

1 EXOTERIC WORLD VIEW AND LIFE VIEW

1.1 THE WILL TO UNITY

¹The individualist will to power leads to division. The universalist will to unity shows the value and viability of our individualism.

²When world views and life views are shattered like so many other things that have seemed certain and reliable to us, burst like the soap-bubbles they are but which it is always hard for us to admit they are, then the sense of solidarity and the need for unity become vitally important factors.

³The will to unity is no will to uniformity, no standardization into robotism. The will to unity does not fight against other views or against dissidents. It is so rational that it need never fear criticism. It leaves everybody's fiction in peace, for it knows how to find unity in diversity. The individual has a natural right to exist, to be different from all others, to be an individual with individuality. In its deepest sense, freedom is individuality. Without freedom there is no individual character, no self-reliance, no self-determination, no development. The will to unity is the strongest defence of freedom, for this will must be built on freedom as its basis. True unity cannot be enforced and can never be won at the expense of freedom. The will to unity is incomparably superior to any psychosis that unifies all temporarily. It needs no compulsion, no force, for it is an indestructible sense of belonging together and solidarity proved in action. The will to unity makes any nation as strong and as great as it can be. Every part, no matter how small, of a nation is a part of the whole, a whole part of the whole. The will to unity brings about a whole and gigantic power for outer unity; a power different from any dictatorial enforcement, which always bears the seed of division in it. Oppression fosters no will to unity and no faith in the oppressor's ability to fulfil his promises of paradise.

⁴Life need not be a struggle. Struggle may be a factor of development for lower forms of life. At higher stages of development, however, struggle is irrational. Even competition – a sublimation of the urge to struggle – has been superseded by co-operation. Conflict cannot possibly be connected with culture. Where there is struggle, culture is absent; the technological advances may be however great. Reason finally learns to recognize that the law of the jungle, the war of all against all, belongs in the jungle. Life, viewed as a totality, is a great collective, whose individual units, when once they have attained the common-sense level of development, will be united in a concerted endeavour to reach ever clearer consciousness from ignorance and impotence, to acquire the freedom and power that are in understanding.

⁵Also political parties demonstrate the importance of solidarity. But solidarity within a certain party, within a certain social class, always leads to disunion within the community. The whole has been divided and disintegrates more and more. It is forgotten that class interests are justified only if and as long as they are subservient to the whole.

⁶To remove everything which divides, and to come to an agreement on everything about which one can agree – and this in all fields – is the first step towards the goal of unity, is the first condition of the welding of all individuals, of all parties, into that inseparable unity which the will to unity can realize.

⁷The will to unity is perhaps not the only way of solving the social and economic problems. But it is the best, simplest, surest, and perhaps necessary way. If the majority begin to doubt the possibility of achieving a result on a voluntary basis, then they will try to achieve it in another, worse way. The will to unity is the only rational basis, and the only basis tenable in the long run, of society and of culture. That idea is the basic idea of this book.

⁸The will to unity is not least the will to a national culture. Such a culture must emerge from that collective self-reliance and self-determination which the will to unity fosters in a nation.

⁹To create a culture man must first find Man. Culture is impossible before he is discovered.

For man is always the measure of culture. Man creates his culture himself. Nobody else does him that service. Where man is not naturally respected as a man – because just as a man he is above, superior to, everything else – there the human is absent, the conditions of the human are absent, and thus the conditions of culture are absent.

¹⁰Everybody has a right to his share but not to more. The demand for more has the result that others have to go without their requisite share. The individual insatiability counteracts the striving after unity. When nobody demands more than his share, then everybody else will get his share too. Of course this does not imply that all shares are equally great, for the tasks are not equally great. When everybody gets his share, then the stage of material culture has been reached.

¹¹The stage of emotional culture has been reached when everybody serves and nobody feels like a master. When everybody serves something higher, something beyond himself, something for several, for many, for all together, then that harmony will present itself which is the expression of cultured emotion. The present intellectual possibilities of man have been overrated, and his emotional ones undervalued and neglected. It is also easier to realize emotional culture, with the sense of unity as its highest value.

¹²We shall have social culture when individuals feel that they exist for the community, and the community feels that it exists for the individual; when everybody regards service as his foremost task.

¹³The prerequisite of the stage of intellectual culture is a rational and non-contradictory world view and life view, which is free of dogmas and has been made available for all. This presupposes a system of education that develops the power of judgement.

¹⁴Emotional and mental culture are the kinds of culture most important for the realization of unity. Material culture will follow as a matter of course when the good will to mutual assistance is made the highest value and norm.

¹⁵Mental culture presupposes mental self-reliance and mental self-determination. Intellectual independence implies the ability critically to sift that material which culture has afforded us, to assess the kind of certainty and degree of probability accruing to the ideas we find.

¹⁶School imparts certain skills – languages for instance – which are intended to make it possible to acquire true education, or knowledge of facts. For all too many people the very skill is the same thing as education – the skill at expressing oneself on everything and judging everything one has incidentally picked up, with a semblance of knowledge of facts – that skill which is the opposite of reliability. When leaving school, the young people who are declared mature appear rather to be disoriented, ignorant of life, unable to feel independently and to judge objectively. Their self-activity has been hampered by overloading their memory with inessentials – this memory which should only absorb knowledge of laws, principles, and methods, not details obtainable in easily accessible reference books. The true purpose of the school is to educate the power of judgement. The goal of rational upbringing and education is brotherhood.

¹⁷Common sense is critical reason, everybody's highest reason. Common sense relativizes, strives for objectivity, corrects itself, hardly ever expresses final opinions, and does not base opinions on incomplete facts and insufficient experience.

¹⁸The lumber room of the history of ideas is crammed with superstitions that were once called truth. The world is still a chaos of innumerable ideologies based on fictions and illusions. No wonder that the man who has come to know them thoroughly ends up a skeptic.

¹⁹The systems of belief are built on emotional conviction absolutified. The systems of speculation prove untenable when scrutinized critically. And both kinds of system come into conflict with the facts of reality.

²⁰The knowledge of reality is the one rock bottom of a world view and life view. Natural science has mapped but a fraction of reality, it is true. It has been possible for it, however, to make clear that whatever conflicts with the facts of reality cannot claim to be called truth.

²¹Many people regard it as a hopeless task to search for a unifying bond in all the cultural factors that are in a state of dissolution, conflicting in disunion, or groping in uncertainty. It is impossible to achieve it without a concerted striving, will to unity, although what separates people is almost always inessential both in emotional and mental respects. We must learn not to concentrate on what separates, but to direct our attention to whatever unites, and regard everything that separates as inessential.

EMOTIONAL CULTURE

1.2 MAN AS AN EMOTIONAL BEING

¹At his present stage of development, man is an emotional being with a possibility of intermittent use of his still undeveloped reason.

²Sense perceptions excepted, emotionality can be said to include everything psychological that does not belong to the purely rational, and the purely rational does not embrace much. Our consciousness is centred in emotionality, which colours sense perceptions as well as thoughts. Once in a while, consciousness makes a temporary excursion into the sphere of unemotional thought, when we disconnect everything that can be emotionalized, everything that concerns our desires and needs, everything that is included in what is “personal”.

³Emotion is without measure. It absolutizes and is subjectively sovereign. Emotion requires certainty, wants something unshakably firm and certain, “even though heaven and earth perish”, turns relative into absolute, probabilities into absolute truth.

⁴In the struggle between emotion and reason emotion wins, since it is perceived as being absolute and since reason recognizes the relativity of its content. Emotion dictates most opinions. The fact that an idea wins is no proof of its rationality, correctness, or viability, but all too often a proof of its emotional usefulness.

⁵Emotional thinking imitates whatever it finds sympathetic, and copies trains of thought attractive to emotion. From the objective point of view, emotional thinking is uncritical and undiscerning, and has an especial predilection for resorting to fictions that are inaccessible to rational criticism. Emotional thinking decides the choice of authorities, the choice of particularly important viewpoints and standpoints, the choice of world view and life view. Emotional thinking reacts against any kind of criticism, as though realizing that the strength of its mainly emotional conceptions would be subverted by objective analysis in the long run.

⁶The fact that dogmas are hard to eradicate depends on their being woven into emotional complexes. They have thereby become needs. Emotion must have indestructible certainty. Destruction of dogmas leads to a dissolution of the corresponding complexes, and thereby to emotional chaos that is painful and hard to overcome for many people.

⁷The fact that the art of formulation belongs to emotional thinking is clear from the power of the pertaining emotions over thought, the romance and atmosphere created by the choice of words, the glow of form which fires imagination, and the suggestive power of catchwords by which they can incite to emotional intoxication or psychosis.

⁸Emotion dominates not only thought but also the will. One wills whatever emotion decides one shall will. The essence of the volition that directs our activity is affected or, expressed in terms more modern, vitalized emotional complexes. An action is determined by its strongest motive, and the strongest motives are emotional factors.

⁹The four temperaments – the choleric, melancholic, sanguineous, and phlegmatic – affect our emotional thinking as well as our emotional volition, and are visible expressions of our modes of emotional reaction. If emotion is absent, action is easily deferred. Reason wavers between different standpoints if it does not recognize the need for immediate action. Since most standpoints seem arbitrary to a certain extent, reason tarries until emotion intervenes and decides.

¹⁰With an insight into this immense importance of emotion to thinking and to volition, one understands the significance of emotional culture. Emotional culture is the essential of all culture. Without emotional culture the “cultures” will destroy themselves and one another, and mankind will never reach up to a true and predominantly mental culture, that which some time will make men rational beings.

¹¹Four of the most important factors in the field of emotional culture will be critically examined in the following. It is only by an unprejudiced scrutiny of them that we can hope to see clearly enough eventually to remedy the deficiencies in concerted work.

1.3 RELIGION

¹The purpose of religion is to lighten the burdens of life, not to make them heavier.

²The purpose of religion is to ennoble man and in so doing to afford him joy, peace, and harmony.

³The purpose of religion is not to issue commands or prohibitions, but to ennoble and strengthen feelings so as to make all commands superfluous.

⁴The purpose of religion is not to mitigate the wrath of any cosmic being, but to unite us with our fellow men in a brotherly bond.

⁵The purpose of religion is, therefore, to ennoble our feelings, to preach brotherhood, and to practise service.

1.4 The Essence of Religion

¹In essence religion is feeling. It is an instinctive and spontaneous feeling of life – without any rational conceptions and theoretical constructions – with an unreflective, natural certainty of the inseparable and inescapable unity of all life, a longing and a striving to participate in this unity. This feeling of life contains in it: confidence in life, reliance on life, certainty about life, courage in life, joy of life, and the will to live.

²This feeling of life is also a need for, and an ever more conscious striving after, ennoblement of all feelings susceptible of ennoblement. It is a need to love and admire, revere and worship everything it can and may. The feeling of unity appears nowhere as strongly as in true religion. This feeling of unity, which fills the man engrossed in devotion with a peace that atones for everything, does not only extend towards the invisible, but contains and embraces everything, even his bitterest enemies.

³Where this feeling of unity is allowed to express itself, is fostered and encouraged instead of being stifled, where this unity is allowed to be realized undisturbed, we find those live individuals whom we spontaneously call real people.

⁴In its own sphere, feeling is will as well as power and reality. The spontaneity and certainty of feeling are destroyed when feeling is divided against itself. For reason to be able to harm or vanquish a feeling, it is necessary that a feeling assists on the side of reason against another feeling, that a feeling has regarded itself to be in need of, and has sought, the support of reason. If the feeling that has appealed to reason is connected with conceptions that are untenable in the long run, then that feeling loses its support and is wasted away.

⁵Religion is feeling and this feeling is a driving force in the acts of service.

1.5 Religious Mysticism

¹Consciousness is probably not limited to our “five senses”, but has perhaps unlimited possibilities of unconscious contact with an immense series of vibrations from a universe which in the main is still unexplored. If we could apprehend and interpret all the cosmic vibrations pervading our own body, it is conceivable that we would be omniscient.

²Christian mysticism, Islamic sufism, and Hindu bhakti yoga are different paths to that mystic experience which, in states inaccessible to introspective analysis, has found the supreme states. Because of the danger of self-deception, these predispositions should be balanced by a special training in common sense with a strict demand for purposiveness. The true mystic has always been a rare phenomenon, and appears to be so more and more. To outsiders, he is characterized by that feeling of the unity of all life, that striving after union with life, that absorption into unity – not to be confused with quietism, paralysing thought, feeling, and will – of which the Indian Ramakrishna, portrayed in a number of biographies, is a typical example.

1.6 Religious Intellectual Constructions

¹It has not yet been possible to make any system of thought unchangeable. Viewed historically, intellectual systems consist each of a series of systems; thus they are reconstructions.

²True religion is not any matter of reason and has little, if anything, to do with theories. It is not the purpose of religion to give us a world view and life view. Religious dogmatics is neither religion nor a rational life view. It harms religion.

³A conception that has no counterpart in reality is a fiction. If reason takes charge of the fiction, then the fiction will be continually adapted through new definitions or increased experience. If emotion, which requires immutability, takes charge of the fiction, then the fiction is turned into a dogma. If a religious feeling is connected with untenable rational constructions, then both are harmed. Doubt in the individual, discord between individuals, schisms resulting in more and more sects, are the inevitable consequences. When the dogma is destroyed, the entire emotional life is shaken. Many people are then seized with panic and see themselves wandering on a bottomless quagmire.

⁴The fact that religion can do without dogmas is proved by Buddhism, whose tolerance is a consequence of this. A Buddhist “synod” laid down as its first thesis: “Whatever conflicts with common sense cannot accord with Buddha’s doctrine.” If a Christian Council had adopted a similar thesis, then a considerable part of the hapless human race would have been spared ghastly sufferings, endless disputes, and endless doubt.

⁵Religious dogmas reform nobody. It is the ennoblement of feeling that reforms. The cultivation of noble feelings, such as admiration, affection, sympathy, would contribute in an entirely different manner to the uplift of mankind. The wasting away of religious feeling is a better testimony than any other to the harm done by connecting religion with untenable views.

⁶Belief does not belong to the essence of religion. This appears best from the fact that Buddha seriously warned all his disciples not to believe (accept blindly). The question is whether Jeshu by “faith” did not mean will, although faith from meaning will was distorted so as first to mean trust, and later blind acceptance or irrational conviction.

⁷Bible criticism frightens many people. But anyone who doubts that Pilate’s question – “What is truth?” – is the word of god, is already practising Bible criticism. If every word of the Old Testament is the word of god, then Judaism is as infallible and as divine as Christianity. The question is whether the Jews have not also lost the key to their Testament by becoming Westerners and literalists from having been Easterners and symbolists.

⁸The words that men can understand are the words of men and not the words of a cosmic being. God does not preach any truth, nor does he protect the truth from falsification and deception. Man has been given his reason to use it so that he may seek and find the truth himself.

⁹Religious dogmatics as a rule suffers from three misleading conceptions: an erroneous idea of god, an erroneous idea of sin, and an erroneous idea of atonement.

¹⁰The idea of god has changed continually over the ages. It, as well as all other religious ideas, will always be a matter of dispute. But then ideas without ground are superfluous to a religion possessed of psychological insight.

¹¹Our idea of god must be assumed to be false as long as man is being crucified, abused, and despised. Of course, our idea of god does not affect the possible existence of a cosmic being. Savages adore the spirit of idols they have constructed, and somewhat less primitive intellects adore the spirit of ideas they have constructed.

