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## Arts marketing and ethics: what you can and Kant do

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## **Arts marketing and ethics: what you can and Kant do**

### Introduction

In this chapter I want to explore the ethical nature of arts marketing. In particular I hope to demonstrate that, in spite of its common-sense appeal and affinity with the marketing concept of customer benefit, utilitarianism (i.e. an approach to ethics that focuses on consequences) is of limited use in helping us do arts marketing ethically. While acknowledging the partial relevance of a utilitarian approach, I will argue that the deontological approach to ethics associated with Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804) is a surer guide to reflective, responsible and sustainable arts marketing practice. While it could be argued that this is true of all applications of marketing, it is peculiarly so in the context of the arts because of the respect for human autonomy implicit in the aims of arts organisations. Nantel and Weeks (1996, p. 9) argue for the inclusion of a Kantian perspective to complement what they saw as the utilitarian approach on which marketing is grounded ‘by its very definition’ (1996, p. 9). My aim in this chapter is to argue, in contrast, that ‘by its very definition’ arts marketing is more appropriately based on Kantian ethics.

At the outset, therefore, a definition of arts marketing is called for. On a common sense level we might all agree that it involves using marketing techniques to promote the experience of the arts - for example ‘how to get more customers to watch Shakespeare’ (O’Reilly, 2005, p. 585). Laudable as swelling audiences for the Swan of Avon may be, the aim of arts marketing, if it is genuinely to promote the experience of the arts, can be extended a good deal further. Hill et al. (2003, p. 1) define it as ‘an integrated management process which sees mutually satisfying exchange relationships with customers as the route to achieving organisational and artistic objectives’.

### The moral purpose of arts marketing

Like social marketing, arts marketing seeks to achieve objectives which go beyond the financial returns driving commercial marketing (though its complete set of objectives is likely to include them). In the case of social marketing, such objectives cover pro-social ends such as healthier lifestyles or better environmental stewardship. In the case of arts marketing the ‘organisational and artistic objectives’ mentioned in our definition might include the facilitation of aesthetic experience and expression, personal and community flourishing for artists and audiences, and the maintenance and development of a stable and innovative arts economy. While there will often be a societal dimension to these aims (for example social inclusion), they are essentially in the service of an artistic vision which demands to be shared with others, as audiences and participants. In spite of the temptation to consider audiences as passive and participants as active, the nature of the arts as a service means that either form of sharing assumes active customers, and intense arts experience demands a high degree of active orientation (‘eyes on stalks, not bums on seats’ in the memorable slogan of the radical theatre company Welfare State International (Fox, 2002)). In fact, arts marketing has long been an example of what has become an influential contemporary orthodoxy seeing marketing as collaboration between customers and suppliers (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). If the purpose of business is to create and keep customers (Drucker, 1954, p. 37), arts marketing is about creating and keeping customers with the capacity to be actively engaged in artistic experience. A

fundamental element of such capacity is what we might call 'autonomy' – in other words the freedom to respond and participate fully and critically, untrammelled by manipulation or illusion. This has implications for the ethical framework within which arts marketing operates, because it necessitates marketing which prioritises respect for, and promotion of, individuals' autonomy.

Arts marketers, like the artists whose work they promote, tend to be driven by a sense of mission. This, while not guaranteeing their ethical probity, does at least suggest a measure of integrity. Whether in arts organisations (typically in junior positions relative to general or artistic managers) or as freelancers employed from project to project, they form part of the 'precariat' of workers in the creative and cultural industries (Gill and Pratt, 2008; Standing, 2011), sacrificing financial security and stable working conditions to their evangelical commitment to the cause. A glance at the arts recruitment pages suggests that nobody is doing it for the money, leaving personal values and idealism as the prime motivators for individuals working in the sector. We can therefore expect arts marketers to be receptive to the need to incorporate appropriate ethics into their practice. This chapter attempts to articulate the basis for such ethics, leaving practitioners free to elaborate their own approaches in sympathy with it, but in a way which responds to their individual contexts.

### Ethical problems in arts marketing

What are the possible ethical outcomes of arts marketing activity? One way of getting some perspective on this question, and discerning what might differentiate arts marketing ethics from those manifested in other applications of marketing, would be to categorise them against a norm for marketing more generally. According to Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) in a survey of 50 years of marketing ethics literature, the most cited empirical study of ethical dilemmas experienced in marketing practice is by Chonko and Hunt (1985). Based on a survey of American marketing practitioners asking what job situation 'poses the most difficult ethical or moral problem for you?' (1985, p. 343) it obviously predates the many ethical dilemmas thrown into sharp relief for marketers by subsequent social and technological developments, such as the internet and associated technologies (data protection, privacy, piracy etc.). But ethical issues presented by, for example, information management were still manifest in the 1980s even if pervasive computing was not. Chonko and Hunt's list is headed by six broadly-defined problems which stand out in particular: bribery, fairness, honesty, price, product and personnel. In spite of the passage of several decades, these themes still provide a serviceable checklist for analysing generic ethical issues in marketing practice, and so remain relevant as a way of structuring a discussion of those which arise from arts marketing.

Bribery to obtain contracts, the issue of most concern to mind-1980s American marketing managers, is unlikely to trouble most arts marketers these days. However, it does raise the broader question of governance of resources in arts organisations. It could be argued that the ethical expectations borne by marketers in the arts are more exacting than those applied to their purely commercial peers when it comes to stewardship. Often, the organisations and activities they promote benefit from charitable status, public funding, or public mandate from national or local government. High standards of propriety in areas such as purchasing and communication are essential to preserve trust and credibility for a function which

typically commands one of the largest budgets in an arts organisation and is primarily concerned with the organisation's image and messages. The widespread use of discounting as a promotional tool raises the question of how patronage is 'bought' in the arts through membership schemes and promotional discounts, and how such tactics (which could be argued to favour existing patrons rather than attract new ones) cohere with espoused strategies of audience development. Particularly where public subsidy is involved, questions of propriety come into play regarding financial incentives for customers.

