

Dear friends,

we had our first reading group last Sunday and it was absolute fun! Next reading will be on 14th October, 7pm (German time). Please read letters 4 and 5 until then

The discussion was also very good and I'll do a quick summary of that one first, then I'll go into what Schiller said in his first three letters.

Osama had a lot of questions and he told me there are much more. So we all look forward to hearing more of them. He asked, why Schiller is talking so much about the Greeks and why did the French Revolution fail. The Greeks were very advanced in their understanding of the human soul, at least some where, not all society. That is also the reason, why the French Revolution failed, since not enough people understood how they could govern themselves, they didn't understand themselves enough. Schiller would say, their emotions weren't educated. This is what we're are doing with the reading of Schiller, so that the next revolution will be a lasting and successful one: as Matthew said, that's the reason why we want to increase the "Schiller-flux-density" in society :-)

Nicholas said that being a political movement takes a lot of responsibility, therefore we need to become better people. And Christine added that the most important duty of poets is to be the true legislators of society, because laws aren't there to be made, but to be discovered.

1st letter: Schiller says that he likes very much to do what the prince, the one he is sending his letters to, is asking of him. He connects the duty with his passion. And this is what the content of the letters is about! He says that everyone can discover this connection: "Your own feeling will furnish me the facts upon which I build, your own free power of thought will dictate the laws, upon which I should proceed." In the end of this letter, he gives a warning that he'll have to describe his ideas rather abstractly, not really close to our senses in order to make them understandable: "... the following inquiries should remove their object from the sense, while they seek to draw it nearer to the understanding."

So, bear with him, if you don't understand his words asap.

2nd letter: "The most perfect of all works of art [is] the construction of a true political freedom." Schiller is connecting here, what most wouldn't: art and politics, ideal and reality. But it's feasible, as he insists. But first, we need to understand the role of beauty in all of this, as the connection between ideal and reality: "In order to solve the political problem in experience, [one] must take the path through the aesthetical, because it is beauty through which one proceeds to freedom."

3rd letter: In order to achieve an ideal nation state with the laws that fit this state, people have to advance. Schiller said that the laws that govern nations today were formed by sensual necessity, not by reason. So, we have to find the way through necessity to reason. But, when we're too much of a "natural character", this won't work, since we're

too close to our sensual needs. If we tried to be too much of a "moral character", this wouldn't work as well, since this "would have pulled the ladder of nature out from under [our] feet." We would stretch too much, I would say. In order to achieve this noble goal, we have to "produce a third character, which, related with these both, prepared a transition from the rule of naked force to the rule of law, without hindering the moral character in its development, but served rather as a sensual pledge of invisible morality."

Adam, who will be with us soon again, once described this 3rd character: something like a natural character with the benefit of morality.

best regards! Till next Sunday
Jonathan

4th letter:

Remember at the end of the third letter, Schiller presents a third character which is neither the 'natural' character of man nor is it the moral character. Now in the fourth letter, Schiller asserts a certainty: Only the predominance of such a character in a people can make a state transformation according to moral principles uninjurious and also only such a character can guarantee its duration. It is only in the Absolute Being that physical necessity coincides with the moral. If man is to be truly free, he will need to have his instincts become harmonious with his reason. If that can happen, then we may find it useful in relying on it as if a universal legislation. All humans have this inclination in them, they have an ideal man inside of them. Now this ideal man is represented through the state. The man must maintain himself in the state while the state maintains itself in the individual. Neither can or should abolish the other. State has to respect the subjective and specific character of the individual while conforming to reason and necessity. Totality of character must be found in the people: Neither must man be a savage nor a barbarian. Totality of character is a prerequisite to facilitate an exchange of the state of necessity for the state of freedom.

5th letter:

Schiller starts his fifth letter with a question. He's talking about the French Revolution which has been ongoing. Did we find in the actors of the French revolution the same type of third character he was previously talking about? It's true that there's a moment of great opportunity as man is waking up from his indolence and self-deception and he demands to have his rights restored to him. This great opportunity fails to achieve the potential because the moral quality of the people is lacking. There is dichotomy of the savage state confronting the state of enervation. As if in a class war, where the lower more numerous classes they act with lawless instincts while the supposed cultured class is even more pathetic in that they reveal in themselves a depravity of character. Everybody is looking out only for himself and it makes for a sorry state of affairs. The spirit of the time show hesitations and stands still trying to choose between two evil outcomes.

