> the modern technicians had indeed produced "better" economic mousetraps. Instead of evidence of progress, however, I see a continuing erosion of the intellectual (and social) capital that was accumulated by "political economy" in its finest hours.

Gross Domestic Product is an economic mousetrap. Instead of blaming the symptom, perhaps we should look more closely at the underlying culture that produced it: the over-mathematization of economics, the transformation of political economists into economic engineers, and the general (mis-)application of the laws of the natural sciences to the social sciences (see Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science: Studies on the Abuse of Reason*, 1979). Recall that GDP emerged when economics turned its back on the market process and was forged as a tool for government management of the economy.

All in all, Masood poses troubling questions and lays the foundations for improvements to GDP. Perhaps his greatest lesson is that *macro*economics should not neglect the fundamental teachings of *micro*economics: we live in a world of scarce resources, so every action has an opportunity cost. GDP has limited use for cost-benefit analysis (and thus for economics) if it leaves out key components. We must be cautious about ignoring the cost of growth—but we should also not ignore the cost of blocking growth.

—Nikolai G. Wenzel (e-mail: nikolaiwenzel@gmail.com)
Center for Law and Economics, University of Paris Law School

The Wealth of Persons: Economics with a Human Face
John McNerney
Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014 (357 pages)

In McNerney's *The Wealth of Persons* we find a much-needed clarion call to philosophers and economists to engage with one another again in order to rediscover the basis of all economics: the human person. McNerney appeals to a diverse, interdisciplinary set of thinkers, putting special emphasis on the work of Eric Voegelin, Bernard Lonergan, Joseph Schumpeter, and the personalism of Wojtyła and others. I found it particularly refreshing that McNerney presented a conversation between philosophical personalism and thinkers deeply engaged in the justification of the free economy. Where so many assume incompatibility between the two, McNerney's deep grasp of the historical sources shows that this split is of more recent vintage, and that earlier thinkers such as the scholastics of the School of Salamanca as well as economists such as Cantillon were already working along these lines before the division between Catholic and Protestant thought led to imbalance on both sides.

He begins by asking for a "higher viewpoint" from which economists can rediscover a substantive anthropology laden with meaning. The middle of the book reviews various theories of the entrepreneur, with special attention to Schumpeter. This matters because "visions" of economics based on the achievement of an equilibrium state run the risk of excluding the dynamism of the economic realm and the centrality of the entrepreneur as the driver of economic growth. This role is a particularly human role—one that defies any account of participants in the economy as mere mechanistic cogs. The entrepreneur surprises us; her motives seem at times to depart from our caricature of utility maximization. What economists *could* predict are the cultural and institutional circumstances under which entrepreneurial activity is more or less likely to emerge. But entrepreneurs may pop up in the unlikeliest of places: McNerney's deeply moving eighth chapter presents the story of Sister Agnes Morrogh-Bernard, a nineteenth-century nun who transformed Foxford, Ireland, through sheer power of will (or perhaps, the power of the Holy Spirit) by building a woolen mill for the town. Although one might not know it from one's Intro to Micro class, such stories are in some sense at the heart of the free market. After all, market institutions require an almost selfless faith in a blind application of the rules of justice, and yet this is the very thing that makes an efficient web of self-interested cooperation possible. While Smith's insight into the role of self-interest is indispensable, a reductive anthropology misses much of the richness in economic life. McNerney offers a view of human nature inspired by Trinitarian community in which humans are both traders *and* givers.

If McNerney hoped to present a compelling case that the faults of contemporary economic thought could be due to an "anorexic anthropology" that bespeaks an underlying lack of vision about the nature of economics, he does an admirable job. His references to various financial crises help concretize these faults. Indeed, many colleagues of mine in economics have admitted that most economists neither predicted the 2007 housing crash prior to it, nor understood it as it was happening, in spite of the fact that prices and practices in the housing market were highly unusual. He successfully claims that there are plenty of resources within economics and philosophy, at least historically speaking, to get the conversation he wants to start off the ground. However, if his hope was to convince more than a few economists of this, I am afraid he has more work ahead of him. One challenge of interdisciplinary work is resistance to the jargon of other disciplines, but McNerney spends quite a bit of time introducing the esoteric vocabulary of particular philosophers. Additionally, although McNerney has identified the disease, and perhaps even the cure, it is not clear what practical steps economists can take next to create a vision of economics that both includes the centrality of the human person and makes itself relevant to current practices within the discipline, such as econometric analysis. Indeed, in one telling passage, McNerney refers to Schumpeter's claim that "it is almost impossible to drive out 'conscious dishonesty' from economics" (115). Mainstream economists often laughingly admit that they set up their regressions in such a way as to get the result they want. How would the adoption of a personalist economics change current practice? I hope to see another research project from McNerney along these lines, with less constant reference to the particular philosophical terms of various thinkers.

I have only two other criticisms for McNerney to consider: that he is too generous to Thomas Piketty, and that he does not refer to the works of Deirdre McCloskey. He says that Piketty is "strong on the description of income and wealth distribution" but weak on the deeper understanding of the economic system (4). In fact, Piketty is weak on both.

Martin Feldstein effectively dismantles Piketty's numbers when he points out that his analysis of income using tax returns fails to take into account the way that changes in tax law led to "tax data [that] signaled an increase in measured income inequality even though there was no change in real inequality" ("Piketty's Numbers Don't Add Up," *Wall Street Journal*, May 14, 2014). Feldstein also points out that while growth from investment does exceed the growth rate in the overall economy, the fact that people retire, use up much of their savings, and then die, passing on what is left to (in most cases) a number of heirs, mitigates Piketty's assumption about ever-increasing inequality.

Second and finally, I was stunned that Deirdre McCloskey's *The Bourgeois Virtues*, or any of her other work, was not mentioned, referenced, or indexed. Since *The Wealth of Persons* laments the lack of interdisciplinary insight into the centrality of the human person within the discipline of economics, I would have thought McCloskey a prime candidate to lend personalists more hope with regard to the future of the discipline.

—Rachel Douchant
Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri