**Relevance, Responsibility, Critical Performativity, Testimony and Positive Marketing: Contributing to Marketing Theory, Thought and Practice**

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**Biography:** Mark is Professor of Marketing at Durham University. He is the editor of the *Journal of Marketing Management*, an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Historical Research in Marketing* and co-editor of a number of book series.

**Abstract**

In this commentary, I chart recent changes at the *Journal of Marketing Management*. These include the introduction of a senior editorial board, a revised main editorial board and a modified team of associate editors. The new deputy editor is welcomed. The exemplary performance of the *JMM* in scholarly league-tables is registered. From this, a case is made for the pluralisation of the concepts of relevance and impact. In doing so, the emergent literature on critical performativity is unpacked. I highlight a missed opportunity in this material, namely, the potential for academics to act as critical commentators on industry practice in the courtroom. Developing the ideas associated with critical performativity leads to the scrutiny of new concepts in marketing. One of importance is positive marketing. This regressive manoeuver is critiqued; as is macromarketing narcissism. Following Dunne et al (2008), I make a plea for more responsible academic practice. Developing logically from these ideas, a number of new potential avenues for contributing to the *JMM* are sketched. These include special sections and research notes among others.

**Keywords:** Pluralism; Critical Performativity; Positive Marketing; Impact; Responsibility; Mushroom Model of Consumer Cultivation.

**Introduction**

The changes periodically wrought by journal ranking guides are just one of the horrors of the university system that formats our intellectual labour. The pressures to publish can cause considerable anguish, even 'psychological' and 'mental disorder' (Frey, 2009). This is only the case if we conceptualise these as problems and let them block our paths. If we use them for productive purposes, the enforced thinking they generate can be vitalising. The last year has been an extremely productive time in terms of thinking about how we can forward our discipline and the best methods for doing so. In this commentary, I discuss some of these, introduce a number of new debates and offer relevant critiques, in order to trigger the sparks that drive intellectual activity onwards and upwards.

The *JMM* is a conduit for all types of high quality research. Every paper has to meet the strictest criteria for originality and contribution consistent with the paradigmatic and methodological positioning adopted. We solicit reviews from paradigm native reviewers, that is, by those best able to determine whether any given study merits publication according to the criteria that underwrite a specific contribution. To stimulate debate even further, we plan to commission paradigm *divergent* commentaries on particularly promising and provocative manuscripts. Intellectual sparks and friction make for interest and further challenge us to reflect on our own biases, assumptions and limits, pushing us harder to progress what we do and how we do it (Collins, 2002).

By bringing varied content together and by privileging no specific paradigm or methodology, we will wholeheartedly support paradigmatic pluralism. Entering alternative worldviews, engaging with different perspectives and accepting the sparks of contention and inspiration holds considerable promise for stimulating novel, interesting and impactful research for the foreseeable future. We all wear intellectual spectacles that delimit what we notice. This focus is compounded by the reward system which encourages us to remain wedded to our relatively narrow furrow in order to maximise productivity. The not-so-subtle power relations and disciplinary techniques that hover in the background keep our eyes on the proffered prizes.

We must not let the demands on our time, energy and effort delimit our scholarly horizons. Ideas will dry up; interest will flag; and it will be a struggle to put pen to paper. Read material outside your research speciality. The next paper could be the one that serendipitously advances research conversations in ways you never anticipated. Likewise, teaching preparation can – and often does – provide the creative inspiration for a research project that would never have otherwise been identified. Whatever work we have to undertake – research, teaching or administration – it can all be highly valuable in terms of generating scholarly opportunities. Inspiration comes from unlikely sources.

So, this is a roundabout way of saying that we are all human. We have limitations and personal biases. These only become a problem if they are unrecognised, unappreciated or denied. As the editor of a multiple paradigmatically oriented journal, it was clear that my basic training in quantitative methods needed support. My own writing is far removed from managerial scholarship. This does not mean that managerially oriented and quantitative research holds no interest for me, it certainly does. But I needed someone who possesses considerable skills in these areas; someone to help elevate the *JMM* to even greater heights.

Over the last ten years, I have been fortunate to work with a large number of truly excellent scholars. In identifying an active researcher that I could call upon to help manage the *JMM* and who supplemented my skills, there was one obvious name that kept coming to mind. As such, I am very pleased to say that Professor Victoria Wells has agreed to take up the role of deputy editor. Victoria has an excellent track record. She has published multiple papers in the *Journal*. Her work traverses methodologies with ease and she possesses the intellectual openness that was an essential quality for the role. She is receptive to and demanding of all intellectual contributions, seeking to understand their position and willing to subject them to critical evaluation. Her professionalism is unparalleled.

There have been other changes at the *Journal*. We have introduced a senior board. This is constituted of scholars who have made sustained contributions to our discipline (Bedeian et al., 2009). Their names, ideas and arguments are well known. Consistent with the positioning of the *JMM*, as a group they reflect a pluralistic conception of knowledge production in marketing. We have major thinkers whose views cohere with mainstream managerial research through to interpretive research, consumer culture theory, critical marketing studies and Transformative Consumer Research.

The senior board – like the associate editors and editorial board – is our foil. Their insights will be sought and their ideas about potential research frontiers that require exploration will be pursued. We have also revisited the associate editorial board. Depending on the nature of the submissions we receive, sometimes it will be necessary to expand this community, sometimes to prune it slightly, bringing alternative specialists in to handle emerging areas and topics. The contributions of the associate editors are immense. We sincerely thank those who have offered their service. Their contributions are key in enabling the *JMM* to function and we cannot signal our appreciation and admiration for their work highly enough.

These are very research active academics. Yet they devote considerable time to help authors navigate the review process. However, not all submitted work will be published. That much is obvious. Our desk rejection rates are very high (circa 68%). Ultimately around 90% of submitted content does not get accepted. Do not let this put you off. The key to academic

labour is tenacity. Keep trying. The *JMM* is a scaffolding which – if your work meets our expectations for originality and contribution – will help support you to publication.

More recently we have revisited the membership of the editorial board. Once again, we have called upon the talents of scholars representing all of the major paradigms. Many of these are younger academics who have achieved considerable career success. With this reconstitution of the editorial board, there has been a shift in the geographical orientation of the *Journal*. Previously, the *JMM* was viewed as a European, perhaps even a UK focused outlet. This is no longer the case. The editorial board reflects the paradigmatic and geographic range of our subject more closely than ever before. Global in orientation and pluralistic in emphasis. These are the twin facets of the *JMM*.

