

A social morality for mortals: A review essay of *the order of public reason: A theory of freedom and morality in a diverse and bounded world*

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Abstract This essay praises Gerald Gaus’s *The Order of Public Reason* as a building block for all normative explorations into the institutional foundations of human sociability. It evaluates the normative implications put forth by Gaus in terms of the Kirzner’s “finder’s keeper’s ethic.” This raises a question about the relationship between the moral order and the political order that underlies market processes. Examining the role of entrepreneurship in the market process in relation to Kirzner’s “finder’s keeper’s principle” suggests a deeper ethical foundation that underpins the institutional conditions of “social morality.”

Keywords Gerald Gaus · Israel Kirzner · Socialist calculation debate · Political economy

JEL classification B2 · B53 · P16

1 Introduction

Gerald Gaus has produced a “big book” and not just in terms of sheer size, but in terms of the fundamental issues addressed and the literature he employs. Prior to the twentieth century, the field of economics was part of the broader discipline of moral philosophy. At the time it was simply known as political economy. But writers in the field contributed not only to our technical understanding of value theory, capital, and production theory, and the theory of economic development, they also tackled

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questions in ethics, epistemology, political theory, and even institutional design. Consider the writings of figures such as David Hume, Adam Smith, and J. S. Mill.

By the time economics emerged as a separate discipline with Alfred Marshall, the sort of broad questions that were given equal weight by Hume, Smith, and Mill were increasingly put in the background and the technical details of economic analysis moved to the foreground. Questions of background and foreground in analysis too easily lead to situations where what is in the background tends to be not only de-emphasized, but forgotten. Thus, the sort of analysis of the Scottish moral philosophers and the British utilitarians that recognized man as he is (an imperfect creature) and the imperfect world he occupies (we live in a world of scarcity and with imperfect knowledge) gave way to proofs and theorems. For mathematical tractability reasons, many of the imperfections of man and the world he occupies had to be minimized. Instead of the strictures of critical reasoning, the striving for sound logic, and good argument guiding the economic theorist, theory construction was now a game of mathematical model building where logical validity was the only check, and the testing of the propositions for their relevance to the world of affairs would be done through a separate intellectual act of sophisticated statistical analysis. In this climate is it any wonder that economics became increasingly divorced from philosophy?

Gaus tackles this from the other side, and finds fault in the philosopher's excess of abstract theorizing from ideal conditions. So in some sense, the twentieth century was a flight from reality and a retreat into the abstract in both the social sciences and the humanities. From the economic point of view, there were some bold thinkers who refused to follow the trend – for our purposes here we will just list Hayek, Buchanan, and Sen as the primary examples, though perhaps only Hayek came the closest to fully escaping ideal theorizing. As caricatures of the ideal theorists in economics and philosophy we would mention Arrow and Rawls. The very invoking of these names should focus the reader immediately on the tensions in our narrative – for it is not a simple story. Arrow was deeply concerned throughout his writings with questions beyond a technical nature in economic theory, and Rawls as well thought his political philosophic efforts were not limited to worlds devoid of human frailties. But in both cases, a reasonable argument can be made that the theoretical efforts of Arrow and Rawls fails to address the problems we must address in dealing with flesh and blood human beings; fallible yet capable creatures, who despite their differences with one another must somehow stumble upon rules of social intercourse that enable them to live better together than they would apart.

As we read Gaus's tome, this is his great achievement. He successfully marshals arguments and evidence from the social sciences (economics, politics, psychology, etc.) to address fundamental questions in the humanities (nature of freedom, the 'good society', etc.). Gaus is writing a philosophical treatise, so it is different in nature and scope than say Deirdre McCloskey's similar efforts in *The Bourgeois Virtues* (2007) and *Bourgeois Dignity* (2010). In McCloskey's work, she informs us that we cannot answer empirical questions philosophically. As a result, she goes to the social sciences and the historical record to address the questions concerning the fundamental determinants of human well-being. Gaus, on the other hand, is asking a different question — what rules that bind behavior can we publicly justify that also enable us to live with one another despite our differences and to realize the great gains from social cooperation?

