Simon J. Cook *The Intellectual Foundations of Alfred Marshall's Economic Science. A Rounded Globe of Knowledge*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009, pp. xvii, 331.

As a book on "The Intellectual Foundations of Alfred Marshall's Economic Science", Simon Cook's essay certainly presents itself as an innovative contribution in the context of recent Marshallian scholarship. In place of the well known utilitarian and evolutionary premises of Marshall's economics, the reader will find that what takes centre stage in this book is an explanation of how and why an idealistic philosophy, rooted in the thought of Coleridge, Maurice and Hegel, lay behind Marshall's economic science. No surprise, therefore, if such a book should have some disorientating effect, especially on Marshall scholars. Nonetheless, this should not be an impediment to reading it with interest and attention.

A preliminary point to be made, and one that Cook makes clear in his introduction, is that this essay certainly has to do with economics but is not, properly speaking, a book on the history of economics. Cook's objective is not to provide a new key to Marshall's economic analysis by looking retrospectively at its philosophical foundations. Accordingly, he does not set the various sources from which these foundations can be derived in any predetermined scale of importance. Rather, working the other way round, the method adopted by Cook is genealogical, and consists of a contextual reading of published and unpublished sources in which Marshall's ideas are considered as a consequence, - and are approached from the point of view - of previous and coeval intellectual traditions. Within this contextual reading, economics in general and Marshall's economics in particular appears inevitably different from today's economics and independent from any idea of the way in which Marshall's thought may be relevant from the standpoint of an economist today.

The image of Marshall's economics as it emerges from this essay is that of a specific system of thought which is enclosed within a larger intellectual envelope, a wider philosophical system that comes first and goes beyond. Therefore, more than a study on how Marshall's economic analysis actually works, this is a study on the broad moral, political and philosophical influences and motivations that prompted Marshall's economic research, as well as an enquiry into the limits that Marshall himself placed on his own research programme in the field of economics.

The path that Marshall followed and Cook reconstructed is one in which science is the way but not the whole way, and in which Marshall's "metaphysics", as Cook finally labels it, though descending from religion, had scarcely anything to do with the search for God. Akin to the Kantian idea of reason (*Vernunft*) in transcendental dialectics, Marshall's metaphysics includes those ideas that human beings can conceive but cannot understand properly. The view that Cook suggests is that, for Marshall, these ideas and ideals ought not to be removed from view merely because there is no way of comprehending them within the scope of scientific thought. Rather, when properly grasped and organised through philosophical reflection, they make sense of the final aims of scientific research. In the field of mid-nineteenth century political economy they had much to do with the idea of progress and, therefore, with the philosophy of history.

The argument presented in the book is that along with the utilitarian tradition of Mill and the evolutionary wave sparked by Spencer and Darwin, a third source of

Marshall's philosophical views is to be found in the idealistic philosophy of Coleridge as it was originally developed within the Anglican tradition by Maurice and then reshaped and redeployed on new, quite original, more secular, and "neo-Hegelian" lines by Marshall himself. This took place in three stages: Marshall's philosophical training in the pre-Hegelian period which spans the years from the late 1860s to the early 1870s, the inclusion of Hegel's philosophy of history within this very insular philosophy, and, finally, the process of elaboration of a "neo-Hegelian" philosophy of history.

The first of the three periods occupies more than one half of the book, as it includes a large part of the required contextualization. Elements of the setting here represented are the process of rapid transformation occurring within the Church of England, the parallel process of change within Cambridge University, the struggle between religious orthodoxy and liberalism, the deepening of a division between liberal and orthodox Anglicans, and the way in which political economy took part in, and was influenced by, these interconnected battles. Within this broad scenario, much emphasis is given to the common ground that the debate on political economy and the need for its reform came to provide for Anglican and secular liberals alike, the young Alfred Marshall being influenced by both sides of the liberal camp.

