

Stephen Brown<sup>1</sup>

## Writing Marketing: The Clause That Refreshes

University of Ulster

*Whatever their philosophical, methodological and epistemological differences, marketing academics have one thing in common. They are writers. They publish or perish. They produce books, articles, case studies and, on occasion, articles for top-notch journals like JMM. Writing, however, is rarely given much thought by the scholarly community. It is considered a chore, an obligation, a tiresome task between completing the research and seeing it published. This paper examines the often uneasy relationship between marketing and writing. Based upon a study of best academic practice, it shows that there's more to outstanding writing than many suppose. It's not simply a matter of short sentences, plain prose and setting out the facts succinctly. Writing marketing also involves an appreciation of the 3R's, all of which run counter to academic custom and scholarly practice.*

---

**Keywords:** writing, rhetoric, publications, the 3R's.

*Writing is easy. All you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until the drops of blood form on your forehead.*

—Gene Fowler

The marketing academy, like that bizarre biblical building, is a house of many mansions. Scholars study everything from the pitfalls of globalisation (Johansson 1999) to the sales patter of flea market stallholders (Sherry 1991). Research methods range from structural equation modelling (Diamantopoulos and Siquaw 2000) to “netnography”, a kind of on-line in-dwelling (Kozinets 2002). Philosophical perspectives stretch from good old fashioned Positivism (Hunt 2002) to wild and woolly Postmodernism (Brown 1995). The ultimate purpose of marketing scholarship is either descriptive or prescriptive (or both), depending on the axiological ambitions of the

---

<sup>1</sup> *Correspondence:* Stephen Brown, School of Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Strategy, University of Ulster, Jordanstown, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim, BT37 0QB, Northern Ireland, Tel: 028 9036 6130, Fax: 028 9036 6868, E-mail: sfx.brown@ulster.ac.uk

academic concerned (Hackley 2001).

Despite this diversity, there is one thing that unites the various strands of marketing research. And that is the written word. Whether they be quantitatively or qualitatively inclined, whether they be diligent data miners or factorial experiment finessers, whether they study the pupil dilation of supermarket shoppers or the relationship between macroeconomic cycles and retail institutional change, all marketing academics set out their arguments, hypotheses, findings and so forth, in a written document. Articles, books, reports, dissertations, case studies, chapters, monographs, working papers, and analogous ephemera, are the principal output of the marketing academy.<sup>2</sup>

Writing, in short, is what we do for a living. Academics are authors, men and women of letters. Literary types, no less. They place words on the page, sometimes in the right order. They compose clauses that refresh, in principle at least. Their careers are advanced, their employability is enhanced, and their professional standing is ultimately predicated on the written word.

Writing about writing, however, is conspicuous by its absence. There is very little published literature on the published literature. There are, of course, countless citation studies and analogous ranking analyses of the leading journals (e.g. Easton and Easton 2003). Innumerable self-help texts on the mechanics of doing research, writing dissertations, getting into print and suchlike are also available (Hart 2002). Anthologies of classic articles (HBSP 2002), bibliographies of background readings (Belk 2003), and comments and rejoinders on individual scholarly contributions (Schlegelmilch 2002; Wensley 2002) are an equally important part of marketing's rich textual tapestry. The peer review process, in particular, has attracted much discussion and not a little disdain (Brownlie and Saren 1995).

All things considered, nevertheless, it is clear that academic writing has not received the attention it deserves nor, indeed, that its professional significance warrants. If academics' personal advancement is predicated on words on a page, then those words and pages are a subject worthy of

---

<sup>2</sup> Granted, several other forms of symbolic expression, such as pie charts, flow diagrams, scatter plots and videography, are routinely employed by marketing researchers. Academics also communicate their findings in all sorts of ways, from student seminars and conference presentations to personal websites and television interviews. These variations, however, ultimately rest on the written word, the textual artefact, the published article. Not only does the published paper represent a distillation of several other textual phenomena – questionnaire surveys, interview transcripts, secondary data, literature reviews etc. – but it is arguable that research doesn't actually exist until and unless it appears in published form, ideally in a journal of record.

detailed investigation, if only for self-help or job-search purposes.

The present article attempts to address this issue. It begins with a “justification” of marketing’s antipathy to things literary and shows that this justification is unjustified. There is no rationale for our neglect of the written word. The paper then turns to the fraught relationship between the literary community and the marketing system, noting that just as literary criticism is becoming more marketing orientated, so too marketing scholarship has taken a latter-day literary turn. Ironically, however, the lit-crit toolkit has rarely been applied to the marketing literature itself. This paradox is unpicked in the third section, which sets out several salient lessons derived from an ongoing study of marketing’s leading literati, figures who have transformed the discipline through the power of the written word. These are brought together in a 3R’s rubric, which summarises how academic author-ity comes from complete command of “the basics”. Writing marketing, the paper concludes, is neither plain nor simple, though basics training can help us publish rather than perish. Perhaps.

*There are three rules for writing the novel. Unfortunately, no one knows what they are.*

—W. Somerset Maugham

No doubt there are many deep-seated reasons for marketing’s reluctance to write about the written word, but scientism and pragmatism must figure prominently among them. For more than sixty years, marketing has been marketing itself as a science, a Science with a capital S. It is firmly positioned in the academic firmament as a scientific repository of the laws, axioms, and principles of the marketplace. True, there has been much internal debate about the nature and extent of marketing’s scientific standing (Brown 1996). However, the discipline’s aspiration to scientific status runs deep, even among those who subscribe to the post-positivist research tradition. The field’s leading learned journal, for example, is emblazoned with the resonant byline, “advancing the practice and science of marketing” and most academics, one suspects, accept this statement of scientific intent (*Journal of Marketing* 2003).

Practice, indeed, is no less important. Alongside its staunchly scientific character, marketing prides itself on being an applied discipline (Brownlie and Saren 1997). It is not given over to hi-falutin, namby-pamby, artsy-fartsy flights of literary fancy. It has little or no truck with pseudo-intellectual pretension and scholarly self-indulgence, let alone lounging about in libraries agonising over split infinitives, dangling participles and misplaced apostrophes. It has demanding constituents to cater for – students,

managers, policy makers etc. – and doesn't have time for frivolity or anything that diverts attention from the bottom line. It is a serious business and it is in the business of being taken seriously. It focuses on the facts. Got that?

