



What Was Advertising? The Invention, Rise, Demise, and Disappearance of Advertising Concepts in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Europe and America

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The article introduces a model of changing and competing advertising concepts and frameworks in order to replace dominant but limited periodization models of the historical development of advertising. I argue that different conceptualizations of advertising (as art, science, service, salesmanship, symbolic communication, creativity, and relationship-building) have existed in different forms throughout the last two hundred years. Historians and marketing researchers might learn that 1880s or 1920s practitioners meant different things when they insisted that “advertising works.” Since 1800, emerging advertising frameworks and concepts have had competing perspectives on advertising’s efficiency within the marketing process, and competing concepts of the social and political. Ideas about advertising are inherently political and pertain to specific visions of society. Advertising concepts relied on rhetorical strategies that legitimized and delegitimized opposing social and political structures. These allow us to complicate often undertheorized narratives proffered in advertising management textbooks. A conceptual history of advertising also shows how the triadic relationship among firm, advertising agency, and media has grown.

In his overview of the economics of advertising, Richard Schmalensee wrote rather laconically that the hyperbole surrounding the promise of commercial persuasion of consumers might have been ill-placed: “Empirical studies suggest that advertising is not an important determinant of consumer behaviour and that advertising follows rather

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than leads cultural trends. On the core issue of whether advertising is anti- or pro-competitive, the evidence suggests that advertising is associated with lower prices.”¹ While Schmalensee defends the role of advertising in a competitive economy, he rejects the received wisdom that advertising’s *raison d’être* was its ability to influence and change consumer behavior and/or to lead cultural trends to benefit specific market offerings.² Despite the large amount of money spent on advertising on both sides of the Atlantic, it is commonly thought that the heyday of advertising in its classic form is over. As audiences become more diverse, media more fragmented and technological (mobile phones, Internet), and lifestyle changes accelerate at an ever-faster speed, large-scale mass advertising campaigns have become a thing of the past. Mobile and direct communication, public relations, sponsorship, viral and “buzz” marketing, and product placement are increasingly dominating the relationship between consumers and brands.³ As a result, historians might look back at the twentieth century and ask what advertising actually was and why it dominated our understanding of marketing communications for so long.

In this essay, I propose to “kick-start” the process of historicizing nineteenth- and twentieth-century advertising ideas. When studying the historical development of advertising campaigns, historians of business and society tend to work with a limited understanding of the range of past advertising concepts and frameworks. As historians, we often take for granted a contemporary, yet historically contingent, understanding of what advertising is supposed to be and to achieve.

To problematize such approaches, I provide an overview of trends and changes in advertising frameworks from the early nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. I argue that notions and practices of advertising can be usefully historicized by applying the methods of intellectual history—specifically, the history of concepts. In this, I follow

¹ Richard Schmalensee and David Genesove, “Advertising,” in *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, ed. Steven N. Durlauf and Lawrence E. Blume (London, 2008); *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics Online*, 2d ed.; viewed 10 Feb. 2009. URL: <http://www.dictionaryofeconomics.com/dictionary>.

² Gerard Tellis and Tim Ambler, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Advertising* (London, 2007), 3-8; Demetrios Vakratsas and Tim Ambler, “How Advertising Works: What Do We Really Know?” *Journal of Marketing* 63 (Jan. 1999): 26-43.

³ Roland Rust and Richard Oliver, “The Death of Advertising,” *Journal of Advertising* 23 (Dec. 1994): 71-77; Winston Fletcher, “The End of Advertising as We Know It? *Admap* 1 (Jan. 1996): 22-24; Sergio Zyman, *The End of Advertising as We Know It* (New York, 2002); Al Ries and Laura Ries, *The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR* (New York, 2002); and the excellent “Postscript: Advertising in Crisis” in Sean Brierley, *The Advertising Handbook*, 2d ed. (London, 2002), 233-59.

the German tradition of social history–oriented *Begriffsgeschichte* (translated as “history of concepts”) and the Anglo-Dutch tradition of the history of concepts, with its emphasis on detecting currents of political and religious ideas.⁴ What I propose therefore is an intellectual history of advertising in the form of a conceptual history: rather than outlining changes in advertising media, practices, or designs, I attempt to delineate changes in the conceptualization of what contemporary practitioners and social commentators understood and implied when they talked about advertising. I am thus more interested here in “Advertising” with a capital “A” than in advertisements themselves, or in changing advertising content and communicative forms.⁵

With regard to existing scholarship, my account complicates and challenges advertising histories that focus on specific campaigns, products, periods, and/or countries. I challenge a historiographical understanding of advertising practices as either “modern,” “outdated,” “American,” or “European.”⁶ I hope to further the idea of writing the history of advertising as a history not only of its products and practices, but also of advertising

⁴ Pim den Boer, “The Historiography of German ‘Begriffsgeschichte’ and the Dutch Project of Conceptual History,” in *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans, and Frank van Vree (Amsterdam, 1998), 13-22; Reinhart Kosselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford, Calif., 2002); Wolfgang Schieder and Christof Dipper, “Propaganda,” in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur Politisch-Sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, 9 vols., ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Kosselleck (Stuttgart, 2004), 5: 69–112; Hans-Erich Bödecker, ed., *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte* (Göttingen, 2002); James Grunig, “A Situational Theory of Publics: Conceptual History, Recent Challenges and New Research,” in *Public Relations Research: An International Perspective*, ed. Danny Moss, Toby MacManus, and Dejan Verčič (London, 1997), 3-46.

⁵ This is the preoccupation of the studies by Richard W. Pollay, “The Subsiding Sizzle: A Descriptive History of Print Advertising, 1900-1980,” *Journal of Marketing* 49 (Summer 1985): 24-37; Barbara Gross and Jagdish Sheth, “Time-Oriented Advertising: A Content Analysis of United States Magazine Advertising, 1890-1988,” *Journal of Marketing* 53 (Oct. 1989): 76-83; William Leiss et al., eds., *Social Communication in Advertising: Consumption in the Mediated Marketplace*, 3d ed. (London, 2005), 153-60; Barry Richards, Iain MacRury, and Jackie Botterill, *The Dynamics of Advertising* (Amsterdam, 2000), 161-87.

⁶ Victoria de Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005); Harm Schröter, *Americanization of the European Economy: A Compact Survey of American Economic Influence in Europe since the 1880s* (Amsterdam, 2005); Chris Waters, “Beyond ‘Americanization’—Rethinking Anglo-American Cultural Exchange Between the Wars,” *Cultural & Social History* 4 (Dec. 2007): 451-59.

discourse in a wider sense.⁷ I follow the lead of advertising historians Roland Marchand, Pamela Walker Laird, and T. J. Jackson Lears, who excelled at tracing both the subtle and the more overt changes in the public understanding of advertising.⁸ However, unlike some of these authors, I assume that advertising practitioners in the 1830s, 1880s, 1920s, and 1960s not only might have been doing different things, but might actually have been discussing different things. While Jackson Lears' Foucauldian account of advertising cultures in late nineteenth-century America came close to this idea, he was criticized for his reluctance to produce factual evidence compared to the weighty research offered by Marchand and Laird.⁹ A conceptual history approach might rectify this perceived shortcoming, as it is necessarily based on in-depth readings of sources and archival research. In addition, more ambitious historians might use the model I outline and engage in much-needed global comparisons. It would be interesting to see, for example, if practitioners, scholars, and civil society actors in places such as Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Buenos Aires developed similar or divergent advertising concepts compared to those that dominated the United States and Europe during the nineteenth and early twentieth century.¹⁰

Competing Concepts or “Stages”?

