

knowledge. Weintraub deserves credit for intellectual intrepidity (he himself gives credit to Philip Mirowski's *More Heat Than Light*) in importing well-accepted propositions from the history and sociology of science and arguing for their applicability and importance in the (less accepting) history of economic thought community.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the book's success, I am left with a lingering uneasiness. This may stem from the loss of the (artificial) sense of progress associated with the Whig and Lakatosian interpretations. What Weintraub's interpretation leaves us with instead—"the augmentation of the stock of contingent truths, and useful and interesting propositions" (p. 112)—seems thin compared to the magisterial marches of progress and rationality he convinces us to question. But the uneasiness stems also from a further implication of Weintraub's argument—that we must repudiate *all* notions of the progress of knowledge. Of that I remain unconvinced.

Weintraub's demonstration that there is no single "true" interpretation of this episode in the history of economic thought also raises a question: Why should we care more about his interpretation than any other? It is precisely because he does *not* answer this question that his case for alternative socially constructed interpretations is convincing. But the question requires an eventual answer. Extending the logic of Weintraub's argument, that answer will only emerge from negotiations of meaning within the community of historians of economic thought as they develop arguments to narrow the possibilities for disagreement. Weintraub's challenging and persuasive book is an effective beginning to that negotiation. Paradoxically, the history of thought is likely to "progress" as a discipline by facing this cogent postmodern challenge and arguing about the sources of the accompanying intellectual uneasiness.

AVI J. COHEN, *York University*

A History of Canadian Economic Thought. By Robin Neill. London: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1991. Pp. 297. \$49.95.

Historians of economic thought have tended to focus overmuch on the intellectual continuity within economic discourse. However, to go entirely in the other direction and sketch only the cultural, political, and institutional context of economic thought inevitably produces a disjointed discussion: the debate at any point seems to owe no debt to previous discourse.

Neill's book suffers this fate, for he is not concerned with the conventional treatment of economic thought as a description of the evolution of the core of economic theory. Rather, his focus is on "action-oriented" policy analysis. This focus has the advantage of allowing Neill to identify much closer links between economic history and economic thinking than is usually possible. Nevertheless, the separation of policy analysis from theory must inevitably mean that the treatment is partial in both senses of the word: the biases of the pamphleteers are readily laid bare, but one often wishes that greater attention were paid to the theoretical validity of their pronouncements.

Economic historians may be frustrated at times by Neill's thumbnail sketches of economic development that provide a backdrop to the discussion of economic commentary. For example, the assertion that the Canadian government's free-homestead policy after 1870 was disadvantageous and conceived only to compete with American homestead policy ignores the extensive literature on the timing of settlement in general and the effects of land policy on land prices and migration rates in particular.

Still, the focus of this book is on economic thought, and it provides the best available guide to the debates that surrounded the major transformations in Canadian economic history (then, as now, government decision making often ignored independent analyses). Neill surveys the entire European period in Canada. Issues discussed include the felt need for increased immigration in the days of fur and fish, land policy, the desire for balanced growth (especially in Atlantic Canada), tariffs, railways, and banking and

currency policy. The author has striven to cite all previous work on the subject and is, if anything, too ready to refer the reader to more extensive discussions of particular issues available elsewhere.

Neill does not ignore Canadian contributions to the wider world of theory, as long as these are felt to reflect some aspect of the Canadian experience. A chapter devoted to John Rae, describing the sociocultural influences on his too-often unheralded contributions to capital theory, the infant industry argument, and the concept of conspicuous consumption. A chapter on staple theory notes that this emerged at a time when economic history played a more central role in the economics profession; Neill attempts to describe how the staples approach reflected developments across the economics discipline in Canada.

Neill's discussion of French Canadian thought is of special interest. Although the Euro-American emphasis on the individual was shunned in favor of the needs of the collectivity, French Canadian thought still reflected North American cultural influences to a large degree. Neill also describes how leading thinkers, beginning in the late nineteenth century, pushed for educational reforms to foster the emergence of a local business elite. Those who may have the most to gain from reading these chapters will be unnecessarily handicapped by the nontranslation of French quotations.

Neill argues that before 1900 Canadian economic thought largely reflected local considerations rather than the tenets of Euro-American theory. It was widely felt that a small, open resource-exporting country required a different world view. Moreover, there were always at least two distinct bodies of Canadian economic thought, French and English, and often major regional differences within the English camp. In the first half of the twentieth century, both streams of thought came increasingly to reflect Euro-American theory, particularly as a body of professional economists emerged. After 1950, Canadian economic thought came to be almost entirely integrated into this international body of theory (Neill does not mention that a similar process can be observed throughout the developed world). The diminished role of staple theory in modern Canadian thought is symptomatic of this development.

For economic historians of Canada, this book provides a very useful introduction to the debates associated with the development of the Canadian economy, and its references and bibliography are a comprehensive guide to the literature on Canadian economic thought.

RICK SZOSTAK, *University of Alberta*

Strategic Factors in Nineteenth Century American Economic History: A Volume to Honor Robert W. Fogel. Edited by Claudia Goldin and Hugh Rockoff. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992. Pp. ix, 491. \$60.00.

The young Robert Fogel set out to revolutionize the world; the mature Fogel has revolutionized economic history. This collection of essays in his honor is more than a tribute to a mentor (the authors are former students): it is a reflection of his own contribution.

The essays were presented to Fogel at a National Bureau of Economic Research-Development of the American Economy conference in March 1991. Indeed, it was Fogel who pioneered the latter program. This is an important volume that should be found in every university library; many of these essays will be widely cited. The essays, which are divided into four parts, address the major themes that have occupied Fogel. Clearly he has already found ways to incorporate the lessons his students teach into his own work—this has been the nature of his scholarly enterprise as long as I have been privileged to observe it.

The volume, whose title is taken from his graduate course, begins with two personal "appreciations" of Fogel by Stan Engerman and Don McCloskey. Both discuss his