humanities taking each other seriously. Neither economists nor literature professors (or historians, art historians, philosophers, or whomever) would find these chapters persuasive reasons to leave their departments, walk across campus, and talk to other faculty about ways their research interests might fruitfully combine.

The frame of *Cents and Sensibility* is an excellent one. It cannot be said often enough that the disciplines have much to learn from each other. And Morson and Schapiro are right to take Adam Smith as the patron saint of such interdisciplinarity, and to insist that he is ill-treated when we pretend that there are "two Adam Smiths" rather than an individual with rich and complex interests and questions who produced multivalent work of great importance. The frame of the book makes a strong argument that more such work is needed, and that without it we are ill-served as scholars and as humans. Stronger case studies in the central portion of *Cents and Sensibility* would have provided a first foray into the production of such work. As it is, though, Morson and Schapiro have given us a strong and persuasive argument for such a book, but the book itself remains to be written.

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Never Enough: Capitalism and the Progressive Spirit

Neil Gilbert

New York: Oxford University Press, 2017 (231 pages)

Progressivism has its contradictions (the subject of Thomas Leonard's excellent book, *Illiberal Reformers*). For example, the average citizen should govern, but the elites will need to govern until the masses can be trusted. And as frequent advocates of government activism, progressives often ignore the knowledge problem (from Austrian economics) and the motive problem (from public choice economics) as they move from theory to practice. For another example, in *The Triumph of Conservatism*, Gabriel Kolko discusses the way big industries in the Progressive Era pursued regulations to limit their competition.

In his book on contemporary progressivism, Neil Gilbert focuses on another concern. "The very success of the progressive agenda in the twentieth century has dampened present-day support" (2), since progressives have little "distinctive to offer" on economic policy and poverty. There are other policy issues of interest, but they are "peripheral to the progressive ambition of altering the free-market distribution of resources" (45).

How should progressives proceed when so much progress has been made against poverty—spending on poverty has already increased so much (by 557 percent between 1968 and 2004, with only a 46 percent increase in population)—and when the public does not share their faith in government and government budgets are tight (30)? "The mature welfare state entered the twenty-first century under considerable fiscal duress" (3).

In response, Gilbert calls for a "progressive conservatism" that recognizes the limits of government activism and works at the margins of public policy reform. Gilbert is perhaps echoing George W. Bush's "compassionate conservatism" and presenting a hybrid model for progressives in the face of political realities and policy constraints.

Gilbert's conservatism goes beyond his policy pursuits to some of his goals. "The good society … is more than just a place that protects its members from the ruins of poverty and disease. It is a social landscape that cultivates family life as the seedbed of human development" (149). As such, he recommends only two modest policy reforms: subsidies for in-home nursing services for those with newborns and three years of "national service" (150–52).

The book's greatest value-added is the way it clears the field of common misperceptions. For example, Gilbert critiques the recent focus on inequality. "Resentment over inequality seems to have displaced concern for the truly impoverished members of society" (38). For example, President Obama did not mention poverty in two of his State of the Union addresses—something that had only occurred one other time with a Democratic president since 1948 (18). With the poverty of the 1960s, "you knew it when you saw it" (15). Economist Stephen Miller notes that Google images of "American inequality" are mostly charts and graphs, while inequality in less-developed economies is "pictured" as slums in front of skyscrapers. One can "see" that our inequality is of a markedly different sort, even when our Gini coefficients seem to be more troubling.

Gilbert invokes J. K. Galbraith (*The Affluent Society*), who distinguished between "insular poverty … in economically depressed regions" and "case poverty … rooted in personal handicaps." Galbraith argued that remaining poverty could not "be remedied by government transfers of income" (16, 28–29). Instead, he proposed increased taxation so the government can invest in public services and human capital (17). Gilbert notes the statistical gymnastics inherent in reaching the conclusion that the United States is "the least generous welfare state" (122). Using a more sophisticated measure (Net Total Social Expenditure) and switching from percentage of GDP to actual spending, the United States is easily the most generous welfare state in the world (124). Again, it is difficult to imagine that more redistribution would be effective.

He is critical of the underlying focus on "fairness" within "inequality," arguing that it is the approach of "young children yelling" (45). Moreover, its "tautological formulation skirts the issues of how to or even whether to adjust for merit" (46). He also argues that the concern over inequality is overblown, by providing various levels of median disposable household income and Gini coefficients, and then asking where the reader would like to reside (63). Most folks would choose the higher average income, even with somewhat more inequality.

The book is helpful on the profound flaws of the poverty rate (19–25, 31) and measures of income and wealth inequality (49–61). Gilbert critiques inequality measures for ignoring cost of living, income dynamics, changes in tax law, and the value of leisure. For example, "the unusual jump in income inequality in the period immediately following the 1986 Tax Reform Act … is more likely attributed to a shift from corporate to individual income than a material change in inequality" (57).

Ultimately, the focus on inequality is wrongheaded because it "does little to alleviate the disabilities of the chronically poor. It does not develop opportunity, strengthen family life, educate children, create satisfying work, or encourage civic virtues.… It reinforces the unbridled materialism that Galbraith saw as irrelevant, if not detrimental" (39).

Progressives claim that there are five areas where inequality causes harm: it "spawns social ills, hinders economic growth, warps democracy, defies individual preferences, and impedes social mobility" (66). Gilbert deals with each in successive chapters, deflating or dismissing the supposed evidence. For example, on "social ills" (67–76), he critiques the "flimsy speculation," lack of robust data, and careless claims of causation in Wilkinson and Pickett's *The Spirit Level* (see my review essay of this book in vol. 18, no. 1 of this journal). And on social mobility, Gilbert notes the "persuasive evidence that the rate … has not changed since at least 1971" in the United States (93).

More generally, and especially in this section of the book, it is obvious that Gilbert is well-read on the literature, for example, on Head Start's limited effectiveness (100–103), Charles Murray's discussion of "assortative mating" in *Coming Apart* (103, 107), intergenerational income mobility (109–15), and Social Security's low rate of return and its funding problems (131, 139–41).

It would have been useful to see a critique of onerous FICA taxes on income and a discussion of educational choice programs in light of our government's deficient, inequitable, and expensive approach to K–12 education. But these are minor quibbles about a strong book with an unfortunately rare combination—an author who "believes in" government, but understands much about the limits of statistics and government activism.

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The Moral Economy: Why Good Incentives Are No Substitute for Good Citizens

Samuel Bowles

New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2016 (288 pages)

Samuel Bowles defines his goal in *The Moral Economy* as follows: "to convince you that when it comes to designing laws, policies, and business organizations, it is anything but prudent to let *Homo economicus* be the behavioral model of the citizen, the employee, the student, or the borrower" (2). To be clear, what Bowles means by *homo economicus* is the methodological assumption "that people … are entirely self-interested and amoral" (1).

Bowles, however, makes two additional assumptions about what this means: First, self-interest is synonymous with "amoral selfishness" (2), which rather than being morally neutral (as "amoral" might imply) is instead morally dubious (as "selfishness" does imply). Self-interest, to Bowles, is amoral in the sense that it acts apart from any concern for morality, not in the sense of being able to be either good or evil depending on its content and context. Second, the "self" in self-interest is the individual human person.