Critical Marketing Studies and Critical Marketing Education

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Biography

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Introduction: What is Critical Marketing Studies?

Let me say at the outset, this is a very broad-brush introduction to Critical Marketing Studies. It therefore has to elide nuance in favour of fairly general outlines and sketches of what this label stands for, providing a potted history of Critical Marketing Studies, and explanation of how it can potentially inform our teaching. This paper concludes with a review of valuable source materials – books, journal articles, online sources and documentary DVD's – that are invaluable for adding further flesh to the key concepts in marketing that we critically interrogate.

It is clear that marketing has long suffered a poor reputation in the business school. This need not be the case. We have a rich tradition of Critical[i] scholarship, combined with an outpouring of high quality recent publications (see Tadajewski, 2010a for a survey), that beg to be incorporated into our curriculum. This material has many benefits that justify its inclusion, perhaps the most obvious being that Critical research and pedagogy challenges taken-for-granted concepts and theories in marketing, demonstrating the ideological function these perform for those who mobilise them.

In an attempt to illuminate the benefits and costs of the market and marketing, academics in this thought community have produced numerous papers, chapters and books that aim to challenge the representation of marketing theory and practice by situating it within its wider historical, social, cultural and political context (Catterall *et al*., 1999; Tadajewski, 2011). While it is possible to trace the emergence of Critical perspectives to the beginning of the discipline (Burton, 2000; Tadajewski, 2010a), the majority of literature emerged from the late 1970s onwards when the first doctoral studies were produced which took an explicitly Critical orientation (e.g. Firat, 1978) through to seminal publications during the 1980s (Dholakia and Arndt, 1985; Firat *et al*., 1987) and 1990s (Brownlie *et al*., 1999) all the way to present day (e.g. Ellis *et al*., 2011; Hackley, 2009).

At its most basic, Critical Marketing is concerned with "ontological denaturalisation" and defatalisation. The former is a term taken from Critical Management Studies (e.g. Fournier and Grey, 2000) and the latter is informed by the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu and philosophically rich historical work of Michel Foucault. What the first term means is that the current social order and the way it so deeply structured around the construction of identity through consumption is not a natural state of affairs. It is the outcome of a very particular process of historical development, traceable back to the industrial revolution, if not before. This process effectively involves numerous actors and "vested interests" – of which corporations are the most obvious – who in their search for profit and their need to justify their activities as legitimate and unproblematic invoke particular discourses (service or science, for example) and use marketing and consumer research to ensure the on-going malleability of the market (Strasser, 1989) and consumer subjectivity (Foucault, 1982). Marketing is, from this perspective, not solely about satisfying consumers. Rather it is about ensuring they are never totally satisfied (Alvesson, 1994). Only then can we maintain the plasticity of consumer desire (Belk *et al*., 2003) and elevate market-based methods of satisfying these desires to a preeminent position.

Connected to ontological denaturalisation is the issue of defatalisation (Bourdieu, 1998). While some commentators see Critical perspectives in marketing, particularly those aligned with the Frankfurt School version of Critical Theory as completely negative (Hetrick and Lozada, 1994), Critical Marketing Studies is partly underwritten by a belief in the positive value of negativity – "nay saying" in Leo Lowenthal's (1998) terms – in contesting the way marketing is represented. This said, Critical Marketing registers the value of many marketing activities and firmly appreciates the desire that people at the margins of the world economy have for access to the consumption vistas that more fortunate people in affluent nations have long had the opportunity to consume. This is not to dismiss the problems that accompany greater participation in the market as it stands. The unsustainable status-quo of resource consumption is something that cannot be ignored, however difficult this issue will be to tackle (e.g. Wilk, 2012). Nevertheless, social change is possible.

For more mainstream marketing scholars, the fact that Critical Marketing is associated with various forms of critical social theory such as neo-Marxism, feminism and postcolonialism to name a few, might suggest that it is a politicised form of marketing education. This would be the correct perspective to adopt. Arguably though, all forms of marketing education are political in that they have some vision of the good society at their base. Mainstream marketing education focuses on the satisfaction that can be derived from consumption whereas Critical Marketing Studies seeks to highlight the dark-side of marketing theory and practice, that is, it incorporates discussion not just of the benefits of the marketing system, but also the costs. These are often a concomitant of the profit logic of the capitalist system. In this system corporations are compelled to provide the maximum returns to their shareholders possible (Bakan, 2005). And this has implications for the tactics corporations utilise and it is not a surprise that the history of marketing thought reflects both socially desirable as well as deeply undesirable corporate activities (e.g. Tadajewski, 2010b) which have ramifications for their customers and the ecosystem as a whole (e.g. Crane, 2000; Kilbourne *et al*., 1997; Prothero and Fitchett, 2000; Tadajewski, 2010a).

Given that marketing is quick to promote the value of its activities, its role in provisioning, indeed its central position within what some commentators call a "post-industrial", "postmodern" world, it is important for responsible academics to recognise both the benefits and the costs of marketing in and on society. This means moving beyond viewing marketing in managerial terms, where we focus only on the role of the marketing manager, their function within the firm, and the limited proxy of contributions to shareholder value and wealth, as our measuring stick for evaluating the contribution of business to society (Arndt, 1985). As praxis, Critical Marketing Studies thus attempts to reveal how this consumption-driven social order is structured, patterned and how meanings are associated with certain products in ways that seem self-evident or natural, yet are actually the outcome of a power inflected process of social construction.

Being attuned to the dark-side of the market involves the recognition that the products, services and the ideology that supports the expansion of the market into ever further reaches of the social world is accompanied by a range of problems (Hochschild, 2012). This is a distinctly unequal world, where dollar votes can buy you the items you desire, including human beings (Pennington *et al*., 2009), the organs that sustain them (Moniruzzaman, 2012) and products that when taken to excess can cause them to fail (Farrell and Gordon, 2012). These are obviously examples taken from the end of a troubling continuum. On a daily basis, it remains the case that people trying to negotiate the marketplace face stigma, discrimination, psychological and physical abuse (Moufahim and Lim, 2009; Moufahim and Chatzidakis, 2012). The marketplace is sometimes not a pretty place.

Our textbooks, however, prefer to tell a "happy families" story about marketing. We present our students with an idealised normative view about marketing and its attempts to satisfy the customer. A vaguely aware student will see through this narrative fairly quickly. The normative view of marketing practice will sit very uneasily with their experiences of being refused loans from banks or when they have received bad service on the basis of the colour of their skin. As a responsible discipline, committed to self-reflection and critique, we cannot ignore these facets of marketing practice. We should explore and highlight them.

This self-reflexive stance can only add brute empirical realism that can be juxtaposed to the unreality of textbook accounts that largely neglect power relations, politics and illegal activities conducted by companies.