A model of trends and changes in the way advertising was understood and conceptualized by practitioners is not the same as a model based on successive stages of development (“periodization”). Rather, I argue that various definitions of what advertising is and what it is supposed to do always existed and still exist side-by-side. But through the ages, various

⁷ Liz McFall, *Advertising: A Cultural Economy* (London, 2004), 108-9; Anne M. Cronin, *Advertising Myths: The Strange Half-lives of Images and Commodities* (London, 2004), 9-23.

⁸ Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley, Calif., 1985); Pamela Walker Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing* (Baltimore, Md., 1998); T. J. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York, 1995).

⁹ Richards et al., eds., *Dynamics of Advertising*, 33-35.

¹⁰ Russell Belk and Richard Pollay, “Americanization in Print Advertising: An Historical Comparison of Japanese and U.S. Advertising since 1945,” *Marketing*, 2 vols., ed. Stanley Hollander and Kathleen Rassuli (Aldershot, 1993), 2: 49-53; David Tse, Russell Belk, and Nan Zhou, “Becoming a Consumer Society: A Longitudinal and Cross-Cultural Content Analysis of Print Ads from Hong Kong, the People’s Republic of China, and Taiwan,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 15 (March 1989): 457-72; Xin Zhao and Russell Belk, “Advertising Consumer Culture in 1930s Shanghai,” *Journal of Advertising* 37 (Summer 2008): 45-56.

definitions got sidelined, while others were pushed to the fore by those whose ideological and political purposes they served. Admittedly, marketing historians enjoy a love-hate relationship with periodizations: while models of periodization allow for “order,” they also inadvertently promote “Whig” ideas of stages in a progressive and rational process of historical development. The eminent marketing historian Stanley Hollander defined periodization as “the process of dividing the chronological narrative into separately labeled sequential time periods with fairly distinct beginning and ending points.”¹¹ Recently, Ream Shoreibah neatly summarized the criticism of this approach to charting historical change in the following way:

The chief shortcoming of the reduction of history to distinct periods is the tendency to oversimplify, emphasizing the distinguishing features of each period at the expense of other features and events and thus failing to recognize basic foundations that span across periods. In addition, it is often difficult to reach consensus on how to delineate periodic boundaries, as the same historical chronology can be divided based on an abundance of varying criteria. Hollander and others warned that periodisation tends to exaggerate progress, chronicling an apparent evolution towards an ever more desirable state.¹²

In contrast to extant periodization models, such as the one developed by James Grunig for the historical development of public relations, I argue that we can distinguish between various simultaneously competing concepts of advertising that emerged from at least the seventeenth century.¹³ I contend that practitioners’ assertions that “advertising works”

¹¹ Stanley Hollander et al., “Periodization in Marketing History,” *Journal of Macromarketing* 25 (June 2005): 32-41, quotation at p. 32.

¹² Ream Shoreibah, “The Development of Social Marketing: A Historiography Based on Bartels’ Framework (1951-2009),” in *Marketing History: Strengthening, Straightening and Extending: Proceedings of the 14th Biennial Conference on Historical Analysis and Research in Marketing (CHARM)*, ed. Richard Hawkins (Leicester, 2009), 227-37. See also Hollander et al., “Periodization”; Noel Stowe, “Periodization of the History of Marketing Thought,” in *First North American Workshop on Historical Research in Marketing*, ed. Stanley C. Hollander and Ronald Savitt (East Lansing, Mich., 1983), 1-12; Herbert Heaton, “Criteria of Periodization in Economic History,” *Journal of Economic History* 15 (1955): 267-72; Eric Shaw and D. G. Brian Jones, “A History of the Schools of Marketing Thought,” *Marketing Theory* 5 (Sept. 2005): 239-81; Roland Bartels, *The Development of Marketing Thought* (Homewood, Ill., 1962), 157-83.

¹³ James Grunig and Todd Hunt, *Managing Public Relations* (New York, 1984), 22; James Grunig and Laurie Grunig, “Models of Public Relations and Communication,” in *Excellence in Public Relations and Communication*

did not always mean the same thing, and that there were phases of intense competition over the definitions of what advertising was meant to deliver and meant to be. Because an in-depth study of all the various advertising concepts would require a book-length study, I concentrate on the 1930s and the 1950s, when advertising was reconceptualized in relation to the key issues of creativity, branding, and consumer behavior.

The “Polite” and Direct Announcement

From the earliest records we have of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century European print advertising it appears that advertisements were understood mainly as announcements of goods, shops, and services to attract the attention of potential customers. This suggests that through much of the early modern period, advertising was already conceptualized as an important part of an emerging attention economy in which sellers competed for buyers’ attention as an important economic resource.

As early as 1693, the author of what was perhaps Europe’s first advertising handbook advised Dutch shopkeepers how to use language, humor, and irony to draw the attention of potential buyers of watches, books, spices, and dresses.¹⁴ As John Stobart, Maxine Berg, and Claire Walsh have shown, early modern advertising as a form of direct announcement was also situated within the wider realm of “politeness” that made up and structured the bourgeois public sphere.¹⁵ Within that realm, it was not unusual, however, for market traders to use suggestive advertising and display techniques to create a buyer-friendly atmosphere at shops and stalls, and in order to surround their often trademarked (that

Management, ed. James Grunig (Philadelphia, 1992), 285-325; James Grunig and Laurie Grunig, “Conceptualization: The Missing Ingredient of Much PR Practice and Research,” *Jim and Lauri Grunig’s Research: A Supplement of pr reporter* 10 (Dec. 2000): 1-4.

¹⁴ Isaac van den Berg, *Het gestoffeerde winkel en luyfen banquet: Dienstig voor alle winkeliers die eenige rymen voor luyfens, deuren wil zetten: Koddig gerymt, voor de winkeliers en liefhebbers te grabbel gegooyt* [A Book of Advertising Jingles and Songs to be Sung by Tradesmen in their Shops, Including Some for Printers and Bookbinders] (Amsterdam, 1693).

¹⁵ John Stobart, “Selling (through) Politeness: Advertising Provincial Shops in Eighteenth-Century England,” *Cultural and Social History* 5 (Sept. 2008): 309-28; Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, “Commerce and Commodity: Graphic Display and Selling New Consumer Goods in Eighteenth-Century England,” in *Art Markets in Europe, 1400-1800*, ed. Michael North and David Ormrod (Aldershot, 1998), 187-200; Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, “Selling Consumption in the Eighteenth Century: Advertising and the Trade Card in Britain and France,” *Cultural and Social History* 4 (June 2007): 145-70; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass., 1991).

is, branded) goods with specific social values, such as esteem, attraction, and beauty. In other words, there can be no doubt that early modern salespeople, traders, and advertisers worked with a set of buyer-, place- and product-specific tacit knowledge that already connected advertising, brands, and consumer behavior.¹⁶

Mass Distribution and Salesmanship

The concept of advertising as a polite, commercial, and attention-oriented form of public announcement dominated British advertising, especially, until the end of the nineteenth century. As late as 1910, the advertising manager of the London *Financial Times* defined advertising simply as the “art of making known.”¹⁷ In parallel, a second advertising concept began to emerge, largely in response to changes in production and distribution methods. While most markets and product flows tended to be local or regional affairs before the mid-nineteenth century, new forms of production and mass transportation of goods began to unify local and regional markets into markets working at the national level.¹⁸ At this moment, the idea began to emerge that advertising was really an integrated part of efficient distribution systems and an aid to selling mass-produced goods in increasingly homogenous markets. This sales and distribution concept of advertising dominated the advertising literature in the United States and Europe from the 1880s until the years before World War I. In 1903, the London agency Mather & Crother, for example, defined its role in the marketing process by presenting products “to that section of the purchasing public which will buy them.” The agency further explained: “Having ascertained for the client the true place for his announcements, together with the cost at which the advertising operations shall be conducted, in order that the greatest and speediest possible return may be surely obtained by the advertiser, consideration of the form of the

¹⁶ Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760* (London, 1988); Jonathan Barry, “Consumers’ Passions: The Middle Class in Eighteenth-Century England,” *Historical Journal* 34 (March 1991): 207-16; Claire Walsh, “Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London,” *Journal of Design History* 8 (Autumn 1995): 157-76; Claire Walsh, “Shops, Shopping, and the Art of Decision Making in Eighteenth-Century England,” in *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830*, ed. John Styles and Amanda Vickery (New Haven, Conn., 2006), 151-77.

