

new vistas

Policy, Practice and Scholarship in Higher Education





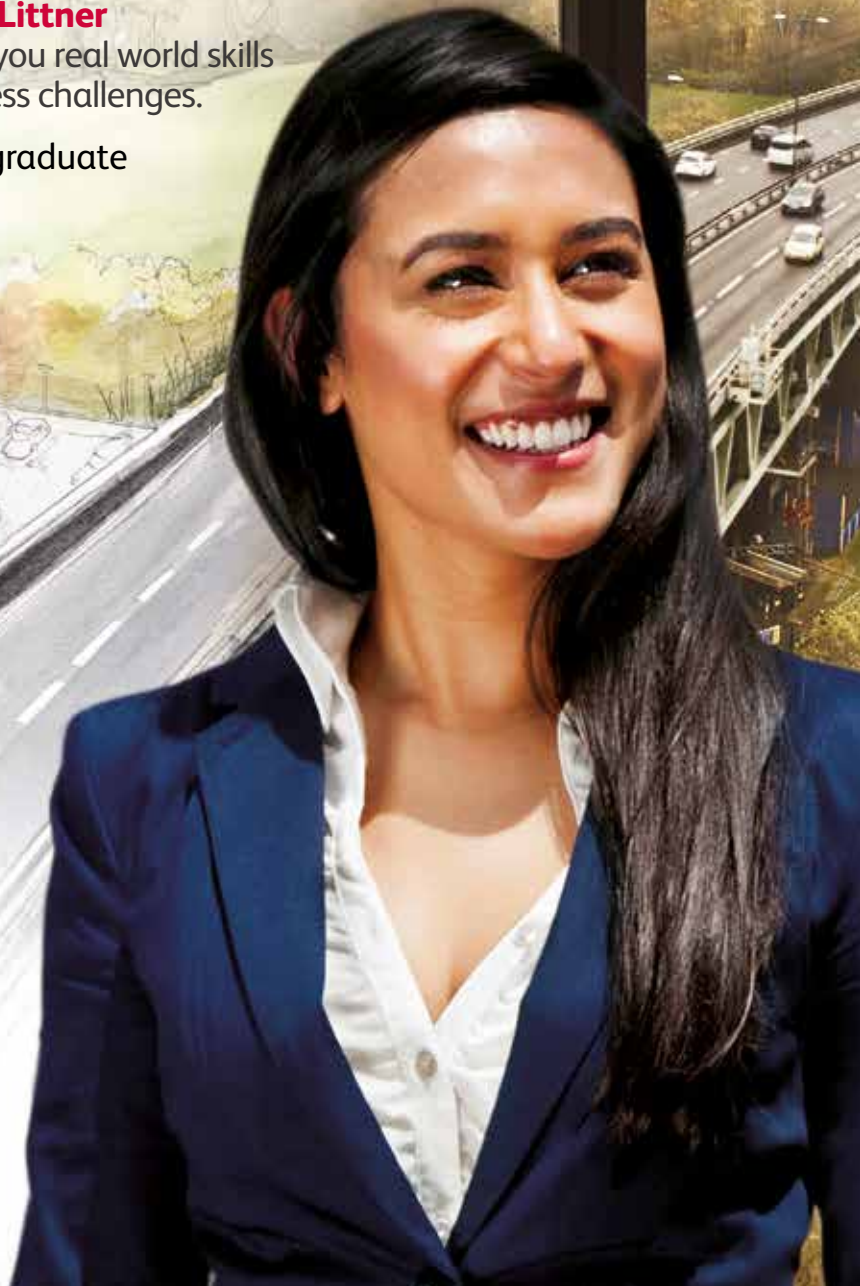
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Volume 1 | Issue 1

Welcome to *New Vistas*, the University of West London's peer-reviewed journal, which focuses on issues related to policy and practice in higher education. Guided by the recommendations of its international editorial board on proposed contributions, the journal disseminates research, commentary, and scholarly work that engage with the complex agenda of higher education in relation to local, national and global contexts. *New Vistas* welcomes contributions from external and internal authors, with the explicit intention to give a voice to early-career researchers and scholars. It publishes research and scholarly analysis on higher education policy; current issues in higher education; higher education pedagogy; professional practice; the relation of higher education to work and the economy; and discipline-specific research.

New Vistas is positioned at the interface between theory and practice, and values quality and diversity. It aims to showcase the richness of the academic endeavour in modern higher education and is directed at a broad readership that includes students, academics, employers, alumni, the West London community, and national and international partners and collaborators.

This inaugural issue gives a flavour of what a reader might expect from *New Vistas*, all articles being presented under a relevant 'tag' that informs them of the article's main theme. Under the *Policy* tag, Roger Brown and Lars Gausdal describe, from different theoretical perspectives, the impact of marketisation on higher education. Through observations at the macro-level of policy (Brown) and the micro-level of how students choose their place of study (Gausdal), both dispel the myth that market theory works to govern higher education or to provide realistic explanations of behaviours. Under the *Teaching and Learning* tag, Tina Stern discusses a small-scale initiative to engage students in mindful learning. Rose Rafferty examines the challenges of re-thinking the education of primary school leaders under *Work and Practice*. Strong and Pott's contributions are focused on their respective disciplines of literature and film, and composition. Jeremy Strong explores the fascinating resonances afforded by the practice of adaptation from literature to the screen and Francis Pott engages the reader with the challenges of the composition process. From the field of marketing, and under the *Viewpoints* tag, Jose Ruizalba and Khalid Hafeez introduce the reader to Christian Grönroos, from the Hanken School of Economics in Helsinki, and to his vision, as a *Legend in Marketing*, of the future of interactive marketing. Finally, in line with the editorial intention of featuring newcomers to the field of higher education, *New Vistas* concludes on a regular section introducing newly fledged PhD Students.

On behalf of the editorial board, welcome to this first issue of *New Vistas*! I hope you enjoy reading our authors' contributions as they reflect the thoughts, views, and areas of interests of those engaged in working and learning in a modern university.

Professor Joelle Fanghanel
New Vistas Editor



New Vistas is positioned at the interface between theory and practice, and values quality and diversity – it aims to showcase the richness of the academic endeavour in modern higher education

MISSION STATEMENT

***New Vistas* is published by the University of West London (UWL) and provides a forum to disseminate research, commentary, and scholarly work that engages with the complex agenda of higher education in its local, national and global context.**

Published twice a year (with occasional special issues), for a broad (academic, international and professional) audience, the journal will feature research and scholarly analysis on higher education policy; current issues in higher education; higher education pedagogy; professional practice; the relation of higher education to work and the economy; and discipline-specific research.

We welcome thought-provoking scholarly contributions from external and internal authors, with the explicit intention to give a voice to early-career researchers and scholars.

For more information contact newvistas@uwl.ac.uk

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Editorial

EDITOR'S NOTE

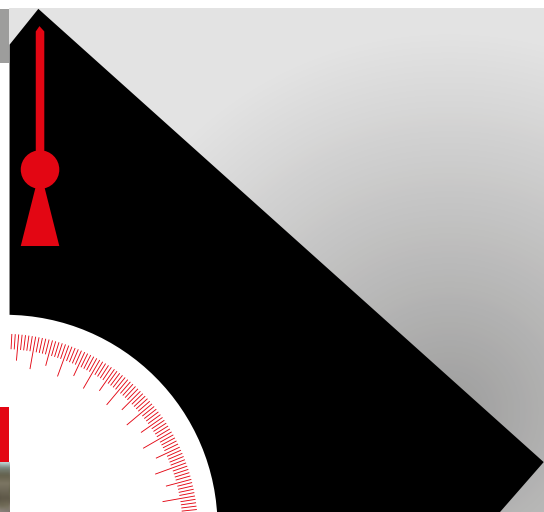
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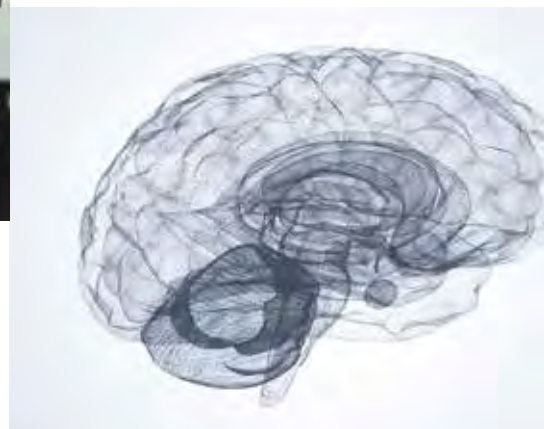


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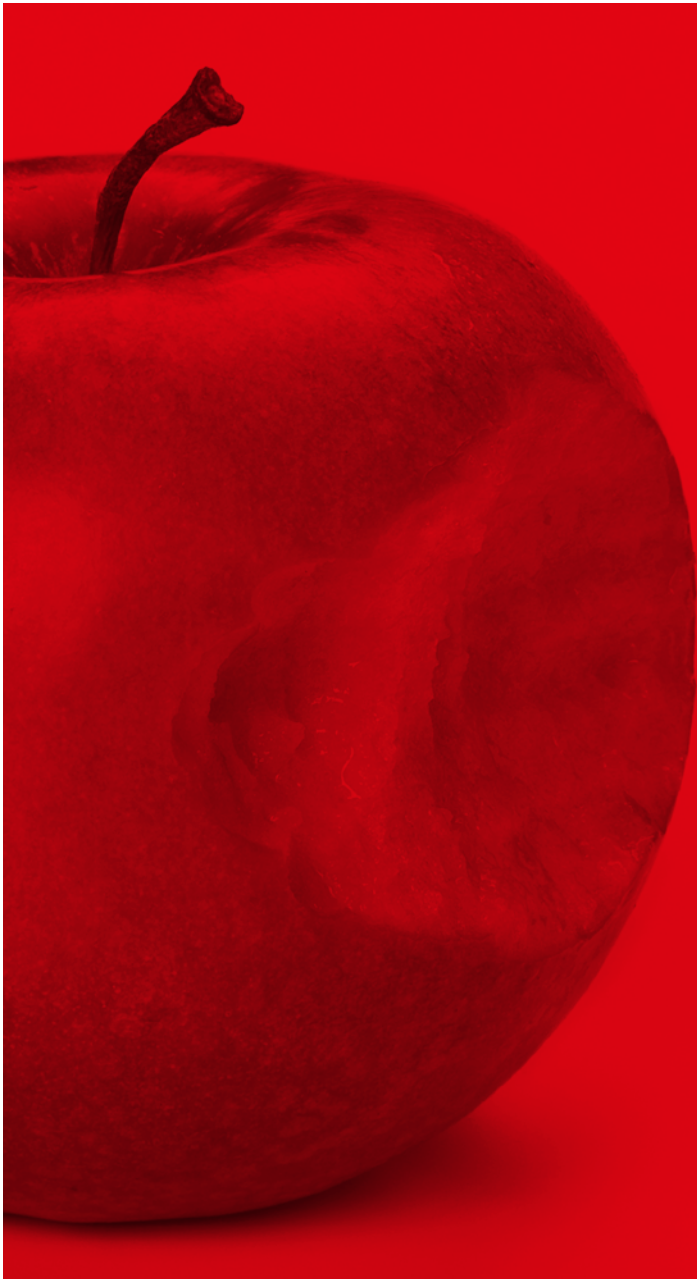
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Roger Brown | Liverpool Hope University, UK

THE MARKETISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: ISSUES AND IRONIES

Higher education has been subject to a gradual process of marketisation since the early 1980s. This paper explores the paradoxes inherent in a market-driven HE system



Attempts to marketise higher education have been accompanied by a number of other moves to reform higher education in a corporate direction'

Marketisation is defined as the attempt to put the provision of higher education on a market basis, where the demand and supply of student education, academic research and other university activities are balanced through the price mechanism. The article begins with some definitions, and concludes with some thoughts about the best means of combining 'market' and 'non-market' (Wolf, 1993) coordination.

The background

UK, and especially English, higher education has been subject to a gradual process of marketisation since the early 1980s. The main steps were the abolition of the remaining subsidy for overseas students' fees in 1980; the separation of funding for teaching and research, and the introduction of selective research funding, in 1986; the introduction of 'top-up' loans for student support in 1990; the abolition of the 'binary line' between universities and polytechnics in 1992; the introduction of 'top-up' tuition fees of £1,000 in 1998; the changes in the rules for university title in 2004 to enable institutions without research degree awarding powers to obtain a university title; and the introduction of 'variable' fees of £3,000 in 2006.

Under the present Coalition Government in England this process has been consolidated and accelerated. The maximum full-time undergraduate tuition fee was increased from £3,375 to £9,000 in 2012. At the same time, the block grant to institutions to meet the costs of teaching has been reduced so that by 2015 only a small group of subjects receive direct subsidies. In parallel, there has been a progressive deregulation of funded full-time undergraduate places, so that in 2015 there are no limits on the number of students universities can enrol. Finally, market entry rules have been relaxed so that private universities and colleges are now offering a small but significant proportion of under- and postgraduate courses. There are now three privately owned universities: BPP University, Regents University, and the University of Law. Nearly £1bn is being spent on the education of students at private institutions compared with only £104m as recently as 2011-12 (for a detailed account of these changes and the background to them, see Brown with Carasso, 2013).

These attempts to marketise higher education have been accompanied by a number of other moves to reform higher education in a corporate direction. These include the remodelling of university governing bodies on corporate lines, and the development of sector-wide performance indicators (Brown, 2012a and b).

In parallel, there has been a progressive privatisation of the funding of higher education, with an increasing proportion of the costs being borne privately. By 2011, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), only Chile and Korea amongst member countries had a higher share of private expenditure on institutions than the UK's 69.8 per cent (this compares with 23.2 per cent in 2006 and 11.3 per cent in 2000) (OECD, Education at a Glance, 2014: Table 3.2). The 2012 reforms will of course increase the private share still further.

The rationale

The rationale for these reforms has three main components.

