

Orage in America

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Munson's vivid account of his friend A. R. Orage's catalytic influence in the U.S. particularly during his eight years in New York between 1924 to 1931. "Orage . . . profoundly influenced American life in three ways: he initiated a movement for supermen, he revived journalism, he initiated a new movement for economic freedom."

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Part One

When A. R. Orage died in London, in 1934, an American critic described him as having lived in the thick of the future. His influence in America, where he spent much time from 1924 to 1931, was subterranean and will only gradually emerge to the surface, but it is possible that the future will declare that Orage profoundly influenced American life in three ways: he initiated a movement for supermen, he revived journalism, he initiated a new movement for economic freedom. In doing the first he aroused prejudice and hostility which obscured at the time the work he performed as literary critic and teacher of journalism and the labors he carried on for economic change, but the delay wrought by distorting prejudice is now over. We can begin to appreciate Orage in his three main roles of psychologist, man of letters, and economic essayist.

The Enigma of Consciousness

Seventeen years before Orage landed in New York as an advance-courier of the startling Caucasian Greek occultist, G. I. Gurdjieff, he had published a small book under the imprint of the Theosophical Publishing Company which bore the title of *Consciousness: Animal, Human, and Superhuman*. The book is rare today and in later years its author spoke lightly of it. Nevertheless the work is an excellent introduction to Orage the teacher of the esoteric Gurdjieffian doctrine in New York, New Mexico and California between 1924 and 1931. It happens that the records of his teaching are chiefly private, scrawled in the notebooks and memories of several hundred pupils, and their trustworthiness varies with the mental training of the note-taker. *Consciousness: Animal, Human, and Superman* is Orage's own editing of lectures he gave before the Theosophical Lodges of Leeds and Manchester. We can gain a reliable inkling of what his American lectures were like by summarizing its contents.

Having warned his readers

“that they need expect no proof in the ordinary sense of anything I am about to say,” Orage defined his book as “an imaginative quest.”

He then described a number of intellectual devices, similar to the

“psychological exercises” he taught years later in New York, by which he had attempted to isolate “consciousness from its modes, and he arrived at this concept: “The final concept of consciousness is therefore that of a power of attention, a state of complete preparedness, a universal awareness, which only by the particularized activities of beings becomes defined and limited into specifically human, animal, vegetable modes. Before being thus limited it is universal, undifferentiated, simple and pure. After limitation it is still that.”

With this as a starting point Orage decided that animal consciousness “is one-plane consciousness in which awareness exists, but in which there is not a someone who is aware.” He then employed an image, brilliant in simplicity, of a twice folded sheet of paper to illustrate the differences of consciousness of animal, man and superman.

“If, as I think, animal consciousness is surface only, then human consciousness is simply that surface folded over in such a way that each part reflects the other; and superman consciousness is still a third folding that reflects the reflections. . . . But the differences lie in the addition, by means of the first folding, of a something which experiences; and by means of the second folding, of a something which contemplates both the experienced and the fictitious experiencer from another fold. It is, in fact, at the folds that the miracle takes place. . . . I regard Instinct, Reason, and Intuition as no more than Consciousness of one, two, and three planes.”

The key-thought in Orage's description of human consciousness is that “it is in a state of becoming, of which the strain is conscious. Consciousness of becoming is, in

fact, the distinguishing mark of human consciousness.” With that statement he stood at the crossroads between Romanticism typified in our time by D. H. Lawrence and Mysticism typified for the dawning twentieth century by Nietzsche. Lawrence wished to return to the sub-moral unity of animal consciousness, and Nietzsche to rise to the super-moral unity of superman consciousness. In between was the inherent duality of the modern mind upon which contemporary Humanism strove to ground itself. And into the controversy over Humanism the following passage from *Consciousness: Animal, Human and Superman* might have been fruitfully injected.

“In all human thought, of all types, both subjective and objective, the radical distinction of this and that, of a higher and a lower, an outer and an inner, is assumed as the very ground of itself. So native and ingrained is this dualizing habit that I have sometimes thought that Kant should have added it to his other categorical forms of the mind. . . . For example, all our ethical thought may be said to have validity only by reference to a higher and lower self. Dismiss, if you can, the distinction between a higher and a lower self, and the distinctions of ethics vanish at the same time.”

