

## WHY CASE METHOD TEACHING DOES NOT MAKE GOOD HISTORY\*

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### ABSTRACT

Cases and case method instruction are claimed by some to be a form of history instruction. This point is disputed because case method theory rests on the philosophy of pragmatism and the theory of progressive education, both of which are anti-history in theory and in practice. Consequently, case method instruction is anti-history; in fact, it is the opposite of history. Further, pragmatism, progressive education, and the case method are anti-conceptual, which is anti-human according to Objectivism--the philosophy of Ayn Rand. The essential flaw in case method theory is its failure to distinguish between principles and concretes, which consequently reduces students to perception-bound thinking--which is not thinking at all. A call for marketing history courses as a standard part of the business curriculum is made in order to teach students how to think and, above all, how to separate historical concretes from principles.

At a recent roundtable discussion, sponsored by the Harvard Business Review, on "Why History Matters to Managers" (Kantrow 1986), Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. said: "Don't forget, the heart of this [Harvard Business] school's curriculum has always been the case study, and the case study is precisely what a historian does, what a historian is trained to do."

I disagree with this statement and challenge the notion that case studies and the case method teach history. While cases are probably the only remnant of history that students get in their marketing education today, I maintain that cases and the case method are woefully inadequate at teaching history. Further, I maintain that the case method actually harms students.

Contrary to the claims made to support the case method of instruction, I maintain that cases do not teach students to tolerate ambiguity and to think for themselves without recourse to pat formulas. The case method, indeed, is based on the philosophy of pragmatism and the theory of progressive education, both of which deny the validity of universal principles. But it is only by means of principles that we can know either the past or the future and, consequently, how to deal with the uncertainty or ambiguity that confronts us.

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## THE CASE METHOD, PRAGMATISM, AND PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

In essence, the case method replaces textbooks and lectures with disguised historical data about a (usually disguised) company and discussions among students and professor about how to respond to the data.

". . . The purpose of business education," says Dewing (1931, p. 7) in one of the earliest statements of the case method, "is not to teach truths--leaving aside for a moment a discussion of whether there are or are not such things as truths--but to teach men to think in the presence of new situations." After discussions of many cases, says Gragg (1951, p. 7) in one of the most often quoted descriptions of the case method, ". . . students learn to draw more and more fully upon each other's ideas in the working out of problems. . . . The young men [make] common cause and thereby [learn] the pleasure of group pooling of intellectual efforts."

Above all, "truths" or "right answers" are not taught. Indeed, faculty often say that they do not agree among themselves what the correct course of action in a particular case should be. "It takes [students] a long time to discover that they are being subjected to a process of instruction in analysis, logical thinking, and decision-making, rather than in a ritual of 'right answers,'" says Copeland (1958, p. 266) in his history of the Harvard Business School.

That the case method, pragmatism, and progressive education go hand in hand is readily acknowledged, albeit somewhat defensively as in this quote from McNair (1954, p. 15):

Some observers have looked on the case method as merely an extension of the doctrines of progressive education, an application of the pragmatic approach, an opportunity for self-expression. It is not to be denied that there are points of analogy, in the emphasis on learning rather than teaching, in the responsibility placed on the individual to do his own thinking, in the recognition that there may be more than one answer to a situation.

McNair goes on to say, however, that these "observers" are wrong if they think that case method teaching requires little effort or responsibility on the part of the instructor. Indeed, he maintains, it requires a considerable amount of both.

The connection between case method instruction, on the one hand, and pragmatism and progressive education, on the other, is apparent in the similarity of issues discussed by Dewing, Gragg, and other writers on the case method and by John Dewey (1915; 1916; 1963; Jones 1952), one of the foremost proponents of pragmatism and progressive education. For example, the following are all basic tenets of pragmatism, progressive education, and the case method of instruction: the dichotomy between the telling or dictatorial methods of instruction and the democratic; the requirement that learning be a social or cooperative venture rather than individual; the emphasis on action or doing (decision-making) rather than knowing; and the resistance to providing "truths" or "right answers."

