

18. Gurdjieff and Ouspensky (2)

1. In this paper I examine another incident which reveals O's awareness that G was of superior knowledge and being but also his own resistance to this fact.

In the immediately previous paper, I examined the highly significant event in Finland which was the telepathic communication that G set off between O and himself thus giving to O proofs of his own [G's] superior ability. We take it that O described accurately an actual event. Despite this, I pointed out, O assumed (p 263, *In Search of the Miraculous*) that G could react in a certain way deriding him, if he, O, told him of something he had found about himself: this shows very great presumption on O's part. How could O, after G's clear demonstrations of his own undoubted higher knowledge and power, assume that he knew G so well as to be sure of G's ways and reactions?

2. A little later, after the events in Finland, two people of the group dropped off. They seemed suddenly, writes O (p 269), not to understand anything of the teaching, to see in everything G told them a **misunderstanding on his part** and to find in their fellow-students a lack of sympathy.

The two thought all the other members conspired against them, failed to inform them of what G said when they were absent and, on the contrary, told tales to G in order to make him distrust them (= the two).

The two became mistrustful, suspicious and openly hostile to the group. They accused them all of giving to G wrong information about themselves and presenting them in a false light.

O was astonished by this change.

3. But the more significant aspect of this sad event is that O notes fully the two person's change of attitude towards G himself! I quote O's description of their new attitude: -

"G. himself had completely changed, had become altogether different from what he used to be before, had become harsh, requiring, had lost all feeling and all interest for individual people, had ceased to demand the truth from people; that he preferred to have around him people such as were afraid to tell him the truth, who were hypocrites, who threw flowers at one another and at the same time spied on the others".

Note: O writes that the two others thought G had changed, had become different; had ceased to demand the truth from people; preferred to have round him hypocrites.

Yet some such notions appeared in O himself subsequently leading him to leave G!

4. At first O begins to "separate" G the man/teacher from the "system". In the circumstances this is an absurdity. Particularly as G does absolutely nothing that goes against the "system" as far as one can see at that stage by O's own description.

Later he writes openly that there were many things (unspecified) he could not understand and that *he had to go* (p. 373) i.e. abandon G. He valued immensely the ideas of the system realising their significance. But he doubted that he, together with "the majority of our company", could continue under G's leadership. "I do not in the least," O explains, "mean that I found any of G's actions or methods wrong [here too he becomes judge of his teacher!] or that they failed to respond to what I expected". This explains nothing, of course; and the same holds for O's additional explanation that "a man has choice" and he is not obliged to follow something which "does not respond to what he is seeking" (p. 374). This seems to me to contradict the preceding statements about the two members who left and about O's valuing the system. He does not say how exactly G's methods failed to meet his own expectations! And when he wanders off into different types of school he is obviously covering up or evading something. How did G become different? No explanation!

Nor is there the slightest improvement or clear explanation when he says that a leader (=G) should put off people for whom his methods or subjects will be "alien, incomprehensible and unattainable". O does not and will not give any real reasons as to his objections.

He states then that he had been mistaken about many things that he had ascribed to G. But again we have seen no mention of these things. It all sounds like clumsy self-justification.

Here I stop to return with another paper.

19. Gurdjieff and Ouspensky (3)

1. In my youth in England, I got acquainted with Krishnamurti's and Ouspensky's writings and, shortly after, Gurdjieff's. Krishnamurti was very much alive then (late 1950's) and I attended some of his talks. But he had no "school", no practical, methodical system of teaching – only the practice of non-interfering "watching" or "self-awareness". Therefore, I could not follow him in a practical way because no sooner did I remember to watch my condition and state of mind than I forgot again for a very long period. Fortunately, soon afterwards I joined an organisation descending from O, the School of Economic Science run by L. MacLaren.

But I enthused immensely over the teaching of G & O as given in the dispassionate style of O's books and the immense span they covered in human psychology and cosmic structure. I confess though, that, even then, I found rather artificial, some thing like the hydrogens and the food-octaves based on them.

2. Today, (Sept 2018), the G and O traditions are very fragmented even where groups continue in direct descent from one or the other man. In those days around 1960, we looked at the life and legacy of the two in great awe. I myself thought of G and O as Socrates and Plato, even though Socrates had not written any books and had died many years before Plato, whereas G outlived O by 2 years and had written his own books.

Even in those days there were those who favoured O and those who favoured G. This initial split, which obviously had begun much earlier, gradually, with the passage of years, became a strong and rather "un-esoteric" partiality towards the one or the other line of descent. I suppose it was inevitable.

Over the years appeared books promoting implicitly or explicitly the one or the other line, vindicating G over O and vice-versa, sometimes not without much acrimony.

3. Of the two lines, O's would seem to be the more successful but only in so far as it changed very radically.

At present I shall focus on one important aspect of O's character which comes out strongly in his own writings. This is ascertained, searched out and sketched by W.P. Patterson in his *Struggle of the Magicians* (1996 Arete Commun. Publ. Fairfax, Cal). WPP writes (pp 36-37, n 22) that the point of O's real break with G began in Finland, in August 1916. At that time, G had induced in O his telepathic ability of communication and O had discovered something about himself but decided (as he writes in his *In Search of the Miraculous* p 263) that he would not show this to G "because he would laugh at him". Quite rightly WPP considers that here O betrays lack of trust in his teacher (one moreover who had just demonstrated to O powers unknown to him!) and assumes contrary to all esoteric principles, which O himself would later emphasise to his own students, that a student cannot know his teacher's level of being!

4. In O's *A Further Record: Extracts from Meetings 1928-1945*, in the section on the "Short History of the work", O says that he went to the East to look for schools but, in India, he found only devotional ones which expected acceptance on the students' part of all they were told and he was not interested; for such schools existed in Russia too.

This to me sounds very odd for three important reasons.

First, in his book *In Search of the Miraculous* O writes (p 5) of the devotional schools, indeed, but also that he heard of a different type that could have been what he was looking for; moreover, the people who were connected with and spoke to him about that type of school were, he adds, very different from others. Nonetheless, he rejected that, too, without further investigation because, as he says, such schools demanded too much – that he should give up his ideas and plans! But is not this what a school with a genuine esoteric teaching would ask?

Second, O himself put similar conditions of obedience on his students also, sometimes quite severe, demanding and seemingly unreasonable, especially towards the end of his life. (In a later paper I shall examine the last months of his life in England which have been preserved in great detail.)

Third, O enjoined his successor in London in 1947 to make contact with the Inner Circle and find the source of the system but he made no such effort himself throughout his life. Why not? He said at an interview in the 1930's that Central Asia was closed and one could not travel there and in any case conditions, people and institutions like monasteries etc, would have changed beyond possible recognition. But John Bennet did travel there in the early 1950's and discovered much. India was easily accessible being a British colony and one, moreover, which O had visited much earlier and found possibilities! Yet he did no further exploring for more than 20 years.

I shall examine this whole situation in detail in the next paper.

20. Ouspensky's break with Gurdjieff

1. As I mentioned in the previous paper Es19, W.P. Patterson, without denigrating Ouspensky at all and often praising O's honesty and integrity, pinpoints the start of O's break with Gurdjieff in August 1916, a year after their eventful meeting, when they were in Finland and G induced in O the ability to have temporarily telepathic communication (p 36 ff, *The struggle of the Magicians* 1996 Community Publications, Fairfax, Cal).

O discovered during those experiences something about himself but decided, as he admits in his *In Search of the Miraculous* (p 263), that he would not reveal this to G "because he would laugh at him". In this O betrays involuntarily his own lack of trust in his teacher, who had just demonstrated powers that O did not have, and the presumption that he (O) knew better!

(Personally, I am not fully convinced that this event in Finland took place, since neither G nor O appear in any subsequent publications to have had a similar experience anywhere!)

2. Thereafter Patterson traces several other occasions when, contrary to the esoteric principle, which O himself emphasizes in his writings and lectures, that the students are not on the level of being of their teacher and that they go to him to learn, O arrogates to himself the privilege of knowing better than his teacher G.

However, Patterson makes an error here - and many others make the same error including, of course, O's sympathizers. O did not reject just G.

