

and allows the very men and ideas which have wrought the consequences to go free of responsibility for it. Historically, politics and the arts were not *behind* technology in the application of ideas drawn from science. If anything, the reverse was the case. The artistic, political, and social implications of modern science were being generally pointed out and applied by the eighteenth century. (It will be remembered that modern science emerged in the seventeenth century.) By contrast, the technological implications are still unfolding, and this is largely a nineteenth and twentieth century development.

It does not follow, of course, that the social studies and humanities are *ahead* of technology now. They are neither ahead nor behind. What has happened cannot be fitted into a nice progressivist formulation at all. Politics and the arts have been cut off from reality; the proponents and developers of them have been engaged in a flight from reality. By contrast, technology is still rooted in its scientific foundations, and practicing scientists appear to be closer to reality than do other intellectuals. If technology should follow the path of the social studies and the humanities it would be cut loose from its foundations in laws and might be ex-

pected, subsequently, to degenerate.

Creature or Creator?

The key to understanding what has happened in the humanities and social studies (and from them to the arts and to politics) is the new conception of creativity. The way has been partially prepared thus far in this study for understanding the New Creativity, but before pointing out the connections to it of positions already established it may be well to examine the idea of creativity from an historical point of view.

So far as I can tell, the use of creativity to refer to something that man does or can do is a recent innovation. Certainly, this usage has no foundation in the main Western tradition of thought. Traditionally, creation was what God did when he brought the universe into being, or, following the account in Genesis, gave the universe its form and brought beings into existence. One unabridged dictionary gives this as its first meaning of the word "creation." To wit: "The act of creating from nothing; the act of causing to exist; and especially, the act of bringing this world into existence." On the other hand, the *American College Dictionary* drops this particular meaning to third position, and deals with it as a

special phrase. It says, "*the Creation*, the original bringing into existence of the universe by the Deity." The most absolute view of creativity imaginable was held by St. Augustine concerning God's creation of the world. He held that it was created *ex nihilo*, out of nothing.

How, O God, didst Thou make heaven and earth? Truly, neither in the heaven nor in the earth didst Thou make heaven and earth; nor in the air, nor in the waters, since these also belong to the heaven and the earth; nor in the whole world didst Thou make the whole world; because there was no place wherein it could be made before it was made, that it might be; nor didst Thou hold anything in Thy hand wherewith to make heaven and earth. . . .¹

There were differences among philosophers, of course, as to the extent and character of the Creation. Aristotle did not even believe that the universe had been created; it has always existed, he thought. Probably a more usual view was that the universe was created, but that this consisted of giving it form and order. Be that as it may, what man does was not conceived of as creativity. Plato and Aristotle conceived of the artist as imitating reality. For ex-

ample, Aristotle said: "Tragedy, then, [by which he meant a tragic drama] is an imitation of an action. . . ."² They did not necessarily, or particularly, mean a literal imitation of things as they appear to the sight.

Conveying the Ideals

Traditionally, the arts have been imitative of an underlying order. They have evoked ideals, caught the essence of man, or of a man, captured and set forth that which the most sensitive perceive in a thing. In short, the artists, too, labored in a metaphysical framework. They did not create; they imitated, but this was by no means a lowly task. Few things could be more worthy of doing than to make visible by painting and sculpture, to make audible by music, to communicate by drama and poetry, or to cast in concrete form by architecture the underlying order in the universe and the ideals of justice, honor, truth, beauty, and piety by which men should live. That the artist did not create these was no reproach; it was enough that he should convey them. In this context, if the artist were to create, he would be committing a fraud, for he would be deceiving men as to the nature of the underlying reality.

Nor were other kinds of activity

¹ Quoted in W. T. Jones, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1952), p. 354.

² *Ibid.*, p. 250.