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Alterity & Sensitivity in Inter-Organizational Relations: Contours of the Tutor in Marketing Ethics Education

(Work-in-Progress paper)

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Abstract

Purpose & literature addressed: This paper scrutinises the way in which ethics is taught in the modern business/industrial marketing syllabus. We argue for a reappraisal of the tutor-student relationship such that we may facilitate a greater understanding of how marketing students can make sense of themselves and of ‘the other’ within industrial networks.

Research method: This paper is conceptual in its approach. Drawing on literature from the history of marketing thought, educational philosophy and the work of Emmanuel Levinas, we suggest that the conceptualisation of ethics in marketing cannot be divorced from the question of pedagogy and the responsibilities of the tutor.

Research findings: We suggest that the ideas of alterity and proximity offers space for a discussion of justice within the global supply chain, providing entry into the marketing discourse for those members of the industrial network not normally encountered by students in the course of teaching.

Main contribution: Importantly for teachers of inter-organizational relationships, Levinas offers an opportunity to simultaneously re-imagine the relationship between the student and the tutor. In the process we are forced to confront and acknowledge the responsibility that the role of a moral mediator entails.

Keywords: ethics, education, inter-organizational relationships; tutor-student relationships

Introduction

The literature on business ethics generally and marketing ethics specifically is large and increasing rapidly. Recent global economic events are likely to accelerate the flow of research in these fields. In their seminal text Laczniak and Murphy (1993, page x), pioneers of the field, defined marketing ethics as *'the systematic study of how moral standards are applied to marketing decisions, behaviors, and institutions'* (italics in the original). Subsequently Murphy (2002) provided an excellent summary of the state of knowledge in the field up to 2001, in which he asserted that "marketing ethics came of age in the 1990s". However, this paper suggests that there is an important lacuna in the field of marketing ethics, and attempts to (re)plot the contours of the marketing tutor by scrutinising the way in which ethics is taught in the modern business/industrial marketing syllabus. We open up a debate on how the tutor role as a conduit of ethical knowledge to students has somehow failed to map with sufficient sensitivity the terrain of the moral impulse in business practice. In particular, we argue for a reappraisal of the tutor-student relationship such that we may facilitate a greater understanding of how marketing students can make sense of themselves and of 'the other' within industrial networks. We acknowledge that there have been some useful contributions to conceptualising the place of ethics in a business network approach (e.g. Lindfelt and Törnroos, 2004) and to debating the appropriateness of legislating for ethical dilemmas (Crespin-Mazet and Flipo, 2009). Nevertheless, given the reflexive nature of much of the IMP community, it seems surprising that greater reflection on marketing ethics has not taken place in this scholarly context.

Perhaps a sense of timing is important. The writing of this paper is unavoidably over-shadowed by contemporary events. Recent turmoil within the financial markets and the injection of public funds into the banking sector has provided for an acutely focused point of imagery for a generation. The resulting clamour to provide explanations and to allocate blame has seen calls for business schools (Dunne et al, 2008) and marketing educators (Shultz, 2009) to take some responsibility for global economic problems. The expectation is that business schools will in future ensure that programmes are designed to equip students with powers of ethical reasoning. Although some IMP research has addressed issues around the pedagogy of industrial networks (e.g. Geersbro and Hedaa, 2001), there is a need to revisit such matters with a view to moral education.

In introducing the paper with recent economic woes we wish to bring to the fore the role being performed by the economic crisis in academic discourse. Corbyn (2008) neatly captures one perspective, by asking whether the teaching in business schools should take partial responsibility for the collapse of financial markets. Academics, teaching in business schools, are accused of failing to equip students with the necessary skills for graduate careers. The error it is claimed is in the provision of a curriculum that prioritises narrow technical skills over 'broader' learning. The suggestion is that had students received an education that incorporated dialogue on ethics and social responsibility, the perceived excesses of the financial services industry could have been avoided. The scale of the economic crisis is seen by some as a mark to instigate change: "Never has this force for change been needed more than in the face of the serious ethical lapses and system failures that triggered the collapse of investment banking, shook the foundations of the financial services industry, and has ramifications globally in all industries" (Waddock 2009: 4).

