

LETTERS ON THE AESTHETICAL EDUCATION OF MAN

Friedrich Schiller

[An anonymous translation in *The Works of Frederick Schiller* published as part of Bohn's Standard Library, reproduced here with some revisions]

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LETTER III.

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3.2

When man is raised from his slumber in the senses he feels that he is a man; he surveys his surroundings and finds himself—in a state. He was introduced into this state by the power of circumstances, before he could freely select his own position. But as a moral being he cannot possibly rest satisfied with a political condition forced upon him by necessity, and only calculated for that condition; and it would be unfortunate if this did satisfy him....

3.3

This natural state (as every political body can be called which owes its establishment originally to forces and not to laws) contradicts the moral nature of man, because lawfulness can alone have authority over this. At the same time this natural condition is quite sufficient for the physical man, who only gives himself laws in order to get rid of brute force. Moreover, the physical man is *actual*, and the moral man *problematical*....

3.4

The great point is, therefore, to reconcile these two considerations, to prevent physical society from ceasing for a moment in *time*, while the moral society is being formed in *idea*; in other words, to prevent its existence from being placed in jeopardy for the sake of the moral dignity of man.... Accordingly a prop must be sought for to support society and keep it going while it is made independent of the natural condition from which it is sought to emancipate it.

3.5

This prop is not found in the natural character of man, who, being selfish and violent, directs his energies rather to the destruction than to the preservation of society. Nor is it found in his moral character, which has to be formed, and which, because it is free and *because it is never apparent*, can never be worked upon or safely counted on by the lawgiver. It is important therefore to separate arbitrariness from the physical character and freedom from the moral character; it is important to make the former harmonize with the laws and the latter depend on impressions; it is important to remove the former farther from matter and to bring the latter somewhat nearer to it; in order to produce a third

character related to both the others—the physical and the moral—paving the way to a transition from the sway of mere force to that of law, without preventing the proper development of the moral character, but serving rather as a pledge in the sensuous sphere of a morality in the unseen.

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LETTER IX.

9.1

... All improvement in the political sphere must proceed from the ennobling of the character. But, subject to the influence of a social constitution still barbarous, how can character become ennobled? It would then be necessary to seek for this end an instrument that the state does not furnish, and to open sources that would have preserved themselves pure in the midst of political corruption.

9.2

I have now reached the point to which all the considerations tended that have engaged me up to the present time. This instrument is fine art; these sources are open to us in its immortal models.

...

LETTER XI.

11.1

If abstraction rises to as great an elevation as possible, it arrives at two primary ideas, before which it is obliged to stop and to recognize its limits. It distinguishes in man something that continues, and something that changes incessantly. That which continues it names his *person*; that which changes, his *condition*.

11.2

Person and condition, the self and its determinations, which we represent as one and the same thing in the necessary being, are eternally distinct in the finite being. Notwithstanding all continuance in the person, the condition changes; in spite of all change of condition the person remains. We pass from rest to activity, from emotion to indifference, from assent to contradiction, but we are always we ourselves, and what immediately springs from *ourselves* remains. Only in the absolute subject do all determinations persist *with* the person. All *that* Divinity is, it is just *because* it is; consequently it is everything eternally, because it is eternal.

11.3

As person and condition are distinct in man, because he is a finite being, the condition cannot be founded on the person, nor the person on the condition. Admitting the second case, the person would have to change; and in the former case, the condition would have to persist.

Thus in either supposition, either the personality or the finiteness would necessarily cease. It is not because we think, feel, and will that we exist; it is not because we exist that we think, feel, and will. We exist because we exist. We feel, think, and will because there is outside us something that is not ourselves.

11.4

Consequently the person must be its own ground, because the permanent cannot flow from the change, and thus we have in the first place the idea of absolute being, grounded in itself; that is to say, of *freedom*. Condition must have a foundation, and as it is not through the person, and is not therefore absolute, it must *result*; and thus, in the second place, we have the necessary condition of all dependent being or becoming, that is, *time*. Time is the necessary condition of all becoming; this is an identical proposition, for it says nothing but this: that consequence is the necessary condition of something following.

