

Preface

Economics and Philosophy have been the two academic loves of my life. Having two loves in this case is not a sign of infidelity. A philosopher is “a lover of wisdom”. The philosophical perspective is the loveliest perspective of any subject of knowledge. Thus, far from competing, philosophy reinforces love. Through the philosophical lens I came to love economics more and more. These two loves have led me to the reflections contained in this book.

Economics was born as a practical or moral science about the best way of using what is needed for the sake of the “good life”, i.e., a fulfilled life. Over the long course of twentyfour centuries, economics lost this practical or moral approach and the objective of the good life. It became a technique for maximizing resources in order to attain given subjective ends.

My ultimate claim in this book is that economics must revert to being a moral science. It must return to being concerned with ends and with a consideration of the means embedded in these ends. Renouncing this concern is not a sign of modesty but of a likely unconscious will to avoid difficult problems. In effect, the choice of ends is indeed a difficult task. However, a lack of deliberation about them supposes the acceptance of whatever ends without a rational discussion about them. Technical rationality is indeed a powerful tool for the advancement of human knowledge but it is not enough. We only grasp the complete picture of any reality thanks to the most human use of reason, theoretical reason, and we can only reason about ends through practical reason. Economics deserves the contribution of the three uses of reason. This is the thesis that I want to defend here. I hope to be convincing.

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