

Beauty Is a Necessary Condition of Man

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Helga Zepp-LaRouche gave the following presentation to a two-day cadre school of the LaRouche Youth Movement on Feb. 18, which following the International Caucus of Labor Committees/Schiller Institute annual Presidents' Day weekend conference. Her presentation was followed by several animated hours of discussion. She was introduced by LYM leader Michelle Lerner. The transcript has been edited for publication.

Michelle Lerner: Something that comes up once in a while in organizing, is that someone will say to you, "Why are you so concerned with a bunch of dead white guys?" And: "Isn't LaRouche just another white guy? A patriarch?" That just shows that most people are uneducated about history, culture, and especially about the sublime!

And the irony, is that behind all great men there is usually a great woman—as long as it's not his mother! [laughter] So, over the course of history, I'm not sure if there have been many women so committed to the dialogue of civilizations as the beloved wife of Lyndon LaRouche. So, without further introduction, I present to you the "New Silk Road Lady," Helga Zepp-LaRouche.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Well, there is a little male chauvinism coming out here. Because Lyn is actually standing behind me. And behind us, is Mai-Bow [their dog].

I was considering the difficulty of talking about why Classical art is really the only one. It came out in the discussion already, I think yesterday or two days ago, where somebody said, "Is there not going to be, at one point, something which supersedes Classical art? And how can we not—you know maybe—okay, accept Classical art, but then move on to something more easy and modern?" The difficulty is that people really don't have a clear conception of what Classical art is.

Therefore, I want to confront it today, first of all with what it is not, and what has led to this present confusion of so-called modern culture, which mostly is no culture at all. You have to go back to the attack on Classical art by the Romantics.

This is an historically very important period. People have, generally, not only no idea what Classical culture is, they also don't know what Romantic is. Because if you ask anybody in the street and say, "What is your definition of Romanticism, or Romantic?" They'll probably say, "Oh, this is when my Valentine gives me flowers on Feb. 14." Or, "It is a beautiful candlelight dinner, where we are sitting there, having dinner together, the two of us, with candles," and so forth.

I have put up the thesis, and I think I can make my case pretty convincingly, that the present ugliness of culture, in all of its many depraved, degenerated forms, is the end result of what started with the Romantic period.

It is very interesting that even the *Financial Times*, which is the organ of the financial oligarchy in Great Britain, already two years ago had an article entitled, "Dark Age or Renaissance?" in which they said that the individualization, the deification of the individual, caused by the free-market economy, by globalization and so forth, has led to an erosion of traditional structures of society, and totally destroyed the sense for the common good; and that now we have reached the point where this utopia of the total individualization is triumphing. This goal has now been reached. The utopia is there; and this would be excellent. There's only one problem: It stinks. They say, the end result of this is, that Classical culture is on its deathbed, and nobody has any more the authority to insist on any artistic standard.

Well, that is actually true. I mean, I have not been able for at least 20 years to go into any Classical performance of Schiller's plays in Germany without having either gotten sick



Helga Zepp-LaRouche: "I think I can make my case pretty convincingly, that the present ugliness of culture, in all of its many depraved, degenerated forms, is the end result of what started with the Romantic period."

in the stomach or going out early or something. There is the so-called *Regietheater*—now, I don't know this word in English. It's basically that a modern *regisseur*, a director of a play, takes a Classical piece of art and then puts his own interpretation in it. So that, for 30 years now the so-called *Regietheater* has been doing the same thing: that people are urinating on the stage, that they are having sex on the stage, that they take their clothes off. This is supposed to be "happenings." But, you know, typical for Baby-Boomer monotony, they are doing the same things for 30 years and nothing new happens.

I always say that they should not ruin Classical art and Classical plays—they should write their own plays. If they want to be perverse, then they can write whatever. But they should leave, please, the Classical theater in peace.

So, no theater, no poetry, no modern poetry; modern architecture is ugly. I don't know if anybody has ever been in Houston. Unfortunately, you can go to any strip mall in the United States. If you drop from a helicopter down out of the skies into a strip mall, and you get a \$64 million question, "Which city are you in?" I bet you cannot get the \$64 million, because they are all the same! For example, here, the environment of this hotel and around—it's *ugly*. It's just blocks, glass; no architecture. The same thing goes naturally for all other areas. For example, you could say, modern music is awful, but pop music is awful. Modern rock music, gothic rock, is terrible. Hip hop is terrible. Pop is the worst of it.

A while ago, because of Lyn's influence, I did not look at these things for a long time. And then, because young people look at it all the time, I decided, "I will now actually take a

look." Because the argument was, that there is creativity in hip hop, or rap. Well, I emphatically came to the conclusion there is *zilch* creativity in it.

Then I looked at Britney Spears. I was truly shocked, because she has a vocabulary of 80 words. Among the many 80 words she has, she came to the conclusion that she is in favor of the death penalty. Why? So that these guys don't do it the second time around! [laughter] Then, I found out that I was already way behind, because Britney Spears is now out. She is gone. And instead, you have the Atomic Kittens. You have Shakira, and all of these things.

If you actually look at it, it is really Romantic. It is completely Romantic. I am going to prove this a little bit down the road. For example, Madonna recently had a pop video where she dies on an electric chair, but she fights back. She has a split personality, truly schizophrenic. She is the good girl and the bad girl. It is just totally insane. Then Jennifer

Lopez plays out death penalties in pop videos. Christina Aguilera, the so-called "clean girl," now has the desire to be a total whore. The big Italian star, Eros Ramazzotti—he plays necrophilia on the stage, with corpses, with dead heads, and so forth. So, you know, it's pretty bad.