While journal metrics are the bane and boon of academic life, they cannot be easily ignored. The arguments surrounding journal rankings have been rehearsed previously (Tadajewski, 2016). Let me just say that there are many of these systems available (see Tourish, 2015). And even though the issues and problems that they raise seem intractable, we do register how important they are for our authors and readers. With this in mind, the *Journal* is doing very well. On a recent Google ranking list, it appears in the top twenty publications listed in marketing. Our current positon is number 13 (https://scholar.google.com/citations?view_op=top_venues&hl=en&vq=bus_marketing).

In the latest dataset released in June 2016, *JMM* rose 24 places up the Scimago marketing journal rankings by SJR to rank 37 out of 153, with an SJR of 0.859. As a point of comparison, the *European Journal of Marketing* is ranked 35 with an SJR of 0.933. *JMM* is now in Q1 for both Marketing, and Strategy and Management journals in this ranking. This is very good. Tell your dean, head of department, colleagues and Ph.D. students. We can and will do more to ensure that the *JMM* is as credible as possible so that publishing with us helps contributors meet their career goals.

We all face numerous performance pressures. Some of these will be self-imposed. Academics are busy people. They work long hours, often well into the night (Miller et al., 2011). As readers are no doubt aware, newly appointed members of staff face performance expectations that are stomach churning. Their research has to appear in the rarefied heights of a limited number of very specific journals. They have to publish rapidly and frequently. They have to be high quality teachers. They are committed to administrative duties. Securing grants is a pressing task on their agendas. It cannot be long before probation is contingent on demonstrating the impact and relevance of their research (Dallyn et al., 2015; Ozanne et al., forthcoming).

Of course, the topic of relevance is much more complex than it appears at first blush (Butler et al., 2015). In the U.K. system it is pluralised to some extent, with impact referring to some contribution to economic efficiency, cultural edification, engagement with public policy or improvements to health and wellbeing among a number of other options (Ozanne et al., forthcoming). The main thing to note is that impact has to take place beyond the walls of the ivory tower. As such, researchers from across the paradigmatic spectrum can involve themselves with the impact agenda, seeking engagement with industry. It is not only the preserve of managerial academics. Interpretive and CCT minded thinkers have exhibited substantial interest in and actual engagement with business (e.g. http://culturalbranding.org/#whatwedo). For obvious reasons, critical academics tend to avoid

helping business operate more effectively in order to please shareholders. They are more active in terms of article publication, book writing, social media engagement, public speaking, film production and aspire to engagement with public policy makers, non-profit and Non-Governmental-Organisations (Hill et al., 2015; Tadajewski, 2010). Critical performativity is another route to impact, relevance and engagement that has attracted the attention of this part of our community.

**Critical Performativity**

Critical performativity has been highlighted as one way forward for critical academics to engage with practice (Butler et al., 2015; Tadajewski, 2010). It refers to an intervention into the status quo often by challenging extant managerial practices, perspectives and prerogatives. This *can* be achieved through contact with management, government or via more traditional social change routes such as teaching and course development (Fleming & Banerjee, 2016; Spicer et al., 2016; Tadajewski, forthcoming). Taking a critical performative stance necessarily means questioning the role of marketing in society, asking whether this is consistent with the needs of those currently alive, the ecosystem and those still to exist.

As an orientation to engagement, critical performativity is a developing concept (e.g. Spicer et al., 2009, 2016). Its limitations have been highlighted (e.g. Fleming & Banerjee, 2016). Spolestra and Svensson (2016), for example, make the compelling case that we should explore why concepts like critical performativity are finding an audience at the present time. It is tempting to note that it enables critters to perform well on another new metric, namely impact. Cynicism aside, instrumentalism is not the only reason why a critically minded performativity is being marketed. It does reflect real concerns with the limited impact of Critical Management and – we can add – Critical Marketing on the world outside the university.

As a remedy, Spicer and colleagues (2009) encourage closer connections between critical thinkers and the world of business. Interestingly, they propose that the former help develop – in conjunction with the management groups they seek to nudge in pro-social, progressive directions – alternative vocabularies and visions about the role of business in society. There is much to be welcomed here. Obviously, there are power disparities that need to be kept in mind. Engaging with business places academics on a precarious footing especially if their research identifies poor or problematic practice. The dangers of legal action are ever present (Oldani, 1999). We would hope that university support against such attempts to curtail academic freedom or whistleblowing will be forthcoming.

Placing these very major issues to one side, it will always be necessary to ensure that suitable contextual priming and support for alternative ideas and proposals has been cultivated, otherwise enacting these different perspectives will be difficult. Strong idealistic arguments about the power of discourse to shape society through articulation neglect to register the sedimented nature of political economy, the legal foundations of corporations and the claims of shareholders to profit which skew managerial decision-making (e.g. Applbaum & Oldani, 2010). We will deal with these issues in more detail below.

Recognition of the historical-material territory in which these attempts at critical performativity have to be enacted has led to more circumspect analyses of the likely success of critically performative projects. Fleming and Banerjee (2016) are notably incisive on this

front. They refer to the high likelihood of 'failed performatives' (i.e. where the uptake of performative proposals is frustrated due to a lack of contextual readiness or appreciation for the ideas and practices in question). Fleming and Banerjee suggest that overly close affiliation with management can undermine the critical spirit. Management can refuse to engage; they can structure what is considered an important task; co-optation is an ongoing concern; and the watering down of demanding proposals is always possible.

Archetypally, critical performativity is enabled by first determining matters of interest to the research co-participants whether this is the managerial community, non-profit sector or the wider public (cf. Hill et al., 2015). These topics have to speak to the academic competencies of the people involved. Generally we are skilled at subjecting 'underlying assumptions' to questioning, evaluation and rethinking (Spicer et al., 2016). An alternative route not discussed in the critical performativity literature so far is the application of our sensitive analytic skills in the courtroom (cf. Ozanne et al., forthcoming). Some marketing professors have been extremely adept on this front.

**Expert Witness**

Rick Pollay has written some truly exceptional studies on the cigarette industry. His work demonstrates the absolute psychopathic egotism of this trade. Profit is placed above consumer health (Cummings & Pollay, 2002; Pollay, 1995). Lobbying and campaign donations serve to limit legislative interventions to restrict this market (Cummings and Pollay, 2002). They line the pockets of academics willing to forgo their commitment to evidence, critique and reflection, happily adopting the company line for a fee. Ethics, intellectual responsibility and self-respect goes out of the window.