First, it is believed that the best use of resources is obtained where universities interact directly with students as customers, rather than with the Government or a Government agency acting on students' behalf. The argument here is that 'students know best' and if they are empowered to act as consumers, institutions will either have to respond to their needs and preferences or lose custom. Second, as the system expands, its costs increase, especially as higher education has relatively limited scope to increase its efficiency. Because of real or perceived limits on the ability and willingness of taxpayers to fund a greatly enlarged system, a private contribution is necessary if quality is to be maintained. Third, many of the benefits of higher education – such as higher wages, more satisfying jobs, better health and longevity – accrue to students/graduates as individuals. It is therefore only fair that they should contribute a reasonable share of the costs (Williams, 1995). It should incidentally be noted that conventional theories of the market assume a number of buyers and sellers: the term 'quasi-market' denotes the supply of collective services on market lines where the state remains the principal direct purchaser (Le Grand and Bartlett, 1993).

Academic research is a good example.

Before moving on, it may be worth emphasising that some important public, 'non-market' features remain. Entry to the market – access to degree awarding powers and university title – remains restricted, albeit not as much as before. Prices – full-time tuition fees – are still controlled, and limited to a maximum of £9,000, at least until 2015. Loans for fees and maintenance are still subsidised whilst a significant number of students are receiving maintenance grants, bursaries, fee remission and other forms of financial support. University research remains heavily subsidised. It also seems highly probable that, given the overall future funding situation for higher education, student number controls will be re-imposed after the general election. Finally, price competition in full-time undergraduate education remains limited: almost all higher education institutions are charging the full £9,000 fee for all or some of their courses. So, with the extensive and continuing public financial support for both tuition and maintenance, isn't what we are seeing really 'business as usual'?

However, there are already many areas of higher education that are subject to market disciplines (part-time and postgraduate education, staff remuneration especially in connection with research, the raising of finance, and so on). It is also not necessary to have a full economic market to generate market-like behaviour, as the respected US economist W.J. Baumol demonstrated many years ago in relation to market entry barriers in conventional markets. Finally, whilst it is certainly true that extensive private funding does not preclude the supply of public goods, a significantly higher level of private contributions is bound to lead to greater resistance to the levels of taxation needed to safeguard those wider public benefits.

Let us now turn to the main purpose of this article. The main ironies of the marketisation of higher education concern value for money; system effectiveness; information and consumer choice; quality; and the role of the state.

Almost all higher education institutions are charging the full £9,000 fee for all or some of their courses. So, with the extensive and continuing public financial support for both tuition and maintenance, isn't what we are seeing really 'business as usual'?

Value for money

Unfortunately, the arguments for marketisation, and the evidence underpinning those arguments, are rarely presented with such specificity or in such detail as the arguments against. If marketisation is considered on its own terms, and not simply as a cover for class or special interests and/or as an attempt to divert attention away from prolonged underfunding – both of them highly respectable arguments, but not considered here – then the case for it must be about increasing 'value for money' for stakeholders. This will be secured through greater competition both reducing costs and raising quality. And there can be little doubt that some degree of competition does increase efficiency, responsiveness and, more arguably, innovation.

But it is also clear that too much competition can be damaging, not only to other aspects of higher education (see below), but also to the central aim of better resource use itself. This arises mainly from the inevitable and unavoidable tendency, through price competition in what is essentially a positional market characterised by competition for status, for prices to rise to what the market will bear. The US private 'not for profit' colleges and the English private schools are classic instances (Brown, submitted for review). In both instances, the providers charge far more than is necessary to provide a good education, whilst the American private colleges create a 'price umbrella' that means that other institutions also charge far more than they need to, leading to wholesale price inflation and welfare losses (Dill, 2007). A further significant source of waste is increasing expenditure on things like marketing and branding, glitzy halls of residence and the like, all designed to attract students. In other words, some competition leads to better use of resources, but too much undoes the advantages of increased competition in the first place. This is the central and crucial irony of marketisation in higher education.





Image © University of West London

In higher education the consumer is the joint, or even main, producer

System effectiveness

There is great difficulty in comparing the effectiveness of different university systems, not least because of the absence of any valid and reliable means of assessing and comparing the effectiveness of university teaching (see below). However it does appear that those systems that have a high degree of marketisation, and its associate, privatisation, are generally less effective than those that favour less competition and more public funding: the Scandinavian countries, Canada, The Netherlands (Gerritsen, 2008; Li et al., 2011). There may be parallels here with school systems and health care.

Information and consumer choice

It is cardinal to the whole notion of an economic market that both producers and consumers have access to reliable information about price, availability and product quality. But in higher education the consumer is also joint, or even main, producer. Equally important, however, is the risk that, unless it is carefully controlled, competition leads to rationalisation and an actual reduction in diversity and consumer choice, at programme, subject and institutional levels. *Everything for Sale?* (Brown with Carasso, 2013) charted the demise of the specialist institutions – the colleges of education, the medical schools, the art and design colleges. We can expect to see – indeed, are already beginning to see – some rationalisation of subjects, as institutions find it increasingly difficult to justify continuing cross-subsidies to keep subjects and programmes going for which there is little evident market appetite. This again parallels the situation in the US (Blanchflower, 2014). There must also be some rationalisation of institutions, though how that will be accomplished, by whom, and with what resources, is far from clear.

Quality

The Coalition Government believes that market competition will lead to improved quality because providing institutions have greater incentives to offer better programmes to their students. However, marketisation necessarily turns higher education into an economic good, and this in itself is inimical to the broader liberal notion of higher education being about the intellectual (and moral) development of the individual that many in higher education still cling to. It leads institutions to focus on what are at best proxies for quality, such as student surveys, at the expense of things that really make for learning gains, such as more professional assessment. It also threatens academic self-regulation, which remains the best, as well as the cheapest, form of regulation. Even before the higher fee, there were a number of cases where academic judgements were overturned by managers concerned about the potential impact on institutional revenues or on customer reactions (Brown with Carasso, 2013). The Bedfordshire case, where it is alleged that students sponsored by Saudi Arabia were given greater lenience than other students in complying with local assessment regulations, is a recent instance (Matthews, 2014). There may be many more instances, including more grade inflation, as competition really bites.

The role of the state

The final irony concerns the role of the state. Before the mid-1980s, even though nearly all the cost of UK higher education was borne by the state, there was very little official engagement with higher education. Although it could be draconian with individual institutions, the University Grants Committee (UGC) operated with a very high degree of freedom from both Whitehall and Westminster. So, in a slightly different way, did the corresponding coordinating body for the so-called 'public sector' of higher education, the National Advisory Board (NAB). Indeed this degree of freedom was to be the two organisations' undoing when the Thatcher (and successive governments of all parties) sought greater 'responsiveness' from the universities to its reform agenda.

Although UK universities still enjoy a high degree of autonomy compared with many other publicly funded organisations, as well as with universities in many other countries, there can be little doubt that there has been a considerable increase in the degree of state control over UK higher education. This control is exercised through agencies – the funding councils that succeeded to the UGC and the NAB – that are closely monitored and controlled by the Government. So whereas markets elsewhere are seen to need less state regulation, in higher education they are seen to need more!



Whereas markets elsewhere are seen to need less state regulation, in higher education they are seen to need more!



The problem in higher education is not that one party has information that the other party lacks, but that no one has, or can have, the necessary information about quality, not least because higher education is a ‘post-experience good’

Conclusion

These then are some of the ironies and paradoxes that attend the attempt to put the supply of higher education on a market basis. They are certainly not confined to the UK (Brown, 2011) or indeed to higher education. But in higher education at least they result mainly from two constraining conditions.

The first, and most crucial, is the information problem. For many years, economists have acknowledged the risk of market failure owing to ‘information asymmetry’ – the case where one party to an economic exchange has relevant market information that the other party does not. It is customary to think of the producer/supplier as having the advantage here, but there are instances where the boot is on the other foot, as in insurance (hence the ‘excess’). However the problem in higher education is not that one party has information that the other party lacks, but that no one has, or can have, the necessary information about quality, not least because higher education is a ‘post-experience good’ (Weimer and Vining, 1992). This means that the information that is really needed is only available long after it can be of any use. William Goldman’s famous saying about Hollywood – ‘nobody knows anything’ – comes to mind here.

The second is the existence of significant externalities, and in particular the fact that the benefits of higher education are not confined to the individual student/graduate. The most comprehensive attempt so far to identify and measure these wider benefits (McMahon, 2009) estimates that the social, non-private benefits – such things as higher education’s contribution to democracy and human rights; reduced economic inequality; or lower welfare, medical and prison costs – amount to just over half the total benefits. Even the present Government has recognised this by maintaining some direct subsidy of so-called ‘strategic and vulnerable subjects’ – such as medicine, engineering and modern foreign languages – that would struggle if left entirely to market competition.

So what, finally, are the best ways of obtaining the benefits of competition without the detriments?

There are five key requirements:

1. Market participation should be controlled through a system of institutional accreditation covering governance, management, finance, use of resources and educational quality. Peer-review should play a central role in this process. No provider that is not eligible for charitable status should be able to obtain degree awarding powers or university title.
2. Teaching should be funded through a mixture of institutional block grants and tuition fees, with the latter capped at 50 per cent of the cost. Institutional resourcing differentials should be controlled, with minimum and maximum levels of funding per student. Maintenance grants and national scholarships should be available for poorer students, with all students having access to subsidised loans for both tuition and maintenance.
3. Quality should be monitored by a single, system-wide regulatory agency accountable to Parliament. Institutional and departmental review processes supervised by the agency should ensure minimum standards of student learning achievement and academic practice. The agency should have the power to de-accredit any provider that consistently fails to meet good standards of governance, management or academic practice.
4. Research should continue to be subsidised through the funding and research councils. It should only be funded selectively where there is a special case for doing so, for example, where it is relatively expensive to conduct. Research quality, and links between research, teaching and other university activities, should be monitored through the institutional and departmental reviews.
5. There needs to be a mechanism for monitoring the impact of market competition and taking action where needed to deal with market failure. This should include identifying providers or activities in need of subsidy or support because of their wider contribution to the benefits of higher education, and promoting and facilitating institutional collaboration both as a means of controlling costs and as a way of extending educational opportunities (Brown, 2014).



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Keywords

marketisation, quality, information, privatisation, choice

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DEGREES OF CHOICE?

Dominant theories on choice of higher education tend to regard students as rational consumers in an educational marketplace. Tracing the logic of student decision-making in South Africa shows the complexities of these processes

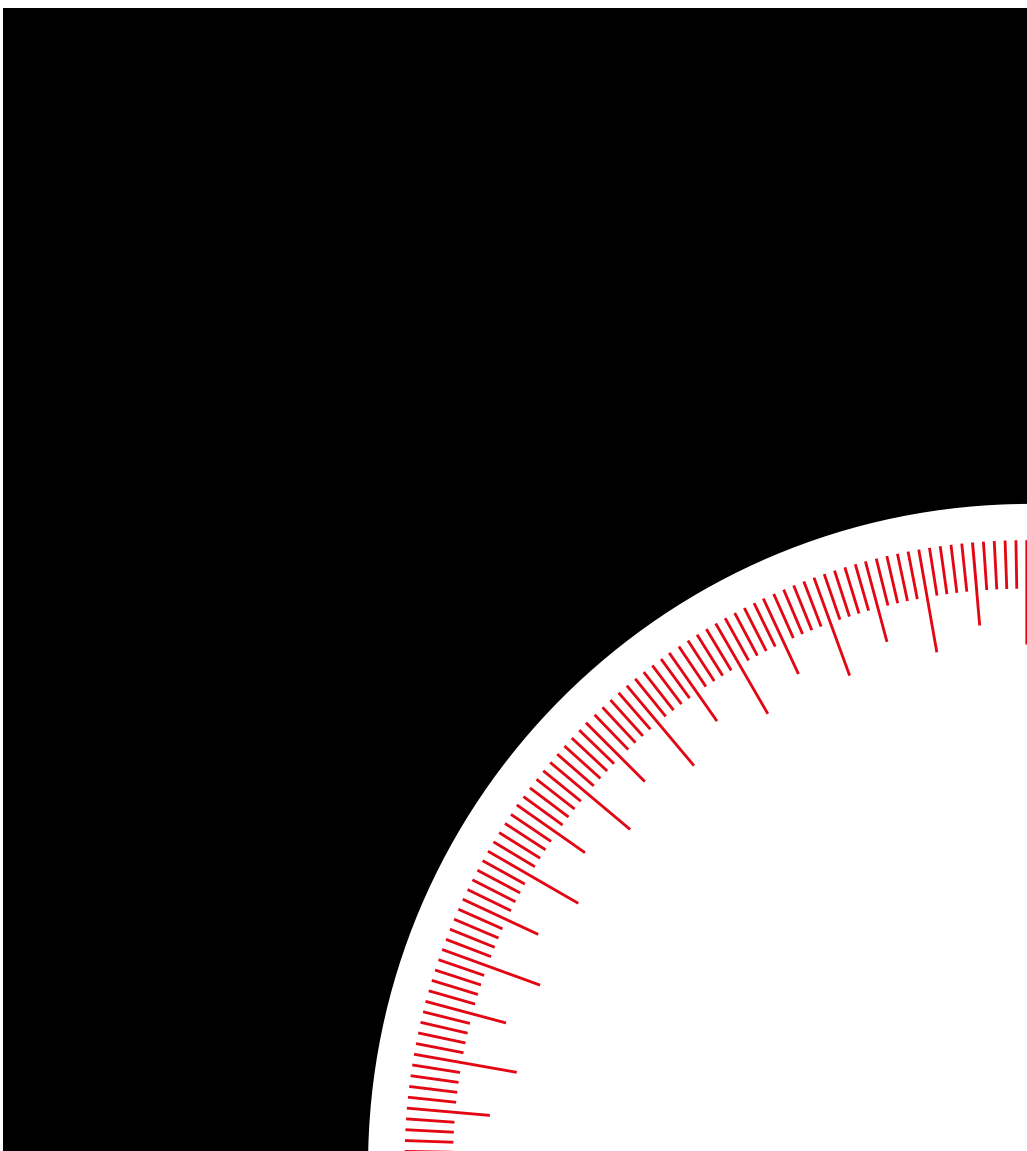
The notion of student choice holds a central position in the current discourse on higher education in South Africa. The transition from secondary to tertiary education is a critical branching point as decisions made by young people at this stage not only affect their own careers but equally determine the supply of skilled labour in the economy. In recent years, the field of student decision-making has received increased attention from researchers and policy-makers as a result of the rapidly changing educational landscape.

