

lines between 'free' Indians and the 'coolies' working in the colonies and committed itself to the cause exclusively of 'free' Indians (pp. 207–208). In fact, in many ways, coolies who were ready to work under any circumstance were indirectly held responsible for the contemptuous attitude of the colonisers towards 'free' non-indentured Indians. Thus, a hierarchy of status was upheld in the initial phase. For early nationalists, it was not the condition of indentured workers that was the problem per se, but the fact that respectable and wealthy 'free' Indians were being treated in the same ways as those who were working as 'coolies'. However, frustrated in their attempts to attain a 'respectable' position in the eyes of the colonisers, the nationalist leaders started invoking the harsh working conditions of coolies in their rhetoric to bargain with the colonial state. This, in turn, created a powerful anti-indenture campaign voiced by prominent leaders such as Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Mahatma Gandhi, CF Andrews and others in the second decade of the 20th century and eventually led to the system's abolition. Here, Kumar rightly points out that the overall exploitative nature of the system was merely a secondary concern in the nationalist discourse that mobilised the question of indenture for wider political purposes (p. 205).

Kumar's study, which he presents as an endeavour to develop 'an alternative view' on the world of *girmitiyas* (p. 241), appears to be heavily influenced by the views and writings of Shahid Amin, who supervised Kumar's doctoral work at the University of Delhi, and of Crispin Bates and Marina Carter, who guided his postdoctoral research on the 'Becoming Coolies' project at the University of Leeds. These influences appear to have led him to occasionally romanticise the journey of a coolie. In his interest in the details of the cultural world of *girmitiyas*, Kumar has overlooked the exploitative structure which was characteristic of the indentured system. His appraisal of the overseas migration of the Bhojpuri-speaking population as a mere extension of historic inland migratory patterns misses vital differences between the two. While the earlier inland migrations were short-term and unorganised, indentured migration was long-term and far more organised in nature with the state being actively involved in the recruitment process. Furthermore, the psychological trauma of separation faced by the *girmitiyas* was hardly there in the case of peasant soldiers of sultanate. For the latter, returning home was much easier, socially as well as economically, than for overseas coolie migrants. Similarly, in his attempt to celebrate the 'agency' of emigrating labourers, Kumar downplays the element of deception involved in their recruitment through indenture.

Nevertheless, Kumar offers a lucid narrative of indenture migration from its beginning in 1834 till its abolition in 1917. It is useful for both the scholarly investigation of various aspects of overseas migration from India to sugar colonies and for a lay reader trying to understand, out of curiosity, the unique world of the *girmitiyas* of the Ganges valley.

Craig Freedman, *In Search of the Two-Handed Economist: Ideology, Methodology and Marketing in Economics*, Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2016; xx +418 pp., ISBN 9781137589736. RRP Hardcover EUR 135 (AUD 206.50; ebook EUR 107 (AUD 163).

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Craig Freedman's own account of his lively text needs some refinement, so it is worth beginning with a sketch of the book's structure. The first substantive chapter studies two articles that set out rival visions of the firm and the organisation of production, one closely linked with Chicago and George Stigler (Alchian and Demsetz, 1972) and the other with Marxism (Bowles, 1985). Evidence is adduced that the authors diverge sharply in their political beliefs; this allows the nexus between ideology and analysis to be investigated. There follows an account of the rise of the Chicago School, in which the polemical origins of this label are nicely illustrated, and the role of George Stigler in establishing certain combative verities is central. Then comes a critical review of Richard Bronk's *The Romantic Economist* (2009), a chapter that has no place in the book, and which leads Freedman into territory where he has little expertise, such as the Enlightenment and Romanticism (e.g. pp. 134–140). This is followed by the best chapter, which is also the longest at 169 pages. It uses original interview material and archival sources to carefully track Stigler's sustained attack on EH Chamberlin's theory of monopolistic competition, in Sections IV and V especially. The book closes with the transcripts of two lengthy interviews with people close to Stigler – Gary Becker and Sam Peltzman – that explore his approach to economics. In short, this is a book about George Stigler.

