



Legends in Marketing

SHELBY D. HUNT

Series Editor
Jagdish N. Sheth

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Volume Editor
Roy D. Howell



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Jagdish N. Sheth, Ph.D.

Volume 3

MARKETING THEORY PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE CONTROVERSIES IN MARKETING

Volume Editor

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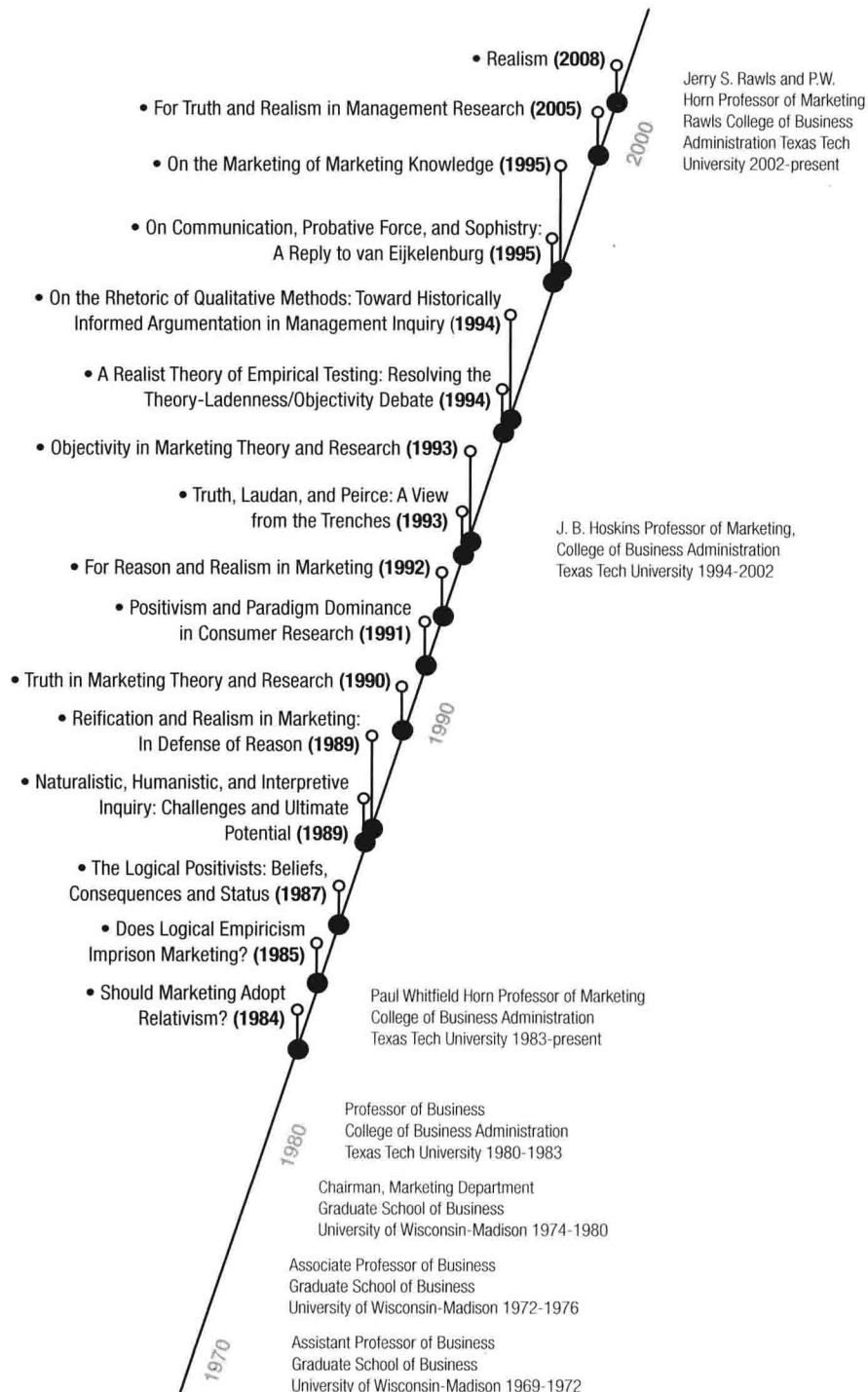
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SHELBY D. HUNT

