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An Investigation into the Absence of Disabled People from Commercial Advertising and its Impact on the Disabling Experience

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'An Investigation into the Absence of Disabled People from Commercial Advertising and its Impact on the Disabling Experience'

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ABSTRACT

Much research has been conducted into the effects of advertising on various minority groups – women, gay people, black people, unemployed youths. However, research regarding the relationship of mainstream advertising and disabled people is sparse. Disabled people are one of the largest minority groups in the world and yet, they are almost invisible within advertising and consumer research, and within advertising itself.

It is this lack of representation in commercial advertising that interests the researcher. Disabled people have historically been excluded from many facets of society – education, employment, leisure – with advertising viewed as one more mechanism to further this exclusion and perpetuate the inherent oppression.

Both the disabling experience and advertising experience of disabled people in Dublin are investigated. In particular, the researcher is concerned with whether these experiences interact. It is an exploratory study as very little is known about this area. A two-stage semi-structured interviewing approach is taken and data analysed hermeneutically. The findings are presented in detail and recommendations for future research suggested.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of MPhil, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for an award in any other Institute or University.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the Institute's guidelines for ethics in research.

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Signature Mary-Ann O'Donovan **Date** 27/6/05
Candidate

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GLOSSARY OF ORGANISATIONS

CRC (Central Remedial Clinic): The CRC is a national centre for children and adults with physical disabilities in Ireland. Services provided by the CRC include clinical assessment, physiotherapy, hydrotherapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, social work, psychology, nursing, dietetics, orthotics, technical services, seating services, orthopaedics, paediatrics, parent support, vision and hearing specialists, transport and catering.

Easter Seals: Easter Seals is a US-based organisation, which provides services to children and adults with disabilities and provides support to their families.

Enable Ireland: Enable Ireland are a national service provider for people with disabilities and their families. There are 14 regional centres around Ireland, which provide services to approximately 2,200 children and 200 adults.

MS Society (Multiple Sclerosis Society): The MS Society provides services to people with Multiple Sclerosis. There are branches in the UK and Ireland

NDA (National Disability Authority): The NDA are an independent statutory agency set up under the Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform by the National Disability Authority Act 1999. They promote rights, equality and integration of disabled people.

NCBI (The National Council for the Blind of Ireland): NCBI promote the rights and independence of Blind people in Ireland.

Rehab Care: Rehab Care provides health and social care programmes to people all over Ireland. Though people with disabilities are the main recipients of their services, they also cater for older people and long-term unemployed.

Scope (Formerly The Spastics Society): Scope is a UK based organisation that provides services for people with cerebral palsy.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Disability is viewed as a social process, in that the environment, attitudes, policy and legislation are considered barriers in the lives of disabled people. These barriers have been erected throughout society and throughout history. The thesis sets out to examine the role of advertising in this disabling process. In particular, the researcher is concerned with the absence of disabled people from commercial advertising and what this means to disabled people. How commercial advertising interacts with the disabling experience and whether it serves to accentuate this experience is investigated. The role of commercial advertising is an understudied area of research and current studies are wholly US based. An overview of each chapter is presented below.

1.1 CHAPTER TWO

Chapter two highlights key issues within disability studies at present. There is a particular emphasis on how disability is defined, as this will shape how the study is carried out. The complexity in defining disability is highlighted along with the current debates regarding the models of disability. The social model guides this study. This means that society is seen to disable individuals and so disability is not presented as something implicit within the individuals. An important addition to the social model is the recognition of the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability, which recognizes that not only external barriers but also internal barriers (low self-esteem, shame, internalised oppression) are disabling. It is also realised that disabled people are not an homogenous group and this is highlighted in addressing the issue of disability identity. Furthermore, current literature on disability representation is discussed.

1.2 CHAPTER THREE

Chapter three integrates both disability and advertising literature. There is a particular focus on advertising's ideological role in society and the dominant images it displays. The exclusion of disabled people from this discourse frames the study and therefore the researcher hopes to ascertain what role advertising plays in the lives of disabled people. The chapter serves to critique advertising's role in society and tackles the issue of the power advertising possesses and how this power is manifested. It discusses the role of the body in advertising, illustrating both the emphasis on the ideal body, and the absence of a 'normal' or disabled body. Advertising's focus on encouraging the audience to control and maintain their bodies in order to reach this ideal is also discussed. The chapter concludes with a look at consumption and in particular, the consumption of advertising images irrespective of whether the product or service is consumed.

1.3 CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter four sets out the research question in greater detail. This is stated to be an investigation into the social process of disability through mainstream advertising with an examination of advertising's image of the body ideal and what this means to the disabled audience. The research is guided by the principles of the emancipatory paradigm but cannot claim to be wholly emancipatory. Therefore, it is essentially participatory in nature. This chapter details how the research was carried out and explains the process of analysis and interpretation that the researcher followed.

1.4 CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter five presents the key findings of this study. These are presented under five main headings – exclusion from advertising; role of advertising in the lives of participants; how participants define disability; interaction of disability and advertising; and participants suggested changes for advertising. Each of these areas are discussed in detail in line with the overall research objective.

1. 5 CHAPTER SIX

Chapter six provides concluding comments on each of the major findings detailed in chapter five. The contribution of the study to current literature and the limitations of the study are also discussed. In addition, recommendations for future research and recommendations to the advertising industry and disability organisations are also presented.

CHAPTER TWO:

DISABILITY LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Disabled people have been described as one of the largest minorities in the world (Mitchell and Snyder, 1997). One in ten of the Irish population (360,000) are defined as having a disability (NDA, 2002). This chapter serves to highlight some key issues within disability studies at present. There is a particular emphasis on how disability is defined, as this will shape how the study is carried out. Furthermore, current literature on disability representation is discussed. The majority of the work drawn on is UK based. There is a dearth of academic work in Ireland with regards disability-related issues with the majority of academic debates occurring in the UK, US and Nordic countries.

How disability is defined, the way in which disability is portrayed in TV, film and charity advertising and how advertisers fail to portray disabled people in commercial advertising are the main issues that will be dealt with in this chapter. Two authors set the stage for this discussion. The first is Hevey (2003) who tracks disabled people's changing status in society through three stages. This provides a general overview of how disabled people have become more prominent and visible within society. Another work that is critical to the development of this study is the work by Morris (1991) who identifies how disabled people's lives are continually viewed as being of lesser value. Such thinking is central as it sets the stage for understanding the value judgements that are persistently made regarding disabled people in all facets of their lives. It could be argued that advertisers make value judgements which results in their exclusion of disabled people from commercial advertising. This theme will be developed throughout this entire work.

2.1 'TO BOLDLY GO WHERE EVERYONE ELSE HAS GONE BEFORE'

The chapter will also discuss how disabled people have historically been excluded from all facets of society – education, employment, leisure – through lack of access to economic resources, inaccessible landscape and prejudicial attitudes. This has not been a static situation, as disabled people themselves have fought against this exclusion. However, the fight still continues. As Hevey (2003) described in his recent exhibition called '*Giants*', disabled people have gone through three stages of existence – 'unseen', 'being seen' and 'being'. Each stage was set out as follows;

Unseen: "In the past, many disabled people were treated as less than human; mere medical specimens – broken, uncured, isolated. [....] Low level schooling and work for disabled people became common. Marriage and having children were discouraged".

Being Seen: "From the 1960s, disabled people challenged their socially dead status. They redefined disability as meaning discrimination – Prejudice, inaccessible buildings and communication, lack of control over their own lives. A disabled people's movement grew; they began to influence public policy. Some handcuffed themselves to inaccessible buses. In the words of Direct Action Network, disabled people wanted 'to boldly go where everybody else had gone before'".

Being: "Discrimination against disabled people is finally being tackled. Disabled people have rights and are reaching for equality. In a world without barriers, disabled people could be heroes, valued for their difference and unique point of view".

Though discussed in terms of a progression of disabled people's status within society, it would be naïve to suggest that the emergence of one stage serves to eliminate the previous stage. In fact, all three stages exist simultaneously with some disabled people remaining unseen, kept from view, locked away; others have recently come out and are being seen, while yet other disabled people are simply 'being'. Furthermore, these stages exist in varying degrees across different facets of society. For example, while the increased number of low floor buses has enabled wheelchair users to become 'seen' within society, disabled people are still relatively 'unseen' in commercial advertising. While Hevey (2003) refers to changes that occurred in Britain, the three stages can be said to exist in Ireland also. However, these changes did not occur in the same way or at the same pace as in the UK. This exhibition not only highlighted the changing status of disabled people in society but is also an indicator of the value placed on their lives. This concept of value is described in detail by Morris (1991). This will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 'LIVES NOT WORTH LIVING'

Within society more value is placed on the lives of some groups at the expense of others. For example, men over women, white people over black people, heterosexual over homosexual, middle class over working class. Disabled people can be added to this list, as a group whose lives are devalued in society in favour of able-bodied or non-disabled people. This is a reflection of a powerful ideology that serves to undermine and undervalue the lives of those who differ from the dominant group – white, straight, non-disabled males. An acute danger persists due to the existence of such a power imbalance. What essentially occurred under the Nazi regime was a decision that some 'lives were not worth living' while others were. Morris (1991) provides an insightful look at two quality of life judgements made in recent times regarding the lives of disabled people – decisions made about disabled adults and those made about the unborn child. A comparison is made between these quality of life judgements and those made under the Third Reich, where the Euthanasia Programme was based on the judgement that some lives were not worth living. The present author considers it important to re-iterate the main points of Morris (1991) discussion, for it not only highlights the negative attitudes towards disabled people but serves to draw attention to the inhumane treatment of an entire group of people whose history is often omitted from the general history of society.

Morris also draws comparisons between recent 'assisted suicide' cases in the US and the Nazi Euthanasia Programme. These assisted suicide cases involved individuals claiming that they wished to die, as they no longer considered their life worth living due to their impairment. The ease with which non-disabled people were able to accept this as a valid reason for wanting to die and their blatant disregard for outside forces such as personal issues or social issues that were in fact making the individual's life difficult, was startling. Many non-disabled people appear to believe that a physical or learning disability is enough to deem a person's 'life not worth living'. As Wendell (1996:156) explains, "The desire for perfection and control of the body, or for the elimination of differences that are feared, poorly understood, and widely considered to be marks of inferiority, easily masquerades as the compassionate desire to prevent or stop suffering". Such fear of difference and desire for control of the body exists today and there is a strong emphasis on trying to 'normalize' disabled people. This arises from the fact that the impaired body and the lives of disabled people are not valued within society.

The ideology underlying the Nazi Euthanasia Programme discounted the lives of disabled people as unworthy and demonstrated this contempt by murdering thousands. Prior to this, disabled people had been routinely sterilised under the Third Reich, which was yet another attempt to eliminate disability (difference) and aim for the 'perfect' race. "There are two crucial elements which the American 'assisted suicide' cases and the Nazi Euthanasia Programme have in common. The first is the unquestioned assumption that physical or intellectual disability, or mental illness, can in themselves be the sole, and inevitable, cause of a person's life being considered it is not worth living. The second is that those who feel entitled to pronounce that a life is not worth living because of disability are not disabled people themselves but non-disabled people in positions of political, economic and medical power" (Morris, 1991: 46). With regards to the issue of abortion and disability, the following statement serves to sum up the perception of the low quality of life that disabled people are deemed to have. "It is outrageous that, under legislation just passed in Britain, a foetus of more than 24 weeks gestation is treated as having rights as a human being but loses those rights once it is diagnosed as being disabled" (Morris, 1991:75).

The above summary of Morris' views highlights the danger in judging the quality of life of another person and the difficulty for disabled people to value their lives in the shadow of such judgements. Such negative associations could also underlie why people may fail to or decide not to associate themselves or identify themselves as disabled. Issues of identity and defining disability, which are fundamental issues in understanding the disabled experience will be dealt with in this chapter. Prior to reviewing these issues, it is necessary to examine the way language is used to talk about disability. Words are loaded with meaning and the language used to describe disability impacts on how disability is defined and perceived as it is also indicative of the value judgements made by society regarding disabled people. The following section highlights the power inherent in language, the fact that no neutral language exists of which to speak of disability and the role it plays in the lives of disabled people.

2.3 LANGUAGE

The language associated with disability is usually medical in nature and thus disability is either defined by the medical profession or government bodies, who are more likely than not non-disabled. "Despite its purported transparency, language is thus neither a neutral tool nor a transparent reflection of reality. Its component parts in fact shape the ways in which reality is perceived" (Gunew, 1990: 19). This lack of neutrality has important implications for a discussion of disability as negative connotations are inherent in the language available for use. Williams (1998: 242) notes that, "....there is no language to talk about it (*disability*) that is untainted; the language and categories we use influence the definition and measurement of 'the problem'; and there is continuing dispute about who are the legitimate representatives of the experience and reality of disability in the modern world". Barnes (1997: 229) also asserts, "Society's misconceptions about disabled people are constantly being reinforced by disabling terms like 'cripple', 'spastic', 'idiot'. Of course there is nothing inherently wrong with these terms, it is simply that their meaning has been substantially devalued by societal perceptions of disabled people; in short, they have been turned into terms of abuse. Their continued use contributes to the negative self-image of disabled people and, at the same time, perpetuates discriminatory attitudes and practices among the general public". Wendell (1996: 77) also talks of the derogatory words associated with disability; "There is a large number of terms (not all of them were originally derogatory) in English that are used for insulting people with disabilities....Some of these terms, as well as relatively neutral terms for describing disabilities, are used to insult people *without* disabilities, by way of implying insultingly that they have disabilities..".

Morris (1992) highlights the fact that disability exists in culture in terms of what it is not: that is, in terms defined by the non-disabled people. As Swain and Cameron (1999: 68) note, "Non-disabled is presumed unless otherwise stated". This is similar to representations of women, black people, gay people, who are all defined by their opposites in the hierarchy of the dominant ideology – men, white, straight - a set of binary oppositions exists. This is not a neutral hierarchy but one that consists of dominant terms (male, white, straight, able-bodied) and subordinate terms (female ,black, gay, disabled). Gunew (1990: 22) in drawing on the work of Foucault, highlights the inherent power that exists in language when she states that "Power is reproduced in discursive networks at every point where someone who 'knows' is instructing someone who doesn't know". An important point to make is that the introduction of the term non-disabled was an attempt by the disabled community to redefine themselves and place those people without impairment as the other, that is, not disabled.

Hevey (1992) notes that the UK disability movement promotes the use of the term disabled people as opposed to people with disabilities. Gordon and Rosenblum (2001: 7) highlight the distinctions between these two descriptive terms and state that such distinctions are not superfluous; "While those outside the group may see such distinctions as arcane, for many of those "inside" naming is part of the collective carving-out of social identity, movement goals, and ideological orientations. For example, in the United Kingdom those who subscribe to a materialist, neo-Marxist social model and those creating postmodern constructionist model of disability often prefer "disabled person", asserting that this phrasing best describes the disablement of the person by society *in reaction to* his or her impairment. Making a different point, some American activists, along with scholars who support a "minority model" of disability, use "person with a disability" because it puts the human being first and the impairment second. Thus, choice of terminology reflects ideological stance". This is further explicated by Barnes (1997:230), who marks out three reasons why people with disabilities is the least preferred term;

"First, 'people with disabilities' assumes that disability is the property of the individual and not of society…

Secondly, by linking 'disability' to 'the impairment' this phrase conveniently sidesteps the consequences of institutional discrimination against disabled people –poverty, dependence and social isolation – and, by implication, the need for change.

Thirdly, it is an explicit denial of a political or 'disabled identity'". Thus, there is a political strength implicit within the term disabled people as opposed to people with disabilities. In the UK, the term disabled people is the generally accepted term. However, in the US and Ireland, people with disabilities is the term that dominates. As can be expected, the language used can affect how the research is carried out and for the purposes of this project, the author will utilise the term disabled person. However, a deeper understanding of the term disabled is required.

2.4 WHAT IS DISABILITY?

No single definition of disability is all-inclusive and totally correct, and authors and governments alike have failed to agree on how to define and measure disability. This section presents some key definitions of the term to highlight the inconsistencies that exist. Davis (1995: 8) presents the definition of disability according to the Rehabilitation Act 1973, which states that disabled people are "those who are regarded as having a limitation or interference with daily life activities such as hearing, speaking, seeing, walking, moving, thinking, breathing, and learning". Mitchell and Snyder (1997: 8) say that "...we use the term disability to designate cognitive and physical conditions that deviate from normative ideas of mental ability and physiological function". Both definitions have a common element, which is to highlight both a physical and a mental element to disability. More pertinent to the Irish context is the definition put forward by the NDA (National Disability Authority) Act 1999. "Disability, in relation to a person, means a substantial restriction in the capacity of a person to participate in economic, social or cultural life on account of an enduring physical, sensory, learning, mental health or emotional impairment". Alternatively, the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and the Equal Status Act, 2000 in Ireland, define disability as:

"(a) the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body,

(b) the presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness,

(c) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body,

(d) a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction,

or

(e) a condition, illness or disease which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement, or which results in disturbed behaviour, and shall be taken to include a disability which exists at present, or which previously existed but no longer exists, or which may exist in the future or which is imputed to a person".

Interestingly, the NDA definition highlights disability as a restriction on the person and links this restriction to the existence of an impairment, which keeps the focus on the individual. The Employment Equality Act, 1998 and Equal Status Act, 2000, focus mainly on the existence of impairment, whether physical, mental or learning. The focus is on the condition and the individual. The negativity inherent in that focus will become apparent in the discussion around the models of disability. Freund (2001: 691-2) states that, "The term disability can be used in two different senses. It can refer to a social status a cultural category or one's bio-medical status. In disability theory, a second usage of disability emerges – a restriction on activity generated by an impairment transformed by a particular socio-cultural context into a disability".

As detailed above there is no consistency across definitions. In addition, disabled people themselves do not define disability in a singular way and inconsistencies exist across how they would define their experience of disability. This is evident in the following discussion of disabled identities.

2.5 DISABLED IDENTITY

Disabled people are not an homogenous group and so it has been questioned whether a common disabled identity can or does exist. However, it must be noted before proceeding that not everyone with an impairment will necessarily consider themselves disabled (Gordon and Rosenblum, 2001; Watson, 2002; Wendell, 1997). In fact, identities are not static (Darling, 2003) and as Patterson and Elliot (2002: 231) note, "Identities are composites of multiple and sometimes contradictory subjectivities that materialize as a result of specific discourses. As such, identity is properly viewed as fluid...". As Reeve (2002: 503-4) asserts, "The concept of a single disability identity is appealing – disabled people linked by a shared experience of social exclusion – and as in other identity politics, it has political use as a rallying call to effect social change. However, not all disabled people experience the same degrees of disabling barriers and discrimination....". As such, the author states that, "...disability is a function of both disability *and* impairment experiences; it will be constituted differently for each individual and will have both temporal and spatial dimensions" (Reeve, 2002: 504). Taylor (1999: 369) had previously noted this idea of variance in terms of identity; "The extent to which individuals will identify with their communities will vary according to their circumstances".

Darling (2003) sets out a typology of disability orientations. Society is divided into two sections – cultural majority and disability subculture. The individual can identify with either section of society and this is seen as a personal choice.

Table 2.1: A typology of disability orientations

	Norms/Goals of Cultural Majority		Norms/Goals of disability subculture	
	Access	Acceptance	Access	Acceptance
Normalisation	+	+	+/-	-
Crusadership	_	+	+	-
Affirmation	+/-	_	+	+
Situational Identification	+	+	+	+
Resignation	_	+	-	-
Apathy	+/-	_	+/-	-
Isolated Affirmation	_	_	-	+

+, Has access or accepts; -, Does not have access or does not accepts; +/-, May or may not have access

(Source: Darling, 2003: 885)

However, gaining access to either culture may be difficult. For example, access to the majority culture may be restricted due to lack of economic resources, inaccessible landscape, and prejudicial attitudes. Table 2.2 highlights the seven possible categories that disabled people could fall into and these categories are described as follows:

Normalisation: "Individuals who adopt this orientation are those who accept the norms of the larger society with regard to appearance and/or ability, and who manage to achieve lifestyles that are similar to those of individuals of their social status who do not have disabilities" (p885)

Crusadership: "...crusaders are those who accept the norms of the cultural majority, but who do not have access to a normalised lifestyle. Consequently, they become involved in the disability subculture in an attempt to achieve normalisation" (p886).

Affirmation: "Like crusaders, affirmers identify with the disability subculture in order to achieve their goals. However, unlike crusaders, their identification is not temporary. The goal for these individuals is not normalisation. Although they may seek access to the right to participate fully in society, they continue to view their disability as their primary identity and view their disability in positive terms" (p887).

Situational Identification: "Some people are chameleons. They seem to be able to maintain multiple identities, or to adopt whatever identity seems appropriate or expedient at any given time. In some cases, these identity shifts simply reflect ambivalence, or the inability or unwillingness to choose between competing norms" (pp887-8).

Resignation: "Some individuals who desire, but are unable to achieve normalisation do not have access to the disability subculture either. They may be illiterate or living in poverty or in isolated rural areas without access to a computer" (p888).

Apathy: "...one would need to acknowledge that some individuals might simply be apathetic or completely uninformed" (p889).

Isolated Affirmation: "Finally, some individuals who do not have access to the disability subculture may, on their own, arrive at an affirmation orientation" (p889).

This typology highlights that disabled people are not a homogenous group. Apart from the existence of a range of types of impairment, disabled people also experience their disability in different ways and identify with the disabled community and non-disabled community in different ways. So identity seems to be a result of the individual's impairment, experience of disability and their interactions with other disabled people. In addition, disability is not the only factor that makes up an individual's identity.

Not only is gender a fundamental element in a person's identity but it is also a factor that affects one's experience of disability. There are certain aspects of being a woman that lead to disability being experienced differently than men. As Wendell (1997: 261) notes "Disabled women struggle with both the oppressions of being women in male-dominated societies and the oppressions of being disabled in societies dominated by the able-bodied". Furthermore, as Begum (1992) notes, disability may be the predominant characteristic of the person but gender influences how a person's disability is perceived and reacted to. Thus, the combination of gender and disability issues is experienced very differently depending on whether the person is male or female. The differing experience is explained by Morris (2002a: 87-88); "Analysis of the relationship between masculinity and disability as social constructs tells us something of the way that the non-disabled society defines physical impairment. To be a disabled man is to fail to measure up to the general culture's definition of masculinity as strength, physical ability and autonomy. Status and autonomy, also key components of masculinity, are similarly associated with an absence of disability....a key part of being a woman in our society is dependency and passivity, yet this, too is a key part of the social experience of physical impairment". Thus, disability serves to confirm the woman's position in society. Tighe (2001: 526) explains that, 'Disabled' becomes a woman's master status, rather than being recognised as a self-sufficient woman with the capacity to enjoy the many pleasures of life".

Asch and Fine (1997: 248) note that, "Often deprived of the chance for long-term intimacy, disabled women also are commonly considered unfit as sexual partners and as mothers". While the idealization of the body occurs for both men and women, greater emphasis is placed on women having the perfect body. Garland-Thomas (1997: 287) stipulates that, "Within the visual economy in which appearance has come to be the primary index of value for women, feminising practices normalize the female body, while disabilities abnormalize it. Feminisation prompts the gaze, while disability prompts the stare. Feminisation alterations increase a woman's cultural capacity, while disabilities reduce it". Furthermore, "the disabled female figure occupies an intragender position; that is, she is not only defined against the masculine figure, but she is imagined as the antithesis of the normative woman as well" (Garland-Thomas, 1997: 288). Wendell (1996: 43-4) highlights how this emphasis on perfection is more pertinent in the life of a woman than a man; "Physical imperfection is more likely to be thought to 'spoil' a woman than a man by rendering her unattractive in a culture where her physical appearance is a large component of a woman's value...".

Gender is not the only factor of importance as race, social class, among others, also interact with disability to form a person's identity (Wendell, 1996). As Freund (2001: 703) notes, "It goes without saying, that, in addition to disability status, gender, class, age, race and ethnicity are significant factors". Gordon and Rosenblum (2001: 13-14) also note that, "..the person with a visible physical disability inhabits a body rejected by society – and the consequences of that are much the same as they are for those in race and sex minority groups". One aspect that may influence an individual's disabled identity could be their access to and acceptance of the various models of disability, which seem to underpin disability studies in the UK, and form a basic starting point for academic discussion in the UK and Ireland. The following section discusses the two dominant models, the medical and social model. A distinction is firstly drawn between the terms impairment and disability, as it is in understanding these terms that a full understanding of the models can be gained.

2.6 MODELS OF DISABILITY

It is important at this stage to distinguish between the terms impairment and disability even though the two concepts are linked. Lonsdale (1990) draws on the World Health Organisations International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps and highlights their distinction between these terms:

1. Impairment: "parts or systems of the body that do not work";
2. Disability: "things people cannot do";
3. Handicap: "social and economic disadvantage" (p20).

The WHO classification scheme is not generally accepted by disabled people (Barnes, 1997) and this could be due to the fact it does not incorporate any social dimension of disability. It is interesting to note that Abberley (1987) discusses impairment as a social product. That is, the non-function of parts or systems of the body can occur due to social activities, such as work or consumption (of defective products). Thus, impairment is not simply the recognition that parts of the body do not work but also a recognition that this can be derived from the production or consumption processes in society. It is a consequence of political and social factors. It is also noted that impairment may be the result of an hereditary condition or may occur at birth. "Claims about the social origin of impairment.....are directed at the explication of the social origin of what are material and biological phenomena, and should be understood not as dissolving these material elements into attitudes or ideas, but rather as pointing to the inextricable and essential social elements in what constitutes a material base for ideological phenomena" (Abberley, 1987: 12). However, this social origin of impairment is quite distinct from the social process of disability and the following distinction between the two terms is helpful in clarifying the issue. Finkelstein and French (2002: 28) explain that,

"*Impairment* is the lack of part of or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body.

Disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities that prevents people who have impairments from taking part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers".

Finkelstein, cited in French (2002) offers a useful analogy to show the distinction between impairment and disability. He suggests that if the physical and social worlds were adapted for wheelchairs, then their disability would be eliminated. Similarly, blindness is described as an impairment, but not having access to information in braille form is a disability.

Hughes and Paterson (1997) use the medical and social model to illustrate the distinction between impairment and disability (see Table 2.1). While the authors present a distinction between impairment and disability in line with the medical and social model, they do not ascribe to either model in their work. In fact, they suggest an alternative model, which will be discussed later in the section

Table 2.2: Impairment versus Disability

The biological	The social
Impairment	Disability
The body	Society
Medicine	Politics
Therapy	Emancipation
Pain	Oppression
The Medical Model	The Social Model

(Source: Hughes and Patterson, 1997: 30)

As highlighted in Table 2.1 two models dominate the discussions of disability. Acceptance of one or other of these models determines how disability is defined, represented and valued within society. The first, the medical model, focuses on the physical aspects of disability and locates the responsibility for disability with the individual. Begum (1992: 71) describes this perspective as one "...in which disability is interpreted as a deviation from accepted or expected notions of normality, the differentness is regarded as a personal tragedy which the individual must seek to 'come to terms with'". As Taylor (1999: 375) explains, "The medical model is underpinned by the personal tragedy theory of disability, which suggest disability is some terrible chance event that occurs at random to unfortunate individuals". Such a model lessens the experience of disability and reduces disability to a purely bio-medical experience and as such adds to the marginalisation and domination of this group. Most evidence suggests that this position is oppressive as it requires the individual to adapt to society rather than vice versa. Finkelstein (2002a) notes that this model continues to dominate legislation and is the main basis by which people are defined and categorised.

An alternative perspective is the social model, which not only locates the responsibility with social institutions and government policy but locates its origins in history. As Oliver (1992: 101) contends, "Disability cannot be abstracted from the social world which permeates it; it does not exist outside the social structures to which it is located and independent of the meanings given to it. In other words, disability is socially produced". Williams (1998: 240) highlights this social process when stating that "Disability as a social reality of people's experiences is caused neither by the externalities of the environment nor by any 'facts' of biological trauma or deterioration, but emerges out of the relations between persons and society". This view means that disability must be understood in terms of an historical context, so that, disability is not simply of relevance in its present context but must be understood as a process that has occurred over time. Disabled people have been marginalized and victimized within society throughout history particularly from the onset of the industrial revolution. As Oliver (2002a: 52) states, workhouses and asylums spawned at the time of the industrial revolution were used as methods of control and that "In addition, day centres, adult training centres and sheltered workshops make a considerable economic contribution by carrying out jobs that cannot easily be mechanised, at wage rates that make third world workers look expensive". Furthermore, Hahn (1987: 557) states that factories were built during the industrial revolution for non-disabled workers and notes that "...patterns of aversion and avoidance toward disabled persons were embedded in the construction of commodities, landscapes, and buildings that would remain for centuries". Society tells disabled people through policy and the built environment that they are not wanted. "We receive so many messages from the non-disabled world that we are not wanted, that we are considered less than human. For those with restricted mobility or sensory disabilities, the very physical environment tells us we don't belong. It tells us that we aren't wanted in the places that non-disabled people spend their lives

– their homes, schools and colleges, their workplaces, their leisure venues. The refusal to give Sign the status of a language means that Deaf people are forced to use a language suited to people with different biological characteristics. The refusal to give Braille the same status as printed material shuts out people with a visual impairment" (Morris, 1991: 26-27).

Kitchin (1998: 345) highlights how "..space is socially constructed to exclude disabled people in two main ways:

- spaces are currently organised to keep disabled people 'in their place';
- spaces are social texts that convey to disabled people that they are 'out of place'".

Thus, the way that space is organised perpetuates the process of disablism and serves to oppress the impaired individual by relocating them to specific areas. As Hughes and Paterson (1997: 328) note, "The built environment, for example, was built for non-disabled people and the norms of construction are such that those with impairments may, and often do, find themselves excluded from a whole range of social spaces that non-disabled people take for granted". This is in line with Kitchin's reference to keeping disabled people 'out of place'. The following passage demonstrates such an experience of a 'cripple' cited in Goffman (1990: 146),

"*But people do not only expect you to play your part; they also expect you to know your place. I remember for instance a man at an open-air restaurant in Oslo. He was much disabled, and had left his wheel-chair to ascend a rather steep staircase up to the terrace where the tables were. Because he could not use his legs he had to crawl on his knees, and as he began to ascend the stairs in this unconventional way, the waiters rushed to meet him, not to help, but to tell him that they could not serve a man like him at that restaurant, as people visited it to enjoy themselves and have a good time, not to be depressed by the sight of cripples*".

Wendell (1996: 39) agrees with this general view and says that "Not only the architecture, but the entire physical and social organization of life tends to assume that we are either strong and healthy and able to do what the average young, non-disabled man can do or that we are completely unable to participate in public life. A great deal of disability is caused by this physical structure and social organization of society".

On the other hand, the particular social groups and institutions set up for the provision of service to disabled people can also serve as a mechanism of organised segregation and have the effect of keeping disabled people 'in their place' (Kitchin, 1998). Finkelstein (2002b) talks of segregated facilities as a form of oppression. A further example given cited in Goffman (1990: 51) highlights this segregation from the perspective of a 'newly blind girl',

> *"I was expected to join this world. To give up my profession and to earn my living making mops. The Lighthouse would be happy to teach me how to make mops. I was to spend the rest of my life making mops with other blind people, eating with other blind people, dancing with other blind people. I became nauseated with fear, as the picture grew in my mind. Never had I come upon such destructive segregation".*

Segregation is a process of separation from mainstream society and it is a process that has been used against disabled people in all areas of their life – housing; employment; education. Such segregation can be compared to segregation based on race. As Hirschman (1985: 186) notes "Segregation of blacks from whites in public education, jobs, and places of residence was, and is, legitimated on the basis that blacks were best served by creating a "separate but equal" institutional structure for them which permitted blacks to compete among themselves". Hirschman's (1985) main concern within this article is the inequality that exists in the distribution of consumption resources and its subsequent ability to determine consumption ability. Though disability was not researched it is imagined that disabled people are at a disadvantage with regards consumption resources as they are historically economically worse off than other groups within society.

A unique aspect of segregation for disabled people is that of institutionalisation. The fear of institutionalisation is a very real one for many disabled people and is one based on the knowledge that institutionalisation entails a loss of control and identity. Furthermore, many disabled people have been subject to emotional and physical abuse while in residential establishments, where Ruth Moore's testimony as quoted in Morris (1991: 121-2) is as follows:

> *"...I was in quite a lot of pain but it paled into significance in comparison with trying to keep in order. It was very strict. Like when I had a plaster cast on and I had to stay lying on my bed, you weren't allowed to lift your head off the pillow. And if you did, you had sticking plaster stuck all over your hair and tied underneath. There were all*

> *sorts of awful things that only in the last few years have I been able to bear to think about. It was not a good idea to be sick – because you had to eat the sick.*
> *I suppose one of the worst experiences of my life was when staff took a dislike to this beautiful looking little girl. She had blonde hair. The nurses used to play a game which they used get groups of us to watch where they held a child under the water in the bath until she started to go blue. And they killed this child. They held her under for too long. I didn't dare do or say anything.*"

This is evidence of how historically society has mistreated disabled people.

In sum, "...disability is a form of social oppression which is circulated through prevailing ideological, social and political determinants and, as a consequence of these, disabled people are socially excluded and handicapism is constructed" (Begum, 1992: 72). Probably the most important question to ask in any critical examination, is 'who benefits from this oppression?' For in identifying who benefits, an understanding of why such oppression exists and might be gained and its destruction might be achieved. Abberley (1987) states that the present social order benefits from exercising such oppression, with that order being capitalism. As Kitchin (1998: 346) highlights "People who do not hold the same values or live the same way as the dominant group are repressed through physical violence and imprisonment". This is further explained by Morris (1991: 166) when she asserts that, "Our society is characterised by fundamental inequalities and by ideologies which divide people against each other – the experience of disability is an integral part of this". Thus, the dominant value system in society benefits from maintaining the status quo. As Clear (1999: 438) states, "Like the fundamental racism of apartheid, disability feeds off powerful, pernicious and persistent forms of economic and social structure, and distribution, which have not substantially been transformed, and therefore disability lives on".

Abberley (1987: 17) proposes a theory of disability as oppression as consisting of five points; it,

(1) "recognises and, in the present context, emphasises the social origins of impairment;

(2) recognises and opposes the social, financial, environmental and psychological disadvantages inflicted on impaired people;

(3) sees both (1) and (2) as historical products, not as the results of nature, human and or otherwise;

(4) asserts the value of disabled modes of living, at the same time as it condemns the social production of impairment;

(5) is inevitably a political perspective, in that it involves the defence and transformation, both material and ideological, of state health and welfare provision as an essential condition of transforming the lives of the vast majority of disabled people"

This theory is further supported when we consider Young's (1990) classification of oppression into five categories. These can be described as different ways that relationships are maintained. (cited in Kitchin, 1998; also referenced in Priestley, 1998).

- powerless – political means
- marginalized – social means
- exploited – material means
- repressed – violent means
- maintained – ideology

Disabled people have invariably been described as a powerless (in the sense that they do not usually hold positions of power in any facet of society and thus it is very difficult to make their voice heard), marginalized, exploited and repressed group within society. Social, material, violent and ideological forces have been employed throughout history to ensure that disabled people remain oppressed.

Thus, the social model recognises that society is organised for non-disabled people and this system discriminates against 'disabled' people. "The objective of creating an environment that fulfils the needs and desires of people with disabilities is not a utopian vision" (Hahn, 1985). Oliver (2002b: 65) distinguishes between the social construction and social creation models of disability. He favours the social creation perspective which describes disability as "..a problem created by institutions, organisations and processes that constitute society in its totality". The social creationist approach according to Priestley (1998) is concerned with the material relations of power. The units of analysis are disabling barriers, which are specified as physical, structural, and institutional. Alternatively, the social constructionist approach is described as an idealist position, as opposed to a materialist position and "..it assumes that the construction of disability is a product of specific cultural conditions" (p81). Priestley (1998: 81) emphasises that these positions are not mutually exclusive (including the individual perspectives mentioned above) and that "..many social constructionists find it useful to note structural factors as supporting evidence (within either a pluralist or a materialist tradition)".

The author will not be dealing exclusively with either social model. Both focus on the collective experience of disability and operate on the notion that some commonality exists in terms of discrimination and oppression. Priestley (1998: 86) states that in viewing disability as oppression, the researcher can gain a significant amount by combining both perspectives, that is , it is, "...a product of both cultural values and material relations of power (such as political economy, patriarchy or imperialism)". "The suggestion is that the mode of production has a determinate influence on cultural values and representations and not the converse. The assumption is that cultural values contribute to disability in so far as they preserve and legitimate the social relations required by a dominant mode of production" (Priestley, 1998: 88).

Much criticism of the social model exists and for this reason the social model may need to be redefined in terms of the 'sociology of impairment'. The sociology of impairment requires a refocus on the body, something that the social model is deemed to omit. As Hughes and Paterson (1997: 326) state, "the social model of disability proposes an untenable separation between body and culture, impairment and disability". Marks (1999) holds the view that the individual and social models are two sides of the same coin and argues that disability is an embodied relationship. The social model is criticised by Marks (1999) due its lack of recognition of the subjective experience of impairment with impairment deemed to be an important part of disability. As Finkelstein and French (2002) highlight, pain and fatigue are a very real part of having an impairment for some people. As Abberley (1987: 14) points out, "For disabled people the body is the site of oppression, both in form, and what is done with it". Furthermore, Morris (1992: 164) states "To experience disability is to experience the frailty of the human body". The idea of an embodied conception of disability is central to the sociology of impairment and involves an extension of the social model rather than a complete revision of the model to involve a focus on the body. What Hughes and Paterson (1997: 337) argue is that "..the social model of disability embodies an adequate theoretical basis for emancipatory politics but not for an emanicpatory politics of identity".

However, the sociology of impairment is not without its limitations. There are two main criticisms of the sociology of impairment, the first of which is that "...the production of a new and separate impairment model will simply replicate problems inherent in binary explanations of oppression...Secondly, while rightly highlighting the pervasiveness of images of the 'perfect body' in cultural media and fashion representations, the theory also seems to uncritically accept the premise that all members of society are caught up in the new project of achieving bodily perfection, and the mainstream assumptions about disabled people's impairments exclude them from this contest" (Tregaskis, 2002: 464).

The present author does not want to belittle or denigrate the experience of disability as a medical and individual issue but rather the aim in discussing the social model is to highlight that responsibility does not lie with those people deemed to be disabled. So regardless the type of disability, there is some commonality with regards the experience of disability, that is, a collective experience exists as well as an individual one. There is a fear that adherence to the sociology of impairment re-instates a focus on the body that may result in the responsibility of disability being re-located in the individual, thus, reverting back to the oppressive mode of the medical model.

Thomas (1999) proposes to extend the social model into the social relational model of disability. This is worth noting as it sums up some of the key arguments put forward thus far. Within this viewpoint, "disability becomes a particular form of unequal social relationship which manifests itself through exclusionary and oppressive practices – *disablism* – at the interpersonal, organizational, cultural and socio-structural levels in particular societal contexts" (Thomas, 1999: 40). Thus, disability is not seen solely in terms of restriction of activity imposed on people with impairments. It is an historical and spatial relationship that oppresses impaired people.

An important strand of this social-relational approach is the recognition of the psycho-emotional dimensions of disablism. It suggests that not only should barriers to what we can do be looked at but also the barriers to what we can be or who we are; so, it is about how we feel and think about ourselves (Thomas, 1999). "I am suggesting that as well as the social barriers, which are experienced as externally imposed 'restrictions of activity' as currently recognized by social modellists,.....there are also social barriers which erect 'restrictions' within ourselves and thus place limits on our psycho-emotional well-being: for example, feeling 'hurt' by the reactions and behaviours of those around us, being made to feel worthless, of lesser value, unattractive, hopeless, stressed or insecure" (Thomas, 1999: 47). As Reeve (2002: 495) notes, "One important aspect includes the way in which disabled people respond emotionally to social exclusion and physical barriers (structural disability), such as feelings of anger and frustration when faced with inaccessible buildings. Another dimension of this form of disability includes the emotional responses to the social reactions of other people, for example, feeling ashamed when being stared at in the street. An important element of this type of emotional disablism is called internalised oppression and is a feature of any marginalized group within society".

Thus, disability is still considered a social process, which recognises that not only external barriers but also internal barriers need to be assessed. Advertising potentially plays a pertinent role in generating this kind of disablism, because it can effect how we feel and think about ourselves. This study is concerned with the absence of disabled people from commercial advertising and how this interacts with the experience of disability. It is important to review current images of disability that persist in various mediums, films/TV programmes/charity ads. A review of current research in the area of disability and commercial advertising will also be given.

2.7 DISABILITY: THE IMAGE

Disabled people are essentially missing from mainstream culture, which means that non-disabled people have very few points of reference with regards disability (Morris, 1991). However, disability is not entirely defined by its absence (most notably its absence from mainstream advertising) but also by its presence in television programmes (more so in the US), film and charity advertising, which construct certain images of disability. "The way in which the culture interprets and uses the *presence* of disability is the very powerful other side of the coin. Just as beauty – and goodness – are defined by the absence of disability, so ugliness – and evil – are defined by its presence" (Morris, 1991: 93). Wendell (1996: 42-3) explains that "Culture makes major contributions to disability. These contributions include not only the omission of experiences of disability from cultural representations of life in society, but also the cultural stereotyping of people with disabilities, the selective stigmatisation of physical and mental limitations and other differences (selective because not all limitations and differences are stigmatised, and different limitations and differences are stigmatised in different societies), the numerous cultural meanings attached to various kinds of disability and illness, and the exclusion of people with disabilities from the cultural meanings of activities they cannot perform or are expected not to perform". It is this area of disability presence that the author is first concerned with, with a review of the images that dominate film, TV and charity advertising. The discussion will then turn to the absence of disability in mainstream advertising. This section will however be brief due to the paucity of literature in the area.

