

those who give things away? Perhaps a good answer was provided by Adam Smith some time ago when he asked the related question: why do we trade and not simply share? His answer is that in a society with some considerable number of people, we don't have time to be friends with more than a few. The deep appeal to a finite life—all humans are mortal—ought to resonate with students of Greek classics (Levy and Peart 2013).

In conclusion, I need to make clear that this is, in my way of thinking, an admirable project. Economists can learn things by studying the ancient world. To continue the example discussed above, random representation in the ancient world means that problems of democratic stability, such as those Kenneth Arrow considered, would be completely obvious to the Athenian critics of democracy. Lyttkens rightly emphasizes how ostracism forms an important part of Athenian democracy. There is a research problem here, since this form of democracy will not share properties with the sample median (Levy 1989), but what the actual estimate of location is that reflects that democratic constitution is, as far as I know, unknown.

David Levy
Economics, George Mason University

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Roger Frantz and Robert Leeson, eds., *Hayek and Behavioral Economics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) pp. xvii, 349, \$115. ISBN 978-0-230-30116-0.

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The appearance of a new collection of original essays considering the relevance of the writings of F. A. Hayek to behavioral economics can be greeted only with some degree of both anticipation and trepidation. If Hayek's groundbreaking work in diverse fields is handled with analytical sophistication, any application to or examination from the perspective of behavioral economics is likely to be insightful. But, if one fails to comprehend the subtleties of Hayek's often difficult ideas, a treatment of the latter through the lens of behavioral economics is likely to exacerbate misunderstanding. Luckily for Roger

Frantz and Robert Leeson, co-editors of the anthology *Hayek and Behavioral Economics*, their several editorial missteps are mostly rectified by a coterie of attentive authors.

A number of the better essays in the collection, like the selection by Peter Boettke, W. Zachary Caceres, and Adam Martin, expose the fundamental error of any attempt to assimilate Hayekian economics to “new” behavioral economics:¹ the former is not an *instance* but a *critique* of the latter. The central result of such behavioral analyses that real economic agents are not *homos economicus* is a premise in the Hayekian explanation of economic coordination: “Error is obvious. The puzzle is whether and to what extent human interaction generates institutions that cope with those errors and allow coordination” (p. 104). The new behavioral economics has little to say about this puzzle. Taiki Takahashi and Susumu Egashira make a similar argument in their fascinating and highly technical essay on Hayek’s cognitive psychology and its implications for a conceptual revolution in neuroeconomics.²

Several of the collection’s more challenging, but ultimately rewarding, essays appear in the middle chapters of the book. Herbert Gintis offers an argument for the centrality to a reconceptualization of economics of Hayek’s theory of the role in guiding human behavior of (often implicit) social norms and cultural institutions. Ciara Chellini and Sonia Riva explicate the relationships between the psychological analyses of Hayek and the Swiss child-development psychologist Jean Piaget (to whom Hayek referred favorably in *The Sensory Order* [1952]). Francesco DiIorio’s deft comparative analysis of Hayek’s theoretical psychology and Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s neurophenomenology rationalizes Hayek’s allusion to similarities with the left-oriented French philosopher in 1976’s “The Primacy of the Abstract.” Leslie Marsh skillfully compares and contrasts Hayek’s “bidirectional” externalist explanation of complexity with Herbert Simon’s “unidirectional” account. And Stefano Fiori offers one of the best analyses to date in the secondary literature of the historical transition that led Hayek’s early criteria of demarcation between the natural and social sciences to become a distinction between sciences that investigate simple and complex phenomena.

This praise notwithstanding, all of it deserved, it is important to mention the apparent disinclination of the anthology’s editors to enforce certain standards and the undue denigration that Hayek suffers at the pens of a few of the collection’s authors.

Though published under the auspices of Palgrave Macmillan’s *Archival Insights into the Evolution of Economics* series and despite the promise of “systematic archival examination,” a reader who picks up the book expecting to discover a wealth of archival research will be disappointed. A scan of the endnotes and bibliographies of the book’s fourteen essays reveals a total of two references (pages 194 and 215) to original archival research.

Moreover, one might argue that the book is mistitled. Only a few essays in the collection directly address the relevance of Hayek’s writings for behavioral economics and several repeat the same points: no fewer than five essays (those by co-editor Frantz, Marsh, Altman, Earl, and Rizzello and Spada) include extended comparisons and contrasts of Hayek and

¹On the distinction between “old” and “new” behavioral economics, see Sent (2004).

²Salvatore Rizzello and Anna Spada (Chapter 13) offer a third argument that the new behavioral economists have ignored Hayekian insights and are the worse for it.

Herbert Simon. Two other essays in the anthology make no contact whatsoever with the issue of the relationship between Hayek's writings and behavioral economics.