The Romantic Roots of Rock Counterculture

If you look at all of this—well, how could it happen? Now, I have really come to the conclusion that it all goes back to the Romantic attack on the Weimar Classics, and the false idea which they spread. It's very difficult to say, was the Romantic movement—the so-called "early Romantics," which quickly turned into the political Romantics (these are different periods), were they an agent operation of the financial oligarchy at the time of the Holy Alliance from the beginning? Or, were they just a spontaneous group of crazy people, who then were picked up for a political purpose, of political reaction?

Schiller in his *Aesthetical Letters* had made the definition that the most noble and complete piece of art is the construction of political freedom. This can only occur if each person develops to be the ideal man in himself. And, to coincide with that inner ideal man is the great task of his existence. People ask, what is the meaning of life? To become that potentially ideal person which you could be. Therefore, the key question is the ennoblement of the individual, the ennoblement of the character. Schiller makes emphatically the point that all perfection of man proceeds from the notion of beauty.

In *Kallias*, he defines beauty, because he is trying to come

to a notion of beauty based on reason, an intelligible notion of beauty, in which he defines it, that beauty is the free principle in man.

In *Grace and Dignity*, he says, “Love alone is the free emotion, because it derives from our divine nature. It is the absolute greatness itself which imitates itself in grace and dignity. It is the lawgiver himself, the God in us, who plays with his own image in the world of the senses.”

For Schiller, in the moment when the artist creates beautiful art, the artist is divine. The artist is in the image of God, the Creator, who continues the process of creation through the music he creates, through the poetry, through the great drama. In the Tenth Letter [of the *Aesthetical Letters*], Schiller says, “The pure notion of reason of beauty must be found through abstraction. It must be possible to show beauty as a necessary condition of mankind.”

This was also against the bestial notion of the British Enlightenment, that man was only motivated by egoism, by his own interest, and so forth. Against this influence, already [Moses] Mendelssohn and [Gotthold] Lessing had basically said, that with art it is possible to ennoble the emotions to universal lawfulness. And, that, consequently, if you have a society in which there is no beauty—like in the British Enlightenment or in America today—the lack of beauty means that mankind degenerates and civilization collapses.

Schiller and Goethe, in particular, were trying to find generally universally binding laws of aesthetics, which would be eternally true. Of all the attacks of the Romantics, the successive attacks on the notion of beauty, as being *the* essential thing about art, were the most devastating. Therefore, you have a direct line from the early Romantics, which was Novalis, Tieck, the Schlegel brothers, to the philosophical Romantics, the so-called “late Romantics”: Savigny, who was the one who replaced natural law through case law; Niebuhr, Nietzsche, Wagner, Carl Schmitt, directly into the Nazis. You have a direct line from Kant, Schlegel, Novalis, Tieck, E.T.A. Hoffmann, to Schopenhauer, Hegel, Freud, the Frankfurt School, depth psychology, and the cult of ugliness today. I will elaborate this.

Mendelssohn and Lessing defended Leibniz against the Enlightenment, and the efforts by agents of the English and French Enlightenment to bring these ideas of Newton through people like Euler and Maupertuis to the Berlin Academy of Science. There was a whole group of court academicians, to which also Kant from Königsberg belonged.

And since, Mendelssohn, who was known to be the Socrates of the 18th Century, because he not only picked up Plato’s dialogues, but he wrote them for modern times and talked about the immortality of the soul—as long as he was alive, Kant did not dare to completely attack his notions; but the moment Mendelssohn had died, Kant really proceeded to attack the idea of reason. He defined reason to be “the negation of the negation,” and made reason, therefore, a deductive construct. He said the seed of freedom in man is the radical



An Alice Cooper rock “concert” in Sweden. As the poet Heinrich Heine once observed, the best place for Romantic so-called artists, is in insane asylums.

evil in him. In this way putting himself in the tradition of Pomponazzi, Sarpi, Locke, and so forth.

At that point it was especially Friedrich Reichart—the composer whom Goethe liked most because he would only set tones to his poems—he sent Kant around in Germany, and so eventually Schiller got these Critiques: *The Critique of Practical Reason*, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, *The Critique of Judgment*. When Schiller read this, that art was supposed to be an arbitrary thing, with no lawfulness in it whatsoever, Schiller got very upset. He said: Look, Kant must have had a terrible childhood, because he did not grasp what beauty is; he did not grasp what art is. He only wrote for the slaves, and he did not write for the children of the house. Schiller’s idea of the children of the house was beautiful souls.

Kant was already a very important step in the destruction of the inner cohesion between the good, truth, and beauty. The good thing about Kant’s writings, if you ever have tried to pick up one of his books, is that they are so boring and so convoluted, that nobody can actually, really understand them or get excited about them; but he was an important stepping

stone, so that when Novalis, Tieck, the Schlegel brothers, and E.T.A. Hoffmann came along, they had already a theoretical preparation, so that their evil writings could fall on a fertile ground.

Now, Friedrich Schlegel—who you probably haven't heard of, but he was very important in this process; he was not a poet, he was not an important figure at all—he laid the theory of the Romantics in his famous 1795 writings about the studies of Greek poetry. In which, he said, there is not one, a unique Classical form, but there are limitless possibilities of poetry. He basically brought, for the first time, the idea of ugliness into culture as the central question.

Schlegel, an 'Overbearing, Cold Cynic'

Schiller met Friedrich Schlegel for the first time in 1792, and he had a terrible impression of him. He said, "What an overbearing, cold cynic." And he wrote to his friend Körner, whom I had mentioned already the day before yesterday, that he was completely confused and had no talent at all.