2.7.1 Film

Darke (1997a: 10) presents four eras of cinematic representation of disability using the classification as developed by Martin F. Norden. "For Norden the cinematic conception and construction of disability can be broken down into four main eras: first, before World War II disability is constructed as 'freakish'; then, immediately post-war, it improves to become what he terms 'rehabilitative'; in the third period from the 1950s on, it degenerates and reverts once more to a freakish perspective; and finally, from the mid-70s, there is a swing to a more enlightened and tolerant stance, linked in the USA to the returning Vietnam War veteran contingent and in Britain to left-wing liberalism, and combined with a desire for the international film industry to facilitate the rehabilitation of a divided world (the legacy of the 60s)".

Television programming and films in the US have utilized the area of disability or more appropriately impairment as a dramatization tool (Longmore, 1985). As with the representations of black people and women, the focus within this medium is solely on the body (Hevey, 2002). "The entertainment value of disability imagery is an often forgotten aspect of the persistence of negative images that is especially relevant to any discussion of the 'freakish' image of disability. The entertainment content of such images also helps us to explain why civil rights for disabled people have been slow in coming" (Darke, 1997a: 11). Zola (1985) states that disability becomes a metaphor within the media to depict images of disabled people as victims, childlike, and living empty lives. "One of the interesting findings of sociologists is that on television the lives of people with disabilities are obviously empty, excluded from important roles as husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. One survey showed that two-thirds of them were single, even childlike, often victims" (Nelson, 1996: 123). In addition, it can be used to perpetuate underlying American ideology through a focus on survival and endurance, that is, those who work hard can overcome all the odds, be successful, in other words, achieve the American dream. The use of disability as a metaphor for the failure of the American dream is evident in the film *Born on The Fourth of July*, according to Sutherland (1997) where disability signifies loss. He also states that a distinction must be made between films that have disability as their central focus and those that use disability as metaphor. A further example of the metaphorical use of disability is given by Morris (1991: 96) in her discussion of *Born on the Fourth of July* and *My Left Foot*, which she states are primarily concerned with the issue of masculinity, or perhaps redundant masculinity; as men are usually considered autonomous and disability is deemed to change this. "A man in a wheelchair is an easily recognisable metaphor for a lack of autonomy, because this is how the general culture perceives disabled people".

Disability as a melodramatic device has also been described by Longmore (1985) where he highlights some key trends in film and television programmes.

- *Disabled person as criminal.*

In film, the bad guy is always recognisable by some physical deformity. Examples of such characters are the James Bond villains, Captain Hook and Freddy Krueger. It is the classic tale of good versus evil, normality versus abnormality, with the good always winning out in the end (Darke, 1997a). As Sutherland (1997: 17) explains, "The idea that visible physical difference automatically denotes a more fundamental 'otherness' is one of the most basic elements of the film vocabulary". Longmore (1985: 32) states that "Deformity of body symbolizes deformity of soul". This point is reinforced by Hevey (2002: 117) when he says that "For the character to know and demonstrate their doom, their body must physically manifest the flaw through an impairment". Furthermore, as Nelson (1996: 121) contests, " Modern screens abound in portrayals of villains whose evil presence is exemplified by some obvious physical limitation – a limp, a hook for a hand, a black patch over the eye, a hunchback. All of these play on subtle and deeply held fears and prejudices". The characters are sometimes shown to become impaired as a consequence of their evil and set out to retaliate against non-disabled people. "Giving disabilities to villainous characters reflects and reinforces, albeit in exaggerated fashion, three common prejudices against handicapped people: disability is a punishment for evil; disabled people are embittered by their 'fate'; disabled people resent the nondisabled and would, if they could, destroy them" (Longmore, 1985: 32).

- *Disabled person as tragic victim of fate.*

The disabled person may be constructed as dangerous in an alternative way to the criminal or monster genres, that is, one who has tendencies for violent outbursts. This character usually has a loss of self-control within the plot and this perpetuates the message that being disabled results in a loss of humanity. A common example of this type of character is Lenny in *Of Mice and Men*.

- *Maladjusted Disabled Person*

This character is usually resentful and embittered and there is usually no mention of the social factors, which disable the person. They are typically 'shown the light' by a non-disabled person who, it is implied, has a better understanding of the disability experience than the person themselves. "These portrayals suggest that disability is a problem of psychological self-acceptance, of emotional adjustment. Social prejudice rarely intrudes" (Longmore, 1985: 34).

Other stereotypical images include the disabled person as victim (as in telethon appeals), the disabled person as hero (the 'supercrip'), the disabled person as one to be cared for and the disabled person who shouldn't have survived (referred to as the better off dead syndrome) (Nelson, 1996). There is also the stereotype of the disabled person as asexual or sexually deviant and the dramatic ability to 'cure' disability or in the most drastic cases the ability to eliminate disability through death. As Darke (1997a) explains, the 'cure' is the simplest remedy for disability in film or it can be made to disappear through death. "Either way, the audience is entertained and the problem resolved before their eyes: disability, to the non-disabled audience, remains a tragic state of being and the marginalised continue to be blamed for their own situation. The status quo is intact" (p12). These stories tend not to have neutral endings (Zola, 1985), and there is a tendency for the disabled person to die or commit suicide (Longmore, 1985).

People with learning disabilities are consistently shown as childlike (*Forest Gump*; and *Dumb and Dumber*) while visual impairment (or more appropriately 'blind' people as the true range of visual impairment is never depicted) also constitutes a popular metaphor. Although blindness is often linked to evil or sin, some 'positive' stereotypes also prevail; "These positive stereotypes include the notion that other senses can compensate for sightlessness that blind people possess the desirable character traits of spirituality, patience, and cheerfulness, and that they have superhuman command of the non-visual senses" (Wilkins, 1996: 128). However, the attractiveness of visual impairment as a dramatic device may have much to do with its voyeuristic nature; "The visual nature of film as film has ensured that visual impairment is, and always will be, a mainstay of the film-makers' repertoire. The movies' and the spectator's voyeuristic tendencies, that is, seeing and watching without being watched or seen, have no greater power or force than when watching the unable to see. Visually impaired characters on the screen reassure the audience, society and the film industry in their own delusions that 'seeing is believing'"(Darke, 1997b). Deafness is another disability that features in films. "Historically, Hollywood's ideal deaf person has been truly invisible – other than the inability to hear, the stereotyped movie ideal invariably speaks clearly and reads lips with unfailing accuracy – both unrealistic exaggerations" (Schuchman, 1997). Schuchman (1997: 45) also notes the similarities between blind and deaf characters in film in making excellent victims, plus the fact that "..these characters look good; and since film-makers value a pleasing physical appearance, this explains why deafness and blindness predominate among disabled characters in film".

2.7.2 Television Programmes

Although, some of the dramatization tools mentioned above have been employed in US TV programmes, British television has quite a different history. As Davies (1997: 61-

62) explains, "As more films and American drama imports reached the screen, disabled people were in a sense 'present', but that is not the same as characters identifiable as useful role models. The effect then, in the early television mix, was of an absence of disabled people, but with the greater institutional segregation of the time, fewer people had direct experience of disabled people, and that absence was therefore inconspicuous". Shakespeare (1997) highlights the incidence of disabled characters in soap operas, an important genre on British TV. Some positive portrayals in the soaps include Mark Fowler who is HIV positive, *Eastenders*; baby Alice who had Down's Syndrome , *Brookside*; and Chris Tate, a wheelchair user, *Emmerdale*. Shakespeare accords the most positive portrayal to Julie Fernandez, a wheelchair user in the ill-fated soap, *Eldorado*. However, it must be noted that general images of disability on TV are medicalised. "In the past, disability has been medicalised and narratives have centred around traumatic accidents, death-bed crises and other dramas of diagnosis and disease. However, disability is about far more than this focus on impairment" (Shakespeare, 1997: 76-7). Karpf (1997: 79) also recognises how the majority of images are underscored by a medical approach to disability and states that the reason is that "Programmes using the medical approach are usually presented and produced by able-bodied people, for the medical approach speaks to the able-bodied (and shows disability as seen by them); 'the disabled' are its objects".

Documentary programmes are rarely accused of stereotyping but Pointon (1997) observes that stereotypes, such as the transformer role (or the non-disabled rescuer) and disabled person as burden (a tragic story that does more to highlight the goodness of those who 'care' for the disabled person than anything else), still persist. Furthermore, such impairment-based stories are said to provide a unique opportunity to 'gaze'. As Pointon (1997: 88) states, "There is a 'reality' in these programmes but also a real world that gets left out".

Longmore (1985: 32) suggests that these negative traits attributed to disabled people are a projection of the fear of non-disabled people, where "the non-disabled audience is allowed to disown its fears and biases by 'blaming the victims,' making them responsible for their own ostracism and destruction". Hevey (2002: 118) agrees that negative depictions of disability are used by 'able-bodied' people and he says they aid in the management of two fears "...(1) the ridding or disavowal of health, fitness and other physical/functional issues pertaining to the ability of work, and (2) the disavowal of the presence of death and mortality". The negative implications of such imagery are also noted by Elliott and Byrd (1982: 43); "Given that the majority of portrayals of disability deal with mental illness and primarily occur on dramas and other programs that utilize suspense, it is no small wonder that the immediate attitudes toward disability are considered negative communication barriers". Thus, "the lack of realistic cultural representations of experiences of disability not only contributes to the 'Otherness' of people with disabilities by encouraging the assumption that their lives are inconceivable to non-disabled people but also increases non-disabled people's fear of disability by suppressing knowledge of how people live with disabilities". All of these images serve to construct disabled people as the 'Other' and perpetuate stereotypes, which sometimes are the only contact with and knowledge of disabled people that some people have. They can increase the fear of disability as these mediums fail to communicate accurate knowledge about how disabled people live. One of the most powerful mediums that constructs a certain image of disabled people is charity advertising. In fact, charity ads are a medium within which disabled people are 'hyperpresent' (Hevey, 1992).

2.7.3 Charity Advertising

Charities are renowned for portraying disabled people as pitiable and pathetic, as a means of affecting emotions of sympathy and guilt among the audience to encourage them to donate money. However, such imagery is just as negative as the monster and rehabilitative genres of film and T.V discussed earlier. Morrison (2002: 26) stresses that "Charity imagery, tales of tragedy or outstanding courage in the media, fairy tales and other children's books loaded with disabled villains can all combine to undermine a view of ourselves as valid human beings. If one of the creative activities of art is to present a mirror to society, what we generally see is a distorted reflection of ourselves". The key message is usually that the audience can ward off disability themselves by donating money. There exists a clear emphasis on fear and pity in such campaigns (Haller and Ralph, 2001). However, Hevey (1992: 44) suggests that the link between campaigns and donations is not as simplistic or successful as one might think; "It is becoming clear.....that the central point of charity advertising is not in the first instance to raise money: at this it manifestly fails. Its central purpose is to appeal to the volunteer army of the respective charity organized within regional and local 'self-help' groups. Charity advertising is there to inform these people that they exist and that their mission is happening". Morris (1991: 109) highlights how such misrepresentation occurs when she explains how disabled people are not involved in the production process. "Disabled people are not clients (the charity is), they are not the audience (non-disabled people are – the givers of funds), and they are not the product (the charity is)". This point may be explicated by looking at the three stages of charity advertising as described by Hevey (1992). The first stage is concerned with brand awareness, with the aim being to fix the existence of the impairment in the mind of the audience. The second stage is concerned with attitude change; "attitude change as used in charity advertising asks disabled and non-disabled people to disengage from the physical world of inaccessible construction and enter a mapless world of hope" (p36). And, finally the third stage is the functional stage, which begins to illustrate the disabled person in social engagement. Hevey (1992: 40) believes that the process of charity advertising will not stop here and that "..the charities will attempt to develop a fourth-stage, 'positive' image of their impairment category both to show how happy their users are and to fight off criticism". It is rare, that at any stage during this process that disabled people would be consulted. Scott-Parker (1989: 11) also previously noted the special relationship between charity and agency which resulted in the exclusion of disabled people from the process;

"The **charity** briefs the agency, pays the fee and becomes the client.

The **agency** remains the agency of course, but does a lot of work at less than commercial rates and saves the charity large sums of media discounts. The agency becomes a **benefactor**.

As charity campaigns are seen to operate outside the usual commercial constraints, agency creative talents have greater scope than usual and often win prestigious ad industry **awards,** thus the agencies become in a sense **beneficiaries**. Charity accounts also enhance their corporate image.

The **target audience** is the **potential donor/general public**. The aim of the campaign is to **raise brand awareness** for the **charity**, also described at this point as the **product.** Market research regarding the impact of such advertising naturally focuses on the target audience, that is, the potential donor, and the product, that is, the charity.

The entire *relationship* can be described *without reference to people with disabilities.* They are *not clients, not audience, not product, not customer*".

There has been very little recognition of the absence of disabled people from commercial advertising and what this means to disabled people, if indeed it means anything at all. Current literature in this area will be dealt with in the next section.

2.7.4 Commercial Advertising

As Hahn (1987: 561) asserts, "Perhaps the most common method utilized by capitalists to perpetuate the subordinate status of oppressed groups, however, was simply to exclude them from their economic appeals". This tactic of exclusion has been used extensively in advertising against disabled people and the majority of mainstream advertising persists in following this agenda (Longmore, 1985). Albrecht (1992: 280) has highlighted to some extent the role of the media in this social process when stating that "...the media often do a disservice to persons with disabilities by suggesting that only those without a blemish deserve to be seen in public". Thus, exclusion from advertising discourse, accompanied with an attitude of 'not deserving to be seen in public' could be said to set the stage for social interactions that occur between non-disabled and disabled people on a daily basis. It gives the impression that they are not a part of mainstream society (Hardin et al., 2001). In their study of Sports Illustrated for Kids (SIK), Hardin et. al (2001) found that over the three year period studied no advertising included images of disability and that all twenty-four images of disability were found in the editorial. Furthermore, the context in which disabled people were photographed is worth noting. Most disabled people were pictured on their own or with other disabled people, which serves to reinforce the notion of segregation not integration. Also disabled children were not pictured in certain types of sports and disproportionately represented in others, which serves to imply that disabled athletes are more different from their non-disabled counterparts than similar to them.

Haller and Ralph (2001) propose that the inclusion of people with disability is a profitable route for advertisers, and not the political minefield so often put forward by advertisers in defence of their absence. It is suggested that diversity in advertising imagery might enhance its reception by audiences. While in general advertising discourse there is limited inclusion of disabled people, there are more cases of inclusion in the U.S than in the U.K. Although, it is only the most beautiful and least disfigured people, which are depicted and thus the diversity of disability is not truly represented. This is also reflected in research, with the majority of research projects focusing on advertising and disability being US-based. There was a special issue of Disability Studies Quarterly in 2001 and this accounts for much of the work in this area. The majority of these studies (Ganahl and Arbuckle, 2001; Haller and Ralph, 2001; Hardin et al., 2001; Thomas, 2001) content analyze images of disability in advertising, with the exception of Panol & McBride (2001) who evaluated the effect of images of physically disabled people in print ads on non-disabled people. Only two studies actually look to disabled people for their opinions and attitudes. Burnett and Paul (1996) investigated the media habits and needs of mobility-disabled consumers compared to non-disabled consumers and one element of the research looked at respondents views of advertising. However, the question of what the exclusion from mainstream advertising means to disabled people was not tackled. The authors definition of disability was very much in line with the medical model and really could be described as impairment-focused research. Hardin et. al. (2003) looked at disabled athletes attitudes to sport, advertising and exclusion from mainstream culture. This is one of the very few pieces of research that asks disabled people for their opinions but is concerned specifically with sports coverage and sports advertising and focuses solely on male wheelchair users.

A comparison is drawn between charity and commercial advertising (see Table 2.3). It highlights the differences between the two advertising formats. Charity ads are typically black and white with an emphasis on instilling fear in the audience. The aim here is to encourage audience members to buy distance from the brand and as such donate money to the charity. Commercial advertising is quite different. Not only is this format dominated by colour, this type of advertising tries to sell desire and encourages the audience to buy the brand.

Table 2.3: Comparison of Charity and Commercial Advertising

CHARITY ADVERTISING	COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING
Black & White	Colour
Sells Fear	Sells Desire
Buy Distance from Brand	Buy Brand

(Source: Adapted Hevey, 1992: 35)

Such distinctions may go some way to explain why commercial advertisers may feel that disability and commercial advertising are incompatible and as such fail to include disabled people in their campaigns. As Calvi (2004: 17) states, "...disabled people have traditionally only been featured in ads raising money for charity or where a product is being directly targeted at them. The result has been a dearth of disabled people in advertising, and their persistent portrayal as 'victims'".

In Ireland, disabled people are essentially absent from commercial advertising but there has been some recent notable exceptions. These include the Brennan's bread ad, which featured a visually impaired woman and a recent Adidas ad featuring a male wheelchair user. As Ireland were the hosts of the 2003 Special Olympics there was increased images of people with learning disability on our screens, however, these ads were specifically in connection with the event itself. Furthermore, these ads seemed to be dominated by a discourse of gratitude, common of charitable ads in general. Another advertising genre that has a tendency to include disabled people are government road safety campaigns. Disability is usually depicted as a result of accident and could be construed as a punishment for speeding or drink driving. Such ads serve to create a discourse of fear around disability and as such ask the audience to distance themselves from disability. This could also create a distance between disabled and non-disabled people in social interactions.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed key issues regarding disability. The complexity in defining disability, the range of disability orientations and the current debates regarding the models of disability were detailed. The social model guides this study, which means that society is seen to disable individuals and is not something implicit within the individuals. An important addition to the social model is the recognition of the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability, which recognizes that not only external barriers but also internal barriers (low self-esteem, shame, internalised oppression) are disabling. Thus, working within the social model of disability means that disability is located in society and no institution holds a more powerful and omnipresent position in our society as advertising. Literature regarding the representation of disabled people in TV, film and charity advertising was discussed. Current research in representation of disabled people in commercial advertising, all of which is US-based was detailed. However, the justification for focusing on this medium will be dealt with in greater detail in chapter three which details the role of advertising, the power of advertising and it's dominant discourse.

CHAPTER THREE:

ADVERTISING LITERATURE

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The present study investigates how commercial advertising interacts with the disabling experience and whether it serves to accentuate this experience, through the absence of disabled people from its discourse and imagery. Chapter two described disability as a social process and emphasized the ways in which society is constructed to exclude disabled people. The research proposes to investigate that commercial advertising is yet one more way by which disabled people are excluded from society. The question is posed as to what this means to disabled people and how it interacts with their experience of disability. An understanding of advertising's place in society, its function and process is required. The following discussion serves to critique advertising's role in society and tackles the issue of the power advertising possesses and how this power is manifested. The chapter concludes with a discussion of consumption. However, prior to looking at ideology and power in greater detail, it is beneficial to first outline the basic role of advertising in society.

3.1 ROLE OF ADVERTISING

Traditionally, advertising was identified as having an informational and transformational role in society (Pollay, 1984). However, more recently academics have noted how advertising has come to occupy the seat of power in the communication realm. Schroeder (1999: 182) testifies that, "advertising has emerged as the most powerful communication system in the world, creating a dream world of images where anything is possible". Jhally (1990: 106) states that one of its key functions is to communicate rather than simply attract attention. Whereas, O'Donohoe (1993) notes how advertising has both marketing (information, choice, consumption stimulation) and non-marketing (escapism, play, entertainment) uses for consumers.

Advertising also has a moral role in society. Sinclair (1987: 30) recognised advertising's stature as "a moral force in society". Furthermore, it has been noted that "in the consumer society, marketing and advertising assumed the role once played by cultural traditions and became the privileged forum for the transmission of social cues" (Leiss et al., 1990: 65). Elliott (1999) believes that advertising images are used as personal and social resources by individuals. In essence, advertising has eclipsed traditional means by which individuals learn to behave. That is, traditional structures in society are in some cases replaced (church) but in others combined (family) with advertising communications, to teach individuals in society what is right/wrong, or acceptable/unacceptable. As Elliott & Ritson (1997: 200) state "the individual was freed from one ideological code to be influenced by another, that of consumption ideology in the form of advertising". It is this role as a moral source of influence and social communicator that deems an investigation of advertising ideology and power as highly important. For if society looks to advertising for guidance, surely the question must be asked, where exactly advertising is guiding them to? The first step is to define ideology.

3.2 IDEOLOGY

3.2.1 What is ideology?

The term 'ideology' was first used by Destutt de Tracy, a French philosopher, in 1796 (Thompson, 1990). It is understood that not one universal ideology exists, but that different ideologies co-exist. Corner (2001: 526) highlights the fact that there has been a "...tendency towards talking of 'ideologies' rather than of 'ideology', a pluralizing that carries implications for the way in which the word can be used as a term of critique". For the purposes of this study, the author will focus on ideology as defined in an advertising context, but only having identified primary definitions of the concept.

To begin to explain ideology we must look back to Karl Marx, who used his ideas of ideology to explain his theory of the class structure. However, as Torrance (1995: 201) explains Marx never actually defined ideology but stipulated certain characteristics that are involved. The two characteristics were: "(a) 'inversion': the feature that 'in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside down as in a camera obscura, and (b) 'idealization': the tendency to convert ideas into ideals". The issues of illusions and desired end goals are prominent in these characteristics, and as will be seen, are prominent to date in definitions of advertising ideology. The Marxist theory of ideology as stipulated by Sinclair (1987) was that "culture is seen to be ultimately determined by social and economic organisation, and the corollary that the class which controls material production also controls the production of ideology, and does so in perpetuation of its own social dominance" (p36). Mannheim (1936: 49) suggests that there are two meanings of the word ideology. They are referred to as the particular and total conception. "The particular conception of ideology is implied when the term denotes that we are sceptical of the ideas and representations advanced by our opponent. They are regarded as more or less conscious disguises of the real nature of a situation, the true recognition of which would not be in accord with his interests". Whereas, the total conception "...refer(s) to the ideology of an age or of a concrete historico-social group, e.g. of a class, when we are concerned with the characteristics and composition of the total structure of the mind of this epoch or of this group" (pp49-50). Within these broad definitions of ideology, issues of class, dominance and deception arise.

Ideologies according to Elliott and Ritson (1997: 193) "are essentially the facilitating force which permits a small group with a particular political agenda to influence a much wider, diverse section of the population". While Davidson (1992: 174) suggests "there is another use of the term ideology, an oppositional one, pledged to the analysis of underlying, and often covert ways of thinking". In these definitions, the concepts of society, dominance by one group and the image or illusion begin to surface. Davidson's (1992) definition is closely aligned with those specific to advertising ideology. Focus now turns to these definitions.

Williamson (1978: 13) views advertising ideology as filling a gap that exists in society when she says "Ideology is meaning made necessary by the condition of society while helping to perpetuate those conditions. We feel a need to belong, to have a social place; it can be hard to find. Instead we may be given an imaginary one......The mass media provide this to some extent and can [potentially] fulfil a positive function in our lives". Similarly, Goldman and Papson (1996: 18) suggest that "ads are ideological insofar as they construct socially necessary illusions and normalize distorted communication". Leiss et.al (1990: 31) introduced the concept of a consumption society and detailed advertising ideology as "a set of false and misleading concepts about reality, and in two major dimensions this ideology actually works: the stress on satisfaction through consumption rather than work; and the 'Hollywood set', in which the world is portrayed as free from radical and class conflict, 'idyllic and false'". This is further explained by Ritson and Elliott (1997: 202) when they state that, "Advertising.....uniquely combines the apparent representation of everyday reality with an overtly ideologised account of that reality. Advertising portrays reality-as-lived against reality-as-possibly lived with the consumer good as the connecting step".

The above discussion highlights the negative connotations implicit within advertising ideology. This may be understood in relation to Gramsci's proposition of hegemony (a concept closely related to ideology) and defined as "a process by which certain definitions of reality attain dominance in society" (cited in Sinclair, 1987: p39). Furthermore, "the term 'hegemony' is a reference to the way in which the ideas of the ruling class tend to be seen as right and unchallengeable. The rigid class based hegemony of a unified dominant ideology may now have been replaced by a more sophisticated form of advertising, but the same messages are transmitted in more subtle forms" (Mayne, 2000: 60).

In line with the focus of the present study, Ross (2001: 430) touches on the idea of a disablist hegemony when she states that it " could be....promoted through the frame of 'normality' where each (re)articulation of what is 'normal' also reinforces the potency of its opposite by figuring what is not". The concept of normality will be dealt with in more detail later. It is sufficient to say, that normality is itself an ideology of what we should look like, act like and think like and serves to exclude those deemed not 'normal'. As such, is a very potent concept in the lives of disabled people, as disabled people are generally considered not 'normal' by society's standards. Additionally, Davis (1995: 2) places disability in the realm of ideology; "What does not occur to many people is that disability is not a minor issue that relates to a relatively small number of unfortunate people; it is part of a historically constructed discourse, an ideology of thinking about the body under certain historical circumstances". Thus, what constitutes a 'normal' body, 'normal' mind, 'normal' intellect is not a given, but a social construction, an ideological discourse that serves the purposes of those deemed to be 'normal', to be 'right'.

Thus stemming from the Marxist critique of illusions and idealization, we come to discover that within advertising ideology there is distortion and an ideal image of reality proposed. This is in essence the skewed image of reality that was referred to earlier. There is a need to ask who's reality the ideology pertains to communicate, as it is not universal but instead advertising ideology is exclusive and dominated by the beautiful, white middle classes. The question that now needs to be answered is how does ideology work.

3.2.2 How does ideology work?

Academics such as Thompson (1990) and Elliott and Ritscn (1997) have put forward strategies to explain how ideology works. A lot of overlap exists between their work, in that four of the strategies/modes of operations are the same or very similar. However, Elliott and Riston (1997) concentrate more specifically on how ideology works in an advertising context and it is to these strategies that the author now turns.

- Legitimisation: Under this strategy advertising ideology appeases consumer anxiety about their consumption behaviour. It removes the guilt that could be attached to purchase and promotes consumption as a route to happiness. Ideology functions to direct individuals towards their dreams and desires.
- Universalisation: Consumption is made a constant part of daily life with products included in all advertisements. "By effectively universalising consumption within society individuals are denied the ability to contrast their current life world with one in which consumption does not maintain an extensive influence" (p199). It would be extremely difficult for an individual to compare the world of brands to one where there is a lesser focus on materialism.
- Unification : This strategy refers to the concept of 'pseudo-individualism'. That is, while advertising communicates and draws in the individual, it also tries to bring the target market together behind the brand through a false individuality. Thus people assert their individuality through wearing, driving or drinking a certain brand, but the brand and its meaning are not unique to them.
- Fragmentation: This strategy refers to the demise of social institutions as an influence on consumers and highlights the moral role of advertising which ousted other ideologies such as state and church. The importance of understanding ideology in light of this role was discussed earlier.
- Naturalisation: Advertising ideology creates a situation where having brands and needing brands is natural. The brands and their meanings are a part of life; a part of self. "This acceptance leads to a blurred distinction between the natural reality of the life world and the manufactured naturalisation created by advertising ideology" (p200). The world in which we live is portrayed as so

natural that it would be absurd to question it. In fact, ideology functions to ensure that society does not think of questioning it.

- Enlightened False Consciousness: The majority of consumers state that advertising has no effect on them. Advertisers attempt to tap into this feeling and incorporate it in their ads, through such strategies as the 'knowing wink', as stipulated by Goldman (1992). Advertising may seek to 'enlighten' consumers and convince them that they know what is going on, yet all the time communicating an ideology.

It is important to note that no one strategy is better than the other, and these options are not mutually exclusive. They may be combined in order to maximise the communication of the ideology. What these ideological strategies demonstrate is that though people claim that advertising has no effect on them and that they don't pay much attention to it; the way in which advertising is produced and meaning is created, though hidden from consumers, ensures that consumption is a constant part of daily life, that consumers don't feel guilty about their consumption behaviour and that advertising is considered a natural and accepted part of life, whether actually liked or disliked. The next section will address the issue of "he who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing his definitions of reality" (Berger and Luckmann, 1991: 127). Ideology as a source and mechanism of power is discussed in more detail while also being contrasted to an alternative conception of power, as proposed by Foucault.

3.3 POWER OF ADVERTISING

The idea of the domination of one group in society by another remains an important concept in media and communication studies. Power is of relevance from two angles in this discussion. Firstly, ideology works in the context of power relations. This can be construed from the above definitions, where one party (the advertiser) has the power to distort reality (through advertising content) and communicate this meaning to another party (the audience). Secondly, as previously stated, ideology is the source of power for advertising. As Ritson and Elliott (1997: 204) note, "Advertising is ideology and what's more it is an ideology with a power and influence beyond any other". Jhally (1990: 52) suggests that "Advertising then derives its power because it provides meaning that is not available elsewhere. Its power stems from the human need to search for meaning and symbolism in the world of goods". As well as conveying meaning, Sinclair (1987) suggests that advertising creates feeling. He states that "whether these feelings are positive or negative, advertising's power as a moral force in society lies in its capacity to select out which feelings are to be cultivated in social communication, and how and in whom they are to be called up" (p30). Advertising ideology is essentially concerned with the meaning and feelings; the focus of this ideology is beauty, the perfect body and perfect lifestyle. Of interest to this study are the concepts of beauty and perfect body image and the particular meaning and impact on feelings such an ideology has on disabled people.

However, ideological power is but one conception of power. Foucault (1980) rejects this notion of power as an outdated form, that has seen its zenith in sovereign societies; where power was a top-down, centralized form. That is, one central source (the Monarch, the State) possessed power and demonstrated this in the form of domination and repression. Thus, the way power is exercised under this view is quite negative. As noted above advertising has been likened to such forms of power, in that, the power demonstrated by advertising is not available to other people; people within the advertising industry hold power to portray the images they wish, and also the process is quite invisible to the audience who only get to see the end product, that is, the ad itself. As Hackley (2002: 212) explains, "Advertising agencies can be seen, then, as repositories of cultural consumer knowledge. This knowledge mobilizes advertising's potentiality as a vehicle of cultural meaning and, hence, in the aggregate, enables advertising as an ideological force". Advertising has the power to exclude certain groups from its discourse and to promote a 'reality' that they want consumers to buy into. Thus, the cycle of consumerism is set in motion. Furthermore, advertising as ideology also implies that advertising excludes certain discourses in favour of a dominant discourse and that this process goes somewhat unnoticed by the audience. It is true that advertising does exclude discourses and images, in favour of a dominant discourse and dominant image type, however, the extant literature that critically analyses advertising content and consequences are testament to the fact that the audience do not accept this passively. Audience members are not passive recipients of advertising messages but negotiate with advertising text in an active and often critical manner. As O'Donohoe (1993: 55) notes, "...there is support within the advertising industry for a view of advertising consumers as active and seeking various rewards from their encounters with advertisements". However, the process of advertising creation and creativity is not visible to the audience and is not available for criticism. Hackley (2002: 213) notes that "..the surveillance, categorization and interpretation of consumer data by advertising agencies represents a significant dynamic driving advertising's ideological force. Indeed, it is the very insubstantiality of the knowledge about consumers that it gives its ideological character: it is largely hidden from public view and yet it is the primary production material for advertising agencies". Furthermore, he notes how "Advertising creativity can be seen to hinge on the extent to which cultural meanings can be extracted from the consumer's milieu and re-formed in juxtaposition with marketed meanings. In this way advertising's ideological power to promote consumption by valorizing marketing objects is mobilized" (Hackley, 2002: 214).

Foucault (1980) rejects the notion of ideology and its conception of power as he considers it an insufficient and incomplete picture of how power works in modern society. He sees this notion of power as essentially negative and focusing on repression. Alternatively, Foucault proposes a conception of power as a network, that is, with no central point but coming from different sources to work on the body. Power is seen in terms of production, that is, it produces knowledge and produces discourses. However, this power is not accepted unquestionably. A key tenet of Foucault's theory of power is the concept of resistance. That is, individuals can put up resistance to power in numerous ways. Again, the idea that people are active not passive is highlighted. "We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it "excludes," it "represses," it "censors," it "abstracts," it "masks," it "conceals". In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production" (Foucault, 1979: 194). Thus, rather than considering advertising as repressive and negative in that it excludes certain groups, one could think of advertising as productive, in the sense that it produces a certain picture of the world, a certain knowledge of how people should live and how people should look. It produces a narrow view of the world and constitutes an ideal towards which people are encouraged to strive. However, ideology is essentially negative because it does 'exclude', 'mask' and 'conceal'. This does not mean that it is the only source of power or that it is accepted unquestionably.

What this study proposes is that advertising can function as an ideological force among a number of other forces that impact on the experience of disabled people and contribute to disability as a social process. Though advertising is described as ideology, it is not considered the only force that impinges upon the disabled experience. Power is exercised upon disabled people in a number of ways and from various sources. This is recognised within the social model of disability, which was described in detail in chapter one. The social model locates disabling practices in many facets of society, with cultural representation being only one such facet. However, there is little questioning of the power of commercial advertising on the disabling experience (Ganahl and Arbuckle, 2001; Haller and Ralph, 2001; Hardin et al., 2001; Panol and McBride, 2001). How disabled people are represented in the media that is, TV programmes (Shakespeare, 1997), films (Darke, 1997a), documentaries (Pointon, 1997), and charitable advertising (Hevey, 1992) has been investigated. However, the fact that disabled people are wholly absent from mainstream advertising has not been addressed. Although, Hardin (2003) does focus on the absence of disabled athletes from mainstream sports coverage and sports advertising. As Shakespeare (1994: 289) notes, "Disability is a complex process, which involves a number of causal components. Within this, the role of culture and meaning is crucial, autonomous and inescapable". Thus, advertising is ideological in that it portrays a dominant image in particular of the body, that is idealized, and it is this discourse that epitomizes advertising text.

Disabled people are excluded from mainstream advertising discourse and as such this could possibly serve to further propagate segregation and discrimination. The question is asked whether advertising contributes to the disabling experience by increasing feelings of exclusion and alienation at an emotional level and in particular in line with the psycho-emotional dimensions of disablism, through this symbolic exclusion. What this absence means to disabled people, if it means anything at all, how it makes disabled people feel and how it interacts with other aspects of the disabled experience are of interest. It is also recognised that advertising is not accepted unquestionably and audience members can resist or employ strategies of resistance to advertising's ideological message. "Advertising pervades cultural space and is a hugely powerful ideological force yet it can be sensitive to consumer's strategies of resistance because of the intimate understanding that advertising personnel can glean about highly specific interpretive communities" (Hackley, 2002: 219). Hirschman and Thompson (1997) highlight three broad strategies that audience members can indulge in when interacting with advertising – critical, motivational and personalizing. Critical interpretations as the name suggests occur when the individual is overtly critical of the media image, they reject the image and what it stands for. In opposition to this, motivational strategies are employed when the image is viewed as an ideal to which the individual would like to aspire to. The individual strives to achieve that goal. Finally, personalizing the media image occurs when the individual sees the image as a reflection of their experience and can identify with the image.

It would be impossible to discuss advertising's role as a disabling barrier without a look at how the body is viewed in contemporary society, as it is the body, and in particular the female body, which dominates advertising imagery. "The advertising industry has long made particular use of the symbolic properties of bodies, both male and female, in compelling its audience to consume" (Patterson and Elliott, 2002: 232). It is important to note that though the study is still guided by the social model, an appropriate starting point is that of the 'normal' body. This is quite distinct to the concept of the normative body. The normative body is essentially what is referred to as an idealized body. It is this body that dominates advertising imagery. Implicit within a discussion of the body are the concepts of bodily control and body maintenance, which are two prominent messages within advertising and potentially have strong implications for disabled people. These implications will be tentatively discussed.

3.4 THE BODY

3.4.1 Normal – versus – Normative

According to Kaplan and Rogers (1990) the word 'normal' meant square in Latin and until 1830s in England it meant standing at a right angle. However, the authors place the modern meaning - conformity to a type - at the onset of the industrial revolution (Oliver, 2002a). It is interesting to note that it was around the time of the industrial revolution that exclusion of disabled people from social spaces began. Thus, the meaning of 'normal' as conformity to a type and the exclusion of those who did not conform to the generally accepted type (disabled people) occurred at the same time in history.

The attempt therefore to normalize individuals is not a new phenomena, as Foucault (1979; 1989) noted in his discussion on the normalizing processes that characterised various institutions, and in particular, the prison and asylum. The focal point of these normalizing processes or more appropriately normalizing techniques were the prisoner and the 'madman'. They were incarcerated, kept away from the rest of society, set out as different, deviant and a case to be rectified. Within the prison, discipline was directed through observation, a perpetual observation that culminated in the prisoner turning their gaze on themselves. Through the idealization of the panopticon prison, where from one central point the guard could see into every cell but the prisoners could not see the guard, it was impossible for the prisoner to know when they were under observation and thus, they had to assume that observation occurs at all times. In this, they discipline themselves, and invert their gaze. "The perfect disciplinary apparatus would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly. A central point would be both the source of light illuminating everything and a locus of convergence for everything that must be known: a perfect gaze that nothing would escape and a center toward which all gazes would be turned" (Foucault, 1979: 173). There were three principal means by which the 'madman' was organized; silence, recognition by mirror, perpetual judgement. Then following this Foucault, adds the most powerful and pertinent structure, which was the doctor. The authority of medicine was established at this time. "With the new status of the medical personage, the deepest meaning of confinement is abolished: mental disease, with the meanings we now give it, is made possible" (Foucault, 1989: 270). This cognitive and social authority of the medical profession is extremely pertinent to the disabled experience (Wendell, 1996) and underlines much of how society thinks about disability.

The medical gaze constructed the disabled person as an impaired body, redundant and inadequate, a body to be controlled with no allowance for individual expression of feelings or needs (Marks, 1999). As Edwards and Imrie (2003: 248) note, "Medical discourses are core to the definition of disabled people and incorporate values that stress the need to 'correct' or normalize the disabled body. Their dominance is such that most aspects of society are not generally structured in ways that provide frequent opportunities for value to be bestowed on disabled bodies". The authority of medicine is further demonstrated in its ability to delegitimize and denigrate the disabled person's understanding and experience of their body; that is, the doctor rather than the disabled person themselves is seen as the expert (Wendell, 1996). Such authority can serve to alienate people from their bodies, in that they are led to question the validity of their experience of their body. As Mitchell (2002: 163-4) notes "Rather than charting bodies as diverse entities interacting with and adapting to their external and internal environments, medicine developed an increasingly abstract notion of the "ideal" body founded upon the statistical evaluation of norms". Thus, medicine had a huge role to play in propagating the ideology of normalcy.

It is important from a disability perspective to revisit the notion of what is 'normal' because it is only through an understanding of what is 'normal' that the concept of the 'deviant', 'different' or 'Other' body can be understood. The starting point for this discussion surprisingly lies in statistics and the development of the Bell curve, otherwise known as, the normal distribution curve and as Davis (1997b: 13) notes, the bell curve became "...a symbol of the tyranny of the norm". Furthermore, the author asserts that, " Any bell curve will always have at its extremities those characteristics that deviate from the norm. So, with the concept of the norm comes the concept of deviations or extremes. When we think of bodies, in a society where the concept of the norm is operative, then people with disabilities will be thought of as deviants. This, as we have seen, is in contrast to societies with the concept of an ideal, in which all people have a non-ideal status " (Davis, 1997b: 13). Thus, in wider society, as it is in statistics, it is desirable to be within the normal distribution that is to be average.

> "*We live in a world of norms. Each of us endeavors to be normal or else deliberately tries to avoid that state. We consider what the average person does, thinks, earns or consumes. We rank our intelligence, our cholesterol, our weight, height, sex drive, bodily dimensions along some conceptual line from subnormal to above-average. We consume a minimum daily balance of vitamins and nutrients based on what an average human should consume. Our children are ranked in school and tested to determine where they fit into a normal curve of learning, of intelligence. Doctors measure and weigh them to see if they are above or below average on the height and weight curves. There is probably no area of contemporary life in which some idea of a norm, mean, or average has not been calculated. To understand the disabled body, one must return to the concept of the norm, the normal body*" (Davis, 1997b: 9).

In this line of thought it is desirable to be part of the 'norm', to have normal intelligence, weight, height, eyesight, 'looks' in general. Disabled people are not deemed to be 'normal'. Impairment whether physical, sensory, intellectual or other, is seen as deviant from that which is considered a normal body, normal mind, normal intelligence, and so on. As Wendell (1996: 88) asserts, "The disciplines of normality are preconditions of participation in every aspect of social life, yet they are unnoticed by most adults who can conform to them without conscious effort". Thus, the majority of people do not question the disciplines of normality due to the fact that they 'fit into' its requirements and don't know any other way of being, however, for those that do not 'fit in', those that exist at the extremities of what is considered normal, a different scenario exists. The emphasis is constantly on making oneself as normal as possible, in order to distance oneself from difference and pass as a 'normal' member of society. As Watson (2002: 328) explains, "Normalization I take as being the attempt to make all people subject to one view of individuality (both somatically and ideologically) and the marginalisation, of those who fail to conform to that prescribed idea (1) of normality". As Edwards and Imrie (2003: 244) assert, "For disabled people, their bodies are usually understood, symbolically, only insofar as they deviate from a prescribed set of norms or where impairment is perceived as a threat and disabled people are 'outsiders' or symbolic 'others'".

