Gurdjieff—Ouspensky—Orage

Black Sheep Philosophers

by Gorham Munson

On October 29, 1949, at the American Hospital in Paris died a Caucasian Greek named Georgy Ivanovitch Gurdjieff. A few nights later at Cooper Union, New York, a medal was presented to the revolutionary architect Frank Lloyd Wright. After his part in the ceremony was over, Wright asked the chairman's permission to make are announcement. "The greatest man in the world," he said, "has recently died. His name was Gurdjieff." Few, if any, in Wright's audience had ever heard the name before, which is quite understandable: Gurdjieff avoided reporters and managed most of the time to keep out of the media publicity.

However, there was one kind of publicity that he always got in Europe and America, and that was the kind made by the wagging human tongue: gossip. In 1921 he showed up in Constantinople. "His coming to Constantinople," says the British scientist, J.G. Bennett, "was heralded by the usual gossip of the bazaars. Gurdjieff was said to be a great traveler and a linguist who knew all the Oriental languages, reputed by the Moslems to be a convert to Islam, and by the Christians to be a member of some obscure Nestorian sect." In those days Bennett, who is now an expert on coal utilization, was in charge of a British Intelligence section working in Constantinople. He met Gurdjieff and found him neither Moslem nor Christian. Bennett reported that "his linguistic attainments stopped short near the Caspian Sea, so that we could converse only with difficulty in a mixture of Azerbaidjan Tartar and Osmanli Turkish. Nevertheless, he unmistakably possessed knowledge very different from that of the itinerant

Sheikhs of Persia and Trans-Caspia, whose arrival in Constantinople had been preceded by similar rumors. It was, above all, astonishing to meet a man, almost unacquainted with any Western European language, possessing a working knowledge of physics, chemistry, biology and modern astronomy, and able to make searching comments on, the then new and fashionable theory of relativity, and also on the psychology of Sigmund Freud."

To Bennett, Gurdjieff didn't look at all like an Eastern sage. He was powerfully built--his neck rippled with muscles--and although of only medium height, he was physically dominating. He had a shaven dome, an unlined swarthy face, piercing black eyes, and a tigerish mustache that curled out to big points. In his later years he had a large paunch. But in one respect Gurdjieff's reputation followed the pattern of all the swamis, gurus and masters who have roamed the Western world: his past in the East was veiled in mystery. Only the scantiest facts are known about him before he appeared in Moscow about 1914.

Gurdjieff was born in Alexandropol, an Armenian city, in 1866. His father was a kind of local bard. It is said the boy was educated for the priesthood but as a young man he joined a society called Seekers of the Truth, and went with this group on an expedition into Asia. He was in Asia for many years and then came to Moscow where there was talk that he planned to produce a ballet called "The Struggle of the Magicians."

The rest is hearsay. It has been said that the Seekers of the Truth went into the Gobi desert. It has been said that they were checking on Madame Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, and at places where she said there were "masters" they found none; whereas at places unspecified by her, they did find "masters. " It has been said that Gurdjieff found one teacher under whom he studied for fifteen years and from whom he acquired his most important knowledge. It has been said that several times he became a rich man in the East. This is all hearsay.

A better grade of hearsay centers around Gurdjieff in Tibet. Was he or was he not the chief political officer of the Dalai Lama in 1904 when the British invaded Tibet? According to Achmed Abdullah, the fiction writer, Gurdjieff was the "Dordjieff" to whom the history books make passing reference, supposedly a Russian who influenced the Dalai Lama at the time of the Younghusband Expedition. Abdullah was a member of the British Intelligence assigned to spy on this "Dordjieff," and when Abdullah saw Gurdjieff in New York in 1924, he exclaimed, "That man is Dordjieff!" At any rate, when there were plans in 1922 for Gurdjieff to live in England, it was found that the Foreign Office was opposed, and it was conjectured that their file dated from the time of the trouble between the British government and Tibet. According to rumor, Gurdjieff counseled the Dalai Lama to evacuate Lhasa and let the British sit in an empty city until the heavy snow could close the passes of the Himalayas and cut off the Younghusband expedition. This was done, and the British hurried to make a treaty while their return route was still open.

