Always in Demand: The Keynes Biographies

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D.E. Moggridge *Maynard Keynes: An economist's biography* (London, Routledge 1992) xxxi + 941 pp ISBN 0-415-05141-X, $59.95

R. Skidelsky *John Maynard Keynes* : *The Economist as Saviour 1920-1937* (Macmillan 1992) xxxv + 731 pp ISBN 0-333-37138-0, $49.95

The age of Keynes is back - in the literary world at least. Walk into any respectable bookshop today and you are likely to face two weighty tomes on Keynes. Biographies are big business these days and eminent economists are sharing in the glory. 1992 marked a remarkable occurrence, where, in the space of a few months, two biographies on Keynes were issued, one by an economist, the other by a political historian. It may be a feature in the history of economic thought to have simultaneous conceptual breakthroughs by independent endeavour but it is rare indeed to have two magisterial studies of a master economist put out in the one year.

The joint publication could not have been more mordant; the retreat of Thatcherite-Reaganite economics has left the orthodoxy in a void. After yet another "low dishonest decade", a rekindled spirit of Keynesianism is making headway in the nervous nineties[1]. At one stage during the 1991 global recession the OECD openly advocated fiscal stimulus for its members; only recessions it seems, brings back the abiding logic of Keynes. Lately however there has been a reversion to Pre-Keynesian economics with the OECD clamouring for balanced budgets, increased savings and wage flexibility. Budget deficits are once again seen as the devil's handiwork. What would Keynes make of the fashion of ranking of inflation before deflation, or even more bizarre, Britain's fateful experiment with the ERM - a classic re-run of the Gold Standard debacle of the twenties. In its hour of greatest triumph, capitalism, especially the western variety, is blighted by mass unemployment and an inequitable income distribution - the very evils Keynes spoke of towards the end of *The General Theory*. There are, therefore, more than enough parallels between the ultra-competitive global capitalism of today and its despondent, unyielding counterpart of the 30's to make some case for rediscovering Keynes.

If that is not enough inspiration for economists to delve into these volumes then one can always paraphrase Carlyle's dictum that the history of economic thought is nothing but the biographies of great men. Skidelsky's second volume of his trilogy has anyway been long awaited. With an appeal beyond the economics fraternity it has already been favourably reviewed in the press. In contrast, Moggridge's academic study of Keynes will come to some as a surprise since its preparation and subsequent arrival met with little fanfare.

The near simultaneous publication of these two books on the same subject reminds one of Hotelling's model of duopoly behaviour i.e. the ice-cream stalls on the beach. Hotelling's model, based upon locational similarity, predicted that two firms will typically supply products of near-identical character and quality. Having consumed, in quick succession, both offerings nothing could be further from the truth. On all the quality criteria - approach, content, emphasis, lucidity, style and appeal - the products differ and competition, (hurrah!) rules. There's even a marked price difference for the rabid neo-classicist to savour. Indeed, the difference begins with the dustjackets. Moggridge's volume features a portrait by Duncan Grant, with William Roberts' portrait of

Keynes and Lydia adorns the Skidelsky work. Incidentally Keynes acquired the Roberts portrait and hung it in his study at Tilton where he wrote much of the *General Theory*. This is a tad suggestive that Skidelsky's offering is a much more intimate portrait of its subject than its rival. He certainly revels in the contradictions in Keynes' character which, at times, seems to daunt Moggridge a little. In a beautifully crafted introduction, Skidelsky perceives Keynes as an oddly partitioned chararacter divided between the worlds of Bloomsbury and Whitehall. Moggridge shies away from ever really dissecting his subject. Instead an avalanche of chronological facts are present.

Like Skidelsky's undertaking, Moggridge's biography had a long and troubled gestation. Reflecting his credentials as a Keynes scholar, the idea of writing a biography was first put to him by Richard Kahn and Austin Robinson, no doubt as a follow-up to his well-received Fontana primer on Keynes. In the foreword, Moggridge admits that he applied himself intermittently to the task. More than once he confesses the project was consigned to the bottom of the filing cabinet as university administration and the editing of other works interceded. Like Skidelsky, Moggridge's book makes extensive use of the hitherto undisclosed Keynes papers, held at Kings College, and Cabinet and other official papers held at the Public Records Office at Kew.

As it transpired Moggridge's effort has been overshadowed in the mass appeal stakes by its more illustrious rival. (The market too apparently shared in this opinion. The top twenty best selling economic titles, as tabulated at The Economist bookshop in London, had Skidelsky's tome in the top bracket for some months. Moggridge's effort, when first released, did not make the grade.)[2] This is rather sad. It would have won greater appeal, no doubt, if released independently. However, even in its own stead Moggridge's *Maynard Keynes* is a disappointment for it lacks a centre, something on which to hang the whole book. By omitting any discussion of the *General Theory* it comes across somewhat as a tale of Hamlet without the Prince.

Moggridge's offering pitches itself towards the broad church of economists. This, at least, might be ascertained from its rather ambiguous title - to look at the life of Keynes as a professional economist in a detached way. He was, of course, many other things too. Nor was Keynes, like most economists, a risk adverse creature. How else could one explain his lifelong gambling or the careless liaisons in his younger days.

In the preface, Moggridge discusses the desiderata in writing an eminent economist's biography. He bemoans the lack of interest the economics profession has in its past. The young turks of the profession have little time to savour the biographies of the great thinkers - technical expertise takes pride of place. Notwithstanding Harrod's pioneering effort Moggridge complains that there was little to go on when it comes to writing an eminent economist's biography[3] Trying to fit, moreover, Keynes extraordinary life and achievements into one volume - as distinct from Skidelsky's licence of three - requires an acute sense of selectivity. In that light, "facts", Moggridge insists, need to be screened for relevance for they do not always speak for themselves; there are 'fertile' facts and 'creative' facts (p. xxv). The selection and arrangement of such facts, Moggridge contends, is the be-all and end-all of the biographer's craft. Biography then is a selective process - no more so than with Keynes. After the initial chapter Moggridge's study sets itself the primary task to trace out life long concerns expressed through Keynes' major works.

This judicious approach is not unexpected from someone who co-edited the Royal Economic Society's *Collected Works of J.M. Keynes*. (Apparently the full set of 'Keynes Papers' at Cambridge were enough to fill 100 volumes.) To save space, Moggridge announces his disinterest in fleshing out the more racy details of his subject. This rejection of the 'warts and all' treatment is blessed because, as a quoted novelist put it, 'the obsessive shadowing of another man's life is one of the most bizarre ways to spend one's time' (p. xvi). Possibly, but in Keynes' case one may make for a grand exception. What pray tell must Moggridge make of Skidelsky's devotion in making his home at Keynes' former country retreat at Tilton? This is not a cheap point. Critics have lashed Skidelsky for falling into adoration over the subject of his last biography, Oswald Mosley. Should biographers, especially economists, check against projecting their own concerns onto their subjects?

