

Discussion on "Good and Evil" with A. R. Orage

November 5th [1927]

[Eleven numbers were taken.]

Reese: As I remember, there was originally no such conception of good and evil as we have now; it grew out of the idea of positive and negative. It's a degeneration of these ideas, in which such a state as hunger, for instance, can be thought evil.

Orage: You remember that these concepts of good and evil never came into man's experience until objective reason had degenerated. There was discrimination of values before then but it was disinterested—qualitative differences arising from differences of nature. After the decline of objective reason, this discrimination became associated with emotional center and its interests and there came good and evil in place of positive and negative.

Lucille: There was no neutralising element present, was there?

Orage: You remember that a certain being was supposed to have introduced good and evil into the world. His mistake was pointed out, that he had insufficiently stressed the neutralising element. The question arises whether in his mind he thought of good and evil as one neutralising force—a force beyond good and evil, as it were. But the fact is that his hearers had no concept of neutralising force in good and evil. We shall perhaps see what the neutralising force is in these ideas—something which is neither good nor evil but partaking of both.

Mary Johnston: If good is fulfilling potentiality of essence, then evil is falling short of this. I wasn't here when that chapter was read, though.

Orage: That's all right—this is a definition of the purposes of values. The objective merit of a being is his realisation of the values which he was created to fulfill. Added to that is the criterion of direction—a being's state is good if it stays statically good, but a being with potentialities must be constantly in a state of becoming to be good. Progressive values arise out of this process of actualising possibilities. So we have both static and dynamic concepts of good.

A perfectly good being would be one whose cross section—the cross section of his time tube—would always be in the direction of fulfilling its objective. But we may find that we need another word to describe a being's responsibility to the nature of its being—the design of its creator. In this discussion try to exercise simultaneity of understanding, holding all statements in mind and contemplating them in one pattern.

Edna: Evil is definitely the problem God faced when he worked out the laws of 3 and 7, life and death. Good is maintaining the 3-7-9 functions, reciprocal feeding.

Orage: But where does good and evil come in? I invite comment on this as a contribution.

Edna: You ask where good and evil come in, but I spoke of making effort at a time of crisis, through pondering, which is certainly good.

Orage: We are close to the ascetic school when we equate good with effort.

Edna: But pondering is an equalising force.

Orage: Pondering is a process. If there is a misdirected effort then effort alone is not necessarily good, there can be good and evil effort relative to the result. There was an idea in the original statement you made—about the government of the universe by the laws of 3, 7 and 9. Nine introduces effort against time. This presupposes that the creator thought the universe worth the effort of maintaining. What we have to consider concerning objective good and evil is whether life in this universe is worth maintaining at the cost of the effort of the semitones 3, 7 and 9.

Sherman: Are you speaking just of this planet, or all the universe?

Orage: All the universe. Life doesn't go absolutely smoothly elsewhere—the only difference is that elsewhere provision is made for securing the effort necessary to the universe at these semitones—through schools, teachers and so on. We reach majority without becoming aware of the nature of our life as adults, and if we have the desire for self-improvement (the first semitone) or to help God (second semitone) we find no one and no school deputed to help us. On other planets youths find such schools. In other respects, we are the same as other beings.

Mr. Brown: The book says no grandmother ever told us.

Orage: We haven't even tradition, you see. It is hopeful to know that we are really normal, but depressing to know that our environment provides no help for development.

Hugh: Why is our environment so unattractive to teachers?

Orage: It isn't. But imagine going to this planet to preach peace, for instance. The people don't even think that they don't want it—they say they want it and then they immediately go to war. Imagine how much more impossible it would be to teach objective duty to the Creator.

[At this point Edna brought up her question about something Beelzebub had said to Hassein. Orage said it was irrelevant—said her type of "mind" was the obstacle to teaching—then modified this a little to keep from hurting her feelings.]

Orage: I pass up Edna's somewhat irrelevant question to answer Hugh and Edna doesn't listen. You understand now, Mr. Ferriss, some of the difficulties of teachers. I thought we were on the high road to a discussion of good and evil— and here we are.

Edna: But it is an absolutely good question—absolutely. [Everyone laughed]

Orage: I had thought that in my 1000th incarnation to be a religious teacher, but I am already getting cold feet. Everyone hears questions and answers from the center of gravity in which he is at the moment. His interpretation depends on this only. Essence has the form of being of the center of gravity—it is animal, child or barbarian—and every second the psyche is changing form. To such beings, doctrines are addressed! You can imagine how such a being transforms a doctrine having heard it in three centers. The difficulties of a world teacher are so tremendous that no wonder it took the Son of God—and he failed—to explain to men a few simple ethical doctrines.