In particular, Deirdre McCloskey argues that "Hayekian-Kirznerian" economics contributes to an explanation of "the Great Fact of an increase of real income per head by a factor of anything from 16 to (if quality is allowed for) 100" (p. 38). Setting aside the fact that it is immaterial to the issue of Hayek's relevance for behavioral economics, McCloskey's essay is peculiar in that she argues, contrary to her well-known view concerning the centrality of rhetorical persuasion to theory choice in economics, that it was the comparative explanatory power of the Austrian system that convinced her to adopt it.³

In another essay unrelated to the book's purported subject matter, Walter Block insists that a commitment to apriorist praxeology is an essential characteristic of an Austrian economist, and that Hayek's lackluster engagement with praxeology makes him a "semi but not a full Austrian" (p. 79). Two responses are appropriate here: a) "Who cares?"⁴ and b) Block's criteria is vulnerable to a simple *reductio*: praxeology, with its purportedly synthetic *a priori* "action axiom" was an invention (if you prefer, discovery) of Ludwig von Mises, a *third-generation* Austrian. So, if a commitment to *apriorist* praxeology is required to count as fully Austrian, then Carl Menger—the school's undisputed founder—fails to qualify.⁵

Two of the collection's longer essays misconstrue Hayek's perspective utterly. Without any consideration of the extensive literature on the topic, Morris Altman revives the worn-out old chestnut that Hayek committed the naturalistic fallacy.⁶ Altman makes a Pangloss out of Hayek on the basis of an anorexic examination of six writings from the latter's massive *oeuvre* while ignoring the works (Hayek 1960, p. 67; 1988, pp. 20 and 27) in which Hayek explicitly denies the charge of the naturalistic fallacy.

The essay by co-editor Roger Frantz is rampant with factual misstatements and simple interpretative errors. To name a few: Hayek (1952, p. 4) was clear in *The Sensory Order* that, contrary to Frantz (pp. 10–11), "the physical order" is *not* to be identified with "reality." Moreover, Hayek never "called subjective knowledge tacit knowledge" (p. 19), nor would he: tacit knowledge is not accessible to introspection (Hayek 1952, p. 19); but, of course, many items of subjective knowledge *are* introspectable. Similarly, some "knowledge of circumstances of time and place" may be tacit knowledge, but—again, contrary to Frantz (pp. 2, 22–23)—the former is not identical with the latter. Furthermore, Hayek, like his friend Karl Popper, accepted that prediction and explanation are two sides of the same coin (Hayek 1967, p. 9n4), and so, contrary to Frantz (p. 19),

³Of course, it is possible that this is a bit of intentional irony, and that McCloskey is in fact adopting a rhetorical technique to persuade non-Austrians.

⁴"[T]he reaction to the title of this chapter [i.e., "Was Hayek an Austrian Economist? Yes and No. Was Hayek a Praxeologist? No. "] from some quarters is likely to be, 'Who cares?' (p. 70). Indeed. Certainly, few who are truly interested in the relevance of Hayek's work for behavioral economics are likely to care about Block's slender conception of the Austrian School.

⁵It is difficult (for me) to believe that the same man who wrote the following words could accept that economic science is based on a synthetic *a priori* foundation: "All so-called ideas *a priori* and knowledge from pure reason must be presented as empirical statements or as errors. There is no truth of a metaphysical nature and thus lying beyond the limits of experience" (quoted in Menger 1994, p. 35).

⁶To name just a handful of the more recent writings on the topic: Whitman (1998), Denis (2002), Whitman (2003), Angner (2004), Caldwell and Reiss (2006).

would have rejected Harvey Leibenstein's hard-and-fast distinction between prediction and explanation; nor did Hayek identify trend predictions with what he called "explanations of the principle," as Frantz mistakenly asserts (p. 20).

Scott Scheall

Arizona State University, Polytechnic Campus

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Till Düppe and E. Roy Weintraub, *Finding Equilibrium: Arrow, Debreu, McKenzie and the Problem of Scientific Credit* (Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 304, \$39.50, hardcover. ISBN 978-0691-15664-4.

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The history of ideas is replete with illustrations of roughly simultaneous discovery and of sequential discoveries where "first in time" does not give rise to "first in mind." The history of economics is certainly no exception here; just ask poor Edward West, fourth fiddle to David Ricardo, Thomas Malthus, and Robert Torrens. Issues of priority and credit are part of the messy process of knowledge creation and diffusion, and they are grist for the mill of the historian of economics.

But how is the historian of economics to contend with these issues? One approach, certainly, is to wade into the texts, the archives, and other elements of the historical record to find the "truth." Who was there first? Who did it "better" (whatever that may mean)? Is there a historical record that merits correction? Such exercises are all well and good, and at times even informative. And it is even possible that the result of such research is that what is known as the "Smith theory" will suddenly become