



A. R. Orage: An Introduction & Bibliography

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Equipped with the barest formal education, a formidable natural intelligence and an unquenchable desire for truth, Alfred Richard Orage emerged from British 19th Century working class poverty to survey the significant literary, psychological, political and spiritual trends of the early 20th century. His literary skills and wide range of interests led him to edit the influential the *New Age* journal from 1907 until 1922. Then he abandoned London to live at Fontainebleau and attend Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man.

Orage had met P. D. Ouspensky in London in 1914 when the latter was on his way back to Russia, having travelled through Asia in search of the miraculous. When Ouspensky moved to London in the autumn of 1921, Orage attended his lectures about 'fragments of an unknown teaching' and helped him gather an audience. In February 1922, Orage met G. I. Gurdjieff who, with a band of followers, had fled the Russian Revolution in 1917 and was considering London as a place to immigrate to.

Gurdjieff established his Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man near Paris France, at Fontainebleau on October 1, 1922. That same month, Orage sold the *New Age* and surrendered the vibrant intellectual life of London to study with Gurdjieff and dig ditches at the Prieuré, Gurdjieff's Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man at Fontainebleau. Orage invited his friend Dennis Saurat to visit the Prieuré in February, 1923. Saurat's "A Visit to Gourdyev" conveys a vivid sense of the turmoil and enormous difficulties everyone experienced as Gurdjieff sought to establish the Institute. C. S. Nott's *Teachings of Gurdjieff: The Journal of a Pupil*, provides a vivid record of Fontainebleau and reports that Orage described this period, saying:

When I was in the depths of despair, feeling that I could go on no longer, I vowed to make extra effort, and just then something changed in me. Soon, I began to enjoy the hard labor, and a week later, Gurdjieff came to me and said, "Now, Orage, I think you dig enough. Let us go to the cafe and drink coffee." From that moment things began to change.

In January 1924, Orage went to New York to pave the way for Gurdjieff's first visit to America. In October, after Gurdjieff had returned to France, he appointed Orage to supervise Institute activities in America. In July 1924 Orage was shocked to hear that Gurdjieff was critically injured in an automobile accident and might not survive. During Gurdjieff's recovery and because of his decision to focus on writing *Beelzebub's Tales* and *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, Orage found himself the de facto leader of several Gurdjieff groups across America. Gorham Munson's essays on Orage describe this period in vivid detail.

Having authenticated a great deal from Gurdjieff's ideas Orage—for personal reasons—parted with Gurdjieff the man. He married for the second time in his mid 50s and with Jessie Dwight, had two children. In May 1930 he returned to England to renew his independent literary life. He became deeply reinvolved with political issues and was instrumental in rekindling interest in the socialist movement called Social Credit which became a fringe force in politics for many decades, particularly in central Canada. Orage founded a new journal the *New English Weekly* in April 1932. He was planning to introduce Gurdjieff's ideas in that paper and elsewhere, when he died on the night of November 5, 1934. On hearing of Orage's death, Gurdjieff issued the following invitation:

November 6, 1934

I have just now learned of the death of Mr. Orage, who was for many years your guide and teacher and my inner world essence friend.

I invite you to attend a meeting, to pay homage to him and to speak in his memory, on Friday evening, November 9th, at 9 o'clock, in Miss Bentley's studio in Carnegie Hall, at which time, likewise, will be played some of his favorite music and some of those pieces dedicated to him which were composed by me while he was at the Prieuré.

G. Gurdjieff

A. R. Orage: a brief bibliography

Orage wrote hundreds of essays on diverse topics related to philosophy, religion, literature, psychology, history, economics and politics. In addition to playing a major role in rendering Gurdjieff's *Beelzebub's Tales* and *Meetings with Remarkable Men* into vivid English, Orage edited, influenced, or is discussed – in a large body of literature. This list focuses on material by and about Orage in relation to Gurdjieff. With the exception of C. Daly King's *Oragean Version*, these sources are usually in print or readily available from book finders. For scholars interested in the larger body of Orage's writings, Professor Wallace Martin has compiled a comprehensive bibliography.

Material by Orage

Readers and Writers (1917-1921). New York: Knopf, 1922, 181p. index. Orage was editor of thirty volumes of the enormously influential *New Age* between 1907 until 1922. Under the title of "Readers and Writers", he contributed a wealth of essays, articles and editorial comments; this anthology includes 78.