In stating the puzzle in this way, Gaus is able to show that our moral intuitions do not always align with the moral demands required for us to realize peaceful cooperation and productive specialization. Our moral intuitions too often impute to us a moral authority over others that cannot be publically justified. The moral demands required of us actually pare down the claims we can make on others and limit the justifications of coercion we can actually make. In making his case, Gaus relies on both evolutionary arguments *and* social contractarian arguments. This, again, is to us one of the strong suits of Gaus. He blends political philosophical traditions together in a way that most interpreters refuse to do. Somehow, Locke, Hume, and Hobbes all get to contribute to our understanding of morals and public authority, as well as their modern representatives in Nozick, Hayek, and Buchanan.

Gaus' central motivation in this work is the following: "can the authority of social morality be reconciled with our status as free and equal moral persons in a world characterized by deep and pervasive yet reasonable disagreements about the standards by which to evaluate the justifiability of claims to moral authority?" (p. xv). He defines social morality as "rules that we are required to act upon and which provide the basis for authoritative demands of one person addressed to another" (p. 1). Stated differently, social morality refers to "the set of social-moral rules that require or prohibit actions, and so ground moral imperatives that we direct to each to engage in, or refrain from, certain lines of conduct" (p. 2). In establishing a social morality and then institutionalizing it in political and legal structures, we must not only account for our imperfect nature on both sides of that intellectual exercise, but also to account for the relationship, if any, that exists between ethics and the political/legal order. Modern ethics and political philosophy render foundational priority to one's relations to other individuals, or as Gaus would describe the relationship, as primarily concerned with "whether free and equal persons can all endorse a common political order even though their private judgments about the good and justice are so often opposed." (p. 2) As a social being, how we account for the relationship between ethics and the political/legal order depends significantly not only on one's relations with others, but also ultimately of how individuals choose to live their own life.

It may not simply be that the ethical order of "social morality" is reducible to the political/legal order. They may be related yet distinct from one another, such that individuals can have moral obligations that are both morally and legally binding and other obligations that are morally binding though not necessarily legally binding (Rasmussen and Den Uyl 2005, p. 85). If so, this leads to us to ask the following question: can there be any principles by which to differentiate those ethical norms that concern the political/legal order from those that concern only the moral?¹ If so, does this suggest a deeper ethical foundation that underpins the institutional conditions of "social morality"? To answer this question, we will draw from the ethical implications of the socialist calculation debate for a liberal market order (Kirzner 1988). These ethical implications are drawn from what Israel Kirzner regards as "ethical by-products" that emerge from the entrepreneurial market process. Following this Kirznerian insight, we argue that such ethical by-products that emerge from rational economic calculation have two implications for social morality in times of moral disequilibrium. First, that the demands of social morality require a deeper moral

¹ For the purposes of this paper, we are using the terms *ethical* and *moral* interchangeably.

foundation for its justification. Secondly, the failure to make a distinction between the *institutional* prerequisites for individual human flourishing and those for social morality assumes away the problem that Gaus is attempting to resolve, namely how autonomous individuals converge on “rules that are actually followed by its members and so form a basis for an ordered and cooperative social life” (Gaus 2011, p. 179).

2 The socialist calculation debate: positive and normative implications

As Austrian economist Don Lavoie reminds us, theory is “analogous to a pair of spectacles through which we try to make sense of the world” (1985, p. 8). Although the role of the economist, from an Austrian perspective, is to engage in positive, value-free economic analysis, alternative theories about the market, whether it is viewed in terms of a process of discovery or in terms of equilibrium conditions, will generate different normative implications. As Kirzner elaborates on this Misesian-Hayekian rendition of the market process, price signals which facilitate greater plan coordination “are *developed* through a process of learning that is governed step by step by the interim sets of prices; it is the latter process to which we refer as a process of communication of information. This learning process at the same time nudges individual plans into closer and closer coordination” (italics original 1973, p. 219). The superiority of capitalism, according to Austrians, rests on an institutional framework of private property rights, in which entrepreneurs catalyze the generation of economic knowledge by discovering previously unnoticed pure profit opportunities in the market. Entrepreneurship is not manifested as an endowment in a particular group of individuals, but as an innate potentiality embodied in all individuals (Mises 1949 [2007], pp. 252–253).

