

2 CULTURE

WHAT IS CULTURE?

2.1 Introduction

¹Culture is defined as “intellectual and material cultivation”. That definition is meaningless, since it says nothing about what is the most important, namely the motive. Many different things can be cultivated and with the most varied motives: love and hatred, amicability and hostility.

²Nietzsche, who believed he was a great philosopher of culture, regarded the realization of a unitary style as a proof of culture. That kind of culture (such as the Chinese, for instance) soon degenerates into refined subtleties. True culture has to do with the development of consciousness.

³In the esoteric sense, culture means the cultivation of higher consciousness in contradistinction to lower: higher emotional (striving for unity) and higher mental (striving for insight). At the present stage of mankind’s development, the striving for culture should be directed to higher emotional consciousness, emotional attraction, as opposed to lower emotional consciousness, emotional repulsion in all its countless kinds of life expressions. Esoterically, culture is the first conscious step towards unity, the indivisible unity of all life.

⁴There is a fundamental difference between exoteric and esoteric culture. Exoteric culture appears in emotional consciousness; and esoteric culture, in mental consciousness as the world of ideas (mental ideas). Causal ideas explain the causes of effects in the worlds of man and are too high for the first self.

⁵Culture presupposes the will to unity and right human relations. Division, schism, sectarianism, isolation, exclusion are hindrances to culture, which in emotional respect implies attraction. To an extent never dreamt of, culture makes it easier for mankind to attain the stage of the saint, for that is the goal of culture. By achieving it we should obtain what people have dreamt of in all ages: the paradisiacal condition, the country of Utopia.

⁶True culture is characterized by an all-pervading tendency to unity and freedom. For only in freedom can unity become the unwavering power factor. That lawless freedom without aim which people ignorant of life desire leads to division and chaos, and the reaction upon it follows inevitably: intellectual, political, social dictatorship in a police state that spies on the citizens and supervises them. That unity without freedom to which the life-ignorant aspire leads to the police state, and the reaction upon it is inevitably revolution, when people are able to think for themselves and not just parrot their leaders. Where there is true culture, dictatorship of any kind is impossible.

⁷Peace, tolerance, and harmony are conditions of culture, of the acquisition of attraction (admiration, affection, sympathy), of voluntary, strived-for identification with wholeness.

⁸One of the signs of the rise of culture is the strengthening of the legal protection of the individual. As a child you had no rights against your parents, as a pupil you had no rights against your teacher, as a conscript you had no rights against all the officers, as a civil servant you had no rights against those above you. All of this has already (albeit slowly in certain respects) undergone a change. Things are moving towards improvement after all.

⁹Thus the function of culture is consciousness development. For this purpose culture makes use of various physical products, such as literature, art, and music.

¹⁰It is these external manifestations that people, in their ignorance of life, call “culture”. Of course, not just any literature, art, and music can be called “cultural products”. It can be only if they ennoble emotionality, help people to acquire the qualities and means of expression of attraction. Modern products in these spheres rather have the opposite effect, contribute to aggravating disorientation. How many people realize this?

¹Not amusements and entertainment, but consciousness development is the meaning of life. Man should try to reach the fifth natural kingdom, not remain in the fourth. The mission of the planetary hierarchy is to see to it that human beings fulfil their function. If they will not do so voluntarily, they will have to put up with being “obliged” to do so. Must they be forced through dictatorship and tyranny?

2.2 Physical, Emotional, and Mental Culture

¹Since “culture” is defined as cultivation, many people seem to think that it has reference to physical things: physical culture, cultivation, agriculture, culture-plants, gravy culture, etc. Therefore, when using the word “culture” it is probably necessary to specify what kind of culture is intended: physical, emotional, or mental culture.

²“Spiritual culture”, too, is a cherished expression that is used in various contexts so that everybody has his own interpretation of it, whereas nobody has any idea of what it means. To the esoterician, the “spiritual culture” of our times is the same as emotional culture. Mankind is at the emotional stage and its “cultural products” (literature, art, music, etc.) are entirely within the reality domains of emotional consciousness.

³Emotional matter is by nature either repulsive or attractive, and its consciousness has the same tendency. Over 90 per cent of the consciousness expressions of mankind are emotional and repulsive. Perhaps it will eventually be understandable that consciousness development for mankind in emotional respect means passing from the repulsive to the attractive tendency. This would afford us a “spiritual culture” belonging to the higher emotionality. When mankind has reached that far, it will have made a giant stride forward in its consciousness development.

⁴Emotional culture can be said to include such expressions of life as belong at the higher emotional stage, the stage of attraction (48:2,3). In philosophical and religious respect they are brought together under the common heading, “stage of the mystic”, since they are not amenable to the control of principle thinking (47:6) and have not yet been brought under the perspective thinking (47:5) of the stage of humanity. What is still lacking in these expressions of life is that feature of universality which is fundamental at the stage of humanity.

⁵We shall have to wait for mental culture until at least a dominant minority have acquired perspective thinking, have stopped entangling their consciousness in dogmas of all kinds, and start using thinking in systems of survey the contents of which are made up of ascertained facts put into their correct contexts without conjectures and assumptions (theories and hypotheses). Thinking is free when it thinks new thoughts, not when it is locked up in stereotypes and moves in old tracks. The “thinking” of all mankind is still a habitual thinking and unintelligent parroting. In mental respect, human beings are still robots. Still thinking is prohibited, for everything connected with dogmas is prohibition against thinking. Mankind lives in its illusions and fictions, in veritable Augean stables of idiotisms divorced from reality, hostile to reality. This is true of theology, philosophy, and not least science. Science can at least defend itself saying that it has kept to physical reality and has never claimed to comprehend anything beyond it. The others take their imaginings for reality.

2.3 Individual Culture and Collective Culture

¹There is individual culture and collective culture, a difference that will endure until all mankind has reached the stage of ideality. As long as there are people at different stages of development, there will be individual culture which is superior even to the highest collective culture and which the haters of culture will vainly try to level. Equality in that respect remains both an illusion and a fiction. It is possible to annihilate mankind. However, provisions have been made for the survival of a few people. The Phoenix who burns himself and then is resurrected from the ashes was a symbol of this fact and not, as they have assumed and

believed, a (meaningless) symbol of immortality. The dictatorship of the proletariat was a new attempt by those at the stage of barbarism at blotting out the difference. They are starting, little by little, to see the idiocy of it. However much you strive to defy the laws of life, you will finally reach the insight of King Fialar who once challenged the gods: "Oh, what is man that he should storm against you? Like stars in space unreachable you smile."

²That policy which aims at the annihilation of individuality ends up in barbarism without fail and digs its own grave. Only by promoting individual development will a society be able to reach the stage of culture.

2.4 Civilization Is Not Culture

¹The technological civilization of the West should have been able to benefit culture but has instead hampered or even obstructed it. Civilization and culture need not be antagonistic but have been so hitherto. Regrettably, civilization is possible in conjunction with barbarism, which both Nazism and Bolshevism demonstrate incontrovertibly. Besides, it can be asserted that the West with its enormous technology lacks the conditions of culture to a great extent. Its scant understanding of the superior culture of the educated Oriental is a sufficient demonstration of that fact. Culture must be assessed according to the understanding of the laws of life it possesses. And Oriental man possesses it to a higher degree than Occidental man who has been disoriented by a theology that is in many respects barbarous, hostile to life.

²How far from a true culture so-called cultural nations are is best seen in how they value their writers at the stages of culture and humanity. Writers at the stage of civilization who preach pessimism, negativism, division, disunion, revel in descriptions of people at the stage of hatred with the pertaining disgusting activities have no idea of true culture. But all who orient in reality, who protect, elevate, liberate, ennoble, are among the saviours of mankind.

³A mankind that lives in the physical for the physical, who preaches hatred, who can create wars, not only is unable to create a culture, but also is unable to understand culture.

⁴Civilization and culture presuppose that everybody fulfils his task of life, makes his contribution to the common good. Everything that divides counteracts development. They should finally have been able to see that. There is no other path than the path of unity, and the will to unity must be the norm guiding everyone. This presupposes freedom, which, regrettably, is taken to imply a license for the most primitive and life-ignorant to lead lawless lives. Freedom presupposes knowledge and understanding. The self-willed must be taught in a suitable manner to see the necessity of law. The start must be made with children, of course. You do not grant children the freedom to run riot like wild animals, but only as much freedom as they are able to use in a rational way.

⁵Modern education gropes its way forward but still has a long way to go before it has acquired the right psychological understanding and has emancipated itself from educational dogmas now ruling it. The theory of complexes has had a completely disorienting effect. The modern dogma of freedom, instead of training children for freedom, has fostered lawlessness complex and the fancy that freedom equals arbitrariness. Freedom is conditioned by law, which indicates the limits to reason and affords the understanding of the expediency of action. In their development, children run through the stage of barbarism, and when being at that stage the child must not have its say at its own discretion. The real error of the old method of upbringing was its lovelessness, brutality, and punishments, in many cases unnecessary prohibitions as well. However, even simple intellects must be able to comprehend that there must be prohibitions for those who understand nothing.

⁶The culture of our times is culture of the physical form. True culture, however, is mental culture to begin with, having only as many possessions as are necessary to physical existence. "Wealth" (abundance) entails a definite handicap to true happiness. The spirit of commercialism with the craze for possessions and aggressive greed for more and more things

makes culture impossible. And the planetary hierarchy has decided to put an end to that psychosis. If people will not share their abundance voluntarily, then mankind will be taught how to do so. Apparently, the world wars did not have the requisite effect. They revert to their old habits. But the planetary hierarchy has not given us knowledge that we should feel important, and has not made inventions possible that we should live for those things. The intention was to emancipate us from drudgery, so that people should have the time to live in mental consciousness. They have not wanted to understand this.

⁷It is a radically wrong attitude to life and culture to hold affluence as a condition of happiness. It is a basic error to seek to satisfy physical needs beyond what is necessary to dignified human existence. It is wrong also from a psychological point of view, since it diverts attention from the essential things of life: ennoblement of emotionality, development of mentality, and aspiration to unity. Anyone who has had his mind opened to these “spiritual” needs rather is happy that his physical needs are reduced to a minimum. That is the certificate of a true culture. Moreover it is the solution of the supply problem of mankind.

2.5 No Nation Has Yet Reached the Stage of Culture

¹For a nation to consider itself to be at the stage of culture it is not sufficient that culture exists in it. The fact that there is culture in it at all depends on the incarnation of small clans of people who are at the stage of culture and higher stages. If they were shut off from incarnation, so that only barbarian and civilizational clans incarnated, then all traces of culture would very soon be wiped out.

²A typical example of the ignorance of life ruling is that illusion which held sway during the first decade of the 20th century to the effect that mankind had then reached so far in development that wars and similar manifestations of barbarism were impossible. Still about 24 billion human monads are at the stage of barbarism.

³It has not yet been possible to rightly assess the contributions of the cultural people, all the things said about this notwithstanding. Only cultural people can perceive and appreciate culture. “You are like the spirit you comprehend.” This means that the individual has reached the same level of development. Of course, every literary critic believes that he can understand and rightly value. But then the histories of literature produced are typical compendiums of drivel.

⁴If in a nation there are poor people, sick untreated people, abandoned people, then that nation is not a cultural nation. If the people of a nation are ruled by hatred (fear, wrath, contempt), then that nation is not a cultural nation. If a man is valued according to his power, glory, wealth, then there is no national culture.

⁵In a cultural nation everybody has had its justified physical needs satisfied. Beyond that, the essential capital is used for the raising of the level of education, the level of knowledge, the level of culture. This does not mean what narrow specialists consider to be necessary learning, but knowledge of reality and of life promoting a communal living without friction, will to service and helpfulness, increasing the understanding of life and the ability to lead a happy life. Culture is unity. Everything divisive is an error.

⁶It will be possible for whole nations to reach the stage of culture only after the planetary hierarchy has been called back and so wars have been made impossible on this planet of sorrow. It is true that there will be a war in a distant future when the black lodge has gathered, in sufficient numbers, those first selves who refuse to become second selves. However, that war will not be fought until human beings are able to live in their etheric envelopes as their lowest physical envelopes, since subsequently organic life will have been made impossible.