Shelby D. Hunt is the Jerry S. Rawls and P.W. Horn Professor of Marketing at the Rawls College of Business, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, USA. A past editor of the *Journal of Marketing* (1985–87), he is the author of numerous books, including *Foundations of Marketing Theory: Toward a General Theory of Marketing* (2002), *Controversy in Marketing Theory: For Reason, Realism, Truth, and Objectivity* (2003), and *A General Theory of Competition: Resources, Competences, Productivity, Economic Growth* (SAGE Publications, 2000). One of the 250 most frequently cited researchers in economics and business (Thomson-ISI), he has written numerous articles on competitive theory, strategy, macromarketing, ethics, relationship marketing, channels of distribution, philosophy of science, and marketing theory. Three of his *Journal of Marketing* articles won the Harold H. Maynard Award for the “best article on marketing theory.” His 1994 *Journal of Marketing* article “Commitment and Trust,” with Robert M. Morgan, was the most highly cited article in economics and business in the 1993–2003 decade (Thomson-ISI). For his contributions to theory and science in marketing, he has received multiple other distinguished awards.

VOLUME 3 ARTICLE TIMELINE



Legends in Marketing

As a post doc Research Fellow at Columbia University while writing the book *The Theory of Buyer Behavior* (Wiley, 1969) with my mentor and professor, John A. Howard, I had spent two full years in the stacks of Columbia University Library, reading in awe, classic books in psychology, philosophy, economics, sociology, and anthropology. I was always fascinated with history since my undergraduate days and especially with the biographies of philosophers, scholars and advisors to kings and monarchs. I was curious about how they developed their thoughts; what made them challenge existing wisdom; and the context or circumstances which made them propose alternative perspectives or explanations.

What impressed me the most through this experience was the realization that knowledge is recursive: what we discover today was also discovered yesterday but forgotten just like the ancient civilizations in Machu Picchu, Egypt, India, and China. The old monuments and ruins were overrun by vegetation and buried in forests or swallowed by floods, only to be rediscovered by archeologists and anthropologists. Just as we are in awe of ancient civilizations and marvel at how advanced our ancestors were in organizing civic societies and synthesizing extant knowledge in either scriptures or in mythologies, I am always in awe of insightful concepts, discoveries, experiments and synthesis of knowledge by well respected scholars. Furthermore, often their best writings are not just in top tier journals but also in symposia, monographs and chapters in specialized books. Often their books become textbooks for graduate students because of their unique perspectives or research findings. In fact, most of the best known scholars are more remembered by their books and not for their papers.

The breadth and depth of knowledge I gained in those two years at Columbia University was simply invaluable in writing *The Theory of Buyer Behavior*. This was also the case in my other academic books including *Marketing Theory: Evolution and Evaluation* (Wiley, 1988) and *Consumption Values and Market Choices* (Southwestern, 1991).

I followed that tradition in my doctoral seminars at the University of Illinois in Consumer Behavior, Marketing Theory and Multivariate Methods, by assigning and encouraging doctoral students to read classic writings, many of them out of print and

therefore not easily accessible, unlike today. Similarly, I continue to encourage doctoral students to read and review old literature to gain perspectives for their doctoral dissertations and research papers.

The genesis of *Legends in Marketing* comes from these experiences as a doctoral student, post-doc Fellow and doctoral seminar leader. There are world class thinkers and researchers in marketing, who, over their four to five decades of scholarship, have generated knowledge which is both deep and broad. However, it is scattered in different publications, some of them out of print and not digitized. What if we could assemble and organize this knowledge into volumes and make them available both in print and online? Hence, this series called *Legends in Marketing*.