'Fairness' comes next in Chonko and Hunt's list. Less specific than bribery, this category covers manipulation or exploitation of others, selling unnecessary services, arbitrary price differentials between customers, and taking credit for the work of others. We have already adverted to the issue of price differentials. Other aspects of fairness have particular resonance in an arts marketing context. The idea of selling irrelevant services is an example. Arts marketing, insofar as it shares educational aims, implies a fiduciary role of introducing audiences to unfamiliar experiences (whether new audiences to established work, or experienced audiences to new work). The fiduciary element involves a judgement that the experience will be relevant and valuable to the intended audience. It could be argued that, with notable exceptions, a considerable amount of arts marketing involves replicating a model of artistic excellence that is of dubious relevance to the audiences targeted but reflects the concerns, values and aspirations of producers. In reaction to this concern Andrews and Radbourne (2007) report a project attempting to re-imagine models of orchestral repertoire, presentation and promotion more relevant to contemporary audiences. Nevertheless, much programming in classical music still revolves around a core of symphonic work which makes considerable demands on the attention and concentration of audiences, deterring the inexperienced attender.

Fairness also relates to access to the arts, reflecting the key element of place or distribution in arts marketing. This is not just a case of widening access to new audiences (important as that is). It also involves ensuring access to a wider range of arts experience to reflect inclusivity on the supply side. Kerrigan and Özbilgin (2002) identify an ethical gap between espoused national policy on film distribution in the UK at the turn of the century, and actual film marketing practice which, in spite of public incentives to widen choice for UK filmgoers, merely reinforced the power of Hollywood in limiting the available repertoire. Analysing the problem in terms of the conflict between 'shareholder' and 'stakeholder' interests, they call for a more proactive regulatory environment for film marketing to ensure distributive justice. In this article and later work (Kerrigan and Özbilgin, 2004) they underline the macro-environmental pressures which shape ethical practice in arts marketing, providing an illustration of how conditions affecting the 'mutually satisfying exchanges' referred to by Hill et al. (2003, p. 1) are not confined to the immediate relationship between arts organisations and their patrons. Arts marketers thus need to be conscious of the need to address such pressures through 'upstream' activity such as lobbying and mobilising opinion to support change as appropriate.

A similar note is struck by Larsen and Lawson (2012), developing the notion of consumer rights as a policy framework at odds with actual distribution patterns in the arts. They point to increased concentration (i.e. fewer, bigger players dominating the market) in the promotion and supply of live popular music as an example of how trends which favour industry financial interests act against the interests of distributive

justice for consumers in the form of increased prices and reduced choice (Krueger 2005; Crain and Tollinson, 2002).

Honesty is Chonko and Hunt's third most mentioned problem, covering misrepresentation and being economical with the truth in ways which undermine customer interests. They found that honesty was a particular problem in service industries, which suggests its salience in arts marketing because of its service orientation. Kubacki and Croft (2004) highlight the dissatisfaction of musicians in two European countries with what they see as dishonest industry marketing practices, effectively replacing the authentic vision and emotion of artists at a personal level with pre-manufactured marketing images. Not only does this threaten to weary consumers with homogenised product, but it also reduces the perceived individuality of musicians themselves as brands, cancelling out a potential source of differentiation. Kubacki and Croft's research interviews revealed two kinds of musician -- the 'artists' who rejected marketing out of hand as a betrayal of their art, and the 'promoters' who rejected the 'corporate' approach but saw marketing at a personal level as a moral imperative to reach wider audiences. Interestingly as a reflection on potential complexity of reasoning in arts marketing ethics, each group was convinced of the moral basis of its attitude.

Honesty is also important for Bouissac (1987) writing with reference to the performing arts. He suggests that 'accountability and its correlative concept of risk' is fundamental to what makes arts marketing different from marketing any other kind of service: 'cash is paid in advance on the faith in a promise.' (1987, p. 395). One could argue that this applies to services other than the arts, although the sense of unique occasion that surrounds artistic performance in a theatre or concert hall (and the specific time and place necessary to a gallery visit) throws the element of risk into particularly sharp relief. Risk underlines the ethical imperative to be as honest as possible to customers in advance. Bouissac argues that what marketing does in advance of a performance is to begin to tell a story which can only be completed by attendance at the event. Good faith is therefore essential. He concludes that 'its advertising is a functional part' of any performance being marketed (p. 395). Promotion being integral to the offer is not peculiar to the arts, as is evident from the importance of branding to consumers in many markets. But there is a sense in which arts marketers have more of a duty than most to lead audiences to an experience in a way which is consistent and continuous with the experience itself if they are to respect and nurture an autonomous capacity to respond to art. Honesty, and the trust it begets, is therefore a crucial ethical dimension of arts marketing.

Tying with honesty in third place for Chonko and Hunt is the related area of pricing--covering differential pricing (i.e. different prices for different customer groups) and pricing in a way which takes advantage of market conditions to the detriment of customer welfare. As we have already observed with reference to fairness above, pricing policies in the arts reflect a wide range of factors and organisational priorities, but such priorities need to preserve customer welfare. Sometimes the physical environment presented by a venue offers explicit justification for differences in price between tickets (for example a seat with a limited view of the performance area will be less desirable than a more central one). A range of prices can enhance benefits to customers through the opportunity of 'trading up' to a better seat, perhaps to mark a special occasion, to relish a particularly keenly-anticipated performance, or just to

express a moment of conspicuous consumption. Choosing a cheaper seat, by contrast, can mitigate the risk of an unfamiliar work. But there are other pricing situations, for example the practice of imposing booking fees in addition to the face price of a ticket which seem not to offer any consumer benefit except the facility to purchase at a distance rather than in person, or even to purchase a ticket at all. Here marketers should take the opportunity to explain what lies behind the pricing decision in order to reduce a sense of exploitation – particularly where the customer appears to be at a power disadvantage in the exchange. Notably some venues have imposed their own controls to prevent unethical marketing by patrons themselves under conditions of high demand – retaining ownership of paper tickets at all times and threatening to void tickets resold for profit or commercial gain by individuals (RSC, 2012).

Product was Chonko and Hunt's fifth most frequently mentioned factor, though one might expect it to feature further up an arts marketing ethics issues list given the central role accorded to product orientation in the arts (Butler, 2000; Hirschman, 1983). The primacy of product makes it difficult to question this element of the mix in an arts marketing context, not only in the light of assumed market demand against planned artistic policy, but also from an ethical perspective. We have briefly discussed the issue of irrelevant services which place corporate over customer interests under fairness above. But it could also be argued that choice of repertoire, by potentially cementing a view of high or low culture in place, may help perpetuate the social divisions associated with such demarcation (Carey, 2005) and thus contribute to wider injustices. In a similar vein, restricting repertoire to relatively low-risk familiar works might have attractive short-term revenue or reputational implications for an organisation or performer, but excludes alternative material to the detriment of inclusivity, choice and – crucially for our argument supporting customer autonomy – the development of a more widely-experienced and thus independent customer in the longer term.