11.5

The person which is manifested in the eternally persisting *ego* or *I*, and only in this, cannot become something or begin in time, because it is much rather time that must begin in it, because rather, in reverse, the permanent must serve as basis for the changeable. That change may take place, something must change; this something cannot therefore itself be change. When we say the flower opens and fades, we make this flower a permanent being in the midst of this transformation; we lend it, as it were, a personality, in which these two conditions are manifested....

11.6

Thus the matter of activity, therefore, or reality, which the supreme intelligence creates from its own being, must first be *received* by man; and he does, in fact, receive it, through the medium of perception, as something which is outside him in space, and which changes in him in time. This matter which changes in him is accompanied by his never-changing ego; and the rule prescribed for man by his rational nature is to remain immutably himself in the midst of change, to refer all perceptions to experience, that is, to the unity of knowledge, and to make of each of its manifestations of its modes in time the law of all time. Only as he changes does he *exist*; only as he remains unchanged does *he* exist. Consequently, represented in his perfection, man would be the permanent unity that remains always the same among the waves of change.

11.7

Now, although an infinite being, a divinity, could not *become*, still a tendency ought to be named divine which has for its infinite task the most characteristic attribute of the divinity; the absolute manifestation

of capacity (the actuality of all possibilities) and the absolute unity of appearance (necessity of all that is actual). It cannot be disputed that man bears within himself, in his personality, the predisposition to divinity. The way to divinity—if the word way can be applied to what never leads to its end—is opened to him in his *senses*.

11.8

Considered in itself, and independently of all sensuous matter, his personality is nothing but the predisposition for a possible infinite manifestation; and so long as he neither intuits nor feels, he is nothing more than a form, an empty capacity. Considered in itself, and independently of all spontaneous activity of the mind, sensuousness can only make a material man; without it, he is a pure form; but it cannot in any way unite matter with him. So long as he only feels, wishes, and acts under the influence of desire, he is nothing more than the *world*, if by this word we point out only the formless contents of time. Without doubt, it is only his sensuousness that makes his capacity into active power, but it is his personality alone that makes his activity his own. Thus, that he may not only be a world, he must give form to matter, and in order not to be a mere form, he must give actuality to the predisposition that he bears in him. He actualizes form by creating time, and by opposing the immutable to change, the eternal unity of his ego to the diversity of the world. He gives a form to matter by abrogating time anew, by maintaining permanence in change, and makes the diversity of the world submissive to the unity of his ego.

11.9

Now from this source issue for man two opposite exigencies, the two fundamental laws of sensuous-rational nature. The first has for its object absolute *reality*; it must make a world of what is only form, manifest all its predispositions. The second law has for its object absolute *formality*; it must destroy in him all that is only world, and reconcile all its variations. In other terms, he must manifest all that is internal, and give form to all that is external. Thought of in their highest fulfillment, both tasks lead back to the concept of divinity, which was my starting-point.

LETTER XII.

12.1

We are impelled to fulfill this twofold task, making the necessary *in us* pass into reality and in making reality *outside us* subject to the law of necessity, by two opposing forces that it is entirely proper to term drives because they drive us to realize their object. The first of these drives, which I shall call the *sensuous*, issues from the physical existence of man or from his sensuous nature and has as its concern to set

him within the limits of time, and to make him material—not to give him matter, for that involves a free activity of the person, which receives matter and distinguishes it from itself. By matter here we understand nothing but the change or reality that fills time. Consequently this drive demands that there should be change, and that time should have content. This condition, consisting merely of time with content, is called sensation, and it is through it alone that physical existence makes itself known.

12.4

The second drive, which may be named the *form drive*, issues from the absolute existence of man, or from his rational nature, and strives to set free, and bring harmony into the diversity of his manifestations, and to assert his personality through all the changes of his state. As this personality, being an absolute and indivisible unity, can never be in contradiction with itself, *as we are ourselves forever*, this drive, which tends to maintain personality, can never exact in one time anything but what it exacts and requires forever. It therefore decides for always what it decides now, and orders now what it orders forever. Hence it embraces the whole series of times, or what comes to the same thing: it annuls time, annuls change. It wishes the real to be necessary and eternal, and it wishes the eternal and the necessary to be real; in other terms, it presses for truth and justice.

