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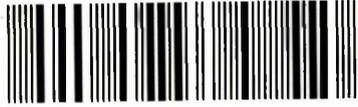
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**THE EXPRESSION OF CLASSICAL RHETORIC IN TELEVISUAL ADVERTISING**  
**Portraying Science & Scientists**

**CHRISTOPHER FREDERICK JOHN SIMPSON**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of  
Sheffield Hallam University  
for the degree of Master of Philosophy

SEPTEMBER 2011

# ***The Expression of Classical Rhetoric in Televisual Advertising:***

## ***Portraying Science and Scientists***

*Christopher F J Simpson*

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### **ABSTRACT**

The origins of *classical rhetoric* are to be found in Greece of the 4th and 5th centuries BCE. Developed principally for spoken delivery, though sometimes applied to written work, it became a much sought after skill due to the newly emerging democracies in the city-states. It was the refinement of the Greek philosophers' fundamental principles for the practice of *classical rhetoric* by their Roman successors, during the last century BCE and the first century CE, that later established its robust canonical structure.

After drawing on semiotic wisdom in order to interpret the meanings embedded in illustrations and advertising film the following research shows to what degree *classical rhetoric* has a *visual* expression in which those ancient canonical principles have contemporary relevance rendering it a major mechanism in the persuasive function of television advertising. In so doing its contribution to knowledge comprises an innovative analytical methodology whilst also exposing a link, previously unremarked upon by scholars in the field, whereby the canon of classical rhetoric known as *arrangement* can be seen to have a common structural basis with narrative.

Touching on the use of scientists, often presented as figures of unquestionable authority in televisual advertising during the middle part of the last century, this thesis now finds a more subtle rhetoric directed at an increasingly more media-aware culture in the third millennium. It will be suggested, however, that such rhetorical devices, as are revealed to be operating, are more likely to be as a result of intuition and empirical adroitness rather than being born of academically acquired knowledge on the part of creative media personnel.

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# INTRODUCTION

## In the beginning was the word!

Human life is characterized by an innate search for meaning. Philosophical approaches describing ways in which meaning may be established (now termed semiotics) and how that meaning can be employed to persuade (rhetoric) have linguistic origins that lie with the ancient Greeks and from whence Aristotle emerges as pre-eminent. Both semiotics and rhetoric are inextricably linked to one another and whilst it is semiotics that tells us how meaning is *created* it is rhetoric which teaches us how meaning can be arranged, delivered and installed to an agenda.

Aristotle said 'Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion' (Kennedy [translator] 1991:36). He was, of course, referring to *linguistic* rhetoric, principally, of the spoken word. Such rhetoric, now termed "classical rhetoric," became bound by canons of practice that counselled rhetors on how to manipulate meaning, *selectively*, in order to persuade more effectively and more scientifically. Early Greek rhetors and rhetoricians such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and later Romans such as, Cicero and Quintilian, were all acutely aware that rhetoric may be practised with or without ethical or moral regard and, consequently, strove to act honourably.

Notwithstanding the passage of time since the days of Aristotle and the very different world in which we now live it has been observed that people's reactions appear to be much the same. In short, *times* may change, but human nature very little.

## Is there a visual expression of classical rhetoric? Is it important?

In classical times, the written word and the spoken word were the chief means of communication. Today we often consider television as fulfilling that rôle which surely begs the question: Is there a tele-visual expression of classical rhetoric and if so how may it be revealed?

Ample circumstantial evidence suggests that *all* tele-visual broadcasting is both explicitly and implicitly rhetorical; but it is in the commercial advertising function that it becomes, by *definition*, persuasive. Consequently this thesis can, with good reason, search this quarter for its answers. How important, nevertheless, will such answers be? Here then is a rhetorical question: If the precepts of a linguistic mechanism that promised to persuade, preferentially, audiences numbered in thousands, were considered so important to the early Greeks and Romans, how much *more* important might those same precepts become if they were found to have a visual expression in addressing audiences numbering millions?

#### Where should one look? Representation of scientists and their science

Where then should one look first? It is no exaggeration to say that science underpins UK society and, indeed, western culture. For the most part we see it as a problem solving service to our way of life and sometimes to life itself.

As Menser and Aronowitz (1996) observe:-

*Culture, science, and technology, although distinct on specific levels, have been and continue to be inextricably bound to one another in such a fashion that each actually merges into the other. . .* (Menser & Aronowitz in Aronowitz, (1996:7)

In a publication by the Government's *Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills* (Denham, 2008) evidence from MORI was cited which suggested that "the main source of information about science for the public is the media, whether through news programmes or documentaries, on TV, radio or in print." Webster (1991) has this to say:-

*The image of science portrayed by science is one of certainty and authority. Media representations usually work to confirm this image.* (Webster 1991:128)

*The image of science in the media has, then, until fairly recently been one which has stressed its authority: this conforms to the widespread cultural belief we have about science [...] Advertising agencies can happily draw on this stereotype in order to sell new products.* (ibid:129)

Clearly then the way in which audiences perceive science should be a subject that is high on the agenda. As a sub-set to the main research area, therefore,

this thesis will touch on the manner in which classical rhetoric attends the portrayal of scientists and their sciences in television advertising.

### Research Rationale

Classical rhetoric, bound by its canonical structure, is fundamentally a skilful, linguistic art, the measure of which can only be expressed in qualitative terms. This thesis will assume, therefore, that when a *visual* dimension is added then the expression of classical rhetoric remains no less qualitative.

Accordingly, this thesis will develop and address a research question by a detailed analysis of a small number of commercials through a deductive-inductive argument with qualitative reasoning.

Stage 1 will employ a television commercial, devoid of any form of scientific support in its sales pitch, as a *Pilot Study* in order to test and refine the methodology developed.

In Stage 2 a second television commercial, chosen to include scientific content, will become a *Case Study* in which the analysis undertaken will lead to certain deductions being made as to the nature of rhetoric in television commercials.

In Stage 3, the final stage, three more commercials, having scientific content will be analysed having been specially selected to portray the ways in which scientists and/or their science are exploited in television commercials.

In short this thesis will explore the televisual ramifications of a proposition made by Corbett & Connors in their 1999 publication of *Classical Rhetoric for The Modern Student*, to wit:-

*Advertising may be the most ubiquitous example of an activity that practices what Aristotle preached*

(Corbett & Connors, 1999:24).

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# CHAPTER 1

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND PREVIOUS WORK

### Classical Rhetoric, Television, Semiotics

#### 1.1 Classical Rhetoric: An Overview

##### 1.1.1 The origins

There is no consensus on when or where exactly classical rhetoric began. Corbett and Connors (1999:15) talk of rhetoric's origin being in 5th century BCE Greece. Covino & Jolliffe (1995:39) are more specific believing it to have started in the Greek colony of Syracuse, in Sicily, during 467 BCE. Suffice it to say that the rise of classical rhetoric began with Sophist teachings engendered by the newly emerging democracies of 4th and 5th century BCE Greece. Similarly there are various opinions as to the *extent* of rhetoric's "classical" period. Most estimates fall within dates stretching from the early 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE to around the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE and include "the principles and theories of rhetoric developed by philosophers and teachers primarily in Athens, Rome and the Roman Empire" (Covino & Jolliffe 1995:38-39).

Despite these uncertainties it is widely accepted that the early Sophists were responsible for the start of what would become classical rhetoric. Being both instructors and practitioners of the art rather than theorists, they were itinerants teaching a number of different subjects of which rhetoric was but one. Covino and Jolliffe describe them as being:-

*especially famous - or infamous - for relativistic views of truth and demonstrations of oratorical dexterity; such demonstrations were especially popular as both entertainments and as indications of the skills required of citizens in newly emerging democracies.*  
(Covino and Jolliffe, 1995:84)

Despite such exhibitions of prowess, however, their "relativistic views of truth" clearly brought them no credit as is indicated by Aristophanes (448-380 BCE), a playwright of the period. In his satirical comedy *The Clouds*, (Sommerstein [trans], 2002:78) he has Strepsiades, a moderately wealthy citizen of 5th

century BCE Athens, saying of them "and if you pay them well, they can teach you how to win a case whether you are in the right or not." Although Aristophanes includes Socrates in his lampooning of the Sophists this seems ill conceived for, in fact, Socrates (470-399 BCE) deplored such Sophists who gave scant regard for the truth and charged extortionate fees. Indeed Cicero, records a long tradition among Greek professors for imparting "education both in right conduct and in good speech." He continues, "nor were the professors in two separate groups, but the same masters gave instruction both in ethics and in rhetoric" (Cicero in Henderson [Ed],1942:47). Collier & Toomey (1997:28), writing on scientific and technical communication, uphold this image in recording Socrates' and his pupil Plato's (427-327 BCE) claim that "the Sophists were immoral both because they charged for their services and because they did not instruct their clients and students on the ethical use of their newly acquired skills." Indeed Plato (428-348 BCE), in his dialogue entitled *Sophist*, describes them as "manipulators or jugglers of the truth" (Corvino & Jolliffe 1995:84) and as "paid hunters of rich young men" (Guthrie 1971:37). Corbett & Connors (1999:493) tell us that "orators often based their arguments on what people *believed* to be true rather than on what was demonstrably and universally true" a practice that, no doubt, contributed to the sophists' derogatory reputation. Such images are not hard to find and the following extract indicates that:-

*Already by the end of the fifth century (BCE) sophistēs had acquired the pejorative sense from which we derive our 'sophistical' and 'sophistry.' On this hostile view a sophist was a charlatan, a clever-clever verbal trickster whose stock-in-trade was to make worse seem the better argument. To compound this felony (as the critics saw it) the sophist charged a fat fee to his pupils in return for corrupting their moral sense and turning them into immoral know-it-alls kicking over the traces of established convention.* (Cartledge, 1984:175)

A seemingly more balanced picture emerges, however, from Corbett & Connors with the following analysis:-

*Among the Athenians of the fifth century BC<sup>A</sup> the term Sophist carried no invidious connotations. It was a rather neutral term applied to professors who lectured on the "new learning" in*

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<sup>A</sup> Now expressed as B.C.E. (Before the Common Era)

*literature, science, philosophy and especially oratory. The Sophists set up small schools and charged their pupils a fee for what amounted in many cases to tutoring. These schools eventually proved to be so lucrative that they attracted a number of charlatans into the teaching profession and it was men like these who eventually gave sophists an unsavoury reputation and made "sophistry" a synonym for deceitful reasoning.*

(Corbett, 1999:491)

This early recognition of the Sophists' tendency towards dubious rhetoric practice clearly lived on for Matthew Arnold (1852), the English poet and essayist, wrote, "be neither a saint nor Sophist led." Indeed, the association has now become well established and Collier and Toomey (1997:150), observe that, "to many [...] rhetoric implies an underhanded and not entirely honest means of persuasion." Thus it is that, in today's parlance, one finds this cynicism reflected by the more common usage of the word *rhetoric* as a term that is all but synonymous with empty words or implying insincerity. Such an interpretation is currently reinforced by such phrases as "being economical with the truth"<sup>B</sup> whilst political "spin doctors" have, in like manner to the Sophists, also fallen into disrepute and been held to ridicule in recent years.

### 1.1.2 Rhetorical theory

Rhetoric, however, has another interpretation. In his dictionary of 1755 Dr Samuel Johnson (Lynch [Ed.], 2002:435), describes this second meaning for "rhétorick," with quotations from English literature to support his interpretation, as "The power of persuasion; oratory." The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (Hornby and Wehmeier, Eds. 2002) appears somewhat perverse on the subject in describing it as "the skill of using language in speech or writing in a special way that influences or entertains people." Now such a construction would clearly have been applicable at the time of the Sophists (see p.1 quotation from Covino & Jolliffe), or even 5th century CE Rome; Cicero, for example, describes the 2nd canon of rhetoric (Arrangement) thus:-

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<sup>B</sup> Originally 18th century, but scarcely used. Brought into contemporary language by the UK Cabinet Secretary, Sir Robert Armstrong, who, in 1986, famously employed the expression in the Australian 'Spycatcher' trial. <<http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/127700.html>>.

*Collocatio, the arrangement of the arguments in a manner suited to the nature of the speech - according as it is to be delivered in a court of law, or in a deliberative assembly, or for the purpose of display.* (Cicero in Henderson [Ed], 1942:307)

To say that it “entertains people,” nevertheless, is a little bizarre insofar as it cannot be held to be appropriate to-day. The *Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary* (Walter & Woodford, 2005), perhaps, offers the most succinct interpretation and one which reflects current usage more closely by describing it as “speech or writing which is intended to be effective and persuasive.” Employed essentially in academic circles, this definition probably owes much to Aristotle (384-322 BCE) who, in describing it said, “Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion” (Kennedy 1991:36).

Aristotle, a pupil of Plato, and equally aware of disreputable behaviour among Sophists shared his master's ethical concern yet was clearly intrigued by rhetoric. Being committed to memory, and spoken rather than written, rhetoric was also a whole-body activity involving facial expression, stance and gesture; but above all it demanded a prior and profound understanding of what an audience already “knew” and was prepared to believe. In his collected writings, entitled “On Rhetoric,” Aristotle (Kennedy's translation, 1991:216) puts in place a structure, the core of which comprises *three* canons of rhetorical practice. By the time of the Roman rhetoricians Cicero (106-43 BCE) and Quintilian (35-95 CE), however, these emerged as *five* canons.

#### 1.1.2.1 The five canons

In *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (attributed to Cicero), which shows a distinctly Hellenistic rhetorical flavour, these five canons are described, most concisely:-

*Invention is the devising of matter, true or plausible, that would make the case convincing.*

*Arrangement is the ordering and distribution of the matter, making clear the place to which each thing is to be assigned.*

*Style is the adaptation of suitable words and sentences to the matter devised.*

*Memory is the firm retention of the matter, words, and arrangement.*

*Delivery is the graceful regulation of voice, countenance and gesture.*  
(Henderson [Ed] 1954:7)

Covino & Jolliffe (1995:29-30), revealing how Aristotle laid the foundation for three of these five canons, provide a far more comprehensive exposure. In summary they were:-

1. *Invention (Gr. heuresis):*  
*Assessing the audience in terms of what they already knew and were prepared to believe whilst generating effective material for that particular rhetorical situation.*
2. *Arrangement: (Gr. taxis):*  
*Ordering material in a 'text.'<sup>c</sup> Classical origins suggest that an effective argument is ordered first to capture the audience's attention, second to provide necessary background information, third to state and prove the text's thesis, fourth to anticipate and address possible counter-theses and, finally, to conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions.*
3. *Style (Gr. lexis):*  
*Use of language index, tropes, simile, metaphor, synecdoche and schemes to generate the required impressions (one might also add parables, proverbs and myths to this list). Under 'schemes' rhetorical theorists have catalogued such devices as parallelism (creating a similarity of structure in a set of related words, phrases or clause). [To-day, use of intertextuality and phonology are frequently employed by the media to this end]. Most modern rhetorical theorists see style as the process of "giving presence" to ideas that rhetors want their audiences to attend to.*
4. *Memory (Gr. mnēmē):*  
*In classical periods rhetors were required to commit their speeches to memory. Mnemonics were frequently employed whereby, for example, rhetors may associate the parts of their speeches with various rooms in a house. The introduction might be associated with the porch, the background narration with the foyer, the thesis and proof with the arch and grand ballroom and the conclusion with the antechamber. In current rhetorical theory we find that computers are being used to store monumental data bases and rhetors are devising increasingly inventive ways to manipulate these data so, indeed, memory remains a vital canon.*

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<sup>c</sup> In this thesis 'text' denotes any aural or visual message delivered to an audience.

5. *Delivery* (Gr. *hypokrisis*):

*The art of using one's voice and body effectively when speaking. In both classical periods and later, elaborate theory was developed to teach rhetors how to pronounce words, project their voices and move their faces, arms, hands and even legs and feet.*

(Corvino & Jolliffe, 1995:22-24)

1.1.2.2 The three species

Aristotle describes how rhetors also had at their disposal "three species of rhetoric" from which, skilfully using their judgement, they would select the most appropriate form in order to achieve their objective. In outline they were:-

*Deliberative: Exhortations or dissuasions to action aimed at showing the potential advantage or harm of the action.*

*Judicial: Either accusations or defences concerning things done in the past and aimed at showing the justice or injustice of what had been done.*

*Epidictic: Either praise or blame aimed at showing that a person is honourable or shameful whilst often reminding audiences of events of the past and projecting the course of the future.*  
(Aristotle, in Kennedy, [trans], 1991:15)

1.1.2.3 The means of persuasion

In his work entitled, *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle also identifies three types of textual<sup>D</sup> appeals that could be made to an audience. Summarising Corvino & Jolliffe, once more, they were:-

*Ethos: An appeal to the authority of the rhetor - generally defined as the good character and the consequent credibility of the rhetor. Theorists in ancient Greece and Rome did not agree among themselves as to whether such ethos should reside in the rhetors' texts or whether they should evince it in their lives as well. Aristotle believed the former in that a text must demonstrate that the rhetor is a person of good sense, virtue and good will.*  
(Corvino & Jolliffe, 1995:15)

*Pathos: An appeal to the emotions or "stages of life" of the audience and sometimes referred to as the pathetic or emotional appeal. The central idea underlying pathos is that an effective text will somehow activate or draw upon the*

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<sup>D</sup> In this context 'textual' or 'text' denotes any aural or visual message delivered to an audience.

*sympathies and emotions of the auditors causing them to attend to and accept its ideas, propositions, or calls for action.*

(Corvino & Joliffe, 1995:15-16)

On *pathos*, however, Aristotle's own words really cannot be improved upon. Consider the following, from his work entitled *On Rhetoric, A Theory of Civic Discourse*, which reveals him to be both a keen observer of human nature and a skilful rhetorician and rhetor:-

*[There is persuasion] through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion [pathos] by the speech; for we do not give the same judgment when grieved and rejoicing or when being friendly and hostile.* (Aristotle, in Kennedy, [trans], 1991:38)

*Logos: An appeal to systems of reasoning that the audience find convincing and persuasive. Although it is common to translate logos into its cognate, the "logical appeal," such a translation is imprecise and potentially misleading. In Greek, it approximates to "thought plus action." Just as ethos moves an audience by activating their faith in the credibility of the rhetor and pathos arouses their feelings, seeking changes in their attitudes and actions, so logos, accompanied by the other two appeals, mobilizes the power of reasoning.*

(Covino & Joliffe, 1995:15&17)

Kennedy (1991:ix), writes that "Aristotle was the first person to recognise clearly that rhetoric as an art of communication was morally neutral, that it could be used either for good or ill." Though history has demonstrated, therefore, that rhetoric constitutes a tool which, in the hands of its artisans, may be used either to deceive or to reveal truth jaundiced attitudes remain that continue to confuse its unethical practice with its honourable function. The following was found in a text book dealing with scientific and technical communication!

*'Rhetoric deals with deceit - the indiscriminate use of language to serve the desire of a speaker. Science finds truth; rhetoric hides it.'* (Collier & Toomey, 1997:146)

Less cynical and much more likely to lead to a true understanding of rhetoric is the following, more insightful (constructivist) description:-

*When we speak about the art of rhetoric, then, we mean the faculty that humans have - a teachable, improvable faculty - for inventing constructions of "reality" that others may regard as such. In short, rhetoric is the art of knowledge making.*

(Covino & Joliffe, 1995:8)

### 1.1.3 Modern rhetoric?

From classical times onwards rhetoric occupied a prominent place in academies around the world. Some hold that the theory of rhetoric underwent radical reinterpretation between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in England in order to serve the "new science" instituted by those such as Francis Bacon. In fact, the reverse would seem to be true inasmuch as the greatest changes probably occurred in the *scientific procedure* of the day accompanied by a mere fine tuning of rhetorical theory, or rather the logic which underpinned it. Covino & Jolliffe (1995:67) claim that, from the late nineteenth century, a "modern rhetoric" emerged but again it does not appear to have been deep seated since, as the authors admit, it was "rooted in the ancient tradition of the Sophists." Whatever changes did occur did not affect the fundamental principles which, it seems, remained intact as evidenced by Kennedy, who remarks:-

*Modern theorists frequently refer to the 'Rhetoric' (Aristotle's work) for ideas about communication and as the basis for rhetorical analysis or criticism of speeches and discursive writing.*  
(Kennedy, 1991:ix-x)

Lane Cooper (a founder of the modern study of rhetoric) adds weight to this in observing that:-

*The rhetoric not only of Cicero and Quintilian, but of the Middle Ages, of the Renaissance, and of modern times, is, in its best elements, essentially Aristotelian.* (see Corbett, 1990:543-44)

By dint of this one can say with some confidence, therefore, that the fundamental principles of the five canons remain at the heart of rhetoric today.

Given such classical beginnings and the central role of rhetoric down the ages, it remains somewhat of an enigma that, at a time when communications technology has rendered a worldwide audience so eminently accessible, the art of formal rhetoric is rarely to be seen in the university curricula of Europe. Yet, despite its low academic profile, there is no disputing its relevance to the democratic process. In the United States of America, for example, where

societies<sup>E</sup> flourish for its pursuit, it is widely available as a university study subject. Testimony of its higher status in America is suggested in an article published in *The Guardian* newspaper at the end of a powerful campaign for the American presidency in 2008 (Fig.1.1). Higgins, (2008:10-11) under a banner headline "The new Cicero," records how Barack Obama's speeches were "much admired and endlessly analysed" whilst commenting on the "enormous debt they owe to the oratory of the Romans." It is an irony



perhaps that, in the publication of this article, we are able to witness just how "subcutaneous" the use of rhetoric is in England. The English reporter, in seeking credibility for his article from *The Guardian's* readership, has judged that readership to be one which will, at least, have an appreciative knowledge of Cicero thereby, albeit unwittingly perhaps, invoking the initial requirement of the first canon of rhetoric (*Invention*) i.e. to assess the audience. Through presenting an image of Barack Obama dressed in a Roman toga and carrying a scroll, moreover, the reporter demonstrates, a *visual* expression of the first principle of the second canon of rhetoric (*Arrangement*) which requires rhetors to capture the attention of their audience (here, the readership). In semiotic terms (to be addressed in 1.3.4) the image attains, visually, an *Iconic* status acting *connotatively* through the toga and scroll to invite readers to recall and then associate with Barak Obama the classical, oratorical skills, of ancient Romans (*Cicero et al*).

Despite the disparity in the pursuit of rhetoric between Europe and America it is, nevertheless, the principal means of *purveying* rhetoric that has now become important - so important that it is a prime military target in times of

<sup>E</sup> *The Rhetoric Society of America, The American Society for the History of Rhetoric*

war - or civil uprising, so important that it has access to 26 million UK homes (2007 statistic) (Fisher,2009). That *purveyor*, which will now be addressed, is television.

## 1.2 Television: Its Scope and Facility for Rhetoric

### 1.2.1 The potential to influence

In researching the rhetoric of the UK's national press in mediating science news the author of this thesis, Simpson (2002:70-71), suggests, that inanimate cartoons and pictures may employ rhetoric as robustly as the printed word. Although beyond the scope of that earlier investigation it inspired the question, nevertheless, as to how much more robust such rhetoric might be if those pictures were both animated and vocal; or in this current context, televised.

Circumstantial evidence of television's power to influence is not hard to find. Why else would politicians spend so much time, effort and money ensuring equitable television coverage in their party political broadcasts at election time if not to *influence* our opinion and subsequent behaviour in the polling booth? Indeed such is the perceived power of television's influence that "broadcasters are required by law to be impartial and balanced" whereas newspapers, at least in Britain, can back the political party of their choice" (Boyd, 2001:195). The commercial breaks, which seem to interrupt television viewing with ever increasing frequency and duration, however, are where we can be sure of finding the most influential texts. It is here that many millions of pounds are spent each year by advertisers deliberately seeking to influence our purchasing behaviour. Advertising, however, may have hidden depths as Boyd seems to imply with his remark that:-

*The advertiser's hope is that viewers will receive what is being said about the product with the same unquestioning trust that they gave to the news - only now the scripts flow from the pen of the ad man whose sole concern is persuasion, not information.*

(Boyd, 2001:214)

Yet, as will be seen later, other authors suggest that even news casting is not without its element of persuasion.

Contrasting sharply with the constraints of the printed message and static images employed in our national newspapers, television brings immediacy to its message. By a complex interaction of animated visual and aural dimensions these features constitute an eminently suitable vehicle for rhetorical influence. Crucially, with its additional ability over that of the printed word to practise rhetoric's fifth canon, that of *Delivery*, (governing visual and aural effects) television represents a medium that, seemingly, embraces *all* of the five canons. Importantly, moreover, it can address a *world* audience and, in this respect, *Delivery's* central role cannot be overstated. Cicero, in 55 BCE, said of Delivery that it is "the dominant factor in oratory" [and that] "without delivery the best speaker cannot be of any account at all." He records:-

*The story goes that when Demosthenes was asked what is the first thing in speaking, he assigned the first rôle to delivery, and also the second and also the third.*

(Cicero in Henderson [Ed], 1942:169)

Later, (c.92-96 CE) Quintilian, who clearly holds Cicero in high regard and quotes him extensively, records the same story about Demosthenes and says of delivery that:-

*All emotional appeals will inevitably fall flat, unless they are given the fire that voice, look, and the whole carriage of the body can give them.* (Quintilian in Page, et al, [Eds], 1922:245)

In more recent times Adolf Hitler too displayed a keen awareness of the power of *Delivery* and was an awesome visual rhetor, as one may see from much film footage of the era. Furthermore, his innate *oral* rhetoric was equally, if not even more, formidable. In a translation from the preface to his "Mein Kampf" he has this to say:-

*I know that men are won over less by the written word than by the spoken word, that every great movement on this earth owes its growth to great orators and not to great writers.*

(Hitler in Manheim, 1969: preface)

During world war two (1938-45) Hitler was also quick to harness the power of propaganda; chiefly in radio broadcasting with the notorious "Lord Haw Haw," a nickname associated with various broadcasters but especially with the Irish-

American, William Joyce. Similarly, "Tokyo Rose"<sup>F</sup>, sought to undermine the morale of Allied forces in the South Pacific during World War 2 (FBI, 2008).

Propaganda, of course, remains. Recall, for instance, the political "spin doctors" mentioned earlier with their specific agenda to reinforce, modify or establish new (political) meaning. Yet television, which frequently provides a platform for such rhetors, also has its own agenda. Thus rhetors must not only confront the task of installing their preferred meaning in the minds of their audience but also engage in a skilful attempt to manipulate their medium as well. In this rhetorical engagement, however, control would seem to rest largely with television. Just how much control it possesses may be gleaned from the following observation by Brian Wenham a Former BBC Director of Programmes who not only suggests a powerful potential for television to manipulate meaning but also hints at a capacity to inhibit or destroy rationality:-

*'Television is credited... with almost superhuman powers. It can, they say, start wars, and it can sap the will to continue those wars. It can polarize society, and it can prevent society talking sensibly to itself.'* Wenham [1937-1997], (see Boyd, 2001:192)

Media coverage of the military invasion and subsequent civil conflict in Iraq in recent years may, when history comes to be written, or more insightfully perhaps, re-written, underline the veracity of *that* quotation. It is interesting to note that Wenham is speaking of "society" rather than the individual here, an aspect that will be pursued later under the heading of "The cultural dimension." In this quotation from Wenham, however, there reside signs that reality or meaning has a malleable quality. The remarks of Allen, are slightly more revealing for, in commenting on television news broadcasts, he says:-

*The capacity of television technology to show us seemingly unmediated pictures of events around the world at the moment of their occurrence would appear to endow television with a unique power to show us the world "as it really is."*

(Allen 1992:10)

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<sup>F</sup> A generic name given by soldiers to a series of American-speaking women who made propaganda broadcasts under different aliases.

The words "seemingly unmediated" and "appear" with inverted commas placed around the words "as it really is" are deliberate devices which imply that the reverse is the case and that even events "at the moment of occurrence" may be *framed* in some way so as to influence the television viewer. Given computer-aided manipulation of imagery, lighting, sound, and camera, it is not too difficult to appreciate how the tele-visual medium of today is equipped as no other "to see the available means of persuasion." "Television discourse is not immutable and impersonal in nature and its mode is the reverse of literate or formal logic: its mode is that of rhetoric" (Fiske & Hartley 2003:92). Arguably, then, television's influence represents a renaissance for rhetoric in the 21st century, but more importantly it can be seen as a major mechanism for maintaining, modifying or establishing meaning for its many audiences.

### 1.2.2 Television audiences and advertising

Corbett (1990:5) postulates that "perhaps the most common, most ubiquitous form of persuasive discourse in our society is advertising." There is good reason to suppose, moreover, that certain television commercials reach audiences that do not conform to a cross section of the total UK viewing public. Indeed the growing sophistication of advertisements and the manner in which their transmission is engineered blatantly conspire to appeal to very specific genres of the viewing public. The increasingly prevalent in-context advertisements, relating closely to some aspect of the programme that is being interrupted, are clearly screened in the belief that a specific type of person will be viewing in positively disproportionate numbers. Advertising high performance cars during the broadcast of a *James Bond* film, or food products with reduced calorie content during a programme on dieting are examples that typify this strategy. Such "in-context" advertisements, according to some, have an increased effect. Swain, writing for *The Guardian* on television advertising research commissioned by the Virginia Association of Broadcasters (VBS), reports the findings of their consultancy, *Neurosense*, in which increased brain activity is correlated with effectiveness thus:-

*Advertising that fitted the programme [...] was, on average, 24% more likely to generate brain activity in the areas measured than ads that had no such fit.* (Swain, 2005:8)

Such audiences, nevertheless, may never be physically gathered together as a body in one place but, rather, will reside homogeneously within, and dispersed among, the whole population. They may be determined by their gender, age or areas of interest. They may also be tangible (self-declared), such as the UK's pro fox-hunting community, or imagined by the media such as "the great British sporting public" (a reference taken from an article on a rugby match between England and France, in the *Sun* newspaper, (July 2005). There is no *ordinary man (or woman) in the street* for, as rhetors and rhetoricians alike will already appreciate there are many audiences and, as Shakespeare says in his play, *As You Like It*, (Act 2, Scene 7), "one man in his time plays many parts" .

### 1.2.3 The cultural dimension

In acknowledging that television may have a significant part to play in influencing meaning, it behoves one to explore the environment in which that meaning is generated. The claim by Wenham (*ibid*), cited earlier, that television may "polarize society" implies that television's power to influence people has the effect of creating some degree of *common meaning* and thus carries undertones of today's widely accepted constructivist theory.

Originating in the 1960s and 1970s, constructivism was deemed by Lyotard (1984) to have the status of a meta- or "grand theory" (see Osborne, 1996:54).

Later, in fact, Tobin et al., (1994) report that :-

*Such is the dominance of this school of thought that it has been contended that it offers a new paradigm for science education.*  
(see Osborne, 1996:53)

If one imagines the "student" in the following passage to be the member of an audience then the ramifications for rhetoric become manifest:-

*If knowledge cannot be transmitted, but must instead be constructed by each student individually, this does not imply that teaching must dispense with language. It implies only that the role of language must be conceived of differently. We can no*

*longer justify the intention of conveying our ideas to receivers [...]. Rather, we will have to speak in such a way as to "orient" students efforts at construction.*

(Von Glaserfelt in La Rochelle, Bednarz & Garrison, 1998:27)

Consider, once again, how Aristotle's 1st canon of rhetoric, *Invention* (Section 1.1.2.1, The five canons) comprised "assessing the audience in terms of what they already knew and were prepared to believe whilst generating effective material for that particular rhetorical situation." Is this not consistent with Von Glaserfelt having had his (implied) teacher assess his students and "orient students' efforts at construction?" These observations of Von Glaserfelt's on the subject of constructivism in education, in fact, provide nothing less than an understanding of not only *how* rhetoric can be understood to function but why, if skilfully employed, it *succeeds* in functioning. The researcher considers the place of constructivism therefore to be *a priori* in holding that the practice of rhetoric, whether it is after the "Sophist" or "Aristotelian" school, does, by its canons, precepts and practice, implicitly rely on a constructivist learning philosophy.

Although full discussion of this popular concept is beyond the scope of this thesis suffice it to say that it propounds that one *constructs* and installs new meaning, which is true for oneself, alongside or by integration with one's existing beliefs. This does not preclude that, as some authors maintain, there are those who are also able to retain new beliefs which are, in fact, in contradiction with those already resident.

If Wenham's implication is to be sustained, in that *common meaning* may be moulded, it must also allow that human beings are social animals with a propensity to live in communities - a characteristic easily discerned. Such a community, if it is to prosper, requires that its members communicate with one another whereupon some meaning, perforce, becomes *negotiated* with significant areas becoming common; features which again one may readily discern in the every-day world. When such areas of *common meaning* engender behavioural uniformity such as are manifest in social etiquette,

religions and political ideologies, however, they are perhaps more properly defined as cultures. Onega (1996) has this to say:-

*Meanings are not produced only by individuals who register certain experiences as connected to others. Cultures maintain a system of language and pass on to succeeding generations knowledge of the connections between signifying sounds and the things and notions they signify.*

(see Junker, in Scanlon, Hill & Junker, (Eds), 1999:251)

Even the very language developed and employed for communicating meaning may be implicated, perhaps, as suggested by the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis* which postulates that:-

*People who speak languages with very different phonological, grammatical and semantic distinctions perceive and think about the world quite differently, their worldviews being shaped or determined by their language.*

(Sapir 1958: Whorf 1956:213-14 in Chandler, 2002:154)

Essentially, then, for meaning to become the cultural norm there has to be communication and when one observes this occurring rapidly and widely then mass mediation is implicated. No other agency fulfils this function more comprehensively or effectively today than television. As alluded to earlier, however, both the communicator and the mediator have their agendas which, in this context, provide a potential for cultural meanings to become reinforced, modified or replaced.

In 1977 a little known anthropologist, keenly aware of the influence of television and inordinately interested in cinema film, started preparing a paper entitled *Toward an Ethnographic Semiotic* for the following year's UNESCO conference. In it he clearly implicated television as having a tangible ability to shape cultural opinion and behaviour with the following observation:-

*Not only is film the most important new sign system developed in the 20th century, but is, along with television, the most pervasive and powerful socializing force available today.*

(Worth 1977)

Worth's reference to "sign system" will be addressed later under "Semiotics" but the words "powerful socializing force," emphatically underline television's cultural influence. Later authors, bring a certain air of prophecy to his words.<sup>6</sup>

Allen (1992:2&12), although cautious in admitting that "the nature of our relationship with television is poorly understood, and for the most part not very well studied" writes, nevertheless, that "television structures everyday life for many people." Television viewing, he says, appears to be "social rather than self-absorbing." Fiske & Hartley (2003) substantiate this but offer a more perceptive analysis, leaving little doubt concerning television's central involvement in influencing cultural meanings and values. In their 2003 second edition they offer the proposition that:-

*Television discourse presents us daily with a constantly updated version of social relations and cultural perceptions. Its own messages respond to changes in these relations and perceptions, so that its audience is made aware of the multiple and contradictory choices available from day to day which have the potential to be selected for future ways of seeing. [...] These 'active contradictions' in the television message serve to remind us of our culture's daily state of play.*

(Fiske & Hartley, 2003:5)

This slightly more complex understanding of the constructivist's viewpoint from Fiske & Hartley, in their interpretation of television's societal influence, exposes the dynamic nature of culture. In essence they are saying that cultural evolution occurs as the population is both influenced by, and itself influences, the culture within which it resides. Such movements in cultural values may be exemplified perhaps by the current attitude to divorce. Once considered a social disgrace, it is now looked upon as a mere misfortune and sometimes not even that! Again, more recently, it was acceptable to drink before driving a car or to smoke a cigarette wherever one chose. Today, with their negative aspects emphasised, these habits are becoming socially repugnant and legally constrained. In 2005 a "Reality television," programme (Jamie's Dinners' roused a sizeable proportion of its audience in mounting pressure on politicians to attend to the subject of school dinners. *The Times*

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<sup>6</sup> Sol Worth died before completing his paper and being able to develop his work.

described the case in point under the heading “Jamie's dinners push healthy school food up the political menu,” with the following article:-

*A TV show aimed at changing the eating habits of children has stirred parents and teachers. Almost 100,000 people have joined forces to demand that the Government spend money on healthier school dinners.* (Blair, 2005:13)

Bretherton puts this event in a cultural perspective:-

*Reality television is a notable feature of the contemporary cultural landscape. Its participants can become cultural icons in their own right [...] In the form of 'Jamie's Dinners' it can even shape public policy. It is not going too far to say that reality television frames a conversation in which we as a society discuss who we are and what we value.* (Bretherton, 2005:10)

The role of television, *per se*, in the foregoing exemplars will not be pursued here but the relative rapidity with which these recent cultural shifts have occurred may be an indicator of how television accelerates the impetus of cultural evolution.

Some cultural features, however, die hard and appear more resilient than most. Consider the enduring institution of *man the bread-winner* which, despite today's emphasis on political correctness, continues implicitly or explicitly in television commercials. Indeed, this thesis will examine one of a series of commercials which all rely on just such socially constructed stereotypes (see Appendix 5.3, to Chapter 5). In contrast to the previous examples, however, this particular concept is often seen to confer benefit having *positive* family associations that resonate closely with female maternal instincts whilst bonding strongly with what it means to be a *man*. Although, regarded by many as a primordial legacy, (which might explain the long historical prominence of men in the workplace and the limited success in introducing that social construction known as the “new man”<sup>H</sup>), one must acknowledge, nevertheless, many other contributory factors. Fundamentally, though, what it *means* to be a refuse collector, a nurse, a tramp, a physicist, a man, a woman, a child, or an adult, etc., is continually and rigorously being enshrined and spelt out by that amorphous custodian of negotiated common

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<sup>H</sup> A concept which prescribes that men take on some tasks traditionally undertaken by women - especially housework and care of one's children.

meaning, our culture. Words from an *Ofcom* survey perhaps provide a succinct conclusion to the question of television's cultural influence:

*. . .there are indications from our research of a strong attachment by viewers to the idea that TV is a form of societal cohesion or 'social glue', binding the nation together through majoritarian programming.* (Ofcom: 2006 Survey)

#### 1.2.4 Gender influence

Although the exact *nature* of television's influence may continue to be debated and researched there appears to be universal agreement that television has the capacity to, and does, indubitably, shape human beings' attitudes, beliefs and behaviour in various respects including that of gender influence. Allen remarks that:-

*Throughout the history of American commercial broadcasting, the industry has regarded women as the prime audience for many types of programming. Indeed, around the world, programs are made that attempt to appeal especially to women.* Allen (1992:27-28)

More specifically, Hobson (1980), reveals that women have distinct preferences for the particular genre of programme they watch and says:-

*Television programmes appear to fall into two distinct categories. The programmes which they (women) watch and enjoy are comedy series, soap operas, American television films, light entertainment and quiz shows.... The programmes which are actively rejected deal with what the women designate the ...'man's world', and these predominantly cluster around the news, current affairs programmes, scientific programmes, the subject matter of politics or war, and, to a lesser extent documentary programmes.* (see Moores, 1993:37).

Although Hobson's 1980 research is fairly old and the choice of words and structure, therefore, somewhat condescending to contemporary ears ("the women") there is reason to believe that the genres mentioned are still favoured. Allen not only upholds the observation that various television genres possess gender specific attraction but, taking an overtly constructivist's stance, posits the theory that, in giving pleasure to viewers, television may also exert a cultural gender influence. Thus he says:-

*Examining the pleasures and meanings of the television we watch "for fun" might shed some light on other aspects of our everyday lives; how narratives work, how our notions of masculinity and femininity are constructed.* (Allen, 1992:4)

Mason (1995:11), writing three years later in *Science Coeducation*, quite clearly identifies gender influence saying that “television shows, movies, music and advertisements, continue to display and reinforce gender stereotypes” whilst introducing the concept of rôle models - a subject that will be addressed later. By 1997 the theories of Hobson and Allen appear to have received tacit acceptance and are brought together by Gledhill. Using *Soap Opera* (listed earlier by Hobson) to illustrate the point, Gledhill (1997:366) describes how that, historically, the very subject matter of “soaps” has most strongly suggested a woman's cultural form with its emphasis on “family and community, relationships and personal life - all social arenas in which women exercise a socially mandated expertise and special concern.” As a consequence, he says, “we find a greater number of female protagonists than is usual in other types of fiction.” It is, Gledhill conjectures, such factors that make it “a *pleasurable* form for female viewers.” Allen, however, previously suggested that such *pleasurable* television viewing may influence “how our notions of masculinity and femininity are constructed” and it is during adolescence, according to Steinke (2004), that such notions take hold. Writing in the *Public Understanding of Science* journal, Steinke quotes Perse (2001) who considers that:-

*The mass media are a significant influence in the lives of children, especially during the early childhood and adolescent years when socialization is most pronounced.*

(See Steinke, 2004:13 (1):8)

But Steinke goes further inasmuch as he considers, adolescent girls are not *merely* influenced but actively *search* for an understanding of the culture in which they find themselves. Accordingly he says:-

*Adolescent girls appear to be acutely aware of cultural representations of gender in their world.' [...] 'during adolescence, girls seek out cultural cues to help them define their future personal, professional, life and gender rôles. (Steinke, *ibid*).*

With the implication that television influences women selectively and that during adolescence their cultural “knowledge” of what it is to be a woman is also being moulded, one questions how this might occur.

The popular perception is that, from an early age, one learns by example. In terms of television, therefore, much care is taken to protect the young (aged under 15) from what is perceived to be “unsuitable material.” The imposition of a 9.00 pm “watershed” marks the point before which, starting at 5.30 am, only material suitable for a “general audience including children” may be shown (Ramsay, 2003:9). Learning by example, however, is accorded more credence as adolescents seek to establish their future cultural identity. To many authors and politicians seeking to mitigate gender discrimination at this vulnerable stage in the life of our young people, characters in television drama come under close scrutiny. The undesirable images termed “stereotypes” and the approved images known as “rôle models,” that they cite, however, are but two sides of the same coin. Rôle models are a concept thinly veiled in the previous excerpts from Mason and Allen but patently accepted by Steinke. Dr Evan Harris, an Oxford University graduate and member of the Science & Technology

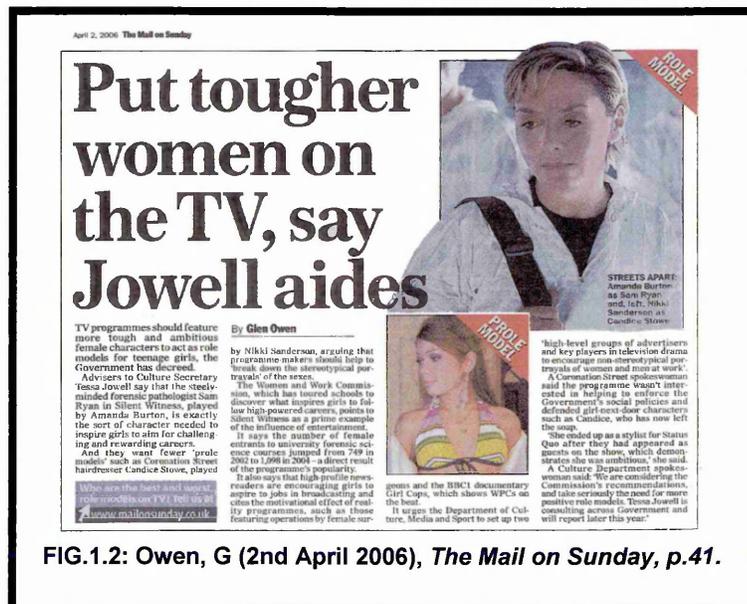


FIG.1.2: Owen, G (2nd April 2006), *The Mail on Sunday*, p.41.

Select Committee, offers the following opinion in saying:-

*There's good evidence that science graduates are more effective not only at teaching it, but also at inspiring people. They are rôle models, and that's what we desperately lack, particularly for girls.* (The Guardian, 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2005:4).

It is, however, widely held and promoted by the press (notwithstanding their own contribution), that it is *television* that is largely responsible for the propagation of “gender stereotypes” the political correctness of which is increasingly being questioned. The Government's *Women and Work Commission*, moreover, appears to endorse that opinion. Reporting on the Commission's findings, Owen (2<sup>nd</sup> April 2006), in *The Mail on Sunday* (Fig.1.2)

reveals the extent to which “advisers to the Culture Secretary” are convinced of television's influence through rôle models and what the newspaper terms *prole*<sup>1</sup> models; the latter being an allusion to stereo-typical portrayals of women in traditional occupations (Appendix 1.1)

The Government's enthusiasm for apparently having “decreed” that television should feature “more tough and ambitious female characters” arises from a sizable increase in the intake of female university students wishing to pursue forensic science. Having toured a number of schools the Commission is said to have attributed the trend to earlier portrayals of Amanda Burton playing the part of a forensic pathologist in the television programme entitled *Silent Witness Prosser et al* (2006). Interestingly, amongst the comments to the *Mail on Sunday*, the following reader's response was to be found:-

*I think that this is a step in the right direction. I am now at university and I have to admit that it is because of TV shows that I have chosen the degree that I am now doing.*

(“Alex, Birmingham,” 2006).

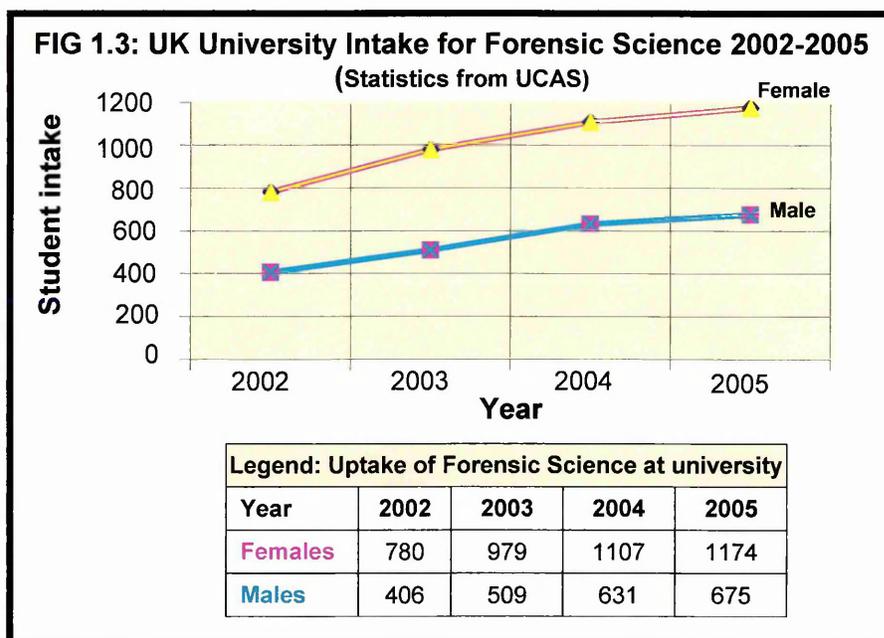
Given the subject matter, it is assumed, that “Alex” is short for Alexandra. Yet were it a male student it would still be indicative of television's influence on adolescents. The article also reports that the Culture Secretary's advisers wish to see “fewer 'prôle models”” such as Coronation Street hairdresser Candice Stowe, played by Nikki Sanderson, arguing that programme makers should help to break down the stereotypical portrayals of the sexes.

Such advice, which would mean targeting a specific audience of adolescent girls, indicates how strong the belief is in television's ability to exert gender influence. Research, (later discontinued) revealed that, for adolescent school girls (Key Stage 4), “soaps” were the most popular viewing. It is interesting to note that the *Mail on Sunday*, which published this article, also showed signs of audience targeting. Although appearing on page 41 it was afforded high visibility in occupying approximately one third of a page, complete with picture, a treatment that sits very comfortably with the fact that in 2005 it was reported that 54% of the *Mail on Sunday's* readership were women (Mende, 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> Informal contraction of 'proletariat' (possibly coined by George Orwell in his novel, *1984*.)

Notwithstanding the enthusiasm for the strategy just identified, the recipe for producing “rôle model” television programmes has proved somewhat illusive. An attempt to produce a “science soap opera” (“Happy Valley”), commissioned by the *Public Awareness of Science* (PAWS) Drama Fund in 2005, was aborted when it failed to attract backers. Despite such difficulties, nevertheless, the concept of highly visible personalities such as sportsmen and women, film and television actors etc., having a “rôle model” influence on young people appears to have some credibility. One should, however, be wary of attributing an effect, such as the increase in the number of female students pursuing Forensic Science at university, with that of a supposed influence e.g. Amanda Burton starring as the Forensic Pathologist in the television programme “Silent Witness,” without reference to a “control.” What, for instance was the corresponding trend of males pursuing Forensic Science over the same period? Statistics (UCAS) show, in fact, that the uptake by male students also increased, albeit from a lower base and at not quite the same incidence as for females (Fig 1.3).



### 1.2.5 Portrayal of science and scientists

Many scientists, according to Gregory and Miller (1998:131), cite television as something that got them involved in science which, as they say, leaves the question as to what it was about the programmes they watched that enthused them; for it is evident that millions watched the same programmes and yet

failed to become scientists. How then does television's representation of science and scientists impinge on adolescents who, according to the earlier quotation from Steinke, may be "seek[ing] out cultural cues to help them define their future [...] professional life." In recent years other voices such as Elena (1997) have expressed similar concern over the same issue. Steinke quotes Elena thus on the issue:-

*In the mass media, images of women scientists and engineers often accentuate stereotypes of scientists and engineers through unrealistic, limited, unflattering portrayals.*  
(see Steinke, 2004:13 (1):7)

The history of such negative images, however, predates television. From an age when public demonstrations of scientific prowess and excellence sought to capture people's imagination, came the publication, in 1818, of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's book "Frankenstein", subtitled "The modern Prometheus." It is somewhat of an irony, perhaps, that as the foundations of modern scientific thinking were being laid so too was the origin of one of today's negative images of science and scientists. Based on Whale's original 1931 film the character of Dr Henry Frankenstein has been, and continues to be, ubiquitous in the UK press. The character portrayed in the film is a every layperson's picture of a scientist; white coated, immersed in "his" work to the point of obsession, more than slightly mad of course, and surrounded by a maze of effervescing, laboratory equipment. Since that time newspaper articles have employed the term with such monotonous frequency that the "mad scientist" has become an archetypal image and the very word "Frankenstein" a prefix to subjects involving ethically or morally difficult science. Due to its sensational property "Frankenstein" imagery is, however, associated largely with the press and is rarely, if ever, employed in television. Gender stereotyping of scientists and portrayal of science as a male preserve, nevertheless, continue to pervade television programmes and advertisements alike with *implicit* rhetoric that is far more likely to go unchallenged. This, surely, is what De Fleur recognised as early as 1964 when he said:-

*Television may be instructing children in ways that are not readily apparent even to close observers - ways that may lead to later disappointments as the individual enters the labour force.*

(see Fisk & Hartley, 2003:9 [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.] )

This suspicion, expressed by De Fleur, turns out to have been surprisingly insightful and the effect alluded to is now understood to rely on establishing an appearance of normality. Advertising, according to Bignell (2002:37), "has been critiqued as one of the social institutions which perform this function of naturalising dominant ideologies in our culture." In particular he cites ideologies that oppress women. Advertising may also, he says, "encourage us to view our consumption positively as an activity which grants us membership of lifestyle groups." The manner in which advertising might "naturalise" science, scientists, women and men, will be examined during the research into the visual expression of rhetoric in television advertising. The effect will also be referred to in section 1.3.4., entitled "The evolution of pictorial sign classification."

#### 1.2.6 Limitations & Differences

Insofar as this thesis is concerned we shall deal only with rhetoric engineered by human beings and therein resides an important distinction. In the Agora<sup>J</sup> of ancient Athens rhetors knew and could see their audiences thus *the audience* defined the rhetoric. Conversely, in television advertising, visual rhetors know only the audience they wish to attract, therefore, the rhetoric defines the audience! Let us, for a moment, continue to compare spoken rhetoric with tele-visual rhetoric for there is another significant distinction to be made. Imagine, for example, the following well known delivery being executed in the city precincts of Rome:-

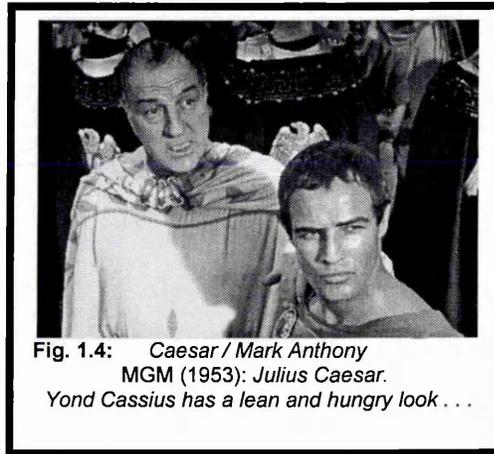


Fig. 1.4: Caesar / Mark Anthony  
MGM (1953): Julius Caesar.  
*Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look . . .*

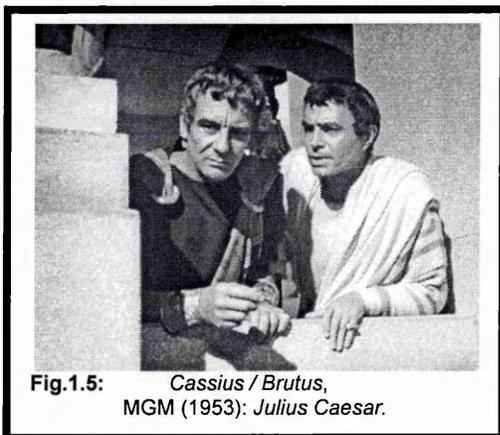
*Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look, He thinks too much;  
such men are dangerous.*<sup>K</sup>

Assuming that Cassius was present in the precincts of the city then all may have turned their head to see Cassius. Some may not have been in a

<sup>J</sup> Agora: in ancient Greek cities, an open space that served as a meeting ground for various activities of the citizens. (Encyclopaedia Britannica)

<sup>K</sup> William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*. Act 1 Scene 3.

position to see Cassius, others may not have been able to recognise Cassius, and yet others may have chosen not to look at Cassius. All would certainly have had slightly different viewpoints which may or may not have exposed the condition of Cassius. Whichever of these circumstances pertained, however, the facility remained with the audience to behold Cassius. Now let us consider the tele-visual equivalent using the same text. The face of Caesar appears on the television screen and, having delivered those famous lines, disappears from view. He is replaced by the figure of Cassius who, may



indeed, appear lean and, by his demeanour and facial expression very hungry. In this scenario the audience are always near enough to see Cassius and all can recognise him, for the narrative has previously identified him and the camera now isolates him. They have no option but to look at Cassius and observe his condition, for the

camera directs their gaze and may even focus on relevant features such as his wasted figure and drawn face, whether the audience wishes it or not. Definitely all receive the same view. This audience may only choose to “leave the precincts of Rome” by switching off the television. In an unwritten contract, therefore, the television audience, almost without thinking, consent to the camera becoming their eyes and in so doing have had choices removed. The camera selects both *what* and *how* they look at the rhetor's subject. The camera is a rhetorical tool of, subliminal dimensions, in the hands of the television or film director - the visual rhetor, by proxy, for the advertiser. Now consider the following.

On a hill, high above the city of Athens, at a site known by all as the Acropolis, stands the Parthenon, a temple to Athēnē Parthenos (“the Maiden”). Built as part of a massive rebuilding programme under the direction of Pericles in 447 BCE, it celebrated victory over the Persians by the Athenian-led *Delian League* and housed a massive statue of the Goddess Athēnē covered in gold leaf. The exterior of the temple was furnished with brightly painted relief work

depicting victorious Athenians and their deities. Due to the increasing military power of Athens (and rhetorical speaking by Pericles) it, seemingly, drew little criticism when the whole work was funded by diverting tribute originally paid for defence purposes by member states of the *League*. Standing 19.81 metres (approx 65 feet) high at its apex, and situated on the highest part of the rock, it towered above the city of Athens; a position that ensured that its imposing magnificence could be seen for miles around. Payment of tributes by league members took place annually and, with the treasury having been located at the Acropolis site from circa 454 BCE onwards, delegates from each member state had to make the steep climb to the temple precincts in order to deliver their payment. Having had the monument under their constant gaze in the days spent travelling towards Athens, therefore, imagine the impact on those emissaries as, on arrival, they were finally confronted and dwarfed by its sheer opulence and majesty. Something of the impressive rhetorical aura that it and other monuments like it in Athens must have cast can be gleaned from the writings of Thucydides, an exiled stratēgos<sup>L</sup> and historian of the period, who remarked that:-

*to judge by the comparable surviving monuments in Sparta and Athens, coming generations would think Athens much more powerful than she was and Sparta much less.*

(see Jones, 1984:343-4)

The Parthenon, in its time, was in effect a visual rhetoric in architecture providing a formidable statement of power and wealth. Such was the impact created that the same rhetorical message continues to this very day to echo among the Ionic, Doric and Corinthian pillars that adorn civic buildings around the world.

The important point made here, is that television, due to the physical constraints of its cognitive screen, cannot achieve the rhetoric of scale and presence i.e. reality. Notwithstanding the spontaneous contract entered into by viewers, when they watch television, to accept almost involuntarily, a much reduced image as the reality, the impact of scale, nevertheless, is all but lost.

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<sup>L</sup> An Athenian general. Ten stratēgoi were elected annually by the people and could be re-elected. In addition to military status they were also influential in state policy. In 424 BCE Thucydides was relieved of his position as a general for incompetence and, whilst in exile, was able to devote more time to gathering material for his historical writings.

A visit to the cinema may go some little way to recreating the impact of scale but at the expense of new compromises in which one is obliged to ignore the larger than life-size portrayal of human beings. Even then one cannot walk around such images or touch them or smell them. These expressions of rhetoric and others limit, by their absence, the influence of television to the extent that it cannot equal *being* there. In short nothing can compete with the reality. Metz (1931-1993), a semiotician with a special interest in how meaning is created in film, understood this limitation. Combining the three-dimensions of space with that of time, sometimes referred to as the fourth dimension, he had this to say:-

*Reality assumes 'presence', which has a privileged position along two parameters, space and time; only the 'here' and 'now' are completely real.* (Metz, 1974:22)

This observation reveals another important limitation inherent in Television and film inasmuch as neither can ever be strictly “here” and “now.” The rhetoric of television or film, directed or not, remains insensible of its audience, always delivers after the event (albeit in a split second) and is a one-way communication.

It may be thought that television provides a medium of mass communication that is able to accommodate all of rhetoric's five canons but it would be wrong, however, to conclude that the whole of rhetoric's potential is, therefore, satisfied or that televisual rhetoric equates to that of the live experience. Now is a good time to return to Aristotle's original definition, to wit:-

*Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion.* (Kennedy 1991:36)

One cannot know, of course, precisely what was in the mind of Aristotle when he said this but, given his precursory exploration into the field of “meaning”, the researcher believes that he perceived that rhetoric was not limited to human beings' ability to manipulate the spoken word but extended to the sum of all that may be discerned by one's five senses. Chandler (2000) recalls that "in the first sentence of his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle wrote, “Of all the senses, trust only the sense of sight” and remarks that “this general bias in favour of sight and the eye has persisted in Western cultures.” Cicero too

was obviously aware of the propensity for human beings to favour sight over sound when he wrote "for the mind's eye is carried more easily to things we have seen than to things we have heard of" (Cicero in Henderson [Ed], 1942:129). Thus Rhetoric surely surrounds us all.

The author has contended that the practice of rhetoric (through a human agency) implicitly relies on a constructivist learning philosophy, in which one *constructs* and installs new meaning, alongside or by integration with existing beliefs (1.2.3). This must also allow, however, that the natural world has a random rhetoric of its own which, lacking an agenda, is manipulated only by the recipients themselves who, in the light of their life experience and the context in which they find themselves, will determine the extent and nature of its influence. Does not each one of us find the rhetoric that will persuade us and every rhetor hope to discover it? In the following section (1.3.2), in which the nature of semiotics is explored, Augustine too, in his concept of the "sign" provides a plurality which is entirely consistent with and essentially underpins, the rhetoric which impinges on human beings.

In this section (1.2) literature has been examined revealing television as a mass communication medium with tangible and significant potential for influence in addressing audiences through their cultural and gender identities. Other literature intimated that influence so applied, presented science and scientists in stereotypical / rôle model portrayals. Such images continued, moreover, to reinforce and promote traditional, cultural norms and expectations that are either currently being questioned or are adjudged no longer desirable, appropriate or beneficial to the future of our society.

As a principal mediator, carrying significant rhetorical potential, and a prime mover in establishing cultural meanings, television can, therefore, be reasonably implicated and researched. It remains now to explore literature that promises to reveal a means of interrogating the rhetoric of television in order to understand how it might be acting to influence or persuade various audiences.

### 1.3 Semiotics: The Origins and Evolution.

#### 1.3.1 Defining Semiotics

Where rhetoric is the result of manipulating *meaning*, selectively, in order to persuade, semiotics offers us models by which we can comprehend the structure and malleable nature of meaning. Thus semiotics has the potential to empower rhetoric albeit rhetoric which, as we have seen, extends beyond the spoken word. The word “semiotics” (the study of signs) is derived from the Greek word *sēmeion* meaning a sign - something which stands for something else. The word “sign” later acquired special meaning in semiotic terminology and attracted precise definitions that defined its function as a way of *understanding* how meaning is established and conveyed.

In semiotics, as with rhetoric, Plato and his pupil Aristotle were the early precursors in this field of study during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE (Cobley & Jansz, 1997:4). Although largely unacknowledged it is difficult to imagine how the works of Plato and Aristotle cannot have been the major, if not sole, inspiration for the development of semiotics down the ages that followed. Plato's reflections on the origins of language in *Cratylus* and Aristotle's consideration of nouns in his *Poetics* and *On Interpretation* provide musings that are striking in their resemblance to the thinking that emerged during the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> centuries through semioticians, such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce (see 1.3.3).