Much more is known about Gurdjieff after 1914. A recently published book by P.D. Ouspensky which the author called *Fragments of a Forgotten Teaching*, but which the publisher has renamed *In Search of the Miraculous*, gives a running account of Ouspensky's relations with Gurdjieff over a ten-year period. Of his first interview with Gurdjieff, Ouspensky says: "Not only did my questions not embarrass him but it seemed to me that he put much more into each answer than I had asked for. " By 1916 Ouspensky was holding telepathic conversations with

Gurdjieff. He also records one example of Gurdjieff's transfiguring of his whole appearance on a railroad journey, so that a Moscow newspaperman took him to be an impressive "oil king from Baku" and wrote about his unknown fellow passenger. The greater part of *In Search of the Miraculous* consists of the copious notes Ouspensky made on Gurdjieff's lectures in St. Petersburg and Moscow, which give us the only complete and reliable outline of Gurdjieff's system of ideas thus far in print. It is plain from Ouspensky's exposition that Gurdjieff attempted to convey Eastern knowledge in the thoughtforms of the West; he was trying to bridge the gap between Eastern philosophy and Western science.

For us in America the story of Gurdjieff is the story of three men whom I call the "black sheep philosophers." Gurdjieff was the master, and the other two--Alfred Richard Orage who died in the fall of 1934. and Peter Demianovich Ouspensky who died in the fall of 1947--were his leading disciples. I call them philosophers: others would call them psychologists: many have called them charlatans. Whatever one names them, they were black sheep: they were looked at askance by the professional philosophers and psychologists because of the different color of their teachings. Nor were they accepted by theosophists, mystics, or various occult professors. They stood apart and their appeal was to what I shall call, for want of a more inclusive word, the intelligentsia.

It is impossible to assimilate Orage, Ouspensky and Gurdjieff into any recognized Western school of thought. The New York obituaries of Gurdjieff called him the "founder of a new religion." It was said that he taught his followers how to attain "peace of mind and calm." This was an attempt to assimilate him. But Gurdjieff claimed no originality for his system and did not organize his followers; furthermore, he did nothing to establish a new religion. As for "peace of mind and calm"...there is the incident of an American novelist who calls himself a "naturalistic mystic. " In the middle of a dinner with Gurdjieff in Montmartre, this novelist jumped up, shouted, "I think you are the Devil!" and rushed from the restaurant. The truth is that Gurdjieff violated all our preconceptions of a "spiritual leader" and sometimes repelled "religious seekers."

In my view, the man was an enigma, and that means that my estimate must necessarily be a suspended estimate. The supposition that he was founding a religion will not hold up. And I do not believe he was a devil out of the pages of Dostoevski. There is an old saying that a teacher is to be judged by his pupils, and by that test Gurdjieff had knowledge that two of the strongest minds in our period wanted to acquire. These minds belonged to the English editor, A.R. Orage, and the Russian mathematical philosopher, P.D. Ouspensky. Both surrendered to Gurdjieff. Let us look at the disciples and then come back to their teacher.

Orage, a Yorkshireman, bought a small London weekly, *The New Age*, in 1906. From then until 1922, when he relinquished the paper and went to Fontainebleau where Gurdjieff had his headquarters, Orage made journalistic history. He was remarkable for finding and coaching new writers. Among these was Katherine Mansfield, who acknowledged her great indebtedness to him as a literary mentor. Another was Michael Arlen, who once dedicated a novel to Orage in terms like these: "To A.R. Orage—slow to form a friendship but never hesitant about making an enemy." Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc and Arnold Bennett debated with each other in *The New Age*, and Shaw called Orage a "desperado of genius."

The New Age was more than a literary review. It played a lively role in British political and economic movements. It began by being highly critical of Fabianism, then took a positive turn by advocating National Guilds, or Guild Socialism, as the Guilds movement was popularly called. With A.G. Penty and S.G. Hobson, Orage was one of the prime instigators of the National Guilds movement, but he always had a lingering doubt of the practicability of its platform and in 1919 he dropped it and joined with Major C.H. Douglas to found the Social Credit movement. With him went many of the more brilliant Guild Socialists, to the mortification of G.D.H. Cole who denounced the "Douglas—*New Age* heresy."