LETTER XIII.

13.1

At first sight, nothing appears more opposed than the tendencies of these two drives; one pressing for change, the other for immutability, and yet it is these two notions that exhaust the concept of humanity, and a third *fundamental drive*, that might mediate between them, is an utterly unthinkable concept. How then are we to restore the unity of human nature, a unity that appears completely dissolved by this primitive and radical opposition?

13.2

I admit these two *tendencies* are contradictory, but it should be noticed that they are not so in *the same objects*, and things that do not meet cannot come into collision. No doubt the sensuous drive desires change; but it does not wish that it should extend to personality and its field, nor that there should be a change of principles. The form drive seeks unity and permanence, but it does not wish the condition to remain fixed with the person, that there should be identity of feeling. Therefore these two drives are not divided by nature, and if, neverthe-

less, they appear so, it is because they have become divided by transgressing nature freely, by ignoring themselves, and by confounding their spheres. The office of *culture* is to watch over them and to secure to each one its proper limits; therefore culture has to give equal justice to both, and to defend not only the rational drive against the sensuous, but also the latter against the former. Hence she has to act a twofold part: *first*, to protect sense against the attacks of freedom; *secondly*, to secure personality against the power of sensations. One of these ends is attained by the cultivation of the sensuous, the other by that of reason.

LETTER XIV.

14.1

We have now been led to the idea of such an interplay between the two drives that the action of the one at the same time establishes and limits the action of the other, and that each of them by itself arrives at its highest manifestation just because the other is active.

14.2

The reciprocal relation of the two drives is admittedly merely a problem advanced of reason that man is in a position to solve fully only in the perfection of his being. It is in the strictest signification of the term: *the idea of his humanity*, consequently, an infinite to which he can approach nearer and nearer in the course of time, but without ever reaching it. "He should not strive for form at the expense of his reality, nor for reality at the expense of form; he should rather seek absolute being by means of a determinate being, and determinate being by means of an infinite being. He should set a world before himself because he is a person, and he should be a person because he faces a world. He should feel because he is conscious of himself, and he should be consciousness of himself because he feels." He cannot come to know that he really conforms to this idea and is, consequently, human in the fullest sense of the word so long as he satisfies only *one* of these two drives exclusively or satisfies them one after another; for so long as he only feels, his personhood or absolute existence remains a secret to him, and so long as he only thinks, his temporal existence or condition remains a secret. But if there were cases in which he could have this twofold experience *at the same time*, in which he were at once the conscious of his freedom and the sensible of his existence, in which he were at once to feel himself matter and come to know himself as spirit, in such cases, and absolutely in them alone, he would have a complete intuition of his humanity, and *the object* that provided him this intuition would serve him as a symbol of his *accomplished*

destiny and consequently—since this can be reached only in the fullness of time—serve as a representation of the infinite.

14.3

Assuming that cases of this kind could occur in experience, they would awaken in him a new drive, which, precisely because the other two drives would co-operate in it, would be opposed to each of them considered individually, and would rightly count as a new drive. The sensuous drive requires that there should be change, that time should have contents; the form drive requires that time should be annulled, that there should be no change. Consequently, the drive in which both of the others act in concert—allow me to call it the *play drive*, till I have justified the term—the play drive would have as its object to annul time *in time*, to reconcile becoming with the absolute being, change with identity.

14.4

The sensuous drive wants to *be* determined, it wishes to receive its object; the form drive wants *itself* to determine, it wants to bring forth its object; the play drive will thus endeavor to receive as it would itself have produced, and to bring forth as sense aspires to receive.