#### 1.3.2 Classical & Medieval beginnings

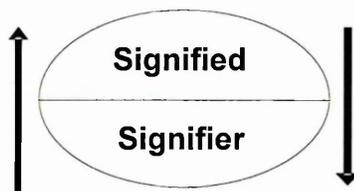
During the Medieval period, in Europe, the advancement of semiotics appears to have owed most to Augustine (354-430 CE). Meier-Oeser (2003:3) considers his assertions and remarks to be “fundamental to the development of medieval semiotics.” Claiming his work to constitute “the only elaborate theory of signs until the 13th century (apart from the original theory of Peter Abelard),” he hails Augustine's doctrine as a “decisive turning point in the history of semiotics.” The basis for such high praise appears to emanate from Augustine's redefinition of the “sign” which, in *De Doctrina Christiana*, assumes two species defined thus:-

- (1) *Natural signs (Signa naturalia) are those which, apart from any intention or desire of using them as signs, do yet lead to their knowledge of something else.*
- (2) *'Given' Signs (Signa data) or Conventional signs [...] are those which living beings mutually exchange in order to show, as well as they can, the feelings of their minds, or their perceptions, or their thoughts. (See Meier-Oeser, 2003:4)*

Despite Meier-Oeser's somewhat eulogistic appraisal, however, Augustine's philosophy remained linguistically focused. Even when he appeared to be on the brink of a wider interpretation of semiotics (as in item 1 above) he continued to express such concepts in linguistic terms. Notwithstanding such self-imposed constraint, nevertheless, it was Augustine's comprehension of what would later be identified as the "linguistic sign" and the "indexical sign" that would eventually lead to and justify the epithet "a turning point in the history of semiotics." When, therefore, during the late 19<sup>th</sup> / early 20<sup>th</sup> century, academics decided to examine the concept of the "sign" once more, they did so by returning to its linguistic foundations.

### 1.3.3 The "modern" linguistic basis of semiotics

Hanson et al (1998:192) observes that "the study of visuals in comparison with the study of language remains in its infancy." Despite such shortcomings, however, concepts such as we have for understanding pictures in visual media, be they still or animated, are considered by most authorities to have been rooted in the first linguistic models propounded by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839 -1914). Occasionally referred to as the "founder-fathers" of semiotics, they each defined the "sign" with a theoretical, linguistic, mechanism that revealed language to be a sophisticated and arbitrary code system for conveying meaning through mental images. Chandler (2002, p18) illustrates the bilateral nature of Saussure's sign model reproduced in Fig.1.6



**Fig.1.6: Saussure's bilateral 'sign'**

In this linguistic model the *signifier* is anything that stands for something else and the *signified* is the notion created in the mind of the receiver. Together they form the "sign". The corollary of this is that a word must be understood to have no intrinsic meaning other than that which is ascribed to it. Thus having no meaning in itself, it becomes a *signifier* only because, by convention, it has been arbitrarily agreed (by a culture or nation etc) that it should represent a given object, abstract state or thought. Or as Lewis Carroll, a contemporary of the period, has Humpty Dumpty say in his 1872 publication of "Through The Looking Glass":-

*When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean –  
neither more nor less.*" (Carroll, 1994:100)

The original thought, however, belongs to Aristotle who, in his work entitled "On Interpretation" writes:-

*Spoken words are symbols of signs of affections or impressions of the soul; written words are the signs of words spoken. As writing, so also is speech not the same for all races of men. But the mental affections themselves, of which these words are primarily signs, are the same for the whole of mankind, as are also the objects of which those affections are representations or likenesses, images, copies.*

(Aristotle in Cooke & Tredennick's translation, 1938:115).

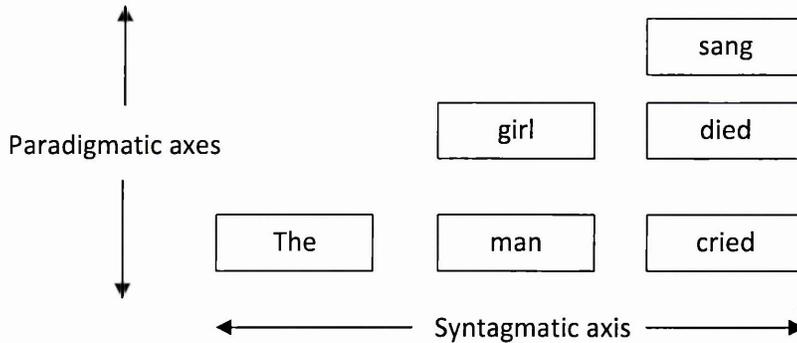
Independently of Saussure, but at about the same time, Charles Sanders Peirce, proposed a similar linguistic model which can be interpreted as a variation on Saussure's theme. Peirce's basic "sign" model, which is triadic, is described by Chandler (*ibid* :32) as comprising:-

1. *The representamen:- the form which the sign takes, (not necessarily material).*
2. *An interpretant:- not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign.*
3. *An object, to which the sign refers.*

Here the *representamen* corresponds approximately to Saussure's *signifier* and the *interpretant* to the *signified*. The *interpretant*, however, has a quality unlike that of the *signified* inasmuch as it is itself deemed to be a sign in the mind of the receiver. Thus Peirce's sign embraces the object of the message being conveyed as part of the sign which, in Saussure's model, is only implied and remains outside of the "sign". There has been, however, much academic

debate about the nature and consequences of applying Peirce's "sign" structure which is beyond the scope of this thesis. In short, Saussure and Peirce devised schematic structures that offered to describe the way in which meaning is conveyed and created. Or, as Whannel is reported to have said (somewhat cynically), "semiotics has a tendency to tell us things we already know in a language we will never understand" (Seiter in Allen, 1992:31).

In a wider context, these "signs" were arranged systematically according to the level at which the sign operated.



**FIG.1.7: 'Sign' relationship**

In the linguistic example (Fig.1.7) it can be seen that, at sentence level, there exist a number of imaginary columns (*paradigmatic axes*) whose components (in this example words) are so similar that they may be substituted for one another in the basic sentence, "The man cried", without destroying its ability to be comprehended ; e.g. "The man sang" or "The girl died" etc. The horizontal, *syntagmatic axis*, comprises signs (in this example words) whose sequence (a sentence) is bound by the rules of English grammar.

This linguistic example, taken from Chandler (2002:80) could just as easily be reworked at a lower level where letters of the alphabet comprise the signs of the *paradigmatic axes* that would compile a single word on the *syntagmatic axis*. Seiter (*ibid* p46) describes it like this:-

*A syntagm is an ordering of signs, a rule governed combination of signs in a determined sequence. Syntagms are normally linear and must follow a strict order. (Seiter in Allen 992:46)*

The rule-bound nature of the syntagmatic axis implies an agreed convention and this reveals the fundamental principle that meaning can only be conveyed

by “signs” that have previously been arbitrarily established. When this principle was seen to hold for other than linguistic subjects, therefore, semiotics took a major step forward.

#### 1.3.4 The evolution of pictorial sign classification.

Chandler (*ibid*:14) observes that since the 1970s semiotics has become increasingly less Saussurean and that “whereas Saussure emphasized the arbitrary nature of the (linguistic) sign, most semioticians stress that signs differ in how arbitrary/conventional (or by contrast 'transparent') they are” (Chandler, *ibid*:36).

There seems little doubt that Charles Sanders Peirce was instrumental in eventually breaking free of linguistic limitations. Thus he went on to develop the taxonomy of typologies that would ultimately lead to the sign's application in illustrative and tele-visual media. Paraphrasing Chandler (*ibid*:36-37) he describes Peirce's typologies (in decreasing order of conventionality), as:-

1. *Symbol / Symbolic: Where the signifier does not resemble the signified so that the relationship must be learned i.e. language, Morse code, traffic lights, national flags etc.*
2. *Icon / Iconic: Where the signifier actually resembles or imitates the signified, (but generic rather than specific) e.g. scale models, portraits, imitative gestures, recognizably looking, tasting or smelling like etc.*
3. *Index / Indexical: Where the signifier is not arbitrary but is directly connected in some way to the object e.g., a sundial may indicate the time of day. “Natural signs” are exemplified by smoke (indicating fire) thunder (a storm), footprints (a person / animal) etc., or “signals” such as a knock on the door (a visitor), a phone ringing, (a caller) or recordings such as a photograph, film, video / television shot or pointers such as a pointing finger / signpost.*

The way had now been paved for the introduction of what Roland Barthes (1915-1980) termed “denotative” and “connotative” signs, which would expand the scope of semiotics even further. Importantly, the refining of sign categories complemented and advanced Peirce's indexical and iconic signs in allowing for a “second order” of signs that revealed *hidden* meaning or what Barthes termed “myth”. Bignell describes Barthes' “myth” as meaning:

. . . things used as signs to communicate a social and political message about the world. The message always involves the distortion or forgetting of alternative messages, so that myth appears to be simply true, rather than one of a number of different possible messages. (Bignell, 2002:21)

The following example serves to clarify the distinction between the *denotative* and the *connotative* sign. Fig.1.8 comprises a combination of two signs which, by Peirce's classification are iconic signs, comprising marks on a piece of paper that represent, by resemblance, (i) a segment of coiled barbed wire and (ii) a



Fig.1.8

lighted candle. In terms of Barthes' classification and assuming no other meaning could be attributed, they are "denotative" signs (first order). Yet, as many will know, these signs *can* have a wider *cultural* meaning. For when combined, as in Fig.1.8, they constitute the emblem of *Amnesty International* representing the pitiful plight of many "prisoners of conscience." Thus there is a second meaning beyond that actually depicted and which Barthes accommodates with a classification known as "connotative" (a second order sign). By Barthes' notation, therefore, these signs not only "denote" a candle and piece of barbed wire but, additionally, "connote," the symbolic "myth" of *Amnesty International*. Importantly, for the research to be undertaken, Barthes, in his discussion of the *denoted image*, observes that:-

*the distinction between the literal message and the symbolic message is operational; we never encounter (at least in advertising) a literal message in a pure state.*

(Barthes in Heath, 1977:42)

Both Chandler (2002:142) and Cobley & Jansz (1997:51) attempt to explain the construction that delivers the connotative sign but it is the Cobley and Jansz diagram that provides the clearest understanding of the transition from first to second order sign that will now be examined.

1. signifier	2. signified
3. denotative sign	
4. CONNOTATIVE SIGN	5. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIED
6. CONNOTATIVE SIGN	

Fig.1.9: Barthes's Sign Functioning diagram (Cobley & Jansz, 1997:51)

Fig.1.9 shows how *denotative* and *connotative* signs derive from Saussure's original linguistic model (Fig.1.5) comprising the "signifier" and "signified." The *denotative* sign (3) thus comprises a signifier (1) and the signified (2). The *denotative* sign (3), however, also forms the *connotative* signifier (4) which, with the *connotative* signified (5), forms the *connotative* sign (6)

Applying the notation to the Fig 1.8 example, therefore, the drawing of the candle and barbed wire segment on a piece of paper is the "signifier" (1). The meaning initially established in one's mind is the "signified" (2), a candle and piece of barbed wire (thus it is denotative). This couplet, (1 & 2), then constitute Saussure's linguistic sign which Barthes terms a first order "denotative" sign (3 above). The denotative sign, however, now becomes a "connotative signifier" (4) that prompts a mental recollection of *Amnesty International* thus it is connotative), which Barthes terms the "connotative signified" (5). This couplet finally constitutes a second order connotative sign (6). Incidentally the barbed wire and candle which, by Peirce's classification, we assumed, when in isolation, were *denotative* (iconic) signs are, in fact, not so to everyone. To many the barbed wire may *connote* an association with prison camps whilst the lighted candle may have religious *connotations* of vigils and intellectual enlightenment. Thus the potential for complexity in the connotative sign becomes apparent as one peels back its levels.

A sign acts *connotatively*, of course, only for those who have knowledge of the sign's particular convention. The most significant aspect of these second order signs, however, is their ability to convey what Barthes terms "myth." "Myth", he says, "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 in Lavers, 1973:114). It is "myth" that constructs the rhetoric, therefore, that the author or employer of the sign wants the audience to receive. Broms & Gahmberg put this most succinctly:-

*Symbols and myths are values clothed as a picture, an image. Abstract ethical values such as "good" and "bad" have little charm, except to moral philosophers, but if those values appear in the form of an image (e.g., good = St. George, or bad = the Dragon), they suddenly start to work on the imaginations of great masses of people. These value laden images are myths.*

(Broms & Gahmberg, 1983:482-495)

The speed with which one's brain recognises, accesses, and recalls the connoted meaning, however, is very rapid and Barthes, emphasises that:-

*The process of connotation is so "natural" and so immediate when it is experienced that it is almost impossible to separate denotation and connotation, [moreover] identification of what signs depict, especially pictorial ones, happens so quickly that it is easy to forget that it has happened at all.*

(see Cobley & Jansz, 1997:50)

That such a process should occur so *naturally* as to render it almost subliminal is a very important observation and has great bearing on the way in which cultural norms are reinforced through the medium of television (see De Fleur in Fiske & Hartley 1.2.5 p.46). Consistent with Barthes' observation is Allen's proposition, which opens up interesting avenues of exploration in suggesting that:-

*Semiotics has shown us [that] the naturalness of our relationship with television is illusory. Television [...] constructs representations of the world based on complex sets of conventions - conventions whose operations are largely hidden by their transparency. Like television itself most of the time, these conventions are so familiar in their effects that we don't notice them.*

(Allen, 1992:7)

Whilst Meier-Oeser, therefore, considered Augustine to have provided the "turning point" in semiotics, with the passage of time, Peirce and Barthes would now appear to be fitting candidates. For, in recognising the significance of Augustine's and Saussure's early *linguistic* work, it was they who went on to develop a semiotic theory that opened up the way for comprehending the far more complex field of *illustrative* meaning and communication.

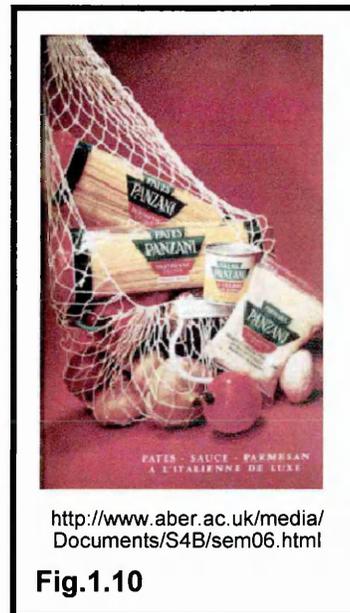
There are, however, two important points to note. First, the new signs did not *displace* the linguistic signs but, rather, embraced and *supplemented* them. This becomes quite evident in the classic Panzani advertisement employed by Barthes to demonstrate the nature of connotative signs in which he says:-

*The image [Fig.1.10] immediately yields a first message whose substance is linguistic; its supports are the caption, which is marginal, and the labels, these being inserted into the natural disposition of the scene, 'en abyme'.*

He continues:-

....the sign 'Panzani' gives not simply the name of the firm but also, by its assonance, an additional signified, that of 'Italianicity.' The linguistic message is thus twofold [...] :denotational and connotational. (Barthes, 1977:33)

Secondly Barthes' new signs were directed solely at pictures that were both static and silent. With an increased taxonomy of signs, however, it was probably Christian Metz (1931-1993) who was foremost in pioneering a way of deciphering meaning conveyed by the moving image in film.



### 1.3.5 In search of a methodology for semiotic analysis

Of particular concern to Metz was the difficulty of representing the smallest complete picture unit and he concentrated all his effort on this problem although it was the cinema that was the focus of his attention. He concluded, nevertheless, that “the cinema is so different from language that we must be wary in applying linguistic theory to it” [and] “that there were no smallest units in the cinema. Instead, he felt it must be analysed at the level of the shot, which he called its *largest minimum segment*” (Seiter, *ibid*:45). From here he went on to identify five communication channels: *image, written language, voice, music, and sound effects* but, as Seiter says (*ibid*:43), “unfortunately, he never analysed television in the same meticulous way he did cinema.” It is plain, therefore, that “a semiotics of television provides us with a set of problems different to those one encounters in studying written or spoken language” [for] “images are already combinations of several different signs at once and involve a complex set of denotations and connotations” (Seiter, *ibid*:42-43), or as Allen puts it:-

*Given the capacity of television to "carry" so many other symbol systems (verbal language, gesture, music, graphics, photography, cinema, etc.), perhaps it would be more precise to say that television represents multiple and ever-changing points of intersection for those systems.* (Allen, *ibid*:6)

An analytical methodology for television, therefore, seems illusive.

Fiske & Hartley (1978) explore various genres of television broadcasting and actually demonstrate the case (but not the methodology) for using semiotics as a means of comprehending *television* images. They too are drawn into considering what they term "the smallest signifying unit" which they say is "generally known as the *seme*."<sup>M</sup> It is disappointing, therefore, to find that they make no attempt to define it and, although, a series of experiments are recounted (Baggaley & Duck, 1976), it remains a mystery as to what a *seme* actually is. Despite falling short of providing suitable semiotic research methodologies, nevertheless, Fiske & Hartley do begin to suggest some of the rhetoric that awaits analysis. Introducing us to "anamnesis," they describe a technique whereby the audience are invited (usually implicitly in visual media) to recall what they already "know" about the subject matter (Fiske & Hartley, 1978:135). "Anamnesis", however, is nothing new to the rhetorician and rhetor for, as we have seen (1.1.2), it was a key objective and device pertaining to the 1st canon of rhetoric (invention) as proposed by Roman rhetoricians such as Cicero and Quintilian, building on Aristotle's earlier work (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995:22). Chandler (2002), however, writing much later than Fiske & Hartley, provides a sound basis for semiotic analysis but leaves the relationship between semiotics and television as largely assumed and, once again, demonstrable methodology is lacking. As he admits:-

*. . . there is remarkably little consensus among contemporary theorists regarding the scope of the subject, core concepts or methodological tools.* (Chandler, 2002:xvi)

Seiter (1992) exemplifies this, perhaps, in appearing undecided. Initially this author applauds structuralism saying:-

*semiotics and structuralism help us to see connections between fields of study that are normally divided among different academic departments in the university. Thus they are specially suited to the study of television.* (Seiter, 1992:32)

The logic of that remark is difficult to follow. Later, however, Seiter criticises the rôle of structuralism in remarking that:-

*The classical structuralist does not look beyond the text to "real" readers, viewers and listeners to verify whether others find the same kinds of meanings that s/he does. Television studies,*

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<sup>M</sup> c/f the 'meme' as a unit of cultural transmission in Dawkins, R., (1989:192): *The Selfish Gene*. [2nd Ed]. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

*over the past fifteen years has (sic) become increasingly pre-occupied with this omission and with other limitations of semiotics and structuralism.* (Seiter, 1992:60)

Finally concluding that:-

*The flaw in the structuralist model, as poststructuralists have been quick to point out, is that it is inevitably idealist in the philosophical sense that ideas are seen as relatively independent, primary forces that determine reality, rather than as the products of human beings in particular material circumstances.* (Seiter, 1992:63)

Chandler (*ibid*:12), warns of the “danger of trying to force all media into a linguistic framework.” “Contemporary social semiotics,” he says, “have moved beyond the structuralist focus on signifying systems as languages” which, when one considers the advances brought about by Barthes and Metz is wholly credible. So could *poststructuralist* thinking offer a way forward? There appears to be no categorical list of poststructuralist theorists but names that recur are Foucault, McQuail, Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva, and Barthes (in his later works). Of these Foucault is arguably the most prominent. According to Hall (1997:51), the production of knowledge for Foucault “is always crossed with questions of power and the body; and this greatly expands the scope of what is involved in representation.” Even with post-structural advances, nevertheless, it seems there are no clearly developed methodologies. McQuail (1987:202) said that, “the systematic analysis of audiovisual languages is still at an early stage.” Four years later Jensen & Jankowski (1991:37) observed that “it is, indeed, striking that research methods have not been able to match the proliferation of visual media in the contemporary media environment.” Then, as recently as 2002, Chandler (*ibid*:7) was still able to observe that, “as yet, semiotics involves no widely agreed theoretical assumptions, models or empirical methodologies.” The television industry, moreover, according to J Bennett (1997:51), is “not very sophisticated in terms of its qualitative research methods, and available data on the contents of science programming and audience response to it are not conclusive.” Most recent of all is an assessment from Berger (2005:35) who believes that the “problem with semiotic analysis, especially of television and televised texts, is that a strong theoretical foundation is lacking that would facilitate

work in this area.” He considers that “most of the work done in semiotics in recent years has been concerned with film, not television,” and “without a strong well articulated body of theoretical criticism,” he cautions, “work in applied semiotic analysis of television texts must remain tentative.”

Such paucity of consensual methodology and the pertaining exploratory nature of semiotic analysis surely invite consideration of new approaches and it is, perhaps, Berger who, despite his misgivings, is pointing the way. In an otherwise positive appraisal, he withdraws from the challenge by offering constructive advice to those who *would* pursue semiotic analysis in the televisual field. His regrettably short section on *Semiotic Analysis* (Berger, 2005:3-40) provides a valuable introduction to undertaking a semiotic analysis of a television programme in which he includes a key discussion of the ideas of Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp (1895–1970), a Russian structuralist.

First published in Russian in 1928, and held by some to be a major theoretical breakthrough, *Morphology of the Folktale* by Propp (1968) was, in fact, not to be read by Europeans for another 30 years until, in 1958, it was first translated into English. Although the *subject* of Propp's study is not directly relevant to this thesis it is the potential of his *analytical methodology* as a model for other applications which promises most.

Propp's intention was clearly to produce a “scientific” taxonomy that would force a meaningful way of comparing folk tales for he was persuaded that “correct classification is one of the first steps in a scientific description” (Propp, 1968:5). He, therefore, began by doing what, many years later, Christian Metz was to do with film (recall 1.3.5., p.46/47). Both Metz and Propp believed that, by establishing the smallest component of meaning, a valid taxonomy and hence sustainable means of comparison would be found. Thus Propp resolved “to show that study on the basis of small component parts is the correct method of investigation” (Propp, 1968:11). In so doing he determined that the smallest narrative unit resided in the “functions” of the “*dramatis personae*”. Accordingly he established a catalogue of 31 prime

*functions* with a great many sub-species demonstrating as he did so how they could be used to categorise types of Folk Tale (Propp, 1968:25-65).

Interestingly, for semioticians, Alan Dundes, (in Propp, 1968:xi-xvii) in introducing this second edition, recognises Propp's structural methodology as one that employs *syntagmatic* and *paradigmatic* axes. Propp, however, does not apply such nomenclature to his axes which are, in all but name, those which were propounded by Ferdinand Saussure some 12 years earlier. In his 1894 manuscript "Course in General Linguistics," published posthumously in 1916, Saussure had already devised such axes to serve as a structure for the analysis of *text*. Could Propp have been inspired by Saussure? There is no evidence of this. What Propp refers to as "the law of sequence" (Propp, 1968:22), nevertheless, is certainly an allusion to the syntagmatic axis and, although somewhat less categorical, the declaration that "the absence of certain features" (in the syntagmatic chain) "does not change the order of the rest (*ibid*)," surely implies the presence of paradigmatic axes. Whilst Dundes, in his introduction to the second edition acknowledges these structural features it is, nevertheless, most odd that he appears to overlook this resemblance to the earlier work of Saussure. Instead, he chooses (appropriately, nevertheless) to contrast and compare the manner in which Propp employs such structures with that of Levi-Strauss (Dundes in Propp, 1968:xi-xiii).

Significantly Dundes muses over the potential of Propp's analytical methodology in other applications, including television (Dundes in Propp, 1968: xiv) but stops short of exploring the implication.

The syntagmatic / paradigmatic nature of Propp's structural approach, born of his intention to create a "scientific" taxonomy, is also recognised by Berger (2005:18-19) who, more perceptively it seems, *does* acknowledge Saussure's pioneering work in this field. Prompted by Dundes, no doubt, Berger also proposes that Propp's ideas can be readily adopted and adapted to films and television (Berger, 2005:20). Berger, nevertheless, also draws back from pursuing the potential of Propp's analysis for use with television. Tantalisingly

he offers those researchers in semiotics who *would* take up the challenge five fundamental questions (each with subsidiary questions) that they might consider asking themselves (Berger, 2005:35-36) namely:-

- *Isolate and analyze* (which are) *the important signs in your text* (?)
- *What is the paradigmatic structure of the text?*
- *What is the syntagmatic structure of the text?*
- *How does the medium of television affect the text?*
- *What contributions have theorists made that can be applied?*

As with most literature in this field the use of the word “text” is not to be taken literally. Rather, it should be understood, in this context, to relate to any vehicle by which a message (implicit or explicit) may be conveyed through the medium of television be it linguistic, diagrammatic, filmic, musical etc.

Having revealed the common paradigmatic and syntagmatic features, of Propp's approach to the analysis of narrative in Russian folk tales and Saussure's sign modelling in linguistics, during the pursuit of *semiotic analysis*, one may ask if there is a rhetorical relationship. Indeed there is and it resides within the second of the five canons, previously elucidated (1.1.2.1). Kennedy (1991:257), in his notes on Aristotle's work “On Rhetoric,” discusses the canon of *arrangement* saying that “an effective speech follows a structural pattern” and, recalls how that “the first teachers of rhetoric in the Greek world [...] seemed to have recommended a “set order of parts.” Though there is some variation in the number of parts that the canon of *arrangement* contained, Cicero (Cicero in Henderson [Ed],1954:107) observed that, “The most complete and perfect argument, then, is that which is comprised of five parts. . .” With five principles (paradigms) which the rhetor should address and a prescribed sequence for their delivery (syntagm) this, therefore, was fundamentally nothing less than a *narrative* structure! Narrative's two-dimensional structure of paradigm and syntagm, therefore, delivers a common denominator capable of semiotic and rhetorical interrogation. In bringing together Propp, Barthes and Metz, under the astute questioning of Berger we find good reason to suppose that a methodology might be devised with which to establish if Classical Rhetoric has an expression in television advertising.

## 1.4 Summary

### 1.4.1 Classical Rhetoric

In the preceding review of literature the origin and nature of classical rhetoric, as devised for the spoken and written word, was examined. As a structured means of persuasive speaking or writing, it appeared to be most effectively employed when practised in accordance with five canonical precepts formulated by the classical scholars Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian.

### 1.4.2 Television

In the knowledge that the *raison d'être* of television advertising constituted a deliberate attempt to influence, strategies that targeted specific audiences became manifest. Television's gender influence found support from many authors although the *Women & Work Commission's* finding, that television rôle models had an influence on girls, turned out to be misleading in *not* observing that it had an almost equal effect on boys. Whereas, in the press negative images of science were seen to be *direct* (allusions to Frankenstein etc) in television such negative imagery was *implied*. The influential role of culture, as defined by Junker, found a resonance with Worth together with Fiske & Hartley who both considered television to be a cultural influence in line with what amounted to a constructivist interpretation.

Although the capacity of television to influence its audience was seen to offer a potential to accommodate the canonical structure of classical rhetoric, it was noted that certain limitations and differences pertained.

### 1.4.3 Semiotics & Narrative

Literature examined earlier in this review (1.3.1) found its linguistic origins of semiotics, like that of rhetoric, also lay in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE Greece. The development of semiotic theory was found to be on the ascendant in Europe during Medieval times and by the middle of the nineteenth century was able to show how the spoken and written word synthesised meaning. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century semiotic theory made another advance and Barthes was prominent in showing how the principles of semiotic analysis could be

harnessed to interpret both static illustration and the artefacts that adorn our everyday life. He showed, most importantly, how meaning may possess denotative and connotative dimensions.

Semiotic methodology for the analysis of the moving picture proved elusive and it was Propp's taxonomy of folktales which prompted some authors to speculate about the possibility of applying a narrative concept. Salient features of Propp's structural analysis were the identification of the smallest component of meaning and the use of paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes, used (seemingly unbeknown to Propp) many years earlier by Saussure in his "Course in General Linguistics." Reflection on the paradigmatic and syntagmatic foundations of semiotic analysis also found resonance in rhetoric's second canon of *arrangement*

Metz, who sought a unit for film analysis, pioneered the attempt to develop semiotic notation for the moving image. Applying a largely linguistic philosophy to deconstructing film he concluded that the only effective way in which to analyse it was at the level of the "shot."

## 1.5 Conclusion

This review of literature investigated the origins of classical rhetoric and semiotics whilst also examining television and Propp's work in narrative through folk-tales. In so doing it found reason to explore the nature of a tripartite relationship between classical rhetoric, semiotics and narrative structure. Accordingly this thesis sought to address the principal research question:-

(1) *Does classical rhetoric, once devised for vocal and written delivery, have a visual expression in television advertising?*

Given, moreover, the apparent propensity for scientists to assume stereotypical images in the media, suggested by Steinke, to wit:-

*In the mass media, images of women scientists and engineers often accentuate stereotypes of scientists and engineers through unrealistic, limited, unflattering portrayals*

(Steinke, 2004, 13 (1):7).

this thesis also sought to address a subsidiary research question:-

(2) *If classical rhetoric is found to have an expression in television advertising how is such rhetoric employed in the portrayal of science and scientists?*

It then remained for these questions to be set in a *visual* context, and where one might most expect to find both, devices of persuasion, and the depiction of scientists and their science - the television commercial. Thus it was proposed that a methodology should be constructed which, being founded on an appropriate communication model, would most efficiently yield the answers to such questions.

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# CHAPTER 2

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

### 2.1 Introduction

Emerging from the Literature Review (Chapter 1) were research questions which sought to reveal if Rhetoric had a visual expression in television advertising and, if so, in what manner scientists and their science might be portrayed. Notwithstanding the growing sophistication in the manner and modes of our communication brought about by technological advances, nevertheless, it remains for each of us to establish meaning that is peculiar to ourselves. In any communication, however, it is the prime objective that some meanings also become meanings *shared* betwixt communicator and recipient. The degree to which that objective is ever achievable is the subject of philosophical musing and theorists have produced many models some of which are examined here.

Given the complexity of the human brain and the various communication media it is not surprising to find that there is no *universal* model capable of representing all modes of communication. A face-to-face conversation is not the same as a telephone conversation. A handwritten letter differs from an e-mail whilst a radio broadcast is far removed from that of a television transmission. For this reason the selection or adaptation of a model befitting the specific channel of communication under research here was deemed to be most efficacious. This chapter considers, therefore, some of the better known models that have marked the development of communication theory over the past 60 years and evaluated how they could assist in situating the research methodologies that were finally directed at televisual communication, in advertisements.

## 2.1.1 Situating methodology: review of communication models

### 2.1.1.1 Lasswell (1948)

This "formula" was devised in 1948 by Harold D Lasswell, a sociologist. Described by Chomsky (1991:20), as 'the founder of the modern field of communications,' his formula was intended specifically for use in mass communication and propaganda (Underwood, 2003) (Fig. 2.1).

<b>Who?</b>	<b>Says what?</b>	<b>In what channel?</b>	<b>To whom?</b>	<b>With what effect?</b>
<b>Communicator</b>	<b>Message</b>	<b>Channel</b>	<b>Receiver</b>	<b>Effect</b>
●	●	●	●	●
<b>Control Research</b>	<b>Content Research</b>	<b>Medium Research</b>	<b>Audience Research</b>	<b>Effects Research</b>

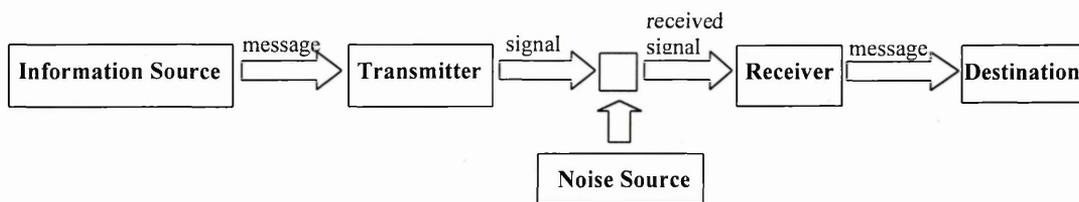
**FIG. 2.1: Lasswell Formula (1948)**

Termed a "transition model," because of its preoccupation with the movement of the message, it comprises five parts and is both rudimentary and unidirectional. Technological references are absent and it clearly emphasises the central rôle of people. Its interrogative format places the onus for deciding how it will be applied upon the user thereby demonstrating its efficacy as a device for *prompting* the construction of more complex models. The strength, and to a certain extent weakness, of this model lies in its non-assertive simplicity and flexibility.

Communication in this model is seen only as a one-way phenomenon in which the sender's message is merely conveyed rather than its meaning being arbitrated. Recalling the formula's original propaganda function one might reasonably conclude that these characteristics were sufficient. A major drawback of this model to most applications is its lack of feedback.

### 2.1.1.2 Shannon-Weaver (1948/9)

The *Shannon-Weaver* model is derived from the *Lasswell Formula*. Unveiled one year later it too was transitional and unidirectional comprising five elements (Fig. 2.2) (Underwood, 2003).



**FIG. 2.2: Shannon-Weaver Model (1948/9)**

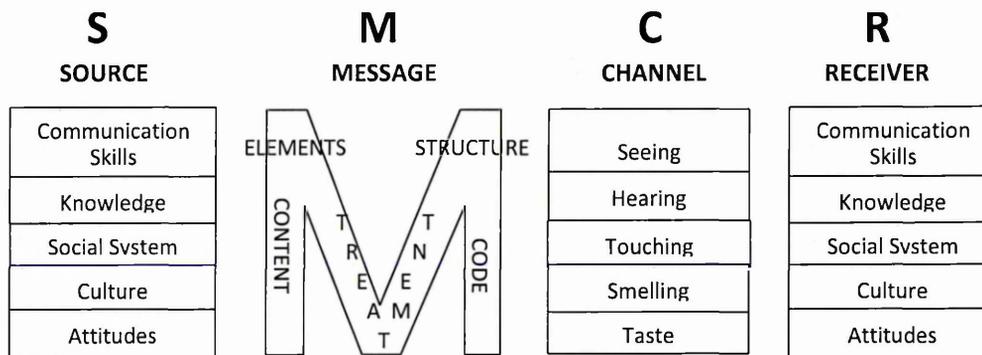
Unlike the *Lasswell Formula* the *Shannon-Weaver* model does not prompt responses but purports, by its prescriptive wording, to be a model of the act of communication. The strength of this model resides in the "noise source," which goes some way to allowing that messages may mutate during their transition. The possibilities that this might have opened up in terms of resolving the dichotomy inherent in the *transmitted* as opposed to the *received* meaning of the message, nevertheless, are severely inhibited. For by employing terminology that suggested items of technological hardware rather than people, it discouraged development towards the key rôle that constructivists would later play in describing how meaning is established as a personal construct. This technological bias is hardly surprising since Shannon was no philosopher but an electrical engineer, mathematician and research scientist. Between 1941 and 1958 he worked at the *Bell Telephone Laboratories* and was concerned only with finding solutions to the technology of transmitting the message. The model, which was first introduced by Shannon in *The Bell System Technical Journals* of July and October, 1948, was later published together with Weaver by the University of Illinois, in 1949.

The *Shannon-Weaver* transition model, which is plainly not concerned with the human factor, favours the *transit* of the message over the *nature* of the message. This feature not only explains the failure to consider feedback, previously lacking in the *Lasswell Formula*, but also the absence of an equivalent for *Lasswell's* explicit question "with what effect?"

#### 2.1.1.3 Berlo (1960)

Around 1960 more refined models appear and *Berlo's S-M-C-R* model (Fig. 2.3) (Underwood, 2003) finds no place for the technological treatment

employed by *Shannon and Weaver*. With a "channel" comprising our five senses, *Berlo* unambiguously defines communication as a human activity. By affording human beings a central rôle *Berlo*, and others after him were, *ipso facto*, compelled to consider more profoundly the influences external to both the "source" and "receiver" of the message. Thus one finds the "noise source," seen in the earlier *Shannon-Weaver* model, now being comprehensively reinterpreted by *Berlo* as "communication skills," "knowledge," "social system," "culture" and "attitudes." In positing the concept that meaning had a malleable quality, however, the message was rendered conditional and far less predictable than previous models might have implied. The propensity of human beings to fashion the meaning of the message at its *conception* and refashion it at its *reception* was now in plain view. There appears to be no evidence that *Berlo* belonged to the *constructivist* school of thinking but his model is consistent with the direction in which communication theory was moving at that time. The facility for establishing arbitrated meaning was, nevertheless, still lacking.

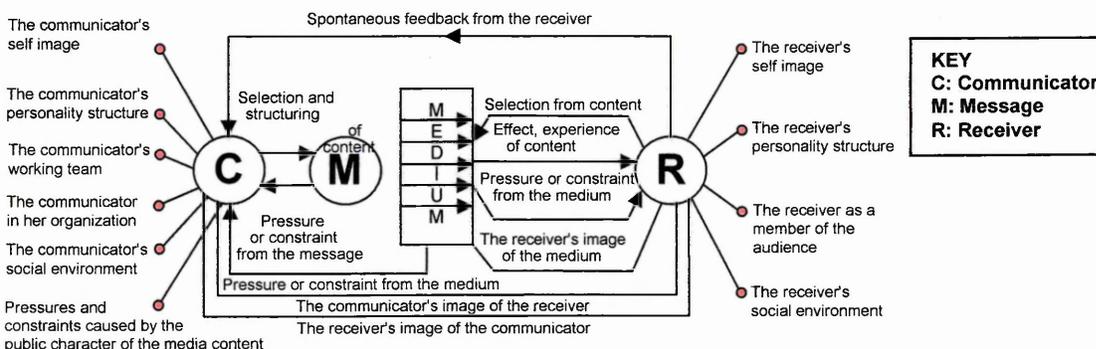


**FIG. 2.3: Berlo's Model (1960)**

The fifth element, "with what effect," found in the *Lasswell Formula* is again absent in Berlo's four part model but the five factors ascribed to both the "source" and the "receiver" might well be considered to provoke that unasked question. Although this model can be regarded as more accurate it remains a unidirectional transition model and, like its predecessors, continues to lack feedback.

### 2.1.1.4 Maletzke (1963)

In comparison with the simplicity of earlier unidirectional models *Maletzke's Model of the Mass Media* (1963) is markedly more sophisticated and takes a wider view (Fig.2.4) (Underwood, 2003). It is, however, specialised inasmuch as it performs a media function. Interestingly its language is couched in terms of the singular which, subtly casts the "communicator" as an individual "in her organisation" and the "receiver" as an individual "member of the audience."



**FIG. 2.4: Maletzke's Mass Media Model (1963)**

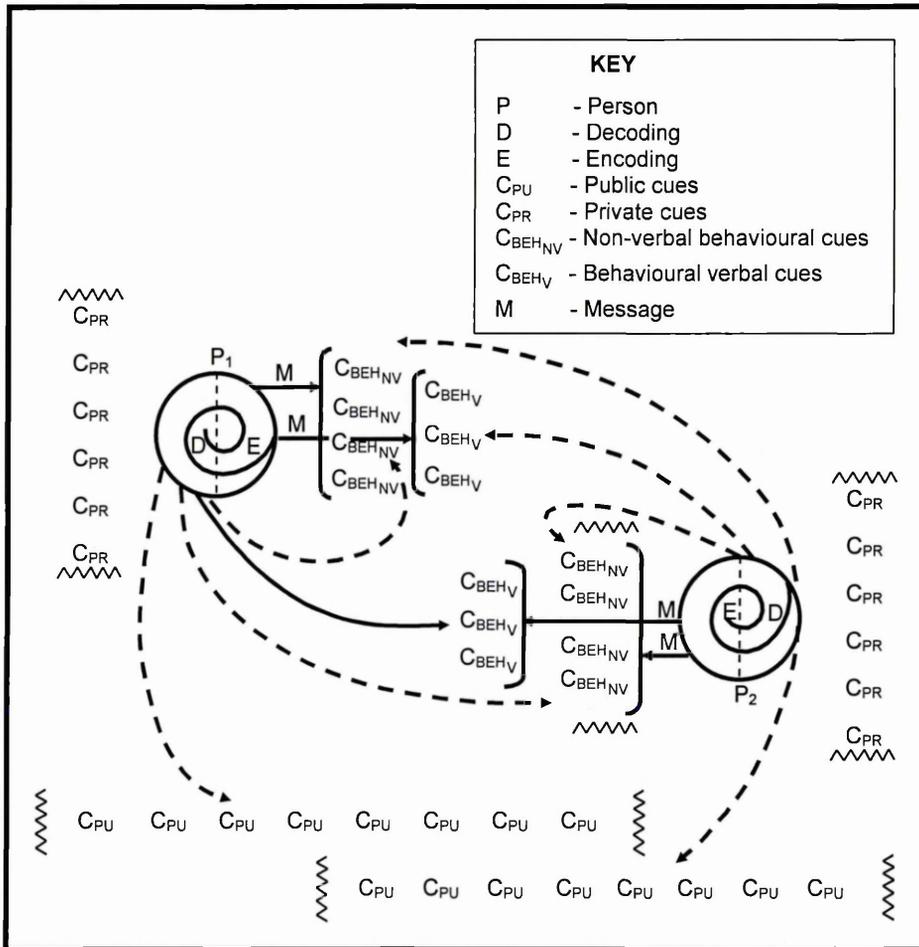
Like *Berlo*, *Maletzke* identifies external factors impacting on both "communicators" ("source" in *Berlo*) and "receivers" with terms that, in part, define similar spheres of influence. Where *Berlo* has "social system" *Maletzke* has "social environment." Similarly *Berlo's* "attitudes" might be equated to *Maletzke's* "self image" and "personality structure." "Communication skills" and "knowledge" given in *Berlo's* model could, perhaps, be taken as implied by *Maletzke* but the all-pervasive category of "culture," given by *Berlo*, which is somewhat open to interpretation (i.e. racial, political, religious etc), *Maletzke*, oddly, ignores. *Maletzke*, however, takes a media orientated view, not considered by *Berlo* by suggesting that the "working team," "organization" and "audience" may all impact on the "communicator" or "receiver" as an individual.

What unifies both *Berlo's* and *Maletzke's* models is the conception that human beings transmit and interpret messages under the influence of the surroundings in which they are or envisage themselves to be. That which

distinguishes *Maletzke* from *Berlo* and earlier communication modellers is the introduction of feedback loops by *Maletzke* rendering his model bi-directional and far more representative of the act of communication (*media* communication in *Maletzke's* case).

### 2.1.1.5 Barnlund (1970)

Termed "transactional," due to its interpersonal nature, *Barnlund's* model (1970) deals *solely* with human beings (Fig. 2.5).



**FIG. 2.5: Barnlund's Transactional Model (1970)**

The "channel" or "medium" of communication met in previous models does not figure here. With sweeping curves instead of straight lines it is visually stimulating and organic, engendering a feeling of fluidity such that one can almost see two people locked in the act of communication (Fig. 2.5). Like the *Maletzke* model it embraces the concept of feedback, which is a totally

integral feature of this model - without it there would *be* no model. Additionally, it considers behavioural displays (verbal and non-verbal) and sub-divides communication cues into "private" and "public." Thomlison (2000) considers the "transactional model" to be the "current evolutionary development of basic interpersonal communication models" and believes . . .

*interpersonal communication is a dynamic, process-oriented activity, in which the two participants are simultaneously sending and receiving messages.*"  
Thomlison (2000)

Citing Anderson and Ross (1994), he records that. . .

*encoding and decoding are not alternating sub-processes of communication, [...] but are mutually dependent, each contributing to the meaning the communicators are building together.*  
Anderson and Ross (1994:81-82)

Thomlison (2000), in reading this model, describes an engagement in which meaning can be arbitrated and is convincing inasmuch as one's empirical experience tends to support its truth. Yet despite this advance *Barnlund's* model is disappointing. For with language reminiscent of the *Shannon-Weaver* model it erodes its lively visual impression by assigning to human beings mechanical functions such as "encoding" and "decoding."

External influences, present in both *Berlo's* and *Maletzke's* models, are, here, conspicuous by their absence. Notwithstanding that this close focus may be deliberate, it is by placing its communicators in such a vacuum that its useful application is severely curtailed. This treatment is also a little unexpected when one considers that constructivism was being heavily influenced by cognitive development theory at this time.

### 2.1.2 Evaluation of models

The models discussed show that, over time, communication theorists have become generally more discerning and their models more complex and specific in their terminology. Danesi (Danesi in Colon, 1995) tells us that communication theorists generally focus more on the study of message-making as a process, whereas semioticians centre their attention more on what a message *means* and on how it *creates* meaning. In the current

research it was this latter aspect which was of special significance and so models which were sympathetic to this understanding were favoured.

*Lasswell's Formula* encourages customisation with its interrogative structure. Its unidirectional communication path, moreover, matches that between the type of television advertisements that this thesis examines and their audience whilst allowing the areas of research to be easily accommodated thus:-

Lasswell Formula	Research Area
Who?	Advertiser
Says what?	TV commercial message
In what channel?	Television Broadcasting
To whom?	Television Audience
With what effect?	Consumer Demand

**FIG. 2.6: Research areas accommodated by the Lasswell Formula**

The questions put by the *Lasswell Formula*, therefore, delivered the basis of a sound framework on which to locate the research areas and required only that the devices needed to *move* the "message" and inform the research methodologies be identified.

The *Shannon-Weaver* model shares the same basic unidirectional structure as the *Lasswell Formula* but by its definitive language is, in effect, already a customisation of the *Lasswell Formula* albeit as a technological construct. The facility for investigating message distortion through its inclusion of a "noise" element is attractive, given the rhetorical nature of the research subject, but the device lacks viability due to its mid-transit positioning and its vagueness. The issue is also addressed far more effectively by later models. These grounds disqualified the use of this model for the current research.

The *Berlo* and *Maletzke* models evince, by their terminology, that successful communication is dependent on the environment and life experience of its human communicants. The detail of this terminology, moreover, provides a means by which the message can be moved. This accords with the researcher's view that classical rhetoric is culturally situated and relies, implicitly, on *constructivist* learning theory. These models, therefore, found favour. The reflexive feedback loops and media disposition of the *Maletzke* model, however, portray and invite a wider understanding of the communication process in general and the television context in particular. Compared with the unidirectional *Berlo* model the *Maletzke* model it was considered the more worthy of the two in helping to situate this research.

*Barnlund's model* is centred firmly on what occurs during a dialogue or conversation between two people to the exclusion of any exterior influences that might act on the participants. Although Thomlison, cites Anderson and Ross (1994:81-82) in referring to "the meaning the communicators are building together" this model provides no intimation as to what the factors involved in arbitrating such meaning might be. It has little to say about the way in which the message may impact on the recipient and represents a degree of homogeneity linking the sender and receiver of the message which does *not* pertain between the television advertisers and audiences under consideration in this study.<sup>a</sup> This model was, therefore, deemed inappropriate for the current research application.

### 2.1.3 The Television Matrix Model

Since the prime concern of this study was the discrete nature of classical rhetoric in television advertising, rather than the communication *route*, it was decided to represent communication in television advertising with a hybrid of two of the models discussed. The hybrid model incorporated the basic structure of the *Lasswell Formula*, customised as shown in Fig. 2.6, but drew on the categories which *Maletzke* portrayed as influencing the

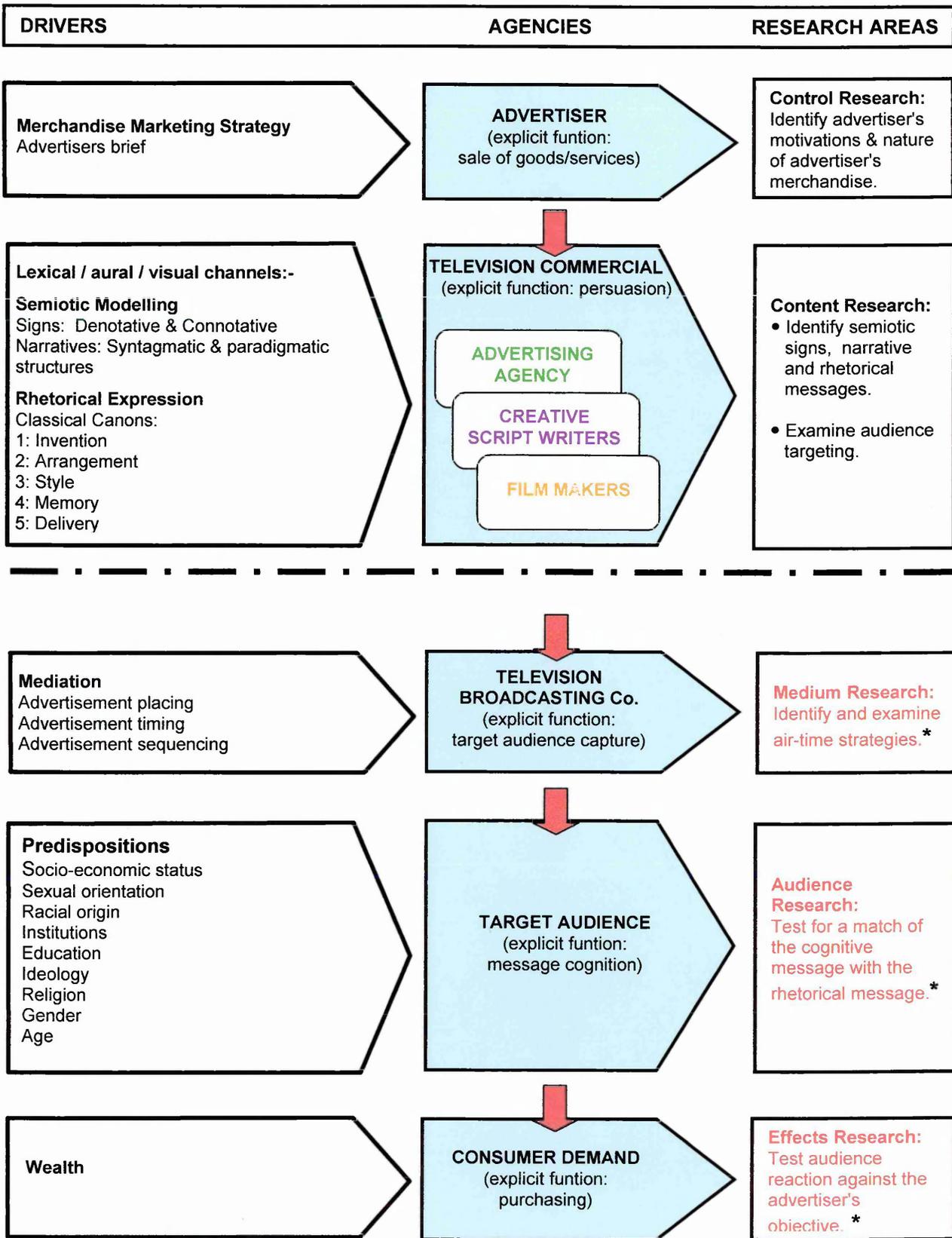
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<sup>a</sup> Commercials inviting bids or purchases through the use of other channels of communication (telephone / e-mail ) are beyond the scope of this research.

"communicator" and "receiver." Absence of cultural influence in *Maletzke's* model was mitigated by assigning all existing areas of influence, in addition to some new ones, as subcategories thereto. A "matrix" emerged, therefore, (Fig. 2.7), adopting the *constructivist* philosophy, implied and inherent in the *Maletzke* model, and which was in harmony with the perceived nature of the research subject. The *matrix* model does *not* purport to be a universal model of the *complete* communication process. The "feedback" route for example, despite being a key element of any communication is not a major feature in this study; after all, the precepts which Aristotle prescribed for practising rhetoric conform to a unidirectional model of communication. Television audiences, furthermore, are unable to respond spontaneously, to the advertisers in the same channel (television).

The *matrix*, consequently, portrays a downward flow (unidirectional) that interprets Lasswell's five questions in terms of critical functions, termed "agencies," visited in the production of television commercials. Accompanying each function are factors facilitating the output of each "agency" termed "drivers." Finally, at each stage, the "research area" is defined after categories specified in Underwood's portrayal of the Lasswell formula (2003) (see Fig.2.6), which describe the research aim at that locality.

The extent of research work envisaged constrained this thesis to pursuing the first two stages of the matrix only (above the dotted line) whilst the remaining stages offered fertile areas for future research.



\* POSSIBLE FUTURE RESEARCH AREAS

FIG. 2.7: Matrix Model

## 2.2 Theory, Research Questions, Research Methodologies

### 2.2.1 Theory: a review

The review of literature (Chapter 1) showed that, in researching acclaimed authors spanning eight decades, a consensual methodology for the analysis of televisual imagery was not in evidence. Semiotic analysis, nevertheless, appeared to offer a way forward.

The foundation for modern semiotics was discovered to have a linguistic origin in Saussure (Saussure in Harris, 1983) who introduced the concept of "signs" to show how denotative meaning could be established. Ordering such signs he demonstrated how meaning could be woven into narrative on a syntagmatic axis from the choices made on the paradigmatic axis. Propp, seemingly unaware of Saussure's linguistic philosophy, also utilised what, in effect, were paradigmatic and syntagmatic dimensions in his analysis and classification of Russian Folktales. In so doing he was compelled to consider the deconstruction of the narrative which he concluded was best achieved through the "functions" of the "dramatis personae." Thus he demonstrated convincingly his assertion that "study on the basis of small component parts [was] the correct method of investigation."

Taking semiotics into the realm of static illustration Barthes then described how *signs* could convey both *denotative* and *connotative* meaning in the wider context of pictures, drawings, photographs advertisements and even aspects of our daily life.

Insofar as the *moving* image was concerned it was Metz who, like Propp, sought to subdivide the syntagmatic transit of narrative, albeit for semiotic analysis rather than classification. Thus he concluded that this was best achieved through what he termed the "largest minimum segment," defined as "the shot."

With the exception of Metz, oddly enough, Berger (2005:33-40) brings together, all of the foregoing authors in a single chapter to provide a

"Semiotics of The Television Medium" to which he adds, most usefully, a semiotic interpretation of television camera work. Not embarking on the task himself he leaves his readers on the threshold armed with some, but not all, of the ingredients and inspiration required for a semiotic analysis of the "television medium."

Metz's linguistic approach to film and the dissemination of narrative by Vladimir Propp, therefore, seemed to offer a means by which to consider, incrementally, the transit of *signs* through the text<sup>b</sup> of the television advertisement. Yet Barthes, in his early semiotic analysis of posters and magazine advertisements, quickly realised that the sum of the constituent parts in visual imagery was more than their whole in creating what he called "myth". One should ponder perhaps, how much more then must this concept pertain when, in film and television, sounds accompany the moving image that we see and the "myth" takes on the proportion of narrative?

The Literature Review (Chapter 1) quotes Aristotle as saying:-

*Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion* (Kennedy 1991:36).

The rhetoric to which Aristotle referred was essentially concerned with *vocal* persuasion and would, by the time of the Roman orator and rhetorician Quintilian (35-95 CE), acquire a 5-part canonical structure for its practice. Burke (1969:172) reinforces Aristotle's precept but shifts the emphasis by saying "wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric." He then adds "and wherever there is *meaning* there is persuasion," which introduces a constructivist concept, confirming the belief of Covino & Jolliffe (1995:8), that "rhetoric is the art of knowledge making". Now although Aristotle's original precept did not preclude that rhetoric may be expressed in other than linguistic channels these 20th century observations encourage one to explore that possibility in modern media. In fact "advertising may be the most

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<sup>b</sup> In this thesis "text" denotes any aural or visual message delivered to an audience.

ubiquitous example of an activity that practices what Aristotle preached" (Corbett & Connors, 1999:24).

### 2.2.2 Research Questions

Most, if not all, people *expect* to find persuasion in television advertising. In the Literature Review of this thesis (Chapter 1) it was observed that television is a mass communication medium with tangible and significant potential for influence in addressing audiences through their cultural and gender identities and a major mechanism for maintaining, modifying or establishing meaning.

The research question considered the five canons of classical rhetoric, as devised for *oral* delivery, at a functional level, in terms of their objectives in the belief that one would begin to see the "*available means of persuasion*" for generating a *visual* expression. In the understanding that rhetoric, when vocally expressed, is a persuasive device for establishing meaning, we are led by the semiotic deliberations of Saussure and Peirce to the mechanics of how words and sentences establish that meaning. By the same token, therefore, in the pursuit of a *visual* expression of classical rhetoric, the research question sought a corresponding mechanism for establishing meaning. In this respect it posited the idea that the semiotics developed later by Bathes and Metz, linked to a narrative order inspired by Propp, would provide just such a mechanism which would, in application, reveal how the moving images of television could become rhetorical in keeping with classical canons.

From the Literature Review (Chapter 1) the foregoing hypothesis emerged that classical rhetoric may be found to be still extant and nowhere more so than in the medium of television advertising. Accordingly this thesis asked:-

- (1) *Does classical rhetoric, once devised for vocal and written delivery, have a visual expression in television advertising?*

If, as is hypothesised, this *should* be the case then one would be beholden to consider the consequences. This thesis pursued just *one* possible

consequence through a line of enquiry which could have ramifications for our Government's future science education policy in this country, namely, the manner in which science and scientists are used and portrayed in television advertising.

The Literature Review in this thesis also revealed that, in 2006, Governmental attention was aroused when, seemingly, a connection was seen between an upward trend of university applications from girls for forensic science university courses and the concurrent screening of television programmes such as "Silent Witness" featuring Amanda Burton as a forensic pathologist. The urgency felt by Her Majesty's Government to 'increase the number of students going on to study science post-16' and, in particular, the 'problem of poor uptake of physics among girls' (Kelly, 2005:39), was already a matter of record at that time.

Given the central role that science assumes in the culture of the United Kingdom the second, subsidiary question, employed to inform question (1) above and demonstrate its veracity was:-

(2) *If classical rhetoric is found to have an expression in television advertising how is such rhetoric employed in the portrayal of science and scientists?*

### 2.2.3 Methodologies

To attempt to discover evidence of structure in television advertising and to show that same structure to be a *visual* expression of the canons of classical, linguistic, rhetoric is, in the first place, a qualitative pursuit. Secondly, when pursuing a novel line of enquiry, for which no previous research exists, a deductive - inductive approach is invariably called for. This methodology was, therefore, conceived thus.

The purpose-made matrix (2.1.3., Fig. 2.7), founded on models designed by *Lasswell* (1948) and *Maletzke* (1963), situated the research area and,

together with the research questions, structured the methodologies associated with the first two of the five "Agencies" namely:-

1. The Advertiser.
2. The Television Commercial

#### 2.2.3.1 The "Advertiser" :- Control research methodology

Although chronologically *first* in the "matrix" (and Lasswell sequence), the "advertiser" was placed *second* in terms of the sequence in which the research methodology was carried out. This allowed data gathered from the television advertisement to guide and inform subsequent interviewing.

Research methodology was to be qualitative by nature whilst adopting an investigative approach. Tape recorded interviewing was considered in which the advertiser would be identified, being consequent upon the nature of the television commercial selected, and the nature of the merchandise or services. Principally it would try to discover if advertisers targeted specific audiences, the motivation for advertising and the desired outcome. The main objective was to understand (and obtain a copy if possible) of the advertiser's brief to the advertising agency.

#### 2.2.3.2 The "Television Commercial" :- Content research methodology

The television commercial ("TV commercial message" in Fig 2.6 above) identified in the *Content Research* area of the Matrix communication model (Fig. 2.7 above) allowed, specifically, for identification and examination of semiotic *signs*, rhetorical messages and the engendered *narratives* portrayed. Attention was also to be devoted to the means by which the television commercial may target discrete audiences.

The *content research* methodology, generally qualitative by nature, envisaged a pilot study to prove methodology followed by a deductive case study and three further commercials serving as inductive analyses. Seeking first to deconstruct television commercials in terms of Metz's filmic unit, "the shot" there was little doubt that each would contribute to a syntagmatic structure in order to build narrative. It was recalled and acknowledged that paradigmatic

units were problematic for Metz and that he was forced to conclude that whilst "there [was] a paradigmatic category of film, [...] the commutable units [were] large signifying units" (Metz, 1974:70). The semiotic approach to be followed, therefore, would allow for each "shot" to be considered as a paradigmatic choice along the syntagmatic axis of the narrative providing for *denotative* and *connotative* signification, and hence *myth*, after Barthes.

The rhetorical approach, would draw on the established relationship exposed in the literary Review (Chapter 1: 1.1.2.1) in which the linguistic structuring of narrative had been found to have a basis in classical rhetoric through the canon of *arrangement*. Thus the effect of the shots would be assessed, collectively, within the paradigms created. In examining the positioning of paradigms on the syntagmatic axis, moreover, compliance with the canon of *arrangement* would be sought in order to prove the nature of the visual rhetoric at work.

In summary, the intended function of this methodology was designed to reveal the presence of a *mythic* narrative in which visual rhetoric could be identified as acting in accordance with classical canons.

In this manner the methodology was contrived to examine each television commercial both incrementally and holistically in order to obtain data. The luxury of being able to contemplate such a finely detailed examination was accounted for by the short duration of television commercials which was generally found to be circa 40 seconds.

The analysis contemplated employing a pilot study, to prove efficacy of the methodology, followed by a 'case study' (deductive phase) in order to establish whether the canons of classical rhetoric were in evidence and what part narrative and semiotic modelling may be playing in their visual expression. Methodology would then be adjusted, if required, before other commercials were examined and the results compared.

The following qualitative methodologies were devised to present an *analytical* approach in (a), (b) and (c) below, whereas in (d), (e) and (f) they adopted an *investigative* approach. Items (d), (e) and (f) were to apply only to the pilot study and commercial selected as a "case study":-

- (a) An initial deconstruction of the commercial into analytical units with consideration of the narrative.
- (b) A "reading" of the television commercials' imagery, as seen in each of the analytical units, in terms of the semiotic theory propounded by Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce and Roland Barthes.
- (c) A "reading" of the rhetoric expressed by the scripting, semiotic imagery, voice-overs, music, printed words and camera (after the five canons of rhetoric formulated by Aristotle and added to later by Cicero and Quintilian); at the level of each analytical unit and in terms of the narrative sequence.
- d) Tape recorded interviewing of a representative from the advertising agency to obtain information on their rôle and to obtain evidence of semiotic/rhetorical intention from the advertiser's brief. (Case study only)
- (e) Tape recorded interviewing of the creative script-writer/s to obtain information on their rôle and evidence of deliberate and/or unwitting use of semiotic/rhetorical devices in interpreting the advertiser's and/or advertising agency's brief. (Case study only).
- (f) Tape recorded interviewing of a representative of the film agency to obtain evidence of information on their rôle and deliberate and/or unwitting use of semiotic/rhetorical devices in interpreting the advertiser's and/or advertising agency's brief. (Case study only).

#### 2.2.3.3 "Television Broadcasting Co.":- *Medium* research

It has become apparent in recent years, to even the most casual viewer, that television commercials frequently conform to the subject matter of the programme that one has been watching whilst yet others are designed to "bracket" the commercial break. It has been observed, too, (not without contention) that the sound level, during commercial breaks, is frequently increased without intervention by the viewer. In the Review of Literature (Chapter 1) features such as these were construed as deliberate devices forming part of a strategy to target specific audiences and to secure their attention.

