

Political Revolution Requires Aesthetic Education of Man

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, president of Germany's Civil Rights Solidarity Movement (BüSo), gave the following speech on Nov. 18, to the annual congress of the Solidarity and Progress party in France, which is backing the Presidential candidacy of party president Jacques Cheminade. She spoke in English.

I think we are actually in a very good moment of history, because when Lyn [Lyndon LaRouche] said that it would be the youth who would be the revolutionary difference in bringing change in the world at this moment, I think this was just very powerfully demonstrated by the American part of the LaRouche Youth Movement. As you know, only two months ago, during the period of the primaries, which had the lowest turnout for a long time, most Democrats were actually convinced that they would not be able to win this election. And then Lyn has this really brilliant idea to catalyze an intervention into the campuses, into the universities in the United States. And basically we realized that the political block of most of the youth, the failure to react, of students and graduate students, was due to mind control by the Lynne Cheney/John Train apparatus,¹ and the Ayn Rand Institute; and basically, that you had a real mind-Gestapo preventing people from engaging in political discussions.

And then, when we intervened with the pamphlet “Is Joseph Goebbels On Your Campus?” and so forth, we had a real explosion. We then concentrated on those election districts which we thought were the most decisive ones, and the youth vote—especially of the age between 18 and 35 years—had the largest increase in turnout in these states where we were deployed. This catalyzed them, but also, obviously, other po-

1. See Anton Chaitkin and Jeffrey Steinberg, et al., “John Train’s Press Sewer: Is Goebbels on Your Campus?” *EIR*, Oct. 13, 2006.

litical forces got mobilized, so that the youth vote in general really picked up tremendously, where it had been completely apolitical and not mobilized just a very brief period before.

I think that this is really a very important reference, because the situation, I would say, before Nov. 7, was almost hopeless. Just think, what a universe we would be in, if we would still have a Republican majority for four more years or who knows what—it would be completely depressing, it would be a nightmare; there would be almost no hope. But when Lyn said that the situation had to be changed in the United States, to then create other options elsewhere, I think he really has been proven to be right, and now we have a fighting chance.

I spoke briefly with Lyn earlier in the day, and he said that the response to his webcast on Thursday [Nov. 16] was absolutely fantastic, that the right people in the Democratic Party got it, and they were completely excited. And these are also people who know that the crash is on. I don’t need to name who these people are, but I think Jacques probably has told you, these are people who do know something about Wall Street, they do know something about the global financial system.

Therefore, I think we are going into a period where, between now and the end of the year, the beginning of the new year, you will see *dramatic*, changes. You probably will see the meltdown of the system. You have now, almost every day, the *Financial Times*, or Robert Rubin, or other such people warning of an imminent crash—this is not supposed to be the “psychology of the markets.” Because, according to the psychology of the markets, you are supposed to talk very nicely about the financial system, and not give an alert warning that it’s about to crash.

Now, you all know the situation in Iraq is absolutely out



EIRNS/Julien Lemaître

Helga Zepp-LaRouche with Jacques Cheminade in Paris on Nov. 18, at the annual conference of the Solidarity and Progress party, which Cheminade heads. The challenges facing the world in the next weeks and months, she stressed, will require profound subjective changes—of the sort that were most incisively described by the great humanist poets and philosophers of German Classical culture.

of control. And if there is not an immediate reversal of the policy, in the direction of the “LaRouche Doctrine for Southwest Asia,”² there is right now, the danger—even if they don’t make an attack on Iran, which is not off the table until we have Bush and Cheney impeached—the dynamic right now, is towards a broader war and civil wars, involving Turkey, involving other countries in the region, because this thing is just exploding on a Shi’ite-Sunni-Kurdish basis.

A Turning-Point in History

So, if the crash comes, Lyn is the only person—and he has stated this many times—who can effect the necessary change in a reform of the monetary system. But, I’m pretty sure, that when this happens—and it will happen, as we say in Germany, “as surely as the ‘Amen’ in church”—then there will come a period which will be the most challenging in world history. I’m sure that that is not an exaggeration. Because, either Lyn can catalyze the Democratic Party and hopefully some moderate Republicans, to immediately go for the proposals of a New Bretton Woods—a new monetary, emergency conference—or there will be chaos.

We will come to a moment when the American Revolution or any other great moment of change will look relatively small, compared to what we have to effect. So, that is why, in a certain sense, I wanted to discuss this question tonight of what is required subjectively.

Now, obviously, when the American Revolution happened, the best European minds all hoped that this could be

replicated in Europe. And the biggest hope obviously was placed on the French Revolution, with Jean Sylvain Bailly and the idea to have a National Convention until a Constitution could be debated, representing the closest approximation to going in the direction of an American Revolution.³ But we all know what happened: the storming of the Bastille; shortly afterwards the Jacobins; Robespierre said, “The Revolution doesn’t need any scientists”; the guillotine started to be used; Thermidor came as a response to that; Napoleon crowned himself Emperor, and started to establish a global empire, by plunging all of Europe into wars. And at that point, all the humanists in all of Europe, who had looked to France to be the first example to follow the American Revolution, were completely shocked, and only some strange Jacobins stayed on the course of the French Revolution after that.

Schiller and Aesthetic Education

One person who was very much in favor of the French Revolution in the beginning—as a matter of fact, he, in 1789, thought that the Age of Reason was about to start—was Friedrich Schiller. In 1789, he gave his famous lecture on universal history in Jena, and he was convinced that the possibility to establish true political freedom, republics all over the place, was extremely close. He was made an honorary citizen of France in 1792, by the National Convention. But when Schiller heard that Louis XVI had been executed, he was com-

2. Reprinted in *EIR*, Dec. 15, 2006.

3. Pierre Beaudry, “Jean Sylvain Bailly: The French Revolution’s Benjamin Franklin,” *EIR*, Jan. 26, 2001, and “Why France Did Not Have an American Revolution,” *EIR*, Jan. 18, 2002.

pletely disgusted, and he rejected this honorary citizenship, because he didn't want to have anything to do with such a policy.

