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REASSESSING ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING'S DIALOGUE WITH FRIEDRICH SCHILLER IN "THE DEAD PAN"

Hüseyin ALHAS [1]

ABSTRACT

Widely interpreted as Elizabeth Barrett Browning's justification for incorporating Christian themes within poetic discourse, "The Dead Pan" offers a Christian perspective in response to Friedrich Schiller's favourable portrayal of Ancient Greek paganism in "Gods of Greece." The poem epitomises Victorian pietism, exemplifying the period's religious fervour and advocating for the synthesis of Christian content in poetry to enrich the literary canon. This advocacy originates from Browning's belief that Christianity offers superior truths and values compared to Greek paganism. However, this study proposes a reassessment of Barrett Browning's interpretation of Schiller's work, suggesting that she may have misconstrued his allusions to Greek mythology as a straightforward endorsement of paganism. It is crucial to recognise that Schiller's critique of Christianity primarily condemns the exploitation of the faith by religious and secular authorities to oppress and control the populace, rather than an outright denunciation of the religion itself. By examining the genesis of "The Dead Pan" through Barrett Browning's personal correspondence, this study illuminates her specific objectives and her responses to Schiller's perspectives. Additionally, by contextualising "Gods of Greece" within its socio-political and theological framework, this paper demonstrates that while Browning and Schiller have divergent approaches to Ancient Greek culture and Christianity, Barrett Browning overlooks Schiller's nuanced criticism of the misuse of religion by religious and secular authorities.

Keywords: Elizabeth Barret Browning, Friedrich Schiller, Greek Mythology, Paganism, Christianity

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ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING'İN "THE DEAD PAN" ADLI ESERİNDE FRIEDRICH SCHILLER İLE DİYALOĞUNU YENİDEN DEĞERLENDİRMEK

Hüseyin ALHAS [2]

ÖZ

Çoğunlukla Elizabeth Barrett Browning'in, Hristiyan temalarının şiirsel söylem içinde yer alması gerekliliğini meşrulaştırması olarak yorumlanan "The Dead Pan," Friedrich Schiller'in "Gods of Greece" adlı eserinde Antik Yunan paganizmini olumlu bir şekilde tasvir etmesine bir yanıt olarak yazılmış olup Hristiyan bakış açısı sunar. Dönemin dini duygularını ortaya koyan bu şiir, Viktorya dönemi dindarlığının simgesi olarak kabul edilir ve edebiyatı zenginleştirmek için şiire Hristiyan içeriklerin dahil edilmesini savunur. Bu yaklaşımın temelinde, Browning'in, evrensel doğru ve değerlerin Hristiyanlık öğretilerinde barındığına dair inancı yatar. Ancak, bu çalışma, Elizabeth Barrett Browning'in Schiller'in eserine yönelik yorumunun yeniden değerlendirilmesi gerektiğini öne sürer; zira Browning'in, Schiller'in Yunan mitolojisine yaptığı göndermeleri, paganizmin kabul edilmesi ve yüceltilmesi olarak yanlış anlamış olması muhtemeldir. Altı çizilmesi gereken önemli nokta, Schiller'in Hristiyanlık eleştirisinin altında yatan temel motivasyonunun, dini tamamen reddetmek değil, aslında Hristiyanlığın dini ve laik otoriteler tarafından halkı baskı altına almak ve kontrol etmek amacıyla kötüye kullanılmasını kınamak olduğudur. Browning'in kişisel mektuplarına odaklanarak şiirin yazım sürecine ışık tutmayı amaçlayan bu çalışma, şairin bu şiirle neyi amaçladığını ve Schiller'e nasıl cevap verdiğini ortaya koymayı amaçlar. Ek olarak, bu makale, Schiller'in "Gods of Greece" şiirini yazıldığı dönemin sosyo-kültürel ve teolojik bağlamına oturtarak, Browning ve Schiller'in Antik Yunan kültürü ve Hristiyanlık konusundaki farklı yaklaşımlarına rağmen, Browning'in Schiller'in dinin kötüye kullanılmasına dair nüanslı eleştirisini gözden kaçırdığını gösterir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Elizabeth Barret Browning, Friedrich Schiller, Yunan Mitolojisi, Paganizm, Hristiyanlık

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Introduction

Published in 1844 within the compendious two-volume collection titled *Poems,* Elizabeth Barrett Browning's (EBB) "The Dead Pan"[3] holds a significant place within the poet's oeuvre, revered by both the poet herself and her contemporaries. In a letter addressed to Richard Hengist Horne, dated December 29, 1843, Barrett Browning remarked, "Mr Kenyon[4] took it into his head that it ["The Dead Pan"] was the best thing I ever wrote or ever should write," signifying its esteemed reception at the time (1991, p. 118). Furthermore, EBB deliberately placed "The Dead Pan" as the final poem in her collection *Poems* to emphasise its paramount importance. This strategic positioning, as Margaret Morlier notes, indicates the poem's profound significance within Barrett Browning's literary canon, reflecting the conventional understanding that the final piece in a collection often represents its most consequential expression (1990, p. 131).

"The Dead Pan" is widely recognized as Barrett Browning's apologetic manifestation for the integration and exploration of Christian themes within the poetic discourse. Celebrating orthodox Christianity, the poem is remembered as a hallmark of Victorian pietism, delineating a fervent expression of the era's religious sentiment. Through its verses, Barrett Browning champions the compatibility and necessity of Christian content in enriching the poetic landscape, thereby asserting the enduring value and relevance of Christian discourse in literature.

The composition of "The Dead Pan" can be traced back to Barrett Browning's engagement with Friedrich Schiller's[5] "Die Götter Griechenlandes" ("The Gods of Greece"), as she explicitly indicates in the introduction to her poem (Browning, 1844/1904, p. 210). This inspiration was notably sparked through an exchange of letters with her cousin, John Kenyon. In a letter dated 15 May 1842, Elizabeth Barrett Browning[6] initially engages with the thematic elements that would later solidify in "The Dead Pan." She expresses her intention to keep Kenyon's poem relevant, with its mythological references, for further reflection (1987, pp. 347–49). It appears that Kenyon had shared with her a poem titled "The Gods of Greece," which itself was Kenyon's English rephrasing of Friedrich Schiller's work, subsequently published in *The Keepsake* for 1843 (Raymond, 1991, p. 24).

