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Introduction: What's Wrong with Marketing in Theory and in Practice?

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Contents

<i>List of Figures and Tables</i>	vii
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	viii
Introduction <i>Michael Pirson and Richard J. Varey</i>	1
Part I What's Wrong with Marketing in Theory and in Practice?	
1 Where Marketing Causes Trouble <i>Verena E. Stoeckl and Marius K. Luedicke</i>	19
2 Re-affirming the Prevailing Order? <i>Pierre McDonagh, William E. Kilbourne and Andrea Prothero</i>	29
3 What Is Critical Marketing Studies? Reading Macro, Social, and Critical Marketing Studies <i>Mark Tadajewski</i>	39
4 Rehumanizing Marketing (and Consumer Behaviour) <i>Ben Wooliscroft</i>	53
5 Wants vs. Needs: On the Philosophical Bases of Humanistic Marketing <i>Claus Dirksmeier</i>	59
6 Marketing for Mortality? The Scottish Case and the Humankind Index <i>Kathy Hamilton and Katherine Trebeck</i>	84
7 Criminal Marketing: An Inhuman Side of Business <i>Nils Bagelius and Evert Gummesson</i>	98
8 Can Society Nurture Humanistic Marketing? <i>Aliakbar Jafari</i>	113
9 How Is Humanistic Marketing Possible? <i>A. Fuat Firat</i>	126

Part II Marketing as a Force for Good

10	Fusing Back the Human, Radically <i>Nikhilesh Dholakia</i>	137
11	Translating Anthropological Consumption Theories into Humanistic Marketing Practices <i>Ahir Gopaldas</i>	150
12	Well-Being Marketing as Humanistic Marketing <i>Grace B. Yu, Dong-Jin Lee and M. Joseph Sirgy</i>	164
13	Constructive Engagement, Macromarketing, and Humanistic Marketing <i>Clifford J. Shultz, II and Stanley J. Shapiro</i>	176
14	Wisdom as Excellence in Commitment to the Humanistic Marketing Practice Paradigm <i>Djavlonbek Kadirov and Richard J. Varey</i>	192
15	Power to the People: An Essay on Branding and Global Democracy <i>Thomas Boysen Anker</i>	204
16	Responsible Advertising for Sustainable Development: The Case of French Responsible Agencies <i>Fabrice Desmarais, Sauveur Fernandez and Jean-Marc Gancille</i>	216
17	Sustainable Marketing through the Natural Step <i>Diane M. Martin and John W. Schouten</i>	231
18	Social Networks and Marketing Happiness? The Potential Role of Marketing in an Electronic World <i>Ed Vos and Richard J. Varey</i>	244
19	Social Business – Everybody’s Business <i>Michael J. Baker</i>	257
	Closing Commentary: Towards Humanistic Marketing? <i>Richard J. Varey and Michael Pirson</i>	274
	<i>Index</i>	281

Introduction

Michael Pirson and Richard J. Varey

Marketing practice and scholarship are facing unprecedented challenges. The unsustainability of resource use, the increasing inequity of the market, and the continuous decline in societal trust pose a threat to business and ‘marketing as usual’. Capitalism is at a crossroads and scholars, practitioners and policy makers are being called to rethink their purpose and assumptions in light of major societal and environmental changes (Pirson & Lawrence, 2009). As current marketing thinking is based on the exchange paradigm it is largely informed by economics. Therefore it draws substantively from neo-classical theories of human beings. Accordingly, a human is a materialistic utility maximizer that values individual benefit over group and societal benefit. A ‘homo economicus’ engages with others only in a transactional manner to fulfil his or her stable and predictable interests. He/she is amoral, values short-term gratification, and often acts opportunistically to further personal gain. Business strategy and marketing organization are largely based on these limited and limiting assumptions and, in turn, are blamed for creating negative externalities. This can be seen in unhealthy consumption patterns such as smoking or overeating, or an increasingly consumerist and materialist society that cherishes the “What I have” more than the “Who I am” and “What I do”, resulting in widespread instances of depression.

This book therefore is a response to the currently growing megatrend call for rethinking marketing. The point of this book is to organize current thinking around the problems of marketing theory and practice as well as some possible solutions and ways forward: both in theory and practice. As a starting point we posit that we are facing a Kuhnian paradigm crisis in business research at large and marketing research specifically. This collection of contributions was invited on the basis of a

novel, humanistic paradigm for marketing practice, research, and policy. This book was initiated by The Humanistic Management Network to contribute knowledge and understanding to the emerging humanistic business and management movement, which does not accept perpetual economic expansion as a sustainably viable means of meeting individual and collective needs in society and Nature, and instead seeks balance in the place of excess. Humanistic Marketing recognizes the harm that comes with the unfettered desire for more of more. We ask how can Marketing's principles and practice be founded on humanistic values such as altruism, empathy, respect, trustworthiness, honesty, integrity, care, compassion, service, intelligence, beauty, justice, virtue? Furthermore, how can marketing help to protect human dignity and promote sustainable human (not consumer) well-being?

In this introduction we will briefly (1) outline the major philosophical flaws of the current economic basis of the exchange paradigm, (2) develop the pillars of an emerging humanistic paradigm which is based on the protection of human dignity and the promotion of sustained well-being, and then (3) outline the following chapters and their contributions to the discussion suggesting that marketing can be a force for good in society.

