

# Critical Marketing Studies: Introduction and Overview

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## Introduction

In the late 1960s, a small, but steadily growing cadre of scholars began to scrutinise the central tenets of marketing. Kangun (1972), for example, registered that marketing activities contributed to economic growth, but was concerned that the negative impact of marketing on society was passing 'unrecognized and unchallenged'. Fisk (1974), likewise, made reference to some of the benefits of marketing for society and at the same time acknowledged the externalities of marketing practice.

He was particularly concerned about the sustainability of then current levels of consumption. While he saw these as extremely problematic, he nevertheless believed that marketing techniques and tools were 'capable of promoting socially desirable long-run environmental goals' (Fisk, 1974: 5). On a related theme, other prominent scholars and practitioners have supported the use of marketing techniques to induce certain forms of behavioural change (e.g. reductions in alcohol consumption). This type of socially responsible marketing is now well established as social marketing (Andreasen, 1994, 2003; Kotler and Levy, 1969). Other responses to changes in the socio-political environment included societal marketing, whereby marketers were asked to reflect on whether they should be producing products that did not contribute to the long-term health of the individual or society (Crane and Desmond, chapter 6; Kotler, 1972).

Nonetheless, it is safe to say that much teaching in marketing continues to adopt the marketing managers' viewpoint; it promotes, in other words, a way of looking at the world which elevates the perspective of one stakeholder group in society whilst marginalising others. This is problematic because theory and concepts that appear benign initially – the marketing concept, along with the related topic of consumer 'needs', being good examples – do not appear quite so unproblematic or salutary when examined through a critical lens.

For instance, when we read an introductory marketing text, it is often the case that when consumer 'needs' are discussed, they are presented as innate to the individual (Firat, 1985; Jhally, 1993; Jones and Monieson, 1990). This raises the question, if all needs are innate to an individual, then what is the role of marketing in society (O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2002)? If we consider needs as latent, or 'non-felt', then who activates them (Kline, 1995; O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Soper, 2007) – the peer group, marketing communications, the private lobbying organisation, NGO or government (Warde, 1994)?

Other questions closely related to the above points include: do present patterns of consumption closely contribute to wellbeing, regardless of how much they are allegedly demanded by the consumer (Jhally, 1993; Shankar *et al.*, 2006)? Do they enable individuals to self-actualise (Kilbourne, 1987), self-realise (Freundlieb, 2000) or otherwise develop a sense of autonomy (Adorno, 1967/1989; Arnould, 2007; Fromm 1942/2001) or agency (Tadajewski and Brownlie, 2008)? Many commentators are not so sure (e.g. Jhally, 1993; Soper, 2007). Zygmunt Bauman (2007) and Juliet Schor (2008) have repeatedly argued that the commodification of social life is not necessarily benefiting society. In a reference to consumerism that connects the above issues of wellbeing, self-actualisation and autonomy, Bauman says:

'Consumerism acts to maintain the emotional reversal of work and family. Exposed to a continual bombardment of advertisements through a daily average of three hours of television (half of all their leisure time), workers are persuaded to 'need' more things. To buy what they need, they need money. To earn money, they work longer hours. Being away from home so many hours, they make up for their absence. . . with gifts that cost money. . . And so the cycle continues.'

(Bauman, 2007: 28)

Whether or not we agree with Bauman, the questions posed above remain important. It is only by asking whether certain forms of consumption behaviour do or do not contribute to psychological, physical and other forms of wellbeing that we can begin to ask what we should do about them. Should we lobby our Senators, Members of Parliament and so on to change the 'political economy of social choice' (Dholakia *et al.*, 1983; Dholakia and Dholakia, 1985)?

Given the importance of marketing in society (Kline, 1995; Moor, 2003, 2008; Tadajewski and Brownlie, 2008; Wernick, 1991) and the increasing numbers of students enrolling on marketing courses (see Hackley, chapter 9), it is an appropriate time to pull together a range of literature that has questioned the values that underwrite marketing theory and practice. In this respect, we hope that this collection will serve as an invaluable survey of relevant topics that fall under the label 'critical marketing studies'. To orient

the discussion that follows, we want to parse the title of this collection into its three constituent parts, examining what we mean when we say: critical, marketing and studies. Please note, the following discussion should not be considered an attempt at defining 'critical marketing studies' for reasons that will become clear.

## Critical

To suggest that some way of approaching marketing is somehow more critical than others appears slightly odd. After all, most academics and students approach their work from a critical perspective, questioning the arguments with which they are presented (Catterall *et al.*, 2000; Mingers, 2000). Perhaps, then, the best way to differentiate the focus of critical marketing studies from the wider marketing literature is through a brief historical overview of the topic (cf. Tadajewski and Brownlie, 2008).

The first discussions of 'critical marketing' can be segmented in terms of their geographical location (Desmond, 1995). Working from a base in Europe, were Heede (1981, 1985), Hansen (1981), Ingebrigtsen and Petersson (1981) and Arndt (1985a, 1985b), who were attempting to encourage marketing scholars to move beyond the confines of the logical empiricist paradigm<sup>1</sup> that is still prominent in marketing theory (McDonagh, 1995; Morgan, 1992; Moorman, chapter 3). What was particularly interesting about this group was their desire for knowledge produced about marketing and consumer behaviour not simply to be used to make promotional campaigns ever more effective in influencing consumer decision-making, that is, as part of the armoury of a 'controlling science'; instead, marketing had the potential to be a 'liberating science' (Heede, 1985).

A 'controlling science' produces knowledge that is used to support pre-existing 'power structures in a society' and serve 'the elite' (Heede, 1985: 156). Marketing knowledge and social science research had typically been used in this manner (Tadajewski, 2006a, 2006b). In spite of this, Heede thought that marketing could be a 'liberating science' which did not reinforce extant power structures, but revealed how they worked to structure society in ways that did not necessarily benefit the mass of citizens (Heede, 1985).

At the same time as Heede *et al.* were engaged in research in Europe, a significant group of scholars in North America were responding to the multiple calls for more critical perspectives in marketing, including Benton, Belk, Firat, Dholakia, Hirschman, Venkatesh, Kilbourne, Ozanne and Murray. At the most basic level what unites the European and American contingents of critical marketing commentators is their use of various forms of radical social theory such as Marxism, Critical Theory, Feminism and poststructuralism among others, to question otherwise naturalized assumptions in marketing theory and practice (Brownlie, 2006).