In what follows, I will indicate some areas where Critical perspectives can be integrated into the marketing curriculum, as well as point to some of the key scholarly papers that will facilitate curriculum development. In selecting the issues discussed below, I have been guided by recent developments in the domain, particularly as represented by major edited collections on the topic of Critical Marketing Studies (e.g. Tadajewski and Maclaran, 2009; Tadajewski and Cluley, 2013). This said, I can only touch upon a very limited range of topics. This paper, therefore, is best considered a "taster" of Critical Marketing, not a definitive statement of aims, objectives and major contributions.

A History of Critical Marketing Studies

Marketing has a long history of self-generated critique, not to mention a large variety of critical analysis directed at it. Schematically, the early work of the German Historical School took a macro orientation to its study of the marketplace and the role of marketers in distributing goods and services. They were concerned – at the University of Wisconsin at least – with distributive justice and ethics (Jones and Monieson, 1990). There are a number of excellent resources that help educators introduce what are called the first paradigm debates in marketing. These took place between two different interpretations of the German Historical School and its implications for marketing between Harvard and Wisconsin. Jones and Monieson (1990), Jones (1994) and Jones and Monieson (1987) all illuminate the dynamics of the two different interpretations of this school of thought during the first three decades of the twentieth century (see also Tadajewski, 2014). Suffice to say, the ethical orientation of Wisconsin was gradually displaced by the managerial orientation associated with the Harvard Business School. The latter focused on analysing issues of interest to the marketing manager rather than looking at the marketing system as a whole.

The 1930s saw a flowering of critique, particularly among "muckraking" journalists, former advertising professionals and some scholars (Tadajewski, 2010a, 2013). This critique was, like the German Historical School, itself gradually displaced by the boom years following the Second World War when critical analyses of the business system were few and far between – excepting the work of the Frankfurt School outside of marketing and the book length contributions of social critics like Vance Packard, Betty Friedan, and David Caplovitz. But, the late 1960s did see the revival of Critical research in marketing. Younger scholars, most notably, were concerned about the way marketing was perceived to be part of the military industrial establishment (Arnold and Fisher, 1996; Kassarjian and Goodstein, 2010). And its role in systems maintenance, that is, with encouraging consumption and consumerism were the subject of scathing commentary, particularly from the emergent environmental movement. This led scholars to attempt to rethink marketing's relationship with society.

Connected to this, a key focus revolved around questioning capitalist values, especially the profit-motive, and the way this structures corporate behaviour and conceptions of the marketplace deployed by educators, researchers, government legislators and others. While it is central to most business practice, the pursuit of profit can have very negative consequences for wider society (Bakan, 2005; McDonagh, 2002). This is especially important at the present time given the pre-eminence of capitalist values and their steady encroachment into areas of social life that were previously outside of marketplace calculations (Hochschild, 2012).

The fall of the Soviet Union and its socialist alternative to the capitalist system has "led to a fatal triumphalism in the West. The feeling of being among the winners of world history is seductive. In this case, it contributed to inflating a theory of economic policy [capitalism and neoliberalism] into a worldview that permeates all areas of life" (Habermas, 2009: 229). What Habermas means by this is that many facets of the social world are increasingly examined through the prism of economics and market-based decision-making. For practitioners, the market, as reflected in the share-price associated with their company, inflects all business decisions. For educators it may mean that we cannot think beyond the existing

organisation of society to imagine alternative means of distribution. Critical Marketing Studies, by contrast, aims to illuminate these capitalist dynamics and underscore how and where people are contesting the existing organisation of society. Arguably, Critical Marketing Education is one of the major ways scholars can contribute to furthering this process of self-reflection, emancipation and social change.

Critical Marketing Education

As part of a movement against mainstream marketing theory and pedagogy, there have been recent calls for marketing education to take a Critical turn. This can be dated to the late 1990s when these issues were beginning to be aired in prominent journal publications. As expressed by Maclaran and Tadajewski (2011: 300), "At the heart of this pedagogical approach is the idea of critical reflection, encouraging students to think about the wider implications of marketing activities and set these in their broader macro context…Critical Marketing Education, then, seeks to remind students as future for-profit and not-for-profit actors that all marketing practice takes place within society and that society ultimately sanctions its continued existence".

Scholars have argued for a complete overhaul of the marketing curriculum in an effort to help students realise the benefits of a Critical approach – however loosely this is defined in the marketing education literature – from the start of their studies (Treagear *et al*., 2007, 2010). This project of rethinking marketing education is part of the wider movement that strives to ensure that marketing is not merely a "controlling science" (Heede, 1985), that is, one which supports the status-quo via the production of knowledge for the marketing manager and the moulding of student subjectivity in line with the needs of corporate capitalism. The counterpoint to this emphasis is viewing marketing as a "liberating science" (Heede, 1985), concerned with changing the marketing system through systematic critique in order to acknowledge where certain interests, perspectives and values are being served and others denied (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2002).

An interest in marketing becoming a liberating science has implications for the pedagogic process. Much in line with Freire, it means a shift from a "banking model" of marketing education which assumes our students are passive vessels into which knowledge is deposited to one where their active participation and experiential understanding of marketing is sought. The lecturer, in this context, helps students "challenge the status-quo" and the managerialist understandings they possess, highlighting the impact of marketing on society as well as upon the individual (Vince, 1996: 117). In pragmatic terms, this can lead to challenges to key ideas like the marketing concept (e.g. Benton, 1987), consumer sovereignty (e.g. Dixon, 1992/2008) and so forth. For Critical Marketers, these terms take on an ideological status in the sense that they serve to elide rather than illuminate the social relationships between marketers and consumers if we are not careful.

Far from producers listening and acting upon consumer requirements, producers attempt structure the marketplace in ways that suit their interests, limiting the products and services available. In the Critical literature, the marketing concept is a way for producers to hide their power in the market; consumer sovereignty, likewise, presents a highly distorted image of customer power vis-à-vis producers. After all, the marketing system does not satisfy all customers. Some are treated distinctly unequally when they attempt to negotiate the marketplace. They might be subject to oppressive power relations and social structures: racism and sexism, for example, permeate the marketing system causing various harms to diverse groups.

Denying the existence of racism, sexism, and so forth in the marketplace is not just irresponsible pedagogic practice, but fundamentally myopic in that it denies the empirical realism of the marketplace as it exists today. We need to help students engage with alternative perspectives and the function of the marketplace in society. This means expanding the range of organisations and groups we introduce to them. Environmental campaigners, groups advocating fair trade, alternative organisations (e.g. non-profit charities)

among many others, should be invited into the classroom to add further flesh to the conceptual and theoretical bones of Critical Marketing oriented articles and documentaries.

