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A Feminist Critique of Marketing Theory: 
Toward Agentic-Communal Balance

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"The feminist perspective holds that the epistemologies, metaphysics, ethics, and politics of the dominant forms of science are androcentric ... Despite the deeply ingrained Western cultural belief in science's intrinsic progressiveness, science today serves primarily regressive social tendencies ... The social structure of science, many of its applications and technologies, its modes of defining research problems, ... its ways of constructing and conferring meanings are not only sexist but also racist, classist and culturally coercive." -- Harding, 1986, p. 9

INTRODUCTION

Over the past three decades feminists have pursued a project of reconstructing the ideology surrounding sexual roles and the cultural meanings of masculine and feminine. In particular they have attempted to eradicate barriers to the advancement of women into secular areas of accomplishment beyond their traditional familial roles as wives and mothers. Barriers to entry and forms of overt and implicit discrimination against women have been identified in business and in the natural and social sciences (Flax 1983; Keller 1983; Rossiter 1987).

While much progress has been made in several socially significant aspects of this project, for example, the removal of sexist language from most academic journals and research reports, there are still several significant hurdles confronting women as they attempt to make their way into scholarly areas of endeavor. Marketing is no exception to this pattern. In the American Marketing Association, for example, 20 percent of the academically constituted Education Division is female. The Associate for Consumer Research, by contrast, might be perceived as being somewhat more receptive to women with a 30 percent female membership.

Women as marketing academics appear to be excluded from full participation in the field in other subtle ways as well. As Schiebinger (1987) notes, membership in an academic society does not always provide one with equal access to positions of power and influence within the field. To date, there have been no women editors of any journals sponsored by the American Marketing Association. Further, female representation on the review board of the field's primary journals is well below even their proportional membership in the Association. For the Journal of Marketing, only 3 women are currently listed as members of the Editorial Board, versus 78 women for a proportional representation of 3.7%. The Journal of Marketing Research lists only 3 women on an editorial board of 52, a 5.8% representation. The Journal of Consumer Research, perhaps because of the higher percentage of female membership in the Association for Consumer Research, fares slightly better; there are 10 female members on its editorial board of 51 members, a 19.6% representation.

Consistent with the low representation of women on marketing editorial boards is their marked absence in the ranks of administrative positions within the two primary academic associations. No woman has ever been president of the American Marketing Association, and only two have served as vice-president of its academically-based Education Division. Only one woman has been elected president of the Association for Consumer Research. All these positions were held during the latter 1980's.

Impediments to the progress of women in marketing as well as other academic fields spring from a variety of cultural factors, ranging from early childhood socialization (cf, Gilligan, 1982) to structural barriers in the form of maternity leave policies, lack of an adequate child care infra-structure, and discriminatory hiring and tenure practices (cf, Rossiter 1987; Scott 1988). However, as several feminist scientists have recently observed, a fundamental obstacle to the progress of women in marketing, as in the other social sciences, is the nature of the scientific enterprise itself. With few exceptions, current social science
theory and methods are androcentric; that is, they represent masculine/agentic modes of perceiving reality and of formulating and carrying out research programs.1 The origins and nature of this androcentric perspective will be discussed and a set of articles taken from a recent (1989) volume of the Journal of Marketing will be used to demonstrate the presence of this perspective in current marketing thought. Suggestions will then be presented for rectifying this condition.

THE ORIGINS OF ANDROCENTRISM

"Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view and confuse it with the absolute truth," wrote Simone de Beauvoir in 1970. But what is the origin of this masculine view of the world and why has it come to permeate the ideology of modern marketing science? Schiebinger (1989) argues that the androcentric world view originated in the efforts of early scientists to establish their professionalism by banishing both females and the feminine from scientific inquiry. Beginning with Aristotle, women were viewed as incompetent for scientific inquiry. Schiebinger (1989, p. 2) observes that "the alleged defect in women's minds has changed over time: in the late eighteenth century, the female cranial cavity was supposed to be too small to hold powerful brains; in the late nineteenth century, the exercise of women's brains was said to shrink their ovaries. In our own century, peculiarities in the right hemisphere supposedly make women unable to visualize spatial relations."

The ideology that excluded women from participating in science rejected not only the female but also, and most importantly, for my present purposes, the feminine. As science grew from a craft undertaken largely in private, home-based laboratories and observatories to a profession centered in universities and institutes, it increasingly embraced a dualistic perspective of human nature and the empirical world. One half of this duality -- the masculine/agentic portion -- came to be regarded as scientific; the other -- the feminine/agentic portion -- came to be regarded as unscientific, and was excluded from inquiry.

Descartes bequeathed to science a model of knowledge based on clarity, dispassion, and detachment; a model that was distinctly masculine and that explicitly rejected the feminine. As Descartes noted, scientists were to rid themselves of all emotion and subjectivity: "Even those that have the feeblest souls can acquire a very absolute dominion over their passions if sufficient industry is applied in training and guiding them (1911, p. 356)."

However, as Harding (1986) and Keller (1985) note, the most vivid portrayal of the masculinity of science originated from Sir Francis Bacon, the founder of the British Empiricist tradition and deemed by many to be the architect of modern science. Bacon equated knowledge with power, scientific knowledge was to enable man to dominate and control nature -- a norm that is still pervasive in science today. Bacon's vision was a science leading to the dominion and mastery of nature, the "command of nature in action" (quoted in Keller, 1985, p. 34). Bacon viewed Nature as a woman who required taming and shaping by the masculine scientific mind: "I am come in very truth," wrote Bacon, "leading you to Nature... to bind her to your service and make her your slave... I invite all such to join themselves, as true sons of knowledge... that passing by the outer courts of Nature... we may find a way at length into her inner chambers." According to Bacon, scientific knowledge and the technologies it generates, do not "merely exert a gentle guidance over Nature's course; they have the power to conquer and subdue her, to share her to her foundations (quoted in Keller, 1985, p. 36)."