## Marketing?

Although there is evidence of marketing having actually been a relatively critical discipline throughout its history (Tadajewski and Brownlie, 2008; Tadajewski, 2008), numerous observers have acknowledged that over the course of the last hundred years, as an academic subject, its focus has become far more managerially oriented (Dholakia and Firat, 1980; Firat, 1985; Firat *et al.*, 1987; Wilkie and Moore, 2003). For example, in their recent history of marketing, Wilkie and Moore (2006) chart the changing definition of marketing. They note how later definitions are more closely related to marketing management and that this serves to circumscribe the issues that scholars and practitioners focus upon (see Holbrook, chapter 7; Moorman, chapter 3).

In the case of this collection, the use of the term 'marketing' is meant to signify a return to the interest in social and distributive justice (discussed below) that motivated the earliest scholars (see Jones, 1994; Jones and Monieson, 1990), inspired initial critical marketing studies (e.g. Arndt, 1985a, 1985b), and continues to stimulate those associated with macromarketing (see Shapiro, 2006), as well as critical marketing (Varman and Belk, 2008; Varman and Costa, 2008).

## Studies

The final element of the title of this collection reflects a common concern in the critical marketing literature for paradigmatic pluralism (Arndt, 1985a, 1985b; Brownlie, 2006; Desmond, 1995). Rather than call for 'critical marketing', we use the title 'critical marketing studies' as a way of signalling our desire to encourage multiple perspectives, in order to refuse the premature foreclosure of discourse that may accompany too closely defining an intellectual domain (Rojek, 2004; Kompridis, 2005). Thus, instead of being overly prescriptive about what exactly critical marketing studies stands for, we follow recent calls for critical marketing scholars to adopt a 'limit attitude' (Healy, 2001; Tadajewski and Brownlie, 2008). This involves us all reflecting on the limitations posed by existing ways of thinking about marketing, if only to remind us that these limits exist in the first instance (Tadajewski, 2006a), so that we can then move beyond them (Tadajewski and Brownlie, 2008). Having sketched what we mean when we talk about 'critical marketing studies', we will now turn to examine the contents of this collection.

## Volume I: The Development of Critical Perspectives in Marketing

Just before we survey the work that appears in the three volumes, we should add that we do not simply follow the listing of the articles, as they are presented in the contents page. There is a good reason for this: many of the topics overlap, and we aim to point out some of the linkages that can be made between them. We will refer to the contents of the chapters, although only with the briefest gesture in some cases, discussing other publications at the same time and indicating still others through our citation practices that the interested reader should consult.

Having stated this somewhat bluntly, we do not intend to leave the 'new' critical marketer adrift. So, let us start at the beginning. What we now think of as 'marketing' is contingent on changes in the social, political, economic and technological environment in which 'marketing theory' and 'practice' as we know it developed. As such, 'Even the words we employ to speak about social realities, the labels we use to classify objects, agents and events... are all historical products' (Bourdieu, 1988: 779). Reflecting on this encourages us, in other words, to realise the extent to which the way we think about marketing is not naturally the only way, or necessarily the best way.

As scholars of marketing thought have argued, marketing has not always been solely affiliated with the promotion of the interests of business management. From its origins as an academic subject in the early twentieth century, there was a concern for distributive justice (Jones and Monieson, 1990; Jones, 1994): were marketplace participants paying too much for goods; did farmers receive too little compensation for their produce; did the middleman contribute anything to the economic value of a product, apart from higher prices?

The three papers that begin this collection engage with this history. Benton, in an excellent study, takes us through the development of marketing, adopting a posture that refuses to take the existing interpretations of a given topic at face value (Benton, 1985b). In line with this, he demands that we examine whether foundational concepts like 'the marketing concept' accurately reflect marketplace reality (see Schipper, 2002).

Benton questions the typical 'customer is king' narrative found in marketing texts (see Morgan, chapter 2; Dixon, chapter 5) in which the customer is positioned as the axis around which a marketing-led organisation functions. By contrast, Benton adopts a similar stance to Adorno (1967/1989: 129) who stated that the 'customer is not king, as the culture industry would like to have us believe, not its subject but its object'. The culture industries – movies, film, advertising, radio and so on – aim to control consumer subjectivity, as far as possible. Related to this, the discourse of marketing is a means of disguising an organisational desire to control the customer in the interests of advancing company objectives.

Marketing, Benton says, uses the lexicon of ‘customer orientation’ as a way of directing attention away from corporate self-interest. By invoking seemingly neutral touchstones as ‘customer satisfaction’ and ‘the marketing concept’, marketing’s beneficial role in society is thereby legitimated (cf. Goldman, 1987; Kline, 1995). This is a view with which Morgan (chapter 2) concurs and he devotes considerable attention to the various reasons why certain debates in marketing have taken the shape that they have, linking these to changes in the political, legal and social environment, as does Moorman (chapter 3). She focuses however, on the changing definition of marketing and the way it rationalises the application of marketing techniques in new spheres of the social world.

## The Marketing of Marketing

The language of marketing and its assemblage of concepts have undoubtedly been seductive to a whole range of constituencies. This is attributable to the self-confident way in which textbooks, academics and practitioners alike present their ability to provide the skills that organisations operating in a turbulent business environment require (see Hackley, chapter 9). The structured nature of the planning, implementation and control approach to marketing practice, after all, implies that the world – which appears very complex to the untrained eye – can be controlled by the marketing manager. According to a number of papers included in this collection, the representation of marketing practice found in introductory textbooks is excessively rationalistic, in that it downplays the intuition, skill and tacit knowledge used by marketing managers. Instead, it depicts them as involved in carefully structured patterns of marketing analysis, planning and implementation that Svensson (chapter 10) says is far removed from the complexity of the day-to-day activities of marketing managers (cf. Moor, 2003). Clearly, Svensson is responding to the papers that precede his in this collection, especially Brownlie and Saren’s (chapter 8) call for empirical research into the performance of marketing practice. Such research can thereby counterpoint the ‘paranoid’ accounts of marketing practice found in the popular literature (Schudson, 1981).

Svensson documents the various ways in which marketers demonstrate their professional competence (see also Applbaum chapter 11, Moor, 2008), by laying claim to some limited skill in influencing consumer perception. In his case study, this takes the form of marketers stressing that they are able to change the signifiers of particular objects, transforming potentially negative connotations into positive values. In a sense then, the activities of marketing managers are a form of meaning-making, changing the way that we think about a signified object (see Goldman, 1987; Maxwell, 1996; Moor, 2003, 2008), at least within certain bounds.

