relevant to this study are examined for each of the methods to show in what way they were used, their significance and their role in determining meaning. Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1975) proposed the semantic differential as "a psycholinguistic tool, designed to measure the meanings of signs" (275). They claim "the semantic differential taps the connotative aspects of meaning more immediately than the highly diversified denotative aspects" (290). They do not measure the reference or relation between signs meaning. It is argued that their concept of connotation does not relate to signification if the referential value of the denotative sign is not measured. Connotations have to be related to the referential capabilities or functions of the sign. This is particularly relevant to advertising research where the sign is used to transfer meaning. If the meaning of the original sign is not considered, the advertiser will not know what the connotative meaning of the brand. An important methodological issue is that the referent of the sign is not considered. In advertising it is the referent that gives significance of meaning. An ad, and concepts in ads, may have different referential value to people e.g. a sign like windsurfer has different meanings for those who do and do not windsurf, for some it may remind them of holidays, fun, the sea, because of their familiarisation with sails falling in the water, or sails blowing in the wind or

even the movement of the sea; the concept in the ad may be perceived as analogous to washing machine but for others who are unfamiliar with the windsurfing experience it may be meaningless. An ad itself is a sign and consists of many other signs each of which has referential value in its own right, yet the semantic differential as it is used in advertising measures an overall evaluation to all signs in the ad. This may not relate the real meaning of the signs to the audience.

Meaning is assigned to a concept by allocating a rating to a series of descriptive scales defined by bi-polar adjectives. The scale items used are supposed to be representative of the major dimensions along which meaningful processes vary. Factor analysis is used to explore and narrow the selection of scale items. The analysis and findings from the rating of these scale items should result in the positioning of the concept in a semantic space, the purpose of which is to visually show similarities and differences between concepts. Three dimensions used to assess the meaning and positioning of a concept are evaluation, potency and activity. Several scale items may be chosen to measure each of these dimensions. The positions of the concept in a semantic space involves mean evaluation of each dimension, and then the application of a distance measure to determine individual differences along the three dimensions. Two particular concerns in application of this method to determination of meaning are the choice of scale items and the clusters of concepts in a semantic space.

Generation of scale items can either be from the researcher or the respondent. In all attitude to the ad applications, the scale items used have been determined by the researcher. The researcher considers the concept being measured and

then chooses bi-polar adjectives that will measure the concept. The semantic method forces the respondent to choose a scale in assessing the ad. This may not be a fair indication of what someone is really thinking. At best, the semantic differential gives the direction of thinking about an ad but it is argued that it does not inform the researcher about the meaning of an ad to an individual. Unless the respondents pick the key concepts themselves the meaning of an ad remains unknown. There is no discussion of the variables chosen and it is argued that the variables may receive positive ratings in the ad but may be meaningless in terms of interpretation and significance for the respondent.

The items chosen and used by researchers relate to the objectives of individual studies. The semantic differential has been used widely to measure attitude to the ad where the objective is to determine a favourable or an unfavourable evaluation of the ad. Choice of scale items has been determined by the approach taken to the measurement of cognition and affect. Scale items used most to measure attitude to the ad where researchers were concerned with cognition and regarded affect as an evaluative dimension are good/bad, like/dislike, irritating/not irritating, interesting/uninteresting (Mitchell and Olson 1981), (Gardner 1985). Mitchell and Olson used factor analysis on seven scale items and a varimax rotation of those factors yielded the four chosen in the study. Gardner replicated Mitchell and Olson's choice of items. Others who have used similar scales are Belch and Belch (1984) who included favourable and enjoyable. Burke and Edel (1989) obtained overall opinion of the ad by using only one scale item, favourable/ unfavourable. Lutz, MacKenzie and Belch (1983) used favourable/ unfavourable, and interesting/uninteresting. All scale items chosen by the above researchers relate to evaluation of the

cognitive dimension. There was very little if any elaboration in the above studies justifying choice of bi-polar adjectives or even generation of items. None of the studies raise the issue of variability among choice of items or even suggest a more universal common assessment of the items most suited to the measuring of cognitive dimensions of attitude. The assumption is that any of these scale items measure attitude to the ad.

Choice of scale items shows no consistency in measuring affect. Gresham and Shimp (1985: 166) used pleasant/unpleasant, sociable/unsociable, nice/awful. Instead of using scale items other researchers have developed different systems to measure the emotion. Many use a cognitive response approach which relies on free elicitation of thoughts and feelings which are then coded into cognitive and affective responses. Park and Young (1986), Burke and Edel (1989), Batra and Ray (1986), Holbrook and Batra (1987). Other methods used to measure emotional responses which were considered but rejected, were Plutchik's (1980) emotional scales and Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) Pleasure Arousal Dominance (PAD) paradigm. Plutchik's measure relies on the identification of eight primary emotions: fear, anger, joy, sadness, acceptance, disgust, expectancy and surprise. Havlena and Holbrook (1986) compared two systems in measuring emotion and consumption experiences. They used the Plutchik primary emotions with a seven point scale ranging in intensity for those who experienced no emotion to those who felt very strongly. They also used the Pleasure, Arousal, Dominance paradigm developed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) which identified 12 scale items measured on a seven point bi-polar adjectival scale. Consideration was given to the use of the PAD paradigm which was based on the semantic differential method. However after re-evaluating the scale items for inclusion in the study it was decided to measure

emotion using the free elicitation and the elaboration method. The inclusion of the 12 items would have meant that respondents would be rating 22 scale items per ad. It was decided that this would be an excessive number and instead the semantic differential was confined to the cognitive evaluation of ads and emotion was measured by the free elicitation method.

This study was concerned with more than just attitude to the ad and wanted to explore meaning in ads using the three dimensions of evaluation: potency and activity, which according to Osgood, Suci and Tannebaum (1975) account for the majority of variance of meaning. Attitude toward the ad was measured by asking respondents to rate three seven-point evaluative scales: good/bad, favourable/unfavourable, like/dislike. The pilot study tested for variability between these three items and Mitchell and Olson's (1981) four scale items, no significant differences were found between the scale items. Respondents were also asked to rate two potency scales, strong/weak, gentle/hard, and one activity scale, active/passive. More attention was given to the evaluative dimension because Osgood, Suci and Tannebaum claim that it plays a dominant role in meaningful judgements "accounting for almost 70 per cent of common variance" (1975: 38).

### **3.1. Cluster**

Once the meaning of the objects is determined using the semantic differential it is possible, by using a distance measure, to cluster the results in a semantic space. In this way it can be said that ad A is similar to B, and both ad A and B are distanced from C and D. A factor of concern for some critics of the semantic method is that meaning in a semantic space is confined to just three dimensions. There may be a problem if different people interpret the ads in

different ways and this affects their ratings. Then the semantic space will be so diverse that it will hold no significance. Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1975) proposed the positioning of meaning in a semantic space because they believed that meaning is a multidimensional concept. They found that subjects differentiate the meaning of concepts along certain scales and that this may be quite independent of evaluation along another scale e.g. an ad could be perceived as good, strong and active, or as good, weak and passive. This study tests the semantic space theory to see if the ads appear in particular clusters for all or a significant number of groups.

### **3.1.5. Free Elicitation**

Cognitive response shows people's elaboration at the time of processing the ad. What people elaborate on, what they pay attention to, determines their involvement with the ad and the brand. A problem with cognitive response theory that particularly affects meaning is the method of analysis used to categorize cognitive response. Essentially cognitive response theory asks people what they thought of an ad. These responses are then coded into different categories which reveal attitudes to brands and the ad. It is argued that the coding of responses limits the significance of meaning and that in a final analysis merely shows the direction of response. If for example person A says they like the ad, and person B says they love the ad especially the music, both these statements are categorised as execution bolstering, but we still do not know why A liked the ad and why B liked the music. Both of these responses would lead the researcher to report favourable attitude to the ad. Whereas in fact B may like the music because it reminded them of some experience in their past that has nothing to do with the ad. Alternatively the music may be a significant factor in attitude to the ad and brand in that it



forms a permanent association with the brand advertised. By not specifying the exact meaning music could be classified as a very positive execution bolstering variable or a complete distractor item.

The categories used by researchers for analysis of free elicitation evolved from a number of different studies. Wright (1973) first proposed categorizing cognitive response into support argument, counter arguments, and source derogation. Batra and Ray (1986) questioned the limitations of this categorization claiming that it was primarily cognitively based. They proposed the inclusion of three affective responses which would measure the moods and feelings evoked by the ad. The three categories were Surgency, Elation, Vigour, Activation (SEVA), this code signified a pleasant or relaxing reaction to the ad. The third code was social affection this meant the ad triggered a caring or a loving feeling, so the ad could depict happiness, warmth or friendliness. Holbrook and Batra (1987) felt that these positive mood states should be counter balanced with negative moods and introduced affective categories of negative feelings and distractor thoughts. Combination of the cognitive and affect categories provided the method of analysis for thought verbalization questions. The categorization system and examples from respondents thoughts and feeling verbalizations are given in Appendices 5 and 6 respectively.

When using free elicitation, researchers do not differentiate between thoughts and feelings. One question tends to be asked to cover both thoughts and feelings. This takes the form of asking respondents to verbalize or write all the thoughts and feelings that come to mind when they think of the ad. This study separated thoughts and feelings and asked them as two separate

questions (Appendix 2) The purpose was to see if different types of responses emerged If replies are different then it has implications for future research in that both areas must be dealt with separately

The technique of free elicitation also has its problems While respondents are free to point out what they think of the ad it assumes that the respondents have experienced thoughts to the ad, have thought of something, and most importantly are willing to write or verbalize the reply An additional problem for free elicitation is that it assumes all respondents have equal ability to verbalize This whole issue of people being able to write what they really think on the spur of the moment is questionable, no research has attempted to quantify information generated from a sample that gives detailed elaboration, scant elaboration and no elaboration

Attitude to the ad measures of semantic differential and thought verbalization were used in the study A questionnaire was given to all the participants after seeing each ad The questionnaire (Appendix 2) contained bi-polar questions to determine attitude towards the ad and the brand, and open ended questions to discover thoughts and feelings about the ad The objective was to examine information that typical attitude measures disclose in comparison with the proposed semiotic system This comparison should show the compatibility and strengths and weaknesses of both a semiotic and attitude based methodology

### **3.2. Meaning**

The preceding section examined problems that occur with over reliance on quantitative methods in measuring meaning Part of the reason for the gap

between quantitative and qualitative research in testing meaning is the concern for validity and reliability in academic research. As a result the study of meaning in advertising research has concentrated on cognitive dimensions and attitude type measures. Qualitative research is quickly dismissed as subjective and unreliable. While qualitative research is subjective the results of such studies can give greater understanding of what respondents are taking from an ad. Although the information is not quantified in numbers it still has significance to the advertiser.

The positivist approach within sociology maintains that social scientists should employ the methodologies of the physical sciences to study social facts. These social facts exist apart from subjective experience. The logical empiricists approach is strictly cognitive and concerned with the rational discovery of laws which determine behaviour. Gadamer (1975) argued that there are unique differences between the subject matter of the physical and social sciences, and urged researchers to focus on behaviour which is subjectively meaningful to those partaking in the research. More recently Sanders (1987), Holbrook (1989) and Hirschman (1988) have called for a subjective interpretative approach to studying consumption. Holbrook (1989) and Hirschman are enthusiastic about the use of semiotics. Although both confine its use to individual interpretation, Holbrook and Grayson (1986) examine film and Hirschman (1988) analyzes television soap operas. Holbrook (1989) argues that the positivist approach typically focuses on "simple feature and feature-interaction effects at the expense of losing the complex configural nature of the overall Gestalt" (495).

Advertising's function is seen as "giving deep meaning to products, imagery aids persuasion by giving products a soul" (Dichter 1964 57) The nature and "meaning of a product seem to relate to the use of image advertising" (O'Shaughnessy and Holbrook 1988) Symbolism and imagery are used to differentiate otherwise similar brands The function of advertising is to symbolize the "status and aspirations of human identities" (Levy 1986) It is argued that these descriptions of advertising show that it is about giving life to a product, that is, giving a brand a 'soul' or core values, and that it is impossible to discover these meanings by using quantitative research Choice of methodology should depend on what is being measured This study is concerned with the meaning people take from advertising The methods chosen had to reflect subjective interpretation The main areas that were examined and used in establishing a system for reading ads were, structuralism, semantics, pragmatics, syntactics, and visual interpretation Relevant issues that arose in use and application of these areas are discussed fully

### **3.3. Semiotics**

The subject matter of semiotics is concerned with the meaning of a sign To this must at once be added that semiotics is also focally concerned with the study of signification (Sebeok 1991 13) The message consists of a sign or a series of signs Different semioticians have taken slightly different approaches to the study and understanding of sign All are concerned with determining the meaning sent by a source and the interpretation taken by the receiver Saussure (1983) put forward a diadic relationship which centres on the signifier, the physical object and the signified, the mental concept Peirce (1931) suggested a triadic relationship between sign, object and

interpretant Interpretant lies at the centre of Peirce's theory with some people assuming that interpretant is the same as interpreter It is not, instead, it is the idiosyncratic interpretation of a sign Morris (1946) believed that the study of signs should involve semantic, pragmatic and syntactic analysis The latter approach was taken primarily as a structural base for the proposed methodology Visual interpretation relied heavily on the Saussure concepts of signifier and signified The objective of visual analysis was to examine the "relationship between one set of signifiers and another set of signifiers with the same signified" (Tantam 1986 44)

It was felt at the outset of the study that signification was a key concept especially in the interpretation of ads Analysis of the meaning should show how idiosyncratic interpretation affects signification Semiotic analysis is the unfolding of meaning, which tries to give a Gestalt understanding of the perception of an ad The Gestalt approach is important because several studies in marketing focus on a narrow aspect of communication Olson (1986) summarised his evaluation of five contributions to the study of meaning by comparing them with the fable of the seven blind men exploring an unfamiliar elephant "Each chapter addressess an aspect of meaning, yet none offers a clear sense of the broader, 'bigger' issues" (274)

The majority of marketing/advertising studies to date that apply a semiotic approach rely on the researcher's analysis of the communication Levy (1981) uses a structural approach to interpret consumer behaviour Williamson uses a semiotic approach to give her reading of ads Holbrook and Greyson (1986) suggest how semiology could be applied to the study of consumer esthetics Mick (1986) proposes applications of semiotics to consumer research.

Cleaveland (1986) is the only researcher who tests part of a proposed semiotic system for pretesting ads on consumers. The present study fully explores an audience's semiotic reading of ads. The following sections extend semiotic theory by the analysis and adjustment of existing methods to develop of a system which can be used to test women's interpretation of ads.

### **3.3.1. Semantics**

Miller (1973) defines language in two different ways. The first, a formal definition, is stated in terms of grammar. This is made up of, phonological information, syntactic information, formation of sentences and lexical information i.e. the meanings of words. The second is a functional definition which tells you what the sentence is used for. This is determined by the individuals conceptual knowledge and his/her system of beliefs which help to evaluate information. This study is not concerned with the grammatical analysis of language. Semantics is understood to be the study of ideas that words represent. As such particular attention is paid to the associations people have with a word. To find out the ideas that people associate with a word Deese's (1965) approach was used. This involved asking the women respondents what they associated with a word. The focus of attention is on the receiver. An alternative would be to ask receivers what the word means. The pilot discussion attempted this approach but respondents generally considered it was a "stupid question" so it was decided to concentrate only on associations of the product category in general and on the brand in the ad. This should show what the women were interpreting from the ad and how this related to their conceptualisation of the product category.

Research on the effects of advertising language has considered contexts such as psycholinguists (Harris, Sturm, Klassen and Bechtold 1986), symbolic (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1986), apperception (Levy 1986), verbal imagery using poetic analysis (Stern 1988) and semiotics (Cleaveland 1986). Only one of these methods concentrates on consumer interpretation, that is semiotics. Leiss, Kline and Jhally (1986) used content analysis to determine symbolism. Levy (1981) used subjective analysis to determine interpretation and Stern (1988) used literary criticism methods to assess how an ad acquires meaning. The method used to study the meaning of language in this study was derived from Cleaveland (1986) and Deese (1965). While it is recognised that contributions from other researchers do help in understanding meaning, it was not believed that the methods were appropriate for consumer use. In some cases it was expected that the women may use figurative language such as metaphor and parody in making associations between the ad and their own lives. This was not an area that was followed up because there are too many separate figures of speech used in different ads and the researcher wanted to see which ones were freely discussed by the women. Analysis is given to figures of speech that were used by the women.

### **3.3.2. Pragmatics**

Pragmatics studies the relation between linguistic expressions and their users. As such, meaning is not just a property of language, but of a particular speaker's use of language in a particular context. The realm of pragmatics is concerned with the hearers' interpretation of the speaker's intention in relation to the context of the communication. Pragmatics is the study of the "relation of signs to interpreters" (Morris 1946: 217). Pragmatic analysis requires assessment of the whole ad in relation to the receivers' existing

image of the advertiser and other manufacturers in the product category

Pragmatics is the study of context, meaning is attributed on the basis of prior perceptions and how the present communication fits the calculation of the context of the whole ad

There were three stages to pragmatic analysis in this study. The first was where respondents were asked to compare the ad shown to other ads in the product category. This should show the significance of what was said in relation to what is expected from the product category. People have prior perceptions and read ads in relation to all ads and also for the product category. Attention was given to reading of the ads in the product category rather than ads in general. It was felt that if both were asked the respondent would be confused. If only the ad is shown and no consideration is given to other ads, then a favourable evaluation of a specific reading may be totally misleading. It is possible for people to say that they liked an ad, but when they consider other ads their evaluation of these may show what they expect and want from a specific category of advertising. Evaluation of context is about reading what is not in the ad in relation to what is there. It should show the significance of the ad in relation to other ads. It should show if the receivers of the message perceive the ad as being different and better than other ads, or different and worse. The comparison may highlight re-occurring issues that people like or dislike across product categories. To discover this information the women were asked about their ad preference for a given product category.

The second stage of pragmatic analysis focused on the relation of the signs in the ad to the interpreter. Linguistic analysis of the relation of the sign to the receiver centres on the intention of the speaker and how this is interpreted.



by the receiver To determine this information in ads one could concentrate of the intention of the source But it was feared that if specific questions were asked on intention only the explicit intention, that is, they want us to buy, would be discussed, while the implicit intentions of advertising such as positioning the brand with a particular image would be ignored Therefore the women were asked to discuss their associations with the situations shown, the people and the activity in the ad This should show how the ad fits into the receivers schema for a particular product activity For example could they relate the ad to washing or could they relate to the people or ideas in the ad

The third stage was concerned with how the ad was read in relation to the existing image that the respondents had of a given advertiser The women were asked to describe the image they held of the advertiser and how the ad related to their image of the advertiser This should show if the context of the ad supports existing image perception or if the women perceive a change of image for the advertiser and if they evaluate the change in a favourable or unfavourable manner

### **3 3.3. Syntax**

Syntactics is the study of the sequence of words in a statement and the rules used to form the statement Syntax focuses on the grammatical structure of the sentence Syntax is about the relation of signs to each other, the structuring of different elements of a sentence It concerns the rules of language and how the structure affects semantic interpretation The ordering and the combination of the elements subject, verb phrase, object and complement are strictly limited in English The structure of the sentence must be well formed and must correspond to syntactical rules In determining what is going to be

said one must consider not only the semantic representation but also how a well formed syntactic representation gives correct emphasis to different aspects of the message

Hirschman (1988) conducted a syntactical analysis of Dallas and Dynasty. She broke down the narrative sequence by extrapolation of the fundamental syntax structure. Instead of studying the relation between the subject, verb and object, she examined the relation between actor, the actions in the narrative and the outcome of the action. A similar approach was taken to the study of ads where the main action was examined for the creation and transformation of meaning. In this study syntactics analysis was considered as being quite similar to the main structural analysis. Evaluation and analysis of syntax was derived from the respondents' descriptive discussion of what they thought of the ad, what the message in the ad was and the main signs read. The objective was to examine the relation of different signs in the ad to each other and to see if consumers interpretation of these matched or differed from the likely intention of the advertiser. Focus of attention was on the thematic interpretation rather than grammatical structure. Specific attention was given to the ability of the text/ad to transfer meaning between signs and thereby create a significant meaning for the brand.

#### **3.3.4. Structuralism**

Structuralists believe that the structure of any form of communication reveals the message. For structuralists communication can only be explained by examining the complex network of relations that link and unite parts of the communication. In applying the structural method to ads, it can be said that ads are the products of the human brain and that there is a universal meaning

somewhere beneath the surface features that is common to all "Structuralism claims that the symbolic function of the mind predetermines our ability to communicate" (Konner 1984 155-172) Langholz-Leymore (1987) specifically applies the structural method to advertising and believes that structural analysis of ads show that just as a new sentence conforms to existing rules of syntax so too ads must conform to the main signifier of the product category (19 327) Two issues must be addressed in relation to structural analysis in advertising The first centres on finding a system that will reveal universal meaning, this may be found in a product category, across all transformation ads, across all information ads, across all advertising, or some other definition of ads The second involves the method that should be used to uncover the meaning

Langholz-Leymore argues that structural analysis must be undertaken for a system of ads The system she uses is product categories "All the different claims of all the different brands operating in the market make up its advertising system Individual advertisements are nothing but isolated pieces in a jigsaw puzzle" (324) Francis (1986) also takes this view that structuralism is about evaluation of a system, and although he is highly critical of Leymore (1975) he acknowledges her attempt to define a system but questions her choice of product category as the base of the system Francis does not proceed to develop his own definition of a system Both Francis (1986) and Langholz-Leymore (1987) believe that a single ad is not an adequate structural base as it can only be read in isolation However it is argued that the system is the ad and the structural meaning is concerned with examining relations within the ad and between ads

Levi Strauss (1978) is insistent that investigation of a corpus of myths can begin anywhere, that is, with any one myth or part thereof. Structuralism is about "noticing how we apprehend nature, by observing the qualities of the classifications which we use and the way we manipulate the resulting categories, we shall be able to infer crucial facts about the mechanism of thinking" (Leach 1970: 26). The system that Levi Strauss originally proposed was the relationship between nature and culture and how cultural systems are derived from nature. Transformation of meaning is brought about through binary opposition, where the bi-polar positions take on more of their oppositional characteristics until they become their antonym.

Langholz-Leymore (1987) is saying that an ad is read across a product field, and no single ad can have a structure unless it is considered as part of a system. It is suggested that an ad itself has a structure because it is part of a system of all ads and it is the underlying system of signs in the ad that first needs structural analysis. Langholz-Leymore may be correct in establishing product categories as a base for systematic analysis of universal meaning. But no one in advertising has used or suggested an alternative system, and until the results of different systems are examined any proposed system is simply a proposition. The objective of using structural analysis in this research was to examine how women read ads, to see if it was possible to undertake a structural analysis by examining the women's responses to the various ads. Previous structuralist studies in advertising all centre on the researchers' interpretation. If a product category is examined and the researcher gives the sole reading of the ad then only one paradigm per ad may be read. But if an audience reading of the structural message is considered it may show different paradigms are read depending on the interpretation of signs in the ad. For

example, cowboys may be perceived as rough, gun slingers, or as people who have a healthy western lifestyle. It is argued that universal meaning is only evident if the receivers of the communication perceive the message or sign in a similar way.

In attempting to read levels of meaning in ads, structuralists use rules of transformation which associate some fundamental value with the product. By using a set of rules it is possible to determine the symbolic function or deeper meaning in the ad. The rules involve a reduction of the communication into a set of relationships using a binary system and analysis of this system reveals transformation of meaning from one code system to another. Levi Strauss's set of rules was used for structural analysis. These are:

1. Define the phenomena under study as a relation between two or more terms, real or supposed.
2. Construct a table of possible permutations between these terms.
3. Take this table as the general object of analysis which, at this level only, can yield necessary connections, the empirical phenomenon considered at the beginning being only one possible combination among others, the complete system of which must be reconstructed beforehand (Leach 1970: 25).

The objective of structural analysis of ads is to discover how relations which exist in an original code, for example nature, are used to produce cultural products which hold the same relations. Respondents' depth of reading is disclosed across their responses to various topics and not to one topic in particular. Key phenomena were determined by analyzing discussion data that resulted from topic one (Appendix 4). Structural analysis was concerned with how the women related different segments of the ad to form a complete

reading of the ad. The relations between different elements in the ad were analyzed to find out the number and type of segments read and their significance to the women. The objective was to see if the groups broke down the different segments of the ad to uncover a deep symbolic meaning. The structural system should show the number of segments read in the ad, whether the signs succeeded in transferring meaning, and whether attention was given to product or symbolic signs.

To construct a binary table it was necessary to find out what attracted peoples' attention in the ad. The most dominant signs and concepts are picked out and analyzed to see if any transformation of meaning took place between binary pairs. In constructing the binary table the researcher studied the ad to determine the likely intention of the advertiser in terms of the binary relationship that he/she hoped an audience would concentrate on, this binary pair is also included in the table. If no group read the intended binary relation this will be shown clearly in the presentation of results. For some if not all of the ads, it is expected that where different groups or even different women within a group, have diverse opinions then it is possible that both binary elements will be read. This difference of opinion will be discussed fully in the analysis under the transformation of meaning.

Transformation shows the relation between signs. A transformation matrix is proposed to describe how cultural consumer products take their meaning from symbolic signs. The transformation matrix examines the women's level of reading in the ads. It is expected that some women will only read the surface level of meaning while others will read a deeper level. The matrix shows four quadrants, the vertical axis considers the level of reading and is described as

deep or surface The surface level of reading corresponds to denotative meaning and the deep level corresponds to connotative meaning Reading of each ad commences at the deep symbolic quadrant to determine who read these signs and how they proceeded to read the surface symbolic The third quadrant examined is the surface product signs which show if there is any link between the product and symbolic signs The final quadrant is the deep product meaning which will show if the product has taken its meaning from the deep symbolic signs The reading process is based on the notion that people break down the message into a number of segments and will perceive a certain amount of the message as redundant Some people will read more segments than others, the proposed matrix should reveal the key segments read in each ad, by whom and at what level Transformation matrices are given for each ad in chapter 5

### **3.3.5. Visual Method**

This part of the study is concerned with how the visual was read A review of existing methodologies on visual effect centres on individual information processing Studies in cognitive psychology show that individual differences in ability and preference to process imagery can have a significant impact on cognitive functions Research on individual differences in imaginal processing falls into three areas

Imagery vividness - the clarity of the mental image an individual evokes

Imagery control - the individual's ability to self-generate a mental image or to perform certain manipulations, such as mental rotation

Imagery style - the individual's willingness to habitually engage in imaginally versus verbally oriented process (Childers Houston and Heckler 1985 126)

Imagery vividness is measured by the use of the Vividness of Visual Imagery Questionnaire, a 16 item scale with five response alternatives. Imagery Control is measured by the Gordon Test (1949) of Visual Imagery Control which includes 12 items with a true/false or unsure response format. Imagery style is measured by the Verbalizer Visualizer Questionnaire which consists of 15 scale items and uses a true/false response format (MacInnis 1987: 88). These scales have been applied and adapted to advertising by Childers Houston and Heckler (1985). The focus of these studies is on the individual's ability and preference for visual processing. Application of imaginal studies to advertising can be divided into two broad categories. In one, pictorial processing effects on memory are examined and in the other attitudinal responses receive attention. The memory studies, Lutz and Lutz (1977) Childers and Houston (1984), Houston, Childers and Heckler (1987), and Edell and Staelin (1983) show that consumers process pictorial material in ads differently than verbal material. The attitude studies concentrate on showing the mediating effects of visual processing independent of verbal contributions upon belief, attitude and intention responses Rossiter and Percy (1980), Percy and Rossiter (1982), Mitchell and Olson (1981), and Tsal (1985) .

None of the studies on visual processing differentiate between literal and figurative images, nor do they consider the visual presentation of the image whereby the relation between the sign and the object could be iconic, indexical or symbolic. It is the reading of the relation between the sign and object that determines the significance of meaning for the viewer and their willingness and ability to transfer meaning from the referent to the object. Use of the imagery scales was considered to see if individuals who had greater ability to visualize read the signs in ads in a different way to individuals



classified as verbalizers. But it was felt that the introduction of 43 scale items for each ad would be too demanding a task for those who took part in the research. Instead it was considered more important to obtain as much discussion as possible on thoughts about the signs used in the ads rather than tracing individual ability to visualize.

The type of methodology for examining pictures in this study is hermeneutic in origin where emphasis is on the relation between the internal and external textual contexts. The internal is taken to mean what is within the ad visually, and the external is taken to mean how it fits, matches, contradicts, or pleases the viewer. The analysis is not particularly concerned with issues such as whether 80% liked or disliked an ad. Instead it is concerned with what visuals the groups read and how they interpreted these. Did they match the visuals with similar referents and how did these referents/ideological systems effect the reading of an ad? Did the meaning of the visuals or referents triggered transfer to the brand? Were the groups able to elaborate on the visuals and what was this elaboration concerned with?

Visual analysis is concerned with thinking about a picture, which is treated as something more than a merely physical object. Attention is given to the inferences made about the visual, the referent of the ideological system triggered and the effect of this on the subjects. Visual analysis of the ads focuses on three areas which were derived from Baxandall's model (1988). Baxandall examines visual description in terms of cause, comparison and effect. Cause is inferences made about the action or process that lead to the picture being what it is, making comparisons with things whose effect on us is of a similar quality. To discover what people are thinking in relation to the

visual the subjects were asked to discuss fully the pictures that came to their minds when they thought about the ad (see topic 3 Appendix 4) This should reveal the sign and referent read The sign will be analyzed according to Saussure's definition of its two component parts the signifier or material object and the signified or the mental connotations of the signifier The connotations that the subjects inferred will show whether they associated the meanings of the referent discussed with the product The cause variable should show the ideological referent system that the visual has triggered

To produce an effect in advertising creators of the ad often rely on comparative devices Comparison is used to make associations and transfer meanings with things whose effect on us is of a similar quality The idea behind comparative analysis is to see if the women talk of the visuals on the surface of the ad, or the representing images as though they are the product represented For example, a perfume is a sensual woman, a cup of coffee is a friend Visual techniques that are used in advertising to produce comparison are metaphor, analogy, juxtaposition, symbolisation The subjects were not asked to give a metaphorical evaluation Instead the text that resulted from the discussion of the visuals was analyzed according to the technique or comparison device that dominated the discussion (see Appendix 7 for example of visual discussion)

The main visual technique used in producing a comparative effect was identified by the researcher from the subjects' discussion of each ad Comparative techniques used by the advertisers include metaphors, analogy, juxtaposition and symbolisation Metaphors compare two dissimilar entities, metaphors do not claim outright that the object in the comparison is the same

as the subject but instead seeks to "produce the reader into making that mental transference by himself" (Stern 1991 163) Metaphoric analysis shows the groups that succeeded in making the mental transfer of meaning between signs

"Metaphor is an attempt at communicating something, usually something emotional which literal language cannot communicate, or which metaphorical language will communicate more vividly and intensely" (Boulton 1971 158) Metaphor is used in advertising to make associations with things that are already perceived as having emotional or physical values A metaphor may not hold the exact same associations for every reader, the purpose of the analysis is to see if there was some portion that was read by all and to determine if there was fusion of meaning between the comparative signs in the metaphor Metaphor is often needed in advertising because literal language cannot be used to create or express emotion or some other value for a brand as easily as a direct association of the brand with the metaphorical idea The figurative use of language such as "Put a tiger in your tank" has many connotations for the reader and makes people think more deeply and make several associations than a literal expression such as 'Put some strength in your tank' Only metaphors discussed by the subjects will be analyzed

A visual is given meaning by the advertiser by relating signs to objects This is achieved by use of symbolic or/and indexical signs Studies such as Stern (1988), Vestgaard and Schroder (1985), and Geis (1982) suggest the need to consider the use of figurative forms in advertising No study to date has applied these methods to consumers' interpretation of the visual in advertising Each figurative form could provide the basis of a separate or a

comparative study on the effect of form on the viewer This study is not concerned with the effectiveness of the symbolic or the indexical sign, but is concerned with the form of signs read and how this determined the meaning taken from the ad as a whole and the final meaning given to the object in the ad

Symbols are used as comparative devices to give meaning Symbols are thought to be the most powerful forms of image because readers must involve themselves in mental effort to grasp the meaning In this way they become actively involved in the message Vestergaard and Schroder (1985 61) claim that "visual symbols are rare in advertising images it takes a sustained advertising effort to establish a link between an arbitrary image and a product " It is argued that arbitrary abstract symbols are rare but because much advertising today is visual, symbols are used frequently to build association between the symbol and its object The relation between the sign and the object can be indexical or symbolic Indexical images occur by means of juxtaposition where the favourable connotations of one sign transfer to the object in the ad Juxtaposition suggests that the meaning of the object is the same as the sign, whereas symbolism claims that the object is the sign

Effect describes direct effect of the visual on the subjects for example, the visuals may have been perceived as happy, enchanting, sad, rough Responses to the topic (Appendix 4) on mood, movement and music were examined to see if the subjects concentrated on mood over music and movement The indirect effect from the cause and comparisons variables are also considered, in many cases the indirect effect may have predominated the reading of the ad Only the variables that predominated in the discussion are

analyzed for effect. For example, in some ads music is discussed as having an effect, in others it is not.

### **3.4. Focus Groups as a Qualitative Method**

Choice of type of research procedure used must relate to the objectives of the study. Qualitative research is advocated where the study is exploratory in nature. The purpose of this study is to see how people read ads. The study seeks an explanation of what is read, that is the personal significance of advertising concepts to the respondents. This would require participants giving detailed descriptions of situations, people, interactions and activities. This information is unobtainable from quantitative data. The options in qualitative research are either to use in-depth individual or group interviews. Groups were chosen because of their ability to generate data. Lautman (1982) refers to this as the assembly effect "where the presence of others creates a state of psychophysiological arousal that intensifies attention, participation, competition, emotions and self-evaluations leading panelists to become highly involved in their task" (53). The objective of using focus groups is to learn about participants' perspectives on the topic of interest. This is broader than an attitude measure, it takes into account how people think about comparable objects which can explain why participants think as they do. The strength of focus groups lies firmly in their ability to explore topics which are generated by the researcher, and the individual members of the group. Attention is given to what is important to the group in relation to the topic being discussed.

### **3.5. Planning the Groups**

In conducting qualitative research a systematic procedure must be followed in planning and conducting group interviews. Proper presentation is essential

to the achievement of meaningful results. Several factors must be considered in planning and conducting the group. In a practical setting budget and time constraints are major considerations in planning the number of groups and when they are going to be conducted. This is understandable since the budget for each group is about £1000-£1500. The main constraints in this study was selection of the number of groups so that the desired objectives could be fulfilled. Groups were conducted between mid-October and mid-December 1989. On average two to three groups were conducted every week. Each organizer was contacted two weeks before interviewing and asked to set up their groups. They were recontacted about three days before the actual discussion session to confirm that all eight members could attend. When a group postponed their day or night it was moved to the nearest available time. The reason for this is that the group were expecting a session and the researcher did not want to lose the groups motivation or willingness to participate. Group re-scheduling occurred three times due to a sudden inconvenience for the subjects involved. The groups were conducted during the day for women based in the home, and at night for those who worked outside the home.

### **3.5.1. Determining the Number of Groups**

Qualitative research samples are non-probability samples selected in such a way as to increase the likelihood of covering a range of issues in relation to experiences of particular individuals. Collins provides a useful critique of the validity of qualitative research samples.

I have been looking at some issues of sample size and inference. In this context, the ability of Reynolds and Johnson's 20 groups to identify a range of issues is not surprising. 20 groups will give a total sample of around 150. A sample of this size has a 99% probability of including (and therefore identifying) a minority view of

behaviour as small as 3%, and a 95% probability of including a minority as small as 2% (Sykes 1990: 6)

Twenty groups were selected in this study with a total sample size of 160. A systematic procedure was employed in sample selection which relates to the expectations and important dimensions of the research. The dimensions of the research will determine the number of groups and sub-groups required. Fewer groups are needed if the groups are homogeneous in terms of both background and role based perspectives. Two of the critical variables chosen were social class background and whether women worked outside or were based in the home. Two main social class categories were chosen based on the occupation of head of household, these were ABC1 and C2DE. Ten groups were selected from each social class category. Within these categories, groups were selected on the basis of women who worked outside the home and those who worked within the home. For each social class there were five groups of women who worked outside the home and five who worked within. An additional sub factor, age, was considered as a variable which may affect interpretation of ads. A degree of flexibility was imposed with respect to age. These groups were conducted last and it was decided that if the results of the four groups, two under 30 and two over 60 were significantly different more groups would be conducted. This did not happen, so it was decided to conclude the groups after the twentieth discussion. Appendix 8 gives a full breakdown of the groups according to the key dimensions.

### **3.5.2. Determining the Size of Groups**

The usual size of groups is somewhere between 6 and 10. The number selected for the groups was 8. As the groups were located in the women's houses it was felt that more than eight might create an imposition on the organizer. One of the pilots was run with 5 simply because people failed to turn up and it was felt

that the women had to force the discussion. The other pilots where eight attended worked well in terms of people interacting with each other and therefore it was decided to limit the group number to eight.

### **3.5.3. Determining the Source of Participants**

Results from focus groups are not generalizable because the sample chosen is not representative, so the sample size is not an issue. Sample bias is an issue. A typical solution, given the small size of focus group samples, is to work with chosen subgroups from the total population and to work with samples that provide the most meaningful information. Women were chosen as the main sample group on the basis that so much television advertising is aimed at women. The study had to be confined to one gender base because differences in background variable were included as possible factors that may determine how people read ads. Morgan (1988: 47) advocates the use of four groups per type of variable in order to observe the range of response to a topic. If men were to be included as part of the study this would have meant conducting forty groups. Mixed groups were not considered as it was believed that arguments may centre around issues such as male and female role portrayals which may not accurately reflect how either group perceive the ads.

Recruitment of participants can take a great deal of effort, if specific categories of participants are required and detailed planning is necessary to locate them. The aim in recruitment was to contact one woman according to the required criteria and ask her to select seven other women to participate. Profiles of each group are given in Appendix 8, the group is identified by a random woman's name selected for the organizer. The women who became the group organizer were sourced in a variety of ways. Approximately half of the



C2DE groups were sourced by contacting Family Resource groups. The resource centres would suggest a woman who they considered would be willing to organize a group, and then these women were contacted and briefed on what would be required. Every one of the women contacted in this way willingly conducted a group. Five groups in each of the C2DE and ABC1 categories were recruited by calling to a number of housing areas and discussing the research with different women. In some cases the women approached refused to participate, but again the acceptance and the willingness of the women surprised the researcher. The remaining five ABC1 women were contacted through clubs and societies.

The group organizer was briefed and asked not to include best friends as it was felt that they might form a clique which would hinder group interaction. Focus groups theory advocates the use of strangers, as friends may have boundaries around the way certain topics are discussed. The women were asked to choose acquaintances rather than friends. The women who worked were asked to choose other women who worked outside the home. On contacting the women to find out how they were getting on with their recruitment, it was discovered some had difficulty in getting seven other women and therefore felt it necessary to include a friend. It was decided to allow this and it was felt that if the group dynamic was affected a new group would be selected. This did not happen in any of the groups which included friends. Three women (Susan, Lily and Marion) had difficulty in confining the group to all housewives or all workers, so one or two of the women in their group fell outside that dimension. Social class screening did not take place until the actual group session. It was felt that the women would invite others of a similar background and that if the women were asked to screen others in

terms of occupation of head of household their participation in the study would be jeopardised. When the women arrived in the house they were asked to fill in a short demographic questionnaire (Appendix 1). In all cases except one (Valerie) social class background matched the requirements of the research. In Valerie's group two of the women fell into the C2DE social class. It was decided to allow the group, as the social class mix did not hinder group interaction.

#### **3.5 4. Determining the Level of Moderator Involvement**

There has been much criticism in the literature of the role of the moderator in focus groups. Several researchers (Payne 1975 and Axelrod 1975) argue that because of the proliferation of focus groups, clients assume once they have seen one they can run one. The running of focus groups is quite complex and the moderator must adjust their role in relation to group dynamics. Level of moderator involvement is described as high or low whereas in practice it may be at any point in the continuum. In groups where there is low involvement, the moderator relies on dynamic group interaction. Where there is high involvement, the moderator controls the set of topics that are discussed and the group dynamics. Low levels of involvement are important if a full scale content analysis is required otherwise the content will reflect the moderators views and not the groups. High levels are required when the objective is to provide answers to a set of sharply drawn questions. The groups in this study used low levels of moderator direction at the start in order to generate data on thoughts to the ad. For some of the topics high level of direction was given in order to probe what the researcher wanted to know more about, and to make sure that a desired set of topics was discussed. The moderation of the group was non directive, the moderator told the group at the outset that it was the group's

experiences which was important and that the research was concerned with finding out how they thought and felt about the topics being discussed. Each group was told that the moderator would not be judging opinions given or partaking in the discussion with their own views. The moderator's role was one of listening and reassuring the group by showing interest in what they were saying and encouraging group interaction.

### **3.6. Conducting the Focus Groups**

Guidelines suggested by Merton (1956) were considered in deciding how to conduct the focus group. The four criteria that Merton presented for conducting effective focus groups were, range, specificity, depth and personal context. Under range the group discusses topics that are important to the issue being examined. Discussion is generated from the group only, in unstructured settings, and from both the group and the moderator in structured groups. The more structured the group the less generation of topics from the group. The aim of this research was to let the group develop the issues that are most important to them and to avoid cueing the group to the topic. The perceived danger was that the group would answer the question as in a structured questionnaire format and would not elaborate on what was important to them. This would result in group failure to elaborate or freely elicit own thoughts and feelings. At the same time the researcher wanted the groups to discuss certain topics, and clear direction was given in these circumstances as in, for example, the semantic area (Appendix 4).

Specificity means that the moderator directs discussions toward participants' concrete experiences. The researcher needs to determine why the group holds particular attitudes. When the research gets the group to concentrate on

individual experiences they avoid generalised discussion which fails to show reasons for holding specific attitudes

The group should explore the respondents' feelings in some depth. This can be difficult to achieve especially if respondents speak in terms of generalities and do not relate the topic to their own experiences. Morgan suggests that the group should begin with generalities because participants may not be able to follow a researcher's detailed thinking on the topic and this allows them time to ease into the topic. An added difficulty is that the individual may not have thought about a topic in a detailed manner or they may not be good at verbalizing the thoughts they have. With respect to advertising these problems can be accentuated as was shown in the pilot by the comment "For God's sake it is only an ad". Some people found it difficult to reveal their own experiences in relation to the ad. The danger was that such comments would stop others from discussing their experiences. In such cases individuals were reinforced and others were encouraged to partake in the discussion.

Observation by the moderator must take into account the personal context that participants use in elaborating their responses to a topic. The researcher is trying to find out why participants see a topic in a particular way. These reasons may relate to social roles and individual experiences. Personal context is important in advertising because the signs used have particular meaning for people. The referent of signs must be explored to find out personal context.

### **3.6.1. Determining the Interview Content**

One of the main constraints on interview content is time. The average length of time for a focus group is one and a half to two hours. The number of topics

that can be discussed is determined by the time available and by the type of group direction given. Morgan (1988: 56) suggests that for an unstructured group interview two topics can be covered and for a structured group the limit may be four or five. The groups in this research were structured with high moderator involvement. Following from the Wells (1974) suggestion, the topics for discussion were organized into a guide which the moderator committed to memory so that the discussion followed the same order from group to group. The guide was created by preparing a full list of the questions that would answer the research objectives. These questions were then ordered into six topics. Appendices 3 and 4 give the list of questions that were considered in forming the topic for discussion. The presentation of the topics in a question answer format to the group was avoided, as it was believed that they would end up interacting with the moderator and not with each other.

Social scientists use questionnaires as a means of supplementing observations. These provide a means of gaining background information on who is participating and their socio-demographic breakdown. The questionnaire also provides a means of quantification which is considered by some as a safeguard against overly subjective interpretations (Rosenstein 1976). Questionnaires were used in this research to highlight the difference in the quality of information obtained from using quantitative attitude measures and qualitative methods that explain why and how people perceive ads as they do.

### **3.6 2. Site Selection and Data Collection**

The researcher must decide on the location of the focus group. Site considerations must be centred on the participants' needs. Will they come to a group that is located outside their own area? Research issues that must be

addressed in site location is the effect on the group of natural as opposed to a laboratory type of environment. Typically, marketing and advertising groups are conducted in hotels or similar environments. The researcher felt that the home was the most natural environment and that this location would be pursued above all others. If there was failure in getting group agreement for conducting groups in a home base then another location would be considered. It was also felt that some of the groups would be completely intimidated by a strange hotel location. All of the subjects contacted gave permission to contact the group in their homes.

Six ads were selected for discussion by respondents. Participants saw each ad twice, the two viewings were consecutive and prior to each there was separate discussion on the six ads. After two repetitions of the ad respondents were asked to complete a short attitudinal questionnaire. The questionnaires (Appendix 2) for each ad were given to the women when they had seen the ad twice. Each group was taped, and the tapes were then transferred to transcripts which formed the basis for analysis. It is suggested by qualitative researcher practitioners that the impression of the group should be discussed as part of analysis. Group impressions on the moderator are given in Appendix 10.

### **3.6.3. Choice of Ads**

A number of factors were reviewed in selection of ads. At first consideration was given to the use of an informational/emotional categorization. This would have meant using the Puto and Wells (1984) or the Rossiter and Percy (1987) method of judging ads. These methods assume that ads can be assigned to discrete categories of either information or emotion. This may not always be

the case. Some people may read information in an ad and others may read emotion. Since significance of meaning was being examined it was not considered essential to have an even distribution of ads representing information and emotion. However in order to test the semiotic system some ads were chosen which were primarily informational (Surf and Bank of Ireland, Appendix 9) and others because they were emotional (Maxwell House and Chanel, Appendix 9), and two ads were chosen which could have been read as informational or emotional, (these were Peugeot and Birds Eye, Appendix 9). Another factor which may affect the significance of reading was the type of product advertised and its appeal to women. A range of fast moving consumer goods and infrequently purchased products were chosen. Surf, Birds Eye and Maxwell House were selected as fast moving consumer goods ads, and Peugeot and Chanel as infrequently purchased products. The bank ad was chosen because it was felt that loans were an infrequent purchase, as opposed to a current account ad which would be classified as a fast moving service. In deciding on choice of ads, consideration was given to confining selection to one product category as suggested by Langholz-Leymore (1987) and Francis (1986). But it was felt that while this had advantages for structural analysis it could be damaging for other areas such as semantics and pragmatics. The participants would be dealing with the same associations continually and it was feared that there would be forced participation to unimportant signs if they felt that they were repetitive in their own discussions. The main objective was to test the system across a range of ads to determine main signs read and their significance to the subjects, therefore, ads from different product categories were chosen.

### 3.7. Pilot Groups

Discussions of pilot groups centre on the main topic items which were divided into sections (Appendix 3) The first topic which was supposed to ease people into discussion, by asking them about general attitudes to advertising The results for this topic were not disappointing but it was felt that the behaviour of the group for the rest of the topics was greatly affected by the initial discussion The group became immediate experts on advertising and all discussion was judgemental There was great difficulty in getting the group to relate to their own experiences The following examples are typical of the comments that emerged from the general advertising discussion

"I would tend to be negative about all ads and also I am not swayed to use a product because I see it on TV "

"There are certain ads that would irritate you and you would find them very offensive This image making role, the role of what every woman should be I see in a lot of ads "

"I hate the role that women have to play in 70% of the ads "

"I don't think ads persuade you, I would buy a product through word of mouth, from people talking about products "

"I don't know I think if I saw something that I was using and they produced something better say for example Persil, well they produced a liquid Persil then I would try that just for a change "

It was felt that these kinds of comments committed women to certain attitudes to such a degree that discussion on specific ads might maintain a pattern to correlate with what was said at the start So, for example, if a woman said she was negative about most ads, or that ads did not persuade her, or she generally



hated the role of women in ads, then her reading of all other ads might or would have to, relate to these statements. The women were more vociferous and elaborative in discussions on advertising in general in comparison to a specific ad. The purpose of the study was to examine specific reading. It appeared that the reading of advertising was so general that it did not produce a system that was used for all ads, and it hindered full elaboration of specific ads. It was, therefore, decided to exclude general advertising topics from the discussion for the main groups.

