

In Defence of the Humanities

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While I was preparing this article, I read some remarks on the same subject by a U.S. politician with whom I found myself in substantial agreement. I then discovered, to my consternation, that the politician's opinions had been compared with those of Adolf Hitler.¹ So the reader must be warned that she can expect something pretty shocking in what follows.

We desperately need a philosophy of the humanities, both in the popular and in the narrower professional sense of the term 'philosophy'. That is to say, we need to be able to spell out clearly and distinctly what the place of the humanities is in the good life, why they are important, and why (to put the matter in the most basic terms) they are worth paying for. I read that in parts of the U.S. the obvious obscurity and apparent triviality of the work of many representatives of the humanities has led to a cutting of funds and a precipitous fall in the number of students.² I also note with some regret that, for the construction of a philosophy of the humanities in the sense that I have just given, recent trends in philosophy have been of very little help.³ In general I find a gaping hole in most prevailing modes of contemporary philosophy where the means for defending civilization—sustained reflection on the true and the good, and the best means of achieving them—should be.

What is the point of devoting time and money to the study of the humanities? The answer I shall give, and try to justify in what follows, is briefly this. What is fostered by the study of the humanities, and more by that than by anything else, is quite simply development of the most precious of all human resources—the expansion and clarification of consciousness. The means by which it does this is largely inviting the student to share human viewpoints other than her own, especially the viewpoints of persons of outstanding excellence in their fields. The expansion of consciousness is valuable both intrinsically and instrumentally, in itself and as a means to other ends. To enter the mind of Schubert, Emily Bronte, or Cézanne, or even that of the average contemporary French person or cultivated ancient Roman, is satisfying and delightful in itself. As to its instrumental value, it helps to distance us from the concealed assumptions and prejudices characteristic of our own place and time, and so to get a critical purchase on them. Thus I may be

the more able to perceive limitations in contemporary industrial culture, and so the more capable of working clear-sightedly for its improvement, if I have some appreciation of the writings and paintings of William Blake. The expansion of human consciousness is worthwhile above all as the means *par excellence* of knowing what is really true, and of knowing and doing what is really good, in spite of all the pressure exerted by the ideologies and fashions of our particular place and time. (I should note immediately that I am aware that this last point is controversial; but it is of the first importance, as we shall see.)

It may be objected to the cultivation of the humanities, that it does not speed up the making of money, or the getting of oil out of the ground, or the manufacture of cars, contraceptives and carpet-slippers. Now the expansion of consciousness *may* be indirectly useful even for these purposes, in giving people the flexibility of mind to think of new ways in which they may be achieved. But it also might provoke the student into asking another kind of question: how much more of these things do we really need to enhance the quality of our human lives? Such things are certainly good in their place, and yet it may still be wrong to be obsessed with them, to be caught up in the means-end reversal of which Simone Weil wrote. To expand one's consciousness is largely a matter of being disposed to ask questions, particularly awkward ones; of keeping alive the *wonder* which Aristotle said was the basis of all science and philosophy.

People often make a sharp contrast between the sciences and the humanities; and of course some distinction between the two is called for. But the expanded consciousness is obviously at the bottom of science, as indeed of all effective human search for truth. (Incidentally, since science is among the greatest achievements of the human spirit, I think that the history of science should have a very important place in courses in the humanities.) It will be convenient here, in fact, to use some rather elementary examples in science to distinguish the principal elements in consciousness which, I want to argue, it is the main business of the humanities to extend and to clarify. I shall distinguish four basic elements, which I shall label, following Bernard Lonergan⁴, *attentiveness*, *intelligence*, *reasonableness*, and *responsibility*. Attentiveness makes one aware of the data of sensation or feeling; and our awareness of our visual experience can certainly be enhanced by an impressionist painting, and that of our sense of touch by Michelangelo's sculptures or Keats's 'St. Agnes' Eve'. On the other hand, much political evil is buttressed by suppression of evidence available to our eyes and ears on the suffering of races and classes different from our own. Of the important scientists of history, Tycho Brahe with his meticulous collection of data on the stars, Leewenhoek with his observations of tiny organisms through the

microscope, and Rosalind Franklin with her spectroscopic data which proved so vital for the discovery of the double helix, are fair examples; Charles Darwin in his attention to the observable peculiarities of his Galapagos finches is yet another.