The Moggridge study, in its dispassionate and detached style, certainly meets the grade. In a dig perhaps at Skidelsky's first volume on Keynes, Moggridge admonishes the voyeuristic approach by asking "What is the point of telling the Keynes story 'boy by boy'?" (p. xxiv) The point, certainly to some, is that sex matters. The Hession study of Keynes postulated a connection between Keynes' rampant homosexuality and his creativity. In his first volume Skidelsky held that Keynes' "peculiarity", as he himself described it, was an important influence in his intellectual development. Moggridge mostly leaves the sexual dimension to the readers' imagination (helped no end with an Annex entitled "A Key for the Prurient: Keynes' loves") which demonstrates not only Keynes' strong libido but also his obsession for numbers. Thankfully we are spared graphs! Both studies squarely address Keynes spectacular mid-life switch from homosexual dalliances to faithful heterosexuality.

Despite the disavowal of tracing out the lurid side of Keynes, Moggridge actually uncovers evidence of Keynes' first homosexual encounters while a schoolboy at Eton. Later he also takes Keynes to task for an unsavoury incident with an Indian student that the young don threatened to send home. Apart from his inveterate racism and anti-Semitism - the product of age and class - it is perhaps the only incident where Keynes private behaviour fell short of the lofty conduct he, as a disciple of Moore, vigorously prescribed for mankind. On that note, Moggridge finds no proof to the charge, made by Harry Johnson, that Keynes goaded on his young turks against D.H. Robertson.

Moggridge's account is, of course, a complete life study of the man whereas Skidelsky's volume looks at what was, without doubt, the most productive and phenomenal period of Keynes' life, 1920 to 1937. Despite the strictures about selectivity of detail Moggridge commences his study with an unnecessary and self-indulgent history of Cambridge that betrays the author's love of place. To be fair, Skidelsky committed a similar indulgence in his first volume with a 70 page preamble on the Keynes' family tree. What strikes the reader of Moggridge's account of his subject's childhood is what little sadness or trauma there was. He grew up in a world of late-Victorian order and security. He got on equally well with his parents. Only much later did he yearn to escape from their moral and august code. His school days at Eton were marked by a flood of maths, history and classics. Adolescence brought the usual fare of complexes including a strong sense of self-repugnance about his face and frame and interestingly, his voice. It was his eyes however that struck most. As one wrote, they were to "mirror every thought of the leaping mind" (Skidelsky, p. xxxi). Moggridge's work is no psycho-biography although one snippet about how a childhood accident resulting in a deformed finger explains Keynes' fetish with peoples' hands while his own were tucked away like a Chinese courtier.

After eight rather dull biographical chapters Moggridge commences his study proper of Keynes the economist. It must be stressed that, from the outset, Keynes was well positioned, with his parents pillars of the establishment. His brilliance at Eton and Cambridge opened many doors to what would always become a promising career. The civil service was his first stop. Like many other ambitious young men bored to death in the civil service in 1906 Keynes revised his Cambridge dissertation on government time. His expressed fears about being 'found out', however, related more to his sexual proclivity; prudish London had little tolerance for what passed within the liberated congenial climes of Kings College. This led Keynes to live out what Moggridge calls an oddly 'bifurcated' life (p. 171). Moggridge carries off Keynes' couplings with Lytton Strachey and Duncan Grant rather well. The confines of the private Keynes and public Keynes were being set. This ambivalence carried through to his professional activities where as a child of the establishment he proved its *enfant terrible*. In economics he was brought up within the orthodoxy yet his heresies ultimately provided a framework for alternative analysis. In politics he proved a chameleon dabbling with liberals and socialists as his mood took him.

Skidelsky plumbs the psychological depths of Keynes' character - with profit. Skidelsky's Keynes is a mass of contradictions, not "all of a piece". His stockbroker-friend Falk reported that he "had no identity in solitude" (Skidelsky, p. xxi). This jells with Schumpeter's view that Keynes was 'a man of parts' - parts which could not be put together as a whole. For his part, Skidelsky detects his subject's fascination with the King Midas legend. He makes great play of Keynes diatribes against money-love and links it with his mockery of the Victorian icons of savings and sound finance. His repugnance of money-love contrasted with his own money-making which the Bloomsbury set despised. To Keynes, the "moral problem of our age is concerned with the love of money" (Skidelsky, p. 236). Put simply, it reduced to the banality that money is the root of all evil. The Midas fable runs thematically through Keynes' literary output. In a part of the book entitled, The Cross of Gold, Skidelsky exploits the obvious parallel with the Gold standard episode. Later on Keynes postulated a situation, *in extremis*, where total liquidity preference would drown out enterprise and production - the last person in a laissez-faire economy, as it were, expiring on a heap of gold. Keynes asked whether the fable could be reversed, the gold transformed into nectar.

There is none of this psychological tapestry in Moggridge. However he does detect one recurring theme in Keynes' lifestyle, namely, his chronic tendency to overwork himself - a superhuman disposition he exhibited even in his teens. As he confessed in a letter "I see my doom clearly before me. I am bound to become a work machine ... It is in my blood". (Moggridge, p. 106) It was this passion, Skidelsky argues, that would ultimately suppress his sexual libido. He later admitted to Lytton Strachey that relating theory to data was as exciting as copulation. Much of his ideas came to him from "messing about with figures and seeing what they mean" (Skidelsky, p. 414).

Both Moggridge and Skidelsky parallel each other by generously discussing the recent re-interpretations of Keynes' philosophy from dissertation to the *Treatise on Probability*. Much is made of how the young Keynes at Cambridge fell under the sway of G.E. Moore that, of course, infused his life work. In a perhaps over-romanticised memoir, entitled 'My early life' (1938), Keynes recalled the heady effects of supping at Moore's table.

> "We were at an age when our beliefs influenced our behaviour ... and habits of feeling formed them still persist to a recognisable degree ... The influence was not only overwhelming...it was exciting, exhilarating, the beginning of a renaissance, the opening of a new heaven, on a new Earth, we were the forerunners of a new dispensation, we were not afraid of everything." (Moggridge, p. 117)

Some might recall similar sentiments aired by the young transatlantic adherents when first exposed to the *General Theory* (hereafter G.T.). Certainly the full import of the G.T. would, in Moggridge's words, ultimately lead to "domestic Jerusalems" forming upon Keynes' green and pleasant land. His Cambridge Apostles allegiance, together with Moore's religion of sweetness and light, left Keynes a philosophical framework, a belief in progress and a sense of moral purpose matched with worldly concern. It also left him with an immorality, feelings of 'colossal superiority', a belief that he was intellectually born to pontificate. Keynes' vision of Utopia resembled a society with an enlarged Bloomsbury set at the top and bread and circuses for the masses; an elite cohort of patricians using economic science would save capitalism from its self-destruction.