EBB interprets Schiller's work as a lament for the bygone era of the Greek gods. Contrarily, EBB adopts an opposing stance, suggesting that Christianity not only offers a higher truth but also provides richer material for poetic exploration. Through this, EBB delineates a

[3] The poem was originally titled "Pan Is Dead" however, Browning subsequently revised the title in response to the suggestions of her relative, John Kenyon. For further information, see page 101, volume 7 of *The Brownings' Correspondence* (1989), edited by Philip Kelley and Ronald Hudson.

[4] John Kenyon was a distant cousin of EBB. His significance in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's (EBB) life was multifaceted, primarily marked by his critical role in broadening her literary horizon and facilitating her relationship with Robert Browning (RB). His introductions extended her network into the most influential literary circles of the time, including her pivotal meeting with RB, which led to one of the most renowned partnerships in literary history. Additionally, Kenyon's support was instrumental in EBB's encounter with Mary Russell Mitford, further enriching her literary engagements. Beyond his social introductions, Kenyon's financial support was crucial, providing EBB with the means to focus on her writing amidst financial constraints. His legacy in EBB's life and career thus encompasses a blend of personal connection, literary facilitation, and financial aid, highlighting his indispensable influence on her path as a writer (Raymond, 1991, pp. 19-26).

[5]Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805), a distinguished German poet, philosopher, physician, historian, and playwright, played a pivotal role in shaping German intellectual and cultural life. In 1794, Schiller formed a close friendship and intellectual partnership with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Together, they embarked on a collaborative endeavour to establish new aesthetic and literary standards in Germany. This collaboration gave rise to what is now known as Weimar Classicism, a movement that sought to harmonise Enlightenment ideals with classical forms in the pursuit of artistic and intellectual excellence (Reed, 2002, pp. 101-104).

[6] From this point forward, Elizabeth Barrett Browning will be abbreviated as "EBB" to conserve space.

distinct philosophical and aesthetic preference, underscoring the depth and contemporaneity of Christian themes in poetry. The reactionary nature of the composition of EBB's poem can be observed in a sequence of letters to Richard Hengist Horne. In a letter dated December 29, 1843, EBB reveals her intention for her poem "The Dead Pan" to act as an antithesis to Schiller's "The Gods of Greece," expressing that her work "is a contra to Schiller's Gods of Greece" (1990, p. 118). In a subsequent letter from June 8, 1844, she elaborates on her perspective, stating, "[m]y 'Pan' takes the reverse of Schiller's argument in his famous *The Gods of Greece*, & argues it out" (1904, p. 10). These pronouncements in her private letters signal EBB's objectives with her poem. She seeks not simply to counter Schiller but to offer an alternative narrative that highlights the decline of the Greek deities and the rise of Christianity and its principles. EBB suggests that these Christian principles provide a more profound foundation for poetry (1989, pp. 21-22). This marks her ideological divergence from Schiller and establishing a niche for her literary voice that critically examines the transition from a pagan to a Christian moral framework in the realm of poetic exploration.

Hence, it is evident from the letters of EBB that her poem "The Dead Pan" was composed with the intention of countering Schiller's views on paganism while promoting Christian values and truths. However, this study proposes a reassessment of EBB's interpretation of Schiller's work, suggesting that she may have misread Schiller's references to Greek muses and mythology as an unequivocal endorsement of paganism. As will be explored in greater detail later, it is crucial to recognise that Schiller's critique of Christianity primarily targets the misuse of the faith by religious and secular authorities to oppress and control the populace, rather than constituting an outright rejection of the religion itself. Schiller's desire to revive the ancient Greek gods serves as a metaphor for reintroducing the principles of ancient Greece: liberty, harmonious coexistence, and the inspiration for superior art and ideas, which ultimately enable individuals to lead better lives. This study does not primarily examine the literary text of EBB's poem, except in a few instances; instead, it focuses on her private letters to contextualise the background in which she composed "The Dead Pan," highlighting her aims and purposes. Subsequently, the study delves into Schiller's "The Gods of Greece" within its socio-political and theological framework to elucidate the context in which the poem was written and to uncover Schiller's true intentions. Ultimately, this paper demonstrates that while EBB and Schiller exhibit divergent approaches to Ancient Greek culture and Christianity, EBB overlooks Schiller's nuanced critique of the exploitation of religion in the German context and interprets the poem through a religious and theological lens. However, Schiller's approach to religion in the poem is actually situated within a socio-political context.

It should be acknowledged that although EBB's poetry responds critically to Schiller's interpretation of Greek mythology, it would be inaccurate to assert that EBB consistently rejected mythology and its incorporation into poetry. A letter of significant interest, addressed to Lady Margaret Cocks, dated 19 August 1837, reveals EBB's refined perspective on mythology in the 1830s. She remarks: "The Germans are great men—but the demigods are still among my Greeks" (1985, p. 275). This comment highlights her lasting admiration for Greek antiquity as the epitome of cultural and literary excellence, at least in the late 1830s. Additionally, within the same correspondence, EBB discusses her ongoing literary projects, including a ballad influenced by Hindu superstitions and a lengthy poem comparable in scale

to *Prometheus* (1985, p. 275). These references elucidate her broad range of inspirational sources, spanning various mythological narratives. EBB's engagement with diverse mythological themes reflects her intellectual curiosity and her ambition to incorporate a wide array of cultural narratives. Therefore, Greek mythology, alongside other mythological traditions, stands as a pivotal source of inspiration for her poetry, enhancing both its thematic and narrative complexity.

Throughout her artistic career, EBB frequently draws on Greek mythology, using it as a rich source of symbolism and metaphor to explore a wide range of themes. Among her poems that harbour mythological references, the most famous are *The Battle of Marathon* (1819), an epic poem about the historical Battle of Marathon; *Aurora Leigh* (1856), an epic novel-poem that contains numerous allusions to classical mythology; and "A Musical Instrument" (1860), a poem that explores the myth of Pan and the dual nature of artistic creation. EBB's engagement with mythology enriches her poetry, providing a timeless context that allows her to address contemporary issues and personal experiences. In this respect, EBB's stance against Schiller should not be perceived as a denunciation of Greek mythology but rather as a rejection of paganism in favour of Christian doctrine. Her use of mythological elements underscores her ability to bridge the ancient and the modern, weaving diverse themes into a cohesive and resonant body of work.