Superman Defined

Having thus stated the basis of Humanism in the very years More and Babbitt were privately preparing their system, Orage passed to examining the nature of the duality and pointed out acutely that higher and lower are distinctions made within our minds, that strictly speaking there is only one self whose creations are just the distinctions of higher and lower self. That is to say, both the higher self and the lower self are only products of the formal mind and of the human ego. Orage resolved the dualism of human consciousness along religious lines. Suggestion, he declared,

“seems to me luminous beyond all others in the region of human consciousness; so much so, that I would even define human consciousness as animal consciousness acting under a dual suggestion. If we take animal psychology as presenting no more than an organism acting psychically under the suggestion of its environment (a view which is supported by modern science), we see that the distinction between animal and man is that man acts under another suggestion as well. I do not deny, I affirm, that in many respects man is an animal acting under the suggestion of his environment; but all attempts to confine him to that have failed. The fact is, that he not only acts under outer suggestion, but inner suggestion as well. And it is the contest between these two voices of command that really constitutes his dualism. (Here I suggest that the higher and lower are really an inner and outer; the call of nature without, the suggestion of external things: and the call of the Transcendental Self within, the suggestion of the inner. . . .)”

Finally Orage speculated on the superman state, the dominant characteristic of which he believed to be, in relation to the human,

“a standing outside, or ecstasis. . . . Such a second awakening might fairly be described as ecstasis, since it would imply the power to stand outside the ordinary waking state, as that stands outside sleeping.”

But at the very end Orage warned that

“to become ecstatic is not the only end, but to become ecstatic in such a way that ecstasy each time becomes easier, more natural. And for this, a long, patient, and difficult purification, interior preparation, and discipline are necessary.”

Emissary of Gurdjieff

It was his perception of the need for a difficult discipline that had caused Orage in 1922 to give up the editorship of *The New Age* and to go to Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man at Fontainbleau. The regime there was extremely arduous—long hours of physical toil, hours of dancing intricate sacred gymnastics and temple rituals, farm and kitchen duties, bare comforts—but it stripped Orage of excess weight and renewed his youth so that although fifty-one when he came to America he seemed only forty. In America he was assigned by Gurdjieff, after the sensation created by the dances at the Neighborhood Playhouse and Carnegie Hall, to a very congenial role—teacher of a flock of people who had a “magnetic center,” *i.e.*, were responsive to ideas of a mystical order.

From his young manhood when an elementary school teacher in Leeds, Orage had gathered by virtue of his intellectual excitement and personal charm groups of persons around him who delighted to discuss ideas and art. There had been the Plato Group, which attracted professors at the university of Leeds; the famous Leeds Arts Club founded by him, A. J. Penty and Holbrook Jackson; the Fabian Arts Group in London; the Café Royal meetings during the *New Age* days. Now in New York groups, each numbering fifty or more, began meeting on several nights a week to hear Orage expound with polished lucidity, force and wit the psychological method of Gurdjieff. Gurdjieff, swarthy, powerfully built, piercing-eyed, mustachioed, dramatic in behavior, is every whit as enigmatic as was Cagliostro in the eighteenth century. Although affecting many as a charlatan, as did Cagliostro, Gurdjieff works too inhumanly hard at his music and his unpublished writings, casts too strong a light upon the age's psychological and philosophical problems, for that simple description to satisfy those capable of suspending judgement in the presence of the strange. He is a man for the “enigma-intoxicated” for whom the lonely Nietzsche pled. To Orage Gurdjieff synthesized Eastern esoteric learning with the Western experimental scientific technique, and Orage laid the greatest stress on Gurdjieff's method of self-observation.

This method is said to be as old as the teachings of the Buddha, and indeed in *Some Sayings of the Buddha According to the Pali Canon*, translated by F. L. Woodward (Oxford University Press, 1925), there occurs (pp. 72-83) a description of it under the title, *The Only Way*. The method has been the language of contemporary science by the psychologist C. Daly King, first in a popular form, *Beyond Behaviorism: The Future of*

Psychology (Grant Publications, 1927, out of print) and later in *The Psychology of Consciousness* (Harcourt, Brace, 1932).