Schiller at that point wrote the famous *Aesthetical Letters*. He starts these *Aesthetical Letters* by saying about the French Revolution, that "a great moment had found a little people." That the objective condition was there, for political change, but that the subjective, moral condition was lacking. And he wrote his *Letters on the Aesthetical Education of Man* to try to find a means to make sure, that in the future, such great moments would find, not a little people, but a great people, who would be capable of using the objective opportunity and making the kind of political change which was required.

If people remain the same, he said, nothing will change. So the only possibility you have is to change the people, to make them better people. And how do you make people better? By aesthetical education. And since most people today have almost no idea of what that actually is, how do you aesthetically educate somebody? Does that mean that you go to the theater every evening? Does that mean you read a lot of books? Or, what does it mean? I want to actually go a little bit into the evolution of the idea of aesthetical education, how this occurred.

Origins of the Weimar Classical Period

Now, you probably know that the two persons who were more important to lay the foundation for the German Classical period than anybody else, were Gotthold Lessing and Moses Mendelssohn. And I will talk about them in a little while. Lessing was actually the first German tragedian in the real sense, writing real tragedies, after the Seven Years' War, and after the Thirty Years' War in particular, reviving Shakespeare and going back to the Greek Classics, laying the foundation for the Weimar Classic, which was Schiller, Goethe, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and several others; but Lessing was one of the founders. And he was actually the first one to say: Tragedy means ennobling the audience by evoking its compassion—*Mitleid*. And he said: Who makes us compassionate, makes us better and more virtuous.

Actually, one can say the real founding of aesthetical education was in a letter exchange—which, when your German has progressed enough so that you can all read this fluently, I advise you to read it—a letter exchange among Lessing, Moses Mendelssohn, and Friedrich Nicolai (Nicolai was the publisher) from Aug. 31, 1756 to May 14, 1757.

In this letter exchange, Lessing develops the essential conception of his theory of the ennoblement of man. He starts with questions such as: Which passions are provoked by tragedy, and which faculties of the soul are responsible for moral cognition? Which power of the soul guides moral behavior? I think that is a very worthwhile question, and I will come to it in a second. He says: The most compassionate man is the best man, more open to all social virtues and all kinds of generosity.

You can believe that or not, but it's something I put on the table tonight as a thesis, and as I keep talking, I want you to think, is that sentence true? Is it true that the most compassionate person is the best human being? Well, I think so, and I hope that you will debate me and refute it, make arguments and so forth, but I want to come to this.

Aristotelian Manipulation

But let me first give you the prehistory of how we came to this point. Now, in the period since Aristotle, everybody would talk about the *affect* of tragedy, of drama; they refer normally to Aristotle and his *Poetics*. And in this work, Aristotle says that you need tragedy for *catharsis*. Now, what he means by *catharsis*, is that you need a lot of emotions—fear, compassion, and many others—so that the emotions get purified by fear and compassion. He also says, just in parenthesis, that an actor should go on the stage and feel anger, when the main character feels anger; or feel love, when he kisses Juliet, if he's Romeo. And so forth and so on. (Schiller by the way, later completely rejected this. Concerning the idea that you have to go on stage and pull out your hair when you're upset, he wrote a very nice article, called "About Bürger's Poems," which I advise you very strongly to read, because it's full of gems.)

So, Aristotle says: Also people should cultivate their emotions very well, because you need that for rhetoric. He says, the objective of speech, of rhetoric, of oratory, is to influence the judgment of the audience; and therefore the orator must get himself and the person who judges, into a certain attitude. The same subject appears differently to the person who loves, from the person who hates; it appears differently to the person who is angry, or who is mild—the same subject will be judged by people in a different mood, in a completely different way. So therefore, truth is not what counts, but that you (I would say) manipulate people to believe, through rhetorical skills, you put them in the mind-set so that they judge the matter according to the mood you put them into.

He says, therefore, for him, affect—and I use the old word "affect," which is the same as passion or emotion, but since Lessing and all of these people talk about it in terms of "affect," I use it this way, because it's simply more accurate; it's more to the point. So, Aristotle says: There are two other means of persuasion. One is the character of the speaker, and the speech itself. And also, the proofs and the supposed proofs. It doesn't matter if it's true or not, as long as I make it appear that the proof is true.

Now, that thinking of Aristotle's influenced the debate for a very long time. Rudolph Agricola wrote, in 1515, that it is of no importance for the affect, for the emotions, whether the matter is true, as it only appears that way; every affect is unreflected and heated, and mostly in a heated argument one affect grows out of another. You know, in a heated debate, where everyone is talking with high emotions, one emotion catalyzes the other, and it doesn't really matter then what the



Rudolph Agricola was an Aristotelian of the 16th Century, who maintained that it is not truth that is the basis for judgment, but the manipulation of emotions.

reality is. So, the judgment, he says, does not occur on the basis of reality, but on the basis of the delusion of another affect, which a person has accepted because of another even minimal and unimportant influence. So, it's all about manipulation.

He says, an affect is a certain motion of the mind, which causes us to desire or reject something more than if we were in a state of calmness of the mind. In other words, all you have to do, is whip up emotions, and you can influence people, change their views and so forth.

Then another writer in this line was Gerhard Johannes Vossius, who in 1630, wrote about rhetoric, that what counts is a change of the state of the soul, or the mind, for that matter, which is excited through the affects; and then, the person judges differently than the calm person or the appeased person before. He describes the persuasive effect of affect, and he says, it can be made so strong, that it can even be deployed against the truth.