Moggridge devotes a chapter to Keynes' dissertation in philosophy and how it affected his developing weltanschauung. This dissertation draft, which Neville Keynes found 'very difficult' added intellectual steel to the 'presuppositions of Harvey Road' gathering in Keynes' head. Formulating and writing it sharpened its mental processes, not least, in the protracted time it took to complete. In an undergraduate essay, Keynes took to heart the eternal wisdom of Burke when it came to economic statesmanship: "Our power of prediction is so slight and our knowledge of remote consequences so uncertain that it is seldom wise to sacrifice a present benefit for a doubtful advantage in the future." (Moggridge, p. 125) Much later on, Keynes' caution in nominating a full employment criterion mirrored a Burkean prudence.

After short biographical sketches on Marshall and Sidgwick, Moggridge tells how - in the finest example of academic recruitment ever - he enticed, at times begged, Keynes into the orbit of political economy[4]. His catch was, of course, to prove the very embodiment of a warm heart and cool mind. Keynes, with typical understatement wrote to Lytton Strachey of his new vocation "I think I am rather good at it" (Moggridge, p. 96). Vignettes of Keynes' colleagues and associates are interspersed through either text - both tomes feature a Dramatis Personae - a veritable who's who of the inter-war years. Skidelsky's entries, however, are not only more extensive but written with style and wit.

The young and ambitious economists, who take time out to read these volumes, will readily appreciate Keynes' observation that: "The work of a don is the hardest work in the world ... I am being little more than a machine for selling economics by the hour." (Moggridge, p. 187). For Keynes, means and ends meet wonderfully. Keynes' lecturing fees provided the seed capital for his financial investments. His lecturing expertise was from the outset to forever fall in the field of 'money credit and prices'. Here Moggridge devotes suffocating detail to Keynes' speculative side. Despite a bourgeois distaste for grubby money making and a capitalism that wantonly destroyed the countryside, the young don was not averse to building up his share and bond portfolio. Moggridge and Skidelsky are at pains however to uphold that he never took advantage of inside information in his placements. Indeed he later urged greater disclosure on this noxious practice together with tighter auditing over company accounts. Moggridge records one instance where Keynes positively refrained from profiting from Treasury advice over known currency movements. It is legend that Keynes happily played the stockmarket stakes in bed every morning but it also, as Moggridge records, brought moments of anguish when losses with other people's money were incurred (pp. 348-52). It brought more than an element of duplicity in Keynes' character - while bemoaning throughout the twenties investors lack of confidence in British industry he was not adverse to having his syndicate make a fortune on Wall Street. Nonetheless his high-minded sense of duty foreswore a full-time career in finance.

Earmarked for rapid promotion Keynes was offered the editorship of the *Economic Journal* at the tender age of 28. This outrageous success was not just to do with Keynes' growing network with the high and mighty but also his supreme self-confidence. At a stroke it overcame the bugbear of every academic - where to submit one's articles and weighting up the probability of acceptance. The *Economic Journal* became, as it were, Keynes' in-house journal and perennial companion - the editorial bag went everywhere though he regarded the chore as 'non-work'. Under intense scrutiny Moggridge rates Keynes' editorship as astute and efficient, little escaping his attention.[5] Skidelsky barely rates this activity a mention.

Indian affairs returned to Keynes' busy schedule in the form of a Royal Commission. With impeccable timing, Keynes, brandished his own book - *A Treatise on Indian Currency Reform* - at the proceedings that help expedite the Commission's findings. As Moggridge goes on to exactingly report Keynes delivered an encore performance before the much grander and more influential MacMillan Committee on Industry and Finance. No-one who saw him on his feet could doubt that Keynes had a flair for electric showmanship matched equally by intellectual acuity.

In both wars, Keynes served his country beavering away in the Treasury trenches. It gave him a precious insight into economic officialdom's way of thinking and how easy it was to become enslaved to sound finance. In the first episode, Keynes did not readily take to the Treasury line which, as always, was 'a bulwark against too much enthusiasm' (Moggridge, p. 246). This did not stop Keynes committing himself to herculean labours dealing with inter-allied finance. He lived life to the full in the social dimension, mixing with the high and mighty. Episodes of overwork were punctuated by periods of convalescence; in one instance Clive Bell lectured Keynes for his 'habit' of almost dying (Moggridge, p. 302). It was to be prescient. Keynes literally died for his country from the strain of devising and negotiating with the Americans over both a post-war trading and exchange rate system and then the tricky matter of the Anglo-American loan. Later, in a rare moving account, Moggridge shows how Keynes became worn-out by the pettiness and intransigence of US loan negotiators. During the first world war, Keynes saw, at first hand, the passing of the financial torch to the Americans. His repulsion of war manifested in his conscious objection to conscription - even though he was in a reserved occupation. As the carnage of war continued, a disaffected Keynes wrote "I work for a government I despise for ends I think criminal" (Moggridge, p. 279).

Moggridge lucidly summarises Keynes philippic *Economic Consequences of the Peace* that, of course, launched his public career. The book was written at his country retreat - as Keynes recovered from a bout of nervous exhaustion brought on by the perfidy of Versailles. Examining Mantoux's critique of Keynes figurework behind his 'Carthaginian peace' charge, Moggridge concludes that Keynes had, indeed, underestimated the 'recuperative powers' of capitalism (p. 345). As it turned out Germany's interwar economic decline was nowhere as bad as Britain's. The famous pen portraits of the so-called statesmen at Versailles in the book showed just what a magnificent prose writer Keynes truly was. Indeed much of the pleasure of leafing through either volume is coming across Keynes' acidic wit and table talk, some of it disclosed for the first time. And, of course, Keynes' wordplay, often at first draft, will leave many lamenting the death of the literary tradition in economics. Only Galbraith - after six drafts - comes close to his standard.

Skidelsky resumes his study of Keynes' with the poignant prologue entitled "What is one to do with one's Brains?" In a candid address, Keynes pondered in what capacity he would continue to make his mark on the world. As Skidelsky recounts, Keynes had a remarkable set of gifts - the very attributes Keynes listed as essential for a well-rounded economist in his memoir on Marshall. Keynes' introspection about where his comparative advantage lay was swiftly interrupted by a call for help from the Treasury bewitched by the post-war inflationary boom. This episode will dispel forever the libel that Keynes was tolerant of inflation. Indeed he eloquently warned "... that western governments by directing hatred against entrepreneurs, are carrying a step forward the fatal process which the subtle mind of Lenin had consciously conceived" (Moggridge, p. 333).