The manner in which the commercial ("message") is handled by television broadcasters is a rich area for possible future research but, whilst it may be referred to herein, it is beyond the scope of this research project.

#### 2.2.3.4 "Target Audience":- *Audience* research

If, as empirical experience has suggested, television advertisers consider it rewarding to target specific audiences then there should be evidence to be found which justifies the practice. This area, however, remains the subject of possible future research.

#### 2.2.3.5 "Consumer Demand" :- *Effects* research

*Effects research* sets out to establish if the audience's reaction is consistent with the advertiser's objective and would represent a high priority area for any future research work undertaken.

## **2.3 Selecting TV Commercials: Application of Research Methodologies.**

### **2.3.1 Selection Rationale**

With the exception of the pilot study the criteria to be employed in the selection of commercials was to be informed and influenced by the reviewed literature and confined to such considerations as were required to address the research questions.

Circumstantial evidence of the use of semiotic and rhetorical devices was deemed a suitable criterion for selection in respect of the principal research question. Insofar as the subsidiary research question was concerned, preliminary examination of various television advertisements and the empirical experience of the researcher down the years would testify to the fact that there was a history of humour being used in UK television commercials. That such a feature should endure and that it was to be found in the representation of science and scientists in television were deemed to be sufficient reasons for considering it as a selection criterion with which to address the subsidiary research question.

Five commercials would be selected. One would serve as a 'pilot study' (Chapter 3), of no preferred subject, in order to test the methodology and induct data supporting the premise that classical rhetoric can be shown to have a visual expression in television advertising. The remaining four commercials (one a case study) would be selected for their portrayal of scientists or science, two with a humorous theme and two which afforded sober treatment of the subject in order to test the premise in an inductive analysis.

In so far as was possible, selection would favour those commercials which offered to provide clear points of comparison and contrast. One commercial would be selected as a "case study" and receive in depth analysis and the remaining commercials would then be examined in order to ascertain if similar or identical characteristics pertained thereby comprising a deductive / inductive loop. The particular product or service being advertised would be of no specific interest.

### 2.3.2 Application of Research Methodologies

The pilot study selected would be subjected to an analysis (Chapter 3) in which data would be sought supporting the premise that classical rhetoric, through invocation of its five canons and semiotic theory, can be shown to have a visual expression in television advertising.

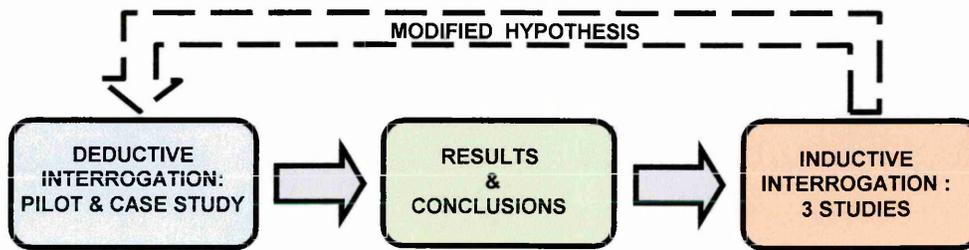
Chandler (2002:52-53), however, lists television as a medium that utilizes "verbal, visual, auditory and locomotive signs." The Analyses, therefore, in seeking visual expression of the five canons of classical rhetoric, would not be restricted merely to visual manifestations but would encompass the interaction of all rhetorical and semiotic devices attending the television commercial as deemed pertinent.

The application of these methodologies was later developed and presented in Chapter 3, "Pilot Study"

## **2.4 Research Reasoning**

The research question which this thesis addressed was founded on the hypothesis that classical rhetoric, once devised for vocal and written delivery, has a visual expression in television advertising. The term "classical" was central to the hypothesis since it required that such visual expression, if revealed, should be seen to conform to the five canons once devised for its vocal and written delivery by the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, later having been developed by Roman philosophers, principally Cicero and Quintilian.

The methodology proposed described a *deductive - inductive* reasoning process. Though not pursued in this thesis, the possibility of a "logic loop" (dotted outline in Fig 4.1) arises in which a modified hypothesis might ensue leading to a more informed deductive interrogation of the original *case study*.



**FIG. 4.1 DEDUCTIVE - INDUCTIVE LOOP**

Opening at the deductive stage, therefore, the methodology sought to reveal the truth of the premise that the five canons of classical rhetoric could be seen to persist in the *visual* communication of a television commercial (the pilot study) thus proving the methodology whilst upholding the hypothesis. It was envisaged that a further deductive (case study) would then follow in which, if classical rhetoric was, indeed, found to have a visual expression then the manner in which science and scientists were portrayed would be examined. Ensuing deductive studies were then planned to determine if the deductive finding might be upheld in order to establish it as a general principle.

In adopting this trialling approach both validity and reliability of the analytical devices were secured. Validity, insofar as this method tested whether the semiotic-rhetorical analysis could be employed in a televisual context; reliability inasmuch as it was applied to a number of varied situations.

## **2.5 Summary of Methodology**

The development of this methodology considered the nature of the communication area in which television commercials could be seen to operate by examining traditional communication models. A customised "matrix model", recognising the linear nature of communication inherent in classical rhetoric, was subsequently drafted which drew on certain strengths exhibited by both the *Lasswell* and *Maletzke's communication* models.

Following a review of the theory and reflection on the literature review, the research questions were presented

- (1) *Does classical rhetoric, once devised for vocal and written delivery, have a visual expression in television advertising?*
  
- (2) *If classical rhetoric is found to have an expression in television advertising how is such rhetoric employed in the portrayal of science and scientists?*

Two main research areas were defined using Lasswell's original wording (see Fig.2.1). Termed "Control Research," relating to the communicator (the advertiser) and "Content Research" relating to the message (the television commercial), they situated the methodology that would be directed at televisual communication. Research on five commercials was proposed comprising a pilot study, a case study and three inductive studies. Selection would be guided by the review of literature (Chapter 1) and circumstantial evidence of the use of semiotic and rhetorical devices.

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## CHAPTER 3

### PILOT STUDY: METHOD, FINDINGS, RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The qualitative research work in this pilot study was devised to prove the methodology developed in Chapter 2 and, through semiotic and rhetorical analysis, test its efficacy in addressing the principal research question:-

*Does classical rhetoric, once devised for vocal and written delivery, have a visual expression in television advertising?*

In selecting the commercial for this study those which portrayed science and scientists (the subject of the *subsidiary* research question) were, deliberately excluded.

#### 3.1 Method

##### 3.1.1 Selecting the pilot television commercial

In selecting a television commercial for piloting the methodology no preference was given to any particular product being advertised. As previously indicated, however, commercials seen to depict scientists or scientific processes were not considered. It was reasoned that such a strategy would afford the opportunity to isolate and to discern differences that might later emerge during comparison with the deductive *case study* analysis and the three ensuing studies which *would*, indeed, contain scientific content.

The commercial finally selected for piloting was the first in a series of eleven created by the advertising agency McCann Erickson. It was first broadcast during November 1987 for *Nescafé's Gold Blend* brand of coffee (see Appendix 3.1 to this Chapter [video file]) and subsequently became famous for its miniature soap opera format.

The storyline of the chosen advertisement focussed on a young man and woman drawn together in a flirtatious initial encounter occasioned by a shortage of coffee for a dinner party. Due to its ongoing 'soap opera' serialisation, it appeared likely that it would display a strong narrative

structure. Given the perception by advisors to the Government's *Culture Secretary*, that "stereotypical" images are created in "soap opera," (see the *Review of Literature*, Chapter 1: 1.2.4) selection of this commercial seemed most cogent.

### 3.1.2 "Control Research" method: Interviewing technique

In order to practise and refine interviewing technique, prior to approaching Creative Scriptwriters (the "control" element of the televisual message) an approach was made to Marty Jopson, the Interactive Head of *Screenhouse Productions*,<sup>A</sup> producer of science based television programmes and a BBC1 television presenter. A tape recorded, semi-structured interview was adopted since such an approach would, it was thought, allow for the "expert" to share his greater knowledge and wider experience in a field where one's own knowledge was limited.

Insofar as the structured part of the interview was concerned the prospective questions were thought through, refined and a printout produced for reference. As required, the interviewee was made aware of the ethical protocol regarding withdrawal, confidentiality, anonymity and the use/retention of data. A full transcript of the answers tape recorded has not been made since it was technique rather than subject matter that was of the essence.

### 3.1.3 "Content Research" method: development

The Content Research postulated in Chapter 2: 2.2.3.2 envisaged analysis of semiotic meaning (*signs*), rhetorical messages and narrative structure in order to identify visual expression of rhetoric's classical canons. Effecting the means with which to undertake such analyses, however, required structuring.

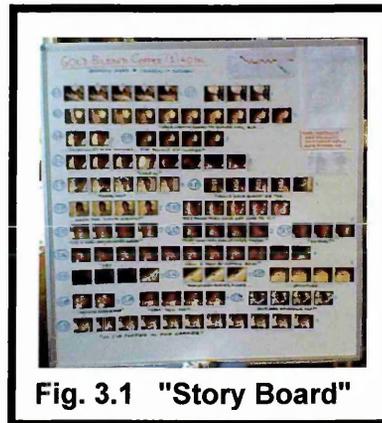
Guided by the findings of Metz (1974:67) who promulgated "the shot is the smallest unit of the filmic chain," an approach was adopted which sought to

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<sup>A</sup> *Screenhouse* generate imaginative scientific content for use in educational websites, TV programmes, games and live shows having worked extensively with the BBC and BBC1 on educational websites and programmes.

deconstruct the commercial into a series of manageable, syntagmatic, analytical units each of which might reasonably be interpreted as a "shot."

A miniature "storyboard" format was constructed (Fig.3.1) to accommodate the "shots." The incremental nature of this approach would, it was considered, afford the opportunity of being able to study, closely at length, any subtle transitional changes (see also Appendix 3.2 to this Chapter).



**Fig. 3.1 "Story Board"**

It was found that detailed examination of the chosen television commercial would be made easier if a "wmv" media file format were adopted. Using a *Microsoft Windows<sup>XP</sup> Moviemaker* software package, therefore, "still" photographs were taken of each of the twenty-one "shots" identified by using the "freeze-frame" facility.<sup>B</sup> The limit (and definition) of each shot was determined by the point at which the camera cut from one subject to the next. Such cuts, usually abrupt (image screen goes blank), were known to be of exceedingly brief duration (microseconds) and invisible during normal viewing.

Additional stills were taken, as a precautionary measure, in order to mitigate any possible movement of actors during the brief transit of each "shot." For identification as sub-divisions of the shot, it was decided that they would be termed "frames." All the stills were subsequently arranged in "shot" sequence on the "story board" to facilitate detailed observation and to allow notes to be taken. Each shot with its constituent frames was then referenced and the shot duration recorded with any spoken text written beneath the frames of each shot.

#### 3.1.4 Analytical framework:

The preliminary viewing of the pilot commercial, in tandem with the methodology prescribed in Chapter 2, prompted the development of an analytical schematic (Fig.3.2). Drawing on the shared understanding of

*paradigm* and *syntagm*, discussed in the Literature Review (Ch.1, p.52-53), both in narrative structure, (Prop, 1968), and linguistic structure, (Saussure in Harris, 1983:121-125), it satisfied the need to situate Metz's "largest minimum segment" in film, also termed "the shot"<sup>B</sup> (Seiter in Allen, 1992:). Such an approach was seen to accord closely with Hall (1973) who, as early as 1973, recognised the significance of semiotics in television communication theory in observing:-

*The 'object' of production practices and structures in television is the production of a message: that is, a sign-vehicle, or rather sign-vehicles of a specific kind organized, like any other form of communication or language, through the operation of codes, within the syntagmatic chains of a discourse. (Hall, 1973, p.1-2).*

Hall (1973, p.2) in his dictum regarding the role of *narrative* has particular relevance in television advertising inasmuch as he states, "To put it paradoxically, the event must become a 'story' before it can become a communicative event."

In application, the television commercial under analysis proved amenable to the allocation of both *paradigmatic* and *syntagmatic* themes. *Paradigmatic* themes (vertical axis), for each *shot* were allocated which were based on its most central, visible, feature for which a meaning or meanings were being sought. It was considered, however, that in future commercials the vocal score should also influence the *paradigmatic* category in its capacity to create abstract concepts i.e. states of being. Simultaneously each shot was located in a timed and scaled *syntagmatic* sequence (horizontal axis) since it was believed that research would reveal the positioning of paradigms along the *syntagmatic* axis would have a rhetorical expression in the second canon of rhetoric, *Arrangement* (see Chapter 1, para.1.1.2.1 "The Five Canons"). Being listed merely in order of appearance, the vertical sequence of the paradigms had no such significance (unlike the horizontal axis).

The schematic (Fig 3.2) afforded, therefore, a means of comparing television commercials through the characteristics of each shot in terms of *syntagmatic*

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<sup>B</sup> In which "shot" shall mean the definition conferred upon it by this thesis.

location, duration and *paradigmatic* theme-change with the facility for examining the rhetorical implications of shot sequencing within the narrative structure. More than this it promised to reveal to what extent the second canon of rhetoric, *arrangement*, was being *visually* invoked in terms of the five-point sequence of functions given in Covino & Jolliffe (1995) and summarised thus:-

1. *Capture the audience's attention.*
2. *Provide necessary background information.*
3. *State and prove the text's thesis.*
4. *Anticipate and address possible counter-theses.*
5. *Conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions.*

(Covino & Jolliffe 1995:22)

FIG. 3.2 SCHEMATIC: ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE STRUCTURE / RHETORIC'S CANON OF ARRANGEMENT  
INTEGRATION OF METZ'S FILM "SHOT" WITH DE SAUSSURE'S LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS OF PARADIGM & SYNTAGM

**TELEVISION COMMERCIAL FOR NESCAFÉ GOLD BLEND COFFEE (PILOT STUDY)**

		← SYNTAGMATIC AXIS →																				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
<b>THEMES</b>		<b>SHOT No.</b>																				
HAND WITH PENCIL																						
BELL PUSH & FINGER																						
FEMALE SUBJECT																						
MALE SUBJECT																						
COFFEE JAR (PRODUCT)																						
COFFEE BEANS IN SCOOP																						
COFFEE BEANS FALLING																						
COFFEE BEANS ON JAR CAP																						
COFFEE JARS + CUP & SAUCER																						
FEMALE DINNER GUEST																						
<b>PARADIGMATIC CHOICES</b>																						
<b>DURATION (Secs)</b>	<b>INCREMENTAL</b>	2	1	3	2	1	3	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	4	2	2	1	2	1	1	3
	<b>CUMULATIVE</b>	2	3	6	8	9	12	13	14	15	18	20	22	24	28	30	32	33	35	36	37	40

DRAFT

### 3.1.5 Content analysis method

In determining the criteria most likely to yield evidence of the visual expression of classical canons of rhetoric a path was chosen which commenced with *semiotic analysis*. Listing television as a medium utilizing 'verbal, visual, auditory and locomotive signs, Chandler<sup>1</sup> (2002:52-53) was drawn upon in order to pursue this function. Through identification of *semiotic sign* classification, it was reasoned that it should be possible to elicit an illustrative (*semiotic*) meaning which would then lead to an understanding of the devices underpinning the visual expression of classical rhetoric through its five *linguistic canons*.

Content analysis sheets (Appendix: 3.3 to this chapter) were devised, accordingly, in order to record details of both the semiotic analysis and the rhetorical analysis. "Frames," up to a maximum of six per "shot" were catered for with provision also being made, at the head of the Semiotic Analysis sheets, for commentary on the following additional mechanisms which served as a prelude to the two analyses:-

- Camera (attitude, field depth)
- Soundtrack (vocal, musical, other sound effects)
- Principal Components (including artefacts)
- Scene (disposition of artefacts / characters/ lighting/ colours)

Space was thereafter devoted to *semiotic* analysis in terms of its 1st and 2nd orders and modal identity followed by a *rhetorical* analysis in terms of the canons of classical rhetoric.

#### 3.1.5.1 Semiotic analysis method

Since the key function of *semiotic* analysis in this research was to facilitate the exposure of *visual* rhetoric it assumed first place in the analytical sequence. Frames from each shot were selected and quantities of up to a maximum of six were found to be sufficient which, thereafter, could be subjected to two stages of semiotic analysis.

In stage one of the analysis visual expression of 1st order *denotative* and 2nd order *connotative* meaning would be sought in accordance with the concept expressed in Barthes's sign functioning map (Fig3.3), as expressed in Cobley & Jansz (1997:51).

1. signifier	2.signified
3. denotative sign	
4. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIER	5. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIED
6. CONNOTATIVE SIGN	

**Fig.3.3: Barthes's Sign Functioning diagram (Cobley & Jansz, 1997:51)**

As expounded in Chapter 1 section 1.3.4, the *sign*, be it *denotative* (3 in Fig.3.3 above) or *connotative* (6 in Fig.3.3 above), in each case was seen to comprise both a *signifier* and a *signified*.

In stage 2 of the analysis, classification of the *denotative* and *connotative signifiers* would be undertaken by reference to the three typologies, listed in Peirce's taxonomy, and defined by Chandler (2002:36-43), which are summarised as under:-

1. Symbol / Symbolic: Where the signifier does not resemble the signified so that the relationship must be learned i.e. language, Morse code, traffic lights, national flags etc.
2. Icon / Iconic: Where the *signifier* actually resembles or imitates the *signified*, (but generic rather than specific) e.g. scale models, portraits, imitative gestures, recognizably looking, tasting or smelling like etc.
3. Index / Indexical: Where the *signifier* is not arbitrary but is directly connected in some way to the object e.g., a sundial may indicate the time of day. 'Natural signs' are exemplified by smoke (indicating fire) thunder (a storm), footprints (a person / animal) etc., or 'signals' such as a knock on the door (a visitor), a phone ringing, (a caller) or recordings such as a photograph, film, video / television shot or pointers such as a pointing finger / signpost.

Preliminary examination suggested that many of the twenty-one shots comprised more than one semiotic sign which contributed to building a single, cohesive, meaning for the shot in question. Thus, it was decided that the frames selected in each shot would be considered collectively to establish the *prevailing* semiotic sign classification (*denotative / connotative*) and the mode (*symbolic / iconic / indexical*) for each of the twenty-one shots.

### 3.1.5.2 Rhetorical analysis method

The method for identification of visual rhetoric, in terms of the classical canons, was so sequenced as to be informed by the preceding semiotic analysis. It was envisaged that the *denotative* and *connotative* meanings, together with their *modal* classification, emerging from the semiotic analysis would serve to reveal the subject which one might expect the canons of classical rhetoric to address. Most specifically, reference to *Aristotle, Cicero & Quintilian* was planned; namely in relation to their definitions and precepts relating to the five canons of *Invention, Arrangement, Style, Memory* and *Delivery* (see Ch.1, section 1.1.2 Rhetorical theory).

#### Invention

In analysing visual expression of the first canon (*invention*) it was planned to interrogate the nature of the rhetoric that was being *invented*, as pertaining to, and acting in accordance with, the canons of *arrangement, style* and *delivery*. Any rhetoric identified would then be examined in order to evince evidence that a specific audience was being assessed; the primary function of this canon.

#### Arrangement

In considering the visual expression of classical rhetoric through the second canon of *arrangement*, it was recognised that it would be necessary to equate the whole of the commercial to what, in classical times, would have been the entirety of the oration. It was reasoned, therefore, that visual expression of this canon could only be observed by considering the ordering of *shots*, and the functioning of their rhetorical material, within the narrative structure of the *complete* television commercial (see Narrative Analysis).

## Style

Recognition of the visual expression of this canon (*style*) was set to be guided by the devices of oratory laid down in the classical literature of Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian including elucidation through the works of later 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century authors; typically, but not exclusively, Corbett and Connors (1999 4<sup>th</sup> Ed.) and Covino & Jolliffe (1995). Devices referred to, as embraced by this canon, were to be drawn from both these authors and recorded in Appendix 3.4 to this chapter. Generally *style* was to be regarded as the process of "giving presence to ideas that rhetors want their audiences to attend to" Covino & Jolliffe (1995:23-24).

## Memory

Insofar as the *canon of memory* was concerned it was adjudged to be implicit in the requirement for actors to learn and recall their lines, their pre-arranged movements and their body language. Since the process of recalling such functions was deemed to be an exclusively mental discipline it was considered that a visual expression could not be observed, save only inasmuch as one might witness in the performance thereof, that these functions had, indeed, been recalled.

## Delivery

Aristotle gave scant treatment to the canon of delivery which is dealt with altogether more comprehensively by Cicero and later Quintilian. In the Literature Review (Chapter 1, 1.1.2.1.) a summary of Covino & Jolliffe's understanding of the canon of *delivery* is given thus:-

*Delivery (Gr. hypokrisis):*

*The art of using one's voice and body effectively when speaking. In both classical periods and later, elaborate theory was developed to teach rhetors how to pronounce words, project their voices and move their faces, arms, hands and even legs and feet. (Paraphrased from Covino & Jolliffe, 1995:22-24)*

Cicero, says of *delivery*,:-

*For he invests his speech with lucidity, brilliance, convincingness, and charm not by his language but by changes of voice, by gestures and by glances.*

(Cicero in Henderson, 1942:331)

Quintilian says that "*Delivery is often styled action*" (Quintilian in Page et al, 1922:243). Although he initially defers to Cicero on this canon, Quintilian later elaborates on the two aspects of *delivery* which he defines as "voice and gesture" (*ibid*). He continues:-

*All emotional appeals will fall flat unless they are given the fire that voice, look, and the whole carriage of the body can give them (ibid).*

(*ibid*, p.245)

In searching for a visual expression of this canon, therefore, this thesis is constrained to addressing "gesture," together with "look and the whole carriage of the body."

### Narrative Analysis

It was seen in the Review of Literature (Chapter 1: 1.3.5, p.53) how that the second canon of *arrangement* defined five themes (paradigms!) which the rhetor should address and a prescribed sequence for their delivery (syntagm!) rendering it a, fundamentally, *narrative*, structure. Thus narrative's two-dimensional structure of paradigm and syntagm was seen to be capable of delivering a common means of semiotic and rhetorical interrogation. It was these early precursors, therefore, that were considered here as a suitable basis on which to found the search for classical rhetoric's visual expression in the canon of *arrangement*.

By piloting and developing a new, schematic structure (Fig.3.2), it was found possible to present the *narrative* of the commercial in terms of both its *paradigms* and its *syntagmatic* structure. This action, therefore, opened up the way to examining and explaining the impact and visual expression of classical rhetoric through the second canon of *arrangement*. In order to do this, however, it became necessary to devise a system by which to deconstruct the commercial's narrative.

The key to deconstruction of the television commercial into the units required for the *paradigmatic* and *syntagmatic* axes was found to reside in Metz's prescribed 'filmic' unit, the 'shot' (Metz, 1974:67). The relative brevity of the running time of most commercials (circa 40 seconds) made it possible to interpret Metz's 'shot' as the scene pertaining between the point at which the camera cuts from the previous subject to point when it cuts to the next. It was considered that such a structure would allow the findings of the semiotic and rhetorical analysis for each *shot* to be individually considered thereby enabling the identification of paradigms and their location on the syntagmatic axis.

Subsequent analysis, through examination of the rhetorical messages which each shot displayed through the canons attending and the relevance of their location on the *syntagmatic* axis of the *narrative*, it was hoped, would reveal a particular relevance to the visual expression of the 5-point linguistic structure, advocated in the second canon of classical rhetoric termed *arrangement*.

In reviewing the draft schematic structure, (Fig 3.2), however, it was considered that much would be revealed if the limits and application of the 5 principles of *arrangement* were to be added beneath the *syntagmatic* axis. The schematic was amended accordingly (see Fig 3.12).

## 3.2 Findings & Results

### 3.2.1 Results of the Semiotic Analysis

By interpreting Metz's prescribed filmic unit, the "shot" in the manner prescribed, it was found that the commercial comprised 21 shots during a period of 40 seconds. The duration of each individual shot lay between 1 and 4 seconds each, during which movement of actors was occasionally noted. A clearly defined boundary was observed between all with the exception of three shots (Shots 14/15, 15/16 and 16/17), which were determined by a *dissolve*<sup>c</sup>.

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<sup>c</sup> One shot fades into or out to the next.

In early trial runs of the commercial, semiotic analysis showed that, in many instances, shots comprised more than one semiotic *sign* in building a single, cohesive, meaning for the shot in question. Accordingly, provision was made in the design of the analysis for a judgement to be recorded as to which was the "prevailing" semiotic *sign* classification in each shot. The detail of the reasoning surrounding each of the *prevailing signs* and the nature of the taxonomy was recorded on a shot-by-shot basis in Appendix 3.3, attached to this chapter. A review of the shot-by-shot analyses produced the following observations

#### Applying Barthes's Sign Functioning & Peirce's taxonomy

The twenty-one, prevailing, semiotic *signs* were found to combine both aural and visual aspects conveying meanings that, by *Barthes Sign Functioning Diagram*, were entirely *connotative*, (*second order*). For the most part, (18/21 shots), these *connotative signs* acted in *symbolic* mode by Peirce's taxonomy, as defined by Chandler (2002:36-43) (Fig.3.4).

In Peirce's taxonomy (Peirce in Chandler, 2002:36-37) *symbolic* mode describes a *signifier* which does *not* resemble the *signified* so that the [meaningful] relationship between the *signifier* and the *signified* must be learned. Examples might include Morse code, in which configurations of dots and dashes equate to words, traffic lights where colours equate to intended actions or national flags that equate to a specific nation. Such symbolism was most prevalent in this commercial through its use of gold and typical instances recorded included:-

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Shot 2:                | Gold coloured (brass) door-bell plunger.            |
| Shots 3,5,7,12,14, 21: | Gold jewellery (coffee bean earrings & necklace).   |
| Shot 8:                | <i>Gold Blend</i> brand label & packaging (Jar top) |
| Shot 16:               | Gold coloured coffee beans.                         |
| Shots 20, 21           | Gilt edged coffee cup and gilt picture frame.       |

FIG. 3.4 Semiotic Analysis

Shot	Denotative (1st Order)			Connotative (2nd Order)		
	Symbolic	Iconic	Indexical	Symbolic	Iconic	Indexical
1				✓		
2				✓		
3				✓		
4				✓		
5				✓		
6				✓		
7				✓		
8				✓		
9				✓		
10				✓		
11				✓		
12				✓		
13				✓		
14				✓		
15						✓
16				✓		
17					✓	
18				✓		
19				✓		
20				✓		
21				✓		
<b>TOTALS</b>				19	1	1

Emerging from the qualitative analysis of these 21 entirely *connotative* shots the *semiotic signifiers* made extensive use of artefacts and/or a vocal score in conveying meaning. Frequent reference to 'gold' implied the high value of the product whilst the use of objects and décor usually possessed by those from a middle to high income bracket were seen as implying the high socio-economic status of their users (Fig.3.5). Normally deemed to be a pursuit of cultured people, the soundtrack of classical style musical which accompanied all but three shots was deemed to be enhancing the ambience of high social status which it achieved in acting (aurally) as a *connotative signifier*, in *symbolic* mode.

In 2 shots only, numbers 13 & 19, was there no *signification* of either high value or elevated social status detected.

**FIG. 3.5 Dominant Semiotic Sign Themes**

Shot	Implied Product Value	Implied Social Status
1		✓
2	✓	✓
3	✓	✓
4		✓
5	✓	
6	✓	
7	✓	
8	✓	
9	✓	✓
10	✓	✓
11		✓
12	✓	✓
13	x	x
14	✓	
15	✓	✓
16	✓	
17	✓	
18		✓
19	x	x
20	✓	✓
21	✓	✓
<b>TOTALS</b>	15	12

In two instances only were the prevailing *connotative signifiers* found to be acting in anything other than *symbolic* mode. The first, Shot 15, was where the *connotative signifier* was in *indexical* mode which, in Pierce's taxonomy (Pierce in Chandler, 2002:37), is where the *signifier* is not arbitrary but is directly connected in some way to the object. In this case the coffee beans were unquestionably linked to the product i.e. granulated coffee (Fig 3.6). In the other outstanding instance (Shot 17) the mode was *iconic* which,

according to Pierce (Pierce in Chandler, 2002:37-38), is where the *signifier* actually resembles or imitates the *signified*; in this case where the red background glow resembled the glow of the sun during ripening and the glow of the furnace during roasting of the coffee beans.



**FIG. 3.6 Gold Blend: Shot 15**  
**Indexical / Symbolic modes**

The modal categorisation of both of these shots, however, was a little ambiguous since even these two exceptions were seen to contain some *symbolic* elements. In shot 15, for example, the brass scoop containing the coffee beans was reminiscent of those used by exclusive coffee vendors, and "spoke", *symbolically*, of tradition and high quality (note the example in Fig.3.7).



W Martyn (Est. 1897) 135 Muswell Hill Broadway, Muswell Hill, North London

(<http://www.wmartyn.co.uk/>)

**FIG. 3.7 Tradition and high quality - symbolic mode**

### Dominant Themes

The consensus emanating from the *semiotic* themes that dominated this commercial were those of high product value and elevated socio-economic status which strove to support the ensuing rhetoric, by acting wholly *connotatively* whilst predominantly in *symbolic* mode.

### 3.2.2 Results of the Rhetorical Analysis

Allowing that rhetoric's canon of *arrangement* would later be linked to the commercial's narrative sequence and that rhetoric's canon of *memory* had no direct visual expression, the analytical results were compiled for the three remaining canons of classical rhetoric by reference to the definitions discussed in the literature review (Ch.1, para.,1.1.2.1).

**FIG. 3.8 Rhetorical Analysis: Canons**

Shot	Canons of Classical Rhetoric		
	<i>Invention</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Delivery</i>
1	✓	✓	
2	✓	✓	
3	✓	✓	✓
4			✓
5	✓	✓	✓
6	✓	✓	✓
7	✓	✓	✓
8	✓	✓	
9	✓	✓	✓
10	✓	✓	✓
11	✓	✓	✓
12	✓	✓	✓
13	✓	✓	✓
14	✓	✓	✓
15	✓	✓	
16	✓	✓	✓
17	✓	✓	✓
18	✓	✓	✓
19	✓		✓
20	✓	✓	✓
21	✓	✓	✓
<b>TOTALS</b>	20	19	17

Employing the Canons of Classical Rhetoric

Being conducted in tandem with the forgoing *semiotic* analysis, the shot by shot *rhetorical* analysis and reasoning that exposed these three classical canons was recorded in Appendix 3.3 attached to this chapter. A record of the canons invoked was summarised and appears here in Fig. 3.8.

It became immediately apparent that the rhetoric observed in each shot frequently engaged all three of the classical canons of *Invention*, *Style* and *Delivery* which were generally discerned to be interacting in both audible and visual expression. The following commentary examines each of these canons in turn before visiting the canon of *arrangement* which, during piloting of the method to be followed, was seen to possess a structural affinity to narrative.

### 3.2.2.1 Invention (1<sup>st</sup> Canon):

In order to best reveal the canon of invention at work a two-fold approach was made that, in the first instance, was guided by Covino and Jolliffe who define Aristotle's work on the subject and conclude that:-

*Invention requires the rhetor to assess the audience in order to determine what they feel, think, and know about the subject he intends to speak of or write about . . . (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995:22)*

In the second instance Cicero's description of the functions of an orator (rhetor), was referred to, in which he defines the objectives of the canon of *invention (inventio)* thus:-

*the discovery of arguments designed to convince or to influence the audience - arguments either elicited from the evidence or inherent in the facts of the case;*

(Cicero in Henderson, 1942:307)

Cicero's words are of a somewhat forensic nature since he practised his rhetorical skills chiefly in legal and political arenas. The principles, nevertheless, are independent of their application.

Notwithstanding that these passages addressed the *invention* of rhetoric in a *linguistic* context, the opportunity was taken to interpret those same parameters in the wider *visual* context. Thus discovery of artefacts, mannerisms, costumes, dialogues and any order of device, aural or visual, which suggested a *deliberate* intention to persuade in this commercial were all considered to be part of the "arguments" to which Cicero refers. As such they were taken as evidence of the canon of *invention* having been invoked; especially where knowledge of the audience could also be deduced.

From this approach, largely through the use of the afore-mentioned devices, emerged two major *inventive*, rhetorical, themes in this commercial (Fig.3.9) both, apparently, resting on the earlier *semiotically* based *mythic* constructions of *product value* and *social status* (Fig.3.5). The first three shots saw emphasis placed on social scene-setting whereas the centre of the commercial (shots 5-14) was concerned with inviting viewers to self-identify. Finally, in shots 15-21 a firm emphasis was resumed on the social scene-

setting aspect. Overall, the social scene-setting accounted for fourteen of the twenty-one shots (66%) whilst eight of the twenty-one shots were devoted to self identification (38%). It should be noted, however, that in Shots 5 & 18 both of these two themes were being exploited in the same shot.

**FIG. 3.9 Rhetorical Analysis: Major Themes**

Shot	Social Scene-setting	Self-Identification
1	✓	-
2	✓	-
3	✓	-
4	-	-
5	✓	✓
6	-	✓
7	-	✓
8	✓	-
9	✓	-
10	✓	-
11	-	✓
12	-	✓
13	-	✓
14	-	✓
15	✓	-
16	✓	-
17	✓	-
18	✓	✓
19	✓	-
20	✓	-
21	✓	-
<b>TOTALS</b>	14	8

3.2.2.2 Arrangement (2<sup>nd</sup> Canon):

Commentary on the expression of this canon appears in section 3.2.3 Narrative Structure & The Canon of Arrangement.

### 3.2.2.3 Style (3<sup>rd</sup> Canon):

Visual expression of the canon of *style* utilised an analysis which drew upon Aristotle's definition of the canon and its numerous devices summarised by Covino & Jolliffe (1995:29-30) (see Chapter 1 paragraph 1.1.2.1 *The Five Canons*).

The devices observed as having visual expression, in order of their prevalence, were those of metaphor, simile, synecdoche, parallelism, exaggeration and ellipsis (Fig.3.10). In all but the final scene metaphor was seen to express rhetoric which sought to modify human *behaviour* whereas simile was seen to purvey a rhetoric that sought to modify human *perception*. These two devices were the dominant exponents of visually expressed rhetoric in this commercial.

It was noted that synecdoche, in its function to represent the whole by the part, served two canons of rhetoric. As a device pertaining to the canon of *style* its effect was to confer an aura of mystery on the two opening shots in order to "[give] presence to ideas that rhetors want their audiences to attend to" (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995:23-24). The brevity of the use of this *stylistic* device, however, belied its importance for in creating such mystery and presence it was also seen to serve the first principle of the canon of *arrangement* by securing the attention of the audience.

FIG. 3.10 Rhetorical Analysis: Devices (Canon of Style)

Shot	Metaphor	Simile	Synecdoche	Parallelism	Exaggeration	Ellipses
1			✓			
2			✓			
3		✓	✓			
4						
5	✓	✓				
6	✓					
7	✓	✓				
8		✓				
9						
10	✓	✓			✓	
11	✓		✓			
12	✓	✓		✓		
13					✓	
14	✓	✓				
15			✓			✓
16		✓				
17	✓	✓				
18	✓			✓		
19						
20	✓					
21	✓	✓				
<b>TOTALS</b>	11	10	5	2	2	1

#### 3.2.2.4 Memory (4<sup>th</sup> Canon):

Whilst it was realised that memory, involving the recollection of lines and ground / floor movements by the actors, played an essential supporting part in the vocal and visual performance of rhetoric, this canon was considered and found to have no discernable visual expression.

### 3.2.2.5 Delivery (5<sup>th</sup> Canon):

In the seventeen shots recorded as having displayed an expression of the canon of *delivery* (Fig. 3.8), vocal tone supported the visual expression through, body deportment gesture and facial expression. They were observed as being most active in conveying messages relating to the romantic narrative and the implied social status. In Shot 14, (Fig 3.11) where the



**FIG. 3.11 Shot 14 (Frame 2):  
Canon of Delivery**

female subject is at the end of the romantic overture, her *delivery* addresses both of these message themes simultaneously (Appendix 3.3). With facial expressions and head movements she excuses herself, using a polite cultural convention "yes. . . well I must be getting back" (terminating the courtship ritual), which she expresses in an equally refined vocal tone (implying social status). In this example the use of "gestures and glances," (Cicero in Henderson, 1942:331) and, indeed, the "whole carriage of the body" (Quintilian in Page, et al (Eds), 1922:245) are exclusively involved in satisfying the visual expression of this canon.

### 3.2.3 Narrative Structure and The Canon of Arrangement

Visual compliance with the canon of *arrangement* was sought by reference to the five principles derived from Cicero's linguistic approach (Cicero in Henderson (Ed), 1942, p.307), and summarised by Covino & Jolliffe (1995) thus:-

1. *Capture the audience's attention.*
2. *Provide necessary background information.*
3. *State and prove the text's thesis.*
4. *Anticipate and address possible counter-theses.*
5. *Conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions.*

(Covino & Jolliffe 1995:22)

Only by examining the shot-by-shot visual action of the narrative was it found possible to ascertain to what extent the sequencing and functioning of the principles of the canon of *arrangement* were being met.

### 3.2.3.1 Expression of *arrangement's* first principle

As this commercial opened, Shots 1 & 2 engaged close focus photography to create synecdochal rhetoric. The air of mystery aroused surrounding the ownership of a hand seen writing and of a finger seen ringing a door bell (an every-day attention-demanding device), therefore, constituted a clear attempt to *capture the audience's attention* (first principle of *arrangement*).

### 3.2.3.2 Expression of *arrangement's* second principle

The female caller then volunteered the *necessary background information* with the story of her arrival at the front door and the *raison d'être* for her request, to wit; "I'm having a dinner party and I've run out of coffee." The nature of the message and visual sequencing of these shots (Shots 3-5), therefore, was found to concur precisely with the edict of the second principle of the canon of *arrangement* (to *provide necessary background information*). Compliance with this principle was, however, largely vocal albeit supported by appropriate facial expression (canon of *delivery*).

### 3.2.3.3 Expression of *arrangement's* third principle

In Shots 6-18 a comprehensive rhetoric, comprised largely of metaphor and simile, in promoting the quality and "sophistication" surrounding the possession and consumption of *Gold Blend* coffee. In constituting the core message this indubitably equated to the requirement of the third principle to *state and prove the text's thesis*.<sup>D</sup> The "text" supporting this principle was, again, situated in the order of sequence specified by the canon of *arrangement*.

### 3.2.3.4 Expression of *arrangement's* fourth principle

No evidence was found to support expression of the fourth principle of *arrangement*; that of *anticipating counter thesis*.

### 3.2.3.5 Expression of *arrangement's* fifth principle

Finally, in Shots 19-21, an *appeal to the audience's emotions* (fifth principle) became evident as the narrative engaged with the romantic feelings of its

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<sup>D</sup> In this thesis 'text' denotes any aural or visual message delivered to an audience.

viewers through the half truth delivered in the exchange "Have you met your new neighbour yet?" "Oh, I've popped in for coffee." With meaningful facial expressions, that involved direct engagement with the eyes, the episode was clearly calculated to thinly mask the flirtatious behaviour witnessed earlier being characteristic of female romantic subterfuge. As such the scene also served to visually express the canon of *invention*, inasmuch as it constituted a targeted emotional appeal that will have been most easily "read" by a female audience, and the canon of *delivery* through its performance. Cicero (in Henderson, 1942:317) writes of the emotional appeal, as applicable to limited enquiries, (such as this advertisement can be considered to be) thus: "we must also employ the means to excite the emotions." Covino & Jolliffe too describe Aristotle's thinking on this species of rhetoric, which he termed "pathos," thus:-

*The central idea underlying pathos is that an effective text will somehow activate or draw upon the sympathies and emotions of the auditors causing them to attend to and accept its ideas, propositions, or calls for action. (Corvino & Joliffe, 1995:15-16).*

### 3.2.3.6 Situating *arrangement* in narrative structure

In order to provide further insight into the relationship between narrative and the canon of *arrangement* the distribution of the principles pertaining thereto were entered into the schematic shown in Fig. 3.12, horizontally, beneath the shots forming the syntagmatic axis. Principal feature/theme identified during the course of the analysis were entered vertically into the paradigmatic axis in order of their appearance.

In this commercial two-dimensional structure of narrative, in paradigm and syntagm, was seen to be capable of delivering a common means of semiotic and rhetorical interrogation. The content of this particular narrative, moreover, was seen to have been so ordered as to accommodate the prescribed sequence of the five principles of the classical canon of *arrangement*. By this token, therefore, the narrative was deemed to have imposed a rhetorical influence. It was these early precursors, therefore, that were considered here as a suitable basis on which to found the search for classical rhetoric's visual expression in the canon of *arrangement*.

FIG. 3.12 SCHEMATIC: ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE STRUCTURE / RHETORIC'S CANON OF ARRANGEMENT

INTEGRATION OF METZ'S FILM "SHOT" WITH DE SAUSSURE'S LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS OF PARADIGM & SYNTAGM

**TELEVISION COMMERCIAL FOR NESCAFÉ GOLD BLEND COFFEE (PILOT STUDY)**

FEATURE / THEME		← SYNTAGMATIC AXIS →																				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
HAND WITH PENCIL																						
BELL PUSH & FINGER																						
FEMALE SUBJECT																						
MALE SUBJECT																						
COFFEE JAR (PRODUCT)																						
COFFEE BEANS IN SCOOP																						
COFFEE BEANS FALLING																						
COFFEE BEANS ON JAR CAP																						
COFFEE JARS + CUP & SAUCER																						
FEMALE DINNER GUEST																						
DURATION (Secs)		2	1	3	2	1	3	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	4	2	2	1	2	1	1	3
CUMULATIVE		2	3	6	8	9	12	13	14	15	18	20	22	24	28	30	32	33	35	36	37	40
Principles of Arrangement (Visible Functions)		1: CAPTURE ATTENTION				2: BACKGROUND INFORMATION				3: STATE & PROVE THE TEXT'S THESIS								5: APPEAL TO THE EMOTIONS				

### 3.3 Discussion of Findings & Results

#### 3.3.1 Provenance

This, the first of a series, of now famous television commercials, from November 1987 promoted Nescafe's *Gold Blend* coffee. In a narrative which surrounded a young man and woman drawn together in a flirtatious encounter, occasioned by a shortage of coffee for a dinner party, the twenty-one shots comprised well established visual and aural semiotic *signs*.

#### 3.3.2 Semiotic Analysis

Referring to the *Tabulated Data* summary (Fig 3.4) it became immediately apparent that all of the *signs* employed in the twenty-one shots of this commercial were delivered via *connotative signifiers*. This finding was found to be consistent with the observation of Hall (1973) who explains the tendency thus:-

*In the advertising discourse, for example, we might say that there is almost no 'purely denotative' communication. Every visual sign in advertising 'connotes' a quality, situation, value or inference which is present as an implication or implied meaning, depending on the connotational reference. (Hall, 1973:12)*

Whilst not unexpected, the degree of conclusiveness of this result, nevertheless, came as somewhat of a surprise. Yet, not only were these *signs* wholly *connotative*, they were also, with the exception of two results, seen to be operating entirely in *symbolic* mode.

Such precision and regularity observed in the classification of these *signs*, was taken as an indication of the visual content having been most artfully considered and constructed, albeit, not necessarily with a foreknowledge of semiotics. Close examination of the nature of the subject matter, moreover, revealed good reason to suppose that a middle class socio-economic audience in 1980s England were being deliberately targeted. In this respect, classical music, a *filofax* and the mention of a dinner party, were some of the *symbolic* factors that would have been "read" rapidly by the television audience of that time as *connotative signifiers* of their social status. The covert, yet subliminal, nature of such *connotative symbolism* is surely made manifest by the words of Barthes who

observed "the process of connotation is so immediate when it is experienced that it is almost impossible to separate denotation and connotation" (Barthes in Cobley & Jansz, 1997, p.50). So seamless, in fact, was the transition between *first* and *second order signifiers* that, clothed in the normality of a romantic narrative, their lifestyle scene-setting function became all but invisible. For as Allen observes:-

*Television [...] constructs representations of the world based on complex sets of conventions [...] whose operations are largely hidden by their transparency. Like television itself most of the time, these conventions are so familiar in their effects that we don't notice them.*  
(Allen, 1992:7)

The rationale of the advertisers in choosing to establish, by association, their product as a lifestyle *signifier* of high social standing becomes clear when considering Bignell's perception of the ideological function of advertisements. "Advertising", he says, is "one of the social institutions which perform this function of naturalising dominant ideologies in our culture" and that it may also "encourage us to view our consumption positively as an activity which grants us membership of lifestyle groups" (Bignell, 2002:37).

The effect of such *connotative signifiers* in creating what Roland Barthes termed "myth" (Bignell, 2002:21) became most evident in the juxtaposition of the product and its associated artefacts (coffee cups and saucers, coffee beans, coffee jars etc.,) amongst established *signifiers* of middle-class culture (*filo-fax*, classical music, dinner party, architectural excellence, *haute couture* etc.,). Thus it enabled *Gold Blend* coffee to achieve *mythic* status as a *symbolic* possession and its drinking to become a defining behaviour of that same social classification.

The following extracts taken from Appendix 3.3 are considered typical of instances where an association with high socio-economic status was being sought:-

Aural associations:

- "I'm having a dinner party and I've run out of coffee" (Shots 04 & 05).
- Classical style backing music (all but the last two Shots)

### Visual associations:

- A home bureau and a filo-fax are juxtapositioned with a coffee cup and saucer (Shot 02).
- A dinner party scene featuring a guest holding a coffee cup (Shot 20).

The foregoing is consistent, therefore, with what Bignell (2002) had in mind when he quoted Barthes' on 'myth' thus:-

*Myth as Barthes uses the term, means things used as signs to communicate a social and political message about the world. The message always involves the distortion or forgetting of alternative messages, so that myth appears to be simply true, rather than one of a number of different possible messages.*  
(Bignell, 2002:21)

The almost insidious visual power of *myth* in advertising is clearly recognised by Broms & Gahmberg (1983) who write:-

*Symbols and myths are values clothed as a picture, an image. Abstract ethical values such as "good" and "bad" have little charm, except to moral philosophers, but if those values appear in the form of an image (e.g., good = St. George, or bad = the Dragon), they suddenly start to work on the imaginations of great masses of people. These value laden images are myths.*

(Broms & Gahmberg, 1983:482-495)

The manner in which the construction of *myth* was observed in this commercial, can, therefore, be seen to accord with Broms & Gahmberg's observation through the process of *association*. The *connotative signifiers* were lifestyle indicators that were skilfully selected in order to *associate* the purchase, drinking and display of *Gold Blend* coffee with social status.

Associating coffee with clientele of high social status, however, was not enough, for the product had also to be seen to have high value if it was to be credibly linked to such clientele. Naming the coffee *Gold Blend*, therefore, together with the use of *golden* or *gold* coloured artefacts afforded the opportunity to *associate* it with a substance of high worth (gold) thereby delivering the required perception of a product of equally high worth. The following examples taken from Appendix 3.3 are considered typical of instances where, in tandem with the vocal script, such an association was actively being sought:-

Aural associations:

- Voice-over: "now golden roasted, richer" (Shot 16)

Visual associations:

- Gold coloured bell push (Shot 02)
- *Gold Blend* coffee label (Shot 08)
- Gold coffee bean earrings (Shot 12)
- Gold coloured coffee scoop (Shot 15)
- Gold coloured coffee beans and jar top (Shot 17)

The *semiotic analysis* revealed, therefore, that, in realising the objectives of enhancing the value of the product whilst relating it to a 1980s professional group of people, with high socio-economic status (later disparagingly termed "yuppies"), a powerful *semiotic* mechanism termed *myth* was employed.

With all but one of the shots having been revealed to be acting *semiotically* in *symbolic* mode, (Fig.3.4) the expectation was born that an analysis of the rhetoric would reveal much use of *metaphor*, *simile* and *synecdoche* since these devices are, almost by definition, *symbolic* in their function. One might recall the following words of Bignell (ibid), who, although writing on *Media Semiotics* seems to positively invite rhetoric.:-

*The message always involves the distortion or forgetting of alternative messages, so that myth appears to be simply true, rather than one of a number of different possible messages.*

(Bignell, 2002:21)

One might ask, therefore, was it an accident that, in choosing words to describe the semiotic *myth*, Bignell provided an almost perfect description of the function of rhetoric insofar as it promulgates the preferred agenda? One cannot know, but it was anticipated that the ensuing rhetorical analysis might shed some light on why the *semiotics* and the rhetoric which it engendered were so inextricably linked to one another. Having established *Gold Blend*, through a visual semiotic presentation, as being a valuable possession with implied high social status attached, it remained only to *persuade* viewers that those same benefits could,

by the purchase of the product, be theirs. Such persuasion was now perceived to be the province of rhetoric.

### 3.3.3 Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical Analysis of the twenty-one shots found extensive visual expression of four of the five canons of classical rhetoric. Three, namely *invention*, *style* and *delivery*, became apparent in the shot-by-shot examination and one, *arrangement*, emerged from examination of the narrative sequence of those shots. The canon of *memory* possessed no potential for visual expression.

#### 3.3.3.1 Invention

In Chapter one of this thesis, it was observed that, in the Agora<sup>E</sup> of ancient Athens, rhetors knew and could see their audiences thus *the audience* defined the rhetoric. Conversely, in television advertising, visual rhetors knew only the audience they wished to attract; the rhetoric, therefore, defined the audience. In searching for the visual expression of classical rhetoric's first canon (invention), therefore, one sought, and indeed found, an argument being developed which did just that! The themes of self-identification and high social status that were identified were companions which could only be reasonably understood when viewed as aids to the *invention* of rhetoric designed to target a discrete audience. Morley (1992) concludes that "one can hardly imagine any television text having any effect whatever without identification."

What was observed was the *invention* of a visually constructed rhetoric which targeted people from a particular social stratum. It did so in the knowledge that in the current (1980's) English culture it was widely considered chic for young, professional, people to belong, or *appear* to belong, to the *middle class* sector of society. In order to achieve this impression the rhetoric employed signalled the code of behaviour expected of such a group through *symbolic* artefacts, refined manner of speech, recreational tastes (especially the arts - classical music & paintings) etc. The television advertiser's intention to become known to a certain

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<sup>E</sup> *Agora*: in ancient Greek cities, an open space that served as a meeting ground for various activities of the citizens. (Encyclopaedia Britannica)

audience, therefore, was manifest and could legitimately be considered to accord, *visually*, with the classical canon of *invention* through the "discovery of arguments designed to convince or to influence the audience" (Cicero, in Henderson, 1942:307). Although it was remarked upon, in Chapter 1 that the nature of the rhetoric *invented* in a televisual context *delimited* the audiences reached, the nature of the rhetoric in this commercial was such that it also sought to reach those who could only *aspire* to the social status alluded to.

At first sight it appeared anomalous that visual expression of the canons of *Invention* and *style* were, without exception, found to accompany one another (Fig.3.8). On consideration, however, it became obvious that the canon of *invention*, by definition, required envisaging a rhetoric that was born of a full understanding of its intended audience. In addition, moreover, if that rhetoric, once conceived, was then to accord with the classical canons, then it *must* comprise one or more devices pertaining to the canon of *style*. Considered in this light the result becomes one that should be expected given the evidence found with regard to the visual expression of the canon of *style*.

### 3.3.3.2 Style

As anticipated, following the discovery of a largely *symbolic* semiotic structure, the rhetoric was observed to draw heavily on *metaphor* (eleven instances), *simile* (ten instances) and *synecdoche* (five instances) which, cumulatively, featured in seventeen of the total of twenty-one shots (Fig.3.10). Metaphors are accorded high status by Cicero who observes "the *Style* is brilliant if the words employed are chosen for their dignity and used metaphorically" (Cicero in Henderson, 1942:327). Metaphor, moreover, is the perfect vehicle for the self-identification being sought from the television audience for it is a defining precept that metaphor requires the "subject" to *become* the "image." With eleven of the twenty-one shots having been identified as employing visual metaphor we can deduce that, in this commercial, not only is the canon of *style* most strongly expressed in visual terms but that metaphor is a principal device employed in its enactment. Whereas, metaphor had been seen acting to persuade through the self-image of its *viewers*, however, simile had been most active in the selection of artefacts to enhance viewer's perception of the image of the *product*; hence the

extensive use of gold in presenting the product (coffee granules) as a substance of great worth.

### 3.3.3.3 Delivery

Insofar as the canon of *delivery* is concerned, it is perforce, dependent on a human presence. Given the romantic saga involved in this commercial, it also found frequent expression, albeit not always concurrently, with the canons of *invention* and *style*. Given the large number of close up shots (14 out of 21) comprising head or head and shoulder views, it came as no surprise to find that visual expression of the canon of *delivery* depended largely on facial expression and to a lesser extent on body deportment and gesture, often referred to as "body language," albeit supported by a vocal text. Such observations accorded with Covino & Jolliffe's understanding of the canon, i.e. "the art of using one's voice and body effectively when speaking" (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995:24-25). More significantly the observations made were seen to be consistent with Cicero and Quintilian's classical definitions:-

*For he invests his speech with lucidity, brilliance, convincingness and charm not by his language but by changes of voice, by gestures and by glances, which will be most efficacious if they harmonise with the class of speech and conform to its effect and its variety.*

(Cicero in Henderson, 1942:331)

*All emotional appeals will fall flat unless they are given the fire that voice, look, and the whole carriage of the body can give them (ibid).*

(Quintilian in Page et al [Eds], 1922:245)

As recounted in Chapter 1 of this thesis, it is difficult to overstate the importance of delivery in classical rhetoric. Once again Cicero (Cicero in Henderson, 1942, p.169) is exuberant in his promotion of the canon of *delivery*, observing that "without delivery the best speaker cannot be of any account at all" Both Cicero, and later Quintilian, recount a story purporting to quote Demosthenes :-

*The story goes that when Demosthenes was asked what is the first thing in speaking, he assigned the first rôle to delivery, and also the second and also the third.*

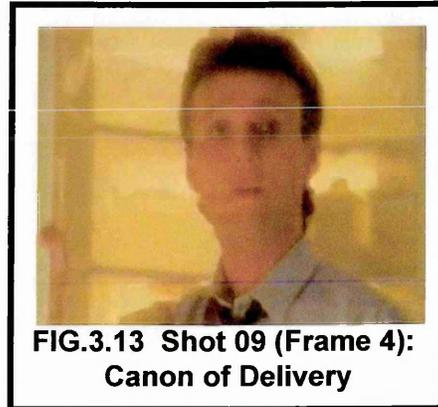
(Cicero in Henderson [Ed], 1942:169)

Likewise Quintilian's account reads:-

*Demosthenes, when asked what was the most important thing in oratory, gave the palm to delivery and assigned it second and third place as well, until his questioner ceased to trouble him.*

(Quintilian in Page *et al* [Eds], 1922:245)

The crucial role that the visual expression of *delivery* plays in enhancing the product image in this commercial is blatantly exemplified in Shot 9 (Appendix 3.3) (Fig.3.13). Facially and vocally expressing nonchalance, the male subject enquires of the female subject "would *Gold Blend* be too good for your guests?" The line could have been delivered with a smile



which, despite the nonchalant vocal tone, would have been perceived as a joke. By maintaining his nonchalant facial expression, however, he makes it appear to be a normal question to ask. In this way the creative script writers are able to imply the product's quality and an association with cultured people of good taste. Thus the air of normality that is conveyed allows these meanings, which are being attached to the product, to go unquestioned.

In Shot 20 (Appendix 3.3) (Fig.3.14) one sees the association of high cultural imagery maintained but chiefly through the surrounding artefacts and décor. Visual expression of the canon of *delivery* in this penultimate scene, nevertheless, still draws on the casual voice tone, now supplemented by body posture. In asking the question "have you met your new



neighbour yet" accompanied by a sideways glance, a guest at the dinner party surreptitiously enquires if the hostess has made any romantic overtures toward her next door neighbour. The inclination of her head and the slight smile that plays upon her lips is, however, behaviour that may be witnessed when friends (especially female friends) are teasing one another and is indicative of the aura

of comfort that pertains. The comfort that allows such relaxed after-dinner talk, however, is a quality that is clearly being associated with the *Gold Blend* coffee, symbolised by the gold-rimmed cup held at centre screen for maximum attention and responsible for rescuing the hostess from her, otherwise, social disgrace.

The "gestures and glances" of this dinner party guest are such that they may easily be seen to be consistent with Cicero's observations, mentioned earlier, on practising rhetoric through the canon of *Delivery* in which he declares:-

*For he invests his speech with lucidity, brilliance, convincingness and charm not by his language but by changes of voice, by gestures and by glances. . .*

(Cicero in Henderson, 1942:331).

Evidence of classical rhetoric's visual expression through the canon of *delivery* in this commercial is substantial. Attending seventeen of the twenty-one shots, fourteen of which concern facial expression, there remains little doubt that the canon of *delivery*, as described by classical scholars, is extant in this commercial and its promotion of the product. Masked by a romantic narrative, moreover, its effectiveness, was enhanced, as revealed by a semiotic analysis which, in the words of Allen, showed that "like television itself most of the time, these conventions are so familiar in their effects that we don't notice them" (Allen,1992:7).

#### 3.3.3.4 The canon of *arrangement* relative to narrative Concerning *arrangement*

Results showed that four of the five "principles drawn from ancient rhetoric" (Covino & Jolliffe,1995:22) within the canon of *arrangement* were *visually* expressed and, moreover, in their correct sequence namely:-

1. *Capture the audience's attention.*
2. *Provide necessary background information.*
3. *State and prove the text's thesis.*
4. *Anticipate and address possible counter-theses.*
5. *Conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions.*

(Covino & Jolliffe 1995:22)

The failure to find evidence supporting visual expression of the fourth principle, *anticipating counter thesis*, should, perhaps, have been expected since it can most probably be explained by the following commercial considerations:

- (a) An inability to argue tangible differences between the product advertised and those of rival companies
- (b) Commercial expediency in not wanting to draw attention to competitors' products.

That four of these five principles were found to have been applied in the prescribed sequence, nevertheless, surely speaks of deliberate structuring. Even if born of the creative scriptwriter's intuition and empirical experience rather than in knowledge of the canon and its principles, such a stratagem as this canon of *arrangement* presents surely bears testimony of its visual expression and effectiveness. Although, as has been suggested, the canon of *arrangement* may not have been wittingly considered, one can observe that a form of narrative was most certainly contrived.

### Concerning Narrative Analysis

Propp in his original publication of 1928 "Morphology of The Folktale" believed that study on the basis of small component parts [was] the correct method of investigation' (Propp 1968:11). Alan Dundes, in his introduction (Dundes in Propp, 1968:xi-xvii) recognised Propp's minimalistic approach and its structural methodology as employing *syntagmatic* and *paradigmatic* axes (see Chapter 1, 1.3.5). Although Propp used no such nomenclature, his axes were, in all but name, those which had been propounded by Ferdinand Saussure 12 years earlier to serve as a structure for the analysis of *text* (Saussure in Balley, C., & Sechehaye, A., (Eds.), (1983:110-120). Thus narrative, in its linguistic expression, was seen, through its structure, to possess the basis of analysis. It was in the work of Christian Metz (1974), however, in which was found the same minimalistic approach to the narrative analysis of film and which inspired an innovative interpretation of Metz's concept of the "shot" in this thesis (3.1.2 of this Chapter).

The *romantic* narrative theme was distinguished from the *product* narrative theme by reference to the sound track. All of the words spoken, with regard to romance, were *semiotically connotative* rather than *denotative* by interpretation. Being rhetorically implied entirely through the canon of *delivery* the romantic narrative theme utilised euphemistic phraseology, vocal inflection and facial

expression. Product narrative called on the authority of the male voice in both the voiceover (shots 15-18) which promoted the product's taste, quality and brand name and through the male character (Shots 8,9 & 11) in associating the product's cultural image.

The narrative structure that emerged in analysis was one which could be seen to engage people (28 out of 40 seconds) more often than artefacts (12 out of 40 seconds). From the results entered into Fig.3.12, however, 11 seconds, in total, were devoted to the male character (less than the total for artefacts!) whilst for female characters 17 seconds was allocated. One might conclude, therefore, that in encouraging self identification from this commercial's audience the higher exposure of female characters implies targeting that is skewed towards women rather than men. If one acknowledges that more women than men shop for groceries then such a bias becomes explicable. Duration of exposure also favours women insofar as the "shot" average for female characters is 17 seconds / 7 "shots" = 2.43 seconds per shot, whereas for male characters it falls to 11 seconds / 6 "shots" = 1.83 seconds per "shot". The difference may seem trifling but when one considers that the whole commercial lasts only 40 seconds and that the average "shot" duration for any one "shot" is 40 seconds / 21 shots = 1.90 seconds, then the emphasis on women is unmistakable.

If one now recalls (see 3.3.2.1 of this Chapter) the observation that in television advertising, visual rhetors know only the audience they wish to attract; and that the rhetoric *invented* defines the audience, a natural link between narrative structure and rhetoric becomes evident. Thus we are poised to investigate the engagement of narrative with the rhetorical canon of arrangement.

#### Concerning *arrangement* in narrative

In the review of literature (Ch.1: 1.3.5, p.53) Kennedy, [trans], (1991:257) was drawn upon in observing that classical origins of rhetoric's canon of *arrangement* showed that 'an effective speech follow[ed] a structural pattern' whilst recalling that the first teachers of rhetoric in the Greek world, [told] how they recommended a 'set order of parts.' Thus *arrangement* appeared to have a narrative structure in which the five principles which the rhetor should address

could reasonably be held to be paradigms whilst the prescribed sequence for their delivery could quite justifiably be regarded as constituting a *syntagm*.

When a shot by shot rhetorical analysis was undertaken evidence was found supporting the presence of 4 of the 5 principles of *arrangement* in their prescribed sequence. Having, superimposed those 4 principles on the sections of the syntagmatic axis (Fig 3.12) upon which they were found to act, it was observed that some had been afforded a disproportionate amount of screen time; the most noteworthy being that pertaining to the principle of *stating and proving the text's thesis* (shots 6 - 18 inc.). In this way, therefore, the narrative structure could be seen to have acquired a preferred and, therefore, a rhetorical agenda featuring, in this instance, the product.

### 3.4 Piloting Summary

The analytical structure conceived in Chapter 2 and tested by the research work carried out in this pilot study (see Appendix 3.3) was found to be sufficiently robust in so far as it easily afforded the chosen commercial to reveal visually rich semiotic meanings and rhetoric messages and devices.