¹²When the idea of god has been sublimated into the idea – so unattractive to those lulled into the belief in arbitrary grace – of the universal causal law, which is also valid psychologically, the law of sowing and reaping the inevitability of which Jeshu intimated; then that idea will have reached its highest rational expression. The highest expression of the sense of divinity is the unifying omnipotence of love.

¹³Anyone who is not perfect like god, who is not like god, who therefore is not god, is regarded as a “sinner”. Man, or the relative, must be god, or the absolute; otherwise he is condemned for eternity.

¹⁴The engrafting of the idea of sin – which was the true “fall into sin” – and the infection of mankind with that irrational complex of an inevitable and ineffaceable burden of sin, that complex which hampers life and promotes hatred, is the most heinous crime – befitting for a devil – ever perpetrated on mankind. The foreign missions spread the doctrines of sin and of eternal punishment.

¹⁵They soon realized, of course, that the unbearable burden of sin must be lifted off in some manner. To this end various religions have salaried medicine-men who have their special tricks. Christianity – a thing totally different from Christ’s teaching – made faith in the irrational and incomprehensible a condition of the remission of sins.

¹⁶According to the doctrine of the Church, “sin is a crime committed against an infinite being, and thus requires infinite punishment”. Quite naturally they sought to explain away the idea that this infinite being could be infinite love, could be infinitely able to forgive and not hate eternally the victims of ignorance and inability. According to common sense, “sin” would rather be a crime committed against others and clearly recognized as such by the offending individual, or an obstacle to his own development raised by the individual. Such a sinner needs psychiatric treatment. When “sin” will be whatever separates a man – not from a cosmic being – but from another man, whoever he be, then we shall become humanized. Then we shall begin to discover what is still undiscovered, namely Man. True culture appears in the fact that it reconciles man with his fellow men. This, however, seems to be the most difficult thing of all.

¹⁷The idea of atonement is equally absurd. A gleam of common sense, however, succeeded in penetrating this darkness of unreason: “God is not wrath. There is no passage in the Old or New Testament that makes god the object of atonement, the one to be atoned. On the contrary, god is the subject of atonement, the one from whom atonement emanates. It is man who becomes incensed at the seeming iniquities of life and goes away from god in his hatred. God need not be atoned with man, but man with god.”

¹⁸Man’s longing for unity with life perceived – as with the mystics – always and everywhere the reality of this unity.

1.7 MORALITY

¹No idea is as vague, indeterminate, and ambiguous, no everyday word is as abused, as morality. One just knows that it is an “infallible absolute”, which always is good enough as a weapon. But in order to be efficiently useful as a murder weapon it must indeed be as incomprehensible as possible.

²Each new life view that appears results in a new moral view with new rules of conduct and new values set according to new bases of valuation. These rules and values survive independently a long time after the life views and bases of valuation have been abandoned. They are slowly being eliminated at random, it is true, but there will always be some convention persisting, which nobody can explain and which seems mysterious and taboo. There would not be such ignorance as to what “morality” is, if there were a demand for it.

³They have tried to save morality in numerous ways. Absolute commands, absolute conventions, absolute rules of conduct, absolute motives, absolute norms of valuation, and the voice of conscience – everything has been vainly attempted. However, no philosophic systems of morality have stood up to rational criticism.

⁴When using the word morality as a fiction in every possible sense, finally nobody knew what the word stood for. Through this abuse the word acquired an air of sanctity, of supernatural mystery. Every now and then they arrange prize competitions in morality. Befogged by all the swindle of ideas practised with this fiction, they search in vain for a rational explanation. There

exists no rational moral science, but only a history of moral constructions.

⁵Where Mr Average is concerned, morality is whatever is approved of, and immorality whatever is disapproved of, by other people. Other people's valuations are Mr Average's basis of valuation. The fear of being different from other people and, therefore, of being the object of contempt and persecution by the undiscerning as a result, is Mr Average's moral motive.

1.8 Conventions

¹Conventions should be rational and consistent. They are often irrational and mutually contradictory.

²Conventions should have a scientific basis in physiological, psychological, and social respect. Often they are an outright insult to everything scientific.

³Conventions should be humane and allow man the freedom he can claim and to which he has a right. They are often cruel and antihuman.

⁴Conventions should help people to live. They are almost always hostile to life in some respect.

⁵Conventions should be unnecessary. The laws of the community should be sufficiently normative. Conventions would indeed be superfluous, if people were not so "conventional", insecure, so without taste and tact, and undiscerning.

⁶Conventions should be made available for those who are helpless without them. Some time in the future international conventions on good manners will perhaps be compiled. As it is now, every country and part of a country has its customs, manners, and prescriptions as to what may be done and how, or must not be done.

⁷Those who wish to practise certain conventions should join together in conventionalist orders where they could meet people of a like mind and at about the same intellectual and cultural level.

1.9 Rules of Conduct

¹No rule must be undiscerningly applied anytime, anyhow, or anywhere. A rule of conduct presupposes three abilities in the man acting: the ability of analysis, of judgement, of application of both the rule and the case. More often than not these abilities are absent, and if they exist, they are seldom used. The conditions of moral rules are absurd. Right conduct presupposes omniscience. They are moreover unpsychological. We act automatically, instinctively, and habitually. The end determines the conduct.

²A rule of conduct is a theory made from constructed cases. But these seldom occur in real life. At the moment of action – and only then, if ever, are all the factors for judgement available – it is often found that no rule is applicable. Life itself carries all rules to the absurd. No maxim can be made a general law, because no maxim can be applied in all circumstances. Situations would always arise in which its application were absurd.

³With a table of compulsory rules the intelligent man would soon stop acting at all. The narrow-minded, who would not be able to realize the difficulties in this, which amount almost to impossibility, and who would fail to understand the great importance of adaptation, would need a strong motive appealing to his egoism in one way or other: vanity, fear, hope of reward, etc. In other words, he would be unselfish from selfish motives.

⁴A rule makes the individual free of responsibility. Who shall be able to blame anyone who has obeyed a moral rule now, if rules and judgements are allowed to be valid? "He was equally respectable and inhuman."

⁵People want commands and prohibitions in order to feel free of responsibility. If these necessarily naïve commands are applied just sufficiently and if the prohibitions are not disobeyed, then "they have indeed done their part", feel very solid and good, and "thank god that at least they have a clear conscience". They have fulfilled all righteousness – unaware of

their equally hopeless and grotesque self-deception.

⁶To sum up: rules are useless in practice, are applied without discrimination, and make their practiser free of responsibility.

⁷Just one rule has held true over the ages, the principle of reciprocity: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

⁸The one moral command – if some such were possible – would be the command of love. But love cannot be commanded. Love requires freedom and grants freedom.

1.10 Motives

¹When rules were found to be unsuitable, a substitute was sought for in ethics, which made the motive the norm of action. Intention and motive became the essential things. The disposition of mind and the direction of will were to bear the responsibility.

²It had been found that “where two people do the same thing, yet it is not the same thing they do”, that two people could say and do the same thing from different motives, nay from diametrically opposite motives, the one from a noble, and the other from an ignoble, motive. From the moral point of view, both were equally “respectable and commendable”. From the ethical point of view, the one was commendable and the other reprehensible.

³Regrettably, ethics proved to be impracticable. Because for one thing the motive was inaccessible to objective assessment, and self-deception was considerable and impossible to avoid safely, and people were incapable of judging their motives, and finally the basic motive existing in the subconscious escaped even the most downright honest analyst.

⁴Even though ethics is impracticable as a general method, yet many people accord to it a definite superiority to convention, since it makes action the object of the individual’s independent examination, and makes the individual responsible but to himself.

1.11 Moral Valuations

¹There are neither any absolute nor any objective values. All valuations are subjective emotional valuations – let them be individual or collective. Emotion decides what is right or wrong. Morality, or the conception of right, has had little to do with rationality, at least hitherto, but has been determined by emotionality.

²Valuations change. Just as our mental development consists in a continual rethinking, so our emotional development consists in a never-ending revaluing. Fobbing one’s valuation off on other people, wishing to make it final, is proof of presumption. In respect of values, the entire evolution is a continual process of revaluation. We can follow this process through all the stages of civilization and culture. The qualities and actions admired by savages are wholly different from those admired by cultural people. We still have a long way to go before the weights and measures by which people measure are good for standard measures, before they have reached the level of generosity or humanity.

³A valuation is based on given religious, philosophic, scientific, political, economic, social, etc. conditions, and changes with these conditions. If the valuation survives its condition, it becomes an obstacle to a more expedient valuation, a mysterious relic, the object of superstitious veneration.

⁴Conventions can contribute with their norms, reason can supply its opinions. It is feeling, however, that values, that decides their value. Valuation is subjective and probably more often collectively than individually subjective. There are almost always a few individuals who value a certain quality or action more or less than the majority do.

⁵Feeling does not just value but also gives life to the thing valued by weaving it into emotional complexes that determine opinion or action.

1.12 The Voice of Conscience

¹The hypothesis of the “heathen who have not the law”, yet do what the law prescribes, is exploded by research, which has found that they have “the law”, or enforced conventions, but that the content of the law is of very varied, contradictory, and dubitable description. Conventions of duty and conventions of virtue change with different races, different nations, different epochs.

²The hypothesis of the voice of conscience has been confuted logically and psychologically. The voice of conscience is the voice of convention, an automatized “logical” reaction from those inferiority complexes which were established in childhood and overstimulated in adolescence by unpsychological unceasing inculcation of the notions of sin, guilt, and shame, which are hostile to life and which later in life are turned into depression complexes and often grow into anxiety complexes.

³The hypothesis of the “voice of conscience” is also refuted by the fact that there has not been anything true that has not been denied, nor anything rational that has not been silenced, nor anything absurd that has not been accepted, nor any kind of iniquity that has not been approved of, nor any kind of cruelty that has not been commended; by this voice of conscience.

⁴Those who speak most of “conscience” are usually the ones to be the least embarrassed by self-criticism. They walk with “waves of their own across the ocean” and hurl their spears unconcernedly, “with the warrior’s lawful intent to injure and kill,” at the defenceless they find in their way.

⁵An English bishop, South, rightly said: “By all means follow thy conscience, but take heed that thy conscience is not the conscience of a fool!”

1.13 Religious Morality

¹Religious morality has nothing to do with reason. For it is supposed to be the demands of some kind of cosmic being. Inasmuch as such a being is considered absolute, it is thought that its demands on the imperfect also should be absolute, or demands for perfection. Absolute demands, however, are logically absurd and psychologically preposterous.

²Faced with a demand for absolute truth, for instance, nobody – nobody, that is, who understood what this meant – would dare utter a word, would hardly dare move from the spot. Because for one thing we make mistakes in what we say and do and, moreover, we are guilty of making ourselves misunderstood. From the logical point of view, absolute truth means that mere truth is not truth. Therefore truth must be something else, any kind of thing, perhaps even untruth. Thus truth cannot be given a higher degree of truth by being called absolute. Demands are hostile to life. In any case they are unjustified. “Absolute” demands make us more blind to ourselves and strengthen our cult of appearances.

³A wise man once wrote: “God does not demand more from us, poor helpless things, than a mother from her newly born child.” There is more understanding of life in that utterance than in religious morality of whatever kind.

1.14 Sexual Morality

¹To many people, the curious sexual morality is morality proper. The true state of things can be drastically expressed thus: sexual morality is the condemnation of the erotic people by the unerotic.

²So-called sexual morality has been dictated by the sexless, erotically indifferent, or impotent, in whom both the physiological and emotional conditions were absent. They have made a virtue of necessity. Monkish asceticism and puritan fanaticism, which falsify life, have made a disability a merit and a physiological function an object of contempt. Nothing can be more divorced from reality and hostile to life than the monkish morality that calls

eroticism fornication, a natural function shameful, and the very fact of conception original sin.

³The sexual function is a natural and probably necessary one, with the exception of the impotent or of those who can sublimate their sexual urge. The rest of mankind can be classified into those of weak and strong eroticism, respectively.

⁴The problem of sexuality is a medical and a social one. The abolition of prostitution would be the first move towards a raising of the sexual problem from that level of brutality to which the idiotizing outlook of contempt has delegated it. Even such an expression as “a fallen woman” illustrates unsurpassably what is moral in morality, evidences the crudity, brutality, and inhumanity of morality. In this matter more than in any other social problem, ennoblement is an imperative social demand.

⁵When studying the eroticism of the lovable primitive peoples in its perfect justice and innocence, one realizes more easily what unspeakable suffering sexual morality, poisoning everything, has drawn upon Christendom.

1.15 Honour

¹Honour is a monstrous moral fiction from the times of scuffle morality. This fiction has survived here and there with an undiminished intensity.

²Honour is inherited or acquired merit of which anybody can be deprived by anybody else, the reconquest of which often exacts the blood and life of him who was so easily deprived of it, perhaps by a villain paid to do so. If this fiction had any rational life value, then of course the insulting man, and not the victim of the stupidity or vulgarity, would be the one to “lose his honour”.

³Anyone who needs to defend his honour, has no honour to defend. Other people’s depreciatory opinions, “offensive” judgements, or similar expressions of hatred, can never degrade the person intended, but only the calumniator. Anyone who wants to be invulnerable, always is so.

⁴Honour and violence are a pair of twins so like one another that they have almost always been confused. Might is honour, right, and wisdom. There are many kinds of honour: soldier’s honour of fighting and murder, diplomat’s honour of guile and deceit, money-maker’s honour of usury and exorbitant profits. The whole of history is a temple to honour.

1.16 Right and Wrong, or Good and Evil

¹Man is neither “good” nor “evil”. He is, at his present stage of development, an undeveloped being with primitive instincts, egoistic interests, and unreal world views and life views.

²To social man, right, or good, is what the laws of the community prescribe or, in case of their absence, what the spirit of the laws aims at. Wrong, or evil, is what these laws prohibit. In the community, it is the collective in its entirety that decides what it will consider right and wrong.

³To anyone who wishes to seek his basis of valuation in the unity of brotherhood and service, right, or good, is everything that promotes this unity; wrong, or evil, everything that harms it. Everything that unites individuals, family, society, nation, and mankind is then looked upon as valuable. The greatest contribution a man can make is then considered to be that of gathering and unifying, the greatest harm that of dividing and separating.

⁴To anyone who seeks his basis of right and wrong in the scientific outlook, the laws of nature furnish determining norms of good and evil.

⁵To anyone who in life sees development – albeit often apparently interrupted – right, or good, is whatever serves the development of all and everyone. Wrong, or evil, is everything that hinders development.

⁶It should be clear from what has been said that, in its rational sense, morality is the conception of right and (possibly) the application of this conception.

1.17 *The Art of Living*

¹Morality is the infantile version of the art of living, a guide of social intercourse for the primitive and undiscerning designed to make their life together with others as free of friction as possible. Morality is social convention and obedience to the laws of the land. Thus morality is enforced conventions for the subjectively minor. When, in addition to this, morality lays down any kind of “thou shalt” or “thou shalt not”, it violates personal freedom or individual sovereignty. Morality has not any right whatsoever to do so. Without his sovereignty the individual will never find the law that he will himself become. Man does not exist for the sake of convention. As long as convention is above man, as long as man can be judged according to convention, so long man is deprived of his human right and human dignity. The slaves to convention regard their slavery as the meaning of life.

²The art of living is tact, duty, and virtue. Tact is the inability to hurt. Duty is to fulfil one’s task. Virtue is the “golden mean” between the extremes. The art of living is far from self-torture and moral complexes. The art of living requires the insight that commands do not raise the level of culture, that life grants freedom and men issue commands, since they deny each other freedom. The art of living is (also from the collective point of view) the art of the possible.

