

tity as a person even while living his life in communities. Why do men stay together? How is social cohesion to be accounted for? Numerous theories have been elaborated in answer to these questions, but most of them overlook the obvious and basic fact about man, that he is an economic animal. One of them errs in the opposite direction and insists that he is little or nothing more than that!

Economic activity in a healthy society is in the realm of means, being somewhat analogous to digestion in a healthy individual. A person has aims for his life which far transcend the processes by which his body is maintained; but if these processes begin to falter and work badly, his attention is drawn away from his life's goal and begins to focus on them instead. He becomes a hypochondriac. Given other circumstances he may become a glutton. In any event, he has idolatrously erected means into ends, to the detriment of both means and ends.

Economic activity, too, may become an end in itself for a person whose life lacks more worth-while goals, or even for a society when its value system is scrambled. It is up to a society's religious institutions to keep its value system in repair; and if they fail to respond with new duties to meet new occasions, it is inevitable that the false

gods will take over. Then we may have what Nock described as "economism"—the doctrine that the whole of life consists in the production, exchange, and consumption of things. This, however, is far from what it means to say that man is an economic animal.

The Importance of Man

All creatures take the world pretty much as they find it, save man. Man alone has the gifts which enable him to entertain an idea and then transform his environment in accordance with it. He is equipped with needs which the world as it is cannot satisfy. Thus he is compelled to alter and rearrange the natural order by employing his energy on raw materials so as to put them into consumable form. Before he can do much of anything else, man must manufacture, grow, and transport. His creaturely needs man shares with the animals, but he alone employs economic means to satisfy them. This is an enormous leap upward, for by relying on the economic means man becomes so efficient at satisfying his bodily hungers that he gains a measure of independence from them. When they are assuaged, he feels the tug of hungers no animal ever feels: for truth, for beauty, for meaning, for God.

It conveys something like a half truth and a whole error to label

man a spiritual being. He is, in fact, a spiritual being who eats, feels the cold, and needs shelter. Whatever may be man's capacities in the upper reaches of his nature—to think, dream, pray, create—it is certain that he will attain to none of these unless he survives. And he cannot survive for long unless he engages in economic activity. At the lowest level economic action achieves merely economic ends: food, clothing, and shelter. But when these matters are efficiently in hand, economic action is a means to all our ends, not only to more refined economic goods but to the highest goods of the mind and spirit. Add flying buttresses and spires to four walls and a roof, and a mere shelter for the body develops into a cathedral to house the spirit of man.

The Whole of Human Nature

Chodorov picks his way between two schools of thought, neither of which has much excuse for being except as a protest against the errors and one-sidedness of the other. On the one hand are the economic determinists, who argue as if man were merely a soulless appendage to his material needs. For them, the modes of production at any given time decree the nature of man's institutions, his philosophies, and even his religions. Economics, under this dispensation, will be a tool

of the State. On the opposite side of the fence is a school of thought which appears to regard it as a cosmic calamity that each soul is sullied by connection with a body which must be fed and kept warm. Spiritual purity will not be attained until there is deliverance from this incubus; but until that happy day let us try to forget that man has creaturely needs which only the products of human labor can satisfy. Nothing in this scheme to dispose men to pay any attention to economics! But there is a third way.

The mainstream of the Judeo-Christian tradition is characterized by a robust earthiness which makes it as alien to the materialism of the first of the above alternatives as to the disembodied spirituality of the second. Soul and body are not at war with each other, but are parts of our total human nature. It is the whole man who needs to be saved, not just the soul. Creaturely needs are, therefore, legitimate; and being legitimate they sanction the economic activities by which alone they can be met.

Such an understanding of the human situation prepares us to accept the idea that economics is a discipline in its own right, governed by its own natural laws. This tradition also makes it plain that economic action is in the realm of means, and thus properly subject