Marketing research and its crisis as normal science

Marketing research is currently mostly conducted as puzzle-solving 'normal science', in which scholars accept the exchange paradigm, and perform experiments that test and prove its efficacy in a range of situations. New explanations may extend the paradigm but do not change its fundamental nature – by pursuing a rationalist ideal, marketers limit their interventions within an objectivist, positivist ontology to matters of 'fact' and assumptions of control and manipulation. Within the classical science worldview of reductionism, atomism, quantification, determinism, and the assumption of mechanism, value is objectified, fixed, and deliverable. Within modernist thought marketing research remains embroiled in transactions within a society understood scientifically as a collection of independent self-sufficient individuals labelled in commercial marketing discourse by the narrow and partial term 'consumer'. In this way, the paradigm may grow, with many extensions to explain the various exceptional cases that are not easily covered by the original paradigm (e.g. consumer behaviour, relational commerce, gift giving, business ethics, or social marketing). In line with this perspective, marketing failures with regard to the societal crises are then explained through the

lens of the old paradigm (e.g. lack of transparency, uninformed choice and information deficit, profit-maximizing competition, and so on).

There are several major areas where the exchange paradigm is limited and limiting research progress. As an example, Nussbaum suggests that the underlying utilitarian framework, which asks people what they currently prefer and how satisfied they are (a pervasive practice in Marketing research and practice) proves inadequate to confront the most pressing issues of social justice, including gender justice or intergenerational justice. As such the underlying problem of the exchange paradigm is its inherent neglect of social, ethical and developmental aspects of human nature, evidenced by the disregard for the notion of human dignity. As noted economist Michael Jensen (2002) opined on our propensity for exchange...we all have a price: "Like it or not, individuals are willing to sacrifice a little of almost anything we care to name, even reputation or morality, for a sufficiently large quantity of other desired things; and these things do not have to be money or even material goods." Kant, however, famously noted that "everything has either a price or a dignity. Whatever has a price can be replaced by something else as its equivalent; on the other hand, whatever is above all price, and therefore admits of no equivalent, has a dignity" (Kant, 1785).

The notion of human dignity has been central to societal progress since the middle ages, in the quest for human rights, democracy and the establishment of modern governance. Deirdre McCloskey (2010) even suggests that, only because of the accordance of dignity and freedom to an expanded class of citizens did the capitalist society and its progress in wealth and well-being come about. So, a system that denies dignity – such as the marketing system, based on the exchange paradigm – reduces human beings to mere consumers, makes them commodities and stunts personal and societal development.

A humanistic paradigm in the re-making?

The question of human nature and the understanding of a shared vulnerability as well as the resulting necessity to protect human dignity are central to the humanistic quest which gave birth to economics and marketing in the first place. Despite many popular misconceptions, humanism as a philosophic tradition and utilitarian economism have very similar roots (Nida-Ruemelin, 2008). Humanistic philosophy also takes the human individual as its starting point and emphasizes the human capacity for reasoning. It is therefore equally hostile to any form of collectivism, including socialism or communism. In contrast

to economism, however, humanism assumes that human nature is not entirely a given, that it can be refined through education and learning. In addition, the ethical component remains a cornerstone in humanism in that it attributes unalienable rights to everybody, independent from ethnicity, nationality, social status or gender (Pirson and Lawrence, 2009). Humanism addresses everybody and is universal in its outreach. Humanistic business theories share the implicit endorsement of human dignity and the focus on human development (flourishing), not mere wealth or profit generation as the objective.

The protection of human dignity

Scholars of human dignity argue that there are subjective and objective dimensions of dignity: the subjective facets include self-esteem, autonomy and meaningful work, and respect; objective factors are security, just reward, equality, voice and well-being. The most developed catalogue of human dignity elements has been developed by Nussbaum (2003) and includes: (1) life, (2) bodily health, (3) bodily integrity, (4) the full engagement of senses, imagination and thought, (5) the ability to express emotions, (6) the ability to use practical reason, (7) the ability to affiliate with others, (8) being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature, (9) the ability to engage in play, and (10) the ability to exercise control over one's environment, political and material.

Current marketing practices have been criticized because they seemingly funnel attentional resources away from developing the above-mentioned capabilities. Furthermore it is convincingly argued that an exchange-based model of marketing works best when personal development remains limited or stunted. Many consumer products do not aim fundamentally at the development of capabilities as an expression of personal freedom (e.g. sugary soft drinks or potato chips) but undermine the ability to exercise control over one's life and environment (by becoming large). Manipulative shaping of social identities, for example as a consumer of Apple products, substitutes for authentic engagement of a full self. Whereas current marketing practices may intentionally or unintentionally be directed at undermining capability development, it is not unimaginable that marketing could easily serve human dignity via the development of capabilities as an expression of freedom.

Well-being as end in itself, not a mere means to performance

Another central element of the humanistic perspective embraces the improvement of the human condition as the ultimate goal of socially

organizing, including marketing. Even the early utilitarians argued that the ultimate goal of economic organizing was not material wealth generation but the promotion of happiness (utility). That central quest has been rediscovered by economists and gained significant impact in the discussions on well-being measurement at a policy level (Healy & Cote, 2001). Marketing research, however, rarely engages in the questions of improving the human condition directly, e.g. stakeholder or consumer well-being as a *dependent* variable. Well-being remains an independent variable, couched in the quest for better performance; a means not an end. Very rare are the instances in which the possibility of stakeholder well-being, as an end in itself not a means to wealth creation, is even entertained (Spreitzer et al, 2005; see Varey, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 for specific treatment in marketing).