This stress on normalization is evidenced in how society is organized and is also the implicit message within the medical model of disability. That is, responsibility for one's body and how that body functions in society rests with the individual, and it is up to the individual to change in order to fit in with the rest of society. However, it is society that is constructed to accommodate those who fit into this 'norm', and therefore, the focus of change should be with society, its structures, its laws, its attitudes, its perceptions. This is noted by Wendell (1997: 266) when she asserts that; "Much of the world is also structured as though everyone is physically strong, as though all bodies are "ideally shaped", as though everyone can walk, hear and see well, as though everyone can work and play at a pace that is not compatible with any kind of illness and pain, as though no one is ever dizzy or incontinent or simply needs to sit or lie down. [....] Not only the architecture, but the entire physical and social organization of life, assumes that we are either strong and healthy and able to do what the average able-bodied person can do, or that we are completely disabled, unable to participate in life". Thus, there is huge emphasis on making disabled people as 'normal' as possible and the authority of medicine has much to answer for in this regard. "Medicalism has built its empire upon the bodies of the abnormal to such an extent that it needs the disabled to justify its own particular power even today, a fact that is the only reason why 'disability' – as in the oppressive medical model – will not be fully eradicated" (Darke, 1994).

As Begum (1992: 71) notes, "To avoid embarrassment and inconvenience to the non-disabled world, an emphasis is placed on accepting the goal of normality". Phillips (1985) investigates what it means for disabled people to try harder to succeed, to be 'normal', to fit in with the rest of society. Phillips (1985: 46) found five kinds of success to exist – acquiescence, adaptation, renegotiation, inversion and normalization – and no participant was defined by only one definition of success. However, in referring to the stress on normalization, Phillips highlights how this focus on overcoming all the odds is implicit within American value-systems; "Although the more sophisticated twentieth-century poor-boy-makes-good premise can be disputed, the popular media are replete with stories about Americans who persevere, who believe that hard work pays off. Surely a notion so ingrained in the American psyche influences the manner in which individuals with disabilities are expected to "overcome" all obstacles in their pursuit of a higher station, in the pursuit of normality". This does not only underscore the message of the medical model, but also the majority of representations of disabled people whether in film, TV programmes and documentaries that exist. Thus, the media (and medical) message is clear with a little hard work and perseverance disability can be overcome, eliminated, so non-disabled people need not fear and disabled people who don't 'cut it' just didn't try hard enough. Disability is constantly equated with negative values, such as laziness, sinfulness, failure.

As Morris (2002b: 101) stipulates, "Disabled people are not normal in the eyes of non-disabled people. Our physical and intellectual characteristics are not 'right' or 'admirable' and we do not 'belong'. Having such a negative meaning to abnormality, the non-disabled world assumes that we wish to be normal, to be treated as if we were. It is supposedly progressive and liberating to ignore our differences because these differences have such negative meanings for disabled people. But we *are* different. We reject the meanings that the non-disabled world attaches to disability but we do not reject the differences which are such an important part of our identities". Thus, the negativity associated with these labels is rejected but not the differences that exist.

However, it could be stated that, to be 'normal', to be average, is not so much desired in a society where the concept of the ideal exists, as the aim could be to move away from that which is 'normal' or 'average' and to move closer to that which is ideal. It is possible to see that where once anybody outside the 'norm' was deemed deviant, it might be possible today to reconceptualize this as anybody at one end of the extreme is deviant and those at the other who seem to be reaching that which is considered ideal, not deviant but idealized (as with models and movie stars). "In a capitalist, consumer-driven culture, members of groups without 'acceptable' bodily status have also historically been excluded from advertising images, which by their nature focus on the 'perfect' body (Hardin, 2003: 108). It is this ideal that is most pertinent today as it is an ideal body and lifestyle that consumers are confronted with. It is suggested that a stress on achieving an ideal body potentially will have a different effect on disabled people than a stress on the norm. Though disabled people are often subjected to regimes and techniques of normalization, there is no corresponding method to encourage disabled people to strive for this idealized standard. In fact, the absence of disabled people from advertising imagery goes some way to suggest that disabled people are not considered to exist within the loop of consumption and cosmetics that advertising promulgates. However, the question that needs to be tackled firstly is what form this ideal body takes?

3.4.2 Advertising Image and the Ideal Body

What the advertising image bespeaks is not what we (as members of society) look like or how we live, but what we should look like and how we should live. Davidson (1992: 113) states that "images are no longer just pictures, but constructions designed to communicate, and consolidate, ideological 'truths'". An important development in art which had a huge impact on representation of the 'body image' in advertising were the Carte de Visite of the 19th century (see Appendix A). They were multiplied cheaply and presented a 'powerful discourse of the body' with the concept of the 'ideal' body type emerging (Schroeder, 2000: 8). It is this image of body, beauty and ideal in advertising that the author is most concerned with.

Advertising is an exclusive realm, in that, only certain 'ideal' types are ever present (Pollay, 1986). It is a biased, unrealistic platform for the 'beautiful' people. Belk and Pollay (1985: 888) state that, "advertising presents detailed instructions on how to live".

Advertising presents the ideal, which it wants the individual to aspire to. The power of the image is paramount in achieving this task and as detailed by Levitt (1970: 89) "the promises and images which imaginative ads and sculptured packages induce in us are as much the product as the physical materials themselves". As Hackley (2002: 222) explains, "Through the mediation of advertising we assimilate and transform cultural meanings to symbolically realize aspirations and fantasies of social positioning. This process has an ideological character in that its core dynamic and beneficiary is corporate capitalism yet advertising produces consumer culture by promoting the idealization of self. The promotion of consumption above all other value systems is the key collective theme of advertising as a totality".

Therefore, advertising sets the standard to which everything we do and have is consequentially compared. This is particularly true for women, where the focus on the body and figure is extreme compared to that for men. As Lonsdale (1990: 3) stipulates "Physical appearance has long been recognised as something which has particular relevance to women. Women in western society are required to conform to an image which is based on certain sexual, physical and behavioural stereotypes (which also often imply certain cultural and material lifestyles). This image may change over time as the fashion and make-up industry determines, but it is always there, providing a model or ideal to which most women aspire and work towards achieving. Magazines, television and advertising convey the image".

Of relevance, at this point is the concept of relations of domination (Thompson, 1990). Thompson (1990) speaks of domination in terms of one group having power that is both durable and somewhat inaccessible to the excluded group. This situation is clearly evident in advertising as it promotes the image of beautiful, thin, glamorous people. There are no blemishes or readily identifiable defects. "The 'magnificent amplitude of the human frame' which once constituted the cultural model in Europe – and still does in many societies where poverty is rife – was gradually replaced by the ideal of the slim figure" (Mennell, 2001: 147). "As the slim form becomes mandatory, almost every conceivable consumer product is discovered to have slimming properties" (Featherstone, 2001: 184). Albrecht (1992: 274) states that, "People with disabilities often talk about the 'Barbie and Ken syndrome,' in which both individuals and the relationship are presented without blemish. These are not people but ritualized stereotypes that exert a powerful influence in selecting role models to be emulated". The audience is consistently presented with an ideal 'look' or 'lifestyle'. In essence, promoting an ideology of fantasy. As Baudrillard (1998: 133-4) explains, "Just as the erotic is never in desire but in signs, so the functional beauty of the fashion models is never in their expressions but in their 'figures'. Irregularity or ugliness would bring out meaning again: they are excluded".

Mitchell and Snyder (1997) describe disabled people as one of the largest minority groups in the world. However, "the neglect of people with disabilities has resulted in their pre-eminent social invisibility" (p11). Lonsdale (1990: 43) notes that "The media and advertising have largely ignored people with disabilities as valid and valuable constituencies". Furthermore, "with more than one in ten of the population living with some form of disability, there should be more evidence of this as a part of Joe Public scenes in ads" (Bainbridge, 1997: 8). What the audience has become accustomed to however, is perfection.

Patzer (1985) discusses the socialization of children to the idea of beautiful. He explains that even through fairytales children are presented with the good (beautiful) and bad (ugly). Thus, children are being conditioned from an early age to distinguish between the two and always to strive for the former, "ugly ducklings strive to be beautiful royalty". Advertising is yet another medium through which such messages are communicated, but instead the beautiful princess is substituted with the fashion model. "Throughout childhood the individual receives the same social messages which are delivered both explicitly and implicitly through books, movies, television, and advertising" (Patzer, 1985: 11). As Davis (1995: 131) states, "The ideology of the assigning of value to the body goes back to pre-industrial times. Myths of beauty and ugliness have laid the foundations for normalcy". As Edwards and Imrie (2003: 252) note, "Disabled people's bodies are subjected to the values of a society that renders them 'less than valuable' and inferior to those considered to be the embodiment of 'normality'". What essentially has been highlighted throughout this discussion but has not been detailed explicitly, until now that is, is that advertising represents and reinforces stereotypes that exist in society. As Patzer (1985: 7) suggests, "The foundation of the physical attractiveness phenomena is a stereotype that prevails throughout society".

However, as Wendell (1997: 267) asserts, "Our real human bodies are exceedingly diverse – in size, shape, colour, texture, structure, function, range and habits of movements, and development – and they are constantly changing. Yet we do not absorb or reflect this simple fact in our culture. Instead, we idealize the human body. Our physical ideals change from time to time, but we always have ideals. These ideals are not just about appearance; they are also ideals of strength and energy and proper control of the body. We are perpetually bombarded with images of these ideals, demands for them, and offers of consumer products and services to help us achieve them. Idealizing the body prevents everyone, able-bodied and disabled people, from identifying with and loving her/his real body". Thus, ideals are not consistent across time and across places, but ideals of some kind always exist. Hughes (1999: 166) notes, "The concept of body fascism has arisen in popular culture to express the oppressiveness inherent in the narrowing of norms about the ideal body and the (postmodern) celebration of difference has as an expression of resistance to it. Impariment figures(!) badly in a world in which the 'six-pack' and the 'size eight garment' have become measures of authenticity and self-control, as well as sources of social acceptance and rejection". In essence, society is confronted with the myth of bodily perfection. Stone (1995: 413) describes the myth of bodily perfection that pervades society as one that, "..holds that we can and should strive to achieve perfect bodies". It is not a new myth, and its origins can be traced to Ancient Greece and also implicitly within Christian beliefs (Stone, 1995). As the author states, "According to this world-view, disease and dysfunction are not natural, but are evidence of moral failure" (Stone, 1995: 414). So, first of all there is the call for people to examine themselves in relation to an ideal body, fashion model, advertising image. In comparison, the individual is then prompted to take measures to improve one's image, maintain one's image and to basically bring their body under their control. Thus, connected to this idea of the ideal, is the power of the gaze and the emphasis on controlling the body.

3.4.3 The Gaze

Foucault (1990) describes how, where once sovereignty exercised power by deciding who had the right to live and die, this changed to a concern with what was done to the living body. As such, power was no longer fulfilled in death but in the disciplining and managing of life. Mechanisms existed by which individuals were encouraged to control their body and thus gave rise to the concept of the disciplined body.

Two technologies of power that serve to regulate the body, according to Foucault, are the gaze and self-surveillance (Reeve, 2002). The power of the gaze resides with the observer and what they can see. It is the dominant person in an exchange, who objectifies and constructs the person being looked at. Hughes (1999: 163) talks about this as a loss of power on the part of the individual being looked at; "Occularity is a sort of collision of bodies in which the right to define rests with the powerful. The gaze wounds and denigrates, the more so, when it is used interminably as a seal of dominance and a re-iteration of truth". As seen in the discussion on normalization the medical gaze had a huge influence on how disability is perceived and how disabled people are integrated (or not as the case may be) into society. "The body, as an increasingly targeted object, found itself giving way to a glut of images and management systems that stressed homogeneity and static bodily-based ideals of citizenship as the ubiquitous measure of human value. Panoptic practices subjected all bodies to the invasive nature of the gaze and sought to divide up human populations based on degrees of deviance from standardized norms" (Mitchell, 2002: 165). The power of the non-disabled observer is further highlighted by Hughes (1999: 165) when he states that, "It is not the impaired body that is distorted, but rather the specular experience and the language that is used to construct it. To put it another way, the non-disabled gaze is disfiguring yet it assumes itself to be an act that identifies disfigurement". Reeve (2002: 499) also identifies the position of the observer as a privileged and powerful one; "Having an impairment that is immediately visible presents the observer with privileged information and therefore power about that body. This gaze is influenced by the stereotypes and prejudices about disabled people, and so the power of the gaze is intimately linked and nourished by knowledge from within the social domain". It could be said that the power of the gaze is also influenced by the knowledge we do not have about disability, the knowledge missing from the social domain.

Shakespeare (1994) discusses the gaze as a power relationship and notes how Freudians see it as a phallic activity. Advertising research identified women as the traditional object of the male gaze. It highlighted how the female form was brought under scrutiny and women were pressurized to look a certain way. However, more recently, men have been identified as subjected to a gaze, however, this is an inverted gaze (Patterson and Elliott, 2002). With the increased representation of the male body in advertising, men as well as women are being forced to scrutinize their appearance. However, this pressure is heightened in the case of women. Ironically, women are subject to the male gaze yet men are not subject to a female gaze, but an inverted male gaze, their scrutinizing observations are turned on themselves but a powerful female gaze is not deemed to exist. However, as Patterson and Elliott (2002) recognize, the gaze is one of many subject positions that men can adopt. In terms of disability, Garland-Thomas (1997: 285) offers an alternative view of the gaze and explains that disabled people are in fact subjected to a 'stare'; "This image of the disabled body as a visual assault, as a shocking spectacle to the normative eye, captures a defining aspect of disabled experience. Whereas feminists claim that women are objects of the male gaze which demarcates their subjectivity, Wade's image of her body as 'sock in the eye' subtly reminds us that the disabled body is the object not of the appropriating male gaze but of the stare. If the male gaze informs the normative female self as a sexual spectacle, then the stare sculpts the disabled subject as a grotesque spectacle. The stare is the gaze intensified, framing her body as an icon of deviance".

Besides the 'gaze' a further technology of power is self-surveillance and Reeve (2002: 501) notes how one manifestation of self-surveillance for disabled people is internalised oppression; "In this form of self-surveillance disabled people may attempt to make themselves acceptable by conforming to the behaviour expected by non-disabled people and to adopt the 'disabled role'....". However, Reeve (2002: 501) also notes the effects that doing this can have; "Living a contradictory identity has a detrimental effect on the psycho-emotional well-being of a disabled person, causing stress and confusion, and in part this conflicting identity remains unchallenged because of the lack of positive role models within society for disabled people". Thus, the lack of positive disability imagery in advertising may add to such stress and confusion.

3.4.4 Controlling and Maintaining the Body

An emphasis on controlling the body is widespread within society and constitutes a dominant advertising message that is, controlling what the body can do, controlling how the body looks and controlling what goes into the body. As Wendell (1997: 268) notes, "Idealizing the body and wanting to control it go hand-in-hand; its impossible to say whether one causes the other". As Mennell (2001: 151) asserts, "Anorexia nervosa and obesity can be regarded as similar if opposite disturbances of the normal patterns of self-control over appetite now normally expected and necessary in prosperous Western societies. Though the process may not yet be complete, in the course of the twentieth century the concern with weight-watching and slimming has gradually become more widespread in all ranks of society: its progress can be observed in cookery columns in popular magazines". Advertising informs the audience of how they can control their body; maintain their body; improve their body; reach for that ever-elusive ideal. Thus, we are confronted with the concept that what we have is not good enough and must be improved; it is also a matter of 'keeping up appearances'. "The body is the vehicle par excellence for the modern individual to achieve a glamorous life-style. Bodies no longer represent how we fit into the social order, but are the means for self-expression, for becoming who we would most like to be. In an era where the individual has become responsible for his or her own fate, the body is just one more feature in a person's 'identity project' (Giddens, 1991)" (Davis, 1997a: p2). This focus on control is linked to the idea of the body as machine metaphor, that is, just like a machine the body can be controlled, repaired, maintained, kept up to scratch. "The notion that the body as a machine – to be repaired, maintained, or enhanced (Finkelstein, 1991) – is reflected in computer technologies which blur the boundaries between the body and machine, between physical and virtual realities (Shilling, 1993)" (Davis, 1997a: 2). Furthermore, Featherstone (2001: 182) notes that, "The term 'body maintenance' indicates the popularity of the machine metaphor for the body. Like cars and other consumer goods, bodies require servicing, regular care and attention to preserve maximum efficiency".

Essentially, it calls for the individual to take responsibility for their body, its changes, maintenance and preventative measures to ensure that the body remains youthful, healthy and acceptable within the criteria set out by society and promoted within advertising. "From a dualistic view, the body that changes in unwanted ways and eventually deteriorates over time is readily seen as a natural object to be controlled by reason, knowledge, and technology" (Thompson and Hirschman, 1995: 143). According to the authors this is based on three sociocultural values and beliefs. "The first is the long-standing cultural idealization of youthfulness; to be forever young is perhaps the most commonly expressed form of the desire to transcend the limits of the body. Second, is the dualistic view of the individual as an essential self whose true identity is not constrained by the body in which s/he is housed. In a culture that values youth, it is expectable that our essential transcendent selves would also happen to be constructed in youthful terms. Third is the Cartesian ideal that knowledge (and the technology it inspires) not only allows the natural world to be controlled by the rational realm, but also liberates the transcendent self from various forces of nature" (Thompson and Hirschman, 1995: 143). However, "The essence of the myth of control is the belief that it is possible, by means of human actions, to have the bodies we want and to prevent illness, disability, and death. Like many myths, the myth of control contains a significant element of truth; we do have some control over the conditions of our bodies, for example through physical risks we take or avoid and our care for our health" (Wendell, 1996: 94). There is a huge emphasis within advertising on controlling the body. In fact, there is no avoiding the demands to control the body. As Williams and Bendelow (1998: 73) note, "...the body itself becomes something of a 'fetishised' commodity, one that has to be attractively 'packaged', 'marketed' and 'sold'". And in turn, the body has symbolic properties, which serve to communicate certain things about the individual. However, it is not only how the body looks but also how it functions that serves to communicate a message to others. This is particularly true within a society where there is a huge focus on health and fitness.

3.4.5 Health and Fitness

These are two concepts, which are highly pertinent to the disabled consumer. "This focus on 'fitness', in turn, feeds into broader discourses on health within consumer culture. Health, as Crawford (1984) notes, is one of Western culture's supreme metaphors – a code for signifying personal qualities, moral capacities, and situations. More generally, these discourses, as he convincingly demonstrates, provide potent metaphors for the cultural values, symbols and ideologies that structure contemporary social and economic life. On the one hand, late capitalist imperatives of a disciplined, productive workforce are reflected and reinforced through the notion of health as 'control'. On the other hand, health as 'release', the alternative modality, serves as a potent metaphor for the imperative to consume" (Williams and Bendelow, 1998: 75).

Advertising offers an immediate solution to 'all' our aches and pains, insecurities and worries. In fact, advertising plays on these aches, pains, insecurities and worries, and offers the answer to maintaining that youthful appearance, that slim-line figure, essentially it offers an array of products to control the body and prevent unsightly and unacceptable change. If the consumer does not avail of such products there are consequences, as society does not tolerate, the lazy, the old, the sick or disabled people. The emphasis on not being ill is clear in any advertisement for painkillers and other forms of medicine. Although, this is a natural correlation due to the product nature, there seems to be a growing emphasis on more rapid recovery, if you have a headache it must be eased instantly, if you have the flu you can't let it interrupt the daily routine you have, illness cannot be allowed impinge on your life, it must be avoided or there will be consequences to pay. As Stone (1995: 417) states, "Everyone is allowed, on occasion, to be excused from duties because of a headache, an upset stomach, or the common cold. One becomes suspect of moral laxity, however, if too often seen to be 'giving in' to such ailments, allowing them to interfere with the completion of daily tasks". An example of a recent advertisement in this category is *Lemsip Max* with the slogan 'Because Life Doesn't Stop'. It gives the message that you're not allowed to be sick, you must keep working, 'can't let the team down', must keep up with the pace of life 'or else'. It further highlights a core value of a capitalist society, that a person's worth is measured by what they can contribute economically. "Clearly, idealization of the body is related in complex ways to the economic processes of a consumer society. [...] Moreover, never before in history have images of real people who meet the latest cultural ideals of beauty, health, and physical performance been so often presented to so many people" (Wendell, 1996: 86). This link was also noted by Foucault when he stated that, "This bio-power was, without question, an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes" (Foucault, 1990: 140-141). Thus, there are two themes at play, what the body can do and how the body can look, and both constitute the myth of bodily perfection. In addition, both have implications for all members of society, though the consequences are potentially heightened for disabled people.

Based on the assumption that mainstream commercial advertising is aimed at non-disabled people, it is non-disabled people who are urged to control the effects of aging, weight gain and illness. Is there an assumption that disabled people already have bodies that cannot be controlled in the normative sense and as such are lost to the cause of advertising? Or would non-disabled people rather forget about those bodies that are not easily controlled, as it is true that many disabled people do have hodies that cannot be controlled; this is a fact of life, a fact that is omitted from the myth of bodily control that tends to dominate advertising. As Wendell (1996: 61) asserts, "..failure to control the body is one of the most powerful symbolic meanings of disability". Wendell (1997) also suggests that where the emphasis on controlling the body is strong, those people who cannot control their bodies may be considered failures, both by others and by themselves. Death and ageing are viewed negatively in a society that privileges the young, fit, and beautiful body, with stress placed on the individual to postpone any signs of decay for as long as possible. Failure to do so is seen as laziness or even moral failure (Featherstone, 2001). As Williams and Bendelow note, "Ageing, in short, like death itself, comes to be seen as a 'disease' in need of cure" (1998: 76). Furthermore, as Stone (1995: 416) explains, "The dominant culture offers distorted and negative images of disability, which discourage most people from acknowledging and accepting their own disabilities. Disability is promoted as a condition to be avoided as much as possible".

3.5 CONSUMPTION

However, if the audience aspires to the fantasy that advertising describes, they must also incorporate consumption into their daily lives, thus living the consumerist lifestyle. But what if they don't aspire to that fantasy. To be part of society is to consume. Exclusion from advertising imagery may be testament to the fact that advertisers perhaps do not consider disabled people to be consumers. As Dahl (1993) highlights, "Advertisers do not seem to think in terms of disabled people as customers - - drinking beer, brushing their teeth, or buying a car".

Without consumption you are excluded from society, because we live in a consumption driven society. The importance of consumption within the lives of disabled people was stressed by Hughes (2002: 580) when he states that, "The new criterion of purity and inclusion in post-modern culture is the ability and willingness to consume. Unless disabled people have the resources and wherewithal to participate in cultures of consumption, then they will continue to be marginalised". There is a very high rate of unemployment among disabled people and as such a large proportion of disabled people are living on benefit and as such cannot afford to partake extensively in consumption activities. Also, wherewithal refers to the inaccessible landscape – inaccessible transport, inaccessible shops – prevent disabled people from shopping, that is, keep them out of consumption spaces.

The consumption ideology proposes purchasing as the route to self-enhancement and improvement. What is evidenced here is advertising's ability to instil inadequacy and 'lack' within the audience member. Consumers' willingness to purchase outside the realm of necessity highlights advertisings ability to draw the audience into its ever powerful and omnipresent ideology. "What is valuable is what the individual is ready to spend resources for, believing such expenditure will help to effect counter change, that is, restore an acceptable state of being" (Fennell, 1997: 106). This was expressed clearly when Baudrillard (1998: 134) said that "Buy and you will be at ease in your body". It is questionable whether disabled people buy in order to be at ease in their body. As Wendell (1996: 91) explains, "Most people with disabilities cannot even attempt to make their bodies fit the physical ideals of their culture. They may wish for bodies they cannot have, with frustration, shame, and sometimes self-hatred; they may reject the physical ideals as narrow, unimaginative, and/or oppressive; or, like myself, they may fluctuate between these points of view. In any case, they must struggle harder than non-disabled people for a self-image that is both realistic and positive, and this is made more difficult by other people's reactions to them".

Furthermore, advertising can be consumed in and of itself. So, even though disabled people are absent from commercial advertising; may not have the resources and wherewithal to purchase the products advertised, they can still consume the images that they are confronted with. As Ritson and Elliott (1999: 274) found in their study; "The absence of any reference to product consumption in this study represents a significant finding because it empirically illustrates the theorized contention that advertising may be consumed independently of the product it sponsors. This, in turn, suggests that it may be time to elevate the concept of advertising above its status as a complex, but nonetheless intermediary conduit in the process of product consumption. Instead, consumer researchers must accept that advertising is itself a cultural product that can, through experience, interpretation, evaluation, ritual, and metaphor, conspicuously confer and convey personal and group meanings". Furthermore, Featherstone (2001: 176-7) highlights the relevance of consuming advertising images for excluded groups when he states that; "From the start of consumer culture large sections were excluded: advertisements were first directed at the middle class and only gradually were parts of the working class initiated into the consumer lifestyle. Consumer culture has its dark side, the realities of poverty and unemployment amidst images of affluence and the good life. Whatever the shortcomings in capitalism's ability to deliver consumer goods and the consumer lifestyle to all sectors of the population, it has never been short of images – and for those who inhabit the dark side of consumer culture, consumption is limited to the consumption of images" (Featherstone, 2001: 176-7).

3.6 CONCLUSION

Advertising is a powerful and pervasive form of communication and this chapter served to explore its role in society. There was a particular focus on advertising's ideological role in society and the dominant image it displays. The impaired or disabled body is notable in its absence from mainstream advertising. In fact, a 'normal' or 'average' body is also notably absent. Instead, the audience is confronted with images of the ideal body. Advertising encourages the audience to control and maintain their body in the quest for this ever-elusive ideal. Advertising was also described as a cultural product that can be consumed in and of itself as sometimes consumption is limited to the consumption of images. The exclusion of disabled people from advertising discourse frames the study and the researcher hopes to ascertain what role advertising plays in the lives of disabled people. The following chapter highlights how such issues will be examined.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4. 0 INTRODUCTION

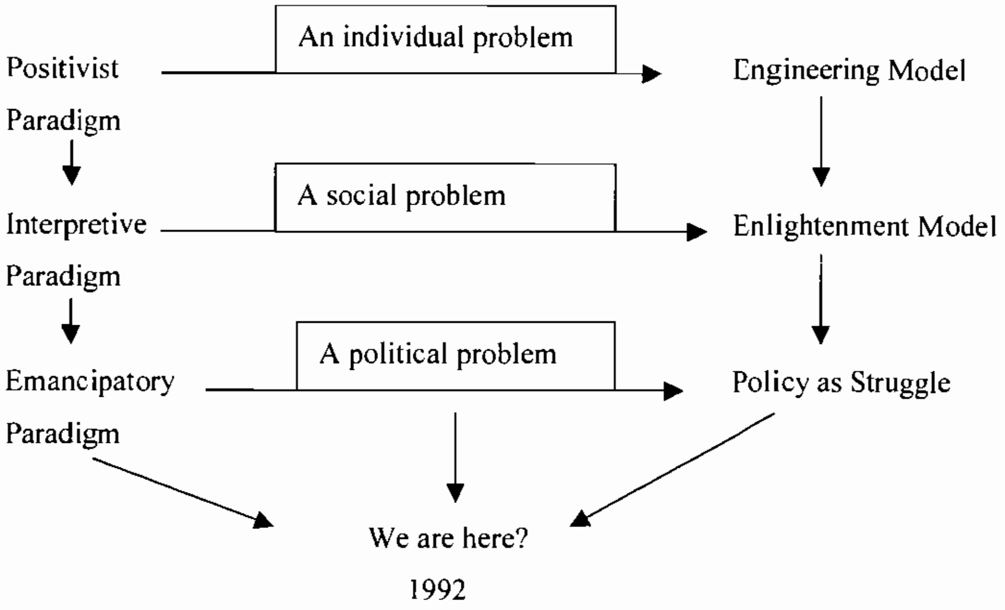
The research question is stated as an investigation into the social process of disability through mainstream advertising with an examination of advertising's image of the body ideal and what this means to the disabled audience. The research is guided by the principles of the emancipatory paradigm but is essentially participatory in nature. This chapter will detail how the research was carried out and explain the process of analysis and interpretation that the researcher followed. Prior to this the philosophical debate surrounding and supporting the research will be discussed.

4.1 PHILOSOPHICAL DEBATE

Oliver (2002c: 2) has described how research traditionally failed disabled people; "Firstly, it has failed to accurately capture and reflect the experience of disability from the perspective of disabled people themselves. Secondly, it has failed to provide information that has been useful to the policy making process and has contributed little to improving the material conditions under which disabled people live. Thirdly, it has failed to acknowledge the struggles of disabled people themselves and to recognise that disability is not simply a medical or welfare issue, but a political one as well". Woods (2002: 38) recognizes the subordinate position that oppressed groups occupy as objects of research; "Research is something the relatively powerful do to the relatively powerless ostensibly for the latter's own good. Studying problem people is a recognised field; studying the researchers or helping industry is much less common; what was the last study of psychologists, politicians, lecturers you came across?". However, as McCarthy (2002: 92) notes, this situation has not remained static and "has culminated in the development of an alternative research agenda by disabled people dedicated to the ideology of the social model and to the empowerment of the disabled experience and disabled people as a collective".

This failure to represent the disabled experience accurately has led to the emergence of the emancipatory paradigm. Oliver (1992) reports disability research has gone through three stages, namely, positivism, interpretivism and more recently, emancipatory.

Figure 4.1: Stages of Disability Research



(Source: Adapted from Oliver, 1992; p 108)

Though disability research developed in this sequence, the development of a new paradigm does not equate with the disintegration of another, and as Oliver (1992) stresses research guided by the philosophy of positivism and interpretivism continue to exist alongside research that claims to be emancipatory.

This researcher considered positivism and interpretivism as possible worldviews to guide the current study. However, as the research question developed from a focus on quantitative measures to one concerned with the social processes of disability, neither positivism nor interpretivism could support the social, cultural and political aspects of the research. These philosophies were originally considered due to the fact that the researcher is undertaking an MPhil within the Business Faculty. However, as the study developed it has become very much aligned to disability studies, with a strong emphasis on the social model, leading to the consideration of critical theory and in particular, the emancipatory paradigm as a guiding philosophy.

4.1.1 Positivism and Interpretivism

The emancipatory paradigm developed as an alternative to positivism and interpretivism. This is because research guided by the traditional philosophies has tended to add to the oppression of disabled people as opposed to being a means to tackle and eliminate this oppression. Hudson and Ozanne (1988) detail the characteristics of the positivist and interpretivist views of science, as below.

Table 4.1: Comparison of Positivism and Interpretivism

ASSUMPTIONS	POSITIVIST	INTERPRETIVIST
Ontological		
Nature of Reality	Objective; tangible, Single Fragmentable Divisible	Socially Constructed Multiple Holistic Contextual
Narure of Social Beings	Deterministic Reactive	Voluntaristic Proactive
Axiological		
Overriding Goal	"Explanation" via subsumption under general laws, prediction	"Understanding" based on Verstehen
Epistemological		
Knowledge Generated	Nomothetic Time Free Context-independent	Idiographic Time-Bound Context-dependent
View of Causality	Real causes exist	Multiple, simultaneous shaping
Research Relationship	Dualism, seperation Priviledged point of observation	Interactive, cooperative No priviledged point of observation

(Source: Hudson & Ozanne, 1988: p509)

Positivists contend that a single, objective world exists out there to be studied and set out explanation as their main goal. Leonidou (1995) describes the aim to be,

"...ultimately the prediction and control of its subject matter" (p11). The knowledge generated is time and context independent, and the researcher holds a privileged position that is detached from research participants. In essence, researcher experience and values are deemed not to impinge on the research process and social and historical factors are not considered. It is this emphasis on objectivity which constitutes the main problem with positivism when studying disabled people. It is essential to understand that due to disabled people's oppression, as with women's oppression, which is an historical and cultural product, disabled people (women) experience their realities differently. "Reality is contradictory, realities do co-exist and over-lap, and conflict; and people who are in some sense excluded from the 'reality' of dominant groups live such contradictions and conflicts. As women, as lesbians, as black, as working class, as disabled, as otherwise 'deviant', we see the world in a different way, different experiences happen to us, people relate to us differently, we relate to them differently" (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 169). Thus, an objective, detached position would fail to appreciate and incorporate such idiosyncracies.

The feminist critique of positivism and social science in general has contributed much to the development of emancipatory research. As Woods (2002: 40) asserts, "Feminist and disability researchers wrote the critique of positivist objectivity in the 1980's – all social research takes place within a context and within a set of social relations and cannot be objective in the scientific sense". Research taken from a male perspective or generalised from male experience, does little to develop an understanding of female experience and in fact goes some way to contributing to this oppression. Thus, research taken from a non-disabled viewpoint, which fails to understand the disabled perspective, will serve to contribute to disabled people's oppression. As Eichler (1991: 2) postulates, "In order to truly understand our universe, we must create a vantage point that allows us to observe it both for what it is and for what it is not". The difficulty for men in accepting and adopting such a viewpoint is explained by Stanley and Wise (1993: 30) when they state that, "Women's present marginality within 'male society' means that women know about two different 'worlds', men know only one". This is further acknowledged by Sprague and Zimmerman (2001: 74) when they state that, "...as an oppressed group, women have had to develop a dual perspective, to understand the point of view of their dominators as well as the perspective developed through their own experience".

In sum, feminist theory and research practice offer many insights for disability research. The recognition of domination and bias in research policy and practice; the notion of a dual perspective and stress on the benefits of focusing on a feminine perspective and the critique of the positivist school are all important considerations for the present research. The acknowledgement that disabled people have a dual perspective on the world, that is, they have an understanding of the world as an oppressed group but can also see the world as the oppressor does, is an acknowledgement that disabled people have knowledge about the world that non-disabled people cannot possess. Non-disabled people therefore must learn from this.

Interpretvism is in essence the anti-thesis to positivism. It constitutes a belief in multiple realities and aims to understand the phenomena under consideration. When guided by this worldview, contextual, social and historical factors are taken into consideration in both devising and undertaking the research. Thus, it would seem that interpretive research might provide a suitable paradigm. However, research guided by this worldview can also be oppressive. As noted by Oliver (1992: 106) "....while the interpretivist paradigm has changed the rules, in reality it has not changed the game". It is often viewed as a means of 'abusing' the disabled community and has been referred to as the 'rape model of research' (Reinharz, 1985; cited in Oliver, 1992: 109). This is because research participants are viewed as objects of the research, due to failure of the researcher to understand and appreciate the disabled experience and failure to recognize that disabled people are the experts on their experience. Furthermore, the term 'rape model' of research points to the overwhelming amount of research conducted with disabled people but that serves the needs of the researcher alone. Thus, the researcher undertakes the research with their own goals as a priority and the needs of disabled people as secondary, if they are even considered at all. So, although interpretivism is in some ways an improvement on positivist research, it still falls short. A philosophy that focuses on empowerment, emancipation and praxis is required. This of course, comes in the form of the emancipatory paradigm, which is a relatively new paradigm and highly specific to disability research. However, before exploring this paradigm in more detail, it is important to note that another worldview influenced the development of this study, critical theory.

4.1.2 Critical Theory

Critical theory considers the goal of emancipation. Critical theory has its foundations to a great extent in Marxian theory and its aim is to raise consciousness, that is, to make individuals aware of their situation. "One of the basic notions underlying the whole of this paradigm is that the consciousness of man is dominated by the ideological superstructures with which he interacts, and that these drive a cognitive wedge between himself and his true consciousness" (Burrell and Morgan, 1992: 32). Hollinger (1994: 79) notes that, "Critical theory is an attempt to revitalize Marx's humanism and his idea that modern society exploits and alienates individuals. As such, it embodies a narrative about human progress, a set of universal norms, and a utopian vision of society that grew out of the Enlightenment project".

So, although, issues regarding disability have not received much attention within consumer research, the issue of emancipation has been introduced through critical theory. Murray and Ozanne (1991) classifed critical theory as a paradigm and compared it to positivism and interpretivism (See Table 4.2). Critical theory is not a single, unified theory but acts as an umbrella term for the inclusion of various theorists and as such, a classification that pertains to the idea that it is a single theory is quite misleading. Murray and Ozanne (1991) also propose a methodology of which there has been much contestation (Hetrick and Lozada, 1994; Larsen and Wright, 1993). The present author agrees that this proposed methodology reduces the strength of the critique of the critical approach. However, critical theory offers some important insights to the researcher of disability. Critical theory does highlight the importance of recognising how researcher values impinge on the research project and it is a perspective, which aims to take the view of the participant. It focuses on the removal of constraints, with a heavy emphasis on praxis and has as its main goal, emancipation. Hetrick and Lozada (1994) distinguish between positive and negative emancipation, that is, emancipation to something as opposed to emancipation from something. Though it is questionable whether these two concepts can so easily be separated, it is a notion that should be considered within disability studies. Critical theory also advocates for the active engagement of participants and encourages the researcher to critically self-reflect. The historical context and totality are also deemed to be important.

Table 4.2: Comparison of Positivism, Interpretivism and Critical Theory

	POSITIVISM	**INTERPRETIVISM**	**CRITICAL THEORY**
Ontological Assumptions			
Nature of Reality	Objective; Tangible; Single, ahistorical; Fragmentable; Divisible	Socially Constructed; Multiple; Holistic; Contextual	"Force-field" between subject and object; Dynamic; Historical Totality;
Nature of Social Beings	Deterministic; Reactive	Voluntaristic; Proactive	Suspend Judgement; Emphasize Human Potential
Axiological Assumptions			
Overriding Goal	"Explanantion" via subsumption under general laws, prediction	"Understanding" via interpretation	"Emancipation" via social organization that facilitates reason, justice, and freedom
Epistemological Assumptions			
Knowledge Generated	Nomothetic; Time-Free; Contect-Independent; Value-free	Idiogrpahic; Time-Bound; Context-dependent; Value-laden	Forward-looking; Imaginative; Critical/unmasking; Practical
View of Causality	Real Causes exist	Multiple, simultaneous shaping	Reflection, exposure of constraints through dialogue, reconstruction, reflection.....
Research Relationship Metaphor	Dualism, separation, Detached Observer	Interactive, cooperative, Translator	Continuing Dialogue, Liberator

(Source: Murray & Ozanne, 1991: p133)

However, besides the lack of an explicit method, the role of the researcher within this paradigm is also questionable, with the researcher set out as some kind of visionary. Though, the researcher is encouraged to critically reflect on their position, there is still the notion that they have the knowledge of where to bring participants and as such power inequities still seem to be in existence. The problem and solution seem to be identified by the researcher and the participants emancipated by the researcher, that is, brought to consciousness. However, within disability studies true emancipation and empowerment are things that are under the control of disabled people and no one else. Therefore, although there is much overlap between the emancipatory paradigm as set out in disability studies and critical theory, and much can be borrowed from critical theory for the purposes of this project, a critical theory approach will not be the mainstay of this project.

Though, the present research study aspires to be emancipatory or more appropriately, to be guided by the principle tenets of this paradigm, due to certain restrictions, this project can never be a wholly emancipatory piece of work. One key issue that arises is the issue of control. As the research is conducted within an academic environment, disabled people do not have control over this research and as such, the research can only ever be at best, a variation on participatory research. As Smith and O'Flynn (2000: 515) note, "Disability research has taken two distinct directions – participant and emancipatory".

4.2 EMANCIPATORY PARADIGM

The research will be undertaken within the guidance of the emancipatory paradigm, though due to certain restrictions, this project can never be wholly emancipatory. The first question that needs to be answered is, what does emancipation mean? "In essence, emancipatory disability research is about the empowerment of disabled people through the transformation of the material and social relations of research production. In contrast to traditional investigative approaches, the emancipatory disability research agenda warrants the generation and production of meaningful and accessible knowledge about the various structures – economic, political, cultural and environmental – that created and sustain the multiple deprivations encountered by the overwhelming majority of disabled people and their families"(Barnes, 2003: 6).

The goal of emancipation is based on the view that "...social research has much to contribute to improving the quality of life for everyone in late capitalist society" (Oliver, 1992: 103). Two primary principles of this emancipatory paradigm are empowerment and reciprocity (Zarb, 1992). Empowerment has as one of its main techniques the propagation of reciprocity (Oliver, 1992). Whereas, empowerment refers to issues of power and control over the research (Taylor, 1999), reciprocity is a reference to the importance of the transfer of skills and knowledge between the research and researched. Barnes (2003) notes that two transformative aims exist: barrier removal and empowerment and that it is the role of the researcher to facilitate the achievement of these goals through the research process. A third criteria is that of gain (Oliver, 1992). However, as Zarb (1992: 127) notes, "..research has done little or nothing to contribute to the empowerment of disabled people". "The task for emancipatory research is not, as is sometimes implied, to help the researched to understand themselves better, but to develop its own understanding of the lived experience of these very subjects" (Oliver, 1992: 11). Morris (1992: 162) asserts that, "If disability research is to be emancipatory research then it must be part of disabled people's struggle to take over ownership of the definition of oppression, of the transaction of the subjective reality". Whereas, Stone and Priestley (1996: 702) suggest that, "Commitment on the part of the researcher, both to a social analysis of disablement and to the development of the disabled people's movement, must therefore form the basis of emancipatory disability research". In essence, "Emancipatory research is about the systematic demystification of the structures and processes which create disability, and the establishment of a workable 'dialogue' between the research community and disabled people in order to facilitate the latter's empowerment" (Barnes, 1992: 122). However, a cautionary note must be made with respect to such research and as Stone and Priestley (1996: 710) state "There is a fine line between devolving control as partners in research production and becoming mere pawns".