2.6 *The Purpose of Culture*

¹The meaning of life is consciousness development. The stimulation to increase the consciousness activity of the monads should be adapted to their levels: where human beings are concerned, to their ability to comprehend and understand, to their various emotional and mental needs, and psychologically to their interests. The purpose of culture is the satisfaction of these needs of consciousness development.

²The purpose of culture is to develop emotional consciousness by ennobling it into attraction, and mental consciousness by teaching it how to observe, reflect, think new things, ponder on problems of life.

³The purpose of culture is to enable the individual at the stage of culture to “develop his personality”, not in order to become great and important, but in order to better serve evolution. Not the individual but the community is the goal, that community of which we are parts and of which our share increases the more efficiently we serve it.

⁴During his tens of thousands of incarnations, the individual acquires all the good and bad qualities (the “pairs of opposites”, the opposites of good and bad) that belong to the different molecular kinds. They exist latently in the subconscious. And which ones of them are re-actualized and re-activated largely depends on his heredity, upbringing, the environment in which he grew up, the impressions he receives from literature (newspapers included), nowadays also films, radio, and television.

⁵The purpose of culture is to help us develop the good qualities in increasing percentages, until they will be the stronger ones and prevent the bad ones from dominating.

⁶We shall not be entirely free of the bad ones until we control emotionality with mentality, so that we are not influenced by those vibrations of the emotional world which mankind's emotional consciousness expressions produce day and night.

⁷The common responsibility lies here as well, a fact that people have never understood. The higher the molecular kind, the stronger the vibrations and their effects, the greater the responsibility, and we are all implicated.

2.7 *Art*

¹Writing is a kind of creative activity, the art of representing the products of imagination in words and imagery, just as the painter fixes his images on the canvas and the composer his musical creations. You are a born artist if you have cultivated art in previous lives. The quality of a “creation” depends on the individual's level of development (understanding of life); and the technique, on the labour expended on forming it. Esoterically, three incarnations are said to be required for talent, and seven for that perfection which people call genius. The expert will hardly find it difficult to determine to which technical stage the product should be assigned.

²It is part of the all-round development of the understanding of all things human that everybody has also cultivated this creative ability during some phase of development.

³The cultural value of the work of art as an expression of understanding of life acquired is determined by the artist's level of development. Genius need not at all imply that its creations can be assigned to the stage of culture. What above characterizes this stage is the artist's responsibility, his desire to help people to reach a greater understanding of life, thus his desire to do something for evolution, to contribute his share to the striving for unity.

⁴There are epochs when artists are mainly such ones as are acquiring their first experience, are found on lower levels. As a rule it is when an existing culture is to be smashed that those people are born whose task it is to contribute to destruction, thus corresponding to the present epoch. We are experiencing a dissolution of all artistic professions, not least the literary one.

⁵There are as many theories of art, as many answers to the question, “why is art like that?”, as there are “philosophers of art”. Their only common feature is that they are equally clueless, equally senseless. However, that is precisely what has characterized all philosophers ever

since life-ignorance started speculating and believed itself able to explain things. Sooner or later they will find some explanation, for “seek and ye shall find”. Modern art is arbitrariness, subjectivism raised to the highest degree. Reason is eliminated and the chaotic urge has filled its place.

2.8 They Do Not Know What Culture Is

¹There is in our times very much talk of culture. Each faculty and so-called school of art has its delusion of what culture is and must proclaim it. In this process, the word “culture” has lost all its rational content, a destiny similar to the one that has befallen the word “esoteric”.

²You only need to study the definitions of culture proposed by “philosophers of culture” to assess the levels of the clans who have incarnated the last two thousand years.

³A bishop declares that culture rests upon the theological knowledge of the reality of god, and other protagonists of religion assert that Christianity is the only possibility of neutralizing ever-increasing barbarization. Those who have got an education in the Classics derive their ideas of culture from ancient literature and assert that a wide reading in it is the only possibility to keep the understanding of humanism alive. Both categories are ignorant of the fact that there were once highly developed cultures without Christianity and Greek literature.

⁴The esoterician may inform them that only five hundred years hence will mankind be able to understand what culture is, for it will be that long before representatives of true culture deem it worthwhile to incarnate.

⁵It must be emphasized that so-called people of culture do not know what culture is. This is just too evident from the clumsy definitions put forward. You can make one more step and say that exoterism cannot answer that question, because it does not have that basis of knowledge which is required. You must have some understanding of the meaning and goal of life, if you are to have rational ideas of the path to be pursued to reach that goal. In the debates that exoterists hold about culture, their emotional illusions and mental fictions are constantly replaced with other similar ones in a non-stop fashion. They are waiting in vain for a “let there be light” in the chaos of fictional concepts. The esoterician listens in astonishment to this nursery babble with age-old hackneyed phrases. It only remains for him to await the day when common sense will wake up and they will decide to examine the reality content and logically inevitable basis of explanation provided by hylozoics, the only such basis existing, the only one that is satisfactory in all respects.

⁶They have not been able to present a correct definition of culture because no nation has as yet reached the stage of culture, so that they could see what culture really is. Those activities which from of old have been deemed parts of culture – literature, art, and music – are as far removed from true culture as ever and are rather pursuing a downward path into unreason and barbarism.

⁷In a certain newspaper it was said that the “audience” underestimate their own power of judgement, since they consider themselves incapable of criticizing the manners of intellectual tyranny assumed by all sorts of self-appointed apostles of culture. Error. Precisely the fact that they submit to such phenomena as modern literature, modern art, modern music, etc., demonstrates that they are utterly incapable of judging. And that is not to be wondered at, since they have been systematically deprived of all criteria of judgement while not being given a firm foundation on which to stand.

⁸In the cultural chaos ruling some words of reason have been kept: “Afterwards, it will always be seen that the significant, new, and germinal things took place in unguarded corners, were done by people who were neither authorized nor paid nor even observed.” It could be added and repeated that culture is absent and nobody knows what culture is. We have a civilization with a technology that has reached an enormous development. But that is all. What we call culture is a parody of culture.

2.9 Assessment of People

¹People assess each other according to mistakes, faults, and failings, not realizing that this is part of what is too human. To assess a man, his actions and statements reasonably justly you must start from his stage of development. The ancient Romans realized this, as is clear from their saying: “If two people do the same thing, it is not the same thing.” It can be added: “If two people say the same thing, it is not the same thing.” It depends on who says it; it may have been dictated by the desire to make people understand or to censure someone.

²The planetary hierarchy assesses people according to their stages of development, not according to their mistakes. That is a thing which esotericians are taught and which those who are at the stage of hatred do not want to learn, for they search for reasons to judge and condemn, to have outlets for their hatred. They have not attained the stage of culture, and their hatred is a sign of recognition that is infallible and independent of the social position they have reached.

³There are persons who can do and say practically anything without being misunderstood, because they are sky-high above all vulgarity, and also because they have gained the “right” to this. If you know a man sufficiently well, you can decide whether what is reported of him is true or not. If you cannot, then you are the victim of all untruthful gossip. And most people are. If some bad thing is said about a man, all are inclined to believe it. If some favourable thing is said, they yawn. At the present stage of mankind’s development nobody is legally protected from calumny. A saint of our times could say: “All is said about me,” that is, what spite can invent. That, too, is an aspect of our culture.

⁴The present system of testing to establish the “intelligence quotient” is totally abortive. Still they do not realize that there are fundamental differences between knowledge, comprehension, and understanding; differences between born physicalists, emotionalists, and mentalists; differences between the stages of development.

2.10 Genius

¹The ignorance of life, appointing geniuses, thinks that genius is the mastery of form and means of expression, a technical command of the material. This is “talent” at the utmost. Talent can execute quite a number of things that astound ordinary people. The genius, however, is beyond what to the normal individual is the “curtain”. He has distinctive traits of a sense of reality and instinct of life. Those who are dubbed “geniuses” by their contemporaries demonstrate the direct opposite of this in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred: a perverse instinct of life. The evidence for this is their stupidizing, disorienting, hate-provoking, destructive influence, which ruins the taste and sense of people in the present and in the future as well. They are standard examples of what and how you should not think or feel. But how many people understand that? To most of their readers they stand out as exemplary. The literature they “create” can justly be described as seducer’s literature. When you say such a thing, the life-ignorant smile superciliously and opine, “that is as silly as scaring children with the bogeyman, that has been the argument of obscurantists in all ages.” Those who are able to read in the subconscious, however, and to see the action of impressions, say something different. To the attentive mentalist it is obvious that the rapid “cultural decline” of our times is the very result of such disorienting literature.

²The genius at the stage of civilization is a seeker. He is seeking for the good, the true, the noble, the beautiful with the dowsing rod of his divination. He perceives instinctively that “everything perishable is only a seeming” (Goethe), that invisible reality is something higher, that life has a meaning, that ideals show the path, that the great humanists are the light-bringers. Those who are unable to discover unity in life are blind leaders of the blind to perdition by arousing and strengthening hatred’s tendency to division and by hindering others from seeing and walking the path to understanding.

³True, the cause of the decline and the greatest responsibility exists elsewhere than in those “spiritual values” about which life-ignorance drivels, although the entire history of this spirituality demonstrates that those values are fictitious and illusory. It is as obvious, however, that the “apostles of emancipation” are blind. You do not carry mankind forward by merely destroying things, by bursting crystallized forms with the forces of hatred devastating life. They said they were pulling down to get light and air, and left behind a desert sterile of life in which mankind will perish for lack of water and bread.

2.11 Culture Can Be Quickly Swept Away

¹This implicit belief that a level of culture once attained is a gain for mankind that is guaranteed for all time to come is one of countless proofs of how little mankind has learnt from history. The whole of culture can be swept away in just one generation. It is only needed that time is up for the annihilation of a culture, which may depend on the fact that it has stagnated, that it is an obstacle to further development, or has accumulated a sufficient amount of bad sowing. Then individuals at higher stages are temporarily shut off from incarnation and clans at the stage of barbarism incarnate in their thousands. What ensues then is a period of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” in all spheres of life, not merely in politics. And that is the end of that culture.

²In their ignorance of life human beings believe that they are the producers of culture. All knowledge is a loan from the planetary hierarchy. It is the instruments of the hierarchy who become guides for mankind and whom the nations adore as their heroes, after putting them to death in a more or less brutal manner. For it is with the genius as with the hare, “which is good to eat after it has been killed and dressed up. So long as it is alive, it is only good to shoot at.” Then they boast of their great men and feel very important.

³During the growth period of a culture, the portion of barbarian clans decreases and the portion of civilizational clans increases. Maturity is attained when clans of people at the stages of culture and humanity incarnate. It should be added that historians do not know yet that such cultures have existed. Now and then a group or circle of geniuses incarnate, and then such phenomena are produced as the Greek culture, the triumphs of painting and architecture during the Italian Renaissance, glory days of literary art such as in Goethe’s Weimar, or the rise of musical culture in Mozart’s and Beethoven’s Vienna.

⁴Culture is obtained when cultural clans incarnate, and is maintained as long as they go on incarnating. When mankind has learnt this lesson (and it will be long before it does so), it will see to it that political and social conditions are such that people at higher stages are enabled to reattain the levels they once conquered so as to continue their development, and that they are appreciated according to their merits while they live. In our times, the absurd and paradoxical is achieved in that they make much of all bunglers who work for the subversion of culture in literature, art, and music. They have finally understood that in past times all geniuses were unappreciated, but overdo it in the opposite direction, dubbing all botchers geniuses. That is a demonstration as good as any one of the fact that the masses have never been able to determine what true culture is and that civilizational individuals are always unsure judges. They sway as the wind of fashion blows. Just as there are those who build culture, there are also those who pull it down.

⁴Alf Ahlberg is a worthy successor of Hans Larsson as a representative of the culture of his times. In three works – *Tankelivets frigörelse*, *Flykten från ensamheten*, and *Humanismen* [The Emancipation of Intellectual Life, The Escape from Loneliness, and Humanism] – he has tried to make people heed the present cultural emergency, while displaying an understanding of the art of the possible. In these three works he succeeded in refuting most of the destructive proclamations made by the apostles of our modern culture. Those who need arguments in discussions on the pertaining matters will find a veritable gold-mine in these books.

