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The 'Florestan Principle' in Art

by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

Mr. LaRouche later changed his ideas about some of the material presented here, but the core of his argument remained the same. EIR recently published three articles regarding Beethoven's opera Fidelio: David Shavin's "Think Like Beethoven: Fidelio, Lafayette, and LaRouche—or, the Big Elephant in the Room," published in two parts, [Part I](#) on November 13, 2020, and [Part II](#) on December 4, 2020; "Namelose Freude," a conference [presentation](#) by David Shavin on January 15, 2021; and "The Marquis de Lafayette and the Challenge of the Sublime," a conference [presentation](#) by Anastasia Battle on January 22, 2021.

It is symptomatic of the most important issues affecting the general comprehension and enjoyment of all art that some misguided musical experts recommend the introduction of a "method-acting" element to performances of Florestan's aria from Beethoven's opera *Fidelio*. It is granted that disputes respecting performances of Beethoven's works are not the most common correlatives of assault-and-battery cases coming before magistrates currently. Nonetheless, the point to be made must be stated in juxtaposition to key works of the greatest artists. For this purpose, Beethoven's more important works are of extraordinary scientific relevance; the issue of Flores-

tan's aria has a special appropriateness for the kind of point being stressed foremost here, not overlooking the composer Robert Schumann's fascination with that subject.

As we shall emphasize in due course here, great art has a demonstrated function for alleviating neurotic disturbances and stimulating the creative potentialities.

Not accidentally: it is by stimulating the individual's creative potentialities that neurotic impulses are most efficiently checked. A population which lacks enjoyment of great art, great music most emphatically, is not only culturally impaired in the ordinary sense of that term, but is deprived of a means for improvements in its qualities of moral judgment and creativity in general.

For purposes of analysis, music is the most efficient medium in which to situate the treatment of art generally. Music emerges and constantly reemerges from the prosodic qualities of the spoken language and is a medium for concentrated evocation of the affective correlatives of that language. The relationship of

language to the individual's consciousness-in-general, the individual's conscious and preconscious notions of social identity, makes music the most social of the art forms. Within music generally, song and opera have the advantage of immediately subsuming drama and poetry. Song is the "Rosetta Stone" connecting speech to music in general. The current state of musical comprehension and taste constantly measures afresh the



Painting by Michel (Mincho) Katzaroff

Ludwig van Beethoven

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capacities of a people respecting drama and poetry. A culture which loses the impetus for fostering and enjoying great music cannot produce great drama or great poetry.

The choice of Beethoven's music for analysis of points going to the fundamentals of art generally ought therefore to be obvious.

We note and disparage inclusively that nominally learned musical opinion which relegates Beethoven's achievements as a composer to a bygone age. This sort of misguided opinion has two interconnected moments.

At the point represented by his late major compositions, notably the string quartets, Beethoven had not only made a revolution in counterpoint, he had expressed thus the discovery of a general principle of musical composition. This example contributed directly to the generation of great composers whose talents were formed during the first half of the 19th century. Schubert, Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Liszt, Brahms, Wagner, Verdi typify the assortment of greater and lesser moons who radiated the sunlight of Beethoven's genius. These figures, together with the continued reflections of Beethoven, produced the gifted Hugo Wolf, the self-aborted genius of Gustav Mahler from the second half of the 19th century. Then, during the 20th century, the capacity for composing music died, together with the death of poetry and the decay of drama. Although Beethoven's immediate successors reflected both the direct influence of Beethoven and the favorable circumstances of the spirit of the age of their youth, the genius of Beethoven was not deliberately conceptualized beyond the point represented in particular by the musicologist Schenker. In general, musical theory has misapprehended the essential features of the late Beethoven, with the same included folly exhibited by incompetent learned opinion respecting René Descartes' notion of universal perfection.

A Rigorous Scientific Basis for Apprehending Great Music and Great Art

In sum, learned musical knowledge has both lost the spirit of creativity and has failed to develop the knowledge needed for formal analysis of the last great breakthrough in the methods of musical composition.

The formal aspect of this wretchedness has special included relevance in the treatment to follow, and also has the merit of establishing the rigorous scientific basis for apprehending the most essential feature of great music in particular and great art in general.



Rather, "it is by stimulating the individual's creative potentialities that neurotic impulses are most efficiently checked." Extraction of the Stone of Madness by a follower of Hieronymus Bosch or his workshop, 1501-1505.