POLITICS

1.18 *Introduction*

¹Politics belongs to emotionality. Political ideas still belong, in most cases, to emotional thinking, and political action to emotional will. All the more important, therefore, is the demand for common sense, that is, sense of facts; all the more necessary it is to rid the political problems of inessentials that confuse judgement. In times of political psychoses, especially, one cannot reflect too calmly, nor judge too matter-of-factly.

²Politics is partly theoretical, partly practical attempts at solving the socio-economical, social, national, and supranational problems. Politics is and will remain hypotheses and experiments. Evils, iniquities, and poverty must be remedied. Something must be done, and the game of chance begins.

1.19 *Political problems*

¹It can be disputed whether the profound political problems are solvable. The optimist believes so, whereas the pessimist doubts. Man is not governed by his reason, and reason is unable to show the path. The problems are probably unsolvable without the will to unity. It may be asserted without exaggeration, however, that the problems cannot be formulated in a purely intellectual manner, cannot like mathematical problems be worked out at the writing-table, and cannot be solved in some constructional fashion. The human intellect is all too primitive an instrument for a task thus presupposing omniscience. In his acute *Introduction to Sociology*, Herbert Spencer demonstrates with numerous examples, some of them drastic, that human reason does not even suffice to survey the consequences of apparently rather simple legislative measures. The result is all too often totally different from what was originally intended. Add to this the fact that the world is ruled with “a very little measure of wisdom”, and there is little hope of arriving at enduring solutions without the good will and concerted endeavour of one and all.

²“The right man in the right place” is a daily recurring problem that is more or less unsolvable. When many people do not even know themselves what they are suited to, and most people choose jobs that a long time later they realize do not suit them, then one should not demand that appointments to posts be more rational. Undoubtedly, something would be gained if personal relations, inconsiderate elbowing, or party zeal were not regarded as qualifications.

³The relation between the people's freedom, or its power, and government power is one of the many problems that are unsolvable without the will to unity. That of forestalling abuse of power – individually and collectively – is another.

1.20 Political Systems

¹All political systems have gone bankrupt, not once but many times. In that respect, history is just one long chronicle of bankruptcies. The political systems succeed one another and reappear as in a circle. Every time a certain system reappears, they believe that only now is it constructed correctly, only now can it show what it is worth, only now do those people exist who have the insight and ability to realize the ideal and accomplish the impossible. And the hapless human race hopes and believes, toils, practises self-denial, and suffers. In due course of time it despairs, revolts, and turns to the next system in rotation. Under dictatorship the people are ruled through violence, under democracy through promises.

²All forms of government are unsuitable as long as the nations are not ripe for self-government, and as long as the governments are incapable of wielding power competently.

³The nations must, however, discover for themselves by experiments the system they desire and believe suits them.

⁴Democracy presupposes general interest in political issues along with strong instincts of freedom and will to solidarity. Dictatorship seems to be justified for primitive nations with an antisocial instinct among the majority, or for nations that are incapable of self-government on account of insuperable tendencies to division.

⁵No system is intrinsically good and suitable for all men in all conditions. A system is a product of a number of different factors, of the general developmental level of the nation, of a certain mentality, of national distinctive traits. It is the same with the system as with everything else: its justification is relative. That system is the best which can be best adapted to prevalent conditions.

⁶Even if it were possible – which it is not – to construct a truly ideal system, this would collapse, since the nations cannot adapt themselves to or uphold other systems than those which they have formed themselves and which they have developed from their own experience. An ideal form of government presupposes of necessity ideal people. If people change so far as to rate unity highest and value it more than anything else, then the worst system would do. For it is people who make up the content of the system.

1.21 Freedom, Equality, and Brotherhood

¹Unity must be based on freedom. Any attempt on the part of the government to deprive the individual of his inalienable rights as an individual is abuse of power, which must lead to the decline of government authority. The inalienable rights of the individual include the right to form his own views and act on them as long as he does not infringe the right of others to that same inviolable freedom.

²There are many different kinds of freedom. True freedom, however, has not been realized as yet. Freedoms guaranteed by the government, such as freedom of thought, of expression, of the press, are very valuable, being as many freedoms from government tyranny. But this does not by any means amount to a guarantee of freedom of expression, for example. Anyone who freely speaks what he thinks will soon learn what this freedom of his is worth. Only those who possess some sort of power may express their own opinions. Almost everything is arranged so as to deprive people of their freedom: arbitrary conventions and people's lack of independence, their intolerance and arrogance. Independence, the refusal to let oneself be enslaved, results in the individual having almost the whole world against him. To this conscious oppression is added the immense unconscious pressure which is brought to bear by public opinion and which, by the aid of a free press that is also free from responsibility, practically abolishes freedom.

³Abuse of the freedom of the press and the exploitation of the undiscerning and gullible might be considered one of the still unsolved problems of democracy. The spreading of false statements, distortion of facts, misrepresentation of the opinions of dissidents, casting of suspicion on the motives of others, vilification of undesirable persons, refusal to comply with just demands for correction, should be prohibited, also for the press. Here is an important task for an ombudsman of the freedom of the press, one invested with extensive powers, as well as duties, to start prosecutions. The demands for correction raised by individual citizens could thereby be dispensed with.

⁴Power factors too often become obstacles to freedom, means of pressure and oppression for the unscrupulous. Thereby they are corruptive elements. The experience of life makes it clear that power is always abused in some way. Power always leads to arbitrariness that is above the law in some respect. Private power is lawlessness. Man without law personifies human reason without humanity, which Goethe so vividly depicted in Mephisto of his drama, Faust. Only he is ready for power who grants other people freedom. The legal norm of freedom remains unchangingly: live and let live.

⁵Freedom, equality, and brotherhood are a combination of three ideas that are not quite equivalent. Freedom and brotherhood presuppose one another. Without freedom there is no brotherhood, and without brotherhood no freedom. Equality has but minor points in common with these two. By equality was meant the right to human dignity, the right to open competition, the right to be judged by competence alone, equality before the law, and the abolition of all privileges – that is, private power. Although the demand for equality has not yet been fulfilled, yet that demand belongs to a lower cultural level than freedom and brotherhood. The ambiguity of the word equality confused weak minds, who drew the monstrous conclusion that all men are equal – equally ingenious and competent in all respects – not understanding the fact that two such equals have not yet existed. The question is whether the modern inferiority complex could not be more correctly termed equality complex.

1.22 Political Unity

¹The task of the state is also to work for political unity on the basis of free conviction, since the will to unity alone can bring about an enduring solution of the political, social, and politicoeconomical problems. Unity, solidarity with the community at large, the co-operation and mutual assistance of all, is the only rational and in the long run tenable ground. That path of hatred and division which mankind has pursued with so desperately meagre results should have a sufficiently illuminative and sufficiently deterrent effect. We should be able to learn at least something from history.

²“Divide and rule” was the motto of short-sighted politics, rating power higher than unity. Such politics would be impossible if political parties collaborated instead of opposing each other. The party institution means division and antagonism, poisons public spirit, and counteracts political unity directly and indirectly.

³If the will to unity cannot grow strong enough in a nation to overcome egoistic class politics, then values are easily destroyed which it would have been possible to save with good will. There are more rational ways in which to achieve unity than through dictatorship, which, constantly in fear of non-existent dangers, brutally watches over its own security and which, moreover, does what a small, temporary power clique arbitrarily sees fit. Freedom is easily lost and is very hard to regain. There exist possibilities of disregarding whatever separates, of choosing such individuals as are able to animate discussions and decisions with the spirit of unity. There exist relatively simple resources for making political fighting organizations as well as class parties superfluous by means of wise legislation and by government power as a watchful assistant.

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⁴Power abolishes freedom. Arbitrary power abolishes or restricts arbitrarily the freedom of others. Anyone who strives after power over others for another reason than to liberate others, is an enemy of others. No nation has any right but arbitrary right to rule other nations. And anyone who seeks to dominate the world is an enemy of mankind.

⁵The individuals' will to unity and their right to freedom are the rational justification of the state. All attempts to defend the possibilities of oppression by temporary power – that is: possibilities of arbitrary justice – remain arbitrary. The foremost task of the individual as a member of society is to contribute to the realization of unity and freedom in a state organized as rationally as possible.

⁶All rights must be based on the individual's right to the greatest possible freedom within the limits of the equal right of others to freedom. Any kind of oppression, persecution, or violation of the right of others is a crime. No collective has more right within the limits of the equal right of all than has one single man. Any kind of organization formed for the purpose of feathering its own nest at the expense of others is criminal. Undue advantage of any kind is a crime.

⁷The right of the state in relation to the individual – his necessary obligations to the state disregarded – can only be its right to social education of antisocial individuals who violate the laws of the state and the right and freedom of others. The state has no right to punish, to exact vengeance, no right to do evil that good may come thereof.

⁸Political racial problems breed racial hatred since to most people the idea of race is an emotion, and in this case hatred.

⁹Action presupposes a standpoint. All standpoints are more or less temporary, since they are temporarily conditioned by the necessity of action.

¹⁰We are all of the "masses" when emotion decides our standpoint, when in each particular case we cannot make an independent and rational standpoint clear to ourselves.

1.23 Practical Politics

¹Nowhere is the stereotyped thinking of formal theorists as fatal as in politics. Statesmanship is not the art of combining minorities or of log-rolling, not the art of generalization but of individualization. Statesmen must of course possess the watchfulness, adroit adaptability, and practical skill of trend-sensitive politicians. They realize the value of political theories as being attempts at orientation. But they never put them into practice, since they have comprehended the essential difference between theory and reality.

²Societies that are built according to constructions lack that elasticity in life which characterizes evolutionary societies. Society is a collective of individuals to whom freedom is their vital air and the condition of their best achievement. Society is a collective that is unlike any other in its individual character.

³Concentration of power facilitates abuse of power. A central administration that regulates everything is as great a failure as a doctor who makes his diagnoses by telephone. A balance of power between legitimate or necessary group interests in society is the best guarantee of freedom. "The majority seldom meets the demands for the true interest of the state, and is far from always right." No party should be allowed to oppress the others or to make laws without consideration for the legitimate interests of minorities. "If the legislative assembly also becomes the executive power, decides the current matters of the day, makes laws for individual cases, then the respect of law is in danger through the temporary fancies and passions of party politics." To base power on undiscerning mass opinion is perhaps democracy but is no proof of infallible judgement.

⁴Government organizations gradually become less suited to their purpose, unless there is a continual adaptation to the constantly changing outer conditions and to the individual capacities of new functionaries. The question is whether it would not be better for government posts to be personal instead of permanent. A bureaucratic organization of society tends to

become a civilian counterpart to the military bureaucracy with its superiors and subordinates, the leading principle of which is allegiance. Just different emblems distinguish such a society from the slave society. Herbert Spencer prophesied that future socialist societies must end up in a tyranny which the world had never seen.

⁵In a bureaucracy, initiatives must never come from below, because this offends the omniscience of all higher authorities. Moreover, initiatives involve certain risks. If they turn out well, then the “unnecessary trouble” leaves a general dissatisfaction behind it. If they fail, your career is ruined. The point is to be on the safe side, not showing enterprise, always adhering to the letter of statutes with formalism as the consequence. Bureaucracy is the most rigid, unwieldy, clumsy, initiative-killing, expensive system, and leads to an immense waste of talents hampered by it. The official is restricted to show his competence in routine matters.

⁶The question which social system is the most expensive, and thus brings about the heaviest burden for everybody, is not as difficult to answer as is generally believed. A greater population of public servants is immensely burdensome. Compared with that, the cost of private capitalism is negligible.

⁷Private capital is the greatest factor of increasing production. The abolition of private capital makes all steady people poorer and eventually turns all into government slaves. The only way of raising the standard of living is to increase production, not to confiscate the private capital which makes initiatives possible, not to lower the standard of those groups who best benefit society by their voluntary contributions, not by restrictions to impede enterprise which benefits productivity. All these measures are like killing the goose that lays the golden eggs.

⁸Enforced equalization of property results but in a temporary rise of the standard of certain groups. Trying to raise the general standard of living in a more rapid tempo than that of production is like living beyond one’s means.

⁹Is it really more difficult to find ways of determining people’s share in the national income according to their contribution to production, society, and “culture”, than to regulate the pay for various kinds of work according to the economic law of supply and demand?

¹⁰Taxation is a complex of still unsolved problems. The state has not more right than any other to exploit individual capacity unduly. The ends of the state do not justify its means. Unwise taxation policies promote wasteful practices. It is part of socialist sophistry that you benefit society by near-confiscational taxation of geniuses in business and industry who have a capacity for increasing production and creating values.

¹¹The free social system will in the end prove to be the incomparably superior one. State capitalism will never be able to compete with private capitalism in efficiency and productivity. The state is suited, not to run business, nor to be a distributor or manager, but just to be an efficient auditor. One of its foremost tasks is to ensure that no class interest may have an opportunity of encroaching on the other ones.

¹²Government enterprise will never be able to compete with private enterprise in the matter of efficacy and profitability. That proposition may pass as an axiom, as that of Rousseau, saying that there will never exist a true democracy.

1.24 ESTHETICS

¹Esthetics is a theory of beauty. Formerly they meant the theory, a “unitary” theory and preferably an infallible theory, the only true one. They started from an idea. On the basis of the esthetic viewpoints that could be obtained from this idea they made more or less profound reflections, which were put together into a seemingly unitary theory.

²In the following, partial connections will be made with old, well-known viewpoints on very trite subjects. But there is perhaps no harm in scrutinizing them once more, in connection with the significance of art for emotional culture. Its significance for this is too often forgotten, which is to be regretted. True art fills man with joy. And true joy makes man good.

* * *

³Nowhere are the division and fumbling of our times as manifest to everybody as in everything connected with art – architecture being the sole exception. Perhaps the unique position of architecture depends on the fact that the handling of materials requires a certain moderation, that people cannot live in any kind of house, and also that the technological problems have caused enough headache.

⁴They say that art is seeking new paths. But does it find, does it have the least chance of finding, any new paths? Contempt for the old is no source of inspiration. The attempts made appear forbidding more than anything, least of all encouraging, offering very little hope. Hopelessness and weariness now even seem to have affected the technical skill.

⁵Presumably, all this is a consequence of the impoverishment of feeling, its lack of certainty and a goal. When feeling withers, is being dulled and coarsened, then no art worthy of the name is born.

⁶It appears as if the art of our times started by creating chaos, hoping that an orderly cosmos will emerge from it. It is likely that the very term “create” has added to confusion. “Shape” would of course be a more appropriate term. The great artist does not “create”. He seeks to represent the irreplaceable, matchless, visionary, in all its splendour. What our age calls art has forgotten everything it has learnt from the experiences had in times past. It returns to the savage’s howling and leaping, noise and row, naive wooden and stone idols, glaring colours, and formlessness. Only palm huts are missing for the savage to feel at home in our culture.

⁷New art is obtained when a new art idea is fused with the previous ones. The artistic geniuses do not reject the old. They take it as their basis. They assimilate it and perfect it. They possess the true ability of synthesization. They know that the new must develop organically from the old, and that there must be an intermediary stage and a connection.

⁸Art affords power when giving satisfaction, joy, harmony, and calm. We hardly get anything of that from the art of our times. Our minds are whipped up and torn to pieces by all the unreal, improbable, impossible, unsolved, immature, disharmonious, and immoderate things. Impressions entail expenditure of force, since they require tension for assimilation and energy for digestion. If impressions release the positive emotions referred to above, then the expenditure of force is outbalanced by the positivization of consciousness and the increased vitality obtained. Only the negative tires and depresses.