The mission of *Legends in Marketing* is to:

1. Compile and organize decades of published academic research of a world renowned marketing scholar into six to ten volumes.
2. Ensure that his or her legacy is widely disseminated to the next generation of marketing scholars especially from emerging markets such as Africa, China, and India as well as from the transition economies of ex-Soviet Union including Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia.
3. Preserve this knowledge as a Legacy in marketing.

Each Legend selected compiles and organizes his or her published works from academic journals, conference proceedings, chapters of books and any other source of publication. While this is not a census of all the Legend's writings, it includes a vast majority of his or her lifelong contributions over several decades which can be organized into six to ten volumes.

For each volume, the Legend selects a Volume Editor (VE) who is familiar with the Legend's publications in that specific area. The VE in collaboration with the Legend organizes the selected publications into a Table of Contents with thematic sections of the Volume. The VE also writes an Introduction to the Volume which traces the origins of the focal area, how the Legend has impacted that area and how the field is likely to evolve in the future.

The VE also invites three contributors who comment on how the Legend's work has impacted the field and them personally. Finally, the VE interviews the Legend to get his or her latest views and reflections on the published works.

I went through this process for my own writings with the extraordinary assistance from Balaji C. Krishnan, who agreed to be the Set Editor, resulting in eight volumes which SAGE (India) published in early 2010.

The first set of nine Legends who have agreed to be featured are:

Shelby D. Hunt	Kent B. Monroe	Naresh Malhotra
Richard Bagozzi	Philip Kotler	Yoram Wind
Paul Green	V. Kumar	Gerald Zaltman

Both SAGE (India) and I are very pleased with the strong interest and enthusiasm about the Legends in Marketing Series from faculty, doctoral students, and academic libraries, especially from emerging markets. I am especially pleased that each Legend is also passionate about this project. Our plan is to continue the Series each year by adding five to six additional Legends in Marketing. This is a very gratifying labor of love.

Jagdish N. Sheth, Series Editor
Emory University

Legends in Marketing:

Shelby D. Hunt

There are very few marketing scholars who are as versatile, precise, and knowledgeable as Shelby Hunt. In marketing theory, you have to study his writings just as in earlier days, we all, as doctoral students, had to study Robert Bartels and Wroe Alderson. Shelby is what I refer to as a deep generalist. He is incredible in his depth of knowledge in philosophy of science and theory construction. At the same time, he is a generalist who can develop and articulate theories across different marketing domains ranging from the nature and scope of marketing to macromarketing to relationship marketing, and most recently, developing a respected and thoughtful general theory of marketing anchored to relative advantage.

Just like other Legends in Marketing, Shelby Hunt is exceptional in three skills. First, it is about what he has to say. It is insightful and thorough. Second, it is about how he says it. His style makes the subject matter easy to understand, concise, and to the point. Third, he knows how to frame the situation or the context. In fact, in my interview, he told me that it takes him several iterations and sheer hard work to write the first two or three paragraphs of an article. Once this is done to his satisfaction, the rest of the content flows naturally.

Shelby decided to become an academic as early as his freshman year in engineering at Ohio State University. One day there was a knock on his door. A fellow student in the 200-plus-student chemistry class that he didn't even know, asked him to be his tutor. He realized right then and there that he had a knack of explaining difficult material in ways that everyone can understand. This made him realize that he may be a good educator. Since then he has never looked back. When I asked him if he had second thoughts about the academic career spanning over four decades, his answer was a definite NO; he has no regrets. He has won virtually every academic award bestowed by the marketing discipline.

His advice to younger scholars: Be very efficient; don't waste time; and write down what works and what does not work for you. He is really puzzled by today's reduced teaching load in order to increase research productivity. For example, when he started

his academic career at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he taught five different courses with five different preparations in his first three years. It never occurred to him that it was a lot of teaching. According to him, if you have curiosity to learn new things, you don't think of teaching as a burden. In fact, the best way to learn is to teach!