O never intended to accept any teacher or teaching by another for long.

Very early in his *Search of the Miraculous* O writes (p 5) that he had found devotional and similar schools in India but decided against them as they were not to his liking and, in any event, he could find similar ones in Russia. But he also heard of "another type which ... promised very much but demanded very much ... [of the student, i.e.] to denounce all my own ideas, aims and plans"; moreover, the men who spoke to O about such schools stood out distinctly from the common people. O rejected these also without an attempt to investigate them closer. Yet this, surely is the point of esoteric work, namely that you abandon your ideas, aims and plans formed by your ego and subject yourself to the discipline of the School or the teacher.

3. It is obvious in his subsequent life both as a student of G and later as an independent teacher on his own that he did not wish to subject himself fully and wholeheartedly to the authority of another man. Yet, as a teacher, he made very great demands of his students, expecting them to have read his *A New Model of the Universe*, which, as I showed clearly in earlier papers, Es 3, 4, 5, 16, has many grave errors. After his return from the USA in 1947 his demands on those who looked after him were not only very severe but also seemingly irrational; yet the students responded positively.

Moreover, although he knew that the "system" was merely fragments, that the elements (=carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen) and the food-octaves were artificial contraptions that

did not help with the real practical processes, yet he continued with it and made no effort in more than 20 years to find the source of the teaching or make contact with the Inner Circle or with a man of higher being and mind. But later he enjoined his successor in London, Dr F. Roles, to do so! I pointed out that the reasons he gave for this were not at all sound.

4. On p 374 of *In search of the Miraculous* O states emphatically “all work consists in doing what the leader indicates, understanding in conformance with his opinions even those things that he does not say plainly, helping him in everything he does”. On the next pages (374-5) he elaborates excuses why he had to leave G. A man has choice, he writes, and is not obliged to follow something that does not suit him: he sees no contradiction here! He claims that G was leading towards monasticism but offers not a bit of evidence of this statement in the subsequent 14 pages or in other writings. In fact, on p 375 he writes “all that I had learnt during those three years I retained ... and ... found it possible **to continue to work in the same direction as G but independently**. (Again, he sees no contradiction in “monasticism” and “same direction”.)

Here he places himself on the same level as G and works in the same direction as G !

Later, in the 1920's O went a few times to G's Institute at the Prieuré but always as a visitor. He never stayed as a student, like so many others, some of whom he had directed there himself. There the residents observed a fairly strict daily discipline of hard physical labour and various exercises and lectures. This might be said to have a quality of monasticism but there were no religious rituals or other observances. Obviously, the subjection of oneself to another's will, which was the main point, was not much to O's liking.

But the avoidance of such a discipline on his part would show later adversely in O's habits of heavy drinking and of late nightly gatherings until morning (which crippled his kidneys and liver). Since he was already 37 when he met G, the very few years spent in working under G's guidance were not enough to change significantly his own level of being.

5. This is really the nub of the whole matter. O had acquired from G the theoretical system and enough practices to set up independently and not to have to obey another man nor ask his permission to teach the other man's system!

His aim all along appears to have been to establish himself as a teacher.

21. Inner Circle?

1. For us, people of the outer Circle of confusion, of non-understanding and disunity, it is impossible to recognize a man of the Inner Circle except perhaps feel vaguely that the man has certain qualities like confidence, reliability, stability, knowledge and practical wisdom to a degree above our normal. In fact, unless we have some interest in esotericism and have read books or talked with people who have this interest or joined some “group” or organization with esoteric teaching, we would not have heard of the Inner (or Esoteric) Circle or known and believed in its existence.

Let us take an analogy: the gross body of a man has millions and millions of common cells specializing in being cells of particular organs like skin, muscle, fat, bone, liver, lungs etc. and at the same time there are the brain cells and the network of nerves which govern, as it were, the others and their development and nourishment. Similarly, in the being of humanity at large, there are the common people of the Outer Circle doing the multiform common jobs, the specializing people of the Middle and the highly advanced special numbers of the Inner Circle.

2. We take for granted many things like the use of the wheel, for instance, the cultivation of cereals and dozens of vegetables, the domestication of the cow, sheep and goat and of the horse. How, where and when were they accomplished?

We take for granted the eruption of fine artistic products in the Renaissance and the subsequent scientific advances; of the flourishing of literature in England in the 16th century, of the similar flourishing of art, literature and philosophy in Holland in the 17th century; of the formulation of law in the Roman Republic and at the time of Justinian (in Byzantium); of the upsurge of arts and crafts, literature theatre and philosophy of the Greek wonder; and of so many other cultural, religious, artistic and scientific explosions in different periods in different parts of our planet.

We don't really know all the details and causes for such cultural eruptions that raised the standard of living of the masses and promoted empires and civilizations.

The initial impulse seems always to be given by figures of whom little is known other than the name and who sometimes are wrapped wholly in myth and legend: Orpheus, Moses, Lao Tse, Pythagoras, Ulpianus (in Rome), Buddha, Jesus Christ and so on.

3. It is said that such cultural renaissances are the work of men of the Inner Circle of Mankind. Of them usually little is known. We know of the work of the “doers”: Plato and Aristotle; Bernard of Chartres; Da Vinci and Michelangelo; Queen Elizabeth and Shakespeare; Copernicus and Galileo; Rembrandt, Spinoza and Locke (Holland); and so on.

But who invented the wheel, distinguished between edible and poisonous vegetation and domesticated the animals?

Some discoveries like the hammer or the first decorative necklace may have been accidental. Someone took a stone and with it cracked a nut or a bone. The stone then was developed eventually into the hammer. Similarly, someone had some leaves on his/her hair or a blossom on his/her chest and this developed into decoration. But the wheel?

It is not beyond belief, even though we do not know how it was done, that some men knew directly the inner qualities and features of plants and animals and passed them on to others. Or that someone envisaged the wheel and fashioned one.

Such men would be of the Inner Circle, knew their Self to be no other than the Self of the Universe and thereby had all universal knowledge. For this is said to be a basic feature of these people. Such men exist always and, it is said, at given moments in History appear for a time and give whatever knowledge is appropriate at the time and place to raise the level of common life. They form special Schools, or Groups, to train common people and elevate them to a higher level of being, knowledge and consciousness, who then replenish the Inner Circle.

4. Were Gurdjieff and Ouspensky such men?....

It is too early to state a definite opinion on this. It is certain that they were executors and with their teachings helped many people. It is more than probable that the legacy they left behind and the groups that carry on their teachings, in some cases considerably modified, still help many people. But more material must be examined before a final judgment.

22. The Inner Circle? (2)

I should put here an explanatory note that, since these essays were being published weekly in the course of 2017 and 2018, there are repetitions.

It may be thought by some superficial readers that I belong to a group of students in the tradition of Gurdjieff and his successors and I am criticizing Ouspensky or the reverse. This would be untrue. Many decades ago in England I had some sporadic contacts only with John Bennett who was a Gurdjieff adherent and these ended by 1962. On the contrary, my own involvement in esotericism was with groups that followed the line of O (L. MacLaren's School). And I have not cut myself off from that line.

As I wrote initially, I was stunned when I first read O's books and wished I had been born much earlier to have met him, even though I had the feeling that perhaps I was not ready for such work. There was no doubt in my mind about the truth of the main ideas and the general system that O promulgated and that the man, whatever foibles he may have had, was an earnest seeker of truth.

But I wish to probe not only O and O's writings but the whole notion of esotericism, as it appeared with such explosive publicisation in the first half of the 20th century. How much of it was genuine and of a genuine desire to aid ailing humanity?...

2. In the last quarter of the nineteenth cent. some Indian sages came to the West (e.g. Vivekananda in the USA) bringing systems of Indian Philosophy (Vedānta, Yoga etc). At the same time many Westerners went to India searching for miraculous systems of self-improvement; some found what they thought was genuinely miraculous and wrote about it.

The Indians who travelled westward were in some cases like that of Vivekananda members of a "school" or tradition, in this case of the sage or saint Ramakrishna. In other cases (like that of Shri Rama Tirtha) they were not but they all brought something useful and helped set up or invigorate various organizations.