¹⁷ Howard Bridgwater, *Advertising: The Art of Making Known* (London, 1910).

¹⁸ Richard Tedlow, *New and Improved: The Story of Mass Marketing in America* (New York, 1990), 4-8; Terrence Nevett, *Advertising in Britain: A History* (London, 1982), 70-75; Hamish Fraser, *The Coming of the Mass Market, 1850-1914* (London, 1981).

announcement engages the agent's attention."¹⁹ By 1914, the agency had repositioned itself following the service definition of advertising. Instead of an announcement bureau that brought about speedy sales increases for sellers, the agency now described itself as a "modern service agency" and a "bureau of experts."²⁰

In the distribution- and sales-oriented framework, advertising came to be envisioned as a streamlined activity measured only by the criterion of the amount of goods it helped shift to use plant capacity and achieve economies of scale. For this reason, many European and North American advertisers reduced the amount of text and often employed the direct command technique ("Buy Sunlight Soap!") suggested by the American advertising psychologist Walter Dill Scott, among others. Scott advised that advertisements should be informative and persuasive, but always commanding and repetitive to ensure that habitual behaviors were created in the consumer: "If an advertisement can get persons started to purchasing a particular brand of goods, it has done much more than sell the goods in the immediate present; for when people do a thing once it is easier to get them to do it again, and habits are formed by just such repetition."²¹

Advertising as Service

While the conceptualization of advertising as mass sales—later also known as the sales framework of advertising—was still dominant, a slow yet decisive shift in the professional definition of advertising took place at the beginning of the Progressive Era and during the Edwardian period.²² Around 1910, advertising for the first time was defined foremost as a service. Immediately preceding World War I, a discursive theme emerged that presented advertising as a benefit (not as a cost) to all partners in market transactions: manufacturers, retailers, consumers, and even the state and society at large.²³ Advertising brought products into the limelight and often made wide-ranging promises about them, as well as informing

¹⁹ Mather & Crowther, *Practical Advertising, 1903-4* (London, 1903), vii.

²⁰ Mather & Crowther, *Practical Advertising, 1914* (London, 1914), 4, 8.

²¹ Walter Dill Scott, *The Theory and Practice of Advertising: A Simple Exposition of the Principles of Psychology in their Relation to Successful Advertising* (New York, 1908), 132.

²² Chris Fill, *Marketing Communications: Interactivity, Communities and Content* (Harlow, England, 2009), 491.

²³ Eric Shaw, "A Review of Empirical Studies of Aggregate Marketing Costs and Productivity in the United States," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* 18 (Sept. 1990): 285-92; William L. Wilkie and Elizabeth S. Moore, "Scholarly Research in Marketing: Exploring the '4 Eras' of Thought Development," *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 22 (Fall 2003): 116-46.

consumers about products' availability, price, function, and origin. Thus, it handed power over to the consumer and acted as a kind of self-regulating safety net for commercial society. Consumers who were dissatisfied with an advertised, branded product inevitably developed knowledge that allowed them to reject those products that did not live up to the promises made in the advertisements.²⁴ Advertising thus acted as consumers' protector, a collective information system, and helped manufacturers to bring their product messages closer to specific audiences. Advertising guided consumers to look out for what was best for them. It ultimately acted as a form of mass education that prepared the consumer polity for a new civilization in which more choice became available for more people.²⁵

The years between 1900 and 1920 saw the publication of a plethora of advertising handbooks that propagated this newfound idealization and legitimization of advertising. Among them, one publication stood out because it provided a powerful summary of this new and immensely influential advertising concept. When, in 1914, the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, a U.S.-based advertising industry body, planned to publish a textbook that set out the basic principles and practices of advertising, it commissioned the author and advertising practitioner John Lee Mahin to pull together his insights and experiences. What Mahin put on paper became the seminal text, *Advertising: Selling the Consumer*. Despite its sales-oriented title, the book in many ways revolutionized advertising thought because it laid out how advertising as a service fitted into the wider framework of a free market economy. Though Mahin still defined advertising through the lens of sales, he showed that advertising was really "service salesmanship directed at a group."²⁶ In contrast to the earlier announcement- and sales-oriented schools, which both, in a sense, reified advertising, Mahin's service-oriented definition of advertising was a milestone in the intellectualization of the subject. Advertising was no longer defined by what was tangibly and visibly printed on paper and put up on the billboard; it had become an idea:

Advertising is not material substance. It is service. The true advertiser and the advertising man never forget that space is less important than service. Ideas are paramount. . . . The finished work of an advertiser is not a material substance which can be

²⁴ An idiosyncratic logic, best summarized in Laird, *Advertising Progress*, 304-61.

²⁵ Stefan Schwarzkopf, "Respectable Persuaders: The Advertising Industry and British Society, 1900-1951" (Ph.D. diss., Birkbeck College, 2008), 150-70; Inger L. Stole, *Advertising on Trial: Consumer Activism and Corporate Public Relations in the 1930s* (Urbana, Ill., 2006), 11-20, 98-105.

²⁶ John Lee Mahin, *Advertising: Selling the Consumer* (New York, 1914), 3-10, 28.

seen with eyes and touched with hands, but a definite, positive impression in the minds of possible buyers which is reflected in the voluntary purchase of the goods which the advertiser wishes to sell.²⁷

The service orientation that emerged within the advertising profession just before the outbreak of the First World War was a trans-Atlantic phenomenon. In December 1912, the advertising correspondent of the London *Times* described the advertising practitioner in a similar fashion: “His energies, his experience and his skill are devoted to the service of the advertiser. He is an adviser, an originator of ingenious and carefully-planned campaigns. . . . Advertising is no longer a hazard; it has been reduced to an exact science.”²⁸ By the mid-1920s, this service rhetoric had permeated British advertising entirely. In 1925, the largest British advertising agencies publicly committed to a “Truth Pledge,” which promised that the ad agents would “. . . dedicate [their] efforts to the cause of better business and social service,” and the trade journal *Advertiser’s Weekly* announced that “Billposting is civic service. Poster art is social service.”²⁹

Propaganda and Social Engineering

Historians of advertising and marketing know most of this story. From the 1920s on, however, the story of advertising ideas becomes more complicated, and few historians have ventured into researching interwar advertising concepts. Advertising ideas that emerged outside the United States or the American hemisphere have also received relatively little attention. As we have seen, around the time of World War I, an important shift took place, which for the first time in history redefined advertising as a social ideology. The intellectual consequences of this shift cannot be overestimated. As a consequence of the social and political upheavals brought about by “the Great War” and the socialist revolutions that followed it in large parts of Europe, advertising became more firmly embedded within the framework of what today is called social marketing. In other words, both political and commercial advertising became understood as forms of propaganda and social engineering.

Of all Western nations, it was perhaps in Germany and in Britain where practitioners and advertising scholars developed this new conceptualization to its absolute consequences. By the late 1920s, there had emerged a school of thought in Germany that saw advertising mainly as a form of social propaganda for the benefit of national self-organization.

²⁷ Mahin, *Advertising*, 10.

²⁸ “The Work of the Expert,” *The Times*, 11 Dec. 1912, p. 5.

²⁹ *Advertiser’s Weekly* (3 April 1925), 24; “Posters and the Public,” *Advertiser’s Weekly* (2 Oct. 1925), 39.