In January 1796, Schiller wrote his famous *About Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*, discussing the difference between ancient and modern poetry, and came to the conclusion that neither of them had found all answers, but that a new poetry on a higher level was necessary, because neither can exhaust the potential of beautifulness in humanity, which can only come from a combination of both. And he said, "The more each of them becomes poetical, the shortcoming disappears." So, he says, it's not a question of, is the ancient poetry or the modern poetry better, but are they poetical? Are they good poems? And the same thing is true naturally for how you measure any poems in the present. Are they good?

Schlegel, in the same year he wrote the thesis about Greek poetry, pretended to defend the Greek poetry against the modern. He said, the modern poetry is not beautiful, it's just interesting. Supposedly he attacks modern art as a complete degeneration and pretends as if he wants to wish a revival of Classical art. Then Schiller's piece came out about *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry* and Schlegel got very upset, because he saw his own piece superseded before it was even published. Then, in the famous "Lyceum" fragment—this he wrote two years later—Schlegel made a 180° turn-around and totally attacked the Classics, and all Classical forms, as being ridiculous. And then, he started to replace the notion of modern with Romantic.

Two years earlier, he had written in the thesis about Greek poetry, "If there are pure laws of beauty and art, they must apply all the time. From that standpoint, all modern art has no value at all. If one only tries to titillate desires and please raw lust, one can only get low, degenerated art. The lack of character seems to be the only character of modern poetry. Confusion, lawlessness, insatiable thirst for new material as long as the effect is strong; but through every consumption the desire becomes more greedy; the demand gets higher. The new becomes old. The rare becomes common. The excite-

ment becomes stale. In the end, the taste only wants disgusting perversions and finally dies all together."

This is actually Schlegel's own life, because from there on, he went downhill. He became an active secretary of Metternich and disappeared in nothingness, actually. But by replacing the notion of beauty in art, with the "interesting," he started to pull the rug from under the structures of Classical art.

The "interesting," obviously, must always be new. There can never be a highest "interesting." The desire can never be satisfied. And Schlegel himself wrote, "So I tumble from desire to lust, and in lust I starve for desire." Because it never gets satisfied. There has to always be an escalation, a highest new, because there is no highest new, and no highest ugly.

On the other side, Schiller said, and you heard it in the poem "The Artists," that there is a highest beauty. Remember that in the last strophe of "The Artists," he says to the artists, "you, free sons of the freest mother," meaning art, "swing upward with a constant face, and strive, then, after no crown other, to highest beauty's radiant place."

Now, why can you have no highest ugliness and no highest interest, but you can have a highest beauty? Well, because Schiller defines beauty as the free expression of an inner lawfulness. Beauty is also the harmony of the sensuous and reason, but, in the realm of sensuousness. Beauty, therefore, is something coherent and not a mixture. For the same reason, in a truly poetical world, all disharmonies disappear, and a higher unity is accomplished. As long as this clarity of beauty existed, it was also clear that beauty, the truth, and the good, were one and the same thing.

As long as this was the case, the principle of Classical art was unattackable. And it was exactly that axiom which Schlegel attacked. So, step by step from there on, you had a devaluation of art, and it prepared the ground for a totally different category of modern art. What Schlegel did was, he said, "The beauty in general, which includes the sublime, beauty, in a narrow definition, and the attractive, is the pleasant appearance of the good."

This was a very mean trick, because people would say, "Okay fine. Why is the sublime and beauty not the same thing?" But for Schiller, beauty and the sublime are not at all the same thing. Because the sublime reflects the mixed nature of man. It is not harmonious, and it is not like beauty, or harmony, but it reflects the contradiction of the sensuous nature of man. Because it requires a fight. And only after the fight, only after man has conquered that which prevents him from having his identity on the highest principle, that he is on the level of reason; but the sublime is not just some harmonious thing. It requires a tremendous overcoming of an agony.

Therefore, when Schlegel did that, it was only one step for him to introduce the notion of the "sublime ugliness," and the "ugly sublime." From there, naturally, it goes down the road.

And so it was not very profound ideas, but the significance

of all this was that there was a theoretical basis for the Romantics. The brother of Friedrich, Wilhelm August Schlegel, started to teach these ideas in the university from 1798 onward. This is basically the beginning of the principle that in art everything goes. That as long as it is new, as long as it is titillating your senses, as long as it is more interesting than what was there before, it is art. And that is absolutely not the case.

Now, in Classical art, ugliness is also allowed, but in a completely different form, and I will give you later on an example. It is only allowed as an artistic means, sometimes to get strong effects, but only in a very definite and stylistically determined way.

Then Schlegel proceeded to put beauty and ugliness on the same level, and that led to the destruction of beauty in art. The ugly becomes the interesting. The sublime ugliness is the key in modern art. And soon, you have no universal truth any more at all.

Schiller's Standard for the Artist

Now, Schiller, on the other side, in a critique of the landscape painter, Matthisson, which is a very worthwhile piece to read, defined a very clear standard for the artist. He said that because of the great effect an artist has on the audience, because he has a key into the innermost feelings and emotions of the soul, therefore, before the artist should dare to move the audience, he must have elevated himself to an ideal man. He has to ennoble himself to become the representative of the species, before he can dare to move his audience. Because, at least for a moment, of the creation of the poetry, of writing the music, of doing some great painting or sculpture, he has immense power over the audience, and therefore, he can only call himself an artist, if the effect is intelligible and noble.

Now, how can that be? How can an artist, or a poet, or a composer go to an audience, which consists of a hundred people, or a thousand people—how can he be absolutely sure, what is the effect of what he is doing, because there are all these different people who have different reactions, different experiences? And Schiller says: No, the artist must be absolutely certain about the effect, or he should not call himself an artist at all. And, the only way you can accomplish that is that the artist has to be an ideal man, in that moment of creation, and he has to talk about a universal truth. But, the effect nevertheless, has to be free, it cannot be moralistic, it cannot be by force, it cannot be through coercion. And, all of this is only possible when the poet has elevated himself to the species-character of man, and his subject is universally true.