A Key to Self-Knowledge

Cautioning the reader to be on guard against the deceptive simplicity of the following statement, let me define the first stage of the self-observation method as being simply awareness, non-critical, concurrent, *non-identifying*, of one's physical behavior. This impersonal detached awareness, it was asserted, was the first and only function which the embryonic "I" in a man could perform, and it was alleged to be a catalytic function.

Now it was this method, which it should be noted is a sharable technique, that somewhat reordered the pattern of Orage's previous mystical thought. It was the practical discipline he had been searching for, and it immensely increased his understanding of the degree to which man is determined, of the difficulty of emancipation from mechanicality, and of the possibility of free will and an expanded consciousness. But not only his understanding but his experience of occult teaching was deepened; ideas of which he was a master were incorporated in experience (knowing, feeling, doing).

As time went on more and more area was traversed at the Orage lectures which incidentally were not formal but followed a semi-socratic pattern. The method in its three phases of observation, participation and experiment: the wide-ranging topics covered in Gurdjieff's manuscript, *The Tales of Beelzebub*; cosmology; modern psychology with particular reference to Behaviorism and Psycho-Analysis; Whitehead and Eddington; the technique of pondering . . . to attend these dissertations was to have the feeling of visiting the cultural metropolis. There were classes, not led by Orage but under his supervision, in the ancient dances collected by Gurdjieff. There were recitals of Gurdjieff's musical compositions. There were classes from time to time in mental gymnastics—exercises in imagination, mental agility and celerity, simultaneity of attention—of which the reader may gain a taste in the anthology, *Psychological Exercises*, compiled by A. R. Orage (Farrar and Rinehart, 1930). There were private consultations on personal problems with Orage. In the summers pupils who could afford the trip went to Fontainebleau to work under Gurdjieff.

Orage's Sophisticated Followers

Stimulating as were these activities to the faithful hundred or so who attended year after year, they were derided by many outside. By some Orage was felt and hated as a menace to vested intellectual interests. In spite of his notable record in England as an intellectual leader, it was assumed that he was a charlatan or credulous. Weird unfounded tales were circulated. His work was associated in many minds with a cheap

Swami racket. It must be added that a number of his disciples made enemies for him by their own silliness or sentimentality or misunderstandings.

The glittering group he assembled about him in this movement for supermen, or for a new renaissance, is sufficient answer to the caricatures of these meetings. Among them were Herbert Croly, disciple of Comte, whose editorials in the *New Republic* began to show the stamp of Orage's religious ideas; John O'Hara Cosgrave, editor of *Everybody's* in the muckraking period, who was to write a book, *The Academy for Souls* (Farrar and Rinehart, 1931), expounding the Gurdjieffian metaphysics; the poet Samuel Hoffenstein, the painter Boardman Robinson; the print expert Carl Zigrosser; Muriel Draper, author of *Music at Midnight* and New York's most talented salon mistress; the actress Helen Westley; Mary Johnston, historical novelist; the publicist Amos Pinchot; Waldo Frank, who was to attack the ideas in *The Rediscovery of America*; Margaret Naumberg, progressive educator, whose book, *The Child and the World*, was to show the influence of the lectures; Mabel Dodge Luhan, who wrote breathlessly to D. H. Lawrence about the groups; Jane Heap, editor of *The Little Review*; Israel Solon, short story writer; Jean Toomer, author of *Cane* and *Essentials*; the actress Rita Romilly; Edna Kenton, whose *Book of Earths* (Morrow, 1928), was stimulated by the new esoteric learning. The names of these sophisticated moderns are sufficient to prove that Orage's teaching had no ordinary appeal but had rather to face the most skeptical hearers New York could muster.

In 1931, after a period of increasing tension, Orage broke with Gurdjieff, not over the ideas, but, it appears, over the question of his personal independence. He had married an American girl and had an infant. Gurdjieff wished Orage to come to Fontainebleau with his family, an exceedingly rigorous environment for wife and child, and continue work on the translation of his voluminous manuscripts. Orage, however, chose, on the ground of family responsibilities, to return to London.

