

AVALON is an impulse that exposes the so-called barbarian type that dominates the current day and is separated from its own nature. The barbarian develops a strict, joyless, ascetic morality, separate from vital forces, from a simple idea, a morality that leads people into the abyss. This is becoming more and more apparent. Using compulsion to command good things transforms what in the best of cases is good intent into evil and ends in moral disappointment. Resentment, envy and the desire for power always find their way unimpeded into laws, regulations and public offices. Nor is a barbarian deterred when maintaining that idea, which has mutated into an ideology, entails the destruction of the barbarian's ability to learn. Imprisoned in the world of that idea, the quixotic grows until it becomes a fundamental attack on humanity itself. The reigning barbarian takes away the dignity of his subjects (who often subjugate themselves) because they know only one kind of pity – self-pity. They long to ease the pain they have caused themselves, and which the barbarian promises to relieve for them – with the welfare state, as he calls it – and he also robs them of their freedom, because they so gladly trade that for security. This mutates the rule of the people to domination by barbarians, and it erases all signs of beauty as freedom. In its place, a landscape littered with unattractive functional buildings. Health as an expression of life in harmony with nature gradually deteriorates and leaves behind sagging, weary, burned out, sickly people, who have forgotten how to get proper nourishment. Avalon is therefore not directed at the wild ones in particular, who do not manage to gain control over, let alone reform, their natural powers. They are defenceless against those natural powers and so they can only internalize their wildness, alienating others as they hold fast to pride in that wildness. The wild ones are happy enough that their sheer will sets them apart from animals, and that that will enables them to live in extraordinary health. They usually have nothing but contempt for arts and culture. Avalon attracts people who are moving ahead on the path of life and who notice the barbarian and wild abysses to their left and right, but still manage to continue on in a relatively straight line. They know that they have to build their own compass if they want to be able to continue on that path even when the fog sets in. They experience pain, but turn it into powers of insight. In this way, they create their own wealth and, carried by growing self-awareness, can use their powers of volition to understand rather than condemn. They see life as an adventure that puts them in new initially incomprehensible situations each day, but which ultimately provide learning material to fortify the awareness of their soul. Parzival is a prime example. He is ignorant, but gradually gains knowledge through various exercises, many of which he appears to fail, but all of which help him grow until ultimately he even manages to acquire, with great effort, the ability to feel compassion, which becomes the foundation of freedom. Avalon is under the protection of the most free, and one day it will be able to manifest itself as what we now call government. Once it has become a way that people look at things, it will reveal a different kind of equality. On that day, in that place, people will be able to understand the quest for the Grail as the story of human beings from the lowlands breaking through to higher, spiritual planes, where their heads begin to poke out of the fog, and then, through their own creativity, their stature gradually becomes more and more apparent until it radiates as if new. Such people will have grasped that they have to recreate themselves from nothing if they want to become human. Among many other things, they will also shake off their materialistic frame of mind and confinement through heredity, origin and other inadequate theories. The following five ingredients in this spiritual impulse work together and converge in a quintessence that continually renews itself by giving birth, often in pain, to new questions and answering those questions in ever-greater depth, and so develops into what might be called an 'art of society':

1. Individual integrity When our behaviour makes our values and ideals visible, our own essential integrity is revealed. A key exercise for students of Avalon is to become aware of those values and ideals of which they are prepared to bear the consequences, and to become aware of them through their thoughts and actions. In order for this to happen, Avalon offers a space, embodied by the Modelhof, where truth, goodwill and the desire for freedom set the tone. All who reject this environment must remain outside. We turn towards those ideals and then run after them – this makes them our point of reference and our future. The degree to which we stand up for these ideals and manage to use them to our benefit defines our individual integrity.

2. Learning Avalon attracts citizens who recognize, or at least suspect, the essential meaning of life in the learning activity. Learners experience themselves as highly informative objects of study. Investigating one's own motives is a core element of this. Learners ask themselves: What really motivates me to do what I do? For example, if someone appears 'poor', it may be for economic reasons or because they have to prove constantly to themselves that they are not vain. This indicates vanity and other people become involved to the extent that it makes them unable to tolerate the sight of that secretly vain person. Motivations are elemental forces of the will that often lie hidden and may come back into view only in a completed action. As such, they can be very interesting to study. This kind of study requires us to be interested in ourselves and the world, open to new things, and brutally honest with ourselves. Thought is the key activity to enable this. In Avalon's learning culture, problems are not negative. They are a chance to learn, because they get us thinking. This makes life fun, because everyone is thinking and acting in the same, solution-oriented direction, although they are not thinking or acting uniformly. On the contrary, this approach brings out their individuality. An important, enjoyable fruit of this learning is recognising natural laws and gaining insight into what is and is not right and true. This kind of insight cultivates an attitude of objectivity in learners, helping them to move away from today's dominant culture of outrage. Avalon does not aim to expand its territory but rather to expand the consciousness of its citizens. This is how power becomes right and true.