Keynes' prescription of high interest rates once implemented quickly quelled the boom. A fundament in his thinking was that a monetary economy could not readily stand fluctuations in its standard of value. Much later, Keynes reiterated his earlier advice that a 'swift and severe dose of dear money' would suppress inflation (Moggridge, p. 360).

With the weight of his philosophical treatise off his mind Keynes took to easier subjects that recommended themselves. Journalistic pursuits beckoned. The twenties, as now, were a momentous decade - and by far the most active part of Keynes' life. It seemed, as Skidelsky shows, as if Keynes just could not say no to the requests that fell upon him. Keynes complains that on any day he would not have 15 minutes peace before the detested telephone rang! A well travelled man for his time, Keynes' trips to Germany allowed an eye witness view of the ravages of hyperinflation and later, the despair of deflation. The subsequent writings showed that he was not unmoved. Nor, unlike G.B. Shaw, was he to be taken in by the Soviet economic experiment.

Moggridge recounts Keynes break away from the clutches of the Bloomsbury set into the caring arms of Lydia Lopokova. Mary Marshall said his marriage to Lydia was the best thing he ever did (Moggridge, p. 400). Walter Layton was surely right when he told Keynes his marriage would stimulate his already brilliant career by meeting all his emotional needs. Keynes must have felt so too because he equally felt Pigou had intellectually withered because of his prolonged bachelorhood. Skidelsky's treatment of what must be the greatest love story in the history of economic thought is entertaining as it is moving (Ch. 6, passim). It followed after the rather bizarre episode with Miss Bentwich. It is gratifying to hear that the great man was mere mortal, falling prey to moments of doubt even at times, writers block. Lydia urged him on. "The truth lies in your eyes" she told him after he vowed never to write another treatise after the tortuous experience with Probability (Skidelsky, Ch. 9). Her role in the transformation of Keynes' career from temperamental polemicist to enduring economist cannot be underestimated. Much later, as Moggridge records, Lydia vigilantly guarded a weakened Keynes from a surfeit of work, visitors and food.

The thread running through the polemical essays Keynes wrote through the 20's was to expose the unreality of assumptions underpinning orthodox economics. In doing so he also mapped out the prevailing climate or milieu of a new age. He blazed against orthodoxy especially the Treasury's sacrifice of jobs and prosperity in the name of sound money - and the Gold Standard. His 'line of attack' focused remorselessly on the theoretical premises underlying the edifice. Skidelsky is especially good at detailing this rebellion shaping in Keynes' mind. In fact, the grand theme of Skidelsky's volume is that Keynes had a vague strategy of reform for capitalism in place long before the G.T. was written. Officialdom palpably had the wrong model of the economy in their heads. What Keynes called 'the principle of diffusion' - the view that the economic organism was fluid and resilient to any disturbance no longer held. Keynes critique of laissez-faire came from his insistence on "vigilant observation" (Skidelsky, pp. 299-304). Economics, he argued, was the science of thinking in terms of models but the trick was to choose ones relevant to the contemporary world.

Keynes' insistence on defining the character of the age, Skidelsky writes, was critical as a first step to theorising and policy making then, as now. Economic doctrine was useless if it ran counter to the prevailing cultural milieu. In his *Economic Consequences of the Peace*, Keynes had uniquely sensed that the pre-conditions for the success of pre-war classical capitalism had passed away. Moggridge is particularly good in recounting how the economic edifice that had spurred on a century of growth and accumulation, had crumbled. In its place came, as Skidelsky records, a negative Zeitgeist, a reluctance to adjust to change and instead a tendency to combination and collectivism (Skidelsky, pp. 405-410). Keynes ultimate achievement was to present an economics for a new age and a new spirit.

In the twenties Britain was locked into significant unemployment by adhering to the Gold Standard. In circumstances not unlike today in many Western economies, Keynes pondered how to rejig real wages downward. The expedients on offer - wage cuts or running plant at a higher level of activity were too hard to engineer. Since lower interest rates were ruled out it brought into play Keynes' 'reserve weapon' of public works. Once Britain came off the bind of the Gold Standard Keynes renounced the expedient and urged lower interest rates as the means to salvation. Keynes held great store by this policy till 1932.

A recurring theme of Skidelsky's *Keynes* is how he invoked paradox in argument to mock the presuppositions of his origins (p. 425). Time and time again, and to much delight, he showed that it was the virtuous (the savers) who are damned and the sinners (the spendthrift), engaged in riotous living, who are blest. Simple monetary accumulation was deadening unless it stirred the spirit of enterprise. "If enterprise is afoot, wealth accumulates whatever may be happening to thrift, and if enterprise is asleep, wealth decays whatever thrift may be doing." (Moggridge, p. 486) Moggridge, armed with the same quote, fairly interprets it as part of Keynes' lifelong focus upon capital accumulation as the motor of capitalism.

In his polemical essays Keynes enunciated a middle way - between state socialism and laissez faire - for capitalism to survive. Economic prosperity was essential if the thin veneer of civilisation was to remain intact. Politically Keynes was a neo-liberal thinker; a liberal-socialist vision straddled his public writings. His picture of Utopia however was a 'just and reasonable order of society as it appeared to cultivated and superior English minds' (Moggridge, p. 452). Clear thinking and cool lucidity would prevail over extremism in all its forms.

Skidelsky, as argued, believes that the mid-twenties was where the seeds of Keynesian Revolution were sowed though the technical apparatus for 'his wisdom for a new age' lay far off. The first foundation stone to be laid was money wage rigidity identified by Keynes in 1922. This wage rigidity came to the fore with Britain's return to the Gold Standard. No amount of deflation could force them down. Through newspapers and radio, Keynes-speak was being increasingly broadcast with phrases like the economy 'stuck in a rut', 'jammed' and 'the paradox of unemployment amidst dearth'; what was needed was 'an impulse', 'a jolt' by public works because "prosperity was cumulative". As he inimitably put it, schemes of public works would 'submerge' the rocks 'of recession' in 'a rising tide of prosperity'. Moggridge traces this early burst of proto-Keynesianism from 1924 with Keynes' formula of monetary reform and state public works. Keynes railed against Britain's huge foreign investments and the adjustment they spelt, via the Gold Standard, for local industry and real wages.

Moggridge who wrote his doctorate on Britain's return to the Gold Standard is first rate in recounting this episode of the General Strike of 1926 and the culminating political crisis of 1931. Skidelsky's account details Keynes' advice - in vain - to let the exchange rate adjust to the level of domestic prices rather than the other way round. Moggridge points out that for all Keynes' opposition to restoring the Gold Standard he had not really fleshed out an alternative policy to it, other than an all-round reduction in wages.