In addressing such calls for change, we argue that instilling ethics in a contemporary marketing curriculum should not mean bringing marketing ethics in from a periphery and giving it greater

emphasis. Instead, it requires academics to look again at how we understand and teach ethics in marketing. Drawing on literature from educational philosophy and the work of Emmanuel Levinas (1969; 1974), we suggest that the conceptualisation of ethics in marketing cannot be divorced from the question of pedagogy and the responsibilities of the tutor. Whilst the largely conventional model adopted for the teaching of management (including marketing) may provide students with a prescribed set of knowledge and skills, it may by the same token refuse us the moral education that seems to be necessary.

The paper is in agreement that recent economic problems do indeed offer an opportunity for a reappraisal of the teaching of marketing ethics. We suggest that the ideas of alterity and proximity offers space for a discussion of justice within the global supply chain (Higgins and Ellis, 2009), providing entry into the marketing discourse for those members of the industrial network not normally encountered by students in the course of teaching. Such a reading of ethics can open us to the experience of others and the ways in which our actions can affect those others. It may involve teaching with a vision not restricted by considerations of reason, calculation or formal process. It requires us to locate ethics within inter-personal and managerial relations, and for teachers to remain sensitive to students' backgrounds, knowledge and experiences, thereby facilitating proper reflection (cf. Geersbro and Hedaa, 2001). Thus, importantly for teachers of inter-organizational relationships, Levinas also offers an opportunity to re-imagine the relationship between the student and the tutor. In the process we are forced to confront and acknowledge the responsibility that the role of a moral mediator entails. This may be an uncomfortable demand, sitting ill at ease with the current culture of most business schools and the pedagogies that dominate marketing education.

While we would not claim that the ethics of business-to-business markets requires a separate theoretical approach to the ethics of consumer marketing, nevertheless the practical ethical problems encountered in business markets tend to be different from those encountered in consumer markets. Characteristic ethical dilemmas in consumer marketing involve product safety, aggressive sales tactics, advertising of 'unhealthy' foodstuffs and other products injurious to health (such as alcohol and tobacco), and sexually-charged advertising and promotion. These tend not to be the characteristic dilemmas in business-to-business marketing. Indeed, as is generally the case in business-to-business marketing, and central to the IMP approach, it makes little sense to consider 'marketing' ethics separately from 'purchasing' ethics. Characteristic dilemmas in business-to-business ethics include ethical negotiating practices (Al-Khatib et al 2007), pricing ethics (Indounas 2008), conflicts of interest (Handfield & Baumer 2006), and the ethics of global sourcing (Pretious & Love 2006).

Lest We Forget

A call for 'more' ethics has been apparent in earlier crisis. Ethics education came into sharp focus after the 1987 stock market crash, when Bok (1988:4) asserted that: "Suddenly, ethics has become a national obsession." The 1987 crash was in part attributed to a perceived decline in ethical standards within business, and there was an implicit expectation that ethics education could rectify this. This was coupled with the suggestion that there was a need to prepare students to deal with the types of ethical dilemmas they will encounter in the workplace (e.g. Grant, 1990, Singh, 1990). More recently, cases of business wrong-doing such as WorldCom, and Enron and

Arthur Andersen (Enron's auditors) have led to renewed calls for ethics education to be made mandatory (Haas, 2005, McAlister, Ferrell & Ferrell, 2005).

