

# Friedrich Schiller, Excerpts from *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795)

## Abstract

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Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805) attained great renown as a poet, playwright, historian, and philosopher, and also as Goethe’s intellectual partner and equal. In this epistolary book, he expressed his conviction that humanity’s path to reason and self-government had to pass first through an education to aesthetic self-consciousness and an understanding of art’s role in molding the mind and psyche. In these excerpts, Schiller depicts a contemporary humanity unable, as the tragic course of the French Revolution seemed to show, to attain communal harmony. Society, as Schiller writes, is riven by inequality. The state imposes internal order with its own violence and self-servingly engages in war, and “business” chills the heart. Hence, he argues for the necessity of an aesthetic self-awareness that would bring about a modern version of the balance between art and life attained in ancient Greece, a balance that Schiller, like many other German intellectuals of his day, regarded as ideal. Schiller’s text prefigures the vision of many influential nineteenth-century writers, including Karl Marx and Friedrich Nietzsche.

## Source

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### On the Aesthetic Education of Man

#### *Third Letter*

Nature begins with Man no better than with the rest of her works: she acts for him where he cannot yet act as a free intelligence for himself. But it is just this that constitutes his humanity, that he does not rest satisfied with what Nature has made of him, but possesses the capacity of retracing again, with his reason, the steps which she anticipated with him, of remodelling the work of need into a work of his free choice, and of elevating physical into moral necessity.

He comes to himself out of his sensuous slumber, recognizes himself as Man, looks around and finds himself—in the State. An unavoidable exigency had thrown him there before he could freely choose his station; need ordained it through mere natural laws before he could do so by the laws of reason. But with this State based on need, which had arisen only from his natural endowment as Man, and was calculated for that alone, he could not and cannot as a moral being rest content—and woe to him if he could! With the same right, therefore, by which he becomes a man, he leaves the dominion of a blind necessity, since he is parted from it at so many other points by his freedom, as—to take only a single example—he effaces through morality and ennobles through Beauty the low character which the needs of sexual love imprinted on him. He thus artificially retraces his childhood in his maturity, forms for himself a *state of Nature* in idea, which is not indeed given him by experience but is the necessary result of his rationality, borrows in this ideal state an ultimate aim which he never knew in his actual state of Nature, and a choice of which he was not then capable, and proceeds now exactly as though he were starting afresh and substituting the status of independence, with clear insight and free resolve, for the status of contract. However artfully and firmly blind Lawlessness has laid the foundations of her work, however arrogantly she may maintain it and with whatever appearance of veneration she may surround it—he may regard it during this operation as something that has simply never happened; for the work of blind forces possesses no authority before which Freedom need bow, and everything must yield to the highest ultimate aim which Reason sets up in his personality. In this way the attempt of a people that has reached maturity to transform its natural State into a moral one, originates and vindicates itself.

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This natural State (as we may call every political body whose organization is ultimately based on force and not on laws) is now indeed opposed to the moral man, for whom mere conformity to law is now to serve as law; but it is still quite adequate for the physical man, who gives himself laws only in order to come to terms with force. But the physical man is *actual*, and the moral man only *problematical*. Therefore when Reason abolishes the natural State, as she inevitably must do if she wishes to put her own in its place, she weighs the physical and actual man against the problematical moral man, she ventures the very existence of society for a merely possible (even if morally necessary) ideal of society. She takes from Man something that he actually possesses, and without which he possesses nothing, and assigns to him in its place something which he could and should possess; and if she has relied too much upon him she will, for a humanity which is still beyond him and can so remain without detriment to his existence, have also wrested from him those very means of animality which are the condition of his humanity. Before he has had time to hold fast to the law with his will, she has taken the ladder of Nature from under his feet.

The great consideration is, therefore, that physical society in *time* may not cease for an instant while moral society is being formed in *idea*, that for the sake of human dignity its very existence may not be endangered. When the mechanic has the works of a clock to repair, he lets the wheels run down; but the living clockwork of the State must be repaired while it is in motion, and here it is a case of changing the wheels as they revolve. We must therefore search for some support for the continuation of society, to make it independent of the actual State which we want to abolish.

