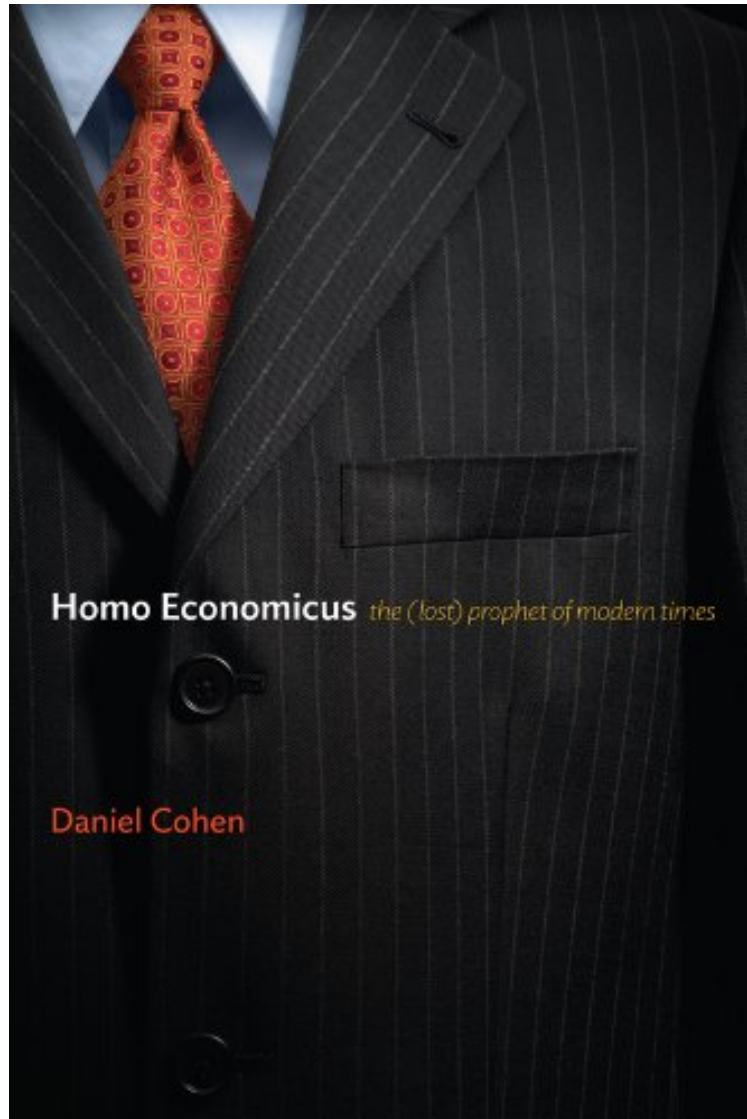


(Mobile book) Homo Economicus: The (Lost) Prophet of Modern Times

Homo Economicus: The (Lost) Prophet of Modern Times

Daniel Cohen

**Download PDF / ePub / DOC / audiobook / ebooks*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#1465196 in eBooks 2014-06-05 2014-06-05 File Name: B00KUOALNC | File size: 56.Mb

Daniel Cohen : Homo Economicus: The (Lost) Prophet of Modern Times before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Homo Economicus: The (Lost) Prophet of Modern Times:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Socialist Treatise Dressed Up As Economic and Historical AnalysisBy Kindle CustomerCohen presents an interesting perspective on historical and current economic theories, but his ultimate conclusions are wholly unrealistic. Two examples from his last chapter illustrate the criticism:1. Any cure for AIDS (no matter how expensive) should be available to all, not just those who can afford it. What about every other fatal disease and where will the money come with Health already straining the budgets of governments all over the world.2. Secondly, he suggests that people "should be endowed with resources that permit them to live as they

