

Reframing critical marketing

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Abstract In response to the guest editors' call for the expansion of disciplinary space within marketing and consumer research, in this paper I offer an alternative conceptualisation of critical marketing knowledge. Rather than asking what is (or isn't) critical marketing, instead I ask what is marketing knowledge for, critical or otherwise, and for whom? I use these questions to develop a framework through which to identify different regimes of marketing thought and illustrate their co-dependence using two luminaries from the UK marketing academy. My (rather idealistic) hope is that if the marketing discipline is to mature this interdependence should be recognised, understood and then celebrated.

Keywords Critical marketing; Pragmatic epistemology; Michael Burawoy.

INTRODUCTION

My first academic colleague with whom I shared an office, Maurice Patterson, heavily influenced my initiation into the academic world of marketing. Having settled in, conversations soon turned to research: I rather naively asked, "What should I be reading?". "Try reading Stephen Brown's *Postmodern Marketing*", came his reply. And so I did. Prior to interview at my current university, I was advised not to position myself as a critical marketer during the selection process. A decade separates these two experiences and it would appear that during that period I had inadvertently become a critical marketer. It certainly wasn't planned, yet this was obviously how my future colleague perceived my academic identity. Anyway, I duly heeded her advice, slipped under their radar and was appointed. This paper is written, therefore, from the perspective of someone who lurks around the murkier margins of critical marketing (the selection panel seem to have viewed critical marketing rather dubiously) – I'm

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both an insider (as perceived by others) and an outsider (as perceived by myself). Yet, as I thought and others have noted (Saren et al. 2007), being critical broadly construed is, in large part, the *raison d'être* for all academics.

In this paper I develop a conceptual framework that identifies the production and consumption of critical marketing knowledge as one of four main streams or regimes of marketing thought. My overriding (and perhaps somewhat idealistic) aim is for a mature marketing discipline, one in which there is a healthy, productive and constructive conversation *between* these different regimes of thought. Through this conceptual framework, I'm also responding directly to a point made by the editors in their call for papers, as I too am growing rather tired of "*bad tempered debates about the status of competing knowledge claims*". I suggest, however, that although such conversations are occurring, as critical marketing thought develops it runs a risk of marginalising its potential impact by talking to itself and not to and with, these other streams of marketing thought.

ASKING THE WRONG QUESTIONS?

The call for papers for this special edition advocates a particular form of critical marketing as an epistemological exercise in sceptical reflexivity: a questioning of – or critical engagement with – the very foundations upon which marketing knowledge claims are made. Such a view of critical marketing is, however, only one of many. Perhaps this ambiguity in exactly what critical marketing is (and therefore isn't) not only contributes to its conceptual allure but also to its marginal status. For example, in a recent tome (see Saren et al. 2007), both Schroeder (2007) and Scott (2007) asked their extended academic networks to try and define the indefinable. Many located the meaning of critical marketing within a post-Marxian Frankfurt School theoretical tradition with Bradshaw and Fuat Firat (2007) insistent that for any research to be critical this must be the case. Equally, the view of a significant number of others surveyed by Schroeder and Scott was more in line with the sceptical reflexivity of the editors and is consistent with a view that to be critical is to question traditional modes of thought and claims to authority or objectivity (Minger 2000).

Critical marketing clearly has multiple meanings. I approach the critical marketing project from a different angle that embraces this conceptual ambiguity and I take a more pragmatic approach to address two different yet related questions. In a sense, I am trying to "see" things differently, to ask different questions to the ones that are normally asked (e.g. what *is* marketing knowledge, how is it produced and how is it validated?). The first question I shall ask is: "What is the purpose of critical marketing thought in all its guises, amongst other forms and types of marketing knowledge?". And second, "Who is this knowledge for, critical or otherwise?". This facilitates the recognition and acceptance that marketing knowledge comes in many different flavours to suit the palates of its varied constituencies. The potential, therefore, of this more pragmatic approach to marketing knowledge production lies in its pluralism. Each form of knowledge exists in co-constitutive, co-dependent relation to the others and together they should constitute a healthy, productive and mature discipline (see Burawoy, forthcoming; Levy 2002).

