

Popular Culture and the Meaning of Feelings

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In the human sciences at large, it is still the case that only literary criticism and psycho-analysis seek to theorize with any degree of generosity a place for the feelings in the practice of their discipline. Of late, indeed, the most weighty presences in both literary criticism and psycho-analysis have worked to expel mere subjectivity and the theoretically irrelevant but idiosyncratically incontestable feelings which are held to *define* subjectivity. The structures that are left become venerable in virtue of their scientific standing: the fierce induration of such Parisian worthies as Julia Kristeva, Jacques Lacan, and (in his playful, dandyish way) Jacques Derrida has worked to reproach devout Gallophiles in England for ever countenancing 'sincere and vital emotion' and all the emotional vocabulary-baggage of the bourgeoisie. And even in philosophy, which has taken the place of the emotions seriously, the subject has come clearly down the list of both difficulty and prestige - epistemology first, then the theory of meaning, then (perhaps) metaphysics, and only then the emotions as the difficult adjunct of ethics.

The smallish corner of the human sciences occupied by questions of feeling and emotion (and for the purposes of this paper I shall make no conceptual distinction between them) looks at first and second sight preposterously too small a space. It is so *plain* to see that the experience of understanding human behaviour is coterminous with the bounds of feeling set by the capacity of the understanding (and interpreting) agent. The vindication of this straight-forward and intuitive claim is the point of this paper, although it is a point which of its nature can only be pressed home by precise *assertion* and recognisable definitions, rather than by argument.

In the present circumstances, however, the urgency of such assertion is in the biggest sense vital. For the small corner of academic intellectual life allocated to the emotions prefigures their significance on the vaster planes of public life. This is not to say that this significance is small; it isn't. But it is quite specific and on the argument of this paper, quite specifically mistaken.

Within the frames of customary interpretation, feelings and emotions are classified as private but precious, and counterposed to the unfeeling public world, where decisions are thought to be taken according to a model of rationality founded upon those observable, empirical facts the computation of which is held to guarantee

objectivity. Such a definition throws into relief a series of antinomies simply to quote which is to do much to sense in what I am calling 'customary' meanings and interpretative motions the essential structures of our present ontologies. Consider these:

private	:	public
personally possessed	:	externally known
subjective	:	objective
feelings	:	reason
imagination	:	calculation
values	:	fact
women	:	men
arts	:	science
morality	:	politics

The terms of the left-hand column interpenetrate in the domain of feelings, which is conventionally protected not only as being one's own, occupied by the personally possessed qualities of self, but also as being unassailable: that is, you can't be mistaken about your own feelings, and you certainly can't be told by someone else to improve or alter them. Private in essence and, as we hope, intense in substance as they are, feelings define the human world-reality and create the meanings which make sense of the inane events occurring within that reality, turning them into manageable experience.

The primacy won for the feelings, since Romanticism released Hume's 'civil passions' from the correctness of that civility, and allowed the vast detonation of spontaneity, ardour, and expressiveness to break the connections between virtue and happiness, duty and sincerity¹, has led the suntanned hedonists of consumer living back from the great freedoms of Beethoven and Wordsworth to some small and dismal rooms. In the armchairs of the encounter group, and the analyst's comfortable closet we find the dire and deadly-sweet narcissism to which our customary version of private feelings can lead, especially in the carefully self-regarding affluence of *Ordinary People*, *Kramer versus Kramer*, and *A Bouquet of Barbed Wire*.

This corner of the culture has turned itself into the laboratory of the feelings, whose research reports are the corresponding bedrooms of such films and television programmes as I have named. As Richard Sennet and Christopher Lasch both claim², in their general, rather unchecked and polemical way, the encounter-group narcissist searches for a deep cleansing of the self from the

destroying, polluting structures of *all* social institutions in the name of a perfect purity of free aspiration, realized in a series of personal intimacies, unfettered by dead conventions and traditions, most surely confirmed in the passionate conviction of a fulfilled, unfulfillable sexuality.

There is, no doubt, a genuine good somewhere near the heart of the more vapid congenialities in the direr encounter groups. In amongst the mixture of frightful and touching self-interrogation, the 'truth for me', the 'getting in touch with my feelings', the 'is it feeling right?' is a main valuation of the culture in which the satisfaction of emotional needs is situated in the very middle of our teleology.

