



Economix: How and Why Our Economy Works (and Doesn't Work), in Words and Pictures

Michael Goodwin , Dan E. Burr (Illustrations) , David Bach , Joel Bakan

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Stimulus plans: good or bad? Free markets: How free are they? Jobs: Can we afford them? Occupy Wall Street . . . worldwide

Everybody's talking about the economy, but how can we, the people, understand what Wall Street or Washington knows--or say they know? Read "Economix."

With clear, witty writing and quirky, accessible art, this important and timely graphic novel transforms "the dismal science" of economics into a fun, fact-filled story about human nature and our attempts to make the most of what we've got . . . and sometimes what our neighbors have got. "Economix" explains it all, from the beginning of Western economic thought, to markets free and otherwise, to economic failures, successes, limitations, and future possibilities. It's the essential, accessible guide to understanding the economy and economic practices. A must-read for every citizen and every voter. PRAISE FOR "ECONOMIX"

"It's simply phenomenal. You could read ten books on the subject and not glean as much information."-- David Bach founder of FinishRich Media; author of nine "New York Times" bestsellers, including "Debt Free for Life" and "The Automatic Millionaire" "Goodwin has done the seemingly impossible--he has made economics comprehensible "and" funny."-- Joel Bakan, author of "The Corporation" "The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power" "An amazing lesson in true-world economics Delightfully presented, powerful, insightful, and important information What a fun way to fathom a deep and often dark subject "-- John Perkins, author of "Hoodwinked" and the "New York Times" bestseller "Confessions of an Economic Hit Man" "Smart, insightful, clear, and as close to the truth as economics can get. The bonus: Who would have guessed that economics could be fun, and--here's the joy--really accessible? Goodwin roots us in history and fills us with common sense understanding. As he puts it early on, economics seems horribly complicated mostly because we're looking at it all at once. Broken down into its component pieces, it's relatively easy to understand. And a good understanding of economics is critical to maneuvering in the world today. If I were compiling a list of the 100 most important books you can read in a lifetime, this would be on it."--Stephen Petranek, editor-in-chief, Weider History magazines, former editor-in-chief of "Discover" magazine "Through a potent mix of comics and punchy, concise, accessible prose, Goodwin takes us on a provocative, exhaustively researched, and exceedingly engaging trip through our history and present day, creating an alternately hilarious and scary picture of where we are today as an economy-- and what it all means. More than that, Goodwin makes the arcane, understandable. If your mind either spins or slumbers at the thought of economics, read Goodwin's "Economix" and all will become clear. --Nomi Prins, author of "It Takes a Pillage: An Epic Tale of Power, Deceit, and Untold Trillions" ""Economix" is a lively, cheerfully opinionated romp through the historical and intellectual foundations of our current economy and our current economic problems. Goodwin has a knack for distilling complex ideas and events in ways that invite the reader to follow the big picture without losing track of what actually happened. Any reader wondering how our economy got to where it is today will find this a refreshing overview."--Timothy W. Guinnane, Philip Golden Bartlett Professor of Economic History, Yale University

Economix: How and Why Our Economy Works (and Doesn't Work), in Words and

Pictures Details

Date : Published September 1st 2012 by Harry N. Abrams

ISBN : 9780810988392

Author : Michael Goodwin , Dan E. Burr (Illustrations) , David Bach , Joel Bakan

Format : Paperback 304 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Economics, Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Comics, History, Politics, Bande Dessinée, Business, Finance, Graphic Novels Comics

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From Reader Review *Economix: How and Why Our Economy Works (and Doesn't Work)*, in Words and Pictures for online ebook

Ananya Ghosh says

To quote Joel Bakan (author of *The Corporation*), "don't be surprised if it turns out to be the first comic book to win its author the Nobel Prize in Economics" . I can't agree more.

And boy, who knew dismal science can be so fun to read?!

Zanna says

These days everyone's worried about the economy! The economy is the biggest issue for voters! Won't somebody puh-leeeeeese think of the economy?