This last point is important, as I don't want to see the marginalisation of critical marketing thinking. There appears to be a nouveau clique of marketing scholars who favour musing over intractable sociological and philosophical questions rather

than advancing a managerialist, practice or applied model of marketing. They are re-evaluating the dominant paradigm of marketing, yet the mainstream appears resolutely immune to its insights (see for example Hackley 2001). My concern is that critical marketing knowledge seems to be increasingly produced and consumed by and for a marginal minority of marketing academics. This reflexive reflexivity is an admirable scholarly trait and is clearly consistent with a critical constitution. Equally though its *singular* pursuit also runs the risk of further marginalising an already marginal stream of marketing thought. This state of affairs is somewhat perplexing as marketing has long been the poor relation, intellectually, to other management disciplines with the academic study of management itself pretty low down the social science pecking order. Therefore, elevating the scholarly, intellectual or academic status of marketing was long over due, is still much needed, and critical marketing scholars have done and continue to do an excellent job in this regard.

Equally, critical marketing thought must also be advancing into the mainstream with this special edition in a leading marketing journal. My paper is an attempt to contribute to this process by uniting different streams of marketing thought within a single conceptual framework. My point is to show and advance a perspective of mutual interdependence – critical and mainstream marketing are, so to speak, two sides of the same coin. In order to achieve this I develop the ideas of Michael Burawoy (2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, forthcoming) for the discipline of marketing. Recently he has turned his considerable attention to examining his own discipline, sociology, and the role and purpose of the knowledge that it and its disciples produce.

My paper is structured as follows. Following Burawoy, I outline the bases of a framework in which to locate critical and other forms and types of marketing knowledge. I use a rhetorical device so beloved of mainstream marketing, a 2x2 matrix, through which to map out these different types of marketing knowledge. Obviously, I recognise that such a practice can oversimplify and compartmentalise what can also be considered overlapping terrains of knowledge. I then explore each of the manifestations of marketing knowledge that have been identified and some of its chief practices and protagonists. I finish by comparing and contrasting two giants of UK marketing academia who seem, at first glance, to represent two different and potentially opposing positions within my conceptual framework.

KNOWLEDGE FOR WHOM? KNOWLEDGE FOR WHAT?

As part of a reflexive process, it seems pertinent to try and address the point or purpose of the knowledge that the marketing discipline produces – critical or otherwise. Following Burawoy, two key questions to address therefore are: Who is the knowledge produced for? – Knowledge for whom? And for what purpose is it produced? – Knowledge for what?

Knowledge for whom?

A glance at a history of marketing thought (Shaw and Brian Jones 2005) doesn't really help much as they focus and pursue what might be called a subject matter perspective. They introduce 10 schools of marketing thought – with a school being defined as, "...a substantial body of knowledge; developed by a number of scholars; and describing at least one aspect of the what, how, who, why and when of performing marketing activities," (Shaw and Brian Jones 2005, p. 241).

The emphasis on “performing marketing activities” identifies a key audience for this marketing thought. As the 19th century turned into the 20th, business schools emerged in the US to teach marketing, encouraged and supported by government and corporations alike (Leach, 1993).

Bartels’ (1962, p. 2) *The Development of Marketing Thought* identifies the antecedents of what we would now recognise as marketing as lying in courses that focused on the improvement of distribution efficiency, in other words on “solving problems of the market place.” Marketing thought first emerged to satisfy the burgeoning demand for all these new courses and was, therefore, primarily produced for an external, non-academic audience (students or would-be practitioners in the main) that, I suggest, still constitutes its major audiences today. The *Journal of Retailing* was first published in 1925, before the *Journal of Marketing* in 1936, and many articles in these early days were applied in nature, more of a “how to” guide. Papers also tended to be very short in comparison to today’s papers and it wasn’t uncommon for a single journal issue to contain 50+ articles. It wasn’t until later that we see more papers beginning to emerge whose primary audience could be considered an internal audience of fellow marketing academics and nowadays the average for the *Journal of Marketing* is nearer 10 papers per issue.

Bartels (1962) suggests this dichotomy arose for three main reasons. First, a new breed of academics began to question and develop the original economic principles upon which the discipline had been founded. Second, with the expansion in the teaching of marketing across the US, what constituted the marketing curriculum became increasingly contested. Finally, as the conceptualisation of marketing was broadened away from treating it simply as an economic activity and towards viewing it as a social activity, what constituted marketing thought also had to be broadened.