During the general discussion the participants were probed for thoughts they had to the ad. In the first pilot the moderator asked "What do you think of the ad just seen?" This resulted in an immediate evaluation of the ad such as "I think it is good." What was sought was a full discussion on what the women were thinking about, which would explain how they held particular attitudes. This probe was changed in the second pilot to "I would like you to tell me as fully as you can thoughts that come to your minds as you think about that ad." There was a complete change in the type of response from the participants. There appeared to be disclosure of the key signs read with elaboration on the significance of the sign to the women and how they related the sign to the brand advertised.

The verbal topic worked well in that the women discussed the associations and the main referents for washing and the advertised brand. No changes were made to the semantic association aspects of the topic. A further aspect of this theme was to see if the participants could relate the words used in the ad with washing or the brand advertised. In order to explore these associations women were asked what they thought of the words in the ad. The results of the probe

showed that women either evaluated the words as being good or bad, or they recalled the words with very little comment. One of the reasons for the women's failure to explore semantic significance of words in the ad was that the ads were highly visual, and so, they were concentrating on the theme of the ad without paying specific attention to the words used. The women were video literate, i.e., they did not have to hear or consciously pay attention to the words to know what was happening in the ad. It was decided that for the second pilot the participants would be given the verbal text of the ad and asked to discuss or write their comments on semantic associations. For half of the ads the typed versions of the copy were given to respondents before the verbal discussion. The problem was that when it came to discussion of verbal associations of words people immediately consulted their sheets. For the remaining ads subjects were given the typed copy at the end of discussion on all ads and asked to write their comments. This proved to be a very strenuous task for the group, they were quite tired and found difficulty in giving a written evaluation. The results of the change did not prove to be significantly better than the probe in the first pilot. But the length of time for the second pilot was almost three hours and the women were exhausted by the end of the discussion. Therefore it was decided not to give text and to revert to the original format in the first pilot.

The next topic that the women were introduced to, centred on visual reading of the ad. The participants were asked to think about pictures that came to mind when they thought first of washing and then of the ad. The results of the visual section were interesting and highlighted two important issues in relation to the reading of visuals. The first was the ability of the participants to read concrete and abstract visuals, and the second was the respondents'

perceptions of congruency between verbal and visual content. The Chanel No 5 ad was quite abstract in that it centres on fantasy; the participants found it extremely difficult to grasp the ideas, and few if any actually spoke of fantasising. Whereas when reading the Surf ad, which was very concrete, the women could relate and visualize from the concept, even though the majority had never windsurfed. It was recognized that verbal competence could be the cause of respondents' failure in expressing verbally, meaning which is expressed non verbally. For example, fantasy is something experienced but not generally discussed or cognitively thought about. Similar difficulties in expression also occurred with mood, where mood evoked feelings which were more complex in terms of expression, there tended to be a lack of discussion. For example the mood in the Maxwell House ad was perceived as happy and friendly and the women freely discussed their feelings in respect to the ad. However where the mood was one of suspense the women in general failed to verbalize the mood and their feelings. It was decided not to change the probes used to explore key visual signs and mood perceived. The reason being that if the same trend re-occurs in the main study then it highlights the problems of verbalisation of non verbal signs.

Changes were made in the third pilot for the congruency probe. In the first two pilots, participants were asked how well they felt the visuals matched the verbal content of the ad. The idea here was to see if there was congruency between the verbal and the visual content. Instead of a discussion on verbal and visual content emerging, the women replied with a simple no, or else they commented on what they thought the advertiser wanted them to read from the ad, as for instance, when one person commented "they are trying to get you to borrow money for all sorts of things." To pursue the congruency theme

would have meant reducing the time available for a general discussion on the visual. The congruency issue was not deliberately explored with the main groups, it was, however, believed that it would be clear from the signs read in the verbal and visual section if there was incongruency between the main signs read.

Osgood's semantic differential bi-polar scales were used in the questionnaire. It was decided to include them as part of the discussion to see if it was possible to explore the significance of meaning from these three scales. The results of pilot one were disappointing, chiefly because there was a lack of depth of discussion. In fact more information was gained from the self administered questionnaire. The women just said yes or no when asked to discuss if the ad was good, active or strong. These questions were left in for Pilot 2, but it was decided that if the responses were confined to yes and no then these questions would be deleted. The results of Pilot 2 were identical to Pilot 1 and the questions were removed for Pilot 3 and the main study.

It was hoped that the topic on information/transformation would reveal thoughts and emotions experienced from the ad and associated with the product category. It was thought that the pragmatic reading which focuses on a participant's use of a sign in a particular context would evolve naturally out of this discussion. After analysis of Pilot 1 it was clear that the questions on the informational and transformation areas simply did not produce either direction of reading in relation to thoughts and feelings or did not reveal how the participants related to the ad. Discussion in relation to liking tended to be confined to a yes or no reply with very brief comment on product benefits. In seeking out emotional impact respondents were probed for emotional

authenticity, that is, their perceptions of a match in emotional experience shown in the ad and their own experience of the product. Discussion on emotion should have centred on experience and the feelings the participants had about the ad. The women found it difficult to verbalize their feelings, most replied that the ad made them feel good or that they hated the ad. The first two pilots showed similar results for this area and it was decided that direct discussion on emotion would not reveal the emotional experiences. It was felt that an indirect approach such as comparison of ads where the women could think of experiences that they liked or disliked in other ads may reveal emotions.

The only area of transformation where there was full discussion was the brand image consistency topic. The discussion on comparison of image in the ad and how it related to an existing image worked well. However there was a lack of association and comparison of other ads in the product category. It was decided to change the focus on this topic entirely to pragmatics in the second pilot. The discussion commenced with a comparison of all ads in the product category. The women gave full elaboration on this area and had no difficulty in describing what they thought, what they liked or what experiences they felt were relevant to the ad. Appendix 4 gives the final set of topics that were used in the main study. The pilot groups were extremely valuable in drawing up the main discussion topics. The discussion from the pilot topics demonstrated the importance of the wording of the topic, so that an explanation and interactive discussion would result and not just an evaluative statement.

Chapter 4 Analysis of Questionnaire

4. Introduction

The analysis of results is divided into two chapters Chapter 4 examines the results from the questionnaire Chapter 5 presents a semiotic reading of the ads which resulted from verbal discussion of ads This chapter commences with a discussion of results that emerged from analysis of questionnaires The questionnaire was designed to show the usefulness of two attitude methodologies, semantic differential scale measurement and free elicitation in reading the content of the ads The analysis of attitude gives separate results for each method and compares both methods

4.1 Attitude to the Ad

Attitude to the ad is defined as favourable or unfavourable evaluation of the ad by the individual Three variables are generally used to measure attitude to the ad on a semantic scale, favourable, like, and good The mean scores for these three variables are given in Figure 1 for each ad Data in Figure 1 shows that Maxwell House obtained the most favourable attitude to the ad while Chanel and Peugeot received the least favourable While respondents showed a positive brand attitude they did not intend to purchase the products (Figure 2)

|                 | Favourable | Like | Good |
|-----------------|------------|------|------|
| Surf            | 1 35       | 1 25 | 1 42 |
| Birds Eye       | 1 68       | 1 63 | 1 64 |
| Chanel          | 63         | 41   | 51   |
| Bank of Ireland | 1 31       | 1 23 | 1 33 |
| Peugeot         | 97         | 94   | 94   |
| Maxwell House   | 2 20       | 2 12 | 2 09 |

Figure 4 1 Attitude to the Ad

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 show comparisons between attitude to the ad and attitude to the brand. Respondents had a more favourable attitude to the Surf ad than to the brand and a negative intention to purchase. There was a similarity between attitudes to the ad and to the brand for Birds Eye but a neutral intention to purchase. Chanel received a neutral ad evaluation, positive brand evaluation and negative intention to purchase. Respondents had a positive attitude to Bank of Ireland and a positive intention to purchase. This data shows that Surf needs to bring their brand attitude in line with respondents' attitudes to the ad. Peugeot and Chanel were the least liked ads but received the second and third highest attitude to the brand scores respectively. These two simple figures suggest a need to examine how and what was read in the ads. This information may reveal reasons for the mismatch between attitude to the ad and attitude to the brand.

|                 | Good | Like | Purchase<br>Intention |
|-----------------|------|------|-----------------------|
| Surf            | 79   | 69   | -1.2                  |
| Birds Eye       | 1.50 | 1.30 | .05                   |
| Chanel          | 1.59 | 1.30 | .05                   |
| Bank of Ireland | 1.47 | 1.36 | .78                   |
| Peugeot         | 1.75 | 1.79 | -1.83                 |
| Maxwell House   | 2.05 | 1.97 | 1.2                   |

**Figure 4.2 Brand Attitude and Purchase Intention**

Attitude to the ad and the brand were also examined for brand users and non users. In all cases but one both attitude to the brand and to the ad scores were higher for users. The exception was attitude to the Surf ad where attitude to the ad scores were slightly higher for non users (1.45) than users (1.21). Purchase intention scores were negative for all non users and positive for all users. The least negative of non users was Maxwell House (-.62) the most positive of users was Bank of Ireland (2.49). This shows that the most successful ad Maxwell House also had the lowest negative intention to purchase among non users.

#### 4.1.1 Demographic Analysis of Attitudes

Attitude to the ad, brand and purchase intention were examined by age, education, number of children, and whether the women worked inside or outside the home to see if there were consistent differences across any of the demographic categories. Typical data that emerged from the respondents is given in Figure 4.3 for the Surf ad only, this is followed by a summary outline of attitudinal differences for all ads.

The demographic profile for Surf shows that attitude to the ad was more positive for Surf than brand attitude across all age groups. Brand attitude was slightly more positive for older age groups but still not as strong as their attitude to the ad. While all age groups had a positive attitude to the brand and to the ad they had a negative intention to purchase. The same general finding was true of those with children. However those with 6+ children had a stronger brand attitude and also a positive intention to purchase. Of all the brands in the survey, Surf had the lowest brand attitude score.

There was no significant difference in evaluation of the Birds Eye ad with means of around 1.5 for different age groups. Brand attitude was slightly more favourable for the younger age groups. Purchase intention was neutral for all age groups. There seemed to be a more positive attitude to Birds Eye for those with more children, their mean scores were 2.28 compared with 1.27 for those with no children. There was also a slightly more positive attitude to the brand for those working in the home compared with those working outside the home. Intention to purchase was very negative for those with no children, -1.63, and very positive for those with 5+ children, 2.42. There was greater difference between attitude to the ad, brand attitude and purchase intention across people with and without children than across age groups or between women working in or outside the home. There was little difference in comparing attitude to the ad with attitude to



the brand, both were evaluated in a similar manner across demographic variables. The only case where there was a significant difference was with those who had no children. They evaluated the ad in quite a favourable manner but brand evaluation was neutral to slightly positive.

| Surf               | Under 30 | 30-44 | 45-60 | Over 60     |
|--------------------|----------|-------|-------|-------------|
| Attitude to ad     |          |       |       |             |
| Favourable         | 1.19     | 1.39  | 1.37  | 2.33        |
| Like               | 1.11     | 1.30  | 1.37  | 1.33        |
| Good               | 1.19     | 1.43  | 1.81  | 1.66        |
| Attitude to brand  |          |       |       |             |
| Good               |          |       |       |             |
| Like               | 50       | 64    | 93    | 33          |
| Purchase Intention | -1.30    | -1.36 | - .31 | -1.33       |
|                    | Children |       | Work  |             |
|                    | 0        | 1-5   | 6+    | In Out      |
| Attitude to ad     |          |       |       |             |
| Favourable         | 1.0      | 1.42  | 1.14  | 1.39 1.35   |
| Like               | 1.09     | 1.33  | .57   | 1.44 1.17   |
| Good               | 1.27     | 1.46  | 1.28  | 1.51 1.39   |
| Attitude to brand  |          |       |       |             |
| Good               | 72       | 75    | 1.57  | 76 82       |
| Like               | 45       | 59    | 1.71  | 67 62       |
| Purchase Intention | -2.09    | -1.25 | .85   | - .93 -1.37 |

Figure 4.3 Demographic Analysis of Attitudes to Surf

Attitude to the Chanel ad for different age groups showed a more positive score among younger age groups. The attitude to the ad in general went from neutral

for older groups, to slightly positive for younger age groups. However, older groups held a more positive attitude to the brand, in fact, of all the brand attitudes across the six ads, the strongest brand attitude was held by older people to Chanel. Attitude to the brand Chanel was much stronger across all age groups than attitude to the Chanel ad. Purchase intention was negative for all women. Differences in attitude to the ad emerged between women with and without children. There were positive evaluations among women who did not have children (1.09) and neutral to negative for those who did have (6/-28). Those who worked outside the home had a more favourable attitude compared with those who worked in the home. Brand attitude was more positive than ad attitude for those with and without children. Purchase intention was slightly positive for those with no children (.45) and very negative for those with children. The significant finding for the Chanel ad was that brand attitude was much stronger than attitude to the ad for all demographic variables examined. Another interesting finding was women with children had a negative intention to purchase while those without children had a positive intention to purchase.

Attitude to the ad was evaluated positively for Bank of Ireland for all age groups. There was a distinct relationship between age and attitude, the older the person the more positive their attitude to Bank of Ireland. There was similarity between attitude to the ad and to the brand for all age groups except the 60+ group where they had a more favourable ad attitude (2.33) than brand attitude (.66). Intention to purchase was positive but not as positive as attitude to the ad or brand. People with no children had a slightly positive attitude to the ad and brand but a very strong intention to purchase (2.09). While people with children had very similar brand and ad attitudes with positive intention to purchase.

There was a difference in the Peugeot ad evaluation among various age groups, younger age groups had a positive ad evaluation and older groups held a neutral

to very negative attitude to the ad. Brand attitudes to Peugeot were more positive than attitudes to the ad for all groups. The older group had the strongest brand attitude 2.37. There was a very negative intention to purchase across all age groups. There was a big difference in attitude to the ad and brand, where attitude to the brand was more positive for all groups. In some cases brand attitude was 2 and ad attitude -2. This finding also emerged for attitude to the ad and brand among those with and without children. The finding here was similar to Chanel where attitude to the brand was much stronger than attitude to the ad.

Overall the Maxwell House ad appeared to be the most successful ad with very high attitude to the ad scores across all age groups 2.6, strong brand attitude 2.66 and positive intention to purchase 1.75. The results for Maxwell House showed almost equal ratings in attitude to ad and brand for all demographic variables. Intention to purchase scores while positive are not as positive as attitude to the ad and brand.

Demographic influence on attitude to the ads and to the brands did not vary significantly. The main findings showed differences between attitude to the ad and attitude to the brand across all women irrespective of marital status, age or social background. The demographic data for Birds Eye showed no real difference in attitude to the ad, brand attitude was stronger for those respondents with children and intention to purchase was also stronger for those with children. Attitude to the brand Chanel was stronger than attitude to the Chanel ad. Respondents had an almost equal attitude to the ad, to the brand and purchase intention scores for Bank of Ireland. The only difference in the demographic variables was that those with no children had a higher intention to purchase. Responses to Peugeot showed a strong brand attitude but a less favourable attitude to the ad, this was particularly true of older respondents, and there was a negative intention to purchase across all categories. Maxwell House received very positive

attitude to the ad and brand scores and a positive intention to purchase across all demographic groups.

**4.1.2 Distance Analysis**

This section aims to determine the similarity of meaning between ads across all respondents and show whether or not all groups perceive the ad in the same way and the position of the ad in semantic space by the groups. By conducting this analysis it is possible to say for example that Surf is most similar to Birds Eye and completely different to Maxwell House. The above data was analyzed for the twenty groups to seek out an overall or separate pattern. The distance formula is given as:

$$D_{il} = \text{dil}^2$$

where  $D_{il}$  is the linear distance between the points in the semantic space representing concepts  $i$  and  $l$  and  $d_{il}$  is the algebraic difference between the co-ordinates of  $i$  and  $l$  on the same dimension or factor,  $j$ . There are several stages in determining the distance measure. The first is semantic evaluation of attitude scores. The second is developing and analyzing distance tables and the third is pictorial representation of findings.

**4.1.2.1 Semantic Meaning**

The first stage in distance analysis establishes the meaning of a concept in a semantic space. This enables quantitative comparison between ads for all respondents. Figure 4 shows the similarities and differences between ads quantitatively. Figure 4 also shows the position of each ad in a semantic space. This analysis was conducted for each of the twenty groups to see if one group of women differentiated more between the meanings of two or more ads than another group. Data from two groups (group 1 which is Kathleen's group and group 6 is Mary Lou's) is given to represent some of the differences that occurred.

Semantic meaning is explained in terms of three concepts, evaluation, potency and activity. These are the component attitude scores where evaluation is the average summation of favourable, good and like, potency is the score for strength and activity for active.

|               | Evaluation |      | Potency |      | Activity |      |
|---------------|------------|------|---------|------|----------|------|
|               | Group      |      | Group   |      | Group    |      |
|               | 1          | 6    | 1       | 6    | 1        | 6    |
| Surf          | 1.56       | 1.83 | 1.80    | 1.38 | 1.50     | 2.00 |
| Birds Eye     | .83        | 2.31 | 1.33    | 1.83 | 1.33     | 2.33 |
| Chanel        | 2.21       | -.98 | 1.50    | -.66 | .66      | .50  |
| Bank of Ire   | 1.88       | 1.50 | 1.83    | 1.66 | 1.16     | 1.83 |
| Peugeot       | -.22       | 1.48 | 1.83    | 2.16 | 1.83     | 2.16 |
| Maxwell House | 2.69       | 2.16 | 2.16    | 2.00 | 1.83     | 2.00 |

**Figure 4. 4 Factor Scores of Ratings of 6 Ads by Two Groups**

Figure 4. 4 shows that group one perceived the Surf ad as good, strong and active. The Birds Eye ad was seen as slightly good, strong and active. The Chanel ad was evaluated as very good, strong and mildly active. Bank of Ireland was perceived as good, strong and active. Peugeot was perceived as bad, strong and active. Maxwell House was evaluated as very good, very strong and very active. It is also evident from the semantic data in Figure 4. 4 that Kathleen's and Mary Lou's groups perceived some ads in a very similar way, namely Maxwell House and Bank of Ireland, and they perceived Peugeot and Chanel in a very dissimilar way. Figure 4. 4 shows where each ad would be positioned in a three-dimensional space defined by three axes. Surf would be defined by the three axes such that it is + 2 units from the origin on the evaluation scale, +2 units from the origin on the potency scale and + 2 units from the origin on the activity scale. The next stage involves finding out how respondents perceived distance of each ad in relation to the others.

**Group 1**

|                   | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Evaluation</b> |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Surf              | --   | 1 38 | 1 22 | 70   | 3 10 | 1 92 |
| Birds Eye         | 1 38 | --   | 2 50 | 1 85 | 1 90 | 3 21 |
| Chanel            | 1 22 | 2 50 | --   | 91   | 4 23 | 84   |
| Bank of Ire       | 70   | 1 85 | 91   | --   | 3 70 | 1 39 |
| Peugeot           | 3 10 | 1 90 | 4 23 | 3 70 | --   | 5 01 |
| Maxwell House     | 1 92 | 3 21 | 84   | 1 39 | 5 01 | --   |
| <b>Potency</b>    |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Surf              | --   | 89   | 1 95 | 1 21 | 1 37 | 2 00 |
| Birds Eye         | 89   | --   | 1 50 | 97   | 1 74 | 1 86 |
| Chanel            | 1 95 | 1 50 | --   | 76   | 3 18 | 68   |
| Bank of Ire       | 1 21 | 97   | 76   | --   | 2 50 | 89   |
| Peugeot           | 1 37 | 1 74 | 3 18 | 2 50 | --   | 3 38 |
| Maxwell House     | 2 00 | 1 86 | 68   | 89   | 3 38 | --   |
| <b>Activity</b>   |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Surf              | --   | 83   | 1 50 | 1 00 | 33   | 33   |
| Birds Eye         | 83   | --   | 66   | 16   | 50   | 33   |
| Chanel            | 1 50 | 66   | --   | 50   | 1 16 | 1 16 |
| Bank of Ire       | 1 00 | 16   | 50   | --   | 66   | 66   |
| Peugeot           | 33   | 50   | 1 16 | 66   | --   | 00   |
| Maxwell House     | 33   | 50   | 1 16 | 66   | 00   | --   |

**Figure 4 5 Distance Measures Relating to the 6 Ads for Group 1**

Distance analysis for Kathleen's group (group one) showed the relative position of each ad to the other. The first vertical column is the distance all other ads are from Surf. Figure 4 5 showed that Bank of Ireland was perceived as closest to Surf on the evaluation scale, Peugeot was furthest, Birds Eye, Chanel and Maxwell House were a similar distance apart. In terms of potency Maxwell House was furthest from Surf and Birds Eye was the nearest. There were no great differences in relation to activity. Analysis of the three scales: evaluation, potency and activity together showed that Bank of Ireland was read in a similar

manner to Surf, Peugeot and Maxwell House were distanced furthest from Surf. Similar analysis was conducted for each of the other ads and showed that Chanel and Maxwell House were perceived as being furthest from Birds Eye, Bank of Ireland and Surf were a similar distance apart but closest to Birds Eye. Bank of Ireland was closest to Chanel and Peugeot furthest. The distance analysis for Bank of Ireland showed Surf and Chanel closest and Peugeot was furthest. Evaluation of Peugeot showed Maxwell House was positioned furthest and Birds Eye closest. Peugeot was furthest from Maxwell House and Chanel was closest. An overall distance pattern for Kathleen's group showed Peugeot at a similar distance from all ads, Maxwell House and Chanel were perceived in a similar manner, Surf, Birds Eye and Bank of Ireland were seen as being similar but at a distance from Maxwell House and Chanel. This could be called a 3, 2, 1, cluster.

The same data for Mary Lou's group (group 6) in Figure 4.6 shows that they read the ads in a different way. Four ads were read as being close to Surf on evaluation. These were Birds Eye, Bank of Ireland, Peugeot and Maxwell House. Chanel was perceived at quite a distance from Surf. There was a similar reading of the potency and activity scales. Maxwell House and Birds Eye were read as being closest to Birds Eye on all scales and again Chanel was furthest. No ads were perceived as being close to Chanel. In fact there is a similar large distance for all the other ads away from Chanel. Reading of distance for Bank of Ireland showed Peugeot and Surf as being near and Chanel furthest. Bank of Ireland and Maxwell House were closest to Peugeot and Chanel was furthest. The distance in relation to Maxwell House showed Birds Eye and Peugeot as being close and Chanel once again at a distance. A clear pattern emerged for this group, that was Chanel was perceived at quite a distance from all ads. Surf, Birds Eye and Maxwell House were perceived as being similar as were Peugeot and Bank of Ireland. While Peugeot and Bank of Ireland were grouped together their difference from Maxwell House was not great. By looking at Kathleen's and Mary Lou's groups it was clear that

they had positioned ads in different spaces, they read the ads differently

Kathleen's group placed Peugeot at a distance, while Mary Lou's group placed Chanel at a distance

| Group 6       | 1    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6    |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Evaluation    |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Surf          | --   | 68   | 4 94 | 55   | 62   | 89   |
| Birds Eye     | 68   | --   | 5 60 | 1 22 | 1 30 | 40   |
| Chanel        | 4 94 | 5 60 | --   | 4 50 | 4 41 | 5 83 |
| Bank of Ire   | 55   | 1 22 | 4 45 | --   | 16   | 1 35 |
| Peugeot       | 62   | 1 30 | 4 41 | 16   | --   | 46   |
| Maxwell House | 89   | 40   | 5 83 | 1 35 | 46   | --   |
| Potency       |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Surf          | --   | 83   | 2 00 | 1 37 | 1 86 | 1 95 |
| Birds Eye     | 83   | --   | 2 54 | 68   | 1 05 | 1 17 |
| Chanel        | 2 00 | 2 54 | --   | 2 60 | 3 20 | 3 14 |
| Bank of Ire   | 1 37 | 1 68 | 2 60 | --   | 60   | 60   |
| Peugeot       | 1 86 | 1 05 | 3 20 | 60   | --   | 23   |
| Maxwell House | 1 95 | 1 17 | 3,14 | 60   | 23   | --   |
| Activity      |      |      |      |      |      |      |
| Surf          | ---  | 33   | 2 50 | 16   | 16   | 00   |
| Birds Eye     | 33   | --   | 2 83 | 50   | 16   | 33   |
| Chanel        | 2 50 | 2 83 | --   | 2 33 | 2 66 | 2 50 |
| Bank of Ire   | 16   | 50   | 2 33 | --   | 33   | 16   |
| Peugeot       | 16   | 16   | 2 66 | 33   | --   | 16   |
| Maxwell House | 00   | 33   | 2 50 | 16   | 16   | --   |

Figure 4. 6 Distance Measures Relating to the 6 Ads for Group 6

The next step in the distance analysis was to see if any other groups read the ad in a similar manner to either Kathleen's or Mary Lou's group or if



Figure 7 Semantic Spatial Representation of Distance Group 6

- 1 Surf

2 Birds Eye

3 Chanel
- 4 Bank of Ireland

5 Peugeot

6 Maxwell House

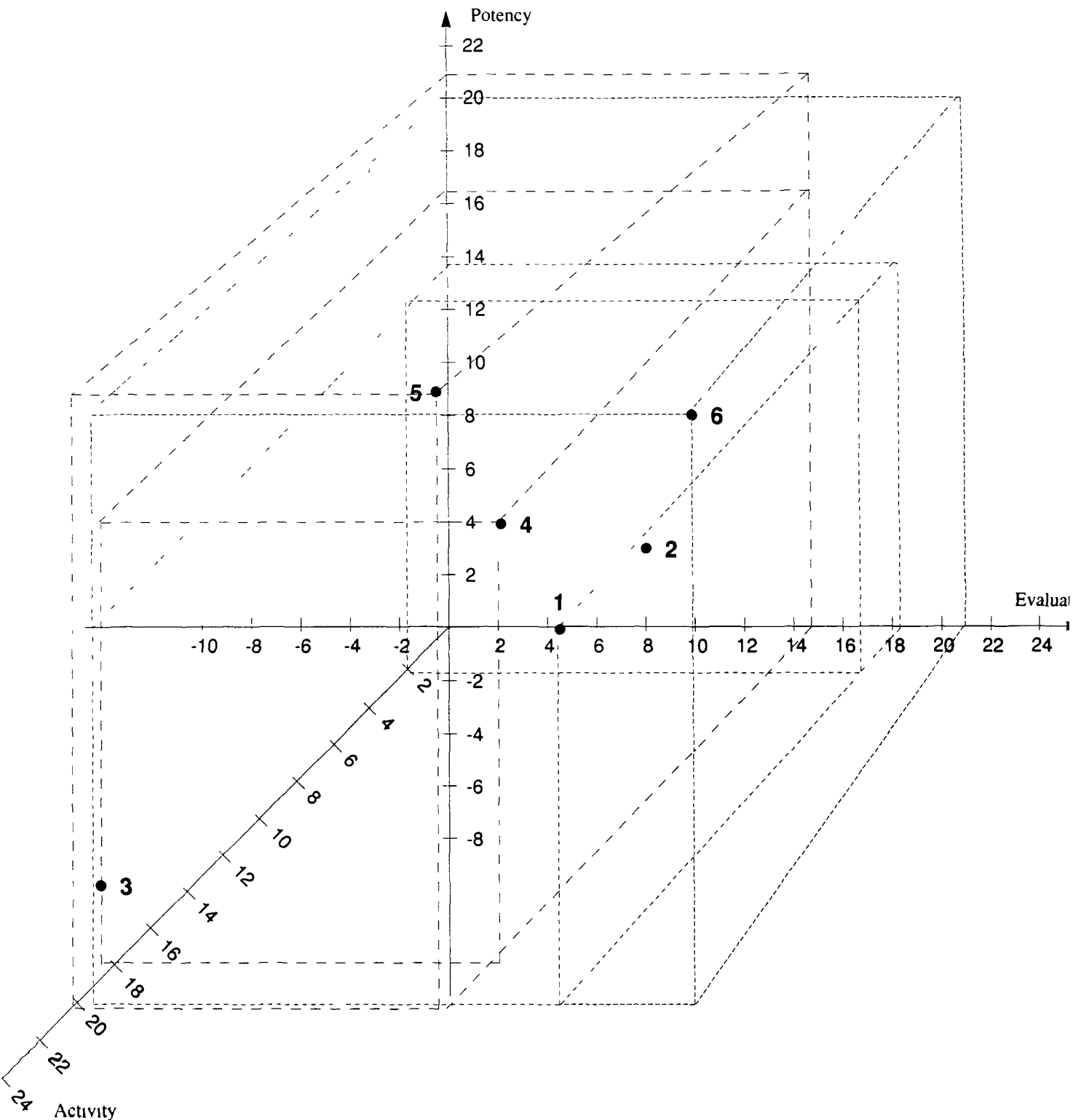
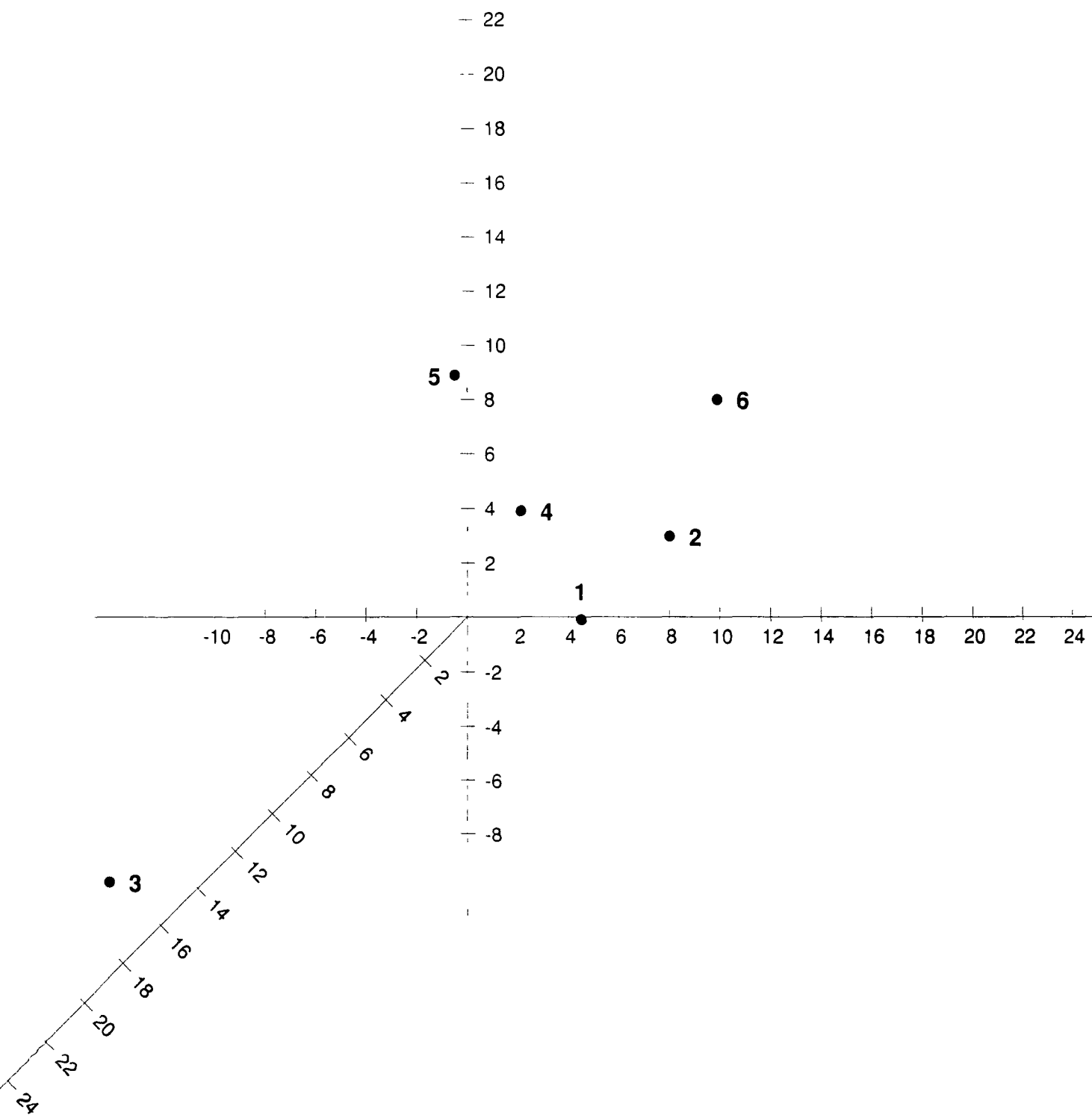


Figure 8 Distance Analysis Group 6



another pattern emerged among the other groups. The above analysis was conducted for all groups and the results were disappointing in that no strong patterns of consistency emerged among the groups. The distance analysis, Figure 4.9 showed how three ads were perceived as being different from other ads by different groups of women. Nancy's, Philly's, Mary Lou's, Ann's, Rosaleen's, Teresa's, Lily's, and Clodagh's group positioned Chanel away from other ads. Kathleen's, Deidre's, Karen's, Maureen's and Sharon's group placed Peugeot out on its own. Clare's, Ann's, Brenda's, Freda's, and Susan's, group perceived Bank of Ireland as being different from the rest. However, there was no other consistent reading of similarities or differences in reading other ads among these three categories of groups. For example, in the first category where Chanel was perceived as different from the rest, Philly's, Ann's and Lily's group placed Birds Eye and Maxwell House close together but different to Surf, Peugeot and Bank of Ireland. The other groups either positioned all other ads alongside each other or else they grouped four ads together and the fifth in a different position, but not in the same position as the sixth. For example, Nancy's group saw Peugeot, Maxwell House, Birds Eye and Bank of Ireland as being similar but placed Surf away from these and Chanel away from Surf. There were similar inconsistencies with the other group categories. In the category where Peugeot was placed on its own, group 1 positioned Maxwell House and Chanel together whereas Mary Lou's group placed Surf and Chanel together. While it appeared that there was a cluster of 2 ads, 3 ads and 1 ad in a similar space, the ads within the pairing changed considerably among the groups. The only pattern that did emerge was the positioning of a single ad away from the rest.

The third stage in the distance analysis is to give a pictorial representation of the above data. This should show at a glance what ads were read in a similar manner by all groups. The drawing of such a diagram for the twenty groups could only be done if a consistent pattern emerged. For example if one set of groups positioned

Maxwell House and Chanel together and distanced them from Birds Eye and Peugeot, and perhaps grouped Bank of Ireland and Surf in a different position and if another set of groups agreed on different positioning of ads it would have been possible to give a pictorial diagram.

| Groups   | Similar               | Ad  | Distance           | Distanced | Ad |
|----------|-----------------------|-----|--------------------|-----------|----|
| Kathleen | Ch, M.H               |     | B.E, Surf, BOI     | PG        |    |
| Nancy    | B.E, BOI, Pg, M.H     |     | Surf               | Ch        |    |
| Philly   | B.I, M.H              |     | Surf, BOI, Pg      | Ch        |    |
| Deidre   | B.E, BOI, M.H         |     | Surf               | Ch, Pg    |    |
| Ann      | B.E, M.H,             |     | Surf, Ch, Pg,      | BOI       |    |
| Mary Lou | B.E, M.H              |     | Surf, Pg, BoI      | Ch        |    |
| Claire   | M.H, Ch               |     | Surf, B.E, Pg      | BOI       |    |
| Valerie  | B.E, M.H, Pg, BOI     |     |                    | Surf, Ch  |    |
| Rosaleen | M.H                   |     | B.E, BOI, Pg, Surf | Ch        |    |
| Brenda   | M.H, Pg, B.E          |     | Ch, Surf           | BOI       |    |
| Freda    | B.E, M.H, Ch          |     | Pg, Surf           | BOI       |    |
| Susan    | Ch, BOI, Pg           |     | B.E, Surf, M.H     |           |    |
| Karen    | M.H                   |     | Surf, B.E, Ch, BOI | P g       |    |
| Noreen   | Surf, B.E, BOI, M.H   | P g |                    | Ch        |    |
| Maureen  | Surf B.E, BOI, Ch, Pg |     |                    | Ch        |    |
| Teresa   | M.H, BOI, Surf        |     | B.E, Pg            | Ch        |    |
| Marion   | M.H, B.E              |     | Pg, BOI, Surf      | Ch        |    |
| Lily     | B.E, M.H              |     | Pg, BOI, Surf      | Ch        |    |
| Sharon   | B.E, BOI, Surf, M.H   | Ch  |                    | P g       |    |
| Clodagh  | Surf, Pg              |     | B.E, BOI, M.H      | Ch        |    |

Figure 4. 9 Distance Anlaysis for all Ads

Figures 4. 7 and 4. 8 give the pictorial representation of Mary Lou's groups positioning of the ads. However, because no overall pattern emerged among all groups it was impossible to represent the positioning of twenty groups together in a semantic space. Instead Figure 4. 9 gives an indication of how each of the

groups positioned ads, this shows the variability in the reading of the ads. The overall usefulness of the distance measure has to be questioned as a means of showing cultural interpretation or similarity of meaning. If there was more universality of results in that the same ads were interpreted as pairs across groups one could accord more significance to this method.

#### **4.2 Attitude to the ad from Thought Verbalisation**

Analysis of free elicitation produces eleven categories of responses. Appendix 6 gives examples of responses for each category. The eleven categories are: S A (these are support arguments), C A (counter arguments), E D (execution discounting), E B (execution bolstering), SEVA (surgency elation vigour active) (otherwise described as an upbeat feeling), Dac (deactivation or passive positive feeling), Social Aff (social affection), Neg Fel (negative feeling), Neg Dac (negative deactivation), Distr (distractor thoughts) and the eleventh category is other thoughts. By combining and subtracting various categories it is possible to determine the respondents primary focus of attention, Figure 4.10. If support arguments, counter arguments, execution bolstering and discounting are grouped together the cognitive response can be obtained. Cognitive response can be further broken down to obtain the direction of response. By combining the frequency of counter arguments and execution discounting and subtracting them from support arguments and execution bolstering statements it is possible to determine a positive or negative reaction to the ad. By subtracting counter arguments from support arguments it is possible to determine attitude to the product. Subtracting execution discounting from execution bolstering gives attitude to the ad or source. Finally if the category affective response predominates, the ad can be described as a feeling ad, the direction of this feeling is obtained by subtracting negative feelings from positive feelings. The sum of responses for each of the eleven categories is given in Figure 4.11. Responses for these categories could be multiple, for example one respondent may have had two

counter arguments    The bold figures are responses for the feelings people had to the ad and the plain figures are responses to thoughts

|                | Surf  | Birds<br>Eye | Chanel | Bank<br>of Irl | Peugeot | Maxwell<br>House |
|----------------|-------|--------------|--------|----------------|---------|------------------|
| Cog Response   | 95/42 | 91/63        | 69/26  | 98/45          | 94/38   | 55/30            |
| Affective Resp | 22/79 | 22/75        | 44/92  | 33/86          | 44/96   | 87/126           |
| Positive Resp  | 41/24 | 43/39        | -23/-2 | 36/3           | -2/4    | 49/26            |
| Positive Feel  | -2/-7 | 2/-1         | 7/-30  | -13/-26        | -24/-36 | 75/98            |
| Message Arg    | -2/2  | 13/27        | -3/6   | 29/14          | 9/3     | 22/23            |
| Source Statem  | 43/22 | 30/12        | -20/-8 | 7/-1           | -11/11  | 27/3             |

**Figure 4. 10 Responses to ad.**

Figure 4 10 shows how free elicitation responses were broken down to determine both overall levels of cognitive and affective response, attitude to the brand and the ad and positive and negative feelings    The data in Figure 4 10 shows a large number of cognitive responses with only one ad having higher affective responses than cognitive responses, Maxwell House    Examining each ad individually in Figure 4 10 it is evident that Surf received a high number of cognitive responses which were positive    But when the figures were broken down to see if the response to either the product or the ad was evaluated positively it was clear that only the ad was evaluated positively    People liked the style of the ad but this did not mean that they evaluated the product positively and in Surf's case they did not    It was also clear from Figure 4 10 that people had negative feeling towards the ad, but the overall response from Figure 4 10 was that, like Figure 4 1 it showed a favourable attitude to the ad    There are however a few causes of concern, these relate to the fact that feelings and message arguments were negative    Results from the message arguments indicated a negative attitude to the brand but the number of responses in relation to attitude to the brand were so low that they could not be considered significant    The direction of the message arguments which showed that respondents counter argued more than they

support argued is not the issue that should concern the advertiser. The small number of support arguments showed that respondents did not focus on the brand, instead most of the respondents' attention was on the style of the ad. The information resulting from both the semantic measure and the free elicitation questions do not suggest what exactly people focused on in the ad. If the advertiser knows what the women read from the ad they would be able to infer how attitude to the ad will affect brand attitude over time. The results of the semantic scale and free elicitation response support each other with the open ended or free elicitation being more revealing but still not showing what exactly was read in the ad.

The overall evaluation of Birds Eye was positive. On the cognitive side there were quite a large number of responses. Closer analysis of cognitive response showed that there were more responses to the ad than the product with respondents favourably evaluating both. Although affective responses amounted to 22 when these were examined the difference between positive and negative feelings to the ad was only slightly positive. A question that arose from the results of Birds Eye was: If people liked the ad where execution bolstering was greater than execution discounting, why did it not create positive feelings? Feelings were investigated to see if there was a blandness about the ad that failed to trigger an emotional response. Further analysis of feelings showed there was a small number of positive and negative feelings. These results did not indicate why the ad was liked or why the ad failed to create feelings in the respondent. The results from the free elicitation supported those of Figures 4.1 and 4.2 which showed a more positive attitude to the ad than the brand. Even though there were questions that could not be answered from the results in Figure 4.10, there was more information about the reading of the ad.

Cognitive responses to Chanel were mainly negative. This ad received the most negative responses. Further analysis showed that most of these negative responses were due to the style of the ad where there was a large number of execution discounting responses compared with counter arguments against the product. Respondents had a very negative attitude to the ad. Figure 4.10 shows the large number of execution discounting responses. This ad produced the most contradictory results between the semantic and free elicitation methods. Figure 4.1 showed a slightly positive attitude to the ad whereas free elicitation produced a very negative attitude to the ad. This negative evaluation of the ad carried across in free elicitation to the formation of a negative attitude to the brand. Figure 4.2 showed a positive attitude to the brand. Neither method of attitude measurement shows exactly why the ad is perceived negatively.

There were positive cognitive and negative feeling responses to Bank of Ireland. Respondents agreed with the ad more than they liked the style of the ad, in other words there were more support arguments than execution bolstering statements. Two apparent contradictory results appear in Figure 4.10, it showed that there was a positive response yet respondents' negative feelings predominated. This result is difficult to explain. If the women liked the ad and the brand then why did they experience negative feelings? It was difficult to identify the reason for this finding from the categories given. It is possible that the ad created negative feelings among the women who did not like the style of the ad. If this argument is pursued it should follow that the ad produces positive feelings among the women who like it. This did not happen, the reasons for such divergent results may be evident in analysis of verbal material. The semantic evaluation showed a very positive evaluation to the ad and the brand. There was no big difference between the two methods used in the evaluation of the Bank of Ireland ad. However, free elicitation did show negative feelings and low positive response to the style of the



ad Otherwise the ad had quite positive evaluation particularly in terms of attitude to the brand

The Peugeot results showed a negative evaluation on the style of the ad and a positive evaluation of thoughts to the car This indicated a positive attitude to the brand and a negative attitude to the ad Source statements tended to be negative Respondents did not appear to like the style of the ad They also experienced negative feelings to the ad These responses showed a more negative evaluation of the ad than the semantic scales in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 which showed a slightly positive attitude to the ad Free elicitation responses showed that respondents liked the product shown but not the ad There is some conflict in the results with the semantic evaluation giving a more positive response to the ad The only positive response from free elicitation was a favourable attitude to the brand

The Maxwell House ad was clearly evaluated most positively in terms of cognitive and affective responses People liked the ad and the product and had extremely high positive feelings to the ad This could suggest that high positive feelings affect cognitive evaluations and not the other way around There are no other ads with high positive feelings

Looking at the results overall some interesting findings emerged Some of the ads showed slightly different results between the semantic method and free elicitation On the whole both methods supported each other in most cases free elicitation gave more detail on the reading of the ad However, free elicitation is not always clear in terms of the response categories given Several of the ads produced apparent contradictory results that could not be explained by analysis of the categories given It is hoped that these divergent results will be clarified in the analysis of verbal responses

Researchers using thought verbalisation methodology in advertising research typically ask 'What thoughts or feelings come to mind when you watched this ad?' This is either asked in the amalgamated format just given or else respondents are asked either 'What thoughts come to mind as you watched this ad?', or, 'What feelings come to mind as you watched this ad?' Both questions were asked separately in this study to see if results were similar which would mean that either question can be asked in research and also to see if people could differentiate their thoughts and feelings which would mean that results from both questions would be different. At the outset it was expected that people could not. But results proved otherwise, and the answers to both questions were quite different. This has implications for researchers especially those who think they are the same and analyze results in terms of thoughts. Different attitudes emerged when respondents were asked what feelings they had when watching an ad. Figure 4.11 gives results to both questions alongside each other. The analysis shows that people differentiated between their thoughts and feelings. There were more thought responses when people were asked their thoughts about an ad. There were more feeling responses when the women were asked their feelings about an ad. On average twice as many thoughts were given for the thought question as against the feeling question and twice to three times the number of feelings for the feeling question as against the thought question. Positive cognitive responses were much greater when people were asked about their thoughts to the ad. Positive feeling responses were greater when the women gave their feelings to the ad.

Figure 4.11 shows that respondents differentiated between thoughts and feelings. While there were differences in the amount of responses to each question only one difference occurred in direction of thoughts and feelings. This happened in response to the Chanel ad where thoughts to the ad showed positive feelings but when the women gave their feelings to the ad this response was very negative.

