

5 LITERATURE

5.1 Fiction Literature Is Emotionality

¹An esoteric fact that remains to be ascertained by the poets is that fiction literature – poetry, drama, novel, biography – belongs at the emotional stage, is a product of man’s emotional consciousness.

²This is especially manifest in poetry. The beauty or harmony of rhythm and sound is an emotional path to the unity of life. A true poet has the ability to “paint” reality in words that act like music. Here “reality” means physical things and events such as they are commonly and generally perceived by all people as well as states of emotional consciousness common to all. Individual traits are then eliminated, because the subjective fancies of the individual have no place in world literature.

³At best fiction literature represents a mentalized emotionality. If this literature is to fulfil another function than that of entertaining literature, it conveys to the general public those mental ideas that are part of our culture, and make these ideas more comprehensible to discursive inference thinking, largely parrotry.

⁴It is a matter of regret that the scientific, philosophical, and psychological ideas treated in literature have a disorienting effect on people. Usually they reinforce the illusoriness and fictitiousness ruling.

5.2 Fiction Literature Is Poor in Ideas

¹At best the novel affords a few, simple (well-known) ideas. The knowledge to be gleaned from an intelligently written novel running to three hundred pages could be summed up on three pages by a skilled aphorist.

²Most novels deal with the same problems, thrashed out during at least a century, with some small variations that doctors of literature take as essential, since bothering about details goes with their profession.

³Experts on the works of the great writers find in authors of later times the same ideas, observations, reflexions, generally more sparse and in worse formulation. One wonders whether all those having an itch to write are that ignorant of what has already been said, whether they fancy themselves able to bring up something really new, whether they consider themselves fit to be teachers, educators of the race, or whether they write merely because publishers accept their products and they can make a living by their diluted wisdom of life.

5.3 Fiction Literature Reinforces Life-Ignorance

¹The immense libraries give evidence of man’s enormous ignorance of life, of mankind’s vain search for knowledge, which we can receive from the planetary hierarchy only.

²What knowledge can we get from writers? What do they know about life? They deal with sheer imaginings, with their own fictions. And poor mankind is fed with such stuff.

³The “aesthetic” values of a novel, the “poetic”, the “lyric” values, are to aesthetes the essential ones. They do not understand that life-ignorant writers have small resources of orienting themselves in reality, and of course they have even smaller resources of guiding their readers. They can only aggravate people’s disorientation in life, spread and strengthen the illusions and fictions of the general ignorance of reality and life. They do not serve consciousness development but counteract it. They make people worse, less fit for life.

⁴The works of life-ignorant writers often have the same effect as bad suggestions. But their hostility to life is due to this.

⁵If readers of a work of literature asked themselves whether its author was in a position to understand the problems of life and their solution, then the answer would be obvious in most

cases. If readers had that insight, trash literature would soon be eliminated from bookshelves.

⁶Without knowledge of reality, life, and the laws of life, the individual should count himself fortunate if his incarnation does not amount to a failure, namely that the consciousness development intended did not occur, that emotional illusoriness and mental fictitiousness in his subconscious was even more strengthened, all of which makes the individual's liberation in his next incarnation more difficult. It is little wonder that consciousness development takes such an absurdly long time.

⁷If fiction literature afforded us true knowledge of reality and life, of man and his consciousness, of culture and its mission, etc., then there would be a justification for its existence. The writers of this literature are not able to afford us this, however. Those who have acquired some instinct of reality (from latent experiences) are grateful to be spared wasting their time on such rubbish, which is just entertaining literature.

⁸Such literature is without meaning to anyone who has once realized that the meaning of existence is consciousness development, has realized what this implies. They have more important tasks in life. Anyone who has come of age mentally does not want to have ideas diluted to the smallest dose.

⁹The time should soon have come to end this sort of literature. To be sure, the planetary hierarchy foresees that this literature will disappear within a few centuries after mankind has received knowledge of reality, of the meaning and goal of existence.

5.4 The Knowledge of Human Nature Does Not Exist in Fiction Literature

¹Human beings are unable to attain knowledge of human nature. This is true of writers of imaginative literature as well. Such writers occupy themselves with the surface layers of waking consciousness, even when trying so sound subconscious complexes. They do not have that knowledge of reality which is a first condition of a correct view of life.

²The descriptions of individuals made by writers never agree with reality but are figments of the imagination, then they may be created by repulsion or attraction or in an attempt at objectivity. This is true not only of so-called historical novels or so-called romans à clef (which are scandalous stories, generally speaking), but also of the most "scholarly" biographies. Something quite different is obtained when the individual being portrayed is to represent a type, a type of his class, nation, or times. General traits can be ascertained, individuals ones are inaccessible. Neither psychologists nor literary historians have reached that insight, however.

³One single textbook of characterology would afford us deeper knowledge of human nature than all novels put together. Having studied that textbook we could safely leave all those novels unread. But how would novelists and their publishers then make a living?

⁴Time and again they bring Strindberg to the fore to floodlight his personality. "Research" (psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis) has made revolutionary discoveries that refute the old hypotheses of that "genius". Such nuisance will probably not come to an end until psychology as well as psychiatry and psychoanalysis have gone down into the slop-pail and been replaced with the teaching of esoteric psychology on man's different envelopes and their conflicts, on different kinds of consciousness, on stages and levels of development, on the importance of the envelope centres for the different kinds of consciousness and the pertaining different kinds of energy, on the different degrees of the vitalization of those centres. Subsequently science will have a firm ground on which to stand and not, as now, something that suddenly proves to be quicksand.

5.5 The Object of Fiction Literature Should Be Education

¹The old novel painted in white and black, depicted noble heroes and devilish villains, rewarded virtue and punished vice, defended innocence and detected crime. That literature was idealistic, not realistic. Its object was education.

²In its stead we have got the modern novel with a “realism” that revels in the disgusting things of the human bottom layer. The character portrayal is revealing. The types being depicted belong on the lowest levels of civilization, often enough at the stage of barbarism. Anyone who portrayed real people and right human relations would be dismissed by the doctors of literature as “unrealistic”.

³Such a literature does not educate people but dissolves all concepts of right. It works unknowingly at lowering the level of education and at destroying the faint onsets of a longing for what is beautiful and good. Often it glorifies crime.

⁴Modern writers believe they are psychologists and describe reality. Such as they write they demonstrate how little they know of either the human psyche or of reality. From time immemorial the “power of example” has been spoken of. That it is a real power and that it can be deployed in a psychological and educational sense in authorship has not been grasped by these writers. In other words, they are without understanding of the importance of literature for educational purposes.

⁵The novel is the fairy tale for adults. Children demand that all stories end well, for that is what life does, which adults do not know.

⁶Let us have people whom we can admire and desire to emulate, have them in literature at least! We have had enough of people at the stage of hatred, of subhumans of all sorts.

⁷If a book does not ennoble our feeling, does not increase our knowledge of reality, life and people, if it does not develop our instinct of reality and life, then it is not worth the paper it is printed on. What does not develop us, does not afford us more knowledge and understanding, that stupidizes us and often brutalizes us. In our times people allow themselves to be fed with cultural refuse.