The upshot of this hard-science, hard-headed, hard-to-shift mindset is that literary concerns are generally considered trite, trivial, and tangential to the real business of business schools (when they are considered at all, that is). In the great marketing scheme of things, writing doesn't require much thought. Literary analysis is unnecessary, not to say narcissistic. Textual analysis has its place when, say, Shakespeare, Shelley, Emerson or Eliot are the objects of scholarly scrutiny. But it is irrelevant to the academic marketing situation. It wastes valuable intellectual resources that would be better spent disseminating the marketing message or investigating practical, cutting-edge issues like retaining customers and increasing loyalty. Worse still, it sends out all the wrong signals. In an era characterised by seriously socially responsible corporations, worrying about literary matters seems, well, somewhat irresponsible. At a time when marketing practitioners are under inordinate pressure to specify, justify and quantify their contribution (Doyle 2000), arguing over assonance, alliteration, allegories or adverbs appears almost obscene. It is the ivory tower equivalent of fiddling while Rome burns, I'm all right Jack, or let them eat cake.

The only problem with this line of argument is that it is flawed at best and fallacious at worst. Its basic premises – that marketing is a science, and an applied science at that – are not universally shared. Many scholarly authorities have expressed serious reservations about marketing's scientific status (Holbrook 1995), just as they have about its utilitarian imperative (Wensley 2000). Despite innumerable assertions to the contrary, academics are under no obligation to address pragmatic issues, or shoulder the blame for corporate shortcomings, or advance the cause of marketing science, or do anything other than study marketing matters, broadly defined. True, many have convinced themselves that their duty is to serve. However, that is a personal choice not a contractual obligation, a convention not a covenant. It is perfectly possible, and in many ways intellectually commendable, to study marketing from a non-hands-on, anti-hard-science perspective. Academic interests and managerial requirements often coincide, but they are not synonymous.

Another problem with the would-be science, wannabe relevant model is that it isn't endorsed by the people who purportedly matter. The presumption that marketing scientists are horny-handed pragmatists at heart, that they supply actionable insights for eternally grateful executives, is totally at odds with reality (McKenzie et al. 2002). The reality is that marketing executives and practitioners don't read the academic literature.

They get next to nothing from it. They regard the leading journals as vehicles for scholarly advancement rather than founts of deathless marketing wisdom. They turn to Jack Trout, not *JM*, to Tom Peters, not *JMR*, to Sergio Zyman, not *MS*, when they're looking for meaningful marketing insights.<sup>3</sup> They ignore the alleged "managerial implications" of our 2 x 2 experiments on 120 undergraduate students from a Midwestern university, who receive course credit for their reflections on imaginary products and hypothetical marketing situations. And who can blame them?

The proponents of pragmatism are thus hoist by their own petard. Those who claim that marketing science has no time for literary frivolity are the very people failing to get through to their stated constituents, or a key segment thereof. It follows that they, more than anyone, need to take a long hard look at things literary. What's more, the associated fear – that marketers will not be taken seriously if they exhibit a penchant for poetics – is belied by the fact that longer established and much more "serious" disciplines see things differently. Literary considerations have been debated at length by adjacent academic specialisms, such as Economics, Psychology, Anthropology and Organisation Studies. Deirdre McCloskey (1998), for example, has convincingly demonstrated that the "dismal science" is anything but, in literary terms at least. A.J. Soyland (1994) has portrayed the history of psychology as a cavalcade of constantly clashing metaphors, from Freudian water closets and Skinnerian mazes to Lacanian mirrors. Clifford Geertz (1988) has published a brilliant excursus on the writing styles of leading anthropologists like Claude Lévi-Strauss, Bronislaw Malinowski, Edward Evans-Pritchard *et al.* And, contemporary organisation studies is chock-a-block with analyses of narrative, irony, tragedy and all the writerly rest (see for example Boje *et al.* 1995).

The tragedy, for marketing, is that it continues to disavow its discursive roots in the hope that it will be taken seriously by the scholarly community in general and the social sciences in particular. The irony is that its reluctance to address rhetorical issues – unlike adjacent social sciences – is one of the very things that prevents it from being taken seriously. The gnarled narrative that marketing is a science, and that science focuses on content not style, is negated by recent upsurge in stylish scientific writing, writing that not only reaches big audiences but regularly bests the best-sellers list (Gould 2003; Pinker 2003; Wilson 1998). When was the last time a marketing scholar topped the literary charts, let alone lurked in the lower reaches?

---

<sup>3</sup> It can, of course, be argued that academic articles are written for academics. But generic conventions (the "managerial implications" section) and journal submission requirements (e.g. the "executive summaries" demanded by *JM*) clearly indicate that this isn't the case. If stated "editorial objectives" are any indication, most marketing journals consider themselves conduits between academia and the agora.

*I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork.*

—Peter de Vries

If it is accepted that marketing scholarship is a literary matter, in a manner of speaking, and that writing is central to what marketing academics do for a living, then the treasures of Literary Theory and Cultural Criticism are available to us. For most people, admittedly, that prospect is singularly unappealing. Their memories of literary criticism are confined to painful high school encounters with hideously impenetrable poems and less than side-splitting Shakespearean comedies. Heroic couplets, iambic pentameters, metrical feet, ottava rima, spondees, trochees, dactyls, enjambment and analogous prosodic utterances are all that remain, lodged in the interstices of remembrance like food in a broken tooth, their precise meanings long since forgotten. The happy few that have ventured beyond prosody, furthermore, have found themselves in an alien environment, densely covered with thorny textual thickets and peopled by speakers of an incomprehensible post-this, post-that, post-the-Other polyglot (e.g. Culler 1997; Cunningham 2002; Eagleton 1996).

To make matters worse, literary types are renowned for their hostility to marketing, both in practice and in principle (Delany 2002; Pollard 2000). Indeed, if there's one thing that unites the notoriously fractious literary community it's their shared aversion to marketing. Marketing, for the scribbling classes, is within spitting distance of the Devil Incarnate and a stone's throw from Hades HQ. The literati see themselves as last-ditch defenders of what Matthew Arnold famously deemed "the best that has been known and said in the world". Marketing, selling, trade and the insidious imprecations of late capitalism are anathema to those who hail from the liberal arts end of the scholarly spectrum. Commerce is crass. Profit is poison. Money-grubbing is grotesque. Art is above such base concerns. Art for art's sake is the inalienable watchword. Art is everlasting, lucre is ludicrous...and filthy to boot.