Intelligence in the sense at issue here is basically the capacity to theorize, to envisage possibilities, to make out patterns in data; it is more or less what Coleridge meant by 'imagination', though the term is in some ways misleading. The original formulations of their laws by Kepler, Newton and Einstein were feats of intelligence in this sense; but so is the capacity to grasp the structural symmetry of a Bach fugue, a Spenserian stanza, or a Jane Austen novel. As to the difference between intelligence and reasonableness, it is one thing to envisage a possibility, invent a theory, or make out a pattern; it is another to become convinced, as a result of renewed attention to the relevant evidence, that the theory or possibility is probably or certainly correct, or that the pattern really does pertain to the data; this is the province of what I have termed reasonableness, whose special concern is the truth or falsity of judgments. Newton said, 'I do not construct hypotheses', which is a bit odd for the greatest hypothesis-maker of all time; what he seems to have meant was that his theories were not *mere* hypotheses, presenting nothing more than possibilities, but hypotheses supported by a vast amount of evidence, and so liable to be true. Darwin, again, was reasonable as well as intelligent; it was one kind of triumph of the human mind just to conceive the theory of the origin of species by mutation and natural selection, another to show that the theory was likely to be true as corroborated by a huge array of otherwise inexplicable data.

It is important to note that I can be more or less intelligent and reasonable in relation to matters of value as well as to matters of fact, with respect to what is good as with respect to what is true. If I am an insensitive or selfish person, I may brush aside evidence which might suggest to me the possibility that my actions and dispositions are wrecking the happiness of another member of my family; so I never come to make the reasonable judgment that my behaviour is bad, and that it would be a good thing to change it. The psychotherapeutic techniques of Freud and his disciples, whether orthodox or heterodox, are largely devoted to the good end of fostering attentiveness, intelligence and reasonableness, and so of advancing knowledge and dispelling ignorance, with regard to our own states of feeling, and consequently those of others. On the relevance of the humanities to these matters, one may cite Freud's remark about his own discoveries, that the poets had said it all before him. R. G. Collingwood suggested, to similar effect, that the arts and psychoanalysis had in common that both were the enemies of 'corrupt

consciousness'.⁵

Such false or restricted consciousness has its baneful effects not only in close human relationships, but in social and political arrangements as well. Marxists have put into currency the conception of 'ideology', which consists in effect of those beliefs and assumptions which a person holds owing to her socio-economic position, as opposed to those which she would hold as a result of a more thoroughgoing exercise of attentiveness, intelligence and reasonableness. In our own time, it has become clearer than it ever was before that large groups of people, for example women and blacks, have been unjustly disadvantaged; white males have not been disposed to attend with sufficient care to the data, or take into account the possibilities, which might converge upon the judgment that their own privileges are undeserved. An intelligent and reasonable assessment of the evidence does not go to support the view that these privileges are justified by innate differences in sensibility or intelligence, or moral capacity.

Responsibility can be disposed of briefly for our present purposes, for all its intrinsic importance; it is a matter of deciding to act according to our reasonable judgments of value, rather than out of habit, sloth, fashion, or cowardice. One may still act irresponsibly, even if one has been fully attentive, intelligent and reasonable with respect to the value-judgment in question; but most people do not have the perverse moral heroism required for this, at least as a consistent policy of life. It is much easier half-consciously to deceive oneself about what is good and bad, than to act badly, and be fully aware of what one is doing. The slave-owners of the American south believed that black people were less attached to their children than were white; otherwise, the early separation of children from parents which was convenient to the slave-owners would have appeared quite clearly for the barbarity that it was.

Concern with language is central to the humanities, and, if I am right in what I have said so far, one can see why this must be so. A good verse or prose style keeps alive the reader's sensibilities and her capacity to question; this is exactly the opposite of the obfuscatory and numbing effect of jargon. Persons are to be suspected of having something to hide, who prefer to talk of 'megacorpses' than of millions of human deaths, of 'anti-personnel devices' than of bombs which blow off people's legs and leave them screaming till their voices die. George Orwell wrote eloquently of the 'pompous and slovenly' use of language which goes with totalitarian habits of thought; of the difference between saying 'Party loyalty means doing dirt on your own conscience', and intoning 'Virtues based on excessive concern with individual rectitude need reorienting in the direction of social responsibility'.⁶ Technical languages have their uses; one cannot engage in a science which has advanced beyond a certain

level of sophistication, or even in some sorts of humanistic study, without recourse to them. But their danger is that they may confer spurious privileges, and be the badge of membership for corrupt little clubs and coteries, rather than serving the genuine advancement of knowledge and understanding.