5.6 *The Art of Reading*

¹Too many people cannot read. Most people who devour books do not know afterwards even what they have read. It does not penetrate their brains, since they perceive only such things as they have already worked at in some respect. The rest they did not even see. They have never been taught to dwell on each sentence to reflect on it, because the literature offered to them did not contain anything worth pondering upon. The art of reading is a difficult art. It surely will not be heeded until people have acquired common sense. Then there will not be an abundance of writers and publishers.

²In the art of the most contradictory advice is given. The most modern – and hence the most perverse – method is training your ability to skim the whole page with just one glance. “Speed reading” is the order of the day. Admittedly, the content is generally such that it is sufficient to catch some words here and there. Such books should preferably be left unread, however. A book composed of facts and axioms, where every sentence contains an idea, should be left unperused by such readers.

³“If one takes the trouble of rereading the book after some time, slowly and thoughtfully, the impression is different.” It may happen that one sees then what one did not see before. There are books that constantly yield something new. It is, to be sure, not the fault of the book if it appears empty when colliding with one’s head. One does not discover more than what one has learnt to see and understand. Judgement and experience of life are required to grasp the “spirit”. Is it not often the case that the writer himself was amused and laughed at his formulation in a certain place which some readers then took as satire, sarcasm, or a spiteful remark? There are many ways of shaking up the usual dull reading, arousing reflection, trying to sharpen the attention.

⁴Emerson’s work, *Representative Men*, bears witness to an exceptionally wide reading of valuable literature, profound education, and masterly understanding. What he said of Plato, or the philosopher; Montaigne, or the Skeptic; Shakespeare, or the Poet, Swedenborg, or the

Mystic; Goethe, or the Writer, Napoleon, or the Man of the World; is of the best that can be said of those men. It also bears witness to Emerson's ability of reading. But then he did not read anything whatever. He knew that it is better to read one first-rate book a hundred times than a hundred second-rate books or a thousand third-rate books.

⁵A piece of good advice to young, uncorrupted readers. Summarize every book you read. Describe its content and the ideas you found in it. Quote apt formulations. After about 30 years' reading of valuable books you can at 50 years of age sum up what you have learnt and give your contemporaries (and also posterity) a book worth reading. Then you will also have acquired the "art of reading" and in addition the "art of writing" something valuable.

5.7 Reading and Level of Consciousness

¹How would it be possible for the theologians, philosophers, and psychologists of our times to understand esoterics? An intellectualist has been reading esoteric literature for years and believed he understood it. But one day he suddenly wakes up and exclaims: "How did I read this? This is something quite new. I am in another world. This is the world of reality. Where have I been? I have been reading with quite different ideas and have not been able to see what it says in the book!"

²Most people in our times have read themselves stupid. They have read so much drivel that they have grown dull, are unable to retain anything, even if, for once, it were of great value. The present writer has noticed this in the case of readers of PhS. There are readers of PhS who have scarcely perceived anything. There are others who have misunderstood practically everything they have read. After a couple of days they have forgotten what they read. A few formulations engraved themselves on their memory. But they have no idea that they read them in PhS, and they may contest that those words are in the book. A book such as PhS, composed of facts and axioms formulated as aphorisms, is not to be read like a novel if the reader has any comprehension. Some few readers have realized this and have worked at assimilating the content of the book. They say: "that is a book you never finish reading". It was that kind of readers Goethe had in mind when writing, "You resemble the mind you understand." The present writer never finishes reading his books.

³You develop your consciousness by becoming "aware of" all that exists, by filling your consciousness with an increasing content of ever higher quality, by examining what is tenable, what agrees with reality. In this process, the expedient choice of literature is important.

⁴Anyone who wants to study the stages of human development, the 200 civilizational levels in particular, can learn a great deal from statistics of various kinds of literature: what books are published and what books become bestsellers. Humanistic literature in the proper sense is of no interest to publishers or booksellers, for "it does not pay".

5.8 Reading as Not Being Able to Live

¹Most people are disoriented, do not know what to do with their lives. They just try to pass time as pleasantly as possible and, above all, be spared the effort of thinking. They are content with just repeating what others think and say, no matter how meaningless it is.

²For those people reading fiction literature is trying to escape reality, having their attention caught by something different from the painful or monotonous present. Reading then does the same service as meaningless amusements of other kinds, can be regarded as that waste of time called diversion: the inability to use one's incarnation (the opportunity of development offered by life) for something rational. This is a sign that the individual has failed to live both his own life and in the service of mankind.

³Fiction literature lives by this inability of people to use their spare time in the right way, undertake something rational, acquire knowledge, insight, understanding, qualities and faculties. It exploits the human tendency of being a mere passive receiver, needing diversion,

something with which to kill time. The victims of this attitude to life, and they are too many, may be said to have “wasted one more incarnation”. No wonder that they use thousands of incarnations more than they need to develop their consciousness, incarnations in which they lament that “life is meaningless” and commit suicide to complicate it even more for themselves in lives to come

⁴One of the many future problems of culture is that of teaching people the right use of attention, the monad consciousness. They are still far from being able to grasp that this is a problem of culture.

5.9 History of Literature

¹Ingenious Georg Brandes was the author of a new discipline, the scholarly treatment of the history of literature. That history of ideas which he had in mind, however, was never carried into execution by his imitators. Instead, the history of literature has at best become the study of a particular technique: how in different epochs the same ideas of reality and life were formally treated. Too often it has degenerated into a chronicle of scandal detailing the inability of individuals to lead their lives appropriately. Publicizing the failings, faults, and vices of individuals is apparently a very scholarly occupation, an interest in the private matters of individuals without understanding of the fact that the object of scholarship is not what is individual but what is general. They have not even understood that little.

²To the esoterician such a culture is cultural barbarism. Brandes understood that the proper aim of imaginative literature is to enrich us with ideas. The history of literature thus should inform us as to what ideas the writers had, not what books they wrote. Writers that had no ideas could be safely consigned to oblivion.

³Doctors of literature should soon be able to realize that the significance of great authors lies in their contribution to the development of ideas, not in their formal treatment of the subject matter. When their interest can be directed to the problem of who Stagnelius' Amanda was, they have demonstrated that they are incompetent for their job and have gone astray. Such a “scholarly discipline” should be on its way out.

⁴We still wait for the people able to transfer the mentally viable parts of the history of literature to the history of ideas where they properly belong. That would dispose of the interest in what is personal, ephemeral, accidental, too human, and direct attention to what alone is essential. The history of ideas (correctly understood) could then become the support of culture, showing us at the same time the eternal quest of the human spirit out of the darkness and labyrinth of life.

5.10 What Is Devoid of Reason Cannot Be Systematized

¹Doctors of literature become increasingly scientific and busy themselves with the “theory of science”, scientific methodology. Emotionality and imagination are to be mapped, the life-ignorant drivel of literary dreamers is to be systematized, and there is no end to profundity. We are presented with yet another illusionary discipline to be added to all the others which our age, disoriented in reality and life, has seen arising.