The musicologist fails to understand Beethoven's method of composition because such musicologists have mistaken the apparent elements of tonality ("this chord!") for the *process* of contrapuntal development. The blunder involved may be likened to mistaking the footprints of a man for the man himself. The musicologists overlook the primary facts, the succession of changes in manifest contrapuntal and related musical knowledge represented by Beethoven's work. They fail to conceptualize the *process of development* as being itself the *existent* principle determining the

changes. They want to find a procedure, where a principle for changing procedures is what ought to be adduced. This *existent* principle must be apprehended as *the object-for-consciousness*.

Beethoven, more than any other composer, made creativity-for-itself the subject of musical consciousness, creativity expressed in the medium of musical composition. This underlies the *religious* component of Beethoven's musical genius and personality, Beethoven's *self-consciously Promethean* identity as a musician.

At the same time, Beethoven's development, as delimited by his late major works, represents a development of musical science. Like any breakthrough in knowledge, situated with respect to predecessors, it represents a point of departure for the subsequent, fur-

ther development of knowledge. Beethoven represents the sum-total of musical scientific knowledge extant as of approximately 1830. Without mastering that knowledge, nothing representing a further general progress could be effected. More specifically, Beethoven's supersession of Bach is usefully regarded as comparable to the supersession of Newton, Lagrange, and Gauss by Riemann and Cantor in physics. Beethoven shifts the concept of musical knowledge from the "Newtonian" to the relativistic. It is no mere heurism to say that Beethoven's implicit contribution to musical knowledge is a doctrine of *negentropic relativity*.

This is to be emphasized. Even before the problem of negentropy began to be posed as a fundamental problem for physics, the great thinkers of the Renaissance and Enlightenment recognized the creative principle of human thought as determining a "nonlinear" successive ordering of the coherent lawfulness of human behavior. The thrust of the development of the Renaissance and Enlightenment, typified by the succession of Marsilio Ficino, Descartes, and Hegel, is toward a rejection of the notion of linearity, in progress. An accumulation of progressive changes in knowledge and informed impulses for willful practice was regarded as defining a new set of general laws, which then became the point of reference for further innovations.

The physics analogy for this is as follows. Instead of imagining space-time as measuring displacements according to a fixed reference-scale, imagine that forward displacements of a space-time-matter continuum change the ostensibly linear scales employed for the preceding moment. Imagine that this change in the basis-measurement is of such a form that instead of measuring displacement of the developing continuum according to linear (scalar) magnitudes of increments of time, distance, mass-energy, and so forth, that the scale of measurement is a series of numbers determined by an exponential function. That is perhaps the best heuristic representation of the general idea for today's ordinary informed consciousness. It also expresses precisely the consequence of Beethoven's approach to composition in the late quartets and related works.

The late 19th and 20th century composers and musicologists were confronted by a sense of the impotence of contemporary composers relative to their predecessors of the early through middle 19th century, and confronted in fact by their lack of developed mental powers for comprehending what Beethoven had achieved. In desperation, they attempted to flee from the haunting

comparison with Beethoven (in particular), by creating distance from Beethoven represented by irrational novelty. The exemplification of this degenerate reaction-formation in music is Arnold Schoenberg.

Hence, it was given to a Spike Jones, a popular band leader of the late 1930s and 1940s, to reveal the truth concerning Schoenberg et al. With their outrageous, shameless candor, John Cage and Spike Jones strip Arnold Schoenberg and Leonard Bernstein naked, and reveal the widespread inclination among contemporary musicians to become trolley-car conductors. Like the ruling eunuch-elite of decaying Byzantium, modern musicologists have cut themselves off from comparison to Beethoven, and distinguish themselves by such arbitrary differences.

The related significance of Beethoven's important works for our present undertaking is that we need be distracted the least from our purpose by the obligation to account for this or that distracting defect in the composition considered. In this instance, we are viewing art in approximately the purest form it exists for current practice. It is more or less emphatically peculiar to Beethoven, that in examining criticisms of his work we are examining the critic's internal tendencies in the best practical approximation of their juxtaposition to "pure" art.