Moggridge once or twice breaks off the relentlessly linear approach of Keynes' life by probing into his mental processes. This is something too that fascinated Keynes' colleagues like Robbins and Robertson both of whom at close observation, likened his mind to a searchlight or lighthouse probing the darkness (Moggridge, pp. 550-555). Keynes as a public advocate for a just cause was just as awe-inspiring; Moggridge reports several instances where witnesses were bedazzled by the command of his brief. Another wit thought Keynes never dimmed his headlights. It is common knowledge that Keynes had an intuitive streak a mile wide - his intuitions were years ahead of any formal analysis. Just as Adam Smith derived the laws of economics from the Newtonian methodology so too Keynes drew inspiration from the great physicist with his 'muscles of intuition' (Skidelsky, p. 411). Newton was his role model - long ponderous contemplation then the divine flash of insight. His method of theorising would be the bane of General Equilibrium theorists; he held their analysis to be 'little better than nonsense' (Skidelsky, p. 615). Rather he concentrated attention on a single factor or small group of focus and ignored the repercussions of changes in them on other elements of the initial position.

Indeed Keynes roving mind had little time for formal theorising for its own sake. Ironically, like his *bête-noire,* Karl Marx, Keynes felt theory is nothing unless it is attuned to the most pressing practical needs of people. Interestingly both expressly wanted to make the world better with a "gloves off" approach to philosophy. As Kahn, Keynes theoretical confidant put it, "It was a betrayal to use economics as a purely logical exercise to show off how clever one was. Economics had a sense only if it aimed at a better world".[6] Both works exhibit Keynes coruscating wit in dismissing say, the pure theory of a Hicks or Hayek because it offered no practical means to further the common good. His mind, forever racing, he would draft contents pages, to proposed books that were "sketchmarks to his mind'. Many did not see the light of day. Even when Keynes fell seriously ill the intellect still shone brightly - even towards his very last day.

The Treatise's genesis came essentially from Keynes being peeved by his peers defining him as a polemicist - a household name, in fact - but alas, not a serious scholar. For all his brilliance and public reputation, his theoretical contribution to economics by the mid-twenties was negligible. Keynes resolved to change this by dropping his ephemeral pursuits for he found that: "Journalism eats one up and leaves no energy for other matters". (Moggridge, p. 435)

Being Keynes there were distractions too in the world of arts and finance. Some readers might be irritated at Moggridge's generous treatment of Keynes' financial affairs and his sponsorship of arts, especially, since the author promised to focus solely upon his professional activities. This is unavoidable since both books adopt a linear approach to recounting Keynes' rich multi-layered life. But Moggridge's book is plagued by a poor organisational structure by its jamming together disparate topics under the one chapter without subheadings. The narrative subsequently jumps like a scratched record. Some Chapter titles are plainly misleading when one examines their content. This technical fault comes as a great surprise from a skilled and painstaking scholar whose strength lies in editing economists works. Admittedly Keynes' mind, never mind his activities, were the very opposite of tidiness - multi-faceted in every way. Skidelsky's organisational structure, in contrast, is sharper with chapters broken down into water-tight compartments that can still be read in isolation if need be.

Despite this discipline, Skidelsky also laces his narrative with the revealing anecdote here and there. For instance, a cheeky boy, the son of a farm worker at Tilton doing somersaults as Keynes passed by trumpeted "You can't make somersaults can you?" Keynes, unruffled, took some coins out of his pocket and responded. "No, but you can't make money, can you?"

We know that Keynes did, however, perform mental somersaults of a sort and almost on a daily basis. Yesterday's point of view would be ferociously overturned by today's argument. Little wonder Elizabeth Johnson called Keynes "the Indian Rubber man". He was certainly, as either biography clearly demonstrates, an economic chameleon, as the mood and times took him; the nascent environmentalist, the nation builder, the mercantilist, the financial diplomat even, at times the 'special case' neo-classicist. Keynes detested principle or doctrine; the means always justified the ends - and the end was a better society. In different circumstances he would devise new policies - charges of inconsistency failed to see a flexible, restless mind at work.

He was the perpetual motion man - though Skidelsky confesses he does not know why Keynes drove himself so furiously. The touching choice of plates in Moggridge's tome shows how Keynes visibly aged in the last 10 years or so. The frenetic pace of life had, of course, tragic consequences. It also held other drawbacks. Schumpeter wrote that Keynes never spent the extra fortnight to perfect his occasional pieces. This reminds one of Joan Robinson's famous remark of Gerald Shove's that Maynard never spent the twenty minutes needed to digest value theory. A bitter Schumpeter noted too that the heroic Keynes left no perfect work, that he was always "attempting' what he could not quite succeed in doing (Skidelsky, p. 411). This is a prescient comment when we consider how Hicks stylised restatement of Keynes' G.T. into "a special case" of the neoclassical paradigm was aided somewhat by the book's purported lack of internal cohesion. Saddled with a restless temperament Keynes was unhappy with sustained theorising. On that note, Hayek, Harry Johnson, Kaldor and Frank Hahn concur that Keynes first strength lay not in theorising but rather advising.

Neither Skidelsky nor Moggridge visualise Keynes in a 'single book' light. In an extensive 40 page analysis, Skidelsky joins with some revisionists who hold *The Treatise* to be a better, more rounded, scholarly work than the G.T (Skidelsky, Ch. 10). It contained detailed descriptions of monetary institutions and examined episodes of monetary turbulence by articulating how the credit creation process could lead to macroeconomic instability. Another of the Treatise's strengths was the integration of foreign trade and capital flows. It allowed Keynes to advocate for a universal standard of value, neé fixed exchange rates, that would facilitate international commerce. Some of this would come to fruition at Bretton Woods.

Built around the fundamental equations, the book gave hints that the capitalist system had no automatic pilot, that an investment and saving equilibrium could easily be upset by psychological forces. The critics response to it, particularly Hawtrey's valuable advice, pushed Keynes to beyond seeing the recurring crisis as purely a monetary phenomenon. In contrast, Moggridge devotes 6 pages of competent exposition to the *Treatise* without generating any new penetrating insights. Overall he find it a discontinuous link in the progression of Keynes' thought whereas Skidelsky's interpretation sees it redolent with 'creative tension' (Skidelsky, p. 327). It was a 'Janus-faced' book, Moggridge concluded, in that it looked back to his Cambridge monetary theory background yet also looked forward to addressing fluctuations in economic activity (Moggridge, p. 484).

Both accounts trace Keynes' appearances before the MacMillan Committee with his concurrent drafting of the *Treatise* - though neither treatment surpasses Peter Clarke's effort.[7] In his testimony before the MacMillan Committee Keynes held aloft his manuscript as the theoretical proof for the seven or so policy expedients he put forward. Coincidentally, in a piece of antipodean drama E.G. Theodore, one of Australia's band of proto-Keynesians, held aloft the same *Treatise* in the House of Representatives and rather prematurely prophesied "This will be the guide to the intelligent of all nations on the subject of economics for the next 50 years"[8] Keynes, true to form, had already changed his mind about the book's worth - even before it circulated. The implicit and ultimate guarantee of full employment had ruined its force. Salvage operations ensued.