Critical Marketing Pedagogy

I think it is fair to argue that many Critical Marketing scholars would not see this module as a standalone option which is bolted on to an otherwise mainstream marketing programme. Rather, the point of engaging with Critical Marketing as I see it is that it should be included in all courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Arguably, a "balanced" marketing curriculum contains elements of mainstream perspectives – marketing as embodied in the marketing concept, aiming to create satisfied customers – and Critical perspectives that see the above statement as hiding all manner of power relations, asymmetries and inequalities (Benton, 1985, 1987).

Threading throughout this educational endeavour is an interest in studying marketing management as an object for critical interrogation, comparing and contrasting what practitioners and their accompanying ideology say they do, with the ultimate result of their marketing practices on society. This requires students to be exposed to relevant educational materials in terms of current academic articles, books and more popular sources, combined with alternative media like some of the excellent documentaries available that can serve to problematise marketing practice.

There are, for instance, a few specialised textbooks that merit attention: Hackley (2009) and Ellis et al (2011) are the main sources for alternative perspectives available at the moment. While Hackley (2009) assumes a degree of subject specialist knowledge and is more suitable for second year and above students, Ellis et al (2011) can be used on an introduction to marketing course with little modification. A major benefit of the Ellis et al book is that it comes with additional readings which can be accessed upon adoption.

In addition to these useful books, there are many other sources worthy of consultation (e.g. Parsons and Maclaran, 2009; Saren *et al*., 2007; Tadajewski and Brownlie, 2008; Tadajewski and Cluley, 2014; Tadajewski and Maclaran, 2009), including journal outlets such as the *Journal of Marketing Management*, *Marketing Theory, Consumption, Markets & Culture*, *Journal of Macromarketing*, *Sociology*, *Discourse & Society*, *Critical Sociology*, the *Sociological Review*, *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *Feminism & Psychology* and even sources like the *Journal of Drug Issues*, all of which publish marketing related manuscripts that take a Critical perspective. The backing of the UK based Higher Education Academy (HEA) who have recently founded a Critical Marketing Community of Practice which will support, stimulate and disseminate resources to help educators interested in incorporating a Critical edge into their teaching and learning practices, will further assist those wanting to know more about Critical Marketing Studies.

Furthermore, there are numerous articles and chapters that interrogate influential intellectual trends that have caught the imagination of marketing scholars (see Tadajewski and Cluley, 2013; Tadajewski and Maclaran, 2009). These readings highlight the complex and politically fraught nature of marketing practice; sometimes even the downright illegal activities of companies that may have been heralded as exemplar marketing organisations (Tadajewski, 2010b). Thus there are analyses which strike at the centre of the conceptual universe in our discipline dealing with the marketing concept (Tadajewski, 2010b), consumer sovereignty (Dixon, 1992/2008) and relationship marketing (O'Malley and Prothero, 2004). They remind us that the narratives found in many mainstream texts are problematic and should be subject to critical reflection. After all, we know that the consumer is often limited in their cognitive and information analytic skills (Ellis *et al*., 2011; Fırat, 2014), with their behaviour channelled in very specific ways, using a variety of techniques (e.g. Johnston and Sandberg, 2008; Knights *et al*., 1994; Korczynski, 2005; Korczynski and Ott, 2005) such as something as innocuous as a menu (Korczynski and Ott, 2006) or more obviously through advertising that resonates with the cultural climate (Cronin, 2004; Holt, 2003). And yet such issues rarely feature in mainstream books.

Having now introduced Critical Marketing Studies and some of its underlying assumptions, let us explore more specific worked examples of its contribution to marketing pedagogy.

Critical Marketing: Worked Example

Within the confines of this brief paper, let me focus upon examples I have used in my teaching with undergraduates at varying levels. Any course naturally begins with reference to the interwoven tapestry of issues that I have asserted is a productive way of making sense of Critical Marketing above. An introduction should be historical and contextually sensitive. It should underscore the development of marketing theory, thought and practice as largely an American story[ii] and begin with an overview of the development of the discipline. There are useful historical surveys that can assist the lecturer in this endeavour (e.g. Jones and Monieson, 1990; Tadajewski, 2010a) and recommended lists of further reading that can be consulted (e.g. Benton, 1985).

On any course I teach, I try to refrain from remaining wedded to a single textbook. Rather I use a combination of the Ellis et al (2011) introduction to marketing book that takes a critical-ethical perspective. This is supplemented with materials from the large scale readers on Critical Marketing (Tadajewski and Cluley, 2013; Tadajewski and Maclaran, 2009), a dictionary of concise reviews of key concepts in Critical Management Studies (Tadajewski *et al*., 2011), additional readings from Brownlie et al (1999) and a reasonable quantity of journal articles (roughly two per lecture seems optimal). This material provides students with enough insight into each topic for an undergraduate course. For example, a sampling of the Tadajewski and Cluley (2013) four volume work includes

1. material on the history of critical marketing;
2. theoretical and conceptual perspectives on critical marketing;
3. critiques of marketing and critical marketing;
4. critical social marketing;
5. co-creation, governmentality and the labour process;
6. service work, experience production and customer manipulation;
7. marketing ethics and morality;
8. racism, discrimination and whiteness;
9. gender, sexuality, and the consumption of people and organs.

This can be supplemented with material from the Tadajewski and Maclaran volumes (2009) which deals with

1. The development of critical perspectives in marketing;
2. Social and societal marketing;
3. Critical reflections on marketing management;
4. Critiques of the consumer society;
5. Critical Theory and marketing;
6. Critical Theory and advertising;
7. Feminist reflections on marketing;
8. The agency of the consumer;
9. The shaping of consumption choices;
10. Liberatory consumption;
11. Marketing and global social justice; and
12. The ethics of marketing.

In practical terms, at the start of the first lecture of a principles class, following an historical overview I commence with a series of ice-breaking questions. This call for student participation thus reflects the advice offered by Critical Management educators (e.g. Grey *et al*., 1996) that student participation and experiential learning are central to a critical pedagogy. Specifically, I ask does the marketing system really meet the needs and requirements of the people on this planet? Secondly, does the marketing system or organisation actually listen to the consumer and respond to their desires? Thirdly, is the consumer sovereign in the marketplace? To engage with these questions my pedagogic approach adopts a multiple

paradigm strategy whereby different paradigmatic positions as articulated in key papers are reviewed. Thus, I begin with a mainstream managerialist narrative such as Keith's (1960) seminal *Journal of Marketing* paper and then turn to more critically oriented literature in a number of steps: from Keith (1960) to Brownlie and Saren (1992), then Benton (1987) and finally Tadajewski (2010b).

