

with a specific and original focus on attempts to build an economic ornithology; second, to the land economics movement of the 1920s–40s and to George Wehrwein's and Aldo Leopold's promotion of the integration of ecology into economics. Chapter 7 investigates the “other Austrian economics” of Joseph Popper-Lynkeus and Otto Neurath. While Neurath's work on the incommensurability of nature, another privileged issue of ecological economics, is already well documented, the chapter also focuses on attempts to express the satisfaction of basic needs in physiological terms. Chapter 8 switches to the relationship between evolutionary biology and economics.

Every chapter is consistent and raises its own stakes and controversies. But these various moments cannot easily be compared—for instance, eighteenth-century French botanists have little in common with twentieth-century American conservationists. As acknowledged by the authors, “[Their] historical account takes the form of vignettes with stand-alone insights” (8). Except that they fall within the scope of ecological economic thought as previously defined, the ensemble of these moments hardly amounts to a unified history; it rather draws a kind of pointillist painting. In other words, each moment carries its own *common ontology and epistemology of the social and natural world*, but none is common to all. As a consequence, each chapter can be read independently, and readers can easily choose the moment that interests them the most. The strength of the book is to provide, for every chapter and every topic, an original and contextualized analysis that highlights attempts to build new bridges between political economy and the natural sciences.

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DOI 10.1215/00182702-11327260

Ideology: Conservatives, Liberals, and Socialists. By David Reisman. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2021. vii; 235 pp. \$142.00.

David Reisman's work covers a wide variety of topics and economists, ranging from democracy and capitalism to health care and welfare, and from Smith and Marshall to Schumpeter and Buchanan. Emphasizing the power of ideas, this prolific scholar now ventures into the topic of ideology. Ideology is described as a set of ideas, beliefs, or mental maps by which we structure the bewildering spectacle of reality and reduce anxiety over its inconsistencies and confusions. Ideology is a shared, interpretative frame that allows us to build a working consensus amid a plethora of views and thereby helps us to interact and communicate with one another. Such a common template plays an important role in the shared understandings and cohesion that make society more than a collection of isolated individuals. Reisman argues that (Western) ideology has become “a buffet bar of separable components” (216) being assembled according to individual preference, given the ongoing differentiation and diversification in society. In *Ideology* he traces this multiplicity and heterogeneities of ideas and beliefs to three meta-ideologies: conservatism (chaps. 3 to 6), liberalism (chaps. 7 to 12), and socialism (chaps. 13 and 14). Each core cluster is outlined by its general

beliefs, some representatives, and historical context, with the ongoing tension between autonomy and membership as the common thread.

Conservatives consider the present a gift from the past, hard-won and embodying the accumulated wisdom of the ages, and therefore the best guide to an uncertain future. Given that humans are risk-averse and their cognitive powers and knowledge limited, the status quo is not to be squandered away in pursuit of some ideal society. Conservatism gives priority to the whole over the parts or to the community over the individual. It emphasizes the worth of conventions that keep society together and stable against the onslaught of change and design, calling upon the state to conserve community.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries such beliefs were challenged with the rise of a market economy, based on free enterprise and innovation. Liberalism moved center stage. Peaceful cooperation and prosperity required a revision of ideas concerning the individual, his freedom, and rights vis-à-vis those of the collective and the state. Liberalism ascended by wrestling itself away from religious and political control, swapping revelation and metaphysics for scientific discovery and empirical inquiry, and it was carried forward by the Industrial, the American, and the French Revolutions. Reisman describes how liberalism pursued the liberation of the individual. Sensations and happiness are subjective, and the only one qualified to judge and compare is the individual himself, who is therefore to be free to choose and pursue his goals as he sees fit, as long as he does not harm others. Political democracy and market exchange are the best guarantees of liberty. Even if we renounce the community, however, we do need some minimum conditions to make society possible: a social contract, a protective state (Hobbes), private property, reasonableness and toleration (Locke), to make up for lack of knowledge, fear, and the human drive for power. The liberated self requires a setting of “freedom from” (external interference) to have “freedom to” (seek self-realization).

Yet, many—from Coleridge to Ruskin—became disillusioned by the shortcomings of the liberal way. They objected to the mechanical materialism, the individualism and utility-driven instrumentality of the capitalist economy by which natural bonds and obligations between classes in society were disrupted. Humanity and purpose come before mechanism and profit. The isolated individual contrasts poorly with the member of a larger community enjoying cohesion and fellowship, especially if liberty is taken away by business organizations and bureaucracies that control workers and frame their choices as consumers and citizens.

Reisman presents socialism as the next stage in human evolution, emerging in tandem with the capitalist mode of production and its conditions of poverty, alienation, and degeneration. Socialism argued that structures of inequality and exploitation have produced artificial barriers of class, birth, luck, and inheritance. Radical change is necessary to transform unnatural institutions and create conditions of cooperation and leveling. Ideas and beliefs that capital cheated labor out of its fair share were solidified into an ideology by Marx. Uncovering the irreversible laws of motion, he predicted the collapse of capitalism. Transcending private property and putting a stop to human estrangement, humans would be made sociable again, restoring the context

of community and fellowship. Whether through state ownership and paternalism or self-governing cooperatives and communes, the socialist future is given shape by removing barriers of privilege and greed and induces cooperation and fraternity. In a closing chapter Reisman argues that these ideologies live on: “It is mix-and-match only within the goalposts of a single broad church” (215). We have to live with these differences and aspire to do the best we can to work out some balance.