Academics in marketing, like all disciplines, succumb to regular bouts of forgetfulness (Tadajewski 2008). The call for more ethics in marketing education, however, seems to ignore the response to earlier financial calamities and the heritage of ethics thinking in marketing. For instance, the American discipline of marketing owes much of its early orientation to German academic institutions in the late 1860s. The scientific model of historicism heavily influenced the social sciences in German Universities from the 1880s. This was a reaction to classical economics, which was perceived to fail to account for the problems of abject poverty and industrial development that arose with the rapid growth in the German economy. Economics was also seen to valorise self interest and autonomy as it sought to constrain the seepage of human imperfections (Birnik and Billsberry 2008). Historicism utilised historical statistical methodology, merging it with pragmatism and ideals. German-trained American economists returned to their native country in the 1870s, taking positions in US universities. Many of them undertook research, often with a leaning to the institutional approach explicitly concerned with social welfare.

This brief discussion of German historicism is not offered to recall a golden age or suggest a more moralistic marketing. The presentation of the past is to remind ourselves that we have the imagination within the discipline to reflect on marketing practices and that the question of marketing ethics and the politics of marketing is far from novel. What then has happened to this imagination? Why are we seemingly unable to share this imagination with our students?

Teaching Marketing Ethics

The debate on whether ethics should be taught in business schools is seemingly "settled" (McWilliams and Nehavandi 2006: 421). Despite this the teaching of ethics to marketing students is not without its critics. Gaski (1999:330) for example has argued that the norms of marketing practice is aligned with prevailing ethical standards, requiring only that students are taught "normal commerce under democratic law". There is also scepticism in the belief that an enhanced ethics education provision will reduce corporate wrong doing (Bok 1988). The study of ethics and the quality of the educational institution is also no guarantee of moral behaviour. McAlister (2004) notes that many of those responsible for recent corporate scandals hold MBAs from prestigious institutions and Gorovitz (1988:426) cautions that "there are a lot of people in jails who have passed ethics courses".

Despite these reservations, the drive for an enhanced education in ethics is bolstered through the expectations of accrediting bodies, employers and students. Ethics education improvement is a major priority in the USA, particularly among institutions with AACSB accreditation (Baetz and Sharp, 2004). The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) takes the subject so seriously that it provides mandatory standards within its accreditation criteria (AACSB, 2005) and provides a dedicated Ethics Resource Centre for those teaching ethics modules (AACSB, 2004). While ethics education does not receive the same level of prominence within the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) accreditation standards, values and ethics education are an explicit expectation, both within their Guidance Notes on the EQUIS Quality Criteria and EQUIS Quality Standards (EFMD 2004a and 2004b).

Ethics education is deemed to make a difference to students themselves by improving both awareness of ethical issues and ethical reasoning (Buff and Yonkers, 2004; Hunt and Laverie, 2004; Eagle, 1995; Weber, 1990). Despite this, ethics is acknowledged in surveys of teaching faculty as being the issue in which most curricula are significantly deficient (Barnett, Dascher, and Nicholson, 2004), a view also held by students (Buff and Yonkers, 2004; Shannon and Berl, 1997). Spain, Engle and Thompson (2005: 8) suggest that a failure to teach ethics adequately results in students missing out “on a topic that will be critical at some undeterminable point in their careers”. The reasons for this deficiency are seen to be a consequence of the priorities of the business school. Porter & McKibbin (1988) in their large-scale study of students, academic staff, alumni and employers found that business schools concentrated too much on teaching quantitative aspects of the curriculum (“hard skills”) and too little on the behavioural side (“soft skills”).

The imperative (Chonko 2004) that marketing ethics is an essential component in preparing students for marketing careers has provided a focus on the teaching of ethics that is practical and assumed to be relevant to practice. The debate on the teaching of marketing ethics has tended to focus on content, scheduling and approach. This is perhaps neatly demonstrated by the question of whether ethics should be taught through the curriculum or in a dedicated module. While full integration seems attractive in resource terms and to meet the demands for subject integration espoused by accreditation bodies such as EQUIS (EFMD, 2004a, Loe and Ferrell, 2001), the evidence is that this approach results in atheoretical, superficial and incomplete coverage of the topic (Spain, Engle and Thompson, 2005; Haas, 2005; Baetz and Sharp, 2004; Rozensher and Fergensen, 1999). Cooper (1994:1) asserts, “the reality is that the concept of integrating ethics throughout the curriculum just doesn't work in practice. What really happens is that ethics is given lip service and the lecturers tend to concentrate in what they specialise in best...”.