Artistic product also raises questions of provenance and ownership. This is not limited to the complex issues opened up by intellectual property rights in a digital environment, where traditional notions of ownership and control struggle to keep pace with consumer behaviour which can involve appropriating, reworking and reproducing content at and beyond the limits of legality. Provenance and ownership also relate to the intricate networks of responsibilities accompanying production and consumption in the arts and related industries. Brennan and Savage (2012) for example propose a clearer ethical framework in which the tourism industry can prevent souvenirs based on indigenous art from having negative consequences for originating communities. Brennan and Savage's claim for the potential of something as commonplace as tourism souvenirs to promote respectful intercultural understanding, instead of stereotyping and condescension, can be scaled up to apply to how marketers might frame any kind of arts experience emanating from, or portraying, unfamiliar cultures, more or less ethically. This is likely to lead to more challenging, questioning types of arts experience for customers, again developing them as autonomous critical participants rather than leaving them reliant on outmoded and potentially damaging stereotypes.

A further ethical issue arising from product is raised by Walmsley (2011) who, even in a relatively small sample of respondents in a qualitative study of motivations for theatregoing, found evidence of audience behaviour bordering on the obsessive with

‘some participants admitting to following shows around the world and others spending almost all their spare time and money on theatre’ in pursuit of the intense emotions available (p. 347). He argues that while emotion-based marketing clearly constitutes an opportunity for theatre producers, they need to be aware of their responsibilities to consider and manage the potential effects on their audiences. It could be argued that obsessive ‘fan’ behaviour like this is over-represented in the literature relative to its actual incidence amongst audiences (Hills, 2002), but nevertheless Walmsley makes a valid point about how arts marketers owe a duty of care to their customers.

Sixth on Chonko and Hunt’s list is personnel, covering hiring, firing and staff evaluation. Personnel issues are, Chonko and Hunt point out, common to any organisational context not just marketing, particularly the ‘back office’ ones involving administrative, procedural and interactional fairness between employees (Folger and Cropanzano, 1998). However the power imbalance inherent in many arts organisations between senior artistic managers and junior marketing and publicity staff may lead to the disproportionate manifestation of unfairness in the sector. There is evidence to suggest that bullying is a particular problem in the cultural industries because of the licence granted by ‘artistic temperament’ (Quigg, 2011). As we have noted earlier, employment conditions in the arts tend to be relatively precarious, rendering staff vulnerable to exploitation and limiting rewards. It could be objected that this is an issue affecting arts marketers from the poor ethical practice of others rather than one relevant to arts marketing as an activity itself. However, its unchallenged acceptance may lead to its perpetuation, perhaps internally within the marketing function, and express a lack of respect for the individual which may affect other aspects of an organisation’s marketing approach in a way which compromises its artistic mission by objectifying customers.

This brief survey of potential ethical problems for arts marketers, structured by generic categories and illustrated by relevant literature, suggests respect for the individual as a thematic emphasis which might distinguish arts marketing ethics from those governing other applications of marketing. Governance, fairness, honesty and defensible pricing, product and personnel policies are each fundamental to creating the conditions for sustainable exchange relationships between organisations and individuals. But more than this, in an arts context they also help create customers who are receptive to artistic experience and capable of participating in the achievement of artistic objectives. Thus, objections to the inauthentic promotion of music in Kubacki and Croft (2004) are ultimately based on the dilution of the available experience for customers, and the consequent limitation of their potential development as music lovers. As we have argued following Kerrigan and Özbilgin (2002; 2004) and Brennan and Savage (2012), ethical concern for customer development in line with artistic policy implies a marketing responsibility to the art form as well. Marketers as in the arts need to embrace breadth of available experience as a priority, and find appropriate ways of framing it to avoid audiences becoming switched off and overly dependent on the familiar. Just as musicians and performers need to keep in touch with contemporary or neglected works to stay fresh in their techniques, so their audiences need to be led to the unfamiliar to avoid being deskilled as participants.

The notion of leading customers to the unfamiliar, and perhaps the uncomfortable, seems to be at odds with marketing’s expected emphasis on ‘offerings that have value

for customers' (at least as articulated in their own terms) (AMA, 2007). Promoting autonomy in customers sounds like hard work not only for marketers, but, problematically, for customers themselves. Is the use of marketing consistent with furthering artistic objectives in their fullest sense (which includes promoting difficult work to develop the arts customer's capacity to participate)? This question is not an attempt to reiterate the debate between art and commerce as referred to by, for example, Bradshaw (2010) or by some of the respondents in Kubacki and Croft (2004). Instead, the question is whether marketing viewed as an institution, or as a more local technology involving customers and suppliers, has something about it which might negate rather than further artistic mission. This is not just a practical question but an ethical one if, as we are arguing, artistic mission involves promoting autonomy as a form of customer welfare.

#### Arts experience as a laudable end

Before discussing marketing's ability to support artistic mission, we need to justify the worth of arts experience in a way which positions it as somehow more serious and morally valuable than entertainment or pleasure alone (important as those may be as components of the whole). Entertainment and pleasure on their own do not require the same kind of independent response from the consumer as art does and so do not imply the same kind of critical autonomy. It is dangerous to generalise, but we tend to understand them as more immediately accessible than art, making fewer demands on the consumer. This reawakens uncomfortable echoes of elitist distinctions between 'high' and 'low' culture (which appear increasingly irrelevant to contemporary audiences anyway). But we need to establish the arts' claim to being in some sense good for us in a way that entertainment and pleasure, good as they are, are not, in order to treat the ethics of arts marketing differently from marketing in any other context.

This is a controversial area. Carey (2005) is sceptical of the reverence accorded art since the eighteenth century when the word 'aesthetic' entered the vocabulary. Carey claims that Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790) by insisting on beauty as an absolute, abstract concept, separate from and superior to pleasure, has infused a creepily sanctimonious tone into our thinking about 'proper' aesthetic experience. According to Kant, things like emotion, sensual pleasure and even usefulness, have no necessary relationship with beauty. It's an austere view of artistic experience (but consonant, as we shall see later, with Kant's very clear conception of how things like emotion, pleasure and even utility can compromise our freedom as autonomous moral agents). Carey argues that the separation of beauty from pleasure can also encourage a confusion of artistic with moral worth, calling Kant as his witness:

'All aesthetic judgements are, consequently, ethical as well. "Now I say the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good, and that it is only in this respect", Kant admonishes, "that it gives pleasure".' (2005, p. 10).