At the same time there was the Theosophical Society which was started by Madam Helena Blavatsky and then was established in India (and many other countries) and was under the guidance of Mrs. A. Besant.

I don't think there was anything very esoteric in all these but undoubtedly they helped in many ways.

3. Nobody really knows where and from whom G received the elements that made up the teaching or system which he brought to Russia in 1912 or thereabouts. There are many theories and speculations but I think that even G's *Meetings with Remarkable Men* is not really factual. G obviously loved story-telling and shocking people.

Yes, it is very probable that G travelled considerably in the Middle East, in Persia, Central Asia, Tibet and India and met schools, organizations or men of the "Inner Circle" and learnt

much from them, especially regarding the development of “being” as distinct from knowledge, which could have been obtained from books or anywhere more readily, perhaps. Some specific people are mentioned in some fairly reliable publications (e.g. Russian Masons or Theosophists in Persia in the last decades of the 19th cent and the Sarmoun Brotherhood of the Sufis).

C S Nott claims that Orage had said (p 31 *Further Teaching of Gurdjieff...*) that G actually had been sent by people of higher being (=Man no 7, as G calls him) to expand and promote “the system” in Russia and the West generally. But can we trust such reminiscences and rumours? Be that as it may, we know that O had no such mandate.

4. At some time in the late 1940's or the very early 1950's a group of sages in North India gathered together, as was said about 10 years later. They decided to send to the West and the world at large an easy method, a system of meditation that anyone could practise without difficulty and without prior preparation.

One of them was the Śankarācārya of Jyotir Math (= official Seat) in North India, Brahmānanda Sarasvatī, known also as Gurudeva. He was one of the 4 Śankarācāryas, custodians of the Advaita tradition and prelates of the Hindu religion. The other 3 Seats (=Maths) are in the West, the South and the East. In the early 20th century another Seat was admitted in the South, thus allowing 2 Seats there. It is not known who the other sages were that met in the early 1950's.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was a disciple of Gurudeva and was entrusted with the duty of bringing this method of meditation to the West. And this he did in the late 1950's and hundreds of thousands were and are still being initiated into this method. Other organisations were set up too and by now those introduced to the method must be millions though only a small portion probably continue to meditate and seek further guidance.

As far as one can be sure of anything in this sphere, this, indeed, seems to have been an action instigated by men of the Inner Circle of humanity, the Circle of unity and comprehension. And apart from Gurudeva, who enjoyed very great veneration in India, the other sages participating in that meeting remain unknown!

23. The Inner Circle? (3)

1. I may in the preceding paper have given the impression that the Inner Circle of Humanity, the Circle of Unity and Understanding is located in India. This is not so and it was not my intention.

It is a fact that humanity is divided into three very large Circles reflecting the structure of the human embodiment which has three bodies - the spiritual or causal body of Nature, the mental or psychic and the carnal or gross body. So also the vast organism of Mankind has the Inner, the Middle and the Outer Circles in fairly exact correspondence. But these Circles are not each located in any one place at different times or permanently. Some men may be in, say, Australia, others in India, others in Uganda, others in Italy and still others in South America. And they are really very very few!

2. The Outer Circle is said to be one of disunity, confusion and misunderstandings; it comprises all common humans like myself and you reader, criminals, politicians, churchmen, pilots of fastest planes, captains of submarines and plane-carriers, lawyers, professors, economists, madmen, merchants, industrialists and proletarians.

The Middle Circle consist of men of the Outer who have heard of the Inner Circle, or of the Unity of the Self, or of the Yogic powers and practices, or simply feel the need to do so, and are studying in esoteric organizations in different countries so that they may overcome their weaknesses and passions and realize their higher mind; they are being prepared to enter at some time the Inner Circle. Such organizations must have, or must have had, direct connection with member(s) of the Inner Circle, otherwise their teachings are shallow and often misleading and dangerous.

The Inner Circle comprises humans who have realized fully the Unity of Being and know that their own Self is the same as the Self in every creature and the Self of the Universe. A man of the Inner Circle may be the Head of an esoteric organization, an anchorite in a cave on a mountain or in a jungle or desert, the abbot in a remote monastery, the Head of a Philosophical Institution, the Leader of a religious tradition or even a plain man. They do not form an organization but do recognise one another instantly.

3. It may be that the Śankarācāryas in India are men of the Inner Circle. They certainly undergo a rigorous training in the study of the Vedic Scriptures and in yogic bodily and psychological exercises.

However, today (Sep 2018) there are in India, inclusive of the 5 generally and traditionally acknowledged ones in the North, the East, two in the South and the West, more than 70 men holding the title Śankarācārya and having some kind of an organization ostensibly teaching spiritual practices. Most are successors of former Śankarācāryas (some going back many decades) who had stepped down from the Seat. Moreover, sometimes a Śankarācārya appoints a young man or an adult as his successor who is not in any spiritual path but in the common life and does not accept the post!

Here I should add that I have read writings of some modern ones who decided to publish their thoughts and speeches but did not find there anything other than common statements about spiritual life and morals met in many other books.

What I am trying to establish here is that the title does not imply automatically that the bearer is a wise man of the Inner Circle.

4. G's teaching and aspects of his behaviour (his disregard of what others thought of him, his lecturing, his powers etc) show that he must have passed through rigorous disciplines which had originated in the Inner Circle.

We don't know really where and by whom he was taught and trained. He did not reveal much about them, what he met in his early travels in the Middle East, Persia, Afghanistan, Tibet and India. Several people tried to ascertain from G's sparse, sporadic references his teachers and the places of training (e.g. Bennett, Lefort et al). To me all such accounts seem speculations and fantasies. I shall examine the matter later.

One of the main practical ideas G taught was "self remembering" (O's *In Search...* p 117 ff). This has several meanings. Ordinarily it means thinking of oneself as one pictures and considers it (name, job, physical appearance, talents, likes and dislikes, habits, ambitions etc). It may be taken as having one's attention on one's whole body or a specific area (belly, chest, head) where one feels oneself. It may refer to feeling one's being, existence, and presence. It may mean feeling and viewing oneself as a much larger being of universal spirituality. Self-remembering refers to the last two meanings.

5. Surprisingly, Ouspensky's successor in London, Dr F. Roles, who headed the "Study Society" for some 35 years, encountered this idea in North India. He (and Leon MacLaren of the School of Economic Science) contacted Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in London and adopted his system of Meditation, mentioned in §4, Es 21. In 1960 he went to India and there met eventually Śāntānanda Sarasvatī who had succeeded Gurudeva in 1953 as Śankarācārya of the North (Jyotir Math). This holy man delivered a talk saying –

"The whole thing is that we never remember ourselves. All our troubles come from not remembering ourselves, only we can't talk about this because it is never understood."

In subsequent conversations Dr Roles was convinced that Śrī Śankarācārya's tradition in Jyotir Math was one of the sources for G's teaching and accepted the Indian sage as his new teacher.

I shall write more in later essays.

24. Gurdjieff and Ouspensky (4)

1. I could write much more about the 3 Circles of Humanity with more details on the Esoteric Circle and the connecting bridges it constructs in the form of special Schools created in the mass of the Outer (or Exoteric) Circle. But enough has been given. One will find more in several sections in Ouspensky's *A New Model of the Universe*.

Let us turn once more to G and O, this duo of the 20th century. And to begin to realize the animosity that arose between some of the followers of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, here are two examples.

Some of G's followers called O's book when it came out in the early 1930's *A New Muddle of the Universe!*

Some of O's followers spread the rumor and laid emphasis on this, namely that G had plagiarized and taught as his own some ideas of the world and higher dimensions found in O's book *Tertium Organum* which had been published in Russian some years before O met G!

2. I always admired immensely O, especially his clear, pragmatic style of exposition in his writings. In later years I discovered a certain naivety and even shallowness which are companions of self-importance and conceitedness. I shall examine two incidents.

The first is O's first meeting with G in April 1915 in Moscow. O recounts the incident early on in his *In Search of the Miraculous* which was written and revised considerably many years later, published in 1950.

On p 11 he describes the moments before he left G's apartment after the long exchanges with G at a Café and then at G's residence. He writes "When I was taking leave of him [=G] the thought flashed into my mind that I must *at once, without delay*, arrange to meet him again and that if I did not do so I might lose all connection with him".

