

THE MERCHANT OF PRATO

Iris Origo

London: Jonathan Cape, 1957

Rarely do we have the opportunity to read in detail about the marketing practices of a merchant active in the second half of the fourteenth century. Looking backward more than half the length of this millennium, one cannot help but be intrigued not only with all that has changed so significantly in the way that business is conducted but also, and more surprisingly, with what has remained in many respects essentially the same. Francisco di Marco Martini, the Merchant of Prato referred to in the title, was born, as far as can be determined, in 1335. By 1350, he had left his native Prato to begin a career as trader and merchant in Avignon in France, at that time the seat of the Papacy. From that date until early in the next century, he was active in trade with his headquarters sequentially in Avignon, Prato, and Florence. Martini also operated with subsidiary partnerships or joint ventures in almost all of the then important centers of trade.

As is emphasized throughout the monograph, Martini's was not one of the great international trading companies of the period. Because of that fact, his initiatives were less likely to fall on hard times than were those of more prominent firms often required to make substantial loans to rulers subsequently loathe to pay back what they had borrowed. Mr. Martini, rather, was a fourteenth-century niche marketer who succeeded in remaining lean, mean, flexible, and opportunistic in a world characterized by both constant social change and periodic political upheavals. Phrased in marketing parlance, within the context of the uncontrollable variables of his time, Martini creatively managed for a variety of different products and ventures the various components of the marketing mix. As circumstances dictated, Martini became manufacturer, banker, wholesaler, and/or retailer.

But why do we know so much about this particular merchant? The answer to this question comes in two parts. The first relates to Martini's way of doing business. He was an inveterate fourteenth-century writer of letters of instruction, both to his wife regarding household affairs and to all those with whom he was doing business. He also appears to have been obsessed first with documenting every transaction or agreement and then with carefully saving what he had documented. But that we have access to this treasure trove of commercial history is also due in large part to the fact that Martini's voluminous records have survived almost intact. When his correspondence files were rediscovered in 1870, after having been all but forgotten for more than 300 years, they were found to include 150,000 letters, more than 500 account

books and ledgers, 300 deeds of partnership, and 400 insurance policies (p. 11).

Origo, the author of this monograph, devoted considerable attention to topics of obvious interest to students of marketing. This is even done in a way that causes one to think in terms of marketing functions or marketing flows, though Origo herself never presented material using this terminology. In particular, one finds surprisingly extensive discussions of the very well-developed role of insurance, of when title changed as wool was processed into cloth, and of the impact of piracy and, literally, highway robbery, on the movement of goods, information, and money. Similarly, the role of the Martini family as consumers—of food, clothing, shelter, and health care—is also extensively documented. What Martini, his considerably younger wife, and the illegitimate daughter that lived with them owned and presumably wore is spelled out in considerable detail. The source of much of this information is an extensive household inventory compiled in 1397.

The monograph itself is divided into two major sections, the first dealing with Martini as merchant and manufacturer and the second focusing on the Martini household. In both of these sections, extensive use is made of the treasure trove of documentation that had survived for close to 600 years. In addition, valuable information is provided on the historical context within which all of this marketing activity took place. In particular, the impact of the Papacy's move to Avignon, the governmental upheavals of the time, the decline of the guilds, the periodic recurrence of plague, and the operating practices of Italian traders resident abroad are carefully and interestingly sketched out.

The author also provides some very interesting observations on the merchant and his times. A great deal of insight into Martini's character is parsimoniously conveyed by some of Origo's descriptions. "He lived in daily dread of war, pestilence, famine and insurrection, in daily expectation of bad news. He believed neither in the stability of any government nor the honesty of any man" (p. 81). One also finds the Avignon of the period of Papal residency described as "both magnificent and squalid but with luxury and misery in peculiarly sharp contrast" (p. 31). As well, the everyday life of the Martini family is characterized as "conducted with a cheese paring frugality alternating with sudden splashes of extravagance." The author also describes Francesco as relentlessly driven by a desire for profits but who, at the same time, claimed he had "always kept his word, had indulged in no sharp practice and had never made illegal profits" (p. 153).

A recurrent theme is Martini's efforts over more than half a century to balance his lust for profits and a growing religiosity. This is always a difficult balancing act but especially, as Origo documents, at a time when trade still had to be financed while usury remained a sin. This required Martini, using "dry exchange," to walk a very thin line indeed. Our merchant, over the later half of his life, periodically tried, without too much success, to moderate his desires, wind up his worldly affairs, and to have more time for God (p. 155). But while rendering unto God was a desired if not always obtainable objective for Martini, the same cannot be said for rendering unto Caesar. Datini had to operate as best he could within a variety of nations and city-states in an environment characterized by regulation, taxation, favoritism, and, above all, almost constant political turmoil.

The author of this monograph was neither a professor of marketing nor the type of business historian with whose work marketing academics of the historical persuasion have become familiar in recent years. Rather, she was a social historian whose descriptions of the merchant and his period are both thorough and rich in descriptive insights. She was also, almost certainly, a historian who would have been just as excited about studying the correspondence and the medical records of a physician practicing during that same period. It is not the absence of descriptive material describing marketing practice that is in fact voluminously documented but rather that of a conceptual marketing framework that made reading this monograph a somewhat more laborious task than had been anticipated.

This reviewer's longing for a framework drawn from the marketing literature is likely to be shared by many but by no means all who profess an interest in marketing history. There are some among our number who gain great professional satisfaction from detailed studies—both of their own and those authored by others—of the business practices of a particular organization or community during a given period. Such marketing historians are likely to accept *The Merchant of Prato* on its own terms and to praise it as an exemplary study in specificity. But other marketing academics whose historical interests, like those of this reviewer, are wider than they are deep will almost certainly put this monograph down, regretting the absence of a comparative analysis of business practices and/or a cross-cultural study of fourteenth-century consumption.

Origo focused in considerable detail on Martini's voluminous correspondence with his overseas partners. My personal preference would have been, even at the cost of there having been far fewer direct quotations from historical source material, for Origo to have then drawn some comparisons between the business practices of the Italian merchants of the period and those, say, of their Hanseatic League counterparts. Even more important, why stop at telling us that very Catholic merchants such as Martini believed that only two things in life, religion and trade, were of any real importance? Does this not

have relevance to the arguments advanced by Tawney and others, who maintained that only a Protestant ethic could have nurtured Europe's spirit of capitalism? Both the similarities and the differences, in values held and in practices followed, between the Merchant of Prato and his Protestant counterparts three centuries later would have been well worth discussing.

In summary, then, *The Merchant of Prato* provides us with a surprisingly complete study of the life and times of an Italian entrepreneur active throughout the entire second half of the fourteenth century. The merchant's business practices are spelled out in great detail as are the consumption patterns of his household. The descriptions provided were made possible by the fact that the extensive correspondence and business records of the merchant in question, Francisco di Marco Martini, have survived the ravages of time. Trade practices, manufacturing, banking, and household consumption are discussed within the social, economic, and political context of the period. Origo's monograph presents truly remarkable insights into the marketing practices of a particular time and place. For that reason alone, any academic interested in the history of marketing would be well advised to read this truly unique study. At the same time, those who prefer their marketing history to emphasize the comparative, the evolutionary, or the recurrent theme may well finish their examination longing for an expanded discussion that would have placed this material in a broader historical context or presented it in a marketing systems framework.