While such a perspective is largely considered naïve, we wish to point out that questions of legitimacy all too often hinge on the question of whether business is increasing societal well-being. In a widely observed recent switch in perspective Porter and Kramer (2011) suggested that the old thinking (what is good for business is good for society) needs to be replaced by the perspective ‘what is good for society is good for business’. The currently prevailing assumption that businesses, by sheer contribution to financial performance, also contribute to overall human flourishing is less and less tenable. Therefore the perspective of stakeholder well-being as the ultimate objective is receiving increasing support. Learning from current public policy discussions, marketing researchers could evaluate marketing benefits and costs based on dimensions of stakeholder well-being, including physical, psychological, social, financial, spiritual and environmental well-being measures.

The road less travelled – towards humanistic marketing

The marketing discipline has to be reinvented, in practice and in principle. The marketing system designed and developed to solve the 20th Century ‘need for affluence in industrialized society’ problem is therefore not effective at meeting the 21st Century need for ‘well-being for all’ within limits and within the carrying capacity of the ecosystems that support life on Earth. In its orthodox form, marketing’s harm and costs are greater than generally recognized, whilst the gains all too frequently fall short of the desirable. Whilst many business and management academics are busy addressing the problem of how to incorporate sustainability in management and marketing, the other more profound problem facing the marketing discipline, and as yet the road ‘less

travelled', is the integration of management and marketing (i.e. business) into the precepts of a sustainable society. Thus we need to work towards a constructive response to changing stakeholders' expectations of the role of business in society. With the various initiatives emerging around macromarketing, social marketing, sustainable marketing, positive marketing, or conscious marketing it seems as if a different consciousness is already emerging.

Guided by reason in caring about others as well as the self, such humanistic marketing is founded on a re-formed marketing concept: focus not on the short-term gratification of wants but truly on the well-being derived from the satisfaction of needs/interests; in business reward effective and efficient provisioning for healthy prosperity rather than limited and limiting competitive growth-derived profit maximizing. This requires a systemic "re-design" of prosperity – authentic, sustainable, and meaningful value creation of real worth. Authors contributing to this collection analyse the problem, propose and demonstrate alternatives, highlight the challenges, and propose ways of addressing marketing's contribution to a human-centred transformation of the socio-economic system – by protecting human dignity and promoting well-being. The challenge lies in the integration of this alternative "humanistic" form of marketing so that it becomes the path to a sustainable society. This is not a problem of integrating morality (in the form of social responsibility and sustainability) into marketing, but rather a challenge to tap into the social power of marketing to drive change for the betterment of society.

Overview of contributions

An open call for contributions and invitations to acknowledged experts resulted in 19 chapter contributions from 33 authors.

In *Part I* we ask "*What is wrong with Marketing in theory and in practice?*" Chapters in Part I overview the criticisms and review the ideological basis – marketing in its orthodox form is not a comfortable bedfellow of sustainable society since it generally promotes consumption and thus leads to overconsumption and promises of happiness through acquisition of material possessions that are not fulfilled. Indeed, marketing intentionally creates discontent, certain practices are unethical and motivated by greed for profit, and citizens are reduced to a competitive and isolated role – the consumer as primarily an economic resource for competing firms. The dehumanizing profit-making machine is overly materialistic, growth-driven, and inequitable (in terms of affordability,

accessibility, availability, and serviceability), and questions are raised about who it serves and how value is created and destroyed. There is an inherent egocentric emphasis on advantage, differentiation, and superiority, but what of human values such as dignity, love, joy, honour, beauty, justice?

In the first chapter, Verena Stoeckl and Marius Luedicke reflect on the ever-broadening range of “mutually beneficial exchanges” and the increasing criticisms of marketing. To illuminate “humanistic marketing” they consider where in marketing “dehumanizing” effects are produced. They indeed find dehumanizing marketing practices that cause trouble for individuals, communities, society, and human and natural resources. They also observe the enormous creative potential that marketers unleash when pursuing their ambitious goals and adjusting to changing consumer demands. For marketers shouldering the responsibility of innovative, more “human” projects, the agenda will be a challenging one. When marketers seek to address (or anticipate) the criticisms they may use their brands, skills, and networks to lever distributive (information) justice, community support, deep life satisfaction, and ecological balance at a socio-culturally legitimized price. They struggle with balancing quality and profit, truth and sales revenue, intelligence and risk, exploitation and competitive disadvantage, domination and conversation, liberty and regulation, and conditional growth.

Pierre McDonough and colleagues examine consumption with a particular value orientation commonly referred to as materialism. Materialism seems so common in American and other Western societies that it has become institutionalized and forms a new secular religion that influences behavior at many levels. In considering the effects on environmental sustainability in the context of business and marketing in the future they argue for a radical humanist approach. At present, while a radical humanist analysis of the Dominant Social Paradigm is available, the proposed solutions are not as radical. For balance in society to replace excess we need to recognize that the system is the problem. Humanistic marketing, from a sustainability perspective, thus requires a re-thinking of what marketing is, and what marketing does – and an embracing of the radical (the fundamental) in doing so.