²When will it dawn on the learned that the whole of emotional life is a life of illusions and only a stage preparatory to rational life? What is devoid of reason cannot be systematized. The little reason to be found in emotionality is obtained from mental consciousness (“rational feelings”). Emotional consciousness deals with conceptions from the physical world, and these concepts are mental. Pure emotionality is blind urge.

5.11 Linguistic Fanatics and Purists

¹The question is whether linguistic fanatics, so-called purists in particular, do not counteract the simplification of language by insisting on forms and rules of language that were established long ago; rules for the use of prepositions, adverbs, etc. that they consider to be valid for all time to come. The only rule should be to accept everything that does not lessen the clarity of expression. Language exists to convey thoughts and is not an end in itself. Also so-called linguistic aestheticians make critical remarks, which in their pedantry often appear puerile.

5.12 Biography

¹A characteristic of superficiality in current biographies of poets is that the ideas they had are not discussed. Their poems are quoted, sources and influences are demonstrated, their physical inheritance since generations is described, but what was essential in them, what made them intellectual guides, is overlooked to a great extent.

²It is to be hoped that future biographies of master minds, except the necessary personal particulars, will refrain from accounting for various unessential personal weaknesses, trivialities, banalities, gossip, and slander. Only what is imperishable, their greatness and intellectual contribution to cultural development, has an enduring value. All the rest can and should be left out.

³Historical biographies of writers should aim at accounting for the ideas which the persons understood, their world view and life view with the pertaining motivations, the words of wisdom they used. A library of such biographies would be a storehouse of wisdom and a priceless part of everyone's own collection of books. We need not be convinced of the discrepancy between teaching and life, ideal and reality, which almost must exist (if the ideal is a true one). When the intellectual leaders of the nations have realized that the meaning of life is consciousness development, they will have more important psychological problems to analyse than those which belong in the kitchen, in the toilet, or in the bedroom, but not in the literature that is to rise above the level of triviality, banality, or barbarism.

⁴The greatness of Brandes was that he emphasized the ideas of the writers. To do so, however, the biographer must have the capacity for discovering those ideas, and that is impossible when they are above the biographer's own level.

5.13 Autobiographies

¹The study of autobiographies is amazingly little rewarding to those who think they can profit by the personal experiences described in them. Constant occupation with their own dear selves and all manner of trivialities in connection with it characterizes most people.

²Autobiographies that have a justification are those from which other people can learn something of significance. The professional man's contribution to an increased understanding of the community and of the importance of his work for the common good would be valuable but is almost totally absent. A jurist could make an account of importance of the legal views for society, a shipowner could explain the value of shipping to the public economy. It is quite forgotten that people need to learn from everything and that everyone has had experiences that can contribute to widening the outlook on human conditions.

³It would be highly valuable, too, if esoterician would care to tell of their experiences, how they got into contact with the knowledge and its significance for their view on reality and life. As ignorant of life as most people are and need to be liberated from the prevalent delusions, it is desirable that all who could testify in the case did so. Observations on education upbringing, education, friends, social intercourse, etc., and their effects in various respects could be very valuable from a pedagogical and psychological point of view. There are so many things that need correction and have not been elucidated correctly. Poul Bjerre's autobiography, *Räfst och rättarting*, shows the justification for a critique of the educational system and of the

often absurd conditions in many spheres of human life.

5.14 *Literary Criticism*

¹In many cases literary critics are literary historians and cultural critics. If they do not have a foundation in reality, all their critique will be both subjectivistic and individualistic when not dictated by those in power.

²Literary critics in countries that are under communist dictatorship must, when assessing literature of all sorts, start from the Marxist view. Everything of which Marx would not have approved must be condemned. During long ages critics had to make theological views their starting-point. Later a revolutionary basic view was considered the only correct one.

³When, some time in the future, hylozoics has been recognized as the only possible basis of the conception of reality, the laws of life, universally recognized at that time, will be the criteria commonly used.

⁴The task of a reviewer is to account for the essential content of the book being presented to the public, not to state his own views. He can of course start from the “present standpoint of science (or scholarship)” and concur with it. But if he states his own view, the public has a right to demand that this view is the result of his own examination of the matter, not a mere echo of another person’s view. The present condition, where public opinion is being led astray by ignorance, thoughtlessness, irresponsibility, must come to an end.

⁵Just as philosophy has degenerated into an end in itself, so has literature and even art, the proof of mankind’s complete disorientation in reality and life. The task of the true literary historian consists in emphasizing the reality value and life significance of literary works.

⁶Whenever an intellectual fantasm such as Nietzsche makes his appearance, an extensive literature about that writer is produced. If you cannot think your own thoughts, then you may make yourself important by commenting on someone else, write about how you feel about that person and his views. That is literary parasitism.

5.15 *Faith in One’s Own Judgement*

¹Hitherto philosophers and scientists have considered themselves able to judge everything. Latterly novelists and literary critics have joined them. It is typical of doctors of the history of literature, literary critics, and reviewers that they believe themselves able to assess all works of literature. A doctor of literature opens KofR, finds the words “world 46” and “46-self” and is at once ready to pronounce his opinion, that “this must be some pseudo stuff”. Intelligent people realize that they need facts for everything, need facts to know what they are talking about. But when they set about expressing their views of literary works, they become subjectivists.

²A writer examines the “dream of universal consciousness” and thinks he can dismiss the possibility of such knowledge, a view in which his reviewer concurs without reserve. Is there anything on which those individuals cannot pass their cocksure verdicts?

³A typical example of injudiciousness is seen in the judgement passed on a work on the basis of superficial impressions of the personality connected with it. A work should be judged by its reality content. The physical person is nothing but the pen. The self behind the personality dictated the content. Apparently this esoteric axiom, like all the other ones, cannot be too often enounced.

⁴The depictions of Goethe’s development attempted by many literary historians demonstrate their enormous ignorance of life. It is increasingly apparent that only esotericians can realize the limitation of human knowledge and understanding.

⁵In a review of *The Eternal Smile* by Pär Lagerkvist, his view of life is compared with that of Besant of Leadbeater. This is typical. One man is as good as another: the view of one man is as good as that of another. The exoterists have no idea of the essential difference. The

accounts made by Besant and Leadbeater were the results of objective research in higher material worlds. These are contrasted with and deemed equally valuable as an imaginative construction by a “poet” who is ignorant of life and disoriented in reality. It is by writing such stuff that a doctor may become a professor. Still they do not take into consideration that people who are unfamiliar with esoterics are deterred from examining it themselves when they are told beforehand that “all such things are pure imagination”.

⁶In all this absurdity, however, an improvement may be seen, even though only slightly noticeable as yet. Which doctor would have dared, one or two generations ago, to compare two “self-deceived visionaries” and an “intellectual genius” as Lagerkvist, would have dared even to mention Besant and Leadbeater?