To literature and economics, Orage added a sustained interest in occultism, and it was this that finally led him to Gurdjieff's Chateau du Prieure at Fontainebleau-Avon. Nietzsche had extended the horizons of Orage's thought during his formative years, and Orage's weekly became a forum for Nietzscheans. He himself wrote two small books on that grossly misunderstood philosopher which remain the clearest expositions yet penned of the superman doctrine. On the spoor of the superman, Orage investigated theosophy, psychical research, and Indian literature, and he wrote one book, *Consciousness: Animal, Human and Superman*, which hinted at the mental exercises he practiced to enlarge and elevate consciousness. T.S. Eliot called Orage the finest critical intelligence of his generation, which is an assurance to the reader that Orage was no gull in his excursions into mysticism. In 1922, at the age of forty-nine, he cut all ties in England, went to Gurdjieff at Fontainebleau-Avon, and was set to digging trenches and washing casseroles.

At that time Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man was in full swing. With funds provided by Lady Rothermere, Gurdjieff had acquired the historic Chateau du Prieure, once the residence of Madame de Maintenon, the consort of Louis Quatorze, and in latter years the property of Labori, the attorney for the exonerated French officer, Dreyfus. The institute provided a thorough workout for the three "centers" of human psychology. Its members engaged in hard physical tasks ranging from long hours of kitchen drudgery to the felling of trees in the chateau's forest. Unusual situations, friction between members, and music insured great activity for the emotional "center." For the mental "center" there were exercises that often had to be performed concurrently with physical tasks. An airplane hangar had been set up on the grounds. This was known as the "study house" and was the scene for instruction in complicated dance movements. There were mottoes on the walls of the "study house." One of them in translation read: "You cannot be too skeptical." This was the milieu the brilliant English editor entered to become a kitchen scullion.

In 1924 Gurdjieff came to America with forty pupils—English and Russian—and gave public demonstrations of dervish dances, temple dances, and sacred gymnastics. Orage came along but did not perform the movements, although he had practiced them for a Paris demonstration. Nothing like these dances had ever been seen in New York, and they aroused intense interest. They called for great precision in execution and required extraordinary coordination. One could well believe they were, as claimed, written in an exact language, even though one could not read that language but only received an effect of wakefulness quite different from the pleasant sense of harmony most art produces. When Gurdjieff and his pupils

sailed for France, Orage was left in New York to organize groups for the study of Gurdjieff's system, and for the next seven years he was engaged in this task.

Let me call up from memory one of the evenings Orage talked to a group in New York. The place is a large room above a garage on East Fortieth Street. Orage comes in a little after nine. Deliberately, he is always a little late, and often he takes a snifter of bootleg gin in Mrs. Draper's kitchen before entering the big room. He is tall, with a strong Yorkshireman's frame, an alert face, an elephantine nose, sensitive mouth, hair still dark. He is a chain-smoker throughout the meeting. He calls for questions. Someone asks about "self-observation," someone wants to know "what this system teaches about death," someone else makes a long speech that terminates in a question about psychoanalysis. After he has five or six questions, Orage begins to talk—and he talks well in lucid sentences often glinting with wit. A graduate student in psychology at Columbia objects to one of his remarks. Orage handles the objection and goes on until a progressive schoolteacher interjects a question. It is like a Socratic dialogue, with Orage elucidating a single topic from all sides. Every question eventually gets back to "the method," and by eleven o'clock he has once again illuminated the method of self-observation with nonidentification that appears to be the starting procedure prescribed by Gurdjieff for self-study.

Briefly, what Orage has said is that man is a mechanical being. He cannot do anything. He has no will. His organism acts without his concurrent awareness and he identifies himself with various parts of this victim of circumstances, his organism. There is only one thing he can try to do. He can try to observe the physical behavior of his organism while at the same time not identifying his 'I' with it. Later he can attempt to observe his emotions and thoughts. The trouble is that he can only fleetingly observe with nonidentification, but he must continue to make the effort. It is claimed that this method differs from introspection. The nonidentifying feature differentiates it from an apperception. The man who finally succeeds in developing the power of self-observation is on the path to self-knowledge and the actualizing of a higher state of consciousness. This higher state, which Orage calls "Self-consciousness" or "Individuality," stands to our present waking state as the waking state stands to our state of sleep.