I unfortunately have recently seen such examples, in my immediate environment.

Aristotle, who was the founder of the rhetorical school, actually said the reason the speaker has to learn the characteristics of affect, is to manipulate the result, so that he can consciously cause a certain result. Antonio Sebastiano Minturno wrote a piece, *De poeta*, in 1559, also on the line of Aristotle, and he says: "Compassion and fear can be very well used to break anger, to destroy greed, to reduce ambition, to suppress lust for power, and to contain every unbridled raving of the mind." So, this was the common view of all poets, at least the ones I encounter, in the 16th and 17th centuries; this was the opinion of Vossius, Jacobus Pontarus, the so-called Giessener Poetik group; Gryphius, who wrote during the Thirty Years' War, very emotional, really powerful poems, which you should also look at at some point. And all believed that this was the Aristotelian view of compassion and fear.

Aristotle, by the way, called compassion, "*eleos*" and fear, "*phobos*"; you find this word still in "phobia," and so forth.

Behind that, is the idea that you need a *catharsis*, a cleansing of the emotion.

Enter, the Leibnizians

Then Lessing appeared in the middle of the 18th Century for the first time, with this idea that tragedy only creates one passion, not many, and that that passion is compassion, *Mitleid*: that you feel with the suffering of the other person. Also, he's the first one to ever say that there is a moral effect of compassion. Now, he did not completely invent this on his own. He goes back on the one side to Leibniz, and on the other side he was in this dialogue with Mendelssohn. But, he nevertheless made a clear break with the Aristotelians.

Leibniz had written *Meditationes de Cognitione, Veritate et Ideis* [*Reflections on Knowledge, Truth and Ideas*]. (Unfortunately he wrote most of the time in French or Latin, which makes it very difficult to read him, because he writes with three languages in one sentence.) He describes also, in a certain sense, the different kinds of cognition. He says, the key is the activity of the soul, because it is the soul which defines cognition. If a soul cannot recognize the perceived matter, or the subject that you are trying to understand, he calls it "*cognitio obscura*," dark cognition. If you recognize it clearly, he calls it "*cognitio clara*." If you can differentiate the matter from other things, he calls it "*cognitio distincta*"; or if you cannot do it, "*cognitio confusa*." (Now, that is also something I have recognized recently a lot.)

Leibniz was the first to investigate the subjective condition of the process of cognition, namely that it is occurring in the human soul. That is not self-evident, because most people, when they talk about reason, understand it as an objective process of the mind.

Another person who was following Leibniz in this tradition, was Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, who wrote *The Theoretical Aesthetic*. He developed it for the first time, and he goes even a step beyond this, and says: It is the sensuous part of the soul which is also capable of independent cognition. That you have the mind, reason, which does the cognition; but you also have the soul, which is the part which is responsible for the sensuous part of cognition. So he developed the first scientific definition of the instruments for an investigation of this power. He develops these different powers of the soul, which are involved in the sensuous part of cognition. He differentiates between *imaginatio*, which is the power of imagination; the *facultas fingendi*, the power of poetry; the *perspicacia*, the power of analysis; *memoria*, memory; *previsio*, the power of anticipation; the *judicium*, the power of judgment; the *praesaegitio*, the power of inkling, or what Lyn would call "prescience"; and the *facultas caracteristica*, the power of conceptualization. The area of cognition, he says, is exclusively the realm of the sensuous part of the soul, or that part with which you understand poems. The power of the soul in respect to cognition is sensuous. But, he says, absolutely clearly, it is not feeling for feelings' sake, but



Moses Mendelssohn (1729-86), the great German-Jewish philosopher, was known as “the Socrates of Berlin.”

it is the question of how do you educate your emotions so that they play a better part in the role of cognition?

So aesthetics, in that sense, as an independent science of sensuous cognition, was really developed in the course of the 18th Century.

Moses Mendelssohn on ‘the Sensations’

Mendelssohn, referring to Leibniz and to Baumgarten in 1755, wrote “Letters About the Sensations,” in which he investigates the nature of pleasure; and what he means by that, is to look at the processes which occur in the soul when a person experiences pleasure. Now, Mendelssohn discusses compassion and love for an object, or a person, who is associated with a misfortune or a physical evil, which happens to him without his own doing. The love part is based on the perfectness of the person you love; you think the person you love has some very good qualities, otherwise you wouldn’t love this person, and that obviously gives you pleasure. And if a misfortune happens to this person, for which the beloved person is not to blame, then the innocent beloved who is in such a misfortune is even more lovable, and it increases the value of his excellence.

Mendelssohn says: This is the nature of our sensations. If some bitter drops are mixed in the honey-sweet cup of pleasure, they increase the taste of pleasure and double its sweetness.

That is the essence of tragedy: Why do you feel pleasure in something which is horrible? Why do you bother to see Sophocles, or Euripides, or Shakespeare, or Schiller? Well, because obviously, the misfortune of the noble person increases the “fun,” so to speak. I’ll come to this in a second.

So, then Mendelssohn, in the tradition of Leibniz and Baumgarten, insists that the perception of a matter is constituted by the processes of the soul in the subject who does the cognition. And he then writes about the *Main Principles of the Beautiful Art and Sciences*, and this is the title of a book in 1757: In the rules of beauty lie the deepest secrets of our

soul. In each rule of beauty, lies at the same time, the discovery of knowledge about the soul. He calls this *Seelenlehre* or *Seelenkunde*, which nowadays you would call psychology. The point he’s making, is that each rule about beauty, when you discover it, tells you something about how your mind works. Since the rule specifies which condition a beautiful object has the best effect on our mind or soul, it is possible to explain it by the nature of the human mind and its attributes. One has to investigate the appearances, which are the main-spring, the motives of our soul, and when the soul is in the heaviest turmoil, the most upset, very carefully compare it with the theory, to shed new light on it and to expand its limits through new discoveries.

