

requires communities that, acting through nonmarket means, promote the development of the moral person. Only in an economy vitalized by such persons can a just social order be achieved, no matter what the level of material abundance might be.

Reply to Mark Brosky's "Know Thy Limits: The Noneconomics of Abundance"

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It has been a privilege for me to have the opportunity to read Father Mark Brosky's paper. The task that each of the presenters in this conference was asked to do was not an easy one. Each presenter had to examine one principle in the present form of our "Statement of Principles of Economic Personalism" and attempt to produce an improved version of such principle based on some insight that he found significant to bring to the fore. Father Mark did exactly this, and in his argument he produced for us distinctions that constitute, I believe, a very important contribution to our discussion concerning the communion of markets and morality. For example, Father Mark presents us with a contrast between economic life as we know it, and a hypothesis of economic life in the Garden. Furthermore, he examines the distinction he finds between acts of sharing, and the sage practice of striking a deal in everyday market exchange. Finally, and not of least importance, Father Mark introduces a new distinction for social institutions: that between healing institutions and coping institutions. He has given us in this way much to consider and discuss. I would like to begin, then, with a few observations that are directed at one assumption that underlies the text Father Mark suggests should replace the present definition of value in our "Statement of Principles."

The assumption can be expressed in this way: Subjective economic judgments *can* be replaced altogether by objective moral judgments. Consequently, Father Mark argues that we *should* aim toward this end. He presents scarcity as the inevitable result from man's fall from grace. He calls the market system "a coping institution," since it has served as an efficient vehicle for man to meet his needs in light of scarcity, but the family, which he calls "a healing institution," can bring about a transformation of judgments such that economic

judgments are no longer subjective but are, instead, in line with objective moral principles. In his hypothesis about economic life in the Garden, Father Mark suggests that, there, economic value judgments were identical to moral value judgments. Now, let us consider the plausibility of this claim. Fundamentally, economics is the study of choice. According to economic theory, every choice reflects an economic value judgment on the part of the agent. Subjective economic value arises whenever an agent perceives a causal connection between a thing and the satisfaction of an urgent need or want. In Father Mark's hypothetical case of the economics of the Garden, the scenario is that every choice is not only morally relevant but also morally good. If this is true, then two questions jump to mind: First, how could an error in value judgment be possible? This is a critical consideration, since an error did occur that brought about the fall of man. Second, are all instances of economic value morally relevant?

Let us begin by examining the last question by means of an illustration. Suppose that the only winter coat that a student living in Buffalo owns is stolen. If this occurs in the summer, this would not present an immediate problem to the student. However, let us further suppose that this occurs in the winter. Consequently, the student is confronted with an urgent need or want that will warrant a sacrifice of some other present satisfaction. In this case, let us suppose that the student substitutes the coat in place of another good he feels he can sacrifice since, relative to his present situation, it would provide him with the least utility. We shall recall that economic value is measured by the importance of the want whose satisfaction is dependent upon the possession of the good. The determination of which satisfaction is the dependent one is, then, reached by considering which want would be unsatisfied if the good were not in his possession. In our example, the student decides to sacrifice attending the Buffalo Symphony this season. Hence, the student attaches greater importance to being warm in the bitter Buffalo winter than to enjoying cultural entertainment. The coat thus acquires economic value for the student. This illustration shows the economic calculation involved in making a choice which, in turn, will bring about a cost, albeit subjective. Nevertheless, there is no moral relevance in this situation. Like this, there are many cases of choices that are by definition economic in nature, but they are not morally relevant. We must be careful, then, not to suppose that the spheres of economic value and moral value are identical. My guess is that this would also be true in the Garden.

Let us now address my second question: How could an error in value judgment be possible in the Garden? In Father Brosky's paper, the assumption is that all subjective preferences would be in accordance with moral values. Conversely, as we have seen by means of our illustration, some subjective prefer-

ences have no moral relevance, but only economic relevance. We know that needs or wants are genuine economic phenomena. What is important to introduce now is the notion of desire. A desire has no practical economic consequences. For example, I could desire to own a castle in France, but this desire plays no role in my evaluation of my wants that require satisfaction. In this sense, a desire is akin to a wish in the sense that it does not require one's personal involvement in bringing about the object of one's desire. Although desires and economic needs or wants often coincide, the latter are characterized by the necessity of their satisfaction. The student in Buffalo, for instance, does not merely wish to have a coat in the winter. He needs the coat and will strive to get it by sacrificing some other satisfaction in his total utility bundle. It is important to consider as well that one's desires do not have to involve only narrow or frivolous interests. One could desire something good that affects others. For example, I could desire the castle in France for someone other than myself. Even in this case, a desire does not coincide with a need or want until the former necessitates a cost calculation, a sacrifice of another satisfaction, and acts of striving to obtain the object of desire. If we now apply the distinction between desire and need or want to the case of the Garden, then it could be argued that a value judgment error occurred because a *desire* to know was tragically confused with a *need* to know. In any case, the distinction between want and desire is an important one to bring to the discussion of the assumption presented in the paper.

In general, I agree with Father Mark that the definition of value in our "Statement of Principles" is in need of clarification. Furthermore, I agree that Father Mark's discussion in his paper contributes toward this goal, but I would like to insist that the notion of value is complex and that we should not assume that the term will only refer to economic value or to moral value, as there are many other kinds of value such as aesthetic value, religious value, and others. The chief difficulties in the examination of value are, first, to distinguish each kind of value adequately; and, second, to discover the nature of the relations among values, especially when more than one value is present in a single act or judgment. For the practical purposes of our statement, I suggest that we include a clear definition of economic value and, if possible, of moral value, since both are the relevant values for our interests.