Marshall's Third Review

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Marshall is known to have written only two book reviews: the first of Jevons's *Theory of Political Economy* in *Academy*, April 1 1872; the second of Edgeworth's *Mathematical Psychics* in *Academy*, June 18 1881 (1) . Marshall himself on being asked to review for the *Political Science Quarterly* remembered only the first:

> [I]t has always been against my rule to write reviews. I have only written one in my life: that was of Jevons Theory when it first appeared, & then I wrote only because there was no one else who had been working systematically on the subject of that book in England (2) .

It transpires that Marshall published anonymously a third review, not indeed of a book but of Jevons's address of November 11 1874 to the Manchester Statistical Society on "The Progress of the Mathematical Theory of Political Economy with an Explanation of the Principles of the Theory". Marshall's unsigned note appeared in the section of "Notes and News" in *Academy*, November 21 1874. His authorship is conclusively established by a letter he wrote to H.S. Foxwell on February 4 1875 (3) .

Marshall and Foxwell had each just received from Jevons a copy of the official printed text of Jevons's address. Marshall wrote to Foxwell, enclosing a proof copy of his own November review note:

> You have already seen the inclosed: but you have only just read the paper of which it speaks. I am now writing something about Cairnes: it is more subdued than this about Jevons: but as I am to sign my name I am in some fear lest people should think it pert. Would you mind telling me if you think that, had I signed my name to the inclosed, it would have been thought atrociously pert.

He added that "I am writing to Jevons to thank him for his pamphlet & repeat in a very subdued tone what I said in the Academy" (4) .

Jevons's address had largely reiterated in a non-technical way the main themes of his *Theory of Political Economy*, but also used the occasion to acknowledge warmly the parallel contributions of Walras, the first part of whose *&Eacutel&eacutements* had recently appeared, and to take issue with criticisms recently made in Cairnes's *Leading* Principles (5) . Marshall's *Academy* note, the text of which is reproduced below is critical of Jevons's claims for the centrality and novelty of the marginal utility principle and is dubious of the validity of Jevons's purported overthrowing of J.S. Mill's economics. It is perhaps overgenerous to Cairnes, and (by implication) dismissive of Walras. It avoids, as Jevons had done, technical issues of economic theory and lacks the acuity of Marshall's 1872 review of Jevons's book. It does indeed seem "pert" given Jevons's eminence and Marshall's then obscurity.

Detailed discussion of the substance of Marshall's note is hardly necessary, but the circumstances of its composition call for comment. The speed of its appearance was

remarkable. Jevons gave his address in Manchester on November 11 and the printed proof of Marshall's note was returned to him by the editor of *Academy* on the 17th (6) . Even allowing for the highly efficient postal services of the time, composition must have occurred between the 12th and the 15th.

It seems certain that Marshall's review was based only upon a newspaper report. Thanking Jevons for the text of his Manchester address, Marshall remarked of it rather disingenuously that "I read it with interest some time ago in a newspaper" (7) . The London papers do not seem to have reported Jevons's Manchester Statistical Society address, but Jevons told Walras that "three Manchester newspapers which circulate over a considerable part of the country (...) printed most of it" (8) . Jevons had sent copies of the version published by the *Manchester Examiner* to various correspondents pending availability of the printed text (9) . The latter became available only in January when 150 copies, including those sent to Marshall and Foxwell, were circulated by Jevons (10) .

It seems unlikely that Marshall would have stumbled independently upon one of the reports of Jevons's address published in the Manchester newspapers and then composed and submitted an unsolicited note to *Academy*. Much more probably the initiative came from the editor who, recalling Marshall's 1872 review, sent him one of the newspaper reports of the address and requested a short comment on it. The *Academy* had been founded in 1869 by an Oxford group concerned to raise the quality of British scholarship by emulating German and French precedents – a symptom of the awakening of British intellectual life occurring in the late 1860s and the 1870s. Its editor, Charles Appleton (1841-79) was:

> [A]n energetic and idealistic young Oxford don who intended it [*Academy*] to fill the Arnoldian purposes invoked by its title – to serve as an authoritative intellectual organ to which serious readers could turn for reliable judgements on matters of high culture. Although not a notable scholar himself, Appleton was a serious entrepreneur of scholarship (11) .

Major reviews in *Academy* were to be signed as was not normally the case in the established organs. Marshall's involvement with *Academy* almost certainly came about through Henry Sidgwick who made several contributions between 1871 and 1879 and was sympathetic to the aims of the Oxford group (12) .

The timing of the publication of Marshall's note was hardly diplomatic given that Jevons was very shortly to debut in Cambridge as an examiner for the Moral Sciences Tripos (13) . l Whether Jevons guessed Marshall's authorship of the note is uncertain, but seems likely as Marshall's 1872 review in Academy had been signed. There seems to have been little contact between the two during Jevons's stay in Cambridge, although not from want of effort on Jevons's part (14) . However, the serious illness of Marshall's mother may excuse Marshall's backwardness (l5) . Matters appear to have been more cordial when Jevons returned as examiner a year later when Mary Paley sat the Tripos papers and Marshall hosted a party (16) . But in the interval November 1874 to February 1875 it was mainly through the examination answers of Marshall's students and Foxwell's claims on Marshall's behalf that Jevons learned that "Marshall had so long entertained notions of a quantitative theory of PE" (17). Marshall's willingness to publish on the eve of Jevons's visit a combative note based only on a newspaper report does suggest that his antagonism to Jevons's *Theory* continued to rankle. When the promised essay on Cairnes appeared in 1876 as "Mr Mill's Theory of Value" Jevons was more generously conceded to have "brought out with excellent distinctness many vital points connected with this notion [marginal utility], and has thereby made one of the most important of recent contributions to Economics" (18) .