Hugh: It has been said that we should become as little children—is this childlike?

Orage: I explain that something as meaning that if any motive exists for pursuing self-knowledge, then the objective is distorted. It must be pursued as children pursue an interest—without comment

or motive. We are not to become like children, but as children. To be like them wouldn't be the kingdom of heaven, but the kingdom of the nursery.

Sherman: You mean we should become, as children should be, not as they are?

Orage: No—as they are. You remember—art is like nature, but it is not nature. Well—you can puzzle it out for yourself.

Lewis: Do many potential teachers abandon the idea?

Orage: Hundreds.

Sherman: May I ask if good and evil concepts came into being after the removal of Kundabuffer?

Orage: The concept was a consequence of the organ. We haven't as yet reached a definition of good. Were you thinking of what I said about a being's responsibility to his nature?

Sherman: I was thinking of that being who was banished to an evil island for his mistake.

Orage: I would suggest that the denial of the possibility of being of value is the only objective evil. When a machine is scrapped and is totally useless it is bad. Its suffering is like that of the beings on the planet where nothing they do has any value to the universe—literally nothing.

Hugh: Could you say that the absence of neutralising force between good and evil, in the sense of the lack of possibility of making a choice, would be evil?

Orage: That's good formulation.

John: Heropass is the source of all evil in that it is the great depriver of possibility.

Orage: In that sense it is.

[Mary Johnston suggested that in the universe as a whole the good might outweigh evil, since good is native to the sun absolute.]

Orage: Yes, but there are planets for beings that have absolutely no use in the universe, and yet preserve their being. The idea put forth is too optimistic from our point of view. Some beings refusing to be of value, maintain their being but cease to exist in the mind of God—cease to have any value.

Nat: In a way they are better off than we are; we don't know why we exist.

Orage: We don't know yet. But we have a wish to be needed—to contribute values and to wish this but be incapable of it is the state of beings on those planets we have mentioned. We are of unconscious value, at least, as manure for the moon.

Hugh: Even the people then who just go out to raise hell contribute at least negative values—they aren't evil, but merely bad.

Orage: Exactly.

Carl: By the corollary to the scrapped machine being absolutely evil, absolute good must be

fulfilling function.

Orage: Yes, but we must decide what function to fulfill. If I could draw a diagram of this concept it would be:

••••

Positive neutralising force is absolute good. Negative neutralising force is absolute evil.
Unconscious neutralization has value to the moon.

Melville: Is minus another word for negative here?

Orage: Yes, a good word. Plus and minus.

John: There is no connection—no triad—between plus and minus neutralising forces.

Orage: Yes, there is present in each being a neutralising of positive and negative forces constantly manifesting in being. But the state of being depends on serviceability to God, and lacking this serviceability beings do not cease to exist but cease to be.

Carl: A description of this state would be life in death.

Orage: Yes, a living death.

Carl: How do minus beings escape Heropass?

Orage: They are bound to last as long as God, if God has suspended Heropass in all his sphere.

[Mary Johnston suggested that the threat of evil, threatening God's existence provides the drama of life.]

Hugh: How does all this effect us practically?

Orage: Only as we realise this drama of the possibility of non-being, and the struggle to develop our being. Plus neutralising force has the function of coordinating positive and negative forces in any being so that that being fulfills its objective. Animals, having no conscience, run no risk as man does, whose consciousness makes it possible for him to actualize the development of conscious plus neutralising, or to fall into minus neutralising. In the book's objective critique of man, he is literally inferior to animals in that he can make a positive contribution to absolute evil by not consciously contributing plus neutralisations. Ashiata started with the assumption of subconscious dormant values—objective conscience. The discipline for waking this conscience starts with self-observation.

Lewis: Then objective conscience isn't a pulling power toward consciousness?

Orage: Objective conscience is a sense of being-duty and the discharge of this duty, which requires a higher state of consciousness than one has. So consciousness demanding plus neutralisations is required by objective conscience and is its motive in discharging its obligation.

Lewis: Then conscience isn't a neutralising force.

Orage: No, it can be said to be an urge toward the development of neutralising force.

Lewis: But if we finally lose all our negative motives for self-observation, such as wish for power, etc., we are left in a sort of barren state.