Marketers' traditional abhorrence of things literary is thus matched by the literati's long-standing antipathy to marketing matters. Opposites, however, attract and recent years have seen a significant softening on both sides. On the one hand, the literary community has reluctantly conceded that marketing has its place. Dramatic changes in the production (desktop developments), publication (multi-media conglomerates) distribution (online operations, mega-bookshops) and reception (reading groups, the Oprah effect) of literature; the increasingly customer-orientated ethos that has penetrated even the most liberal liberal arts colleges; the emergence of superstar scholars and celebrity culture in the hitherto sanctified groves of

academe; and, not least, the sheer relentlessness of the commodification process, which can offer all sorts of rewards in return for author compliance, has led even the stoutest defenders of the faith to doubt their calling and bend their formerly absolute anti-marketing principles (Brooks 2000; Collins 2002; Seabrook 2000).

On the other hand, the marketing community has latterly been bitten by the literary bug. Not badly bitten, it has to be said, not bitten to the point of rabidity. But bitten sufficiently to break the skin and require a little scratching.<sup>4</sup> The scratcher-in-chief is Barbara B. Stern (1989, 1995, 1998), who works on the premise that marketplace phenomena such as shopping centres, supermarkets, service encounters, brandscapes and, above all, advertisements, can be treated as “texts” and studied using the tools and techniques of literary criticism. Stern, moreover, is not alone. Her approach has spawned a small (but very active) school of marketing thought. To cite but a few examples: Linda Scott (1994) has applied Reader-Response theory to copious commercial messages; McQuarrie and Mick (1996) have highlighted the importance of rhetoric and resonance – that is, the use of puns, word play and suchlike – in marketing communication; Heilbrunn (1996) has drawn upon the narratological theories of Vladimir Propp to conceptualise the brand-buyer dyad; Stephanie O’Donohoe (1997) has adopted Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality and adapted it to young consumers’ relationship with television advertising; and Brown *et al.* (2003) have read the recent rapid rise of retro branding in relation to the aphoristic literary theories of Walter Benjamin.

Welcome though this text change is, marketing’s embrace of things literary does not extend to the marketing literature. Although academics are happy to engage with metaphorical marketing texts, as the “readings” of advertisements, supermarkets and brand extensions bear witness, they remain strangely reluctant to interrogate literal marketing texts, the writings of their fellow researchers. There are, of course, exceptions to this ludicrous rule. Barbara Stern (1990) has considered the corpus of Ernest Dichter from a

---

<sup>4</sup> In the interests of brevity, I have not made a distinction between practitioners and pedagogues. The same trend is evident in both domains, however. These days, leading academic literary critics, most notably Harold Bloom and Stanley Fish, are given the Tom Clancy/John Grisham treatment in mega-bookstores. Business executive education, likewise, is replete with offerings based on literary classics like “Leadership Secrets in Shakespeare” or “The Harry Potter Way to Higher Profits”. So close is the connection between marketing and literature that an “Ernest Hemingway Collection” is now available from friendly neighbourhood furniture stores (Collins 2002, p.2). No doubt the Tom Sawyer paint range, George Orwell rat trap and William Burroughs brand pharmaceuticals are on their way. The less said about the Hunter S. Thompson package tour of Las Vegas, the better!

literary perspective, as has Jeff Durgée (1991). Craig Thompson (1993) published an hermeneutic analysis of the vituperative “realism versus relativism” debate of the early eighties. Daragh O’Reilly (2000) demolished the rich brew of mixed metaphors pressed between the precious pages of Hamel and Prahalad. Avi Shankar and Maurice Patterson (2001) have applied narratological methods to the rise of the interpretive research tradition, creatively construing it as a series of crises, climaxes and resolutions. More recently, Chris Hackley (2003) has deconstructed the ideological arguments that inhere in introductory textbooks of the Lancaster and Massingham stripe.

Such studies, nevertheless, are not only few in number, they are preoccupied with what may be termed the “dark side” of marketing scholarship. That is, the angry, the antagonistic, the aberrant. Aberrance, admittedly, isn’t abhorrent. The deviant are advantaged, according to management gurus Mathews and Wacker (2002). The “bad guy” role is inherently appealing, as actors and audiences alike attest. It is not surprising, therefore, that initial literary analyses of the marketing literature should deal with dark side concerns. But if literary criticism is to be considered a force for the good, as a disciplinary redeemer, as something that every scholar and student should be thoroughly versed in, then a more upbeat approach is necessary. Indeed, if we wish to increase our marketing word power, in classic *Readers’ Digest* fashion, it may be wise to start with the masters of marketing’s literary art. The best can teach the rest of us a lesson (or three, as we shall see).

*No passion in the world is equal to the passion to alter someone else’s draft.*

—H.G. Wells

In an attempt to start the literary ball rolling, the present author has been engaged in a long-term study of leading marketing author-ities, including Ted Levitt, Phil Kotler, Shelby Hunt, Wroe Alderson and Morris Holbrook (Brown 1999, 2002a, 2002b, 2003a, 2003b). This research programme involves close reading of the famous five’s literary corpus, coupled with lit-crit analyses of their rhetorical manoeuvres, stylistic quirks and signature writing strategies. From a conventional marketing standpoint, clearly, this approach is open to question. Why, some might ask, those particular writers? What qualifies Phil Kotler, Morris Holbrook or Ted Levitt for consideration and not, say, Sid Levy, Barbara Stern or Russell Belk? How, furthermore, is it possible to draw general lessons from such a small (if perfectly formed) sample?

As with most matters literary, there is no definitive answer to such questions, or at least not one that is likely satisfy marketing science-minded readers. In this regard, however, it is important to appreciate that literary criticism is *not* scientific, nor does it pretend to be.<sup>5</sup> Literary criticism proceeds by exemplars – the classic, the masterpiece, the magnum opus, the iconic author – not by representative samples or on the basis of clear-cut selection criteria. Granted, there is much debate over what constitutes a canonical work or author (and, of late, the existence of canonicity, per se) but the procedure of focusing on key contributions-cum-contributors remains standard practice. Analysis proceeds on this “sample of one”, since the emblematic object, much like William Blake’s “world in a grain of sand”, is considered an expression of the age, the epoch, the zeitgeist. It says everything of significance that needs to be said. And then some.