Accordingly it was found that semiotic theory, notably that of Barthes (in Cobley & Jansz, 1997:51) and Peirce (in Chandler, 2002:36-43), could be readily applied in the visual context of a television commercial, notwithstanding that it had been originally exemplified though the medium of printed, illustrative, advertising. It could, moreover, having been applied, be seen to support certain preferred rhetorical messages. The opening shot of this *Gold Blend* commercial (Appendix 3.3, p.2) (Fig.3.15), for example, saw how that classical music and an artefact (a *filofax*), that was an established *connotative sign* for social status during the 1980s period, underpinned in (*symbolic mode*) a visual rhetoric which sought to confer that same social status, by association, on *Gold Blend*



**FIG.3.15 Shot 01 (Frame 1):  
Semiotic connotative sign  
(in symbolic mode)  
underpins the Canon of  
*Invention***

coffee through the simultaneous presence of a coffee cup. Through the canon of *invention*, therefore, such a rhetoric defined its audience.

Likewise it was also found that rhetorical theory could be most meaningfully applied, in the visual context, in four out of five of the canons of classical rhetoric, originally propounded by *Aristotle, Cicero & Quintilian*, for linguistic expression. For example the rhetoric which ensued from the *semiotic sign*, just mentioned, was one which used the *invented* association of social status to *create* an appeal (i.e. to target) a specific audience. It, therefore, exemplified, in Cicero's words, "the discovery of arguments designed to convince or influence the audience" (Cicero in Henderson, 1942:307) and thereby satisfied the first Canon of classical rhetoric.

Although rhetoric's canon of *memory* lacked direct visual representation the reasons for this were already fully understood and were not taken as detrimental to the search for visual expression of the remaining canons. It was also foreseen that the canon of *arrangement* could not, by its very nature, be analysed using the structure set out in Appendix 3.3 to this Chapter nor its potential for influencing narrative structure be quickly appreciated. An innovative schematic approach to analysis of narrative structure, through the integration of Metz's film "shot" with de Saussure's linguistic concepts of paradigm & syntagm was developed from a draft (Fig 3.2) to a refined structure (Fig 3.12). By revealing the presence and extent of principles, known to pertain to the rhetorical canon of *arrangement*, it was found to be most valuable in its ability to successfully demonstrate how the narrative of this commercial enhanced its power of persuasion.

What emerged from the trial of this narrative analysis, however, was that the paradigms allocated were insufficient in their ability to fully represent conceptual meaning. It was recalled that "the verbal channel anchors the meaning of the visual" (Hodge & Tripp in Allen, 1992:56). In particular the trial exposed the need to reveal "states of being" that were delivered through the vocal score. For example in Shots 08 - 11 the following exchange constructs a paradigm of *quality* that concerned enhancement of the product image:-

Male subject: *Would gold blend be too good for your guests?*

Female subject: *Oh I think they could get used to it.*

Male subject: *It's a very sophisticated coffee.*

Similarly in Shots 12 - 14 the exchange produces a paradigm of *status* that served to promote sales through inviting customers' self identification / aspiration:-

Female subject: *They have very sophisticated tastes.*

Male subject: *Do they?*

Female subject: *Yes. Well I must be getting back . . .*

Thus it was resolved that the paradigm-setting, procedure in the ensuing commercials under research, would take account of this finding. A revised set of paradigms which would more fittingly represent this commercial, in terms of its conceptual headings, was subsequently drawn up (Fig. 3.16).

It was also observed, during the assessment, that there was a degree of overlapping between some paradigms in terms of the range of Shots over which they were considered to be operating. Whilst consideration was given to incorporating such overlaps into the schematic development it was deemed to be an unnecessary refinement. Paradigms identified, therefore were those seen to be dominant.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

The pilot study was deemed to have proven the methodology required to address the principal research question, namely:-

*Does classical rhetoric, once devised for vocal and written delivery, have a visual expression in television advertising?*

This had been achieved insofar as it had been demonstrated that a visual expression of classical rhetoric was most apparent when intimately linked to canons of practice once devised for its linguistic expression. Sufficient grounds were deemed to have been established, therefore, for proceeding with methods

which would embrace a wider portfolio of television commercials and which would also include pursuit of the subsidiary research question namely:-

*If classical rhetoric is found to have an expression in television advertising how is such rhetoric employed in the portrayal of science and scientists?*

FIG. 3.16

REVISED SCHEMATIC: ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE STRUCTURE / RHETORIC'S CANON OF ARRANGEMENT

INTEGRATION OF METZ'S FILM "SHOT" WITH DE SAUSSURE 'S LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS OF PARADIGM & SYNTAGM

**TELEVISION COMMERCIAL FOR NESCAFÉ GOLD BLEND COFFEE (PILOT STUDY)**

← SYNTAGMATIC AXIS →

THEMES		← SYNTAGMATIC AXIS →																				
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
DURATION (Secs)	INCREMENTAL	2	1	3	2	1	3	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	4	2	2	1	2	1	1	3
	CUMULATIVE	2	3	6	8	9	12	13	14	15	18	20	22	24	28	30	32	33	35	36	37	40
<b>Principles of Arrangement (Visible Functions)</b>		1: CAPTURE ATTENTION		2: BACKGROUND INFORMATION				3: STATE & PROVE THE TEXT'S THESIS										5: APPEAL TO THE EMOTIONS				
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS SETTING																						
THE MYSTERY CALLER																						
PROBLEM DEFINITION																						
DISPLAY OF SYMPATHY																						
PROBLEM SOLUTION / PRODUCT VALUE PROMOTION																						
BRAND & PRODUCT IDENTITY (Tableau)																						
NEED FULFILMENT (Epilogue)																						

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# CHAPTER 4

## METHODS

The successful conclusion of a pilot study (Chapter 3) which, through semiotic and rhetorical analysis had proven the methodology in addressing the principal research question, finally led to consideration in this chapter of an extended number of television commercials. In the broader approach which followed, commercials were selected which could be seen to offer good prospects of informing the principal research question, "does classical rhetoric, once devised for vocal and written delivery, have a visual expression in television advertising?" More than that, however, it also sought to satisfy the subsidiary research question, "If classical rhetoric is found to have an expression in television advertising how is such rhetoric employed in the portrayal of science and scientists?"

### 4.1 Selection Method: Television Commercials

#### 4.1.1 Facility to address the research questions

Four television commercials (one a *case study*) were considered to be an appropriate number on which to base the research insofar as it promised to be a quantity which was amenable to detailed analysis whilst also allowing sub-division into two pairs for comparative purposes.

Guided by the objective of satisfying the principal research question, the selection of the four commercials was informed by the rhetorical and semiotic theory previously examined and discussed during the literary review in Chapter 1 of this thesis; key features which suggested discernible use of classical rhetoric's five canons (Ch.1, para.,1.1.2.1) and which displayed well defined narrative structure in relation to *paradigmatic* themes and *syntagmatic* sequencing (as discussed in Ch.1, para.1.3.5). Additionally, discussions in Chapter 1, paras.1.2.4 & 1.2.5, surrounding gender and the portrayal of science and scientists in the televisual medium, were permitted to influence selection in order to provide suitable materials with which to address the subsidiary research question.

#### 4.1.2 Humour ~ a possible rhetorical function

Among the various styles of presentation in UK television advertising, one of the most enduring themes observed by the researcher appeared to be that of humour. An on-line encyclopaedia makes the following observation:-

*Advertising agencies often use humour as a tool in their creative marketing campaigns. In fact, many psychological studies have attempted to demonstrate the effects of humour and their relationship to empowering advertising persuasion.*

(Wikipedia, 2010)

The suggestion that humour may be able to confer on advertisements the power to *persuade* clearly had rhetorical implications. Aristotle had certainly seen humour as possessing a rhetorical function, although chiefly as a potential diversionary device it would seem:-

*The object of an appeal to the hearer is to make him well disposed or to arouse his indignation, and sometimes to engage his attention or the opposite; for it is not always expedient to engage his attention, which is the reason why many speakers try to make their hearers laugh.*

(Henderson, 1926:433)

There is also a suggestion that it might be applied in well disposing or arousing an audience. Corbett & Connors (1999:11) found that "all rhetoricians emphasise the importance of putting the audience in a receptive frame of mind" and that "the need to dispose an audience favourably explains why so many speakers begin their talk with a joke or humorous anecdote." Further consideration of the use of humour, therefore, seemed most appropriate and two commercials were selected which, whilst possessing scientific content, adopted a light-hearted approach and two offering, in contrast, a more sober manner of delivery. No cognizance was taken of the nature of the products being promoted, albeit, due to selection on the basis of scientific, conceptual modelling, in which resemblances were observed in the second pair of commercials (*Benecol* and *Vaseline*), a *health and welfare* connection emerged.

#### 4.1.3 Money Cards: EGG Plc., (Case Study)

Commissioned by EGG Banking plc., the *Egg Money Card* series of four commercials was first observed by the researcher in late 2005. Selection owed much to humour and the use of anthropomorphised guinea pigs which

presented an intriguing challenge to the principal research question in determining if classical rhetoric was discernable in television advertising.

The use of an overarching scientific theme, a predominantly male team of white-coated scientists and *faux* guinea pigs, with cultural roles that appeared to be gender specific, constituted subject matter which promised to be stereotypical. Such material hinted at *myth* building as promulgated by Roland Barthes' (Barthes in Lavers, 1973:68) semiotic work. This series of commercials appeared to offer, therefore, a good traditional basis for comparison with other commercials in addressing the subsidiary research question. The commercial entitled "Testing", from this series, was finally selected as the *case study*.

#### 4.1.4 Women's Shoes: Brantano UK Ltd

Interest in this series of commercials was stimulated during the preparation and delivery of a conference paper by the researcher in 2007 and subsequently published (Simpson, 2007). Several points of similarity and contrast between this commercial and the foregoing *EGG* commercial led to a realisation of the potential for addressing the subsidiary research question. As in the case of the previous *EGG Money Card* commercials this series also had a humorous theme. A gender imbalance among the scientists, however, who were mainly women, made an interesting contrast and a valuable subject for comparative analysis.

The clear use of "myth" in this commercial, inherent in the creation of a fictitious scientist who was subsequently associated with two highly recognisable but real psychologists, promised resonance, once more, with Barthes semiotic works (Barthes in Lavers, 1972:68). The "ethos" created by the use of such prominent figures, moreover, invited reflection on Aristotle's rhetorical precepts (see Covino & Jolliffe, 1995:15). These factors, therefore, seemed to offer a very pertinent basis for pursuing the principal research question and resulted in its selection.

#### 4.1.5 Benecol Products: Raisio Plc

The Raisio plc commercial, first screened on UK television during March/April 2006, was selected in order to contrast the latent rhetoric found in its sober treatment of the subject matter with that presented in the more humorous theme of the two previous commercials. In seeking subject matter with which to address the principal research question the researcher was particularly intrigued by the identity of the voiceover artiste whom he recognised as that of Amanda Burton. With appearances in two popular television drama series, the first a doctor and the other a forensic pathologist, the potential arose to address the subsidiary research question from another perspective, namely, that inherent in the dissemination of scientific information without the *visual* representation of a scientist. The use of large numbers of people to mimic human biological characteristics (blood stream components) also offered fertile subject matter for semiological and rhetorical interpretation.

#### 4.1.6 Vaseline Skin Products: Unilever Plc

Screened in the UK during December 2006 and taken from a series commissioned by Unilever plc to promote the sale of its Vaseline products, this commercial was also chosen for its sober approach thereby balancing the overall comparative elements of the research materials.

The conceptual modelling of the science by large numbers of people to mimic human biological characteristics (skin cells in this instance), without the visual representation of a scientist, presented features that clearly paralleled those observed in the Raisio "Benecol" commercial. It was felt that such resemblances demanded closer examination due to the implication that important semiotic and rhetorical devices may be at work. An opportunity was seen, therefore, to pursue both the principal research question, through the nature of the rhetoric being employed, and the subsidiary research question by the manner in which the science was being portrayed.

**FIG. 4.1****SELECTED TELEVISION COMMERCIALS**

PRESENTATION STYLE	PRODUCT / SERVICE ADVERTISED	SUPPLIER / ADVERTISER
1. (humorous)	Money Cards ( <i>Case Study</i> )	Egg Plc
2. (humorous)	Women's Shoes	Brantano UK Limited
3. (sober)	Benecol Products	Raisio Plc
4. (sober)	Vaseline Skin Products	Unilever Plc

#### 4.1.7 Summary

Observation during the selection of these last three commercials showed the subjects being advertised and their narrative themes to be very different from each other and to that of the *Case Study*, thus offering the opportunity to test validity of any deductions made in the former in a manner that would be independent of the content.

### 4.2 **Analytical Methods**

#### 4.2.1 Overview

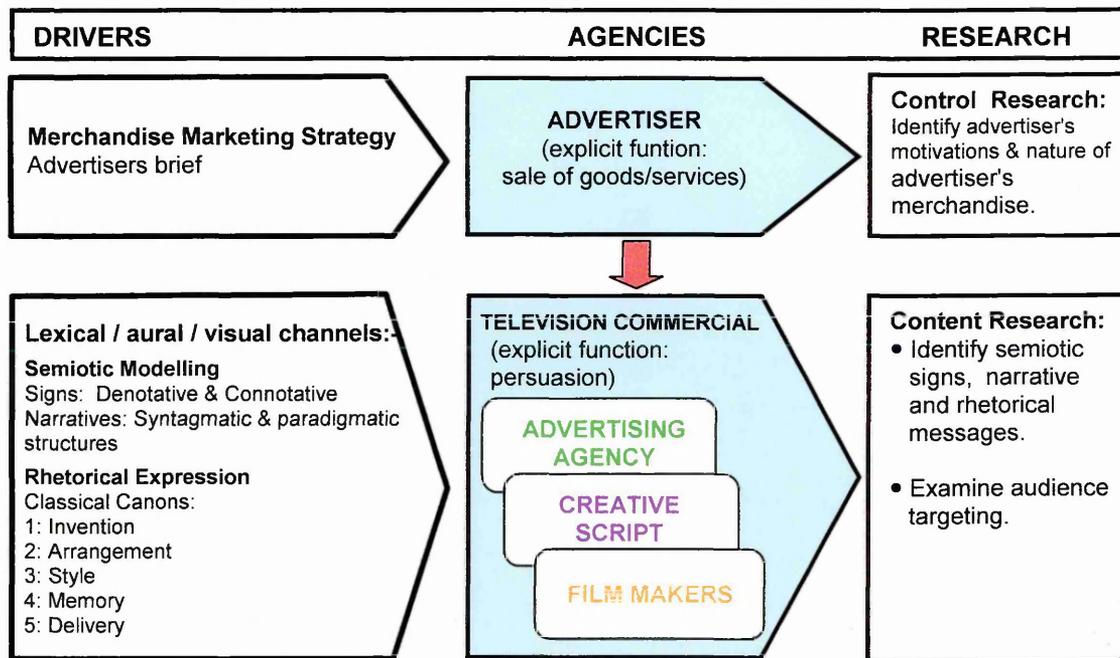
In the following account the extent and sequencing of the research was defined by the two opening stages only of the five-part "Matrix Model" illustrated in Fig. 2.7 of Chapter 2. Reproduced here in Fig.4.2, the two stages were labelled "Control Research" and "Content Research," having derived their terminology from the *Lasswell Formula* (Fig.2.1 Chapter 2).

The first method, entitled "Control Research," was envisaged as comprising interviews with representatives of all the relevant agencies. Seen as providing an insight into the motivation, objectives and intended audiences, it was intended to afford a more informed reading of any semiotic and/or rhetorical devices that may, later, become manifest during analysis.

The second method entitled "Content Research," having been successfully conceived and piloted (Chapter 3), was to be the focus of the research work. Comprising an analytical function it was designed to determine the semiotic structure of each commercial leading to exposure of the rhetorical devices in force and the relationship with narrative.

FIG. 4.2

## EXCERPT FROM CHAPTER 2 "MATRIX MODEL"



## 4.2.2 "Control Research" (Case study only)

Face to face semi-structured Interviews were conducted with representatives from both the creative script writers (*Mother*) and the advertising agency (*Mediacom*) in order to gather information surrounding how the commercial had been conceived and to determine if semiotics or classical rhetoric had been wittingly or unwittingly employed. Although an attempt was made to arrange an interview with the film makers (*Stink Films*) a brief telephone conversation was all that could be achieved yielding nothing of any value.

An interview was also proposed with an *Egg Money* marketing representative (the advertiser), during which the following subject areas were planned:-

- Confirmation of the nature of the merchandise being advertised.
- Identification of intended audiences.
- Motivation for advertising and desired outcome.
- Objectives of the advertising briefs.

An unexpected offer by the interviewee at *Egg's* advertising agency (*Mediacom*) to arrange a meeting with a contact at *Egg* for the researcher was most welcome. It was later found, however, that the personnel concerned had since left *Egg*. With no further details of their whereabouts the attempt was aborted.

"Control Research" for each of the ensuing studies was curtailed in view of the difficulty experienced in obtaining data during the *case study*. Details of agencies were recorded, where known, in order to facilitate any ensuing research work that may be embarked upon (Appendix 4.1).

#### 4.2.3 "Content Research"

The analytical method adopted for content research in the *Case Study* and all three of the subsequent commercials, was founded on the piloted methodology (Chapter 3). The alterations made during piloting were few and concerned mainly the sequencing of subjects under analysis and the manner and extent to which the relationship between *narrative* and classical rhetoric's canon of *arrangement* could be demonstrated. The approach, structure and literary support of the analysis were used, substantially without modification, with the research protocol being conducted under the following four headings:-

##### 4.2.3.1 Construction of "storyboards"

Four "storyboards", each titled with the identity of the manufacturer and product, were constructed, sequentially, for each of the four television commercials, after the fashion previously piloted. The total number of shots comprising each of the commercials was recorded and the number of 'frames' required for each shot determined according to the degree of movement observed throughout each 'shot'. Miniature stills were then printed and mounted in chronological frame sequence being referenced by product /shot/run-time. Rather more frames were selected than were ultimately shortlisted for the ensuing semiotic and rhetorical analysis. The duration of each shot was written at the end of each sequence of frames of which it was comprised. Dialogue associated with each shot (or frame sequence) was written underneath. Since the "storyboard" was an aid to work in progress, space was also made available at the sides for comments and notes (Appendix 4.2).

#### 4.2.3.2 Schematic diagram (narrative analysis)

A schematic diagram for the *case study* was devised in tandem with those for each of the other three commercials researched (Figs., 4.3 to 4.6). Prop's *narrative* concept and de Saussure's *linguistic* concept were drawn upon in the construction of a two-axis schematic diagram, for each of the four commercials, representing *paradigm* (vertical) and *syntagm* (horizontal) whilst integrating Metz's "shot" (see Seiter in Allen, 1992:45) as previously piloted. Shots, earlier identified on the "story board," were numbered and installed with their respective individual and cumulative durations on the syntagmatic (horizontal) axis.

A space was allocated for locating the extent of the principles pertaining to the canon of *arrangement*, horizontally, beneath the shots forming the *syntagmatic* axis, having been conceived and developed during the earlier pilot study.



FIG. 4.4

**SCHEMATIC: ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE STRUCTURE**

**INTEGRATION OF METZ'S FILM "SHOT" WITH DE SAUSSURE 'S LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS OF PARADIGM & SYNTAGM**

		TELEVISION COMMERCIAL FOR WOMENS SHOES (BRANTANO UK Ltd) ~ INDUCTIVE STUDY																	
		← SYNTAGMATIC AXIS →																	
FILM SHOT NO.		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
PARADIGMATIC CHOICES	FEATURE / THEME																		
DURATION (Secs)		2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	5	2	1	3	2	3	3	
CUMULATIVE		2	3	5	7	9	11	12	14	16	18	23	25	26	29	31	34	37	
Principles of Arrangement (Visible Functions)																			



FIG. 4.6

**SCHEMATIC: ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE STRUCTURE**

**INTEGRATION OF METZ'S FILM "SHOT" WITH DE SAUSSURE'S LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS OF PARADIGM & SYNTAGM**

FEATURE / THEME		← SYNTAGMATIC AXIS →																										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
PARADIGMATIC CHOICES		TELEVISION COMMERCIAL FOR VASELINE (UNILEVER PLC) ~ INDUCTIVE STUDY																										
DURATION (Secs)		1	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	3	0.5	0.5	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	0.3	0.5	1	1	1	1	4
		1	1.5	2	2.3	2.5	2.7	6	6.5	7	8	9	11	12	13	14	15	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	25	26	30	
		Principles of Arrangement (Visible Functions)																										

#### 4.2.3.3 Semiotic & Rhetorical Analysis Sheet Design

The semiotic and rhetorical analysis employed three sheets for each *shot* in all four of the television commercials.<sup>A</sup> The first of these three *shot* analysis sheets displayed the "stills" (termed "frames") selected for analysis and was headed "Semiotic & Rhetorical Analysis" with details of the advertisers name, the *shot* number and the *shot* duration. Frames, up to a maximum of 6, were allocated to each *shot*. Each frame used was identified with a reference number comprising the product code and the relevant *shot* number. The exact location of each frame within the shot was recorded by the number of seconds elapsed since the start of the commercial and by with a sequential frame number. For example, the reference "BR04-06.27 (FRAME 5)" refers to the *Brantano* commercial, *shot* 04 at 6.27 seconds into the commercial and designated frame 5 (of a possible 6) in that *shot*.

The second sheet headed "Semiotic Analysis identified the advertiser / product advertised together with the following details:-

- ▶ "Shot" (identity number),
- ▶ "Camera" (attitude, aperture, field depth, focus, etc),
- ▶ "Soundtrack" - ("vocal", "musical", "other"
- ▶ "principal components" (main subjects displayed).

A large area was set aside for interpretation and a small space at the bottom of the sheet allocated for recording the "prevailing semiotic sign" classification in terms of Barthes' *denotative* or *connotative* sign designations and Peirce's taxonomy (Pierce in Chandler, 2002:36-37).

The third sheet headed "Rhetorical Analysis," again allocated spaces for duration and shot, together with a large area for interpretation. A space was provided at the bottom of this sheet for summarising the canons of classical rhetoric found to be attending after reference to Covino & Joliffe (1995:23-24).

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<sup>A</sup> For examples of these Analysis Sheets refer to completed Appendices 5.3, 5.5, 5.7 & 5.9 of Chapter 5.

#### 4.2.3.4 Semiotic Analysis

Stage one of the analysis sought visual expression of 1<sup>st</sup> order *denotative* and 2<sup>nd</sup> order *connotative* meaning in accordance with Barthes' sign-functioning map (Fig.4.8), as expressed in Cobley & Jansz (1997:51).

<b>1. signifier</b>	<b>2.signified</b>
<b>3. denotative sign</b>	
<b>4. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIER</b>	<b>5. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIED</b>
<b>6. CONNOTATIVE SIGN</b>	

**Fig.4.8: BARTHES'S SIGN FUNCTIONING DIAGRAM**

Stage two of the analysis, classification of the *denotative* and *connotative signs* was established by reference to the three typologies, listed in Peirce's taxonomy, and defined by Chandler (2002, p.36-43), summarised as under:-

1. Symbol / Symbolic: Where the signifier does not resemble the signified so that the relationship must be learned i.e. language, Morse code, traffic lights, national flags etc.
2. Icon / Iconic: Where the *signifier* actually resembles or imitates the *signified*, (but generic rather than specific) e.g. scale models, portraits, imitative gestures, recognizably looking, tasting or smelling like etc.
3. Index / Indexical: Where the *signifier* is not arbitrary but is directly connected in some way to the object e.g., a sundial may indicate the time of day. 'Natural signs' are exemplified by smoke (indicating fire) thunder (a storm), footprints (a person / animal) etc., or 'signals' such as a knock on the door (a visitor), a phone ringing, (a caller) or recordings such as a photograph, film, video / television shot or pointers such as a pointing finger / signpost.

Due cognizance was taken of experience gained during the pilot study (Chapter 3), where it was observed that more than one semiotic sign could be seen to be at work in building a single, cohesive, meaning for a given shot. Accordingly all meanings found extant in a given shot were considered collectively in order to establish the *prevailing sign* classification (*denotative / connotative*) and the mode (*symbolic / iconic / indexical*) for each shot.

#### 4.2.3.5 Rhetorical Analysis

Analysis in all four commercials was undertaken by examining each *shot* by reference to the detail of devices contained and expounded within each of the original five, *linguistic canons* of classical rhetoric. Whilst some cognizance was taken of vocal expression, particular scrutiny was employed in seeking to ascertain those canons that could be interpreted as having been visually expressed. Such interpretation was significantly informed by the foregoing semiotic analysis which yielded *denotative* and *connotative* meaning, together with the *modes*, in which they could be understood to operate in a visual context.

Works examined in the Literature Review (Chapter 1, 1.1.2 Rhetorical theory) were drawn on in relation to the definitions and precepts surrounding the five canons, namely those of *Invention, Arrangement, Style, Memory* and *Delivery*. These were, essentially, translated works edited by, Kennedy (1991) on *Aristotle, Cicero* in Henderson (1942), *Quintilian* in Page, *et al* (1922) with further elucidation from the works of later 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century authors; principally Corbett and Connors (1999 4<sup>th</sup> Ed) and Covino & Jolliffe (1995).

Analysis, via the five canons, proceeded as in the Pilot Study (Chapter 3, 3.1.5.2). As previously acknowledged the canon of *memory* was deemed to have no tangible expression in a visual context whilst consideration of the role of the canon of *arrangement* was deferred in order to consider how it may be acting through the *narrative* structure.

#### 4.2.3.6 Narrative Analysis & The Canon of Arrangement

In order to examine how *narrative* may be empowering rhetoric, the semiotic and rhetorical analysis of each shot was reviewed to identify the dominant *narrative* features or themes (*paradigms*) emerging in individual shots or, more often, across groups of shots. Account was taken of the need, identified in the pilot study, to also consider the contribution of the vocal score of the commercial in expressing the visual script. Provision was made for dominant *narrative* features and themes identified to be installed on the *paradigmatic* (vertical) axis of the schematic, for each commercial, in order of their appearance and for the shot, or sequence of shots, in which they were active to be marked by contrasting colours in the corresponding horizontal spaces (Figs 4.2-4.5).

A review of both the semiotic and rhetorical analysis was again undertaken on each of the four commercials in order to secure any evidence that might reveal the presence of the principles of classical rhetoric's canon of *arrangement*. Evidence found to be consistent with such, together with the reasoning supporting it, were recorded under each of the principles of the five point linguistic sequence as advocated in the second canon of classical rhetoric, termed *arrangement* thus:-

- Capture the audience's attention
- Provide background information
- State and prove the central idea
- Anticipate, address and counter possible counter theses
- Appeal to the audience's emotions

The scope of the action of each of these principles, in terms of the *shots* in which they had been found to be active, was then applied beneath the *syntagmatic* (horizontal) axis, in each schematic diagram (Figs 4.2-4.5).

### 4.3 Method of Comparison & Contrast

Analytical results recorded for the *case study* (*EGG Money* commercial) were drawn upon to address the principal research question and to deduce:-

- (a) The extent and order of *semiotic* (illustrative) *signs* generated (*first* or *second order*), together with their mode of operation (*symbolic, iconic / indexical*) in their support of the ensuing rhetorical message.
  
- (b) If, and to what extent, the five linguistic canons of classical rhetoric had, through the interpretation of their principles, found expression in a visual context and the manner in which they could be seen to operate.

In order to address the subsidiary research question literary references were drawn upon in order to inform the function of humour and the role of science and scientists as rhetorical devices. A comparison or contrast was subsequently made with the manner in which those same features were observed to function within the *EGG Money* commercial.

In the light of results obtained from the *case study*, and in order to further inform both the principal and subsidiary research questions, the analytical results from each of the remaining three studies relating to *Brantano*, *Benecol* and *Vaseline* products, were examined in order to induce:-

- (a) Any resemblance or contrast to the extent and order of semiotic (illustrative) signs generated and the manner in which they were observed to operate.
  
- (b) Any points of resemblance or contrast displayed in the expression of classical rhetoric through the five canons in a visual context and the manner in which they were observed to operate.

#### **4.4 Summary of Method Application**

Failure to obtain interviews with representatives from *EGG Money plc* (the advertiser) and *Stink Films* (film makers) with regard to the case study commercial was disappointing but not disastrous. The application of the semi-structured interviews with regard to the creative script (*Mother*) writers and the advertising agency (*Mediacom*) went well, producing useful data with which to approach the ensuing rhetorical analysis (see Ch.5) and subsequent discussion of results (see Ch.6).

The application of the analytical methods was found to have benefited from the preceding pilot study insofar as no alterations of any consequence were required. The method sequencing and structure remained the same as theretofore, facilitating meaningful data recording and analysis to be undertaken, albeit now, additionally pertaining to the subsidiary research question. It remained then to present those results in a form that would render them suitable for subsequent discussion and evaluation.

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# CHAPTER 5

## FINDINGS & RESULTS

### 5.1 Introduction

Application of semiotic and rhetorical research methods yielded comprehensive results presented in Appendices 5.3, 5.5, 5.7 & 5.9 to this chapter constituting the core findings of the "shot analyses" carried out on four commercials. They reveal in detail how, with the application of semiotic theory, the visual meanings, latent in these television commercials, may be understood and seen to support classical rhetoric that is shown to accord with canons originally devised for its vocal expression. This chapter serves, therefore, as a guide to be read in conjunction with the following appendices:-

Appendix 5.3 Shot Analysis: *EGG Banking plc* commercial (Case study)

Appendix 5.5 Shot Analysis: *Brantano UK Ltd* (Shoes) commercial

Appendix 5.7 Shot Analysis: *Raisio plc.*, (Benecol) commercial

Appendix 5.9 Shot Analysis: *Unilever plc* (Vaseline) commercial

#### 5.1.1 Selection of commercials

The four commercials selected were found to be data rich enabling a detailed analysis to be carried with a scientific dimension, not present in the pilot study. The *EGG Banking plc.*, and the *Brantano UK.*, (*shoes*) commercials provided important insight into the rhetorical use of humour with visible representation of scientists / science. Similarly the *Benecol plc.*, and *Unilever plc*, (*Vaseline*) commercials yielded valuable data surrounding the use of the human body as a visually rhetorical vehicle in communicating "scientific" data without the physical appearance of a scientist in a commercial devoid of levity. The basis upon which commercials were chosen and piloted (Chapter 2, 2.3), therefore, promised to enable valuable comparisons and contrasts to be made which are discussed in Chapter 6.

### 5.1.2 Storyboards

The *storyboards* piloted and constructed during method development (Appendices 3.2 & 4.2), proved a most effective means of conducting shot-by-shot analysis. Although time consuming in construction the facility fulfilled an essential need to "freeze-frame," observe and record precise detail in tandem with the voiceover transcript, which the semiotic and rhetorical analysis demanded. Its construction, founded on an interpretation of Metz's "shot" (see Seiter in Allen, 1992:45) comprised a shot-by-shot progression of the commercial, with a sub-division of "frames," often enabling observation of features that, in the moving film, might have gone unnoticed (Chapter.3, 3.1.3). *Storyboards*, therefore, provided a focal point for data collection and the opportunity for observing both the detail in analysis together with the global account for each the four commercials.

### 5.1.3 Basis of all semiotic reasoning

*Semiotic* analysis of the following commercials was carried out on a shot-by-shot basis. The reasoning behind all *semiotic signs*, observed and classified in these four commercials, was recorded in the *Shot Analyses* appended to this chapter (Appendices 5.3, 5.5, 5.7 & 5.9).

During the semiotic analysis the *prevailing sign* identified for each shot was subjected to the methods described in Chapter 4, being expressed, in the first instance, in terms of its 1<sup>st</sup> order *denotative*, or 2<sup>nd</sup> order *connotative* category by reference to *Barthes's Sign Functioning Diagram* (Fig.5.1).

<b>1. signifier</b>	<b>2.signified</b>
<b>3. denotative sign</b>	
<b>4. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIER</b>	<b>5. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIED</b>
<b>6. CONNOTATIVE SIGN</b>	

**Fig.5.1: Barthes's Sign Functioning diagram (Cobley & Jansz, 1997: 51)**

Secondly, each *denotative* or *connotative sign* so identified was then assigned a modal classification (*symbolic / iconic / indexical*) in terms of Peirce's taxonomy<sup>1</sup> as defined by Chandler (2002:36-43).

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 3, 3.1.5.1, p.10 for Peirce's taxonomy.

#### 5.1.4 Basis for all rhetorical reasoning

Rhetorical Analysis of these four commercials proceeded on a shot-by-shot basis as described by the methods of Chapter 4. The reasoning was recorded in the *Shot Analyses* (Appendices 5.3, 5.5, 5.7 & 5.9) appended to this chapter and referred to precepts pertaining to each of the original canons of classical rhetoric, as discussed in the Literature Review (Ch.1, para.,1.1.2.1).

Earlier semiotic analysis, pertinent to each particular shot, significantly informed the process of identifying the *visual* expression these canons. As previously established, however, analysis of the expression of classical rhetoric's canon of *arrangement* was, in all cases, deemed to be best considered in association with the commercial's narrative sequence. Rhetoric's canon of *memory* was acknowledged to have no direct visual expression.

#### 5.1.5 General application of methods

The analysis for each commercial commenced with the *storyboard* construction in order to facilitate the ensuing shot-by-shot interrogation. Semiotic analysis then followed in which *semiotic signs*, when identified as previously described, were seen to reveal certain levels of visual meaning. Rhetorical analysis then saw those meanings supporting the visual expression of a preferred agenda which could most reasonably be associated with canons of classical rhetoric. Completion of a schematic analysis of narrative structure and its relationship to classical rhetoric's canon of *arrangement* concluded the *Content Research*.

Interviews with representatives from two of the media agencies responsible for making the *Egg Banking plc* commercial (the *Case Study*) preceded and informed this procedure.

## 5.2 EGG Banking plc (Case Study): Study 1

### 5.2.1 "Control research"

In order to aid and inform the planned shot-by-shot analysis of the commercial in this *Case Study*, face-to-face interviews were proposed with representatives from the advertiser, *EGG Banking plc*. Although unable to make contact with those representatives, who had subsequently left the Company, secondary sources, namely the advertising agency and the creative scriptwriters, agreed to be interviewed. The scriptwriters, *Mother*, having been recommended by *Mediacom*, the advertising agency, had liaised directly with the client, *EGG Banking plc*, in creating a script for the film makers, *Stink Films*. The film directors, engaged under a subcontract for this commercial by *Stink Films*, were unwilling to be interviewed.

Members of the staff who had been engaged in the manufacture of these commercials at both *Mother* and *Mediacom* did agree to be interviewed. Accordingly, a brief preview of the commercial (*EGG Money Card DVD ~ Appendix 5.4*) was first carried out so that questions could be prepared for interviewing personnel from these two agencies. Tape-recorded, semi-structured interviews were then arranged and undertaken, first with one of the two creative scriptwriters at *Mother*, involved in the *EGG Banking plc*, commercial, and then with the advertising agency's account director, also responsible for that same commercial.

#### 5.2.1.1 Mother (London): semi-structured interview

*Mother's* creative script writer (one of two) was interviewed at *Mother's* London office on 12th June 2007. The interviewee was Swedish yet, despite the transcribed account appearing a little ungrammatical in places, with some lack of precision in word choice and use of tense, there was little or no difficulty in comprehending what was meant. Some words, which were strangely pronounced, nevertheless, could not subsequently be deciphered when listening to the tape recording but such instances were rare.

Significant points emerging from the interview included the fact that the creative scriptwriter had received no formal training in rhetoric or semiotics. Notwithstanding this a number of the features discussed in relation to the scripting of this commercial had shown that rhetorical devices *had* certainly been used and canons of classical rhetoric complied with. For example, consideration and targeting of specific audiences had been carried out (a prior function of the first canon of rhetoric, *invention*). Insofar as the *nature* of that target audience was concerned the picture was less clear but appeared to define a broad spectrum of age groups. Comments recorded had ranged from "something between like. . . twenty-five to maybe thirty-five" to "quite young, old as well" (Appendix 5.1: 13).

Some patently empirical knowledge of the use of humour to "dispose an audience favourably" (Corbett & Connors, 1999:11), whilst gaining their attention (implicating the 1st element of the canon of *arrangement*), had also been manifested. Most commonly achieved through behavioural metaphors and similes in this commercial (implicating the third canon of rhetoric, *style*), an appreciation of how inviting an audience to self-identify might be used persuasively also appeared possible. So much became evident, in fact, when the interviewee volunteered ". . . in advertising you always try to create something that people recognise themselves in . . ."

When, questioned about techniques that may have been employed in order to ensure that audiences received a particular message, the interviewee replied "it is trial and error" (*ibid*: 13)

#### 5.2.1.2 Mediacom: semi-structured interview

The extent of the interviewee's broad knowledge of the media industry and shrewd understanding of techniques and effects employed by the creative scriptwriters, such as *Mother*, that emerged, provided useful supporting data to the previous interview. The prime role of *Mediacom* was confirmed as being that of recommending and selecting the medium or media in which the aspirations of their client, *EGG Banking plc* could best be achieved. This

turned out to be a wide portfolio of television companies, mainly Channel 4 but including ITV1,2 & 3, Sky and "a lot of satellite stuff" (*ibid*: 10). Their secondary function was that of advising *EGG Banking plc* on the contents of the brief for the creative script writing agencies dealing with the credit card advertising market; often referred to by the *Mediacom* interviewee as "the credit agencies" (not to be confused with the credit card agencies themselves).

What emerged most plainly was a disparity between *Mediacom* and *Mother* as to the audiences being targeted. Both interviewees seemed somewhat vague. *Mediacom's* understanding of EGG's required audience was an A, B, C1 profile in the 25-45 years age group (Appendix 5.2: 3). When it was pointed out by the researcher that the impression gained from viewing the commercial didn't appear to correspond with that rating the interviewee replied that in fact the commercial had targeted a younger audience within the age bracket 20-30 years. He went on to say that he actually believed that EGG's audience "in terms of the group that [would] deliver the profitability, [were] older. In his words "sort of thirty, thirty-five" (*ibid* : 4).

The essential core of *Mediacom's* influence on *Mother's* script for the commercial surrounded the apportioning of time devoted to the "offers and benefits." It was clear that *Mediacom* had wanted a 30 second commercial but, on finding that the creative script writers were adamant in having a 40 second commercial (increasing the cost to EGG), then insisted that last 10 seconds should be devoted to the product and its benefits.

Aware of EGG's desire for a "quirky" commercial in order to say "we're not that kind of an old sort of *fuddy-duddy* institution," the *Mediacom* interviewee, nevertheless, indicated that he was ill at ease about the efficacy of *Mother's* storyline for the commercial, by saying "I don't personally think that guinea pigs target that audience" (*ibid*: 8)

The transcripts of the preceding two interviews, Appendices 5.1 & 5.2 are deemed to be results of a methodology calculated to provide empirical data which would inform analysis and are later drawn upon in the "Discussion of Results" in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

## 5.2.2 "Content research"

### 5.2.2.1 Semiotic analysis: ordinal & modal classification

Analysis in the *EKG Banking plc.*, commercial proceeded via examination of the filmic unit, termed the "shot."<sup>2</sup> With an overall running time of 40 seconds, the commercial comprised 22 shots, each of duration 1 to 4 seconds but averaging around 2 seconds each. Up to a maximum of 6 frames per shot were taken to accommodate movement of characters or (in one instance only) scene change within the shot duration. All shots were clearly defined with no *dissolves*.<sup>3</sup>

In terms of *Barthes's Sign Functioning Diagram*, it was reasoned (Shot Analysis, Appendix 5.3) that 21 of the 22 prevailing *signs* constituted 2<sup>nd</sup> order, *connotative signifiers*. By Peirce's taxonomy (Pierce in Chandler, 2002:36-43), sixteen of these were assessed as acting, for the most part, in *symbolic* mode. Another two *connotative signifiers* were seen to be in *iconic* mode with the remaining three *signifiers* of this order occupying an *indexical* mode (Fig.5.2)

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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 3, 3.1.3 for definition of the "shot."

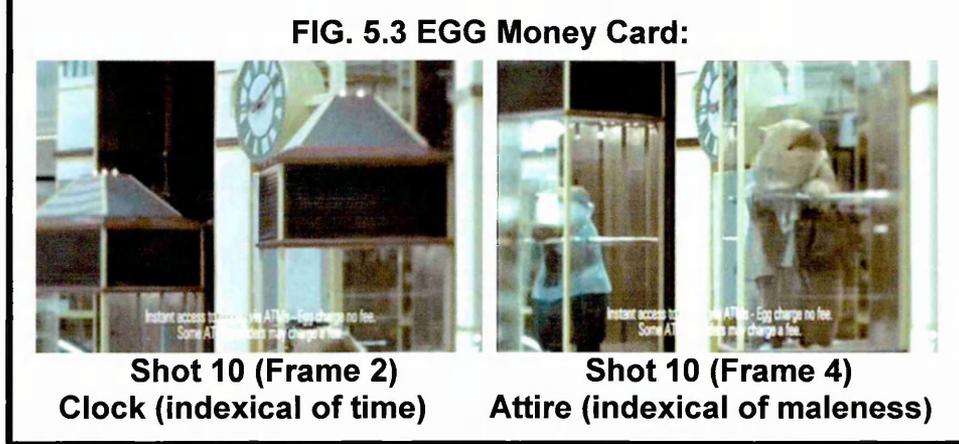
<sup>3</sup> One shot fades into or out to the next.

**FIG. 5.2 Semiotic Analysis: EGG Banking plc (Case Study)**

Shot	Denotative (1st Order)			Connotative (2nd Order)		
	Symbolic Mode	Iconic Mode	Indexical Mode	Symbolic Mode	Iconic Mode	Indexical Mode
1				✓		
2				✓		
3				✓		
4				✓		
5					✓	
6				✓		
7				✓		
8				✓		
9				✓		
10			✓			
11						✓
12						✓
13					✓	
14				✓		
15				✓		
16				✓		
17				✓		
18						✓
19				✓		
20				✓		
21				✓		
22				✓		
<b>TOTALS</b>			1	16	2	3

One *sign* only was found to portray *denotative* (1<sup>st</sup> order) *signification* (Fig.5.3). The mode was, by Pierce's taxonomy, *indexical* (Pierce in Chandler, 2002:37), where the *signifier* is not arbitrary but is directly connected in some way to the object. In two frames, taken as examples from this shot, a clock (the *signifier*) indicates the time of day (the object i.e. the *signified*) whilst the trousers and generally drab colour of the guinea pigs' attire (the *signifier*) indicate that they are both male (the objects i.e. the *signified*).

**FIG. 5.3 EGG Money Card:**



### Character concepts

Three fundamental character concepts structured this commercial. In a humorous presentation the first concerned scientists displaying their authority whilst the other two portrayed "guinea pigs" adopting human behaviour by indulging in cultural rôle play as "shoppers" and "non-shoppers." Greatest coverage, in terms of both the number of shots and the overall running time (19 seconds), was afforded to shoppers. Scientists accounted for the second longest running time (12 seconds) and frequency of appearance whilst non-shoppers received least coverage (9 seconds) (Fig.5.4). Shoppers and non-shoppers, in total, occupied 70% of the screen time with scientists taking up the other 30%.

The theatre within which this commercial operated was observed to be one of mimicry in which the behavioural characteristics of scientists, shoppers and non-shoppers were patently being simulated or perhaps even parodied. The questions as to how and why such *obvious* mimicry should be predominantly associated with semiotic *signs* which, by their *connotative* status and largely *symbolic* mode, were *less* than obvious in employing meaning beyond the literal, are discussed in Chapter 6.

**FIG. 5.4 EGG Banking plc (Case Study): Character Concepts**

Shot	Scientific Authority	Cultural Rôle Play	
	Scientists /Science	Shoppers	Non-Shoppers
1	2 seconds		
2	2 seconds		
3	2 seconds		
4	1 second		
5		2 seconds	
6	1 second		
7	1 second		
8		2 seconds	
9		2 seconds	
10			2 seconds
11		1 second	
12		2 seconds	
13		1 second	
14		3 seconds	
15			2 seconds
16		1 second	
17			2 seconds
18		2 seconds	2 seconds
19		2 seconds	
20	1 second	1 second	1 second
21	2 seconds		
22			
<b>TOTALS</b>	12 seconds	19 seconds	9 seconds

### 5.2.2.2 Rhetorical analysis: canonical classifications

Visual expression of classical rhetoric observed in each shot frequently engaged all three of the classical canons of *invention*, *style* and *delivery*, which were generally discerned to be interacting in both audible and visual media, the whole being consistent with the results obtained during the pilot study. The following commentary relates to the expression of each of these canons in turn before visiting the canon of *arrangement* which, in piloting, was seen to possess a structural affinity to narrative.

**FIG. 5.5 EGG Banking plc (Case Study): Rhetorical Analysis ~ Canons Observed**

Shot	Canons of Classical Rhetoric		
	<i>Invention</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Delivery</i>
1	✓	✓	-
2	✓	✓	✓
3	✓	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	✓
5	✓	✓	✓
6	✓	✓	✓
7	✓	✓	-
8	✓	✓	✓
9	✓	✓	✓
10	✓	✓	✓
11	✓	✓	✓
12	✓	✓	✓
13	✓	✓	✓
14	✓	✓	✓
15	✓	✓	✓
16	✓	✓	✓
17	✓	✓	✓
18	✓	✓	✓
19	✓	✓	✓
20	✓	✓	✓
21	✓	✓	✓
22	✓	✓	✓
<b>TOTALS</b>	22	22	20

#### Invention (1<sup>st</sup> Canon)

In discerning where the canon of *invention* might be operating a two-fold approach was employed; guided in the first instance by Covino and Jolliffe who, in defining Aristotle's work on the subject concluded that:-

*Invention requires the rhetor to assess the audience in order to determine what they feel, think, and know about the subject he intends to speak of or write about . . . (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995:22)*

In the second instance Cicero's description of the functions of an orator (rhetor), was referred to, in which the objectives of the canon of *invention* (*inventio*) are referred to thus:-

*the discovery of arguments designed to convince or to influence the audience - arguments either elicited from the evidence or inherent in the facts of the case;*

(Cicero in Henderson, 1942:307)

Notwithstanding that these passages addressed the parameters of the *invention* of rhetoric in a *linguistic* context, the opportunity was taken to interpret those same parameters in the wider *visual* context; hence the prior necessity to examine the *semiotic* construction. Discovery of artefacts, mannerisms, costumes, dialogues and any order of device, aural or visual, which suggested a *deliberate* intention to persuade in this commercial were considered as part of the "arguments" to which Cicero refers and were taken as evidence of the canon of *invention* having been invoked; especially where knowledge of the audience could also be evidenced.

Figure 5.5 shows that consideration of the canon of *invention* preceded every shot in this commercial, to some degree, in the discovery of (visual) "arguments designed to convince or to influence the audience" (Cicero, in Henderson *ibid*). In assessing if and how specific audiences had been targeted, the nature of the rhetoric developed under the canon of *style* was first examined (see 5.3.3.2). Building on earlier semiotic themes the wide use of metaphor in this canon seen to attend "scientists," "shoppers and non-shoppers" indicated that the viewing audience had been assessed as one which would defer to the authority of scientists and which would also readily relate to scenarios depicting habitual, UK cultural, rôles, particularly with regard to domesticity and shopping. Based on a rhetoric, therefore, that was seeking self identification through metaphor, the characters, with which the viewing audience were being invited to identify, comprised a broad age group ranging from the depiction of a young person in his late teens to early 20s wearing combat trousers (Appendix 5.3, Shot 20 commentary refers) to the elderly couple, circa 60 - 70 years of age, who were "window shopping" (Appendix 5.1, Shot 16 commentary refers). This assessment is well supported by the comments gained during interview with the creative script writer who, although appearing vague about the issue, also gave a wide age range (see Appendix 5.1: 13).

### Arrangement (2nd Canon):

Commentary on the expression of this canon appears in section 5.2.2.3 “The canon of *arrangement* relative to narrative.”

### Style (3<sup>rd</sup> Canon)

Analysis of the visual expression of the canon of *style* drew upon Aristotle's definition of the canon and the devices exposed by Covino & Jolliffe (1995:29-30) (see Chapter 1 paragraph 1.1.2.1 *The Five Canons*).

The devices operating within this canon and observed as having visual expression were, in order of their prevalence, those of metaphor, parallelism, synecdoche, hyperbole and simile (Fig.5.6). Metaphor was found to be active in 13 of the 22 shots with Parallelism being active in 7 of the 22 shots. The devices of metaphor and parallelism were the dominant devices of visually expressed rhetoric in this canon.

**FIG. 5.6 EGG Banking plc (Case Study):  
Rhetorical Analysis ~ Devices (Canon of Style)**

Shoppers: <b>Sh</b> Non-shoppers: <b>Ns</b> Scientists: <b>Sc</b>					
Shot	Metaphor	Parallelism Error! Bookmark not defined.	Synecdoche	Hyperbole	Simile
1	Sc			Sc	
2	Sc			Sc	
3		Sc			
4		Sc			
5	Sh				
6	Sc				
7		Sc			
8	Sh				
9		Sh			
10					Ns
11			Sh		
12		Sh	Sh		
13	Sh				
14					Sh
15	Ns				
16		Sh			
17	Ns				
18	Sh Ns				
19		Sh			
20	Sc				
21	Sc				
22					
<b>TOTALS</b>	12	7	2	2	2

Memory (4<sup>th</sup> Canon):

This canon was considered and found to have no discernable visual expression.

## Delivery (5<sup>th</sup> Canon)

The analysis of visual expression of the 5th canon of classical rhetoric was guided exclusively by reference to the writings of Cicero & Quintilian on the *delivery*:-

*For he invests his speech with lucidity, brilliance, convincingness, and charm not by his language but by changes of voice, by gestures and by glances.*

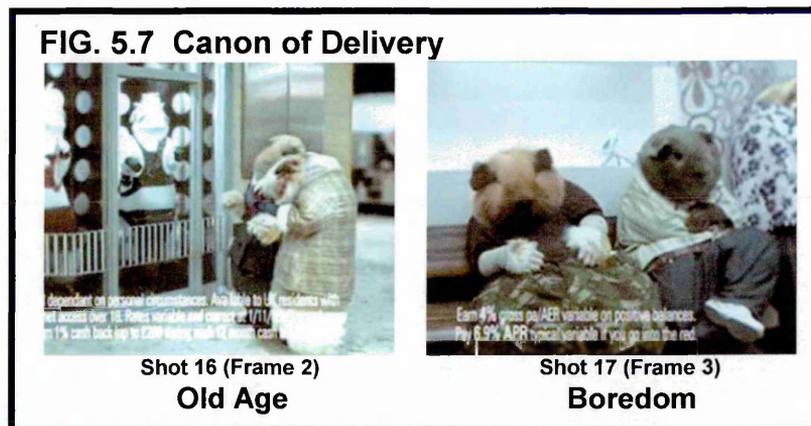
(Cicero in Henderson, 1942:331)

*All emotional appeals will fall flat unless they are given the fire that voice, look, and the whole carriage of the body can give them (ibid).*

(Quintilian in Page et al, 1922:243)

The parameters of this canon were found to be unambiguous and well defined consequently presenting no problems in interpretation. In short it comprised the analysis of UK cultural body language seen in terms of deportment, gesture and facial expression. With all characters seen in this commercial remaining silent and with only the voiceover to inform the visuals, the canon of *delivery* assumed a far more significant role than in the previous *Pilot Study*. Insofar as the guinea pigs were concerned, analysis of facial expression was clearly neither feasible nor relevant since the guinea pigs' heads had been emplaced by photo montage after filming.

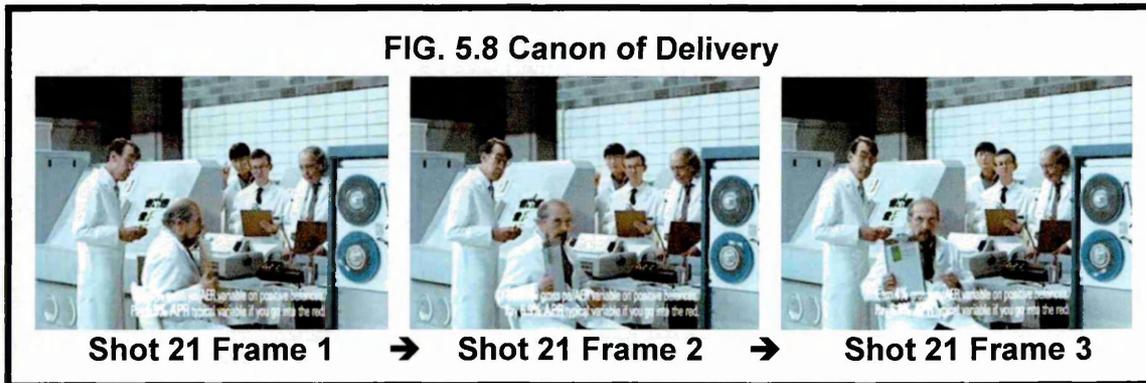
Visual expression of *delivery*, with regard to the guinea pigs, was, therefore, confined entirely to their posture and movement.



Good examples included Shots 16 & 18 (Fig.5.7) for the guinea pigs and Shot 21 (Fig.5.8) for the scientists. In shot 16 hunched shoulders and hands clasped across the chest indicated advanced years, a posture commonly witnessed in elderly people. In Shot 18 a male guinea pig was seen, with

legs outstretched, to slip slowly down the seat as he fell asleep, which anecdotally in the context of a women's boutique, conveyed his boredom.

The scientist in the foreground of Shot 21, seen in conference with his colleagues in the opening frame, then turned to display his clipboard and as if to share the findings of the team with the viewers. With solemn facial expressions the body language displayed here was stereotypical scientific / clinical behaviour which complimented the aura of expert authority and trustworthiness already established through the canon of *style* in visual metaphor.



### 5.2.2.3 The canon of *arrangement* relative to narrative

Visual compliance with the canon of *arrangement* was sought by reference to the five principles of “ancient rhetoric” as summarised by Covino & Jolliffe (1995: 22) thus:-

1. *Capture the audience's attention.*
2. *Provide necessary background information.*
3. *State and prove the text's thesis.*
4. *Anticipate and address possible counter-theses.*
5. *Conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions.*

(Covino & Jolliffe 1995:22)

Shot-by-shot examination of the visual action of the narrative was duly undertaken in order to ascertain to what extent the sequencing and functioning of the principles of the canon of *arrangement* were being met. With all characters remaining silent in this commercial the narrative was led by the male voiceover.

### Expression of the first principle

Satisfaction of the requirement to secure the audiences' attention emerged slowly. Shot 1 (the EGG laboratory) served to locate the action that was to come. The air of intrigue gathered momentum when, in Shot 2, the interior of the laboratory was shown to house a huge, scale model, township, silently posing the question as to what its purpose might be. In Shots 3 & 4 details of the miniature township (trees and houses) were revealed as the camera, now at ground level, portrayed close up shots of a miniature urban environment suggesting habitation; but by what or by whom?. The expression of this first principle was finally satisfied when, in synchrony with the voiceover, Shot 5 revealed the inhabitants to be; "guinea pigs!" These scenes, however, also served to "provide the necessary background information," a requirement of the second principle.

### Expression of the second principle

Interestingly, expression of the second principle, to "provide necessary background information", was seen to emerge in parallel with the first principle but through the voiceover which announced that:-

*EGG has invented Egg Money, a credit card so revolutionary we tested it on guinea pigs.*

The final words "guinea pigs" were timed to arrive at the same instant that Shot 5 reached the screen.

### Expression of the third principle

The requirement to "State and prove the text's thesis" is the core function of the commercial. Shots 6,7 and 8 introduce and install the EGG Money card which in Shots 9 - 17 is then demonstrably stated and proved with visual shots of its usage, accompanied by data supplied by the voiceover.

### Expression of the fourth principle

Viewed as anything which might detract from the product on offer (*EGG Money card*) or which would deter potential customers from its acquisition, the

fourth principle "anticipate and address possible counter theses" can be seen to operate in Shots 18 and 19. Here the concept of debt (the possible deterrent) was being "anticipated" and "addressed" by the implication that the attributes just mentioned (cash back on purchases and interest on money unspent) were more than sufficient to allow the purchase of a new dress.

#### Expression of the fifth principle

In order to "conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions" in the closing Shots (20 - 22), a visual expression of the rhetorical appeal known as *Pathos* was to be expected, about which Aristotle observed:-

*[There is persuasion] through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion [pathos] by the speech; for we do not give the same judgment when grieved and rejoicing or when being friendly and hostile. (Aristotle, in Kennedy, [trans], 1991:38)*

Although having established their affinity with *EGG Banking plc*, at the start of the commercial, the scientists' reappearance in these shots as benefactors of the guinea pigs and, by extension, the audiences being targeted, was too tenuous to be interpreted as constituting an emotional appeal to the degree described by Aristotle. This principle was, therefore, considered not to have been represented. Instead a continuation of "stating and proving the text's thesis" is seen (the advantages of owning an *EGG Money Card*). In this respect the beneficial results (increased disposable income) arising from cash savings on goods and interest accrued on unspent money are implied in shot 20. The reappearance of the group of *EGG* scientists in Shot 21 reminds viewers from whence such benefits come and the product (the *EGG Money Card*) is finally displayed in Shot 22.

#### 5.2.2.4 Situating *arrangement* in narrative structure

Further insight into the relationship between narrative and the canon of *arrangement* was afforded by the installation of the foregoing principles in the schematic, Fig.5.10, horizontally, beneath the shots forming the syntagmatic axis. As a result evidence of *arrangement*, as defined by the classical origins referred to in Covino & Jolliffe (1995: 38-39), albeit visually expressed, was

found somewhat lacking in this commercial. Although the sequence was broadly in alignment it produced the first two principles in a duplex arrangement through Shots 1-5 whilst totally failing to invoke the fifth principle at the conclusion of the commercial. Evidence that the principles of *arrangement* had been considered during composition of the narrative was absent.

Principal features / themes (paradigms) identified during the course of the analysis were entered vertically into the paradigmatic axis in order of their appearance (Fig.5.9 – See also Appendix 4.2)

<b>FIG. 5.9 EGG Banking plc (Case Study): Paradigms</b>	
<b>PARADIGM</b>	<b>Appendix 5.3 Shot numbers</b>
EGG LABORATORY EXTERIOR & INTERIOR (Brand name introduction / power)	1 - 2
SCIENTISTS TENDING MODEL TOWNSHIP (Customer care & Socio-economic setting)	3-4
GUINEA PIGS AS SHOPPERS (Human behaviour model [metaphor])	5
EGG CARDS IN CASE (product value)	6
SCIENTISTS PROVIDING EGG CARD (Benefit)	7-8
FEMALE CUSTOMER (Gender rôle setting - shopping)	9
MALE CUSTOMERS (Gender rôle setting - <i>not</i> shopping)	10
FEMALE CUSTOMER (Gender rôle setting - maternal)	11
FEMALE CUSTOMERS (Product value)	12-14
MALE CUSTOMERS ( Product value)	15-17
SPENDING POWER (Female)	18-19
POWER TO OVERSEE PEOPLE'S FINANCES	20
REINFORCING AUTHORITY (Personal finance)	21
BRAND & PRODUCT IDENTITY	22

#### 5.2.2.5 The Science

The scientists exhibited rudimentary data-gathering behaviour in shots that were often packed with, ostentatiously, outdated scientific equipment. Such scenes were an integral part of the narrative theme in this explicitly ironical commercial which parodied a scientific research experiment whilst surreptitiously representing EGG plc., in a position of unquestioned authority.

All scientists capable of being gender identified were, with the exception of one, men. All were dressed conventionally in white coats and closely resembled stereotypical media images.

**FIG. 5.10 SCHEMATIC: ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE STRUCTURE INTEGRATION OF METZ'S FILM "SHOT" WITH DE SAUSSURE'S LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS OF PARADIGM & SYNTAGM**

FEATURE / THEME		← SYNTAGMATIC AXIS →																					
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
PARADIGMATIC CHOICES																							
FILM SHOT No.																							
EGG LABORATORY EXTERIOR & INTERIOR (Brand name introduction / power)																							
SCIENTISTS TENDING MODEL TOWNSHIP (Customer care & Socio-economic setting)																							
GUINEA PIGS AS SHOPPERS (Human behaviour model [metaphor])																							
EGG CARDS IN CASE (product value)																							
SCIENTISTS PROVIDING EGG CARD (Benefit)																							
FEMALE CUSTOMER (Gender rôle setting - shopping)																							
MALE CUSTOMERS (Gender rôle setting - not shopping)																							
FEMALE CUSTOMER (Gender rôle setting - maternal)																							
FEMALE CUSTOMERS (Product value)																							
MALE CUSTOMERS (Product value)																							
SPENDING POWER (Female)																							
POWER TO OVERSEE PEOPLE'S FINANCES																							
REINFORCING AUTHORITY (Personal Finance)																							
BRAND & PRODUCT IDENTITY																							
DURATION (Secs)		2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	4
INCREMENTAL		2	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	4
CUMULATIVE		2	4	6	7	9	10	11	13	15	17	18	20	21	24	26	27	29	31	33	34	36	40
Principles of the canon of Arrangement (Visible Functions)	(1) CAPTURE ATTENTION																						
	(2) PROVIDE BACKGROUND INFORMATION																						
	(3) STATE & PROVE THE TEXT'S THESIS																						
	(4) ANTICIPATE & ADDRESS COUNTER THESES																						
	(5) STATE & PROVE THE TEXT'S THESIS.																						
	(5) APPEAL TO AUDIENCES' EMOTIONS (NOT REPRESENTED)																						

### 5.3 Brantano UK Ltd commercial: Study 2

#### 5.3.1 "Content research"

##### 5.3.1.1 Semiotic analysis: ordinal & modal classification

Analysis of the Brantano UK Ltd., commercial proceeded via examination of the filmic unit, termed the "shot." An overall running time of 37 seconds, was observed in which 17 shots ranged from 1 to 5 seconds but averaging around 2 seconds. Up to a maximum of 6 frames per shot were taken to accommodate possible movement of characters within the duration of the shot. All shots were clearly defined with no *dissolves*.