The Active Mind: adventures in awareness. London: Janus Press, 1930. Also published as *Psychological Exercises*. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1930; New York: Hermitage House, 1954, 122p. Revised and subsequently published as *Psychological Exercises and Essays*. London: Janus Press, 1965, 121p., and as *The Active Mind: psychological exercises and essays*. New York: Weiser, 1965, 121p. The essays were first published as "Fifteen Exercises in Practical Psychology" in *Psychology Magazine* (New York) between April 1925 and January 1926. About one hundred thirty psychological exercises to focus mental, vocal and visual acuity. These are complimented by fifteen essays on such topics as "The control of temper," "How to read men," "On dying daily," "[Economising](#) our energy," and "[Are we awake?](#)"

Essays and Aphorisms. With a biographical note by C. S. Nott and containing the essays "[On Love](#)," "[On Religion](#)," "What is the Soul?" and "Talks with Katherine Mansfield at

Fontainebleau", London: Janus Press, 1954, 55p. limited edition of 1000 copies. Subsequently published under the title *On Love: with some aphorisms and other essays*. London: Janus Press, 1957, 72p.; New York: Weiser, 1966, 72p. The four essays in this collection reflect the depth of Gurdjieff's influence on Orage. C. S. Nott edited the aphorisms from his personal notes on Orage's talks to Gurdjieff groups between 1924 and 1930.

On Love & Psychological Exercises. York Beach: Samuel Weiser, 1998. Both the previous titles, separately paged in one paperback volume.

Orage's Commentary on 'Beelzebub.' First published in *Teachings of Gurdjieff: the journal of a pupil; an account of some years with G. I. Gurdjieff and A. R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon*. By C. S. Nott. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, 254p.; New York: Weiser, 1962, 230p., index. The Weiser edition was issued with the variant subtitle; *A Pupil's Journal*. after 1978. Also issued in a variant edition as *A.R. Orage's Commentaries on G. I. Gurdjieff's "ALL and EVERYTHING: Beelzebub's Tales to His Grandson."* Edited by C. S. Nott with an introduction by A. L. Staveley. Aurora: Two Rivers Press, 1985, 136p. Orage was largely responsible—in close collaboration with Gurdjieff—for rendering *Beelzebub's Tales* into articulate English. Nott's personal notes compiled over several years, provide a detailed record of Orage's illuminating commentaries.

Orage as Critic: edited by Wallace Martin. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974, 218p., index.

Forty-four of Orage's critical essays on culture, literature and the English language—written between 1912 and 1932—with a lengthy introduction by Professor Martin.

Material about Orage

Gurdjieff, George I. *Life is Real Only Then, When "I Am."* *The third series of All and Everything*. Foreword by Jeanne de Salzmann. Privately printed, New York: Triangle Editions, 1975, 170p.; second enlarged edition privately printed, New York: Triangle Editions, 1978, 177p; New York: Dutton, 1982, 177p.; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982, 177p.

Orage is the only prominent and historically verifiable figure mentioned more than briefly in Gurdjieff's writing. Gurdjieff points out that Orage's appointment as leader of his study groups in the United States between 1924 and 1930 was necessitated by the devastating automobile accident he suffered and provides a vivid account of how he challenged Orage's performance, motives and preoccupation with self-observation. Gurdjieff examines the question of how we deal with death and describes the false sympathy he was repeatedly subjected to on the occasion of "the death of my close friend, Mr. Orage." He emphasises the importance for him of November 6, 1934; the date of Orage's death and the day he began the final period of writing the Third Series.

King, C. Daly *The Oragean Version*. Privately printed in a limited edition of 100 copies. New York: 1951, 289 p., index.

Convinced that Orage's presentation was an undistorted version of an ancient teaching that would be irretrievably lost after his death, King presents a rigorous and detailed formulation of material he gathered over several years of close study with Orage. Pages 257 to 269 contain 118 aphorisms by Orage.

Mairet, Philip A. R. *Orage: a Memoir*. London: J. M. Dent, 1936, 132 p.; revised with a new introduction by Philip Mairet, New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1966, 140p., index.