14.5

The sensuous drive excludes from its subject all autonomy and freedom; the form drive excludes all dependence, all passivity. Exclusion of freedom is physical necessity; exclusion of passivity is moral necessity. Both drives thus compel the mind: the former through laws of nature, the latter through reason. Therefore, the play drive, as that in which both act conjointly, will compel the mind at once morally and physically. Hence, as it annuls all contingency, also annuls all constraint, and will set man free physically and morally. When we embrace with passion someone who deserves our contempt, we feel painfully the *constraint of nature*. When we have a hostile feeling towards another who compells our respect, we feel painfully the *constraint of reason*. But as soon as this person at once interests our inclination and wins our respect, both the compulsion of feeling and the compulsion of reason vanish, and we begin to love—that is to say, to play at once with our inclination and our respect.

...

LETTER XV.

...

15.2

The object of the sensuous drive, expressed in a universal conception, is named *Life* in the widest acceptation; a conception that expresses all material existence and all that is immediately present in the senses.

The object of the form drive, expressed in a universal conception, is called shape or form, as well in an exact as in an inexact acceptation; a conception that embraces all formal qualities of things and all relations of the same to the thinking powers. The object of the play drive, represented in a general statement, may therefore bear the name of *living form*; a term that serves to describe all aesthetic qualities of phenomena, and what people style, in the widest sense, *beauty*.

15.3

Beauty is neither extended to the whole field of all living things nor merely enclosed in this field. A marble block, though it is and remains lifeless, can nevertheless become a living form by the architect and sculptor; a man, though he lives and has a form, is far from being a living form on that account. For this to be the case, it is necessary that his form should be life, and that his life should be a form. As long as we only think of his form, it is lifeless, a mere abstraction; as long as we only feel his life, it is without form, a mere impression. It is only when his form lives in our feeling, and his life in our understanding, he is the living form, and this will everywhere be the case where we judge him to be beautiful.

...

15.6

But perhaps the objection has for some time occurred to you, Is not the beautiful degraded by this, that it is made a mere play? and is it not reduced to the level of frivolous objects which have for ages passed under that name? Does it not contradict the conception of the reason and the dignity of beauty, which is nevertheless regarded as an instrument of culture, to confine it to the work of being a *mere game*? and does it not contradict the empirical conception of play, which can coexist with the exclusion of all taste, to confine it merely to beauty?

15.7

But what is meant by a *mere game*, when we know that in all conditions of humanity that very thing is play, and only that is play which makes man complete and develops simultaneously his twofold nature? What you style limitation, according to your representation of the matter, according to my views, which I have justified by proofs, I name enlargement. Consequently I should have said exactly the reverse: man is serious only with the agreeable, with the good, and with the perfect, but he plays with beauty. In saying this we must not indeed think of the games that are in vogue in real life, and which commonly refer only to his material state. But in real life we should also seek in vain for the beauty of which we are here speaking. The actually present beauty is worthy of the really, of the actually present play drive;

but by the ideal of beauty, which is set up by the reason, an ideal of the play drive is also presented, which man ought to have before his eyes in all his games.

15.8

... Now reason pronounces that the beautiful must not only be life and form, but a living form, that is, beauty, inasmuch as it dictates to man the twofold law of absolute formality and absolute reality. Reason also utters the decision that man shall *only play* with beauty, and he shall *play only with beauty*.

15.9

For, to speak out once for all, man only plays when in the full meaning of the word he is a man, and *he is only completely a man when he plays*. This proposition, which at this moment perhaps appears paradoxical, will receive a great and deep meaning if we have advanced far enough to apply it to the twofold seriousness of duty and of destiny. I promise you that the whole edifice of aesthetic art and the still more difficult art of life will be supported by this principle....

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LETTER XVIII.

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18.2

... Beauty weds the two opposed conditions of feeling and thinking, and yet there is absolutely no medium between them. The former is immediately certain through experience, the other through the reason.

18.3

This is the point to which the whole question of beauty leads, and if we succeed in settling this point in a satisfactory way, we have at length found the clue that will conduct us through the whole labyrinth of aesthetics.