Reasoning supporting all the *semiotic signs* observed and classified was recorded in the Brantano UK Ltd., *Shot Analysis*, Appendix 5.5, attached to this chapter and the results summarised on a shot-by-shot basis (Fig. 5.11). Shots found to comprise a number of *semiotic signs* building a single, cohesive, meaning were allocated a "prevailing" *semiotic sign* classification. The *prevailing sign* for each shot was, in the first instance, expressed in terms of its 1<sup>st</sup> order, *denotative* or 2<sup>nd</sup> order, *connotative* category by reference to *Barthes's Sign Functioning Diagram* (See Fig.5.1). Secondly, each *denotative* or *connotative sign* was awarded a modal classification (*symbolic / iconic / indexical*) in terms of Peirce's taxonomy as defined by Chandler (2002:36-43).

In terms of *Barthes's Sign Functioning Diagram*, it was reasoned (Shot Analysis, Appendix 5.5) that fifteen of the seventeen prevailing *signs* constituted 2<sup>nd</sup> order, *connotative signifiers*. By Peirce's taxonomy (Pierce in Chandler, 2002:36-43), twelve of these were assessed as acting in *symbolic* mode. The remaining three *connotative signifiers* of this order were seen to be occupying an *indexical* mode.

**FIG. 5.11 Brantano UK Ltd (Shoes): Semiotic analysis**

Shot	Denotative (1st Order)			Connotative (2nd Order)		
	Symbolic Mode	Iconic Mode	Indexical Mode	Symbolic Mode	Iconic Mode	Indexical Mode
1				✓		
2				✓		
3				✓		
4				✓		
5				✓		
6				✓		
7						✓
8				✓		
9						✓
10		✓				
11				✓		
12				✓		
13				✓		
14				✓		
15				✓		
16		✓				
17				✓		
<b>TOTALS</b>		2		13		2

Two *signs* only were found to comprise *denotative* (1<sup>st</sup> order) *signification* (Shots 10 & 16). The mode was, by Pierce's taxonomy, *iconic* (Pierce in Chandler, 2002:37), where the *signifier* is not arbitrary but is directly connected in some way to the object. Taking Shot 16 as an example (Fig.5.12), the principal *sign* being constructed portrayed the antithesis of every failure previously presented as being characteristic of competitor's shops. The status of this *sign* was confirmed by the first of two strap lines delivered by the voice-over in order to ensure that viewers received and understood what they were seeing, i.e. "The



shop where the shoes are arranged by size, out in pairs, ready to try on" (the *signified*). By its purely illustrative nature, the *signifier* (the shelves of shoes of different sizes and styles arranged in pairs) resembled precisely that which was *signified* and acted, therefore, in *iconic* mode.

### Character concepts

Two principal groups were defined in this commercial. The first comprised scientists consisting of *Professor Anne-Marie Brantano*, a spoof scientist and her team. The images two real, highly recognisable and accomplished psychologists, (*Sigmund Freud* and *Carl Jung*) were introduced, despite an ironic presentation, to legitimise *Professor Anne-Marie Brantano*.

The second group comprised the experimental subjects, ostensibly female volunteers taken from among the general public, who adopted cultural rôle play one as patient (brain scan subject) and the rest as customers (shop simulation unit). The division of screen time was not straightforward inasmuch as there was a significant amount of shared screen time in which both scientists and the patients or customer appeared. Shots portraying solely Scientists and/or their science occurred in five of the total of seventeen shots, accounting for nine of the thirty-seven seconds available. Shots showing solely the patient or customers occurred in only two shots out of seventeen, accounting for three of the thirty-seven seconds available. By far the largest amount of screen time was shared by the scientists with either the patient or the customers accounting for eight of the seventeen shots and occupying sixteen of the thirty-seven seconds available (Fig.5.13).

As with the *Egg Money Card* commercial, mimicry was the medium in which the behavioural characteristics of scientists and shoppers were being simulated and parodied. The questions raised also appeared to be similar to those posited by the *Egg Money Card* commercial and are compared and discussed in Chapter 6.

**FIG. 5.13 Brantano UK Ltd (Shoes):  
Character Concepts**

Shot	Scientific Authority	Cultural Rôle Play
	Scientists	Experimental Subjects
1	2 seconds	
2	1 second	
3	2 seconds	
4	2 seconds	
5	2 seconds	2 seconds
6	2 seconds	2 seconds
7		1 second
8	2 seconds	2 seconds
9	2 seconds	
10	2 seconds	2 seconds
11	2 seconds	2 seconds
12		2 seconds
13	1 second	1 second
14	3 seconds	3 seconds
15	2 seconds	2 seconds
16		
17		
<b>TOTALS</b>	25 seconds	19 seconds

#### 5.3.1.2 Rhetorical analysis: canonical classifications

The reasoning which supported how the classical canons were deemed to have been visually expressed was recorded in the *Shot Analysis*, Appendix 5.5, to this chapter. A record of the shots in which each canon was perceived to have been visually expressed was given at the end of the analysis which is also summarised here in Fig.5.14.

**FIG. 5.14 Brantano UK Ltd (Shoes):  
Rhetorical Analysis ~ Canons Observed**

Shot	Canons of Classical Rhetoric		
	<i>Invention</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Delivery</i>
1	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓
3	✓	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	✓
5	✓	✓	✓
6	✓	✓	✓
7	✓	✓	✓
8	✓	✓	✓
9	✓	✓	✓
10	✓	✓	✓
11	✓	✓	✓
12	✓	✓	✓
13		✓	✓
14		✓	✓
15		✓	✓
16	✓	✓	✓
17	✓	✓	
<b>TOTALS</b>	14	17	16

Visual expression of classical rhetoric was observed to engage the three classical canons of *invention*, *style* and *delivery*, to a high degree, which were generally discerned to be interacting in both the audible and the visual media.

The following commentary relates to the expression of each of these canons in turn before visiting the canon of *arrangement* which, is seen to possess a structural affinity to narrative.

Invention (1<sup>st</sup> Canon)

A two-fold approach was employed which, in the first instance, was guided by Covino and Jolliffe (1995:22) and secondly by Cicero's description of the functions of an orator (rhetor), in which the objectives of the canon of *invention* are described (Cicero in Henderson, 1942:307).

Parameters surrounding the *invention* of rhetoric, originally given in a *linguistic* context, were here considered in the wider *visual* context aided by the findings of preceding *semiotic* construction for this commercial. Discovery of artefacts, mannerisms, costumes, dialogues and any order of device, aural or visual, which suggested a *deliberate* intention to persuade were taken as visual expressions of the "arguments" to which Cicero refers and as an indication of the canon of *invention* having been invoked; especially where knowledge of the audience (audience targeting) could also be revealed.

The canon of *invention* (Fig.5.14) was seen to operate in all but three shots in this commercial. Targeting of a female audience was to be expected, given the product being advertised (women's shoes). Indeed, it was also evidenced by the semiotic, mythic, theme of this commercial which was founded on the expectation that viewers would comprise those well acquainted with two popular perceptions (a) women display obsessive behaviour concerning shoes (a perception most women are acutely aware of) and (b) women, mostly in the eyes of men, act irrationally – as reinforced by the voice-over in Shot 07 (Appendix 5.5).

#### Arrangement (2nd Canon:

Commentary on the expression of this canon appears in section 5.3.1.3 "The canon of *arrangement* relative to narrative."

#### Style (3<sup>rd</sup> Canon)

Analysis of the visual expression of the canon of *style* drew upon Aristotle's definition of the canon and the devices exposed by Covino & Jolliffe (1995:29-30) (see Chapter 1 paragraph 1.1.2.1 *The Five Canons*).

**FIG. 5.15 Brantano UK Ltd (Shoes):  
Rhetorical Analysis~ Devices (Canon of Style)**

Shot	Experimental Subjects: <b>Es</b> Scientists: <b>Sc</b> Customer: <b>Cu</b>					
	Parallelism	Metaphor	Hyperbole	Simile	Parable (Myth)	Antithesis
1	Sc					
2	Sc					
3	Sc					
4		Sc				
5	Sc					
6	Sc Es			Sc Es		
7					Es	
8	Sc Es					
9					Es	
10				Sc Es		
11			Sc Es	Sc Es		
12		Es	Es			
13		Sc Es				
14		Sc Es	Sc Es			
15		Sc Es	Sc Es			
16						Cu
17			Cu			
<b>TOTALS</b>	6	5	5	3	2	1

The devices operating within this canon and observed as having visual expression were, in order of their prevalence, those of parallelism, metaphor, synecdoche, hyperbole, simile, parable and antithesis (Fig.5.15). Parallelism, by a narrow margin, was most dominant, being active in six of the seventeen shots.

### Memory (4<sup>th</sup> Canon):

In classical times rhetors were required to commit the whole of their rhetorical address to memory. Thus the classical canon of *memory* allowed for the use of various mnemonic devices upon which the rhetor may draw in order to:-

- recall the rhetorical content devised to appeal to the particular audience in attendance under the 1<sup>st</sup> canon of *invention*.
- recall the structural sequence dictated by the 2<sup>nd</sup> canon of *arrangement*.
- recall the devices chosen from the 3<sup>rd</sup> canon of *style*.
- recall the body language and vocal performance under the 5<sup>th</sup> canon of *delivery*.

In a wider context Quintilian, who practised much of his rhetorical skills in the law courts of Rome, considered that the canon of *memory* should also embrace the recall of past legal engagements:-

*. . . it is not enough to learn what you have written by dint of repeated reading ; it is just as necessary to follow the order both of matter and words when you have merely thought out what you are going to say, whilst you must also remember what has been said by your opponents. . .*

(Quintilian in Page et al [Eds], 1922:213)

The canon of *memory* is addressed only to the actions of the rhetor and should not be confused with the process of manipulating the memory of the audience. Such an effect, if required, would be the function of the remaining 4 canons which could just as easily be employed, selectively, to induce forgetfulness.

This canon, therefore, was the rhetor's device with which to recall and direct the rhetorical performance through the other four canons and was an exclusively mental discipline. In consequence the canon of *memory* could not, *ipso facto*, be considered to be expressed visually in the televisual context.

### Delivery (5<sup>th</sup> Canon)

As with the analysis of the previous commercial, visual expression of the 5th canon of classical rhetoric was guided exclusively by reference to the writings of Cicero (Henderson, 1942:331) and Quintilian (Page et al, 1922:243) being most active in two high profile themes. In the first instance it was seen, largely through facial expression to support



the myth of women's irrational behaviour with regard to shoes (Fig. 5.16). In the second instance it acted to expose the shortcomings of Brantano's market competitors in a combination of both facial expression and body posture.

The "customers," seen (a) resting her head on her hand with her elbow on the counter and (b) sitting with arms folded both displays body language indicative of boredom (Fig. 5.17) whilst the attending voiceover provides the cause, i.e. “. . . failure to deliver the correct size. . .”. The scientist, carefully taking notes in the foreground of this shot, displays a body language that is commensurate with, if not definitive of, her occupation.



#### 5.3.1.3 The canon of arrangement relative to narrative

Visual compliance with the canon of *arrangement* was sought by reference to the five principles derived from Cicero's linguistic approach (Cicero in Henderson (Ed), 1942: 307), and summarised by Covino & Jolliffe (1995) thus:-

1. *Capture the audience's attention.*
2. *Provide necessary background information.*
3. *State and prove the text's thesis.*
4. *Anticipate and address possible counter-theses.*
5. *Conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions.*

(Covino & Jolliffe 1995:22)

Shot-by-shot examination of the visual action of the narrative led to the discovery of the extent to which the sequencing and functioning of the principles of the canon of *arrangement* were being met. With both the "experimental subjects" and "customers" remaining silent in this commercial the narrative was led by the male voiceover and by occasionally "eavesdropping" on "Professor" Brantano who was heard to address only her fellow scientists. All five principles were found to have been expressed but in an unorthodox sequence (Fig.19).

#### Expression of the first principle

The requirement to secure the audiences' attention in this commercial was achieved during the opening four shots. In Shot 01 audiences were presented with a black & white photograph of the universally familiar face of the psychologist, *Sigmund Freud*, supported by trenchant music and a deeply pitched stentorian male voiceover. The effect was seen to rely on mimicking an already well established association witnessed during the years of black and white cinema, in which announcements of weighty matters and statements of great import were delivered to just such an accompaniment. As the voiceover continued, Shot 02 introduced another familiar psychologist, *Carl Jung*. Finally in Shots 03 & 04, the audiences' attention is completely secured when, contrary to their expectation, perhaps, a hitherto unknown character is presented, *Anne-Marie Brantano* and an institute which bears her name.

#### Expression of the second principle

The second principle, "provide necessary background information," was explicit in shots 5 - 15. With scenes depicting an experiment in which a subject had been encouraged to observe a sling-back style shoe whilst also

being subjected to a "brain scan," a spoof history was set up via the accompanying voiceover which informed viewers that :-

*It was Professor Brantano who discovered the part of the female brain that makes women act irrationally about shoes . . . the "sling-back synapse."*

The history concluded with the recorded symptoms said to have been expressed by the experimental subjects.

#### Expression of the third principle

Expression of the third principle, "state and prove the text's thesis," was observed to have advanced to the end position designated for the fifth principle. In occupying the penultimate and final shots of this commercial, Shots 16 & 17, expressed both visually and vocally the thesis:-

*The shop where the shoes are arranged by size, out in pairs, ready to try on. Brantano, mad about shoes, sane about shopping.*

#### Expression of the fourth principle

Shots 10 - 15 addressed the principles of *arrangement* in a complex manner in which the spoof history, which had introduced the second principle, continued to run whilst the fourth principle, "anticipate and address possible counter-theses," commenced its visual expression. Thus the voiceover presented the thesis by informing viewers that:-

*She found that enforced waiting inflames the synapse, as does failure to deliver the correct size or style, with disastrous consequences. (the continuing history)*

At the same time the camera captured scenes in which "customers" were seen in exaggerated states of boredom and frustration thereby depicting the counter thesis, which was deliberately contrived to be unattractive. Such scenes were, ostensibly, those to be witnessed in shops belonging to Brantano's competitors which, being so blatantly expressed, served only to manifest Brantano's thesis as the more desirable polar opposite.

### Expression of the fifth principle

The fifth principle which is required to "conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions" was not found to be expressed in the prescribed position. Instead, it too ran concurrently with the fourth principle (Shots 10 – 15) by seeking an emotive empathy from its target, female, audience in which they would recall similar scenes which they themselves might well have experienced.

#### 5.3.1.4 Situating *arrangement* in narrative structure

On analysis the narrative structure of this commercial was found to be such that, after Shot 9, it failed to accommodate the principles of the canon of *arrangement* in the prescribed classical sequence as referred to by Covino & Jolliffe (1995:38-39).

Shots 10 - 15 had the second, fourth and fifth principles running concurrently with one another whilst the third principle was found to be out of sequence in the final shot of this commercial (Fig.5.19)

Principal narrative features / themes identified during the course of the analysis were entered vertically into the paradigmatic axis in order of their appearance (Fig.18 & Fig.19).

<b>FIG. 5.18 <i>Brantano UK Ltd</i> : Paradigms</b>	
<b>PARADIGM</b>	<b>Appendix 5.5 Shot numbers</b>
<b>FREUD &amp; JUNG: Identifying authority</b>	1 - 2
<b>PROFESSOR BRANTANO: Authority Conferred</b>	3
<b>BRANTANO INSTITUTE: Company heritage</b>	4
<b>SHOP SIMULATION UNIT &amp; SCIENTISTS: Expertise</b>	5-9
<b>COMPETITOR'S SHORTCOMINGS DISPLAYED: Problem Identification</b>	10-13
<b>"CLASSIC SHOE RAGE": frustration - a reminder</b>	14-15
<b>SHOP DISPLAY: Problem solution</b>	16
<b>SHOP &amp; LOGO: Brand name reinforcement</b>	17

#### 5.3.1.5 The science

In this parody of a scientific research experiment the leading (fictitious) female scientist, *Anne-Marie Brantano*, was legitimised by linking her with two well known, factual, scientists. Her Discovery of the so called "sling-back synapse" then led to controlled experiments on volunteer "customers" in which behaviour of the scientists and their equipment were seen to be foregrounded. This core narrative theme provided the intrigue that, in the closing shots, led to a visual presentation of the unique selling point (USP), reinforced by the *strapline*, "the shop where the shoes are arranged by size, out in pairs, ready to try on."

All scientists capable of being gender identified, with the exception of one, were women. Being conventionally dressed in white coats and equipped with scientific paraphernalia they conformed closely, apart from their gender, to stereotypical images frequently seen in visual media representations.



## 5.4. Raisio plc., (Benecol) Commercial: Study 3

### 5.4.1 "Content" research

#### 5.4.1.1 Semiotic analysis: ordinal & modal classification

Analysis of the Raisio plc., *Benecol* commercial proceeded via examination of the filmic unit, termed the "shot." The overall running time recorded was thirty seconds in which eighteen shots ranged from one to five seconds averaging around one and a half seconds per shot. Up to a maximum of six frames per shot were taken to accommodate possible movement of characters within the duration of the shot. The commercial *dissolved* into the opening shot. Clear boundaries defined all shots thereafter with the exception of the penultimate and ultimate shots (17 & 18) which were also linked with a *dissolve*.

Reasoning supporting all the *semiotic signs* observed and classified was recorded in the Raisio plc., *Benecol*, *Shot Analysis*, Appendix 5.7, attached to this chapter and the results summarised on a shot-by-shot basis (Fig.5.20). Shots found to comprise a number of *semiotic signs* building a single, cohesive, meaning were allocated a "prevailing" *semiotic sign* classification. The *prevailing sign* for each shot was, in the first instance, expressed in terms of its 1<sup>st</sup> order, *denotative* or 2<sup>nd</sup> order, *connotative* category by reference to *Barthes's Sign Functioning Diagram* (See Fig.5.1). Secondly, each *denotative* or *connotative sign* was awarded a modal classification (*symbolic / iconic / indexical*) in terms of Peirce's taxonomy as defined by Chandler (2002: 36-43).

**FIG. 5.20 Semiotic analysis: Raisio plc., (Benecol)**

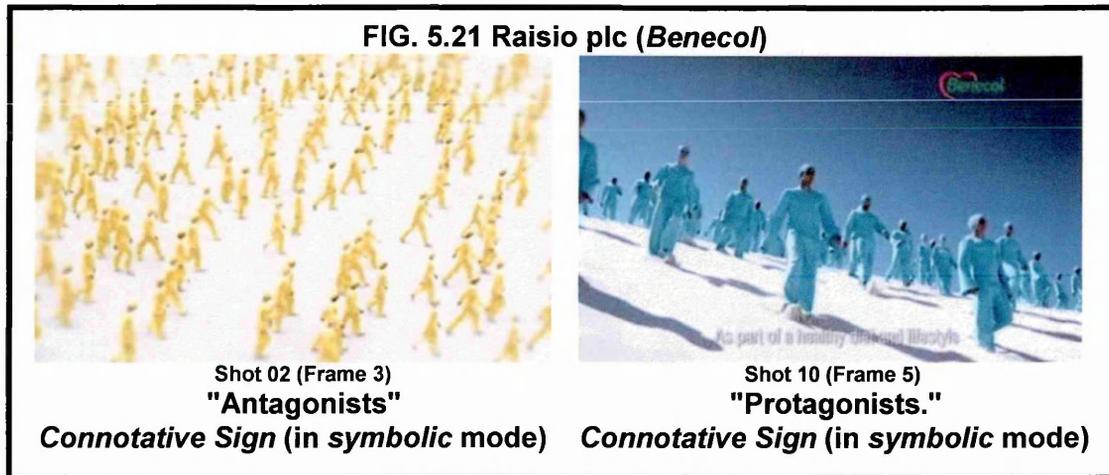
Shot	Denotative (1st Order)			Connotative (2nd Order)		
	Symbolic Mode	Iconic Mode	Indexical Mode	Symbolic Mode	Iconic Mode	Indexical Mode
1				✓		
2				✓		
3				✓		
4				✓		
5				✓		
6				✓		
7				✓		
8				✓		
9				✓		
10				✓		
11				✓		
12				✓		
13				✓		
14				✓		
15				✓		
16				✓		
17				✓		
18				✓		
<b>TOTALS</b>				18		

In terms of *Barthes's Sign Functioning Diagram*, it was reasoned (Shot Analysis, Appendix 5.7) that all 18 prevailing *signs* constituted 2<sup>nd</sup> order, *connotative signifiers*. By Peirce's taxonomy (Pierce in Chandler, 2002:36-43), all eighteen of these were assessed as acting in *symbolic mode*.

The opening shots were typical of *connotative signs* acting in *symbolic mode*. With the words, "these people represent cholesterol in your body. . . ", the voiceover openly instructed viewers as to the convention that was being set up and the visual *connotation* that they must infer from Shots 01 & 02 and those which would follow. Figure 5.21 provides clear examples of where no visual resemblance pertained between the actors and the cholesterol (Shot 02) and actors and the *Benecol* (Shot 10), thereby rendering the prevailing mode, in both

cases, *symbolic* by Peirce's taxonomy, as defined by Chandler (2002: 36-37), to wit:-

*a mode in which the signifier does not resemble the signified but which is fundamentally arbitrary or purely conventional - so that the relationship must be learned . . . (Chandler, 2002:36-37)*



### Character concepts

The character groups in this commercial (Fig 5.22) were, *perforce*, well defined as antagonists (cholesterol) and protagonists (*Benecol*) of human health who proceeded to enact a model of the science involved. Cholesterol, the first to appear, introduced the problem to be addressed which was subsequently met by the solution, *Benecol*.

Modelling in which Cholesterol and *Benecol* appeared, jointly, occurred in seven shots and, with eleven out of the thirty seconds, consumed the most screen time. Cholesterol modelled in isolation also occurred in seven shots but only ten of the thirty seconds of screen time. *Benecol* modelled in isolation occurred in only three shots taking a mere three seconds out of the thirty seconds of running time. Shot 18, lacking actors, concluded the commercial with a product tableau and vocal strap-line "*Benecol*, every day, help keep cholesterol at bay."

**FIG. 5.22 Character Concepts: Raisio plc., (*Benecol*)**

Shot	The Problem	The Solution	The Engagement
	Cholesterol (Antagonists)	<i>Benecol</i> (protagonists)	Cholesterol & Benecol
1	2 seconds		
2	1 second		
3	2 seconds		
4	1 second		
5	1 second		
6	2 seconds		
7	1 second		
8		1 second	
9		1 second	
10		2 seconds	
11			1 second
12			3 seconds
13			2 seconds
14			1 second
15			2 seconds
16			1 second
17			1 second
18			
<b>TOTALS</b>	10 seconds	4 seconds	11 seconds

5.4.1.2 Rhetorical analysis: canonical classifications

The reasoning which supported how the classical canons were deemed to have been visually expressed was recorded in the *Shot Analysis*, Appendix 5.7, to this chapter. Shots in which each canon was perceived to have been visually expressed were tabulated at the end of the analysis and are also summarised here in Fig.5.23.

**FIG. 5.23 Rhetorical Analysis ~  
Canons Observed: Raisio plc., (Benecol )**

Shot	Canons of Classical Rhetoric		
	<i>Invention</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Delivery</i>
1	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	
3	✓	✓	
4	✓	✓	✓
5	✓	✓	✓
6	✓	✓	
7	✓	✓	
8	✓	✓	✓
9	✓	✓	✓
10	✓	✓	✓
11	✓	✓	
12	✓	✓	✓
13	✓	✓	✓
14	✓	✓	✓
15	✓	✓	✓
16	✓		✓
17	✓	✓	
18	✓	✓	
<b>TOTALS</b>	18	17	11

Visual expression of classical rhetoric engaged all three classical canons of *invention*, *style* and *delivery*, with very few exceptions in the eighteen shots of this commercial. Both audible and visual media were generally observed to act cohesively in the expression of rhetoric.

The following commentary relates to the expression of each of these canons in turn before visiting the canon of *arrangement* which, as previously indicated, was seen to possess a structural affinity to narrative.

#### Invention (1st Canon)

First impressions suggested that, with the simplicity of the science model used and the gender-neutral status of the welfare benefits offered by this product, the canon of *invention* was appealing to the widest possible audience. In analysis,

however, the healthy lifestyle theme invoked for the sale of this nutraceutical<sup>4</sup> product and the rhetoric of medical parallels *invented*, were perceived to have greater resonance with a female audience. Viewed with some evidence that it is women who, for the most part, shop for food and appear more willing to visit their GP over health matters, it was finally concluded that the rhetoric invented in this commercial was skewed towards women.

### Arrangement (2nd Canon)

Evidence of *Arrangement*, as defined by the classical origins referred to in Covino & Jolliffe (1995:38-39), was lacking in this commercial inasmuch as it failed to demonstrate compliance with the optimum format prescribed. Full commentary is provided under 5.4.1.3., "The canon of *arrangement* relative to narrative."

### Style (3rd Canon)

Analysis of the visual expression of the canon of *style* drew upon Aristotle's definition of the canon and the devices exposed by Covino & Jolliffe (1995:29-30) (see Chapter 1 paragraph 1.1.2.1 *The Five Canons*).

Devices observed to have visual expression in this commercial, within this canon, were, in order of their prevalence, those of simile, parallelism, metaphor and assonance (Fig 5.24).

Simile was found to be active in 12 of the 18 shots being the dominant device of visually expressed rhetoric in this canon.

Use of a voiceover, which could clearly be identified as that of the actress Amanda Burton, overtly subscribed to "giving presence" to ideas that rhetors want their audiences to attend to" (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995:23-4) thereby also conforming to the requirements of the canon of *style*. Known for her roles of a doctor<sup>5</sup> and a forensic pathologist,<sup>6</sup> her voice provided a significant

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<sup>4</sup> A portmanteau word (*nutrition / pharmaceutical*) denoting food containing nutritional additives that are promoted as being beneficial to one's health.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Beth Glover played by Amanda Burton in the ITV series "Peak Practice" first screened in 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Sam Ryan, played by Amanda Burton in the BBC1 series "Silent Witness" first screened in 1996.

accompaniment to the visual expression of the human biology theme in this canon.

**FIG. 5.24 Rhetorical Analysis ~  
Devices (Canon of Style): Raisio plc., (*Benecol*)**

Shot	Cholesterol: <b>Ch</b> Benecol: <b>Be</b>			
	Simile	Parallelism	Metaphor	Assonance
1		Ch		
2		Ch	Ch	
3		Ch		
4	Ch			
5	Ch			
6	Ch			
7	Ch			
8	Be	Ch		
9	Be			
10	Be			
11	Ch / Be	Ch		
12	Ch / Be			
13	Ch / Be			
14			Ch / Be	
15	Ch / Be		Ch / Be	
16				
17	Ch / Be			
18		Be		Be
<b>TOTALS</b>	12	6	3	1

Memory (4th Canon)

This canon was considered and found to have no discernable visual expression.

Delivery (5th Canon)

Expression of the 5th canon of classical rhetoric continued to be guided exclusively by reference to the writings of Cicero (Henderson, 1942:331) and Quintilian (Page et al, 1922:243).

Body language constituted the sole vehicle for the *visual* expression of the canon of *delivery* in this commercial which, with the exception of the product tableau of the final shot, was entirely devoted to scientific modelling.

The opening shots (shots 1-7) employed a gentle yet inexorably, forward moving, body language in a mainly corporate manner designed to imply the invisible threat posed by cholesterol. The scenes which followed (Shots 8-10) employed the same corporate body language to deliver a matching advance by the *Benecol* figures as they moved to counter the threat. In the closing confrontation between cholesterol and *Benecol*, shots became progressively more intimate with facial expression and upper limb gestures, mainly expressed by *Benecol* figures, in order to promote a passive yet unyielding resistance.

#### 5.4.1.3 The canon of arrangement relative to narrative

Visual compliance with the canon of *arrangement* was sought by reference to the five principles derived from Cicero's linguistic approach (Cicero in Henderson (Ed), 1942, p.307), and summarised by Covino & Jolliffe (1995) thus:-

1. *Capture the audience's attention.*
2. *Provide necessary background information.*
3. *State and prove the text's thesis.*
4. *Anticipate and address possible counter-theses.*
5. *Conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions.*

(Covino & Jolliffe 1995:22)

All characters remained silent in this commercial, the narrative having been led entirely by the female voiceover. Shot-by-shot examination of the visual action of the narrative was carried out in order to ascertain to what extent the sequencing and functioning of the principles of the canon of *arrangement* were being met.

#### Expression of the first principle

Shots 1 and 2, were deemed to have successfully complied with the first principle of *arrangement* in capturing the attention of the intended audience. In Shot 1 the deliberately unfocused lens produced a growing intrigue which then secured attention via a uniformity of motion, colour and unconventional style of costume (by comparison with everyday UK fashions). Shot 2 then gave direction to the

uniformity of motion whilst adding further fascination with an elevated camera angle and increased numbers of people. The two scenes were accompanied by a voiceover which delivered a momentary vocal "cliff-hanger" with the words "these people represent cholesterol in your . . ."

#### Expression of the second principle

In shot 3 the vocal cliff-hanger is immediately resolved by the word "body" and the provision of the "necessary background information" commences with regard to the fact that "for two out of three of us too much cholesterol passes into our bloodstream." With scenes that are set to model the science involved the "cholesterol" figures are shown entering the sea (a simile for the bloodstream) until, in Shot 7, the conclusion is reached with the cholesterol having fully entered the body's bloodstream.

#### Expression of the third principle

"Stating and proving the text's thesis" follows, as prescribed, with Shots 8 - 17. Introducing *Benecol* as a "pioneering Finnish" company the science is again modelled to demonstrate the thesis that their food products offer a cholesterol blocking facility.

#### Expression of the fourth principle

The fourth principle, which requires anticipation and countering of any anti-theses, was absent.

#### Expression of the fifth principle

The "appeal to audiences' emotions," although tangible, is weakly presented in the final shot of this commercial. Relying principally on the voiceover with the *strapline* "help keep cholesterol at bay," visual expression is thin as it seeks to awaken an emotion of concern among viewers to the effect that their body's optimum cholesterol level is under *daily* threat. The threat is, however, mollified by the pre-emptory solution of "Benecol every day."

#### 5.4.1.4 Situating *arrangement* in narrative structure

The canon of *arrangement* was not only found to have been visually expressed but also, in four out of the five principles visited, the narrative structure was seen to complement the classical sequencing of its principles.

The relationship between narrative and the canon of *arrangement* was, therefore, afforded by the installation of the foregoing principles in the schematic, Fig. 5.26, horizontally, beneath the shots forming the syntagmatic axis.

Principal narrative features / themes identified during the course of the analysis were entered vertically into the paradigmatic axis in order of their appearance (Fig.5.25 & Fig.5.26)

<b>FIG. 5.25 BENECOL PRODUCTS (RAISIO PLC) : Paradigms</b>	
<b>PARADIGM</b>	Appendix 5.7 Shot numbers
<b>YELLOW CLAD FIGURES (CHOLESTEROL) :</b> Science modelling (simile) explained	1-2
<b>YELLOW CLAD FIGURES ENTER THE SEA:</b> Personalising the problem ("2 out of 3 of us")	3-7
<b>BLUE CLAD FIGURES (BENECOL STANOL ESTER):</b> Brand introduction ["So Benecol a pioneering. . ."]	8-10
<b>ENGAGEMENT OF BLUE WITH YELLOW CLAD FIGURES:</b> Problem solution ("...introduced foods which . . .")	11 & 13-17
<b>VIEWERS PLACED IN THE SEA (CAMERA POSITION IMPLIES):</b> Vulnerability of the viewer / Benecol's protection	12
<b>BRAND &amp; PRODUCT IDENTITY: Product Tableau</b>	18

#### 5.4.1.5 The Science

Lacking the physical appearance of scientists, whilst modelling the science involved in a totally sober fashion, provided an interesting contrast to the highly visible scientists and parody of the two previous commercials. In addition, the science involved in human biological processes, when *Benecol* is taken, in contrast to its visual modelling in this commercial also warrants further examination. Both issues will be discussed in Chapter 6.

FIG. 5.26

**SCHEMATIC: ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE STRUCTURE**

**INTEGRATION OF METZ'S FILM "SHOT" WITH DE SAUSSURE 'S LINGUISTIC CONCEPTS OF PARADIGM & SYNTAGM**

FEATURE / THEME		← SYNTAGMATIC AXIS →																									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18								
<b>FILM SHOT No.</b> YELLOW CLAD FIGURES (CHOLESTEROL) : Science modelling (simile) explained YELLOW CLAD FIGURES ENTER THE SEA: Personalising the problem ("2 out of 3 of us") BLUE CLAD FIGURES (BENECOL STANOL ESTER): Brand introduction ["So Benecol a pioneering..."] ENGAGEMENT OF BLUE WITH YELLOW CLAD FIGURES: Problem solution ("...introduced foods which...") VIEWERS PLACED IN THE SEA (CAMERA POSITION IMPLIES): Vulnerability of the viewer / Benecol's protection BRAND & PRODUCT IDENTITY: Product Tableau																											
<b>DURATION (Secs)</b> INCREMENTAL CUMULATIVE		2	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	1	2	1	1	5								
<b>Principles of Arrangement (Visible Functions)</b>		2	3	5	6	7	9	10	11	12	14	15	18	20	21	23	24	25	30								
		(1) CAPTURE AUDIENCE ATTENTION												(2) PROVIDE NECESSARY BACKGROUND INFORMATION						(3) STATE & PROVE THE TEXT'S THESIS						(5) APPEAL TO THE AUDIENCE'S EMOTIONS	

## 5.5 Unilever plc (Vaseline) Commercial: Study 4

### 5.5.1 “Content research”

#### 5.5.1.1 Semiotic analysis: ordinal & modal classification

The analysis of the Unilever plc, *Vaseline* commercial advanced in like manner to the preceding commercials via the filmic unit, termed the "shot." With an overall running time of thirty seconds it comprised twenty-six shots ranging from 0.2 to 4 seconds duration and averaging just over 1 second per shot. Up to a maximum of six frames per shot catered for movement of characters within the overall duration of each shot. Clear boundaries defined all shots with the exception of the transition from the penultimate shot to the final shot (25-26) which constituted a *dissolve*.

Shots found to comprise a number of *semiotic signs* building a single, cohesive, meaning were allocated a "prevailing" *semiotic sign* classification. The *prevailing sign* for each shot was, in the first instance, expressed in terms of its 1<sup>st</sup> order, *denotative* or 2<sup>nd</sup> order, *connotative* category by reference to *Barthes's Sign Functioning Diagram* (See Fig.5.1). Secondly, each *denotative* or *connotative sign* was awarded a modal classification (*symbolic / iconic / indexical*) in terms of Peirce's taxonomy as defined by Chandler (2002:36-43).

Reasoning supporting all the *semiotic signs* observed and classified was recorded in the Unilever plc, *Vaseline Shot Analysis*, Appendix 5.9, attached to this chapter and the results summarised on a shot-by-shot basis (Fig. 5.27).

**FIG. 5.27 Semiotic analysis: Unilever plc (Vaseline) Commercial**

Shot	Denotative (1st Order)			Connotative (2nd Order)		
	Symbolic Mode	Iconic Mode	Indexical Mode	Symbolic Mode	Iconic Mode	Indexical Mode
1			✓			
2			✓			
3			✓			
4			✓			
5			✓			
6			✓			
7					✓	
8				✓		
9				✓		
10					✓	
11					✓	
12					✓	
13				✓		
14					✓	
15					✓	
16					✓	
17			✓			
18				✓		
19					✓	
20				✓		
21				✓		
22				✓		
23				✓		
24				✓		
25				✓		
26				✓		
<b>TOTALS</b>			7	11	8	

The twenty-six, prevailing, semiotic *signs* displayed visual aspects, frequently supported by the voiceover, which were consistent with both *denotative* (1st order) and *connotative* (second order) classifications. By far the major classification employed was the *connotative* sign which in nineteen of the twenty-six shots acted in either *symbolic* or *iconic* mode.

### Character concepts

Character acting formed no part of this commercial. The people that did appear were, intentionally, *characterless* in their modelling of the human skin. Findings relating to this modelling are to be found under 5.5.1.5 “The Science” and are discussed further in Chapter 6.

#### 5.5.1.2 Rhetorical analysis: canonical classifications

Visual expression of classical rhetoric, via the canons of *invention*, *style* and *delivery*, was observed to a high level of consistency. Details of the reasoning behind the visual expression of classical canons of rhetoric in this commercial were recorded in the *Shot Analysis*, Appendix 5.5, to this chapter. A tabulated record of the canons finding such visual expression was compiled at the conclusion of the analysis and is summarised here in Fig.5.28.

The following commentary summarises the expression of each of these canons in turn before addressing the canon of *arrangement* and its structural affinity to narrative.

#### Invention (1<sup>st</sup> Canon)

As previously recorded, Covino and Jolliffe (1995: 22) were drawn on together with Cicero's description of the functions of an orator (Cicero in Henderson, 1942:307). Interpretation of the canon of invention was undertaken as previously in a *visual* context with the support of a foregoing *semiotic* construction.

**FIG. 5.28 Rhetorical Analysis ~  
Canons Observed: Unilever plc (Vaseline) Commercial**

Shot	Canons of Classical Rhetoric		
	<i>Invention</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Delivery</i>
1	✓	✓	
2	✓	✓	
3	✓	✓	
4	✓	✓	
5	✓	✓	
6	✓	✓	
7	✓	✓	✓
8	✓	✓	✓
9	✓	✓	✓
10	✓	✓	✓
11	✓	✓	✓
12	✓	✓	
13	✓	✓	✓
14	✓	✓	✓
15	✓	✓	✓
16	✓	✓	✓
17	✓	✓	✓
18	✓	✓	✓
19	✓	✓	✓
20	✓	✓	✓
21	✓	✓	✓
22	✓	✓	✓
23	✓	✓	✓
24	✓	✓	✓
25	✓	✓	✓
26	✓	✓	✓
<b>TOTALS</b>	26	26	19

In Figure 5.28 it can be seen that the canon of *invention* attended every shot in its capacity to identify the audience and discover (visual) "arguments designed to convince or to influence the audience" (Cicero, in Henderson *ibid*).

In this commercial there is no mystery with regard to the target audience insofar as a press release, referring to the creative design group (*Blue Marlin*) for this commercial, quoted its Executive Creative Director, Martin Grimer as saying:-

*The packs (Vaseline products) now communicate the product's function and will help to forge a strong emotional affinity with consumers - mainly 30-55 years old women, who want simple straightforward solutions to skincare for themselves and for their family.*  
(POPSOP, 2009: Press Release)

Analysis of this commercial, indeed, tended to support the targeting of a female audience, albeit with less precision with regard to the age grouping (mainly thirty to fifty-five). Expression of the canon of *invention* was seen to reside more in the vocal score during the opening shots (Shots 1-7) of this commercial in which the use of a mature male voice-over sets up the appeal to the older woman rather than the teenager. The words "and for their families," moreover, in the closing sentence of the aforementioned press release, were also taken as indicative that the qualities of care and nurture, traditionally associated with women, would constitute part of this commercial's appeal. Thus, in the middle and closing shots (8-26), it was observed how that this canon attained greater visual expression as the close-up shots of the skin end and the use of naked bodies joined with the vocal score in modelling care and nurture (as a defence against environmental threat).

#### Arrangement (2nd Canon):

Evidence of *Arrangement*, as defined by the classical origins referred to in Covino & Jolliffe (1995: 38-39), was lacking in this commercial inasmuch as it failed to demonstrate compliance with the optimum format prescribed. Full commentary is provided under 5.5.1.3., "The canon of *arrangement* relative to narrative."

#### Style (3<sup>rd</sup> Canon)

Analysis of the visual expression of the canon of *style* drew upon Aristotle's definition of the canon and the devices summarised by Covino & Jolliffe (1995:29-30) (see Chapter 1 paragraph 1.1.2.1 *The Five Canons*).

**FIG. 5.29 Rhetorical Analysis ~ Devices (Canon of Style):  
Unilever plc (Vaseline) Commercial**

Shot	Metaphor	Parallelism	Synecdoche	Anaphora	Oxymoron
1				✓	
2				✓	
3				✓	
4				✓	
5				✓	
6				✓	
7	✓		✓		
8	✓		✓		
9	✓	✓	✓		
10		✓			
11		✓			
12		✓			
13	✓				
14	✓	✓			
15	✓	✓			
16	✓				
17	✓				
18	✓				✓
19	✓				
20	✓		✓		
21	✓		✓		
22	✓				
23	✓				
24	✓				
25	✓		✓		
26	✓	✓			
<b>TOTALS</b>	17	7	6	6	1

The devices observed as having visual expression within this canon were those of metaphor, parallelism, anaphora, synecdoche and oxymoron (Fig.5.29). Metaphor, was clearly the device most prevalent in the visual expression of rhetoric through this canon being active in 17 of the 26 shots.

### Memory (4<sup>th</sup> Canon):

This canon was considered and found to have no discernable visual expression.

### Delivery (5<sup>th</sup> Canon)

The analysis of visual expression of the 5th canon of classical rhetoric (*delivery*) was guided exclusively by reference to the writings of Cicero (Henderson, 1942:331) and Quintilian (Page et al, 1922:243).

The unambiguous parameters of this canon, previously remarked upon, again presented no problems in interpretation. Lacking any vocal output by the actors, the largely metaphorical nature of the scientific modelling (of human skin) demanded intense use of body language,



through deportment and gesture. Thus the canon of *delivery* assumed a greater than usual importance with only the voiceover to inform the visual representation. Shot 24 provides an excellent exemplar of how the gestural body language of the canon of *delivery* serves to enhance the canon of *style's* metaphor for the healing facility of human skin and the central rôle played by this canon (Fig. 5.30)

#### 5.5.1.3 The canon of *arrangement* relative to narrative

Visual compliance with the canon of *arrangement*, was sought by reference to the five principles derived from Cicero's linguistic approach, (Cicero in Henderson (Ed), 1942, p.307), and summarised by Covino & Jolliffe (1995) thus:-

1. *Capture the audience's attention.*
2. *Provide necessary background information.*
3. *State and prove the text's thesis.*
4. *Anticipate and address possible counter-theses.*
5. *Conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions.*

(Covino & Jolliffe 1995:22)

The Shot-by-shot analysis found the visual action of the narrative to be generally in accord with the sequencing and functioning of the five principles of the canon of *arrangement*. With no sound emanating from the actors, the narrative was led almost exclusively by the male voice-over. The one notable exception was the final shot in which a female voice-over was introduced.

#### Expression of the first principle

The first six shots in this commercial portrayed six different skin areas on the human body in synchrony with each of the first six syllables spoken by the voice-over ("Your - skin - is - a-ma-zing"). Following one another in quick succession to a shortening exposure time, these six shots generated sufficient intrigue to satisfy the requirement of the canon of *arrangement's* first principle – "capture the audience's attention." This was achieved in semiotic terms in that it portrayed the subject (human skin), but *didn't* tell viewers what they were seeing (albeit implied by the voice-over). It was patently a commercial but *didn't* identify the merchant. Its function was to sell but it *didn't* identify the product line. Thus the audience were drawn into lingering a while (the creative script-writer hoped) in order to satisfy their curiosity.

#### Expression of the second principle

"Providing necessary background information" (on the nature of human skin) was found to be a central and complex feature of this commercial. In Shots 7-12 information concerning human skin was given (800 million cells). Shots 13-16 outlined how it constituted a defence against disease whilst Shot 17 identified its waterproofing ability. Finally, in Shots 18-24, its self-healing facility was identified.

#### Expression of the third principle

The way having been prepared by the previously imparted, comprehensive, background information, the third principle, "state and prove the text's thesis," then adopted that same background information as the thesis. This was achieved in Shot 25 by a combination of the voice-over, which posed the question "do you see skin the way we do?" and a return to the earlier visual metaphor of human skin mimicry. The words "it's worth looking after" brought

the thesis to a neat conclusion whilst installing a sense of self worth among viewers.

#### Expression of the fourth principle

No evidence was seen of text satisfying the need to "anticipate and address possible counter-theses." Reasons for this will be postulated in Chapter 6.

#### Expression of the fifth principle

The nature of this appeal, given the known target audience, was seen here as an appeal to female viewers' emotional receptiveness surrounding their perceived ideological rôle. The change from a male to female voice-over, in the final shot (Shot 26), together with a soundtrack comprising a female choir, significantly enhanced this impression.

The human qualities of care and nurture that formed the central theme of this commercial, and which culminated in a feeling of self worth generated by the earlier cataloguing of human skin qualities, were adjudged to have constituted a conclusion "appealing to the audiences' emotions." Aristotle identifies such an appeal thus:-

*[There is persuasion] through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion [pathos] by the speech; for we do not give the same judgment when grieved and rejoicing or when being friendly and hostile. (Aristotle, in Kennedy, [trans], 1991:38)*

#### 5.5.1.4 Situating arrangement in narrative structure

Four of the five principles of the canon of *arrangement* found a good sequential fit within the narrative structure of this commercial with only the fourth principle, "anticipate and address possible counter-theses," lacking expression. An inordinate number of shots appeared to have been devoted to the third principle of the canon of *arrangement*, "providing background information" and this will be discussed further in Chapter 6. Principal narrative features / themes identified during the course of the analysis were entered vertically into the paradigmatic axis in order of their appearance (Fig.5.31& Fig.5.32).

**FIG. 5.31 VASELINE (UNILEVER PLC) : Paradigms**

<b>PARADIGM</b>	<b>Appendix 5.9 Shot numbers</b>
<b>THE CUSTOMER IS SPECIAL: "Your skin is amazing. . ."</b>	1-6
<b>SCIENCE MODELLING - IMPLIED AUTHORITY: Skin cells metaphor</b> Bookmark not defined.	7-12
<b>PROBLEM DEFINITION: Disease</b>	13-16
<b>PROBLEM DEFINITION: Water ingress</b>	17
<b>PROBLEM DEFINITION: injury</b>	18-24
<b>INSTILLING GUILT</b>	25
<b>PROBLEM SOLUTION / PRODUCT IDENTITY: Tableau</b>	26

#### 5.5.1.5 The science

With no physical representation of scientists in this commercial the science was managed jointly by the male voice-over and the accompanying visual metaphors enacted. Like the Benecol commercial a totally sober presentation was delivered in which the biology being modelled demanded further examination. These aspects will be discussed in Chapter 6.



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# CHAPTER 6

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### 6.1 Introduction

Historically the inception and rise of classical rhetoric, as a linguistic skill, came about in Greece and its colonies during the Hellenic period (500–300 BCE). Brought to us most definitively through Aristotle's writings, especially in his work entitled "On Rhetoric," the art became refined in Roman times, during the *Late Republic* and *Early Empire*. During these periods it was articulated, most skilfully, by rhetors such as Cicero and Quintilian who, building principally on Aristotle's earlier work, prescribed five canons for its proficient practice.

The results that are about to be discussed were obtained by methods of observation and analysis which sought to show how those very same canons continue to pertain in the *visual* communication of today's television commercials; thus seeking to resolve the research questions:-

- (1) *Does classical rhetoric, once devised for vocal and written delivery, have a visual expression in television advertising?*
- (2) *If classical rhetoric is found to have an expression in television advertising how is such rhetoric employed in the portrayal of science and scientists?*

Piloting of the methods, which has already been reported upon in Chapter 3 of this thesis, will be accorded a mere overview in this discussion before moving on to a more comprehensive discourse on the results obtained by applying those proven methods to four subsequent studies. The first of the four, a *Case Study*, will be seen to have furnished deductions concerning the nature of any visual presentation found to have employed devices that can be shown to pertain to canons of classical rhetoric. The results of the ensuing three studies will then bear particular scrutiny with regard to recognition of any such visual presentations that were seen to uphold those deductions. The scope of this research thesis, however, was restricted to one half cycle of the deductive-inductive loop (Fig.6.1)

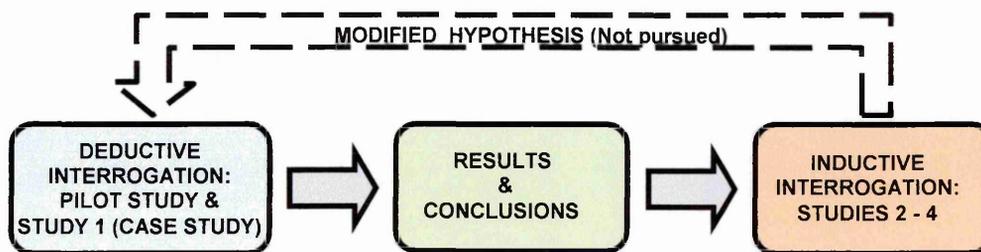


FIG. 6.1 DEDUCTIVE - INDUCTIVE

The extent to which the results from the three ensuing studies were seen to support the findings of the *Case Study* determined their merit for consideration as general principles and hence to uphold or falsify the hypothesis, implicit in the principal research question. In addition, all four commercials will be compared and contrasted with regard to the rôle of humour and to the use of rhetoric in relation to the portrayal of science and/or scientists; the latter being dependent upon a positive answer being defined to the principal research question. The discussions take place under the following headings:-

- The *Pilot Study*: *Gold Blend* coffee commercial (6.2)
- Study 1: *EGG Money* card commercial (Case Study) (6.3)
- Study 2: *Brantano* shoes commercial (6.4)
- Study 3: *Benecol* products commercial (6.5)
- Study 4: *Vaseline* products commercial (6.6)
- Comparing & Contrasting: Study 1 / Study 2 (6.7.1)
- Comparing & Contrasting: Study 3 / Study 4 (6.7.2)
- The principal research question - Summary (6.8)
- The subsidiary research question - Summary (6.9)

## 6.2 The Pilot Study: *Gold Blend Coffee* commercial (overview)

### 6.2.1 Piloting Semiotic Analysis

The facility of semiotics to offer models by which one might comprehend the structure and malleable nature of meaning in its linguistic and visual dimensions is one which renders it invaluable in the hands of analysts and rhetors alike. The multifarious nature of a *sign* system, such as semiotics,

which allows it to expose meaning in media applications is patently recognised by Chandler who says:-

*Some media draw on several interacting sign systems; television and film, for example, utilize verbal, visual, auditory and locomotive signs.* (Chandler, 2002:52-53)

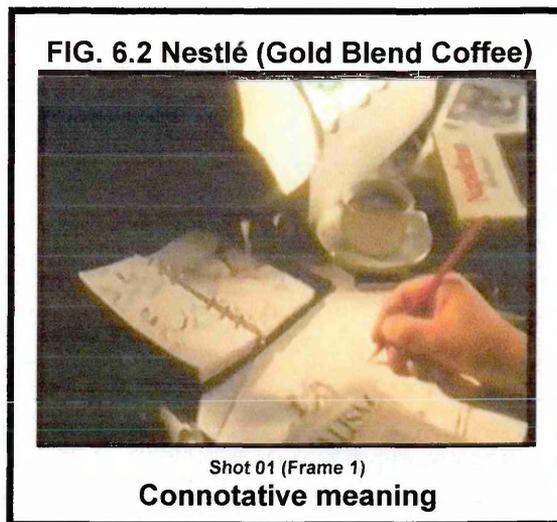
The potent facility of semiotics, moreover, to reveal meaning that is apparent (*denotative*) and/or covert (*connotative*), whilst also offering to refine such meaning in modal classifications, proved to be an incisive mechanism for revealing the preferred agenda of rhetoric and to enable its "translation" in terms of its canons, visually expressed.

Results emanating from a *visual* analysis during this *Pilot Study* showed that the prevailing semiotic *signs* created in the twenty-one shots of this commercial were *entirely* of the second order (*connotative*). Whilst unexpected, such a finding was, however, found to be consistent with Hall (1973:12) who says that "In the advertising discourse [...] we might say that there is almost no 'purely denotative' communication." The particular ability offered by semiotic analysis, for discerning such hidden (*connotative*) meaning, therefore, is important and justified its use in the visual medium. The increased propensity for such covert strategies in television advertising is also made plain by Chandler who finds that:-

*Visual advertisements are a powerful example of how images may be used to make implicit claims which advertisers often prefer not to make more openly in words.* (Chandler 2002: 47)

The *Gold Blend Coffee* commercial was thus found to be endowed with artefacts, charged with latent meaning which, with semiotic exposure, pointed to preferred rhetorical agendas. The romantic soap opera that unfolded during the transmission of this commercial adroitly deflected viewer's attention from the underlying meaning that was being surreptitiously imparted. The semiotic *connotation* of the opening shot, for instance, (Fig.6.2) introduced a theme of elevated social position that was to become omnipresent throughout this commercial. The coffee cup in the opening shot,, the *semiotic* "odd man out," constituted a first order *denotative* sign for

drinking *Gold Blend* coffee but sought a second order *connotative* meaning (Barthes in Cobley & Jansz, 1997:51) of high socio-economic index by association with artefacts for which that *connoted* meaning was already well established. The *filofax*, *denotatively* a personal organiser, was in 1987 *connotatively* a social status symbol. The book,



entitled "Napoleon," *denotatively* a non-fiction historical work, is *connotatively* a symbol of intellect - and by inference high salary. These artefacts, accompanied by a soundtrack of classical music, acted cohesively as powerful life-style identifiers in which (a) they reinforced their association with middle class, professional people, of high socio-economic index and (b) (the prime purpose) embraced the coffee cup, and later the coffee jar, as *connotative signifiers* of that same social scene. This was seen to be consistent with Williamson's findings that:-

*Advertisements are constantly translating between systems of meaning, and therefore constitute a vast meta-system where values from different areas of our lives are made interchangeable.* (Williamson, 1995:25)

Overall, the semiotic analysis revealed a visual presentation that became totally immersed in the effort to associate the drinking of *Gold Blend Coffee* with people from a specific social stratum. Strict attention to detail left nothing to chance in a narrative that exploited every facet of the concept of gold. Representations of gold were ubiquitous. A gold-rimmed coffee cup, golden coloured door-bell, gold coffee-bean ear-rings, gold necklace, gold ring and gold picture frames all found resonance with the brand name, *Gold Blend*. Gold became the core semiotic vehicle for conferring its long established, *connotative*, meaning as a substance of high value on the product whilst also indicating the high status image on offer to its target audience.

This commercial sought, *semiotically*, to build by association, a new meaning for its audience. The *connotative signifiers* were lifestyle indicators that were skillfully selected in order to *associate* the purchase, drinking and display of *Gold Blend* coffee with social status. Such construction, termed *myth* by Barthes (Barthes in Bignell, 2002: 21), also accords with Broms & Gahmberg (1983:482-495) in their observation that "these value laden images are myths."

This *Pilot Study* was, therefore, able to endorse the potential of semiotic analysis to reveal meaning, both resident and newly created, and to justify the use of semiotic reasoning (Appendix 3.3) in postulating preferred rhetoric agendas in the visual dimension.

#### 6.2.2 Piloting Rhetorical Analysis

The rhetorical canons adjudged to have been induced by *connotative* semiotic constructions, acting for the most part in *symbolic* mode, turned out to be predominantly those of *invention, style and delivery*. (Ch.3: Fig.3.7). Thus, by the first canon (*invention*), a rhetoric was constructed which, in turn, invoked the canons of *style* and *delivery* to address the task of persuading a target audience that both purchasing and drinking *Gold Blend* coffee conferred "membership of a [high status] lifestyle group" (see Bignell, 2002:37). Initially this was achieved through simile and metaphor, being devices of the canon of *style*. The gold, coffee-bean-shaped, earrings and necklace introduced a visual simile that likened coffee to gold as a substance to be greatly valued (Fig.6.3). Later, viewers were invited to self-identify with the characters of the storyline with metaphors which by paralleling well known lifestyle and social scenarios sought to persuade viewers that this was or, *could* be, them and/or their image, if they were seen to buy and/or drink *Gold Blend* coffee (Ch.3: Fig.3.9). Such an interpretation sits well with the findings of Morely (1992:209) who concludes that "one can hardly imagine any television text having any effect whatever without identification."

With all character shots being close-ups of either the head, or head and shoulders (Fig 6.3 exemplifies), the canon of *delivery* was paramount and an integral companion to devices encompassed by the canon of *style*. Cicero (in Henderson, 1942: 7) says that "delivery is the graceful regulation of voice, countenance, and gesture." Both vocally and visually, through



deportment and facial expression, this is exactly what was found throughout this commercial. Observe, for example, the appealing and expectant facial expression of the female subject in Figure 6.3 as she explains "I've run out of coffee" whilst clearly implying that the male subject should offer to provide her with some. Social etiquette (which is what this commercial is laden with) forbids that she should actually voice that expectation.

### Arrangement & Narrative

It was recognised at an early stage that the complete commercial should be regarded as the equivalent of what, to rhetors in 4th / 5th century BCE Greece, would have been the whole of their rhetorical text; the canon of *arrangement* had, therefore, to be considered holistically.

Analysis of the conceptual subjects of each "Shot" (paradigms) and their sequencing (syntagm) in this commercial was undertaken and subsequently evaluated in terms of the five principles of classical rhetoric's second canon of *arrangement*. The result showed that four of the five principles had been applied in the sequence prescribed by the canon and taken to be indicative of considered structuring. No matter whether devised by *creatives* in the knowledge of that classical canon's theory or whether conceived empirically, the finding was taken to demonstrate that this canon had directed the visual expression, albeit not perfectly. The absence of the fourth principle (*Anticipate and address possible counter-theses*) was accounted for by the

advertiser's inability to argue tangible differences between the product advertised and those of rival companies in addition to commercial expediency in not wanting to draw attention to competitors' products. It will be seen, however, that not all television commercials are lacking in this respect as later discussion of the *Brantano* commercial will reveal.

Piloting of a holistic approach to analysing visual expression of the canon of *arrangement* proved most revealing. Its schematic presentation (Ch.3: Fig.3.12) readily enabled one to discern the extent to which the ordering of paradigms of the commercial's syntagmatic narrative structure complied with the syntagmatic sequencing of the principles prescribed by the canon of *arrangement* which consequently recommended its continued use.

### 6.2.3 Summary

For all the semiotic and rhetorical devices that were seen at work (wittingly installed or not), one was able to see, with the benefit of hindsight, how transient was the lifespan of any given meaning. Artefacts such as the *filofax* which, at that brief moment (1987), symbolised all that was chic would, in a few years, acquire a different meaning. Rather than symbolising a lifestyle that one might aspire to they would come to symbolise the "yuppie culture," a subject for ridicule equal even to that of the "Essex girl" perhaps.

Piloting of these methods suggested that classical rhetoric in this and any other commercial could be expected to involve four of the five canons only in *visual* expression; the exception being the canon of *memory* which, by definition (see Ch.1: 1.1.2.1), was constrained to remain a mental discipline.

The "storyboard", "shot analysis sheets" and "narrative schematic" devised for semiotic and rhetorical research and analysis achieved a high degree of success with minimal alteration being required. Thus the combined semiotic and rhetorical approach piloted by this commercial proved to be robust and logical whilst promising to be a viable basis from which to expose the *visual* expression of rhetoric's classical canons in television advertising.

### **6.3 Study 1(Case Study): EGG Money Card commercial**

#### **6.3.1 Introduction**

A series of four advertisements were broadcast for *EGG* Banking plc., during November 2005, on Channel 4, the three ITV channels and a selection of Sky channels. *EGG* Banking plc., awarded two contracts. The first was to the advertising agency, *Mediacom*, with a brief to propose and arrange a media advertising outlet that would reach a target audience whilst achieving a specified increase in the number of *Egg money-card* sales (*Mediacom* Interview, Appendix 5.2, p.6 and *Mother* Interview, Appendix 5.1, p.3 refer). The second was a creative scriptwriting contract awarded to a company named *Mother* (London) which included the design and production of a television advertising film. Filming was sub-contracted by *Mother* to a company known as *Stink Films* who, in turn engaged two directors from *Ne-o*, an Anglo-Japanese film-directing team, based in the UK.

In this Case-study a commercial entitled "Testing," just one of the series of four *EGG Money* card commercials, was selected (Appendix 5.3 DVD) which employed ironic / parodic humour to market its new "EGG Money" card. Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives from both the advertising agency (*Mediacom*) and the creative script writers (*Mother* [London]) prior to attempting full analysis of the commercial.

#### **6.3.2 Mother (London) interview (semi-structured)**

NB: *The creative scriptwriter being interviewed was Swedish and, consequently, quotes from this interview may appear to contain strange word orders or to be oddly phrased.*

*Mother (London)* was engaged, by *EGG*, to undertake the creative script writing after the decision to exploit the televisual medium had been taken by the advertising agency, *Mediacom* (Appendix 5.1, p.4)

Principal objectives of this semi-structured interview had been to elicit information regarding the use of semiotics or rhetoric, *EGG Banking plc's* advertising brief and the use of humour and scientists.

*Witting* use of semiotics and classical rhetoric was not in evidence. Such was inevitable given that the interviewee had acknowledged that his formal education had not included these two subjects. A preliminary viewing of the commercial had suggested, nevertheless, that in certain respects rhetorical devices had, indeed, been employed - albeit unwittingly. When asked about the use of guinea pigs, for example, the interview subject had replied:-

*[...] In advertising you always try to create something that people recognise themselves in. . . . .* (Appendix 5.1: 5)

Such an approach (wittingly or unwittingly embarked upon), in fact, would later be found, during analysis, to invoke canons of classical rhetoric which, after securing the audiences' attention would clearly invite them to empathise and self-identify with the guinea pigs' lifestyle and situations. The following comment from the interviewee relating to how he expected the audience to react confirms this:-

*. . . having grabbed their attention we invite them into the world, just again, getting to know their characters:- "oh guinea pigs that's really interesting, oh their funny, oh, oh they're. . . oh, they're kind of like, I recognise that stuff there," or "ooh that's a friend of mine he's so like that and blah, blah, blah ."*  
(Appendix 5.1: 19).

Camera angles and positions (of semiotic significance to Berger, 2005:33-34) had been largely in the hands of the film makers but were, seemingly, employed functionally rather than semiotically / rhetorically. This much was suggested by the interviewee's remark to the effect that the low angle shot at the opening of this commercial had been used as "an establishment shot, an exterior of a place, so where we know everything takes place" (Appendix 5.1: 9). Yet later one detects the beginnings of a semiotic / rhetorical construction in the remark that:-

*the scientists employed by EGG in these ads are obviously studying these people down on the ground, which is their jobs and we also have the angles which are shot from their level, we are one of those guys looking up. . .[. . .]. Again the camera work there is always made to feel like we are coming from that outside point of view but then we are always down inside at their level . . .* (Appendix 5.1:9)

The camera angle, which was clearly being used to place the viewer at the level of the guinea pigs in relation to the scientists, acted semiotically, albeit unknown to the to the creative scriptwriter, to infer their "smallness and weakness" (after Berger, 2005, *ibid*) in relation to the superior power of *EGG Banking plc*. Conscious use of such a facility, however, did not just go unacknowledged during this interview but was denied in the following exchange:-

Researcher: *When I first started to analyse your advertisements, the idea came to me that there was this massive building with Egg on it and two little tiny scientists and it occurred to me that you were trying to say Egg is big and powerful and has the capacity to solve your problems, perhaps. Would you say that was, er, a deliberate. . . .*

Interviewee: *Er, that, was. . . no that's not the example.* (Appendix 5.1:11)

The camera work, therefore, had been used merely to situate the action of the commercial with no witting agenda for inferring the power of *EGG plc* (the *semiotic* construction). Indeed, this is what Brierley (2002: 178) maintains in saying that "All advertising begins with orientation, [...] in TV commercials it would include the first shots, background music and sound effects."

Finally, in enquiring about the means used to ensure that audiences received a particular message, the following response removed any doubt as to the informal approach adopted in installing persuasion in this television commercial:-

*. . . it is trial and error, [. . .] we try several different approaches and then we find something that we are happy with in the end."* (Appendix 5.1:13)

Indeed, with responses such as "something between like twenty-five to maybe thirty-five" and "quite young, old as well" (Appendix 5.1: 13) the

interviewee had appeared equally vague about the nature of the target audience.

It was, therefore, concluded that any semiotic and rhetorical structuring that might later be observed during analysis of this commercial would have not have been emplaced wittingly but rather by application of the creative script writers' empirical knowledge and intuitive skills.

On the question of the scientists represented in this commercial, the interviewee was clear that they were to be regarded as having been "employed by EGG" (Appendix 5.1, p.10). The deliberate intention to present science / scientists in an ironic / parodic manner, by mimicking traditional media images, was confirmed when the interviewee volunteered:-

*. . . . in an ironic world we've set this up as, you know, the idea is to be like this big, I don't know if you call it er, research from the 1950s and an atomic age. . .* (Appendix 5.1:10)

On the manner in which they would be perceived, however, the interviewee was in no doubt that:-

*Scientists don't reflect, er, us as people, they reflect someone else . . . . someone else [. . .]. Scientists are a sort of "hand of God" isn't it type of thing in there?* (Appendix 5.1: 17)

Interestingly, these comments echo, the "voice of god" style of advertising prevalent in the washing powder commercials of the 1950s which formed part of a documentary series on the subject. Entitled "Washes Whiter" they were first screened in 1990 (BBC2) and repeated in May 2004 (BBC4). The effect is neatly summed up by Nelkin (1999) who identifies media images such as these in observing that:-

*The scientist, at least the male scientist, is portrayed in popular newspapers and magazines as socially removed, apart from, and above most human preoccupations.* (Nelkin, 1999:229)

The "hand of God" comment by the interviewee, therefore, surely implied the intention to invest these scientists with some authority. Being an internet banking service and having no high street presence like other banks (a point

observed later in the interview with *Mediacom*) the need for EGG Banking plc to secure such authority (by association) was plain as was indicated by the interviewee's earlier observation "EGG is an internet bank obviously not a big. . .(interviewee breaks off) (Appendix 5.1: 10).

The expectation, therefore, was that, during the forthcoming analysis, this commercial would be found to have used scientists ostensibly in a humorous manner but at a deeper level as a means of establishing financial authority for EGG Banking plc.

### 6.3.3 Mediacom Interview (semi-structured)

EGG Banking plc., engaged *Mediacom*, to advise on and manage the promotion of its new financial service vested in the *EGG Money Card*. Having recommended that television would be the best medium, *Mediacom* subsequently undertook to oversee *EGG Banking plc's* chosen creative scriptwriters (*Mother*). The interview with *Mediacom's* Account Director for the EGG Banking plc contract showed, however, that their management of *Mother* was limited to peripheral issues such as the length of the commercial. Even in this area it appeared that the *creatives* at *Mother* had got the upper hand. Whereas, for economical reasons, which were linked to the cost of air time, a thirty second commercial had been requested by *Mediacom*, the *creatives* at *Mother* had insisted on a format that would require forty seconds. Even when *Mediacom* had conceded this point the eventual commercial did not comply exactly with what had been agreed. *Mediacom* had demanded:-

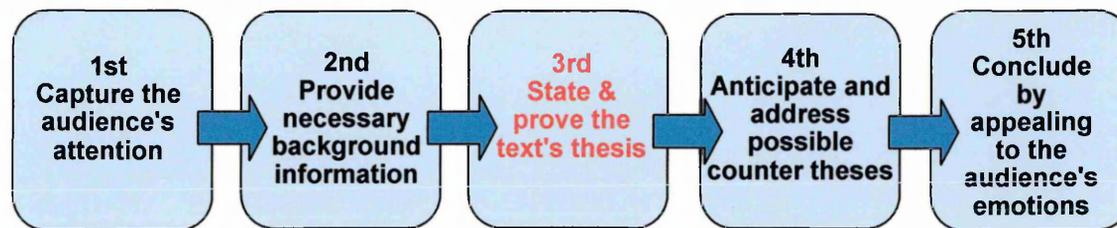
" . . . alright you guys it's a forty-second ad and you've got a thirty-second sort of guinea pig kind of story thing and then you've got a ten seconds of the product at the end "

(Appendix 5.2:4)

The reality had been that *Mother* allocated 34 seconds to the "guinea pig kind of story" and 6 rather than 10 seconds to "the product at the end."

Notwithstanding the economical aspect, this particular feature holds rhetorical interest insofar as the time devoted to "the product at the end," to which

*Mediacom* refer, can reasonably be equated to the canon of *arrangement's* 3rd principle, "state and prove the text's thesis." The actual position prescribed by the canon for this principle (shown in red), however, is *not* at the *end* of any given text but *preceding* the fourth and fifth principles (Fig.6.4).



**PRESCRIBED SEQUENCE FOR THE 5 PRINCIPLES OF THE CANON OF ARRANGEMENT**

**FIG. 6.4 (EGG Money Cards)**

The actual result, as Chapter.5, Fig.5.10 showed, was that the third principle was afforded twenty-seven of the forty seconds available, constituting a major proportion of the air time. In addition to occupying its prescribed central position it was also allowed to share the end position with the fifth principle, which was seeking to "conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions." Such treatment lent weight to the findings discussed in the interview with the creative scriptwriter from *Mother* (London), i.e. that any semiotic and rhetorical structuring that may be observed, during analysis, was more likely to have its origin in the empirical knowledge and intuitive skills of the creative script writers. In addition to the involvement with the second canon of classical rhetoric, this interview revealed yet another important rhetorical feature linked to the agency's principal communication rôle which will now be explained.

*Mediacom*, in the words of their Account Director (Appendix 5.2: 2), were "essentially a communications specialist" whose task was "about understanding the consumer." Indeed, the mention of various audience research software such as "qual and quant inside tools,"<sup>1</sup> followed by the admission that *Mediacom* do "a lot of focus groups," in addition to their having "a street in Reading signed up to *Mediacom*," in order to "diarise their days" (Appendix 5.2:2), all tended to support that claim. A keen awareness was

<sup>1</sup> "qual / quant" (qualitative / quantitative) refers to a hybrid market research software product.

also displayed of the importance of placing the commercial in front of the right television audience for their client:-

*Basically [...] EGG's audience are "ITV" viewers and they have [...] "appointment to view" programmes that, that they'll [...] always, always go back to.* (Appendix 5.2:2)

Even before the commercial had been screened, therefore, this evidence was indicating the potential to address the 1st canon of *invention*, i.e. that of:-

*Assessing the audience in terms of what they already knew and were prepared to believe whilst generating effective material for that particular rhetorical situation.* Covino & Jolliffe (1995:29-30)

The implication was, therefore, that these research techniques were routine yet, in comparing this interview with that undertaken with *Mother (London)*, both interviewees had appeared vague and revealed disparity in the audiences being targeted. The eventual audience reached by the finished commercial, moreover, was adjudged by *Mediacom's* account director to be one that neither of the two agencies had originally envisaged; hence his comment:-

*. . . no there's a bit of a, there's a bit of disparity between, erm, who the ad was target. . who the ad in terms of the sort of the use of guinea pigs was targeting and who, actually, the audience is.* (Appendix 5.2:3)

Later, he opined that "I don't personally think that, um, er guinea pigs target that audience" (Appendix 5.2, p.8). Common ground, nevertheless, was found between the two agencies on the question of the need for *EGG Banking plc.*, to project its financial credibility and authority which was summed up by the *Mediacom* interviewee as follows:-

*EGG's a virtual brand, it certainly hasn't any high street presence or anything, obviously, erm, and, which means that from an audience perspective they don't have the advantage of someone like Barclays. . .* (Appendix 5.2:3)

Concerning the use of scientists *Mediacom* were conscious of the parody being performed and were patently well aware of the use of scientists in television commercials with authoritative and legitimizing functions born of the washing powder commercials of the 1950s:-

*"usually the use of scientists if you look at [...] Proctor and Gamble stuff, Ariels and the Dazs etc would normally be to, er, try to convey some sort of, you know, expertise and fact but obviously when there's actually guinea pigs, or you know it's a very sort of comedy, quirky sort of take on the whole, you know, Ariel, Daz thing so, er, I don't think, in this instance, it would be to convey any sort of er . . .* (Appendix 5.2:5)

The comment also shows, however, that they believed that the humorous tenor of this commercial tended to destroy traditional functions. Questioned on the rôle of humour the interviewee observed that:-

*. . . the financial category is not particularly high interest to consumers so one of the ways that you kind of get around that [...] is humour to [...] create that air of warmth and [show] that we're not [...] that kind of an old sort of fuddy-duddy institution . . .* (Appendix 5.2:5)

Just such a view correlates closely with Brierley (2002) who considered such advertisements were:-

*. . . trying to distance [themselves]] from the tired and drab image of traditional advertising formats and to win the confidence and support of advertising-literate viewers.* (Brierley, 2002:160)

Aristotle too considered the use of humour as a device aimed at making the audience more attentive and well disposed (Aristotle, in Kennedy, [trans], 1991:263). Although recognising the *function* of humour, however, the interviewee showed no awareness that humour was an acknowledged *rhetorical device*.

As with the interview with the *Mother (London)* representative, the evidence once again indicated that one might expect any visual expression of rhetorical canons found during forthcoming analysis to have been unwittingly installed rather than having been born of an informed knowledge of rhetorical theory.

#### 6.3.4 Semiotic analysis

Through the parody of a scientific experiment, in which the behavioural characteristics of "scientists", "shoppers" and "non-shoppers" were mimicked, a semiotic imagery was seen to create meanings which were identified as

predominantly *connotative* having modal presentations that were largely *symbolic* (sixteen out of twenty-two shots [Ch.5: Fig.5.2] ).

The analytical results of this commercial given in Chapter 5 (Appendix 5.3) showed that two major *semiotic* messages pertained. Both had sought to establish new meaning for *EGG Banking plc*. The first was seen to provide imagery which awarded authority linked to financial expertise and hence the ability to deliver benefit to their target audience. The second, equally important, message was shown to be linked to the need to demonstrate the suitability of the service afforded to different, specific audiences, via the *EGG Money card*.

In the first instance, stereotypical scientists with scientific accoutrements, and wearing the familiar white coat, were seen to *connote, symbolically*, established associations of their expertise, authority and publics' trust. Commonly such imagery would be considered semiotically sufficient to effect a transfer of such qualities to the advertiser in question. In this case, however, the association was even more powerfully reinforced in the opening scene by two scientists approaching and dwarfed by the huge *EGG* laboratory. Viewers would be left in no doubt, that these were *EGG* scientists. Although, according to the creative scriptwriter, this scene was merely "an establishment shot" (Appendix 5.1, p.9), intended to locate the action, it also *connoted*, through the contrast in size between the scientists and their laboratory, a blatant *semiotic* message, that *EGG Banking Plc.*, were big and, therefore, powerful. The audience, having at this stage no indication of the humour to come, would have no reason to make other than a sober assessment.

Seen throughout this commercial conferring only occasionally, and then only with each other, the scientists remained unheard and never spoke to camera (their audience) rendering them both mysterious and remote. Such behaviour served to maintain distancing from "ordinary people" and reinforced their "special" status, thereby constructing an implicit statement of scientific

authority. Such a reading served to confirm the view expressed by the *Mother (London)* interviewee that "scientists don't reflect, [...] us as people, they reflect someone else" a view which was found to be consistent with Nelkin (1999) who observed that:-

*The scientist, at least the male scientist, is portrayed in popular newspapers and magazines as socially removed, apart from, and above most human preoccupations.* (Nelkin, 1999:229)

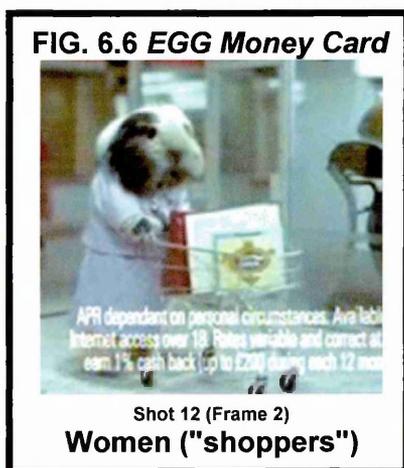
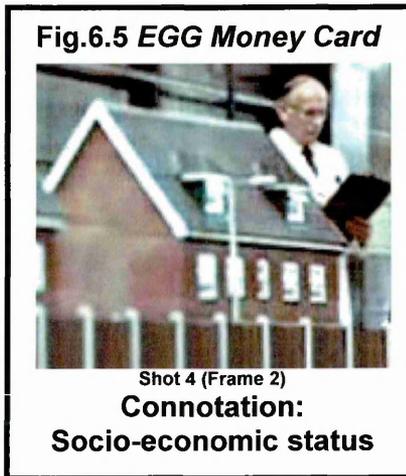
Glenn (2004:49), too, is in no doubt that "in order to maintain a practical sense of power, the powerful must maintain their distance from their inferiors."

Evidence obtained from the analysis showed, therefore, that the semiotic *signs* constructed on a shot-by-shot basis sought first to establish credibility for *EKG Banking plc* by "borrowing" the established trust and authority already vested in the images of scientists and their science. This powerful imagery, in fact, became the commercial's narrative (a scientific experiment).

Despite the reservations of *Mediacom* (refer to 6.3.3 p.19 above) that the humour of the scientists' parodic portrayal might defeat the transfer of such authority and trustworthiness, the application of semiotic theory, applied during analysis, provided good reason to suppose that these qualities were still capable of transfer at the deeper, *connotative*, level in the construction of a *myth* (see the final paragraph of this section).

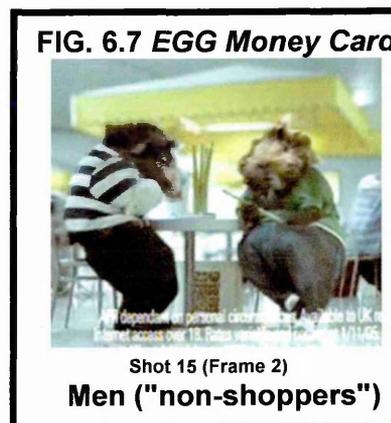
Having established a meaning that *connoted* credibility for *EKG Banking plc.*, the commercial also addressed the second major semiotic message, i.e. the aptness of the service offered by the *EKG Money* card. This was achieved by inducing viewers to self-identify, a technique already alluded to during interviewing at *Mother*, when the "creative" had postulated the following possible response from the audience:- "I recognise that stuff there," or "ooh that's a friend of mine he's so like that. . ." (Appendix 5.1:19).

Running concurrently with the scientific theme the commercial employed *semiotic signifiers* in which every-day situations and infrastructures, familiar to a specific demographic sector of the television audience, were portrayed. Guinea pigs were dressed and shown to behave as human beings, indicating that they should be regarded as such, whilst model housing and street layouts *connotatively* defined the particular socio-economic status of the viewers being targeted (Fig 6.5) (see also the commentary in Appendix 5.3, Shot 4).



Superficially they were both "shoppers" and "non-shoppers". These categories were then quickly distilled by scenarios in which only *women* were seen to shop (Fig 6.6) whilst *men* were, demonstrably, *not* shopping (Fig.6.7). Yet, there were benefits for both, for as the voiceover informed viewers (Shots 12-17, Appendix 5.3), "the guinea pigs who chose to

shop got cash back on their purchases (female "shoppers" displayed) and those who didn't, earned interest on the money they kept on it" (male "non-shoppers" displayed). The "shoppers" were, later, also portrayed as mothers (Shot 11, Appendix 5.3) implicating the family. "Shoppers" and "non-shoppers", therefore, *connoted, symbolically*, the eminent suitability of the *EGG Money* card and the benefits which it afforded by re-enactments of familiar aspects of UK male and female cultures.



Such *obvious* mimicry, delivered through the behavioural characterisation of "scientists", "shoppers" and "non-shoppers," appeared at first sight to be in

conflict with the more *esoteric* status of the semiotic *signs* that were being utilised; for as Barthes' observes,

*The process of connotation is so "natural" and so immediate when it is experienced that it is almost impossible to separate denotation and connotation, [moreover] identification of what signs depict, especially pictorial ones, happens so quickly that it is easy to forget that it has happened at all.*

(Barthes in Cobley & Jansz, 1997:50)

Indeed, the scientists' stereotypical laboratory behaviour together with the routine activities of shoppers / non-shoppers were so familiar to viewers that the *connotative signification* of scientific authority and the female and male cultural rôle play became all but invisible to the eye and is entirely consistent with Allen (1992) who encapsulates this precisely when he says:-

*Semiotics has shown us [that] the naturalness of our relationship with television is illusory. Television [...] constructs representations of the world based on complex sets of conventions - conventions whose operations are largely hidden by their transparency. Like television itself most of the time, these conventions are so familiar in their effects that we don't notice them.*

(Allen, 1992:7)

Mimicry, however, is also a prerequisite for the effective communication of parody which "relies on the addressee recognising the original text in order to get the most out of the humour" (Berger, 1995:73). It was the mimicry in this commercial, therefore, which facilitated the parody. Acting as a device to covertly divert attention it subliminally invited passive, self-identification, from a discrete audience. Evans (in Brierley, 2002: 161) says that "Distraction is [...] used to break down the resistance of the consumer." The rhetorical rôle of humour will be examined further in Section 6.7.1.3

These dominant *semiotic* scenes of scientific authority and cultural rôle play employed *connotative (symbolic) signs* which, by the words of Bignell (2002) on Barthes, could then be seen as having produced meaning beyond the literal, in which *myth*, had been accounted for by:-

. . . things used as signs to communicate a social and political message about the world. The message always involves the distortion or forgetting of alternative messages, so that myth appears to be simply true, rather than one of a number of different possible messages. (Bignell, 2002:21)

By seeking to borrow the ethos of authority vested in scientists the *myth* was that *EGG Banking plc* held financial authority and expertise. In inviting a target audience to self-identify, the *myth* that 'the *EGG Money* card exactly matches your lifestyle' was also propagated. In this manner semiotic *myth* could be seen to be signposting the preferred meanings which the devices of rhetoric would deliver for *EGG Banking plc*.

### 6.3.5 Rhetorical Expression (Visual)

#### 6.3.5.1 Introduction

*EGG Banking plc's* advertising brief for this commercial, entitled "Testing," could not be obtained and it remained, therefore, undeclared. The commercial that was subsequently broadcast, nevertheless, was purpose-bound to declare that brief, by proxy, through the rhetoric employed and which then remained only to be "read" by analysis. Appendix 5.3 constituted that analysis.

With prevailing meanings having emerged from the semiotic analysis as those which were principally concerned with establishing that, (a) '*EGG Banking plc* deserves your trust in matters of finance' and (b) 'the *EGG Money* card is entirely suited to *your* way of life,' this section appraises the detailed findings of Appendix 5.3 and discusses the more salient, rhetorical points, by visiting each of the classical canons in turn to determine if and how visual expression occurred.

#### 6.3.5.2 Invention (1st Canon)

Brierley (2002: 178) refers to commercials which "show the product in use and the types of people who use it" as "slice-of-life" commercials. That a

powerful rhetoric ensues also seems to be in no doubt for, as Coen (2001) observes:-

*Given the evidence from social-psychological research about the importance of identification, it is easy to understand why media scholars have considered identification to be a process that mediates between exposure to media messages and persuasion.*  
(Coen, D., 2001:260)

Paraphrasing the words of Covino & Jolliffe (1995: 22), the function of the 1st canon of classical rhetoric requires that the audience be assessed in terms of what they already know and are prepared to believe whilst generating effective material for that particular rhetorical situation. Shot 04 (Fig.6.8) exemplifies one of the ways in which this rhetorical function was fulfilled in this commercial.



As observed in the analysis (Appendix 5.3, shot 04) houses are key social status identifiers. A comparison with internet advertisements, showing properties similar to those being modelled, established that the shared earning capacity required for the purchase of such a property in 2010 would comprise a *gross* income of circa £60,000 p.a., yielding circa £30,000 gross income each for a married couple. With reference to the *National Readership Survey* the nearest equivalent *net* income was found to be £24,000 p.a., correlating with a *C1/C2 Social Grading Category* (National Readership Survey: see Appendix 6.3). Thus some insight was gained as to the audience that had been assessed and which was eventually targeted, despite the disparity encountered between *Mother (London)* and *Mediacom* during interviewing. Some further indication of the nature of this target audience is

given by the air time afforded to the characters appearing in this commercial. In considering Fig.5.4 in Chapter 5 it can be seen that most air time was devoted to the (female) "shoppers", followed by the "scientists" and finally the (male) "non-shoppers." These results were not surprising since those who were expected to use the EGG card (female "shoppers") were given most air time. The authoritative image of EGG, vested in the "scientists," nevertheless, was deemed more important than the (male) "non-shoppers" (prospective "investors"). Plausibly, therefore, the principal audience being targeted throughout this commercial were C1/C2 married women.

A deliberate invitation to those of a certain socio-economic standing to self-identify (see Appendix 5.3) by mirroring their lifestyle, therefore, was strongly suggested. Taken together with the comment that, "in advertising you always try to create something that people recognise themselves in . . ." (*Mother [London]* interview) the conclusion that this audience had, indeed, been "assessed," as required by this canon, became irrefutable. Reference to the Corbett & Connors (1999, inside covers), reproduced in Appendix 3.4, showed the rhetoric that had been *invented* to assimilate lifestyle had drawn on a visual expression of *parallelism* in shot 04, a device pertaining to the 3rd canon of *style* (sub-category *schemes*), employed here as a route to self-identification. All 22 shots of this commercial were found to have shown the canon of *invention* to have been actively engaged in visual expression of classical rhetoric (Fig 5.5., Chapter 5).

#### 6.3.5.3 Arrangement (2<sup>nd</sup> Canon) ~ See 6.3.5.8

#### 6.3.5.4 Style (3rd Canon)

Corvino & Jolliffe, see *style* as the process of "giving presence" to ideas that rhetors want their audiences to attend to and define the canon of style as the:-

*use of language index, tropes, simile, metaphor, synecdoche and schemes to generate the required impressions. Under 'schemes' rhetorical theorists have catalogued such devices as parallelism (creating a similarity of structure in a set of related words, phrases or clause).* (Corvino & Jolliffe, 1995:22-24)

Although it pains to define the canon of *style* concisely, Corbett & Connors (1999: 337-483), provide, nevertheless, a more exhaustive list of the devices with useful definitions beyond those given by Covino & Jolliffe. These were gainfully employed in the search for visual expression and are summarised in Appendix 3.4 of this thesis.

The rhetoric provided by this canon throughout this commercial was generated by *semiotic signs* that were largely *connotative* and in *symbolic* mode (Chapter 5, Fig.5.2), delivering meanings already familiar to most UK audiences. Returning to shot 15, for example (Fig. 6.9), the *signifier* addressed an audience who had *learned* its meaning beyond that of the purely *denotative* boredom, to one which *connoted* men's distaste



for shopping in the company of a woman (anecdotally a wife or girlfriend), thereby placing it in *symbolic mode*. The form of rhetorical device generated was that of metaphor, pertaining to the canon of *style* which, like the *semiotic, connotative sign* that provoked it, conveyed a deeper meaning.

For female viewers this rhetoric employed a visual *simile* that said "this is what men are like when *you* go shopping." For male viewers, it encouraged self-identification with a visual metaphor that said "this is *you* when you accompany your wife on a shopping trip." The *semiological myth* that underpinned this metaphor was powerful and drew on men's deeply rooted, somewhat dated, yet egotistically appealing, self perception of being the "bread-winner." Since these male guinea pigs did *not* shop, this rhetoric implicitly perpetuated, in both male and female audiences, men's traditional

gender rôle as "providers." Hence the unintended result of rhetoric unwittingly employed comprised a metaphor with patriarchal overtones that said "this is what it is to *be* a man". Backed by the voice-over *EGG's* promise of interest earned on unspent capital that remained on the card it also provided a reward for adopting that rôle.

Similarly women's traditional domestic rôle was also being implied with scenes that showed *only* women shopping (Fig.6.10). Again *semiotic*, *connotative (symbolic)*, messaging invoked visual metaphor as the rhetorical device through the canon of *style* which invited self-identification. The *semiological myth* that



underpinned this metaphor was that of women's domestic rôle. The unintended consequence was that it epitomised the aphorism "a woman's place is in the home." Unwitting use of metaphor said in effect, therefore, "this is what it is to *be* a woman."

The Canon of *style's* device of metaphor was highly favoured by Cicero who observed "the *style* is brilliant if the words employed are chosen for their dignity and used metaphorically" (Cicero in Henderson, 1942:327). As witnessed with the pilot commercial (*Gold Blend Coffee*), self-identification was also seen to be a key response required from the audience. Metaphor by definition, therefore, becomes its inevitable exponent since it too requires the subject (audience) to own the characteristics of the image that represents the preferred, rhetorical, agenda.

In this commercial the canon of *style* found visual expression in all of the twenty-two shots (Fig 5.5, Chapter 5) of which twelve employed metaphor as a device (Fig.5.6, Chapter 5). Metaphor, seen as a recurring device employed in its fulfilment, appeared to correlate with an extensive use of

*connotative semiotic* imagery acting in *symbolic* mode. This is not surprising when one considers that *connotative symbolism* and rhetorical metaphor (visual) share a tendency to impart covert rather than explicit messages. There is, however, a further more pressing incentive for its extensive usage as brought to light by Brierley (2002) who observes that . . .

*Because of constraints on time, advertisers need to imply events in the story and use metaphor as a form of shorthand.*  
 (Brierley, 2002:179)

#### 6.3.5.5 Memory (4th Canon)

No sound argument could be constructed which could describe a visual expression of the original vocal concept for the canon of *memory* which Cicero (Henderson [Ed] 1954:7), concisely described as "the firm retention of the matter, words, and arrangement."

Such a finding was remarked upon during piloting and, though adjudged to have been implicit in the requirement for actors to learn and recall their lines, their pre-arranged movements and their body language, these processes were deemed to be an entirely mental discipline.

#### 6.3.5.6 Delivery (5th Canon)

Little needs to be said with regard to the results of analysing the visual expression of this canon. Evidence presents itself easily since, already in classical times, the canon of *delivery* comprised a visual dimension as is made manifest by Cicero's enlightenment of this canon:-

*For he invests his speech with lucidity, brilliance, convincingness and charm not by his language but by changes of voice, by gestures and by glances . . .*  
 (Cicero in Henderson, 1942:331)<sup>ii</sup>



<sup>ii</sup> Cicero's use of the male gender obviously pre-dates the politically correct language of today, although, in real terms, his writing is accurate insofar as rhetors, both in Rome and Greece of the classical period were, with exceedingly rare exceptions, exclusively men.

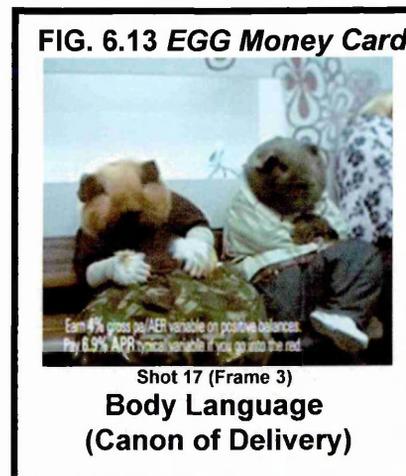
Indeed, “gestures” and “glances” too played a part in this commercial. In Shot 03 (Fig.6.11) a momentary widening of the eyes of the scientist holding the tree and his gentle nod of approval at the action of his colleague combines with the scientist’s nod of approval in the next shot (Shot 04) to establish an ambience of scientific approval. This is best observed by viewing the DVD (Appendix 5.4).

In Shot 19 (Fig 6.12), one sees an example of a timeless gesture that seeks the approval of others and which will have been most easily read by any UK female audience. In effect it says “how do I look – does it suit me?” The gesture has not been performed for the female guinea pig’s self gratification because, oddly for a boutique, there are



no mirrors in sight. In fact, the preceding Shot (Shot 18) shows that she appears to be performing for the benefit of the seated (and uninterested) male guinea pigs.

Whilst there are many examples to choose from in this commercial, Shot 17 (Fig 6.13) is probably clearest in exploiting body deportment. From frames 1 to 3 in this shot a male guinea pig, who has fallen asleep whilst waiting for his wife to reappear from a changing booth, slides slowly down the seat to emphasise his state of boredom.



As is made clear by Cicero (*ibid*) in his definition of this canon, *delivery* possesses two devices, vocal and physical to wit: “by changes of voice, by gestures and by glances”. Since all characters remained silent throughout this commercial, with only the voice-over informing the television audience,

the device of body language became crucial leaving no doubt that the canon of *delivery* had been visually expressed in all but 2 of the 22 shots; "for by action the body talks" (Cicero in Henderson, 1942:179).

#### 6.3.5.7 The canon of *arrangement* relative to narrative

In researching this commercial for evidence of the use of *narrative*, the following was found at the website of Egg's advertising agency, *Mediacom*: -

*A vital part of business is persuasion. And a vital part of persuasion is the ability to tell a story. We all respond to a story.*  
(Mediacom)

Following a passage cleverly composed after the style of a Victorian *cautionary tale* and opening with the words "Once upon a time. . ." it can be seen to act as a slick, self-fulfilling, demonstration of *Mediacom's* own advertising promotion (Appendix 6.1).

It was reasoned that if *Mediacom*, "the largest TV buyer (of advertising time) in the UK", (Appendix 5.2: 11), consider "the ability to tell a story" (narrative) to be a "vital part of persuasion", then this was compelling practical evidence supporting the theory that narrative is linked to rhetoric. The question remained, however, as to whether such was born of empirical wisdom or whether via informed knowledge of rhetoric. Commentary follows on the examination of the paradigmatic structure of the narrative in the EGG commercial, in terms of its array along the syntagmatic axis (see Ch.5: Fig.5.9) and its structure compared with the prescribed order defined by the 2nd canon of classical rhetoric, *arrangement*.

#### 6.3.5.8 Arrangement (2nd Canon) - The five principles

The five principles derived from Cicero's linguistic approach, (Cicero in Henderson (Ed), 1942: 307), and summarised by Covino & Jolliffe (1995: 22) were strictly sequenced for the most effective delivery of the rhetorical text. Accordingly the visual narrative of this commercial was examined (see Ch.5: Fig.5.10) in order to ascertain how closely it could be seen to comply with that prescription, ie.

1. *Capture the audience's attention.*
2. *Provide necessary background information.*
3. *State and prove the text's thesis.*
4. *Anticipate and address possible counter-theses.*
5. *Conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions.*

(Covino & Jolliffe 1995:22)

In shots 01-05 the viewer was told of a credit card that was "revolutionary" backed by a visual rhetoric of scale hinting at scientific achievement with white coated scientists dwarfed by a huge experimental laboratory. Thus the first principle would appear to have been complied with; for as (Brierley, 2002:173) observes "most creative treatments attempt to grab attention and sustain interest" and "they also use different or unusual images". In this *Case Study* the latter was seen to beget the former through the use of guinea pigs who are shown behaving like human beings. Recalling comments obtained during the interview with the creative scriptwriter from *Mother (London)* (see 6.3.2) the use of guinea pigs was, indeed, found to be a deliberate device for gaining audience attention.

The second principle ("provide the necessary background information"), contrary to the prescribed order, fulfilled its function in tandem with the first, "capture the audiences' attention." The viewer was told "we tested it on guinea pigs" accompanying scenes which showed the preparation and introduction of the *EGG Money Card* during which the rhetoric implied that its target audience were married women of a C1/C2 social grading which (in later shots) also included nursing mothers.

The phenomenon of the first and second principles appearing in parallel, though unorthodox according to the sequence of principles enshrined in the canon of *arrangement*, was one which, nevertheless, served a useful function. Instead of first "capturing the audience's attention" (Covino & Jolliffe 1995:22) followed by the "necessary background information," which classical principles dictate, the sequence was truncated so that, at the point when the audiences' attention was at its zenith in Shot 5 (the appearance of the guinea pigs), the key message also found its completion in satisfying the second principle "*provide the necessary background information.*"

The necessity and efficacy, in televisual rhetoric, of these two principles appearing in parallel becomes perfectly explicable when one realises that the luxury of speaking at length, as ancient rhetors did, is removed by the severe time limitation of the television commercial, a mere forty seconds, a point mentioned earlier in explaining the extensive use of metaphor in television advertising. It is also quite evident that, due to the unusual scenario that was unfolding, no amount of visual dexterity would fully explain, in the fleeting seconds of a commercial, the *history* of the model township. Thus, in order to install the second principle, to *provide necessary background information*, in the time available, it occurs in parallel with the first principle and through the voiceover.

The third principle ("state and prove the text's thesis") followed the first and second in its prescribed position whilst its paradigms related to the product's value in terms of benefit and its usage by male and female customers. These shots (6-17) addressed the requirement to "state and prove the text's thesis" by introducing the product in Shot 06 (Fig.6.14) and recalling how "the results were interesting" (Shots 9/10). The



The viewer was taken through the history of how the card was "tested on guinea pigs" and the results that were obtained. These are synonymous, of course, with the product's *Unique Selling Points (USPs)*; "cash-back on purchases," and "interest on money kept on it."

Occupying twelve shots and amounting to twenty seconds, or half of the total time allowed for this commercial, the third principle clearly constituted the most important feature of the communication.

The fourth principle, "anticipate and address possible counter theses," also appeared in the sequence laid down by the classical canon of *arrangement*. The case that has been argued for it, however, in which the paradigm of

female shoppers' spending power is seen as debt (the "counter thesis") being overcome by surplus (due to benefits of the *EKG card*), is a little tenuous and could also be easily construed as being part of the previous third principle.

Rather than concluding "by appealing to the audiences' emotions," as required by the fifth principle of this canon, the paradigms of the last three shots are such that they return to the subject of the third principle – stating & proving the text's thesis. Reiterating *EKG Banking plc's* power to oversee people's finances whilst reinforcing their authority in the field of personal finance, the commercial concludes with the reinforcement of brand and product identity.

In summary, whilst the first three of the five principles of this canon found tenable, visual, expression, the fourth was open to question and the fifth was replaced by a reiteration of the third principle. The second principle, though visually represented, moreover, was not placed in accordance with the sequence required by this canon.

Though the paradigms that emerged from this commercial displayed an appreciation of rhetorical principles in their content, the deviation of those principles from the classical sequence (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995:38-39) along the syntagmatic axis (Chapter 5, Fig.5.10) suggested that such appreciation was born of empirical wisdom rather than informed knowledge of rhetoric. The following words by Brierly (2002), indicate that this may indeed be the case since the model he reports as being used by *creatives* would appear to have a far more global approach than that of the narrative model imposed by the second canon of *arrangement*:-

*Advertisers have used models of behaviour to frame their messages since the inter-war years [...] For many years, creatives have worked to a behavioural model known as AIDA: Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action. The purpose of advertising in this model is to raise awareness, then stimulate interest which would lead to desire and eventually action. (Brierley, 2002:151)*

As a consequence the finding was that the narrative structure of this commercial did *not* direct the visual expression in complete accordance with the classical definition of this canon.

#### 6.3.6 The Science

Television audiences today are now far more media-literate than during the 1950s when commercials had scientists and their science acting as figures of unquestioned authority, mainly in washing powder commercials. Researchers in the *Public Understanding of Science*, now recognise such treatment as one which perpetuates an assumption of the publics' lack of scientific knowledge, which scientists are shown to satisfy (not just in media circles). Such a perspective, popular in the 1980s and dubbed the "deficit model," is described by Gregory & Miller (1998:17) as a view "which sees the public as blank slates or empty vessels – as minds in deficit that need scientific information in order to be replete." The concept according to Gross (1994:6) "implies a passive public: it requires a rhetoric that acts to accommodate the facts and methods of science to the public's limited experience and cognitive capacities."

That which this commercial required of scientists was fundamentally the same as in those early commercials but was rather more sophisticated in its presentation. The resurrection of the scientists' behaviour and appearance as images that were last seen in the 1950s again sought the transfer of authority for *EGG Banking plc* but now rather more covertly. Conscious of today's media-literate audience the message became cloaked by parody, enabling it to merge seamlessly into the comic narrative of the guinea pigs. Synchronously, however, and in addition to the intended message, unwitting use of rhetoric was also serving to convey messages which had not been considered.

With four male Caucasian scientists in the team, the scientific authority created for *EGG Banking plc* was predominantly male. In the penultimate shot (Fig 6.15) the *only* female scientist (ringed) was blatantly marginalised.

Partially hidden, at the very back of the group in this shot, she went almost unnoticed. By contrast, the stereotypical *male* scientist (arrowed), complete with white coat, a beard, spectacles and clipboard, occupied the most prominent position, the centre foreground. The visually expressed rhetoric projected, therefore, reinforced and perpetuated a historically well established cultural perception that all scientists are men and that they are more important than women.



### 6.3.7 Summary & Deductions

In this *Case Study* the rhetorical analysis undertaken searched for visual expressions in terms that could be reasonably related to canons that were once devised for, vocally articulated, classical rhetoric. The results of that analysis found that, by using established Piercean *semiotic* theory for visual *signs*, in combination with a consideration of paradigmatic / syntagmatic narrative dimensions, classical rhetoric could be seen to have been visually expressed in this commercial to an acceptable degree of plausibility. Identification of the visual expression of classical rhetoric through the canons, nevertheless, was not taken to imply knowledge of the existence or use of such on the part of creative script writers. As had already emerged from interviews with *EGG Banking plc's* creative scriptwriters and advertising agency, rhetoric that had been empirically installed was even to be expected. Unwitting use of rhetoric associated with the classical canons, however, was also seen to lead to unintended consequences.

The rhetorical functions, supported by the semiotic imagery, had been intended to (a) induce self-identification in target audiences that were married, male and female, and with a *lower middle class* (C1/C2) socio-economic

index status, with familiar shopping scenarios in which the efficacy of the *EGG Money* card could then be demonstrated and (b) effect a transfer of the trust and authority, normally vested in scientists, to *EGG Banking plc*. The *unsolicited* consequence of this action was that, in mirroring selected cultural behaviours in UK society, it stealthily legitimised and perpetuated them.

Interviews had previously revealed targeting of specific audiences on behalf of the creative art and advertising agencies and established that in-house audience research programmes were in place. These findings, therefore, allowed the deduction that the audience of this commercial had, indeed, been *assessed*; a prior requisite of the 1st canon of *invention*. The visual materials, specially generated to mimic the behaviour and lifestyle characteristics of the target audience, and which had induced self identification, moreover, constituted the construction of a dedicated rhetoric. Thus the 1<sup>st</sup> canon of *invention* was considered to have been satisfied in directing the visual rhetoric.

Analysis of the commercial's narrative paradigms found correlation with the functional requirements of all five principles of the 2<sup>nd</sup> canon of *arrangement*. The syntagmatic sequencing of the commercial's paradigms, nevertheless, was seen to be only *partially* in accord with the order prescribed by this canon. Such a finding suggests a conflict between any narrative model in use by the creative and that dictated by the canon of rhetoric. Visual expression of the 2<sup>nd</sup> canon of *arrangement* could *not*, therefore, be said to have been fully complied with.

The display of stereotypical UK cultural behaviour relating to shopping and scientific experimental procedure invited self identification on behalf of its targeted audiences. Extensive and almost exclusive use of visual metaphors was observed in conveying preferred meanings, despite the potentially large selection of available devices listed by Corbett & Connors (1999) under the auspices of this canon (see Appendix 3.4). This tendency was attributed to the need to convey messages rapidly. Unmistakable visual expressions

within the precepts of the 3rd Canon of *Style* were, nevertheless, succinctly delivered.

The 4th Canon of *memory* was found to be a wholly mental discipline which could not, by its prescription, be deemed to have a visual expression and could not, therefore, be pursued.

Finally, expression of rhetorical meaning through body language and gestures, manifested by the guinea pigs and the scientists, served to visually satisfy the 5<sup>th</sup> canon of *delivery*. The visual expression of this canon, moreover, took on a vital communicative function in compensating for the total silence of the participants in this commercial.

Consideration of the analytical findings (Appendix 5.3) of this *Case Study* commercial resulted in the following deductions being made:-

[A] The *semiotic* support for visual rhetoric in television advertising, can be expected to (i) employ a preponderance of *connotative signs*, acting in *symbolic* mode, when (ii) cultural norms are employed to invite audience/s' self-identification.

[B] The canon of *invention* is (i) likely to be satisfied through prior assessment and targeting of its desired audience/s by the client's creative art and advertising agencies and (ii) with a form of rhetoric that will induce that/those same audience/s to self-identify.

[C] Narrative structure of television commercials can be (i) expected to embrace most if not all of the five principles of the 2<sup>nd</sup> canon of *arrangement* but will (ii) rarely correlate with the syntagmatic sequence prescribed by that canon.

[D] Despite many devices being available for effecting a visual expression of the canon of *style*, relatively few are likely to be engaged and metaphor is likely to be the one most frequently employed.

[E] The fifth canon of *delivery*, already in possession of a visual dimension from classical times, will find expression through "body language" and most powerfully in commercials where the characters displayed remain silent.

[F] Use of parody is likely to accompany the portrayal of scientists and/or science which may mask their traditional legitimising / authoritative function in relation to the advertiser.

[G] Rhetoric unwittingly employed in conveying the advertiser's preferred meanings, especially in reinforcing and perpetuating traditional cultural norms, may have unintended consequences.

## **6.4 Study 2: Brantano Shoes Commercial**

### **6.4.1 Introduction**

This commercial marketed a new shop layout for the display and sale of women's shoes with a narrative theme that parodied scientific experiment and discovery. First screened on UK television during April 2007, it sought a female market in the promotion of a key area of customer service and which comprised its "unique selling point" (USP). It was, in defining its customer service, however, that this commercial demonstrated one of Saussure's fundamental semiotic principles. Williamson (1995, p.27) quotes Saussure thus:-

*In all cases, then, we discover not ideas given in advance but values emanating from the system. When we say that these values correspond to concepts, it is understood that these concepts are purely differential, not positively defined by their relation with other terms of the system. Their most precise characteristic is that they are what others are not.* (Saussure in Williamson, 1995:27)

With its central message and principal strap-line "the shop where the shoes are arranged by size, out in pairs, ready to try on" this commercial emphasised that *Brantano UK Ltd* was what other companies were not.

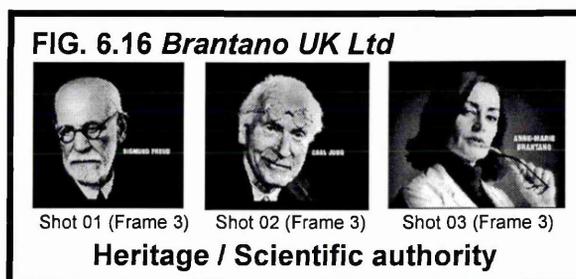
The use of "myth," as defined in the semiotic works of Roland Barthes (Barthes in Lavers, 1972: 68) is immediately apparent in this commercial and which, in this instance, surrounded the popular perception that women act obsessively with regard to shoes. Drawing on the authority which the figures of *Sigmund Freud* and *Carl Jung* offer, moreover, it exposed the need to legitimise *Professor Brantano* as a woman working in what was traditionally perceived to be a "man's job" whilst simultaneously transferring authority to *Brantano UK Ltd*.

#### 6.4.2 Semiotic analysis

The semiotically created meanings throughout this commercial were identified as predominantly *connotative* with modal presentations that were largely *symbolic* (thirteen out of seventeen shots [Ch.5: Fig.5.11]).

In the opening shots 01-04 (Appendix 5.5) one sees first an attempt to acquire an air of authority for *Brantano UK Ltd* followed by one seeking an aura of heritage. Filming commenced in black and white and served to imitate original film from an era before colour film had been developed. Black & white film footage is now a familiar sign that is part of the cognitive vocabulary of television audiences signalling that what they are witnessing is a "flashback" to former events. In this commercial it mimicked the way in which historical television documentaries often display archive film footage.

By juxtaposing an entirely fictitious figure of *Professor Anne-Marie Brantano* with the well known historical figures of psychologists, *Sigmund Freud*



and *Carl Jung*, the commercial sought transference to *Professor Anne-Marie*

*Brantano*, and hence Brantano UK Ltd., of the authority which these renowned figures both commanded (Fig. 6.16).

Semiotically, each of the first three opening shots constituted a *first order*, visual *sign*, created by a photograph. Initially, as *denotative signs*, they resembled the *signified* (the character's image), thereby placing them in *iconic* mode, after Peirce in Chandler (2002: 36-37). Ultimately, however, these *signs* achieved the intended, *second order*, status inasmuch as they *connoted* acknowledged excellence in the field of psychology. Since by Peirce in Chandler (*ibid*) such association was one which had been learned these *connotative signs* acted in *symbolic* mode. With the same melodramatic backing music and voice-over, as had attended the images of *Sigmund Freud* and *Carl Jung*, now accompanying the image of "*Professor Anne-Marie Brantano*" a seamless transition was ensured which enabled her to be easily taken as the latest in a portfolio of famous psychologists. Her name, moreover, surreptitiously provided the link which introduced and associated the brand name with the scientific authority.

Interestingly, the pose struck by *Professor Brantano* was seen to mirror that seen in a website photograph of the psychologist Alice Miller. Whilst eminent in her field, Alice Miller is not generally well known although such correlation would suggest that the pose *is*. Here one sees her fictitious role as a psychologist being further enhanced. In this shot (Fig. 6.17) it was the pair of spectacles held by both women and the manner in which they were being held that constituted a *second order signifier connoting* intelligence



(see Argyle & McHenry, 1971:27-29 in Appendix 5.5, Shot 01 semiotic analysis). Indeed, spectacles were a component shared by the shots of each of the two male scientists, *Sigmund Freud* and *Carl Jung*. Having gained authority for Brantano UK it remained only, in shot 04, to establish an aura of

heritage in order to secure customers' trust. This was effected by placing *Professor Anne-Marie Brantano* in front of the fictitious "Brantano Institute."

The black and white film footage continued as a cognitive code to the television audience indicating that what they were witnessing was archive film from a former time, ostensibly from the period of the "Brantano Institute's" inception (Fig.6.18).



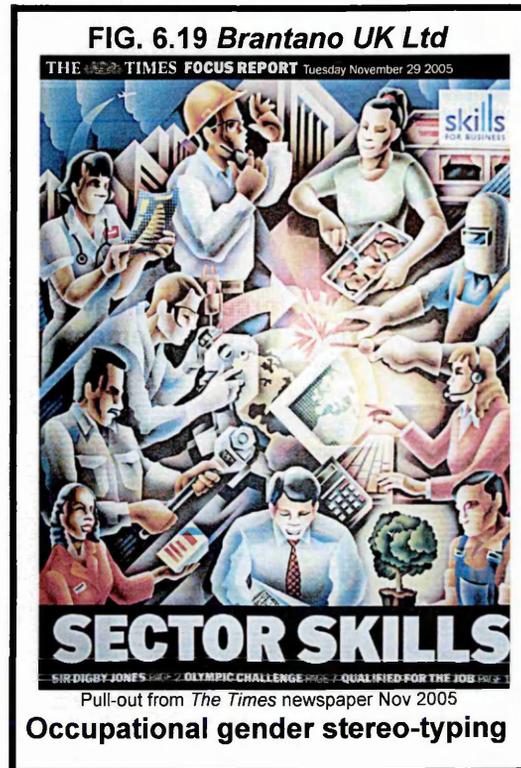
The presence of *Professor Brantano*, her visitor and the moving car in this shot served to create the impression that the building seen in the background was in use and that it was what it purported to be, the "Brantano Institute." The stance of the person standing back to the camera conferred "visitor" status whilst *Professor Brantano's* occupation of the "Institute" was easily inferred from her forward facing position. Significantly, with pointing finger, *Professor Brantano* draws the attention of her visitor, but more importantly that of her television audience, to the prime vehicle of the intended *semiotic* meaning - the foreground image of the pillar and shoe sculpture. Foreground images are always very important and the sculpture of the woman's shoe (the product) mounted on a neo-classical pillar (the heritage) conspired with the black and white *archive film* to create the aura of a long established business concern with the implication of reliability that frequently attends such companies. The moving car in the background also assisted in building the image of a busy, thriving, concern. The *sign* that was being constructed, therefore, was one which projected reliability and trustworthiness, often closely associated with a long heritage in a particular market.

With such imagery, therefore, these opening four shots built *signs* beyond the *denotative* in creating company image whilst implying product quality. As *second order connotative signs*, therefore, they did not and indeed could not, visually *resemble* the conceptual images they sought to create. Rather, they used abstract associations of:-

- Scientist / science (image) = authority / legitimacy (conceptual *sign*)
- Brantano Institute (image) = heritage / reliability / trust / quality (conceptual *sign*).

Since these are cultural associations that have been learned by their audiences the *signs'* modal expression, after Peirce in Chandler (2002:36-37) is classed as *symbolic*.

The need to legitimise *Professor Brantano*, a woman, by relating her to two male psychologists in these opening shots, however, implied that she was working in what is traditionally perceived to be a "man's job." Thus it created an unintended legacy comprising a *second order connotative sign* which perpetuated the traditional cultural belief that *real* scientists are men! An advertisement seen in *The Times* newspaper (Fig 6.19) in November 2005, just two years prior to the screening of this commercial confirms that such beliefs were likely to be still extant albeit in a socio-economic group other than that being targeted.



With *Professor Brantano* having been identified and legitimised as a psychologist and supposed founder-member of *Brantano UK Ltd.*, Shot 05 (Fig.6.20) then changed to *colour* film footage signalling to its audience that what was to come related to the *present* timescale and setting a scene of scientific expertise and authority.



Throughout this, and the ensuing ten shots one saw the construction of an overarching theme promoting the image of *Brantano UK Ltd*. With visual mimicry of a scientific experiment purely *denotative* images were exceeded in order to *connote* the expertise and authority of *Brantano UK Ltd* and to convey the lengths to which *Brantano UK Ltd*, were prepared to go in caring for their customers. At the same time the notion of well established trust that exists between patient and doctor was also surreptitiously installed. This appeared intentional since psychologists seldom wear white coats during non-invasive experimentation (*N.B.* Freud and Jung in this commercial were pictured wearing jackets). The seated position of the “patient” in relation to the laboratory assistants her upward glance and relaxed demeanour in Shot 06 automatically implied her inferior / submissive status and the surrender of her trust (Shot 06 (Fig.6.21).



Having established the trustworthy and professional credentials of *Brantano UK Ltd*, Shot 06 built a *sign connoting* their deep interest in the customer and her needs, indicated by the attention lavished on the experimental subject; note the cup of tea that has been provided.

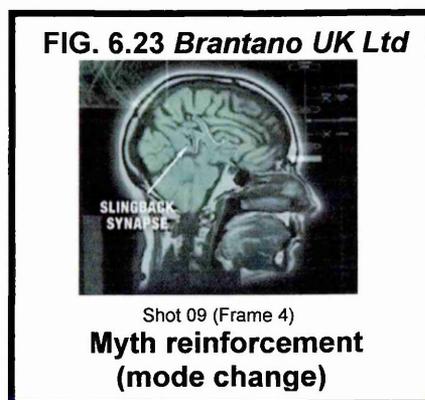
These *connotative signifiers* (scientists and the experimental subject), which cannot *visually* resemble the *signified*, conceptual images (expertise, trustworthiness and customer care), are, in Shots 05 and 06, acting in *symbolic* mode (Peirce in Chandler, 2002:36-37).



As with Shots 05 & 06 the *sign* created in Shot 07 (Fig.6.22) also goes beyond *first order denotation* to establish a *second order sign connoting* a high state of arousal in the subject occasioned by the apparent visual stimulus of the pink sling-back shoe. The

pink colour is a long established *connotative signifier* of femininity reminding viewers that this is a commercial for *women*. Since the cultural coding of pink = femininity is a learned association it too acts in *symbolic* mode. This, however, is not the *prevailing sign*. Rather, it is the "cause and effect" relationship that pertains between the female subject and the object of her attention which is more important inasmuch as it represents the *myth* (see Barthes in Lavers, 1973:109-159) surrounding female obsessive behaviour towards shoes. The link between Sigmund Freud, who authored a paper on fetishism in which women's shoes were implicated, will perhaps not have been missed by a tangible proportion of viewers. Unlike Shot 05, however, there exists a direct link (through cause and effect) between the *signifier* and the *signified* placing this *connotative sign* in *indexical* mode (Peirce in Chandler, 2002:36-37).

Shots 8 & 9 continued, with *connotative signs*, to transfer scientific authority to Brantano UK Ltd., in tandem with the aura of customer care. In Shot 09, however, the appearance of the "sling-back synapse," coupled with the voiceover, reinforced the *myth* relating to women's obsessional behaviour surrounding shoes causing a mode change. The *symbolic* mode of shot 08 became *indexical* in Shot 09 (Fig 6.23) because the "sling-back synapse" image being featured was being related directly to the *myth* (Peirce in Chandler (2002: 36-37)).



Shots 11-16, inclusive, focussed on the "shop simulation unit" and, in occupying sixteen seconds out of this forty second commercial, clearly carried the most important message. It was, in fact, Brantano UK Ltd's USP that was being promoted. Interestingly thirteen seconds (five of the six frames) were devoted to a portrayal of their competitors' failings whilst devoting a mere single shot (Shot 16) to demonstrating that Brantno UK Ltd was what its competitors *were not*.

When Shot 16 (Fig 6.24) finally came to the screen the prevailing *sign* which it constructed was, unusually, a *first order, denotative sign*. The reason for this was not hard to figure. For by its direct (*denotative!*) unequivocal message, the antithesis of every failure previously presented as being characteristic of competitor's shops, was then most powerfully exhibited.



The prevailing *sign* in the concluding shot (Shot 17) was seeking *second order, connotative* status inasmuch as it was attempting to teach viewers to associate the Brantano UK Ltd logo with the key message and strap-line of the previous shot, "the shop where the shoes are arranged by size, out in pairs, ready to try on." The *pan up* camera attitude and vertically converging lines of the towering *Brantano* building ensured that viewers were placed in a position that (by Berger, 2005:34) would *connote* their "smallness" or "weakness" in relation to *Brantano UK Ltd*. Conversely, by dint of this camera angle, *Brantano UK Ltd* took on the aura of a company powerful enough to deliver what it promised. The *connotative, pan up* attitude of the camera, had no causal connection with this *signification*, and did not resemble it in any way. It acted, therefore, in *symbolic mode*.

In this commercial, scenes of scientific authority and cultural rôle play employed *connotative (largely symbolic) signs* in producing meaning beyond the literal and which operated in support of two *myths*. The dominant and most visible myth being promoted was that which surrounded the obsessional behaviour which women, anecdotally, display towards shoes. Any feelings of guilt that female views may harbour towards the purchase of new shoes could then be attributed to the nature of the female brain – the "sling-back synapse." It was of course a parody but by presenting such a concept in jest the suggestion was sown that shoe purchase was not a subject that should cause serious concern – after all it could be joked about!

The second, more implicit, *myth* concerned the transfer of authority. By seeking to borrow the ethos of authority, vested in the psychologists *Sigmund Freud* and *Carl Jung* and in the parody of scientific research, the *myth* was born that *Brantano UK Ltd* possessed authority and expertise in understanding the needs of female shoppers seeking to buy shoes.

These, then, were the *semiotic* "myths" that engendered the preferred meanings on which the devices of rhetoric would be seen to operate for *Brantano UK Ltd*.

### 6.4.3 Rhetorical Expression (Visual)

#### 6.4.3.1 Introduction

In the earlier semiotic analysis of this commercial the principal notions emerging from the prevailing *signs* and *myths* were (a) Brantano possess expertise, are reliable and deserve trust; (b) 'Brantano UK Ltd's branches are the only outlets that consider their customer's convenience.' This section appraises the detailed findings of the rhetorical analysis of Appendix 5.3 and discusses the more salient, rhetorical points, by visiting each of the classical canons in turn to determine if and how visual expression occurred.

The humour witnessed in this commercial acknowledged UK viewers to be, generally, media-wise and likely to see the parody, not only in the scientific experiment, but in that of the outdated media advertising technique as well. Beyond the parody, however, the technique was far removed from that employed in television commercials directed at UK female audiences of the 1950s.

Media-wise or not, the audiences of this commercial were being exposed to a visual expression of classical rhetoric. The *semiotic* "myth" created for *Professor Brantano* and her experiment, through the use of photographs of the prominent scientific figures of *Freud* and *Jung*, patently employed Aristotle's rhetorical precept relating to "ethos." Covino & Jolliffe (1995:15) explain that *ethos* equates to the "good character and consequent credibility of the rhetor." By way of an example they refer to the academic convention of

citing other published academic studies in describing how such a practice would "invest the writer [...] with good sense or 'practical' wisdom."

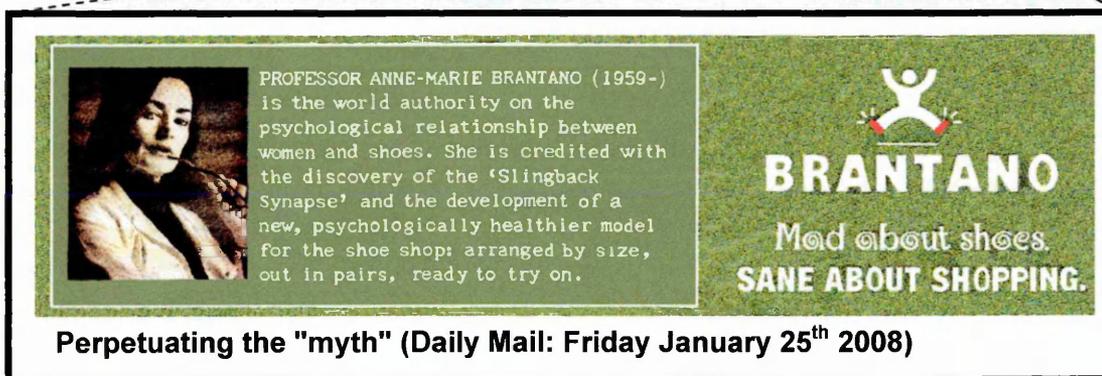
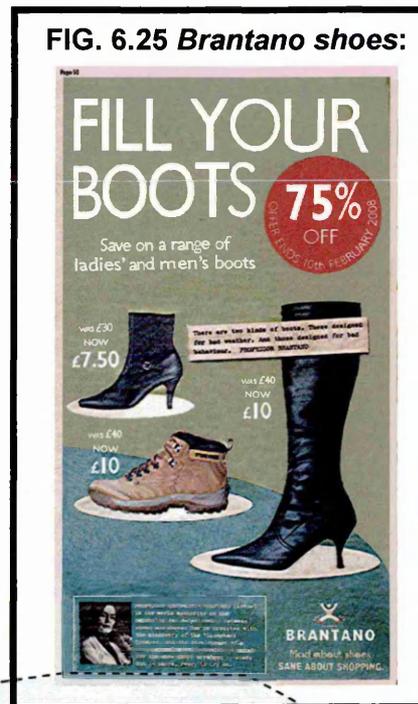
Visually and, at times vocally, *Professor Brantano* is a rhetor who needs to quickly acquire *ethos* in this thirty-second commercial. The manner in which this is most rapidly achieved, therefore, is through "borrowing" the established reputation (*ethos*) of well know figures in the field such as *Freud* and *Jung*. The *real* (vocal) rhetor, however, who is male, hides behind the voice-over to direct and inform the visual rhetoric. Invisibility and maleness, however, are well worn, yet still powerful, media advertising devices used to establish authority. The media-aware audience, having had its "eye taken off the ball" by the parody of establishing *Professor Brantano's* credibility, therefore, may yet have fallen victim to the same traditional rhetoric that establishes the *ethos* of authority via scientists and their science.

#### 6.4.3.2 Invention (1st Canon)

The audience/s who *actually* view a commercial can never be fully known hence the need in television advertising to induce or target the audiences they require. One can, nevertheless, safely assume in this instance that the target audience will have been female since the product was women's shoes. The rhetoric *invented*, therefore, was expected, and indeed, was found to be of a type that would appeal to women. Who could be better perceived for understanding women's needs than another woman? *Professor Brantano*. The female *voice* of *Professor Brantano*, however, was *not* ideal. A *male* voice, especially a *deep* male voice, is still regarded by many in media circles as being more authoritative. Silverman (1988:165) observes that "the female voice seldom functions as a voice-over" and quotes Bonitzer who says "The [voice-over] represents a power, that of disposing of the image and of that which it reflects from a place that is absolutely *other*. . ." This, therefore, was mitigated, jointly, by two devices. First, authority-by-association was *borrowed* in allowing the name of "*Professor Anne-Marie Brantano*" to be encapsulated within the same *ethos* as the two highly recognisable and renowned *male* psychologists; all three being described in the next shot as

"giants of the twentieth century." Secondly, the use of a *male* voice-over to introduce *Professor Brantano* acted to support her *honorary membership* of the *male* scientific community for the duration of the commercial.

The perceived importance to the advertising agency of the authority vested in scientists and conveyed by the image of *Professor Anne-Marie Brantano* is, perhaps, underlined by a *Daily Mail* newspaper advertisement (enlarged inset from Fig.6.25). In acting to perpetuate the mythic narrative of *Professor Anne-Marie Brantano* it also reinforced the sub-text "Mad about shoes, sane about shopping."



Perpetuating the "myth" (Daily Mail: Friday January 25<sup>th</sup> 2008)

Notwithstanding that, through the nature of the product being advertised, one was able to assume that the target audience was female, this advertisement in the *Daily Mail* newspaper (Fig 6.25) enabled more precision to be exercised in assessing the nature of Brantano *UK Ltd's* target audience. Referring to the *Daily Mail's*, readership statistics, it was found that the majority were women (51%) (NMA Facts & Figures, 2009) coming from an A, B, C1 and C2 *Social Grading Category*. More importantly (for the

researcher), it also served to indicate assessment and targeting of a specific audience - a fundamental requirement of the canon of *invention*. In total this canon was seen to have directed visual expression in fourteen of the seventeen shots in this commercial.