Knowledge for what?

The second question that informs the conceptual 2x2 framework – why is marketing knowledge produced or knowledge for what? – has been hinted at already. For Burawoy (2004) the answer to this question is twofold. First, he identifies instrumental knowledge; literally knowledge for a purpose but where the purpose is often taken for granted or is tacit. For an external non-academic marketing audience such a purpose is often clearly articulated and we might also consider this type of knowledge to constitute practical, applied or managerially useful marketing knowledge. For an internal marketing academic audience the purpose of research seems to have become divorced from this constituency. Instead we produce knowledge for each other increasingly as an “output” variable to assess our productivity – its instrumentality is often tacit at least at the start of our careers. Regardless of the audience, internal or external, what needs to be known is the best manner to achieve whatever the ends are or to “concentrate on providing solutions to predefined problems” (Burawoy 2004, p. 1606).

In contrast to instrumental knowledge, Burawoy (2004) identifies reflexive knowledge as less interested on means and more on the ends, which it doesn’t take for granted. Reflexive knowledge is not value neutral and could involve an examination of the consequences that arise from the knowledge production process or a questioning of the knowledge that is produced in the first place. As Burawoy (2004, p. 1606) eloquently puts it:

... should we repress the question of ends and pretend that knowledge and laws spring spontaneously from data, if only we can develop the right methods? Or should we be

concerned explicitly with the goals for which our research may be mobilized, and with the values that that underpin and guide our research.

The simple answer is ‘no’ if you produce instrumental knowledge and ‘yes’ if you produce reflexive knowledge. Part of the problem for reflexive knowledge in marketing is that it is often ignored by the mainstream but its *raison d’être* is precisely to question what it is ignored for questioning.

A 2x2 FRAMEWORK FOR CONCEPTUALISING MARKETING THOUGHT

I now have the criteria to construct my 2x2. On the one hand, I have identified two primary constituencies for marketing thought in general – an internal audience of fellow marketing academics and a non-academic external audience in which I include students, practitioners and the ever-more marketing literature population at large. On the other hand, I have identified two main types of marketing knowledge in terms of its purpose – instrumental or reflexive marketing knowledge.

In mapping out these different and distinctive terrains of marketing knowledge (see Table 1) it is my intention to show that each relies or exists in relation to some or all of the other forms of knowledge. Furthermore, although in any particular discipline one form of knowledge may be more powerful and influential than another, “*a thriving discipline depends on their organic interdependence*” (Burawoy forthcoming). Moreover, the same person (or collective) could produce, disseminate and/ or practice a number of these regimes of marketing knowledge as a means to develop this interdependence and, of course, advance his or her career.

Mainstream academic marketing

What I have called mainstream academic marketing thought – instrumental knowledge for an academic audience – is the bread and butter of the marketing discipline especially in universities driven by either tenure or audit and accountability cultures. The vast majority of the most revered marketing outlets, by which I mean the top tier journals, are full of marketing knowledge that is instrumental in nature but it often fails to exert too much influence beyond the narrow confines of its academic audience. Do many marketing practitioners actually read any “top tier” marketing journals? Notwithstanding repeated calls for relevance (see for example Piercy 2002), this type of knowledge is produced and consumed primarily for academic purposes,

TABLE 1 Regimes of marketing thought

	Academic “Internal” Audience	Non-academic “External” Audience
Instrumental Knowledge	Mainstream Academic Marketing	Mainstream Applied Marketing
Reflexive Knowledge	Critical Marketing	Intelligentsia Marketing

Adapted from Burawoy (2004)

implicitly as either a metric to determine tenure and promotion or for the “objective” allocation of limited resources in a publicly funded higher education system (for example within the UK the RAE). The instrumental nature of this knowledge has become inverted.