A number of studies on student choice have been conducted in South Africa, and the vast majority of these have used quantitative methods to examine why young people choose what they do. While they offer rigorous statistical evaluations of learners' rationale for choice of programme or institution, the question of how young people make these choices, and the nature of the actual decision-making process, has largely been left unaddressed. Instead much of the current research and policy literature typically rests on the implicit assumption of young people as technically rational consumers.

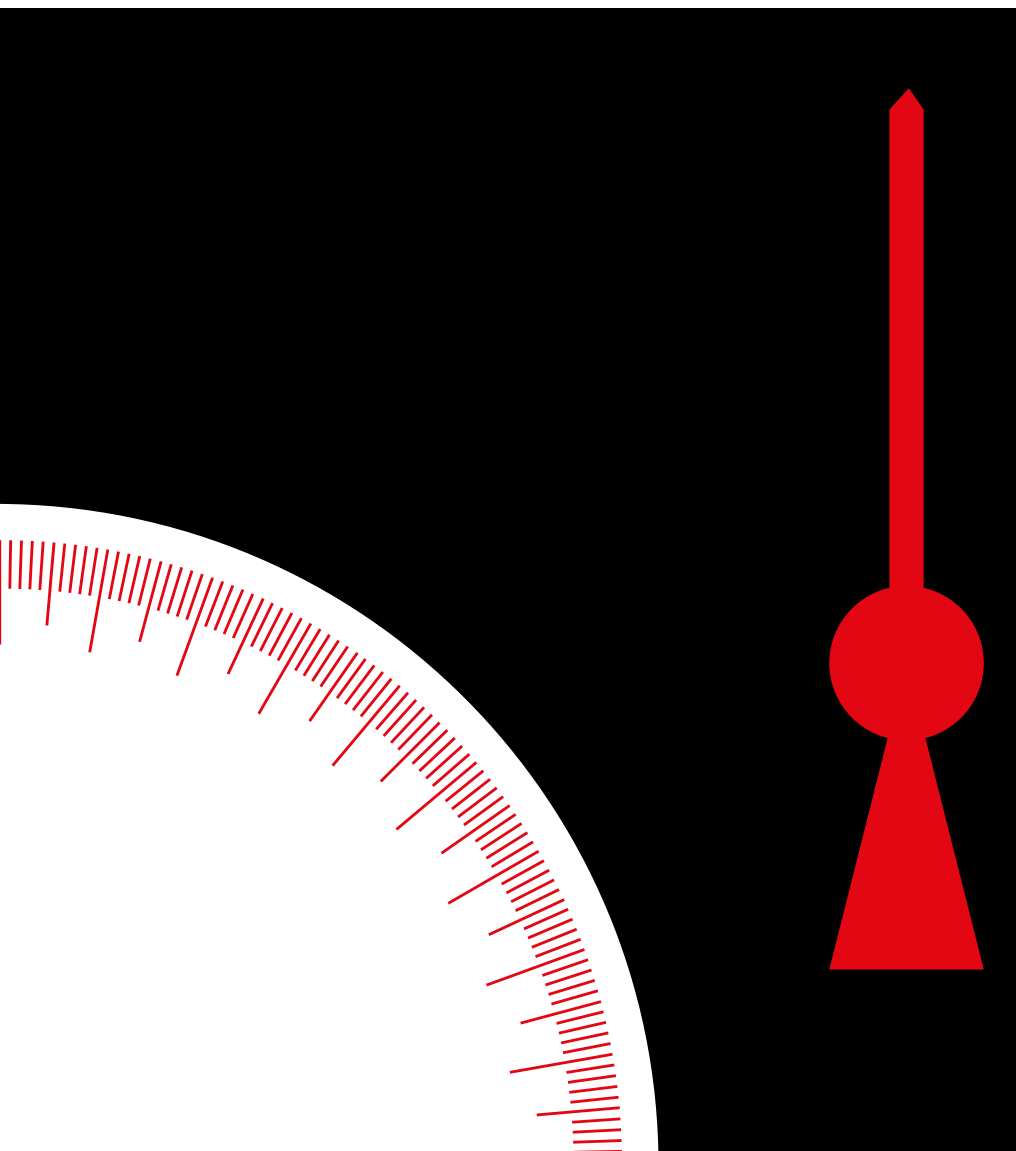
This approach has nonetheless attracted criticism for its narrow and overly economic scope. Some scholars have started to question whether aspiring students truly are as calculating as postulated by this body of literature (cf. Brown, 2012; van der Merwe, 2010). In this article I draw on a recent study of the underlying 'logic' of decision-making among university entrants in South Africa (Gausdal, 2013). Here, I challenge the hegemonic position of rational action theory in the South African research and policy discourse, focusing on cognitive processes of choice-making and thus capturing a richer picture of human behaviour.

The making of choice in South Africa

Researchers, policy-makers and university officials have started paying considerable attention to the choices made by prospective students. The origins of this burgeoning interest can partly be found in the changing educational landscape.



Institutions have been forced to become more 'market-oriented', as part of this process, university officials have recognised the importance of understanding the way in which young people make decisions about their future



Worldwide, the system of public higher education has gone through a process of unprecedented transformation in recent decades, including broadening access to higher education, changing student profile, increased marketisation of the education sector and growing institutional competition.

With the demise of the apartheid system in South Africa and the transition to democratic rule in 1994, the sector of higher education was finally opened up to previously excluded groups. The removal of the discriminatory admission policies of the past regime was accompanied by a general expansion of the system. While the number of students enrolled in public tertiary education was just past half a million in 1994, the figure was nearly 900 000 in 2011. The transition from an 'elite' to a 'mass' system of higher education led to an increased diversification of the student body, especially in terms of ethnicity, class and gender. The presence of women in public higher education increased from 43 per cent in 1988 to 57 per cent in 2010. Alongside the rapid growth of female entrants, the sector also witnessed a surge of students from previously disadvantaged racial groups. The proportion of non-white students in public higher education increased from 55 per cent in 1994 to 80 per cent in 2010 (DHET, 2012: 10-37; Subotzky, 2003: 362-365). These new and fairly swift changes have made the government cognisant of the need to strengthen the research on educational choice-making.

In parallel with the expansion of the education sector, the institutional landscape has witnessed significant changes. Public institutions now face increased competition from both foreign and private service providers. These institutions have, as a result, been forced to become more 'market-oriented' in order to attract the best students, thus paying greater attention to branding and marketing. As part of this process, university officials have recognised the importance of understanding the way in which young people make decisions about their future.

Within the dominant discourse on choice behaviour in higher education, there seems to be a growing tendency to regard aspiring students as autonomous consumers operating in an educational marketplace (van der Merwe, 2010). There is an implicit assumption that young people are rational and utility-maximising beings who 'assess their own abilities and interests, evaluate the range of opportunities which are available to them and then make a choice which matches ability to opportunity' (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997: 31).

There is also however increasing scepticism towards the belief in the idea of students' rational choice (Brown, 2012). The reliance on an overly individualistic and economic framework appears to have blurred the vision of researchers and policy-makers alike. Commenting on the current policy discourse, van der Merwe (2010) makes the point that:

South African higher education policy evidently assumes a human capital interpretation of the value of higher education. However, not much local evidence has been provided to support the human capital view that individuals enrol in higher education primarily on the basis of future earnings they expect to flow from such investments. [...] [T]he variability and unpredictability of human behaviour cannot comfortably be reconciled with the perfect knowledge and rationality that economic agents are assumed to possess in a neoclassical economic world' (van der Merwe, 2010: 81).

The inability of dominant choice theories to provide satisfactory frameworks has prompted calls for new and alternative approaches. The study I report on in this article set out to explore the finer nuances of the decision-making process, employing a qualitative framework.

A qualitative approach to choice-making

The study was conducted using qualitative research methods in the form of in-depth, semi-structured interviews. This enabled me to explore the context in which decision-making occurs. The investigations included a sample of 26 first-year students in the Civil Engineering and Social Care programmes at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The social care cohort was made up of students from the Bachelors Degree of Social Work at UKZN and the National Diploma in Child and Youth Development at DUT, while the civil engineering cohort consisted of students from the Bachelors Degree of Civil Engineering at UKZN and the National Diploma in Civil Engineering at DUT. Pseudonyms were used for the participants in this study.

At the heart of the analysis lies the theoretical framework of 'pragmatic rationality'. The framework stems from the work by Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) on career decision-making among British youth. The approach describes decision-making in terms of three integrated dimensions. The first is that of pragmatically rational decision-making. It claims that while a decision involves some degree of rational calculation, it cannot be divorced from the life history of the person making it. Thus, decision-making is neither technically rational nor completely irrational. It is instead pragmatically rational.

The second dimension is concerned with the power relations existing among the participants in the field of higher education (Bourdieu, 1984). The structure of this field is governed by the degree of power (defined by cultural, economic and social capital) held by the different individuals. *Cultural capital* refers to the sum of symbolic (non-financial) elements such as skills, credentials, knowledge, tastes, attitudes and mannerisms that are acquired by belonging to a specific social class. *Economic capital* encompasses (material and financial) assets which are immediately convertible into monetary units. Finally, *social capital* is the aggregate of resources (actual or potential) accrued by virtue of membership in a group or social network. The composition of the different capitals determines the ability of the individuals to position themselves in the field and, in turn, influence the rules by which the field is governed (Hodkinson and Sparkes, 1997: 36).

The third dimension focuses on the notion of turning-points (Strauss, 1962). A turning-point takes place when an individual reconsiders or questions the status quo. It can, as a result, cause a significant transformation of identity. The process of choosing a career should therefore be read as an irregular pattern of experiences dispersed with turning-points.

The logic of decision-making: pragmatic rationality?

I examined three key areas of student choice – how the decision to enrol in higher education was made; how the field of study was chosen; and finally, how students settled their choice of an institution.

The responses in the study outlined three main characteristics in the decision-making process. Firstly, the participants described a process in which they themselves were instrumental in making the decisions. Secondly, the students had largely rational reasons for making these decisions as they were based on evidence from lived experiences, either from first- or second-hand sources. Many of the students had been influenced by relatives or neighbours who worked in the same fields. This influence included both implicit inculcation of attitudes and values, and explicit transmission of information and knowledge. Thirdly, these choices were also pragmatic in the way that they were based on partial and highly localised information. The reliance on fragmented information was perhaps most explicit among the students from poor backgrounds who had attended ordinary public schools. Decisions were, in other words, shaped by the students' personal dispositions or habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). These dispositions had been moulded by their life histories and were situated in the context in which they, their families and friends lived. Within these horizons for action, the students made logical and rational choices. Hence, one could argue that they made pragmatically rational choices.





The way the participants experienced the decision-making process was determined by their individual composition of social, cultural and economic resources

These findings largely support the observations made by Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997) about the nature of decision-making. This pattern of pragmatically rational choice-making was found in all of the 26 interviews, irrespective of ethnicity, social class, gender and discipline. This does not, however, imply that the students experienced the decision-making process in a similar way, or even that they entered the process on equal terms. On the contrary, the study illustrated how the participants were engaged in highly differentiated choice-making processes. This was, in turn, largely due to the unequal access to relevant information about the system of higher education.

The interviews showed how educational choices were shaped by interactions with others in the field of higher education. Within the field students came in contact with, and were subsequently influenced by, a large number of other actors. This included caregivers, siblings, peers, teachers and career guidance counsellors. The main differences in this regard were related to students' social and educational background. The middle-class students in the sample highlighted their own families as the most important source of influence. Following the definitions provided by Lareau (2011), 'middle-class' refers to households where at least one caregiver is 'employed in a position that either entails substantial managerial authority or which centrally draws upon highly complex, educationally certified skills' (Lareau, 2011: 365). Siya, one of the middle-class students in the civil engineering programme at DUT, described the significance of familial support in the following manner:

Dad used to be a principal at a school but now he is retired. ... And my mum is a nurse. Dad did his B-Ed [Bachelors of Education] at UJ [University of Johannesburg] and mum got her degree from UKZN... They know how learning systems operate and all that. If I phone them to tell them about my problems they can recall having similar problems when they were studying. That helps and it motivates me. ... The support they gave me was the most important thing because they understand. If my parents had not been exposed to higher education, they would not have been able to help me in the way they did.

The situation was significantly different for his working-class counterparts. The notion of 'working-class' refers to households where neither caregiver is 'employed in a middle-class position and at least one [caregiver] is employed in a position with little or no managerial authority and which does not draw on highly complex, educationally certified skills' (Lareau, 2011:365). In the absence of caregivers with experience from or relevant knowledge about the system of higher education, these students primarily relied on so-called 'informal' guidance provided by significant others in their community or, for those who had attended a well-resourced secondary school, from career education services in the formal school system.

The way the different participants experienced the decision-making process was, in other words, determined by their individual composition of social, cultural and economic resources. The social work cohort from UKZN provided an interesting case in this regard. All of the students came from relatively poor backgrounds and possessed little economic capital. They had largely been raised by individuals with low levels of formal education, and had all attended secondary schools with only a minimum of career guidance provision, resulting in low cultural capital. Consequently, the students had few people to consult about the system of higher education, which in turn led to low social capital. They were, in effect, forced to rely on themselves or on informal guidance from people in their community. A similar pattern was detected among the vast majority of the working-class students in the sample. The fact that over two-thirds of the sample was made up by students of working-class background explains the prevalence of this pattern.

Decision-making is neither technically rational nor completely irrational. It is instead pragmatically rational





In contrast to the more dominant theoretical models on choice behaviour, the pragmatic rationality approach in this study recognises the unpredictable nature of educational decisions

The study also documented that career decision-making was shaped by a series of turning-points. Over the course of a lifetime people experience a number of these moments, some more transformative than others. The analysis demonstrated how patterns of biographical discontinuity (Alheit, 1994) had affected choice of career paths. Many of the students had altered the course of their career after an encounter with an inspiring individual. This was particularly the case with the social care students. Others admitted to have been forced to change their plans due to external constraints, a common feature among the working-class students. The frequency of turning-points underlines the dynamic nature of the students' dispositions. Faith, one of the social work students at UKZN, explained how she had tried out different pathways since leaving school:

In 2010, I went to do IT at a private college here in Durban. [...] Why I choose IT? Because all my friends were doing IT and I thought I must do it too. Maybe I would enjoy it. I didn't know what IT was all about so I chose it. And then I got bored. I lasted only one year. [...] But the experience made me realise one important thing – that I like working with people. Helping people. That is why I decided to become a social worker. I wouldn't want to sit in an office all day working on a computer.