Mark Tadajewski reviews the recently emerged Critical Marketing Studies orientation, differentiating it from mainstream macromarketing and social marketing. Critical Marketing’s main goal is to reveal the flaws and limitations of mainstream marketing thinking and to arrive at a re-energized new concept of marketing in the light of contemporary wide-ranging societal changes – including consumerism, globalization,

climate change, deregulation, and so on. Schematically, macromarketing and social marketing are evangelical about the further extension of markets, marketing theories and concepts to ever wider spheres of the social world, and macromarketing is closest in orientation to Critical Marketing as it provides the discipline to evaluate marketing at the societal/cultural level. Social marketing is more questionable, and this discussion offers a cautionary evaluation of 'critical social marketing'.

Ben Wooliscroft asks why we do not use the word 'people' in our talk of marketing? He further asks why we should care about the words used in marketing and consumer behavior? In the modern discipline, surely our words and phrases accurately reflect what we study and what interests us, and our terminology doesn't blind us to important issues or upset or alienate people? Not so. People are largely absent, because they have been removed from the discussion. Wooliscroft urges us to put the people back into this most human of phenomena as the first step in reminding ourselves that we are dealing with human beings and that while the discipline is interested in consumption, consumption is not the centre of people's lives.

Claus Dierksmeier observes that the present demand for *Humanistic Marketing* – a synthesis of the previous concepts of *integrity marketing* and *sustainability marketing* – may represent the current state of management theory. Can marketing-as-usual no longer service human interests adequately? Conventional marketing clearly fulfills its instrumental function of promoting and supporting consumption, yet doubt has arisen as to its merits. As marketing-as-usual meets its professed goals, it is increasingly met with disapproval. Much of the criticism against it can be charted along the lines of the distinction between *wants* and *needs*. The criteria for evaluating economic goals rest ultimately on the indispensable foundation of human freedom, so we ought to progress into a new era of *democratic economics*, so today's research and teaching efforts should thus be directed towards finding and promoting better and more sustainable definitions of corporate and economic success. Dierksmeier offers ten focal ideas as the basis for humanistic marketing.

Kathy Hamilton and Katherine Trebeck explore how the development of consumer culture in Glasgow, Scotland, has been a central strategy in response to the identity crisis caused by de-industrialization. The city's marketing campaigns emphasize style and conspicuous consumption. Alongside these efforts, Glasgow suffers poor health and high mortality levels beyond what can be explained by socio-economic circumstances, a phenomenon known as the 'Glasgow Effect.' They discuss the extent to which the consumerist mode of economic development is both counter-

productive to the prosperity of communities and counter to what citizens really value – their dignity. They draw on Oxfam’s Humankind Index for Scotland, built following consultation with Scottish people regarding what they felt they needed to live well in their communities.

Nils Bagelius and Evert Gummesson offer insights into marketing practices that clearly undermine human dignity: criminal and unethical practices in markets. Crime destructively disrupts the market and beyond, and unfairly alters distribution, value creation and destruction, valuations, trust, and efficient material use and waste handling. According to the authors, economics and business disciplines present idealized images of markets and pretend that irregular behavior does not exist or is so marginal that it can be ignored. The authors tentatively use criminal marketing as a general term for their research domain but there is considerable difficulty in finding adequate definitions that acknowledge the many varieties of criminal marketing behavior. They began studying criminal marketing in the 1990s and have learnt to be humble when confronting its complexity, ubiquity and variety. The chapter draws on numerous publications in marketing and criminology, on case studies of international business scandals, and on media reports. The sources support the conclusion that criminal marketing is widespread and growing. It should be considered in research, theory and education, and attention should be paid to mobilizing countervailing forces to curb criminal influence.

Aliakbar Jafari points out that, for more than four decades, academic debates on the morality of marketing have focused mainly on the advantages and disadvantages of marketing as an institution. His essay questions the usefulness of such debates when addressing the many challenges of life in contemporary society and argues that engagement in such discussions will only entrap us in vicious circles of argumentation. The author calls for collective social responsibility and argues that humanistic marketing can only be realized in a humanistic society.

Fuat Firat also asks whether and how marketing can become humanistic and what the results of this transformation might be if it can occur. For the contributors of this volume, marketing as we know and practice it today has unsatisfactory characteristics and outcomes, so the author’s purpose in this essay is to explore some of the reasons that underlie the unsatisfactory nature of marketing. These explorations might provide us with insights as to what may be required for a substantive transformation. For this author, it is not simply a matter of philosophy but a matter of analysis of the consequences of differential versus equal access to all knowledge for humanity’s good and future that should guide our

consciousness. Differential access to knowledge distracts democracy, and a defence of differential access to knowledge must also defend why democracy may not always be a good to seek. He dares the intellectuals of our time to attempt this task.

In summary, our contributors here argue that marketing, when focusing on the creation of wants rather than meeting authentic needs, risks losing societal legitimacy. It is often judged to defy human dignity in that it does not contribute to the development of people's abilities; instead it either reduces them to the role of consumer or manipulates them directly. For marketing to become a force for good in society other authors argue we need more than a shift in practice but an overall shift in consciousness. A daunting task... ..

In *Part II*, we ask *what are the alternatives for Marketing as a force for good?* Authors explore a range of approaches beyond the economic legacy model of economic production and exchange, providing discussions of state of the art thinking, with case studies and practical examples.