I don't know about you, but I don't remember anyone ever explaining anything about this economy to me in eleven years of compulsory education. Every politician confidently promises to fix it and everyone has an opinion on it, but most of us rely heavily on clued-up commentators to translate market jargon into baby-talk we can nod along to, and believe that it's all over our heads, it's in the hands of the academics, the math-grads and (oh dear) the bankers who actually understand those crazy equations.

Knowing about economics is powerful knowledge; those who control wealth benefit from our ignorance. Michael Goodwin has collaborated with illustrator Dan E Burr to create a textbook simple and entertaining enough to explain economics and its chequered history to a teenager. I can't even articulate how great I think this concept is. Goodwin has totally done his bit towards saving the world here. He makes the absurdities of our economic system look absurd. He exposes its hypocrites and its bare-faced liars, and points out the gaping holes in economic theories that are not just taken seriously but used to justify government and international policies.

A couple of years ago I picked up and read *The Wealth of Nations* and I seem to have read various other relevant historical and critical texts like *Prosperity without Growth* and *Thinking Fast and Slow* (which deals harshly with classical economics and critiques stock broking as... worse than pointless). I've studied ethics and philosophy of science and read about climate change and its causes. I teach physics. *Economix* doesn't have much news for me, but it condenses a giant fuzzily grasped cloud of what I more-or-less knew into a work of blazing clarity, making it communicable and useable for me. It could convey this knowledge to anyone without the hundreds of head-scratching hours of multidisciplinary study I have apparently spent garnering it! And it's funny. It deserves laurels. It deserves to be read. Preferably by everyone.

Josh says

The author condenses a mountain of economic texts into a highly readable 300-page comic book, deftly explaining economic theory and history from Adam Smith's 1776 masterpiece "*The Wealth of Nations*", to the Keynesian stimulus spending after the 2008 collapse and beyond. The illustrations make the book extremely approachable, but don't think for a second that the book is juvenile or watered-down. I actually had to read the book in small chunks so that I could process the onslaught of information in each section.

This book did for me what an entire semester of Macroeconomics did not: it helped me truly grasp the fundamentals of our economic system.

Much of the book simply confirmed what I already knew: conservatives favor an economic model that creates private profits and public risks, corporate propaganda demonizes and exploits labor whilst lobbying for tax loopholes that shift the tax burden to the lower class, Republicans are only concerned about the federal debt to the extent that it funds social programs (a very deliberate and planned political move christened "Starve the Beast" started by Reaganites and continued to this day by Eric Cantor and others, which pushes government to the point of collapse for the mere purpose of defunding social welfare spending), and that military-industrial cahoots *always* lead to unnecessary wars.

I also learned a LOT that was completely new to me, such as: what Adam Smith *really* said in "Wealth of Nations", why the IMF and World Bank were complete abject failures in the 1990s, what a complete idiot Alan Greenspan is, how the three worst presidents we have ever had (Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover) served back-to-back administrations, how all of classical and neoliberal (a.k.a. Tea Party) policy points are based on theoretical Ricardo concepts that were never intended to be the basis for public policy, and how government grew and taxes increased under the Reagan administration.

Having all of this information is both infuriating and empowering. Mostly infuriating.

Steve Klabnik says

A few friends recommended Economix to me, so I picked it up the other day. I was expecting not to like it, but I needed to mix some light reading into my schedule, and blew through Economix in a few hours. I really enjoyed it overall, but like any book, it's not without it's problems.

Marx

The first thing that I do when I read any layman's book about economics is to check the index for the words "Karl Marx." It's sort of a filter; if they don't strawman Marx, then it's probably pretty good. If they do, then they probably suck. Note that I said 'strawman,' disagreement is fine, I myself disagree with Marx on many things. But it's a pretty good way to see if someone knows what they're talking about. So I'll start there.

Good 'ol Karl is mentioned just a few times in this book, and it's actually pretty decent. It starts off with a description of the *Manifesto*, class struggle, and some other bits of Marxist theory. However, we run into the first weird little thing on the bottom of page 55:

> But the workers didn't unite, and most of the 1848 revolutions failed. Marx
> fled to England with a mission: "I'll prove the revolution is coming! See if
> I don't!"