Orage: But if you finally uncover an urge toward self-observation—the uncovering of objective conscience—it doesn't matter with what motive you started. Self-observation, as a matter of fact, could be taught and practiced merely as a technique in ordinary psychology. Watson might very likely take it up. But when we strike objective conscience we shall realise the falsity of all motives.

Nat: The labor of self-observation would be the same after uncovering objective conscience, wouldn't it?

Orage: Yes, but it then becomes a sacred duty—the highest value in your experience. Values are transvalued.

Hugh: Isn't there a connection between the urge and magnetic center so that after uncovering magnetic center and objective conscience, trick motives are no longer necessary?

Orage: Yes, that can be added.

Hugh: But don't some people uncover this and then lose their interest?

Orage: In Gurdjieff's terminology, faith equals magnetic center. Persons with developed magnetic center "smell" the hidden treasure to be found through further self-observation.

Sherman: You have spoken of this faith stage as a "desert," but it doesn't seem so to me, thank God.

Orage: Roses, roses all the way! So much the luckier. Nat: Knowing what good is, we still don't know our function.

Orage: Yes. We can ask—what is the nature of our organism? Function is defined by structure and this takes us to the question of norms. It presupposes self-study and this presupposes a state of disinterestedness. Only in this state is self-study possible and only when this exists can the objective value of the structure of the organism be discovered. If we self-observe long enough a state of disinterestedness—of non-identification—does occur. And by reason of the presence of our consciousness it is implicit that we are intended to development of the understanding of our function.

Milliken: We aren't intended to be driven, like motor cars?

Orage: Unconscious, we are driven.

Hugh: Do you assert that self-observation will lead to non-identification? Orage: Yes.

Mary Johnston: Is non-identification synonymous with impersonal self-observation?

Orage: Yes. Your word is better. Without this non-identification self-observation takes a long time to produce the state; the conscious effort to introduce the state of impersonal self-observation shortens the process.

Hugh: I don't question this, but who introduces non-identification?

Orage: Suggestion. I suggest it—by saying how long plain self-observation takes to produce the state, and so on. Disinterestedness is not lack of interest, but absence of bias. Bias presumes a moving object. It is the neutralising force.

Sally R.: Can you say self-observation is blowing air in the pig to make it bigger, but it is still a pig?

Orage: Yes, the features of the psyche become clearer.

Edna: Real disinterestedness is passionate interest in any observed facts, whatever they prove.

Orage: Exactly.

Lewis: There is no evil, but only the deprivation of good.

Orage: In view of what we have said, we must change that to "deprivation of the possibility of good."

Blanche: Until we live by essence, we cannot be concerned with good and evil. Now we are concerned with right and wrong.

Orage: Yes, in the discovery of essence, the right thing is that which leads to uncovering essence, and the wrong thing is the opposite—that which further conceals essence. We can be statically good, but we must also be dynamically good in developing potentialities. God must maintain the universe this way—not just statically. Sun Absolute is not the abode of absolute good except as it contains the state of dynamic good.

Milliken: Then the inhabitants of that planet you mentioned are a standing condemnation of the creator.

Orage: And so God has no use for them.

Reese: Isn't static good negative and dynamic good positive?

Orage: When static good is wholly static it ceases to be that and becomes minus neutralising. The sin against the Holy Ghost is the suppression of dynamic good.

Reese: Or of static good?

Orage: Thereby hangs a tale I won't tell you now.

Someone: I can't conceive of a being without potentiality, as a representative of evil.

Orage: Well, let us say that we are not apt to meet such a being for a long time. The state of such a being is not being nor non-being, but minus being.

Gertrude: How can a minus-being be actualised, or continue to be actualised?

Orage: It remains statically actualised. It is no longer in the stream of becoming; it is fossilized in its actualised form.

Gert: It can become separated from the law of seven?

Orage: Yes, on that particular planet. It is the scrap-heap of the universe. Whether willfully or ignorantly, these beings have failed to actualize their potentialities; their fate is the same. And they may be a standing condemnation of their creator. Eddington says some atoms exist so—without time's arrow. They are something like hearts that go on beating outside the organism to which they belong.

Milliken: What keeps them beating? Orage: Ask Eddington.