3. Quality The love of quality is an expression of appreciation of one's own existence and the existence of others, and so it is the foundation of our perceptions, thoughts, feelings and actions. Carried by self-esteem as a welcome form of egotism, which is so often maligned these days, citizens of Avalon think and act diligently, thoroughly and reliably. They are egotists in the good sense of the word, as they are eager to provide for themselves, and not only in order not to be a burden to those around them. Their thinking manifests itself in an awareness of language that attaches the most profound significance to words and sentence forms. The Avaloner guards his tongue, is a linguist, language talent and speech practiser. They distinguish between written and spoken language and the demands of each, and they know that some things are better done than said, or must remain unspoken so they do no harm and can remain true in spite of this silence. Sensing the mysterious connection between form and content, they are capable of affecting and creating in both spheres at the same time. Elsewhere, people blame others when something is poor quality, but Avaloners want to bear the blame, which is to say, they transform feelings of guilt into a sense of responsibility. They want to understand why something unpleasant has happened because they want to cure it or avoid repetition. They know that they see themselves in others and stop themselves from jumping to conclusions, preferring instead to postpone judgement for as long as possible. They do not seek out the role of a victim, which is comfortable in the short term, but rather the role of one who takes responsibility for the long term. Where do they get the endurance they need for this? What is the relationship between quality and quantity? Under what titles and arguments do the never-ending attacks on quality go, and how should one approach them? Indeed, many questions still remain.

4. The economy – an ode The economy is a being that can feel at home in Avalon. She knows exactly what she is, what she wants and what she enables. But strangely she has nothing in common with economists as we know them. She is thrifty and diligent, she creates value, and she is exact, truthful, prudent and observant, because she wastes nothing and creates something of value from everything. Economists, meanwhile, are uncertain, full of fear through a fixation on short-term cyclical phenomena, desire to stimulate consumption by any means necessary, turn the dying (banks) into zombies, sugar-coat enormous deficits, and stagger from one false forecast to the next. But she is loyal, hard-working, upright and effective; she allows bubbles to burst and cleverness to come to nothing, she disciplines big spenders and meanwhile she creates more treasure. But freeloaders and envious onlookers are never far away. They berate her as greedy, or even call her a thief. Others write sentences as mere theory and call them laws, so they can steal

her treasures, justifying this theft with nice words such as 'justice' and 'solidarity'. They have no qualms about seducing people to live a dishonourable life; that is, a life at the expense of others – they call it prosaically the 'pension fraud society'. But economy remains calm, stands firm and stays active because she follows higher laws that do not need to be written to be valid. And so she will carry the day this time too, just as she did when she made the Berlin Wall collapse, an event that so vividly demonstrated the limitations of socialism. She does this with astonishing gentleness, peacefulness, and composure, for the benefit of all, and does not waste a word responding to her critics; her virtue is great and her fruits are a delight. And so she too will stimulate thought and action in Avalon and make good things possible there. In Avalon, money is not possessed by the spirit of mammon, which is only – but significantly – a powerful conglomerate consisting of various vices, such as envy and resentment paired with feelings of inadequacy that stem from its own harsh judgement of its own success. Money carries the spirit with which it was acquired such that one can truly know people by their fruits. Avalon has no place for haters of money.

5. Trust Avalon is an interaction between sovereign individuals who form a social organism in a meaningful whole. Ideal cooperation is expressed in the formula  $1 + 1 = 3$ . We can experience this ostensible miracle in our everyday lives through a fruitful conversation in which we share knowledge. One person gives spiritual content without losing it – on the contrary, it continues to grow through this sharing. The other person receives it gratefully and is enriched. The principle of reciprocity strengthens this synergy, turning it into wealth that people can experience. But here people have a duty to correct one another and point out vices, lest those vices continue to grow until they can no longer be reigned in without great effort. This is illustrated before our eyes right now, in the state of events that has given birth to Avalon: Everywhere, people are enslaved by the dead letter. Citizens of this new world defend those who are absent out of a deep understanding of their defencelessness – and in so doing, manage to quickly heal the vice that poisons social organisms, which is speaking badly about others behind their backs. But even in this New World, people can fail to get the logical, mathematical result of  $1 + 1 = 2$  that one would expect – in cases of conflict. Situations of conflict are highly informative objects of study and so can be transformed from a danger to an advantage in developing our 'art of society' – an art that is sustained by knowledge of human nature and a basic sense of trust. The people of Avalon are not ruled by an inner compulsion to get things off their chest, but are animated by the will to create an impact through their words. This elevates patience to a key virtue –without which the culture of dialogue that is so important in Avalon would never be possible, a culture in which simple order reigns and only one person talks at a time and others can listen without distraction by annoying interruptions. Observing this custom produces a great fruit that we call presence of mind. Trust is the key ingredient for fruitful coexistence; it is the most important asset of the people of Avalon. They know that they can have it before others, and that they can do it from only their own store, which we call self-confidence. The abuse of trust does not distress them but it leads them to inspect with greater care the soil in which they sow their seed. Unswerving, they continue to investigate questions such as these: How does trust develop and how do you earn it? How can we cultivate an honest, shared sense of purpose? What needs to happen so I can be my true self? How can I learn to know who I am and what mission I have? Answers to these questions and each new question that arises from those answers and from dialogue with oneself and others allows us to become more aware of the responsibility that we bear for our thinking and our words, and more aware of what lovely blossom this awareness can produce. And so our art of society can create the true art of living.