The module/course debate often leads to the related issue of the balance between practice and theory. Chonko (2004) has asserted that business students lack the philosophical background to apply abstract ethical principles and are thus deemed comparatively ignorant of ethical theory. To counter this ignorance, Spain, Engle and Thompson (2005) report that multiple pedagogical methods, including case studies, lectures, assignments and debates, enhance students' self-reported understanding of the material presented.

The arguments surrounding the teaching of ethics are important but they are of interest here simply to focus attention on what is going unsaid. Removed from the discussion is reflection on the particularly narrow approach to ethics being adopted. We also draw attention to the absence of any reflection on the relationship between the student and the tutor in the literature. In our readings on the teaching of business ethics, the student is seemingly being denied credit for prior learning and the role of the tutor is to perform as the conduit for the transfer of knowledge of ethics. Reviewing the epistemological and ontological preferences of the discipline may provide an explanation for this.

Re-Imagining the Teaching of Marketing Ethics

Marketing ethics is we suggest constrained by the knowledge base of its subject and the dominant orientation within the discipline. Marketing is a modern enterprise: it shares with modernity many of the desires for control, prediction and measurement (Arndt 1985). This has implications for the manner in which parties to marketing are constituted. Individuals are presented as instrumental beings to be managed from the perspective (and for the benefit) of the marketer's organisations (Alvesson 1994).

We argue that this perspective shapes the approach to ethics in marketing. The orientation of much of the research and textbooks in marketing ethics is of interest, displaying as it does a strong emphasis on deontological and in particular teleological schools of ethical thought (e.g. Ferrell and Skinner, 1988; Hunt and Vasquez-Parraga, 1993). This perhaps should not be that surprising after all, if we are to assume a managerial definition of marketing as satisfying human needs through an exchange process, the orientation is already framed within a utilitarian calculation (Nantel and Weeks 1996).

Pragmatic considerations such as the audience for marketing texts and the need to provide tools for managerial decision-making are also pertinent. Normative approaches are often susceptible to being condensed and transformed into a memorable framework or artefact – (cf. Ferrell and Ferrell, 2008) that can be applied by managers across a broad range of contexts. Ethical theory in marketing is often judged by its practicality for tackling the problem that the manager is confronting (Primeaux and Shebor, 1995).

These forces engender an approach to the teaching of marketing ethics that presents the construction of ethics and morality as rules, codes and guidelines. These serve to maintain “the system's performance-efficiency” (Lyotard, 1984: xxiv). When experienced by the student in the classroom, they are encountered in a way not dissimilar to consumer problem solving. The issues are often packaged to consist of high profile cases rendered neatly accessible. Standish (2001: 339-340) notes how this leads to a sense of detachment: “...there is the tendency to see the ethical as a segment of human experience that can leave more or less untouched other segments. Ethics is a part-time business: it is the stuff of dilemmas—of earnest discussions on radio shows or classroom debates—covering such issues as abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, etc.”

The student is required to choose from the available options available to settle on a moral result (Bauman 1995). Such an attitude, Bauman argues, has implications for the realisation of the potential moral self. In a similar fashion to the art of shopping, the attitude involves the individual perceiving life as a series of problems that can be specified, singled out and dealt with. Decision making skills may be sharpened, but the questions and tensions of ethics remain aloof. In looking to re-imagine marketing ethics and the teaching of marketing ethics we turn now to the work of Emmanuel Levinas.