November 12th [1927]

Orage: We will continue with Good and Evil in order to try to reach firmer conclusions than we arrived at last week. Our present views are wholly subjective; tell me your family income for two generations, the schools you have gone to and so on and I will tell you your real ideas on good and evil. Does there exist in the objective world any element corresponding to our subjective good or evil? It's too bad that the stimulation of these evenings so often fades leaving nothing. First let's have questions.

Alan Brown: I remember once we were given three stages of morals, and eventually right and wrong. These weren't mentioned last week except when it was said that until we have objective conscience we have no sense of good and evil, but only of right and wrong, as though these latter were lower states. It seemed to me that much of our discussion was of right and wrong.

Orage: Right and wrong are subject to pragmatic proof.

Brown: But in seeking for an absolute, can't we say that pragmatic judgment may come from objective understanding?

Orage: Oh no. Any result in a world that is perpetually becoming may depend on where you draw your line and say that at that point something is right or wrong; but later on this judgment may be reversed. The only center in which absolute judgments are possible is the one where we feel our absolute identity—in the emotional center. Instinctive judgments are based on like and dislike; the intellect says right or wrong. They are both based on the absolute center—the emotional. This says if the thing is good or evil.

Hugh: Are our emotional centers capable of such absolute judgments?

Orage: Capable of them potentially.

Man: This gives the emotional center some element of timelessness.

Milliken: What about the activity of discrimination—isn't this intellectual?

Orage: Discrimination of likeness and unlikeness is intellectual, and without moral value. The development of what we call reason has no connection with what the book calls reason. Any elongation of a single line of the triangle does not increase its triangularity.

Hugh: Is essence in that absolute center?

Orage: Essence is a particle of the center of conscience of the Universal Being. It is the voice of God in the individual—that is, objective conscience.

Sherman: How can we know that the values of this Being are absolute?

Orage: You use absolute too metaphysically. Absolute means taking all things as one. All suns collectively are said to be Sun Absolute; all planets are taken as one absolute planet.

Solon: If we assume then that the emotional opinion is non-educatable—a native response—it makes an absolute judgment?

Orage: Yes.

Man: Isn't emotional education possible?

Orage: Oh yes, but its judgment wouldn't come from discussion; it would not be derivative, though it would naturally be similar to other judgments.

Man: Do we ever have such experiences?

Orage: If emotional center were not distorted by the education of the other two centers, we would have such experiences. All essential impulses arise in the emotional center. Our natural likes and dislikes are not related to essence; but at the moment of experiencing them we can be aware of them as good or evil.

Daly: Why isn't this just a conflict of emotions?

Orage: There is no element of discrimination in pure emotion. We simply find an internal monitor that condemns what we like.

Daly: It seems to me like external training.

Orage: That is so. In the absence of objective conscience in essence, judgments of emotional center are influenced by sociological training.

Sherman: My judgments seem to be based on a feeling of safety or peril.

Orage: Purely instinctive, Sherman.

Sherman: Isn't a sense of death—such as Gurdjieff advises us to cultivate—a sense of peril?

Orage: It was never meant as a bogey; it was meant to evoke objective conscience by a sense of duty undone.

Sherman: How does this differ from a mechanical urge?

Orage: It doesn't except in so far as it is conscious. Animals are said to be without sin because they have no choice in the matter; men who are conscious of the possibility of choice are under the same obligation to fulfill their objective duty. They have both mechanical and conscious obligation—parallel. The question of evil arises only when this possibility of split occurs. And it is perfectly easy to discriminate between sociological guilt and being shame.

Hugh: I don't see why acting according to essence wouldn't be according to unrealised essence.

Orage: Essence is part of the absolute as a drop of water is of the sea. Insofar as it is capable, it goes through the process of self-understanding and development.

Sherman: Then there is a difference between essence and 'I'?

Orage: Yes. Essence is a particle of the active principle of life; T is forever non-participant in the life of essence—untouchable.

Milliken: We ought to say that a judgment is absolute relative to its part in a group—of one universe. We know there may be more than one universe.

Mary J.: You can't speak of the 'relative absolute!'

Orage: Maybe in one sense you can. Imagine you are nothing externally—just a point of consciousness. Recollections remain but have no use to you. You are not now existing, you could not be perceived, are not phenomenal. You can't be said to occupy space, but you do occupy time. This point is 'I,' persisting in time, not in space. It has a field limited by recollections and possible states of consciousness. The world it then inhabits is its absolute world, having lost all possibility of contact with other processes. There is no growth, no shrinkage.

Louise: Can't it create out of its memories?