It is of central importance for my argument here that, the more attentive, intelligent and reasonable we are, the more we tend to get to know what is really true and really good, and not just what is 'true for' or 'good for' ourselves or our interest-groups. We have come to know that there were a big bang and dinosaurs, that the sun consists mainly of hydrogen, and that there is a naturally-occurring inert gas with atomic weight greater than that of gold, by feats of attentiveness, intelligence and reasonableness, the conditions of which have obtained in rather a restricted range of human societies; but, if these are facts at all, they obtain prior to and independently of human societies, and might have been the case even if human beings had never come into existence at all. Rather similarly, slavery and the subjection of women are absolute evils and injustices; they are so because they prevent vast numbers of people from coming to the happiness, fulfilment and self-realization of which they are capable. Truth and goodness, in fact, are absolutes; the badness of child-prostitution or torture, the falsity of phlogiston or flat-earth theory, are not simply a function of particular communities and the opinions which they happen to cherish. To deny this is not only to remove all basis for the justification of the humanities; it also makes nonsense of science, and of all non-arbitrary notions of progress and decline within human societies. To impugn absolute standards of rationality, truth, goodness or justice in the name, say, of feminism or anti-racism, as is often done by those influential in the teaching of the humanities, is utterly counter-productive, and in fact a betrayal of those causes. In my view, it is thoroughly reasonable and responsible to be a feminist or an anti-racist; but this is to presuppose norms of reasonableness and responsibility such as are not dependent on the say-so of any human group, female, male, black, white, proletarian or capitalist. It makes no sense even to claim that Western civilization, or any other civilization, has defects, except by explicit or covert appeal to norms of reasonableness and responsibility which are not the preserve of any one civilization.

Some people insist that the arts and the humanities are ineluctably political; others that, even if they are so to some extent, at least they ought not to be. If what I have been saying so far is on the right lines, both sides to this dispute are partly right and partly wrong. As I have been saying, it is a fundamental role of the arts and the humanities to open human consciousness to apprehension of what is really true and really good. It

will consequently tend to be in the interest of unjust governments to suppress and censor the arts; since the more conscientious people are aware of remediable evils, the less they are likely to put up with them. (It does not immediately follow that good governments never have to exercise censorship, at least in an emergency; for example in the case of incitements to violence against racial minorities.) Good art is thus profoundly subversive of bad political and social arrangements; on the other hand it is apt to be preservative of relatively good ones, and certainly does not tend to support the kind of mindless destruction which would do away with present institutions, without raising the rather important question of whether better or worse ones are likely to take their place. Here, surely, is a central component in the case for the importance of the study of history—whether that of 1789 or of 1989. However, the arts are not usually political in the sense of directly commending or condemning particular political actions or attitudes. We have it from Sir Philip Sidney that the poet never affirmeth; he might as well have added that he never commandeth either. A political harangue might incidentally be a fine work of art (the address of Queen Elizabeth I of England to her forces at Tilbury at the time of the Spanish Armada is an example); but its excellence as a speech and the propriety of its political aims would probably not have much to do with one another. Good speech and writing, unfortunately, can be devoted to poor causes; bad speech or writing to excellent ones. However, it remains that the arts, while as such they do not traffic directly in factual or moral judgments (when George Eliot or D. H. Lawrence preach, they are generally felt to be at their worst), do foster the liveliness of mind and sensitiveness of heart which are apt to lead to true judgment and good action. To revert to the jargon which I introduced earlier, they promote reasonableness and responsibility indirectly by directly fostering attentiveness and intelligence. It seems to follow that the Horatian criterion of literary excellence, ‘to delight and instruct’, will not do quite as it stands. Good art and literature delight by expanding and clarifying our consciousness in such a way that we are enabled to instruct ourselves. Education in the humanities, to conclude on this matter, should not be directly political, but must be highly relevant to politics; it extends consciousness in such a way that the educated person can make an informed judgment about which political aims are good, which are indifferent or worse.