If we consider that later they had those telepathic exchanges thanks to G's power, which until the events in Finland in Aug. 1916 had been undisclosed, we cannot avoid the speculation that it was G who had put the thought in O's mind. After all, the whole meeting appears to have been arranged by G. But O seems to be under strong conviction that he himself was the instigator of all the action! Writing so much later O might have considered this other possibility. On the other hand, we have no other evidence, independent of O's record, that the telepathic incident did take place.

3. The second episode occurs in Constantinople, a few months before O left the city and went to London. At that period, he had put aside "all former difficulties" (p 382) and worked with G amicably. Obviously, the "difficulties" were not dissolved but only set aside and stored. Why he felt the need to work again with G he does not explain.

On p 383 O writes that on one night, G started translating a dervish song for his ballet "The struggle of the Magicians" revealing the poet in him whom he had carefully hidden from O. G recited the Persian verses for about 15 minutes in a quiet voice and translated them into Russian for O, who felt he had been lost in "forms, symbols and assimilations". Then G told O to make a single line out of it all, which O did somehow.

The exercise was repeated a second time and the process continued until the next morning when both felt very tired, G laughed and they stopped. O concludes the narration saying "So the verse remained as it was, unfinished, because he [=G] never returned again to this song".

4. This is quite telling because from other sources a very different picture emerges. I shall reproduce W. P. Patterson's account on p 62 of his book *Struggle of the Magicians* (1996, Fairfax, Calif - with full references and bibliography) but with my abbreviations for O and G.

"It was very special knowledge, very sacred," says O, "But we were both very tired." They retire agreeing to meet the following night to resume the translation. All of O's doubts about G now vanish. "I felt sure I could work with him again," says O. "This was again the real G". But the next night G refuses to translate. Instead G tells him dirty jokes. "Nothing! Nothing but dirty jokes," cries O. "Not even good jokes. Stupid dirty jokes!"

O returned then to his former "difficulties". His main, possibly sole, difficulty is that he was greedy for special knowledge. When G was not giving it to him straight but toyed, trying to make him see his immature feelings and attachment to "wishing to know", O separated "G from G's system" and divided G into two – a good teacher and a not-good one, with whom O and others could not work!

It should be recalled that O was 37 years old when he started working under G's guidance and the three years in Moscow and Petersburg (plus the brief extra time in Essentuki later) would probably not have been enough to dislodge habits and identifications in his mentation and behaviour.

G must have known this and repeatedly prodded O to make him see his weakness(es). It seems O did not know or see this aspectx.

25. Gurdjieff and Ouspensky (5)

1. In the previous paper Es 24, I commented upon Ouspensky's sliding over his displeasure with G, this time in Constantinople and hiding the true turn of events in his *In Search of the Miraculous* (p 383) regarding the sudden stop of translating the Persian dervish poem. I had to consult other sources.

O treats with evasions and omissions G's visits to England also, after he himself had settled in London (pp 384-5). He writes "Many of those who came to my lectures became interested in this idea [of G setting up groups in England]". O certainly helped with a collection of money for G from among his own students and acquaintances, but he writes nothing about G's visits from Germany and lectures in London and of Lady Rothermere, O's friend, who would have helped G to obtain a visa but in the end did not.

However, O does state categorically (p 385) "I had decided for myself that if the Institute [of G's] opened in London, I would go either to Paris or to America."

2. It is not strange that O slides over the events of this period (1922, February and March) and presents himself (*In Search...*284-5) only as a benefactor to G since he "expected a very great deal more from his work" despite the fact that he "saw again all the former obstacles which had begun to appear in Essentuki".

After anxious pressing situations, all of us tend to present, in self-justification, a pleasant and benevolent picture of ourselves.

To obtain a clear idea of what actually transpired during that period one has to resort again to sources other than O's own publications. And fortunately there are many, as most people involved left accounts.

3. O does not mention A.R. Orage (nor Lady Rothermere and many others) who helped him settle in London in his *In Search...* Yet he had met the Briton, who was an acknowledged man of letters, back in 1914 in London as he was returning to Russia from his travels in the East. Orage had later edited in book form O's *Letters from Russia* and had secured for O some economic help. Now, in the winter of 1922 Orage is a student of O.

However, on hearing G's first talk in London (13/2/1922), when O, Frank Pinder and Olga de Hartman translated for him, Orage exclaimed: "I knew that Gurdjieff was the teacher. Ouspensky for me represented knowledge, great knowledge. Gurdjieff – understanding, though, of course, Gurdjieff had all the knowledge, too": pp 27-28, C. S. Nott, 1961 *Teachings of Gurdjieff*, New York.

In March G gives two more talks (5th and 15th) and has only Frank Pinder translating for him. When at some point O intervenes saying that Pinder is not translating correctly, G tells him bluntly "Pinder is translating for me, not you". Then G attacks O directly and openly, saying "Ouspensky is neither mandated nor qualified to teach" (p 76, W. P. Patterson: 1996 The struggle of the Magicians, Fairfax, Calif.).

4. Frank Pinder describes the whole inner situation (on p 163 of J. Moore's *Gurdjieff: Anatomy of a Myth* Element, U.K 1991): *"Despite Ouspensky's command of theory, the groups he had constituted in Ekaterinodar, Rostov, Constantinople, and now London were unauthorized and largely off the rails; he was free as air to propound his own theosophical or philosophical notions, but to transmit Gurdjieff's teaching in all its complementary modalities he was neither mandated nor qualified; he had enjoyed in total only three years of direct contact; he knew nothing of the music; he had had only a perfunctory fling at the Sacred Dances; and, not least, he lacked the essential human warmth to insulate his pupils from the bleak ideological climate of the 'System'. In addition, there arose the separate matter of his own development. If Ouspensky still sincerely wished to assimilate Gurdjieff's work in his essence and not merely in personality, he must (like his wife Sophie) postpone any pretension to teach and re-dedicate himself as a pupil."*

As I wrote before, O seemed highly disinclined to be a student: he desired theoretical knowledge and the function of teaching it.

26. A note on measure

1. I write this Note because one will search in vain in the G/O teaching and related publications to find some guidelines for a measured day in the common life. The Śankarācārya Śrī Śantānanda Sarasvatī said in 1971 (to Leon MacLaren, Head of the School of Economic Science, London, in *Conversations*, 2nd day): *“The whole creation runs through laws and measure”*. Only the utterly ignorant and insane would deny this proposition.

Hesiod in *Works and Days* advises his brother Perses to live in measure following the seasons, months and days, working with attention. Later the Pythagoreans will also follow a measured life, according to all available evidence, and Plato (*Philebos*, *Republic*, *Statesman* etc) insists on measure or the mean (*metron*, *metrion*). Later still Cicero will promote measure in *De Officiis* and Epictetus in his essays. And in the Florentine Renaissance Marsilio Ficino will do the same in his numerous Epistles.

Neither Gurdjieff nor Ouspensky applied much measure in their daily life. They often indulged in discussions and carousals very late into the night and often until dawn.

2. *“Introduction of measure”*, says Śankarācārya, *“starts right from the Absolute... The Absolute also outlines a measured way of living for all types of being... Every man is under promise to behave by measure... Life without measure is shadowed by death... When regulations are not observed, or coarse regulations are resorted to, then a certain imbalance is created in the elements of the physical world and also of the subtle world of mind... Diseases... [and] all deformations are the results of misuse of measures”* (5th day).

What of man then? What are the measures for his life?

“A day is a unit”, he said. *“The week is not such a unit... so the regulation would have to conform to the unit of a day”*. And he gives the illustration of a well: *“You draw water during the day and leave it at night in order to find another supply... next morning”*.

3. The Śankarācārya does give specific measures and regulations for ordering the day, one’s activity, rest and sleep but these are for students to follow in a disciplined fashion, so I shall not give any here. He said also:

“The question of measure is very much related to the desire for complete fulfillment... The general tendency is to satisfy desire to the full... [But] when you eat, eat a little less... When you see... when you hear, stop... before it bores you. This stoppage is not negation but a positive help for remaining lively and healthy”.