Although the style of writing is overdone with its staccato phrases, catchy formulations, and overuse of comparisons and metaphors, Reisman’s *Ideology* is a welcome contribution to the literature. It offers a useful exposition of the intellectual decor against which ideas and beliefs were developed and debated, especially now that we mix and match beliefs. For ideas and beliefs are part of an interpretative framework, also in economics. Most economists are aware that economics is less value-free than perhaps wished for. In *Economic Philosophy* Joan Robinson qualified economics as a mixture of ideology and science, and she invited the reader along to find the root of our beliefs. Gunnar Myrdal called ideology “the political element,” given that facts do not interpret themselves. Douglass North introduced ideology or mental maps to explain differences between changing structures of incentives and control, and Thomas Piketty took ideology on board to discuss the way inequality regimes have been justified. Ideas and beliefs matter, and the development of economic thought in many ways reflects exchanges between the three core ideological currents.

Although Reisman admirably describes the basic ideas and beliefs and development of the three meta-ideologies, one would have wished for more. Given the historical angle, one would not only have expected coverage of the neoliberal turn, but also a more substantial account of the development from the ideological one-pot dish to the buffet bar, especially in connection with the conflicting tendencies of independence/autonomy and integration/membership. This would have been of considerable interest to the economist given that in various guises the same tensions are running through the history of economic thought: how to reconcile wealth and virtue, to combine private initiative and collective or state control, to align utility and obligation or to square efficiency and equity? These questions play out between utilitarians and romantic economists, between marginalists and historical economists. Even when economists dropped the prefix “political” and pronounced economics to be value-free, these tensions continued, like between the equilibrating system and the institutional environment, and between utility and happiness. Not all these tensions can be made to fit the template of the three meta-ideologies. This shows up for instance when Reisman writes that “socialists tend to agree that profits and prices are not all there is to economic performance” (202). Surely it is not the prerogative of socialism to insist that wealth is a means and to look forward to the development of a sense of reciprocity and fellowship in the large, impersonal society based on the division of labor. Many “liberal” economists like Mill, Marshall, and Keynes had similar visions, even though they did not feel the need to call for radical transformation but expected similar outcomes from a gradual development within a market system itself. Or consider economists like Robbins, Hayek, and Friedman, whose takings from Reisman’s “buffet bar” helped to create the neoliberal turn in the 1980s. Although

perhaps not tailored to the tastes of the economist, Reisman has written an insightful and useful book on the three meta-ideologies that also framed economics.

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DOI 10.1215/00182702-11330029

Scarcity: A History from the Origins of Capitalism to the Climate Crisis.

By Fredrik Albritton Jonsson and Carl Wennerlind. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2023. 304 pp. \$35.00.

Ever since Lionel Robbins (1932: 15) defined economics as the science “which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses,” the concept of scarcity has become critical within the discipline. Actually we can go back even further in history, as it has been around since the origins of modern political economy—Adam Smith uses it extensively in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776). In their new book, the historians Fredrik Albritton Jonsson and Carl Wennerlind trace the history of the concept of scarcity in Western economic, political, philosophical, and even literary thought, particularly in the context of the economy-nature relationship, since the sixteenth century. Both are recognized intellectual historians, the former having been acclaimed for his *Enlightenment’s Frontier* (Albritton Jonsson 2013) on the origins of environmentalism, the second having recently received praise for his joint book with Margaret Schabas on David Hume, *A Philosopher’s Economist* (Schabas and Wennerlind 2020).

In *Scarcity*, the authors emphasize two opposed traditions with respect to the economy-nature relation: a “Cornucopian” tradition, basically considering that human wants and nature’s potential are infinite; and a “Finitarian” tradition, in contrast insisting on natural constraints and the need to temper human desires (5). Throughout the book, the authors present a multitude of subcategories belonging to the two traditions: “Neo-Aristotelian Scarcity,” resting upon the idea of a careful balance between human activities and the natural world and imbued with a spiritual dimension; “Enclosure Scarcity,” limiting, in the sixteenth century, abundance to the wealthiest classes of society; “Utopian Scarcity,” described by Thomas More as a state of relative shared abundance thanks to the voluntary limitation of needs; “Cornucopian Scarcity” in the narrow sense, with science and technology becoming an infinite lever for progress in the seventeenth century after Francis Bacon’s scientific revolution; “Enlightened Scarcity,” with authors such as Hume and Smith combining infinite desires and the moral means to direct those desires toward the improvement of material conditions; “Romantic Scarcity,” in which material simplicity is presented as key for human accomplishment; “Malthusian Scarcity,” with fears about population growth and land finiteness; “Socialist Scarcity,” defending universal needs and the use of science and technology for the benefit of the many; “Neoclassical Scarcity,” developed by economists in the late nineteenth century, depoliticizing needs and promoting infinite growth; and “Planetary Scarcity,” which emerged in the