#### 6.4.3.3 Arrangement (2nd Canon) ~ See 6.4.3.7

#### 6.4.3.4 Style (3rd Canon)

The results of the rhetorical analysis presented in Chapter 5 (Fig.5.15) showed that visual expression of the canon of *style* employed six separate devices in which, *parallelism* was most frequently called upon (6/17 shots). Both *metaphor* and *hyperbole*, however, were used on only one less occasion (5/17shots ).

*Parallelism*, a device of the Canon of *style* (Covino & Jolliffe, 1995: 23-24), was employed exclusively in the first half of this commercial to award Brantano UK Ltd authority, and to secure customers' trust. Applying a species of rhetoric which, in translation from Aristotle is termed "epideictic" (Kennedy, 1991: 15) the opening shots provide, perhaps, the most explicit example comprising a *trptych* in which *Professor Brantano* is being *paralleled* with *Sigmund Freud* and *Carl Jung*. Although *Professor Brantano* is not being exalted *over* these renowned psychologists, the construction, nevertheless, surely accords with the tenor of Aristotle's teaching that:-

*One should make the comparison with famous people; for the subject is amplified and made honourable if he is better than [other] worthy ones"* (Aristotle in Kennedy, 1991:86)

In the second half of this commercial (Shots 9 -17) it is the devices of metaphor and hyperbole which are dominant. Being largely engaged in emphasising the shortcomings of the high street competitors to *Brantano UK Ltd.*, the use of hyperbole is most dramatically demonstrated in Shot 14

(Fig.6.26) where one sees a customer at the end of her patience and highly



distressed. One of course never witnesses such scenes in reality but here they serve to visually exaggerate inner feelings that viewers might normally repress. Drawing on the powerful compulsion of viewers to self-identify in asking themselves, "how is this relevant to me?" the metaphor visually replied "this is you and the way you feel in such circumstances." This, key function of visual metaphor, however, seemed to have been overlooked by the *creatives* in this commercial since it provoked much adverse comment in *internet blog* at the time of which the following is an example:-

*. . . then we've got the ads themselves, featuring a fictional "Professor Brantano" who is a "giant of the 20th century", up there with Einstein et al because she's discovered the "Slingback Synapse" in the female brain that makes women go crazy for shoes. Because as everyone knows, we're all dozy bimbos with a pathological addiction to shopping.*

(*"Marion"*, 2007)

Einstein was, of course, *not* featured in this commercial but the reference is interesting insofar as it serves to underline his *iconic* status. Clearly the internet "blogger" had interpreted the portrayal of these *myths* concerning women's obsession with shoes and their irrational behaviour as a form of sarcasm directed at women. She even uses it herself in responding to what she saw as an affront to womankind. *Creatives* had judged no doubt that the comedy of the situation being directed at a group (women), rather than an individual (woman) would overcome the risk of irritating and alienating its audience. Sarcasm, however, is considered a "high risk" device by most rhetoricians and rhetors and Corbett and Connors have this to say:-

*Sarcasm is another mode of humour that requires a master hand, for it can easily go wrong. Sarcasm seems to succeed best when it is directed at an individual; it is risky when it is directed at nationalities, classes, ranks, or vocations. That this should be so is rather curious, for of all modes of satirical wit, sarcasm is the one that most closely borders on uncharitableness. One might think that since the caustic jibe at an individual comes closer to violating the virtue of charity than the gibe at a group of people, personal sarcasm would be most likely to elicit unfavourable reactions in an audience. But human nature is so constituted that it will tolerate, even enjoy, the vituperation of an individual.* (Corbett & Connors, 1999:282)

The practice of accentuating one's own attributes by reference to another's failings can easily be construed as the species of rhetoric which was termed *epideictic*. Aristotle described it as comprising "either praise or blame aimed at showing that a person is honourable or shameful whilst often reminding audiences of events of the past and projecting the course of the future" (Aristotle, in Kennedy's translation, 1991:15). Thus viewers are reminded of the shameful performance of competitors whilst, in the penultimate shot, they witness the honourable actions of *Brantano UK Ltd.*, in displaying their shoes "arranged by size, out in pairs, ready to try on."

#### 6.4.3.5 Memory (4th Canon)

No reason was found in this study to dispute the *Case Study* finding that the classical canon of *memory* can have no visual expression (see comments under 6.3.5.5).

#### 6.4.3.6 Delivery (5th Canon)

As alluded to in earlier discussion Cicero (Henderson, 1942:331) made it clear that the canon of *delivery* comprises both vocal and physical expression "by changes of voice, by gestures and by glances." Being active in sixteen of the seventeen shots in this commercial, evidence of the visual expression of *delivery* was again emphatically secured.

Since the experimental subjects/customers did not speak, the commercial was hugely dependent on the visual expression of this canon. In the early shots facial expression played an important part in conveying the *myth* surrounding women's obsession with shoes (refer back to Fig.6.22).



Occupying much of the core part of this commercial, however, both body language and facial expression joined in demonstrating the frustration arising from the unsatisfactory service of the competitors of Brantano UK Ltd. Such frustration was even refined into several outcomes (Fig 6.27).

Oddly, *Professor Brantano* appears to misinterpret what is clearly an expression of despair in Shot 14 with the words “you see classic shoe rage” although, to be fair she may have seen it as being symptomatic. The colour coding of blue for the customer’s clothing, however, is unequivocal in signalling despair. Similarly the red clothing worn by the customer in Shot 12 codes for anger (as well as danger). The metaphor (a device of the canon of *style*) here is a visual interpretation of the vocal expression “to see red” which fully supported the facial expression and the short jabbing motion of the shoe being held in this shot.

#### 6.4.3.7 Arrangement (2nd Canon) - The five principles

Compliance with this canon in visual terms was, once again, tested by comparing the visual narrative sequence (see Ch.5: Fig.5.19) with the strict sequencing of the five principles derived from Cicero's linguistic approach, (Cicero in Henderson (Ed), 1942, p.307), and summarised by Covino & Jolliffe (1995: 22) thus:-

1. *Capture the audience's attention.*
2. *Provide necessary background information.*
3. *State and prove the text's thesis.*
4. *Anticipate and address possible counter-theses.*
5. *Conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions.*

(Covino & Jolliffe 1995:22)

There was little doubt that the opening shots (01 - 04) of this commercial effectively captured the attention of its potential audience as required and at the juncture stipulated by the first principle of this canon. With strident music and black and white film, the list of names being read out by the voice-over created a cognitive code for great importance which, by its melodramatic delivery generated an air of high expectation. Simultaneously it encompassed paradigms that identified the authority as being scientific whilst conferring that authority on *Professor Brantano* (a clear euphemism for

Brantano UK Ltd) and established the (spoof) company heritage (refer back to Fig 6.18). Most viewers, however, would also have been aware that these opening shots were being presented in an exceedingly dated fashion reminiscent of television in the 1950s. This, the weaker semiotic code, hinted at the parody that was to follow.

The sequencing of the second principle (“provide the necessary background information”) was exactly in keeping with the format prescribed by this canon and encapsulated *Professor Brantano’s* fictitious research history in the field of women’s supposed obsessional behaviour towards shoes. The paradigmatic structure, however, was one of complexity in attempting to convey the expertise of Brantano UK Ltd., whilst also identifying the problem and reviving the emotive anguish in the minds of viewers. This occupied 24 seconds of air time and eleven of the seventeen shots (05-15) in the discovery of the “sling-back synapse” and the manifested consequences of it becoming “enflamed.” Comprising a major part of the narrative, from Shot 10 onwards, it also joined with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> principles which ran in parallel with it (see Ch.5: Fig.5.19). During this sequence viewers were invited, through visual expressions of the canons of *style* and *delivery*, to relate to the customers’ feelings of boredom, anger and despair (see 6.4.3.4 and 6.4.3.6). Although the *creatives’* strategy of emphasising the shortcomings of *Brantano UK Ltd’s* competitors in order to underline its own USP was understood, it was difficult to appreciate why so much time was afforded to this aspect.

The third principle, “state and prove the text’s thesis,” occupied two paradigms. The first brought a visual solution to the problem, exhaustively presented as pertaining to high street competitors, with a *Brantano UK Ltd* shop display. Together with the voiceover that declared “the shop where the shoes are arranged by size, out in pairs, ready to try on,” Shot 16 presented the major strap-line and the narrative’s “thesis.” It was quickly followed by Shot 17,



which addressed the second paradigm that sought to reinforce the brand name and company logo (Fig.6.28). Concluding with the (printed) strap-line attesting that *Brantano UK Ltd.*, were “mad about shoes, sane about shopping,” it comprised the minor thesis.

The end position adopted by this principle was observed to have departed from the sequence stipulated by this canon and to have migrated to a position normally occupied by the 5<sup>th</sup> and final principle. The motivation for this switch can be understood, perhaps, in the context of wanting to have the audience learn an association between the company logo and the theses, i.e. the major and minor strap-lines, one vocally delivered (Shot 16) and the other visually displayed (Shot 17). If this was the thinking then it may have seemed desirable to the *creatives* to have the latter appearing as the last thing in the minds of their audience.

The anticipation of, and address to, possible counter-theses required by the fourth principle was found correctly located, albeit parallel with the extension of the second principle. In Shots 10 to 15 the counter thesis comprised paradigms of competitor’s shortcomings and customers’ discomfiture. The shortcomings found exemplification through the “shop simulation” unit in which the shoes were displayed *singly* and were definitely *not* ready to try on, since they had to be brought to customers by shop assistants. The distress which this then caused customers comprised the second paradigm with exaggerated body language and facial expressions being employed under the canon of *delivery*. In this context the extremely long air time (24 seconds) afforded to the second principle could then be seen to be justified since 15 seconds were being shared with this fourth principle in order to “address the counter thesis.” By default it served also to highlight the concluding mal-sequenced third principle in which the thesis and Brantano UK Ltd’s USP would be demonstrated in Shots 16 & 17.

The fifth principle, which should have concluded this commercial, also ran in parallel with the second and fourth principles. Also sharing fifteen seconds of

the twenty-four afforded to the second principle its required function, to appeal to the audiences' emotions, was accommodated by the history of *Professor Brantano's* experimental work in the "shop simulation unit." Inviting viewers to share their emotive experience in Shots 10 to 15 boredom, anger and despair, were all enacted through the canon of *delivery*.

The canon of *arrangement*, in terms of the sequencing of its principles, referred to by Covino & Jolliffe (1995:22), was not in evidence. Although all of the principles required were, indeed, present they failed to comply with the required order of succession. The finding brought to mind the famous line from a 1971 *Morecombe & Wise* television show in which Eric Morcombe, responds to André Previn's criticism of his piano playing with "I'm playing all the right notes but not necessarily in the right order."

Clearly then, the tactics which the architects of classical rhetoric deemed crucial to the construction of persuasiveness in the second canon of *arrangement* had also been valued and employed in this commercial; albeit unwitting of their classical origin, as evidenced by the randomness displayed by their sequencing. In this respect, however, the compact narrative and parallel sequencing of three of the five principles were surely indicative of the severe time constraint presented by the mere thirty-seven seconds available in this commercial. As Brierley observes:-

*TV commercials may have only 30 seconds to get the story across, hence the need for many short cuts and short sentences.*  
(Brierley, 2002:179)

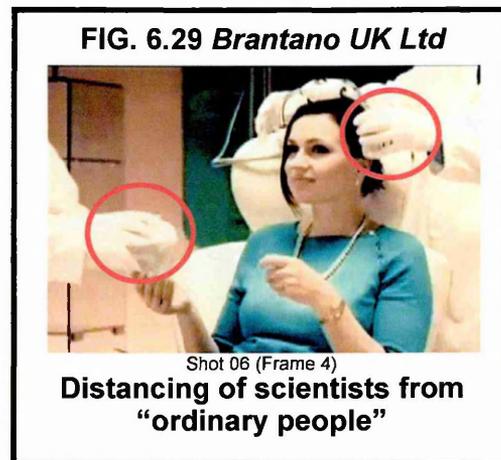
One should remind oneself again, perhaps, of the luxury enjoyed by classical rhetors to speak at considerable length. The finding, nevertheless, was that the narrative structure of this commercial did *not* direct visual expression in complete accord with the classical definition of the canon of *arrangement*.

#### 6.4.4 The Science

The parodying of scientific research procedure in this commercial hinted at a reasonably media-literate audience. Any attempt to present the myth

surrounding women’s obsession with shoes as a serious scientific concern would surely have risked evoking women’s anger on a wide scale. It would also have risked being seen for what it was i.e. an assumption of the public’s (but especially women’s) lack of scientific knowledge and an attempt to assert the authority of the advertiser. Cloaked by parody, nevertheless, the narrative that unfolded did just that, albeit with more subtlety. Even in parody, however, the commercial was not without criticism from some of its female viewers, as was remarked upon in section 6.4.3.4 of this chapter (Style [3rd Canon]).

Distancing of scientists from “ordinary people” was maintained throughout. Surgical gloves (Fig.6.29) a component used in “barrier nursing” infectious patients, were an early example of this. Worn by “faceless” scientists they constructed a *visual* simile of remoteness which was then metaphorically reinforced in Shots 10 to



15 by the glass viewing panel of the “shop simulation unit” which effectively isolated the white coated figures of *Professor Brantano* and her colleague from the experimental subjects (“ordinary people”). The gulf was widened still further by *Professor Brantano’s* foreign accent and her preference for



communicating only with the assistant, at her side; notwithstanding the presence of an intercom (circled) located beneath the soundproof viewing panel (Fig.6.30)

Use of a foreign accent to depict scientists in television advertising, whilst not uncommon, is not yet fully understood by the researcher. It seems

highly probable that it may confer an air of credibility arising from various publics' familiarity with the well known and highly respected iconic *male* figure of *Albert Einstein*, albeit the accents used in such commercials are not always German! It was interesting to note in researching this commercial, therefore, that, despite the emphatic announcement of the renowned psychologists *Sigmund Freud* and *Carl Jung* in the opening frames of this commercial, the female complainant, internet blogger, quoted in 6.4.3.4., still imagined *Albert Einstein* to have been cited!

The gender imbalance among the scientists who, *atypically* in media advertising were mainly women, was plain. Yet this was no milestone for women's emancipation for what was, perhaps, *not* so plain was that *Professor Anne-Marie Brantano* needed to have her authority established by association with *men*. In addition to bracketing her name with the names of two highly recognisable and renowned, genuine, *male* psychologists, it was also a *male* voice-over which described all three as "giants of the twentieth century." Consequently, despite the appearance of a female scientist, unwitting use of rhetoric attended the opening three shots of this commercial which perpetuated cultural patriarchy. For, in legitimising "*Professor Brantano*" by association with two highly recognisable *male* psychologists, the semiological *myth* that underpinned this rhetoric (*real* scientists are men) went corrected. By later presenting her in jest, moreover, the *myth* was then further compounded.

Beneath the parody, therefore, traditional semiotic *signs* and rhetorical imagery were still in evidence. Customers trust, for example, *was* sought by inducing viewers to recall their "doctor/patient" relationship through the use of white lab coats and settings displaying medical equipment (MRI scanner etc). As commented upon earlier, this appeared to have been a deliberate strategy since psychologists seldom wear white coats during non-invasive experimentation (*N.B.* Freud and Jung in this commercial were pictured wearing jackets).

Overall, the representation of scientists / science in this commercial continued to purvey traditional, gender laden, cultural values masked by the visual mimicry and parody of scientists' methodological behaviour in a research laboratory situation. Since no scientific theory or data purporting to be genuine were actually expounded in this commercial, scientific accuracy was not an issue.

#### 6.4.5 Summary

In this *study* the rhetorical analysis found visual expression of classical canons, to an acceptable degree of plausibility, supported by established Piercean *semiotic* theory for visual *signs*, in paradigmatic / syntagmatic narrative dimensions. The rhetoric of this commercial, however, again suggested that it had been empirically installed as had already emerged from Study 1 (*Case Study*) interviews. As a result of such unwitting use of rhetoric the *preferred* meaning also assumed a meaning which perpetuated a patriarchal set of cultural values within the realm of science. The leading female scientist was seen to be introduced by, and to have her status established and legitimised by men implying that *they*, rather than *women*, were the only real scientists. The rhetorical functions, supported by the semiotic imagery, were seen to:-

- (a) induce self-identification and emotional empathy in target audiences that were female, having an A,B,C1 and C2 socio-economic index status, in scenes exaggerating competitor's failings in order to demonstrate Brantano UK Ltd's *Unique Selling Point*.
- (b) effect a transfer of the trust and authority, normally vested in scientists, to *Brantano UK Ltd*.

Scrutiny of the previous Study 1 (*Case Study*) led to the deduction that *semiotic* support for visual rhetoric in television advertising could be expected to employ a preponderance of *connotative signs*, acting in *symbolic* mode, where cultural norms were employed to invite audience/s' to self-identify. In this Study 2 commercial (Brantano UK Ltd) the prevailing semiotic *signs* were, indeed, predominantly *connotative* and in *symbolic* mode once more (13/17 shots in Ch.5: Fig.5.11) but did not exclusively attend scenes of normative

cultural behaviour as displayed by Study 1. Instead these predominantly *connotative* signs, in *symbolic* mode, mainly accompanied scenes of scientific experimental procedure (psychological). Self identity and cultural norms were only to be seen in attendance in scenes simulating customer behaviour in a traditional high street shoe shop. The deduction in Study 1, therefore, was not fully repeated in Study 2 suggesting that the phenomenon observed, in which *connotative signs* in *symbolic* mode are dominant, may be a feature of television advertising in general rather than deriving specifically from the representation of cultural norms.

Insofar as the deduction surrounding the canon of *invention* was concerned a female audience for this commercial was never in question and the socio-economic status which was initially uncertain was eventually clarified, by reference to a national daily newspaper advertisement with a known readership profile. Consequently targeting, and hence audience assessment by *creatives*, was indicated. The Study 1 deduction that “the canon of *invention* is likely to be satisfied through prior assessment and targeting of its desired audience/s by the client's creative art and advertising agencies and with a form of rhetoric that will induce that/those same audience/s to self-identify,” therefore, was upheld.

With six devices of the canon of *style* being employed in the Study 2 commercial in contrast to five having been observed in Study 1, the total used was again relatively few in comparison with the number available (46) (Appendix 3.4). Use of metaphor (five instances), though significant in Study 2, shared almost equal usage with hyperbole, (five instances), and Parallelism, (six instances); (see Ch.5: Fig.5.15). The Study 1 deduction relating to the canon of style, therefore, found support in that few of the available devices (6/46 devices) were employed in Study 2 but failed to endorse the deduction that *metaphor* would prove to be the device most frequently employed in the visually expression of the canon of *style*.

The shot-by-shot analysis (Appendix 5.5) and paradigms of the Study 2 narrative structure (Ch.5: Fig.5.19) could be seen to accommodate all five of the principles prescribed by the canon of *arrangement* as observed in Study 1. The nature of the syntagmatic sequence observed in Study 1 was, again, found to be in conflict with the strict sequence defined by the canon of *arrangement* with many of the principles running in parallel. The findings of Study 2 relating to the canon of *arrangement*, therefore, fully supported the Study 1 deduction.

No reason was found in Study 2 to dispute the *Case Study* conclusion that the classical canon of *memory* can have no visual expression (see comments under 6.3.5.5).

The visual dimension inherent in classical rhetoric's canon of *delivery* was observed to have been expressed pervasively in the Study 2 commercial in which all characters, with the exception of *Professor Brantano*, remained silent. As a consequence, body language and facial expression were key factors in establishing the myth surrounding women's obsessive behaviour towards shoes and in demonstrating, by default, the USP of Brantano UK Ltd's product. The Study 1 deduction that "the fifth canon of *delivery*, already in possession of a visual dimension from classical times, will find expression through "body language" and most powerfully in commercials where the characters displayed remain silent" was sustained.

Parodying of scientists' methodological behaviour in a research laboratory situation in Study 2 was undisguised. That which, at first sight, appeared to be a concession to female emancipation in this field, however, was found on analysis to conceal traditional, patriarchal, values of male authority by restricting reference to authentic and highly recognisable psychologists and by the use of a male voice over. The jocular treatment afforded to the patently fictitious female scientist, moreover, served only to reinforce the semiologically established myth that the only real scientists are men. Such findings were considered consistent with the deduction made in Study 1 which

proposed that the “use of parody is likely to accompany the portrayal of scientists and/or science which may mask their traditional legitimising / authoritative function in relation to the advertiser. The Study 1 deduction that the “rhetoric employed unwittingly in conveying the advertiser's preferred meanings may have unintended consequences especially in reinforcing and perpetuating traditional cultural norms” was also upheld, therefore, insofar as such norms related to publics’ traditional view of scientists.

## 6.5 Study 3: Benecol Products Commercial

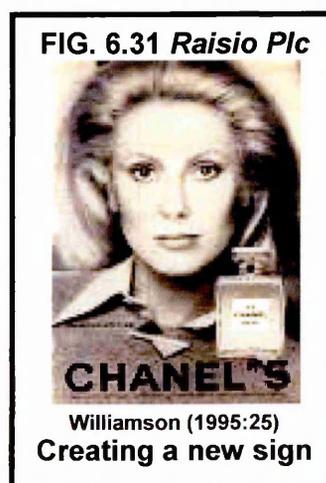
### 6.5.1 Introduction

Filmed on a beach near Cape Town, South Africa, this commercial advertised *Raisio plc's Benecol* range of products on UK television during March/April 2006 on all the main TV channels including ITV and the satellite channels. Unlike the previous two commercials it was devoid of humour. With no visible representation of scientists, it sought to model the science surrounding how the *Benecol* range of products inhibited the ingestion of cholesterol into the human vascular system.

The scientific (biological) modelling took place through 2 character groups which well defined as the antagonists (cholesterol) and protagonists (*Benecol*) of human health. Cholesterol, the first to appear, introduced the problem to be addressed and was subsequently met by the solution, *Benecol*.

### 6.5.2 Semiotic Analysis

Running the length of this commercial the voiceover chosen by the *creatives* exploited an archetypal *semiotic (vocal) sign* technique. The strategy was dependent on the use of a voice having had previous media exposure and which could be easily recognised by the audience; in this instance that of the actress *Amanda Burton*. Williamson (1995, p.25-26) understood and described this practice perfectly

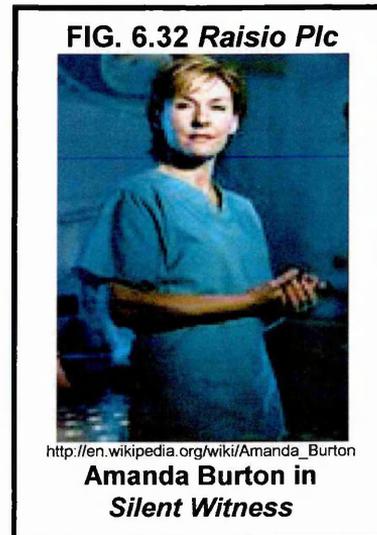


when, in citing the example of actress, *Catherine Deneuve*, in an advertisement for Channel No.5 perfume (6.31), he had this to say:-

[...] *the work of the advertisement is not to invent a meaning for No.5 but to translate meaning for it by means of a sign system we already know. It is only because Catherine Deneuve has an 'image,' a significance in one sign system, that she can be used to create a new system of significance relating to perfumes.*  
(Williamson, 1995: 25-26)

In the *Benecol* commercial this was precisely what occurred. The "other system" in this case related to *Amanda Burton's* previous enactments of *Dr Beth Glover* in the ITV television series "Peak Practice" (1993 - 2002) and *Dr Sam Ryan*, a forensic pathologist, in the BBC television series "Silent Witness" (1996 - 2004). Thus the "significance" which this conferred on her was one of medical authority and trust such as is anecdotally yielded in a "doctor/patient relationship."

Armed with such meanings, therefore, it became possible to create a new (vocal) "sign system" for the *Benecol* product range. It was only because *Amanda Burton* had an "image" and a "significance" in a "sign system," already known to television audiences, that she could be "used to create a new system of significance" relating to *Benecol* products.



Silverman (1988:165) observes "the female voice seldom functions as a voice-over." Chandler (2001:4) too, sees voice-overs as "voices of 'authority'" and that they are "overwhelmingly male." The belief, in media communication circles, that a male voice commands more authority, therefore, appeared to be in question (*c.f.*, Appendix 5.5: Shot 1, *Brantano* commercial). On this occasion, however, it appeared that such authority was adequately compensated for by the aura of *Amanda Burton's* well known medical rôles in television. Women, moreover, are more likely to be attended by a female GP

(Phillips & Brooks, 1998) and if, as seemed likely, the target audiences were indeed female then *Amanda Burton's* voice would be more readily received.

With just the voiceover acting as a guide and all visible characters remaining silent throughout this commercial, there was little doubt that "the verbal channel "anchor[ed] the meaning of the visual" (Hodge & Tripp in Allen, 1992:56). The silence of the characters involved also made it essential that the imagery of the opening shot should provide viewers' with a clear example of how they should comprehend this commercial. This was exactly what occurred; for by commencing with the three words "these people represent," the *connotative nature* of the *semiotic signifiers* was made plain beyond doubt. Viewers were being directly instructed that the visual *connotation* that they should draw should be the modelling of reality with the implication that ensuing shots should bear similar interpretation. For the audience this became a meaning to be "learned."

Chandler (2002:33) employs the example of the colour coding system employed by traffic lights', in order to explain how, through Peirce's model (Peirce in Chandler 2002:36-37), meaning may be attributed arbitrarily and how that such meaning has to be "learned." Meaning established in this manner was attributed a mode classification by Peirce (Peirce in Chandler, 2002:36-43) and was termed *symbolic*. Since the model created in this commercial, (it too included colour coding<sup>III</sup>) was founded on a learned (instructed) association in which people (actors) were to represent something other than themselves, these *signifiers* were also in *symbolic* mode and entirely consistent with Peirce's taxonomy.

The principal function of the *semiotic, signs* that appeared throughout this commercial (with the exception of the final shot) was that of modelling, simplistically, the complexity of cholesterol ingestion in the human intestines and the beneficial role played by *Benecol* products (hence the name). The

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<sup>III</sup> Figures clad in yellow represented cholesterol whilst those clad in blue represented *Benecol* ingredients.

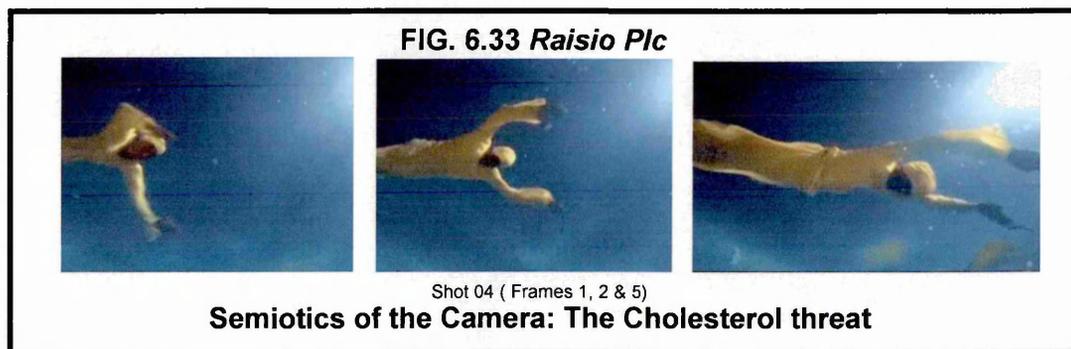
words of Brierley (2002) remind us of the justification for *creatives* substituting visual modelling for vocal descriptions, laden with scientific jargon:-

*TV commercials may have only 30 seconds to get the story across, hence the need for many short cuts and short sentences.*  
(Brierley, 2002:179)

In fact thirty seconds was exactly how long this commercial had in order to communicate its message.

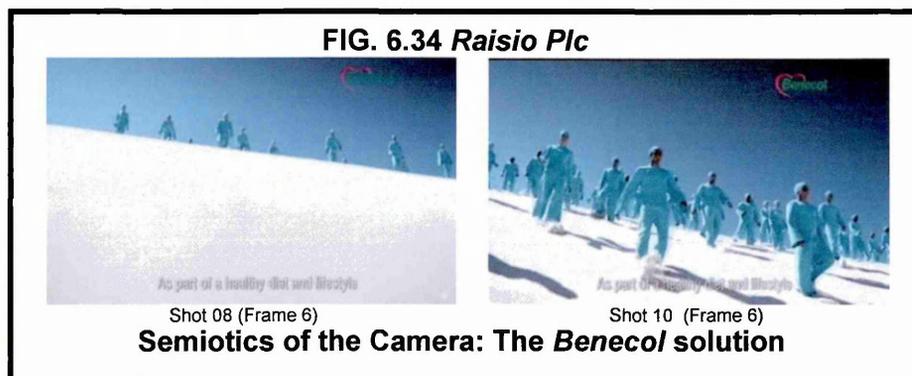
Having established the representative nature of the modelling, it was paramount to expose the health threat and offer the solution; but gently and *connotatively* of course. Having identified the yellow clad figures as cholesterol and the blue clad figures as *Benecol* ingredients, an easy-going migration then ensued in which the process of cholesterol entering the bloodstream (sea) *en-masse*, was modelled.

Placing the viewers beneath the sea surface, the threat grew through shots 1 to 3, with *semiotic* camera work, to reach its climax in Shot 4. During this scenario the voiceover informed viewers (Shot 03) as to the extent of the threat with the words “two out of three of us” (creates more impact than 67%). Use of the personal pronoun “us” rather than “people” ensured that viewers’ concern was aroused individually. Concern but not alarm; the balance was a delicate one skilfully achieved with slow motion photography and the continuing, tranquil, strains of the backing music. According to Berger (2005:34) a *pan up* camera angle, such as the one employed, *connotes* the comparative weakness of those at the viewpoint. “Diving” from left to right across the frame the single figure dressed in yellow, therefore, *signified* the growing threat commensurate with the increasing size of the image (Fig.6.33).



By having the sun in the top right-hand corner the figure emerged from the darkest quarter of the frame thus *connoting* even further the implied menace. Other, shadowy yellow figures (Frame 5) together with the indistinct shape of the sun in an otherwise clear blue sky and small bubbles, gave evidence that the camera (and hence the viewing audience) were indeed beneath the surface of the water.

Shots 8 to 10 saw the arrival of the *Benecol* ingredients in the form of figures dressed in blue, being a close match for the corporate colour used for *Benecol* product packaging. As they poured, like invading troops over the horizon, the camera-work took on a *semiotic* significance once more in heralding the solution to the threat posed by cholesterol (Fig.6.34).



Consistent with Berger (*ibid*), a pan-up camera attitude in these two shots implied the vulnerability of the viewer but conversely, and more importantly, firmly *signified* the strength of the *Benecol* ingredients.

With their power established the descent of these figures from their elevated "hill-top" implied combat! It was, however, a fine line that the *creatives* were required to tread since the combat which they were *signifying* was required to result only in passive confrontation. It may have been no coincidence, therefore, that the blue colour of their costume also echoed the colour of blue berets worn by peace-keeping, *United Nations* forces, often seen by television audiences. Coincidence or not the possibility of this *semiotic* *signification* pertained.

In Shots 12-17 the final frontier was reached at the water's edge *connoting* the intestinal wall through which cholesterol would normally pass unhindered. The camera moved in progressively closer through these shots enabling the confrontation of "cholesterol" and "*Benecol*" to be *signified* by two discernable means. The first was colour coding i.e. yellow = cholesterol and blue = *Benecol* ingredients. The second was gender opposition in which the power of dominant *Benecol* was *connotatively signified* by a male actor whereas, for the cholesterol, submissiveness was connoted by a female actor. The meaning *connoted* through the colour coding of the costumes was an association taught at the start of the commercial, when viewers were instructed by the opening words "these people represent." Gender difference, however, called upon a deeply ingrained *connotation* which has resided in cultures for countless generations and which invoked the polar opposites of dominance / strength (male) and submissiveness / weakness (female). In these shots the weakness of *cholesterol* submitting to the strength of *Benecol* was *connoted*. The expressionless faces of both actors and open handed gestures of the *Benecol* figure, however, ensured that the action was perceived as non-aggressive *connoting* the firm but gentle action of *Benecol* foodstuffs. All these *signifiers* drew on viewers' *learned* associations rendering the mode *symbolic* after Peirce in Chandler (2002:36-37).

Although visual resemblance was important for product identification by supermarket shoppers, it was the aura of human welfare that provided the prevailing *connotative signifiers* acting in *symbolic* mode in the product tableau of the final shot. The onscreen printing "keep

cholesterol at bay" and the voiceover prompting viewers with the mantra, "Benecol, every day, help keep cholesterol at bay," resonated with the previous biological modelling whilst the clinically white background and reflective standing surface both assisted in prompting viewers to recall the health benefits that the *Benecol* products offered (Fig6.35).



The insight of the *creatives* in perceiving the potential for directing the biological context through the voiceover of *Amanda Burton* in this commercial would appear to have been inspired. The *Women & Work Commission* (Prosser *et al*, 2006), that same year, were said to have attributed a sizable increase in the intake of female university students wishing to pursue forensic science, to her portrayal of a forensic pathologist in the television programme entitled "Silent Witness" (see Ch.1: 1.2.4).

Overall the *semiotic* support, which engendered the preferred meanings on which the devices of rhetoric would subsequently operate, took place within a fairly simplistic but all pervading biological model. In analysis the semiotic language of this commercial created meaning that was identified as totally *connotative* and operating in symbolic mode. The theme, which modelled the biology involved, bore a distinctly martial air to it with its blue and yellow 'armies'. In the final analysis, however, the confrontation turned out to be one of gentle persuasion in which the blue clad troops of *Bencol* appeared to act more as police rather than soldiers in controlling the influx of cholesterol into the bloodstream.

### 6.5.3 Rhetorical expression (visual)

#### 6.5.3.1 Introduction

The rhetoric of this commercial rested on the prevailing *semiotic signs* which were, without exception, *connotative* and acting in *symbolic* mode. Accompanied by somnolent music the well know voiceover speaking in soothing tones became reminiscent of the knowledgeable, bedside, manner that is familiar to most through their own *doctor/patient relationship* and many television dramas. The notions that this illustrated were (a) a quantifiable threat to human health (b) a solution to the threat posed and (c) a memorable modelling of the defence mechanism offered by the product.

The following appraisal examines the detailed findings of the rhetorical analysis of Appendix 5.7 and discusses the more salient, rhetorical points, by

visiting each of the classical canons in turn to determine if and how visual expression occurred.

#### 6.5.3.2 Invention (1st Canon)

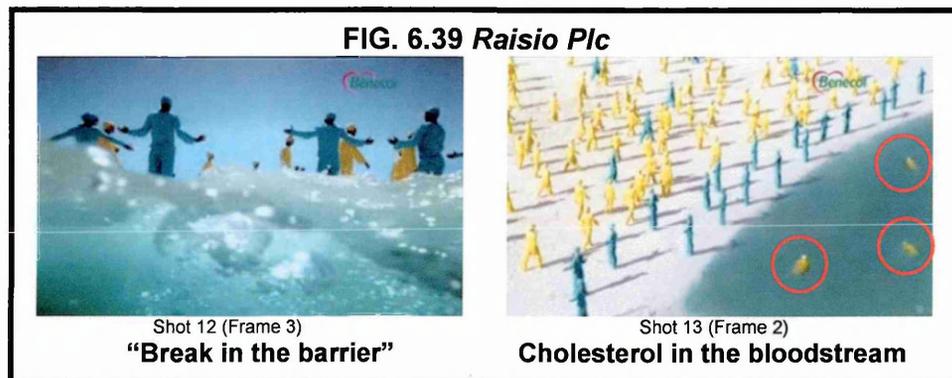
The *invented* rhetoric of *Amanda Burton's* voiceover drew on one of three "artistic means of persuasion" in order to represent the science behind these nutraceutical<sup>IV</sup> products. Aristotle described this as *ēthos*, being "derived from the character of the speaker" (Aristotle in Kennedy, 1991:14). *Ethos* is a rhetorical appeal in which the "good character and consequent credibility of the rhetor" (Covino & Joliffe, 1995:15), in this case *Amanda Burton*, is associated with the "text" in order to establish its integrity. It may be seen how, with the medical connotation that *she* brought to this commercial, her words "*Benecol* every day, help keep cholesterol at bay" (Shot 18) invited the interpretation of a recommended dosage linking the product to the concept of a healthy lifestyle. Given that women are considered to "have excellent 'help-seeking behaviours' [and] visit doctors two to four times more than men do (Lamm, 2008) together with their propensity to register with a female GP, it appeared that *they*, rather than men, were the preferred target. When, in addition one considered the observation of Howard-Spink (Howard-Spink in Carter (2010) that "the majority of grocery shopping is still done by women" then the evidence of a female audience having been assessed and targeted became most plausible.

It was anticipated, therefore, that the *invention* of visual rhetoric to follow such an assessment would constitute subject matter which would appeal to a female audience rather than a male audience and that was, predominantly, what was found. A welfare theme persisted throughout and when, in Shots 08 to 10, the blue clad *Benecol* figures arrived, the caption below read "as part of a healthy diet and lifestyle." Again the word "diet" is one which secures attention rather more swiftly from a female audience than from a male audience.

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<sup>IV</sup> A portmanteau word (*nutrition / pharmaceutical*) denoting food containing *nutritional* additives that are promoted as being *beneficial* to one's health.

small break in the barrier of blue-clad Benecol figures which, in the next shot, has resulted in a few yellow-clad cholesterol figures (ringed) having entered the sea (bloodstream) (Fig.6.39).



Altogether, therefore, the science involved in the action of this product was simplistically modelled and rapidly delivered. It is most probable that a high percentage of viewers would have been unable to appreciate, therefore, where the representation departed from reality.

#### 6.5.5 Summary

Piercean *semiotic* theory for visual *signs* in this study continued to uphold rhetoric that found visual expression of its classical canons.

No significant evidence was found of cultural norms being employed in order to invite self-identification. *Connotative signs* in *symbolic* mode nevertheless attended every shot of this commercial thus confounding the Study 1 (*Case Study*) impression that semiotic “support for visual rhetoric in television advertising might be expected to employ a preponderance of *connotative signs*, acting in symbolic mode, when cultural norms are employed to invite audience/s’ self-identification.” This deduction in Study 1, therefore, was not fully repeated in this commercial (Study 3) suggesting that, as with the previous commercial (Study - Brantano), the phenomenon observed, in which *connotative signs* in *symbolic* mode are dominant, may be a feature of television advertising in general rather than deriving specifically from seeking self-identification through the representation of cultural norms.

Convincing evidence was found that, in satisfying the canon of *invention*, prior assessment of a specific audience had, indeed, occurred. Circumstantial, yet plausible evidence, comprising the healthy lifestyle / dietary theme and the higher incidence of women over men undertaking grocery shopping, suggested that the advertising agency's *creatives* had targeted a female audience. There was no tangible indication that self-identification had been induced from that audience. The Study 1 deduction also found no supporting reason in this commercial for believing that the canon of *invention* was satisfied by a form of rhetoric which invited its audience to self-identify.

Simile, visually expressed, was indubitably the principal device at work within the canon of *style* throughout this commercial, having been definitely spelt out by the opening words "These people represent." Results tabulated showed the incidence to have been 12 shots in a total of 18 (Chapter 5 Fig.5.24). The devices observed operating within this canon numbered four namely those of *simile*, *parallelism*, *metaphor* and *assonance*.

It was felt reasonable to conclude that the Study 1 deduction, to wit:- that "Despite many devices being available for effecting a visual expression of the canon of *style*, relatively few are likely to be engaged and metaphor is likely to be the one most frequently employed" was satisfied. Notwithstanding that *simile* rather than *metaphor* was the dominant device employed under the canon of *style* a precedent was found in Aristotle for supposing both to be so closely allied as to make no difference. In his work "On Rhetoric" he has this to say:-

*A simile is also a metaphor; for there is little difference: when the poet says, "he rushed as a lion," it is a simile, but "The lion rushed [with lion referring to man] would be a metaphor; since both are brave, he used a metaphor [i.e., a simile] and spoke of Achilles as a lion.*<sup>VII</sup> (Aristotle in Kennedy, 1991:229)

The canon of *arrangement* saw four of its five principles accommodated within the narrative structure of this commercial and accorded with the Study 1

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<sup>VII</sup> Translator's note: The simile comparing Achilles to a lion occurs in the Iliad 10.164. "The lion rushed," meaning Achilles, does not occur in Homeric poems; thus, Aristotle says *would be*.

deduction. Lacking only the fourth principle (anticipate and address possible counter-theses), principles 1 to 5 did appear in the sequence prescribed by the canon of *arrangement* and did not, therefore, uphold the Study 1 deduction that such principles would “rarely correlate with the syntagmatic sequence prescribed by that canon.”

No reason was found in this study to dispute the *Case Study* conclusion that the classical canon of *memory* can have no visual expression (see comments under 6.3.5.5).

With scientific modelling having relieved actors of the need to speak in this commercial only the voiceover remained to inform viewers as to how the visual enactment should be interpreted. “Body language,” a classical exponent of the canon of *delivery* therefore, assumed a major rôle in the visual expression of the threat posed by high cholesterol levels in the body and the action of the defence mechanism offered by the product, *Benecol*. Such a finding accorded with that of Study 2 and was consistent with the deduction drawn from Study 1.

Reference to Chapter 5: Fig.5.22 showed that the character concepts responsible for installing the preferred meanings in which rhetoric was most gainfully employed were (a) those involved in identifying and installing the problem (b) those required in demonstrating the solution and (c) the engagement of both (a) & (b). Devoid of normative lifestyle characterisations, this commercial could not be found to promote cultural ideologies. At the same time the occurrence of rhetoric displaying the potential for unintended consequences appeared to be extremely low in analysis (Appendix 5.7). The observation, therefore, provided support, *inversely*, for the Study 1 deduction in that it suggested that rhetoric unwittingly employed in conveying the advertiser's preferred meanings may have *few or no* unforeseen consequences especially where traditional cultural norms are *not* being reinforced and perpetuated. It would, of course be a logical fallacy of the order *post hoc ergo propter hoc* (“after this, therefore, because of this”) to

attribute causation to this deduction but such results might serve to identify an area worthy of further research.

## 6.6 Study 4: Vaseline Products Commercial

### 6.6.1 Introduction

Commissioned by Unilever Plc., this commercial was the UK version of several variants made for broadcasting in America and around the world. After filming in Iceland and Barcelona it was finally broadcast in 2006 in order to promote the sales of *Vaseline* skin products through, in the words of the film's Creative Director, "get [ting] people to re-evaluate how amazing skin is" (Smith in Sree, 2006) (See Appendix 6.5 mpg file).

Like the previous *Benecol* commercial, it was devoid of levity and strove to model the science involved by engaging large numbers of people. In this case male and female actors were employed to mimic defence mechanisms observed in human skin cells in a variety of environmental conditions representing the problem to be addressed by the product range.

### 6.6.2 Semiotic Analysis

The ploy to build visual intrigue and hold audience attention in the opening six shots became most evident by the paucity of information which one might normally have expected to see up front. Thus, it was a



commercial, but did not declare the merchant; it had a function to sell yet did not identify the product line; it portrayed human skin yet concealed its locality (Fig.6.40). The audience were, therefore, encouraged to ponder what such illustrations might mean for them (the creative script-writer hoped).

Despite such a mysterious introduction, largely achieved by means of close-up photography, the *semiotic signs* created by the subject matter of these shots (human skin), were purely *denotative* inasmuch they transmitted a meaning which was merely representative of the subject; nothing more. The *signifiers*, being photographs, also fulfilled criteria which, by Peirce's taxonomy showed the *signs* to be acting in *indexical* mode (Peirce in Chandler, 2002:37). This finding contrasted sharply with the three previous studies, in which only one or two shots had been identified as being purely *denotative*. One should, however, not be surprised by this finding, perhaps, since it surely arose from the need to provide data which was solely factual for that which was to follow.

The modelling of the science, which commenced in Shot 7, made little or no attempt to indicate that it was the concept of human skin pores that was being depicted. There were three editions of this commercial; UK, USA & Global. Comparison with the Global edition of this commercial (Appendix 5.11) revealed that certain voiceover lines which would have made clear the nature of the modelling at the start of Shot 7 were cut from the UK edition (see Appendix 5.9 Shot 07). It remains open to question as to whether this omission was intended to extend the intrigue begun by the preceding six frames or whether it was indicative of UK audiences having been assessed as more sophisticated in their ability to anticipate and detect metaphor. From this shot onwards all shots, with one exception, presented *signs that were connotative*.

Shots 8-12 delved beneath the surface to model human skin cells. From a starting position deep within the a single cell the camera pulled back progressively, frame by frame, to finally reveal the locality in which the cell was located. It was in this sequence that scientific precision became sacrificed for *semiotic* efficacy. Just where the accuracy of the science fell down is discussed in paragraph 6.6.4. Suffice to say, here, that *semiotic* impression assumed more importance than scientific understanding. The overriding requirement in this particular sequence of shots was the

juxtaposition of different skin tones; black, white, olive, to infer *Vaseline's* universal suitability for all human skin types (Fig.6.41).



Continuing its outward journey the camera then focused on modelling of the skins pores.

In Shots 13-16 the resistance to disease was simulated with scenes that showed skin pores opening and closing. Again semiotic meaning superseded scientific understanding (to be addressed in 6.6.4). For the most part (Shots 14-16) the mode of these entirely *connotative* signs was *iconic* inasmuch as they were "resembling or imitating the signified" (Peirce in Chandler, 2002:37).

Although continuity was maintained through continued use of naked people Shot 17 (Fig.6.42) was exceptional in its departure from the previous scientific modelling which, since Shot 7, had illustrated the fine detail of human skin. Instead, viewers were given a practical demonstration of another of the skin's



quality reinforced by the words "your waterproof barrier" spoken by the voiceover artist. Whereas, hitherto, the science being modelled would have been unfamiliar to many, the scene which now confronted viewers was one which would have been highly recognizable to anyone who had visited the seaside.

The shot's prevailing sign was *semiotically denotative* insofar as it represented, by visual example, the waterproof nature of human skin. Since the *signifier* (the practical demonstration) was directly linked to the *signified* (waterproof quality of skin) it was, by Peirce (in Chandler, 2002:41-42), acting in *indexical* mode.

Most importantly, for the ensuing rhetoric, the obvious truth of skin's waterproof quality, the well spaced figures and the exposed landscape / seascape, all *connote* a concept of openness and honesty into which viewers are personally drawn by being given a water-borne perspective.

Returning to modelling, a long episode of seven shots (Shots 18-24) followed with a visual enactment of injury and the self-healing properties of the skin. In having people mimic the various forms and behaviours of human skin an aura of intimacy was introduced. Nudity of the actors enhanced still further the *connotation* of the skin's vulnerability which combined with their movement ensured that they would be understood to be representing the skin as a living organ. Confirmation of this intention, in fact, is to be found in video footage made during the making of this commercial in which the Group Creative Director says:-

*The people moving together took on a life of their own and that's  
when you start thinking of them as skin and not just as people.*  
(Sree, 2006)

The mythic theme for this commercial was one that celebrated the qualities of human skin, with the words, "your skin is amazing" (Shots 1-6); asked viewers to attribute value to it with the words, "It's worth looking after," and presented the means of preserving it (Shot 25). This mythic theme fed the ensuing rhetoric.

### 6.6.3 Rhetorical Expression (Visual)

#### 6.6.3.1 Introduction

The rhetoric of this commercial rested on prevailing *semiotic signs* that were predominantly *connotative* and acting mostly in *symbolic* but also in *Iconic* modes (Ch.5: Fig 5.27). As in Study 1 (*Case Study*), therefore, one again saw the rhetoric of metaphor being underwritten by *semiotic signs* that were hugely *connotative* and which were highly *symbolic*. Such a finding served to support the observation that *connotative symbolism* and rhetorical metaphor share a tendency to impart covert rather than explicit messages.

The notions illustrated: (a) biology above and below the skin's surface (b) environmental threat to human skin (b) a solution to the threat posed.

The following appraisal examines the detailed findings of the rhetorical analysis of Appendix 5.9 and discusses the more salient, rhetorical points, by visiting each of the classical canons in turn to determine if and how visual expression occurred.

#### 6.6.3.2 Invention (1st Canon)

The visual rhetoric, like that of the *Benecol* commercial, was guided by the voiceover whilst the actors remained silent throughout. *Unlike* the *Benecol* commercial the voiceover was male and, as such, encouraged the perception, prevalent in media communication circles, that a *male* voice commands more authority.

Reflecting on observations made concerning the *Benecol* commercial (Study 3) to wit:- that women were considered to "have excellent 'help-seeking behaviours' [and] visit doctors two to four times more than men do (Lamm, 2008), the initial finding was that the rhetoric *invented* would be for a female audience. The empathetic response invited by the *mythic* theme of care and nurture also lent support to such a finding. Indeed when one considered the skin creams and lotions, predominantly for women, that stack the shelves of high street shops a female audience again offered the most plausible conclusion. Lacking further evidence the line of research then took to examination of the vocal track.

As in the case of the *Benecol* commercial an unseen personage proceeded to disseminate the science behind the product. The patriarchal ideology inherent in the soft, conspiring tones, of a mature, *male* voice-over observed in analysis also raised the prospect that the rhetoric *invented* may have been designed to target an equally mature *female* audience. Finally a press release resolved the issue. The creative design group (*Blue Marlin*) for this

commercial, quoted its Executive Creative Director, Martin Grimer speaking about the launch of the newly packaged product thus:-

*The packs now communicate the product's function and will help to forge a strong emotional affinity with consumers - mainly 30-55 years old women, who want simple straightforward solutions to skincare for themselves and for their family.*

(POPSOP, 2009, Press Release)

The *invented* rhetoric expected, therefore, was one which would be seen to be commensurate with this assessment in which care and nurture would be promoted. The rhetoric which emerged was, indeed, one that reflected such concepts but was also one which could be seen, under analysis, to rely on a cultural ideology that assigned specific gender rôles and which still deemed health and welfare to be largely the concern of women. Commencing with Shot 08 this rhetoric grew until it was at its most evident in the male/female embrace of Shot 24 (Fig6.43) which delivered an erotic portrayal of the metaphor for bonding.



The well choreographed routine of this shot drew on popular wisdom concerning male and female characteristics in which women are acknowledged to have a proclivity for men to appear dominant; male dominance here being established by height differential. The effect was complemented and enhanced, however, by body language. The female, resting her head upon her male partner's chest, flung wide her arms, her hand open and fingers spread which, in the *semiotic sign* supporting this rhetoric, *connoted* her submissiveness and her yielding towards him. Conversely the male subject moved to enclose her. With but a single arm wrapped firmly around her midriff he displayed his easy control over her, indicating male dominance. His free arm displayed a cupped, caressing hand that defined his disposition as being receptive and cherishing. Facing

downwards, nevertheless, it also promised to subdue and engulf her female form (Fig.6.43)

In a scene in which intercourse appeared to be inferred, the association between the regeneration of new skin and women's regenerative, child-bearing, rôle could not be ruled out as a veiled visual metaphor. Recalling the words of the press release (POPSOP, 2009, *ibid*) "women, who want simple straightforward solutions to skincare for themselves and for their family" and bearing in mind the age range of the female audience being targeted (30-55 years), the employment of such a rhetorical approach was likely to evoke memory of child birth experience at the age group's lower end and nostalgia at the upper end in which recalling / recapturing youthfulness may even have been a factor. The persuasion which this rhetoric installed therefore was one which had the potential to draw on the strong maternal instinct for procreation and preservation of life.

Shot 25, which followed, appeared to be somewhat of an anti-climax in this sequence. It was, however the voiceover that carried the most pertinent message. With the words "do you see skin the way we do?" it asked its female viewers to recall the whole of the foregoing ethos concerning the external assaults upon the skin and the need for its care nurture, rendering the culmination of this commercial, in Shot 26, all the more powerful. The delicate balance which was then struck between the authority of science expressed through *parallelism* with "Close Encounters of The Third Kind" (See Rhetorical Analysis - Appendix 5.9: 78) and women's implied cultural rôle of caring and nurturing being expressed by the only *female* voiceover of the commercial with the single word "Vaseline," was a masterpiece of precision.

6.6.3.3 Arrangement (2nd Canon) ~ See 6.6.3.7

6.6.3.4 Style (3rd Canon)

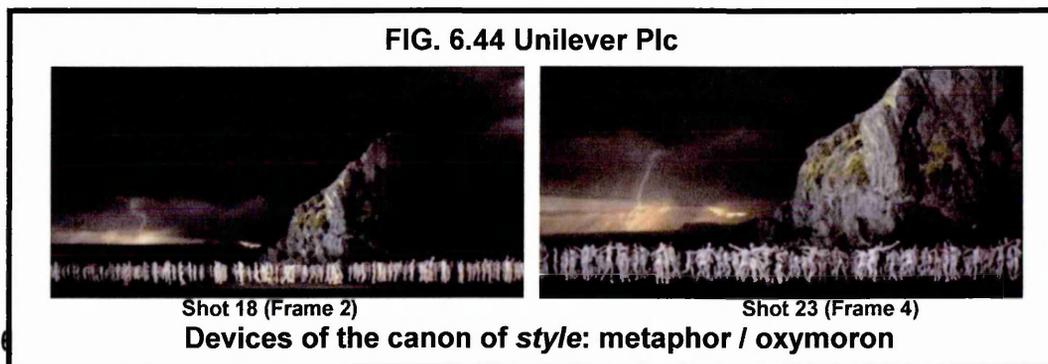
The canon of *style* attended every shot with visual expression throughout this commercial utilising a mere five of the many possible devices available within

the bounds of this canon as defined by Corbett & Connors (1999), (Appendix 3.4). These comprised Metaphor (17), Parallelism (7), Synecdoche (6), Anaphora (6) and Oxymoron (1).

By far the most exploited of these devices was metaphor which held a central role in revealing the threat to human skin and its facility for self healing in the sequence of Shots. One can be absolutely certain that metaphor was wittingly employed in this instance since video footage of the making of this commercial was found in which the Group Creative Director was heard to say:-

*The people moving together took on a life of their own and that's when you start thinking of them as skin and not just as people. When you see them moving like a whole other organism, that was the metaphor, that's what we wanted.* (Sree, 2006)

In two very similar shots, (18 and 23), one saw a complex interaction between devices pertaining to the canon of *style*. Both employed the same metaphors, one of security (the rock) and the other of threat (the storm) which, in their opposition to one another, invoked a second device, that of oxymoron. One might, therefore, have easily been tempted to interpret both of these shots in the same manner had it not been for the intervention of Shots 19 – 22 which progressively removed the air of conflict and unease with metaphors of the body's innate self-healing ability (Appendix 5.9: 52-69). It was also interesting to observe how that in Shot 23, with the camera having moved in closer (“dolly in”), the balance of the visual argument begun in Shot 18 had changed. Healing and security were now distinctly favoured by the increased prominence of both the self-embracing crowd and the significantly increased size of the rock (Fig.6.44)



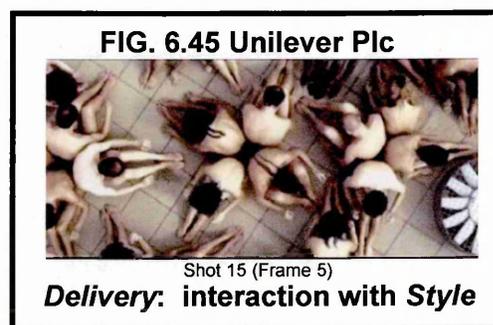
#### 6.6.3.5 Memory (4th Canon)

No reason was found in this study to dispute the *Case Study* finding that the classical canon of *memory* can have no visual expression (see 6.3.5.5).

#### 6.6.3.6 Delivery (5th Canon)

The key role of *delivery* was most manifest in this commercial which, in seventeen of its twenty-six shots, relied on visual metaphor. Just as in classical times, *vocally*, the canon of *delivery* had been employed interactively and inseparably with the canon of *style* to install the preferred meaning of the message, so here, *visually*, the same was very clearly in evidence.

Shot 15 (Fig.6.45) provided just one of many examples to be seen throughout this commercial serving to demonstrate how the interaction of the canon of *style* through its device of metaphor, with the canon of *delivery* through gesture, modelled the biological functions of human skin.



#### 6.6.3.7 Arrangement (2nd Canon) - The five principles

Compliance with this canon, in terms of its direction of visual rhetoric, was tested by comparing the commercial's visual paradigms in the narrative sequence (see Ch.5: Fig.5.32) with the strict sequencing of the five principles derived from Cicero's linguistic approach, (Cicero in Henderson (Ed), 1942:307), and summarised by Covino & Jolliffe (1995) thus:-

1. *Capture the audience's attention.*
2. *Provide necessary background information.*
3. *State and prove the text's thesis.*
4. *Anticipate and address possible counter-theses.*
5. *Conclude by appealing to the audiences' emotions.*

(Covino & Jolliffe 1995:22)

The voiceover, addressing viewers individually and collectively by ambiguous use of the word "your" in "your skin is amazing," at the opening of this commercial offered to secure favourable attention through instilling the notion that, as potential customers, viewers were valued and special. Analysis of the

*semiotic* construction of the opening six shots of this commercial, however, not only revealed the meaning on which the ensuing rhetoric would build but also exposed their robust attention-seeking function (refer to 6.6.2).

The simple device employed in providing close focus illustrations whilst withholding information relating to the subject, the merchant and the product on offer, would have undoubtedly secured the attention of its audience as required by the first principle of this canon which was also correctly sequenced.

Providing viewers with the necessary background information, as required by the second principle of *arrangement*, occupied a substantial number of shots and was a major feature of this commercial. That this was clearly the intention became apparent in the light of comments made by the Creative Director, involved in the filming (See Appendix 6.5 [mpg file]) who remarked:-

*Basically I think that our ultimate objective is to get people to re-evaluate how amazing skin is . . .* (Smith in Sree, 2006)

By defining the problem which the product being marketed would eventually address, the “background information” modelled the science of human skin morphology and the nature of some of the hazards that would be encountered during a normal lifetime. There emerged, however, another reason for the large number of shots that had addressed this second principle for it was also seen that the comprehensive background information served a dual purpose in subscribing to proof of the text’s thesis in Shot 25.

A combination of the voice-over asking, “do you see skin the way we do?” and a return to the earlier visual metaphor of human skin accompanied by the words “it’s worth looking after” succinctly spelt out the thesis statement required by the third principle of *arrangement* whilst also serving to uphold a sense of self-worth among viewers. The sequencing of this principle within the narrative was also considered to have accorded with that classically prescribed.

Lack of visual and vocal text required to “anticipate and address possible counter theses” in the fourth principle of *arrangement* led to the judgement that this principle had not been satisfied. It was considered that some might argue that it had been satisfied passively inasmuch as the arguments *supporting* the thesis might also be deemed to be refuting its polar opposites i.e. that “your skin is *not* amazing – it’s *not* worth looking after.” The view was taken, however, that such a stance would constitute a default argument and would not be in accordance with the spirit of the classical canon which required the counter thesis to be specifically addressed.

Reasons previously considered as to why this principle was not represented such as (a) the advertiser's inability to argue tangible differences between the product advertised and those of rival companies or (b) commercial expediency in not wishing to draw attention to competitors' products, could not be sustained in this commercial since the viewer, or rather the viewer's skin, had been made the subject of the “thesis” rather than the product. The most likely explanation, therefore, appeared to be that, since rival companies would be hardly likely to claim that the viewer's skin was *not* worth looking after, the principle was redundant. Such an omission, however, could indicate a weakness in the advertising strategy insofar as it raises the question as to whether the product was given sufficient exposure. Indeed the product was only promoted visually and vocally once and in the final shot of this commercial.

Classically, constituting an appeal to one or more of the emotions, the evidence of the fifth principle was deeply embedded in this commercial. On examining the semiotic ground on which the rhetoric was founded one saw that the meanings being installed in the narrative throughout this commercial dealt extensively with situations presenting exposure and threat, thereby highlighting the need for care and nurture. Bearing in mind the nature of the target audience identified by the commercial's Executive Creative Director as women 30-55 (see 6.6.3.2) one had to consider the traditional cultural implications on such an audience. The decision by the creative script writers

to use a female voice in this one shot did not, therefore, appear to have been made randomly. The single word, "Vaseline," spoken by a woman in preference to a man, together with a backing of angelic *female* voices also produced a resonance (*semiotically*) which went beyond purely *denotative signification*. Set against the highly recognisable *Vaseline* logo, a product well known for its soothing potential, the *connotative signifier* constructed could not have failed in building a rhetorically emotive appeal termed *pathos*. Aristotle described its action thus:-

*[There is persuasion] through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion [pathos] by the speech; for we do not give the same judgment when grieved and rejoicing or when being friendly and hostile. (Aristotle, in Kennedy, [trans], 1991:38)*

The effect that would have been generated in this commercial would have lain somewhere between these extremes. Invoking a cohesive combination of both vocal and visual rhetoric it would have alerted female viewers' to their resident cultural, ideologically installed, feelings in which care and nurture are part of what the media frequently present as being what it means to be a woman. Consequently, on this stage, *Vaseline* appeared as a female utility. This principle was seen to occupy the position prescribed by the classical sequence.

#### 6.6.4 The Science

The modelling of science in this commercial sought like all models to relate something with which the observer *was not* familiar to something with which he or she was familiar. The risk which such modelling always presents, however, is that the observer may not appreciate at which point the model departs from reality.