He added: *“There are measures everywhere, causal, subtle and coarse. One must choose at least one type of measure”*; then he explained: *“Spiritual life is a finer life... governed by finer regulations. Those who wish to have eternal bliss, consciousness without bounds and Truth, they need to appreciate finer measures”*.

4. It is curious that we find hardly anything about measure-in-life in the G/O “system”. It is implied, of course, in the octaves, in scales, in exercises in breathing and the like, but no guidance is given for daily activities and rest, for food, sleep, sex etc. True, ultimately every individual discovers in experience the measures that suit him/her. Nonetheless, there are general guidelines. Śāṅkarācārya says further:

“The manifest material world is held by the subtle world; the subtle by the causal world; the causal by the Absolute. To keep a good physique one needs regulations:... better food, better living, better atmosphere and better exercises to make oneself healthy and strong. But this physical body is held by the subtle and if this body of mind is not pure and healthy, then the physical care would not be of much use. The health of the subtle body depends upon Reason... To keep reason active all the time, one must follow the discipline of a wise man” (6th Day).

5. I have access to all Conversations of Śāṅkarācārya with Leon MacLaren as I was his student at the School of Economic Science in London for 20 years, before being given permission to set up my own school; I visited the Śāṅkarācārya twice and had some correspondence with him and his secretary Narayan Swaroop. (I have access to Dr Roles’ conversations also, since they have been available for some years now on the Internet; curiously, there is not much on measure in them.)

L. MacLaren died in 1994 and Śāṅkarācārya in 1997.

27. Gurdjieff's magic?

1. Today I turn to glorious or ignominious G.I.Gurdjieff, who by one means or another, one way or another, influenced millions of people since 1915 and still does, including myself and you, reader; and he shall continue to do so. He started teaching in Moscow before 1915 but in that year, in April, Ouspensky met him and it was he that helped primarily and enormously to make G so well known.

Thousands of books and articles have been written about G, his teaching, his life, his actions, his students, his achievement, his powers, his myth. Ever since R. Landau devoted a chapter on G in his *God is my Adventure* in 1935 (Nicholson & Watson, London), every Tom, Dick and Harriet who so much as exchanged a "Good day" with G, sat and wrote a book about him.

It is to Jeanne de Salzmänn's credit that although she knew him more intimately than most for some 30 years, she did not follow suit. (A book with her name has appeared in 2010, i.e. 20 whole years after her death in 1990 but I doubt she wrote it. Non vidi.)

2. I shall not deal with G's teaching, nor life, nor achievement, except incidentally. There are hundreds of publications – most of them misleading and some definitely full of fantasies, especially those dealing with G's teachers like Lefort's and Bennett's: some people can't restrain their impulse to exhibit (non-existent) knowledge.

Here I start by raising some questions that I have not met in any publication, friendly or inimical. An initial and important one concerns G's much publicised powers, especially telepathy or mind-reading, which many writers ascribe to him.

One must start with O's account of that astounding experience of telepathic communication, described so vividly in his *In Search of the Miraculous* p.260-265.

3. The incident occurred in EMN's country house in Finland in August 1916, fifteen full months after O's and G's first meeting. At that first period O had asked to see "genuine facts" (miraculous events) and G had said "There will be facts, I promise you. But many other things are necessary first".

And so, during that evening in August, G spoke to O's astonishment telepathically and subsequently O too was able to respond, with G's undoubted inducement, in the same manner. The impact of those experiences lasted some three weeks so that when O returned to Petersburg, he was able to see people in the street "walking in sleep"! Thus O realized that "many things could be seen with our eyes which we do not usually see" (*In Search...* 265)

4. I don't doubt that like me, most readers of *In Search....* and of other books by others that presented G's teaching, were enthralled by the new esoteric ideas about man's place in the cosmos and his possibility of development (or involution) into higher states of consciousness and being. But when all is read and assimilated theoretically by the lower intellect, what does matter is the actual experience of a truly higher state.

I have already written about O's inability to induce such a higher state in himself or in others as indicated in all his own and others' subsequent publications (Es 17, § 6).

5. What I find most strange, however is that neither G seems to go through such an experience thereafter. He does not refer to this in any of his own books and no student of his either has such an experience or detects one in G himself. Practically all authors mention the piercing gaze of G and the feeling that he saw into their inmost thoughts and feelings, and I feel sure that G did see a lot. But nobody actually substantiates this with a detailed description. I shall examine later one or two examples which to me seem utterly unreliable.

John Bennett does, of course, mention several experiences that he had, especially being out of his body and seeing it like any other body, but this was not due to G's mediation - and Bennett is rather fond of having experiences.

Thus for G's telepathic powers we have only O's long testimony.

28. Gurdjieff's magic? (2)

1. I should again point out that the repetitions that appear frequently are due to the fact that the essays were published weekly in the years 2017-18 and it seemed then necessary to connect the essay in hand with the previous one for chance new-comers. So we continue with our subject.

After August 1916 and the telepathic communication which Gurdjieff sparked off in Ouspensky in Finland, such experiences were not repeated. Neither G nor O, nor any of their students (with two exceptions which I shall examine later), mention anything like them for the rest of the two men's lives.

This seems very strange to me. How is it to be explained?

For O I don't have any demands or expectations. But G is quite a different case. His students repeatedly write of the sense they had that he could weigh them up or look into their innermost being and know their deepest impulses. G himself also talks repeatedly as though he has these powers in control and can produce at will such experiences given the right circumstances.

2. Well, from 1916 (Aug) to 1949 (Oct) when G passed away, surely there must have been in those 33 years some "right circumstances". Let us take events chronologically.

In July 1920 G arrives in Constantinople where he meets a large number of new people interested in occultism and in his work: B. Mouravieff, J. Bennet and his mistress, Mrs. Beaumont, Prince Sabahaddin.

After a year and failing to establish his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, G goes to Berlin in Nov 1921 in a new attempt at establishing his Institute. He meets several important people but nothing comes of this. He visits London as well and lectures there (Feb, March 1922) and meets even more people including A.R. Orage and Dr. M. Nicoll.

Failing both in Germany and England, G settles in France.

3. In late September 1922, the Institute gets established at the Château Prieuré in Avon, some 44 miles from Paris near Fontainebleau. Thereafter a long stream of people, old and new acquaintances who want to study with G, arrive and stay in the large estate.

One of the first to come, in October 1921 on Orage's recommendation, is writer Katherine Mansfield who suffers from tuberculosis at an advanced stage. In January 1922, while her husband has come for the Russian New Year celebrations, she dies. She had been, if anyone, in need of some special lift and she had gained a new confidence and understanding. But in all her many letters there is not a single out-of-the-ordinary experience. There is much optimism and even a strong belief (31/12/1922) that in 6 months' time her health will have improved! It did not.

4. Many others stayed at the Institute and followed the rigorous disciplines that G imposed, including, of course, very hard and long physical labour like cutting trees, digging ditches, demolishing or building walls, cultivating plants, cooking, cleaning rooms and so on.

The list is long: the de Hartmanns, Mrs. de Salzmann, Orage, Frank Pinder, M. Nicoll (with wife and child), Dr. J. Young, Mrs. Page, F. Peters and (in Aug 1923) J. Bennett and many others. Most of these people wrote books and, naturally, include this period of their life. Yet not one of them mentions an experience like the one Ouspensky describes in his *In Search of the Miraculous*, the telepathic communication with G, on pp 260-265.

We might not perhaps expect G himself to describe such experiences in his own books. But if it was known that there had been such, then one or other of the numerous books written about him by people who had known him a long period (Bennett, Kathryn Hulme, Orage, Nott etc) would have adverted to it.

5. In August 1924, after a car accident in July in which G was severely incapacitated, G decides to put an end to the Work, shut down the Institute, dismiss the students and sell the estate of Prieuré. G sold it in fact in 1934!

Many more students followed G in France and in the USA. Many formed groups, especially in the USA; others approached him individually in Paris (e.g. K. Hulme). But again there is no record anywhere of notable experiences.

It is very difficult to know why such an event was not repeated. One can only speculate.