Humanist Art

We have already touched upon the principal internal distinction of Beethoven's work to this effect. Since the Renaissance, early centering around 15th century Florence, the essential subject of great art has been *universal perfection*. Up to about 1525, prior to the accession of Charles V to the throne of Spain and the Holy Roman Empire, this was as characteristic of great painting, sculpture and architecture as great musical movements. Painting, sculpture, architecture were permeated with the same humanist impulse, usually expressed in the Renaissance form of utopianism variously seen in then-contemporary literature from Dante through Ficino and Machiavelli. Humanist art celebrates not the self-evident deed; humanist art deprecates the impulses of romanticism. Humanist art celebrates acts of creativity—the painting within the painting, the sculpture and architecture within the painting, and the self-portrait—as a medium for celebrating *the process of creativity* itself. It is the celebration of those creative mental powers which absolutely distinguish man from the lower beasts. It is in that sense, as the greatest literature, music and plastic art from the Renaissance directly

attest, which permeates and characterizes the religious artistic works of the period and which characterizes the religious spirit of the Renaissance. It is the subordination of the development of the craftsmanship of creativity in Beethoven which places him as an epitome of artistry in general. Beethoven typifies the self-consciously Promethean expression of the informed creative impulses of universal perfection.

This overview of Beethoven is not merely objective formal knowledge. It is not something this writer knows at a distance from himself, but is real knowledge. The writer owes the explicit grounding of his several, distinctive contributions to human knowledge to such figures as Karl Marx, Riemann, Cantor and their principal predecessors. He owes the reinforcement of his creative impulses themselves to Beethoven's music more than any other identifiable influence. The persisting element of "surprise" in Beethoven's work, isolated for concentrated, simpler treatment in his scherzi, is the characteristic feature of his development most powerfully experienced by his audience. This "driving quality" of Beethoven's development in his compositions, and in the progress from one phase of his development to the next, represents the most desirable intellectual climate for creative work. On that account, this writer's debt to Beethoven is enormous.

The essential feature of creative work is extended, unblocked concentration. The activities the mind must be screened from echoes of the banality to which one is exposed in daily life, and also from internal mental distractions. For this purpose, certain cathexes are most useful, to the point of becoming almost indispensable. The provocative features of great writers, or the provocation of one's summoned mental powers in anger against a stupid writer, against mediocrity in general, are frequent, appropriate cathexes for rallying one's concentration. The most efficient general sort of cathexis is a period of saturation with Beethoven's music. Even hearing a bad performance, if it is not absolutely impossible, helps as it summons one to a defense of Beethoven

against such a rendering. Beethoven's quality is one of agreement with the creative life in one's self. Saturation in Beethoven is a most appropriate process for summoning the most sustainable concentration for creative work.

This is not wanting in some works of other composers. (Whoever would deny that Mozart's *Requiem* is essentially "late" Mozart has no musical integrity.) Other composers cannot, generally, be *trusted* by the creative person bent on getting to work. One's own new reading of a Beethoven score, one's hearing of a new performance of Beethoven by genuine musicians, touches upon an inexhaustible potential for discovering not

merely what Beethoven might have intended, but what might be fruitful implications of the composition. Attentively heard with the "inner ear," there is always something importantly new to be heard in a major Beethoven composition—hence the special excitement of hearing it once again.

Conscious experiments, involving other composers' works, work-sessions with and without preparatory concentration upon music or some other creative audience-activity, correlated with experience of greater and lesser fruitfulness in this writer's creative efforts, represents a significant experimental knowledge of the subject.

It is also a fact that the lack of similar disposition among encountered gifted persons correlates with a characteristic sour note in their internal mental discipline, a certain shallowness. A person who enjoys "rock" or prefers romantic "kitsch" is invariably a moral mediocrity under closer scrutiny. Romantic musical "kitsch" belongs to the department of the belly-laugh after the third or fourth beer, the second bottle of wine. Such moments occur in the life of the creative person, but they occur as "other moments." The person who lacks the habit of great art, the habit of profound excitement in the experience and contemplation of great art, is a deprived, diminished person. Opposite to such deprivation and self-deprivation, knowledge of Beethoven's work is the most powerful catalyst for one's own creative development—yet,



Painting by Willibrord Joseph Mähler, 1815
Ludwig van Beethoven

perhaps one must first evoke a compulsion to be creative to gain knowledge of Beethoven. Without the development of the inner mental faculty for hearing the content of the music, only the stultified senses are stimulated in a superficial way. Without creative insight, art ceases to be art, and is degraded into a mere matter of differences in the banalities of private taste.

Beethoven is the creative intellect's preferred companion. Powerful, ebullient humor saturates his compositions. His music is a delightful prank against pompous philistinism, constantly a new discovery ostensibly intended to confound the apostles of "thoroughness." If Beethoven was, in his daily personal life, sometimes embittered as well as contemptuously mocking against moral and intellectual banality, his surviving creative life is a joyful assault against the same imbecilities. His work is concentrated attention-span expressing that latter quality.