It's my current understanding that Marx didn't write *Capital* to prove anything about the revolution; he wrote it to gain a scientific understanding of capitalism and how it functions. However, after thinking about it, I'm not actually sure I know enough bibliographical information about Marx to truly say this. My gut also says bullshit on sentences like this because of the

rhetorical function that they play in the story, which is to equivocate Marxists and Austrians, which is just flat-out wrong. More on that later.

The next time we pick up with Marx, he's finished **Capital**, so Goodwin explains its basic tenets. He does a pretty admirable job, but a few caveats apply.

> Marx kept Ricardo's labor theory of value, but did ask: "If everything sells for its labor cost, where does ****profit**** come from?"

This is hand-wavy, but hand-wavy in an important way: Marx did not keep Ricardo's labor theory of value. The subtitle of **Capital** is 'Kritik der politischen Ökonomie', or 'a critique of political economy.' Goodwin does a good job of mentioning that Marx was trying to critique classical political economy (which contains Ricardo), but then mis-handles that as well. We'll get to that, but Marx's labor theory of value contains significant and important differences from Adam Smith and Ricardo's theories.

> but profit comes from squeezing workers.

This is not really true. Marx made it very clear that exchange is based in equivalence, nobody is 'cheating' the laws of exchange. Surplus value (which Goodwin mentions appropriately) is formed from the differences between labor-power and other commodities: labor-power is the only commodity which can create value. This isn't the page on *Capital*, and this book is supposed to be an overview, but it's still a significant distortion of Marx's theories.

Other than this, his description of **Capital** is pretty good, and frankly, way better than I expected when I bought this book.

Okay, next up, 'Neoclassical economics':

> But soon after **Capital** came out, economists started moving away from Ricardo's labor theory of value.

And for good reasons! Ricardo's theory of value wasn't developed enough, for sure. But Marx, as I mentioned above, was also moving away from it. Ricardo's irrelevance does not make Marx irrelevant. This is why the comment above about the differences between their labor theories matters. The book has an image here of Marx chasing after Marshall, Walras, and Jevons, but in reality, they should all be walking away from Ricardo. This lack of understanding is also played out in the further description of Ricardo; also, lol at taking the Malthusian growth model seriously at all.

Anyway, I have a few other things to say, but yes. In general, I think Economix's handling of Marx is better than I expected, and I also don't think it's fair to expect rigour in a book like this. But these kinds of things are why, at the end, the author suggests that you go read things on your own, and read things for yourself. Broad overviews are just that.

Conflation of Neoliberals and Marxists

On page 241, he has a panel that says,

> Heck, it could be hard to say which was which.

This kind of thing really rubs me the wrong way, because they're basically opposite, not equivalent. Yes, both use anti-state rhetoric, but anarchists and communists care primarily about the health of the working class, and will support 'growing the state' through social programs and taxation until the collapse of capitalism. Austrians and neoliberals simply care about non-interference by government, and have no concern for anyone but themselves. See: Objectivism. Even if their policies hurt people, they don't care, due to the rhetoric around bootstraps, job creators, and lazy welfare recipients.

Mischaracterization of the anti-globalization movement

Page 245:

> We're not against globalization, we're against the ****way**** that it's happening.

The vast majority of those involved in the anti-globalization movement were ardent anti-capitalists, and were straight-up against globalization. Maybe there were a few liberals mixed in there that said things like this, but invoking the black bloc and implying that they are ultimately cool with globalization is really wrong.

What I liked

Other than that, I really, really enjoyed this book. It presents an overall scepticism that I really enjoyed, a focus on pragmatics over theories, and gives an overview of economics that is in line with most of my understanding of the field and its various players. Details are a bit out of line, but the big pieces are all great. It was easy to read, fun to read, and has a pretty great list of books in the back to follow-up on.

I will certainly give a recommendation of this book to anyone who wants to get their feet wet in the wide world of economics.