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MARKETING AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN EAST AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Anthony Pecotich and Clifford Shultz, editors
New York: McGraw-Hill, 1997

In a time when everyone is talking about the globalization of business, one of the problems that academics encounter can be a paucity of good summary source materials for use in the graduate or advanced undergraduate classroom. *Marketing and Consumer Behavior in East and South-East Asia*, a collection edited by Anthony Pecotich and Clifford Shultz, makes a strong effort in attempting to remedy that situation as it relates to one part of the world.

The book has an introductory discussion by the two editors that adds a nice integrative dimension to the text. It gives a solid regional overview and sets the stage for the rest of the book by providing both a functional and theoretical framework for the following country chapters. Given the wide diversity encompassed by the region and recent events in the

region, such an overview is extremely useful for someone just beginning to study the region or even someone revisiting it.

Seventeen of the individual chapters are about countries from East and Southeast Asia. What makes this a very intriguing collection is that we get to explore marketing and consumer behavior issues in such countries as Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam. Most of the academic-directed textbooks pay little or no attention to these smaller yet very unique countries. Instead, these texts focus all their attention on important yet often well-covered countries such as Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, and Indonesia. The diversity of the region is such that the use of all the countries in the region by the Pecotich and Shultz text makes this a very solid contribution in the discipline. In addition, we get an extra chapter on an entire continent, Australia, and a chapter on the island country of New Zealand to round out the nineteen-chapter undertaking.

In this volume, the two editors have put together a solid collection of writings that explore each of the major countries in the East and Southeast Asian regions. Two particular elements of the endeavor enhance its value. Those two elements are the use of a wide variety of authors from the areas examined and the breadth of the material delivered in many of the chapters. Too often, I think we see summary pieces written from an external viewpoint. These completely external viewpoints, while not inherently being flawed, at times lack those small nuances that come through the pen of an indigenous author. Pecotich and Shultz have created a nice partnering of global authors in a number of these chapters. While reading some of these chapters, the reader may sense a "little something extra" that comes through in the discussion.

In regards to the second point of breadth, I commend the authors of many of the chapters for providing not just what is often termed "standard marketing and consumer behavior data" discussions. While a couple of the chapters come up a little short on this dimension, in most cases, the reader is given a wide brush of the cultural, economic, and political landscape of the country being examined. Having used this book with my graduate MBA students, I can attest to the ability of this volume to bring a group of students with a somewhat limited knowledge of the area up to speed very quickly.

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MARKETING STRATEGY AND UNCERTAINTY

Sharan Jagpal
Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998

Rather than keep the reader in suspense, I confess right from the start that Professor Sharan Jagpal's *Marketing*

Strategy and Uncertainty, published recently by Oxford University Press, is an exceptional book.

When I recently received a copy from the publishers, I quite greedily perused the entire book almost immediately, well prior to being asked to review it for this journal. As the apocryphal tale of academics has it, the famed Dons of yore spent their lifetime planning their magnum opus in three volumes, only to die writing in the middle of the first. I am extraordinarily pleased for those of us in the academy that Professor Jagpal has not waited any longer to keep the ideas contained in this book to himself. In a nutshell, it is a delight that Professor Jagpal has organized and put down on paper some of the highly original and *recherché* ideas on the major managerial problems of marketing.

The macrolevel nature of the book can be gleaned from the nature and scope of the problems addressed. In this tour de force, Professor Jagpal embarks on a voyage that begins with the fundamental and critical issues of pricing—such as examining the impact of input and output uncertainty and the effectiveness of coupons in different market structure scenarios. He then takes us through issues such as consumer behavior, evaluating the firm's new product introduction decision, media planning, and compensation decision. Jagpal then concludes this with a breathtaking chapter on choosing domestic and international strategy in uncertain environments wherein he argues for country-specific policies suggesting that strictly global strategies can actually be dysfunctional despite the benefits that accrue from reduced coordination costs.

Reviewing a book of this magnitude always poses certain challenges (as has been borne out for me by one of the reviewers of this manuscript prior to publication). I can only imagine what a challenge the organizing and writing of such a book must have been to the author. It is to his eternal credit that he has pulled this off splendidly.

Having said all that, I must also confess to a certain amount of trepidation as I scanned through the pages of this book in my first foray. How in the world, given the objectives listed by Professor Jagpal in the preface to the book, would he ever have the patience to be able to record such galloping thoughts dealing with large issues (e.g., "to provide meaningful prescriptions for marketing and corporate strategy"; "models that can be empirically operationalized")? And to do all this, in the narrow media-rich confines of printed pages that are readable while exposing readers to new vistas and managerial insights, without being pedantic and/or completely unapproachable, seemed Herculean. In short, what could the readership ever be of such a book?

The initial skim seemed to confirm my worst fears. The book appeared to be filled with equations (and in very small type at that) of the sort that only advanced doctoral program students from the leading universities would have found appetizing. However, subsequent and closer examinations provided me with much relief. The author had the extraordinary foresight to provide a book that is well navigable to even

the most nonanalytically trained MBAs. The roadmap to the book that makes this possible without watering the content or rigor is the approach of separating and relegating all of the math to the notes section of each chapter. The use of this format makes this book highly readable. Specifically, the author uncannily manages to present the theory in the main body of each chapter, using only verbal reasoning, graphs, and numerical examples. Most appropriately, for the managerial and executive program readers, he defers all technical material to notes at the end of each chapter and summarizes the main ideas as “Key Points” in the text. It is my belief that this book should appeal to a wide readership ranging from practitioners to state-of-the-art researchers to doctoral students in search of dissertation topics.

Marketing Strategy and Uncertainty departs fundamentally from the usual research tradition in economics and marketing. The stated purpose of this book, as manifested in the preface, is to help choose marketing strategy that maximizes the long-term performance of the firm. In a noted and welcome departure from traditional strategy books, the author uses multiple metrics of performance (from both economics and finance) of maximizing expected utility as well as stock value. As a result, analytical models for strategic decision making are presented that use portfolio theory as well as the capital asset pricing theory.

Those of us in the academy who have attempted to employ interdisciplinary perspectives quickly recognize the perils that are strewn before this path. This is clearly doubly so for the author of such an ambitious book. Research in economics and marketing is highly polarized: one group of researchers focuses on analytical modeling and the other group on statistical modeling or developing econometric methodology. The former group typically makes simplifying assumptions to obtain analytically tractable solutions. For example, in a sales force compensation model, the firm is assumed to employ only one agent, sell one product, and be risk neutral. In reality, of course, firms typically employ many agents, sell many products, and are risk averse. The latter group (statistical modelers) uses such statistical techniques as confirmatory factor analysis and multidimensional scaling to analyze perceptions and preferences; however, the connection between the statistical results they provide and optimal marketing policy (e.g., coordinating price and advertising policy) is almost always implied but not explicated.

The author develops analytical models that are more realistic than those developed in the past. Furthermore, the author develops appropriate statistical and econometric methods that can be operationalized using data that the firm routinely collects. To illustrate, consider the sales force compensation problem. The author, in contrast to previous research, allows the firm to be risk averse, sell multiple products, and employ many agents. To provide greater realism, the author provides a methodologically unifying perspective by analyzing the problem using both the expected utility (common in

economics) and value maximization (common in finance) frameworks. Recognizing the acute need to measure sales force productivity (an unobservable quantity), the author develops a hybrid regression/confirmatory factor model that can be used to estimate the agent’s productivity using objective market-level data. Despite the complexity of the problem analyzed and the generality of the solutions provided, the author has performed the extraordinary feat of presenting these theories and empirical methods (and others throughout the book) very simply by using only verbal arguments and graphs.