It is easy to be brisk with this view. We might say, with the Left, that such a preoccupation with personal feelings is merely the last refuge of a bourgeoisie driven out of an intelligible public life by the unintelligible centrifuge of monopoly capitalism (in a phrase), and left to make the best it can out of the delights of the consumers' domesticity. To coddle personal feelings (the argument runs) in a two-thirds starved world is, strictly an irresponsible and impossible evasion of political reality. There is justice in such a view of course. Indeed, we might say on behalf of the encounter groupists and their sympathizers in the Tolkien commando that they too repudiate the cosy dissatisfactions of consumerism by seeking an immaterial and socially placeless intimacy which rests neither on property nor acquisition. They too are looking for a non-utilitarian non-exploitative social ethic. What is more, the power of Romanticism is irreversible; its dizzy brew combined the elements of democratic rights, personal fulfilments, and nationalism, which have been appealed to by as mixed a bunch of liberators in the past forty years as Fidel Castro, Abdul Nasser, Ho Chi Minh, Kwame Nkrumah, Lech Walesa and Bobby Sands. The implicit appeal to the power of spontaneous feeling latent in international nationalism is the most dangerous as well as the most exhilarating of the energy veins laid down by the Romantic movement.

If I am right, however, about the present definitions, valuing, and organisation of feeling, that danger is the greater for its misunderstanding. For we feel our feelings within the social structures we have for their allocation. If we return for a while from the larger geographical ranges of international feeling to the scope of British customary culture, then it is more plausible to claim to make that insofar as our conceptual-material structures distort our expressible feelings, to that extent the whole social order is twisted out of its 'natural' shape.

To speak so is to endorse naturalism with a vengeance. It is to claim, with Rousseau and

Romanticism, that there is a natural way to feel which is coterminous with the natural way to live, and that the discovery of this co-incidence is the moment of the good life. Well, there are innumerable ways of living the good life, both within and between cultures, and it is by now certain, after a century of classical sociology and classical novels, that however tricky it may be to theorize the endogenesis of feelings, they are equally the producers of social structures as they are their expression. In other words, the human spirit and human culture are mutually embedded, and feelings themselves not only have no natural primacy, but are inseparable from and simultaneous with both cognition and the intransigent matters-of-fact which similarly produced and are produced by both *Geist* and culture.

Yet while it may be true that this moment of our historical corner has given untoward prominence to feelings and emotions, we all of us go on having more or less strong feelings, and have little choice in attempting a science of human nature and affairs, and its historical hermeneutic, but to imagine that people at all times and places have similarly had feelings and needed urgently to interpret, understand, and improve them. Having said which, what may we convincingly claim about the status and nature of feelings, which may be both recognizable to the popular view and its antinomies as I have tabulated them, and replace the feelings in some more public and less excluded room in the mansion of the human sciences in particular, and popular education in general? As I have argued, any such venture must commit itself against the deeply traditional paradigm in the human sciences (by which phrase I only intend the available conceptual frameworks of intellectual life at all its levels, from the five-year-old's reception class to the Ph.D. seminar). This paradigm identifies the primary qualities of the world as objective and realist; an always strong but largely underground opposition insists upon the singular view of humans as self-interpreting animals as being utterly solvent of realism; this is the class-struggle of the human sciences, and the heart of hermeneutics. The nature and location of our idea of feeling (*sic*) is its dominant conundrum.

II

I shall now attempt to assert a series of 'emotions-claims' which go some way towards placing emotions on a hermeneutic agenda. This is not, as they say, an academic point. It is plainly true that all forms of education attempt to make systematic the dominant modes of knowing, of interpreting, and of self-education;³ in which case, to get out of the dead ends of educational narcissism, and the confident

falsehoods of a physical science-based objectivity, is to give education some chance of understanding the world better, and to make it political in a more than sentimental sense. In an effort to be firm about the emotions-claims, I shall list them numerically!

