

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Number 10, Part 5.4

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**A LETTER OF LAMENTATION
TO
AMERICA:
THE UNITED STATES
IS NO LONGER
A SERIOUS PLACE**

Part 5.4



Paragraph from *A Nation Gone Blind*, Chapter Two (“The Death of Literary Thinking in America”), pp. 160-161

But enough; lamentation will bring nothing back. The fact is that literary thinking can't be recovered—nor can the benefits it's capable of bringing—until such time as we once again recognize thought and feeling not just for what they *are* but also what they're *not*. As things stand now—in America, in academia, in the mass media, in the arts—feeling is doing the work of thought, and doing it very badly indeed. Thought, meanwhile, is hobbled and hamstrung by the cords of feeling it's bound up in, with the result that most of the time thinking can hardly be said to be taking place at all. John R. Searle, straight-faced and without irony, wrote well over a decade ago in *The New York Review of Books* that “One of the most depressing things about educated people today is that so few of them, even among professional intellectuals, are able to follow the steps of a simple logical argument.”¹

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¹ “The Storm over the University,” *The New York Review of Books*, Dec. 6, 1990.