Generally speaking, a mainstream response to these questions will draw upon Robert J. Keith's (1960) "The Marketing Revolution" which can be interpreted as answering each of these questions in the positive. I should underscore that students must read the original source, as there are far too many misinterpretations of Keith's work in mainstream textbooks (Jones and Richardson, 2007). It merits this attention because this narrative is so central to our disciplinary identity in terms of the "eras model" of production, sales, marketing and marketing control (Tadajewski, 2010b). It has also merited a considerable amount of scholarly attention which means it is easy to juxtapose the claims made in this paper against the historical development of marketing thought and capitalism more generally. As a case study, it can be read in numerous ways depending on the needs of the lecturer. Firstly, the argument deployed by Keith can be subject to historical scrutiny. This can be achieved by rethinking the genealogy of the ideas that Keith presents, challenging his eras model. Marketing historians have expended considerable energies on this front (e.g. Fullerton, 1988; Hollander, 1986; Jones and Richardson, 2007). Secondly, they can be interrogated from a historical-critical perspective, where the arguments that Keith presents can be compared against the actual practices of the company (e.g. Tadajewski, 2010b). Thirdly, they can be read using a feminist lens to contest the gendered nature of the eras discourse (e.g. Fischer and Bristor, 1994).

For Critical scholars, the answers to these questions will differ markedly from those of mainstream textbooks. A Critical scholar will argue that each of these questions depends on the context. But, if we are permitted to generalise a little for the sake of the exposition of Critical Marketing Education, let us work through each in turn. With respect to the first question, Critical Marketers will point out that the marketing system only provides goods to those segments that are worth – however we define worth – serving; furthermore attention is often as much directed at the competition as at the consumer. Many consumers remain not served by the market.

As pointed out above, one of the best sources for a critique of each of these questions is Brownlie and Saren (1992). It questions the value of the marketing concept, asks whose needs are being served, undermines the valorisation of consumer sovereignty and makes reference to organisational politics which hinder the implementation of the marketing concept. Marketing, for these writers, is about manipulation and the influencing of consumers, not necessarily about satisfying them, certainly not in the sense that their demands are catered for and used to inform product development. Drawing from Benton, it can then be argued that the invocation of the marketing concept helps elide power relations between organisations and their customers, as well as organisational moves to control markets in ways that might not be in the interest of the ultimate customer (Benton, 1987). As Benton illuminates, the 1950s witnessed a turning point in marketing thought. It was a period of extreme geopolitical and ideological stress, when buffering the American economy was a priority:

"The shift in marketing orientations that occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, culminating in the adoption of an explicitly managerial perspective, involved the abandonment of any pretence on the part of marketers to be standing outside of social reality as a system. No longer seeing themselves as intervening on behalf of the system as a whole, as early marketers had, at least to some extent, marketers emerged as a force intervening on the side and in support of the interests of a particular class."

(Benton, 1987: 424)

What was promoted during the time Benton refers to was a much more widely shared ideological (i.e. managerialist) vision of marketing than was the case previously.

Moreover, all of these points can easily be explored via the experiences of students who will have undoubtedly have interacted with organisations who did not provide products that satisfied their needs or

where the asymmetric power relations were obvious (e.g. between students and banks). Attention can then be turned to Tadajewski's manuscript which can be read in conjunction with the wider literature on the nature of markets and the means governments have to control them. Important here are laws like the Sherman Act which makes attempts to control markets through the joint action of companies illegal (e.g. Dickson and Wells, 2001; for a UK example, see Ashton and Pressey, 2011).

Moving topic slightly, linked to the marketing concept is the category of the consumer and the issue of consumer sovereignty. Let us start with the category of the consumer first. An attempt to place the category of the consumer in historical context is found in Strasser (1989). She charts the changing terminology that accompanied the conceptualisation of the market and consumer as malleable. At the same time (roughly the middle to late nineteenth century), the "customer" – the individual who was known personally to the retailer, whose desires and interests were moulded on an inter-personal basis – morphed into the "consumer", the person who lived far away from the manufacturing base of a given organisation. Through research and appropriate marketing communications, their preferences could be shaped to fit with organisational requirements. Put slightly differently, the above narrative moves the consumer from the centre of our analytic attention, highlighting an important role for marketing in shaping consumer lived-experience. At the same time as these discursive moves were being made, there was also the rise of a complementary discourse (circa 1914) of the consumer being depicted as king or sovereign in the marketplace (Ward, 2009, 2010). Lecturers can problematise the validity of this concept as an accurate reflection of the dynamics of the marketplace easily.

After all, the idea that the consumer is sovereign is dubious on multiple fronts. The economics literature carefully unpicks the idea that consumer sovereignty exists in an ideal form and finds it a misrepresentation of consumer power in the marketplace. Secondly, the idea of the customer as "king" is problematic. Historically, Charles Coolidge Parlin articulated this concept in an attenuated form (Ward, 2009). Only certain consumer segments have merited the designation of the sovereign consumer. They were usually affluent, well educated, and thus the ideal target for the offerings of marketers. But, as Ward (2009) documents in his study of consumer capitalism and market research, there were various other groups who were not considered appropriate targets for marketer attention. The unemployed, non-white, and residents of southern states of the United States were excluded.

Recognition of the boundaries and exclusions accompanying C.C. Parlin's "customer is king" phrase, then, has the potential to introduce related debates on the structural barriers and inequalities that are ever present in the marketplace into a course. This is essential given that such barriers remain present in society. For those seeking to incorporate these and related ideas, recent research has investigated the presence of racist assumptions in marketing theory and practice (Tadajewski, 2012), the racist discourses mobilised in the service industries (e.g. Bailey, 2000; Mallinson and Brewster, 2005), and found in television campaigns (e.g. Bristor *et al*., 1995). This material is reprinted in Tadajewski and Cluley's *New Directions in Critical Marketing Studies*. Related studies can be found in the journal, *Discourse & Society*.

The above research can be used to highlight how different consumers receive very different treatment from marketers and retailers on the basis of racist ideas and ideology. Somewhat disconcertingly, the papers mentioned above can easily be linked with contemporary advertising campaigns. While I was researching this topic, new campaigns that employed racist language and imagery appeared with some frequency. For those scholars who seek to try to encourage reflection on these issues yet still ensure it remains relevant for students in terms of their potential managerial careers, the study of Aunt Jemima by Judy Foster Davis (2007) and the methods she outlines for reducing the potential for racist assumptions and biases to creep into advertising campaigns is worthy of review and discussion.

However, to turn this focus around slightly, why should we assume that the customer is always someone worth dealing with, treating well and respectfully, whose needs take priority over those of the employee in a retail store or wherever? We should not deceive ourselves into thinking that the customer is or should be king or queen. They might be a liar (Eddy 1912 in Tadajewski, 2009). They might be an "abusive" bully

(Bishop and Hoel, 2008; Korczynski and Ott, 2004). They may even be a pervert who makes staff feel distinctly uncomfortable (Tyler, 2009). Is it any wonder then, that employees sometimes give customers "shit" (Stein, 2007) having taken enough of it themselves?