Patrick Zandl says

Komiks o tom, jak funguje ekonomika, jsem namátkově znal z anglického vydání a v češtině jsem ho původně koupil dcerám k vánocím. Co by mi mohlo na takovém zpracování překvapit, že jo...

Nakonec jsem ho zhltnul na posezení. Kniha výborně probírá více i méně známé stránky ekonomiky v historickém přehledu. Neukazuje izolované ekonomické teorie a teoretiky, ale především to, jak se projevovala v praxi. Nejde o odosobněnou výkladovou knihu o makroekonomii, ale přesně o to, co mám rád: kontinuální výklad v historických souvislostech. Kniha mi umožnila si znovu zrekapitulovat všechny moje výhrady, které mám proti tzv. "volnému trhu" (a v českém pojetí vříd Svobodným), proti Reaganovi a

podobným stálícím tuzemské mytologie.

Pro dcery je to nakonec p?eci jen trochu t?žký, samy to asi nedo?tou, teenager se tolik orientovat nebude, ale s trochou výkladu i tady dobrý :)

Result? Pokud máte zájem mít p?ehled o ekonomice, mzdách, zam?stnanosti, korporacích atd, rozhodn? berte. A na záv?r spoiler: kone?n? n?kdo, kdo je pro progresivní zdan?ní firem podle obratu. Já taky. Pro boj s da?ovými úniky do ráj? dobrý za?átek :)

Mike says

Good introduction to basic economics and its history (primarily via the U.S. experience). The author's own political sensibilities are somewhat hamfistedly delivered as he approaches the present day, and there is a shade too much hero worship of Adam Smith and the Roosevelt clan, and he also tends to veer into Greenpeace territory more than an introduction to economics should. I actually agree with most of his viewpoint, but the polemic seems out of place and poorly handled. The book would've benefited from a more balanced view of the stock market, as it tends to depict investors as either rich, idiots or both, and the system itself as basically a big business conspiracy (not to say that all three don't apply). While I can see how the dysfunctional nature of the stock market can give rise to that view - I'm sure the author realises the benefits of the stock market to society at large (pensions are one obvious example), but he doesn't give them much attention for such an important area of the world-economy and its current problems, it's quite likely that some will come away from the book asking why we have one at all. This is significant because in order to properly reform the market it needs to be understood why it works, not just how its been abused. Overall though worth a read even for those already familiar with the territory.

Jean-Luc says

Way back in the day, when we had to walk uphill both ways to get to class, students were required to take Macroeconomics 101 @ Stevens Institute of Technology. The point, I'm sure, was to allow us to digest the news and make informed decisions as voters. The professor was boring, the book prided itself on only using tautologies, all quizzes were multiple choice, and attendance was mandatory. (The last one explains why I only got an A-, ruining my best shot at a 4.0 GPA.)

This book is a 400 year tour-de-force on the history of capitalism, and it is way, way better than an introductory book on economics has any right to be. The author, Michael Goodwin, understands that cause and effect minus context is pointless, and it shows. The art, by Dan. E. Burr, is crisp; there's never any question about what you're looking at.

As part of my History minor, I studied Historical Materialism and the History of Darwinism. I was pleasantly surprised by how fair (and accurate) this book was w/rt Karl Marx's ideas and the context they were born in.

Any economics textbook that doesn't take the environment as central is worthless. We have very nearly liquidated the capital that *the entire economy* runs on. You can't *not* touch on that and pretend you're educating people. This book devotes an entire chapter to the subject, again, with cause, effect, and context.