Be that as it may, most would agree that the individuals selected for the present exercise rank among the most influential, the most cited, the most widely read, in the marketing discipline. They are the giants of our field, on whose shoulders the rest of us struggle to stand. More pertinently perhaps, they are all blessed with striking writing styles and owe some, arguably most, of their eminence to the words they place on the page. True, the “literariness” of their styles varies considerably, but few would deny that they are nothing if not stylish. Akin to Harold Bloom’s “strong poets”, Roland Barthes’s “*ecrivains*”, or Michel Foucault’s “founders of discursivity”, they stand out among their contemporaries, like mountaintops above the mist. They aren’t so much a sample of market scholarship as the summit of marketing scholarship.

So what can we, the mediocre majority, learn from the mountain men of marketing letters, the Sherpas of research? At the risk of misrepresenting the nuances of each author’s unique style, the very thing that makes them “them”, it is clear that their outstanding achievements come from complete command of the basics. The basics, in this particular case, being the 3R’s of *Reading, Righting* and *Rhythmic*.

---

<sup>5</sup> That said, several prominent schools of literary theory, such as the notorious New Critics and Northrop Frye’s legendary “myth crit”, have claimed to be “scientific”. However, this is not scientific, as most marketers might understand it. Scientific literary criticism means something closer to “systematic study” than axioms, theories, predictions, covering laws, etc.

*Don't read science fiction books. It'll look bad if you die in bed with one on the nightstand. Always read stuff that'll make you look good if you die in the middle of it.*

—P.J. O'Rourke

*Reading:* The key to successful writing is reading, and more reading, and even more reading. Manners maketh man, or so the old, sexist saying goes, but writers are made by reading. Reading and writing are the recto and verso, systole and diastole, ebb and flow of literary endeavour. Almost every creative writer who takes the time to reflect on his or her craft, acknowledges the all-important part played by reading, voracious reading, incessant reading, reading to the point of addiction (cf. Mailer 2003; Naipaul 2000; Sontag 2002; Winterson 1996). Stephen King (2000), for instance, attributes his best-sellerdom, his total mastery of the schlock-horror genre, to his insatiable reading habit. He takes a book wherever he goes and dips into it at every opportunity. "Reading," he avers, "is the creative center of a writer's life." So much so, that "if you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that" (King 2000, p.167).

Everyone, of course, *knows* that reading is important and, more to the point perhaps, everyone does it. The merest glance at almost any academic marketing article reveals that the writer is well read, very well read. Copious citations striate our texts and the final few pages unfailingly provide an impressive inventory of the author's insatiable textual appetite. It follows that telling people reading is important is, well, superfluous, pointless, unnecessary. Reading, rather, is *de rigueur*. Is a prerequisite, an obligation, a must, not something that helps individual scholars stand out from the clamouring crowd.

This is true. But there is an important reading wrinkle. Namely, the distinction between depth and breadth of reading. Most run-of-the-mill marketing academics, if the published record is any indication, are undeniably deeply read. They know everything that there is to know about impulse shopping, gift giving, brand personality, the Boston matrix, or whatever their specialist area happens to be. What they seem to lack is breadth of reading, the incisive insight that comes from reading writings far removed from the existing literature, the latest research findings, the me-too studies that replicate, reiterate, regurgitate, restrain.

Literary myopia, to be sure, is an occupational hazard. So voluminous is "the literature" these days, especially in a burgeoning discipline like marketing, that it is virtually impossible to keep up with what's being written in our own field, or even subfield, much less master the content of adjacent domains. When it comes to more and more "distant" academic

domains, let alone the ever-growing mound of novels, short stories and other literary output, the seemingly impassable soon becomes the simply impossible.

Be that as it may, one of the things that marketing's famous five share is breadth of reading. They all draw upon extremely broad intellectual palettes, whether it be Morris Holbrook's effervescent reflections on aesthetics, Shelby Hunt's prodigious grasp of western philosophy, Phil Kotler's amazing ability to absorb stuff from every conceivable cultural sphere, both high and low,<sup>6</sup> Wroe Alderson's desperately autodidactic desire to demonstrate that "I'm more widely read than you" or, indeed, Ted Levitt's equal and opposite knack of wearing his learning lightly, while dropping occasional ever-so-erudite hints that hidden behind his horny-handed persona is an intellectual man of mystery.

The first lesson, then, is that if we want to become better writers we must read more widely. But does this mean sacrificing depth for breadth? Yes and no. According to Michael Baker's (2001) valuable essay on writing literature reviews, reading should be guided by the EVPI (expected value of perfect information). This is the point, around about the fifteenth pertinent paper, where additional reading on the topic of interest yields no new information. If the Pareto principle thus applies to our reading - 80% of insight comes from 20% of articles perused - the time saved by skipping second-rate publications can be devoted to other domains, intellectual uplift and left field stuff generally.

Fine though this idea is, it inevitably necessitates "drawing the line". It asks us to resist the next article on brand personality, or on-line retailing, or after-sales service or whatever. We are being denied the very papers that could solve the problem we're wrestling with or turn out to be the ones that our reviewers are most aware of (or, in light of Murphy's Law, actually wrote). Embracing EVPI, what is more, overlooks the benefits that come from reading the duff, the dross, the ho-hum, the substandard. For younger academics in particular, there's nothing like reading a poor paper to persuade them to give it a go. Just as one needs to be bowled over by the best of the best, so too we occasionally need to feel "I can do better than that!"

Still, given the sheer difficulty of keeping tabs on what's being written in our area, and given our deep-seated desire to absorb it all, no matter how mediocre, perhaps the best we can hope for is *recognition* of the fact that we need to read more widely. The marketing literati do it and we must do it too

---

<sup>6</sup> In Northwestern, Kotler is renowned for his ability to absorb others' ideas and adapt them to his all-encompassing marketing system. They call it the Kotlerite "mindsuck". I, myself, have experienced the mindsuck - didn't take long, as you might imagine - and, believe me, it's an extraordinary experience (see Brown 2003d).

if we want to improve our writing. Time set aside to take in the latest sex 'n' shopping novel or stirring sci-fi saga (O'Rourke's admonition notwithstanding), is not time wasted. Quite the opposite (see Brown 1998; Smith *et al.* 2001). *Bridget Jones's Diary* says more about contemporary consumer behaviour than any number of scholarly publications in *JCR*.