Now, that is a similar idea to what you find in Nicolaus of Cusa, about the laws of the microcosm and laws of the macrocosm being the same. It is the same idea that you find in Leibniz, that you have to understand the human soul as a Monad, which contains in germ form, all the laws of the physical universe at large. It is the same idea, that in the laws of beauty, you find the key to the inner secrets of your own soul. So, he says further, that, in respect to the appearances of the mainsprings of the soul, emotion, then what causes the mainsprings of the soul to be most activated, is beautiful art.

Now, the notion of the affect, of the passion, for Mendelssohn is completely different than for Aristotle. And this group of people, especially Mendelssohn and Lessing, consciously broke with all the theories about poetry, about rhetoric, derived from Aristotle. Because, for Aristotle and the school of rhetoric, affect, passions, are only a means for persuasion and manipulation. While for Mendelssohn, he’s talking about the psychology, the *Seelenkunde*—I have not found a good [English] word for it: the knowledge of the soul. And he has given it a new sharpness in this notion.

The Mendelssohn-Lessing-Nicolai Dialogue

Now, the question was asked, what kind of passion is evoked by tragedy? On stage, all kinds of passions happen; the main actors are sometimes joyful, they fall in love, they become angry, they become vengeful. So now, Lessing asks: Do these people in the audience experience these emotions that are shown on the stage? I’m not asking the question, do they accept that the actors have these emotions in the play; but rather, does the poet get the person in the audience to feel these passions himself? Does the person who is sitting in the audience feel like Juliet, or Romeo, or like Iago, or these people? And here Lessing answers: No. No passion or emotion is evoked by tragedy in the audience but one: compassion. Because the person in the audience does not get really furious or afraid, even in a horror movie! When you switch off the TV set or leave the movie hall, the horror goes away, because you remember, it was just a movie. So you’re not really experiencing this emotion, because, as Lessing says, the uncomfortable object is missing.

Lessing says this is totally different concerning compas-



EIRNS/Stuart Lewis

Classical actor Robert Beltran works with a LaRouche Youth Movement drama workshop in Pennsylvania, coaching a performance of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. Does the audience actually experience the emotions portrayed on the stage? Lessing, who rejected the Aristotelian concept of tragedy as catharsis of the emotions, said no: What the observer experiences is compassion.

sion. Because here, the affect, the passion, has an object, the misfortune of the tragic hero, and compassion is a specific form of cognition.

Now, Nicolai, who participated in this dialogue with Mendelssohn and Lessing, says: No, the tragedy is only effective when the observer feels the emotion himself, in his soul. Lessing disagrees with that, and explicitly says: I disagree with this whole Aristotelian school. And then he starts this letter exchange on Aug. 31, 1756, and in the letter, he says, "I'm going to dispute and disprove the argument of Aristotle, that the aim of tragedy is to purify the emotions."

That is the main reason why so many dramas which were written in Germany are bad dramas. Because if the purpose of a drama is to achieve the moral improvement of the audience, you end up with these terribly moralistic, didactic plays. And Nicolai says: I say the best play is that which evokes the passions the most. Therefore, he says, the most important thing is the plot in a drama, because the plot is what evokes the emotions the most. And then he goes through different categories of plays, Greek tragedies and so forth, and says: Look, don't you see? In these tragedies all kinds of emotions are evoked: fear, compassion, admiration, and so forth.

And then Lessing writes to Moses Mendelssohn in October 1756—I'll just give you a little anecdote, because some people these days complain that Lyn is polemical, and I wanted to tell you through this story, that Lessing was also

quite polemical.

In one of these letters to Mendelssohn, he says: "I read your message about Naumann's metaphysical discussion with a noble lady." He wanted to issue philosophy for ladies, which was never published. Naumann—I'll tell you at the end who he was—said: "After I heard that from you, I couldn't help shouting out, 'Why did he not rather drown?' This thought is, according to your own system, by the way, not so malicious as it appears, because what is best for a single person must always be secondary to the general welfare. And it would be better even for his own honor. Would it not be better to drown as a bad poet, than as a bad philosopher? By the way, I don't predict or wish such a fate for him—God, no! I'm not doing that. I would even save him at the risk of my own life, pulling him out of the waters if he had fallen into them. But the point is simply, Naumann is not smart."

The background of this story, is that Naumann was a lousy poet, who at the same time wanted to make a lot of

money. He tried to sell a shipment of ladies' stockings to America, but the ship went down and he lost all his money. And then on top of that, he wrote a poem about this story, and sent the poem to Lessing, and that is what he refers to—better to drown as a bad poet, than as a bad philosopher.

I just wanted to tell you, because Lessing is full of such humorous things, which are very difficult to capture in translation.

So, finally, in November 1756, Lessing answers Nicolai's first letter from Aug. 31. He says: We both agree that the principle, that tragedy must make people better, resulted in many well-meaning but bad dramas. But the second principle you mentioned, that the more passions a drama arouses, the better—well, let's look at what passions are aroused by a drama.