Mandla, another student from the same programme, described how a difficult episode at the end of secondary school had altered his trajectory completely:

In high school, I had a lot of bad friends. We were always drinking, smoking, skipping classes. I never thought about the future and what I wanted to be. I ended up failing grade 12 and was forced to repeat it. This was in 2009. Failing taught me an important lesson. I left my friends, many of them ended up dropping out of school. I'm not drinking alcohol anymore. I failed matric and that taught me a lesson that I needed to stop doing all of that, to get away from my old friends. I ended up choosing this course because I wanted to help people in a similar situation.

The responses from the students in the sample reveal the intricacies of the decision-making process. In contrast to the more dominant theoretical models on choice behaviour, the pragmatic rationality approach in this study recognises the unpredictable nature of educational decisions. The deliberately vague framework, seeking out the broader cognitive processes of choice, concedes that human behaviour cannot be fully comprehended through the lens of a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. It demonstrates, moreover, the futility of models that oversimplify or ignore the contextual complexities at which they are directed.

Conclusion

In this article I have argued that the policy discourse on student decision-making in South Africa is founded on the false premise of rational choice behaviour. Drawing on a recent study of first-year university entrants, I have shown that their choices were neither rational in the technical sense nor the outcome of a planned, linear process. Instead their decisions were found to contain elements of both approaches, encapsulated in the concept of pragmatic rationality.

One of the implications of the misalignment between policy and reality has been the implementation of a series of the misguided career guidance reforms. I contend that attempts to improve the choice-making process will not succeed unless policy-makers in South Africa are willing to recognise the intricacies of the decision-making process, and to understand that providing young people with more information about higher education will not necessarily lead to sound and logical choice-making. At the time of writing it remains unclear whether the current government is prepared to alter the key principles guiding its education policies. Yet what does seem certain is that a sustained reluctance to act on this matter will prove detrimental to future generations of South Africans.



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student choice, higher education, research and policy discourse, pragmatic rationality

Dimensions of Marketization in Higher Education

Edited by Peter John and Joëlle Fanghanel

Exploring the many dimensions of marketization, this text will be an authoritative reference book on higher education policy and practice, appealing to higher education leaders, managers and scholars worldwide.

About the Editors

- **Peter John** is Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive at the University of West London, UK.
- **Joëlle Fanghanel** is Associate Pro Vice Chancellor at the University of West London, UK.

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MINDFUL LEARNING

Can the introduction of mindfulness meditation relieve stress in students, and improve performance?

Why mindfulness?

Mindfulness practice is an area that is gaining momentum as a method for enhancing personal and professional development (Nugent et al., 2011). It is currently attracting widespread attention in a large number of spheres far removed from its natural and original home, Buddhist philosophy and practice. Athletes use it to sharpen their game; corporate executives use mindfulness to learn to handle stress better; chronic pain sufferers apply it as a coping strategy; primary school teachers use it to help children give attention. In the context of Buddhist teachings and precepts, mindfulness is of overriding importance and at the heart of the learning environment. Thich Nhat Hanh, the renowned Vietnamese Buddhist teacher and campaigner for world peace and justice, has brought mindfulness to the Western world. The foundation of his teaching is that mindfulness involves a form of 'attention to the present moment' that is 'inclusive and loving' and 'accepts everything without judging or reacting' (Nhat Hahn, 1999: 64).

John Kabat-Zinn, Professor of Medicine Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, has been largely responsible for transforming the original spiritual notion into a powerful and universal therapeutic tool based on forms of meditation and mindful practices. It was on a retreat, led by Thich Nhat Hanh, in the United States (US) that Kabat-Zinn first realised the appropriateness of mindfulness in the treatment of chronic medical conditions. Kabat-Zinn later adapted Hanh's teachings on mindfulness into the structured eight-week Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course (Kabat-Zinn, 1996). The MBSR approach is currently offered across a broad range of settings in the US, including hospitals, clinics, schools, workplaces, universities, and prisons. The practice of mindfulness has shown to be successful in a diverse range of contexts including the treatment of depression, addictions of various kinds, and the promotion of physical and mental health and wellbeing generally (Baer, 2006). It is widely accepted within healthcare in the United Kingdom that mindfulness plays a central role in the development of recovery focused therapeutic interventions for the treatment of a range of psychological disorders as recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (e.g. NICE, 2009).

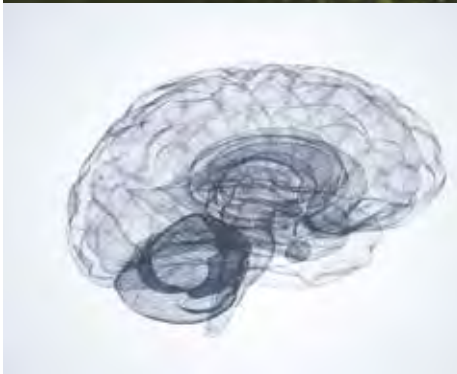
Mindfulness involves a form of 'attention to the present moment' that is 'inclusive and loving' and 'accepts everything without judging or reacting'





Mindfulness for learning in higher education

Students in the field of nursing tend to report high levels of stress and anxiety in the clinical learning environment (Sharif and Masoumi, 2005). Beddoe and Murphy (2004) suggest that high anxiety and stress impede concentration, memory, and problem-solving, which in turn, adversely affects academic performance and learning. Studies in neuroplasticity have also suggested that the adult brain is more malleable than previously thought (Draganski et al., 2004). Neuroscientists studying the effects of mindfulness practice on the brain have indeed observed that it can foster sustained neural changes (Hölzel et al., 2011), with brain activity increasing in the pre-frontal cortex: a crucial area of the brain in terms of understanding social interactions (Wang et al., 2007). This claim represents a significant departure from views which consider traits such as attention span and emotional regulation as fixed properties that cannot be greatly altered. If, as neuroplasticity proponents report, mindful reflection intensifies the activity in the prefrontal cortex and 'this neural integration promotes a reflective mind, an adaptive, resilient brain and empathic relationships' (Siegel, 2007: 262), mindfulness in learning is a concept well worth exploring. This theoretical shift in perspective accounts better for the complexity of learning, and the narrowness of a focus on innate cognitive properties or fixed views of intelligence (Dweck, 1999), and suggests a relation with views of learning that take into account social and personal factors. For teachers in higher education, this means that using effective mindful teaching strategies might increase students' learning potential, as it impacts on the affective domain of learning. Educators who intentionally incorporate insightful, mindfulness-oriented learning experiences may help students with stress, and potentially enhance their learning (Bushnell and Henry, 2003).



The positive experience of students

A group of 28 first year nursing students were invited to attend a practice development workshop during the early stages of their first placement experience in the clinical environment, where mindfulness training was introduced. It consisted in a ten minute breath awareness exercise following a presentation on the nature of mindfulness including reference to the literature and research on this topic. Students were later invited to reflect on the qualities associated with mindfulness skills. Six students were later selected to attend a focus group to further discuss their experiences and views of mindfulness in learning. Their feedback is discussed here, using pseudonyms to report their comments. The students indicated that they found it helpful to focus and to pay attention to how they communicated. Shan, for example indicated that she was 'becoming more aware of how [she] responded to clients' including aspects such as her 'looks, words, and expressions'. Julie indicated that conscious awareness of the breath had helped her focus:

Trying out a new idea, breath awareness and feeling changes in my body that helped me think clearly and focus on tasks.

Respondents also indicated that silent reflection and mindful breathing enabled them to overcome stress, as in the case of Jon below:

I [first] felt unable to take the initiative due to lack of confidence during the role play. When I did eventually participate in the role for the first time, I was too anxious to think clearly. The second time I used breath awareness prior to my turn, and enjoyed the experience much more. I now need to practice this to become more comfortable with using it.

Neuroscientists studying mindfulness practice have observed that it can foster sustained neural changes, with brain activity increasing in the pre-frontal cortex: a crucial area of the brain in terms of understanding social interactions



Why develop mindfulness?

The students I interviewed identified a number of benefits to the introduction of this exercise. They reported that this had strengthened their values in caring and compassion; enhanced their communication skills; and their approach to the quality of patient care. They thought it had helped them think more deeply about professional conduct issues, and become more open to others' perspectives. The views expressed by students were about qualities beneficial to their personal and professional development, including increased self-awareness, deeper empathy, ability to adapt to change, and greater resilience to face challenging situations. Although this experience was confined to a very small number of students, similar themes were present in findings from other studies bearing on health and social care students (e.g. Napoli and Bonifas, 2011).

Those students who reported problems with the mindfulness exercise also found it difficult to differentiate between the concepts of *mindfulness meditation* and *relaxation*. This may highlight the need to take time to introduce mindfulness to ensure students grasp the concept more fully. It may also indicate that this approach is not beneficial for all students. Nevertheless, all the students involved in this study reported enjoying the approach to learning and requested further sessions to practice and develop mindfulness skills. One participant indicated that this allowed her to 'think creatively'.

Mindful conclusions

Mindfulness has been explored in a number of studies (e.g. Napoli and Bonifas, 2011; Nugent et al., 2011) which have suggested that this approach encourages an openness to change; a willingness to try out new approaches to learning; and a tendency to become more aware of others. However, mindfulness is a skill that needs to be practiced to obtain full benefit, both professionally and on a personal level. Nhat Hanh also suggests that regularly practising the fundamental skills is essential for any benefits to be sustained and behaviours changed (Nhat Hanh, 1999). There are clear limitations. There are few opportunities in the current teaching schedule to initiate mindfulness in learning, and maintaining it over a whole course is clearly a challenge. Critics of this type of approach also express concern that research on the potential benefits gained from mindfulness teaching are not supplemented with research on potentially harmful or negative effects. Some students in my study reported problems in practicing these skills. This may indicate that this approach is not beneficial for all students. It also highlights the fact that to be effective, this method requires understanding and application of the concept. The modern curriculum, with its set of predicted learning outcomes, does not allow for much space to introduce and practice *mindfulness*. This small scale intervention explored the concept with a group of students, who on the whole reported benefits from it. It remains to re-imagine a curriculum that would enable full integration of this approach into a modern curriculum.

TIV

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mindfulness meditation; Thich Nhat Hanh; health science education; stress

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WORK-BASED RESEARCH IN PRIMARY LEADERSHIP EDUCATION

Primary education leadership must evolve to include the ability to generate organisational change. How can the education of leaders contribute to developing new models of leadership?

The purpose of this paper is to explore the policy drivers for developing change capability within school leaders, and the potential of new pedagogical approaches to build capacity in the field of school leadership. The paper reviews change challenges impacting on school leadership in the UK and suggests the sector can learn from business models.

Policy drivers affecting primary school leadership education in the UK

A recent paper by the think-tank 'Policy Exchange' entitled *The next phase of improvement for primary schools in England* highlights a range of challenges facing the primary sector today. The authors conclude that it is 'imperative that the government and schools take action to proactively build the capacity and capability in the primary phase to manage this transition and these higher expectations' (Briggs and Simon, 2014: p9).

An important driver is the 2011 Education Act which introduced a free market approach to schooling in England with academy chains and free schools. Whilst increasing the seeming autonomy of schools, the Act also signaled zero tolerance for failing schools and a challenge for leaders, with the introduction of a new Ofsted inspection framework in 2014. Performance-related pay was introduced to schools in September 2014. Raised targets in 2016 will require that 85% of all eleven year olds achieve 'level 4' in Reading, Writing and Mathematics. The policy logic is that educational excellence is to be driven by system-led reform and a more accountable teaching profession delivering 'world-class' education as an entitlement for all children.

'Adaptive' leadership

A further challenge for school leaders is the expectation that schools will leverage new technologies in designing personalised learning to engage learners and build 21st century skills. This has been defined as an 'adaptive' challenge, that is a 'gap between aspirations and operational capacity that cannot be closed by the expertise and procedures currently in place' (Heifetz, 2009: 1). At the heart of 'adaptive leadership' is the idea that change can be successfully addressed by leaders capable of distinguishing between tactical and adaptive challenges, knowing how to diagnose complex situations before taking action (Heifetz et al, 2009: 6). Through my work with schools and dialogue with school leaders, I have identified five substantive adaptive challenges across the following key areas:

1. **Professionalism** – new skill sets for inquiry, change agency and problem solving
2. **Partnerships** – partnerships with Universities to generate new professional knowledge
3. **Personalisation** – co-creation of experiences and solutions in consultation with learners
4. **Pedagogy** – demand for more innovative pedagogy supporting organisational learning
5. **Performance** – outcomes driven by change-capable, research-literate professionals

This highlights a shift in the locus of production of new professional knowledge from academia to the workplace (Hargreaves, 1999), requiring new models of 'collaboration for impact' (Briggs and Simon, 2014). It also suggests a shift in the locus of new pedagogical expertise to a consultative partnership between teachers and learners that taps into the intrinsic motivation of both. Within such a framework, a key challenge for school leaders today is to build capacity for innovation through personalised approaches to staff development that will build capacity in problem-solving.



A key challenge for school leaders today is to build capacity for innovation through personalised approaches to staff development that will build capacity in problem-solving





Introducing personalised learning in schools

Interestingly, the challenge around personalisation of learning in schools is not dissimilar to the challenge around personalisation of service delivery in business (Pralahad and Ramaswamy, 2013). John Fallon, Chief Executive of Pearson, defines the leadership challenge within businesses committed to personalising services as ‘defining a problem that’s worth solving, bringing together the most talented people you can and then giving them the resources to go on and solve it’ (*The Times*, 9 August 2014). It is arguable that the function of leadership today, whether in business or education, is to sponsor a culture of continuous learning (Senge, 1990) where problems can be identified, defined and solved in order to secure competitive advantage within a broader knowledge economy. The skills requirements of a global knowledge economy are key drivers in setting the agenda for 21st century professional learning, alongside social capital and finance capitalism (Kagia, 2003). At the same time, as far back as 2001, a report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) highlighted a weak culture of investment in Research and Development in schools as an issue preventing change capability in the face of 21st policy challenges (OECD, 2001: 66). So, both schools and business face similar challenges that providers of postgraduate education for school leaders need to consider when designing courses.