Disciples Carry On Underground

On the surface the Gurdjieff-Orage groups disintegrated. It would seem that their promise as a revitalizing force in American culture had been extinguished. But it is better to say that this force is still living underground. For all who attended the groups, whether in the end favorably impressed or not, the experience was memorable, and a memorable experience colors the rest of one's life in countless ways. Inasmuch as a considerable proportion were intelligentsia, who act as idea-carriers, we may expect widening adumbrations of Orage's oral teaching to appear, as they have already in certain instances noted *en passant*, in our literature. Many are called, few chosen; a few of the old members continue to work at the technique Orage taught. The conception of the superman has for America been taken from poetry and given a psychological setting. Most definitely of all, we can say that there has been made accessible to

American scientific psychology—and Orage had numerous conversations with leaders like Dr. John B. Watson, Dr. William M. Marston, Dr. Louis Berman of glandular research fame—a new-old psychological technique, the technique of impersonal awareness, which claims to provide an escape from the dilemmas of introspection. Orage's words have gone into the inaccessible notebooks of his hearers, but King's *Psychology of Consciousness* insures that their meaning is available in print to the professional psychologist. It is not beyond reason to think that a hint dropped here and there by Orage about the technique of self-observation and non-identification may fructify in research along new lines in American psychological laboratories.

Orage in America: Part Two

While in America Orage wrote very little literary criticism. Seven or eight literary essays—in the *New Republic*, *Century*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Little Review*, *Commonweal*, *New Student*—was the sum contributed to our periodicals by the man of whom T. S. Eliot wrote:

“Many will remember him as the best leader-writer in London. . . . A smaller number will remember him as R. H. C. of the *New Age*, as the best literary critic of that time in London.”

In England Orage with his watchword of “brilliant commonsense,” his quest of the perfect style never yet achieved in English, his championing of the *Mahabharata*, had striven to be a critical power—and he had his admirers over here. Admirers like Gilbert Seldes, who reviewed *Readers and Writers* in *The Dial*, but no critical followers ploughing with his heifer. Occupied with his psychological groups, Orage made no effort whatever to practice literary criticism in New York or to found a school.

Occasionally he would converse on literature, and once after he had talked at some length about Meredith, an entranced light versifier exclaimed: “But why don't you write literary essays?” “I write writers,” was the reply. That had been the truth about Orage during the fifteen years he had edited the *New Age* and grown famous as the discoverer and coach of new talents. It was even more true in America in 1927, 1928 and 1929 when he did something not attempted in London and held private classes in journalism.

Just as people who scorned going to lectures had flocked to the psychological groups, so professional writers, who scoffed at courses in writing, enrolled for Orage's lectures on the art of literature, submitted manuscripts, and salted away the knowledge of the defects he exposed with what he called “appropriate injustice.” Some of the writers—like Lawrence S. Morris, chief reviewer for the *New Republic*; T. S. Matthews, future literary editor of *Time*; Isa Glenn, the novelist; Melville Cane, the poet; Oakley

Johnson, the Communist journalist; John Riordan, Amos Pinchot, Muriel Draper—came from the psychological groups; others—Currie Matthews Cabot, Savington Crampton, Hansell Baugh, Genevieve Taggard, Dorothea Brande—came from outside and tasted the course for various lengths of time.

Orage would begin such a course by saying that he would like to discourage his hearers from the attempt to write, and he would therefore proceed to paint the difficulties of writing—which he did in such a way that no pursuit seemed more fascinating. His method was the reverse of Quiller-Couch's lectures on writing which began with a picture of the heights of literature raising to Shakespeare, putting the class on its knees, and then ascended to the Bible, prostrating the class. Orage began with journalism and not until the final lectures did he disclose the Himalayas. He humanized the craft of letters before divinizing the art of literature, concentrating on first evoking a doing attitude, a practical outlook, on the part of his prentice writers.

Doctrine of "Speaking Paper"

Thus, at the outset he taught that literature is an affair of readers and writers analogous to the relationship of listener and speaker. The speaker, however, makes use of a number of languages—not words alone but the expression of the eye, the tone of voice, the gestures of the hand, the movements of the body, all combined, convey his meaning. The writer, a substitute speaker, is reduced to words alone. His aim is to produce by the limited mode of written words, intended effects upon an intended audience. "Style is superior effectiveness." He has therefore to compensate for his physical absence. By artifice he has to produce the illusion of an ideal speaker. Therefore he employs vocabulary, rhythm, style, all the literary devices, to approximate perfect speech addressed to the substitute hearer, the reader, who, it must be remembered, hates to read but loves to be compelled to read. Writing is a form of telekinesis, a species of white magic.