The opening chapter of this focus on a better marketing, from Nikhilesh Dholakia, acknowledges that under contemporary capitalism the on-going process of differentiation of multiple roles that we play in everyday life, a process with a long history (through centuries of modernity), is getting subverted – and there is the plucking out and elevation of one particular role among these. The role and notion of the “consumer” has been growing rapidly. This role is being stretched and expanded so as to subsume as many other life roles as possible. It is being constantly glorified and valorized: there are attempts to put it on the same pedestal as the historically established and hallowed role of the democratic citizen. Dholakia reflects on these processes and explores ways in which all our life roles (and not just the consumer role) can be elevated and fused back into the one notion that really defines us – as humans.

Ahir Gopaldas sets out to imagine more humanistic marketing practices within the confines of existing capitalist structures. Anthropological consumption theories are well-suited to this task because they offer a people-centric view of markets and address universal human themes, such as the search for meaning, the pursuit of pleasure, the construction of identity, and the maintenance of community. This chapter translates four theories – consumption as *meaning making*, consumption as *emotional experience*, consumption as *self-extension*, and consumption as *community participation* – into concrete managerial recommendations. Each theory illuminates a distinct pathway for empathically understanding, motivating, and satisfying consumers in economically profitable as well as humanistic ways.

Grace Yu and colleagues see *Well-being marketing* as humanistic marketing; that is, the business mechanism that provides marketing beneficence through planning, pricing, promoting, and distributing consumer goods for the purpose of enhancing customer well-being while preserving the well-being of all other stakeholders through marketing non-maleficence. *Marketing beneficence* refers to marketing decisions designed to enhance customer well-being. Conversely, *marketing non-maleficence* alludes to marketing decisions designed to preserve the well-being of employees, stockholders, distributors, suppliers, local community, and the environment. By engaging in well-being marketing, firms are likely to develop a long-term relationship with customers and benefit from company goodwill. The authors believe that well-being marketing is the next step in the evolution and progression of marketing. Well-being marketing builds on relationship marketing by highlighting business ethics in a relationship marketing context.

Cliff Shultz and Stan Shapiro review recent definitions of marketing from the American Marketing Association, and see them as useful to the practice of marketing management, with some orientation to societal issues, yet too microscopic. They do not coincide particularly well with historical interpretations of marketing, and ultimately (tragically?) limit the potential impact of marketing on the most pressing challenges that confront us. If one accepts the premise that the current definition is too microscopic, one must also conclude that it is not sufficiently macroscopic. But what exactly does it mean to orient toward (macro)-marketing? Humanistic marketing is a still emerging concept, though humanism and marketing were first linked decades ago. The term Macromarketing, by contrast, has for forty years been a recognized sub-discipline of academic marketing. Whatever macromarketing has to offer, humanistic marketing is free to borrow – or not. In this chapter we discuss both the potential usefulness of “constructive engagement” as humanistic marketing’s prevailing mind-set and what else the macromarketing literature might contribute to a fully fleshed out concept of humanistic marketing.

Javlon Kadirov and Richard Varey consider the wisdom of marketing, observing that dominant marketing practices of the modern age are barely humanistic in being driven towards inciting individual egos to serve their own momentary desires while being indifferent to commonly shared and shaped domains of life and spheres of collective value creation. In this sense, marketing atomises egos and snatches them away from their embedded “nurseries”. Marketing appeals to individuals to maximize their own utilities and be indifferent to shared utilities.

Considering that shared and common spheres are fundamental and vital to becoming 'real' human beings, we can in fact talk about the tragedy of the commons across the whole humanistic spectrum: natural resources, societal relationships, morality, ethics, and generational evolution. All such shared spheres need some kind of input on the part of human beings in order to be kept sound and sustainable. Orthodox mainstream marketing activities exploit these shared "treasures" but fail to replenish them. Moreover, traditional marketing, guided by neo-classical assumptions, constantly erodes these shared spheres of humanity. Misguided assumptions lead to anti-human practices: the deteriorating natural environment affects our bodies; crippled social relationships impair our spirits; our common intergenerational existence (e.g. the being) is mutated through myopic temporal decisions and reduces our survival fitness. One can argue that traditional marketing tactics are simply tools with which marketers hope to maximize personal well-being by creating satisfying exchanges. Wisdom in this case is the realization that personal well-being is profoundly related to welfare-for-all. The traditional marketing paradigm might have been an effective set of approximations that contributed to enhancing life standards in the industrial age when big fixes for social ills were in prospect. However, holding on to these approximations is not wise when a society is on the brink of transition to a new (supra-affluent within limits) epoch. Wisdom is then understood as a meta-heuristic in recognizing the existence of various paradigms and a commitment to those paradigms that leads to welfare for all.

Thomas Boysen Anker sees the world moving in opposite directions as if it was divided into parallel universes: more prosperity for some people yet even more poverty for others; the ideas of democracy were literally catching fire as he wrote during the Arab Spring, but at the same time gruesome tyrannies and radical religious groups were spreading dread and fear through terror and torture. Prominent political theorists have described each of these movements. Fukuyama's optimistic theory of the idea of democracy winning global public appeal, on the one hand; Huntington's pessimistic theory of the clash of civilizations, on the other. Against the background of these world visions, Anker asks two questions. First, is it possible for corporations to use the power of branding to promote democratic mind-sets and thus help in moving the world in the peaceful direction of Fukuyama's vision? Second, does the idea of democracy provide a desirable brand position? Anker's empirical findings and theoretical arguments support the claim that corporations can use branding as a force for good to shape democratic

mind-sets and that this endeavour offers a potentially very desirable brand position.