Beethoven is the perfect artist, insofar as one has yet existed.

It is on that account that the issue of the Florestan aria—the general issue reflected in the disputes surrounding that aria—is considered in that specific setting.

The Woman Question

The principal character of Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Florestan's wife, Leonore, reflects the healthy direction of Beethoven's approach to the "woman question" in opposition to the reactionary impulses typified by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. This is underlined by the wretched, nakedly anti-Shelley theme of Mary Shelley's famous "science fiction" novel, *Frankenstein*. The novel is a naked, Malthusian denunciation of the poet Shelley's own Promethean impulses, reflecting the smug, almost Fabian banality which "feminist" Mary Shelley focuses in thinly veiled hatred against the essential feature of her husband's character. Where Mary Shelley's invidious feminism seeks cheap equality for women by degrading great men, Beethoven directly attacks the mediocrity imposed upon women. His Leonore is not the heroine of the opera, but the *hero*: the woman who is feminine, but also a Promethean fit to match herself against the men of her time. *Fidelio* is of the same type as Rosa Luxemburg.

This is also, without stretching analogies, the case of "Florestan" Robert Schumann and his *Fidelio*, Clara Wieck.

The creative man is perhaps the only person who can develop a competent initial insight into the "woman question." Only the creative man can comprehend what

men lose by the degradation of women to the condition of relative banality, to anti-intellectual creatures of "feeling." A creative man, who desiring what the close companionship of a woman would aid him to fulfill in himself, finds instead a poor, babbling creature of sentiment and shallow varieties of informed opinion, a creature without depth, a creature—too much like a faithful dog—upon whom one can bestow one's most precious inner achievements and see that attempted sharing pouring off an impervious mind. *Poor Shelley!* The Malthusian reaction settling about England like a sulfurous miasma, the French Revolution ebbed, and, so constrained in the external world as the negative reading of his "In Defence of Poetry" would portend, he turns to the face of his faithful wife. In such circumstances, he was almost as if doomed to die.

How can a woman encompass the most profound moments of a creative man's life, unless she, too, is a creative personality? Unless she, too is creative, she can never be more than a sympathetic spectator for as much of his performance as she can understand—understand little better than she might project insight into the moods and performances of a pet dog or cat. Her mate's achievements belong to a dimension of human experience which is alien to her. She can, in the one moment, admire the brutish achievements of one mate on the football field, and view the achievements of a creative-scientist mate in the same way! A Beethoven, seeking companionship from among the women of his time, lifts the cup to taste wine and encounters dishwater.

Situate the same Beethoven in the Vienna opera culture of his time—even Mozart's operas, such as *Così fan Tutte*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, the women of *Don Giovanni*. Everything he as a man despises concerning the condition of women is celebrated in those operas. That society not only molds women to become a cruel, bad joke on the men who assist in perpetrating the arrangement, but celebrates the result of this abysmal degradation in musical performances designed by the greatest composers. Music—sacred music—is composed to celebrate this awfulness.

How much Beethoven and Luxemburg would share ultimately identical contempt for our contemporary "feminists"! Feminists who rebuke men for the quality of "male intellectual aggressiveness," feminists who make of the degradation of women into paranoid creatures of sentiment and "feeling" the purported moral advantages of the woman-*species*.

No, for Beethoven, the woman must become the equal of the man. Foolish women will then mistake her



"For Beethoven, the woman must become the equal of the man." Florestan and Leonore are reunited, in a production of Fidelio by L.A. Opera.

the details of the situation are merely expedients for the expression of the outlooks of the inner selves as expressed by the music. The essential thing about the opera is Beethoven's choice of the character of Leonore and of her relationship to Florestan in a common struggle against the brutish injustice of the aristocracy. The overall world-historical outlook is *voluntarist*; bold ingenious intervention can discover against all seeming contrary certainties some remedy. It is that creative, voluntarist conduct in a woman which is the essential subject of the opera.

The Dungeon Scene

In the revised version of the opera, the second act begins with an extended ironical orchestral prologue, which leads into Florestan's aria. The scene is the dungeon of the Spanish prison, where Florestan lies near death. From the preceding act, one knows—and this is confirmed—that the jailer and Leonore, disguised as the young man Fidelio, are approaching. Florestan's assassination is imminent, according to the plans and instructions of the enemy who had him imprisoned so.