The questions may be asked, what will emancipation look like and how will it be evident? Ultimately, emancipation aims to remove all barriers to disabled people in society and to alleviate oppression. It is difficult to imagine when such a goal would be achieved. How many years would it take to remove all barriers? Such questions are impossible to answer, as no piece of work could ever amount to having this emancipatory effect. Each research project is but a small step towards this ultimate goal. Guidelines for conducting emancipatory disability research are now set out.

4.2.1 Emancipatory Paradigm – Key Criteria

Stone and Priestley (1996) set out six principles for carrying out emancipatory research and these are also supported by Barnes (2001):

- Choosing an Epistemology

- Surrendering Objectivity
- What's in it for Them
- Reversing the Social Relations of Research Production
- Personalizing the Political and Politicizing the Personal
- Qualitative and Quantitative

Each principle will be reviewed in light of the current research question.

- *Choosing an Epistemology*

According to Stone and Priestley (1996) the choice in terms of epistemology within disability studies is that, between the personal tragedy model and social model. Depending on which model the researcher adheres to the knowledge produced through the research will be quite different. Within disability studies there has been a rejection of the medical (personal tragedy) model of disability in favour of the social model of disability. This distinction was described earlier, and in essence, marks a move away from a focus on the individual, to a model that locates the 'problem' of disability in society. For example, it sees the built environment and social institutions as disabling. To reiterate, the implication of this choice on disability research, Stone and Priestley (1996: 702) state that, "In particular, where disability is defined in social and material terms, the focus of disability research will have less to do with the ability of disabled people to 'cope with' or 'adapt to' their situation and more to do with the identification and removal of disabling physical and social barriers". This adherence to the social model is a core element of emancipatory research (Barnes, 2003). As has already been detailed in previous chapters, the researcher will be working within the social model of disability but will also be drawing on the social-relational model as proposed by Thomas (1999) with particular emphasis within this model on the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability. As such, the question concerning the current project is whether mainstream advertising is part of this social process through its exclusion of disabled people.

- *Surrendering Objectivity*

Researchers are encouraged to move away from the objective stance of the positivist paradigm as it is deemed oppressive (Stone and Priestley, 1996). This has been touched on to some extent above in the critique of positivism. It is deemed oppressive as it serves to alienate the disabled participant and denigrate the disabled experience. Zarb (1992: 130) contends that "..the *ideology* of objectivity not only sets the parameters for the dominant research paradigm, but also effectively limits the scope for developing alternative models of research". This rejection of the objective, detached nature of the research has been rejected within feminist research, also noted above. An important point highlighted by Stanley and Wise (1993) is that the majority of research that is presented in journals is 'hygenic', that is, research as it is described not research as it is experienced is detailed. Problems, emotions, conflicting values, anything that deviates from the rules (set out by men) and that prevents the research from being 'objective' is not documented. There is no recognition of such issues in male dominated research, especially the subjective area of emotions which is deemed to be a female trait and inappropriate in (male) science (Bristor, 1992). This 'objectivity' bias can be rephrased in terms of a male/female dichotomy with male characteristics associated with scientific methods whereas female characteristics are deemed non-scientific. This idea of male science and female non-science is illustrated by Hirschman (1993) in Table 4.3 and described in essence as a dominant ideology in research.

So-called feminine non-science is deemed soft, emotional, and qualitative in nature while male science is considered hard, rational and quantitative. Thus, male positivistic, quantitative science dominates consumer research. It is due to such binary oppositions that quantitative methods come under scrutiny. Many people align quantitative methods with positivism as if they are one and the same. However, this is an inaccurate assumption (Sprague and Zimmerman, 2001). The emphasis within the social sciences is on quantity (Opie, 1992), and as the social sciences were historically male dominated, its rules and methods were devised by men and for this reason, they present a target for feminists. However, Sprague and Zimmerman (2001) explain that qualitative methods suffer from similar problems to quantitative and as such criticisms solely directed at quantitative methods are unjustified. Stanley and Wise (1993) believe that the dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity is false as these are artificial constructs based on sexist thinking.

Table 4.3: Ideological Dualisms

Masculine	Feminine
Rationality	Emotionality
Objectivity	Subjectivity
Quantitative	Qualitative
Hard	Soft
Manipulative	Nurturant
Personal Detachment	Personal Involvement
Universalistic	Particularistic
Technology	Nature
Instrumentalism	Expressiveness
Independent	Dependent
Public	Private
Dominance	Submission
Active	Passive
Agency	Communion
Self-Interest	Altruism

(Source: Hirschman, 1993)

In terms of disability research, it is inappropriate to conduct research claiming to be objective, as researchers bring values, perceptions and a certain conception of what it means to be disabled and these all impact on how the research is conducted. This does not constitute bad research, but simply recognises the fact that these factors have implications for how the research is done. It is important to continually critically reflect on both the process and content of the research with these issues in mind.

- *What's in it for them*

"The rationale of the emancipatory disability research paradigm is the production of research that has some meaningful practical outcome for disabled people. After all, emancipation is about empowerment" (Barnes, 2003: 12). This principle forces the researcher to question the practical relevance of their research for disabled people in general. "The researcher engages in processes of emancipation, rather than merely monitoring them from sympathetic guidelines. Moreover, the nature of that engagement should be determined by disabled people" (Stone and Priestley, 1996: 703). Traditionally, research conducted within the positivist and interpretivist paradigms, resulted in research where the researcher guided by their own needs, conducted the research with no consideration to the material conditions of the group. As a result of poor research practice and little action disabled people began doing research for themselves. "Disabled people have come to see research as a violation of their experience, as irrelevant to their needs and as failing to improve their material circumstances and quality of life" (Oliver, 1992: 105). As Hughes (1999: 159) notes, "It is also a profound refusal to be constituted by the vision of others. It is a refusal to accept the false lucidity and penetrating curiosity of the gaze of the disciplines. It is a refusal to be objectified and invalidated by the abstract and external corporeality of the eye of power". Thus, research must have some impact on the material conditions of the lives of disabled people. "By definition emancipatory disability research should be judged mainly by its ability to empower disabled people through the research process, but whether this is achievable is a highly contentious issue. It would be impossible to imagine that any one piece of research, no matter how comprehensive or rigorous, could empower all disabled people at the same time" (Barnes, 2001: 16). Barnes (2003) also notes that the main targets for emancipatory disability research are disabled people and their allies.

This research project was not proposed by a disability organisation, and as such, may not be an issue that is deemed of prime importance relative to issues such as securing rights based legislation, access and appropriate services for disabled people. However, this is not to say that the issue is unimportant. The goal of emancipation requires an attack on oppression from all fronts simultaneously. The research does not have policy implications directly, but it hopes to add knowledge to the area of representation, what this symbolic exclusion means to disabled people, if indeed it means anything at all, and highlight the implications this can have on the daily lived experience of disability. On a general level, it has been recognised that cultural representations feed into perceptions and go some way to educating society regarding disabled people. As Toolan (2003: 21) notes, "..media images of individual experience inform our identities and, indeed, the perceptions non-disabled people have of those identities. This, in turn, has a profound impact on the opportunities available to disabled people, and the kind of choices we believe we can take" (p21). Thus, media images feed into perceptions and attitudes of disability, and as such potentially impact on the rate of change in other areas of disabled people's lives. However, "If such research is ever to be useful, it must not only faithfully capture the experience of the group being researched but also be available and accessible to them in their struggles to improve the conditions of their existence" (Oliver, 2003: 11). Thus, the research findings should be made available and accessible to disabled people and an opportunity to criticise the research should be in place. Furthermore, by providing an opportunity for discussing the research, the researcher is also providing an opportunity to identify important areas of study for the future. How this is to be incorporated into the present study will be detailed later in the chapter.

- *Reversing the Social Relations of Research Production*

Stone and Priestley (1996: 703) stress that, "If research is to be relevant, and if the researcher is to demonstrate commitment in actions as well as words, then anti-oppressive practices must begin with the research production itself". It involves the recognition that power relations exist in research just as they do in society, and if research is to tackle oppression, then research practices must recognise their implicit oppressive nature. Oliver (1992: 102) described the traditional nature of these social relations of research production when he states that they are, "...built upon a firm distinction between the researcher and researched; upon the belief that it is the researchers who have specialist knowledge and skills; and that it is they who should decide what topics should be researched and be in control of the whole process of research production". Thus, traditionally research sees the researcher as the expert, whereas, a reversal of the social relations of research recognise that disabled people are the experts of their lives and of the disabled experience. Smith and O'Flynn (2000: 515) note that, "In disability research, the role of the researcher and balance of the relationship between researcher and researched have correspondingly shifted toward greater partnership and equality in the research process, culminating in research that is used to change the relationship in favour of disabled people and their organizations". In terms of being a non-disabled researcher, and as such outside the community to be studied, there needs to be a heightened awareness of the existence of these power relations, as relations within research potentially mirror power relations that exist in the wider society. As a reflection of the power relations in society, the non-disabled are dominant over the disabled person. "This is particularly important for non-disabled researchers because the inherent power relationships between researcher and researched is accentuated by the unequal power relationship which exists between disabled people and non-disabled people in the wider world" (Stone and Priestley, 1996: 700). However, the researcher may assume a non-oppressive role in disability research. Oliver (2002c: 10-11) states, in referring to this reversal of social relations, that; "The harder version of this position goes further and argues that shared experience is essential; in other words only women can research women's experience, black people the black experience, disabled people the disability experience and so on". However, Oliver (2002c) believes that the issue of control is more important than the issue of experience. This issue of control is central to disability research and will be returned to later.

In fact, many believe that there *is* a role for the non-disabled researcher to play. Morris (1992) suggests that there is a need to ground oneself as a non-disabled person holding certain assumptions about disability. It must also be stated that having an impairment is not an automatic qualification for doing disability research. This is explained by Barnes (1992: 122) when he says that, "Having an impairment does not automatically give someone an affinity with disabled people, nor an inclination to do disability research. The cultural gulf between researchers and researched has as much to do with social indicators like class, education, employment and general life experiences as with impairments" (p122). Clear (1999: 444) suggests that a critical approach to research is needed and highlights the importance of self-reflection by drawing on Foucault's idea of the researcher gaze and believes that by using a participative methodology the gaze can be shifted in two ways. "First, it validates a researcher stance in which the researcher looks at her or his own thoughts and actions as much as anyone else's (a reflexive stance). Secondly, it recognises that other participants too could become observers, that their gaze could be as much on the researcher and the research process as the other way round".

If such power relations are not recognised and the researcher fails to reflect on the values they bring to the research process, then alienation of the research subject could occur. As Barnes (2003: 10) highlights, "The idea that 'scientists' of whatever persuasion, social or otherwise, can interpret data without reference to personal values or interests is one that has been promulgated by philosophers, scientists, and later politicians, since at least the enlightenment. The reality is that *all* information whatever its source and format can be interpreted in a variety of different ways and those charged with the responsibility of interpreting it are influenced by various forces, economic, political and cultural". Alienation of the research participant influences how the research is approached, what questions are asked, how questions are asked and also what becomes of the research findings. This has been characteristic of previous studies, which are guided by either the positivist and interpretivist paradigms. Oliver (2002c-12) notes the importance of language in changing the social relations of research production; "It also implies that we need to develop a language (or discourse) which does not continue to maintain the artificial distinction between researcher and researched. We do not, as yet, have a language which enables us to talk about research not premised upon the researcher/researched distinction".

Therefore, in order for research to be emancipatory it must not only aim to improve life as lived by the chosen respondent group but also shift the balance of power (as much as possible) that exists in research. The research process, thus far, has been one characterised by critical self-reflection and questioning at each stage. It is developed within the social model and it is recognised that choice of methodology and how the methodology is used will have huge implications for the ability to reverse the social relations of research production.

- *Personalizing the Political and Politicizing the Personal*

"The fifth principle of the emancipatory paradigm is perhaps the most contentious within the paradigm and signifies the beginnings of divergence amongst the core of disability theorists" (Stone and Priestley, 1996: 704). Basically, it's about whether the research should focus on the individual experience or collective experience of disabled people. Though the research is looking at advertising as having social implications, it is also concerned with the individual experience of this.

- *Qualitative and Quantitative*

Stone and Priestley (1996) note that a general preference exists for qualitative over quantitative research. This preference for qualitative methods over quantitative methods is probably due to the alignment of quantitative methods with positivism generally and the rejection of positivism due to its focus on objectivity. Stone and

Priestley (1996: 706) highlight that, "...it would be misguided to equate emancipatory disability research with any one approach to data collection since both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used in an oppressive or an emancipatory context". The present study will be conducted using qualitative methods. As little is known of this subject area, it was felt that qualitative methodologies would enable the researcher to explore the area in-depth, and the exact methods to be employed will be detailed later. However, as stated previously, it has less to do with the methodologies employed and more to do with *how* the methodologies are employed. Thus, as Barnes (2003: 12) states, "...all data collection strategies have their strengths and weaknesses. It is not the research methods themselves that are the problem, it is the uses to which they are put".

4.2.2 Emancipatory Research – Points Of Contention

There are various issues that make it impossible for this research to be genuinely emancipatory. These are mainly related to what Zarb (1992) refers to as the material relations of research production. That is, who is the funding body for the research and what criteria do they set out for the project. This is in turn linked to the question, 'who has control over the research?'. The research question was developed by the researcher and not by disabled people themselves or by organisations representing disabled people. The research question developed from an undergraduate dissertation. It was an idea that developed due to gap in knowledge and also interest in disability issues due to the researcher having a disabled sibling. However, this is not to say that the research is redundant or has no place in disability studies. The topic under investigation is not one of the immediate concerns as set out by the National Disability Authority (NDA). However, it is an issue that has importance in the bigger picture of emancipation, that is, the removal of barriers. Representation is the kind of area that feeds into other areas of life. Though, it is correct that structural and policy change should receive priority, it would be naïve to underestimate the power of representation and the media to influence, how and when this change occurs. "As Shakespeare (1996) argues there is a place for instrumental, theory-driven research, which although seeking emancipation for disabled people only includes them as data sources. He concludes that all socially based disability research is welcome research as long as it does not parasitise disabled people's experiences for the purpose of career development or further oppressive practices. However, it is contended here that *where beneficial and possible* a more empathetic approach to empirically based disability research should be adapted"

(Kitchin, 2002: 48). The researcher is informed and guided by the social model in all work, from literature to methodology. As a person with a disabled sibling, the author has a specific experience of disability. "Family members occupy a kind of middle ground between disability and able-bodiedness and can be theorised into the oppressed class or into the oppressors" (Woods, 2002: 37). However, this is not the same as being disabled and also, the nature of the impairment means that the author did not grow up aware of the disability movement, disability community and disability studies. However, since beginning this research masters the author has made a concerted effort to make contact with and discuss my research with disabled people both in Ireland and the UK. The author has also made the effort to become more informed of disability issues on a wider scale and not just issues directly relating to the research.

Zarb (1992: 128) sets out four questions that need to be answered in relation to control:

i. "Who controls what the research will be about and how it will be carried out?"

The researcher has controlled the development of the research question and the devising of the research plan. Though disabled people have been consulted during this process, the final decision has remained with the researcher.

ii. "How far we have come in involving disabled people in the research process?"

Disabled people have been involved in a consultative role, in that, opinions and reflections on the research question and other issues have been obtained, through organised meetings with disability organisations (not always disabled people) and with disabled people themselves.

iii. "What opportunities exist for disabled people to criticise the research and influence future directions?"

The research has been presented at two conferences, which provided an opportunity for disabled people present to comment and influence the research. A full paper of the presentation is available on the university's website, along with my email address should anyone wish to contact me about any element of the work. Granted this is quite a passive way to elicit criticisms and it may be more beneficial to inform people of the existence of the website and subsequent work and ask for opinions and advice. The greatest opportunity to criticise and influence the research exists for those who participate in the interviewing process. They will be given the opportunity to reflect on both the process and content of the interview.

iv. "What happens to the products of the research?"

> During the research process disabled people who participate will be given the opportunity to comment on their interviews and change any element that they are not happy with. The overall findings will hopefully be published in disability journal and the research will also be made available in accessible formats and disseminated widely.

So, control of the research is with the researcher and not disabled people and as Zarb (1992: 128) asserts, "Simply increasing participation and involvement will never by itself constitute emancipatory research unless and until it is disabled people themselves who are controlling the research and deciding who should be involved and how". Thus, the present project cannot be wholly emancipatory, but at best, participatory.

4.2.3 Emancipatory Research –Versus- Participatory Research

Though, differences exist between the two perspectives, namely in the way that disabled people are involved and the level of control disabled people have over the research, the two can be linked. As Zarb (1992: 128) notes, "Participatory research which involves disabled people in a meaningful way is perhaps a prerequisite to emancipatory research in the sense that researchers can learn from disabled people and vice versa, and that it paves the way for researchers to make themselves 'available' to disabled people – but it is no more than that". The phrase 'in a meaningful way' is important and as Smith and O'Flynn (2000: 517) assert, "Research that attempts to "consult with" disabled people rather than involve them more actively in the research process has been criticized for paying lip-service to the concept of participation". Thomas-Bernard (2000: 185) also recognises the link between participatory research and emancipation, and states that, "As a tool for emancipation, participatory research is one way to engage people in a process that aims to challenge oppressive structures that define and control their lives".

4.2.3.1 What is participatory research?

"Participatory research attempts to generate knowledge about social relations and social change more democratically by fostering dialogue and equality between researcher and researched. Built into the paradigm is the academic's commitment to use this knowledge for the community to expose and improve social relations that are inequitable and unjust" (McLean-Petras and Porpora, 1993: 109). Furthermore, these authors cite three components of participatory research; "1) a commitment to the needs and interests of the community; 2) a direct engagement with the community so as to permit its problems and goals defined in its own voice; 3) a moral commitment to the transformation of social, political and economic injustices directly afflicting the community studied" (McLean-Petras and Porpora, 1993: 108). Stoecker and Bonacich (1992) believe that participatory research involves two criteria, democratization of knowledge creation and social change. The first focuses on taking the control of knowledge creation out of the hands of the oppressors and putting it into the hands of the oppressed; "It tries to engage people from oppressed communities in the research process. And it tries to "give voice" to their own wisdom and world view, treating it as legitimate knowledge – perhaps even more legitimate than the knowledge of those tied to power who have a vested interest in drowning out the cries of pain that emanate from those who are hurt by our social system" (p7). With regards social change, the authors stress the importance of political action linked to the research. "Thus, the ideal PR must also be explicitly guided by a political perspective, i.e., to counter oppression and bring about a restructuring of society towards greater equality of all kinds" (Stoecker and Bonacich, 1992: 7). As Park (1992: 30) asserts, "Participatory research is a way of creating knowledge that involves learning from investigation and applying what is learned to collective problems through social action. A critical difference between traditional social research and participatory research is that in the latter the people on whose behalf the investigation-action cycle is carried out get directly involved in the process, from problem formulation, to inquiry, to action". Furthermore, "Participatory research is a process of critical and reflective inquiry, which holds hope for the marginalized; it gives voice to those who are usually silenced and empowers people to analyse their experience as a means of effecting change" (Thomas-Bernard, 2000: 167).

The issue of control, which was the principle reason why the current project could not qualify as emancipatory, that is, as the research is primarily under the control of the researcher, is again an issue to consider within participatory research. There is no one way to do participatory research with various models available and each with varying levels of control in the hands of the group under study. "The type of involvement in participatory research may vary, but to be considered participatory a project must involve some degree of active involvement of participants as agents in the research" (Thomas-Bernard, 2000: 169). Various models of participatory research exist but few entail an awareness and understanding of research being conducted within an academic environment. This is an important concession that needs to be made because the current research is being conducted within an academic environment, with funding coming from an academic institute with the overall aim, in reality being an academic qualification for the researcher. As such there are certain criteria and guidelines set out for conducting research by the institute. These criteria may at times outweigh the criteria set out by the disabled community regarding research. One model that does incorporate this issue is the parallel process model. A key element of this model is that, regardless of research question whether it is of immediate concern to the group or simply an academic endeavour, the researcher must be willing to reciprocate the participants for the time and trust they have given. "In participatory research, academics must give back something more direct to the subjects who have afforded the researchers time and trust. This is essential even when the research question is removed from the subject's immediate concerns" (McLean-Petras and Porpora, 1993: 112). Various ways in which the researcher can give back are suggested by McLean-Petras and Porpora (1993: 112-3) and the following are the ways in which the current researcher hopes to reciprocate;

- Special Publications and Presentations

Commitment to making the research findings accessible and widespread is set out for this research. Thus, following submission of thesis, the work will be adapted to suit the requirements of various groups, so that they can critically assess it and see where the work can go from that point. "Consultation is obviously essential before and during a research project if the principles of participatory research are to be realised. It is equally important that consultation continues after the research has been formally completed so that disabled people involved or interested in the research have the opportunity to reflect on the findings and – most important of all – subject the researchers to critical scrutiny" (Zarb, 1992: 136).

- Strategy Building

The research though not explicitly policy-related may provide information to support arguments or may simply highlight areas for further study that have more policy implications.

- Practical Skills

The researcher can be available to train/inform disabled people in research skills perhaps through research workshops or accessible documents. Even if this just breaks down the practical elements of doing qualitative research as undertaken for this study.

- Ethical Responsibility.

Researchers have a responsibility to the participants to follow good research practice. "The researcher reciprocates for the openness and trust of grass roots organizations and their leaders with confidentiality and care not to disclose information that could be harmful to the group" (McLean-Petras and Porpora, 1993: 113). Zarb (1992: 129) sets out three ground rules used in conducting research, which include informing participants of " (a) our basic orientation (i.e. whose side we are on); (b) what we hope the research will achieve (i.e. what the benefits to disabled people might be); and (c) how we intend to do the research".

It is important to understand how the relationship will be reciprocal prior to undertaking the research and this should be explained to research participants. That is, participants should be aware of what is in it for them and also what they can take and learn from the experience, and draw on the researcher to aid them with. It is important to note that, "In what we have called the parallel process model, social researchers are committed to giving something back to the communities they study. However, the research itself remains primarily an academic product, to be consumed by academics or by the broader reading public. The research is not intended solely as a product for use by the community that was the object of research" (McLean-Petras and Porpora, 1993: 114).

4.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

As stated above, the research question is set out as, an investigation into the social process of disability through mainstream advertising with an examination of advertising's image of the body ideal and what this means to the disabled audience. This involves a number of angles including;

- What does exclusion from mainstream advertising mean to disabled people, if indeed, it means anything at all?
- What role does advertising play in the lives of disabled people?
- What does disability or being disabled mean to participants?
- If and how the experience of disability and experience of advertising interact?

Further to this, the researcher wishes to explore if and how disabled people would like to see advertising change.

Research currently highlights the negative images of disability in film (Darke, 1997a), on TV (Shakespeare, 1997) and in charity advertising (Hevey, 1992; Morrison, 2002), and the implications of this for disabled people. In consumer research, there has been much research into advertising effects and minority groups including, women (Richins, 1991), gay people (Kates, 1999), black people and Hispanic people (Wilkes and Valencia, 1989) and unemployed youths (Elliott, 1995; O'Donohoe, 1995). However, research regarding mainstream advertising and disability imagery is sparse (Haller and Ralph, 2001; Hardin et al., 2001). The reason so little work has been conducted in this area could be due to the fact that disabled people very rarely appear in mainstream advertising. However, it is this lack of representation in mainstream advertising that interests the researcher.

4.4 RESEARCH METHODS

4.4.1 Participants

Participants had visible, physical non-intellectual impairments. Four men and four women were interviewed. It was felt that this even split would allow for comparison across gender. Ages ranged from 20 to 42 years of age. All participants have been assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity. Table 4.4 provides some information about the participants namely pseudonym, age and type of impairment.

These participants were recruited in a rather ad hoc manner. It was felt that to interview people from within the same organisation would lead to perhaps a strong institutional viewpoint being represented. Some participants were recruited through the college, others through a disability organisation and another participant through a friend.

Table 4.4: Participant Profile

Pseudonym	Age	Impairment Type
Anna	20	Cerebral Palsy
Yvette	31	Mobility
Elaine	42	Multiple Sclerosis
Erica	32	Mobility
Robert	40	Cerebral Palsy
Noel	23	Motor and Sensory Neuropathy (CMT)
Stephen	29	Cerebral Palsy
Niall	23	Mobility

4.4.2 Pilot Interview

A pilot interview was conducted to test the question format and interview design. Initially, the researcher had hoped to use an analysis of narratives approach to interpretation which would essentially influence how the interviews were structured. The aim was to elicit participants stories connected to their experience of disability and their experience of advertising. According to Polkinghorne (1995) there are two types of narrative inquiry, analysis of narratives and narrative analysis; "In the first type, analysis of narratives, researchers collect stories as data and analyze them with paradigmatic processes. The paradigmatic analysis results in descriptions of themes that hold across the stories or in taxonomies of types of stories, characters, or settings. In the second type, narrative analysis, researchers collect descriptions of events and happenings and synthesize or configure them by means of a plot into a story or stories (for example, a history, case study, or biographic episode). Thus, analysis of narratives moves from stories to common elements, and narrative analysis moves from elements to stories" (p12). As the focus of the research is to understand the role of advertising in the experience of disability, as opposed to understanding the life history of the respondent, an analysis of narrative approach was chosen. This approach potentially enables the researcher to elicit stories relevant to specific events in the life of the participant, and as such serves to anchor statements in experience. Though, many issues impinge on the experience of disability and these may arise in the interview, the researcher did not aim to compile a biography or life history of the participant but to ascertain, commonalities and *differences* that exist in the experience of disability across the chosen participants. Thus, the questions were quite broad and it was hoped that the interview would be quite free-flowing.

However, following the pilot interview it was clear that trying to elicit stories was constrictive to the interview as not all the questions that the researcher wanted to ask could lend themselves easily to this format, and as such, not all the questions could possibly be answered through telling a story. This has a lot to do with the fact that the research question is quite specific and is not dealing with some general issue in the person's life. As such, only one such story was really given in this pilot interview. It was also thought that the initial interview guide was quite direct and some questions actually dealt with quite big issues. The researcher's personal reflections and also consultation with a fellow academic researcher in the field of disability studies, helped to highlight that although the same issues were to be dealt with in the interview, an alternative approach was required. The questions were to be less direct and some advertisements were to be used as stimuli to overcome the directness and magnitude of the questions and to encourage participants to talk at ease. The choice of advertisements used in the interviews will be detailed later.

4.4.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

The remainder of the interviews were semi-structured in-depth interviews. This approach was chosen because it allows for open-ended questions to be asked and also for impromptu questions based on information divulged during the interview itself. In referring to the semi-structured interview, Bryman (2001: 314) states that, "The researcher has a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an *interview guide*, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply. Questions may not follow on exactly in the way outlined on the schedule. Questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by interviewees. But, by and large, all of the questions will be asked and a similar wording will be used from interviewee to interviewee". Quinn Patton (2002: 342) notes how, "The *general interview guide approach* involves outlining a set of issues that are to be explored with each respondent before interviewing begins. The guide serves as a basic checklist during the interview to make sure that all relevant topics are covered".

The research involved a two-stage interviewing method. The first stage interviews were structured by two broad themes: what is your experience of disability and what is your experience of advertising. However, a number of questions relating to each theme were developed (see Appendix B). The first interview served to cover these two broad themes as best as possible. Whereas the second interview served the purpose of clarifying issues that the researcher was unsure about and also it gave the participant more time to talk about areas that they wanted to talk about. Initially, the researcher had hoped to have the participant read the transcript of the first interview by the time the second interview was carried out and to use the transcript as a guide for the interview. However, it was felt that it would be more beneficial and less demanding of the participant if both transcriptions (first and second interview) were given to the participant at the same time. The opportunity then exists for the participant to remove any data they are not comfortable with. However, although the opportunity was there to alter the transcripts, the onus remained with the participant. In fact, only one participant came back to me with changes and this was only a minor change and did not impact on the reading of the text. It is not something that can be or should be forced onto the participant. However, it is important that the transcript for the first interview is complete and reviewed by the researcher prior to the second interview, as it is the transcript that forms the basis of the questions asked in the second interview. Ideally, the second interview would take place within a week of the first interview. However, this was not always possible due to participant's busy schedules and other commitments. Six out of the eight participants took part in the two stages of the interview. One interview was via email. The person had sat in on someone else's interview but felt more comfortable answering the questions via email. Another participant had taken part in the first interview; a date was set for the follow-up interview on several occasions but these were cancelled. This participant then went on holidays making it impossible to do the follow-up interview.

4.4.4 Choice of Advertising Stimuli

It was quite a challenge to ascertain ads with images of disabled people, both commercial ads of which there are a handful of examples that cropped up around the time of the research and all were TV based, and charity ads. A number of charity organisations were contacted about the possibility of obtaining some advertisements that included images of disabled people but it seemed such ads did not exist. The only organisation in Ireland, which seemed to include images of disabled people in their advertising were The National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI). Two ads were obtained from NCBI. Although delighted to finally get some ads within an Irish context, as the focus of the research is visible physical non-intellectual impairment, these ads were not exactly suitable. They were not considered the best stimulus for the discussion. Disability is so diverse and somebody with a physical impairment may not necessarily identify with someone with a sensory impairment. Some organisations in the UK were contacted, namely Scope (formerly The Spastics Society) and the Multiple Sclerosis society and a number of ads were received from them, some of better quality than others. An Internet search for ads was also conducted, and two in particular from the Easter Seals organisation in the US were quite suitable. These images were tested in the second stage of the pilot interview. The purpose was to obtain the participants opinions on each, gauge response and ask which ads they would recommend to be used in the remainder of the interviews. This proved quite helpful and the ads were narrowed down to a sample of three – one from MS society, one from Scope, and one from Easter Seals (see Appendix C). These illustrated a range from a medical model representation to a social model representation of disability. It was thought that such a range would generate a fruitful discussion. Participants were shown the ads and asked whether they related to the ads in anyway and what their general thoughts and feelings were about these ads. Furthermore, the participants were asked whether any of the ads defined disability in the same way that they would and if not, how their definition would differ. This was quite a useful way to approach this question.

4.4.5 Informed Consent

The purpose of informed consent is "..to achieve a position whereby people who agree to take part in a research programme know what they are agreeing to and authorize you to collect information from them without any form of coercion or manipulation" (Kent, 2000: 81). Thus, potential participants need to be given clear and complete information regarding the researcher, the research content, the research process and the purposes of the research. In the present study, participants were given a document, which explained my background, my personal experience of disability, the research topics to be covered in the interview and also how the interview process would be structured (see Appendix

D). In the majority of cases this was emailed to respondents and alternatively was given to respondents on first meeting. This first meeting was highly beneficial. The researcher met respondents for a coffee and chat to discuss and explain the research further and answer any questions they may have. It was also an opportunity to get to know each other in an informal setting which makes the interview scenario less daunting and has the potential to put both the researcher and participant at ease. The only time this did not occur was for the pilot interview. Having met for coffee and a chat about the research respondents were asked to think about it further and they were not obliged to make a decision there and then. The researcher rang within a few days to find out whether they would be willing to take part. Implicit within the notion of informed consent, is the fact that consent must be voluntary as well. Potential participants should not be bullied, coerced or made to feel guilty into taking part in the research. Once participants agreed to take part, a time and place for the first interview was decided. On meeting for the interview, respondents were given a consent form to fill out (see Appendix E). This consent form was based on an example given in Arksey and Knight (1999). However, consent must be on-going. Participants must be made aware that they can refuse to answer any questions or drop out at any time without having to give an explanation or reason.

4.5 ANALYSIS

Spiggle (1994: 492) makes an important distinction between analysis and interpretation; "*Analysis* breaks down or divides some complex whole into its constituent parts (i.e., from the Greek, analyein, to break up). Through analytical operations researchers dissect, reduce, sort and reconstitute data. Researchers use analysis to manipulate data. In *interpretation* one makes a construal – ask what something means, or grasps the sense of it".

The researcher decided to take a hermeneutic approach to the analysis. Though it is not associated with one particular method (Arnold and Fischer, 1994) what appealed to the researcher was the emphasis on moving from parts to whole. This is otherwise known as working within the hermeneutic circle. As Arnold and Fischer (1994: 63) note, "The idea of a hermeneutic circle, or iterative spiral of understanding, is central to hermeneutic philosophy. [...] The term 'hermeneutic circle' represents the idea that meaning of a whole text is determined from the individual elements of a text, while, at the same time, an individual element is understood by referring to the whole of which it is a part (Bernstein, 1983). Specific elements are examined again and again, each time with a slightly different conception of the global whole. Gradually, an ever more integrated and comprehensive account of the specific elements, as well as of the text as a whole, emerges". Thus, it involves a process of reading and re-reading, moving from a specific interview to an overview of all interview texts. Thompson (1997: 441) describes how he uses this approach to understand consumer stories; "This iterative procedure actually entails two distinct stages. The first is an intratext cycle in which a text (such as an interview transcript) is read in its entirety to gain a sense of the whole (Giorgi 1989). Further readings then are undertaken to develop an integrated understanding of the consumption meanings conveyed by the text. The second part-to-whole movement is an intertextual one whereby the researcher looks for patterns (and differences) across different interviews. As well, there are interactive movements between the intratextual and intertextual interpretive cycles. For example, a researcher may gain an important insight from an interview text interpreted later in the process and then reconsider previously interpreted texts in light of this newly developed understanding".

Thompson's (1997) description of working within the hermeneutic circle acted as a useful guideline for the present study. Each interview was read on numerous occasions. The researcher analysed each interview in isolation developing a profile of each respondent and highlighting the most important elements of each interview. Furthermore, similarities and differences between the individual interview and the literature were highlighted. Following this an inter-textual reading across interview texts was made to highlight similarities and differences that existed between participants. This was an on-going process and literally involves moving from parts to whole back to parts again with each re-reading of the text providing insights and different interpretations as the analysis progresses. So, while the analysis involves dissecting the interview data, trying to uncover patterns across the text, the next stage, interpretation, is concerned with developing an overall understanding or meaning. According to Spiggle (1994: 497-8), "Arriving at an interpretation results from an emergent, holistic, extralogical insight, or understanding. The interpreter translates some *distant* – less familiar, abstract, indirectly apprehended – object, experience, or domain (encoded in signs) into one that is *near* – more familiar, concrete, directly apprehended. Through this translation the interpreter grasps a meaning by seeing resemblances between a new sign system, a text, and a previously understood one".

Interpretation of interviews is probably the most powerful part of the qualitative research process. Thus, having conducted the analysis a pre-publication write-up about each participant was given to the participant. In this way, the participants have some control over how they are represented and as such it goes some way in reversing the social relations of research production. The trouble with such a process is deciding when to stop, as this process of interpretation and re-interpretation could go on ad infinitum. However, it is anticipated that once this pre-publication interpretation is given to the participants and their recommended changes are made, then the interpretation will then be ready for publication. One major advantage is that the participants are empowered through the process of reading and analysing their own words and the subsequent interpretation of those words by the researcher, and are able to challenge and change how they are represented in the research.

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter detailed the choice of philosophy and research methodology used to investigate the research question. Guided by the emancipatory paradigm, as set out by Stone and Priestley (1996), the researcher set out to investigate advertising's role in disability as a social process. The research is not wholly emancipatory but at best, participatory in nature. A two-stage interviewing approach was taken and interviews were in a semi-structured form. A hermeneutic approach to the analysis was taken. The following chapter details the outcome of such analysis. That is, key findings in light of the research question are described.

CHAPTER FIVE:

FINDINGS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This study is an exploratory study as not much is known about this area. It is framed by an overall research objective with the objective set out as 'an investigation into the social process of disability through mainstream advertising with an examination of advertising's body ideal and what this means to the disabled audience'. As set out in the previous chapter this overarching question entails a number of different elements;

- Exclusion from Advertising,
- Role of Advertising,
- Defining Disability,
- Interaction of Disability and Advertising.
- How participants would like to see advertising change.

This chapter examines each of these elements in an effort to gain a greater understanding of the overall research question.

5.1 EXCLUSION FROM ADVERTISING

One element of the research was to ascertain whether the exclusion from mainstream advertising means anything to disabled people. There are a number of aspects to exclusion that need to be considered in the context of this study;

- Exclusion due to lack of representation;
- Exclusion due to lack of purchasing power;
- Exclusion from consumption of advertising imagery.

Participants all commented on the fact that the absence of disabled people from commercial advertising was not something that they had thought about before. They did not connect disability with mainstream advertising. The topic was as such opened up for consideration and discussion through the research. The interviews could be seen as a reflective process, which asked participants to consider some issues that had not occurred to them previously.

"I haven't really connected the two of them together yet" (Noel)

Participants were not asked why they had never thought about it as 'why' questions tend to make people feel like they have to justify their answers.

"..I've never really thought of it, I haven't seen many disabled people doing ads...." (Erica)

Although participants had not questioned the lack of representation of disabled people in commercial advertising, there was a feeling by some that this was indicative of advertisers attitudes towards disabled people. Participants felt that advertisers do not consider disabled people to be consumers. As such, advertisers choose not to target them as consumers. Dahl (1993) noted this lack of recognition on the part of advertisers when she said that, "Advertisers do not seem to think of disabled people as customers -- drinking beer, brushing their teeth, or buying a car". Also, participants suggested why advertisers do not think of disabled people as consumers. One participant suggests that disabled people may not be seen to fit in with the brand image.

"So, they're not, I don't think, maybe they don't see disability as fitting into what they want a brand image to be, probably" (Niall)

Other participants see this exclusion as being directly related to disabled people's spending power.

"..advertisers do not think of disabled people as being consumers...they don't actually necessarily think of disabled people as having any income to actually buy goods..." (Yvette)

"...because disabled people are not seen to have economic power, not seen to have money, then there's no need to advertise to them, you know..." (Robert)

There is a high rate of unemployment among disabled people in Ireland and as such disabled people are not seen to have money, to have economic power. If disabled people are not seen to have spending power then advertisers are not going to try to entice them to spend. Hirschman (1985) notes how the distribution of consumption resources determines people's consumption ability and locates race as an important stratification variable for consumption resources. Though Hirschman (1985) does not comment on disability as a stratification variable for consumption resources, it is felt by the researcher that disabled people are at a disadvantage in terms of consumption resources as they are a group that have been historically economically worse off than other groups within society. This economic disadvantage exists even for those disabled people employed within workshops and as Oliver (2002a: 52) contends, "In addition, day centres, adult training centres and sheltered workshops make a considerable economic contribution by carrying out jobs that cannot be easily mechanised, at wage rates that make third world workers look expensive". Participants in this study were not based in adult training centres or sheltered workshops. There were three students, four workers and one female participant unemployed at the time of the research.

One male participant suggests, advertisers will not change unless disabled people get money, get economic power.

"so, I think until disabled people get economic independence, economic power, I don't see advertising changing, I don't see why it should. I think advertising again it just tells what's happening already, it doesn't, it never really, like ads to women, we say single women or separated women, it was the women themselves that got power, not the ads, the ads came later" (Robert).

So, advertising is seen as reflective of society. Advertising is not considered to have the power to influence or change things according to this participant. This reflective status of advertising is also pin-pointed by a female participant.

"...I think it speaks of where we are as a society and the values we put on things...." (Elaine)

Not all participants viewed advertising as solely reflective and indicated ways in which advertising could bring about change and influence perceptions/attitudes towards disabled people. This issue will be revisited later in the chapter.

So, returning to the focus on consumption and spending power, one participant explains, people have some money to purchase. Although consumption resources are limited, they are not non-existent. This would be true of all participants in this study.

"...by including disabled people within the advertising, its acknowledging the fact that they have a part to play, that they are consumers and as consumers they have to be addressed and if you're not obvious in advertising they're sort of not included as consumers and they're seen to be poor or whatever and they are pretty much poor or whatever, but everyone still has some money to spend on something..." (Elaine)

Participants do not see themselves as different in terms of consumption. They use the same products as everybody else. It is questioned why 'ideal' or 'perfect' body types need to be shown using the products when it is something that everybody uses. So, the images may be exclusionary but this does not prevent participants from purchasing the products.

"...I suppose, I mean, advertising would look, you wouldn't necessarily see people who aren't beautiful in advertising, in many ways, you know, you have a look of, they would normally be your blondes, and long blonde hair, particularly I'm thinking of the Garnier ads or any of those types of hair product ads, that they're always beautiful models that you know, all of us use hair products...." (Yvette)

The disabled people in the study are consumers, and not only of products but also of advertising imagery. Featherstone (2001) highlights the importance of consuming images for those people unable to participate in the purchase and consumption of products as consumption can sometimes be limited to the consumption of images. Consumption for these participants is not limited to the consumption of images but some participants described how they consumed advertising images irrespective of whether they consumed the product (Ritson and Elliott, 1999). Thus, the advertising image is a product itself, a cultural product and can be consumed in isolation of any purchase behaviour.

"..the ad that I really like, I'd look at again and again, is the vodka, you know, the Smirnoff Ice, you know the guy is taking his girlfriend away for a dirty weekend...so that's the kind of ad that I'd look at again and again, even though I don't drink the stuff..." (Robert)

When asked if he related to the ad in any way the participant said that, "..both sides like, the guy going off for a dirty weekend with the girl and then as a father with an eight year old daughter, I, that's gonna happen to me someday anyway, she's going to bring back a boyfriend and I'm going to have to deal with that as well...." (Robert).

The discussion around this ad also highlights how participants can relate to advertising on different levels. This participant related to the ad as a father and as a man who has been in relationships and who perhaps has gone on a dirty weekend. There is no mention of disability, the product itself is not consumed and yet the ad is liked, and will be consumed again and again. Furthermore, the existence of disability in the life of the participant and the absence of disability in the ad, did not lead to the participant feeling distant from the ad. This was due to the fact that the participant could relate to the ad on different levels.

