The most that a reviewer of this book can hope to present is a sampling of its rich insights into the demographic, economic, and political concerns of our time. For a rounded representation of the author's system of thought, one would have to range through the Sauvy opus, which comprises at least a dozen important books. The *Théorie générale de la population*, first published some 30 years ago, and in English translation in 1969, still repays reading. Fortunately there is no sign that the opus is yet finished, and we can look forward to more ideas from Professor Sauvy as he approaches his ninety-first birthday.

International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis
Laxenburg, Austria

NATHAN KEYFITZ

E. L. JONES
Growth Recurring: Economic Change in World History
New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. xii + 247 p. $49.95.

When economic historians look to the big picture, as they occasionally do, and seek to understand the rise or decline of whole societies and civilizations, it is not surprising that population change is accorded a major role. In one guise, demographic expansion is an oceanic force, reshaping generation by generation the institutions of human intercourse. In another, alternating periods of expansion and retrenchment are reflections of those institutions—in Braudel's arresting phrase, "the immense respiration of the social structure." E. L. Jones's book, economic history about as big as it can get, in its essence is about the question of why economic effort so often is dissipated in population increase.

It is an essay really, as many good books are. It could readily have been condensed to article length. As a book it offers more heft, self-assurance, visibility, and shelf life—no mean advantages. By their nature, some topics require the dignity of hard covers. The author's style is brisk, informal, often cocky, and from time to time a bit grating.

The basic concepts employed are "extensive" and "intensive" growth. Extensive growth, often called static expansion, is the growth of economic product *pari passu* with population, leaving per capita product constant. Intensive growth is the increase in per capita product. The concepts derive from elementary growth theory: with increasing population, investment notionally goes first toward capital widening, equipping the additional workers up to the previously existing level of capital per person; then to capital deepening, raising that average level. The case for slowing population growth is that more investment is thereby available for capital deepening.

As algebra, the relationships are incontestable. As social science, a lot more needs to be said, giving institutional content to an economic system that is otherwise behaviorally empty. For example, the extent of independence (or lack of it) between growth of product and growth of population is set by choice of that content, a detail that bears directly on the gain to the first achievable by reining in the second.

Jones's thesis offers a different institutional and behavioral content, simple and powerful. World history from around the ninth to the eighteenth century, he asserts, shows repeated instances of the tentative beginnings of intensive growth, and several at least that progressed quite far; virtually always, however, these efforts were in the end blocked by extortionate government. Economic success brought its own demise through the administrative rent-seeking it generated. The two exceptions where intensive growth, somewhat fortuitously, was not blocked were Europe and Japan.

The thesis is stated and restated throughout the book, often in striking metaphor: "history is to be thought of as repeated, tentative efforts of *intensive* growth to bubble up through the stately rising dough of *extensive* growth." The recurrent negating of intensive growth is "a low-level political trap." (The metaphors don't always work: "the hideous entropy of history" [p. 181], for example.) Sooner or later, Jones implies, one government or another would by luck manage not to kill the goose—and thereby offer a lesson for others to draw from and a pathway to vastly enhanced power that others would ignore at their peril.

The shift in the frame of comparison is notable, contrasting too with Jones's earlier and well-received work *The European Miracle.* What merits explanation now is not the fact of growth but the rare occasion of its not being choked off. Societies seen as having had the potential for achieving intensive growth but never getting there are Safavid Persia, Mughal India, and the Ottoman Empire. Those showing intensive growth that was not nipped in the bud but later withered in the fruit are China during the Sung dynasty (tenth to thirteenth centuries) and, less certainly, the Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad in the ninth century. Tokugawa Japan (seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) and the European states-system in the century or so prior to the industrial revolution are the cases of uncurtailed intensive growth. Jones does not claim expertise on all these, and devotes much space besides Europe and Japan only to the Sung: his reasonable standpoint is that "it is better to have a rough sketch map of where you are than an intricate chart of somewhere else."

The blocking process is not uniform or straightforward. Indeed the brief case studies of failures in intensive growth highlight the remarkably varied institutional surrounds of each. There are what he calls "flytrap economies" in which revenues disappear relentlessly in one direction, and there are cases where the problem is "less the grasping state than the state's undergovernment" (Sung China is the main instance). Intensive growth may also be dissipated by external factors. The Mongol invasions brought the Persian experiment to an end—though, significantly, the main economically detrimental effect of invasion was not physical destruction and despoliation, or slaughter of people, great as these were, but "strengthened conservative institutions and values that made renewed growth more difficult" (p. 145).

Jones's overall argument for the value of trying to understand intensive economic growth rather than the emergence of industrial capitalism ("the causes of the Industrial Revolution") is I think compelling. The disentangling of intensive growth, industrialization, capitalism, (Kuznetsian) Modern Economic Growth, and economic development, undertaken as an initial clarification, is of general value in the enterprise. (Jones attacks the common belief that economic development everywhere but where it began was derivative. Intensive growth, he persuasively demonstrates, was not derivative. Technological change too was relatively commonplace. The distinctive element of European development was industrial capitalism.) The concept of rent-seeking enables diverse case materials to be brought together into a cogent piece of comparative analysis.