This support is not to be found in the natural character of Man, which, selfish and violent as it is, aims far more at the destruction than at the preservation of society; as little is it to be found in his moral character, which *ex hypothesi* has yet to be formed, and upon which, because it is free and because it is never apparent, the lawgiver can never operate and never with certainty depend. The important thing, therefore, is to dissociate caprice from the physical and freedom from the moral character; to make the first conformable with law, the second dependent on impressions; to remove the former somewhat further from matter in order to bring the latter somewhat nearer to it—so as to create a third character which, related to these other two, might pave the way for a transition from the realm of mere force to the rule of law, and, without impeding the development of the moral character, might serve rather as a sensible pledge of a morality as yet unseen.

#### *Fourth Letter*

This much is certain: only the predominance of such a character among a people can complete without harm the transformation of a State according to moral principles, and only such a character too can guarantee its perpetuation. In the establishment of a moral State the ethical law is reckoned upon as an active power, and free will is drawn into the realm of causes where everything coheres with strict necessity and stability. But we know that the dispositions of the human will always remain fortuitous, and that only with absolute Being does physical coincide with moral necessity. If therefore we are to count upon the moral conduct of Man as upon *natural* consequences, it must *be* his nature, and Man must be led by his very impulses to such a mode of life as only a moral character can have for its result. But the will of Man stands completely free between duty and inclination, and no physical compulsion can or may encroach upon this sovereign right of his personality. If therefore he is to retain this capacity for choice and nevertheless be a reliable link in the causal concatenation of forces, this can only be achieved if the operations of both those motives in the realm of phenomena prove to be exactly similar, and if the subject matter of his volition remains the same through every variation of its form, so that his impulses are sufficiently consonant with his reason to have the value of a universal legislation.

Every individual man, it may be said, carries in disposition and determination a pure ideal man within himself, with whose unalterable unity it is the great task of his existence, throughout all his vicissitudes, to harmonize. This pure human being, who may be recognized more or less distinctly in every person, is

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represented by the *State*, the objective and, so to say, canonical form in which the diversity of persons endeavours to unite itself. But two different ways can be thought of, in which Man in time can be made to coincide with Man in idea, and consequently as many in which the State can affirm itself in individuals: either by the pure man suppressing the empirical—the State abrogating the individual—or by the individual *becoming* State—temporal Man being raised to the dignity of ideal Man.

It is true that on a partial moral estimate this distinction disappears, for Reason is satisfied when her law alone prevails unconditionally; but on a complete anthropological estimate, in which content counts as well as form, and living feeling at the same time has a voice, the distinction is all the more evident. Reason indeed demands unity, but Nature demands multiplicity, and both systems of legislation lay claim to Man's obedience. The law of the former is impressed upon him by an incorruptible consciousness, the law of the latter by an ineradicable feeling. It will therefore always argue a still defective education if the moral character can assert itself only through the sacrifice of what is natural; and a political constitution will still be very imperfect if it is able to produce unity only by suppressing variety. The State should respect not merely the objective and generic, but also the subjective and specific character of its individuals, and in extending the invisible realm of morals it must not depopulate the realm of phenomena.

When the mechanical artist sets his hand to the formless block, to give it the form that he intends for it, he does not hesitate to do it violence, for Nature, which he is fashioning, merits no consideration for herself, and his concern is not with the whole for the sake of the parts, but with the parts for the sake of the whole. When the fine artist sets his hand to this same block, as little does he hesitate to do it violence, only he forbears to shew it. He respects the material at which he works not in the slightest degree more than the mechanical artist does; but he will try to deceive the eye which takes the freedom of this material under its protection, by an apparent deference towards the material. The situation is quite different with the pedagogic and political artist, who has Man at the same time as his material and as his theme. Here his aim reverts to the material, and only because the whole subserves the parts may the parts submit to the whole. The statesman-artist must approach his material with a quite different respect from that which the fine artist feigns towards his; not merely subjectively, and for a delusive effect upon the senses, but objectively, for its inner being, he must pay careful heed to its idiosyncrasy and its personality.