And then he goes through these questions again, and says: Do you actually become more joyful? Do you fall in love? Or, is it something else? And he says, "No," and he repeats, the only passion which is evoked is compassion. Because horror and admiration are not really passions. Horror, he says, is nothing but the surprise of the compassion; for example, when a ghost appears, as in *Hamlet*, it is the anticipation that this ghost has something to do with the misfortune of a person. Because you would not be afraid of a ghost as such. So, he calls "horror," *Schrecken*, a "surprise compassion." Or, admiration, if the hero is unfortunate, but he's so sublime that the



Gotthold Lessing (1729-81) believed that compassion is the only true emotion evoked by tragedy, whose purpose is to increase the feeling of compassion in the audience.

compassion turns into admiration. So, he says, horror and fright, and admiration, are only steps on a ladder, where the middle is compassion, and if it comes too soon, then he calls it *Schreck*, and if it goes too far, it becomes the Sublime, it turns into admiration. He says: The purpose of the tragedy is to increase the feeling of compassion. It is not supposed to teach us to feel compassion for this or that unfortunate person, in the concrete situation in the play, but to educate our emotions to feel compassion for all unfortunates at all times, in all situations, to move us to engage ourselves for them.

Now, this is very important, because Lessing says at another point that the reason people should study tragedy and great plays, also comedies, is that they teach you, in looking at the stage, how to deal with a problem you may meet in real life, but which comes so suddenly that you have no time to rehearse it. And Schiller says, for example in the introduction to the *Bride of Messina*, which was one of the plays which he wrote completely in the Greek style, that great tragedy or great Classical art evokes in us an emotional power, which stays within us even after we have long left the theater.

Now, I believe this is absolutely true, both positively, but also unfortunately, negatively. I twice made the mistake that I went to a good play by Schiller and one by Shakespeare, which had these horrible, modern *Regietheater* performances, and it really caused *terrible* emotions in me, and I could not switch them off. They stayed with me for days to come. And, at the same time, when you experience a very elevated performance, and you are ennobled, it stays with you. You have learned emotionally something which will not go away. With great music, it's similar, but he says this for great tragedy.

So, he says, the aim of this whole thing, is to make us feel compassion for all unfortunates at all times in all situations, and cause us to engage ourselves for them.

Now, this is the main problem we have to deal with. Because, you see, the problem is, why do people not immediately say, "The world is in terrible shape: Africa is dying, the culture stinks, most people are suffering terrible lives. I have to de-

vote my life to changing that." No. People don't react like that. They say, "Oh. . . I don't go there." "To look at the misery in Africa? I don't let that get to me. It would ruin my evening." We have many people who say, "I haven't watched the news for a long time, because all you see is bad news, and I don't want to ruin my day with all of this reality."

Schiller, in the *Aesthetical Letters*, which are all based on these earlier writings, especially of Lessing and Mendelssohn, he says: The main problem of our time, is the lack of *Empfindungsvermögen*, development of sensuous faculties, of the emotional side of cognition. And most people neglect that completely. They say, "Oh, I need to study, I need to know all of these things," but they pay very little attention to the fact that their emotions have to be educated to be on the same level as reason, that there should not be a contradiction. So the *Aesthetical Education* is addressing exactly this problem.

Then, Lessing says: The most compassionate person is, therefore, the best human being, ready to act on the basis of all civil virtues, to demonstrate all kinds of generosity. And therefore, one who makes us compassionate, makes us better and more virtuous.

And then he says, the same thing is also true for comedy, because it enables us to recognize all sorts of absurdities, and a person, who has, in a playful way, studied these absurdities, will not repeat these in his own behavior, and therefore eventually will become the best-educated person.

So, both tragedy and comedy, at the same time, naturally, are inseparable from having fun.

The Essential Nature of Tragedy

Now, they go into how to make a drama, such that this effect is brought about. The person who suffers misfortune in the play, must have good qualities and accomplishments, and the misfortune must remain in a balanced relation to accomplishment. You must have a good person, and a good misfortune, but not a big accomplishment and a small misfortune, or vice versa; they have to be approximately equal to have this effect. Therefore, the poet must not put a completely evil person on the stage, because you will not feel compassion for a totally evil person. And you should not put God on the stage, because He is so perfect that there is no tragedy involved—there is only admiration.

So therefore, the question is, how do you write a tragedy in such a way that such compassion is evoked in the maximal way? Lessing does not refer to the outcome of the play—whether the tragedy ends badly, and therefore you call it a tragedy—but he says, it has to be sustained for the entire duration of the play. Then, in the letter to Nicolai on Nov. 29, he writes: The aim is to cause the audience to be moved, even to tears.

Take, for example, a beggar. I go to the beggar and I ask him why he is in this situation, and he says, "I lost my job three years ago. My wife is sick. My children are too small



The Shakespeare Theater at the Folger

The blinded Earl of Gloucester with his son Edgar in a performance of Shakespeare's King Lear. The audience is deeply moved, wrote Lessing, when the suffering and the accomplishments of a character in a play are approximately in balance.

to take care of themselves. I just overcame a severe illness yesterday." Then the person asks the beggar, "Who are you?" and he replies, "Well, I worked for a minister, and I could get my job back immediately, if I would agree to be the creature of this evil minister." And then Lessing says: Well, that's a story, but nobody would be moved to tears about it. But if the beggar says, "I lost my job because I was honest, and I made myself hated by the minister, and therefore I'm now suffering hunger, and my sick wife and my small children go hungry and would rather beg, than have to see me become evil, and they cannot bear having me become evil." In this case, the compassionate person may weep, because here you have a story where accomplishment and misfortune are in a balanced relationship.

Take a balance-scale, and place misfortunate on one side, and compassion on the other. Let's put a little bit more emphasis on the one or the other, and then see what it does to the emotional reaction of the audience.

Let's have the same beggar, the unfortunate, who continues his story, and says: "But, if only my wife recovers from her illness, everything will get better, because we are brave people and we are not ashamed to earn our money with the work of our hands. We can cut wood, or do something else practical. The only thing that counts is not whether we work with our hands or we work in the ministry, but that we aspire to the Good."