THE CULTURE OF OUR TIMES

2.12 Our Culture Is a Culture of History

¹Humanistic education is largely historical education and a developed understanding of literature, art, and music. The most important part of the Westerner's historical education is so called classical (Greek and Latin) literature. Ever since, during the Renaissance, the study of Greek and Latin authors began anew, this literature has been the basis of culture for the "educated". The other literature was by and large only theology and was justly regarded as barbarous.

²The superiority of classical literature was due to the fact that their authors possessed knowledge of life that no later nations of the West acquired. That is to say: they were initiates of the so-called mysteries and received in them knowledge of the physical, emotional, and mental worlds. That knowledge afforded them quite different perspectives on existence.

³The Latin and Greek literatures were great assets at a time when natural research and technology were still in their infancy and theology was the only world view and life view people had beside the imaginative speculation of philosophy. Those literatures were the only resources of common sense of humaneness. It was the humanistic life view, set free from all theological notions, that made people upright and honest.

⁴That does not imply, however, that we must learn Greek and Latin. Everything has been translated, also much unnecessary stuff. Experts on these literatures have summarized their essential contents. In the esoteric literature of more recent date we are given even wider perspectives on existence and deeper views on political and social problems affording us understanding of truly human relations. Still pursuing the study of those languages in order to acquire some culture is like crossing the brook to fetch water, after the esoteric knowledge has been publicized and we can go directly to the original source. Then we can also see to what extent the esoteric knowledge of life was expressed in the Greek and Latin literatures and to what extent it was distorted through adaption to the illusions and fictions that dominated at the time.

⁵What a relief to be spared the burden, equally immense and unnecessary, of learning two dead languages. It is equally beneficial and enlightening to be set free from the fiction that these two nations produced the esoteric geniuses. We are also spared the illusion that humanism (human dignity, human right, human happiness) has been obtained from some certain exoteric philosophy or form of religion.

⁶You must be blind like the advocates of classical studies not to realize that the study of ancient languages has had its day, not to realize that a new, revolutionary world view and life view makes its entry in the life of mankind, that esoteric view which formed the basis of the concepts of right of the "classics". The great authors (Platon, etc.) were all initiates. That fact should finally kindle the spark of reason in the darkness of historical studies. It is about time mankind began looking ahead and stopped looking back.

⁷The same could be said of religion as was said of culture. The different forms of religion are distortions of what was taught in the esoteric knowledge orders. We have received all our knowledge from the planetary hierarchy. If the hierarchy were called back, we should receive incomparably more in a direct manner than what happens now indirectly through disciples with their inevitable idiosyncrasies.

2.13 The Culture of Our Times Is Emotional Culture

¹How primitive is psychological understanding is best seen in the fact that only esotericians know that man possesses an emotional envelope that has six different kinds of emotional consciousness.

²It is probably safe to say that without esoteric psychology with its account of the

consciousness aspect (consciousness in the different kinds of matter), the requisite basis of knowledge is lacking.

³What life-ignorance calls “culture” is part of emotionality: literature (novels, poems, dramas) and art. If it is to contain ideas, they must be scaled down to emotionality in order to be attractive, interesting, and influential. This emotionalization is a work of the imagination, which is a union of thought and emotional energy.

⁴If there is nothing to satisfy feeling and imagination, then it is “uninteresting”, cannot stimulate them, is “cold and unreal”. When, some time in the future, mankind reaches beyond emotionality up into mentality (47:5), all that which is now called “culture” will vanish. “Clarity” will supersede “warmth”, penetration will eliminate the intoxication by emotional power in impenetrable “infinitude”.

⁵The risky feature of imagination is that it, lacking knowledge of reality, leads people into appearances, into a world of illusion without reason and, above all, without law. In that world dwell most people, seers and poets. They believe that lawlessness is freedom, the great, the basic error in life. Goethe says truly: “Und das Gesetz nur kann uns Freiheit geben.” (Only law can afford us freedom.) Without conformity to law no culture worth its name is produced.

⁶The foremost cultural worker is the one who affords people knowledge of reality and life, not the one who is hailed as the foremost poet. If life has a meaning, then the realization of that meaning is the only thing that matters. The will is the power factor that realizes. Writing novels and dramas you realize no culture.

⁷The Westerners live so fully in the matter aspect that they do not suspect that there is a consciousness aspect of existence and that the meaning of life is the cultivation of that aspect. When they are that ignorant of reality, they should not boast of their culture or of their ideologies. The one fantasm after the other constructs his ideology. And all the “cultured people” pounce upon those innovations hoping that they will finally pick up something sensible. If they possessed the least insight and understanding, they would ask themselves what chance a man stands of explaining reality.

⁸Rousseau, who was an initiate, knew what he was talking about when preaching a “return to nature”, by which he meant “reality and life”. He had come to see that “culture and philosophy had contributed to depraving people”. Mankind has lost itself in a jungle of illusions and fictions.

2.14 Education

¹Almost every so-called educated person has his own view of what “education” means. It is generally thought that education means that you have a passable orientation in existence, can follow in the world of literature, art, music; join discussions on political, social, religious, scientific matters, etc.

²In other words, education means a learning about what other people have said. Such a learning belongs at the stage of civilization. It is robot thinking, a parasitizing on the work of others. It is no demonstration of the ability of individual reflection, it rather hinders people from thinking for themselves. You read in order to avoid thinking for yourself. The old expression, “pride in education”, shows that it is a matter of an old intellectual disease. Thus education is not culture, and it is a grave error to confuse the two.

³Anyone who keeps running to theatres, concert halls, cinemas, wastes his time reading magazines, listening to the radio, or watching TV, etc., has no sense of true culture. Cultural man has nothing new to learn from these things and is grateful that he need not spend his time on such things. He has got other interests.

⁴Teachers of history still consider their subject to be the most important one. Every specialist teacher takes a similar view, which is characteristic of one-track minds. Such a fictionalism is based on overrating bookish erudition. We should have risen above such

overestimation of booklearning. Not the teaching but its practice in life is important to our development. It has often proved that learning may be a hindrance to life.

⁵Historical erudition is related to ordinary personal curiosity, a pastime of superficialness. If history does not afford us anything to satisfy our need of increased understanding of life, then this collection of fairy tales that are remade by each new generation, by each nation, by all the various intellectual dictatorships that have ruled mankind with their views, only contributes to a further disorientation.

⁶Learning is not the same as understanding. Understanding is innate, demonstrates the individual's level of development. Learning is 99 per cent man-made illusions and fictions in most spheres of life.

⁷Learning, being informed of what is written in history books, is far from a proof of judgement, knowledge of life, understanding of reality. Learning is historical erudition, and past times did not possess the knowledge of reality. Learning and conceit, exaggerated faith in one's own judgement, usually go together.

⁸Knowledge of detailed facts is necessary for those who are to formulate the system of knowledge. For the non-specialist, however, the system is the important thing, not the details. Educationists have not understood even this. Facts without a system are useless. From an educational point of view, the system is the essential thing.

⁹It is a very common error, pointed out by Goethe and others, to believe that "human progress is advanced by teaching the individuals a mass of theoretical knowledge." We develop by living, not by theories. A view is valuable, if it can show us how we should live. But if the teaching is not applied, it is useless.

¹⁰If you study some language to read its literature, you are wise to ask yourself: Is that literature so valuable that the work you put in on language study "pays"? In most cases, this would probably be answered in the negative.

¹¹English is the language of esotericians. Whatever esoteric is not available in English can be safely omitted.

¹²Many representatives of the culture of our times have worried about the ever more rapid decline of humanist education and its replacement by technological education. Modern education cultivates the matter aspect (technology) more than the education of the past did, which more promoted the consciousness aspect (culture). What modern culture has gained in one respect it has lost in another one. How about distinguishing the two more consciously? We need cultured people too. We ought to have a history of culture and a history of ideas that did not lose themselves in unnecessary details. We need perspectives and not gossip about persons.

¹³The culture of our times largely is historical culture, the legacy of our fathers. Regrettably, it contains in too many respects remnants of the less than humanist views of barbarous ages. The elimination of these along with the illusions and fictions of ignorance would set us free from a degrading burden. We may look forward to a new epoch of culture in which the knowledge of reality, hitherto kept secret, will constitute the basis of a revolutionary view of existence. It is important that views of the past that are unfit for life do not stand in the way of this new culture.

2.15 Real and Fictitious Problems of Culture

¹There are many problems of culture. However, these do not include such fictitious problems as writers internalize to the point of obsession and then force them on people until these problems dominate like psychoses a large portion of those having a literary education. Thus experiencing "anxiety before life" has been all the rage. Right now another phobia is running rampant: the "fever of belief in God", the anger at "God's enigmatic absence", or "God's silence", and similar expressions that are manufactured to make that pseudo-problem

look more realistic. After a decade or so, after the subject has been threshed out, a new pseudo-problem is constructed in which poets will revel and by which they will idiotize the educated. That is not culture. It is irremediable disorientation. This they prefer to the knowledge of reality, which indicates the path to unity to them.

²Apparently, the idea of god is still the old beard in the clouds who rules it all arbitrarily. They know nothing of the fact that god is immanent, that urge to consciousness expansion which makes man develop his mental faculties through “seeking”.

2.16 Belief in Authority Replaces Individual Understanding

¹An ever more frequent phenomenon is the publication of huge works on the history of literature, art, and music in which the authors by their value judgements influence public opinion for at least a generation. The masses will always (saying and writing “always” as regards the next few millions of years at least) be dependent on authorities, however little they like to hear that statement and however much those who deem themselves experts reject it.

²Therefore, it is to be desired that writers of encyclopedias were content to state impersonal, objective facts and refrained from subjective opinions of any kind. It is perhaps wishful thinking to expect something of the sort before the esoteric world view and life view will have become generally accepted, common sense will set the norm, and all emotional stuff will have been eliminated.

³According to “democratically” minded writers on cultural matters, the masses possess discrimination, and this is so because they approve of those writers, who thus have become their authorities. That is a demonstration of “discrimination” as well, equally great in the writers and the masses. Those writers do not understand that by being cultural mouthpieces of the masses they do not rise above them.

THE MODERN LACK OF CULTURE

2.17 The Modern Age Is Disoriented

¹What is wrong with our so-called culture is that it does not have a true cultural content. What is thought to be culture is largely disorienting. The first condition must be that culture agrees with reality. The prerequisites of this are absent until esoterics has been accepted as a working hypothesis. Esoterics is the foundation of reality on which to build a culture. The imaginations of ignorance in our fiction literature are hindrances to culture.

²A typical demonstration of the modern total disorientation in life is so-called social mobility. This actually is due to ignorance of the different stages of development and lack of understanding of the necessity of choosing a partner of one’s own level. People marry completely at random, for a passing fancy or when falling in love, resulting in a failed marriage. They do not see that mutual understanding is possible only between people on the same level, that a common cultural level is an important factor and a condition of a fulfilling life together.

³Philosophical subjectivism (the author and foremost representative of which was sophist Protagoras) has consistently ended in total skepticism, which logically degenerates into complete nihilism: considering life to be utterly devoid of meaning and so completely useless. As one of the countless demonstrations of this disorientation, modern wise men appear as defenders of all manner of madness and the follies of all ages.

⁴“After any kind of killing time (without committing a crime; a highly cultivated jurist is writing this) has become at least theoretically unassailable on account of the value nihilism ruling and practically unimpeachable on account of the values ruling, it seems difficult to designate any occupation as folly, provided it leads to the maximal satisfaction of the agent. For this is surely the only certain sign of his acting rationally. Certainly there may still be

such among the elderly who deem it better to read Faust than to collect matches, but this is, I suppose, the expression of residual prejudice to the effect that the former activity would engender some sort of vibrations in something that used to be called soul. In a few generations' time this prejudice will probably have been eradicated."

⁵There are innumerable examples of how the ideas of nationalism have idiotized people. One example of how such ideas can be used to separate nations from each other is so-called purism in language. Its advocates want to purge their language of all international words to assert its national character. They do not realize that, if they succeed in this, they will make it more difficult for all future generations to come in a living contact with the rest of mankind. They have not managed to perceive that development goes in the direction of increased "internationalization".