But just for that very reason, because the State is to be an organization which is formed by itself and for itself, it can really become such only insofar as the parts have been severally attuned to the idea of the whole. Because the State serves as a representation of pure and objective humanity in the breast of its citizens, it will have to maintain towards those citizens the same relationship in which they stand to each other, and it can respect their subjective humanity only in such degree as this is exalted to objectivity. If the inner man is at one with himself, he will preserve his idiosyncrasy even in the widest universality of his conduct, and the State will be simply the interpreter of his fine instinct, the clearer expression of his inner legislation. On the other hand, if in the character of a people the subjective man is opposed to the objective in so contradictory a fashion that only the suppression of the former can secure the triumph of the latter, the State too will assume the full severity of the law against the citizen, and must ruthlessly trample underfoot any such hostile individuality in order not to be its victim.

But Man can be at odds with himself in a double fashion: either as savage if his feelings rule his principles, or as barbarian if his principles destroy his feelings. The savage despises Art and recognizes Nature as his sovereign mistress; the barbarian derides and dishonours Nature, but—more contemptible than the savage—he continues frequently enough to become the slave of his slave. The cultured man makes a friend of Nature and respects her freedom while merely curbing her caprice.

When therefore Reason introduces her moral unity into physical society, she must not injure the multiplicity of Nature. When Nature strives to maintain her multiplicity in the moral structure of society,

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there must be no rupture in its moral unity; the triumphant form rests equidistant from uniformity and confusion. *Totality* of character must therefore be found in a people that is capable and worthy of exchanging the State of need for the State of freedom.

#### *Fifth Letter*

Is this the character which the present age and contemporary events reveal to us? I direct my attention at once to the most prominent object in this vast picture.

It is true that deference to authority has declined, that its lawlessness is unmasked, and, although still armed with power, sneaks no dignity any more; men have awoken from their long lethargy and self-deception, and by an impressive majority they are demanding the restitution of their inalienable rights. Nor are they merely demanding them: on every side they are bestirring themselves to seize by force what has, in their opinion, been wrongfully withheld from them. The fabric of the natural State is tottering, its rotten foundations are yielding, and there seems to be a *physical* possibility of setting Law upon the throne, of honouring Man at last as an end in himself and making true freedom the basis of political association. Vain hope! The *moral* possibility is wanting, and the favourable moment finds an apathetic generation.

Man portrays himself in his deeds, and what a form it is that is depicted in the drama of the present day! Here barbarity, there enervation: the two extremes of human degeneracy, and both of them united in a single period of time!

Among the lower and more numerous classes we find crude, lawless impulses which have been unleashed by the loosening of the bonds of civil order, and are hastening with ungovernable fury to their brutal satisfaction. It may be that objective humanity had some cause of complaint concerning the State; subjective humanity must respect its institutions. Can we blame the State for disregarding the dignity of human nature so long as it was defending its very existence, for hastening to separate by the force of gravity, and to link together by the force of cohesion, where there could as yet be no thought of building up? The extinction of the State contains its vindication. Society uncontrolled, instead of hastening upwards into organic life, is relapsing into its original elements.

