

7 EDUCATION

7.1 Introduction

¹The purpose of education is to teach the child to activate his various kinds of consciousness. In this work it is important that the teacher has a clear grasp of the ideals of life, so that he knows how to guide. His task is to impart these ideals of life to the child.

²The object is to arouse in the child the will to the good, the beautiful, and the will to serve.

³Of course, upbringing and education will be essentially different in the future when mankind has learnt to see the meaning of life and what it is that the individual needs to learn in order to live rationally and efficiently.

⁴There are two ways of helping mankind to develop: help it to develop the higher emotional consciousness (the method of the mystic) and help it to develop the mental consciousness and to acquire common sense (the method of the esoterician). These two methods have been called the paths of love and of knowledge.

⁵The problem of upbringing includes not only the problems of childhood and adolescence but also those of re-education of anti-social individuals. These are problems that only our times have begun to see to be real problems; and to the esoterician it is obvious that they are still unsolved, educators and social workers may believe what they want. Psychology is still at an embryonic stage, however much its swelling libraries are continually expanded. Practically everything concerning consciousness and its problems remains to be discovered. The problems of the subconscious are not solved by means of psycho-analysis. And people do not even know that there are such things as problems of the superconscious. They do their best to increase the chaos of their waking consciousness.

⁶Development is a process in stages, and these stages provide the basis for our division into classes. It is the same with the consciousness aspect, with its different stages. It is important to realize the fact that those at higher stages understand those at lower stages and that those at lower stages cannot possibly understand those at higher stages. This applied to education means that you do not teach things of higher stages to people at lower stages. The analogy of different classes in school is not quite applicable here, for “learning” is just a matter of digesting successive series of new facts.

⁷Modern education has the superstitious belief that the child can by himself, without guidance, develop his predispositions to the right and the good. The child runs through the stages of human development and is at first found at the stage of barbarism. He learns by experience, and the view of his environment rouses his corresponding latent view. If he gets to know people from their least viable sides, then he will soon be unfit for life himself.

⁸It is no easy thing for the self in a new incarnation to master its new envelopes. If they have been idiotized and brutalized already at an early age, then that incarnation is by and large a failure. Then the self’s subconscious instinct is never given an opportunity to develop and the individual remains disoriented in an existence where people demonstrate their lack of humanity and common sense.

⁹Educators should try to grasp what is meant by the word “freedom”, which ignorant people have abused to idiotization. It has a bearing on many different things. As it now is, freedom seems to be roughly equivalent to chaos, in any case lawlessness, self-will, arbitrariness. The esoterician seems to be the only one who knows that freedom just means the “right to development” with everything that lies in that right. They should be able to see that society cannot exist without law. We may hope that educators can realize that all children must be taught not to violate the right of others (this is the law precisely). Freedom includes the “right to choose your life view” when you have finished your elementary school education. But that right does not exist in practice, for by that time the child is already idiotized by parents, teachers, and priests. It is true that children are promises. It takes a lot to spare them too from idiotization

and robotization.

¹⁰“According to the law, every man has a right to that freedom (limited by his insight and ability) which he has once acquired and subsequently applies in accordance with law”, the freedom in life that belongs to his level of development.

¹¹Modern education with its total disorientation in life lacks of course understanding of the law of freedom and its application to the upbringing of children. The child has a right to be cared about, to be treated with understanding, to have opportunities of education. But in so far as the child lacks insight and ability his freedom must be limited. Extremely few children can be given unlimited freedom, only those who are on the verge of the stage of unity. For the others, freedom can have catastrophic consequences in life.

¹²The child is at the stage of barbarism and has those tendencies which he developed once at that stage. The most typical tendencies include self-assertion, lust for power (obstinacy), desire for possessions, imagined right to everything (belonging to others), destructive urges, malicious pleasure, and cruelty. It stands to reason that bounds must be set to the pertaining arrogance.

¹³The prohibitions of educators correspond, later in life, to the laws of the community and, in respect of life, to the Law. The child must (like domestic animals) learn to observe certain rules and that every transgression has a consequence, usually a temporary loss of benefits or the duty to make good when this is possible.

¹⁴Thoughtless mothers have a pernicious habit of arbitrarily forbidding and then permitting. This destroys that instinct in the child which is the condition for understanding law. Every prohibition must be well thought out, be based on rational motives, and firm. Law is law, certainly different on different levels and according to the understanding of the necessity of law.

¹⁵It is a serious psychological mistake to base ideas of right and wrong, necessary for the existence of any community, on religious views. When the life view changes, then the ideas of right are dropped and young people become the victims of diverse barbarian illusions, not to say criminal fancies.

¹⁶It is abortive to force metaphysical ideas on children, ideas which they may later in life realize not to be founded on fact. Religious doctrines should not be presented as inflexible dogmas, but as various ways of explaining reality in times past. Young people must be given total freedom to accept any working hypotheses. Facts are necessary even for working hypotheses. Some people are content with alleged “facts”. The intelligent demand a perfect system of logically and psychologically tenable facts. Those “historical facts” on which religions are based cannot be regarded as incontrovertible. The fact that innumerable billions of individuals have believed and proclaimed something is no proof whatsoever. Religious dogmas and legally valid proofs are no proofs. Only undeniably correct systems are valid working hypotheses. They must explain, in a simple manner and without contradictions, previously inexplicable things and the meaning and goal of life.

¹⁷At the present stage of mankind’s development, a good share of healthy skepticism towards ruling ideologies in the fields of religion, philosophy, and science is, from the logical point of view, the only defensible attitude. However, this says nothing about what it may be possible to accept in the future.

¹⁸There has not yet been any culture worth the name in historical times (that is: the last twelve thousand years of world history, ever since Poseidonis went down in 9564 B.C.). There have been single individuals (trained in esoteric knowledge orders, often teachers of non-initiates) and small clans that have lent lustre to a short epoch. From there to a national culture, however, would have been a long step. No religion has been able to produce any culture, the characteristics of which are universal brotherhood (though not “equality”), tolerance, freedom, truth, and justice. The beginnings of culture there are we owe to the great humanists.

¹⁹We shall have culture only in this epoch which has just begun. That so-called culture to

which we are treated at present we can without great loss shelve; we should gain by letting it go down into the slop-pail. Only the natural sciences afford us knowledge of reality. The contents of the “cultural sciences” fall within the sphere of fictionalism.

7.2 *Stages of Development*

¹The monad, the self, is slowly roused to consciousness by having its contact with physical reality renewed. And since a new contact is necessary for the self to remember anew any knowledge it formerly acquired, we should realize how important is the guidance of the child from the very first year of his life on. If the child is brought up in an environment that has a good general orientation in reality (not in ruling ideologies), then he has great prospects of attaining a higher level of development.

²When growing up everybody passes through the various levels of human development. This can be done more or less rapidly or be made impossible depending on the environment: parents, brothers and sisters, friends, teachers. If these people are at lower stages than the child, then there is a risk that his incarnation will never be what it could have been, a very great risk, even a wasted life. It really is that serious. The acquisition of a sense of unity and perspective consciousness are delicate processes, and ignorance, thoughtlessness, regrettably even wickedness may inflict incurable injury on individuals who are at these higher stages. The instruments (centres) there are in the envelopes of incarnation for the reception of the finer vibrations in these higher molecular kinds can be definitively petrified if the child is treated brutally.

³In present-day democratic societies, where all are “equal” (equally good and clever and obviously on the same level of development), one may just pity those cultural or humanist individuals who incarnate in order to help mankind find its way out of the darkness of illusions and fictions.

⁴Those who have reached higher levels have no great prospects of being born into suitable environments and having the upbringing and education corresponding to their possibilities of understanding. As a rule, they must use the latter half of their incarnation to liberate themselves from those emotional illusions and mental fictions with which they were idiotized by unsuitable parents, teachers, and friends when they were growing up and received their education.

⁵It is therefore all the more important for them to work for the raising of mankind in mental respect and, above all, to work for the spread of esoteric facts in rational contexts, which is the only possibility of spreading common sense.

⁶It is very deplorable that “old souls” (having latent esoteric knowledge) should be forced to go through ordinary schools, military training, etc. In so doing mankind commits a crime against its benefactors and must take the consequences. Noble souls are not violated with impunity; mankind’s own path of suffering is sufficient proof of that. Those who incarnate (sacrifice themselves in order to serve) have a right to better treatment. As a rule, they have always been made martyrs.

⁷The limited understanding in those at lower stages constitutes a real problem to those at higher stages. It is only in our times that the psychological problem involved in this has begun to be realized. It has been one of the greatest shortcomings of educational theory that they have not realized that this is a problem to solve, that this ability makes education an art and not a method of cramming. To teach people so that they comprehend is an ability that most teachers as yet lack. It is that art, however, which captures the interest of the pupils and arouses their enthusiasm for the teacher.

⁸The young generation can seldom assimilate the experience of the elder generation, even when the younger have the knowledge latently. That depends on the fact that what is latent generally is brought to life only through experiences and these are usually lacking. It is true that the understanding is there, but the desire to understand is killed when the elders do not meet the children’s need lovingly and treat them wrongly also in other respects, with strictness or

indifference. The generations become estranged.

⁹With the knowledge of the stages of development and the horoscope's indication of the developmental stage of the newborn child, the parents can more easily follow their child's more or less rapid recapitulation of mankind's past evolution.

¹⁰In the civilized nations having a developed school system, universities and institutes of technology, most people in incarnation are found at the stage of civilization, a minority at the stage of culture, and the exceptional people at the stages of humanity and ideality. In so far as mankind develops, its leaders come to see the superiority of hylozoics as a working hypothesis. Accordingly, educational systems will be reorganized to cater to the differing possibilities of understanding reality of people at various stages of development.

¹¹Those who have mentally reached the level of perspective thinking will then find it easier to assimilate the results of the research into reality by studying a summary of the principles of the various scientific disciplines, those basic concepts of each discipline which are necessary for its exploration of reality, its methods and system, details inessential to understanding being excluded.

¹²Appropriate school education, paying attention to the children's possibility of consciousness development, presupposes psychologists capable of establishing the developmental stages of the children. As yet psychologists lack all the necessary qualifications for this, above all the esoteric knowledge of the different stages of development. Using their present testing methods, they never reach the latent faculties in the subconscious of the children. It has happened that they have regarded individuals at the stage of humanity as "very little talented and unfit to continue their studies".

¹³Those at the stage of humanity often show little interest in school work, as this cannot arouse interest in whatever seems essential to them. Many of them remain undeveloped, since they cannot take an interest in all these things which they have already assimilated; of course, also because they never get opportunities of remembrance anew. If a child is uninterested, then you should let him try his hand at all sorts of things to establish whether he is on too low or too high a level. If his level is high, then you should grant the child freedom to seek and find his own way and provide him with opportunities of self-instruction in the most varied subjects.

¹⁴Only a causal self can establish the qualities and abilities of the child. This he does by investigating a series of previous incarnations. Only 45-selves can establish the percentages of emotional and mental qualities and abilities, the condition of the various centres in man's different envelopes and which centres primarily need to be developed. It should be clear from what is said here that exoteric education can never be more than random experimentation, and this is especially true of individuals at higher stages of development.