The resulting 'farrago of superstition and unsubstantiated assertion', in Carey's memorable phrase, has led to a situation where we consider art to occupy a hallowed space, set apart from the mundanity of life (art as spiritual even in a materialist world), from economics (art opposed to commerce), and from the sexual (art as distinct from pornography). Regrettably such high-minded divisions have also

developed into social ones between the cultured few who appreciate art and the philistine many, separated at best by mutual incomprehension, at worst by mutual contempt.

Carey hammers home his case against assuming any intrinsic moral value for art by pointing to the veneration accorded to art in Nazi Germany. One might object that the kind of state-sponsored art and architecture associated with totalitarianism is resoundingly, and demonstrably, bad. But, notoriously, even Hitler had an ear for what we now consider to be great music. Clearly, then, good art does not necessarily make us good people (although Carey does acknowledge the therapeutic benefit of the arts in prisons and in cases of depression).

However, we can agree with Kant that beauty can stand as a symbol of the morally good without taking the further step that there is something intrinsically morally worthy about art (as a source of beauty) itself. Indeed, that is a step which Kant himself would not have taken. One of Kant's central ethical doctrines, articulated early on in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals* (1785), is that there is nothing conceivable 'in the world, or even out of it, which can be taken as good without qualification, except a *good will*.' (Kant, 2008 [1785], p. 507). We will discuss the nature and implications of a 'good will' later in the chapter, but it is difficult to argue with Kant's point that, beyond this one exception, we need 'qualification' (that is, an account of the circumstances in which something takes place) in order to use the term 'good' meaningfully about the arts, or anything else, from an ethical point of view.

On the other hand, even if we cannot accord the arts moral worth in themselves, we can at least acknowledge they offer the opportunity for moral and intellectual development of some sort: '[I]f you think of a society without the arts, without cultivation and without ideas that come from the arts it will undoubtedly be a much less agreeable and much less civilised place, and I have no doubt whatever that we behave in a much better way because of the time we spend with the arts.' Thus wrote John Tusa, then the chief executive of London's Barbican arts centre, in a newspaper feature reacting to Carey (2005), (Tusa, 2005). It's difficult to engage fully with Tusa's proposed thought-experiment, implying as it does a unidirectional movement of ideas and cultivation from the arts to society rather than the enmeshed, symbiotic relationship that the arts have with ideas, society and the whole notion of cultivation. And one could easily interpret the better behaviour invoked at the end of the extract as having as much to do with manners as with morals. But the point about the developmental role of the arts is valid, and the social benefits to which Tusa alludes have an ethical dimension.

In explaining its support for the arts, Arts Council England stakes a similar claim for social and individual enhancement through artistic experience (adding the qualifier of 'great' which assumes a degree of consensus on quality at which Carey (2005) might cavil): 'Great art and culture inspires us, brings us together and teaches us about ourselves and the world around us. In short, it makes life better' (ACE, 2011). Analysing and categorising more systematically quite how it makes life better, the US National Endowment for the Arts posits a system map of arts activity, anatomising its cognitive and emotional benefits to individuals, its civic and economic benefits to communities, and its capacity-building effects in innovation and expression more

widely (NEA, 2012). In the UK, the pioneering work of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council on Generic Learning Outcomes (MLA, 2008) presents an exhaustive typology of benefits focused on the individual learning experiences available from museums (Knowledge and Understanding; Skills; Attitudes and Values; Enjoyment, Inspiration, Creativity; and Activity, Behaviour and Progression), alongside Generic Social Outcomes at a community level (Stronger and Safer Communities; Strengthening Public Life; and Health and Well Being). These outcomes, verifiable through qualitative and quantitative research as suggested by the MLA, have clear parallels in benefits available from other forms of arts experience besides those available in museums and galleries.

From the general, somewhat nebulous, goods articulated by Tusa and the Arts Council to the closer-grained, empirically testable learning gains itemised by the MLA, it is clear that there is considerable scope for arts organisations to claim value for their missions from social and individual 'improvement' above and beyond the entertainment and pleasure they may generate. However uncomfortably moralistic a ring that idea may have, it is nevertheless consonant with the Arts Council of England's manifesto of making life better. Carey's (2005) objections to muddled thinking and elitism in valuing the arts seem less warranted the closer you get to the quantifiable results implied by the NEA (2012) and MLA (2008) (although it will always be difficult to make hard and fast connections between a putative cause like exposure to the arts and a complex social effect like health or well-being). The more qualitative benefits of self-actualisation and mutual understanding common to the cited accounts of what's good about the arts (ACE, 2011; MLA, 2008; NEA, 2012; Tusa, 2005) introduce an ethical dimension with which any attempt to promote the arts must be consistent. For example it would not make sense to use manipulation or coercion to attract a consumer to an arts event if the point of their attendance is (at least in part) to enhance their understanding of self and others.

What's the matter with marketing?

To support an emancipatory outcome, arts marketing must itself be emancipatory. However, by calling itself 'marketing' as opposed to promotion or publicity, arts marketing is making a claim to being something more coherent than just an assemblage of techniques. Our definition (Hill, et al., 2003, p. 1) underlined exchange relationships as the basis of a technical understanding of marketing as a function, stipulating that both parties to the exchange are satisfied as a result. Furthermore, by referring to the integrated nature of the process, the definition implies its foundation on a philosophy of customer orientation (any 'integrated management process' needs to be philosophically as well as operationally coherent). These two aspects of marketing (as function based on exchange, and as philosophy based on customer orientation) have separate ethical implications at first sight. A function sounds as if it ought to be innocent itself, but judged on its outcome in a particular context. A philosophy, on the other hand, is shot through with moral ramifications.

The function/philosophy distinction becomes less clear cut under scrutiny. Hastings (2007, p. 173), writing about social marketing (that is, marketing in the service of pro-social ends in which we might include the arts), argue that 'marketing is an amoral technology that, provided it is controlled properly, can bring about great good'. While not denying the good to be brought about by social marketing, and the moral worth

bestowed on social marketing in practice by such good, we may still harbour doubts as to marketing's intrinsically amoral status. After all, any technology expresses a theory of how the world works. It could be argued that, whatever it is used for, marketing's assumptions (for example, that exchanges between buyers and sellers are voluntary, or even that mutually satisfying exchanges are possible in an unequal world) imbue it from the outset with a morally charged point of view which emphasises agency over structure. Marketing could be accused of flattering consumers that they are freer than they actually are from the constraints imposed by social and economic context. As Hackley (2003) points out, constructing marketing as a neutral technical discipline is popular with its apologists, and is a classic ideological strategy (O'Reilly, 2006). The concept of an amoral technology, effectively an 'innocent tool', is, therefore, problematical. The deployment of marketing in the arts, as elsewhere, furthers a particular view of reality founded on certain psychological, economic and social premises. In this sense, the tools of marketing imply and express its philosophy, and they become morally charged as a result.