The reception of Adam Smith's thought in the nineteenth century constitutes the main thread followed by Cook in the long journey across this wide area, and, in the first chapter, extensive use is made of the recent scholarship on Smith. With specific reference to the works of Haakonssen and Winch, Cook shows that Smith's "science of the legislator" rapidly disappeared from view. This came about when Dugald Stewart removed jurisprudence – which was the fundamental link between the *Wealth of Nations* on one side and Smith's moral and political theories on the other – from the image of Smith that was to be conveyed to the new generations. In so doing, Stewart also provided Smith's political economy with a method which was devoid of any influence of history. The new method was based on deduction from a few basic premises grounded on introspection, and such a move implied that from this point onwards, alternative psychological doctrines could compete within political economy. Following De Marchi (1983), Cook (2009, p. 21-2) argues that this paved the way to the inclusion of J.S. Mill's earlier views on method, outlined in the 1836 essay 'On the Definition of Political Economy', in the picture of classical political economy as a mature science that lumped together Smith and Ricardo in a well established scientific consensus based on the same deductive method as that employed by Mill. However, whereas Stewart's own version of the deductive method rested on intuitionist assumptions, Mill based the same method on associationism, thus reproducing within political economy a philosophical divide that was at the root of wider political and religious controversies. Moreover, other points of disagreement would soon emerge, such as the breakdown of the wage fund theory and, more generally, the question of which role political economy ought to play in the debate on British society overall.

As in any history of economics book, Cook depicts the apparent consensus within political economy as mere delusion, doomed to be short-lived and to result in the prolonged quarrel, more typical of a young discipline than of a mature science, which Marshall inherited and overcame. But the standpoint that Cook takes on this commonplace in the history of economics is a wider one. It includes economists or would-be economists, like Mill and Marshall himself, but they are not considered as economists *tout court*; and it also includes other thinkers who gave no relevant

contribution to economics but nonetheless participated in the debate on the moral and social significance of economic theories.

As Cook points out, the change of direction that was imposed on British political economy after Smith's death was one in which the focus shifted from human history to human nature, from the consideration of any possible causal nexus between individual behaviour and changing social and institutional settings to the quest for the basic, more stable, and perhaps immutable features of human beings. However, this arose in the era of rapid change that led England from the pessimistic Malthusian epoch to the optimistic and progressive Victorian age. What is worse, while the 'dismal science' was well equipped to deal with the 'pessimistic' side of the picture, the one in which human beings are self interested agents seeking immediate pleasure at the expense of any sacrifice, it was rather unfit to deal with human beings as moral agents capable of altruistic behaviour and more constructive purposes. Typical of this fracture is Mill's solution to the Malthusian problem, in which the moral progress of the working classes, an exogenous factor that political economy did not assume and could not explain, was supposed to reduce the birth rate, thus keeping real wages above subsistence level (see Cook 2009, pp. 154-5).

In Mill, what can be derived from economic analysis, such as the Ricardian 'Iron law' of wages, is not the same as can be expected to happen when a wider moral outlook on human nature is taken, and for Cook this reflected a general fracture, or dualism, that was fairly widespread. This basic dualism is epitomised in the book through the interpretation of Smith that Buckle gave in a passage of his *History of Civilization in England*. Here Buckle observes that in the *Wealth of Nations*, "Smith had obtained his results 'arguing from principles which the selfish part of human nature exclusively supplied'" (Cook 2009, p. 25). Once again, this entailed that there was a non-selfish part of human nature and that Smith had kept it outside the economic field, in the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. As Cook informs us, Marshall drew a vertical line along the margin of the above passage in his own copy of Buckle's book, thus taking notice of a distinction he could have found almost everywhere. In fact, the distinction between the altruistic side and the selfish part of human nature, like that between lower animal instincts and higher mental faculties, is a form of dualism which was widespread at the time and it was by no means a specialty for economists. On the contrary, Cook argues that much of the crisis in economic thinking depended on the difficulty that economists encountered in coming to grips with everything that was outside the boundaries of self-interested individual behavior.