Economix isn't pefect (few books are), and Thomas Hedges has the best critiques, but they're simply things to keep in mind, not reasons to ignore the book. It isn't the be-all, end-all of understanding, but instead a

ale dnes není až takový standart. Celkově je jeho hodnocení stávající ekonomiky nepříliš lichotivé a krize v roce 2008 je podle něj promarněná šance, jak zkrotit Wall Street a velký kapitál, ale i toto resumé je mi blízké (byť nejsem ekonom a v problematice se orientuji jen velmi zhruba). Ale to jsem rovnou přeskóčila až na konec knihy - celých těch 300 stran předtím je plně zajímavých příkladů z praxe, řada náhledů je pro mě dost nová (hodnocení Reaganových reforem, MMF atd.) a fakt, že jsme se od sedmdesátých let v ekonomické diskuzi dle autora příliš neposunuli, mě docela šokoval, ale když se nad tím zamyslím, tak je to vlastně pravda (byť pro nás bylo v devadesátých letech vše nové, tak nové to ani zdaleka nebylo). Určitě vím, že mě knížka navnadila na další podobnou četbu, takže už se snad konečně pustím do Sedláčkovy Ekonomie dobra a zla a nejspíš na můj reading list přibudou i některé z knih doporučené v závěru Michaelem Goodwinem.

Kontext: Knížku jsme koupili na Světě knihy 2015 - původně jsem s ní v nákupech nepočítala, ale když už jsem ji měla v ruce, tak se mi docela zalíbila a David říkal, že by si ji taky přečetl, takže jsme ji nakonec u Paseky koupili

První věta (byť u komiksu to jde určitě dost špatně): "Na ekonomiku se ptá kdekdo."

Poslední věta: "Takže doufám, že tohle je jen **začátek**, ne **KONEC**."

PS2015RC: A graphic novel (28/50)

Mr. Steve says

This book had a really interesting concept - using a graphic novel format to simplify the economy (this is an adult book). I learned a little bit and enjoyed the first half. However, a caveat: in the second part of the book, the author warns that he's going to get political and that is when this book went downhill, and fast. At least he gave a warning.

In full disclosure, I am a fiscal conservative so the author's blatant liberalism would be something I wouldn't agree with anyway. However, he is so unwilling to give any modern conservative a modicum of credit for any economic successes that I found it quite distracting. Even in his eyes, some conservative somewhere must have gotten SOMETHING right.

It was very disappointing. I realize I don't know everything about the economy and am open to the possibility that I might be wrong about some things I think I know about it. I was hoping to read a book that took the economy from an independent standpoint; sadly, this wasn't it.

Yann says

Je ne lis plus beaucoup de bandes dessinées, mais j'avais envie pour changer un peu de lectures austères, de tester celle-ci, qui promettait d'instruire en distrayant. Au début, l'auteur se représente avec une pile de livre d'économistes sous le bras. Il explique au lecteur qu'il s'est donné, pour la lui épargner, la peine de les lire et les comprendre à sa place, pour n'en garder que le plus important. Quel bon moyen de devenir à son tour éclairé à moindre effort! Non pas comme ces diplômés, caricaturés comme des imposteurs bornés et impudents, faiseurs de systèmes, sourds et aveugle à la réalité, rendus finalement stupides par l'abstractions de leurs modèles mathématiques horriblement compliqués, lesquels nous conduisent de catastrophes en catastrophes. C'est qu'avant d'aborder un sujet présenté comme rébarbatif, il faut bien animer notre courage,

et vaincre la pusillanimité naturelle du néophyte. Et rien n'y parvient mieux que de flatter sa paresse et sa présomption.

L'auteur, un Etats-Unien, brosse le résumé historique des deux derniers siècles, principalement dans son pays. Il s'agit de se concentrer sur la révolution industrielle et ses conséquences sociales, politiques et économiques. L'ordre est à peu près chronologique, en fonction des sujets abordés. Les grandes figures de l'économie politique sont présentées, avec un résumé de leurs doctrines, ainsi que les circonstances historiques principales qui les ont motivées à les établir. C'est assez général, et je n'ai pas appris grand chose, mais ça a le mérite de constituer un bon synoptique.