What all this suggests, perhaps, is the need to re-frame professional learning for school leaders in terms of building capacity for change within a knowledge ecosystem (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). Few of the insights on organisational change have been systematically applied to the education leadership sector, where arguably they have much to offer in supporting capability for innovation within the current climate.

Pedagogical principles and processes in the design of work-based research

Quality professional development comprises opportunities for engaging in learning that is work-based and contextually relevant (Hargreaves, 1999). Brown (2009) has developed an entire model of change-by-design learning processes derived from contextually relevant design thinking in the workplace. He argues that a core feature of design thinking is the sequencing of processes related to identifying, defining, ideating, prototyping and testing ‘wicked issues’ or problems (Brown, 2009: 16). Brown’s approach has much in common with Tan’s approach to problem-based learning of ‘unstructured problems’ (Tan, 2003: 2). This includes the development of skills in metacognition, self-regulated learning, and higher order thinking within in a framework where technology becomes a tool to enhance ‘solution-based thinking’ (Tan, 2003: 208).



Image © University of West London

The focus on practical solutions within design research incorporates approaches to knowledge transfer and change management



A focus on work-based research for school leadership programmes

In addition to problem-based learning and design thinking, new approaches to inquiry are emerging that prioritise work-based research to solve problems and generate impact (McKenney and Reeves, 2012). The focus on practical solutions within design research incorporates approaches to knowledge transfer and change management. An approach to school leadership development programmes that will address the policy requirements of organisational change might include:

- Defining postgraduate work-based learning as a collective rather than an individualistic endeavour
- Provision of support to senior leaders so they know how to sponsor a culture of inquiry in the workplace and create structures and systems to facilitate the translation of research evidence into agendas for change
- Support in the development of in-house R&D teams with appropriate protocols who know how to self-organise and collaborate around learning and research
- Support in identifying and defining practice issues as a starting point in learning
- Skills development in design research that enables course participants to frame good questions into even better strategic projects that generate new knowledge
- Synthesis of design thinking (Brown, 2009) and design research approaches (Wong et al, 2014) where intentionality, clarity of purpose, respect for learning processes and protocols are factored into the programme design from the outset

- More focus on the scaffolding and facilitation of learning that sees lecturers as coaches rather than as deliverers of content
- Attention paid to the assessment of learning that facilitates stakeholder engagement, knowledge flow and exchange through presentations, papers and participation in conferences
- Course provision that includes the politics of change in organisations to ensure that course participants are not naive about translating research evidence into a stakeholder change agenda

These components will support the development of change-capable professionals in either public or private organisations. In this framework, the role of the 21st century education provider becomes, in part, that of validator of new knowledge linked to how and where people learn.

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leadership education; organisational change; work-based research

Few of the insights on organisational change have been systematically applied to the education leadership sector, where they have much to offer in supporting capability for innovation within the current climate

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THE ‘WANDERING JEW’: HISTORY, FICTION, AND ADAPTATION

The paper discusses the figure of the ‘Wandering Jew’ in the practice of adaptation – from page to screen – and uncovers a stereotype that finds expression in both fictional texts and in accounts of real life individuals

This paper starts with a coincidence. In 2011 I attended a presentation by Prof. Peter Luther on London’s slum landlords, and particularly Peter Rachman. The next day, through the lottery that is Britain’s ‘Love Film’ DVD rental service, I received the movie *An Education*, adapted from Lynn Barber’s memoir; a story in which the infamous property magnate Rachman plays a minor part. Luther argued persuasively that Rachman, although undoubtedly an unscrupulous landlord, was not quite the singular arch villain that contemporary accounts and posterity had made him. Using the figure of Rachman as a way into a wider examination of historical and fictional representations, I examine adaptation in more than one sense. In the first, straightforward, sense it is focused on two screen adaptations – *An Education* (Scherfig, 2009) and *The Way We Live Now* (Yates, 2001). It also employs two contemporary reviews of those texts to analyse the choices made in adaptation and the responses they foster. The selection of reviews – one from a website focused on Jewish concerns, the other from a deeply unpleasant white-supremacist website – is wilful, but hopefully illuminating. Specifically, I consider the adaptations in respect of their susceptibility to either provoke the charge of anti-Semitism or nourish an anti-Semitic reading. Adaptation is also at issue here in a less conventional way, in that the paper is concerned with stereotypes, a mode of representation which – in its patterns of repetition, difference, intertextuality, multi-media transmission, and so on – might be among the oldest (if problematic) variants of adaptive practice.



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Peter Rachman

Born in Poland, the son of a Jewish dentist, Rachman had been interned by the Nazis after the 1939 invasion. Escaping to Russia, he had the misfortune to be interned again, in a Siberian Labour camp. Following Germany's invasion of Russia, he fought for the Allies and became a British resident after the war. He built a property empire in West London, notable for the driving out of the mostly white sitting tenants, who had legal protection against rent increases, and their replacement with newly-arrived West Indian tenants who enjoyed no such protection and had little choice but to accept high rents. In 1962, aged only 42, Rachman died of heart failure, probably due in large part to his wartime hardships. But it was the Profumo affair, and its press coverage in 1963, that made him – posthumously – notorious.

For Rachman had owned the house in London's Marylebone used by Mandy Rice-Davies and Christine Keeler – both of whom had also been his mistresses. As interest grew in the scandal of sex and politics, so accounts of Rachman and his property dealings emerged. MP Ben Parkin used the term 'Rachmanism' in a call to improve protection for tenants and by 1965 when the Rent Act became law, this new word – defined as 'the exploitation and intimidation of tenants by unscrupulous landlords' – had entered the dictionary. As Luther argued, although the ills of bad landlords would be conveniently embodied in the foreign and deceased Rachman, one scarcely acknowledged outcome of the media coverage was that it encouraged many wealthy British landlords to either quietly improve or quickly divest themselves of their own slum properties. We may also observe that the newly-minted term 'Rachmanism', and subsequent invocation of the name and figure of Rachman, were not unprecedented. Like the fictional figures of Fagin and Shylock, he would be loaded with negative meanings far beyond the narrative of his original appearance.

Of particular interest to me were tropes and aspects of the Rachman story that echoed earlier stories, and prefigured others. For example, the Jewish émigré who builds an empire from London; his success, excess and conspicuous consumption; the empire's collapse; his dramatic death; the subsequent unravelling of his mythology. And finally the questions... 'What did we really know about him?' 'Is he really dead?' and 'Where did the money go?' Here were narrative elements that belonged to Anthony Trollope's 1875 novel *The Way We Live Now*, and its central character, financier Augustus Melmotte. But they also applied to the life-story and representations of newspaper tycoon Robert Maxwell who died in 1991.

An Education

Rachman's appearance in *An Education* is fleeting but nonetheless significant to both page and screen accounts. *An Education* tells how, as a sixteen year-old schoolgirl, Lynn Barber (Jenny, in the adaptation) is seduced by Simon (David, in the film), a Jewish man 20 years her senior. With not inconsiderable charm, David introduces her to the sophisticated adult world she craves – classical music concerts, nightclubs, restaurants, a trip to Paris. He is the antithesis of the staid suburban parents she hopes to escape by academic achievement, crystallised in the ambition of reading English at Oxford. He also works for Peter Rachman. In one scene we watch as Jenny observes David meeting a Caribbean immigrant family with their luggage. At an upstairs window an elderly white woman is seen, twitching her net curtain, concerned at the appearance of her new neighbours. David explains to Jenny that he helps 'schvarzers' who cannot rent 'from their own kind'. The relationship ends when, having accepted his proposal of marriage and rejected the goal of Oxford, she discovers he is already married and has a young family. Attempting to revive her university dream, she is rebuffed by her former headmistress, but tutored to the dreaming spires by a sympathetic teacher.

A review by Irina Bragin found the film wholly problematic, chiming with 1930s Nazi propaganda, and employing a variant of the centuries-old figure 'The Wandering Jew'. Originally available on the *JewishJournal.com*, a site with a range of cultural, political and social interests, the review later appeared on the more assertively political *FightHatred.com*, the website of the Jabotinsky International Center which has as its stated aim 'to stand at the forefront of the international battle against contemporary anti-Semitism'. In *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes*, Frank Felsenstein describes how the key features of the Wandering Jew stereotype are that he is a 'pariah', 'a perpetual outsider' condemned to a vagabond existence 'for his supposed crime against Christ' (Felsenstein, 1999: 35). Bragin (2009) observes that:

Jenny's values, and those of her middle-class parents, teachers and first boyfriend, are antithetical to those of the crooked Jew.

The Brits [by contrast] are refined, attractive, honest, sober and hard working.

Considered in terms of Stuart Hall's Encoding/Decoding model, Bragin's reading of *An Education* is 'oppositional'. She does not misunderstand the film's intentions – how its makers would 'prefer' it interpreted – but rather she 'retotalizes the message within some alternative framework of reference' (Hall, 1980: 138).

Whilst acknowledging that the film merits analysis in terms of the problematic Wandering Jew motif (a term the film invokes twice, most pointedly to highlight the prejudices of key non-Jewish characters) I found I could not agree with much of Bragin's summary. Jenny's parents and her pre-David life are not presented in remotely attractive terms. They are deathly, comically, dull. The would-be younger boyfriend is – at best – sympathetically inept, shaded out by the suave David. The lion's share of the film is devoted to Jenny's mostly-enjoyable experiences in David's company. Viewers are encouraged to relish, to connive, in the ruses by which Jenny and David





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outwit the impossibly impercipient Mum and Dad into allowing them to spend time together. Although there are moments when David's interactions with Jenny assume a 'creepy' quality, heralding a future difficulty, these are not presented as anyhow Jewish, and are outweighed by uncomplicated representations of them as a stylish young couple. This includes a peppy foot-tapping montage of them in 1960s Paris that comes perilously close to parody. Ultimately, the problem with David is that he's not the footloose free agent he masqueraded as. He is in reality more quotidian, rooted, with a family home very much like hers. The evenings and trips with Jenny were an escape of kinds for him too, but more deluded, more unsustainable. He may be an extra-marital 'wanderer' but in most respects he does not align to the Wandering Jew stereotype at all.

Although the film's conclusion suggests that Jenny is chastened by her experience, this does not entail her reconciliation to the values and institutions which formerly contained her. The anti-Semitic headmistress is not the agent of her renewed attempt upon the Oxford entrance exam. Jenny blames her parents for not seeing through David, and returning to her studies is patently not a re-incorporation into the old order but a means to find an alternative – neither her parents' existence, nor that offered by David. For Bragin, the ending presents Jenny as 'repentant' and willing to return to 'wholesome Christian values', an interpretation for which I fail to find the textual evidence. Furthermore, it is difficult to square this reading with the extra-textual knowledge that the real-life Barber's first post-Oxford job was writing for Penthouse and her subsequent work included *How To Improve Your Man In Bed* and *The Single Woman's Sex Book*.

The Way We Live Now

My earlier reference to Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* and Melmotte may have prompted readers to ask 'But... is Melmotte Jewish?' This very question forms one of John Sutherland's puzzles of Nineteenth Century literature from his book *Is Heathcliff a Murderer?* As Sutherland argues, Trollope deliberately 'casts a pall of racial and national ambiguity around Melmotte' (Sutherland, 1998: 157). The same is emphatically not true of several other clearly Jewish characters including Madame Melmotte, Mr Brehgert, Mr Cohenlupe, and Mr Goldsheiner. But Melmotte himself is a confusion, at times a contradiction, of signs and information. For example, of his daughter Marie and her recollections of a childhood in America and Europe we hear:

Her father had married her present mother in Frankfort. That she could remember distinctly [...] and the fact that she was told that from henceforth she was to be a Jewess. But there had soon come another change. They went from Frankfort to Paris, and there they were all Christians (Trollope, 2001: 88).

This account of movement and re-invention echoes many aspects of Jewish experience from at least the Middle Ages, including: exile, expulsion, arrival, conversion (or its appearance), integration, and difference. These are among the tropes that – adapted into the legend of the Wandering Jew – would form one of the enduring means by which Christian host groups would assert and perpetuate the notion of Jews as aliens.

Where Trollope is clear is in his critical depiction of the aristocratic English characters who have dealings with Melmotte. They are mostly hypocrites. Hoping to profit from association with his business, they maintain (with various degrees of openness) a disdain for him personally, either because they think he is Jewish, or at least for his Jewish connections. Following Melmotte's suicide towards the end of the novel, Trollope describes additional speculation about Melmotte's identity:

The general opinion seemed to be that his father had been a noted coiner in New York – an Irishman of the name of Melmody (Trollope, 2001: 743).

Sutherland observes that adding Irishness to the mix allowed readers to recognise a reference to swindler John Sadleir, who took cyanide in 1856 but was widely believed to still be alive at the time of *The Way We Live Now* (Sutherland, 1998: 160). It also anticipated the rumours and theories that would follow the deaths of both Peter Rachman and Robert Maxwell a century later. Of Rachman, Parliament was told by the MP who coined 'Rachmanism' that:

All Fleet Street is full of the idea that Rachman is not dead [...]. It would be easy to switch bodies. [...] It would be a very good idea to have a substitution, and very useful – just 10 days before all hell broke loose [A reference to the breaking of the Profumo affair in the press] (Parkin, 1963).

In the case of Maxwell, who drowned after falling from his yacht, a frenzy of conspiracy theories attended, and continues to attend, the discovery of his body, autopsy and subsequent burial in Jerusalem. Several of these laboured his Israeli connections, describing as 'convenient' his death, or non-death, when his business empire was unravelling. Helpfully (for conspiracy theorists) this reading could apply whether Maxwell either a) alive and well thanks to Israel's intercession or b) murdered by Israel's secret service Mossad, having outlived his usefulness as a spy.

The 2001 BBC television adaptation of *The Way We Live Now* constitutes an intervention on the question of Melmotte's identity. Where Trollope makes him – in Sutherland's words – 'a national-racial compendium', someone who stands for 'a whole range of 'dishonesties' across 'England, Europe and America' (1998: 160), this screen version would present him in terms of a specific public figure, of someone who had been dead only a decade. In *The Telegraph* Quentin Letts observed:

Its central villain is a great financier called Augustus Melmotte, a ringer for Robert Maxwell. The way Melmotte cons investors and "polite society" is eerily familiar (Letts, 2001).