Both biographers adroitly cover Keynes' exhausting work spent on the Committee of Economists advising the MacDonald government on the appropriate response to the raging economic blizzard. Exhausting in the sense that Keynes had to solicit, negotiate and draft economic advice with orthodox diehards like Pigou, Robbins and Henderson. At those sessions, Keynes showed an acute sense of the importance of restoring business confidence.

The *Treatise*, conceived in solitude, was completed at a time when Keynes' attention was dissipated by endless engagements. All his feverish effort and winnowing out of policy expedients went for nothing. It was, therefore, a politically isolated and despondent Keynes who withdrew from public affairs as he thought anew, 'working quietly in my chair'. He was aghast at the low esteem economic theory was held in the 1930s. He swore 'to think it all over again' but this time divulge his thinking with his Cambridge colleagues. Moreover he elected to remove himself from the hurley-burley of public life. Excluding Kahn, Skidelsky believes that the influence of the Cambridge circus has been overstated. Hawtrey, Harrod and Robertson, kindred spirits in theory were just as useful up to a point in showing the way. His correspondence with all three, circa 1936, inevitably led to irritation at their continuing incomprehension of effective demand. "Are all economists mad except Alexander (Kahn) and me?", he asked Lydia in exasperation (Moggridge, p. 565).

Moggridge faithfully treads down the well-worn path of the trail that led to the G.T. In a well-worn detective case, Moggridge mulls over the forensic evidence and clues as to when Keynes, in a characteristic flash of insight, formulated the principle of effective demand. Was it a crucial prompt from Austin Robinson or Kahn's manifesto of April 1932 that shifted focus from price to output that did the trick. Only in his 1933 Michaelmas lectures entitled, "The Monetary Theory of Production" did Keynes see the equilibrating role of fluctuation in output that is the true hallmark of the theory of effective demand (Moggridge, pp. 561-3). Skidelsky tells us that the first to actually use that term was the political maverick, Oswald Mosley; Keynes had probably long forgotten or perhaps more preferred the esteemed antecedence of Malthus whom he, coincidentally, had been writing an essay upon. The pamphlet "The Means to Prosperity", issued in 1933, which, incorporated Kahn's multiplier analysis, marked the metamorphosis. Keynes resumed his role of policy salesmanship 'with increasing confidence in his analysis'. After this forensic dating exercise Moggridge abruptly ends the study with the throwaway line, 'the rest is history' (p. 570).

Despite his impeccable credentials Moggridge hugely disappoints his readership by refusing to discuss fully the G.T especially when he tantalises with an entreé outlining its revolutionary message. 'What Keynes meant' is now an academic parlour game but many would have enjoyed what this lifelong scholar of Keynes would have made of this *tour de force*. He, if anyone, having made a painstaking study on his subject's thought processes and the underlying context in which he wrote, is in a superb position to offer an authoritative interpretation. This is especially apposite for one who solely edited the key volumes of the *Collected Works* surrounding the preparation and aftermath of the G.T. His omission is all the more mystifying since the G.T. was, by all accounts, the very apotheosis of Keynes' intellectual life. In that sense Moggridge fails in his mission to capture Keynes "in his natural mould" (p. xxvi). As Moggridge recounts, Keynes felt it important to remove himself from his extensive extra-curricula activities to channel his energies into its composition. It was a period of intense mental effort not endured since his dissertation on probability days. One of Keynes last temporal concerns was to ensure plentiful supplies of the G.T. and, moreover, available at democratic prices.

Skidelsky's treatment of this climax in Keynes' life in contrast could not be more different, or more richer. Against Moggridge's breathtaking omission Skidelsky devotes not only the largest chapter of his book (Shooting at the Moon) but the most lucidly written account of the G.T. for some time. All that has gone before was scaffolding to this towering chapter. It is all the more remarkable given Skidelsky's admission about not being totally comfortable with the subtlety of economic analysis. The achievement is all the greater in the sequel 'Whose General Theory?' where Skidelsky skilfully navigates through the tidal wave of exegetical debate over the book's content. 'Shooting at the Moon' makes for great therapy for those wayward in their Keynesian faith, for others it serves as a magnificent introduction to that great perennial - what Keynes was really all about.

Essentially Keynes was making the point that the theory of production and the theory of money could not be separated in a monetary economy. The crucial distinction, first enunciated in his 1932 lectures, between a monetary economy and a real exchange economy was the watershed. In the former, money affected 'motives, decisions, expectations and predictions' and ultimately economic activity whereas in the latter model, money was impotent. In the G.T. Keynes distinguished

> "between the theory of stationary equilibrium and the theory of shifting equilibrium - meaning by the latter the theory of a system in which changing views about the future are capable of influencing the present situation. For the importance of money essentially flows from it being a link between the present and the future." (Skidelsky, p. 540)

The decision not to have dinner today was not necessarily a promise to have dinner next week, for the saver gives no indication of his future consumption plans. Nor would the rate of interest adjust to ensure investment take up the savings or postponed consumption.

While Lydia strutted the stage in a newly-found acting career, Keynes likened the economy to a battle royal between two actors, the entrepreneur and the saver (Skidelsky, p.343). The entrepreneur's inducement to invest was affected by business confidence. The saver's propensity to hoard was driven by fear and anxiety. More often than not, the latter won over the former leading Keynes to conclude that secular stagnation threatened capitalism. Only the "socialisation of investment" would put off the day of judgement. He drew succour from the "brave army of heretics" (Skidelsky, p. 569) and those "traditionally uncultured at Cambridge economics" that lent some pedigree to his cause. No longer then did Keynes profess that "intellectual history" was only for the "incipiently senile" (p. 465).

Keynes, it seems, was dogged by intransigent critics close and afar, many of whom it seems disagreed purely for the sake of it. An erstwhile colleague, Hubert Henderson, was particularly spiteful. For his part, Pigou found the G.T. so obscurely presented he was not certain what his Cambridge colleague was saying - an identical view to how Keynes felt about Pigou's representation of classical theory. Moggridge skims over the post G.T. exegesis including Hicks seminal interpretation. Keynes' 1937 QJE article, written in response to Viner's critique, stressed the importance of money and the role of uncertainty in economic decision-making. The good life could be postponed indefinitely resulting in systemic underperformance. Uncertainty, in Keynes' opinion, was the fundamental economic problem not, as Robbins had put it, scarcity.