This bare summary will not, of course, explain why so many New Yorkers came to hear Orage between 1924 and 1931. Some came only once or twice out of a weak curiosity, like Heywood Broun who listened through one meeting, then asked, "When do we get to sex?" and shuffled off, never to return. Others were fascinated by the charm and keenness of Orage's literary personality and found such epigrams as "H.G. Wells is an ordinary man with a carbuncle of genius" full compensation for the dissertations on psychology they sat through. But the solid core of his group were probably the people who prefer Plato to Aristotle; that is, people who feel that there is some kind of film over reality and respond to the idea that this film can be penetrated.

In 1931 Orage faced a personal crisis. He had married an American girl and had an infant son. Gurdjieff, a hard taskmaster, wanted him to bring his family to the Chateau du Prieure and continue work on the translation into English of the huge book then called *Tales of Beelzebub to His Grandson*, which Gurdjieff had written partly in Russian and partly in Armenian. Orage neither wanted to leave his family nor to put them in the never-stable environment of Fontainebleau-Avon. He decided to go to London and there founded the New

English Weekly. On Guy Fawkes Day in 1934, he who had never addressed more than a few thousand readers addressed hundreds of thousands of B.B.C. listeners with a speech on Social Credit, went home, and died before morning.

The link between Orage and Gurdjieff was originally P.D. Ouspensky, who came to London in 1921 and started groups for the study of the Gurdjieff system. Orage attended these, as did Katherine Mansfield, and both went to the source at Fontainebleau. As explained by Ouspensky, there were three main ways to a higher development of man: the way of the fakir who struggles with the physical body, the way of the monk who subjects all other emotions to the emotion of faith, and the way of the yogi who develops his mind. But these ways produce lopsided men; they produce the "stupid fakir," the "silly saint," the "weak yogi. " There is a fourth way, that of Gurdjieff, in which the student continues in his usual life—circumstances but strives for a harmonious development of this physical, emotional and intellectual life—the non-monastic "way of the sly man. " The accent was on harmonious, all-round development.

Ouspensky was a highly mental type. At his lectures in New York he seemed like a European professor. He was not nervous in manner and he had a peculiar kind of emotional serenity; one felt that it did not matter to him what his listeners thought of him. In his youth he had been fascinated by the problem of the fourth dimension, the nature of time, and the doctrine of recurrence. When only thirty-one, he wrote a book, *The Fourth Dimension*, which was recognized as a contribution to abstract mathematical theory. He also practiced journalism for a St. Petersburg newspaper. At thirty-four, he completed the book on which his popular fame rests, *Tertium Organum*. This book had a great influence on the American poet, Hart Crane, an influence Brom Weber has carefully traced in his biography of Crane. But *Tertium Organum* is a pre-Gurdjieffian work, and much of it has to be reset in a later pattern of Ouspensky's thought, as he implied in a cryptic note inserted after the early editions. Ouspensky also wrote a short book on the Tarot cards, which are surmised to contain occult meaning.

The young Russian thinker attempted to be practical about his speculative thinking. He made trips to Egypt, India and Ceylon in search of keys to knowledge. He experimented with drugs, fasting and breathing exercises to induce higher states of consciousness. When he met Gurdjieff in Moscow in 1914, he was ripe for a teacher.

As the years went on, Ouspensky began to make a distinction between Gurdjieff the man and the ideas conveyed by Gurdjieff. Remaining true to the ideas, he finally decided about 1924 to teach independently of the man Gurdjieff. The last chapter of *In Search of the Miraculous* deals with this "break," but it is too reticent to make the "break" understood.

Ouspensky held groups in London throughout the 1920's and 1930's, and had a place outside London for his more devoted pupils, some of whom were quite wealthy. When the bombs began to rain on England, he and a number of his English pupils migrated to America and purchased Franklin Farms, a large estate at Mendham, New Jersey. In New York he lectured to shifting groups of sixty or so, while at Mendham his wife supervised the pupils who carried out farm and household tasks as part of their psychological training. Instruction in the Gurdjieff dance movements was also given at Mendham.

Ouspensky's later books have included *A New Model of the Universe*, begun in pre-Gurdjieff days but revised and completed under his influence, and a novel, *Strange Life of Juan Osokin*, which has a flavor that reminds one of Gogol. Although Ouspensky has written extensively on relativity, the professional physicists appear to have given him a cold shoulder; at least, he is never mentioned in scientific literature. However, *A New Model of the Universe* produced a great impression on the novelist J.B. Priestley, who wrote one of his most enthusiastic essays about it.