(1) It is generally acknowledged that emotions have *objects*; that, for example, the experience of fear has typically a *structure*, in which the fear is fear of something which is necessarily part of that structure, and towards which the emotion is suitable. This is brought out by our view that persistently objectless or nameless fear is a neurotic condition. This, as we say, irrational fear is so described, because we cannot, in turn, ascribe what Charles Taylor names the *imports* towards which the fear is our response. Saying what an emotion is like is a matter of describing imports. Thus, in order to impack the structure of the feeling 'shame' we typically identify the shameful features of the situation. By the same token, though, we cannot love mistakenly (the statement clearly has no content), we may well be mistaken as to whether or not we do 'really love' somebody, and try to determine this by describing imports truthfully. There is a salient identity between this descriptive process, and the descriptive processes by which we sort out a variety of hermeneutic utterances, as for instance, the placing of moral insights or justifying aesthetic judgements⁵.

(2) Imports are subject-referring in ways directly evidenced by the language of emotions.

'When my love swears that she is made of truth,
I will believe her though I know she lies...'

Shakespeare's piercing lines emphasize a familiar disjuncture in the everyday recognition of emotions, but one which insists not only on the subject-referring property of feeling (which is obvious) but also on the non-secondary force of this referral which in itself confutes the behaviourism refusing to deal in internal states beyond reflexes. When we say with Shakespeare 'I believe her with all my heart, even though I know she is lying to me', we emphasize that subject referring imports entail a subject who is aware of them intuitively, and therefore requires his emotion as a way of grasping the imports themselves. His emotions may change on reflection, but without emotions he cannot work out what has happened in the first place. (This is the point of the excellently double-edged joke in the famous Marilyn Monroe film *Some Like it Hot* in which Tony Curtis pretends to have lost the capacity to feel the emotion, love, and the sensation (feeling) of physical desire. Marilyn helps him find them).

(3) Feelings and emotions are a mode of access to imports, therefore; but, as Shakespeare's two lines so painfully bring out, knowing X while feeling Y doesn't win the day for either. As the encounter-groupists and the deadly protagonists of the American television confessional *Couples* are

all too apt to forget, the feelings in question may be horrible ones, and the difficulty of this can't be solved in Plato's surely far too simple view that virtuous action is a necessary consequence of knowledge of the good. The directness of his line between knowledge and action is far too early to take account of the impulses unleashed by Romanticism behind the emotions. Perhaps a mildly neo-Platonic proposition could, however, venture that a good grasped by all our feelings and emotions as the fullest awareness of what is going on will be epistemically grasped as *import* in a superior way to a good grasped by a limited range of emotions. Loving the good, on this argument, involves full insight as a consequence of comprehensive feeling; loving the bad, on the anti-platonic hand, is not, regrettably, just ignorance or lack of knowledge.

(4) Given these claims, it follows that our awareness of the good is a function of our own feelings (and emotions). Feeling is what it is, first, as I have asserted, in virtue of the dialectical motion between itself and its 'imports'. Secondly, it is so in virtue of *various* constituent feelings as they played upon imports, and which it incorporates. Thus, remorse (guilt) as many ethical theorists as well as psychologists⁶ have remarked for one necessary basis for acting altruistically at all, expresses in *its* structure a sense of right and wrong. To feel remorse is to acknowledge that you have done wrong when you might have done right. Under the impulse of such feeling, it is natural to proceed to further articulation of our situation (an articulation not merely presupposed but constituted by our initial feeling)⁷, which may in turn transform the initial feelings — the process clearly recognizable as emotional growth.

(5) Feelings, in a key proposition *ascribe a form* to what happens to us. If we take this proposition as the culmination of my four premises, we may (truistically) conclude that feelings are bound up definitionally with their own articulation: self-understanding or *misunderstanding* alike shape what we really feel, and this essentially linguistic claim returns me to the form of hermeneutics. These propositions, once granted, prefigure the hermeneutic (and human) sequence which, structurally inseparable as it is from emotional response to the imports of eventual experience, and in spite of the customary-cultural allocations of feelings and emotions, reaffirms the essential relations of feeling and cognition, and of both to ethics and politics. In a phrase, and on these claims, feelings and emotions are every bit as much part of the momentum of *public* life and thought as the self-congratulatory and austere rationalities of computation and so-called pragmatic expediency. To restate: feelings are a structural ground of cognition: both impel the necessary and human motion of interpretation, and are therefore no less necessarily linguistic, and intersubjective. This intersubjectivity can only be understood (after interpretation) in relation to the 'imports' which define situations. Such (linguistic) understanding is moral, and, obviously, may be taught.