Skidelsky's coverage of the ensuing debate, "Keynes versus the Classics" and more specifically, Keynes' theory of liquidity preference is superbly covered. Skidelsky shows how Keynes reserved his harshest criticism for those monetary disequilibrium theorists closest to him, namely Hawtrey and Robertson, in a bid to distance his theory from the seductive entanglements of the classical paradigm. He wanted to be seen as having cracked classical economic theory wide open. The classicals' interest-rate adjustment mechanism that had ensured a saving-investment parity had broken down. What adjusted to mend the parity was output. Classicists still clung to long run vision of the self-adjusting market because, as Skidelsky puts it, they mistrusted Keynes' notion of the "self-adjusting politician" (p.593). They resented Keynes' disputatious method, his hectoring tone, his sweeping dismissal of them as "classical" and, not least, his attack upon the central pillars of orthodox economics. His basic charge against Pigou and Robertson - and Viner in the USA - was that they advocated public policy contrary to their theory.

Against a barrage of criticism Keynes did relent by taking on board Robertson's point about the need for some prior financing of investment expenditure. The Frenchman Labordère - a poet of economics - cautioned Keynes on the historical role rentiers had played in capital accumulation. Pigou and Champernowne queried how pliable trade unionists would be to incursions upon their real wage with every expansion in aggregate demand. What, if at full employment, the workers were to ask for the moon? Keynes could only shrug his shoulders at this political problem. Skidelsky's account of how Keynes lost control over disposal of his own property is superbly told. Despite his caveat about any premature formalising of his theory, Keynes gave his approval to Hicks' IS-LM apparatus, as a rough and ready representation of the G.T. Forever a pragmatic man, Keynes did not oppose his model being formalised by those with their hearts in the right place. Skidelsky believes Keynes wanted a quick reconciliation between the two camps to clear the ground for policy (p. 611 passim). No matter that it let the classics off the hook and ultimately derailed the Keynesian bandwagon. Keynes' G.T. became, *ad nauseam*, the special case of a more encompassing classical theory which, as always, was an analysis of long-run natural tendencies.

In reviewing Hicks' "little apparatus" Keynes stressed the condition that expectations could never be rendered formally exact (Skidelsky, pp. 614-616). This was lost in the tumult. What emerged was a travesty of Keynes' original conception. Skidelsky speculates that the Cambridge Circus only belatedly challenged Hicks' interpretation when, so to speak, the dust had settled. Skidelsky cannot readily fathom why Keynes gave Hicks' interpretation the nod when he was so stridently opposed to others. Wittingly or unwittingly, Keynes became the father of what was to become bastard Keynesianism.

Keynes did rally in defence of the fundamental interpretation of the G.T. in his celebrated QJE article of 1937. A new book would rekindle the spirit and message of the G.T., but alas, only got as far as a contents page. The QJE article, besides re-emphasising the black hole of uncertainty that challenged economic decision-making, delivered a riposte to mathematical interlopers and nascent econometricians. (Keynes himself had dropped his mathematical formulation of the theory of effective demand he had used in his 1932 lectures.) This linked up with a rather ferocious review of Tinbergen's early attempts at econometrics. In moving from statistical description to inductive generalisation, Keynes warned that: "Progress in economics consists almost entirely in a progressive improvement in the choice of models ... (for which) one does not fill in real values for the variable functions ... For as soon as this is done, the model loses its generality and its value as a mode of thought". (Moggridge, p. 623)

After his heart attack in 1937 Lydia Lopokova told Kahn that her husband would never work again as of old - Keynes had other ideas! It is at this point that Skidelsky abruptly breaks off his narrative leaving Moggridge to cover the remaining years of Keynes' life.

Keynes is surely one of the few economists to actually witness his intellectual wisdom enshrined into policy when the first budget, premised on national income accounting was brought down in 1941. The budget now concerned itself with achieving balance in the economy before reaching budgetary balance, per se. In his second round of wartime Treasury service Keynes patrolled the corridors, a plenipotentiary beholden to no-one. While Keynes played only a marginal part in the actual framing of the White Paper and Beveridge's Social Insurance scheme he was enthusiastic over both initiatives (Moggridge, Ch. 27). Treasury continued a rearguard action against implementing Keynesian constructs for the post-war age. The Secretary of the Treasury, Sir Wilfred Eady found some of Keynes' policy missives 'to be a voyage in the stratosphere' (Moggridge, p. 710).

Moggridge devotes 200 odd pages of withering detail to what Keynes would lovingly call 'my subject', namely the drawing-up of a post-war trading and monetary system. Here Keynes became once again a man of affairs while theorising and writing took a back seat. Despite the trans-atlantic drama the detail on these negotiations is overwhelming and of interest only to the specialist. In swamping the reader with the minutiae of war finance, Lend Lease, and the Anglo-American loan of December 1945, Moggridge becomes Mogadon.

In the incessant day-to-day negotiations with the Americans to chisel out a workable post-war trading system, Keynes spoke for Britain. In a historical overview, he reminded his transatlantic audience that there had been relatively little success at maintaining equilibrium in the balance of payments between countries since barter gave way to money. Like the entrenched opposition to the G.T., Keynes again found much resistance to his intellectual constructs for a new trading and monetary order. This time, however, the opposition was more chauvinistic, based as it was upon American financial power. His imaginative European clearing union, which had its origins in earlier constructs, proved too clever for some. All this, despite it offering a non-deflationary means of Balance of Payments adjustment that disarmed the weapons of international economic policy. The Bretton Woods compromise of fixed but adjustable exchange rates and regulated capital flows -

was still a tribute to Keynes negotiating skills. This marked another life-long issue of Keynes now chiselled in stone; in the Tract he stressed exchange rate stability as the means to foster international commerce.

Before the House of Lords, Keynes presaged a new age where Britain would never again have to accept deflation due to the dictates of international finance. Keynes, the multilateralist free trader, had come full circle since his protectionist days of the thirties. In a solitary fight, Keynes short-circuited an attempt to forcefully de-industrialise Germany with the Morganthau plan. Britain too had Lord Keynes to thank for steering them away from autarky, or what he called 'starvation corner', by winning bridging finance from the tight-fisted US officials. Funds were needed to tide Britain over a difficult post-war adjustment and settle debts in the Sterling area. The Americans would extend the loan only on the humiliating proviso that Britain accepted the whole charter of Bretton Woods without recourse to imperial preferences or any other trade and currency controls. All the loan proceeds, moreover, had to be spent exclusively on US goods. Long-contemptuous of American financial power, Keynes knew well that Bretton Woods spelled the economic dismemberment of his beloved British Empire.