In all other cases direction was the same but with a greater number of responses

All ads except Chanel received at least twice and in some cases three times the number of responses on the Seva category

The thoughts to the ad question showed some interesting results

There were a large number of responses for execution discounting and execution bolstering

Surf, Birds Eye, Bank of Ireland and Maxwell House all received a large response to execution bolstering which implied a positive evaluation of the ad

However Chanel received a much larger number of responses on Execution Discounting indicating a negative response to the ad

Peugeot also had a large number of negative responses

|            | Surf  | Birds | Eye | Chanel | Bank<br>of Irl | Peugeot | Maxwell<br>House. |
|------------|-------|-------|-----|--------|----------------|---------|-------------------|
| S A        | 4/4   | 20/3  | 3   | 4/6    | 41/22          | 12/7    | 22/2              |
| CA         | 6/2   | 7/6   |     | 7/0    | 12/8           | 3/4     | 0/0               |
| ED         | 22/7  | 17/7  |     | 38/1   | 19/8           | 45/8    | 3/2               |
| EB         | 64/29 | 48/1  | 8   | 18/6   | 26/7           | 34/1    | 30/5              |
| SEVA       | 9/2   | 3     | 8/3 | 0      | 15/1           | 8/2     | 5                 |
| Dac        | 4/1   | 2     | 3/5 |        | 8/1            | 3       | 2/5               |
| Social Aff | 0/1   | 2/2   |     | 0/0    | 0/0            | 0/0     | 28/2              |
| Neg Fef    | 8/1   | 5     | 7/2 | 0      | 12/4           | 1       | 1/5               |
| Neg Dac    | 7/3   | 0     | 3/1 | 8      | 5/2            | 1       | 5/9               |
| Distr      | 12/25 | 24/   |     | 20/1   | 0              | 9/7     | 8/7               |
| Other      | 6/9   | 2/2   |     | 4/3    | 2/0            | 2/4     | 3/1               |

Figure 4. 11 Ad thoughts and Ad feelings

Responses to the affective question are given in bold

Response to feelings about the ads showed that positive feelings (Seva and Deactivation) were lower for five of the six ads with Maxwell House the exception

This indicated that responses for feelings to the ad were expressed in stronger terms than thoughts to the ad

Negative feelings for Peugeot and Bank of Ireland were quite high, 30 and 19 respectively

There were also a high number of distractor thoughts for Birds Eye

and Chanel The Maxwell House ad was interesting because on all positive variables for thoughts and feelings it received a high number of responses support arguments 22, execution bolster 30, seva 23, social affection 28 and the negative are all low counter arguments 3 and negative feelings 6

Examining the number of cognitive responses for the thoughts question and affective responses for the feeling question it should be evident whether the ad is primarily a thinking or feeling ad Feelings predominated for three ads and thoughts for three ads The ratio of feelings to thoughts was 92 feelings to 75 thoughts for Chanel, 96 feelings to 94 thoughts for Peugeot and 55 feelings to 26 thoughts for Maxwell House Results from the Surf ad showed 95 thoughts to 79 feelings Birds Eye showed similar results 91 thoughts to 75 feelings and Bank of Ireland had 98 thoughts to 86 feelings

**4.3 Comparison of Attitude to the Ad Measures**

Attitude to the ad scores were cross tabulated with free elicitation responses The cross tabulation of both attitude measures provided a basis for comparing both attitude methods In general both methods showed similar results Respondents who had positive attitude to the ad from semantic analysis also had a positive attitude to the ad from free elicitation For example attitude to the ad scores for Surf can be divided into three categories which support free elicitation results Respondents who had a positive response (that is where support arguments were greater than negative statements) had the highest attitude score on the semantic scales Their attitude score was 2 compared with an average score of 1.35 Respondents who had a negative response (negative statements were greater than support statements) had the lowest attitude score 1.25 on the semantic scales

There were differences in attitude scores between those who did and did not respond to the free elicitation question Figure 4.12 indicates those who gave a free elicitation response by + and those who did not respond by - Respondents

who gave a free elicitation statement that was categorised as cognitive, message or source centred had more favourable attitudes to the ads than non respondents across all ads. The opposite to the cognitive case emerged for the affective category, where for all ads those who did not respond had a higher attitude score than those who did. The greatest difference in attitude scores was among women who affectively responded to the Peugeot ad. Those who had positive feelings to the ad had an attitude score of .22. Those who experienced negative feelings to the ad had an attitude score of -1. Non respondents had an semantic attitude of 1.40. Lower attitudes to the ad among affective respondents could be understood if negative feelings predominated over positive. But for three of the ads they did not. The Maxwell House ad received a large number of positive affective responses yet these respondents had a lower attitude to the ad score than non respondents.

It could be argued that because there were more thoughts expressed people who responded to the ad were more involved and therefore gave it a higher semantic score. This may well have been the case, but if one considers that the people who had cognitive response also gave affective response this argument does not hold up. The answer to the affective response attitude score dilemma may lie with the non respondents. The semantic scale forces people to respond, they must put a mark beside a variable indicating how they rate the ad. All of the respondents marked the semantic scales. But perhaps for Maxwell House the non free elicitation respondents were incapable of expressing their feelings. They could not write or think of feelings they had to an ad even though the ad was perceived to be very good.

The main finding from the affective response category is that there is a divergence between the way people feel about an ad and how they think or evaluate the ad. The two methods show conflicting results and are therefore

incompatible in measuring feelings to ads This finding of divergence between affective responses and semantic scale scores is not all that surprising The semantic scales are a cognitive evaluation rather than a measure of feeling, therefore there should and was a greater correlation between the cognitive measures This was the case for all ads except Maxwell House

|             | Cognitive Response |      | Affective Response |      | Message Argument |      | Source Statement |      |
|-------------|--------------------|------|--------------------|------|------------------|------|------------------|------|
|             | +                  | -    | +                  | -    | +                | -    | +                | -    |
| Surf        | 1 64               | 1 0  | 96                 | 1 46 | 2 0              | 35   | 1 78             | 69   |
| Birds Eye   | 2 50               | 1 25 | 1 16               | 1 78 | 2 00             | 85   | 1 35             | 2 00 |
| Chanel      | 00                 | 73   | 45                 | 69   | 2 00             | 2 25 | 2 00             | - 20 |
| Bank of Irl | 1 71               | 56   | 44                 | 1 59 | 2 25             | 25   | 1 92             | 55   |
| Peugeot     | 1 25               | 52   | 22                 | 1 40 | 2 66             | - 33 | 2 36             | 08   |
| Maxwell     | 2 21               | 2 19 | 1 07               | 1 60 | 2 70             | 2 12 | 2 07             | 2 66 |

Figure 4. 12 Mean Score Variation

Both measures of attitude appear to give similar types of response in terms of positive and negative direction of attitude This fact has been reinforced by the analysis given above in that in the majority of cases those who did not respond to an open ended category had a lower attitude to the ad score But these figures even though they reveal attitude to the ad do not tell us what the attitude actually means A major area of concern is the adequacy of the open ended question to ascertain affective responses There was a low number of affective responses, and those who did not respond had a higher attitude to the ad score than those who did One of the reasons for this is that people may not think or be able to express their feelings but are capable of putting a mark on a semantic variable such as gentle In other words the semantic scale forces people to respond maybe in a way that they are not thinking of the ad The open ended question brings to mind immediate thoughts and at the time of writing their thoughts to an ad they totally forget about their feelings

The questionnaire provided some interesting results. One being that both measures of attitude supported each other. Another was the fact that the distance measure produced such divergent results among a relatively small number of people. Results also showed that viewers' attention is on the ad itself and not the product and that regardless of brand attitude it is possible for people to have a negative attitude to the brand and a positive attitude to the ad and vice versa. Affective and cognitive questions produced quite different results and this may cause problems for researchers.

## **Chapter 5 Analysis of the Reading of Ads**

### **5. Introduction**

The main part of this study centres around the women's verbal discussion of ads. The previous methods analyzed from the written questionnaire showed the direction of the women's response to aspects of the ad. These methods did not tell us what exactly was read or the significance of meaning in the ad for the women. A number of methods are used to analyze verbal reading of the ad. Structural, semiotic, visual and attitude methods are used to analyze verbal reading of the ad. Structural methods are used to determine the key meaning in the ad and how it was read by the women. Semiotic analysis of the ad is used to see how respondents understood the ad and the meaning they took from the ad. A semiotic analysis is an unfolding of the meaning of a set of words. Words get their meaning from three separate sources, each is examined from the respondents' viewpoint and not, as is traditionally the case, from the researchers. Words derive their meaning from three separate sources: semantics, pragmatics and syntactics, each of these is examined. Semantic analysis refers to the audiences' translation of words into ideas. Syntactic analysis examines the audiences' interpretation of how words relate to each other. Pragmatic analysis looks at the audiences' interpretation of the context in which the words are found. Semiotic analysis traditionally concentrates on verbal or written text. However an ad is much more than a verbal text. TV ads in particular evolve around visual text, and the techniques of semiotics are adapted to study the total reading of the ad. Visual reading of the ad is further explored by using Baxandall's model. This type of methodology is hermeneutic in origin and emphasis is on how the text of the visual matches, contradicts or pleases the viewer. Baxandall developed his model for analysis of art pictures where the focus of attention is on a single picture. Ads consist of many visuals, but for the purpose of analysis the reading of the visual was confined to what the viewer felt was important. Attitude to the ad is discussed.



in relation to overall reading of the ad and how the existing methodologies used, that is, semantic scale measurement and free elicitation fitted in with the methods used to uncover verbal reading of ads.

### **5.1. Structural Analysis**

Structuralists believe that the structure of any form of communication reveals the message. Reading according to structuralists is on a segmentation basis. People break up the total of what is being read. The segments read are then classified into existing codes of meaning for the individual. This leads people to associate and transfer meaning from one code system to another. Structural reading of the women's' response to the ads are presented under three headings. The first examines the key phenomena in the ad. The second is a presentation of binary opposition pairs which resulted from reducing the discussions according to the key segments read by the women. The third area is a discussion of the transformation process. This involves examining the way in which meaning from one code system transferred its significance to another system.

#### **5.1.1 Structural Analysis: Surf**

The phenomenon studied or read in this ad is good and evil; the sea is used to convey the deep and surface meaning in the ad. The deep meaning is derived from the reading of sea as a cultural variable. As a variable of nature the sea is good or evil. The sea is perceived as good in a natural system because it sustains life it is perceived as evil when it takes life. Cultural meaning attributed to the sea which is perceived as good is that the sea refreshes it provides a form of leisure for people. Aspects of life associated with the sea which are represented in the ad are, strength from the pounding of the waves, power from the movement of the sea, energy from both movement and pounding and freshness from the splashing of the Surf. The cultural variables used were windsurfers and the sails which represented garments of clothes. Windsurfers are used as the

cultural system which takes the meaning of good and evil from the sea. Some windsurfers represent the good aspects of the sea and some the evil or bad connotations of the sea. The good windsurfers are the ones prepared to fight the bad, dirty ones; the good are strong, the bad ones weak. The good are powerful and energetic, they jump high and are lifted by the power of the wind, they have the energy to keep going, the bad ones are powerless and unenergetic, they are not lifted and fall in the sea. The good are clean and fresh while the bad are dirty and stale. Surf powder has taken all the qualities of nature, power, strength, energy and freshness. In the end the good conquer the bad. The meaning read in the ad is that Surf washing powder like the sea and the windsurfers wins the battle over dirty clothes because it is powerful.

It was found that different groups read different levels of meaning. Some groups read the deep meanings in the ad others read the surface meaning. Three categories of readers emerged. Some women read symbolic codes and transferred the meaning of these to the product. These women for example perceived the sea as fresh and healthy and these attributes were transferred to the product. Some of the women felt that the ad lifted their spirits in a similar way to the wind lifting the boards out of the sea. They saw the sea as emulating a washing machine and the sails were items of clothes. These women tended to read a greater number of signs in the ad. Other women read only one deep code. Some women could be described as surface readers: they did not read in depth across the symbolic codes and mentioned only the product or that they enjoyed the waves with no further comment on either.

### **5.1.2 Binary Opposition: Surf**

Reading according to structuralists involves breaking a continuum into segments. Each segment can be classified into a previously named category or class. In reading and perceiving people discriminate between objects. The binary system

is based on discrimination and ordering processes. Meaning is given to objects not just in terms of what they are, but also in terms of what they are not. For example an apple has particular meaning because it is not an orange. When reading people break down the continuum into binary segments, this allows them to comprehend the most significant meaning. The segmentation process means that each system is broken down and classified according to a previous system of meaning. The binary opposition table, Figure 5. 1 shows the signs that were read and the number of groups that read the signs.

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Good: Evil            |                        |
| Nature: Culture       |                        |
| Sea: Machine          | K N ML A C KN MN CL NN |
| Fresh: Stale          | K P ML C V L CL        |
| Bright colour: Dull   | D A C V R S MN T M SH  |
| Strength:Weakness     | A KN L CL              |
| Clean: Dirty          | K N D ML V B F KN NN   |
| Holiday: Workday      | ML A R F S KN T M L CL |
| Sea Surf: Suds powder | N D C V F              |
| Sails: Clothes        | K ML M SH CL           |
| Old: New              | P NN M Cl              |

Figure 5. 1 Binary Opposition Surf

In the Surf ad the main binary pair read was supposed to be good versus evil. Dirty, smelly clothes are culturally unacceptable. Unwashed clothes are a sign of laziness or sloppiness. These attributes are associated with the person responsible for washing, the woman or mother of a household. Clean clothes on the other hand are a sign of a hard working, caring mother who looks after her family. In order to beat the enemy, the dirty clothes, the woman needs help. The problem with the Surf ad was that the binary pair good and evil was not read. Instead the women concentrated on the holiday sign in the ad. The ad was not read as intended because the product was shown in an abstract way in relation to good

and evil. Concrete association with the concept of good and evil would have involved showing the woman in the ad washing clothes, or using powder or caring for their family. The role portrayal should have revolved around the woman as a good mother. The ad did not show people at all and the women did not read the ad in relation to the product activity of washing clothes or the cultural significance of clean clothes.

### **5.1.3 Transformation Process: Surf**

The transformation process discusses the number of segments read highlighting different systems which are classified as symbolic and product symbolic. The product symbolic categories take their meaning from symbolic systems. The transformation process shows how the relations or meanings attached to one code variable are transferred to another. Several sub plots may be used to transfer the totality of meaning in a message. The final message resulting from structural analysis is represented in a matrix of meaning (Figure 5. 2) which consists of the main binary opposition relationship; in the above case this is good and evil and the transformation variable or activity which is washing (cleans).

The deep meaning of good and evil was not elaborated upon by any group and those that mentioned good referred to it in different contexts. Kathleen's group claimed the ad made them feel good, as in mood, they were "lifted like the windsurfers", Noreen's group talked about good windsurfers fighting the bad. The reading of good people using this brand to get rid of stains did not fully emerge. But other connotations of good, for example, good people, feeling good because clothes are clean may occur at a subconscious level. The codes or signs that were read were either product related or symbolic; these were read on a surface and a deep level of meaning. The reading of this matrix must be considered carefully. It is assumed that the advertisers want to transfer the deep symbolic meanings onto the product. The question is which quadrant does the

advertiser finally want the reader to read? This must be decided so objectives can be set Is it deep product or deep symbolic? Structuralists look for the deep symbolic meaning Assuming that advertisers want to achieve the symbolic reading then one could question why the two deep levels are represented by two quadrants The reason for this is that in order for the signs to be read a transformation process takes place The reader may start reading the deep symbolic meaning, for example, sea, nature etc , and then may read or even start reading the surface symbolic, freshness, and may then read across to the product, that is, washing powders are supposed to get clothes clean and fresh Finally, attention may now focus on washing powders or more particularly the brand itself, Surf, is powerful and effective like surf in the sea

|         | Product              | Symbolic                          |
|---------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Surface | Clean Dirty          | Fresh Stale                       |
|         | Holiday Workday      | Strong Weak                       |
|         |                      | Birth /Egg Death/Decomposing fish |
| Deep    | Sea Machine          | Nature Culture                    |
|         | Sea Surf Suds powder | Good Evil                         |
|         | Bright Dull          | Alive Dead                        |
|         |                      | Summer Winter                     |

Figure 5. 2 Transformation Process Surf

If the audience fails to read or elaborate between the binary relations reading will not take place For transformation to take place there must be a set of mediation signs which resolve the conflict between binary opposites The transformation of evil to good is brought about by a struggle between two sets of variables, nature and culture The struggle in nature focuses on the sea which stands out as sunny and calm and bright and then changes to become dark and

turbulent and finally changes back to even brighter and calmer and sunnier. This change takes place by the appearance of a strong wind which makes the sea very rough and full of Surf. When the wind dies the sea becomes calm once again. Similarly the cultural side is represented by windsurfers who are also involved in a struggle, the good clean ones fighting the bad dirty ones. The mediating variable from nature, the wind, brings about the transformation in culture. The wind lifts the windsurfers, flips them over and causes the bad dirty one to fall in the sea and be washed by the surf. The ad finishes with windsurfers bearing the brand name Surf on their sails, reinforcing or sailing behind the now reformed enemy the bright clean items of clothing.

## **5.2 Semiotic Analysis**

Semiotics is concerned with the study of meaning. The methodology as applied to reading ads examines semantic association of word meaning. This is followed by a syntactic analysis of the ad where the subject, object and outcome of the ad are examined. Pragmatic analysis involves analysis of how the women compared different ads in a product category, it also shows how the women associated the ad with their image of the advertiser.

Semantic analysis of the ad focuses on word association, which shows the interpretation and reading of the concepts used in the ad. This is extremely important in advertising where the objective is to achieve thought elaboration among viewers in order to bring about association and transformation of the symbols and images in the ad with the product. The semantic analysis here varies in many respects to the linguistic use of semantics, but is similar in its fundamental approach, that is, the determination of meaning or how the respondents translated signs into meaning. The differences between the approach used here and the approach of a linguist is that the linguist concentrates on his or her analysis of a sentence while this study concentrates on

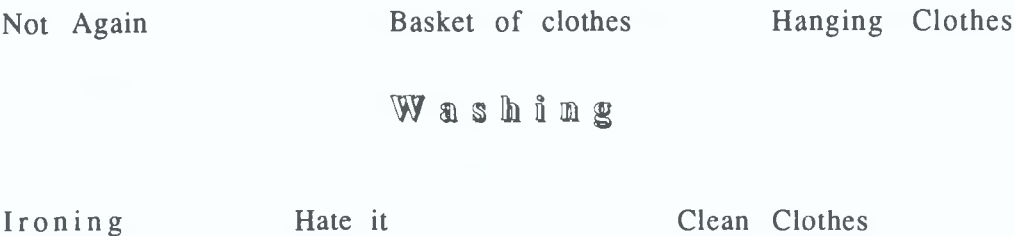
the respondents' analysis of the ad. A linguist concentrates on three levels of language, phonology, syntax and semantics. Phonology is not examined here because it was felt that the average respondent would be unable to give a phonetic analysis of the ad. The semantic analysis concentrates on the significance of words and word association in the ad.

### **5.2.1 Semantic Analysis: Surf**

Semantic analysis commences with an investigation of associations that the women held for the general product schema. For example, washing has a set of meanings for the respondents and any reading of a washing ad is based on these meanings. The reading of the words, if complementary, will produce association and elaboration in relation to the general schema. If the words read in relation to the Surf brand signify a complete contrast, it will either trigger more thoughts to produce a reading in relation to the product category or the reading of the sign will be based on some aspect of symbolic meaning.

The word washing, Figure 5. 3 had several different connotations for the women but most of them related to a work activity. Eleven different groups mentioned washing as a work activity. Six women were reminded of ironing. Three groups thought of hanging clothes out on the line. Two groups thought of the satisfaction of having clean clothes, there was some controversy on this issue. Eight groups agreed that there was some satisfaction getting clothes clean but they also felt that it was an never ending cycle, which involved sorting clothes, hanging them out, taking them in and ironing.





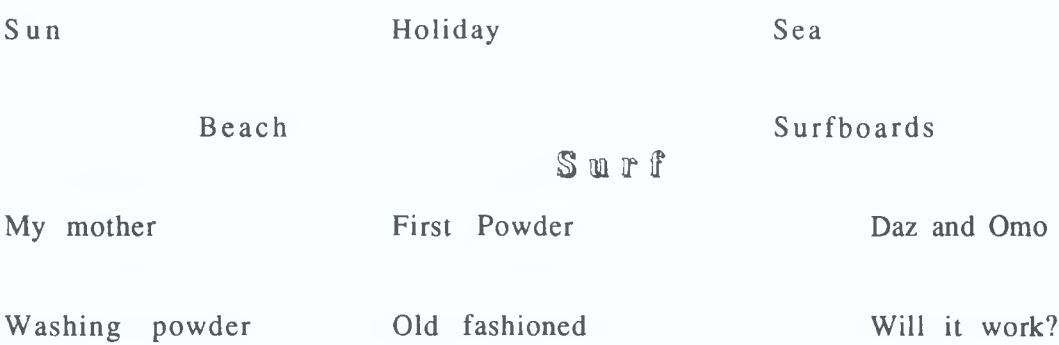
**Figure 5. 3 Semantic Association Washing**

The responses to the meaning of the word Surf were divided into two categories. The first category where over half of the responses emerged were to elements of the ad. Of the referents mentioned by over half of the respondents (sun, sea, beach, holidays and Surfboards), only two were explicitly obvious in the ad, the sea and surfboards or windsurfers. None of these referents had any association with the product category. Instead when people thought of sun sea and beach they thought of holidays. While these words had positive gratifying motivations or experiences for the consumer one could argue that the attitude was not formed to the ad. The reason was that holiday was not an actual part of the ad but was the main sign triggered by elements in the ad. Theory on attitude to the ad would suggest an association between elements in the ad eventually transfers to the product. The reverse has happened in the Surf ad. The respondents have associated and transferred meaning from elements in the ad to other aspects of their lives, for example, the sun and the sea reminded them of holidays. All the meanings associated with holidays will never be associated with washing or washing powder.

Two issues must be raised in relation to the referent holidays. Firstly it is a high involvement or a very important event to people. Secondly the involvement is affect based towards holiday and people expect sensory gratification from holidays. Washing is a low involvement activity and the motivation is negatively driven, to remove a problem, dirt. These two referents have no direct



relationship and recall of either would not imply the other. The ad itself did not mention holidays at all, and did talk of activities associated with washing, for example removal of stains. Yet over half the respondents focused attention on referents that they associated with holidays, Figure 5. 4 and as a result that was the referent recalled or thought about. It is critical for the advertiser to determine at the outset of the creative process what referents are, can or may be, triggered by the code symbols used and how this affects ad interpretation.



**Figure 5. 4 Semantic Association Surf**

A second category of product related responses emerged. There were over sixteen responses in this category. Examples of referents in this category were: 'old fashioned powder'; 'reminds me of my mother' or 'Daz and Omo, the first powder out, it does not work'. For a washing powder none of these referents are positive. Old fashioned brands, may for some brands carry values of nostalgia, trust and emotion. But for a washing powder it implies lack of development, doubts of machine compatibility and questions of whether or not it still works. A second referent triggered from word association which had negative product connotation, Figure 5.4 was, my mother. Mothers are used in advertising and have connotations in consumer society as people who are credible sources in recommending products. This was not the context in which the sign mother was read. Instead it implied that the women remembered back to their own childhood

and this was one of the first washing powders used by their mothers. This did not imply that she recommended it or even still uses it.

The other washing powders that Surf was associated with were Daz and Omo which were not the leading brands used by the respondents. These product related referents all had negative connotations for the respondent. The semantic interpretation or reading is negative for both categories; the first set of referents while positive and satisfying had nothing to do with the brand or product category. Even if the ad itself is evaluated in a favourable manner where the respondents like the ad because it reminds them of holidays. It is unlikely that the values and meanings associated with holidays would ever transfer to washing or washing powders.

**5.2.2 Syntactic Analysis: Surf**

Syntactic analysis revolves around the structure of the sentence. Syntactics is concerned with structure, how the larger linguistic units are built up out of the smaller units. Another way of examining this for ads is to consider how the same symbolic meaning is built up from different signs that lead to this meaning. Syntactic analysis draws on analysis carried out in the preceding section on structural analysis. Ads contain more than a verbal element and therefore the syntactic meaning should be expanded to cater for other elements of the ad. Hirschman (1988) introduced or expanded the syntax structure for reading the narrative of Dallas and Dynasty by equating the subject with actor, the verb with action and the object with outcome. A similar approach is used for syntactic analysis of the ad.

The subject in the Surf ad is not an actor but windsurfers; the action is the cleansing of the sails; and the outcome is that Surf powder can achieve these results. The windsurfers could be seen as representing two extremes of nature

and culture; one set of windsurfers were the clean and good lining up to do battle against the bad and dirty. The mediating force is a close up of the good and clean to discover their sails have Surf written on them. The transformation is the dirty sailboards going through the water and the audience seeing the stains come out in slow motion; the end of the ad shows all clean windsurfers, with not a sign of the dirty ones anywhere. There was a long distance shot of the sea, wind and blue sky and something in the distance sailing towards the camera. These signs represented nature and could be described as deep symbolic values. The camera focuses in on product related meanings, dirty sails of egg, fish and grass; all the sails represented items of clothing such as table-cloths and t-shirts.

Transformation (Figure 5.2) occurs with the surface product quadrant but this is only bought about by the surface symbolic quadrant where, for example, the sea gets very rough and the wind appears to have increased suddenly in strength; the windsurfers are now moving fast through big waves. The mediating nature sign is the wind lifting the boards through the air, the mediating cultural sign is a focus on the dirty sail, and the transformation where almost inch for inch the stain disappears as the wave washes over the windsurfer. The board of the windsurfer when it is covered in these dirty sail travels through turbulent sea and once clean, sails into calm water with the Surf sails sailing behind. During the mediating shots, especially between the surface symbolic and product quadrant when the wind lifts the boards, the battle commences but it is not the boards that are now doing battle but nature washing the dirt away. This time the audience is not shown the good or clean windsurfers; all the boards are mixed and after the battle or turbulence only the clean boards remain, as all the stains are gone. In addition, now the originally bad windsurfers lead the good; thus there is a complete transformation, with the original bad or dirty windsurfers turning so clean that they now lead the original good windsurfers.

### 5.2.3 Pragmatic Comparison: Surf

Pragmatic analysis focuses on the context before, during and after the ad has occurred. Pragmatics is concerned with the relation of signs to interpreters. Pragmatic reading of the ad should show the interpreters' image of Surf in relation to washing and other washing powder ads. A particular ad does not exist in isolation and the reading of the ad must concern itself with the reading of this ad in relation to others. This may show the inclusion of variables that are actually absent from this ad but may be present in others. For what is not said can be as important as what is said; failure to realise this may result in complete misinterpretation of the significance of what people claim to have read. For example, respondents generally seemed to like the Surf ad thinking that it was bright and colourful but when they compared it to other ads they preferred the washing powder ads that showed people in everyday scenarios. But they praised the Surf ad because it did not show the stereotype woman or worse, it did not swap two packets of washing powder for one. From this example it is clear that people read in relation to ads they already know. These context variables show how respondents associated with the ad and whether the ad reminded them of washing, and how well the ad compared with others.

The pragmatic questions received the most responses among all groups.

Pragmatic analysis commences with how people read the Surf ad in relation to other washing powder ads. This highlights what was read in other ads that was not read in the Surf ad and vice versa. There appeared to be two different approaches to comparing ads, some groups thought about the issues and others listed their favourite ads. The groups that thought about the issues disliked the Daz type ad and although some stated the reason for the dislike was that women were portrayed as stupid; others implied this by expressing annoyance at "Will you swap one for two?" The second approach was where the groups listed the ads they liked. Figure 5.5 gives the full textual responses of two groups with each

representing one or other of the two categories. Noreen's group is an example from groups that discussed issues, and Marion's group is an example of groups who described other ads preferred.

Noreen's group

- Woman 1      There is one called Radion, Oh, my God I could throw something at the TV when that comes on.
- Woman 2      The ads that go Mrs so and so bought Daz they just bore the shit out of me
- Woman 5      Daz swap two and the stereotype of stupid women!
- Woman 1      There was this one on 'last night, she couldn't get her wash clean and the husband went out and bought Daz
- Woman 5      I know it sounds cliché but I really hate them
- Woman 3      That's right they are trying to say that men do the shopping
- Woman 4      I found the music in that ad terrible irritating
- Woman 5      It was sort of a male hobby for a female product. There was this thing that everyone else was having a good time because they used Surf, appealing to you from the outside. It was real yuppie.

Marion's Group.

- Woman 1      I prefer that I think it is more exciting
- Woman 2      The best one is the one with the little bottle where she says Hugo's good polo shirt, his best shirt
- Woman 3      The Ariel bubble where she puts her face to the machine
- Woman 4      And the girl with the tomato juice spills over her dress and she runs out and her mother
- Woman 3      The Ariel ads are fantastic
- Woman 2      The new Radion ad is brutal
- Woman 4      I know
- Woman 5      I haven't seen it
- Woman 2      Well actually now when you are ironing the shirts you often get a smell off them
- Woman 3      The ad is not good
- Woman 2      But it is true to life.

Figure 5.5 Comparison of Ads for Noreen's and Marion's Group

Noreen's group were conscious of the role portrayal of women in the ad, Figure 5.5. The depiction of women was important to this group and when they thought of other ads they read them in relation to the role portrayal of women. They hated ads that showed women as stupid. Two different ads, Daz and Radion, were given as examples of poor role portrayal. The Daz swap two ad was disliked because they portrayed women in a stereotypical situation and also because the women in the ad appeared stupid. These women did not care if Mrs so and so bought Daz. But they did object to showing the woman as though she was stupid.

The irritating part for a lot of women is that the advertiser thinks the female audience is stupid enough to accept the tone and content of this message. The Radion ads were also disliked because a male reporter was telling women about washing. In another Radion ad the husband goes shopping and comes back with a washing powder that will get stains and smells out of clothes. Both of these ads imply that the woman is stupid. Generally in society it is the woman who does all the washing, yet one of the Radion ads has a man who does not do any washing, telling women how to wash. Similarly with the second Radion ad, women generally do most of the household shopping, yet in this ad the man goes out and comes back with this wonderful powder. This shows male superiority, in that when he goes shopping he can come home with the correct powder. The Surf ad itself was disliked by one of the women because it showed a male hobby for a product that was used by women. This ad also showed everyone as having a good time and implied that the women could have a good time if they used Surf.

Noreen's group mentioned ads only in the context of how they showed women. In fact, there was no mention of preferred ads. The notion of binary opposition could relate to their discussion. Their preference is non sexist role portrayal of women, their dislike is the sexist role portrayal of women; therefore in talking

about ads they they preferred they cannot think of positive role portrayal, so they highlight the negative.

Marion's group preferred a drama type ad that was related to the product category. They wanted to be entertained. Marion's group listed ads they liked, Figure 5. 5. All the ads liked were based on a slice of life creative style. The ads showed an imaginary real situation such as confusion about putting washing powder in a plastic ball and putting the ball in the washing machine with the clothes. These ads depicted a humourous situation and were enjoyed by the women. The Persil ad was also enjoyed. It too showed an ordinary situation of a daughter borrowing her mothers dress and then spilling juice on it. No issues were mentioned in relation to why they liked these ads. The group quoted parts of the ad that they liked. The reasons for liking would appear to be enjoyment rather than any particular issue. This group also disliked the Radion ad. The reason for their dislike could be inferred by reference to the ads they liked. The Radion ad was a very straight sell ad while the others were an everyday drama in a home setting.

#### **5.2.3.1 Pragmatic Association: Surf**

Pragmatics examines the relation of the sign to the interpreter, in other words whether the respondents associated or could associate with the ad. When asked if the behaviour in the ad was the type of behaviour they associate with washing, all groups replied no or definitely not as their initial statement. Seven groups held this negative attitude in further discussion of the question; their elaboration was confined to a more or less single statement such as "No, going out windsurfing and dragging the clothes behind," or "No it reminded me of summer holidays with all the water." The remaining thirteen groups while their reply was negative, contradicted the first response by saying "Yes, the surf movement and the sea was like a washing machine or the surf board flipping over like



clothes in a washing machine," or "It reminded me very much of the inside of a washing machine." In general there was much more elaboration among the groups that contradicted the initial statement.

#### **4.2.3.2 Pragmatic Image Analysis: Surf**

One of the more important areas of pragmatic analysis is how the ad relates to the existing image that people have of a product. Sixteen groups claimed that the ad did not match their image of Surf. Four of these did not elaborate or give any reason as to why they didn't. Two groups said they had a dull image. Six groups said they thought of it as an old fashioned product that had been around for years, or that it reminded them of their granny. "Surf is so old fashioned. It might be getting modernised, years ago it wasn't for machines was it?" Two groups said it didn't remind them of their image, but they did not use the product so it was hard to know. One said that they had no image and one said no but they did not know why. There is a major problem for Surf in these responses; the overall implication is a lack of image and the the image that is there is a dull old fashioned one. The reference to old fashioned is not one of nostalgia but one where this was the first product in the product category and now there are newer, more modern powders that suit today's washing machines. Product image can be classified as either practical or emotional. This product category had traditionally sought a practical image, but some ads also seek an emotional image; this is usually in addition to the practical base. The Surf ad does not portray a practical image. Of the four groups that said the ad related to their image of Surf, one associated with the play on the word but would never have thought of Surf boards; another thought of Surf water and suds in a washing machine. The third group claimed that it related to their image because Surf was washing powder; and the fourth gave no reason. None of these responses would imply a practical product image. A product positioning map of Surf according to practical and emotional image would imply a poor position, low on practical and low on



emotional dimensions. However, this could not be regarded as definitive, the construction of such a map would require ratings of different brands and ad attributes on several variables. But the verbal responses of the groups imply a low practical and emotional image.

This pragmatic analysis shows that ads, are not read in isolation, an ad is read across issues relevant to a persons life and in comparison with other ads in a product category. For the Surf ad a key issue was the portrayal of women; the respondents felt that the Daz Swap 2 campaign reflected women in a stupid stereotype role. The respondents also compared and contrasted various story type ads, preferring those that told a story/playlet compared to the Surf style ad. The women in all the groups could not associate with the ad but they did read the message that the surf movement in the ad was similar to a washing machine. The ad did not match the respondents' image of Surf.

### **5.3 Visual Analysis**

Visual reading of the ad did not seek a description of words representing a picture, but the thoughts the respondents had as a result of seeing the picture. The primary concern is the relationship between the picture and the concepts. What is sought from the reading of the picture is identification of the effect of the picture on the respondents or to the inferred causes of an object that would have such an effect on the respondents. The visual description of the picture is a representation of thinking about a picture and not a representation of the picture. These thoughts about the picture are indirect in that they are not directly related to the picture. Baxandall outlines three modes for thinking about a picture; the direct effect of the picture on us; making comparison with things whose effect on us is similar; making inferences about the process which would predict an object having such an effect on us.

The questionnaire that the women individually completed sought to determine the most persuasive variable in each ad for each woman. The results for persuasive variables Figure 5. 6 simply identified the most persuasive sign. The women did not describe their reading of the sign nor did they explain why they felt it was persuasive. There was however a clear correlation between the signs that the women felt were persuasive and the visual signs read in the ad. For example, in the Surf ad visuals were thought to be most persuasive and the main sign read was visual connotations of holiday. In the Birds Eye ad the most persuasive variable was people the main sign read was children/cowboys. The women stated that nothing in the Chanel ad was persuasive, however woman as a persuasive variable received 16 mentions. The main visual sign read was woman.

|             | Surf | Birds | Chanel | Bank of | Peugeot | Maxwell |
|-------------|------|-------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
|             |      | Eye   |        | Ire     |         | House   |
| Visual      | 23   | 8     | 9      | 9       | 25      | 20      |
| Verbal      | 1    | 7     | 2      | 6       | 2       | 11      |
| Music       | 3    | 16    | 10     | 7       | 18      | 24      |
| Movement    | 7    | 5     | 2      | 9       | 6       | 9       |
| Mood        | 1    | 7     | 2      | 15      | 3       | 29      |
| Rational    | 1    | 3     | 0      | 7       | 1       | 6       |
| Question    | 1    | 1     | 4      | 2       | 2       | 7       |
| Person      | 3    | 31    | 16     | 9       | 0       | 10      |
| Product     | 3    | 24    | 7      | 12      | 1 2     | 12      |
| Nothing     | 17   | 10    | 27     | 12      | 15      | 9       |
| Colour      | 15   | 8     | 2      | 3       | 0       | 6       |
| Fantasy     | 3    | 1     | 5      | 1       | 2       | 2       |
| No Response | 39   | 21    | 29     | 28      | 28      | 12      |

Figure 5. 6 Persuasive Variables

The main persuasive variables in the Bank of Ireland ad were mood and product. Money was the main visual sign read. In the Peugeot ad the main persuasive variable read was visual. Fire was the main sign read. Mood was perceived as the most persuasive variable in the Maxwell House ad, while having a break which

had connotations of a happy, friendly mood was the main visual sign read. Although people may find it difficult to elaborate on persuasiveness per se, the women did attempt to indicate the persuasiveness of the ad which correlated with the visual discussion of key signs read in the ad.

### **5.3.1 Visual Analysis: Surf**

Pictures/visuals are read or identified by what they imply, and by how they are compared, and by their effect. The inference process in advertising visuals is twofold. One is the advertisers' inferred meaning and two is the audience's inferred meaning. Analysis here concentrates on audience inference, that is the significance of the sign to the women. Visual description is related to some referent that produces a similar effect. Advertisers attempt to appeal to thoughts or feelings associated with the general product category or schema. Analysis of the signs mentioned should show what referents the audience mentioned, and the meaning of these referents to the audience. After the analysis of the signs given by respondents, it is clear that the majority did not read the signs in relation to general product/schema, Figure 5. 7. The general schema implies work, but visual interpretation of the ad is concentrated on holidays. In fact, when two groups mentioned holiday as the sign, they claimed that they definitely did not think of washing. Washing was perceived as the complete opposite of holidays.

Essentially what the cause variable or description of the visual shows is the ideological referent system that the visual has triggered. This is denoted by the visuals that come to mind when the respondents thought of the ad. What is extraordinary is that most of the visuals that were thought about referred to the original ideological system and only five to the product related value system. Only three groups referred to more than one sign. Examples of the visual signs thought about are given in Figure 5. 7.

| Sign        | Signifier              | Signified   | Group Nos.                           |
|-------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Holiday     | Sea/Sun                | Fun         | N A NL T MN L<br>NN M KN F R CL<br>S |
| Surf/sea    | Sail stained           | Clean       | ML P                                 |
| Water       | Disintegrating<br>fish | Clean       | A V KN                               |
| Water       | Sea surf               | Surf powder | K C                                  |
| Windsurfers | Turning over           | Energy      | L                                    |
| Blue/White  | Sun                    | Freshness   | R B                                  |

**Figure 5. 7 Visual Sign Surf**

The referent or sign that was thought about most was holidays. Holiday denotes sun, sea and beach, it connotes freedom, fun, and revitalised energy. These connotative meanings associated with holidays were not read by a single group. The values themselves may have been read in relation to other aspects of the ad and transferred to washing, but there was no connection between holidays and washing. In fact three of the groups stated clearly that they thought of "holidays definitely not washing." One of the women described washing in terms of a wash day, with the inference that washing is a workday; holidays are the opposite.

The sign blue/white, the signifier the sun and signified cleanliness was read by two groups. The blue/white sign makes full use of meanings derived from colour, blue/white has traditionally been associated with washing powders. The blue whiteness is supposed to imply real cleanliness. The sun and sea and sky are all blue and the colourful sails all have white in them. The Surf box is blue and

white. The connotative meaning is that in order to get clothes deep clean, again using the depth of sea and underwater shots to get rid of culturally offensive stains, a blue white powder is required.

A few other signs draw on values of energy and freshness. The concept fresh when applied to people means that one feels energetic, alive; similarly when applied to clothes it means that they are clean, even alive. The denotative signs that show this are the egg. The two stains that stood out in most peoples' minds were the egg and decomposing fish. One symbolizes life and the other decay or death. Applied to washing, dirty clothes are dead and lifeless, but Surf can bring them back to life. Also the activity of washing takes away a feeling of freshness or energy, but when it is finished one may feel more lively.

Another sign mentioned was the sailboard going through the surf and coming out clean. The denotative meaning is the sailboards going through the Surf. The connotative meaning occurs at the transformation stage. The boards came out of the surf clean and bright, jumping over each other. This implies that clean will mean bright and energetic. The meaning is drawn from nature, where Surf water eventually leads to calm sea. The windsurfers with dirty sails go through the surf and come out clean. This cleanliness gives them the energy to jump . The sea/water has the power to destroy dirt and to give life to fresh new sails. The connotative meanings of energy and life werenot read.

### **5.3.2 Visual Comparison: Surf**

In Baxandal's model one way of describing visuals is by making comparison with things that have a similar effect. Metaphors are often used to produce this comparable effect. This is particularly true in advertising where meaning is transferred from referents by juxtaposition, analogies and metaphors. In comparative analysis of the visual metaphors were used frequently when

respondents described the movement in the ad. The main metaphor that emerged is given in Figure 5. 8. Before discussing this an issue that emerged from the visual analysis that is relevant to the model is the difference between cause and comparison referents. The differences is not always clear because the same referent may be used in one case to make an inference and in another a comparison. The referent sea makes some people think about holidays. The inference is freedom, fun and leisure. But the referent sea is also described as "the sea is a washing machine." In this case similar attributes of the sea and washing machine are compared.

The most popular metaphor used was that the sea is a machine. As two separate referents, the sea and washing machine are very different but some of their attributes are similar. By presenting the two concepts side by side as superimposed images the advertiser dissolves the critical features that separate the concepts and fuses the similarities. The conceptual reorganisation brings about reading of one concept only; the intent of the metaphor in this case is that the sea is a machine. Figure 5. 8 shows attributes that are different and similar between a washing machine and sea. Those attributes below the line bring about the fusion process and unity between the concepts.

Mc Cormac (1988) outline three levels that should be considered in explaining the meaning of metaphor: culture, semantics and syntax, and cognition. It is evident from analysis that cognition took place where respondents discerned likeness and difference between the two referents. The cognition was that your washing machine and Surf powder is the same as the sea and its surf. The machine is powerful like the sea and can get deep stains out of clothes. This metaphor was read by nine groups. The cultural and semantic level were read but there was no fusion of cultural values associated with the sea to the washing machine. The popular meaning for the sea is not a machine which is associated with work; sea is

associated with leisure and enjoyment    Level 3 is read and Levels 1 and 2 are not read in relation to carry over of meaning onto the product

|                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Sea               | Washing Machine        |
| Natural Force     | Mechanical Device      |
| Salt water        | Fresh Water            |
| -----             |                        |
| Power from Nature | Power from Electricity |
| Movement          | Movement               |
| Clean             | Clean                  |
| Colour/Blue       | Blue white wash        |

**Figure 5. 8 Metaphoric Reading of Surf**

**5.3.3 Visual Effect: Surf**

The effect of the visual was not as apparent as either the inferred or comparative referent    The effect however while not obvious from visual description is revealed in both mood of the ad and how the ad wanted respondents to feel    The mood of the ad was read as lively, active, very get up and go, not a washing mood    All the groups read the mood in the ad as lively and active    They also felt that the ad wanted them to feel good, clean, fresh, alive and in a holiday spirit    Six groups felt the ad wanted them to go out and buy the product

Looking at the reading of what the ad wanted them to feel and the desired effect, it is remarkably close to the structural reading of the ad    The ad wants them to feel good but the only way they can be good is if they get clothes clean, then they will feel fresh, alive and good, because they have succeeded in getting rid of dirty clothes    Comprehension/understanding does not necessarily lead to interpretation    A group may fully understand the codes, symbols, signs used, but this system may not be what they want to interpret and unless we ask what

visuals they think about we will not know what they are attending to in the ad. This issue emerged with two groups who liked the ideas because you had to pay attention to understand what the ad was about. "It was not an ad you could understand without watching." But an understanding of the codes used does not imply interpretation.

#### **5.4. Attitude to the Ad: Surf**

The attitude to the ad was discussed in the previous section where it emerged that respondents had a positive attitude to the Surf ad. Most of the ad related thoughts were classified as execution bolstering, which implies liking of the creative content. An interesting fact emerged later in the analysis where negative feelings appeared to be greater than positive feelings to the ad. So the overall evaluation was one of positive response and negative feeling.

Two issues that came to light in analysis of attitude to the ad and discussed are execution bolstering and source credibility. The argument that is being raised in relation to attitude to the ad theory is that it does not show what people read nor does it give any explanation of the attitude in relation to the individual or ad or product. As the data is presented even at its most in depth level, it is only giving the direction of thoughts or feelings. It has emerged from the group discussion that sometimes what started off as an apparent positive evaluation turns negative or unimportant in full discussion. There are many reasons for this. People may say the first thing that comes into their minds, but when they actually start to think about and compare ads what initially appeared good may have some major drawbacks. When respondents filled out attitude to the ad scores and thoughts to the ad, they did so on an individual basis. An issue that has not been raised in attitude to the ad theory is that these responses are only to one ad and do not include comparisons with others. It is possible to have positive brand and ad attitudes but when you start comparing attitudes across brands in a category, the



initial attitude may appear weak. When people are filling out scores on a semantic scale they are giving an evaluation of what they are seeing or have seen. It is suggested that these scores are higher or more positive than is really the case. On reflection and discussion, or comparison with other ads in the same product category, the ad may not appear so good. The semantic scale shows a positive or negative evaluation but does not tell us anything about how or what made the person hold that attitude and the consequences of these thoughts for the advertiser. So people evaluated things like colour, movement and sea in a positive way, they like the portrayal of these variables therefore they like the ad. But then they start to think about the ad in comparison with others or some issue about washing powders. The ad bears no relation to their general product and ad schema for washing powders. Even though they may still like the ad it may be difficult for the respondents to read it in the context of washing. So the issue is, what message or reading did they finally take from the ad? What appears to have happened in group discussions is that a comment from one person leads to second opinions, e.g. Woman 1 would say "It is good bright and colourful" and Woman 2 replies, "It reminds me of my holidays". Woman 1 responds with "Yes but not washing powder, how would you wash clothes in the sea".

Looking at the Surf ad in relation to semantic differential analysis some points of interest emerged. Attitude to the ad showed a large amount of execution bolstering. Examples of these are given in Appendix 6. Attitude to the ad also showed that negative feelings were greater than positive feelings to the ad, but that in general there was a positive response. How could any advertiser read such an apparent contradictory result? It is argued that they could not from general categories given. The attitude to the ad data only makes sense if attention is focused on the cause of the response. From the preceding structuralist and semiotic analysis the above contradiction is explained thus. One would expect that if people like the execution of the ad then they would have positive feelings, that

the ad would make them feel good. But this did not happen. The elements of bolstering such as sea and windsurfer were described as fascinating exhilarating, energetic, and powerful. These descriptors did not remind people of washing but of holidays, and holiday became the main referent. It was clear in the pragmatic section that people could not see themselves in the same situation; they could not associate with windsurfing and therefore would not identify with the positive feelings portrayed. Another explanation is that people disliked the strength in the ad, they felt the ad was too powerful and it reminded them of feelings of over exertion.

The question is what does execution bolstering do for an individual. Past analysis simply describes it as focus of attention on the ad but has not attempted to suggest the effect of execution bolstering. The effect depends on the transfer of meaning, whether it is from a product or ad related thought. The decoding or reading of the ad means that codes are used to symbolize products and give them meaning, but in taking or reading signs, image, symbolism we can either demythologize the sign, read the sign or symbols as intended, or fail to transfer meaning and in the process maybe to read an unintended message. While execution bolstering appears as a positive result for the advertiser in that there is a suggestion that it creates a favourable attitude to the ad which can mediate brand attitude, this is questionable in light of the above results where an unintended message, holidays, is read. The feelings mentioned are attributed to the referent which is totally unrelated to the brand, and in the everyday schema the complete opposite is the case.

All execution bolstering responses are treated in the same way, that is, they create a positive attitude. But different execution bolstering responses may have different effects on attitude and all effects may not be positive. Signs that are liked but which are very unrelated to a general schema may never transfer any

meaning to the brand. Other bolstering responses such as "The ad makes me feel good" may affect brand attitude. Attitude to the ad theory regards all execution bolstering statements as though they were equal in that they form a positive attitude to the ad. This may be the case. But the issue is that not all favourable attitudes to the ad carry over to create positive brand attitudes, there may be no positive relationship between attitude to the ad and the brand. It is suggested that the reason for this is that where meaning is read to an unexpected referent and there is no association with general product or ad schema, a positive attitude to the ad will not carry over to the brand. If the execution bolster responses are as varied as the ones in Appendix 6 it is unclear what these execution responses are really telling us about attitude to the ad and brand. For example, a bolstering statement such as: "I love the ad, it reminds me of my holidays" suggest a positive attitude to the ad. But is, or will the sign holiday ever be associated with washing? A bolstering statement such as: "It was great the way the stain disappeared," also shows a positive attitude and in this case there is an association with the general schema. The significance of meaning of the sign referred to by respondents is completely ignored in the current categorisation of bolstering statements.