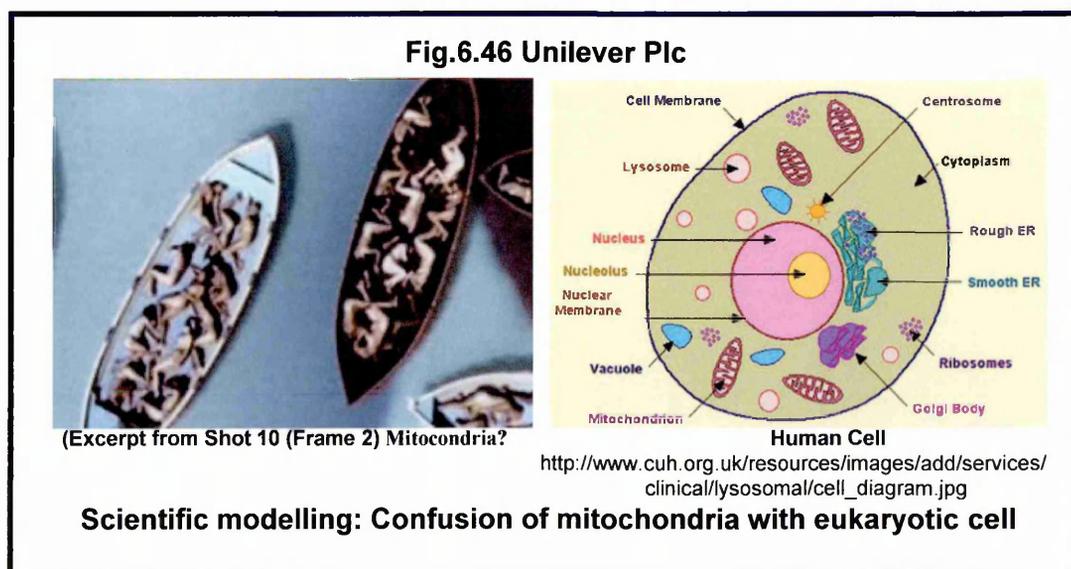
Like the *Benecol* commercial the modelling of science here conveyed a notion rather than a visual facsimile of the reality; a point which may not have been fully appreciated by many viewers. Examination of the visual presentation, nevertheless, revealed that the science involved was not fully understood by the *creatives* either.

In Shot 07 the enactment of old skin cells being replaced by new skin cells was a little misleading. Whereas the model suggested that living cells are maintained at the surface of the skin, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* describes the surface of the human skin (the epidermis) thus:-

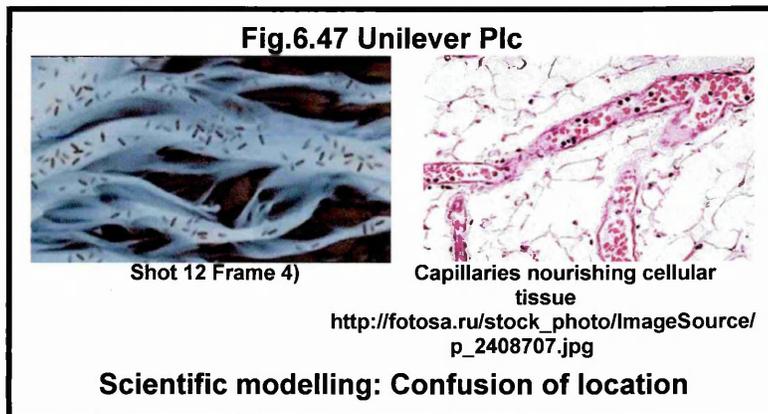
*The epidermis [...] is divisible everywhere into a lower layer of living cells and a superficial layer of compact dead cells.*  
(Britannica)

The reality was, therefore, that there is a constant layer of *dead* cells at the surface of the skin. Such a state, however, would have complicated the modelling and would not have made convincing rhetoric; after all who would want to maintain a surface of dead skin cells.

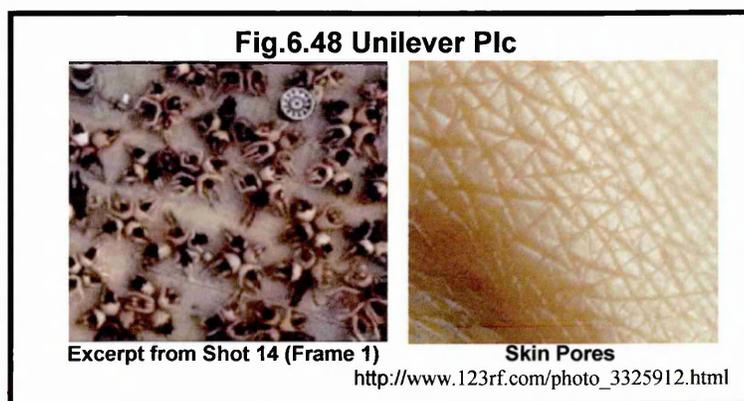
The creatives in modelling what they understood to be (eukaryotic) skin cell structures in Shot 10 had clearly confused them with mitochondria (Fig.6.46) which are not skin cells as the voice-over, coupled to these images, led viewers to believe. A mitochondrion, in fact, is just one of a number of different types of organelles which reside within and characterise *any* eukaryotic cell including the human body cell. They are therefore sub-constituents of, and not even exclusive to, skin cells (Fig.6.46).



The features of the human body which most closely resembled Shot 12 were the capillaries. They are "the smallest type of blood vessels. Blood flows very slowly in the capillaries enabling exchange of oxygen and nutrients from the blood into the tissues, and waste products and carbon dioxide from the tissues back into the blood" (Medcyclopaedia). The imagery of this shot was exceedingly confused and totally contradicted scientific reality with regard to location. The mitochondria of the skin cell, rather than being contained within the *capillaries* as this shot may have led one to believe, are actually enclosed by the *membrane* of their epidermal skin cell. In turn, the skin cells reside *outside* of the capillaries. The capillaries, in fact, serve to nourish the cells (Fig.6.47).



In Shot 14 less than accurate science was again in evidence as this shot attempted to mimic what appeared to be the pore structure of the skin's outermost surface (epidermis) (Fig.6.48). Shown from an overhead vantage point, the synchronised movement of the actors led viewers to believe that the pores of the skin were opening and closing as a defensive mechanism. Whilst it is a popular concept that skin pores open and close this is just not anatomically possible. Lacking muscle fibre, they are incapable of such movement.



As with Study 3 the science involved was simplistically modelled and, due to the constraints of television advertising, also rapidly delivered. It is, once

again, probable that a high percentage of viewers would have been unable to appreciate where the representation departed from reality, or in this case the nature of the inaccuracies. As Gregory and Miller (1998:123) observe, "television [...] has no responsibility to represent science in the way scientists or teachers or politicians would like it represented."

#### 6.6.5 Summary

Rhetorical analysis continued to find expression supported by Piercean *semiotic* theory for visual *signs*, in paradigmatic / syntagmatic narrative dimensions.

*Semiotic* support for the visual rhetoric in this *Vaseline* commercial was, more *connotative* than *denotative* (19/26 shots) yet less so than any of the previous studies. Of the 19 *connotative* shots 11 acted in *symbolic* mode which again constituted a lower ratio than in any of the previous studies (Ch.5: Fig.5.27). As in the previous (Benecol) study which was also featured scientific modelling, no evidence was observed suggesting that its audience were being invited to self-identify through presentation of cultural norms. Indeed the modelling, much of which was choreographed to portray skin characteristics, required such remote camera-to-subject distances that it actively discouraged any such concept. Accordingly the deduction of Study 1 that a preponderance of connotative signs, acting in symbolic mode, could be expected when cultural norms are employed to invite audience/s' self-identification could not be totally upheld. Rather it added weight to the conclusion that the Study 1 observation that *connotative signifiers* acting in symbolic mode may be a characteristic of television advertising in general rather than deriving specifically from seeking self-identification through the representation of cultural norms.

That a female audience was being assessed and targeted by this commercial was put beyond doubt by the Executive Creative Director who was quoted as saying:-

*The packs now communicate the product's function and will help to forge a strong emotional affinity with consumers - mainly 30-55 years old women . . .* (POPSOP, 2009)

Such assessment and targeting, however, did not, as has already been observed, invite self-identification from its audience. Support was conclusive, therefore, with regard to the Study 1 deduction that the canon of *invention* was likely to be satisfied through prior assessment and targeting of its desired audience/s by the client's creative art and advertising agencies. Nevertheless, with no evidence of that same audience being invited to self-identify the deduction could not be wholly endorsed.

With only five devices of the canon of style having been invoked out of a possible 46 listed (Corbett & Connors, 1999: inside covers), relatively few had been employed. Of those five devices it was also found that metaphor was the device most frequently called upon (17/26). Accordingly these findings were entirely consistent with the deductions made in Study 1.

Reference to Chapter 5: Fig.5.32 will show that the narrative structure embraced four of the five principles of the canon of *arrangement* and that they were correctly sequenced. This finding was, therefore, in accord with the Study 1 deduction that most if not all of the principles of *arrangement's* five principles would be embraced by the narrative structure but counted against the deduction that they would rarely correlate with the prescribed syntagmatic sequence.

No reason was found in Study 4 to dispute the deduction that the classical canon of *memory* can have no visual expression.

Actors involved in modelling the human skin and its defence mechanisms, as in Study 3, remained silent throughout the commercial again leaving the voiceover, albeit this time male, to describe to viewers how to interpret what they were witnessing. The "body language" in this *Vaseline* commercial was, therefore, a key component in the visual expression of the canon of *delivery*.

This finding was entirely consistent with the deduction drawn from Study 1 and also accorded with the findings of both Studies 2 and 3.

The use of cultural norms in this commercial did not attain a high level of incidence. Identified in Shots 22 and 24 only, the rhetoric employed was subtle and was *semiotically* supported by *connotative signification* in which the coming together of the male and female body was called upon to construct a visual metaphor of bonding (of skin). The cultural norm being invoked and unwittingly reinforced here was one which we are so accustomed that it was almost invisible. Focussing the dimorphism of the human body it portrayed male & female models that accorded with cultural penchants in which the smaller female form is submissive in the presence of a dominating larger and more muscular male physique. Unwittingly then these two shots perpetuate the expectation of our UK cultural ideology with regard to what it means to be a woman or a man. Chandler (2001) in his series of on-line *Media Modules* observes that "the male hero tends to be physically strong, aggressive, assertive, takes the initiative, is independent, competitive and ambitious." Salska *et al* (2007) confirm earlier research that found "a strong norm favouring men being taller in relationships that nearly all men and women endorse." Whilst the Study 1 deduction that rhetoric unwittingly employed in conveying the advertiser's preferred meanings may have unintended consequences, especially in reinforcing and perpetuating traditional cultural norms, must be considered to have been upheld, it should be acknowledged that that it did not constitute a significant episode in this commercial.

## **6.7 Comparing & contrasting**

### **6.7.1 Study 1: EGG Money Card / Study 2: Brantano**

#### **6.7.1.1 Visual representation of the classical canons**

Rhetoric, expressed visually, in accordance with classical canons was evident in both these commercials although not comprehensively. Acknowledging that visual expression of the canon of *memory* was not possible (for reasons already given) actual visual expression functioned only through the canons of

*style* and *delivery* whilst under the direction of the canons of *invention* and *arrangement*. Whereas it remained open to question as to whether the visual satisfaction of these canons occurred by informed knowledge or through empirical wisdom remained open to question, failure to comply with the sequencing prescribed by the five principles of the canon of *arrangement* in both of these studies provided more conclusive evidence that the latter was the case; five principles conforming to a prescribed sequence being less likely to occur by chance. Such a result had, nevertheless not been unexpected, following comments obtained during the interview with a *Mother* (London) creative prior to analysis of the *Case Study* commercial (see 6.3.2).

With time being an important commodity in television advertising both of these commercials were of very similar, but short overall, duration. Study 1 (the *Case Study*), however, achieved a higher average shot rate, with 22 shots in 40 seconds (0.55 shots/sec.), compared with 17 shots in 37 seconds (0.46 shot/sec.) for Study 2. This may not appear significant until one appreciates that the speed of processing by the human visual system is measured in milliseconds. "Face recognition" trials reported in the science journal *Nature* (1996) suggest response times of between 140 and 200 milliseconds. Just as in computing, therefore, every millisecond counts in the transfer of data. Interviews undertaken with EGG's creative and advertising agencies prior to analysis had also revealed the importance attached to the duration of the commercial:-

. . . *we always try to push for a longer format.* . . .  
(Bjurman M., Interview, 2007, *Mother* (London), Appendix 5.1:4)

. . . *alright you guys it's a forty-second ad.* . . .  
(Ingram, S., Interview, 2007, *Mediacom* [2007], Appendix 5.2:4)

Touching on the observation of Brierley (2002:179), therefore, that "because of constraints on time, advertisers need to imply events in the story and use metaphor as a form of shorthand," it was interesting to note that Study 1 (the faster moving of the two) employed metaphor to a far greater degree, (12 out of 22 shots = 55%), than Study 2, (5 out of 17 shots = 29%).

Just as In the *Pilot Study (Gold Blend)* the inducement for viewers to self-identify with, or aspire to, a specific social group proved to be the central paradigm to the rhetoric so, in Study 1, self-identification also appeared to have been skilfully manipulated; life style, housing and costume all betrayed socio-economic status (C1/C2). There was little doubt that this was a deliberate strategy for, during interviewing one of the *creatives* for this commercial remarked that ". . . in advertising you always try to create something that people recognise themselves in," (*Mother*, [London] interview, 2007, Appendix 5.1).

In comparison, Study 2 displayed far less awareness of audiences' latent tendency to self-identify when asking themselves mentally, "How is this relevant to me?" Hence the following example of adverse internet commentary which this commercial drew:-

*. . . then we've got the ads themselves, featuring a fictional "Professor Brantano" who is a "giant of the 20th century", up there with Einstein et al because she's discovered the "Slingback Synapse" in the female brain that makes women go crazy for shoes. Because as everyone knows, we're all dozy bimbos with a pathological addiction to shopping.*  
(*"Marion"*, 2007)

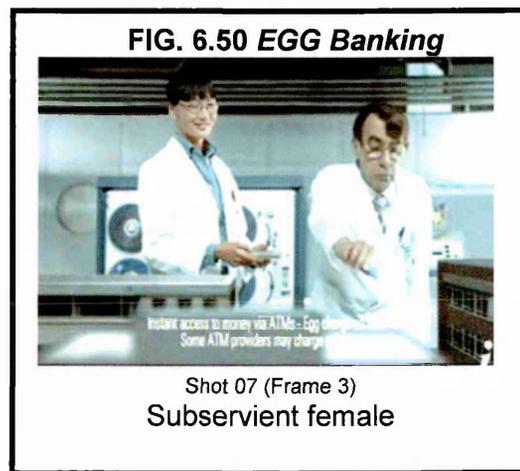
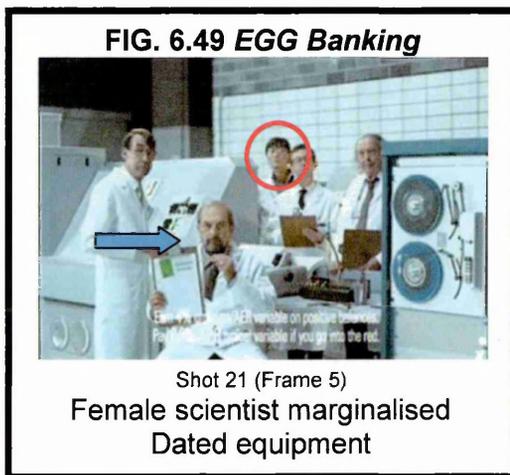
Though appearing to have underestimated their audience in that particular aspect, the use of metaphor in Shot 14 of this commercial, appears much more astute. The overstated behaviour of the customer, displaying classic "shoe rage," invites viewers to self-identify with the frustration that is clearly being demonstrated by saying (visually) "This is you and the way you feel in such circumstances."

#### 6.7.1.2 Use of Science / Scientists

In comparing the use of science / scientists in these two commercials both shared a humorous approach. Both had scientists physically present and both applied parody to their character enactments. In neither of these two studies did the scientists address their television audience although they *were*

seen to confer among themselves. Scientific accuracy was not an issue since scientific data were not offered and fantasy was the setting.

Thus In the *EGG* commercial one saw scientists' data gathering behaviour being parodied during a survey of shopper's (guinea pigs) use of the new *EGG Money* card. The results reported by the voiceover, however, were merely said to be "interesting" and no scientific data were divulged. Scientists were seen to confer with one another but were not heard. At no time did any of them speak to camera (the television viewers). In the final shot of this commercial it was the male lead scientist that occupied the centre foreground (Fig 6.49).



All *EGG* scientists were, with the exception of one, of male gender. The one female member of the team appeared in subservient rôles only (Fig.6.50) and, as reported earlier, was marginalised in the final shot of this commercial.

The gender balance of the *Brantano Shoes* commercial reversed the concept of the *EGG Money* card commercial. Conversely, the *Brantano* scientists were, with the exception of one, all female. The only visible male scientist shared subservient tasks with other female assistants (Fig.6.51). Again no scientific data were revealed.



Unlike the EGG commercial the lead (female) scientist *was* heard to speak, albeit only to instruct her fellow scientists, whilst the lead (male) EGG scientist had remained silent. In comparing these two commercials many of the differences were polar opposites. EGG scientists had treated guinea pigs as human beings whilst, in the *Brantano Shoes* commercial, one witnessed human beings that were treated as "guinea pigs" (shop simulation unit). *Brantano's* scientific equipment was compact, portable and embraced fairly modern technology (brain scanning). By contrast, the EGG equipment was overtly, old fashioned (reel-to-reel main frame computing (Fig.6.49), large, bulky and fixed. Hence it was the focus and nature of the parody that was at issue here.

In the case of Study 1 it was the parody of old scientific traditions such as patriarchy and remoteness of scientists to the world of ordinary people around them that was being signalled by their dated equipment. Rhetorically this was achieved visually by mere exaggeration equating to a device of the canon of *style* termed *hyperbole*. In the *Brantano* commercial, however, the *creatives* had chosen not only to exaggerate the scientific behaviour but to underline the parody even more emphatically by inverting the old traditions of the EGG commercial. There was, nevertheless, a limit to which this strategy was carried through. Despite the parody in both these commercials there remained certain functions that had to be served. These were (a) to clearly identify the characters as scientists and (b) to locate authority with the advertiser. Thus we saw scientists in both commercials wearing white coats, holding clip boards, wearing glasses and adopting experimental and data gathering behaviour which was essentially stereotypical.

#### 6.7.1.3 Humour

Only Study 1 (*Case Study*) and Study 2 were chosen for their humorous presentation both of which parodied scientific methodology. Both commercials employed humour as a diversionary mechanism and for ingratiating themselves with their audience. Corbett & Connors (1999)

observe that "all rhetoricians emphasize the importance of putting the audience in a receptive frame of mind" and that:-

*The need to dispose an audience favourably explains why so many speakers begin their talk with a joke or a humorous anecdote.*  
(Corbett & Connors, 1999:11)

Both of these two studies were also silently installing traditional authoritative and legitimizing paradigms into the narrative but with more subtlety than in the early days of television. McLuhan neatly sums up, the distracting function of humour in these two commercials when he observes that:-

*The content of a medium is like the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind.*  
(McLuhan in Gordon, 2003:31)

It was the parody of a scientific experiment introduced in the Study 1 commercial which provided just such an element of humour. Scientists are frequently exploited in television commercials and, in Study 1, mildly amusing scenes showed guinea pigs (anthropomorphised by computer-aided photo-montage) that were apparently being observed by a team of scientists. Ostensibly, for the sake of the ironic narrative, the objective of the "scientific experiment" was to test the effectiveness of the *Egg Money* bank card. In reality, of course, it was to advertise it as a banking service, the benefits of which would exactly satisfy the requirements of the lifestyle pursued by a discreet group of targeted customers. The use of parody, signalled by large items of outdated scientific equipment (circa 1950s), and the ostentatious scientific behavioural characteristics of the scientists, suggested acknowledgement of a media-literate audience well versed in the conventional use of scientists by the media in conferring authority (also dating back to the 1950s).

Anthropomorphism, such as was employed in Study 1, is not new to television advertising and was used with good effect in a series of commercials during 1991 that employed reproductions of various household pets created in modelling clay to bring about increased custom for *Heat Electric*. The models were crafted so as to adopt human mannerisms and body movements and to mime the words taken from interviews with real people. As humorous

entertainment it was demonstrably successful, having been based on a 1989 film about zoo animals and subsequently spawning a popular television series entitled "creature comforts" in 2003.

Similarly, in this Study 1 commercial, a parody of a scientific experiment also found animals ("guinea pigs") being used. Created by photo-montage and observed by "scientists," they too were endowed with ironical human behavioural characteristics but were additionally given thinly veiled ideological roles. The rationale that leads to this type of treatment of the television commercial stems, perhaps, from creative scriptwriters whom Brierley (2002) believes:-

*. . . try to undermine consumers' resistance and win their consent through personality endorsement, the use of stylish commercials, humour and, most recently, parody advertising.*  
(Brierley, 2002:173)

Weight was added to Brierley's observation, in fact, when, during interview at *Mother* (London) premises, the creative volunteered:-

*. . . whatever message we want to say we do it with humour, people may forgive us. . .*  
(Bjurman M., Interview, 2007, *Mother* (London), Appendix 5.1:12)

## 6.7.2 Study 3: Benecol / Study 4: Vaseline

### 6.7.2.1 Visual representation of the classical canons

Visual expression of classical rhetoric in terms of the five canons was again evident in both these commercials but not comprehensively. Given that it has been argued that visual expression of the canon of *memory* is not possible, it was the canons of *style* and *delivery* which manifested classical rhetoric's visual expression directed by the canons of *invention* and *arrangement*. As in the previous comparison the question as to whether visual satisfaction of these canons was by dint of informed knowledge or through empiricism remained open to question. Although the paradigms which these two commercials produced failed to match the prescribed sequencing of the five principles of the canon of *arrangement* they did so by the omission of the 4<sup>th</sup> principle only; "Anticipate and address possible counter-theses." Sound

reasoning was found, nevertheless, for why it may have been deliberately omitted; namely, reasons associated with commercial expediency in not wishing to draw attention to one's competitors in the field and the lack of features distinguishing the product from those of competitors.

The significance in terms of data transfer rates to the audience has already been commented upon in the previous comparison. Both of these commercials ran for 30 seconds. Study 4, however, achieved a higher average shot rate, with 26 shots in 30 seconds (0.87 shots/sec.) compared Study 3 which achieved 18 shots in 30 seconds (0.60 shot/sec.). Recalling Brierley (2002:179), with regard to the use of metaphor once again, both commercials engaged this device widely:- *Benecol* (15<sup>VIII</sup> /18 shots = 83%) and *Vaseline* (17/ 26 shots = 65%).

Unlike the preceding commercials, Studies 3 & 4 provided no significant inducement to its audience to self identify with any situation or a specific social group. Rather, the paradigms that were central to the rhetoric in both of these Studies were concerned with presenting an aspect of care of the human body as a problem to be solved by the respective advertiser's product. Visual metaphor was indubitably a major player again under the auspices of the canon of *style*. In these two commercials it was seen to attend the modelling of human body functions, i.e. the absorption of cholesterol into the bloodstream (Study 3) and the behaviour of epidermal skin in relation to its environment (Study 4). As with the Studies 1 & 2, speed was of the essence once more and it was significant that with both these commercials having much higher running rates than Studies 1 & 2, in terms of the shots per second, the use of metaphor was correspondingly that much higher:-

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<sup>VIII</sup> Figure includes similes (12) & metaphors(3) having been considered to serve the same function (see 6.5.5 Summary).

FIG. 6.51: Running Rate / Use of Metaphor				
Study:	Study 1 (EGG)	Study 2 (Brantano)	Study 3 (Benecol)	Study 4 (Vaseline)
Running Rate	0.55 Shots/Sec	0.46 Shots/Sec	0.60 Shots/Sec	0.87 Shots/Sec
Use of metaphor:	55%	29%	83%	65%

Such figures merely indicated a trend and there was no mathematical formula or rule involved here.

#### 6.7.2.2 Use of Science / Scientists

Both of these commercials modelled science (human biology) in order to convey, rapidly and in simple terms, a problem which the product being advertised would eventually be shown to address. Both employed human beings to model a specific area of their own physiology, a reversal of the more usual application of the rhetorical device (*canon of style*) termed “synecdoche” in which the part normally represents the whole. Both owned a degree of inaccuracy in conveying the scientific processes involved and both deferred to what, in the field of the “Public Understanding of Science,” is frequently referred to as the “deficit model” (refer to 6.3.3)

In the case of Study 3, (Benecol commercial) viewers were told, in advance, of the simile that would be used (“these people represent cholesterol . . .”). The modelling of the science involved a coastal site in South Africa with the beach representing the void in the human body's small intestine and the sea representing the bloodstream in the intestinal wall. Using people dressed in yellow costumes to represent cholesterol molecules and people in blue costumes to represent *Benecol* ingredients (plant stanols) it led viewers to believe that *Benecol* ingredients would line the walls of the intestine and physically block the access of cholesterol to the bloodstream within. It was found that the science, however, was not well modelled. In fact a molecular construction known as a *micelle* acts as an agent to introduce either cholesterol molecules or *Benecol* plant stanols to the intestinal wall. On arriving at the intestinal wall the *Benecol* plant stanols are rejected and

cholesterol absorbed. Cholesterol absorption is, however, *inhibited* rather than totally *blocked* because the *micellae* select the Benecol plant stanols *preferentially* thus reducing the number of cholesterol molecules introduced to the intestinal walls for absorption (see Appendix 6.2). The science in Study 3, therefore, had been truncated. The reason for this was surely associated with discussion earlier in this chapter in which Brierley (2002: 179) was cited thus:-

*TV commercials may have only 30 seconds to get the story across, hence the need for many short cuts. . .*

(Brierley, 2002:179)

Study 4 (Vaseline commercial) modelled the surface of the human skin but without giving its audience any foreknowledge that metaphors that would be used. Large numbers of naked actors were employed in various industrial and beach settings, in Iceland and in Spain, where they were choreographed in order to mimic how human skin cells behave under the microscope; both at their interface with the atmosphere and at lower levels. Like the Study 3 (Benecol commercial) the science was, again, not well modelled. Whereas Study 3 had merely abbreviated the science involved, in the Vaseline commercial the creatives appeared to have become confused and had consequently misrepresented the science pertaining to the human skin. In the first instance modelling implied that skin pores may open whereas, lacking muscle fibre, this is not possible. Images described as “cells,” moreover, could be seen to resemble mitochondria which, in fact, are sub-constituents of cells and which were then wrongly located within what appeared to be a capillary (a small blood vessel).

## **6.8 The Principal Research Question**

### **6.8.1 Introduction**

Following a *Pilot Study*, a deductive *Case Study* (Study 1) and three inductive studies, 2, 3 & 4, were deliberately selected for their perceived points of comparison and contrast. Both Study 1 and Study 2 displayed scientists and their science in jocular fashion, drawing on well established, stereotypical, imagery. Conversely the commercials in Studies 3 & 4 retained a sober approach by appearing to model the particular aspect of science in which the

respective product would be demonstrated to act. The principal research question which this thesis then considered was:

*Does classical rhetoric, once devised for vocal and written delivery, have a visual expression in television advertising?*

The following paragraphs present a brief discussion of the research basis before going on to discuss if, or to what extent, that question was resolved by the studies that ensued.

### 6.8.2 Research Basis

The Review of Literature (Chapter 1) explored the origins and development of classical rhetoric which, from the time of the emerging Greek democracies until the 1st century CE Rome, became a highly skilled discipline effecting vocal persuasion. Central to the development of rhetoric throughout that time was the emergence of five canons of practice to which rhetoricians and rhetors alike would defer in order to render their addresses the more efficacious. Pre-eminent in both the theory and practice of those canons were Aristotle (384-322 BCE), Cicero (106-43 BCE) and Quintilian (35-95 CE), to whom this thesis has made frequent reference.

Aristotle famously said 'Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion' (Kennedy 1991:36) from which springs our current understanding of rhetoric as 'speech or writing which is intended to be effective and persuasive' (Walter, 2005) It is, however, inconceivable that Aristotle and those that followed him were unaware of the power of rhetoric in the visual dimension. Indeed it has been shown that the canon of *delivery* was accorded just such expression by those same classical rhetoricians and rhetors. Thus, by those five canons, as conceived by Aristotle and refined by Cicero and Quintilian, this thesis has sought a *visual* expression of classical rhetoric in a 20/21<sup>st</sup> century medium where one might anticipate nothing other than persuasion; the medium of television advertising.

Where rhetoric was shown in this thesis to be the result of manipulating meaning, selectively, in order to persuade, it was semiotics which was shown to offer models by which one might comprehend the structure and malleable nature of that meaning in a visual context. Thus the Review of Literature discussed how, from the ground-breaking linguistic inception of semiotics, in which Saussure (1857-1913) and Peirce (1839 -1914) were sometimes referred to as the 'founder-fathers,' it was Peirce who emerged with a new taxonomy of *signs* (Ch.1:1.3.4), to show the means of transcending semiotics' linguistic bounds in order to embrace the world of illustration. More recently it was Roland Barthes (1915-1980) who probably did most for the movement of semiotics with the introduction of his "sign functioning diagram," (Ch.1: Fig.1.9) revealing the *denotative* and *connotative* construction of *semiotic signs* and their potential in all we see around us. In Peirce's *sign* taxonomy and Barthes' classifications, therefore, resided the agency for comprehending and exposing meanings that would be seen to empower a rhetoric beyond the spoken word; a visual rhetoric.

### 6.8.3 Classical Rhetoric's visual expression

#### 6.8.3.1 Pilot Study

The television commercial selected as a *Pilot Study* (Appendix 3.1), addressed only the principal research question in order to establish a *prima facie* case for proceeding with the methodology. Yet, in so doing, it produced a rich body of *semiotic* evidence which, by reference to the classifications of Barthes (Barthes in Cobley & Jansz, 1997:51) was found to uphold visual messages composed of wholly *connotative signs* (Ch.3: Fig.3.4). Under subsequent, rhetorical analysis (Appendix 3.3), those messages were then shown to have provided the basis on which certain of the five canons of classical rhetoric were seen to act in establishing preferred meanings.

In this pilot study commercial of the 1980s, the first canon of *invention* was found targeting people from a particular social stratum who considered it chic for young, professional, people to belong, or to *appear* to belong, to the *middle class* sector of society. The evidence for this was strong, residing

mostly in the artefacts on display and in the behaviour of the actors who were patently inviting their audience to self-identify.

In considering the second canon of *arrangement*, five principles were taken account of, for which this canon prescribed a strict order for their implementation. With the realization that such ordering constituted a *syntagmatic* sequence, visual expression of this canon was tested by a schematic (Ch.3: Fig.3.16). The schematic then considered the functioning of the commercial's narrative paradigms and their capacity to accommodate the terms of the five principles when arranged along the narrative's syntagmatic axis. Evidence for this canon having been satisfied, whilst not conclusive, did identify four of the five principles appearing in their prescribed sequence. Such a result, however, did not deny rhetoric its visual expression but, rather pointed to creatives' use of the classical canons of rhetoric

*Style*, the third canon of classical rhetoric, was forcefully proven to have visual expression in which metaphor was seen to be an important and dominant device.

In a commercial which sought a high level of self-identification from its audiences, moreover, metaphor was seen to be the ideal mechanism due to its inherent and definitive requirement for the "subject" to *become* the "image."

The canon of *memory* designed, in classical times, to comprise any mental discipline which may be employed to facilitate the recall of rhetorical content, devices and / or their sequencing was, from the start, identified as possessing no facility for being visually expressed. Its function in visual rhetoric was, therefore, deemed to be redundant..

*Delivery*, the most important of the canons according Demosthenes, as reported by Cicero (Cicero in Henderson [Ed], 1942:169), was expressed most clearly in the visual medium throughout this particular commercial through extensive use of facial expression. As remarked upon earlier, visual

expression was already a component of this canon's classical definition:- ...  
 "by gestures and by glances. . ." Cicero in Henderson [Ed], 1942:331).

Altogether, three canons were *fully* instrumental expressing classical rhetoric in a visual context, namely *invention*, *style* and *delivery*. A fourth canon, *arrangement*, was seen to be partially active through four of its five principles.

### 6.8.3.2 The Case Study & three inductive studies

Adopting the methodology, previously piloted in the 1980 *Gold Blend* commercial, the research proceeded with Study 1, a *Case Study* (Appendix 5.4) which addressed both the principal research question, now under discussion, and the subsidiary research question which follows (6.8.2.3).

*Semiotic* evidence emerged during analysis of the *Case Study* and each of the three subsequent studies which again showed visual messages to be substantially *connotative* by the classifications of Barthes (Barthes in Cobley & Jansz, 1997:51) and *symbolic* after Pierce's taxonomy (Pierce in Chandler, 2002: 36-43) (Fig 6.52).

FIG. 6.52 Connotation: Modal classifications				
STUDIES: MODES	CASESTUDY STUDY 1 (EGG)	STUDY 2 (Brantano)	STUDY 3 (Benecol)	STUDY 4 (Vaseline)
Symbolic	16	13	18	11
Iconic	2	-	-	8
Indexical	3	2	-	-

This finding was entirely consistent with Hall who concluded that "In the advertising discourse [...] we might say that there is almost no 'purely denotative' communication" (Hall, 1973:12). Rhetorical analysis then saw those *connotative* messages supporting visual expression of the canons of *invention*, *arrangement*, *style* and *delivery*; reasoning already having been provided to show the canon of *memory* to have no visual expression. This finding, therefore, upheld Case Study deduction [A](i). Notwithstanding that self-identification was being rhetorically invited in Study 2 cultural norms were

not employed in any of the Studies 2-4. Thus part (ii) of the *Case Study* deduction [A] failed to be upheld. It must be considered, therefore, that the highly *connotative* status of *signs* acting in *symbolic* mode independent of cultural norms inviting self-identification could constitute a feature common to *all* television advertising.

### Canon of invention

In all four commercials (Studies 1-4) the canon of *invention* was seen to have been satisfied in its requirement to assess the audience and to “invent” rhetoric possessing special significance for that particular audience. As explained previously, however, whereas in classical times rhetors were able to see their audiences, enabling the audience to determine the rhetoric to be employed, in the case of these television commercials the audience were unseen, requiring the rhetoric to determine the audience that would attend. In Study 1 (Case Study), for example, this was achieved by inviting viewers to self-identify in a narrative that had “guinea pigs” adopting lifestyles reflecting the types of customer whom the advertiser (*Egg*) wanted to persuade.

In Study 2 the product (women’s shoes) immediately identified the audience as female. It was the company’s illustrative advertising in a national newspaper which provided more refined data through the newspaper’s readership statistics which revealed the social grade of woman that was being targeted as A, B, C1. Self identification was then invited with a situation comedy in which “customers” were shown to become severely frustrated in exaggerated scenes designed to be reminiscent of viewers’ experiences with the advertiser’s competitors.

Studies 3 & 4 both revealed the audience as having been assessed with an *invented* rhetoric which appealed to a female audience through cultural ideology in which healthcare and welfare generally perceived to be the province of women were featured. In the case of Study 3 (Benecol) diet was also indicated, once again a subject more usually perceived to be the concern of women. Little work was required in the case of Study 4 (Vaseline) since

video footage of the making of the commercial had the *Executive Creative Director* spelling out the intended audience as “mainly 30-55 years old women.” As such it constituted evidence of the audience having been assessed and appropriate rhetoric having been “invented.” It was interesting, however, to be able to view the commercial with a known audience in mind.

Deduction [B](i) of the *Case Study*, which proposed that this canon was “likely to be satisfied through prior assessment and targeting of its desired audience/s by the client's creative art and advertising agencies, was upheld but failed insofar as the part (ii) prediction that the rhetoric invented would be of a form “that would induce that/those same audience/s to self-identify,” was not seen.

#### Canon of arrangement

The discovery of the canon of *arrangement's* relationship to syntagmatic and paradigmatic narrative structure, leading to the development of a specially designed schematic, was a significant achievement allowing all four commercials to be examined whilst testing the 5 principles of this canon against the narrative paradigms of each. As a result support was found for the *Case Study* deduction [C](i) that narrative structure would embrace most if not all of the canon of *arrangement's* five principles with all of the three ensuing commercials (Studies 2,3 & 4) having registered four of the principles and one all five. The fourth principle, “anticipate and address counter theses” which was absent in two of these commercials was also absent in the *Pilot Study*. The cause of its consistent omission, therefore, may well have been one of commercial expediency in not wanting draw attention to competitor's products as suggested by the *Pilot Study*.

With narrative paradigms, having been seen to embrace “most if not all of the five principles” of the canon of *arrangement*, part (ii) of the deduction anticipated that the narrative paradigms would “rarely” agree with the sequence of the canon of *arrangement's* principles. In fact this deduction was only supported by the Study 2 finding. In both Studies 3 and 4 the order

of narrative paradigms that were present matched the *sequencing* prescribed by this canon. The level of correlation with the canon's five principles and their sequencing, whilst strongly suggesting that the narrative structure had been considered in some way was not so conclusive as to indicate deliberate use of the canon of arrangement. Given the experience of the pre-Case Study interviewing, the balance of probability is that narrative structure had been considered, albeit with a similarly structured regimen. Just such a regimen was discussed in 6.3.5.8 of this Chapter when Brierley (2002) was quoted thus:-

*For many years, creatives have worked to a behavioural model known as AIDA: Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action. The purpose of advertising in this model is to raise awareness, then stimulate interest which would lead to desire and eventually action.*  
(Brierley, 2002:151)

If one considers, for example, the first two elements of this "behavioural model" which are concerned with raising (viewer's) "awareness" and stimulating "interest", they can be seen to coincide at least with the first principle pertaining to rhetoric's canon of *arrangement* - "Capture the audience's attention." The remaining two elements, "desire" and "action," however, whilst not in alignment with the elements of the canon of *arrangement*, are what one would surely expect rhetoric to *yield*.

The deductions made from the findings of the *Case Study*, therefore, were not fully confirmed in that studies 2,3 & 4 came closer to meeting the requirements of the canon of *arrangement* than had been anticipated following analysis of the *Case Study*. As observed in regard to the *Pilot Study*, however, such a result could not be said to deny rhetoric its visual expression but, rather, pointed to the 'creatives' unwitting use of the classical canons of rhetoric.

#### Canon of style

All four studies saw the canon of *style* as a major persuasive component in the creation of visually expressed rhetoric. The deductive findings [D] of the *Case Study* were decisively upheld by the ensuing three studies which

correspondingly engaged few of the available devices of this canon whilst making most frequent use of the device termed “metaphor” (Fig.6.53).<sup>ix</sup> It is worth noting perhaps that, like the pilot study, self-identification was again being sought from the audiences in the Case Study and Study 2. As such it underlines that conclusion that metaphor, by virtue of its definitive requirement for the "subject" to *become* the "image," is eminently well equipped to serve this application.

FIG. 6.53 Canon Of Style: Comparison Of Devices Employed				
STUDIES: DEVICES	STUDY 1 (EGG)	STUDY 2 (Brantano)	STUDY 3 (Benecol)	STUDY 4 (Vaseline)
Anaphora				6
Antithesis		1		
Assonance			1	
Hyperbole	2	5		
Metaphor / Simile	14	8	15	17
Oxymoron				1
Parable (Myth)		2		
Parallelism	7	6	6	7
Synecdoche	2			6

### The canon of memory

As identified during the *Pilot Study* and deduced in the Case Study, the canon of *memory* was reasoned to possess no facility for being visually expressed and was not pursued, therefore, in any of these four studies (see 6.3.5.5)

### Delivery

In Study 1 (*EGG*) *delivery* had an essential role to play. Functioning in body language and facial expression it was engaged mainly in the area of mimicry where “guinea pigs” were required to behave as human beings. Its most significant contribution was probably with respect to the humour in cameo scenes such as the boutique (Appendix 5.3 Shot 17) in which a male guinea pig was seen falling asleep as he waited for his wife / girlfriend to emerge from the changing booth.

<sup>ix</sup> Metaphor includes simile since both were considered by Aristotle to serve the same function (see 6.5.5 Summary).

In Study 2 (*Brantano*) the use of *delivery* whilst supporting the humour also assumed an important rôle as, with exaggerated facial expression and body department indicating frustration and despair, it portrayed the failure of service offered by *Brantano's* competitors. It again facilitated functioning of the device of metaphor once again in the canon of *style*.

Studies 3 &4 had the canon of *delivery* assume a crucial part in modelling the science and, with all characters remaining silent, *delivery* became a key factor in the provision of support to the metaphors in both of these commercials.

Thus the canon of delivery was seen to support the metaphorical rhetoric with "body language" in all three studies and more powerfully due to the characters having remained silent. The *Case Study* deduction [E], which had expected that this canon, already in possession of a visual dimension, would continue to find expression through "body language" was, therefore, upheld. It should be noted, however, that, like the vocal expression of this canon, its *visual* expression is, by definition, entirely dependent on the appearance human beings. Thus it may only be *visually* expressed in commercials, such as those here analysed, which were seen to have invested heavily in the human factor.

#### 6.8.3.3 Conclusion

Does classical rhetoric, once devised for vocal and written delivery, have a visual expression in television advertising? The preceding paragraphs have shown the answer to be a qualified "yes" inasmuch as all, with the exception of the canon of *memory*, were shown to have been actively involved in expressing classical rhetoric visually. Of those four remaining canons, *style* and *delivery* were seen to have been intimately involved in visual expression under the direction of *invention* and *arrangement*.

Some evidence pertained to suggest that the sequencing of narrative paradigms in the commercials under examination had been considered under a discipline similar in structure to that of the canon of *arrangement*. The canon of *arrangement*, however, whilst not appearing to have been wittingly

employed by *creatives* in the advertising industry was, nevertheless, shown to possess the potential for directing narrative structure in visual expression.

#### 6.8.3.4 Unwitting Rhetoric

The early indication, during interviews with media personal, that unwitting use of rhetoric might be at work in television commercials gathered credence as each of the Studies 2-4 were examined. The extent of evidence, though circumstantial, was felt, nevertheless, sufficient to uphold *Case Study* deduction [G]. Tangible evidence of this was presented in Study 2, concerning a female internet blogger who, among many others, had made known the feelings which this commercial (*Brantano*) had provoked in her. Rather than finding herself persuaded by rhetoric calculated to encourage her to shop at Brantano outlets, she had, instead, been clearly roused to anger at the unintended rhetorical message which she had interpreted as one that supposed women to be, (in her own words), “all dozy bimbos with a pathological addiction to shopping” Appendix 5.5: Shot 07: 21 of 53). Well worth recalling from the *Rhetorical Analysis*, perhaps, is the caution proffered by Corbett & Connors (*ibid*) :-

*Sarcasm is another mode of humour that requires a master hand, for it can easily go wrong. Sarcasm seems to succeed best when it is directed at an individual; it is risky when it is directed at nationalities, classes, ranks, or vocations.*

(Corbett & Connors, 1999:282)

The truth of this keen observation of human nature in Study 2 becomes apparent when one recognises television commercials address audiences rather than individuals and the “you” which they may employ from time to time is ambiguous in its ability to assume the singular or plural. Thus, to the *internet blogger* the whole of womankind became one of the “classes” to which Corbett & Connors refer. Though not engineered by Mother (London), this episode provided some measure of *creatives*’ lack of formal education in this field and allows that deduction [G] be upheld insofar as unwitting rhetoric was seen to incur unforeseen consequences.

In addressing the research questions, nevertheless, this thesis did *not* seek to gather evidence from actual audiences in order to prove the effectiveness of rhetoric as a persuasion technique which, whilst worthy of exploration, was beyond its scope. Rather, it strove to reveal how that, in televisual advertising, the visual images presented possessed persuasive potential whether, recognised or not by those who employed them, and which could be seen to accord with the five canons of classical rhetoric originally devised for written and spoken delivery.

## **6.9 The Subsidiary Research Question**

The subsidiary research question asked:

*If classical rhetoric is found to have an expression in television advertising how is such rhetoric employed in the portrayal of science and scientists?*

### **6.9.1 Studies 1 & 2**

Imagery, reminiscent of the 1950's in these first two studies, sought to transfer the trust and authority, normally accorded to scientists and doctors, to the products' advertisers. According to the *creative* interviewed at Mother (London), for Study 1, the humour in these commercials constituted a sop to reward audiences for their attention. In analysis, however, the parodying of the scientists, more extreme in study 2 than Study 1, was deemed to have been acting as a foil to divert the attention of today's more media-wise audiences away from the promotion of those same traditional objectives.

Even in parody, and despite viewers that were media-wise, these commercials continued to present images which marginalised women in science. In this respect Study 2 was more subtle than Study 1 in that, superficially, it appeared to be *promoting* the place of women in science; even awarding "Professor Brantano," the leader of an almost all female team of scientists, a place beside two iconic psychologists. Therein, however, lay the rub, for the measure of women turned out to be men in the figures of *Sigmund Freud* and *Carl Jung*.

Only in these first two studies did scientists make a physical appearance. Regardless of gender, all were stereotypical in both their costume and in their behaviour. Distancing themselves from viewers and their experimental subjects alike they spoke to no-one but each other, thus underlining a demarcation that pertains and is upheld in the media between scientists and “ordinary” people.

#### 6.9.2 Studies 3 & 4

In Studies 3 & 4, the gulf between scientists and “ordinary” people continued to be reinforced. In the absence of parody, and lacking the physical appearance of scientists seen previously in Studies 1 & 2, it was science modelling directed by the voiceover that effected the transfer of scientific authority to advertisers whilst also maintaining the sole right of scientists to dispense scientific knowledge.

In Study 3 (Benecol) the voiceover announced to viewers that what they were witnessing was to be taken as representative, a modelling of reality. With Amanda Burton, known for her television rôles as a pathologist and a doctor, acting as vocal guide through a series of simplistic models, the position of the viewers (the “ordinary” people) was never in doubt. If one were to suspend other expediencies, such as seeking to appeal to a female audience, usually perceived as the main supermarket shoppers, then the choice of Amanda Burton for the voiceover could be construed as an acknowledgement of the place of women in science. Indeed, her perception as a rôle model has already been discussed in the Review of Literature (Ch.1:26).

Unlike the Study 4 commercial (*Vaseline*), viewers were *not* left to guess as to the nature of the modelling. Bereft of the images of white-coated scientists and their equipment, the distancing of “ordinary people” from the realm of science became most implicit in the homogeneity of the visual modelling and the voiceover. Speaking almost as a mother to a child, Amanda Burton addressed her audiences in dulcet tones as she explained the scientific modelling of cholesterol in the human body. Whereas, in the validation of Professor Brantano in Study 2, one had seen the ideology of patriarchy, here

one detected a hint of a matriarchal ideology (“mother knows best”). Both the Study 2 and 3 commercials, nevertheless, subscribed to the “deficit model” in which publics were deemed to lack scientific knowledge which they require in order to become “replete” (refer to 6.3.6).

As with the previous two studies, the Study 4 (*Vaseline*) commercial was also typical of a genre that subscribes to the “deficit model.” Notwithstanding the assumption of the UK publics’ lack of scientific knowledge, however, a certain irony attended this commercial. The modelling offered to viewers had, when subjected to analysis, revealed quite fundamental inaccuracies, seemingly due to confusion by the creatives over the biology surrounding skin pores and cells. All models, nevertheless, eventually break down since there are limits to their points of reference. There is, in other words, a price to pay for the simplification which they offer.

In analysing the commercials in Studies 3 & 4, therefore, the modelling was found to be simplistic in relating science to the product, and to be operating mostly through the 3rd canon of rhetoric termed *style*, in which visual metaphor / simile were the principal devices supported by *connotative semiotic* meanings acting in symbolic mode. The findings were entirely consistent with Rosenstone’s observations which, in recognising this tendency, consider that:-

*. . . we must be prepared to deal with, even accept, certain kinds of stereotyping and fictionalizing in the depiction of science and scientists. Part of our task is to learn to read the language of the visual media, which tends towards symbolic and metaphoric rather than literal truths. (Rosenstone, 2003:335)*

### 6.9.3 Summary

The rhetoric employed in the portrayal of science and scientists showed that in all four of these commercials very traditional objectives were being sought. These were, principally, (a) to establish the credibility and authority of the advertisers and (b) to appeal to members of a discrete television audience. In Study 1, the *Case Study*, where humour had been employed, it was

deduced that “the use of parody [was] likely to accompany the portrayal of scientists and/or science which may mask their traditional legitimising / authoritative function in relation to the advertiser.” Study 2, which also employed humour, upheld that conclusion. Representation / provision of scientific information, however, was not in evidence.

In Studies 3 & 4 the pursuit of the same traditional objectives was embarked upon but through the combination of the implied authority of the voiceover and the modelling of scientific data surrounding human biology. The *semiotic* imagery created to convey the meanings which would achieve those rhetorical objectives was, as already remarked upon, empirically and experientially based leading to unintended rhetorical side effects. One such consequence observed was the marginalisation of women in science where images of male scientists were dominant or where women's authority was established by reference to men. Insofar as the quality of the science conveyed in these two commercials was concerned, modelling of the science had been found either inadequate due to its brevity or factually inaccurate.

## CHAPTER 6: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## SUMMARY

This research project undertook full semiotic and rhetorical analyses on five television commercials comprising a *Pilot Study*, a *Case Study* and three inductive studies. Employing established semiotic rubrics and taxonomy together with canons and tenets drawn from classical literature, originally associated with linguistically expressed rhetoric, the research tested the extent and nature of their visual expression in televisual advertising.

Operating through four of the original five classical canons in exceedingly brief time spans, a robust structure remained in which *style* and *delivery* were seen to dispose powerful metaphors under the direction of *invention* and *arrangement*. With auto-cues, miniaturised technology and other devices, the canon of *memory* with its entirely mental regimen became redundant in the televisual expression of rhetoric.

### Case Study

Interviews with the creative and advertising agencies preceding Study 1, the *Case Study (EGG Banking plc)* indicated that, their construction of television commercials might be drawing on empirical and experiential knowledge of persuasion techniques rather than knowledge of classical rhetoric, formally acquired.

Subsequent examination of the *Case Study*, through semiotic interpretation of the imagery, exposed highly *connotative* meanings that were *symbolically* coded, principally, through re-enactment of UK male, but mostly female, cultural behaviours. As might have been expected much of that behaviour in the *Case Study* commercial surrounded shopping activity, the field in which the advertised product (the *EGG Money* card) was to be employed. Rhetorical analysis was then able to demonstrate that the installation of such meanings invoked four of the five canons of classical rhetoric in visual expression. Those canons were *invention*, *arrangement*, *style* and *delivery*. Of those four canons, *style* and *delivery* were seen to be the focus of visual

expression whilst being directed by the canons of *invention* and *arrangement*. Thus a form of rhetoric was *invented* which employed the canon of *style* and *delivery* in a narrative sequence orchestrated by the canon of *arrangement*.

The canon of *style*, whilst employing few of its devices, had made exceedingly high use of the device of *metaphor*, visually expressed, to encourage its viewing audience to self-identify in this *Case Study*. The canon of *delivery* had been seen to conspire in the visual expression of such *metaphor*, predominantly by the use of body language or in Cicero's words, "by gestures and by glances."

The *Case Study's'* narrative paradigms, having embraced four of the five principles of the canon of *arrangement* led to the expectation that *creatives* had afforded some form of consideration to the commercial's narrative structure. Failure in the *Case Study* to see the *sequencing* of those paradigms match that prescribed by this canon, however, led to the conclusion that this rhetorical canon had been invoked unwittingly. Such a categorical contradiction, moreover, lent weight to the belief that, where the remaining canons had been found in analysis to be generating rhetorical messages that were clearly not intended, they too were being unwittingly employed. Those canons, moreover, were found, in the *Case Study's'* rhetorical analysis, to have been employed in a fashion that had reinforced and perpetuated aspects of UK cultural ideology relating to the way in which women are regarded in society in general and in science in particular.

Although, during interview prior to analysis, the *creative* at *Mother (London)* had indicated that the humour of their commercial had been intended to reward viewers for their attention and to crave their forgiveness for the intrusion into their viewing, humour had been found in analysis to have a second function. Through a parody in which scientists and their science assumed stereotypical costume and behavioural characteristics, a more subtle transfer of traditional authoritative and legitimising values to the advertiser was being masked. In adopting such traditional imagery, for the

sake of parody, moreover, the role of women in science was seen to have been marginalised. A total of seven deductions, based on the *Case Study*, were then prepared for testing in three selected commercials.

#### Consideration of Case Study deductions in Studies 2-4

Examination of Studies 2, 3 & 4 saw *semiotic* analyses which, like the *Case Study*, revealed highly *connotative* messages acting predominantly in *symbolic* mode. The *Case Study* deduction [A], however, which had envisaged a link between such *semiotic* classification and scenes where cultural norms invited self-identification, was not repeated in any of these three studies and could not, therefore be upheld as a general principle. It was postulated, therefore, that the continued high incidence of *connotative* messages in *symbolic* mode seen in Part (i) of the deduction and occurring even in the absence of cultural norms inviting self-identification [A(ii)], might indicate that it was a feature common to *all* television advertising.

Concerning the deduction [B(i)], assessment and targeting of audiences was evident in all of these three studies through the canon of *invention* with rhetoric having been *invented* and installed, by both the canon of *style* employing the device of metaphor and through *delivery*, using body language. Only in Study 2 was the *invented* rhetoric construed as inducing it's audience to self-identify [B(ii)]. The canon was, therefore, satisfied, but the [B(ii)] deduction that strove to confirm a link with self-identification was not sustained in Studies 3 & 4.

With narrative paradigms, having embraced four of the five principles of the canon of *arrangement* in the *Case Study*, deduction [C] anticipated that "most if not all of the 5 principles of the canon of *arrangement* would be similarly identified in the ensuing three studies. Just such a circumstance proved to be the case for all three studies (2-4) thereby upholding (i) of the deduction; a finding which suggested that *creatives* had afforded some form of consideration to the commercial's narrative structure. Part (ii) of that deduction, however, which anticipated that narrative paradigms would "rarely" agree with the sequence of principles in the canon of *arrangement*, was

supported only by the Study 2 finding. In both Studies 3 and 4 the order of narrative paradigms that were present matched the *sequencing* prescribed by this canon. The conclusion reached was that this rhetorical canon had been invoked unwittingly but that narrative structure had been considered, albeit within a similarly structured regime.

In all three studies (2-4) the *Case Study* deduction [D], which proposed that relatively few of the devices available to the canon of *style* would be employed, and that metaphor would prove to be the device most frequently seen, was firmly upheld. The special facility which metaphor offered in inviting audience self-identification was most cogent.

Already known to possess a visual expression in classical times, the canon of *delivery* was readily shown to have continued relevance in the field of television advertising. With one brief exception in Study 2 (“Professor Brantano”) no actors were heard to speak, in these three studies. Clearly demonstrating the powerful use of “body language,” as the visual exponent of this canon, its role was shown to be a core constituent of the scientific modelling in Studies 3 & 4. Deduction [E] of the *Case Study* was, therefore, most securely upheld.

Observation of the *Case Study* generated some expectation in deduction [F] that the use of parody was likely to accompany the portrayal of scientists and/or science which may act to mask their traditional legitimising / authoritative function in relation to the advertiser and product. As such Studies 3 & 4 were seen to provide reasoning that was sufficient to show that traditional functions were still being covertly installed together with timeworn rhetorical visual images that perpetuated cultural perceptions marginalising women’s role in science.

Preliminary interviews with media personnel suggested that unwitting use of rhetoric might be expected in the (*Case Study*) commercial that they had helped to construct. Study 2 (*Brantano*), although not produced by the same media agencies, researched primary evidence surrounding the angry reaction of a female viewer which upheld the deduction [G] of the *Case Study*

suggesting that unforeseen consequences might ensue from unwitting use of rhetorical canons. Reasoning proffered by authors in the field quoted researched results purporting to explain the audience reaction.

It remains now only to reflect on these results which have shown that Classical Rhetoric, originally devised for linguistic applications has a visual expression in television advertising and to consider the conclusions that may be drawn from such a revelation.

FIG 1. CASE DEDUCTIONS UPHELD (✓) / NOT UPHELD (✗)				
Case Study (1) Deductions		Study 2	Study 3	Study 4
A	The <i>semiotic</i> support for visual rhetoric in television advertising can be expected to (i) employ a preponderance of <i>connotative signs</i> , acting in <i>symbolic</i> mode, (ii) when cultural norms are employed to invite audience/s' self-identification.	(i) ✓ (ii) ✗	(i) ✓ (ii) ✗	(i) ✓ (ii) ✗
B	The canon of <i>invention</i> is (i) likely to be satisfied through prior assessment and targeting of its desired audience/s by the client's creative art and advertising agencies and (ii) with a form of rhetoric that will induce that/those same audience/s to self-identify.	(i) ✓ (ii) ✓	(i) ✓ (ii) ✗	(i) ✓ (ii) ✗
C	Narrative structure of television commercials can be (i) expected to embrace most if not all of the five principles of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> canon of <i>arrangement</i> but will (ii) rarely correlate with the syntagmatic sequence prescribed by that canon.	(i) ✓ (ii) ✓	(i) ✓ (ii) ✗	(i) ✓ (ii) ✗
D	Despite many devices being available for effecting a visual expression of the canon of <i>style</i> , relatively few are likely to be engaged and metaphor is likely to be the one most frequently employed.	✓	✓	✓
E	The fifth canon of <i>delivery</i> , already in possession of a visual dimension from classical times, will find expression through "body language" and most powerfully in commercials where the characters displayed remain silent.	✓	✓	✓
F	Use of parody is likely to accompany the portrayal of scientists and/or science which may mask their traditional legitimising / authoritative function in relation to the advertiser.	✓	N/A	N/A
G	Rhetoric unwittingly employed in conveying the advertiser's preferred meanings, especially in reinforcing and perpetuating traditional cultural norms, may have unforeseen consequences.	✓	✓	✓

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### The research question answered

This thesis has shown, through detailed analysis, in a field of study where persuasion is its *raison d'être*, that the canons of classical rhetoric, once devised for linguistic practice, have evolved and do, indeed, have a visual expression in television advertising today. For the loss of one canon, that of *memory*, the remaining four canons were seen to comprise a robust *modus operandi* in which the rhetoric delivered, whilst tangible, fell short of reaching its full potential. The reason for this was perceived to be due to the intuitive rather than guided manner in which *creatives* constructed their narratives.

### Unwitting rhetoric - the implications

Remarks made by the creative agency's interviewee to the effect that the persuasion techniques employed at his agency were born of *trial and error*, led to an early expectation that, wherever visual expression of the classical canons was encountered in the commercials under analysis, it would have been guided neither by *creatives'* academic training, nor with any foreknowledge of such canons but, rather, installed unwittingly through intuitive and empirical wisdom.

Subsequent semiotic and rhetorical analysis of the commercials selected provided some foundation to that assessment and, moreover, found a certain consistency in the words of Corbett & Connors who observe that:-

*Ad writers are some of the most skilful rhetoricians in our society. They may never have studied classical rhetoric but they employ many strategies of this ancient art.*

(Corbett & Connors, 1999:2)

If, with further research, therefore, such a result were to be found representative of the work of media *creatives* in a wider context, then an important opportunity presents itself to teaching academies for improving the skills of media artisans leading to higher quality and more effective visual advertising in the UK. In tandem with such teaching would be the prospect of

also being able to enshrine ethical codes of conduct and practice. At a time when economic recession is upon us, it is considered worthwhile promoting the wider teaching of such skills so that such learning becomes as accessible, say, as it is in the universities of the *United States of America* today. As the author writes this thesis he is aware of only one university<sup>1</sup> in the UK at which classical rhetoric is being taught to MA degree level; yet the very same political and forensic incentives that spawned the birth of classical rhetoric all those centuries ago remain with us to-day. The most important point to grasp is, however, that the perspective has changed. With the advent of television during the middle of the last century rhetoric has become up close, and personal. Most significantly though it has become visual!

Science in television advertising: the subsidiary research question.

Science concerns a body of knowledge which substantial numbers of people both recognise and trust as a source of information that assists them directly, or through technology, to live their everyday lives. It also constitutes, for many of our young people, a prospective vocation which should be open to all who wish to pursue its mysteries and find its rewards.

In the small sample of commercials researched by this thesis it was seen how brief the time-span available was in which to convey the message. Evidence, presented in this study, moreover, showed that, when science was modelled the accuracy of its visual presentation could not be totally relied upon. The boundary between commercial information and scientific information, it seems, becomes rather blurred in television advertising rendering the point at which the modelling of science breaks down only visible to specialists in the field or by reference to accredited encyclopaedic knowledge. It would seem, therefore, that, unlike the teacher in a science class, the advertiser has neither time, money nor any obligation even to make this plain. The possibility is that it may not even always be in the advertiser's own interest to do so! The consequences arising from the presentation of "bad science" to various television audiences in this manner, therefore, bear further research.

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<sup>1</sup> *University of Central Lancashire*

If, as the results of this small sample of television commercials have suggested, the application of televisual rhetoric (classically or empirically inspired) has a tendency to be “economical with the truth” and to promote stereotypical images of scientists that preclude specific groups of people, then we owe it, both to ourselves, and to our children, to create a greater awareness of televisual rhetoric. The effect of such rhetoric, as glimpsed in these television commercials, which employed stereotypical imagery of scientists that were male and white and which marginalised women might also, with more searching examination, prove to be insidious in its potential to damage the evolving perceptions of our young people in schools and colleges. It is worthwhile, perhaps, considering just one area in which further research could bring better practice and benefits.

Much effort has been expended in recent years in attempting to dispel the reluctance by Key Stage 4 girls towards pursuing subjects such as physics which they perceive to be a “boys’ subject.” A report commissioned by the *Institute of Physics* last year (2009) spoke of “the persistent problem of girls being under-represented in physics” and showed that, whilst a substantial number of girls did well at Key Stage 4, they did not choose to study physics post-16. If, as seems apparent from that report, the problem is one of perception then implications for television advertising would now appear to be well worth pursuing.

#### The future of Classical Rhetoric

The television advertisements researched showed that their audiences were, at times, induced to consider themselves to be ideally suited to the products on offer by scenes which echoed their everyday life. The practice is, in fact, so widespread that we may envisage, even as McLuhan (2003) does, that:-

*. . . historians archaeologists will one day discover that the ads of our times are the richest and most faithful daily reflections that any society ever made of its entire range of activities.*

(McLuhan in Gordon, 2003:312)

With modes of communication becoming increasingly more visual and portable there is little doubt of the fundamental role that the canons of classical rhetoric play in *visual* expression during our current era. Corbett & Connors surely foresaw this in predicting that:

*. . . . there will be a "new rhetoric" for the twenty-first century, a rhetoric of cyberspace that will be more comprehensive than any that has been devised so far, an international rhetoric that will be congenial for people of many nations and cultures. But in that new rhetoric there will be noticeable residues of classical rhetoric.*  
(Corbett & Connors, 1999: Preface xi)

The embryo of that new rhetoric is already with us; it is *televisual* rhetoric!

[ Word Count: 88,025 ]

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