Gurdjieff was by far the most dramatic of the trio; in fact, Gurdjieff as a pedagogue was mainly an improvising dramatist, a difficult aspect of his character to explain briefly. Most people believe that they can make decisions. They believe that when they say "Yes" or "No" in regard to a course of action, they mean "Yes" or "No." They think they are sincere and can carry out their promises and know their own minds. Gurdjieff did not lecture them on the illusion of free will. Instead, in conversation with a person, he would produce a situation, usually trivial and sometimes absurd, in which that person would hesitate, perhaps say "Yes," then change to "No," become paralyzed between choices like Zeno's famous donkey starving between two equidistant bales of hay, and end full of doubt about any "decision" reached. If the person afterwards looked at the little scene he had been put through, he saw that his usual "Yes" or "No" had no weight; that, in fact, he had drifted as the psychological breezes blew.

Often, in his early acquaintance with a person, Gurdjieff would hit upon one or both of two "nerves" which produced agitation. These were the "pocketbook nerve" and the "sex nerve." He would, as our slang goes "put the bee on somebody for some dough," or he might as he did with one priest from Greece, egg him on to tell a series of ribald jokes. The event often proved that he didn't need the money he had been begging for. As for the poor priest, when he had outdone himself with an anecdote, Gurdjieff deflated him with the disgusted remark, "Now you are dirty!" and turned away. "I wished to show him he was not true priest," Gurdjieff said afterwards. To go for the "pocketbook nerve" or the "sex nerve" was to take a short cut to a person's psychology; instead of working through the surfaces, Gurdjieff immediately got beneath them. "Nothing shows up people so much," he once said, "as their attitude toward money."

There are legends about how Gurdjieff came by the large sums of money he freely spent. It has been rumored that he earned money by hypnotic treatment of rich drug addicts. There used to be a tale that he owned a restaurant, or even a small chain of restaurants, in Paris. His fortunes varied extremely, and there were times when he had little money. He lost his chateau at Fontainebleau-Avon in the early 1930's. His expenses were large and included the support of a score or two of adherents. He tipped on a fabulous scale. Money never stuck to his fingers but he himself did not lead a luxurious life. He joked with his pupils about his financial needs and openly called his money-raising maneuvers "shearing sheep."

When the Bolshevik revolution struck Russia, Gurdjieff moved south. He halted at various places, notably at Tiflis, to launch groups, but eventually he and his followers crossed the Caucasian mountains on foot and made their way to Constantinople. Via Germany, he reached France where, as related, Lady Rothermere enabled him to found the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man at the Chateau du Prieure. This Institute, Orage once told me, was to have made Bacon's project for an Academy for the Advancement of Learning look like a

rustic school. But in 1924, Gurdjieff met with an automobile accident which nearly killed him, and thereafter he turned to the less strenuous activity of writing. The Institute plans were canceled, and he began the tales of Beelzebub as told to his grandson on a ship in interstellar space. This book is a huge parable with chapters on the engulfed civilization of Atlantis, the "law of three" and the "law of seven," objective art, and many riddles of man's history. It purports to be an impartial criticism of the life of man on the planet Earth. In this period Gurdjieff also composed many pieces of music, making original use of ancient scales and rhythms.

In the last year or two of his long life, Gurdjieff finished with his writings and intensified his direct contacts with his followers. Movement classes were started in Paris, and several hundred Frenchmen now come more or less regularly to these and other meetings. In England the exposition of Gurdjieff's ideas is carried on by the mathematical physicist, J.G. Bennett. Bennett is the author of *The Crisis In Human Affairs*, an introduction to the Gurdjieff system. It is said that Bennett attracts about three hundred to his lectures and that the class in movements numbers nearly two hundred.

Gurdjieff spent the winter of 1948-49 in New York, as usual unnoticed by the press. The remnant of the old Orage groups came to him, as did the Ouspenskyites from Mendham and many new people. With Oriental hospitality, he provided supper night after night for seventy and upwards in his big suite at the Hotel Wellington, the supper being punctuated by toasts in armagnac to various kinds of idiots: "health ordinary idiots," "health candidates for idiots," "health squirming idiots," "health compassionate idiots." When Gurdjieff drank water, he always proposed, "health wise man." Prepositions were left out of the toasts; Gurdjieff spoke a simplified English that often required an effort to follow. After the supper, Gurdjieff's writings were read until the small hours of the morning. While he was here, he signed a contract with a New York publisher to bring out in 1950 the English version of the 1000-page tales of Beelzebub, under the title *All and Everything*. It is also expected that after the book appears, his American pupils will give a public demonstration of the dance movements.