Figure 5. 9 gives the message that the groups mentioned in their discussion of what they thought of the ad. Once a person stressed the message such as: "Surf washes clean," others in the group or the individual themselves passed a comment on it. These are given in Figure 5. 9 and really highlight the whole area of source credibility. The study of reading ads must include analysis of source credibility, which was revealed by peoples' thoughts about the Surf ad. In all cases the credibility was negative. "I would not believe them," (the advertiser), "It is supposed to be what a washing powder does, and I cannot understand why he says new when it was used by our mothers." These comments are quite revealing because general attitude to the ad in the previous section was positive, yet source

credibility is quite negative This could raise serious questions as to why source credibility has not been included as a component measure of attitude to the ad

| Message  | Group Comment  |
|--|--|
| Surf Washes Clean  | I would not believe them<br>It is supposed to be what washing powder does  |
| Surf Takes Stains Out  | If you believe it<br>Stupid nothing to do with washing powder<br>I don't know what they do to them<br>Cannot understand new when it was used by our mother |
| Trying to sell the product<br>It is a good times ad everything is bright and healthy | Not a good sales ad  |
| Freshness deep cleans and that<br>Surf gets all the stains off                       | It is not true   |
| Water washes all stains off  | Too energetic  |

Figure 5. 9 Message in the Ad

None of the methods on their own give a full reading of the ad The structuralist method examined the symbolic values that were read and how these were transferred to the brand Three levels of reading emerged in this section, the deep, the moderate and the surface product reader While these results were revealing, the method did not disclose the full meaning of the ad Semiotic analysis was used to determine broader reading and comparative reading with

other ads. On the semantic level the words in the ad cause negative reading in relation to Surf. Respondents thought on non washing related activities such as sea, sun and beach or their thoughts in relation to the brand were derogatory, for example, old fashioned, first powder. The syntactic level involved reading of the deep structure, in this case good versus evil. The pragmatic analysis showed how the ad was read in relation to other ads; here again there was diversity of reading. Some people preferred Surf because it did not stereotype women. The image of the ad did not match respondents' image of the product. The visual analysis showed that most attention was given to a referent that caused inference about holidays which did not lead to a comparison between codes.

Comparison only took place when people described the movement. There was no voluntary statement on the effect of the visual; information on effect was obtained by asking respondents about the mood in the ad. Attitude to the ad analysis questioned a concept that is used as a frequent measure of attitude to the ad, execution bolstering. Another issue that emerged in the reading of the ad that is not considered in measuring the attitude but which does effect the attitude was source credibility. Of the measures used to determine reading of the ad, attitude to the ad appeared to be the weakest and can appear confusing when opposite readings are given such as positive response and negative feelings. It is not suggested that this cannot happen, it does. It is possible to like some aspects of the ad and dislike others. But this information will not be revealed in either a score only measure, as in semantic differential or thought verbalisation analysis.

## 5.5 Structural Analysis: Birds Eye

The key phenomena in the ad is satisfaction. The deep meaning of satisfaction is evident in a number of different sub plots in the ad. Groups concentrated on different themes, and some of the groups read two themes in the ad. For example Valerie's group read the cowboy and the manipulation theme. All the scenes read had satisfaction as the deep meaning. The mother is satisfied because she has pleased the children. Firstly she played along with their stake-out game by pretending she did not know they were watching her. Secondly she gives them their favourite food. As a result of pleasing the children she herself feels satisfied.

The main theme in the ad is children acting as cowboys. The meanings attached to cowboys become associated with the burger so that when the children eat the burgers they will feel like they are cowboys. Fourteen of the groups focused on the cowboy theme which was read in two different ways.

1. The cowboy down on the ranch branding cattle.
2. The good, the bad, and the ugly style cowboy fighting, robbing and holding up others.

Five of the groups (Philly's, Deidre's, Claire's, Rosaleen's and Freda's) read the cowboy image, the down on the ranch style cowboy. This type of reading completely ignores the satisfaction meaning between parent/mother and child. Instead attention is focused on the branding/naming of a product. Satisfaction in relation to the branding phenomena results from ownership of the brand. Branding is traditionally a male activity, women look on but have no participation in the process. The purpose of branding is to mark animals so that ownership of animals is known. In the world of packaged goods branding has the same meaning. Branding enables the consumer to differentiate products. There is another function of branding, every time the consumer purchases a brand they

are buying a product personality, they own this personality, they can feel secure in the quality of the product. The satisfaction would be from knowing that you are using a well known brand which has become so familiar to you that you feel you own it.

Eight of the groups (Kathleen's, Valerie's, Brenda's, Karen's, Marion's, Lily's, Clodagh's and Sharon's) read the second cowboy theme and were reminded of Clint Eastwood when they thought of the ad and the message in the ad. Clint Eastwood represents a macho cowboy. He typifies a modern gun slinger and always survives the fight. This reading relates to satisfaction in that the women saw the pun on cowboys. The children playing on their bikes were pretending to be cowboys. The women think the children are clever to have thought of playing cowboys on bikes. The parents' satisfaction is in the children's involvement in their play.

One of these fourteen groups (Noreen's) elaborately discussed the western theme. There was quite a discussion in this group. One woman felt that the ad was great. It reminded her of her children and how they enjoyed these burgers. She would be quite happy to play, "The game with them." The game is the children pretending they are cowboys and holding up the mother. The bounty is the burger. Two of the women in this group did not like this idea at all, believing that it had "Connotations of high noon and Clint Eastwood and all that spitting." This was agreeable to the first woman because it was only a parody. The others felt it was dangerous, that this type of behaviour became acceptable if initially it was presented as frivolous. They believed that these frivolous messages were more dangerous than blatant sexist themes. They appeared completely inoffensive and were therefore readily accepted by society. In reality this frivolity both creates and reinforces sex roles and stereotyping. They were completely opposed to the male macho image and loathed the fact that the "Token female," the little girl was

portrayed with "Such a cock eyed look" which was more aggressive and menacing than the boys' behaviour. They disliked the macho image and patriarchal dominance in society. The other eight groups that read the cowboy theme did not read this at all. They read the pun on cowboys.

Six of the groups (Nancy's, Rosaleen's, Freda's, Maureen's, Marion's and Lily's) focused on the children. They compared the children in the ad with children in general. They felt the ad was typical of what ordinary, everyday, children would do. These people reflected on parental satisfaction. Normally the children are rushing in and out and either don't want to eat or don't care what they eat. They disregard the fact that the mother has put time and thought into making something that they might like. But this is not the case with burgers. The mothers know that the children appreciate them when they give them burgers. They also know that the children will have eaten and thus their hunger will be satisfied. This means that the parent can be satisfied because they have looked after their children.

Seven groups felt that the message was to get mum to buy burgers. Four of these groups (Ann's, Valerie's, Teresa's, and Susan's) read manipulation from the ad. The women did not like the idea of using children to manipulate parents into buying products that they, the children wanted. Manipulation does not imply any meaning of satisfaction. Three of the groups (Mary Lou's, Noreen's, and Sharon's) felt the ad suggested how they can satisfy children. The ad appealed to the parent with difficult children; parents who worried because their child did not like the food the mother prepared. The ad shows how all children love burgers and therefore your child will love you for giving them burgers. The women who read the ad in this way succumbed to cultural pressure to give children what would make them happy and therefore they too could feel happy and satisfied.



5.5.1 Binary Opposition: Birds Eye

The main binary pairs that were read in this ad Figure 5. 10 were symbolic, success versus failure. Thirteen groups read this binary pair. All but two groups concentrated on success. Success was read because the women felt that children would appreciate their mothers if they gave them food that they wanted. The connotations are that a good mother is one who pleases her children. But success can also be read at a deeper level, where meaning is attributed to motherhood. Motherhood has connotations of a woman who nourishes protects and cares for her children. Failure in motherhood is where the woman rejects her child, fails to care for and protect them. This notion of motherhood is reviled by most cultures. Success is read when the woman decides to be the ideal mother and neighbour and feeds the children of the neighbourhood at a moments notice. Eleven groups read the ad in this way. Two of the groups read failure. They did not like the idea of pressurising women to suddenly turn around and feed all their sons' friends. The transformation process shows how the sign success was transferred to the product. The Birds Eye ad was read as intended on the success sign but the transformation process should show how the totality of segments fitted in with this reading.

|                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Inconvenient/Convenience   | K N P D C V S K N M             |
| Clint Eastwood Macho/Whimp | N                               |
| Hunger/Satisfied           | K N M L B F S M N T M L         |
| Fish/Meat                  | S M N                           |
| Wholesome/Junk             | A C S T                         |
| Steak/Frozen Burger        | K N D M L A C F S M N M         |
| Branding/Generic           | N D C R M L                     |
| Success/Failure            | K P D V R B F S K N N N M N M L |
|                            | S H                             |
| Raw/Cooked                 |                                 |
| Harmony/Conflict           |                                 |

Figure 5. 10 Binary Opposition Birds Eye

In the Birds Eye ad the audience was brought through each binary segment with attention mainly on the positive end of the continuum. For example, attention was first focused to the idea of steakhouse and not the kitchen because the ad wants to refer to meanings attributed to cowboys and not a modern kitchen. The woman is shown as being a good sport, willing to play along with the childrens' game. But the ad also shows the negative aspects on some segments for example, the conflict and threatening manner of the children, where the children order the parent around. By bringing in these negative features attention may be drawn away from positive aspects to focus on the negative. If this happens transformation will not occur. This ad was only partly read as intended because not all women accepted the cowboy theme.

### **5.5.2 Transformation Process: Birds Eye**

Figure 5. 11 outlines the transformation process for Birds Eye. The deep product symbolic sign harmony/conflict was not read by any group. The woman represents harmony, she is the one doing the pleasing. Her kitchen is more brightly coloured than the rest of the ad. She is willing to entertain Pete and his friends. The children represent conflict. They are staking out the woman. They are sullen and menacing, and the only thing that will satisfy them is if they get what they want, a burger. The burger takes the meaning from the mother and replaces her. Throughout the ad the audience see and hear more of the burger than of the mother. She is used to give the burger meaning. Her values are now reflected in the burger. It can satisfy, please children in the same way as mothers do.

The fundamental message is satisfaction. The binary opposition table Figure 5. 10 shows that most of the reading in the ad centred around the success/failure theme which leads to satisfaction. The denotative reading of this success/failure is that

children love burgers and therefore the meal is a success. The connotative reading is that the children will love the mother for giving them the burger. The ideological or deep meaning relates to maternalism. The ad reflects each woman in the audience as the perfect mother. Mothers are supposed to be kind and caring. They look after children, nourish them, fulfil their needs. By carrying out these maternal functions women are supposed to feel fully satisfied. This ad extends the perfect maternal image because, not only does the mother meet her own children's needs, but also her child's friends. The woman is presented as a generous person who would not dream of offending her child by turning away his friends. Satisfaction is important as deep reading. It erases the concern that women may feel because they did not prepare the food themselves. The satisfaction in this case does not evolve from the woman preparing the meal herself. Instead the satisfaction for the mother is knowing that the children love burgers. If the children are happy the mother is satisfied.

|                |                          |                  |
|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|
|                | <b>Product</b>           | <b>Symbolic</b>  |
|                | Steakhouse/Kitchen       | Hunger/Satisfied |
|                | Inconvenient/Convenience | Fish/Meat        |
| <b>Surface</b> | Clint Eastwood           | Wholesome/Junk   |
|                | Sizzle/Simmer            | House/Bike       |
|                | Steak/Frozen burger      | Raw/Cooked       |
| <b>Deep</b>    | Branding/Generic         | Harmony/Conflict |
|                | Cowboy/whimp             | Success/Failure  |
|                |                          | Children/Parents |

**Figure 5. 11 Transformation Process Birds Eye**

Failure is never considered in the ad. Perception of failure would be where the women read "A crowd of brats, I would never feed the children of the

neighbourhood." Only two groups admitted that they did not like the idea of feeding all these children. But no group discussed the aspect of the ad that presented an ideal maternal image which was far from reality, and an image they did not want to have to live up to. These idealised images are presented in such an inoffensive, simplistic manner that they are barely noticeable to the audience. The image for all women is that this idealised maternal role becomes expected behaviour. It is culturally accepted and the women may in time be seen as having failed the child if they do not adopt this ideal role. Failure is also evident where the children hate the food, refuse to eat it, and blame the mother. The mother is unhappy because she has not pleased the children. The mother may even feel guilty because she has let her children down because she has not given them what they wanted.

A second deep sign read concerns the parent/child relationship. The ad shows the child in control. The child makes demands on the parent and the mother succumbs to the child. The deeper meaning was read by two groups who suggested that "Ads like this mean that children make the purchase decision." Other groups felt that, as a result of seeing the ad, children would pressurise parents. This would mean that the child makes the purchase/consumption decision and controls the parent. Ads aimed at children, and ads which suggest that other children get what they want, advocate child control. These meanings were not given by the majority of groups.

The surface symbolic sign read most relates to children. The theme that received most attention at this level was hunger. Like the mother the audience is to read through hunger and arrive at satisfaction which is derived from eating. The women were reminded of hunger by the actions of the children. Many of the women could see their own children rushing home on their bikes and arriving in the kitchen starving. The children triggered the parents own feelings of hunger

and their experience of hungry children. The binary opposite of hunger is satisfaction. To read this meaning the women must read across the ad to the surface product meaning which is that a burger will satisfy the childrens' hunger. The children will be satisfied because they love this food. Both hunger and satisfaction were read. Hunger is deliberately presented as a major sign so that the mother builds up an association between the problem, hunger, and the solution, a tasty burger that the children will eat and be satisfied with.

The main surface product meaning read was convenience. Convenience was not verbalised in the ad, but was remarked upon by seven groups. The women felt that if you were landed with a load of children then this was a convenient meal to make. The inconvenience theme was not mentioned for fear of arousing the guilt feelings in the women. Only one woman referred to guilt feelings. "They are handy once in a while, you don't have to cook a proper dinner, but you could not do that all the time." A proper dinner implies time and effort spent cooking a meal; the mother preparing wholesome, nutritional meals. But as was evident from the deep symbolic meaning, Figure 5. 11, the advertisers hopes to project these values onto the burger. Therefore, the convenience meaning must avoid all mention of the inconvenience of full meal preparation. Instead convenience is emphasised by the ability of this woman to feed a whole lot of children at a moments notice.

Another product surface transformation sign, read by ten groups, was that these burgers, which are frozen, are as good as the original beef steak that cowboys used to get. The meaning is that the frozen processed burgers take on the same nutritional values as prime raw steak. Not all of the groups would have inferred this in their reading of the ad. Only two groups question the steak/burger content. They claimed the ad wanted people to believe the burger was the same as steak.

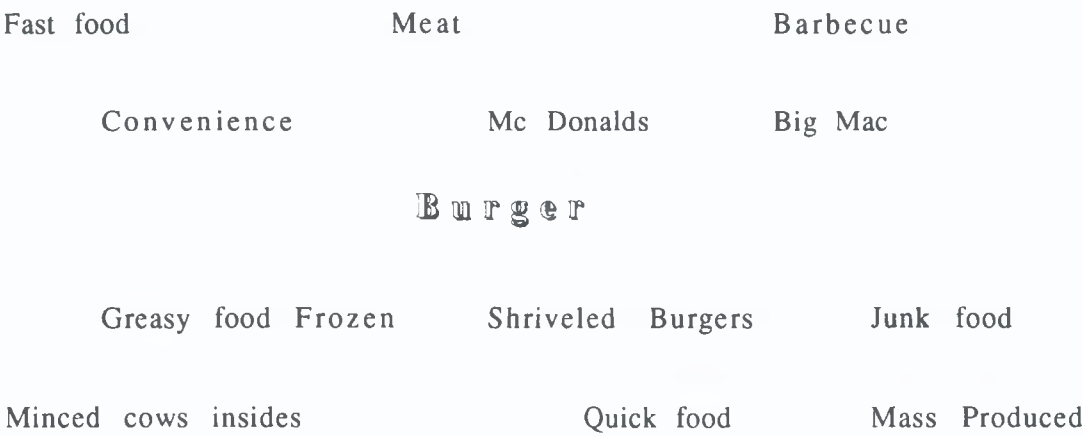
Transformation is bought about by the children taking on the role of cowboys. This creates an atmosphere of disharmony and there is only one way to restore order, that is, feed them what they want which is Birds Eye burgers. The burgers take their meanings from two main code systems in the ad; the cowboys and Pete's mum. The cowboy meanings were read by the majority of groups but maternal meanings were not. The cowboy reflects a macho image, taking what he wants, he is also associated with real cows, real meat, and a ranch. The children brand this make of burgers; they are staking out the mother for the burger they want. It must be a real, genuine steak burger. The mother is perceived in society as someone who satisfies children, she pacifies them. Her value of providing satisfaction is transferred to the burger. Once the children get the burger they are contented and leave the home peacefully.

## **5.6 Semantic Analysis: Birds Eye**

Most of the responses to the word burger were positive, Figure 5. 12. Birds Eye burger only received one mention. It is interesting that when thinking about burgers respondents gave responses from their own point of view. Other sections of analysis for this ad for example structural and visual analysis show that the women were more concerned with how the children would be affected by the ad. There were 15 mentions of McDonalds and Big Mac. McDonalds was well perceived and mentioned by almost all groups. There were no derogatory remarks about McDonalds. Six groups thought of convenience and three groups fast food. This implies that it is a fast dinner. Four groups thought of sauce and chips.

The negative responses were much fewer than the positive. There were only single responses to certain aspects of burgers. For example one woman thought burgers were greasy, another thought about junk food, and one described burgers as shriveled food. One was reminded of additives and mass produced food. Only six

women had a negative response to burgers. While the word burger has positive response only one brand really received attention, McDonalds.



**Figure 5. 12 Semantic Association of Burger**

The word burger was generally described or thought about in a positive manner. A few people thought they were greasy, junk food. When people thought of Birds Eye they thought mostly of peas and fish fingers with only one group mentioning burgers. Birds Eye was well regarded and was evaluated positively, its products were perceived as good quality. Although some thought of Birds Eye as expensive, this implied quality for other women. A negative factor from the word association is that Birds Eye Burgers are not as prominent in the consumers mind as peas which received 13 mentions and fish fingers 18. Captain Birds Eye got 4 mentions and was well liked, burgers only received one.

Birds Eye's strategy of generalisation appears to have worked well in that most of the women had positive response to Birds Eye products, Figure 5. 13. They felt they were good quality products. There appears to be a slight imbalance in the generalisation strategy in that both Birds Eye peas and fish fingers received far more comment than burgers. Considering that the women had only just seen the



burger ad there may be more need for concern that it did not receive much attention from the women. Given that McDonalds were automatically associated with burgers Birds Eye's generalised connotations from different brand categories may need to be re-examined in order to give the burger a more individualised personality. This appears to have worked for fish fingers but not for the burger although it was perceived in a positive manner.



Figure 5. 13 Semantic Association of Birds Eye

### 5.6.1 Syntactic Analysis: Birds Eye

Subject/Actor: Children/Cowboys

Verb/Action: Stake-out

Object/Outcome: Burgers/Stake-out

Most of the groups perceived the theme of children acting as cowboys. The children are the subject in the ad. These children are imitating cowboys. From start to finish the children are cowboys. They are never shown changing roles from children to cowboys or from cowboys back to children; the whole role portrayal is cowboys. Cowboys connote meanings of a down on the ranch lifestyle, people who provide and eat wholesome natural food. This however was not the image portrayed, except by the branding visual at the end of the ad.



Instead the bad image of the cowboy, as one who holds up, steals and fights was portrayed. The result is usually one of satisfaction for the cowboy; they get what they want and then ride off. In the ad the children were the cowboys, staking out the mother for what she had, the burger, they too, were successful in their stake-out. Once they had eaten the cooked food they disappeared. Conflict was evident in the ad and was there to arouse attention. Very early in the ad the mood and setting was dark and sinister. Later in the ad the eye movements were also menacing almost saying "We better get what we want or else!" By overcoming the threatening mood the mother is saved. She is relieved and has also satisfied the subject. But it is the object, the burger, that ends up as the real satisfying element.

The object, the burger, does not appear until the end of the ad. Throughout the ad significant values associated with other signs are introduced and in the end of the ad they are transferred to the burger. The traditional cowboy image of a healthy lifestyle, working in the outdoors, and eating wholesome food and real meat, is implicitly implied. Mothers provide natural food and only give what they feel is best for their children. Thus the burger is perceived as original, natural wholesome food.

The reading and outcome is totally child centred. The children are the subject and their wants are the outcome. They, the children, make the decisions. The women who read the ad as child centred felt that the ad was aimed at getting the children to watch ads; which would influence them to get their mother to buy. The cues in the ad that build up to this reading are that the children in the ad have decided what they want before the ad commences. They, the children, first appear role playing cowboys, but they are on bikes. They have been in the saddle for ten long minutes. While the visual and verbal script are running, the music from the film: 'The Good the Bad and the Ugly' is playing in the background. They are obviously

after something and the audience is told it is Pete, or rather his mother, who has been to the steakhouse. Next the audience see the stake-out of the mother. The children get away with this and end up getting what they want; a burger. So the message that these children represent to other children is: "We wanted a burger and got it by pressurising Pete's mum. You too can have a burger by asking/telling your mum." Or: "Eating burgers is great fun, you can pretend you are a cowboy."

### **5.6.2 Pragmatics Comparison: Birds Eye**

There was not a lot of elaboration of this ad in comparison with other ads, Figure 5. 14. People either could not remember other similar types of ads or they made brief comparisons. At least fourteen people in different groups said they did not know or could not bring others to mind. Those who did prefer it were also brief in their comparative descriptions for example: "It was a good ad," or "I liked that." Eleven groups gave this response. When people did compare the ad with others, they attempted to recall burger ads or else they compared the ad with other Birds Eye ads. The problem was trying to recall either other food type ads or ads for burgers. In all the comparison was favourable but not on a particular issue. It was almost a neutral evaluation. In fact only two mentioned McDonalds (Noreen's and Maureen's) when they were trying to think of other ads but there was no attempt at comparison of ads. Three groups compared the ad with other Birds Eye food ads. Each of these groups focused on different aspects of Birds Eye. One group (Kathleen's) compared the ad with all frozen foods and did not think the ad was as good as the vegetable ads. The second compared it with the Menu Master ads, and simply commented that the burger ad was of a similar style. The third group listed other steakhouse ads. There was no reading of any issues by any group in comparing this ad. The reason is: the vast majority of the women could not think of any ads to compare it with.

|                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| I think that is more catchy,   | P A M L R F N K N M N T M S   |
| it was a good ad               |                               |
| Others                         | D                             |
| I don't know others            | C V B S N K N M n T M L Sh Cl |
| It is like other Birds Eye Ads | K N M                         |

Figure 5. 14 Ad Comparison Birds Eye

5.6.2.1 Pragmatics Association: Birds Eye

Most of the groups felt that their children behaved in the way same way as those shown in the ad; coming home on their bikes, starving, waiting for burgers. Two groups argued against the behaviour of the children claiming that they were obnoxious and far too demanding, expecting food the minute they arrived with their friends. They admired the mother for feeding the neighbourhood at a moments notice. They thought the situations were typical in that children like and eat burgers and chips. "If you had a lot of children into your house you would give them burgers and chips because they are handy to cook." Though some argued that you would not feed all the children steak burgers but if children came in unexpectedly then it was the quickest thing to cook. They felt the behaviour was typical of the way burgers disappear. When children are out and come in hungry they think they will never get food. In all of the groups about four people felt the situation was not typical. The behaviour that was seen as typical was that of hungry children. Not so typical was feeding every child in the neighbourhood.

5.6.2.2 Pragmatic Image Analysis: Birds Eye

The groups felt that the ad did not match their image of Birds Eye. Different reasons were given for this. One group (Valerie's) associated Birds Eye with vegetables and felt that their ads were very strong. They could not associate Birds Eye with frozen meat at all. Another group (Brenda 's) stated that the burgers were bought frozen and the ad did not show this. Four groups (Noreen's, Susan's,

Maureen and Clodagh) claimed that their image of Birds Eye was Captain Birds Eye and associated him with fish fingers. But this image did not carry across to the burger ad. They associated the Captain with boats, the sea and fish. This image did not transfer across to meat, cowboys and horses.

The remaining groups did not expand on their image of Birds Eye. Birds Eye's image was well perceived as a good quality brand. When the groups attempted to think of image they talked about the quality of peas and fish fingers. This also happened in the semantic section. They gave a generalised image of Birds Eye but were not very positive that this ad lived up to their image. Only one group had a definite image of this ad and their image of Birds Eye. The ad reminded them, like other Birds Eye ads of "Good wholesome food."

### **5.7 Visual Analysis: Birds Eye**

The majority of the signs were related to the product category. The signs given in Figure 5. 15 all reminded respondents of preparing food for dinner. Some aspect of each of the signs made the women think of hungry children or food. There were five main signs. The most frequently mentioned sign were cowboys, children on bikes and Clint Eastwood. The children reminded the women of their own children coming home hungry from playing. They also reminded the women of cowboys. The children were perceived as imitating cowboys, instead of horses the children were on bikes, like the cowboys the children were in saddles. But in addition to cowboys the children reminded the women of their own children and how they love burgers. Some of the women, three groups, liked to give their children something tasty and believed that burgers were tasty. Others felt that the children only liked burgers, if they were bringing their friends home then burgers were the ideal meal. They were quick easy and convenient: something they would all enjoy.

| Sign                       | Signifier                  | Signified  | Groups                |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Cowboys                    | Children                   | Macho/Violence<br>Western Ranch                  | NVKNNMNLCL<br>NPDRFSM |
| Children sitting           | Own child<br>at dinner     | Meal Time  | DRKNMNSHCL            |
| Steakhouse<br>Branding     | Brand mark<br>on package   | Ownership  | NPAN                  |
| Clint Eastwood             | Music                      | Rough/bad  | K NVBKNNL<br>SHCL     |
| Children on Bikes          | Saddle                     | Horses   | D MLACVS<br>KNNTMCL   |
| Easy dinner<br>Dinner Time | Package dinner<br>Children | Convenience<br>Something<br>Satisfying/<br>Tasty | CBCL                  |

Figure 5. 15 Visual Signs Birds Eye

Cowboys were discussed by 15 groups. 8 talked about the macho image of cowboys and 7 the western image. 9 groups thought about Clint Eastwood. Neither cowboys or Clint Eastwood appeared visually in the ad and yet both were recalled by the majority of groups. The cowboy image connoted images of being down on the ranch, a western image, an image of wholesome food. Although the groups did not mention the transfer of these values onto the burgers, the fact that those visual were mentioned in association with the burger ad would imply classical conditioning had occurred. Mothers saw children on bikes, thought about them being hungry, the whole scene reminded them of cowboys which in turn reminded them of real wholesome food. The conditioned stimulus is cowboys, the

unconditioned stimulus is children on bikes. The conditioned response is demanding Birds Eye burgers.

Cowboys, children on bikes, and Clint Eastwood are all related. Children on bikes represent the denotative meaning in the ad. The connection between the children on bikes and cowboys, in other words the pun, is the connotative meaning. The western image, whether it is the macho male domination or the country and western image, represent ideological values. The values of the cowboy are male dominated with total disregard for the female. The ad is based on a male culture, cowboys. It is dominated by an all boy cast. Even the end of the ad, the actual branding of the product is by a man.

Clint Eastwood, as a sign, would not connote a down on the ranch image. The music in the ad and the mood and attitude of the children reminded the women of Clint Eastwood. The image of Clint Eastwood, as projected in his films, is one of a gun slinger, not a cowboy rounding up the cattle and branding them. The music used was from the film "The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly." This was a film of violence and fighting and did not present happy child-like image of cowboys. The similarity between Clint Eastwood and the traditional cowboy is that both are perceived as having a tough outdoor life. But they are also perceived as very different. Clint Eastwood is always the centre of trouble. He never rounds up the cattle, never brands them and is continually killing people and always the hero.

The next sign is children sitting around. Seven of the groups thought of children sitting around when asked about their visual thoughts. The women were reminded of their own meal times and the children tucking in or the mother 'dishing up' the dinner. The meal itself was perceived as an 'easy dinner', by three groups, this meant that there was no real preparation involved. The connotative meaning refers to attitudes to meal preparation. The connotative

reading was that this was not a proper meal. There was no preparation involved therefore the meal could not contain the same goodness as a dinner that was fully prepared by the mother. Some of the women felt it was all right to give children fast, convenient, food once in a while. The ideological meaning centres around maternalism. Western maternalism presents a passive mother willing and wanting to do everything possible for her children. Advertising presents mothers in an idealised home situation, with a perfect house, perfect children and sometimes a perfect husband. The woman is happy to be portrayed in the home taking care of everyone. In this ad she does not mind feeding the neighbourhood children. Even when the woman is presented in a somewhat modern appearing role her function never alters from the traditional housebound female role. In the Birds Eye ad she may be youngish, dash off in the car to shop, play along with the children and come home to a modern house but this mother upholds fully the traditional concept of maternalism. She passively subjects herself to every whim of the children, she gives other women the impression that she fully enjoys this. She makes her role appear so trivial that women do not notice the disparity between the portrayal in the ad, which appears realistic, and the actual reality motherhood. Not all women would willingly accept this role, but society pressurises them into thinking that reality should mirror the ideal reality of role portrayal in the ad. Groups such as Philly's and Noreen's, which read several feminist issues across a number of ads did not question the function of maternalism in this ad. Ideology was not read by any group.

The visual sign of branding struck seven groups. They thought that it was a strong image. Two groups stated that it reminded them of branding animals. The ad denotes the branding of the package. A brand connotes a product of quality. Branding provides a means for the consumer to differentiate between brands. The ideological meaning of brand is that it signifies ownership in the same way as the branding animals. In this case the real owners of the brand, Birds Eye, want



the consumer to feel that they own the brand. This ownership will make them feel loyal.

#### **5.7.1 Visual Comparison: Birds Eye**

The main creative technique used in this ad to transfer meaning was analogy. The children were perceived as imitating cowboys. A visual image of cowboys was not shown in the ad. But the women compared the visuals of the children with cowboys. Other elements in the ad, the music and movement, made the women think of cowboys. In making comparisons about the visual western connotations were recalled. The music was taken from the western film, 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly'. The verbal content was a direct take-off of western speech. "They came in search of Pete. They had been in the saddle for ten long minutes." The pun in the ad was that instead of horses the children were riding bikes and instead of western hats the children were wearing bicycle helmets. The entire behaviour of the children was a pun on how cowboys behave.

The metaphor used is branding of packages is the same as branding of animals, the device used is a burning fork. The upper half of Figure 5. 16 shows the difference between animals and product packages. The bottom half of the diagram shows how the differences are fused by a unifying object to produce similarity of meaning. The fusion of meaning relates to ownership. The branding of cows implies ownership to a farmer, branding means that animals can be differentiated. The result is that there is no confusion between farmers as to who owns what animals. Similarly by using the branding fork a manufacturer differentiates his or her brand from other manufactures. The purpose of branding is to differentiate the brand for the consumer. The manufacturer not only wants the consumer to recognize his or her brand but they are also giving ownership of the brand to the consumer. The branded package is the buyers, once they purchase the package they own it. The cultural meaning of branding



is ownership, this was not read by any group. The semantic and syntactic meaning would have connotation of a western cowboy lifestyle. Cowboys round up cattle and brand live cows. This was read by six groups. The cognitive meaning was that branding of a package had similar meaning to the branding of a cow. This was read by two groups. The other groups that read the branding metaphor spoke only of the visual impact of the sign.

|                            |                                    |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Burning Fork               | Package                            |
| Live Animals               | Dead Meat                          |
| Open Air                   | Factory                            |
| -----                      |                                    |
| Branding                   | Branding                           |
| Differentiation of animals | Differentiation from other burgers |
| Ownership of animals       | Consumer ownership of brand        |

Figure 5. 16 Metaphoric Reading of Birds Eye

5.7.2 Visual Effect: Birds Eye

The majority of the women liked the ad. It either reminded them of their own children rushing home hungry or of children in general and how they love burgers. The main mood read in the ad was a western one. The music reminded the women of westerns and they thought the concept in the ad, the parody of modern children imitating cowboys was clever. Negative opinions were only expressed by four groups (Kathleen's, Nancy's, Noreen's and Ann's). The rest of the women liked the ad. The overall effect was that the ad reminded women of children and in particular their own children. When they thought of burgers they were reminded of their own children and how they loved burgers. When they thought of the ad they thought of children who enjoyed playing cowboys. The combination of burgers and cowboys reinforced the appeal of the ad to children for the women. They felt that children would really enjoy the ad in the

same way that they enjoy burgers and playing. Overall the ad was read as intended and the interpretation was positive. However the dual meaning of western theme that was given in the structural analysis of a macho male and western wholesomeness was not addressed when the women thought of the effect of the ad. They simply liked the ad because they felt it would appeal to their children.

### **5.8 Attitude to the Ad: Birds Eye**

This ad received the second highest attitude score. There was positive evaluation of attitude to the ad and to the brand. Free elicitation showed the majority of comments were execution bolstering where the respondents liked the ad or thought of cowboys. There was a favourable and positive reaction to the ad. However, there was a low positive feeling response. The advertiser would now want to know why. The former analysis does not reveal this information but the groups verbal response data does. Some respondents thought the ad was clever because of the pun on cowboys and the play theme. Some disliked the idea of children acting/being cowboys and others disliked the idea of children pressurising their parents. Some were irritated without specifying why. A descriptor, such as children having fun, boys playing on bikes, counts as an execution bolstering statement, as would a descriptor like: "I could imagine myself eating one." None of the respondents gave this reply in relation to the ad. This type of response occurred more for McDonalds in word association, where fourteen groups associated McDonalds with burgers. This is an important response for a food product.

### **5.9 Structural Analysis: Chanel**

The key phenomena in this ad is the relationship between men and women. The relationship was read in different ways by groups and individuals in groups.

Three different readings emerged from the groups; a romantic reading, a sexual reading and an object based reading. Each of these readings reflects a different set of meanings for the brand in the ad, Chanel. The Chanel ad received more elaboration than any other ad in this study. For some of the ads elaboration centred around a single issue, but elaboration for the Chanel ad revolved around several issues. The respondents addressed themselves to several issues and levels of meaning in the Chanel ad. There was a lot of involvement with the ad even though the majority disliked the ad. Structural analysis reveals the significance of the different issues read and elaboration of reading in the ad.

The majority of women read or focused on the sexual connotations of the ad. Within this category of reading there are different areas of focus which are given in Figure 5. 17.

|                                     |              |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Sugar Daddy/Living off men          | KNPMLVCRBNKN |
| Toy boy/use Chanel have lots of men | KNMLBNKN     |
| Phallic Symbol                      | NPL          |
| Independent type woman              | P            |

Figure 5. 17 Structural Issues Chanel

While there are differences of reading for all of these categories there is one fundamental reading, the male-female sexual relationship. The reading of sexuality is not read in a positive manner. The beautiful young woman in the sugar daddy reading, is being kept by an older man in return for sex. The sugar daddy context implies that the woman is living off men. Whilst there was a certain amount of jesting and laughter at the notion of a sugar daddy, the concept was not well received. The women did not like the idea of being dependent on men in return for sex. The woman in this case is nothing more than a sexual object, and while her lifestyle is materially luxurious, the woman herself is

regarded as an object that can be bought. In general this is not a relationship that would be enjoyed by women and is perceived as a one-way relationship. The man has what he wants and is patronising in his attitude by thinking that he can keep the woman by giving her material objects.

The next reading is a complete role reversal for the man and the woman. The central reading is sexual but this time the woman is perceived as having a toy boy. The woman is perceived as self-centred and selfish, she has to flirt and gain the infatuation of the young fellow in the garage. Again the relationship is one sided, the woman has the money and possessions. She can have whatever she wants. This type of relationship was sneered at by the women as it implies that men have to be bought. Six of the groups read both the sugar daddy and toy boy themes alongside each other. The implication was "Use Chanel and have lots of men." The portrayal of the woman and her sexual relationships was disliked. The insinuation was that the woman flaunted her sexuality in order to obtain whatever she wanted. The world in the ad was seen as a "world for the rich, nothing to do with us." It could be argued that the ad was about fantasy, but even if read on a fantasy basis which it was not, the fantasy was not one the women wanted.

The next sexual reading was the phallic symbol. This appeared in the last scene of the ad and was read by three groups, Philly's group saw the rock as "An erotic phallic symbol that was there to make us fantasize." Nancy's group thought the phallic symbol was a "rush of blood to some man's head" and that the ad was far too abstract. Lily's group mentioned the phallic symbol and laughed. The reading and association of the phallic symbol in the ad was "Wear Chanel and you will have sex."

The final reading on sexual connotations was given clearly by one group. Philly's group described the woman as independent, doing her own thing, but they were disappointed because in the end all she was doing was going to meet a man. They had hoped for something different, instead they saw the woman's independence completely reversed. For all her style and glamour she ended up dependent on a man.

A romantic message was read by three groups (Kathleen's, Philly's and Rosaleen's). Their reading centred around a beautiful rich woman going off to meet some man. These groups read the ad as follows. The woman kisses her father goodbye, gets into her car, drives off to the desert to meet someone special. She was looking glamorous and feeling good because she had a romantic date. The man she was meeting was flying through the desert to meet her and then they would disappear together.

One woman in Rosaleen's group felt that the ad: "Built up the same way a girl builds up to a night out." The ad builds up to the romance. The woman appears well dressed, jewelled and ready to go somewhere that matches her sophisticated look. The audience is not told where. This adds a sense of mystery. She gets into a very expensive car and drives herself. The next time we see her she is in the desert which is a stark contrast to her sophisticated look. A shadow passes over her car, and she gets out to meet a handsome man who has flown his own plane into the desert to meet her. They embrace, disappear behind a rock and the audience is told to share the fantasy. The audience is left to speculate and to fantasize about the ad.

The women that read the romantic meaning could not see and totally disbelieved the other readings. They frequently replied "don't spoil it for me" or "I don't believe it." Some of the women who read the sexual message experienced conflict

between the music and the visuals in the ad. But the women who read the romantic message did not experience any. The music or song was: "My baby don't care for cars, clothes, my baby just cares for me." Two of the women who read the romantic message were familiar with the song. The meaning they derived from the song was that of a man caring only for the woman. However, the voice could easily be interpreted as a male voice and was by many who were unfamiliar with the song. In this case the meaning of the song was that the woman does not care for cars and clothes, she just cares for him. The respondents argued that she had everything, beautiful clothes, jewellery etc and as a result she did not have to worry about possessions. They also argued that she did not care for him because she had other men as well.

Conflict is used in advertising to attract attention and to bring about a solution but the conflict cannot be resolved in this ad if one takes the attitude that if you have everything then you don't have to care. The only reading that can resolve the conflict is the romantic reading. But this romantic reading cannot happen if the women think the song is sung by a man. With the romantic reading the focus of attention is on the relationship between the man and the woman: the woman means everything to the man. The woman in the song is happy because her man just cares for her. The ad wants women to fantasize and the only way she can is by wearing Chanel. She can pretend that her husband/lover is prepared to fly to a remote spot in the desert just to be with her. But the significant meaning is where the fantasy is turned into reality, if you wear this perfume this can happen to you.

A third category of response was where five groups (Ann's, Claire's, Freda's, Susan's and Maureen's) claimed they did not know what the message was. However, they then continued by saying that they liked ads to surprise them or hold them in suspense. The surprise or suspense was wondering what the ad was

for. First the woman appears in expensive clothes. Was it for clothes? Next the camera focuses on the gold jewellery as she kisses the older man. Was it for jewellery? Next she gets into a beautiful expensive car. Was it a car ad? Finally they wonder what is the relationship between this woman and all these men. The answer is Chanel. The women who read the ad in this way focused on the objects in the ad which were used to give meaning to the perfume. The main phenomena here is that the relationship between men and women is centred around objects. The meanings of the other products cars, clothes, jewellery are transferred to perfume. They are all very expensive, high status quality products.

### 5.9.1 Binary Opposition: Chanel

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Desert City            | F N M D A V                               |
| Old man: Young man     | K N P M L K N                             |
| Material: Spiritual    | P M L B L S                               |
| Chauvinistic: Feminist | K P M L M N                               |
| Moral: Immoral         | K N P M L A C V R B K N N N K N T M L C L |
| Money: Poor            | P V R K N M N T C L                       |
| Cold: Hot              | K   |
| Romance: Unromantic    | K P V F                                   |
| Sophisticated: Gauche  | K M L A C V K N                           |
| Car: Foot              | C R F K N M L                             |
| Perfume: Stink         | N D V R C L                               |
| Fantasy: Reality       | N P D B C I                               |

Figure 5. 18 Binary Opposition Chanel

The binary pair that was read most in Figure 5. 18 was moral/immoral, with the 15 groups focusing on the immoral. The immoral codes read were that the woman was having an affair, she was selling sex, the man was her sugar daddy, she was bleeding men. The perfume code read does not relate to a nice odour versus a bad odour but to the fact that this was a perfume ad and the product was not



highlighted. The car and jewellery had negative connotations in that the women thought their relationship with the product advertised was so abstract that the ad could have been for anything. Figure 5. 18 shows that 16 groups concentrated on the moral/immoral codes.

One would expect that the intention of the ad was centred on romance and a modern young woman. Four of the groups read romance but these groups also read negative aspect of other binary segments. The signs used did not encourage the women to read the cultural system intended. Even though both ends of a binary segment were not evident the women concentrated on the negative aspect of the binary pair. For example, the ad only reflected wealth, the women read this sign in a disparaging manner. They felt that there was too much wealth and would derogate the ad by commenting on the amount of poverty in the world. They read the ad as immoral, disliked the behaviour shown, and while they recognised the woman as being sophisticated she was perceived as being too sophisticated.

After analyzing the main binary codes that emerged from the audiences analysis of the ad one could question whether the advertiser or the creative thought about the meanings that would be taken from the ad. It is unlikely that any advertiser would want to concentrate on moral reading of the brand, particularly when the reading brought the audience from a moral to a immoral meaning. Nor is it likely that the advertiser wants the audience to question materialism in a disparaging manner. The deep product pairing which was aimed at taking people from reality to fantasy was not interpreted by most of the women.

The main message in the ad is that the relationship between men and women is sexual. A woman can have a sexual relationship by wearing Chanel. Fourteen groups mentioned that the message was sexual, women attracting men or women



having men. The triangle of meaning centres on the relationship between men and women. The women can have a man of her choice if she is wearing perfume. The women that the ad is appealing to will find that their lives' will be transformed. It will be adventurous, romantic, anything she wants it to be, even a fantasy as long as she wears Chanel. However, many of the women may have read outside the triangle of meaning. The codes and symbols that are used to build up this meaning are examined. If only the triangle of meaning is examined it is possible that the values the advertiser hopes to add on to his or her brand would be completely ignored. The transformation process is primarily concerned with how deep symbolic meanings, associated with the signs used, are transferred to the product.

5.9.2 Transformation Process: Chanel

|                |                       |                    |
|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
|                | <b>Product</b>        | <b>Symbolic</b>    |
|                | Music                 | Wealth/Poverty     |
|                | Sophistication/Gauche | Romance            |
| <b>Surface</b> | Car: Foot             | Cold/hot           |
|                | Gold Jewels/Sand      |                    |
|                | Perfume/Stink         | Desert/ City       |
| <b>Deep</b>    | Ownership/Communalism | Man/Woman          |
|                | Song                  | Sex                |
|                | Fantasy/ Reality      | Material/Spiritual |

Figure 5. 19 Transformation Process Chanel

Transformation takes place when the bipolar positions gradually take on more of the oppositional characteristics until finally, the reader reads through the original sign to its opposite. Several deep symbolic codes are used together to make sure that the fundamental message is read, Figure 5. 19. The ad starts in the city. The city itself is a symbol of materialism, a place where emphasis is on

production of goods, ownership, a place for buying possessions. By the time the ad is finished the audience is taken away from the city and in some ways from the material world to the desert. The desert connotes a barren area, sparsely populated with a primitive people, a place of no industry and no possessions. The desert is a place of mystery and romance. It is a place about which most people fantasize but never experience. These meanings were supposed to transfer to the product. None of the groups read this meaning.

The other deep symbolic signs used are; materialism, gender and temperature. The woman at the start of the ad appears cool and completely involved with material objects. The city also appears cold with an environment of glass buildings. The first man in the ad is coldly indifferent as he sits and accepts the woman's light kiss and gives no response. This is a complete contrast to the end of the ad, where the woman is excited. The scenery is a hot desert. The man is eager to reach out for the woman before they both disappear together. Both the people, and the scenery, change from cold to hot. The people's sexual desire also change from cold to hot, from passive to active. Only Kathleen's group read the cold and hot relationship between environment and people.

The transformation takes place from the surface symbolic to the surface product meaning. The surface symbolic is denoted by wealth, and a leisured life. Although a number of groups identified and read wealth in the ad none contrasted it with poverty and the need to work. None discussed both money and leisure alongside each other. The lifestyle of leisure as opposed to working was not mentioned. The perception of money in the ad was read critically. The women did not like the abundance of wealth. None of the women suggested that wealthy means that some people can buy the most expensive brands in all product ranges. Transformation takes place as follows. During the ad the audience is taken from a place of obvious wealth and abundance to a dramatically stark place

where there are no buildings, no objects. The sophisticated woman, who is surrounded by material objects, brings us from one place to another. On the product level of meaning she displays high quality, high value items, gold jewellery, designer clothes and expensive cars. The audience knows that whatever she is going to show them is expensive, and that they will associate it with high quality products. Her sophistication is a complete contrast to life in the desert. The gold jewellery is a contrast to the silver sand. The surface product meaning provides some of the added values that the brand Chanel signifies. The surface product meaning also leads into complete transformation. The main surface product sign read was objects. They were read by seven groups. None of the groups read that these objects are all expensive, stylish, top quality products. The binary process was supposed to enable the women to move from thinking about ordinary everyday cheaper products to luxurious top of the market brands. Instead the women questioned the relationship between the objects and perfume. The association was too abstract. There was no concrete connection between the objects used and perfume.

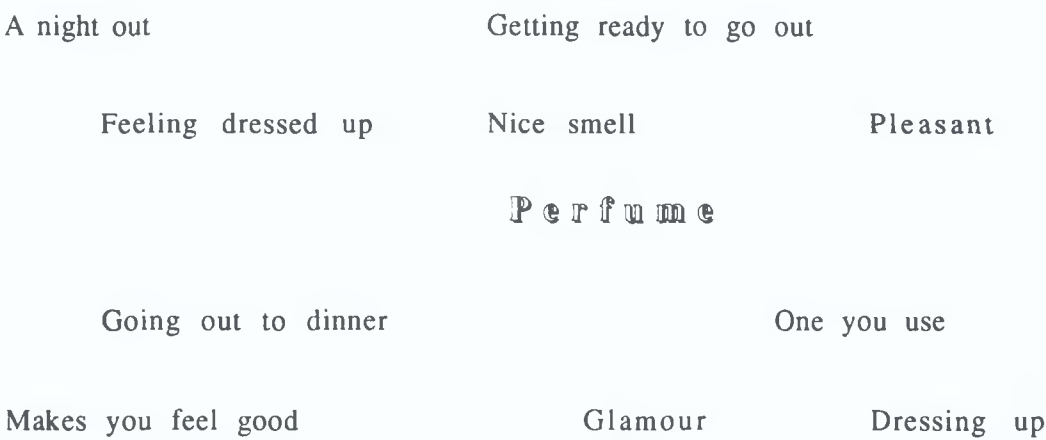
Three signs in particular were noticed at the deep product level; perfume, music and ownership. The woman leaves the city for the desert. She sheds ownership, at one level leaving the older man, whether he is read as her father or her sugar daddy. Later in the ad she leaves her car. When it looks like she has all these men, the audience is allowed in. They are told to share the fantasy. They are brought to focus on one key value; love between men and women. The woman finishes with one man, someone who just cares for her, nothing else is important. The perfume is the key to having this ideal man, to allowing the woman to fantasize, to shed the material world for a natural sexual relationship, a relationship of love and romance.

The transformation deep product meaning is complete when everything in the ad is left. The woman leaves the objects, the man who provided them, and the car, to have her fantasy. The ad leaves the woman, she disappears before the end of the ad. Everything in the ad has been used to give surface meaning of wealth luxury and style to the product. But the deep meaning that the product takes in is that it, Chanel, like the woman's imagination, can give fantasy. No product is capable of replacing reality with fantasy. The ad wants us to believe it can. Fantasy was read at a denotative level in that the women said the ad was about fantasy. They did not expand on this to a connotative meaning; even if you don't have wealth, beauty and men, once you have Chanel you can fantasize. The fantasy is living life as a lady of leisure. No groups read the deep product meaning.