Levinas is something of a paradoxical figure. On the one hand, until recently his work was largely unknown outside the circles of professional philosophers; on the other hand, he is cited as a major influence on several philosophers, notably Sartre and Derrida, who have been widely influential (Critchley & Bernasconi 2002, Hand 2009). However, recent years have witnessed growing interest and influence of Levinas's ideas in the humanities and the social sciences. Despite the oft-mentioned elusiveness and complexity of Levinas's work, Critchley and Bernasconi claim that his oeuvre revolves around one 'big idea', namely “his thesis that ethics is

first philosophy, where ethics is understood as a relation of infinite responsibility to the other person” (Critchley & Bernasconi 2002: 6). In his early work Levinas was heavily influenced by Husserl’s phenomenology, while subsequently he had in much in common philosophically with Heidegger (although Levinas was deeply troubled by Heidegger’s membership of the National Socialist party in Germany).

Levinas has been largely ignored by writers on management and marketing ethics, as Jones et al. (2005: 167) note “It is telling that, despite the existence of a large and controversial work...and being one of the major influences on discussions of ethics in philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century, Levinas has been almost totally avoided by the discipline of business ethics.” This omission is perhaps to be expected; whilst Jones et al. (2005) note the existence of a “large and controversial work”, they should perhaps also note the seemingly wilful complexity of the writings of Levinas that the reader is forced to confront. This difficulty of understanding leads to caricatures and misplaced points of concentration as writers search for accessibility in Levinas’ writing (Desmond 2007).

The development of Levinas’ writings on ethics is usually associated with two texts, ‘Totality and Infinity’ (1969) and ‘Otherwise than Being Or Beyond Essence’ (1974). Together these texts outline and develop the idea of the responsibility inherent in the moral relation with ‘the other’ and the significance for subjectivity of the epiphany of the other. It is in the response to the other, through engagement with the other’s metaphorical ‘face’, that Levinas situates the site of morality and the construction of subjectivity.

For Levinas, ethics and morality have been displaced by western philosophy. Reason, calculation and identity have promoted a thinking of the ‘same’ at the expense of the relation with a being that is utterly foreign. In a challenging position, Levinas argues that the relation with the other places an unbearable and ceaseless responsibility, a necessary responsibility, not contracted or agreed, but a primordial aspect of being. Levinas offers an ethics that builds from the alterity for the other without an expectation of reciprocity or personal gain. Levinas is proposing an approach to ethics that offers little in terms of answers, a condition that would normally be demanded of business ethics. There is no consideration of intent or calculation of consequence. Levinas is requiring us to interrogate the impulse, the emotional response, the act of compassion despite itself (Ten Bos and Willmott, 2001).

The focus on the ‘relation to’ and ‘responsibility for’ unsettles the customary approach to marketing ethics in which reason and rationality are matched with tools and guidelines. This unsettling we argue extends beyond the mere introduction or ‘application’ of Levinas’ ideas in the delivery of course materials but brings into consideration the relationship between student and tutor. Through the other, subjectivity is negotiated and through this engagement with the other, the act of teaching and process of being taught occurs (Lim 2007). If marketing educators are to give Levinas’ ideas serious consideration, it is with the relationship between student and tutor that we must open ourselves.

Returning Morality to the Tutor-Student Relationship

The business school approach to teaching marketing is concerned with the development of the student's cognitive skills and reasoning to resolve business difficulties. Structures, content and processes of assessment are designed to maintain a correspondence with the business world. This correspondence between what is taught and the organisational forms that the student is deemed to be destined for encourages the perception of relevance.

The construction of teaching plans, module outlines and content driven learning outcomes prioritise the dominance of transmitting knowledge and the promotion of cognitive skills over and above socio-affective development. Education relies heavily on a Kantian like understanding of the relationship between the teacher and the student (Joldersma 2008). The teaching of marketing ethics assumes a neutral classroom environment in which ethics is inserted, accordingly ethics is brought 'in' from 'outside'. The tutor's goal is to 'produce' autonomous individuals capable of rational self-determination. The student offers the ends of the encounter and effective teaching is deemed to have been achieved when the student is able to distinguish right from wrong.

