

PANEL II **The Aesthetic Education of Man for the Beauty of the Mind and the Soul**

---

MEGAN BEETS

## Artistic and Moral Beauty

*This is the prepared text of Megan Beets' address to the Schiller Institute conference in Morristown, N.J. on Feb. 16, 2019. She is a member of the LaRouche PAC Scientific Research Team.*

Friedrich Schiller said in 1795, "It can be said that every individual carries a pure ideal man in himself . . . and it is the great task of his existence, during all his changes, to harmonize with this unchanging unity." Every human being, is fundamentally distinguished from, and set above all animals, all lower forms of life, in that every human child is born with the capacity for creative genius, to discover fundamentally new and *true* principles of the universe, or, as Einstein put it—to "know God's thoughts."

Therefore, genius is the most natural state of the human being, the fundamental characteristic of our species. But if that's the case, why are we in the situation we're in today—in which the beliefs of the majority of our fellow citizens, and the system that they have gone-along-to-get-along with for fifty years—even while they disagreed with it—have led them down the path of their own destruction, and have brought civilization to the brink of the abyss? Why has our own thinking failed us for so long? Is it the case that people just didn't know what's going on? That they didn't have the right information? People today are *drowning* in information! We are inundated with facts, with news stories, with documentaries, and most importantly, what we know from our own experiences—what's been done to us and to our children for all these years.



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

Megan Beets

In response to the bloody failure of the French Revolution, the loss of the momentous opportunity to bring the American Revolution to the continent of Europe and bring an end to the system of oligarchy, Friedrich Schiller said that while the objective circumstances were there, the moral possibility was wanting—a great moment had found a little people. What is lacking today is not information, or the objective circumstances for change, but the *emo-*

*tional capacity* to respond and realize the great chance which stands before us.

This means that we must awaken within our fellow citizens, an inner force to change, to pull humanity back from the abyss. We must make our fellow citizens *better people*, and change today's society from a degenerate one which has tolerated and perpetuated such injustices for so long—into one which is moral, just, and good. As I say that, you may be picturing your next-door neighbor, your family members, co-workers, your in-laws, the deluded mobs of the "resist" movement, and you may be thinking, "Political victory depends on making *them* moral, just, and good?! My God, we don't have a chance!"

### Popular Culture Is Menticide

Think for a moment about the mental life of the average citizen—and don't exclude yourself from that. With what does the average person occupy his or her leisure time? What occupies the thoughts, the idle moments of most people? How many thousands of hours of precious life are spent in a zombified state, *mindlessly* scrolling

through a social media feed or clicking from link to link on the internet? Why do people think this has no effect on their outlook on the world?!

Look at the popular music, the popular entertainment. I'll spare you my poetic recitation of the so-called lyrics of popular music. You've all heard them, you've all seen what passes for movies and dramas. What do all of these things share, as a common characteristic? Banality. Bestiality. And most of all, violence. Look at the video games, which even the youngest of children are playing! Violence! Our children, when they're not in school or otherwise occupied, are rehearsing murder on a daily basis. Does this, perhaps, have something to do with why Americans have thus far failed to reverse course? And therefore, there is no practical way out of this crisis. No logical extension of the beliefs and behavior of society today will lead to the necessary change for humanity, to bring mankind into a new paradigm, a future which is fundamentally different than the past fifty years.

### The Function of Classical Art

How do we resolve this paradox? The future depends on a change in society which that society doesn't seem to have the resources to make! Where can it come from? It certainly won't come from the Congress, or the other leaders on our political stage, at least not here in the West. Think again of that inner, mental life, and invert our previous discussion of it. What if the leisure time of the average citizen were occupied with a kind of entertainment in which they rehearse not violence, not murder, not banality, but the act of *creative discovery*? What if, in their leisure time, they trained their imaginations in the mode of creative thought?

This is the function of Classical art.

Friedrich Schiller, "On the Use of the Chorus in Tragedy":

Art has for its object not merely to afford a transient pleasure, to excite to a momentary dream of liberty; its aim is to make us absolutely free; and this it accomplishes by awakening, exercising, and perfecting in us a power to remove to an objective distance the sensible world; to transform



Friedrich Schiller

it into the free working of our spirit, and thus acquire a dominion over the material by means of ideas. For the very reason also that true art requires somewhat of the objective and real, it is not satisfied with a show of truth. It rears its ideal edifice on truth itself—on the solid and deep foundations of nature.

How different that is from the conception of art today, where art is whatever you feel at the moment. Whatever expression of your inner pain, or inner ugliness, or inner ennui oozed out of you today, to be forgotten tomorrow. For Schiller—and it's not just his opinion, it's ac-

tually true!—art is not art unless it is beautiful, and it ennobles the mind and soul of the audience toward the divine, toward the ideal in humanity. In his *Letters on the Aesthetical Education of Man*, Schiller wrote,

Art, like science, is free from everything that is practical and is established by human convention, and both rejoice in an absolute immunity from human lawlessness. The political legislator can enclose their territory, but he cannot govern within it. He can outlaw the friend of truth, but the truth exists; he can humiliate the artist, but he cannot degrade art. For entire centuries philosophers and artists have been occupied in plunging truth and beauty into the depths of vulgar humanity; the philosophers and artists are submerged there, but truth and beauty struggle triumphantly to the surface with their own indestructible vitality.