Orage: We come to that. Assuming it has imagination, its world is spun from its own subjectivity.

Nat: It makes new combinations of recollections?

Orage: Yes. What happens in its isolation—

Solon: Why isolation. I think that means it is bounded—not absolute. It has to be actualised to be isolated.

Orage: It is isolated by its limits of recollecting, its self limitations are absolute. This comes to Mr. Milliken's question of whether an absolute can be relative.

Daly: I think we use the terms absolute and relative in unusual ways. Relativity in Einstein isn't used in this sense.

Milliken: Relativity existed before Einstein.

Orage: The question of relativity inheres even in the concept of the whole and its parts. In this sense we use relative. Absolute is the whole taken as one; relation of the parts is relativity. There may be a relation of two absolute suns. An absolute may still develop.

Solon: You said it could shrink but not grow.

Orage: I'm not speaking now of the 'I' point of consciousness. Since it does not exist, it has no possibility of relation with anything else.

Larry: There is nothing, then, but imagination?

Orage: That is all.

Solon: In this case imagination is the only reality?

Orage: Yes—periods of pure imagination between manifestations.

Larry: What are we to suppose happened to this 'I' that evidently once had experiences?

Orage: Death.

Larry: Then we are all brain cells of a ghost?

Orage: Exactly!

Larry: Very amusing!

Orage: Being in a state of pure imagination which was beginning to decline, the Being had to make an effort to arrange his world. To arrange images in a cosmos instead of having them a chance series of recollections. I hope you see where this leads us in the question of good and evil. The existence of pattern presupposes a value on its actualisation. To the extent to which the pattern is recognizable to its parts, the cosmos becomes awake—conscious. It is implicit in the plan that this world shall be His body with three brains, in one of which we shall live, and that He shall become concretely conscious.

Daly: If a body is to be created, what will its environment be?

Orage: Read the last chapters of Eddington, or Whitehead's *Process and Reality*. We have to use "body" as Whitehead does—as any organization of knowledge, an ordered relation of parts.

Solon: As twelve units make a dozen?

Orage: Yes.

Larry: Did He discover this pattern or devise it?

Orage: He devised it—it might have been another.

Man: Where did God get his recollections? Was He part of another cosmic system?

Orage: Yes—it might have been that there were many other universes, and they may be existing now.

Man: We might eventually have cosmic systems of our own?

Orage: Well, eventually! Every wish we experience can be regarded as a psychological entity—every impression a unit, playing the same role in our psychical being as we as individuals play in the life of the planet. Gurdjieff said that if one could be anatomised psychologically, he would see myriads of beings—wishes, thinking organisms. He would see his entire population.

Mary J.: Isn't that personalising the passions, as the Elizabethans did?

Orage: This is a bit more subtle. This is projecting on a screen the concretised contents of mind. In this way we are one of the ideas in God's mind. Conflicts in our minds represent internecine conflicts in His mind. We defined good as whatever design God had in composing his pattern as he

did. In one sense this is arbitrary, in another it is absolute since no other pattern is possible for the constituents. Evil is the failure on His part to realise progressively, or dynamically, this pattern.

Solon: Then God alone is capable of evil?

Orage: We'll come to that. The question arises of the degree of participation in that plan and the possibility of participating in good and evil.

Man: Then he does good catalytically and evil when he interferes.

Orage: No—when he fails to interfere—fails to produce catalysis. Evil arises from the weaknesses of God; when these weaknesses manifest they are in the forms of beings. This is where religion comes in—divine service—to save God from "nodding."

Mary J.: Then Beelzebub was the manifestation of such an aspect? Orage: Yes—a fallen angel.

Larry: Evil seems an odd word to use, since God's arrangement of the cosmic pattern was voluntary on His part; and if he sometimes nods he pays the penalty. Good and evil imply a sense of obligation imposed by the very nature of the case.

Orage: No—unless you use "nature of the case" as the totality of the world for us. He does evil in his own judgment. Evil is related to less-being, or non-being; good to more-being.

Daly: You said God preferred more-being; isn't this, then, just a like, not a good?

Orage: This judgment of God's is from emotional center; it is an absolute preference for absolute good. If the growing end of his pattern is toward more-being, then the being participating in it is on the side of absolute good.

Solon: This is much like St. Augustine's words on human responsibility, man as a channel for God's will.

Orage: Channel is a bad word from our point of view. Man should be an agent in God's will. This point led to Quietism and the heresy based on men as the servants rather than the sons of God.