The soliloquy Beethoven gives to Florestan has the general function of introducing the inner Florestan, preparatory to his emergence as a second central figure of the opera in the developments to follow. Beethoven's identification with Florestan is obvious; he projects enough of himself into Florestan to give depth of reality to what would otherwise be a thinly portrayed character in the script itself.

The issue of Beethoven's oncoming impairment of hearing is perhaps relevant. Although Beethoven's continuing to compose in part at his Broadwood piano is among the evidence against the common early dating of his absolute deafness, the impairment experienced even as early as the period of the revision of *Fidelio* was a real oppression to a gifted performer and composer who gained a kind of sardonic pleasure from conducting rehearsals of his own compositions. Not to hear from the outer world what the mind could hear from within; that is oppression enough to be regarded as like a dungeon in the experience of such a composer.

The soliloquy prescribed to be sung on behalf of this man near death begins with an exclamation of "God!" Up to this point, the figure of the prisoner has been

for a man—thus foolishly insisting that no woman could achieve such a condition, and that women love men for the wrong reasons, for reasons which ought to be as much the peculiar achievement of women as men. Or foolish women must see in the "triangle" in *Fidelio*'s first act a portent of the lesbian cause.

The details of the plot of *Fidelio* are of little importance. They were of transient importance to Beethoven, as his critical judgment expressed in the revision underlines. Opera, as we shall emphasize shortly, is not dramatic narrative, but a montage of sequential circumstances which provide the settings for the essential business of the opera, which is music. Each song is an internal soliloquy of the character, and duets, trios, quartets, quintets, choruses a polyphony of soliloquies. The narrative halts, the character expresses the internal soliloquy on a subject situated in that circumstance, and the narrative moves as quickly as possible to the next soliloquies.

In the opera, the character steps forward—away from the "action"—as in a Shakespearean soliloquy. The opera's primary subject is the montage of those soliloquies.

Hence, what Leonore does in the narrative aspect,

stilled, in the half-darkened stage properly prescribed for the orchestral prologue. As the figure rises to exclaim his “God!” one properly imagines the lights to rise during that note, so that the audience is abruptly made aware of this personality, aroused from the setting provided by the orchestral meditation. The long soliloquy proceeds through three phases into a bravura, concluding reiteration of “Freedom!” Overall, the selection is preferred among the most confident of those baritones transformed into Wagnerian heroic tenors. A lyrical intensity in the lower register of the voice is required for the first portion; the concluding passages might have been intended as a showpiece for Helge Roswaenge.

What, then rules the proper performance of this aria? Are we to be guided by a realist’s regard for a credible performance? Must Florestan’s singing be that of a weakened man near death?

Absolutely not! It is not the narrative character, Florestan, who is singing. In what real-life situation do people proceed from moment-to-moment, everything pausing recurrently as each character takes time out to declaim a major operatic piece? This is *soliloquy*, in which the soul rises from the body it inhabits to sing according to the ideas occupying the soul, not the condition of the body. The song must reveal *the character*, not the narrative action.

The delivery by the tenor must reflect the psychological attitude correlating with the imprisonment, not the physical state of the prisoner. Beethoven’s music is clear on this point—what would you have, Marlon Brando mumbling and grimacing sotto voce as a quaint obbligato to the orchestral accompaniment? Yet, eminent musicians, who were better trained, have been known to propose compromises with the Marlon Brando school of mumbling on just this point.

This issue, while specialist to the point of perhaps appearing to border upon the precious, if viewed merely by itself, goes to the heart of the pervasive problem in contemporary artistic culture. It goes against the wretched schools of realism and neo-realism and their existentialist offspring, schools whose pervasive influence is in direct proportion to the inability of the United

States (in particular) to produce a good play, write a respectable line of serious poetry, or compose sixteen good bars of music. The point is that a person who would propose a realist’s compromise approach to the performance of the Florestan aria has thereby rejected every principle upon which art and the creation of art absolutely depend.

One might say of the cinema and TV screen that, unfortunately, the medium has tended to become the message. The fact that singers can perform fellatio on a microphone before thousands of cheering spectators has apotheosized heartburn into a salable product. The



Illustration by Ange Louis Janet, 1860
A scene from Act 3 of *Fidelio* as performed at Paris’s Théâtre Lyrique in 1860.

fact that a camera can be employed by detectives specialized in divorce cases, and the fact that montage has been freed from the limitations of the regular stage, has caused the technicians of the screen to misconceive art as primarily the expression of their own technical prowess. New techniques have not become so much instruments to increase the power of artistic performances, but the techniques themselves have filled the vacuum left by the absence of artistic contributions.