From a substantive viewpoint, this book focuses on crucial but underresearched areas in marketing. The author develops analytical and empirical solutions to problems facing the multiagent and multiproduct firm, paying particular attention to the vexing problems posed by unobserved heterogeneity, the unobservability of behavioral constructs, and measurement error. To the best of my knowledge, this is the first book that uses financial theory to develop analytical solutions to basic marketing problems, especially those facing the multiproduct firm. Marketing and strategy books often make such statements as, “Firms should choose marketing policy to maximize shareholder value.” However, they do not develop analytical models or show how to implement this exhortation in practice.

At the risk of being redundant, a very important feature of the book is the author’s use of both the expected utility and capital asset pricing model (CAPM) valuation frameworks to analyze marketing policy under uncertainty. Consequently, the author’s solutions are general because they apply to both privately owned and publicly traded firms whose owners are risk averse. Previous marketing studies, in contrast, provide only limited managerial guidance because they do not consider the ownership structure of the firm and assume that the firm is risk neutral. (Note that risk neutrality is a special case of the expected utility and CAPM valuation frameworks, both of which the author uses throughout the book.) The author develops a wide range of marketing models that allows for general forms of uncertainty (i.e., additive, multiplicative, and generalized). The author shows that marketing policy depends crucially on the precise manner in which uncertainty affects demand and cost. Thus, from a managerial viewpoint, it is necessary to go beyond conventional marketing models that assume that uncertainty is additive (e.g., the firm’s marketing policies do not have an impact on demand fluctuations) and that the firm is risk neutral.

As discussed, the author focuses on fundamental but neglected problems in marketing strategy. The author also provides a unique perspective even in areas where a well-established literature is already available. Consider the well-known problem of break-even pricing for new product introduction. The author provides new insight, which executive program participants in particular are likely to appreciate. He shows that the firm that pursues a break-even pricing

strategy is likely to charge an excessively high price. A noteworthy feature is that the author is able to demonstrate this important result by using a simple numerical example. Hence, the reader can understand the proposition without wading through a detailed algebraic proof.

Overall, this book is unique in content and style. It would be not out of place to say here that the foreword to this book was written by a leading scholar, whom many readers of this journal would be familiar with—namely, Nobel Laureate Harry Markowitz. Professor Markowitz, no less, calls this a “pioneering book” that, in his opinion, “moves us forward” toward the holy grail of “a detailed, integrated theory of the firm.” Clearly, this book is a major substantive and methodological contribution to the corporate strategy literature. It also goes a long way toward assisting in the development of an overall theory of marketing and opens up new theoretical and empirical research opportunities. In short, this book is a must-have for every executive and research scholar.

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ADVERTISING PROGRESS

Pamela Walker Laird
Baltimore: Johns Hopkins
University Press, 1998

This is an account of the beginning years of one of the United States’ most important institutions—advertising. The author explores the development of this uniquely important American phenomenon from its origins to around the year 1920.

According to the author, advertising has been a major conduit between business and the general population. It is an examination of how history can help the reader see the interrelationships between business and the larger culture. The reader is induced to appreciate how complex and convoluted the relationships among advertising messages, their creators, and the audience have been and remain. The author also provides a caveat: advertisements do not provide totally reliable materials for reconstructing their creators’ business and cultural attitudes and intentions. However, advertisements are rich products of those attitudes, beliefs, and intentions.

Particularly, the author develops advertising’s evolution from informing consumers about products and services to creating customers by persuading people that they need to buy. Two related themes explain why this change has taken place. First, institutional business history focuses on the changing marketing problems to which those practicing advertising have taken an active role. Second, a cultural history reflects marketers’ perceptions of their roles in progress.

The author’s objective is to develop a dynamic analytic framework explaining the evolution of advertising content and styles along with professionalization of its practices. Specifically, the author has engaged in extensive and detailed research (there are now more than fifty pages of references) ranging from sources such as trade literature, agency literature, the actual advertisements themselves, and lithographed images. It is not the author’s intention to interpret advertising messages but rather to explain how and why they took the forms and contents they did.

The book is, at times, both difficult to read and not written in a style that will make the reader “remain glued” to the text. It is not an easy read. However, there is a need for the author’s contribution. The book is not required reading for those desiring an overall perspective of advertising but should be read by those contemplating careers in the advertising profession. It is written from a historian’s rather than a marketer’s perspective. For those who have been constantly exposed to the perspectives of marketers, this outlook is refreshing and interesting.

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CONSUMING PEOPLE: FROM POLITICAL ECONOMY TO THEATERS OF CONSUMPTION

A. Fuat Firat and Nikhilesh Dholakia
New York: Routledge Kegan Paul, 1998; 208 pp.

The title of Firat and Dholakia’s book captures its central idea—a portrait of ourselves as consumers, the consuming people. The text examines how the notions of the “consumer” and “consumption” as discourse and practice have been transformed over time. The title also represents the journey the authors took in its writing over twenty-plus years, as explained in the preface. The book was planned originally to be a treatise on marketing as viewed from a political economy perspective. Over time, the focus of the text began to shift to a portrait of consumption and consumers as understood from a multiplicity of views, including economics and poststructuralist/postmodernist thought. The term *consuming people* in the title refers to two ideas: people in the act of consumption and people consumed by the act of consumption. Both of these meanings are central to the authors’ discussion of how the concept of consumption has evolved throughout Western (largely U.S.) history. The book follows the history of the consumer from the rise of capitalism to the present state of experimentation with alternate lifestyles and modes of living.

The first five chapters provide the foundation for the work. The remaining five sections render a critique of the ideas presented in the first five chapters. In the last chapters, the

authors speculate on future liberatory potentialities for consumers as consuming people. Chapter 1 sets forth the ideas and structure of the text as well as its rationale—namely, that the United States (and indeed global culture) is preoccupied with consumption. Consuming is at the center of our daily lives and social discourse.

Chapter 2 is concerned with the structure or code of modern consumption patterns that determine product popularity and lifestyles. Four dimensions are said to underlie the code of modern consumption: the social relationship, the domain of availability, the level of participation, and the human dimension. The social relationship dimension ranges from collective to individual consumption. Increasingly, the consumption act is becoming individualized as consumers drive separate cars, eat separate meals from one another, watch separate television sets, and so on. Second, the domain of availability (of a product) has moved from public to private with the advent of technologies such as personal stereos, home video, and so on. The level of participation refers to the shift from participation to alienation as consumers are no longer players in the determination of products and activities consumed but have become instruction followers. Finally, the human activity dimension defines the level of human activity (both mental and physical) during consumption, which over the past century has moved from active to passive, with the introduction of precooked meals, for example. Firat and Dholakia contend that the predominant consumption pattern existing in the United States is individual-private-alienated-passive.

Chapter 3 focuses on the creation of modern definitions of the consumer and consumption as opposed to producer and production. These terms are related to the concept of value in capitalist theory and its corresponding constructs of work, home, gender categories, and private-public space. The chapter shows how in the discourse of modern capitalist society, work (production) is done outside of the home (in public) and is the domain of men. Unproductive (but nonetheless essential) activity, such as fashioning the household and raising children, is done inside the home (in private) and becomes the domain of women. The producer and production are considered valuable, while the consumer and consumption destroy value. The consumer thus lives the paradox of performing what was considered a base, trivial, albeit necessary role in the modern economy. The opposition of production and consumption played key roles in the reconceptualization and reconstruction of society, including its purpose.

