

"Real and Nominal Magnitudes in Economics." Both essays are critical of the rational expectations model; both, especially the former, acknowledge the problems with general-equilibrium analysis. However, both authors accept the analytics of general equilibrium as a tool for establishing an element crucial to a new Keynesian paradigm, namely, the nature and process of equilibrium adjustments in all markets over time.

The only essay in the Revolutionary tradition is Paul Davidson's "Post-Keynesian Economics: Solving the Crisis in Economic Theory." This is unfortunate. Since the Revolutionaries correctly perceive themselves as direct descendants of Keynes, and, since this volume of necessity scavenges the Keynesian carcass, another article in the Revolutionary tradition, or at least one by Paul Samuelson defending mainstream Keynesianism out of the "neoclassical synthesis," would have been both instructive and fair. Nevertheless, although sometimes defensive and polemical in tone, Davidson makes a spirited and clear statement of the modern Keynesian case. Davidson criticizes the rational expectations theory, monetarism, and what he considers to be abuses and deficiencies in contemporary classical microeconomic theory and general-equilibrium theory. One detects in Davidson an impatience with the irrelevancy of much of the debate in the current crisis in economic thought. In large part, a Keynes that never existed is being criticized and all because, according to Davidson, the Samuelson-Hicks "neoclassical synthesis" aborted the real Keynesian revolution "before it could establish roots in the economics profession."

The remaining essays in this volume criticize in varying degree all of the dissenting traditions defined by Dean. "Microeconomics and X-Efficiency" by Harvey Leibenstein challenges the optimizing assumption of conventional microeconomics. Since market structures may reveal different degrees of motivation and maximization by market participants, microeconomic theory must be reformulated to reflect these less than optimal conditions before it is synthesized with contemporary macroeconomics. Clearly, the "irrationality" of Leibenstein's X-

efficiency theory conflicts dramatically with the logic of the "rational expectations" model. Israel M. Kirzner's essay, "The 'Austrian' Perspective on the Crisis," argues for an Austrian rather than English-American microfoundation to a reformulated macroeconomics. Kirzner criticizes the overly sophisticated mathematical and econometric techniques of the English neo-classical tradition primarily because they promote mechanistic and static notions of market structure and equilibrium without providing any understanding of market and competition as dynamic processes.

Daniel Bell's "Models and Reality in Economic Discourse" is a well-written and interesting presentation of an old genre of criticisms concerning the methodology and epistemology of modern economic theory. By examining the evolution of important axioms in neoclassical theory through Marshall and Keynes, Bell questions the realism of all economic models and their ability to serve as guides for empirical research. Finally, Edward J. Nell's "Value and Capital in Marxian Economics" looks at Marxist economic theory post-Sraffa and concludes that the "modern Marx" still offers insights into the resolution of the crisis in economic theory.

Reviewed by FRANK PETRELLA

## *Tedium*

**Natural Law and Natural Rights**, by John Finnis, *Oxford, Eng.: Clarendon Press, 1980. 425 pp. \$39.50.*

AT ONE POINT the author refers, half in joke, to the "tedium" of his book. The word is certainly not too strong and in fact it is the dominant impression obtained from the 425 closely printed pages. One may argue that a scholarly book does not have to be entertaining. Perhaps; it has some obligation, however, not to make its topic repugnant, to pay some attention to style and to organization.

Concerning the latter point, the book is, if anything, over-organized. It is one of those works that, in me at least, produce at once a hostile reaction. Every part is divided into chapters, they in turn into sections with Roman numerals, then into subsections with Arabic numerals. This arrangement is supposed to facilitate the cross-references, which abound. A typical page looks like a monograph on chemistry.

The style is both pretentious and pedestrian; indeed, one suspects that Professor John Finnis gave the completed manuscript to a second-rate student for rewriting. By his own efforts an Oxford don just cannot have such a suicidal style! The most obvious points are endlessly belabored which, in a book claiming to exhaust all things knowable and some besides, exasperates the reader. I do not exaggerate. From the first sentence of the jacket script we are warned what to expect, but we ignore the warning since, at that point, our faith in polyhistorians is still intact. According to the blurb, the book "integrates philosophy of law with ethics, social theory and political philosophy," and all this in an "authoritative restatement of natural law doctrine," giving the student "a thorough grounding in the central issues of legal, moral, and political philosophy." One of the sections (or is it a subsection? I dare not go back and look) establishes, for example, that "knowledge is better than ignorance," and "establish" it surely does on several pages of paltry arguments and quotations.

Why do I, in turn, stress the issue of style rather than judge the contents? Because I think that an ethical question arises with books that serious authors write and publish. Is it not noteworthy that the fundamental works on which our reflection rests, the classics, were quasi-incidentally written, although they may have been corrected afterwards? Plato's dialogues stole their vividness from life; Aristotle dictated courses; Lucretius wished to reassure a friend fearing death; Thucydides was a war correspondent; Proclus took notes across the table from Plotinus; Augustine relates the story of his conversion; Boethius wrote in prison; Descartes thought out his Discourse, blocked by the winter cold.

