

Pont de Nemours' emasculated text, the corrected copy constructed therefrom for Turgot's own use, and the posthumous edition of 1788. Marshall, it may be noted, used the 1844 Daire edition of Turgot's works, the then-standard edition, of which he owned a copy (included in the 1927 Marshall Library Catalogue).

Apart from Cook's errors of commission and omission on Turgot, there are peculiar references in his book (pp. 232, 260) to an "ancient pagan mode of expression" that, according to Cook, Smith had inherited from Turgot and the Physiocrats, and that was also visible in the writings of "Ricardo and even J.S. Mill." How far, and how lasting, was the impact of this French practice on English thought? In addition, Cook provides no evidence to support these statements, no examples from the classical literature are provided, nor does Cook explain the meaning of his innovative term, "ancient pagan modes of expression." Physiocratic texts are completely absent from Cook's bibliography. Cook's awareness of these "pagan" proclivities in French economics seems to have fallen like manna from heaven.

Several other examples of Cook's unscholarly practices may be mentioned. His declaration of differences with Tiziano Raffaelli (p. xiv), without disclosing them, is one. Cook's erroneous documentation (p. 216, n. 73) of the nature of Marshall's religious childhood from my biography is another. His treatment of Marshall's early economic studies is generally weak. Much of Cook's argument is speculative and unsubstantiated (for example, pp. 48, 117–118, 231–232, 256–257). Moreover, to reiterate my earlier comment on Cook's two major conclusions, the view that Marshall was a "neo-Hegelian" for the whole of his life is incorrect, and relies fundamentally on weak evidence. Cook's view that Marshall's social philosophy and policy for the moral, and economic, improvement of the working class rested on a wide range of principles is a well-known proposition to Marshall scholars, and generally accepted by them. This cannot be described as a worthwhile book.

Peter Groenewegen
The University of Sydney

REFERENCES

- Groenewegen, P. 1990. "Marshall and Hegel." *Economie appliquée* 43: 63–84.
 Groenewegen, P. 1995. *A Soaring Eagle. Alfred Marshall 1842–1924*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
 Keynes, J. M. 1925. "Alfred Marshall, 1842–1924." In A. C. Pigou, ed., *Memorials of Alfred Marshall*. London: Macmillan, for the Royal Economic Society, pp. 1–65.

Nahid Aslanbeigui and Guy Oakes, *The Provocative Joan Robinson: The Making of a Cambridge Economist* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2009), pp. x, 293, ill., bibl., index, \$23.95 (paper). ISBN 9780822345381.

doi: 10.1017/S1053837210000684

This book on Joan Robinson traces a path between classical biography and anthropology of science. It illustrates an economist's scientific and professional progress as the result of a complex of external circumstances, environment, personal relations,

and temperamental characteristics. The authors have concentrated in particular on reconstructing the process through which Robinson —abandoning the marginal role of “faculty wife” or “wife of Austin Robinson,” which had been hers at the end of the 1920s—eventually held a position among the major exponents of “Cambridge economics” in the early 1930s. To account for what appears to be an unprecedented professional advance, Aslanbeigui and Oakes chose—as they explicitly assert in their work—an approach departing radically from the lines followed by other biographers. They do not, in fact, set about reconstructing the intellectual biography of Joan Robinson, which would in itself amply suffice to account for this extraordinary academic escalation (see, for example, Pasinetti 2007), but focus their attention on analyzing the interpersonal relations that Robinson entered into with the other economists living and working in Cambridge in those years, together with the external historical circumstances in which she worked and with her own personal characteristics.