Fabrice Desmarais and colleagues overview the French advertising environment and the attempts of some participants to build a more sustainable and responsible industry. The authors also present an insider account of a relatively new breed of 'responsible' agencies that have placed strong sustainable development principles centrally in their mission. The chapter explores the motivations and practices of these agencies and uncovers a range of internal and external issues faced by them. Overall these agencies see their role as educating and accompanying their clients towards a better understanding of and attitude towards sustainable society issues, and also to deliver messages to consumers that are compatible with these issues.

Diane Martin and John Schouten, following their book on Sustainable Marketing, observe that in recent years the ecological and humanitarian reasons for businesses to become environmentally and socially sustainable have become clearer than ever. With less fanfare, the business rationale for sustainable practices has also begun to clarify. Many marketing companies, including some of the world's largest and most successful (e.g., Walmart, Nike and Interface Carpets), have undertaken the serious task of becoming more environmentally neutral and socially responsible. In moving to more sustainable models, these companies have not compromised their economic futures. On the contrary, they are helping to usher in a new business paradigm that will ensure their economic viability in a world of increasingly scarce natural resources and rapidly growing consumer markets. If the marketing profession in general is going to help shape a culture of sustainability (that is, a culture in which sustainability is a driving value) then once again orthodox marketing thought may need to be revised. Somewhere between the customers who are 'kings' and the 'suckers born every minute' lies another kind of customer that is willing to be a partner with marketing institutions in creating win-win-win outcomes for customers, companies and humanity. Reversing or even slowing the runaway train of unsustainable production and consumption will require the will and participation of people in every sector of life and work. The one thing people of every sector share is constant exposure to marketing, and the authors want it to be sustainable marketing.

Ed Vos and Richard Varey see that in the world of increasing electronic connectivity we are often amazed at the widespread popularity of social networks, instant email connections, and almost universal personal cell phone ownership. The ability to electronically connect to each other

has become so popular because we, as people, have a great desire to be connected to each other. In fact, the science of happiness is very clear in listing 'relationships' as the foremost determinant of happiness. So we embrace every opportunity to connect with an underlying hope of becoming happier. However, it is becoming clear that these electronic connections are not as personally fulfilling as they appear at first glance. Online 'conversations' are useful, but they do not provide the happiness we crave which comes from personal relationships. By substituting social network connections for personal connections, we are becoming lonelier, not happier. So where does this place the marketing function of a business? Are marketers reduced to being website developers and content copy-writers, or is there greater potential for their skills? This chapter suggests that the skills of marketers may become more valued should society increasingly seek happiness, and offers a conceptual framework for understanding the changing role of the marketing function in the firm. The authors suggest that marketing has the potential to add value to the firm beyond the information dissemination function, which websites can fulfil, while also enhancing individual happiness and society's drive to maximize usefulness (value). They point out the potential of marketers to spread happiness while adding value and thereby be part of a virtuous cycle for both the individual and the society at large.

Michael Baker advocates what he refers to as Social Business in the final chapter of this section, and identifies some of the distinctive features of social business, why it is important, and current thinking about its effective implementation. In so doing, he highlights social business as an orientation towards business and human well-being in the context of capitalism. Transformative marketing is necessary, and the author recommends both more research in this direction in the marketing discipline, and the recently established journal *Social Business* as an outlet for intellectual capital-building marketing research in and for the sustainability of society.

In summary, this set of chapters provides a diverse exploration of the position of marketing in the face of challenges for societal transformation. We want to challenge, provoke, and inspire reflection, deliberation and debate, and here acknowledge the contributions of our colleagues in this regard.

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Index

- advertising 13, 20, 21, 53, 60, 66,
 68–9, 76–7, 89, 102–3, 116, 120,
 130, 142, 143
 responsible 216–28
 anthropology/anthropological 10, 60,
 74–5, 78–9, 150–60
 authenticity 4, 6, 10, 22, 23, 59, 153,
 200, 221, 224–5, 233–4, 250, 274

 brand/branding 7, 12, 22–6, 36, 55,
 83, 100, 105, 107, 139, 152–7,
 160, 204–13, 221, 226–7, 239,
 263, 271, 278
 city 84, 93–5
 sustainable 32, 84