5.16 Knowledge of the Stages of Development Is Required

¹The first condition of a reliable verdict on literary works is knowledge of the stages of development. That condition is the most important one, for the reality content and life significance of what an author writes depend on his stage of development. The ability to determine the author’s stage of development is necessary also because otherwise his readers will misunderstand almost everything written by him. This is particularly true of writers who are at the higher stages, the stages of culture and humanity.

²To anyone in possession of such knowledge it very soon appears from a work whether its author is at the stage of civilization, culture, or humanity.

³Literary critics should learn to see that their task is to give a matter-of-fact account of the content of the book so that the public may know what it is about. When they receive knowledge of the stages of development, they perhaps could learn how to assign the literary work to the right stage, and that will suffice. We should not expect that doctors of literature will do so until at least the so-called intelligentsia have clearly realized that people are found at different stages of development (not to say levels of development).

⁴But how would critics who are at the stage of civilization be able to assess writers who are at the stage of culture, let alone writers who are at the stage of humanity? Doctors of literature generally are found at the stage of civilization and are even because of that unable to assess writers of the stages of culture and humanity. There are plenty of examples demonstrating this fact.

⁵Goethe and Schiller were slated by the would-be critics of their times and are still misunderstood. As it is now, a Goethe is judged by the standard of any hack whatever. Novelist Bulwer-Lytton is deemed antiquated. What a genuine Rosicrucian writes, however, does not very easily become antiquated. Perhaps they will understand this better a hundred years hence. Georg Brandes, a typical representative of the humanist stage, suffered the same fate. The examples could be multiplied.

⁶These doctors become authorities for the masses that make up public opinion. These doctors in their histories of literature dictate the “verdict of all” and the judgement of posterity. It may take centuries before the misjudged are rehabilitated, as a rule after a so-called general breakthrough that has brought about a new way of looking at life.

⁷If mankind does not have a basis in real knowledge, then everything “is in the air”, mankind is unable to find tenable norms of reason, mankind will always be misled by life-ignorant fantasts. It has always been like that.

5.17 No One Can Judge Beyond His Own Level

¹Goethe tried in various ways to make it clear to his readers, implicitly and especially to his critics, that the readers of a literary work do not see more in it than they already know. Of course this fundamental insight was lost to his age and to posterity. Every critic has believed himself able to understand and judge Goethe and all the other great ones: Platon, Bacon, etc.

But only an esoterician can understand Shakespeare and other initiates. To the esoterician it is obvious that all of them are still misunderstood. You must be a mentalist (47:5) and be well versed in esoterics to be able to understand what they meant by what they said. Those who were never initiates cannot realize this, however.

²This is because no one can understand anyone who is on a higher level of development. That is a law. For students of esoterics it is essential to realize that this law applies to both exoteric and esoteric matters. In its application to esoterics this law concerns, among many other things, the difference between comprehension and understanding. The explanation for this is that particularly in esoterics it is easy to believe oneself able to judge such matters as are above one's own level. Esoteric ideas always influence in some respect all the centres of the envelopes. Anyone who does not apprehend these ideas correctly and does not translate them into right life and action loses his balance too easily both emotionally and mentally, believes himself all-knowing, in contact with the planetary hierarchy and more such follies. It is here we should seek the explanation for the enormous production of occult (not esoteric!) literature the authors of which have distorted esoteric knowledge and in so doing lead injudicious readers astray.

³The impression had is just comical when one reads literary critics who consider that we are "more advanced", that Goethe is antiquated and that his views are old-fashioned. It will be very long before such critics have attained to Goethe's level and Goethe's understanding of reality and life. He wrote for contemporaries on low levels and was forced to adapt his presentation to them, "lower" himself to them. That is quite different from being on those levels.

⁴Still no one has been able to assess Oscar Wilde right. He was, as the prophecy said of him, "a king that would exile himself". The esoterician has to smile when reading the verdicts on great men passed by professors and doctors of literature. They do not surmise that they are in no position whatever to know man and to assess culture. They have no idea of the immense mental distances involved. There are many thousands of incarnations between a Wilde and an "average" doctor of literature.

5.18 Authorship

¹The question whether a writer can be impersonal and objective has, as usual, been taken in the absolute sense. Facts and axioms are absolute, of course, but the selection and combination of them are always subjective. Even more subjective is the presentation of such things as cannot be ascertained but fall into the category of hypotheses and theories. The novelist is the most subjective even if he wishes his story to appear as a depiction of reality. How could you describe life as it really is when you cannot see more than you already know?

²Faced with a writer the esoterician at once asks himself the questions: Does what he writes show that he has knowledge of reality and insight into life? Does the writer start from prevalent illusions and fictions or has he seen through their unfitness for life? If the writer lacks knowledge but is intelligent enough, the esoterician may learn from him the new contemporary attempts made at varying the misconception of ideas and so learn how he should critically answer the misconceptions, when conversing with others or in his own writing.

³The mentally active often think they are called to become writers. They pick up ideas from other equally life-ignorant writers, and when they have collected a sufficient amount of them, they make a soup out of these fictions. Then the new celebrities are popularized by doctors of literature whose aim it is to discover geniuses and to inform the public what they think about those writers. Subsequently they can be read and admired by the public keen on reading who have specialized in killing time by light reading to be spared thinking for themselves.

⁴Most writers start too early letting the light of their genius shine on a stupidized world.

Then it will amount to little more than a variation on problems that have been treated in literature since millennia. There is a justification for the poet if he has something new to proffer: new ideas, new perspectives, new ideals. Versatile Swiss professor and writer Carl Hilty wrote that nobody should become a writer until he had reached the age of fifty. Then he could speak from his own experience, the only reliable one.

5.19 *Genius*

¹You can become whatever you like if you devote sufficiently many incarnations to it, lives filled with single-minded work. Chosenness for a certain profession, easiness in practising it, talent, genius always are the result of persistent work in the past. What people call “genius” is simply sovereignty in a certain field. It need not at all imply, and has extremely seldom implied, that the literary genius, for instance, has reached above the lower emotional stage (48:4-7). At that stage you can become mentally sovereign in the lowest two mental regions (47:6,7). Most so-called geniuses are found there. The wide-spread belief that the writer knows more about reality and life than, for example, the financier or the official, is part of the usual psychological infantilism. Most authors demonstrate a high degree of injudiciousness in too many respects. Common sense is not required for the kind of authorship generally cherished.

²It was probably with Nietzsche that the real cult of the genius started, madness broke out like a veritable epidemic. Many of Nietzsche’s readers thought they were some sort of genius and strutted about like superhuman dandies, unable to see how ridiculous they were. The true geniuses of our times are passed over with silence. Now is the reign of democracy with the demand for equality in all respects. This implies the rule of ignorance and inability. Culture of the masses is culture of incompetence. The most vulgar taste comes to dominate everything. Anyone who does not want to take part in this madness is declared anti-social.

³Genius requires more than mastery of the form. Content is the main thing. The notion of “destructive genius” is a contradiction in terms. The essence of genius at least contains the divination of the ideals, the instinctive understanding of what is fit for life and life-promoting. Those in whom this divination has never been born or in whom it has been devastated do not belong to the stage of culture and are no true geniuses. Strindberg, for example, is not one of those. He is a typical representative of a literary current that is totally disoriented and has not even a minimal understanding of culture.