At the other end of the political spectrum, in the *Socialist Worker*, the comparison was equally apparent:

The portrayal of Melmotte is clearly modelled on Robert Maxwell, the fraudster newspaper owner who committed suicide ten years ago. [...] Like Maxwell, he finds the high and mighty prepared to extol his virtues so long as he seems likely to line their pockets (Harman, 2001).

This interpretation was not merely based on life-story parallels, but consciously developed through performance. As Letts noted, 'the cigar-smoking Melmotte is played by David Suchet and is given a Maxwellian growl.'

That distinctive Maxwell sound had been worked on hard by Suchet who listened to radio and TV recordings when preparing for the role. The Melmotte/Maxwell similarity was in no sense discovered or invented by this adaptation, but constituted an important strand of how the derived text would address its viewers. Suchet stated: 'What audiences will see, if they know Maxwell's background, is that he mirrors the life of Melmotte.' Interviewed for American TV's *Masterpiece Theatre*, Suchet stressed the Melmotte-as-Maxwell angle, returning to the topic even for questions that did not appear to invite it. To 'Do you think that someone who is a great swindler has to be a great actor?' he replied, 'Yes'. The thing about Melmotte and Maxwell is that both had enormous charm, with totally convincing, wonderfully winning ways. In addition to being good actors, both knew how to manipulate people' (Suchet, 2001).

Like Trollope's Melmotte, Maxwell would become an MP. Twice elected, he owed one of his nicknames to Prime Minister Harold Wilson, who described him as 'the bouncing Czech'

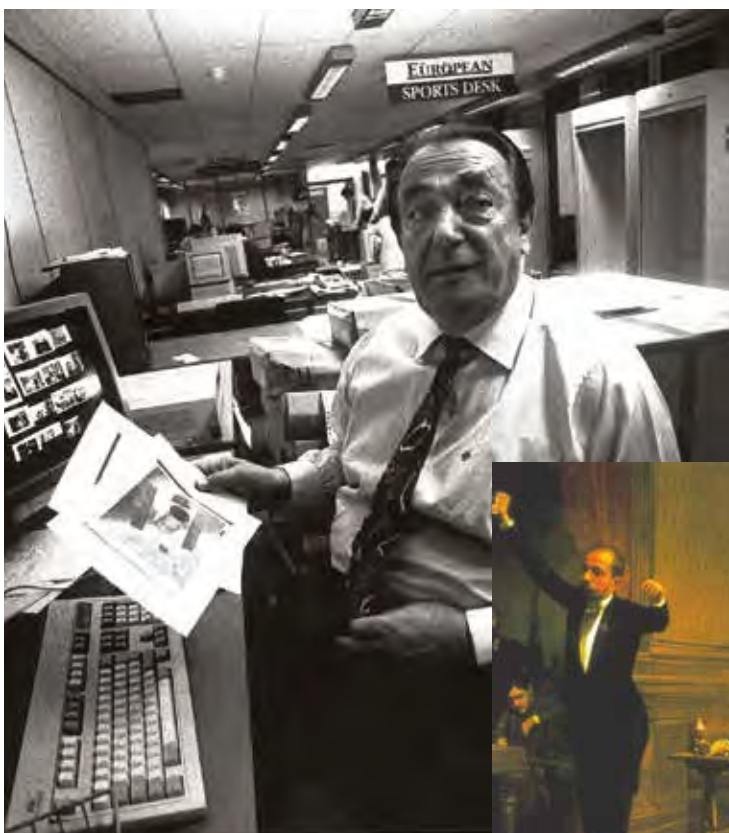


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PENGUIN CLASSICS

ANTHONY TROLLOPE

The Way We Live Now

An inevitable corollary of this version of Melmotte was that, in making him Maxwellian, it effectively decided that he was Jewish, supplanting Trollope's deliberate ambiguity. The years after Maxwell's death had seen an increased interest in his Jewishness, of speculation about his connections with Israel – for example *Maxwell: The Final Verdict* (1996), *The Assassination of Robert Maxwell: Israel's Superspy* (2002) – and this could not but colour audiences' reading of a Maxwell-like Melmotte. In terms of the making and/or finding of meaning, it is notable that the Melmotte-as-Maxwell portrayal was not just a simple accretion, the addition of a further layer of meaning in this particular text. Simultaneously, it rendered this version *less* polysemic that its source, less amenable to multiple readings, and (as will be discussed later) made it more amenable to one particular interpretation.



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Maxwell

In 2007 the BBC broadcast another drama focusing on the final days of a beleaguered public figure with a monumental fraud unravelling around him. David Suchet would not immediately appear the ideal candidate for the title role in *Maxwell*. Many inches shorter, at least a hundred pounds lighter than the real Maxwell, the role with which the actor is most readily associated is a virtual opposite, Hercule Poirot. Poirot is diminutive and dapper, whereas the ebullient newspaper proprietor was famously larger-than-life. However, in interview Suchet would reprise aspects of his description of preparing to play Melmotte, focusing on 'voice' as key to characterisation. He stated: 'in Maxwell's case, it comes from deep down within him. It's an expression of power, of self-assurance, of incredible self-confidence' (Suchet, 2007). It was also, of course, very similar to the voice with which he had earlier rendered Augustus Melmotte for the same broadcaster.

Sharing several characteristics of 'quality' television – seriousness of subject matter, a public service broadcaster, high production values, time of broadcast – the audience for the 2001 Trollope adaptation would likely have mapped substantially onto those who watched the 2007 drama *Maxwell*. Suchet's Maxwell would then have imported a host of associations from his prior portrayal of Melmotte. If his Melmotte had been Maxwellian, then his subsequent Maxwell could hardly avoid being 'Melmottian'. In particular, the 2001 adaptation seemingly deciding Melmotte's origins – removing the novel's opacity, firming up his Jewishness, his foreignness – would through Suchet's double performance emphasise that aspect of Maxwell too.

Like Trollope's Melmotte, Maxwell would become an MP. Twice elected, he owed one of his nicknames to Prime Minister Harold Wilson, who described him as 'the bouncing Czech'. Of itself, the moniker need not be interpreted as anti-Semitic. However, neither can it be ignored that in linking foreignness with untrustworthiness, it echoes a durable theme in anti-Semitic discourse and threatens an interpretation that does not limit Maxwell's foreignness to having been born in Eastern Europe, but that includes his Jewish identity too.

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Difficult territory

Most adaptations make decisions in respect of the texts they adapt. At its simplest, the relative openness of words will be replaced by a variety of concrete visualisations – recognisable actors, physical locations, and objects. There is a parallel impulse, not confined to literature-on-screen, for any version of a well-known text to be re-contextualised, given a contemporary hook, spin or reference, in order to better engage audiences. In this respect, the BBC's *The Way We Live Now* with its Maxwell-inspired version of Melmotte did not do anything that countless other adaptations have not done before, though in intervening on the question of Melmotte's identity it inevitably set the interpretive stakes higher.

If Bragin's review of *An Education* was, in my estimation, over-eager to find and condemn anti-Semitic sentiment in that adaptation, it must be admitted that one review of *The Way We Live Now* indicated the extent to which such ugly sentiment persists. Among its varied and nasty preoccupations the white supremacist website Vanguard News Network had something to say about the BBC adaptation. Worryingly, their reviewer loved it. In a rave review the BBC would rather have avoided, VNN reviewer Gerald Morris praised the screen version as a 'candid portrayal of kikery' and opined that: 'Whether you buy it, rent it or catch it on Masterpiece Theatre... this is a **must have** for White Nationalists. I seldom recommend video over a novel but this production merits it (Morris, undated).

Clearly, this mostly tells us about the reviewer and the prejudices of the Vanguard News Network, demonstrating the axiom that stereotypes tell us little

about those who are stereotyped, but much about those who do the stereotyping. Of course, nobody set out to make an anti-Semitic adaptation, yet they produced a result capable of pleasing anti-Semites. In particular, it was noteworthy how the adaptation's innovations and emphases were lauded. Of the Maxwell/Melmotte parallel Morris wrote:

The comparison to Robert Maxwell by the jew actor Suchet is good and shows but one example of the relevance of this story to today. This is what makes a classic (Morris, undated).

Although the reviewer was unequivocal in attributing to Trollope and his original a worldview similar to his own – 'Anthony Trollope's novel offers penetrating insights into that group's [i.e. Jewish] pathologies which pertain to the way we live *now*' – the consistency with which the adaptation's supposedly heightened anti-Jewish message was identified was even more remarkable e.g. 'Melmotte's malevolence comes through stronger in the video than in the novel' and 'Trollope was a little too kind to Melmotte'. In his enthusiasm to heap garlands upon the BBC's adaptation, Morris even lists as one virtue that 'there are no 'lovable jews' in this production'. Given the reviewer's prejudices, and the context of the website on which it appears, it is ridiculous to note that this last observation seems myopic. Nonetheless, one must ask, how can Morris have failed to observe – for example – Jim Carter's sympathetic performance as the dignified Brehgert? Perhaps, like Bragin reviewing *An Education* (and in a parallel guaranteed to offend both writers), the interpretive destination is such an *idée fixe* as to obscure textual counter-evidence that does not oblige.





A conclusion

Perhaps a great deal was overlooked or wilfully misinterpreted because the interpretive prize for Morris and his racist cronies was to claim an essentially mainstream text for their narrow grouping. If Bragin's response to *An Education* is straightforwardly oppositional, it is far less easy to bracket Morris' review and reading in terms of Hall's tripartite distinction of 'preferred', 'negotiated', 'oppositional'. He is not reading *The Way We Live Now* as its producers would wish it to be read, nor is he criticising it. Rather, readers of his review are presented with a contradictory position, a voice one might even term playful if it were not so chillingly hate-fuelled.

When Morris links *The Way We Live Now* and the Nazi propaganda film *Jew Suss* (1940), contending that they share 'educational value' he performs a rhetorical operation related to Bragin's conjoining of *An Education* with *Der Ewige Jude* (1940), despite their diametrically opposed aims. Morris, politically-aligned to the prejudices of the Nazi pictures, wants to 'find' equivalent views in other texts, especially those that enjoy the imprimatur of respectability. In this respect the status of *The Way We Live Now* is important. A classic adaptation, a screen version of a canonical literary text produced by a respected broadcaster, is significant territory to claim from his position on the nasty margin. For Bragin, it is the respectability of the mainstream text (*An Education*) that needs demolishing through linkage to unarguably offensive pictures.

Castigating reviewers who fail 'to acknowledge the film's anti-Semitism', she makes a case for the movie to be interpreted precisely as a problematic marginal text. While Morris delights in inventing/imputing the meanings he wishes to find, claiming them as historical truths, Bragin's review is a plea for interpretive vigilance against the unchallenged articulation of those longest-standing of fabrications, stereotypes. Assuming the redundancy of any need to illuminate the shortcomings of Morris' wider doctrines, the issue is that the comparatively modest innovations in the adaptation of *The Way We Live Now* have inadvertently provided a foot-in-the-door that facilitates an increased susceptibility to an anti-Semitic reading of derived and source text alike. Adaptation, as these overlapping narratives remind us, is more than decanting a story from one medium to another. It can be a matter of much higher stakes.

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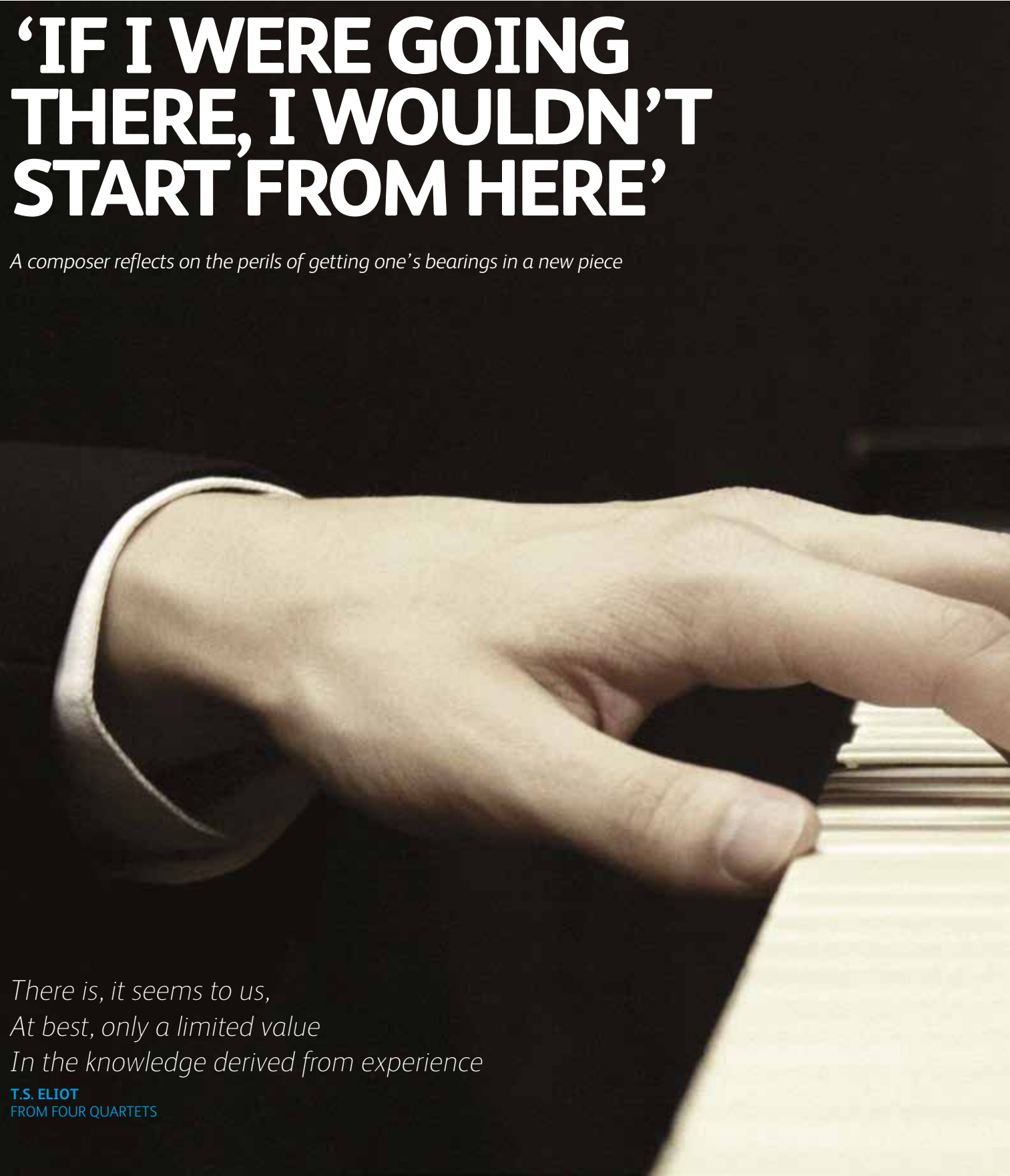
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'IF I WERE GOING THERE, I WOULDN'T START FROM HERE'

A composer reflects on the perils of getting one's bearings in a new piece



*There is, it seems to us,
At best, only a limited value
In the knowledge derived from experience*

T.S. ELIOT
FROM FOUR QUARTETS



The apocryphal Irish response to a request for directions, which serves as a title to this piece, has often struck me as pertinent to the composer's condition. I wish I had a pound for every time somebody asks – usually with mingled wonderment and asperity – 'what kind of music do you write?' as if might be edible (it isn't), combustible (it is), or useful in score form in the smallest room (no comment). It is a question to which there is neither a clear nor a consistently true answer. One may duck its true intent by mentioning 'technique' in an externalised way. But in the parallel context of poetry, Edwin Muir wrote how the term technique '...always gives me a slightly bewildered feeling; if I can translate it as skill I am more at home with it, for skill is always a quality of the thing that is being said or done, not a general thing at all' (Knight, 1980). Muir acknowledges that, in effect, skill is inseparable from idea; the thing being 'said' indivisible from the means of saying it.