III

Equipped with the satisfactions of these conclusions, how may we deploy them in the hermeneutic process? More precisely, how shall these revisions upon the popular and conventional definitions and locations of feelings in relation to cognitive status and public (political) values, be made to tell in the actualities of social practices, perhaps supremely in those areas held to be immune to the invasions of naturalism and the intelligentsia? The cue is provided by Clifford Geertz's account of the Balinese cockfight in which, seeking to locate the meaning of the intense and organised passions aroused by the 'deep play' of the occasion, he dissolves distinctions between art and sport, and proposes the analysis of either in terms of 'the use of emotion for cognitive ends'⁸. By this token we could ask of our popular culture, how it provides for the perpetuation of certain feelings. But this might seem either too voluntarist or too functionalist, as though we maintain a given practice because otherwise the desirable feelings for which it was the set of imports might lapse. No doubt this *does* happen, in part; some people go to church in order to respond with the appropriate feelings to the rhetorical tropes, the strokes of alliteration and assonance, the grand cadences which have no literal meaning for them; others deliberately exercise themselves on a June Saturday a couple of hundred feet sheer up Avon Gorge on the edge of two steel pegs in order to experience the thrills of danger in a culture which has made the rest of the week happily safe and sound. Without matins and mountaineering religious feeling⁹ and the feeling of danger might substantially vanish from the available range of intelligible feelings.

But to understand such institutions and practices as intended for the prompting occasions and the expressions of deep feeling is to understand them on the terms of the standard definitions and meanings of feeling. The ambition of this paper is not to imagine that a revolution of human nature may be so boiling up that benign feelings can, with a little pedagogic help, reoccupy the citadels and redoubts of the mind now occupied by the ice-cold rationalists of the books of numbers. Rather, it is to give a small reminder to teachers of the human sciences that the interpretative frames which are what we all have for the understanding of human action and which, in a crude synopsis, we may be said to fit over events in order to bring them within the concepts of our experience, are themselves partially ordered by the quality and inevitability of our feelings about that action and experience. Thus to understand matins or mountaineering requires us to sympathise (in a very strong sense of a now commonplace verb) with the intentions and motives of those who are practising worship and

climbing, and although not to be obliged to experience the same feelings as the practitioners (clearly, we may try to understand people's actions without remotely being able to know what they felt as they performed them), certainly to seek to situate the action within the contexts of as large a realm of sympathetic feelings as possible.

It may be that 'sympathetic feelings' as a phrase has too pious as well as too banal a ring to it. Let us say that sympathy is the modality and focus by which many different feelings find specific form in relation to a particular object and subject. Putting the claim so has first, the merit of restoring the notion of sympathy to a central place in the hierarchy of moral-emotive terms, secondly, of refuting the evasion of the difficulty which some theorists attempt through the neologism 'empathy', and finally, of suggesting that sympathy is a conductor for the various feelings which flow between subjects (and are altered in their reciprocal passages) in the essential motion of interpretation. No doubt, as aestheticians have vigorously claimed since Romanticism, it has been in art and our response to it, that this reciprocal motion is first developed and educated, but it is fundamental to life itself.

Now I have already insisted that a clash between cognition and feeling isn't resolved by handing victory over to the senior faculty, according to your ideological preferences. But the power of the claim is that sympathy and its cognates, compassion, pity, mercy, all stand on the essential ground of interpretation and understanding; the further claim is that it is a characteristic of human nature to recognize such ground as its own epistemic domain. Hermeneutics attempts to make a sufficiently stable and continuous method of this endless human state of being. The drastic weakness of such hermeneutics is that it can only make methodical the first half of 'the science of human affairs'¹⁰, that which permits us to understand backwards, to show how we come to be in the position we are in at the present; lacking a critical theory of human interests, it has no means of thinking forwards, of telling human beings *what to do* — which may be one reason why contemporary liberalism finds hermeneutics so attractive. But this chasm stands happily beyond the terminus of my argument. Here it is sufficient to say that, like any other intellectual discipline, hermeneutics seeks to order and comprehend (another large concept) the incessant inanity of ordinary everyday life by finding ways of stopping it still for long enough to permit reflection.