Fourth Letter

Thus much is certain: only the predominance of such a character in a people can make a state transformation according to moral principles uninjurious, and also only such a character can guarantee its duration. In the establishment of such a moral state the moral law is reckoned upon as an active power, and free will is drawn into the realm of causes, where all things hang together mutually with stringent necessity and constancy. We know however, that the determination of human will remains always accidental and that only in the Absolute Being doth the physical necessity coincide with the moral. Thus if the moral conduct of man should be relied upon as upon natural results, so it must be nature, and he must surely be led through his instincts to such a proceeding, as only a moral character can always bring about. The will of man stands perfectly free between duty and inclination, and no physical necessity can and may seize the majestic right of his person. Should he therefore retain this power of choice and notwithstanding be a dependable link in the causal chain of forces, so can this only be effected thereby, that the effects of both those instinctive springs sally forth perfectly equally in the realm of appearances and, with every difference of form, the matter of his volition remains the same; that therefore his instincts are sufficiently harmonious with his reason, in order to be of use as universal legislation.

Every individual man, one can say, carries by predisposition and destiny, a purely ideal man within himself, to agree with whose immutable unity in all his alterations is the great task of his existence.¹ This pure man, who gives himself to be recognized more or less distinctly in every subject, is represented through the state; the objective and as it were canonical form, in which the multiplicity of the subjects strives to unite itself. Now however let two different ways be considered, how the man in time can coincide with the man in the idea, hence just as many, how the state can maintain itself in the individual; either thereby, that the pure man suppresses the empirical, that the state abolishes the individual; or thereby, that the individual becomes the state, that the man of time ennobles himself to the man in the idea.

Indeed, in the one-sided valuation this difference falls away; for reason is satisfied, if her law alone is valued unconditionally: but in the complete anthropological valuation, where with the form also the content is considered and the living feeling likewise hath a voice, the same will come so much the more into consideration. Unity demands indeed reason, nature however multiplicity, and man is claimed by both legislations. The law of the former is imprinted upon him through an incorruptible consciousness, the law of the other through an indelible feeling. Hence it will every time bespeak of a still deficient education, if the moral character can maintain itself only with the self-sacrifice of the natural; and a state constitution will still be very imperfect, which is only capable of effecting unity through the suppression of multiplicity. The state should not merely respect the objective and general, it should also respect the subjective and specific

character in the individual and, whilst it spreads the invisible realm of the moral, should not depopulate the realm of appearance.

When the mechanical artist places his hand on the formless mass, in order to give it the form of his purpose, so he hath no hesitation, to do it violence; for the nature, upon which he works, deserves no respect for itself, and he is not interested in the whole for the sake of its parts, rather in the parts for the sake of the whole. When the artist of beauty lays his hand on the same mass, so he hath even less hesitation, to do it violence, he only avoids, to show it. The stuff, upon which he works he doth not respect in the least more than the mechanical artist; but the eyes, which take the freedom of this stuff under protection, he will seek to deceive through an apparent forbearance towards the same. It is entirely different with the pedagogical and political artist, who immediately makes man into his material and into his task. Here the purpose returns to the stuff, and only because the whole serves the parts, the parts may accommodate themselves to the whole. With an entirely different respect, than is that, which the artist of beauty shows his material, must the artist of the state approach that of his, and he must not merely subjectively and for an illusory effect on the senses, but rather objectively and for the inner essence spare its peculiarity and personality.

But for just this reason, because the state should be an organization which forms itself through itself and for itself, so can it also only in so far become real, as the parts have raised themselves to the idea of the whole. Because the state serves as representative of pure and objective humanity in the breast of its citizens, so will it have to observe the same relationship towards its citizens, in which they stand to themselves, and also only be able to respect their subjective humanity to the degree, that it is ennobled to the objective. Is the inner man one with himself, so will he even in the highest universalization of his conduct save his peculiarity, and the state will be merely the interpreter of his beautiful instincts, the more distinct formula of his inner legislation. On the contrary, offers the subjective man in the character of a people still such contradictory resistance to the objective, that only the suppression of the former can create victory for the latter, so the state will also take up the severe earnestness of the law, and, in order not to be its victim, will have to crush under its feet a so hostile individuality without respect.