Granted, these are the great precursors and models. But are they models only by what they say, or also by how they say it? Both. The style catches the imagination, which then actively collaborates in widening and smoothing the channels of intelligence. While we cannot actually indict Finnis for his turgid monotony—there is no law against it, as he might argue in one of the subsections—we must note the academic temptation to equate boredom with depth. This used to be a German monopoly, but it is now firmly planted in the soil of Anglo-Saxon scholarship.

I repeat, this is an ethical issue which, in a book, among many other things, on ethics, it is not unfitting to raise. Finnis' work has been hailed as a substantial and original study of great scholarly importance. I opened it with understandable curiosity—and was repelled again and again, as one's view of a much-advertised landscape may be inhibited by heavy, sulphur-yellow smog. In this case it was the smog of boredom. Does Finnis say anything that is either new or, as it is claimed, restates the central position about natural law? The reader is lost in myriad side issues, back alleys, and culs-de-sac through which he is compelled to wander, impatient and wanting to get on with the thread of reasoning. But he cannot trace his way back and there is no thread to which he can cling. At best he finds the obvious, stated as a discovery; at worst he is guided to As, Bs, Cs, IV 6s, and XII 8s. At the risk of provoking the printer's ire, I transcribe a typical sentence, since until now my reader may have remained unconvinced. (I swear I opened the book at random, on p. 306):

The set of facts that affords this opportunity comprises (a) the framework fact that a practice (involving more than one party and extending over a span of time and applicable to many and various promises) exists or can readily be initiated (given the underlying facts about human foresight, memory, desire for security, ability to understand, co-operate, rely, etc.), whereby the intentional giving of certain signs will be linked by the participants with expectations of future performance,

demands for that performance, etc., etc.; (b) the particular fact that a given individual has entered into the practice by voluntarily and intentionally giving the relevant signs; (c) the fact that if that individual, like others, goes along with the practice by trying to perform, even when performance is at the expense of some inconvenience, foreseen or even unforeseen, to himself, he will thereby not only contribute to the well-being of the person for whose benefit his promise was accepted (a contribution which might in the particular case be outweighed by the loss to his own well-being) but will also be playing his part in a pattern of life without which many of the benefits of community could not in fact be realized.

The hope at this point is that there are only 119 more pages left.

Reviewed by THOMAS MOLNAR

## *Andrew Jackson, First Reform President*

**Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Freedom, 1822–1832, Volume II**, by Robert V. Remini, *New York: Harper and Row, 1981. xvi + 469 pp. \$20.00.*

ROBERT V. REMINI wrote in the Preface to his Twayne biography of Andrew Jackson, published in 1966, "Surely anyone who presumes to scoop up a life as rich and exciting as Andrew Jackson's and spill it over a few hundred pages is looking for trouble." Since that time Remini has continued his research and writing on Jackson which has resulted in a number of short monographs and two large volumes of what promises to be a definitive biography of our seventh President. Volume I of this biography, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American Empire, 1767–1821*, was published in 1977, and Volume II, *Andrew Jackson and the Course of American*

*Freedom, 1822–1832*, was published in 1981 and is the subject of this review. A third and last volume of this biography is scheduled to appear early in 1984.

There have been numerous biographies of Andrew Jackson, beginning with Reid and Eaton, Amos Kendall, and James Parton, to name the best of those published in the nineteenth century, and continuing in the twentieth century with biographies by John Spencer Bassett, Marquis James, and others of lesser importance. Since Bassett and James published their biographies much new material has been discovered to which Remini has had access.

A good biographer places his subject, as accurately as he can, in the historical setting of the period in which his subject lived. Remini has done this superbly. Even conversations have been reproduced from primary sources, such as diaries, letters, and memoranda, as they were remembered and recorded by Jackson's contemporaries. The opinions and implications, expressed or implied in these conversations, are authentic and the style makes interesting reading.

In Volume I of Remini's biography of Andrew Jackson, the author concludes that Jackson, more than any other man of the nineteenth century, determined the course of American expansion. As early as 1803, Jackson congratulated Thomas Jefferson on his purchase of Louisiana, a purchase which, he told Jefferson, had the approval of the citizens of Mero. Jackson played the most important role in the accession of the Floridas and he left no doubt that he was highly in favor of annexing Texas, although this accession was not consummated until after Jackson's death.

Volume II begins with Jackson's return to Tennessee in 1821 after his tour of duty as Governor of Florida. Although a sick man, Jackson, somewhat reluctantly, allowed his name to be proposed for national office, first, as a candidate for the senate in 1823 and then for the presidency in 1824. He had written his friend John Overton while serving in the United States Senate in January 1798 that "the frowns of fortune may cause me to continue in a political life one more session—perhaps more—but not my wishes."