Academic journal marketing knowledge appears, therefore, to be divorced from a constituency that it should serve, that is, the actual business of marketing practice from whence it emerged. Of course, as I elaborate later, this is not the same as saying that the purveyors of this knowledge suffer from the same myopic tendencies, on the contrary. Instead, academics pursuing this type of knowledge production conduct their research rigorously, according to their paradigmatic allegiances. Simply put, if you want to be a player in the game, you have to first learn the rules and then play by them. The mainstream continues to advance marketing thought through empirical data, justify its knowledge claims according to a correspondence theory of truth thereby legitimating itself through an adherence to scientific norms, be policed by itself for itself and, if it has a politics, pursue and promote a politics of satisfied, self-interest (see Burawoy forthcoming). The rules of the game pre-exist the player, as all rules tend to, and are a non-negotiable form of disciplinary power, marshalling and coercing players in the right direction, ensuring that they don't step too far out of line. As Burawoy (forthcoming) argues, echoing Feyerabend (1988), this state of affairs precludes any critique because “*focused playing presumes agreement on the rules and the suppression of critique*”. And the key word here is focus. Academics pursuing this type of knowledge production are so focused, too focused even, that they appear to be becoming detached from the broader communities of knowledge that surround them, who they should be informing yet equally who should also be informing them. Piercy (2002) for example, recalls his sadness in attending two US academic marketing conferences, where two masters of mainstream marketing thought (Rohit Deshpande and Jagdish Sheth) lamented the increasing irrelevance of academic journal marketing and its continued bifurcation from the “real” world of business. What these two masters have identified is that what is required is precisely *more* reflexivity.

Following Burawoy, I suggest that if we aspire to a healthy, mature marketing discipline, then the interdependence of the different regimes of marketing knowledge suggests that they should be in a productive conversation with each other. The relatively closed system of journal based marketing knowledge production that currently dominates will not change until a *major* rupture occurs. This has yet really to happen in marketing and quite possibly never will. We have only experienced minor ripples on the marketing millpond. For example, for all the commotion, for some, and inspiration, for others, that postmodern marketing caused at the time, for the majority it was but a minor underground tremor that never quite developed into the earth-shattering, paradigm shifting tsunami postulated by its passionate proponents. Will a similar fate awaits PoMo's cousin, critical marketing? I would rather see a relationship of mutual interdependence – a beneficial, symbiotic relationship.

Perhaps though, as one of my reviewers pointed out, there are signs of this interdependence emerging. S/he pointed out that in her/ his reading of the “new” paradigm for marketing, the Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) (Vargo and Lusch 2004), this mutual interdependence that I'm advocating is already with us. My reviewer suggested that SDL “*appears to absorb the research that we associate with the field's postmodern trajectory.*” I am slightly more cautious that SDL represents a ‘mature’ conversation and the emergence of a symbiotic relationship. For starters, SDL is merely updating the idea that there can be a normative view in our discipline, an

anathema to most PoMo influenced marketers I'm sure. Second, as I scoured the references, I could not find any "evidence" of any mutual interdependence, so if a conversation has occurred it certainly hasn't been acknowledged. As Brown (2007) has noted SDL merely repackages ideas that have been around for a long time, dresses them up for the 21st century and, in so doing, ignores the previous attempts of such luminaries as Sid Levy and Morris Holbrook (who just happen to be founding figures within the interpretive, symbolic marketing movement and therefore pivotal for the PoMo and critical movements that followed).

Mainstream applied marketing

Applied marketing – instrumental knowledge primarily for an external non-academic audience – is now a global industry for the production of marketing knowledge. It is also the evolutionary ancestor of all other forms of marketing knowledge, the primordial soup, so to speak, from which they have all emerged. It comes in many guises from: textbooks for students; to manuals, guide- and handbooks for practitioners; to the consultancy business and the marketing service industries (like communications agencies, market research agencies, brand consultancies, public policy informers, etc.); to the innumerable trade magazines for the marketing industry like *Campaign* or *Marketing Week* in the UK; to pseudo-academic journals like the *Harvard Business Review* and other publications from that venerable institution's prolific and, no doubt, highly profitable press; and the knowledge codified and disseminated through professional bodies like the Chartered Institute of Marketing, or the Institute of Direct Marketing or the Market Research Society in the UK.

It would, indeed, be a rum state of affairs if marketing knowledge hadn't been marketed so well. However, in some instances it appears to have achieved its success, paradoxically, by practising the complete opposite of what it preaches. For example, with regard to the mainstream, mass-volume, mass-market, student textbook industry, it is quite astonishing to note how so much has been written, by so many, to potentially so many, with very little, if any, discernable difference in their product offerings at any level, core, actual or augmented, or with little, if any, price competition. These marketing textbooks are the Model T Fords of the publishing world. There are some notable exceptions, as one of my reviewers pointed out, but laudable efforts by Saren (2006), Blythe (2006) and Brown's (2006) "textbook-come-thriller" are simply not mainstream when compared to books like Kotler et al. (2008). Kotler et al. (2008) is currently 2,037th in the Amazon Bestseller list, Saren (2006) 642, 717th, Blythe (2006) 538, 115th and Brown (2006) 238, 333rd.