18.4

But this requires two very different operations, which must necessarily support each other in this inquiry. Beauty, it is said, weds two conditions with one another *which are opposite to each other*, and can never be one. We must start from this opposition; we must grasp and recognize them in their entire purity and strictness, so that both conditions are separated in the most definite manner; otherwise we mix, but we do not unite them. Secondly, it is usual to say, beauty *unites* those two opposed conditions, and therefore removes the opposition. But because both conditions remain eternally opposed to one another, they cannot be united in any other way than by being abrogated. Our second business is therefore to make this connection perfect, to carry it out with such purity and perfection that both conditions disappear en-

tirely in a third one, and no trace of separation remains in the whole; otherwise we segregate, but do not unite. All the disputes that have ever prevailed and still prevail in the philosophical world respecting the conception of beauty have no other origin than their commencing the inquiry without a sufficiently strict distinction or not carrying it out fully to a pure union....

LETTER XIX.

19.1

Two principal and different states of passive and active capacity of determinability can be distinguished in man; in like manner two states of passive and active determination. The explanation of this proposition leads us most readily to our end.

19.2

The condition of the human spirit *before* any determination is given him by the impressions of the senses is an unlimited determinability. The infinity of time and space is given to his imagination for its free use; and, because nothing is settled in this domain of the possible, and therefore nothing is excluded from it, this condition of undetermination can be term an *empty infinity*, which must not by any means be confounded with an infinite void.

19.3

Now his sense is to be affected, and from the infinite set of possible determinations one alone becomes actual. A representation is to spring up in him. That which, in the previous state of mere determinability, was only an empty capacity becomes now an active power, and acquires content; but, at the same time, as an active power it receives a limit, after having been, as a mere capacity, unlimited. Reality exists now, but infinity is lost. To describe a figure in space, we are obliged to *limit* infinite space; to represent to ourselves a change in time, we are obliged to *divide* the totality of time. Thus we only arrive at reality by limitation, at *positing*, or actual establishment, by *negation* or exclusion; to determination, by the abrogation of our free determinability.

19.4

But mere exclusion would never be a reality, nor would a mere sensuous impression ever become a perception, if there were not something *from which* it was excluded, if by an absolute act of the mind the negation were not referred to something positive, and if opposition did not issue out of non-position. This act of the mind is styled judging or thinking, and the result is called *thought*.

19.5

Before we determine a place in space, there is no space for us; but without absolute space we could never determine a place. The same is

the case with time. Before we have an instant, there is no time to us: but without infinite time—eternity—we should never have a representation of the instant. Thus we can, of course, only arrive at the whole by the part, at the unlimited through limitation; but we also only arrive at the part through the whole, at limitation through the unlimited.

19.6

It follows from this, that when it is affirmed of beauty that it mediates for man the transition from feeling to thought, this must not be understood to mean that beauty can fill up the gap that separates feeling from thought, the passive from the active. This gap is infinite; and, without the interposition of a new and independent faculty, it is impossible for the general to issue from the individual, the necessary from the contingent. Thought is the immediate act of this absolute faculty, which, I admit, can only be manifested in connection with sensuous impressions, but which in this manifestation depends so little on the sensuous that it reveals itself specially in an opposition to it. The independence with which it acts excludes every foreign influence; and it is not insofar as it helps thought—which comprehends a manifest contradiction—but only insofar as it procures for the intellectual faculties the freedom to manifest themselves in conformity with their proper laws that the beautiful can become a means of leading man from matter to form, from feeling to laws, from a limited existence to an absolute existence.

...

19.11

A necessity *outside us* determines our condition, our existence in time, by means of the sensuous. The latter is quite involuntary, and as it acts on us we are necessarily passive. In the same manner a necessity *inside us* awakens our personality in connection with sensation, and by its opposition to it; for consciousness cannot depend on the will, which presupposes it. This primitive manifestation of personality is no more to our credit than its privation is a defect in us.... It is thus that, wholly without act of the subject, sensation and self-consciousness arise, and the origin of both is beyond our volition, as it is out of the sphere of our knowledge.