That's of little help to my interlocutor above – but it does acknowledge something about the nature of what we casually label 'inspiration'. One very seldom has a compositional idea and *then* thinks, 'I wonder how I can do that'. It has been claimed that an entire movement could spring unbidden into Mozart's brain in an instant. That seems less sensational to the jobbing composer than to the layperson, both because the norms of Classical form which Mozart was extending were fundamentally so predictable, like a vessel waiting to have the requisite content poured into it, and because local detail proceeds only later from the panoramic overview to which Classical form is especially conducive. In any case, what it fails to acknowledge is that the composer's first spontaneous mental image of his or her incipient piece is almost never borne out in the finished result. The finished result stares back at its creator, and is become 'other'. It may satisfy him or her in a variety of ways intellectual, emotional or even spiritual; but, as in a memorably gruesome scene from the film *Alien*, the incubus will have escaped its human confines in the meantime, sprouted legs and run off on them, evading his clutches until another season. Tchaikovsky is reported in various sources to have observed that every piece becomes a dress rehearsal for the next, and the foregoing comments serve to suggest how that might be so: the bit that got away becomes the starting point for the next attempt.

'Inspiration' sits amicably alongside Muir's comment, and doesn't necessarily pick a quarrel with Tchaikovsky's either. Yet the composer will not always be in the happy position of taking wing so spontaneously: there will be times when he has to kick-start the sluggish engine and force it into motion. Work on most compositions extends over days or weeks and through an entire spectrum of moods: morning, evening, night; good weather, foul weather; stress, apathy, boredom, excitement, joy, fury. These phases will embody a *mélange* of musical *mots justes*, flashes of summer lightning, tight corners, square pegs in round holes and moments of educated artifice posing as 'the real thing'. Consider, if you will, the

comedian and satirist Rory Bremner – clever, with an agile mind; an accomplished theatrical translator from German; an engaging political commentator; not, in my estimation, an especially acute mimic. The mimicry is interesting. Find, say, five defining oddities in your human subject, then play on them at a relatively consistent rate, perhaps in rotation. Make no especial effort at verisimilitude for anything up to twenty seconds in between, but rely on that handful of identifying features – and, behold, your victim’s identity becomes vividly recognisable, the intervening neutrality of the other material overlooked by a forgiving audience. Apply something of the same notion to a composer of the past, the evidence of whose academic schooling arguably outweighs intermittent hints of his ‘inspiration’ – Glazunov, perhaps; or Stanford; or Bruch; or the up-and-coming Saint-Saëns of whom Berlioz, the Robin Williams of his day in both repartee and, oddly enough, physiognomy, notoriously remarked, ‘he lacks inexperience’. In Muir’s terms or, indeed, Bremner’s, these composers exemplify an alternation of ‘technique’ and ‘skill’. Perhaps, indeed, technique is merely what remains to you when ‘skill’ capriciously departs?

There are perhaps two other issues worth briefly reflecting upon here. One is composition’s relationship to time. The other is its metaphorical parallels with language.

Music is Janus-faced. A listener’s experience of the finished product is temporal; the composer’s relationship with the unfinished one not necessarily so. Composers acknowledge a term, ‘through-composing’, by which they refer to the starting of a composition where it also begins in performance, followed by ‘the continuing of the same until it be thoroughly finished’. Despite the tonic sol-fa wisdom expounded to the von Trapp family in *The Sound of Music*, the very beginning may not always be a very good place to start. Unfortunately, the default setting of the student compositional mind is that it is the only option, and this profoundly counterproductive state of affairs has been greatly aggravated by the advent of software which militates against sketching and drafting, while conspiring through cosmetic appearance to flatter the impressionable eye and mind into a ‘fair copy mentality’. It looks set in stone; *ergo est* – and no questions need ever be asked again. Oh dear... In reality (a place in which relatively few student composers are to be found), the point

of entry into a new work may be anywhere. If the prize is there for the taking, then the composer may do well to imitate the action of the burglar, who seldom enters by the front door, but instead – like floodwater – finds the most permeable point. To students, I have sometimes likened the starting of a new piece to one of those monstrous jigsaw puzzles attempted only when yuletide overindulgence has largely eliminated the will to live. The first small accretion of pieces may yield clues neither to the local image which they portray, nor to its contextual place in some wider scheme of things. Gradually, however, more such islets take form, as yet unrelated and unplaceable. Some may find it helpful to complete the perimeter next, in an attempt to establish the position of the islets; this, too, offers a reasonable analogy with compositional form, or at least with some outer structural casing inside which everything else must belong.

Even when dealing with the setting of text to music, one can profitably avoid being forced into the Procrustean bed of through-composing. Poets are wont to speak evasively of ‘form’, which frequently boils down to whatever shape the finished product has acquired. That might seem like sophistry, yet it

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Music is Janus-faced. A listener’s experience of the finished product is temporal; the composer’s relationship with the unfinished one not necessarily so

Much is talked about music as a language, but composers themselves have tended to concentrate on the fault line separating the two: music beginning where words are powerless to express; music powerless to 'express' anything



comes back to Muir's view of 'skill' and to 'the thing being said'. It also offers a certain parallel to forms of composition, such as fugue or variation over a recurrent 'ground' bass, which are inherently organic and linear rather than inclined towards recapitulation. One of the reasons why symphonic Beethoven is so arresting, is its status as a battleground between 'Classical' form and something at once older and newer. Classical sonata form might be likened to a diligent flower arrangement: left and right (or an opening 'exposition' and concluding 'recapitulation') enjoy a certain frozen symmetry, given which, the middle has only – in a simplistic sense – 'to be the middle'. Lift it out and replace it with the corresponding section from a work in the same key, and in many cases nobody would be any the wiser. What we misguidedly call 'development sections' in such music are often consciously *avoiding* recourse to the movement's main themes, both because over-exposure is laden with risk and because in any case the themes of a natural melodist do not generally lend themselves to fragmentation. They are complete as the sum of their parts, not as the parts, just as a radio works better intact than smashed to smithereens with a hammer – and we do not need to know how a radio's components work in order to appreciate what comes out of the assembled object.

In contrast, the process of metamorphosis set in motion by the first movement of Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony cannot be wound back to its point of origin, however strenuously Classical form may insist. Once metamorphosis has got hold of the acorn and turned it into an oak tree, it will be difficult to return it to the jam jar whence it came. And yet, while much organic and linear music of this type may be imbued with a kind of compulsive directional certitude, thus lending itself to relatively lengthy stretches of 'through-composition', even this may have come together haphazardly from inchoate shards of an idea. Another of my favoured analogies to students is the *whodunit* – if you write one, you must start from the solution or *dénouement* as your starting point, even though this is in effect the end. Only then can you work backwards, teasing out cause and effect at the same time as rationalising how to feed the withheld content incrementally to your reader. Kierkegaard caught something of this in his celebrated remark that life had to be lived forwards but understood backwards. It is a position which our

Irish roadside helper in my title would recognise: you can't go there without working out where best to start from. And so it is sometimes, I think, with Beethoven: areas of local detail will have been the product of the summer lightning mentioned earlier – the momentary felicity, the fleeting inspiration caught on the wing in the mental butterfly net. But the generality is an implacable sense of gravitational homing towards an inevitable conclusion. We may not be able to do likewise, but we can certainly look, and listen, and prod and poke, and climb around inside the structure, and see *how it is done*.

Much nonsense is talked about music as a language, but composers themselves have tended to concentrate on the fault line separating the two: music beginning where words are powerless to express (Debussy and, earlier, Mendelssohn, among others); music powerless to 'express' (in any literal sense) anything (Stravinsky); etc. This paradoxical focus on blurred abstractions mirrors a common human trait of defining one thing in the terms of another: thus the Swedish symphonist Franz Berwald became 'the Berlioz of the North', just as Bruges is sometimes compared in similar terms with Venice, or St Petersburg with Buenos Aires. 'Wagner is the Puccini of music', allegedly wrote J.B. Morton with rather more mischief in mind. But music is not the language of anything. At a conference convened by my colleague Robert Sholl in 2008, Peter Bannister arrestingly argued that music, like God, is irreducible to anything beyond itself; therefore the believer's inability to say what – in the deepest sense – is 'going on' in music mirrors his or her incapacity to articulate what is 'going on' with the divine.

Despite this, for the composer, the viably linguistic dimension of music may be less a sense of the numinous, more the mundane mechanics of its 'parts of speech'. The moments which he permits himself to recognise as flowerings of inspiration may seem to have some parallel with those fragments of a poem which both leap visually off the printed page and orally capture ear and imagination. But there are also the musical prepositions and conjunctions, the humdrum linkages and dutiful gerunds and unavoidably platitudinous turns of phrase whose destiny is but seldom to transcend the functional. In fact, they are the 'Bremner' or 'Saint-Saëns' moments where what is settled for is merely adequate – fit for purpose in a way that still lowers the bar. These



may have a certain transient neutrality, failing to proclaim the stamp of their individual creator, but they *could* also be elevated by exercise of well-ordered compositional craft. Sometimes a revelatory instant of the hoped-for magic may be a mere semiquaver out of reach, a narrow miss – like the tantalising story that Bach and Handel once passed through the same city on the same day, attempted to meet and, being but human, failed for all eternity.

I am currently constructing a 20-minute piece for mezzo-soprano, chorus and orchestra. The text is a collation of materials, some of which require a labyrinthine ordeal of copyright clearance (still in progress). At the time of writing, balancing passages from the beginning and end have taken form, like musical book-ends. A kind of dynamic shape established itself in the early stages of manipulating the 'libretto', which draws partly upon Psalm 107, thus placing a marine storm at the centre and a metaphorical, existential return to safe harbour at the end. Musical motifs have been tried and tested, some retained and some rejected. This is a case of determining what hoops one requires one's raw material to jump through, then fashioning it accordingly: if you want to go there, work out your point of departure. To add to the complexity, some passages tend to come with sonority an integral part of the idea, and thus to require immediate scoring for orchestra; others to be sufficient unto the day, demanding at this stage only 'short score' notation on two or three musical staves. That precipitates the yuletide jigsaw effect with a vengeance: discontinuous papers of all shapes and sizes, covered with passages for anything between one instrument and at least sixty. I always compose in longhand, sometimes at the piano, sometimes not, going to the *Sibelius* software only when the finished score is ready for origination in print, and find the spatial dimension of a piece pinned all around the room much more liberating than the confining geometry of the computer monitor. When composing *Le Sacre du Printemps* in 1912-13, Stravinsky festooned the walls of his rented Parisian apartment with manuscript



paper, before working around it like a decorator (whom, in a sense, he became). Presumably like him, I rather enjoy the sense that on a Friday one may be scribbling on the wall above the desk, then suddenly realise that what one is doing relates back to what one did under the radiator on Monday.

It may be no accident that a number of composers have excelled at the combination of spatial thinking and planning ahead required in chess – in the twentieth century Frank Martin and Sergei Prokofiev, to name but two. In the words of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: 'Man is but a network of relationships, and these alone matter to him'. That seems a very fair encapsulation of the composer's mentality, too, and of the elusive, shifting matrix on which the compositional game plays itself out.

But we can't go there today. I started from the wrong place.

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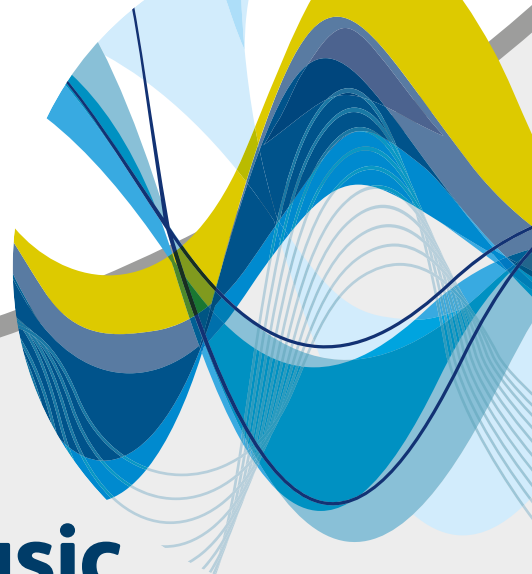
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Jose Ruizalba and Khalid Hafeez | University of West London, UK

INTERVIEW

KEEPING PROMISES

Professor Christian Grönroos, from the Hanken School of Economics at Helsinki in Finland, recently selected as a Legend in Marketing, shares his vision of the future for marketing

K. Hafeez: Can you tell us about the Nordic School of Marketing, and its contribution to the field of marketing?

C. Grönroos: The Nordic School is essentially a brand name that Evert Gummesson decided to use at the second service conference arranged by American Marketing Association in 1982 as a name for our approach to service marketing research. We had attended the first conference in this series in 1980, and realised that both our methodological approach and our way of developing service marketing knowledge differed substantially from the North American approach. The participants listened politely, and said 'interesting', but clearly did not consider it relevant. So we decided that we needed to demonstrate that our approach was not just that of two single researchers, but something bigger than that. At the conference the Nordic School was indeed recognised as something to pay attention to.