To put this in different terms, a Critically oriented course does not always have to valorise the customer, their service experience and their satisfaction. It can provide students with the resources to deal with problematic, perverse individuals, teaching them how to modify the power dynamics between the troublesome customer and the retail worker (e.g. Johnston and Sandberg, 2008). Certainly, a Critical Marketing curriculum needs to engage with consumer misbehaviour and the deliberate attempts by people to sabotage the exchange process in various ways, ranging from not telling retailers about being given extra change after paying for their products through to vandalism (Fullerton and Punj, 1998, 2004) all the way to the sexual threats that some severely disturbed individuals target at staff (e.g. Daunt and Harris, 2011; Daunt and Harris, 2012).

There are other ways of developing this orientation further by recognising that not only do producer and consumer interests not always align, but that producer and consumer short-term desires are not necessarily commensurate with the long-term viability of the natural world. The ecological critique of the marketing concept as anthropocentric in nature is important and the studies produced by Kilbourne and colleagues with regards to the "dominant social paradigm" and the "ideology of consumption" are worthy of attention by those seeking to incorporate a Critical, ecological edge into their courses (e.g. Kilbourne *et al*., 1997). For those interested in pursuing these ideas further, they can be united with research associated with ecofeminism (e.g. Dobscha and Ozanne, 2001/2008) which documents how some groups try to limit the impact of their activities on the natural world, and indeed refuse the label "consumer" at all, preferring instead "conserver".

Gender, Sexism and the Cultural Industries

To switch topics now, another lecture could tackle the issue of gender and marketing theory and practice. As has been underscored on numerous occasions, marketing has an ambivalent relationship at best with gender. Four articles will help set the scene for this discussion. Maclaran's (2012) account of the relationship between marketing and feminism is a highly useful orientation device for those new to this area and an ideal piece to distribute to students. Linda Scott's (2000) book chapter further develops many of the ideas in the Maclaran paper, highlighting the productive use of the market by feminist writers and lecturers. Staying with the historical emphasis, Zuckerman and Carsky (1990) provide a very useful introduction to the contributions made by female scholars and practitioners in the early twentieth century, revealing how their ideas were prescient and chime with those articulated by Belk (1988) and other contemporary contributors.

Another excellent paper is Maclaran et al's (1997) engagement with women in marketing management and their concept of the "glasshouse effect" and the marginalisation of female labour in a gender stratified workplace; an issue that is very longstanding. Compared to other industries, marketing and advertising practice was fairly open in terms of appreciating and using the skills of women to speak primarily to other women. This is amply documented by the contributions to the special issue of the *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* which presents numerous papers that deal with the treatment of women in the marketplace for marketing and advertising labour (Vol. 5 No. 3). Yet, the same issue reveals that this appreciation only went so far. Women were frequently paid less than men and subject to sexist and derogatory comments. These issues were compounded by intersectional barriers, that is, women who were already subject to marginalisation by virtue of their gender, faced greater struggles if they were from an ethnic minority. The issue of intersectionality is well articulated by Gopaldas (2013) and can be linked to the theoretical tradition of "critical multiculturalism" (Burton, 2002) and which is historically explored by Davis (2013) in her research on black advertising executives. What needs to be underlined is that this research is not just of historical interest. Many of the issues that were problematic in the early twentieth century have not simply gone away. There are a variety of empirical studies that reveal the gender, ethnic

and class based biases still prevalent in the advertising industry today (e.g. McLeod *et al*., 2009, 2010; Windels and Lee, 2012).

These ideas can be further extended by shifting from the position of female practitioners within industry and their contributions to look at how feminist ideas have been appropriated and mainstreamed by the marketing industry. The exemplar case study is the Dove "Real Beauty" campaign. This will no doubt be familiar to many students and scholars. In spite of the intention of the campaign, there is generalised discomfort with the idea that corporations should be the mouthpiece for feminist ideas, challenging the "beauty myth" propagated by the same industry (indeed, the same parent company owns brands whose campaigns leave a lot to be desired from a feminist perspective, especially Axe or Lynx). In equal measure, there is appreciation of the fact that such marketer led communications do introduce seemingly empowering ideas to the wider public. As such, this ethical grey area presents an excellent starting point for student reflection and classroom discussion.

Until recently many papers dealing with this example have offered useful reviews of the campaign (e.g. Johnson and Taylor, 2008). A recent publication in *Critical Sociology* by Taylor et al (2014, forthcoming) takes their earlier review work one step further and engages in an evaluation of the campaign, using focus groups to probe whether this campaign was consistent with feminist values. As might be expected, the evaluation was fairly lukewarm. It will, nonetheless, provide the basis for an engagement with a recent campaign and stimulate student discussion of feminism and marketing's use of social criticism to drive forward a profit-driven agenda.

International and Global Marketing

The history of international and global marketing is an interesting one. As Cunningham and Jones (1997) have documented, the earliest courses in marketing were often accompanied by an international dimension. Historians have likewise encouraged us to view globalisation – and the problems that have accompanied it (e.g. Klein, 2000) – from a longer-term perspective than is normally appreciated. It is clear that the global trade in products and services has a long lineage and often a dark-side linked to slavery, the marketing of harmful drugs, and racist assumptions and discourses (e.g. Domosh, 2006).

Moreover, for those who seek to take a Critical orientation very seriously, there is room to engage with the relationship between marketing theory and practice and recent wars, like that of both Gulf wars. As Apple (1990), Jhally (1993) and others have pointed out (e.g. McCarthy, 2007, 2009), attempting to ensure access to necessary minerals and resources that are central to the high consumption lifestyles of the affluent has been used as a means to legitimate recent geopolitical aggression (Apple, 1990). While this topic remains less well developed in marketing – the Ellis et al (2011) textbook contains a case study based on the relationship between marketing and war – it would be one of the more interesting angles for scholars to research and educators to incorporate into their lectures.

At the very least, internationally oriented courses have to engage with the history of international trade, colonialism and racism that underpin the early history of marketing practice fairly clearly, and whose tropes continue to feature in the very latest literature. Articulating the colonial assumptions and "civilising mission" narratives present in the promotion of some of the earliest major brands is comparatively easy given the important book length studies on these topics. Seminal contributions have been made by Domosh (2006), McClintock (1995) and Ramamurthy (2000, 2003) among others. While I am eliding the differences in their argument to a degree, what they document are assumptions that not only treat the consumer as a malleable entity – this follows the argument deployed by Strasser (1989) and Applbaum (2000) – but also that people around the world, particularly those hailing from non-western nations, would welcome branded goods as a taste of civilisation and development (see also Applbaum, 2000; Svensson, 2007). The images used in the advertising communications cited and the assumptions made about different racial groups are often explicitly racist in tone.