In spite of this, much of the general marketing ethics literature from the 1960s onwards takes it for granted that marketing is indeed an amoral technology, whose *abuse* presents us with moral issues, rather than something to be questioned on its own account. Schlegelmilch and Oberseder's (2010) previously-cited review of half a century of work in the field identifies eighteen topic streams treated by writers on marketing ethics (e.g. issues related to product, issues related to price, etc.). These all refer to applications of marketing rather than the intrinsic nature of marketing itself. A less extensive but more recent literature under the banner of 'critical marketing' does question the 'amoral technology' view of marketing, seeing it as part of a systemic ideological process which perpetuates power inequalities in society. In fairness to Hastings (2007) it should be stressed that social marketers have been in the vanguard of this critical movement, framing the adverse effects of much marketing activity as competition to be countered by social marketing (Lazar and Kelley, 1973). They emphasise the need to move upstream from consumers themselves to address policy makers and industry power in order to facilitate genuine consumer agency.

The aim of social marketing's reforming critique is to leave a chastened marketing 'controlled properly' rather than question it intrinsically as a tool in the first place. Other critical marketing scholars shine a bleaker light on marketing as an institution beyond redemption – framing it within perspectives such as Feminism, Environmentalism, or most influentially Critical Theory from the Frankfurt tradition, all of which question commonly-accepted phenomena as expressions of power, patriarchy and vested interests in society (Bradshaw and Fuat Firat, 2007). Critical Theory offers what can seem to be an impossibly idealistic alternative to the accepted realities of commercial and political life. It proceeds 'from an assumption of the *possibilities* of a more autonomous individual, who, in the tradition of Enlightenment, in principle can master his or her destiny in joint operation with peers' (original italics) (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992, p. 9). Rather than reforming marketing into something better regulated but still recognisably itself, Critical Theory-informed critical marketing suggests that there might be an alternative way of providing for whatever it is that marketing does – more co-operatively, more collectively, more humanely and with less damage to the environment (cf. Alvesson and Willmott, 2012, p. 28). How this might work in practice is difficult to imagine in a globalising, marketising world, but it remains a tantalising prospect, particularly for non-profit and

arts organisations. It suggests that, in order to be authentically supportive of the creation of autonomous customers, arts marketing needs to rethink what marketing actually means in practice.

Tadajewski (2010) provides a useful historical review of critical marketing studies, tracing the first use of the term to the beginning of the 1980s (Hansen, 1981). Hansen and subsequent scholars argue that marketing perpetuates distributive injustice (for example by concentrating on attractive groups of customers and ignoring others), and betrays the real interests of consumers (for example by attending to their stimulated wants rather than their genuine needs, and by encouraging dependency). Far from stimulating the kind of creativity and independent mindedness we might associate with the arts, marketing here stands accused of engendering docile subjects, locked into unquestioned patterns of consumption and passivity. It could well be objected that such a view of marketing is unrealistic and that consumers are notoriously unpredictable and difficult to manage. But in many of the developed world's typically low-growth economies, marketing's primary function is to defend the status quo against competition rather than to break new ground. Even on this mildly critical account of marketing as a reactionary force, its adoption in essentially innovative fields such as the arts (or in support of any kind of emancipatory social programme) seems problematic.

In a case analogous to the ethics of marketing the arts, Gibbs and Murphy (2009), question the ethics of marketing higher education. They cite Lippke (1989, p. 38) on education as a form of resistance to consumer culture, fostering the 'kind of skills needed for autonomy and the motivation to employ them'. As we have argued, the arts can be seen as a cognate resource for the skills and motivation necessary for autonomy. If marketing is really just about business as usual, its use to promote the arts or education seems disingenuous. The very use of marketing techniques like segmentation and advertising helps, however marginally, to legitimise such approaches as normal, common-sense, activities rather than something that can be questioned on ideological grounds. At the very least (and pretty mildly given the budgets at their disposal), by purchasing marketing services such as advertising and research, arts marketers are contributing economically, as well as intellectually, to the maintenance of a system whose wider effects they must therefore acknowledge some responsibility for.

How convincing you find Critical Theory-inspired objections to marketing in the arts or elsewhere depends to some extent on your own world view. Having given way to more active conceptions of consumers and citizens in the later part of the twentieth century, Critical Theory is now enjoying a revival in the wake of renewed concern about balancing democratic and corporate interests in an uncertain world (Bragg, 2010). Given the popular distrust of big business which has provided a ready audience for recent books and films sceptical about marketing, it could be argued that, at the very least, Critical Theory-inspired critical marketing is of relevance to arts marketers in that it colours the social and cultural environment in which arts marketing takes place -- particularly in the demographic where arts attendance is at its highest: 'the broadsheet reading, farmers' market shopping, free range chicken, organic vegetable box scheme and fair trade buying middle classes' (Shankar, 2009, p. 689). Caricatured as this depiction might be, it nevertheless behoves arts marketers to be aware of, and

reflect on, the implications of aligning themselves with a body of practice which carries such potentially negative connotations with their customers.

### Marketing at a local level

So far in the discussion we have referred to ‘marketing’ as if it were a unitary concept. This is excusable at the institutional level at which critical marketing pitches its analysis, but unsatisfactory at the local level where marketing involves actual customers and suppliers in a variety of configurations. We have also suggested that arts marketing may have to find a new way of understanding what marketing means in order to be ethically consistent with its own aims. In practice, at the local level, marketing is already anything but homogenous. Since 1960 there have been enough academically-sanctioned definitions of marketing for Gamble et al, (2011) to discern ten distinct varieties. Lee (2005) points out that arts marketers have already reduced the dissonance between the customer orientation essential to marketing and the product orientation essential to artistic integrity through flexing their conceptions of marketing, particularly towards relationship marketing as an appropriate paradigm (cf. Conway and Whitelock, 2007; Rentschler, 2002). Relationship marketing emphasises the value of a continuous customer relationship as a framework for exchanges (Gronroos, 1994). As regards the argument in support of developing customer autonomy, relationship marketing looks like a promising framework in which to bring audiences through cumulative experiences towards the artistic vision of the producer. Yet even within relationship marketing in general, or the broad definition of arts marketing we are using (Hill et al, 2003, p. 1) which is consistent with it, there will be different ways of managing exchanges and integrating management processes. Each may have its own moral implications. For example, exchanges can be more or less overt, from a rational bargain between well-informed equals to an almost involuntary response by a customer in thrall to a supplier made powerful by informational or distributional advantage.