When Marshall was no more than a young student, the optimistic side of the widely accepted dualistic view of human nature**,** the one Marshall eventually embraced with regard to economics, was occupied by the moral, political, and religious concerns of those – like Ruskin, Carlyle and Coleridge – who were unwilling to acquiesce in the gloomy picture of humanity compendiated in the 'economic man' doctrine. A key aspect of this situation, one that Cook (2009, p. 27) derives from Collini (1991), is that it created a limited but nonetheless significant intersection where both secular and Anglican liberals could meet. Though from different and conflicting perspectives, men like Mill and Maurice agreed that something should be added to the doctrines of Ricardo. Thus, applying for the Chair of Political Economy at Oxford in 1837, Maurice declared that "political economy is not the foundation of morals and politics, but must have them as its foundations or be

worth nothing" (quoted in Cook 2009, p. 27); but he could have strengthened his point had he realised that "Mid-Victorian liberals subscribed unhesitatingly to Mill's definition of the science of political economy ... , and yet in their practical engagement with social issues consistently looked to the moral improvement of the working classes in order to derive from Ricardo's pessimistic doctrines an optimistic vision of the future" (Cook 2009, p. 28). Moreover, this unexpected convergence found a very concrete ground in the ongoing debate on the university system and its reform. If one point of agreement existed between members of the Church of England like Maurice and, before him, Coleridge, and secular liberals like, for instance, the young Marshall and Mill, this was the call for political intervention in creating an endowed system of higher education.

This issue occupies the second chapter of the book, which consists of a wide and quite detailed survey of several positions that various thinkers held on the subject. Examination of this question starts from Smith and ends with Marshall's "four folios" on the "principal questions wh[ich] Smith seems to have overlooked" that Cook tentatively dates back to 1868 or 1869 (2009, p. 79).

The university issue, and, more generally, 'education', is the main vehicle of the transposition of idealist and romantic tendencies within the field of secular liberalism. Much of what Cook presents as, and in fact seems to have been, a religious influence on Marshall, could also be seen, in a less disorientating perspective, as the acquisition and re-elaboration within secular thought of a few but important moral and political issues that came from the most advanced and illuminated minds of the Anglican establishment.

After Smith's attack on the old system of British universities and his call for market-oriented academic institutions, new and alternative proposals were being put forth that were not a mere preservation of the past but nonetheless took for granted that the market could not be a solution. Smith himself acknowledged the need for public intervention at least at the level of lower education as a buffer against ignorance and superstition. In the subsequent passage, the reader will find Burke's reversal of the Smithian doctrine, namely, the idea that higher education is a precondition, rather than a consequence, of a successful commercial society. But the turning point is individuated in Coleridge's doctrine that an endowed university system was needed to preserve the national "culture" from the threats of a commercial society. Burke and Coleridge here represent the sources of a new debate on the nexus between national 'culture' and civilization on the one side and economic development and commercial power on the other. Along this path, it was Whewell who gave a new meaning to 'liberal education' and 'civilization', which were becoming increasingly connected with the cultivation of the higher faculties of the human mind (p. 62).

As Cook observes in two important passages of chapter 2, this completed the transition from Smith and opened up a new ground upon which battles and alliances could be fought and created: "Whewell's idealist conception of the human mind was forcefully and consistently challenged by J.S. Mill. Nevertheless, when placed in contrast to Adam Smith, Mill and Whewell stand side by side in their shared emphasis on the mind in and of itself as the foundation of philosophical, political, and social thought (as opposed to the sociable mind in concrete historical circumstances investigated by Smith)". Therefore, "Whatever philosophical and political differences existed between Mill and Whewell, their shared identification of education with mental cultivation went together with a dismissal of Smith's arguments against the

endowment of institutions of higher education" (p. 62). Quite interestingly, Cook relates Mill's dismissal of Smith's argument directly to Coleridge, and this on the basis of a sentence in Mill's essay on "Coleridge" that is "carefully underlined in Marshall's copy" of this essay: Coleridge had "vindicated against Bentham and Adam Smith and the whole eighteenth century, the principle of an endowed class, for the cultivation of learning, and for diffusing its results among the community" (Cook 2009, p. 64).