At all costs, Orage counselled, acquire pen-confidence, fluency, facility, assurance with pen in hand. For this ease, prolific production was necessary; "quantity before quality."

Orage, it will be seen, worked to free his writers from preciosity. He was a stimulus to greater production. He emphasized the eighteenth century literary virtues of industry, purposiveness, manliness in letters—at a time when young writers were inclined to take Pater for a model or to believe in idiosyncrasy and self-expression or to despise bread-and-butter journalism.

Orage did not develop his lectures in systematic sequence. He touched casually on the eye for a subject, the choice of form, the discovery of one's native style, vocabulary-building, tone and rhythm, the article, etc., but the manuscripts were

always suggesting lecturettes as he criticized them and *obiter dicta* on epistolary style, allusion, resensualizing words and many other aspects of writing were inspired in largesse. Being neither aesthetic nor commercial but intensely practical, the course was unique; it was an editor's course, not a professor's, but it avoided the formulae of the commercial writing schools.

Orage on the Sublime

Orage concluded his courses with two lectures, one on Prose, the other on Poetry, which gave his neophytes the keenest sensation of the intoxicating rarefied air on the summits of Olympus and Parnassus. He had an unfashionable belief in the possibility for the critic of an exact table of values. Coleridge had urged that

“reviewers support their decisions by reference to fixed canons of criticism, previously established and deduced from the nature of man,”

and there had been implicit in Orage's causeries in the *New Age*, to quote Coleridge again,

“a solid foundation, on which permanently to ground my opinions, in the component faculties of the human mind itself, and their comparative dignity and importance.”

But until his New York lectures on Poetry and Prose he had never made explicit his table of literary values.

The writer possesses some stenographic notes, unfortunately incomplete and occasionally inaccurate in transcription, on one of these lectures on Prose and a culling of sentences will give an idea of the skeleton—but not the golden flesh coming through the pearly cigarette smoke—of Orage's views on Prose and Scripture.

“I have come this evening,” he said after lighting the first of a long chain of cigarettes, “at a point when I am going to ask your consideration of the standards of value as applied to all prose, and I shall begin with a description. There was an extraordinary institution existing in London called Hyde Park oratory. On any night of the week it was possible to enter Hyde Park and see assembled there perhaps forty or fifty little platforms around each of which you would see a larger or smaller group of passersby who had been drawn by the oratory to these platforms and driven from one to another. All these speakers were engaged in attempting to attract and absorb interest with the idea of creating a definite effect. This picture I have begun to draw is really strictly analogous to the world of literature in general.

“There are a certain number of people who put themselves forward and they mount not a platform but a book, and they attract as much attention from chance passersby as Hyde Park speakers. Strictly speaking, every person who writes and publishes is simply the Hyde Parker who has set up a little platform for himself and is proposing to attract the whole attention.

“Now it is an extremely interesting thing, and everyone has observed it, that within the last twenty-five years the character of the oratory of Hyde Park has very distinctly deteriorated. Twenty-five years ago it was perfectly possible for an intelligent man to go to Hyde Park in the morning and find one of the platforms occupied by an extremely intelligent person who was appealing to a relatively intelligent crowd. In fact, occasionally the Bishop of London would come down or a member of the Cabinet. But gradually those platforms, formerly occupied by these better minds, began to be deserted, with the result that today no intelligent person going to Hyde Park would find it interesting for more than a second or two and then to scoff.

“Now I am going to suggest that exactly that decadence has taken place in the literary fair, not over a period of twenty-five years, but of twenty-five centuries. We ought to be prepared to entertain and realize certain standards of value in literature, even though we may discover and have to admit to ourselves that current literature, the literature of the last one hundred, five hundred, one thousand, two thousand years ago, has shown a progressive decline. Let us maintain standards even in the absence of any contemporary evidence. This is the difficulty of the critic: to be able, in spite of the fact that he is presented only with current literature, to maintain not his ideal but his recollection and knowledge of what real standards are and the difference between the exemplification once upon a time and their exemplification today.