It is these very tenets, however, that I wish to challenge. The foundations of the case method--the theories of pragmatism and progressive education--are essentially flawed; as a result, so also is the case method of instruction. Pragmatism and progressive education, I maintain, are in fact anti-historical in theory and, consequently, in practice. Pragmatism and progressive education, I maintain, are responsible for today's dearth of history courses in business schools--in most

schools, for that matter--and the near-complete ignorance of history on the part of business students. Worst of all, the case method of instruction does not enable students to think for themselves; rather, it teaches students to become arrogant, emotion-driven, critics who do not have any knowledge to think about even if they could think. History, on the other hand, if it were taught, would teach students how to think, by teaching them how to separate historical fashions from universal principles--to distinguish unique events from the constant and timeless in human action.

#### ANTI-HISTORY IN THEORY: PRESENT EXPERIENCES ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN PAST

"Pragmatism is a theory of truth which springs from a theory of thought. It holds that thought is an instrument to practical ends, and hence that truth is measured by success in reaching those ends" (Blanshard 1939, p. 341). Hence, truth is practical, not theoretical; it is that which works in a given, concrete situation or experience. Because situations or experiences change from time to time and place to place, there is no such thing as the truth or the answer to a given question; truth is not a correspondence to facts--they are always changing--but what works for society in the long run. Consequently, there are no universal laws or principles, only "more and more adequate instrumentalities for dealing with always changing, growing human situations" (Jones 1952, p. 952). Absolute certainty, in other words, is unachievable (Dewey 1929; 1933).

Thought, according to Dewey, arises when our habits and routines are disrupted--when we experience confusion, frustration, or "dis-ease." To combat this "dis-ease," we start thinking about how to solve the problem. An idea, thus, is a plan of action, which, at first, is a hypothesis that must be tested in action through trial-and-error experimentation. If the acted-upon idea removes the "dis-ease" and solves our problem, the idea is then said to be true--at this time and place.

Progressive education, says Dewey, gives students personal experiences to stimulate their thinking--experiences of "dis-ease" that have to be handled thoughtfully, i.e., problems that have to be solved. Thought that succeeds in action, consequently, prepares the students for future experiences. The major problem of educators, Dewey says, "is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences" (Dewey 1963, p. 28).

Progressive education rejects the traditional form of education, which believes in transmitting "bodies of information and of skills that have been worked out in the past" to the new generation, in providing moral training, and in separating the school from other social institutions (pp. 17-18). "Books, especially textbooks, are the chief representatives of the lore and wisdom of the past, while teachers are the organs through which pupils are brought into effective connections with the material" (p. 18). Progressive education, in contrast, emphasizes "expression and cultivation of individuality," "free activity," and "learning through experience" (i.e., "learning by doing"). It is child-centered, rather than subject-centered. It recognizes "that all human experience is social: that it involves contact and communication" (p. 38) and that the "development of experience comes about through interaction," which "means that education is essentially a social process" (p. 58).

The similarities between pragmatism and progressive education, on the one hand, and case method instruction, on the other, should be apparent from the above quotes. But if thought is es-

entially practical--a testing of hypotheses or experimentation that takes place in the present--then "bodies of information and of skills that have been worked out in the past" will be of little use in present experiences, especially since there are no universal principles or laws. Such historical information, according to Dewey, has value only in biography "as a dramatic summary of social needs and achievements," as "an organ of social study" (Dewey 1915, p. 154). (Dewey's followers sport the slogans "we don't teach history, we teach Johnny" and "students can get it in the book on their own--we teach students to think.") If our present experiences are constantly changing, why bother with what happened in the past? As a consequence of this theory, history courses have disappeared from many curricula.

### ANTI-HISTORY IN PRACTICE: PROBLEM RESOLUTION IS TABOO IN CASES

Cases do not constitute history because they are disguised and because solutions or results are not provided.