⁹Art is the culture of form. The artist who shatters all forms is a fantast just like the philosopher who ignores reality. Art is freedom but not arbitrariness. Also the artist must be able to find the middle path between bondage and lawlessness. Being a factor of culture, art exists no more for its own sake than does anything else. Everything has a purpose, and art too. Just as it can be said that you become whatever you assimilate in some manner or other – by eating, reading – so it can be said that you become whatever you observe. One of the purposes of art is to beautify life. Of ugliness we have more than enough as it is. By enhancing beauty, art unifies us in a concerted striving for beauty, increases our understanding of beauty, refines our perception of everything beautiful, and affords the joy you feel before everything beautiful. All art has a common purpose in the universal cultural development: to ennoble us. It can do this in many ways.

¹⁰Everybody assimilates, even if unconsciously, whatever he can. Conscious interest in art may be lacking. But the greatest significance of art lies in the unconscious.

¹¹The fact is overlooked that all ideas in art, science, and in all spheres of life, are prepared in the unconscious. What we call consciousness – that is, the waking consciousness – can be compared to what the eye sees at a given moment. And the unconscious corresponds to a world that is mainly unexplored. As a rule it takes a long time for an original, a new idea to become conscious. The idea is prepared through a multiplicity of impressions, which coalesce into an idea complex. Years pass away and this idea complex grows slowly and unconsciously. The

waking consciousness perhaps never pays any attention to these impressions. Impressions flow in, are assimilated by the complex which constantly works. The impressions are regrouped in a never-ending process, until all conceivable combinations have formed, dissolved, and formed again. With each new impression the process starts all over again, until one day some idea is crystallized which penetrates to the threshold of consciousness. Then we receive a new idea of some kind, as a new concept of beauty, a new way of looking at things.

¹²The layman's ideas of beauty are often the result of such an unconscious process. Art can perform one of its many functions in that process. The artist's message is lost, however, if he will not be grasped. In order to receive attention and be understood, he must keep within the limits which life has set itself for its forming and which reality indicates. Not even the unconscious can avail itself of an arbitrary and aimless subjectivism. Whatever one wishes to be assimilated by the unconscious must not have a repulsive effect but should be instinctively attractive. By captivating attention art also develops that concentration of consciousness called the power of observation.

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¹³In esthetics they have been able to find at least negative merits in the works of art that have stood over all ages, and have been looked upon as immortal. These works do not war against our knowledge of reality, do not contain any unsolved problems, do not hurt our feelings, and do not exhort us to action. Thus no disturbing factors have been allowed to counteract the absorption into that contemplative observation in which one most intensely assimilates whatever the work of art can give and oneself can receive.

¹⁴Positive merits that they have found in the art called classical are: moderation, strong effects with small means, unifying tendency.

¹⁵Great art represents the universal in the particular, that is, what is common to a unitary group of similar objects. And this is precisely the ideal. The ideal is the real without the defects of the real, or the casual. The ideal is no arbitrary construction. Often it is much truer to the real than the real so styled. The ideal is the universal concrete, not the particular concrete. Nature's works of art – a beautiful human body, for instance – are seldom perfect. Almost always there is in them what we call a flaw. We perceive this flaw because we possess a more general conception, a generalization, a type. Otherwise we would be bound to the particular, casual concretion, and would not notice the flaw. Idealism is the demand of beauty for perfection. In some measure it can be said that idealism consists in the elimination of flaws, correction of the failed attempts of nature, corresponding to the photographer's retouching of his film.

¹⁶Art exists in order to afford us beauty. Reality affords us truth. Truth – the lifelike representation of reality – is seldom beautiful. And beauty is seldom true. To confuse truth and beauty in art is to misunderstand the purpose of art.

¹⁷A work of art has its inevitable limitation. In this limitation appears the true humility of the artist. Within a given framework he is to – not “create” but accomplish a truly difficult and great thing – solve all problems, master all difficulties, give out in a princely manner of the abundant richness of his soul, present something of the splendour visioned, communicate to the spectator the spontaneous feelings that filled him.

¹⁸Idealism is a “primary abstraction”. The “secondary abstraction from the primary” – still with the realist's adherence to concretion – is the visionary. The great artist is always “clairvoyant” in some respect. Sometimes the vision emanates from nowhere, as it were; sometimes it is instantly seen like an aura enveloping reality; sometimes a long and careful observation of reality (that is, contemplation) is required. The vision from which the work of art was born always surrounds the great work as its aura, and appears before the devout spectator, absorbed in contemplation, as the wondrous prototype out of which the work has crystallized.

¹⁹The true realist depicts the concrete with all its defects, flaws, and deformities. Lifelikeness is his motto. But he seldom adheres to it. Missing the inspiring vision he

unconsciously seeks for some substitute for it, and thereby he abandons the tyrannical concretion. He takes liberties, he too, and starts abstracting. At first, perhaps, he just discards whatever may be left of the pleasant. But one thing easily leads to another, and the particular is coarsened into caricature. One more step, and he ends up in formlessness. Realism, which was supposed to be “truth above all” and which made such a fuss about “falsity”, has found a truth that often bears a repulsive likeness to its opposite, and a reality that is not like anything.

²⁰The relationship between idealism and realism can be drastically summed up thus: idealism shows what reality should look like, and realism what it should not look like.

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²¹Greek art has been exemplary in certain respects. Its foremost creations show us that idealism which constitutes the perfect ideal realism.

²²The Greek type of beauty, however, must not be regarded as an ideal fixed for all time to come. If the body structure changes, then art must follow suit. And the body structure is probably not unchangeable. The race is changing. Nobody can tell whether the woman’s shoulders will not be wider than her hips, whether the woman’s legs will not be proportionally as long as the man’s. If the racial strains change as much, then our ideal of beauty changes too, because it is never something fixed for all time to come. The racial type of beauty is always the universal in the particular, and so-called beauty is a concretion of the universal.

* * *

²³The purpose of literary art is also to ennoble our feelings. The purpose of literature in cultural respect is to help people to live, to choose ideals for us to admire, characters to revere and to love, to grant beauty, joy, and trust in life, to give knowledge of man’s possibilities of developing good, noble qualities also under trying and adverse conditions of life.

²⁴One of the most important factors of ennoblement is admiration. Admiration of something one-sided easily leads to imitation and a need for divergence, appearing in the inability of adaptation which often makes life unnecessarily awkward to others. The feeling of admiration of everything admirable, however, preserves the individual character and prevents imitation. The very admiration – not just of something great in particular, but of everything that is in some respect greater than ourselves, than the average, mediocre – liberates, elevates, ennobles. Anyone who has acquired the art of admiration has thereby found access to one of the great secret powers of life.

²⁵The influence of literature can hardly be exaggerated. Its direct influence is obvious to anyone who realizes the power of ideas, particularly the power of emotional ideas and ideas that incite to action. The influence of literature on the unconscious is probably less considered. Without our noticing it literature lays the basis of moods and complexes that can decide our entire emotional attitude, our valuation of conventions, and our view of life. English literature in the Victorian epoch is a typical example. Non-tendentious and naïve to an almost pathetic extent, it was masked agitation and propaganda for conventional norms and valuations, which its contemporaries were suggested to view as eternally unchangeable and which to this day determine the habits of the English gentleman. Without our noticing it literature can lace us up with the ties of narrow conventions that are hostile to life, falsify the outlook of the inexperienced, engraft illusions that are divorced from life and have fatal consequences, and make the undiscerning expect miracles or the improbable.

²⁶Great literature gives us real life with problems of life, conflicts and their solution. It gives us greater knowledge of ourselves and of man. It has an encouraging, stimulating, atoning effect by depicting the dogged struggle against restricting conditions and adverse destinies, the liberating power of humour in the midst of the tragedy of life.

²⁷A true work of art is obtained when the individual characters in their very concretion express something universal, superindividual, characteristic of their epoch; and when the individual conditions depicted afford understanding of an epoch’s way of thinking, attitude to

life, limitation, and final emancipation.

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²⁸Music has its own sphere within the emotional sphere, and its means of expression are rhythm, harmony, and melody. Discord is esthetically allowed as enhancing harmony.

²⁹Music is purely subjective, albeit not individually but collectively subjective. It is the wordless emotional language of the national, racial soul. And it must not be translated. By making it something that can be apprehended by reason, by introducing “objective musical pictures” with conventional interpretations – this is supposed to be bad weather, rain, wind, calm after storm, sunrise, moor landscape, etc. to ever greater, seemingly endless extent – they have led music away from its proper sphere into one of convention incomprehensible to the uninitiated. Introducing music of convention they have abandoned the proper sphere of musical emotion and led music into a world of reason and reflection where it does not belong. “Musical pictures” are therefore on the whole doomed to failure. Music cannot paint the very thunderstorm, that gigantic natural phenomenon, can hardly evoke the same feelings as a thunderstorm, and as a rule cannot even create understanding of the feelings a thunderstorm arouses. The similar is true of musical drama. Dramatic music does not act, cannot represent the import of an action, hardly even the feelings of the persons acting, but arouses in us individually subjective feelings. Also in this musical domain conventions are necessary to understanding, although it is true that dramatic action makes it somewhat easier to understand these conventions.

³⁰Nearest related to music is lyric poetry, since conventions are unnecessary in it. Musical feeling and lyric feeling do not merge, however, but form two parallel emotional currents that can strengthen one another.

³¹There is little to say of modern so-called musical art. Atonalism, noise and din are not music. Shouting, squeaking, howling, roaring, whining, crowing, wailing are not singing.

³²Singing to a complete orchestra destroys euphony if the voice is not made an instrument among the others and then by no means dominates. The experiments made with new types of singing technique have usually led singing astray.

³³Music requires ever new forms and has too great a tendency to become set in traditional forms. Like feeling music is by nature rhapsodic. Liszt’s rhapsodies were the desperate protest of genius against tyrannical divisions and partitions, against those conventionally, “logically” constructed symphonies with their prescribed movements. Pot-pourris, sneered at by “connoisseurs”, are often the most enjoyable form of “symphony” to an unprejudiced mind, thus not an overeducated or conventionalized mind. There is much work to be done by reformers within all spheres of music. Opera with speech dialogue in classical style has probably new prospects. As it is now, operettas, being rich in melodies, often are musically superior to operas. Rhapsodic symphonies, continuing without movements, possibly with features of lyric singing, in which the voice or voices merge with the instrumental music, are perhaps possible too.

³⁴Melody is the heart of music. Any musical carpenter can learn the contrapuntal handicraft of theoretical music. The melodies of genius, however, are the work of inspiration and do not fall to everybody’s lot. As usual, artistic inability makes a virtue of deficiency.

³⁵We need a renewer of musical art, one who will make harmonious notes enwrap wondrous melodies in free forms, who will make melody assume its rightful place in the great works, who will make melody fulfil the central task due to it. The melody in its orchestral setting, when at its highest point, also marks the acme of musical art. The technique of orchestration makes its strongest impression when a certain instrument is made to emphasize the melody distinctly, while the other instruments pursue their own successions of notes, intended to weave, like a fine piece of chased work, a congenial pattern of tones round the monogram.

MENTAL CULTURE

1.25 PHILOSOPHY

¹The task of philosophy is to develop reason, that of science is to know reality, and that of religion and art is to ennoble emotion. The sooner they learn to cooperate, the sooner the day will dawn for true culture.

²The history of philosophic ideas is the history of fictions. Philosophy becomes fictionalism when it stops being criticism, and makes attempts at constructions, which have always led the sense of reality astray. Philosophy is the attempt of reason to explain the given reality from existing conditions. Philosophy is immanent and must not, no more than science, for its explanations resort to facts inaccessible to the normal individual. The philosopher's or scientist's personal opinion about the unexplored is not philosophy.

³The history of philosophy shows the various attempts of speculative thought to form a view of reality on the basis of principles. Without knowledge of reality – knowledge that is essentially a result of the work of the natural sciences – or an acquaintance with the very nature of thinking, it was probably inevitable that this speculation became subjectivist not even understanding that it was subjectivist.

⁴Whether problems concerning principles are real problems or just pseudo-problems often cannot be decided until the problems have been solved or been proved unsolvable. Until the problems are solved even their formulation is problematic. Most philosophic problems have been demonstrated to be pseudo-problems.

⁵An objective problem of reality is that of the totality of knowledge. Either we know everything or there is something unexplored. And only when nothing remains unexplored will this problem cease to be a problem. As long as there exists something unexplored, we possess knowledge only of a part of reality. The unexplored, and probably greater, part of reality belongs to the world of intellectual constructions to the extent that we form conceptions, or put forward hypotheses, of it.

⁶The intellectual experiments of philosophy have been very important. They have developed the very ability to think, satisfied the need for surveys and for clarity, and supplied material for ideas. They have demonstrated the one-sidedness of pursuing but one train of thought at a time in logical thinking, demonstrated the limitation of learning, and counteracted the tendency to turn relative ideas into absolute and fixed ideas.

⁷The views of reason show the attempts and ways of thought to orient itself, the value and limitation of our subjectivism.

1.26 Ideas

¹Idea means discovery, suggestion, new insight, greater and deeper understanding, a wider outlook. Idea implies acquisition of knowledge, supposed or actual. Ideas can be said to include generalizations, syntheses, judgements, theories, hypotheses, fictions. A formal logical deduction is no idea, however, for such a deduction does not increase our knowledge, does not widen our outlook.

²The majority of our reason's constructions are ideas or are based on ideas, which are incorporated with the intellectual heritage of mankind if they are handed down to posterity. Otherwise the discovery must be made anew. The history of ideas is the history of intellectual discoveries.

³Usually the ideas are received from the unconscious. They can arise through telepathy – which explains why they appear in several persons simultaneously – or be the result of the work of one's own unconscious. The unconscious includes everything that has once passed through the waking consciousness. By far the most of it the waking consciousness has forgotten, often not even apprehended clearly. All these impressions enter into similar

complexes, and lead their own lives under the cover of the unconscious. The work of the complexes can be conceived as an association and disconnection of impressions to form innumerable combinations, this going on until in the waking consciousness an idea has crystallized, emerged, as it were, apparently from nothing. Ideas are summaries, turned into original units, of innumerable similar and mutually according experiences within a given sphere. Kant's "pure apperception" and Fichte's "intellectual outlook" are unsuccessful attempts at explaining the conception of ideas in the unconscious.

⁴The work of the unconscious is incomparably quicker, surer, more efficient, than that of conscious reflection. That the result is negative where most people are concerned, depends on the fact that they supply their unconscious with useless material. The work of the unconscious is mechanical and uncritical. If the unconscious is supplied mainly with fictions, suppositional facts, erroneous opinions, then the result of its work will just be mainly emotional impulses, fancies, freaks, vagaries.

⁵Ideas are instruments for comprehending reality. Just as the richness of life consists in relations, so the richness of thinking consists in ideas. We must have ideas. We need as many as we can get. We never get too many of them. With each new idea we have a greater prospect of understanding a world that is extremely hard to comprehend. The more ideas we have, the more we see and discover. People will remain hostile to knowledge until they come to see that each new idea only increases our insight and understanding, our power of judgment and of orientation.

⁶If we do not have any rational ideas, then we have irrational ideas. The less ideas we have, the more certain it is that we are slaves to them. Without suspecting it, most people are victims to their all too few and primitive ideas. The more ideas we have, the freer we are, the greater our possibility of choosing between different ideas.

