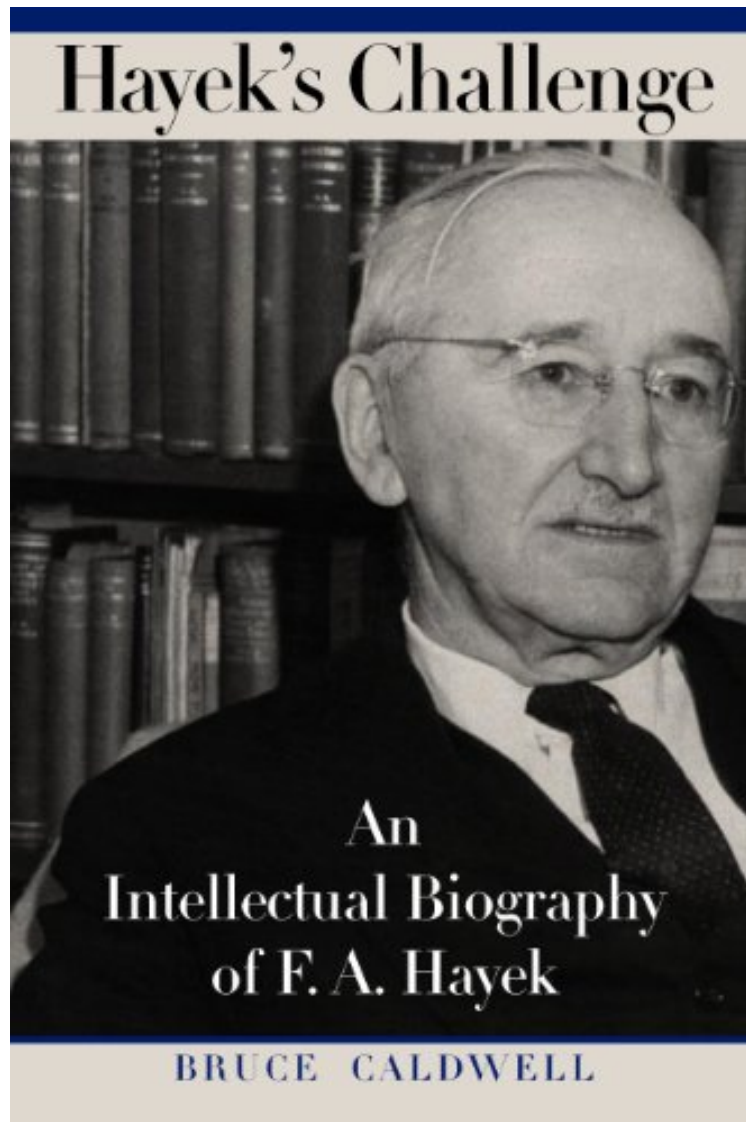


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Hayek's Challenge: An Intellectual Biography of F.A. Hayek

Bruce Caldwell

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Bruce Caldwell : Hayek's Challenge: An Intellectual Biography of F.A. Hayek before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hayek's Challenge: An Intellectual Biography of F.A. Hayek:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Methodology clarifiedBy B.It was Hayekian thought that finally explained the world to me. I have read a good deal of Hayek. Years ago I started with The Road to Serfdom, than The Constitution of Liberty, The Fatal Conceit, and a slew of essays by Hayek and others on Hayek. So, as the above illustrates, I found this book because I wanted a deeper understanding of Hayek's intellectual thought. I did, in fact, receive this, but I gained something much more powerful from this book.I'm an undergraduate student of Political

Science, so, accordingly, I have taken one class on methodology--this, of course, was the application of Multi-Regression Analysis in Political Science. The insight that this book offers, more than an understanding of Hayek, Mises, Menger or even Weber, is the insight that there is more than one valid way to approach research in the social sciences. That is the gist of this book--that Hayek, and the Austrian school approached the study of and the manner in which to explain the world differently than the garden-variety intellectual, and that these different approaches hold merit; they are worth understanding--regardless of their absence from curriculums. I would like to thank Dr. Caldwell for this book; it has truly opened my eyes, and has given credence to my lure to the Austrians and Hayek. Make sure you don't skip the last chapter; it is worth the time and attention. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The fascinating intellectual development of a great man By Barry Milliken I'm filled with gratitude toward Bruce Caldwell for writing this book and writing it so well. I have read Hayek (Road to Serfdom, Constitution of Liberty) and consider myself a fairly literate but amateur economist. Even for me there are some sections on methodology and philosophy of science that require careful focus by the reader. But Professor Caldwell is a patient and gentle tutor, so I did not experience the problems that one reviewer reports. Overall the book emphasizes the wide range of Hayek's thought; far beyond economics: psychology, evolutionary theory and the nature of mind. I loved Hayek before I began this book, but ended even more impressed by the man. It's also heartening to notice that Hayek is getting recognition beyond the ranks of economists. Stephen Pinker references Hayek in his magnificent "The Blank Slate"; Matt Ridley praises him in "The Rational Optimist". Let's hope for more of same. 14 of 15 people found the following review helpful. Wide Ranging, Lively and Clear By Andrew Cooke This is one of the best non-fiction books I have read in a long time. I have no idea how I came to buy this - I rarely read biographies, consider myself left-wing, am a computer programmer who was educated as a physicist (so have no background in economics), and only vaguely recognise his name - so must assume someone recommended it to me. Whoever that person was: Thank-you! I think there are two things that makes this such a good read. Most important is the subject matter - Hayek seems to have been a pretty smart chap who was interested in, and contributed to, a wide range of subjects, at a time (the latter 2/3s of the twentieth century) when a lot was happening. And because he kept shifting fields and, to some extent, revising his opinions, you get to watch the evolution of a wide range of disciplines. So this book touches on subjects like scientific methodology; emergent behaviours; how money acts as a way to signal information; the foundations of economics (do you have to assume everyone is "perfectly greedy", for example?); models of consciousness; evolutionary biology and group selection - interesting problems that are relevant today, presented in a historical context that is extremely helpful in understanding their peculiarities. Maybe it sounds crazy (or stupid), but until I read this book I had no idea how history could be so useful, relevant and informative. Much credit must also go (my "second reason") to the author - I think this is impressively well written. Caldwell is a very careful guide who takes pains not only to justify what he says, but also gently directs you through what could be a terribly confusing and complex journey by identifying common threads, summarizing discussions, and repeatedly placing everything within its proper context. Please write another book (how about Popper?)!

Friedrich A. Hayek is regarded as one of the preeminent economic theorists of the twentieth century, as much for his work outside of economics as for his work within it. During a career spanning several decades, he made contributions in fields as diverse as psychology, political philosophy, the history of ideas, and the methodology of the social sciences. Bruce Caldwell; editor of The Collected Works of F. A. Hayek; understands Hayek's thought like few others, and with this book he offers us the first full intellectual biography of this pivotal social theorist. Caldwell begins by providing the necessary background for understanding Hayek's thought, tracing the emergence, in fin-de-siecle Vienna, of the Austrian school of economics; a distinctive analysis forged in the midst of contending schools of thought. In the second part of the book, Caldwell follows the path by which Hayek, beginning from the standard Austrian assumptions, gradually developed his unique perspective on not only economics but a broad range of social phenomena. In the third part, Caldwell offers both an assessment of Hayek's arguments and, in an epilogue, an insightful estimation of how Hayek's insights can help us to clarify and reexamine changes in the field of economics during the twentieth century. As Hayek's ideas matured, he became increasingly critical of developments within mainstream economics: his works grew increasingly contrarian and evolved in striking; and sometimes seemingly contradictory; ways. Caldwell is ideally suited to explain the complex evolution of Hayek's thought, and his analysis here is nothing short of brilliant, impressively situating Hayek in a broader intellectual context, unpacking the often difficult turns in his thinking, and showing how his economic ideas came to inform his ideas on the other social sciences. Hayek's Challenge will be received as one of the most important works published on this thinker in recent decades.

"Guides are needed, and Bruce Caldwell's Hayek's Challenge is a welcome introduction."