And what of the knowledge that the applied mainstream produces? As we would expect, it tends to be highly prescriptive and, in its consultancy or marketing service provider form, is often produced specifically to solve the problems of commissioning clients – its politics is interventionist rather than self-serving. Applied marketing knowledge is not overly concerned with theory, with the knowledge that it produces judged, by those who commission it in terms of the motives that initiated its production in the first place. More often than not, this means it's judged in terms of its practical usefulness in solving particular problems, or in terms of its organisational validity, the support or justification of a course of action that has already been decided upon (May 1981).

Clearly there can be considerable overlap between the two forms of instrumental knowledge – not least in terms of a cross fertilisation between its protagonists. Once credibility is achieved in one domain, it can be readily leveraged into the other.

For mainstream academic marketers with tenure or a chair, lucrative consultancy contracts abound, executive education programmes emerge and on the horizon lurks the authorship of hopefully a best selling textbook. Indeed, if you happen to be the man largely responsible for marketing marketing, the gurus' guru of marketing, Philip Kotler, you do all three. For applied marketers the stamp of a visiting professorship at a leading business school can add some intellectual credibility in their role as consultants and no doubt crank up their day-rate.

Intelligentsia marketing

For the past 150 years, the capitalist system has been subject to critique from what have now become the social sciences. That knowledge, from Marx onwards, does not overly concern us here but it does feed into and underpin what does. I am concerned with what I have called intelligentsia marketing – reflexive marketing knowledge for an external non-academic audience. Knowledge produced in this vein casts a critical gaze directly onto marketing and its various technologies, like advertising and branding, or indirectly through critiques of contemporary consumer culture that marketing helps to support and sustain.

Examples include a populist genre of non-fiction with a lineage from: Vance Packard's classic indictment of the mass manipulation of consumers by the advertising industry in the *Hidden Persuaders*; to Eric Schlosser's condemnation of the Disneyfication of McDonald's marketing strategy in *Fast Food Nation*; through to Naomi Klein's denunciation of contemporary brand culture in *No Logo* (see Bradshaw et al. 2006); Alissa Quart's subsequent pillorying of the marketing to children in *Branded*; and Benjamin Barber's indictment of global capitalism and the overproduction of goods in *Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults and Swallow Citizens Whole*.

Often, non-academics write intelligentsia marketing as their writing style is more suited to their chosen audience and therefore they can communicate more effectively than academics can with the public at large. Producers of intelligentsia marketing knowledge include: journalists like Packard, Klein and Quart; or political theorists like Barber; or writers trained in other disciplines like the "philosopher" Alain de Botton's critique of a celebrity lead consumer culture in *Status Anxiety*; or the "historian" Thomas Frank's analysis of hip consumerism in *The Conquest of Cool*; or the 'psychoanalyst' Oliver James's critique of modern capitalism in *Affluenza*.

Intelligentsia marketing, however, is not limited to the written word. I could also include in this category of marketing knowledge the work of Morgan Spurlock, in particular, his documentary film *Super Size Me*. This highly successful documentary is a populist dramatisation, rather than a literal extension, of the sociologist George Ritzer's arguments concerning the harmful consequences envisaged in his *McDonaldization of Society*.

Knowledge produced in this category has a clear political message. Its aim is to communicate with the public at large, often to raise the levels of public consciousness towards the negative effects of living in a market(ing) driven consumer culture. Their hope is to make these issues more relevant to the public, in an attempt to build consensus against those it sees as responsible – mainly it seems, global brand owning companies. And because their audiences can run into the millions, the potential impact of this type of knowledge can be more profound than that produced by their academic counterparts. Perhaps though, and this is why I have used the term intelligentsia marketing, producers of this type of marketing knowledge are preaching

to the converted, a minority of the mass market – and let's face it, it's probably the broadsheet reading, farmers' market shopping, free range chicken, organic vegetable box scheme and fair trade buying middle classes. Those whose (false) consciousness levels arguably could benefit from some raising appear resolutely immune to such preaching.