⁷Reality can accord with an idea, but seldom or never with the so-called logical consequences of the idea, unless ideas are developed from those envelopes of ideas into which they have been previously wrapped up. Whenever we begin theorizing, we leave the firm ground of reality. That does not prevent us theorizing. But it should prevent us fanaticizing.

⁸Usually we attach too great importance to conceptions once acquired, which are soon superseded by more expedient or more rational ones in the striving for ever greater exactness and clarity in the seemingly endless process of intellectual development.

⁹Ideas can sometimes be dangerous to uncritical people, who do not realize their relativity, or to idea fanaticists, who exaggerate the importance of ideas. In the idea-cultured people, who have worked through the idea material of our culture, as it were, each idea acquires the limited importance due to it. By such a process man has become a master of ideas. Then ideas are not any longer causes of unrest but afford the calm that any clear survey will give.

¹⁰We are on an infinite voyage of discovery through reality. Each scientific discovery gives a reality content to a new idea. The discovery of a new law of nature provides a new idea of a constant relation. Many ideas are analogies from different fields of experience. Many ideas are the common heritage of culture, although we sometimes forget their origin and look on them as new ideas.

¹¹Often we miss the opportunity of making a discovery or finding a new idea by our rooted habit of explaining new experiences by old ideas, identifying new experiences with things we know and are used to.

¹²Emotional thinking deplores that ideas have just a relative or temporary validity. We get the feeling of "no bottom" whenever we must discard ideas we have woven into emotional complexes. This also shows how important it is to handle ideas with care. More easily than you think they are turned into *idées fixes* that nobody must upset. It is always a difficult matter when emotion takes charge of ideas. Emotion supplies the power of action, and should be directed to the world of action. When emotion is in any way made to decide in the world of

thought, then reason is deprived of rationality.

1.27 Clear Concepts

¹Most people do not feel the need for clear concepts. They are content with suggestions and unclear, diffuse conceptions. Their thinking is an imitative repetition of words they think stand for something. The conceptions accompanying the words are seldom concrete. They lack that individualized content of reality which is obtained through experience only. The emotion accompanying the conception is often seen as much more important. The word has from the beginning been connected with an emotion and not with a clear conception. When the emotion appears in the waking consciousness, then the word presents itself; and the word is certainly all you need for communication with other people. To be able to think you must set the word free from emotion and connect the word with a memory picture of graphic reality or experience had. Without clear conceptions you will lead an “instinctual” emotional life. And without these clear conceptions, rationally ordered into a logical whole, you will live in a mental chaos.

²Thinking appears strenuous and meaningless when the result is so vague as to be unusable. When conceptions are like little clouds, then their combination will be just a bigger cloud. The fact that a definition of concepts is necessary is most clear from the chaos of concepts that most people are satisfied with – not a very grand result of intellectual education.

³Before concepts are combined one ought to see that the conceptions are clear and distinct and the words are unambiguously defined. Nobody can think clearly without clear concepts. When concepts are clear, thinking is a mere play, an almost automatic procedure, and the solution comes of itself, so to speak. Divergent opinions are in most cases due to indistinctness or fictions existing.

⁴The definition of concepts related to material reality is done by resorting to that reality and examining it objectively, matter-of-factly, and critically. Without experience of that material reality, the concept is hardly better than a fiction. In concept thinking a unitary group of objects is surveyed, in principle thinking a group of concepts, in system thinking the objects of an entire system. Most people, however, lack the power of visualization and must resort to auxiliary constructions. Thus by concepts many people understand words which have been connected with memory pictures of characteristic common qualities, the so-called essential qualifications of the concepts. In that case definition of concepts means that the conventional reality content connected with the word is made clearer or is changed altogether.

⁵Almost all our conceptions require a critical examination. Our entire life of ideas abounds in fictions: conceptions without any counterparts in reality. They are auxiliary concepts and, like hypotheses, indispensable. But they should without hesitation be replaced by more expedient ones. Concepts which are obviously unusable or positively false must be continually eliminated. This elimination hardly requires more work than the assimilation of new ideas. But you must proceed cautiously when doing this. Many constructional concepts are necessary aids to comprehension until we have acquired objectively determined consciousness of the corresponding reality. Auxiliary concepts make orientation possible and are among the aids to understanding. To reject these aids, without replacing them by more exact, efficient ones, is to impede intellectual development.

⁶Philosophy is criticism of concepts, and as such it is necessary. Intellectual development is a continual, never-ending examination of concepts and definition of concepts as a result of an increased knowledge of reality.

1.28 Logic

¹Logical proofs have had an irresistible suggestive influence on reason. They fascinated not just the antiquity but also scholasticism. Euclides’ mathematical induction was for a long time looked upon as a model of scientific presentation. As Schopenhauer has demonstrated, the

graphic evidence of geometry is superior to its logical evidence, which makes the directly certain indirectly certain. To this day Aristotelian formal logic misleads those who think that formal logic is a path to knowledge. But no knowledge is gained by that kind of logic. By logic you can only “prove” what you already know.

²Logicians make reason the master of sense, and logic superior to facts. The reality value of “logical necessity” is clear from the absolute proofs of the Eleatics, sophists, and scholastics.

³Logical deduction goes from universals to particulars. This procedure has the appearance of discovery. But deduction merely demonstrates what the “universal” has been previously made to include. Even Leibniz at his time demonstrated that logical and mathematical induction consists in following a chain of identities step by step. The proof brings to light what is “potentially” included in the proposition. He asserted that generalization is not logical but psychological, that induction is scientific to the extent that it is calculation of probability, and that logic does not lead to scientific discoveries (which result from momentary inspiration).

⁴In his work, *The Quantitative View in Logic*, Phalén demonstrated that it was improper to differentiate form and content in the concept, or the logical, that this differentiation had made it possible to construct the so-called third law of thought, had entailed a quantitative instead of qualitative or objective view, and had allowed the familiar irrefutable sophisms. Accordingly, space and time, spatial and temporal magnitudes, as concepts only, are not quantitative products. Division into greater or lesser units (infinite space, infinitesimal particles, etc.) are mathematical constructions.

⁵There is no universal logic productive of knowledge. Any kind of formal, schematic, mechanical, mathematical logic implies or presupposes quantification. Logic is the inherent logic of the subject-matter, and every qualitative field has its own logic. What you obtain through schematic logic is some sort of intellectual play with trivial or insoluble propositions, or dissolution of concepts. Immense mischief has been wrought by means of deductive and inductive as well as mathematical logic. Recognition could be granted to the significance of logic as mental gymnastics, if it did not at the same time stereotype and dogmatize the faculty of thinking. The history of philosophy is just one great example that the philosophers have not comprehended the problems of reality, and that logicalization has resulted in irremediable dogmas.

⁶According to Leibniz, logical truths were analytical and their self-evidence a consequence of the definitions used. He called empirical judgements synthetic, and asserted that mathematical propositions are synthetic a posteriori, and also that there were no synthetic judgements a priori. In this he was undoubtedly right unlike Kant who made his fictitious construction later.

⁷The law of thought can be regarded as one, although it can be formulated in two ways; as an identity or a non-identity.

⁸“Logical” thinking is sometimes a work of imagination, sometimes automatic, sometimes unconscious. If it is presented as formal logical thinking, then the mode of inference is a rationalization. Nobody thinks as formal logic teaches. Formal logic includes all modes of inference that refer to the so-called third law of thought. True logic is objectivity.

⁹The logical process is a pretty simple process that works with similarities and divergences, points of agreement and deviations. This process of clarification can also be said to include those processes of presentiment or instinct which seek out similarities under divergences and divergences in points of apparent agreement. The results are subsequently tested out in objective experience if one wishes to be convinced. Without that control the logical will easily be erroneous. Logic has been accorded a significance far beyond its true one. Any mental work is simply called logical, although it should rather be called psychological. The preparatory work done by the subconscious, its contribution to the work of reflection, has

been overlooked. There are strong indications for the truth of the hypothesis saying that man “thinks” more unconsciously during 24 hours than he does consciously during a whole year. The pertaining realities have been very little considered. When consciousness works at some problem, ideas suddenly emerge and are fitted into the mental constructions. You often do not notice that you try to construct a logical process from an idea received, and to present the idea as a result of logical inference. Whether the idea is presented as a result of induction or deduction will in that case be a matter of constructional expediency. Philosophers have constructed entire systems of thought intended to lead to that inevitable conclusion which they originally had as an idea. Juggling with inferences holds the fascination of a piece of legerdemain, and paralyses the power of discrimination. By means of logical proofs you can convince the ignorant of anything whatsoever.

¹⁰Logic is also that technical process of concatenation which links different moments up into a continuous chain of thoughts, and that method of subsequent testing which sees that the demand for logical definition has been met, that the thing to be proved has been proved. The more convincingly this can be done, the stronger too an apparent proof will be.

¹¹Logic includes the demonstration of the illogical. True refutation consists in demonstrating the falsity of ideas or objective untenability of conclusions.

¹²Many people think that refutation is done by pointing out formal contradictions. Usually, however, these are due to unsuitable formulations, carelessness in the linguistic expression, insufficient elaboration of the material. They need not at all imply any error as to facts or erroneous reasoning. Opposite statements sometimes acquire validity through the limitation they confer on one another. It is this relativization that often makes paradoxes justified.

¹³The most common “refutation” is done by starting from other premisses and other assumptions, by criticizing from other points of departure. Using that “method” you can “refute” anything.

¹⁴There are no such antinomies of reason as Kant maintained existed. Hegelian thesis–antithesis–synthesis–dialectic also depends on either objective ignorance and thence possible contradictory hypotheses, or on confusion of absolute and relative, or on confusion of the logical and linguistic mode of expression. We express ourselves in absolute instead of relative statements. If language contained a number of handy relativisms, then the absence of relativization would be seen to be depend on objective ignorance. Presumably, logical formalism has delayed the understanding of the general significance of relativity. The criterion of reason is relativity. Contradiction implies misapprehension, ignorance. Reason is full of contradictions because of its faulty working up of the content of sense. If subjectivity and objectivity contradict one another, then the fault is with subjectivity. Our subjectivity in combination with our objective ignorance has the effect that reality appears illogical to us, in the same way as the logic of a deeper insight often seems illogical to the simpler logic of ignorance.

¹⁵Finally a few words about the logic of proverbs, those proverbs which make up a stupidizing “treasure of ancient wisdom”. They were the first attempts of primitive thought at making theories. They are still used by simple minds as logical arguments to confirm the truth of all manner of assertions. They are excessively wide generalizations, can be applied in any way whatsoever and prove everything you want to prove; thus they prove too much and therefore nothing at all.

1.29 Criticism

¹Criticism is a method of scientific research. This criticism is objective, matter-of-fact, impersonal analysis of the content of knowledge. Criticism, being reason’s unceasing improvement of its mental constructions, is an inescapable demand of reason.

²Criticism is an assertion of the right of reason against all dogmatic claims. Our entire intellectual life abounds in fictions, in all kinds of dogmas that are unfit for life or hostile to

life. Dogmas exist in all fields of human thought. Thus there are religious, moral, political, scientific, philosophic dogmas. Dogmas are the antitheses of intellectual freedom and counteract the striving after free and correct thinking. One can call a dogma a construction of thought which is declared to be valid for all time to come, which must not be doubted or disputed, or which is adhered to despite its having obviously outlived its day. The necessity of criticism is best realized when studying the immense number of intellectual constructions that have been accepted and rejected in succession over the ages. It would be a rewarding enterprise to examine the average life-time of those “infallible” opinions, theories, hypotheses. In such an enterprise one must of course leave such constructions out of account as have been dictated by fear or desire and thus have satisfied emotional needs. They are essentially devoid of reason and are thereby intellectually “unassailable”. Unceasing critical examination has managed to prove that fully 99 per cent of the others are erroneous constructions.

³Critical, matter-of-fact reason makes a distinction between belief, opinion, comprehension, and learning, as well as between assumption and knowledge.

⁴Belief is incorrigible conviction absolutized by emotion, blind acceptance without insight and understanding. Belief is a dogma which has been laid down for all time to come and which must not be doubted or examined. Belief is out of reach of reason, is the enemy of reason and criticism. The whole world is full of fools who believe. Everything is believed. All mistakes are defended by “I believed”. Fully 90 per cent of everything believed would be rejected if people learned to distinguish between what they know and do not know.

⁵Opinion is not learning. “Few people think but everybody wants to have opinions.” They want to have ready-made opinions on as many things as possible in order to know what they should think and say. These possessors of opinions make up “public opinion” with its fictions, sentiments, conjectures, guesswork, spurious facts, exploded hypotheses and theories, fragmentary learning, and subjective valuations.

⁶Comprehension is the mastering of a material of thought in a gradual logical process, or in an ordering of unsystematized learning into scientific learning. It need not have anything to do with knowledge. Logic and the sense of reality have nothing in common. Logicism puts inference above facts and regards the absence of contradictions as a proof of infallibility. Reason, however, is an instrument for processing facts, and is no criterion of truth.

⁷Learning is no guarantee of knowledge. Learning is ideas, spurious facts, real facts, hypotheses, theories, etc. methodically obtained and systematically ordered. Formerly they used to rate learning higher than knowledge. Scholarly learning afforded “clarity”. It did not need to bother about any knowledge of reality, because reality was just one great illusion. Logical certainty was the one essential thing. There still exist disciplines that are chiefly occupied with fictions.

⁸Assumption is part of the critical method. Assumption is always an emergency, a resort taken for the time being. The believer and the doubter, the dogmatic and the skeptic, are equally uncritical. The critical man examines everything of which he desires knowledge, or he refrains on principle from having any opinion on it at all. He starts from the idea that learning is a necessary preliminary to knowledge and is needed for orientation (the sand that must be washed for the grains of gold to be found), that it can have a relative validity. He defers his final judgement until new facts in the matter will be out of the question.

⁹Knowledge is knowledge of facts and consists of definitively established facts that have been systematized. Facts of natural science are obtained from material reality, psychological facts from the reality of consciousness. Knowledge affords insight, which is the discrimination of the sense of reality in matters that concern knowledge. Insight appears in the correct prediction and faultless technical application.

¹⁰There are two kinds of criticism: the positive and the negative.

¹¹Positive criticism wants to reach a positive result. It desires insight and clarity, to acquire

ideas if possible, to assimilate whatever it can. It tries to understand the author's intention, to help him reconcile apparent contradictions. It willingly recognizes merits.

¹²Negative criticism is the more common one. It wants to "criticize", dismiss, reject. That kind of criticism is the criticism of emotional thinking, dogmatic rejection under the pretence of unbiased criticism. Only uncritical people regard it as "refutation". Emotional thinking has no right to express its opinions before the forum of critical reason. Any negative attitude is uncritical and also has a restrictive influence on the intellect. To criticize is easy enough. Every reader who has that intention can do it. Both dogmatism and skepticism belong to emotional thinking.

¹³It is important that we should not restrict ourselves to what has been explored, that we should not reject any one idea just because it seems alien, improbable, or unprofitable to us. It is important to investigate every new possibility of knowledge. We know too little to be able to afford to neglect the least chance of expanding our sphere of knowledge. Everything new and unfamiliar appears improbable to most people at first sight. People must get used to the new outlook, no matter how correct it might be. By being constantly dinned into people's minds, even absurdities eventually become well-known, familiar, and seem probable or correct. The majority do not want to hear anything but what they "have heard before". Those who deem themselves critical do not want to accept anything that cannot be fitted in with their previous system of thought. One moment's reflection should tell them that if their system is so correct, they should be all but omniscient. Anyone who has stopped assimilating whatever knowledge may be found in that which contradicts his own thought system, is captive in the prison of his own thinking, and has finished his intellectual development.

