Abstract
Critical Management Studies challenges the ‘received’ knowledge contained in the
texts on which established management theory and practice is constructed. Critical
management is often perceived to be ‘difficult’ — esoteric and complex — by our
colleagues of a more technical/positivist bent, and management practitioners also
have problems accessing our material. Yet managers are text dependent: the theory
they enact draws on both popular and academic texts; and texts, written and spoken,
are what managers do. Our paper argues that if managers were offered accessible
strategies of textual interpretation they would be empowered in two ways: they would
more readily recognise the differences, exclusions, ambiguities, hegemonies and
hierarchies that language (and visual strategies) betray; and if cognisance leads to
an enriched scope of perceived responsibilities then management practice would
become more balanced and ultimately more ethical.

Working with a scriptive reading method (Monin, 2004), and having selected a
sample text for analysis - from CEO of Saatchi and Saatchi, Kevin Roberts’ recent
book on branding strategy, Lovemarks (2004), our paper demonstrates the deeper
and/or alternative sense-making that critical reading supports. Scriptive reading
works with a 3-step approach to text analysis: a first, dominant or standard, reading
is followed by a critical reading (based on any one, or a combination of, a variety of
epistemological approaches to text-interpretation) of the same text, and the process
is completed by a reflexive commentary on the text and subtexts uncovered in the
first two readings. We follow this process as we read and re-read the same text,
noting and highlighting the basic principles of defamiliarisation that we have
employed; the strategies that enable readers to ‘stand back’ from the text and view
its potential meaning from different perspectives. We include in our scriptive reading
process a satirical re-write of the original text in which we demonstrate some of the
ways in which exaggeration, juxtaposition and wit highlight aspects of sub-texts and
surface meaning.

References
Routledge.