A female participant talks about relating to ads because of the broader message that it communicates. Specifically, the ads being referred to are the broadcasters against racism, and as such, a broad social message is being communicated. This participant also likes humorous ads. So, she needs to relate to the ad either from a humorous or social justice point of view, but they do not need to include a disabled person for this connection to occur.

"if I'm not able to see myself in that, I won't necessarily relate to it or if it doesn't have a, a broader understanding that I can, I can relate to, I won't you know, I won't and that doesn't mean that I need to see disabled people in it..." (Yvette)

This suggests that disability is not the only way that a person can or should be defined. The person can be described as a father, mother, man, woman and disability is not necessarily their master status. As such, being disabled will not necessarily determine their consumption practices, patterns or preferences and will not determine their relation to commercial advertising. This is not to say that being disabled will not influence any of these factors but just that it is not the sole determinant and many facets of the person impinge upon both the consumption and advertising experience.

5.1.1 Summary

In terms of exclusion, although participants had not connected disability and commercial advertising prior to taking part in the research, they were able to identify this absence and also suggest why such exclusion had occurred. The responsibility for this exclusion was attributed to the advertisers and participants felt this was a conscious decision. Participants felt that advertisers did not consider disabled people to be consumers, however, this attitude did not prevent participants from being consumers of both products and images. This could be evidence of advertising's ideological nature. That is, in naturalizing and legitimising the consumption experience (Elliott and Ritson, 1997) participants do not question the message underscoring the ad.

5.2 ROLE OF ADVERTISING

The researcher was also concerned with ascertaining what role advertising plays in the lives of disabled people. In their study of mobility-disabled consumers, Burnett and Paul (1996) found that their respondents viewed advertising negatively. However, participants in the present study used advertising in a number of different ways and these related to the categorisation of marketing and non-marketing uses of advertising by O'Donohoe (1993). In the present study participants saw advertising having an informational role and also saw it as stimulating consumption. Both are marketing uses.

5.2.1 Advertising as Informational & Stimulating Consumption

Advertising was seen by some participants to be informational. That is, advertising makes the audience aware of availability of products and services and the introduction of new products. As one female participant explains,

"..an awful lot of ads make you aware of what's going on..." (Erica)

In addition to providing information on products and services, ads were also seen to stimulate consumption. Thus, ads can act as a prompt for purchasing. One female participant highlights how seeing a person with certain make-up or clothes would be enough for her to consider buying the make-up and clothes.

"…you see a person with certain make up or clothes or whatever, you're like, oh yeah I might buy that…" (Anna)

Another female participant indicates that advertising had more effect on her when she was younger. She talks about a phase she went through where she claims to have watched more advertising and explains how this enticed her to go out and purchase a range of *Boots* products. She suggests that advertising wouldn't influence her as much nowadays, implying that advertising's influence decreases with age.

"In a way it works with me, I kind of you know whiter teeth or longer hair, I think it works, as much as the impact, when I was younger I would've probably watched a lot of it, I remember at one stage when they were the Boots stuff, I was out buying all the Boots stuff, I was out buying all the Boots curling stuff for my hair and stuff like that, do you know that sort of way, but now I wouldn't pay particular attention to it, only if it was controversial, or only if I was annoyed with it or whatever, you know, that would be it, but I wouldn't generally pay too much attention to advertising." (Yvette)

Some non-marketing uses were also evident, such as, entertainment (ads were described as sometimes being better than the programmes), ads can play an aspiring role, and also for stimulating social interactions between family and friends.

5.2.2 Advertising as Entertainment

Ads were described by some participants as being better than the programmes themselves. Being described as entertainment also suggests that the ads are enjoyed by participants. So, unlike Burnett & Paul (1996) advertising is not viewed as wholly negative by these participants.

"..some ads are better than the programmes you watch.." (Niall)

"..sometimes advertising is better than the programmes.." (Elaine)

"…I think ads to me are an entertainment in between TV programmes…" (Yvette)

5.2.3 Advertising as Aspiring

Burnett and Paul (1996: 57) also state that, "As most advertising is targeted at the non-disabled, we can understand why the mobility-disabled may resent advertising and consequently find it useless". Even though advertising is dominated by images of non-disabled people, participants did not tend to talk in terms of them versus us, or non-disabled versus disabled people when referring to commercial advertising images. Participants talked about advertising images as idealized. They commented on the absence of ordinary Joe Soap or average people in advertising. So, there was a recognition of the existence of a normal and idealized body but these were not discussed in terms of an opposition to a disabled or impaired body. The fact that advertising is seen to be dominated by ideal types with a lack of 'real' people present may suggest that it is exclusionary and isolating for many different people and may not be an issue directly related to disability. Furthermore, there is no distinction made between men and women, in that, images of men and women are both deemed to be idealized. Even though, it is generally agreed that there is more emphasis on the female form in advertising, this did not emerge in the discussions. Participants talked about both female and male images being idealized.

"…they always, you know have real beautiful women to try and sell things, always or good looking men always, you never see like your average person just stuck in an ad, never, ever, ever…" (Anna)

However, although both men and women are shown in an idealized way, participants, note how the emphasis on the body is different.

"I suppose anything to do with women, beautiful, slim, tanned you know, women, you know, that's the picture of women, men, tough, and you know looking sexy and rugged" (Elaine)

Other participants highlight the focus on youth in advertising.

"…I suppose advertising, don't see a lot, you know, advertising probably, they want to go for what the best image, the kind of eh, the stereotypical you know, whatever, male, twenty-something or female, you know….the perfect body, the perfect everything. So, they're not, I don't think, maybe, they don't see disability as fitting into what they want a brand image to be, probably…" (Niall)

"Its either epitomising the norm or subverting it. The body pertaining to the old or disabled is hardly shown and shows it's the case" (Stephen)

Some participants highlighted the negativity implicit within the promotion of such ideal bodies, that is, critical interpretations of advertising. This was an issue raised in research conducted by Hirschman and Thompson (1997). They highlighted the negativity that such images can have in terms of pressure to look a certain way. The focus on weight loss and problems some people may have with anorexia were attributed to these images. These participants tended to distance themselves from these advertising images but felt that it was not only disabled people who would feel like this but non-disabled people as well. So, the distance felt was based on the fact that these are idealized images and that the majority of people would not be able to relate to these; it was not a case of these are images of non-disabled people and I feel distance because I am disabled.

"….these advertising images of beautiful people, fit people you know that goes against, the majority of the world are not like that, so I think advertising is a small group of images which really do not reflect the actual real life day-to-day experiences of people…so I think that people would be more inclined to maybe engage in it if they actually saw themselves in the ads, but I don't think any individual never mind disabled or non-disabled can actually see themselves in advertising, because its normally people who are beautiful, or who are considered beautiful, you know…." (Yvette)

"…like I'd see advertising and you'd see, you know, these models and stuff, so I'd say it like, probably, like a lot of people, they might feel distant from those images anyway, you know, ……so maybe it would be like that for a lot of people, who would look at advertising and maybe not relate to that, because you know they do, they use the quick, snappy image of you know, something that looks good with their brand…"
(Niall)

One female participant describes the focus on the ideal body as oppressive. She highlights body enhancements but also contrasts this with growing obesity and asks where's the normality. So, the focus is still on the absence of the 'normal' body as opposed to the disabled or impaired body.

"I think its very oppressive actually, you know, that if we aspire to that, I think its becoming a very curious world, in that, you know the body enhancements people go through now to try and its becoming very out there, very weird and mechanical and reconfigured, do you know what I mean, some sort of some like Barbie doll image or something or action man image, that don't relate to real people in their lives and then we have that on the one hand and on the other hand we have growing obesity, so where's the middle man, where's the normality in there" (Elaine)

However, there was not a wholesale rejection of these images. In fact, for some participants these advertising images could be deemed to play a motivational role (Hirschman and Thompson, 1997). Advertising was seen by some participants to encourage them to lose weight and maintain their physique by going to the gym. This was not seen in a negative light, but participants were to some degree aspiring to the images that they saw in advertising.

"..does it make me feel good watching that? It does and it doesn't cause their figures, I'll probably say, oh yeah I'd love to lose weight you know, just looking at them…."
(Erica)

Traditionally, women were subjected to the male gaze, their bodies brought under scrutiny and objectified. With the increased focus on the male body in advertising, men are now also subjected to a gaze and this is a male gaze or as Patterson and Elliott (2002) describe it, an inverted gaze. This male participant recognizes the pressure to monitor and control his body in light of this gaze. He explains that he has to go to the gym, in order to maintain his physique, which is a situation, which did not exist ten to fifteen years ago. Interestingly, this participant believes the gaze is heightened in the case of gay men as opposed to straight men, thus, feminising the object of the gaze once more.

"...in terms of body, you have women always had the problem of having to compete with images of advertising, but I think men now have, especially gay men, have to compete with good-looking guys. I know myself like, I don't know whether it's a mid-life crisis or anything (laughter), I have to go to the gym, and all that, which probably 10 or 15 years ago wouldn't have happened...." (Robert)

Disabled people are also subjected to the gaze as a result of their impairment and disability. As Hughes (1999: 163) states, "Occularity is a sort of collision of bodies in which the right to define rests with the powerful. The gaze wounds and denigrates, the more so, when it is used interminably as a seal of dominance and a re-iteration of truth". However, participants did not talk about this gaze in terms of advertising. There was no evidence of participants reflecting on their impairment in light of advertising images. Again, it is the absence of a 'normal' or 'average' body that is most noted by participants.

5.2.4 Stimulating Social Interactions

Besides encouraging the audience to reflect on their bodies and take action to maintain and control those bodies, advertising can also play a role in stimulating social interactions between people. There are two aspects that will be discussed in this section;

- Advertising can be consumed with other people;
- Advertising can be a stimulant for interactions between people.

Advertising can be consumed alone or with other people present, for instance with family or friends. However, consumption of advertising imagery does not stop when the ad is over. People talk about advertising in other social settings. Furthermore, it can be a stimulant for social interactions. Ritson and Elliott (1999) highlight how advertising can form the basis of social interactions among peer groups in secondary school. In the present study, advertising was seen to form the basis of social interactions between family members, friends and members of society. The following comment suggests that discussion between the siblings occurs involving advertising, which leads to the sister realizing that the participant doesn't understand the ads and is amused by this.

"..cause my sister keeps laughing at me cause I misunderstand ads the whole time.." (Yvette)

"..my sister always laughs at me…" (Yvette)

Also, the participant stresses that this occurs the whole time. So, she misunderstands ads a lot of the time but also, her sister is aware of this a lot of the time. As such, this social interaction around advertising is on-going and this is re-enforced by the fact that she states twice how her sister always laughs at her misunderstanding the ads.

One participant describes a situation where he was in the pub and a conversation about a Bennetton ad started between him and his friends. The ad was well liked by the participant and was seen as quite erotic. He goes on to describe how this ad has opened up Bennetton as a possibility to buy clothes; again highlighting the marketing use of advertising of consumption stimulation.

Another participant highlights how advertising could be a stimulant for interactions between non-disabled and disabled people. That is, including disabled people in commercial advertising is seen as one way to get people talking. Hardin et al (2001) suggest that the absence of disabled people from mainstream advertising gives the impression that they are not a part of mainstream society. Thus, including disabled people may perform the opposite role and as this participant suggests, may act as a stimulant for social interactions.

"..cause people talk about ads, you know, did you see this ad, and you know, that interaction between people, it gets people talking, it gets people thinking, so advertising definitely has a role to play I think...." (Niall)

This participant suggests that advertising could act as a stimulant between non-disabled and disabled people and therefore, has a potentially powerful role to play in the lives of disabled people.

5.2.5 Role of Charity Ads

In general, charity ads were viewed negatively. They were described as patronizing, as creating fear around disability, as focusing on raising funds and all the time failing to promote disabled people in a positive light. It has been well documented that charity advertising focuses on invoking pity and fear in its audience (Haller and Ralph, 2001; Hevey, 1992; Morrison, 2002) with the main aim to increase donations for the charity. These characteristics did not go unnoticed by participants and as such the negative critique was not surprising.

"...I sort of tend to shy away from charity advertising anyway because its so patronizing and so shite and generally it is very patronizing and it invokes fear in the viewer that 'Oh my God', give money to this cause or you'll end up like that, you know and so, and its sort of whole murky area really..." (Elaine)

"yeah, advertising in Ireland around disability is mainly driven by charities so you'll see, Rehab Care running their teddy bears thing, or their angel thing or the CRC running their love heart thing, isn't it? It's all driven by charity, so and its all driven by fluffy pink, bloody, hearts and teddy bears which just further, it just completely removes dignity from disabled people, removes disabled people from thinking that we're adults, it literally makes it look childlike...." (Yvette)

The critique of charity advertising was quite strong. This is because the images are wholly negative and also that they are so abundant. In contrast to commercial advertising, charity advertising is a medium in which disabled people are said to be 'hyperpresent' (Hevey, 1992). Disabled people are never portrayed as attractive or sexy and this is the case in all mediums – TV, film, charity ads. Commercial advertising is quite the opposite and is described by one female participant.

"..they always seem to be like, not victimising but like kind of focusing on, there's always images of people like not looking good in situations, they never make them up or make them look well, they're always like just, like they would be like on any other day, in normal advertising people are always done up, but they're always seem to be like focusing or victimising the people in the photo's, saying look at this, and you could do this and this poor person, so they could be a bit more positive like" (Anna).

In commercial advertising people shown are beautiful, sexy and attractive. So, the image that dominates charity advertising is not one that people would want to aspire to but rather one that people would like to distance themselves from. These findings endorse Hevey's (1992) distinction that commercial advertising sells desire and encourages the audience to buy the brand whereas charity advertising sells fear and encourages the audience to buy distance from the brand. In terms of the charity image, one participant spoke of other images such as charity collection and charity shop images.

This participant rejected the charity image completely in terms of ads, collections and shops and believed that the only way images of disabled people could improve was by getting rid of the charity image completely. Though, charity shops and charity collections are not advertising images, this participant considers them a very potent image that promotes a certain way of thinking about disabled people.

"At my local shopping centre twice a year they have disabled people collecting money and sometimes that's the only public contact between disabled people and the general public, the general public put their money in a box, so eh, that's a really strong image, and its an image that's quite normal, like non-disabled people would take as granted, as normal, a lot of disabled people would take as normal..." (Robert)

This comment suggests that the interaction around charity collections could be the only contact that non-disabled people have with disabled people; thus, it could be the only knowledge they have regarding disability. It is an image of disabled people as dependent and as receivers of charity. The participant suggests that this is quite a normal image for non-disabled people and interestingly, it is quite a normal image for many disabled people also. As such, it is an image that is rarely questioned. There exists a normalization of charity in Irish society, perhaps connected to the historical role of the Catholic Church, and also a normalization of charity for disabled people in particular. It is something implicit within Irish society and as such not questioned by many people. Charity shops were also critiqued for feeding into this idea of disabled people as not having any power and not having any money.

"Then you have the charity shops as well, Enable Ireland and all that. In the end, myself as a consumer, as somebody in a consumer society, who has two kids, and who probably seen as someone who's kind of made it but has his own, I have to compete with those charity shops, those images, so you don't, you're not normal, it's not normal, its not normal for disabled people to have power, to have money, and that is reflected when we go to campaign and meetings you know…" (Robert)

It could be suggested that if disabled people are continually promoted as and viewed as recipients of charity, then it goes some way to explaining why disabled people are not viewed as consumers. To be a receiver of charity and a consumer at the same time would seem to be a contradiction. Charity emphasizes getting something for nothing because the person is unable to purchase or acquire things themselves. Consumerism encourages acquisition to achieve a certain look or lifestyle. Disabled people are deemed to exist outside the realm of commercial consumption and are located solely within the remit of charity.

In addition to the charity image, one participant commented on ads for impairment-related products. This is another advertising genre that tends to be dominated by a medical discourse. The focus is on functional pieces of equipment, aids to make the disabled person function more 'normally'. A female participant referred specifically to ads for Quicksilver wheelchairs. She describes the ads as using calendar-type girls in shorts sitting in the wheelchair and that she felt this humanized the whole thing rather than focusing on a functional piece of equipment. It suggests that typically ads of this nature focus on the equipment only, with disabled people absent or perhaps present in a secondary role. The fact that people were used in the ads was seen to humanize the ad.

The girls were described as calendar-type girls suggesting that they were attractive models. When asked to describe her initial reaction to the ads she said;

"..well of course from a feminist point of view, I was thinking typical, they always have bloody women, you know, there wasn't a good looking young man in a pair of shorts in a chair, it was women, but fair enough there could've been I just didn't see that brochure, but no I thought it was great...." (Yvette)

So, in one way its good that attractive models were used in ads because disabled people are not usually portrayed as attractive but in another way it just feeds into the whole focus on the female body to promote goods. So, from a disability point of view it is seen as a positive step but from a feminist point of view it is not.

5.2.6 Summary

In sum, advertising is seen to play a number of different roles in the lives of disabled people. Advertising played an informational role, aspiring role, entertaining role, stimulated consumption and also stimulated social interactions for these participants. Some participants critiqued the focus on the ideal body and suggested that everybody feels distant to these images, not just disabled people. In fact, commercial advertising plays a similar role in the lives of these participants as it does in the lives of non-disabled people. Disability or impairment does not seem to result in advertising being experienced or consumed in a wholly different way. However, the role of charity advertising is quite the opposite. Charity advertising was seen by participants to play a negative role in their lives. It portrays disabled people as pitiable and pathetic and this potentially impacts on interactions between disabled and non-disabled people. It is unlikely that non-disabled people experience charity advertising in the same way and this could be a point for future research.

5.3 DEFINING DISABILITY

Participants were also asked what disability meant to them or how they would define disability. Initially, participants were divided into the categories of political and non-political. This was based on a number of factors:

- Identification with the social model;

- Commitment to make change or challenge barriers;
- Positive attitude to disability;
- Language Used.

Those considered 'political' identified with the social model, celebrated their difference, were committed to social change and used language to reflect this. It became apparent that these participants all shared another characteristic and that is, that they were older than those participants considered non-political. Also, they were contacted through a disability organisation and as such were directly involved in disability issues in some capacity other than personal. The term 'political' was chosen due to the distinction made within feminism between the political and the personal. So, people either dealt with issues in a personal way, this is my problem and I'll deal with it as best I know how or in a political way, that is, it is seen as a wider issue that affects many people and as such should be dealt with as a wider issue. It's an individualizing versus a collectivising position; with those seeing it as a collective problem/issue fighting for change and those in the 'personal' box focusing on getting on with their own lives.

5.3.1 Models of Disability

The first factor that influenced whether participants were considered political or not, was how they defined disability. In defining what disability meant to them, most participants would be classed within the social model. As Oliver (1992: 101) explains, "Disability cannot be abstracted from the social world which permeates it; it does not exist outside the social structures to which it is located and independent of the meanings given to it. In other words disability is socially produced". Disability is described by the participants in this study in terms of barriers and restrictions of activity. That is, barriers to what people can do and barriers in people's minds in terms of negative attitudes and perceptions regarding disability. Restrictions of activity refer specifically to physical barriers within society and manifest themselves in the form of access issues for participants. This supports Kitchin's (1998) contention that space is socially constructed to keep disabled people 'in their place' and 'out of place'. This discussion of barriers and restrictions that dominate participants' discourse on what disability means to them is very much a social model description of disability. That is, society is seen to disable these participants and it is not something implicit within them as individuals.

"...in terms of my understanding of disability is, I have an impairment but the environment disables me from you know being able to access buildings, from attitudes, from lack of legislation, from all of those huge issues, and that you know it's more about what other people do unto me than myself.." (Yvette)

"..its more like the barriers that society kind of puts up, as opposed to, like any kind of physical, or kind of, you know, impairment there is,[...] not just physical barriers but barriers that people have in their heads about disability.." (Niall)

"..I think mine is an access issue, the way I see it is you take me as I am or you don't take me at all, that's basically the way I am...yeah, well, its really the access, I'm only in a wheelchair, four wheels under me...I'm grand but I don't know, some people won't even look at you if you're in a wheelchair, they're afraid to say hello to you, they'll talk to the person with you, you know, I've had that for years, but now no, take me as I am or don't take me at all.." (Erica).

"well disability for me is the social barriers that, attitudes like. [....] Physical access issues are still really important, like transport or ramps but they're easy, they're easy to change, compared to attitudes. Attitudes are cultural, they're culturally determined and you can economically determine that disabled people need more money but there's a cultural argument. So any education of non-disabled people has to happen at a cultural level" (Robert)

Another male participant, Stephen, highlights both attitudes and environmental barriers as important issues in his life. He describes how people didn't expect him to go to college and also how a recent move to new accommodation presented some problems;

"I moved out recently. I am encountering other problems that steps. The shower and doorways are too small. Dublin Corporation built it without consulting me. [...] Nevertheless, they came and rebuilt the shower. I had to wait for six months to move in" (Stephen)

One male participant in describing what disability means to him seems to fall within the medical model. Disability within this view is individualized, reduced to the bio-medical and as Taylor (1999: 375) explains, "The medical model is underpinned by the personal tragedy theory of disability, which suggests disability is some terrible chance event that occurs at random to unfortunate individuals". This participants' description is quite individualized and is framed by a medical discourse. He explains, that

"..it's just something that whatever, like I was born with and you have to deal with, but there should be more acceptance, there should be a bit more, there is help like, you can get disability allowance and stuff like that but hopefully the way it will go that people will accept people with disabilities, its very hard like though for kids and stuff unless, if their parents don't as well, they have to learn from a very young age, it just has to be in the social conscious more I suppose…" (Noel)

Disability is described as something he is born with and something he has to deal with. The focus is on the individual and not society. This could be explained by the nature of his impairment and also the lack of interaction with other disabled people. The impairment is a subtle type but one that will get progressively worse. It is also a rare condition and as such he has never met anyone with the same impairment. There is no representing organization in Ireland as there are so few people with the condition and the only possible contact would be through website with UK or US organizations. His experience seems to have been a very personalized one to date and not very political. However, the participant does go on to say that there needs to be more acceptance of disability within society. As such, there is a recognition that responsibility does not lie with him entirely but that social acceptance is required.

Another female participant failed to define disability at all.

"em……..I wouldn't have a clue……I wouldn't have a clue" (Anna)

Initially, I found this quite strange that the participant couldn't define disability. She did mention throughout her interview that she had never encountered negative attitudes and that access was not really an issue for her. So, perhaps, her experience thus far has been based on impairment effects and not disabling effects. As such, participants can be classed within the social or medical model, with one female participant failing to define disability at all. It is interesting to note that the participant who could not define disability and the participant who put forward a medicalized definition are the youngest participants in the study. This is consistent with the findings on page 122, where the link between age and political orientation is highlighted.

5.3.1.1 Psycho-Emotional Dimensions of Disability

Besides access issues and negative attitudes (barriers to what you can do), there was evidence of the existence of the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability (barriers to what you can be) in the lives of some participants. Participants described situations where they were made to feel self-conscious, embarrassed, stupid and lazy. These feelings were stimulated by situations where participants were restricted access onto buses, and singled out for pity and criticism due to their impairment. Thomas (1999) highlights the existence of social barriers that create 'restrictions' within disabled people. These include feeling 'hurt', of lesser value, feeling stressed and unattractive to name but a few. This is further supported by Reeve (2002) who describes these forms of emotional reactions to social and physical exclusion and pinpoints internalised oppression as an important factor in this. This internalised oppression is a kind of self-blame that disabled people have and is evidenced among some participants.

One participant describes a situation where the ramp on the bus that he usually takes to work wasn't working and how the bus driver just drove off and left him there.

"...I get the eleven and its an accessible bus, it has a ramp that folds out, but em, the particular ramp didn't work, and like you know, in the rain, people behind you and the bus driver just goes, no it doesn't work, and like you know, just drives off and then you just, you know, feel so stupid, like, you know, ..." (Niall)

This highlights a situation of both a disabling environment (through inaccessible transport) and disabling attitudes (the bus driver did not care about the fact that the ramp wasn't working and was preventing the participant from boarding the bus and did nothing to try and rectify the situation). This made the participant feel 'stupid'. This suggests a kind of internalised oppression. The participant seems to blame himself or maybe feels that people perceive him as being at fault; as opposed to the ramp not working. He describes how it was raining and there were people behind him; so he was obviously aware or feeling conscious of what they were thinking and also suggests a feeling of helplessness – being stuck in the rain and can't do anything about it.

Transport problems were also described by a female participant.

"yeah, em, there the other day, there was a pram waiting with me to go on the bus and she got on the bus first and she wouldn't close her, close the pram up, now she was a foreigner, she probably didn't understand but the driver start shouting at her, telling her to close up and she wouldn't close it and I was mortified at the end, I just wanted, said to him you can go, you know, I'll get the next one but he still wouldn't, he said I had to get on that bus, [....] I was still embarrassed, I just couldn't wait to get off the bus, you know, cause it's a big fuss over nothing, you know..." (Erica)

The ramp was working this time but a woman with a pram was using the space assigned for wheelchair users. Also, the driver in this situation was determined to get the woman to fold down the pram and get the participant on the bus. However, all this attention made the participant feel uncomfortable and embarrassed. The participant was willing to wait on the next bus but the driver insisted that she get on the bus. The participant and not the woman with the pram felt embarrassed and ashamed. Again, it was being brought into the spotlight, being set out as different, as a 'problem' to be dealt with that seems to structure this story. Furthermore, it must be noted that although the bus driver seemed to have a more 'positive' attitude to the situation and insisted that the disabled person get on that bus, it also highlights how the disabled participant's voice was not listened to and her feelings were ignored.

Another female participant describes how people's attitudes can make you feel bad about yourself. She mentions being blessed, being patted on the shoulder, being pitied by people and how this serves to dis-empower her.

"...I've had people bless me and you know pat me on the shoulder and almost getting tears, so people's attitudes that you're sort of like such a sick and needy creature aren't very empowering, and make you very Other in the world, rather than just being part of life, you know it makes you significantly Other and that makes you feel shit" (Elaine)

So, this participant feels separate from society due to people's attitudes. As she says, she feels 'Other', different and distant from those around her and this makes her feel bad about herself. Other people's actions and attitudes have strong impact on how disabled people feel about themselves. A male participant describes his schooling experience and how a lack of tolerance and understanding by teachers led him to be considered lazy.

"in school, you will be telling them like that there's little things like you can't write fast, so teachers wouldn't necessarily think it exists in their own head cause they can't see it, they think it's laziness" (Noel)

Another female participant recognizes the existence of internalised oppression among some disabled people, although, she does not talk about this as an issue for her personally.

"Disabled people sometimes think that responsibility for their disability is their own self, and it's their problem, it's their fault, so you need to transfer that to society and they need to realize that it's not them its society's inadequate responses and because of that they are disabled and then when that happens you've raise consciousness and from that you can raise, people begin to get a sense of power because they get angry at what is not being provided to them in society" (Yvette)

5.3.2 Commitment to Make Change or Challenge Barriers

The second factor that influenced whether participants were considered political or non-political was their commitment to make change or challenge barriers in society. This was not directly related to acceptance of the social model. Some participants described their experience of disability in social model terms but did not see themselves as playing a role in bringing about the removal of disabling barriers. As such, there was a recognition that these barriers are socially constructed but responsibility for their deconstruction was with other people.

One female participant, although aware of other disabled people marching and protesting, said she would not be inclined to do this herself.

"..I know disabled people that have marched and all, you know, giving their opinions and that, now personally I wouldn't do it, I'd be mortified doing it.." (Erica)

This again highlights a form of internalised oppression. This participant would be 'mortified' if she went protesting. So, there exists a feeling of shame or embarrassment at the thoughts of being in the spotlight.

Another female participant, in referring to an advertisement that she didn't like states that, "I wouldn't like it but I'm not gonna really do anything about it" (Anna). This comment suggests a passive stance. The participant does not like the ad and would not like to see the ad on a billboard but she would not do anything to change it.

A male participant considers that maybe he is being selfish by not being involved in challenging the barriers but highlights that he just wants to get by.

"em, I'm kind of, maybe its selfish in a way, but I just kind of do, I like to do what I have to do to get by" (Niall).

What connects these three participants is a desire to get on with their own lives. Although, two of these participants define their experience within the remit of the social model, their focus is on getting on with their own lives rather than joining together with other disabled people to challenge these barriers. Both of these participants discuss how they just want to be treated normal, to be treated like everybody else. This suggests that being identified by others as disabled, as different, leads them to be treated differently to those that are not disabled. It is not that their impairment can be disguised or hidden because they have quite visible, physical impairments but that they should not be identified as different because of the impairment. This is not unusual as Watson (2002) found in his research. The majority of people in his study did not see themselves as different and stressed how they just wanted to be treated like everybody else. "This idea of normality, of leading a normal life, of just getting on with things was present in many of the participants responses" (Watson, 2002: 516). He also explains that, "It is not that these informants are rejecting the social model of disability in favour of the medical model, they are merely downplaying the significance of their impairments as they seek to access a mainstream identity" (p525).

Most participants identified society, the environment and attitudes as disabling, though not all participants felt that they had a role in bringing about change and challenging the barriers that exist. Some participants were proactive in their attitude and action taken to initiate change. They saw themselves and other disabled people playing a pivotal role in removing barriers in its various forms. For instance, one male participant talks about how he plans to protest outside a play because of the way disability is used and portrayed in it.

"…its supposed to come back and if it does come back we're going to protest outside it…." (Robert)

Whereas a female participant talks about the focus on rights and the need for a collective identity. These participants highlighted their role in bringing about change and challenging barriers. Campaigning and protesting were two ways that their challenges manifested themselves.

5.3.3 Attitude to Disability

A third way in which participants could be defined was their attitude to their impairment and disability. No participant rejected their impairment. In fact, it would be difficult to do so as all participants have visible, physical non-intellectual impairments. However, the degree of visibility varies.

In terms of disability, some participants saw disability as something to be celebrated; they wanted to celebrate the difference. This is in line with Morris (1991) contention that disabled people should celebrate their difference.

"..we return the idea that we are disabled, we are different and that should be tolerated, and celebrated and it should be coming from the social model.." (Robert)

So it was a case of normalizing the difference, not trying to eliminate it. Other participants saw it as something so implicit within their lives that it should not be the main focus for people. For example, one female participant states "I'm only in a wheelchair, four wheels under me..". The participant sees the only difference between herself and other non-disabled people as the fact that she needs a wheelchair to get around. However, this is not something that should be highlighted as an issue. So, she should not be set out as different or Other. One group highlights or celebrates the difference whereas another group negates or makes irrelevant the difference.

5.3.4 Language Used

The language used by participants can be quite informative and indicative of where they are coming from in their lives, their political affiliation with regards the disabled people's movement in Ireland and their attitudes towards other disabled people.

5.3.4.1 People with Disabilities versus Disabled People

The term people with disabilities was used by some participants whereas the term disabled people is used by others The use of one term over the other is indicative of the political leanings of the participants. The term people with disabilities is deemed to be void of any political weighting. However, it is the term of choice for the majority of disability organizations in Ireland and as such dominates discussion around disability in this country. This is in contrast to the UK where the term disabled people is used widely. This is noted by one female participant.

"Because we would use the term disabled people whereas most people would use the term people with disabilities.....there's no political identity with it at all, and what we're trying to do is raise political identity, raise, and disabled people are like oh, we don't want to have a political identity and I'm like well I think we need one, we need a political and we need a cultural identity and we don't have it in Ireland and we need to develop it and that's what our job is to do" (Yvette).

This participant stresses the lack of political identity with the term people with disabilities and would like to see more Irish people use the term disabled people and focus on developing a political identity.

5.3.4.2 We versus I

Some participants talk in terms of 'we' instead of 'I'. This is most common amongst the participants who are aligned to a disability organisation or who were contacted through a disability organisation. It could be linked to the work they do where the focus is on all disabled people as opposed to just their needs. It may also indicate the existence of a collective disabled identity as opposed to simply an individualized disabled identity. That is, those participants that talk in terms of 'we' identify with disabled people as a group and look at the collective experience of oppression when asked about their individualized experience of oppression.

5.3.4.3 Them versus Us

Some participants talk in terms of 'them' versus 'us' where they differentiate between themselves and other disabled people. This may be indicative of the existence of a hierarchy of disability. That is, some people are considered more 'disabled' than others and create a kind of imbalance within the movement. For example, people with learning disabilities or mental health issues tend to exist at the lower end of the spectrum of disability.

5.3.4.4 Social versus Medical Model

When asked to explain what disability means to them some participants actually used the terms social and medical model. This shows an awareness of the literature and debate within disability studies regarding these models. However, just because the terms were not used by all participants does not mean that the definitions given by these participants carry any less weight or value. The definitions may not have been explicitly described as medical or social but they could be classed within these categories.

5.3.5 Discussion

The language used to describe and define disability and the way in which disability is experienced on a day-to-day basis is different for each participant, though some commonalities exist. Based on these commonalities, participants are split into two groups – political and non-political (see Table 5.1). As such, the way in which disability is experienced and defined by the participants in this study highlights to some extent that disabled people are not an homogenous group.

Table 5.1 Participant Political Orientation

Pseudonym	Age	Political Orientation
Anna	20	Non-political
Yvette	31	Political
Elaine	42	Political
Erica	32	Non-political
Robert	40	Political
Noel	23	Non-political
Stephen	29	Political
Niall	23	Non-political

It also suggests that a common disabled identity does not exist. As Reeve (2002: 503-4) asserts, "The concept of a single disabled identity is appealing – disabled people linked by a shared experience of social exclusion – and as in other identity politics, it has political use as a rallying call to effect social change. However, not all disabled people experience the same degrees of disabling barriers and discrimination…". Of the seven different types of disability orientations identified by Darling (2003), as discussed on pages 14-15, participants in the present study could be classed within two of these. Thus, aside from being categorised as political or non-political, Darling's (2003) terminology of normalisation and affirmation could be used to describe the participants. The characteristics of those falling within the category of normalisation and affirmation are as follows;

Normalisation: "Individuals who adopt this orientation are those who accept the norms of the larger society with regard to appearance and/or ability, and who manage to achieve lifestyles that are similar to those individuals of their social status who do not have disabilities" (p885)

Affirmation: "Like crusaders, affirmers identify with the disability subculture in order to achieve their goals. However, unlike crusaders, their identification is not temporary. The goal for these individuals is not normalisation. Although they may seek access to the right to participate fully in society, they continue to view their disability as their primary identity and view their disability in positive terms" (p885).

Thus, those deemed non-political could alternatively be categorised within the normalisation category, whereas, those thought to be political could also be defined as affirmers (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Participant Disability Orientations

Pseudonym	Age	Political Orientation	Disability Orientation
Anna	20	Non-political	Normalisation
Yvette	31	Political	Affirmation
Elaine	42	Political	Affirmation
Erica	32	Non-political	Normalisation
Robert	40	Political	Affirmation
Noel	23	Non-political	Normalisation
Stephen	29	Political	Affirmation
Niall	23	Non-political	Normalisation

It is interesting to note that the group does not divide based on gender. In fact, age seems to be a better indicator of those who would be political and those who would be non-political. Though, essentially it is based on all of the issues discussed above (social model, commitment to change, attitude to disability and language used), a theme that emerged in the research was the difference between the older and younger generation both disabled and non-disabled. Among disabled people there is evidence that younger people in Ireland are not political enough. This is detailed above with younger participants falling within the category of normalisation, which means that they tend to identify and strive towards the norms and goals of the majority culture. The older participants are more political and can also be described as affirmers. They see their disability in positive terms and fight for equality for disabled people. This split between the older and younger disabled people was noted by one male participant who stated that,

"..they're not political enough" (Robert) in referring to younger disabled people in Ireland.

Further to this, older non-disabled people were seen by some participants to be less tolerant of disability. Though not directly related to the experience of advertising it raises some interesting issues. This commentary was based on personal experience and interactions with older people, be it, teachers in school who were old or just older members of society in general.

"..they see you in a wheelchair and they think, ah she can't talk or whatever, I've got it before so, ...I'd say more like the older generation that would be like that now with you, other than that I do be grand..." (Erica)

"..I think people, in our generation now are more open minded about things..." (Niall)

"...so the older generation like, that's what I found with some teachers like to sweep it under the carpet and kind of ignore it you know, at least other kids even if they did say something nasty or something, but still, they have it more in their conscious these days I think" (Noel)

This relationship between tolerance and disability, or perhaps, understanding and disability, could be linked to the Catholic Church and its role in society.

"I think because it has been such a slow movement to disability rights here, its still not resolved yet, and I suppose the Catholic Church has a lot to do with it and you know, keep people I don't know in receipt of charity and there but for the grace of God go I and God love them and all that sort of shite" (Elaine)

Though diminishing at present the Catholic Church had a very powerful and influential role in Irish society. It could be suggested that the older generation are still greatly influenced by the Catholic Church in their lives whereas younger people today are less likely to be affected by its doctrine. This relationship between the Catholic Church and Irish people is very important in terms of disability. The Catholic Church places a huge emphasis on charity, whereas the role of charity in the lives of disabled people can mean no rights, pity, emphasis on care and cure and generally can be very oppressive. This can be linked to the nature of charity advertising, charity collections and charity shops, with the same ideology underpinning them all.

5.3.6 Summary

In reviewing their experience of disability, participants were split into two groups – political and non-political. This distinction was based on their acceptance of the social model, their commitment to challenge barriers, their attitude to disability and the language they used. It was found that the group did not split on gender but based on age with younger participants less political than older participants in the study. The fact that younger disabled people in Ireland are not political enough was noted by one participant. Further to this, participants could be classed within Darling's (2003) categorisation as either striving towards normalisation (non-political) or affirmation (political). It suggests that the disabled experience is not a homogenous one and should not be treated as such.

5.4 INTERACTION OF DISABILITY AND ADVERTISING

An important element of this study was to explore whether participant's experience of disability interacted with their experience of advertising. Some participants described how advertising made them feel and think differently about themselves. In the case of mainstream advertising this was not specifically related to disability. Participants described feeling either distant from advertising images because the images were idealized. This distance was thought to be the case for non-disabled people as well. Or, participants were motivated by these images, for instance, to lose weight or attend a gym. It was very difficult for participants to articulate if and how advertising impinged on their experience of disability as it was not something that they had thought about before. One participant did stress that advertising played a role in his experience of disability in a number of ways.

"In almost every aspect – socially, economically and culturally" (Stephen)

The manner in which this manifests itself on a daily basis was not detailed by the participant. However, participants were able to suggest reasons why this exclusion had occurred. It was shown earlier how advertising interacts with their experiences as men, women, fathers, but mainstream advertising was not seen to specifically 'disable' these participants. Participants were able to relate to ads on different levels and use advertising as an informational, aspirational and entertaining resource.

In terms of charity advertising there was a different story altogether. As described earlier, this advertising format was subject to much greater criticism than commercial advertising. The images were seen as negative and the knowledge they communicated regarding disability was seen as dis-empowering. Charity ads and ads for impairment-related products were seen to impact on how participants felt and thought about themselves. This is related to what Thomas (1999) terms the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability. It is in this respect that the interaction between disability and advertising is seen most clearly.

In terms of how this advertising made participants feel, one participant described it as driving her mad because it was so patronizing.

"..I suppose in general, the way advertising is done around disability drives me mad cause its done from such a patronizing way or from such a medical way and such a responsibility being on the disabled person you know.." (Yvette)

Another spoke about how she felt 'shitty' after looking at an ad for MS and how they make her feel 'Other' and separate from society. She highlights the link between invoking fear and eliciting donations and stressed how this is very patronizing.

"..generally its very patronizing and it invokes fear in the viewer that 'oh my God', give money to this cause or you'll end up like that, you know and so, and its sort of whole murky area really" (Elaine)

Thus, advertising is seen here to impact on how participants feel and think about themselves. They feel patronized, mad, separate from society and 'shitty'. The fact that charity advertising can have such a strong impact on participant's feelings and sense of self should not be ignored or underestimated. Such reactions can be classed within Thomas (1999) psycho-emotional dimensions of disability and can have a profound effect on how disabled people think and feel about themselves. These feelings are potentially internal restrictions on what disabled people can be and who they think they can be. Thus, charity advertising has the potential to 'disable' these participants by eliciting feelings of isolation, frustration and belittling participants, which in turn can impact on how participants act and interact on a daily basis.

5.4.1 Summary

Presently, it seems that historical and current images of disability in charity ads play a greater disabling role in the lives of participants than the absence of images in commercial advertising. The critique was much more negative and the impact and consequence of these images was seen as much greater than the fact that disabled people were not depicted in mainstream advertising. This finding implies that instead of looking at each in isolation that the cumulative impact needs to be assessed.

5.5 SUGGESTED CHANGES IN ADVERTISING

An important aspect of this study was not only to ascertain what exclusion from advertising means to disabled people and the role that advertising plays in their lives but to gain some understanding of if and how disabled people would like to see advertising change. Earlier in this chapter, participants suggested why advertisers may not want to include disabled people in their advertising. These included a number of different explanations:

- Disabled people are not seen to have economic power due to the high unemployment among disabled people.
- Disabled people are not seen as fitting in with the brand image

Further to this one participant suggests that the charity image is too strong and commercial images cannot compete with it.

"They're all competing with stronger images, charity images of disabled people, so for advertisers to take that risk of promoting a product with disabled people, the general public will see, will harbour baggage of charity images" (Robert)

Thus, advertisers may not include disabled people in their campaigns because the charity image sends out such a strong negative image and this could damage or conflict with the image of the brand.

Hardin (2003) found that disabled people in their study were highly sensitive to positive, integrated images of disability in advertising. This was true of the present study also, with participants commenting that seeing a disabled person in an ad would make that ad stand out for them.