The authors examine these aspects on the evidence of a vast mass of archival material, showing impressive meticulousness and thoroughness, but following a very particular perspective, guided by a thesis that seems not so much to emerge from objective perusal of the papers as to have been there from the very outset. The authors’ thesis is that Joan Robinson was singularly adept in the strategy of building a career (her husband Austin’s to begin with), showing uncommon ability and promptitude in turning to her own advantage both the collaboration of her closest friends and mentors, and the criticisms of her adversaries. The authors start from two objective factors that characterized the university environment at Cambridge, and, in particular, that of the economists between the 1920s and 1930s: the difficulty to penetrate an élite constructed on local intellectual foundations; Cambridge “parochialism,” as Pasinetti put it (Pasinetti 2007, p. 101); and the formidable barriers standing in the way of women, discriminated against as students and academics in favor of men due to prejudices (not even Marshall was immune) about their alleged intellectual inferiority. They then go on to the task of reconstruction with the aim of demonstrating the determination and great tactical flair shown by Robinson in finding her way around both obstacles, in the space of just a few years overturning her very considerable initial disadvantage in terms of isolation and marginalization, and transforming it into opportunities that exceeded all expectations. The authors examine every stage they discern in the process, from her marriage with Austin Robinson to her relationship with Richard Kahn, going through “courting” with Keynes and friendship with Sraffa, seeking to highlight the causal link between her self-image as economist (and as “Cambridge economist” in particular) from the beginning of the 1930s and her subsequent behavior in pursuing professional success in the broad sense. From the point of view of the history of science, the authors’ exercise is certainly interesting and original, bringing light to bear on various aspects, details, and circumstances that may have received relatively little attention in the literature, which previously had concentrated solely on Robinson’s scientific contribution to the work of the Cambridge ‘school.’ The complexity and profundity of her intellectual and personal companionship with Richard Kahn emerges vividly from the authors’ analysis, but at the same time it appears rather too one-way, failing to account sufficiently for the fact that many of the innovative ideas on imperfect competition, for example, are clearly attributable to Robinson herself (see Rosselli 2005, pp. 262–263).

Basically, what disturbs readers sympathetic to Joan Robinson and appreciative of her intellectual qualities is precisely the *reductio* she is subjected to, ultimately and inevitably casting her in the role of a scheming, self-interested woman. It is a picture that contrasts all too much with the Joan Robinson familiar to us all as unconventional, anti-conformist, somewhat argumentative and instinctive, but sincerely dedicated to her research interests—characteristics that must have made it more difficult for her to be accepted in the academic world of Cambridge, in particular by the more traditionalist male components (consider, for example, her awkward relations with Fay and Robertson when she held her course on monetary theory in 1935; see Naldi 2005, pp. 339–341). If Robinson had really been motivated by self-interest in her academic and professional choices, would it not have been more logical for her to adopt a different attitude, less polemical and aggressive, avoiding head-on challenge of the rules of the Cambridge tradition? Another point that disturbs the reader is the way in which perfectly legitimate professional aspirations are interpreted negatively as overweening ambition. Reducing her espousal of Keynesianism to a purely tactical move to edge into an academic position at Cambridge really does seem to clash with the truly profound reasons for her convictions in this field, consistently pursued throughout her life. Finally, in reconstructing the genesis of the book *The Economics of Imperfect Competition* (1933) and the early stages of her career, to insinuate—as do the authors—that Robinson wittingly and ably exploited the collaboration and helpfulness of Kahn (*in primis*), but also contributions by Shove and Sraffa (not to mention the protection of Keynes later on), means not only offering a representation that hardly does justice to this economist's scholarly skills but, even worse, failing to understand what Cambridge was really like in those years, the way theoretical advances were achieved as the fruit of group work, or, at any rate, of a meeting of minds through contribution and comparison. Suffice it to take any work of those years published by any of the major authors involved to see the sheer quantity of reciprocal acknowledgments and interrelating influences. Robertson's book *Banking Policy and the Price Level* (1926) was the result of long discussions with Keynes, echoes of which are amply attested in the *Treatise on Money* (1930), which in turn clearly contains ideas and leads taken up from Robertson. Another example, perhaps not so well known but equally apt, is to be seen in the idea of commodity buffer stocks, which first appeared in the book by Robertson (1926) and was later taken up by Keynes (1938, 1942). The *General Theory* would probably not have been everything it was if it had not been for contributions, in the first place by Kahn (see Marcuzzo 2002, pp. 442–444), but also by other members of the famous Cambridge Circus. So, what are we to conclude from all this? Are we to see all these economists as so many expert strategists who 'exploited' their colleagues' contributions to forge ahead in their careers?