Chapter 4 is a transitional chapter in the book, as it both outlines and begins to question the beliefs connected to modern consumption theory. The first part of the chapter considers classical models of consumption. These models are based on the assumption that needs and wants are distinct from one another. The classical frameworks also disregard issues of access and (buying) power and how these influence the

structure of available alternatives for consumption. The authors then discuss deviations that have been proposed to the classical models of consumption, both nonradical and radical. The nonradical ideas of Nader, Veblen, and Galbraith (and others) are based on the issue of differential marketplace power. Their writings concern such topics as the power inequities of buyers and sellers, the trickle-down determination of needs from the top strata down to the bottom strata of society, and the producer as the determinant actor in need formation. The radical ideas proposed by Marx, Simmel, Barthes, Bourdieu, and Baudrillard depart from the classical models of consumption. Marx's ideas are based on class analysis and concern consumption as determined by the conditions of relations of production. The scholars who follow Marx go beyond his ideas to demonstrate how consumption is not only determined but also acts as a determinant of socioeconomic relationships.

Chapter 5 links the subjects presented in the preceding chapters with additional ideas and institutions of the modern period, including the market, celebrities and the rise of the middle class, media and corporations, and the institution of marketing. With the health of modern society tied to the production and consumption of products via the marketplace, celebrities and the wealthy took on new roles, selling ideas, values, attitudes, and lifestyles. With these role models, the middle class grew to desire all of the advantages of the wealthy and grew to believe in the linkage of consumption with freedom. For example, products such as cars allowed the middle class to do what they wanted to do, when they wanted to do it. Sponsorship (advertising) of media also helped promote consumption and lifestyles. Corporations became powerful institutions in society as producers of consumption goods. The role of marketing was (and still is) to take images and ideas and relate them to products to reinforce desired consumption patterns (those that enlarge and extend the market). It is here that the authors' argument is linked back to chapter 2, as it is the individual-private-alienated-passive consumption that allows for the purchase of more products. Our consumption pattern is an inevitable consequence of the logic of modern capitalism.

Chapter 6 turns to the idea that this modern consumption pattern has lost its allure in an age when the consequences (environmental and otherwise) of the ever-increasing expansion of the market and consumption activities has resulted in widespread disillusionment in modern political and social ideas and institutions. As these modern institutions begin to lose influence, the market assumes greater prominence. It is at the present point in history when postmodernist ideas—including hyperreality, difference, seduction, decentering, reversals, tolerance, fragmentation, juxtapositions, fluid significations, and decontextualization—are creating new sensibilities and attitudes toward consumption. Consumers in the current period are increasingly seeking

meaning and pleasure in a variety of experiences and associated images to represent various selves. Consumption is reconceptualized as inseparable from production. It is through consumption that consumers produce themselves. Consumption provides the means by which life experiences, self-image, and ultimately the meaning of and for life are constituted.

Chapter 7 speculates on the success of new consumption patterns in light of the hegemonic power of the market. The authors also introduce the concept of theater into the discussion. Theater is presented as a metaphor for cultural interaction in the future. Theater holds the key to the articulation of postmodern consumption by allowing for different criteria, rationales, and ways of existing.

Chapter 8 examines global consumption. The chapter presents a call for development not based solely on economic growth but founded on multidimensional processes and assessments of the quality of life (as interpreted from multiple perspectives).

Chapter 9 sums up the issue at stake in the current age: will we continue to be consumed by consumption, or can we transform our society and consume for ourselves, so that consumption is for us? The authors provide no easy answers. They suggest that models of transformation exist, such as consumers who belong to or support a microcause as a consumption experience in itself. Consumers should be involved in doing little projects instead of taking on grand proposals. Consumer society should adopt an attitude of mutual acceptance and tolerance to accommodate various projects and life mode communities.

Chapter 10 summarizes the key principles of modern social formation as related to the nation-state. The power of the nation-state is disappearing in the face of ethnic strife and discontent, the rise of transnational corporations, and corresponding organized opposition, such as countercultural movements. It is these countercultural groups and other cross-national communities, such as cyberspace communities, artists, professionals, and others, that are driving new approaches to living and playing with identities and culture. No longer is the citizen subject the representative of the individual in contemporary U.S. society—it is the consumer. However, the consequence of the decline of nation-state influence has resulted in a rethinking of freedom. The authors feel that we need to think in terms of both “freedom from” and “freedom to.” Both concepts are necessary so that, on one hand, freedom from (participating in larger social affairs) does not dissolve into escapism, and freedom to (determine our individual lives) does not become entrapment. Complete freedom involves both forms, allowing individuals to construct and experience a life mode community and then to leave this community to experience other communities.

Overall, the book is an excellent resource for macromarketers and others who are looking to understand the

logic and rationale of modern consumer culture and its transformations in the present. The book provides a novel and optimistic view of the potential for the future. New and various ways of living in life mode communities do not require that we, as consumers, commit to one way of being, purpose, or cause. Life mode communities constitute “theaters of consumption” that consumers may pass in and out of at will. Thus, consumers are allowed the freedom to construct their individual lives.

Various scholars may dismiss the book based largely on the idea that “postmodern consumption” that allows individuals to play, alter, and produce selves, self-images, and experiences is not a reality for most consumers. Some academics have argued that self-identity is not constituted by a constellation of fragmented, emotionally intensified consumption experiences as the authors seemingly imply but that it is grounded in historicized and existentially grounded realities. However, Firat and Dholakia’s work does not deny the realities of power and inequities in the present state of (modern) consumption. Firat and Dholakia point out that postmodernist tendencies are currently stronger in discourse than in practice.

The major criticism of the book is that the concept of “life mode community” was left a bit abstract. The authors fail to define (perhaps intentionally) or give examples of these communities, leaving the reader to imagine the possibilities. However, the authors state that these new forms of communities differ from “modern” communities, such as communes, in two ways. First, the new communities would not oppose the mainstream as alternative and become totalized ways of living. Second, these communities would not become isolationist. As discussed above, the boundaries for entry and exit would be permeable. These communities would exist alongside other communities. The new communities could exist in cyberspace or in physical thematized settings. However, in the future, physical space should no longer separate communities with the advent of technologies that allow for the navigation of experiential space.

In summary, the book is a significant contribution to the field. While intellectuals in other fields are discussing many of these issues, it is refreshing to find a solid contribution from marketing scholars who are able to ground their thoughts in marketing and economic discourse, as well as draw on ideas from social and cultural theory. The authors state in the preface that the purpose of the book is to encourage “creative multilogue on the potentials and possibilities for meaningful human lives rather than to provide conclusive theses” (p. xi). It is in this spirit that the book ultimately succeeds in raising questions on the future of consumption and consumers.

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**POSTMODERN MARKETING 2:
TELLING TALES**

Stephen Brown
London: International Thomson
Business Press, 1998; 332 pp.

By now, Stephen Brown, author of both *Postmodern Marketing* and *Postmodern Marketing 2: Telling Tales* is firmly established as the intellectual “bete noir” of 1990s marketing thought. Some revere him—mostly those who profess to postmodern leanings. Others revile him—individuals who find Brown’s attacks on the received marketing wisdom as absurd as they are unfounded. But isn’t it true that the rest of us both read and, when the opportunity presents itself, listen to Brown with a mixture of fear and fascination? In doing so, are we not like gold miners of a bygone age, using an intellectual sifting pan in efforts to separate out the nuggets of real value from the dross and, even more important, the fool’s gold?