"..then again if I did see something that you know was related to disability, it would really jump out at me" (Niall)

Also, participants were able to identify recent ads that included disabled people (Brennan's Bread and Adidas) and had positive attitudes towards these. Such ads were seen to make disability appear more 'normal'.

"..that's really interesting and good because they're just part of the fabric of society, they're showing they're not different and special and pitiable, they're actually quite dynamic, active characters, so those adverts are good...." (Elaine)

"...I thought that was really interesting..." (Yvette)

"I thought it was funny, not in a bad sense, but I thought it was good the way she felt the bread real soft and then went to feel your man's arse, I thought it was a good ad..." (Erica)

"...I think the Brennan's ad was good, really a lot of people talked about it, and again it wasn't patronizing, it wasn't like, it was just, she was going to the shop, it was very kind of normal, your man treated her like you know a normal customer..." (Niall)

Key factors that are highlighted by participants regarding these ads are that disabled people were shown as dynamic, as part of the fabric of society, as normal. It is also stated that the Brennan's bread ad was not patronizing. By describing the ads in this way, it is implied that disabled people are rarely depicted in this way, that is, as dynamic, normal, a part of society. These characteristics stand out as different and positive aspects of communications regarding disability.

Participants stated that they would like to see more ads like these as they think it would have a favourable impact among non-disabled people. That is, by making disability seem more 'normal' and more accepted within society, then this will impact on interactions between disabled and non-disabled people. A female participant talks about how inclusion of disabled people in media in general, including advertising, can provide an alternative perception of disability and that this will impact on reactions to disabled people by non-disabled people.

"Well I think it will impact on people's reactions to disabled people, they'll just see them as part of life rather than just shaking cans to get money or do you know what I mean, and they'll begin to see them as part of the fabric of society rather than you know a special case" (Elaine)

Although participants had positive reactions to these mainstream ads that included disabled people, one participant commented that she would tend to question why disability was there. This indicates a kind of scepticism around the use of disability imagery.

"..I think sometimes if they do put disability into it you're kind of questioning why its there or the relevance of it, so you know in terms of that ad, I probably wouldn't relate too much to advertising around disability issues" (Yvette)

This could be due to the historical stereotyping of disabled people in different mediums, where the disabled character is consistently used as a metaphor to say something else. Issues that are important to disabled people are rarely dealt with. As such, this participant is perhaps aware of the mis-use of disabled people in other mediums and fears that advertisers may be tempted to do the same. Another participant stated that including disabled people wouldn't necessarily make her prefer that ad over others or make her buy that product.

"..you might remember it over ads but it wouldn't necessarily influence me to like buy or prefer that ad because of it, but it would stick in your head cause there is none, there is no people with disabilities really selling stuff or advertising, yeah.." (Anna)

This is interesting but links to the earlier discussion regarding how disabled people relate to advertising. As was highlighted then, disability is not the only way that a person can relate to advertising. Participants related to advertising on a number of different levels, as a father, man and woman. As such, seeing a disabled person in the ad may not be enough to prompt the participant to consume the product or service.

The use of disabled people in commercial advertising was seen as a positive thing and participants did state that they would like to see more ads like these. However, when asked if and how they would like to see advertising change, some participants were more specific as to the changes they would like to see. One participant described how he would like to see disability portrayed as something other than misery or pity. He describes advertising as dominated by cool images and suggests that disability can be incorporated into that and shown in a different light.

"...you know people think that you know advertising is a bit cool, you know, you could have cool images and then you can incorporate that into disability and show that disability can be, you know, its not, its not, misery, its not something to be pitied.." (Niall)

A female participant highlights a particular issue for her, that of motherhood. She suggests that developing ads that show a disabled mother with her child would go some way to make people aware that disabled people can be carers and mothers and are not just people to be cared for.

"...I mean disabled people have babies and you have ads on that and all the mothers are able-bodied, they should have something like that.....a disabled person with their child or whatever it would, you know, make people aware that we can rear a family, do whatever, do everything...." (Erica)

Another participant is quite specific about the two types of ads that she would like to see.

"...there's two types of ads I'd like to see, one is an ad where it's a mainstream ad where disabled people are featured in the ad and they're featured in the background or in the foreground or whatever, but the issue is not about them being disabled so that it becomes just part of everyday life, em so whether, your mortgage broker ads, you know TSB you see a disabled person going in to get a mortgage or you see a disabled person in McDonalds or whatever you know. And then I think the other ad that's needed within the social justice point of view is an ad made by disabled people, saying you know we are citizen's of this country, we are blah, blah, blah, blah, you know, we want to make choices for ourselves and its about rights not charity, I think that's what its about..." (Yvette)

Each of these suggestions challenges a certain image of disability;

- Disabled people not considered cool,
- Disabled people not seen as carers,
- Disabled people not seen as participants in everyday life.

These messages are predominantly but not solely communicated through charity advertising. As such participants go some way to suggest a certain image of disability that counteracts the messages communicated in charity advertising. The message of the charity ad is rejected and commercial advertising is seen as a powerful way to overcome or challenge that message. Furthermore, the changes that participants suggest are about inclusion of disabled people and they do not look for fundamental changes in other aspects of advertising. One participant however, is particularly sceptical of advertising's power to overcome the image of the charity. He believes that the charity image is too strong and that commercial advertising cannot compete with it. This participant believes that charity advertising and the charity image have to go completely before any changes in commercial advertising can be effective.

"So, I think the general public will have to find it a bit of a challenge to recognise a product like Adidas, and also recognise the image, the charity image it has to compete with like People in Need" (Robert)

Further to this, he stresses that disabled people need more economic independence before advertisers will consider them a viable market to target and consequently include in their campaigns.

5.5.1 Summary

Participants were able to identify recent commercial advertisements that included disabled people and they had positive attitudes towards these. They also stated how they would like to see more ads include disabled people with some participants providing very specific examples of the types of ads they would like to see. These suggestions go some way to challenge the dominant charity image and the various messages regarding disability that it communicates. One male participant was quite sceptical as to the power of commercial advertising to challenge such images and believes that the charity image needs to go completely before any other changes occur. Further to this, he stresses the need for disabled people to have economic independence before advertisers will begin including them in their campaigns.

5.6 CONCLUSION

Disabled people are excluded from commercial advertising imagery but this was not an issue previously questioned by participants. However, participants were able to suggest why this exclusion had occurred – disabled people not seen to have economic power, disabled people not seen to fit in with the brand image, charity image is too strong.

Though excluded from representation, participants showed that they are not excluded from shopping (provided the shops are accessible and there is accessible transport), from partaking in beauty regimes of their choice, of buying fashionable clothes, of dieting, of working out, and of consuming advertising images in and of themselves, which seems to highlight the fact that advertising is a cultural product in and of itself. We live in a consumer society and although many disabled people live on limited funds, we all have some money to buy something, we are all a part of consumer society whether we like it or not, it is difficult, neigh impossible to escape. Being disabled does not necessarily exclude participants from consuming products or advertising images but the extent that this is done depends on their economic situation and also the extent to which they can relate to ads. Their relation to ads may be as a man, woman, mother, father, artist, activist, student. It suggests that being disabled is not the only way that a person can or should be defined.

Also, being disabled is not a uniform experience, and participants were classed within two groups, those striving for normalisation and those striving for affirmation.

In light of the current study it seems that charity ads play a more 'disabling' role in the lives of participants than commercial advertising. Charity ads were seen to impinge on their experience of disability by eliciting feelings of frustration, shame, anger and isolation. It must be noted that these findings are exploratory in nature and can only be inferred to the people involved in the study. The following chapter presents some concluding comments and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER SIX:

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this research was to investigate the absence of disabled people in commercial advertising and it's impact on the disabling experience. Specifically, the researcher was concerned with the role of commercial advertising and whether it's exclusion of disabled people constituted a disabling barrier. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four disabled men and four disabled women and the question was explored under two broad headings: participants' experience of disability and participants' experience of advertising. Chapter five presented the main findings of the study. These were presented under the following headings: exclusion from advertising; role of advertising; defining disability; interaction of advertising and disability; advertising changes. This chapter will review the overall research question in light of these findings and offer conclusions to the research. The contribution to the literature will also be highlighted, along with some limitations of the study. Recommendations for future courses of action, in terms of research, the advertising industry and disability organisations, will be presented.

6.1 'ADVERTISING'S ROLE IN DISBAILITY AS A SOCIAL PROCESS'

The research question wanted to examine advertising's role in disability as a social process. Disability is a social process as it is something that has occurred within society over time (Oliver, 1992). It is not something implicit within the individual but instead a process of exclusion and oppression that has served to isolate and denigrate the experience of people with impairments. This comment highlights the distinction made between the medical and social models of disability. The medical model focuses on the individual and the impairment with responsibility for disability assigned to the individual. It is also known as the personal tragedy model of disability (Taylor, 1999). That is, the individual is blamed for not being able to enter certain buildings, for not being able to do any number of things. This is an oppressive and individualistic view of disability. The social model, on the other hand, refocuses this responsibility on society, namely, the built environment, government policy, attitudes. The built environment, transport and attitudes were most noted by participants as disabling barriers that they face on a recurring basis. As Kitchin (1998: 345) explains, "...space is socially constructed to exclude disabled people in two main ways:

- spaces are currently organized to keep disabled people 'in their place';
- spaces are social texts that convey to disabled people that they are out of place'".

Participants in this study described situations of being kept 'in their place' and 'out of place' by the way society is constructed. Essentially, disabled people are made to feel separate and 'Other' in a society that is constructed for non-disabled people.

Advertising is a social and cultural product, with a power and influence that is wide-ranging. It constructs and communicates meaning through its' ideological discourse. This research focuses on advertising and questions whether advertising is yet another disabling barrier. Specifically, the research was concerned with commercial advertising and its symbolic exclusion of disabled people. It is a medium in which disabled people are virtually invisible. There have been some recent examples of inclusion in Ireland; the *Brennan's bread* ad that included a visually impaired woman and the *Adidas* ad, which included a male wheelchair user. Yet despite these recent examples disabled people would be considered absent from commercial advertising discourse. It was anticipated that advertising's exclusion of disabled people would manifest as a disabling barrier in terms of the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability (Thomas, 1999). That is, does advertising contribute to the disabling experience by increasing feelings of exclusion and alienation at a symbolic level. Through its exclusion of disabled people does advertising serve to further enhance feelings of separation amongst disabled people, increase feelings of differentness and instil feelings of inadequacy in light of the ideal advertising image that the audience is confronted with.

- *Feelings of Separation*

The first point that needs to be stressed is that, participants in the study had not questioned this absence prior to taking part in the research; it was not something they had thought about. This could be due to the absence of disability imagery from commercial advertising and as such was not an issue that had occurred to them. Though, the invisibility of disabled people from commercial advertising was not questioned prior to taking part in the research, the interviews served as a reflective forum for discussion around this issue. Participants, on reflection were able to suggest why advertisers chose to exclude disabled people and also how they would like to see this change. Furthermore, participants were aware of the two advertising examples noted above and had positive attitudes towards these. Thus, the way in which disabled people were portrayed in these ads was accepted. Had these ads used medicalised or stereotypical images of disability, a different reaction would have ensued and the question of commercial representation would more likely have come to the fore. Representation, or lack thereof, was not a priority for participants. As such, it cannot be claimed that commercial advertising increased feelings of separation or isolation among participants. The participants in this study were disabled by the built environment, by inaccessible transport and by negative attitudes, but the lack of representation in commercial advertising had not been previously questioned and as such did not lead to these participants feeling separate from society.

- *Feelings of Differentness*

Participants in the study did not see themselves as different in terms of non-disabled people's experience of advertising or non-disabled people's experience of consumption. Even though advertising is dominated by images of non-disabled people, participants did not tend to talk in terms of "them" versus "us", or "non-disabled" versus "disabled" when referring to commercial advertising images. Participants talked about advertising images as idealized. They commented on the absence of the average or 'normal' body from advertising. So, there was a recognition of a 'normal' or 'idealized' body, but these are not discussed in terms of an opposition to a disabled or impaired body. Participants saw their experience of advertising in much the same way as non-disabled people. Some participants highlighted how they would aspire to these images, perhaps by focusing on losing weight or going to the gym. This supports Hirschman and Thompson's (1997) contention that people employ motivational strategies in their interaction with advertising. Further to this, some participants noted how they felt distance from these advertising images but stressed that the majority of people would feel this distance not just disabled people. So, they do not see themselves as experiencing this distance in isolation but it is suggested that this is a common experience for people when consuming advertising images. In addition, participants identified with advertising on a number of different levels – as a father, a man, a woman and someone who identifies with broad social issues. Disability did not have to appear in these ads for these participants to identify with them and as such the lack of disabled people in advertising did not prevent them from relating to ads or enhance feelings of differentness.

In terms of their consumption experience, participants again do not see themselves as different to the majority of people. They state how they consume the same products as everybody else and illustrate how they have the capacity and resources to partake in the consumption experience. So, though excluded from commercial advertising, participants were not excluded from consuming the products or services advertised or from consuming advertising images in and of themselves. The participants did not see themselves as different in terms of their consumption of products/services and advertising. This could be explained by the fact that participants were able to identify with these alternative roles that were present in advertising.

Further to this, consumption and advertising are considered natural parts of society and this could be evidence of advertising's ideological nature. Naturalization and legitimisation are two ideological strategies put forward by Elliott and Ritson (1997). That is, in naturalizing and legitimising the consumption experience participants do not question the message underscoring the ad. Naturalisation as an ideological strategy suggests that the world in which we live is presented as so natural that we do not think of questioning it. Thus, the world of consumption and the world of brands are seen as a natural part of our lives; a part of self. In the context of the present study, the absence of disabled people from commercial advertising may seem so natural and the thoughts of inclusion so abstract, that it is not questioned and is generally accepted. Legitimisation on the other hand, promotes consumption as the route to happiness and removes the guilt attached to purchasing. Thus, participants are free to purchase and consume in the same way as non-disabled people and as such focus on achieving their desires and dreams through consumption.

- *Feelings of Inadequacy*

Commercial advertising was not highlighted as making participants feel and think negatively about themselves in terms of their impairment/disability. That is, in consuming images of the idealized advertising images, participants did not reassess their image as a disabled person. As noted above, the absence of disabled people was not questioned by participants and in assessing advertising images a comparison of disabled/non-disabled was not made. Participants were concerned with the absence of the 'normal' or average body. It was this that they questioned and critiqued, yet this questioning did not seem to impact on their sense of self as a disabled person. Thus, in terms of enhancing feelings of separation, increasing feelings of differentness and instilling feelings of inadequacy commercial advertising was not disabling.

However, most participants indicated that they would like to see more inclusion of disabled people in commercial campaigns. So, although in viewing and consuming advertising images, these participants did not feel disabled, it is implied that exclusion from advertising sends out the message that disabled people are not a part of society, they are not consumers. Participants felt that their exclusion was indicative of advertisers attitudes towards disabled people. They felt that advertisers do not consider them to be consumers, do not see them as having any economic power and as such resources to purchase. Thus, this may be the message communicated to the rest of society. This would then impact on interactions between non-disabled and disabled people in society. So, the exclusion is not disabling in the sense that when viewing or consuming the ads, participants feel disabled but in the viewing and consuming of ads by the non-disabled audience. This in turn will impact on interactions between disabled and non-disabled people, and it is these interactions and the implicit attitudes and perceptions of disability that can be disabling.

6.2 CHARITY ADVERTISING

Advertising's role in disability as a social process can be seen more clearly through participants' experience of charity advertising. In contrast to commercial advertising, disabled people are notable in their presence in charity ads. In fact, disabled people dominate charity advertisements (Hevey, 1992). These are not positive images and tend to be quite oppressive. Participants critiqued charity advertising extensively, which in contrast to commercial advertising was not questioned or critiqued to the same extent. Charity advertising was seen by participants to play a negative role in their lives. This negative role can manifest itself in two ways;

- In interactions between disabled and non-disabled people;
- In impacting negatively on participants sense of self.

- *Interactions between disabled and non-disabled people*

Charity advertising portrays disabled people as pitiable and pathetic and this potentially impacts on interactions between disabled and non-disabled people. However, it is not only the advertising image but the charity image as a whole, that is promoted through charity collections and charity shops. This is noted by one male participant in particular. It was suggested that the interaction around charity collections could be the only contact that non-disabled people have with disabled people; thus, it could be the only knowledge they have regarding disability. It is an image of disabled people as dependent and as receivers of charity. Such an image then determines the interaction between non-disabled and disabled people.

- *Sense of Self*

In contrast to commercial advertising, charity ads were found to impact on participants' sense of self, in terms of feelings of separation, feelings of differentness and feelings of inadequacy. They impacted on how participants felt and thought about themselves. This could be seen in terms of the psycho-emotional dimensions of disability (Reeve, 2002; Thomas, 1999). Participants were made to feel frustrated, angry, isolated and belittled as a result of charity advertising. The fact that charity advertising can have such a strong impact on participants' feelings and sense of self should not be ignored or underestimated. Charity advertising has the potential to 'disable' these participants by eliciting such feelings. These feelings are potentially internal restrictions on what disabled people can be and who they think they can be. Such internal restrictions can emerge in terms of confidence and self-esteem and potentially impact on how participants act and interact on a daily basis.

So, it would seem that historical and current images of disability in charity ads play a greater disabling role in the lives of participants than the absence of images in commercial advertising. The critique was much more negative and the impact and consequence of these images was seen as much greater than the fact that disabled people were not depicted in mainstream advertising. This finding implies that instead of looking at each advertising format in isolation that the cumulative impact needs to be assessed.

6.3 SUGGESTED CHANGES IN ADVERTISING

The findings showed that though the participants in the study had not previously questioned the lack of representation of disabled people in commercial advertising, they held positive attitudes towards recent advertisements that did include disabled people and commented that they would like to see more ads like these. This is in line with Hardin (2003) who found that disabled people in her study were highly sensitive to positive, integrated images of disability in advertising. Besides indicating that they would like to see more disabled people in advertising, some participants were highly specific as to the type of ads they would like to see. Each of these suggestions challenges a certain image of disability;

- Disabled people not considered cool;
- Disabled people not seen as carers;
- Disabled people not seen as participants in everyday life.

Most criticism of disability advertising was concentrated around charity ads and it is in this medium that disabled people are most visible. Charity ads tend to send out such messages about disabled people and therefore, the suggestions put forward by participants can be seen as a challenge to the charity image. This illustrates a number of points, namely, that commercial advertising can challenge the charity image and as such the power of commercial advertising is recognised by participants. Furthermore, it also highlights that the charity image needs to be challenged and as such it supports the above contention that charity ads play a greater disabling role than commercial advertising in the lives of participants. There was one participant who didn't see commercial advertising as being powerful enough to counteract the historical baggage of the charity image and suggested that the charity image needed to go completely before any other changes would occur.

These advertising examples as put forward by the participants, are images that participants want to see of disabled people and also, images that they want other people in society to see of disabled people. Such ads would communicate certain knowledge of disabled people that society should have. For example, that

- Disabled people can be cool,
- Disabled women can be mothers, and

- Disabled people are members of society just like everybody else.

It is interesting to note that although mainstream advertising is not seen to 'disable' participants in the way that charity advertising does, it does nothing to empower disabled people either. Positive, integrated images of disabled people are difficult to source in any medium, be it, TV, film or advertising (charity and commercial). As such, the media in general do a disservice to the disabled community and participants suggest that advertising is one way to challenge this.

6.4 IDENTITY

In reviewing disability as a social process, the researcher set out to explore the disabled experience in general, irrespective of the advertising experience. A number of different factors were taken into account when trying to understand the participants' experience of disability – their acceptance of the social model, their commitment to challenge barriers, their attitude to disability and the language used.

- *Acceptance of the Social Model*

In terms of defining their experience of disability most participants would be classed within the social model. Environmental barriers, inaccessible transport and negative attitudes were the most common disabling barriers that participants encountered. It was anticipated that the majority of the sample would frame their experience of disability within the social model. However, one male participant describes his experience in a medicalised and individualized way, while a female participant failed to define her experience at all. These participants were the two youngest in the sample.

- *Commitment to Challenge Barriers*

Though, most participants described their experience of disability in social model terms, not all saw themselves playing a role in bringing about change. Though they recognised that the barriers they faced were socially constructed, responsibility for the removal or deconstruction of these barriers was placed with other people. The focus for these participants is on getting on with their own lives. They stress how they want to be treated like everybody else. Other participants did however, put forward a proactive attitude to change. They saw themselves and other disabled people as playing principle roles in challenging disabling barriers and were active in their quest to do so. As such, a divide was seen to emerge among the group.

- *Attitude to Disability*

In terms of attitude to disability, participants would either celebrate their difference or negate or make irrelevant their difference. Those that celebrated their difference were coming from the social model, and the focus was on normalizing the difference. That is, the attitude should be that it is normal to be different and this should be tolerated and celebrated. Other participants saw their disability as something so implicit within their lives that they should not be set out as different because of this and should be treated like everybody else. It is interesting to note that those that chose to celebrate their difference where also the participants that were actively involved in challenging disabling barriers.

- *Language Used*

Finally, the language used by participants was indicative of their political affiliation and attitude to disability. For instance, in using words like people with disabilities as opposed to disabled people indicates a lack of political awareness regarding language and identity. The term people with disabilities is considered void of political weight (Barnes, 1997). Furthermore, some participants spoke in terms of 'we' as opposed to 'I', which suggests identification with a collective disabled community rather than an individualized focus.

Based on these criteria it was found that participants could be split into two groups – political and non-political, and only those classed as political strived towards removing barriers. This supports the contention that disabled people are not an homogenous group. But it also highlights that the social model is not an all-inclusive and all encompassing framework to describe the experiences of all disabled people. Some participants highlighted how they just wanted to get on with their own lives and were not involved in challenging the barriers that exist. The social model does not seem to account for such experiences. That is, participants identified society as disabling but did not see themselves as playing a role in changing society. They strived towards normalisation (Darling, 2003) and identified mainly with the majority culture. In opposition to this, were participants who identified with the social model but also lived the social model in terms of politicising their experience and challenging and deconstructing disabling barriers. Some participants do not live the social model but this does not mean that their experience is any less valuable or less important.

This distinction between different disabled identities had not been anticipated prior to conducting the interviews. It was thought that the social model would dominate in terms of how participants described their experiences and this was found to be the case, with the exception of two participants. However, it was assumed that those who did identify with the social model would also live its ethos and this was not necessarily the case.

This finding also unearths an important issue within an Irish context and that is, that younger disabled people are not as political as the older generation. Although a number of different factors were taken into consideration when splitting the group into political or non-political, it was interesting to see that the group split on age, with older participants classed as political. One participant actually noted that younger disabled people in Ireland are not political enough. Though, this is not directly related to the advertising experience it is an important contextual issue for the disabled people's movement in Ireland and an interesting area for future study. An understanding of why younger people are not as political when it comes to their disabled identity would provide huge insights into the disabled experience in Ireland.

6.5 CONTRIBUTION TO LITERATURE

This study contributes to two broad literatures – advertising literature and disability literature. In terms of advertising literature, it adds to the knowledge regarding the role of advertising in the lives of the audience and to the literature surrounding the consumption of advertising.

Firstly, it highlights the fact that disabled people are consumers. They are consumers of products and advertising images. This fact is often overlooked as is evidenced in the invisibility of disabled people in advertising and in advertising and consumer research.

Secondly, it highlights that disabled people in this study do not consider themselves different in terms of product and advertising consumption. They consume the same products/images as everybody else. Also, in critiquing advertising it is not the absence of the disabled or impaired body that concerns these participants as much as it is the absence of the 'normal' or average body. Thus, the use of idealized images are questioned in much the same way as it has been by non-disabled people.

In terms of disability literature, the role of commercial advertising in the lives of disabled people is a new line of investigation. The charity image has been critiqued previously but the absence of disabled people from commercial advertising has been an overlooked area of research in the UK and Ireland. The research re-enforces the notion that charity images are detested by disabled people and are thought to play a powerful role in the lives of disabled people. It suggests that the charity image is a potent disabling barrier in the lives of these participants. Overall, the research highlights how representation or lack thereof, are important areas of study. Sometimes the image is the only knowledge a person has about disabled people. Thus, the image holds a powerful position in society. This knowledge feeds into perceptions and attitudes towards disabled people and potentially impacts on if and how barriers can be challenged.

6.6 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

The study was bounded by various limitations. Firstly, the sample was very small. This small sample had its advantages, in that, within the time restrictions, the question could be explored in depth. On the flipside, the results of the study relate solely to the participants and cannot be inferred to the greater disabled population in Dublin and Ireland.

The sample consisted of disabled people only. It may have been beneficial to include non-disabled people also to allow for direct comparison, particularly in reviewing the experience of advertising and the experience of charity advertising.

Furthermore, participants were chosen due to the fact that they had visible, physical, non-intellectual impairments. Disabled people are not a homogenous group and a whole range of impairments exist – intellectual, mental health and non-visible physical impairments. The disabling experience and advertising experience may differ for these people.

6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.7.1 Future Research

In light of the limitations mentioned above, a larger sample would be recommended for future research as it would give greater breadth of information and would be more reflective of the population of interest. The sample composition could also change to include non-disabled people. This would allow for direct comparison in terms of the experience of advertising. It would be of particular interest to ascertain how non-disabled people experience charity advertising and how this effects their perception of disabled people. Further to this, it may be beneficial to include people with different impairments such as non-visible, intellectual or mental health.

As charity advertising was found to have a greater disabling role than commercial advertising, future research should explore this issue in greater depth. An important aspect of such research could be the role of the Catholic Church and it's emphasis on charity. Historically, the Catholic Church played a formative role in Irish society and the emphasis and acceptance of charity as an implicit part of our lives could be linked to this role.

An exploration of different disability orientations would also be of interest. The present study identified the existence of two orientations in this sample. However, a bigger sample may allow for a more in depth analysis of disabled identity in Ireland. This would be an important area for future research. Younger disabled people in Ireland are not considered political enough. The question could be asked who will take the disabled people's movement forward if there are no younger people coming on board. This idea of identity, both in terms of being disabled and being Irish would give great insight into the experience of being disabled in Ireland. It could also link in with the emphasis on the Catholic Church and it's role in the experience of disability as an Irish person. However, most importantly would be discussions with disabled people regarding the findings of the present study in order to ascertain how they would like to see the research develop.

6.7.2 Advertising Industry

The research highlights that disabled people are consumers and as such a viable market for advertisers to target. Inclusion of disabled people in advertisements would be welcomed by participants. It would be a positive and progressive step for the disabled people's movement and the advertising industry. It would require consultation with disabled people and disability organisations. Also, inclusion of disabled people in campaign development and production would transfer some power to disabled people in the process of representation. The initial emphasis should probably be on improving charity ads. The question needs to be asked is there a way that charities can still elicit donations without promoting a negative and pitiable image of disabled people.

6.7.3 Disability Organisations

Disability organisations should continue to promote research in the field of disability studies and use the research to leverage change and challenge barriers. Disabled people themselves should be the catalysts for such change and should determine the focus of the research. Future research in the area of representation would provide more in-depth information about the role of advertising both commercial and charity and how this should change. There should also be a focus on youth and identity. More young people need to get involved in the movement in order to carry forward the work and changes achieved so far.

Most importantly however, is for charities and disability organisations to review their funding strategies. They should ask the following questions:

- What image of disability are they promoting?
- How do disabled people feel about this?
- What impact does it have on their lives?
- How would disabled people like to see this change?
- How can organisations still get funding without conflicting with a positive/progressive image of disabled people?

It was found that the charity image played a strong, negative impact on the lives of participants and as such this needs to be questioned and challenged in greater detail.

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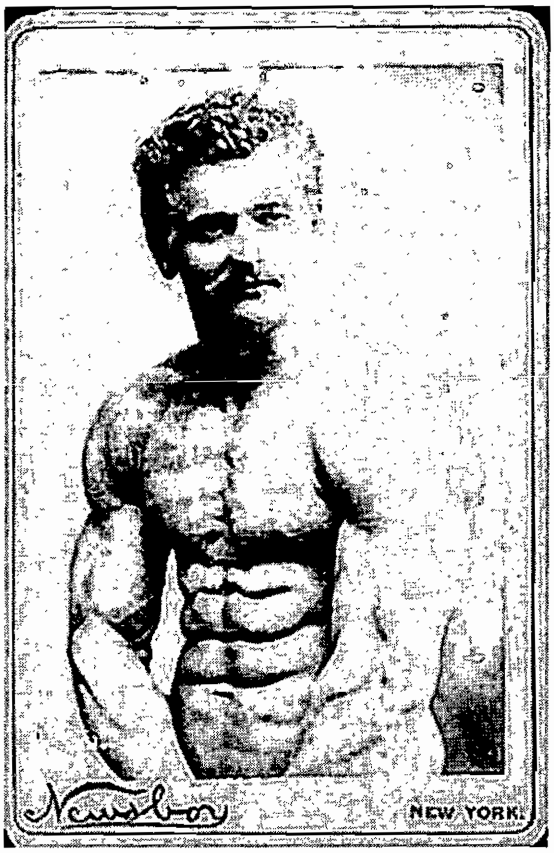
APPENDIX A

CARTE DE VISITE


Newsboy
NEW YORK.


James L. Bayfield
10 WELLINGTON TERRACE
BAYSWATER ROAD, W

APPENDIX B

THEME SHEET

Interview Theme Sheet

Just to explain again that the interview is going to look at two broad areas
    Your experience of disability, and
    Your experience of advertising.

And I was just wondering whether there are any thoughts that you would like to share about either of these areas before I begin with my questions.

Do you think that the media has a role to play in your experience of disability?

What kind of role do you think they play?

Can you identify any disabled people in the media?
    What do you think of him/her?
    Do you identify with them in any way?

When you look at advertising what thoughts and feelings go through your mind?

What images come to mind when you think of advertising?
    How does that image relate to you?
    What do you think of these images?
    How do they make you feel?

What is your favourite ad at the moment?
    Why do you like this ad?

Do you talk about ads with other people?

None of the ads you've talked about include a disabled person – how does that make you feel?

What do you think of the way the body is shown in advertising?

Do you think advertising has a role to play in your experience of disability?
    In what way?

What image comes to mind when you think of disability advertising?
    How does that image relate to you?
    What do you think of these images?
    How do they make you feel?

Use as prompt if needs be: There was an ad a couple of years ago for Brennan's bread that featured a visually impaired woman. Were you aware of this? Can you remember that? What did you think of it?

I have some advertisements here that I'd like to show you.

Show Images
MS 'It's much easier for you to make a stand against Multiple Sclerosis'
Easter Seals 'For some people the search for an apartment is all uphill'
Spastics Society 'They said Bill would never walk, work or wed'

Questions regarding these images:
What thoughts or feelings go through your head when you see this ad?
What does that ad mean to you?
How does that image relate to you?
Do you identify with it?

When the ads have been shown ask these questions:
Is this what disability means to you?
Is that how you would define disability? How would your definition of disability differ?

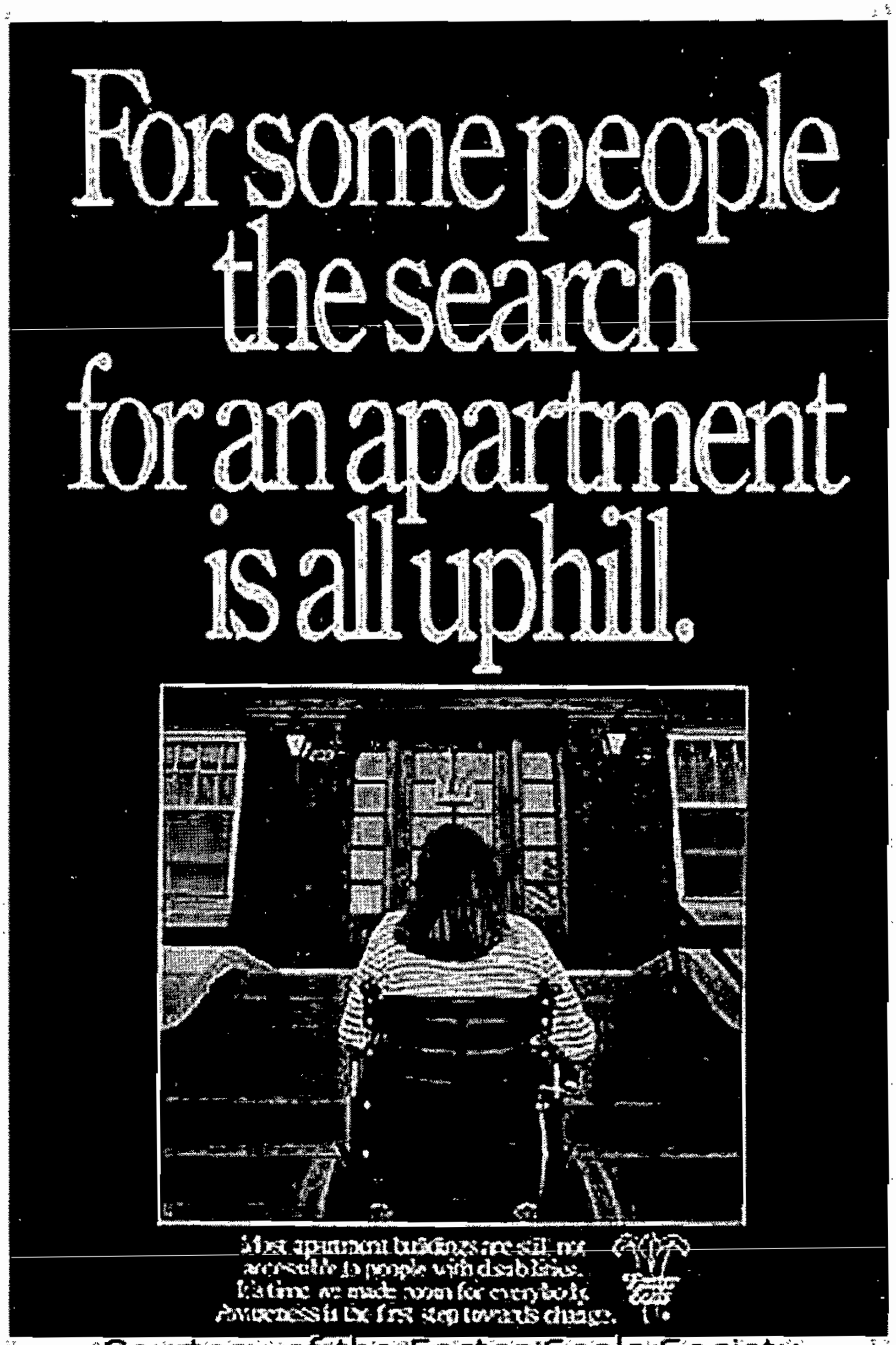
(If I don't understand, maybe ask them to explain further or give an example in order to clarify this).

And just getting back to the issue of advertising again, would you like to see advertising change in any way?

Do you think that you would miss advertising if it wasn't there?

APPENDIX C

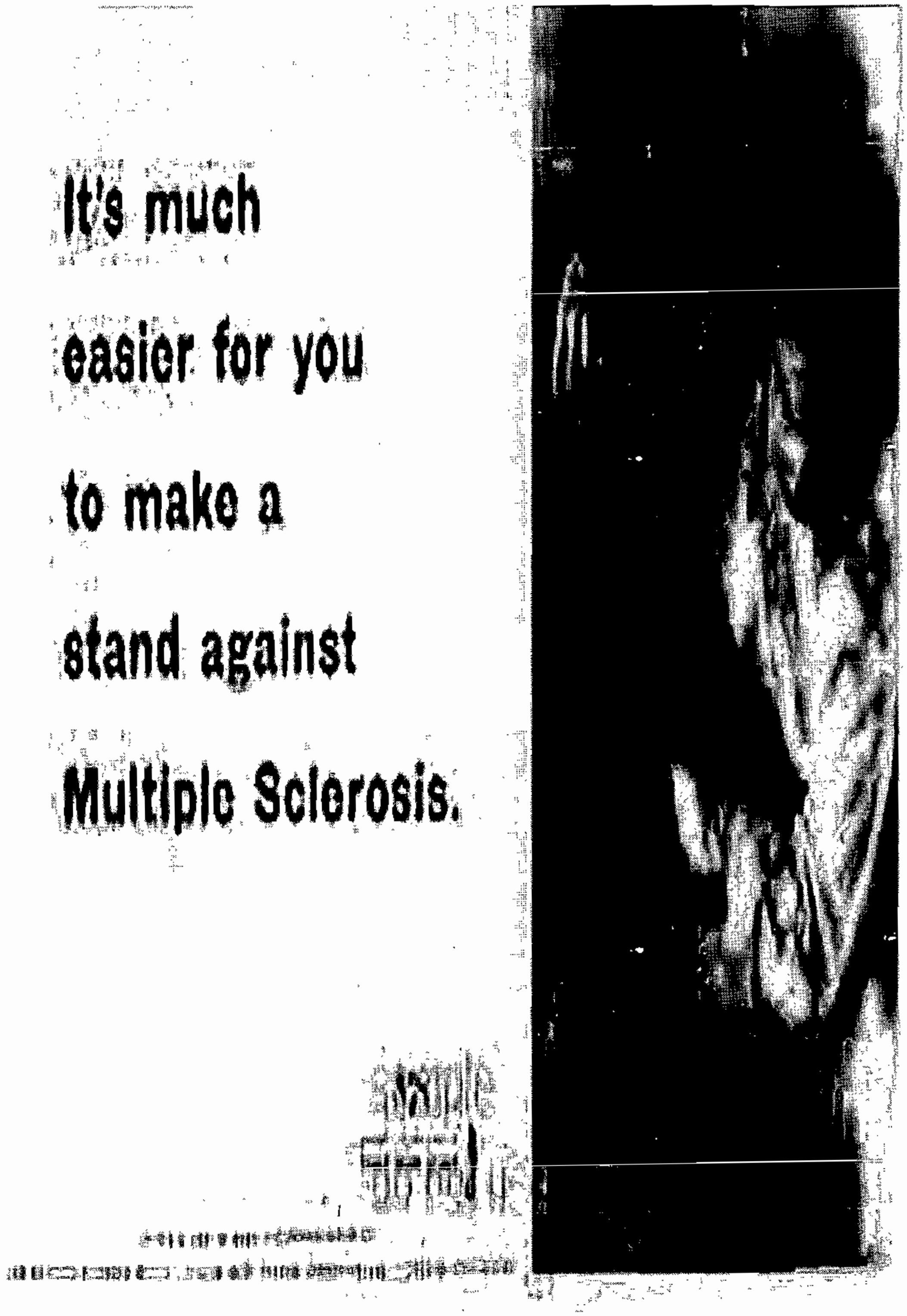
ADVERTISING STIMULI



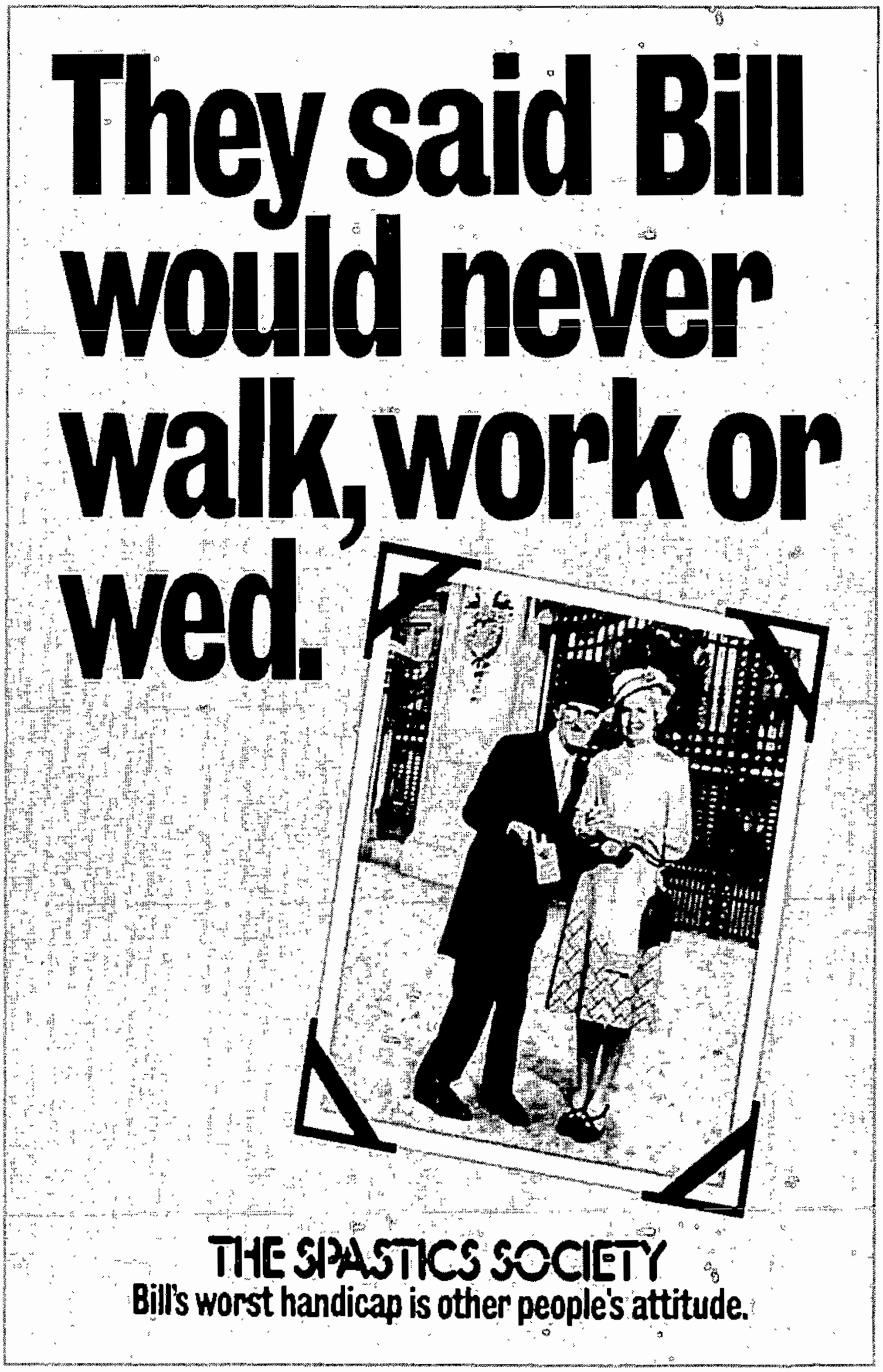
For some people the search for an apartment is all uphill.