Ruiz (2004), drawing from the work of Levinas, argues the relationship between student and tutor is a moral relationship, a relationship characterised by an attitude of 'reception' and 'commitment' to the learner. This involves the tutor accepting the difference of the student, acknowledging their culture and traditions whilst acknowledging them as a unique human being (Joldersma 2008). Morrison (2009) refers to this approach as 'passive'. This involves listening to and with the student, accepting the student's contribution to the relationship. This is opposed to the egoism of teaching that is characterised by the teacher declaring their knowledge. Presenting the tutor as a moral mediator and requiring tutors to acknowledge their responsibility to their learners unsettles the contemporary mode for there to be a prescribed form of engagement between student and tutor and a narrowly defined teaching syllabus. For Ruiz, Morrison and Joldersma, education is about how we understand ourselves and our place in the world. It is held distinct from the development of a skill. It is an intervention directed to the future: in other words, making sense for oneself.

Opening up the idea of alterity in the teaching of marketing and of ethics demands time, resource and presupposes both theoretical and experiential approaches to teaching. The momentum of a responsibility for the other requires exposure of the limits of self-interest and a refreshing of the boundaries employed to foreclose responsibilities. Such thinking takes us beyond more conventional models of business ethics into a far more 'demanding' sphere of ethics, a huge space of potential agency that can have ethical consequences. It makes us recognise all the social relations that are embodied in the exchange (Jones et al., 2005).

This is perhaps at the crux of the engagement of the other, the entry into a problematic and troubling space. The command of the other exposes a vulnerability in the self and it is in the response to the pain of the self's vulnerability that the inescapable tensions of the response appear. The demands of the other pull in different directions, numerous options become available and in the heat of oscillation the action forms. This is not to guarantee that the action will be satisfactory or pleasing, the self may pull away from the other's demand, responsibility may be rejected. This exposure to the distress of being for the other must be a prerogative for the marketing ethics tutor, both in their relationship with the student and with offering opportunities for the student to experience the obligations of the other.

The teaching of network relationships may facilitate the pedagogic introduction of ‘the other’ into B2B marketing management. The notion of ‘proximity’ (Levinas (1974/2004) between actors includes a relation to third parties, effectively positioned ‘up’ and ‘down’ the hierarchical supply chain. If we extend the chain metaphor to an industrial networks perspective, we might even describe this as a “lace of obligation” (Derrida, 1991: 30). The introduction of a third party to the relation with the other requires the subject to treat them as equally entitled to devotion. As such, they demand that ‘justice’ be done to everyone, justice for Levinas being broadly characterised by structures of administration and comparison. Levinas argues that the relationship with a third party (or indeed a fourth, or fifth party, *ad infinitum*) involves a weighing, an “incessant correction of the asymmetry of proximity in which the face is looked at” (1974/2004: 158). He believes that the subject’s relationship with the (proximate) other gives meaning to relations with all others, meaning that, “justice remains justice only, in a society where there is no distinction between those close and those far off, but in which there also remains the impossibility of passing by the closest” (p.159). This forces us to consider notions of ‘ethical embeddedness’ in terms of a firm’s ethical position in a business network (Lindfelt and Törnroos, 2004).

These considerations are complex. The other cannot be reduced to a module or constrained within the syllabus. However, in both the module and the broader curriculum, the other can be introduced and a broader reading of marketing proposed. Those not usually incorporated within industrial marketing’s *oeuvre*; such as farm labourers, factory workers, call centre employees, political activists and the host communities of polluting factories, can be allowed entry within the teaching of marketing. This also offers an opportunity to incorporate within the discussion objects not normally accorded moral consideration. This brings witness to the question of animals, the environment and the product etc, and how these help in the construction of the idea of the human (Introna 2009). Incorporating alternative points of view may be crucial to one of the most demanding tasks of critical education that is, as Spivak puts it, “to unlearn your privilege” (1990: 30). Teachers of marketing ethics may need to identify how we can clear the space to allow a variety of others to speak (Spivak, in de Kock, 1992) and reflect upon how we construct, represent and talk with the ‘subaltern’.