Shelby has no plans to retire unless some unexpected health-related issue interferes. He truly enjoys what he does. He was born into a family that owned a shoe store business and he learned how to sell in his youth. What may be a loss to the family business has been a great gift to the marketing discipline!

I have known Shelby Hunt for more than 40 years. We usually meet at academic conferences throughout the year. Sometimes we are asked to be on the same panel. I admire his writings and have personally benefited from his books and papers.

Jagdish N. Sheth, Series Editor
Emory University

Volume Introduction: Marketing Theory—Philosophy of Science Controversies in Marketing

Roy D. Howell

James L. Johnson Chair of Business Administration
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It is an honor to edit this volume of the *Legends in Marketing* series devoted to my friend and colleague Shelby Hunt. The works included here ultimately served to provide marketing (and later management) scholars with a historically accurate, intelligible, and meaningful philosophy of science to underlie their research efforts. The works in this volume comprise Shelby's response to what has been termed the "crisis literature" in marketing (and again, later, in management). In this introduction I will attempt to describe the context of the controversies from my own perspective as a young researcher with an interest in quantitative methods for theory testing (called LISREL modeling at the time, but later more accurately referred to as structural equation modeling). I will then attempt to summarize the major themes in Shelby's response to the various arguments made in the crisis literature.

The Context of the Controversies: A Brief History

The works in this volume are almost entirely Shelby's responses to the works of others, and it may be difficult for the reader who was not around at the time to understand what the controversy was all about (although in these works Shelby consistently and meticulously quotes the arguments of his interlocutor[s], so in any given article one should be able to figure out the position Shelby is arguing against). My first exposure to the philosophy of science controversy in marketing was a panel discussion at the AMA Winter Conference in 1982 that included marketing academics J. Paul Peter, Paul Anderson, Jerry Olson, Mike Ryan, and Jerry Zaltman, along with Shelby and a

relatively well-known philosopher of science, May Brodbeck. (One can note that, as will be the case for many subsequent years, Shelby was alone among the marketing academics in arguing what would become his scientific realist position.) A summary of the discussion can be found in Hunt (1983) or Peter (1982). I attended the session because I had accepted a position at Texas Tech beginning the next fall (largely because of Shelby), and thought it would be courteous to do so. Now, I had taken a marketing theory course as a doctoral student, and one of our texts was Shelby's "Little Green Book" (Hunt, 1976). I thought that the issues regarding theory and theory testing were pretty much settled (if still somewhat obscure to me), at least in the marketing discipline. In the course of the discussion there was reference to positivism, empiricism, relativism, constructivism, and to Kuhn, Laudan and Feyerabend. I had heard Jerry Olson's 1981 Presidential Address to the ACR the previous year (Olson, 1981), but I thought he must have been playing the devil's advocate and spicing up his speech. But at the 1982 conference, I began to realize that maybe he really did believe this. Overall, however, my reaction to the debate was basically: Interesting, but so what?

Then came the publication of Peter and Olson's "Is Science Marketing" (Peter and Olson, 1983) and Anderson's "Marketing, Scientific Progress, and Scientific Method" (Anderson, 1983). Both of these articles urge marketing to adopt some form of relativism. In the case of Anderson, it is a form of relativism (critical relativism) largely based on the work of Larry Laudan, while Peter and Olson propose something they term the "relativistic/constructionist" approach, in contrast to what they characterize as the "positivistic/empiricist" approach that Arndt (1985) would later claim "imprisons" marketing. Shelby answered quickly with "Should Marketing Adopt Relativism?" in the 1984 AMA Proceedings, and with "Does Logical Empiricism Imprison Marketing?" in 1985.