Woman: Is God's failure our failure?

Orage: We are so constituted as to save him from His failure—this is our potentiality. Our failure is in not realising this potentiality. Any three-center being can be co-conscious with God.

Daly: I understand that absolute good or evil for the creature is participation in or failure to participate in consciously this pattern of God's. But isn't this simply like or dislike for God?

Orage: Well, maybe so.

Daly: Do you think so?

Orage: No, I don't. That is the same kind of good and evil—he has defined by his will absolute good as more-being, and absolute evil as less-being. For the original being this choice is arbitrary.

Daly: For us there is no such choice?

Orage: No. As an absolute being you could defy absolute good and call it evil for you. For subordinate being there is no choice.

Larry: It seems more likely that instead of preferring being over non-being, God was compelled to choose being as good.

Orage: Oh no, there was no compulsion.

Larry: But he was terrified—he must have been terrified at the possibility of non-being.

Orage: I once brought up this point with Gurdjieff. He said that God's mind was not compelled to follow His emotions; it was not a choice under necessity, though the stimulus to the choice was a necessity. So we cannot say anything compelled God to make this decision. Will is not in emotional center—he could have willed to choose evil. Will excludes wish.

Man: What would be the picture if God never nodded?

Orage: We wouldn't exist. We are one of his nods, and have a special lot of work to do to become normal.

Daly: Then God would be better off without us, since we are a mistake. He may get some value from us, I suppose, but I doubt it.

Orage: When no value is possible the being goes to that planet we spoke of. This is the ash heap of the universe. The third point I wanted to make tonight is that three centered beings have the possibility of understanding the universal plan, as God understands it. A private in an army can participate in any sphere of function provided he has a conscious appreciation of the fact that the particular status he occupies is unimportant.

Daly: And the being's absolute good or evil is determined by his part in the great absolute?

Orage: Yes—in modern terminology this is "relativity."

November 19th [1927]

Orage: So far we've agitated the bushes in this discussion of good and evil, but I doubt if we've startled the hare. Instead of recollections to start off with, I wish one or two of you would attempt formulations of the ideas so far thrown out. This last discussion is staged really for Larry Morris, who was so dissatisfied with the first two. Larry, would you summarise what you think we've arrived at?

Larry: Last time we started with a resumé and ended by discussing new things. It's much better I think to start where we left off last week. I recollect that we stopped with a discussion of God's situation at the inception of the universe and considered the conditions under which He was forced to invent some design for it.

Orage: Forced?

Larry: He was driven by His state of fear to form this purpose.

Orage: Not driven. Is a motive called a force?

Larry: He desired to escape a disagreeable situation.

Orage: It was a free desire. He had the alternatives of passing to extinction and of willing to overcome it.

Larry: But He was terrified of extinction.

Orage: Not terrified. There was no compulsion in the matter. The reason Gurdjieff insists on this point is that the universe is non-mechanical, and maintained by a will.

Daly: But He had to find extinction disagreeable according to His nature.

Orage: That was compulsion, but His doing something about it was not.

Larry: Am I wrong in imagining that the story goes that having been satisfied with things as they were, He realised that this would cease, felt fear and took measures to ward the end off?

Orage: Yes.

Larry: That is all I meant to imply by compulsion.

Orage: You can say that this situation provoked Him, but did not compel Him. It is like not being forced to get up by an alarm clock. It isn't having to do one thing or another, but doing something or something else.

Solon: It seems to me that that is the way we use "compulsion."

Orage: That is because we are perfectly mechanical.

Mary Johnston: He would know that His 'I' remained, though, even if the universe dwindled out or not.

Orage: Yes. He couldn't decide to do nothing because to do nothing was part of time's inevitable flow. He had to do one of several things that were possible. You can't decide to let Time take its course; Time is taking its course.

Mary J.: His was a decision to Be.

Orage: Yes. He was under the compulsion (laughter)—well, the logical necessity to Be one thing or another.

Louise: I thought God was in a state of pure Being non-manifested. How did He run down in that state?

Orage: The state is purely psychological. His power of imagination was running down. The images in His mind depended on subjective activity, and, losing this activity, He had to create a source for these images by concreting them.

Imagine a state of pleasant dream interrupted by nightmare from which 'I' concludes that the powers of imagination are waning due to the influence of time. Further waning and more nightmare is foreseen. 'I' makes a selection of dreams and gives them substantiality—makes a durable pattern of them. Then there is no fear of waning dream power.