¹⁵They judge the child from his capacity to learn and parrot (his capacity to comprehend) but they are totally unaware of his capacity to understand when this does not manifest itself expressly (when the gift of formulation is lacking).

¹⁶Logical comprehension proceeds from universals to particulars, not the other way round as modern educators seem to believe. They have never understood the psychology of comprehension, and philosophers seem to have forgotten it. Details are for specialists in every subject sphere, not for those who want to acquire the system of knowledge. As long as memory geniuses are regarded as shining lights of intelligence, those who have acquired perspective consciousness will never be estimated at their true value.

¹⁷To a former initiate, the entire education at school is a martyrdom, education primarily meant for those at or near the stage of barbarism. One understands that many young people refuse to participate in such things and then are judged accordingly by their teachers.

¹⁸Pedagogy and psychology, studying the consciousness aspect, are still at an exceedingly primitive stage. In general it can be said that these disciplines satisfy the needs of the great majority. The élite individual, however (belonging to the 15 per cent group), will be a "problem child" and sometimes a "black sheep" (although it will be all right later in life).

¹⁹Between four and seven years of age, the self in the triad envelope learns to use the organism with its etheric envelope. Between seven and twenty-one years the self learns to use the emotional envelope, and between 22 and 28 years the mental envelope, whereupon the self, provided it has reached the stage of culture, should be receptive to causal consciousness. In the sixth period of life (36–42 years), the self as a rule forms that world view and life view which corresponds to that level of development which it has reached and which in most cases is definitive for that incarnation. If the experiences undergone by the self have forced the self to revise the generally accepted view it has automatically taken over, then the result can be a radically new view on reality and life. If no new “crisis” occurs during the ninth period of life (56–63 years), then the individual has reached his point of maturity, whereupon Augoeides takes no further interest in the individual’s development.

²⁰Generally it is only when he has reached the fifth period of life (5x7 years = 35 years) that the individual begins to take an interest in the meaning and goal of life, and in the seventh period of life (7x7 years = 49 years) that he has gained the experience of life necessary for being a teacher of life view. Writers of literature start too early, and therefore they are unable to contribute to mankind’s consciousness development.

7.3 Do We Learn for Life?

¹Most people, who should have had opportunities to develop their own power of reflection, have never learnt to discriminate between what they know and what they do not know nor learnt to withhold their judgement until they have gained knowledge of the real matter in question. This necessity has not been imparted to them as a basic insight, a splendid proof of the uselessness of the training in logic given most people. Instead, you are considered to have a good all-round education if you can produce offhand explanations for everything. But then the opinions of most people are nothing but mistakes. If faced with the natural counter-question to all explanations – what facts have you got for it? – most people would be non-plussed. Most of what most people think to be obvious is (apart from the trivialities of daily experience) erroneous. When mankind has reached that insight, then we shall have acquired common sense. We have a very long way yet to go.

²Most intellectuals are content with the learning they have got during their education, and they are as content to share with others the views they have formed and to display their emotional capacity. Most people seem to have stopped learning when leaving school. This is the fault of the school, which has not even taught them that what the school is supposed to teach is the very proficiency in self-instruction. You learn foreign languages in order to be able to study the pertaining literatures, not in order to feel “educated”. The esoterician makes quite different demands on himself. He wants to liberate mankind from its more or less childish or primitive illusions and fictions and give it a firm basis to build on, a basis guaranteeing security, certainty, widened perspectives, and trust in life. At all events he will not contribute to strengthening the ruling ideologies but to showing the path out of the labyrinth. He will not live by satisfying people’s demands for sensations or amusements that make them superficial. He does not care about money or fame but rather expects the scorn and derision of the world, which is the lot of all pioneers.

³Even though history is largely fictionalism, yet the educated are living in its “intellectual atmosphere”, and you should know something about it if you want to understand the ways of looking at things that derive from history. Let us hope that formal education gives people a preparation so that they are able to orient themselves in modern life. Only the esoterician, however, is able to go beyond that, and even though we cannot foresee how the powers that be will arrange it for us in the immediate future, yet the esoterician can prepare himself for lives to come in order to meet them well equipped.

⁴The esoterician leads his own life in the world of ideas. Life in the physical world, in the world of emotional illusions, and in the world of mental fictions can no longer captivate his

attention, even though it is his sphere of action for his service to mankind. This activity of his is largely destructive, since his help chiefly consists in liberating people from the views forced on them by their environment. It is constructive in so far as it attempts to replace the fictions by reality concepts.

⁵To an esoterician most of the studies done at contemporary schools and universities amount to a waste of time. The present educational methods are suited to individuals at the stage of civilization. They are disastrous, however, to those at the stage of humanity, for they idiotize common sense in the humanists by forcing on them all manner of illusions and fictions from which many of them will never be able to liberate themselves. The only branch of learning that affords real knowledge of at least part of the physical world is natural science. The knowledge of the ancients (esoterics) is not met with in literature, which in so far as it contained something valuable imparted this in symbolic form.

⁶For those who begin studying esoterics it is important to know that there is a risk that they will misapprehend much which they will need to correct later on. This is due to the fact that comprehension goes from universals to particulars and that you cannot comprehend the detail correctly until you have put it into its correct context. This is an educational principle that has been forgotten in modern education. It starts with particulars, and the entire study becomes learning based on memorized details not affording true understanding. This makes modern education insufferable to those who have the learning latently and instinctively demand to know the meaning of the details before they are able to take an interest in them.

⁷Academics seem to think that only doctors and professors understand things and have a right to give their opinions on theological, philosophical, and scientific problems. The esoterician holds the opposite view. Academic education is rather idiotization in the matter of insight into, and understanding of, the problems of reality and life. Universities are specialist schools and their spirit is the guild spirit. By such education nobody reaches the world of ideas or gets into contact with the planetary hierarchy.

⁸People pray for that which they must acquire themselves. They pray for “light” (knowledge) that they cannot receive, knowledge that they can only abuse. Just as in school those in lower classes cannot be taught what is learnt in higher classes, so also in life. Anyone who has not acquired the ability to understand cannot receive but misunderstands, which fact is proved by the ruling ideologies. The light they have received they have turned into darkness. The knowledge they have either distorted or abused. One thing is certain. Nobody needs to pray for “more light”. It is pouring out for those who are able to see. And the blind have no need for the light.

7.4 The Neglected Knowledge of Life

¹School education still seems to consist in cramming perfectly unnecessary facts into the brains of the young. The memory genius still is the real school genius. The truly brilliant minds with latent understanding of life – those who find it difficult to remember all the details, difficult to account for what it says in the book, difficult to rattle off their lesson to be learnt by heart (which they have usually forgotten) – have no prospects of competing with the “school talents”.

²How often do we meet, later in life, individuals who belong to the cultural stage as well as the humanist stage and who can tell about what difficulties they had at school, what martyrdom their whole schooling was, that their teachers marked them as untalented, hopeless cases that would hardly be able to pass the exams!

³What are these people, who are tens of thousands of incarnations ahead of their school fellows, to do with all the rubbish taught at schools, which is useless in life and which everybody hastens to forget as soon as he has passed his exams? What use did they have of learning what people formerly believed, how they formerly behaved, what mistaken views they now hold of most things in life?

⁴Weed out the nonsense and teach the children what they will need to know when they go out into life! That is something quite different from that learning which every specialist teacher thinks vitally important. As it now is, they stand bewildered before the tasks that meet them when they are to find their bearings in social life. They are studded like encyclopedias with useless facts and make mistake after mistake. That old saw, “we learn not for school, but for life”, is typical of these educators who never knew life. Else they would not have “crammed the kids” with such unnecessaries.

⁵At school we should learn knowledge of reality and knowledge of life. What that means teachers do not yet suspect, educated as they are by outdated scholastic and formalist methods. The entire educational system is in need of radical reform. But where is the man? A committee will never succeed.

⁶Educators have every reason to ponder why knowledge does not lead to wisdom, why people have not even learnt to live together without friction. It is typical of disorientation that they have not seen the importance of these problems. Or do we not think that the problem of learning how to live is a basic one? It is not primarily a matter of cramming the kids with loads of facts that they neither understand nor are able to use. Besides, children find it much easier to grasp perspectives in life (as they are “old souls”) than educators who have drowned in their collections of disjointed facts.

⁷What stage of development the child has reached and how we should help him to reach the next higher stage are two questions that the educators of the future will consider essential.

⁸The intellect is not as important in life as educators have thought. This overestimation of mentality has entailed a corresponding underestimation of emotionality, which is incomparably more important. It is by mastering emotionality that the individual makes himself a saint and solves all those problems which make people unhappy, disappointed with life, discontented with most things, helpless in their loneliness and abandonment. If children were taught the very simple lessons to be learnt in these matters, then life would appear quite different to them, whereas they now often end up in pessimism, weariness of life (not to say dread of life), and misanthropy.

⁹Life is a school at which most people fail; if they had understanding of life, they would instead do brilliantly. We are here in order to develop our various kinds of consciousness, so that they may solve our personal problems of life for us.

¹⁰The wrong thing with most people’s attitude to others is that they do not try to enter into what their fellow men think and feel, their view on life. That view on life which a man has is largely conditioned by his level of development and his destiny in life. Anyone who wants to help people with their problems of life must be able to disregard his own view and enter into the view of the man he is going to help. He will not be able to help the man by forcing a view on him which he cannot understand and thus cannot use. That is why the fanatic is unfit to be a helper. He has an infallible recipe, the one and only saving remedy.

¹¹The wise man will take people as they are, will not try to remake them, not try to correct them, not demand from them anything that passes their comprehension. It is a cardinal error to judge other people from yourself. We are all different, since every individual has his own unique character, his own path of development, his own departments, his own horoscope, his own level of development, his own environment where he grew up, his own family, his own friends, his own experiences of life which in most respects are unique, and his own view on those experiences. The longer the individual goes on developing by working his experiences up, the more “individualized” he will become.

¹²Understanding of other people’s individuality is the result of affection, sympathy, desire to understand in order to help, thus the result of studying people for some time. Judging by the “first impression”, by the usual clichés, is evidence of the grotesque ignorance of life ruling.

¹³The possibility of understanding lies in the fact that “the particular is found in the

universal”. But then you must also have assimilated this “universal”.

¹⁴In life after life we make the same mistakes over and again, until the thousands of similar experiences have been gathered into a fund that is so vast that it can express itself as instinct. In each new life we can make any blunder whatever. If our fund of experience is vast enough, however, we do not make the same kind of blunder in the same life. The understanding of this fact formulated the saying, “once is a mistake, twice is stupidity”.

¹⁵It is by making mistakes that we learn. That is also the “method” used by the planetary hierarchy. It puts the individual (and the more often the higher his level) into situations where he is forced to use his emotional and mental powers to the utmost. If he succeeds in these tests, he will be put to new ones. If he fails, then it just shows what is lacking in his equipment. The satanic feature of prevalent theology is that it labels all these more or less unavoidable mistakes unpardonable sins, deserving eternal punishment. That such things still can be accepted indicates the level of mankind’s mental development.

¹⁶It is important that instead of theological fictions and moralist twaddle people are taught what love and hatred means. An analysis of what lies in the two basic urges, attraction and repulsion, would clarify what should be fostered and counteracted.