Postmodern Marketing 2: Telling Tales is in no way, shape, or manner merely a modestly refined second edition or even a major revision of *Postmodern Marketing*. You cannot catch up with Stephen that easily, at least if you are starting where most of us will be beginning. This latest effort takes off where *Postmodern Marketing* ends. If you wish to appreciate both where Brown is coming from and how far he has traveled, you must read both monographs. (That doing this is a necessary but still not a sufficient condition for understanding Brown is a point to which we will subsequently return.)

So, in a large nutshell, what is covered by *Postmodern Marketing* the Senior? For a good summary, we need not look any further than Nikhilesh Dholakia’s review that appeared in the fall 1997 issue of the *Journal of Macromarketing* (*JMM*).

The first chapter of Brown’s book is a loose, fairly entertaining introduction to the fields of postmodernism and marketing and to the tentative connections that have existed between the two. Chapter 2 is an overview of marketing, particularly of the managerial (but also many of the macro) aspects; it attempts to point out how knowledge endeavors in marketing have run into roadblocks and detours. This chapter is a useful review for marketing scholars and a necessary introduction to the field for nonmarketing people who are likely to be attracted to the book. Chapter 3 is a rather good, condensed review of postmodern ideas and key writers. This is a must-read for marketing scholars who have wondered about postmodernism but do not know how to begin to understand it. Chapter 4 (you knew it was coming) attempts a matrix-like juxtaposition of the fields of marketing and postmodernism. This chapter has some insights but a lot more remains to be done (some of it in a follow-up book by Brown, this reviewer hopes). Chapter 5 locates the various knowledge systems in marketing from an epistemological perspective. This should be a must-read for doctoral students and anyone else in marketing interested in knowledge systemic issues. Chapter 6,

the final chapter, offers a critique of the dominant knowledge systemic approaches in marketing and lays out the author’s philosophical position. He is against both the bland positivist empiricism of Marketing’s Centurions and the agitative critical theory orientations at the fringes, but he is firmly in favor of adopting postmodern orientations to the study and practice of marketing. (Pp. 121-22)

Dholakia, of course, has far more to say about *Postmodern Marketing*. But those interested in Nikki’s assessment of Brown’s initial opus, as opposed to his summary of its contents, will have to read the review in its entirety. It is time for us to move on to a consideration of the second of Brown’s monographs. Once again, the decision will be to buy—or, more precisely, to borrow—rather than to make as far as providing a summary of content is concerned, and once again, the source of the borrowing will be a past issue of *JMM*.

In the June 1999 issue of *JMM*, there is an invited piece by Morris Holbrook titled “Higher Than the Bottom Line: Reflections on Some Recent Macromarketing Literature.” Those reflections include, among other things, a review, or perhaps more precisely put, a highly personal endorsement of *PoMo*², as Holbrook calls it (PoMo being the rather PoMo shorthand for the term *postmodernism*). To some extent, Holbrook’s comments are shaped by the high regard in which Brown and Holbrook, another unconventional marketing scholar with far-ranging intellectual interests and a highly personal, somewhat self-indulgent mode of expression, hold each other’s work. But mutual admiration aside and shared literary self-indulgence notwithstanding, readers seeking a better understanding of Brown’s work would be well advised to see both what Holbrook has to say and how he says it when discussing both what Brown has to say and how he says it.

Let us now select from Holbrook’s (1999) review the required summary of the scope of *Postmodern Marketing 2*. In doing so, we will also get, at no additional expense, a feel for Holbrook’s own mode of expression. (For the endorsement in its full glory, one must see the relevant pages [pp. 48-74] in “Higher Than the Bottom Line.”)

In Brown’s view, as expressed in chapter 1, our profession has been unpardonably slow to recognize that marketing is an art rather than a science but, moreover, that marketing *should be* an art rather than a science—indeed, that the artistic paradigm is *superior* to the conventional scientism. From this, it follows that marketing should direct itself toward drawing from aesthetics in general and from literature in particular. . . . Subsequent chapters develop this theme with an imaginative splendor that almost defies description. Brown begins in chapter 2 by describing the postmodern ethos and by distinguishing what I [and remember, says Shapiro, this is Holbrook writing, but both in tone and tenor it could just as well be Brown] would call the *parakeets* from the *paracletes*. The *parakeets* are the hopelessly retarded captives of the tradition and the helplessly retrogressive adherents to the received view—the devotees to doctrine and the disciples of dogma who continue

to mimic the mainstream; to parrot the parochial; to reiterate the repetitious; and to huddle in their old-fashioned paradigmatic cage with its antiquated experimental methods, structural equations, matrix thinking, and patriarchal puritanism. The *paracletes* are the good guys who proudly promulgate the postmodern propensity toward paradox, parody, pastiche, playfulness, pluralism, proliferation, promiscuity, polysemy, panculturalism, and all the rest. . . .

Chapter 3 speaks on behalf of the semiological and hermeneutic analysis of literature as a source of insight into consumer behavior, markets, and other aspects of our discipline. . . . Toward this end, Brown remains true to his scruples against elitism and blesses us with a detailed analysis of (what else?) *Scruples*—that quintessential marketing text by Judith Krantz. He probes five aspects of the two novels in this Krantz duology: hedonic consumption, addiction to shopping, collecting, giving gifts, and apathetic shoppers. . . . Chapter 4 pursues the project involving a literary analysis of marketing itself. . . . In this direction, vowing allegiance to the carnivalesque, heteroglossial, chronotopic inclinations of Mikhail Bakhtin (p. 137), Brown demonstrates how to postmodernize the interpretation of a pomo text by deconstructing a print ad for Moët & Chandon champagne (p. 138). . . .

Chapter 5 soars even higher by singing the praises of an approach to marketing scholarship aimed at a more passionate and resonantly introspective mode of self-expression. I could not agree more wholeheartedly. . . . Nor could I respond more appreciatively to Brown's own illustrations based on his sardonic view of the review process (pp. 189-95), his tongue-in-cheek advice for would-be authors (pp. 205-6), and his remarkably creative foray into the realm of subjective personal introspection or SPI in telling the harrowing tale of his own Saturday-morning shopping experiences (pp. 216-24). . . . But all good things must come to an end. And so *PoMo* exits in a blaze of glory with a few more pertinent comments in chapter 6 about the evils of boxes-and-arrows marketing models (p. 226), the pleasures of creative texts (p. 233), the need in our discipline for new literary forms or NLFs (p. 241), and the desirability of more expressive modes of writing capable of revealing the depths of our passions concerning our chosen subject. (Pp. 69-70)

Holbrook's review, as this extract already suggests, involves far more than a clear restatement of the substantive content of Brown's book. Even a logical positivist could have provided that much. Holbrook, in a very real sense, is responding to the many comments about his work and his intellectual position that Brown has made. One also cannot help but admire Holbrook's clever parodies of Brown's own staccato (and remember that adjective is *not* supposed to be stochastic) use of words, words that would rupture any spellchecker, beginning with the same letter of the alphabet.

Read Holbrook's review in its entirety to see what a true believer thinks of *Postmodern Marketing 2: Telling Tales*. Then compare that unquestioned paean of praise with the tone of the following discussion between this reviewer, SS;

his intellectual soul mate, Macro Marty or MM for short; and PoMo Patty or PP, another believer. Picture this conversation at a recent conference titled FOMTA, the Far-Out Marketing Thought Association.

MM: Are those two books by Stephen Brown really worth reading or even, perishing the thought, worth buying?