Stopping life, by my token, means enclosing (comprehending) an action within a larger context of sympathy. To do this, the interpreter requires a sufficient capacity for that enclosing movement of

the sensibility. He or she must be capable of (have the capacity for) the necessary feeling and its direction by sympathy, if there is to be any movement of understanding and compassion. The familiar, reassuring conclusion must be that an understanding person must have a large capacity for feeling, and be wisely practised in the articulation of that feeling so that the sympathy is not mute (even if its speech may be heard in the eloquence of sympathetic gesture rather than words). It is impossibly difficult to predict whether a particular person will be enlarged in his or her capacity for intelligent feeling by experience of life, or whether he will be cramped up and closed either by suffering or success. Nonetheless the truism stands that what the Catholic Church long since named as the natural cardinal virtues, justice, prudence, temperance, fortitude, and those dependent and detailed ancillaries amongst the gifts of the holy spirit which include humility, joy, peace, patience, benignity, mildness and modesty¹¹, are connected in both essence and substance with right and true feeling, and that the free and relevant play of each upon the other just is the proper way of studying mankind.

None of these rather preaching adjurations can do much more than prepare the good man for thinking about society. And in any case, goodness is not enough by itself. A sufficient social theory begins, no doubt, from a picture of the good life, but must proceed by way of some account of how to bring it about. It follows that the wise and learned interpreter comes to human performance with a relevant sense of what feelings are needed to understand what is going on, and in so doing is bound to criticize that performance for the feelings it lacks or distorts which, being present, would have made up a more compelling version of the good life.

This comes out most simply in the practice of the great novelist, who is great in virtue of the prose expression she finds with which to summon our sympathy as the medium of our understanding. In *Felix Holt*, George Eliot presents a moment at which Mrs. Transome, the elderly, haughty, bitter and pitiful mother of the secondary hero, knows herself yet again trapped by her scheming, bland lawyer, once her lover, to whom 'moral vulgarity cleaved... like an hereditary odour'. After Jermyn's speech, George Eliot goes on:

Every sentence was as pleasant to her as if it had been cut in her bared arm. Some men's kindness and love-making are more exasperating, more humiliating than others' derision, but the pitiable woman who has once made herself secretly dependent on a man who is beneath her in feeling, must bear that humiliation for fear of worse. Coarse kindness is at least better than coarse anger; and in all private quarrels the duller nature is triumphant by reason of its dullness¹².

The first sentence, in its understated plainness, makes the reader shrink for very sympathy - 'cut in her bared arm' - so long as his attention is full upon the page (the movement must be mutual; he must be, in D.W. Harding's phrase, in a 'bond with the author'). The subsequent generalizing of sexual relations in power and dependence turns on that sympathetic wounding. If the novelist cannot win it, or the reader does not give it, the moralizing is vapid. If both do, the opacity of moral statement clears into the transparency of fact.

I am claiming that such are the processes and procedures of interpretation and judgement: in life, literature and social theory. First, that feelings themselves are *initially ethical*¹³, and intimate and central to cognition and recognition of the social and public world; second, that these feelings must be incorporated into that revised account of theory and practice in the human sciences which has been their main preoccupation for a decade; third, that such revision is necessarily conducted and made methodical by close attention to the rhetorical tropes (metaphor and metonymy) by which writers of all kinds engage with our sympathy with the predicaments of others; fourth, that this hermeneutic helix criticizes the actualities of life in terms of an imaginary but plausible good life, and must of its nature capture what is desired only in its immanence as visible in what is actual. This is the political heart of all social theory¹⁴, and the only point of that education which is intended to reproduce the culture, and strive for its improvement.

IV

It now remains briefly to vindicate such criticism in praxis, and to show some of the ways in which a deep blankness as to certain feelings leaves British popular culture at the moment impoverished and deadly. If my argument is true, the criticism can only be made by someone able to feel for himself those feelings largely absent from the culture, and these he must have learned from whatever opportunities he could make to discover and name them. Thus and thus is the process of all education, seen as the mutual advance of edification and criticism.

Edification, in its etymology, connotes a building up of personal capacity - for experience, thought, feeling, life itself. Criticism, in the structure of its meaning, denotes a movement of thought towards a subject from a position outside that subject. Taken together in a reach-me-down definition, education allows an individual (or a class) to identify the defects of the subject in the name of a better alternative in past or future.

