

Sept. 1, 1982

Dear Ted:

Please excuse the delay in replying to your communication in which you submitted an article.

You thought I might not have thought much of your previous article. But I thought it was quite interesting, and as you must have seen by now, I used it in the Spring 1982 issue of the Georgist Journal.

Actually, I have a better opinion of your previous article than of the current one you have sent, "Positive and Negative Reactions." While you continue the theme "positive" and "negative," I believe you have misconstrued the axiom to which Henry George refers, "Man seeks to satisfy his desires with minimum effort." George readily admits, in fact puts it forward that man's desires are unlimited. In Book II, Chapter 3 of "Progress and Poverty", George goes on at some length on man as the unsatisfied animal. And look at "The Science of Political Economy", Book I, Chapters 11 and 12.

In the example you give, of the farmer crossing the field, he says, "Straight across is shortest, the ground has been ploughed and is smoothest nearest to the fence, the crop is grown and I don't want to trample it, I have plenty of time, I'll go around the sides." His action is determined by his desire not to trample the crop.

Or take an unselfish desire to help other people. A person so motivated will try to take the most effective course for satisfying this desire.

Of course this is consistent with your "positive potential", but you do spend time unnecessarily on a slight misreading of the basic axiom.

You do, however, write interestingly, and I hope I may hear further from you.

Sincerely,

Robert Clancy
Editor, Georgist Journal