THE ECONOMIC PERSONALITY

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Alexander Dugin

The person and the individual: distinguishing the concepts

The concept of the ‘total worker’ as a source figure for economics can be supplemented with the formula of the ‘economic person’. The economic person is the total (integral) worker. In this case, the person in its anthropological interpretation (especially that of the French school of Durkheim and Mausse[1] and the successors of F. Boas in the US [2]) takes centre stage. Here personality (la personne) is contrasted to the individual (l’individu), as the person is something social, societal, complex, artificially created, in contrast to the individual, who is an atomic unit of the rest of the human being without any additional characteristics.

The individual is the product of subtraction of the personality from the human being, the result of the liberation of the human unit from any bonds and collective structures. The person consists of a weave of different forms of collective identity which can be depicted as roles (in sociology) or filiations (in anthropology). The person exists and has a meaning only in its relation to society. The person is an aggregate of functions, as well as the result of the human being’s conscious and premeditated creation of its identity. The person is never a given; it is a process and a task. The person is constantly built and during construction establishes itself, puts itself in order, or the other way around, as the surrounding world collapses and turns into chaos.

The person is a weave of many identities, each of which is related to a type, i.e. that is to say it encompasses within itself an undeterminably large number of persons as its aspects.

The concrete person is a combination of these filiations (types) and is each and every time something original, as the number of possibilities in each type and, what is more, the combinations of these types – are unlimited.

People use one and the same language, but pronounce it with the help of a multitude of different discourses, which are not really original (as it sometimes appears to the human being itself), but also not as predictably recurrent (as is the case with machines or even the systems of signals of some kinds of animal). Persons also consist of impositions of age-, gender-, social, ethnic, religious, professional, and class identities, each of which has its structure.

Thus, the person is a chain of structures whose semantics is determined by structural context.

The individual is the product of external observation of the human person, where the personal aspect is either unclear or removed entirely. The individual is conceived separately from structures and filiations and is fixed only on the basis of its factual physical presence, reactive nervous system, and ability to move of its own volition. In a certain sense, the individual as a concept is easiest to grasp in behavioural theory: according to behaviourists, the person is ‘black-boxed’ and engages in contact with its environment; this is the individual and its primary empirical condition.

However, even if the individual is empirically fully realisable, it is purely nihilistic as a metaphysical concept. Behaviourism affirms that it does not know anything about the contents of the ‘black box’ and, what is more, that it isn’t interested in the contents at all. In principle, this is a logical conclusion of the American philosophy of pragmatism. But if the contents are not of interest, that doesn’t mean they aren’t there. This is very important: pure pragmatism, by refusing to interest itself in the structure of the person, acts very modestly and doesn’t draw any conclusions about the ontology of the ‘black box’s’ contents. This is why American pragmatism is only partially individualism, in its empirical aspect.

Radical individualism has other, purely English roots and is mated to the idea of the emanation of all filiational lines.

In other words, individualism is built on the deliberate and consistent destruction of the person, on its rejection and on the giving of a metaphysical and moral status to that rejection: the destruction of the person is a movement towards ‘truth’ and ‘good’, which means towards the ‘truth of the individual’ and the ‘good for the individual’.

Here we see the boundary between indifference and hatred: American pragmatism is just indifferent towards the person, while at the same time British liberalism and its universalist and globalist derivatives hate it and try to destroy it. The goal is the transformation of the individual from an empty concept, created by way of subtraction, in something real, in which the physical separateness of one being would be closed in with the element of the metaphysical abyss (which is received from the liquidation of the person and all its foundational structures).

The economics of the person

After this explication it is easy to apply both concepts (the person and the individual) to economics. The integral (total) worker is precisely an economic person and not an economic individual. Here, the integrality that we characterize as a compound of production and consumption and ownership of the means of production is supplemented with a most important characteristic: membership of organic societal structures. The integral worker lives (and produces and consumes) in a historical-cultural environment, which is what gives him a filiative selection of collective identities. This selection determines his language, sex, clan, place in the system of kinship [3] (C. Levy-Strauss), gender, religion, profession, membership of a secret society, link to the milieu etc. In each of the structures the human being occupies a determined place, at the same time giving it its corresponding semantics.