Most apartment buildings are still not accessible to people with disabilities. It's time we made room for everybody. Awareness is the first step towards change.

Courtesy of the Easter Seals Society



REPRINTED COURTESY OF MS SOCIETY UK



They said Bill would never walk, work or wed.

THE SPASTICS SOCIETY

Bill's worst handicap is other people's attitude.

REPRINTED COURTESY OF SCOPE (formerly known as The Spastics Society)

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH INFORMATION

RESEARCH INFORMATION

My name is Mary-Ann O'Donovan. I graduated from Dublin Institute of Technology, Mountjoy Square with a BSc (Management) specializing in marketing, in 2002. I am currently undertaking a Masters by research (MPhil) within the business faculty in DIT Aungier Street. My research area is advertising, and in particular mainstream advertising, and its role in disability as a social process. It asks whether advertising is a disabling barrier and if so, in what way. More specifically, I am interested in the lack of representation of disabled people in commercial advertising. I decided to interview people with a visible physical non-intellectual impairment. The topic was chosen based on my knowledge of marketing and general interest in advertising and its societal effects, and also, my personal experience of disability. I am a non-disabled person. My brother is disabled and only through starting this research project I have truly become aware of the political and social issues surrounding disability, as opposed to being simply a family issue. The social model of disability guides the research.

I hope to undertake eight interviews in total. This will consist of interviews with four disabled women and four disabled men. The interviews will be guided by two broad themes: experience of disability and experience of advertising.
Topics to be covered in the research include,

What disability means to you?
The role of the media in your experience of disability.
The role of advertising in your experience of disability.
The role of disability in your identity.

If there are any topics that you are not comfortable talking about these can be left out of the interview. Also, if there are any issues not covered that you wish to raise I would be very happy to listen. I will use various images of advertising as part of the interview.

RESEARCH PROCESS

The interviews are conducted in two stages.
The first interview deals with the topics listed above and is the main interview.
The second interview is an opportunity for me as the researcher to clarify any issues I might have arising from the first interview so that I do not misinterpret you in any way. It is also an opportunity for you to make additional comments on any area of importance to you.

The second interview should ideally be carried out the week following the first interview, depending on both our timetables and commitments.

The interviews will be transcribed, typed up and given back to you. This is an opportunity to review the transcripts and make any changes, that is, add in or take out any data you are not happy with.

A summary report of the research will also be given to participants. This will include some basic analysis, and the participant will also have the chance to change any parts of this that they are not happy about.

The participant will be given an email address and phone number for the researcher so that they can contact the researcher if and when they have something they would like to add or change to the initial transcripts.

The thesis is due for submission in September. Therefore, a cut off point for feedback would have to be set provisionally at the end of July.

Participants are free to opt out of the research at any stage without having to give any explanation or justification.

Contact Details:

Email: mary-ann.odonovan@dit.ie

Office: (01) 402 3041

Mobile: 086xxxxxxx

If you are interested in taking part in this research I would really appreciate hearing from you by the end of April 2004.

APPENDIX E

CONSENT FORM

Research Consent Form

Name of Participant:…………………………………………………………………………

Name to be used in Research (Chosen Pseudonym):…………………………………..

Age:……………………………………………………………………………………..

Gender:…………………………………………………………………………………

Description of Impairment:……………………………………………………………..

Qualifications:…………………………………………………………………………

Occupation:……………………………………………………………………………..

Please tick appropriate box before signing.

	YES	**NO**
Are you happy with the amount of information you have received about the research?		
Do you understand that you can refuse to answer any questions?		
Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the interview at any time without giving any explanation or reason?		
Do you understand that I will treat all your information as confidential and anonymous?		
Are you willing for me to record the interviews?		
Do you agree to take part in the research?		
Do you agree that interviews can be used in MPhil thesis and other publications?		

Signature:……………………………………………….**Date:**…………………

APPENDIX F

TRANSCRIPT

Sample Stage One Interview

I=Interviewer
P=Participant

I: So, just to explain again I'm going to look at your experience of disability and your experience of advertising, they're the only two real issue, so

P: yeah

I: Is there anything that you want to talk about before I get started with the questions?

P: no

I: right, grand. The first question that I wanted to really ask you was, do you think that media has a role to play in your experience of disability?

P: media, media, I don't think it has a changing role, I think it has a, I always think the media reflects things, that kind of leads a discussion that's kind of happening already

I: um

P: I don't think they can change things, I think they can, they can reflect what thoughts are going out there

I: yeah, yeah

P: so eh, a lot of visual representations of disability would be people in wheelchairs, because usually people in wheelchairs, a lot of these people would be disabled by accidents, they'd have gone through the normal school system, have jobs, have relationships and all that, and became disabled,

I: yeah

P: so they had that confidence and all that

I: yeah, yeah

P: whereas, eh, there's not a lot of representations of other impairments, like cerebral palsy and

I: yeah, yeah, and do you think that it'll impact on your daily experience of disability, the media?

P: yeah, yeah, I think that eh, more images that get out there, people are used to seeing. Well, people are already quite used to seeing images of disabled people in film and documentaries,

I: yeah, yeah

P: so there's eh, but they're in the context of people suffering or the context of, characters that are evil or pathetic, or like Forest Gump, angelic

I: yeah, yeah

P: they're not used to seeing disabled people in normal, everyday situations

I: yeah, yeah

P: so, eh, a recent experience, is that I was on the committee for the European Year of Disabilities, which one of the actions at the end of year, or, in January or February, there was a series of ads shown on RTE, we worked with the production group, company making the ads. Unfortunately, we only had a week schedule, a week to do it

I: alright, yeah

P: but they wanted, they came across to us first with, they wanted disabled people who do mountain climbing, skiing or go across Africa on the back of an elephant

I: yeah

P: but we said that they're all supercrips,

I: yeah, yeah

P: you know, disabled people live normal, everyday lives. We thought it would be better to portray disabled people in normal everyday situations

I: yeah, yeah

P: and not show supercrips to the general public

I: yeah, yeah

P: I don't ski, or I don't have an elephant

I: yeah

(Laughter)

P: in terms of media, I think the media, there is a lot of images out there of disabled people historically, but the media is starting to put this in normal situations

I: um, they are starting to, you think?

P: in terms of ads, yes, some ads yeah

I: yeah, yeah

P: well not, there's still a long way to go

I: yeah, yeah. And is there anybody that you can identify in the media, a disabled person in the media?

P: eh, on radio?

I: any media, any…

P: media, eh, well in terms of British media, like BBC or Channel 4, I have friends who are going through a whole history of, say, British, English theatre, like Graeae Theatre company?

I: yeah, yeah

P: and they use their acting, and have now crossed over into mainstream media, like Channel Four, a guy called Matt Fraser? Matt Fraser?

I: I don't know him…

P: he has thalidomide, he had, he's a really good actor, he does a lot of voice overs for Channel Four, eh reality documentaries. He also had a documentary last year about, he wanted to be, you know these cage fights, it hasn't come here yet

I: the which?

P: it's a cage fight

I: cage fight?

P: you see, you build a cage and put two people in it…

I: I haven't heard about it

P: and they kick the shit out of each other

(Laughter)

P: and its eh, there's no rules

I: oh right, and is it coming from the UK?

P: it started in the States,

I: oh right yeah

P: he went in and he does Karate, and did whole documentary about him wanting to do a cage fight

I: yeah, and is he disabled as well?

P: yeah, thalidomide, he's also an actor first though. In England a lot of the people, the artists or actors would be quite active activists

I: yeah

P: and BBC has a disabled production unit, here in Ireland there's a guy on the radio called Olan Mc Gowan. I wouldn't say he was coming from the same position that I am

I: yeah, yeah

P: I would see that as quite, as the old idea of disability, like, that disabled people want to be normal, whereas we return the idea that we are disabled, we are different and that should be tolerated, and celebrated and it should be coming from the social model, the social model

I: yeah, yeah

P: where the barriers far outweigh any restriction caused by the impairment, social barriers

I: yeah, yeah

P: so in Ireland there's not a lot of media, there's Bethan Collins who's on AudioScope on the radio

I: yeah, yeah

P: that can be quite good, she's coming from a social model perspective and so we shouldn't get caught up in the whole impairment so

I: yeah

P: you concentrate on the social barriers, there's not great, generally the role models and the media newspaper, or TV, or radio there's not a lot

I: there's nobody within media that you'd identify with and that's somebody that kind of?

P: yeah apart from Bethan on AudioScope on RTE one,

I: AudioScope

P: which probably has a very small listenership, there's nobody on TV

I: nobody yeah, and just when you were saying, disabled people want to be normal, that's eh, are you saying that's within Irish society that's the kind of mentality

P: yeah it still is somewhat, if you think 30 or 40 years ago, the Irish Wheelchair Association was started up, and they were really good at campaigning for disabled people should be treated as normal and now we're saying we're not, well first of all there's no such thing as normal anyway, especially in new Ireland, multicultural there's no normal anyway. We are disabled but we're disabled by society

I: yeah, yeah

P: so society itself doesn't have a norm, it thinks it has a norm, but it doesn't

I: um

P: it does exclude us

I: yeah, yeah

P: we're not any more prone to the idea that we're normal, we're just part of the difference that should be celebrated

I: yeah, yeah, and do you think that difference should be celebrated within the media

P: yeah

I: yeah

P: they should move away from, RTE if they're ever they're doing an image piece or documentary feature on disability, they always start off with the image of somebody in a wheelchair getting into a taxi, or, the impairment is always first the person comes second, so you want to move away from any kind of impairment based discourse around disability

I: yeah, yeah

P: and look at the social barriers

I: yeah, and just moving onto advertising more specifically, when you look at advertising in general, what kind of thoughts or feelings go through your mind?

P: in terms of images like of disabled people or just in general?

I: just in general, advertising in general

P: Advertising is there to sell you something basically, the best way to sell something is around fear, fear of like you know, 'is your toilet smelly?' you know,

I: which, sorry?

P: the best way to sell something, there are three ways to sell you something, fear, sex and humour, so advertising works on fear or sexual, promoting sexual liberty or sexual access and humour, comedy

I: um

P: so, that's what any ad works, it could be all three or could be one or two, but fear is number one

I: yeah

P: sex is number two and humour is third, so advertising works, its selling you something, all ads are trying to sell you a lifestyle or something, I suppose in Ireland now say compared to ten years ago, advertising has took on a new role, its selling an individualized society.

I: yeah, yeah

P: like, the, a very good example would be the *Knorr* ads for soup, *Knorr* soup?

I: yeah, *Knorr* Soup

P: its very clever you see, remember the good old days, you know when you had time,

I: yeah, yeah

P: there's something called it quality of life

I: yeah, quality of life

P: nobody could tell you what that is but they know it's gone, in Dublin anyway, they know that its not there, so they're selling you that, but what I was trying to say is advertising is very important, it's a reflection of what Ireland is today, yeah, so its quite important, it kind of dictates the discussion about what it is to be living in Ireland

I: what it is to be living in Ireland?

P: living in Ireland, not necessarily Irish, but living in Ireland

I: yeah, yeah, and would you say that the *Knorr* campaign that you were talking about would that fit into the fear or..

P: fear, yeah

I: and have you ever watched an ad and felt afraid so to speak, or have you watched it and said oh that's trying to instil fear in a way, not in a huge way, maybe in a small way

P: yeah the ones I hate is, I have two kids, eight and five, the ones I really detest are the ones where they have the kids on the toilets

I: ah right yeah

P: and eh, the kids get neurotic or paranoid about the smells, and have to buy some perfumed things in the toilet, that's really strange like you know, you know

I: yeah

P: so its quite aggressive advertising

I: yeah

P: yeah niche advertising, advertising's become more niche, if you haven't got kids, that ad wouldn't bother you, but if you have got young kids like that age around 10 or younger, that ad will, poor kids could get paranoid about going to have a shite

(Laughter)

P: its hard enough trying kids to go to the toilet without having them worry about what it smells like

I: yeah, yeah

P: so yeah, I suppose advertising has become more niche oriented

I: and what image comes to mind when you think of advertising? If want to, if you can pick an image

P: in Ireland or?

I: any advertising that you see, it doesn't have to be Irish-based, whatever stands out in your mind

P: depends on what time of day you want

(Laughter)

P: eh, I think about an ad, yeah I know what ad I really like, the great thing about video and the remote control is that you can just switch off the ads, so the ads have to get more and more narrative to hold you, you know you have to create your own set of drama situations around, situation, conflict and resolution in thirty seconds, they have to hold you, the ad that I really like, I'd look at again and again, is the vodka, you know the *Smirnoff Ice*.

I: ah yeah, yeah

P: you know the guy is taking his girlfriend away for a weekend

I: yeah (laughter)

P: and the father starting to

I: yeah

P: I love that, in terms of simple, great acting, great directing, and I just, I always laugh at it,

I: yeah, yeah

P: So that's the kind of ad that I'd look at again and again

I: yeah, yeah

P: even though I don't drink the stuff

(Laughter)

P: the ad is great

I: yeah you like the ad. And that would be an image that would stand out in your head for advertising? Do you think that would be a typical image of advertising?

P: its aimed at guys, its definitely aimed at guys, well I'm 40 but it still worked for me

I: yeah, yeah

P: it's aimed at fear and humour, it would always stand out, the ads that don't stand out are the ones that are just boring and selling a product, by product I mean, look at this. Advertising I think has got really sophisticated and complex and niche

I: and do you think even though like you were saying that you're 40 and you don't think that *Smirnoff Ice* is aimed at your age group, can you still identify with it and relate to it?

P: definitely,

I: in what way, kind of?

P: in kind of like a watershed, both sides like, the guy going off for a dirty weekend with the girl and then as a father with an eight year old daughter, I, that's gonna happen to me someday anyway,

I: yeah

P: she's going to bring back a boyfriend and I'm going to have to deal with that as well

I: yeah, yeah

P: yeah, it's funny like that

I: yeah, yeah. So that's your favourite ad and would you talk about ads with other people?

P: actually the other night, this is going to sound a bit pervy right, I was with a few friends the other night and the conversation came up to, men and women all around 40, late 30, the new *Benneton* ads? have you seen them?

I: I don't think of seen them, what are they, can you describe them?

P: its very simple, there's two, a man, a woman, its got her lying down looking at the camera, and actually its one of the most, it's a big turn on really

I: yeah, yeah

P: really erotic image, she's lying there with top, like nothing, it's a really clever, really brilliant ad

I: yeah, yeah

P: there's a male campaign obviously for women, don't know if that works, it doesn't work for me, whereas they one like, its just dead simple ad, very simple, obviously, whoever shot it, they know what they're doing, like we were talking about that the other night like 'oh did you see that ad like?' can I get a copy of it (Laughter) Its an ad that's more erotic than any men's magazines downstairs in Eason's, the woman's just lying there, looking straight at the camera,

I: yeah, yeah

P: and she's looking straight at the camera with total, complete confidence, its not a simple, submissive image, she's looking with the same, like me looking at her, you know that whole thing of, its not a submissive glance, its quite powerful confident glance. That kind of thing we were talking about

I: and do you think that's an unusual ad campaign? Or do you think it'd be typical kind of?

P: no, its unusual, very clever, very clever

I: yeah, yeah, what do you think of the way that the body is shown in advertising?

P: you know, years ago like, the 70's and 80's kind of, it had a really, say the whole point that women, well young women's bodies were used to sell products to men who had money, and the catch was that men had money and women didn't really have access to money,

I: yeah

P: so advertisers had to get that money off them somehow. Now, its not equal environment, its definitely not an equal society, but women definitely have more money, and the whole family break up, like separation for women, divorce, or separation, for women, they might have kids but they still have some economic independence, so eh, in terms of the image of the body, and then you have the whole gay thing as well, the pink pound if you're gay you have no kids, or you know you don't have any kids, but they have quite a big disposable income

I: yeah

P: so obviously advertisers are gay hunting, whereas ten years ago that didn't exist, in Ireland what its only 10 or 11 years ago that it became legal to be gay

I: yeah

P: so eh, in terms of body, you have women always had the problem of having to compete with images on advertising, but I think men now have, especially gay men, have to compete with good-looking guys. I know myself like, I don't know whether it's a mid-life crisis or anything (laughter), I have to like go to the gym, and all that, which probably 10 or 15 years ago wouldn't have happened

I: yeah

P: men just got pot-bellies and got fat, and now I think there's a, I wouldn't say pressure but a reflection, again its just a reflection of society, advertising is just actually reflecting society, that men have to be more careful about how they look, because women have more economic power, they don't have to stay with their pot-bellied, fat man

I: yeah

P: you know, they can move around, they've more freedom, more independence,

I: yeah, yeah

P: and advertising definitely, definitely, taps into that, you know it has some ads, you know one ad, I don't know what it was, I haven't a clue what it was for, I think it was for some cereal, cartoon character, fat guy who has to go off and jog, and take the dog for a walk and all that, its like for spread, you know butter, Olive-something, that he has to lose weight to keep his wife, at the end he gets back his fit body and she throws out the window-washer

I: ah right yeah

P: so there's definitely, that's fear, humour but mainly fear, if men don't get their act together and look better they'll get kicked out because women have economic independence

I: yeah and of all the ads that you've mentioned so far, there hasn't been any disabled people in those ads, how does that make you feel that?

P: well obviously again, its a reflection of society that, I'll go back to the 10 years that they didn't have ads that were directed towards gay men, because gay men were illegal and were not seen to have any, I don't know why, were not seen to have any spending power. Now marketing have coped onto that gay men are, like, it used to be, what was it, 18-25 year olds were the most ads were aimed at, now because of niche marketing you have ads aimed at gay men like, all the way up to 60, so I think, because disabled people are not seen to have economic power, not seen to have money, then there's no need to advertise to them, you know

I: yeah

P: and like the fact is and we know now from the last census, that 80% of women, of disabled adult women are unemployed, 70% of disabled adult men are unemployed, so they don't, disabled people don't have economic power to go out and buy, so there is no need for advertisers to reflect that in their ads. When or if disabled people get access to money and jobs, then I think ads will reflect this

I: and how do you feel about that as somebody who would be working and has economic power?

P: yeah, I don't see images to represent myself,

I: yeah

P: when you look at me I have the two kids, the dogs, the car, the house, I would probably be seen as making it, the college degree I have. But there's no,
there is no public representation in the media. Not in ads, yes, in ads, actually the only advertising, the only ads that were there, were the ads promoting disability charity, charity images.

I: yeah, yeah

P: even People in Need

I: oh the Childline, is it, no?

P: no the Irish, Come on Everybody, what's that one? People in Need, is it?

I: yeah I think, yeah

P: I see images of disabled people there but its all care, charity images, they don't sell, you can't sell images, you can't sell products on charity. We, as disabled people, we shake with laughter, we never ever got, nobody ever uses the sympathy card, nobody is gonna sell their product on sympathy or charity, you just can't. You can sell a campaign like People in Need, but you're not selling disabled people, you're selling the idea of helping

I: yeah, yeah

P: so we have to compete with that. So any ad, any advertisements that go out on TV, like the ad for what is *Buttercrust*, with the blind woman?

I: oh *Brennan's* bread

P: *Brennan's* bread, ah yeah, or the new ad from *Addidas*, the guy in the wheelchair?

I: I haven't seen that one

P: They're all competing with stronger images, charity images of disabled people, so for advertisers to take that risk of promoting a product with disabled people, the general public will see, will harbour baggage of charity images.

I: yeah, yeah

P: so, I think the general public will have to find it a bit of a challenge to recognise a product like *Addidas*, and also recognise the image, the charity images it has to compete with like People in Need.

I: yeah, yeah

P: so I think until disabled people get economic independence, economic power I don't see advertising changing, I don't see why it should. I think advertising again it just tells what's happening already, it doesn't, it never really, like ads to women, we say single women or separated women, it was the women themselves that got power, not the ads, the ads came later

I: yeah, yeah, so do you think that will have to happen for disabled people, that they'll have to have power in other parts of society before advertising will change?

P: yeah, before advertisers will feel the need to attract them to a product, yeah, definitely.

I: you don't think advertising has a changing role, like you were saying earlier on, in general it doesn't have a changing role, so do you see it having a changing role for disabled people?

P: no, it can't change with advertising, its selling a product, its selling a lifestyle, and its own niche market, but I can't see how it could change, even that *Brennan's* bread ad, you know, which was great, who is it selling bread to? It's a great ad but first of all blind people can't see the ads, so they probably know about it, but its not selling, who's it selling to?

I: yeah, yeah

P: They did make disabled people look sexy, like your one but then that was changed, so you wonder why advertisers, fair play to them, they probably did it for European Year of Disability, just to sell a product. I'd say in some ways you couldn't count the actual product you know, *Brennan's* bread would have to compete with the charity or blind images. You know the ads helping the blind charities. Which you know, I think they have to go first, I think the charity image has to go completely before anything else.

I: And what images of charity stand out for you, like advertising images?

P: there was an interesting one recently it had, Huntington's, did you see the Huntington's disease?

I: no, I didn't

P: it was a billboard campaign, I didn't see the point of it, people with Huntington's disease are 50%, have 50-50 chance of living, you know what's that? I don't know what it was telling

I: 50% chance of living?

P: People with Huntington's disease have a 50% chance of dying, you know

I: oh right, yeah, yeah

P: I don't know what that's telling us, its just information

I: yeah, yeah

P: so, just get people to give more money to. I think the charity images have to go, they really have to go

(had to change tape at this point)

I: sorry about that

P: We're, as a campaigning organisation we are promoting and we're also now working on more cultural images, we see cultural images of disabled people as important, cultural representation, so all our work is kind of, every year is kind of undermined, by disabled people going out and collecting money for charity and that includes like the Irish Wheelchair Association

I: yeah, yeah

P: At my local shopping centre twice a year they have disabled people collecting money and sometimes that's the only public contact between disabled people and the general public

I: yeah, yeah

P: the general public put their money in a box, so eh, that's a really strong image, and its an image that's quite normal, like non-disabled people would take as granted, as normal, a lot of disabled people would take as normal but its an image that undermines all the work we do, around campaigning and lifestyle

I: yeah

P: so, advertising would have to, somehow debunk that image first, so all these ads like *Brennan's* bread and *Addidas,* they're great, they're brilliant, its great that they're there, they have to compete with this image of eh disabled people needing care, help and charity because to sell a product around disabled people and the general public think disabled people need care, and help and charity, it undermines their product.

I: yeah

P: It undermines the lifestyle that product is trying to sell

I: yeah

P: so *Addidas*, like you know, with *Addidas* you know, disabled people need charity and care, so is *Addidas* for people who need charity and care, you know

I: yeah

P: like *Brennan's* bread, that's for people who need.....So, those, getting disabled people onto the streets as people, not as charity, cans, shaking cans, once or twice a year, I think that has to go. Eh England, we have no information here, but in England like, you have a charity called Scope, which used to be The Spastics Society, they're a huge charity, like, a few million, millions, they only employ 2% of disabled people, now what's that saying?

I: yeah

P: Then you have the charity shops as well, Enable Ireland and all that. In the end, myself as a consumer, as somebody in a consumer society, who has two kids, and who probably seen as someone who's kind of made it but has his own, I have to compete with those charity shops, those images, so you don't, you're not normal, its not normal, its not normal for disabled people to have power, to have money, and that is reflected when we go to campaign and meetings you know, you definitely get a sense that non-disabled people can't cope with disabled people having power, and really can't cope, eh, actually the organisations, the charities, or the voluntary groups that collect money are caring, company with a caring ethos, they have kind of a big challenge to have disabled people asking permission so in terms of advertising, you know the advertisers have to compete with all that baggage, all that historical images of disabled people

I: yeah, yeah

P: so, to sell a product with disabled people in it, you're gonna have to undermine that whole history, that whole baggage

I: yeah, yeah

P: so, if you're in a shopping centre and you're selling a product in a shop and outside there's somebody, there's a disabled person collecting, collecting money for charity, I think the charity image wins

I: yeah, yeah, and do you think that has major implications in your life, the charity image?

P: yeah, and other disabled people's life, definitely, it has to go, I: yeah

P: there's no grey area I think it just has to stop

I: yeah

P: it's a problem with any, it's a problem with most charities, disability charities, they only earn about 5% of their income from this charity so, most of their income comes from the state

I: oh right

P: indirect and direct finance, they don't need it, they don't need them, they don't need this money

I: yeah, yeah

P: Most of the service providers, and they're all service providers, they're all providing a service, the money comes from the government, the state directly and indirectly, so we as disabled people are campaigning for questioning where that money is going to,

I: yeah, yeah

P: so, we are changing the situation, so, the thing about advertising, again advertising won't change anything, it's the group, gay people, black people, women, cause they had to change it first and then advertising come along later, it's the same, because you have money, its easier to sell you a product

I: yeah, yeah, and when you were saying earlier on about somebody who's married and has two kids and a house, a car and a dog, and they're looked at as being somebody who's made it, would that be by disabled people or by non-disabled people, that you're seen as somebody who's made it, so to speak, that you're?

P: you're not actually talking about me, you're talking about other disabled people

I: yeah, yeah

P: I think it be more accepted into society, because you have these things, especially in consumer society like the one it is now, its em, I won't say philosophy but the idea is, is that if everyone had money we'd be all equal, ridiculous idea, crazy idea. It's seen in the States, if you're disabled people, working, with financial power, they have more acceptance, not acceptance, they have more power to be, to be part of society. Its not about acceptance, you can't make society accept you, it won't happen, you have to get out there, so in terms of having the kids, the mortgage, the house, the car, it's the disabled person themselves going out and getting it and getting the means to access it. Society won't give it to you

I: yeah, yeah

P: so you put yourself in that position as a disabled person

I: yeah, yeah. Em I'll just show you these ads now if that's alright?

P: yeah ok

I: they're not Irish ads (laughter), cause I was trying to

P: do you want to leave that on or?

I: yeah, we'll leave it on yeah.

I: is that alright for you? (turning laptop around to show ads)

P: yeah, I saw that before yeah (referring to MS ad)

I: you've seen that before yeah?

P: Yeah, it's a very strong medical model, charity model. Its ridiculous, they always sell this stuff under the auspices of research. Research what? like I don't see any impairment, I can't think of any breakthrough in terms of research. Anyway most research is paid for by pharmaceutical companies and I think this ad, I had a colleague who had MS and she was really annoyed with this. And I think it's the MS Society, is it?

I: yeah, in the UK

P: UK one yeah, never mind one here, which is bad enough, but a UK one, you'd think after years of campaigning about disabled people that this wouldn't happen, its still happening.

I: yeah, yeah

P: Again, it's a good example of how people with MS, people with MS are usually, they come up in education, they've gone through the whole normal system, normal schools, it's a normal school system, special schools aren't normal

I: yeah, yeah

P: they have the education, they have the money, so they know they want the lifestyle, this promotes, what its promoting charity, care, it's medical model, it completely undermines,

I: yeah, yeah

P: attached to the idea, if you give your two pounds, we could cure MS, they don't even know what it is, so how can they cure it? There's no cure. Its this idea of curing the impairment, whereas people with MS know the biggest barriers are prejudice, or access issues, you know its not the condition itself, its, the condition itself is restrictive but the everyday reality is the prejudice that they come up against. So, it's a good example of a bad medical model image

I: yeah, yeah, and how does it make you feel when you see ads like that?

P: Well, its great because it for MS, and I have cerebral palsy, so its nothing to do with me

(Laughter)

P: God help them, I'll give them a few pounds

(Laughter)

P: Its, again, the image, the disabled person has no power, if advertising is about sex or about fear even, that's definitely fear, non-disabled people will go 'Jesus, I hope that never happens to me. I'll give a few bob, in the hope that it never happens to me'. For the disabled person there's a complete lack, loss of power. Somebody with MS is not seen as a sexual being or attractive. The image is a total loss of any power, you couldn't get a worse image really, complete loss of power. For most people with MS, their daily life is not like that. It's like that for a very small percentage of the time, but it's not like that. The image could be anything, it could be cerebral palsy, it could be, we're not promoted as attractive or, we're a drain on society. That other non-disabled person could be better doing an honest days job, instead of looking after people with MS. It just undermines and takes power away..

I: will I just show you the next one?

P: yeah

I: I don't whether you've seen this one before this is from the US.

P: again, its still a medical model, some people would say that's quite positive, and I suppose compared to the last one it is positive, but still America has a big problem with the social model because it sees it as a Marxist dialectic

I: right yeah

P: Now you have the social model and the medical model and they work off each other, yeah?

I: yeah, yeah

P: so its kind of a dialectic, Marxist, the Yanks just can't cope with that.

I: yeah, yeah

P: Eh this is a medical model, because the person can't get up the stairs. The image shows disabled person has no power, you know, they have excluded themselves from normal society. Its not, if I was a non-disabled person I'd go 'oh fuck, I'm glad I'm not in a wheelchair'. Its still… in some ways the other one is so bad you can let it go, this is kind of harder to deal with because its very, very medical model whereas non-disabled people think of it as progressive

I: yeah, yeah

P: I don't think it is. And it's a woman, and she's left completely vulnerable, lack of power, and also nobody, everybody else is upstairs in their apartment. At the end of the day the disabled person is on their own, and a lot of images of disabled people are always on their own, they're never part of a group, or

I: and how does that make you feel when you see those images?

P: Again, its, because they're not seen as part of a group, disabled people in the medical model, charity model, disabled people can't make relationships, disabled people can't talk to other people, its all the disabled person's fault, that they are the problem. Whereas, as a person who's out there, who has eh, if you didn't know I had cerebral palsy would think he has his own life, I think most disabled people who have financial power, have a job, they are part of society just like everybody else. It's only those disabled people who don't have financial independence who are stuck with other, stuck outside society.

I: yeah, yeah

P: You have to have money to go to the pub,

I: yeah, I just have one more to show you

P: yeah. Where did you get that one? It's an old one? (referring to The Spastics Society ad)

I: I got it from Scope. I emailed them and then I rang them and they sent over two or three images

P: that's a long time ago

I: yeah, yeah, yeah

P: Again, it's a, it would be a progression on the last one, but its still based around the impairment, its still medical model. Its, 'the worst handicap is other people's attitudes' – that's true yeah. But it's the charity saying that not disabled people, the disabled person has to have power in the image, they don't have power in the image. I don't think you can ever, you can't depend on charities to change, because they're still looking for money

I: yeah, yeah

P: so, it's an improvement on the last one, on the American one. I have a feeling the American one is more recent is it?

I: yeah, as far as I know, I'm not sure of the dates but I was under the impression that it was more recent as well, like I thought this was much older

P: The Spastics Society I think changed in 80-something

I: was it yeah

P: em 84? The Spastics Society, the outgoing chairman he said eh, he had a great quote, he said 'just because you run a cats and dogs home, doesn't mean that the cats and dogs should take over'

I: Oh my God

P: that was his last week before, the day they were changing from The Spastics Society to Scope

I: unbelievable

(Laughter)

P: I'd say, the American one is more recent I think

I: yeah I think so

P: But still, this ad would've been the time when Scope was changing over. The campaign by disabled people in The Spastics Society, in institutions to change and that's where it came from. But its still, they have power, disabled person didn't have power, its still not, what's it selling?

I: yeah. And would you identify with any of those three images?

P: no

I: no? and in terms of defining what disability means for you, would any of those images define it?

P: no

I: how would your definition differ?

P: well disability for me is the social barriers that, attitudes like. A recent research report in five European countries, Ireland wasn't included, I think it was Sweden, Spain. They asked disabled people what was the biggest problem and they all said, 80% said attitudes were the biggest barrier

I: yeah, and would you agree with that?

P: yeah, absolutely. Physical access issues are still really important, like transport or ramps but they're easy, they're easy to change, compared to attitudes. Attitudes are cultural, they're culturally determined and you can economically determine that disabled people need money but there's a cultural argument. So any education of non-disabled people has to happen at a cultural level. The recent European Year of People with Disabilities, you have a 'hundred days a hundred ways' campaign?

I: yeah, yeah

P: That's the same tactics as the charities, you pledge to do something for disabled people

I: you which, what did you say (name)?

P: you pledge to do one of the

I: you pledge yeah

P: that didn't give disabled people any power. So, it's still a charity base. I think the social model and a social model practice, and an understanding and appreciation of what the medical model is. I think that has to, that concept has to inform disability discourse. Anything else is based around impairment, the cure, and rehab and medical – that does nothing. Also, because in this society, which we were just talking about value for money and cost and all that, and things like the whole genetic discussion, genetics will cure, genetics will not cure anything, if very little, like cerebral palsy is not a genetic thing, they don't know what MS is, schizophrenia is not a genetic issue and they're trying very hard to prove it is but they can't, they can't. So, genetics will not, in thirty years time people will see that genetics has failed, we'll still have disabled people with us and they cost so much. That's what happened with the Nazi's, the Nazi's said, science said that it will cure all illness, it didn't, so the Nazi's said we have all these disabled people are we willing to pay for them, that money would be better spent on crèches, you know. Say if someone said here, the whole issue of crèche, you know, will we take the money that goes on disabled people and don't ask how much money is spent on disabled people but if we take some of that money away and build crèches, I think most people would vote to build crèches, wouldn't they? So, its an issue of cost, and I think that discussion, that argument was kicked off three or four years ago by (name) what value have disabled people in modern society? And advertising is selling a lifestyle, they're not selling it to disabled people, they're not part of it. So, we 're not seen to have any value.

I: and would you like to see advertising change in any way?

P: Yeah, well again I don't think it can until disabled people have economic power, there's no point, what are they going to sell like. They have the odd ad with disabled people in it, great, but it's not selling anything. Disabled people need to have economic independence and then advertising will kick in. I don't think we can depend on advertising to sell, to do anything.

I: do you think you would miss advertising if it wasn't there?

P: no

I: no?

P: I'd rather it wasn't there.

I: all advertising?

P: yeah, its only there for business, its only there for profit. Advertising, advertise a nation, a citizenship and all that, well not all advertising, advertising around a citizenship, what it is to be living in Ireland. That kind of take on advertising, selling an ethos or a belief that would be good. In terms of a product we could do without it, big time.

I: Its just one last thing then, I got these cards from MS Society, I just actually wanted to see your opinion of them

P: yeah

I: I'll leave that on if that's alright?

P: yeah

(Showing cards)

P: Jesus

I: will I flick through them and show you the whole lot of them first and then?

P: (laughter) Impotent (reading from card), Jesus,

I: I'll flick through them and then I can go back to ones then

P: it's a voodoo doll

I: what?

P: its like a voodoo doll

I: yeah, yeah, yeah

P: Are these from Ireland?

I: no UK. I actually found it very hard to get images here off the charities, they said they didn't use disabled people in their advertising

P: That's terrible, they're desperate.

I: I actually got a fright when I opened it, I opened the envelope and I wasn't expecting them.

P: what are they selling?

I: if you want to see the brief actually that went with it, the campaign. I'd be interested to see what you think of it just, do you know that way.

P: well, that's, getting an awareness of what MS is ......16-30 year olds, they're picking that advertising niche of 16 to 30 year olds to sell what MS is. But MS for every person is different, that's just telling you the impairment, its not telling, its not saying...., its terrible, its really, its actually worse than...

I: than those ones?

P: yeah. I'd say the disabled people with MS would be really sickened by something like that. It's a total loss of power, the whole thing

I: yeah, yeah, that's great I just wanted to actually see. That's all my questions, have you got any questions for me?

P: what's the general, what did other people say?

I: about these?

P: No, about your whole thing?

I: I haven't, I've only done one other one and then I have (name) whose going to do one as well, so I've only started the interviews, at the minute.

P: do you want to talk to somebody who has MS?

I: yeah, I wouldn't mind if you knew somebody else to talk to

P: (name) she's doing a doctorate in Trinity college, so

I: would that be...?

P: myself and (name) were probably the first to introduce the social model to Ireland, nearly ten years ago, before that it wasn't really here, we pushed that big time, so really worked a lot, we were working hard on it, so much so, that (name) got knackered with it, we were getting nowhere, its only in the last few years that the social model has actually been on the table.

I: yeah, yeah, you can see changes happening?

P: yeah, you say it and people don't go 'what'?

I: yeah, yeah

P: so (name) would be great to show this to, she has MS

I: yeah, it was just em

P: she's from England, she was involved in the whole, she's an activist in England, she's seen England and she's seen here

I: yeah, so she's seen the contrast

P: (name) her name is

I: I'll turn this off now will I?

Sample Stage Two Interview

I = Interviewer
P = Participant

I: em, so I was just going to start by summarizing what we did in the last interview, so, we looked at the role of the media, visual representations of disability, the advertising images including disabled people and not including disabled people, and then we talked about the ads that you liked and that you didn't like and how you thought they impacted on your experience of disability and we looked at how the body is used in advertising and I was just wondering whether you thought any more about these areas and if there was anything you wanted to add yourself

P: eh, I'm just trying to think of what I said the last time, eh, I don't think there's anything really, the only thing I'd say is the impact around, or issues around cost, say like recently it relates to advertising, something like Ryanair who had a court case brought against them a few months ago

I: yeah, yeah

P: by a disabled guy in England and he won his case about costs, so Ryanair are put up ads, advertisements saying that prices will go up because we have to take on disabled people

I: yeah, yeah

P: so, and also, the Darts closure, you know the Dart stations are closed, they say they have to close the Dart stations because they have to make it accessible to disabled people, and the other thing was em, the Department of Education are going to charge for primary school buses down the country because they say 30% rise in costs to include disabled people. So, these are all advertisements, these are all ads so you know in one way they're turning out representations of disabled people, images, and the reason its predominant here is the issue of costs around disabled people, that eh companies or organisations are saying that we cost them money and its our fault, we are the problem, so that's in terms of the social model it's a very medical model you know, we used to be charity and now we're cost, we cost you, so social model interpretation would say that Ryanair or different state departments are portraying, us as a problem, that costs money, we are the problem,

I: and how does that make you feel when you see that?

P: I think eh its gonna get worse eh it gonna get as we move from eh history in Ireland was the religious or family groups, you know CRC or IWA, or women at home you should look after disabled people, and women quite rightly you know, want to go out and earn a living and have, get some money, have a bit craic, they don't want to be stuck at home with looking after the handicapped, so religious organisations or family groups do the rest of that as well, so it becomes a cost or a burden on the Irish people, as I said before you have some disabled people living positively as, as disabled people, there is a larger and a growing image of disabled people as being a cost, they're going to cost you something, that's quite negative, we are a problem, and disabled people are as I said before , advertisers won't be interested in us unless we have money,

I: yeah, yeah

P: so this cost issue, we saw it coming, right it keeps getting stronger and stronger, so everything the State does or a company does for access they're going to blame us, they're going to in their advertising, they're going to advertise like the extra cost or the extra hassle is because of disabled people

I: yeah, yeah, and what do you think disabled people can do to counteract that or do you think that there is anything that they can do?

P: well, they can transform

I: they can which?

P: they should organize a terror campaign

(laughter)

P: eh that's what I really think, eh I think in advertising I think we can do very little, we can do something, like the (name of organisation) we have a newsletter, and its getting bigger, we have posters, we're turning in more through poster campaigns, so like, say the new electronic voting, it's not very accessible, they're saying its accessible but its not, so we're, we have a poster, shite I meant to bring you a copy of the newsletter

I: ah right, I'll be over in the (name) on Friday

P: will you, so you can get a copy, and they have the poster in that,

I: brilliant, yeah

P: its an advertisement, the poster its aimed at getting, its aimed at disabled people, and its aimed at getting disabled people out to vote, its, I'm doing a poetry paper on employment, we need to market directly to disabled people, and last year the European Year of People with Disabilities in Ireland, I think there was a few million pound a few million of the euro campaign, aimed mostly, aim, focused on non-disabled people, and I don't think it had any impact at all, I think any campaign should be aimed at disabled people, like in the Northside of Dublin, in the local partnership, a few years ago, had a poster campaign aimed at women in the home, to get them to come out and get a job, it wasn't aimed at employers it was aimed directly at women, to go out and get a bit of work, you know so it wasn't saying to employers employ more women, it was saying to women to get out of the home, get training, go to work, and it really worked

I: do you think that's a matter of raising awareness within the group themselves before outside action?

P: yeah I think it is I think resourcefully we'll get a better focus on, advertising to disabled people for issues of, or services directly related to disabled people, I think that's the only power advertising has at the moment, I don't think like general advertising on TV are , actually its like token to me , disabled people don't, with 60 or 70% unemployment disabled people don't have the consumer base, they don't have the money to buy the products, so they're not attractive to advertisers, and I do feel that the odd image of disabled people, where it can be quite positive, its great, its real token, its not, they're not selling

I: like with the *Nike* ad was it and the *Brennan's* bread, you were talking about that the last time, do you think that's tokenism?