⁶One of the representatives of our modern culture was Nietzsche, the inventor of the superman, who thought he was god, the fantast who has led so many modern intellectuals astray. That god was not up to much, when the friend who had been called to bring Nietzsche to the mental hospital found him sitting at the piano, pounding the keys with his elbows while howling. A sad end of a superman and a god.

⁷We human beings have enough to do trying to become human beings. Diogenes sought in vain for one single of them in the crammed marketplace of Athens. How many do we find?

2.18 The Decay of Our Civilization

¹In the beginning of the 19th century, before there were private banks in Sweden, proprietors of ironworks had offices at Skeppsbron in central Stockholm and were money lenders. One day such an ironmaster was visited by a gentleman who proposed a piece of business and could show him that it would surely yield him 15 per cent. Having examined the proposition, the ironmaster said that it was a safe deal. "But I never make bargains like that," he said. "I will not take more than five per cent. More would be unfair." Such was the public spirit at the time. This story must seem incredible to businessmen of our times. Small wonder that society is in decay.

²Particularly in our times people seem to assume that the introduction of every new thing implies progress. This is even stranger considering the fact that most innovations imply retrogression and destruction. All the old, well-tried, viable things are rejected to be replaced with passing fancies brought up by fantasists who lack that solid foundation on which our culture and our language in particular are built. Our language is being corrupted as everything else, and so-called representatives of culture accept with enthusiasm every silly idea.

³A nation that no longer understands the importance and necessity of work (the "blessing of work"), but looks upon work as a burden, is a nation on the road to ruin. "When life is at its best, it is work and toil," is one of mankind's most valuable experiences. But mankind forgets everything it has learnt. Apparently mankind needs to relearn, and it will. New vagaries, freaks, passing fancies without any knowledge of life are the only things that are good enough.

⁴The decadence of culture, "spiritual" decline, re-acts in all spheres: political life, business life, etc. Industrial corporations hire researchers to systematically impair the quality of merchandise instead of improving it. Watches, appliances, etc., are sold "guaranteed for one year". We need a legislation that forces manufacturers to issue guarantees for at least 25 years. As it is now, fraud proliferates in all spheres. And the masses, understanding nothing, follow their leaders who make them believe that everything must be as it is and that nothing can be done about it.

⁵The decline appears in the judicial system as well, in an incredible laxity towards bandits of all sorts and the lack of legal rights of wronged people. What should be said of a community where it spells financial ruin for a man who tries to get his rights and does not

have much chance of it?

⁶“The frequency of alcoholism, drug abuse, over-sexualization, and suicides in modern Western societies is a symptom of the failure of herd conformism as a form of life.”

⁷It was hoped that Sweden was to be a leading country, but it now seems as if it would instead become a backward one. More and more people of higher stages leave Sweden if they can, and more and more people of lower stages incarnate. Sweden had an opportunity but did not seize it.

2.19 *Oversexualization*

¹It is typical of this transitional period of lawlessness with mass incarnation of clans on the 400 barbarian levels and the resultant stupidization, vulgarization, idiotization, and brutalization that even the magnetic mutual influence of the two sexes is to be destroyed by sexualization. The possibility of refinement, ennoblement, “spiritualization” inherent in the powerful mutual attraction and interactive stimulation of the sexes is lost through the sexual act. That is a fact which is of course inconceivable to our times. The following excerpt from the memoirs of a leading personality in the field of culture is likely to provoke the coarse guffaw of perverse views: “We used to take long walks on light spring evenings. I would not even have thought of taking her arm. Being close to her was an ineffable richness. Whatever our conversation, words were a trembling bliss that was sufficient unto itself.” This excerpt was preceded by an intimation: “There is an antagonism which we do not transcend and which basically is the hardest touchstone of every form of culture.” Incomprehensible to our times, destitute of all cultural qualities.

2.20 *The Swedish Language*

¹The destruction of culture seen in our times includes the abolition of the plural forms of verbs. It has deprived our Swedish language of many of its resources of nuance and so has made it poorer. It has been asserted, and very rightly, that in all high cultures there is definite distinction made between the written language and the spoken language. The spoken language is the language of “public opinion” and the “uneducated”. The written language is the vehicle of culture. “The spoken language is a slurred carrier of the mechanical and mindless babble of our everyday life. In the written language, however, our spiritual and intellectual values are preserved.” The language of our great poets is lost through this meddlesomeness hostile to culture, and poetry is impoverished. Self-important politicians are not to decide on language. At least those who want to use the plural forms should be allowed to do so. That would inculcate the necessity of having both a spoken language and a written language. The two must be kept apart. The demand for a phonetic spelling is ridiculous, since in the spoken language there is no uniform pronunciation, only various dialects. May the cultural people revert to the use of plural forms!

2.21 *“Christian Culture”*

¹In their almost unbelievable historical ignorance (ignorance of what really happened), Westerners speak about the “Christian values”. The victims of Christianity run up to approximately fifty million. To this should be added the tyranny of opinion which makes a true culture impossible. The true values are the “human values”, man’s inalienable rights, which Christianity fought with all the violent means that were at the disposal of those in power.

²What strikes one most when reading Eric Lundqvist’s book *Vildarna finns i väst* (The Savages are Found in the West) is that the “savages” he portrays do not have that hatred which is so characteristic of Westerners. The question presents itself spontaneously how it is that hatred is such a salient feature of the so-called Christian peoples who say they embrace

the religion of love. Is it a legacy of Judaism, of the Old Testament? Also certain parts of the Talmud of the Jews contain teachings that must foment hatred. The Talmud studied by the learned (two recensions) is not the complete one.

³The superiority of Christianity to Greek culture is constantly invoked by Christian writers referring to the fact that the Greeks kept slaves. Those writers should study the history of slavery and slave trade, the history of bondage and serfdom up to, and in, modern times. The Christians should speak low about their superiority. In Brazil (a dominion of the Roman-Catholic Church), slavery was abolished as late as in 1888. Not theology, but humanism worked the abolishment of slavery. And humanism was rather anti-clerical. Christian humanism was not a cause but a sequel. So-called Christian culture was built on the foundations of humanism, not the other way round, that humanism which for tens of thousands of years was proclaimed in esoteric knowledge orders

⁴It is true that the Church did a lot of good by fighting lawlessness in certain fields and preserving old manuscripts (the Church cannot be given credit for the good that individuals did by instituting monastic orders).

⁵In too many respects, however, the Church was a political power factor in violation of the teaching of Christos. Only upon its adoption of ideas of humanism during the 19th century can the Church be regarded as a factor of culture.

⁶Esoteric history (which cannot be falsified) shows that humanism predates Christianity, that the idea of humanism originated from the esoteric knowledge orders, that humanists reformed official Christianity in those respects where it was impressionable at all.

2.22 *Cultural Radicalism*

¹The superficiality of our modern culture is typically manifested in that group of so-called cultural radicals who are vividly suggestive of the sophists in the days of Sokrates.

²In a dictatorial manner they proclaim mindless nihilism, as though all the experiences mankind had up to now were completely useless. To them, all norms are like a red rag to a bull. This only depends on the original label: whether religious or moral, it is of no significance. Change the label and call the norms what they are – norms dictated by experience, norms without which no ordered community can exist – and their cerebral paralysis may pass off. When theologians and moralists take out patents for those norms, they falsify historical reality. It should be sufficient to point this out.

³A true pioneer is not anyone who brings up something new, for every fantast can do so, to the verge of the absurd, which we witness daily in everything classed among the arts (literature, visual arts, music). A pioneer is a discoverer of such things as entail steps forward in development (understood in the widest sense). Our modern so-called avantgardists or cultural radicals cannot do anything of the sort, however, can only aggravate disorientation in reality, just as all the others who are ignorant of reality and life. At the stage of development they are at, they do not stand a chance of “guessing right” in anything concerning reality and truth.

⁴So-called cultural radicals have a mania for seeing only defects (which exist in everything), even when (as almost always) merits outweigh flaws. They are intent on pulling things down but are quite unable to build anything up, since they do not know what culture is. They preach hatred but are incapable of seeing the good existing and of working for unity, for everything that can bring people together. They can only divide, not unite. They are unanimous only in their hatred. All social systems have their drawbacks, but they are better than the chaos these demolishers would work, if they succeeded in their brainless designs. Everybody can criticize, but only very few can do it better, and certainly not those who bluster and demonstrate their incompetence. It is a narrowness of outlook that appears pathological. Now they are bent on destroying the family, that stronghold against anti-social

urges. A happy marriage is the greatest happiness of life, an abode of peace for the protection of the young against all the powers of darkness.

⁵When so-called cultural radicals act as educators of the people, they demonstrate the most primitive ignorance of life and lack of true psychological understanding. They believe that what is suited to adults is suited to children, too. They oppose all conventions, since they do not realize that these teach children “how to behave” and so set them free from the feeling of insecurity which otherwise finds expression in reckless behaviour. Overstepping the bounds of propriety is only for those who know conventions and who have learnt to see where the limits to tactlessness and ruthlessness are. These “sophists” are ignorant of psychology and do not understand that imitation is man’s basic instinct. Man becomes what he thinks and feels, and this is determined by what he “eats” (absorbs in all respects, sees and hears). Everything barbarous in films, on the radio, television, in literature, etc. is so close to the transitory stage at which the young are found that they should be spared such impressions. Such things obstruct all striving after cultural refinement. Surely the purpose is not to bring us back to the stage of barbarism?

⁶If these cultural radicals, who have no idea of what culture is and now dominate *Dagens Nyheter*, *Expressen*, *Aftonbladet* and other Swedish newspapers, are allowed to go on with their destructive activity, we shall soon live in a bandits’ den and a madhouse. It appears as though the other forces of the community were unable to react against this mischief. I feel sorry for Sweden.

2.23 *Dawning Understanding of the Abnormality of Our “Culture”*

¹The following excerpt from the book *Patterns of Culture* by Ruth Benedict, professor at Columbia University, shows that among the learned there are those who are occupied with essentials and who have realized that our “culture” is not the only right one. The esoterician may add that they do not yet know what is meant by true culture.

²“Arrogant and unbridled egoists as family men, as officers of the law and in business, have been again and again portrayed by novelists and dramatists, and they are familiar in every community. Like the behavior of Puritan divines, their courses of action are often more anti-social than those of the inmates of penitentiaries. In terms of the frustration and the suffering that they spread about them, there is probably no comparison. There is very possibly at least as great a degree of mental warping. Yet they are entrusted with positions of great influence and importance, and are, as a rule, fathers of families. Their impress both upon their own children and upon the structure of our society is indelible. They are not described in our manuals of psychiatry because they are supported by every tenet of our civilization. They are sure of themselves in real life in a way that is possible only to those who are oriented to the points of compass laid down in their own culture. Nevertheless, a future psychiatry may well ransack our novels and letters and public records for illumination upon a type of abnormality to which it otherwise would not give credence.”

³It is no wonder that the esoterician regards himself as a “stranger in an impossible world”. Inevitably, he is considered abnormal, a psychopath. In all ages, “freethinkers” were outlaws.

2.24 *Cultures are Born and Die*

¹All processes of manifestation (cosmic, solar systemic, planetary) move in cycles of different length with periods of activity and passivity. The same is true of all phenomena of life and thus also of cultures, which are characterized by upward and downward movements.

²Even our historians are so disoriented that they have not been able to discover this periodicity. From history we could learn at least so much that we understood that mankind has a long way to go before it has a prospect of reaching the stage of true culture, not to say the stage of true humanity.

³No one possessed of a normal measure of common sense could fail to see that the current age evinces a marked decline, a destruction of a culture many hundreds of years old. In astronomical respect this age coincides with the transition from the Piscean to the Aquarian zodiacal period. Mankind lives in intellectual, cultural, social chaos.

⁴In fact we live in a critical epoch, the most critical since those times when the planetary hierarchy preferred to “go underground”. Clans at the stage of barbarism have been allowed to incarnate to pull down that “culture” which is unfit to live and is being removed to make place for a radically new order in political, social, and economic respects.

