3 Marketing as pro-education

> In the last twenty years, however, [the university] has metamorphosed rapidly into a completely different institution – if such a perpetually mobile business-oriented entity may still be called an 'institution'. So radically has the university changed that the typical academic, administrator or student from the 1960s and 1970s would barely recognize it today. It might seem to them to be more akin to a marketing company or advertising agency, so concerned is it with profit, products, clients, market share, branding and image.
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> (Hassan 2003: 79)

Premise

For Aristotle, there appears to have been a distinction between a specific form of making or production, *poiesis,* and the more general notion of doing and being involved in an activity that is ***praxis***. This, in the case of education as ***paideia***, for example, would relate to ethics and politics. Aristotle's argument is that something's function is for its end.

Praxis is encapsulated actions which promote wisdom, practical wisdom based on the notion of acting in ways which are for the good and the well-being of self and others: at least that is the reason that Aristotle gave for seeking through enlightenment – educating towards happiness – the highest good of happiness. However, this distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis* as different ways of being-in-the-world has become blurred, as *praxis* has been essentially '**enframed**' by the technologies that dominate and surround us. They threaten to turn *praxis,* with its potential of wise well-being, into the utility of *poiesis,* collapsing means into ends. (See Heidegger for an extended discussion of the relationship between these concepts.) Marketing should not be about concealing or merely altering people's perceptions about education. Rather, it is about developing fundamental change in people's ideas about the world, bringing and delivering real value to their lives.

If we apply the above to being-in-the-world of education, both in concept and in practice marketing functions as *poiesis* and, as it is in the

market, it produces commercial value – as in Heidegger's discussion of being in-the-world in *Basic Writings, Problems of Phenomenology*. The purpose of marketing in its essence is derived from its practical relationship with its end – the market – and, through that, neo-liberal notions of capitalism, manifest in the creation of commercial value in and of itself. The marketer is enframed by the essence of marketing technologies to this end. And so when these techniques and practices, which are derived from the market, are applied to education, they enframe education as a utility. The argument is that marketing techniques, for the most part, cannot be divorced from the genesis of the utility of the market, regardless of the sentiment or wisdom of those using them.

One of the consequences of education so marketed is the promotion of higher education as a means to an end and not an end in itself. Thus:

> The technological project's focus is on securing an end, its attitude towards temporality is that time, in its unruliness, must be domesticated, and must be brought under control. Opposed to this, praxis fully recognizes time as its field of action and as an enabling medium – for instance, the meaningful action of praxis as an application or repetition of the past understood as an historical legacy – and seeks, ideally, to maintain the singleness of individual identity through the vicissitudes of temporal existence.
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> (Simpson 1995: 57)

The argument thus prevents higher education, if marketed, from being promoted as a place for education where education is considered as anything other than an end of the market (Gibbs 2007). Many would argue that this is its role; to reflect the values of the society in which it serves. We would not dispute that this is a position worth holding in a diverse higher education field of endeavour, but we would argue that the mass use of this approach ought to be resisted, for it reduces choice, potentially inhibits critical thinking and ultimately leads to a loss of democracy. However, given the power of the market, the voice of dissenting institutions still needs to be heard and the resistance needs to be visible. To do this requires such institutions either to formulate marketing for education in ways which do not lead to the deconstruction of education to a marketable value, or to find ways of promoting education which are found outside the domain of existing marketing theory.

Temporality

Common to most approaches to this problem is the notion of an abstract, absolute, linear, irreversible, monotonic, homogeneous and divisible struc-

ture of time in which consumer behaviour is set. In particular, current consumer models pay little attention to the phenomenological experience of both time and temporality. This has inevitably led to difficulties in understanding the role of time, as purchase and consumption events are much further apart than for most consumer goods and services.

The perception and experience of learning which has an established and verifiable goal draw attention to notions of time beyond normal temporal horizons. The expansion of everyday horizons to encompass the experience and the subsequent location of the '**encashment**' outside of this '**extended present**' (Nowonty 1988) identifies a need to understand the multi-faceted total social learning time environment. It is proposed that an understanding of the preferences and successes of learners in formal learning would offer an insight into both the phenomenology of the learner's own temporality and that embedded in the product or educational service being consumed. Further, there needs to be harmony between these temporalities for maximum utility to be gained from the transaction. Elsewhere Gibbs (1998) has shown that a phenomenological perspective of 'temporal consumption realities' within a time continuum can offer these insights. Slattery (1995) has made interesting observation of the notion of time in education which has familiar themes.

The above is based on a model of the experience of time where learning is depicted as an essentially temporal activity. To achieve this, distinctions were drawn between the everyday socialized future of our temporal environment and two qualitatively separate futures: the distant future and the personal historic future. Goals and outcomes located in these 'futures' require marketing interventions which initially bring them into the domain of the time capsule, where personal comparative assessment exists, and then impart to them a wave motion to bring them through the region of attention to the consumer's present.

This enframing of time in education is particularly well illustrated in the work of Hassen (2003), Clegg (2003) and Ylijoki and Mäntylä (2003), which give full play to the expression of the changes in temporality in an academic setting. They show the tensions in tempo and temporality of academic life brought about through policy changes, arguing that these changes are not the consequence of academic evaluation but of external policy impositions.