Many, if not most, topics in the humanities depend heavily on the existence of a canon. The justification for this is as follows. No course in German music, or Italian painting, or English literature, which lasts less than a lifetime, can cover the whole of the subject with which it is supposed to deal. Certain choices have to be made, of what is to be

attended to and what is to be left out. The most natural way of making the choice is to give pride of place to what is considered to be of most value. One necessary qualification of being a teacher of the nineteenth-century English novel, I suppose it would be generally admitted, is that one takes delight in the excellence of *Emma*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Middlemarch*, and wishes to communicate this delight to one's students. Education in the humanities does seem committed to the assumption that some cultural products are really better than others, and that it is the obligation and privilege of the teacher to put her students in touch with them. To palm off a student who wished to study the English nineteenth-century novel with a course centred on, say, Bulwer-Lytton, would be rather like feeding a child under one's care with nothing but sweets and junk food; not, of course, that Bulwer-Lytton's work could not be of interest to the historian of taste or the sociologist (indeed, the teacher of literature might well make use of it in order to set off good writing by way of contrast), but that would be another matter. Such questions of comparative value are inevitably either faced or begged, simply because no course can cover everything. So there inevitably arises, in each relevant department of the humanities, a 'canon' of works supposed to have established their intrinsic worth over time and the vagaries of fashion. And I must say I know, from my own experience, that the existence of canons is rather more than an administratively necessary evil. I have obtained enormous delight from the music of Handel and Mozart, the poems of Blake and George Herbert, and the novels of Jane Austen; but I would never have been able to do so, if I had not been able to rely on traditions of criticism and evaluation which especially commended their work as 'canonical'—if I had had to wade through the whole corpus of bad or indifferent eighteenth and nineteenth-century music, and of seventeenth to nineteenth century English literature in order to seek them out. It is of the essence of the open and refined consciousness, furthermore, that it is able to detect, bring out and explain the excellence of the excellent; and to distinguish it from the mediocre and the shoddy.

While it is thus positively valuable as well as inevitable that there should be canons in many of the subjects which make up the humanities (not every European philosopher or Spanish poet is equally rewarding of study), it is scarcely less important that such canons should not be absolutely closed. It is always possible that something of great worth has been overlooked, or that something not so valuable has been overestimated. The keeping open of these issues is one of the main functions of the professional critic. I had the privilege once of hearing a superb illustrated lecture by Laurence Gowing, in which he argued, in such a way as to carry conviction at least with me, that the etchings of

Hercules Seghers had been underestimated, largely because they had never been studied together and in relation to one another. One very good reason for revising or expanding a canon, is that there is reason to believe that an important human viewpoint, or the expression of a fundamental human concern or mode of sensibility, has been systematically left out of account. For example, while women are comparatively well, if less than fairly, represented in the canons of the English novel and of Catholic mysticism, it seems surprising to say the least that they figure so little in those of sculpture, painting, or musical composition. Notoriously, the anomaly pertains not only to differences of gender, but also to those of race and class. Yet always, if I am right, the same basic criteria should be remembered and applied; the object of the humanities is to extend and clarify consciousness, in such a way that we may in general be the more capable of knowing what is true and of knowing and doing what is good.

At this point, I am afraid, I must descend to polemics. I need a convenient term to refer to the many authorities to whom I find myself opposed; so I shall call them 'the new *literati*'. The new *literati* have recently acquired great power in the teaching of the humanities; but unfortunately they are dominated to a frightening extent by some of the most corrupting opinions and conceptions in the whole history of thought, which, if they are applied thoroughly, will destroy civilization, and the humanities along with it. This judgment may seem somewhat severe, not to say alarmist; but is not at all difficult to justify, as we shall see. The reader will have noticed that my attempt to defend the humanities has depended rather heavily on the notions of a truth and a goodness which are objective and universal in the sense that they are not dependent on the say-so of any person or group. For all that they are obvious preconditions of science as usually understood, and of any non-arbitrary distinction between social progress and decline, it has been characteristic of the new *literati* either uncritically to brush aside these notions, or to reject them under the pretext of a number of unsound philosophical arguments. I cannot show this in detail here; but having made such severe allegations, it is up to me at least to sketch a case for them.