¹⁷Man’s so-called love of god and of his fellow man is emotional attraction. Such attraction is necessary, for it is the driving power of all noble actions. It is not sufficient, however, for acting wisely, not even for acting prudently. Love without understanding, without the power of judgement, has caused innumerable and the most incredible follies, has brought about an infinite amount of unnecessary suffering for all concerned. Particularly in the matter of upbringing such love is often the ground of wasted lives. Love must be combined with wisdom. Else it can be disastrous.

¹⁸Everybody has a right to his own opinion. That does not mean, however (as some sophists have thought, in the manner of Protagoras), that all individual views are equally correct. On the contrary, the views of most people on most things are erroneous: they do not accord with reality. This is most clearly seen in the opinions of children. People’s views undergo perpetual change. Are all these temporary standpoints equally justified, equally rational? This false idea of equality has the effect that people dislike criticism: “You must be nice” and let children and idiots have their way, do damage to an ever greater extent.

¹⁹It is important that young people find their right places in professional and social life. Otherwise their natural capacities become stunted and they will feel themselves to be misfits. To find one’s right social and cultural environment is also important. A marriage that is the result of a whim (falling in love) perhaps draws the individual into an environment that will choke him, for you marry into a family, which always thinks it has a right to make claims.

²⁰There are many grievous errors in life that people commit in their almost total ignorance of reality.

²¹They think that the meaning of life is pleasure and enjoyment, that we are here in order to “have fun”. Those who think so will be taught something else.

²²Waste of everything and quite particularly of natural resources is characteristic of our time.

²³Scientists are hired in laboratories to constantly impair the quality of all industrial products instead of improving it.

²⁴We are living through the “dictatorship of the proletariat”. Workers work if and when it suits them and demand unreasonable pay for the simplest work.

²⁵In all ages educators have given young people advice only to find, to their astonishment, that the young never follow it. The young have seen how their elders followed it and what the result was.

²⁶They can perhaps be awakened to think for themselves if they are given some summary of the views on mankind held by wise and experienced people. The study of this wisdom, as a rule very hard-earned, may save them many bitter experiences.

²⁷Never confide in anybody! You never know whether he will not abuse your confidence.

²⁸If you cannot keep a secret, then never demand of anybody else to do it.

²⁹Never speak ill of yourself, not even in jest! Others believe it all too readily.

³⁰Never speak ill of anybody! Sooner or later it comes out and you have one more secret enemy.

³¹You can never trust anybody who speaks ill of another, never be certain that he will not speak ill of yourself.

³²“The one half of all life-wisdom consists in saying nothing and believing nothing; the other half, in neither loving nor hating.” (Schopenhauer)

³³Whenever anything emotional enters into the mental, the mental is bungled.

³⁴Never try to convince others! You will never succeed, even though they seem convinced.

³⁵You can fully understand just what is part of your own experience. Everything else is, after all, something uncertain.

³⁶When judging people the most important thing is to determine their stage of development, which has nothing to do with their erudition.

³⁷Understanding is the sum of your experience of life in lives past.

³⁸Keep your thoughts to yourself, keep yourself to yourself!

³⁹The art of listening is one of the most important arts. Practising it, you get for nothing what others know and win their sympathy.

⁴⁰Never show distrust of anybody, let alone superciliousness, arrogance or contempt! In so doing most people get secret enemies without number, not understanding how, and complain that they are misunderstood.

⁴¹Good advice to young and old: Never transgress the limits of other people’s private lives! Everybody has a right to lead his life in peace from the interference and curiosity of other people. Criticism is justified only where relations between individuals are concerned, thus when society enters into them as a legitimate part.

⁴²Morality is the business of the individual and must be distinguished from customs, conventions, and instituted law.

7.5 Purpose and Methods of Upbringing

¹The purpose of upbringing is to enable the individual to fulfil his life task and to develop his consciousness.

²Children are being “civilized” by their “instinct” being led in the right direction towards obeying the laws in everything and respecting the inviolability of everybody.

³Upbringing should not hinder or stifle but help life in its individual formation. Children should be taught to see what a serious error it is to despise and judge others.

⁴Growing up, the child runs through the developmental stages of his previous incarnations: physical, emotional, mental. This repetition, which varies in length, can be inhibited to the detriment of the child. The less friction he meets when developing, the better.

⁵Only he is wise enough to be entrusted with upbringing who has realized the importance of the laws of freedom, unity, self-realization, and reaping or unconsciously applies them.

⁶Self-determination shall not be encouraged in schools. Children shall be taught to see that they are at the stage of learning and that you do not form a mature opinion while you are learning. Anyone who has a settled view stops seeking, ceases to be interested in that series of unsolved problems which always lies before us.

⁷All must be taught some conception of right. Anyone who has not learnt to obey educators, does not understand law, does not learn to respect the right of others. Those who are lacking in judgement and concern for others must by rational and humane persuasion be taught the pertaining “categorical imperatives”. Self-will abolishes freedom.

⁸Nobody should be taught ideas which belong to a higher level than his own and which he cannot understand. Such errors of judgement just breed contempt, lead to a decrease of respect.

⁹You should be wary of prohibiting things. When you have made a prohibition, however, then it must be regarded as a categorical imperative which must not be transgressed without consequences. “Punishments” should have the character of natural law. The best punishments probably consist in the suspension of freedom, right, authority, advantage granted and in the demand of some sort of redress. Everything that violates the personality (amounts to insult, derision, belittlement, contempt, etc.) or engenders fear is unsuitable. The conception of right develops gradually, a process that must start on the lowest level. First must be taught the understanding and respect of law. If the individual does not understand the implacability of natural law, then any conception of right will be based on the notion of the arbitrariness of power and so will be undermined.

¹⁰The sooner this understanding and respect appear in the individual, the greater is the freedom that must be granted to him, for the greater is that right to freedom which the individual proves to possess. In upbringing, mass upbringing in particular, there is no getting away from the necessity of granting privileges to those entitled to them. The talk of equality and the equal rights of all is one of the innumerable mistakes and errors of life ignorance. Every right must be acquired by the individual himself. No right exists without duty and responsibility. If this basic social law is contravened, then the result will sooner or later be social disruption.

¹¹The conception of right is the most important of all conceptions, the basic one for a society ruled by law. It must be inculcated on the child in the school’s first term, if the parents have evinced such great incompetence and ignorance of life that they had not done it already. Children must be taught to see the necessity of social law and to respect the laws they are able to understand. And any other laws should hardly be needed, if the respect of the right of others has simultaneously been inculcated on them.

¹²A true teacher knows instinctively how to do this without resorting to outrageous violence or brutal psychological methods. He knows how to rouse the sense of self-respect and responsibility in the individual and collective responsibility in the class. In a school where reigns the right “school spirit” there shall be no need for intervention even by the individual teacher, but discipline, obedience to law shall be the common duty of all. All answer for all. The school laws, which are in many cases irrational, could then be abolished. School laws should not be made for the “worst elements”. Having offended they should individually be taught the right conception.

7.6 Bringing up Children

¹The child’s first period of life (1–7 years) is a repetition of the development of mankind at the stage of barbarism. As much as individuals at the barbarian stage, children need directions and guidance. By rational playing methods they can be rapidly civilized in the age between 5 and 7 years.

²The individual’s consciousness development generally displays three phases: instinct up to 14 years, sense up to 21 years, reason up to 35 years. Upbringing is to lead instinct in the right direction. That is a thing which parents have largely neglected. And that is why barbarism has been made to prevail without restraint. Children have been allowed to grow up like savages with the instinct that there are no bounds to their self-will and that everything must yield to unrestrained arbitrariness.

³How should modern parents be able to bring their children up when they have never been brought up themselves and do not understand what is meant by upbringing and how necessary this is? Add to this that the courses arranged to teach parents to bring their children up are led by incompetent teachers who are crammed full of totally ineffective psychological dogmas.

⁴There are many instances to prove that very skilled teachers are incompetent at upbringing. To be able to teach is one thing; to be able to guide is quite another; those are two quite different psychological spheres.

⁵“Children are the angels of god.” Ignorance, as usual. Children are old individuals with tens of thousands of incarnations behind them. Educators will get the knack of upbringing only when the knowledge of reincarnation has been allowed to penetrate the entire view on education. Children’s latent qualities are soon actualized and make themselves felt.

⁶You may assume that the child is at the same developmental stage as his parents. There are exceptions to this rule, of course, due to the reaping of parents or child.

⁷Only causal selves can judge the individual case: level of development, meaning of the incarnation, quality of the etheric envelope with the predispositions resulting from it. The family inheritance is important, not just the inheritance from the parents. (The sowing to be reaped remains an inaccessible factor.) The influence of the environment from the first year on has been very little explored with a view to the instinctive tendency to mimicry and parrotry. The habit of unwise parents to speak ill of others in the presence of their children often has deplorable consequences.

⁸At the present stage of mankind’s development, the percentage of bad qualities is as a rule greater than that of good ones, with the effect that the bad qualities are more easily roused in the child by the example of his elders, who are unable to realize this.

⁹Being a child is for most of them an immense strain, especially when they are not understood.

¹⁰Bringing up children is teaching them what they must not do: do not kill (?), do not steal, do not deceive, do not lie, do not slander, etc. But are they taught what they should do? That is more important, for if they know that, they will need no prohibitions. Parents are unwilling to do it, for they scarcely know it themselves, and what they do know they do not act upon. Mankind is not more advanced than that. We understand Diogenes who, with his lantern lit, searched vainly through the market place. When asked as to what he sought, he answered: “Human beings.” Where are they?

¹¹One of the best proofs that educators are unable to understand the human psyche is that they do not see that the monkey instinct is man’s primary and basic instinct: automatic and unconscious imitation, “mimicking and parroting” whatever he sees, hears, grasps. It sinks directly into the subconscious and sooner or later makes itself spontaneously felt in man’s reactions and also views.

¹²Most people yield without resistance to their impulses: physical, emotional, mental ones. The drift of modern upbringing is actually to make the child yield to them; the gravest psychological error man can make. Yielding to physical impulses people become murderers, criminals of all sorts; at first impulses are unintentional, then a tendency is established. Yielding to emotional impulses people learn to address others offensively, to gossip, to slander, etc. Yielding to mental impulses people produce all manner of vagaries. Only when mankind has reached the stage of emotional attraction can consciousness can be allowed spontaneity, for then its impulses are born from the tendency to unity. And only when you have seen mankind’s ignorance of reality will you be spontaneously skeptical of the correctness of your vagaries and will test them by asking yourself, what facts do I have to base my assumption on?

¹³This “laxity” in upbringing is due to the fact that people have begun to see their ignorance of life and do not know what is psychologically right: a consequence of general psychological disorientation after the dissolution of the old systems of conventions which are unable to survive.

¹⁴Injudicious and thoughtless (thinking on the basis of impulses) as most people are, they cannot distinguish between “opinions” (personal views) and “universal experience”. Such a simple rule as never to speak of other people in the presence of children, can hardly be taught to parents. Children believe in all gossip, and its sticks in their memory to their dying day, unless they start reflecting on the blunders of their parents.

¹⁵There are mothers who are so afraid of “losing the love of their children” that they do what

they can to lose it. Fear is no fount of wisdom. Besides, the very notion is based on an illusion. The question is whether children are able to love at all. To be able, they must have reached the higher emotional stage.

