

Invitation to Learning

On Columbia Broadcasting System's program, "Invitation to Learning," on January 2, the book "Main Currents of American Thought" by Vernon Louis Parrington was discussed. Chairman Lyman Bryson had Harry D. Gideonse, President of Brooklyn College, and Harry A. Overstreet, former head of philosophy at the College of the City of New York, as guests.

In his criticism of the work, President Gideonse noted particularly the inconsistency of the writer in his treatment of Henry George's "Progress and Poverty." He states, "I find just monstrously untrue statements about the economics of Henry George, and God help the American student of literature if his economic foundations are that poor and if at the same time he believes that his economic foundations are the primary fact in interpreting literature."

Observing Parrington's contradictions he notes two opposing statements several pages apart. The book states, "From the classical economics, Henry George got little. He had a quiet contempt for them he was never at pains to conceal." Two pages later it reads: "Henry George's argument is based on the Ricardian theory of rent." Professor Gideonse then states, "He," Henry George, "was well rooted in classical economics. But Henry George had to be used

by Parrington as a proof that classical economics somehow was wrong and anti-democratic, which in fact, of course, it was not at all."

In summary, Professor Gideonse claims these inconsistencies indicate poor scholarship, and "That's pretty bad when it comes from a university as an outstanding contribution and when it gets a Pulitzer Prize on top of that".