Svensson's findings are supported by Applbaum (chapter 11), whose interviews with marketing managers provide empirical flesh to the discussion of the 'dual core' marketing concept outlined by Borch (1958) that Benton discusses. Applbaum offers a vivid description of marketers performing their business knowledge to their colleagues. He relays how they talk about their use of marketing techniques that they say can be used to encourage the adoption of products among a given target market.

That marketing managers 'perform' their skills in this way is not wholly unexpected. The marketing and brand manager occupies a relatively low status position in many organisations (Maclaran and Catterall, 2000; Moor, 2003). As a consequence, they need to justify their skills to increase their own status (Cronin, chapter 23; Moor, 2008). What is quite startling in Applbaum's account is the degree of ethnocentricity that these marketing professionals demonstrate (compare this with chapter 15, for instance). These marketers, in short, describe their activities in terms of producing products that the customer will desire because the products are more advanced than those available in the domestic market: they bring a taste of 'development'! Unsurprisingly, these products do not sell themselves; they have to be actively marketed through a programme of customer 'education' that borders on 'manipulation' (Goldman, 1987; Kline, 1995; Moor, 2008; cf. Appadurai, 1990).

Marketers, as we have pointed out, are interested in legitimating their activities, either through the demonstration of technical knowledge, as Brownlie and Saren, Svensson and Applbaum illustrate, or by reference to the centrality of the customer to all marketing activities, as Benton revealed. Each of the aforementioned accounts relates to the legitimization of marketing practice in business contexts. There are, as was mentioned at the start of the chapter, marketing scholars and practitioners who believe that marketing tools and techniques should be applied in non-business areas, selling socially responsible behaviours (Arnold and Fischer, 1996; Kotler and Levy, 1969). Not all agree that bringing social and behavioural change into the purview of marketing practitioners is necessarily a good development. The views of Moorman and Luthra should be considered representative of these. From a slightly different perspective, Dixon (chapter 5) and Crane and Desmond (chapter 6), ask whether marketers should be making normative decisions about individual consumption choices. Put simply, the social (Kotler and Levy, 1969) and societal marketing concepts (Kotler, 1972) are examined and called into question.

Nor is the critique of social marketing put forward by Luthra conspicuously unusual. Dholakia (1984) makes similar arguments. Nevertheless, while many commentators acknowledge the benefits of social marketing; others direct our attention to the uncritical use of marketing techniques in countries far removed from where these tools were first developed. For instance, in a number of case studies that were concerned with promoting effective family planning in India (e.g. Dholakia, 1984; Dholakia and Dholakia, 2001; Luthra,

chapter 4) or with AIDS prevention in Mozambique (Pfeiffer, 2004), it would appear that marketing tools are used in the manner that Moorman lamented in her discussion of 'marketing as technique'.

What we mean by this is that an excess of attention was devoted to securing the correct result – permanent birth control on a large scale in the case studies outlined by Dholakia (1984), Dholakia and Dholakia (2001) and Luthra – with little regard for the cultural context in which these interventions took place and the long-term consequences for the people involved (see also Pfeiffer, 2004). In effect, these people were another mix variable to be controlled. Surveying the benefits and problems involved with such marketing activities, Dholakia and Dholakia write:

'...the [social marketing]...approach to family planning in India, showed both the success potential and the problems [associated] with social marketing methods. . . Individual incentives – cash, bags of food grain, transistor radios – were offered to the men who lined up to get vasectomies . . . The mass vasectomy camps did achieve the family planning agency's immediate goals, but with major side effects. To take advantage of the incentives, all types of men underwent the operation including unmarried males and older males not married to childbearing women. The camps were set up during the low season in the agricultural cycle. This presumably was to facilitate participation by men who were extremely busy during the high agricultural season. But it also meant that incomes, savings and food stocks were low in the villages, and people saw the mass camp as a way of getting extra money or food. Many of the men did not understand the nature of the vasectomy operation and went through the operation just to take advantage of the incentives. Some of the men later wanted to reverse the procedure, but no clinics were available for this; the camps and the doctors moved on to other locations when they were finished with a village.'

(Dholakia and Dholakia, 2001: 490; cf. Andreasen, 2003: 296;  
Bauman, 2001: 25)

These implementation problems are obviously troubling. They raise questions about whether marketing tools and techniques that were developed in relation to business practice can and should be transferred to domains where they are not necessarily appropriate (see Parsons *et al.*, 2008). This said, the colonisation of social and political arenas by marketing discourse continues unabated. Social marketing is supported by various governmental and nongovernmental organisations across the globe (Andreasen, 2003). And many other areas of life previously outside of the lexicon of 'customer satisfaction' find themselves marketised (Morgan, chapter 2; Schor, 2008; Soper, 2007; Wernick, 1991): students are not students anymore, they are 'customers' and the customer, as marketers remind us, is always right (see Hackley, chapter 9). Patients are not patients anymore, they are also 'customers', and



directly marketed to by pharmaceutical companies in the hope that the patient-customer then exerts their sovereignty and demands higher priced, branded products where there might be suitable generic goods on the market. This is the modern day consumer culture.

## Critiques of Marketing Practice

Across a range of disciplines including cultural studies, philosophy, sociology, social psychology, as well as consumer research, numerous references have been made to the growth of 'consumer culture' and its positive and negative effects on day-to-day life. For our purposes here, we use Featherstone's definition (1983) as our springboard into these debates:

'The term consumer culture points to the impact of mass consumption on everyday life which has led to an ever-increasing range of goods and experiences. New modes of cultural representation ensure the proliferation of images which saturate the fabric of social life with a melee of signs and messages which summon up new expressive and hedonistic definitions of the good life. Consumer culture cannot be equated with contemporary culture per se, its transformative efforts encounter stubborn resistance from both the residue of tradition and the new sets of oppositional practices and counter-tendencies it generates.'

(Featherstone, 1983: 4)

The difference between the consumer society of the twenty-first century from all which preceded it is 'the emancipation of consumption from its past instrumentality that used to draw its limits – the demise of 'norms' and the new plasticity of 'needs', setting consumption free from functional bonds' (Bauman, 2001: 12; see also chapter 18, 19, 20, and 21; Goldman, 1987). These are views that chime with most discussions of consumer culture in which a fairly standard roster of influential theorists are cited, including Veblen, Galbraith, Packard and the Frankfurt School (Adorno, Horkheimer, Benjamin, Marcuse, Fromm, Habermas and Lowenthal), whose arguments are used to illustrate the deleterious impact of marketing on society, culture, decision-making and consumer agency.