⁵Each zodiacal epoch of 2500 years also implies an epoch of a new culture. During this time, mankind has the opportunity of knowing some of the ideas on which culture is based. By their ability to perceive and assimilate those ideas, the different cultures demonstrate mankind’s general stage of development.

⁶Each form of culture has its allotted task in the consciousness development of mankind. When this task is fulfilled, the old form dies and is replaced with a new form. What is true of the individual is true of a culture, too. The monad develops through constantly new envelopes of incarnation. If these were not renewed, the individual’s consciousness development would come to a standstill. If a form of culture were crystallized so as to be unchanging, also mankind would remain at that stage of development. It is not the fault of life that the individual contracts disease and a premature death through a wrong manner of living; no more than it is the fault of life that cultures are annihilated by mankind itself in a way that is unnecessarily cruel and filled with suffering.

⁷If human beings lived in accord with the laws of nature and laws of life, the processes of reincarnation of both individuals and cultures would take place in a natural and peaceful manner. But mankind refuses to consider that knowledge of reality and life offered to it by the planetary hierarchy. Let mankind complain about itself for its own lack of understanding, but let it not accuse life for it.

2.25 The Planetary Hierarchy Builds and Preserves Culture

¹The planetary hierarchy once worked among men but was banished. Ever since then the hierarchy has been reduced to using human beings as instruments. These have generally been tortured, stoned, crucified, and put to death in many other ways all of which is reported in esoteric history. Such was the result in a mankind that was and is at the stages of barbarism and civilization. Those who had reached at least the stage of culture could be saved from persecution by being initiated into secret knowledge orders. However, these orders could act only by setting examples, a recourse that does not seem to have the effect commonly believed. Development progressed only as humanism made its break-through in the 18th century.

²The humanist intellectual “revolution” in the 18th century was made possible through works written by initiates of the secret knowledge order of the Rosicrucians and, in particular, through the contribution made by Saint Germain. He found that time was up for a more efficient propaganda. The purpose of the many new orders that were formed on his initiative, however, was rather to enable their members to liberate their thinking from theological dogmatism. The true knowledge (for the élite, incarnations of old initiates) was taught in the Rosicrucian Order only.

³In ancient times, the esoteric knowledge orders were the only means of preserving culture. All that culture which we notice in the ancients derived from initiates. In our times, when democracy has taken out a patent for culture, we see indeed this being quickly replaced with non-culture, so that the level of culture is being lowered toward the bottom. In these times of transition from a civilization, which has shown its inability to reach higher and so is crumbling away, to a new culture (based on esoterics), we experience the same chaos in respect of culture as characterizes such transitions generally.

⁴It remains to be seen whether the future culture will evince features that would prove it to be the work of that portion of the 60 billion human monads who have “come of age”, so demonstrating that those monads consider it worthwhile incarnating to continue their interrupted consciousness development. At all events, the planetary hierarchy cherishes certain hopes that this will be possible. After the Second World War, clans who are at the higher stages have decided to “sacrifice themselves for the good cause” and to incarnate. We must hope that their contribution will not be made in vain such as it largely was hitherto in the long history of mankind.

2.26 Hindrances to Development Must Be Destroyed

¹The fact that ignorance of life and disorientation in reality are almost total is seen in the acceptance of that lie of life (not the only one) which the black lodge has managed to get smuggled into the Gospels and be attributed to Christos: “resist not evil”, a motto that has paralysed the ability to act and left the field open to “spiritual wickedness in high places” to suppress all good efforts everywhere.

²Referring to this false motto, sentimentality hostile to life has opined that we should not criticize, that we should avoid everything “negative”. Those holding such views do not realize that we must demonstrate errors in accepted views to those who cannot see what is wrong or do not want to see or do not care to examine it. Pointing out what is wrong is as important as holding up what is right. We learn more from our mistakes than from our successes. That, too, is truth not generally recognized hitherto.

³You should not “alienate” those who could perhaps be won over with mildness, they say. To this it should only be said that those who take offence at hard sayings and energetic action in any event are quite unable to understand the heart of the matter. Those to whom the form is the essential thing do not grasp its content. A truth-teller is always a pioneer as well. That much should be realized by those who are in a position to perceive what is the matter at stake. Trying to persuade those who can only become believers and who accept it because it pleases them may be a task for other people, but it is not among the duties of the esoterician. Believers always believe wrong, even if they accept the truth, for as long as they believe they neither comprehend nor understand, and then everything will be misapprehended anyhow.

⁴The energies of the first department have a twofold purpose: to pull things down and to build things up. Also “Shiva” of the Hindus has been presented as the destroyer, the dissolver of what served evolution once but has now become a hindrance to further evolution. Of course they have conceived of Shiva as wreaking havoc in the physical matter aspect. Wrong, as usual. Shiva dissolves illusions and fictions, thus is the destroyer of emotional and mental forms. That is all what is needed. When consciousness has left its envelope, that form dissolves automatically. When the content of reality, presumed or actual, disappears, then the hypothesis, theory, ideology is of interest only as a curiosity. Certainly there are collectors of such things. But they collect anything except what has a life value (what is important to consciousness development). What people call value is a price someone will pay to possess something. When nobody wants to give anything for it, it has no value. And such intrinsically worthless things are hunted by people as though they were valuables! When will that illusion lose its power?

THE FACTORS OF CULTURE

2.27 The Stage of Culture

¹In esoterics, mysticism and esoterics are distinguished. Mysticism is part of emotional consciousness; esoterics, of mental consciousness. As a mystic the individual pursues the path of the introvert subjectivist, and his envelopes are of departments 6, 4, 2. As an esoterician he pursues the path of the extravert objectivist, and his envelopes are of departments 7, 5, 3, 1.

The mystic passes through that stage of development which is called the stage of culture, to activate consciousness in the higher emotional molecular kinds in which vibrations (energies) are attractive, and acquire through this activity higher emotional consciousness. This stage of higher emotional development is concluded with an incarnation as a saint in which the monad proves to have mastered all the problems of this stage, to have acquired all the requisite emotional qualities and abilities. If these are not activated in the following incarnations, they will remain latent and only “instinct”, “understanding” will be left.

²At the stage of culture, the individual is dominated by emotional vibrations of the higher kind, the attractive ones. Since these vibrations (48:2,3) are above the individual’s mental vibrations (47:6,7), reason cannot assert itself against feeling and imagination and is seen by the individual as almost as delusive. It is only at the stage of humanity (47:4,5) that reason becomes sovereign also in emotionality and can fully dominate it. It should be pointed out that no one who has not reached this mental stage is in any position whatsoever to contact the planetary hierarchy. Its members work only with those who have acquired common sense and who have their emotionality under mental control. Real common sense is found only at the humanist stage. Also, only mentalists are able to assimilate the esoteric knowledge in a rational manner. Other people will turn it into belief systems with a deficient intellectual clarity in various respects. The common sense of the humanist stage must not be confused with “common sense” in physical life, which is acquired on the higher levels of the stage of civilization. No one stands a chance of reaching the stage of culture if he has not acquired “physical common sense” before it. The stage of culture, or the stage of the mystic, presupposes that the individual has learnt everything that he reasonably need learn in physical life. The mystic is no weak intellect, but has mastered principle thinking (47:6).

³The manifestation of youthful idealism in an individual is a sign that he is approaching or has attained the stage of culture. His instinct leads the way to him. Without knowledge of the different stages of consciousness development and without experience of life, he cannot grasp why his ideals cannot be realized just like that. Those young people are lamentable who lack this idealism even if it is soon lost in the ongoing “struggle for existence”, for the absence of idealism indicates that the instinct of it is lacking, and their orientation in life is made more difficult when they do not have that subconscious fund of experience of life already had.

⁴It is useless demanding tolerance of those who are at the stage of civilization. Even if they recognize tolerance as right on principle, it can never be spontaneous and natural until at the stage of culture. Differences of race, opinion, conventions of all sorts, separate people, and superficial tolerance deceives only the life-ignorant.

⁵The intelligentsia at the stage of civilization of course can study so as to grasp the Pythagorean hylozoic mental system, and philosophers as well as scientists will eventually realize that this system is the only sustainable working hypothesis. This is not the way of reaching the stage of humanity, however, but the path to it goes through the faculty of attraction of the higher emotional stage and a conscious or unconscious application of the laws of life. Without attraction and the will to unity no one shall reach the stage of unity.

⁶If the individual at the stage of culture has some knowledge of the fifth natural kingdom, his longing to reach that kingdom is often roused, and the individual becomes an aspirant to discipleship. How long he must prepare for this contact with the planetary hierarchy depends on the stage of development he has reached and also on the intensity of his determination and staying power in his work to come up to the requirements for the acquisition of the consciousness of unity, the consciousness of community, the collective consciousness. Long before this will be possible, he must have learnt how to live without friction with his fellow human beings (“live and let live”), refrain from criticizing and morally valuing them; he must have realized his responsibility for all (since we all influence one another, potentially are a unity, the natural kingdom of mankind). Those who do not want to see the necessity of unity

must be taught that lesson through an unlimited number of incarnations in different races, different religions, both sexes, etc., and the less willing they are the more painful it will be to them.

⁷Not all people at the stage of culture had the opportunity of being initiated into esoteric knowledge orders, but had to walk through life feeling that they had ended up on the wrong planet, being unable to challenge massive theological superstition and its tyranny over thought. Even so-called history has been utterly unable to describe what really happened in the past, and so it is as fictitious as all the other traditional learning.

2.28 Culture Is Ennoblement of Emotionality

¹What makes mankind as a whole appear to be at or near the stage of barbarism and makes even people of higher stages relapse into barbarism (not to speak of the countless misdeeds of the Church, in our times those of Nazism and Bolshevism) is the repulsive basic tendency. Culture is above all cultivation of emotionality, acquisition of the qualities of emotional attraction.

²The stage of culture is characterized above all by emotional consciousness of attraction. Where this is absent, there is no culture worthy of the name. This must be typical of all content of culture in all respects, an aspiration to understanding and a will to unity. Its opposite is division, refusal to cooperate, dissociation, rejection, or whatever name should be put on the expressions of hatred. We are all imperfect as human beings, and we must learn how to take each other as we are. The obvious precondition of this is the disapproval of any cult of hatred and cult of lies.

³It is a mistake to reject emotional illusions before they have fulfilled their purpose of making man see the nature and significance of emotionality. In a series of levels, illusions of lower kinds are replaced with illusions of ever higher kinds, and so have a developing effect. For example, it is great step forward, if the illusions of wealth, honour, power are superseded by the emotional adoration of a saint or a higher being. Emotionality is ennobled in stages. When a higher ideal has served its purpose, it is superseded by a still higher one, and this process goes on until man need no longer live in the world of imagination but longs for that of reality. Emotionality is the world of ideals, and it is through ever higher ideals that man gradually is freed of the need of ideals. In mentality, Law becomes the essential reality, knowledge of the Law and application of the Law become the determining factors.

⁴Refined manners and customs are of great significance, even in the cases where they are not matched by an understanding of the culture that was their origin.

2.29 Culture Is Universal Brotherhood

¹Culture implies universal brotherhood. Anyone who does not look upon all human beings as his fellows (not the same as equals of the same stage of development) is not a cultured individual let alone a humanist. Your level shows in your perception of reality and understanding of life, not in learning and erudition. Anyone who possesses the knowledge latently may be very “uneducated” because he has not had opportunities of reviving his latency. There are very learned people who are without understanding. The shoemaker may be a Jakob Böhme and the professor may be an expert on meaningless facts.

²The condition of culture is the realization that all mankind makes up a unity and that we reap what we have sown. During thousands of incarnations we are born into all races, religions, and in so doing get paid back for everything we have done to others. Only by being servants of all can we expect to receive help from all. These facts, which have been given to mankind, have been distorted, and mankind has been idiotized by the prophets of ignorance. Such a condition, just like all evil, is bad reaping out of bad sowing. We have ourselves to blame for it, because it is our own doing that is paid back to us.