Critical marketing

The origins of the critical marketing project have been discussed elsewhere (see Brownlie et al. 1999; Burton 2001; Saren et al. 2007). I have classified critical marketing as reflexive knowledge produced predominantly for an academic audience. Without doubt critical marketing is the poor relation to mainstream marketing. Unlike critical sociology where Marx, for example, is foundational to all sociology, critical marketing was not, and is still not, foundational to marketing knowledge *per se*. And whilst all students of sociology are familiar with Marx, to what extent has critical marketing, or postmodern marketing come to that, penetrated into the *mainstream* marketing curriculum? Certainly there are outposts of critical marketing but it is far from mainstream.

As we saw earlier, practitioners of mainstream journal marketing thought are so hamstrung by their game playing and adherence to the rules as they attempt to legitimise marketing thought that they are unable to offer any critique. This, however, is not their role but precisely the role and function of critical marketing thought – it is anti-foundational, its politics is to question the very essence of what is popularly perceived to constitute marketing and remind us all of the unintended consequences of marketing practices (Hackley 2001). If the academic discipline of marketing does not engage in this function others from outside the discipline surely will. At present then, the knowledge claims of critical marketing thought are legitimised by its own. I believe that its legitimacy should be recognised by the mainstream too, as the moral conscience of the academic discipline of marketing. We see suggestions of this in, for example, the greening of marketing (see Peattie 2007) and in social marketing (Gordon et al. 2007); both a necessary compliment to, and development of, other forms of knowledge that together constitute a healthy discipline. Journal editors too seem to like publishing the odd critical paper but the extent that its axioms have penetrated into the fabric of mainstream academic journal based marketing thought is more questionable.

Critical marketers need to embrace the legitimacy of mainstream marketing thought both journals based and in its more applied forms because they are defined by it. The mainstream also needs to respect the legitimacy of an anti-foundational voice and embrace the intellectual credibility that it can bring to marketing. If we collectively aspire to be treated in any way other than as a cash cow, by or for our colleagues in other departments, schools or faculties across our respective universities, then improving our intellectual credibility must be a positive force.

The sub-discipline of consumer research has been having such a conversation for the past 20 years (see Arnould and Price 2005). However, if a recent email sent by one of the leading lights of consumer culture theory (CCT) is an indication, then any lasting effect on the overall nature of consumer research has been limited:

...once again an issue of Journal of Consumer Research... appears with only one CCT (critical marketing, Mediterranean marketing, etc.) friendly piece of research in it; an

excellent one, but one. This will not cut it. Please submit more work and invite your colleagues to do so...

Arnould (2008)

It would be easy to blame the mainstream for maintaining its dominant voice through the exclusion of more marginal, CCT friendly voices – with the mainstream here being a consumer research variant of experimental social psychology. However, in my experience of the *JCR* review process (first attempt unsuccessful and second attempt successful), the current guardians of CCT (associate editors, reviewers etc.) don't exactly help in feathering the CCT nest, as they preclude any work that doesn't conform to their vision for CCT. Again, we're back to learning and playing by the rules of the game, even though I thought that CCT work was allowed to, or was even supposed to, break or subvert the rules. I was obviously wrong, with one set of rules merely being replaced with another, and this was duly taken on board by the time of the second submission.

However, more broadly, what does the emergence of CCT represent? Is it an example of the constructive dialogue that I'm talking about? As a fully paid up member of the CCT tribe, with some of my published work positioned to contribute to its development, I find it to be an incredibly useful rhetorical device. My doctoral students also find it useful as envisioned by Arnould and Thompson (2007). At some conferences I have attended it appears its main objectors are not the mainstream rather those "within" CCT. CCT now has its own conference – is this a good thing or will it perpetuate the idea that CCT scholars will simply be talking to each other rather than to and with the mainstream? So long as the former encourages the latter, CCT will be a positive force in encouraging constructive debate.