Indeed, the arguments offered by these scholars are usually complemented by interpretations of visual media such as advertisements and their representations are generally linked to wider discussions of colonialism, representation and political economy. This visual dimension means they are useful for mixed ability student audiences. They can also be used in conjunction with the debates about advertising and its role in shaping or reflecting the world exemplified by Pollay's (1986, 1987) and Holbrook's (1987) debate in the *Journal of Marketing*.

Ramamurthy's (2000) paper, for instance, is an impressive close interpretation of a number of Lipton's tea advertisements which unpick how large corporations supported the colonial project of the United Kingdom and how advertisements reflected the ideas that undergirded colonialism. This material can be used to explore and question important theoretical concepts like "commodity fetishism" (see Dunne, 2011). This concept basically refers to the idea that production relations are hidden from view. As such we do not see the child labour that helped constitute our trainers or jeans in the advertisements for major brands (although Adbusters produces ads that refer to these issues which are useful for this kind of course). However, in the case of these early advertisements and the material circulated by major tea producers, they did reflect the worldview of colonial producers and the value of empire:

> "While in the majority of the advertising, the social relations of production and depictions of labour are usually deliberately hidden, in Lipton's advertising and other tea advertising of the period it appears to have become exalted. Of course the actual conditions of [the] workers, their low rates of pay, the indentured system of labour which forced them to give up their freedom, the brutalities of the planters, are not depicted, but instead an idealized world of production in which conflict is eliminated has been represented."
>
> (Ramamurthy, 2000: 160)

Such work would be of undoubted value for international and global marketing courses, since the arguments being made and the advertisements presented whilst sometimes shocking, are mirrored in international marketing related scholarship today (see Applbaum, 2000; Kelly-Holmes, 1998), which calls for cultural sensitivity and tolerance, but only within certain bounds. As Witkowski (2005) points out, there are still quite strong culturally imperialistic themes played out in international marketing that sometimes indicate that cultural difference will ultimately be overcome by marketers seeking to operate globally, whilst reaping the cost benefits of standardisation. For those interested in exploring these issues further, Gavin Jack (2008) provides a useful summary of McClintock's work (1995), linking this to related themes echoed in scholarship today, with Kalman Applbaum (2000) offering empirical research that engages with related issues. Other areas worth tackling in any international or global marketing course would naturally include the debates currently raging around the "Base of the Pyramid" (e.g. Bonsu and Polsa, 2011; Chatterjee, forthcoming).

Having now reviewed the development of the field of Critical Marketing Studies and indicated some areas where Critical Marketing can inform marketing education, I will briefly list some useful orientation materials for lecturers, following this with ten reviews of pertinent DVD documentaries that can illuminate the sometimes complex debates characteristic of Critical Marketing Studies.

Online Resources

http://www.corpwatch.org/
http://criticalmanagement.org/
http://www.criticalsociology.org/classroom_tools/index.html
http://www.sutjhally.com/lectures
https://www.adbusters.org/

Orientation Materials for Lecturers

Introductions to Critical Perspectives on Management

Mingers, J. (2000) 'What is it to be Critical?', *Management Learning* 31(2): 219–237.
Fournier, V. and Grey, C. (2000) 'At the Critical Moment: Conditions and Prospects for Critical Management Studies', *Human Relations* 53(1): 7–32.
Spicer, A., Alvesson, M., and Kärreman, D. (2009) 'Critical Performativity: The Unfinished Business of Critical Management Studies', *Human Relations* 62(4): 537–560.

Introductions to Critical Marketing Education

Catterall, M., Maclaran, P., and Stevens, L. (1999) 'Critical Marketing in the Classroom: Possibilities and Challenges', *Marketing Intelligence and Planning* 17(7): 344–353.
Catterall, M., Maclaran, P., and Stevens, L. (2002) 'Critical Reflection in the Marketing Curriculum', *Journal of Marketing Education* 24(3): 184–192.
Maclaran, P. and Tadajewski, M. (2011) 'A Critical Marketing Perspective on Marketing Education and Theory', *Social Business* 1(3): 300–303.
Benton, R. (1985) 'Micro Bias and Macro Prejudice in the Teaching of Marketing', *Journal of Macromarketing* Fall: 43–58.
Catterall, M., Maclaran, P., and Stevens, L. (1997) 'Marketing and Feminism: A Bibliography and Suggestions for Future Research', *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* 15(7): 369-376.
Stern, B. (2008) 'Course Innovation: "Diverse Consumers: Race, Ethnicity, Religion, Social Class, and Gender"', *Marketing Education Review* 18(1): 55–60.
Burton, D. (2005) 'New Course Development in Multicultural Marketing', *Journal of Marketing Education* 27(2): 151–162.
Shapiro, S.J. (2006) 'A JMM-Based Macromarketing Doctoral-Level Reading List', *Journal of Macromarketing* 26(2): 250–255.
Tregear, A., Kuznesof, S., and Brennan, M. (2007) 'Critical Approaches in Undergraduate Marketing Teaching: Investigating Students' Perceptions', *Journal of Marketing Management* 23: 411–424.
Tregear, A., Dobson, S., Brennan, M., and Kuznesof, S. (2010) 'Critically Divided? How Marketing Educators Perceive Undergraduate Programmes in the UK', *European Journal of Marketing* 44(1/2): 66–86.

Recommended Texts

Brownlie, D., Saren, M., Wensley, R., and Whittington, R. (eds.) (1999) *Rethinking Marketing: Towards Critical Marketing Accountings*. London: Sage.
Catterall, M., Maclaran, P., and Stevens, L. (eds.) (2000) *Marketing and Feminism: Current Issues and Research*. London: Routledge.
Ellis, N., Fitchett, J., Higgins, M., Jack, G., Lim, M., Saren, M. & Tadajewski, M. (2011) *Marketing: A Critical Textbook. London:* Sage.
Fırat, A.F., Dholakia, N., and Bagozzi, R.P. (eds.) (1987) *Philosophical and Radical Thought in Marketing*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
Hochschild, A. (1983) *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Klein, N. (2000) *No Logo*. London: Flamingo.
Leach, W. (1994) *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture*. New York: Vintage.
Hackley, C. (2009) *Marketing: A Critical Introduction*. London: Sage.
Leiss, W., Kline, S., Jhally, S. and Botterill, J. (2005) *Social Communication in Advertising: Consumption in the Mediated Marketplace*, Third Edition. London: Routledge.
Maclaran, P., Saren, M., Stern, B. and Tadajewski, M. (eds.) (2009) *The SAGE Handbook of Marketing Theory*. London: Sage.
McClintock, A. (1995) *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*.