Mon avis est mitigé. D'un côté j'ai bien apprécié la présentation de certains penseurs. Par exemple, les pages sur Adam Smith, qui n'est pour une fois pas réduit à cette bête histoire de "main invisible", mais dont les nuances de la pensées sont rendues. Il fait heureusement justice à l'humanité et la probité morale de ce philosophe. Parfois, c'est plus sommaire. Par exemple, les idées de Marx sont un peu traitées par dessus la jambe, et ne permettent que de très loin de comprendre ce que fut le Capital, réduit à un gros bouquin inutilement compliqué. Enfin, tout ce qui traite de la fin de l'histoire du XXème siècle me laisse dans l'ensemble circonspect et sceptique, ressemblant parfois à un salmigondis de pamphlets outrés et de théories du complot fumeuses, mélangé à de vrais informations fiables et utiles.

La réponse se trouve dans la bibliographie, plutôt restreinte : elle est à l'image de la qualité du traitements des sujets. Lorsque les vrais auteurs ont été lus, la vulgarisation est bonne. Dans le cas contraire, s'il s'agit de résumés de seconde main, ou s'il s'agit de plumes interlopes avides de chiffres d'affaire que le temps n'a pas encore filtré, le résultat laisse plus à désirer. Par ailleurs, c'est dommage que les citations ne soient pas accompagnées de références exactes. Je serais curieux d'avoir l'avis de l'auteur sur Tocqueville, qui n'est malheureusement que cité dans la biographie finale en quelques lignes, comme un témoin de l'âge d'or qu'aurait connu la nation à ses début.

Parmi les choses qui m'ont un peu agacées, même si je comprends que l'auteur a voulu donner dans la satire, pour ne pas lasser le lecteur, c'est la légèreté parfois curieuse avec laquelle certains points sont traités. Par exemple, les révolutions politiques européennes sont traitées avec un énorme mépris; en particulier la révolution française, réduite à une aimable plaisanterie qui tourne mal. Inutile également de chercher quoi que ce soit sur l'Espagne ou l'Italie et leurs contributions: dans ce livre, c'est comme si elle n'existaient pas ! Rien non plus sur l'antiquité, alors que l'histoire romaine et l'histoire grecques sont une véritable mine pour la réflexion. Qu'on lise par exemple les commentaires de Machiavel sur Tite Live, ou ceux de Hobbes sur Thucydide: l'économie politique n'est pas apparue le jour où on a eu l'idée de la modéliser par des lois.

Finalement, le but de l'ouvrage est de convaincre le lecteur qu'il doit s'instruire (très bien!), mais surtout se mobiliser contre les abus, les absurdités et les turpitudes qui lui sont mises sous les yeux. Cette dernière intention, assumée et revendiquée par l'auteur, est certes louable, mais elle aurait été à mon avis mieux servie en étant accompagnée par un fond un peu plus uniformément consistant et circonstancié, et moins gâté par les approximations et les omissions. Mais j'ai quand même plutôt apprécié, et le dessin est bien fait!

Iain says

I've been hearing a fair amount of buzz about this, and at the bookshop where I bought it the owner said "oh, we've been selling a lot of these!" And I can see why—it's excellent.

It's basically a cartoon history of the world economy and of economic theory, from Adam Smith up to 2011

or so. Goodwin cites Larry Gonick's *Cartoon History of the Universe* as his inspiration, but this book reminds me more of Scott McCloud, particularly *Reinventing Comics*. Like McCloud, the author's avatar talks directly to the reader, and he makes good use of iconography: an economist's theory is explained with a complicated chart, say, and then for the rest of the book the same chart pops up as an icon whenever he wants to mention that theory. So it's a quick and easy read, but with a pretty dense web of cross-references—terrific informational comics!

As to the content... Well, it's a big picture that I've seen brief glimpses of in the past, but this is the clearest exposition I've seen of the entire thing. I'm inclined to agree with Goodwin's ideological stance (mostly left-wing, though he has well-justified complaints about both sides) so I wonder if there's a kind of groupthink here; are there gaping flaws in his arguments that I'm just not seeing? I'd love to see how rational right-leaning people respond to this.