Bacon's pervasive metaphor equating science with male dominance and Nature with female submission served as the primary cornerstone for the development of the androcentric ideology that came to characterize the scientific enterprise from its origins to the present day. Masculine sexual metaphors continue to echo through modern scientific discourse. We speak of "hard" versus "soft" data, the "rigor" of the physical sciences versus the "softness" of the social sciences; we continue to laud reason over intuition as a way of knowing and favor objective experimentation above subjective empathy as inquiry methods (cf. Anderson, 1983; Deshpande, 1983; Hirschman, 1986; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988; Peter and Olson, 1983). We make continuing appeals for "penetrating thrusts" in theoretical arguments and praise work that contains "seminal" ideas. More specifically in marketing theory, we envision "competitive thrusts" into target markets and devise strategies...
for "penetrating market segments," all the while attempting to maintain hardheaded rigor and objective rationality in our inquiry systems.

The language of science, including marketing science, is not value-neutral. To the contrary, it pervasively and consistently presents a masculine/agentic Weltanschauung. It constructs a view of reality using one-half of the masculine-feminine dialectic of meaning; it excludes and rejects as not-science that half of the dialectic which is feminine. Bleier (1988, p. 160) writes, "Scientists believe the language they use is simply a vehicle for the transmission of information about the objects of their research ... They do not recognize or acknowledge the degree to which their scientific writing itself participates in producing the reality they wish to present ... As literary criticism has debunked the myth of linguistic neutrality in the literary text, it is time to debunk the myth of the neutrality of the scientific text."

Scientific writing, like all other texts, is a vehicle for transmitting norms, values, and ideology. It has been argued here that current scientific writing conveys the norms, values and ideology characterizing the masculine/agentic world view. Let us examine this charge more directly in some current texts of marketing theory.

ANDROCENTRISM IN CURRENT MARKETING THEORY

As a theory becomes adopted within the ideological structure of a field of inquiry, its theoretical statements come to frame the phenomenon as if the metaphor were literally true. For example, we no longer question conceptualizing the human mind as an information processing computer, because this metaphor has been so consistently applied in psychology and consumer research (Bettman, 1979).

It will be argued that the prevailing metaphors in marketing theory serve to frame in an androcentric way the phenomena that marketers study. The 27 articles in the 1989 volume of the Journal of Marketing served as the frame for the analysis. Each article was read and coded as to themes and propositions representing a masculine/agentic or feminine/communal orientation. For purposes of the present study, the concept of agency and communion were defined following Bakan (1966):

"Agency manifests itself in self-protection, self-assertion, and self-expansion; communion manifests itself in the sense of being at one with other organisms. Agency manifests itself in the formation of separations; communion in the lack of separations. Agency manifests itself in isolation, alienation and aloneness; communion in contact, openness, and union. Agency manifests itself in the urge to master; communion in noncontractual cooperation. Agency manifests itself in the repression of feeling and impulse; communion in the lack and removal of repression ... The very split of agency from communion, which is a separation, arises from agency itself; it then represses the communion from which it has separated itself" (p.15)

Bakan, like many sex role theorists who modeled their work on his (Bem 1974; Spence, Helmreich and Stapp, 1978), noted the linkage between agency and male gender and communion and female gender: "Although the agency and communion features are present in both males and females, agency is greater in males and communion in females" (1966, p. 20). This covariation between gender and agency/communion gave rise to sex role typing: "What we have been referring to as agency is more characteristically [viewed as] masculine, and what we have been referring to as communion is more characteristically [viewed as] feminine" (1966, p. 110).

Hence, in large part, agency is equivalent in meaning to masculinity; communion is equivalent to femininity. Further, as I will illustrate, agency is the prevailing ideology within marketing science. Communion is not. The graph in Table One lists the 27 articles in the 1989 volume of the Journal of Marketing. Across the top are the primary themes identified within the set of articles. Symbols indicate which themes were represented in each article. As will be discerned from the graph, only ten (37%) of the 27 articles examined contained content conveying communal values, such as interpersonal cooperation and group loyalty; and, as I shall show, most of these did so within a larger framework communicating an agentic ideology. Only one article put forward an advocacy position for
communal values in marketing research and theory (Deshpande and Webster, 1989); this article essentially argued for a balance between agency and communion in marketing theory -- a position which will be proposed in the present paper, as well.

Let us now examine in more detail the themes informing current marketing theory.

Control and Power Over Others

By far the most pervasive theme (present in 16 of the 27 articles examined) was the advocacy of gaining power and control over the thoughts and/or activities of others. Targeted others were primarily consumers, but several articles also incorporated references to sales personnel, dealers, suppliers, and other companies. Frazier, et al (1989), for example, opened their article using the following ideological frame: "Two research questions of central prominence in the study of distribution channel relationships are 'what is the basis or foundation for one firm's ability to gain influence on the behavior of another firm;' and 'what are the behavioral reactions of the target firm to the source firm's influence attempts' (p. 50)." These authors continued their line of reasoning by proposing that "Because prompting inter-firm teamwork is not a high priority, the manufacturer would be interested in achieving its influence objectives ... as quickly as possible. Coercive strategies are attractive in such a situation (p. 56)."

Hoch and Deighton (1989) framed their research by advocating and then describing how managers may gain control over consumers' product experiences:

"We offer a simple four stage model ... This model isolates the points at which consumer learning from experience is fallible and therefore open to influence ... We then lay out strategies for managing what consumers learn from experience." (pp. 7-2). These researchers continued by "suggest[ing]that the points where consumer learning is most error-prone are those where marketers can exert leverage on the learning process, whether by facilitating, hindering, or shaping what is learned (p. 10)." In concluding their article, these authors asserted that, "Manufacturers can gain control over the consumer learning process by understanding how consumers learn from experience ... Learning must be accounted for ... as a process that marketing has the power to leverage ... We hope our discussion will stimulate studies that translate research on learning from experience into workable options for marketing management (p. 16)."