Underwriting the endeavours of this industry is subscription to a 'mushroom model of consumer cultivation' (Pollay & Dewhirst, 2003). This is distant from the conceptualisation of the consumer as information processor too often found in marketing theory (Pollay, 1986). This colourful turn of phrase signifies tobacco companies desire to 'keep' customers 'in the dark and feed them lots of bullshit[i]' (Pollay & Dewhirst, 2003: 325). The companies routinely target young people with their advertising and marketing communications and have done so for a century (Pollay, 1995). They use cartoon figures (e.g. the Flintstones and Joe Camel) which are known to attract younger audiences in their brand building and positioning efforts (Pollay, 1994, 1995). They neglect to pursue violations of their brand identity by candy (cigarette) producers, that is, when they are not licencing their brand names themselves, presumably because these products are an ideal way of inculcating the normalcy of tobacco consumption at a very young age (Pollay, 1995). In addition, tobacco firms undertake huge amounts of market and consumer research to develop sophisticated distribution, packaging and communications strategies (Pollay & Dewhirst, 2003).

They purvey images of health, wellbeing, happiness, masculinity and solidarity with peers as a way to hook adolescent audiences seeking help in constituting their fragile identities (Pollay, 1997). They co-opt feminist imagery to buttress their positioning around values of independence and rebellion (Kilbourne & Pollay, 1992) – values that are incommensurate with products that are addictive and reduce agency to a variant of slavery (O'Keefe & Pollay, 1997; Pollay, 2000). Their ads provide limited to non-existent information. They hinge on imagery and trade on emotion in order to bypass cognitive scrutiny (O'Keefe & Pollay, 1997) and 'counter-argumentation' (Pollay & Dewhirst, 2003). They are meant to restrict the ability

of the consumer to make an informed decision. Pollay, in short, has provided an evidence base that firmly undermines the legitimacy of this product and business model. This is a product offering that 'kills' its customer base when it is consumed exactly 'as intended' (Anderson et al., 2006: 1974; Kilbourne & Pollay, 1992).

Pollay fits the mould of a tempered radical, that is, someone who has become adept at trying to modify the system whilst not overly transgressing mainstream mores in marketing theory and thought (Meyerson & Scully, 1996). For example, Pollay (1986) engages with a substantial range of commentary which is critical of marketing and advertising, yet he also signals to mainstream thinkers that he does not uncritically align himself with these traditions. But he has been a major irritant for the cigarette industry. This deserves much more kudos than he has received. His logical and often scathing criticisms of this pestilence (cigarettes have killed more than war in the last century) have been disseminated through public lectures and recorded for posterity (e.g. Kilbourne & Pollay, 1992).

With Jean Kilbourne, Pollay illuminates how the industry makes claims about advertising expenditure which are highly disingenuous (e.g. about spending huge sums of money to advertise simply to those who switch brands – a small number of typically older smokers). It is notable that this industry has avoided being considered part of the war on drugs despite it being a drug and an extremely harmful one at that. For those unfamiliar with the figures, deaths from the consumption of tobacco far outstrip those associated with cocaine, heroin and so forth. Pollay (1995), moreover, has shone a bright light on how the industry views smokers, they are not agentic consumers, but described as structurally constrained fools (Kilbourne & Pollay, 1992) and treated like the mushrooms referenced above. He has communicated these empirically based views as an expert witness in various trials involving the tobacco industry in the U.S.A and Canada. Taking this position as an expert witness is one way forward for critically minded scholars to think about helping limit the future marketing of harmful products. There is much work to be done. Jean Kilbourne and Rick Pollay have cleared a path, we just need to follow.

As educators we can play a more general day-to-day role helping circulate the work of people like Rick Pollay, Jean Kilbourne and Sut Jhally (something I will be doing systematically over the coming months in terms of writing and teaching). Watching this type of content (Kilbourne & Pollay, 1992) causes gasps amongst my student audiences. It changes their view of the industry, makes them question the role of advertising and marketing communications in the world and encourages reflection on the gap between corporate rhetoric and the reality of product consumption. Contrary to industry claims, these products are not about creating an independent self, free from the shackles of authority and consumed by risk-takers and rebels. They are an addictive product. Like all addictive products, they do not foster freedom and self-value. They take it away. They do it systematically, robbing people of their health, wellbeing and agency. This is one of those industries that does not deserve liberal protections (Tadajewski et al., 2014).

**Harvesting Seeds and Producing Counter-concepts**

There are other ways we can use our skills. Acknowledging relevant caveats regarding 'optimistic' discursive idealism, the harvesting of counter-concepts looks like a potentially fruitful way forward for critical performativity. After all, scholars are methodologically attuned to 'picking up seeds for alternatives in existing discourses and…[can help] nurture

and develop them' (Spicer et al., 2016: 236). This has been framed as the explication of '*counter-concepts* that are already floating around or at work in organizations, but are often overlooked by most mainstream research that is unnecessarily fixated on existing ideas' (Spicer et al., 2016: 236; emphasis in original). Once these are identified, they need to be communicated to relevant audiences. Appropriate methods of framing the discussions to be had and the analyses to be performed have to be determined. There is always a distribution of labour involved here – not everyone has to engage in all aspects of a critical performative agenda. We have different skills, ideals, approaches, personalities and psychologies which influence how we engage with the world. Being critically performative is not intellectual and political Taylorism. There is no one size fits all (Tadajewski & Jones, 2012).

Being able to participate in the above requires us to put in certain kinds of labour. Reading, thinking, reflection and discussion are important. Clearly, our daily routine may look distinctly non-performative (Fleming & Banerjee, 2016). It is easy to dismiss critically minded academics. They work in business schools. They act like academics. All they seem to do is read, think, write, teach and organise. This criticism demonstrates a limited grasp of the theory-practice linkage. It levels very high expectations at one group. It is not realistic to expect a small community to perform all of the elements in a complex activist-oriented division of labours. We specialise. That is the nature of a career. We might be better off expanding our understanding of theory and its connection to the world (i.e. pluralising it). Articulating theory, for some traditions, is a form of practice. Producing literature reviews can have an impact on public policy (Pollay, 1986). Studying is a form of practice. All can inform what we do and how we do it, especially in relation to the ideas we communicate to our students and how we help expand their horizons of attention and understanding. The people we teach represent a (pluralistic) channel into many different spheres of life and they will take their improved abilities to read, synthesise and evaluate into the world.

Taking this point further, it has been argued that it is not the function of critical academics to provide solutions to the complex economic problems that confront this world. This is Spolestra and Svensson's (2016) position. This point resonates with those made previously by Naomi Klein. It works against (neo-)conservative efforts to shift responsibility for changing the social system to those outside of the main channels of political praxis. The role of a scholar according to Spolestra and Svensson is to ask questions – often deeply uncomfortable questions – about the present ordering of the economic and social system. They have to repeatedly ask these questions in the face of attempts to foreclose discourse. This orientation marries Foucault's interest in potential interventions into society through theoretically and historically informed questioning, with the activities of the *parrhesiastes* (i.e. a truth teller). On Spolestra and Svensson's interpretation, critical research is not directly relevant to business. It should not enhance the efficiency of the economy. Rather, it shifts the terms of the debate, jettisoning the way hegemonic groups currently frame the production and evaluation of knowledge in preference for contributions that offer insight, scandal and provocation (Spolestra & Svensson, 2016).

