

This book is dedicated to

*my grandchildren
Alessandro and
Francesca;*

*my son Luca and
his wife Gepy;*

and my wife Irene.

In 2001, when I published my second book, I wrote something about myself that I would like to repeat here: “*The quest for freedom takes him all over the world, but it’s no use asking him why. It’s a mystery even to him.*”

Tullio Chiminazzo

HOMO ETHICUS ÆCONOMICUS

Economics, Happiness and Value

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Preface

by Loredana Reppucci Ales

How can we begin – in the limited space available here – to do justice to Tullio Chiminazzo’s latest book, *Homo Ethicus Œconomicus*? Beneath the enticing cover, its hundred or so pages capture the essence of the thinking that Chiminazzo has consistently expressed over the years in a wide range of papers, reports, communications from his Movement, and other texts.

From the start, this digestibly-sized book sets out its intention to cover a wide and balanced range of contemporary topics.

Coined by John Stuart Mill, the eminent 19th-century English economist and philosopher, the term *Homo Œconomicus* gains the additional qualification of *Ethicus* in the title of his book. “Ethics” is the *tuning fork* that sets and accompanies the tone of everything that this professional and author thinks, writes and does.

Although slim and ostensibly simple, this book has an intensity, fluency and far-reaching significance that mark it out as an *outstanding work*.

It’s a book to keep by your bedside, ready to dip into at any time.

It’s not enough to read it, *you need to study it* with undivided attention, because there’s *nothing superfluous* in it! Every sentence, laden with meaning, opens up fresh insights into the world we live in and have yet to understand in depth, or indeed at all. Life, production, economics, work, wealth, poverty and even happiness...

I’m not referring to the usual jargon used by experts in the field, I’m referring to the uneasy union between two states of consciousness that, according to the evidence of our eyes, are simply an oxymoron: ethics and economics; like “*a cool warmth*”.

This is a whole new world that might be *easy to talk about*, but is far less so to understand or achieve.

The history of every country in the world illustrates how ethics and economics have rarely (if ever) converged. Ethics has become an abstract term, which features less and less in the ambitions of Homo Sapiens. Some even see it as a by-word for weakness.

This book offers no utopia, of course. But it does explore why this happens. Why does Homo Sapiens always betray himself? Everyone seems to like Good... so what steers us towards the path of Evil?

It's probably a lack of education and perhaps a lack of *spirituality*, but not – obviously – in the sense of anything to do with religion, prayer, sin or retribution.

What I mean is the *education of our spirit* in relation to everything around us, whether good, bad or ugly, because *it's our duty to be aware* that every creature in the universe, from the smallest to the largest, has a right to its own space and life, so that it can fulfil the role allocated to it by Nature or God, whichever you prefer.

Cause and effect... are the equilibrium of the universe made manifest. *From a holistic point of view*, however, the subjugation of *another being* is an act of savagery that *deprives that being of their rights but also prevents them from exercising their duties*. It's a violation of universal Ethics.

Not to mention the fact that... we can't all be on the winning side all the time. Thankfully.

Sailing against the current is always foolish because it certainly won't make life's journey easy. While nature has always favoured the wisest, man has favoured the least scrupulous... and unscrupulousness is just an allotropic state of intelligence bestowed upon fools, but which can be used to gain unfair advantage in battle.

Personally, I'm "studying" Tullio Chiminazzo's book, and I intend to study it painstakingly, to understand the full depth of his words and theories. In these, I seek (and am finding) an adherence to the laws of Nature, which are already showing us the consequences of our foolishness and will punish us accordingly.

As soon as you finish this book, I would invite you to go over it again from the start, underline the key concepts it sets out, *study* the profound meaning conveyed by every word, and take on board everything it expresses. Doing so will take you on a wonderful journey towards an ideal future – a future that might be unattainable, but that aims nonetheless at a change of course that could lead all the peoples of the world to a fairer, more intelligent and more balanced way of Life.

Introduction

A lustrum has passed since the publication of my last book. *Lustrum* is a Latin word describing a rite of purification carried out at intervals of five years. This is a nice coincidence that immediately promises us the horizon and the prospect of having to look beyond the present. It asks us to break free from all bonds of time and space, and think big, without worrying about getting too close to utopia, where we cross the threshold into dreams. It feels like taking flight, so as to view the world from above and enter a new dimension, where we can perceive our being – body and soul. We understand the material weight that inevitably brings us back to earth, by force of nature, but at the same time, we can taste the lightness of the Spirit, which, from a great height, helps us see more of our horizon, and see it more clearly. It is Spirit that enables us to see the civilisation which, in the anthropological sense, everyone describes as the full combination of expressions of the spiritual and material life of a community.

But what can we do to keep ourselves anchored to the dream, the idea, the flight? How do we remain free and aloft, to explore subjects that look dry and dull at first glance, such as classical economics, i.e. the economics of the 20th century, in relation to the new discipline – “Ethics and Economics” – that this book posits as the most appropriate for life in the 21st century?

Well, the prospect, the dream, the idea lies right within the horizon of “Ethics and Economics” – a horizon made up of respect for nature, attention to the environment and climate change, and care for the left-behind, whether they are defenceless children, people facing poverty, mothers in desperation because of the miserable living conditions of their sons and daughters, or fathers left with so few options that they are now willing to attempt any “crossing” just to secure a future for their family.

It’s also a horizon imbued with the awareness that, to save the greatest number of human lives, material goods are essential, but spiritual goods are even more essential. We also need buy-in from everyone, to organise development processes that are sustainable and capable of rapidly resolving the hardships that countless human beings face on a daily basis.

This book aims to explore the pathway open to many people, especially from the younger generations, that leads to the organisation of enterprises through which no-one will ever again be able to destroy wealth in greater quantities than they produce it, and never again be able to appropriate wealth to themselves to the detriment of others who inhabit the same “common home”, namely Planet Earth.

Taking a spiritual view of humanity enables us to understand, simply, that we need to be released from the ideological burdens that are weighing us down, clouding our minds and pitting people against each other.

This will prepare us and enable us to understand the gravity of what international financial and monetary systems give rise to, through their appetite for wealth for the benefit of the few to whom the excess accrues, rather than wealth at the service of the real economy. Let’s cast aside fear and have faith in ourselves, as people capable of the necessary vision and aspiration to unleash the potential we have, and put our talents and abilities to the test, to enhance our own and our families’ wellbeing, within a vision of community.

This is the prospect that can project us beyond our everyday perception, weighed down by the difficulties of material life, and enable us to understand that our action and our assessment of its effectiveness can no longer remain decoupled from the embrace of solidarity. All we need to do is reverse the poles of the magnet to see that, while efficiency and solidarity have been universally viewed as entirely separate drivers of economic processes, the time has now come for attraction and convergence between the two. Never again must entrepreneurial initiatives fail to merge efficiency and solidarity into a single vision, in which material substance combines with spiritual substance to show us the way – perhaps a simpler, more human, less perilous way – to see the light shining on the horizon; a light that might just be discernible as a new civilisation.

I have already used some of the paragraphs that appear in this book in the recent past, and have opted to include them for the sake of harmony and balance, within the proposed horizon.