### Educating Your Emotions

In the same work, Schiller takes up an extensive discussion of the process of educating the emotions. Just as you might study to improve your reason and your knowledge, the emotions can be trained and ennobled, such that the desires and impulses of a person can, over time, come to coincide with what is right and good. This kind of person Schiller called the "Beautiful Soul." This power of true art puts a great responsibility on the artist. The artist, before he or she dares do something so important as to touch the soul of the audience, must be sure of the

effect, yet must elicit this effect as a free action, a free response of the imagination of the audience—or else the audience isn't truly free. Schiller says,

As difficult as it may be to determine the imagination's interplay without thereby impinging on its freedom, that first task is no less taxing than this second one: namely, to wield this imaginative play so as to determine the subjective individual's emotional state.

How can we be certain of the subjective, emotional effect we will elicit through a work of art? The only way to do this is by addressing what Schiller calls the "species character," or that which is universally human, in each person—the ideal person. And only if the artist has elevated him- or herself to the ideal, to the level of the universal—at least in the moment of performance—will he be able to accomplish this.

Schiller commented on the individual's species character in discussing Friedrich Matthisson's poems:

In order to be certain that he is indeed addressing the pure species within the individual, he himself must have already extinguished the individual within himself, and must have elevated himself to species-being. Only when he no longer experiences emotion as belonging to this or that specific person (in whom the notion of species would always remain limited), but rather as belonging to man as a universal, can he then be certain that the emotions of the entire human species will follow his own; indeed, he is just as entitled to strive for this effect, as he is to demand pure humanity from each human individual.

The other person I want to bring in on this dialogue is Lyndon LaRouche, for whom Classical art, and Classical music in particular, was a center of his mental life, and formed to a large degree the structure of his thought. It played a crucial role in his discovery in economics, and he, in turn, contributed a great deal to enrich our understanding and love of great music. I want to encourage everyone to study his writings on music and the poetic principle.

### **Real Music Is Not Romantic**

At the founding conference of the Schiller Institute in 1984, LaRouche discussed the difference in quality



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

*Lyndon LaRouche and Helga Zepp-LaRouche at the founding conference of the Schiller Institute in Arlington, Virginia on July 3-4, 1984.*

between real music, human music, and romanticism, which is the fundamental characteristic of popular music today:

The creative element in music, the difference between a blank and a real musician is that in real music the passion, the beauty, the excitement, is not located in chromatic sensual effects—that is romanticism. It is not located in the "freedom" of the "interpreter"—another word for liar—certain gratifying effects, idiosyncrasies for which he is famous. The performer is properly enslaved to the music, not in any rigorous programmed sense, but in the sense that in great contrapuntal music, there is a progress of development, rigorous development. . . .

The excitement of music is the same excitement that you feel in a profound scientific discovery, or the excitement that a child experiences in solving a problem and re-experiencing discoveries made before: The passion of music is the experience of that light turning on in your head at the point you have made a discovery. It is an emotion which is precisely congruent with love, in the most profound sense of love. To love someone is to love them in precisely these terms of passion—the passion of discovery, the passion to create, to elevate by creativity, to communicate something which will become immortally useful.

## The Power of Beauty

A population which is surrounded by beauty—by beautiful art, beautiful architecture, beautiful music—which taps into the imagination, the capacity for creative play which is inherent in every person; such a population won't be emotionally incapable of responding to the great tasks of his or her time, but will be able to take in the problems of humanity as their own.

Does that mean that nobody on Earth will have degenerate impulses, or will act like a jerk anymore, and that everybody will be a perfect angel all the time? Of course not! But what it *does* mean, is that the predominant characteristic in the majority of the population will be one which enjoys creativity, one which prefers that higher characteristics of mankind dominate their character. It means that the majority of humanity will exhibit and delight in a sense of goodness—in the sweetness of

truth, as Helga has said many times. And this is possible!

I would remind you that we are living in one of the most extraordinary periods in all of human history. This is a time such as Percy Shelley described when he said that at times of great social upheaval there is an “accumulation of the power of communicating and receiving intense and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature.” For the first time in human history, we have the potential for a Renaissance to exist throughout all parts of humanity simultaneously—not merely within one culture, or one region of the planet; but for all of mankind, across the entire Earth. We are living at a moment when mankind is finally in the process of eliminating poverty for good. These are the kinds of moments when great changes which you didn't think were possible before, become reality. This is possible. And because it is possible, you should join us and fight to make it happen.