#### **5.10 Semantic Analysis: Chanel**

There were slightly more responses to the word perfume than to the word Chanel. However, the categories of response were quite different. The main meaning attributed to perfume was getting dressed up to go out, something that makes you feel good, glamorous with a pleasant smell, Figure 5. 20. The meaning given to Chanel revolved around money. Most groups thought of money when they thought of Chanel, Figure 5. 21. Thoughts that came to their minds were; expensive tastes, something that reflects absolute wealth, something they could not afford, or something that was a waste of money. One person thought of money, one of clothes and one of power. The thoughts about the word perfume revolved around the theme of going out, getting ready and feeling good. None of the women associated these feelings with Chanel, or more particularly the Chanel ad. The ad appears to have removed the product from the lives of these women. None of the thoughts about what they do or how perfume makes them feel emerged in relation to Chanel.

There were very few product related or affective related responses to Chanel. But the responses or thoughts to the word perfume were very positive and mostly affect based. Fifteen of the women thought of a nice smell, five of being dressed up, six of a night out, four of getting ready to go out, three of going out to dinner and four thought of feeling good. None of these thoughts were aroused in relation to Chanel, with only one person thinking of a nice smell, sixteen thought of money, and sixteen thought of an expensive product. Both are negative attributes for a product such as Chanel, and neither relate to what the product category generally signifies for the women.



**Figure 5. 20 Semantic Association Perfume**

Chanel, as with all perfumes, appeals to women's feelings. It is an affect based product. It is also a product that is perceived as very expensive therefore, it could be described as a high affective involvement. These type of ads are advised to use a creative approach that helps the audience experience the product. This happened when the women thought of the word perfume but the thoughts about Chanel were more typical of high cognitive involvement and were expressed in negative terms. Money and expensive were negatively expressed as too expensive, or waste of money. There were no positive cognitive thoughts in relation to the word Chanel.

Expensive taste

## Something you cannot afford

## Expensive

## Waste of money

## Channel

## Power

## Absolute wealth

## Clothes

## Money

## Perfume

**Figure 5. 21 Semantic Association Chanel**

### 5.10.1 Syntactic Analysis: Chanel

**Subject: Men**

Object: Women

**Outcome: Lifestyle**

The subject of the ad was men. Eleven of the groups (KPMLVRBKNNNTML) read the message as "Wear Chanel have lots of men." Three of the groups (Nancy's, Claire's, and Clodagh's) expressed the message as "Have a good time." The connotations of this message is being with men. The men in the ad seemed to play a minor role particularly the last man shown who was, in fact, the main subject. There were three men in the ad. The first man that appeared was sitting down in a wealthy apartment. The second man was an attendant in a garage. The third flew a plane, disembarked and embraced the woman. Whether the ad is read in the sugar daddy or romantic context, the man is in control. He is the subject, all the woman's activities revolve around these men.

The woman is the object for all the men. Her role is a lady of leisure. She has no other function in the ad. There is no evidence of her working, of her being a wife or mother. She is simply a lady of leisure, depending on men to keep her, and provide her with a wealthy lifestyle. She is an object of pleasure for the older

man if he is her sugar daddy. She keeps herself beautiful because he wants a woman with expensive style to reflect his lifestyle. For the younger man, her lover, she appears independent in that she drives off to a mysterious place to meet him. She also makes sure that he will find her attractive. She again reflects a role that will suit his lifestyle. She has no real independence, that is why she is not the subject; everything she does is to reflect or serve the wishes of someone else, some man. As an object she is representative of all the other objects in the ad. She is wealthy, beautiful, fashionable, chic, sophisticated and elegant. The meanings attached to the woman transfer to the product. Chanel perfume is expensive, luxurious and mysterious.

The outcome relates to a particular lifestyle. By wearing Chanel you can experience a rich lifestyle. If you wear it you can attract men with money. But it also means that the woman wants her main role in life to be one of leisure. She must mirror expense, fashion, a consciousness in the correct look. She must at all times appear well dressed, well made up and ready to serve men who control her and her lifestyle. Chanel becomes an object that provides her with a means of pleasing men. It too is an object that the man feels represents his lifestyle. The woman is not using the perfume for herself but for all men and women who will perceive that she is a woman with expensive tastes. They will also perceive that her man or men can afford to give her this expensive perfume. He is perceived as suave, wealthy and generous. In the syntactic reading the women did not read fully into the relationship between the men and the women. But the ten who did read the sexual message revolving around a sugar daddy all saw her as being dependent on the man. Only one group verbalised the independent issue. They were disappointed because the ad, in the end, showed her dependent on men. The leisure context was not read by any group.



### 5.10.2 Pragmatic Comparison: Chanel

Overall there was not a lot of discussion about other perfume ads. Perfume ads were not perceived as being impressive. This was born out by the number of people who could not remember any other ads and by the number of groups who simply stated the names of perfume ads. Fourteen groups in Figure 5. 22 could not remember the names of other perfume ads initially, but of those fourteen, seven groups eventually named a perfume ad. Within these seven groups the discussion would generally start with a statement of preference for other perfume ads. This claim was followed by a comment such as "I cannot remember others." Someone in the group then recalled a visual such as the "one with flowers" or the "one in everyday situations." Another woman would then name the ad as Impulse or Tweed and there was again agreement on preference. Six of the groups simply named the perfumes they preferred, such as White Linen, but did not give any description of the ad. In general, perfume ads have failed to be perceived as impressive, most were so non-descript that they failed to gain a mention or any degree of cognitive or affective elaboration.

The majority of the groups preferred other ads. Where women in the groups preferred Chanel they did not just state "I prefer that ad," as was the case for those who claimed to prefer others. Instead they justified their reason for preference. It appears that those who felt they were in the minority had to reason out their opinions to the majority. This also happened in a group, the only group, in fact, where the majority preferred Chanel. The woman in the minority had to justify her stance. Within the groups where there was general consensus of preference for others no elaboration was given and the members just stated that they preferred others or named a perfume ad.

This ad was discussed in a similar manner to the Surf ad, in that the discussion either centred on issues about the product, or in naming and stating scenes in



other ads. Two groups, Philly's and Noreen's, elaborated most on the issues, but other groups that also raised issues were Deidre's, Brenda's, Lily's and Karen's. The groups with opposing views gave most elaboration. The issues raised are given in Figure 5. 22

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Women wearing perfume for themselves              | P N      |
| The other ads you are always with your husband    | D        |
| Some ads are flowery. That is not prissy feminine | P B      |
| Aimed at the type of woman who would buy          |          |
| Perfume for herself                               | N        |
| Named Ads   |          |
| Tweed   | K N KN C |
| White Linen                                       | K        |
| Este Lauder                                       | R        |
| El Mondo  | R        |
| Prince Machavili                                  | M        |
| Description                                       |          |
| The one where the fellow comes running            |          |
| after the girl with the flowers                   |          |
| Impulse Flowers                                   | ML T     |
| More feminine ones like Tweed                     | KN       |
| Others I cannot think of them now                 | A C V R  |
|   | F S SH   |
|   | CL       |

Figure 5. 22 Ad Comparison Chanel

Noreen's and Philly's group raised two related issues, women buying their own perfume and women wearing perfume for their own pleasure. One woman in Philly's group claimed that she liked the ad because it did not have the feel that women wear perfume for men but wear it for their own satisfaction. She argued that most perfume ads show women wearing perfume for men. The argument raised against this was that there were three men in this ad whom she was trying

to please. This woman felt that the impulse ad was much more independent because the woman did not care whether she got the flowers or not. The argument changed focus at this point with the first woman claiming that she did not like the Impulse ad at all. She thought the ad was very dangerous because it encouraged men to act on impulse. These women did not want to be perceived as doing things or wearing perfume just for mens' pleasure. They were concerned for the woman herself, her needs and desires. They disliked the prissy feminine type of ads which give women no independence. Even the woman who raised the argument against the ads reflection of wearing perfume for herself, admired an ad that she felt portrayed the woman as pleasing herself. Although both women read both ads differently they both wanted to see the same role portrayed, an independent woman.

In Deidre's group one of the women liked the ad because other perfume ads showed wives with their husbands. The role portrayal is normally the husband waiting for his wife. But this ad showed the woman with her own lifestyle. She was going off on her own. Similarly Noreen's group liked the ad because the woman was perceived as being naughty. She was the one having the affairs. She was in control of her life and would buy perfume for herself. This issue of having affairs and independence was raised as a counter argument. One of the women had suggested that if men thought that women behaved like the woman in the ad, they would not be persuaded to buy the perfume. She was also of the opinion that women would not buy the perfume for themselves because it was too expensive. She claimed that women would feel guilty about spending a lot of money on themselves and would not like to have to buy it for themselves.

The groups that did not discuss issues stated their reasons for liking other ads by describing scenes from the ads. They liked the boy running after the woman with the bunch of flowers; the Impulse ad. One group liked the Machivali ad

where the man buys the perfume for the woman and the Tweed ad where the woman is seen in every day situations. These women reflect on more old fashioned romantic notions of perfume. The issue feministic women took was a more modern view of women and the way she uses perfume.

**5.10.2.1 Pragmatic Association: Chanel**

None of the women could associate with the ad. They could not see themselves in the woman. In all, only three women could associate with the ad, the rest could not. The women who associated with the ad did not elaborate on what they associated with. It could have been the woman, the behaviour, the fantasy. Most of the women who could not associate with the ad did not give any reasons but there was a certain amount of laughter and sarcasm. At least four of the groups laughed, two groups felt the ad was out of their world. One group wished that, with a bit of luck, maybe they too could live like that. Two groups could not associate with the desert. One group replied that they could not associate their use of perfume with kissing a sugar daddy and going off to meet a toy boy. Finally one group felt that they were fortunate in not been able to associate with it.

**5.11.2.2 Pragmatic Image Analysis: Chanel**

Figure 5. 23 shows the comments on the match between ad image to brand image that emerged from the different groups. On the whole there was very little elaboration of the image that the women held of Chanel. Nor did the women explain why they felt the image they derived from the ad matched or mismatched their image of the brand. Eight of the groups had a negative image or a mismatch between the image they have of Chanel and the image portrayed in the ad. Six groups felt the the image in the ad matched the product. Six groups had a mixed reaction. Where there was a divergence of opinion there was more discussion and explanations as to why the ad did or did not match the women's image.

The groups showed quite an equal split between those that thought the ad matched their image of the product, and those that disagreed. There was more elaboration on the positive match of ad and product image, than the negative. It is interesting to note also that the responses to the ad on product image were similar to the way in which respondents thought about the word Chanel. Most of the replies related to money, to an exclusive expensive image; to an image of wealth and how the women felt the product was out of their range. The only comment that was not related to money was from the women who felt that the ad matched the product's image of sophistication.

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Yes she was very sophisticated                              | KV       |
| Yes over priced product out of our reality                  | P        |
| Except that it is wealth I associate with Chanel.           | V N M NN |
| There are few products that boast of how expensive they are | NN       |
| Yes adventure and romance                                   | M        |
| Yes   | R S CI   |
| No way not related to the product at all                    | NC       |
| No I think it is older people who use Chanel                | KN       |
| No not at all   | MLA      |
|   | R F KN   |

Figure 5. 23 Image of Chanel

The negative responses of a mismatch between ad and product image were on the whole non elaborative. Some thought the product was for older women, that it was an old fashioned product yet the ad was modern. Six groups stated that the ad did not match their image but they did not explain why, Figure 5. 23.

### 5.11 Visual Analysis: Chanel

Although there were a lot of signs mentioned they can be grouped into four referent categories; woman: object: scenery: sexual/feeling Figure 5. 24. The sign feminine was discussed by 7 groups. Most of the readings of the sign were at the connotative level where the women mentioned visuals such as beautiful woman, elegance, and sophistication. None of the women suggested the significance of the connotative meaning which is desirability; men perceiving the beautiful woman as desirable. It is difficult to define the ideological system because there is such diverse opinions on the whole notion of femininity. Feminism is described as an ideology but explanations of femininity are not so clear. In some cases femininity could be described as a social construct and in others an inherent biological system. Femininity as a social construct is really the meaning society gives to femininity. Radical feminists would say the this meaning was created by man and imposed on women and as such they totally scorn and reject anything to do with femininity. Traditional and liberal feminists would say that women have been conditioned into a mode of thinking about femininity which is; a woman is soft, gentle, attractive and pleasing. They accept a woman's need to display these feminine characteristics. Femininity is also explained as a biological system. A woman's biological system lacks the same aggressive hormones that are present in men. As a result women are by nature less aggressive and this is what makes them feminine. None of the groups examined the issues just raised. One group's identification with femininity would be described from the liberal feminist point of view which is an ideological base. Here the woman was perceived as been free, independent, in control of her own life. But the other eight readings fall into the socially constructed meaning or the connotative level of reading which is derived from culture.

| Sign                        | Signifier                            | Signified            | Groups                  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Chanel Woman                | Woman                                | Feminine             | KPAV<br>SKNT            |
| Woman with Man              | Embrace/<br>Kiss                     | Sex                  | NMLAVS<br>L             |
| Expensive Clothes Jewellery | Car, Clothes<br>Jewellery<br>Perfume | Wealth               | KNCVRF<br>KNNTT<br>MLCL |
| Rough Terrain               | Desert                               | Masculine/<br>Barren | CSLSH                   |

Figure 5. 24 Visual Signs Chanel

Of all the visual signs, objects received the most mentions. The denotative level of meaning is taken as simply the mention of the object, such as car, or clothes. The connotative meaning is the grouping of all the objects together to imply status, expensive, top of the range products. The ideological meaning is capitalism and the value placed on wealth in society. A few of the groups discussed ideological values but this was not always in a positive manner. Some of the women thought there was an abundance of wealth which was excessive. One group felt that the need for, and possession of, all these objects signified an empty lifestyle.

There were six mentions of scenery, the main signs were mountains and desert. One group saw the rugged mountains or terrain as a contrast to the softness of the woman. This sign was otherwise read on the denotative level. None of the women suggested that the ruggedness and strength in the terrain was an analogy for man. Nor did they suggest that the barrenness of the desert was a contrast to the fertility of the young couple. I think it would be wrong to say that the ideological system here is naturalism. The ideas relate to the force of nature. The desert is a

natural place untouched by man, the woman appears in this environment surrounded by material possessions, but she gives them all up for a primary natural drive, sex. No groups read the sign nature/scenery at this level.

#### **5.11.1 Visual Comparison: Chanel**

In the Chanel ad the technique used to produce a comparison effect, which is where people talk about visuals or objects that have a similar effect on them, is juxtaposition. Both values and objects were juxtaposed alongside Chanel to transfer their values to the perfume. The objects used were; designer clothes, custom cars, gold jewellery and a plane. The values were; romance, femininity, sexual attractiveness and having men. Both the values and the objects were seen side by side and it was only at the end that both transferred their values to Chanel. Chanel was seen as expensive, exclusive, a product that could help attract men; a product that could offer romance, sexual fulfilment, and also a situation where the woman was in control. She was the one who was cool and sophisticated, she went to meet him rather than wait for him to pick her up. This product would also give independence. If one combines the referents femininity and sexuality it is clear that both of these, and object based referents, were mentioned equally by all groups. If gold makes you feel treasured and special then Chanel will also make you feel like this. If being dressed glamorously and elegantly makes you feel sexually attractive, then when you wear Chanel you will also feel this way.

Music was commented on frequently for this ad. There were negative perceptions of the music in that 7 of the groups thought the music was dull, five of the groups thought there was a mismatch between the music and the visuals and 8 groups liked the music. The music is important because when using the music as a comparative device 6 groups felt that the ad was sung by a man. That meant this woman did not care about anything but "Her baby, her man." But the song was sung by a woman who was saying that her man did not care about anything but



her. If it is taken that a man sung the song then the ad appears to be totally contradictory because it states that "My baby don't care for cars, clothes" yet in the ad she is wearing beautiful clothes, jewellery and has a custom built car. However if it is sung by a woman she is saying her man don't care for these things. The romantic notion for the woman is to know that the man just cares for her. If the man is perceived as singing the song there is no romance for the woman. It would also mean that the woman is dependent on the man; if anything she was perceived as independent in the ad.

Another comparative device was the mood of the woman. Would the women compare themselves to the woman in the ad with her mood, her behaviour. The woman's mood in the ad was seen as a complete contrast to the music. 18 of the groups thought she was very happy, full of anticipation and in a very sexy mood. Yet none of the women could associate with her or the ad. No reasons were given for the failure to associate with the woman in the ad. They appeared to like her in that they thought she was attractive but they disliked her behaviour. While the mood of the woman was read in a positive manner it did not effect the womens' opinions of the ad.

#### **5.11.2 Visual Effect: Chanel**

There was a mixed reaction to the music and a positive response to the mood in the ad. In trying to determine the overall effect, the significance of the visual message, the music and the mood were considered together. The issue that was examined under visual effect was how the different variables of music, mood and visual sign effected the women's reading of the ad. Visual analysis showed that visual signs and music predominated the women's discussion on effect. A major problem for the women was that they could not see the significance of the visual aspects of the ad in relation to perfume. The visuals and the music did not make them feel or think about perfume. The experience of the woman in the ad was



totally different to the circumstances where the women used perfume. None of the signs were read at the ideological level and none appealed to the women's concept of femininity. The ad did not arouse positive emotions or even emotions that the women experience when they use perfume. Instead the main effect resulted in the women counter arguing with lack of significance in the ad. Only those who read the romantic message (Kathleen's, Philly's and Rosaleen's) experienced affect.

### **5.12 Attitude to the Ad: Chanel**

This section is concerned with the meaning or significance of an attitude rather than with an attitude score. From the previous measures of attitude the perceptions of the Chanel ad were neutral to slightly positive. This ad received the worst attitude scores of all ads. There is a positive attitude to the brand and a low intention to purchase. The free elicitation which tried to determine cognitive and affective elaboration showed a more negative response to Chanel. But these negative feelings did not clearly identify what people disliked in the ad. The majority of negative feelings fell into the execution derogation category. Execution derogation and bolstering do not divide the creative aspects of the ad. This means that the advertiser does not know exactly what the respondent liked or disliked. Therefore they will not know the significance of the sign to the product and how to avoid further association with it in the future. It is clear from the focus group discussion that respondents liked the person, hated the sexual connotation and some disliked the execution because they felt the ad could have been advertising anything. The problem with execution bolstering and derogation is that no research has attempted to classify areas of creative style. Aspects of creative style that did affect the reading of the Chanel ad are source and creative appeal.

Looking at each of these in relation to Chanel, source credibility was a problem. There are some quite contradictory results on source. The negative attitude to source was focused on the woman and the perceived role of the woman. The brand Chanel was well perceived with all twenty groups stating that they liked the brand and would like to be able to use it. The women felt that the woman in the ad was beautiful and attractive. However this may have been a problem. Although attractiveness is a key dimension of source credibility an over attractive source may distance the audience from association. None of the groups felt that they could associate with this woman, she was too attractive and as such led a completely different lifestyle.

The appeal used was sexuality. The women who did not like the role portrayal of the woman felt, that here you had a woman using other men's money, to get what she wanted. This in some ways was patronising, the man treating her as a beautiful object, giving her things so that he could keep her. Others felt that she reflected money and power. The groups disliked the display of the woman cheating on the men; they saw her as totally untrustworthy. They similarly had negative attitudes to the role portrayal of men, as both a sugar daddy, and a toy boy.

### **5.13 Structural Analysis: Bank of Ireland**

The key phenomena or the deep symbolic meaning revolves around the instinct for survival. Survival can be easy or hard. In the natural world some animals are always under attack because they are small or for some other reasons. Predators have an easier life because for reasons of strength or size they prey off others. The parallel system in society is money, possession of a lot of money like the predator gives some people an apparent easy material life. Those who do not have money are like animals being preyed upon, they are exploited. If these people

can get work they are in low paid jobs, they continually pay interest for everything they need. Their employers or money lenders are their predators. To survive they must pay either in labour, wages or both.

The key phenomena is money and is read in different ways by different groups of people but the deep symbolic meaning remains the same, having money makes life or survival easy. The relationship between money and its making life easy or hard as given by the groups revolves around two separate but not unrelated issues portrayed in the ad; problem resolution and ease of borrowing. There was almost an equal evaluation of positive and negative reading of the ad on the combined issues. Figure 5. 25 shows the groups that read the different issues.

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| Problem Resolution                     | N P A C K N M        |
| They won't solve problems              | K L C V R Nn MN Cl B |
| Easy to get a loan                     | A S M N B T M S      |
| Don't believe them it is not that easy | K N D V R B F M N    |

Figure 5. 25 Structural Issues Bank of Ireland

\*The problem resolution groups saw several problems such as a burst tap, the kitchen, a need for clothes, a depressed woman, a broken car, these problems were immediately resolved by the bank. The bank gave the woman with the burst tap a new kitchen, the couple who wanted clothes a shopping spree, the depressed woman a holiday and the man with the broken car a rally car. In each of these cases the receiver, beneficiary started out as the victim, the woman was drenched with water, the woman was depressed with the weather and work and the man could not race his car. But by the end of the ad they are no longer victims, they are secure in that all their problems have been solved. Life is no longer tough it is easy, thanks to Bank of Ireland.

The negative reading of problem resolution is more complex.

Five groups felt the ad was completely misleading (R N MN B CL) and the bank would not solve your problems. A similar response but not stated in such explicit terms came from Valerie's group.

Woman 1 "That Bank of Ireland will solve all your problems"

Woman 2 "You go to them and they will have a happy face that is a laugh"

Woman 3 "That they will bend over backwards that is a laugh"

Two other groups expressed anger at the ads falsity and claimed that they are only there for people with money (K L). This type of meaning shows a reading through the ad that people do not end up with an easy life and a protector who will hand out money to solve problems.

The next meaning read is borrowing money is easy and that money makes life easy. In western society many needs are perceived as being connected with money, if you have money you can have everything. The groups that read this did not focus on problem resolution but on ownership or possession of things they wanted. They took the meaning that the banks would give you money if you needed it. They did not question this message and appeared to accept it. This meaning was read by eight groups which are given in Figure 5. 25.

Three different issues were discussed under: "It's not that easy to get a loan."

Deidre's, Valerie's and Brenda's all claimed that the reason it is not that easy is that you would think they were going to help. They felt that the bank would not loan money as easy as the ad portrayed. These women were quite adamant that the bank would not give out money in the manner suggested in the ad. Some quoted their own experiences when they sought loans for different things such as holidays and were refused. The women felt demeaned under such circumstances

and were quite angry when the ad suggested that they would give loans anytime they needed help.

For some groups the apparent ease of borrowing money was a stark contrast to reality where they knew that no matter how easy it appeared in the ad as soon as they went to the bank they would be refused. These were people who had no money and who perceived life as being hard. Three groups (R F MN) in particular commented on how deflated and rejected they felt when they used banks and that the friendliness portrayed is only a false impression. When they tried to borrow in reality they felt like criminals. They also argued that the bank would not even cash their cheques without identification and insinuated that if they were not going to cash cheques they were not going to give them money.

There were two groups (N K) who felt that it was not easy to get a loan and that the ad gives young people a false idea that it is easy to get money to do what you want. This was perceived as a false reality because there was no mention of paying back interest or the money and that in many circumstances this is what made life hard. The discussion here centred around the slogan and the song "Now what can bank of Ireland do for you." There were friendly people in the ad giving people whatever they wanted, co-operating fully with those in trouble. This was read as a fairy tale reality. The reality is that to cash cheques some of the women needed identification, they could not bank in a bank that was not in their area and they were never given loans.

#### **5.13.1 Binary Opposition: Bank or Ireland**

The main binary pair read in the ad was it was easy/ difficult to borrow money. Roughly half of the groups in Figure 5. 24 read that it was easy to get a loan and half felt that it was difficult. Similarly a number of groups felt that the ad would solve problems while an almost equal number felt they would not. There was very

mixed reaction with some groups focusing on the ad as presented and concentrating on positive aspects such as being able to borrow money to solve problems. However for others they did not believe that the bank would solve problems they did not think it was easy to get a loan and they felt that the ad was giving a false impression. For this ad people appeared to concentrate on one end of a binary continuum and did not move through from one end of the continuum to the other.

A binary pair that was intended to be read was friend-enemy. Bank of Ireland showed a problem solution scenario but they also wanted to be perceived as being helpful and friendly. Whenever people were in trouble they were there to give a helping hand. Many of the women refused to read this message because of their own adverse experiences with the bank. There was a major credibility problem for at least half of the women in that they did not think the bank behaved in the manner shown in the ad.

|                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Security: Threat   |                     |
| Chaos: Order       |                     |
| False: True        | K N R N MN L CL     |
| Money, Capitalism: | S h                 |
| Easy: Difficult    | N P ML C B MN M CL  |
| Problems Solutions | K N P A V CL        |
| Give: Take         | P A S N             |
| New: Old           |                     |
| Kitchen            | N ML A C KN Mn M Cl |
| Holiday            | N P V S KN Cl       |
| Clothes            | MN                  |
| Spend: Save        | S                   |
| Repayment:No repay | L T MSh             |
| Friend: Enemy      | N KN Mn             |

Figure 5. 24 Binary Opposition Bank of Ireland

5.13.2 Transformation Process Bank of Ireland

The women read the symbolic meanings in this ad more than any of the other ads in the study. There was reading from the symbolic to the product symbolic Figure 5. 27. Most of the groups commenced reading at the surface symbolic levels. One of the main transformation systems read was chaos. The binary opposite of chaos is order. Only one group (CI) read chaos and order at the deep level. Chaos was represented at the surface symbolic level by problems and solutions. This transformed to material representation of problems and solutions at the surface product level, for example, burst tap was a problem which resolved itself in a new kitchen. The deep product meaning was represented by two signs help and friend. The ad showed a complete transformation from a chaotic situation in the kitchen, where there was water all over the place to a calm joyful event when the bank sent in helpful kitchen fitters and plumbers to fix up the kitchen.

|                      |                      |                        |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
|                      | <b>P r o d u c t</b> | <b>S y m b o l i c</b> |
|                      | Possessions          | Give/Take              |
|                      | Kitchen              | Problems/Solutions     |
| <b>S u r f a c e</b> | Holiday              | Easy/Difficult         |
|                      | Car                  |                        |
|                      | Clothes              |                        |
|                      | Spend: Save          | False/True             |
| <b>D e e p</b>       | Help: Hinder         | Chaos/Order            |
|                      | Friend: Enemy        | Security/Threat        |
|                      |                      | Capitalism/Communism   |

Figure 5. 27 Transformation Process Bank of Ireland

Chaos stands for disorder and one group Clodagh's read it as such. Chaos is also linked strongly to political ideologies where the extreme opposition of ideas results in anarchy, chaos, and war. The deep meaning of chaos/capitalism and its



connection with the ad can be read as follows. Everything in the ad shows a breakdown situation, cars and taps appear broken. These scenarios show the individual in trouble, they appear unable to cope on their own, they have to go to others for help. The bank, typically representative of capitalist society, is called upon to help. They can solve problems.

The problem solution scenario represents the surface symbolic meaning in the ad. The idea is to show that chaos will reign if problems are left unresolved. The ad shows all the problem situations first, and then shows how the problems are solved. The problems presents threatening situations, the woman has water all over her kitchen, the man is without a car. These situations represent chaos in peoples' lives. There is close association between surface symbolic and surface product meaning. The surface product meaning centres around the solution.

The solution to the problem is further representative of capitalist society. It is the purchase of new goods rather than repair. The purchase of products is only identified with consumption. This too is typical of many ads representing capitalistic values. At no time do they show the production of goods, and if they do it is always brand new factories, or places that look like some working utopia. The worker and his or her labour is completely disassociated from the ad. In most cases as in this ad only consumption situations are shown. The consumption is not directly about borrowing money or a bank service but it is concerned with what money can buy or what the bank can give you, cars, holidays, clothes and kitchens.

At no stage in the ad was money shown or the repayment of money. Once the ad mentioned lending but never talked about loans although that is clearly the service being offered. The bank appeared to be giving money to everyone for anything. In fact what they were giving was a loan. Loans conjure up negative



connotations of repayment, and hardship at making the repayments. The ad avoided all mention of loans in order to create a positive belief that it was easy to get money. The bank itself only appeared once and was visually so unlike a bank that many would have had difficulty in recognising it. Instead the surface product symbolic shows the getting and apparent joy at the consumption of what money can buy.

This leads into the deeper product meaning. People as individuals cannot buy these things, they cannot solve problems on their own, they need help. The bank will help, if you will give you money and money will solve all problems. The bank wants to be perceived as friendly and helpful. Like a friend the bank wants people to turn to it for all their needs. The bank wants to let people know they are not on their own, that other people all over the land come to them for help. The bank wants people to turn to them whenever they need money. They want to build an image as a caring, friend who solves problems.

However, five of the groups (R N MN B CL) who read the intended message as the bank being helpful, friendly and ready to give a loan for anything thought that this message was very misleading. They read through the transformation process and concentrated on an adverse meaning. These women saw the ad reflecting a false reality. It was misrepresentation of their experiences. It was misleading in giving the impression that it would help anyone when in reality those with little or no money had never been helped by a bank. Several of the groups including those who thought the ad was misleading commented that it was not that easy to get money. The binary pair easy/difficult showed that life is difficult when something goes wrong, or you cannot have what you want. The bank can make life easy by fixing all troubles with brand new products.

5.14 Semantic Analysis: Bank of Ireland

The words that came to the women's minds were the same for banks and Bank of Ireland. The word that people associated most frequently with banks and Bank of Ireland was money (32 and 8 mentions respectively). Most of the other words associated with banks were related to money, Figure 5. 28. All of these words have negative connotations. When people think of banks they think of problems(2 mentions), queues (3 mentions), overdrafts (5 mentions) and bills (6 mentions).

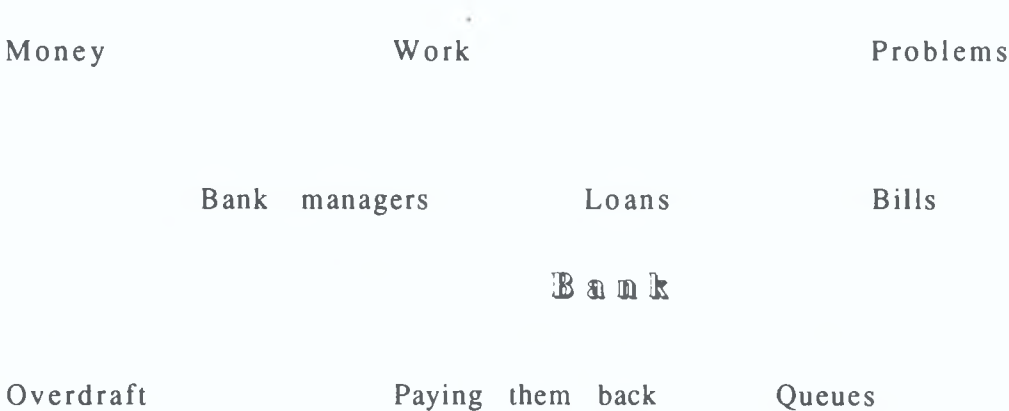
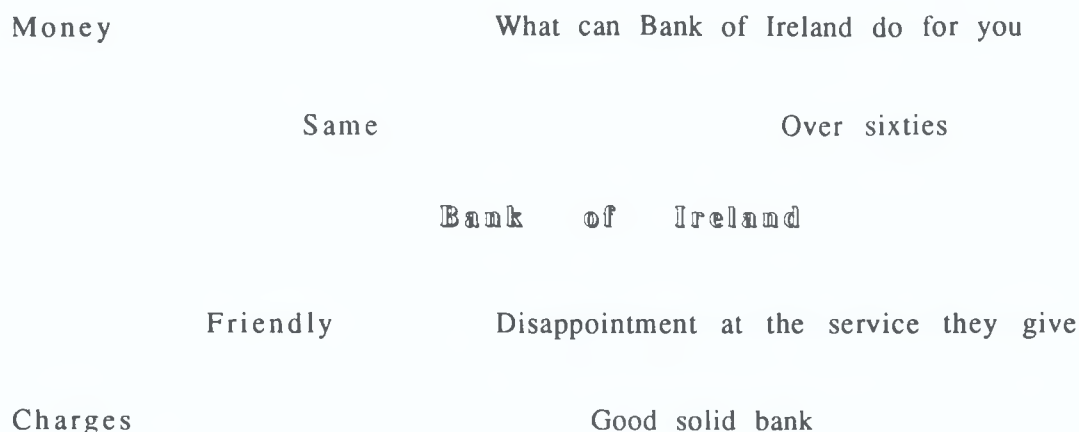


Figure 5. 28 Semantic Association for Banks

Similarly when they think of Bank of Ireland they think of the same things that they associate with banks, Figure 5. 29. There was strong association between banks in general and Bank of Ireland in particular. Thirteen of the groups replied "Same as banks" when asked what words came to their mind when they thought of Bank of Ireland.

This was the highest response category on words associated with Bank of Ireland. This implies that the women do not differentiate between banks. The inference from this is that although they are loyal to one bank they do not think that other banks provide a different of better service. There were no positive mentions of the service provided by any bank.



**Figure 5. 29 Semantic Association Bank of Ireland**

#### **5.14.1 Syntactic Analysis: Bank of Ireland**

Subject: Bank or Ireland

Object: Helping You

Outcome: Material possessions. Easy life

The subject in this ad is Bank of Ireland, the object is the audience addressed by the ad and the outcome is an easy, better life thanks to the help received from the bank. The subject is seen transforming peoples' lives from depressing and problematic situations to lively, delighted, happy ones. The ad opens with a series of problems that people in general may be faced with in the course of everyday living. While the visuals are shown of these problems the music and verbal content of the ad is continually asking "Now what can we do for you." The audience does not see the bank, the camera shows people and problems that arise from different situations. The bank only appears in one shot at the solution stage. The ad uses people and things to show what the bank can do. People who solve problems like mechanics, plumbers and travel agents represent the bank. They are willing friendly and able to sort out problems. As the audience sees these other people the song is telling us that "Bank of Ireland can help people do things, help them to plan, help them buy new things, by lending them money they will help make things better." The audience will never have to go through

these problems on their own, the bank is there telling them "We can do it together." When the woman is getting a new kitchen there is a group of men fitting the kitchen in for her. When the couple get new clothes there are shop assistants attending them. The woman on her holiday is surrounded by people and the man with his new car is wished good luck from a number of people at the race start. All these helping happy well wishers represent the bank. They, like the Bank of Ireland are happy to help. These people like the bank are in control and are able to sort out different problems. The bank want to become associated with the end result of the loan with the satisfaction that people derive from spending money. They do not want to be seen as an institution that people go to with fear and dread wondering if they can borrow. This bank is friendly and helpful.

The object, people in general who need money, is represented by the people in the four different problem scenarios. All of these people appear in need of help. Something in their lives is out of control, they are the victims of living. Life suddenly and unexpectedly becomes tough and they need someone to help make it better. Bank of Ireland comes to the rescue. The object, the recipient of the loan becomes dependent on the subject, the bank. This relationship is not outlined at all. It appears that the bank is giving money away. This is not the case. Many of the groups through their own experiences recognise and dislike their dependency on banks in getting any form of money.

The outcome is a better easier life. People can have whatever they want, they do not have to wait or worry about anything, Bank of Ireland is "Always near." Syntactics offers a meaning to the audience but the issue that really needs to be discussed on the syntactic analysis is was there a difference in the meaning that was suggested and the meaning that was taken. It was evident that the audience saw the intended meaning, but because of their own experience with the bank

they did not believe the behaviour in the bank resembled reality. Nor did they believe that it was as easy to get loans as the ad suggested (K N D V R B F MN). The fact that a number of groups did not believe that it was easy to get a loan and a number felt that the ad was misleading (R N MN B CL) or did not reflect reality (N F NN L Cl) shows the the intended meaning was not read.

**5.14.2 Pragmatic Comparison: Bank of Ireland**

There was very little elaboration or discussion of either the Bank of Ireland ad or other bank ads. Once again the comparison of ads was made in terms of discussion of an issue or naming other ads preferred. The issues and the ads mentioned are given in Figure 5. 30. There was no consensus of agreement over the issues discussed with no single issue being discussed by more than two groups. When they were talking about preference for this ad or others the women that raised issues made comparisons not with other ads but according to the image they held of the bank or their experience of using the bank.

The first issue raised related to the portrayal of borrowing in the ad and the experiences of the women when they have borrowed money. They claimed that when you are borrowing money you do not feel like the people in the ad who appear to be on cloud nine jumping up and down. Other women had a feeling of dread and apprehension when they went to the bank to borrow money. Philly's and Kathleen's groups also claimed that you would not get a loan with the same ease that they showed in the ad. The belief was that this was far too light bright and giving. Whereas the reality was that when applying for a loan you had to produce life assurance and fill out forms guaranteeing the money. Both of these groups also felt the ad was unrealistic in that it did not even mention the amount of money that had to be paid back.

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| If people go to borrow you don't feel like that | K            |
| You will not get money with the same ease       | K P          |
| It is unrealistic it does not mention amounts   | K            |
| That is different it is friendly                | Ml A         |
| It is more lively                               | VI KN Mn     |
| Description                                     |              |
| Lovely ad for AIB wedding                       | N            |
| The butterfly, nature waking up                 | A S          |
| Named   |              |
| Preferred others, no reason given               | C F MN M CL  |
| Cannot think of others                          | D R B KN T L |
| EBS   | D ML S C     |
| Trustee Savings Bank                            | F            |
| Irish Permanent                                 | L            |
| English bank ads Lloyds                         | C            |

Figure 5. 30 Ad Comparison Banks

There was little or no description of other ads with only two groups giving a slight description of an AIB corporate ad. Both groups liked the butterfly and the idea of nature waking up, but did not discuss the ad in relation to either banking or the the ad shown. Five groups preferred other ads but did not name them or give reasons for preference. Six groups could not think of any bank ads and they did not expand on their reasons for lack of memory Figure 5. 30.

In the category of straight descriptions the women simply named other ads which they preferred. The EBS ad received the most mentions, four groups just named it as their preference. Other ads named which only received a mention from one group were the Irish Permanent, Trustee Savings Bank and Lloyds bank. The groups appeared to be very unsure as to what was in these ads and could not really discuss them or give clear reasons for preference.

#### **5.14.2.1 Pragmatic Association: Bank of Ireland**

In many cases the women talked of the situations in the ad and whether or not they would borrow in similar circumstances. Six of the groups (K D A P S KN) could associate with the ad particularly getting loans for cars and holidays. Four groups claimed they would not borrow money if the tap burst. Another four (N P N MI) said they could not associate with it because they made it look too easy to borrow money and it looked as though you could get a loan any time you wanted one. There was a very vague negative response from eight groups (C V B K Mn L S), these groups did not give any reason for their lack of association with the ad.

#### **5.14.2.2 Pragmatic Image Analysis: Bank of Ireland**

At least fourteen groups felt the ad did not match their image of the bank. There were different reasons given for this mismatch of image. Four groups felt the ad did match their image: two did not specify a reason, one said (K) "Yes it did because you have to be a member to borrow," and one claimed (T) that like the ad their bank was friendly. Although the groups did not appear to like the ad that much when it came to comparing the image in the ad with their image of the bank, the ad received a more positive evaluation. Looking at the reasons above the women generally read that the ad was friendly, young, and co-operative in that they were open when people wanted to use them and that it was easy to get money. The image they have of banks Figure 5. 31 implies that banks are staid, awkward to use, unfriendly, they give a slow service and it is difficult to get money out of them and some groups did not like using banks, they made them feel uneasy.



|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| No, not that easy to get Money                           | K C L P                    |
| Banks are staid that is bright and cheery                | D S K N                    |
| Banks are awkward they are not open at the<br>right time | K D C                      |
| I hate queues  | D A V R B F K N T M<br>C L |
| They are unfriendly                                      | R B N L                    |
| They do not show paying<br>back interest                 | P N                        |
| I don't like using them                                  | R B F T C L                |

**Figure 5. 31 Image of Banks**

Respondents had a negative image of banks. Most of the women hated the idea of queues. Their image of banks was a corporation with stacks of money who owned the oldest buildings in every town and village in Ireland (P A C N). In contrast some of the women felt inferior when they used banks because they needed money. When they approached the banks for a loan they were interviewed or interrogated by men in suits (N V M L S). Once again there were no positive service attributes mentioned. The women had a negative image of banks which carries over to all banks. The negative image that the women in general hold of banks is further exacerbated if they read any negative features in an ad. This happened with the Bank of Ireland ad because of the belief that it was not possible to get money as easily as the bank portrayed.

**5.15 Visual Analysis: Bank of Ireland**

The main signs read in the ad were holidays and kitchen. Four key signs were shown in the problem solution scenario, clothes, car, kitchen and holidays. Cars and clothes were not really focused on with only two groups mentioning them. The kitchen and the holiday scenario were the two signs that the groups really focused on. The denotative reading of holiday was the woman in swimming togs lying in the sun at the side of the pool. The connotative meaning relates back to



the sign which represented the problem, a rainy day. The cultural meaning of holiday is where people take time off from their normal everyday reality. Holiday has also taken the meaning of getting away from it all. The rain is traded for the sun, work is traded for relaxation, reality for a dream world. Problems automatically disappear, people leave moods or feelings of depression for happiness and elation. The women read this meaning from holidays with statements such as "I would love to be lying in the sun, it would be great to get away from it all." The ideological meaning would be leisure over work. None of the groups read any deep meaning from the sign holiday. They associated holidays with the sun and relaxation. None of the women suggested that they go or would go to a bank for money to take a holiday. They did not see the bank as a provider of money to go on holidays.

| Sign        | Signifier             | Signified      | Groups   |
|-------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------|
| Holiday     | Woman in togs by pool | Sunshine       | K C D V  |
|             |                       | Relaxed        | ML B A   |
|             |                       | No problems    | CL       |
| New Kitchen | Happy woman           | Satisfaction   | K N P D  |
|             |                       | Delight        | V ML R   |
|             |                       |                | MN CL    |
| Burst tap   | Drenched woman        | Fixed          | K P ML A |
|             |                       |                | CR N     |
| Car         | Broken                | New            | D        |
| Clothes     | New clothes           | Shopping spree | A S      |

**Figure 5. 32 Visual Signs Bank of Ireland**

Two related signs as shown in the ad are burst tap and new kitchen, Figure 5. 32. The new kitchen as a sign was only read in the context of the burst tap. All of the

groups that read new kitchen did so in the context of belief/disbelief that a burst tap could give you a new kitchen. The denotative meaning of the burst tap was the water sprouting from the tap. The connotative meaning was, this is a problem that would cost money and therefore a loan would be needed from the bank. Another deeper meaning would be the approach people take to handling problems. The scenario shown in the advertisement would be based on the notion that it is not unusual for households to reassess for example the needs of the whole kitchen if something goes wrong with a smaller part. So instead of a small fixing job a whole redecoration is called for (no groups read this meaning). Fixing something small like a tap did not trigger the schema of redecoration. Six groups (K P A B KN M) claimed that they wished they could have a new kitchen from a burst tap. Or that you don't call the bank if you have a burst tap you call the plumber (K P A B KN M).

A further reading of the cynicism expressed by the women in relation to fixing versus redecoration is the attitude to replacement and repair. The scenario in the ad is typical of capitalistic societies where emphasis is on replacement rather than repair. This creates a continual need to produce more and more products. Many household products are no longer perceived in isolation but en masse. A total look has been developed so a kitchen has become a fully fitted kitchen, everything must match, must be bought at the same time, purchase of one item means purchase of several, and so on for bathrooms sitting rooms etc. None of the groups raised the issue of replacement versus repair nor the resulting effect of holding either values on society.

The combination of the different scenarios lead a number of groups to reading the ad or the sign as having everything (T S) or having nothing (F). The denotative sign here was getting a loan (KN MN L). All the problems were presented in a happy, even frivolous manner, the woman laughing when she was

drenched with water, the couple happy in the shop, the man working under the car, even the depressed looking woman appeared comfortable looking out of her professional office window and later dashing through the rain. The ad did not want anyone to worry about problems because they were there to give a helping hand. The bank was a friend and would easily give you money. The deeper reading is that money can solve all problems, so therefore money is the thing that will make you happy. No matter what inconvenience you have in life just call the bank and they will help.

#### **5.15.1 Visual Comparison: Bank of Ireland**

In the other ads analyzed there tended to be discussion of either metaphors or symbols or situations where juxtaposition was used. This did not happen in this ad. Instead there was just a straight statement of the situations used such as kitchen, holiday, car. Music and movement were used in making comparison with the respondents reading of the visual and reading of reality. On the whole music and movement were read as presented in the ad with twelve groups thinking that the music was good, lively, made them feel like spending money, that there was no problem, the bank would lend money. Kathleen's Rosaleen's and Valerie's group questioned this claiming that while the music projected a lively hustle bustle easy approach to borrowing, this was not the case in reality. The ad may make you wish you could go in and get the money to buy things but they would not give it to you if you went looking for it. The movement in the ad was generally read in a positive non-evaluative manner with most groups thinking that it was very active and fast. There were a few more negative comments, for example, Clodagh felt that the ad was very fast in contrast to getting money which is a very slow process.

### **5.15.2 Visual Effect: Bank of Ireland**

The effect of the visual is not so much as to whether they could read it or not but what the visual did for them. Even if the ad was read as intended that does not mean to say that the ad had a positive effect. The music was perceived as lively and catchy. The movement to most groups suggested that Bank of Ireland would lend you money. There was a mismatch between perceptions of the ad and attitude to the bank. The end result was a dislike of the ad by half the groups because they thought it was misleading. There was a representation of reality in the ad but it was a misleading reality not a fantasy. The situations were too "idealised normal." The women wished they could have a holiday if they were bored, or a new kitchen from a burst tap. The meaning that the women took of fantasy was an illusion and not a fanciful dream.

### **5.16 Attitude to the Ad: Bank of Ireland**

In the analysis of attitude to the Bank of Ireland ad in previous sections there was mixed results between the two methodologies used. The semantic analysis showed a positive attitude to the ad, but the open ended questions showed very positive cognitive response but negative feelings to the ad. In the pragmatic section it was clear that people had quite a negative attitude to banks in general and especially the continual queues in banks. In the focus groups people were asked if they particularly agreed or disagreed with anything in the ad. Every group disagreed with this ad because they felt that it made borrowing look too easy, and this was not the case in reality. A mild expression of this negative attitude was: "It is giving people false ideas," a stronger expression is: "It is completely misleading." The question is why were these statements not given in the open ended thought verbalisation section.

One explanation of this may be that some of the women were unable to write the thoughts they had and therefore wrote something very simplistic such as I like

the ad, which is counted as a support argument or did not write anything at all. The written response is difficult for a lot of people to give and as such the response given may not be a true reflection of the women's attitude. Looking at the semantic scale it would appear that there was a positive attitude to the ad and the bank. However people have a tendency to say 'Yes I like that' and then when they start thinking about it a negative thought arises which makes them change their mind. Looking at the different areas of analysis on this ad the results show an equal divide of positive and negative thoughts in the structural analysis. Pragmatics showed a negative attitude to banks, and a positive evaluation of this ad. But no reasons were given for this evaluation. The visual was also read in a positive manner.

It would appear that the respondents had a negative attitude to banks. They liked the ad because it was bright and breezy and therefore contrasted to their image of banks. They did not however agree with the ad in that they did not think it was that easy to borrow money. This is an example of an ad where people have both negative and positive opinions of the ad. In this case positive attitude to the ad and negative attitude to the service, the bank.

#### **5.17 Structural Analysis: Peugeot**

This ad triggered more voluntary reaction from all the groups than any other ad. The women were freely giving their own opinion on the ad before any questions were asked. These comments are incorporated into the structural analysis. The key phenomena in this ad centred around the concept of life and death. This is represented in the nature sign and in relation to the car itself. Nature was read in three different ways. There were also a number of different issues read in relation to the car.

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Nature images and danger, fire               | KNPRVDMLBF |
|  | KNMNCLSFMN |
| Nature and the need to burn                  | C NNCL     |
| Nature and its incorporation into technology | N          |
| Car gives the impression of security         | VMLFCLSFMN |
| Car is tough powerful                        | KANNKNMTS  |

Figure 5. 33 Structural Issues Peugeot

The ad opens in silence and focuses on an unclear landscape as though dawn is breaking. This is followed by noise of nature, a bird's cry, the movement of sugar cane. The bird's eye is used like a mirror to reflect a man. The man ignores the bird, disregards the snake, he appears intent on whatever he is about to do. He stamps through the land and stops at the sugar cane. He purposefully sets the sugar alight, at the same time the bird cries, as though it is warning all animals of the impending danger. An enormous fire blazes through the sugar cane and seems to destroy the whole landscape. Some of the groups in Figure 5. 33 read only the nature signs; the bird, the bush, the sugar cane and the fire. The fire to these women signified something dramatic, something was going to happen. They associated the fire with danger. Most of the groups focused on the fire and tried to determine the purpose of the fire. Quite a number felt the purpose was to show the security of the car. They read through danger and read safety.