¹⁶Those who do not love children should not have any and are not suited to be teachers. But how many parents and teachers have thought that matter over? How many of them are up to the task? Have they thought at all of the thing called responsibility?

¹⁷There is a closely related side of the matter. Those who refuse to bear and rear children because it is too trying, will be reborn, of course, but not in any of the higher “castes”. The refusal to assume responsibility has its consequences. Nobody escapes responsibility for what he does or omits. People really should learn about the laws of life, for they determine their future incarnations.

¹⁸Do we have the right to put anybody to a test that we realize to be beyond his power? That is a question which educators of all kinds should reflect on.

¹⁹Two things every educator must convey to children: the necessity of law and never to violate the rights of others.

²⁰The most important thing in upbringing is to train children to understand the law. You do that best by using as few directions as possible. But those which exist must be upheld. Consistency and firmness are required. It goes without saying that kindness is necessary, if the best natural abilities of the child are to develop. It is difficult to bring children up. And it is the business of the parents. It is their fault if their children learn to lie and dissemble. Badly brought-up parents cannot bring children up. And most adults are badly brought up.

²¹Anyone who has not learnt to obey acquires disrespect and contempt for anything of the nature of authority and law and is by that alone a potential lawbreaker. “Modern” upbringing leads in its consequences to social disruption. The old system of upbringing, using hard treatment to inculcate the concepts of right on the young, was an appeal to violence conflicting with that true conception of right which is in the law of freedom. The best way of teaching concepts of right to young people is to use loving authority: to be kind, consistent, firm, and to appeal to the children’s own judgement. Primitive concepts of right can be conveyed to everybody, since they are latent in everybody even at the stage of barbarism. Kindness without firmness, goodness without law, leads to self-will and arbitrariness.

²²Upbringing is upbringing to responsibility, to self-responsibility, and is not concluded until the individual has fully realized that. The individual is a responsible member of a society which ideally is designed to offer opportunities of further development to everybody. This is made impossible in a lawless society. It is the business of lawyers, not of priests, to give young people knowledge of laws necessary for frictionless social life. The lawyer has been absent in modern school education. The child does not need religion but social training that makes him a loyal, law-abiding, responsible member of the community. There are other ways of making the child realize that he should not murder, steal, deceive, slander, etc., than by the so-called commandments of god. They are, quite simply, the necessary conditions for a social organization, for the continuance of a community. “By law shall ye build your land.” That law is civil law and needs no additions in the form of “commandments of god”, which people reject when they doubt the existence of god. This coupling of law with religion has been devastating. The law of Moses was the only method of inculcating legal rules on a primitive nation. But it is patent adulteration when these rules are called the commandments of god. God commands or prohibits nothing. Train the child to be a law-abiding citizen and he will meet with god’s approval!

²³The purpose of upbringing is to cultivate the organism so that it becomes healthy, strong, and harmonious; to cultivate emotional life so that the individual loves everything noble and beautiful, that he inspires those around him to a life of service, that he sympathizes with other people in their joys and sorrows, until he loves his elders as his parents, those of his own age as his brothers and sisters, and his youngers as his children, that he joyously sacrifices himself

for a great cause or for the defenceless; to cultivate the intellect so that it will be able to form independent judgements or at least rational judgements.

²⁴The goal of man is to become a causal self and to pass to the fifth natural kingdom. But the means of reaching the goal is to activate mental consciousness. This everybody does in his own manner. In any case it is nothing that concerns others. Moralists think they have a right, take a right, to blame others, judge others. That is one of the greatest mistakes man can make. It violates one of the laws of life that is particularly important in the human kingdom: the law of freedom, which grants to everybody the right to think, feel, say and do as he wants within the limits of the equal right of all. It is these limits that upbringing must clarify to the children.

²⁵At all events freedom is in all respects a necessary condition. All measures that curtail freedom in political, social, economic respect war against the Law. That is perhaps the first lesson that mankind has to learn. That axiom is valid also in the upbringing of children. The fact that modern upbringing has gone bankrupt is not the fault of its principle, but of its totally senseless application. Educators have the responsibility that children are brought up, are given knowledge of reality and life, of laws of nature and laws of life. Modern upbringing is no upbringing at all. Children are at the stage of barbarism, and when growing up they run through those levels of development which they covered in previous incarnations. Coming of age thus in reality corresponds to the regaining of latent understanding, the reacquisition of those latent qualities and abilities which the new life is designed to develop further.

²⁶There is an unfailing indication of a wrong intention or goal, abortive method, etc., and that is violation of the law of freedom, particularly in political life. It is another matter altogether that education must be used in the matter of those who have not understood the necessity of law. But then it shall be adequate education and no punitive methods, which are always abortive. No methods will avail against true evil. Such phenomena are very rare, however, and belong rather under the category of "obsession".

²⁷The child should grow up in an atmosphere of loving understanding, patience on the part of parents, brothers and sisters, and orderly activity. Moralists ruin the child's conception of right with their unwarranted commands and prohibitions instead of clarifying that what is really wrong is to infringe on the rights of others in order to appropriate unjust advantages. In a spirit of understanding fear disappears and so the child is given an opportunity to understand.

²⁸Moralism is demands. Man is not allowed to be himself but must be something else. All demands are hostile to life, since they violate that right of self-determination which inheres in the law of freedom. According to morality, man shall be such as manners, customs, conventions, the ruling religion or ideology prescribe; he shall think and feel as all the others. Else he is a failure and will be condemned. These outer demands imperceptibly turn into inner demands with the effect that man throughout his life walks about with a bad conscience and with a rope round his neck. As against uncalled-for namby-pamby educational theory and practice, however, it may be stated that the lower the level of development the individual is at, the less is his ability to use his reason. And children must be taught to understand Life and Law before they are set free. Otherwise there is a risk that they will develop into the despots of self-will and the gangsters of society.

²⁹To teach children to "fear" god is to teach them to hate him. You cannot love the one you fear. Respect can be either fear or reverence. Those who fear the punishing power that can condemn them walk about throughout their lives with the sword of Damocles above their heads.

³⁰Once in a while you may hear young people say: "I haven't asked to come here into this world." Then you may answer: "That is precisely what you've done. Else you wouldn't be here. What you say shows that you don't understand the matter and that you don't understand what a great sacrifice your parents made who arranged for you to come here. Take care so that you won't be born among the Hottentots next time. Ungrateful people may not choose at all. You may be glad that you've been given new opportunities to get to know life. That is a thing you're

forced to do anyhow through no end of incarnations which you can never escape.”

³¹Modern upbringing avoids fostering reverence for our parents. But that feeling is of great value for the children. It is a noble quality, necessary to reach the stage of culture.

³²Children make a grave mistake if they blame their parents for physical defects they have inherited from them. Children are born into precisely such families in order to inherit such defects (according to the law of reaping).

³³Children seldom show gratitude to their parents for everything they have done for them. Can they not be taught to see that parents make great sacrifices for their children? They give individuals opportunities to continue their interrupted consciousness development, to have new experiences and to learn from them, opportunities which most people fail to use in the right way. Parents have endless trouble and untold worries for their children. As a reward they may, as grandparents, be babysitters and otherwise be set aside.

³⁴Gratitude is no quality that you get for nothing. It must be acquired through feelings of admiration and affection.

³⁵People lead their lives as mental monkeys, recording machines, without trying to think their own thoughts. Everything they say is parrotry. You must feed them with thoughts, for they do not care to think them themselves even when they would be able to do so. They have no idea of the economy of life, if they believe that the mother's sufferings and troubles with her children, the parents' sacrifices, etc. have had the object of turning the children into mental robots that do not learn anything from life and so throw away one incarnation after the other.

³⁶As ignorant as people are of reality and life, as inoculated all are from childhood with the illusions and fictions of life ignorance, life must be one long series of disappointments. Nothing squares with what they have been taught. Everything is so different. Wise parents and teachers teach children to see this. Anyone who does not expect anything from life will be spared all these disappointments that embitter the lives of most people. In all ages the wise have all reached the insight that when life is at its best it is “work and toil”. The more needs we get, the more we complicate our lives, the more difficult it will be to live expediently. The less needs we have got, the simpler and easier our lives are. There is nothing more perverse than the illusion that the meaning of our existence is to lead a pleasant life in luxury and amusements. The meaning of life is development, the evolution of all, for we all depend on each other, and all laggards become a hindrance to the common development, a constant threat to civilization as well as culture. That is a lesson we should have drawn from the convulsions of our times, revolutions that have brought mankind to the verge of annihilation.

7.7 Purpose and Methods of School Education

¹The right school education is to teach the young to use their reason expediently, to teach them how to think for themselves, not to cram their memories with facts easily accessible in encyclopedias. Amazingly little needs to be “crammed up” when children have been taught where to find the facts. It is necessary to orient them in the existing literature of various subjects. The prime task of a teacher is to arouse the interest in self-instruction. It is self-activation that yields the lasting profit, and that is counteracted by the passivizing “feeding method” currently used. The task of the teacher is to help the children to help themselves.

²Society requires exams, certificates to prove that the individual has the necessary training. That is unavoidable. But many people seem to think that exams are necessary for their own development, which is a great error. The education you have got by self-instruction is often much more appropriate, provided you have studied systematically. You are spared so much unnecessary reading that goes with examinations and that you have not the slightest use of later, whether in life or for understanding life.

³It is not the indigestible food you gorge yourself with that is important but what you need in the nutritive sense. And the same principle applies for intellectual food. It is more important

that you assimilate the contents of one weighty work thoroughly than that you read a hundred books cursorily. Such books as you are never “through with” are the only ones you need to have in your bookshelf. On reading such a book through again you have deepened your knowledge and got new materials for reflection. This very activity – thinking for yourself, reflecting on what you have read – is the important thing and the actual purpose of reading. Otherwise you never learn how to think, you just learn how to parrot what others have said. But if you learn how to think for yourself, you will never be a slave to public opinion, that thoughtless mass thinking which is the enemy of consciousness development.

⁴A good rule in education is that the teacher asks questions before he teaches. Then it will be easier for him to adapt his information. The important thing is to direct attention to the problem, so that the pupils are aroused to reflect, not fed with such things as they should be able to discover for themselves. This requires patience, not superiority.

⁵Educational practice up till now has been authoritative, which is a psychological error. By being taught to parrot, children are hindered from thinking for themselves, and so we get would-be wisdom, sententiousness, and belief in authority. Parents are wrong, for “the teacher said so”, and he or she knows best. And so parents are taught by their children: a frequent phenomenon.

⁶Parents should ask their children, not children their parents. For questions put to them cause them to reflect and take the initiative in consciousness activity. The teacher should ask the pupils questions and beg them to think the matter over until next time. That is a good method of arousing their interest. Arranging a discussion in class and then summing up the result of the discussion causes the children to think for themselves and widens their knowledge, their understanding of other people’s ways of looking at things.

⁷Educators should long ago have seen that the ignorant cannot ask questions that can be answered rationally, and they should have learnt from that insight. Above all this is a thing that children should be made to see as early as possible, which would avail them much in life, help them not to be the victims of their own freaks. So doing they would be spared many blunders in life. Most simply the matter is formulated so: “You cannot ask the right questions until you know the right answers.” That sounds like a paradox and also is one, as is so much else in esoterics. The more you know of a thing, the more “intelligent” are the questions you can ask. That is true of reality and everything in reality. And people have no idea of how far from reality they are. The only reality they are in a position to study is the physical one. It seems absurd to them that there is a material world of emotions and a material world of thoughts, that emotion is a material form with an energy effect, etc. They cannot even give a rational definition of what emotion is.

