English economist who, by 2001, was the only woman ever to have achieved outstanding eminence in economic theory. Her *Economics of Imperfect Competition* (1933) taught an entire generation of economists the microeconomics that now figures in elementary textbooks.

A stalwart defender of English economist John Maynard Keynes and a leading popularizer of Keynesian economics in the 1930s, she went on after the war to convert Keynesian short-period analysis into a Keynesian-type theory of economic growth, laying the foundation of a currently thriving school of post-Keynesian economics. In 1932 she launched the so-called ‘Cambridge controversies’ – Cambridge, England, versus Cambridge, USA – one of the most acrimonious theoretical debates to have disfigured the face of modern economics. Convinced that she had discovered a fatal flaw in standard economic theory, she moved steadily away on almost all economic questions towards a unique heterodox position of her own.

As a member of the so-called ‘circus’ of Cambridge economists who helped Keynes formulate what was to become the ‘General Theory’, Robinson played a key role in the story of the Keynesian Revolution. Her *Introduction to the Theory of Employment* (1937) was one of the most widely read pre-war introductions to the Keynesian system. A few years later, she published *Economics* (1942), a sparkling, heretical no-nonsense attempt to give German philosopher and economist Karl Marx his due as a sort of early Keynesian.

She was born into a middle-class, academic English family, descended on her father's side from F D Maurice, the great 19th-century Christian Socialist. She graduated from Girton College, Cambridge, in 1925 and shortly after married Austin Robinson, soon to become a Cambridge economist in his own right. After a spell in India the Robinsons returned to Cambridge where Joan joined the Cambridge faculty as an assistant lecturer in economics; she became a university lecturer in 1937, reader in 1949, and, finally, a full professor in 1965, retiring in 1971.

APA

Chicago

Harvard

MLA