And then, Lessing says: At this moment, our tears dry and admiration takes over, with all of this noble behavior. But we are no longer moved.

Okay, let's emphasize the other side of the scale: The misfortune becomes too big. So, the story continues; the beggar does not get any donations; everyone rejects him and says, "Go away!" His hunger becomes worse, his mind becomes

confused, and his anger increases. And then, at the height of it, he murders his wife, his children, and finally kills himself.

So, then Lessing asks: Can I still cry? Obviously not, because here the pain has overtaken the compassion, and the compassion stops.

He has more elaborated examples from the Greek tragedies and so forth, which would take too much explaining, so I took a relatively simple story. But he applies the same principle to *Oedipus*, to *Hecuba*, to other Greek tragedies, and it's a very useful mental exercise; if you want to write tragedies, or comedies, it's useful to read this. Because it gives you a sense of what kind of thinking people had to use to create their characters, to assess the scientific effect on the audience. And we come to this in a second, with Schiller.

So, the whole point, what Lessing is trying to do, is to develop as many people as possible into self-thinking people who are capable of individual compassion, a personality which is developing harmoniously as an individual. And compassion is the most important. Now, remember, when Lessing and Mendelssohn wrote these things, Mendelssohn was called the "Socrates of the 18th Century"; he continued the *Phaedon* of Plato, and he was really the outstanding, towering mind, and was regarded as such in the 18th Century in Germany.

Against the Enlightenment—and Popular Culture

They all did that, against what? Against the French Enlightenment, against the English Enlightenment, against the ideas of Locke, Hobbes, the idea that the only interest is egoism, self-interest. Basically, personal benefit, that that would motivate people to do things.

Now obviously, you can see already, that by this theory you have to have, not self-interest, but you have to organize people so that they feel compassionate toward each other. It is obviously the opposite of the Enlightenment, and a total attack on the Enlightenment.

And Lessing and Mendelssohn were very much against everything which was [debased popular culture]. For example, they did not go to soccer games, obviously; but they would be horrified if they had seen the World Cup soccer games in Berlin last Summer, when you had these people in a rave. And they would be completely horrified if they were to go to a modern pop or rock festival, where you have 10,000 young people all in very strange, Dionysian, orgiastic motions. As a matter of fact, mobs and crowds are actually the opposite of what this aesthetical education is all about. Nobody will ever be aesthetically educated by going to any kind of mass event of that kind.

Just yesterday morning, there was a TV program about video-games, and you know, they actually did a study which completely confirmed what I said several years ago, when I worked on Pokémon and video-games and so forth. They have now found—not surprisingly, it's not new, but I just want to repeat it in this context: At a rock concert, people

have wild, crazy emotions. But what happens in the video-game is totally the opposite: People become autistic. They develop a certain faculty of the mind, and when they play video-games for hours and hours, you can even say that they develop a certain skill, like having quick reactions. But it is almost like a dead part of the mind, because it's based on pure logic, almost like a digital reaction in your mind. And people have *no emotions*. In video-games you cannot have emotions, you become autistic. Because you're not developing—Lessing would say, how can you be compassionate with a video-game?

But the researchers took students, or children, or whatever—young people who do this for hours and years, and then they expose them to family fights, to political disaster, to natural catastrophe, to certain scenes that are in the video-game, they have almost no reaction. But when the video-game is tested, they have very big emotions. Now, I think this is really a very interesting thing.



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Video-gamers in Los Angeles. Studies have found that video-gamers' emotions are suppressed, almost to the point of autism, even as their minds are narrowly focussed to master skills such as quick reflexes. The opposite of Classical aesthetic education!

Schiller: The Sublime Aim of Poetry

Now, let's look at Schiller, because in a certain sense, the idea that man can be aesthetically educated, as I tried to point out, came out of a long struggle, until people really had the right idea. Schiller wrote the *Aesthetical Education of Man*, and many other aesthetical writings. Why do people feel joy at tragic subjects? He wrote two very beautiful articles about the Sublime—which is really unique to Schiller: The notion of the Sublime, is something which I think nobody else has in a play. Schiller made a special kind of different universe of tragedy, by inventing this idea of the Sublime. But he was very clearly influenced by Lessing and Mendelssohn, and one should know that the Humboldts, for example, Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt, used to go to Mendelssohn's family home all the time.

So, what I said so far, was the fertile ground out of which then the German Classics came. In Schiller, concerning pleasure about tragic subjects, he actually said almost the same thing that Lessing had said earlier: that the well-meant desire to have the morally good in art, as the aim, has produced so much mediocrity, and also in theory has caused similar damage.

So, what is the aim? The main idea of the *Aesthetical Letters* is the following: He asks, why did the French Revolution collapse? (That's one reason why you should read it, by the way!) He says, because the subjective condition was not there. That's what we have been talking about the whole time. So, then he asks, what should one do, where should the ennoblement come from, when the masses are degenerate, and the governments are corrupt? Then he comes to the surprising—or not so surprising—answer: It has to come from great Classical art. Why? Because in the case of great Classical art,

when it has the true principles of this art, the tyrant can contain it, he can forbid it, but he cannot rule in it.

A great poet, he says, only deserves to be called a great poet, if he idealizes himself at the moment when he creates great art, at the moment when he writes a tragedy or a poem; he has to ennoble himself, to be an ideal man, or he should not dare to move his audience. Because the poet, or the artist in general, or the composer—but especially the poet, because he has such power, that he can touch the emotions and he can change people—should not go in front of the audience if, when he composes his great art, he has not ennobled himself to be an ideal man, *and*, he should not talk about a subject which is not a universal one. Because if he fulfills these two conditions, he has a scientifically knowable effect on the audience. A poet or an artist who says something and then produces chaos, what Aristotle was talking about before—where some people hate, others love, and so forth—Schiller says: No, the effect on the audience must be scientifically known by the poet beforehand. And the only way you can accomplish that, is by having these two conditions fulfilled.