19.12

But as soon as these two faculties have passed into action, and man has verified by his experience, through the medium of sensation, a determinate existence, and through the medium of consciousness its absolute existence, the two fundamental drives will be active given their objects. The sensuous drive is awakened with the experience of life (with the beginning of the individual), the rational drive with the expe-

rience of law (with the beginning of personality); and it is only when these two inclinations have come into existence that his humanity established. Until this happens, everything takes place in man according to the law of necessity; but now the hand of *nature* leaves him, and it is *his* business to maintain the humanity to which nature disposed and introduced him. As soon then as the two opposite fundamental drives are active in him, both lose their constraint, and the opposition of two necessities gives birth to freedom.*

* In order to prevent all misinterpretation, I will state that, whenever I speak here of freedom, I do not mean the freedom which necessarily attaches to man regarded as an intelligence, and which can neither be given to, nor taken from him; but the freedom which is based on his mixed nature. By simply acting rationally, man displays a freedom of the first sort; by acting rationally within material limits, and acting materially under the laws of reason, he displays a freedom of the second sort. The latter might be accounted for simply as a natural possibility of the former.

...

LETTER XXI.

21.1

I have remarked in the beginning of the foregoing letter that there is a twofold condition of determinability and a twofold condition of determination. And now I can clarify this proposition.

21.2

The mind is determinable only insofar as it is not determined; it is, however, determinable also, insofar as it is not exclusively determined; that is, if it is not confined in its determination. The former is only a want of determination (it is without limits, because it is without reality); the latter is aesthetic determinability (it has no limits because it unites all reality).

21.3

The mind is determined, insofar as it is at all limited; but it is also determined because it limits itself of its own absolute capacity. It finds itself in the former position when it feels, in the second when it thinks. Accordingly, what thought is in relation to determination the aesthetic constitution is in relation to determinability. The former is a limitation from internal infinite power, the latter a limitation from internal infinite abundance. Just as feeling and thought come into contact in one single point, that the mind is determining in both conditions, that man is exclusively something—either individual or person—but are otherwise infinitely separate from each other; just in the same manner the aesthetic determinability coincides with the mere lack of determination in a single point, that both exclude every determined existence, while in all other points, as everything and nothing, they are therefore

infinitely different. If, therefore, the latter, undetermination by deficiency, is conceived as an *empty infinity*, the aesthetic freedom of determination, which forms the proper counterpart to the former, can be considered as a *full infinity*; a conception which agrees exactly with what the forgoing inquiry has taught.

21.4

Man is therefore *cipher* in the aesthetic condition, if we give attention to the single result, and not to the whole faculty, and if we consider the absence in him of special determination. We must therefore grant to be wholly right those who pronounce the beautiful, and the mood in which it places the mind, as entirely indifferent and unfruitful in regard to *knowledge* and *attitude*. They are perfectly right; for it is certain that beauty gives no single result, either for the understanding or for the will; it leads to no single intellectual or moral object; it discovers no single truth, helps us fulfil no single duty, and, in one word, is equally unfit to found the character or to clear the head. Accordingly, the personal worth of a man, or his dignity, as far as this can only depend on himself, remains entirely undetermined by aesthetic culture, and nothing further is attained than that, *on the part of nature*, it is made possible for him to make of himself what he will—that the freedom to be what he ought to be is restored perfectly to him.

21.5

But by this something infinite is attained. For as soon as we remember that freedom is taken from man by the one-sided compulsion of nature in feeling, and by the exclusive legislation of the reason in thinking, we must regard the capacity restored to him by the aesthetical disposition, as the highest of all gifts, as the gift of humanity. Certainly, he possesses this capacity for humanity, before every definite condition in which he may be placed. But, as a matter of fact, he loses it with every determinate condition into which he comes; and if he is to pass over to an opposite condition, humanity must be in every case restored to him by the aesthetic life.

21.6

It is therefore no mere poetical license, but also philosophically correct, if we call beauty our second creator. For, although she only makes humanity possible for us, and, for the rest, puts it to our free will to what extent we will make it actual, she has this in common with our original creator, nature, which has imparted to us nothing further than the capacity for humanity, but leaves the use of it to our own determination of will.

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LETTER XXIII.