Now the Romantics rejected this completely. They said, against this idea of idealization, they put the theory of letting the unconsciousness go. Genius is not this idealization, but fantasy; new possibilities; let the reality be cushioned with nice dreams. Art as a stimulating drug or as a mild anaesthesia, depending on how you are on that day.

Compare that to Schiller. Schiller said, "Only through the

morning gate of beauty will you enter the land of cognition." Art, for Schiller, is the idea to develop the cognitive powers, to ennoble the individual. And, the Romantics say the exact opposite. They say, let yourself go. No matter what your morbid fantasy requires, just live it out, let it go. They started with a glorification of the unconscious, the dreaming.

I have actually put it on myself, which I do sometimes, to read things the enemy is writing, like Samuel Huntington, Brzezinski, and these people, because you have to study how these people think. With the same painful burden, I actually did read a lot of Novalis, Tieck, or E.T.A. Hoffmann. I can only tell you it is unbelievable. You should maybe pick one of these writings once, just to get a sense, to get the notion of what Romanticism is out of your system once and for all.

The Greek Classic and the Birth of Human Dignity

But let's just locate this. The Classical period in Germany was a tremendous step forward in European, and actually world, universal civilization. Because, what was the situation? You had the Thirty Years' War; you had the complete destruction of Europe. Culture was degenerated: Voltaire, the Enlightenment. Classicism in France was oriented toward the Roman period.

So, it took a gigantic effort to re-establish the principles of the Greek Classics. Why is the Greek Classic as a reference point, so absolutely important? Homer was actually the first one to introduce man as a free person based on reason. Homer, however, was not yet quite it. The Greek tragedians Sophocles, Aeschylus, and so forth, they went a step further. And the greatest of them was actually Aeschylus, who, in the *Prometheus* play, for the first time, established man being a Prometheus, a god, but who challenges the irrationality of the gods.

But, it was only through Plato that the idea of man being capable of ideas, of reason, emerged in European civilization, because, up to that point, in all the previous empires—Mesopotamia, Babylon, and so forth—you have to put your mind into how people were thinking then: Everything was magic, demons; you had some priests reading some oracles; people had no sense of themselves; they were superstitious; they were manipulated; they were surrounded by irrational powers. Basically, only through this Greek Classical period, came the idea that man is able to develop valid ideas concerning the real universe, and that the universe, as it is there, reflects reason in the form of beauty. It is what Schiller discusses in "The Artists" as the birth of mankind.

With the Greek Classic, the idea of the dignity of man, the idea of the inalienable rights of man, were born. This was really a birthplace. I am a great friend of other cultures: I love Chinese culture; I love Indian culture; I love ancient Egyptian culture. But I must say, the idea that man is capable, again and again, to produce valid conceptions about the physical universe—and this, as a continuous process of perfection—



The German Classical tradition was an integral part of American culture in the 19th Century, as shown by the statues of Schiller and Goethe that were erected in cities all over the country (here, right to left: Chicago, New York City, Cleveland). The Romantics were deployed to smash this influence.

started there. I'm not saying that these other cultures have not incredibly valid contributions, but this was unique to universal history.

This was revived in the Italian Renaissance, especially because, when the Council of Florence took place—the Council of Florence was the effort to reunite the churches, between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Church—when the Greek Church fathers brought Plato, it was for the first time translated, for the first time fully impacted Europe in this way: This led to the incredible explosion of cultural optimism and the beautiful contributions of the Italian Renaissance which laid the foundations of 500 years to come.

Then when the German Classics occurred, through the works of Mendelssohn, Lessing, but especially then, Schiller, Humboldt, and Goethe, the highest level so far in history—and I'm saying this, ready for anybody to challenge this and say, “No, it's not true”—but, this period produced the highest conception of the image of man. Just think of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, the “Ode to Joy” by Schiller, and Beethoven's beautiful music: “All men will become brethren.”

And then you had [Wilhelm von] Humboldt, who was one of the towering giants of the German Classical period, who wanted to form Schiller's ideas into an educational system, where every child would have access to universal history, universal education. Just imagine if every child, starting with the Humboldt reforms, would have had exactly what we are trying to do with the youth movement today. Actually,

Humboldt was proposing a youth movement based on universal education. He was a government minister. He was for a short period of time able to implement his ideas.

The Oligarchy Attacks German Classics

Obviously, the oligarchy was completely freaked out, because, if you have every child becoming a genius, that's the end of the oligarchy. So, I am absolutely convinced that one of the reasons why Germany has been attacked so much, not only because of the Holocaust and the Nazis, but, in this period—from Bach through Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, up to Brahms, and from Lessing, Mendelssohn, Schiller, Goethe, some other people worth noting—this was in one sense the richest period in terms of culture at all.

If that would have spread—look, for example, America was nearly taken over by this culture, because whenever the suppression hit in Europe, there were millions of people immigrating to the United States. In the entire 19th Century you had not one professor in the United States who was not either educated in Germany or who was educated with a German professor who had been educated in Germany. Still in 1905, at the 100th anniversary of Schiller's death, when they performed *Wilhelm Tell* in German in Chicago, 4,000 people watched and could understand it. German culture was so much an integral part of American culture, that it was only because of Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, and then unfortunately America joining Great Britain in World War I on the

wrong side, that there was this break. But if you look at the 19th Century, this was permeating in the United States everywhere.