*The mixture that is not shaken soon stagnates.*

– Heraclitus

*Righting*: "Bridget Jones Consumer Researcher" may strike some mainstream marketing academics as an heretical statement, even though similar claims are often made by interpretivists (Brown 1998). Heresy, however, has its place. As the phonic and philological connotations of the word "righting" convey, one of the most striking characteristics of our scholarly superstars is their desire to overturn convention, to upend the accepted, to ensure that things are the way they should be (or as they think things should be). Righting marketing is their *modus operandi*. Without exception, their signature scholarly achievements involve turning the tables in some way, shape or form.

Levitt for example, famously flipped the field on its head by claiming that the customer is the point of marketing departure, not the denouement of marketer activity. Phil Kotler challenged the myopic if widely held notion that marketing is confined to the for-profit sector and contended that it is in fact a universal verity. Shelby Hunt not only added philosophical lustre to an hitherto hands-on discipline, but brilliantly out-manoeuvred the anti-positivists by pointing out their misrepresentation of "positivism". Morris Holbrook brought an aesthetic sheen to marketing and made a compelling case against base managerialism, the utilitarian ethos that still holds sway, if less forcefully than before. Wroe Alderson, similarly, did something so radical that it seems simply inconceivable today. A self-taught farm boy without a PhD, or any serious scholarly credibility, Wroe rose from the grubby ranks of marketing consultancy to the very pinnacle of academic respectability. He finished up at Wharton, set the agenda for the entire field in the '40s and '50s and, perhaps more than anyone before or since, demonstrated that intellectual might is marketing right.

This upending imperative, what is more, is not confined to our exemplars' overall contribution. It permeates their oeuvres, the lineaments of their arguments, the very organisation of their sentences. Kotler's preferred rhetorical ploy involves variations on the construction, "you may think this, but it actually isn't so". Shelby Hunt frequently uses a form of "judo

strategy”, where the strength of his opponents (such as those hostile to “positivism”) is used against them. Ted Levitt repeatedly rails against prolix professors and management gurus, thereby ironically inverting himself and everything he represents (irony, remember, is a wry way of selling the otherwise unsellable). Wroe Alderson’s written texts almost oscillate with to-ings and fro-ings (they constantly refer to points discussed previously and allude to assertions to come) which leaves the reader overwhelmed, overawed, overturned and, ultimately, in no position to argue. Morris Holbrook, moreover, is especially fond of antimetabole, a rhetorical device where the sentence is essentially thrown into grammatical reverse at its mid point (e.g. “ask not what semiotics can do for marketing, but what marketing can do for semiotics”).

The result of this convention-flouting ethic is that the flouters frequently find themselves embroiled in controversy. Their writing careers are punctuated with comments, rejoinders, manifestoes, denunciations, head-buttings and similar epistolary exchanges. They are not only putting the discipline to right but chastising anyone who dares demur from their *droit du scholarly seigneur*, as it were. Hunt’s hatchet jobs on his antagonists are classics of the genre, the marketing equivalent of splatter movies, textual Texas Chain Saw Massacres. That said, there’s nothing like a little argy-bargy to raise one’s academic profile and, as there appears to be a direct relationship between the boisterousness of the argy-bargy and the degree of profile-enhancement (Brown 2003c), our serial subversives are ever ready, willing and able to resort to literary fisticuffs. The pen may be mightier than the sword, but it is necessary to use the pen *as* a sword from time to time.

There’s a very important lesson here for those of us who lack, or hope to acquire, the write stuff. The conventional wisdom of academic marketing intercourse, derived largely from the presumed norms of “scientific” endeavour, is that scholarship is a cumulative activity. We add to the ever-growing body of literature. We contribute our textual two-pennyworth to marketing’s conceptual treasure chest. We stand on the shoulders of giants, or would do once the giants grow up and stop squabbling among themselves. The underlying ethos is progressive, linear, onward and upward, new and improved, washes whiter-than-white. The acme of academic achievement is a replication experiment that formally confirms an empirical finding and thereby establishes a *bone fide* marketing axiom or – gasp! – law-like generalisation.

The greats don’t think or act like that, though they often espouse the cumulative model for argument’s sake. In practice, they tend to operate on a dialectical principle of thesis, antithesis, synthesis, or in terms of crisis/response/catharsis/repose, or with regard to the circles, seasons, gyres and eternal returns of “cyclical time”, rather than the slow but steady

accretion that underpins conventional notions of “linear time”. Oppositionalism, outsiderdom and obversity, if there is such a word, are the rhetorical hallmarks of our textual tall poppies, strange though this may seem when Kotler’s under consideration.<sup>7</sup> Yet the Venerable Phil, of all people, is a past master of recycling, repetition and strategic reversal. He has announced a “new marketing” paradigm on at least eight separate occasions, each one a challenge to the prevailing approach (previously laid down by Kotler himself!).

The lesson, then, is that if you want to get ahead in marketing letters, get an axe...and wield it.

*I hate vulgar realism in literature. The man who would call a spade a spade should be compelled to use one. It is the only thing he is fit for.*

—Oscar Wilde

*Rhythmic*: Like obversity, rhythmic is a word that doesn’t exist. Until now. The neologism, nevertheless, combines “rhythm”, the essential characteristic of felicitous prose, with an intertextual allusion to “rithmatic” of the original 3R’s. As such, it is singularly pertinent to the heroic handful under consideration. When all is said and done, the central trait that connects our poetic champions is a compelling literary style. On reading their works – even those of Wroe never-knowingly-understood Alderson – one is instantly aware of an authorial “presence”, a distinctive textual persona that speaks to us in an inimitable manner, often mellifluous, always unique. Some of the passages in Levitt and Holbrook are breathtaking in their brilliance.<sup>8</sup> They send shivers down our collective spine, raise the hairs on our neck and walk over our grave. It may not be marketing science, but with writing of that calibre, who needs science?