New York: Routledge.
Parsons, E. and Maclaran, P. (eds.) (2009) *Contemporary Issues in Marketing and Consumer Behaviour*. Elsevier: London.
Saren, M., Maclaran, P., Goulding, C., Elliott, R., Shankar, A., and Catterall, M. (eds.) (2007) *Critical Marketing: Defining the Field*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
Tadajewski, M. and Cluley, R. (eds.) (2013) *New Directions in Critical Marketing Studies*, Four Volumes. London: Sage.
Tadajewski, M. and Maclaran, P. (eds.) (2009) *Critical Marketing* Studies, Three Volumes. London: Sage.
Tadajewski, M., Maclaran, P. Parsons, E. & Parker, M. (eds.) (2011) *Key Concepts in Critical Management Studies*. London: Sage.
Zwick, D. and Cayla, J. (eds.) (2012) *Inside Marketing: Practices, Ideologies, Devices*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Recommended DVDs

Many of the DVD's I refer to below are available via various internet sources, however, I would recommend you purchase original copies of each as online sources are both unreliable and compromise the ability of these companies to continue to produce the kind of films we urgently need to inform our research and teaching. These are materials that I have used most recently in taught courses (and which students have most likely not seen previously). There are, of course, many others that would be worthy of inclusion on a Critically oriented marketing course such as the seminal *Century of the Self*, *The Corporation*, *Super Size Me*, *McLibel*, and *The Shock Doctrine* to name just four. I have to restrict my attention to ten and in no particular order, they are as follows:

Vanalkemade, R. (2007) *What Would Jesus Buy?* Artefact Films.

This is a highly entertaining critical interrogation of American society. Its focus is upon the extent to which consumerism has formed the core axiology in US society, leading people to spend more time shopping per week than they do communicating with their children in meaningful conversation. The result is growing levels of consumer debt, with some unfortunate people becoming addicted to shopping. Shopping, as the film highlights, brings some people a great deal of pleasure, while for others it becomes something they dread, having to keep up with the Jones' by providing their children with the latest gadgets and gizmos that take them further into "eternal debt", so that it takes them nearly a year to pay for each prior Christmas.

This film charts the efforts by an anti-consumerist performance activist group – the "Church of Stop Shopping" – to encourage people to be more conscientious shoppers and to restrict what they buy to only those things they really need. This message is relayed by "Reverend" Billy and his gospel choir across the U.S. Connected to this, they encourage people to avoid supporting the big box retailers who devastate local communities, pay their staff very little, and seek out the lowest priced locations where they outsource their production, irrespective of the harm their hardball negotiating tactics do to the people employed in the factories making Disney products (this company figures prominently in the film).

In short, what we see here is an attempt to encourage people to become the kind of critically reflexive marketplace participant that Ozanne and Murray (1995) have sketched. And what is refreshing is that those aligned with the "Church" admit they do not have all the answers about how to consume. They suggest that people follow at least a two-step process of reflection when buying, however. Firstly, look for products made in America (or your own home country). Secondly, purchase your goods and services from local retailers and merchants so that your money will circulate through the local community rather than pad the bank accounts of some of the wealthiest people in the world – Wal*Mart is another key target in this film. So, alongside the Ozanne and Murray (1995) paper mentioned above, I would also suggest lecturers consult Murtola, A-M. (2012) "Materialist Theology and Anti-Capitalist Resistance, or, 'What Would Jesus Buy?'", *Organization* 19(3): 325-344.

Smith, C., Ollman, D. and Price, S. (2005). *The Yes Men*. Tartan.
Bichlbaum, A., Bonanno, M., and Engfehr, I. (2010) *The Yes Men Fix the World*. Dogwoof.

In her reflections on Critical Management Education, Contu (2011: 544) stresses the important role for "Over-identification with the positions, claims, and behaviors established in the mainstream". What she means by this is taking the stance of the mainstream to an extreme. For Contu, one of the best examples of this strategy are the activities of The Yes Men. I can only echo her sentiment here and encourage marketing scholars to explore the DVDs produced by this community of activists.

Specifically, my interpretation of their films is that they represent what social marketing with its emphasis on behavioural and ideational change could practice if it was not tied so closely to government, corporations and other forms of sponsorship (O'Shaughnessy, 1996). The Yes Men are a group of anti-corporate activists with a high degree of technical knowledge and a huge amount of tenacity. They set up websites purporting to represent some of the biggest corporations on the planet – usually corporations with very bad reputations – or groups whose activities in parts of the world are problematic such as the World Trade Organization (see Smith *et al*., 2005) and wait for invitations to large public events such as conferences or television interviews. They subsequently attend these events pretending to be representatives for these groups and make statements that take, for example, a neoliberal axiology to its extreme in an effort to encourage critical reflection on these values and their effects on people around the world.

In the second film in the series, for example, they present themselves as representatives of Dow Chemicals in the wake of their purchase of Union Carbide – the latter being implicated in one of the largest industrial accidents this planet has seen so far, but which has largely left the populations living around the still hazardous plant to deal with the "externalities" that resulted. 18,000 people were injured because of this accident and the Yes Men announce – in front of 300 million viewers on BBC Worldwide – that Dow would fully compensate those injured. For a time this wiped billions off the stock price of Dow thereby indicating exactly what is valued within capitalistically driven marketplaces, namely shareholder dividends rather than ethics. This announcement did not exactly have the effect that the Yes Men wanted, but I will not spoil the narrative. Both DVD's are highly recommended for ethics and corporate social responsibility lectures.

Francis, N. and Francis, M. (2006) *Blackgold: Wake Up and Smell the Coffee*. Speak-It Films. See also: http://blackgoldmovie.com

This film tackles a range of issues that are important in relation to supply chains and distributive justice. It highlights the coffee trade and explores how the marketplace benefits some participants more than others, in this case the retailer rather than the poor farmer who produces coffee beans. It touches upon issues like information asymmetries and how these affect the ability of the producer to secure an appropriate distribution of the benefits that flow from the marketing system. More generally it deals with fair trade and supply chains. It could be usefully paired with Anna Tsing's recent work: Tsing, A. (2009) "Supply Chains and the Human Condition", *Rethinking Marxism* 21 (2):148-176.

The website that accompanies the film is very good, providing one especially useful feature that asks for the user to input how many coffees they drink per day and then graphically breaks down the distribution of the costs and profits. The farmer, predictably, comes out very badly whilst the retailer does very well. From my experience, this surprises students. Whether it changes their behaviour is, of course, another question.

Greenwald, R. (2005) *Wal*Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*. Tartan.

This frankly shocking documentary charts the rise to prominence of the big box retailers whose low prices are derived from their hardball negotiation tactics with suppliers. It illustrates their power with respect to local community groups and councils, their willingness to pay low wages whilst encouraging their staff to

claim benefits and utilise food banks. It also engages with more distressing issues like the treatment of migrant workers who are sometimes locked in the stores during the nightshift with predictably dangerous results.