Taking Spolestra and Svensson's position, we should be alert to attempts to rethink marketing through the production of concepts that seem attuned to managerial needs rather than reflective of any substantial change in the underlying values and assumptions that frame our discipline. One of the most obvious recent contributions in this vein has been the notion of 'positive marketing'[ii].

**Positive Marketing**

Positive marketing as a 'theory' has institutional support, a conference base and special sections of a major journal have been dedicated to its conceptual architecture (Gopaldas, 2015). In this case, the theory associated with positive marketing is a matter a 'speculation', often linked with some empirical evidence intended to buttress an *a priori* position (Weick, 1995). But what is positive marketing? It is quasi-humanistic in tenor. It is all part of making the marketplace look less abstract, more beneficent and human centred. People are elevated in this discourse; the profit motive is downplayed. All good so far.

Advocates of positive marketing have underscored that markets are about people, their needs and satisfactions (Lerman & Shefrin, 2015), often making reference to societal benefits (Mittelstaedt et al., 2015). The assumption here is that individual choices necessarily result in aggregate benefits (Gopaldas, 2015). The latter does not necessarily follow from the former. Even the examples provided in support of positive marketing like the Freecycle community do not result in unproblematic aggregate benefits. Freecycle, in case we have forgotten, is an internet site and user group that lets members distribute unwanted items to people who can make use of them. Krush et al (2015) see this as a very positive outcome for consumption efficiency.

It can mean a smaller amount of virgin material is being consumed. This is provided that people do not recycle their goods faster than they would ordinarily, using the disposal of these items to buy more products and services. This is doubtful. None of the respondents in the Krush et al paper frame their disposal behaviour as a means to achieve environmental and ecological sustainability. The motives look instrumental. They are engaged in waste disposal and want to secure free stuff. These are explicit themes in the manuscript (e.g. Krush et al., 2015: 2508). This is psychological egotism (Crane & Desmond, 2002). The problems are compounded when we realise that the authors effectively assume a steady state. Their argument does not account for human desire. Positive marketing, it seems, looks for examples to applaud without considering sufficiently whether they merit approbation.

That said, the humanistic gestures of positive marketing are smart. As is tying it to what amounts to an American Marketing Association definition of marketing. In producing his narrative of positive marketing, Gopaldas defines it as follows: 'Positive marketing is any marketing activity that creates value for the firm, its customers, and society at large. In other words, positive marketing is marketing in its ideal form' (2015: 2446). This is not marketing in an ideal form. This is textbook marketing. And textbooks are not especially good at reflecting the reality of practice.

Taking this further, the listing embedded in the definition implies a staggering of importance. As Weick (1995: 388) explains, a 'tacit message of a list is that…the items towards the top of the list are more important than those toward the bottom'. Value to the company takes priority; value to the customer is secondary; with society tacked on to the end. 'Positive marketing', so the argument goes, 'unites a public interest with a profit motive' (Gopaldas, 2015: 2447). The logic starts to really unravel at this point. But it should not surprise us. A cynic would suggest that it is a process of ethical washing that we periodically need to undertake during moments of insecurity. There is some recognition of this issue in the positive marketing literature.

Gopaldas echoes an argument often linked to societal marketing. In a nutshell, this is the fact that we are adept at producing concepts which affirm a social edge to our work. Even so, the actual attention given to these ethical issues via teaching and research underscores the extent of our interest. It is negligible. Societal marketing is the absolute exemplar. It refers to the idea that we can expect the field of managerial practice to be bounded by the dictates of corporate capitalism. The hands of business are tied by shareholders and the latter's desire for financial returns. Nevertheless, societally oriented marketers were concerned for the long-term survival of their corporate reputations and customer base. By not demonstrating some interest in the worries of influential groups (i.e. the consumer movement), we betray our ethical vacuity. The end result is the de-legitimation of marketing as a discipline and practical endeavour.

As such, a basic ethical commitment was expressed via the societal marketing concept. Through this prism, companies should aim to provide goods, services and experiences that give the customer long-term benefits. They should not offer goods and services that are highly desirable in the short-term, but ultimately harm the consumer. This was invoked to stress a move beyond the instrumental-technical orientation of the marketing concept (Crane & Desmond, 2002). Societal marketing was, like positive marketing, articulated as a humanistically inflected variant of marketing practice that *seemed* to embrace ethical egotism – inasmuch as it apparently focused on values oriented to societal betterment – but which, in reality, manifested ethical commitments similar to the instrumentalism of the marketing concept, that is, psychological egotism (Crane & Desmond, 2002). Societal marketing could be viewed as a manifestation of corporate self-love and a desire to retain legitimacy more than anything else. This is not to deny the utility of the concept nor its potentially critical edge.

Axiologically both societal marketing and positive marketing are similar to traditional forms of marketing practice (Crane & Desmond, 2002). There is a focus on acting ethically and in socially responsible terms since there is a business case for doing so (e.g. Prothero, 1990; Stoeckl & Luedicke, 2015). In some respects, the engagement with ethical concerns – even if these are being undertaken for instrumental reasons – is laudable. There is no doubt that some companies have managed to forward ethical agendas, popularise significant causes and foster changes to the world through their everyday operations. As such, they have advanced understanding and appreciation of deforestation, labour relations, excessive consumption and so forth.

Unlike societal marketing, positive marketing does not appear overly inclined to move towards critique. This was a more readily articulated opportunity in societal marketing. Naturally, it would be challenging given the diverse nature of opinion refracted in a 'pluralistic society' (Crane & Desmond, 2002: 561). Notwithstanding this, discussions about whether certain goods and services were in the interest of the individual and society could have fed into government and policy decision-making, thus returning us to our social activist origins (Jones & Monieson, 1990; Jones & Tadajewski, 2015).

Nonetheless, conceptual contributions should be welcomed. But welcomed with a sceptical eye. To pre-empt the discussion below about the responsibilities of academics, it is our responsibility to ask questions about why these concepts emerge and whose interests are being served. New concepts and definitions can be insightful. They can make us think and

they can foster action. On the other hand, we should be concerned if they act as 'discursive curtains' which elide conflict, contradiction and the regressive nature of their effects (Arora & Romijn, 2011; Varman et al., 2012). Once again, this indicates a valuable role for an activist oriented marketing scholar. The things we say and write do not always have to fit comfortably with existing views. The intellectual can be a 'professional irritant' (Dallyn et al., 2015).