Much of the book is dedicated to showing how Marshall first embraced and then went on to reconsider this view. At the very beginning, we find Marshall quite sceptical about the Tripos competition system and the "intellectual athletes" of Fawcett and Stephen (Cook 2009, p. 73) but strongly convinced that the market can neither promote nor evaluate the advancement of science. As he wrote in his comments on Smith, the "true men of learning" find no stimulus in pecuniary reward. Rather, the "student's frame of mind" is "an essentially non self-regarding frame of mind" (quoted in Cook 2009, p. 80). Thus, while the market can provide a stimulus to the activity of the lower self, the higher self follows another and independent route that unfolds in a more spiritual, non materialistic dimension, which in turn gives the highest moral significance to scientific research.

Cook's interpretation of this earlier position makes reference to the religious notion of "enthusiasm" as it was also imported within the secular liberal camp by Leslie Stephen. In this case, its rise was a reaction to the poor results achieved in the general election of 1868 by the academic liberals, who had failed, with their purely rational arguments, to grasp the religious dimension of popular thought (Cook 2009, pp. 31-2). It does not appear from Cook's research that Marshall ever subscribed to such a view. Rather, in the case of Marshall, the same point was connected to another issue, which had nothing to do with the social divide between the uneducated masses and the sophisticated elite of academic liberals, and this leads into the subject matter of part II of the book. In the words of John Grote, "Before we can *act* ... we must know what we *want*", and we must therefore "form a notion of an ideal of what should be done" or of what "the human race should aim at" (quoted in Cook 2009, pp. 102-3). In Grote, this was connected with the idea of "God". By contrast, in Marshall's "intellectual foundations" as Cook sees them, the same point had to be made on a renewed basis and, apparently, independently of any idea of God.

The religious side of the question is dealt with in chapter 3, where a revisionist account of Marshall's 'mental crisis' and lost religious faith takes the place of Maynard Keynes's classic contribution (Keynes 1924). For Cook, the main flaw in Keynes' argument is that it failed to take account of a third position that stood midway between Anglican orthodoxy and secular liberals. Whereas Keynes enrolled Marshall amongst secular liberals and against religious orthodoxy, Cook considers Marshall as a product of the University of Cambridge at a time in which Anglican liberals were at the head of this institution. Accordingly, the influence that Coleridge's idealistic philosophy was still able to exert on Anglican liberalism and the role of Anglican liberals in framing the context of Marshall's education are added to the picture.

As Cook explains later in the book, perhaps too late to be of some help to the reader, a related flaw of Keynes' account is that he made of Marshall an "agnostic", and this term, when employed without further qualification, conveys an anti-metaphysical bias that is misleading. While Cook has no particular interest in coming

to a precise conclusion about Marshall's lost faith in God, it is crucial, in his perspective, to make it as clear as possible that strong metaphysical commitments may survive in those people who grew up in religious or semi-religious institutions and then made their way in life without keeping their religious faith. The problem is not – and this is clear from the beginning of the book – whether Marshall believed in revelation or not. At least in the period covered in the book, it is taken for granted that he did not. What matters, in Cook's perspective, is the above mentioned Kantian-like dimension of Marshall's metaphysical views. So, while Grote argued that the "universe consists of phaenomena of matter, thought of by mind, which thinks also of much besides" (quoted in Cook 2009, p. 106), it was not very clear how, outside of revelation, the human mind could think about this "much" that was "besides".

In the transition from religious orthodoxy to scientific positivism, when science was covering a part of the ground that religion had occupied in the past, though not the whole ground, Anglican liberals took on the responsibility of keeping alive the attention to that part of the intellectual ground which was in danger of remaining uncovered and therefore of being lost. Placing Marshall in the context of a dialogue between secular and Anglican liberals, Cook portrays him as a young student of philosophy who was ready to throw away the religious bathwater but who was quite resolute in keeping the metaphysical baby. And, in doing this, Marshall inevitably took something from the Anglican tradition, something that later remained at the back of his mind.