This vision of advertising as a tool for the social, economic, and political reconstruction of a disrupted national entity was widely discussed at the 1929 Berlin conference of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World. At the conference, over a thousand delegates from all parts of the world met to discuss advertising under the motto “Advertising: the key to world prosperity.” At the conference, a young advertising practitioner from Hamburg, Hans Domizlaff, made his mark by outlining to his audience how corporations and government institutions could use advertising to win public trust.

A few years later, Domizlaff developed an entire marketing philosophy, in which he defined advertising essentially as a behavioral branding technique (*Markentechnik*), which company managers should use to steer their products onto global markets and state leaders should use in order to make the social body more cohesive.³⁰ In a similar fashion, another German advertising scholar, Hanns F. J. Kropff, defined advertising most broadly as an institution to steer the nation’s collective consumer behavior and provide tools for politicians to integrate a separated society into a more holistic unit. During World War II, Kropff described the outlines of “total advertising” as the necessary public policy adjunct in a nation that fought a total war for its survival.³¹ While all of

³⁰ Hans Domizlaff, *Die Gewinnung des öffentlichen Vertrauens: Ein Lehrbuch der Markentechnik* (Hamburg, 1939); Hans Domizlaff, *Propagandamittel der Staatsidee* (Leipzig, 1932); Rainer Gries et al., “Ins Gehirn der Masse kriechen!” *Werbung und Mentalitätsgeschichte* (Darmstadt, 1995), 45-73; Gerhard Voigt, “Goebbels als Markentechniker,” in *Warenästhetik: Beiträge zur Diskussion, Weiterentwicklung und Vermittlung ihrer Kritik*, ed. Wolfgang Fritz Haug (Frankfurt/Main, 1975), 231-60; Tino Jacobs, “Zwischen Intuition und Experiment: Hans Domizlaff und der Aufstieg Reemtsmas, 1921 bis 1932,” in *Marketinggeschichte: die Geschichte einer Modernen Sozialtechnik*, ed. Hartmut Berghoff (Frankfurt/Main, 2007), 148-76; Holm Friebe, “Branding Germany: Hans Domizlaff’s Markentechnik and Its Ideological Impact,” in *Selling Modernity: Advertising in Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Pamela Swett, S. Jonathan Wiesen, and Jonathan Zeitlin (Durham, N.C., 2007), 79-101.

³¹ Hanns F. J. Kropff, *Die Totalität der Werbung. Ein Beitrag zur Vorbereitung ihrer Rationalisierung und zum Einbau in die neue Absatzlehre* (Berlin, 1939). Similar thoughts were expressed in Heinrich Hunke, *Die neue Wirtschaftswerbung: eine Grundlegung der deutschen Werbepolitik* (Hamburg, 1938) and again by Kropff himself in his article “Suggestion, Glaube und Überzeugung in der Reklame,” *Seidels Reklame* 19 (Jan. 1935): 20-24; and later in his book *Die psychologische Seite der Verbrauchsforschung: ein Beitrag zur Verbesserung der Marktforschung und damit der Warenherstellung, der Werbung und des Verkaufs* (Leipzig, 1941). See Stefan Schwarzkopf, “Kontrolle statt Rausch? Marktforschung, Produktwerbung und Verbraucherlenkung im Nationalsozialismus zwischen Phantasien von Masse, Angst und Macht,” in

this might sound like the outflow of hopelessly Nazified brains who desperately tried to present themselves as useful experts to the regime, one needs to keep in mind that it took until well into the 1970s before advertising scholars rediscovered the “social integration” and “public policy” function of commercial advertising.³²

Parallel to the conceptual developments that took place in Germany during the 1920s and 1930s, some British advertising practitioners attempted to widen traditional advertising concepts in order to bring their industry in line with the perceived needs of state and civil society, both of which faced massive political and economic challenges. Amid the intense debate that was waged during the interwar years about the uses, purposes, and evils of advertising, the advertising practitioner Charles Frederick Higham emerged as a pioneering, yet today largely forgotten, proponent of advertising as an efficient tool for social engineering in democratic societies. As early as 1916, Higham explained that advertising was one of the greatest forces known to humanity as it “stimulates our power of choice, sets our standards, creates new habits of thought.” Democratic societies like Britain would benefit greatly from advertising conducted as a “scientific distribution of merchandise and ideas”:

Let us, then, get away from our narrow notions with regard to Advertisement—view it not only as a selling force, but as the greatest distributing force in the world. The best Advertising Men have learnt that a Trade Advertisement not only sells; it explains, interprets and teaches too. It helps to make the public connoisseurs; it intensifies their powers of discrimination and adds to the social and economic welfare of the state.³³

After the war, Higham helped create the myth that only the specialized knowledge and professional services of advertising executives could have enabled the British government to mobilize all forces of society:

Most men and women thought they were acting on their own initiative; and, though in the ultimate sense this was true, yet probably not half those self-sacrificing decisions would have been made without the continual galvanisation of heart and thought and energy. Government publicity, throughout the war, was like the beating of drums; except that they were silent drums, and the beating was not on parchment but on consciences.³⁴

Rausch und Diktatur: Inszenierung, Mobilisierung und Kontrolle in totalitären Systemen, ed. Arpad von Klimó and Malte Rolf (Frankfurt/Main, 2006), 193-216.

³² Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman, “Social Marketing: An Approach to Planned Social Change,” *Journal of Marketing* 35 (July 1971): 3-12.

³³ Charles Higham, “Scientific Distribution,” *Daily Mail* (15 Aug. 1916), 1.

³⁴ Charles Higham, *Looking Forward: Mass Education through Publicity* (London, 1920), 23.

The social propaganda and mass education concept of advertising found its embodiment in the advertising and public relations work of the Empire Marketing Board (EMB), a small government organization that, since 1926, issued poster and print advertising, leaflets, films, and radio programs, and organized public lecture series on the importance of the Empire and Commonwealth economies for the British consumer at home. As Dan LeMahieu and Stephen Constantine show, the EMB's advertising designs and strategy were directly influenced by the struggle over competing advertising concepts.³⁵ Some advertising professionals and politicians who served on the board demanded that the EMB's posters should directly persuade consumers to go out and buy Empire-produced goods, but other marketing professionals like the agency director, William Crawford, and the London Underground's advertising manager, Frank Pick, rejected this view in favor of more propagandistic advertising strategies that were entirely based on educational and artistic premises. Instead of pieces of salesmanship, the EMB initially designed its posters mainly as pieces of mass education. The foremost modern poster designers of the day were recruited in order to deliver artistically challenging, beautiful designs that were devised to inform consumers as well as to please their eyes. Behind the EMB stood the philosophy that advertising worked best if it convinced people to become active as citizens and rally around a great social and political cause.³⁶

In the United States during these years, advertising and public relations people began to toy with similar ideas that assigned marketing communication a much wider social and political role. Most notably, Edward Bernays told his audiences in 1928 that the advertisers' job was to understand the inner workings of the "group mind." Because the group mind did not work in the same way as the individual mind, advertising and public relations (PR) practitioners had to devise communications that aligned the potentially disruptive differences between people and bound them together into a meaningful whole on which stable democracies and

³⁵ Dan L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain between the Wars* (Oxford, England, 1988), 154-70; Anandi Ramamurthy, *Imperial Persuaders: Images of Africa and Asia in British Advertising* (Manchester, 2003), 131-45; Stephen Constantine, *Buy & Build: The Advertising Posters of the Empire Marketing Board* (London, 1986), 1-17; Stephen Constantine, " 'Bringing the Empire alive': The Empire Marketing Board and Imperial Propaganda, 1926-33," in *Empire and Popular Culture*, ed. John MacKenzie (Manchester, 1986), 192-231; Judith Freeman, "The Publicity of the Empire Marketing Board, 1926-1933," *Journal of Advertising History* 1 (1977): 12-14.