Elizabeth Barret Browning and the Significance of Christianity in Poetry

EBB's nuanced approach also harbours the idea that Christianity should be celebrated in poetry with the same reverence and enthusiasm as Greek mythology. In her letter to John Kenyon dated 25 March 1843, Elizabeth Barrett Browning discusses the relationship between Christianity and mythology in poetry. She appreciates the way religious truth and sincerity can be naturally woven into poetry. EBB contrasts the everyday, heartfelt practice of Pagan worship with a type of Christianity that hesitates to express its beliefs outside of church settings. She cites Kenyon's reference to William Wordsworth's sonnet "The World Is Too Much with Us," published in *Poems, in Two Volumes* (1807), in which Wordsworth states: "I would rather be / Pagan suckled in a creed outworn" (1989, pp. 9-10) to criticise a form of Christianity that hesitates to express its faith publicly. EBB argues that the consistent and genuine practices found in Pagan worship provide a more sincere approach to spirituality: "Certainly I would rather be a Pagan whose religion was actual, earnest, continual, ... for weekdays, workdays, & songdays, ... than I would be a Christian who, from whatever motive, shrank from hearing or uttering the name of Christ out of 'Church" (1989, pp. 20-21).

EBB further argues that avoiding the mention of God in poetry, out of fear of alienating some readers, goes against the purpose of poetry that aims to celebrate Christian truth over Pagan myths. For EBB, the infusion of Christian themes into poetry transcends mere personal belief, serving as a declaration of the universal and transformative power of religious faith within the arts:

> [I]f I, ... writing a poem, the end of which is the extolment of what I consider to be Christian Truth over the Pagan Mythos,—shrink even there from naming the name of my God... in what more forcible manner than by that act, can I controvert my own poem, or secure to myself & my argument a logical & unanswerable shame?" (1989, pp. 20-21).

She firmly believes that excellent poetry cannot be separated from sincere religious expression. This integration, EBB argues, not only enriches the literary and moral landscapes but also underscores the intrinsic connection between poetic creativity and the divine contemplation inherent in Christianity: “Did any one of these shrink from speaking out Divine names when the occasion came?” (1989, pp. 20-21).

EBB’s letter stands as a vigorous endorsement of a poetic practice that fearlessly embraces Christian motifs, positing that authentic artistry cannot evade the profound truths of faith. She perceives the avoidance of religious conviction in literature not as a commendable discretion but as a deficiency that undermines the poet’s craft and poetry’s potential to refine and elevate societal consciousness. Her discourse is a fervent appeal for the indispensable role of religious sincerity in literature, positing an authentically engaged Christianity as fundamentally superior to mythology in its ability to inspire and uplift both the realm of poetry and the broader social fabric.

Further elucidating on this theme, EBB contemplates the harmonious relationship between the Christian religion and the poetic faculty. She posits, “[i]f it [Christian religion] offers the highest & purest objects of contemplation [a]nd the Poetical faculty which expresses the highest moods of the Mind, passes naturally to the highest objects– Who can separate these things?” (1989, pp. 21-22). This rhetorical question underscores how poetry naturally gravitates towards the lofty and profound subjects provided by Christian thought. EBB suggests that this connection is not accidental but reflects a deep, inherent alignment between the pursuit of poetic excellence and engagement with theological truths.

To support her argument, EBB refers to renowned poets like Tasso, Petrarch, Calderon, and Chaucer, whose works are filled with Christian themes (1989, pp. 21-22). By mentioning these poets, she situates her viewpoint within a broader historical and literary context and shows how Christian elements add richness and depth to poetry. These illustrious poets, recognized as literary giants with a firm place in world literature, bolster her claim that religious inspiration is essential for creating poetry that aspires to the highest expressions of beauty, truth, and moral insight.

EBB’s discourse vividly illuminates her belief that the essence of eminent poetry is indissolubly tied to the poet’s immersion in spiritual themes. She argues that neglecting such themes not only impairs the poet’s capacity to realise their full artistic potential but also diminishes poetry’s ability to motivate, elevate, and enhance the human condition. Her reflections provide a sophisticated insight into the relationship between religious devotion and poetic expression, promoting a literary approach that recognises and embraces this interconnection as a source of both artistic and ethical enrichment.

The Role and Purpose of Poetry for Elizabeth Barret Browning

To fully appreciate why Christian content is so crucial in EBB’s poetry, it is essential to understand her perspective on the role and function of poetry within society. In a correspondence dated March 25, 1843, to John Kenyon, EBB unequivocally challenges the notion that religious themes should be marginalised within the poetic realm (1989, pp. 20-22).

She firmly believes in the transformative potential of Christian-themed poetry to enrich both the moral and aesthetic dimensions of society.

This conviction is rooted in EBB's broader understanding of the poet's role and purpose. She articulates this in her letters, stating, "if a poet be a poet, it is his business to work for the elevation & purification of the public mind, rather than for his own popularity" (1989, pp. 21–22). This assertion underscores her belief that the true calling of a poet goes beyond the pursuit of fame or personal success. Rather, a poet should aspire to elevate and purify the collective consciousness, utilising poetry to effect positive change and foster deeper moral engagement within society.

EBB's perspective highlights the profound responsibility she believes poets carry in shaping public consciousness. This view, moreover, reflects a prevalent notion of the period and resonates with the writings of various Victorian poets. The role of the poet during the Victorian era was deeply influenced by the intellectual, moral, and social frameworks of the time. Poets were regarded as both moral and spiritual guides, whose works were expected to reflect and elevate societal ideals. It was widely held that poets had a duty to address pressing ethical and social issues, casting light on truths in an era marked by industrialisation, scientific advancement, and religious debate (Hughes, 2010, pp. 5–6, 11). In keeping with these Victorian ideals, EBB advocates for poetry that actively engages with Christian motifs, not merely as artistic expression, but as a vital instrument for societal improvement. By embedding religious themes in their works, poets, according to EBB, can play a pivotal role in elevating and purifying the public mind, thereby fostering a more ethically sound and spiritually enriched community.

Therefore, it is evident that the primary impetus driving EBB's advocacy for the incorporation of Christian content in poetry is fundamentally linked to the Victorian perception of the educational function of the genre. As previously noted, EBB holds the conviction that Christianity embodies higher universal truths and values. Consequently, she contends that it is the duty of a poet, whose role is to enhance, elevate, and purify the public consciousness, to employ these transcendent truths and values, which are most available in Christianity. EBB's approach not only underscores the ethical responsibilities of the poet but also reflects a deliberate choice to engage with themes that promise a more profound impact on societal morals and aesthetics. This foundational concept and poetic stance form the basis of EBB's critique of Friedrich Schiller[7] and his poem, "The Gods of Greece."