Most histories of critical marketing studies might gesture to the growth of consumer culture and then make reference to the above commentators, assuming in this way that discussions about the nature of consumer desire and distinctions between 'real' and 'false' needs can be traced to the work of Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse and Fromm during the 1930s and 40s. Historically speaking, Jackson Lears in chapter 12 takes this analysis back one step. Through a study of the growth of the market economy, Lears documents eighteenth and nineteenth century perceptions of the marketplace as a place

that not only offered enjoyment and aesthetic excitement, but was also an environment to be feared (see Hilton, 2004; Laermans, 1993).

Peddlers may manipulate and seduce consumers; department stores promise such tantalising choices that irrational (usually) female consumers lose their minds, stealing what they desired much to the chagrin of their husbands and the legal establishment (see Fullerton, 2007; Leach, 1994; Learmans, 1993). Throughout the tranche of history he examines, Lears diagnoses a desire to distinguish between 'authenticity and artifice'. Unlike some present day postmodern consumers who allegedly thrive on artifice (Wernick, 1991), nineteenth century consumers apparently considered the consumption of high fashion items appropriate only on the basis that it mirrored the 'real self' of the purchaser (cf. Laermans, 1993: 99–100).

Both Lears (chapter 12) and Kellner (chapter 13) introduce important critiques of consumption and consumer culture. Lears focuses on Veblen<sup>ii</sup>; whilst Kellner introduces the Frankfurt School's critique of mass culture, through close readings of the work of Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse and Fromm, as well as that of contemporary critics such as Ewen and Ewen. Kellner realises that some of the commentary provided by the Critical Theorists has a tendency to overemphasise the disciplinary aspects of consumption and the social control of everyday life, downplaying consumer agency at the same time.

Kellner articulates a number of flaws that he perceives in 'classical critical theory' and outlines how these might be remedied. These concerns are discussed and expanded upon in more detail in chapter 17 by Harms and Kellner who use a range of critical and postmodernist social theory to scrutinise the effects of advertising and corporations on society (see Goldman, 1987; Jhally, 1993). Where Kellner's earlier work expressed some dissatisfaction with Critical Theory, but still remained quite close to it, his and Harms' work exhibits a greater degree of intellectual pluralism. For example, 'Critiques of advertising', Harms and Kellner propose, 'should . . . draw on the most advanced work in semiotics, post-structuralism, feminism, hermeneutics, and other methods of interpretation and ideology critique, as well as Critical Theory'.

In the Critical Theory inflected work in this collection, it is quite obvious that there are those who argue that the distinction between true and false needs can still be made, and that this serves a useful function, in the sense that we can discuss 'alienated, fetishised and dehumanising consumerism, as opposed to creative and life-enhancing consumption' as Kellner put it. Others are not so willing to critique specific consumption choices or patterns. Crane and Desmond (chapter 6), for instance, express their reluctance to engage in the evaluation of certain forms of consumption due to the inherent complexity and necessarily contextual nature of such a task; Douglas Kellner has no such reservations (cf. Bauman, 2007: 43–44; Soper, 2007; Thompson chapter 46, Nill chapter 47).

Kellner distinguishes between 'consumption as the use and enjoyment of commodities' and 'consumerism as a way of life dedicated almost totally to the

possession and use of consumer goods'. Whereas Kline and Leiss (chapter 18) and Jhally et al (chapter 19) question the idea that we can determine those goods that satisfy our 'vital' needs or that respond to 'false' needs and do not require satisfaction, Kellner, Kline and Leiss believe that it would still be valuable for some critical debate to take place regarding what beneficial ways of life should be promoted, and what less beneficial, possibly harmful influences require legislative action.

One way of starting such a debate is by undertaking critical research that aims to explore the socio-political restrictions that consumers face in their everyday lives. Murray and Ozanne (chapter 14), in what is undoubtedly a significant contribution to critical marketing studies, have provided a systematic method for doing just that. We should register that not all agree with their 'pragmatic' (Murray and Ozanne, 2006) interpretation of Critical Theory (cf. Hetrick and Lozada, 1994). Despite this, Critical Theory itself is not a unified tradition (Bradshaw and Firat, 2007; Habermas, 1992; Murray *et al.*, 1994). So, it is not to be expected that all will necessarily agree about the best way to engage in research, inspired by the group associated with the Frankfurt School.

The next paper examines the relevance of critical multiculturalism for marketing theory and practice. Burton suggests that this paradigm has the potential to rectify certain blind spots and biases present in studies of consumer behaviour with regard to ethnicity, race and ethnocentrism (cf. Venkatesh, 1995). She reveals how the marketing academy is predisposed to select its topics of inquiry on the basis of their commensurability with the needs of marketing managers (cf. Holbrook, chapter 7), the values of capital-reproduction and, in turn, on the gender, ethnic and class affiliations of the scholars themselves. Interestingly, Burton's paper is peppered with the tensions that she makes reference to (probably understandably), in that she stresses her sympathy for Critical Theory, but continually returns to the implications of critical multiculturalism for marketing strategy.

Gavin Jack (chapter 16), on the other hand, critically analyses marketing through the theoretical resources provided by postcolonial thought, an almost completely unexplored direction to date. Unlike Burton's chapter, Jack does not seek to bring a new theoretical perspective into marketing for the benefit of the marketing manager; instead he illustrates how marketing and promotional practice was firmly implicated in the colonialism that various governments were involved in from the 15<sup>th</sup> to mid 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The fact that some former colonies have been 'given' their freedom does not mean that the colonial project has since halted. Applbaum's (chapter 11) presentation of marketing managers who depict the way they contribute to the development of the populations they market to, and Böhm and Brei's (chapter 45) critical analysis of the contestation surrounding what represents 'development' in 'developing' nations, should be enough to disabuse us of the idea that the colonial project

has totally ceased (see Banerjee, 2003; Banerjee and Linstead, 2001; Hudson and Hudson, 2003; Klein, 2000; Micheletti and Stolle, 2007, 2008; Parker, 2007; Pfeiffer, 2004; cf. Wernick, 1991). Via a range of examples, including tourism and travel marketing, Jack demonstrates the continued impact of racial and ethnic stereotypes on the way tourists approach their consumption objects (cf. Appadurai, 1990) and how existing stereotypes are used by indigenous populations in affirmative ways.

## **Volume II: Theoretical and Empirical Perspectives in Critical Marketing Studies**

In Volume II we continue through Critical Theory, neo-Marxist and critical marketing accounts of marketing theory and advertising practice. In the first paper, Harms and Kellner make a distinction between 'critical' and 'administrative' research. This was initially proposed by Paul Lazarsfeld (1941) who, in turn, was influenced by the work of the Critical Theorists.