⁴In contrast, Erik Gustaf Geijer, Viktor Rydberg, and Gustaf Fröding are three examples of that instinct. Gustaf Fröding shows how important divination is for the seeker of the Holy Grail. A genius is a guide to the light, albeit through dark vales, to the world of ideals, to the kingdom of supermen and happiness.

5.20 *Abuse of the Imagination by Writers*

¹Novels do not depict reality but such as it appears to the writer’s imagination which, however profound, has little to do with reality. Of course such literary art (just like all art) degenerates into removing itself more and more from reality, until the “sensitive souls” enjoy the mere excesses of poetical imagination; the further away from reality, the better.

²This is a perverse way of cultivating imagination. “Truth is always strange, stranger than fiction,” if you are fit to realize it. To distort reality is to destroy the flair of the instinct of reality. And this has been done thoroughly. Otherwise such phenomena as the dogmas of theologians, the imaginative constructions of philosophers, and the primitive hypotheses of scientists would have been unthinkable.

5.21 *The Responsibility of the Artist*

¹Many believe they are called to be teachers of men without possessing knowledge of life. Others believe they are called to be helpers without an attractive individual character and understanding of people. They deceive themselves with their “sacrifice”. But if they can sow a good sowing for a good reaping, then it certainly is something for their egoism.

²All egocentrics are the victims of self-formed illusions. Typical examples were Nietzsche and Strindberg. They idiotized all ideas they could contact. When the individual is a self-centred self instead of sensing that he is a tool, this breeds emotional illusions of the individual’s own mental sovereignty.

³No more than any other art is fiction literature an end in itself. According to the law of life everything has a purpose, and art too. Writers who spread traditional illusions and fictions contribute in so doing to the idiotization of mankind. They sow a bad sowing the reaping of which will hamper their future development, make it more difficult for them to apprehend reality and life. Quite often one comes across “mental geniuses” who cannot possibly understand esoterics, although they have made efforts at it. They are typical examples of bad reaping. The corresponding is true of all other art. Those modern artists who have lost all sense of what true art is have destroyed their instinct of art in previous incarnations. Usually they begin by cultivating the caricature. To the esoterician art as well as science are “sacred things”.

⁴Our consciousness expressions are not merely subjective. They are objective material phenomena that have energy effects. By our emotional expressions we throw out vibrations into the emotional world; and by our mental expressions, into the mental world. Those who have their receivers tuned to that wave-length pick them up in their waking consciousness and think that they are all products of their self-activity. More than 80 per cent of our consciousness expressions come from without. Still they have not understood this, the consequence of it according to the law of cause and effect and the law of sowing and reaping. We are responsible for all our consciousness expressions, not only for words and actions. They have not even understood the responsibility of writers for all the illusions and fictions they are spreading by their writings.

5.22 *The Limitation of Art*

¹Art belongs to emotionality. It is contact with both the physical and the mental worlds. The plastic arts are in contact with the physical world. By their elaboration of mental conceptions of physical reality, novel and drama are in contact with the physical world. In contrast, music is in essence pure emotionality and degenerates and turns into caricature if made to render something physical or mental. It is true of all art that it loses itself in all manner of absurdities when trying to be a guide of reason and regarding itself as a higher authority and able to perceive reality beyond the emotional. The conceited claims of poets to the highest esteem are examples of such an aberration.

²Literary romanticism affords an example of art that has on the whole strayed from reality in the falsity of patent life-ignorance. It has accorded emotional “love” a life value far beyond what is justified. It has given the rising generation, who normally always passes through a “romantic period” before critical reason manages to make itself felt, a false idealized description of a harsh reality. It is unavoidable that even so-called realism is false. Writers are seldom knowers of reality. They generalize their own experiences and generally speaking live on collective illusions and fictions. Without true knowledge of reality, without a sense of responsibility for what they write, they are little better than parasites. They give stones instead of bread. In this flood of books containing nonsense the valuable books drown. The most valuable manuscripts remain unprinted.

³When novelists and playwrights awaken to their responsibility, they will work at giving

people knowledge of reality and life and not, as they do now, mostly contribute to amusement and entertainment by their trivial descriptions of people's worst qualities.

5.23 *The Mission of the Poet*

¹According to Schiller, the mission of the poet is to be a guide of mankind, a teacher, an educator. This was what Platon thought as well. The mission of the poet is to be a teacher of ideals, help mankind at the emotional stage to develop its emotional consciousness, ennoble its emotionality. To be a guide the poet must have knowledge of reality and life, be an expert on the different stages of human development, for only on these conditions can he set mankind free from its illusoriness and fictitiousness, afford to it that thread of Ariadne which shows those who would else be irremediably disoriented how to find their way out of the labyrinth of life.

²Otherwise he is a parasite that lives at the expense of mankind, a seducer of souls, a reinforcer of mass suggestion that hinders other people from seeking and finding the truth.

5.24 *No Books Are for Everybody*

¹No books are for all. Books are only for those who can learn something from them. Many books are below the individual's level, other books are on too high a level for him.

²Ninety nine per cent of fiction literature is emotional and not mental and demonstrate the stage of mankind's development in cultural respect.

³The greater portion of existing literature is for those at the stage of civilization. A very small portion, the writings of mystics and the yoga literature, belongs to the stage of culture. The works belonging at the stage of humanity are very few, Bertrand Russell's books on issues of life view are examples. His books can be read because he has become generally known in other fields. Esoteric books have to be printed at the authors' cost.

⁴Those who have reached the stage of humanity and to whom the problems of reality and life are the only essential ones do not find much from which to learn in ordinary fiction literature.

⁵The doctors of literature seem to think that what they write in their literary encyclopedias should be part of general education. This could be so where people at the stage of civilization are concerned. But often one is deeply disappointed, deplores the time one has spent on such things, and is amazed at the words of praise wasted on their authors.

⁶From a psychological point of view it is interesting to read which books are appreciated by "eminent representatives of culture". One is often amazed at their taste.

⁷An author is often read simultaneously by people of three generations. What the academician, blasé about literary expressions, considers to be platitudes may be important news to the youngest generation. That is one of the reasons why experiences of the same kind appear as fresh discoveries to each new generation. They have simply been forgotten, since they were commonplace to older generations, were taken for granted, and so were not emphasized.

5.25 *True Culture and Cultural Barbarism*

¹True culture cannot exist until mankind has attained the stage of culture. What in our times is called culture may only exceptionally be assigned to that stage. Instead it increasingly approaches the stage of barbarism.

²Being able to write is not enough for individuals to be representatives of culture. Whether they effect culture or not depends on the content of what they write. Being a master of language, being able to review and criticize, to write novels and plays is not enough. It is required of them that they have some understanding of the meaning, goal, and development of

life, of the ennoblement of human beings.

³Classical literature cannot be understood, they complain, and it is impossible to enjoy the works of our great writers. Not if they are provided with commentaries, which doctors of literature so readily will supply.