Kohli's article (1989a) explicitly stated its agentic orientation in the title, "Determinants of Influence in Organizational Buying." As in the other articles, he framed his research from a perspective which specifically assumed patterns of interpersonal control: "Several previous studies have established linkages between an individual's manifest influence and his or her resources, such as reward power, expert power and information power ..." (p. 51). Kohli used as his predictor (causal) variables nine different forms of power that could be used to control the actions of others.

In some of the articles, specific aspects of the consumer's psyche were depicted as having managerially beneficial influence potential. For example, MacInnis and Jaworsky (1989) described how current research on "consumers' additudinal responses to advertising" were being investigated at the subcomponent level. For example, research viewed "emotions as factors that influence brand attitudes" and sought to "identify factors that affect processing from ads (p. 1)." As with the other articles, their aim was to increase the control of managers over consumers' thoughts and actions: "Our model is formulated from the perspective of the advertising practitioner whose objective is to encourage processing of brand information." (p. 4).

As a final example, let us consider the article by Ronchetto, Hutt and Reingen (1989) entitled, "Embedded Influence Patterns in Organizational Buying Systems." These researchers also embedded their study within a worldview guided by notions of power and interpersonal control: "Consistent with current theories of power and influence, our conceptualization is based on the premise that organizational actors derive influence from the structural position they occupy within the buying system." (p. 51). The authors further asserted that "Deep structures of power are located in patterns of action that ... establish the rules of the game."
As in some of the other articles examined, the Ronchetto et al. (1989) study transformed the presence of control into a quest for establishing a dominance/submission relationship: "Increasing the dependence of the other network members increases the control exercised by an individual (p. 53)." This agentic ideological stance is reminiscent of Bacon's call to control and subdue Nature, to make her obey the scientists' commands (cf., Keller, 1987). Following the pattern established in the other studies in which ideological appeals to control and power were identified, the Ronchetto et al. (1989) study concluded on a note of managerial dominance: "By identifying embedded patterns of influence ..., the marketer is better equipped to develop more responsive relation-management strategies." (p. 60).

The allusion in the above passage to 'relation-management strategies' leads us to the second most common theme emerging from the articles examined -- instrumentalism.

Instrumentalism

Instrumentalism refers to an agentic tendency to view other entities (e.g., people, animals, natural phenomena) as objects or instruments to be used/manipulated as the individual sees fit (Spence, 1983). Within an instrumental perspective, other persons become essentially depersonalized and regarded as tools to be utilized in the course of carrying out a task or reaching an objective. Instrumentalism springs from the masculine/scientific tendencies to separate the knowing subject from the observed (or experimentally manipulated) object. Interpersonal contact between subject and object is repressed in order to provide objectivity and an appropriate level of dispassionate detachment (Keller, 1987). The object is then manipulated to obtain the desired goal, e.g., scientific knowledge, profits.

In the present inquiry, several articles were identified in which researchers displayed an instrumental view of the phenomenon they were studying. For example, in an article discussing the selection decisions for new products by grocery store personnel, Rao and McLaughlin (1989, p. 81) stated that: "Considerable human capital costs are incurred by retail firms for the evaluation of as many as several hundred new products each week." In this passage, persons who work as professional buyers for the grocery chain are linguistically presented as tools or 'capital equipment' of the company for which they work. This implicitly de-humanizes the individuals by transforming them from living people into abstract commodities.

Oliver and Swan (1989) presented an instrumental conceptualization of exchange transactions in their study of consumer perceptions of equity. In a passage describing current theories on customer-salesperson interactions, they stated: "In the traditional resolution of multidimensional inputs, inputs that are 'similar' (e.g., the salaries and wealth of marriage partners) are averaged or 'integrated' and compared with outcomes (p. 23)." Here a relationship between two persons (salesperson/customer) is recast as a set of 'inputs' and 'outcomes'. The example they provide is also distinctly instrumental in linguistic imagery. Persons getting married are not described as lovers (a communal concept) or even fiancees, but rather as 'partners', a more business-like term. The example also suggests an economic, monetary basis for marriage, as opposed to communal notions such as love, caring or nurturance.

In an article on evolutionary processes in business markets, Lambkin and Day (1989, p. 13) stated: "New markets attract increasing numbers of competitors, leading to an increasing level of population density until eventually the resource space is filled and a shakeout occurs; (the timing depends on whether resource supplies expand or efficiency in resource use rises)." The term 'resource space' is an instrumental depiction of consumers (men, women, and children) who are here portrayed as objects useful to the company because they provide things the company wants (money). Also, absent from this narrative is any apparent concern for those composing the 'resource space', which a communal normative base would provide.

Similarly, McKee, Varadarajan, and Pride (1989, p. 24) stated: "In a strongly positive, volatile market ... if the firm does not actively increase slack, the ratio of adaptive capabilities to externally available resources will decrease automatically." Here also, consumers (people) are transformed into abstract entities (i.e., external resources) viewed as valuable to the firm.
danger is that in viewing people in such an instrumental fashion we may lose sight of the emotional and personal impact a company's actions may have on their lives. They become implicitly de-personalized and, hence, non-human.

Instrumental values were also present even in articles with a communal focus. For instance, Hunt, Wood and Chonko (1989) examined the relationship between business ethics and the corporate commitment of workers. Although ethics typically is a communal issue, in this article it was cast in an instrumental mode: "The managerial significance of these questions lies in the fact that a strong link has long been recognized between organizational commitment and such desirable outcomes as high performance and low absenteeism (p. 80)." Thus, in this passage, ethical standards did not appear to be valued for their intrinsic merit in producing interpersonal harmony, but rather because they would cause workers to be better company tools (i.e., hard working, more profitable).