³⁶ Schwarzkopf, "Respectable Persuaders," 203-15.

efficient economies depended.³⁷ While Bernays achieved some level of notoriety as a result of his near-demonization by communications researchers including Noam Chomsky and Stuart Ewen, others attempted to work out new definitions for a widened advertising concept. Among them were the two advertising practitioners, Roy Sheldon and Egmont Arens. By drawing on Ernest Elmo Calkin's notion of "consumer engineering," both authors argued that advertising was, in reality, a social engineering technique and a science that could be used to find, and match, demand and supply in order to prevent under-consumption:

Modern science has been humaneering in psychology as well as in marketing. Under a dozen different banners it has been investigating the human mind by ever increasingly more accurate scientific methods. The work started by such pioneers as Freud, Jung, and Adler among the psychoanalysts, and by Professor Pavlov and Watson under the general term of behaviourism, is beginning to bear fruit in the advertising orchard.³⁸

In the more task- and sales-oriented American market culture, however, it seems that the European fascination with what today would be called the social-marketing concept of advertising, took less root than in the socially and politically more experimental European world. There were only a few who attempted to explore the possibilities of a widened advertising concept systematically, and among them Edward Bernays, who was of European descent, stood out.³⁹

Brand Management

The social propaganda concept of advertising had fallen somewhat out of fashion on both sides of the Atlantic by the late 1930s. Not only were advertisers like the EMB criticized for their needlessly highbrow approach to the market, but individual advertising messiahs Hans Domizlaff, Charles Higham, and Edward Bernays also came under fire for being out of touch with their clients' requirements regarding scientific advertising and with sales strategies based on market and consumer research data. The influx into the United States of European consumer researchers like

³⁷ Edward Bernays, *Propaganda* (New York, 1928), 50–52; Edward Bernays, "The Marketing of National Policies: A Study of War Propaganda," *Journal of Marketing* 6 (Jan. 1942): 236–44.

³⁸ Roy Sheldon and Egmont Arens, *Consumer Engineering: A New Technique for Prosperity* (New York, 1932), 97.

³⁹ When Wiebe and Kotler talked about widening the marketing concept, they actually caught up with a debate that had begun in Europe at least a generation earlier; see G. D. Wiebe, "Merchandising Commodities and Citizenship on Television," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 15 (Winter 1951–52): 679–91; and Kotler and Zaltman, "Social Marketing."

Herta Herzog, Alfred Politz, and Paul Lazarsfeld changed the “mood” of the advertising debate once more, as those who demanded evidence-based and sales-oriented advertising began to win the argument once again. During the 1930s, it became possible to combine the thrust of mass salesmanship with more in-depth knowledge of the needs of specific market segments. Across the Atlantic, advertising professionals began once again to redefine their self-concept and acknowledge that advertising really was part of managing the totality of a brand in a given market.⁴⁰

At about that time, the London agency of William Crawford began to talk about “product personality” and the “advertising idea,” arguing that in order to stimulate sales of a certain product, agencies had to create powerful brand images. The Crawford agency did this from scratch after it acquired the European advertising account of Chrysler motorcars in 1925. Crawford’s account group around the copywriter Saxon Mills and the artist Ashley Havinden realized that Chrysler cars could not compete on technical specifications or tangible product attributes, but that, first of all, the brand had to be positioned in peoples’ minds. This was achieved by creating an image of speed, performance, and modernity for the Chrysler brand. All Chrysler advertisements were dominated by the now iconic “streamline,” and people and cars in the advertisements became part of a modernist composition of technical elements.

As the copywriter Saxon Mills later wrote, Crawford and Havinden realized that they had to use the product’s “personality” in order to create an “advertising idea,” and Crawford explained to his client that he could put a “face” on their products. Crawford himself drew on Dale Carnegie’s 1937 management classic, when he explained that it was only through the “advertising idea” that “your product wins friends and influences people.”⁴¹ Crawford’s agency and the account team thus did not attempt to sell the car itself, but instead devised advertising communications to form attitudes about the Chrysler brand. The team decided that Chrysler as a brand needed to convey acceleration, speed, and modernity; Havinden argued that print advertisements with ordinary half-tone black-and-white photographs would not make the car look any different from other brands. Because the agency was also in charge of the Chrysler campaign in

⁴⁰ Ronald Fullerton and G. Low, “Brands, Brand Management and the Brand Manager System: A Critical-Historical Evaluation,” *Journal of Marketing Research* 31 (May 1994): 173-90; Stefan Schwarzkopf, “Turning Trade Marks into Brands: How Advertising Agencies Created Brands in the Global Market Place, 1900-1930,” Centre for Globalization Research, School of Business and Management, Queen Mary University of London, Working Paper No. 18 (Aug. 2008). URL: <http://ideas.repec.org/s/cgs/wpaper.html>.

⁴¹ Godfrey Hope Saxon Mills, *There is a Tide. . . The Life and Work of Sir William Crawford, K.B.E.* (London, 1954), 79.

southern and Eastern Europe and the Middle East, where low-quality newspaper print was the rule, a photograph in the advertisements would have undermined the brand message of modernity and performance. In order to get across the brand image of glamour, excitement, and speed, Havinden created unique and iconic drawings, which today are recognized as Britain's first advertising campaign in a purely modernist design. Crawford's Chrysler campaign under the slogan "We are coming in a Chrysler" was also one of the first British attempts at building a consistent brand image internationally.⁴²

Though the brand as a key focus of advertising practice took center stage during the 1930s, there was no lack of controversy around the question of whether a more sales-driven and rationally argued advertising approach or a more artistically minded and creative approach was better-suited to serve the purpose of brand-building. Around this issue, different advertising agency philosophies emerged between 1930 and 1970. The J. Walter Thompson agency (JWT), McCann-Erickson, and Ted Bates' agency with its famous copywriter Rosser Reeves developed a school of advertising thought that emphasized the research-based sales-function of advertisements.⁴³ Following this line of thought, JWT, McCann, and Bates advertisements stressed the uses and benefits of products ("reason-why approach") and their unique selling proposition (USP), in order to build a brand image around these clearly communicated benefits. Artwork took somewhat of a backseat in these agencies. In contrast, agencies like W. S. Crawford, Doyle, Dane Bernbach (DDB), Ogilvy, Benson & Mather (OBM), and Saatchi & Saatchi stressed the primacy of creative, and often challenging and ironic, artwork over direct-sales messages.⁴⁴

⁴² Saxon Mills, *There is a Tide...*, 82; Ashley Havinden, "The Importance of 'Company Handwriting'," *Penrose Annual* 49 (1955): 58-61; Michael Havinden, *Advertising and the Artist: Ashley Havinden* (Edinburgh, 2003), 27-39; Stefan Schwarzkopf, "Creativity, Capital and Tacit Knowledge: The Crawford Agency and British Advertising in the Interwar Years," *Journal of Cultural Economy* 1 (July 2008): 181-97.

⁴³ Peggy J. Kreshel, "The 'Culture' of J. Walter Thompson, 1915-1925," *Public Relations Review* 16 (Fall 1990): 80-93; Summary-Advertising Plan 1928-1935 (May 1935), JWT papers, box 687, History of Advertising Trust Archive, Norwich; JWT Blue Book (1928-29), JWT papers, JWT New Business Records, box 7, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising and Marketing History, Duke University, North Carolina; and Marion Harper, *Getting Results from Advertising* (New York, 1948).

