Looking over the Wall: the need to think beyond our usual silos
What are the key problems facing human kind?

**Industrial Epidemics**
- 3m alcohol deaths in 2016:
- 7.2% of prem deaths (WHO 2018)

**Self-harm**
- 88% of Europeans die by their own lifestyle choices (WHO 2017)

**Inequalities**
- 8 men now own more than half of humanity (Oxfam 2017)

**Corporate Power**
- Corporations are bigger than countries (Oxfam 2017)

**Climate Breakdown**
- Our consumption behaviour

**Corporate Marketing**
Of Marketing and Human Folly: Time to Change the Narrative

Gerard Hastings
Institute for Social Marketing, Stirling University
Structure

1. Examining marketing
2. Marketing in Action: the case of infant formula
3. The big picture: the reality of corporate marketing
4. The need for radical change
Corporate Marketing

The Four Ps:

- Practices
- Personality
- Philosophy
- Politics
marketers study us well
know our every move, emotion, weakness
spoil, flatter, coax and seduce us
this gives them immense power
Practices of Marketing

Multiple RCTs show how it sells us alcohol, tobacco and junk food

But who needs RCTs….

Fast Fashion

Fashion changing by the week rather than by the season

Beauty products

‘Saying you don’t care about privacy because you have nothing to hide is no different from saying you don’t care about freedom of speech because you have nothing to say.’

(Snowdon 2019)

Smart Phones

the first generation to pay for the means of our own surveillance
Ours is ‘a society that is, to an unusual degree, business-run, with huge expenditures on marketing: $1 trillion a year, one-sixth of the gross domestic product, much of it tax deductible, so people pay for the privilege of being subjected to manipulation of their attitudes and behaviour.

(Chomsky N (1999) Profits Over People)
Examining Marketing

The Four Ps:

- Practices
- Personality
- Philosophy
- Politics
Personality of Marketing

The fiduciary imperative: corporations always put their own interests first

Psychopath

*Joel Bakan: The Corporation*

‘asked a psychiatrist called Dr Hare to apply his diagnostic checklist of psychopathic traits to the corporation’s institutional character, he found there was a close match….

Irresponsible, manipulative, superficial, lacking empathy, asocial tendencies, refusing responsibility, no remorse
Personality of Marketing

Psychopathic

Charm: we feel good even as our pockets are picked and our souls trashed

This charm is at its most venal in CSR…
Drinks industry (NSDA) Keep America Beautiful campaign: “people start pollution, people can stop it”

Disposable containers were immensely profitable and enabled centralised production ➔ more money & power. Trouble is they also greatly increase littering

Real aim: change the narrative to individual responsibility and so fend off laws mandating Deposit Return Schemes

Textbook example of Dr Hare’s Psychopathic tests

Irresponsible, manipulative, superficial, lacking empathy, asocial tendencies, refusing responsibility, no remorse – including charm
Coca-Cola cans and bottles top list of rubbish on UK beaches

Under our price of single drinks container is returned to

The scheme

Fiona Harvey
Environment correspondent

Coca-Cola bottles and cans are the most commonly found pieces of packaging polluting British beaches, making up nearly 12% of all the litter, says Surfers Against Sewage (SAS).

The situation, it says, (Guardian, 15 May 2019)
Examining Marketing

The Four Ps:

- Practices
- Personality
- **Philosophy**
- Politics
Philosophy of Marketing

Materialism

• Greed is good: consumer orientation; our satisfaction; excellent customer service
• Problems are solved by shopping
• We love being pampered & indulged at every turn
• Loyalty cards:
  Tesco’s Club card: 16 million members;
  its rival Sainsbury has over 19 million (Express 2016)

‘shoppers in the UK are second only to those in Finland in the likelihood of having at least one loyalty card’ (Nielsen)
And yet we know this is madness:

‘the aim should be to produce the maximum of wellbeing for the minimum of consumption’

(Schumacher)
Examining Marketing

The Four Ps:

- Practicalities
- Personality
- Philosophy
- Politics
Politics of Marketing

Extraction: natural resources & the domination of nature

- Amnesty International
- Shell: Make the Future - Clean Up the Niger Delta
- Size of the Niger Delta (equal to the Republic of Ireland): 70,000 km²
- Recent Niger Delta oil spills Shell has admitted to: 1,693
- Litres of oil Shell admits spilling in the Niger Delta since 2007 (a massive underestimate according to Amnesty's research): 55,809,000
Politics of Marketing