Freedman, however, presents his work as a study of the three phenomena listed in his subtitle: ideology, methodology and marketing, with Chicago the self-selecting case study (x, 9 n16). As suggested above, it is Stigler, not Chicago, who fills the frame. More importantly, the notions of ideology and methodology get in the way of Freedman's study, which is really an intellectual history, and often produces terrific results that could never have been generated using the old tools. More will be said about this shortly. Something similar happens in relation to the notion of 'marketing'. The term is under-defined (pp. 14, 18, 28) and plays a small role, only occasionally trying to squeeze onto the page as an umbrella term to capture the substantive discussion (e.g. pp. 181, 334). The decision to use ideology as an organising category for a book by an economist about economics is perfectly understandable, for this concept has been central to the discipline's self-understanding. A few points should be made to ground this claim and establish a baseline against which to measure Freedman's use of the concept.

The fear that economic reason might be contaminated by ideology was, of course, most famously and forcefully expressed by Karl Marx. His most sustained engagement with classical political economy is found in *Theories of Surplus Value*, which Friedrich Engels and Karl Kautsky prepared from manuscripts left by Marx and published as the fourth volume of *Capital*. Marx (1951) located 17th-century writers, such as John Locke and Sir Dudley North, within a general conflict between capital and landed property, where land rent and usury were continuously defended and attacked as the economic standards of each class (pp. 26–33). Here, ideology reflects material interests, and it directly corrupts economic reason. But in Marx's reading of Adam Smith, a different style of analysis can be detected. Smith is apportioned near equal measures of praise and blame for his conceptual insights and shortcomings (Marx, 1951: 107–97). But this is all secondary to the key issue: Smith studied capitalist economic relations as if they were the only possible economic relations, instead of recognising that they belonged to a definite historical epoch (Marx, 1951: 148–175). Ideology thus does not simply represent a more or less direct material interest but something like historical blindness.

A contrary account of ideology is found in Joseph Schumpeter's (1954) *History of Economic Analysis*, where it is paired with the notion of progress in *economic analysis*, a category that isolates 'the analytic or scientific aspects of economic thought' (p. 3). This category allows systems of political economy (economic policies based on normative principles) and economic thought (public opinions regarding economic topics) to be excluded from historical investigation because they are not subject to progress. Ideology is the pre-analytic act of 'vision' that identifies the phenomena to be studied, but its effects are washed out by the scientific process in which facts and theory interact and coagulate into scientific models in a process that will 'crush out ideologically conditioned error', leaving only 'ideologically neutral' elements, whatever may have been 'the desires of the research worker' (Schumpeter, 1954: 41–44). In short, Schumpeter does not construe ideology as a long-term threat to economics because of the mechanics of the scientific process, in which ideology is an inevitable but ultimately harmless element of intellectual endeavour.<sup>1</sup>

A yet further view of ideological contamination is taken by Gunnar Myrdal. Economics, Myrdal claimed, had political implications built into its very engine of analysis, a result of the historical growth and development of economics out of natural law and utilitarianism. For example, neoclassical economists work with utility as a subjective measure of value and then aggregate these utilities under such names as general welfare and social value. This is not objective analysis, we are told, but a political argument – namely, that society should govern itself according to a specific version of utilitarianism. The costs of such practices for economics are not only that it is engaged in an intellectually dishonest species of labour, but also that it is consequently riddled with logical fallacies. These fallacies are seen to be 'inevitable when economic theory attempts the logically impossible feat of arriving at political conclusions without political premises' (Myrdal, 1953: 13–14, 16). The necessary remedies are honesty and reformulation. The need for honesty relates to the political content of assumptions which are typically disguised by a 'quasi-objective formulation of a "principle"'. Especially important is the link between economic analysis and political interests, an issue best addressed in any specific case by proposing 'alternative solutions, each one corresponding to some special interest'. In this way, the link between policy and sectional interests can be made explicit and the subject of open challenge. Economics could then ascend to the role of neutral counsellor: 'a scientific theory of how policy can serve concrete interests' (Myrdal, 1953: 191–193, 196). Reformulation is more challenging. It involves building an analysis that does not take the 'institutional set-up for granted' or the 'legal order, and the customs, habits, and conventions' because politics is struggle over these aspects of society (Myrdal, 1953: 192, 196). This, according to Myrdal, is how to render economics both politically neutral and useful.