⁴There is another side to the matter. We need to set ourselves free from the burden of the past, from two-thousand-year-old illusions and fictions; we need to acquire a new view of reality and life; we need not live in the past; we need to understand right the new things that are happening, the new knowledge that is offered to us, the radical change that everything will undergo in the new zodiacal epoch. We are no longer dependent on “Greek and Roman humanism”. The new view of mankind presaged by esoterics will make it clear that everything that was viable in the classical view has been well integrated in the coming perspective.

⁵Most people seem to have stopped learning when they left school. This is the fault of school, which has not taught them that what school is intended to impart is the very ability of self-study. What school never taught them is that the meaning of life is consciousness development.

5.26 Books You Never Finish

¹There are three kinds of books. There are such books as you read only once. Those are the ones you can leave unread, and which you should never put on your book-shelf in the first place. There are books you read many times. They are valuable. Then there are books you never finish. They are irreplaceable.

²There are books which people who understand never finish, because they constantly find new things in them, learn how to “read between the lines”, are elevated into another “atmosphere”, constantly receive new ideas. That realization is lost to those who must always read something new, as if there were so much worth reading. Most books can be safely left unread. There are such books, if you understand them, as you constantly re-read even after you have learnt the entire book by heart. Anyone who reads in that manner has learnt how to read. Most people cannot.

5.27 Choosing Literature

¹When choosing literature you should first ask yourself: Will this enhance my understanding, will it rouse reflection, will it afford new ideas, will it help me live? Anyone who made this his rule would keep only valuable books on his book-shelf and could leave the bulk of literature unread. Such as quality has fallen since the two world wars, literary products reflect the “intellectual” degeneration, the decline to be generally seen in all fields. Culture reaches the bottom level. Besides it is true in all spheres that nobody gets good value for his money and that all are deceived.

²The cultural individual assimilates what is fit for life and eliminates what is false and perverse. He is careful about his choice of literature. He knows that deepening is achieved only through limitation. His library consists of books that he can read however many times without finishing them. He is not an encyclopedia but reduces his learning to principles, methods, and systems. He is matter-of-fact, thorough, and reliable. He can distinguish what he knows from what he does not know, can distinguish main issue from side issues, and discovers at once what is essential in everything.

³Many unconscious seekers (after true knowledge) are unwilling readers. Probably this is often because they have not found the right books, nor known where to find them. Those books drown in the book catalogues if they are entered into them at all. Therefore, those who try to help the seekers should give them information about suitable literature selected for the very persons concerned. If the helper does not how to make such a selection, he may suggest a number of books for the seeker’s own choice. There are nowadays books for all levels and for

different needs.

⁴Many people could be made to reflect seriously, if they were given opportunities to read other books than the useless pulp literature with which they fill their consciousness. Often one comes across people who have never caught sight of a “guide”, do not know that there exists a valuable literature, and when they are presented with a list of it, are amazed at their ignorance of it and deplore all the years they have wasted in desert literature. It is even worse that many writers would have treated of quite different spheres of life had they known the “best books”.

⁵The public is ignorant of the existence of the real knowledge. The literature treating of it is not merely passed over with silence by theologians, philosophers, and scientists. It must not even be reviewed in the daily papers. The editors are anxious about the reputation of their papers so that everything that the ruling authorities have rejected as superstition has to be avoided.

⁶To a certain extent this is true of other valuable literature as well. One very often meets people who have searched for such literature without finding it. Neither at public libraries nor in bookshops are seekers informed about it. The surprise and gratitude of these seekers were great when they were given a list of books worth reading.

⁷Strangely enough publishers do not care to re-publish books that have long been out of print. If they are valuable, they are very rarely found in antiquarian bookshops. The public libraries have moved them to their stack-rooms where they cannot be found but with great effort. The chance of finding something worth reading thus is scant. Those who have suffered under such a system are indignant, and rightly, at having been kept in the dark, almost on purpose, about precisely the things of which they have been instinctively in pursuit.

⁸Generally speaking, the valuable literature is unknown (the greater its value, the more “non-existent” it is). Most people do not know that it exists or how to find it. Booksellers are only interested in bestsellers in mass editions (which people of real culture do not read, no more than they listen to the radio or watch TV). Esoteric literature is uninteresting because “there is no money in it”, and “no one buys such stuff”. Booksellers put those books on the uppermost shelf where nobody finds them. They must not be in the display windows. Since nobody has been able to advertise them, no requests are made for them. Publishers must earn some money, too, and this they will do only on mass editions. Writers having knowledge they want to share must pay for the printing themselves and then give the copies away for free.

⁹Most of the books that people think they should read to be “educated”, “move with the times”, are not merely unfit for life but even disorient them. Experts who have understanding should give information about truly valuable literature, so that young people may know something about that of which they all too often are ignorant. The history of literature does not give the requisite information. Such literary surveys are desirable as briefly review the contents of the classics so that the reader has an opportunity to choose according to his needs. If in such a survey the ideas contained in the books were accounted for in an objective manner, readers would even be spared the time and effort wasted at devouring the mammoth literature.

¹⁰When shall we have a publisher who will publish nothing but valuable literature? This does not at all mean the most famous works of world literature. What life-ignorant people of all times have considered to be best will in the future not be deemed worth the printer’s ink. Where is that capitalist to be found who will sacrifice his fortune on publishing esoteric literature?

5.28 *Ideas*

¹A humanist does not read to enjoy the writer’s style, hardly even to study the ways in which he has solved the problems he treats of. What commands his interest are ideas, reality ideas that enable him to understand better, that widen his perspectives. Anyone who has the

idea also has its content of reality and so is liberated from the need of studying how this is varied in countless novels and memoirs. It seems that to the book-reading public at large the details in each individual case are the essential things, and many writers, especially writers of memoirs, also dwell upon these, which to the humanist indicates the stage of development of both the writer and the public.

²What was just said here about the idea has its correspondence as to the material forms of objective reality. The causal selves, who have in the causal world experienced the primordial forms of nature in their perfect beauty, cannot possibly take an interest in the more or less serious degeneration and distortion of those forms in the physical world.

³This was what Platon tried to explain to his contemporaries and to posterity. It would be interesting to know how many have understood what Platon intended to say. Probably only those have been able to do so who were once initiates of the esoteric knowledge orders instituted by the planetary hierarchy.

⁴We wonder how long it will be until mankind has arrived at the realization that the ideas and not their frames are the essential things. Doctors of literature seem to think that the frame is more important. Otherwise they would not occupy themselves so much with personal particulars, gossip, and sundry details. Pick out the ideas from their personal frame and put them in the frame presented by the history of the development of ideas. Then one volume will suffice for the essential content of hundreds of thousands of volumes.

⁵What is lasting in them all, poets or philosophers, is the little that agrees with reality, and that has always existed in the world of ideas. Illusions and fictions, which people live on, are preferred to real knowledge.

⁶Nobody can claim right of priority to a causal idea, hardly even to a mental idea. The formulation of the idea, however, is the individual's work. Plagiarism can be involved only in the formulation of the idea.