Appropriately, moreover, our principal peers’ peerless prose is replete with neologisms, word-play, linguistic excesses and, as often as not, extreme sesquipedalianism. Kotler has spawned more neologisms than you can

---

<sup>7</sup> This antithetical approach, nevertheless, is very much in keeping with the chosen role of creative writers, who have long positioned themselves as opponents of the accepted, the bourgeois, the comfortable, the decorous, the establishment. From the Romantic Movement onwards – and long before, in fact – the writing function has been regarded as dangerous, threatening, edgy (see Birkerts 1994, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> To select an example at random: “In Brazil, thousands swarm daily from pre-industrial Bahian darkness into exploding coastal cities, there quickly to install television sets in crowded corrugated huts and, next to battered Volkswagens, make sacrificial offerings of fruit or fresh-killed chickens to Macumban spirits”. Guess who?

shake a stick at (meta-marketing, turbo-marketing, demarketing, etc.). Alderson is no slouch in the locution foundry either (transvection, blaze, hedonomics *et al*). Levitt is always ready to riff rhetorically or practise his lexical scales (“the paradox that puzzles and perplexes”, “what needs to happen for that to happen?”). Holbrook seems to work on the premise that assonance is good, alliteration is better, and alliterative assonance is best of all (“patience, persistence and perseverance”, “fantasies, feelings and fun”). Even Shelby Hunt, who regularly adopts the textual persona of Professor Pedantic, is in fact a master of marketing rhetoric, someone whose arguments often hinge on subtle shades of linguistic meaning. Hunt, of course, would refute this “mistaken” assertion, but one only has to read the first sentence of his recent opus (“Assume competition.”) to appreciate that you are in the presence of a stylist supreme, the purple prose of Texas (Hunt 2000).

So incessant, indeed, is their wordplay – some would call it alpha male exhibitionism of the my-vocabulary-is-bigger-than-yours variety – that the arteries of our titans’ texts are, frankly, clogged, sclerotic and in serious need of bypass surgery. They don’t so much suffer from writer’s block as blocked writing. Their books and papers are almost unreadable, if truth be told. Hunt and Alderson are especially stricken, as any postgraduate student will attest. Holbrook and Kotler are heavy sledding on some occasions and very heavy sledding on others. Levitt, likewise, is often held up as a living paradigm of luminously pellucid prose. But the evidence indicates otherwise. A detailed empirical study of reader-responses to Father Ted’s most famous, most reprinted, most influential paper, “Marketing Myopia”, reveals that it is anything but pellucid, much less luminous (Brown 2003b). Dazzling as certain passages undoubtedly are, Levitt’s discursive diamonds come embedded in an awful lot of rhetorical rough.

The reading difficulties that some people have when grappling with the greats, again contains an important lesson for would-be writers of distinction. Clarity is not strictly necessary. Lucidity is a barrier to entry. KISS is the kiss of death. This contention, needless to say, runs completely counter to everything that is said about writing, academic writing especially. We are constantly exhorted to keep it plain and simple, to avoid big words, long sentences, unnecessary adverbs, or anything that detracts from getting the facts across in a clear, concise, coherent manner. The prevailing “philosophy” of marketing writing is predicated on the George Orwell school of thought, which famously made the case for plain prose, simply put (Table 1).

The crucial thing to appreciate, however, is that Orwell was expressing an opinion, not issuing an order. He was expressing an opinion, moreover, that reflects the “social realist” literary style that was then in vogue, as well as the minimalist mode of high modernism (Alexander 2000). It was a credo that

Orwell's equally gifted contemporaries did not subscribe to in many cases – e.g. James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* – and one that promptly evaporated when the linguistic excesses of postmodernism burst on to the literary scene.

---

**Table 1. George Orwell's Golden Rules of Good Writing**

---

- (i) Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
  - (ii) Never use a long word where a short one will do.
  - (iii) If it is possible to cut out a word, always cut it out.
  - (iv) Never use the passive where you can use the active.
  - (v) Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
  - (vi) Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.
- 

Source: Orwell (1962, original 1946).

This is not to suggest that lucid writing is wrong, or that we should aspire to obscurantism, albeit incomprehensibility can be helpful in a strictly scholarly sense, since it carries connotations of depth, sagacity, learnedness and suchlike. Wroe Alderson and Shelby Hunt, certainly, owe at least some of their eminence to the if-it's-difficult-it-must-be-profound mental model that readers bring to their texts. The essential point is that there is more to writing than plain and simple, though you'd never know this from the academic marketing literature.

In a recent discussion of learned journal rankings, for example, Easton and Easton (2003) recoiled with horror when their evidence revealed that the more unintelligible the journal, the higher its intellectual standing. "The implications of this research are very disturbing," they conclude, implicitly urging us not to go down the abstruse writing route (Easton and Easton 2003, p.19). But why shouldn't we go there, if only to discover why we shouldn't go there? Why decree something off-limits before it's been properly investigated? Imposing textual taboos only makes the taboo topic more attractive, after all (Brown 2003c). Obfuscation, lest we forget, has a perverse appeal. Bewilderment brings what leading literary critic Valentine Cunningham (2002, p.40) calls "pleasurable pain". Indeed, it is curious that marketing scientists are happy to bless mind-bogglingly baffling statistical methods, yet scream blue murder when confronted with a plethora of polysyllables, a congeries of conjunctions, a litter of alliteration. The words "sauce", "goose" and "gander" spring instantly to mind, as do "pot", "kettle" and "black".

More pertinently perhaps, by refusing to consider anything other than plain and simple prose, the proselytisers for plain and simple fail to appreciate that plain and simple is itself a literary style, a literary style that is

hard to master. It is very difficult to write in a plain and simple way; write well, that is. Orwell's above-cited encomium to the joys of plain and simple is a sublime example of the essayist's art. Marketing's plain and simple imperative encourages us to think that writing plain and simple is something that is plain and simple to do. This is nonsense, and the outcome of this nonsensical misconception is the plethora of poorly written, pseudo-plain, sham-simple marketing articles that atrophy our principal academic organs (present journal excepted, of course). Plain and simple is the *epitome* of creative writing, one of the hardest literary effects to achieve. Genuinely creative writers, poets in particular, unflinchingly cut back, ruthlessly edit, ceaselessly polish in order to achieve the plain and simple effect, as the quotation from Saint Exupery indicates. Most marketing academics aren't good enough to write plain and simple. They'd be better off writing to entertain, to intrigue, to excess in fact, and grind things down from there, rather than labour under the delusion that they can produce plain simply.