Gurdjieff had passage booked for America last October but fell gravely ill. An American doctor flew to Paris, had him removed to the American Hospital, and made him comfortable. "Bravo, America!" he said to the doctor. "Now we can have a cup of coffee." Those were his last words.

How shall I sum up this strange man? A twentieth century Cagliostro? But the evidence about Cagliostro is conflicting, and the stories you will hear about Gurdjieff are highly conflicting. I can personally vouch for his astonishing capacity for work. Two to four hours' sleep seemed sufficient for him; yet he always appeared to have abundant energy for a day spent in writing, playing an accordion-harmonium, motoring, cafe conversation, cooking. Those who had to keep up with him were sometimes ready to drop from fatigue, but he seemed inexhaustible after twenty hours and fresh the next morning from a short sleep. He was eighty-three this last winter at the Hotel Wellington. He would retire at three or four in the morning. Around seven the elevator boys would take him down and he would go over to his "office," a Child's restaurant on upper Fifth Avenue. Here, as at a European cafe, he would receive callers all morning.

I have sometimes asked myself what our civilization of specialists would make of certain men of the Renaissance—men like Roger Bacon, a forerunner, and Francis Bacon and Paracelsus who came at the height—if they reappeared among us. I think we would find them baffling, and it would be their many-sidedness that would puzzle us. The biographers and historians have never quite known how to take their scandalous unorthodoxy. To me Gurdjieff was an enigma whom I associate with the stranger figures of the Renaissance rather than with religious leaders. He never claimed originality for his ideas but asserted they came from ancient science transmitted in esoteric schools. His humor was Rabelaisian, his roles were dramatic, his impact on people was upsetting. Sentimentalists came, expecting to find in him a resemblance to the pale Christ-figure literature has concocted, and went away swearing that Gurdjieff was a dealer in black magic. Scoffers came, and some remained to wonder if Gurdjieff knew more about relativity than Einstein.

"A Pythagorean Greek," Orage called him, thus connecting the prominence given to numbers in the Gurdjieffian system with Gurdjieff's descent from Ionian Greeks who had migrated to Turkey. Perhaps this appellation, "Pythagorean Greek," is as short a way as any to indicate the strangeness of Gurdjieff to our civilization, which has never been compared to Greece in its great period from the sixth to the fourth centuries before Christ.

How shall we account for the interest persons of metropolitan culture in the Western world have shown in the Eastern ideas of Gurdjieff and his transmitters, Orage and Ouspensky? One explanation is easy, and it holds for people who seek respite for their personal unhappiness in psychoanalysis, pseudo-religious cults, and the worship of the group (nostrism as manifested in Communism and Fascism). This is the therapeutic interest, and many who have come to the Gurdjieffian meetings have had it. Let us disregard this common interest and ask why Eastern ideas have attracted in these years the interest of sophisticated thinkers like Aldous Huxley who has been remarkable for his typicality. The answer here is that Western culture is in crisis. Ours is a period of two world wars and one world depression. In this period it has been impossible for a thoughtful person not to have been deeply disappointed in his hopes for man. He has seen one effort after another produce an unintended result. World War 1 made the world unsafe for democracy. The prosperity of the 1920's led to economic drought. World War 2 turned into cold war. The socialist dream flickered into a totalitarian nightmare. Science becomes an agency of destruction. The doctrine of progress gives place to the feeling that Western man is at a standstill. In a crisis one hopes or one despairs. Gurdjieff, Orage and Ouspensky confirmed the despair but simultaneously raised the hope of Westerners whose mood was disappointment over the resources of their culture. It is said that Aldous Huxley, that modern of moderns, went to a few Ouspensky meetings in London. Eventually Huxley settled for Gerald Heard who draws heavily on Eastern philosophy. In Huxley we may find a symptom of a desperate tendency to turn in our crisis to ideas and teachings that stand outside the stream of Western culture. Orage, Ouspensky and Gurdjieff painted a crisis-picture—in one part as black as any school of Western pessimism, in another part so bright as early Christianity. In this balance-by-contrast of the dark and the light is a principal reason for their appeal to moderns.

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