In this connection, that which Anglican thought could provide and Marshall absorbed was a philosophical method that Cook traces back to Coleridge. This method was not yet the Hegelian search for new syntheses in which contradictions could be composed, but in some sense it prepared the ground for a Hegelian influence on Marshall. What was important in this method was that instead of looking for a compromise as a way to soothe controversy, it boldly admitted that a contradiction may always exist and that the search for truth is a process in which contradictions have to be admitted. As it had been elaborated to deal with opposed and very rigid religious orthodoxies – that is, with doctrines that were quite incompatible with any form of compromise – this method consisted in assuming that the opposing views which result in a controversy may be *completely* right in what they affirm and *altogether* wrong in what they deny. While the search for a compromise may lead to the statement that the opposing views are half right and half wrong in what they affirm, this suggested, or, at least, admitted a further and more Hegelian solution: there may also exist a third doctrine, which is not a compromise between the two and is capable of including both. Along with this method, a further possible contribution by Anglican liberals was a general attitude – common to both secular and Anglican liberals, and distinguishing both from religious orthodoxy – which consisted in putting no *a-priori* limit on human understanding and curiosity.

Examples of this general attitude that are given in the book are the extremely favorable reception of Darwin by the Anglican liberals (Cook 2009, p. 93), as well as Maurice's enthusiasm in reading Mill against Mansel's argument that God could not be an object of knowledge (p. 107). Then, in chapter 4, this very example on the subject of method is given by Marshall as the outcome of this earlier period.

The example, and the gist of Cook's interpretation of Marshall's thought, amounts to a dualistic philosophy based on the usual distinction between a higher and a lower self. These two dimensions are connected, in Marshall's mind and throughout

the book, with a range of distinctions between the physical/metaphysical, materialistic/idealist, mechanical/spiritual sides of human nature. In a nutshell, this dualistic framework entails that the now well known evolutionary matrix of Marshall's thought, that which Raffaelli (2003) traced back to 'Ye Machine', certainly exists, but it belongs exclusively to the particular part of human nature of which a physical, mechanical, or materialistic explanation can be given. For Marshall, there exists a further dimension of the human mind, one that escapes any materialistic or mechanical explanation like the hypothetical perspective provided in 'Ye Machine'. Cook traces this back to the other paper, 'Ferrier Proposition one', presented by Marshall at the Grote Club in the same days as 'Ye Machine'. Whereas for Raffaelli this former paper consists of a line of thought that Marshall rapidly abandoned, for Cook this idealistic line survived throughout Marshall's life, running parallel at the back of (and not in contradiction with) the other.

In the way in which it is presented, Marshall's own dualism reflects the opposing views of human nature that surrounded him as well as a wider call for philosophical dualism, seen as the composition of conflicting opinions, which was so typical of liberal Anglican thought. Moreover, it must be emphasized that these dualistic images of human nature, though so distant from the intellectual horizon of a 21st century reader and therefore so difficult to take seriously nowadays, are crucial in the narrative. As Cook points out, they had a common root in Coleridge's distinction between "reason" and "understanding". In Coleridge, such a distinction was subservient to the need of keeping together conflicting religious opinions as the different 'understandings' of a single truth given by 'reason'. Later, other dualisms, and Marshall's own dualism in particular, emerged as a way to accept the contradictions that existed and as a first step towards their composition.

Many elements, which make up the substance of chapter 4, moved concurrently in this direction. There was Coleridge's method, based on the idea that each individual is right in affirming the particular part of truth he or she has discovered, but is wrong in denying what others affirm from their point of view. This was a method that Marshall, according to Cook, consistently applied to the doctrines of Bain and Ferrier. Moreover, with his candid admission that associationist psychology can explain much but not everything, Mill suggested to Marshall that the idea of the self could be 'non homogeneous' with the other ideas. Again, this solution was the one adopted in the Grote Club papers, but, before Marshall's solution, Mill's admission implied that a fundamental psychological issue was, at least for the moment, left beyond the reach of human understanding. This, however, collided with the liberal attitude, be it secular or Anglican, as it hinted that some areas of knowledge may be unattainable by mankind. Therefore, while it is hardly unexpected that Maurice could enthuse about Mill's refutation of Mansel's doctrines, it is coherent with this common liberal wisdom that it would be better to have the human mind divided in two parts than to leave one of its regions in the darkness of orthodox religious thought. So, for Marshall, Bain was right in what he affirmed, and a mechanical representation of his doctrine was given, in 'Ye Machine'. So far as it goes, 'Ye Machine' is a reversal of Ferrier's position, in which Bain's argument was negated. But, in turn, Ferrier was right in what he affirmed, because 'Ye Machine' cannot explain human self-consciousness. As Ferrier put it: "'along with whatever any intelligence knows, it must, as the ground or conditions of its knowledge, have some cognizance of itself' (quoted in Cook 2009, p. 113)