Lazarsfeld maintained that administrative research is undertaken for business interests and usually positivistic in nature. Critical research, he contrasted against administrative research in two ways (Lazarsfeld, 1941: 9). First, critical research 'develops a theory of prevailing social trends of our times...and it seems to imply ideas of basic human values according to which all actual or desired effects should be appraised' (Lazarsfeld, 1941: 9). Second, critical research perceived society as 'engulfed by a multitude of promotional patterns' with individuals losing whatever agency they might have possessed before the growth of large scale capitalism. From this perspective, 'human beings...behave more and more like pawns on a chessboard, losing the spontaneity and dignity which is the basic characteristic of human personality' (Lazarsfeld, 1941: 12). It is this pawn-like behaviour that supported monopoly capitalism and was so difficult to get consumers to disavow, because the patterns of behaviour engaged in are so pleasurable (e.g. watching films, soap operas, reading pulp fiction) (see also Fromm, 1942/2001: 97). Bauman goes so far as to call them 'addictive' (Bauman, 2001: 25).

After introducing the distinction between administrative and critical research, Harms and Kellner appraise a wide variety of Critical Theory, structuralist and poststructuralist literature and thereby provide an introduction to the work referred to in later papers in this volume (e.g. Cronin, article 23). Following this, Kline and Leiss and Jhally et al rethink a central element in Marxist thought namely, commodity fetishism. These publications are important in view of their attention to consumer needs and decision-making in complex marketplaces. Their specific area of interest is the way in which person-product relations have changed slowly, but perceptively, over the last century (see Appadurai, 1990; Kline, 1995; Leiss et al., 1985), so that

consumption objects are increasingly invested with human characteristics and considered to be capable of transforming their human users (Goldman and Wright, 1983). Kline and Leiss (chapter 18) investigate this phenomenon through a study of magazine advertising, which Jhally et al (chapter 19) extend via an examination of television advertising.

By iterating through their historical and primary research, they argue that advertising has gradually become more ambiguous and abstract (see Goldman, 1987; Moor, 2008) and that this serves the needs of producers and their desire to reach certain segments of consumers (cf. Schudson, 1981). It also makes it difficult for consumers to determine ‘objectively’ which products and services will most closely match their requirements (see Heath, 2000). This, in turn, may mean that consumers return again and again to the market, seeking to find another product that meets and satisfies their needs more closely (cf. Bauman, 2001, 2007; Maxwell, 1996; Moorman, chapter 3; Warde, 1994). Regardless of the problems that consumers’ face in negotiating the market, Kline and Leiss and Jhally et al do not propose that this can be interpreted as evidence of capitalist manipulation (see Appadurai, 1990).

Two other papers in Volume II deal with commodity fetishism (chapters 20 and 21). Both broaden their focus beyond the U.S. and Canadian market-places. Applbaum and Levi (chapter 20) explain how marketing intermediaries try to promote the idea that drinking Coke can, for instance, if we follow the ‘facile optimism’ (Kline, 1995) of the marketing logic presented by large corporations, create a world where we all live happier ever after. Falk provides an example of this logic in his close reading of Coke’s advertisements:

‘... Coca-Cola is associated with both men and women, young women and adults, work and leisure. It features as a pure thirst-quencher, but also as part of a meal. It is both the climax of celebration and adds an element of the special occasion to everyday life. It is drunk by Blacks in Africa and Eskimos in Alaska. In a word, it is a universal drink that links the drinks and the people of the world in “perfect harmony” as a line from a Coke song of the early 70s indicates (“I’d like to teach the world to sing in perfect harmony. . .”

(Falk, 1991: 53; cf. Kline, 1995: 121; Wernick, 1991: 93)

As a contrast, Applbaum and Levi document the production and consumption of *Tesguino*, an alcoholic beverage which is distributed freely at communal gatherings and is literally exchanged for human labour. All those who participate in communal activities, such as building a barn, are permitted to share in the consumption of this product, which literally enhances group solidarity that is essential to their survival in this case, which products like Coca-Cola can only imitate.

The next paper that deals with commodity fetishism devotes attention to the dark-side of production-consumption relations. As is well known, the production conditions in export processing zones are not pleasant (see Klein,

2000). But what Billig unpicks is how the routines we invariably adopt to deal with the hectic pace of life lead us to engage in a type of 'willed forgetting' regarding the origins or disposal points of the goods we purchase. This forgetting can be bemoaned on one level, as we are inclined to forget the plight of those toiling in the factories that produce our expensive sportswear for a low income; or that live in the massively polluted villages where our 'obsolete' high technology products are disposed, leaking all manner of highly toxic by-products into the water supply (Bauman, 2007; Desmond, 1998; Hill and Dhanda, 2004; Parker, 2007). It is also beneficial on others (Bauman, 2007). It could be ventured that the spectacle that marketing and advertising communications provide us with, enable each of us to distance ourselves from the origins of our consumption fantasies. As a consequence, we do not feel racked with guilt each time we buy non-fair trade products (see Desmond, 1998; Hudson and Hudson, 2003; cf. Warde, 1994). These issues are, of course, very complex and require further exploration.

Following Billig, Hackley (chapter 22) offers us an alternative perspective to one focusing upon commodity fetishism. He states that 'A post-Marxist critical understanding of capitalism moves away from notions of commodity fetishism and false consciousness and develops instead an understanding of commodities as human wishes articulated by advertising' (see also Appadurai, 1990: 305; Bauman, 2001: 14, Rojek, 2004: 299). His stance is poststructural and he talks about the ways that advertising agencies gain an in-depth understanding of cultural knowledge in order to create meaning constellations around their clients' products and services (Goldman, 1987; Wernick, 1991). Advertising executives cannot just associate any image or message with a product; they cannot inject meaning into a consumer durable that the consumer simply reads, without the two sharing a background of popular-cultural knowledge, Hackley maintains (cf. Rojek, 2004). And he uses the image of the Panopticon to signal the pervasive surveillance practiced by advertising agencies with respect to the marketplace, in their attempts to more effectively proposition the consumer (see also Holt, 2003).

Because we are so used to marketing communications, many of us consider ourselves relatively sophisticated interpreters of advertising (Goldman, 1987). Advertising, Hackley suggests, is treated as a diversion, sometimes as a nuisance, which we can avoid using our TiVo, Sky Plus or by watching television on the internet (Witkowski, 2005a). Yet he also documents how quick some people are to reveal intimate consumption secrets to a properly trained researcher eager to tap into currently 'hot' topics (Maxwell, 1996) or experiences (Moor, 2003). This knowledge can, as a consequence, be used to promote the next generation of consumer goods to us, ever more effectively (Wernick, 1991).