Now there are innumerable ways of living good lives; the great contribution of the historical anthropology and ethnographies which have been such an astonishing achievement of Western human science in the past half-century has been to exemplify this truth. Consequently, any criticism of our present life and life-in-death - that criticism without which there could be no future - may take one of a large number of perspectives, the roughest grouping of which may be said at first glance to be either conservative when comparative criteria are taken from the past, and radical or Utopian when the criteria are taken from the future. But this, in turn, will hardly do. I have already argued that we can only think forward after understanding backwards¹⁵. We think forwards in terms of our version of future forms of life immanently discernible in past and present. How else could it be so? In a formula, therefore, we criticize the present in terms of the best imaginable versions of that present (itself inevitably a product of its past) which may be feasible for the future.

Such criticism-with-edification typically proceeds by narrative. I characterized earlier the conventional narratives recounted of present emotions and what they are. On the method proposed here, understanding human action itself (inclusive of the emotions it expresses) is a product of completing its idiosyncratic finitude from an infinite number of possibilities. That is to say, we interpret and understand by trying out against the facts how they might have been otherwise. For example, contemporary narratives of the emotions largely exclude such feelings as fervour, ardour, idealism, passion; my criticism of, for instance, the contemporary hero and heroine would be in terms of their exclusion of these youthful and desirable emotions, themselves the product of Romanticism and all indispensable to anyone committed to imagining a Utopia and tearing up the roots (radicalism) of a presently wicked way of life. Of course, in historical perspective, these same feelings and the qualities which they shape in expressive action were called to far from admirable causes, particularly in the defence of some of the more horrible forms of imperialism. But to acknowledge this truth is to make my point: understanding human action as the only ground for praxis involves bringing to bear as round and full a grasp of feeling as possible (compassion once more; and compassion is not necessarily to be expressed by looking sad and sweet-faced, and speaking in a very low voice). We can understand the best of past ardour and idealism as missing from the cool, uncommitted, unreflexive hero and heroine of the mass media - Robert Redford and Faye Dunaway - without falling into the error of supposing these feelings to be best directed into praxis in the lives of Tom Brown or Will Ladislav,

or even Alexander Blok. Inasmuch as the stars look down on our culture and are (in a phrase) looked up to as life-models, then the wry, uncommitted, nice, well-off but mobile, invulnerable (really), feelinglessly sexual and narcissist characters represented by as mixed a crew as the local heroes of *Local Hero*, Paul Newman, Dustin Hoffman, Meryl Streep, Jeremy Irons,¹⁶ Mary Tyler Moore, Sebastian Coe, Chris Evert, Mike Brearley, and the Prince and Princess of Wales, express a main stream of feeling for the times.

The feelings and imports of the situations and actions these men and women dominate are clearly incapable of teaching a grasp of the good. (Well, Yes!) The contexts of each are placed in the realms of gold, where the glamour figures of wealth, prestige and enviable hedonism wave to us from the stairs leading up to the door of Concorde. To grasp the meaning of these events requires little movement of sympathy, little completion from the larger stores of feeling recorded in the culture, only a spasm of that attenuated, intense but colourless longing we call envy, which at once fuels mimicry and helplessness.

Such cultural commination is familiar enough. In conditions of the loss of power, of deep confusions in national identity, in the face of the incredibility of capitalism, we drastically lack, in both Western Europe and in the USA, sufficient and frequent images of good lives. This conclusion transpires contingently from the examples I glance at. My main intention however is to canvass the view that, at the present conjuncture, the called-for move from hermeneutics to critical theory will identify the hideous failings of present feelings as registered in the narratives of our actions, not merely from a political position, which is tautological, but from a political position emerging from the best versions of revisionist socialism. In other, less unctuous words, the hermeneutic method outlined here rests on absolute presuppositions which identify capitalism as incapable of bringing about a decent life. The absent quantity in this conclusion is destruction itself. Criticism of the present by drawing cheques on the millenium is the proper, indeed only, business of teachers and intellectuals; but unless they see plainly the structural exterminism¹⁷ of the world they criticize as pressing headlong towards the end, their work will lack the critical emotional dimensions of fear and urgency. The means of production are now and globally the means of destruction, and social theory, which simply is, in turn, the forms of knowledge, must inscribe in its dynamics the emotions capable of feeling and thinking this deadly fact.