wish". Endowed by whom and as he himself remarks what most people wish for is to have more money so with the magical wave of the Socialist wand, everyone is "endowed with" whatever they want. It may be a widely held hope, but it is fanciful. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. More the outline of a good book than a good book, it nonetheless points towards the failure of the market to achieve happiness. By Robert Moore I have to confess at the outset that I'm adding a star for good intentions. Daniel Cohen has written an interesting but sometimes underdeveloped book about ways the world has gone wrong, specifically about what the economist Robert E. Lane has called THE LOSS OF HAPPINESS IN MARKET DEMOCRACIES. I almost always loathe personifications, and do so here as well, as Cohen goes on in the book to write of Homo Economicus - or those who see participation in market economic activities as the highest goal of human aspiration - as well as Homo Ethicus and Homo Empathicus - as those who would see the highest goal of human achievement in moral or cooperative ventures. The book starts off by announcing the failure of Homo Economicus, born of the 18th century (though most of the intellectual foundations were in place by the late 17th century) and incarnated in spheres as empire. He goes on to point out several ways in which this view of human nature has failed. I especially liked that Cohen did not abuse Darwin in writing of economics as so many others have done. In fact, two figures often associated with free market ideology - Adam Smith as well as Darwin - would have detested attempts to associate their names with free market fundamentalism. Using Cohen's terminology, Smith clearly was an advocate of Homo Empathicus and all of his writing was motivated by the desire to better the lives of the poor, and not through trickle down! He felt market economies (which he did NOT feel were driven by an Invisible Hand - in fact, in the 5 or 6 passages in his entire corpus, Smith merely states the modest view that people pursuing their own ENLIGHTENED self-interest [a qualifier always left out of today's free market fundamentalism, which assumes that any interest is self-justifying and by definition enlightened] DID NOT ALWAYS lead to unfortunate outcomes [whereas today's free market fundamentalists ignore Smith's qualifications to claim that ALL market activity behaves as if guided by an Invisible Hand; but, then, Smith also believed in the government for providing far more services than today's fundys, which begs the question of how many free marketers have actually read Adam Smith, and of those who have, how many understood him]). In fact, Smith felt that compassion and sympathy and not unbridled self-interest should guide our behavior with others. Meanwhile, Darwin did not believe in the survival of the fittest (a phrase coined not by Darwin but by proto-libertarian Herbert Spencer; interestingly, a number of market fundamentalists who know that Darwin didn't coin the phrase, bizarrely ascribe the phrase and the belief to Karl Marx, who actually believed, like Marx and Adam Smith, in human cooperation as being the highest human achievement). Cohen actually calls so much attributed to Darwin as "Darwin's nightmare." While I wish the book was much longer than it is (only 126 pages excluding footnotes - and as one who can recognize an old term paper trick, the book has relatively wide margins, small number of lines, and somewhat larger font than one usually finds in such books, meaning that the word count is probably quite small for a 126 page book), it nevertheless points in some interesting directions. This is, I've noticed, a tendency in a lot of Polity Press books. Now, as a Leftist (and I call myself that rather than Liberal because of the ambiguity in the L word: for most of the world a liberal is not a leftist but a right winger, with Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan as two of the most prominent liberals of the 20th century, which they were). The position on the left should be Progressive or Socialist. And I'll accept that label. Let's face it, Liberalism, the correct term for those believing in a self-regulating free market, has led to economic catastrophe for most of the world, characterized as it is by an ability to generate great wealth and then concentrate it in the hands of a few. Socialism has never really been tried in a fairly well off country. Maybe it is time to give that idea a try (and remember, you didn't really have real socialism in either the Soviet Union or China). 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. more philosophical follow up to Piketty's Capital. By William S Jamison This reads more like a philosophy / ethics book than an economics book. Starting off with a modern version of the ten commandments which are very nice. The theme is that Homo Economicus has dominated modern and into postmodern times but that in doing so much that actually leads to happiness is lost. Along with a turn towards a competitive economics, individuals find themselves in a dilemma where material needs still must be met but alone do not satisfy the wants encouraged by entertainment and the digital developments that have also undercut the means many used to use to supply those material necessities. Lots of good questions arise as a result of these analyses. For the most part this book is a summary of many other books with an effort to glean from the comparisons essential factors that help improve our understanding of how things are and where they may be heading. In this I found the summaries to be in good touch with what I remember of the books I knew and I assume then the books I do not, so for the short work that it is the book covers lots of contemporary ground. For example, the book from just this summer by Thomas Piketty gets this treatment. It may even be partly what inspired this book as it works well as a more philosophical follow up to Capital in the Twenty-First Century.

The West has long defined the pursuit of happiness in economic terms but now, in the wake of the 2007-8 financial crisis, it is time to think again about what constitutes our happiness. In this wide-ranging new book, the leading economist Daniel Cohen traces our current malaise back to the rise of homo economicus: for the last 200 years, the modern world has defined happiness in terms of material gain. Homo economicus has cast aside its rivals, homo

ethicus and homo empathicus, and spread its neo-Darwinian logic far and wide. Yet, instead of bringing happiness, homo economicus traps human beings in a world devoid of any ideals. We are left feeling empty and dissatisfied. Today more and more people are beginning to recognize that competition and material gain are not the only things that matter in life. The central paradox of our era is that we look to the economy to give direction to our world at the very time when social needs are migrating toward sectors that are hard to place within the scope of market logic. Health, education, scientific research, and the world of the Internet form the heart of our post-industrial societies, but none of these belong to the traditional economic mould. While human creativity is higher than ever, homo economicus imposes himself like a sad prophet, a killjoy of the new age. Drawing on a rich array of examples, Cohen explores the new digital and genetic revolutions and examines the limitations of homo economicus in our rapidly transforming world. As human beings have an extraordinary ability to adapt, he argues that we need to rebalance the relation between competition and cooperation in favour of the latter. This thought-provoking analysis of our contemporary predicament will be of great value to anyone interested in the relationship between what happens in our economies and our personal happiness.

"What are we losing, as we are increasingly pressured to define the pursuit of happiness in narrowly economic terms? That is the question Daniel Cohen asks; and indeed answers; with frequently piercing new insights in this thought-provoking combination of ancient history, sociology, psychology and alternative economics." Colin Crouch, University of Warwick "The economy is the driving force of our world but to what end? In a fascinating book, the economist Daniel Cohen offers a long-term perspective on the relation between the search for individual happiness and the market. He shows how the market, in imposing its own model and valuing competition above everything else, has disrupted the relations between human beings. The emergence and eventual triumph of Homo Economicus has led to the collapse or stagnation of the indicators of wellbeing in the most advanced countries." Libration "Find happiness, or try to achieve it: a topic addressed often in the past by literature or philosophy is now a topic for economics. In Homo Economicus, the economist Daniel Cohen shows how our ultra-competitive societies have disrupted social relations and undermined all the indicators of wellbeing. He starts from a sombre fact: never before has so much wealth been created, never have people had access to so many goods, and yet they are not happier; if anything they are less happy. Why?" Le Monde "A highly readable, thought-provoking critique." Political Studies