- a) The one and only occurrence may have been O's imagination.
- b) G might have decided that he should not generate it again.
- c) Maybe G lost the power to generate it, if he ever had it.

29. Gurdjieff's magic? (3): Hulme and Sinclair

1. Kathryn Hulme acquired fame with her semi-autobiographical novel *A Nun's Story* (1956) which was made into a film. She and her dear friend, "little milliner" Wendy, went to Paris and somehow joined Jane Heap's group who studied Gurdjieff's teaching in the early 1930's. A little later she came to know G in person.

In 1936 G formed a ladies' group "The Rope". It is said that they were all lesbians – the two Americans mentioned, Heap, Solita Solano, Margaret Anderson and 3 or 4 others. But after a year the group was disbanded as the ladies moved in different directions. Jane Heap had been sent to England to teach groups. Solita Solano became G's secretary. Hulme and Wendy went to the USA.

2. "How strong was the Rope?" muses KH (p 158, *Undiscovered Country* 1966 Brown & Co, Boston). "How long could it hold?" She was not afraid that like other, older students who had separated from G's "magnetic field", she would fall by the wayside. She felt they could keep to the path so long as within them they had "the same idea and invincible aim".

G did not travel to NY in August as was expected because his brother Dimitri died. But in September KH's friend Wendy fell ill suddenly and nearly lost her life during an emergency operation. And then, the mind she had trained to stand guard over her emotions abdicated and the old die-hard mechanical self "took control", suffered and sent a cable to G in Paris (p159).

3. A friend of Wendy's, not in the Rope, suggested that she, KH, seek help from an organization called *Unity* whose members would pray for Wendy and KH contacted them. In addition, cables poured in from Paris.

But she also "saw clearly with her inner eye" G ("our master") "making something with all his will for a distant disciple in peril". She had seen G do this several times in Paris – she writes but gives no details. The memory of it "gave her belief in what was coming in from him to sustain the 'Thin One' " (as G called Wendy).

And KH wonders: "Was it telepathy, assistance from 'higher forces', or simply something out of [G's] own great powerhouse of inner strength earned through remorseless work on himself all those years in Tibet?" (Of course, it is not known that G had spent "all those years in Tibet"!) She never learnt and neither do we now!

Anyway, the surgeon called Wendy's recovery "a miracle" (p160).

4. Wendy did not return to the Work.

"The anguish of my fear for her was a strange pain that taught me something about the deeper meaning of 'brotherly love', of caring for the soul of another". Sheer sentiment.

In July 1938 KH sailed alone for France. Her friend never returned to the Work, in fact. She herself returned shortly afterwards to the USA.

G visited NY in the spring of 1939. Then war broke out first in Europe and North Africa, then worldwide when Japan bombed Pearl Harbour in Dec 1941 and thus brought the USA into the conflict.

During the war years KH worked as a welder in the American shipyards and afterwards joined UNNRA and helped repatriate Displaced Persons (=foreign nationals like Poles and Ukrainians forcibly brought to Germany as slave-labour in the Nazi factories).

5. KH mentions another attempt at a miracle when she sought G's help for her mother whose "mind had given way" with old age and impending death (p 278).

G gave her first a scented liquid which KH applied on her mother's solar plexus (p 282-3). Then he took a photo of KH's mother and gave her a photo of his own mother. She was thereafter to sit in a room alone with two empty chairs and see "with inner eye" the two mothers and thus generate energy to send to her mother!

After G's death in Oct 1949 KH turned and was converted to Roman Catholicism. Every other member of the Rope of those that had not died followed her own course in worldly life no longer attending any G-group.

KH's story shows how prone most of us are to see miracles where we ardently want to!

6. There is also Mrs B Sinclair's experiences described in ch 6 of her husband's book *Without Benefit of Clergy* (2005, Xlibris). She had no doubt of G's powers because she felt that G actually "touched" metaphysically, from a distance, her jugular vein at the left side of her neck, one evening as a large group were dining – "perhaps to see if I was relaxed". And then "unbelievably, [G] was able to have a long conversation with me while still engaged in conversation" with the others at the table (p 132). She does not say that this was telepathy; presumably her disbelief and surprise is due to her being new there.

But she was so moved by such experiences that she found herself crying with joy later on her way home in the subway. And another evening, hearing G playing the harmonium she had "divine feelings" and at one moment she felt she "had actually left the planet".

Then, G asked her to make an appointment to see him but she could not arrange this. G "must have sensed her distress, because he 'visited' her in the night while she was sound asleep and asked her many questions" (p 133). So perhaps the first incident was also telepathic but is not clearly expressed!

7. I cannot bring myself to believe such narratives, however willing I may be to suspend disbelief. There is no content in the telepathic "conversations", only feeling – which can easily be self-induced, self-generated. As for the "touch" – it can so easily be imagined!

As I have not read and do not intend to read all published accounts of different people's encounters with G, there may be other similar narratives. But as there are no such testimonies from early accounts, nor reports of them in other well-known publications, I think we must stay with O's evidence only.

30. Gurdjieff's successors?

1. Many appeared as G's successors after G's death in 1949. We shall examine the inevitable proliferation later. In this my first paper on this subject, I start with G's first choices that proved unfit and abandoned him (and his teaching).

G's first choices were successively Ouspensky, Orage and Bennett, though he did allow others to teach in the interim – J. Toomer, Mrs. O. Wright, (both in the USA) Jane Heap (in Britain) and later others.

Some abandoned G's teaching altogether, like Orage and eventually Toomer. Others modified it or introduced foreign elements and new practices – Ouspensky and Bennett.

2. Ouspensky broke with G completely in 1924 having set up his own groups (first in Constantinople and) in 1921 in London. He never really and truly gave himself to G's work as a genuine student but at the same time he, better than anyone else, transmitted G's teaching for contemporaries and recorded it for posterity, in his book, *In search of the Miraculous* which G had seen long before its publication in 1950 and approved fully.

Ouspensky absorbed superbly with his intellect G's system but emotionally revolted against G's method of playacting, changing tactics and delivering shocks. So he separated the teacher from the teaching, as he put it nicely (but in self-justification) and eventually broke completely from G.

Some gurdjieffians thought subsequently that O was selected as a future successor. It is possible but then one must wonder at G's lack of insight, which is also possible.

G's solid gain from O's studentship of 8 years in all is that O made G's teaching known widely and helped in this way for G's settling in France with money from many of O's acquaintances and various students.

3. It is possible that G never intended O to be his successor. So it seems to me. G knew that O, though very honest, was too much of an intellectual and too self-important to follow anyone as a teacher for long.

But I think G definitely blundered with A.R. Orage.

G must have seen that ARO was only superficially an intellectual and, unlike O, essentially emotional. Like O, ARO had a flashy intellect with which he absorbed easily abstract or metaphysical notions and literary issues. Thus he had read Plato, knew well Nietzsche's work, was deep in occult studies and theosophy and had studied the Indian Mahābhārata and practical aspects of Yoga. ARO became first O's student but when G gave a lecture in London (Feb 1922) he realized that G was the teacher and O, despite his intellectual brilliance, the student.

4. Orage arrived at G's Institute at the Prieuré in October 1922. G had already recognized ARO's potential and so placed him in a strict discipline of exhausting physical labour that at

once reduced his excessive weight and his assumed intellectuality bringing to the fore his emotional side – the side that had perceived that G was superior over Ouspensky and that his own intellectual life until then had been a waste!

In his biography of Orage, Philip Mairet writes: “No other pupil... served Gurdjieff with a more implicit obedience than Orage, [who underwent] ... severity of apprenticeship... rigors... psychological bullying.” (A.R. *Orage A Memoir* p xxix.)

5. G took ARO to New York in 1924 and gave him permission to give public lectures and form groups. And this ARO did for the next 6 years. It was there that ARO met and fell in passionate love with Jessie Dwight. G disapproved but ARO married his beloved and had two children with her. He had helped G with translating G’s work *Beelzebub’s Tales to his Grandson* into English but now (in May 1931) he left the Work and went back to England where he turned again to publishing a literary Magazine.

G should have known that starting at the age of 48, Orage’s 1 year with Ouspensky and 2 years at the Prieuré were not enough to prepare him adequately for the more serious role G intended him in the USA.