 capitalism/capitalist 1, 3, 10, 30,
 40–1, 71, 109, 137, 143–4,
 146, 150, 166, 216, 258–68,
 272, 277
 natural capitalism 232–3
 care/caring 2, 6, 33, 90, 138, 139, 141,
 166, 168–9, 172, 200, 216
 citizen/citizenship 3, 6, 9–10, 22,
 56, 68, 78–9, 84–7, 91–5, 104–5,
 108–10, 114, 127, 132–3, 138,
 142–5, 152, 157, 179–80, 206,
 210, 227, 234, 259, 263, 266,
 274, 277
 corporate citizenship, *see* social
 responsibility
 collaboration/collaborative 146, 157,
 159, 249, 267, 277
 commercialism/commercial
 thinking/logic 2, 21–2, 45,
 64, 68, 73–8, 129, 138–9, 141,
 143, 145, 205–6, 220–1, 253,
 259, 278
 communication 32, 68, 73, 75, 80,
 126–7, 129–31, 132, 133, 143,
 146, 195, 217
 commercial/marketing 127, 129,
 153, 218–19, 237, 240, 278
 conversation 7, 14, 26, 129–30,
 222, 245, 276
 community/communal 7, 10, 19,
 20–3, 24, 26, 33, 40, 71, 76,
 84, 86–93, 120–1, 128, 151–2,
 156–60, 165, 171, 182, 200, 233,
 248, 250, 251, 278
 connection/connecting 13, 14, 19,
 31, 36, 86, 91, 137–8, 157, 239,
 244–53, 277
 conscious/consciousness 10, 75, 85,
 131, 133, 139, 144, 147, 166, 204,
 225, 227, 276
 social 139, 166, 225
 consumer 1–4, 10, 19–26, 40, 41, 44,
 53, 54–7, 59, 69, 71–2, 77, 88,
 145, 227
 consumer culture 8, 84, 93, 143, 146,
 235, 275
 consumerism/consumer society 1, 7,
 8, 22, 27, 73, 84, 85, 87, 89, 90,
 93, 116–18, 138, 139, 141, 144,
 152, 241, 246, 253, 269, 278
 consumer research 35–6, 45, 54, 55,
 153, 211
 consumption theory 10, 75, 158
 overconsumption 6, 23, 113, 117,
 118, 121, 160, 278
 crisis/crises 1–2, 8, 36, 41, 56, 84, 99,
 101, 113, 178, 182, 220, 228, 240,
 267, 271
 critical theory 39, 45, 73–4
 criticism of marketing 6–8, 20–3, 44,
 59, 68–9, 73–4, 78, 93, 106, 116,
 127, 150, 218, 266

 dehumanizing (effects of
 marketing) 6, 7, 19–23, 25–6,
 54–5, 139, 142
 deliberation/deliberative 14, 75,
 80–1, 277
 democracy/democratic business 3, 8,
 10, 12, 71, 74–6, 80–1, 102, 104,

- democracy/democratic
 business – *continued*
 116–18, 120–2, 128, 132–3, 138,
 140, 142–4, 204–14, 277
- development/developmental 26, 45,
 146, 186, 271
 development, sustainable, *see*
 sustainable development
- economic(s) 8, 42–3, 70, 85–95,
 183, 186, 207, 258
- human 3, 4, 10, 194
- Human Development
 Report 272
- personal/self 35, 166, 210–11
- societal 177, 178, 186, 200
- dialogue 80–1, 114, 197, 222, 227
- dignity 2, 3–4, 6–7, 9, 10, 63–4, 78,
 128, 139, 257, 274
- dominant social paradigm 7, 30,
 187, 276
- economics
 growth 2, 25, 86, 91, 128–30, 131,
 184, 259, 265
- neo-liberalism 41, 47, 91, 140–44,
 146–7, 204–5, 265
- thinking 60, 70, 74, 128, 141
- engagement 129, 151, 157, 182, 220
- constructive 11, 17, 176–88
- ethical 23
- political 21, 23
- ethics/ethical/unethical
 behaviour 2–4, 6, 9, 11, 12,
 20, 23, 25, 26, 41, 53, 62, 63,
 66, 70, 78–9, 98, 103, 105, 109,
 113, 115, 119, 142, 164–72, 178,
 181–5, 192, 220, 225–8, 252, 269,
 276–7
- exchange (paradigm) 1–4, 7, 10, 12,
 19–21, 24, 39, 43, 54, 71, 101,
 127–9, 131, 142, 165–6, 179, 183,
 185, 201, 246, 249, 252, 257–8,
 269, 271
- freedom 3–4, 8, 21, 24, 46, 65–8,
 71–80, 92, 128, 154, 205–6, 210,
 236, 250, 274
- ‘Golden Rule’/golden mean 77, 183
- happiness 5–6, 14, 23–4, 70–1, 79,
 113, 119, 122, 194, 197–8, 200,
 244–53
- homo communitus* 200
- homo economicus* 1, 72, 75, 79
- homo marketus* 177–81
- humanism 3, 4, 11, 39, 40, 62, 122,
 144, 150, 151, 187, 257
- humanistic ethics 78
- Humanistic Management Network 2
- humanistic marketing, *see* marketing,
 humanistic
- humanistic paradigm/society/
 goals 2–4, 115, 140, 150, 157
- humanistic philosophy 3, 78
- humanistic values 2, 7, 26, 205, 257,
 274, 278
- Humankind Index (Oxfam) 9, 85, 91
- human nature 3, 4, 60, 63–6, 71,
 73–80, 193, 195
- humanness/being human/human
 being 1, 3, 8, 12, 61–6, 73–6, 114,
 117, 128, 130, 144, 192, 194, 197,
 199, 250–1
see also dehumanizing
- individualism(possessive) 40, 46, 157
- instrumental 8, 40, 59, 143, 246
- justice
 distributive 39, 178, 183, 185, 200
 social 2, 3, 7, 13–4, 26, 168
- managerialism 41, 236, 271, 274
- marketing
 changing/in need of change 1, 5, 7,
 9, 13, 36, 116, 241, 270
 concept 127, 141, 165, 182
 criminal 9
 critical 7, 40
 Critical Marketing Studies
 (CMS) 39–47
 criticism of marketing, *see* criticism
 of marketing
 humanistic 2, 5–12, 19, 25–6, 36–7,
 59–60, 77–81, 113–18, 126–7,
 150–60, 183–8, 187, 192, 274–80
 institution of marketing 30–1
 ‘over-marketing’ 24–6