The entrepreneur earns profit based on his “alertness” of uncertain market conditions. In a world of uncertainty, the means by which individuals pursue different economic ends are unknown and must be discovered. It is the entrepreneurial element in each individual “that is responsible for our understanding of human action as active, creative, and human rather than as passive, automatic, and mechanical” (Kirzner 1973, p. 35). The entrepreneur does not mechanically respond to profit opportunities as a calculative, maximizing *homo economicus*. Rather, it is by being “alert” to price discrepancies between existing commodities that the entrepreneur drives the market process towards equilibrium by coordinating the dispersed and often tacit knowledge of time and place.

Upon further examination, Israel Kirzner has argued that Mises and Hayek not only made an explicitly positive argument for the superiority of a liberal market order, but that such an argument also contained an “ethical byproduct” (Kirzner 1988, p. 166) that has moral implications for a liberal market order as well. This ethical by-product of the debate is what Kirzner dubs as the “finders-keepers principle” (Kirzner 1988, p. 180). Kirzner elaborates on this principle by giving an example of a mountain hiker that discovers a previously unnoticed flower. This act of discovery confers property rights over the flower to the entrepreneur, precisely because his action catalyzed knowledge of the flower’s existence. As Kirzner states:

This finders-keepers ethic confers ownership of the flower upon its discoverer not because his claim antedates any other possible subsequent claims, but because finding and taking the flower is seen as giving him a unique moral claim over it that possesses greater weight, on the scales of justice, than any other possible claim can possess. This unique moral claim appears to arise from the circumstance that the undiscovered flower, blooming unseen was, in a certain sense, a nonexistent flower. It existed for no human mind, so that, regardless of philosophical profundities, its physical existence was economically and socially irrelevant (Kirzner 1988, p. 181).

The point we are raising here is that a liberal order based on social morality, which “is the basis for issuing *demands* on others that they *must* perform certain actions,” (Gaus 2011, p. 6) cannot completely eliminate ethical byproducts, such as the emergence of unique moral claims of individuals that are not independent of a particular time and circumstance, from “notions of right, wrong, duty, and obligation” (Gaus 2011, p. 8) applicable to everyone universally and equally. This does not mean that a liberal order based on social morality will never experience moral conflict, and Gaus would not deny this. However, the argument that Gaus puts forth to resolve such moral conflict presumes that the moral equilibrium necessary for the justification of social morality has already been achieved. The resolution of particular moral conflicts within Gaus’ system requires a preexisting equilibrium on moral procedure, the development of which requires a constructivist approach to reaching this equilibrium. As we discuss in the next section, this suggests a distinction must be developed between the political authority that is given this equilibrium condition, and thus institutionalizes social morality as parameters within its framework, and a political authority that provides a framework within which moral entrepreneurship takes place.

3 Social theory, social morality, and perfect competition

In the previous section we have argued that Gaus’s public justification of social society is analogous to a market viewed in terms of equilibrium rather a market viewed in terms of an entrepreneurial discovery process. Just as in the case of the model of market equilibrium, if we employ the Gaussian model of public justification described here as a description of reality rather than a heuristic to understand the tendencies towards which arrive at rules for social morality, then we rule out the mechanism that underlies the public justification of social morality, namely the entrepreneurial learning process. By ruling out this *endogenous* learning process, deviations from those rules that have been publicly justified must be resolved exogenously in a constructivist manner.

To understand this relationship between the constructivist nature of public reason in establishing the rules of social morality and preserving an equilibrium in the moral demands of autonomous individuals, let us revisit the argument made by Buchanan in his essay “Ethical Rules, Expected Values, and Large Numbers” (1965). In that essay, Buchanan considers an analogy between the emergence of norms through the social contract and the model of perfect competition, arguing that the dilemma of large numbers of participants in ethical systems is directly analogous to the free-rider problem and inversely analogous to perfect competition.

The large number of participants in ethical systems leads the individual to consider “his own choice of an ethical rule to exert no influence on the choices of rules made by others. In effect, the choices of others here are treated as a part of the natural environment, so to speak, and not dependent on the individual’s own decision” (1965, p. 7), preventing any one individual from needing to consider the effects of his actions on the overall structure of ethical rules, just as economic actors in perfectly competitive environments do not alter the structure of prices. Thus, in social models with large numbers of individuals and in perfect competition, rules and prices, respectively, are parameters taken by individuals as given. However, if everyone has assumed that ethical rules are given, how is it that rules ever emerge or change? Analogous to the Walrasian auctioneer of the perfect competition model, Buchanan argues:

As individuals, increasingly, find themselves caught in the large-number dilemma with respect to ethical choices, a possible logical explanation is provided for resort to political-governmental processes which can, effectively, change the rules and impose standards of conduct common to all individuals (1965, p. 12).