⁴⁴ For this fundamental difference in advertising concepts in the United States and the United Kingdom, see Colin McDonald and Jane Scott, "A Brief History of Advertising," in *The SAGE Handbook of Advertising*, ed. Gerard Tellis and Tim Ambler (London, 2007), 17-34; F. K. Beard, "One Hundred Years of Humor in American Advertising," *Journal of Macromarketing* 25 (Jan. 2005): 54-65;

Management of Symbols

During the late 1950s, the debate about the role and meaning of the brand in the advertising process helped usher in yet another conceptualization, in which observers understood advertising mainly as strategic manipulation of symbols.⁴⁵ After World War II, American advertising agencies, in particular, had begun to seek more formalized approaches to identifying key stages in the brand-building process. Since 1948, David Ogilvy's OBM agency had begun to work on a specific brand model, because Ogilvy saw his main competitor, Rosser Reeves at the Ted Bates agency, developing a very successful brand communication model based on the unique selling proposition. Against this, Ogilvy formulated the idea of the "Basic Sales Proposition," which was to guide all advertising communication for a particular brand. Both models were developed during the late 1930s and early 1940s, and still viewed the brand mainly as a passive carrier of certain unique characteristics that differentiated the product in the minds of target groups.⁴⁶ During the 1950s, the competition among Ogilvy & Mather, the Ted Bates agency, and Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB) led to further refinements of brand models up and down Madison Avenue. At the Bates agency, the "brand wheel" model was developed, which allowed the agency to identify and order a brand's functional and psychological benefits. In response to this, David Ogilvy adopted the idea of the brand image, which the advertising campaign had to create for a product. In Chicago at the same time, Leo Burnett developed the idea that the brand had to be the expression of an "inherent drama" that was hidden in the product.⁴⁷

The sudden mushrooming of brand models and brand concepts in the United States after the 1940s can be explained, to some extent, by the exceptional increase in the available knowledge about consumer behavior.⁴⁸ The rise of market and advertising research and the ever-

Winston Fletcher, *Powers of Persuasion: The Inside Story of British Advertising* (Oxford, England, 2008), 64-76, 127-57.

⁴⁵ The classic article is Sidney Levy, "Symbols for Sale," *Harvard Business Review* 37 (July 1959): 117-24.

⁴⁶ Rosser Reeves, *Reality in Advertising* (New York, 1961).

⁴⁷ Nancy Millman, *Emperors of Adland: Inside the Advertising Revolution* (New York, 1988); and Stephen Fox, *The Mirror Makers: A History of American Advertising and Its Creators* (New York, 1984), 222.

⁴⁸ Louisa Ha, "Market Research," in *The Advertising Age Encyclopedia of Advertising*, ed. John McDonough and Karen Egolf (New York, 2002), 983-87; Sarah Igo, *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007); Susan Ohmer, *George Gallup in Hollywood* (New York, 2006); Jean Converse, *Survey Research in the United States: Roots and Emergence, 1890-1960* (Berkeley, Calif., 1987).

increasing streams of information about markets, products and media, however, did not necessarily translate into “better” advertisements and did not necessarily tell the agency creative personnel how to devise new campaign ideas. Consequently, the creative process had to be formalized and conceptualized: in the “production line” of an advertising campaign the input was high (market research information), but further down the chain, the moment of creating a campaign proved a bottleneck that posed various risks to the client-agency relationship. More academic conceptualizations of the brand, and the development of account planning during the 1960s, diminished that risk considerably, allowing agencies to trademark a unique type of tacit knowledge about consumers and markets and turn it into explicit, conceptualized knowledge.⁴⁹

The case of David Ogilvy’s agency, OBM, and its advertising work for Dove soap (Unilever), Rolls Royce, Shell, and Schweppes provides crucial insight into how important the conceptual understanding of the brand as social symbol was for the advertising process after the 1940s.⁵⁰ In his correspondence with Bill Bernbach of DDB, David Ogilvy acknowledged, for example, that successful brands were in themselves cultural icons (that is, “cults”), when he wrote: “You people seem to have a bottomless supply of genius to nourish the cult you have created for Volkswagen. Never in all recorded history has an agency sustained such a high level of advertising for any client. I am lost in perpetual admiration. The VW people should give you a castle on the Rhine, stocked with victuals and servants, in perpetuity.”⁵¹

Ogilvy was also fully aware that in order to reach this cult status the brand as a symbol had to be firmly positioned in the minds of consumers as a unique offering with both tangible and psychological benefits. Although acknowledged in marketing theory only during the 1960s, brand positioning began to occupy the brains of Madison Avenue beginning in

⁴⁹ Stephen King, *Developing New Brands* (London, 1973); Chris Hackley, “Tacit Knowledge and the Epistemology of Expertise in Strategic Marketing Management,” *European Journal of Marketing, Special Edition: Marketing Pedagogy* 33, Issue 7/8 (1999): 720-35; Stanley Pollitt and Paul Feldwick, *Pollitt on Planning* (Henley-on-Thames, 2000); Timothy D. Malefy, “Models, Metaphors and Client Relations: The Negotiated Meanings of Advertising,” in *Advertising Cultures*, ed. Timothy D. Malefy and Brian Moeran (New York, 2003), 139-63; Paul Feldwick, “Account Planning: Its History and Significance for Ad Agencies,” in *The SAGE Handbook of Advertising*, ed. Gerard Tellis and Tim Ambler (London, 2007), 184-98.

⁵⁰ Mark Tungate, *Adland: A Global History of Advertising* (London, 2007), 39-56.

⁵¹ David Ogilvy to Bill Bernbach, 6 May 1963, box 3, folder correspondence William Bernbach, David Ogilvy Papers, Library of Congress.

the 1950s. The advertising giants Rosser Reeves and David Ogilvy led this search for conceptualization of the advertising process as the process of positioning a meaningful brand. As Daniel Haygood has shown, the two influenced each other in this perennial search.⁵² On August 22, 1960, Ogilvy wrote to Reeves referring to his *Reality in Advertising*:

Twenty-two years ago [in 1938] you changed the course of my life by lending me the manuscript of Claude Hopkins 'Scientific Advertising', which had not then been published. Now you yourself have written a book of equal importance. . . . It is grotesque, and for me almost tragic, that so many people should regard me as the leading opponent of your "Reality Sell" philosophy, when I am in fact your most fervent disciple.

He continued that engaging with the works of Hopkins and Reeves had taught him the importance of "brand identification," the lack of which in contemporary advertising he found disappointing: "I am obsessed with this; it leads me to perpetual searches for 'singularity'."⁵³ From Claude C. Hopkins, legendary copywriter at the Lord & Thomas agency between 1907 and 1923, Reeves and Ogilvy had learned the importance of a meaningful narrative that advertising had to offer about a brand.⁵⁴ For Reeves, this was encapsulated in a tangible USP ("hard sell"), for Ogilvy more often in a story or image ("soft sell"). However, both believed in Hopkins' idea that advertising had to tell "a selling story" and that it had to transfer "meaning" to a product. Advertising also had to create an idea of a unique and meaningful characteristic and/or benefit of a product.⁵⁵ Ogilvy credited Hopkins, specifically, with having invented the idea of the brand image.⁵⁶ Hopkins had indeed written as early as 1923 that brands are like people, and that if a brand's characteristics changed, it was as if one had to get wholly newly acquainted with a close friend one thought one knew well. Therefore, if possible, advertisements should contain recognizable individuals, because it was they who sold the product, not "the soul-less corporation."⁵⁷ Hopkins followed this philosophy for over fifteen years at

⁵² Daniel Haygood, "David Ogilvy versus Rosser Reeves and their 'Competing' Advertising Philosophies," in *Marketing History at the Center: Proceedings of the 13th Biennial Conference on Historical Analysis and Research in Marketing (CHARM)*, ed. Blaine B. Branchik (Durham, N.C., 2007), 105-14.

⁵³ David Ogilvy to Rosser Reeves, 22 Aug. 1960, box 22, folder correspondence Rosser Reeves, David Ogilvy Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁴ Claude C. Hopkins, *My Life in Advertising* (New York, 1917); Claude C. Hopkins, *Scientific Advertising* (Chicago, Ill., 1923).