Reflexive reflexivity: critiquing the critique

Like any and all 2x2's, mine is not without its problems. Perhaps the foremost that I wish to highlight is that each of the regimes of knowledge are not necessarily coherent domains of thought. As we have already seen there is a distinct lack of consensus over what exactly critical marketing is or isn't. Two early advocates of critical marketing in the UK, Professors Michael Saren and Douglas Brownlie, explicated that critical marketing could draw freely from feminism, Marxism, post-structuralism, postmodernism, environmentalism, in fact, almost anything with an -ism, except perhaps positivism. For others though such an all-encompassing view of critical marketing runs the risk of diluting its very essence (see Bradshaw and Fuat Firat 2007). By and large I have elided such debates in this paper, but they do serve to show how I could quite possibly further sub-divide each quadrant. Within the critical marketing quadrant, I detect the emergence of a reflexive reflexivity as critical marketing develops and different factions emerge (see for example, Bradshaw and Fuat Firat 2007; Tadjewski 2006, 2006a). Such attempts are masterful pieces of scholarship, a clear case of practising what they preach. Equally, however, it is incumbent on others within the critical marketing quadrant to try and engage with mainstream marketing too, and not just with others in its own clique. The framework I have been outlining is an attempt to help develop this engagement.

Such reflexive moments though, are not limited to the critical marketing quadrant. For example, most readers would probably position the knowledge that Shelby Hunt has produced over his long and illustrious career in the top half of my 2x2 – he produces instrumental knowledge. Notwithstanding Brown's (2005) roguish

recasting of Hunt as a proto-postmodernist, he also clearly demonstrates critical credentials. In Hunt (2002), he cogently argues that marketing need not produce managerially relevant knowledge and that it should define itself, first and foremost, as a self-critical academic discipline with responsibilities to the students that it educates and to upholding the values of the academy – academic freedom, reason, objective knowledge and so forth. As far as he is concerned the only responsibility it has to marketing practice is to provide them with suitably trained graduates.

So: I agree that my 2x2 is far from perfect, but it's a start, it's not meant to be prescriptive and I use it simply as a rhetorical device.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

As promised, in this section I compare two giants of the UK marketing academy, Professors Stephen Brown and Nigel Piercy. I have always assumed their work was in marked contrast with each other's and, as I will show, there was a phase when this opposition appears manifest. Through the lens of my conceptual framework, however, I show that there are more similarities in their work than first meets the eye. I demonstrate that whilst their research foci may lie in different domains both bestride the narrow confines of any one regime of marketing thought.

In Piercy's scholarly output I see a degree of ambivalence, disdain and even a whiff of antipathy towards Brown's particular academic oeuvre (see Piercy 1999, 2002). For example, in his 1999 polemic, Piercy is critical of those professors he calls quislings: academics "*motivated by scholarly tradition*". It's left ambiguous as to whether Piercy had Brown in mind. Further Piercy (1999, p. 701) suggests that such quisling professors "*do not want to be in a business school, what they really want is to be 'proper' academics in 'proper' academic departments*". This is a charge that cannot be levelled against Brown now, or indeed ever as his output clearly demonstrates. By the time of the last in his trilogy of polemic denunciations, Piercy (2002) is clearly lukewarming to Brown. He freely admits he doesn't understand most postmodern marketing, although does find some of it amusing and from that confession I can surmise that he was speaking about Brown. To be fair to Piercy he does recognise why postmodern marketing emerged, as he too recognises that the traditional tools and techniques of the marketing profession are outdated. His problem lies with what he sees as postmodernism's critique for the sake of critique. Well, I hope that through the lens of my 2x2 he can now see that this is precisely its point. Brown's mid-to-late 90s PoMo period is clearly reflexive as opposed to instrumental knowledge, largely but not exclusively for an academic audience.

In response Brown (2005) is fulsome in his praise of Piercy and places him alongside a pantheon of marketing greats – Philip Kotler, Ted Levitt, Morris Holbrook, Shelby Hunt and Wroe Alderson. Of course, as is often the case with writers as gifted as Brown (2005, p. 197), such praise is double-edged:

*...he published a book entitled **Tales from the Marketplace**, yet made no reference whatsoever to the wider literature on narrative, storytelling, and suchlike, which would have improved the volume enormously.*

Brown is an expert in narrative and storytelling (see Brown 1997), and was not-so-subtly undermining Piercy's practitioner friendly prose as lacking academic and intellectual credibility. Brown, like Piercy earlier, has missed the point. Just as

I argued that Piercy had misunderstood the logic of critique, the *raison d'être* for a critical marketer, so too has Brown misunderstood Piercy. Through the lens of my 2x2 there's no reason for Piercy to entertain a scholarly, intellectual foundation in narrative theory to underpin his book. Clearly, *Tales from the Marketplace*, like many of Piercy's books, is an example of applied marketing thought – instrumental knowledge for an external non-academic audience.