It would seem then that Buchanan postulates that an extra-human entity, the sovereign, will ensure that rules are enforced and order is maintained. However, “there is no way that the individuals within the model can develop rules; they rely on something outside of the model. But if the model was supposed to explain the emergence of rules then should not the model be able to explain the emergence of rules within the model?” (Boettke 1987, p. 12).²

What we are illustrating here is that there is a distinction to be made between *mechanisms* and *solutions*. When we conflate the solution to a problem with the mechanisms that generate a solution to that problem, we tend to introduce arguments that pre-reconcile the very solution we are attempting to discover. In terms of Gaus, the way in which the authority of social morality can be justifiably reconciled with our status as free and equal moral persons is through what Den Uyl refers to as “an ethics of command” (2009, p. 363), which he defines as:

one whose principles are formulated without necessary reference to, and are applicable independently of, the actual preferences or purposes of agents with the goal of ordering, defining, or removing those preferences and purposes in accordance with the rules or duties dictated by a given theory’s source of moral obligation (italics original).

Although Gaus appeals to the self-interest of individuals in their duty to enforce the demands of social morality upon others, outside the context of moral equilibrium, this introduces an inherent tension between the pursuit of what an individual regards as a good particular to himself, which is central to classical ethics, and the application of the good common to everyone equally and as particular to no one as in modern ethics. This leads Gaus to claim that “neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics is a rejection of modernity rather than a solution to its problems” (p. 8). Although this may be true of some philosophers

² Munger persuasively articulates this argument in this symposium, basing the “extra-human” entity to which we refer runs analogous to what he argues as the necessity for a “Kantian Parliamentarian.”

of the Aristotelian tradition, such as Alasdair MacIntyre (1981), other philosophers working within an Aristotelian framework, such as Fred Miller (1983) argue that certain distinctive doctrines in Aristotle's ethics can serve as grounds for a defense of individual liberty, namely in its interrelationship between Kirzner's finders-keepers principle and the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis*, also known as practical rationality or practical wisdom.³

The point here is not to expound this relationship, but to point out that, as we alluded to in the previous section, that Gaus's rejection of neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics as a solution to modernity's problems, while plausibly true in terms of politics, doesn't necessarily mean that neo-Aristotelian virtue ethics doesn't provide a justificatory *mechanism*, namely self-direction, that informs us of the feasibility of reaching a political *solution* to generate the demands of social morality.

How does this pertain to our discussion of "ethical byproducts" and the role of entrepreneurship for social morality? Returning to our discussion from section II, we had discussed the primacy of private property rights for economic calculation, which extends social cooperation into anonymity through money prices. As Steven Horwitz states, "Economic calculation is the art of picking the economically efficient mode of production from among the technologically feasible" (2008, p. 85). In the same way, those rules that are publicly justifiable ought to be those that protect the self-direction of individuals. The role of self-direction is to discover those social rules that are both morally and legally binding among anonymous others from among those social rules that are only legally binding. Such knowledge is contextual, in that it only emerges when individuals are protected in their capacity to pursue their own goals and objectives and coordinate such goals with those of others. In order for social morality to be publicly justified, it would require individuals to know those moral demands that they must perform so that they may be legally enforced, yet to universalize these moral demands into social morality, they must first be discovered among the set of particular moral demands, which are actualized only through the self-direction of imperfect human beings with imperfect knowledge. Just as this contextual knowledge is precluded from the central planner, it is also precluded from the legislator as well.

Just as Austrian economists view the market as a discovery procedure (Hayek 1968[2002]), a procedural framework that facilitates such a discovery procedure also makes self-direction possible. According to Rasmussen and Den Uyl (2005, p. 88):

Self-direction is both central and necessary to the nature of human flourishing, being simultaneously universal and particular. It is the only feature of human flourishing that is common to all acts of flourishing and peculiar to each, and yet at the same time does not imply any particular form of flourishing... Since self-direction is not only common to, but is required by, all forms of human flourishing, regardless of the level of achievement or specificity, it can be used to create a political/legal order.