Cronin questions Hackley's interpretation of the use of research by advertising agencies. She problematises those studies that claim that advertising research enables agency executives to access the 'truth' of consumer

practices (cf. Moor, 2003: 41; 2008: 419; Moorman, chapter 3) and asks whether agencies have any real control over the meaning of the research findings they are called on to deliver. Like Svensson, Applbaum, Moor (2008) and Hackley, Cronin considers research to be one tool used to legitimate the skills of advertising professionals in a complex, highly competitive marketplace, in which the position of the agency is precarious, due to the pronounced asymmetries of power between agency and client (Maclaran and Catterall, 2000). In this case, advertising research enables the marketing and brand managers in the commissioning firm to justify and enhance their own positions.

According to Cronin, the value of advertising research and the 'products' produced by the advertising agencies thus depends on the context in which they circulate as 'commercial currency' that is used in diverse ways by multiple groups, including potential and current investors, consumers (Schudson, 1981), as well as by those who commissioned it. On her reading, the campaigns developed by advertising agencies are not the result of some 'super-efficient capitalist machine: its practices are more contingent, hesitant and reactive than commonly supposed'. There is much to agree with here. It is not necessarily the case that the marketer manipulates the consumer only to benefit themselves – Borch (1958) realised this with his dual core argument.

As ever though, producer-distributor-consumer relations are complicated, and it is sometimes difficult to determine who benefits the most from market exchanges in different cases. For instance, marketers 'offer life enhancements at the same time as they diminish our personal autonomy' (Maxwell, 1996: 122; cf. Warde, 1994). Autonomy can be diminished in this respect through the use of information collected via market research (Moor, 2003) or courtesy of deliberately ambiguous advertising that contains little informational content about the product concerned (see also Kline and Leiss, chapter 18). It can also be constrained by virtue of the power of large retailers, who can impose their moralistic consumption vision on their target market (Jacques *et al.*, 2003). Consumers, along with other stakeholders are, even so, difficult to manage quite as effectively as marketers would like, as the McLibel Trial and various anti-globalisation movements across the globe stand as testament (Appadurai, 1990; Böhm and Brei, chapter 45; Conca, chapter 43; Therborn, 2007).

## **Feminist Perspectives on Marketing Theory and Practice**

The impact of feminist scholarship has been well-documented throughout the social sciences. This body of work is responsible for many hard-hitting critiques of marketing and consumer behaviour, especially in relation to advertising and the portrayal of women. These critiques are largely based on theories of exploitation by marketers, conceptualising marketing and advertising as forms of cultural doping. From the 1990s onwards, however, a steady

stream of feminist critiques from within marketing and consumer research has emerged that shows the relationship between gender and marketing to be much more nuanced and complex than hitherto conceived (see Hirschman, 1993).

In this section we include two seminal contributions by Bristor and Fischer (chapters 24 and 25) who were among the first researchers within marketing to take a feminist approach. In their 1993 paper, they challenge the way gender-based knowledge is developed by consumer researchers. They contend that women have often been misrepresented in consumer research and in an effort to redress this imbalance, provide an overview of major feminist perspectives and use these to critique the dominant logical empiricist paradigm (cf. Hunt, 1991). In doing so, their analysis reveals the androcentrism inherent in traditional definitions of objectivity and they show how key concepts in marketing theory are gendered in a variety of ways. Building on this material, their second paper adopts a feminist poststructuralist approach to reveal the power relationships embedded in marketing discourse. They argue that exchange relationships in marketing are conceived around the patriarchal premise of a (male) marketer seducing a passive and powerless (female) consumer.

A further key feminist theoretical stance is present in this section: ecofeminism. Dobscha and Ozanne (chapter 26) examine the consumption practices of a group of women who lead ecologically-motivated lives and take an oppositional stance to the marketplace. Raising important questions of consumer agency, Dobscha and Ozanne suggest that the ecological lifestyles their informants maintain holds liberatory potential in acting as a change agent across both public and private domains (see also Moisander and Pesonen, 2002).

The last two papers problematise feminism's ambiguous and contentious relationship with the market. Showing how the market has been, and continues to be, used to advance feminist causes, Scott (chapter 27) rails against an anti-market feminist stance in considerable detail. Her historical analysis pinpoints a key paradox whereby feminists are critiquing others for their complicity with commercial ventures aimed at women, at the same time as using the market system themselves to sell their wares. She calls for a shift to 'market feminism' which involves re-theorising feminism's relations with the marketplace.

The contribution from Winship (chapter 28) also attends to the nuances of the market/feminism relationship. Echoing Scott's position, Winship asserts that three controversial advertising campaigns that were condemned by traditional feminists, reflect the 'Girl Power' of the late 1990s and, as such, need to be (re)interpreted within this context. In order to resonate with a new generation of young women, she proposes that feminists need to acknowledge the role of 'celebrity feminism' in disrupting traditional views on femininity and masculinity (cf. McRobbie, 2008).



## The Agency of the Consumer

Notions of freewill and freedom of choice underpin democratic processes in Western society, as well as neoclassical economics. Yet, how much agency individual consumers actually have in relation to the marketplace is a recurrent, often heated, debate that has a history that goes unacknowledged. We have chosen to begin this section with one of the earliest papers to air these topics. Published in 1936, Lynd's paper (chapter 29) explores a variety of issues that strike at the conceptual core of marketing theory, notably consumer sovereignty, choice and rationality. In what is undoubtedly a prescient piece of analysis, Lynd is extremely sensitive to the role of power relations in the marketplace.

Companies do not simply respond to consumer desires, Lynd states; advertising agencies do not just inform the consumer about the latest products: they are 'consumer-habit fabricating plants' – an analysis that is remarkably close to that provided by Miller and Rose or Hackley. This is not to say that Lynd positions the advertiser, company or marketer as always the most powerful player in the marketplace. But he does admit that, given the financial wherewithal of large companies, they can structure the marketplace so that it works to satisfy the interests of the business community, not necessarily the consumer.

Taking us well beyond a 'manipulation-by-marketers' theme that is still drawn upon by the anti-corporate protest movement (e.g. Lasn, 2000), Graham (chapter 30) articulates the historical role of consumer education in the social construction of women's identities as consumers. She documents how Lillian Gilbreth's industrial psychology background enabled her to create strategies that not only encouraged women to actively and knowledgeably engage in consumption, but also disciplined businesses in catering to their needs. Her perceptive historical account shows how consumer education programmes ensured that homemakers served as agents in their own construction as consuming subjects, rather than being 'puppets of consumerism'.