My point therefore is that through my conceptual lens any ambivalence or antipathy that either existed or that I have made up for my own rhetorical purposes, is unfounded and unwarranted. I was wrong to have assumed that Piercy and Brown are from opposing tribes of marketing thought. In fact they are cousins who share the same marketing DNA. And what they share is that as leading academic marketing professionals they both produce marketing knowledge for at least three of my four quadrants, if not all four. It is to these similarities that I shall now turn.

I had forgotten, until one of my reviewers reminded me, that Brown used to write about retailing. After being challenged at interview to explain the implications of postmodernism for the wheel of retailing theory (Brown 1995), his intellectual curiosity led him to become the postmodern provocateur and marketing anti-Christ that I first encountered (bottom left of my 2x2). He also produces knowledge in at least two of the other three quadrants (top left and top right) and quite possibly the fourth too (bottom right). What Brown achieves is to underpin his more instrumental output with the spirit of his PoMo texts – another case of practising what one preaches. In particular his texts exhibit two hallmarks of the PoMo zeitgeist, pastiche and anti-foundationalism (see table 2). Brown's publication strategy is brilliant in its simplicity as his ideas journey from bottom left, to top left and eventually to top right in my 2x2.

Piercy (1999, 2000, 2002, 2006) is a highly effective reflexive scholar, clearly articulating a sustained critique on the current state of academic marketing – both mainstream and critical – and the practices of marketing practitioners. Alongside his critique, his instrumental, interventionist inclinations (like Brown's PoMo ones) are hard for him to keep at bay and he also offers emancipatory manifestos for our collective salvation that are clearly in keeping with some forms of critical thinking (see Piercy 1999, 2000, 2002).

One of his big bugbears is the RAE. In Piercy (2000) he develops a sustained critique of the fallacy of the RAE. An analysis of his publications profile shows a clear change of strategy from the late 90s onwards away from more traditional RAE recognisable journals. But this is precisely his point – he publishes in journals appropriate to his topic and intended audience and not just simply to pander to the RAE game. Equally though, Piercy knows the rules and submits a very decent return.

In Table 2, I sketch out *some* of Brown and Piercy's output to demonstrate their similarities rather than their differences. As they've been so prolific, many hundreds of publications between them, I necessarily present a *very* truncated picture and any errors in classifying/pigeon-holing their output are duly acknowledged. Perhaps, though such multi-faceted, aspirational publication strategies are only open to those who hold such lofty positions.

TABLE 2 A comparison of output

	Academic "internal" Audience		Non-academic "external" Audience	
	Brown	Piercy	Brown	Piercy
Instrumental Knowledge	Brown, Kozinets and Sherry (2003) Maclaran and Brown (2005) Marketing: The Retro Revolution	Editor, Journal of Strategic Marketing Piercy (1998) Morgan and Piercy (1998) Piercy et al (2006)	Wizard! Harry Potter's Brand Magic. Fail Better!: Stumbling to Success in Sales and Marketing. Free Gift Inside!!: Forget the Customer, Develop Marketease. Brown (2001b).	Market-Led Strategic Change. Tales from the Marketplace. Piercy (2005)
Reflexive Knowledge	<i>European Journal of Marketing</i> 1997 Special Edition editor. Postmodern Marketing. Postmodern Marketing 2. Consumer Research: Postcards From The Edge. Writing Marketing.	Piercy (1999). Piercy (2000). Piercy (2002).	The Marketing Code Agents and Dealers	Piercy (2006)

CONCLUSION

In conclusion I offer this: in a world where we seem to privilege difference, sometimes we could benefit from focusing on our similarities that are often to be found right under our critical *and* mainstream noses. We must recognise that critical marketing and mainstream marketing are actually two sides of the same coin and they are co-dependent and co-constitutive of each other. Together, and with the other regimes of thought that I have identified, they constitute marketing. Until we recognise, appreciate and celebrate our differences and similarities, maturity as a discipline will continue to evade us – the whole is, after all, greater than the sum of its parts.

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