There is a curious state into which intellectuals can get themselves, which has been called 'performative inconsistency'; in this a person explicitly denies what she must assume to be true in the very act of making her denial. It is well illustrated by the writer on Freud, who said that his hero had shown that the human mind was of no more use for finding out truth than a pig's snout.⁷ If that is so, of course, this particular opinion of Freud's is invalidated just as surely as any other opinion. The simple fact is that anyone who does not believe in the possibility of truth, or of reasonable foundations for what one says, is involved in

performative inconsistency with every single sentence in the indicative mood which she or he writes or utters. It is all very well saying, 'There is no truth', or 'There is no rational foundation for any statement'; but if either of these statements is not advanced as true, and as better founded in reason than its contradictory, there is not the slightest point in attending to it. Nor is there if 'truth' or 'reasonable foundation' is a mere matter of social convention, unless the listener either already happens to share the convention, or can be bullied or bribed into doing so. Saying that the social convention in question is rational, or that it really ought to be adhered to, is of course *ex hypothesi* not on the cards. The cleverer authors of this tendency⁸ appear more than half aware of this *aporia* in their position, which they conceal by a self-ironizing style that makes it seem bad taste to challenge any statement that they make as though it were meant quite seriously.

It may perhaps be objected, that the positivism against which this fashion is a reaction was involved in similar inconsistency; and that it may be suspected that any other position on truth and rationality can be caught in its toils. This is indisputably true of positivism, since, as every undergraduate in philosophy knows, there is no course of sense-experience by which one can even in principle verify or falsify the non-analytic proposition, that all non-analytic propositions have to be verifiable or falsifiable by sense-experience. And since empiricism when made consistent becomes positivism, empiricism goes down the drain as well. But the position which I sketched at the beginning of this paper and which I proposed as a foundation for the humanities, is not involved in performative inconsistency. On the contrary, it is necessary to believe that one tends to get at the truth about anything by affirming the possibility which is best supported by the available evidence—in other words, by being attentive, intelligent and reasonable about it—because expression of the *contradictory* of this belief is performatively inconsistent. Suppose someone does contradict it. Does she put forward her denial as the possibility which is best supported by the available evidence? If she does not, it is pointless to take her seriously. But if she does, she is producing conclusive evidence against her denial in the very act of making it.

Another paradox may be added for good measure. Almost everyone would agree with the truism, that the truth of the statement, 'The surface of the sun is hotter than the surface of the earth', is dependent on the fact that the surface of the sun is hotter than the surface of the earth. But according to a view well established among the new *literati*, the truth of that statement, as of all other statements, is ultimately dependent only on social convention. It would seem to follow that it is social convention which makes the surface of the sun hotter than the surface of the earth

(perhaps by generating a great deal of hot air?). I submit that this conclusion is quite insanely implausible; so perhaps one ought to doubt the premiss, that truth is dependent on social convention, from which it appears ineluctably to follow.

Basic moral norms are to be established in much the same way as basic cognitive ones. Is it a good thing to make sure that one's assertions are so far as possible rationally grounded, and so liable to be true? Of course all civilized intercourse between human beings assumes that it is—and conversely, that it is at least on the whole rather a bad thing to lie or deceive. Furthermore, someone who does not know that it is as a general rule good to increase the sum of human happiness, and to avoid unfairness, does not know the meaning of 'good'. Much the same may be said of anyone who denies that Gandhi, Mother Teresa or Martin Luther King were absolutely better human beings—more worthy of respect and emulation whatever one's racial or social background—than Stalin or the Yorkshire Ripper. In short, norms of rationality, truth and goodness, which are not reducible to social convention, underlie all discourse and other forms of interaction between human beings which are not absurd, monstrous or both. It is remarkable that the new *literati* are apt to be very free with their moral condemnations,⁹ for all their repudiation of the assumptions which alone provide such condemnations with any rational or moral basis. One is given to understand that there is no real distinction between good and bad, and that capitalism is bad; that there is no distinction between truth and falsity, and that what the capitalists say is false.

I am by no means inclined to deny that our Western civilization, for all its great achievements (which its detractors seem very ready to enjoy and to take for granted; they do not emigrate *en masse* to the Third World) has been responsible for vast errors and lamentable crimes. But the way to deal with these is to apply in a more thoroughgoing way the universal standards of reason, truth and goodness by which alone they are to be recognized as errors and crimes. It is far from obvious that other societies have done much better than, or even as well as, Western society, in discovering truth, diminishing suffering and promoting justice. As Dirty Harry remarked, when invited to join the vigilantes at the end of the film *Magnum Force*, the system's lousy; but better ones seem to be in short supply. As to the standards, I have already argued at some length that everyone in any case covertly appeals to them, even in the act of rejecting them; to attack transcendent standards of reason and justice in the name of feminism or anti-racism is in fact to betray these noble causes. The really depressing thing about the late Paul de Man is not that he contributed to Nazi propaganda early in his life, but that the principles which he later

championed make Nazism no more intrinsically reprehensible than anything else.