Whereas Graham's focus is on discourse, Humphreys (chapter 32) explores the use of internet technologies that enable marketers to engage in the surveillance of the consumer subject. Amazon.com might claim that they seek to respond to consumer needs, wants or requirements (cf. Benton, chapter 1), but in actuality, Humphreys suggests, Amazon seek to channel consumer desires in particular ways. They do this through the use of 'wish lists' and 'cookies' (cf. Hackley, chapter 22 and Cronin, chapter 23). Is this another example of 'hidden persuaders' seeking to monitor and modify our consumption habits? Not according to Humphreys. The consumer, she asserts, is narcissistic. They like 'to be watched'.

Continuing the focus on constructing and channelling the behaviour of the subject of consumption, and the power relationships therein, Miller and Rose

(chapter 31) use the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (TIHR) as a site for exploring the shaping and advertising of products. Using archival data from the wide range of market research projects conducted by the TIHR – in conjunction with chocolate, ice-cream and toilet-roll purveyors to name but a few – they show how psychological knowledges intertwined in complex ways with advertising and marketing research. This intertwining reflects the changing way in which consumer choice and decision-making behaviour was understood. Consumer rationality, as described by the researchers working at the TIHR, was far more complex than was usually supposed by economic theory. Taking this point further than Lynd, Miller and Rose describe three different ways of conceptualising the consumer that were used at the ‘Tavi’: a psycho-analytical approach (cf. Tadjewski, 2006b), social psychological perspective and a nuanced rational consumer view.

The final paper in this section further develops a number of the strands present in Graham’s, Miller and Rose’s, Humphreys’, as well as Hackley’s and Cronin’s chapters. Arvidsson (chapter 33) draws on recent Marxist theorising to propose that brands are built and maintained on the immaterial labour of consumers. He shows that, although brand management works by ostensibly empowering consumers, it does so only in order that their apparent freedom follows a specific, and well-calculated, trajectory. Challenging current conceptualisations of the co-production of meaning, Arvidsson suggests that spaces like Niketown or brandfests, such as those held by Harley Davidson and Jeep, exist only in order to enable consumers to produce and reaffirm a particular relationship to the brand (see also Moor, 2003).

## **Volume III: Marketing, Ethics and Society: Critical Reflections**

The relationship between marketing activities and their impact on society is a complex one that often requires many layers of analysis and interpretation to untangle. It also has many ethical implications and consequences (e.g. Abela and Murphy, 2008; Laczniaak and Murphy, 2006, 2008). In the third volume of this major work, we include contributions that engage with the inter-relationships between marketing, ethics and society.

### **The Shaping of Consumption Choices**

Firat, a prominent critical and postmodern marketing scholar, looks at how our consumption choices are influenced by forces in the wider macro environment; forces that are not always readily apparent, or easily analysed. He looks at why certain products become widely utilised, not necessarily out of ‘choice’, in developed market economies, such as the U.S. In identifying a

'structure of available alternatives for consumption' (SAAC), Firat (chapter 34) summarises the findings of the large range of studies that he and his co-authors have been producing since the late 1970s. His analysis consists of a detailed assessment of how consumption patterns are structured by various actors in society (see also Alwitt, 1995; Tadajewski, 2008; Moorman chapter 3).

Ger and Belk's research (chapter 35) takes us from a macro to a micro context, as they explore the lifestyles of consumers across four cultures (Western Europe, Romania, Turkey, U.S) in an attempt to discover why materialism is spreading on a global basis. Their findings show that, although there is cross-cultural distain for materialism, most informants aspired to a lifestyle that could be considered materialistic. Despite the fact that these consumers rationalised their personal materialism in different ways, depending on the cultural context, they all referred to materialistic pressures that they considered to be outside of their control and were a function of the macro-cultural environment in which they lived.

Remaining with the theme of interrogating consumption patterns, Holt (chapter 36), in contradistinction to postmodern theorists who emphasise the freedom of the individual from traditional role structures (cf. Warde, 1994), questions whether certain patterns of consumption reflect social class. Modifying Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital in order to account for the US socio-historical context (see Holt, 1997), Holt reveals the continued prevalence of cultural capital based distinction in contemporary American and globalized consumption practices (cf. Appadurai, 1990; Southerton, 2002; Turner and Edmunds, 2002; Warde and Bennett, 2008).

Varman and Kappiarath (chapter 37) take us away from the industrialised west and demonstrate how certain groups that occupy what would appear to be the least powerful positions in Indian society are not apathetic in the face of market pressures. They are empowered on the basis of previous class antagonism that ensured state support for such groups, as well as by being relatively well educated, aware of governmental responsibility to its citizens and willing to take direct action if government services do not meet the conventionally sanctioned minimum.

## **Liberatory Consumption?**

In this section, we begin with the most frequently cited article in marketing and consumer research that deals with liberatory consumption. In effect it forms a benchmark for the type of postmodern theorising that is beginning to be questioned. In their article, Firat and Venkatesh (chapter 38) celebrate the overturning of modernist conceptions of the consumer. They argue that changes in the structure of society and consumption patterns offer

emancipatory potential because they release us from traditional roles and constraints (i.e. gender, class, race), thus allowing people to adopt a multiplicity of subject positions (see Firat and Shultz, 2001; cf. Giddens, 2003; Schor, 2008; Warde, 1994).

Firat and Venkatesh's emphasis is on the playful, imaginative consumer, as he or she creatively appropriates marketplace signs and symbols. Still, we must not forget that however wealthy some consumers are, that there are many marginalised groups who cannot afford the luxury of marketplace play (see Warde, 1994: 891). Hill and Stamey (chapter 39) explore the lifeworld of a key constituent far removed from the lifestyle of the postmodern consumer – the homeless. For this destitute group of consumers, it is survival strategies, rather than identity strategies that count.

Similarly, Varman and Vikas (chapter 40) demonstrate how consumer freedom remains, as yet, only for the elite in India. Highly critical of a post-modern lens whereby consumption increasingly defines human freedom, they make an important contribution to the debate by calling for a re-emphasis on production which, they assert, has become separated from consumption. Their research with subaltern consumers shows how these groups are disempowered in the workplace and, consequently, exist at barely subsistence levels. Varman and Vikas conclude that powerlessness in relation to production, ensures powerlessness, and hence 'unfreedom', in the sphere of consumption. The same theme, the importance of the relationship between production and consumption for marginalised consumers, is investigated further by Rothstein (chapter 41). She challenges the fact that consumption is now seen as the driving force of the global economy. Reaffirming the materialist feminist call to look at wider socio-political structures (Catterall *et al.*, 2005), Rothstein demonstrates through her ethnographic study of a rural Mexican community, that their patterns of consumption arise from relations of 'flexible production' in garment manufacturing.