EBB's criticism of Schiller is most visible in her letter to Mary Russell Mitford, dated 11 April 1843, where she touches on the subject as follows:

> Schiller's poem you have possibly & probably too, seen a translation of, even if you have not read Mr Kenyon's paraphrase. It consists of an eloquent Lament for the Gods of Greece & the ancient mythology .. for all that luminous effluence from antique Souls which beautified Life & Creation to the Greeks. I take the contrary side of the question; & think the false Gods well gone, & stand up for that best Beauty which is in Truth. I do not follow Schiller's poem, mind ..

[7] It should be underlined that although Elizabeth Barrett Browning rigidly criticises Schiller's poem, this does not necessarily indicate a complete rejection of his poetry or a dislike for his art. Schiller, despite occasional criticisms of his methodology and style, emerges as a figure of great importance in Barrett Browning's letters. For more information, please see the letter addressed to Lady Margaret Cocks, dated 19 August 1837, and the correspondence with Mary Russell Mitford, dated 7 March 1839.

> I only take the opposite view to his view, & look at it with my own eyes—and for a basement to my poem I refer to that mystic story of Plutarch's which relates that, at the time of the Crucifixion, a wail was heard by voyagers over the Ægæan, crying 'Pan is dead, Pan is dead'!– Pan signifies 'all', besides his individual goat-godship: & the tradition is that the "oracles were dumb" from the moment of the Cry .. which conveyed that the whole Dynasty of Heathen Gods perished from the earth then! Now you understand!– (1989, pp. 71-72).

In this correspondence, EBB reveals her disagreement with Schiller's lament over the lost gods of Greece and the ancient mythology, which, for Schiller, represented a luminous effluence that once beautified life and creation for the Greeks. EBB acknowledges the aesthetic value that these mythological figures held for the ancient Greeks but ultimately rejects their continued relevance. She firmly supports the view that the "false gods" of antiquity are well disposed of, advocating instead for the superior beauty found in Christian truth. EBB's stance is not merely a rejection of Schiller's sentiment but a profound commentary on the transition from polytheism to a new epoch marked by Christian truth. This transition is symbolically underpinned by the legend cited by Plutarch in his essay "De Defectu Oraculorum," included in *Moralia* (c. 100 AD). According to this account, at the moment of Christ's Crucifixion, a cry over the Aegean Sea proclaimed that 'Pan is dead,' signifying the end of the pantheon of heathen gods (*Moralia,* 2003, pp. 401-403).

In this context, EBB's critique extends beyond personal belief, reflecting a broader ideological shift that embraces Christian monotheism as a source of higher truth and moral guidance. This effectively replaces the ancient myths that once defined cultural and spiritual life in Greece. Since EBB believes in the educational purpose of poetry, it is natural for her to incorporate Christianity into her work, as she views it as harbouring a higher truth than paganism. By referencing the narrative of Pan's death, she not only underscores the obsolescence of the old gods but also metaphorically illustrates the silencing of their oracles and the definitive cessation of their era. This interpretation both positions her in direct opposition to Schiller's nostalgic view and aligns her with a forward-looking perspective that sees Christian values as a foundational pillar for modernity.

Frederich Schiller's Views on Religion

While it is uncertain how Friedrich Schiller might have responded specifically to EBB's poetic critiques, there is a clear insight into his reactions to the severe and immediate criticisms that followed the publication of his poem "Gods of Greece." Schiller's poem indeed sparked a vehement controversy in Germany. Regarding the dramatic reaction to Schiller's poem, Emil Palleske aptly comments, "[n]o man can introduce a grand and novel idea into the period, and at the same time please the masses" (1860, p. 115). The poem's reception in the country was notably intense and acrimonious, with Schiller facing accusations of blasphemy.

Various contemporaries of the German poet reacted strongly; for instance, Franz Kleist retorted with a poem titled "Praise of the Only God. A Rebuttal to the Gods of Ancient Greece" (1789). Similarly, Friedrich Leopold condemned Schiller's perceived irreverence, viewing it as a sin against God and challenging the notion that Christianity obstructs human freedom and progress (as cited in High, 2015, p. 317).

Nevertheless, Schiller also found defenders among his peers, such as Georg Forster and Novalis, who supported him on various grounds. Central to their defence was the principle of freedom of speech. They asserted that regardless of the content of Schiller's assertions and whether they conformed to or deviated from established religious doctrines, he retained the fundamental human right to express his views (High, 2017, p. 81). This defence showcases the broader debate of the era concerning the limits of expression and the role of religion in public and artistic life. Thus, Schiller's ordeal following the publication of "Gods of Greece" not only highlights his personal struggles with religious censorship but also illustrates the societal tensions between traditional religious authority and emerging ideals of personal liberty and artistic freedom.

In any case, the aggressive reaction at the time influenced the poet and led him to alter his poem. Schiller's poem initially comprised 25 stanzas and was published in March 1788 under the title "Die Götter Griechenlandes." The poem was later revised into a sixteen-stanza version in 1800 and retitled "Die Götter Griechenlands." This later version notably excludes stanzas that were considered particularly blasphemous (specifically stanzas 11, 13, 15, 23, and 24) and also removes the archaic genitive 'e' from the word "Griechenlandes" in the title (High, 2015, p. 316). The revision and excision of certain stanzas in the 1800 edition likely reflect both a response to the socio-religious sensitivities of the time and an artistic choice by Schiller. The removal of what were deemed 'blasphemous' stanzas suggests a self-censorship or external pressures that might have influenced Schiller to modify his work to suit a more conservative audience.

Here, it is important to delve into Schiller's views regarding religion and his intention with the criticism of religion in his poetry. Schiller's attitude towards religion and the concept of God has been a topic of intense scholarly debate, generating diverse interpretations of his religious inclinations. Historically, many scholars posited that Schiller held religious beliefs, though there was significant variation in perspectives regarding the depth of his religiosity and his views on religion itself (Caruth, 1904, pp. 578-81; Gostwick, 1884, pp. 319, 325-36). As a child, Schiller's early aspiration to become a minister was often seen as indicative of a favourable outlook towards religion, which might suggest a positive engagement with religious themes in his adult life (High, 2017, p. 77).