And it is exactly this which determines his economic activity. The worker (above all the farmer) labours not just for survival or enrichment, but for many others (and often more important) reasons, which follow from the structures that determine his personality. The worker labours by virtue of his language (which is also a kind of economics: an exchange of speech, greetings, blessings or curses), clan, gender, religions, and other statuses. In addition, the whole person takes part in labour, in the whole diversity of its component elements. In this sense, the integral labourer constantly affirms the structures of his person, which makes economics a kind of ontological liturgy, creation, defence, and rejuvenation of the world.

The economic person is a fully concrete expression of type characteristics in which these characteristics, having many levels, combine into a complex and dynamic composite. If structures are common (even if this commonality is not universal, but is defined by the boundaries of culture), then their expression and confirmation in the person is always unique: not only that, but in some cases the structures themselves are different (for example, in the areas of gender, professions, castes, where they are etc.), but their moments are manifested with a different degree of intensity, purity, and clarity. This is where differentials come from, which make life unexpectedly varied: persons which reflect combinations of common (limited, of course, by cultural boundaries) structures, are always different, as each and every one of them carries differently accented and combined elements of these structures. It is precisely this which allows us to examine society as something single, permanent, and subordinate to a general paradigmatic logic, as well as something that is each time unique and historic, as the freedom of the person is exceptionally great and capable of birthing an infinite multiplicity of situations.

Nonetheless, the society of the integral worker is fully defined by a unity of paradigm where the main rule is the domination of the personality as a base gestalt.

This is exactly what every Traditional society is, where the area of economics is separated into an individual, independent sphere, separate from the other sphere, which contains warriors, rulers, and priests. It is important that the warriors and priests do not directly take part in economic life and appear in the role of the Other, designated to consume the surpluses of the economic activities of the integral worker. What is important here is the word ‘surpluses’. If the warriors and priests were to consume more than the surpluses (the ‘accursed share’ of G. Bataille [4]), the labourers would die of hunger and shortage, and that would cause the death of the warriors and priests themselves. In addition, in societies without social stratification, spirits, the dead, and gods appear as those who destroy the ‘accursed share’ (surpluses), in whose honour potlatch is implemented. The Russian word ‘лихва’ [archaic word for profit; trans.] is very expressive: it means something excessive as well as a bank rent and comes from the root ‘sinister’, ‘evil’.

From this observation emerges an important principle of the theory of the integral worker: the labour community of the integral workers must be sovereign in an economic sense, i.e. it has to be fully autarkic in all meanings of the word. In this case it will be independent of add-ons (the warriors and priests), who can either use the ‘accursed share’ or not be present, in which case the integral workers destroy it themselves via a sacred ritual. In this way the prerequisite for the interiorisation of damnation will be destroyed. And this interiorisation of damnation is the schism (Spaltung) which is capitalism.

Capitalism carries within itself the schism of the economic person, its separation from structure, i.e. its depersonalisation. This leads at the same time to the loss of sovereignty of the trading community, to its dependence on external factors, to the division of labour, and to economic damnation: the integral worker (farmer) turns into a bourgeois, i.e. into an immanent consumer of the accursed share. This is where the disintegration of the personal character of economics and the change of the whole nature of work have their origin: from work as a sacred way of life in the context of personal structures to work as a way to gather material resources. According to Aristotle, this is the change from economics (οἰκονόμος) to chrematistics (χρηματιστική). The person is the main figure of economics as house-building. The individual is the artificial unit of chrematistics as a permanent process of enrichment.

The chrematistic individual

The model of capitalism is built on a view of society as a collection of economic individuals. In other words, capitalism isn’t an economic teaching about the economics of persons, but an anti-economic system which absolutizes chrematistics as a schematization of the egoistical activity of individuals. The chrematistic individual is the result of the schism (Spaltung) of the economic personality.