Reese: If God had sufficient power to maintain His images concretely, why couldn't He go on imagining them?

Orage: Because will was necessary; the dream state was one of only consciousness and individuality. Will is necessary to stabilise. Will was present potentially.

Solon: God and the angels had to objectify their imaginings in order to get the reflexes from the concretions?

Orage: Where does this "objectifying" come in?

Solon: When the imaginings were simply projected from God they were purely subjective; concreted they were objective.

(Daly [raised an] objection; mentioned Santayana and asked for a "summary" of his ideas. The argument trailed off in confusion.)

Orage: All this links up with our personal problem: of selecting an ideal or dream to realise. God's dream actualized is our world. The individual makes a dream come true by concretising it.

Solon: When God was young He took no thought on the morrow—then He began to save up for the rainy day!

Orage: The first part is all right—not the last.

Solon: But our universe is the result of His saving up—of His taking thought.

Orage: Yes—our universe is an actualized dream, like a cathedral—only it is made up of beings.

Milliken: Was the idea of this universe new to the archangels?

Orage: Yes.

Milliken: To God?

Orage: Until the crisis, no thought of will was in His consciousness. This system implies the same in us; there is no actualisation of will in us, but there is the potentiality.

Reese: Was the act of will caused by fear?

Orage: No more than I am caused by it to get up by an alarm clock. Ashiata Shiemash spoke of the "terror of the situation" in order to rouse activity, but not to cause the results.

Milliken: Isn't the universe running down according to Eddington?

Orage: Eddington is in the position of God's angels asked to report on the running down—they reported the second law of Thermodynamics. There is now beginning to be a doubt that that law is

the decisive law of physics.

John: These dreams were taking place in subjective space—

Orage: Yes, and the objective dream is in curved space. Imagine a sphere in which every atom is a being. Atoms at any point have the possibility of occupying the whole sphere—a totality enriched by this conscious activity. To go back to Gurdjieff's image—imagine a sphere of every type of being—the mass making up the World of Being. This has a Queen Bee—we assume—which is God. His will is that sphere, until every being in it shall be all sphere, and identified with Him. Since it is a being, the sphere has the possibility of Being All being. Until it actualises this it remains just sphere.

Daly: Then the end of being is non-being after all potentialities are realised?

Orage: There is a difference between positive and negative states of non-being—the positive is the conscious end of actualisation. These are the two ideas of Nirvana, with stress on different syllables when the word is spoken.

John: God conquers the passing of time, rather than time, because in the conquest each moment of time occupies the whole of space.

Orage: Good, John. Have we reached the point now where we know when the ball has stopped rolling?

Larry: We were discussing the perpetuation of pattern and the terms good and evil, and identifying good with what carries out the pattern.

Orage: What maintained the pattern and developed the static and dynamic aspects?

Larry: We discussed how the pattern became the objective necessity to all its component parts.

Orage: Would this be absolute good for all beings in the design, with or without their consent?

Larry: Yes—consent is implied in their being parts.

Solon: Insofar as they tend to destroy the pattern are they evil or wrong?

Orage: Wrong. They are right when they happen to be in harmony with absolute good, and wrong vice versa.

Solon: To what does evil apply?

Orage: To beings who escape from the pattern.

Daly: I thought last week we said only God could do evil?

Orage: Did we say so? Oh—on the supposition that God's choice is to Be, He alone can unmake it.

Blanche: I thought you also said God does wrong when He nods?

Orage: To nod is not to change the decision. I prefer to call it a mistake, or wrong—it is not an impingement. The will is constant, but the consciousness occasionally nods.

Daly: Then can anyone do evil?

Orage: No, they have to drop from the pattern to do evil.

Solon: A part can fall into a state of evil, rather than do evil.

Orage: That's better. The Hasnamus type drops into this state and loses the potentiality of will, ceasing to be actuated by will and dropping out of the dynamic pattern.

Larry: I think the next step is clearing up right and wrong.

Orage: Well, suppose that in an army a plan of campaign is made which constitutes a guide for all; subordinates have no part in the decision, though it takes them into account. Good is now defined as accomplishment of the plan, and evil as the opposite. The subordinates have nothing more to do with it, but their decisions to cooperate or not are right or wrong, good and evil having been determined by the decision on the plan. Good and evil is impersonal for all beings.

Hugh: But the beings don't know the plan, and can't consciously cooperate or decide if good and evil are predetermined, or even right and wrong.