⁷As long as ideas serve consciousness development, they are regarded as good. But when their significance, energy, effect are transferred to the matter aspect and foster selfishness, pride, isolation, they become evil.

5.29 *Shakespeare*

¹In his dramas Shakespeare showed mankind at its present stage of development, people such as they really are in their speech and action. He showed this without any other tendency than depiction of reality, with logic and realism, free from moralism and valuation. In so doing he sought to afford people knowledge of man, a condition of civilization. In this way Shakespeare showed how dramas should be written.

²Shakespeare is the greatest one because no one has in the same way hit what is typically human in the characters he depicts. His mastery is his ability to do so simultaneously as he makes the characters typical of their times, make them express the views of their times. According to Schopenhauer, all his persons were right in what they said because they could not be different.

³By his plays Shakespeare showed how meaningless the whole masked ball of life appears to anyone able to see through the illusions of life.

⁴Samuel Johnson censures Shakespeare for not punishing the crime, not clarifying the justice of destiny. Being an esoterician Shakespeare knew that human beings cannot judge that matter, cannot interpret the effects of the law of reaping right. Only those who are able to study the individual's incarnations can ascertain the validity of that law.

⁵Only the esoterician knows who wrote the dramas of Shakespeare. The proof was given by Shakespeare himself through the many esoterisms found interpolated in his works. The question whether Shakspere was also Shakespeare will not be answered until a causal self, or

a group of causal selves, examines the matter. Georg Brandes' arguments are too superficial. Besides, nowhere is there a discussion of the facts that Francis Bacon had a shakespeare in his coat of arms, that he was the son of Queen Elizabeth (with the Earl of Essex), that he was the final redactor of the "King James" translation of the Bible. There are many more things to be said in the matter. Suffice it to point out that his dramas are matchless, that no human being could have authored them. It is, however, pointless to dispute this question with the "uninitiated". When the esoteric history will be made public some time in the future, that truth as well as all the other ones will be brought to light.

5.30 *La Rochefoucauld*

¹The maxims of La Rochefoucauld are for those at the stage of civilization, not for those at the stage of culture. They are witty and often acute psychological analyses of people of repulsive tendency. Like all such things they are often too wide generalizations, but give the reader suggestions to make his own observations and analyses. At all events they are not for the uncritical who are unable to individualize. To such people they become psychological dogmas and as such misleading.

5.31 *Goethe*

¹There is an entire literature on Goethe, and it deals especially with his many love affairs, of course. One work is absent, the essential one, that would account for all his ideas. After this has been published, we could as for Goethe's production content ourselves with reading *Faust* (but in the original German, no translation) and his lyric poetry. It is typical that the most instructive texts by or on Goethe are his "aphorisms" and Eckermann's *Conversations with Goethe*.

²Schiller's first impression of Goethe appears from his statement: "It is interesting how he apprehends and reproduces everything in his own characteristic, individual way, unlike how others apprehend it. He considers the form too much where I consider the soul. But his greatness is in his all-roundness and endeavour to explore everything and make it a whole."

³Goethe was interested in both the matter aspect and the consciousness aspect of existence; Schiller, exclusively in the consciousness aspect as it revealed itself in culture and human life.

⁴Goethe considered, and rightly, that superphysical existence (a matter of faith and hope) should not be made the object of speculation destroying thought. In the expression, "destroying thought", lies "destroying reality", a truth that apparently only a Goethe could see, because our illusions and fictions shut us out from reality. This finds expression, in the most striking manner, in all Nietzschean superman apes who believe themselves able "to be sufficient unto themselves" after they have assimilated what others have thought: ideas in literature. They are important by the ideas of others. Their self-importance hinders them from making the simple reflection: what would I be without those people, without all the things given me?

⁵Goethe wrote about "the interior of nature": "Ins Innre der Natur dringt kein erschaffner Geist". And of course everyone knew what Goethe meant by this. Goethe was a Rosicrucian, even though he remained in lower degrees. So he knew at least what was meant by the "interior of nature" and a "created" spirit. It has been generally assumed that his intention was to express his approval of Kant's piffle that we would never be able to explore the inner reality of nature. Of course the "great Kant" knew that. But Goethe's statement was a masked critique of Kant. The interior of nature was really nothing on which an agnostic like Kant should pass his verdict.

⁶When the Germans boast of Goethe they only make themselves comical barbarians. As if Goethe was a product of the "German spirit". Goethe had reached the highest level of the

humanist stage and made the great sacrifice of incarnating in a German milieu to impart some culture to the Germans. The same sacrifice made a whole little clan in the same period. Where such a clan incarnates, a new culture arises. The Germans should not boast of their Goethe. His German contemporaries did not “receive” him. Only abroad were there a few humanists in a position to understand him. It was long before the Germans began to surmise his greatness. And then they beat the drum and played the harmonica.

5.32 Schiller

¹Schiller refused to accept any one of the existing religions for religious reasons. He refused to accept any one of the existing philosophical systems for philosophical reasons. No writer has interpreted Platon as correctly as he did. This shows that he was on the verge of the causal stage. This is a thing that doctors of literature should consider before they find fault with him. If they could grasp the meaning of what is said here!

5.33 Bulwer-Lytton

¹Bulwer-Lytton’s novel *Zanoni* is a book for esoteric connoisseurs. It contains many words of wisdom, like this one: “Life, that ever needs forgiveness, has, for its first duty, to forgive.”

5.34 Nietzsche

¹Nietzsche’s popularity may by and large be attributed to the fact that he in writings accounted for such a multitude of ideas. It was less important that he had a particular ability to misunderstand the ideas of others and to turn them inside out. Those of his readers who understood this could turn them right again and derive pleasure from it.

²By handling the ideas in that manner, however, Nietzsche demonstrated his own incompetence. The study of his success among millions of readers is a contribution to the study of different kinds of religions: barbarian, civilizational, and cultural religions.

5.35 Dostoevsky

¹“If God does not exist, everything is permitted”, says Dostoevsky. In saying this he has unsurpassably indicated his own stage of development. The whole of his literary production thus belongs at the emotional stage. Such statements reveal to the esoterician the degree of a writer’s conception of reality and his understanding of life.

5.36 Strindberg

¹Aesthete Hans Ruin at Lund University calls August Strindberg a “universal genius”. This is characteristic of aesthetes and doctors of literature and an indication of their disorientation of culture. Strindberg was a master of language, an imaginative and versatile person, an expert on man’s worse qualities, an injudicious enthusiast of revolution, and as for the rest a typical Nietzschean superman ape, the helpless victim of superstition of all sorts. Anyone who applies the word “genius” on Strindberg has his own individual criterion of genius. Strindberg must be characterized as the biggest demolisher and corrupter of culture, an apostle of hatred, a poisoner of the public spirit growing. The characters he describes are caricatures, such as they appear when hatred looks at people and enjoys putting the worst construction on them.