Extraction: natural resources & the domination of nature

Exploitation: sweat shops and conflict minerals

Life and death in the forbidden city

Conflict minerals

Rana Plaza

Our consumerism is the bastard-child of colonialism

(Patel & Moore 2018)
Politics of Marketing

Extraction: natural resources & the domination of nature

Exploitation: sweat shops and conflict minerals

The apparatus of justification:

“whether or not such extreme inequality is or is not sustainable depends not only on the effectiveness of the repressive apparatus but also, and perhaps primarily, on the effectiveness of the apparatus of justification”

(Thomas Piketty, Capital)

in a consumer society, gulags and secret police are bested by the mall and the smartphone
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Michael Rosen:

Fascism: I sometimes fear...

Corporate marketing uses the same play-book
I sometimes fear that people think that corporate marketing arrives in fancy dress worn by spivs and conmen as played out in endless re-runs of Dallas and Madmen
*Social Media Marketing

* 98% of Facebook’s revenue comes from advertising
The link between the tobacco industry and the military: tobacco was part of the standard rations of all UK and US soldiers.
by sponsoring your favourite football team or the Olympic Games

make you feel proud
Most Expensive Gated Communities In America

protect your house
The Scottish Whisky Association (SWA), which has consistently opposed the minimum pricing proposal, says 250 to 400 Scottish jobs could be at risk.

anti industry = anti jobs

give you a job
Remember the Crying Indian

clean up the neighbourhood
anti-aging lotions and motor bikes

remind you of how great you once were
Big Alcohol will clean up African Alcohol business

One of the most significant changes that the African alcohol industry has recently seen is consumers’ progression from – often illegally – locally brewed drinks to branded wine, spirits and beer products. “This movement towards safer, better quality, formal alcoholic drinks is being driven by improving disposable incomes and greater involvement and investment in the region from the multinational drinks companies, which are the key drivers to growth”

(Daniel Mettyear, Senior Analyst at International Wine & Spirit Research)
Social media again:
“deeper, scarier, more insidious problem: we now exist in these curated environments, where we never see anything outside our own bubble ... and we don’t realise how curated they are.”

(Emily Taylor, Guardian 2017)
It doesn't walk in saying: "Our programme means industrial epidemics, extraction, conflict minerals, greed and climate breakdown."
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The need for radical change

The diagnosis: the threat of corporate marketing

- its power is getting us to destroy the planet
- its charm is helping us feel okay about doing so
- its ubiquity is blinding us to new narratives

“Will our future generations, standing in a rising pool of swirling waters, not beseech us with this question—‘Why didn’t you do something?’ And what will that say of us?”

(Amitav Ghosh, The Great Derangement)
The need for radical change

Alternative stories:

- Our own history:
  - as our way of life has been pushed across the world it has resulted in the deaths not just of countless people, but countless peoples.
  - Our wealth is built on genocide
The need for radical change

Alternative stories:

- Our own history
- Indigenous peoples:
  - “who still know the secrets of sustainable living” who “are not relics of the past, but the guides to our future” (Roy 2011)
  - “to live you must respect the world, the trees, the plants, the animals, the rivers and even the very earth itself” (Guardian 2019)
The need for radical change

Alternative stories:

- Our own history
- Indigenous peoples
- The Green New Deal

“The idea behind the Green New Deal is a simple one: in the process of transforming the infrastructure of our societies at the speed and scale that scientists have called for, humanity has a once-in-a-century chance to fix an economic model that is failing the majority of people on multiple fronts. (Klein, Guardian 2019)
The need for radical change

Alternative stories:

- Our own history
- Indigenous peoples
- The Green New Deal

Ten year guarantees on all products:

- Local repairs
- Quality production (no built-in obsolescence or unrepairability)
- Price: usage not ownership
- Food-style labelling for production values
The need for radical change

Will a new story immerge? Will it succeed?
I don’t know; the augers are grim
But it will help us “escape the toxicity of the mindset that brought us here” (Rowan Williams 2019)

It can give us hope

« Je suis bien content de connaitre la résistance. Je ne vais plus être tellement malheureux. Je comprends la vie et je l’aime .... J’ai la foi. » (Kessel 1943)
We are the experts in behaviour change; surely we have faith