¹⁴All abandoned superstitions, all discarded hypotheses, have once been declared by authorities to be truth. In all ages, in all fields, authorities have with absolute certainty proclaimed the latest truth as the final truth.

1.30 What Is Truth?

¹To most people, truth is everything they want to believe. From the rational point of view, truth is the agreement of thought and reality, that is: knowledge of reality. Truth as an integrated whole, the total knowledge of the entire reality, is the ultimate goal of research.

²The abuse of the word truth has of course resulted in the usual confusion of ideas, so that quite a number of truths must be distinguished for the sake of clarity. Some of them are enumerated here:

- Truths of mathematical disciplines
- Truths of experimental disciplines
- Truth of descriptive disciplines
- Truths of speculative disciplines
- Historical truths
- Political truths
- Truths of public opinion
- Religious truths
- Personal truths

³Different levels of intelligence, so to speak, can be distinguished in the acceptance of truths, from the level characterized by the uncritical acceptance of everything said up to the greatest critical ability.

⁴The lowest kind is uncritical acceptance. A thing is believed because somebody has told one, or "read it in the paper". It is believed because it seems attractive and reasonable. It is believed because the authority appears sympathetic and trustworthy. It is believed because others believe it. From the logical point of view, belief in authority is a regressus in infinitum: A believes it because B has told it, B believes it because C has told it, etc. ad infinitum. Belief

in authority and contempt of authority are equally dogmatic. Judgements are of course useless without first-hand knowledge or personal examination of the matter. The highest kind of judgement is the scientific demand for experimental proof or for facts ascertainable by everybody.

⁵In the matter of judgement they have sought to differentiate the concepts of possibility, probability, and reality. Quantitative probability is merely a mathematical frequency formula, the limit of a relative frequency. Logically, probability coincides with possibility, in addition being a vague attempt to afford a certain reality value to insufficient experience, or to introduce a gradation from the rationally defensible to the truly rational. Probability is supposed to be possibility with qualifications, thus possibility with a good reason for it, assumption based on certain, although insufficient, facts.

⁶As for personal truths, also called pragmatic truths, truths in life; their usefulness, emotional value, value in life, decides their value. This kind of subjective (possibly also collective) truth has occasionally been confused with truth as that concept defined by the theory of knowledge. According to Schopenhauer, most students of philosophy do not seek for a knowledge of reality in philosophy but for a proof or defence of their personal convictions, their previously formed belief systems.

⁷Everything affording certainty is called truth. In order to judge truth it should consequently be possible to examine the different kinds of certainty. Certainty can be divided into absolute certainty, objective certainty, and subjective certainty; also into emotional certainty, certainty of sense, and certainty of reason.

⁸Mathematical and deductive proofs afford examples of absolute certainty. They prove just what you already know.

⁹The experience of material reality affords objective certainty, because that reality furnishes reason with its content of reality. Exact knowledge is impossible without experience. Even mathematics would be inconceivable without empirical axioms. Geometry is made up of spatial relations obtained through abstraction. These relations are summed up into a number of propositions, the correctness of which is proved by reference to still more basic propositions, until those propositions are obtained which cannot be proved, the axioms. Lobachevsky demonstrated that geometry was not an aprioristic discipline and that the Euklidean axioms were certainly not the only true ones, by constructing a new, non-contradictory, and fully usable geometrical science. Experience affords objective certainty by discovering laws of nature. Without experience a conception formed may be a fiction. Anyone who does not test his judgement in objective experience lacks the greatest possible certainty of the correctness of his judgement. The truths of descriptive disciplines are instances of justified objective certainty. The fact that a great portion of reality is beyond objective experience, perhaps beyond the possibility of such experience, does not in the least lessen the demand for experience as the highest possible criterion of truth. If this demand is given up, there is nothing to guarantee that what is given out as real is real.

¹⁰Belief and assumption afford subjective certainty. Belief is the emotional blind acceptance of, and adherence to, an opinion, independently of its degree of rationality. Belief is unchangeable and forbids criticism. Assumption is based on rational arguments, is just temporarily valid, until a more rational hypothesis appears, presupposes rational criticism, and rejects emotional thinking and dogmatizing.

¹¹Emotional certainty is individual and lacks any objective value. Of course emotion apprehends its certainty as absolute. There is no distinction between possibility and reality where emotion is concerned, but it quite simply decides what shall be true.

¹²The certainty of sense is incomparably more reliable than the certainty of reason. The certainty of sense is an expression of individual experience, whereas the certainty of reason can be based on fictions, dogmas, hypotheses. Dogmatic certainty can, from the objective

point of view, be regarded as improbable certainty and erroneous certainty. Political theory, public opinion, traditional views, are examples of the former. The latter includes superstition.

¹³Necessity, or inevitability, can be absolute, objective, and subjective. Absolute necessity is found in the law of thought. Wherever in addition absolute necessity is obtained, its inevitability depends on the “this is this” of thought, as in the matter of mathematical proofs. The laws of nature afford instances of objective inevitability. An example of subjective (“psychological”) necessity is determinism: action is determined by the strongest motive.

¹⁴The path to the truth for mankind is by and large the path of discarded mistakes. Truth is what remains after all mistakes have been made. Almost every mistake has sometime been called truth.

¹⁵Where other disciplines are concerned, people realize that they must acquire knowledge of the necessary facts before they express their opinions. As regards philosophy, however, they fancy themselves capable of giving opinions offhand on the most difficult problems.

1.31 Sense and Reason

¹Sense is objectivity. Reason is subjectivity. Sense is the immediate, direct, unreflective experience of reality, the reality of matter as well as that of motion and consciousness. The content of sense is the facts of reality. Reason is the instrument for working up the content of sense. Through sense perceptions sense is objectively determined, directly determined by material reality. The fancies of diseased minds are not sense perceptions but mental constructions. The mistakes of subjectivists lie in subjectivizing the experiences of sense, which identifies. In animals sense predominates. The animals’ capacity for existence, their superiority in apprehending reality (keener eyesight, hearing, smell, touch) often exhibited do indeed suffice as proofs of the priority of sense.

²Reason is the faculty of conception (memory pictures), reflection, abstraction (concepts), inference, judgement (construction), and systematization.

³Conceptions can be divided into two kinds: real conceptions and constructed conceptions. A real conception is a reproduction of reality experienced, of a sense perception. A constructed conception is a construction of more or less fictitious notions, imaginative constructions.

⁴Concepts are of two kinds: real concepts and constructed concepts. A real concept is a comprehensive survey of the related real conceptions of some certain unitary group. Constructed concepts are of innumerable kinds, ranging from the most real to the most fictitious. Constructed concepts include abstract concepts, constructed from more or less essential, demonstrable qualities, properties, characteristics of some certain conception or of the conceptions of some certain unitary group. If just one fictitious qualification is included in the construction, the construction will be unreal. Constructed concepts of course include all concepts that lack clear conceptions of reality, that lack such ideas altogether, or have more or less forgotten them. Many people “think” by words to which they have attached vague, conventional qualifications. Principles are constructed concepts, are as though concepts of concepts, abstractions from abstractions. They can also be called unitary, comprehensive, or system concepts.

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⁵Through the activity of its sense the child, even during its first year, automatically develops correct “instinctive” apprehensions of a number of qualities belonging to material reality, which qualities will later be formed into concepts through the activity of reason. The automatism of sense is that mainly instinctive, mechanical process – one among the many continually going on in the subconscious – which turns the multiplicity experienced into those perceptual units that make the activity of sense possible or facilitate it. These units have caused philosophers to distinguish between the logically and psychologically primary. At a

higher stage of the development of reason, that activity corresponds to the conception of ideas, which is also a process finding unity.

⁶The apprehension of space, for instance, develops by observing the forms of matter, and the apprehension of time by observing the different kinds of time-intervals. As a mathematical concept, space is constructed by the determinations of its three dimensions in the same way as the other mathematical basic concepts are constructed from the elements of experience that sense supplies.

⁷Sense supplies the necessary conditions of, the reality material for, describing reality or ascertaining facts. Reason works this material up by reflection. If the result is not correct, this is the fault not of sense but of reason. Sense observes the sun's passage in the heavens. The explanation of reason that this is because the sun moves while the earth stands still, is not correct. Certain misleading optical refractions ("optical contradictions") sense will correct by continued observation. Reason's correct explanations have usually come long afterwards. Reason obtains all its reality material and knowledge material from sense. Reason is our ability to elaborate, clarify, and construct. Subsequent testing always proves sense right. Our mistakes begin with reason's elaboration, with hypotheses, theories, and all other kinds of explanation.

⁸The subjectivists have made the cardinal mistake of making apprehension by objective consciousness subjective. Thought is subjectivist and takes charge of everything subjective. Once objectivity has been conjured into subjectivity, thought is sovereign and the path has been cleared for subjectivist fantasy, such as: nothing exists but consciousness; or: everything exists by means of consciousness. Subjectivism concentrates on consciousness to the exclusion of everything else, as if consciousness were merely subjective; and does not distinguish between the apprehension of consciousness as subjectively or objectively determined. Consciousness can be subjectively or objectively determined. Consciousness is objectively determined by material reality. Thinking is objectively determined when thought adheres to the experience of material reality.

1.32 Reality

¹Reality consists of the following three immediately given and self-evident absolutes: matter, motion (force, energy), and consciousness. They are the ultimate explanatory elements of everything. They explain themselves by their modes of being, and cannot be further explained, only be ascertained by everybody. Neither dualism nor psycho-physical parallelism can explain events, since energy, being necessary, is absent in these systems.

²Natural science, being our source of objective knowledge, and technology have fully proved (the demand for further proofs is the best evidence of how the subjectivists have managed to disorganize thinking) that the visible and also the invisible, the as yet just partially explored, reality is material reality. There is no legitimate reason for doubting that the as yet unexplored part would be anything else. Of course the subjectivists denied that invisible reality could also be material. They accepted the traditional conjecture, that if material reality was visible, then invisible reality (its "ground") must be something else and thus subjective.

³Why they have had such difficulty in identifying the three immediately given realities, depends on the fact that the self-evident is the most difficult thing to discover and that the subjectivist theories have misled and confused their power of discrimination. To the ancients, who conceived of reality as it is immediately given, the so-called problem of reality of the theory of knowledge was no problem, which, assuredly, it is not. Philosophers who exclusively cultivate their reason, eventually and unnoticeably end up in subjectivism. Those who do not constantly use their sense as a criterion of truth, run the risk of removing themselves from reality more and more. The only criterion of truth is the facts of reality. The

scholastic contempt for sense resulted in total disorientation. Theories and fictions finally become self-evident and inevitable. Moreover, students of philosophy are hypnotized by the power of language over thought into accepting subjectivism, since the current philosophic terms have been coined by subjectivists.

⁴Subjectivist philosophy starts from dogmatic doubt of the given reality, the most self-evident of all evident things, the material objects. To assume their existence before philosophy has permitted it, subjectivists call “dogmatic realism”!! First material reality is to be conjured away. This is done by declaring philosophy “unconditional”. Thereupon reality is to be conjured up again, as a mere product of consciousness. They must prove the reality of reality (!!) and the absoluteness of the absolute (!!). They have constructed difficulties from fancies of psychotic minds and idiotic fictions of undeveloped minds, and in order to avoid them the subjectivists accept the absurd constructions of overeducated philosophic minds. The subjectivists call this method “critical reason”.

⁵Philosophy is no more unconditional than anything else. It must start from the immediately given reality. Its purpose is to provide us with knowledge of that reality. The subjectivists cannot do that; they just conjure reality away. They replace reality, or what is self-evident, with their arbitrary fictions, which are often constructed so as to be incomprehensible.

⁶If objective reality were merely subjectively determined reality, then there would be no objective reality, and objective knowledge would be impossible. If the knowledge of the objects of material reality were not immediate, then knowledge of external objects, nay knowledge of whatever kind, would be impossible. If consciousness were pure subjectivity, then the subjective reconstruction of material reality would make knowledge illusory. Without being constantly confronted with material reality, the concepts we derive from that reality would soon lose their reality content. The subjectivity or objectivity of consciousness is determined by the content of consciousness. When consciousness observes material reality, its content is objective. When consciousness is filled with abstract ideas (concepts), emotions, etc., its content is subjective. Consciousness can be simultaneously objective and subjective.

⁷Reality is such as sense apprehends it. We have no reason whatsoever for abandoning the sense apprehension of reality. If we nevertheless do so, then reality can be falsified into almost anything. And that has been done. No absurdity has been left untested in the effort to make reality a mere product of consciousness. To the subjectivists matter is an abomination that must be explained away by every possible means. The sense apprehension of reality must be called correct as far as it reaches. Natural research shows us that material objects contain much more than can be immediately apprehended by sense. However, that does not in the least refute the apprehension of sense. What is added through the further scientific discoveries of the unknown properties of matter just increases our knowledge of the objects. Matter is the necessary explanatory element of objective reality. Matter is absolute. If the properties of matter were categories in consciousness – the absurd attempt at explanation made by the subjectivists – then there would be no need for us to discover them by natural research; it would not be possible to reconcile or explain contradictory sense apprehensions in further objective research; the difference between individual apprehensions would be still greater; and the incomparably strongest certainty of all, the objective certainty obtained from results definitively established in experiments, would not furnish any certainty at all.

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⁸The subjectivists commit several basic errors of thought when making their attempts at constructing the problem of reality, as it is formulated in the theory of knowledge. They try to explain away the material reality that is immediately and directly given to consciousness. They deny the objective existence of the objectively given material reality. They make the absurd demand that reality must be susceptible of a logical proof of its existence in order to be

called reality; that is, it must be possible to prove that the absolute is absolute. The absolute is always immediately given and cannot be proved, can just be ascertained as reality immediately given.

⁹Subjectivism is either logicist or psychologistic. Logicism wants to explain reality logically, as though it were a product of logic. The concept of reality, however, is a collective: the sum total of the different kinds of reality immediately apprehended or ascertained through research. Psychologism seeks for an explanation in a psychological examination of sense perceptions, which of course has resulted in attempts to prove that the objective material reality consists of subjective sense perceptions. However, they cannot in this way explain those new qualities of matter which modern science discovers by instruments almost daily. Neither can they explain the real existence of objects, their existence independent of consciousness. The objects are no more inherent in consciousness than in the photographic film. All the attempts made by subjectivism at subjectivizing the objectively given have failed, because being absurd they must fail.

¹⁰The manner in which a physical object becomes perceptible through nerve and brain cell processes is a physiological problem, which psychologists may try to solve. It is not a problem of the theory of knowledge. Objects are what they are, not anything else. Sense apprehends physical objects according to the law of thought, or of identification, which says “this is this”. The assertion, “we do not see the object as it is”, is logically and factually erroneous – no matter if the psychologists have their theory of light vibrations. Into the question whether “objects are what they appear to be” the idea of appearance has already been introduced deceptively. From the logical point of view, the objects of material reality are immediately given, and that cannot possibly give rise to any logical problem. Facts are facts and cannot be explained away or “refuted” by theories, as philosophers have always believed. As long as reality is interpreted by theories and logical proofs instead of being experienced, so long subjectivism, logicist and psychologistic, will continue to lead the sense of reality astray.