³Through birth and common blood we share in the entire human race, and this sharing makes us human beings. We belong to the human collective, not primarily to a race or a nation. This community is a condition of consciousness development, a fact that seems not to be generally realized. It is to this collective that we owe our physical existence. The collective has come about for a certain purpose (the dharma of mankind) to perform a certain task of life. Every purpose entails responsibility. We are collectively responsible for the collective, a fact that history should have made us realize (which it has not), and which the knowledge of reincarnation could have taught us (which it was not allowed to). When that realization finally dawns upon mankind, it will be the daybreak of a true culture. Then mankind will begin to think rationally. This means a rethinking in many respects.

2.30 Culture Is Service

¹The attitude that looks upon life as service is one of the most marked features of a culture. By living to serve mankind, evolution, and unity, the individual acquires automatically the requisite qualities and abilities and activates (automatically as well) his superconsciousness. By working for the unity of all (counteracting all tendencies to division), he contacts the essential (46) world and in so doing qualifies for discipleship under the planetary hierarchy.

²We can all serve in our daily contacts with living creatures of all kinds. Many people are tormented by their “not making a contribution”, by their desire of “achieving something big”. Such things will come easily when once you are up to it. Many people who could do something waste their time making plans for a future that never comes. They try to have opportunities while overlooking the opportunities offered by life. Many people think that they do nothing if they may not run about messing things up. No one need be without work, however. And if there is nothing else to do, then you may be fully occupied acquiring qualities and abilities, knowledge and understanding for future use.

³There is no harm in pointing out in this connection that many people from misdirected zeal have caused harm that is hard to remedy. In order to serve in the best way we must have knowledge of reality, of mankind’s different stages of development, of what is the most expedient course of action at each stage. Having beautiful ideals is not enough. You must also understand how these ideals work out in practice, since otherwise the help you give may be harmful. Proclaiming freedom to those at or near the stage of barbarism can lead to unchecked lawlessness. History is replete with examples of revolutionary idealists who have just wrought havoc. A thorough misinterpretation of the message of Christos about saving love has resulted in about 50 million deaths, according to esoteric history.

⁴As we receive a more detailed knowledge of the seven departmental types, it will be seen that they, following the law of least resistance, serve in quite different ways and the ways most expedient to them.

2.31 Culture Is Heritage

¹Man errs as long as he lives despite all his striving. We learn by making mistakes at the present stage of mankind’s development, which is characterized by an almost total ignorance of life. Culture is our common heritage of collected experience of life. It provides the individual in a new incarnation with the experience he once gained and enables him to quickly reacquire a latent insight and understanding. To anyone who has not attained the stage of culture that knowledge is inconceivable and “useless”, since he is incapable of assimilating the experience of higher stages.

²There are many things that appear to be platitudes but nevertheless ought to be said to the rising generation. The young never heard of them, since the experience of life that the older generations gained is lost as old ideals of education are pulled down, at the new experiments in pedagogy that are being made without any understanding of what is priceless, “throwing

the baby out with the bathwater”. Too much has been lost in the social and cultural revolution.

³Goethe is right in pointing out that there is little that we all may call our own. We have received the materials from all directions. Our own abilities (being latent in our subconscious) are the results of everything we have received during all our forms of life, all our incarnations.

⁴What did not the deity do for the monads whirling round without consciousness in eternal chaos? It built the cosmos with its 49 atomic worlds. It built the solar systems with their 42 molecular worlds. It guided involution and gave the monads the envelopes they needed to acquire active consciousness in them in ever higher worlds. It guides evolution until the monads have acquired omniscience and omnipotence in the whole cosmos. This is the monads’ debt to Life. That debt must be settled by the monads’ performing the same service in their turn.

⁵What is given to us by our parents and teachers? What is given to us in civilization and culture? Our parents gave us life and, with it, opportunities of consciousness development. Our teachers helped us to orient ourselves in life. Without culture we would remain at the stage of barbarism. The knowledge of the law enshrined in divine wisdom finds expression in the appeal: “Freely you received. Freely give.”

⁶Gratitude to life strengthens fervour and divine humility, which are such outstanding features in the great ones. Ignorance has no idea of how much is being done for the individual’s development.

2.32 *Culture Is Right Human Relations*

¹– Monseigneur, il faut bien que je vive.

– Je n’en vois pas la nécessité.”

²This was always people’s attitude to the others whom they did not need. But then mankind, all its technology notwithstanding, is still at or near the stage of barbarism.

³There will be culture worth speaking of when, some time in the future, mankind will have reached the insight that all life is one and that a crime against unity is a crime against all.

⁴The misanthrope who said that he had “come to know people sufficiently to shudder at new acquaintances” was informed of the fact that he was a human being himself and that mankind can be saved only through love. Anyone who does not want to help mankind to progress cannot expect to reach the goal himself, since all need help to reach it. Only as a disciple of the planetary hierarchy will the individual be able to reach the fifth natural kingdom. And to become a disciple it is required that you do just as the hierarchy does: live in order to help. Anyone who demands anything for himself is unfit as a tool. What we need to become fit tools is given to us by life when we have proved to be good as tools. That understanding is acquired at the stage of culture in a culture deserving its name. From this it is clear how far we are from culture.

⁵The old man was sitting on the bench in the sunlight enjoying his pocket flask of vodka. A lady passed by. The old man had expected a glance of contempt, but met a smile of kindness. “Thank you for being kind to me.” “Why should I grudge people their happiness?” “You are an angel.” She was, because she knew how to arouse love in others.

⁶Anyone who does not have an interest in life constantly catching his attention seeks (as Schopenhauer made clear) to relieve himself of the unbearable boredom of loneliness in the company of other people. Anything more “soul-destroying” cannot be found. It has nothing to do with the “community of souls”. Pursuing this tendency, the man will “misspend his life”, so that his incarnation will be largely wasted.

⁷“You who bind our most free essence
When from deep within it calls,
Wretched small talk, leave our presence
Vanish to your gaudy halls!”

⁸Writing this Wennerberg clearly enounced what all people of culture learn to see, that common sense has no say in social life. Countless people have heard the Collegian's song, but how many of them have seen the truth of its message? Most people are unable to profit by the counsels of the wise, and too many of those who should be able to do so did not care for them. Only in the autumn of their lives do those who knew of them realize how wise they were.

⁹It is understandable that the generations do not learn anything from each other. Instead, the younger generations hold the older ones in contempt and consider them "nutty". Only as "youthful idealism" has volatilized in the "struggle for existence" and the young have come to realize that life is not as simple as they believe it is do they stand a chance of learning from the old.

¹⁰Good will, harmlessness (the will not to hurt), and common sense are the three foremost principles of life. They contain more than the Christians' talk about love.

¹¹Good will in the spirit of cooperation should be taught the young from their first year in school. Loving understanding rationally applied should be a quality of educators.

¹²Simplicity is the slogan that should guide the work for emancipation from the tendency to luxury of modern civilization.

¹³World citizenship becomes the expression of good will as well as the spirit of cooperation and understanding. Culture is obtained in the process.

¹⁴People of good will, unite! The united will of one thousand people is a millionfold stronger than a thousand isolated wills. There is no need for some new society, some new organization. All societies degenerate, fail their intended purpose. However, some method should be devised for bringing people of good will into contact with each other (possibly a "correspondence club").

2.33 *Culture Is "Luxury"*

¹Culture is luxury. What people call luxury, however, is not culture. Such luxury is quite compatible with lack of culture. Truly cultural luxury consists in the opportunity of devoting oneself wholly to the life task of one's choosing without worries about income and work for one's bread and butter. Such an opportunity probably would not exist in the socialist state dreamt of by life-ignorance. Even if certain of its members could receive some cultural stipend from the government, yet the selection of recipients would be arbitrary, since those in power can never judge the life value of the contributions they are supposed to reward whether in the life time of the authors or afterwards. Those "endowed by a generous providence", the true geniuses, were never discovered and recognized until it was "too late". How could those who are "before their times" be judged rightly? Rightly judging them requires qualifications quite different from those commanded by the powers that be with all their committees. What is said here highlights one of the many disadvantages involved in transferring productive private capital to consuming "government capital".

²Pontus Wikner wrote about the "sacrificial character of culture". The true geniuses (those who carried development forward) are among its greatest victims. Their lives were largely a permanent martyrdom due to the countless difficulties they had to surmount and the compact opposition they had to encounter.

³However, a few of them had inherited private capital that saved them from drudgery for subsistence or could be taken care of by some rare "understanding soul" who was their Maecenas.

2.34 *Culture is Simplicity*

¹Culture is simplicity in everything, and the condition of culture is the striving for simplification. Thus it is the direct opposite of what people in all ages believed was the proof of culture. The more they managed to complicate life in all respects, the more they could

make the obvious incomprehensible, the greater they thought they were as geniuses and guides to a supreme culture. In our times they overreach themselves throwing the simplest ideas of right and wrong into vertiginous conceptual expanses and making rules and norms and commands inscrutably profound. Have theological, philosophical, and legal concepts of right idiotized them to the extent that they do not realize that everything discussed in terms of morality should concern social problems, how to enable us to live in a society without frictions? Is it really inconceivable that such a society is impossible as long as hatred rules? “Norms” and “rules” and “commands” are not what we need. A totally changed emotional attitude is what we need: that of attraction instead of repulsion. Anyone who cannot sense attraction can at least try to live “as if” he did so, and derive his pattern of behaviour from this attitude.

²Luxury in the sense of wastefulness, ostentation, extravagance has so little to do with culture that rather it is the enemy of culture, since it over-emphasizes physical things at the expense of mental understanding. Culture includes the greatest possible simplicity; it could be called a refined simplicity, if not the word “refined” could be misunderstood. We understand Rousseau who thought that the culture of his times had degenerated into artificiality and unnaturalness. It is hardly correct to say, however, that this did not exist before. Even the cultures of Athens and Rome were refined in their barbarian pomp and served as examples for the luxury of royal courts and, not least, the extravagance of popes and cardinals.

2.35 Culture Must Be Based on Esoteric Knowledge

¹True culture must be based on the knowledge of reality and life. That basis is obtained only through that knowledge which has been called esoterics hitherto but will become an exoteric working hypothesis in the not-too-distant future. Without that basis, all culture must degenerate sooner or later, which the esoteric history only too plainly indicates. All the efforts at culture that emanated from the esoteric knowledge orders through the ages produced a rapid efflorescence followed by decline and only left ruins that present insoluble problems to historians and archeologists.

²Without knowledge of the different stages of the development of consciousness, there is no correct basis on which to evaluate the phenomena of life and, in particular, those connected with human culture in the widest sense.

³The first self can acquire knowledge of the worlds of man. As a perfect first self he can have knowledge of 16 molecular kinds in all (47:4-7; 48:2-7; 49:2-7) in the lowest three atomic worlds (47–49). This does not entail knowledge of all reality, however, and above all he cannot know anything of the meaning and goal of existence.

⁴To the esoterician it is ridiculous to see how first selves believe they can form opinions and make statements on all such things as are quite beyond them, those cocksure critics that you find everywhere. It appears tragic to him when he sees people flocking round those self-made all-knowing people and allowing themselves to be brought ever deeper into the jungle of illusions and fictions. The self in the first triad lives in this jungle and cannot escape from it. Esoterics may afford the individual this insight and also the requisite understanding of the necessity of a complete re-orientation in religious, philosophical, scientific, and cultural respects.

⁵Common sense can eventually ascertain the errors of religion, philosophy, science and correct them. The errors of occultism present a worse case, since common sense does not suffice there. The only protection is a complete system that clarifies the errors produced by the speculation of ignorance and arrogance.

⁶The esoteric world view and life view liberates us from all human and, therefore, misleading ideologies. When called to action in the changing conditions of life, however, we are often irresolute. Certainly we have our knowledge of the laws of life, which largely

enables us to avoid making mistakes. What conflicts with them cannot be right. Often situations arise, however, where our own judgment does not suffice, where our motive must be our lodestar, and we do our best with loving understanding.

CULTURED MAN

2.36 Freedom from Needs

¹Cultural man perhaps is not what is meant by a person who has no needs, but he has reduced his physical needs to the most expedient, where everything serves a purpose, and above all does not require unnecessary attention but leaves him time for study, meditation, “spiritual activity”.

²Life in the physical world exists to enable us to acquire qualities and abilities, to develop consciousness. But if we live only to satisfy physical needs, then we lower ourselves to the level of the barbarian who has nothing but physical resources.