As educators, we do our students a disservice by presenting marketing theory and practice in overly rosy terms. This world is not rosy. Business practice reflects, refracts, moulds and magnifies the best and worst traits of humanity. It invokes sexist, racist, colonial and any number of other distasteful discourses to cement market positions. National industries have used racist ideas to undermine the products of other countries (e.g. Schlosser, 2013). Other items have been cited as facilitators of terrorist funding – conflict gems are the exemplars whether as ultimate consumption objects (e.g. Schroeder, 2010) or the intermediate components of mobile technology (e.g. Ayers, 2012). Similarly, some of those renting out accommodation on Airbnb have engaged in discriminatory practices, refusing to cater to African Americans (e.g. Weise, 2016). Depressingly, these cases all are too common. People will pursue their own personal (financial) interests irrespective of the impact on others (e.g. Arora & Romijn, 2011; Kaplan, 2007). A large cheque can turn quite a few heads.

As consumers we can be guilty of paying little attention to the production origins of the goods we buy. We sometimes seek to forget their negative effects on the environment as well as on the people producing them. The consumption of aesthetically appealing and olfactory stimulating items hides the stench of death that underwrites them (e.g. Donohoe, 2008). Moreover, disproportionately distributed wealth helps lubricate the expansion of markets into areas that are complex and troubling like commercial surrogacy. This engages populations whose marginality in the global economy places them in a weak position (Pande, 2010). The ethical issues involved in this case are difficult to resolve. Structural marginality and the possibility of stigma are less salient when poverty scars everyday life (see also Scheper-Hughes, 2001, 2004). Indicative of this, the biographical narratives that drive some to participate in the 'reproductive assembly line' do not make for comfortable reading: 'It is working class women who make India's reproductive industry viable. In Bangalore, the garment production assembly line is the main conduit to the reproductive assembly line, as women move from garment factories, to selling their eggs, to surrogacy' (Rudrappa, 2012: 23).

As gestured above, the societal marketing concept was valuable in that it provided mainstream researchers with a vehicle for critique. It allowed them to embed marketing within the circuits of capitalism, enabling the posing of questions about ethical responsibility and amorality. This question posing and probing is even more pressing today as subjectivity, inter-subjectivity and physiology continues to be enfolded within the logic of the marketplace at ever greater speed (Banerjee, 2003; Hartmann & Honneth, 2006; Pande, 2010; Rudrappa, 2012).

To be sure, actual engagements with societal marketing displayed a limited radicalism. But, it was still a form of radicalism. Abratt and Sacks (1989), for instance, looked at the activities of the cigarette and alcohol industries in South Africa. They registered the problematic effects of the profit motive on business practice and attempted to use the societal marketing concept

to evaluate the behaviours of these two industries. The tobacco industry won the moral bankruptcy stakes, denying – in the main – the conflict between their product and the long-term needs of society. This level of repugnant social irresponsibility continues to the present day, albeit in more 'sophisticated' and utterly disingenuous terms.

Both the alcohol and tobacco industries sought to limit government regulation. This is a standard response. The conjunction of neoliberalism and the touting of individual responsibility has enabled the continuing growth of alcohol advertising that speaks to younger teenagers and college-age students in particular. The effects of this are well known in terms of dependency, violence and stunted lives (Hackley et al., 2013; Kilbourne, 1999).

Had the societal marketing concept been more successful, it could have fostered efforts to think critically and constructively about where we need to draw lines in the sands of consumption – a project that has family resemblances with Critical Theory. Where the final paragraph of Abratt and Sacks' (1989: 33) study once read as a call for action, it now seems like a missed opportunity:

'…the goal of social welfare can – if taken to an extreme – infringe on individual freedom – freedom of speech, freedom of enterprise and freedom of action. For if cigarettes and alcohol are harmful or dangerous, so too – it can be argued – are high cholesterol foods and motorcycles and many, if not most, other products. The point is that some dividing line has to be drawn between that which is socially acceptable in marketing and that which is not. And this line has to be drawn not by the business community or the government or any other group which may have a vested interest in the outcome, but by all individuals who together constitute a particular society.'

Societal marketing was touted as a progressive move (Dixon, 2008). Yet, it garnered a paragraph or less in most textbooks. The other 700 pages were devoted to business-as-usual. Gopaldas remarks that social responsibility is often an 'afterthought'. It is an afterthought 'because serving society does not tend to yield immediate profits' (Gopaldas, 2015: 2450). Most pleas for social responsibility will languish as a 'failed performativity' in substantive terms (Fleming & Banerjee, 2016). Rhetorically, they may be more successful. The reasoning is simple. Many of the larger firms that grace the pages of marketing textbooks and are cited as exemplars of positive marketing are traded on the stock market or seeking financial support from the investment community. These powerful stakeholders largely have instrumental concerns at the core of their decision-making. Their financial, political and social muscle means that they can and do shape the actions of top management. Producer sovereignty to pursue socially beneficial activities is therefore more curtailed than we might expect.

Constraints on producer sovereignty are registered, but downplayed in positive marketing for the reason that they make positive marketing an unrealistic strategy for many firms. We are back to marketing as usual, where people are not foregrounded, but treated as a medium to satisfy corporate objectives. This is under appreciated in reviews of positive marketing. Stoeckl and Luedicke (2015), for example, engage in a content analysis of topics routinely discussed in Consumer Culture Theory and some areas of marketing ethics. Their review highlights – in contrast to their assertions otherwise – how reactive marketers are to changing societal conditions (e.g. Stoeckl & Luedicke, 2015: 2454, 2456-2458, 2460). They seem to view positive marketing as a mechanism for creating value for business, then customers, and

eventually everyone else. This replicates the ordering of priority typified in Gopaldas' (2015) work.

With positive marketing, there is a need to deflate the uncritical valorisation of marketing taking place. The arguments offered in support are shaky at best and fundamentally at odds with reality at worst. For example, the idea that 'marketing naturally helps to uplift society by providing consumers with…medication' should have been greatly tempered (Stoeckl & Luedicke, 2015: 2461). Positive marketers wander into murky territory with these examples. Their argument is wide of the mark. It is useful for enabling us to indicate how more critical work on this topic does not simply engage in blaming the marketing practitioner. This is an accusation levelled at critical researchers all too frequently. The narratives are far, far more complicated.

Schematically – and with due regard to the dangers of these general statements (cf. Ecks & Basu, 2009) – common themes in critical scholarship run as follows. Business practice is shaped by the structuring influence of the capitalist system. Certain demands are placed on firm performance. Firm performance targets drive managerial decision-making. Managerial decision-making informs the production of incentive schemes, with these patterning lower level organisational behaviour in relation to the customer base. There are reciprocal relays between each of these elements and it is a very blunt account, but appears to hold. The case of Wells Fargo Bank (U.S.) and their manipulation of customer accounts to achieve incentive bonuses is a useful exemplar. The tactics employed in this case had a detrimental impact on the financial health of their customers, resulting in large fines and restitution costs (e.g. McCoy, 2016).