“The Greeks figured to themselves two hills, one of which they called Parnassus and the other they called Olympus, and by these two hills they indicated the difference between speech and song. Parnassus, by association, belonged to Dionysus; Olympus, by association, belonged to Apollo. Apollo was the god of prose or speech; he was the golden tongued or panned. On each of these hills were some three zones, and while the Greeks had this clearly in mind, they had also merely a diagrammatic scale of values, and they placed all literary works in one of these zones, the lower, the middle or upper, and by the figure of a hill they indicated what was also a fact that the higher, the rarer and more difficult. They indicated that the masterpieces on the peaks, either poetry or prose, were literally few, with the multitude of production in the middle or lower slope. There has been since the Greeks a decline in literary production so that generally speaking we have been producing at lower levels, leaving the upper peaks practically unoccupied.

“The lower zone of Olympus is in our speech today called journalism. There is a certain literary value in journalism, and it can be good or bad, and there is nothing to be said against it so long as journalism does not pretend to be anything else. The middle slope is prose, and the highest slope is scripture. Each of these zones, prose and scripture, can be divided into two kinds, major and minor. The real evolution of a writer would be a passage up this hill beginning with journalism, passing through minor prose into major prose, into minor scripture and major scripture.

“Let us make a distinction between scripture and prose. Scripture was once written by beings like ourselves, but we do not dream even of ever correcting a scriptural prose form. That is the first shock we must encounter. The world of prose, as distinct from the world of scripture, is one with human affairs, inter-human affairs, relations of man to man. Whereas the world of scripture is concerned with the relations of man to the cosmos. If I call it ‘God,’ the word ‘God’ has such associations that it does not seem to have any literary value. But with considerations of the fate of man, the future of man, of

the immortality of man, of the soul, the dominant theme or concern is man's relation to the cosmos. Whereas the concern of those engaged in prose is human affairs, the relationship of man to man.

“Minor prose creates sentiment as between man and man, sentiment in regard to human affairs. Minor prosists aim to produce one or another feeling on the part of readers. Major prose, on the other hand, has as its aim, whether as an unconscious or conscious aim of its writers, the inducement in readers of a state of reflection or thought. It is major because it appeals to a more stable element in the reader.

“In scripture we have the same subdivision of major and minor, minor scripture being concerned with the evocation of cosmic emotion. You will see it is parallel with minor prose. The aim of minor scripture is to bring about a warm feeling, either for or against the cosmos at large. Whereas the aim of major scripture is to induce a state which we may fairly define as ecstasy of understanding. That is to say, a form of reflection raised to a state of illumination.

“You will see that the process of ascending Olympus has a strictly parallel counterpart in the development of the individual psychology. We may rise from the sentimental attitude toward our fellow men to a reflective attitude, and then from an emotional attitude towards the cosmos to an understanding attitude toward it, and you will see from that point of view how the existence of current literature that should answer our need at each of these points would form an enormous engine of individual education. We can fairly say that we are robbed of our social right by the fact that in the whole current literature we find an enormous amount of health in the region of minor prose, a lot less in the region of major prose, practically nothing in the field of minor scripture, and absolutely nothing in the field of major scripture.”

Orage Classifies Major Writers

After this introduction, much abbreviated from the verbatim record, Orage then classified some fifty or sixty writers with commentary on each. Examples alone must suffice here. Among minor prosists he placed Sir Thomas Malory, Sir Thomas Browne, Defoe, Addison, Sterne, Lamb, Goldsmith, Scott, Macaulay, Holmes and Pater. His role of major prosists included Sir Thomas More, Bacon, Burke, Locke, Swift, Thackeray, Cobbett, Coleridge, Landor, Emerson and Arnold. For minor scripture or prophecy he chose Wiclif, Bunyan, Milton, Jeremy Taylor, Blake, Carlyle and Newman. For major scripture the list was naturally much smaller: the Sermon on the Mount, Golden Verses of Pythagoras, Egyptian Book of the Dead, Sayings of Lau-Tse, and a few other texts were all.

