

A Word With You

RECENTLY, I read *The Analysis of Beauty*, a book written by the 18th century English artist, William Hogarth. I had heard about it for many years, but it was usually dismissed by critics as a curiosity, a misguided effort to do the impossible—analyze beauty—and not even by an aesthetic philosopher or a writer.

What was my pleasant surprise, then, to find the book full of discerning observations and very helpful in understanding beauty, at least in a good many of its aspects.

The critics have been very unjust. As in many cases of the sort, I suspect they have not even studied the original, but copied what other critics have said about it.

Hogarth himself inveighed against such practices. He was contemptuous of "connoisseurs" and "nature-menders" who held up artificial standards, and he advocated instead a direct observation of nature.

There is a constant tendency in every art and science to build up a system of rules and methods, premises and conclusions which, helpful though they may be to the student, become tyrannical and inimical to new discoveries. We must never neglect going to the source, to nature.

In economics there are three basic factors—land, labor and capital; and we may say that they have their equivalents in the field of thought. "Land"

would be the facts of life, nature, the raw materials of observation. "Labor" would be the act of observing nature, experimenting, recording, inducing, deducing, reaching conclusions. And "capital" would be the systems of thought that thereby get built up, the heritage of knowledge (and fallacy) that is passed on to us.

In economics the two basic factors are land and labor, with capital as a helpful but derivative factor; so in thought, the observer and nature are the important things, with our accumulated lore as a derivative product.

And as in economics we ought never to think of capital as playing the commanding role, but of labor as employing capital, nor ought labor ever be prevented from having access to land; so in thought we should consider our storehouse of knowledge as mental capital to be used, not to use us, nor ought we ever to be discouraged from making first-hand investigations.

The history of our learned, scientific and cultural institutions have a sad record as to these matters, just as in economics recognition of the right relations of land, labor and capital have been few and far between.

But periodically, someone does come along to upset the waxed-apple cart and offer us real apples—so thank heaven for the William Hogarths and the Henry Georges!

—Robert Clancy

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The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York 21, N.Y., supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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