²Just like even a blind hen may find a grain, so it happens that life-ignorant people are lucky enough to find something if they dig in old archives. Yet it has not occurred to anyone to ask to what extent Strindberg was able to take down an idea from the world of ideas. If there is even one in the whole of his production, then it was not one he discovered himself. The rest was, more than ninety per cent of it, born in the spheres of repulsion. But such things are translated into all languages, are played in theatres deemed cultured, are published in de

luxurious editions of collected works: become efficient barriers against a new culture in the future humanistic epoch.

5.37 Chesterton

¹With his great capacity for throwing dust in people's eyes, English writer G.K. Chesterton seems to have derived pleasure from making the impossible possible. His 48 short stories about Father Brown are examples of his virtuosity in this respect. Being an orthodox catholic he ridicules everything smacking of "occultism" when the occasion arises. He makes the scoundrels occurring in his stories drivel about black magic, etc., according to the ordinary misconceptions of public opinion. This is the way to handle it! You need no knowledge of the matter to distort and ridicule it in a skilful way. It is a subtle psychological trick to have occultism represented by criminal madmen of all sorts. Then you have said nothing that can be refuted but insidiously strengthened the general suggestion that occultism is superstition and deception.

²Chesterton is a typical example of modern man disoriented in existence, drawing the boundaries between imagination and reality himself.

5.38 Tolstoy

¹Tolstoy is one of the most typical examples how idealism can be misunderstood. He was pained by his social standing, his wealth, etc., instead of understanding the lessons these advantages entailed. The Hindu doctrine of dharma could have taught him to use his rich resources in a rational manner. He misinterpreted (as do all non-esotericians) Jeshu's exhortation to the rich young man, not understanding the symbolism of that story. His misinterpreted Jeshu's saying, "resist not evil", just as all non-esotericians have misinterpreted that exhortation. Tolstoy was at the stage of the mystic and demonstrated by his life how little that stage equips people for a right orientation in life. The desire to set an example to others by one's life involves certain risks. This requires above all common sense, and Tolstoy lacked it in most respects. This requires knowledge of reality, of the stages of development and of the conditions of consciousness development.

²The attempts made at comparing Tolstoy and Goethe are characteristic of life-ignorance in union with conceited enterprisingness. Having not the slightest idea of stages of development, of mental and emotional levels, of the essential difference between emotionality and mentality, doctors of literature attempt valuations they are in no position to make. Tolstoy was a brilliant writer belonging to the higher levels of the stage of the mystic. Goethe was at the verge of the causal stage.

³When will people see the idiocy of comparing individuals? Not even individuals on the same level can be compared.

5.39 Brandes

¹Calling Georg Brandes a genius is using a word abused to the point of uselessness. He was well-oriented in the past and all aglow with the realization of the disadvantages of tradition and the power of ruling ideologies to stupidize people. He desired an intellectual revolution in all fields of human thought. He was carried by a divine enthusiasm and ideality. His whole life was a struggle against all the powers of darkness. To the idealistic youth of Scandinavia he became a guide and pioneer. As all such people he was of course the target for the usual persecution by those in power, the "conservative" and "cultured" people, who did not hesitate to use all the means of poisoning on which hatred, baseness, and slander are experts and which have always been characteristic of the ruling caste.

²The collected works of Brandes afford a good survey of European culture in the 18th and

19th centuries, good knowledge of the political, social, cultural, religious, and philosophical problems that occupied the élite of those times. Reading them is disheartening. The educated people of those times were so close to the stage of barbarism. The problems that they debated were so simple. People were so inhumane.

³Brandes accounts for the ideas that were to effect social upheaval and new ways of looking at things after struggle for freedom of thought and freedom of expression. But he does not surmise the origin of those ideas. The ordinary saying, “the times were for it”, explains nothing. When the time for them has come, they make their appearance, those ideas which rule the world.

⁴Still in the 19th century the general view was that the organization of society at the time was as the good god had intended it to be for all times to come. Anyone who dared to appear as a reformer of society was an antichrist against whom the priests thundered in the pulpits and whom the judges sentenced to prison.

⁵Knowledge was to be studied in the Bible and everything else was blasphemy.

⁶Voltaire was significant as a reformer during the 18th century as was Brandes to the 19th century. If you have not read Brandes’ epoch-making book about Voltaire, then you are ignorant of social conditions in Europe in the 18th century.

⁷By his work, *Hovedstrømninger i det Nittende Aarhundredes Litteratur*, Brandes became a pioneer of humanism in Scandinavia in the last quarter of the 19th century.

5.40 Final Words

¹An esoterician can only feel compassion for the literary historians who must fill their consciousness with all the passing fancies which the countless life-ignorant writers of fiction literature deem so valuable as to make them feel called upon to publish them to enrich culture by them.

²Mankind could spare itself much aberration by testing esoterics as a working hypothesis. People should not, however, let themselves be led astray by esoteric neophytes who, overwhelmed by the new perspectives afforded by esoterics, start by thinking, “this is all you need”. They will soon be faced with new problems and such ones in infinitum. But the essential difference is that you do not run the risk of total aberration any more. The basic problems of the meaning of existence have been solved.

Endnotes by the Translator

5.7.2 “And so it happens that the person who reads a great deal – that is to say, almost the whole day, and recreates himself by spending the intervals in thoughtless diversion, gradually loses the ability to think for himself; just as a man who is always riding at last forgets how to walk. Such, however, is the case with many men of learning: they have read themselves stupid.” Arthur Schopenhauer, “On Reading and Books”.

5.20.2 “Truth is always strange, stranger than fiction.” Lord Byron, *Don Juan* (1823), 14:101.

5.31.5 “Ins Innre der Natur dringt kein erschaffener Geist” means “no created spirit penetrates into the interior of nature”. This is quoted also in 7.12.2.

5.33.1 The sentence quoted from Bulwer-Lytton’s *Zanoni* is found in Book III, Chapter I.

5.35.1 This is found in *The Brothers Karamazov*, Part 4, Book 11, Chapter 4 (“A Hymn and a Secret”). Addressing Alyosha, Mitya (Dmitri) Karamazov quotes himself saying it when retelling an earlier conversation with Rakitin, a journalist: “And Rakitin doesn’t like God, oof, how he doesn’t! That’s the sore spot in all of them! But they conceal it. They lie. They pre-

tend. ‘What, are you going to push for that in the department of criticism?’ I asked. ‘Well, they won’t let me do it openly,’ he said, and laughed. ‘But,’ I asked, ‘how will man be after that? Without God and the future life? It means everything is permitted now, one can do anything?’ ‘Didn’t you know?’ he said. And he laughed. ‘Everything is permitted to the intelligent man,’ he said. ‘The intelligent man knows how to catch crayfish, but you killed and fouled it up,’ he said, ‘and now you’re rotting in prison!’ He said that to me. A natural-born swine! I once used to throw the likes of him out – well, and now I listen to them.” (Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, 1990, p. 589.)

5.39.7 Brandes’ *Hovedstrømninger i det Nittende Aarhundredes Litteratur* has been translated into English in its entirety (6 volumes): *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature*.

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