7.8 The Teacher

¹The basic shortcoming of educational theory is the belief that the teacher exists only to teach the pupils facts, that teaching merely consists in appealing to the children’s intellect. At the emotional stage, knowledge is imparted through loving understanding. Mentality is vitalized through emotionality. That is a basic axiom in esoteric educational science. In “born” educators this latent insight makes itself felt instinctively and automatically. It is such teachers that we remember with reverence and gratitude.

²You should be “born” to the profession you choose. As a rule, those who “have their professions latently” neither wish to be nor can be something else. It does not demonstrate understanding of life to be influenced by irrelevant motives when choosing your profession. You will not become a teacher by taking a course in instruction. First you must acquire knowledge yourself. Then you must acquire the ability to communicate your knowledge to others. That is a special art, the educational art, which it may take several incarnations to master. It is not easy to meet everybody on the level where he is and adapt your mode of presentation so that he will comprehend. Many school-children having that ability could teach better than

their teacher. Those who choose the teaching profession without that ability, just for “their bread and butter”, are failures as teachers, to the detriment of those whom they are to instruct. Regrettably, there are all too many teachers of that type. Many of them are also able to arouse disgust for the subjects they teach, which can lead to aversion to all studying.

³Original persons may be very interesting for those who already know and understand. But they are unsuitable as teachers or instructors. A “born” teacher proceeds from universals (universally known things) to particulars and then from particulars back to universals. He makes sure that everybody has been able to follow his demonstration by asking afterwards if there is anybody who has not understood, explaining at the same time that those who have not understood do the teacher a service as an educator by acknowledging this. The learned, who think that everything is simple and easy to grasp, are unsuitable as teachers.

⁴It is rather frequently seen that the best teachers are those who “had a hard time at school”. It is the same with writers on esoterics when they have once learnt their lessons. The “intuitive” person (having perspective consciousness) finds it difficult to concretize, which a teacher must be able to do. That art makes the politician a demagogue, since he can fascinate the masses with his extremely simplified treatment of political problems. He can present them so that the masses think they comprehend even the most difficult problems. They do not in the least suspect that they have been idiotized. This suggestion also works on otherwise “sensible” people, so that they cannot see anything else. This is obviously the case with the Marxists, who cannot possibly discover the basic shortcomings of their patently untenable ideology. They have so often and for so long been thinking in the mental grooves of Marx that they have lost the ability to think differently. In that manner the most absurd fiction is turned into an *idée fixe*. The same observation can be made throughout the history of philosophy.

⁵Teachers, at least, should be alive to the fact that all children are “old souls”, who have incarnated thousands of times before. Then it depends on various factors how much they are able to understand immediately or learn to understand with more or less labour. It may depend on what level of development they have already reached or on their organisms (general health or sickness, efficiency or dysfunction of their brains, etc.). It may depend on the environment they are growing up in with everything which that implies. It may depend on the degree of their interest in studying. And it depends very much on the teacher and his instruction. If teacher and child have “antagonistic” departments in their envelopes, then the child will need another teacher.

7.9 Conditions for Higher Education

¹The educational methods of our times counteract independent thinking. They start from the superstition that we acquire knowledge of reality by knowing more and more facts. “Hundreds of scattered and disjointed facts are crammed into the heads of pupils; their time and energy are consumed in learning more and more facts, so that but little is left for their own thinking ... knowledge can be as great a hindrance to thinking as a lack of it.” (Fromm)

²A serious shortcoming of educational practice is the failure (due to life ignorance) to inculcate, as early as in primary school, that “sufficient facts” are necessary for forming opinions, making assumptions or suppositions. It is high time for counteracting the bad practice prevalent of taking guesswork to be true explanations, an abuse that will follow you all your life, even if you have studied at a university. You will need just a slight experience of university life to be astonished at the gullibility of students. The silliest stories are swallowed without protest. Little wonder that they are so easily idiotized by past and present “authorities”.

³Higher education (precisely higher) should aim at teaching people how little man comprehends and understands. Instead, they put on airs in their pride of learning, which is the reason why contempt of so-called expert knowledge is gaining ground more and more. Nothing impresses an esoterician as much as when a great man acknowledges his enormous ignorance.

From “dii minores” (the “lesser gods”) he will expect nothing.

⁴The result of intellectual training, the power of judgement, is not greater than that you daily meet people who know everything better in matters of which they know nothing at all. They have not learnt to tell what they know and what they do not know, have never asked themselves: “What facts do I have for it?” Somebody has told them! They have read it! And then they know it.

⁵The great contribution Sokrates made more than two thousand years ago was that he tried to make people realize that they “know nothing” (of reality). That realization is the first condition of grasping esoterics. Anyone who thinks he is able to judge, thinks that he is wise, is unsuitable for esoterics. The giants of exoteric research would be even greater could they realize their irremediable limitation. Then Einstein would not have been that certain of his conclusions about relativity. (Besides, time has no dimension, and there are more than “four dimensions”.)

⁶What is wrong with the intelligentsia is their inordinate faith in their own capacity. They have found it easy to master whatever they took an interest in. And from this follows easily the great mistake of believing that they comprehend everything else. They certainly have the prerequisites, have acquired knowledge and mastery of most things in previous incarnations. Then their instinctive certainty remains and inspires them with their unwarranted self-confidence and boldness. Their mistake, however, is that they do not actualize whatever they have latently. For it is necessary to make a new contact with those realities which they once knew, a new study of it, even though it be rapidly done. However, it always requires work to actualize latent knowledge and power. That is a point they have not yet grasped.

⁷We can turn everything into valuable experience. We can learn from everybody, but the “learning” of another cannot be anything but assumption until we have ascertained the facts for ourselves.

7.10 Choosing a Profession

¹Those who have chosen their professions for their bread and butter remain “mechanics” in their vocations, whatever they be. Anyone who is not “born to it”, remains an amateur. Only when your work “is your life”, which you must live for, even though under privations, only then have you chosen the right profession, only then will you have a prospect of becoming a “talent” and in some future life a “genius” in your field.

²It is a mistake by university students to choose their study subjects with a view to the prospects of income and social career. We need a new view on life with a sense of responsibility, so that we learn to distinguish between “profession” and “calling” (the latter being the activity by which we best benefit evolution).

³Anyone who wishes to contribute to human consciousness development and “culture” should not merely acquire those qualities and abilities, that knowledge of reality and that understanding of life which are required, but is also wise to avoid everything that can make his work more difficult. It is a matter of simplifying everything, not complicating it, of not assuming unnecessary duties, of not trying to do work that others can do with lesser equipment.

⁴The profession you choose should be able to support you, should give you opportunities of independent work, should benefit the whole. If your work also ties you together with your fellow men, then you have probably made the best possible choice.

⁵An incredible amount of professional knowledge acquired during generations has been lost through social mobility and the desire of new generations to choose another profession considered to be more respectable and profitable.

7.11 Memorization versus Judgement Training

¹In education the thing is to inculcate principles designed to be the fundamentals of thought and action. Facts are important just in so far as they are required for principles. (This has no bearing on the “firmness of principles” found in pedants who are incapable of perspective

thinking. The word “principle” has of course been idiotized, as usual.) And principles should precede facts, which have only the function of clarifying, making us understand the principles. Modern education, based on the inductive method, overloads the memory with an infinitude of superfluous details that are useless in life or even hostile to life and that leave the young in the lurch when they are to judge things. Study history or the leading figures of our times! Has their knowledge made them any wiser? Does not the immense variety of prejudice, opinions, sects, parties, idiosyncrasies demonstrate their inability of perspective thinking?

²Teachers do that reflective work which their pupils should learn to do. This fosters the tendency to parrotry, to say just what you have heard from others. Instead, teachers should counteract the mental inactivity of most people by stimulating mental self-activity. People go to church in order to hear the priest explain the same text as they have heard dozens of times before and which does not teach them anything new, just strengthens their old fictions.

³In generation upon generation, in various types of schools, young people are taught on the whole nothing but illusions and fictions about reality and life.

⁴The universities demonstrate “all the oddities of the school on an enlarged scale, an even more brutal overloading with meaningless masses of knowledge and an even more abderian examination system”.

⁵Being educated through such a system, most people are made unable to think. They are fed with notions which are then repeated for them daily from the memory fund of what they have read, heard, learnt. They become the slaves of memory to such an extent that most people believe that thinking is remembering.

⁶This “having done one’s homework”, which is typical, is something quite different from understanding the very subject-matter. Memory geniuses can reach all posts in our present society; they can become professors, bishops, governors etc., if they are just able to make a lot out of nothing, knowing what others have learnt. No consciousness development is achieved in that manner, however; indeed one’s incarnation is by and large wasted.

⁷School examinations could safely be abolished. The knowledge and judgement of the pupils could be justly tested in suitable accounts written by them. And for a university degree, it should suffice for the student to write a corresponding report where not his memory but his knowledge and judgement of the entire subject were tested. There is no risk for plagiarism in this procedure, since a competent professor would at once discern whether the reports were the results of independent thought and individual treatment.

7.12 Robot Thinking

¹It seems to be part of human nature that all and everybody spontaneously express opinions before they know what they are speaking about. You hear it already when children talk. What is worse, the school does not point this tendency out to the children. And worse still, even those who have university educations express opinions in matters of which they know nothing. Our educational system has entailed that the individual thinks that he knows enough to have a correct view of most things, which is a colossal mistake. Most of what he knows is false, and most of his views are mistaken. Each new generation has quite another view of life, since the knowledge of reality and life expands. This should mean something to those who are able to think anything else than what they have learnt from others. Individual thoughts seem to be rare. When the experienced man hears people talk, he can always tell from where they have got the thoughts they believe to be their own merely because they are able to express them with their own words. All mankind’s thinking is robot thinking, an unceasing repetition of what others have said.

²At the universities they learn what it says in the books. And they become doctors when they are able to pluck together what it says in various books, say the same thing in another manner and in other contexts. That, too, is robot thinking. He thinks himself wise who knows what it

says in encyclopedias. School geniuses are memory geniuses who can perfectly restate what others have thought and written. That is not knowledge, however. It is learning which will be refuted in a hundred years if not before.

³What would be the result if people learnt to think for themselves and not just parroted others; if they asked themselves and sought for the answers themselves? Have they ever been taught what is meant by knowing something? Their own experience is what they know. Everything else is parrotry. And parrotry is not knowledge but belief in knowledge. What they have been taught at school and at the universities is what has been assumed to be correct. It is a fund of amassed parrotry. By what criteria do they deem this to be correct? Ten years from now they will teach something else. And all are as great believers. They are educated. They know what others know. How remarkable! They read in books what others have thought. But how can they know that others have thought right? Learning is parrotry. What is right today is wrong tomorrow. Exaggeration! Certainly, but more correct than most are able to realize.