Other women read the nature sign in a different way. They recognised that the crop being burnt was sugar cane. They knew that sugar cane had to be burnt and therefore did not read the destruction in the ad Figure 5. 33. They saw the fire as something powerful and many transferred this reading of power to the car. The fire was seen as powerful because it was huge, moved very fast and could drive easily through the landscape. When the car survived the fire all the power associated with the fire was transferred to the car. As the fire raged the car drove

through it. When the fire died the land appeared destroyed, but the car was perfect. It had succeeded in coming through the fire and therefore was even more powerful than the fire. The fire died but the car survived.

One group (Noreen's) felt disgust at the way in which nature was incorporated into technology. They were dismayed with the association of products with nature not just in this ad but also in other ads. They felt that nature was being abused by advertisers. They believed that the values of nature are stolen to give values to products that would otherwise have no distinctive value or attributes.

Most of the groups focused on the fire when reading the ad. The reading of the fire was in association with the car. Although the fire and the natural images received a lot of attention the women consciously attempted to figure out what the symbols and images had to do with the car. The meaning derived for most of the women was that Peugeot was tough enough to get through anything. You could have confidence in this car, it was strong and tough and if it could withstand this fire it could stand up to anything.

Another reading related to the function of security. Seven of the groups (VMLFCLSFMN) took the meaning that the car was safe. The security concept was read in relation to the fire. The world in the ad appeared to be burning down. There were intermittent explosions. There was an intensity in the fire, it was moving fast, the flames covered the land. A feeling of excitement was introduced when the music and the car entered the ad. Both appeared at the same time. The viewer was in suspense. What was the car doing and would it get through the fire? Security was read because the women imagined themselves sitting in the car and feeling safe. They felt that the car in contrast to the raging fire was moving slowly and deliberately. The car was seen as reliable and safe and as such was going to survive.



Despite initial alarm at the sign fire, seven of the groups (K A NN KN M T S) took positive meaning from what the fire symbolized and transferred this to the car. Fire particularly a bush fire signifies destruction and death. The fire is perceived as an uncontrollable force burning whatever and whoever it encounters. This reading implies that anyone who willingly challenges such a force must be in complete control and know what they are doing. Survival in a bush fire signifies life; strength and toughness for succeeding in overcoming such a wild fire. These human attributes are all transferred to the car. It is not a person that the audience sees driving the car. They see the car driving through fire and escaping destruction. Without any attributes being mentioned in the ad, the car and not the man driving was perceived as being tough, reliable, durable, safe and powerful.

#### **5.17.1 Binary Opposition: Peugeot**

The main binary segment read was fire Figure 5. 34. Fire had connotations of death/survival for most women. They wondered how the car would survive such a fire. The opposite of fire is water which could be perceived as something cool and calm. The fire was supposed to take on survival connotation during the ad. Initially when the man lit the fire the intention was to create mystery. Next when it started to spread there were explosions in time to the music. People were supposed to associate the ad with Tom Cruise and the film Top Gun. Like the plane in the film the car was fearless, capable of facing and surviving all danger. Because the car was so powerful and strong people could feel safe, such a vehicle could survive anything. Finally the fire dies, there is an atmosphere of calm. When the fire dies the full car is shown, while the fire was raging only parts of the car was evident to the viewer. Only three groups concentrated on Top Gun.



The visual impact of the fire had connotations of excitement for some and danger for others.

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Life: Death           |   |
| Fire: Water           | K N P D M L A C R B F S K N N N M N T M S H C L |
| Bush: City            | K P A V R N N S H C L                           |
| Destruction: Creation | K N B N M L                                     |
| Fast: Slow            | V   |
| Active: Passive       | N V B K N . C L                                 |
| Reliable: Unreliable  | M L N N K N T                                   |
| Durable: Perishable   | K A S N N                                       |
| Masculine: Feminine   | R N N M N                                       |
| Powerful:Weak         | K P V B K N T                                   |
| Strong: Weak          | K N M L C V K N                                 |
| Safe: Danger          | M L V F S                                       |
| Car: Foot             | D M L C V B S                                   |
| Mysterious Exciting   | F   |

**Figure 5. 34 Binary Opposition Peugeot**

On the whole positive aspects of the ad were read on each of the binary segments examined by the women. They felt the ad was durable, powerful and strong. Even though the women read some positive signs, the ad was so untypical for the product category that there was no clear connection or association with it. It appears that each product category has a meaning and that if the ad supports that meaning then it is more significant to the women. This did not happen for the Peugeot ad.

**5.17.2 Transformation Process: Peugeot**

The deep meaning in this ad is life succeeding over death. The sugar cane has to be burned in order to produce sugar. The land also has to be burnt to enable re-growth. The apparent destruction is a false impression. The fire is used to capture attention. When the audience realises it is sugar cane they do not read destruction but see the fire as a productive force. The energy strength and power

of the fire are used to give life and meaning to the car. The car is created or produced only in part when the fire commences. But the car grows in strength like the fire and drives through several explosions until it becomes more powerful than the fire. When the fire stops, or dies, the audience sees the full and perfect production, the car. The forces of nature are used to give meaning to the car.

|                |                     |                       |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
|                | <b>Product</b>      | <b>Symbolic</b>       |
|                | Reliable            | Animate: Inanimate    |
|                | Durable             | Fast: slow            |
| <b>Surface</b> | Stylish             | Active: passive       |
|                | Masculine           | Fear,threat; secure   |
|                | Strong              |                       |
|                | Car: foot           | Fire: water           |
| <b>Deep</b>    | Mysterious/Exciting | Bush                  |
|                | Powerful            | Destruction: Creation |
|                |                     | Life: Death           |

Figure 5. 35 Transformation Process Peugeot

The surface symbolic relates to aspects of life and nature that the creative person wants the audience to identify with for example, fear, danger, security and mystery, Figure 5. 35. These ideas form the basics to creative style. They are the obvious sign of the deep symbolic meaning. These signs are used to give automatic association of meaning to the object in the ad. In the Peugeot ad the creative person attempts to give life to an inanimate object the car. This is achieved by the active and passive portrayal of nature. At the start of the ad the mood is quite and still. Everything is very passive. The movements are all very slow. This is in contrast to the climax of the ad where there are strong active movements of a wild bush fire. The car maintains a slow movement. It does not

panic and race through the fire. The car is presented as being fully confident, it will make it through the fire. The creative appeals to an individual's sense of fear. They want to attract attention by using a fear appeal. What is really important here is that the creative is trying to bring people through the binary continuum. Instead of feeling fear they want the audience to feel safe and confident. They want the car to be perceived as an animate rather than an inanimate object. As an animate object it should be perceived as an active force, capable of taking the audience to strange and mysterious places.

The next part of the transformation process focuses on the product meanings. This is where surface symbolic meanings are completely associated with the car only. The audience no longer reads the original sign for itself, they read it in association with the car. When the audience first sees the wild bush fire, their immediate reaction is that nothing could survive in such a fire. If a live animal such as a bird, who has the ability to move and flee such a fire cannot escape there is no possibility that an inanimate object such as a car could come out alive, or in reality, in brand new condition. The initial perceptions would be that any car would burn out, explode, would be completely unreliable in bringing a person through such a fire. Instead the car succeeds in coming through the fire and is perceived as reliable, durable, strong, and stylish. The car is also perceived as masculine. The strength and power in the ad is associated with men. The women then generalised the masculine attribute to the car.

The final quadrant in the transformation process is the deep product meaning. The meaning here is that the car is like a force of nature capable of surprise. It surprised the audience by showing how it survived the fire. Thus the car displays its own strength and power. The car created a sense of mystery. Why would anyone drive through this awful fire? It created a sense of excitement. Who would be daring enough to drive through this in a car? Would they survive? By

raising these questions subconsciously they were forcing people to respond. This lead to cognitive and affective elaboration. The deep product meaning is not just power and strength but that this car can give a sense of adventure, excitement, mystery. At the same time you can feel secure because you know the car is durable, tough, safe and reliable.

### 5.18 Semantic Analysis: Peugeot

Most of the groups associated cars with transport, of being able to conveniently travel around. Several other aspects were mentioned with much less frequency by different groups. In fact each of these variables received on average only two mentions from two different groups. For example Philly's and Noreen's groups thought of getting to their destination without breaking down. Kathleen's and Clodagh's thought of comfort when they thought of cars. Karen's and Susan's thought of speed. Rosaleen's and Teresa's thought of getting away from it all. All of these are positive attributes associated with cars.

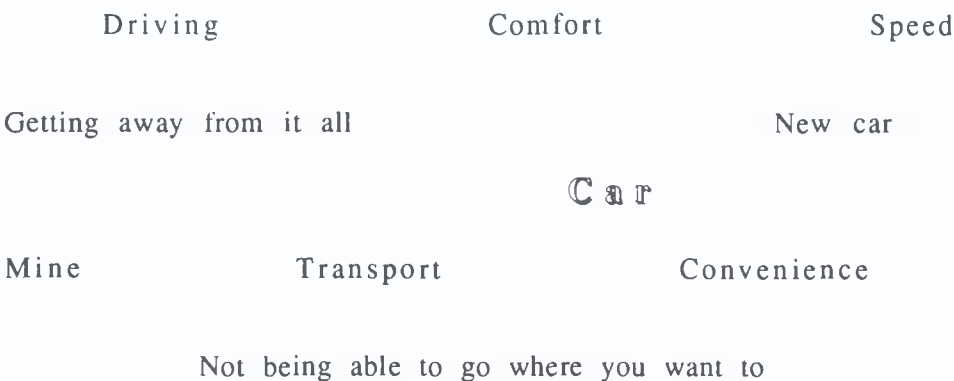


Figure 5. 36 Semantic Association Car

Most of the groups associated cars with transport, of being able to conveniently travel around, Figure 5. 36. Several other aspects were mentioned with much less frequency by different groups. In fact each of these variables received on average only two mentions from two different groups. For example Philly's and Noreen's groups thought of getting to their destination without breaking down.

Kathleen's and Clodagh's thought of comfort when they thought of cars. Karen's and Susan's thought of speed. Rosaleen's and Teresa's thought of getting away from it all. All of these are positive attributes associated with cars.



**Figure 5. 37 Semantic Association Peugeot**

The words associated with Peugeot were more particular than the generalised attributes of a car, Figure 5. 37. The words project a positive up-market image. The car was seen as a strong, sensible good car (C NN M T). Some saw it as luxurious (N P R) and others as a lovely car (R MN). Two groups identified it as French (A B) and five groups as expensive (B KN MN CL S). Expensive was not used in a derogatory manner. The connotations of expensive were a good, sensible, strong car. On the whole thoughts about cars and Peugeot were very positive. The groups had both cognitive and affective thoughts to both.

An interesting fact emerges from the semantic analysis. None of the women mentioned any of the words or theme of the song used in the ad. The words from the song "Take My Breath Away" matched each visual scene in the ad. Yet none of the women verbally associated the song with the car. This may indicate that when people hear music and associate strongly with it they do not re-associate the music with an unfamiliar experience. The words "Take my breath away" apply to both symbols of nature and the car. The fire takes peoples breath away causing either shock or death. Dramatic scenes of nature also metaphorically take peoples

breath away. Similarly the car is supposed to be so stylish that it also takes peoples' breath away. But none of the women referred to the song in the semantic discussion.

**5.18.1 Syntactic Analysis: Peugeot**

Subject: Car  
Objec: Fire  
Outcome: Survival

The message in the ad read by the women was that this car is capable of survival. But survival was only a small part of the meaning that the advertiser wanted to get across. The subject of the ad was the car which was introduced half way through the ad. The fact that the subject was not introduced immediately added to the suspense for the audience. They were watching to see what the ad was about. The suspense was maintained throughout the ad as only parts of the car were shown in different shots. The audience was not certain if the ad was about a car until the ad was almost finished. The subject wanted to take on the values of both the objects used.

The objects nature and the fire both contain elements of mystery and excitement. The bush is a mysterious and adventurous place. One never knows what to expect. Fires are dramatic and also exciting in that there is a grave element of danger and risk. But the subject challenges both the force of nature and the fire and succeeds in driving through explosions and around dangerous bends. But in the end the subject overcomes the object.

The outcome or action in the ad is transferred from nature and the fire to apprehension for survival of the car. As soon as the car appeared the women were wondering would the car survive. Attention was no longer totally on nature

and the fire but on the car and how it was going to escape from the fire. The car drove slowly and deliberately through the blazing fire, showing that it was reliable and powerful. The outcome was that the car succeeded where nature and the fire itself failed. Both of these were destroyed, the fire destroyed nature and burnt itself out but the car survived. The implication was that the car was greater than nature and the power of the fire.

### **5.18.2 Pragmatic Comparison: Peugeot**

The comparison of this ad with others shows a preference for other ads Figure 5.38. Quite a number of the groups simply stated that they preferred others, but did not give any details. In this type of situation it is impossible to know what they like about others that is not in this ad. With lack of elaboration one could infer that the women could not recall others and did not really think that this was what they would call a good car ad.

No single car ad emerged as been strongly preferred. The previous ads analyzed showed a reading of other ads either according to issue or simple ad descriptions. This was not the case for the Peugeot ad. No single issue emerged. Most of the preference analysis was confined to describing scenes from other ads. Two groups discussed a single issue each in giving their preference for other ads (Valerie's and Noreen's).

An interesting issue emerged however in relation to the women's description of the Peugeot ad and other car ads. Most of the women could not name the make of car they were referring to, they knew the ad but did not know the car. The car was referred to as 'the one'. This raises the whole question of success in transferring aspects of these ads to the car. It may be the case that too much attention is given to the story in the ad. There may be a failure to make associations between the ad and the product being sold. The ads may be over



emphasising the story with understatement of the car. The ads liked for their story were Nissan Micra, Golf, Volvo and Renault 25. One group described an ad for a red car and gave a full description of the content of the ad, however the ad was for a pair of jeans (K). This was also a drama type ad. Drama type ads may raise the issue of continuity or openness in reading ads. This concept is relatively new to advertising. While women appeared to like this open ended style of advertising they were unable to identify the source with the ad. Most of the women in this study describe the story in the ad and then another woman would prompt the brand in the ad. The ads were liked for the story no specific attributes or meanings were discussed in relation to the car. Each of the ads mentioned would have to be examined in the same way as the Peugeot ad in this study to determine the significance of signs to the audience.

|   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| I don't like them using images of nature to sell a car.   | N                  |
| I think it is a very macho ad.  |                    |
| There is no woman involved  | V                  |
| Others No details   | N C D Ml Mn L S CL |
| What is the one to Cork and Back  | K                  |
| The one with the big red car  | K                  |
| The one made by Robots driven by idiots   | CBNN               |
| I like others, the one where the rich woman takes off her jewellery and is about to throw away her keys | V B                |
| The story about the husband and wife and little kiddy, because there is continuity,                     |                    |
| Renault   | P D                |
| I like the Renault 5 ads  | Ml S               |
| I like the ad about the opera, Fiat ads   | M                  |

Figure 5. 38 Ad Comparison Peugeot

Two separate issues emerged in comparing ads. The first was dislike of the ad because there was a feeling that it excluded women (V). The ad was seen as



masculine in style, it reflected male values. It was also thought that the ad was directed at men and completely ignored women. Further elaborations showed that the women thought the logo and the slogan "The lion goes from strength to strength" was a real reflection of a macho lifestyle. This annoyed them and caused a negative reading of the ad and Peugeot.

A second issue raised was dislike of choice of signs (N). These women felt that nature was completely exploited in advertising. They felt that images of nature were used to sell products. They saw nature been abused in two ways in the ad. It was used to transfer its attributes onto the car. It was also used to capture the audience's attention, to make them think that the birds and wild life were threatened, to create a certain amount of fear so that they would watch the ad to see what happened.

#### **5.18.2.1 Pragmatic Association: Peugeot**

None of the groups could associate with the ad. They felt the surroundings were dangerous and they were unlikely to ever encounter similar situations to those in the ad. Some of the women believed that the ad was aimed at men both in terms of appeal and the theme. Seven of the groups (P, D V, R, MN, M, CL) did not think that it was a woman's ad. They read a macho type image from different aspects of the ad and they did not want to identify with this. The implications here were that women were excluded from the ad and Peugeot were only concerned about the male viewer. Only four of the groups (K, N, P NN) associated the "Big strong car with the strong music and the flames." Overall association was weak between the images, music and car. Although the other women may have read the message as a tough car they did not associate with the images used

#### 5.18.2.2 Pragmatic Image Analysis: Peugeot

Very few of the groups felt the ad matched their image. There was not a lot of discussion on image. Respondents in most cases gave yes and no type answers with only one or two groups qualifying their answers. For example, "Peugeot would not be so adventurous,"(Brenda's) or, "It could do it, is strong a car that could go anywhere," (Kathleen's). Eleven groups (N, P, R, B, C, V, NN, MN, M, L, S) gave a negative non elaborative response. These groups just said that the ad did not match their image. It is impossible to infer the type of image held by the women and how the ad detracted from this image from this type of response. Some of the other groups gave responses that have nothing to do with image such as "The fire is amazing,"(Freda's). This does not tell us how the ad effects the image of the car.

The signs read most were the strong visual images of nature Figure 5. 39. The reading of nature was in the context of the fire. The sign that was talked about most was fire. Fire connoted several different meanings depending on the signifier read. Some women concentrated on the explosions which signified danger and horror (KN P S MN T L SH CL). Danger was sensed from the fire because of the stillness in the environment and also the reflection of the bird. It appeared that the bird knew something was going to happen. The bird opened his eye wide and reflected a sinister looking man. The women read that there was danger to all the natural images shown. The level of danger and horror aroused from the fire affected the women's ability to read the ad. Where fear prevailed all discussion around other images in the ad stopped and the women formed a negative opinion of the ad. This was the case with Susan's and Lily's groups.

5.19 Visual Analysis: Peugeot

| Sign          | Signified       | Signifier                 | Groups                    |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Fire          | Explosion       | Danger/<br>Horror         | KN P S<br>MN T L<br>SH CL |
| Fire          | Destruction     | Death/<br>Waste           | KV KNNL                   |
| Fire          | Flames          | Excitement/<br>Adventure  | ML R B F<br>MN            |
| Birds Eye     | Mans Reflection | Wild Life                 | K V D                     |
| Masculine Man | Man Walking     | Control/fearless          | KV MLAF                   |
| Mans Car      | Car             | Strength slow<br>reliable | N MLKN                    |
| Masculine     | Symbol          | Mystery                   |                           |

Figure 5. 39 Visual Signs Peugeot

Other groups (K V KN N L) concentrated of the destruction of the fire which signified waste and death. The majority of the groups that read this sign focused on the destruction of nature. Arguments raised were that people should not be allowed to make ads that need to destroy so much land. Other women in the group explained that it was not really destruction because the sugar cane fields had to be burnt in order to clear them for next years crop. None of the women pursued the destruction reading at the ideological level. Nature as a sign is not an ideology, nor was it read as a main sign. When nature is read with connotative meanings of destruction then it has an ideological base. The ideological reading of destructive fire is green based. Fire signifies damage to the environment both in the

destruction of bush territory and pollution from smoke. Part of the ideology of the green movement is protection of the environment and ecological systems, including places of natural habitation such as the bush. However, while images of nature may have attracted attention none of the women read nature or the destruction from the fire at an ideological level.

A completely different reading of fire was where the women thought the fire was exciting (ML R B F MN). Excitement was read when the women concentrated on the flames. This feeling led into a sense of adventure and mystery. It captured their attention to such a degree that they found the images used very impressive. The women that read the ad in this way regarded the ad as a film. The meanings attributed to the images were that they were dramatic. No significant meaning other than excitement was attributed to these images.

The next sign read revolved around the man. His movements were seen as slow and deliberate. He was perceived as a macho man. Here he was walking through the outback, or the bush. He was on his own and intent on what he was about to do. The signifier for the women (K V ML A F) was his slow walking and deliberate lighting of the fire. The connotative meanings of the man's actions were, someone who was in control, who knew what they were doing. Someone who was unafraid of either the wild life, the dangerous looking snake, or the fire. This man was capable of looking after himself in the face of all danger. The man was used as a means to create fear in the audience; the man was on his own facing the wild. Mild fear arousal was deliberate because the advertiser wants to display the strength of the man. He was used to project strength and control and to overcome the wild. The connotative reading of the man was that he was "a macho man." Cultural connotations of macho are ascribed to men who appear to be physically strong, tough, and capable of overcoming a challenge. Strong association of this

image with the car means that the women did not perceive the car as either a family or a woman's car. They saw it as being more suitable for the macho man.

Although most of the groups concentrated on the man and the fire some also focused on the car. It is surprising that none of the women talked about the visual portrayal of the car. While some of the women argued that the car was not shown, examined or presented in a demonstration type format, none discussed the actual visual presentation. The ad focused on parts of the car, there was a shot of the body work, a shot of the steering wheel, a shot of the gear stick. All of these were discontinuous and did not offer a whole view of the car. Even if the audience wanted to complete the closure during viewing and say this is an ad for Peugeot, they could not. They were forced to wait for closure until the very end of the ad. The connotative meaning given to the car was that it was strong, reliable, and safe. These meanings as previously discussed were taken from the fire itself. This car had succeeded in overcoming the natural elements and as a result was superior to all the attributes read in nature. Three groups gave the car sign and the connotative meaning in their visual analysis, Nancy's, Karen's, and Marion's.

#### **5.19.1 Visual Comparison: Peugeot**

The main creative device used to create meaning in this ad was symbolisation. The previous section examined the visual description of signs. These signs along with others can take on a different meaning or retain their original meaning depending on the context read from the ad. The main symbols used were; fire, bird, snake and music. The images used dominated the women's attention. In the visual discussion three groups positively discussed the images in the context of the car. The majority of the women thought the images were dramatic, that they would "Take your breath away." They also thought the images were very strong. Three groups evaluated the images in relation to the car when they were discussing the visuals (N, ML, KN). Their evaluation was that while the images

were good they did not show off the car. It could be argued that evaluation does not equal meaning or even show what was read in the ad. When the women were asked what was the message in the ad, these three groups gave the message that "Peugeot was enough to get through anything, that the car was tough and could withstand the heat." Evaluation is one aspect of meaning but to rely totally on evaluation is to ignore the significance of signs used and how they are interpreted. The problem with reading and interpretation in the Peugeot ad is that in some stage in the total discussion many of the women would have a negative reaction such as: "I don't like the use of fire," but the same women will have read a message such as the "Power of the car to get through the flames." A further question that needs to be answered is Was this a significant message for the women. In the context of other ads read and other areas of analysis it would appear that the message was not significant. The women could not associate with the ad, the image portrayed did not match their image of Peugeot, the main structural meaning revolved around survival which they do not normally associate with driving. These results would suggest that although the women read the message it was not significant to them. The apparent contradiction between evaluation and significance of message is resolved if structural and semantic meaning are compared.

The original music was used in the film Top Gun. The song in the film could be read in two ways. The main character was a fighter pilot from the top flying squadron. The missions that they flew were the most dangerous, often with little chance of survival. The music or the song in one sense was about his life, the planes that he flew. "Sudden every turn into some secret hide away" He was after the enemy and often did not know what was around the next corner. The action, the fighting was so violent that it would "Take my breath away." The song in another sense was about a woman who fell in love with this fighter pilot, the song for her was about him, and how he took her breath away. This song went on to



become a top pop record. Three of the groups Philly's, Noreen's and Marion's immediately said that they associated the music with Top Gun. Others may not have seen the film but the song may have connoted other meanings when they first heard it. However, the original context where the music was heard was not disclosed in the discussions on music.

Music as a comparative effect relates to how the first meaning was read in the context given and how it affected the reading of other symbols used. Quite a number of the women (Kathleen's, Claire's, Valerie's, Brenda's, Noreen's, Lily's and Susan's) saw a contrast between the music and the rest of the ad. They read the music as romantic calm and easy; this mood jarred completely with other images in the ad, and with the car which appeared strong and powerful. The mood from the music was in contrast to the rest of the ad and presented a conflict. There was a raging fire creating tension and then you had the music cooling the mood down. Only one of the women attempted to solve the conflict. This woman was a member of Noreen's group. Her explanation was that the music was not supposed to be calm and relaxing. The song was from the film Top Gun which was exciting and dangerous. Her inference was that because the ad used the music from Top Gun then the ad and music should be perceived as exciting.

Both Kathleen's and Teresa's groups described the music as soothing. The music if read in this way would take some of the danger out of the fire. But this would depend on whether or not music was read as a dominant sign. If the music was hardly perceived or perceived in a negative manner then the fire sign may have over dominated the ad. But both the music and the fire received a lot of attention. Both were read as exciting and powerful. Without exception all of the groups thought the music was very good or brilliant. Although asked to describe the music most of the groups simply said "It is brilliant" and there was very little elaboration. Some groups said it was romantic, sexual, or exciting but again there

was very little elaboration. Music as a sign needs more analysis in advertising. Visual analysis is difficult enough, but easier than music because there is a concrete sign in front an audience even if the visual itself is abstract. But music is capable of conjuring up several images and by asking people to describe the music there is no guarantee that they will be able to say what those images are.

### **5.19.2 Visual Effect: Peugeot**

The main effect from the ad is related to the music and the images. The man, even though he was one of the key visual signs read did not produce an effect on the majority of women. One group thought he was sinister and another thought he was sexy otherwise there were no remarks about the man. Music and images had an effect. There was a very positive reaction to the music all of the groups liked the music. In the comparison section it was shown that seven of the groups could not reconcile the relaxed, romantic mood of the music with the rest of the ad. The implication is that while the women liked the music they could not transfer any significance from the music to the car.

The images had the effect of taking the women's breath away. The women felt that the images were spectacular and beautiful (P D KN, Sh, S). Four other groups thought the images were adventurous and macho (ML N F KN). The question is did any of these effects carry over to the car. The effects of the music did not, nor did the spectacular images affect carry over. The adventure and macho, masculine perceptions were carried over to effect the women's image of the car.

### **5.20 Attitude to the Ad: Peugeot**

Both of the attitude to the ad measures, the semantic differential and the free elicitation technique showed a poor attitude to the ad. The semantic scores were very low and the cognitive and affective elaborations were negative. What is difficult to understand from the reading is how the ad scored so badly on attitude



measures when there was quite a lot of positive verbal elaboration in the group discussions. The images in the ad and the music captured the women's attention. However, the issue that needs to be highlighted is that one methodology discloses a more positive or negative evaluation of the ad, instead attention must be given to the meaning or significance of the sign to the respondents. The group discussion reveals more about how the ad was read. For example, the sign fire was read in a negative manner which would correspond to the negative attitude from the semantic differential analysis. But what was also clear was that the sign fire was read in three different ways, with meanings or significance at the denotative, connotative and ideological levels. The sign fire may have received negative evaluations but it was also read positively; the fire was seen as a powerful, strong, exciting and destructive force. What is really important is that the sign car was read in the context of the fire. Because the car drove through the fire the women then gave the car the values of the fire. No semantic rating scale reveals this type of information.

In the analysis of other ads in this study, concern was expressed in relation to the free elicitation methodology. Similar disquite occurs with findings resulting from this method and the Peugeot ad. Free elicitation results showed negative cognitive responses and negative feelings. The type of responses that were most negative were the feeling category and the source statements. Negative feelings predominated in relation to both thoughts and feelings about the ad. Source statements were negative for the thoughts about the ad and positive for feelings about the ad. Once again the advertiser is left to wonder what these apparent contradictory results mean. Do they show a positive or negative attitude to the ad? The results suggest that if the researcher relies on thoughts people had to the ad then the attitude is negative, but if attention is given to feelings people had to the ad then attitude is positive. The reasons for these divergent results is that categories of execution bolstering and discounting are badly defined.

The majority of responses were either execution bolstering or execution discounting in the discussion with no comments on the actual make of car. Typical execution bolstering statements were "Love the song, good images, loved the overall suspense, pictures and music go well, very impressive, everything was brilliant was like a film." Some mixed execution bolstering statements were "I loved the music and hated the visuals." The execution discounting statements were "It was far fetched, dislike the danger, not for a car, a bit unrealistic, it was rubbish, hated the idea of the fire" What do these statements tell us, which one predominates, and what do they mean? The negative feelings were statements such as I hate the fire. But hating the fire did not mean that the women disliked the ad. They may have hated the fire but loved the ad because they thought it was impressive. It is not sufficient to give a category of responses such as execution bolstering or negative feelings. These responses must be examined in the context of total reading of the ad.

An issue that needs to be discussed is the relationship between the responses that emerged in discussion and free elicitation. It would appear that the direction of responses from the discussions was similar in the those of the free elicitation techniques. But the free elicitation does not show the relationship or significance of meaning between the main sign read, the fire, and the subject of the ad, the car. What is lacking in free elicitation and is also the cause of apparent contradictory results is that there is no focus of attention on either the subject or the object of the derogatory statement. Free elicitation is concerned with giving the frequency of remarks and their respective categorisation into attitudinal statements. but this does not show the meaning of the statement, for example, a response such as, "Love the music hate the visual" would be categorised as execution bolstering and execution discounting. This does not tell us about the

meaning of either the music or the visual to the individual nor how the meaning of these signs affected their reading of the car.

A second issue relates to the concept of transformation. If attitude was mostly to the ad, then transformation is important. Readers of the ad should be able to associate the feelings and experiences in the ad with product use situations. By comparing two questions, how did the ad make you feel and do you feel like that when you use the product it is possible to see if there was a match between experiences. The feelings that the ad created were apprehension, power, fear, excitement, safety. Feelings that the women have when they use the car are hope it will get from A to B, freedom to go places. There was one match between the feelings the ad created and the feelings that the women have when they use the car. Teresa's group felt the ad created feelings of safety and they felt safe when they used the car. But for the others the feelings in the ad did not reflect the feelings they had when they used the car. Five of the groups were more concerned about getting to wherever they were going than any other feeling. One of the groups claimed that the car means nothing as long as it goes. All of the women felt that the ad appealed to men and although this has nothing to do with transformation, it may mean that the feelings and experiences in the ad were not applicable to women. In the section on structural analysis, the women read the signs of strength, power, and safety. But these signs had no significance for the women, they are not the experiences they have or associate with cars.

One explanation for the low attitude score could be that people had very mixed reactions to the ad, they loved it and hated it. From the verbal discussion the results showed where no message was read the groups hated the ad. Two groups hated the ad, Lily's and Susan's. Four groups had mixed reaction with some liking some disliking or thinking it was silly for a car. In ten of the groups that liked the ad there was one or two women who did not like the ad, but the majority said

they liked it. Four of the groups loved the ad. These results do not support the premise that people loved and hated the ad. They either loved or hated the ad.

Another explanation may be that no one group focused on Peugeot. This may mean that in giving attitude to the ad scores people tended to evaluate the ad in terms of how it portrayed the car. This knowledge is not evident in attitude to ad scores. It is clear that the groups focused on the ad and not the car. There has to be a clearer explanation of what the ad means. The reading of the signs gives us this meaning. The other question in relation to attitude is, is attitude a measure of evaluation or meaning. The measure used gives us the direction of attitude but not the significance of meaning.

**5.21 Structural Analysis: Maxwell House**

The key phenomena in the Maxwell House ad is friendship and the need for communication. Three aspects of the ad were talked about most; friendship: normal situations: happiness and joyful ad. Figure 5. 40 gives the reading of these aspects for the different groups.

|                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| Friendship        | K R F KN Cl M L P      |
| Normal Situations | K R V MI A B Cl M T Sh |
| Happy/Joyful      | K MI N Cl L S          |

**Figure 5. 40 Structural Issues Maxwell House**

People have a basic need for friendship. They need to feel that they can communicate with others. Both communication and friendship go together, they are inseparable. People must be able to feel that they can share their problems, that other people will listen to them. In return they will do the same for their friends. They will share experiences in life. This makes life easier, lighter,

happier. Both friendship and communication can exist separately. People can communicate without being friendly, they can socialise. But the friendship and communication together is much deeper than mere socialisation. Both together allow for sharing of common experiences, there is continuous communication, people can depend on and relate to each other. One group read the values as helping each other out like the old neighbourly type (Nancy's). The notion here is that people could depend on each other, that they knew each other and communicated regularly.

Related to the whole aspect of friendship is the mood that was perceived. The people and the relationships in the ad were perceived as joyful and happy, (Figure 5. 40). This meant that the communication, interaction was easy, light and happy. Even in working situations the people appeared to be very good humoured and delighted to see the person who was giving the coffee, their friend. People were giving, they were happy to give and in return for their gift they were given joy from the person receiving.

The third aspect of friendship/communication read was that the situations were all normal, (Figure 5. 40). There was variety in the situations shown, but they all appeared to be normal situations. All the situations had one thing in common, people shared their time with each other, they stopped whatever they were doing to have a cup of coffee. The situations were all a play on the word house, a lighthouse, fire house, Fairy house, town house. No matter what the house the atmosphere was friendly and familiar, people were talking to each other. The women could relate to the situations shown even though they may not have experienced every situation. The people appeared so normal they could relate to them, they looked like their own friends.

|                                   |               |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Nice cup of coffee                | R F M T S     |
| Friendly chat and a cup of coffee | K R C M L L   |
| Coffee break/ having a break      | N P B N K N L |
| Reviving yourself                 | P N C I       |

**Figure 5. 41 Transformation Experience Maxwell House**

This was the only ad where the product shown was incorporated into the deeper meaning. Figure 5. 41 shows that the women translated the ad into their own experience. They saw themselves having a cup of coffee, sitting down with others and having a chat. The women could imagine the circumstances where they have coffee from the mood that was reflected in the situations shown in the ad. Although some of the situations may have been alien, for example, a break in a lighthouse the behaviour during the coffee break triggered their own experiences. Having a break connotes a sharing of coffee with others, people do not break from work on their own for coffee, they stop work with others, it is a chance for a friendly chat, a need for relaxation, a perception of revival. In the home situation a break is either sharing coffee with a neighbour or friends, or a break from routine work. This break is seen as something pleasurable, almost a reward to the individual, a chance to think of themselves. This in fact was not shown in the ad where concentration was on giving and not taking something yourself. The ad was communal rather than individual to show friendship and communication which the woman at home does not have if she has coffee on her own. The feelings in the ad reminded the women Figure 5. 41 of "a nice cup of coffee" "a nice friendly chat." The word nice is used to signify pleasant, good a satisfying break talking to friends. It is not simply about drinking a hot drink. A coffee break or having a cup of coffee takes in the whole environment where the person drinks the coffee. The people it is drunk with, the situations one gets away from, the need for a break.



5.21.1 Binary Opposition: Maxwell House

|                      |                                |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Old/New              | K T                            |
| Irish/English        | P D Mn T Cl                    |
| Break/Work           | P N A R B F KN M L CL SH       |
| Relaxed/Tense        | K D ML R M CL                  |
| Friendship/Animosity | K P D ML C V R B KN MN M       |
| Happy/Sad            | K P D ML C F KN NN M L CL S SH |
| Light/Heavy          | K ML A C NN CL                 |
| Realistic/Ideal      | K V R M CL                     |
| Joy/Despair          | P N                            |

Figure 5. 42 Binary Opposition Maxwell House

Binary opposition shows how meaning is read in context of what it is, and what it is not. Most of the other ads presented meaning in terms of the conflict between the binary pairs, for example, in the car ad there was danger, but the real meaning that was read was safety. This reading through the binary scale was achieved mostly through conflict. The women would argue how a car could go through such a fire. But because the car was moving slowly and deliberately and it made it through the fire a feeling of safety emerged. The Maxwell House ad did not present any opposition of meaning. It presented a non conflicting ad, an ad that gave only one side of binary meaning. People concentrated on the sign presented. These are given in Figure 5. 42 Even if the opposite meaning is not presented, it is read. This reading may be on a conscious or subconscious level. With the Maxwell House ad the transformation is from the absent negative meanings to the present positive meanings.

The main system that was intended to be read in this ad was that communication makes people happy. The main binary pair would be chatting/not chatting. The not talking was represented in the ad when people were working or busy and the talking when they stopped for a break and there were other people present.

During the break people chatted and appeared happy and relaxed. The main sign read was the idea of a break, Figure 5. 42. The break signified relaxation, and companionship. The women identified with the break situations and associated them with friendliness. The women did not read through the binary continuum of work/break or talk/no talk. They only concentrated on the positive aspect of the binary pair. In all the other ads the negative end of the binary segment was read or presented. The Maxwell House ad only portrayed positive happy talking people. There was a transfer of significance from these signs to the coffee to such an extent that the main sign or code system read revolved around coffee break.

#### **5.21.2 Transformation Process: Maxwell House**

The deep symbolic meaning centres around the concept that life is easy and happy if people have friends to talk to. Although individual isolation is not mentioned it does not mean that transformation cannot take place. The ad is showing the audience what can happen if they give to others. It is telling the audience that they too can feel this happy, light-hearted and joyful. The opposition meaning not mentioned in the ad, is that people spend time on their own. They do not have friends to give something too, they cannot chat, or communicate with others. This type of life presents visions of isolation, a hard depressing life. Today's busy lifestyle, despite people's ability to travel and meet more people, usually results in a shortage of time. People do not have the time to sit around and listen to each other. There is always something that has to be done. The neighbour concept has totally changed. People may be acquainted with those who live on either side of them, but for several reasons they may not know them. They may want to keep to themselves, some of the neighbours may be out all day. So the helping, chatting neighbourliness has disappeared in a lot of suburbs and new inner city developments. This means that people are on their own a lot. They do not share breaks or coffee with anyone, even in work situations they may



have coffee while they work and not as a break. This means that talking with others is minimised, as a result people do not have a chance to develop friendship.

|                |                  |                            |
|----------------|------------------|----------------------------|
|                | <b>Product</b>   | <b>Symbolic</b>            |
|                | Cup of Coffee    | House Light/dark           |
|                | People Drinking  | Country/City               |
|                | Socialising      | Fairy House Irish/English  |
| <b>Surface</b> |                  | Old Fashioned/Old terraced |
|                |                  | Normal people/Celebrities  |
|                |                  |                            |
|                | Identity feeling | Friendship                 |
|                | of belonging     |                            |
| <b>Deep</b>    | Cup of coffee    | Chat                       |
|                | Break            | Giving                     |

**Figure 5. 43 Transformation Process Maxwell House**

The ad presents us with a lifestyle that draws on nostalgia and old values, such as terraced houses and the neighbours out on the street chatting to each other. The woman gives coffee to the neighbour who was cleaning her windows. Groups that focused on this scene commented on the neighbourliness, or one woman would refer to the others and say "next time I am cleaning my windows you can give me a cup of coffee." This feeling of nostalgia is also evident in the country scene. The old couple are sharing coffee in a beautiful old world cottage. They are happy, comfortable and care for each other. The opposite to this would be old people in the city having no one to care for them. They may not even live in such a homely atmosphere. The whole transformation process is getting people to identify with these positive, warm, homely situations and to experience these feelings when having coffee. This appears to have worked for the ad because no group mentioned individual isolation, or lack of communication. They read friendship, they liked the ad and all could relate to it. It was the only ad where

the majority recognised the deeper meaning. They did not recognise the idea of transformation, they simply read the end result.

The surface symbolic shows people who are comfortable with each other. All the people in the ad appeared relaxed. This extends the idea of friendship. By giving and sharing, and talking to each other you will feel comfortable and relaxed. People had time to enjoy each other even though most were involved in some activity no scene looked hectic, every one had time for each other and the product. People were at ease with each other, they knew the person giving cared enough to give the busy person coffee. This meant that everyone could relax. If people don't have time, or don't give, or receive, they may feel ill at ease with others. They have nothing in common if they cannot share time together.

This leads to the surface product meaning where now time, mood and coffee are shared in a variety of situations that draw on the deeper meanings, Figure 5. 43. All the houses which play on the word Maxwell House, are bright, light and cheerful. There is a lighthouse as opposed to a dark house, a white house as opposed to a black house, Fairy House is cheerful as opposed to drab, a mad house connoting a packed noisy happy house and not a mad insane house. All of these houses had more than one person in them. In each someone was giving someone else coffee. A few of the groups object to the role portrayal of giving where the women gave to men in non working situations, and the men gave to men in working situations. The surface product meaning is that coffee is something that will lift your spirits, will make you happy and bright. One of the scenes Fairy House can be read for surface meaning as a place to enjoy coffee. But it can also, and was, read for deeper product meaning.

The deeper meaning was that Fairy House was recognised as an Irish scene. This changed and reinforced opinions that the ad had an Irish identity. It actually

mentioned and referred to an Irish situation. Identity is important in the ad because it gave people a sense of belonging. They felt that they were part of a broader culture, they had something in common with other people, they could relate to them. Coffee thus made people feel like they belonged they were at home, not just in the sense of being at home in a house, but being at home at ease as part of a culture. This meaning was also discussed in relation to the people used in the ad. The people in the Maxwell House ad were seen as normal people in everyday situations. As such their credibility was not in question. But the credibility of the celebrities in the Nescafe ad was. Several groups commented that Gareth Hunt and Nanette Newman probably hated the coffee, that they had a motive for doing the ad, they were getting paid for it. They also felt that these celebrities were English but that the situations in the Maxwell House ad were Irish. The women identified more with the Maxwell House ad.

Deeper product meaning was tied to the concept of having a break. No one had a break without coffee. A break implies a stoppage of work, a need for a rest from something that one has been doing for some time. The connotations of a break are a need for refreshment, not just in the sense of a drink but a need for mental and physical refreshment. A break is something that is enjoyed, and also if possible something that is shared with other people. A break brings people together, gives them pleasure, it is something that is to be enjoyed. All of these feelings are now transferred to coffee, because a break is no longer a stoppage or a rest from work, but it is a coffee break. It is the coffee and not the people or all the situations that revives, refreshes, and relaxes a person. It is the coffee that makes them feel happy and cheerful, friendly and giving, or wanted and not the people that share themselves and give to others.

5.22 Semantic Analysis: Maxwell House

This is the first time that the brand advertised was mentioned when the women were asked what came to mind when they thought of the specific product category. Not only was the brand Maxwell House mentioned by several groups but so too was the concept that Maxwell House uses in its ads: a break. This means that either Maxwell House has focused correctly on when people drink coffee. Or else they have succeeded in persuading the audience to associate coffee with a break. The only other brand to receive a mention and it was in the context of their restaurant was Bewley's. The women that mentioned Bewley's talked about either enjoying coffee in the restaurant or the smell as they walked by.

The groups were reminded of relaxation when they thought of coffee, of sitting down with others. What was perhaps surprising here was that there were only a few words given as a response to coffee. Some gave full sentence like "sitting down and relaxing with others," but the majority did not. The women were very positive in their response to thoughts about coffee, they either thought of Maxwell House, having a break or Bewley's, (Figure 5. 44).

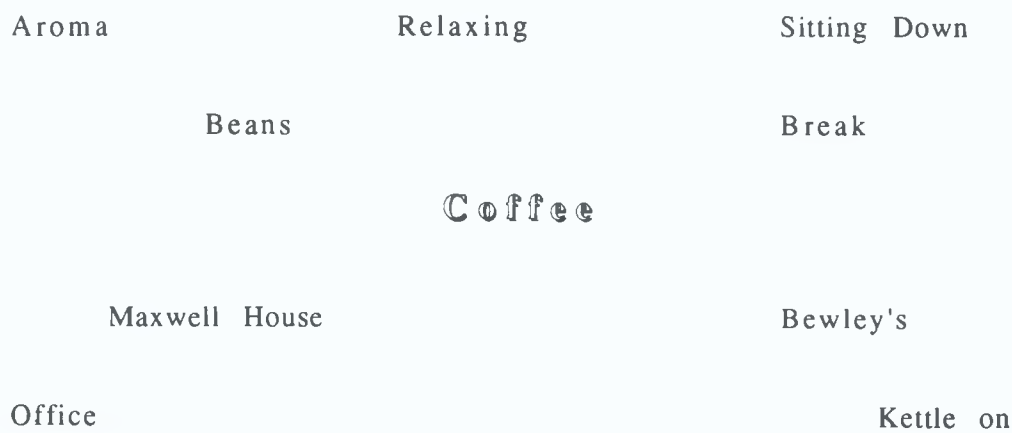


Figure 5. 44 Semantic Association Coffee

The results given in Figure 5. 45 are interesting. It would appear that the attributes associated with coffee are all being associated with Maxwell House. These attributes were not mentioned for the general product category but they were mentioned for Maxwell House. A lot of groups thought of a good coffee, something that was refreshing. Others thought of coffee or even having a cup of coffee. In all there were very positive associations with Maxwell House even if there was more or less singular elaboration.

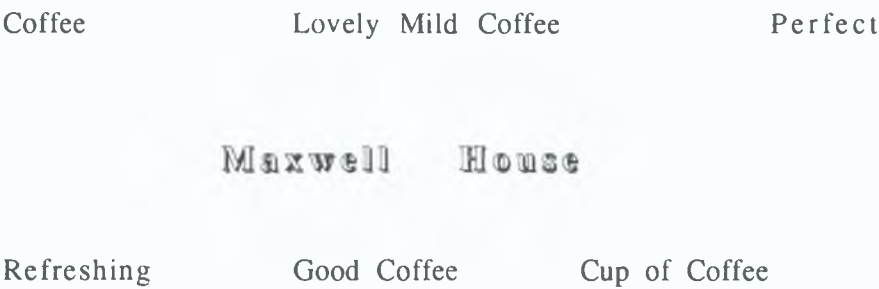


Figure 5. 45 Semantic Association Maxwell House

5.22.1 Syntactic Analysis: Maxwell House

- Subject: Friendship
- Object: People
- Outcome: Belonging

The subject in the ad is friendship. Several scenes are used to portray friendliness. The situations used vary from home to work to pleasure, in all instances people are giving and sharing coffee. The people are happy, they all appear to be talking and very accepting of each other. The friendship is highlighted when the people stop whatever they are doing to join others in a break for coffee. The situations used to show where people have coffee always show a person on their own either at work or at home, and as soon as it is time for coffee more people are introduced into the situation. The whole scene becomes warm, friendly and convivial.

The object in the ad was people. The people in each scene varied in age and sex from the young woman rushing out of the house to the old couple relaxing in a country house. All of the people both men and women appeared casual and at ease with one another. They were busy at whatever they were doing and delighted when someone offered them a coffee. The people and their situations were used to show the versatility and appeal of coffee. Coffee can be drunk anywhere and by everyone. There was a general appeal not just across age groups but also to people of different backgrounds; city people, country people, people who worked and people at home.

The people looked liked they belonged no matter where they were shown. They were intrinsically part of the house, the fire men, the lighthouse keeper but there was also a bond between the people in each scene. The bonding in every situation was evident when the people shared coffee. The implication in general was that whenever and wherever people shared coffee they would feel like they had friends and could identify with each situation. The message was read as intended none of the women read an alternative meaning or argued with the presenation of friendly people.

#### **5.22.2 Pragmatic Comparison: Maxwell House**

Pragmatic analysis for this ad is slightly different to the other ads. Respondents were shown two coffee ads, Nescafe and Maxwell House and asked which one they preferred. They were also asked later in the discussion, as was the case with other ads, if they preferred Maxwell House or other ads. Before the discussion began the women talked quite freely about their opinions of the ad. This was taped and most of the information that resulted from this informal conversation related to preference for one ad over the other, or thoughts about the ad. All of the groups with one exception preferred the Maxwell House ad. Sharon liked both. When it came to the discussion of preference of coffee ads in general again all of the

groups preferred Maxwell House. They did not compare Maxwell House with any other ad except Nescafe. Part of the reason for this could have been because it was the coffee ad foremost in their mind as they had just been shown it. It also means that if a product category is being examined and not a general selection of ads then it may be necessary to show the key brands in the category to ensure that all brands are given an opportunity to be compared.