³ The relationship between the notion of entrepreneurship in the Austrian School and the notion of practical wisdom in Aristotelian tradition within an institutional framework of private property, contract, and consent is beyond the scope of this paper. See Candela and Powell 2014. Markets as Processes of Moral Discovery. *Studies In Emergent Order*, 7: 258–272.

Although Gaus cautions against an overridealization of society's political subjects, which he refers to as a "Members of the Public," (2011, p. 276), such an idealization presumes that political subjects have already discovered both the means and ends of their objective, namely "to resolve conflicts between the demands on social morality, to complete these demands, to enforce them, and to facilitate their reform in a range of circumstances" (Wall 2013, p. 161).

According to Aristotle, the proper exercise of moral virtue in the context of action means "to have them at the right time, about the right things, towards the right people, for the right end, and in the right way, is the mean and best; and this is the business of virtue." (2000, p. 30). Practical wisdom refers to a disposition towards reason in action, constituting an excellent habituation of character, or moral virtue, and is not possible without it. However, it is the proper use of practical wisdom that dictates the habituation of appropriate character in each individual by directing our desires and self-interest using reason. What this suggests is that the development of practical wisdom in accordance with moral virtue is a discovery process that integrates particular and contingent knowledge not only through self-reflection but also in association with other individuals, much like the Kirznerian entrepreneur (Candela and Powell 2014, p. 268).

One particular problem with the conflating the demands of social morality into an "ethics of command" is that it conflates questions about *establishing* the legal framework for a liberal order with questions about our moral demands, which operate *within* such a framework (Boettke 2011; Rasmussen and Den Uyl 1991, p. 194) By restricting questions about ethics to interactions within the framework, the legislator can avoid the problem of moral authoritarianism by being "charged with the single responsibility of enforcing agreed upon rights and claims," (Buchanan 1975, p. 68) thus confining the state to its "protective" role without unleashing moral authoritarianism. Our moral demands to each other are discovered within the framework through self-direction, which is the normative procedure by which we evaluate political institutions.

4 Political authority and robust political economy

Gaus argues that the state "simply facilitates the creation of a moral authority through moral equilibrium" (p. 465). For him, our concept of social morality depends on moral claims being fully coordinated among all individuals in society. If moral equilibrium is achieved, it will *in fact* serve as its own source of justification. This is because a social morality is justified if it reflects, first, the *actual* values of each and every acting agent in society, and a moral claim on others has moral standing only because others have actually accepted the validity of the claim as reflecting their own values. As Gaus writes:

Once a society of free and equal persons has coordinated on specific moral rules and their interpretation, the point of invoking moral authority is to police this equilibrium selection against "trembling hands" – individuals who make mistakes about what rule is in equilibrium – and those who otherwise fail to act on their best reasons. In these cases the overwhelming social opinion concurs in criticizing deviant behavior. An individual who violates the social equilibrium will not simply be able to check the demands on her, for she will meet the same demand from almost all others (pp. 47-48).

Yet this statement presumes that individuals as Members of the Public have already achieved perfect plan coordination of the moral demands that they wish to enforce. However, social cooperation under the division of labor “derives not from abstract assignment of integers by an impersonal agency, but from choices by persons according to the unique persons they are” (Norton 1976, p. 274). Individuals are engaged in sociality through the pursuit of “projects” (Lomasky 1990) that embody not only their own tacit knowledge of a particular time and circumstance, but also their qualitatively unique personhood.

We are imperfect beings living in an imperfect world designing imperfect institutions in our effort to realize a better world. It is, after all, through concrete institutions that individuals and groups are able to transform situations of tension and conflict into opportunities for cooperation. If we relax our assumptions of either agent or institutional homogeneity, then we will fail in our mission to understand how we learn through time. A theory of learning liberalism emerges instead from examining agent heterogeneity and the diversity of institutional forms that groups of human beings test out to resolve conflicts and promote peaceful cooperation. Any account of liberalism would be incomplete if its ethical underpinnings would be “institutionalized” into its framework, since the actual social implications of its principles remain to be discovered and cannot be developed except through practice (Rasmussen and Den Uyl 2005, p. 40).