In our earlier discussion of potential ethical outcomes from arts marketing, a number of themes (fairness, honesty and pricing for example) involved issues arising from asymmetry between buyer and seller. This poses one of the key ethical problems for arts marketing at a local level, not only for marketers in the fortunate position of having high demand for scarce tickets, but also for those tasked with finding audiences for what may be unfamiliar experiences. In the first case, the marketer has the power – even, as Duffett (2012) points out, power to tantalise through promoting performances as sold-out to ‘train’ the disappointed customer to buy more promptly next time. In the second case, the power appears to rest with the customer, but the marketer still holds the cards in terms of expert information and communicative strategy. Power imbalance is a recurring concern in critiques of marketing in general., from Packard’s (1957) *expose* of depth psychology in the service of advertising onwards. Over half a century later, the idea of ‘subliminal’ marketing is still alive in the notion of ‘choice architecture’ (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008) a technique which nudges consumers into apparently natural actions prompted by contexts which have been deliberately designed by marketers. Even where it promotes consumer welfare, choice architecture appears to bypass autonomy and freedom of choice.

Popular with social marketers, choice architecture has considerable potential in arts marketing. For example box office systems which assume subscription renewal as the

default for customers paying by direct debit (effectively a continuous membership scheme), rather than requiring them actively to renew each season, are likely to result in considerably fewer lapsed subscribers because of the natural tendency to inertia (an aspect of the 'behavioural economics' on which choice architecture is founded). Similarly, arts fundraisers could nudge patrons into reliably increasing regular donations by getting them to agree in advance to pre-determined annual increases (Thaler and Sunstein, 2008, p. 229) whose discontinuation would require donors to opt out consciously, or add 'suggested donations' to ticket booking systems which require active refusal by patrons. This kind of approach, once dubbed 'inertia selling', could be argued to be in the consumer's interests through promoting a continuous and convenient relationship with the arts organisation or art form, but there is a whiff of disingenuousness about it. Any exchange relationship can only hope to be mutual, and thus sustainable, if both parties are on a reasonably equal footing. Equality implies participation and dialogue rather than inertia or information asymmetry as a platform for marketing activity. One might object that the examples offered here are relatively trivial in terms of potential harm, and that customers can be relied upon to pursue their own interests, but the general principle holds that manipulation is antithetical to the kind of relationship that arts organisations might be expected to seek with their customers in pursuit of their artistic objectives. Paradoxically, perhaps, overly artful marketing is not in tune with the arts.

In summary thus far, we can question marketing's amoral nature on a macro scale, taking exception to its ideological role as contrary to the real interests of consumers (including their openness to and capacity for artistic experience as autonomous individuals). We can also express reservations about how marketing techniques may work on a local level to position the customer as an unequal partner in managed exchanges. Again, this seems contrary to the kind of autonomy which the arts, like education, ought to be promoting. Such concerns about marketing (insofar as we can generalise about it) problematise its use the arts from an ethical point of view. They do not necessarily proscribe it, but they do suggest that arts marketing needs to find a reliable ethical framework through which to negotiate its way to a generative and morally consistent relationship with customers.

### Judging by consequences

A potential route to resolving this dilemma might be to say that rather than generalising about the ethical nature of arts marketing as philosophy or technique, we should consider the results of its application in particular contexts to determine its ethical value. There is an intuitive appeal in the argument that marketing sugary breakfast cereal to children is bad, but marketing mosquito nets to people at risk of malaria is good, even though both involve marketing. It could be argued, in each case, that the marketing activity involved might be more or less morally worthy, but that its outcome would determine our final moral evaluation of what had taken place. What, for example, if you could get more mosquito nets into circulation (and thus prevent more malaria) by manipulative tactics than by more respectful marketing? While regrettable, the manipulative tactics would arguably be redeemed by their results. The one exception to this would be a case where such tactics contradicted the overall objective of the marketing activity. So, for the sake of argument, if a marketing campaign for mosquito nets were to emphasise their efficacy to the point where record numbers were adopted, but was so reassuring in its approach that users became

complacent about the dangers of contracting malaria, the increased number of nets in circulation might not reduce the incidence of the disease because users might take fewer precautions overall. This effect has been observed in other social marketing contexts and is known as risk homeostasis (Wilde, 1998) – in other words, people’s perception of risk adjusts in accordance with how safe they feel.

The mosquito nets example, while apparently remote from arts marketing, is relevant to the argument we are mounting against judging marketing activity on its immediate consequences alone. If we were to justify arts marketing on its visible results we might (in an extreme situation) point to packed concert halls or theatres as evidence of success, with little sense of whether or not the organisation’s artistic objectives were being achieved because it would be impossible to gauge the quality of the experience being enjoyed. It might be the last performance any of the capacity audience ever attend because of the ennui generated by programming that once seemed attractively familiar and comforting, but now seems hackneyed and unexciting, like the marketing that led to it. Evaluating the ethics of arts marketing depends on taking account of both the process involved and the purpose it serves (the how and the why, respectively) because of the need to support the creation of autonomous customers. While we can consider process and purpose separately, they both contribute to its moral import. As may be obvious by now, the ‘how’ aspect of the marketing process aligns to what we might call rule-based ethics inspired by Kant; the ‘why’ aspect, to which we now turn, aligns to the ends-based ethics reflected in Utilitarianism. It is to the latter that we now turn.

Utilitarianism has had a bad press historically in terms of how it accounts for the experience of art or any other non-economic benefit such as well-being and personal development. From Cardinal Newman’s tirade against ‘useful’ as opposed to ‘liberal’ education in *The Idea of a University* (2001 [1852]) to Dickens’ scathing portrait of the philistine Thomas Gradgrind in *Hard Times* (1854) Utilitarian thinking has been pilloried as insensitive to beauty, feeling or culture. While this caricature might have had some justification with reference to early Utilitarianism, it underestimates the subtleties of its later development.