However, recent studies have painted a more complex picture of Schiller's relationship with religion, particularly Christianity. These investigations reveal that as Schiller matured, his work increasingly reflected a critical stance towards the Christian doctrine, specifically critiquing the manipulation of religion as a strategic tool employed by clerical figures and political leaders to control the masses. This shift suggests that Schiller's early religious ambitions did not translate into uncritical acceptance of religious institutions or teachings in his later years. Instead, his mature writings are characterised by a rigorous critique of how religion, particularly through its institutional forms, was wielded to exert power and influence over society. This approach points out a significant evolution in Schiller's thought—from a potential proponent of religious roles in society to a sharp critic of the abuses and manipulations of religious authority and doctrine.

In his 1780 dissertation *Ueber den Zusammenhang der thierischen Natur des Menschen mit seiner geistigen* (*Concerning the Connection between the Animal and Intellectual Nature of Humans*) Schiller delivers a striking critique on how religious systems are often manipulated by those in power for strategic control over the populace. He describes this development as a process where religious institutions and the concept of divinity become instruments in the hands of the elite, particularly "cunning priests," who use them to consolidate their power and control the masses. Schiller highlights this manipulation by noting, "[c]ities are fortified, states are established, and with the states arise civil duties and rights, arts, numbers, codes of law, cunning priests — and gods" (qtd. in High, 2017, p. 80).

This exploration of societal development underscores Schiller's critical perspective of religion not just as a spiritual or cultural phenomenon but as a construct frequently exploited by the privileged to maintain and extend their influence. He argues that the introduction of gods in a society often coincides with the rise of a priestly class, suggesting that these religious figures tailor religious narratives to further their own agendas. This strategic shaping of religious beliefs by those in power highlights Schiller's broader concerns about the use of religion as a tool for social and political control, therefore, reflects his deep scepticism regarding the authenticity of religious evolution independent of human interference.

It is important to underline that Schiller's critique, particularly of Christianity during his time, is not necessarily an indictment of religion per se but rather an objection to its misuse by priests and rulers to dominate others. Therefore, the type of religion Schiller contests is fundamentally viewed as a mechanism that not only limits individual freedom but also facilitates the exploitation and subjugation of people by those in authority. This perspective illuminates Schiller's ability to distinguish between the potential spiritual or communal benefits of religion and its manipulation as a mechanism for socio-political dominance, providing a nuanced understanding of religion's complex role in society.

Friedrich Schiller's stance against organised religion can be observed in his oeuvre since religion is depicted as an oppressive construct engineered by manipulative clerical figures. This portrayal suggests that organised religion serves as a barrier to the advancement of civilization by stifling the development of individual liberties and hindering the realisation of a humanistic republic. Such a republic, as envisioned by Schiller, would be grounded in the principles of universal tolerance and freedom of conscience, allowing for the flourishing of individual autonomy. Schiller's critical perspective highlights the tension between religious orthodoxy and the Enlightenment ideals of personal freedom and rationality, suggesting that the dogmatic nature of religion can undermine societal progress towards a more enlightened and inclusive community.

As High points out, a central theme in Schiller's literary exploration of religion concerns the historical context and its constrained focus on religious freedom movements. These movements often address the limited freedom of oppressed groups to follow a religion different from the one enforced by a dominant group. However, the scope of this freedom is narrow. For instance, a prince's ability to dictate the state religion or the ability of citizens to choose local rather than foreign domination represents a very restricted form of freedom. This limited freedom essentially undermines the more substantial, shared constitutional objective sought by

all those affected by religious intolerance—namely, the individual's right to be free from, not just of, all forms of ideological coercion (qtd. in High, 2017, p. 77).

In this light, Schiller's perspective on religion transcends mere belief systems; it critically examines how religion serves as a social issue that profoundly impacts the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals and society at large. Religion, in Schiller's view, becomes a mechanism through which power and oppression are negotiated, highlighting its significant social and political implications. High argues that, according to Schiller, "by the late eighteenth century, religion had become a formidable roadblock to both truth and true morality, which are only possible without external control of any kind, and specifically without church, state, and mob coercion" (2017, p. 81). This interpretation indicates the complexity of religion as both a personal faith and a powerful social force that shapes and restricts human rights and liberties.

After receiving harsh criticism for his poem, Schiller was compelled to defend his motives, reasons, and aims. In a letter to Körner, he comments on his own work, providing a self-defence and explanation:

> If I succeed in making out of the shortcomings of religion or ethics a beautiful and consistent whole. I have made a piece of art which is neither immoral nor impious, for the very reason that I took both, not as they are. But as they became after the forceful operation of their separation and new combination. The God whom I criticize in 'The Gods of Greece' is not the God of the philosophers nor the beneficent dream of the multitudes, but he is one abortion out of many erroneous misshapen conceptions … The gods of Greece as I represent them are only the beautiful qualities of Greek mythology comprehended in one general idea. (qtd. in Carus, 1905, p. 297)

Schiller criticises not a universally accepted or philosophical conception of God, but rather a distorted version formed by an amalgamation of flawed and limited human perceptions. Schiller's commentary reveals his critical approach to religious representations, distinguishing his critique from an outright dismissal of all forms of divinity. His dismissal targets a specific portrayal of God that he considers to be a deficient product of collective imagination rather than a rejection of the concept of a higher power as understood by philosophers or the common populace.

"Gods of Greece" and Its Socio-political Context

By promoting the Greek gods as preferable alternatives, Schiller engages in a broader philosophical discourse on the nature of divinity, challenging the prevailing religious dogmas of his time and advocating for a return to a more poetic, less doctrinaire spiritual imagination. This reflects his broader literary and philosophical ambitions to reshape the cultural landscape of his era, encouraging a shift towards a worldview that values humanistic and aesthetic experiences over rigid theological doctrine. This idea is the pillar upon which his "Gods of Greece" rests.

The initial stanza of "Gods of Greece," is pivotal as it immediately unveils the poet's primary objective: a critique of governance intertwined with religion. The stanza is as follows:

> While you still the lovely world commanded,
>
> While on gentle leading-strings of joy
>
> Guided still a happier human era,

> Lovely beings from the land of myth!
>
> […]
>
> Different, oh how different was it then! (1788/2005, lines 1-4, 6).