But, it was very clear that the oligarchy was completely terrified, because, also in Germany, the richest cultural period was actually the period of the Weimar Classic, and immediately after that, the period into the Liberation Wars against Napoleon, where, for example, every soldier—not every soldier, but many, many soldiers, when they would go into the war, they would take little pieces of Schiller’s poems on their breast, you know, as a source of strength, and they would write letters back. If you read the letter exchanges of this period, I can assure you, these ordinary people were much, much, much more educated than the modern day’s politicians.

Romantic Politics, Nordic Myths, and Hitler

What did the Romantics do? It started off with the poetical, first the early Romantics; but they quickly moved to politics. Not only did they have their strange ideas about stories, but they projected a falsified image of the Middle Ages by focussing, not on the Greek Classics, saying, “This is unimportant; we have to focus on the Nordic mythologies.” They focussed on an unexplainable longing for death, a death-wish. They focussed on an unlimited indulgence in fantasy life. So that Heinrich Heine, who wrote the very notable book about the Romantic School, which you should really look at, he said, “What strange curiosity drives them to look into the graves of the past? Such behavior always occurs at the end of periods shortly before catastrophes.” And you know, how right he was. And he warned, he said, these people are very dangerous, because of the effect they have on the population, and therefore, they are a threat to the Fatherland.

Now what happened? In the second half of the 1890s, when you had already Schiller working with Goethe, having his correspondences with von Humboldt, in Jena a group gathered around the Schlegels—August Wilhelm, I mentioned already; he married Carolina Böhme, whom Schiller called “Dame Lucifer,” because she was so devilish. Then Friedrich Schlegel was married to Dorothea Veit [née Mendelssohn], the daughter of Moses Mendelssohn, which shows that the children do not always fulfill the hopes of their parents. Schiller, as I said, broke contact with them immediately, because they were so disgusting, but they immediately worked as a countergang, by putting out the organ of the Classical writers whom Schiller had collected, called *Horen*, and they put out another thing called *Athenäum*. In this, wrote Schleiermacher, a religious fundamentalist like Pat Robertson; Novalis; the sister of Tieck, and so forth.

When the 15-year-old fiancée of Novalis died, he started to go into these death fantasies. He wrote, for example, the *Hymns to the Night*. Then he wrote a political work called *Christianity, Or the Unity of Europe*, which was a proposal for a new empire, where the emperor would rule over a system

of kings, like an early Ashcroft model. The head of the church would make sure that the spread of sciences would not lead to the belief of people that everybody could be intelligent—that was a very dangerous thing that had to be fought. Even for Goethe, who in the very beginning had flirted with the Romantics because they spread his works everywhere, this went too far, because he knew actual history and recognized the falsification right along.

But then, they started to glorify the minstrel songs of the Minnesänger, the *Nibelungen* songs. Basically, August Wilhelm said that the *Nibelungen* would be comparable to the *Iliad* of Homer.

But Schiller and Goethe were completely disgusted with the Nordic myths. They said, these are rather demons and gremlins, but not gods. Schiller said the Nordic myths are too specific and nationalistic, because only the Greek mythologies regard man as timeless and universal. Schiller, already then, expressed his worry about what that would lead to: Well, we know what it led to, because these Nordic myths were picked up by Wagner—*Parsifal*, *Lowengrin*, *Tristan und Isolde*—the whole *Völkisch* idea comes from there, and that became the court music of the Nazis. So, the Romantics are the source of Nazism and Hitler.

Programmed Insanity

Now, I do not do this to you to recount all these stories, but just to give you a taste. You have heard of the famous “Blue Flower of Romanticism”—maybe not, but that is the symbol of Romanticism. This goes back to a novel written by Novalis called *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, in which it’s just a young man lying in bed all the time, dreaming, and eventually he has fantasies, morbid fantasies, incestuous fantasies, war fantasies, and eventually a flower, a blue flower, turns into the face of his fiancée. It’s just endless—it’s like soap operas, never ending, a stream of consciousness.

Then, just to give you another example: Tieck wrote something called *The Fair Eckbert*. The knight Eckbert lives in the woods, alone with his wife, Bertha, and then a visitor comes, called Walther. And Bertha tells the story of her life: When she was eight, she was beaten by her father, and goes away from home. She goes into the woods, into the house of an old woman, and takes care of her bird. But then, when the old woman is gone, she steals the bird and the pearls, and then the bird starts to sing. She kills the bird. And, basically, when she’s finished with her story, this guest, Walther, says, “I can imagine how you killed your dog.” Then Bertha gets sick and dies. Her husband Eckbert goes out, shoots Walther. Then a new guest comes, Hugo. Eckbert is paranoid that he knows his secret. And then, Hugo’s face turns into the face of Walther and the old woman. And she says, “I was Walther; I was Hugo; Bertha was your sister.” Then Eckbert goes insane and dies.

I’m just telling you this, because, what is the meaning of



Richard Wagner's opera "Das Rheingold"—the pure expression of Romanticism, and the court music of the Nazis.

this? There is a bipolar father, beating the eight-year-old girl, who develops a schizophrenic personality and has a fascination with insanity. That is *the* subject of all Romantic poetry.

In another novel called *Runenberg* the plants and the roots cry, when you step on the ground. When you pull them out, there is a scream. The flowers and the trees are the corpses of previous worlds. This is actually Prince Charles—you know, he is a complete Romantic. With E.T.A. Hoffmann, it was known that he would go to insane asylums to study the cases, and make that the basis of his literature.

