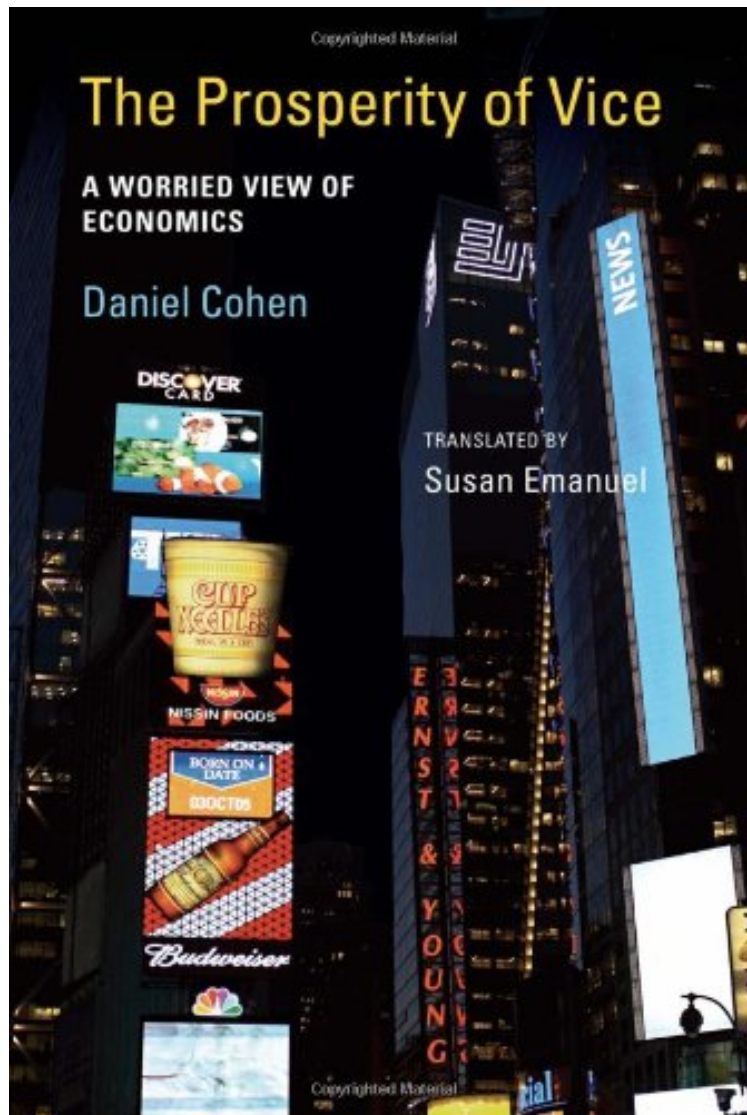


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The Prosperity of Vice: A Worried View of Economics (MIT Press)

Daniel Cohen

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Daniel Cohen : The Prosperity of Vice: A Worried View of Economics (MIT Press) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Prosperity of Vice: A Worried View of Economics (MIT Press):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. It's a nice short read that's easy to read if you're like ...By Margaret D.I needed this book for class. The book arrived on time. It's a nice short read that's easy to read if you're like me and don't necessarily understand economics that well.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Full of knowledge and clear messagesBy Hitoshi MasuyaThe fair and profound discussions of history, economics and sociology are

impressive. The author's standpoint, denouncement of progress in the Western style, is interesting to me not only because he is one of the West but also because it resembles that of some Japanese critics in the end of 19th century (when the country changed its way from the East to the West). The last chapter, discussions on the post modern world and the negative conclusion to it, may be less logical than the previous chapters. But, the book is concise, the statement is consistent, so I can recommend. 8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Too Wide-Ranging to be Worthwhile By Samuel J. Sharp This is a difficult book to review because although the author is very intelligent and the book is well-written, so many topics are touched upon that the book lacks any profound conclusions or takeaway points. The jacket claims that Cohen "shows that violence, rather than peace, has been the historical accompaniment to prosperity" but this conclusion is not convincingly proved and is hardly the main focus of the book. Chapter 10 is titled "War and Peace" but is only 10 pages and essentially concedes that World War II has ended any pattern of economic prosperity leading to wars. The first two parts of the book focus on the historical rise of the West and its economic supremacy over other global regions. This part of the book was well-researched and very concisely presented. This section's quality and level of engagement made the last half of the book a major letdown. The third part of the book contains reflections on the resurgence of India and China and how their increased demand for resources will threaten the ecosystem. This last part lacks focus and is not organized as well as the first two parts. Part three reads like a collection of separate thoughts thrown together without much attention to presenting sustained arguments. Each short chapter is broken up into smaller sections which are almost never more than 3 pages. This makes for choppy, unfocused reading that is a disappointment given the author's seeming ability to produce a more coherent book. I am surprised an academic press published a book that is so short and so dramatically sputters to an anticlimactic inconclusiveness.

How violence, rather than peace, has historically accompanied prosperity; and why emerging nations seem poised to repeat the tragic history of the industrialized world. What happened yesterday in the West is today being repeated on a global scale. Industrial society is replacing rural society: millions of peasants in China, India, and elsewhere are leaving the countryside and going to the city. New powers are emerging and rivalries are exacerbated as competition increases for control of raw materials. Contrary to what believers in the "clash of civilizations" maintain, the great risk of the twenty-first century is not a confrontation between cultures but a repetition of history. In *The Prosperity of Vice*, the influential French economist Daniel Cohen shows that violence, rather than peace, has been the historical accompaniment to prosperity. Peace in Europe came only after the barbaric wars of the twentieth century, not as the outcome of economic growth. What will happen this time for today's eagerly Westernizing emerging nations? Cohen guides us through history, describing the European discovery of the "philosopher's stone": the possibility of perpetual growth. But the consequences of addiction to growth are dire in an era of globalization. If a billion Chinese consume a billion cars, the future of the planet is threatened. But, Cohen points out, there is another kind of globalization: the immaterial globalization enabled by the Internet. It is still possible, he argues, that the cyber-world will create a new awareness of global solidarity. It even may help us accomplish a formidable cognitive task, as immense as that realized during the Industrial Revolution--one that would allow us learn to live within the limits of a solitary planet.

Daniel Cohen has done it again. Be ready for an amazing intellectual and historical journey, from the Neolithic period to the subprime crisis. You will learn. You will be enormously challenged. You will agree with some arguments, disagree with others. But, most of all, you will enjoy the ride. (Olivier Blanchard, Economic Counsellor and Research Department Director, International Monetary Fund, and Class of 1941 Professor, MIT) This is a fascinating book that deserves a wide readership. I was sorry when it ended - which is a rare state of mind at the end of an economic tract. (Howard Davies Times Higher Education) About the Author Daniel Cohen is Professor of Economics at the cole Normale Suprieure and the Universit de Paris-I. A member of the Council of Economic Analysis of the French Prime Minister, he is the author of *The Wealth of the World and the Poverty of Nations*, *Our Modern Times: The Nature of Capitalism in the Information Age*, *Globalization and Its Enemies*, and *Three Lectures on Post-Industrial Society*, all published by the MIT Press.