An article by Kohli (1989b, p. 40) began on an instrumental note by stating: "Salespeople are important sources of revenues as well as costs for the organization." As before, people were transformed via linguistic imagery to abstractions that were valued in terms of their positive or negative contribution to the firm's economic welfare. Although readers accustomed to such language may protest that it is just a question of semantics, the issue is much deeper than that. Language frames how we think; it focuses our attention on certain features of a phenomenon and not on others (Hesse, 1966). The instrumental language cited in the foregoing examples focuses attention upon the economic aspects of human actors. Implicitly, it ignores or denies other significant aspects of these individuals' lives. People become, within the theoretical schema, only resource flows or costs.

By implicitly attending (and teaching others to attend) only to those aspects of a person -- salesperson, consumer, supplier -- which are of value to our tasks and goals, we risk losing sight of their needs. We formulate instead a worldview centered around the firm's objectives; within this worldview, others become valued only to the extent that they serve the firm's purposes. When they are no longer needed (or become too costly), they are abandoned with little thought of the consequences.

**COMPETITION**

The third most common theme across the articles examined was the concept of competition, which was present in nine (33%) of the studies. A notable characteristic of the discussion of competition as presented in these articles was the extent to which competition was assumed to be a 'fact' of business life and a trait that good (i.e., profitable) firms possessed. Gatignon and Robertson (1989, p. 37), for example, wrote, "The logic is that industry participants under oligopoly conditions pay close attention to each other's competitive moves and that the benefits of adopting an innovation increase as the number of competitors decreases." Later, they stated (p. 37), "Uncertainty of demand heightens perceived competitive vulnerability and makes a firm more susceptible to innovation in its quest for competitive advantage." Similarly, Brown and Schwarz (1989) proposed that "today's competitive environment is encouraging professionals to take subtle, and in some cases aggressive, steps to promote their services " (p. 97). The use of a competitive worldview to frame research may serve to generate results consistent with that worldview. Similarly, adoption of this perspective by managers may influence them to act in a competitive manner, rather than to search for ways of coexisting with other firms.2

Articles designed to provide decision-making technologies to companies also implicitly adopted a competitive perspective. Rangaswamy et al (1989, p. 25), in describing a software program to be used during negotiations, stated: "A large number of contextual as well as self- and opponent-based factors determine negotiation outcomes." This passage assumes that negotiations will (should) be based on competitive, rather than cooperative, attitudes between participants. Similarly, Wittink and Cattin (1989), writing about the use of conjoint analysis, stated: "Competitive analysis is now a very common use of conjoint analysis, undoubtedly because of the opportunity to conduct market simulations (p. 93)."

Finally, Thomas (1989, p. 63) used a competitive frame to discuss the role of the United States International Trade Commission: "Patents are a potential barrier to competitors and can lead to
long-run sustainable advantage. However, pressure from a growing number of foreign competitors entering attractive U.S. markets has involved the infringement of valid U.S. patents. In this passage, patents are depicted instrumentally as a competitive tool. Foreign companies are depicted solely as competitors, overlooking the fact that they may be offering better quality or better functioning products to consumers. Implicitly, maintaining the domestic firm's profitability is taken to be the primary goal; issues of consumer welfare are not discussed.

CONFLICT, WAR, AND AGGRESSION

Keller (1985, p. 123) notes that within the androcentric scientific worldview, "Perception ... is aimed at detecting vulnerability, points of weakness, (and) susceptibility to attack ... Science can come to sound like a battlefield. Sometimes such imagery becomes quite extreme, exceeding even the conventional imagery of the warrior or hunter ... Problems for many scientists are to be 'attacked', 'conquered', or 'licked'. If subtle means fail, one resorts to 'brute force' ... The process is perceived as clearing the field of obstacles."

Metaphorical images of war and conflict were present in eight (29%) of the articles examined; aggression was found in five (18.5%). In their article on channel intermediaries, for example, Frazier, Gill and Kale (1989, p. 52) stated that: "The predominant viewpoint is that 'threats tend to elicit threats, thus increasing the degree of conflict ... When one party establishes the use of coercion, the other is likely to respond in kind, intensifying the conflict, rather than resolving it'."

Hoch and Deighton (1989, p. 16), in their article instructing managers in how to control consumer learning, noted that possession of such knowledge "makes it a powerful tool in the underdog (firm's) armory." (p. 16). Even more vivid imagery was used by Lambkin and Day (1989, p. 5) who observed, "Seldom do entrenched substitutes give up their market without a fight ..." Similarly, Alberts (1989, p. 46) in describing the actions of Bausch and Lomb in the late 1970's stated: "Though at least four of its rivals gave up, they were acquired respectively by Johnson and Johnson, Schering-Plough, Ciba-Geigy, and Revlon, all of which counter-attacked."

A final example of the warfare metaphor was provided in a discussion of patent infringement by Thomas (1989, p. 69): "Under the Trade Act of 1974 ... proving the effect or tendency to destroy or substantially injure a domestic industry required the demonstration of causation between the unfair act and the injury."

Keller (1985, p. 167) discusses the linkage between conflict, control and aggression that is central to the androcentric worldview: "Conflict inevitably brings with it the issue of control ... It provokes the need to control oneself, or another, as a response to felt danger ... On the other hand, the maintenance of (communal) continuity between self and other provides a check against the tendency ... to hurt or destroy. Such continuity ... can foster the search for nonviolent solutions of interpersonal conflict and inhibit or even defuse the aggressive feelings aroused."