The power of the camera and its associated modern accessory technologies is to transform even a miserable piece of literary wretchedness into an illusion of enormous credibility to the immediate sensibilities of audiences. The fault lies not with the illusion, but the purpose the power of artistic illusion is employed to serve.

The artist depends upon the instruments of illusion. People do not ordinarily reveal insights into themselves

by means of great soliloquies in song. The fact that a stage character in an opera can do that is an illusion created by the composer and the training of the singer over decades. Yet, what the illusion accomplishes is no illusion, but the conveying of truth by this selected *scientific* ruse.

This is not to argue that drama must generally conform only to the idealization typified by great opera, Marlowe, Schiller, Shakespeare and so forth. Realism on stage and screen can be used to great and good artistic effect. By montage, by the arbitrary selection of moments in an imaginary narrative reality as a whole, the fantastic can be achieved, the presentation of important ideas in a way in which they would never be directly encountered in real life. The artist, in composing such a drama, selects what each might appear realistic occurrences, but by the selection and the ordering of selection determines an insight into the ordering of life.

What is despicable is the notion, whether explicitly argued or implicitly tolerated that art must not be didactic. Some lout screaming on stage, “The proletarians must arise,” is only a poor fool’s caricature of the didactic moment in art. He has given his characters mere slogans in the pathetic effort to cover up his own romantic’s lack of creative insight. Marlowe, Shakespeare, Spenser, Schiller, Goethe, Beethoven were preeminently political in the sense that art is inherently political. Verdi’s music filled the streets of Italian cities on more than one occasion. The artist does not declaim slogans; he uses art as a science, and, makes his case powerfully by presenting artistic insights as *implicitly political* informing of the practical will of his audiences.

The soliloquy in drama and opera exemplify the means by which such artistic insight is most efficiently conveyed. By bringing the character out of himself, coming momentarily out of his role within the narrative, to express his consciousness privately to the audience, the artist uses the characters’ soliloquies to prompt the audience to make itself self-conscious of the drama. “What issues does this narrative reflect?” each soliloquy proposes in its own way. The audience must choose among the soliloquies, and so forth, rather than merely following the narrative.

The narrative itself may be trivial, and yet accomplish the function of great art. It is essentially merely a heurism, which aids the audience in creating a model of reference for situating its own judgment upon the insight represented by the soliloquy.

There are other devices. In place of the soliloquy, one character may speak privately to another in such a

manner as to accomplish the functions of the soliloquy. The principles of dramatic art and poetry remain the same whatever ruses are employed to accomplish the purpose of introducing the artist’s fictionally oriented insights to the audience in a *self-conscious* way. To make the audience self-conscious of its choices of insight, to rise above blind attachment to existing opinions and prejudices, and to develop thus the capacity to understand current developments as they must be understood.

In a certain sense, some modern playwrights have appeared to fulfill such a formal requirement. This establishes them as persons of talent and artistic craftsmanship, but not necessarily as genuine artists. Art is not free to peddle any set of insights which factional interest must prefer. *Art must tell the truth*. The truth respecting man is always in the humanist form based on universalist commitments to scientific discovery and to the circumstances appropriate to fostering the individual’s power and commitment to rise above concern for individual greed and heteronomic sensual gratification to grasp the principle of *universal perfection* better than before. Without that humanist commitment, there is no art, without that commitment by the artist, such a passionate commitment, there is no motive for artistic creativity.

Without humanist truth, without the individual’s commitment to subordinate the individual’s particular greed and heteronomic sensuality to universal purpose of scientific and related progress in respect of the impulses of the informed practical will, there is only existentialist banality parading itself as art as long as we tolerate such travesties.

Thus, invidious contemporary want of artistic merit rises in resentment against Beethoven, against the expression of the Florestan aria as written, and demands that Beethoven be brought down, in all decency, into conformity with the dishwater banality of modern liberal sentiments. In a better age, Tennessee Williams would have been a great playwright, and not the stream of sordid untruths of a misapprehended psychoanalytical insight which has titillated the more self-respecting liberals. As for Tennessee Williams and other skilled contemporary craftsmen of various artistic professions, we wish them the best. However, while we have the great artistic productions from the past, we shall not and need not degrade ourselves to tolerate contemporary existentialist trash—whatever the potential talents of the professed artist involved. Meanwhile, let envious contemporary banality leave the great works of art alone.