

## Death, By Various Means

Only a very few people – and certainly none of the mainstream media – noticed, or drew attention to, the name of the band performing at the Bataclan Theatre, Paris, the night of the attack by Islamists (13 November 2015).

They were Eagles of Death Metal, and the significance of the name hit me as soon as I heard it. I know nothing of this group, but this name strongly suggests one of the many pop bands whose image is that of horror, death, destruction and darkness. Yes, there are many such out there; they have been with us for two or three decades, (and I remember when the first Beatles songs emerged, and old ladies found their appearance shocking!) groups whose clothes, appearance, acts and videos - and message - stress the negative things listed above.

Such phenomena are only part of the darker side of contemporary 'culture', there are many others (my article about Halloween complained about that particular "seasonal" outpouring of it). So when gunmen emerge into a place where seemingly such a group is performing, and start visiting *real* death and destruction on everyone ... well, I can't help thinking there may be some ultimate connection. Of course the audience, and the band themselves, had every right to do what they were doing unmolested, and the killing of innocent victims was a gross evil. But a culture which produces things clearly devoted to evil (if you think I go too far, just ponder the lyrics of some Gangsta Rap ... items (one can't call them songs)) must surely be one in which evil things happen, or rather one which has no basis from which to respond, or counter it, a society which has – some while back – abandoned the good, beautiful, and holy, preferring not to think on such things, as St. Paul enjoins, but on things whose ultimate products are the evils we are experiencing.

Of course it is Islamism that is really responsible for what we suffer – but its forces are striking at a time when the West, former-Christendom, is at its weakest – yes, it appears very strong militarily, technically, and economically, but in reality it is a husk, hollowed out by creeping moral and spiritual paralysis (seemingly self-willed), long taken over by materialism and a lack of belief in anything, unless it might be belief "in man", the most desperate and hopeless of all convictions.

December 2015