Q: Can you repeat the two conditions?

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, the first one is that any artist who dares to touch the audience should ennoble himself to be an ideal man, at least at the moment when he writes the poem. Then later he can have a little pause—but I'm saying that's the condition of Schiller, that a person may be irrational or may be a gourmand, or something else—but when he is a poet, he should stop eating at least while writing the poem! No, I'm making fun of a very poignant subject. But it's true! Beethoven, Bach, Schiller—they would never have written



EIRNS/Steve Carr

A statue of Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) in Detroit, Michigan. Germany's greatest poet and playwright, Schiller wrote that "a beautiful soul is a person for whom freedom and necessity, passion and duty, are the same thing."

what they wrote, if they had not done that! They ennobled themselves to the highest ideal of man, when they composed. Bach's *Jesu, meine Freude*—you cannot write that, when you're having a freak-out!

You have to ennoble yourself, with what Lyn calls the "lunge principle" of a conductor—you have to mobilize the highest ideal. When you write a poem at home, don't write a poem just because you have eaten beans, and your stomach is full, and you have to get it out somehow! The subject you write about should be of universal interest for mankind. This is why most poems which are like opportunity poems—"the air is so blue, and the leaves are so green"—that is generally bad poetry. Because according to Schiller's demand, the subject you discuss must be a universally interesting and truthful subject for mankind. Only then can you call it great.

And if you fulfill these two conditions, then you can have a scientific effect, a knowable effect on the audience.

The Beautiful Soul

Schiller also writes in a critique of the poems of Bürger. So, Schiller says:

"It is inconceivable that a man whose knowledge has matured will seek refreshment for heart and mind from an immature youth; nor will he desire to encounter in a poem the very same prejudices, brutish customs, and vacuousness which plague him in his daily life. Such an individual is fully justified in demanding that the poet be as Horace was for the Romans, a trusted guide through life, and that the latter be on his own moral and intellectual level—since he desires never to sink below himself, not even in the hours he sets aside for recre-

ation. It is therefore not enough to merely depict sentiments with elevated colors; our sentiments must themselves be elevated. Enthusiasm alone is not enough; we demand the enthusiasm of a matured mind. All that the poet can give us, is his own personality; it must therefore be worthy of being presented to the scrutiny of society and posterity. The task of ennobling that personality to the highest degree, of refining it into the purest, most splendid humanity, is the first and most important business he must address, before he may venture to stir members of the elite. There can be no greater value to his poetry, than that it is the perfect imprint of a truly interesting disposition of a truly interesting, perfected mind. . . .

"One of the poet's indispensable functions is to idealize his object; failing this, he deserves not the name. It is his office, to free all that is excellent about his object (whether this be a physical shape, a sentiment, or an action, whether internal or external) from coarser, and even from merely extraneous substances; to gather the beams of perfection scattered among many objects, into a single beam; to subordinate asymmetrical features to the harmony of the whole; to elevate what is individual and local, into what is universal. All particular ideals which he develops in this fashion, are, as it were, outpourings of an inner ideal of perfection abiding within the poet's soul."⁴

In other words, when you write a poem, you can see the soul of the poet. So you'd better watch out, because everyone can read the innermost secret of your soul, when you write a poem! Which is why I personally find it very difficult to write poems, when not surrounded by friends. Lyn said the same thing: Lyn wrote poems when he was a younger man, and he said he stopped because there was no culture which would allow him to write these poems in an appropriate environment. And I have had the same experience, when I wrote some poems, and I was not in the right environment. Then you stop, because you expose your soul. When you write an article or a leaflet, or a book, or whatever, it's still sort of objective—compared to a poem. But when you write a poem, you reveal something of your innermost secrets, they're totally exposed. I think those of you who have written operas recently, probably can say the same thing for operas, or other compositions. If you didn't do it last week, you will do it next week—it's okay!

Okay, so what is now required for the poet to become such an idealized person? How do you manage to fulfill this ideal? How do you become an ideal man, at least temporarily? Better, you should be that all the time, but—

Well, the whole purpose of what Schiller wrote, was exactly like for Lessing and for Mendelssohn, to ennoble man-

4. "On Bürger's Poems," in *Friedrich Schiller: Poet of Freedom*, Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: Schiller Institute, 1988).

kind. Anybody who tells you anything different, forget it. They don't know what they're talking about.

And the highest ideal of the image of man which Schiller had, was what he called the "beautiful soul." Now, I give you a quote from a writing by Schiller, which is called, "On Grace and Dignity." He says:

"We call it a beautiful soul, when moral sentiment has assured itself of all emotions of a person ultimately to that degree, that it may abandon the guidance of the will to the affect, and never run the danger of being in contradiction with its own decisions. Hence, in a beautiful soul, individual deeds are not properly moral; rather, the entire character is. Nor can one add any individual deed to its account of merit, because the satisfaction of an impulse can never be called meritorious. The beautiful soul has no other merit, than that it is."⁵

And then, at another point, he says: "A beautiful soul is a person for whom freedom and necessity, passion and duty, are the same thing." Which follows all of what I just said: because, if you have educated all your emotions to this high level, then you have to do what is necessary, which is a duty, but you're not doing it *against* emotions. Most people say, "Ugh! I have this terrible thing to do, but because I'm moral, I suppress my emotions and I do the moral thing." And then they become Kantians, because they have to use the moral imperative, about which Schiller says, Kant must have had a terrible childhood, because he was not a beautiful soul; he didn't write for us, he only wrote for slaves. If you have to rip out your emotions because they go against what you should do, you have to make a categorical imperative like Kant; so Schiller says, this categorical imperative may be useful in moments when you are not quite yet a beautiful soul, and before you let the "inner swine" run out, so to speak—let your passions gallop in a different direction—then he says, rather than allowing that to happen, you should use Kant's categorical imperative to remain relatively moral. But he says, this is not a condition.