There was a strong dislike of the people used in the Nescafe ad Figure 5. 46. The groups knew the people and some named them as Gareth Hunt and Nanette Newman. They disliked the shaking of the beans. They could not identify with the ad. Whereas with the Maxwell House ad they describe it as more friendly, that it suits every situation. For an Irish audience these two celebrities did not have any appeal. More in depth questioning may have revealed the reasons for their dislike. This however would have meant focusing on Nescafe and that was not the objective of pragmatic analysis.

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| I hate the Nescafe ads I just hate the people | P Mn Cl S    |
| I hate your woman with the perfect hair and   |              |
| the perfect make up shaking the coffee beans  | P B V KN     |
| They probably don't even drink coffee         | D Cl         |
| It is a more friendly happier ad              | P R D Mn L S |
| The only thing is that where you have ads     |              |
| with males and females the females are        |              |
| always giving                                 | P N          |
| More Irish                                    | D Mn T       |
| That suits every situation                    | P R B MIMn L |

Figure 5. 46 Ad Comparison Maxwell House

#### **5.22.2.1 Pragmatic Association: Maxwell House**

The women felt they could associate with the ad. They felt they could relate to it that it was not overdone. It was like everyday living and it would appeal to everyone. They felt the situations were typical and that people would have a break for coffee.

#### **5.22.2.2 Pragmatic Image Analysis: Maxwell House**

Most of the groups said the ad matched their image of Maxwell House. Four groups said they did not have an image. There was not a lot of discussion of either association or image. The women seemed to accept the ad because they liked it and saw themselves in it. But they did not expand on any other meanings or reading for either association or image. Maybe it is easier to explain the issues one is against rather than the issues that one is in favour of.

#### **5.23 Visual Analysis: Maxwell House**

The signs given in Figure 5. 47 were the main ones suggested by most groups. Other signs were mentioned but only by one or two groups. The sign coffee break signifies a break from work or something else that an individual has being doing. It is a physical interruption which gives the individual a moment for themselves. As such it is usually regarded as something that gives pleasure. A break is something pleasant as opposed to work. Work may give pleasure and satisfaction but it is usually about doing something for others whereas a break is where the individual does something for him or herself. The sign break signified a different meaning to four groups (C KN MN CL); the meaning they interpreted from a break was revival or refreshment. The cup of coffee was going to give life or energy back to these women; it would refresh them. There are two deep meanings from the sign break one is revival of life the other is pleasure. Both signs were read at the deep level of meaning.



Another sign read was people sitting down chatting. Most of the scenes in the ad showed people talking as they were giving coffee. But in the majority of scenes people were standing. However, six of the groups in Figure 5. 47 were reminded of their own situations where they would be sitting down and chatting to friends. The use of the word chat implies a friendly conversation. All the women used the word chat or chatting when talking of the ad. This also implies that they can freely communicate with others. They are not talking to strangers, they are chatting or gossiping to people they know. A coffee break or a sit down with coffee is not about needing a drink it is about the need to be with others and to chat with them.

| Sign            | Signified                        | Signifier     | Groups                 |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------------|
| Coffee Break    | Break                            | Pleasure      | P V N ML<br>A L        |
|                 |                                  | Refreshment   | C KN MN<br>CL          |
| People chatting | Different people<br>all chatting | Communication | P V D ML<br>L S        |
| Sitting Back    | Drinking coffee                  | Relaxation    | NCMLA<br>NNMNCL<br>M T |
| Houses          | Light house etc                  | Home          | K V N C                |
|                 | any occasion you                 |               | D ML A                 |
|                 | can drink coffee                 |               | CL M T                 |

Figure 5. 47 Visual Signs Maxwell House

A related sign read most was sitting back and drinking coffee and relaxing. This sign reflects a situation where the women felt they could sit back and relax. Contrary to the groups situation shown in the ad many of the women would only sit back and relax in their own company or with close friends. They sit back when everything, all the house work or other work, is finished and they have a need for relaxation. This implies an individual break rather than a group break. The groups never raised the issue that all of the signs in the ad showed people together drinking coffee. They never commented that their own coffee breaks may mean that they were on their own. They identified with the values such as friendly, neighbourly and homely to such a degree, that they did not realise that what was in the ad was a reflection of a ideal normality. The women totally accepted and liked the ideal norm, happy, friendly people everywhere. Nobody questioned the unreality in the ad or the fact that the situations were ideal. Instead the scenes were read as normal everyday reality. The groups liked the ad because they thought the situations were normal. Unlike some of the other ads there was no fantasy or hidden meanings in a suspense format. It would appear that the women do not want to read through the presentation of ideal reality, maybe they aspire so much to it that they perceive it as the norm.

The sign house was read by ten groups, (Figure 5. 47). House was signified by several different signs, a light house, a white house, a fire house, a town house, a beach house, a wheel house, a country house, Fairy House, a mad house. All of the scenes that revolved around house indicated a homeliness. Home has connotative meaning of belonging, a place where there is always a welcome and people care for each other. Somewhere the individual can be themselves and be with others. None of the women gave any negative readings of home or house. All the houses took on the meaning of home. The women enjoyed the pun on the word house. Maxwell House was read in association with all the other houses shown. It was taking on different meanings from different houses and homes. The old terraced

house signified neighbourliness, the white house in the country warmth and companionship, the new house energy and all the houses together friendliness. The women read the different meanings and associated all with Maxwell House.

#### **5.23.1 Visual Comparison: Maxwell House**

In a way juxtaposition was used to enable the viewer to compare their lifestyle with the one in the ad. The ad showed an ideal lifestyle and made it appear like everyday normality. Values of sharing, nostalgia, friendship, community living, neighbourliness, easy going good natured people were all portrayed in such a way that the audience could identify with them. The audience was led to believe that this was everyday reality. But more than that the only way that they could have this ideal lifestyle was if they drank coffee. It was coffee that made them sociable, friendly, and helping. It was coffee that helped them to chat and relax. This was the reading that all of the groups took from the ad. In reality this jolly natured depiction of a break rarely takes place. People do not sit around in groups giving and receiving coffee. The sun is not always shining and everywhere looking bright and clean as though it were summer. This type of setting was used to add warmth and energy to the ad. The reality is that people spend much of their time on their own, rushing about, never having time to stop and be extremely relaxed as though there was no rush. The ad made both work, recreation and home scenes look as though everyone got on well with each other, as though they were the best of friends. None of the groups read through this presentation of an ideal world. There was no comparison made with reality. The groups totally accepted the ideal reality.

#### **5.23.2 Visual Effect: Maxwell House**

The visual effect in the Maxwell House ad reminded the women of situations and circumstances where they have coffee. The women had a positive response to the ad. The ad aroused feelings and emotions that they liked to associate with coffee

such as being happy, chatting with friends, and having a break. This ad made them feel good. They could associate with the different scenes. It reminded them of pleasant occasions when they had coffee. The warmth in the ad from the hot coffee and the friendly people made the women think of their own lives and how they enjoyed having coffee under such circumstances.

#### **5.24 Attitude to the Ad: Maxwell House**

The focus of attention for this ad was mainly transformational. The feeling in the ad matched the way the product made the women feel. The ad made four of the groups feel like having a cup of coffee. Twelve groups said the ad made them feel happy and relaxed and it reminded them of when they have coffee. No cognitive issues were raised at all. One group when asked how the ad made them feel raised the issue that "The ad is real reality type" and it would make them think of home.

Comparing the different attitude methods, it is clear that they all showed that the Maxwell House ad was most liked by the women. The semantic measure showed a strong positive attitude to Maxwell House. The free elicitation results are interesting when the focus discussion is considered. There were a high number of affective response almost four affective responses to one cognitive on the feeling question, and two affective to one cognitive on the thinking question. There were no counter arguments. Overall only affective meaning was read in the ad. The majority of responses were positive feelings. Most of the other ads showed that the women focused on execution bolstering or derogation. There was hardly any derogation for the Maxwell House ad. A small number of women may have thought it boring because of its repetitiveness. The interesting category of responses from free elicitation besides the high number of positive feelings was the number of social affection responses. Two of the other ads received one or two social affection responses but this ad received twenty eight. The women all associated with this ad, they all thought that the ad appealed to everyone and

anyone, and appeared normal. The social affection relates well to the reading of friendliness which is what most of the women took out of the ad. Overall free elicitation and group discussion work well together. In the other ads it was argued that the whole area of execution bolstering needs further clarification and as the category stands it does not really highlight what was read in the ad. On the other hand there was no conflict in direction or responses from either free elicitation or group discussion. When the women concentrated on execution in free elicitation, they also focused on execution in group discussion. But the group discussion shows the significance of the signs used to the women. It is impossible to tell from the categories used in free elicitation, what signs were read and what they mean to the women.

## Chapter 6 Conclusions and Discussion

### 6. Introduction

The objective of this study was to examine the interpretation of ads by women. This involved using and adapting methods of structuralism and semiotics to advertising. The specific adaption of semiotics to determining how people read ads proved successful. The method revealed the subjective interpretation of the signs used in specific ads. The study illustrated the significance of meaning taken from the ad and its relevance to the brand advertised. Individual reading of the ad demonstrated that people make comparisons with other ads for a given product category. The study highlighted the match or mismatch between the projected image in the ad and the existing image that the women held of the advertiser. Each aspect of the semiotic method will be discussed according to additional knowledge gained from this research and recommendations for future use will be outlined.

The findings from analysis showed that reading must be considered in context not just of the ad shown but in relation to other ads, product concept and product schema. The significance of meaning is revealed when the total product and ad context are considered. Each of the areas examined make a contribution in aiding understanding of the meaning taken from ads. The structural analysis showed the main sign read, the number of signs read in the ad and the way in which the women transfer meaning from symbolic signs to the product and brand advertised. The semiotic system used in this study is made up of a number of components. Each component complements and adds to the knowledge of reading ads. The main components of the semiotic system were structuralism, semantics, pragmatics, visual and attitude comparison.

The structuralist method examined the symbolic values that were read and how these were transferred to the brand. The semantic association and visual method outlined the importance of linkage between product category schema, the brand and ad concept in determining the significance of meaning taken from the ad. The pragmatic area highlighted the importance of considering the ad in the context of competitive ads and the effect of prior image on interpretation. By combining knowledge gained from all of the semiotic areas the advertiser receives a totality of consumer reading of the ad. The information that resulted from the methods used gives a full understanding of brand and ad perceptions. The advertiser is given an explanation of consumer interpretation and not just an evaluative judgement from an attitude score.

## **6.1. Main Conclusions**

1. The proposed system worked in that:
  - a) signification of meaning of signs was determined;
  - b) semantic association showed verbal reading of ad;
  - c) reading revealed a comparative evaluation with other ads; and
  - d) thoughts about visuals showed the level of reading.
2. All attitude to the ad measures and semiotic reading produced the same direction of responses for respondents.
3. Free elicitation codes can produce contradictory results; for example, an individual may experience a positive attitude and negative feelings towards an ad. Unless a semiotic reading is given these results may be confusing.



4. Codes of free elicitation do not hold the same level of significance. All execution bolstering statements are treated as positive. However interpretation of an execution bolstering statement depends on whether the significance of meaning is transferred from the referent to the ad or the referent to the brand or if there is some association between the ad and the brand. The apparent contradictory results that arise from free elicitation can only be explained if the semiotic system is used.

## **6.2. Discussion of Method**

Discussion of the various methods used to give a semiotic reading of the ad examines the main conclusions in relation to previous research, implementation of the method, and recommendations for future research.

### **6.2.1. Structural Analysis**

The findings from the structural reading extend the usefulness and application of the structural method. The audience reading of ads is given which reveals the key phenomena read and the significance of the sign for the viewers. Two critical aspects of the structural method need to be addressed in advertising. The first is definition of a system: should it be product specific as suggested by Leymore, or analogous to Levi Strauss's system of reading myths with a theme base? The second aspect is the actual working of the system to find the significant meaning. This is achieved by reducing the totality into segments showing how linkages of two systems of meaning result in a fusion of meaning for a brand. This study concentrated on the latter and showed how the proposed method for analysis of structure worked across all six ads.



Francis (1986) and Leymore (1987) would argue that unless a system of ads is established the structural method has no value. The counter argument comes from anthropologists such as Leach (1970) who claims if "we are able to arrive at insights which we did not have before, and these insights throw illumination on other related ethnographic facts, which we had not considered in the first instance, then we may feel that the exercise is worth while" (56). The pay off is in the working of the method to determine what was read. Failure to establish an acceptable system should not deter researchers in using the structural method. The actual working of the method offers insight into how people read ads and shows significant meaning taken from ads.

The issue of a system can be addressed in future studies on advertising. A recommendation for such work is to use a classification similar to that proposed by Levi-Strauss. He classified myths according to themes which show "sets of relationships among human beings in terms of relative status, friendship and hostility, sexual availability, mutual dependence" (Leach 1975: 66). The themes centre on: relationships between different kinds of species; between categories of food; sound and silence; categories of smell and taste, animals and plant and relations between categories of landscape or combinations of these relations.

It is hypothesized that Levi-Strauss's classification is more appropriate than the Leymore-Langholtz classification which was based on product categories. If product categories are taken as a base it assumes that one key phenomenon is critical for all brands in that category. Ads that are most appropriate to that

phenomenon will be perceived better. If the purpose of branding is differentiation then ad campaigns should be positioning brands according to different values by using different themes. A product category system would imply that all advertising for that category would be similar. There are numerous product categories which would mean that if a classification system was developed around products it would be extremely large. It is proposed that it is more likely that ads and segments of ads would follow the Levi-Strauss theme. If the binary tables which resulted from this study are considered it is clear that the segments could be classified according to the Levi-Strauss classification. It is recommended that a structural study is undertaken which would examine a large number of ads to determine if there is consistency of reading across the proposed classification.

#### **6.2.1.1. The Working Of The Structural Method**

The method started with an analysis of discussion on thoughts about the ad. This revealed the main signs read in the ad. The key phenomena for each ad resulted from analysis of the significance of the signs. In some ads the significance of meaning was very clear to the women as in the Maxwell House ad where the women read friendship, and in the Birds Eye ad where they read satisfaction. In others it was very unclear; for example Surf, was read more as a holiday sign than as a good agent that could combat evil, dirty clothes. The key signs read were the ones discussed most by the women. The uncovering of the key phenomena is traced by examining the main referents perceived and analyzing what these meant to the participants. Researcher interpretation is important because if the participants fail to read the intended key phenomena of the advertiser, the researcher must show this and identify segments of the ad that were not read. If the structural method is to prove valid in advertising

inter judge reliability will have to be used to confirm key phenomena and segments read. The system used in this study clearly highlights the signs read and the derivative of the key phenomena. In three of the ads, the key phenomena was read by the participants in the Maxwell House, Birds Eye, Bank of Ireland ads. In two of the ads it was identified and dismissed, in the Peugeot and Chanel ads and in the Surf ad it was not read.

The purpose of the binary method is to understand the way in which meaning is created for an object. Meaning is ascribed to an object in terms of what it is and what it is not. Reducing reading to segments of binary opposites allows the reader to discriminate and differentiate symbolic and product meaning. The binary method provided a means of breaking down the whole ad into the key segments read. These segments or binary pairs illustrate what was read and set up a structure to show how meaning is transferred from symbolic to product values.

An interesting conclusion emerged from the binary analysis: where the women concentrated solely on the negative aspect of a binary pair they formed very negative attitudes to the ad. In the Chanel ad they confined their reading to negative surface meaning; for example, the rich, beautiful woman in the city can have whoever and whatever she wants. This resulted in non-elaboration of reading to either the deep product or symbolic levels of reading; therefore the women failed to read through to the whole notion of fantasy. Failure to read the main concept of shedding the city for the desert by the means of fantasy meant that there was no transference of meaning from a city of objects and coldness to a place of romance, to a world of fantasy. The brand thus failed to be associated with the desired system of meanings and

idiosyncratic negative meanings were attributed to the product. This may result in very negative attitudes as in the case of Chanel and Peugeot.

The structural system works with the assumption that meanings attributed to one system can be used to generate meanings for another. The two systems may be superimposed on one another until the advertised sign takes the meaning suggested from the primary system. The transformation matrix which was constructed from binary analysis shows how meaning is transferred from one concept to another. Ads which were read from the deep symbolic level through to the deep product meaning were the most effective. Transformation reading shows what happens when people read different aspects of the transformation process. Some people fail to read across either deep to surface symbolic or from symbolic to product signs; others will read and transfer symbolic values to the product.

The Bank of Ireland ad is an example of those who read through the transformation process. Some of the women who claimed that the bank wanted them to perceive it as friendly and helpful and always willing to lend a hand stated that their individual experiences were contrary to the projected image. They read the ad as misleading and were annoyed with the bank, even though some initially said they liked the ad. The Maxwell House ad showed that those who read the deep symbolic meaning, transferred all the meanings of friendship to having a cup of coffee.

The structural method used in the analysis proved superior to the syntactic method suggested by Hirschman. The syntactic area is concerned with relations between signs. The transformation matrix examined the relations

between symbolic and product meaning according to depth of information. No additional information was gained by concentrating on the relations between the subject, action and outcome of the ad. The structural method should be used to examine relations between segments of the ad.

### **6.3. Discussion on Semantics**

Semantic association showed what happens when reading of brand schema matches and contradicts a product schema. Each of the ads reveal different information on the relations between the advertising concept and the products significance. The Maxwell House ad shows positive association for the product category and the brand advertised. Association for the product category and Birds Eye were also positive but in addition participants commented on a generalisation strategy. The Chanel ad showed positive product associations and negative brand associations. The Bank of Ireland ad was generally received positively, the Peugeot ad was generally received negatively, yet the semantic associations were negative for the Bank of Ireland ad and positive for the Peugeot ad. The type and strength of linkage between the product activity, brand perceptions and their relatedness to a particular ad affects the way in which both the product and the brand are read. Examples from each of the ads demonstrate the different types of linkage.

The Maxwell House ad affirmed that participants mentioned the brand when asked about coffee; not only did they mention the brand but they also talked about the brand concept of having a break. This resulted in very positive association between product schema and connotations of using the brand. The discussion of Maxwell House centred on attributes associated with coffee.

Coffee was perceived as Maxwell House. This was the only occasion where this happened for any of the ads shown. The ad concept was perceived as the product activity concept. This resulted in a reciprocal relationship where the ad triggered product connotations and vice versa. The reinforcement of attitudes which happens with a reciprocal relationship is considered the ideal brand strategy for fast moving consumer goods (Ehrenberg 1974). The only way the relationship can become reciprocal is if there is clear, positive association and reinforcement of concepts between the product schema and the brand advertised.

Responses to semantic associations for Birds Eye were also positive but the link between product and brand associations were not as strong as those for Maxwell House. The semantic associations were connected to the generalisation strategy of Birds Eye. The Birds Eye ad proved that a generalisation strategy had worked well for some brands in the Birds Eye range. While there was positive association for Birds Eye burgers the opinions were not as strong as for the general category, particularly Mc Donalds. Nor were the associations for the Birds Eye burger as strong as those for fish fingers and peas. The generalisation link was there in that participants immediately referred to fish fingers and peas. There was more reinforcement between the brand and the Birds Eye product range than to the specific product category which was lead by McDonalds.

Reading of the Surf ad showed that half of the referents mentioned were not in the ad and had nothing to do with the product category. This showed that the women elaborated from the ad, but the type of elaboration is important. In the case of Surf the elaboration had nothing to do with the brand or the

product schema. It would appear that in cases such as this no matter how favourable the elaboration, the final result is a complete failure in making any association with either the activity, that is washing, or with the product category, washing powders. For a brand to create values outside the expected product schema would be extremely costly and it may take a long time for audiences to accept new significant meanings.

The Chanel ad illustrated interesting results in that there were very positive associations for the product category but there were negative responses to Chanel. It was seen as a moneyed product. None of the connotations that the women experienced with perfume were attributed to Chanel. This was a case where there was a complete mis-match between the brand and product category. There were affective associations for the product and none for the brand. The result was a lack of reinforcement between the product category which was well perceived and the brand.

One other point needs to be raised in relation to negative semantic association between products and brand which emerged from the Surf ad, that is, the intensity of negativity. Roughly half of the responses to the Surf brand were negative. It is suggested that the degree of negativity is important, and can be expressed at the denotative or connotative level. A denotative comment would be "I don't know anything about it," or, "I hate the package."

Connotative significance could be found in comments that extend the notion of Surf as an old fashioned product, where the respondent goes on to associate it with the first ever washing powder. The term old fashioned is deliberately derisory and results in complete dismissal of the brand. Negative connotative remarks may have long term significance for brand acceptance.



Semantic association demonstrates the effect of the product category perceptions on brand interpretation. Banks were generally perceived in a very negative manner and although the Bank of Ireland ad received good attitude scores and the women liked aspects of the ad, the semantic associations for the ad were almost identical to their perceptions of banks. The Peugeot ad showed a reverse position to that of the banks. The product category received very positive attributions as did the Peugeot ad, yet the visual section showed that the significant meaning was to the ad, and there was little transference of connotative meaning to the car. An issue of concern is what happened to make participants give negative associations to a bank ad that was read positively, and vice versa for Peugeot. It is being suggested that the attitudes to banks was so strong that participants automatically read the ad in the light of their experience, and although they may have liked the ad, it was incongruent with their existing knowledge structures. If this is the case perceptions of the ad will be adjusted to relate to existing perceptions.

The Peugeot ad could be explained in a similar way except that the semantic associations were not identical to those of the product. The car was perceived as strong, powerful, tough and durable, while cars were seen as convenient, comfortable and reliable. Two things could have happened in relation to the reading of semantic associations: a), the respondents discounted negative aspects of the ad; and, b), word associations were to previous images of Peugeot. The latter argument is dismissed because the women had a very non-elaborative image of Peugeot. It is suggested that a discounting of sorts happened. The women could see what the message was supposed to be so they gave rational positive associations. The critical issue is the effect of



discounting to long term image. Will the positive associations carry over or will the significant reading of the main referent block positive associations being made to the ad? Only a long term study tracing respondents image over time could determine effects of perception.

The findings and conclusions from word association show clearly the danger of over reliance on attitude to the ad concept. Attitude to the ad studies as pointed out by Gresham and Shimp (1985) do not consider the effect of prior attitudes on current perceptions of the brand. This study shows clearly that while attitudes to the Surf brand were negative and attitudes to the ad were positive, there was no way that attitude to the ad would affect the previous held brand attitude. Comments in relation to the product were at the connotative level and derisory of the brand. Reading of the main referent was not associated at all with either the brand or the product category. It is suggested that a study which commences with attitude to the ad scores and ignores prior attitudes and reading of meaning from the brand and the ad, can never disclose an accurate explanation of the brand's position to an advertiser. By using the methods outlined in this study a real understanding of the brands position is given.

Mc Kenzie, Lutz and Belch (1986) proposed four mediating relationships between attitude to the ad and the brand. The results from the six ads in this study correlates with one of their proposed relationships. The associations between Maxwell House and the ad concept match the dual mediating hypothesis. It is proposed that the main reason for failure in matching theoretical concepts is the effect of product category expectations on brands and ads for that category. It would appear that if attitudes to the category are

strong and negative as in the case of the bank category, these attitudes predominate over a positive reading of a specific bank ad. On the other hand if an advertiser correctly identifies the product schema concept as in the Maxwell House ad (having a break) and the ad strongly associates with it, the brand may be read as the product category and strong reciprocal relationships are formed.

The findings from semantic association revealed greater relatedness to Mandler's (1982) theory on schema congruity and incongruity than to attitude to the ad. Mandler presented five cases of information assimilation and accommodation. The results of this study match four of his cases. In the Maxwell House ad there was assimilation of the ad concept to the product schema. The Birds Eye ad demonstrate slight incongruity of ad concept with original context of the theme used; once the incoming information was accommodated there was acceptance. There were no examples of severe incongruity of incoming information and development of alternate schema. It is not suggested that this cannot happen, but it did not occur for the ads used. The Surf ad was perceived as severely incongruent with the product schema; the ad was successfully accommodated but negatively matched with the product schema. The Chanel ad was unsuccessfully accommodated in that participants did not like the ad and were unwilling to associate it with a perfume schema. Mandler's theory provides an ideal base for building theories on prior product attitudes and their mediating effect on attitude to the ad.

#### **6.4. Discussion on Pragmatics**

Pragmatic analysis showed what people read in the ad in comparison to other ads and how the image in the ad related to the participants' existing image of

the advertiser. People do not read ads in isolation; instead, they read by relating what they perceive to existing perceptions. They do not only read what is in the ad, but how the information, emotions in the ad relate to expected and known associations from other ads. Pragmatic reading showed clearly the context of reading both in relation to other ads and according to existing perceptions of the advertiser.

Ad comparison showed that when people read ads they either pick out issues and compare ads in relation to the portrayal of those issues, or they give descriptions of ads they liked and hated. What is needed for future research is to further explore these issues to see if there is a re-occurrence of particular issues for certain types of ads. The issue that received most attention was the role portrayal of women. A uniformity of image was not sought by the women who discussed role portrayal but rather a match of image to type of product being advertised. The majority of women described other ads they liked or hated. More attention could be given to signs, styles and themes which were liked and disliked.

The women were shown one ad in a product category across several different categories. But for coffee they were shown two ads within the same product category. There are advantages and disadvantages to both methods of comparison. The disadvantage of only showing one ad is that the researcher is relying on the participants memory to recall ads for the product category. In some cases this may be very easy but in others it may be difficult. The advantage is that the most significant issue to the participants will be recalled.

The advantage to showing two or more ads within a product category is that the participants become focused on the most important issues for that product. This may be very important in developing linkage between product and ad concepts. The disadvantage is that because the participants see comparative ads they immediately start discussing issues that may not be that important but are triggered by a particular ad. This may mean that important aspects of advertising in general would not be considered which affect the significance of meaning.

The pragmatic image analysis showed that for all but one ad a large number of groups that felt there was a mismatch between the image in the ad and their image of the advertiser. The only ad where there was a positive match of image was in the case of the Maxwell House ad. The ads for Surf and Bank of Ireland were perceived more positively than the image the participants held towards the brand and service respectively. Birds Eye, Chanel and Peugeot were not perceived as positively as their respective brand images. This raises a question for the advertiser: should the ad reflect current brand image or create something new?

If there is continual creation of new ideas and different values then a consistent brand image will not emerge, and people will find it difficult to make associations between the brand and a specific ad. It is believed that consistency of image between the general product schema and the brand and ad concept are critical to the success of a brand. It is also felt that Osgood Suci and Tannebaum's (1975) notion of establishing meaning in a semantic space is important for determining the linkage between images of the product schema, the brand and the ad concept. One could by superimposing graphs of these

three areas determine distance of the brand image from the product category image and the ad image. It was evident that where image in the ad reflected expected image of the product and the brand the most favourable reading of the ad was given around one significant concept.

The one area of pragmatic analysis where there was disappointment with results was from participants discussion on personal association with the ad. Discussion was very non-elaborative and failed to explain why people could or could not associate with the ad. Future research should commence with experiences that the women associate with the product and the brand before examining particular experience with a specific ad. It is suggested that association of experiences of the individual with the ad may reveal more significant information than discussion on identifying with personalities in the ad.

#### **6.5. Visual Discussion**

Several issues emerged from the visual analysis that deserve some discussion. It is hypothesized that significance of reading occurs when there are accepted associations between the expected product schema, brand concept and creative concepts in an ad. This is similar to the conclusion from semantic association. If there is no significance of meaning the participants perceive the ad as far fetched, and no matter how impressively the creative execution is portrayed, a negative evaluation will result.

Three ads are given as examples of different interpretations of significance. In the Peugeot ad, there was no significance of reading between the product schema, brand concept and creative execution in the ad. The visual referent

that had the greatest impact on the women was fire, and the meanings that were primarily taken from the fire such as danger and excitement were significant for the women, but there was no connection between these connotative meanings to the brand advertised. Therefore, there was no transference of values in the ad to the brand. The participants read the message in the Peugeot ad as strength and toughness but because it was not significant to them; the associations they experienced from the ad were survival and not driving, with the result that there was no connection between the product schema and the ad concept.

The Birds Eye ad showed significance of meaning between the product schema which was associated with children; the product burger was perceived as being loved by children and the ad concept, the children playing as cowboys and coming home hungry, was interpreted as typical behaviour of children.

Bank of Ireland produced interesting results in relation to signification. Banks in general were perceived negatively, the ease of getting money and conducting everyday banking activity was not perceived as typical, but the ad itself was seen as friendly, open and helpful. But because these values were not associated with banks the ad, while liked, tended to be disbelieved and worst of all, it was seen as positively misleading by some respondents. Signification for the ad was positive but because the service schema and bank image was very negative the ad concept was disbelieved. The bank ad shows that product schema and product concept influence the perception of the ad.

Comprehension and understanding do not necessarily lead to the type of interpretation desired by the advertiser. Unless the visuals that the

participants are attending to are known the effect and the level of interpretation will remain a matter of supposition. Interpretation is linked to what is culturally known. If there is no connection between the signs used and the brand advertised there will be no transference of meaning from the referent to the brand. In most ads one main referent received most of the women's attention, and there was some diversity in the interpretation of the sign. Some connotations of the sign were directly related to the product and other connotations remained with the ad. Connotations ascribed to the Surf ad were to the referent holidays with no connection between values associated with holidays such as energy and revitalisation and the product schema or the brand. The Maxwell House ad where the main sign read was a break, showed a strong connection between the women's connotations of coffee and the ad. The ad reinforced and strengthened their perceptions of coffee.

The participants reading of the ads concentrated on the connotative meanings. With the exception of Maxwell House none were read at the ideological level. Significance of meaning was taken from ads when the participants felt that they were interpreting reality and the ad reflected reality and not an obscure or distorted relationship. Williamson (1978) argues that when participants are hermeneutically involved with the ad they read the ad's sign system as a direct reflection of meaningful reality. The results from this study do not support this assumption; the participants clearly liked ads which portrayed ideal realism. But the women were just as capable of reading through an advertiser's desired intended meaning if they felt the connotative or ideological meaning was inappropriate to the product.



Music as a comparative effect showed that for a number of ads the music was read out of context to the ad, and out of context to the original setting that the advertiser was using to transfer meaning to the ad concept. This was clear from the women's reading of music in the Chanel and Peugeot ad. In the Chanel ad because some of the women perceived the song as sung by a man they perceived the woman as selfish and very materialistic. The woman had a materialistic lifestyle and it was considered pure hypocrisy to sing that she only cared for him. With the Peugeot ad some of the participants did not know of the original context of the song, that is, with the film Top Gun. They thought of the song as being romantic, which was a complete contrast to the ad; if the song was read as in its original context it would have been perceived as exciting which would have been more in keeping with the values projected in the ad. Music like other signs, cannot be assumed to have absolute meanings that will be transferred to the brand. Interpretation of signs, includes the interpretation of music, is idiosyncratic, and varies considerably according to participants' experience and knowledge.

The comparative area for visual analysis is very important in advertising because brands are given meaning through direct association with objects and people who have particular meaning for an audience. Typical devices used in transferring and associating effects are metaphor, analogy, juxtaposition and symbolism. The findings from the visual analysis were revealing in this area. The Surf and Birds Eye ad showed the number of participants that read metaphor. The Chanel ad highlighted women's reading of juxtaposition. The Peugeot ad emphasised the use of symbolism.



This area must be developed to gain as much understanding as possible on the indirect effect of comparative techniques. The results from this study indicate the importance of these techniques, but the method used to discover effect needs to be expanded. The greatest concern at the outset of this research was not to impose significance to aspects of the ad that held no significance to the respondent prior to the research discussion. The difficulty is to balance what is naturally read from comparative techniques and at the same time to fully explore the meanings that are attributed to the brand and the effect on the individual from using these techniques. For example, from the present study it would have been interesting to examine visual metaphors: are the children linked with Clint Eastwood, is the perfume fantasy, is the car excitement? Similarly it would be interesting to determine the effect of iconic, indexical and symbolic sign values. While Stern (1988) has made valuable contributions to the use of these techniques in advertising, there appears to be a lack of research in applying the techniques to consumer analysis of ads.

The effect was determined largely by the indirect effect of the cause and comparative sign read. While it was evident what the effect was, it would be valuable to attempt a direct measure of effect. What the reading is trying to uncover is the effect of thoughts about visuals and non-verbal aspects of the ad. This could be explored more widely to see if there are differences between people who are categorised as verbalizers and those described as visualizers. One area difficult to assess was mood and emotion produced by the ad. Participants will willingly give their thoughts about mood projected but found it difficult to talk of the mood or emotion experienced, with many implying that this is only an ad and therefore there is no great swing in emotions for each and every ad. It may be necessary to use an affect based scale as

suggested by Plutchik (1980) and Mehrabarian and Russell (1974), but instead of using the scale as a written device it could be used to tease out emotion on a verbal level.

## **6.6. Discussion on Attitude to the Ad**

This study has been critical of attitude to the measures but it is not totally dismissive of them. One of the conclusions was that semantic measures, free elicitation techniques and the semiotic method produced the same results with respect to evaluation of the ad. But it is argued that attitude measures concentrate too heavily on evaluation and fail to explain the thinking behind the evaluation. As a result these methods are in danger of overlooking antecedents to attitude to the ad, or prior attitudes and how they determine attitude. These are the most important criticisms of attitude to the ad measures. In addition a number of concerns emerged in relation to the working of existing techniques.

The semantic differential as is used in measuring attitude to the ad (Mitchell and Olson 1981, McKenzie, Lutz and Belch 1986) shows evaluation of ad in isolation of other ads in the product category. This study also used the semantic differential in isolation from other ads. But consideration of other ads can dramatically affect an attitude to one specific ad. What commenced as a very favourable attitude may change if respondents recall other ads for similar products. This is not a fault of the semantic differential technique; it is rather, a failure of advertising to consider the comparative effect of meaning.

More attention needs to be given to the significance of meaning of different coded categories. Particular concerns that emerged from this study are that all

responses within a given category are regarded as being the same and all categories are treated as being equal. The real importance of the coded category may be its connection with the product concept or it may be with respect to the category itself. For example the Maxwell House ad produced a high number of affective responses, 4 to every 1 cognitive response. This ad was the only ad that had social affection responses. This raises the question of whether certain coded categories are more important than others in reinforcing attitudes. Future research could examine this question by selecting a series of ads within several product categories, determining attitudes to the ad and then seeing if those with the highest attitude scores also had the greatest number of responses for particular coded categories. This may well prove to be the case especially between products purchased from negative and positive motives (Rossiter and Percy 1987).

Coded responses within a category also presented problems. The one category that received most responses across all ads was execution bolstering. Execution bolstering statements are regarded as favourable assessment of some aspect of the ad. But it is the context of the reading of the sign that is important. People may say: "I love the visuals in that ad," or "I love the music." This is telling us nothing about what they are thinking about and the end result may be contradictory results between coded categories. Barthes (1973) states that when reading it is possible to demythologize a sign, that is, read through it, or to read the sign as intended or to fail to transfer meaning from one code system to another. By not examining a sign in Barthes context it is not known what the value of an execution bolstering statement is. The Surf ad produced a large amount of execution bolstering statements, yet the participants failed to transfer any of the positive holiday associations to the ad. The Bank of Ireland

ad also experienced execution bolstering but many of the respondents demythologize the favourable aspects of the ad when the total context of the ad is assessed. Maxwell House execution statements were in context with the general reading of the ad, but the Surf statements were not. There is a difference in the context of reading of a bolstering statement, yet research does not differentiate between the contextual relevance of various responses.

Researchers using free elicitation do not differentiate between the significance of asking respondents to talk or write about thoughts or feelings to the ad. A single question may be asked of subjects such as, report any thoughts or feelings that went through their mind as they were watching the ad (Batra and Ray 1983, Batra and Ray 1986, Stout and Leckenby 1986). Hill and Mazis (1986) simply ask for all responses experienced while watching the ad.

This study asked separate questions for both thoughts and feelings. The results indicated that different responses are given for thoughts and feelings. Future studies measuring cognitive and affective reaction to ads must confirm whether a single question elicits accurate information on emotional reaction to ads. It is hypothesised that respondents will give thoughts first and that these will predominate as the results of this study show. But if affective responses are asked separately respondents will think only of emotions and not thoughts about the ad.

## **6.7. Conclusion**

The semiotic system is ideal for determining how people read ads. Advertising uses signs from a natural and a cultural system to convey meaning onto a meaningless brand. The pivotal notion in semiotics is the sign. A sign stands

for or communications meaning about something, to someone in a given context. Ads use a single sign to attribute different meanings, to different objects, to different people in a variety of circumstances. The only way to determine the significance of meaning taken from an ad is to conduct a semiotic analysis for each interpretation.

Reading of the ad concentrated on the interpretant, that is idiosyncratic interpretation of the sign. Interpretation involves decoding of a message or codes. The decoding may be triggered by the physical or symbolic representation of codes used in a given context. Advertising uses a second ordering of the sign systems. It takes signs from a natural system and attributes their symbolic meaning to a different physical sign. The transference of meaning is critical to the successful reading of an ad. Therefore it is necessary to know how individuals attribute meaning to the brand. Some may see the symbolic association as very apt while others may believe that it is misleading or that they are being manipulated. Either way the advertiser needs to know how people read and link physical and symbolic meaning in different contexts. While the study focused on the interpreter it could equally be applied to the source, the advertiser, to determine the intention of the communication. A future study may disclose in the meaning attribute to signs by the source matched with those taken by the receiver.

This study is relevant to all who are interested in advertising and marketing communication. There is concern in media studies about the notion of destination effect, which is, the creation of messages to appeal to particular target audiences. It is believed that messages are created regardless of reality to appeal to specific groups. The concern of critics of such an approach is that

audiences are being manipulated. The semiotic system of reading ads illustrates the significance of meaning taken from an ad. This in turn reveals whether an audience perceived a true or misleading reality. The semiotic system can be used as an educational device whereby audiences become aware of manipulation and misleading advertising.

The system benefits the advertiser in that they can determine if the intention of a specific message was perceived by an audience. No advertiser wants to invest millions of pounds in a communication that is perceived as incongruous with an existing schema. Advertisers who are unwilling to consider the subjective world of the individual in the interpretation of signs are resorting to the bullet theory of communication. This states that the message sent is the one received. The result of such a stance is a waste of money invested in advertising. The semiotic system demonstrates that people do read signs differently and the significance of individual interpretation for the brand. The semiotic system could be extended and applied to all aspects of marketing communication

## References

- Aarsaleff, H. (1982). From Locke to Saussure: Essays on the Study of Language and Intellectual History. London: Athlone.
- Aaker, D., and Norris, D. (1982). "Characteristics of TV Commercials Perceived as Informative." Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 22, No 2, 22-34.
- Ahtolla, O. (1985). "Hedonic and Utilitarian Aspects Of Consumer Behavior: An Attitudinal Perspective." In, Hirschman, E., and Holbrook, M., (eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 12, 7-10.
- Allen, R. (1987). Reader-Oriented Criticism and Television. In, Allen, R. (ed.) Channels of Discourse. London: Methuen, 74-112.
- Lutz Alesandrini, K. (1982). "Strategies that Influence Memory for Advertising communications." In, Harris, R. (ed.), Information Processing In Advertising Research. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 65-81.
- Andersan, J. (1976). Language, Memory and Thought. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Antil, J., (1984). "Conceptualization and Operationalization Of Involvement." In, Kinnear, T., (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 11, 203-209.
- Axelrod, M., (1976). "The Dynamics of the Group Interview." In, Andersen, B., (ed), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 3, 437-441.
- Barry, T. (1987). "The Development of the Hierarchy of Effects: An Historical Perspective. In, Leigh, J., and Martin, C. (eds.), Current Issues and Research in Advertising, Ann Arbor MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 251-296.
- Barthes, R. (1973). Mythologies. London: Paladin
- Batra, R., and Ray, M. (1985). How Advertising Works at Contact." In, Alwitt, L, and Mitchell, A., (eds.) Psychological Processes and Advertising Effects: Theory, Research and Application, Hillsdale New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 13-43.
- Batra, R., and Ray, M. (1986). "Affective Responses Mediating Acceptance of Advertising." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 13 (September), 234-249.
- Batra, R., and Ray, M. (1983). "Operationalizing Involvement as Depth and Quality of Cognitive Response." In, Bogozzi, R., and Tybout, A. (eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 10, 309-313.



- Belch, G., and Belch, M. (1984). "An Investigation of the Effects of Repetition on Cognitive and Affective Reactions to Humorous and Serious Television Commercials," In, Kinnear, T. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 11, 4-10.
- Belk, R., and Andersen, B. (1980). "De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum: A Study of the Potential for Broadening the Appeal of Performing Arts." In, Olson, J. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 7, 109-113.
- Belk, R., Bahn, K., and Mayer, R. (1982). "Developmental Recognition of Consumption Symbolism." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 9 June, 4-17.
- Bernstein, D. (1986). Company Image and Reality, East Sussex, Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Biehal, G., and Chakravarti, D. (1982). "Information-Presentation Format and Learning Goals as Determinants of Consumers' Memory Retrieval and Choice Processes." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 8 (March), 431-441.
- Blackwell, L. (1988). "Death Style." Creative Review, January, 14-17.
- Bloch, P. (1981). "Involvement Beyond the Purchase Process: Conceptual Issues and Empirical Investigation." In, Monroe, K. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 8, 61-65.
- Boulton, M. (1971). The Anatomy of Language, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Bovee, L., and Arens, W. (1989). Contemporary Advertising, Irwin U.S.
- Bower, G. (1982). "Mood and Memory." American Psychologist, Vol. 36, 129-148.
- Burke, M., and Edell, J. (1989). "The Impact of Feelings on Ad-Based Affect and Cognition." Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XXVI, February, 69-83.
- Cacioppo, J., and Petty, R. (1984) "The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion" In, Kinnear, T. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 11, 673-675.
- Childers, T., and Houston, M. (1982) "Imagery Paradigms For Consumer Research: Alternative Perspectives from Cognitive Psychology." In, Mitchell, A. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 9, 59-64.
- Childers, T., and Houston, M. (1984). "Conditions for a Picture-Superiority Effect on Consumer Memory." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 11, (September), 643-654.
- Childers, T., Houston, M., and Heckler, S. (1985). "Measurement of Individual Differences in Visual Versus Verbal Information Processing." Journal of Consumer Research Vol. 12, 125-134.



- Clark, M. (1982). "A Role for Arousal in the Link between Feeling States, Judgements, and Behavior." In, Clark, M., and Fiske, S.(eds.), Affect and Cognition. Hillsdale New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 263-289.
- Cleaveland, C. (1986). "Semiotics: Determining What the Advertising Message Means to the Audience." In, Sentis, K. and Olson, J. (eds.), Advertising and Consumer Psychology. New York: Praeger, 227-241.
- Colley, G. (1962). Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results. New York: Association Of National Advertisers.
- Collins, A., and Quinlan, M. (1969). Retrieval Time From Semantic Memory. Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior. Vol. 8, 240-248.
- Conrad, C. (1972). Cognitive Economy In Semantic Memory. Journal of Experimental Psychology. Vol. 92, 149-154.
- Croghan, M., (1986) "Where Did Limbo Go? The Analysis of Real Theory of Meaning." Essays in Language Literature and Area Studies, University of Bradford, No. 7, (Autumn), 1-15.
- Craik, G., and Lockhart, R. (1972). "Levels of Processing: A Framework For Memory Research." Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour. Vol. 2, 671-684.
- Daly, M. (1984). Pure Lust. Elemental Feminist Philosophy. London: The Womens Press Ltd.
- Deese, J. (1965). The Structure of Associations in Language and Thought. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Dichter, E. (1964). Handbook of Consumer Motivations. Mc Graw Hill.
- Douglas, T. (1984). The Complete Guide to Advertising. London: Papermac
- Driver, J., and Foxall, G. (1984). Advertising Policy and Practice. London: Holt Rinehart and Winston.
- Durgee, J., (1986). "How Consumer Sub-Cultures Code Reality: A Look at Some Code Types." In, Lutz (eds.), Advances in Consumer Research. Ann Arbor MI, Association for Consumer Research, Vol.13, 332-337.
- Dyer, G. (1982) Advertising as Communication. London and New York: Methuen.
- Eco, U. (1979). A Theory of Semiotics. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Edell, J., and Burke, M. (1984). "The Moderating Effect of Attitude Toward an Ad On Ad Effectiveness Under Different Processing Conditions" In, Kinnear, T. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research. Vol. 11, 644-649.

- Edell, J., and Staelin, R. (1983). "The Information Processing of Pictures in Print Advertisements." Journal of Consumer Research. Vol. 10, 45-61.
- Ehrenberg, A. (1974). "Repetitive Advertising and the Consumer." Journal of Advertising Research. Vol. 14, No. 2 (April), 25-34.
- Ekman, P., Friesen, W., and Ellsworth, P. (1972). Emotion in the Human Face: Guidelines for Research and an Integration of Findings. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Estes, W. (1978). On the Descriptive and Explanatory Functions of Theories of Memory. In, Nilsson, L. (ed.), Perspectives On Memory Research. Essays in Honour of Uppsala. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum.
- Feasely, F., and Stuart, J. (1987). "Magazine Advertising Layout and design: 1932-1982." Journal of Advertising. Vol. 16, No. 2, 20-25.
- Festinger, L. (1959). A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance. Harper and Row.
- Figes, E. (1970). Patricharchial Attitude: Women in Society. London: Faber and Faber.
- Fish, S. (1980). Is There a Text In This Class. Cambridge Mass; Harvard University Press.
- Fishbein, M. (1967). "Attitude and the Predictions of Behaviour." In, Fishbein, M. (ed.), Readings in Attitude Theory and Measurement. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 477-492.
- Fishbein, M., and Azjen, I. (1975) Belief, Attitude, Intention and behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research. Reading Mass: Addison-Wesley.
- Fishbein, M. (1980). "An Overview of the Attitude Construct." In, Hafer, G. (ed.), A Look Back, A Look Ahead. American Marketing Association, 1-19
- Fiske, J. (1987). Television Culture. London: Methuen.
- Fiske, S. (1982). "Schema-triggered Affect: Applications to Social Perception." In, Clark, M., and Fiske, S.(eds.), Affect and Cognition. Hillsdale New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 55-77.
- Francis, D. (1986). "Advertising and Structuralism The Myth of Formality." International Journal of Advertising. Vol. 5, 157-214.
- Frazer, R. (1983). "Creative Strategy: A Management Perspective." Journal of Advertising. Vol. 12, No. 4. 36-41.
- Freidian, B. (1982). The Second Stage. London: Michael Joseph
- Gadamer, H. (1975). In, Truth and Method, W Glyn-Doepel (Trans) and Barden, G., and Cuning, J., (eds.), New York: Crossroad.

Hill, R., and Mazis, M. (1986). "Measuring Emotional Responses To Advertising." In, Lutz, R. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 13, 164-169.

Hirschman, E. (1980). "Commonality and Idiosyncrasy in Popular Culture." In, Hirschman, E. and Holbrook, M. (eds.), Consumer Aesthetics and Symbolic Consumption, Ann Arbor: Association for Consumer Research.

Hirschman, E. (1980) "The Creation of Product Symbolism." In, (eds), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI, Association for Consumer Research, 327-331.

Hirschman, E. (1981). "Symbolism and Technology As Sources For The Generation of Innovations." In, (eds), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI, Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 537-541.

Hirschman, E. (1986). "The Effect Of Verbal And Pictorial Advertising Stimuli On Aesthetic, Utilitarian And Familiarity Perceptions." Journal of Advertising, Vol. 15, No.2, 27-34.

Hirschman, E. (1988). "The Ideology of Consumption: A Structural-Syntactical Analysis of Dallas." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 15, December, 344-359.

Holbrook, M., and Hirschman, E. (1982). "The Experiential Aspects Of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 9, September, 132-140.

Holbrook, M. (1980). "Some Preliminary Notes on Research in Consumer Esthetics." In, Olson, J., (ed), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI, Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 7, 104-108.

Holbrook, M. (1981) "Some Further Dimensions of Psycholinguistics, Imagery, and Consumer Response." In, (eds), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI, Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 112-117.