If this sketch represents something of the diversity with which ideology (or for Myrdal, political bias) has been used to understand economics, then where does Freedman stand in relation to it? The trouble with this volume is that we are never explicitly told in sufficient depth. Some brief statements appear early in the book, where we learn that 'deeply entrenched a priori beliefs influence our thinking and thus our interpretation of any forthcoming data. Facts refuse to speak for themselves' (p. 8). This sounds like Schumpeter without the scientific process to act as a screening device, but, in fact, such

a notion is seemingly rejected at certain points (e.g. p. 72). But, the early discussion seems to suggest that ideology is more like simple bias (pp. 10–11), in the sense that Marx identified operating in 17th-century debates. The waters are muddied further when Hegel is enlisted to explain that ideology is a function of historical epoch, and thus inescapable (p. 112), rather like Marx's account of Smith. At this point, Freedman gives us a glimpse of what might underlie his concern with ideology and economics:

While this constraint [Hegel's] must be necessarily true, we can continue to guard against the worst excesses of a priori reasoning and at least reject this part of the Chicago legacy. Self-awareness, and a simple recognition of past history, will more easily allow us to realize when we are simply gift wrapping old theories or if we are attempting to tailor evidence to fit our preconceived notions. (p. 112)

This statement points us back to Myrdal and the supposed need for intellectual honesty. In short, the category of ideology is not stable in this book.

As stated earlier, this is hardly a limitation on the argument because Freedman supersedes this concept in practice, if not in rhetoric. That he does so can be seen in the strongest chapter, regarding Stigler's attack on Chamberlin, where the phenomena studied exceed what is normally placed under the label ideology – rhetorical repertoires, the distinction between public and private personae, revision to beliefs, the strategic use of 'barren debates' and the relationship between statements of methodological principles and practice. Consider just this last issue. Stigler was a noted champion of quantitative methods, yet he seems to have always known the answer to his inquiries at the outset. As Ronald Coase said of Stigler in an interview with Freedman, Stigler merely considered empiricism 'as a way of persuading other people' (p. 111). Such findings connect the book with the latest developments in intellectual history – in the history of political thought and the history of science in particular – where the rise of objectivity and natural science have been described not through mythical constructions such as 'the scientific method' or 'the scientific revolution', but through contest over the correct comportment of the mind; objectivity is an attitude, not an epistemology.<sup>2</sup> In relation to Stigler, the question becomes: did he cultivate an openness to the observation of empirical phenomena? Freedman's chapter gives us good evidence to suggest that he did not. And this is the key point – the matter is one of finding and weighing the evidence, and almost no progress can be made by inspecting Stigler's statements on method as if they were a reliable guide to his practice.

Where does this leave the notion of methodology? Freedman is anti-methodology, as he informs the reader multiple times, using the same memoir of his undergraduate revulsion at Descartes (x n7, 2 n4, 128). His grievance is with the prescriptive presumption – that one should be instructed on how to conduct one's thinking. This captures something of the notion, but it elides what most economists think of as falling under the heading of methodology – general epistemological principles, such as induction and deduction, realism and instrumentalism. In this sense, methodology is both polemic and specialised discourse, and in either sense, it has limited traction on the actual work of economists and might be better studied as a second-order vocabulary typically forged for combative use (Walter, 2016).

The final point to make about the text is that the style is demanding. Freedman clearly enjoyed writing his footnotes, which ought not to be discouraged. But the editors needed to impose some discipline. The chapter ‘The Heart is a Lonely Hunter: Chicago’s Climb to Glory’, for example, has multiple pages where the notes not only rise above the page’s waistline but reach the neck! And that is not the only proclivity that needed curbing, for Freedman also enjoys quoting a range of sources, especially Dickens, but also from the film *True Grit* and the minor works of Heidegger. This net would have been better cast towards relevant fields.

## Notes

1. The idea of ideology’s benign and banal nature also emerges in (Schumpeter, 1949).
2. This is the insight behind an enormous body of scholarship, much of it stimulated by the classic study by Shapin and Schaffer (1985), and some of the best research is published in the history of science journal *Isis*. For the history of political thought, see the collection of chapters on persona studies in Condren et al. (2006). As the late Donald Winch often bemoaned, the history of economic thought has simply not kept up with developments in intellectual history.

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