In particular, it is wide of the mark when it comes to John Stuart Mill. A generation after Jeremy Bentham attempted to create a universal moral yardstick from the common denominator of generic pleasure minus pain, Mill’s work took account not only of the quantity of pleasure (or welfare) when weighing consequences, but also of its qualitative aspects (Mill, 1998 [1863]). He assigned greater value to intellectual and aesthetic pleasures than to physical or less demanding ones. This marks a significant revision of Jeremy Bentham’s earlier equation of the popular parlour game ‘push pin’ with poetry and music as legitimate sources of pleasure (Bentham, 1825, p. 206). For Bentham, as a radical egalitarian, all pleasures are equally valuable, and, as he wryly observes, ‘[i]f poetry and music deserve to be preferred before a game of push-pin, it must be because they are calculated to gratify those individuals who are most difficult to be pleased’ (ibid, p. 207). One is reminded here of the social divisions which sour the idea of high and low culture for Carey (2005).

Mill’s promotion of the higher pleasures depends on a frankly elitist appeal to precisely those difficult-to-please individuals Bentham has in mind – the ‘competent judges’, in Mill’s phrase, whose experience of a range of pleasures commits them to

prefer the higher, more intellectual and aesthetic kinds. In the arts, consequences such as widening participation and recruiting new audiences are particularly valued, in part because they represent the spread of higher pleasures to those yet uninitiated (As we have seen, ‘Great art for everyone’ is currently the mission statement of Arts Council England (ACE, 2011)). Utilitarianism would applaud this increase of access to potential wellbeing, so long as it meant an increase in well being overall – and it has a strong appeal to one’s sense of what arts marketing should be achieving from the point of view of social justice. But Mill’s defence of the higher pleasures also includes an acknowledgement that different individuals vary in their capacity to experience them (Mill, 1998 [1863], p. 514). Were the calculation possible, this would mean that the pleasure enjoyed by 50 dedicated and knowledgeable connoisseurs might outweigh that enjoyed by 200 first-time visitors at the same exhibition. Consistent with its egalitarian principles, Utilitarianism takes into account the total amount of well-being generated, rather than its distribution across a population, in judging two competing courses of action. Therefore, as in this case, narrowing audiences might appear to be preferable to widening them – a counter-intuitive conclusion ethically speaking. While it might be possible to object to the detail of this example, it nevertheless adds weight to the argument that there are significant problems with trying to judge the ethics of arts marketing by outcomes alone, in spite of its apparent simplicity as a principle. This is not to deny its usefulness up to a point. After all, the calculation of cost versus benefit has a commonsense appeal and corresponds to how we take decisions in most areas of life. It is intelligible to others as a form of justification (and therefore useful as a way of accounting for controversial action). It is also capable of being negotiated collectively to improve the measurable outcomes from a plan of action. However because of its prioritisation of results over how those results are achieved or distributed, it fails to comprehend the essentially qualitative aspects of arts marketing’s concern for the individual customer’s capacity to respond to artistic experience.

### A Kantian framework

For an ethical framework adequate to this concern we need to adapt ideas from Kant. In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) he denies what was to become the central plank of Utilitarianism, that we should judge things by their effects. Instead, morally upright intentions are what matters, whatever the outcome: ‘A good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes – because of its fitness for attaining some proposed end: it is good through its willing alone – that is, good in itself.’ (Kant, 2008 [1785], p. 507). Like much Kant at first sight, there is an off-puttingly abstract quality about this formulation, but it is essentially the corollary to his point cited earlier (in our discussion of Carey’s (2005) challenge to the ‘goodness’ of art) that it is impossible to think of anything as good or bad without understanding the circumstances that have brought it into being. Thus while a full theatre is generally taken to be a good thing, the quality of what is on stage or the level of engagement of the audience is what gives it value. What makes the achievement good or bad is the motive, or will, behind it.

In a literally lapidary phrase Kant maintains that even frustrated by circumstances beyond its control from carrying out its intentions, the good will ‘would still shine like a jewel for its own sake as something which has its full value in itself’

(Cottingham, 2008, p. 507), likening its potential usefulness to a jewel's setting which allows us better to handle it but does not impinge on its essential value. In other words, even if an arts marketing campaign (or any other course of action with ethical potential) was an abject failure, its instigators' good intentions in launching and pursuing it would still be just as morally valuable as if it had been a triumph. This seems rather an extreme and unrealistic evaluative position, but it reveals the importance of the idea of the good will as the basis for Kant's moral framework.

As Sandel (2010) points out, Kant rests his entire system of moral rights and duties 'on the idea that we are rational beings, worthy of dignity and respect' (p 104). Our capacity to exercise a good will, and thus claim to be moral at all, stands or falls with our ability to reason freely. In order to exercise rationality in a completely responsible way we need to be autonomous agents, free from external influences. But Kant acknowledges that we are not completely rational beings – we have senses and emotions which can complement or conflict with our rational natures. In a radically severe, but completely consistent, way, he sees the non-rational aspects of our nature as a potential constraint on our freedom to exercise our wills with the complete autonomy necessary to claim moral responsibility. This antipathy to the senses and emotions explains why Kantian approaches to ethics have tended to be less popular than Utilitarianism with marketing writers (Nantel and Weeks, 1996) given marketing's address to needs and wants in consumers. Bentham based his moral system on what he saw as a realistic surrender to drives, maintaining that 'Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*.' (cited Barber, 2011, p. 183). Kant's commitment to rationality as the basis for moral choice as an expression of human freedom resists this sovereignty. According to him our freedom depends on our willingness to step back from our sensual and emotional drives in order to consider (and decide ourselves) where our duty lies.

While it makes heroic demands of human beings, the compelling thing about Kant's moral vision is its consistency. Each component – reason, freedom, will -- is required, and thus reinforced, by the others. But all contribute to an affirmation of the essential importance of autonomous action by rational beings as the basis of morality. A good example is the notorious distinction Kant makes between acting 'in accordance with' duty and acting 'from' duty. One might be hard-pressed to recognise a hard and fast lexical difference between the two phrases in ordinary usage, but in Kant's vocabulary they represent a crucial distinction. Acting *in accordance* with duty is to act from mixed motives. While understandable, this can leave an agent vulnerable to influences which interfere with his or her autonomy. By contrast, a completely autonomous agent would act *from* duty – in other words as a result of a decision, potentially an unpalatable one, about what is morally required in a particular situation. For example, you may believe that you should offer discounted admission to people on low incomes for various reasons, one being that it makes you feel good to be part of a socially-inclusive organisation. Kant would see this reason as potentially diluting the moral worth of your position compared to a situation where you were, possibly reluctantly, offering discounts to people merely because you accepted it was the right thing to do to promote inclusivity. Emotions can hamper our freedom because our actions are affected by them in ways which we cannot easily control. Only by acting from duty, in other words as a result of a rational decision, are we expressing our autonomous freedom to act in a way which carries full moral status – using our 'good will' as Kant would say. Furthermore, the internally consistent exercise of the good

will (i.e. the only way it can be said to be properly free or good) is for it to support my overall intentions for good (and, indeed, the good intentions of others). That might sound tautological, but it means that as someone involved in marketing the arts as a form of emancipation, I cannot will a process for my customers which is at odds with emancipatory artistic intentions – to reiterate a recurrent argument in this chapter. Kant's moral framework for understanding human freedom as rational choice commits us to supporting and facilitating the autonomous choices of other rational beings as a way of respecting their, and our, dignity.