It will highlight to students that while low prices might be desirable from their perspective, in the end someone has to pay for them, and it is the people who work long hours for low wages. The film culminates with a reflection on the wealth amassed by the family who own Wall*Mart and their fortune is vast. This could be used to help stimulate a discussion on the benefits and costs of the marketing system. A paper that might be useful in conjunction with this film is: Foster, D., McCann, J. and Tunno, M. (2003) "Wal-Mart or World-Mart? A Teaching Case Study", *Review of Radical Political Economics* 35(4): 513–533.

Paine, C. (2007) *Who Killed the Electric Car*. Sony Pictures.
Paine, C. (2012) *Revenge of the Electric Car*. Dogwoof.

We all know that the car has brought many benefits to consumers in terms of transportation, literally opening up the world for their consumption. However, it has brought numerous costs such as environmental despoliation. It is arguably undisputable that a move to electric cars would be beneficial in numerous ways – homeland security, environmental protection and so forth – but for various reasons these cars have not yet made a substantial dent in the auto-market. In a very balanced analysis the first film charts the rise of the car, underscoring that electric cars were available from the very start of the car industry. They were, however, displaced by normal petroleum engines. Nonetheless, in the early to mid-1990s, there were moves to introduce electric cars to the mass market. The film focuses on California in particular and the establishment of an infrastructure to enable these vehicles to function efficiently. Despite a fairly impressive level of consumer demand among early adopters, the cars were eventually recalled and destroyed, being buried in the desert in some cases. The film subsequently asks questions about where responsibility lies for the failure of the electric car. This is where the film is most balanced, asking questions about consumer apathy, engine capacity and potential distance on a single charge among other factors.

It is worth using this film to illuminate the complex dynamics between marketing's ideology of a consumer orientation and the needs of organisations to realise profit objectives. Both films represent a set of rich resources on multiple fronts (e.g. dealing with consumer agency, activism, marketing communications and macromarketing issues). The second film effectively follows the trials and tribulations of producing and marketing a particular brand of electric car, one which combined environmentally friendly credentials with the kind of sporty styling likely to appeal to the well-heeled professional classes. As *Revenge of the Electric Car* (Paine, 2012) illuminates, having one of the most entrepreneurially successful individuals of recent history backing the reintroduction of the electric car does not guarantee success. This said, there has been an up-swing of sales of electric cars recently (see, http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/may/03/uk-electric-car-sales-speed-up).

Mantel, H. and Skrovan, S. (2006) *An Unreasonable Man*. ITC Films.

As many readers will no doubt appreciate Ralph Nader has been a passionate advocate for the consumer for a considerable period of time. This documentary charts the various projects he has undertaken either alone or with a team of young idealistic researchers called "Nader's Raiders". Nader first came to prominence with his study of auto safety and what he called the "designed in dangers of automobiles". This related to the placement of fuel tanks, the build of the steering wheel, the sharp edges of the internal structure of cars, among many other problematic features.

What is interesting about this film, above and beyond the fact it underscores the arguments recently made by Bakan (2005) in his book about the corporation, is the extent to which the documentary shows how profit requirements drive corporate decision-making rather than the needs and safety of the ultimate consumer. As it notes very clearly with respect to auto-safety, a cost-benefit analysis was conducted which revealed it would cost more to rectify a problematic design flaw which could – and did – result in the

deaths of consumers, than just pay compensation to those hurt, burned and scarred by a particular brand of car in a crash. The corporate response to Nader's research is fascinating, involving hiring private detectives, prostitutes and using a range of other tactics to discredit him. Nader's point is that ultimately there were systemic failings in Detroit's auto-industry which compromised the safety of the consumer.

My summary of this film only scratches the surface of a rich source that combines biography with many marketing related issues (i.e. key concepts like a consumer orientation, the power dynamics between corporations and the consumer, and the possibility of social change through the activities of social critics).

Mistrati, M. and Romano, U.R. (2010) *The Dark Side of Chocolate*. Bastard TV and Video.

This film deals with a product that we all probably consume regularly, chocolate. It could be usefully combined with a discussion about the Marxian concept of commodity fetishism or Zygmunt Bauman's work on adiaphorisation (see Tadajewski and Hamilton, 2014). Commodity fetishism basically refers to the idea that production relations are hidden from view and so we view products solely in terms of their exchange value – the price we pay – rather than the labour that goes into them. Adiaphorisation refers to the idea that the further we are from where the products we purchase are produced or harvested, the more morally distant we are from the lives of the people involved in their production (see Desmond, 1998).

These concepts are useful because this film refers to the widespread use of child labour to harvest the cocoa bean, one of the central constituents of chocolate. It reveals the trafficking of children to plantations on the Ivory Coast, some of whom go willingly, others who do not. It is a harrowing film by turns, with children crying about their situation, handling large and dangerous machetes to harvest the products we so readily consume. What is truly depressing is that it is possible to buy a child slave to utilise on the plantations for a paltry two hundred and forty euros. And that price is negotiable.

What is particularly noteworthy about this documentary is that many of the major purchasers of cocoa deny any knowledge of the use of child slaves in the harvesting of the products they buy. Their denials are not convincing. I would suggest combining this film with a reading and discussion of the Pennington et al (2009) *Journal of Macromarketing* paper on human trafficking and their review of this film (Pennington and Ball, 2012). Both complement each other well and highlight the dark-side of the market and marketing processes.

Poulsen, F.P. (2011) *Nokia: Blood in the Mobile*. Dogwoof.

This is another film that works well with a discussion of commodity fetishism and adiaphoirsation. It resonates with students given that the majority own a mobile phone. The central message is that conflict and slave harvested gem stones are used in the manufacture of mobile phones. And the purchase of these gems contributes to the on-going wars taking place in the Congo among particularly brutal warlords. Once again, it illustrates the limited concern exhibited by companies that claim to be socially responsible in their acquisition of needed commodities. In this case, the focus is Nokia, one of the biggest mobile producers in the world.

Focusing on an area in the Congo known for both warlord brutality and slavery, it charts the working conditions of the people labouring in the mines that supply the gems we need for our phones. The conditions are harsh and dangerous, with mines collapsing on a frequent basis. It is a film to use carefully, however, as some of the examples are distressing with vivid descriptions of rape and murder.

Despite the ability of the film-maker to secure access to these conditions and corporations claiming that they are trying to do as much as they can to remedy their supply chain issues, they assert that it is not possible to trace where gem stones are mined. A visit to a German university undermines the credibility of this argument as Ph.D. students are working on this project. The programme culminates with an interview

with the CSR representative from Nokia who appears evasive and unconcerned and more interested in making a flight than on discussing this desperately important issue.

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[i] A capitalised "C" is used to indicate research using some form of critical social theory to interrogate marketing theory, thought and practice.

[ii] I am speaking here about marketing as taught and reflected in University level schools of business. The history of practices associated with marketing are far longer and less American or Eurocentric than can be explained in this narrative.