Another example is the pharmaceutical industry. Unlike Stoeckl and Luedicke, many paint this industry in dark colours. It is historically one of the most profitable businesses on the planet (Applbaum & Oldani, 2010). To say the least, the unabashed pursuit of profit can result in consumer health and wellbeing taking a backseat[iii] (e.g. Atwater, 2016). This is realistic whether we are talking about large firms, small firms or individual practitioners (Seeberg, 2012). Obviously, the drug industry is dominated by huge firms. Their amorality can stun. There have been examples – notably the 'Trovafloxacin controversy' (Oldani, 2016) – where corporations have worked with dubious governments to access clinical trial patients for antibiotic treatments. Consent was not sought. Documents were forged. Appropriate monitoring and care was jettisoned. Patients were harmed in clinical trials as well as after the introduction of Trovafloxacin to the United States.

This 'controversy' is a microcosm of what is wrong with the pharma trade. These giant firms want to manufacture and market 'blockbuster' drugs, that is, medicines capable of generating above a billion dollars in revenue annually. Trovafloxacin was one such product. It was pursued with amoral vigour as a function of 'investor pressure' (Oldani, 2016) which had extremely deleterious effects on those who served as guinea pigs for the clinical trial or who later consumed it in the U.S. when the company knew about the side-effects. This focus on profit leads companies to make many questionable decisions and choices (see also Hill et al., 2015; Puchan, 2001).

Typically, they avoid researching treatments unlikely to generate sufficient revenue (Applbaum & Oldani, 2010). In preference they devote attention to 'lifestyle' drugs or 'me-too' medicines that will garner high levels of return on investment. We are by now far

removed from the humanism that positive marketing wants to emplace at the centre of marketing practice: 'The metric common to all [big pharma] business…is not lives saved or improved, but ROI – return on investment' (Applbaum & Oldani, 2010: 115); returns achievable only via 'maximal consumption' (Applbaum & Oldani, 2010: 118).

Pharmaceutical companies are evidently talented marketers. They enrol the scientific community in their product promotion practices by funding academics to produce a 'shadow science' (Applbaum, 2010). This refers to the production of 'scientific' evidence to support a product offering in the market. It means generating evidence that will counterpoint research that illuminates problems with a drug; complications that might trigger alternative prescription writing practices (Applbaum, 2010). This is by no means the only problematic area. Practices sometimes shade into dubious territory where close relations between reps and high prescribing doctors are concerned (Oldani, 1999, 2002, 2004). Social connections are cemented via a staggered range of gifts ranging from small items (e.g. pens) through to financially valuable offerings (e.g. holidays) (Oldani, 2002; Seeberg, 2012). One particularly instrumental doctor even dropped unsubtle hints about needing financial support for an extension to their house (Oldani, 2004).

The net result of these interconnected exchanges is that the consumer does not always benefit. Customer needs can end up being side-lined. As Seeberg (2012) reveals, doctors are quite willing to use drugs whose efficacy is suspect on their patients, sometimes leading to death. 'Excessive marketing', 'hyperconsumption' and the over-use of drugs encouraged by 'pharmaceutical hype' can thus seriously harm the consumer and society (Applbaum & Oldani, 2010), the latter due to the bacterial resistance generated through excessive and unnecessary consumption (Oldani, 2004).

These examples elucidate the limits to positive marketing practice. As I schematically outlined above, marketing generally takes place within a capitalistic system. This is the horizon for action that delimits the chances of success for positive marketing. Advocates actually know this: 'pro-social desires will not arise from corporate entities that have a legal mandate to generate profits for investors…Rather, these pro-social desires must come from the human actors who work at corporations, especially from the people in the top management teams' (Gopaldas, 2015: 2450). Top management are responsible to shareholders who demand returns on capital. This fetters managerial action. Hence the issues enumerated above.

**Macromarketing Narcissisms**

Interestingly, some contributors to positive marketing do question the 'optimistic' nature of this discourse (e.g. Mittelstaedt et al., 2015). They want to encourage a move beyond the managerial bounds of positive marketing by combining developmental (read: managerial) and critical perspectives (read: a slightly more questioning macromarketing) in order to generate reflection about how 'marketing is part of the [social and ecological] problem' (2015: 2516). All is not what it seems. This is not a conversation about potentially plural futures. It is a macromarketing narcissism. We are all working towards a single future, a single way of life, namely 'the macromarketing vision of society'. The direction of the discipline and practice can be made progressive if we all agree on a single 'vision' about the relationship between marketing and society and work towards it. This is a vision of academics becoming

legislators about a desirable future. Marketing lecturers should play a role in these types of conversations. No more than that.

**Sun-blindness, Positive Marketing and Regress**

All in all, positive marketing has a tinge of the regressive about it. The avoidance of engagement with societal marketing in preference for differentiating positive perspectives from social, green and cause-related marketing helps circumvent the issue that positive marketing does not go beyond societal marketing (e.g. Gopaldas, 2015). It holds out even less promise for stimulating substantive ethical reflection in our discipline and practice. To put this more strongly, at best positive marketing is a minute reworking of a definition of marketing from the first chapter of an introductory textbook.

It does not fully appreciate – at least in these early definitional and conceptual exegetic works – the harms done by the production and consumption of products and services. More to the point, it does not apparently want to fully identify and deal with these issues. Where societal marketing made an attempt to question and undermine the appropriateness of certain forms of consumption (Abratt & Sacks, 1989), positive marketing focuses on the benefits of marketing. It is a backward step. The conflicts and elisions become steadily more glaring. Even the most affirmative supporter of capitalism must cringe slightly: 'The goal of the Center for Positive Marketing is to reawaken recognition of the fact that customers-markets – are people, and that the job of business is to provide the products, services, experiences and ideas that will help people improve their lives' (Lerman & Shefrin, 2015: 2443). The use of 'reawaken' suggests that all has not been right in the marketing world. Even a cursory glance at the literature on the enrolment of prison workers into the 'socially sanctioned servitude' utilised by some very prominent brands accentuates this in vivid terms (e.g. Hill et al., 2015). The future, however, is brighter. Or not. As Lerman and Shefrin (2015: 2444) underline, 'It is naïve to expect that firms will seriously restrain themselves from maximizing profit'.