History describes the values that men and women chose in the past and the principles that motivated their actions (Mises 1969, pp. 159-161). Case studies, in contrast, are only the raw data of history--a mass of facts about a company and a problem that confronts the company. A case study basically is the raw stuff with which historians begin. In case studies, however, this raw stuff is not even factual. Case writers disguise the data and often, also, the name of the company. Right away, this eliminates cases as a record of past events.

But historians make sense out of a mass of raw data by identifying principles that explain the events of the past and, consequently, reduce the mass and unify it into a few manageable, conceptual units. In case studies, however, the identification of such principles is not possible--because a discussion of the actions taken by the protagonist in response to the problem is not presented, although a discussion of theoretical principles is occasionally made in the course of describing the problem. But what makes an event of history is, precisely, the resolution of a problem--it does not matter whether the resolution is a success or a failure. Human beings choose values, then act in the face of obstacles to achieve the values, following certain principles as their guides. A study of which principles led to success in the past and which ones led to failure is invaluable as a guide to decision making in the present and future. This is what is omitted from cases. Thus, the essence of cases--i.e., the presentation of a problem without its solution--is the opposite of the essence of history.

Cases, of course, have disclaimers printed on them that they are not intended to illustrate effective or ineffective handling of a business problem. They are intended for "classroom discussion" only, which is consistent with progressive pedagogy. But cases, consequently, should not be assumed mistakenly to represent historical education. They are at best rather long, contrived problems similar to the "thought problems" used in math courses. (It must be remembered, however, that math instructors first teach students the principles and method of finding the right answers, before turning the students loose to solve the problems on their own.) The fact that current practice in case method teaching rarely finds instructors using cases much more than a few years old--and virtually never from the pre-World War II periods--indicates how little history our students in marketing and business actually get.

## THE FALLACY INHERENT IN CASE METHOD THEORY

### The Criticisms of Pragmatism and Progressive Education

There have been several critics of both pragmatism (Blanshard 1939; Peikoff 1982; Rand 1961) and progressive education (Barzun 1959; Blanshard 1973; Flesch 1955; Peikoff 1984; Rand 1971). In brief, the critics object to the skepticism of pragmatism and to the anti-conceptualism of progressive education.

Self-Contradiction. Consider pragmatism first. The objection runs as follows: if pragmatism were true, we cannot then in fact know what works. If truth is what works, how do we know what works without referring to the correspondence of an act to the facts of an unchanging, immutable reality? The only way we can know that a glass of water, for example, can quench our thirst is by identifying a universal fact about the relationship between the concepts of water and thirst. How do we judge success or failure without the presence of something unchanging and universal that serves as a standard from time to time and place to place, the standard being a principle that has identified an essential fact of reality? We cannot, says the argument. If pragmatism were true--that reality is in a constant state of flux--then we literally could not know anything. But skepticism--which pragmatism reduces to--is a self-contradiction because, as critics point out, it asserts as a certainty that certainty is impossible.

Consequently, something fundamental must be wrong with the theory of pragmatism. So also, something fundamental must be wrong with progressive education and its application to the teaching of business administration through case method instruction.

Anti-Conceptual. Progressive education is anti-conceptual because pragmatism denies the validity of universals of any kind--concepts or principles. (Principles are combinations of concepts.) Consequently, concepts, according to pragmatism, are arbitrary conventions, formed through our interactions with other people.

In practice, progressive education emphasizes social relations among students and minimizes or eliminates facts, concepts, and principles. According to Peikoff (1984), an advocate of Objectivism--the philosophy of Ayn Rand--"bull-session" style discussions focus on a narrow concrete, which is "taught, enacted, discussed, argued over in and of itself, i.e., as a concrete, without connection to anything wider" (p. 2). It is the lack of integration, the failure to connect these concretes to one another to form principles--and to connect first level principles to higher level abstractions to form still wider principles--that makes progressive education anti-conceptual.