Today, if you read literature about psychoanalysis, psychiatry, they openly say that they all go back to E.T.A. Hoffmann, and his idea of free association and all notions of modern psychology, like free association, convertibility of mental energies, reaction formation, and so forth, they all go back to these Romantic writings. Sigmund Freud, the so-called "father of psychology," says that his theory, and the frustration about civilization of the Romantics, have the same roots, and that he owes them everything. Then you have other such people, like R.D. Laing, who actually was in the circle of [H.G.] Wells and [Bertrand] Russell, who studied things like how to induce psychosis. He worked for the Tavistock Insti-

tute. He was an expert on psychedelic drugs; he worked with MK-Ultra, LSD, the famous manipulation of the students' minds by drugging them without their knowledge.

Goethe, interestingly enough, quoted an English publication called the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, where he actually said that the novels of E.T.A. Hoffmann are material for doctors, rather than for literary critiques. Goethe said the same thing that Heine said: That whoever is concerned with nation-building should have the greatest concern about the insanity induced by these writings. Heine said, "To look at the pile of Romantic poets, you had better go to the insane asylum in Charenton"—Charenton was the famous psychiatric clinic in France at the time. Goethe later came to the conclusion: The Classic is the sane, the Romantic is the insane.

Classic vs. Romantic Ideal of Man

Let's quickly look at the two world outlooks. What is the ideal of man of the Classic? It is perfected man, man without limit, becoming more perfected, more beautiful, developing all potentialities of his personality. For the Romantics, man is not the center; man is only one element in a limitless nature, in the oceans, in the ether.

Schiller says, because poetry is the key to the innermost secrets of the soul, therefore the artist must be a noble person, he must represent the ideal man. His subject must be universal and truthful. The poet must not try to be popular. He should not lower himself down to the vulgar, popular taste, but playfully elevate the audience to the level of the ideal. So, the artist must be on the highest level, and he should not go down to the popular taste of the masses, but he should elevate people in a playful way.

Well, Novalis says, on the other side, no, popularity is the biggest aim. You should go with whatever, go with the flow, go with what people like. The Romantics said, any purpose or rules are immoral. They are a limitation on our freedom of expression. They naturally used the word "freedom" in a completely different way than the Classics. Schlegel said, "There is no truth. Each opinion counts as much as the other one."

Schiller and Goethe had tried to find eternally valid laws of art, and demanded that the artist try to have the highest realization of these eternal laws. The Romantics, on the other side, said, arbitrariness of the poet is the highest law. Friedrich Schlegel said, "Heaven protect us from eternal works."

For the Classical poets, it was clear that when they reached true poetry, they would express the simultaneity of eternity. Goethe, for example, said, "Each moment has an infinite value, because it is a representative of the entire eternity."

Friedrich Schlegel, in his terrible piece *Lucinda*, said, "O laziness, O laziness." And he suggested that laziness should become a science, and that people should work on it, write books about it, and so forth.

Schlegel also had a completely different view on the fa-



The Classical Greek sculpture of Laocoön and his sons fighting with dragons. Contrary to Goethe's view, the Romantics Schlegel and Novalis complained that the figures should be screaming more, in an "ecstasy" of pain.

mous sculpture, *Laocoön*. This is a Greek sculpture in which Laocoön and his sons are fighting with dragons, and this was a very beautiful piece of art, because it shows mid-motion, it shows overcoming of pain. It was a big debate, because, despite the fact that this was a dramatic situation—because wounds were inflicted, but nevertheless, the artist has Laocoön and his sons in a very restrained way, not screaming painfully. Because, as Lessing would later say, if you put in art a face which is screaming, the open mouth is just an ugly hole. So, you cannot show the extreme pain, but you have to do it in a restrained way, because otherwise it becomes so ugly, that you do not get across what you want to say.

Goethe said therefore that what was important about the *Laocoön* sculpture is that it was the most noble expression of humanity, exactly because it managed to show pain, but in a restrained way. Novalis, on the other side, said, "No! He should scream more. The pain should go into ecstasy!"

For the Romantics, Dionysian ecstasy was what they wanted. Schiller, on the other side, said about ecstasy, that in the moment man feels ecstasy, his personality is disconnected, deleted. He is taken over by his emotions. He is out of himself, or beside himself. He is not any more inside himself.

So therefore, Schiller says, if one wants to restore the person's identity, who is in ecstasy, in German you say, "*Mann muß in sich gehen*," you have to go into yourself; being beside yourself, you have to get the inside of yourself

back into your own person. The Romantics had no interest to restore the personality. They wanted people to go out of themselves, being beside themselves.

The Classical Method

Now, the same methodological difference is between the two, in respect to death. Hölderlein talked of a lust for death, a death-wish, longing for the abyss. Novalis said: Life is the beginning of death; life exists only for death's sake. And Schiller, who, as we know, was burdened with a lot of sicknesses himself, for him, beauty and the sublime were superior even to death. It is the great destiny, that elevates man even if it crushes him. Remember the beautiful Schiller poem, "Belonging."

Then, the question of an end. Well, you remember that Schiller's dramas are composed in a very rigorous way, like a Classical composition. Every one of Schiller's dramas starts with a pregnant moment, mostly in the first act. In this first act, you have already everything which will unfold throughout the drama: It's like a germ form, like a seed which then becomes the large tree. Then the story develops, and you reach the *punctum saliens*. This is the moment, when the artfulness of the play recaptures everything, so that the hero or the heroine has the choice to either go this way or that way, to either resolve the situation on the level of the sublime or, by not being able to do it, going in the direction of tragedy. Then, the tragedy or the sublime unfolds, and it ends in a necessary way—as in the same way, the late string quartets of Beethoven: If you would add one more note, you would ruin it. In the same way, everything in Schiller's plays is absolutely necessary, because, it's completed, it's concluded.