In the articles examined, there were few suggestions of or attempts at cooperative ventures between firms or between people. Communality was largely absent, while images of inter-firm rivalry, competition, warfare and control were pervasive. For example, in their discussion of evolutionary processes in product markets, Lambkin and Day (1989, p. 10) stated, "As the density of the (firm) population increases, it becomes increasingly difficult to avoid direct competition, wherein the gains of one competitor must result from losses to another. This situation leads to an intensification of competitive activity ... Competition is likely to be particularly aggressive in a situation of oversupply ... when the size of a population exceeds the carrying capacity of its environment." Similarly, Alberts (1989, p. 38), in an article describing several exploitation strategies for eliminating other companies, as well as achieving above-the-norm profits, encouraged companies to "seek to build market share by some combination of aggressive pricing, aggressive promotion, and preemptive additions to capacity."

SUCCESS = PROFITS

The primary rationale for the marketing warfare, conflict, and aggression cited in the articles surveyed was to attain economic or financial resources; successful strategies were inevitably depicted as those that generated profits for the firm. In his discussion of standardizing international marketing strategy, Jain (1989, p. 76)
concluded, "In the final analysis, the decision on standardization should be based on economic payoff ... As a matter of fact, it is the concern for financial performance that has led researchers to stress one marketing decision area over others for standardization." Similarly, the model proposed by Rao and McLaughlin (1989, p. 82) for grocery store buyers assumed that "the buyer makes a judgment to accept or reject the product, considering such factors as potential demand ... expected costs to the firm, and overall profit potential."

McKee, Varadarajan, and Pride (1989, p. 26) specified three profit measures of firm performance in their study of strategic adaptability; these were: "(1) percentage change in share of total bank deposits ... (2) return on assets ... (3) return on equity." Bawa and Shoemaker (1989, p. 66) proposed that "From a managerial viewpoint, enhancing the incremental sales response to a promotion is the key to improving profitability." And, as a final example, Alberts (1989, p. 43) stated, "[The Company's] overriding financial objective ... is maximization of the present discounted value of its expected economic profits ..."

Although there is certainly nothing morally wrong with corporate profitability (and no firm would choose bankruptcy as a desirable goal), what is compelling about the articles examined is that money was virtually the only objective sought. None of the articles, for example, named employee satisfaction, consumer welfare, or environmental preservation as appropriate objectives for a company to pursue or as indicators of its "success." Indeed, within the prevailing marketing theory worldview, successful operation is equated with accumulating money. It is not so much the presence of pro-profit ideology that is disturbing in these articles, but rather its conception as the sole criterion of a company's worth that is troubling. Companies can and perhaps morally should do more than simply accumulate money. However, the present marketing literature does little to promote, or even suggest, other appropriate standards of success.

THE MACHINE, ROBOT, COMPUTER IMAGE

Haraway (1987, p. 91) observes that androcentric social science has increasingly been turning to metaphors of the machine and the computer to describe both its own workings and those of the phenomena it studies: "By the late 20th century, both sex and mind have been recast from organismic molds into technological-cybernetic ones ... Strategic reasoning has come to be equated with pure rationality." And Keller (1985, pp. 69-70) writes "A new form of perception came into being: a self-detachment that enabled men to conceive of an autonomous universe, operating ... in a purely mechanical ... way. Indeed, it is often argued that the very success of modern science rests on a methodology that protects its inquiries from the idiosyncratic sway of human emotion. No longer filling the void with living form, man learned instead to fill it with dead form -- Nature, deanimated and mechanized, could now be put to the uses of men."

One striking example of the phenomenon-as-machine metaphor in current marketing inquiry was found in an article by Leigh and McGraw (1989, p. 17) on industrial sales personnel. The authors closely adhered to the man-as-information processor analogy popular in cognitive psychology: "Procedural knowledge (possessed by salespeople) is essentially a set of learned behavioral routines that fit various selling situations. Once activated from memory ..., procedural knowledge guides the implementation of an intended selling approach." The information processing analog is also used by Hoch and Deighton (1989) and MacInnis and Jaworski (1989, p. 51) who stated, "(A) primary feature of ... the Aad model (is) ... the assertion that Aad ..., may form through both 'central' and 'peripheral' processing mechanisms."

The mechanical imagery in the article by Rangaswamy et al (1989) concerning computer-assisted negotiations was especially vivid. The software program they presented contained a knowledge base and an inference engine. "The inference engine manipulates the elements in the knowledge base, along with information supplied by the user, in a way that solves a particular problem (p. 29)." The article continued by describing how various software 'shells' could be used to create an inference engine: "Use of shells ... enables the research to focus on knowledge engineering issues rather than programming issues (p. 30)."
The machine-computer metaphor in current marketing theory reveals the high evaluation which logical, rationalistic thought is given within androcentric social science, generally. We project ourselves as computers because we wish to emulate the purely logical nature of their operations -- to rid ourselves of the 'instability' of emotional, empathic, or intuitive thought. This normative orientation toward rationality was exhibited in other ways as well. An article by Weinberger and Spotts (1989), for example, examined the informational content of advertisements in the U.S. and Britain. In their study, they equated rationality with factual information (e.g., price) and emotionality with visual (aesthetic) imagery. Implicitly their model reflected a normative assumption that verbal 'facts' were better than visual images. As they stated this assumption: "Cell 1, consisting of thinking and high involvement, emphasizes rationality and is characterized by economic motives (p. 90)"; and: "Each of the two rational cells ... has significantly more information than the emotional (cells)." (p. 92).

In essence, they projected their androcentric view of what counts as useful sensory data onto consumers: i.e., consumers should not be moved by emotion to buy a product, rather they should calculate its utility based upon economic-technical criteria. As Harding (1986, p. 86) writes, "current social science images of the social actor tend to feature only two types of humans, neither of whom are self-conscious of feeling and emotions, a crucial element in beliefs and behaviors: [they present] either the conscious, cognitive actor consciously wanting something (e.g., money or status) and consciously calculating the merit of various means toward an end; or the emotional actor driven or prompted by a limited number of 'instincts', 'impulses', or 'needs' ... In neither case is awareness of feeling or emotion seen as significant in the reasons for or causes of people's actions and beliefs, or as an element of social structure."

