The interpretation of John Maynard Keynes's philosophical thinking involves significant methodological difficulties which ought to be identified and understood prior to any attempt to explain that philosophy. These difficulties chiefly stem from the fact that Keynes's philosophical and economic work were carried out during almost entirely different periods of Keynes's life and intellectual career. When he was first an undergraduate at Cambridge, Keynes thought that his important scholarly efforts were likely to be made in contributions to the philosophy of logic only recently initiated in Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica*. Yet when Keynes completed his undergraduate study, his interests had shifted more economics, politics, and economic policy, and philosophy had come to be more of an avocation than a vocation for him. Indeed by the time his *Treatise on Probability* was essentially finished (around the beginning of the first World War), he had all but put aside the sort of systematic discussion of philosophical ideas he had pursued in his undergraduate and immediate postgraduate years at Cambridge with the result that philosophical ideas are either altogether absent from the language and thought of Keynes's economics, or such philosophical themes as do appear in Keynes's economics appear at such significant remove from the contexts in which they originally functioned that we must wonder whether their meanings and roles have been subtly changed by their re-location to economics.

The first and perhaps most difficult problem confronting interpreters of the role of philosophy in Keynes's thought, then, is to determine how far one ought to go in reading Keynes's early philosophical ideas into his subsequent economics. Keynes, we know, developed his first philosophical ideas almost entirely before he had begun to think seriously about economics. One cannot simply assume, then, that those early ideas were instrumental to the development of his subsequent abstract thinking in economics. If Keynes had troubled himself over abstract economic questions at an earlier date, and should these abstract speculations have been clearly at issue in his early philosophical reasoning, then it could readily be argued that Keynes's early philosophical commitments were in some degree motivated by his theoretical concerns in economics. But this did not occur. Indeed, Keynes drew few connections between these two spheres of ideas after he turned to economics, suggesting rather that he found his early philosophical views only marginally valuable for the deeper theoretical issues of economics. This of course would not imply that Keynes's early philosophical ideas were of no value whatsoever to his thinking in economics. One certainly would not expect any philosophically accomplished thinker to engage in
wholesale abandonment of hard-won ideas upon turning to another field, and it should be emphasized that early philosophical themes do indeed appear in Keynes's economics. Rather the point here is that because the role of Keynes's early philosophical ideas in his subsequent economic thinking is not clear, one cannot assume that those ideas were foundational to Keynes's economics, or even rule out the possibility that other abstract ideas beyond the purview of philosophy formed the deeper conceptual roots of Keynes's economics.

But there is a second, independent problem involved in interpreting the place of philosophy in Keynes's economics. This stems from the fact that Keynes's economic thinking itself changed substantially over his later career, something Keynes himself was most emphatic about. Scholars of course dispute the manner and degree to which Keynes departed from his early economic thinking in *The General Theory*, but none deny that there were important changes in his later theoretical commitments, nor dispute the fact that Keynes himself believed these later commitments involved a change in his thinking at the deepest level. Thus, while abstract commitments in economic reasoning can generally be treated independently of traditional philosophical questions, there is no doubting the fact that change in one sphere often has implications for the other. It would be a mistake, then, to assume without argument that the changes in Keynes's theoretical commitments in economics occurred without concomitant changes or adjustments in his philosophical thinking, and indeed on the surface it would be more natural to think that changes in the foundations of Keynes's economic thinking were also accompanied by changes in his philosophical thinking.

This second problem adds significantly to the difficulties associated with our first problem. In the case of the first, we should be prepared to find that the functioning of philosophical ideas in the non-philosophical context of economic theorizing may have the effect of transforming the significance and meaning of these ideas relative to their original meaning and significance in pure philosophy. Thus, the interpreter of philosophy in Keynes's economics, who is already working with philosophical materials in somewhat transformed guise due to their embedding in a logic of economic discourse, now also finds that a change in economics paradigms requires that we further attempt to identify philosophical ideas not easily discernable as *per se* philosophical in a language of economics that has itself evolved since this initial embedding of philosophical ideas. The second problem of interpretation, then, compounds the difficulties associated with the first, leaving us, as it were, to locate Keynes's philosophy in his later economics at two removes from its original elaboration - removed from its original location in pure philosophical discourse and removed from its original point of entry into Keynes's economics. Twice so removed, such philosophical thinking would not only lack the clear outlines of Keynes's pre-economics philosophy, but also raise unavoidable questions concerning the path of development of Keynes's philosophical thinking.

Because of these two connected problems, it seems that interpreters of Keynes's philosophical thinking as it operates in his economics must consciously adopt and employ some theory of reading or strategy of interpretation regarding