There are in fact many different ways by which human beings have chosen to live together, but the historical reality is that there are very few ways that human beings have found that enable them to live peacefully and prosperously with one another despite their differences. Most of human history is about isolating one group from other groups and institutionalizing distrust of the “other”, which means foregoing many of the advantages of trade and an expanded division of labor. Peace and prosperity follow from finding those rules of social morality that enable us to pursue our Smithian propensity to truck, barter and exchange, and minimize the scope for our Hobbesian propensity to rape, pillage and plunder. It is all too rare in the recorded history of mankind that a successful institutionalization through political authority constrained our Hobbesian nature and rewarded our Smithian one. When it has happened, peace and prosperity have followed. But again, our moral intuitions too often bite against the moral demands required to achieve such a result. Instead of our social morality and institutions providing the background for a self-governing society, we are condemned to a governing and governed existence. Some claim to a moral authority of governor, while others are denied the dignity of being a self-governor of their own lives. But it is highly dubious that any such claims can ever be publically justified.

The institutionalization of the moral demands of the Great Society – what Gaus (2011, p. 474) refers to as “politically articulated element” of our social morality is what is critical for the establishment of the ‘machinery of freedom’ to be put in place. Again, remember that we are talking about imperfect beings interacting with other imperfect beings in an imperfect world within a social ecology bound by imperfect institutions. Postulating perfection at either the agent or the institutional design level of analysis is one of the major errors of twentieth century political and social theory. Just as we social scientists need a “rationality for mortals” (e.g., Gigerenzer 2008), it is important that as philosophers we develop a “morality for mortals” if we hope to develop a political and social theory that is capable of informing how human beings can in fact devise the social rules that enable them to live better together while realizing the gains from trade and the gains from innovation.

Incentives matter, information must be communicated and new knowledge must be discovered, and creativity, novelty, and innovation must be encouraged and disciplined. This all happens within specific institutional environments. The overlap between the institutional regime that can get the incentives right to achieve this balance of efficient resource use and constant learning through innovation, and one that grants freedom and dignity to the greatest number of fellow human beings is surprisingly similar to that which was originally identified by Hume and Smith – a regime of property, contract and consent.

In “Individualism: True and False”, Hayek (1948, p. 11–14) argued that “there can be little doubt” that the chief concern of the classical liberal political economists was “not so much with what man might occasionally achieve when he was at his best but that he should have as little opportunity as possible to do harm when he was at his worst.” The system they sought to institutionalize was a system “under which bad men can do least harm.” The goal was to establish a social system where freedom could be granted to all, rather than restricted only to the good and the wise. It was a system that would not depend for its functioning on some transformation of human beings for the better, but instead worked with men as they are “in all their given variety and complexity, sometimes good and sometimes bad, sometimes intelligent and more often stupid.” That set of institutions, which it turns out can work with the imperfections in man’s character and the limits to his knowledge and interests, was by their reasoning the system of private property and freedom of contract. “The real question,” Hayek suggests, “is not whether man is, or ought to be, guided by selfish motives but whether we can allow him to be guided in his actions by those immediate consequences which he can know and care for or whether he ought to be made to do what seems appropriate to somebody else who is supposed to possess a fuller comprehension of the significance of these actions to society as a whole.”

5 Conclusion

In Gaus’s language, can we publicly justify the coercive interference in the free choices of others acting on their knowledge of time and place? If we continually insist that we are dealing with imperfect beings operating in an imperfect world within imperfect institutions, then our answer would appear to be no even when we consider the most tension filled situations. It is not my intent to counsel complete despair — as Frank Knight often said, ‘To call a situation hopeless is to call it ideal’ – but instead to provide a caveat in our efforts at institutional design to resolve social problems. We must, and do, engage in institutional craftsmanship, which is designed to both induce but constrain the behavior of others to realize human betterment. The critical point, however, is that we must not trust one size fits all arguments as the guide in our efforts. Instead, the institutionalization of our social morality must be designed such to take into account and encourage constant learning through social experimentation. The political and legal structure that best realizes that has been termed by Elinor and Vincent Ostrom as a polycentric system, and in actual experience is approximated by a system of competitive federalism.

In building his case for Public Reason Liberalism, Gaus has borrowed liberally from the best of what Boettke has termed “mainline economics” (see Boettke 2012) as well as other social scientific insights from evolutionary theory, cognitive psychology, and political science. It is a work that reminds the reader of the great works in political economy and moral philosophy from the 18th and nineteenth century. And we would argue that he has made a great case for a social morality for mortals that should be from now on the building block for all normative explorations into the institutional foundations of human sociability.

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