¹¹Subjectivism began with Locke, who had the brainwave that if you started from a psychological examination of the knowledge obtained objectively, you would be able to establish the objective correctness and logical tenability of this knowledge. That idea was to lead the philosophers astray from 1690 onwards. None but Hedvall, in 1906, realized the basic mistake of turning material reality into “psychology”. And this fiction is still haunting. The objects are no sense perceptions, however, and only scientific research can afford us intimate and more profound knowledge of them.

¹²Locke’s division of reality into primary and secondary qualities, Kant’s division of it into phenomenon and thing in itself, are fatal errors. Locke started from the familiar fact that the apprehension of certain qualities of matter can vary, and can diverge from the normal in a few individuals. He thought he was justified in concluding from this that colours, sounds, smells, etc. were subjectively conditioned. Even if this state of things can be the fact in some respect, since a divergent apprehension can depend on defects in the organs of apprehension, it is nevertheless incorrect to try to deprive matter of the corresponding properties merely because they are differently apprehended by different individuals. In order to uphold that erroneous supposition, Locke made the fatal mistake of differentiating between primary and secondary qualities, properties of matter. The primary ones were those apprehended identically by all; the secondary ones, those which could be apprehended differently. The primary ones were to be regarded as objective, the secondary ones as subjective. This erroneous theory of knowledge gave subsequent philosophers their suggestion to construct absolute subjectivity. Once the start was made by declaring some of the qualities of matter to be solely subjective apprehension in the individual, the final result was of course that matter was deprived of all its qualities, until Kant viewed matter as just something devoid of quality (!!) about which nothing could be known and which already Fichte regarded as a superfluous hypothesis!!

Kant also made the mistake of making an essential distinction between the visible and the unexplored qualities of objects. Only thanks to fictions and untenable constructions did Kant manage to avoid the conclusion, logically necessary after his erroneous supposition, that we cannot know anything about the very things which are the objective ground and criterion of our knowledge: the very objects.

¹³Concerning Kant, the basis and source of the immediately subsequent subjectivists, it should also be added that he has contributed to the disorientation of philosophy more than anybody else. Kant is the best proof that without knowledge (the facts of research), acuity and the art of logical inference just produce untenable or misleading constructions.

¹⁴Finally a remark about the little known Uppsala philosopher, Karl Hedvall. He showed, before anybody else (in 1906), that the immediate, unreflective apprehension of reality by sense is the only correct one. Regrettably, however, sense has a great disadvantage in being defenceless against the theories of reason. This immediately self-evident realization marked a new epoch in the history of philosophy, and entailed a revolution of thought by elucidating the logical untenability and factual error of subjectivism.

1.33 The Limits of Knowledge

¹We are still very far from omniscience. Technology, the applicatory disciplines of natural science, is the one criterion of our knowledge of reality. The other criterion is infallible prediction. We still have much to achieve before we shall be in a position to predict everything that will happen. Application shows what we know, prediction mostly shows what we do not know.

²Each new scientific discovery moves out the limits of knowledge. The more we discover, the deeper become our realization and understanding that our knowledge is limited or relative. If we had sufficient knowledge, life would appear to us as a series of necessities and not as an endless series of coincidences.

³Still the wise must agree with Sokrates. The oracle declared him the wisest man in Greece. The oracle is right, Sokrates considered, for I am the only man in Greece who knows that he knows nothing (worth knowing). If we know just a fraction of reality, then we know nothing of the whole as a totality. And we do not know before we know that. The fact that we know much about the fraction is quite another matter. Fields of knowledge thoroughly gone through show daily the limitation of these fields, show us how little we know. Life is still an unsolved problem, an unsurveyable complex of unsolved problems.

1.34 World View and Life View

¹The first thing we discover is material reality. Relatively late we begin to discover the existence and significance of consciousness. Its significance is so great that we very easily overestimate it.

²From the psychological point of view we lead a subjective life. Consciousness is its own world. Feelings and thoughts make up the content of this subjective world, which has subjective existence and subjective validity.

³Most people lead an emotional life, being content with the simplest possible orientation of reason for the sake of a livelihood. Those who begin reflecting on life in so doing acquire ideas and begin to lead a self-conscious subjective life. Certainly they little suspect that thereby they have entered an unexplored world of consciousness, as real subjectively as the material world is real objectively.

⁴The very realization that, from the psychological point of view, consciousness is our self and that which observes reality, should be sufficient to demonstrate the inevitability of subjectivity. The criticism of the subjective is not aimed at subjectivity as such, but at the arbitrary subjective, or the confusion of subjective and objective.

⁵In its particular expressions the subjective is individual, and in its universal expressions it is collective. The totality of this collective subjectivity we call culture. Objectivity leads to science with technology, and to civilization, which is certainly compatible with subjective primitivity and lack of culture.

⁶It is in this world of subjectivity, of fiction, that so many philosophers have belonged, although they have not realized it themselves. In this world they have found a sphere for their imagination, and have bestowed on mankind mental treasures of enduring value and beauty.

⁷The world of thought is filled with ideas of relative validity. Now and then thought takes stock of its ideas. If disorder is then found to exist, thought seeks to order the ideas by some uniform method, and in so doing constructs a system. Thus system is the manner in which the multiplicity of ideas is made a rational whole. The system is a pedagogic method of making an ordered survey according to the possibilities of grouping inherent in the very subject-matter. The system fulfils its purpose by making a clear survey and a quick orientation possible. The system is superseded by a new system whenever such ideas are added as cannot be fitted into the old systems.

⁸A world view or a life view is such a system. World view is a summation of the knowledge of material reality and furnishes the basis of the life view. Life view is a summation of man's more or less rational attitude to life – its meaning and goal – and to men and human matters. Life view includes the conception of right, that is, that which people vaguely call morality. From his life view man takes norms for his valuation and standpoints for his action.

⁹We can make infallible constructions. We make them in mathematics, since in that discipline we know everything about the thing we construct. A world view and a life view cannot reach that exactness, cannot afford the same certainty, even though the mental constructions can be formed so as to reach the same clarity. That clarity, however, is often deceptive, which the philosophic systems have showed. They show how difficult it is to think in accordance with reality, how easily we make erroneous constructions, how difficult it is for us to set our reason free from mental constructions that we have ingeniously put together and have impressed on ourselves. Certainly it is more difficult still, if not impossible altogether, to eliminate emotional complexes that have been engrafted on us in childhood. Mental constructions often lead us away from, and obstruct our understanding of, reality or of constructions more correct than those we have accepted. The more complicated, the more ingenious, acute, profound they are, the greater the labour bestowed on comprehension, the more difficult to replace do they appear to be. Experience has shown that it is wise to be a little skeptical of complicated constructions, since the expediency and superiority of a construction is greater the simpler it is. Science strives after simplification. Strange as it may seem, the extremely simple, the almost immediately self-evident, is the most difficult to discover. Even the most difficult problems can finally be formulated so simply that the uncritical man thinks their solution is so obvious that it need not even have been given.

¹⁰Many people say they can do without a system. Just as you can “think” without clear concepts, so you can do without a clearly elaborated system. The result, however, is the same in both cases: vagueness, disorder, uncertainty. Without a firm system feeling is rootless, emotional thinking is given greater scope, and the individual falls more easily prey to fictions and psychoses. The system is of greater significance than most people realize.

¹¹Every rational system makes it easier to comprehend reality from that level of scientific development on which the system has been constructed. It is true that, at the same time, the system limits thought and makes it more difficult for the majority to go beyond the limits of the system. But systems are just the temporary limits of research, and supersede one another as research advances.

¹²The world view should preferably be built on the firm facts and unbiased results of

research. Moreover, the construction must not conflict with the direct conception of reality by sense. Like each new scientific hypothesis, each new system must be able to afford better explanations than the old explanations. Where the life view is concerned, it must be possible to claim freedom of thought, feeling, and action within the limits set by the right of others to that same inviolable freedom.

¹³New systems should be constructed whenever new ideas appear that ought to be considered, for the service of those who do not themselves have the opportunity or ability to form such systems. Perhaps it will some time be possible to make the system so general that new ideas need not burst its framework, but can be fitted into the system. Thereby firmness would be gained for a universal view, and understanding would come more easily, not only between contemporary individuals but also between the different generations. Such a system would meet a real need and would counteract irrationality and superstition. For a culture it is an admission of intellectual failure that those who wish to have a world view and a life view by which to orient themselves must devote a large part of their lives to such things as one should be able to learn in school. Most people remain disoriented, however, and their need for clarity is never met.

1.35 SCIENCE

¹Natural science is the systematized study of the explored part of reality. In the proper sense, science is research into causes. The hypothesis that explored reality is only a fraction of total reality is corroborated by the fact that new scientific discoveries continually revolutionize the view taken on a matter instead of substantiating the assumptions made. To all appearances, most things still remain to be discovered and explored. Most laws are still discovered as though by accident. It will still be a long time before all constant relations have been ascertained. There is still much to be done before the scientific view has been fully achieved. Science, starting from everything's conformity to law, has a long way to go before it has demonstrated the inevitable relatedness of everything. Because if everything in nature conforms to law, then there are neither "coincidences" nor "probabilities". Both terms demonstrate with sufficient obviousness the still great limitation of our study.

²To make a principal difference between the explored and the unexplored (for example, when dividing reality into phenomenon, that is, illusory reality, and the inner essence of things) is to practise that arbitrary speculation called metaphysics.

³Science is mental constructions, hypotheses, and theories – based on facts ascertained and systematically ordered. Hypothesis and theory are the methods by which we seek to comprehend and explain facts, seek to comprehend reality.

⁴Hypotheses are preliminary assumptions, temporary explanations resorted to in order to facilitate the comprehension of things and events. They are indispensable to apprehension. The more kinds of things the hypothesis explains, the greater its value as a basis of explanation. It is replaced by a new hypothesis if the latter can explain better, explain more kinds of things. Only ignorance takes the hypothesis for some kind of final explanation or is surprised at its defectiveness or insufficiency, manifest sooner or later.

⁵Theories are summations of a limited number of experiences. When correctly formulated they make experience already acquired easily accessible and make a quick orientation possible. Anyone who has all the correct theories in some field of research possesses mankind's collected experience in that field. Theories facilitate the research into reality that is necessary to insight. Independent thought in some certain field must always result in personal theories. Since the theory seldom applies in all – apparently – similar cases, it often needs to be individualized, must not be assumed to be generally valid, and must not be applied without examination. The theory must be continually adjusted to never-ending practical discoveries.

⁶Theories and hypotheses furnish us with the mental gymnastics we need in order to

continually improve on theories and hypotheses. Without them and the mental training they make possible, scientific thought would be impeded and made considerably more difficult. Attempts have been made to replace theory and hypothesis by a logic of facticity, which would be limited to the ascertainment of facts, compilation of these facts, and description of the things studied. By discarding theory and hypothesis, our study would gain a certain uniformity and the appearance of perfect knowledge. But the unexplored would nevertheless remain in reality, even though its existence might not be invoked. Such a logic of facticity, rejecting the method of hypothesis, would deprive us of a working method that has a psychological value. The hypothesis provides imagination with a material to work on besides the facts previously known, that is to say: possible facts and possible factors. When imagination is constantly occupied with all the pertaining conceivable possibilities, this breeds presentiments which lead to valuable ideas. It is by the endless succession of hypotheses that science advances. The significance of mental constructions is underestimated if it is believed that research can safely omit them. In actual fact, we would be pretty helpless without those constructions. Objective facts are of little value without a previous mental working up of them. Museums can be filled with ascertained facts, and libraries with descriptions, and the only result of this would still be increasing chaos. It is thought that discovers the laws and combines them into a surveyable and conceivable whole.

⁷“We are immersed into an ocean of ignorance.” Everything is a problem, strictly speaking. Explanations seldom take us far. Just a few steps, and we bump against the wall of ignorance. We are able to follow the causal chain but a short way. How do we know this, we ask, and soon we stand without an answer. There are such people, however, who cannot perceive of any problems, the matter-of-fact people to whom everything is clear.

⁸The greatest shortcoming of the matter-of-fact man is his ignorance of 1) all the facts necessary for a final judgement, and 2) whether “facts” are facts indeed. The facts of natural science belong to the first category; to the second category all those “facts” belong which can be included among historical facts.

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⁹Space relations, time relations, and constant relations are reason’s determinations of the relations of matter and the relations of the process of matter.

¹⁰“Conformity to law” defines the immutability of the process of matter, or the process of nature, better than “causality”. Conformity to law indicates the existence of constant relations, or laws of nature. It indicates the fact of immutability: if all the conditions are given, then a certain result will come inevitably. All conditions are “true causes”. It is arbitrary to select some particular cause as the “true cause”.

¹¹Conformity to law implies that nature always repeats itself in the universal. It does not imply that similar processes in similar things are absolutely identical in all respects. The universal, characteristic, essential is constant. An absolute identity of any conceivable least particular does never exist in nature. It is the universal that is expressed in a constant relation.

¹²The universal conformity to law cannot be disputed. To do so would require something entirely different from those hasty conclusions by all too speculative minds which we have seen hitherto. Conformity to law must be termed absolute. If there were no conformity to law, the stone would not fall, no working machine could be constructed, no scientific formula could be set up, no prediction could be made, and the cosmos would be chaos. One could indefinitely go on enumerating incontrovertible reasons for conformity to law being inevitable. We do not have any rational reason for assuming any kind of arbitrariness in nature. That scientific metaphysics, which denies conformity to law because it does not at once discover laws, is as unscientific as philosophic metaphysics ever was. Those “natural philosophers” still do not seem even to have learnt to realize the unreliability of logical consequences, so styled.

¹³The difficulty begins with the particular laws: to decide whether they are true laws or not.

Because there exist relations which could be termed possible laws of nature. They include, among others, the laws of probability or statistical laws that indicate a general tendency of a process, though not any discovered, true natural law susceptible of formulation.

¹⁴A true natural law is absolutely valid, that is, it is without exception and immutable. Those laws which, after innumerable experiences of them, have been so recognized, must be regarded valid as natural laws, until exceptions are met with where each particular law is concerned. Such an exception has not been found as yet. The only thing they have been able to ascertain is that some law did not have the general validity they assumed originally, but was valid for a more limited sphere.

¹⁵If the sun explodes tomorrow, then the astronomical prediction of the next solar eclipse will not come true. Of the explosion we know nothing, for it is part of the unexplored. But this does not make matters any different as regards those natural laws which make it possible to predict the eclipse, does not alter anything as to the absolute validity of the natural laws valid in this case. It does not turn these natural laws into probability laws.

¹⁶Natural science is occupied with the search for natural laws as well as the formulation of such laws. Without a knowledge of all the conditions, true natural laws cannot be formulated. On the other hand, "according to the nature of the very matter, it is theoretically impossible to prove that a series of things is not subject to laws".

¹⁷They have made an improper division of natural laws into qualitative and quantitative laws. The qualitative laws were supposed to be found in the descriptive disciplines, and the quantitative laws in the mathematical disciplines. The quantitative laws are easier to handle thanks to their mathematical formulation. This handiness, however, entails evident dangers and risks. Formulas are produced almost mechanically, and are handled as though they represented anything but largely trivialities or fictions.

¹⁸Using statistics they produce in all fields apparent constant relations that can be formulated mathematically. The result of this is an immense mischief, as though these formulas expressed essential realities. However, to be able to formulate a natural law you must know all the factors. In most cases, they do not know whether unknown conditions exist, or the number of unknowns. Quantitative investigations by means of calculation of probability therefore do not yield more than frequencies. Heterogeneous, qualitatively indeterminate realities cannot be explained, represented, or exhaustively determined by quantitative investigations. Statistics cannot prove the existence of a natural law. Only infallible prediction is a proof. In experiments systematically varied, all conditions will eventually be known.