Paul Ricoeur has made what appears to me a very useful distinction between 'the hermeneutics of suspicion' and the 'hermeneutics of recovery'. Being a member of what Nietzsche condemned as 'the herd' is largely a matter of constant and uncritical adulation of one's own opinions, assumptions, and values, and those of one's group, together with automatic denigration of differing views. One of the main benefits of an education in the humanities is to enable a person to apply the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' to herself, the 'hermeneutics of recovery' to her opponents. Is there some evidence, or some conceivable possibility, which my adversary has noticed, and which I have overlooked? But of course this blend of self-criticism with appreciation of one's opponents only makes sense if there are criteria of rationality and evaluation which transcend both sets of views. The inevitable result of repudiation of such criteria is a new tribalism, in which each tribe praises the opinions and values which it regards, as the saying goes, as 'politically correct', and which *ex hypothesi* cannot in the last analysis be anything but arbitrary. One does have to turn a critical eye, by the way, on the special compunction that decent people have about arguing trenchantly against opinions, however absurd or monstrous in themselves, which are advanced by groups whose members are or have been unjustly treated.

It is usual for the new *literati* to oppose acceptance of canons within the humanities as of itself reactionary. Yet, of course, nothing is more obvious than that they have a canon of their own, in which pride of place is taken by the three 'masters of suspicion', Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. However, each of these authorities seems to be committed on the whole to a very positive view of what is worth striving for in human life, for all that there are possible seeds of nihilism in their writings. A moderate form of each of their positions can be very well grafted onto such traditional humane ideals as are represented, for example, by Aristotle or Aquinas. Marx stresses the injustice of some persons and groups enjoying fulfilment at the expense of others; while Nietzsche deplors the sloth and cowardice which prevent us from becoming the fully-realized human beings which we have it in ourselves to be. Freud aims at replacement of compulsion and unregulated impulse at one extreme, and frustration and corrosive anxiety at the other, by deliberate and long-sighted action for one's own happiness and that of other people. It is only one aspect of Marx, and not the most important or convincing if my argument so far has been sound, that would make morality entirely relative to class interest; of Nietzsche, that would destroy all non-arbitrary evaluation; of Freud, that would conceive thought as so dependent on biological instinct as to make

rational autonomy impossible.

What is a good human person, and what is a worthwhile human life? What is the best way of living from both an individual and social point of view, and how can we achieve it? How can we know the truth about things rather than being deceived by ignorance or imposture, particularly when these are fostered by the ideology of the group to which we happen to belong? These questions seem to me at least as important now as they have ever been; and I am disturbed by the extent of the influence of those whose doctrines imply that the questions themselves are meaningless, or somehow intrinsically conservative. That contemporary fashions in the humanities, with their nihilism and relativism, their 'deconstruction' of 'hierarchical oppositions' and consequent dissolution of all norms of rationality and objective value, make it impossible to ask them, casts a lurid light rather on the fashions than on the questions. If we have a treasure to preserve and to hand on to our successors in the humanities, the principles (or rather the lack of principles) of the new *literati* bid fair to destroy it. Still, absurd and monstrous as their opinions are, in the end I hope they will prove to have been of positive worth for civilization and the humanities; as gadflies to sting us into finding and expounding the proper norms of cognition and evaluation. The point is of course not altogether to exclude them—they too should take part in the general conversation which is the humanities—but to produce and to publicize clear principles which show them to be the aberrant and marginal phenomenon that they are.

- 1 See Roger Kimball, *Tenured Radicals* (New York: HarperCollins 1990), 4–5.
- 2 Kimball, *op. cit.*
- 3 Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979) typifies this tendency, maintaining as it does that philosophy must give up its traditional pretensions to provide foundations for knowledge and culture.
- 4 B. J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd 1971), chapter 1.
- 5 See R. G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 220.
- 6 In the journal *Polemic*; cited in the *London Observer*, 29 September 1968.
- 7 J. A.C. Brown, *Freud and the Post-Freudians* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1961) p. 2.
- 8 E.g., P. K. Feyerabend and J. Derrida.
- 9 See Kimball, *op. cit.*, *passim*. Kimball's book provides a remarkable anthology of the doctrines and assumptions to which I have taken exception in this article.