³There is freedom from physical needs, and there is also freedom from emotional and mental needs. Freedom from physical needs is obtained when man understands the meaning of life. Freedom from emotional needs indicates the mentalist. Freedom from mental needs characterizes the causal self. The causal self has no need of the content of those worlds but has assimilated the experience and knowledge they may offer.

⁴Emotional needs include what people call culture at the present stage of mankind’s development, something quite different from the culture of the future. Imaginative literature that is not beautiful but crude and brutal when it is not meaningless, art that conveys ugliness instead of beauty, music that affords the opposites of harmony and melody, all of this is the culture of our times, idiotized and brutalized culture. You feel like striking the word “culture” from your dictionary.

⁵When man, from just desiring more and more things, realizes the absurdity of this craze for possessions and becomes alive to meaning of life, consciousness development, he tries to liberate himself from everything he has collected, to be spared wasting his time on such things as obstruct him, to devote himself fully to consciousness. Then freedom from needs becomes his true need. Having achieved this he has liberated himself from slavery to the matter aspect. But he does not win the quality of freedom from needs by injudiciously throwing away what life has given him to hold in trust. You can be free from needs even as a billionaire and as such manage your wealth better than any organization. Organizations tend, sooner or later, to become ends in themselves, and that is why freedom from needs should be qualificatory.

2.37 The Man of Culture Faces Compact Opposition

¹The guides of culture, who with superior talent have imbibed the gist of contemporary learning, who with their stylistic ability and pedagogical insight treat of the problems of culture, of course are recognized as authorities on various issues of life. Unquestionably they wield an educating influence on the rising generation and in so doing achieve important work. There is also a risk, however, that they become hindrances to development, if their cultural systems are based on fundamental dogmas that make it impossible for people to assimilate new revolutionary ideas. Such a condition is one of the causes of the usually compact opposition (particularly from the academe) that all “light bringers” will have to face.

²In his book *Räfst och rättarting* [Inquest], Poul Bjerre writes about “the government as an adversary”. This recurs in all his accounts of experiences he had from school, university, doctors’ society; religious, political, literary associations. He described the massive resistance that was put up to all proposals of rational reform he made, so the word “cliquishness” would have been more apposite. It is almost impossible to rouse “public opinion” in some profession, to make them realize that the views controlling them are fictions. Only a

subsequent generation will examine old conceptions critically and bring about reforms. Those who have once acquired a certain system of thought are loath to reconsider it. It is too laborious. It is unnecessary, too. It is stupid, for you will only be considered an eccentric or a troublemaker. You will “lose the confidence of the public”. It is better to think and talk just like all the others. Then you are on the safe side.

³It has always been like this. To be ahead of one’s times is to choose martyrdom. We must hope that a general understanding of this fact will not make public opinion formulate it into a slogan. For then every fool will be regarded as a prophet. Because this is what has happened in literature, the arts, and music. Every charlatan is nowadays elevated into a genius. There are risks involved in “informing” the injudicious masses. Popularization is not always a good thing.

2.38 *Albert Schweitzer*

¹Albert Schweitzer, the theologian, physician, and organ virtuoso much written about in our times, had the great advantage of being able to profit without much toil by the results of research work done by philosophers and scientists. Then it is easy to be “superior”. His indignation at the manifest opposites of teaching and life in Schopenhauer is particularly typical of those who are given all learning for nothing and so can start their practical realization of it when they are still young. They appear unable to see that solving the problem of reality alone is a proposed task demanding a man’s whole time and attention so that nothing is left for the immense effort required for becoming in addition a “saint”. Schweitzer’s indignation is just another striking demonstration of prevalent psychological infantility. His own philosophy of life reveals that he, too, was the victim of man’s belief in his own ability to judge reality and life. Why should not he be able to judge, when all the others imagined they could do so? A manifest lack in him was the absence of a sense of proportion which had the effect that by virtue of his motto, “reverence for life” (“all life is sacred”), he could as a physician hesitate to kill even bacteria, the primeval enemy of mankind. Common sense should have told him that all parasitic life, being an enemy of life, is without a *raison d’être*.

²Not being able to see it, Schweitzer was a typical mystic who believed he was able to think rationally. He was considered a “pioneer in life-of-Jesus research”. He was rather a manifest misleader. His inability to see that Paul, by his fictional doctrine of sin and grace, largely destroyed the work of Christos demonstrates that there were in his subconscious old theological deposits from his previous lives as a monk. Such deposits are inaccessible, predestining the individual for instinctive convictions in subsequent lives, forming the biggest obstacles to the acquisition of common sense.

2.39 *The Man of Culture Encountering Esoterics*

¹To begin with, the cultural individual is sufficient unto himself in spiritual respect and leads his private life in the higher spheres of emotionality, where he finds what his heart desires. This can go on during several incarnations until he has attained the stage of the saint.

²As far as can be judged, it seems as though this period of development were to become increasingly shorter. This is connected with the general rise of levels in mankind and also with the new ideologies in process of appearing that are in better agreement with reality. Traditional religious, philosophical, and scientific systems increasingly demonstrate their untenability. In the long run, the mystics can hardly avoid making up their minds about the esoteric facts of reincarnation (not metempsychosis) and the law of sowing and reaping. This has the effect that they start to take an interest in the pertaining intellectual problems with the perspectives afforded by them. They stand an increasingly greater chance of meeting the new category of helpers trained in esoterics and to receive from them new impulses for further

study. In so doing they take their first step to the acquisition of perspective consciousness.

³This also changes their attitude to the surrounding world, which till then was mainly restricted to the people closest to them (family, relatives, and friends). Their desire to serve gradually increases their understanding of the fact that we all make up a brotherhood, that we are all walking the path to the same goal, leads to the discovery of the fact that we are all causal beings and that causal consciousness will some time solve all the problems mankind is grappling with. For the individual, the first step is being informed of the fact of the “twin souls”. When in incarnation, the individual exists with his first triad in a smaller part of the causal envelope (the so-called triad envelope). His twin soul is his greater causal envelope in the causal world. This greater causal envelope is supervised by a higher being whose task it is during man’s life in the physical world to do for him all he can according to the Law (the different laws of life). It is important to understand that he does not help the human being to solve the problems that he has to solve by himself, that he does nothing that may strengthen repulsion and selfishness. His true mission is to encourage the human being to acquire ever higher kinds of consciousness and, above all, to try and awaken understanding for essentiality (46, the unity of all life). It should be realized that at man’s lower stages his supervision has to be restricted mainly to the law of sowing and reaping. He is man’s best friend and there is nothing he desires more than that the man realizes this and does what he can to apprehend the “impulses from on above” (willingly receives “power from on high”, to use a religious saying). The Hindu epic poem *Bhagavad-Gita* mainly consists of a conversation between the “god Krishna” and “prince Arjuna”. If imaginative adornments are peeled off, this is seen to present the true relation between the causal supervisor (man’s “god”) and man. When the individual leaves physical life, this supervision ceases, since his sojourns between incarnations are intended to be periods of rest during which man works up his physical experiences into a more correct instinct of life for his next incarnation.

2.40 *The Esoterician*

¹Human beings have to pursue their normal path of development according to the law of self-realization. They must grope their way forward through experience and research (experiment). Only in this way does the individual learn how to understand reality. The esoterician can proceed differently because he has all of this behind him. That is why he immediately understands hylozoics, realizes that it agrees with reality. Thus the esoterician was once an initiate of an esoteric knowledge order. An esoterician is the same as an initiate. He is ahead of the rest of mankind on the scale of development simply because he passed from the animal kingdom to the human kingdom earlier than others. That fact is no ground for boasting; rather for a sense of responsibility, because it is his duty as a human being to help his brothers. We are all in some respect dependent on each other, and everyone has to make his contribution for the welfare of all.

²The esoterician cannot teach those who are on lower levels to understand esoterics. To teach them to comprehend it is largely only to use their credulity to make them embrace something they do not understand, which involves the great risk of making esoterics misunderstood, resulting only in parrotry. In that respect there are deterring examples in sufficient numbers.

³The esoterician cannot apply his ideas in practical life either, as a politician, for instance, since those ideas cannot be understood but are rightly viewed as utopias. In that respect, too, history is full of the failed experiments of idealists. The world cannot be reformed in that way. To be of lasting value reforms have to be made from within, not from without.

⁴The esoterician’s work is aimed at liberating people from the ideologies ruling them and at offering them a working hypothesis that enables them lead rational lives. His work concerns the first self (man in his worlds). The acquisition of second self consciousness is not within

the range of mankind's capacity at its present stage of development. Very few people stand a chance of becoming even causal selves or disciples of the planetary hierarchy. The work of the planetary hierarchy is aimed at all mankind, not just a few individuals. The hierarchy seeks collaborators in mankind, so that it will be able to make a paradise out of life in the physical world. It wants to make people live in peace with each other, teach them right human relations. When that goal has been reached, the very process of development will become almost automatic through the acquisition of the qualities of attraction and the striving to unity. It is life in unity that brings about life in accord with the laws of life. From this results the automatic acquisition of those essential qualities which lead to transition to the fifth natural kingdom. As it is now, people lead their lives in division and repulsion, in spiteful criticism and reciprocal judgement. In so doing they counteract their own development and that of others. The mission of culture is to teach people how to lead useful lives, lives in unity.

⁵People waste their time on all kinds of useless speculation instead of living for the realization of unity, which is the only essential thing. When people have received a rational working hypothesis, they need not waste their time on all those theoretical speculations that can never agree with reality, theories that prevent them from leading rational lives.

⁶The esoterician has understood, through bitter experience, the basic difference between teaching and life. Without that insight self-deception and, later on, hypocrisy, are unavoidable. The individual deceives himself with the mask he wears in his dealings with other people. Conventions always deceive the inexperienced. People live in appearances. Whatever you believe, desire, and hope is one thing; life is essentially different from this. Only when he has attained the stage of culture is the individual in a position to fully understand the tragedy of this conflict between will and ability, ideal and reality, knowledge and capacity. This is a thing that benevolent enthusiasts of enlightenment cannot understand. The moralist says: "Live what you teach", not knowing what he is talking about. He only displays his own total ignorance of life without the possibility of self-criticism. It should be added here that the esoterician knows that his own vision will be realized some time. It depends on himself how many incarnations it will take. In this connection we should be reminded of what D.K. says: It is more important to speak about the law of sowing and reaping than about reincarnation. For reincarnation is inescapable, whereas the effects of the law of reaping depend on the individual himself.

⁷You have not attained the stage of humanity merely because you have accepted humanist ideas. Many people who are at the higher levels of the stage of civilization have done so, and more will do so, as they prove to be the most rational and expedient ones. The true humanist has the stage of the saint behind him and uses emotionality only as a driving force in his organism, the visionary power of imagination, and the striving of attraction towards essentiality.

⁸Modern readers have read too much and with little discrimination, so that they have a superficial grasp of what they read and forget it immediately. Therefore they need to read books of esoteric content many times over until the knowledge can be retained. When reading a book, the esoterician reflects upon its content. Each sentence has a meaning the import of which he must realize. If the book is not of that quality, he may leave it unread. The esoteric writer can say together with Goethe: "I do not write to please you. You should learn something."

⁹Least of all does the esoterician write in order to make money on his works. The esoterician does not make a living by esoterics. Such a thing is against the law: "Freely ye have received, freely give." The esoterician's work is "sacrifice" (made in the hope that someone will be able to profit by it). Not even that much have they been able to see, because charlatans exploit people's gullibility. There is every reason to keep a watch on their growing crowd. Esoterics must not be turned into a source of income, for then deception will enter into it without fail.

2.41 Humanism

¹Alf Ahlberg defines humanism as “a life view to which man is the highest value. The humanist’s belief is a belief in man. It need not be a belief in ‘man’s natural goodness’, but it must be a belief in man’s potential for good. Human dignity is its basic value. The humanist’s belief may be justified in many ways. Its high valuation of man may be based on the belief that man belongs to a higher order of life than that of nature. Then we are talking about a religious humanism.” So far it was right. When Ahlberg goes on to identify this religious humanism with Christianity, however, he makes a basic error. Humanism existed long before Christianity. And it was humanism that humanized Christianity, which in its historic form was rather a barbaric religion.