Its main contribution, in my view, is that it legitimises an alternative approach to the standard Anglo-Saxon approach to both the scientific research and to the field of service itself. It gives young researchers a platform for their research. The Nordic School was soon recognised as one school of thought in the field, and is growing.

J. Ruizalba: You have been selected as a Legend in Marketing the first one outside the USA. What does it mean to you?

C. Grönroos: Being selected *Legend in Marketing* means of course a lot. I am extremely honoured to have been selected. It demonstrates that I really have made an impact on research in my field. It also made it possible to publish my scientific work in the English language in a series of eight volumes covering service logic, service marketing, service management, service quality, relationship marketing, marketing communication, marketing theory, and internal marketing. I have also been recognised in my home country in ways I wouldn't otherwise have been. For example, my alma mater, Hanken School of Economics Finland, named a marketing chair Grönroos Professor of Marketing.

J. Ruizalba: You have published recently an article (2014) in which you analyse the mental footprint of marketing in the boardroom. What do you mean when you say that 'marketing is essentially a mental model'?

C. Grönroos: This article was written jointly with Tore Strandvik and Maria Holmlund. I was not the lead author. However, we all want to emphasise that as long as marketing is considered a function, making decisions about a set of marketing mix variables and related issues, it will never become a strategic issue for top management and the board. It is important to realise that marketing, instead, is a matter of relating a firm to its customers, and for this the support of most business functions is needed. Hence, being customer-focused is imperative, and this means that marketing basically should be seen as a mental model of customer-focus throughout the organisation.

If promises are not kept successfully, marketing as a process will fail in the end. Customers will be unsatisfied with the quality they get and they will not return



Illustration by Charlie James

K. Hafeez: What are the implications of a ‘focus on interaction’ rather than ‘exchange’ in respect of service marketing?

C. Grönroos: When marketing focuses on exchange, the dominant interest is to make promises, to be able to achieve exchanges (sales), whereas a focus on interaction and interactions with customers moves the interest beyond exchange and making promises, and demonstrates that to be successful, service marketing has to be an integration of promise making and United Kingdom. In consumer goods marketing keeping promises is more straightforward; basically the product takes care of that. In service contexts there are no ready-made products. The service is a process which is reproduced every time a customer is to be serviced. Hence, promise keeping is reproduced every time a customer is serviced.

J. Ruizalba: How did you become interested in service management and service logic?

C. Grönroos: Very early in the 1980s in the Nordic School approach we realised that marketing is not a separate function, and that the phrase ‘service marketing’ is misleading. Instead the term ‘service management’ came to be used as an abbreviation of market-oriented or customer-focused management in service contexts.

As to service logic, without really realising it from the very beginning, I studied service as a perspective on firms, and in the beginning, only service firms, instead of marketing services as a separate category of products. In the late 1980s goods marketing firms started to approach me about what service marketing really was, and were clearly interested in what service marketing could offer them. Gradually, I realised that it is really about service as a logic. However, before the international discussion of service as a perspective emerged with the introduction of service-dominant logic, I did not use this term and articulate the perspective in a clearly defined way as a logic for business and marketing as I do now.

J. Ruizalba: You coined the term ‘interactive marketing’, can you explain the importance of keeping the ‘promise’ to customers and the performance of employees in relation to this concept?

C. Grönroos: If promises are not kept successfully, marketing as a process will fail in the end. Customers will be dissatisfied with the quality they get and they will not return. In service contexts this process of keeping promises takes place mainly in direct customer-firm interactions. Hence, if these interactions fail, the marketing process fails. Consequently, they are part of marketing, and I introduced the term ‘interactive marketing’ for this part of the total marketing process. The firm’s employees are in a key position in the interactive marketing process. They form the only resource which can listen (and see) and evaluate what they have heard (and seen), and take immediate actions. In service processes where employees are normally not present, they have a central role when something unexpected occurs; for example when there is a failure, or when the customer wants to deviate from the planned path. Hence, employees are always critical to success.

K. Hafeez: Can you talk through the impact of your work on the ‘existing service provision’. How do you see the service industries impacting on economics and the future of global virtual commerce?

C. Grönroos: Firms have over the years implemented a service perspective, and put growing emphasis on interactive marketing. However, this process has been much slower than I had hoped, and expected. Many service firms are essentially product-oriented firms, emphasising promise making and downplaying or neglecting United Kingdom. Such firms often talk about their service as products, and mentally seem to think that promises made by conventional marketing activities are automatically kept by a pre-produced ‘product’ which in reality does not exist.

In the future, service will, in my view, be more and more important, both as new service concepts, and as a service-oriented perspective on how to manage a business, regardless of industry.



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As long as marketing is considered a function, making decisions about a set of marketing mix variables and related issues, it will never become a strategic issue for top management and the board

J. Ruizalba: **As you say, services will be more important in the future world. In the UK, services account for 80% of the GDP and this percentage has been increasing every year. This has been possible due to many factors. One of these factors has been the huge investment in workforce training. In a recent study from researchers of the Imperial College (Goodgridge, Haskel and Wallis, 2014) it is shown that from 1990 to 2011 the relevant investment has increased from £13.7 billion to £33.6 billion. In your view what role do training and human and organisational capital play in improving the activity of an organisation?**

C. Grönroos: The role of training and of human and organisational capital will be immense in the future. Regardless of how much the importance of technology grows – and it grows – firms must not be overwhelmed by it. The impact of people on firm success will remain important.

J. Ruizalba: **At the University of West London, a key element of our strategic plan is the concept of ‘useful knowledge’. In your view what can academics offer to the industry?**

C. Grönroos: In my view, academics should on the one hand offer codified, systematised existing practices, which means that existing practices can be used more effectively and efficiently than before. On the other hand, and perhaps more importantly, academics should develop new ways of thinking, models and instruments to be used by firms in order to make business more effective and efficient.

Academic institutions should offer relevant future-oriented knowledge, without forgetting to create skills that students will need to handle existing tasks. A problem here is that business schools seem to remain in yesterday’s world, and let knowledge and models from the industrial era dominate education.

K. Hafeez: **Why are ‘moments of truth’ essential for the perception of the quality of the service? How does this may impact as a ‘turning point’ towards companies’ service strategy?**

C. Grönroos: The concept of ‘moments of truth’ was introduced in the service field by Richard Normann. Moments of truth are moments which are critical to a customer’s perception of the service. In a service process, there are normally a whole range of such moments. If they are mismanaged, service fails, the service quality is low, and interactive marketing fails. Hence, realising the existence and importance of the many moments of truth in a service process is critical for understanding how to develop and implement a service strategy in a firm.

J. Ruizalba: **According to the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 99.9% of private sector firms in the UK are SMEs. How can they design a good marketing strategy with low budget?**

C. Grönroos: Basically, marketing is to make a firm relevant to its customers. To that extent it is a matter of organising the way SMEs function, such that they take good care of their customers’ practices. Firms do all this, and sometimes outsource some of this. A problem is that, for example, customer information, invoicing, complaints handling, and other processes are developed and managed as operational, administrative, legal or purely financial routines, instead of as service to their customers. Hence, they are perceived as nuisances and additional; unwanted costs and psychological burdens rather than as support to customer processes. I have called such activities ‘hidden services’, because firms hide them for their customers by managing them as non-service, and thereby causing unnecessary problems for the customers.

By making existing processes and routines customer-focused, and such that they function as service for the customers, interactive marketing functions, and word of mouth through various social media, or in old fashion ways, start to take care of customer acquisition. The need for conventional marketing may still exist, but it will probably demand a smaller budget, which often is important for SMEs.

K. Hafeez: How do you see 'value in use' and how can this be implemented by SMEs?

C. Grönroos: Value in use means that customer value is created, perceived, and determined by the customer. For SMEs, as for any firms, this means that the firms should mentally realise that they do not produce final value, and certainly do not deliver value to their customers. Instead they should realise that the only thing they can do is to facilitate their customers' value creation by supporting the customers' practices (activities and processes) as well as possible with their products, services and hidden services. In that way the customers will feel that the firm is meaningful to them, and they will buy and buy more.

The firm can develop, produce and deliver potential value in use, but not real value. Real value emerges in the customers' processes.

J. Ruizalba: How would you define 'culture of service'? What are its key elements? And how can it be implemented in firms?

C. Grönroos: In my view, a culture of service means that everyone in an organisation considers providing customers – internal and external customers – with a good service (or excellent service, if you will) – a dominant norm and a natural way for organisational life. Providing good service requires a customer-focus, and therefore a service culture is both service-focused and customer-focused.

A culture of service does not emerge by itself. It has to be created, and constantly reinforced. And it is easily destroyed by the introduction of a wrong kind of KPI, for example. Installing a service culture demands a service strategy, and a management team that seriously implements such a strategy. Organisational structures, resourcing, training, and everyday management and supervisory behaviour are elements in a process towards installing and maintaining a culture of service.

J. Ruizalba: What do you understand by 'part-time marketers' and what are its implications?

C. Grönroos: The part-time marketer term was introduced by Evert Gummesson in the late 1980s to indicate employees in a firm who have a decisive impact on customers' perception of service quality and therefore also on their willingness to continue buying from this firm, but who do not belong to a marketing department or similar of full-time marketers. They have been trained as marketers and appointed for marketing tasks. Part-time marketers have dual responsibilities – they need to perform their duties in a technically good way, but at the same time, do it in a way which makes the customers satisfied and interested to continue as customers. They seldom have any marketing training and are normally not appointed for this marketing-like part of their duties. However, if part-time marketers fail in making customers satisfied and interested in continuing as customers, interactive marketing fails, and in the end the whole marketing process is unsuccessful.

As Evert Gummesson has pointed out, almost invariably a firm's part-time marketers outnumber the full-time marketers many times over, and on top of that they are present in customer interfaces where a marketing impact is required, and at the exact time when it is needed, whereas the full-time marketers are not. Part-time marketers are instrumental in 'United Kingdom', whereas full-time marketers' duties are mainly restricted to making promises.



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In the future world, service will, in my view, be more and more important, both as new service concepts, and as a service-oriented perspective on how to manage a business, regardless of industry

J. Ruizalba: **What was the best advice that you received in your professional career?**

C. Grönroos: Probably the best piece of advice I have received was when a colleague of mine in the beginning of my doctoral studies told me to drop the topic of a doctoral thesis, which I had written a seminar paper on, and to concentrate on one particular section of that paper. That section was on service marketing.

K. Hafeez: **What advice would you give to a student of a Business School?**

C. Grönroos: Be ambitious, focus on what will be important in the relevant future, but don't forget that much of the existing knowledge is still important in the future. The impact of technology will grow and technology will be used in new ways, which we don't know much about today, but in firms, the culture of the organisation will be exceedingly important for successful implemented business. And customer focus, which also means a service perspective, will increase in importance.

On the other hand, we can never know enough about the future, so be open-minded, such that you see when these thoughts are about to become obsolete, and recognise what new trend is on the horizon.

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Keywords

service management; service logic; interactive marketing; part-time marketers

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STUDENT PROFILE



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Course

PhD in Education, University of West London, UK

Year completed

2014

Title of thesis

Collaborative provision within UK higher education: Perceptions of stakeholders of UK and Sri Lankan private colleges offering university degrees in business and management

John's thesis focused on the complexities emerging from the opening-up of higher education (HE) markets to private providers in the UK in relation to students coming from outside of the UK. His research investigated collaborative partnerships between higher education institutions and small private for-profit colleges. He studied specifically the rationale for such collaborations and the perceptions of the stakeholders involved (management, HE and college-based staff, policy-makers, and international students).

There are strong economic motives that have driven the establishment of collaborative HE partnerships with for-profit providers in the UK. This has been supported by various government policies, as providing a partial solution to the difficult financial situation in which universities find themselves in the face of increased global and local competition. At the same time, government intervention in the HE private sector also attempts to exercise some form of control over private institutions through regular reviews to monitor quality, and inspections to monitor compliance. Nonetheless, the growth of collaborative HE has opened-up a space for private HE providers and it enables them to play a significant role within the UK HE sector. As a result, the distinction between public and private higher education provision has become less sharp. There has been very little empirical research published on this phenomenon. John's research is therefore timely. It broadens our understanding of these activities and brings to light empirical evidence that illuminates the motivations of private providers, and the experience of international students within this part of the sector.

In his thesis, John explored the tensions at the heart of public-private collaborative HE and outlined key challenges and implications for both HE institutions and policy-makers. He identified three key findings regarding students' motivation for studying at for-profit private institutions: (a) for-profit provision enabled students to acquire a UK degree at a lower cost; (b) students saw this step as a route to 'regular' higher education; and (c) there was considerable evidence to suggest that students were influenced by private recruitment agencies that represent the interests of their clients, i.e. HE private providers.

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In his thesis John explored the tensions at the heart of public-private collaborative HE and outlined key challenges and implications for both HE institutions and policy-makers

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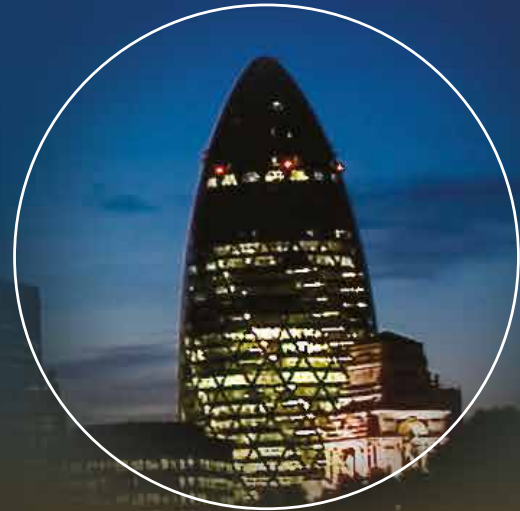




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