On the other hand, the civilized classes present to us the still more repugnant spectacle of indolence, and a depravity of character which is all the more shocking since culture itself is the source of it. I forget which ancient or modern philosopher made the remark that what is more noble is in its corruption the more abominable; but it is equally true in the moral sphere. The child of Nature, when he breaks loose, becomes a maniac, the disciple of Art an abandoned wretch. The intellectual enlightenment on which the refined ranks of society, not without justification, pride themselves, reveals on the whole an influence upon the disposition so little ennobling that it rather furnishes maxims to confirm depravity. We disown Nature in her rightful sphere only to experience her tyranny in the sphere of morality, and in resisting her influences we receive from her our principles. The affected propriety of our manners refuses her the first vote—which would have been pardonable—only to concede to her, in our materialistic moral philosophy, the decisive final say. Selfishness has established its system in the very bosom of our exquisitely refined society, and we experience all the contagions and all the calamities of community without the accompaniment of a communal spirit. We submit our free judgement to its despotic sanction, our feeling to its fantastic customs, our will to its seductions; only our caprice do we assert against its sacred rights. Proud self-sufficiency contracts, in the worldling, the heart that often still beats sympathetically in the rude natural man, and like fugitives from a burning city everyone seeks only to rescue his own miserable property from the devastation. Only in a complete abjuration of sensibility may we think to find protection against its abuse, and the ridicule which is often the salutary chastener of the fanatic, lacerates the noblest feelings with equally little consideration. So far from setting us free, culture only develops a new want with every power that it bestows on us; the bonds of the physical are tightened

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ever more alarmingly, so that the fear of loss stifles even the burning impulses towards improvement, and the maxim of passive obedience passes for the supreme wisdom of life. So we see the spirit of the time fluctuating between perverseness and brutality, between unnaturalness and mere Nature, between superstition and moral unbelief, and it is only the equilibrium of evil that still occasionally sets bounds to it.

### *Sixth Letter*

Have I perhaps overdone this description of the age? I do not anticipate that objection, but rather a different one: that I have proved too much by it. This picture, you will tell me, certainly resembles contemporary humanity, but it also resembles any people at all that is in process of civilization, since all without distinction must fall away from Nature through over-subtlety of intellect before they can return to her through Reason.

But if we pay any attention to the character of the age we must be astonished at the contrast we shall find between the present form of humanity and the bygone one, in particular the Greek. Our reputation for culture and refinement, which we justly stress in considering every mere state of Nature, will not serve our turn in regard to the Greek nature, which united all the attractions of art and all the dignity of wisdom, without, however, becoming the victim of them as does our own. The Greeks put us to shame not only by their simplicity, which is alien to our age: they are at the same time our rivals, often indeed our models, in those very excellences with which we are wont to console ourselves for the unnaturalness of our manners. Combining fullness of form with fullness of content, at once philosophic and creative, at the same time tender and energetic, we see them uniting the youthfulness of fantasy with the manliness of reason in a splendid humanity.

At that time, in that lovely awakening of the intellectual powers, the senses and the mind had still no strictly separate individualities, for no dissension had yet constrained them to make hostile partition with each other and determine their boundaries. Poetry had not yet courted wit, and speculation had not prostituted itself by sophistry. Both of them could, if need arose, exchange their functions, because each in its own fashion honoured truth. However high Reason might soar, it always drew its subject matter lovingly after it, and however fine and sharp the divisions it made, it never mutilated. It certainly split up human nature, and scattered its magnified elements abroad among the glorious assembly of the gods, but not by tearing it in pieces, rather by combining it in varying ways; for the whole of humanity was never lacking in any single god. How completely different it is with us moderns! With us too the image of the race is scattered on an amplified scale among individuals—but in a fragmentary way, not in different combinations, so that you have to go the rounds from individual to individual in order to gather the totality of the race. With us, one might almost be tempted to assert, the mental faculties shew themselves detached in operation as psychology separates them in idea, and we see not merely individual persons but whole classes of human beings developing only a part of their capacities, while the rest of them, like a stunted plant, shew only a feeble vestige of their nature.

I do not fail to appreciate the advantages to which the present generation, considered as a unity and weighed in the scales of reason, may lay claim in the face of the best of antiquity, but it has to enter the contest in close order and let whole compete with whole. What individual modern will emerge to contend in single combat with the individual Athenian for the prize of humanity?