Notes

1. W.S. Jevons, *Theory of Political Economy*, Macmillan, London, 1871); F.Y. Edgeworth, *Mathematical Psychics* (Kegan Paul, London, 1881). The Jevons review is reprinted in A.C. Pigou (editor), *Memorials of Alfred Marshall* (Macmillan, London, 1925), pp. 93-9. The Edgeworth review is reprinted in J.K. Whitaker (editor), *Early Economic Writings of Alfred Marshall*, 1867-90 (Macmillan, London, 1975), Vol. II, pp. 265-8.

2. Letter to E.R.A. Seligman of May 13 1900, *Seligman Papers*, Columbia University. Reproduced in J. Dorfman, "The Seligman Correspondence", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 56 (March-December 1941), pp. 107-24, 270-86, 392-419, 573-99, at p. 410.

3. The letter is in the Foxwell Papers held by Richard D. Freeman. The full text will appear in J.K. Whitaker (editor), *The Correspondence of Alfred Marshall*. *Economist* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming, three volumes), as will the texts of all other letters cited here.

4. Marshall's letter to Jevons, written on the same day (February 4 1875), is reproduced in R.D.C. Black and Rosamond Könekamp (editors), *Papers and Correspondence of William Stanley Jevons* (Macmillan, London, 1972-81, seven volumes), Vol. IV, p. 100. Jevons had opened communication in a letter to Marshall of January 7 1875 (pp. 95-6).

5. L. Walras, *&Eacutel&eacutements d'&Eacuteconomie Politique Pure* (Corbaz, Lausanne, 1874); J.E. Cairnes, *Some Leading Principles of Political Economy Newly Expounded* (Macmillan, London, 1874).

6. The proof copy which Marshall forwarded to Foxwell bore the handwritten inscription "J. [sic] Marshall Esq./St. John's Coll./Cambridge" and was accompanied by a printed slip "Please return to the Editor quickly" dated (by hand) "Nov. 17 1874". No change was made in proof apart from a decapitalisation already noted on the proof by the editor.

7. Letter of February 4 1875, Black and Könekamp, Vol. IV, p. 100.

8. Letter of February 14 1875, *Ibid*., pp. 102-5 at p. 102.

9. *Ibid*., pp. 81-4.

10. *Ibid*., p. 102. The text of Jevons's address appeared in the *Transactions of the Manchester Statistical Society* (1874-5), pp. 1-19. Doubtless it was offprints from this printing that Jevons distributed. A shortened version appeared in the *Journal of the* [*London*] *Statistical Society*, Vol. 37 (December 1874), pp. 478-88. This shorter version is reproduced in Black and Könekamp, Vol. VII, pp. 76-85.

11. A. Sullivan, *British Literary Magazines*: *The Victorian and Edwardian Age 1837-1913* (Greenwood; Westport, Conn. and London; 1984), p. 3. For a detailed account of the journal's foundation and Appleton's editorship see D. Roll-Hansen, *The Academy 1869-1879*: *Victorian Intellectuals in Revolt* (Rosenkilde and Bagger, Copenhagen, 1957: Anglistika, Vol. 7). Appleton himself dabbled on the verges of economics. See his "Economic aspects of the endowment of research", *Fortnightly Review*, Vol. 16 N.S. (October 1874), pp. 519-36 and his contributions to Essays on the Endowment of Research (King, London, 1876), which he also edited. See also the entry on Appleton in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

12. See Roll-Hansen, pp. 77-8, 150n., 205.

13. See Black and Könekamp, Vol. IV, pp. 52-3, 69-70, 88, 93. Jevons and his wife appear to

have stayed in Cambridge from Saturday December 5 to Tuesday December 14. Marshall was not an examiner, but Foxwell was, thereby initiating his prolonged friendship with Jevons.

14. Ibid., p. 96, writing to Marshall on January 7 1875.

15. Marshall told Foxwell on January 27 1875 that his mother had been "at the gate of death" for five weeks but had recently made a rapid recovery (Foxwell Papers: reproduced in Whitaker, *Correspondence*).

16. Black and Könekamp, Vol. IV, pp. 148-9.

17. Letter to Foxwell of February 7 1875, *Ibid*., p. 101. Also see pp. 95-6.

18. The essay was published in the *Fortnightly Review*, Vol. 19 N.S. (April 1 1876) and is reprinted in *Memorials*, pp. 119-33. It is Marshall's only known signed article of the relevant period and defends Mill against Cairnes's criticisms and interpretations. However, given the gap between - Marshall's letter of February 4 1875 and the appearance of the essay, it is possible that his plans were modified.

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