But what distinguishes human beings from animals is precisely the conceptual level of consciousness--our ability, says Peikoff, "to abstract, to grasp common denominators, to classify, to organize our perceptual field" (p. 2). The ability to form concepts is the ability to reason, to think. Perception gives us only the concretes of our immediate awareness (such as this table, that table, and that one over there), but conception enables us to abstract what the many concretes have in common and to retain that information as a concept ("table"), which is a universal applicable to all past and future instances of similar concretes that we may come upon.

In this way--i.e., through the retention of common denominators by means of concepts (and by extension, principles)--we can know what has gone on in the past, and what will happen in the

future, by identifying similar concretes and applying the new concept accordingly. "Conception...involves the formation of abstractions that reduce the multiplicity to an intelligible unity; this process requires a definite order, a specific context at each stage, and the methodical use of logic" (p. 3).

Thus, concept-formation is the process of thinking. It is the process first of discovering and identifying facts, then secondarily of applying these concepts to action--which is the exact opposite of pragmatism. "Truth," says Rand (1967, p. 63), "is the product of the recognition (i.e., identification) of the facts of reality. Man identifies and integrates the facts of reality by means of concepts." To say that truth is "what works" is to ignore the conceptual level of consciousness and to reduce human beings to the level of perception-bound animals--the level of associational, concrete-bound, trial-and-error learning.

Consequently, quoting Peikoff (pp. 3-4):

An education that trains a child's mind would be one that teaches him to make connections, to generalize, to see the wider issues and principles involved in any topic. It would achieve this feat by presenting the material to him in a calculated, conceptually proper order, with the necessary context, and with the proof that validates each stage. This would be an education that teaches a child to think.

The complete opposite of this--the most perverse aberration imaginable--would be to take conceptual-level material and present it to the students by the method of perception. . . . The effect would be to exile the student to a no-man's-land of cognition, which is neither perception nor conception. What it is in fact, is destruction, the destruction of the minds of the students and of their motivation to learn.

This is literally what our schools are doing today.

This is the anti-conceptual, concrete-bound approach to education that pragmatism and progressive education lead to. The Look-Say method of reading instruction used in grade schools is a prime example of the anti-conceptual approach. It replaces the conceptual Phonics method of memorizing the 44 sounds of the alphabet--which gives students principles to guide their subsequent learning--with the perception-bound method "of memorizing the sound of every word in the English language" (p. 6)--which gives students reading neurosis. Is it any wonder that our college students cannot read, write, or spell? (See Flesch 1955; also Rand 1982.)

And, I'm sorry to have to say it, the case method of instruction is also a prime example of this anti-conceptual approach to education.

### Principles and Problem-Solving Thinking in a Business Curriculum

The Anti-Conceptual Case Method. In case method instruction, the "present experiences" of students consist of "bull-session" style discussions about the mass of raw, concrete data presented in the case to set up a business problem. Since there are no solutions or "right answers," the students and the professor, whose ideas are no more correct than those of the students, massage and

manipulate the data as concretes "without connection to anything wider." Allegedly, students learn how to "think" by asserting their ideas (their "plans of action") and by having their ideas tested experimentally in the course of the discussion.

In the case method, conceptual-level material--the problems that confront business managers--is presented to students as the raw data of perception. Then, without further theoretical instruction, students are expected to know what to do with the data. The students, however, are treated as if they already know how to think, i.e., as if they already know how to reduce the data to manageable units--according to principles they have not been taught, as if they know how to connect these first level principles to higher level abstractions to form still wider principles--by a method they have not been taught, and as if they know how to apply these principles to resolve the problem at hand--by another method, too, that they have not been taught.

The result is an aggressive floundering by students who are flattered into thinking that they are learning how to think--aggressive because their grades depend on how much they participate in class, floundering because only the brightest few will have learned (on their own) how to handle such material. Is it any wonder that business executives for years have been accusing business schools of teaching MBA students the art of arrogance--the art of talking and acting aggressively without knowing what they are doing or why?