Man can, however, be opposed to himself in a twofold manner: either as a savage, if his feelings rule over his principles; or as a barbarian, if his principles destroy his feelings. The savage despises art and recognizes nature as his unrestricted master; the barbarian derides and disrespects nature but, more contemptible than the savage, he frequently enough continues, to be the slave of his slaves. The educated man makes nature into his friend and honors its freedom, while he merely bridles its caprice.

When reason therefore brings her moral unity into physical society, so she may not damage the multiplicity of nature. When nature strives to maintain her multiplicity in the

moral structure of society, so may occur thereby no breach in the moral unity; equally far from uniformity and confusion rests the victorious form. Totality of character must therefore be found in the people, which should be capable and worthy, to exchange the state of necessity for the state of freedom.

Notes

1. I refer here to a recently published work: "Lectures on the Destiny of the Savant," by my friend Fichte, where a very lucid and never before in this manner attempted derivation of this proposition is found.

Fifth Letter

Is it this character, which the present age, which the current events manifest to us? I direct my attention at once to the most prominent object in this vast picture.

True is it, the repute of opinion is fallen, caprice is unmasked, and, although still armed with power, yet it obtains no more dignity; man is aroused from his long indolence and self-deception, and with an emphatic majority he demands the restoration of his inalienable rights. But he doth not merely demand them, on that side and this side he rises up, to take by force, what in his opinion is wrongfully denied him. The edifice of the natural state rocks, its worn out foundations give way, and a physical possibility seems given, to place the law upon the throne, to honor man finally as an end in himself and to make true freedom the basis of political union. Vain hope! The moral possibility is wanting; and the generous moment finds an unresponsive people.

In his deeds man paints himself, and what form is it, which is reflected in the drama of the present time! Here return to a savage state, there a state of enervation: The two greatest extremes of human degeneration, and both united in one space of time.

In the lower and more numerous classes brutal lawless instincts present themselves to us, which unleash themselves after the dissolved bond of the civil order and hasten with unruly fury to their animal satisfaction. It may therefore be, that the objective humanity had had cause, to complain of the state; the subjective must honor its institutions. May one blame him, that he placed the dignity of human nature out of sight, so long it still mattered, to defend its existence? That he hastened, to separate through force of gravity and to bind through the force of cohesion, where he was no longer to think of the educating? Its dissolution contains its justification. The unfastened society, instead of hastening upward into organic life, falls back into the elemental realm.

On the other side, the civilized classes give us the still adverse sight of slackness and of a depravity of character, which revolts so much the more, because culture itself is its source. I no longer remember, which ancient or modern philosopher made the observation, that the more noble would be in its destruction the more horrible, but one will find it true as well in the moral. From the son of nature emerges, when he indulges in excess, a raving madman; from the pupil of art a worthless villain. The enlightenment of the understanding, on which the refined classes not entirely with injustice pride themselves, shows in the whole so little an ennobling influence on the inner convictions, that it rather strengthens the corruption through maxims. We deny nature on her legitimate field, in order to experience her tyranny on the moral, and while we resist her impressions, we receive our principles from her. The affected decency of our manners refuses her the pardonable first voice, in order to yield to her, in our materialistic ethics, the decisive last. In the very bosom of the most refined social life egoism hath founded its system, and without producing a social heart, we experience all contagions and all tribulations of society. Our free judgment we subject to its despotic opinion, our feeling to its bizarre customs, our will to its seductions, only our caprice do we maintain against her holy rights. Proud self-sufficiency contracts the heart of the man of the world, that still frequently beats sympathetically in the brutal man of nature, and as from a burning city everyone seeks only to rescue his miserable property from the devastation. Only in a complete renunciation of sentimentality doth one think to find shelter from its aberrations, and mockery, which often wholesomely chastises the *schwaermer*, slanders with equally little forbearance the noblest feeling. Culture, far removed, to place us in freedom, develops with every power, which it forms in us, only a new want, the bonds of the physical always tie themselves up more anxiously, so that the fear, to lose, stifles even the fiery instinct towards improvement and the maxims of suffering obedience are considered the highest wisdom of life. Thus one sees the spirit of the time waver between perversity and brutality, between the unnatural and mere nature, between superstition and moral unbelief, and it is merely the equal weight of evils, which at times still places limits upon him.