The big picture is depressing. Government in the pocket of multinational businesses, which exploit loopholes or just write laws to benefit themselves. Spending cuts and "austerity" thrust on the general population, while billions are spent on bailing out banks from the downsides of their stupidly risky investments. One major theme is "damned if you do, damned if you don't", as when Ireland opted to bail out its banks but also to take ownership of them, and found when the dust settled that all it owned were piles of worthless investments and even more debt that hadn't yet come to light. And if we take exactly the opposite approach, as Goodwin cautiously favours, and spend our way out of recession—there aren't enough resources to sustain infinite growth, and we're already on the brink of environmental catastrophe.

Another theme, slightly more hopeful, is that a balanced approach can work well even if it isn't perfect. Extreme communism failed badly, and extreme capitalism is failing almost as badly; but a mixed economy with both private and government-run businesses, with auditing and regulation, can work well. And almost *all* real-world economies are mixed! The trick is to accept the need for balance, rather than waging an ideological war against it as Reagan did (which just allows a much nastier balance to sneak in by the back door—the US's mixed economy is biased towards funding the military rather than public utilities).

I like Goodwin's subtly revisionary history. He has a lot of time for Adam Smith, hero of the free marketeers, but points out that Smith made a lot of excellent points about the abuse of free markets that are quietly ignored these days. He's a big Keynes fan, but cautions against interpreting Keynes in an overly abstract way—the seductive idea that we can treat the economy as a mathematical system to be optimized, and the danger of forgetting what it actually *means*.

He doesn't claim to offer any easy answers, of course. "Anyone who says differently is selling something." But I think there's some useful general lessons here, as in any good history book. There are many, many ways for a small group of people to exploit a large group; and it's not only unfair, but it makes life worse for *everyone*, not just the poor people! I'll finish with a quote I liked from Steven Rockefeller, great-grandson of John D:

"There is no rational justification for my family having the amount of money that it has... The only honest thing to say in defense of it is that we like having the money and the present social system allows us to keep it."

Oh, but I haven't even mentioned the art! It's clean and clear and doesn't get in the way; which sounds like faint praise, but for a book like this, that's exactly what's called for! In fact I'd say it's clearer than either Gonick or McCloud, and Dan Burr has a very nice line in caricature. There's a lot of ironic subtext to be found in seeing which faces crop up again and again. As late in the book as the Clinton administration, for example... that nose... Adam Smith again??

Bronislava Sencakova says

Som rada (★★★??), že som si *Economix* prečítala, ale som ešte radšej, že som ho mala požiťaný z knižnice. Prejav mojej ekonomickej racionality :)

Poznámka o mne:

Po prečítaní nerouzmím ekonómii/ekonomike asi ani o trochu viac. Buť je môj mozog stavaný na iné mentálne konštrukcie a uniká mi nejaká implicitná vrstva ťi predpoklady, ktoré sú všetkým ostatným jasné, a preto sa prestruňosť a zrejmosť zbytoťne neverbalizujú, ALEBO je to proste tak, že naozaj ani srnka netuší a preto história (a vlastne aj súťasnosť) ekonómie vyzerá v mojich oťiach takto: téza - antitéza - syntéza - antisyntéza - všetko z toho platí naraz - niť z toho neplatí - platí nieťo niekedy - zaibatsu korporácie... Asi sa pôjdem radšej hrať so svojimi imaginárnymi kamaráťmi ťislami :)

Poznámka o knihe:

Z 300-stranovej knihy sa posledných 100 strán venovalo obdobiu od rokov 1980-tych do súťasnosti. Prvých 200 strán muselo staťiť na vzdialenejšiu históriu. Celý komiks je podaný najmä z pohľadu USA, ale na krátko si zacestujeme napríklad aj do ťíny, ZSSR ťi Indie. Spomínaných 100 závereťných strán si autor opatril v jednej bubline vyhlásením, že sem už bude vnášať svoje ((ťavicové) politické) názory. Nielen podťa mťa ich tam vnášal už od začiatku.