Orage: The history of religion and ethics show that what purports to be called the plans of campaign are handed down, through priests. Privates think they are cooperating by obeying conventional standards of right and wrong—the subjective standards of morality. But we can't be satisfied with the plan of campaign of a leader who is in dispute.

Solon: Does the individual's being right unconsciously bring about good?

Orage: No—it brings about right.

Hugh: Can we discuss this humble soldier who gets conflicting orders?

Crampton: A knowledge of good and evil is necessary before right and wrong can be known.

Orage: Yes, in subjective morality the interpretations are therefore idiotic.

Hugh: Then we must try to discover the plan of campaign through observation, voluntary suffering and conscious labor?

Orage: Exactly so.

John: The plan of campaign for the universe is the same for each part rather than a separate function for each?

Orage: Yes.

Solon: Isn't any obedience required?

Orage: Voluntary suffering only; a means to an end.

Larry: How can the private find an objective criterion of right and wrong?

Hugh: I think that in his desire to know the campaign he might observe himself and discover the

purpose of the macrocosm in his microcosm.

Nat: The important thing is to learn this technique before you get shot!

Daly: I understand that before he can choose, even incorrectly, the individual must know the plan of campaign.

Orage: Yes, consciousness may be developed in advance of will.

Daly: I thought will was the last thing developed.

Orage: There is a difference in the capacity of will according to development; it doesn't mean that there is no will to begin with.

Daly: Then full development of will is dependent on consciousness?

Orage: That is true, but they develop simultaneously. The seed is last developed, but it is already in the bud. The development of will, consciousness and individuality is both simultaneous and successive.

Daly: I thought Purgatory was the state of consciousness without will.

Orage: Not enough will for what is understood.

Daly: The beings there can't participate in the conscious plan of God?

Orage: They participate but suffer because they know more than they can do. To avoid Purgatory, will, consciousness and individuality should develop harmoniously and simultaneously. This development of three at once is anti- Yoga. As Beelzebub told Hasein, cease activity in one center when the rate is too high and bring up the other centers, under order of the fourth center—this is Iransamkeep—I keep myself in charge of three centers.

Let me give you this brief summary:

The absolute by definition is the whole considered as one. The absolute to which we refer is the whole of our world. This self-contained unitary absolute presents two features, its status quo and a movement—the static and dynamic features. These two presuppose a plan or design necessitating the maintenance and development of the universe. This development can be called the plan of campaign, and the status quo is the army for carrying it out.

The plan has as its objective the development of the potentialities of all the constituent beings of the total plan. The realisation of the plan is objective reason—the fulfillment of the Being of each being. This plan of campaign is being carried out by all beings, conscious or unconscious, to the extent to which they remain beings at all; they might cease to be contained within this absolute. One potentiality of beings is to be conscious of the plan of campaign and to develop the will to cooperate with it. Regardless of their consciousness, they are all included in the plan, however. The attainment of a state of conscious cooperation with the plan is defined as right. Failure to attain this state is wrong. The plan of campaign by nature and by the nature of the beings operating it is discoverable. In the absence of this discovery, all reports of its nature must be regarded in the category of conventional or religious morality. Obedience to conventional morality constitutes wrong-doing.

The Gurdjieff text claims that the principles of right and wrong as laid down are derived from a

prime source by a being having access to it. It doesn't follow that they are right. From that point of view, Gurdjieff's view of objective morality is only one of many of similar claims. However, a technique is given not involving obedience to these commandments, but designed to bring into consciousness the criterion of conscience so that the individual can appreciate the plan for himself. This technique starts with self-observation and proceeds in maintaining the objectification of body and the development of three centers simultaneously. The technique is designed to help the individual understand the plan of campaign and to cooperate in Will with it. This excludes all possibility of team responsibility. Nothing, however, exempts the individual from his responsibility of development.

The only objectively right thing we can do is to practise the method and bring conscience into consciousness. This is claimed to develop all three centers. Other methods aim at a lop-sided development.

Do you feel that these three evenings have been wasted? Is the hare we startled a March Hare? It may be we shall be dissatisfied with our conclusions and have to admit that we cannot produce the Truth, like Hamelinadir, who turned to growing the first being food, which is impressions; the second being food is intentional suffering, and the third food, conscious labor, for the Being which informs the planetary body.

Larry: Would you say that objecting to a lack of criterion is the beginning of objective conscience?

Orage: Yes.