But how can the students possibly know what they are talking about? Whatever knowledge they do acquire comes from snippets of theory presented in the cases and from short lectures smuggled in by professors not practicing the "pure" method. "I feel I have to give them some theory" is the apologetic refrain of many case instructors.

The sad truth, however, is that the students' ability to think is being retarded by these pretentious "bull sessions."

Theory vs. Practice. The essential fallacy in the theory of case method instruction is the failure to recognize or to distinguish the difference between a principle and a concrete.

Marketing--and all business administration subjects--are practical, "how-to" disciplines. But so are engineering and medicine. To resurrect an old question from the marketing theory literature: Is marketing a science, an art, or a practice? My answer is that it is all three. Marketing (and engineering and medicine) is an applied science. Concepts and principles from more fundamental sciences--economics and psychology for marketing--form the base of applied sciences. The applied science then adds its own unique concepts and principles. These "bodies of information and of skills that have been worked out in the past"--both fundamental and applied--then are applied by practitioners to specific, concrete situations or problems that confront them in the daily practice of their occupations. Hence, the art of marketing is the application of scientific principles to the practice of creating specific need- and want-satisfying products and delivering them to specific consumers--at specific times and places.

Thus, the difference between a principle and a concrete is that the principle is abstract and universal and can be applied in many concrete situations. The concretes, in other words, may vary considerably from time to time and place to place, but an underlying principle captures the essence of what is occurring in the particular event. (Even at the same time and place, broadly con-

strued, many different concretes can be explained by the same principle.) The principle identifies the one in the many; it reduces the "multiplicity to an intelligible unity."

There are many ways to swing a golf club, instructors of that applied discipline say, but there is one immutable fact exhibited by all great golfers: square contact at impact between clubface and ball. That fact at impact is a fundamental principle of the golf swing. The different ways that golfers handle a club are the concretes.

Thus, it is possible for two knowledgeable marketers to recommend two very different courses of action in the marketing of a product. But if the product is to succeed, certain immutable principles must be present in both cases. Uncertainty and ambiguity, to be sure, are present in the application of marketing principles, but this does not deny marketing the status of science. Complete, quantitative predictability is not required (Kirkpatrick 1982). Indeed, it is abstract, theoretical principles that guide our practical choices and actions in the face of uncertainty or ambiguity. The nature of the uncertainty in marketing, however, is perhaps worth examining.

Uncertainty in Marketing. One source of uncertainty or ambiguity arises from the variability inherent in the application of principles to concrete situations. The variability consists of genuine options that are available to normal, rational, well-educated people who are correctly applying the same principles in a given concrete instance. For example, there are options in the application of civil engineering principles to the construction of a bridge; different materials and structural designs can work equally well on the same span. In this sense--and in this sense only--are there no "right answers." But when it comes to selecting principles--the principles of bridge design and construction--there is a right answer. It is this that case method instruction usually ignores.

To my knowledge, no one has attempted to teach civil engineering, an applied discipline, via the case method. Consider what it would consist of: a detailed description of a highway leading up to a river; the protagonist's objective in the case would be to design a bridge to span the river. A problem has to be solved, decisions have to be made. According to "pure" case method theory, no textbooks would be provided--that would be using the "telling" or "dictatorial" methods of education. (Perhaps the students have already taken math and materials courses, but then this school would not be practicing "pure" case method theory.) The (ignorant) students would engage in a "democratic" discussion about the design of the bridge and the materials to be used. There is no one "right answer" because a variety of materials and designs would equally solve the problem. Presumably, independent thought would be learned through the social interaction and the principles of civil engineering would emerge from the discussion.

Absurd? Note that the relationship between principles and concretes is the same in engineering as in marketing. But there most definitely are principles that must be followed in civil engineering if disaster is not to strike. One difference between engineering and marketing is that in engineering the consequences of failing to apply the correct principles are usually immediate and potentially harmful to other people.