Mairet furnishes an admiring informed account of his friend's literary and social influence. He recounts a discussion between Gurdjieff and Orage about having an aim. When asked about his "whim" or true desire, Gurdjieff responded that "it was to live and teach so that there should be a new conception of God in the world, a change in the very meaning of the word."

Manchester, Sherman. *Sherm's Orage Notes: Orage Lectures*. [1923-1929] 163p. Unpublished typescript.

Sherman Manchester was—along with C. Daly King, , Gorham Munson, Lawrence (Larry) Morris and Wlm Nyland—a key member of Orage's New York circle and Gurdjieff group during the 1920s while Orage was editing the English edition of Gurdjieff's typescript of *Beelzebub's Tales*. Manchester's notes cover thirty-nine weekly meetings in New York City, interspersed with breaks, from January 1923 to January 1929. The notes—mostly from 1927-1928—are not in chronological order but consistently focus on Orage's interpretation of *Beelzebub's Tales*.

Morris, Lawrence S. *Note Books of L. S. M.: Orage Lectures.* [1927-1928] 133p., illustrations. Unpublished typescript.

Lawrence (Larry) Morris was—along with C. Daly King, Sherman Manchester, Gorham Munson and Wlm Nyland—a key member of Orage’s New York circle and Gurdjieff group during the late 1920s while Orage was editing the English edition of Gurdjieff’s typescript of *Beelzebub’s Tales*. Morris’ notes cover thirty-two weekly meetings in New York City, interspersed with breaks, from January 17th to December 27, 1927 and from March 19 to May 28, 1928. Most of Orage’s discussion focuses on *Beelzebub’s Tales*.

Munson, Gorham *The Awakening Twenties: a memoir-history of a literary period.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985, 317p., index.

A professional writer, Munson lived in New York's Greenwich Village when it was first bohemian. This account of several major literary figures of the period includes an enthusiastic and vivid chapter on "Orage in America" as well as an account of Munson's month at Fontainebleau with Gurdjieff.

[Orage in America](#). *Dynamic America* (New York), Part I, X May 1940, pp. 17-20; Part II, X (6), June 1940, pp. 12-16.

An informed account of A. R. Orage’s catalytic influence in the U.S. particularly during his years as Gurdjieff’s representative in New York City 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.”

Nott, C. S.

Teachings of Gurdjieff:the journal of a pupil; an account of some years with G. I. Gurdjieff and A. R. Orage in New York and at Fontainebleau-Avon. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, 254p.; New York: Weiser, 1962, 230p., index. After 1978 the Weiser edition was issued with the variant subtitle; **A Pupil’s Journal.**

Journey through this World: the second journal of a pupil including an account of meetings with G. I. Gurdjieff, A. R. Orage and P. D. Ouspensky. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969, 254p.; New York: Weiser, 1969, 253p., index. The Weiser edition was issued with the variant title, *Further Teachings of Gurdjieff: journey through this world.*

In addition to their value as the original source of Orage's Commentary on *Beelzebub* (see above), these companion volumes provide an extended and now classic account of life as a student of Gurdjieff with Orage in France and subsequently in New York. Nott describes numerous talks with both these men as well as the other people in their circles and vividly documents the conditions of these intense decades.

Taylor, Paul Beekman *Brother in Elysium: Orage in Gurdjieff's Service*. York Beach: Weiser, 2001, 269p., index, bib. ISBN 1-57863-128-9 (pb.)

Drawing on a wealth of unpublished Orage family archives, Taylor assembles the most comprehensive Orage biography to date. He vividly reconstructs the 1922-1933 period to demonstrate that A. R. Orage's involvement with Gurdjieff was the natural evolution of his own search and not an aberration as presumed by Orage's literary biographers. Taylor details Orage's work on *Beelzebub's Tales* to demonstrate that he fulfilled his essence commitment to Gurdjieff to complete the English translation. Taylor concludes by examining Orage's contribution to literature, self study, and economics then speculates about sources for the ideas of Gurdjieff and Orage.

Welch, Louise *Orage with Gurdjieff in America*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982, 142p.

Louise Welch studied with Orage during his eight years in New York. She became a group leader in the Gurdjieff Foundation of New York. Welch provides a vividly personal account of Orage's background his continuing influence as a writer and editor as well as his pivotal role as Gurdjieff's representative in America.