If we know that the conditions of possibility for marketing practice foster unethical behaviour, then the more we understand the generative mechanisms, the better. If it wanted to be progressive, positive marketing should start with the negative (Pollay, 1986). Looking at the dark-side of the market could counteract the solar retinopathy associated with gazing at the bright-side[iv] (e.g. Pollay, 1986: 33). Instead, positive marketers are getting ready to devote their energies to 'conditions which are win-win in nature, where firms can take actions to understand the different aspects of their customers' needs and meet them, and in so doing profit thereby' (Lerman & Shefrin, 2015: 2444).

There is no reason why we should not present marketing as making important and salient contributions to our quality of life when it does so (Pollay, 1987). We cannot deny the many advances the marketplace has provided. This said, we shift into ideological territory when we ignore the fact that statements about the likelihood of positive marketing are built on an amoral shifting sand. When we talk about relevance, impact and sincerely hope to make a positive contribution to society, all of our assertions demand scrutiny, critique and rethinking. What counts as doing relevant research is marked – and should be marked – by a contentious pluralism.

**A Contentious Pluralism**

If you strive for relevance and impact through managerial research, the scholarly climate will encourage these aims and objectives. The herald of the intellectual economy in many business schools is firm efficiency, with obligatory gestures to humanism and ecological sustainability (without assuming conflicts between these objectives). The research outputs that are produced – provided they meet the highest standards of originality, contribution and offer some degree of provocation to future thought – will always be welcome at the *JMM*. It is the bread and butter of what many marketing academics do.

Nonetheless the intention has always been to broaden the focus of the *Journal* to make it paradigmatically inclusive. Initially, we took baby steps. Academics were encouraged to study what marketing practitioners actually did, how they perceived their role in the world and the implications of these practices for the rest of us. This opens up the study of marketing management to multiple perspectives. Survey researchers feel at home tackling such questions. Interpretive researchers could quite easily orient their toolkit to study practitioners and customer relations. Critical authors had ample opportunity to engage with the topic, exploring the representation of marketing management by comparing and contrasting the claims being made while situating these practices within a power-laden and conflictual marketplace. In short, our paradigmatic and methodological expansion is meant to pluralise and problematise in turn.

We want to encourage people to move beyond orienting their work solely to a technocratic relevance that aspires to produce objective knowledge in the interest of economic efficiency. We do not doubt the importance of economic efficiency nor the value and contribution made by those who seek to propel industry courtesy of their contributions to knowledge. What we do have an issue with is the assumption that this is the only focus for marketing and consumer research. It accords too much priority to the economy over factors that actually support our existence on this planet (i.e. the ecosystem) and potentially delimits the ability of people in future to exist (i.e. intergenerational justice). The *Journal of Marketing Management* has long been concerned with our responsibility to wider society, with issues of sustainability and the ongoing viability of our ecosystem being foregrounded.

Just as we have attempted to pluralise the thought communities who see the *JMM* as an appropriate and supportive outlet for their work, we want to encourage marketing scholars to view relevance in wider terms. We must see our differences as learning opportunities. You say 'relevance', some reference 'discursive interventions', others herald 'critical performativity', a few say 'responsibility'. We say welcome all. Have an opinion. Express it clearly. Engage with the inevitable critique. And respond. As Dunne et al (2008) point out, management and marketing academics can be criticised for their failure to engage with the most important issues of our time. They neglect the big issues: race, poverty, human exploitation, colonialism and neo-colonialism, gender and sex disparities as well as resistance efforts to neoliberalism and related political-economic-ideological doctrines. These are the 'real world problems' that can fall by the wayside in the dogged pursuit of managerially excellent research (Tourish, 2015).

Historically, the *JMM* has done better than other outlets on this front. We have repeatedly encouraged research on sustainability (McDonagh & Prothero, 2014). We have supported research on human vulnerability and poverty (e.g. Hamilton et al., 2014; Hill, 2015; Hutton, 2015; Ford, Trott & Sims, 2016; Visconti, 2016). Colonial and postcolonial analyses have

found a home in the *JMM* (e.g. Varman & Belk, 2012; Varman et al., 2011) as have extensive debates on feminism, gender and sexuality (e.g. Arsel et al., 2016; Harker et al., 2010; Herne & Hein, 2016; Maclaran, 2016; Schroeder & Borgerson, 2015). We can do more. Thinking through the multiple factors that Dunne and colleagues examined in their critical evaluation of management and marketing publications, let me underscore that we welcome submissions from academics, independent thinkers and activists working around the globe. We want to hear a diversity of voices refracted in the pages of the *Journal*. We want to see more manuscripts taking important, relevant and explicitly politically edged theoretical positions on marketing and consumption oriented topics. We are living in a world where people are being forced to migrate from one area to another, leaving their homes and families behind. They do not do this for easy money. Clinging to a raft or clutching the bottom of a truck for miles on end is not easy or safe. These people and their possessions are quickly scapegoated for hate-mongering 'news' items and gleefully caricatured. Marketing and consumer researchers can help foster a culture of tolerance and care that is needed in a world where the fear of the other is becoming a new metanarrative.

Linked to this, we cannot deny the connections between globalisation, violence and the marketplace (Tadajewski et al., 2014). Violence, forced labour and horrific working conditions are, in part, one of the conditions of possibility for the ongoing expansion of our consumption vistas (Hill et al., 2015). Social comparison and competition can foster violent behaviour (Martam, 2016; Pollay, 1986). Sneaker theft has led to psychological trauma, maiming (for victim and perpetrator) and death (Diversi, 2006; Golgowski, 2016). Encouraging the customer to view themselves as sovereign in the marketplace has had negative ramifications (Korczynski & Ott, 2004). Because they are paying for a product or service, people sometimes give free reign to their prejudices, racist opinions, aggressive and violent natures (Boyd, 2002; Nath, 2011; Rafaeli, 1989).

There is relatively little appreciation of marketplace violence, the enactment of prejudice and the mobilisation of hatred within our subject[v] (Daunt & Harris, 2014; Ellis et al., 2011; Joy et al., 2015; Martam, 2016; Tadajewski et al., 2014; Varman & Al-Amoudi, forthcoming). This is another issue that requires rectification. What this call for responsible marketing and consumer research demands is that we take an unvarnished look at the world around us. Adopting an unthinking, 'blind faith in the system' is about as far removed from good academic practice as can possibly be the case (Dunne et al., 2008: 274). Looking at the world, accepting the benefits of the marketplace, but without denying the accompanying costs, is a good starting point for being a responsible, rather than complicit, academic.

Given this, we are introducing a number of ways authors can advance established and emerging topics. The *JMM* will support researchers who seek to advance the frontiers of managerially focused research. Let there be no mistake here. In equal measure, scholarship commensurate with Dunne et al's (2008) call for responsible research will be forwarded. So, managerially minded, interpretive and critical marketing scholars are all encouraged to get in touch. We want to hear about any projects that might be worthy of development through special sections and research notes.