That G did not, suggests a flaw in his perceptivity. He may well have misjudged Ouspensky as well. But then again he may have not intended anything more serious.

(When I wrote this in Nov 2017, I had not read Marie Seton’s essay on O, published in the *Quest* in 1962. She had worked as O’s secretary in the early 1940’s in America. Her Memoir is full of revealing items.)

31. Gurdjieff's successors (2): JG Bennett

1. I met John G. Bennett in the very late 1950's at his "ashram" Coombe Springs just outside south London and, possibly, twice afterwards. We spoke in Greek as well as English. I was a very young and impressionable man. I liked him as a person, his ease and fluency of speech, but I felt he lacked something. So I joined a different organisation in the Ouspensky line, L. McLaren's School of Economic Science.

JB was born in 1897 and, being younger than Ouspensky by 20 years was more fortunate. O started with Gurdjieff at 37 and Orage started with O at 48 (and with G at 49). Changes in mentation and habits are more difficult the older one gets; more time of sincere practice is required. JB was only 27 in 1924 when he decided to remain with O's group.

2. JB had met both G and O in Constantinople in the summer of 1920. Although he was impressed by the two men having had an out-of-the-body experience while serving in the war and realising that there were other powers in man, he was too attached to his work as an agent of British Intelligence in the Near East. So he let that opportunity pass.

He married in 1919 and had a daughter in 1920. But in the following year he was in Constantinople and at 23 started living with Winifred Beaumont who was 47! His wife petitioned and got a divorce in 1924 and JB married Mrs. Beaumont - who died in 1958. Thereupon he married a third time, Elizabeth Mayall. (I met him just about then.)

He knew Turkish very well and its various dialects spoken in Central Asia. But his knowledge of Parsi and Zoroastrian Scriptures is not as good as is implied in some of his books, while his acquaintance with the Indic culture (Hinduism, Buddhism etc.) seems to have been negligible and superficial, as I will show in the very next essay.

3. In 1928 O asked JB to leave his groups after some misdemeanor but in 1930 he called him back again. It should be noted however, that JB had spent some weeks in G's Institute in France in 1923!

Soon after 1941 while the war was on and O was in America, JB decided to begin with his own groups using whatever material he had recorded from O's lectures. O was angry and asked his students to break fully with JB, who felt deeply hurt.

His picture so far is not of a constant, reliable man. And this would not change but become rather worse.

In 1946 JB bought Coombe Springs (in Kingston-upon-Thames) and continued with his groups introducing new elements into the G-O system. He had a strong liking for Sufism, the mystical aspect of Islam.

In 1948 he joined Gurdjieff in Paris glad to discover that G, the old teacher was not dead, as JB had thought!

4. G hardly remembered him but received him and took him with himself to America. JB promised devoted service. He expressed gratitude and declared he would do anything G asked of him. So he abandons the plan to move with Cecil Lewis into South Africa and set up a safe ashram there.

G then, in January 1949 appointed as his representative in the USA Lord John Pentland, in France Rene Zuber and in England JB who thanks him on his knees! Subsequently JB returns with G in Paris.

G died in October 1949 and JB assumed he was appointed successor to G and certainly G's chief representative in England. He ignored the fact that Jane Heap had on G's instigation gone to London in the mid-1930's and formed a redoubtable group (always under G's direction) which held now several important people, including director Peter Brooke.

5. JB's instability continued to manifest strongly until his death, 1975.

He published many books and always paid lip service to G's genius but always introduced his own notions.

As early as 1950, many questioned his leadership in England and Madam de Salzmann, with the full authority G had invested in her, appointed in the spring of that year Henriette Lannes as her own representative in England. Lannes formed G-groups and headed the Gurdjieff Society in London until her death, 1980.

Meanwhile, JB embarked on travels in the Near East in 1953 and met several eminent sufis and shayks. In 1956 he brought the "system" Subud from Java only to acknowledge his error in 1960 and abandon it fully in 1962. He approached many other gurus thereafter, including Maharish Mahesh Yogi in Rome! In 1971 he founded his very own International Academy for Continuous Education at Sherbourne House, Gloucestershire which closed down after JB's death. There he invited several "teachers" from different traditions!

Given JB's erratic character and doings, one wonders at G's judgment!

32. Gurdjieff's "mission"

1. I find it difficult to understand G's "mission" about which so much fuss has been created by successors and students. It is equally difficult to understand why G was, at least as all published accounts indicate, always short of time and in a hurry to fulfill this mission.

One of Bennett's last books (while in life) was *Gurdjieff - The Making of a New World* (1973, Turnstone, London). There were many other publications with his name after his death, edited by loyal students or members of his family. Most of these refer to periods and activities of JB before that year.

In this book JB gives various definitions of G's mission. One is "to awaken mankind to the 'Terror of the Situation' [i.e. automatism, identification, materialism, negativeness, sleep, population explosion, resource exhaustion, pollution, revolt of the deprived, etc.] and...[prepare] helpers who can join with him in spreading the message" (108). Elsewhere, according to G, our "salvation", the welfare of mankind and "the evolution of the earth and the solar system, are intimately linked together in the universal transformation upon which the maintenance of the World depends" (271).

2. Before delving deeper into this "mission" we should examine the sources of G's teachings. On this JB devotes 57 pages.

In an earlier paper I showed that one source must have been the Vedic Tradition of India since bodily postures and breath exercises come from the Yoga system. Self-remembering, again, was a basic and central practice of G's teaching; he in fact removed A.R. Orage from leading the students in America because Orage had neglected to press upon the students this practice. This too is an integral part of the Vedic Tradition. (I shall return to this later.)

However JB focuses on the Khwajagān Masters of Wisdom, Sufis of Central Asia (=Turkey, Persia, Turkestan, Afghanistan, Tibet, N-W China), and the Naq'shband orders (= "symbolist", p42) of the same Sufi communities. This may well be very true. I know very little about Sufism and am now too old to study the subject as seriously as it deserves.

3. However, it should be noted that G remained reticent about his sources: his rather playful and hardly serious narrations in the *Tales of Beelzebub to his Grandson* (1st Series of All and Everything) and in the *Meetings with Remarkable Men* (2nd Series) cannot be taken at face value for the simple reason that G jokes endlessly, while the *Tales of Beelzebub* is (science-) fiction full of myths. Also for the reason that there is no independent testimony (nobody else confirms any of this).

It is well known now that in 1972 JB hosted the Sufi sage Hasan Lutfi Shushud (1901-1988) who was one of the Masters of Sufism and followed the Path of self-annihilation (Itlak) with its principal practices of deliberate suffering, fasting and zikr (=breathing exercises and prayer). He objected to JB's contention that G had contacted that tradition, established in the 12th century CE (=AD). And for this reason broke his cooperation with JB on the production of that book.

4. In the early 1960's JB had come under the spell of Idries Shah, another "Master of Sufism" who actually produced a document that G had been with the Sufis of Central Asia.

This of course is highly suspect. Anybody could produce a "document" proving anything provided no independent testimony is demanded. Then, why take this to JB who was known in the Gurdjieff world to be erratic and unreliable? Why not present the document to the acknowledged authority who was Madam Jeanne de Salzmann?

Moreover, Idries Shah and his brother influenced Robert Graves, the famous Oxford scholar, and published a new translation of the Rubayat of Omar Khayyam as though it was a Sufi work, according to an ancient manuscript that was in Shah's family for many centuries.

Expert orientalist decided, after a heated controversy, in the early 1970's that this was a hoax - and the manuscript was never produced by the Shah brothers to prove their claim. (Graves died in shame.)

Here I must stop and continue in the next paper.

33. Gurdjieff's sources

1. In this paper I focus on G's sources – and John Bennett's blinding blunders.

G mentions in his own writings the community of Sarmoun (Sarmān o Sarmoung) which is projected back to the time of Zoroaster and even Babylon at the time of Hammurabi (1800-1750 BCE) and later with Pythagoras (500 BCE: J Bennett: 1975 *Gurdjieff - Making a New Word* ch.3). The only problem is that nothing at all is known about the Sarmoun Brotherhood in those ancient times. The documents mentioned by G in *Beelzebub's Tales and Meetings with Remarkable Men* are sheer fiction not reality. However, it is very probable that G borrowed dances, music and much else from Sufi, Zoroastrian and other traditions in the Near East and Central Asia. These have not been identified as yet and probably cannot be identified now.