Inspiring as this is as an emancipatory framework for action, we need to see it as an ideal to work towards. In practical terms one could hardly expect to banish all sense of emotional or sensual satisfaction from moral choices, or in thinking about customers. That would be as inhumane as it would be unrealistic. Instead, arts marketers need to be as conscious as possible of the reasons for policy and action, and aware of motivations which may contradict or interfere with furthering artistic objectives. To what extent are marketing activities gratifying our own sense of worth or convenience (personal or organisational) as opposed to genuinely promoting active audience experience and empowerment? To what extent might our marketing tactics or technology hamper rather than promote the good intentions of others? Is there any sense in which we might be guilty of treating others as means to an end, rather than as ends in themselves as rational beings with the capacity for freedom? Reflection such as this, high-minded as it might sound at first, is in fact a very practical way of developing and protecting our own freedom and that of our customers in a way which supports artistic mission.

Implementing Kantian principles into arts marketing practice means building time for reflection into routines. Fischer (2007) suggests how this can be done in the context of the related area of fundraising – offering a structure for interrogating possible courses of action in terms of how they might further (or not) organisational mission, relationships with others (including customers and wider stakeholders) and one's own personal integrity. The precise questions, their number and focus, will vary from context to context, but the overall purpose is to bring as many influences as possible on the decision into the open in order to maximise the freedom with which it can be made and guarantee, as far as possible, its consistency with the 'good will' expressed in the direction of the organisation itself. This may be difficult to reconcile with accepted ways of working in many arts organisations, where time is at a premium. But, as Fischer observes; 'One rarely hears inefficiency praised as a virtue, but in thinking through ethically troubling situations thinking slowly has its advantages' (2000, in Mordaunt and Paton, 2007, p. 182). This process of scrutiny and reflection has the potential to include not only members internal to the organisation, but a wider range of stakeholders including customers themselves to foster even more participation in organisational mission and a greater sense of mutual respect in line with Kant's ideal..

## Conclusion

To return to the analogy with social marketing, Hastings (2007, p. 210) argues that 'the most fundamental reason that social marketers should be concerned with ethics is because ultimately their business is "messing with people's lives".' Here Hastings is referring to the sometimes challenging changes in behaviour (such as smoking

cessation) that social marketers target in their customers. Arts marketing may not be as intrusive or demanding on customers as social marketing (at least most of the time) but making an important difference to (or “messing with”) people’s lives is still its central aim. Audience development, for example, is not just about growing numbers of gallery visitors or concertgoers at a particular venue or for a certain art form. It is also, as we have argued previously, about developing members of audiences themselves, taking them on a journey which will widen and/or deepen their repertoire, expand their sensibilities, and change their expectations – even their world view. Defamiliarisation, the theory of literature developed by the Russian Formalists in the early part of the twentieth century, can extend to the reframing potential of the arts more generally for audience members:

We see and hear things as if for the first time. We see through the eyes, as Blake put it, instead of with them. In other words, the conventionality of our perceptions is put into question. We see the world afresh. (Ward, 2009, p. 20)

Seeing the world afresh is liberating, but at the same time unsettling and disruptive, as will be familiar to anyone involved in education (to return to another analogy we have pointed with arts marketing in this chapter). Influential taxonomies of learning cover not only stages of changing what one knows, but also changing one’s self and one’s feelings in what can be uncomfortable ways (Fink, 2003). Learners often experience emotional turbulence when new knowledge forces them to abandon familiar ways of understanding the world (Savin-Baden, 2000). Artistic experience offers a more visceral, sensory kind of learning than does education (cf. the ‘impact’ and ‘emotion’ reported by Walmsley (2011) as primary motivators of theatre attendance). And, of course, not every experience in the auditorium or gallery is capable of (or aimed at) transforming the outlook of the arts customer in this way. But even what we might call light entertainment has its place on a continuum at one end of which lies serious engagement with the spectator or listener as an autonomous individual.

As we have seen, arts marketing has an ethical dimension by virtue of its context (underlining accountability for the use of scarce resources, often with a public aspect) and, more importantly, its purpose of audience development in the fullest sense, which includes a potentially intrusive intention to change perceptions consistent with the emancipatory nature of arts experience. Just as in marketing more generally, arts marketers face challenges in areas such as governance, fairness and transparency, particularly in matters of pricing, product and relationships. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but the theme of a respectful concern for developing customers, rather than treating them as a means to an end, runs through it, suggesting this as a particular ethical focus for arts marketers inseparable from their espoused mission. Bearing this in mind we have questioned the appropriateness of marketing, at least as currently understood, as philosophy and a set of techniques for promoting arts experience fully.

In spite of its natural affinity with marketing (from a shared emphasis on benefits), Utilitarianism is of limited help in negotiating the ethical dilemmas arts marketers face. Kant’s ethical prescriptions are more complex and less immediately intuitive than Utilitarianism, but we have attempted to explain and justify their relevance to arts marketing on the grounds of their unifying respect for the individual’s right to flourish in ways which support and complement the development of others. As a system they offer the coherent potential for incorporation into planning and evaluating

marketing activity which supports artistic aims more surely than the unreflective adaptation of marketing techniques from other contexts.

Labelling marketing, in the arts or elsewhere, as problematical does not condemn it as evil or inappropriate – it underlines, rather, that it can be done better or worse, even when supporting what appear to be laudable aims. The contribution of a Kantian approach is to help arts marketers reflect on how what they are doing can contribute to the artistic mission of their organisations in a way which is sustainable, coherent and ethically positive. It opens the prospect of a marketing practice that supports respect, partnership, and inclusivity, pointing the way to new understandings of marketing in the arts and elsewhere.

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