Leaving aside psychology, and before entering into Marshall's philosophy of history and the related issue of the idea of "progress", Chapter 5 shows how Marshall employed a similar "procedure" in the composition of another controversy, which pertained to the wage fund theory and resulted in a reconsideration of the theory of value, with long lasting consequences on Marshall's economics. Following and connecting different lines, this chapter provides the links between part III of the book and the pre-Hegelian stage of Marshall's intellectual development investigated in parts I and II. It mainly makes use of material from the *Early Economic Writings* edited by Whitaker, Marshall's 1876 essay "Mr Mill's Theory of Value", and the unpublished notes on Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. A rather heavy going chapter at a first reading, it is perhaps easier to catch its drift after having read Part III. Here Cook follows Marshall's attempt to fill the analytical gap that resulted from Mill's recantation, showing how it unexpectedly resulted in the dawn of time period analysis. The three points made here are: (1) that the Coleridgean method employed in the Grote Club papers is the source of the approach employed in economic analysis, thus showing that this method was becoming Marshall's basic "procedure" and one of his steadiest philosophical assumptions; (2) that when employed in the composition of the opposing views of Mill and MacLeod, pertaining to the objective and subjective determinations of value, this method led Marshall to introduce a subjective dimension within the definition of a few key categories of classical political economy, including capital (a view connected with the idea that wealth was not coextensive with material wealth, as it included acquired mental faculties gained through various forms of "education"); (3) that "time" is a further element introduced into the procedure, as it is only with time period analysis that a (Coleridgean) solution to the contradiction between objective and subjective theories of value could be framed. As the reader will learn while reading Part III, the subjective determinations of value and capital are closely connected with Marshall's later view on the philosophy of history. Rather than being a constituent part of human nature, as Mill's method would suggest, they exist as a result of a historical process in which the genuine turning point is the separation of human history from natural history, and they are the object of further development as a result of the continuous process of education.

While these links emerge in the following pages of the book, what should be possible to guess in moving on from part II to part III, is that, taken together, Marshall's dualism, the place it awarded to self consciousness, and the method adopted in framing this view, could be a fertile ground for the reception of at least one part of Hegel's philosophy – in the event, the philosophy of history – though certainly not of the whole Hegelian system. This is true to the point that, going through part III, what Cook presents as a "neo-Hegelian" Marshall looks more and more like a very Marshallian Hegel.

Marshall's selective reception of Hegel during the early 1870s is taken, in Cook's reading, as a "translation" of the earlier psychological project into an interpretation of general history capable of discovering the inner logic of the divided world of 'Ye Machine' and 'Ferrier Proposition One' (Cook 2009, p. 220). Thus, while the earlier research in psychology had put forth a mere juxtaposition of the materialistic and spiritual sides, Marshall's long essay on the history of civilization employed Hegel's categories of subjective and objective freedom to provide a connection between them. In the new form of self-consciousness, the idea of the self emerges from history as the separation of men from nature, the birth of a self-

directing agent now freed from the natural flows of things. Following both Hegel and Maine (*Ancient History*), Marshall saw the birth of Christianity as marking the turning point. It was Christ's message that made human beings autonomous agents, morally responsible for their own actions, thereby creating the very condition of subjective freedom. Moreover, Christianity was the spark that gave history a new and progressive direction, in which the future could be expected to be better than the past.

It is from the combination of these two elements –self-conscious and autonomous human beings participating in an idea of history taken as progress – that the third and mature stage of Marshall's intellectual development took shape. And it is at this final stage that the reader is introduced to a more familiar idea of Marshall.