⁵⁵ Claude C. Hopkins, *Scientific Advertising: Introduction by David Ogilvy* (New York, 1966), 91.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 84.

Lord & Thomas for Schlitz Beer (at one time America's favorite beer brand), for Unilever's Pepsodent, and for Palmolive Soap.

Considerations about brand concepts and explicit brand theories mattered enormously in advertising agency practice from the 1940s on. When forming his agency in New York with British financial support in 1948, Ogilvy's strategy was driven by four basic factors: to found his agency around the experience of young advertising executives from the top agencies in the country; to have creative staff with a record of "building advertisements of high readership for major accounts"; to find, through research, the "Basic Selling Appeal" (BSA) of a product or service; and to apply the findings concerning these appeals with techniques for high readership to "institute advertising designed to sell more goods to more people at less cost." Thus, he coined the Ogilvy formula: "optimum BSA + maximum penetration = maximum sales" or, less technically: "we take the Basic Selling Appeal and burn it into the minds of the mass millions in the most efficient manner."⁵⁸

This formula was revised only in 1955, when Ogilvy rediscovered Hopkins' 1920s considerations about a brand's holistic and "personal" characteristics in an article published by Sidney Levy and Burleigh Gardner in the *Harvard Business Review*.⁵⁹ Levy and Gardner's article, titled "The Product and the Brand," was a revelation for the advertising world because they made explicit for the first time what many of the more innovative agencies such as Lord & Thomas and W. S. Crawford's had tacitly practiced for about three decades. Levy and Gardner's conceptualization of the idea of the brand image in March 1955, therefore, was immediately picked up by agencies like JWT, Lintas, and OBM.⁶⁰ Only a few months after Levy and Gardner's article had appeared, David Ogilvy formulated what he called a "Creative Credo," which was to guide campaign development at OBM: "Every advertisement is part of the long-term investment in the personality of the brand." Accordingly, in a speech in October 1955 Ogilvy announced: "We hold that every advertisement must be considered as a contribution to the complex symbol which is the brand image—as part of the long term investment in the reputation of the brand." In this speech, Ogilvy attacked the industry for not recognizing

⁵⁸ David Ogilvy, "HOB&M Presentation," ca. 1949, box 33, folder administrative correspondence (1949), David Ogilvy Papers, Library of Congress.

⁵⁹ Burleigh Gardner and Sidney Levy, "The Product and the Brand," *Harvard Business Review* 33 (March-April 1955): 33-39.

⁶⁰ Alex Mitchell, *The Brand Image and Advertising Effectiveness*, ATV Series of Technical Research Studies, no. 1 (London, 1959); and Sidney Levy, "Roots of Marketing and Consumer Research at the University of Chicago," *Consumption, Markets & Culture* 6 (June 2003): 99-110.

that brand loyalty could be built only through brands with a strong “personality”:

Aren't these two things connected—the lack of brand personalities and the lack of brand loyalties? And isn't the lack of brand personality caused more than anything else by the fact that all the detergents are using the same claims, each of them trying to be all things to all people? . . . The manufacturers who dedicate their advertising to building the most favourable image, the most sharply defined personality for their brand are the ones who will get the largest share of these markets at the highest profit—in the long run.⁶¹

Against Rosser Reeves' idea of the material product differentiation (USP) Ogilvy called out: “Let us remember that it is almost always the total personality of a brand rather than any trivial product difference which decides its ultimate position in the market.”

One year later, Ogilvy's director of research, Myron Helfgott, argued the same way when he presented the agency's advertising research process to conference delegates in Ohio.⁶² Helfgott argued that advertisements helped in “anthropomorphizing” the brand: that is, turning it into a person. According to Helfgott, through this process a relationship between consumer and brand was established, and thus what took place in advertising was mainly “symbolic communication.” What Helfgott brought in here was the crucial dimension of emotion in the marketing communication and the consumer decision-making processes. In order to gauge the effect of advertisements on targeted audiences, Helfgott's research moved beyond demographic variables (age, occupation, income, education, family size, and so forth) and instead considered these audiences as “emotional groups” with certain specific “personality dimensions” to which one brand's image and personality as a holistic symbol appealed, whereas another did not. While engaging with the then-fashionable world of Freudian motivation research, Helfgott's idea of the existence of what he called “emotional groups” characterized by inventories of specific personality dimensions that predetermined reactions to brand messages was essentially an outline of what in the 1970s came to be known as psychographic and lifestyle segmentation.⁶³

⁶¹ David Ogilvy, “The Image and the Brand—A New Approach to Creative Operations,” Speech given at the 4 A's Luncheon in Chicago, 14 Oct. 1955, box 78, folder speeches 1954-1956, David Ogilvy Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶² Myron Helfgott, “Increasing Advertising Effectiveness through Copy Testing,” 26 Oct. 1956, box 78, speeches 1954-1956, David Ogilvy Papers, Library of Congress.

⁶³ Pierre Martineau, *Motivation in Advertising: Motives That Make People Buy* (New York, 1957); and Ernest Dichter, *The Strategy of Desire* (New York, 1960);

Saliency and Creativity in the Cold War

Advertising agencies' rather sudden discovery of the brand image and the relevance of imagery and consumer emotions did not immediately translate into radical shifts in advertising production. In contrast, by the late 1950s, "ad men" on Madison Avenue began to complain that their endless repetition of identical cliché families in sedan cars and sterile kitchen environments threatened the whole sector with the deadly disease of boredom.⁶⁴ The monotony of 1950s American advertising was interrupted by Helmut Krone's Volkswagen campaign for the Doyle Dane Bernbach (DDB) agency. The preoccupation of DDB and other agencies with "creative" output and with pushing the boundaries of irony further finally led to the emergence of a specific advertising framework, which is known in the marketing literature as the saliency framework. This interpretation of advertising "is based upon the premise that advertising works by standing out, by being different from all other advertisements in the product class."⁶⁵ Within this framework, the creative team became more and more recognized for its key role within the advertising process. Rather than assuming that advertising persuaded consumers directly by taking them through identifiable stages of decision-making, the saliency philosophy assumed that consumers had greater autonomy in reading and decoding advertisements. The earlier persuasion (or "Hierarchy of Effects") model that was first developed in the mid-1920s and then became popular in the academic world during the 1960s and 1970s thus found its direct competitor in the saliency framework.⁶⁶ The latter also shifted the power balance within agencies away from market researchers, planners, and account executives to creative teams, who often resented "being managed."⁶⁷

Rainer Gries and Stefan Schwarzkopf, eds., *The Great Persuader: Ernest Dichter, Motivation Research and the Making of Post-War Consumer Culture* (London, 2010) (forthcoming).

⁶⁴ Interview with Steve Frankfurt, creative director at Young & Rubicam during the 1960s, in Tim Kirby, *Selling the Sixties* (BBC Four Documentary, 2 March 2008).

⁶⁵ Fill, *Marketing Communications*, 491; Mike Hall, "Using Advertising Frameworks," *Admap* (March 1992), 17-21; Damien O'Malley, "Sales Without Saliency? Small Brands, Advertising Models—and the 'Curse of Television,'" *Admap* (Sept. 1991), 36-39.

⁶⁶ Edward K. Strong, *The Psychology of Selling* (New York, 1925); Kristian S. Palda, "The Hypothesis of a Hierarchy of Effects: A Partial Evaluation," *Journal of Marketing Research* 3 (Feb. 1966): 13-24; and John O'Shaughnessy and Nicholas J. O'Shaughnessy, *Persuasion in Advertising* (London, 2004), 123-53.