DOMINANCE AND SEPARATION

The drive toward eliminating emotional and empathic aspects of human behavior characteristic of current social science gives rise to a felt need by practicing scientists to separate themselves from the 'objects' of their inquiry and to attempt to dominate and manipulate the phenomena they choose to study. This embracing of dominance and separation is also normatively projected into the theoretical structures used to encapsulate phenomena (Keller, 1985).

Marketing theory is no exception to this pattern. Frazier, Gill and Kale (1989), for example, described dominance tactics in a distribution channel as follows: "Because promoting interfirm teamwork is not a high priority, the manufacturer would be interested in achieving its influence objectives as quickly as possible. Coercive strategies are attractive in such a situation ... Moreover, in handling problems manufacturer personnel may feel justified in using high-pressure strategies with dealers that are so dependent on them ... Dealers with relatively high dependence in the relationship are likely to bend to pressure quickly and comply with the manufacturer's desires (p. 56)." This passage appears not only to dismiss the communal potential of "promoting interfirm teamwork," but implicitly sanctions the development of a dominance-submission relationship between two partners.

Hoch and Deighton (1989) carry this imagery one step farther by first characterizing companies as 'top dogs' or 'underdogs' and then encouraging both of them to attempt to dominate the consumer's experiential learning process. As they argued (p. 12), "Top dogs have market power ... and can use it to control the consumer's learning agenda ..." Analogously, Ronchetti, Hutt, and Reingen (1989, p. 53) appeared to advise workers on how they can dominate one another: "Increasing the dependence of other network members increases the control exercised by an individual", and "a small group of individuals ... have the most influence or decision-making authority ... An employee who has access to such a dominant reference group may obtain from it valuable information and resources, thus increasing others' dependence."

Keller (1985, p. 126) believes that such theorization signifies the ideological values that have been inculcated in the scientist: "The contest many scientists feel themselves engaged in, either with nature as a whole or with the particular objects they study, reflects the contest they feel themselves engaged in with other humans. The need to dominate nature is, in this view, a projection of the need to dominate other human beings."
The desire to dominate others can also lead to (or reflect) fears that the other may come to dominate us. Thus, conceptual schemas that advocate domination also frequently warn of the consequences should the tables turn. Frazier, Gill and Kale (1989, p. 66) stated, "The long run effects of a manufacturer's use of coercion with highly dependent dealers may prove very negative for the manufacturer, if the market environment changes drastically. Today's sellers' markets can become tomorrow's buyers' markets."

The fear of being dominated can lead to the search for barriers to protect one's interests. Articles reflected this desire as well; Thomas (1989, p. 63) wrote, "Patents... are a potential barrier to competitors." And Karakaya and Stahl (1989, p. 88) advised: "Market entry barriers are considered to be a crucial factor in the market entry decision ... For the incumbents, building or keeping the barriers high will make it difficult for new firms to enter markets." Thus, the more we separate ourselves from others (whether the 'other' be other companies, people, or phenomena of inquiry) and attempt to dominate and control their actions, the more we come to fear the possible reversal of roles, and, thus, ever more anxiously we construct the barriers between self and other.

**SEXUAL METAPHORS IN MARKETING THEORY**

The dominance and submission theme, the valuing of rationality above emotionality, and the methodological distancing of self from personal contact with the other which characterize current social science has led many feminist writers to equate the norms of androcentric science with male sexual behavior (cf., Bleier, 1988; Harding and O'Barr, 1987; Keller, 1985; Schiebinger, 1989; Scott 1988). As was noted in the introduction, many early founders of modern science (e.g., Bacon, Kant) construed science as masculine activity appropriate only for men, while Nature was commonly depicted as female.

We propose that this same metaphoric structure is present in current marketing theory, as well. In our view, the appropriate metaphoric analogy within the prevailing ideology of marketing science is: marketers : (are to) consumers as males : females. That is, the prevailing perspective in marketing thought views marketers (i.e., firms, managers) as dominant, active, and controlling, whereas consumers are depicted as submissive, passive, and controlled. A second pattern portrayed managers/Supervisors : workers/salespeople as males : females. This latter theme would seem to bear out the criticisms of several writers that current social science theory is not only androcentric, but also preserves prevailing political and social class interests as well. As Harding (1986, p. 38) writes: "While individual scientists may well be motivated by the loftiest of personal goals and social ideals, their current activity in fact functions primarily to increase profit for and maintain social control by the few over the many."3

The manager : consumer as male : female metaphor was present not only at an abstract metaphorical level, but also was displayed in the form of quasi-sexual imagery. Leigh and McGraw (1989, p. 30), for example, wrote, "The follow-up call presents an opportunity for ... extensive probing to identify buying center interests ..." and "the industrial salespersons in our sample focus on both account maintenance and further account penetration with current customers (p. 31)." Rao and McLaughlin (1989, p. 80) described one reason for the introduction of new products as "attempts to preempt competitive thrusts." Hoch and Deighton (1989, p. 2) argued that "when marketers set out to influence consumers, they tend to think first of methods that implant knowledge — advertising is the principal tool." MacKenzie and Lutz (1989, p.63) stated that "if Aa is indeed a more potent force — in driving Ab, advertisers should strive for maximum entertainment value." And finally Thomas (1989, p. 69), who had earlier advised the establishing of barriers to outside firms, warned of "increased market penetration" by these competitors.

On one level, these linguistic tropes common to marketing -- when viewed in a sexual context -- are humorous; but at another, more normative level, they demonstrate how thoroughly the androcentric worldview has permeated marketing thought. Clearly, in our language, our images, our models, we do see ourselves (acting through our surrogate selves: the marketing managers) as dominators, controllers, decision-makers. We manipulate our tools, formulate our strategies, devise our tactics and send our various resources into action. Somewhere on the other end of the unidirectional arrow in the LISREL model, a
market is penetrated, a consumer is made to respond, a product is purchased. The perceived flow of power is always the same; it emanates from the omniscient manager and affects, influences, controls the consumer. Surely this has to be recognized as an incomplete picture of actual life. How can it be remedied?