Soon others were on the bandwagon with attacks on the "positivist" philosophy of science. Hudson and Ozanne (1988) argued for naturalistic, humanistic, and interpretive inquiry methods in contrast to the "contemporary social science" they label "positivist". In this literature, it was suggested that quantitative methods implied positivism, while relativism was the appropriate philosophy for research employing qualitative methods. Shelby responded with "Naturalistic, Humanistic, and Interpretive Inquiry: Challenges and Ultimate Potential" in 1989 and more generally with "Positivism and Paradigm Dominance" in 1991. Similarly, in the *Journal of Macromarketing*, Monieson (1988) and Dholakia (1985) attack the "positivism" and "discredited Western Science" that dominates marketing on several grounds, and Shelby responds in 1989 with "Reification and Realism in Marketing: In Defense of Reason." The management discipline had its "crisis literature" also. With a few differences, the topics were the same, and in a series of *Journal of Management Inquiry* articles Shelby tried to do for management what he had done for marketing.

But why Shelby? Why was he alone (mostly) in manning the barricades of truth, reason, and objectivity in marketing research? I guess there just wasn't anyone else

with the combination of skills, knowledge, and willingness to take up the battle. As Shelby notes in his retrospective essay in the *Journal of Marketing* (Hunt, 2001), he was revising *Marketing Theory* (the little green book) when the 1982 panel discussion was organized, and was deeply immersed in the philosophy of science literature at the time. The revision published by Richard D. Irwin, came out in 1983 (Hunt, 1983). The timing was right. Why was he willing to invest the effort? As he notes in Hunt (2001), by the mid 1980s the philosophy debates were becoming “highly unproductive,” while to him the “nihilistic implications of relativism were becoming clear” (Hunt, 2001: 119). He believed that “a major factor contributing to the muddled status of the philosophy debates was a lack of understanding—on both sides—of logical positivism and logical empiricism” (Hunt, 2001: 119). So he went back to the history of the various philosophies of science in order to bring historical accuracy and clarity to the debates. This foray resulted in most of the papers in this volume, as well as in *Modern Marketing Theory* (Hunt, 1996). The epigraph of the book quotes Marquis de Vauvenargues: “For the philosopher, clarity is a matter of good faith.” It also resulted in Shelby’s contribution to the philosophy of science literature itself with “A Realist Theory of Empirical Testing” in *Philosophy of Social Science* (Hunt, 1994).

My own reaction to the debate was, at first, to assume that few in marketing would find the relativist position attractive—how could they?—and that the issue would just go away. This seems to be how other practicing researchers felt. Shelby submitted his “Objectivity in Marketing Theory and Research” (ultimately published in the *Journal of Marketing*) (Hunt, 1993) to the *Journal of Marketing Research*. “The journal rejected the paper because, reviewers maintained, ‘most people in marketing regard this ‘debate’ as silly,’ and the ‘reason that the bulk of the ... [debate] has been published somewhere other than JMR is because ... [it] tends not to tell a reader much new’” (Hunt, 2001: 120). I (and others, it appears) didn’t anticipate how seductive it was to many to be “post-positivist,” “post-modern,” and in general anti-establishment, but as I heard more and more colleagues in the discipline and especially newly minted Ph.D.s describe themselves as relativists I started to take the issue more seriously. For me, a large part of my research involved measuring latent variables, which requires a realist position. I had also thought seeking “truth” was what researchers do. Had I believed the relativist perspective to be true, I would have had difficult choices. Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811) was a young Austrian scholar and writer of growing acclaim, but in March 1801, by his own account, he encountered the work of Immanuel Kant. He believed Kant had shown that empirical knowledge was unreliable, reason illusory, truth unattainable, and he concluded, therefore, life quite meaningless. In other words, he attributed (wrongly) to Kant what we would now call relativism. He wrote, “My sole and highest goal has vanished. Now I have none” (Brunskill, 2009). His work stopped, and he killed himself in 1811. Thankfully, few take their philosophy of science quite so seriously.

I am sure my reaction would not have been as strong, but what is the alternative? I could quit doing research (and perhaps go into politics), but to continue my research