⁶⁷ Jeremy Tunstall, *The Advertising Man in London Advertising Agencies* (London, 1964), 58-77; Chris Hackley and Arthur J. Kover, "The Trouble with

Like the sales and the persuasion frameworks, the salience framework of advertising is not merely an alternative interpretation of advertising with only an academic existence, detached from social and political reality. The stress on creative and artistically challenging output had been the hallmark of a number of European agencies as early as the 1920s and 1930s.⁶⁸ Yet during the 1950s, art and irony became politicized and were enrolled as weapons in the global cultural Cold War. As socialist countries banned advertising altogether, and the European and North American Left began to target advertising for its social effects, agency professionals in the “Free World” rallied around the idea that advertising was not merely salesmanship that added to the total cost of distribution. Instead, advertising became redefined as an expression of creativity, an expression of the “freedom of speech,” artistic freedom, and thus, an important cultural contribution to Western societies that had to ward off the threat of totalitarianism.⁶⁹ With the help of Art Directors Clubs that emerged throughout the Western world, creative advertising workers were elevated to a status of political and cultural importance they had not enjoyed before World War II. This transition also meant that, by the 1960s, it became perfectly legitimate for advertising designers to focus mainly on how their work would be received by their peer group rather than by clients or by consumers. Not product sales, but the Ad Award and a place in the Art Directors’ Annual became the prize of cultural sustenance strived for by the new class of “creatives” as “cultural intermediaries.”⁷⁰

Conclusion

From the 1970s and 1980s, we find competing and complementary advertising concepts and frameworks that co-exist. Advertising practitioners’ stress on brand imagery and symbolism is as alive as the overall pressure to respond to clients’ need for measurable returns on

Creatives: Negotiating Creative Identity in Advertising Agencies,” *International Journal of Advertising* 26, no. 1 (2007): 63-78.

⁶⁸ Schwarzkopf, “Creativity, Capital and Tacit Knowledge.”

⁶⁹ Stefan Schwarzkopf, “They Do It with Mirrors: Advertising and British Cold War Consumer Politics,” *Contemporary British History* 19 (June 2005): 133-50.

⁷⁰ Sean Nixon and Paul Du Gay, “Who Needs Cultural Intermediaries,” *Cultural Studies* 16 (July 2002): 495-500; Anne M. Cronin, “Regimes of Mediation: Advertising Practitioners as Cultural Intermediaries?” *Consumption, Markets & Culture* 7, no. 4 (2004): 349-69; Matthew Soar, “Encoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising Production,” *Mass Communication and Society* 3 (Jan. 2000): 415-37; Michelle Bogart, *Advertising, Artists and the Borders of Art* (Chicago, Ill., 1995), 127-37, 157-70; and Elizabeth Hirschman, “Role-Based Models of Advertising Creation and Production,” *Journal of Advertising* 18, no. 4 (1989): 42-53.

investment (ROI). At the same time, advertising agencies vied for clients by pushing themselves ahead of the queue at the various annual advertising creative awards. “Quirkiness” became acceptable as an alternative to the traditional hard-selling approach of “Mr. Muscle” and “Cillit Bang” bathroom cleaners.⁷¹

Toward the end of the twentieth century, two additional understandings of advertising came to the fore, with origins that can be traced back at least to the interwar era. First, both marketing researchers and practitioners emphasize the very positive role that advertising campaigns can play within the social marketing framework that communicates to the public a corporation’s various social responsibilities. Advertising is here seen as a vital part of social campaigning, which in itself has often nothing tangible “to sell,” but rather attempts to change people’s attitudes and behaviors. Examples include drugs, violence, terrorism, speeding, dietary recommendations, and so on.⁷² The recognition of this potential role for advertising, of course, ultimately goes back to the interwar idea of advertising as a tool of social policy for a new society.

Second, researchers and practitioners increasingly recognize the relationship function that advertising serves by connecting consumers and brand and by actively drawing the consumer into an imaginary world of a brand. Termed the “involvement framework,” this philosophy conceptualizes advertising mainly as an activity that works through stimulating product involvement and creating an emotional response.⁷³ Once again, advertising historians might wish to test whether these concepts are really new or whether they are part of a much older tradition that has existed at least since the early twentieth century. The rise, demise, re-, and disappearance of these advertising models and concepts also alert historians to differentiate more carefully in their analyses between advertisements that aim to create a response to the featured product and those that arouse a response to the advertisement itself.

Now that advertising is supposedly “dead,” it is not immediately clear what results a historical approach to changing advertising concepts and ideas could possibly yield. On the one hand, the conceptualizations

⁷¹ Fred K. Beard, “Hard-Sell ‘Killers’ and Soft-Sell ‘Poets’: Modern Advertising’s Enduring Message Strategy Debate,” *Journalism History* 30 (Fall 2004): 141-49; and Pollay, “The Subsiding Sizzle.”

⁷² Alan R. Andreasen, “Social Marketing: Its Definition and Domain,” *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing* 13 (Spring 1994): 108-14; and Philip Kotler, “The Role Played by the Broadening of Marketing Movement in the History of Marketing Thought,” *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 24 (Spring 2005): 114-16.

⁷³ Fill, *Marketing Communications*, 491.

discussed here perhaps existed in different forms throughout the last hundred years and, in one way or another, sales-focused and more artistically minded definitions of the purposes of advertising always competed with each other. Throughout the twentieth century, there existed an intense competition between the position that associated advertising mainly with servicing clients and the position that understood advertising, first and foremost, as a creative activity that needed some necessary measure of detachment from immediate commercial imperatives in order to produce high-quality output of advertising work (see Appendix).

On the other hand, I argue that historians and marketing researchers might learn a lot by acknowledging that practitioners in 1900, 1950, and 2000 perhaps meant completely different things when they insisted that “advertising works.” Behind the various advertising frameworks outlined are not only competing understandings of the efficiency of advertising within a narrowly defined marketing process, but also competing concepts of the social and the political. While European ideas of advertising creativity in the 1920s, for example, denoted a progressive agenda of socio-political change of mass society close to that envisaged by Socialism, political statements about the superiority of market-driven governance systems of society dominated the American concept of the 1960s’ “advertising creative.” This insight allows us to deconstruct and equally contextualize the stories the advertising industry tells about itself. The idea, for example, that advertising has to be “creative” then appears to be, above all, a political statement intended to legitimize advertising in market capitalism. By reinventing brand communication as creative art, a certain *habitus* exhibited by advertising professionals then becomes socially and culturally legitimized.

I argue that ideas about the role and functions of advertising are inherently political ideas pertaining to specific visions of society. The changes and trends in advertising concepts are, therefore, the outcome of rhetorical strategies that legitimized and delegitimized opposing views of social and political structures. This understanding, in turn, allows us to complicate the narrative of advertising creation and advertising management in textbooks, which often start with a largely unreflected and mostly undertheorized idea of what advertising is and what it does. A conceptual history of advertising, for example, would also show that the triadic relationship among corporation, advertising agency, and media has historically grown and does not necessarily have to look the way it does today. Marketing management teaching clearly privileges one type of understanding of advertising production at the expense of other definitions, without acknowledging that the type that is privileged is, at the same time, historically contingent.

An outline of the changes and trends that affected advertising concepts and frameworks over time allows us to be somewhat more differentiating, historically, in comparison to those authors who see twentieth-century

European and Asian advertising practices as mainly shaped by American role models (“Americanization”). The clandestine modernization narrative that underpins this view largely underestimates the variety, social complexity, and divergent socio-philosophical aims that characterized the multitude of advertising practices that existed at different times. A conceptual history of advertising also helps us debunk self-made myths of the industry as full of ingenious “hidden persuaders.” Clearly, key members of the advertising industry in the United States and the various European societies had different ideas about their practices and even engaged in fights among themselves over exactly what advertising was supposed to be. In these internal conflicts, one side attempted to delegitimize the other. This, in turn, had a direct impact on contemporary advertising practices and on the shared definitions of how advertising was supposed to be done or not.

Appendix The Invention, Rise, Demise, and Disappearance of Advertising Concepts