In these lines, Schiller presents a profound examination of governance. He begins by reminiscing about a time when the world was "commanded / While on gentle leading-strings of joy" (lines 1-2) guided the earth, alluding to an era of exemplary leadership. This image establishes the foundation for his critique of the relationship between religion and governance. The phrase "[g]uided still a happier human era" (line 3) is particularly noteworthy, indicating that the world's happiness and beauty were closely linked to its governance and cultural ethos. The "leading-strings of joy" suggest that these leaders were enlightened by a higher moral authority, which Schiller metaphorically associates with the Greek gods.

It is crucial to understand that Schiller's reference to Greek deities is not literal. As Henry Hatfield indicates, Schiller's gods "are romantic gods […] less real, less actual, [they] are in the world of mythology, or aesthetic semblance […] the Greek divinities were fictions" (1964, pp. 120-21). Hence, Schiller is not advocating for a return to paganism as EBB understands but rather using this imagery to symbolise an idealised form of governance in ancient culture where a rich tapestry of myths and stories could flourish. Schiller's nostalgic depiction of a world inhabited by "lovely beings from the land of myth" (1788/2005, line 4) highlights the harmony and acceptance of diverse ideas, customs, and social behaviours in that era. Thus, Schiller emphasises the essence of Greek culture—a culture that nurtured a multitude of narratives, stories, and myths, allowing them to coexist freely. This cultural richness and the freedom it fostered are what Schiller ultimately celebrates.

In this section, Schiller sets the stage for a profound dichotomy between the ancient Greek world and contemporary Christian society. He remarks that "[t]hen through all creation flowed life's fullness, / And what nevermore will feel, then felt" (1788/2005, lines 11-12), suggesting a stark contrast between the splendour of ancient times and the present. Schiller then delves deeply into the grandeur of ancient Greek culture, extolling its virtues and highlighting its significant contributions to human civilisation. Through his vivid imagery and reflective tone, he emphasises the richness, diversity, and enlightened nature of the ancient Greek world. This cultural and intellectual heritage is presented as a lost ideal, contrasting sharply with the perceived shortcomings of modern society. By drawing this comparison, Schiller invites his audience to reflect on the values and qualities that have been lost over time, urging a reconsideration of contemporary governance and cultural practices in light of the revered ancient past.

Schiller's poem further illustrates that the splendour of Ancient Greece is deeply rooted in its rich culture. It abounds with references to Greek myths and historical figures, which are portrayed as defining elements that characterise and enliven ancient Greek civilisation. Among these references in the poem are the myths of Helios riding his chariot (lines 19-20), the Oreads inhabiting high mountains (line 21), Dryads residing in trees (line 22), the myth of Demeter and Persephone (lines 29-32), and Deucalion and Pyrrha (lines 33-35). The poem also mentions the renowned Theban poet Pindar, the Dionysiac poet and musician Arion, the sculptor Phidias (lines 50-52), the hero Ganymede (line66), Medusa (line 68), the dancing Faun and Satyr (line

76), the Thracian bard Orpheus (lines 120, 125), and the moon goddess Selene (line 158), among many others.

Throughout Schiller's poem, the emphasis is on the beauty and diversity of Ancient Greek culture. The poem subtly suggests that these mythological characters and historical figures thrived because the ancient Greek culture provided a fertile ground for their existence and growth. This nurturing environment is metaphorically represented by the ancient gods, who symbolise the vibrant and liberating culture of Greece. The poem extols the freedom inherent in this ancient culture, which allowed creativity, mythology, and artistic expression to flourish. Ultimately, it is this freedom and the consequent cultural richness that the poem celebrates as the quintessential feature of Ancient Greece.

In this respect, it is visible that the poem's central focal point is not characterised by a theological lens as EBB perceives; it rather deals with the social context of religion. Schiller's focus on the Greek world is deeply merged with an appreciation for its cultural and social framework, which he contrasts with the rigid structures of modern Christian society. The Greek gods, as portrayed by Schiller, symbolise the era's moral and aesthetic values, promoting a society that flourished under the principles of liberty, harmonious coexistence, and an unbridled exchange of ideas and artistic expression. Schiller's lament for the loss of the Greek gods is thus a critique of the loss of these values, which he sees as integral to the enrichment of human life and creativity. In juxtaposition, he views contemporary Christianity as having been co-opted by religious and secular authorities to enforce conformity and control, stifling individual freedom and artistic expression. This socio-political critique is central to Schiller's poem, highlighting his belief that the true essence of a flourishing society lies in the freedom to explore diverse narratives and ideas without the imposition of dogmatic constraints. Therefore, while EBB's "The Dead Pan" is framed as a theological rebuttal to Schiller's "The Gods of Greece," it overlooks the latter's nuanced critique of how religion can be manipulated to serve power structures. Schiller's poem calls for a revival of the values represented by the Greek gods—values that encourage a vibrant, open, and free society. By misinterpreting Schiller's intent, EBB's poem engages more with a defence of Christian theological principles rather than addressing the broader social critique Schiller presents. In her poem "The Dead Pan," EBB states:

> O ye vain false gods of Hellas,
>
> Ye are silent evermore!
>
> […]
>
> Get to dust, as common mortals,
>
> By a common doom and track!
>
> Let no Schiller from the portals
>
> Of that Hades, call you back (1844/1905, lines 211-12, 218-21)

Here, EBB explicitly criticises the paganism of Ancient Greece, referring to the Greek gods as "false gods of Hellas" (line 211) and consigning them to "dust" (line 218). By directly invoking Schiller and referencing "Hades," she firmly opposes the ideals expressed in "Gods of Greece." This reference to Hades serves as a vehement and uncompromising condemnation, suggesting that Schiller's call for the revival of the Greek gods is not only misguided but also fundamentally incompatible with Christian truth.

However, by focusing on this theological rebuttal, EBB fails to recognise Schiller's nuanced social commentary. Her poem centres more on defending Christian principles than on addressing the broader critique of religion's role in contemporary society that Schiller presents. Schiller's lamentation for the Greek gods symbolises a critique of the rigidity and conformity in modern Christian society, using paganism as a metaphor for a once vibrant, open society that encouraged liberty and artistic expression. EBB's religious focus prevents her from acknowledging this aspect of Schiller's poem, resulting in a misinterpretation of his underlying message.