Notes

1. A history of ideas finely retold from within European literature by Lionel Trilling in *Sincerity and Authenticity*, Oxford 1972.
2. Richard Sennett: *The Fall of Public Man*, Cambridge 1976. Christopher Lasch: *The Culture of Narcissism*, Warner Books 1979.
3. A term I take from Richard Rorty in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Basil Blackwell 1981), where he wants, reassuringly, to render the German *Bildung* with some less fatally anaesthetized word than 'Education'.
4. I am crucially indebted in this second section to an unpublished paper by Charles Taylor 'Self-interpreting animals' which he gave to my seminar series at Bristol 'Interpretation and the Human Sciences'. I am, as always, immensely grateful to him for his ideas.
5. Wittgenstein implies this in saying that giving reasons for liking a poem is the same as giving further descriptions. See *Conversations on Aesthetics*, C. Barrett ed. Blackwell, 1969.
6. See for each version, Thomas Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism*, Oxford 1970; and Ian Suttie, *The Origins of Love and Hate*, Chatto & Windus, 1935.
7. Although he over-privileges initial feeling, this is a process explored with wonderful subtlety by Jean-Paul Sartre. in *Sketch of a Theory of the Emotions* (1939), Methuen 1962.
8. Clifford Geertz, 'Notes from the Balinese Cock-fight' *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Hutchinson 1975, pp. 444-5.
9. This commonplace, I take it, animated the list of worthy atheists who joined Anglicans in the petition to the Church of England Synod not to replace the Book of Common Prayer and the Authorised Version with Series III and the *New English Bible*.
10. R.G. Collingwood's great phrase in his *Autobiography* (Oxford 1938) where he summarizes an account of its first outline.
11. I ought to make clear that I am not practising Christian apologetics under cover of social theory, but speak, non-polemically as an atheist.
12. *Felix Holt* (1866), Penguin 1972, p. 202
13. A case implied but disappointingly understated by Bernard Williams, in 'Morality and the Emotions' *Problems of the Self*, Cambridge, 1973.
14. This slogan carries me over from hermeneutics to critical theory, this latter phrase meaning not literary criticism, but politics in earnest. Most of what I say derives ultimately from Hegel, but more latterly is summarized by Gabriel Kortian, in *Meta-critique* (Cambridge 1981) and Raymond Geuss in *The Idea of a Critical Theory*, Cambridge 1981.
15. It is an argument more fully developed in the chapter on R.G. Collingwood in my *Radical Earnestness: English Social Theory 1880-1980*, Martin Robertson 1982.
16. Two names suggested by *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, whose moral is exactly mine.
17. 'Exterminism' is a term coined by E.P. Thompson in the title essay to the collection edited by him and many others, *Exterminism and Cold War*, New Left Books/Verso, 1982. The concluding point, on the urgency of theorizing violence, I take as it stands from Anthony Giddens in an unpublished paper. I am in his debt, as we all are.

Appreciation: Reno C. Borg

by Professor Joseph M. Falzon

Like so many others who knew him and valued his friendship, I was deeply shocked to learn of the passing away of Mr. Reno Borg, Director of Education after a career in the Department spanning 37 years. I first met Reno at St. Michael's Training College in 1949/50 when we were both students; even then, he was already showing qualities of leadership which were to stand him in good stead as he successively occupied posts of increasing responsibility - from a primary school teacher with a class of 30 children to the Directorship of the Department of Education with a complement of over 3,000. It is one of the unfortunate facts of life that as people assume greater responsibilities, they tend to lose friends faster than they make them; Reno was an exception: he lost very few friends. On one of the last occasions I met him, a few weeks before his death, as he and I were

thinking of organising a reunion of the St. Michael's College 1949-50 year groups, he rattled off from memory the names of most of the members of that year group and was looking forward to meeting them all again.

Mr. Borg was an active member of several committees and boards, among which were the Commission for the Development of Higher Education, the Advisory Council for Education and the Foundation of International Studies. His wide experience of matters educational will be sorely missed during the meetings of these committees.

As Reno enters a new life, he leaves to mourn his passing his wife Laura, his sons Geoffrey and Andrew, and his daughter Lorraine - a graduate of this Faculty - as well as a great number of friends.