The same is true for medicine, although there is a greater risk in medicine that failure will result in harm to others. To whatever extent the case method is used in medical education, it occurs in the clinical--on-the-job--application of principles and knowledge learned during the first two years of a more "traditional" education. Business cases, I submit incidentally, do not even come



close to reflecting clinical or on-the-job experience. One does not change companies or positions once or twice a week in the real work world, as students do when taking case courses.

In marketing and other business disciplines, the consequences of failing to apply the correct principles are not immediate or obvious, nor are they likely to be harmful to others (assuming the absence of dishonest or fraudulent motivations) other than to the owners of the business. It is, indeed, notoriously difficult to trace the effects of business decisions and to connect certain results to decisions that were made at an earlier period. This, alone, is one good reason why history--in the sense of identifying the principles that caused certain events--is an especially needed and worthy subject of study in business schools.

A second source of uncertainty in marketing and business decision making arises from the phenomenon of human volition. Human beings have free will; consequently, they can change their minds at any time. Marketers face an inherent uncertainty when trying to recommend courses of action. No amount of quantitative forecasting or marketing research can overcome this uncertainty (Kirkpatrick 1982; Mises 1969). But that is all the more reason why marketers need to have at their fingertips an arsenal of "information and skills"--i.e., concepts and principles--to draw upon for application.

This uncertainty does not mean that "there is no right answer," i.e., no "right principle" to apply in certain situations because consumers may change their minds. It means: there are correct principles, given certain consumer choices. But it also means: there are other correct principles, should consumers change their minds. What marketers need to know is how to separate and distinguish historical fashion from fundamental facts of nature, i.e., how to distinguish (historical) concretes--in the form of consumer choices and tastes--from (timeless, universal) principles.

A third source of uncertainty is the lack of knowledge that all managers have about the state of the market, but this is all the more reason why history needs to be studied. Marketing decision makers need a huge store of factual information about historical events, because managers who have this store of knowledge have an advantage over others. Knowledgeable, historically trained managers can identify similarities and differences between their present situation and the past. In turn, these knowledgeable managers can more quickly identify the principles that are operating in the present market. Knowledgeable, historically trained managers can, finally, make decisions more quickly than their less knowledgeable counterparts and can make these decisions with greater conviction of accuracy.

Why History Matters to Managers. This effectively is a call for the teaching of marketing history as part of the standard curriculum. Case histories--not case-method-type, contrived, disguised cases--that present marketing successes and marketing failures along with a discussion of the principles that led to the successes and failures--are what students need to read and study. Students need to know what has worked in the past and what has not worked; but more importantly, they need to know why. Hartley's two books (1985; 1986) are an obvious first and belated start in the right direction.

Managers do need history, as asserted in the Kantrow (1986) roundtable discussion. They need history to teach them how and why not to rely on pat formulas, how and why not to extrapolate blindly from the immediate past into the near and distant future, and, above all, how to tolerate

and manage uncertainty and ambiguity. But contrary to Chandler's statement at the beginning of this paper, case studies are not the solution--because case studies do not make good history.

The Reductio Ad Absurdum. Two last points about case method instruction. First, the business case method was allegedly modeled after the case method used in law schools. But I fail to see the similarity. Law cases are statements of a decision that has already been made--the judge's decision. The student's task is to identify and separate the facts (the concretes), the decision, and the principle or rule by which the decision was made. Law cases are actual case histories that give students a pool of knowledge on which to draw later in life when working in real situations. I am amazed that the analogy to law cases has remained unchecked this long. Indeed, business students would actually learn to think if they were required to write "briefs" of business case histories.

My second point is that the business case method is actually much worse than the absurd example I gave above for civil engineering. The business case method is equivalent to teaching a number of potential athletes how to become coaches--athletes who have never played a sport, except perhaps a part-time football game here, maybe a summer of baseball there. These students are not in school to learn how to become a coach of any one particular sport, but a coach of any kind of sport, on the assumption that coaching skills are transferable from sport to sport. After all, that's what a professional coach is, one who can coach any sport--team or individual, amateur or professional. The entry level position of most of these athletes will be sitting on the bench, filling the Gatorade cups. A few of the brightest, however, will make the starting team and one or two may be offered a high-paying, assistant coach's position in a professional league.