Holbrook, M. (1987). "The Positivistic and Interpretive Sides of Semiotic Research on Artistic Consumption: Hermes Speaks." In, Wallendorf, M., and Anderson, P. (eds), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI, Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 14, 494-497.

Holbrook, M., and Grayson, M. (1986). "The Semiology of Cinematic Consumption: Symbolic Consumer Behavior in Out of Africa." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol.13, December, 374-381.

Holbrook, M and Batra, R. (1987). "Assessing the Role of Emotions as Mediators of Consumer Responses to Advertising." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 14, 404-420.

Holbrook, M. (1988) "Consumption Symbolism and Meaning in Works of Art: A Paradigmatic Case." European Journal of Marketing, Vol. 22, No. 7, 19-36.

Holland, N. (1975). 5 Readers Reading, New Haven Conn: Yale University Press.

Holman, R. (1986). "Commentary: The Effect Of Verbal And Pictorial Advertising Stimuli On Aesthetic, Utilitarian And Familiarity Perceptions." Journal of Advertising. Vol. 15, No. 4, 66.

Holman, R. (1980). "Clothing As Communication: An Empirical Investigation." In, Olson, J., (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research. Ann Arbor MI, Association for Consumer Research, Vol 7, 372-377.

Houston, M., Childers, T., and Heckler, S. (1987). Picture-Word Consistency and the Elaborative Processing of Advertisements." Journal of Marketing Research. Vol. XXIV, November, 359-369.

Huber, J., and Holbrook, M. (1980). "The Determinants Esthetic Value and Growth." In, Olson, J. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 7, 121-126.

Hudson, L and Murray, J. (1986). "Methodological Limitations of the Hedonic Consumption Paradigm and a Possible Alternative: A Subjectivist Approach." In, Lutz, R.(ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 13, 343-348.

Hutchinson, J., and Moore, D. (1983). "Issues Surrounding The Examinatin of Delay Effect In Advertising." In, Bagozzi, R., and Tybout, A.(eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, 650-655.

Ingarden, R. (1984). The Literary Work of Art, (translated Grabowicz, G.) Evanston Ill: North Western University Press.

Iser, W. (1978). The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response. Baltimore, MD: Hopkins University Press.

Izard, C. (1977). Human Emotions. New York: Plenum Press.

Izard, C. (1982). "Comments on Emotion and Cognition: Can There be a Working Relationship?" In, Clark, M., and Fiske, S. (eds.), Affect and Cognition. Hillsdale New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 229-240.

Janis, I. and Feshbach, S. (1953). "Effects of Fear Arousing Communications." Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology. Vol. 48, 78-92.

Kapferer, J., and Laurent, G. (1985). "Consumers' Involvement Profile: New Empirical Results." In, Hirschman, E., and Holbrook, M. (eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI, Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 12, 29-295.

Kaplan, A. (1987). Feminist Criticism and Television. In, Allen, R. (ed.) Channels of Discourse, London: Methuen, 211-253.

Kassarjian, H. (1981). "Low Involvement: A Second Look" In, Monroe, K. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 8, 31-34.

Kintsch, W. (1974). The Representation of Meaning in Memory, Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Kisielius, J. (1982). "The Role of Memory in Understanding Advertising Media Effectiveness: The Effect of Imagery On Consumer Decision Making." In, Mitchell, A. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI, Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 9, 183-186.

Konner, M. (1984). The Tangled Wing: Biological Constraints on the Human Spirit, London: Penguin Books.

Kotler, P. (1991). Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, and Control, Englewood Cliffs N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Kreckel, M. (1978). "Communicative Acts: A Semiological Approach to the Empirical Analysis of Filmed Interaction." Semiotica, 24-1/2, 87-111.

Krugman, H., (1965). "The Impact of Television Advertising: Learning Without Involvement." Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 25, 349-356.

Langer, J. (1984). "Changing Demographics: Stimulus for New Product Ideas." The Journal of Consumer Marketing, Vol. 1, 35-43.

Langholz-Leymore, V. (1987). "The Structure is the Message." In, Umiker-Sebeok, J., (ed.), Marketing and Semiotics, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 319-331.

Lannon, J. (1985). "Advertising Research: New Ways Of Seeing." Admap, (October), 520-524.

Laski, M., (1959) "Sacred and Profane." The Twentieth Century, Vol. 165, No. 984, (February), 118-129.

Lasky, H., Day, E., and Crask, M. (1989). Typology of Main Message Strategies for Television Commercials. Journal of Advertising, Vol. 18, No. 1, 36-41.

Lautman, M. (1982). "Focus Groups: Theory and Method." In, Mitchell, A. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 9, 52-56.

Lavidge, R., and Steiner, G. (1962). "A Model for Productive Measurements of Advertising Effectiveness." Journal of Marketing, Vol. 25, 59-62.

Lawlor, K. (1987) "Involved Consumers And Advertising Involvement" Irish Marketing Review, Vol. 3, 37-49.

Leach, E. (1970). Levi - Strauss, London: Fontana Modern Masters.



- Leiss, W., Kline, S., and Jhally, S. (1986). Social Communication in Advertising. New York: Methuen.
- Leigh, T., Rethans, A., Whitney, T., (1987). "Role Portrayals of Women in Advertising: Cognitive Responses and Advertising Effectiveness." Journal of Advertising Research. Vol. 27, No. 5, (October-November), 54-63.
- Leymore, V. (1975). The Hidden Myth. London: Heinemann.
- Leventhal, H. (1980). Toward a Comprehensive Theory of Emotion. In, Berkowitz, L. (ed.), Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, Vol. 13, 139-207.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1978). Myth and Meaning. London: Routledge Kegan Paul.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (1983). Structured Anthropology. Chicago Ill: University of Chicago Press.
- Levy, S. (1959). "Symbols for Sale." Harvard Business Review. Vol. 37, (July/August), 117-124.
- Levy, S. (1963). "Symbolism and Life Style." American Marketing Association Proceedings, 140-150.
- Levy, S. (1981). "Interpreting Consumer Mythology: A Structural Approach to Consumer Behavior." Journal of Marketing. Vol. 45, (Summer), 49-61.
- Levy, S. (1986). "Meanings in Advertising Stimuli." In, Sentis, K. and Olson, J., (eds), Advertising and Consumer Psychology. New York: Praeger, 214-225.
- Liu, S. (1986). "Picture-Image Memory of TV Advertising in Low-Involvement Situations: A Psychophysiological Analysis." In, Leigh, J., and Martin, C. (eds.), Current Issues and Research in Advertising. Ann Arbor MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 9, 27-59.
- Lundstrom, W., and Schiglimpaglia, D. (1977). Sex Role Portrayals In Advertising." Journal of Marketing. Vol. 41, No. 3, 72-79.
- Lutz, R. (1975). "Changing Brand Attitudes Through Modification of Cognitive Structure." Journal of Consumer Research. Vol. 4, 49-59.
- Lutz, K., and Lutz, R. (1977). "The Effectis of Interactive Imagery on Learning: Application to Advertising." Journal of Applied Psychology. Vol. 62, No. 4, 493-498.
- Lutz, R., MacKenzie, S., and Belch, G. (1983). "Attitude Toward the Ad As a Mediator of Advertising Effectiveness: Determinants and Consequences." In, Bagozzi, R., and Tybout, A. (eds), Advances in Consumer Research. Ann Arbor, MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 10, 532-539.

- Mandler, G. (1982). "The Structure of Value: Accounting for Taste." In, Clark, M., and Fiske, S.(eds.), Affect and Cognition, Hillsdale New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 3-36.
- MacKenzie, S., Lutz, R., and Belch., G. (1986). "The Role of Attitude Toward the Ad as a Mediator of Advertising Effectiveness: A Test of Competing Explanations." Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XXIII, May, 130-143.
- MacKenzie, S., and Lutz R. (1989). "An Empirical Examination of the Structural Antecedents of Attitude Toward the Ad in an Advertising Pretesting Context." Journal of Marketing, Vol. 53, April, 48-65.
- McArthur, C. (1984). TV commercials Moving Statues and Old Movies. In Masterman, L (ed.), Television Mythologies, Stars, Shows and Signs, London: Comedia, 63-66.
- McCracken, G. (1987). "Advertising: Meaning or Information." In, Wallendorf, M., and Anderson, P. (eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor, MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 14, 121-124.
- MacInnis, D. (1987). "Constructs and Measures of Individual Differences in Imagery Processing: A Review." In, Wallendorf, M., and Anderson, P. (eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI, Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 14, 88-92.
- Madden, T., Allen, C., and Twible, J. (1988). "Attitude Toward the Ad: An Assessment of Diverse Measurement Indices under Different Processing "Sets"." Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XXV (August), 242-252.
- Madden, T., and Wienberger, M. (1984). Humor in Advertising: A Practioner View." Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 24, No. 4, (August/September), 23-29.
- Mayer, M. (1958). Madison Avenue U.S.A., New York: Penguin
- Mehrabian, A., and Russell, J. (1974). An Approach to Environmental Psychology, Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Meehan, D. (1983). Ladies of the Evening: Women Characters of Prime Time Television, Methuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press.
- Menasco, M. (1982). "Threats and Promises In Advertising Appeals." In, Mitchell, A., (ed) Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 9, 221-227.
- Merton, R., Fiske, M., and Kendall, P. (1956). The Focused Interview, Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Meyer, D. (1970). On the Representation and Retrieval of Stored Semantic Information. Cognitive Psychology, Vol. 1, 242-292.

- Mewborn, C., and Roberts, R. (1979). "Effects of Threatening and Reassuring Components of Fear Appeals on Physiological and Verbal Measures of Emotion and Attitudes." Journal of Experimental and Social Psychology, Vol. 15, No. 3, 242-253
- Mick, D. (1986). "Consumer Research and Semiotics: Exploring the Morphology of Signs, Symbols, and Significance." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 13, September, 196-312.
- Miller, G. (1973). Communication, Language and Meaning: Psychological Perspectives, New York: Basic Books, Harper.
- Mitchell, A. (1980). "The Use of An Information Processing Approach To Understand Advertising Effects" In, Olson, J. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 7, 171-177.
- Mitchell, A., and Olson, J. (1981). "Are Product Attribute Beliefs the Only Mediator of Advertising Effects on Brand Attitude?" Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XVIII, (August), 318-332.
- Mitchell, A. (1986). "The Effect Of Verbal And Visual Components Of Advertisements On Brand Attitudes And Attitude Toward The Advertisement." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 13, June, 12-24.
- Moore, D., and Hutchinson, J. (1983). "The Effects of Ad Effect on Advertising Effectiveness." In, Bagozzi, R., and Tybout, A. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 10, 526-530.
- Morgan, D. (1988). Focus Groups As Qualitative Research, California: Sage Publications.
- Morris, C. (1946). Signs, Language and Behavior, New York: George Braziller.
- Mulvey, L. (1975). "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Screen 16: No 3, 6-18.
- Myers, J. (1979). "Levels Of Processing, Perceptual Bias, and Comparison Advertising." In, Olson, J., (ed) Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol 7, 95-98.
- Myers, K. (1987). Understains. The Sense of Seduction of Advertising, London: Comedia.
- Myers-Levy, J. (1988). "The Influence of Sex Roles On Judgement." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 14, (March), 522-530.
- Newman, L., and Dolich, I. (1979). "Examination of Ego-Involvement as a Modifier of Attitude Change Caused from Product Testing." In, Wilkie, W. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol 6, 180-183.



- Norman, D. (1978). Perception, Memory and Mental Processes In. Nilsson, L., Perspectives On Memory Research Essays in Honour Of Uppsala. Hillsdale New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum.
- Ogden, C., and Richards, I. (1983). The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism, London: Ark.
- Ogilivy, D. (1963). Confessions of an Advertising Man. London: Longman
- Olney T., Holbrook, M., and Batra, R. (1991) "Consumer Responses to Advertising: The Effects of Ad Content, Emotions, and Attitude Toward the Ad on Viewing Time." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 17, March 440-453.
- Olson, J. (1980). "Encoding Processes: Levels of Processing and Existing Knowledge Structures." In, Olson, J., (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research. Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 7, 154-160.
- Olson, J. (1986). "Meaning Analysis in Advertising Research." In, Sentis, K., and Olson, J. (eds.), Advertising and Consumer Psychology. New York: Praeger, 275-283.
- Olson, J., and Reynolds, T., (1983) "Understanding consumers; Cognitive Structures: Implications for Advertising Strategy." In, Percy, L., and Woodside, A. (eds.), Advertising and Consumer Psychology. Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 77-92.
- Osgood, C., Suci, G., Tannenbau, P. (1975). The Measurement of Meaning. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- O'Shaughnessy, J., and Holbrook, M. (1988). "Understanding Consumer Behaviour: The Linguistic Turn in Marketing Research." Journal of the Market Research Society, Vol. 30, No. 2, 197-223.
- Palda, K. (1966). The Hypothesis of a Hierarchy of Effects: A Partial Evaluation." Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 3, No. 1, 13-24.
- Packard, V. (1970). The Hidden Persuaders. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Park, C., and Young, S. (1983) "Types and Levels of Involvement and Brand attitude Formation." Bagozzi, R., and Tybout, A. (eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 10, 320-324.
- Park, C., and Young, S. (1986). "Consumer Response to Television Commercials: The Impact of Involvement and Background Music on Brand Attitude Formation." Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. XX111, (February), 11-24.
- Pavio, A. (1965). "Abstractness, Imagery and Meaningfulness in Paired-Associate Learning." Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior, Vol. 4, 32-38.

- Pavio, A. (1971). Imagery and Verbal Processes. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Pavlov, I. (1927). Conditioned Reflexes (translated by Anrep, G.) London: Oxford University Press, (1972).
- Payne, M. (1976). "Preparing for Group Interviews." In, Andersen, B., (ed), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 3, 434-436.
- Peirce, C. (1931). Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce ed. Hartshorne, C., and Weiss, P. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, Vols. 1-8.
- Percy, L. (1981). "Psycholinguistic Guideline For Advertising Copy." In, Monroe, K.(ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI, Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 8, 107-111.
- Percy, L and Rossiter, J. (1983) "Effects of Picture Size and Color on Brand Attitude Responses in Print Advertising." In, Bogozzi, R., and Tybout, A. (eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 10, 17-20.
- Percy, L., and Rossiter, J. (1983). Mediating Effects of Visual and Verbal Elements in Print Advertising upon Belief, Attitude, and Intention Responses In, Percy, L., and Woodside, A. Advertising and Consumer Psychology, Massachusetts: Lexington, 171-197.
- Peterson, R., Hoyer, W., and Wilson, W. (1986). The Role of Affect in Consumer Behavior: Emerging Theories and Applications, Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath.
- Petty, R., and Cacioppo, J. (1984). "The Elaboration Likelihood Model Of Persuasion." In, Kinnear, T. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 11, 673-675.
- Petty, R., and Cacioppo, J. (1984). "Source Factors And The Elaboration Likelihood Model Of Persuasion." In, Kinnear, T., (ed.) Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 11, 668-672.
- Petty, R., Cacioppo, J., and Schumann, D. (1983). "Central and Peripheral Routes To Advertising Effectiveness: The Moderating Role of Involvement." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 10, (September), 135-146.
- Plutchik, R. (1980). "A General Psychoevolutionary Theory of Emotion." In, Plutchik, R., and Kellerman, H. Emotion: Theory, Research, and Experience, Volume 1, New York: Academic Press, 3-33.
- Propp, V. (1968). The Morphology of Folktale, Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Puto, C., and Wells, W. (1984). "Informational and Transformational Advertising: The Differential Effects of Time." In, Kinnear, T. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 11, 638-643.

Radcliff Richards, J. (1980) The Sceptical Feminist A Philosophical Inquiry, London: Routledge Kegan Paul.

Ray, M. (1973). "Marketing Communication and The Hierarchy of Effects." In, Clarke, P. (ed.), New Models for Mass Communication Research, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Vol. 2, 147-176.

Ray, M. (1979). "Involvement and Other Variables Mediating Communication Effects as Opposed to Explaining All Consumer Behavior." In, Wilkie, W. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 6, 197-199.

Ray, M., and Wilkie, W. (1970). "Fear: The Potential of an Appeal Neglected by Marketing." Journal of Marketing, Vol. 34, 54-62.

Reynolds, T., and Gutman, J. (1984). "Advertising Is Image Management." Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 24, No.1, (February-March), 27-37.

Reeves, R. (1961). Reality in Advertising, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Ries, A., and Trout, J. (1981). Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind, New York: Warner Books.

Rokeach, M. (1975). The Nature of Human Values, New York: Free Press.

Rombough, H. (1989). "Electra Glide in Blue." Creative Review, (February) 15-18.

Rosenstein, A. (1976). "Quantitative-Yes, Quantitative-applications For The Focus Group, Or What Do You Mean You've Never Herd of Multivariate Focus Groups?" Marketing News, 9, 8.

Rossiter, J. (1976). "Visual and Verbal Memory in Children's Product Information Utilization." In, Anderson, B. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 3, 523-527.

Rossiter, J. (1981). "Visual Imagery: Applications to Advertising." In, Monroe, K. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 8, 101-106.

Rossiter, J. (1984). "Processing Advertising Information." In, Kinnear, T. (ed) Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 11, 26-28.

Rossiter, J., and Percy, L. (1980). "Attitude Change Through Visual Imagery in Advertising." Journal of Advertising, Vol. 9, No. 2, 10-16.

Rossiter, J., and Percy, L., (1987). Advertising and Promotion Management, Singapore: Mc Graw-Hill.

- Rothschild, M. (1984). "Perspectives On Involvement: Current Problems and Future Directions." In, Kinnear, T., (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 11, 216-217.
- Runyon, K. (1984). Advertising, Oxford, Merrill.
- De Saussure, F. (1916). Cours de Linguistique Generale; Course in General Linguistics (translated by Harris, R., London: Duckworth (1983).
- Sapir, E. (1949). "Language." In, Mandelbaum, D (ed.), Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality, Selected Essays, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1-44.
- Sanders, C. (1987). "Consuming As Social Action: Ethnographic Methods In Consumer Research." In, Wallendorf, M., and Anderson, P. (eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor, MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 14, 71-75.
- Scruell, T. (1981). "Person Memory; Some Tests of Associative Storage and Retrieval Models." Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory, Vol. 7, 44-463.
- Sebeok, T. (1991). A Sign is Just a Sign, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Sentis, K., and Markus, H. (1986). Brand Personality and Self. In, Sentis and Olson, (eds.) Advertising and Consumer Psychology, New York: Praeger, 134-148.
- Shavitt, S., and Brock, T. (1986). "Self-Relevant Responses In Commercial Persuasion: Field and Experimental Tests." In, Sentis, K., and Olson, J. (eds.), Advertising and Consumer Psychology, New York: Praeger, 149-171.
- Semenik, R., and Young, C. (1980). "Correlates of Season Ticket Subscription Behavior." In, Olson, J. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 7, 114-118.
- Sexton, D., and Braithney, K. (1980). "A Behavioral Segmentation of the Arts Market." In, Olson, J. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 7, 119-120.
- Sherry, J. (1986). "The Cultural Perspective in Consumer Research." In, Lutz, R., (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 13, 573-575.
- Shimp, T. (1981). "Attitude Toward the Ad as a Mediator of Consumer Brand Choice." Journal of Advertising, Vol. 10, 9-15.
- Simon, D. (1971). The Management of Advertising, Endlewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Simon, H. (1982) "Affect and Cognition." In, Clark, M., and Fiske, S. (eds.), Affect and Cognition, Hillsdale New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 333-342.

Skinner, B. (1953). Science and Human Behaviour. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Smith, E. (1978). "Theories of Semantic Memory." In, Estes, W. (ed.), Handbook of Learning and Cognitive Processes Linguistic Functions in Cognitive Theory. Vol. 6, Hillsdale New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Smith, E., Shoben, E., and Rips, L. (1974). Structure and Process in Semantic Memory: A Featural Model for Semantic Decisions. Psychological Review. Vol. 81, 214-241.

Solomon, M. (1983). "The Role of Products As Social Stimuli: A Symbolic Interactionism Perspective." Journal of Consumer Research. Vol. 10, (December), 391-429.

Spence, H., and Moinpour, R. (1972). "Fear Appeals in Marketing A Social Perspective." Journal of Marketing. Vol. 36 (July), 39-43.

Stern, B. (1988). "Medieval Allegory: Roots of Advertising Strategy for the Mass Market." Journal of Marketing. Vol. 52, 84-94.

Stern, B. (1988). "How Does an Ad Mean? Language in Services Advertising." Journal of Advertising. Vol. 17, No 2, 3-14.

Stern, B. (1990). "Advertising Form, Content and Values: Lyric, Ballad and Epic." In, Leigh, J., and Martin, C. (eds.), Current Issues in Advertising, Vol. 13, 79-103.

Stern, B. (1989) "Literary Criticism and Consumer Research: Overview and Illustrative Analysis." Journal of Consumer Research. Vol. 16, December, 322-334.

Stern, B. (1989). "Detailed Image Analysis: Poetic Methodology for Advertising Research." International Journal of Advertising. Vol. 10, No.2, 161-180.

Strenthal, B., and Craig, C. (1973). "Humour in Advertising." Journal of Marketing. Vol. 37, (October), 12-18.

Stout, P., and Leckenby, J. (1986). "Measuring Emotional Response to Advertising." Journal of Advertising. Vol 15, No 4, 35-42.

Stuteville, J. (1970). "Psychic Defences Against High Fear Appeals: A Key Marketing Variable." Journal of Marketing. Vol. 34 (April), 39-45.

Sykes, W. (1990). "Taking Stock: Issues from the Literature on Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research." Journal of the Market Research Society. Vol. 33, No. 1, 3-17.

Tantam, D., (1986). "A Semiotic Model of Nonverbal Communication." Semiotica. 58-1/2, 41-57.



- Toy, D. (1982). "Monitoring Communication Effects: A Cognitive Structure/Cognitive Response Approach." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 9 June, 66-76.
- Tsal Y. (1985). "Effects of Verbal and Visual Information on Brand Attitudes In, Hirschman, E., and Holbrook, M., (eds), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association of Consumer Research, Vol. 12, 265-267.
- Tulving, E. (1978). Memory Research: What Kind of Progress? In, Nilsson, L., Perspectives On Memory Research. Essays in Honour of Uppsala. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum.
- Turvey, M. (1978). Visul Processing and Short-Term Memory. In, Estes, W. (ed.), Handbook of Learning and Cognitive Processes Human Information Processing, Hillsdale New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum.
- Vaughn, R. (1980). "How Advertising Works: A Planning Model." Journal of Advertising Research, Vol. 20, No. 5, (October), 27-33.
- Vaughn, R. (1986). "How Advertising Works; A Planning Model Revisited." Journal of Advertising Research, (February/March), 57-66.
- Vestgaard, T., and Schroder, K., (1985). Language of Advertising, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wells, W. (1974). Group Interviewing, In, Ferber, R. (ed) Handbook of Marketing Research, Mc Graw Hill Inc.
- Wells, W. (1986). "Three Useful Ideas." In, Lutz, R. (ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, Ann Arbor MI: Association for Consumer Research, Vol. 13, 9-11.
- Whipple, T., and Courtney, A. (1980). "How To Portray Women in TV Commercials." Journal of Advertising Research, Vol.29, No. 2, 53-59.
- Whorf, G., (1963). Language Thought and Reality, Cambridge Mass: MIT Press.
- Williamson, J. (1978). Decoding Advertisements Ideology and Meaning in Advertising, London: Marion Boyars.
- Wright, P. (1973). "Analyzing Media Effects On Advertising Responses." Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 38, 192-205.
- Wright, P., (1980). "Messaage-Evoked Thoughts: Persuasion Reseaarch Using Thought Verbalizations." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 7, September 151-175.
- Zajonc, R. (1980). "Feeling and Thinking: Preferences Need No Inferences." American Psychologist, Vol. 35, 151-175.
- Zajonc, R., and Markus, H. (1982). "Affective and Cognitive factors in Preferences." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 9, September,123-131.

Zakia, R. (1986). "Adverteasement." Semiotica 59, 1/2, 1-11.

Zeitlin, D., and Westwood, R. (1986). "Measuring Emotional Response." Journal of Advertising Research. (Oct/Nov), 34-44.

**Appendix 1**

**Socio-Demographic Questionnaire**

**General Information**

1. Please indicate your marital status
- |          |     |
|----------|-----|
| Single   | [ ] |
| Married  | [ ] |
| Widow/er | [ ] |
| Other    | [ ] |
2. How many children have you in the following age groups?
- |         |     |
|---------|-----|
| 0 - 5   | [ ] |
| 6 -11   | [ ] |
| 12-17   | [ ] |
| Over 18 | [ ] |
3. Do you work outside the home?
- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| Yes | [ ] |
| No  | [ ] |
4. Can you please indicate your age category.
- |                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Under 30 years | [ ] |
| 30 - 45 years  | [ ] |
| 45 - 60 years  | [ ] |
| Over 60 years  | [ ] |
6. Please indicate which of the following you have achieved with respect to education.
- |             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| Primary     | [ ] |
| Secondary   | [ ] |
| Third level | [ ] |



Appendix 2

Attitude To The Ad Questionnaire

1. Do you use the brand advertised?

Yes [ ]                      No [ ]

2. Please rate the following according to your overall opinion of this ad (+3 = extremely favourable, 0 = neutral, -3 = extremely unfavourable)

|                       |    |    |   |                      |    |    |
|-----------------------|----|----|---|----------------------|----|----|
| +3                    | +2 | +1 | 0 | -1                   | -2 | -3 |
| <u>Favourable</u>     |    |    |   | <u>Unfavourable</u>  |    |    |
| <u>Like</u>           |    |    |   | <u>Dislike</u>       |    |    |
| <u>Good</u>           |    |    |   | <u>Bad</u>           |    |    |
| <u>Interesting</u>    |    |    |   | <u>Uninteresting</u> |    |    |
| <u>Not irritating</u> |    |    |   | <u>Irritating</u>    |    |    |
| <u>Original</u>       |    |    |   | <u>Unoriginal</u>    |    |    |
| <u>Sensitive</u>      |    |    |   | <u>Insensitive</u>   |    |    |
| <u>Gentle</u>         |    |    |   | <u>Rough</u>         |    |    |
| <u>Active</u>         |    |    |   | <u>Passive</u>       |    |    |
| <u>Strong</u>         |    |    |   | <u>Weak</u>          |    |    |

3. Please rate the following according to your overall opinion of this brand, even if you have never used the brand.

+3   +2   +1   0   -1   -2   -3

Good \_\_\_\_\_ Bad

Like \_\_\_\_\_ Dislike

4. Please rate the following according to whether or not you intend to purchase this brand in the near future.

+3   +2   +1   0   -1   -2   -3

Likely \_\_\_\_\_ Unlikely

5. I would like you to tell me as fully as possible what thoughts went through your mind while you were looking at the ad. I am only interested in your reactions to the ad. Do not concern yourself with spellings or punctuation, just write about the thoughts you experienced while watching the ad.

6. Now I would like you to write as fully as possible the feelings you experienced while watching the ad. Again do not concern yourself with spellings or punctuation, just write about your feelings to the ad.

7. In your personal opinion what, if anything, makes this ad persuasive?

## **Appendix 3**

### **Pilot Topics**

The questions at the start of each topic were used in developing the topic format.

#### **General advertising theory**

What do you think of the ad?

What do you think it wants you to do?

How would you react to it?

Are you conscious of your opinions of advertising every time you look at an ad?

How would you judge a good ad?

Are you ever persuaded to change your attitude because of an ad?

### **Topic One**

The first topic in the pilots concentrated on general attitudes to advertising and attitudes to the specific ad being shown. The aim here was twofold: first, to provide a warm up for the respondents, to ease them into the discussion at their own pace; second, to see if participants had a framework which they used to evaluate all advertisements. Repondents were asked what they thought about advertisements in general. Once everyone in the group had given their views and there was full interaction, participants were asked if they judged/evaluated ads, and if so was there a particular way in which they judged ads. Finally they were asked what they thought of the specific ad.

#### **Verbal**

When you think about washing what do you think of?

When you think about Surf what do you think of?

### **Topic Two**

This was the semantic topic. A schematic representation of the meaning of washing was sought which could be compared in analysis with the descriptions that participants had of Surf. The women were asked to think about washing, and although it was a very familiar activity to them, they were asked to elaborate as fully as they could on their own, views and experiences of washing. After full discussion on washing they were then asked to think about Surf and to talk about their experience and the thoughts that came to mind about Surf.

### **Realistic and Authentic Emotional Portrayal**

How realistic is the situation depicted in this ad?

To what extent can group members relate to the experience or situation depicted in this ad?

Did this ad remind subjects of any experiences or feelings they may have had in their own lives?

### **Topic Five**

This topic tried to explore the information and transformation qualities of the ad. This topic wanted to investigate the precedence of attribute based advertising versus emotional portrayal. The women were asked to discuss their desire to have an experience like the one in the ad and the experience they normally have when they use the product. They were also asked to discuss as fully as possible the benefits of the product that were being promoted and how useful the benefits were.

### **Brand Image Consistency**

Is the image portrayed in the ad consistent with subject's prior image of this brand?

To whom would this ad appeal to most?

Is this ad similar in style and format to other ads which may have been seen for competing brands in the same product category?

What sort of image does this ad create for the advertised brand?

Does this ad succeed in differentiating this brand from other similar brands?

### **Topic Six**

The pragmatic context of the ad was sought. The aim in this topic was to see how the ad fitted into consumers existing perceptions of the advertiser, to see if there was congruency of conflict between the prior image and the image projected in the ad. Participants were asked to think of the image that they have of the particular brand, and the experiences that led them to hold that image and to discuss the ad seen in relation to that image.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Main Study Topics**

The questions at the start of each topic were used in developing the topic format.

Do you use that brand?

What brand of--- do you use?

What do you think of the ad?

What attracted your attention in the ad?

What is the message in the ad?

When you think of that ad what do you think of?

Is the ad persuasive?

Did you like the ad?

Would the ad run through your mind after you had seen it?

### **Topic One**

The first topic for all groups was attitudes and thoughts to the ad.

The aim here was to encourage respondents to elaborate as fully as possible on their thoughts to the ad. Respondents were encouraged to interact with each other according to their own experiences and to what they read from the ad in comparison to other people. The discussion that resulted from topic one was to form the basis of structural, and attitude analysis. Signs mentioned were probed for significance and relevance to the ad. This topic was introduced by a question such as: I am really interested in finding out what you think of that ad, what thoughts come to your mind when you think about the ad? This was followed by trying to discover what feelings were experienced. Where discussion appeared to be coming to a close participants were probed in relation to what attracted attention, or made them think in such a way.

### **Semantics**

When you hear the word washing what do you think of?

When you hear the word washing powder what do you think of?

When you hear the word Surf what do you think of?

Does that ad tell you about the product?

## **Topic Two**

The semantic topic focused on association, what the women connected with the product activity and the brand being advertised. The women were asked to discuss the thoughts that came to their mind when they thought of washing. This was followed by asking them to continue the discussion in relation to thoughts about the word surf. If the women talked about the product and what the ad told them of the product either in informational or emotional terms, the semantic discussion concluded at that point. However, if there was no discussion on the product, the women were asked what the ad told them about the product.

## **Pragmatics**

Would you prefer that ad or other washing powder ads?

Were the situations in the ad typical product use situations?

Could you see yourself in that ad?

Who do you think that ad appeals to?

Does the ad relate to your image of---

How did the ad make you feel?

Do you feel like that when you use the product?

## **Topic Three**

The objective of the pragmatic discussion was to get the women to talk about the ad shown in comparison to all other ads in the product category. The topic was introduced by the statement: I am really interested in listening to your opinions of that ad in relation to all other washing powder ads. After full discussion, the next area of pragmatics was introduced this was concerned with the ability to associate with the situations and people in the ad. This in turn was followed by trying to determine how the ad shown matched the existing image of the product that the women held.

## **Visual**

What pictures come to mind when you think of that ad?

What did you think about when you saw that ad?

Did you like the ideas used?

What sort of mood was in the ad?

Did the movement in the ad tell you anything about the product?

Is there anything else that you would like to say about the ad

## **Topic Four**

The visual topic wanted to explore what people thought about when they saw the ad. What was sought was determination of the effect and indirect effect of the pictures on the participants. The aim of the discussion was to get the women to disclose their associations with objects or events that had an effect on them which was similar to the effect of the ad. Participants were asked to talk about the pictures that came to their mind when they thought of the ad. They were probed for individual experiences and relevant context that they associated with the visuals. Later in the discussion they were asked to talk about the sort of mood and movement in the ad.

Appendix 5

Coded Cognitive/Affective Response Categories on Thoughts and Feelings in the Ad

| Name  | Code | Description   |
|---|------|---|
| Support arguments                                   | Sa   | Reasoned/simple affirmations or arguments   |
| Counter arguments                                   | Ca   | Reasoned/simple disaffirmations   |
| Execution discounting                               | Ed   | Challenges to execution credibility, other execution derogation   |
| Execution bolstering                                | Eb   | Positive references to elements, style, realism, and so forth   |
| Feelings of surgency, elation, vigor and activation | Seva | Upbeat feelings from music<br>Humor, other elements   |
| Feelings of deactivation                            | Dac  | Feelings of advertisement being soothing, relaxing, pleasant  |
| Feelings of social affection                        | Saff | Ad felt to be warm touching and so forth  |
| Distractor thoughts                                 | Dis  | Advertisement evoked thoughts irrelevant to message (for example, of surprise, curiosity about ad elements, of other ads) |
| Other   |      | Advertisement content playback, subsequently generated thoughts   |



Negative Feeling      Neg F      Angry, Annoyed, defiant, fear,  
irritated

Negative Deactivation      Dec Neg      Bored, depressed, lonely sad.

Text for thought question Kathleen and Clodagh group and the  
corresponding coding for the Chanel and Birds Eye ads.

Kathleen: "Rich woman living off men. Has probably never had to  
buy perfume for herself. Using feminine voiles and blatant sexiness  
to get places. Probably paid for petrol with her smile"

Codes: ED (4) Distr

Kathleen: "Love it. A clever ad, very relevant to adults and kids and  
very appealing. a friendly ad, ordinary kids on bikes making believe  
they are cowboys. Nice mum allows pals home for tea."

Codes Eb Seva Dac

Clodagh: "the Style"

Clodagh: "Nice dinner"

Text for feeling question, same woman, same ads, Kathleen and  
Clodagh groups

Kathleen: "Slightly envious. Part of me would like that lifestyle but  
most of me says no. That to use the fact of her beauty and sex appeal  
to gain material goods is abusive."

Codes: Neg fel distr, ed eb

"Good. It could be me cooking burgers for my kids and pals.  
Admiration for clever insight into kids play."

Codes Seva, EB

Clodagh: "Like I wanted some burger"

Clodagh: "Out of date"

Appendix 6

Textual Examples of Each of the Coded Categories

| Text Example  | Support Arguments   |
|---------------|---|
| Group Susan:  | It (Bank of Ireland) can make you happy.<br>Good for home improvements loans.<br>Coffee revives you I agree (Maxwell House).  |
| Text Example  | Counter Arguments   |
| Group Deidre: | How unlikely it would be to get all those loans so easily (Bank of Ireland).  |
| Kathleen:     | Banks always promise to sort out your money problems even though you can't draw blood from a stone.<br>I dislike frozen foods, all my thoughts were about that (Birds Eye).                                   |
| Clodagh       | Frozen burgers are plastic and artificial<br>I wouldn't touch it, it is biological  |
| Text Example  | Execution Bolstering  |
| Group Noreen  | Great use of word association (Maxwell House).<br>Amusing use of adult western theme (Birds Eye).<br>Love Nina Simone's song "My Baby Just Cares For Me" (Chanel).  |
| Text Example  | Execution Discounting   |
| Group Anne:   | Odd way to advertise perfume, I didn't like it (Chanel).<br>Rubbish I hate that fire, the driver was a fool<br>Too noisy and fast (Peugeot).<br>Unrealistic, irrelevant, could not grasp the intended meaning |
| Kathleen      | A bit unreal. slightly sinister as if evil was afoot (Peugeot).   |
| Text Example  | Surgency, Elation, Vigor and Activation   |
| Group Lily:   | Very fresh looking and lively, makes you feel good (Birds Eye)<br>Great, Happy.   |

Glamorous and extravagant (Chanel).  
Very good, light hearted and happy (Maxwell House).

**Text Example**  
Group Nancy:

**Deactivation**

Music is nice and relaxing (Peugeot).  
Taking a break from work and relaxing  
Pleased by the theme (Maxwell House).  
OK, very relaxing.  
Safe (Peugeot).

**Text Example**  
Group: Mary Lou

**Social Affection**

Drinking coffee and socialising with friends  
go together.  
Being with friends, chatting and having a  
break.  
Shows great friendliness (Maxwell House).

Clodagh

**Text Example**  
Group Lily:

**Distractor**

Boys on bikes, reminds me of the film ET.  
I thought of picnics and races (Birds Eye).  
Thinking of holidays in the sun (Bank of Ireland).  
Associate that music with Madrid  
Music made me think of good nights that  
I had (Peugeot).

Kathleen

**Text Example**  
Group

**Negative Feelings**

Annoyed that it showed women in a bad  
light (Chanel).  
Unadventurous (Surf).  
It made me feel sceptical.  
Annoyed at ad manipulating people into  
thinking if you have got that thing, you will  
be like the people in the ad (Bank of Ireland).

Ann  
Deidre

**Text Example**  
Group Kathleen:

**Negative Deactivation**

Uninterested it was boring.  
Frumpy and Boring (Chanel)  
Depressed (Bank of Ireland)  
Nothing

## Appendix 7

### Example of Structural Text.

#### Example of Structural Text: Bank of Ireland

Good ad

Good

Very good

But it is a selling ad

You would think they were going to help you

It makes you feel apprehensive about using a bank at first but then when you get in there it will be ok

You are in for a big let down when you go in

You get deflated though as soon as you get up to that counter the first thing is "Have you got an account here" "Sorry you will have to see the manager"

They give the impression there that they are friendly and great but There is nothing there about getting an account that ad is nothing about depositing money

You think that they are actually giving you money you're not putting money in but it is not like that

They won't change your cheque and they won't lend you money

You think they will help you if you need help

But it is not like that

That ad is a very misleading ad

#### Example of Structural Text: Chanel

I liked it, I also found it quite irritating

I found it very confusing, it jumped

I never saw the ad before

I cannot remember seeing it before but I must have because the music at the start registered something, I can't remember it

It is confusing because the beginning of the ad doesn't relate to where she ends up

I wouldn't have any difficulty with that. I cannot understand what he is saying

But he is not saying anything, you mean the song my baby don't care for clothes

No I thought my baby don't care for me

So did I

No my baby don't care for everything like cars and races but my  
baby does care for me  
She has her bloody car, clothes and races and he does care  
I must say I didn't find the wording confusing because I know the  
song  
You knew the song, you use Chanel  
Ah shut up, what I found a little bit irritating about it was for all get  
up and go, her delightful clothes and delightful looks and obviously  
beautiful car, etc, etc, all she was doing was going to meet a bloody  
man, that is what I found irritating  
She was living off the men  
The erotic symbol at the end of the ad share the fantasy  
There was no presumption that she was living off men, I wouldn't  
have picked that up  
Oh absolutely using men. It was horrible roles for both male and  
female in it. I didn't like the way they depicted them. Oh I'd have  
thought she was saying goodbye to her daddy  
Oh no, really  
I would think it is quite sexist  
I agree with you  
She has decided to bleed every man she comes in touch with she  
doesn't even pay for petrol, she just smiles and goes on. I don't know  
what else happens. But she goes around smiling at men and getting  
away with a fabulous car  
No I must say I didn't get that, I thought she was pretty independent  
type of woman doing her own thing but what really disappointed me  
was that at the end of it all she was going to do was meet a man  
That is what it was about  
That is what she was thinking meeting a man in the desert who flew  
there in his own plane, another moneyed one.

#### **Example of Verbal Text: Coffee Associations**

I think of the aroma, the smell,  
The smell out of Bewleys  
No for me it is lunch  
I immediately think of relaxing  
Me too having a break  
Yea, a nice hot mug of coffee, a break

### **Example of Verbal Text: Maxwell House Associations**

Good coffee, I feel like relaxing  
Quality coffee when you really need a break  
I think of friends and sitting around and drinking coffee  
It is a lovely mild coffee  
It is perfect

### **Example of Pragmatic Text: Surf**

No, I wouldn't have an image of Surf  
Actually I always thought of Surf as a real old granny that ad livens  
it up  
I was going to say that yea more modern like our generation  
I remember my mother using it when it was cheaper than all the  
rest that sort of thing  
I think it is a real old fashioned powder that has been around for  
years  
I don't think they push the product enough, Persil push push and  
push.

### **Example of Visual Text: Peugeot**

They certainly catch your attention at the beginning  
And the silence, and the silence at the beginning  
An it makes you think what could it be because it is not obvious and  
I think that is good  
I think the pictures take your breath away that was unbelievable  
I would think of the fire exploding and the crack of the thing  
breaking  
It is the destruction that the fire does  
The pictures were fabulous but the fire  
It was spectacular and well done even beautiful to look at but I still  
found it threatening the huge fire could be getting out of control

## Appendix 8

### Groups and Socio Demographic Breakdown.

|    |          |             |        |       |      |
|----|----------|-------------|--------|-------|------|
| K  | Kathleen | Rathfarnham | Worked | 45-60 | ABC1 |
| B  | Brenda   | Kevin St    | Worked | 30-44 | C2DE |
| N  | Nancy    | Killiney    | H/W    | 45-60 | ABC1 |
| L  | Lily     | Stillorgan  | H/W    | 60+   | C2DE |
| P  | Philly   | Rathfarnham | Worked | 25-30 | ABC1 |
| S  | Susan    | Bray        | Worked | 25-30 | C2DE |
| D  | Deidre   | Kimage      | Worked | 30-44 | ABC1 |
| F  | Freda    | Fassarro    | Worked | 30-44 | C2DE |
| ML | Mary Lou | Ballinteer  | H/W    | 30-44 | ABC1 |
| R  | Rosaleen | Nielston    | H/W    | 30-44 | C2DE |
| A  | Ann      | Glenageary  | H/W    | 30-44 | ABC1 |
| SH | Sharon   | Sherif      | H/W    | 30-44 | C2DE |
| V  | Valerie  | Dundrum     | Worked | 30-44 | ABC1 |
| M  | Marion   | Glasnevin   | Worked | 30-44 | C2DE |
| C  | Clare    | Eniskerry   | H/W    | 30-44 | ABC1 |
| MN | Maureen  | Tallaght    | H/W    | 30-44 | C2DE |
| NN | Norreen  | Coolock     | Worked | 30-44 | ABC1 |
| KN | Karen    | Klear       | Worked | 30-44 | C2DE |
| T  | Teresa   | Bray        | H/W    | 30-44 | ABC1 |
| CL | Clodagh  | Coolock     | H/W    | 30-44 | C2DE |

H/W is housewives

Age Categories are averaged for the groups. Some groups would have had a mix of ages which were outside the group category. For example, two women in the Kathleen group were under 45, one women in the Mary Lou group was over 45 Deidre, Valerie, Claire, Maureen and Clodagh all had at least one person over the age band.

## **Appendix 9**

### **Advertisements**

#### **Surf**

##### **Voice Over**

A new washing powder arrives in Ireland Surf automatic, delivering a cleaner fresher wash. It has the power to fight the toughest stains from grease to grass to ketchup to cocoa and for the first time ever in a washing powder new Surf combats those clinging everyday odours, because new Surf is the only one with a special deodorizers action that gets your clothes really fresh, and biological power to get your wash really clean that is the spectacular power of Surf Automatic. Cleaness you can see, a billowing freshness you can smell with new Surf. Catch the wave with new Surf Automatic.

#### **Birds Eye Beef Burger**

They came looking for Pete  
They had been in the saddle for 10 long minutes  
The word was out  
Pete's mum had been to the Birds eye steak house  
Yep Birds Eye original beef burger for tea.  
Somehow other burgers don't taste the same  
Now who'd be quickest on the draw  
Birds Eye original beef burger the bestest tasting meat in town

#### **Chanel No 5**

Song  
My baby don't care for shows  
My baby don't care for clothes  
My baby just cares for me  
My baby don't care for cars and races  
Share the fantasy, Chanel No 5

#### **Bank of Ireland**

Now what can we do for you



Now what can we do for you  
Now what can Bank of Ireland do for you  
We can help people do things  
Help them to plan  
Help them buy new things  
We'll do all we can  
By lending them money  
We're doing it for people all over the land  
Now what can Bank of Ireland do for you

Ohh we can help make things better  
There is a bank always near  
We can do it together  
Now what can Bank of Ireland do for you

### **Peugeot 505**

Song  
Sudden every corner into some secret hide away  
My love take my breath away

### **Maxwell House**

Song  
A town house  
A summer house  
At a road house  
Or a neighbours house  
Up a light house  
In a white house  
Make it Maxwell House  
At a fire house  
or Ferry House  
In a wheel house  
or a beach house  
When its a mad house  
round at your house  
Make yours a Maxwell house house

## Appendix 10

### Group Impressions

#### Groups

Impressions of the groups are given here to show the differences between people and to highlight that not all groups worked in the same way. Group interaction is important in determining the degree of elaboration. It cannot be assumed that the moderator of the group will get all people to give their views in an equally vocal manner. Researchers using this method must highlight the level of interaction to state how the group worked with each other. All groups are not equal in terms of willingness to interact, elaboration of own thoughts, sharing or contradicting opinions. People are different and these differences should be highlighted to see if similar patterns emerge across studies. The tapes of the interviews can always reinforce the moderators assessment of the groups.

Groups were originally selected to represent broad categories of social classes. However the impression formed of the groups is unrelated to social class. The groups could be divided into three categories outstanding, conversative and bored. The outstanding groups were Kathleen, Rosaleen, Brenda, Phillie, Noreen, Marion and Lily. These groups were very open and friendly and worked well together. They were relaxed and interested and talked among themselves and with the moderator both before and after the group session. Anyone listening to their tapes could hear how at ease they are with each other. This meant that they elaborated on their thoughts and opinions, they listened and responded to each other and they were willing and not afraid to speak. This first category was very cohesive as a group. One notable feature about the cohesiveness is that social class determined the willingness to accept divergent viewpoints. Among ABC1 social classes, the women who had different viewpoints stated them and while counter views may have been put forward it was generally accepted that people could have different points of view. However among the C2 social classes this was not accepted. Group cohesiveness relied on the principle of agreement and anyone who disagreed with the general opinion was pressurised to concede their views and agree with the group. The Rosaleen group is a good example of this. When one of the women disagreed with the group on a few issues she was accused of being uppity, of being rich: the use of the word rich was clearly an insult

and this was further reinforced when the group started to refer to the woman as madam. "Well madam would think that" or "what does madam think".

The second group is described as conservative. They never actively disagreed or agreed with each other. They were cohesive in that they appeared friendly to each other but they lacked warmth or willingness to bond and freely discuss anything even when left on their own. They seemed to accept each other and their views all conformed, there was no arguing. There was some elaboration of views but not as much as with the first category. Typical groups include Claire, Valerie, and Clodagh.

The third category is described as bored. There are two segments in this category: the boreds and the no opinions. These were the most difficult groups to moderate. The no opinion groups are frequently dismissed by practitioners as not counting and are replaced by other groups. However this means that these people are never represented. Thus they were included in this study. It was very difficult to generate discussion among groups classified as bored when issues were raised, remarks were confined to monosyllables. Even in their discussions with each other there was a disinterestness a non-involvement this almost amounted to disgruntlement in their attitudes to everything and each other, they did not experience interactive communication. They did not act as a group. They were uncohesive and disinterested in each others remarks. People in these groups do exist in society and their dullness and inability to generate elaborate taped material does not excuse the researcher for excluding them as a research group. Typical groups here are Ann, Deidre, Teresa and Fiona. The second segment, although it is only one group, Sharon, could be described as fearful. They appeared to be oppressed, they had no money, they never thought about branded products, they had no choices they always bought the cheapest products. This group could not verbalize their thoughts, they did not know how to express themselves, while they accepted each other they had no individual confidence and were afraid to express their thoughts.