## Marketing and Global Social Justice

In this penultimate section, all the papers offer sensitive critiques of marketing's role in global economic and social change. Klein and Nason (chapter 42) give a detailed overview of macromarketing viewpoints that look at marketing activities in the context of their wider economic, social, political and ecological environments; viewpoints that also assess the negative or positive impacts of all the many facets of marketing related activities on these environments. A macromarketing perspective is, of course, not critical *per se* as Böhm and Brei (chapter 45) note in their exposé of the pulp and paper industry in South America. However, there is no doubt that the macromarketing field is predisposed to take a critical lens and has contributed many insights by setting marketing practices within wider non-managerial frameworks (see Shapiro *et al.*, 2009).

Sarah Lyon (chapter 44), in a study consistent with a more critical macromarketing orientation (Kilbourne *et al.*, 1997), explores marketing's impact on the economic and political situation of small producers in Guatemala. A recurrent theme, both in this section and the preceding one, has been the relationship between production and consumption and Lyon brings us back to the concept of the disempowered worker/producer in her study of Fair Trade, an approach to distribution relations that turns mainstream marketing logic associated with the marketing concept on its head. Fair trade is intended to equalize the benefits from exchange relations between less powerful producers in 'developing' countries, their distributors and the end consumer (Witkowski, 2005b). She concludes that marketing activities can have an impact on the human rights policies of the country involved.

In sharp contrast to Lyon, Conca (chapter 43) does not see marketing's role as benign in any respect. Focusing on consumption and global environmental degradation, he critiques current thinking that leads to a false polarization: an affluent and over-consuming North (of the globe) versus a poverty-stricken, under-consuming South. He identifies a significant 'sustaining middle' of assorted populations that are being squeezed out by advancing economic globalization. This 'sustainable middle' consists of an estimated 3.3 billion people, in diverse locations around the world, who currently are self-sustaining in small communities that remain untouched by consumer society, but who also do not live in abject poverty.

Providing the empirical context in which to explore Conca's argument, Böhm and Brei illustrate very poignantly how this middle group of self-sustainers is being squeezed. They explore the role of marketing in the construction of what they term the 'hegemony of development'. Applying their Gramscian perspective to the actions of one of the world's most polluting industries, the pulp and paper industry, they demonstrate how marketing discourse is being used, both to legitimize the destruction of the land, and to silence resistance. In the process, many South American peasant small holdings are being destroyed and indigenous people displaced and forced into city dwelling. Their example reveals how marketing can be implicated in global social injustice.

## The Ethics of Marketing

The field of marketing ethics continues to develop apace as the global environments across which marketing activities are practiced, become increasingly complex (see Hunt and Vitell, 2006; Laczniak and Murphy, 2006; Saeed *et al.*, 2001). The two articles we have chosen for this short, and final section, both challenge some of the core assumptions on which the study of marketing ethics has been based. Both focus on the gap between the theory and practice of marketing ethics. In recognition of the consequences of marketing activities on

society, Thompson (chapter 46) outlines a 'contextualist' approach to marketing ethics that questions the value of general ethical principles that are not context sensitive. Abstract ethical reflection, while useful, neglects to factor in the variety of influences which impact differently on the way we each approach the perception and resolution of ethical dilemmas.

For Thompson, having people approach ethical issues or 'tensions' (Abela and Murphy, 2008) in a multitude of different ways is a good thing, as a 'diversity of perspectives offers an important means to recognize a broader range of stakeholder interests'. In a slightly different way, Nill (chapter 47) critiques current models of marketing ethics for failing to account for different business customs and ethical norms in international markets, and discusses the complex nature of ethical decision-making in 'cross-cultural settings'. As with Thompson's contextualist framework, Nill's communicative approach, which is developed through the prisms of the work of Habermas and Apel, emphasizes the role of dialogue in hopefully reconciling ethical issues. Following Habermas, Nill appreciates that such discussions will be complex, most likely very costly, and perhaps impractical. Nor should we always expect that such dialogue about ethical tensions will always be resolved in a satisfactory manner for all involved in the process. Nill concludes by stating that having outlined the theoretical aspect of this ethical position that further 'work is needed to find out how a communicative approach can be implemented as a real-world corporate ethical responsibility approach' (see Grein and Gould, 2007).

## Conclusion

Having come to the end of the introduction chapter to what we hope will be a continued debate about the nature of critical marketing studies, let us just review the terrain very broadly. As Monieson (1988) has indicated, the manipulation of the consumer has often been attributed to big business or to marketing researchers who could plumb the depths of consumer unconscious, manipulating subjectivity and desires in ways that consumers did not appreciate (Schudson, 1981; Tadajewski, 2006b). Just as marketing managers do not act in accordance with the representation of marketing practices found in introductory textbooks, nor do advertising executives, 'creatives' or account planners. Postulating the power of one group over all others means that we will probably marginalise the influence of other actors and institutions (Kline, 1995). Intellectual selectivity has its benefits, but also its costs, in that it structures the way we look at the world, revealing some aspects, while eliding others (O'Shaughnessy, 2008). This is why critical marketing studies must be pluralistic in ethos, refusing to be limited by any claims to define a field, and always ready to utilise whatever theoretical resources we have to hand to rethink the nature of marketing activities in and on society.

## Notes

- i. The logical empiricist paradigm has been called the orthodox approach to studying marketing phenomena (Easton, 2002). Ontologically, this paradigm assumes that the existence of the world is external to the perception of the individual. Research subscribing to the tenets of the paradigm aims to produce law-like generalisations about whatever phenomena is being studied. Objectivity is an important attribute of this research and is facilitated through the use of the hypothetico-deductive scientific method. Not all agree with the assumptions underpinning this paradigm. See Firat (1985), Morgan (chapter 2), Moorman (chapter 3), Murray and Ozanne (chapter 14), Bristor and Fischer (chapter 24), Firat (chapter 34).
- ii. There are a number of other important commentators that could have been introduced in this section. Those that are discussed by Lears and Kellner are the most prominent. The interested reader should consult Renouard (2007) who reviews the work of Samuel Strauss and Stuart Chase, which he links with Veblen and the work of the Frankfurt School. For other linkages and points of differentiation between Veblen and contemporary social theorists like Bauman see Rojek (2004).

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