TOWARD A BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

Feminists have suggested two avenues for supplementing the androcentric ideology of current social science theory. The first, and earliest, course they suggested was simply to add more women to the ranks of practicing scientists (Rossiter 1987). The reasoning here was that the addition of women would act to modify the androcentric perspective by supplanting it with the communal worldview often espoused by women (Keller 1983). This avenue is meritorious and should be pursued on moral grounds alone. As noted in the Introduction, women in large part remain excluded from the sciences due to a variety of inequitable structural and societal impediments (Rossiter 1987). This criticism is as valid for marketing as it is for other disciplines.

However, in and of itself, affirmatively encouraging women to enter graduate studies in marketing and mentoring women professors through tenure and career development will not bring about the desired changes in the marketing theory Weltanshauung. The reason is that, at the present time, virtually all entrants into the marketing academic profession -- regardless of gender -- are inculcated into the androcentric perspective. Socializing women into this ideology simply teaches them that to succeed as scientists, they must discard (or at least repress) whatever communal qualities they possess and instead adopt those which are agentic. Similarly, men who may possess communal values quickly learn upon entering a typical marketing Ph.D. program that these qualities must be hidden, lest their research efforts appear "soft" or "unrigorous."4

Thus, at the present time, women are permitted to pursue research in marketing to the extent that they can adopt and utilize an agentic worldview in framing and conducting their research (Schiebinger, 1989). Efforts at equity are presently viewed as a task of getting women to think like men; equity is rarely depicted as getting men to think like women or as getting both genders to incorporate agentic and communal perspectives in their inquiries. As Harding (1986, p. 53) notes, "The equity recommendations ... ask women to exchange major aspects of their gender identity for the masculine version -- without prescribing a similar degendering process for men."

THE INTERPRETIVE/HUMANISTIC/NATURALISTIC DOOR

The remedy to this situation appears to be making its way into marketing science via a "back door," or at least through an unexpected avenue: that of method. For the past decade, marketing scholars have been questioning the appropriateness of the positivist-empiricist method, which heretofore had stood as a monolith in marketing science (cf, Anderson, 1983, 1986; Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry, 1988; Deshpande, 1983; Hirschman, 1986; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988; Peter and Olson, 1983). Their efforts are consistent with those of many feminist scholars who have also suggested the relevance of semiotic, hermeneutic, and deconstructionist methods for introducing communal values into the scientific enterprise (e.g., Bordo, 1987; Haraway, 1987; Harding, 1986; Keller, 1985; Schiebinger, 1989).

These scholars argue that the widespread use of survey and experimental methods are symptomatic of the encompassing androcentric ideology of social science, which normatively advocates the separation of observer from phenomenon and the manipulation of the phenomenon by the observer. Techniques such as LISREL exemplify this same bias by segregating pieces of reality from one another and then calculating the degree of control (i.e., causation) that independent (i.e., masculine-dominant-agentic) variables have on dependent (i.e., feminine-submissive-communal) variables. Thus, the androcentric ideology of marketing theory is reiterated within the androcentric ideology of marketing method.

To counteract this imbalance, communal methods that bridge the separation between subject and object via empathy and hermeneutic interpretation are recommended (Haraway, 1987; Keller, 1983). Bordo (1987, p. 263), for example, writes "epistemological and ethical perspectives that have been identified as (communal) claim a natural foundation for knowledge, not in detachment and distance, but in closeness, connectedness and
empathy." This feminist post-modernism (Harding, 1986) is consistent with such thinkers as Cavell, Derrida, Feyerabend, Foucault, Gadamer, Geertz, Lacan, Rorty, and Wittgenstein, and such intellectual movements as semiotics, hermeneutics, deconstruction, psychoanalysis, structuralism, and interpretive anthropology. These approaches have in common a belief that "there is another world hidden from the consciousness - of the individual and collective consciousness; of social and historical particularity explored by novels, drama, poetry, music and art (Harding, 1986, p. 245)." Marketing science, like other forms of social science, has thus far been proscribed from exploring these phenomena by its adherence to an agentic worldview. How can this imbalance be corrected?

SOME IDEAS FOR GETTING STARTED

One route is to nurture those aspects of marketing theory that currently exhibit communal values. Although in our present data set (i.e., the 1989 volume of the Journal of Marketing) such instances were few, they were not nonexistent. Three of the articles (11%) mentioned processes of coordination or cooperation among institutions or people. Gatignon and Robertson (1989, p. 38), for instance, stated, "Industries in which suppliers and customers have a high degree of vertical dependence ... have a propensity for coordination and interlocking relationships. Such coordination, we expect, is associated with greater information flow and more rapid adoption." On an interpersonal level, Kohli (1989, p. 54) discusses the concept of viscidity: "Viscidity refers to the extent to which buying center members work together as a team, as opposed to being fragmented and hostile to each other. In highly viscid groups, members work together to make the best possible decision."

In a second article, Kohli (1989, p. 43) dealt with the communal notion of consideration, "Consideration refers to the degree to which supervisors develop a climate of psychological support, mutual trust and respect, helpfulness and friendliness. Considerate behavior appears to result in a work environment in which subordinates feel free to raise questions, clarify doubts, and so on, which lead to high role clarity."

These excerpts suggest the importance that communion could potentially have as a research focus within current marketing science theorization. However, several of the articles in which communal values were found continued to embed them within a larger agentic framework. Hunt, Wood and Chonko (1986, p. 88), for example, consistently linked communal values to agentic goals in their article on corporate ethics: "The search for efficiency, productivity, and success constitutes a core dimension of the discipline of management in general and marketing management, in particular. Corporate ethical values may be a key ingredient for success." And, similarly, Rao and McLaughlin (1989, p. 87) intermixed communal and agentic goals when they wrote: "(As) channel efficiency increases, profits are likely to be higher for channel members and at the same time prices may be lower for consumers."