2. John Bennett connects the idea of the Inner Circle with a permanent tradition or "brotherhood" of Wise Masters (=Sarmoun, Naq'shbandis, Khwajagan etc.) which he finds also in Buddhism with the Arhants and Bodhisattvas and the Tibetan Lamas (p25).

Unfortunately, his scholarship is abysmally sloppy. Despite his statement about Buddhism, on p26 he writes "Strangely enough the tradition of the Masters is almost unknown in India". He does not explain the force of the adverb "almost". For, apart from the fact that Buddhism is an Indic product, this tradition is preeminently known in India from the earliest times of the Rgveda hymns and the subsequent lists of teachers and divine Incarnations.

On p29 he refers to Zoroaster as being of the 6th cent. BCE whereas he is much much earlier. Then, he states that earliest hymns of the Aryan people contain evidence that they were composed "in the far north ten thousand years ago".

These hymns of the Aryan people are either the Rigvedic sūktas (Indic) or the Avestan gathas (Persian) and neither contain "convincing evidence of having been composed in the far north". The Rigvedic hymns were composed in the larger area of what is today N-W India and Pakistan (including the Indus and the lost Sarasvati and Seven Rivers) and the Avestan were composed in S-E Persia moving North-westward in what is today Iran! Most of them and the Rigvedic hymns are much older than 3000 BCE, perhaps even of the 5th millennium while the Avestan gathas are later, probably of the 4th. (Many other scholars ascribe them to more recent dates, as late as 1500 BCE.)

3. On p67, to change the subject, Bennett tells us that "The science of numbers, in the widest sense, originated in Mesopotamia..." He obviously ignores the work of American mathematician and historian of science A. Seidenberg (1962, 1978 *The Origin of Mathematics in Archive for History of Exact Sciences* vols 1,18) and others who postulates that the Maths in the Indian *Śulba-sūtras* is much earlier than Mesopotamian and Greek.

On p59 he tells us that according to Iamblichus (ch4) Pythagoras spent 12 years in Babylon evidently not being aware that Iamblichus lived 700 years after Pythagoras and is as fond of myth-making as Gurdjieff and Bennett himself. And how could G's Institute and general

mode of living be like that of Pythagoras (same page) when the Pythagoreans were vegetarians whereas G loved lamb, fish and like delicacies!

Moreover, nowhere does he mention the Orphics who were older and more secretive than the Pythagoreans, nor the Eleatics who, like the Orphics, spread as far north as the eastern shore of Bulgaria.

When he calls the Sumerians “the older Indo-European race”, I wonder if he had the slightest correct idea about the Indo-Europeans.

4. If J. Bennett had delved only a little deeper into his subject and asked expert orientalists, he would have found out that A. Von Kremer refers in his study of Islamic Civilisation (1873) to a version of the Indic *Kāmarūpa Seed-syllables* mentioned for its breathing and other yogic practices in a 14th century Persian Encyclopedia.

In fact, with luck, he would have also found out that the Indic *Amṛta Kunda* ‘Pool of Nectar’ (with yogic breathing, meditative and other practices) was translated into Persian in 1210 in Bengal and, having been translated afterwards into Arabic & Turkish, became a “best-seller” among Muslim spiritual circles.

Apart from all this, the Naths or Kanpathas, followers of Guru Goraknath, were known among Muslims early on (from the 13th cent) and during the Delhi Sultanate, then rose in political power in the 16th century.

So Sufism has spiritual practices derived from the rich Indic Vedic culture as well as Buddhism. So the Vedic Tradition of India certainly contributed to the formation of Sufi religio-philosophical lore and indirectly, if G received tuition from Sufis, to G’s teaching.

34. Gurdjieff's sources (2)

1. Let me repeat again that we have no means of ascertaining the immediate sources of G's teaching and that it is very probable that he had direct contacts and tuition from Sufi spiritual communities of one form or another. There is also evidence that G went to Tibet where he received Buddhist influences. Buddhism is an unorthodox offshoot of the Vedic Tradition in philosophy and religion. But since Buddhism dismissed the element of "Self" it is difficult to see what G could have had from it since his central practice was '**self-remembering**'. This also limits the undoubted influences he must have had from christian sources.

2. As many have observed, one definite source was the Eastern Orthodox (Greek, Russian, Armenian) Christianity. G's book *All & Everything* begins in the clear christian prayer "In the name of our Father and of the Son and in the name of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

G was brought up in the christian faith and remained a christian to his last breath. His earliest teachers, apart from his parents and grandmother (all christian), were the dean of Kars Cathedral in Armenia and a priest who later became the abbot of an Essene monastery. His funeral and burial were performed according to the Russian Orthodox Church.

The programme at the Institute in Prieuré, its power and aim, were in G's few words to "help one to be able to be a Christian"!

3. John Bennett provides, if it is to be believed, a solid and official evidence that G had been in Delhi: in 1920 he received as an Intelligence Officer in Constantinople a dispatch from Delhi warning of the dangerous Russian agent, George Gurdjieff. But Bennett does not give us a date for G's presence in Delhi.

However, we can follow a different and more profitable procedure. This is to examine various "fragments" of G's teaching - which fragments obviously derive from an unknown Whole System.

In previous papers, e.g. Es23 I mentioned the practice of "self-remembering" which is found in the tradition of the Śankarācāryas in India - and certainly that of the North. This may be found in Muslim or Sufi practices but I don't know them and since nobody (e.g. Bennett) mentions it at all, I take it that it is not to be found there.

4. The Enneagram also has an important place in G's teaching. It is a very significant "fragment". Bennett speculates that it goes back to Sumer and G places it in the Sarmoun Brotherhood but neither of them gives any evidence for this assertion. Nothing like it has been found in Sumer or the Sarmouns. Nor is it found in christian traditions.

On the other hand, in India we find the Circle of Nine Points with Brahman 'Absolute' at 1; *Parā* (or *Avyaktā*) *Prakṛti* 'Unmanifest Nature' at 2; *Aparā* (or *Vyaktā*) *Prakṛti* 'Manifest Nature' at 3; *Mahat-tattva* 'Great being/essence' at 4; *Ākāśa* 'Ether/space' at 5; *Vāyu* 'Air' at

6; *Agni* (or *Tejas*) 'Fire' at 7; *Āpas* (or *Jala*) 'Water(s)' at 8; *Bhūmi* (or *Pr̥thivī*) 'Earth' at 9. The sequence can be reversed with Earth at 1, Water(s) at 2 and so on.

One finds other schemes in the *Purāṇas*, the *lokās* 'cosmoses': *bhūr-loka* 'earth'; *bhuvar* 'space above earth'; *svar* 'sky-light' (Indra's Kingdom); *mahar* 'world beyond polar star'; *janar* 'world of rebirth' (of *Sanatkumar* and other sons of *Brahmā* 'creator-god'); *tapar* 'world of pure being(s)'; *satya/brahma-loka* 'abode of Truth', 'unchanging and no-rebirth'. There are others.

5. Various exercises are mentioned in Ouspensky's *In Search of the Maraculous* and other books. Breathing exercises are paralleled in India with *prāṇāyama* the 'breath-aspect' of Yoga; exercises of sense control with *pratyāhāra*; exercises of attention and concentration with *dhāraṇā*; meditative practices with *dhyāna* 'meditation'. All these are parts of the *aṣṭāṅga* yoga the eightfold yoga, found also in *Vedānta*.

Ouspensky mentions another interesting exercise (p351, *In Search...*) calling it "circular sensation": a man lies down on his back and senses first his nose, then his right ear, right hand, right foot, left foot, left hand, left ear and back to his nose. This is found in a much more complex and effective form in yoga and other Vedic systems: the man lies down on his back but in the *śava-āsana* 'corpse position' and directs his attention again circularly right to left sensing many more spots which are, in fact, centres of energy.

Here I stop. I shall return with several more affinities.