Whence comes this disadvantageous relation of individuals in spite of all the advantages of the race? Why was the individual Greek qualified to be the representative of his time, and why may the individual modern not dare to be so? Because it was all-uniting Nature that bestowed upon the former, and all-dividing intellect that bestowed upon the latter, their respective forms.

It was culture itself that inflicted this wound upon modern humanity. As soon as enlarged experience and

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more precise speculation made necessary a sharper division of the sciences on the one hand, and on the other, the more intricate machinery of States made necessary a more rigorous dissociation of ranks and occupations, the essential bond of human nature was torn apart, and a ruinous conflict set its harmonious powers at variance. The intuitive and the speculative understanding took up hostile attitudes upon their respective fields, whose boundaries they now began to guard with jealousy and distrust, and by confining our activity to a single sphere we have handed ourselves over to a master who is not infrequently inclined to end up by suppressing the rest of our capacities. While in one place a luxuriant imagination ravages the hard-earned fruits of the intellect, in another the spirit of abstraction stifles the fire at which the heart might have warmed itself and the fancy been enkindled.

This disorder, which Art and learning began in the inner man, was rendered complete and universal by the new spirit of government. It was not, indeed, to be expected that the simple organization of the first republics would outlive the ingenuousness of their early manners and conditions; but instead of rising to a higher animal life it degenerated to a common and clumsy mechanism. That zoophyte character of the Greek States, where every individual enjoyed an independent life and, when need arose, could become a whole in himself, now gave place to an ingenious piece of machinery, in which out of the botching together of a vast number of lifeless parts a collective mechanical life results. State and Church, law and customs, were now torn asunder; enjoyment was separated from labour, means from ends, effort from reward. Eternally chained to only one single little fragment of the whole, Man himself grew to be only a fragment; with the monotonous noise of the wheel he drives everlastingly in his ears, he never develops the harmony of his being, and instead of imprinting humanity upon his nature he becomes merely the imprint of his occupation, of his science. But even the meagre fragmentary association which still links the individual members to the whole, does not depend on forms which present themselves spontaneously (for how could such an artificial and clandestine piece of mechanism be entrusted to their freedom?), but is assigned to them with scrupulous exactness by a formula in which their free intelligence is restricted. The lifeless letter takes the place of the living understanding, and a practised memory is a surer guide than genius and feeling.

If the community makes function the measure of a man, when it respects in one of its citizens only memory, in another a tabulating intellect, in a third only mechanical skill; if, indifferent to character, it here lays stress upon knowledge alone, and there pardons the profoundest darkness of the intellect so long as it co-exists with a spirit of order and a law-abiding demeanour—if at the same time it requires these special aptitudes to be exercised with an intensity proportionate to the loss of extension which it permits in the individuals concerned—can we then wonder that the remaining aptitudes of the mind become neglected in order to bestow every attention upon the only one which brings in honour and profit? We know indeed that vigorous genius does not make the boundaries of its concern the boundaries of its activity; but mediocre talent consumes the whole meagre sum of its strength in the concern that falls to its lot, and it must be no ordinary head that has something left over for private pursuits without prejudice to its vocation. Moreover, it is seldom a good recommendation with the State when powers exceed commissions, or when the higher spiritual requirements of the man of genius furnish a rival to his office. So jealous is the State for the exclusive possession of its servants, that it will more easily bring itself (and who can blame it?) to share its man with a Cytherean than with a Uranian Venus!

And so gradually individual concrete life is extinguished, in order that the abstract life of the whole may prolong its sorry existence, and the State remains eternally alien to its citizens because nowhere does feeling discover it. Compelled to disburden itself of the diversity of its citizens by means of classification, and to receive humanity only at second hand, by representation, the governing section finally loses sight of it completely, confounding it with a mere patchwork of the intellect; and the governed cannot help receiving coldly the laws which are addressed so little towards themselves. Finally, weary of maintaining a bond which is so little alleviated for it by the State, positive society disintegrates (as has long since

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been the fate of the majority of European States) into a moral state of Nature, where open force is only one *more* party, hated and eluded by those who make it necessary, and respected only by those who can dispense with it.