P: eh, its positive, its great, its still reality is, what are they trying, they are trying to sell a product and disabled people don't have consumer, don't have the money to buy it, they have no money to buy bread (Laughter) I think

I: its not that bad, I hope (laughter)

P: they can't even buy bread (laughter), they can't even afford *Brennan's* bread even (laughter), yellow pack bread, obviously they're not selling bread, they're not selling, it wasn't an ad to sell bread to disabled people, it was an ad to sell a lifestyle for their product, the same with *Nike*, so I think that disabled people just have to have more consumer power, more jobs, and more money and then like the gay community, you have the pink pound, maybe you'll have the cripple euro or something

(laughter)

I: don't know whether that will catch on, catchy phrase, nice slogan

P: they come up with something last year, euro…, I forget, its in the newsletter, pink pound was really good, as the grey, what's it called

I: grey market, for the older market

P: its really good, so we need something

I: you haven't got one

P: we haven't really got a colour

I: yeah that's what you need

(laughter)

P: we need something catchy, yeah, that's, like I said before advertising same as kinda like films, is always aimed at an age group, of 16-25, and they think after 25 people get married and have kids and don't have much disposable income, that's changed now, its more niche, a growing recognition that people in their fifties and sixties have no mortgage, their kids are grown up, they have more income, lets now market to the grey, the grey whatever its called, so can disabled people be, could they ever be seen as a niche market, I suppose you have to clarify what you mean by disabled people, I: um, yeah

P: is it impairment based, are you basing it on impairment or are you basing it on social barriers, so if you're basing it on impairment there's not really much you can sell, colostomy bags, or crutches or something, if you're basing it on social barriers like for women, like take that advertising for women, where women have, its all about women taking control or having economic independence, a lot of ads is that you have a woman, it's a female mother figure, who have kids, you don't see a man there in the ads, because they're economically independent, you know so what do you buy a product to show a social barrier, do your washing up, do you wash up quicker or, you have to sell to disabled people on a social barrier basis, something that they can buy like, as attitudes have been recognised as the biggest barrier for disabled people, that you'd have to sell a product to disabled people that will make you look a lot more attractive or a lot more,

I: yeah, yeah,

P: yeah, a lot more attractive to the general or more normal to the general public, but disabled people have to have the money to buy it first, so I think advertisers have to clarify what they mean by disabled people, not people with impairments, you know we would we see a medical see a disabled person who can't do something because of their impairment or is it social model, its society that disables people, that angle, whatever angle you take on that will affect your advertising, you know so if they are selling a product as social then, eh, disabled people can't even use the type of product or service, or do you sell your product or service directly to disabled people

I: you were saying about attitudes being the biggest barrier and the last time you were talking about attitudes being culturally determined, and I was just wondering what you think is the best way about influencing people's attitudes towards disability?

P: yeah, I still go back to the I think it's a bit of a waste having an advertising campaign on disability aimed at non-disabled people, with you're selling, you're trying, you're selling disabled people, that's what you're selling the image to non-disabled people, so I think it's a waste myself, like it's all about eh, a continuation of charity that has handicapped, and these people, any of that advertising I've seen is all about supercrips or disabled people, its all like the kind of wonderful, fantastic thing or angelic, or you know like last year with the Special Olympics, you had images of Down Syndrome people running and laughing, and hugging people, you know that's institutional, cause I think disabled people, Down Syndrome people, like being really sexy and snogging and want to be accepted they're in a relationships, you don't see that over here, that wouldn't have sold the Special Olympics, you know so the general public every time they come across a Down Syndrome person, they think they're going to be nice and cuddly,

I: yeah, yeah

P: so as soon as they ask a question, or as soon as they want to be your peer, like talk to you then it changes, so I do, I still think advertising through at the moment in the short, in the immediate future I think any advertising should be aimed at disabled people to change, to boost their confidence and to start to selling an Irish citizenship, to effective citizenship to disabled people, you should be getting a job, you're entitled to get a job, you're entitled to have a house, you're entitled to have a relationship, you're entitled to go out and go mad and have a bit of fun, selling a lifestyle really. I know that's what we are working now at the (name), few posters around, you know the thing about family, disabled parents, I'm a disabled parent that has two kids, so we're doing posters, we want to do a poster campaign, to focus on parents, disabled people who are parents and celebrate that.

I: and do you think that's how attitudes will change, they'll have to change with disabled people and then afterwards concentrate on changing attitudes of non-disabled people, is that the best way to go about it?

P: yeah, I think if you change, if you give disabled people a capacity to go out and the confidence to go out and meet other disabled people, that's where it happens, I myself and other disabled people, they have different impairments, I have cerebral palsy, Donal Toolin's in a wheelchair, (name) got MS, so the actor Matt Fraser who was on the telly last night has thalidomide, we all have the same experience, that when we have friends who get to know us, because I have friends that call me a spa like, not a spastic but a spa, we know its just a slagging

I: the slang kind of

P: and then they go, oh we don't really mean, they don't see me as a disabled person, that's what they keep saying, you see they know I'm disabled but they see me as a peer, as an equal, as a peer but that's me, and no advertising campaign could've done that, so I think disabled people themselves have to be out there, meeting the general public and then like any group, like black, or gay, or the more people meet them the more normal it becomes, you're kind of normalizing the difference, and actually I did a report on employment called, its normal to be different, difference is the actual norm, not everybody's the same

I: its not neutralizing the difference, its just making it a fact that people are different

P: like if you're black, you're black, you know no matter how, you see in England, and it's a pity you see black people who are second or third generation black, they're English, their skin is black, but they're really they're in their country, they speak in such an English way, so, the same with gay, like I know gay men who are my age, in their forties, keep complaining that all these young gay men come around who have no political background, they don't care about politics because to them in Dublin, to them its quite normal to be gay, its not a political thing, I hope someday that younger disabled people don't have to be political to have lifestyle choices,

I: do you find that the younger disabled people now are political?

P: they're not political enough

I: they're not political enough

P: there's still a lot of work, (name), we have to market to young disabled people, they're not, like its quite obvious that there's a lot of, we're only at the start really and there's a need for more and more people to get involved, so we have to get more disabled people, more younger disabled people involved

I: involved

P: to have the confidence to go out party, take drugs and get drunk, you know,

I: yeah

P: that's what we need

I: and you were saying as well the last time that advertising, if it was selling a belief or ethos it would be good and I was just wondering what you meant by a belief or ethos in advertising, is that linking back to your citizenship or?

P: yeah,

I: yeah, its linking back to that, I just wanted to make sure

P: yeah, its lifestyle,

I: yeah

P: so if you're selling a product, like you know, you know yourself, like I mean there's a difference in the ads, you see the ads for the *Nissan Micra* what I have compared to the what I really want which is a big sports car, you know, so the ads are quite different you know, the ads, the narrative of the ads is based here on lifestyle, so that the person who buys this car will have that lifestyle, you know, so actually there's a good one out now, which is eh, I think I might have talked about it the last time, its really really good especially for me because I just turned 41, its an ad for aftershave

I: an aftershave?

P: yeah, the bottle is just there and camera, and there's just one camera shot and these younger men try and touch the bottle but they get an electric shock

I: oh yeah, I know the one but I can't think of the name

P: and then an older man comes along and has the confidence to pick it up, so basically its saying that you know these young guys haven't got the guts to, its only you the older, mature man

(laughter)

I: yeah, yeah, and you related to that

P: I wouldn't actually use that aftershave, the guy looked like he was 50 but I still use what's it, *Hugo Boss*

I: oh *Hugo Boss*, yeah

P: that's really cool its like for the younger ones, I'm trying to hold on with my fingernails to youth, I suggest that the image is quite a positive image you know, its that, it's the grey market, the idea it's a really strong image that these young guys they can't grab it, its going against the grain, in that industry so youth dominated that marketing is respecting a difference in society and this older man, and how women, the guy is always, he's obviously still on the prowl if he's wearing aftershave, and you know he's looking quite cool, but he's still got what it takes to, cause that's a good example, he hasn't got a cardigan or slippers, he hasn't got flannel trousers, he's eh, this is the grey, sexy, really attractive, mature, I'd say a lot of women would find that ad very, its aimed at women as well cause women will probably buy the stuff you know, so it's a good example of how an image of old age can be turned upside down to be very sexy and very attractive, cause who would've thought that could be possible, it's the same with disability there's a need for something like that to happen with disability you know but that product has a particular market of men in their 50's or 60's that's the market, cause a younger guy won't buy it, so that product is related to that market, if you're selling a product to disabled people, disabled people are not an homogenous group, they're not one big community, we're in a different community we're not one community, probably related to each other because they come across, they have a shared experience of prejudice, or attitudes, that's what we've most in common, so if you're saying that if a company are selling or advertisers selling a product and they want to use disabled people but we're not one big group, with one impairment, type of thing the impairment, the only way the impairment can relate to us is if the narrative is based around a social barrier, so, going back to that ad for the old guy, the social barrier was that you know, age is not barrier, young guys might think it is but its not, I am quite sexy, I have charisma, so its older people who have to change things not younger people

I: so, is that selling a belief about what it means to be old do you think?

P: yeah, I think it is selling a belief, I think it's a really good example of turning something upside down completely, and even the like, the age, I'm 41, but I don't feel like it, I don't feel like 41, and advertising is picking that up, they're not selling to me a lifestyle about settling down, they saying that I might have kids, but I could still go out and buy a fast car and still lead a fast life, I actually lead a better life probably because I suppose I have more confidence or experience than

(laughter)

P: but I still think that advertising only reflects society, I don't think it leads things, that ad for the older guy, I think that ad is a product manufactured because there's a market out there, they didn't create the market, the market was there already, a lot of men in their fifties might leave their wives and marry younger, sexy, women, especially if they're in positions of power, it's a fact that more men have power than women, so they'll leave their wife for a younger woman, they'll dress differently, they're going to buy an aftershave that says all that,

I: yeah, yeah

P: cause that's the relation in ads and all the you know, so an ad aimed at disabled people and the product will have to keep that in mind, the product will have to be related and I don't know how, it would have to be on a social barrier, if you base it around one impairment then its gone, like a wheelchair ad, an ad with a wheelchair, its nothing to do with me, I don't have that impairment, but if it's a wheelchair person coming up against attitudes yea then I'd recognise that

I: you'd relate to that, and you were saying as well about em, you see advertising as a reflection of Ireland today and what it means to be living in Ireland, and I was wondering do you that advertising reflects what is to be living in Ireland for you as a person?

P: like I say I'm a man who's in his forties from Coolock, yeah I think, its selling, Irish advertising has definitely got a lot more competent and a lot better, it used to be so bad, and all of that's because its cheaper to produce ads here and a lot of ads that we think are American , a lot of ads are made for the English market or British market would be actually made here, so its just cheaper production and better facilities but, yeah, lot of ads, I'm just trying to think, one ad that struck a cord with me was, I think I might have talked about it the last time, was the *Erin* soup,

I: *Knorr* soup was it

P: was it *Knorr* soup

I: it was *Knorr* soup that you said the last time, maybe

P: that's it, do you know what I'm talking about

I: I don't know the actual ad, you were saying about quality of life

P: yeah, it says do you remember the good old days when you know, when you drink this soup it will all come back to you, so, that one impacted on me because you know I actually notice that Dublin has changed and I don't think for the better, that's why I'm moving down to Leitrim,

I: yeah, yeah

P: so its selling, I know when I move down to Leitrim, its still a market, a niche still a niche, selling a lifestyle, so yeah I think ads, I think maybe the niche ads, a lot of like ads go over my head like the Guinness ads

(tape ends, changed tape over)

P: I think the Guinness ads, my brother works for Guinness in that area sales, its definitely aimed at younger people, they know they have to compete with ecstacy and drugs and then the whole bottled beer, so as a 41 year old, they don't impact on me, you know unless I want to drink Guinness and feel younger, I don't, I drink something else to feel younger (laughter), so the thing is niche marketing, different ads, some ads have no impact and some ads do, some ads are aimed at women, some ads aimed at men, so I'm sure the Guinness ads with the two guys might have a favourable impact on women

I: yeah, yeah

P: and that's the only guy with a guy like that

I: you were saying about the *Benetton* ad the last time, the poster campaign with the woman, you were saying it was very erotic

P: did you see it?

I: no, I've been looking for it, and I can't find it

P: I'm trying to buy it

(laughter)

I: if I find it I'll let you know, but you were saying that you thought that was an unusual campaign and I was just wondering in what way do you think that differs from other advertising?

P: well, firstly, it struck me, I think it was aimed at me, you know what I mean

(laughter)

P: its one my way home, so it must be, (laughter), I think its aimed at my age group, its selling clothes so I don't know what, don't want to think about it too much, she's a younger woman, it is a very erotic ad, there's no doubt about it, I mean its very simple, so its aimed at a particular market that would find that attractive so, is it selling clothes, is it selling clothes to me, so I'll go in and buy clothes, but for who, won't buy it for myself, so I must be buying it for somebody else

I: yeah, yeah

P: cause you know, so am I buying it for my partner or am I buying it for a secret lover, so, its interesting, but I think its definitely aimed at men, or aimed at men to go wow look at that, and the wife or the partner or girlfriend will try and recreate that image or look, this is what I like, I have to somehow bow to that, to that image, I have to buy the clothes to look like that, and *Benneton*'s the place to go, you know when you get your haircut, I want that haircut, and you bring the poster and I want that, I want to look like her

I: you have the picture

P: say it was me and like I was going along and my partner's showing me a guy and wow going look at him, I'd be going, what the hell has he got that I haven't got, definitely I think its aimed, I wonder how younger men see it, to be honest I have a feeling they wouldn't be able to see, that much its so stupid that its very complex, I think its aimed at men my age, 30's, 40's up,

I: middle aged kind of, am I allowed say that?

(laughter)

P: no

I: no

(laughter)

P: middle –aged, I'm going. So that's it, I don't go to *Benneton*, maybe I would

I: do you think you will?

P: after something like that, I might make unconscious decision, I might be buying clothes for my daughter or son

I: yeah, it wouldn't necessarily be

P: not necessarily me, it has definitely opened up *Benneton* as a possibility to buy clothes,

I: that's interesting

P: if it can compete with *Penney*'s prices

(laughter)

I: another thing that you were talking about the need for more cultural images of disability and that part of your work was in promoting cultural images and I was wondering whether you could explain what you mean by cultural images cause I wasn't quite sure what you mean

P: yeah beyond advertising, I think things like Fair City or Irish, disabled people are in positions of, immediate positions of power and authority, I don't think, the last, I might be wrong but the last disabled character I seen was in Glenroe, the actor, Mark Gower who had a very, he's a good actor, but he's not very, to be fair to the actor so he, you just see him sitting there in a wheelchair after Sunday Mass, he didn't really have a, powerful media the part of having a disabled person is an image, he didn't have a narrative role really, he always seemed to be there when they're coming out of Sunday Mass, (laughter) he didn't have any, so you need a disabled person who, I'd love to play a character who is evil or attractive and you know kind of like you know, you need a disabled person to be something like eh, Dirty Den, or the equivalent of whatever that is in Fair City, you don't need disabled person to carry an issue, you need to be able to go beyond that,

I: its beyond advertising these cultural images is it or do you think advertising can be a part of it as well

P: I think advertising needs characters in programmes, TV, in fiction, it needs those characters there before it can really take on its own characters, you know the narrative, that kind of narrative is not there so how can advertising reflect that, it has to start from scratch, that *Brennan's* ad with the blind woman, you don't see that type of character anywhere else and I think that was the problem with the ad got cut or changed, if that character was in Fair City, if she was playing that kind of feisty, sexy, active, character, then the *Brennan's* ad would be a lot stronger, especially for the advertisers, then you know *Brennan's* bread would be seen as the sexy product to have in your house you know, so, em, I think advertisers need to campaign to have more, and they can, advertisers do have that strength, cause they're the same people, they're using the same production companies, you know they could easily suggest or push for, they could say ok we will have more disabled actors, or images, if your Fair City or Ros na Run has more feisty, sexy disabled characters, cause advertising, cause feeds that and reflects that

I: and do you think that could compete with the charity image,

P: oh it has to

I: remember we were talking about that before, that like all the baggage that's there, do you think if it was more in like

P: I think the charity images should have to be lobbied or campaigned to go, I don't think they can compete with it, it just they just have to go, I think we as disabled people have to get in the seat, stress the point it just has to go, get rid of it, and I don't think, it doesn't matter how many characters you have in a fiction, I don't think its strong enough to compete, as I said before all we're campaigning for is social model, social integration, we're saying disabled people can work, are workers, and then on a Saturday and Sunday you have some spas out collecting money, you know, you can't compete against that, it undermines everything you do, cause that's already there, so that has to go, completely, that has to go, that's advertising itself, it has to go

I: and we were talking about disabled people in the media that you identify with and Bethan Collins you said was one because she's coming from the same kind of viewpoint and I was wondering whether you think its important for disabled people to have disabled role models

P: I think its crucial, I think you have to, Bethan is on Audioscope, it's a programme aimed at blind people so its very little relation to, even though I'm disabled, even though myself and Bethan are activists in the same organisation, I don't feel like I have to listen to that programme, I don't feel that's there's need, and then you have the other programme 'Outside the Box' and your man, the presenter there, I don't feel is strong like Bethan, I don't feel he's a proper role model even though he's disabled, he's slipped back into the kind of charity image, so yeah I think disabled people, media, in the media, are not just there because they're presenting a disabled programme, they could be presenting something on clothes, I mean I'm sure Off the Rails, something like Off the Rails, I'm sure they did something, a five minute section on a disabled person getting clothes, who cares do you know what I mean, if they had a disabled person as a presenter, not just there because they're disabled, so the role model has to be beyond the impairment

I: do you think that would make a big difference in a disabled person's life, if there was like role models there in the media?

P: oh yeah, I think its happened for women, definitely, its happening now with gay characters like, Will & Grace, you know the way they have two gay characters, they're not like, they're not just friends with Grace, they're two gay characters, so a lot of gay men, would see them as role models, whether you agree or disagree with them, they're seen as role models, I always think, you'll have we did a sketch in the cabaret where (name) was a lawyer, a business woman with lots of money, she was sick of having a gay friend, a pain the arse, cause they'd go off and leave her alone, go off with other men and he looked better than her, so she had me, she got me out of the special home, I was in there, so she was going to train me to be her friend, her disabled friend you know who'd go shopping with her and be, maybe didn't have to be gay maybe had to be trained to sexually satisfy her as well, you know like years ago on TV or films you always had the woman who had the gay friend, where the character was only that, it wasn't really a character in itself, so maybe in the future women could have a disabled friend who takes that role, who won't leave them won't go off with somebody else, won't look or dress better and won't look similar they are so you know, women, so women with money, single women with money, who don't want a long time lover, so they have a disabled friend, who we thought that would be funny, who replaced the gay friend who you just can't trust because they just go off

I: yeah, its an interesting concept like, I just have one more question and it was like in the first interview we were talking about disabled people shown as people suffering, as evil, pathetic or angelic, you mentioned that people aren't used to seeing disabled people in a normal everyday situation and I was just wondering whether you could explain or describe how you would like to see disabled people shown?

P: yeah, so, disabled people are usually used in the media, advertising, I don't know about advertising so much, in fiction or films or documentaries, they're used as a device to say something so basically you have to lose that, we're not a device for this and again going back to a few years ago, you had a woman with a gay friend, so he was a device to show how lonely she was and how what she really needed was a normal, straight man and as soon as she finds that she gives up the gay man, so couple of years ago gay men were used as a device so there's a need for disabled characters to be characters in their own right, they're not based around an issue, impairment and they're not there to signify something, the Other, they don't represent the Other, did I send you an essay?

I: no you didn't, oh yeah you did, yeah you did, it was two pages

P: yeah

I: yeah, yeah, yeah

P: and did you get the chance to look at it?

I: I only glanced at it, I didn't have a chance to read it yet

P: ah yeah, yeah

(laughter)

P: that's....

I: there's a pile around this height (name)

P: yeah but that's interesting

(laughter)

I: yours is on top

P: don't have to read, don't read the rest; I talk about, you know, what's his face, he died a few weeks ago, Edward Said, the social policy,

I: Said, yeah, yeah

P: he talks about in general the Orient, the Oriental Other

I: the Other yeah

P: especially English/European, English or Britain identified the Orient as the Other, they were savage, uncivilized, un-noble, you know they have the noble savage

I: yeah, yeah

P: English people were English because they weren't that, they weren't English because they did something, they were English because they weren't, so the same with disabled people, disabled characters are used to represent the Other, the deviant, sexual deviancy or nowadays like the English, angelic, you didn't see the programme last week on BBC2 did you?

I: I recorded it, I haven't watched it yet, I have it on tape so, that was Matt Fraser

P: yeah, and I think her name is Sarah, its interesting, I wonder who wrote it, I mean, but they were two characters in the show, they're still kind of weighed down with issues

I: yeah, yeah

P: you know, whoever wrote the piece or directed it but at least they're characters that kind of, they're not a device, they're not there as a device for non-disabled people, so that's what I'm saying in terms of images and representation or characterisation of disabled people, they're not actually, they're not there because they're a device and Irish theatre has a terrible and still up to this day using disabled people as a device to say something else, its not about disability, its about and that essay says that, its not about the impairment or, its about using disability to talk about loneliness or this

I: was it Sharon's Grave was that one of them?

P: Sharon's Grave, yeah

I: cause I saw that last year

P: oh yeah, that's a good example

I: yeah I thought when I was sitting there, that came into my head I was saying, like he's just playing the evil the character like,

P: Sharon's Grave, it was supposed to be set in 1920 but it was written in 1960s, so its really really, John B Keane just didn't have the guts to set it in 1960, but the thing is its 1960's/1970's/1980's Ireland, I mean I recognise that, Dinsy is the character on your man's back

I: yeah, yeah

P: played by a non-disabled actor who got loads of praise for the part, its supposed to be one of the best productions of last year, its supposed to come back and if it does come back we're going to protest outside it, but it's a good, I still think it's a great character, if a disabled actor played that part, would change the whole thing cause the audience couldn't go you know they're not the right kind of shape, because that's a good example of an evil, pathetic character who's used as a device to say that these people are holding back young strong Ireland cause the other characters are young and strong you know, this evil character is holding them back, is stopping progress, so, you know now that it wasn't disabled people who were doing that, it was the Catholic Church, and you've a Catholic government, that's what was stopping them, it was the Church that was stopping people having sex and all, and relationships, not some disabled person on someone's back, do you know what I mean

I: yeah, yeah

P: so Dinsy, and also he was supposed to be related to myths, you know myths, the myth jumping over the cliff and all that but then Irish myths, are, some great myths around disability and they're not like that at all, so that's a good example of it, and that's a new production by Druid Theatre company, one of the most successful companies in the country who will probably take that on tour, people will say to you, oh well its only a play, yeah, it's only a play but why they show that particular play, who chose the play, why they chose it, and why did they really over-emphasize disabled people as evil, so its not there, where did that all come from, its not just the scripts, it's the director, and the actors, and that's Druid Theatre company saying this and that's what we were annoyed about; there's a new film coming out that has two characters with cerebral palsy, the film production company contacted me last year to get involved and I helped them and I knew it was just an exercise to find disabled actors, young actors, you know, I was a bit too old for them and I did, I found it no problem, I found a really good actor in Scotland with cerebral palsy, really good actor, who could easily play the part, they contacted him but they didn't follow on, they dropped me and went to somebody, then went to another disabled person who would give them the kudos, who would o.k them, so when that comes out we're going to protest against that as well

I: as well, yeah, yeah

P: so it's a great offer to do it, it took six years to write the script, why did they contact us, why did they contact a disability group and ask for advice, I haven't seen the script but I'm quite confident that its another example of using disabled characters as a device to say something about Irish society, so in terms of theatre or film or TV, Ireland has a terrible record and no sign of it changing, no sign, the only change that will happen is because of us as disabled artists and disabled actors will change it, and people ask us do you have to be a disabled activist to become a disabled artist, and we said its quite the opposite to be a disabled artist you have to be an activist, you have to become an activist like, you have to get through all this bullshit to get your story on screen or stage or in a gallery, the bullshite you go through is terrible, so in terms of the media and the arts its quite procreative, I think, there has to be a major overhaul and Ireland has a terrible current, past, especially current images of disabled people, its terrible, its negative, really negative

I: and they have implications for disabled people, their everyday experience?

P: yeah, they've implications for non-disabled people, obviously, the production, the actors, the director and the writers think that they're tapping into a baggage that the audience will recognize, the audience are not challenging these, when you where at that play everybody was probably laughing at it

I: yeah, like it was only after that everyone were saying this and this, and I was saying well I didn't like the way that was done, and I don't like the way he symbolizes something else, he's not exactly what they're saying it is and they're using that disability to signify that evilness within him and nobody else that I was with saw that

P: basically John B. Keane, everybody in the 60's, hadn't got the guts to say this is the Catholic Church and the State, only through the back, the State carrying the Catholic Church and beating people up with sticks, and causing emigration, it wasn't just economics, and stopping people having relationships, Dinsy, he represents the Catholic Church, the guy carrying him on his back represents the monstrosity of the State, they're both working together to, you know even though the big guy knows that the disabled character is doing wrong he didn't throw him off, you know he still under total control of the disabled character, then in the 60s we had bishop McCree, the archbishop of ferns , we had the State answerable to the Roman Catholic Church, they hit them with a stick every time something went wrong, in terms of theatre, it was the 1960's, the same time, the Pike theatre in Dublin was closed down because, and the director put in jail because they did a play called the Rose Tattoo, the Tennessee Williams play, that disgusted that mentions the word masturbation, not even wank, people go what, I know I'd be going what, what does that mean masturbation, we had that in school in the sex classes, when you masturbate, 'what's that miss?', wank, ah a wank (laughter) , that is exactly the same time, exactly the same time, in Dublin in the Pike, the Pike Theatre closed down because its director was put in jail because the Catholic Church beat the State into closing, I actually

I: I'd say that's lost on a lot of people

P: totally lost and it so good of the writer, might say oh well I use that as a symbol, as a metaphor, Dinsy is a disabled character, bitter twisted disabled character, they don't see a bitter twisted Catholic Church, or a clumsy State, they just see a tall strong man getting beaten by this little disabled guy, you know that's all they see, that's what it was about but the writer hadn't got the guts to say it, and the same thing is happening today, writers haven't got the guts to say write about what they see so they turn disability as a device to say and the audience go oh yeah, they're all in terms of disability and then the award, Bedbound got an award he has a disabled woman, some kind of weird polio, it's a recent play, its been all over the world, its not about polio, its about the State, the modernized State, they haven't got the guts to say anything, so lets use disability as a device, John B Keane play is a great example of it, exactly the same time as the Pike theatre was closed down,

I: that's interesting, isn't it?

P: did you hear that anywhere in the critics, any of the critics, any of the commentators, did they say that, no, cause they haven't got, and that's why disabled people have to become critical, we, I think that I have no place apart from the (name) newsletter to say that, if I wrote that for the paper, it wouldn't be printed, cause they don't think on that level, really quite obvious, now for disabled people, its up to us to create our own discourse, cause nobody else will create it for us

I: yeah, yeah

P: so I'm not saying that these plays shouldn't be done, not at all, as an actor I'd be, and I know disabled actors who would love to play that part, cause its like in Britain and America, a lot of black actors and directors are going back to Uncle Tom's Cabin type, do you know Uncle Tom's

I: yeah, yeah, yeah

P: they're going back to those types of plays and stories and acting them out as black actors, and seeing you know, seeing how you change, cause that's something, its not a white person blackened up, so it's the same with that other play, I'm not saying that other play shouldn't happen, I'm saying it should happen, it should be disabled directors and disabled actors playing it and that will totally change the story and the audience won't be comfy sitting there laughing at, they'd be quite challenged, like I think the issue around the Catholic Church and all that, yeah it could come out, you know it could come out, the audience will be challenged to say here's a disabled person, disabled actor, its not about him, you know he's acting, what's he acting out

I: exactly yeah, it will be beyond the disability kind of

P: so the actual artwork, the actual challenge buried in the play becomes more than what was, its given more life, its given a whole new life, at the moment to me its like a museum piece in a way you know, this is old Ireland, it could've given a whole new way of life, that's what we were saying as artists, representations of disabled people, if we do it, if we direct it, if we act it, it changes the whole narrative, for the better, and bring the piece to life, Richard III the fact that he, this is a evil character, there's character sees why can't he be King, he has a right like everybody else to be King, Machiavelli, do you know Machiavelli who wrote The Prince, the book called The Prince

I: Prince?

P: yeah he wrote a book called the Prince, basically it was saying that how to become a Prince I think, anyone can become one if you go through these different ways, you know if you become a gentleman, if you learn how to argue, basically everybody has the right to become a Communist or a President, so that's what Machiavelli said, when people see Machiavellian, its twisted into something else whereas Richard III is an actor who is a Machiavellian character, there is no doubt about it, cause he is disabled and he says I have every right to become King

(tape ends, new tape put in)

I: yeah, no bother, is there a deadline or anything?

P: there actually is one out on 28th May, then there's June and July, and also August

I: grand

P: so its up to you

I: yeah, which one, yeah, grand

P: so, going back to Richard III, again the directors are always portrayed him as evil, and they try to say that Shakespeare at the time was asked, Shakespeare was a very pragmatic artist, he just wrote what he was paid to write, he was a great artist, like the same thing about, Michaelangelo painting the Sistine Chapel because the Pope paid him, he painted what they wanted, cause the Sistine Chapel is not about God, its about man, he just uses images of God, so the same with Shakespeare, just uses the story of kinship and all that to argue against the Machiavelli, the Tudors the last thing they wanted was anybody else to become king, I think he had the right to become king, cause the Tudors had the money and power, not because it was their birth right because they just won the war, so Richard III who historically would not today be made disabled by Shakespeare to portray evil and so even though he's a good king he loses it he dies in the end anyway, so if that was played by a disabled actor, with a disabled director which is pointless it would change the whole story,

I: yeah, yeah

P: he's not just evil, he might be an anti-hero, in that he's a good king and falls from grace, but he was still a hero, or a role model to his kids, if you understand that, but its up to Irish, current Irish theatre, film and TV, are lacking in any substance around disability, they are actually I think, increasingly return to disability as a device and it shows lack of, it shows it's laziness, laziness, they haven't got the guts to say the Catholic Church is causing emigration and keeping people apart, so I know what I'll do, I'll use a crippled figure instead to say it

I: to say it, yeah

P: and everybody knows that disabled people are like that, but they won't challenge it, now think of, think of female equivalent, where years ago a woman, I'm trying to think of a play or a film, you know Fatal Attraction, now its quite dated, the bunny boiler, a lot of women would be quite offended by that, just because you're single you have power and you have economic independence, you go mad

I: you go mad yeah

P: that's what Fatal Attraction was basically saying, I'm a woman, I'm 20 or 30 years old, got shot down by a man, his wife is all settled down and she's normal but the single woman is not normal, her hormones

I: cause its not natural to be single, why are you single like? What's wrong with you?

P: yeah, so you go mad, yeah, you haven't got yourself a man you're going to go mad

I: yeah, people are suspicious of you like, they don't know, they're trying to figure out what's wrong with you, definitely is

(laughter)

P: Fatal Attraction would be, I think, quite dated, a lot of women, it actually discriminates against all women who piss off their men, so yeah, that's an example of how women, that's about 20 years, 18/16 years ago

I: yeah, must be something like that

P: I enjoyed it when I saw it

I: yeah, I enjoyed it as a film but its surprising how few women are actually feminist or have any kind of feminist beliefs at all, do you know that way, especially in Ireland, I think its very few

P: yeah, I think a lot of women might consider themselves as feminist, they take it as normal that they have the right to get a job, or they have a right to have choice, whether to have kids or not, they don't have to take any man who, any gobshite who you know, or you can leave, and get separated, I think most separations are brought by women are they

I: I don't know

P: I know in Russia, the Soviet Union, 78% of women took divorce, even though they knew economically they might be worse off, so, I think around disability like its very like, do you know the play, the Doll's House, do you know that one? The Doll's House? Its about, I wouldn't say it's a feminist play but it's a, Henrik Ibsen Norwegian playwright, at the end of the 19th century wrote a play called Doll's House, about this woman who had a perfect house, very rich woman, really nice husband that calls her lovely and puppy and she had everything she wanted, and a friend of her comes to visit and she hasn't got much money, she hasn't got a husband and she says but look at you he calls you puppy or calls you lovely, he doesn't call you by your name, so she soon realizes that she's just his play-thing or, he honestly thinks he loves her, but he loves her because she's a dream, so she makes the choice, in the middle of winter, to leave all this behind her and go out on her own, into certain poverty, there's probably a good chance that she might kick the bucket, she'll definitely have to leave town so disabled people are, that play could easily now be a play about a disabled woman in an institution, that suddenly realizes that all these happy parties and taxi drivers and everything or the Special Olympics, she'll have to leave her lot behind when she becomes a woman but when she does that she loses all these supports and will probably be poor and worse off and that's story goes back to Milton's Paradise Lost and Adam & Eve, Eve takes the apple off Satan, Satan's their hero until that point, he becomes bitter, twisted, he gets his revenge by getting Eve to bite the apple, they get kicked out of, they still had the choice to stay but they decide, but she decides to leave because its hard to not apologize and all to God, because ok, we're going be poor, we're going to be naked, we're going to leave all this, but at least we have our own willpower, our own choice

I: our own choice

P: because Satan was actually pissed off cause he thought, they both lose, God and Satan lose out so, a lot of modern literature and films that are based around that, even though poor Milton, it took him ten years to write it, he went blind, and he thought he was writing a prayer to God, and everyone was like, oh Satan he's a cool guy, so that's, disabled people have to, I don't think we can depend on non-disabled writers and media people to change, we have to do it ourselves, in America, America is a good example, I went to America working a few times, went to the National Theatre Workshop for the Handicapped, it's a college, in Maine, in New York, its an old high school, that was turned into theatre college for disabled people, and get the Board of Directors to work for someone its really good like I've directed over there a few times, the man in charge is a disabled Jesuit, Irish Jesuit, but he's disabled, they have disabled people in power and the whole idea is to train disabled people to go for auditions, which might sound good and they might be great actors but the organization is 20-50 years old, and not one actor has crossed over because as soon as they go for the audition, the director and the producer, go 'oh fuck', who's this, and they don't want to know, no matter how good an actor they are, they immediately, anybody will tell you about auditions, it's the first, and like interviews, the first ten seconds is the most important

I: most important yeah

P: so, as an actor, if you walk on or limp on you're fucked, so in Britain, in America, you don't have great, you should have a better tradition of theatre or stories around disability, they don't, but in Britain they do, cause it was the opposite, disabled people couldn't be a part so they created their own theatre, created their own shows, and so you have a lot of people like Matt and the one last week, in the, they all came from Graeae Theatre, they all came from disability theatre, Matt wasn't an actor, he was a rock singer, a drummer, who pretended not to be disabled, which is ridiculous, he has tiny little arms, for years he tried to say he was non-disabled, he was normal and then he saw Graeae performing a play, six or seven probably eight years ago now, and then he got involved with them and started in disability theatre and that's how he became an actor, that's how he crossed over into mainstream, he wouldn't have got it going to auditions, he goes to auditions now, to get into, he got a part as a World War One soldier in a BBC series where he becomes disabled, at the start he had false arms on so they didn't know he was, so he got that part, only because though he started in disability theatre, if that was a straightforward audition he wouldn't have got, the part especially, you know like

Forest Gump, you know the guy in the wheelchair who loses his legs in Vietnam, that's all computers,

I: yeah, yeah, I heard that yeah

P: they don't have to, they don't need the impairment, they just have a normal actor and the same with the woman in the Soprano's, the Russian woman from the Soprano's who has one leg,

I: which?

P: the woman in the Soprano's, ever see the Soprano's

I: I don't watch the Soprano's no

P: there's a Russian woman who he's in love with, the only woman he's actually in love with, she has one leg, only one leg, when you look at her its only a stump, but that's all computer, so they don't need actors with impairments, so Matt went the opposite way he created a non-disabled character who becomes disabled, those people only get those parts, the same as the woman in the Office you know the office

I: yeah

P: she's disabled, remember Eldorado years ago

I: EldoradoI never watched Eldorado but I knew there was a disabled character

P: she was, that was her

I: is that the same girl, ah right yeah

P: she got involved with Graeae then, and worked her way up, and that's brilliant, the Office, what it says about disability is brilliant, her character, did you see any of it, did you see it

I: yeah, the one where they have a fire drill, you're grand, it's not real

(laughter)

P: that's great stuff or when they're in the pub and he pulls her, stop that, disabled people in wheelchairs, that always happens, people especially in a special schools, disabled people, go aw we'll be wheeling down the corridor or walking in the corridor and there's always someone that comes behind you and wheels you outside or lifts you up, that always happens, and he says to her, are you happy here, any problems just tell me, yeah well I've one problem, what's that, well I haven't got paid yet

(laughter)

P: its like you should be grateful for working here, that's really good show and that's all this is, the guy, the same you know in America, you have the, did you see Something About Mary?

I: yeah, yeah

P: the Farrelly Brothers

I: the which

P: the two writers, they're non-disabled but their best friend is a disabled actor, you know the part where in Something About Mary, where Ben Stiller is carrying a wardrobe up on his back

I: carrying a which?

P: a wardrobe, when he's trying to move house, a wardrobe

I: can't remember that

P: he's on the street and then the guy in the wheelchair, and he says, any chance you can give me a hand and the guy in the wheelchair says 'fuck off', so that, its all about, and you have the character pretending to be disabled or you have the Matt Dillon character saying oh I work with retards, that was so funny, that, as writers they all got that cause their friend is disabled and an actor, and people were upset that its was being demeaning to disabled people, we thought it was hilarious

I: hilarious yeah

P: people with learning with disabilities laughed at it so much, when he said oh I work with retards and I take them out of the cage and I let them walk and I let , its says so more, so much about, and the other guy pretending to be disabled to get a shag, he didn't get a shag did he? Disabled people say there's no such thing as a sympathy shag, if there was we'd be dangerous I never unfortunately got a sympathy shag yet, but like, that's what they were saying, like this character who was a pizza delivery guy, pretending to be disabled so he could get a shag off Cameron Diaz, and he never ever ever crossed the line because, so he's just a pathetic character, it turns out that he wasn't disabled at all, that was really good, another great one, is the Usual Suspects

I: Usual Suspects, no I haven't seen it

P: oh you've never seen it

I: I know, we've had it out don't know how many times on video and I never watched it

P: Kevin, what's his name?

I: Kevin Spacey and Gabriel Byrne

P: yeah, he plays, you didn't see it so I shouldn't

I: don't tell me how it ends (laughter)

P: he plays a character with cerebral palsy, I won't tell you how it ends, but it's a really good example, it turns out that the whole story is hinged on that, that he has cerebral palsy

I: I'll have to have a look at it

P: it's a great one, it undermines, a lot of people found it uncomfortable, its challenging, the ending, for a change

I: yeah, yeah

P: so it taps into the whole charity pathetic, sexual deviance, it taps into all that, the other characters believe that, but in the ending there's a twist, I won't tell you what it is

I: yeah, I'll have a look at it and then

P: yeah that's a good example,

I: yeah, yeah, there's plenty of stuff out there

P: and obviously the writer who was only 21 or 24 or something, had a lot of friends who were disabled and they all helped, it creates a whole new narrative, new ads, I still think advertising should do that, I find it really frustrating that we can't get, I reckon it's the directing, that as the actor I can't act out, its stupid, the challenge for theatre, like the Abbey like to challenge the actors, actors get off on playing impairment, they want to get a hump, they want to have a limp, they want to twist their bodies and they don't act out the character, they act out the impairment, and the audience claps them for that, so the actors, and actors like writers and directors, they're just as bad, they want that

I: they want that as well yeah

P: we're saying well we don't', we're saying its lazy, it's a cop out

I: they see it as a challenge or something

P: the actor who got best actor for Richard III, Cork actor in 2001, the whole interview on the radio was how he had to keep his neck out straight and twist his body, I don't think that's the character, the interviewer was like, oh that must be so painful, oh yeah, I really had to get fit, I really had to get fit, its not about the character, so that's, I do think Christian or stage/screen cinema that has to change first and advertisers can pick up on that

I: on that yeah, so that would be all the cultural images, like you were saying that's were the knowledge are in theatre and film

P: like advertisers always tap into you know, ads that, you know, I don't think advertisers can really create a narrative in 30 seconds, they can but I think there's a danger that the audience mighten get the narrative and the product won't be sold

I: yeah, yeah

P: whereas if the audience are used to feisty, sexy, or challenging disabled characters then already the advertisers have a product to tap into, you know, they don't have to create the narrative from scratch

I: yeah, yeah

P: that's my deep meaningful thoughts

I: what?

P: that's my deep meaningful thoughts

(laughter)

P: is it any help?

I: yeah, its brilliant, its great, I don't have any more questions so unless there's anything else that you want to add in, that was everything that I wanted to cover like

P: no, no,

I: that's brilliant, plenty to write about anyway

(Laughter)

I: but sure I'll transcribe everything and then I'll give you both interviews and if there's anything you're not happy about, do you know that way maybe you're saying I shouldn't have said that or I want to change this and add it in, then you can

P: yeah

I: instead of me just going off and doing it cause I know once like people just kind of look back on it oh maybe is shouldn't, I went too far saying that or maybe I'm not explaining myself, or you know that way

P: yeah, yeah, you might find it hard to understand what I'm saying or

I: yeah, like, sometimes, but I find it with everybody that I'm doing it that it kind of, you have to listen a few times, do you know that way, I wasn't really struggling, it was background noise