*Perfection is achieved, not when there is nothing more to add, but when there is nothing left to take away.*

— Antoine de Saint Exupery

Marketing academics, in sum, are authors. They are literary types, after a fashion. They are paper pushers, sellers of scholarly narcotics. Soporifics, some say. Although certain marketing scholars remain reluctant to get in touch with their figurative side - xtra-hard scientists and gee-whiz technocrats are our role models of choice - denial of what we really do for a living is unhelpful at best and unhealthy at worst. It's unhistorical, what is more. Writing was invented for commercial purposes. The very first writers were marketers, Mesopotamian traders from the fifth millennium BCE (Fischer 2001; Manguel 1996). Marketing and writing have a long-standing affinity, an affinity that contemporary academics are unnecessarily wary of and sadly unwilling to acknowledge.

Whatever else it is, then, literature is our livelihood. This article has investigated some of the impediments to good marketing writing and summarised several ways in which marketing scholars can improve their literary acumen. Studying the academic inimitables is one such method, albeit identifying the incomparables is both difficult and disputatious.<sup>9</sup> Be that as it may, the writings of five famous founding fathers of marketing

---

<sup>9</sup> In the admittedly topsy-turvy world of literary criticism, justification comes *after* the analysis, not beforehand. It is the calibre of the written output - the insights, the imagination, the infuriation engendered by the critic's interpretation - that justifies the initial decision to focus on the artwork or artist concerned.

discourse were considered and salient lessons extracted. The results reveal that the 3R's of *Reading*, *Righting* and *Rhythmic* are central to their marketing artistry, their martistry, as it were.

To be sure, there's much more to writing marketing than *Reading*, *Righting* and *Rhythmic*. Style is no substitute for content, despite postmodernist claims to the contrary, although content without style is equally reprehensible. The 3R's, nevertheless, remind us that if we want a place in the marketing pantheon, we need to be widely read, we need to be willing to overturn convention, we need to be unashamedly promiscuous with our prose, promiscuous to the point of opacity. Less is more, or so they say, but more is not less. Less needs more, just as writing needs reading, science needs art, and practitioners need academics. Well, okay, two out of three ain't bad...

## References

- Alexander, M. (2000), *A History of English Literature*, Basingstoke, Macmillan
- Baker, M.J. (2000), "Writing a Literature Review", *The Marketing Review*, **1** (2), pp. 219-247
- Belk, R.W. (2003), "ACR Fellows' Bookshelf", *ACR News*, Spring, pp. 10-13.
- Birkerts, S. (1994), *The Gutenberg Elegies: The Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age*, London, Faber and Faber
- Birkerts, S. (1999), *Readings*, St. Paul, Minnesota, Graywolf Press
- Boje, D.M., Gephart, R.P. and Thatchenkery, T.J. (1996), *Postmodern Management and Organization Theory*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage
- Brooks, D. (2000), *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There*, New York, Simon & Schuster
- Brown, S. (1995), *Postmodern Marketing*, London, Routledge
- Brown, S. (1996), "Art or Science?: Fifty Years of Marketing Debate", *Journal of Marketing Management*, **12** (4), pp. 243-267
- Brown, S. (1998), *Postmodern Marketing 2: Telling Tales*, London, ITBP
- Brown, S. (1999), "Marketing and Literature: The Anxiety of Academic Influence", *Journal of Marketing*, **63** (January), pp. 1-15
- Brown, S. (2002a) "Reading Wrote: On the Biopoetics of Alderson's Functionalism", *Marketing Theory*, **2** (3), pp. 243-271
- Brown, S. (2002b), "The Spectre of Kotlerism: A Literary Appreciation", *European Journal of Management*, **20** (2), pp. 128-146
- Brown, S. (2003a), "The Snarking of the Hunt: Deconstructing Shelby D", Jordanstown, University of Ulster Working Paper
- Brown, S. (2003b), "O Concept, My Concept: Looking Back on Ted Levitt", Jordanstown, University of Ulster Working Paper
- Brown, S. (2003c), *Free Gift Inside!!*, Oxford, Capstone
- Brown, S. (2003d), "Once Upon a Marketplace". In *Time, Space, and the Market:*

- Retrosapes Rising* (Eds) Brown, S. and Sherry, J.F., Jr, Armonk, NY, M.E. Sharpe, pp. 293-310
- Brown, S., Kozinets, R.V. and Sherry, J.F., Jr. (2003), "Teaching Old Brands New Tricks: Retro Brands and the Revival of Brand Meaning", *Journal of Marketing*, **67** (July), in press
- Brownlie, D. and Saren, M. (1995), "On the Commodification of Marketing Knowledge: Opening Themes", *Journal of Marketing Management*, **11** (7), pp. 619-627
- Brownlie, D. and Saren, M. (1997), "Beyond the One-Dimensional Marketing Manager: The Discourse of Theory, Practice and Relevance", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, **14** (2), pp. 147-162
- Collins, J. (2002), *High-Pop: Making Culture into Popular Entertainment*, Malden, MA, Blackwell
- Culler, J. (1997), *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Cunningham, V. (2002), *Reading After Theory*, Oxford, Blackwell
- Delany, P. (2002), *Literature, Money and the Market: From Trollope to Amis*, New York, Plagrave
- Diamantopoulos, A. and Siguaw, J.A. (2000), *Introducing LISREL: A Guide for the Uninitiated*, London, Sage
- Doyle, P. (2000), *Value-based Marketing: Marketing Strategies for Corporate Growth and Shareholder Value*, Chichester, Wiley
- Durgee, J.F. (1991), "Interpreting Dichter's Interpretations: An Analysis of Consumption Symbolism in 'The Handbook of Consumer Motivations' ". In *Marketing and Semiotics: Selected Papers From the Copenhagen Symposium* (Eds) Larsen, H.H. et al, Copenhagen, Nyt Nordisk Forlag Arnold Busck, pp. 52-74
- Eagleton, T. (1996), *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Oxford, Blackwell
- Easton, G. and Easton, D.M. (2003), "Marketing Journals and the Research Assessment Exercise", *Journal of Marketing Management*, **19** (1-2), pp. 5-24
- Fischer, S.R. (2001), *A History of Writing*, London, Reaktion
- Geertz, C. (1988), *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press
- Gould, S.J. (2003), *The Hedgehog, the Fox, and the Magister's Pox: Mending the Gap Between Science and the Humanities*, London, Jonathan Cape
- Hackley, C. (2001), *Marketing and Social Construction: Exploring the Rhetorics of Managed Consumption*, London, Routledge
- Hackley, C. (2003), "'We Are All Customers Now...': Rhetorical Strategy and Ideological Control in Marketing Management Texts", *Journal of Management Studies*, **40** (4), pp 1325-1352
- Hart, C. (2002), *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination*, London, Sage