With this twofold force pressing on it from within and without, could humanity really take any other course than the one it actually has taken? While the speculative spirit strove after imperishable possessions in the realm of ideas, it had to become a stranger in the material world, and relinquish matter for the sake of form. The business spirit, confined in a monotonous circle of objects, and inside these still further restricted by formulas, was forced to see the freedom of the whole snatched from under its eyes, and at the same time to become impoverished in its own sphere. As the former is tempted to fashion the actual according to the conceivable, and to exalt the subjective conditions of its imagination into laws constituting the existence of things, so the latter plunged to the opposite extreme of estimating all experience whatsoever by a particular fragment of experience, and trying to apply the rules of its own occupation indiscriminately to every occupation. One fell a victim to a vain subtlety, the other to a narrow pedantry, because the former stood too high to see the individual, and the latter too low to see the whole. But the deleterious effect of this tendency of mind was not restricted to knowledge and utterance alone; it extended not less to feeling and action. We know that the sensibility of the mind depends for its degree upon the liveliness, and for its extent upon the richness, of the imagination. But the predominance of the analytical faculty must necessarily deprive the fancy of its strength and its fire, and a restricted sphere of objects must diminish its wealth. Hence the abstract thinker very often has a *cold* heart, since he analyses the impressions which really affect the soul only as a whole; the man of business has very often a *narrow* heart, because his imagination, confined within the monotonous circle of his profession, cannot expand to unfamiliar modes of representation.

I have been concerned to reveal the pernicious tendency of our contemporary character and its source, not to shew the advantages by which Nature makes amends for it. I will gladly concede to you that, little as individuals could derive any profit from this dismemberment of their being, yet the race could have made progress in no other way. The phenomenon of Greek humanity was undoubtedly a maximum which could neither be maintained at that pitch nor be surpassed. Not maintained, because the intellect was inevitably bound to be compelled by the store which it already possessed to dissociate itself from sensation and contemplation, and to strive after clearness of knowledge; and also not surpassed, because only to a certain degree is clarity compatible with fullness and warmth. This degree the Greeks had attained, and if they wanted to advance to a higher state of development they were, like ourselves, obliged to surrender the wholeness of their being and pursue truth along separate roads.

There was no other way of developing the manifold capacities of Man than by placing them in opposition to each other. This antagonism of powers is the great instrument of culture, but it is only the instrument; for as long as it persists, we are only on the way towards culture. Only by individual powers in Man becoming isolated and arrogating to themselves an exclusive right of legislation, do they come into conflict with the truth of things and compel popular opinion, which ordinarily rests with indolent satisfaction upon outward appearance, to penetrate the depth of objects. While the pure intellect usurps authority in the world of sense, and the empirical intellect is engaged in subjecting it to the conditions of experience, both capacities develop to the utmost degree of maturity and exhaust the whole extent of their sphere. While in one the imagination dares, through its caprice, to dissolve the universal order, in the other it compels the reason to climb to the highest sources of knowledge, and to summon to aid the law of necessity against that order.

Partiality in the exercise of powers, it is true, inevitably leads the individual into error, but the race to truth. Only by concentrating the whole energy of our spirit in one single focus, and drawing together our whole being into one single power, do we attach wings, so to say, to this individual power and lead it artificially beyond the bounds which Nature seems to have imposed upon it. As surely as all human

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individuals, taken together, with the power of vision which Nature has granted them, would never succeed in observing a satellite of Jupiter which the telescope reveals to the astronomer, so beyond question is it that human reflection would never have achieved an analysis of the infinite or a critique of pure reason, unless Reason had become dismembered among the several relevant subjects, as it were wrenched itself loose from all matter and strengthened its gaze into the Absolute by the most intense abstraction. But will such a spirit, resolved, so to say, into pure intellect and pure contemplation, be capable of exchanging the rigid fetters of logic for the free gait of imagination, and of apprehending the individuality of things with just and pure intention? Nature here sets, even to the universal genius, a limit which it cannot pass, and truth will make martyrs so long as philosophy still holds it to be her principal business to provide against error.