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23.2

The transition from the passivity of sensuousness to the activity of thought and of will can be effected only by the intermediary state of aesthetic liberty; and though in itself this state decides nothing respecting our opinions and our sentiments, and therefore it leaves our intellectual and moral value entirely problematical, it is, however, the necessary condition without which we should never attain to an opinion or a sentiment. In a word, there is no other way to make a reasonable being out of a sensuous man than by making him first aesthetic.

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LETTER XXIV.

24.1

Accordingly three different moments or stages of development can be distinguished, which the individual man, as well as the whole race, must of necessity traverse in a determinate order if they are to fulfil the circle of their determination. No doubt, the separate periods can be lengthened or shortened, through accidental causes which are inherent either in the influence of external things or under the free caprice of men: but neither of them can be overstepped, and the order of their sequence cannot be inverted either by nature or by the will. Man, in his *physical* condition, suffers only the power of nature; he shakes off this power in the *aesthetical* condition, and he masters it in the *moral* condition.

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LETTER XXV.

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25.7

Henceforth we need no longer be embarrassed to find a transition from dependent feeling to moral liberty, because beauty reveals to us the fact that they can perfectly coexist, and that to show himself a spirit, man need not escape from matter. But if on one side he is free, even in his relation with a visible world, as the fact of beauty teaches, and if on the other side freedom is something absolute and super-sensuous, as its idea necessarily implies, the question is no longer how man succeeds in raising himself from the finite to the absolute, and opposing himself in his thought and will to sensuality, as this has already been produced in the fact of beauty. In a word, we have no longer to ask how he passes from virtue to truth which is already included in the former, but how he opens a way for himself from vulgar reality to aes-

thetic reality, and from the ordinary feelings of life to the perception of the beautiful.

LETTER XXVI.

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26.4

Extreme stupidity and extreme intelligence have a certain affinity in only seeking the *real* and being completely insensible to mere appearance. The former is only drawn forth by the immediate presence of an object in the senses, and the second is reduced to a quiescent state only by referring conceptions to the facts of experience. In short, stupidity cannot rise above reality, nor the intelligence descend below truth. Thus, in as far as the want of reality and attachment to the real are only the consequence of a want and a defect, indifference to the real and an interest taken in appearances are a real enlargement of humanity and a decisive step towards culture. In the first place it is the proof of an exterior liberty, for as long as necessity commands and want solicits, the fancy is strictly chained down to the real: it is only when want is satisfied that it develops without hinderance. But it is also the proof of an internal liberty, because it reveals to us a force which, independent of an external substratum, sets itself in motion, and has sufficient energy to remove from itself the solicitations of nature. The reality of things is effected by things, the appearance of things is the work of man, and a soul that takes pleasure in appearance does not take pleasure in what it receives but in what it makes.

...

26.7

The play drive likes appearance, and directly it is awakened it is followed by the imitative drive to create which treats appearance as an independent thing. Directly man has come to distinguish the appearance from the reality, the form from the body, he can separate, in fact he has already done so. Thus the faculty of the art of imitation is given with the faculty of form in general. The inclination that draws us to it reposes on another tendency I have not to notice here. The exact period when the drive to art develops depends entirely on the attraction that mere appearance has for men.

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LETTER XXVII.

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27.8

In the midst of the formidable realm of forces, and of the sacred empire of laws, the aesthetic drive to create builds by degrees a third and

a joyous realm, that of play and of the appearance, where she emancipates man from fetters, in all his relations, and from all that is named constraint, whether physical or moral.

27.9

If in the *dynamic* state of rights men mutually move and come into collision as forces, in the *ethical* state of duties, man opposes to man the majesty of the laws, and chains down his will. In this realm of the beautiful or the aesthetic state, man ought to appear to man only as a form, and an object of free play. *To give freedom through freedom* is the fundamental law of this realm.

...

27.12

Does such a state of beauty in appearance exist, and where? It must be in every finely-harmonized soul; but as a fact, only in select circles, like the pure ideal of the church and state—in circles where manners are not formed by the empty imitations of the foreign, but by the very beauty of nature; where man passes through all sorts of complications in all simplicity and innocence, neither forced to trench on another's freedom to preserve his own, nor to show grace at the cost of dignity.