He entertained more than intuition in his view that Britain would face a difficult economic time once peace broke out. His close-hand experience of the antiquated inefficiency of Britain's export industries in the thirties made him pessimistic about trading out of balance of payment difficulties. In a memorandum to the War Cabinet on IMF and other matters, he lightened his sombre tone by remarking:

> "If by some sad geographical slip the American Air Force (it is too late now to hope for much from the enemy) were to destroy every factory on the North-East coast and in Lancashire (at an hour when the directors were sitting there and no-one else), we should have nothing to fear. How else we are to regain the exuberant inexperience which is necessary, it seems, for success, I cannot surmise." (Moggridge, p. 785)

A little like his good friend Dr Melchior he was to die 'worn out' trying to put in place against intransigent American negotiators "all that he fought for" (Moggridge, p. 737). Moggridge fails to reprieve himself for his non-discussion of the G.T. with Keynes' death. Again no attempt is made at lifetime evaluation.

Skidelsky warns us against the mechanical application of his ideas. Keynes, ever fearful of 'principle', always insisted one had to get the character of the times right before getting down to policy - a point overlooked by the hydraulic Keynesians of the seventies. The stagflation of the seventies, Skidelsky argues, might have been avoided if only Chapters 19 and 21 of the G.T. had been more scrutinised. Here the hydraulic message "quantities adjust not prices" is qualified by Keynes in that the degree of inflation as the economy neared full employment would depend jointly on the behaviour of trade unions and the state of expectations. A balance between careful judgement, common sense and vigilant observation had to be observed. That same circumspection was necessary confronting a recession. Recklessly expansive fiscal action could easily antagonise business confidence pushing up liquidity preference and eventually interest rates. In this light we can interpret his cautionary obita dicta on fiscal action. By the same token, Keynes was a steadfast critic of the hold of orthodoxy and 'economy'. He would strongly object to people playing politics with his economics. The folly of British economic policy was that they were, in Keynes' words, "... the slaves of 'sound' general principles regardless of particular circumstances...Nearly all our difficulties have been traceable to an unfaltering service to the principle of 'sound finance' which all our neighbours neglected." (Moggridge, p. 499)

Ranging over 940 pages and nearly 2,400 source references Moggridge's pen has rendered up a painstaking account on Keynes' life. It is a definitive study yet still a strangely unsatisfactory study. Moggridge's stated refusal in the preface, to fully discuss the G.T., on the grounds that it would arouse debate amongst economists will not do. A sanitised interpretation of Keynes denies the very essence of the man. Did not he want to raise some dust? Unlike Skidelsky, Moggridge does not develop or pursue the links between current policy debates and similar ones Keynes engaged in. He also refrains from fleshing his version of Keynes' vision. More fundamentally, Moggridge's work lacks a framework, a grand theme that carries the reader through this extraordinary figure's life. In that sense, the book lacks a soul; the essence and enigma that is Keynes is not there. It is sad to pass judgement this way on what is a prodigious piece of scholarly research. Even sadder a judgement in that Moggridge is a first rate monetary economist, as his subject eminently was.

This will, however, become an economist desk copy of Keynes - a useful starting point even suggestion guide, for those preparing advanced studies in Keynesiana - not least because of the facts it commands. But, as argued, it fails to marshall such facts into a flowing and complete narrative that its competitor plainly is. This judgement is a little unfair because Skidelsky is a brilliant biographer. Like his subject, Skidelsky is a master of both the telling phrase and the irony of paradox. Every aficionado of Keynes will always have their copy of Skidelsky within reach. He has made amends for his earlier *Hopes Betrayed* a beautifully-written but technically tainted work. The book's richness is such that diminishing returns barely begin after a second read. A stylist in his own right, he is, to boot, a political historian whose first book, *Politicians and the Slump* (1967), demonstrated his expertise in the political economy of twentieth century Britain.

Keynes' shadow over the profession these days is more that of a bogeyman than saint or saviour. Skidelsky's book will, if taken to heart, melt many a reader's resistance and suspicion of Keynes as an over-venerated economist. One cannot come away from reading these two books without now holding Keynes in the highest regard. They will, like many of Keynes contemporary critics, Robbins, Pigou amongst others find their intellectual resistance melting away against the brilliant light of their tormentor. Many more economists will equally be happy to have Keynes as their guardian angel. Those already generously disposed towards Keynes will draw vicarious pleasure from his successes and triumphs. Those who read the more intimate portrait by Skidelsky might even relate to the more humdrum and idiosyncratic aspects of Keynes' life and identify, in a way, with the master - but distinctly without his brains!

As always much of what he wrote makes for good currency today. Consider, as a last and rather apposite example his Marshallian-hued advice on the psychology of boom and slump: "A boom is a situation in which over-optimism triumphs over a rate of interest which, in a cooler light, would seem to be excessive". When this over-exuberance is punctured on an 'over-optimistic and over-bought market ... it should fall with sudden and even catastrophic force'. The collapse in investment spending will be so dramatic that 'no practicable reduction in the rate of interest' will be enough to offset it. Only after some period will there be a 'return to confidence'. Its rise facilitated by 'shortages of capital through use, decay and obsolescence." (Skidelsky, p. 568)

In a cynical age where biographies of the great tend more often than not to demythologise and depreciate, these two volumes rehabilitate the reputation of a much maligned economist. Crafting theory reflective of institutional reality and devising policy appropriate to the times makes the delphic legacy of Keynes endure. In the free market of ideas where reputations, like exchange rates, fluctuate daily, Keynes' word is like gold. The passing storms of fashion and fetish leave his mantle gleaming in the sunlight.

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Notes

1 Fundamentalist Keynesians will be delighted to see the release of Michael Stewart's sequel to his classic primer *Keynes and After* (1967), suitably entitled, *Keynes in the 1990s : A return to economic sanity* (1993 Penguin).

2 *Economic Affairs* (Institute of Economic Affairs, London) February 1993, p. 41.

3 A strange comment indeed, considering the recent spate of economist biographies including works on Schumpeter, Hicks, Austin Robinson, Kaldor, Galbraith, Kalecki to name a few.

4 On that note Groenewegen believes that both biographers have not plumbed the depths of Marshall's long-lasting influence on Keynes which goes beyond the frequently elaborated areas of commonality. P.D. Groenewegen

5 For a negative view of seminal works that Keynes, with Frank Ramsay's assistance, rejected, see Joshua Gans and George Shepherd, "How are the mighty fallen: Rejected Classic Articles by leading economists", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Winter 1994, pp. 174-176. They report, with Paul Samuelson's help, that Roy Harrod was embittered towards the very end that Keynes had turned down his breakthroughs in the economics of imperfect competition - long before Joan Robinson. Harrod was the true force behind Hicks IS-LM analytical device.

6 L.L. Pasinetti, "Richard Kahn 10 August 1905 - 6 June 1989", *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Feb 1994, p. 4.

7 P. Clarke, *The Keynesian Revolution in the Making* (Oxford University Press, 1988).

8 R. Fitzgerald, "Profile of a political visionary", *The Australian*, August 18, 1993, p. 28.

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