²The existing culture worthy to be called culture was handed down to us through humanism and to the extent that humanism succeeded in humanizing Christianity. We understand fully well that the custodians of the “classical heritage” fight for the preservation of Latin and Greek as school subjects. Classical literature contains the basis of humanism. Theology is no humanism, and where it reigns alone there is a great danger that the humanism existing soon disappears. Christian is theology, and what it has succeeded in becoming beyond that it has received from the great humanists. Anyone who claims the opposite only makes his contribution to the falsification of history that is going on without cease in this respect.

³Anyone who asserts that humanism is the merit of Christianity is apparently totally ignorant of both Buddhism and yoga philosophy. Kongfuzi’s teaching, too, is in full agreement with humanism. It must be maintained with force against theologians ignorant of history and their unintelligent parrots that Buddhism is superior to Christianity in humanitarian respect. The Buddhist “vows” (corresponding to our confirmation vows) contain much more of humanity. The Buddhist vows never to kill including animals in this. These vows also include never to lie. They should at least know that Buddha preached compassion with all living creatures. We must demand that those who claim that Christianity is superior know what they are talking about. We are fed up with traditional lies.

2.42 Stoicism

¹The two basic norms for a social life without friction are “good will” and “right human relations” as taught in esoterics. These two rules of living, without which a regular society is made impossible in the long run, were given their first formulation in historic times by the stoics. They formulated a psychology of social intercourse, which in certain respects is still unsurpassed. They entertained no illusions as to the general stage of mankind’s development. They made it their first principle to be always prepared for everything and their second principle to make themselves invulnerable, unassailable to all the attacks of hatred. When being among people you have to be prepared for disagreeable experience, insults, outrages of all conceivable kinds. Such things of course only demonstrate the aggressor’s level of development. You have to be prepared for all kinds of infamy, slander, treachery by friends.

²The knowledge of the laws of reincarnation and of sowing and reaping formed the basis of the principle of being constantly prepared for the worst blows of fate, losing friends, possessions, honour, life, being deceived, being abandoned by everybody. By meditating daily on all these conceivable possibilities, the stoic steeled himself and preserved his total unconcern, a “divine indifference” to whatever happened to him.

³This was the negative attitude. The positive attitude consisted in the principle of always being obliging and helpful.

⁴The author of stoicism, Zenon, as well as its first theoretician, Chrysippos, were initiates of esoteric knowledge orders. This should suffice as proof, also exoterically, that the esoterician is right when claiming that humanism emanated from the planetary hierarchy and that stoicism did everything in its power to humanize the historical, theological formulation of

Christianity, which is a distortion of the teaching of Christos.

⁵Stoicism has been criticized for not having given any instructions for the methodical development of consciousness. It is necessary to see, however, that stoicism was an esoteric teaching and also that it had to take mankind's general stage of development into consideration. In the Piscean zodiacal epoch with barbarism ruling, stoicism shone like a beacon in the darkness of life madness.

THE FUTURE

2.43 Hylozoics Brings About a Humanist Revolution

¹Hylozoics brings about a revolution in cultural respect and reveals true humanism the mission of which is the realization of unity. What is called humanism in our days is a revival of the "classical legacy" with esoteric Platon as its chief representative. This revival began in Germany, being headed by Goethe and Schiller, and in Sweden by Tegnér, Geijer, and others. Regrettably, it has become a principally literary movement concentrating on the study of those writers of the 19th and 20th centuries who worked upon humanist ideas they had received in diluted doses. It has more or less degenerated into an intellectual play with ideas, a show of "humanist education" without vital force and capacity for re-creation.

²The Pythagorean legacy of ideas publicized in hylozoics will influence people in quite another manner, since it clarifies the meaning and goal of existence, consciousness development, and the necessity of self-realization. The new humanist literature, which is to be expected when the esoteric knowledge of reality will be the object of public study, will be quite different from the one described in the history of literature. The significance of the old humanism will then be seen to have mainly consisted in preparing for and facilitating understanding of the new humanism. Its historical mission was the effort at raising mankind above the stage of barbarism, which otherwise would be all too close. The democratic spirit, which latterly has been striving to deprive us of culture, would, if it were successful, very soon throw us back to the stage of barbarism, strip us of what is truly human, and reduce the individual to a mechanical robot without the right to freedom, a victim of government tyranny.

³It should be added that the "Greek legacy" with its humanism derives from individuals who were initiates of esoteric knowledge orders instituted by the planetary hierarchy.

⁴The revolution brought about by the esoteric knowledge must needs entail a revolution in education as well. The present system of education must demonstrate its psychological perverseness. Young people are being weighed down with burdens that are unfit for life, not to say hostile to life. What is said here is true of university education, too.

⁵Forensic psychologists should ask themselves how it is that esoterics can be given a systematic silence treatment now that they dare not scorn it openly. How does the "voice of truth" fare in our modern cultured society?

2.44 The Culture of the Future

¹The foremost purpose of the culture of the future will be to teach mankind to see that the meaning of life is consciousness development, the acquisition of ever higher kinds of consciousness. The present culture gives too much emphasis to physical things and does not try to liberate mankind from its craze for possessions, mania for collecting, etc. Actually, the individual needs very few physical possessions to lead a fully dignified life in the physical world. This egoist urge to possess more than is requisite is the cause of poverty.

²The culture of the future, being based on the knowledge of reality and life, will present mystics of other kinds than the ones that have appeared hitherto. The latter have not realized that they have strived unconsciously to acquire the qualities of attraction as a condition of

essential consciousness, consciousness of unity with all. They have too long been occupied with their own development, not understanding that unity is not individual but collective and implies the understanding cooperation of other beings as well, so that they must work for this, too. The mystic strives after absorption into the godhead, not knowing that the godhead is a collective being, a collective, not an individuality. You develop the essential qualities by helping other people to develop theirs. Human beings must set themselves free from the erroneous view of individualism and become aware of their responsibility for the collective. There is no unity without a collective in which you enter as a part.

³New scientific discoveries will solve our physical problems, so that slave-labour for the sustenance of life will be abolished. Clans at the stages of culture and humanity will incarnate to a large extent, having the task of developing new cultural forms in all domains. Their priority will be to create good-will between races, nations, and individuals, and right human relations.

⁴According to the planetary hierarchy, the new order must be based on the understanding of the human dignity of all people. We are all members of the same natural kingdoms, have left the animal kingdom, and are walking towards the same goal, the fifth natural kingdom. To those having a sense of perspective it appears less important that not all people are at the same stage of development. And those who realize the responsibility of everyone and the necessity of mutual help to make development possible understand more fully that those at higher stages must help those at lower stages.

⁵The planetary hierarchy is not interested in esoteric knowledge being taught to those to whom it must remain a “blind faith”. There exist life views that are quite useful for those who have not acquired perspective consciousness. It is more important that people lead useful physical lives, benefiting civilization and culture, and above all lives in harmony and without friction with their fellow human beings, in right human relations. In so doing, they automatically develop all the qualities and abilities that will in due time enable them to pass to the fifth natural kingdom. The most useful teachings are those that develop common sense, appeal to human experience and prospect of understanding, above all are proclaimed in freedom of all restraint and entail a striving to unity.

⁶When sufficiently many people have acquired physical-etheric objective consciousness and sufficiently many have become causal selves within the fifth department, collaborating with causal devas, mankind will experience a revolution in most domains of human life in scientific and technological respect, so that people will be able to devote much more of their attention to cultural development.

2.45 The New Culture Is Based on Esoterics

¹As the knowledge of reality and life, of the meaning and goal of existence, becomes more general, also human consciousness development will be accelerated to an extent never dreamt of. When thinking in accord with reality, they will have quite another energy effect through their harmonious cooperation with “cosmic vibrations”. Otherwise disharmony will be inevitable, dividing energy into different directions, so that the effect is minimal or non-existent. Just as the scientist achieves results by applying the laws of nature expediently, so the man who knows how to live achieves something similar by applying the laws of life.

²There is always the risk that the individual confuses theoretical learning with insight and understanding and in so doing overrates his capacity. Theory is a good thing, but until the individual knows how the corresponding realities manifest themselves in him in a life sense, due to his latent insight and previously acquired capacity, he will need (like the laboratory worker) experience gained through many failed experiments.

³Language presents another difficulty. The prevalent terminology is largely useless for the communication of esoteric facts. Actually all words should be redefined to have another

content than their conventional one. A new language with new words, which were the only right thing, would nevertheless be unintelligible to the readers. Writers will have to make the best of it using traditional terms and counting on their readers' "intuition" (as it is called). Essentially, however, this means that you must have mastered the system before you can understand what you only believed you comprehended. It is only from the whole that you can have a correct conception of what it is about. Therefore, you should read esoteric works many times until you have mastered the system. When esoterics has become generally accepted, then the words used will have another content. Otherwise a special "technical language" would be necessary. To those who have acquired objective causal consciousness and have an all-round experience of what they are talking about, hints are sufficient and misunderstandings are precluded.

2.46 *The Cultured People of the Future*

¹If the chaotic conditions now prevalent are superseded by more stabilized ones within a few decades, then it may be expected that cultured people will incarnate. These old initiates will be found in all professions. They are characterized by common sense, by their ability to "think right" (in accord with the three aspects of reality), and by law-abidingness (activity in agreement with the laws of life), with striving to unity. They are aware of their own limitation without being handicapped by it and do not make a fuss of their personalities. They are recognized by their understanding of all things human, and strive for truly human relations between all people, independent of race, nation, sex, religion, etc. They are free from fanaticism of all kind, also the kind that often characterizes so-called idealists and reformers in all spheres, not least occultists with their patent solutions. They have trust in the Law, being certain that all will find their way if they are not misled by life-ignorant prophets in religion, philosophy, and science.

Endnotes by the Translator

To 2.3.1 King Fialar (Fjalar in Swedish) is the hero of a lyric epic by Swedish-Finnish poet Johan Ludvig Runeberg (1804–1877), *King Fialar, A Poem in Five Songs*, translated by Eiríkr Magnússon, Covent Garden, 1912.). The lines quoted are from the beginning of Canto V.

To 2.5.3 "You are like the spirit you comprehend." This quotation is from Goethe's *Faust*. In German: "Du gleichst dem Geist, den du begreifst."

To 2.11.2 "And so the simple man of learning, in the strict sense of the word – the ordinary professor, for instance – looks upon the genius as we look upon a hare, which is good to eat after it has been killed and dressed up. So long as it is alive, it is only good to shoot at." Arthur Schopenhauer, *The Art of Literature*. Also compare with Laurency, *The Knowledge of Reality*, 3.3.27.

To 2.21.2 Eric Lundqvist (1902–1978) was a Swedish novelist. He lived for many years before, during, and after the Second World War in Indonesia (formerly Dutch East Indies), working as a forest officer, and was also a professor of forest sciences at Jakarta University. In his book referred to here, he questions who really are the savages: Papuans with their spears or Westerners with their weapons of mass destruction.

To 2.26.1 "spiritual wickedness in high places". The Bible, the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians, 6:11.

To 2.32.1 The two French sentences mean, “– Sir, I have to live. – I do not see the need for it.” A nobleman’s reply to a beggar, as reported by Voltaire.

To 2.32.7 and 8. Gunnar Wennerberg (1817–1901) was a Swedish poet and composer. His cycle of thirty songs, “The Collegians” (Swedish: *Gluntarne*), enjoyed great popularity in his days and after. In the form of narrative duets sung by a master and his student they describe the joys and sorrows of students at the University of Uppsala in the middle of the 19th century. My English translation of the verses quoted by Laurency is rather literal, emulating the metre and rhymes of the original, though it does not come up to its beauty and force.

To 2.33.2 Pontus Wikner (1837–1888) was a Swedish philosopher.

To 2.40.8. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: ”Ich schreibe nicht euch zu gefallen, ihr sollt was lernen.” *Zahme Xenien*, erste Reihe, I. Also compare with Laurency, *Knowledge of Life Four*, 1.30.1.

To 2.40.9 “Freely ye have received, freely give.” The Bible, The Gospel according to Matthew, 10:8.

The above text constitutes the essay *Culture* by Henry T. Laurency.

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