SS: Yes, definitely. Stephen Brown is something of an acquired taste, like licorice, but he covers a great deal of new, at least to me, exciting intellectual ground. Those in academic marketing who pride themselves in reading widely, rather than deeply, should read Stephen Brown.

MM: Why do you say that?

SS: Damned if I know for certain, but I really do believe there is something of real substance at the core of all this recent interest in postmodernism and marketing. Hopefully, I haven't rushed to accept that position just because I have been a lousy statistician for over forty years.

MM: What, in particular, would I take away from *Postmodern Marketing 2*?

SS: That's awfully hard to answer. The convinced logical positivist will most like view Brown's work as, at best, a form of academic sophistry. Those in marketing who already have postmodernist leanings may well feel that a new guru, one with an Irish brogue, has come to the fore. Brown may well be a mix of sophist and guru, but haven't guys like you and me always been supportive of those who operate outside the received wisdom of academic marketing? Isn't that why FOMTA has always been viewed, both by us and our critics, as being at "the fringe of the fringe"?

MM: You're being kind of oblique today, aren't you—even more so than usual. Let's go about this another way. What did you especially like about Brown's two books?

SS: That's easy. First of all, there is his breadth of knowledge. This guy really does know his marketing literature—both the names and the content. As far as I can tell, he has also read very widely in all aspects of postmodernism. He's especially impressive when he discusses the parallel or even conflicting intellectual approaches now being grouped under this umbrella term.

MM: Well, I have heard he has a very odd writing style. Is that true?

SS: Yes and no. At times, I thought he was one of the best writers in academic marketing since Ted Levitt. It's not journal or even text-style writing, and for that alone he deserves a medal. On the other hand, Brown can be guilty of shameless literary self-indulgence. I could also have done with less of the pastiche of imaginary dialogue, book excerpts, and other literary cut-and-paste components but I am not of the YTV generation. Anyway, Brown is doing this to make a point. Postmodernism isn't supposed to be linear, rational, or orderly. At least I think that's what the man was saying.

MM: What things about *Postmodern Marketing 2* did you particularly dislike?

SS: That's easy. It's the "ad hominem" attacks on Phil Kotler and Shelby Hunt. I've known them both for a long time. They are both good guys, not high priests from an evil empire. You can disagree with someone without categorizing them as either fools or rogues. Brown, however, seems unable to write very many pages without either an insulting aside or a full-scale attack on Kotler, Hunt, or their U.K.-based professorial counterparts.

MM: Hmm. Why do you think he does that?

SS: I don't know. I have a young academic friend, herself of the postmodern persuasion, who insists that, all those insults notwithstanding, Stephen may well have a deep-seated respect for both Phil and Shelby. Well, perhaps his is an academic love of which he dare not speak, but I don't see it. In the first book, Brown uses Phil and Shelby as straw men, but in the second one, he got just plain nasty. That I could have done without.

PP: Uh hum. . . . Can your young academic friend pipe in here? I wouldn't necessarily use the term *respect*. I think it is more of a "master-slave" complex. Your defense of the Phil and Shelby (your use of their first names in the familiar sense reminds me of when actors refer to De Niro as "Bobby" or Scorsese as "Marty") as "good guys" exactly proves that they have achieved an elevated status within the discipline. By talking about them in nasty tones, Brown forces readers to acknowledge their bloated status within a fairly small substantive area. Their unwillingness to accept or, more truthfully, their willingness to malign alternative views is widely documented and therefore stands as the benchmarks for all future marketing thought. I knew Shelby Hunt's name before I even knew my doctoral program director's name. This indoctrination continues today. We spend two years talking about old marketing ideas and, if we're lucky, one class session per seminar talking about new ideas. Some would argue that this is why marketing is dying as a discipline. I'm not sure I'd go so far to say it is because marketing is art and not science; I would just like to see other forms of marketing thought given the same credence! It would not be that important save for the aforementioned status of Shelby's and Phil's ideas. When journals and proceedings are reviewed by these people in power, then those of us who espouse new ideas are left with file drawers full of excellent yet orphaned manuscripts.

MM: Brown seems like one strange guy—in fact, a little too strange. Have you ever wondered whether his whole position isn't a kind of "reductio ad absurdum," with us being the absurd ones for taking him at his published or spoken word?

SS: It's interesting you say that. More than once I've had the feeling he's playing some kind of intellectual game with his readers. For example, there's that *Riverdance* thing. Brown talks about that show as embodying the essence of postmodernism? But what would a marketing resurrectionist argue? That *Riverdance* reflected a deep-seated, even primordial, longing of those living in today's frantic world for a return to the values and rhythms of a far simpler age?

PP: I would also like to point out that Stephen's "strangeness" has also paved the way for other nontraditional scholars to enter the marketing mix. I would like to point out that all during this review, both of you keep using the word *guys* to reflect the members of the conference, other scholars, or past marketing theoreticians. I would caution you that the term *guys* is very exclusive and embodies the power of the "good ol' boy" network that is the marketing hegemony!

MM: Have you ever actually met Stephen Brown?

SS: Yes, twice I have spent some time with him at conferences. I don't quite know what I expected the first time, but it wasn't the Stephen Brown I met. He's soft-spoken, very polite, just as prepared to listen as to speak. I also saw Stephen quietly withdraw, both into a corner and into himself, for a few minutes just before giving a keynote address that was in its own way a polished theatrical performance. It's as if he flipped a switch just before he went to the podium. Maybe he flips another kind of switch before he writes.

PP: Let me just suggest here that you are both becoming "Brownists" before my very eyes! As you seek to humanize Stephen by asserting that he is strange and discussing his personal demeanor, you are doing exactly what Stephen is doing to the "founding fathers." What does Brown's demeanor have to do with his writing? Do people talk about Shelby's, shall we say, less-than-updated wardrobe when we discuss his work? Maybe we should because contextualization is a very big part of what Stephen Brown is trying to sell. Knowing that Thomas Jefferson owned slaves did not take away from his accomplishments as a statesman but did give us a richer context in which to interpret him. Brown's impact is already being felt. We're feeling it right now!

MM: I just don't know what to make of all this. Maybe I should just read a few reviews of his work and let it go at that.

SS: No, I don't think you should do that. In fact, old buddy, that's a hell of a position for a FOMTA member to take. Remember our slogan, "far-out forever." Stephen Brown is worth reading or, perhaps more precisely, worth having read. I think all of us should spend the intellectual energy necessary to see what message, if any, Brown has for us. There are easier guys to read on postmodernism, like Alladi Venkatesh. But Stephen Brown, he's ah, ah, an *experience*, I guess is the word, an experience well worth experiencing.

PP: Damn it, again with the "guys"! There are many great *people* who write in the area of postmodernism, like one of my intellectual heroines, Barbara Stern. For Far-Out Marketing Thought to build a bridge into the next millenium, it is imperative that we begin to acknowledge the incredible works of all marketing scholars, whether they like Irish men dancing in tights or not!

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THE MYTH OF GREEN MARKETING: TENDING OUR GOATS AT THE EDGE OF APOCALYPSE

Toby M. Smith
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999

Smith has provided a comprehensive and scholarly treatment of green consumption from a sociological perspective. It differs dramatically from the typical business/marketing approach to the topic. He uses *myth* in its literary sense, so the

reader should not infer that the book suggests green marketing does not exist. According to Smith, it exists, is growing, and functions as a mechanism to support the hegemony of productivism. It is supportive in that it absorbs the dystopian reading of contemporary industrialism and transforms it into an illusion of consumer environmental empowerment. As such, it is a crucial element of the productivist discourse and legitimized by it. How this transformation takes place is the substance of the book.