⁴If scientists could think (something quite different from thinking what others have thought), then they should see their enormous ignorance of reality. If physicians could think, then they should incessantly ask themselves how and why instead of being content with what it says in the books. “How do wounds heal” and “what processes are then going on” and thousands of similar questions leave the medical man stuck for an answer. “We don’t know.” If they asked the questions themselves, they would soon realize that their science deals with “mysteries”. To see one’s limitation is the sign of common sense. To never stop seeking further and further is the sign of a researcher.

7.13 Deduction

¹In olden times the word “philosopher” was used to denote a learned man, who had assimilated the learning of his age, and such a man was often called a polymath. This is nowadays considered impossible, and of course it is, if all detailed knowledge is intended. But then that depends on the fact that the basic principles of the various sciences have not been clarified in well-arranged and lucid systems. This will prove to be more and more necessary in order to counteract the chaos ruling both within the various disciplines and in their mutual relations. The sciences must strive towards “synthesization” and not drown in detailed knowledge.

²Just as “education is what remains when you have forgotten what you learnt at school”, so mental sovereignty is the ability to think with the systems of the various knowledge branches without details. Should details be needed, they can be rapidly picked up in scientific literature.

³The old “educational theory” started from the understanding that comprehension proceeds from universals to particulars, that the deductive method is the most efficient one for teaching. Regrettably, this method was practised by absurd fossils, as a rule theologians who had not the least idea of psychology or pedagogy, and the result was as might be expected. When they then decided to reform the educational system, they made a clean sweep of all the old things, not understanding what was the essential and only valuable thing in the old education. They kept what should have been weeded out and vice versa. Everything was to be reformed from the bottom. And they decided to imitate the research method used in natural science.

⁴Natural research is inductive, proceeds from particulars to universals, making generalizations. In geography, for instance, they begin with their own country, later on even their own house, instead of starting from the earth’s globe, which at once would have made it possible to put their country and house into the right context. The result was, of course, that the earth’s globe, our planet, was a foggy concept and that they lost their sense of essentials. It was the same in all subjects, and they did not understand that in so doing they counteracted the development of perspective thinking and were more and more restricted in their thinking, which, logically, had the result that “their own house” was the only thing they understood.

⁵How abortive present education is appears best in the fact that not even people who have finished high school have been able to grasp the basic concepts of *The Knowledge of Reality*.

⁶The old esoteric teaching method, which is probably still used to a great extent, was to give the disciple one fact at a time to meditate on until he had realized its immediate significance. That was a method well suited to the neophytes in an age where general analytical capacity hardly existed. The question is whether another method would not be preferable nowadays. When the beginner has mastered the very system with its basic facts, it should be left to the disciple to insert new facts into their right contexts, a thing he should be able to do, if the system has become mentally alive and is not too much of a skeleton.

⁷It will probably be a long time yet before esoteric high schools and universities are founded. But the idea should be kept alive until the time is ripe.

⁸Meanwhile, modern education should change from the inductive to the deductive method, since it is now possible to deduce knowledge from the systems, and in world view and life view (“philosophy”) from the Pythagorean system. This satisfies an important psychological and educational factor. The mode of presentation will be much easier to grasp, simpler and more interesting for the children. When you start from a summary, you give it all a meaning, which the children otherwise never catch sight of. The notion that children cannot comprehend and follow such a method is educational superstition.

7.14 *Unnecessary School Subjects*

¹There are school subjects from which the esoterician should like to liberate children. These include religion, Latin, Greek, and history. History of religion should be replaced by basic knowledge of laws (possibly in connection with a study of sociology), which explains that lawlessness leads to a dog-eat-dog condition, which makes an ordered society impossible. The Jewish commandments (the Decalogue of Moses) are no “divine commandments”. In all forgotten cultures they were self-evident knowledge: not to murder, steal, deceive, slander, etc.

²If knowledge of law and social ability were school subjects instead of Christian religion, then young people would learn how to live with others without friction instead of imbibing useless religious fictionalism.

³The ancient world, Greece in particular, exhibits architectural and sculptural art that is still unsurpassed. In the matter of understanding life and the art of living, however, the study of antiquity cannot be compared to that insight which the knowledge of the laws of life affords. In that respect it rather has a disorienting effect and is no defence for the study of Latin and Greek.

⁴There are certainly grains of gold, aphoristic pearls, in Latin and Greek literature. But they are few and far between except in Platon, Epiktetos, Marcus Aurelius, etc.

⁵That “humanism”, which can be picked up in homeopathic doses in Latin and Greek literature, is in esoterics presented in an incomparably more evident manner in connection with the knowledge of the laws of life.

⁶The esoterician, having access to the esoteric literature, does not need to resort to the “classic” authors (Greek and Latin literature) in order to assimilate their humanism, which itself originated from initiates of esoteric knowledge orders. Left to himself, man has never been able to orient himself rationally in life. The knowledge of life has been given to us by the planetary hierarchy, which has watched over human consciousness development during more than 15 million years (ever since the organism was perfected and men were able to live in the physical world).

⁷The knowledge of this fact has the effect that the immense burden that the study of Latin and Greek implies may be dropped and the study time be used for studies that are more expedient and necessary for fitness in life. Greek and Latin are necessary for philologists and literary researchers but not for “historical education”. That can be acquired in the esoteric history only.

⁸Of course the study of the Latin language is important for those who want to ransack the records, or study the Romance languages, or understand the multitude of metaphors in old imaginative literature. But it should be possible to learn it in a much simpler way than the traditional one. We still lack that language teacher who conveys to his pupils everything necessary for comprehension in the simplest possible manner. This lack has always been the shortcoming of language study. It has been made unnecessarily complicated.

⁹If that energy which is still expended on dead languages for the study of old forms of culture were used for the study of the esoteric literature, then we would be liberated from the immense burden of the old literary heritage, and a new culture would flower forth, this time based on the knowledge of reality.

¹⁰History consists mostly of legends and for the rest of stories about people at or near the stage of barbarism. These are not edifying reading but rather have a disorienting effect in life. History should be replaced by sociology, and philosophy of history by history of ideas.

¹¹Western historians lack the knowledge of our true world history. After the downfall of Atlantis, only initiates of esoteric knowledge orders had knowledge of reality. That knowledge was kept secret until the planetary hierarchy considered the time ripe for publicizing it, which has been done to an ever increasing extent after the year 1875.

¹²It is true that initiates were not allowed to give out what they knew, but they could put the ability they had acquired to use for mankind. This is the explanation for the relatively high culture of Greece and Rome. As we know, it went down in the proletarian revolution that followed. The clans that subsequently incarnated largely belonged at the stage of barbarism. Some few individuals at higher stages incarnated, of course, but they met with very little understanding, and most of them were victims of the barbarism of the theologians.

¹³Apart from those results at which natural research has arrived within its limited sphere (49:5-7), and which must not be judged from the technological applications (which mislead people), it may be said that everything that is not esoterics is fictionalism. To an esoterician it is almost painful to study the works of exoterists with all their fictions, so far from reality.

¹⁴To try to explain esoterics to educated people is almost a hopeless enterprise. Even more ridiculous appears the defence of the first esotericians that the teaching agreed with reality. You do not teach higher mathematics to small children nor defend mathematics against the deficient understanding of the immature.

¹⁵The study of foreign languages makes the study of the pertaining literature possible. Scientific literature excepted, we may ask ourselves what knowledge of reality and life we can gain from people who, being without esoteric knowledge, are unable to judge the realities of life.

¹⁶Another curiosity of our educational system is the required writing of essays in various subjects. There are many latent esotericians who well master the aphorism but lack the ability to embellish it with all the inessentials that are required in order to produce a long essay, all this that does not actually belong to the idea. Essayists suit well to be journalists or novelists. We have all too many of such people. It is not the purpose of the school to train them.

¹⁷Instead of studying philosophy at school they ought to be taught how to tell what you know from what you do not know, can know and cannot know, how little you can know at all, the difference between comprehension and understanding.

¹⁸Just as all university students in the 18th century had to study theology, in the 19th century philosophy, so now in the 20th century the tendency is that all should study higher mathematics. It starts already in secondary school. This is sheer absurdity. We have come into a complete craze for mathematics. Mathematics is for natural scientists but not for "humanists". The latter have no need in life even for algebra or planimetry. It is high time that all scholastic tendencies still remaining from medieval times were weeded out. You should not be forced to study things for which you do not have any use. Of course, it is part of your general education to know a

little about astronomy, geology, biology, etc. But all detail knowledge is just for specialists in becoming.

¹⁹The old school system prepared for a cult of learning that was an end in itself. The learned lived in their own imaginative constructions without any contact with reality. However, all education should aim at imparting the skill not just of understanding reality but also of living a purposeful life in order to realize the meaning of life.

²⁰We need esoteric schools and universities so that those who can comprehend and understand may be spared idiotization by the ruling ideologies.

7.15 Laurency as an Educator

¹Critics of Laurency will waste their words on their notion that his writings contain too much repetition. They are mistaken. New ideas are easily forgotten if they are not put into all conceivable contexts. The ancient Romans, too, knew that “repetitio est mater studiorum”. By being repeated ideas finally “go home”, so that they are always there when needed. An outlook so totally different from the traditional one is not learnt at once. Repetition is necessary. Precisely by being woven into various contexts the ideas are illustrated from all sides and can be understood. The fact that the ideas can be woven into everything shows that they are correct. Anyone who thinks that it is enough to present them once has never examined that problem. Experience shows which readers have read through the Laurency literature once, twenty times or one hundred times. There are very big differences in understanding.

²Time and again it can be ascertained that not even doctors are able to read. They do not see what is written. They just see what they already know and the rest passes them by. One wonders how many have understood that it is all a matter of common sense. It is better to be a skeptic than to accept what you do not realize to be true. Credulity has always been the curse of mankind.

³There really are readers of Laurency who have not understood that his works are one single uninterrupted attempt to help people to acquire common sense and thereby to free them from being victims of their own credulity. Esoteric knowledge is only for those who must have a firm world view as a basis for their life view and conception of right. As a rule, that need is not felt until the individual has reached the humanist stage and has left the emotional stage behind him. It is a mistake to make propaganda for esoterics among those who do not have the qualifications for understanding it. Esoterics is for seekers who were once initiates and cannot find any firm ground to stand upon until they retrieve their ancient knowledge.

7.16 Latent Esotericians

¹Man is born with his individual character and with latent (acquired) qualities and abilities. Then it largely depends on his environment, contacts, and opportunities for experiences how much of his latency will be actualized. Many people are surprised at the fact that born esotericians are often incomprehensible and hard to handle as children, almost seem worse than others. That is quite natural. If they are born into an environment whose world view and life view are quite different from their latent ideas of reality and life, in a milieu that idiotizes them and deprives them of contacts, then they become totally disoriented, do not know their bearings and become desperate or at least anti-conventional.

²Esoteric children often have more difficulties in school than other children. What is being taught is generally against their instinct of life and seems strange and disagreeable to them, and so they generally lose their interest in everything connected with study. They feel as strangers, are as a rule misunderstood by both teachers and fellow pupils and are regarded as eccentrics, which fact makes their life even more difficult during their adolescence. Perhaps they never “wake up” or they do it “too late” to reach their latent level. The understanding of this explains how impossible it is to judge oneself and others right, which is seen in the under- and over-

estimation constantly met with. But then people's opinions of each other are largely due to emotional assessment. The question remains whether we must form an opinion when we have seen the difficulties involved therein. The wise refrain from judging when circumstances do not compel them.