Thus, however much may be gained for the world as a whole by this fragmentary cultivation of human powers, it is undeniable that the individuals whom it affects suffer under the curse of this universal aim. Athletic bodies are certainly developed by means of gymnastic exercises, but only through the free and equable play of the limbs is beauty formed. In the same way the exertion of individual talents certainly produces extraordinary men, but only their even tempering makes full and happy men. And in what relation should we stand to past and future ages if the cultivation of human nature made such a sacrifice necessary? We should have been the bondslaves of humanity, we should have drudged for it for centuries on end, and branded upon our mutilated nature the shameful traces of this servitude—in order that a later generation might devote itself in blissful indolence to the care of its moral health, and develop the free growth of its humanity!

But can Man really be destined to neglect himself for any end whatever? Should Nature be able, by her designs, to rob us of a completeness which Reason prescribes to us by hers? It must be false that the cultivation of individual powers necessitates the sacrifice of their totality; or however much the law of Nature did have that tendency, we must be at liberty to restore by means of a higher Art this wholeness in our nature which Art has destroyed.

#### *Seventh Letter*

Ought we perhaps to look for this action from the State? That is not possible; for the State, as it is now constituted, has brought about the evil, and the State as Reason conceives it in idea, instead of being able to establish this better humanity, must first be itself established by it. And so the foregoing enquiries have brought me back again to the point from which they drew me for a time. The present age, so far from exhibiting to us that form of humanity which we have recognized to be the necessary condition of the moral reform of the State, shews us rather the precise opposite. If, therefore, the principles I have laid down are correct, and experience confirms my description of the present time, we must continue to regard every attempt at reform as inopportune, and every hope based upon it as chimerical, until the division of the inner Man has been done away with, and his nature has developed with sufficient completeness to be itself the artificer, and to guarantee reality to the political creation of Reason.

Nature in her physical creation indicates to us the way we should pursue in moral creation. Not until the struggle of elementary powers in the lower organizations has been assuaged, does she rise to the noble formation of the physical Man. In the same way the strife of elements in the ethical Man, the conflict of blind impulses, must first be allayed, and the crude antagonism within him must have ceased, before we may dare to promote his diversity. On the other hand, the independence of his character must be assured, and subjection to alien despotic forms have given place to a decent freedom, before we can submit the multiplicity in him to the unity of the ideal. Where primitive Man still misuses his caprice so lawlessly, we can hardly disclose to him his freedom; where civilized Man makes so little use of his freedom, we cannot deprive him of his caprice. The gift of liberal principles becomes a piece of treachery to the whole, when it is associated with a still effervescing power and reinforces an already overweening nature; the law of conformity becomes tyranny towards the individual when it is combined with an



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already prevailing weakness and physical limitation, and so extinguishes the last glimmering sparks of spontaneity and individuality.

The character of the time must first, therefore, recover from its deep degradation; in one place it must cast off the blind force of Nature, and in another return to her simplicity, truth and fullness—a task for more than a single century. Meanwhile, I readily admit, many attempts may succeed in detail, but no improvement in the whole will thereby be achieved, and contradiction of behaviour will always demonstrate against unity of maxims. In other quarters of the globe humanity may be respected in the negro, while in Europe it is dishonoured in the thinker. The old principles will remain, but they will wear the dress of the century, and philosophy will lend its name to an oppression which was formerly authorized by the Church. Terrified of the freedom which always declares its hostility to their first attempts, men will in one place throw themselves into the arms of a comfortable servitude, and in another, driven to despair by a pedantic tutelage, they will break out into the wild libertinism of the natural State. Usurpation will plead the weakness of human nature, insurrection its dignity, until at length the great sovereign of all human affairs, blind Force, steps in to decide the sham conflict of principles like a common prize-fight.

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