Further into "The Dead Pan," EBB's emphasis on Christianity as the source of higher truth becomes even more apparent. As discussed earlier, her letters reveal a similar inclination, and this belief is overtly expressed in the poem:

> Truth is fair: should we forego it?
>
> Can we sigh right for a wrong?
>
> God Himself is the best Poet,
>
> And the Real is His song.
>
> Sing His truth out fair and full,
>
> And secure His beautiful.
>
> Let Pan be dead. (1844/1905, lines 246–52)

In these lines, EBB contrasts truth with mythology, positioning God as the "best Poet" who embodies the "Real" (line 249). She draws an analogy between divine truth and Christian-inspired poetry, suggesting that mythological narratives are mere "poor tales of our own telling" (line 258) and therefore insufficient to convey higher truths. In this respect, Davies asserts that the poem "advises repudiating the classical past and looking to the present because Christianity provides the subject matter for modern poetry" (2007, p. 563). The command, "Let Pan be Dead" (line 252), symbolises the replacement of paganism with a Christian truth. Thus, it becomes evident that EBB's poetry is driven by theological discussion, which ultimately obstructs her from engaging with Schiller's social critique.

Moreover, "Gods of Greece" elucidates that the culturally rich and free environment of ancient Greece was enabled by an enlightened harmony within society. This concept is particularly emphasised in stanza six:

> Noble pride, the realm above to govern:
>
> This she [Aphrodite] taught to all her godlike rank,
>
> And to guard the holy girdle's magic
>
> Zeus himself could not resist (Schiller, 1788/2005, lines 45-48).

This passage is pivotal as it follows the poem's praise of Greek culture and myths, providing insight into the conditions that allowed these beautiful myths to flourish: respect within the hierarchy. Aphrodite is portrayed as a ruler who governs with "noble pride" (line 45), so effectively that even the gods, including Zeus, learn from her and adopt the ways of love. The reference to Zeus is significant, as he is not only the mightiest of all Greek gods but also the

ultimate ruler who occupies the highest position in the pantheon. Even Zeus is under the influence of a power beyond his grasp, indicating that hierarchical structures in ancient culture were not rigid but fluid, influenced by virtues such as love and respect.

Furthermore, it is evident that love serves to further unify all the figures within the culture: "Linking men and deities and heroes / Amor fastened them with lovely bonds, / Mortal men beside their gods and heroes" (Schiller, 1788/2005, lines 37-39). Thus, love operates as a cohesive force that enables the deities, humans, and heroes to co-exist harmoniously. More importantly, this force, embodied by love, is facilitated by the exceptional structure and harmony of Ancient Greek culture, where each figure within this system can interact with one another, fostering more genuine and organic relationships among the participants.

The poem, therefore, associates the richness of myths with cultural harmony, presenting a structure in which even the highest gods are influenced by those below them. This structure suggests a more integrated and egalitarian cultural system, where each deity and even humanity can be part of this extensive organic relationship. Since Schiller employs the Greek gods as a metaphor for ancient pagan culture and society, this passage shows the harmonious nature of Greek society. Through this depiction, Schiller emphasises that the intricate mythological fabric of ancient Greece was supported by a cultural system where respect and influence transcended hierarchical boundaries, thus promoting a balanced and enlightened society.

Schiller further elaborates on the ancient culture and states that what was "[h]eavenly and immortal" were the artistic creations of Pindar, who wrote hymns; Arion, who played his lyre; and Phidias, who carved marble (1788/2005, lines 49-52). This emphasis on the profound beauty of art points out its eternal and divine nature. Additionally, Schiller describes the people of this culture as breathing "nobler form" (line 53), resembling shadows of a higher being. He writes, "[f]rom heaven's heights the Gods were flowing, / Eternity upon earth born" (lines 54-56), highlighting a reciprocal relationship between gods and humans, where each positively influences the other. The immortality and divinity of human art are portrayed as being inspired by the gods, their myths, and their stories, illustrating a deeply interconnected cultural and spiritual ecosystem. This passage ultimately celebrates the harmony between divine influence and human creativity, which together forge a civilisation of unparalleled richness and depth.

The representation of modern Christian society and the teachings of Christianity present a stark contrast to the earlier positive portrayal of ancient Greece. Schiller observes, "[p]eople sent the choicest of their treasures" (1788/2005, line 97),[8] indicating that individuals gave away their greatest treasures, which can be interpreted as a metaphor for their culture. This act of sacrifice underscores a fundamental shift from the rich, harmonious cultural practices of ancient Greece to the more austere and self-denying ethos of modern Christianity.

Schiller further elaborates on this theme by contrasting the concepts of death in ancient Greek culture and modern Christian culture. He notes:

> No appalling skeleton was standing
>
> At the bedside of the dying one:

[8] This line is also translated as "[t]he very best he had, man gave away" by David B. Gosselin (2021, n.p).

By a kiss the final breath was taken,

Sad and still a Genius let sink

His torch.

[…]

And the sternest fate had milder features

Through the veil of sweet humanity (1788/2005, lines 105-109, 111-12).

The poet contrasts the concept of death in ancient Greece with that in the modern Christian world. While death remains an immutable reality in both eras, the approach to it differs significantly. In contemporary times, death is often viewed through a starkly negative lens, symbolised by the grim reaper, a cold and foreboding figure. However, in ancient Greece, death was perceived differently. Despite its inevitability, it was approached with a sense of acceptance and tranquillity. The poet suggests that even death, a universally feared event, was more bearable in ancient Greece due to the happier, more fulfilled lives of its people. This cultural difference is encapsulated in the lines where the final moments of life are sealed with a kiss, indicating a peaceful transition rather than a fearful end. Schiller concludes by noting that even the harshest fates had gentler features in this environment, reflecting how the ancient cultural and social milieu softened the perception of death, making it a less daunting experience compared to the grim and fearful view prevalent in modern times.

Thus, Schiller's comparison between ancient Greece and modern Christian society highlights a profound transformation in cultural attitudes towards life and death. The former, with its emphasis on harmony and acceptance, stands in stark contrast to the latter's focus on self-denial and sombre reflection. Through this juxtaposition, Schiller indicates the loss of a more serene and humanistic approach to existence in the modern era.

The criticism towards Christianity gains its most aggressive form in stanza fifteen:

Under frightful laws of holy spirits

No divine barbarian sat as judge,

He whose eyes no teardrops ever moisten,

Tender being, whom a woman bore (Schiller, 1788/2005, lines 113-16).