Capitalism assumes that at the foundation of economic activity there is an individual which aims at self-enrichment; not towards the balance of the cosmic structure and the sacral element of the liturgy of labour (as the integral worker), but to self-enrichment, as a monotonous process of the enlargement of asymmetry. This means that capitalism is the deliberate drive towards interiorisation and the cultivation of the ‘accursed share’. And it is precisely this that is the chrematistic individual: he attempts to maximize his wealth, and this desire is expressed in the capitalism of desire. Here, desire is anonymous (this is where the ‘desire machine’ of M. Foucault comes from), as it is not so much the desire of the person which expresses a structure of filiation, but the nihilistic will of the individual, which is directed against such structures. This chrematistic desire is a force of pure nihilism which is directed not only against the personality, but also against economics as a science and, what is more, against the human being as a structure.

Capitalism destroys the cosmos as a sacred field of the existence of a community of persons, at the same time affirming a space of transactions between chrematistic individuals.

These individuals do not exist, as each concrete individual is still (even in the conditions of capitalism) a phenomenological person, that is, a weave of collective filiations. But capitalism tries to maximally reduce this aspect of the person, which is only possible by way of replacing humanity with post-human individuals. It is exactly in this transition to post-humanism that chrematistic desire reaches its apex: the ‘accursed share’ creates an illusion of the human in coordination with capitalism.

The ideal transaction is only possible between to cyborgs: neural networks without any existential dimension or link to personal structures.

But the cyborg is not being introduced to economics today. From its very inception capitalism has been involved with the cyborg, as the chrematistic individual is a cyborg, an artificial concept that emerges from the splitting up of the total worker. The proletariat as well as the bourgeois are artificial figures, developed by way of the dissolution of the farmer (the traditional third function) and the later artificial assembly of his parts into two unequal multitudes: the urban exploited and the urban exploiters. The cyber-bourgeois and cyber-proletarian are both equally individual and mechanical at the same time; however, the first is ruled by the liberated ‘accursed share’ and the other by the dark mechanical fate of production, which has its roots in the poverty and nothingness of matter. We become a bourgeois and proletarian when we stop being people, when we reject the person.

Economic eschatology and the 4PT

In the context of the general structure of the Fourth Political Theory we can speak of an eschatological structure of economic history.

In the beginning there is the economic person, the integral (total) worker, who in the specifics of Indo-European societies (above all in Europe) is depicted in the gestalt of the farmer. The farmer is a fully-developed person, who is the aspect of the human being (in a wide sense of the Anthropos) which is dedicated to the element of Earth. During the growing of bread, the farmer experiences the mystery of death and resurrection, seeing the fate of man in the fate of a seed. The work of the farmer is the mystery of Eleusis, and it is important that Demeter’s gift to the people, thanks to which it could transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture (i.e. the gift of the Neolithic revolution) consisted of bread and wine, the ear of grain and the bunch of grapes. The farmer is a Mysterious personality, and economics in its primordial sense was founded on the mysteries of Demeter and Dionysius. The cults did not just accompany the activities of the farmer, they were the activity itself depicted as paradigm.

He who was inducted into the mysteries was considered a full person in Athens, more concretely, in the Eleusinian mysteries: the mysteries of bread and wine, i.e. in the farmer’s mysteries of death and rebirth. This figure is the figure of the total worker.

The next moment of economic history is the coming of capitalism. It is linked to the splitting of the economic person, the disintegration of the unified form of the sacred worker, and, accordingly, with industrialisation, urbanisation, and the appearance of classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Capitalism postulates a chrematistic individual as normative figure, describing it as a symbiosis of the animal and the machine. The metaphor of the animal ‘explains’ the will to survival and ‘desire’ (as well as the predatory motivation of (anti)social behaviour: Hobbes’ lupus), and rationality (Kant’s ‘pure reason’) is seen as a prelude to artificial intelligence.