The struggle for control of surplus between its producers and those whose "entitlement" rests in other domains of social reality is a classic theme of social and economic history. Malthus, in writing about one of Jones's almost-successes, the Ottoman Empire (*Essay*, Book 1, Ch. 10), has a diagnosis not unlike Jones's own: "[The government's] tyranny, its feebleness, its bad laws and worse administration of them, together with the consequent insecurity of property, throw such obstacles in the way of agriculture that the means of subsistence are necessarily decreasing yearly, and with them, of course, the number of people." Modern institutional analysis restores such considerations to an economic discourse that had come to ignore them—or, worse, leave them to Marxist polemic. Mancur Olson's *Rise and Decline of Nations* (1982), for example, explores the "sclerosis" engendered by entrenched interest groups in a national economy, in an argument that in several respects prefigures Jones's.

Where then are the weaknesses of *Growth Recurring*? The main one is the obverse of the book's very cogency: Jones's focus on the struggle between producers and the officialdom of rent-seekers. He properly takes for granted that striving for betterment is a near enough to innate human quality, providing the motivational wellspring for economic action. But there is a lot that can go wrong between that individual striving and the aggregate economic success that yields intensive growth or, more commonly, the spoils for appropriation. All kinds of miswirings in the social structure can interfere with this aggregation. Just one category of them, that leading to excessive administrative squandering or plundering of the social product, is the source of Jones's exhibits. But if all factors but one are lumped together—and sifted to extract combinations that yield "success"—it would follow that that one factor set aside is "crucial."

One could readily conceive of an alternative comparative analysis that hinged not on government performance but on, say, the factors that differentiate societies by the efficacy of private initiative at the local level. Communities and kin groups, for example, are seldom neutral entities when it comes to their members' productive and entrepreneurial behavior. Even with minimally extortionate government, it could hardly be supposed that growth would blossom irrespective of the local-level social order. And that level must be especially pertinent when *demographic* outcomes are at issue—as they inherently are in the shift between extensive and intensive growth.

More controversially, even in the new economic history, one might also pay more attention to cultural influences. Jones's historiography is firmly based in tangible interests and incentives. Culture for him is a second-order phenomenon, not a determinant and not even a serious source of impediment to growth. "It is better," he writes, "to think of religions, and other values and institutions, as filters through which action had to pass, to be slowed down or sanctified or winked at according to the occasion, but not as unyielding obstacles" (p. 98). Granted, but in the explanatory stakes what matters is relative degrees of yieldingness.

Thus, the elegant simplicity of the comparative analysis, paradoxically for a study of this ambition, relies on the narrowness of its focus and would be lost under a broader institutional scrutiny. This is not to call for that broadening: readability as well as neat conclusions would suffer. One would have the immediate individual producers, separately and to some degree banding together, not conceptually distinguishable from other individuals and groups with more distant or dubious claims of entitlement to the social product—including some whose claim is their recourse to force majeure. The definition of competitive returns to productive effort and the award of government sanction to a subset of claims would both be more than a little arbitrary. A coalitional analysis could, however, be carried out, in the manner of public choice theory. The differences among groups in their capacity for collective action, including efforts to reap supra-competitive returns, would be assessed, as would be the means they adopted (the blocking of transactions as well as the promotion of them). How close a particular system, lodged within a particular historical and environmental context, was to finding a route to long-run "success" would not then be something to be established through a simple piece of counterfactual argument—what might have happened had the Sung emperors been more like the Tokugawa shoguns—indeed it is not clear how it could be established at all.

Jones is no determinist, but the fortuitous happenings he recognizes tend to be large ones—like the Mongol retreat that left Japan and most of Europe unconquered. Some attention is needed equally to the possibility that the performance of social systems is also indeterminate in the small. Recent work on complexity in economic systems leaves open such a notion, radically destructive though it may be of conventional social scientific modes of explanation. Historians have moved strongly toward the social sciences in recent decades; they may yet meet the social scientists retreating part of the way back toward a fine-gauged "history of events."

A comment should be added on the book's treatment of population. If intensive growth is little more than extensive growth with less grasping or more insightful government, there is not much room for a theory of population growth. Indeed, all that is needed is the classical idea that population growth is one index of economic accomplishment. "Producing people is in some ways an alternative to producing goods and offers an indirect measure of economic performance" (p. 89). The discussion of endogenous population is spotty, reaching a sensible conclusion by an odd (and oddly documented) route. (On demographic data, Jones leans heavily on the Penguin *Atlas of World Population History* [1978], by C. McEvedy and R. Jones, a remarkable little volume that, whatever its faults, seems to have no competitors and is thus indispensable.)

This is a "big idea" book, the work of a hedgehog not a fox, though its author has paid his dues in earlier foxish economic history. Demographers, as custodians of one of the "big" variables, might absorb from it some greater degree of ambition to contribute to a comprehensive economic, social, and cultural history. If fertility transition is something more profound than a discovery of how to limit births or a lifting of sanctions against doing so (or, in the still shallower modern variant, a response to proffered free contraceptives), its understanding is likely to emerge from creative exercises in comparative analysis, not excluding studies pitched at this level, directed at institutional arrangements far removed from the conjugal.

Research School of Social Sciences
Australian National University

GEOFFREY MCNICOLL