Schiller's aesthetical writings are a complete attack on Kant. Kant started to write his *Critiques* only at the moment that Moses Mendelssohn was dead. Because if he had written this crap when Mendelssohn was still alive, he would have taken him apart, because Mendelssohn was the Socrates of the 18th Century. But after Mendelssohn was dead, then Kant wrote the *Critique of Judgment*, the *Critique of Reason*, the *Critique of Practical Reason*. And especially the *Critique of Judgment*, which had this crazy idea that you can have reason, and that's lawful; but then you have taste and art, which should not follow any laws. He even goes so far as to say that an arabesque which a painter throws on the wall, where you see no meaning and no plan, is more beautiful than a painting where you would see the Golden Mean, or some other intention or plan of the painter. And then, naturally, Kant attacked the unity of beauty, truth, and knowledge.

5. "On Grace and Dignity," *Ibid*.



Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). He must have had a miserable childhood, Schiller wrote, to come up with such a wretched philosophy.

So therefore, the aim of Schiller is to have the beautiful soul. And, this beautiful soul is also a person who is not just looking at himself to be all of these things, but again, is a compassionate person. Here he says, in the same "On Grace and Dignity": "A beautiful soul does not know a sweeter happiness, than to see the sacred which he has in himself, repeated and imitated outside, and realized, and also embraced in the world of senses as their immortal friend.

"Love is at the same time, the most general and the most selfish in nature: the first because she receives nothing of its subjective, but gives everything back, because the pure mind can only give and not receive; and the second, because it's always only her own self, which she sees in the other, and loves."

So, in other words, the beautiful soul is the happiest when other people become beautiful souls, when other people are creative, when other people accomplish all the things the beautiful soul wants to accomplish for him- or herself.

Without Beauty, We Are Not Human

In a certain sense, it is that idea which Schiller also means as eminently political. That is what he means, when he says that the highest work of art, *das grösste Kunstwerk*, is the building of political freedom.

Here's another quote, in the 10th Letter of the *Aesthetical Letters*: "The pure notion of the reason of beauty, if one could demonstrate one—because it cannot be deduced from a concrete example, but rather guides our judgment about each concrete case—can only be looked for by way of abstraction, and must be concluded from the possibility of the sensuous, reasonable nature of man. In a word, beauty should be demonstrable as a necessary condition of mankind."

Now, I believe that this is absolutely true: that without beauty, we are not human. And without beauty in art, without

beauty in social relations, without beauty of our soul, we are not doing the right thing.

So, to come back to the question posed from the beginning: What we have to do, in order to be capable of dealing with the upcoming challenges, I think each of us should have the aim to quickly become a beautiful soul. I think that it's much more important that people have this as an ideal, than to have a beautiful body, or to go to the fitness center, or to go the beauty salon! Most people spend an enormous amount on beauty! But they pay almost no attention to the beautification of their souls. So, I think that the best thing to do is to really work on that, and to really make it an ideal, if you still have certain things that need to be ironed out, which prevent you from doing passionately what is necessary.

Or, Schiller in his *Kallias* letters, uses the image of the Good Samaritan, where he takes five examples: A wounded man lies by the wayside, and other men come, and then he uses these examples, to ask, what is the motive for them to help him? The first guy says, "What do I receive in terms of honor, if I do that?" The second one says, "I first have to take care about what I will get from it." And so on. Only in the fifth case, the Good Samaritan puts his bag to the side, not even paying attention to whether he might lose it; he puts the wounded man on his horse, takes him to the

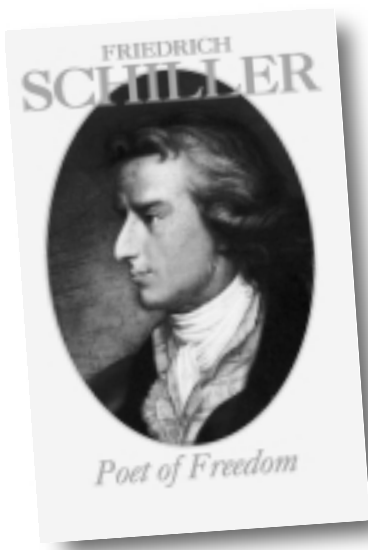
next city so that he gets cared for, without even thinking about it.

And I think it's that attitude, that, when you are needed, you do what you have to do, that is a quality which signifies leadership; it is at the same time the route to genius—you will not become a genius by studying everything which is on the curriculum, if you are not compassionate. You will not become a genius, even if you read everything of Lyn's and you just "know it," but you're not in it with total determination and compassion, as a beautiful soul.

So, I just wanted to say this, because, the problem with the youth culture—and the Boomers on top of it, and the Tweeners, I don't need to go into—but the problem is that the idea of emotional development, of taking care that your soul becomes beautiful, I think it's something worth thinking about, because it's not self-evident. And it is also, unfortunately, not the total *praxis* of everybody, every day. Otherwise, you would never have fits, you would never have shouting sessions, we would never have screaming matches. We would never have people sitting in the corner, but people would be much more creative, and much more lively. And this question of the soul, I think, is worthy. And I think these people—Lessing, Mendelssohn, and Schiller, and also some others, but these are the main ones—have written the best about it, in my view.

"There is a limit to the tyrant's power."

—Friedrich Schiller,
Wilhelm Tell.



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