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¹⁹The history of science and philosophy has by and large been the history of superstitions, but also that of the struggle of untiring criticism against the preconceived opinions of ignorance. The development of science can be summed up in relatively few propositions. But to search out these basic propositions is hard work even today. The essentials are drowned in the mass of inessentials. Of course, only the expert knows how much incredible toil, sometimes by many generations, the "evident" propositions have cost, how many sacrifices they have exacted, not least at the hands of those who were in authority and therefore had the patent for the truth. In the following, only the propositions most essential to the conception of reality will be briefly commented upon.

²⁰Galilei was the pioneer of modern science and thought. He introduced the principle of relativity, demonstrated the necessity of observing nature, established that theories of reality cannot be accepted without investigation but must continually be corroborated anew by experience. He deduced "causes" from "effects", that is, the principles of a theory from the objects. He showed that the concept of motion is a relational concept, that the orbit or trajectory is different depending on which system of co-ordinates you use, and, when doing this, that continuity, acceleration, and force parallelograms must be determined. He combined

the hypothesis method with the mathematical and experimental methods.

²¹Next to Galilei, Newton was the founder of our conception of reality. Newton maintained that we cannot know anything of the “essence of things” and the “true causes” of events. These problems are the favourite metaphysical problems of the philosophers, and the object of guesswork in perpetual re-constructions. Science, however, cannot answer the questions of What? and Why?, only that of How?. Natural science is a generalization of experience. Subsequent investigation is always necessary. The purpose of science is, starting from the empirically given reality, to discover and formulate those exact laws which make prediction possible. Newton made astronomy (celestial mechanics) an exact science. Using Kepler’s laws of planetary orbits (calculated from Tycho Brahe’s careful observations), he discovered the law of gravitation (the attraction of bodies is directly proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of their distance), and in so doing he was able to prove that Cusano was right in his hypothesis and Copernicus in his theory of the planets’ revolution round the sun.

²²Probably, there are no basic propositions that do not sooner or later prove to be parts of still more general propositions. This does not gainsay their correctness, however, and without them the more general ones could not be discovered. By his general theory of relativity Einstein appears to have made the physicists reject the old conception of time and space, since it has proved to be insufficient in some few cases. It is still too early, however, to draw these conclusions from his theory. For it seems to be possible to give the theory a simpler formulation; and also there may exist different kinds of space and even more than four dimensions. So we can safely keep three-dimensional space for most cases. It is not impossible that there may exist an entire series of different kinds of reality, and that the different conceptions of reality are equally correct, each in its particular domain.

²³Leibniz, who corresponded with Newton and other contemporary scientists, adopted their views and realized that the knowledge of reality must be derived from experience, that the mechanical conception of nature is a manner in which to describe reality, that prediction is sufficient proof that reality exists, that conformity to law is the criterion of reality, but also that Newton’s theory of absolute space and absolute time was meaningless.

²⁴The following propositions of the theory of biological evolution can be regarded as basic ones. All forms of life have an inner continuity and a common natural origin, in the last resort through spontaneous generation. The species are changeable. New species originate from older ones through transformation. The eliminating factors include, among others, inability of adaptation to changed conditions of life, inability to endure hardships and climate changes, a more rapid degeneration, and inability of reproduction. What is endowed with finality evinces its superiority in, among other things, its very endurance, the fact that it most easily adapts itself, and most easily passes on its characteristics by heredity.

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²⁵The history of science can be divided into dogmatic and skeptic periods. When the questions which during a certain scientific era have been regarded as essential are answered, it will seem as though the principal research work were accomplished. The universal human need for a firm and certain basis for thought entails a striving after simplification and systematization, which results in a world view. In such epochs it is out of fashion to be a skeptic and question the correctness of the system. Then there is a general aversion to new hypotheses that can upset the mental structure built up with so much toil, an aversion that can find such drastic expression that they refuse to study such facts as cannot be fitted into the system.

²⁶It is continually seen, however, that new problems appear; that the old formulations can be challenged. The well-constructed system is exploded. A new period begins, one of new discoveries in various fields of research. All things change, are in a state of flux, and again seem uncertain. In such periods it is out of fashion to be a dogmatic and express cocksure

opinions on hypotheses and theories.

²⁷Formerly, those whose thinking was emotional and who needed certainty could find it in a philosophical system. Ever since science took over the former task of philosophy, however, that of explaining the given reality, it has been the business of science to build systems. The world is full of believers who have had to content themselves with irrationalities – for want of anything better. Even for science it is important to have a system that makes orientation easier and furnishes an overall view. It is inevitable that those whose knowledge and power of comprehension suffice but to learn the system become dogmatic believers. However, it is better to be a dogmatic about a rational system than an irrational or less rational one. It could perhaps be of some profit to point out that all systems are temporary, are summations of the latest results of research, and no final products.

1.36 HISTORY

¹History is the opinions of the historians about the past, about facts and courses of events. History as a discipline ought to be able to provide us with the experience of mankind in its universal applicability, proceeding from the individual to the typical and universal. It ought to be able to give us, not merely the history of political ideas and systems, but also the lessons that can be derived from these matters.

²The accidental is unreliable a priori, and the individual, which people find the most interesting, mainly belongs to the realm of fiction. Opinions and ideas are individually or collectively subjective and not objective. When psychology eventually attains to knowledge of human nature, science of character, and historical analysis, then history as a shaper of legends will probably yield very valuable data for research.

³If history cannot give to its data such a universal form that we will be able to learn from these experiences, so that we may be spared having the same experiences over and over again, then history hardly increases our insight into life and understanding of life, but only satisfies that studious attitude which could better be called curiosity and which at best can supply literary art with its select material.

⁴Only the studies that are necessary to understand the present can justly claim to be included in so-called general education. If history cannot afford us this understanding, then it should be relegated to a place among the specialist disciplines. The fact that history is indispensable to research is quite another matter. But in that case that arbitrary mixture called universal history should be divided into its many different branches with the boundaries between them marked out. Only then will history fulfil its purpose for the specialist who needs to know every accessible knowable thing in his special field. And he is able better to judge the value of historical study for his needs, to sift the given material critically and take just what is essential to him.

1.37 *Historical Facts*

¹The hypotheses of natural science rest on facts and therefore they are always realistic in some respect. Their weak point is the missing facts. The unreliability of historical truth depends on the mass of spurious facts, and on the impossibility of eliminating them.

²Facts can be divided into real and alleged facts, controlled and uncontrolled, controllable and uncontrollable, objective and subjective, and objectively or subjectively compiled facts.

³If we could group facts into known and unknown ones, then the number of unknown facts would show us our ignorance of the past – also of that past which we believe we know the best.

⁴If we could judge the facticity of so-called historical facts, then our knowledge of the past would prove to be more imaginary than anybody would dare to dream.

⁵History is hardly the story of truthful witnesses. Anybody who has experienced how difficult it is to establish the true facts of some course of events when all parties concerned are

anxious to reach an objectively correct result, realizes that it must be almost impossible to reach the same thing when all parties concerned – as is mostly the case in history – are anxious to revise the facts, correct the events, and misrepresent the motives. The unreliability is manifest to all who in actual life have had opportunities to study how witnesses unconsciously reconstruct their experiences into the form desired. Add to this the fact that the initiated often are silent and that the opinions of uninitiated outsiders are suppositions, that testimonies by challengeable, biased, and uncritical witnesses must be regarded as improbable or unreliable; then the “faith” in historical “facts” will not be great.

⁶Just as the philosopher is distinguished by his critical attitude to philosophy, so the historian is characterized by his critical attitude to history. A more profound criticism of history looks on so-called historical truths with a good share of skepticism and considers that word of wisdom saying that “nothing is so easy to arrange as facts” to prove whatever you wish to prove. Of all the kinds of so-called facts, historical facts are the most dubious ones. As a matter of principle, only objective facts controllable by posterity should be accepted as facts.

1.38 Historical Factors

¹The process of history is, like all processes, the result of a great number of factors. Despite all the attempts made to elucidate these factors, it could yet be said without exaggeration that most factors are unknown and will remain unknown. Historical science can but exceptionally ascertain which factors have contributed, and which causes have been decisive. The factors we think we know have often been spurious factors. And these latter ones give the impression of chance rather than of conformity to law. Most causal connexions all too often remain inaccessible, despite the most refined methods used. The causality of history allows itself to be ascertained but incidentally and exceptionally.

²To estimate the relative significance of ascertainable factors in their co-action, counteraction, re-action, and subsidiary action, to estimate the relative effects all the different social, political, nationalist, economic, religious, psychological, personally determined, etc. factors have had on the formation of state, society, or the process of history in each particular case or generally, to evaluate correctly all these combinations in their unsurveyable multiplicity; all this would probably too often be beyond both learning and judgement. To emphasize certain factors at the expense of all the others, both known and unknown ones, is more or less arbitrary.

³A common error is to confuse causal connection and temporal connexion. Two processes developing similarly and running parallel in time are often looked upon as causally connected. A great number of processes, however, run parallel without having anything to do with each other. The fact that they touch on one another need not at all imply a causal relation. To use a medical simile: the fact that a sick person recovers as he takes some medicine does not prove that the medicine caused the recovery to health. Only when you can exclude or include some factor at will and infallibly predict the result of each particular experiment, only then have you ascertained the existence of a causal connection.

⁴The unreliability of historical learning is clear from the continually revised views occasioned by each thoroughgoing reinvestigation of fields of historical research; and also from the new and often revolutionary historical discoveries we make whenever new ideas emerge, and these hitherto unknown factors are found and can be traced like differently coloured threads in the variegated fabric of history.

1.39 Historical Views

¹Historical views include historical constructions, historical derivations, historical conditionings, and other views. They appear mostly in times of disorientation or conservative efforts.

²Typical historical constructions are the well-known views of history taken by Hegel, Marx,

and Spengler, among others. Being specimens of historical construction, they are fantastically arbitrary enough to serve as warning examples. It must be admitted that history as a discipline almost invites, or in any case is a rewarding field of, such constructions. With a little good will history affords possibilities of being reconstructed as you like it, and leaves the field open to an almost boundless number of views. Historical hindsight does not consist as much in knowledge gained of processes and causal connections as in arbitrary rationalization. We lack the necessary criterion of the correctness of any kind of historical view. Objective judgement is possible only exceptionally. That finality or purposiveness in history which many people think they can trace often remains unprovable personal assumptions. On the whole, history demonstrates but the results of that ignorance which all ages have called knowledge.

³Typical historical derivations are, among others, the attempts made to base social, governmental, or economic rights on their existence in past epochs of history. The fact is that a historical derivation of, for example, human law and human rights involves a return to barbarous, inhuman, long overcome views. However, this concerns the fanatic of historical derivation but little. He arbitrarily starts from the historical heritage as an inevitable thing, as some sort of ineradicable original sin, the only true, only possible real basis and norm of law and right. It seems impossible for him to grasp that human right is sky-high above Roman law or Teutonic law or other more or less inhuman legal conceptions. He cannot possibly see that human right still awaits its realization. We have a civilization but no culture. For the unflinching proof of culture is that man is regarded and treated as Man, which means: superior to any other value.

⁴In making what is historically derived or historically conditioned some kind of norm, they have deprived what is historically accidental of its accidentalness, given what is historically accidental a significance it does not possess, a significance in reality that is far beyond its rationally justified one, made what is historically accidental something universal, inevitable, and necessary. You make the process of history something absolute if you accord to it an appearance of necessary process, inevitability, the "deeper sense" of philosophist profundity. Such a historical view makes you dependent on obsolete views, which fetter thought to ideas once formulated and once possibly justified, but which viewpoints have long since been overcome. What some time in particular cases contributed to a given result or some certain view is overestimated and overemphasized if its historical accidentalness is made the basis of a permanently conserved view of reality.

⁵The historical view, which inevitably becomes dogmatic, thinks tradition represents what is fit for life, as though tradition were a product of experience of life and knowledge of life, a product of a rational process. But the process of history in its individual formation is no rational process. It is rather a play of coincidences, a product of factors which were formerly fit for life, later unfit for life; with a large admixture of unjustified separate interests, ignorance, and arbitrariness. Historians of that kind regard everything historical as well founded, however irrational it may be.

⁶What is historically conditioned is essentially irrational and, therefore, cannot be made a basis for reason or be used as a viewing method. Such a method testifies to the helplessness and mental disorientation of ignorance, and amounts to declaring our own reason bankrupt.

1.40 Culture of History

¹Nothing is new, says the philosopher, and rightly. Everything is new, says the expert. Just as nature repeats itself in the universal but never in the individual, so the various cultures are similar repetitions with individual shapes.

²What is individual in previous cultures makes up their individual characters, and cannot become a new culture by being imitated or copied.

³Living in the past, becoming a museum of useless relics inherited from all past epochs, involves certain risks. Not everything has a life value merely because it once existed. Not all

obsolete views are important because they once were of current interest. Almost anything can be made the object of “scientific study”, once enough time has passed for it to become “historical”. None of the previous cultures regarded man as Man. Calling the pertaining studies humanistic in the proper sense of that word is positively misleading. We overestimate that which once was and do not consider the question whether its death was a proof of its viability. Not everything inherited from our fathers is exemplary. No new culture is produced by conserving tumbledown things.

⁴Tradition and classicism can also have a restrictive effect. They can have so great an influence that everything new is suspect a priori if it is not historically conditioned, and that just whatever is dead and incorporated with history is proved valid and has a life value.

⁵We reconstruct the past and fill up the glaring gaps with fictions. They are often of fantastic dimensions and never have had any reality, but upset our sense of proportion, and obscure our view of the present; and it costs us hard and unnecessary labour ever to rid ourselves from such fictions. The erroneous view prevalent in one’s own age is largely a historical heritage. History has too often become a rear door through which fictions happily scotched slip in to haunt again. If a constant battle shall be fought against the delusions and superstitions of the past, then it will perhaps be necessary in the end to relieve at least “general education” of this useless luxury. If we were in possession of true knowledge, then history would benefit us by preserving that knowledge for future generations. But as long as we use mainly hypotheses and fictions, history chiefly does us a disservice in conserving these fictions. If the history of ideas were called what it is – a history of “superstitions” – then the interest shown in it would decrease considerably. Our present culture is essentially a history of culture and a culture of history. Our culture in too large a measure consists in reproduction. Primitive people lack independent opinions, and their thinking consists in attempting to perceive what others mean in order to imitate it. Representing “cultural nations”, we ought to have passed that stage, as that where we must carefully know what the ancients said they believed. To know what people in all ages believed they knew leaves not much space for real knowledge. Parrotry is not independent thinking.

⁶If we are to create our own culture – and we have the prerequisites – then historical limitation is necessary. You can drown in history. What does not afford greater understanding of life and fitness for life has its place in the various archives of specialist research. That which we have not as yet been able to assimilate of things long since past, both for own culture and for the needs of Mr Average, is part of the subjectivist revelling in inessentials, and has too small significance for the whole. Culture is individual culture, independence, and individual creation, not imitation and parrotry. Historicist culture – worship of dead cultures – does not create any new culture.

The above text constitutes the essay *Exoteric World View and Life View* by Henry T. Laurency.

The essay is the first section of the book *The Philosopher’s Stone* by Henry T. Laurency.

The text is a translation from the Swedish by Lars Adelskog. The original translation, made in 1985, was revised by Lars Adelskog in 2017. The present text is the revised one.

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