But, Tieck says, "Why must everything have an end? All end is arbitrary, it should go on forever." Remember "The Artists," the first strophe, the exposition of the idea, the development; the last strophe, recapturing the idea on the highest level. Or think about Joan of Arc. You have the beautiful call, the mission. The shepherd girl takes the mission; she liberates France; she gets into captivity, but she is able to reach out—then, when France is again in danger—and reaches the level of the sublime. In a certain sense, the same idea like in the beginning, but after having worked through the struggle, the becoming more conscious, the ending on the highest level. This is a Classical art form.

In the Classical method, freedom and necessity become one. The essence of Classical method, is that *the conflict must be overcome on a higher level, where no conflict exists*. This is the equivalent of Nicolaus of Cusa's *Coincidentia Oppositorum*, the highest level on which no conflict exists. Schiller says, "Man is greater than his destiny." You have to educate your emotions, so that you can blindly rely on your emotions to overcome problems. You *overcome*, you do not indulge. The Romantic indulges. Heine basically said, the indulging of the Romantics is the disease. And Goethe called it the delirium of lunatics.



Schlegel's perverse idea of "sublime ugliness" finds its expression in this painting by Jackson Pollock at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

If you think back: Solon, according to Schiller, had defined the aim of mankind being perfection. And, all Classical periods, always tried to get man more perfect, more beautiful, more elaborated in his talents, while the oligarchy always was trying to keep backwardness. And every imperial rule *always* tried to make the population crazy, violence prone. Just think of the Roman Empire and then compare modern days, Hollywood movies, "The Gladiator," "Hannibal," and so forth. Now, if you read the writings of the Roman Empire about art, Ovid, Seneca, Lucans, you find the most *horrifying* descriptions of how people in the battlefield are ripped apart, how their blood is jumping out of their head, and so forth.

Now, once you brutalize a population through such stories, you reduce them to the level of Pavlovian dogs. You know, the training of Pavlovian dogs: You give a dog food and the bell rings. You do this again and again, and so eventually, you just ring the bell, but you don't give the dog food; but he starts drooling, as if he gets food. That is exactly what Hollywood movies are doing with people. Because sex, pornography, perversion, action movies—the drooling starts: People immediately get wet on their seat and other places. [laughter]

There was a movie called "Hannibal," in which Hannibal is a cannibal, who starts to cut out some of his brain. He bakes it and starts to eat it. This is on the Internet! Just recently there was a big scandal in Germany because a homosexual contacted a fellow homosexual on the Internet. They agreed that the one would cut the balls off the other, and they would both fry them and eat them, together. They did that, and then

only the one died in the process, because of the bleeding and so forth. But this actually happened! All of these things—I say this deliberately—because the present culture is so full of this stuff; you should be able to recognize this, as a means of the oligarchy controlling your mind. And you must develop *an absolute inner sense to absolutely reject it*. Don't watch, anytime, any more, any such movie, or, do not allow ugliness to penetrate your mind. Because it does have, unfortunately, a long effect.

'The Cranes of Ibykus'

Now, I was saying before that ugliness, in Classical art, has a function, namely, to cause a strong effect. I want to give you a quote from a very beautiful poem called "The Cranes of Ibykus," which is a very beautiful story.

For those of you who don't know it: The poet Ibykus, goes to the festival of poets in Greece. He marches along and then all of a sudden two murderers come. Since he is a poet, his arm is not so strong, they can kill him. There is no witness, only some cranes are flying over in the sky. He says, "If there is nobody to be witness of my murder, I give you, cranes, the task to be my avengers." And then he dies.

So, then the poetry festival takes place. All the poets, from all the islands and all the countries, come, and they mourn the fact that Ibykus is not there, and they are completely upset. Then, they are all gathered in the big audience, and the chorus of the Erinyes comes onstage. This is a typical Greek custom, that a chorus comes in, and they tell the old rules. Then, because such uneasiness is established by these Erinyes, the

murderers cannot take the tension. When the chorus goes out, the murderers see the cranes. They are the only ones who know the significance of these cranes, but it comes out of their bosoms: They say, "*Sieh da! sieh da!*"—"See there, see there, there are the cranes of Ibykus!" Because this incredible tension has been established, everybody all speaks all at once, "Who says 'Ibykus'? It can only be the murderers. Take them, and put them in front of a trial."

Schiller says they reveal themselves, not because they have a bad conscience, because murderers don't have a bad conscience. They are so depraved, they don't have that. But, the presence of the supernatural, in the form of the Erinnyes, forces them to reveal themselves. It is a Nemesis. It's a higher law, natural law which acts, and makes them show their own guilt.

Now I want Kathy Wolfe to read this, the passage where the Erinnyes are coming into the audience. I will read it in German after that.

Which, stern and grave, i'th' custom aged,
With footsteps lingering and gauged
Comes forward from the hinterground,
The theater thus strolling round.
Thus strideth forth no earthly woman,
They are no mortal progeny!
The giant span of each one's person
Transcends by far what's humanly.

Their loins a mantle black is striking,
Within their fleshless hands they're swinging
The torch with gloomy reddish glow,
Within their cheeks no blood doth flow;
And where the locks do lovely flutter,
And friendly wave o'er the human brow,
There sees one snakes and here the adder
Whose bellies swell with poison now.

And in the circle ghastly twisted
The melody of the hymn they sounded,
Which through the heart so rending drives,
The fetters round the villain ties.
Reflection robbing, heart deluded
The song of Erinnyes doth sound,
It sounds, the hearer's marrow eating,
And suffers not the lyre to sound.

"He's blessed, who free from guilt and failing
The child's pure spirit is preserving!
We may not near him vengingly,
He wanders on life's pathway free.
Yet woeful, woeful him, who hidden
Hath done the deed of murder base!
Upon his very soles we fasten,
The black of night's most dreadful race.