- HBSP (2002), *Harvard Business Review on Marketing*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard Business School Press
- Heilbrunn, B. (1996), "In Search of the Hidden Go(o)d: A Philosophical Deconstruction and Narratological Revisitation of the Eschatological Metaphor in Marketing", In: *Marketing Apocalypse: Eschatology, Escapology and the Illusion of the End* (Eds), Brown, S. et al, London, Routledge, pp. 112-132
- Holbrook, M.B. (1995), *Consumer Research: Introspective Essays on the Study of Consumption*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage
- Hunt, S.D. (2000), *A General Theory of Competition: Resources, Competencies, Productivity, Economic Growth*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage
- Hunt, S.D. (2002), *Foundations of Marketing Theory: Toward a General Theory of Marketing*, Armonk, M.E. Sharpe
- Johannson, J. (1999), *Global Marketing: Foreign Entry, Local Marketing and Global Management*, New York, McGraw-Hill
- King, S. (2000), *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, London, Hodder & Stoughton
- Kozinets, R.V. (2002), "The Field Behind The Screen: Using Netnography For Marketing Research in Online Communities", *Journal of Marketing Research*, **39** (February), pp. 61-72
- Mailer, N. (2003), *The Spooky Art: Some Thoughts on Writing*, London, Little, Brown
- Manguel, A. (1996), *A History of Reading*, London, HarperCollins
- Mathews, R. and Wacker, W. (2002), *The Deviant's Advantage: How Fringe Ideas Create Mass Markets*, New York, Crown
- McCloskey, D.N. (1998), *The Rhetoric of Economics*, Madison, WI, University of Wisconsin Press
- McKenzie, C.J., Wright, S., Ball, F.D. and Baron, P.J. (2002), "The Publications of Marketing Faculty - Who are we Really Talking To?", *European Journal of Marketing*, **36** (11-12), pp. 1196-1208
- McQuarrie, E.F. and Mick, D.G. (1996), "Figures of Advertising Rhetoric", *Journal of Consumer Research*, **22** (March), pp. 424-438
- Naipaul, V.S. (2000), *Reading & Writing: A Personal Account*, New York, New York Review Books
- O'Donohoe, S. (1997), "Leaky Boundaries: Intertextuality and Young Adult Experiences of Advertising". In *Buy This Book: Studies in Advertising and Consumption* (Eds) Nava, M. et al, London, Routledge, pp. 257-275
- O'Reilly, D. (2000), "On the Precipice of a Revolution with Hamel and Prahalad", *Journal of Marketing Management*, **16** (1-3), pp. 99-109
- Orwell, G. (1962), "Politics and the English Language". In *Inside the Whale and Other Essays*, London, Penguin, pp. 143-157
- Pinker, S. (2003), *The Blank Slate*, London, Penguin

- Pollard, A. (2000), *The Representation of Business in English Literature*, London, Institute of Economic Affairs
- Schlegelmilch, B.B. (2002), "Special Symposium on Shelby D. Hunt's 'A General Theory of Competition: Resources, Competencies, Productivity, Economic Growth' Part 1. Comments", *Journal of Marketing Management*, **18** (1-2), pp. 221-227
- Scott, L.M. (1994), "The Bridge From Text to Mind: Adapting Reader-Response Theory to Consumer Research", *Journal of Consumer Research*, **21** (December), pp. 461-480
- Seabrook, J. (2000), *Nobrow: The Culture of Marketing - The Marketing of Culture*, New York, Knopf
- Shankar, A. and Patterson, M. (2001), "Interpreting the Past: Writing the Future", *Journal of Marketing Management*, **17** (5-6), pp. 481-501
- Sherry, J.F., Jr. (1991), "Postmodern Alternatives: The Interpretive Turn in Consumer Research". In *Handbook of Consumer Research* (Eds) Robertson, T.S. and Kassarian, H.H., Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, pp. 548-591
- Smith, W., Parker, M. and Lightfoot, G. (2001), *Science Fiction and Organizations*, London, Routledge
- Sontag, S. (2001), *Where the Stress Falls: Essays*, London, Vintage
- Soyland, A.J. (1994), *Psychology as Metaphor*, London, Sage
- Stern, B.B. (1989), "Literary Criticism and Consumer Research: Overview and Illustrative Analysis", *Journal of Consumer Research*, **16** (December), pp. 322-334
- Stern, B.B. (1990), "Literary Criticism and the History of Marketing Thought: A New Perspective on 'Reading' Marketing Theory", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, **18** (4), pp. 329-336
- Stern, B.B. (1995), "Consumer Myths: Frye's Taxonomy and the Structural Analysis of Consumption Text", *Journal of Consumer Research*, **22** (September), pp. 165-185
- Stern, B.B. (1998), *Representing Consumers: Voices, Views and Visions*, London, Routledge
- Thompson, C.J. (1993), "Modern Truth and Postmodern Incredulity: A Hermeneutic Deconstruction of the Metanarrative of 'Scientific Truth' in Marketing Research", *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, **10** (3), pp. 325-338
- Wensley, R. (2000), "The MSI Priorities: A Critical View on Researching Firm Performance, Customer Experience and Marketing", *Journal of Marketing Management*, **16** (1-3), pp. 11-27
- Wensley, R. (2002), "Special Symposium on Shelby D. Hunt's 'A General Theory of Competition: Resources, Competencies, Productivity, Economic Growth' Part 2. Marketing for a New Century", *Journal of Marketing Management*, **18** (1-2), pp. 229-237

Wilson, E.O. (1998), *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*, New York, Knopf  
Winterson, J. (1996), *Art Objects: Essays on Ecstasy and Effrontery*, London, Vintage

### **About the Author**

**Stephen Brown** is Professor of Marketing Research at the University of Ulster. He has written numerous books, including *Postmodern Marketing* and *Free Gift Inside*. His papers have been published in *Harvard Business Review*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Advertising*, *Business Horizons* and many more.

Copyright of Journal of Marketing Management is the property of Westburn Publishers Limited and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.