This places demands on the tutor over and above the conveyance of material. It requires imagination to consider how to negotiate intersubjectivity between student and tutor. This may bring into consideration game playing (Golan and Gumpel 2000), live cases (McWilliams and Nahavandi 2006), dramaturgy (Mazer 2003), the use of film (Lauder 2002), or even the Feldenkrais and the Alexander technique of body awareness (Lim 2007), but all too frequently the focus on teaching method or evaluation of ethical decision making outcomes overrides consideration of the relationship (c.f. Nguyen et al 2008).

Many cohorts on marketing courses display a rich international dimension. Of course this provides for an apparent and immediate sense of otherness but this pre-occupation with international dimensions evident in the classroom is in danger of valorising surfaces. A concentration on the relationship between the student and the tutor locates the discussions of morality at the everyday, the common place and the ordinariness of existence. It is here that Treacher (2008: 28) suggests the questions of ethics are apparent: “The everyday for all of its ordinariness is also a vexed space which is full of ambiguity, ambivalence and uncertainty. None of us are immune from the erosive attacks that take place in seemingly innocent and ordinary connections.”

Even with an awareness of these sorts of tensions, the authors of this paper have struggled with our own roles as marketing educators. For instance, one of us has just written a B2B marketing textbook (Ellis, 2010) in which issues of ethics are given quite a high profile. The book includes a number of case studies concerning contexts like: fair trade and producer/manufacturer/retailer relations; oil companies and sensitive stakeholder networks; and price negotiations with suppliers offering bribes to buyers in developing countries. Most people would agree that these cases are all 'relevant' to a holistic industrial marketing education. Nevertheless, even though discussions of supply chain ethics (Higgins & Ellis, 2009) are offered in the surrounding text, the material tends to adhere to a fairly conventional pedagogic model involving the importation of ethics from the 'outside' to address business dilemmas.

How then should we articulate the tutor as a moral mentor? Perhaps inspiration can be drawn from the field of nursing. Since the 1990s, the preparation of nurses to participate in ethical decision making at work has become far more prominent (Dinç & Görgülü, 2002). Moral education for nursing students has sought to emerge from the 'virtuous woman' variety and in the process has sought to balance the observation of good practice in the workplace and the development of personal experience to take in to account the pressures to compromise ethical standards that nurses will encounter when they enter the workplace (Woods 2005). Developing this idea, Galvin and Todres (2009) employ a series of four vignettes drawn from the typical nursing experience. The vignettes are used to exemplify what they refer to as 'nursing openheartedness', a "foundational resource for acting in caring ways" (pg 141). The vignettes consist of details of soiled bed sheets, self abuse, pleas for an assisted suicide, and the final moments of life. Central to these stories are the characters, the patient and the responsive nurse for whom the alterity of the other, their body, their pain and their suffering exposes a shared human vulnerability. But these stories are not used to showcase or legislate a desired response, and they are certainly not intended to portray the student as a 'patient', but rather to highlight the process the nursing staff experience as they negotiate the idea of 'openheartedness'.

Through the articulation of 'openheartedness', the caring central to the nursing profession is celebrated through alterity, embodiment and the harnessing of practical knowledge and technology. Whilst parallels can be drawn between the marketing and nursing professions and the relative positions of the moral educations, the purpose of the discussion is to highlight how this idea of 'openheartedness' can be used to distil an essence of the profession. Through the idea of openheartedness, we can see a negotiation of care set against an instrumental audit culture, where the potential for objectification through 'procedural, instrumental or technical knowledge' (pg142) is made apparent.