**Alternatives to Special Issues and Full Manuscripts**

**Special Sections**

At the *JMM* we seek to develop our understanding of marketing, consumer behaviour and consumption in various ways. Traditionally, of course, scholars have produced special issues which deal with a particular topic in considerable detail, soliciting contributions from academics all working in a given domain. This often means that a research area is already popular, has some degree of critical mass, and is capable of generating enough content to fill either a single or double issue of the *Journal*.

While this has been a valuable means of deepening our knowledge of significant topics, theories, concepts and methodologies, it does not go far enough in stimulating new research areas, emerging topics and empirical research in ways that perhaps do not yet – but have considerable potential to – occupy a community of scholars focusing on a given area. Since the *JMM* is constantly looking to push the boundaries of marketing theory, thought and practice, breaking new ground as often as possible, we welcome proposals from intellectuals interested in producing a special section of the *Journal*.

What this means is that special section editors will identify a research area that demands attention (or further study than it has received to date). They will approach prominent and emerging academics in their networks that are working on the topic, soliciting at least five papers that engage with the prospective frontier. Ideally, these manuscripts will introduce, extend and propose further research on the topic.

The papers can be theory-led, conceptual and empirical in orientation (combinations of these are welcomed). They will be accompanied by commentaries produced by scholars who have something interesting, provocative and compelling to say about the research topic, its current status and likely future direction. Commentaries are intended to push the boundaries of current discourse. They can go beyond the empirical state-of-play to illuminate scholarly directions and research conversations we *should* be having. While typically submissions to special sections will be standard academic articles (e.g. 8000-10,000 words), alternative modes of representation are welcomed where appropriate. Each contribution to the special section will be subject to the usual – extremely rigorous – peer review process applied at *JMM*. They will *not* be guided through this process by the special section editor, but will be the responsibility of the normal editor of the *Journal*.

Our first foray in this direction will be a project led by Rohit Varman. This tackles one of the major issues of the capitalist system which enables the expansion, extension and reaffirmation of neoliberal economic values across the globe, namely violence. Varman has a superb reputation for advancing marketing theory and consumer research in directions that can make us all feel uncomfortable. In this case, discomfort is good. We should feel unhappy about the stratified nature of this world. We should feel disconcerted about the frequency and ease with which violence and marketing practice are often related (Varman & Al-Amoudi, forthcoming). The special section that Varman is heading up will deal with the relationship between violence and marketing. It promises to illuminate the dark-side of the marketplace – a task that requires our concerted attention.

**Research Notes**

We also welcome research notes. These are papers that are between 3000-5000 words in length (including references). They are envisaged to explicitly challenge a current topic, concept, literature or empirical base in a substantive fashion. Put otherwise, they have to

fundamentally rethink what we currently take-for-granted. They need to be succinct, appropriately embedded in conversations taking place in the pertinent literature(s), offer a substantive contribution and effectively communicate their results to the general audience of the *JMM* (i.e. clearly, concisely and with a minimum of paradigm specific terminology; the latter has to be appropriately explained if included).

**Beyond the Curtain: Rethinking 'Ultra Rationalist' Accounts of Knowledge Production**

Beyond the two main vehicles that are expected to advance new research frontiers, we welcome attempts by scholars to deflate the way we represent the production of knowledge. This is a call to academics whose work has been hailed as seminal, garnered large numbers of citations and is part of the empirical base or vocabulary of marketing theory and consumer research. The production of knowledge as represented in textbooks, research monographs, journal articles and book chapters is typically 'ultra rationalist' (Alvesson & Gabriel, 2013). What we mean by this is that it elides more than it reveals. The step-by-step narrative which presents an overview of the subject, the explication of research questions, the highly logical methodological strategy, the securing of access to research locations and personnel as well as the easy parsing of empirical data into hypotheses or themes is not a particularly accurate account of the research process (Alvesson & Gabriel, 2013; Cuncliffe & Alcadipani, forthcoming). Nor are the papers we submit to academic outlets the same as the product that appears in the published pages. Sometimes the manuscripts are improved. At other times, the asymmetric nature of power relations between editors, reviewers and authors might lead the latter to acquiesce to demands they disagree with in the hope of securing that sought after publication (Miller et al., 2011).

The *JMM* is interested in unravelling the complexities of the production of knowledge. Papers that reveal their conditions of possibility, that highlight the complexities of the creative processes of researching and writing, combined with the politics of the peer review system, are sought for this section of the *Journal*. These may help advance a sociology of marketing theory. Alternatively, they may give aspiring and new academics a realistic sense of academic labour.

The reason we underscore that this form of contribution will come from authors whose positions within the academy are already cemented is simply that it will take a securely established scholar (or team of academics) to write these types of contributions. Producing an account that contests ultra-rationalist theories of knowledge production is fascinating, tempting and revelatory. They will reveal the way your thought developed, the wrong turns and the ideas that were jettisoned that you wish you had retained. In short they will document the successes and failures that accompany what we do. This is very similar to subjective personal introspection. It demands an openness that few will be willing to tolerate and a reflexivity that we might be disinclined to turn on to our own activities. Even so, please contact me if you wish to write this type of contribution. I would like to hear from you.

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[i] When you are sensitised to look for this description ('bullshit') of marketing practice, examples come thick and fast (e.g. Puchan, 2001).

[ii] When the literature on this topic started to emerge, I shared it with departmental colleagues. One of whom – Dr. Gretchen Larsen – asked me whether I noted anything familiar about it. Our instant responses: it was just a normal definition of marketing slightly rejigged. Thus began a brief foray into research and writing about positive marketing. If positive marketers feel aggrieved about the engagement with their work in this paper, please do get in touch. The *JMM* is a forum for all members of the academy. A special section on cutting edge directions in positive marketing that takes account of the critique levelled above would be welcome.

[iii] The pursuit of profit can also place employees in dangerous situations. By cutting costs, by reducing numbers of staff working on particular days or nights, by limiting access to the technological tools that connect lone workers to colleagues or the police, employee health and safety is placed on a precarious footing. Violence – verbal or physical – is often not too far away, with both short and long-term repercussions for employees and their families (e.g. Boyd, 2002).

[iv] The borderline between the dark-side and the light-side of marketing practice is very thin. There are many examples where illegal (or not sanctioned) practices have beneficial effects for the ultimate consumer. Instances are found in the pharmaceutical marketplace in India (e.g. Ecks & Basu, 2009) and within the prison complex (e.g. Hill et al., 2015).

[v] See, however, the special issue of the *JMM* on the dark-side of marketing that is currently in development.