Finally, appreciable as the book certainly is for its use of sources and historical reconstruction of environments and personal relations, it could have been distinctly better had it not started from an initial bias. One cannot help wondering whether the various stages in her career might not have been viewed in less maliciously searching light had Robinson been born a man.

Eleonora Sanfilippo
Department of Economics, University of Cassino

REFERENCES

- Keynes, J. M. 1930. *A Treatise on Money*. London: Macmillan.
- Keynes, J. M. 1938. "The Policy of Government Storage of Food-Stuffs and Raw Materials." *Economic Journal* 48: 449–460.
- Keynes, J. M. 1942. "The International Control of Raw Materials." In D. Moggridge, ed., *The Collected Writings of J.M.Keynes.*, Volume XXVII. London: Macmillan, pp. 112–166.
- Marcuzzo, M. C. 2002. "The Collaboration between J.M. Keynes and R.F. Kahn from the *Treatise* to the *General Theory*." *History of Political Economy* 34 (2): 421–447.
- Naldi, N. 2005. "The Prof and His Younger Colleagues. Pigou and the Correspondence with Kahn, Kaldor, J. Robinson and Sraffa." In M. C. Marcuzzo and A. Rosselli, eds., *Economists in Cambridge. A Study through Their Correspondence, 1907–1946*. London: Routledge, pp. 331–349.
- Pasinetti, L. L. 2007. *Keynes and the Cambridge Keynesians*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robertson, D. H. 1926. *Banking Policy and the Price Level*. London: P.S. King.
- Robinson, J. 1933. *The Economics of Imperfect Competition*. London: Macmillan.
- Rosselli, A. 2005. "An Enduring Partnership. The Correspondence between Kahn and J. Robinson." In M. C. Marcuzzo and A. Rosselli, eds., *Economists in Cambridge*, pp. 259–291.

Margaret Schabas, *The Natural Origins of Economies* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp. xi, 231, \$40.00. ISBN 0–226–73569–9.

doi: 10.1017/S1053837210000696

That natural science has profoundly influenced economics is certainly well known, and perhaps obvious to the point of banality. Smith's famous reference to the natural price as "a center of gravity" is just once such instance. However, Margaret Schabas' book has a striking and original thesis to argue. She maintains that until about the mid-nineteenth century (J.S. Mill is the pivotal character in her account), the economy was viewed as essentially a part of the natural world, and that, consequently, new discoveries in science were viewed as applicable to an understanding of economic life, and not merely on an analogical or methodological level. By way of contrast, modern economics is erected on a foundation of human agency as a science of rational choice. Its subject matter is completely divorced from that of the natural sciences. Granted economists have copied the mathematical and empirical methods of the sciences, and granted the widespread use of analogies to the natural world, nonetheless, substantively economics is a wholly separate sort of inquiry. In Schabas' words, it has been "denaturalized." The result is that "there is now a sense that the economy can be engineered, if not entirely controlled" (p. 3).

The book is essentially a broad-brush survey of the history of economics in a little over 150 pages. As such, it is highly accessible. There are eight chapters, of which the first two situate her story into the early history of economics and of natural science. There are, then, a chapter each on the French economics of the Enlightenment, Hume, Smith, Classical Political Economy, and Mill. The last chapter summarizes the argument.

Her story of denaturalization is well taken if we look at the first macrodynamic models of the Physiocrats and the Classical Economists. Francois Quesnay and his