- marketing – *continued*
 relationship marketing, *see*
 relationship
- marketization 144
- market/market logic 40, 47, 54,
 56, 113
- materialism 1, 6, 7, 22, 29–30, 34,
 40, 70, 85, 89–91, 94–5, 159–60,
 269, 274
- means and ends 2, 4, 5, 21, 29, 36,
 66–7, 71, 84, 102, 115, 132, 198,
 200, 246, 249
- moral/morality/moral
 development 1, 3, 6, 9, 12,
 19, 20, 23–6, 35, 60–73, 79, 101,
 109, 113, 116–22, 165–8, 171–2,
 179, 192, 199, 210, 253, 265,
 267, 276
- natural capitalism, *see* capitalism,
 natural
- negative effects of marketing 1,
 19–21, 30, 41, 44, 59, 72, 89, 115,
 119–21, 154, 158, 167, 168, 185,
 199, 202, 225, 258, 277
- neo-classical/classical/'normal'
 science/economics 1, 2, 12, 40,
 56, 70, 72–8, 128, 192, 197–9,
 265, 276
- neo-liberalism, *see* economics
- ontology 2, 74–6, 151
- paradigm (shift) 1–3, 7, 12–3,
 30, 45–6, 70, 144, 165, 172,
 182, 187, 192–4, 197–201,
 231, 276
- philosophy/philosophical
 thought 2–3, 9, 29, 40,
 59–81, 115, 133, 137, 140, 143,
 147, 152, 165–6, 193, 206, 210,
 213, 232, 253, 260, 270, 274, 276,
 278, 279
- political 4, 12, 23–4, 62, 68–9, 74, 76,
 78, 98, 102, 106–8, 117, 128–9,
 131–2, 138, 140–5, 179–82,
 204–6, 210–3, 217, 228, 234, 262,
 265, 267, 276–7
- pragmatism 74, 276
- quality of life 37, 40, 55, 56, 87, 116,
 119, 164, 172, 178, 183–6, 225,
 257, 272
- rationality/rationalist 2, 56, 61–4,
 67–72, 101, 141–2, 147, 249,
 253, 277
- relational 2, 151, 165, 275–8
- relationship 11, 12, 14, 20, 31, 40,
 53, 56, 84–6, 90–3, 102–4, 106–8,
 114, 127, 128, 138, 165–7, 171–2,
 176–7, 180, 183, 192, 194, 200,
 210, 223–4, 233, 244–5, 247–50,
 252–3, 269–72, 275–6, 278
see also connection; individualism
- respect 2, 4, 66–7, 92, 107, 115, 155,
 159, 182, 206–7, 210, 218, 220,
 223, 226–7, 272
- self-interest 23, 70, 168, 197, 200,
 267–8, 272, 277
- service logic/science, serving 2, 4, 7,
 8, 25, 44, 59–60, 72, 76, 85, 103,
 116–18, 122, 141–2, 150–3, 158,
 164–6, 246, 248, 251–3, 266,
 268, 277
- social business/enterprise 14, 117,
 122, 253, 257–72, 277
- social responsibility (corporate) 6, 9,
 114, 116, 117, 119, 165–6, 172,
 217, 220, 224, 232, 248, 250,
 262–3, 269
- societal perspective/
 transformation 1–3, 5–14, 19–20,
 22–4, 30–1, 34–6, 40–2, 45, 54,
 59–62, 67–9, 73–9, 84–95, 98,
 101–4, 108–10, 113–22, 127,
 131–3, 140–1, 150, 152, 160,
 165–6, 171–2, 176–86, 192–4,
 198–202, 205–6, 217–18, 233,
 235–6, 245–6, 249–53, 257,
 261–7, 271–2, 275–9
- stakeholder 5–6, 11, 19, 32, 42, 46,
 56, 103–4, 150, 164–72, 176–82,
 235–6, 263, 266, 268, 272, 274–8
- sustainability 1, 2, 5–7, 13, 23, 32–4,
 43, 80, 91, 117, 182, 186–7, 194,
 231–41, 251–2, 258, 260, 262,
 269–72, 278

- sustainable development 13, 32–3, 43, 216–28, 231
- transaction(al) 1, 2, 77, 86, 139, 143–5, 167, 184, 249, 258, 271
 financial 105, 107, 115
- transformation in society 6, 9, 14, 31, 34–5, 74, 126, 132, 157, 187, 194, 268–73, 278–9
- trust 1, 2, 9, 21, 68, 90, 100, 103, 104, 114, 138, 158, 165, 169, 170, 223, 224, 248, 252, 267, 268
- unethical business, *see* ethics
- value creation 6, 9, 11, 14, 36, 115, 145, 150, 192, 246, 252, 267–8
- values (social, market) 1–2, 7, 20, 25, 30–3, 40–2, 69–71, 79–80, 89–90, 109, 116–18, 127, 128, 168, 171–2, 196–9, 205–13, 216, 221, 241, 248–52, 274, 277–8
- welfare 12, 44, 60, 69, 86–8, 115, 121, 150, 165, 177–82, 193, 197–8, 200–2, 257, 263, 270–2
- well-being 2–6, 11–12, 31, 42, 60, 86, 89, 93, 117, 154, 164–72, 183, 185, 194, 198, 200–1, 222–3, 236, 257–8, 272, 274, 277–9
- wisdom 11–2, 62, 78, 192–202