

pole, we have the bank robber, who creates no wealth of his own, but merely appropriates the wealth of others. His actions are purely for profit, without adding anything to the stock of society. At one end of the scale, we have pure self-giving; at the other, only a self-interested taking."

So the contribution to the common good is essential for the entrepreneurship to be moral. Harmful products will always find a market to be sure, and these are defended by libertarians who are in favor of the unfettered free market, but the marijuana and other drugs, the pornography or the sub-prime loans cannot be seen to add to the common good. Far from it! The sub-prime loan industry seems to me like bank robbery, but in this case the bank is doing the robbing.

What are the barriers erected by institutions? In a communist or socialist state you can't count them. The raising of such barriers (making private property illegal for example) goes hand-in-hand with tyranny. Entrepreneurship just dies in socialist collectives.

But what about gigantic corporate collectives, with their immense bureaucracies? And what about the endless regulations generated by our representational democracy, stifling the slightest move to improvement? You get the feeling that the multinational corporation and the long arm of the federal government are also places in which entrepreneurship dies.

As to cultural barriers, Fenollera is brilliant with these. That is, there is a cultural conditioning to seeking a "good job" instead of following a vocation. So if we are convinced that our well-being depends on the good graces of the ruling bureaucracies, then in sense entrepreneurship is already dead. It is viewed as something rare, unique or special, instead of something that is normal. But with that being said, I'll end with

some quotes from the novel.

"It would be utopian to imagine that the present-day world could go into reverse and completely reorganize itself. But there's nothing utopian about a village, Prudencia. What we are is hugely privileged. Nowadays, to live quietly and simply you have to take refuge in a small community, a village or hamlet where the din and aggression of the overgrown cities can't reach; a remote corner like this, where you know nevertheless that about a couple of hundred miles away, just in case (he smiled) a vigorous, vibrant metropolis exists."

Pensively, Miss Prim placed her empty glass on the table. "This does seem like a very prosperous place."

"It is, in all senses."

"So you're all refugees from the city, romantic fugitives?"

"We have escaped the city, you're right, but not all for the same reasons. Some, like old Judge Basset and I, made the decision after having got all we possibly could out of life, because we knew that finding a quiet, cultured environment like the one that's grown up here is a rare freedom. Others, like Herminia Treaumont, are reformers. They've come to believe that contemporary life wears women out, debases the family, and crushes the human capacity for thought, and they want to try something different. And there's a third group, to which your Manin the Wing Chair belongs, whose aim is to escape from the dragon. They want to protect their children from the influences of the world, to return to the purity of old customs, and recover the splendor of an ancient culture."

"Do you understand what I'm trying to tell you Prudencia? You can't build yourself a world made to measure but you can build a village."

I haven't written much of anything on economics ("The Dismal Science" as Thomas Sowell put it), because it's not my field. My background is in literature, history, philosophy and theology. But I thought I'd put some things before the younger parishioners that they might think of starting a small business as opposed to training to become an employee.

This is on my mind because of a remarkable book I've been reading, called The Awakening of Miss Prim, by Natalia Sanmartin Fenollera. A young Spanish lady, Miss Fenollera was inspired to write it because of the program of studies I was in at the University of Kansas; The Pearson Integrated Humanities Program. Throughout the book is interwoven much about education – especially traditional education as opposed to modern, industrial education – the role of matrimony and romance, villages as opposed to cities, and employment, especially in small business. It's easily one of the most interesting and enjoyable reads I've had in some time.

Business comes across in the novel as not just a job, but a vocation; not just a means but a calling to transform this world, or at least one's village. Everyone in the book is called to use or invest their various talents to the common good, out in the open, in the light of day. Everyone in the village is called to this, and it is most natural.

What are the obstacles to pursuing such a dream? Usually the obstacles are created by the culture in which we live, or the institutions that seem to run (or ruin) just about everything. But other obstacles come from within, so that the entrepreneur creates not just a business, but a kind of cult, like Google. This is utterly foreign to the truth that man is created in the image of God, the Creator, the First Worker, and the first to earn His day of rest.

In every enterprise there is the unknown. The young entrepreneur faces adventure, difficulty, romance, and sometimes tragedy. No one can know the future of enterprise; we can only do our best. But there is a strong connection between personal virtue and good entrepreneurship. It goes without saying I suppose, that every successful action requires some degree of personal virtue. "Why did you rob banks Willie?" "Cuz that's where the money was." Willie Sutton was not a man anyone would associate morality with, yet didn't his robberies require courage, planning, perseverance, etc.?

So this identifies another problem, maybe the biggest, because if virtue is needed to rob a bank, then virtue alone cannot determine the goodness of an enterprise. To this must be joined good intention, plus a good end. The whole thing needs to be virtuous for it to count as good. The novel mentioned above brings this out in an ingenious way. The enterprise needs to be done for the common good, and the means to that end have to be good. So entrepreneurship is neither good nor bad in itself.

John Medaille illustrates this in an article he wrote for the Distributist Review, using the concept of motherhood. "The mother 'produces' (if I may put it that way) a unique human product (if I may put it that way), that is, the human being, the active agent, end, and purpose of all human production. She injects a value into the world, and into the world of business, whose value can never be known, and for which a price can never be set. And although the family is the basic economic unit, her recompense is never in money. She takes on a long-term commitment whose course she cannot know, but which most women find difficult to repudiate, even in the most dire of circumstances. At the other end of the