³In incarnation upon incarnation the members of the human élite (those once initiated into esoteric knowledge orders) in most cases (excepting the few born into "esoteric families") were made to grow up in ignorance of the knowledge they once acquired, were made to work their way through the ruling ideologies and learn to see their untenability until, at about 35 years, they had developed mentally so far as to be eligible to join anew any order authorized by the planetary hierarchy. In order to facilitate the remembrance of the latent knowledge it is important that this will be ever more easily accessible to the rising generation, so that the "initiated" are spared the toilsome work of having to set themselves free from those fiction systems with which they were inoculated during childhood and adolescence (some twenty wasted years), are able to continue their interrupted consciousness activation already in youth and join that "new kingdom in nature" destined to facilitate their transition from the fourth to the fifth natural kingdom. These individuals are recognized by their independence of all illusions and fictions, of ruling theological, philosophical, scientific ideologies, their serving attitude and their work for the evolution of mankind. Most members of this "kingdom" were once initiates or are disciples of the planetary hierarchy.

⁴Our modern schools are nothing for these old initiates. What is being taught there does not interest them at all and does not benefit them much. The best they can do is to forget everything they have learnt, if they should indeed remember anything. To students who in previous incarnations acquired consciousness in the intelligence centre of their causal envelope and so are causally intuitive concerning material facts, education starting from the learning of more or less irrelevant fragmented facts is utterly trying. Details without significance for the world view and life view; isolated expert knowledge having no connection with life, affording no knowledge of the meaning of life; it all seems meaningless and inessential to them. They find the slowly progressing discursive teaching boring and unintelligent. No wonder such an individual definitively loses his desire to learn and lags behind in his class. How many teachers comprehend that?

⁵Jinarajadasa, president of the Theosophical Society, tells about himself that he lacked what they call a "gift for studies", faculty of memorization, memory for loose, unconnected facts, so that his teachers considered him very mediocre. That is probably the rule where all true geniuses are concerned. It is quite another matter with "school geniuses". If they have energy for studies, they generally become professors or reach the corresponding posts in society. No genius is necessary for that, however; it is rather a hindrance. Those who are before their times are stopped very soon. And those who have all that latently which the school intends to teach them find school-work insufferable. To perspective consciousness, discursive thinking is unbearably tiresome: that logical harping for weeks on something evident.

⁶Most teachers are narrow specialists who consider their subject to be the most important and every detail essential. They are very unsuitable for esotericians to whom survey is more important than details available in reference books. If they are taught how to use such books they will find what they need to know by themselves. They need principles, methods, perspectives in order to proceed from the system to the details, from universals to particulars. The opposite method, from particulars to universals, is for those at the stage of civilization.

⁷There are children who hunger for knowledge and just want to know; there are others who want to comprehend and understand. Then there are also uninterested children, partly unteachable ones, partly such children as desire to understand without having to comprehend through details. Esotericians often belong to the last category. Having been taught the most elementary basic skills (reading, writing, arithmetic), they are fully capable of acquiring by themselves the necessary learning about everything they need to know in order to make their

contribution in life. Without exams they are “independent scholars” good enough to compete with the most learned people in those branches of knowledge in which they are interested. The only thing you have to do is to afford them the right environment and put the right books into their hands.

⁸It should be emphatically stated that esoteric parents should not let their children go to any school but have them privately taught. If the national authorities would not allow this, then the children should be educated abroad, taken care of by an esoteric family. As long as the esoteric families are as few as they are presently, they have great prospects of having children who were once initiates and possess the knowledge latently.

⁹The highly developed individual must be given individual guidance by teachers who are at the same high stage of development, lest his “spiritual life” be stunted. He should not be brought together with brutalizing school fellows who have not yet reached beyond that stage of barbarism which all must pass and most youngsters seldom have put behind them before the age of 18. For such unsuitable company makes it more difficult for him to remember his latent knowledge as well as it drags his consciousness down into the lower emotionality with its repulsive tendency. Experience has made it clear that the child is always considerably impeded in his development and does not succeed in attaining the level otherwise attainable and calculated. The child should not be forced to adopt the ruling illusions and fictions, should not be made to think in abortive categories, should not be fed with the idiologies of life-ignorant teachers. Nor should the child be idiotized with theological fictions ignorant of and hostile to life. He should be taught that everything happens according to law, and he should eventually learn of the laws of rebirth as well as of sowing and reaping. He should be taught that life is a continuous development of consciousness, that there is no death, only constant changes of envelopes for the self which are repeated until the self has learnt everything it has to learn. At higher stages, esoteric teachers should be assigned to impart knowledge of reality to him. Happy the man who may have such an education and is spared schools and universities!

¹⁰In order to be able to help people with their problems an esoterician should of course be familiar with the illusions and fictions of public opinion. There are, however, easier ways in which to acquire this familiarity than by overloading one’s memory and wasting away the years of one’s youth which the brain could instead be trained to assimilate consciousness energies and acquire the technique of meditation (increasingly difficult the older the brain is).

¹¹Causal consciousness ascertains facts in their reality contexts and so has a correct conception of reality. It is seen, however, that causal selves are unsuited to be teachers unless, along with their esoteric training, they have also been trained to be teachers. Often they are instinctively averse to familiarizing themselves with the fiction systems of the uninitiated and by discursive inference step by step leading the pupil to comprehension. And what they write is not understood by the “uninitiated”, who have no knowledge of that esoteric mental systems from which the authors start.

¹²“Causally talented” pupils find it easy to understand. But as a rule, they find it more difficult than “discursivists” to explain what they understand, and therefore, at school, both teachers and fellow pupils look upon them as “untalented”. Essay writing is a difficult thing for them, unable as they often are to give full rein to discursive imagination. Since we may expect the incarnation of clans of perspectivists (47:5) and also of other people, those at the stage preliminary to causal consciousness (47:4), it is high time to found esoteric high schools and universities. The present educational methods paralyze that organ in the brain which is the seat of the intuition, atrophying it. Set up high schools for esotericians, so that they may learn a rational world view and life view! Reduce the sciences to a study of scientific principles, so that young people are able to draw deductive conclusions instead of guessing their way forward in life! But this is of course abracadabra to the learned.

7.17 *The Reformation of the School*

¹It seems as if it would take an esoterician to realize that the whole school system needs to be reformed so thoroughly that nothing remains of the old one.

²The entire educational system needs to be reformed at regular intervals; otherwise it will easily degenerate into creating nothing but narrow specialists. Every specialist teacher considers his subject to be the most important. Teaching and testing methods have to be changed, memory-work be abolished, which probably many of them have realized. Teachers just have to make sure that their pupils have comprehended the matter. Moreover, pupils should be taught where in the literature they should seek in order to find details and isolated facts when and if they need them.

³Since most teachers still lack the power of self-initiated mental activity and so think just according to models once learnt and under emotional impulses, their teaching methods keep to the same old beaten track. The aversion to all reforms is connected with this. A change would entail rethinking about everything they have learnt and therefore change is always objectionable, abominable.

⁴The instruction necessary for the education of teachers thus needs to be changed so that specialist teachers see the position of their speciality in the totality of knowledge. Philosophy in particular is a subject that needs a reform so radical that it will enable pupils to think, not just learn what views philosophers of times past held. Above all it is necessary to furnish perspectives on everything, for example ranging the various disciplines (their basic principles, methods, and systems) in a system of summaries so that the pupils reach clarity about their importance for the conception of physical reality, for political and social realities, for man as a co-partner of the totality. This also clarifies the relative importance of the various subjects for the totality, for the world view and life view.

⁵At ten years of age, children should be taught the basic elements of chemistry, physics, geology, and astronomy. Biology as a mere descriptive discipline could be considerably reduced. The Latin names of plants are for those who are going to study biology at the university. It is enough that pupils learn to understand the functions of the various parts of the plant. That was seldom if ever taught to them. The variation of forms of leaves and roots, etc., in the different plant species is a subject for specialists. It is enough that pupils are given summaries of the classification of plants and animals so that they understand the fact of higher and lower levels on the scale of evolution. They do not know this at present.

⁶It is desirable that a book should be written that accounted for the basic factors ("scientific principles") of chemistry, physics, geology, astronomy, and biology, so that the reader could get a general grasp of the reality content of these disciplines. Such a summarizing book would be of great value to those who do not go to high school and do not know how they should get a general orientation. It could serve as an introduction to high-school studies and afford badly needed perspectives. Biology, for instance, could start from the theory of evolution, something like Haeckel's *The History of Creation* though adhering more to principles and concentrated. For uniformity in execution, it must be the work of one man.

⁷How much more interesting would geography be, for instance, if you were given an overview of the universe, the solar system, the planets, and finally our earth!

⁸What revelation would biology be, if you were given an account of biological evolution and the interconnectedness of the various kingdoms in nature, how life has developed from the simplest organic cells to the increasingly complex organisms, that process of millions of years!

⁹They speak of "man without a sense of history". However, that history which they take to be true stories from life is by and large a collection of legends. The true history is still unwritten. It will be available only in the next century. And then it will not be any tales of the infamies of barbarous nations, robber barons, kings, and popes, but the story of the evolution of consciousness (physical, emotional, mental, causal). It will teach us to develop purposefully and seek to

attain the world of ideas. In that world, everybody can obtain knowledge of everything he needs in the worlds of man.

¹⁰When we receive the esoteric knowledge, everything we have gathered of the “cultural heritage of times past” will be considered to belong to the criminal archive of mankind and the testimonies of barbarism and non-culture.

¹¹Strangely enough, our educational reformers do not seem to have realized that the history of ideas, such as it can and should be (the opposite of the history of details) from the educational point of view is immensely superior to all other study subjects. But then it must be the over-viewing history of ideas, that which affords perspectives. It may furnish a general view of both humanist and scientific thought. It contains what may be called cultural history.

¹²If educators had any idea of the importance of ideas for consciousness development and culture, then the entire educational system would be given a totally different orientation. On the whole, scholasticism is still ruling with its grammar and dogmatism.

¹³The school exists in order to impart knowledge, so that everybody knows how he is to find his bearings in the community and earn his living. The school should not be a vocational school. Such schools should be separate. It is a nuisance that unmusical children are compelled to learn singing and playing, that children who lack all artistic talents must torture themselves with drawing. Such studies should be optional and would best be relegated to vocational schools. The entire educational system should be reorganized along American lines. Compulsory school should be finished by going through two years of high school without exam. Upper high school, being the preparation for university studies, should be allocated to special colleges, exams from which automatically entail the right of entry into a “faculty” of humanistic or technological studies. The universities should be reorganized so that the pertaining education is given at an institution that is special for each faculty. Bringing together all colleges for specialized studies into a joint university should be regarded as old-fashioned. Not even the present division at the universities into faculties should be retained. Many different kinds of educational institutions are needed.

¹⁴Exams mean that you stuff your brain full with a mass of fictions that you then will be dependent on or have trouble discarding. Admittedly, they facilitate the understanding of public opinion and the participation in the fictionalism ruling, so that you do not remove yourself from mankind. They are also necessary in order to be a public servant etc. for those who cannot earn their living in another way. The individual has to content himself with being dragged into the universal “sacrificial system” about which Pontus Wikner wrote a remarkable essay. Who nowadays has a chance of getting literature worth reading?