And hopes he to escape by fleeing,
On wings we're there, our nets ensnaring
Around his flying feet we throw,
That he to the ground brought low.
So tiring never, him we follow,
Repentance ne'er us can appease,
Him on and on unto the shadow
And give him even there no ease."

So singing are they roundly dancing,
And silence like the hush of dying
Lies o'er the whole house heavily,
As if had near'd the deity.
And solemnly, i'th' custom aged,
The theater thus strolling round,
With footsteps lingering and gauged
They vanish in the hinterground.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: I'll just do the same thing in German.

der, streng und ernst, nach alter Sitte,
mit langsam abgemessenem Schritte
hervortritt aus dem Hintergrund,
umwandelnd des Theaters Rund.
So schreiten keine ird'schen Weiber,
die zeugete kein sterblich Haus!
Es steigt das Riesenmaß der Leiber
hoch über Menschliches hinaus.

Ein schwarzer Mantel schlägt die Lenden,
sie schwingen in entfleischten Händen,
der Fackel düsterrote Glut,
in ihren Wangen fließt kein Blut;
und wo die Haare lieblich flattern,
um Menschenstirnen freundlich wehn,
da sieht man Schlangen hier und Nattern
die giftgeschwollen Bäuche blähn.

Und schauerlich gedreht im Kreise
beginnen sie des Hymnus Weise,
der durch das Herz zerreißen dringt,
die Bande um den Frevler schlingt.
Besinnungsraubend, herzbetörend
schallt der Erinnyen Gesang,
er schallt, des Hörers Mark verzehrend,
und duldet nicht der Leier Klang:

"Wohl dem, der frei von Schuld und Fehle
bewahrt die kindlich reine Seele!
Ihm dürfen wir nicht rächend nahn,
er wandelt frei des Lebens Bahn.
Doch wehe, wehe, wer verstoßen
des Mordes schwere Tat vollbracht!

Wir heften uns an seine Sohlen,
das furchtbare Geschlecht der Nacht.

Und glaubt er fliehend zu entspringen,
geflügelt sind wir da, die Schlingen
ihm werfend um den flücht'gen Fuß,
daß er zu Boden fallen muß.

So jagen wir ihn ohn Ermatten,
versöhnen kann uns keine Reu,
ihn fort und fort bis zu den Schatten,
und geben ihn auch dort nicht frei."

So singend tanzen sie den Reigen,
und Stille wie des Todes Schweigen
liegt überm ganzen Hause schwer,
als ob die Gottheit nahe wär.
Und feierlich, nach alter Sitte,
umwandelnd des Theaters Rund,
mit langsam abgemeßnem Schritte
verschwinden sie im Hintergrund.

Now, here you have a treatment of the ugly from a Classical standpoint, because obviously, snakes and vipers, with poison-swollen stomachs instead of hair, is all so terrible, but it is not out of control. "With stern and grave i'th' custom agèd, with footsteps lingering in gait." This

is not out of control, but it is an ugliness, but in a controlled way. And then, quietness follows, "as if had near'd the deity." So the horrible is not an end in itself, to indulge and go into endless dreams or fantasy, but the horrible is only used as a means to portray the presence of the supernatural, the deity, because you need something to bring this there, to bring Nemesis. And the idea of Nemesis, by the way, was a recurring theme in all of Schiller's work, that you can violate the laws of nature, but you cannot do it for a very long time, without that Nemesis will strike back eventually.

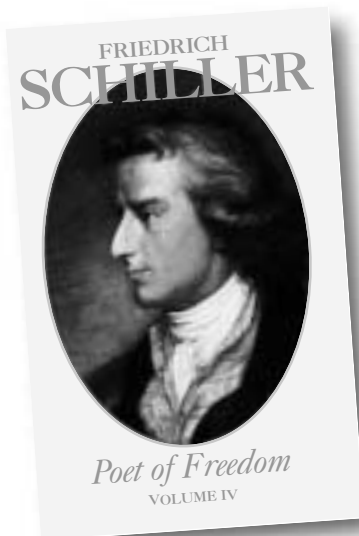
Now, Schiller said, in *The Fiancée of Messina*, another very beautiful play of his, true art is not a game. It has the very serious aim, to make man truly free and to awaken a power in him beyond the time he watches the play or listens to the poem or the music. It wants to enable him to rule over the material realm through ideas.

Beauty has a lasting effect in this way because it makes man more noble, even beyond the immediate performance. But, so does the ugly. The ugly has a lasting effect too. If you ever have watched something ugly, an ugly movie or something, it stays with you. You can't get it out of your system.

I want to end here and just say, let's make beauty our business. Because beauty *is* the necessary condition of man, and I think America should become beautiful.

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

—Friedrich Schiller,
Wilhelm Tell.



Selected writings of Friedrich Schiller, in English translation.

Volume I: *Don Carlos*, Essays, Poetry, and Epigrams. \$9.95

Volume II: *Wilhelm Tell*, Essays, and Poetry. \$15.00

Volume III: *The Virgin of Orleans*, Essays, Poetry, and Ballads. \$15.00

Volume IV: *Mary Stuart*, Essays, Poetry, Historical Essays,
and Early Writings \$15.00

Order from:

Ben Franklin Booksellers

P.O. Box 1707 Leesburg, VA 20177

I-800-453-4108 (toll-free) or I-703-777-3661

Shipping and handling: \$4 for the first book, \$.50 for each additional book.

We accept MasterCard, Visa, Discover, American Express. Virginia residents add 4.5% sales tax.

www.benfranklinbooks.com e-mail: benfranklinbooks@mediasoft.net