Dreadfully schematic as this may look to some when reduced to a bare outline, it was anything but doctrinaire and pedantic to the professional writers who listened rapt for two hours to the “desperado of genius,” as Shaw dubbed Orage, applying with infinite tact and subtle taste his touchstone to the long procession of English writers. Heady as such lectures were, Orage's influence on American writing will be mainly, I

believe, journalistic. He took writers in their formative stage, and under his tutelage they improved with remarkable speed, and showed their gratitude by dedicating their new books to him, as T. S. Matthews, Isa Glenn, Bayard Schindel, and John Riordan did within a twelve-month or so of completing the course. In England he had been the most “dedicated to” man of his generation. The same process was beginning here. He has left behind him in America a certain number of writers who are more competent than they otherwise would have been, but none of them has obtained the stature of Edwin Muir in criticism, Katharine Mansfield in fiction, or Ruth Pitter in poetry, English writers who are profoundly indebted to Orage, the tutor-editor. Perhaps no American coached by him will reach such an unfoldment of powers, but he has taught them to work like slaves at their craft and to aspire to excellence, and time will see.

Orage and Social Credit

Social Credit is the third movement in America inspired by O. R. Orage. Major Clifford Hugh Douglas, a Scottish engineer-economist, had in 1918 announced a theorem of an automatic deficiency of purchasing power inevitable under orthodox accounting practice and had advocated socializing credit and a rectification of the price system to compensate for this chronic shortage of money. He made no headway until after a year of talks with Orage, then a National Guildsman, he convinced Orage of the correctness of his theorem. Whereupon the *New Age* was put at the service of Douglas’s ideas, and a new movement was born, destined within twenty years to become very strong in parts of the British Empire. Boom-time America paid no attention, and not until the end of his American stay did Orage, engaged on the “greater mysteries” of occult psychology, speak much about the “lesser mysteries” of credit-reform.

In the early spring of 1931 Orage took a room at the New York School of the Theatre and delivered to about fifty people four lectures on such topics as real credit, financial credit and socialized credit. But among the fifty were several who were to become leaders of the infant American Social Credit movement.

However, Orage’s choice of a leader for the nucleus turned out amusingly. He had given Schuyler Jackson, poet and editorial writer at different spells for *Time* and *Fortune*, a store of propaganda material and instructions to continue lectures on Social Credit after his own departure for England. Jackson started a series with gusto and kept burning up toward the climax of the “Douglas revelation.” But as he neared this climax, doubts assailed Jackson and he began to improvise economic ideas of his own. Not quite convinced of his ideas and doubtful of Douglas’s, Jackson finally was unable to make any cumulative statement at all, and the bomb he had been preparing for weeks to throw proved a dud. The new movement was stalled.

Father of Social Credit Journalism

The launching in 1932 of Orage's periodical, *The New English Weekly*, greatly increased the circulation of Social Credit ideas in America, and under this impetus propaganda societies began to form and eventually *New Democracy*, a Social Credit review, was issued. By 1934 the movement could claim a United States Senator, a former Governor, a Congressman, and a gubernatorial candidate among its sympathizers, and the following year a Social Credit bill was introduced into Congress.

Compared to the other phases of Orage's work in America, the American movement for Social Credit is exoteric, and inasmuch as its propaganda is actively disseminated, there is no necessity here to outline Orage's economic ideas and social philosophy. Except to say that Orage was an eleuthero-maniac and accepted Douglassism because he believed it would establish the material foundation of the pursuit of liberty in art and psychology.

Orage always advised his friends "to leave a mark on the situation." "See to it," he would say, "that people are not indifferent to you but react for or against you." That he left a deep mark on the English intellectual situation was evident when the memorial issue of the *New English Weekly*, appearing a week after his death on November 5, 1934, carried tributes from fifty or sixty writers, led off by A. E. and G. K. Chesterton. But he also left a distinct mark on American life, the nature of which this essay has indicated, but the depth of which will be determined only as time proceeds. Some forty American writers—among them John Gould Fletcher, Lincoln Kirstein and Alice Corbin Henderson, to select widely different types—joined in a memorial symposium of homages published by *New Democracy*. "As to what was his final meaning or influence," says Orage's biographer, Philip Mairet,

"the answer would be a paradox. For it is a strange fact that the causes Orage forwarded, though aggressive as ideas, accounted revolutionary and most hard to force on an unwilling world, were not in effect disturbing, but enlightening."