The implementation of the case method would be as follows: the first case of the term presents the problems confronting the offensive coordinator of a professional football team. On the following Sunday, the coach's team must go up against the number one defense in the league. Fortunately, the game is at home. Class time consists of a discussion about the appropriate strategy or game plan that the coach should adopt; there's no one right answer, of course, and the instructor's answers are no better than those of the students. The instructor, incidentally, played one year on the professional bowler's tour before quitting to attend the graduate school of coaching administration; his Ph.D. dissertation was a cross-cultural study of the word "scrum," analyzing how the word is used by rugby players in Europe, South America, and Asia.

The second case deals with the problems of a batting coach for a college baseball team. The third case focuses on the coach of a temperamental tennis star. The plum of the cases this term, though, is a new one that presents a problem facing the manager of the New York Mets in the seventh game of the 1986 World Series. And so on.

## CONCLUSION

The adage "there's nothing new under the sun" applies as equally to marketing as to many other fields. As new a discipline as marketing is, nevertheless the truth of certain principles has been evident since antiquity. In advertising, for example, the presence of a unique selling message is the principle that explains basically what makes advertisements work--it has been demonstrated over and over through the tests of direct response advertisers. But this principle also can be seen

on the walls of Pompeii and in the words of the town criers of ancient Athens. Further, it was as true in ancient times as it is today that the execution must not upstage the message.

There's nothing new in the sense that the principles are correct descriptions of the facts of reality; they are, contrary to what the pragmatists say, universal, immutable, and unchanging. What changes are the concretes, the specifics. The educated man or woman is the one who can separate the principles from the concretes--the essential from the nonessential--and then apply the principles as new concrete situations arise.

It is interesting that the writers of advertising textbooks seem to understand this point. Advertising textbooks, at least, usually have a chapter on the history of advertising. The writers of marketing textbooks, however, do not. The only history they include is two pages of falsehoods! I'm, of course, referring to the production-era myth so eloquently exploded by Fullerton (1985).

This issue in itself illustrates the importance of separating principles from concretes and the value of teaching marketing history to business students. For cannot the whole production-selling-marketing-eras issue be put to rest by acknowledging the presence of three principles, two of which are errors in thinking when practiced by some business managers (in both cases confusing concretes with principles)? Can we not talk about the production and selling fallacies of myopic marketing? Once these two principles are discussed in chapter one of the marketing textbooks, the rest of the book can elaborate the principle of the marketing concept.

#### POSTSCRIPT

I am well aware of the wide variation in the practice or application of case method theory. My comments above apply to the purist form of the theory, as expressed in the literature. That many instructors--who attempt to practice the "pure" form (all case discussion and no textbooks)--find themselves, several years later, introducing more and more theory and even a textbook into their courses, is in itself, I think, an indictment of the case method. Besides, my comments are primarily a critique of discussion method teaching and epistemological agnosticism, both of which are widespread in business schools today. I think this point eliminates any objections that I am attacking a straw man.

I am also well aware that I am challenging a sacred cow. Case method theory is a revered authority and tradition in business education. But it is not beyond criticism. I ask the reader to keep in mind the logical fallacy argumentum ad verecundiam--the appeal to authority or reverence. The case method has been used since the inception of business education and it rests on widely respected theoretical foundations. But that alone does not prove that it is the best method to use for our students. Proof requires logical argument and an appeal to fact. I have examined the principles of case method theory and found them lacking sound logic and basis in fact.

I ask the reader not to dismiss my arguments on grounds that no one can challenge a system that has been used for 80 years. If you take issue with my comments, you have logic and fact at your disposal with which to express your disagreement.

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