Hegemony is defined by Smith as a coherent worldview that is dynamic, defending itself from competing views threatening its "naturalness." We use this to insulate ourselves from the dystopian side of industrialization and maintain faith in its promises. The "discourse of productivism" includes actual material existence and the faith in its ability to improve the quality of life. He argues that the discourse is now being challenged by its own dystopian shadow, creating a crisis in belief. As part of this process, the "myth of green consumerism" operates as a suture hiding the flaws in the productivist discourse. If productivism prevails with its consumption ethic of private accumulation and an expansionist economic ethic, new laws will not affect the environmental outcome. With the perpetuation of counterentropic illusions maintaining profits, it is a paradox that green consumerism exists within it.

Consumerism reflects the notion that consuming exists within a cultural framework that makes sense of the activity elevating it to a belief system. Demand is the aggregate of individual preferences and assumes that behavior is self-maximizing and autonomous. The consumer is central to the process and is a category in the productivist discourse that is historically situated in an economic, political, and social context in which it is consistent with other elements of the discourse. This is possible because of the complex structure of overlapping discourses (i.e., many narratives make up the metanarrative of productivism). Green consumerism is but one such narrative having the function of a hegemonic social myth. This historical result was enabled by the growth of Newtonian science and political liberalism as well. In addition, instrumental rationality informs definitions of the environment, anthropocentrism, and epistemological development within the productivist discourse. Each separate subtext or narrative is infused in the dominant discourse and so well integrated that it is effectively invisible to its adherents and critics alike.

A repoliticization of theory is emerging that is serving to decenter economics, rendering its vision of society less deterministic in the neoclassical sense. So individuals live in a tension between choice and social norms. Each interest, or community of interests, can make claims that challenge or maintain the fabric of interwoven discourses. This expands the domain of inquiry to the social, political, and ideological since behavior cannot be reduced to the economic. The individual is not reduced to a one-dimensional economic slave.

Thus, a green consumption act challenges the credibility and authority of the productivist discourse. But there is an ambiguity to the green consumer myth in that while the act challenges productivist logic, it supports it as well since it advocates more consumption of a different type, and increased consumption supports the productivist logic.

Common sense is made of this complex action through the dominant discourse that is capitalist economics, liberal democratic politics, and Judeo-Christian social discourse. That this happens is opaque to the individual and not a conscious decision or choice of discourses. The narratives of the social myths serve the function of unifying the separate discourses in the idiom of the dominant productivist discourse maintaining its authority. The myth of green consumerism serves this function by transforming the ecological critique of the productivist discourse to one consistent with its premises. It is not consumption that is at issue but the type of consumption. Green consumption redirects the problem from one of productivism itself to one of consumer choice. The dominant discourse retains its power and naturalness. This issue is now one of markets, not politics, and the expansionist ethic of productivism is reaffirmed. Contradictory paths of environmental maintenance and expansionist economics are reconciled in consumption of the right stuff.

Green consumerism is such a myth since it effectively transforms the environmental problem from one of productivism to one of consumption. Individuals are responsible for the ecological problem, and they can contribute to its solution by buying green. While minor changes in productivism result from the interchange, the system itself stays intact. Productivism has provided both the problem and the supposed solution. Once the myth absorbs the individual, the resolution to the crisis is achieved, though only symbolically. The actuality remains, but the dystopian reading of the discourse recedes in favor of the utopian.

Economic progress, political democracy, and individual freedom are tied together and reinforced through green consumerism. It is the new myth that has emerged to suture the environmental cracks in the productivist hegemony. Created in the idiom of the dominant discourse, it incorporates the narratives of progress, rationality, autonomy, and so on, thus re-creating the challenge in its own image and according to its own logic.

Social myths are stories of our existence and as such contain narrative with particular conventions. The myth of green consumerism is an ambiguous narrative that we arrange in a story that explains away the flaws of the productivist hegemony. Among the beliefs informing the hegemony is that of linear time. This belief militates against radical political change and offers reformism in its place. It militates against low technology and favors high technology, as low connotes the past and high connotes progress, itself part of the hegemony. Green consumerism fits this mold. It allows consumers to make sense of the complexity of environmental problems

by providing a clear action toward a resolution. Environmental buying immerses the consumer into the myth wherein the conflict is resolved in a single act and the hegemony of productivism is reinforced. Because the story, through narrative form, must be completed by the consumer, its completion, while directed, appears as autonomous and empowering (the myth of the political consumer?). The authority of the myth is dissociated from its sources, which are political ideology and economic exigency since truth must be found, not produced. Science provides the epistemological ground for authority through reason, technology, modernity, liberalism, and economics. Because the narrative provides no agency, hegemonic relationships become invisible, and environmental decline is assumed to be the product of the laws of economics, laws of nature, and so on. The authoritative discourses are economic, political, technological, and scientific and are so well integrated in Western cultures as to marginalize environmental critique of the productivist hegemony.

For modern consumption to emerge, mercantilist notions of capital and consumption had to be transcended. This required a new individual with refinable tastes to be satisfied through domestic consumption. Human nature was assumed to be based on the qualities of avarice, envy, and ambition. Out of this historically situated ontology grew the modern consumer, who was an aggressive and acquisitive individualist. Thus, the human ontology was reshaped to fit the exigencies of productivist expansionism emerging with modern capitalism.

Consumerism now reinforces other discourses and is legitimized by being tied to the productivist discourse. They share common visions of the good, human nature, and social organization. Under mercantilism, the individual was useful as a producer, but wealth was produced through export, not domestic, consumption. With the shift from mercantilism to capitalism, the exigencies of economics changed. The consumer became the center of economics, and consumption activity was transformed from waste creation to luxury, a change crucial to capitalism. The emulation thesis implies that consumerism is a "natural" tendency. The assumption legitimizes expansion and unequal distribution of wealth. Class mobility was also engendered as an exigency of productivism. The possibility of upward movement through consumption expanded the social imaginary to correspond to the requirements of productivism.

Because capitalism contributed to the productivist discourse, consumerism played a critical role in it, and competing voices were excluded. The critical political voice is divided into two groups, the reformist and radical positions. The deep ecologists offer the most convincing challenge to the productivist discourse, and its grounding is in consumerism and the economic expansionism that comes from it. It is argued within deep ecology that a restructuring of both individual perceptions and the political-economic structure is

necessary. The growth imperative here is not considered unique to capitalism and is rather "the ethical imperative of productivism, a totalizing political, economic, and social system with particular ontological assumptions" (p. *000*). Markets are assumed to be the natural outcome of the human propensity to trade (Adam Smith's "truck and barter") and are assumed neutral in all arbitration between preferences. Since individuals are rational and autonomous, given the right information, they will effect decisions in the market that will lead to its solution. The declining consumption levels predicted by this assumption have not materialized because what is required is a change in consciousness and the application of reason from within it. Radical greens, however, consider that reason has been reduced to instrumental rationality, and this is supported and reinforced by the productivist discourse. Deep ecologists argue that the demise of the subject-object dichotomy is necessary for a new relationship with nature, and this ontology challenges the productivist discourse at a fundamental level.

The myth of green consumerism is a suture for the failing ontology, and its basic notion is that individual consumption preferences in the marketplace can promote ecologically benign products. It effectively green-washes the matrix of discourses surrounding productivism. Consumers accept the message of green consumerism as being common sense within the discourse. Adopting the green consumer style creates the illusion that a contribution to the solution is being made while it actually serves to perpetuate the problem. From a marketing standpoint, it is an opportunity for market development. The discourse of green consumerism has been made readily available through the media, and commodity producers provide the major thrust in defining the image and form of the green narrative.