In "Secular Virtue," High argues that Christ is portrayed as a severe and eternal conqueror, labelled a "divine barbarian," which signifies a significant departure from the compassionate Greek judge described as "the grandson of a mortal" (2015, p. 315). This judge, unlike the Christian deity, is characterised by his ability to empathise with humanity due to his partial human heritage. The Christian God, born of a virgin in a manner that defies conventional human experiences, is juxtaposed against the Greek gods, who are not only born of women but are connected deeply with human affairs (High, 2015, p. 315). This connection between Greek gods, heroes, and humanity is crucial throughout the entire poem. As previously discussed in relation to the concept of love, all members of ancient Greek society—the deities, humans, and heroes—coexist harmoniously. Within this system, each figure engages with others, cultivating authentic and organic relationships among all participants. Hence, the idea that the gods are in a genuine relationship with humanity indicates a fundamental difference from Christianity, where the divine is theologically and radically separated from humanity.

This idea is further supported later in the poem when Schiller openly states that "[o]nce the gods were more like human beings, / Human beings more divine" (lines 191-92), drawing attention to the distinct concept of divinity in ancient Greece where gods and humans shared attributes, emotions, and experiences to such an extent that the boundaries between the mortal and the divine were fluid and permeable, allowing for a profound interconnection and mutual influence that was central to the cultural and religious life of the Greeks.

This portrayal of divinity in ancient Greece contrasts sharply with the Christian perception of God. In Christianity, God is seen as wholly other, an omnipotent and omniscient being entirely distinct from humanity. The Christian God's virgin birth and transcendence from human experience highlight a divine separation that underscores human fallibility and the need for divine intervention. Conversely, the Greek gods' intimate involvement in human affairs and their partial human heritage present a model of divinity that is approachable and relatable, reflecting a cultural ethos that valued the interplay between the divine and the mortal, thereby creating a more integrated and humanised understanding of the sacred.

The poem thus serves as a critique of the Christian theology prevalent at the time, suggesting that its severe and detached nature makes it difficult for its divine figures to truly understand and sympathise with human beings, who are "[t]ender beings, whom a woman bore" (Schiller, 1788/2005, line 116). Schiller's preference for the relatable and human-like characteristics of the Greek gods over the austere Christian God reflects a broader thematic exploration of the disenchantment with rigid religious doctrines and an endorsement of more human-centric spiritualities. This comparison underscores a longing for a past where gods and humans shared closer bonds and mutual understanding, highlighting the perceived alienation within contemporary religious practices.

Here, while EBB's critique of Schiller's poem may appear plausible given that Schiller addresses certain aspects of Christianity, it is imperative to underscore that the central message and aim of Schiller's poem are not primarily to critique Christianity. Rather, Schiller's work promotes the virtues of Ancient Greek society, which he perceives as fostering a more liberated and open environment. This is particularly evident in Schiller's revision of the poem. The removal of specific stanzas in the second version suggests a deliberate shift in focus from a deconstructive critique of Christianity to a constructive exposition of the qualities of ancient Greek culture that contributed to a happier and freer way of life. Schiller's intention was to highlight the shortcomings of contemporary society and religion by juxtaposing them with the harmonious and liberal values of Ancient Greece. Thus, his poem serves as an advocacy for the revival of these ancient ideals, emphasizing their potential to cultivate a vibrant, unrestricted, and enriched societal framework. It should also be indicated that in his own elucidation of the poem, Schiller posits that the deities within his poem serve as metaphors and, as such, are immune to insult or undue reverence; they are merely praised within the confines of their moral and aesthetic value as judged by natural moral sense and reason (High, 2015, p. 319). This approach underscores Schiller's poetic exploration as one of demystification, where both the Greek gods and the Christian God are examined not as literal entities but as cultural and individual projections. These divine figures embody the moral impacts and the relative truths of the ideals they symbolise, influencing earthly realities through the metaphors they represent.

Schiller's critique extends to the reception of these metaphoric deities, particularly the unflattering comparison of the Christian God with Greek deities, suggesting that any offence taken is not a problem originating from the artist but from the believer. He further argues that this becomes a societal issue when imaginative possibilities—pertaining to moral sense and reason—are restricted, controlled, and imposed upon by religious dogmas (as cited in High, 2015, p. 319).

Additionally, Schiller addresses the ironic accusation of polytheism levied against him. This misinterpretation, primarily stemming from Stolberg's critique, overlooks Schiller's nuanced view on the function of deities in cultural narratives. While Schiller acknowledges the progress represented by monotheism over polytheism, as explicitly discussed in his essay on Moses, he maintains a critical stance towards all organised religions. He suggests that both monotheistic and polytheistic systems can serve as political tools for domination, yet he characterises the gods of ancient Greece as ultimately less despotic and deceitful in their instrumentalisation compared to the figures of newer religions (as cited in High, 2015, p. 319). Thus, through his poem, Schiller not only challenges the theological constructs of his time but also invites a revaluation of how divine metaphors shape and are shaped by cultural and moral perceptions. His work serves as a philosophical inquiry into the implications of religious and metaphysical representations in society.

Conclusion

To conclude, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's critique of Schiller's approach in her poem is, to some extent, misleading. Her argument is characterised by the belief that Schiller's promotion of Greek mythology, and thus paganism, is flawed, as Christian monotheism is a source of higher truth. Her sheer belief in the Victorian notion of poetry's educational purpose leads her to integrate Christianity into her work, perceiving it as embodying a higher truth than paganism. EBB's interpretation of Schiller's poem is strictly from a theological lens and religious context. Contrarily, as indicated above, Schiller's poem is characterised by a critique of the contemporary pressure and abuse of Christianity extant at the time. By highlighting the features of Ancient Greece that fostered a liberal society and critiquing the rigid stance of modern Christianity and its exploitation by those in power to manipulate people, Schiller presents his audience with an opportunity to discern the elements that contribute to the formation of a just society. He advocates for a return to the ideals of the ancient world. In this respect, the desire to revive or bring back the ancient Greek gods serves as a metaphor for reintroducing the principles of ancient Greece: liberty, harmonious coexistence, and freedom, which ultimately enable individuals to lead better lives and inspire superior art and ideas. Furthermore, Schiller's critique extends beyond mere nostalgia for a lost age of simplicity; it is a proactive call to reclaim and reinvigorate these qualities within contemporary intellectual and ethical life. He envisions a society where freedom is not only a naturally occurring state but also one that is cultivated and enriched through harmony, coexistence, and mutual respect. This philosophical stance challenges the prevailing cultural and intellectual orthodoxy, proposing a sophisticated synthesis of emotion and intellect as the foundation for a revitalised and just society.

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