Na konci je 2-stranový zoznam odporuťanej literatúry (titul + struťný komentár) a podrobný register. Na webe economixcomix.com je bonusový a aktualizáciaťný materiál :)

Zaujímavé dojmológie:

- literárna: Pavel Mandys (iliteratura.cz)
- ekonomická: Vladimír Krupa (pozor, mises.cz; ukážky anglické)
- komiksové: Jan Samohejl (komiksarium.cz, ukážky ťeské), Martin Štefko (comics-blog.cz, ukážky ťeské)
- goodreadsácke: Roseb612, DaViD´82, Kulturozpyt Prumerny, Adam, Patrick Zandl

Prvá (šesť)veta:

Na ekonomiku se ptá kdekdo. Proť si nemťžu žít tak, jak si žili naši? Budu mít napťesrok práci? Jak na tom budou moje dťti? A co svťt? Když to je hádanka pro odborníky, jak máme chápat, co se dťje, myť

Posledná (troj)veta:

Jenťže informace je jen první krok. Svťt si žádá ťiny, a to víc než kdy jindy. Takťže doufám, že tohle je jen začátek, ne...

Goodreads výzva 2018:
139. doťítaná kniha

Bryan Alexander says

Economix is a fun hybrid: an introduction to economics and modern economic history as a graphic novel. It is engaging throughout.

Goodwin and Burr were clearly inspired by Larry Gonick's groundbreaking *Cartoon History of the Universe*,

and say so in the afterward. As with that predecessor, *Economix* uses plenty of graphic novel technique to explain sometimes tricky concepts: repeated cartoon characters (historical figures, personified forces), visual gags, well chosen visualizations, a narrator character, etc. There's a similar mix of humor, empathy, and passion for the subject. For the same reasons it also reminds me of Scott McCloud's superb *Understanding Comics*.

Visually, it's quite compelling. Page layouts make sense, and panels are very clear. Tables and charts - the lifeblood of economic presentation - are not overwhelming, and are actually well chosen. Burr conveys emotion very forcefully, something that really helps make economic theory more engaging.

Structurally, *Economix* is largely a history of modern times. It begins in the 18th century with an introduction to Adam Smith, then races into the industrial revolution, before closely settling into the past 100 years. The focus is clearly the United States, with Goodwin and Burr taking gradually fewer trips abroad as the book progresses. (I appreciate the historical emphasis, as it matches my conviction that much of the discipline of economics is really a branch of history.)

Throughout the writer and illustrator show fine skills for concise explanation, a too rare ability in economics. Goodwin is also very up front about most of his biases, which is also welcome. Someone new to economic theory, or simply curious about terms and concepts, would find this a useful introduction. I also appreciate the concluding section, simply titled "The Revolt of the Rich", which frames history since 1980 as the rise of plutocracy.

However, content (rather than pedagogical) flaws irk me. Or rather, I disagree with key interpretations and emphases. The US-centric approach is understandable, given scope, but I wish they'd been up front about this. That strategy also leads to some weird timing, like not mentioning globalization until the chronology has approached the year 2000.

The treatment of Marx is shallow and ultimately dismissive, a stance I don't share, and one which leads the text to some awkward moments, like dismissing communists as insane. Given the author's pro-Keynesian stance, I would incline to seeing this as a liberal's opposition to economic radicalism. We can see more evidence of this from downplaying American labor activism and socialist movements, as well as the ways the book treats modern left movements (Occupy's suppression at the hands of Democratic party leaders is absent, even though Goodwin is sympathetic to the movement, for example) and views Bill Clinton as a would-be progressive hamstrung by advisors (a telling (mis)reading of 1990-1995).

At a personal level, I appreciated this much more for its pedagogy and use of the medium than for its content. I've been studying or tracking economics since the 1980s - much more seriously since 2008 - so most of this was familiar to me, although I did appreciate seeing someone who respects both Keynes and Smith apply their insights to the modern world (American liberals today tend to prefer Keynes, while conservatives hew to Smith).

Overall, recommended for three audiences: people looking for an introduction to economics, teachers looking for good multimedia pedagogy, and audiences interested in how graphic novels can work as nonfiction.

PS: there is also a website for the book, with extra content.