Existential trust

To go beyond the barriers of the socially constructed cocoon of time horizons – in particular, we are thinking of Giddens (1991) here but similar concepts have been articulated by others (see Gibbs 1998, for a review) – one needs to

trust in unverifiable notions (Luhmann 1979). The marketing of education has to inspire trust to invest in teachers and their institutions to face a future as yet unknowable and even unarticulated (Bearden et al. 2001). This is no argument for blind faith, but for a form of existential trust which is built on humanity's potential for mutual respect, empathy and compassion. It requires our teachers and lecturers to evolve with students through a series of learning conversations. These might form the basis of a marketing proposition which can reach the parts that supporters of A levels would be embarrassed to have visited! If it is right to build relationships based on dignity, respect and personal responsibility rather than product-based transactions, then we might be able to embrace rather than reject those learners who do not fit the financially-driven strategies of our institutions and for whom our marketing fails.

Learner self-confidence

Self-trust is based on the notion of respect. It is the development of a responsibility for oneself as part of humanity: the realization of personal authority over what one trusts to be true. Such trust comes from the experience of involvement. If this involvement, whether in classics or in mechanical engineering, is to be more than a mere observational acquaintance with the subject, it requires the student to become one with his subject, so dissolving any subject/object divide. It requires the skills of rational argument as well as the passion of personal identification with the subject. The scholar becomes inseparable from his achievement. These acts of scholarship are acts of creativity, of becoming what one was not previously. They reveal understanding of the way we come to think of what we might be. In this, involvement is a condition of self-knowledge and conscious self-trust of a future identity.

We have resonance with the notion of self-trust, trusting in our potential to be, as Heidegger says, 'coming-towards oneself'. This is temporal realization of trust, for what one might grasp are opportunities revealed through self-trust, and the practices of trust, within the context of activities. It is within our care for what we might be. It is our concern for what we might be, in the context of what others will be, as a consequence of our realization. In this sense, it acts as a 'protocol' for practice within a specific context.

To trust in one's own judgement, to make decisions on one's own preferences and to accept the results as a reasoned scenario facilitates the ontological integration of authentic and autonomous actions. In building one's network of preferences and acceptances in the 'everyday-ness' of action, one first reveals oneself as a self-trusting and then as a trustworthy

person. Thus one who is trustworthy must be able to distinguish between justified competence in certain arenas, whether propositional or of capacity, and where one is incompetent. Burstow (1983: 176) claims that 'authenticity requires him to learn so as to be able to accept what must be accepted, and – something Sartre also includes in his description of authenticity – to change what can be changed'.

Marketing ends and an education forever

The purposes of the application of forms of knowledge are, we think, very different for marketing and education unless the latter is entrapped by the temporality of the market. Comparing the marketing concept with liberal education, we suggest that the former is about predetermined ends achieved through the application of marketing skills and technologies. By contrast, liberal education is about the critical development into an educated person. It is about the process, not the end, and is distinct from the academically-accredited person whose goal is certification, not knowledge. The goal of accreditation is indeed similar to that of a marketing goal and this is rapidly replacing the idea of an educated populace.

This debate about the temporality of the market has, to some extent, been rehearsed in the social marketing literature. There, Peattie and Peattie have developed the argument that we need 'a more thoughtful and selective application' (2003: 387) of marketing principles. They are not alone in taking this position. For example Gibbs (2002), Janic and Zabber (2002), Wasmer et al. (1997) and Brownlie and Saren (1992), who state that there has always been a paradox that 'marketing techniques are used by firms as much to influence and manipulate consumer demand as to identify and anticipate it', have all supported the view that the ideology of marketing, built in the commercial era of the 1980s, is problematic when applied to other areas of human endeavour where the market might not always hold sway.

It is these views, at least for us, that beg a theoretical underpinning for the application of ***techne*** into the productive *praxis* of educational marketing.

The state which precedes *praxis* is ***phronesis*** – practical activity to further our temporal being – and it is a goal of education. It is developed through reflection on one's own behaviour and is different from reflection on oneself as a skilled agent in a range of competencies appropriate for a defined role in society. Reflection in *praxis* is not remedial in the sense of achieving some 'given' ideal; rather, it is iterative, an engagement with oneself with others. Existential reflection is not contemplatively dwelling on what might have been a futile attempt to match what we are with the totality of what others might expect one to be. It is a learning exploration

and is a process of evaluating one's future possibilities for being, given the reality of one's current existence. It is the realization of what one is, and the diagnostic consideration of the activities necessary to secure what one might be, and it transcends self.

Summary

Without *praxis* informed by *phronesis*, our actions risk unquestioned inauthenticity. This may be brought about by the ritual and tradition of our immanent state. The market's dominance creates the institution's desired result of loyal customers – perhaps through repeat mailings to alumni. This closes off future possibilities, hinging them to the temporality of linearity and rationality (Habermas 1998), a rationality of the social present, of bad faith and of inauthenticity. Encouraged by the desire to satisfy the owners of the means of education, for example, governments and rich donors, marketing activities become guided by the instrumentality of *techne*. This has been proven successful in other spheres of consumption but, thoughtlessly adopted, commoditizes education in the process. Marketing *per se* is not to blame for this enframing of education – this is being forced by policy-makers, and those they have empowered, by means developed for commercial exploitation – but it is inappropriate for education's intrinsic worth. If we continue to market education through the ways of consumerism, education will lose its transcendental potential and adopt the functionality of the market. What seems ironic is that, in securing resources for education, marketing changes the educational essence of what it was intended to liberate.