This was implicit in early capitalism (the beginning of the Modern period) and has become explicit in late capitalism (the Postmodern period). Thus, the integral worker has repeated the fate of the seed once more; not in the structure of the annual rural cycle, but in ‘linear’ history.

However, the linear time of capitalism is a vector which moves towards the pure element of the fall, after which nothing follows and which can contain nothing. The death of the Modern period is a death without resurrection, a fall without sense or hope. And this factor’s maximum of irreversible killing, an-nihil-ation, is reached with the appearance of the pure individual as a culmination of capitalism as a stage of history.

The pure individual must be a carrier of physical immortality, as there will be nothing in him that could die. There should be no hint of structure or filiation in him. He should be fully liberated of all forms of collective identity and also of existence. This is the ‘end of economics’[5], the ‘death of the person’, while at the same time being the flowering of chrematistics and the immortality of the (post-human) individual.

The seed of the human rots, but in its place there is no resurrected life, but a simulacrum, an electronic Antichrist. Capital is etymologically related to head (the Latin caput), i.e. capital has historically been a preparation for the coming of artificial intelligence.

So what does the economic aspect of the Fourth Political Theory, which challenges liberalism in its final (terminal) stage, consist of?

We must theoretically affirm a radical return to the integral worker, to the economic person against the disintegrated capitalist ‘order’ (organized chaos to be more precise) and the chrematistic individual. This means radical de-urbanisation and a return to agricultural practice, to the creation of sovereign farmer’s communities. This is the 4PT economic program: the resurrection of economics after the dark night of chrematistics, the rebirth of the economic person from the abyss of individualism.

But we cannot ignore the bottomless measure of capitalist nihilism. The problem does not have a technological solution: we cannot fix capitalism, it must be destroyed. Capitalism is not just the piling up of the ‘accursed share’, it is its very nature. This is why the battle against capitalism is not a competition for a more efficient economic system, but a religious, eschatological battle against death.

Historically, or to be more precise, hierohistorically, seynsgeschichtliche, is the before last note of the Eleusinian mystery. Economics rots under the weight of chrematistics, the economic person has been ripped to shreds by the individual, the elements and structure of life have been destroyed by the mechanics of electronic desire.

But this all begins to make sense when we take economic history as a mystery. This is the final hour before the dawn. Capitalism has reached its final stage. The seal of the electronic Antichrist has been broken, everything is becoming clear. This is not just a crisis or a technical failure; we are entering the time of the Last Judgement.

But that is the moment of Resurrection. In order for the Resurrection to happen, the subject of the Resurrection is necessary, i.e. the enlightened one, the person, the farmer, the human being. But it is exactly this figure that dies in history. And it seems like it is absent. That it is no more. And returning it is impossible: the distance from the moment of innocence (the traditional society) is irreversibly far away and grows with each and every moment. However, the distance towards the final Resurrection is shortening. And everything that is wagered on that which must rise again will be kept safe until the final, explosive blast of the archangel’s trumpets.

This is why we don’t just see the integral worker, farmer, or economic personality in our perspective, but the integrated worker, not the seed-personality, but the ear-personality, the bread-personality, the wine-personality. The farmer today is called to a militia, his fate in the hour before the dawn (the darkest) is to become part of an economic army, whose goal is victory over Death and the pacification of time, having made it subordinate to eternity.

The Fourth Economic Theory cannot be the next projectionism or consist of fantasies about modernisation and optimisation. This is not our projectionism nor our fantasies, who are encoded in the world of our imagination by Capitalism. We must think in terms of the person, not of the individual, historically, not situationally, economically, not chrematistically.

This isn’t about the building of a system of economics that is more effective than liberalism, it is about the destruction of the 'accursed share’.

Accumulated wealth is a devil’s gift, it falls apart at the first gust of wind. Only a free gift belongs to us personally, only something that has been given away, sacrificed, gifted without the want for compensation is our property. This is why the dream of economics must be resurrective, resurrecting, a dream about a Gift.

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Sources:

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