More precisely, in this latter part, the reader is continuously torn between the favourable impression of viewing from a renewed and interesting perspective something already familiar, and the opposite – and less favourable – impression that Cook's intention was to tell a well known story from scratch, disregarding what others had written before him.

It is the opinion of the present writer that the main flaw of this book is that it fails to provide the reader with the author's own view on the links that it inevitably presents with the recent scholarship on Marshall. One partial exception concerns the nexus between this book and the previous work by Raffaelli. Cook's acknowledgment of the strong intellectual debt he owed to Raffaelli is quite clear in preventing the reader from supposing, as a mere glance at the title might lead one to believe, that this is a revision of the existing interpretations of the philosophical foundations of Marshall's economics, and of Raffaelli (2003) in particular. In fact, the present book seems to be, first and foremost in the author's declared intentions, on the whole complementary and only to a limited extent alternative, to the work by Raffaelli. Though a significant divergence exists it is hard to see Cook (2009) as a refutation of Raffaelli (2003).

But, this said, the flaw remains. The essence of the problem seems to be that in shedding light on the dark side of Marshall's "rounded globe of knowledge" Cook obtains the unintended effect of casting a shadow on the other side. While the book is addressed to a wider audience than the restricted circle of highly specialised Marshallian scholars, it requires its readers already to have considerable knowledge about Marshall. On the other hand, it is quite plausible that the first to browse through the book will be precisely those with a very specialized background who will have some difficulty in recognizing their object of study. For instance, Cook has much to say on Marshall's intellectual biography but mentions Marshall's biographer just once, in a footnote that refers the reader to a minor contribution by Groenewegen. And on such an important episode as the emergence of time period analysis, no comparison is made with the different interpretation Whitaker gave of the same question when he edited the *Early Economic Writings*.

What is worse, this may conceal the valuable services rendered by this book, which is a coherent interpretation of a larger part of, if not all, the unpublished material that can be found in the Marshall library, thus presenting the Marshall that we know in a wider perspective which may even turn out to be essential in placing the author of *Principles of Economics* in the general flow of ideas that came before and that endured after him.

The impression of a wider dimension, one that does not exclude the common wisdom on Marshall and that can even reinforce it, is what Part III conveys. As with

chapter 5 at the end of Part II, chapters 6 to 8 are too greatly imbued with complicated philological expertise to be conveyed to the reader in detail. But it is certainly worth recalling at least some of the results Cook puts forward in these concluding chapters.

The very first of the familiar elements, one that recurs throughout the book, is the way in which Marshall dealt with contradictory theories, adopting an approach which, as he explained in a letter to Clarke, was not a mere attempt to "compromise" (Whitaker 1996, vol. III, p. 184). We know from Cook that the seeds of this Hegelian-like procedure, in which new syntheses were provided that overcame the existing contradictions, came prior to Marshall's study of Hegel and that a Coleridgean influence was probably a major factor in introducing Marshall to a dialectic mode of thinking in which contradictions must in some way be admitted. One other familiar feature that surfaces in Part III is Marshall's attitude towards the conflicting Spencerian and socialist interpretations of history. A closer reading of the essay on the history of civilization provides us with insight into the source of Marshall's own positions on this point. Moreover, it was already known from Marshall's main works, namely from *The Economics of Industry* up to the eight editions of *Principles of Economics* and *Industry and Trade*, that for Marshall "Economic activity presupposes self-conscious and autonomous moral agents, whose actions are free, because self-determined", and that this resulted in an opposition whereby modern economy stood in contrast to the ancient tradition based on "habit and custom" (Cook 2009, p. 212). But a rather more perceptive approach is required in order to realise that this theme, which was common to Marshall and Mill, arose, in Marshall, from a closer investigation of the thoughts of Hegel and Maine and as a translation into history of the earlier dualistic psychology.

In Chapter 6 Cook reads Marshall's Hegelian essay on the history of civilization through the lens of the Grote Club papers, thus providing a key to the way in which Marshall received and readapted Hegel. Now, primitive societies correspond to the lower level mechanical circuit of 'Ye Machine'; a second stage, introducing the spiritual element put forth in 'Ferrier Proposition One', culminates in the rise of Christianity, when self-consciousness emerged; finally, the third period is the one in which self-consciousness prompts an ever increasing use of the higher mechanical circuit of 'Ye Machine'.

As Cook points out, while Marshall followed Hegel on primitive societies and the rise of Christianity, the interpretation of the third phase is far more personal and much more concerned with economic history. Many centuries would elapse after Christ's death and resurrection before capitalism could finally prevail, and this made it necessary, for Marshall, to seek an explanation for such a delay. In its original Hegelian wording this period is one in which subjective freedom continuously interacts with the conditions of objective freedom. But, in Marshall, these conditions are regarded as changing from place to place, thus breaking Hegel's "universal history" into a potentially infinite number of 'localized' histories which, viewed retrospectively, give the impression of projecting into the more remote past the comparative history method employed in *Industry and Trade*. In this way, the combination of a single idea of subjective freedom with a multitude of local objective freedoms provided a sound philosophical assumption for the creation of a unified economic science in the presence of qualitatively different local economies, a view which may certainly be of some interest for present-day students of Marshallian districts.

There are many other topics that could be taken as examples of how stimulating this book can be to a patient reader, challenging though its pages may be in terms of ease of reading. Just to touch on one such topic, let us consider Marshall's later ideas on education, which is a key issue throughout the book and one in which the most unfamiliar features of Cook's essay bear a close relationship to the most familiar and well-established aspects.

The "education" of the working classes is the necessary condition for the full exploitation of equality before the law, which is typical of the modern stage of objective freedom (Cook 2009, p. 247). Within this view, the "social problem ... is not that spiritual evolution is confined to the educated few, but rather that self-consciousness remains a mere potential unless mechanical character – the product of education – has evolved to make it an actuality" (p. 250). This is a step further if compared with the Grote Club papers. Moreover, it includes the mechanical character in an idealistic framework. Finally, it is the translation of a romantic theme into more secular and liberal terms: "Such a distinction between the philosophical few and the nonphilosophical many naturally lent itself to the view that an endowed clerisy should be formally charged with preserving and disseminating the cultural creations of the few philosophical souls. But Maurice, the foremost Coleridgean within the Church of England and without doubt the primary source of Marshall's encounter with Coleridgean ideas, departed from Coleridge on precisely this point. For Maurice, the faculty of reason was universal (...). Maurice, in other words, pointed Marshall toward a version of romanticism that was far more in keeping with Mill's liberal political vision than anything that could be found in the writings of Coleridge" (p. 251). However, as Cook points out in a subsequent passage, Marshall went much further than Mill, because the analogy between the optimism of Maurice and that of Mill "rested on the social philosophy and not on the political economy of the latter. It was Marshall who reformulated political economy itself so that it proclaimed a secular version of Maurice's theological vision of continual progress" (p. 259).

This is the great watershed that Cook reveals at the end of his journey. Before Marshall, any view of progress as a consequence of education could be seen as a utopian vision connected with philosophical views but not with an economic science that saw the accumulation of material capital as the moving force of progress. With Marshall, the same views were now proclaimed from the point of view of economics, and therefore of science. Their status had definitely changed, at the same time raising the status of political economy as compared with religious, political and moral thought. The limit of economic research had been taken a step further.

The object of this long review has not been to present the whole contents of the book, which would be impossible. Rather, an attempt has been made here to find the main line, or, at least, one of the main lines that could be followed in order to dip into Cook's work without losing the drift. It cannot be said that this is an easy book, but it is assuredly an important one. It is indisputably the result of a in-depth study of Marshall's philosophical thought which is worth reading, as it gives us a much more precise idea of what lay at the core of the word "best" when Marshall said, echoing Darwin, that "the fittest is not the best". That Marshall had moral values and an ideal picture of how the world should be at the back of his mind is not quite a great discovery. But it would be difficult to say, after having read this essay by Simon Cook, that these ideal and moral values were no more than the consequence of a Victorian setting. Rather, it is this Victorian milieu itself which seems to have been

more complicated that one usually imagines.

Carlo Cristiano,
University of Pisa

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