Others argue that green consumerism is a substitute for action, suggesting that productivism can solve its own problems. It is argued that the myth of empowerment is a tactical move to shift the locus of blame from business to individuals. Green consumerism further separates the consumer of the North from global inequality and injustice. As green consumerism becomes a lifestyle, it depoliticizes the consumer, fulfilling its political intent. Smith criticizes the green movement for failing to give consumption its proper place in culture. Consumption does not reduce consumers to one-dimensionality and requires a multifaceted cultural analysis of its role. A credible green consumerism attack must consider these differences.

Overall, Smith's argument is lucid and coherent, and it is presented in such a way that a reader not versed in Gramsci, Marcuse, and so on can follow quite well. He provides many examples for the abstract concepts developed throughout the book. For those interested in the environmental problem at the paradigm level, this is a must-read as it describes in detail how the process of perpetuating the paradigm unfolds. It also becomes clear that within the marketing field,

paradigm-based thinking is alive and well. The project for the twenty-first century seems to be, then, to break through the productivist discourse, dislodging its "naturalness" and reestablishing agency. Then we can focus on the problem rather than the symptoms that seem to preoccupy us now.

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SUSTAINABLE MARKETING: MANAGERIAL-ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

Donald A. Fuller
Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999

Fuller has put together a very thoughtful and well-documented text on sustainable marketing. He begins with an overview of sustainability, drawing from Fisk's ecological imperative¹ and the Ehrlich's $I = PAT^2$ formulation. He argues that sustainable marketing is not a choice but a mandate and cannot be ignored any longer. This provides a good focus for the remainder of the book. One deficiency in this section is the limited perspective from which the background research is drawn. Little of the critical research is provided that calls into question the neoclassical assumptions under which marketing functions. His perspective relies on existing market mechanism and informed choice by consumers, for example, and both of these have been challenged from numerous perspectives over the past decade. The perspective on sustainable marketing is, for example, the standard definition of the marketing concept, with ecosystem compatibility added. Chapter 3 begins with the statement that "sustainable marketing is an extension of, not a radical departure from, traditional marketing management practice" (p. 77). Some critics would take issue with this approach. Fuller is up front about his perspective here, and that is sufficient to provide the reader with a preview of what is to come.

What follows in the rest of the text is a very comprehensive and thorough examination of marketing principles in the context of pollution prevention (P2) and resource recovery (R2) initiatives. This does provide a context that is limited to technological solutions for problems that may not be purely technological. Fuller again limits his perspective by arguing, questionably, that marketing mix variables fall within the domain of technology. One might argue that the purpose of marketing has always been to affect the affluence dimension of the PAT equation. But Fuller makes the conscious choice here to focus on technology as the means to the sustainability end. From here on, the text becomes a guide for the application of technology in P2 and R2 strategies. Fuller argues this point quite well and develops comprehensive models around that perspective. He then develops strategies based on integrated waste management and design for environment. Once again, these ideas are well developed and researched

thoroughly. Once the reader ascends to the limited perspective of the text, what follows is both instructive and enlightening. Using a product system life cycle approach in each of the remaining marketing mix chapters, Fuller demonstrates the complexity of the environmental-marketing relationship. He examines the marketing system at each of the intersections at which waste is generated and resources expended from the raw materials stage to the development of reverse channels, with the ultimate goal of minimizing terminal disposal. His objective is the creation of a cradle-to-cradle system that produces a continuous recirculation of matter and energy. While it has been argued that within the laws of thermodynamics, this is not possible, any moves in that direction must be considered good ones. This approach is carried through to the four Ps in the succeeding chapters.

In the design of products for environmental compatibility, Fuller argues for designs that minimize resource use and waste streams. This can be done by building in resource recovery systems, facilitating recycling and pollution prevention systems in the production and recovery systems. He advocates remanufacturing, reconditioning, and repairing as part a product reuse strategy, for example. To facilitate this process, strategic alliances are suggested, allowing firms to work together to solve common problems. Product redesign and reinvention are described as the core issue of sustainable marketing.

In the channels section, he argues that reverse channels are an essential component of all resource recovery strategies and that they must become a standard part of the channel system since some waste is unavoidable. Furthermore, even more emphasis must be placed on the integration of channels since both R2 and P2 activities take place at all levels of every system. An extensive section is also included in this chapter on green retailing, which is a critical link between consumers and the marketing process.

Sustainable communications serve the function of educating stakeholders and creating green legitimacy for the firm. Fuller argues that this is difficult in Western industrial societies that have developed through the "more is better" philosophy. Thus, there is much opinion change to be effected before sustainable marketing can take hold. He focuses here on communication programs, labeling strategies, and certification programs. In developing programs, it is suggested again that alliances with nontraditional partners are an effective strategy.

The pricing chapter is predicated on the full-cost principle, arguing the market now sends erroneous signals because products are underpriced. This happens because the true ecocosts have not been included in the cost structure of most products. If consumers were required to pay full cost for their consumption, many of the problems extant today might disappear. Or so the argument goes. For this to be true, the typical neoclassical assumptions are again required but are suspect. Fuller argues that all sources of ecocosts must be

included in the price of the product, even though he acknowledges that this is quite difficult in practice for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is identifying the costs. Here, alternative modes of pricing are offered, including leasing traditionally purchased products, service life pricing, and take-back pricing, which includes the cost of disposal, whatever form that may take. This requires integration with product design and channel development, of course.

This is the crux of the text, and I would reiterate that it is well developed for what it does—that is, to provide a technologically based solution to the problem of sustainable marketing. Fuller is very complete within this framework, but one must ultimately question whether the framework is adequate. Few environmentally aware scholars outside the field of marketing would consider it so. Fuller's approach is completely acceptable within the domain of marketing management, however, and he makes no apology for being unabashedly micromarketing in a predominately macro-type subject. This leads me to several suggestions for the text in subsequent editions. I take little issue with what Fuller has provided and think he has done a really good job at it. My issue is with what is not said that I think would make for a more well-rounded approach. Specifically, a chapter on the macrodimensions of the problem and their relationship to microprinciples would be a welcome addition. Sustainable consumption, wealth distribution, and global inequities would be examples of the topics to be developed since these are directly complicit in environmental decline, at least according to those outside the field of marketing. Furthermore, to be complete even as a

micromarketing text, a chapter on globalization should be included. The globalization of marketing is the order of business now, and this is not going to change in the near future, if at all. Sustainability is a global problem by virtually all accounts. As a result, no text could be considered complete without consideration given to this relationship.

In short, Fuller has written an excellent work on the technological dimension of the marketing-environment relationship. His presentation is thorough and thoughtful, presenting the reader with insights into this part of the problem. The attention to detail and examples is extensive and to be commended. The addition of two chapters on the larger issues in the problem would serve the text well by raising the issue of paradigm thinking that the text has succumbed to in its present form. The technological solution is not, by nonmarketing accounts, the solution, but it is a necessary condition in any definition of sustainability.

NOTES

1. Fisk's ecological imperative refers to interactions between species and their environment that are necessary for their survival. Humans require the products of their environment that pollution, for example, jeopardizes. This violates the ecological imperative.

2. Ehrlich's equation, $I = PAT$, states that the ecological impact (I) of human activities is a function of population (P), per capita consumption or affluence (A), and technology (T).

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