The most balanced set of communal and agentic conceptual values and research procedures in the current data set was found in the Deshpande and Webster (1989) article on organizational culture. In fact, in several respects, this article could serve as a model of balanced presentation. For example, Deshpande and Webster provided a thorough review of a continuum of theoretical perspectives for studying organizational culture ranging from the distinctly agentic (e.g., the comparative and contingency management paradigms) to the strongly communal (e.g., the structural/psychodynamic paradigm). Further, they also explicitly advocated a mix of agentic and communal methods for examining this phenomenon: "Our own position is that culture topics in marketing can and should be studied by both traditional survey research and ethnographic methods" (p. 5). The Deshpande and Webster article demonstrates well that a balanced discussion of agentic and communal perspectives can be presented which is both scholarly and non-polemic.

In addition to developing those aspects of current marketing theorization which are communal, a second, more venturesome approach may also be taken. This is to explore the far side of the agentic-communal dialectic for research topics and methods that have been omitted from marketing science -- the "far side," of course being the communal end of the value continuum. One direct way to envision this is to simply reverse many of the assumptions currently constituting the
ideology of marketing. Thus, instead of automatically assuming the perspective of managerial dominance and consumer (or worker) subordination, we might instead assume that these persons may exhibit a great deal of interdependence and mutual symbiosis in performing their roles. It is very likely that if we looked for such behaviors, we would find them, much as we now 'discover' patterns of control and manipulation.

We might also choose to explore at a societal level the communality of co-constituted meanings held by both marketers and consumers with regard to products and to examine their mutual construction and deconstruction processes for product meaning (McCracken, 1986). This would provide a useful balance to the asymmetric perspective that product meaning necessarily originates with the marketer and is pushed into the consumer's mind. Further, instead of solely seeking to trace competitive patterns of corporate influence and control, the inter-relatedness and co-existence of marketing companies could be also examined.

From a communal perspective, consumers would be envisioned in a different way than they are currently conceived in marketing theory. Instead of viewing consumers merely as information processing machines, we could also consider studying their aspirations, hopes and feelings. We could seek to understand consumer behavior not only for the purpose of selling them more products, but also to provide them with those things most capable of bringing them happiness.

Similarly, we could begin to view companies as capable of achieving objectives beyond the limited realm of monetary profits -- for example, we could also depict them as successful if they contributed a significant portion of their earnings to protecting the environment, assisting economically disadvantaged consumers, or extensively researching the health and safety aspects of their products.¹

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The foregoing critique was intended to make marketing scholars more aware of one ideological perspective which informs their field of inquiry. Androcentrism is not unique to marketing thought -- indeed, as the introductory discussion attempted to demonstrate, it is perhaps the most widespread ideological base upon which current social science is grounded. For this reason, it is certainly not my intention to criticize the authors of the articles reviewed in the present study or to question the scholarly integrity or scientific excellence of their work. Indeed, their work has passed over many formidable intellectual hurdles to achieve publication in the Journal of Marketing and well exemplifies the very high standards for scientific inquiry demanded in our field.

My critique suggests not that such work be abandoned, for it represents a fertile and strongly-grounded world view to which many in our field adhere. Rather, what I advocate is that equal energy, attention, and intellectual commitment be granted to a different world view -- that which promotes communal values.

In closing, I appeal to two values shared by all scholars: A sense of fair play and an open mind. I believe that the present paper has demonstrated that both the feminine and the female have been excluded from full participation in marketing research. This exclusion has been inequitable and likely has damaged not only women's opportunities for full and productive careers in marketing science, but also the intellectual diversity of the field, as well. The exclusion and repression of viewpoints and persons atypical of the prevailing worldview not only harm those shut out, but also inevitably harm those "shut in" -- by limiting the questions asked and the answers sought.

¹In a significant recent article, Richard and Schuster (1989) draw a distinction between feminist attempts to degender science by removing all 'bias' attributable to sex role socialization from scientific inquiry, versus recognizing and consciously incorporating both the feminine and masculine ideologies into the scientific enterprise. They cogently argue that since science (and indeed all human knowledge) is socially constructed, it cannot be made genderless, because gender permeates many of the meaning structures central to science and to social knowledge. Similarly, science is also ideologically grounded in social class interests, and some would argue, in racial and national interests, as well (e.g., Keller, 1989). My position here is that
marketing science, in particular, and the social sciences generally could constructively broaden their theoretical scope by (1) recognizing that prior research has been largely conducted from an androcentric perspective and (2) actively seeking ways to incorporate the communal values encoded within the feminine worldview.

2 A simple change from a competitive to a cooperative worldview can have profound consequences for all participants -- as witness the recent Gorbachev-Bush dialogues on mutual disarmament. The Cold War was not won or lost; rather, it was abandoned.

3 On this point, it is instructive to note that no articles examined advocated empowering either consumers or workers vis-a-vis management.

4 In support of this point, it is interesting to note that when Morris Holbrook (1990) recently advocated the inclusion of feminine values in consumer research, his remarks were received with discomfort by several in the audience. Male scientists are not 'supposed' to say such things and female scientists are often too self-conscious to do so -- fearing they may be labeled as intellectually weak or, even worse, radical.

5 Although some readers will no doubt raise the issue that marketing management is currently concerned primarily with corporate profitability, there is no reason that we as academicians and researchers, could not attempt to educate marketing managers to adopt a more socially progressive set of values. That is, there is no reason why we must pursue only the agentic perspective in our research. Perhaps by discerning more actual and potential manifestations of the communal in the business world, we may help to engender their growth.

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