¹⁵All children should be given the opportunity to learn to play chess. It is a wonderful game with its inexhaustible possibilities and esthetic values. For the lone player, analyses of master games are full compensation for an opponent. Those who are able to play chess have no worries about what to do in their spare time.

¹⁶Teachers should pay particular attention to two problems that have not been elucidated as yet: the importance of creative imagination and of goal-oriented will. Imagination liberates from the one-track mind and develops the understanding of the possibility of choice and the importance of right choice. This develops the sense of responsibility. The esoterician is taught that we are responsible for everything and that we can never free ourselves from responsibility. It is everybody’s duty to contribute to spreading the understanding of the importance of choosing the true and the right. The ruling subjectivism has entailed increased irresponsibility in all respects, and this is the proof of its perversity.

¹⁷Moralists make the serious mistake of trying to force the sense of responsibility on other people. This demand must come from within and not from without, by means of all manner of commands. The sense of responsibility must be cultivated in the sense of freedom and not of compulsion. Only then will it be self-determined, the result of one’s own choice, based on one’s

own understanding and experience. All compulsion is a violation of the basic law of freedom and defeats its own purpose. That is a discovery which remains to be made.

¹⁸Educational theory as a discipline is still at an infant stage. Both theoretically and practically everything remains to be explored. Its doctrines need to be reviewed at regular intervals. It is the same with most disciplines. If they make progress, they appear new every ten years. There is nothing static in consciousness development, research, knowledge, and acquisition.

¹⁹Mankind is not given all knowledge but just what it cannot possibly discover by itself. We must learn how to solve problems, for that develops our consciousness capacity. We must discover reality by ourselves and learn the methods of application ourselves. The school has in all ages served as a cramming machine and necessarily so, since its duty was to feed us with illusions and fictions, the only available views. That is now at an end. In the future, schools will give us systems, methods, and principles, and we shall be taught how to use them correctly in solving problems. That will teach us how to use facts right and to economize with facts, lest we drown in facts and become memory robots.

²⁰The path to knowledge is the path of discoveries and of elimination of what we have realized to be erroneous. Encyclopedias are rapidly outdated. But memory retains what is unusable. That is why old people seem antiquated. They remember what they have learnt.

7.18 The Education of the Future

¹The best way to utilize knowledge comprehensively is to teach others. Then you get opportunities to view facts from all possible angles and put them into their right contexts in various ways. It all becomes more alive, as it were. A skilled teacher does not teach according to a certain pattern but adapts his presentation to his different pupils and their different ways of grasping (due to their levels and departments and also their acquired, latent modes of comprehension). The possibility of acquiring this art of individualization is for many teachers the unceasing stimulation in a routine that otherwise kills their interest. Being able to catch their pupils' interest where they do not have it also belongs to the pedagogic art, which must never be mere method.

²An educational discipline that is ignorant of the stages of human development has a long way yet to go before it has any prospect of working out the basic methods of education for physical selves, emotional selves, and mental selves. Many discoveries remain to be made as to methods for the different departmental types, for those who have mainly visual or auditory memory. Mathematics can be taught in an immensely simpler manner than by the present clumsy method. The entire teaching can be made a fascinating game and schooling the most longed-for thing instead of a martyrdom, as it often is now.

³Old "intellectualism" made the error of confusing learning and insight (understanding, ability), two totally different things. Learning is a first condition of orientation, but ability belongs to the stage of development attained. Future education will attend to this matter carefully and will not force people to learn things for which they have not the least use. Often a general outline will be enough, an explanation of what a subject is about. But every specialist teacher thinks that all details are necessary and crams their pupils with lots of perfectly superfluous facts. Most of these teachers are overloaded with materials which they cannot use in life and which make them "unable to see the wood for the trees". They have become intellectually myopic and incapable of seeing things in perspective. But perspectives are what we need in order to orient ourselves. Otherwise we shall go astray in the jungle. Without the universals we cannot tell the main issue from side issues, essentials from inessentials, the permanent from the transitory, a method of elimination necessary lest we drown in facts. Those who have acquired the "vision" need no details. That was the meaning of the paradox, "education is what remains when you have forgotten what you have learnt".

⁴As we grow older we find it more difficult to adjust to a more correct view of life. Discarding

those mental and emotional molecules which have been encapsulated in the brain cells is strenuous and chaos-creating work of which most people are incapable. Therefore, it is very important that young people, at the age when they start reflecting and try to form a world view and life view, have an opportunity to study esoterics and thus to make their choice between various views by comparing them. The teaching of theology makes such an examination more difficult. And the teaching of philosophy, which should facilitate such independent reflective work, provides only the imaginative constructions of thinkers ignorant of life, which do not orient us in reality.

⁵Esoterics liberates us from the cult of learning. The esoteric knowledge system is the simplest possible and prevents further subjective speculation, which filled the time of the learned with all its fictitious endeavour. Esoterics is wholly concentrated on practical life, on the realization of the meaning of life. The knowledge sets us free from the whole cult of speculation. We are here in order to live, not to waste our time on useless things, meaningless amusements.

⁶Only the esoteric system can orient us right in reality, it alone can fit the various disciplines into the reality system and clarify their relative importance for the young generation in order to orient them in reality and help them find their places in it. Subconscious latent instinct of reality is roused to life, seeks and finds its way to what it needs to learn. The esoteric high school will let its pupils choose what they want to learn and seek their way forward.

⁷All knowledge implies scaling down, adjustment to various stages of development and possibilities of understanding life. The difficulty in scaling down consists in doing this so that nothing essential is lost in the process, since otherwise the life view is given a wrong direction. That was the very mistake they made in theology and philosophy.

⁸In the higher degrees of the esoteric knowledge orders, the initiates were informed about the different stages of development, what was lacking in the individual for his next higher degree, and how these shortcomings would be overcome by means of efficient meditation, which energies were to be acquired and how they would be expediently utilized. Of all these things mankind is still ignorant (although the publicized part of esoterics abounds in hints) and will largely remain so until the planetary hierarchy can return and contact individuals directly. Since everything is easily misunderstood and wrongly used, esoteric education requires individual guidance. The public cannot be informed about facts that belong at higher stages. Life is a school of many classes, and class teaching is given in class. The task of the planetary hierarchy is to constitute the “university” where teachers are trained for work in the various classes.

⁹When esoteric knowledge along with esoteric psychology and education can be applied, the planetary hierarchy expects such results that fourteen-year-old children will be possessed of the intelligence that distinguishes the most intelligent people at modern universities.

¹⁰Esoteric education is something quite different from the current discipline, which starts from ruling psychological systems and thus is in many respects an experimentation in the dark, often with deplorable consequences. Trying to understand another man’s “psyche” from your own authoritative or specially constructed system is totally abortive. Every human being is unique in his individual character, and this always makes itself felt in his conception of things that are generally valid for mankind.

¹¹You can know without comprehending and you can comprehend without understanding. It is the matter of three different stages of conception which people must have elucidated for them. Not even that little have they been taught at school and the universities.

¹²In teaching you must discriminate between the condition of the brain to conceive (the impregnation of the brain with mental molecules: its mentalization), the developmental stage of mental consciousness, and that of causal consciousness.

¹³The brain needs facts, mental consciousness seeks the concept, and causal consciousness desires the idea (the system). Those who have incipient causal consciousness (subconscious

understanding of the things of the cultural stage) find the traditional cramming tedious and uninteresting. They want the system and take an interest in putting facts into their correct contexts.

¹⁴In order to understand the individual and help him in his life struggle, we must try to consider his level of development (his failings), his faults (the law of reaping), his idiosyncrasies (the circumstances of his childhood and adolescence). We all suffer from national, political, social prejudice (unconscious participation in the pertaining telepathic psychoses), determined by our backgrounds, traditions, and social groups. Esoteric insight shows how we depend on emotional illusions and mental fictions.

¹⁵During centuries, teachers have tyrannized their pupils. Now the pendulum has swung over to the other side: pupils tyrannize their teacher. Balance is struck when teachers and pupils become friends and work concertedly for achieving the best possible result. When, in the future, they have come to realize that individuals are at different stages of development, the educational system will consider this fact and differentiate pupils. However, this is not possible by using the present testing methods. The true differentiation presupposes a classification by objectively studying man's envelopes and their centres. At the same time, esoteric astrologers, studying exact horoscopes (as yet an impossibility), will be able to establish the stages of development and thereby the prospects for success in studies. It must be firmly asserted that the present twaddle about esoteric astrology is not founded on facts. Only disciples of the planetary hierarchy are esoteric astrologers, and that knowledge is not procured from those who teach in the emotional world.

¹⁶The esoteric education of the future will allot the first two life periods (1–14 years of age) to the mastering of civilization; the third life period (14–21, possibly 12–21 years), to culture; and the fourth period (21–28 years), to humanism (including contact with the causal and essential consciousness). This is on the condition that the individual has the requisite latent capacity.

¹⁷instinct = latency, the subconscious (the past)
intellect = waking consciousness
intuition = the superconscious.

¹⁸When, some time in the future, we shall have esoteric boarding-schools with esoteric teachers and children at the mental stage with noble interests, then these pupils will have great prospects for swiftly acquiring higher consciousness.

¹⁹The practical psychology of the future will probably be concentrated on the art of teaching people to use their consciousness rationally: their physical, emotional, and mental consciousness. Suitable material for the content of consciousness is abundant in the wisdom teachings of all ages. Bringing order into this material in a suitable manner for various needs and different stages of development, carefully reformulating antiquated expressions, etc., would be a great task. Patterns for similar though self-formed aphorisms, suited to the individual's own character, would be obtained in this process. In so doing, they must counteract the wise-acre tendency of quoting all manner of proverbs and adages turned into truisms. As a motto they could emphasize the desirability of "thinking one thought of your own for every thought you adopt from another".

²⁰The education of the future will be voluntary. Children will be taught what they wish to learn, not according to any enforced patterns. When they have developed so that they are able to judge for themselves, they are to be informed as to what is necessary in order to be a competent worker in the existing professions and specialities. All the top-hamper of unnecessary facts will be discarded. Special studies will be a private matter. Teachers will not, as heretofore, consider their speciality as the most essential one but will see the various subjects from the viewpoint of the whole. They will start from the system and, using it, decide what facts are necessary for conceiving the system. Memorized knowledge will be minimal and memory contests will be regarded as boasting. Insight will supersede learning, discernment will

supplant erudition. Memory geniuses are no geniuses in understanding.

²¹When hylozoics has been accepted as the sole tenable working hypothesis by the élite among philosophers and scientists, it will take three generations before this system has permeated education. In the first generation it will be taught at the universities; in the second generation, at secondary schools; and in the third generation, at primary schools.

The above text constitutes the essay *Education* by Henry T. Laurency. The essay is the seventh section of the book *Knowledge of Life One* by Henry T. Laurency. The text is a translation from the Swedish by Lars Adelskog. The original translation, made in 1988, was revised by Lars Adelskog in 2019. The present text is the revised one. Copyright © 1988 and 2019 by the Henry T. Laurency Publishing Foundation (www.laurency.com). All rights reserved.

Last corrections entered April 5th, 2023.