The purpose of the moral education for nursing is not to instil but rather to open up and sustain the idea of 'openheartedness'. This is not suggesting that 'openheartedness' is an appropriate expression for dealings with marketing and management students, however the idea of a 'complex sensitivity' expressed in this way does allow us to return some focus to the relationship between the tutor and student. It is also reconfigures the idea of a responsibility for the business school with which we began this article.

Conclusions

In this article we have argued that the idea of alterity and the appreciation both of the experience of otherness in the tutor's relationship with students and in the engagement with marketing offers an opening for the teaching of ethics. This is not an ethics confident and comfortable in itself to proclaim a judgement of *is/ought* in dealings with marketing. It is a complex sensitivity to the relation with the other, a willingness to receive and commit to the learner that goes beyond the delivery of a monologue.

In presenting this critique of the literature on marketing ethics we are painfully aware that many marketing academics acknowledge and consequently struggle with the alterity of the student body. We appreciate that many seek through their teaching and writing to explain and critique the injustices within marketing. These localised instances are recognised and duly respected. The literature is replete with discussion of methods and theories of ethics, but little is offered on the tutor. Indeed, little is written about the practicalities of teaching ethics in any marketing courses, let alone B2B/industrial marketing courses. Much of the research on ethics has tended to focus on 'elite' programmes such as the MBA, predominantly based in the US (Nicholson and DeMoss 2009).

An IMP-inspired business marketing course is perhaps uniquely placed to provide opportunities for moral debates over 'market versus network' perspectives. Conventional approaches to business ethics are implicitly based on a 'customers, producers and markets' view of the world: producers have ethical responsibilities towards customers, and producers operating within markets must abide by the rules of 'fair' competition. This economics-driven perspective is typically highly individualistic compared to what we might call 'network thinking' where parties are (more or less) committed to each other, trust each other and have an interest in the success of others as well as themselves. The framework of the market is so deeply ingrained in the discourse of ethics that it gets taken for granted by most academics and students yet, arguably, the study of organizations through a network lens can lead towards a more collectivist way of thinking. However, whether students appreciate this difference is an intriguing question. This leads us back to the role of the tutor to assist the student in problematising both the network and the market discourses. This does not necessarily suggest that one discourse is 'better' than the other (for instance, we might consider the potential 'dark side' of networks as manifested in cartels), but it does offer an opportunity to develop a more suitably ambiguous (and therefore, ironically perhaps, more 'relevant') account of organizations and interactions.

This sort of uncertainty suggests there is scope for a fuller, more in-depth account of the teaching of marketing ethics within B2B marketing programmes. Such an account would provide an idea of how ethics is conceived in the marketing curriculum, the role of the tutor, the teaching and assessment methods employed and their justification. This might also provide empirical support to the suggestion that the teaching of marketing ethics is narrow in scope and concerned with pragmatics and the aspirant demands of the student. Through localised stories a fuller account may emerge which may offer hope that the absence in the literature fails to reflect the lived experience of tutors in the business school.

Let us return to Corbyn's (2008) questioning of the responsibility of business schools with which we opened this paper. The Corbyn article was heavily influenced by Dunne et al's (2008) critique of business schools and management thinking. In a content analysis study of 2331 articles drawn from the leading business and management journals, Dunne et al found that 98% of the articles

failed to address social issues deemed pertinent to the study of management. Clearly, marketing academics through their research need to broaden their horizons and talk of the injustices and degradations accompanying marketing practise. Perhaps we also need to reinstall a belief and confidence that the tutor possesses the potential to do more than offer technical skills on ethical decision making or moral reasoning (Harris 2008). The teaching of ethics on business marketing courses should not be merely a publicly acceptable response to global problems. There needs to be an appreciation that we can have an impact on the lives of students through taking on our responsibilities to others.

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